

History Armagh



- ◆ Armagh Foundry
- ◆ Finding Abigail, a DNA journey
- ◆ People, property and politics in Ogle Street
- ◆ John Corry, Armagh's forgotten antiquarian



History Group members on a trip to Ram's Island, 27 August 2022

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Watercolour painting showing Market Street
looking towards St. Patrick's Church of
Ireland Cathedral by William Greenlees,
painted 10 May 1838. (73.1979)
© Armagh County Museum

Back Cover:

Drumconwell Cottage, photo courtesy of
Eddie O'Neill

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Armagh Foundry

by Pooler Archbold

Introduction

Around the environs of Armagh can still be found examples of items made by the Armagh Foundry, a once significant industry in the city. What is the history of this company? The story that unfolds gives a rare glimpse of an Irish entrepreneurial family in the 19th century and their business which was successful for a generation, then declined and failed. In this family of liberal sentiment and public service, the story also gives some insight into family connections and the social history of the time.



A 4ft x 5ft cart or sack weighbridge on a farm in the townland of Canary.
Fig. 1: the weighbridge and weighbridge house, Fig.2: the balance plate,
Fig.3: the embossed ARMAGH FOUNDRY mark.

The Gardner family

Thomas (born 1789), Samuel (born c1792), Edward (born c1798) and William (born c1799) Gardner were the sons of James and Mary (née Burdy¹) Gardner of Dromore. Whether there were any girls in the family is not known. James had (at least) one brother, Theophilus.

Nothing is known of the eldest Gardner son, Thomas, and it is assumed that he remained in the Dromore/Banbridge area (a Thomas Gardner is listed as a Linen Draper in Banbridge in 1824).

What brought the three younger siblings to Armagh in the first quarter of the 19th Century? Could a previous generation of Gardners have come from Armagh? In that regard, it is interesting to note that the Armagh census of 1770 by Rev Wm Lodge (Armagh Robinson Library) lists a Robert Gardiner² (*sic*), Brazier, Market Street with three sons. Could this Robert Gardiner have some connection with the later Gardner siblings? In due course as the Gardner siblings died off, their obituaries all alluded to the duration of their residence in Armagh, but none commented on any connection to the city through an earlier generation.

Samuel Gardner, the older of the three brothers in Armagh, was perhaps the driving force in the family. The manner and means of his education is unknown. His obituary suggests that he had been a resident of Armagh for about 60 years suggesting that he had come to Armagh about 1811. Edward and William must have followed later. He initially was a Woollen Draper in Market Street. When Samuel's son, James, eventually sold up the Woollen and Drapery business in 1884, he said it had been in the family for 70 years suggesting that it opened in 1814. Samuel seems to have involved his youngest brother, William, at an early stage as a partner (1819 Bradshaw's Directory, Armagh Museum). Samuel was also an Insurance Agent. Most importantly, Samuel was the founder of the Foundry (1832) with his brother Edward joining shortly afterwards as partner. This partnership was successful for 28 years, until 1860, when, for reasons that are not clear, the partnership dissolved.

Samuel was very active in public and civic life, being, among other things, on the Board of Guardians of Armagh Infirmary, the Board of Guardians of the Armagh Union, a member of the Sanitary Inspection Committee, a long-term member of the Toll Committee, a Town Commissioner. He appears to have been instrumental in establishing the Armagh Branch of the Farming Society (Newry Telegraph 15th

January 1830) and even competed at the Society's Annual Show (Newry Telegraph 23rd August 1833). He was also active in Liberal politics but perhaps less so than his brother Edward. He became a Magistrate in 1863. He was a Director of Newry and Armagh Railway.

Samuel and his wife, Jane Elizabeth (néé Butler³), had three sons who survived to adulthood: James, Thomas, and Edward. He died in 1871, aged 79 years, after a prolonged period of illness and was buried in the family plot in St Mark's Churchyard.

His obituary notes that he *'erected those houses which are now known as Russell Street, and which are now occupied by his son, and his own and adjoining houses were remodelled and rebuilt by him'* (this refers to the top part of Russell Street above Stable Lane, on the Melbourne Terrace (North) side of Russell Street). Samuel had also designed in 1868-69 the new 'post office, postmaster's residence, income tax and telegraph offices' on the South side of Russell Street. More importantly, perhaps, he was said to have been the first person to introduce the 5½ day working week for tradesmen (*'It was in this establishment (i.e. the Foundry) that the Saturday half-holiday to tradesmen was originated, and which has now become so general that it has been rendered compulsory by law in every place to which it can possibly be applied.'*) (Obituary. Ulster Gazette 24th March 1871). The present author has not been able to corroborate this claim but, if it is true, even in a local context, it is a fitting tribute to the man.

Edward is the most interesting and innovative of the siblings. He was educated at Rev Dr James Neilson⁴/Nelson's Classical School at Downpatrick possibly staying with his Uncle Theophilus⁵ who ran a hardware business in Downpatrick.

Edward was a witness in a trial concerning theft of goods from Theophilus (Belfast Commercial Chronicle 31st March 1821) suggesting that he was still in Downpatrick in 1821 at least. It is not known when exactly Edward moved to Armagh, but when he did, he obviously integrated quickly into Armagh civic life from an early stage thereafter. Edward was Chairman of Armagh Benevolent Society by 1829. From an even earlier

date, he was heavily involved with the establishment and running of the Mechanics Institute, in Upper English Street, which offered elementary scientific education to the sons of tradesmen (well described by Seamus S Duffy (Seanchas Ardmhacha 13 (1); 122-172: 1988). Unfortunately, however, the Armagh Mechanics' Institute was seen to be failing from as early as 1827, as outlined by Edward Gardner's critical report as Secretary of the Management Committee, and it only operated from 1826 to 1831 but from it developed an Academy, in Castle Street, with a broader curriculum, which opened in 1828 again with Edward's significant involvement. A further upshot from the ethos of the Mechanics' Institute was the establishment of the Armagh Natural History and Philosophical Society and the Gardners were early, if not Founder, members. Edward, in particular, was an active participant and contributor. In 1856 the Society secured the former Charlemont Place School and converted it, to Edward's design, into a museum, lecture room, reading room, Committee room and Curator's House (The Ulster Architectural Heritage Society's 'The Buildings of Armagh', 1992, described the conversion as down to 'architect' Edward Gardner). The Armagh Natural History and Philosophical Society still meets in its room in the Museum. This was not the first time Edward's architectural talents had been used. He had previously designed the new Unitarian Church in Banbridge in a Grecian style (Northern Whig 17th May 1849).

As well as being partner in the Foundry, Edward acted as an Insurance Agent. A Liberal like his brother, Edward was very active in promoting electoral candidates and Parliamentary petitions for reform. He was frequently corresponding with the local press. He was vocal in his support for Catholic Emancipation, integrated education, free trade and later the Northern States in the American Civil War amongst other causes. On Parliamentary Reform it is claimed that Edward wrote a pamphlet in which the main points made were identical with the measures later adopted by the 1832 Reform Act (Obit. Northern Whig 14th November 1867). The well-known political views of the Gardners led to their successful nomination for membership of the

New Catholic Association (Newry Telegraph 27th October 1836).

Edward was also a regular competitor at the Armagh Farming Society's Annual Show: 'an early and excellent mangel wurtzel (*sic*) was grown on the farm of Edward Gardner, one of the finest ever exhibited in this city, or perhaps in any other city in the kingdom at such an early period of the season' (Armagh Guardian 17th August 1855).

Although he was brought up and confirmed an Episcopalian, he was to state in 1842 that he had been 'many years a dissenter' (Belfast Commercial Chronicle 24th January 1842) possibly influenced by his earlier education⁴. In 1834 he married Rev Dr James Nelson's daughter, Margaret (d February 1848: Freeman's Journal 2nd March 1848)), no doubt reinforcing his dissenter credentials.

After the Dissolution of the Foundry partnership between Samuel and Edward in 1860, Edward moved to Downpatrick, back to where he had spent his youth and where his son, Edward Jnr was a solicitor, Coroner for the Northern Division of the County Down, and Sub Sheriff for County Down. In Downpatrick Edward Snr remained active in public and civic life being a founder member, then Chairman of Downpatrick Literary Society, Sub Sheriff for County Down (succeeding his son in the role) and a Town Commissioner. He died on 12th November 1867 after a short illness. He was buried, along with his wife, in the Nelson vault in the graveyard at 1st Downpatrick (Non-Subscribing) Presbyterian Church. There is a Gardner memorial plaque inside 1st Downpatrick Presbyterian Church.

William is the least well known of the Armagh Brothers. The manner and means of his education is unknown. He was not involved with the Foundry. By 1817 he was certainly working with Samuel in his Woollen Drapery shop: William caught a certain John Quinn stealing about 2 yards of cassimere (a woollen suiting cloth of plain or twill weave) from Samuel's shop - Quinn was sentenced to transportation for 7 years (Belfast Commercial Chronicle 2nd August 1817). By 1819 he is clearly a partner in the shop, both names appearing in Bradshaw's Directory. William is

also described as a Straw Bonnet maker. By 1852 in the Belfast & Ulster Directory, William Gardner is the owner of a Tannery in Dobbin Street. He was a Town Commissioner and a Poor Law Guardian. He died at his residence in Dobbin Street in December 1855 from 'congestion of the brain' at the age of 56 years (obit Armagh Guardian 14th December 1855). He is recorded as being buried in St Mark's Churchyard, Armagh.

The Foundry

The Foundry was opened in 1832, initially in Scotch Street (Mr Gardner's Factory), site unknown, but by 1840 had moved to Dobbin Street (S & E Gardner). Already by 1833, the works were shipping gates from Warrenpoint to Liverpool (Newry Telegraph 13th September 1833). The Scotch Street premises are listed in the New Commercial Directory of 1840 as being run by E Gardner as Ironmongers & Hardware Merchant, perhaps on the basis of his previous experience with his Uncle Theophilus's hardware business in Downpatrick, but these premises disappear from later Directories. The success of the Foundry seems to have been largely due to the dynamism of Samuel and Edward. By 1850, the Foundry, was employing about 50 staff, many extremely skilled (Armagh Guardian 1st July 1850) and was apparently prospering with innovative design and production. However, for reasons that are unclear Edward decided to leave the company in 1860. The Dissolution of Partnership took place on 16th June 1860 by mutual consent and was announced in the press at the end of August 1860. Samuel sustained the Company after Edward left and introduced his sons, Thomas (Gardner & Son) and then Edward, who I will call 'young' Edward, (Gardner & Sons) into the Foundry. Samuel retired from the company in 1869 through ill health. His son, Thomas, probably the natural successor, unfortunately died suddenly on 26th December 1869, aged 40 years. The service of a highly qualified Engineer and Mechanic, Mr William Malcolm, was secured to help manage the company. Samuel died in March 1871. 'Young' Edward, still only about 26 at this stage was possibly never suited to the business and left in 1872. However, in a later lament concerning the loss of Armagh industry, the Ulster Gazette (21st



Site of Armagh Foundry, 1862 Survey (Armagh Robinson Library)

May 1887) described ‘young’ Edward as ‘one of the kindest, most attentive to business and successful of the Gardner family whose removal was a hard blow at the prosperity of this home industry’ (what ‘removal’ means in this context is not known by the present author). He died in a Paris Hospital in 1879 aged 35 years. James Gardner (b1821) was the eldest of the sons of Samuel and had inherited the Woollen Drapery & Haberdashery business in Upper English Street. He was brought into the Foundry when ‘young’ Edward was leaving and quickly was advertising it for sale. He must have failed to find a suitable buyer or had second thoughts. The Foundry was removed from sale and would henceforth be known as Gardner & Co. A highly qualified practical Engineer, Mr Thomas Young, was brought in as manager. No mention is made as to whether Mr William Malcolm was still with the Foundry at this stage. The Foundry continued for some years but was on a downward trajectory and finally closed in 1887. The Ulster Gazette in its article of 21st May 1887 suggested that both local causes, which it

declined to name, and extrinsic factors (foreign competition) lead to the demise of the Foundry. The entire stock of patterns was taken over by the Newry Foundry Company.

In addition to the ‘usual’ manufactured goods of malleable iron (e.g. fire proof safes, weighing beams, entrance gates, field gates, kitchen ranges, ploughs and harrows etc), sheet iron (e.g. coal boxes, stove pipes, fenders, kettles etc), tin plate (e.g. dish covers, tea caddies, tinder & candle boxes, shaving pots, hearing trumpets etc), brass (e.g. door plates & knockers, coach, gig & harness brasses, church and farm-yard bells etc), copper (e.g. boilers, sauce pans, fish kettles etc), lead (e.g. water closets, pipes of all sizes, fanlights etc) and zinc (e.g. eave & upright spouting, water cisterns, pipes of all sizes etc) (Advert, Newry Examiner and Louth Advertiser 4th January 1834) , the company was, from an early stage, keen to assimilate the newest technologies available. The following are the most notable of the foundry output:

Dredge 'Suspension' Bridge

James Dredge of Bath (1794-1863) was a brewer. He turned his attention, however, to engineering, in particular, designing a bridge so, it is said, his beer could get to the other side of the River Avon more quickly. He patented a metal 'suspension bridge' in 1836. Technically these bridges are not true suspension bridges but double cantilever bridges. Of the 36 Dredge bridges known to have been completed only five or six are thought to remain standing and, of these, two are known to have been manufactured by Armagh Foundry and erected in Caledon.

The foot bridge at Caledon (1844) was originally at Glenarb and allowed workers to get easily over the River Blackwater to their work in the local mill. The bridge was restored and re-sited in 1992 on the Blackwater close to the main road (A28) into Caledon from Armagh. It has a main span of almost 78ft with side spans of almost 20ft and a width of 3ft 6in. The second Dredge bridge (1845) has a single 73ft span and width of 10ft 6in, wide enough to take horse carts. It is situated over the Blackwater deep in the Caledon estate. Both bridges were built at Armagh Foundry. Edward Gardner in a letter to the Newry Telegraph on 18th January 1845 promotes the concept and design of the Dredge bridge and describes the construction of the 1844 Glenarb footbridge which took 8 days to build and cost £350, much quicker and cheaper than a stone bridge. He suggested a Dredge bridge should be considered for the River Bann at Portadown.

There were two Dredge bridges over the Moyola River at Moyola Park, Castledawson. One was washed away in 1929. The second bridge, which apparently had been in poor condition, and which had been closed to the public for some years, was damaged by a falling tree a few years ago and, consequently, was demolished. The Dredge bridge at Ballievey over the River Bann near Banbridge collapsed in 1988 under the weight of a laden lorry which should not have been on the bridge. The maker(s) of these bridges is (are) not known.

Fourneyron's turbine

In the early 19th Century, power for industry was either wind-based or water-based. Early steam driven pumps had been used in mining from the end



Dredge Cart bridge 1845, Caledon Estate

of the 18th Century. Wind-power was inconsistent. Water power was used to drive wheels connected to shafts that could turn mill stones directly or via a gearing system. Waterwheels harness both kinetic energy (the speed water is moving when it enters the wheel) and potential energy (the head of water i.e. the height difference between water entering and leaving the wheel) to produce mechanical power or, nowadays, electrical power. Depending on their design, waterwheel efficiency could vary from poor to very good. A variant of the waterwheel is the water turbine which is based on the principle of introducing a swirling motion to water by an additional set of fixed or adjustable blades. This turbulence increases the efficiency of the system. In addition, a waterwheel cannot effectively harness a head of water greater than its diameter whereas a turbine can, thereby also increasing its practical efficiency. Several variants of the water turbine now exist. In the early 19th Century engineers in France began to improve the design of water turbines. Foremost among these was Benoît Fourneyron (1802-1867) who in 1832 developed a working and efficient turbine capable of driving a mill based on a horizontal wheel. It is claimed that the Gardners travelled to M. Fourneyron to learn more about his turbine but were met with indifference and no cooperation. Regardless of this, however, the Gardners were able to produce a turbine with input from Rev Dr Thomas Romney Robinson, Director of Armagh Observatory, advising on practical aspects of the science of hydrodynamics in relation to the mechanism. It was installed successfully in 1847 in a local mill, the first such installation in Ireland

(Armagh Guardian 3rd August 1847). The Armagh Foundry also supplied a turbine to the Marquis of Waterford for his mills at Curraghmore (Armagh Guardian 1st July 1850). Other local engineers also contributed to the development of water turbines⁶.

Thrashing-mill

‘The Messrs S&E Gardner have recently erected a thrashing-mill, worked by water power, at the Dyan Millsthe mill is capable of thrashing 700 stooks of oats in five hours. The Messrs Gardner redeem our City from manufacturing insignificance by the scientific judgement and superior mechanical execution evidenced in the manufactures wrought at their foundry. The high character of their establishment is attested by numerous orders from distant localities.’ (From our Armagh correspondent. Newry Telegraph 31st October 1850).

Grave Rail

‘A tomb railing, of cast iron, which, in chasteness of design and elegance of execution reflects much credit on the artistic ability of the Messrs Gardner of the Armagh Foundry ...in St Mark’s burial ground...for the grave of the late Mrs McWatters wife of Mr McWatters, bookseller of this city.’ (Ulster Gazette 11th September 1852).



Dr Robinson's anemometer in situ at Armagh Observatory

Dr Robinson's improved anemometer 1846

Discussing how Co Armagh industry could contribute to the Great Irish Industrial Exhibition of 1853, the correspondent comments on Robinson's anemometer manufactured by Messrs Gardners: ‘Then there are the Rev Doctor Robinson and the Messrs Gardner of the foundry who, between them, could produce an Irish work of rare merit, combining at once the triumphs of science and

mechanism in cooperative action – that is sublime theory tested by successful practice.’ (Newry Telegraph 24th February 1853). It is claimed that Christopher Sharp, the Dublin clockmaker, provided the clockwork mechanism for the anemometer.

Steam Engines

Armagh Foundry announces its intention to start building steam engines (1853). In 1855, ‘Messrs Andrew and Fleming Boyd are about to erect a steam saw-mill in their timber and coal yard...The mill will be worked by a 16 horse-power engine now being manufactured by Messrs Samuel and Edward Gardner’. (Armagh Guardian 18th May 1855).

Gas works

‘Antrim Gas Worksthe works now being conducted under the superintendence of Edward Gardner Esq are almost complete. The Messrs Samuel and Edward Gardner have been the contractors for the gas fittings for nearly all the towns of Ulster, and it is gratifying to find their works giving such universal satisfaction that competition with them is now becoming impossible.’ (Armagh Guardian 17th August 1855).

The two cast iron gas standard lamps in front of St Mark’s Church, Armagh, are embossed at their bases ‘Armagh Foundry’. On the avenue up to the church, another six lamps of a slightly different design do not seem to be marked.

Hydraulic ram

The story of the supply of water to Kilrea is somewhat confused with differing claims⁷. What is certain is the report in 1859 in the press that ‘At the request of the Mercer’s Company, the Messrs Gardner of Armagh have recently erected a hydraulic ram at Kilrea, by means of which the town is supplied with spring water (*from the celebrated spring at Toberdoney*).....The machine is at a distance of about 700 yards from the village and the spring is 134 feet lower than the point at which the water is delivered..... The driving water and the driven are different in their sources, and more so in their quality, and by modification of the ram, never attempted before, but designed and carried out by Edward Gardner Esq, are kept separate, while they pass through it.

So complete is the separation, that after the mill pond from which the driving power is derived had been used for steeping flax, not the slightest taint of flax water was perceived in that drawn in the various fountains in the different streets of the town' (Banner of Ulster 21st June 1859).

Flax Scutching Machines

Armagh Foundry was widely advertising that it would be demonstrating Rowan's New Patent Flax Scutching Machine in 1861 and again the improved machine in 1863.

North Meridian markers, Tullyard

The construction of accurate meridian markers was considered to be essential for calibration of Observatory instruments and precise astronomical measurement. The stone arch (circa 1793) is the North meridian marker for the transit refracting telescope and where it was positioned in the Observatory. A further stone North meridian marker for the Troughton Equatorial Telescope, which arrived in 1795, also stood near the site of the first marker – it was marked on the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey maps but appears to have been demolished sometime about 1850/51. The third north meridian marker (the cast iron obelisk, 1864 by Armagh Foundry) was for the Mural Circle telescope but was not made for some 30 years after the telescope's procurement because of a later decision by Dr Robinson to use the Mural Circle for different observations than had previously been the case. (The Meridian Markers of Armagh Observatory. Butler CJ. *Astronomy & Geophysics* 57(2): 2.27-2.31; 2016).

Conclusion

The story of Armagh Foundry has been described against the background of the civic engagement of the two main players, Samuel and Edward Gardner, and amid the social and political milieu of mid-19th century Ireland. The establishment of the Foundry created much needed industry and skill base for the local workforce. The breadth and depth of the produce of the Foundry testifies to the enterprise and creativity of the partners. The decline and closure of the Armagh Foundry was a very serious loss for industry in Armagh.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Mr Sean Barden for the use of Armagh County Museum archive material and for useful advice. Thanks also to Mr David Mansbridge, Sexton, St Marks Parish Church, Armagh for his help in locating graves in the churchyard and drawing attention to the lamp standards.

Notes

¹The Burdys were a Huguenot family who came to Ireland via Holland with the Williamite army. Mary Burdy was born in Dromore about 1760, the daughter of Peter Burdy, a merchant in the town. Her brother was Samuel Burdy. Samuel had graduated from Trinity College Dublin in 1781, been ordained in 1783, appointed to the curacy of Ardglass and then to the perpetual curacy of Kilclief. He is most famous for his biography of his friend Rev Philip Skelton which was published in 1792 (*Dictionary of National Biography*, 1885-1900, Wikisource).

²Stuart in his *Historical Memoirs of the City of Armagh* relates the humorous story of the Rev Henry Jenny (died 1758) and a Robert Gardner, a coppersmith of the City. Briefly, Robert Gardner, the coppersmith, took premises opposite where Rev Jenny lived on English Street. Robert started work very early, causing Rev Jenny to lose sleep because of the hammering. Eventually Rev Jenny 'persuaded' Robert Gardner, with £20, to move premises the next Quarter Day. However, by the time Robert moved, so habituated had Rev Jenny become to the hammering, that he could not now sleep because of the quietness. He had to 'persuade', with £20, another coppersmith to move into the vacant premises opposite.

³Norton Butler JP, lived at Grouse Hall, Aghaglassan, Inishowen. In the early decades of the 19th century, Donegal and especially Inishowen was a somewhat lawless place. Illicit distilling was rife and revenue men and officers of the state, who prosecuted the distillers, were not popular and a number were murdered including Norton Butler. In 1816 he was mortally wounded, by shot and bayonet, after two previous unsuccessful attempts on his life. Within a couple of years, Norton Butler's wife, Rachel, moved with her family to Armagh and lived in College Street. Jane Elizabeth, daughter of Norton and Rachel Butler, married Samuel Gardner in 1820.

⁴The Neilsons/Nelsons were a family of Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Clergymen who ran Classical Schools. They conversed, preached and taught as fluently in Irish as they did in English. Rev Moses Neilson started his Classical School (with the addition of arithmetic and book-keeping for those seeking a career in Commerce or Industry) in Rademon near Crossgar. Three of his seven sons were also Clergymen: Arthur took over the Church (1st Kilmore) and School at Rademon, James was clergyman to 1st Downpatrick (Non-Subscribing) Presbyterian Church and had his school in Saul Street, Downpatrick and William (the only son to retain the spelling of the name as Neilson) ran his Classical and Mercantile Academy in Dundalk. In

1818 William was appointed Professor of Classical Languages and Hebrew at Belfast Academical Institution. In April 1821 he was appointed Professor of Classics at Glasgow but died from rheumatic fever, aged 47 years, before he could take up the post. The schools were noted for their integrated education and prepared many young men for the Catholic priesthood. Father Luke Walsh (P.P. in North Antrim) was educated by Rev Moses Neilson and would afterwards say of him 'I was educated by a Presbyterian clergyman, a man of as great moral worth and sterling integrity as Ireland could boast of.....well known as one of the first classical scholars of his day. I was for seven years under his personal care and tuition; and even yet I cling to his memory with filial love and affection.' (Fitzpatrick S., Magee Collection in St Mary's University College Library: An Leabharlann The Irish Library Second Series 15 (34): 124-131; 2001). Successive Bishops (of Down & Connor) William Croll (later Archbishop of Armagh), Cornelius Denvir and Patrick Dorrian were educated by Rev Dr James Nelson (Rafferty O., Catholicism in Ulster 1603-1983: An Interpretative History. C. Hurst & Co. p120; 1994).

⁵Theophilus Gardner died 1834 aged 68 years. Theophilus and his wife, Margaret nee Nevin (d1824), had no family and he is said, in his Will, to have left significant bequests to various nephews including £500 and his house to Edward Gardner (Aynsworth Pilson's Notable Inhabitants of Downpatrick. Eds Blackwood, Wheeler and Rooney. Lecale & Downe Historical Society 2016). Pilson describes Theophilus Gardner, rather disparagingly, thus: 'He was a tall thin figure, somewhat stooped, projecting chin and blue eyes. He was imperfectly educated and uninformed, credulous, and very peevish and irritable, saw little company and for many years indulged in drinking habits which hortened his life.'

⁶The Armagh millwright, William Cullen, definitely visited Fourneryon and was also met with indifference. Cullen, however, had the presence of mind to visit the foundry that was producing the turbines and here he was successful in being able to inspect the machine, no doubt making some measurements as he did so. Cullen visited France on a second occasion to gain more information on the turbine. From what he learned he was able to build and test models and thereby make improvement to the Fourneryon turbine. It is not known whether Cullen ever cooperated with the Gardners but he did join forces with the Belfast Soho Foundry of McAdam Brothers & Co. to produce turbines, the first of which was installed about 1848 in Messrs Barklie's Linen Bleach Mill at Mullamore (Aghadowey). The superiority of this turbine is extolled in a letter to the press (Northern Whig 28th November 1850). In an article on *Machines for Economising Water-Power* (Newry Examiner & Louth Advertiser 18th December 1850), the author stated 'In Ulster some few experiments (on the design and manufacture of turbines) have been made, and failure has generally been the result'. However, the work and modifications of William Cullen were noted and discussed in some detail. The only surviving McAdam turbine can be seen at Cavan Water Mill; no known Gardner turbines survive.

The work of William Cullen culminated in him publishing a book *A Practical Treatise on the Construction of the Turbine or Horizontal Water-Wheel* with seven plates,

specially designed for the use of Operative Mechanics' advertised widely in April 1860. It would therefore appear that, despite the Gardners' early model, the more innovative contribution to the design and manufacture of turbines was from William Cullen of Armagh. Slater's Directory, 1846, has William Cullen, millwright, living in Callen Street.

For completeness, one further Ulster engineer should be mentioned in the history of turbine design, that of James Thomson (1822-1892). Although eclipsed by his younger brother William (later Sir William Thomson and then Lord Kelvin), James Thomson is nevertheless regarded as amongst the most eminent scientists of the 19th century. He was Professor of Civil Engineering (Queen's College Belfast) 1857, Regius Professor of Civil Engineering and Mechanics (Glasgow) 1873, Fellow of the Royal Society, 1877.

In 1850 Thomson designed and patented a vortex turbine where water passed inwards to an inner rotating wheel. The first turbine was installed in the new beetling mill at Dunadry. Many turbines were made under James Thomson's patent in Glasgow and were erected throughout the British Isles and some were sent abroad. The design won a medal at the International Exhibition of 1862.

⁷The Fairy Thorn: Gleanings and glimpses of old Kilrea (Kilrea Local History Group, Impact Printing, Coleraine 1984 ISBN 0 9509392 0 2) has a 'chapter' on 'Toberdoney: Kilrea Water Supply' (based on information originally given in 1953 and subsequently passed on to the author(s) of the chapter) suggesting that the plans for the water supply, superseding the town pump, were drawn up by a local engineer, Robert Stuart, who had served his apprenticeship in the McAdam Soho Foundry, Belfast. The work was said to have been carried out by Armagh Foundry in 1865.

It is also claimed that James Thomson was involved in the process of supplying Kilrea with water. When James Thompson was applying for the Chair of Civil Engineering and Mechanics in Glasgow in 1873, his brother Sir William Thompson drew up a list of his brother's achievements as an engineer which included: 'A water pressure engine for supplying the town of Kilrea with pure spring water by power derived from a river was proposed by him and executed under his superintendence. This was quite a novel design and it has proved in the highest degree satisfactory' (Collected Papers in Physics and Engineering by James Thomson. Larmor J, Thomson J. Cambridge University Press: Page 74; 1912). No date is attributed to this scheme and no mention of it can be found in the press. There are many unanswered questions about all these differing claims but the only concrete contemporary account is that of Edward Gardner's scheme. It is, therefore, at least certain that Edward Gardner and Armagh Foundry were involved to a significant extent in providing Kilrea with a water supply.

In any case, Edward Gardner was considered a significant enough local expert to be asked about 1865 (i.e. some years after he had left the Foundry and Armagh) to survey Keady and make a plan for supplying it with water. This he did, but funds were not found for the scheme. Some years later a similar scheme was put forward by another engineer but this also failed for lack of funding; by 1875 a third scheme was proposed (Ulster Gazette 13th November 1875).

Armagh Family Names

by Gerry Oates

The following essays are a continuation of the 'Armagh Family Names' series and include three surnames recorded in the county since the early part of the 17th century. Two of the surnames, Mackey and Watters, are still fairly common. The third surname, Kelter, is less so, but appears to have its origins in the Ulster Cycle of folk tales which date back to the 12th century and possibly further.

Mackey

Mackey appears to be one of several Irish surnames formed from the Old Irish personal name *Áed* (*Aodh*) 'fire', which is everywhere mistakenly anglicized as *Hugh*. These include Mac Kee, Mac Gee (Magee), Mac Kay, Hughes, Hayes and others. *Mac Aoidh* 'son of Hugh' is usually rendered Mac Kee and Mac Kay in English, but shift of stress from the second element of the name to initial *Mac* tends to produce the alternative version *Mackey*, or *Mackie*.

Since Mac Kee is almost exclusively an Ulster surname it is natural that, as a variant form, *Mackey* is also to be found in Ulster, especially in Cos. Tyrone and Armagh and to a greater extent in Cos. Antrim and Down. In the latter counties many *Mackeys* / *Mackies* can trace their roots to Scotland where the surname *Mackie*, from Scots Gaelic *Mac Aoidh*, is also numerous.

In Co. Armagh the surname *Mackey* is chiefly found in Armagh city and the surrounding parishes and generally in the same areas where Mac Kee is also common and it is quite probable that some of the latter have adopted the spelling *Mackey*. The shift from Mac Kee to *Mackey* is difficult to date precisely, but *Mackey* appears to be missing from local records before the 17th century. The Armagh Manor Court Rolls of 1625-27 include three names: *Patrick Mackey* and *Katherine ny Mackey* who appeared in court in April, 1627; also appearing at the same session was *Manus O Macky*. The name versions used by *Manus* and *Katherine* suggest an Ó-type surname and might represent a distinct sept such as Ó *Macdha*, a Munster surname from the barony of Ormond in north Tipperary, which has also been anglicized *Mackey*.

Towards the latter part of the 17th century, *Daniel Mackey*, was bishop of Down & Connor from 1671-73, but Mac Lysaght maintains that he was properly a Mac

Kay and this might reflect a shift of stress in pronunciation which led to the spelling *Mackey*. Rushe, in his study of Co. Monaghan history and customs, also mentions that Mc Cooley in that county has been anglicized both as *Mackey* and Mac Kay. Similarly, Muhr in place-name research of the barony of Iveagh in Co. Down, noted the interchange between Mc Kay, Mc Key, Magee and *Mackey* in the parish of Drumballyrone in the mid-17th century and shows that the village name Katesbridge was variously recorded as Makey's Bridge, McCay's Bridge, McKeys Bridge and Kate McKey's bridge between 1743 and 1823.

In the 18th century *Mackey* occurs in the Co. Armagh Poll Book of 1753 when *Joseph Mackey* of Kincon, in Kilmore parish, *John Mackey* of Clonroot and *Benjamin Mackey* of Castleraw in the same parish cast their votes in favour of Arthur Brownlow of Lurgan to represent the county in the former Irish parliament in Dublin. Since the above *Mackeys* were entitled to vote they must have been members of the Established Church and quite probably of Scottish background.

The Co. Armagh Tithe Applotment Book for Kilmore parish of 1833 records *Mackey* among the tithe payers in the townlands of Kincon, Castleraw, Ballyhagan, Maynooth and the village of Richhill, including a *Benjamin Mackey* in five separate locations. Elsewhere, *Mackey* tithe payers were recorded in Ballymyre (1827), Lisnadill (1832) and The Grange (1832), but numbers were small. Griffith's Valuation of the 19th century (1848-64) also recorded *Mackey* chiefly in Kilmore parish with individual holdings in Derrynoose, Lisnadill and Killeavy.

Figures from the 1911 census show that *Mackey* was prominent in Armagh city and the nearby townland of Lislea (Lisnadill parish) with a corresponding decrease in Kilmore from the previous century and suggesting a move away from the countryside.

Mackey is also found in Co. Cavan where the sept is regarded as an offshoot of the O Reillys of Breifne. A branch of the ruling O Reilly clan descended from *Mathgamain Mac in Chaich* 'Mahon the blind one' who was known as *Mac an Chaoich* 'son of the blind one', which was initially anglicized *Mac a' Kee* and later altered to *Mackey* and *Key(e)s*. From 1862 a rail link

between Cavan and Belfast was opened which brought many from that county north in search of employment and might account for the presence of some *Mackeys* in Armagh.

In Munster the sept *Ó Macdha* has also adopted the anglicized version *Mackey*. The ancient territory of this sept was in the barony of Upper Ormond in Co. Tipperary where the townland and parish of *Ballymackey* (*Baile Uí Mhacdha* 'Mackey's town'), near Nenagh, are named for them. This name is currently more numerous in Tipperary than elsewhere, but spread into the neighbouring counties of Kilkenny, Cork, Waterford and Limerick, in particular, where, in more recent times, the legendary hurling hero, *Mick Mackey*, has added lustre to the name.

The spelling *Mackie* occurs in Scotland where *Mackey* appears to be absent. *Mackie* was recorded in Stirlingshire in the 15th century and the *Mackies* of mid Galloway were a powerful and prosperous family in the 16/17th centuries and looked upon as staunch Covenanters. Many Scottish families named Mackay also settled in Ulster in the 17/18th centuries and several adopted the spelling forms *Mackey* and *Mackie*.

Watters

Wat(t)ers in Armagh and surrounding counties is usually the anglicized form of *Mac Con Uisce* 'son of the water hound', a sept with Co. Monaghan roots. Their former homeland is located in the barony of Farney in the south of the county. An obituary to one *Raghnal Mac Con Uisgi* appears in the Annals of Ulster under the year 1386 which suggests that he was someone of importance at that time.

The surname was initially anglicized *Mac Enuskey*, *Mac Eniskey*, *Mac Anuskye* and, with substitution of *l* for *n*, it became *Mac Aliskey*. English prevailed, however, and the name was translated *Wat(t)ers*, from its association with *uisce* 'water'.

In Co. Monaghan the *Mac Eniskey* (*Watters*) sept are regarded as akin to the Mac Mahons of Oriel and, indeed, it is in association with the Mac Mahons of Farney that *Mac Enuske* appears in the Elizabethan Fiants of 1601 when *William* and *Coull Mac Enuske* of Farney were granted pardons. A decade earlier, *Turlough M'Inisky* (*Mac Conuisce*), a Franciscan friar, was put to death by the Elizabethan authorities in 1591 and is listed among the Irish Catholic martyrs of that era.

In Co. Armagh the name is mainly found in the south of the county, adjacent to the barony of Farney, and also in

the west in the neighbourhood of Keady, Derrynoose and Middletown. The variant forms, *Mac Aliskey*, *Mac Calliskey* are less common and generally confined to east Tyrone.

In Co. Down, in the parish of Dromore, Derrymackinnisky was the earlier name of the townland presently named Edenordinary, which Muhr has interpreted as *Doire Mhic Con Uisce* 'the oakwood of *Mac Con Uisce*' and also points out that a *Thomas Mc Anuskye* of Co. Down is cited in 1620 in the Patent Rolls of James I. Petty's 'census' ca. 1659 includes *Mc Nuske* among the 'principall Irish names' of the barony of Lecale in east Down. In Ulster at present *Waters* and *Watters* are the modern versions of the name.

The Co. Monaghan Hearth Money Rolls of 1663-65 include several *Mac Enuskey* / *Mac Eniskey* families in Donaghmoyne parish, and in Co. Armagh the Franciscan Petition lists of 1670-71 include a *Teig Mc Annusky* of Killeavy parish among the signatories. A century later in the nearby south Armagh parish of Creggan four households named *Waters* appear in a 1766 list of local families in the townlands Clonalig, Skerriff, Ballynagleragh (now Ballsmill) and Monaguillagh. In 1778, a *Charles Waters* appeared as a litigant at the Armagh Lent assizes, and in 1796, *Francis Waters* of Creggan parish and *Bryan Waters* of Newtownhamilton were awarded spinning wheels by the Irish Linen Board in a government-sponsored scheme to promote the cottage linen industry.

In the following century, the Tithes Applotment Book for Creggan parish recorded 19 tithe payers named *Waters* in 1828. The same document listed another two *Waters* families in Derrynoose in 1825 and one each in Killeavy, Forkill and Newtownhamilton parishes between 1828 and 1835. Griffith's Valuation (1848-64) confirmed the prominence of the name in Creggan where 23 holdings were recorded, mainly in Clonalig, Monaguillagh and Dorsy townlands. Elsewhere, *Waters* was recorded in Derrynoose, Killeavy and Forkill parishes.

A shift in spelling appears to have taken place, for the census of 1901 recorded 118 entries for *Watters* with only 18 for *Waters* in Co. Armagh. Approximately the same situation was recorded in 1911 with *Watters* (124) and *Waters* (16). The cognate surnames *Mac Aliskey* / *Mac Calliskey* were recorded only in east Tyrone and Belfast.

Outside of Cos. Armagh and Monaghan *Waters* / *Watters* often represents a corrupt anglicized form of a number of Gaelic surnames, for instance, *Ó hUarghuis*

(‘cold-power’) and its variant Gaelic forms *Ó Fuaruisce* (‘cold water’), *Ó hUairisce* and *Ó Tuairisc*, on account of their imagined association with *uisce* ‘water’. The above Gaelic surnames have also been anglicized phonetically as *Horish*, *Horisky*, *Whoriskey*, *Toorish* and mistakenly translated as *Caldwell*. With the exception of the latter the others are most often associated with Co. Donegal. Ballyhoorisky (*Baile Uí Fhuaruisce* – ‘the homestead of *Ó Fuaruisce*’) is situated at the extremity of the Fanad peninsula in Co. Donegal. The place-name was first recorded in 1608 and the surname *Hourisk(e)y* / *Whoriskey* etc., was common there until recent times.

Waters is also the name of an Anglo-Norman family that settled in Co. Cork in 1190; it is a later form of Norman French *de Auters* and English versions are usually written *Waters* with a single *t*. *Watters* in England, with double *tt*, is sometimes derived from the first name *Walter* which Reaney claims was pronounced with silent *l* as early as the 13/14th centuries, otherwise it refers to ‘a dweller by water’. Mac Lysaght informs us that this particular English name has been in Ireland since the Cromwellian campaign of the mid-17th century.

Waterson sometimes occurs as a variant of *Waters* and Bell claims that the two surnames were used interchangeably in Co. Cavan in the early 1900s. Elsewhere in Ulster *Waterson* is often a variant of the Scottish name *Mac Watters*.

Kelter

Kelter, to the best of my knowledge, is a surname that has been neglected by the main commentators on Irish family names. It is, admittedly, quite rare but the name has strong links to 17th century Armagh and until recently was to be found in the parish of Kilmore. *Kelter* and *Calter* appear to be synonyms in local records. Fearon, in his history of Kilmore parish, thinks that the *Kelter* / *Calter* name might have originated in Inishowen and possibly represents one of the septa that followed the O Neills in their push south-east into Tyrone and Armagh in the medieval period.

Neither Mac Lysaght nor Woulfe include the surname *Kelter* in their collections, but Reeves notes that the personal name *Cealtchar* occurs a number of times in relation to the site of Downpatrick: *Aras Cealtair* (‘*Cealtar’s* residence’), *Dún Cealtair* (‘*Cealtar’s* stronghold’) and *Rath Cealtair* (‘*Cealtar’s* fort’) in the pre-Christian period. *Rathkelter* (*Rath Chealtchair* ‘*Cealtchar’s* fort’) was the earlier name of a large

earthen fort close to the present site of Down Cathedral. According to legend it was the residence of *Cealtchar na gCath* (‘*Cealtchar of the Battles*’), a legendary hero of the Red Branch Knights in the Ulster Cycle of folktales. In addition, in the north Antrim parish of Culfeightrin, there is a townland named *Dunmakelter* and *Dún Mhac Cealtchair* (‘Fort of *Cealtchar’s* son’) is the suggested interpretation of the place-name which refers to the same fictional hero whose personal name looks like the source of this rare surname. *Cealtchar* could produce English equivalents in *Calter* and *Kelter*.

In Co. Armagh historical records we first meet the name in the parish of Kilmore; the Manor Court rolls of Armagh mention *Hugh* and *Cornelius O Calter* as litigants in 1626 and another *Hugh O Calter*, described as ‘Constable of Kilmore’, in 1627. Almost four decades later, the Hearth Money Rolls of 1664-65 include four hearths in Cornasreeb townland, Kilmore, belonging to *Patrick oge*, *Edmond*, *Shane* and *Donnell O Calter*. In 1670 *Daniel* and *Edd O Calter* of Kilmore parish were among the signatories to a petition in favour of the Franciscans in their dispute with the Dominicans over the right to quest alms in Armagh diocese.

Official documents in the 18th century illustrate the change in spelling from *Calter* to *Kelter*, as well as the dropping of the Gaelic prefix *O*. In 1714 a list of tenants on the Brownlow Estate, Lurgan, included a *Bryan Kelter* of Taghnavan, described as a ‘cleftsman’. Ten references to the name occur in the Armagh assizes indictments between 1743 and 1779; two use the spelling *Calter*, the others *Kelter* and *Kelters*. One of the litigants, *Petur Calter* prosecuted John Mac Wead for trespass at the Lent assizes of 1759 and at the same session was accused by John Mac Quaid of assault under the name *Peter Kelter*, which seems to suggest that he used an approximate Gaelic form of his name on the first occasion. It would appear that both litigants had adopted alternative spellings of their names at the same court session. Tithe accounts for the parish of Derrynoose (1785-87) recorded *Francis* and *Patrick Kelter* of Dernalea among the tithe payers. A decade later, the Spinning Wheel Premiums list of 1796 included *Peter Kelter* (Derrynoose), *Andrew Kelter* (Ballymore) and *Laurence Calter* (Armagh) among recipients of spinning wheels granted by the Irish Linen Board. The Charlemont Estate records (1750-1829) include two leases granted to *Calter* in Ballymacanab, Lisnadill parish, and two to *Kelter* in The Grange and Kilclooney parishes.

In the following century, the Co. Armagh Tithe Applotment Books (1825-40) recorded *Kelter* in

Drumcree (3), Ballymyre (2), The Grange (1) and Lisnadill (1) parishes. The same records also noted *Kilter* twice in Eglisish parish and *Calter* once in Kilmore. In 1831 a survey of turf bog rentals on the Charlemont Estate included *Bridget* and *Hugh Kelter* of Clady More (Kilclooney parish), *Laurence Calter* of Ballymacanabb (Lisnadill) and *William* and *John Calter* of Ballybrannan (The Grange). In the latter half of the century, Griffith's Valuation (1848-64) recorded *Calter* and *Kelter* in Clady More (Kilclooney) and also in Mullinary (Ballymore), as well as *Kelter* in Artabrackagh, adjacent to Cornasreeb, the earliest location of the name in the 17th century. The minor place-name, *Kelter's Bridge*, appears on the 6th Ordnance Survey map of Ballybrannan townland in The Grange parish.

Nationwide, the census of 1901 located eight persons named *Kelter* in Waterford, another eight in Kilkenny and two in Armagh (Lurgan and Portadown). *Kelters*, however, was also recorded eight times in Belfast. *Calter* accounted for 33 entries with the most significant groups in Cos. Mayo and Down.

Despite the lack of an authoritative account on the origin of the surname, *Kelter* / *Calter*, it appears that it is most probably linked to the Old Irish personal name *Cealtchar* for which there are ample references in early Irish folktales. Mac Gabhann, in his place-name study of Culfeightrin parish Co. Antrim (1997), says the following about the personal name *Cealtchar* "The rare personal name *Cealtchar*, used of a fictional warrior of Ulster means 'mantel' or 'concealment', and was a metaphorical term for a 'spear' ". In 'Urkeltischer Sprachschatz' ('Original Celtic Vocabulary') by Stokes & Bezzemberger *celtair* is translated 'lance, spear'.

To close on different note, I refer to the Celtic rock band *Rathkeltair* from Jacksonville, Florida. The band takes its name from *Rathkelter*, aka Downpatrick Mound, and is the brainchild of Co. Down native, Nick Watson.

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The Former Registry - Armagh's Hidden Gem (5 Vicars Hill 250th Anniversary)

by Stephen Day



General picture of the Vicars Hill terrace viewed from the south of the Cathedral ground. No. 5 Vicars Hill is located five houses from the right of the photograph. (I have deliberately shown the elegant row of houses as opposed to just No. 5. There are plenty of individual ones of the latter published over the years but this one shows how well it fits in - is disguised - amongst the rest.)

This year (2022) No. 5 Vicars Hill (the former Armagh Provincial and Diocesan Registry) is celebrating its 250th anniversary. Founded in 1772 (a year after the nearby Armagh Robinson Library) and located just opposite the west door of Saint Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, it is a small, hidden, architectural gem of a building. Outside its appearance blends in perfectly with the other buildings of this neat terrace of George II and George III houses. However, inside, beyond the small outer hall, there are two large domed rooms. Perfect for the storing and safe keeping of important documents.

Prior to Archbishop Robinson's arrival in Armagh as Primate, Vicars Hill, formerly known as Pound Hill, was in a state of transition. There was already a block of new houses (Nos. 1-4) built and endowed in the 1740s (George II period) under the Will of Archbishop Hugh Boulter, for widows of diocesan clergymen. The area to the south side of these had largely been cleared of old dilapidated

dwelling and on April 9, 1768 Archbishop Robinson made over to Dean Hugh Hamilton a plot of ground, next door to No.4. It was on this space that the Archbishop erected, at his own expense, '....a Building or Record Room near to the said Public Library....which is well secured from the danger of fire and properly fitted and prepared for the Reception and safe Custody of Manuscripts and other Valuable Books, Records and other Writings, and hath enclosed the said Building or Record Room with a Wall leaving a sufficient area open to the West to allow a free passage of air...' (Love, H.W. 1965) (Fleming, W.E.C. 2016)

The building was variously known as the Metropolitan Registry, the Armagh Provincial and Diocesan Registry and, for a period in the 19th century, the Court of Probate. In Robinson's time many ancient records were transferred from Drogheda back to Armagh for safe keeping and ease of access. As the Armagh Registry began to fill up and regulations changed, many of these were

returned to centralised record keeping at the Public Records Office in the Four Courts, Dublin. Ironically, they were destroyed when the building was burnt in one of the first acts of the Irish Civil War on June 30 1922. Almost all the Diocesan records of parochial baptisms, marriages and deaths as well as civil registration of births and deaths for all of Ireland were also destroyed in the conflagration to the great frustration of academics and family historians. However, some records, including some medieval Registers, had not been sent to Dublin and what was left of the Armagh archives were conveyed to the Public Records Office NI in the late 20th and early 21st century where they can be researched. (PRONI DIO/4). A small variety of samples have been retained at No.5 where they are currently on display. They include a Diocesan Land Indenture from the 1630s.

From the mid 19th century onwards many of the functions of the Registry were performed by civil government. Records were still stored there but by the early 1930s it was decided that the main part of the house could be turned into a dwelling. (Records were still kept in the rear records room and the new Muniment Room in the Robinson Library) No.5 was still lived in until 1997 when the last resident, Esmee Strain, passed away. A decision had to be made. Should this historic building be upgraded for future residents or should it be restored to its original state. It had to be the latter.

This Grade A listed building was restored, thanks to funding from the former Heritage Lottery Fund and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and opened to the public in 2011. Today No.5 is much the same as the Archbishop intended it to be. The front Record Room, now called the **Registry Room**, still has the octagonal dome (concealed from the public outdoors by the roof of the house) and the octagonal balcony which forms part of the upper gallery where... *Manuscripts, Deeds and Writings belonging to private persons who may desire to leave them there, under such terms as the Governors and Guardians of the Public Library may approve...* could be preserved. At the top of the stairs leading to the gallery is a small room equipped as an office for the Archbishop's Registrar. It looks out directly towards the west door of the Cathedral and is still in use as an office.



Registry Room:- Beresford Collection

To the rear of the building the second Record Room, now called the **Robinson Room**, looks out directly across the garden with a fine view towards Navan Fort (Emain Macha) located three kilometres away towards the west. This room also has an elegant dome but it never had a balcony or gallery. It did not need one but both it and the Registry Room were designed in such a way that they enjoyed cool summers and warm winters. Open fires have now been replaced with underfloor heating. The stone floors have been retained. This is a site of local and national significance. A purpose made George III building where valuable national and state documents and papers were stored.

Apart from being an architectural gem the building also provides a further space to display some of the collections and curiosities which are stored in the Robinson Library. Selected items from the collections of Archbishops Robinson and Beresford can be viewed in innovative cases inspired by 18th



Central Hallway:- Ogham Stone

century ‘cabinets of curiosities.’ Visitors are encouraged to open the drawers and discover these treasures for themselves. These include:-

Registry Room: - Beresford Collection.

Handbells from the early Irish Church and a variety of Bronze Age weapons and adornments such as dress pins. A 350-year-old Armagh Civic Mace is also on display elsewhere in the room along with samples of the old documents and details of the history and purpose of the building. There is also a profile of Marcus Gervais Beresford and information on the long tradition of Christian music on the Ancient Hill.

Robinson Room:- Robinson Collection. Roman and Greek coins, French medallions, Gem impressions and a selection of 17th and 18th century prints. There is also a lot of detail on Richard Robinson’s life and times and on his Georgian building legacy in Armagh.

Central Hallway:- Ogham Stone (5th century) from just south of the city. (Donated to the Library in 1879) A Timeline showing a list of historical events and of Armagh Archbishops from 400 AD to the present. Maps showing Armagh from 1600 to the present day.

There is much more to see via Information Boards on the walls and the vast amount of information on the touch screens. No5 is located on the Ancient Hill of Armagh (Ard Macha) and the Hill (along

with nearby Emain Macha) has been at the centre of the history of the North going back into the mists of time. The staff at Armagh Robinson Library are delighted to be involved in bringing its story and its treasures to a wider audience.

No.5 is open to the public. Enquiries for individual entry and group bookings can be made by telephoning the Armagh Robinson Library 02837523142 or emailing admin@armaghrobinsonlibrary.

Guided group tours of all three buildings (the Cathedral, the Library and No.5) can be provided. Taking approximately two and a half hours to visit all three buildings on the historic Hill of Armagh. These ‘Morning (or Afternoon) on the ‘Hill’ visits are very popular with church and community groups, as well as historical societies. (Tours in the evening or on Saturday may be possible by special arrangement.)



Robinson Room:- Robinson Collection

No.5 is part of the Armagh Robinson Library an independent charity which receives no government funding towards its core costs. It comes under the umbrella of the Governor and Guardians whose membership consists of the Archbishop, the Dean and the Chapter of the Cathedral, and two lay members of the Armagh Diocese. They have

responsibility for the overall management and funding of both buildings.

Visitors play an essential part in the preservation of the Georgian architectural heritage in Armagh. Whether you plan to visit as an individual or as part of a group, a warm welcome awaits you.

References/Sources

(For further detailed accounts of the history of the Registry the books by Canon Love and Canon Fleming are strongly recommended. The latter is available in the Cathedral, the former can be seen in the Robinson Library)

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View of the Front Room, the Registry Room from the Balcony



View from the rear balcony looking west towards the old windmill tower with Navan Fort on the horizon

Finding Abigail, a DNA journey

by Richard Burns



Abi's Place

The name Abigail Burns first came to my attention in a family tree of an autosomal DNA match¹ to one of the DNA kits that I manage. The kit belonged to Laurie Deyoe who is my second cousin once removed on the Burns side of my family. It was particularly useful for me because while Laurie and me are roughly the same age, she is a generation before me and so her DNA reached back further than mine. The kit brought up two important matches one was to Elizabeth Moran who was Abigail Burns granddaughter and the other was Karin Kane. Karin Kane had done a lot of research on the Burns family in the Cladymilltown area, and I had responded to a query she had posted on the County Armagh genealogy page where she was looking for information about the Kennedy family and cited the marriage of Samuel Burns to Abigail Kennedy and listed their children. The children included my ancestor William Burns and his wife Jane Locke and I knew William's father was called Samuel Burns but I did not have a name for his wife. I first contacted Terri Moran who managed the DNA kit for Elizabeth Moran, Terri is the daughter-in-law of Elizabeth Moran who was 96 and wanted to know more about Abigail's life in Ireland, where she lived, when did she die and where was she buried.



Abigail with youngest daughter Margaret

A search of the marriage records² turned up what turned out to be a second marriage for Samuel Burns, where as a widower he married Margaret Nicholl on 12th October 1859 in Cladymore Presbyterian Church. Samuel was described as a widower, aged 50, a weaver from Cladybeg the son of David Burns also a weaver. Margaret was described as a spinster aged 41 from Markethill, the daughter of James Nicholl, a labourer. I had thought that David was a recent forename in the family with my grandfather, uncle and brother all named David, but it turns out that my earliest known ancestor in the Burns line and his grandson were also called David.

The family tree also showed that Abigail had married a Samuel James Martin, there were also dates of birth for Abigail 1859 and 1858 for Samuel. There was a date for the death of Samuel in 1918 but not one for Abigail. It would appear that Abigail was named after her paternal grandmother.

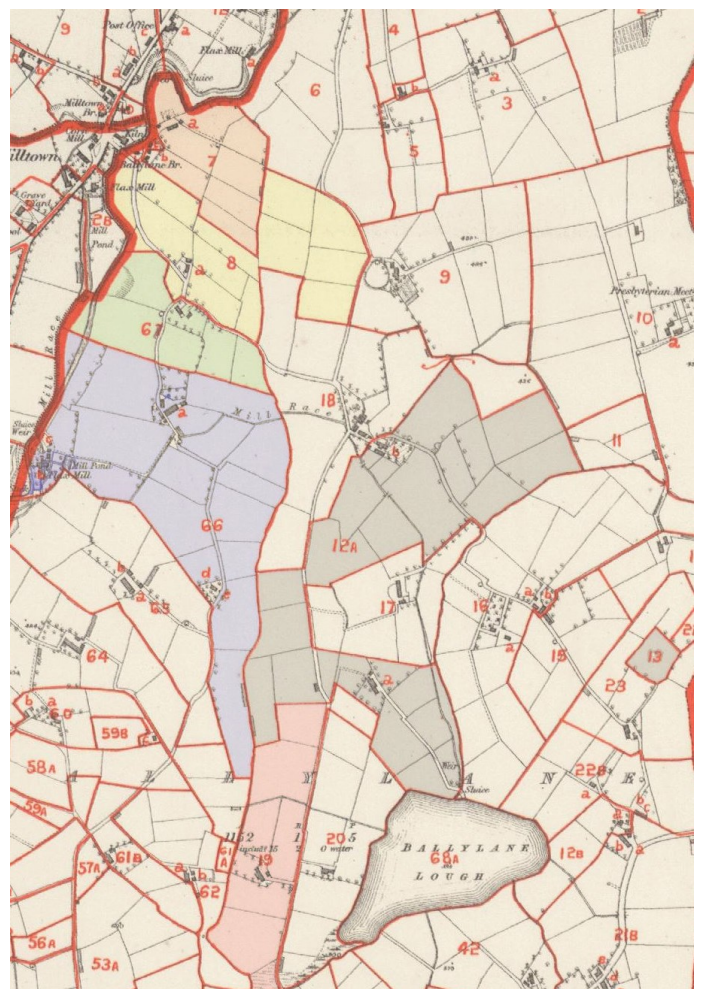
A search of the marriage records provided a date for the marriage and further details of where the couples lived, their occupations, their fathers and their father's occupations. The couple were married on 2nd July 1879 in Cladymore Presbyterian Church. Abigail's age is given as 20, with no occupation, living in Kilmacue, her father was David Burns, and his occupation was a weaver. Samuel James being over 21 is listed as being of full age, his occupation was a weaver, and his father Samuel Martin was a farmer.

The fact that Abigail's residence was in Kilmacue was further evidence that her connection to me was through the Burns family. My ancestor William Burns was from the townland of Cladymore which borders both Kilmacue and Ballylane townlands. The next step was to see if there was a marriage certificate for David Burns online that would yield any further evidence. A certificate was found, David Burns had married Mary Ann Alexander on 25th June 1857 in Armabrague Church of Ireland. David was described as being of full age, a weaver, from Cladybeg the son of Samuel Burns also a weaver. Mary Ann was described as being of full age from Armabrague the daughter of John Alexander, a farmer. This meant that it was very

likely that David Burns was my ancestor William's brother and the DNA match confirmed that.

Samuel James and Abigail had 7 children William Samuel, Sarah Eliza, Anne Jane, Mary Margaret, who died at the age of 7, John, David Henry and Margaret who was named after her deceased sister.

From Griffith's Valuation³ I was able to establish that there were 6 Martin families listed as living in the Ballylane townland. As can be seen from the map, they lived in adjacent properties which would suggest they were all related. I am grateful to www.askaboutireland.ie for giving me permission to reproduce a section of the map containing the relevant part of Ballylane townland.



Samuel Martin senior occupied property 7 (highlighted in orange); William Martin occupied property 8 (highlighted in yellow); James Martin occupied property 67 (highlighted in green), Samuel Martin junior occupied property 66 (highlighted in blue), John Martin occupied property 12 and 13 (highlighted in grey) and Hugh Martin occupied property 19 (highlighted in red). Valuation Revision Lists⁴ indicate change of

occupier of the properties over time and by the 1930s only three properties were still in the name of the Martin family.

With that information in mind, I set off to find out if there were any members of the family still living in the area. I first visited the graveyard of Cladymore Presbyterian Church, I had been there previously searching for Burns family graves without finding any. On this occasion I was able to find the gravestone for Samuel James Martin and Abigail Martin in the top right-hand corner of the graveyard.



The text on the gravestone reads as follows:

IN
LOVING MEMORY OF
MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER
SAMUEL J MARTIN
DIED 1ST MAY 1918
ABIGAIL
DIED 5TH SEP 1934

ERECTED BY THEIR DAUGHTER MARGARET

I knew from the Valuation Revision lists that Samuel James and Abigail had moved into a smaller house on the property of his father after their marriage, this is marked on the map as 7b which is more or less where the Orange Hall now stands. After his father's death in 1895 they moved into the main house, 7a on the map. Following her husband's death in 1919 Abigail lived on in the property.

I set off along the Lough Road to look at the area where the property was situated, it was just to the left over the bridge. The house was still standing but it was uninhabited, rather than exploring further I decided to see if I could find someone who knew anything more about the house. I met a man on a quad bike who gave me directions to a house further up the hill where a family called Martin lived. In the garden of the house, I met Jim Martin who told me that he wasn't related to the Martin family I was interested in, but he could take me to a man that might know something about the family. Jim brought me back down the road to meet a Mr Ruddell, a man in his 90s who still referred to the Martin house as Abi's place, his father had bought the place in 1927 when Abi could no longer work the place, he was happy enough for me to look around the property which consisted of two fields, with a spring and in earlier times a lime kiln.

Abigail Martin died on 5th September 1934 in the house in Ballylane, she was the last member of the family to live there.

The house was last inhabited during the second World War when evacuees from Belfast were sent because of the bombing in Belfast. Since then, it was used as a store and all the fixtures had been stripped out.



Exterior of the house

I took photos and videos of the house and e-mailed them off to Terri, along with directions as to how to view the area where Abigail lived on Google Streetview.



Remains of the fireplace

The next step was to sort out what had happened to the children, Terri knew of the stories of four of the children all of whom emigrated to the United States but did not know what had happened to the other two children.

David Henry was the first of the children to emigrate he went out to Amsterdam in Montgomery County, New York in 1909. He married in Amsterdam and lived there until they

moved to Reading in Pennsylvania around 1940. He was joined in Amsterdam by his brother John in 1912, who also married in Amsterdam and was the father of Elizabeth Moran whose DNA kit had sparked off this piece of family research.

Sarah Eliza had married Samuel Kerr in Ireland, they emigrated in 1920 to Amsterdam, with their six children, the youngest being around 1 year old. Unfortunately, Samuel died in 1924, he had been working in the Carpet Mills along with his brothers -in-law. At this time the Martin families in Amsterdam were living less than 40 miles from the siblings of my great grandfather James Burns from Bessbrook who had settled in Greenwich, Washington County New York.

Margaret the youngest emigrated to the Bronx in New York City in 1926, she later married an Englishman George Coltherd in 1938 and settled in Tenafly, New Jersey.

The two remaining children William Samuel and Anne Jane were still a mystery. When Terri and I set out to find out more about William Samuel we did not know his forename, his birth certificate was blank where a forename should be. In searching the Ancestry website⁵ Terri turned up a Corporal William Samuel Martin of the 12th Battalion the

Highland Light Infantry, aged 36, who died of wounds on 1st September 1916, the son of Samuel James and Abigail Martin and husband of the late Catherine Martin. His age tallied with his date of birth, and a further search of British Newspaper Archives⁶ produced a couple of newspaper reports about his death. The Hamilton Advertiser [Ref 1] added the information that William had 4 children from his marriage to Catherine. A search of the Scotland's People website⁷ produced a marriage certificate for William and Catherine, a wartime informal will for William and a death certificate for Catherine who died from influenza coupled with pneumonia on 18th October 1918. From the marriage certificate we get the information that Catherine's maiden name was Chalmers, her father, Thomas was a coalminer and her mother's maiden name was Mary Gailey. The four children were Mary Margaret born in Holytown 1903, Annie Jane in Bellshill, 1905, Helen Chalmers in Hamilton born in 1911 and Thomas Chalmers born in 1913 in Bothwell, Lanarkshire. At the moment it's hard to tell what happened to the children. What we do know is that Catherine got a war pension of £9 3s 3d in February 1917, following her death in 1918 Abigail was awarded £5 0 0 and the two older children Mary and Annie were awarded £2 10s 0d each in November 1919. Abigail is listed as mother of William Samuel Martin and guardian presumably of the two younger children. It is not known at this stage whether the two younger children came to Ireland to be with Abigail or if they remained in Scotland. Mary the eldest married George Hanlon and stayed in Scotland. It will probably take the release of the records in the 1921 census of Scotland which are expected towards the end of this year to clarify what happened.

The whereabouts of William's sister Anne Jane remains a mystery, while she is listed with the family in the 1901 census, there is no sign of her in the 1911 census, nor any record of her marriage or death in the civil records.

Notes

1. There are three types of DNA that are available for tracing your family history, Autosomal DNA which traces your relatives back 6 or 7 generations on both the paternal and maternal sides of the family. Y-DNA which

traces your ancestry back along the male line of the family from son to father, and mitochondrial DNA which traces your ancestry along the female line from daughter to mother. Not all DNA testing companies provide all three types of DNA test.

2. The registration of Birth, Marriage and Death records for Ireland are available online at www.irishgenealogy.ie. There are separate listings of civil records at <https://geni.nidirect.gov.uk/> for the General Registry Office Northern Ireland. You can check each website to see what years are covered.

3. Griffith's Valuation is the name widely given to the Primary Valuation of Ireland; a property tax survey carried out in the mid-nineteenth century under the supervision of Sir Richard Griffith. The survey involved the detailed valuation of every taxable piece of agricultural or built property on the island of Ireland and was published county-by-county between the years 1847 and 1864. The books contained a listing by townland of the occupiers and lessors of the property, the type of the property, its value in terms of what the occupier was expected to earn from the property and the amount that was due in rates. The property described in the books can be found on a map as shown earlier in this article. You can search Griffith's Valuation online at <https://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/>

4. Valuation Revision Lists are updates to the Primary Valuation of Ireland, the books for the six counties of Northern Ireland have been photographed and the images are available online. They detail changes in the record for the property and the year the changes occurred. They are available online at the PRONI website. They can be found online at <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/search-archives-online/valuation-revision-books>

5. Ancestry is one of the major genealogy companies, it has extensive databases that can be used for genealogical research and can be found at <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/>

6. The British Newspaper Archive is a major project between the British Library, Newspaper Publishers, FindMyPast and digital scanning companies to digitise British newspapers and magazines. It can be searched at <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

7. Scotland's People is a website that gives access to the records of the National Records of Scotland and the Court of Lord Lyon which looks after the coats of arms and associated family pedigrees in Scotland. It can be searched at <https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>

References

1. 'Bothwell and the War', Hamilton Advertiser, 28th October 1916 p5, c4.'

People, Property and Politics: aspects of

Ogle Street's past to the end of the 19th century

by Mary McVeigh

St Malachy lived above McElroys shoe shop in Ogle street and he was related to the Hanrattys who had the grocers next door. I was firmly convinced of this as a child many decades ago. After all there was a plaque on the wall of the shoe shop claiming this was where the saint was born and I heard somewhere, probably at school, that his mother belonged to the O Hanratty family and didn't the Hanrattys have a son called Malachy who was a priest?

Of course I later found out that, whilst St Malachy was reputed to have been born in the vicinity circa 1094, Ogle Street did not come into being until many centuries later. The man responsible for its existence was Thomas Ogle, a man of property and position, the proprietor of a highly successful marble polishing business and Sovereign of the city many times between 1729 and 1763. It was during one of these periods, in 1751, according to Stuart's history of Armagh that he came up with a plan for 'opening two new streets which were to extend from the lower part of Irish Street, to the head of Scotch Street and thus form a direct, level and facile line of communication betwixt the great roads leading from Dundalk, Keady and Killyleagh; and those from Newry, Richhill, Hamiltonsbawn, Loughgall and Blackwatertown.' There was opposition initially from one interested party but, thanks to the intervention of Primate Stone who was greatly in favour of the project, work on the new roadway proceeded. According to Stuart, Ogle demolished 'a considerable portion of his father's mansion house, erected in the previous century', and this land as well as 'part of the backyard, orchard, garden, and lands annexed to his tenements, formed the intended streets.' He continued: "On the 20th September, 1759, Thomas Macan, Esq. then sovereign of the city, accompanied by some of the burgesses [forerunners of local councillors] proceeded to the ground and with some solemnity gave names to the new streets,



Thomas Ogle, Sovereign of Armagh.

Artist unknown 18th century © Armagh County Museum collection. 158.1958

one of which they denominated Thomas Street and the other Ogle Street.”

Stuart was effusive in his praise for this new thoroughfare:

“It has indeed given a connection and regularity to the city, of which it has been previously devoid.” He was of the opinion that it was of ‘more essential service to Armagh than any other improvement which had been effected during the 18th century by an individual.’¹ He did however omit to mention that the costs did not all come out of the pockets of Thomas Ogle, who coincidentally was his relation, but were largely met by the County Grand Jury which was responsible for building roads and other utilities at the time.²

It was not until several decades into the 19th century however that Ogle Street was seen as a separate entity. When Stuart was writing his history, published in 1819, he was highly indignant that the two streets were known collectively as

Thomas Street. He said that some time previously that the words 'Thomas Street' had been painted on boards 'improperly fixed' at the 'extremities of Ogle Street' thus resulting in the street losing its 'original name'. He put the blame for this unfortunate state of affairs on the map maker John Roque and his well-known 1760 map of the city: "In this plan he absurdly assigns the same name to the two distinct streets" Stuart complained. He pointed out that the two streets were quite distinct from one and other and 'formed a considerable angle at their point of contact.'

Lodge census of 1770

Interestingly, when Dr William Lodge carried out his survey of Armagh in 1770, he just referred to both as 'New Street'. It consisted of just some 29 households, mainly of artisans carrying out a range of trades, as well as the Seceders Meeting House. It included the Widow Lockhart who was 'very poor', a dancing master called Moorhead, a mathematician named Holland and five public houses owned by James Kerr, Robert Leeman, John Hanson, Cox [no forename] and Calvert [also no forename], all Presbyterians. There were actually nine Presbyterian households, one without a given religious denomination, five Catholic families and fourteen who belonged to the Church of Ireland. One of the latter was Thomas Ogle who was referred to as Mr Ogle and no occupation was ascribed to him thus denoting that he was a 'gentleman.' He had three children but surprisingly had no live-in servants unlike Thomas Macan who had also served as Sovereign of the city. He had no less than five servants, although he did have eight children.³

Ogle Street by the 1830s

Well over half a decade later, certainly by the 1830s, Ogle Street would seem to have been established as a street in its own right and no longer seen as part of Thomas Street. By this time the number of people living in it had greatly expanded. Indeed by 1839 there were some 56 households, including businesses, in the street according to a valuation published at that time. Eleven of these, including five built at the rear of a group of houses, were exempt from rates because of their conditions⁴. The names of the occupants and the

valuation estimates were given for all other properties but to find out anything more about the people who lived there it was necessary to consult trade directories. These were primarily lists of trades and professions rather like the old Yellow Pages which came with phone books in the recent past. Two directories which covered the first half of the 19th century, Lenox (1840) and Slater (1846) listed a range of businesses for Ogle Street including grocers, publicans, saddlers, harness makers, straw bonnet makers and tallow chandlers, a miller, a baker, a blacksmith, a reed maker and a commercial school. These were just the sort of businesses that you would expect to find in a main thoroughfare of a country town in the 19th century⁵.

Three of the Ogle Street residents at that period were obviously men of some substance: George Barnes who was a miller, Henry Savage, a wine and spirit merchant who lived and carried out his business in the premises which are now known as Red Neds and Francis McKee, who was a grocer as well as being a wine and spirit merchant. They were all town commissioners, forerunners of local councillors, responsible for lighting etc. In order to be elected to these posts they had to own property valued at £20 or over, a considerable sum at that time. Those eligible to vote for them had to have property valued at £5 which would have included more than half of the residents of Ogle Street. Francis McKee was also a Poor Law Guardian, thus representing rate-payers in overseeing the management and upkeep of the workhouse. Both he and Henry Savage were appointed as trustees of St Malachys church in Chapel Lane in 1829 and were members of the Building Committee for the erection of the Catholic cathedral, evidence of their standing within that community. According to T.G.F. Paterson the Savages were 'old Armagh stock' and a Donald Savage had lived within the precincts of the Culdee Priory in 1625⁶. At the time when Ogle Street was being built they were living in Irish Street where there was a small group of houses off it known as Savages Court. While there were no Savages listed in the census of 1770 there were three given in Bradshaw's directory of 1819, George in Irish Street, James, a mason in Abbey Lane and Henry, a publican whose address was Thomas Street, likely the part which was rightly

Ogle Street⁷. It would seem that this Henry Savage was the son of the man who was the trustee of St Malachys etc. as he was referred to as ‘Henry Savage Junior.’ He was however the last of that branch of the Savage family because his gravestone inscription noted that his two children died in infancy. Ironically his wife who was 36 years younger than him died when she was just 36, three years before his demise⁸. After his death in 1869 his entire property including the licence to sell alcohol was put on the market for ‘immediate possession.’ Indeed there is little doubt from the advertisement announcing the sale that he was a man of considerable wealth. The furnishings included four poster and other bedsteads, an eight-day clock with mahogany case, ‘valuable engravings in richly gilt frames’ and a ‘pianoforte by the best London makers in walnut, seven and quarter octaves, of brilliant tone and finish, which had cost £69’. The advertisement pointed out that the premises had been licensed ‘for the past 60 years and upwards with a first class trade’ It detailed the features of the rear of the building, two ‘extensive yards’: one with a good spring well and the other with coal and potato houses as well as cow sheds for 12 head of cattle, 3 ‘excellent lofts to hold 50 tons of hay, 3 good stables capable of holding 24 horses, piggery and yard, coach house, harness room and stores. It stated that the property had ‘every requisite for a first class business house, or private Gentleman’s residence’. The advertisement also mentioned that also for sale was a ‘double pew’ in the Catholic Cathedral⁹.

The property belonging to George Barnes, the miller, had actually the highest valuation in Ogle Street in 1839 but by the 1860s when another valuation was carried out he was no longer living there, he had either moved on or died and it was now vacant. It would appear that besides being a town commissioner he was active in other aspects of public life. He was one of the supporters for a university for Armagh. His name was among the ‘important and influential meeting of the clergy and gentry of Armagh’ held in the Markethouse in August 1845 to forward a memorial to the Lord Lieutenant asking that Armagh be considered as a venue for one of the three Queen’s colleges which were to be established by the government to

increase university education in Ireland¹⁰. He was one of the leading business people who were actively involved in promoting railway expansion. He was a member of the provisional committee of the Newry, Armagh, Londonderry Junction Railway which was set up in 1845 to link ‘the assize town of Omagh with the city of Armagh’, which, according to the Armagh Guardian, was ‘the centre of all railways in the north of Ireland¹¹.’ However, in 1847 the local press carried a notice that ‘George Barnes and Joseph Matthews, both of the city and county of Armagh, Merchants and Millers, Dealers and Chapmen’ were declared bankrupt¹².

An interesting diary from 1867

Francis McKee belonged to what the Armagh Guardian once described as ‘probably the oldest local Roman Catholic family in the city¹³.’ A diary written in 1867 by his son, Francis, held in the Public Records in Belfast gives intriguing insights into comfortable Catholic middle class life at that time and would merit an article on its own. It covers just around ten months and many of the entries are short but nevertheless the opinions and observations expressed make for interesting reading. His views on the politics of the day both at home and abroad were interspersed with accounts of his business matters, his family affairs and his leisure activities. He was obviously a keen reader of newspapers because he frequently commented on current events covered by them. For instance in November he wrote about three Fenians who were executed: “This morning the sun rose in blood red clouds. Did they shadow the brutal deed being perpetrated in Manchester. Allen, Larkin and O’Brien were buried at sunrise. God have mercy on their souls.” Entries about the family business were often statements about accounts being made up for various individuals and meetings with suppliers but he also would appear to have spent considerable time in the ‘tea room’ which was not a place for the partaking of light refreshments but where tea was blended, measured out into bags for selling in the shop.

Although he was married he appeared to live in the family home in Ogle Street with his widowed mother, his father having died two years

previously, and two unmarried sisters, Margaret and Elizabeth. During most of the period covered by the diary his wife Kate was living in Warrenpoint in presumably her family home. First mention of her was in February when she was still in Armagh he wrote: "Kate very ill last night." There was nothing further on her until 14th March when it was stated that she went to Warrenpoint on the 2.20 pm train. On 29th March there was just a short but poignant sentence: "Wrote to Kate- a cry of anguish." A few days later he noted that he had written her a long letter 'explaining to her in what terms' they stood. On two occasions in June he went to Warrenpoint where they met up. On the second one, 23rd June, after attending Mass they sailed to the Quay in Rostrevor, dined at 'Col. Roxburgh's place' and later at tea in O'Hare's hotel. On 22nd July he wrote: "Got a letter this morning from Warrenpoint. Handwriting was James Kelly's. [father of Kate] Was very nervous before opening it. It announced that Kate was safely delivered of a daughter the previous morning - both well." The fact that the pregnancy was never mentioned in the diary was probably not unusual from a conservative Catholic male of that period. The entry for 24th July said: "Went by excursion train to Warrenpoint. Saw mother and baby. Baby christened this morning at 4.00am. Kate was churched by Father Brennan in bed. I had a dip in the sea and got home safely having engaged lodgings in Mrs Osbornes." Until the diary ended on December 31st only two further visits to Warrenpoint were recounted, the last on Boxing Day but there was no mention at all of the baby's name. It should be said that although he was not a frequent visitor he did keep in constant communication by letter with his wife.

He was also in regular contact with a brother in Drogheda, a priest whom he referred to mainly as 'Father Henry.' Religious practice was obviously important to him because he constantly mentioned attending mass, sometimes more than once a day as well as often going to confession. Clerical visitors were a regular feature in the family home. They would appear to have been very sociable because there were many mentions of guests coming to tea. They all seemed to be partial to walking because there were frequent references to walks taken with

either his mother or one or other of the sisters. The Folly seemed to be a favourite spot as well as the demesne where they got water from St Brigid's well. One of the events mentioned in the diary was a holiday which he took in August, September and it is particularly interesting in illustrating how those who had sufficient means were able to spend their leisure time. For instance he took boats from Belfast to Bangor and Carrickfergus to see the castle, he took cars [horse drawn] to Killiney Hill in Dublin and other places to admire the views, he travelled by train to various resorts outside Dublin, stayed and dined in hotels, and attended the theatre and other places of entertainment. Indeed money worries never featured anywhere in his writings. There was one item in the diary which was rather startling if not disturbing: "This morning found only the remains of my canary Blue Bell. It's fate was sad ... It was killed by some cat that got it in. I killed the cat."

There were many references to attendances at the Cathedral Building Committee meetings. He had likely taken his father's place on it. Once he mentioned being out with a Father Rafferty organising collections in Irish Street, Primrose Street and Charter School Lane. There were no references in the diary of him having been involved with any other organisations apart from the Vincentians which may have been associated with St Patricks College since the Vincentian order of priests took over responsibility for it in 1861. This Francis McKee, known as Francis Walsh McKee possibly did not live long enough to have had a career in public life like his father because he died aged forty, in 1875, just eight years after he wrote the diary. He did however write letters to the press on political issues. In the diary he mentioned one published in 'The Nation'¹⁴. Both he and Henry Savage were signatories of a letter from members of the Cathedral Committee to the Freeman's Journal in March 1866 protesting in very strong terms about the search for arms in the Cathedral. This was before the cathedral was completed and at a time when there was considerable unrest and agitation throughout the country prior to the Fenian Rising of 1867¹⁵.

Ogle St men on first City Council

Interestingly it was Henry Joseph McKee, one of his two sons who were born after he wrote the diary, who followed in his grandfather's footsteps in taking an active role in local politics. Indeed when he was elected to the chair of the first Urban District Council in 1899 he claimed that his grandfather had been a Town Commissioner from Catholic Emancipation in 1829 to 1860. He was not the only Ogle Street resident among the twelve representatives chosen to represent Nationalist interests and take control of the council, the first time that Nationalists achieved majority rule in local government in Armagh. There was also Joseph Cassidy, a saddler and John Conway who was now the owner of the licensed premises once owned by Henry Savage¹⁶.

At the meeting to select candidates for the council the chairman Rev. John Quinn, Adm highly praised another Ogle Street man, James McLaughlin, who was an outgoing Town Commissioner, but due to ill health was not seeking election to the new Council. According to Father Quinn he was the man who had 'broken the back of intolerance and Orange bigotry' as a local representative¹⁷. James McLaughlin was a well-established figure with a high profile in Nationalist circles. In 1880 he was the Hon. Secretary of the 'Parnell Defence Fair Trial Fund' when it held a 'large and influential meeting' in Armagh¹⁸. He wrote to the Freeman's Journal in January 1893 when sending a cheque on behalf of the parish of Armagh to the 'Evicted Tenants Fund.' [assistance for people put out of their homes during the land war]¹⁹ A year later, on behalf of the 'tried and true Nationalists of Armagh city and parish' he was again dispensing financial support via the Freeman's Journal. This time it was to 'Parliamentary Fund' which was set up to help Nationalist MPs with their expenses²⁰.

His family had been in business in Armagh for several generations. In 1840 there was a John McLaughlin in English Street who was a seller of earthen and glass but by the 1860s the family would appear to have moved to Ogle Street where Michael McLaughlin sold also delph and glassware. An advertisement in the Ulster Gazette on January 1st 1887 urged readers looking for

'really good value in china, glass, delph to visit James McLaughlin's shop. As well he supplied bottles, wholesale and retail to publicans and stocked Coalisland crocks and flowerpots in all sizes. James McLaughlin died in 1902 but that was not the end of the McLaughlin family's involvement in commerce and politics. His son Thomas who obtained an auctioneer's licence in 1906 went on to be a city councillor which he chaired for a time, a Poor Law Guardian, a county councillor and a Senator in the Northern Ireland Parliament.

The Catholic Reading Rooms

Besides being the place of residences and businesses for a quarter of the Nationalist members who made up the first urban district council it could be said that Ogle Street was also the hub of Nationalist politics in the city. It was in the Catholic Reading Rooms there that all election candidates were selected, strategy devised and decisions made. It was undoubtedly the centre of Nationalist political life in Armagh from the late 19th century and into the first decades of the 20th century. It was here that a considerable number of Armagh Nationalists turned their backs on Charles Stewart Parnell at a packed meeting of the local National League branch in December 1890. The once revered leader had definitely fallen from his pedestal in Armagh when it became known that he had been cited in a divorce case. Speaker after speaker, lay and clerical, gave impassioned and sometimes vitriolic speeches condemning Parnell and proclaiming his unfitness for leading the Irish people in their fight for Home Rule. It should be said though that while there was unanimous disapprobation within the meeting, it was not shared by all because a group of protesters gathered outside before marching to Market Street where they held a meeting to express their continuing support for Parnell²¹.

In the following month, at another 'crowded meeting' Parnell's portrait was effectively consigned to the dustbin. A motion proposed by Rev. H. McOscar Adm. and seconded by Rev. J. Quinn, CC, "That the picture of Parnell be put out of this room" was passed with just one dissenting voice²².

Although the Catholic Reading Rooms were the venue for Nationalist political activity in Armagh, they were essentially a men's club set up by the Catholic clergy, initially financed by them and certainly controlled by them. According to Bassett's directory of 1888 the organisation came into being in 1875 with its headquarters in Castle Street before moving to Ogle Street where the premises were bought in 1887 for £300 and belonged to the members. It noted that the Reading Room which had a membership of 100 who paid a shilling a quarter with honorary member paying two shillings and sixpence was 'well supplied with newspapers and magazines, and about 400 standard books forming the nucleus of a library.' It added that a billiard room with two tables was among its 'attractions'. It was not open to all and sundry, anyone seeking membership were first of all vetted by the 'Reverend Chairman' then his name along with his proposer and seconder was publicly displayed in the Reading Rooms for seven days prior to going forward for election by eligible members. Two thirds of the members had to be in favour before he was accepted. According to the surviving minutes there was no shortage of applicants. Persons 'remarkable for habits of intemperance or other disedifying conduct' were not eligible for admittance. There were instances where applicants had to agree to take a pledge to abstain from alcohol drink before they could be considered. The selection of papers and periodicals were in the hands of the committee which included all Catholic curates as ex-officio members but the 'Reverend Chairman,' the Administrator of the parish, had the right of veto on any publication which he deemed 'dangerous to faith or morals.' Games of chess, drafts and backgammon were permitted but 'playing for even the smallest stakes' would 'entail expulsion upon those guilty.' Surprisingly 'the use of tobacco' was 'strictly forbidden'. As well, the committee had the 'absolute right' to remove any member who was deemed to have 'misconducted himself or given any public scandal.' It would appear that there were expulsions plus over 20 resignations related to the divisive Parnell issue. However, at the same time 81 people applied for membership.

The few following items were selected from the

minutes in the last decade of the nineteenth century to give a bit of insight into the ordered, rule-bound manner in which it appeared to operate. In March 1895 there was a letter from a Mr Clarke, a teacher in Blackwatertown school seeking permission to borrow books from the Reading Rooms Library and after discussion it was decided that since he was unable to avail of the other benefits offered as he was 'so far removed from the city' an exception should be made in his case. Thus he was allowed to take out one book for a fortnight but if he kept it out for longer he was to pay a fine of one penny for every fortnight over the time allowed. If a book was lost or destroyed when he had it then Mr Clarke would be 'held responsible'. Just over a year later, on the motion of the 'Reverend Chairman' it was decided to obtain portraits of the 'Venerable Archbishop Oliver Plunkett' and Cardinal Logue as well as a notice stating: 'Silence in the Reading Room'. In January 1899 it was decided that military staff officers be admitted to the Reading Rooms. Apparently the issue of allowing soldiers to become members had been raised at various times over the years but the response had always been negative up to then. Restrictions were lifted but not for the lower orders, it would seem²³.

Were women ever allowed inside the Reading Rooms? Well it would appear that they were not debarred from attending political events because their presence was remarked upon at the meeting to select candidates for the first urban council election mentioned earlier. The newspaper report stated: "the proceedings which commenced shortly after eight o'clock lasted on close to eleven o'clock and the great majority of the meeting, including the ladies, waited until the votes were cast".

Kirkers Mineral Water Co. in Ogle Street

The committee of the Reading Rooms was effectively the landlord of Kirkers Mineral Water Co. According to the Minutes of 29th December 1899 the Belfast based firm took over the Armagh Mineral Water Co. which rented part of the Ogle Street property. Initially when an extension of the lease was sought by the Belfast concern the committee took the view that nothing would be done until the current lease expired in 1902 and 'provided Messrs Kirker and Co turned out to be

satisfactory tenants in the meantime they might see their way to grant another term.’ It would appear that Kirkers tenancy did not give undue cause for concern because they were still in situ when the firm got into financial difficulties and went into liquidation in March 1907. At that time the lease was held for an unexpired term of 5 years at an annual rent of £22. Minutes of October 1907 noted that the manager of Kirkers, Mr H.S. Boyd, was now asking for an agreement with him regarding the lease. This was duly granted after a series of meetings ‘giving the matter the fullest consideration’ Mr Boyd accepted a lease for 20 years at £21 per annum. The firm remained there until it moved to larger premises in Dobbin Street later in the century²⁴.

Ogle Street businesses

Looking now at other businesses in Ogle Street from the latter half of the 19th century, surprisingly it appeared to have less commercial concerns than what might be expected for a main thoroughfare according to entries in trade directories from 1881 and 1888²⁵. I decided therefore to focus on census returns for a fuller picture of what Ogle Street was like by the end of the century. The 1881 directory listed five grocers but by 1888 there were just three. By 1901, according to the census returns however there were eleven including John Conway and Eliza McKee who were also spirit merchants. These would seem to have been well established businesses with live-in staff members. As well as having two domestic servants John Conway, already mentioned as a City Councillor, had a porter and an apprentice, Edward O’Neill, who was later to take over the business, the original ‘Red Ned’. Eliza McKee, sister of the late Francis Walsh McKee had two assistants and two apprentices plus a manager, her nephew, John Vincent McKee. His brother, Henry J. McKee, another City Councillor as noted above, was a corn merchant as well as being a ‘general grocer’. Robert John Patterson, another grocer, had a domestic servant and an assistant. John Clarke, a young single man aged 32 whose business was well advertised in the local press had a live-in assistant plus a domestic servant. It is likely that some of the others would have been much smaller and more precarious concerns. Nonetheless grocery stores would seem



Mr Hill, cooper (a descendant of James Hill mentioned below) in his workshop in Ogle St., October 1950, photo Ernest Scott. Scott111_010.jpg © Armagh County Museum

to have had the biggest share of Ogle Street shops at the turn of the century but there was a variety of other trades and services also on offer. For instance William Ward and Constantine Ward who lived side by side were butchers and were possibly related. John Donnelly was a grain merchant, Peter Quinn and his son John J had a boot-maker’s shop and Brigid O’Connor had a confectionary business. There were two stone-cutters, William Magee and Patrick Donnelly and a master cooper, James Hill. Both directories had recorded that the Singer Sewing Machine Company was based in Ogle Street but there was no reference to it in the census returns. It could safely be assumed that this business would have been of considerable importance and significance to many women of the time who would either have been making clothes for themselves and their families or relying on local dress-makers. Within the 57 households in Ogle Street there were twelve dressmakers, four tailors including Michael McIntegart, his son Patrick, his two daughters machinists and a clothes shop owned by John Hughes.

Lodgers, Live-in Staff and extended families

There was a Sub-Post Office run by Jane Elizabeth Johnston who was likely the widow of James Johnston who was listed in directories as having a

commercial school which by now had disappeared. Her son, also James was a ‘telegraph learner’ and two of her four boarders were described as ‘sorting clerk and telegraphist’, presumably employees of the post office. Mrs Johnston certainly was not out of the ordinary in having boarders or live-in members of staff. Six other households had live-in staff, either those assisting with the business or domestic help. There were fourteen households which kept boarders, four of them were headed by widows and a further two by single women with apparently no other source of income. Eleven residences consisted of extended families, some with in-laws, grandchildren or a niece or nephew. These were the days before public transport or mechanised travel so to get work in towns most people from the surrounding countryside had to look for lodgings. As well, keeping boarders was the only source of income for some or a means of supplementing low wages for others.

Although Ogle Street was the home of Nationalist politics in the nineteenth into the twentieth century its residents were mixed with regards to religion and likely politics. The majority were Catholic but there were nine households who belonged to Protestant denominations including three grocers who were Presbyterian, John J. Millar, John Clarke and Robert J. Patterson. Another grocer, David Parker belonged to the Church of Ireland and the master cooper, James Hill was a member of In the Fellowship of God’s Son²⁶.

By the end of the nineteenth century Ogle Street’s main businesses were in the provisions trade and its inhabitants both permanent and people in lodgings were engaged in a variety of trades and services. The Catholic Reading Rooms situated there was a significant forum for Nationalist politics as well as providing intellectual stimulation, entertainment and relaxation for sections of Armagh’s male population. There was no equivalent for the females as we might expect.

This is by no means a comprehensive history of Ogle Street until the end of the nineteenth century. I have to confess I concentrated on the aspects that interested me most, the diary, the politics, the Catholic Reading Rooms and the census returns. All of these could have been greatly expanded had

space allowed it. Also, there is much to be written on the street in the twentieth century but that has to be left for another time and more research.

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John Corry – An introduction to Armagh’s forgotten antiquarian

by Sean Barden

Introduction

The renowned author and playwright Mrs Anna Maria Hall visited Armagh in the 1840s when she and her husband were researching their well-known three volume guide, *Ireland: its scenery, character, &c.* A highlight of their visit is recorded in volume two of the book. She wrote:

*“Very recently we passed a profitable hour with a tradesman in Armagh, a haberdasher of the name of Corry whose museum is of great value though it has been formed entirely out of his own funds [...] Mr Corry is a person of very superior mind and thoroughly understands the subject to which he devotes the time [...] We had the pleasure of accompanying him to the place from which nearly the whole of his antiquities have been procured the Rath of Navan distant about a mile from Armagh...”*¹

John Corry was born in 1805 and baptized at old St. Malachy’s chapel in Chapel Lane on 27 September that year.² He worked in the family business assisting his father George running their retail woollen warehouse in Market Street until the latter’s death in 1837. 32-year-old John inherited the business and remaining family property which was situated at a prime commercial location in the growing city.³ Part of the premises had occupied the site of Armagh’s session-house before the erection of the new courthouse at the north end of the Mall in 1810.⁴ The Corry property is now (2022), occupied by the shops on the right of the junction of McCrum’s Court with Market Street.⁵

John’s inheritance proved more of a challenge than an opportunity because it was said that unlike his father, John ‘appeared never to have acquired genuine business habits’.⁶ The first evidence we have for this criticism appears a year after George’s death when John tried to let the shop and house. However, he was to be lumbered with a business he had little love for and was still placing adverts in



Silhouette of George Corry, father of John. He owned property in Market Street and had his woollen drapery business there. (102.1960) © Armagh County Museum

the newspapers for his ‘Woollen & Manchester Warehouse eight years later.’⁷

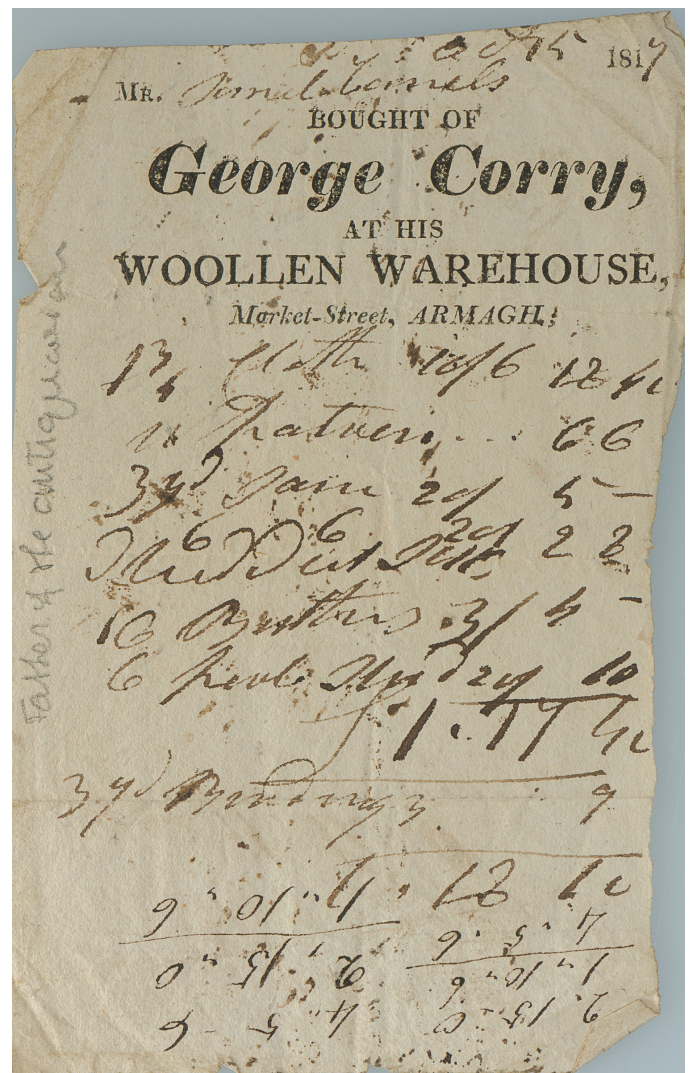
Citizen Corry

As a young man he took an active part in the city’s civic life, for instance in 1829 we see the 24-year-old named among ten trustees of the property on which St. Malachy’s stood.⁸ He was also involved in the fundraising to build a Catholic chapel at the Moy in 1834 and when Archbishop Crolly launched the grand project to erect the Roman Catholic cathedral in 1840 John sat on the building committee.⁹

Between 1842 and 1845 we see his name among the Pipe Water Commissioners who were responsible for the city's water supply.¹⁰ He was also appointed a Town Commissioner and in 1845 was among sixteen signatories who called a public meeting to petition government to consider Armagh as a prospective location for 'one of the proposed Provincial Colleges'. Unfortunately, the commissioners' efforts failed and Armagh's bid for a university was defeated when the Queen's colleges at Belfast, Galway and Cork were founded later that year.

All this evidence demonstrates that during the 1830s and 40s John Corry was among Armagh's most active citizens and a prominent voice among the emerging Catholic middle classes of the Ecclesiastical capital. It is not surprising he was lobbying for a higher education establishment in Armagh because he had a keen interest in learning, something his late father George also devoted time to. Both men were members of Armagh Mechanics' Institute which Dr Seamus Duffy described as one of the 'growing number of societies for the scientific education of the artisan'. In 1829 George was recorded as a shareholder in the Armagh Academy which had been established by the Institute two years earlier to teach science and mathematics to the working classes.¹¹ One of the founding patrons of the Mechanics Institute was Henry Francis Caulfeild, MP for the county and son of Lord Charlemont who with his wife Elizabeth would support John Corry in the years to come when his fortunes changed.

A posthumous tribute to John published in the Ulster Gazette reveals that his father had paid for his education under two Armagh tutors. The first was "John Murray author of a Treatise on Education".¹² Murray is recorded as a schoolmaster in English Street in 1819 and may have taught from his own house or been employed in one of the city's private academies.¹³ Although unlikely, it is nevertheless interesting to speculate that this may have been John Murray, the Scottish scientist who lectured to many Mechanics Institutes and wrote on a wide array of subjects ranging from the miners' safety lamp to geological theory.¹⁴



Billhead dated 1817 for goods bought from George Corry's woollen warehouse. (29.2020.1)
© Armagh County Museum

We know more about his other mentor, the presbyterian minister, Rev. Samuel Edgar who from 1811 until his death in 1850 led the Seceder congregation in Armagh from their meeting house in Lower English Street. He was a well-read scholar and authored a popular defence of Protestantism, entitled 'Variations of Popery'. At the time of his death it was said he was preparing a history of the French Revolution for publication.¹⁵

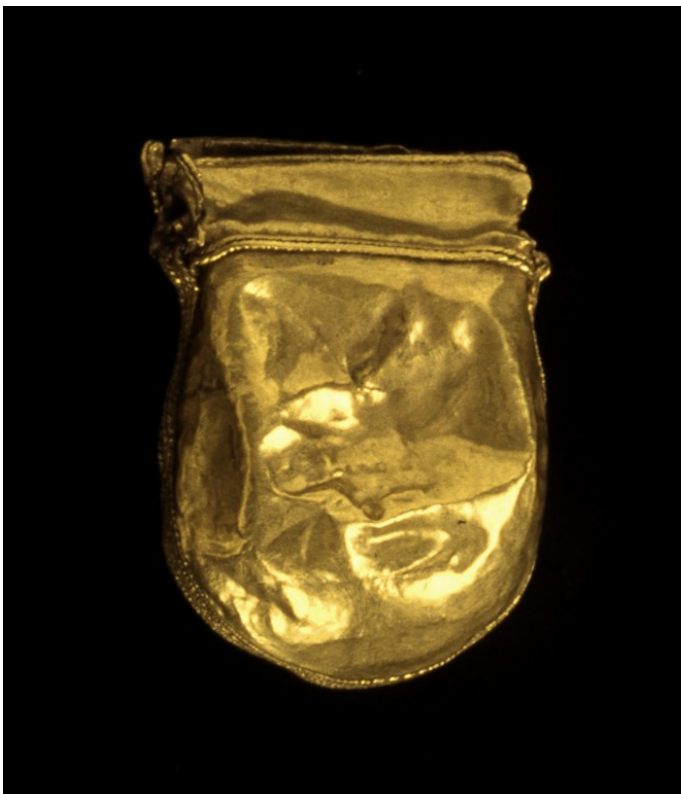
Corry the Antiquarian

Now equipped with a privileged and comprehensive education as well as an interest in his native city's past John developed a passion for the ancient history of the area. This manifested itself not just in his research and writing but also in his passion for collecting antiquarian artefacts. There were a growing number of collectors in Ireland at this time including some from the local area. Scottish collector and artist John Bell was based in Dungannon and Thomas Tenison lived at Portneligan near Middletown.¹⁶ Tenison's

collection would later form the basis of Armagh County Museum's important archaeological collection.

Reports of Corry's acquisitions often made it into the columns of the newspapers. For example, in 1833 the 28-year-old presented "an ancient brazen seal belonging to the See of Armagh" to the Belfast Museum.¹⁷ It had been dug up shortly before at the site of the medieval church known as *Regles Brighde* or St. Bridget's church near to St. Malachy's in Chapel Lane. Another of Corry's finds was described as 'a curious bell' and is likely to be a rare type of Bronze Age object called a crotal.¹⁸

A more significant find which he acquired in 1840 was a hoard of Late Bronze Age objects. They were found in a bog in the townland of Kinnego four miles north of Armagh city in December.¹⁹ The hoard is important because it included an intricately made gold purse-shaped object called a bulla which was decorated with fine twisted wire.²⁰ Only seven examples of this category of object are known in Ireland and today Corry's example is in the collection of the National Museum of Ireland.²¹



Late Bronze Age gold bulla part of a hoard found in Kinnego townland, Loughgall parish in 1840. It is now part of the collection of the National Museum of Ireland. (1906.160)
© National Museum of Ireland

Other finds included a coin found near Newry in February 1849 dated 1217 and in August the same

year "two ancient bronze axes" also discovered at Newry.²² These are just a few reports from the papers but are evidence that Corry was amassing a growing private museum.

Corry's ancient map

Mystery surrounds a more modern find apparently made by Corry in 1848. Among piles of scrap metal in 'the old Iron store in Scotch Street' he discovered a copper plate which he paid ten pence for. After it had been cleaned the fine engraved surface revealed a map of Ireland from 1572.²³ Contemporary newspapers suggest it was made for Sir Thomas Smith, an Elizabethan adventurer who failed in an abortive attempt to establish a colony in the Ards peninsula in the early 1570s.²⁴ Today we recognise the map as a poorly drawn copy of Abraham Ortelius's map entitled, *Hiberniae Britannicae Insulae, Nova Descriptio*, made in Antwerp about 1573. Corry's map was hailed locally as an important cartographic discovery and he seized a commercial opportunity by commissioning a Belfast printing firm to produce 'impressions of it on drawing paper' which he sold.

Corry's map demands closer scrutiny because its authenticity was queried by some at the time and modern experts now dismiss it. One contemporary collector wrote to the periodical 'Notes and Queries' expressing his strong doubts about it after recently purchasing a copy. He was promptly rebuffed in a reply from a correspondent who knew Corry and defended both the map and its discoverer.²⁵ However in 1997 professor John Andrews described the map's maker as, 'an unknown nineteenth-century Irish forger'.²⁶

Was Corry duped when he acquired the copper plate or did he perpetrate a hoax for profit? The story of Corry's map requires further research.

Corry the writer

The 1867 anonymous tribute to Corry states that he contributed regularly to popular publications like the *Dublin Penny Journal* and *Irish Penny Magazine* including 'twenty-seven brilliant sketches of the lives of Irish Worthies' for the latter journal during the 1830s.²⁷ It is difficult to

Ancient Map of Ireland, A.D. 1572



An ancient Map of Ireland printed from the original Copper discovered in Armagh, and in the possession of John Corry; Engraved in the reign of Queen Elizabeth 1572. First supposed to have been created for Sir Thomas Smith, Knight, her Secretary and Governor of the Castle of Belfast in that year.

Corry's 'Ancient map of Ireland' made from a copper plate discovered in Armagh and said to have been made for Sir Thomas Smith in 1572. This copy in Armagh County Museum was produced by Dublin printers, Forster & Co. (5.1956) © Armagh County Museum

track down all his contributions because he seems to have followed the common trend often adopted by writers in those publications of signing only with an initial or single letter, not always their own. But his articles on ancient historical figures such as Niall of the Nine Hostages and Cormac O'Conn did indeed complement the pages of the 'Magazine' under the heading 'Ancient Irish Biography' and are simply signed 'C.'²⁸

While these potted biographies demonstrate Corry's broad knowledge of Irish history and were widely read, it could be argued that his contributions to local newspapers were more important and have added much to our knowledge of Armagh's sites and monuments. During 1848 the Armagh Guardian printed three articles entitled; The Old Abbey (3 July), The old Bishop's

Court, (31 July) and Rathtrillic, (23 October). His commentary on the old abbey is important because he appears to be the first writer in modern times to connect the Franciscan Order to the abbey ruins. The article was considered 'worthy of preservation' by the eminent cleric and historian Bishop William Reeves and a manuscript copy of it in Reeves' own hand is preserved in Armagh Public Library.

Corry's account of the vanished Archbishop's palace at Mullynure (Bishop's Court) is still regarded as important. It was quoted, by Reeves in his 'Ancient Churches of Armagh' published in the Ulster Journal of Archaeology in 1898, Chris Lynn drew on it when writing about his excavation at the site in 1976 and more recently in 2017 Ragnall Ó Floinn thanked Corry when discussing Papal

Bullae.²⁹ Corry's Bishop's Court article is important because it also preserves his own memory of the destruction of the ruins and records many of the finds that emerged as the owner Henry Magill quarried the medieval ruins. Magill found fragments of Gothic windows, complete with broken stained glass depicting beautifully painted strawberry leaves. Brooches, bodkins and harp pins also emerged from the rubble together with a small altar bell. Some of these finds would eventually make their way to the National Museum in Dublin where they are still cared for. From looking at the dates on several coins from the site and observing strong evidence of a fire, Corry concluded, that the complex had been destroyed shortly after 1371. Modern writers do not contradict this deduction.

The museum in Market Street

All these achievements did not occur in a vacuum and Corry's changing personal circumstances had an unlucky impact on his aspirations as an antiquarian.

The family fortunes appear to have been in decline as far back as 1810 when John's father had leased out two of his three Market Street properties. One of them was described as, 'lately occupied by the said George Corry' and must have been the recently vacated family home. It was leased in perpetuity to Denis Murray for £44 a year. The other lease was essentially a mortgage of the property 'wherein the old Court House lately stood' to innkeeper Joseph Lee for the sum of £500. Corry's own house and business was the smallest of the three premises and was sandwiched between the remains of his encumbered estate.³⁰

Even his friends admitted that after George's death in 1837 John's energy was directed more towards his research and collecting rather than running the family business.³¹ Many visitors to the shop in Market Street were not purchasing cloth but came to chat and browse his private museum. There is no doubt that it was worth seeing and it became a magnet for the curious historian. We have already heard that Mr and Mrs Hall were impressed enough to include it in their popular book. Another visitor was the celebrated writer and collector Dean Richard Butler who, after visiting Corry

wrote, "At Armagh we saw a wonderful collection of Irish antiquities made by a shopkeeper consisting of stone hatchets, bodkins, brooches and most curious beads of different coloured glass..."³²

Corry's decline

Unfortunately, there was no profit in his museum and the retail business declined to such an extent that he was forced to sell his treasured collection. It is said some objects went to the museum of the Royal Irish Academy and then made their way to the National Museum of Ireland. Constant ill health also dogged him although his younger sister Mary Anne supported him for a time. They were often seen walking together through Armagh but when she died in August 1846 he was left without any close family in Armagh.³³

Wiggin & Manchester Warehouse,
Market-street, Armagh.

JOHN CORRY

TAKES leave to inform his Friends and the Public, that he has completed his assortment of

WINTER GOODS consisting of *Black, Blue, and Medley Cloths; Ladies' Habit Cloths and Cloakings; Pilot Cloths and Beavers; Cassimeres, Tweeds, Doeskins; Winter Waistcoatings; Cords and Moleskins; with a large Stock of Blankets and Flannels of every quality.*

In addition to his Large Stock of HATS,
He has received, from the **FIRST HOUSES IN LONDON, DUBLIN, and EDINBURGH,**

A SPLENDID ASSORTMENT OF YOUTHS' CAPS,
OF THE NEWEST & MOST FASHIONABLE PATTERNS.

In soliciting an early inspection of his Stock, he begs to assure his friends that they will find such an assortment of

SUBSTANTIAL DOUBLE MILLED GOODS as has seldom been offered for their approval, and which he is determined to dispose of on such **MODERATE TERMS** that no House in the Trade will be able to **UNDERSELL HIM.**

In order to oblige his numerous Customers, he has obtained a Special License to SELL POSTAGE STAMPS.

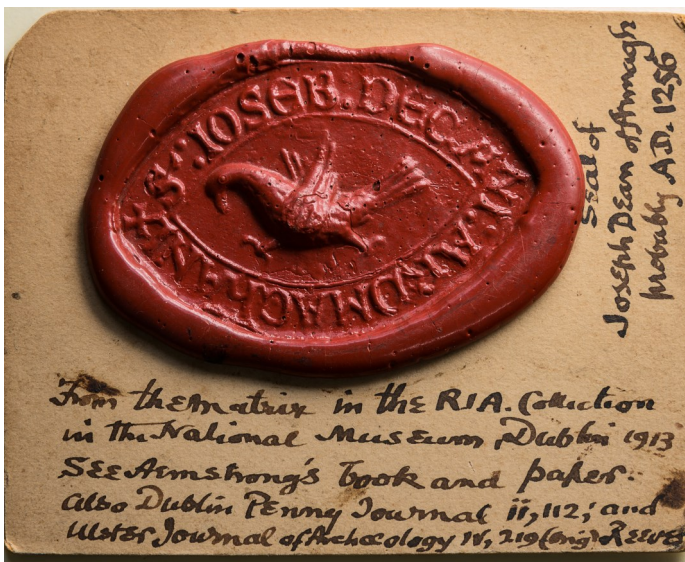
January, 1846.

Advert from Armagh Guardian 13 Jan 1846 showing the range of goods sold by Corry including postage stamps. © The British Library Board.

He tried to diversify his business and that year 'obtained a special licence to sell postage stamps' from his shop. Two years later, through the influence of Col. Caulfeild he was appointed to a job in Newry Post Office.³⁴ (Caulfeild had been one of the founders of the Armagh Mechanics' Institute in 1827 and his wife was both an admirer and supporter of Corry, donating objects to his museum and supporting him financially.) In February 1850 John was promoted to a vacancy in a Belfast post office with a salary increase of £20.³⁵ Despite these opportunities his demeanour

and health did not lend themselves to a successful career as post-master and as the writer of the posthumous tribute tactfully put it, ‘he formed habits of intemperance’. In a final attempt to secure an income and follow his passion he sought employment in Dublin, perhaps in the Royal Irish Academy but when this proved unsuccessful, he returned dejected to Armagh in the summer of 1855. His unspecified chronic illness forced him into the Armagh Infirmary under the care of Surgeon Alexander Robinson. By the end of the year he had made enough improvement to leave hospital, however shortly after he collapsed and was readmitted. John died soon after, on either the last day of 1855 or New Year’s Day (reports differ).³⁶

John Corry was the last of the name to be buried in the family plot in the ancient churchyard of Armagh’s old cathedral. The recumbent tombstone is now concealed under the lush grass of the graveyard but even if it were to be revealed John’s name was not inscribed on it. It is ironic that a man who spent his life collecting and writing about the memorials and artefacts of those who went before him left no trace in the heart of the city he loved.



Impression of a seal of Joseph, Dean of Armagh dating from about 1260. The metal seal matrix was found near the site of St. Malachy’s chapel, Chapel Lane, Armagh where the church of St. Bridgetmhad stood in medieval times. (T235.4) © Armagh County Museum

When in 1860 the scholar and cleric William Reeves read his paper on The Ancient Churches of Armagh he praised one of Corry’s better known discoveries:

...the seal of a dean of Armagh ; namely, Joseph,

dean from 1256 to 1262, bearing the legend + S. IOSEB DECANI ARDMACHANI of which a notice was communicated to the Dublin Penny Journal (vol. ii., p. 112) by the late John Corry, the truest antiquary Armagh ever produced.³⁷

Such high praise from a person of Reeves’ reputation is a clear indication that Corry was a serious antiquarian with a passion and knowledge for his native city and Irish history.

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Market Street looking north. The premises to the right of the gateway in this later photograph was where Corry had his business and home before 1850.
Lawrence collection, © national Museum of Ireland

Travelling by train from Armagh was the only way to go

by Mary McVeigh

It is hard to imagine but over a hundred and twenty years or so ago there probably was not a great deal of difference in the time it took to get from Armagh to Portadown on an early weekday morning. Nowadays we are more than likely to be caught, along with countless other equally fed-up commuters, in crawling traffic, getting nowhere fast. Yet in the bygone era of steam it was possible to get on the train in Armagh at 7.15am, stop in Richhill to pick up more passengers, and arrive in Portadown at 7.40am. The entire journey took just 25, probably stress-free, minutes. So much for progress! This and other interesting snippets of information were picked up from some old timetables published by the Great Northern Railway in the 1890s. For instance, an announcement of a schedule alteration in June 1898 stated that passengers leaving Belfast on the five o'clock train could now arrive in Armagh at 6.20pm instead of 6.45pm as before. Nowadays those who take the bus from Belfast can expect the journey to last an hour and twelve minutes, just saving a mere eight minutes on the train journey of over a century ago.

The railway opened up travel to all sections of society, not just for getting to and from work but for leisure and pleasure as well. If you were wealthy enough you could have relaxed in the plush splendour of first class whilst those of more humble circumstances were accommodated in the less lavish surroundings of second or third class. Right through the summer months, from the beginning of May until the end of October, there were plenty of cut-price excursions on offer. A day's outing at the seaside was advertised at special rates for 'picnic parties, workpeople and schools'. Warrenpoint was the obvious choice for people from Armagh and surrounding areas. Trains for this resort could be boarded daily at many small towns and villages including Hamiltonsbawn, Markethill, Tandragee, Poyntzpass and Scarva. Those fortunate enough to be able to stay for more than two months could

Clogher Valley Tramway & Great Northern Railway.

ARMAGH DOG, POULTRY, — AND — FLOWER SHOW — AND — HORSE JUMPING COMPETITION

On Wednesday and Thursday 16th and 17th
JULY, 1890,
EXCURSION TICKETS.
WILL BE ISSUED
TO ARMAGH
From the undermentioned Stations, viz :—

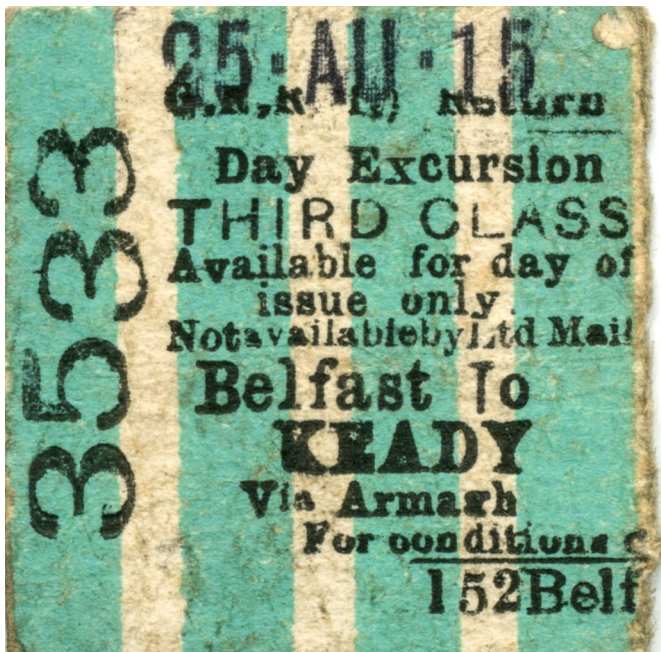
Stations.	Train Time.	EXCURSION FARES :		
		1st Class.	2nd Class.	3rd Class.
FIVEMILETOWN	dep. 10.44 a.m.	s. d. 5 0	s. d. 4 9	s. d. 3 0
CLOGHER - -	" 11.25 " }	4 0	3 9	2 5
AUGHER - -	" 11.34 " }	3 6	3 3	2 1
BALLYGAWLEY-	" 11.55 " }	3 2	2 11	1 9
UGHNA-CLOY -	" 12.24 p.m.			

Tickets are not transferable, and are available for Return from Armagh (Great Northern Railway) at 6.3 p.m. on day of issue.
Holders of 2nd Class Tickets may travel 1st Class in the Trains of the Clogher Valley Tramway without extra charge.
NO LUGGAGE ALLOWED.
(By Order),
D. J. STEWART, General Manager.
Head Office, Ughnacloy, 27th May, 1890.
8156—Printed at the Enniskillen Gas-Power Printing Works by WILLIAM TRIMBLE.

Handbill advertising Clogher Valley Railway excursion to Armagh dog, poultry and flower show July 1890.
ARMCM.64.2011.jpg © Armagh County Museum

have their tourist tickets extended for additional fees.

Cheap tickets for venues further afield were also available. Every Friday and Saturday in the holiday season there were reduced fares on all classes of ticket to Killarney from Armagh and for some reason, Bessbrook. It was even possible to book a mini break. For an additional 20s (£1) per person you could have availed of 'bedroom and attendance for two nights and meals commencing with supper on Saturday night and ending with lunch on Monday' in the sumptuous surroundings of the



Third class day excursion Belfast to Keady, 25 August 1915.
ARMCM.49.1990.jpg © Armagh County Museum

Killarney Great Southern Hotel. Fifteen-day return tickets at special prices to the West Clare coastal resorts of Kilkenny, Ennistymon, Lahinch and Milltownmalbay were also offered from Armagh.

A forerunner to today's package holiday was the combined rail and boat trip though most of those advertised would certainly have been beyond the pockets of the majority of working people. A person of affluent means could make the return journey in luxury carriage and cabin from Armagh or Portadown railway stations to the west Highlands of Scotland, taking in Glasgow, Inverness, the Caledonian Canal and Oban for the princely sum of 146s6d (£7.32p). Folk in more reduced circumstances could make the same trip with, of course, less services. Third class on the train and steerage in the boat was 71shillings (£3.65p). Among other excursions offered were the Isle of Man, North Wales, Harrogate and the English Lakes. The Lakes journey included a 'steam yacht' trip on Windermere and a charabanc ride.

Armagh was one of the places recommended to visitors by the railway company, evidence surely that the city and environs were recognised as a tourist attraction more than a century ago. Visitors were advised that if they arrived early, the morning and forenoon should be devoted to the inspection of the principal features of interest in Armagh. "The architecture and elegant proportions of the Protestant Cathedral claim attention, and the

monuments and stain glass window are of particularly high merit," it was noted. The Roman Catholic Cathedral was also recommended as 'imposing and impressive' with its 'artistic decorative excellence'. The Observatory, Primate Robinson's Library and the Mall, 'an attractive woody park' were listed as additional attractions.

A 'splendid day's excursion' was advertised for Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from June to September. A circular coach drive costing 2s6p (12p) was offered. Passengers from all trains who wanted to go on it were met at the station by omnibuses belonged to the Charlemont Arms Hotel where they were able to avail of 'luncheon' before the trip. The first port of call was Moy, 'a picturesque village with a capital small hotel, Forrests.' The next stop was Benburb where they were permitted to walk down to examine the ruins of the O'Neill castle 'overhanging the Blackwater.' On the way back to Armagh they were taken to the Navan Fort which was highly acclaimed as 'one of the most famous of all ancient Irish palaces' and where 'the celebrated Red Branch Knights of Ulster annually assembled to be trained in military science and feats of prowess.' After their arrival back at the Charlemont Arms the passengers were conveyed, free gratis, to the railway station.

One conclusion which might be drawn from all this is that public transport services would not appear to have made significant progress in the past 120 years or so and it could well be time to bring back the railway to Armagh.

Information for this article, written originally in 1993, was obtained from the Irish and Local Studies Library.



Armagh station September 1957, photo by DRM Weatherup
Scan_Feb_2018006.jpg © Armagh County Museum

The restoration of Drumconwell Cottage

Preserving local history, identity and landscape

by Kevin Quinn



Fig.1 Drumconwell Cottage circa 1950s (Photo courtesy of Eddie O'Neill)

Rediscovering our vernacular heritage

In 2003, Drumconwell Cottage received a B1 listing from the Department of Communities which recognises “buildings of a natural or local importance, or prime examples of a period style”. Under the heading; “Heritage at risk” the following description was given:

“This wonderful example of a relatively intact Irish vernacular cottage...has been listed, in recognition of its architectural and historic interest, as well as the rarity value that such buildings now possess. It contains all of the features and the charm that one would expect of traditional buildings” (see: fig.1)

The loss of the traditional vernacular dwelling

Since 1999, there have been a series of planning policies for the protection and conservation of built heritage. The 1970s and 80s saw the abandonment and disappearance of traditional buildings. This demise was primarily driven by the ‘Replacement Dwelling Policy’ which allowed owners to tumble traditional buildings to be replaced with grant-assisted modern structures. The ‘Housing Improvement Grant Policy’ seemed to require such a radical alteration that most of the historic character of the structure was lost. This replacement policy not only accelerated the loss but



Fig. 2 1846 OS map showing location of Drumwell Cottage (Armagh County Museum collection)

also resulted in the suburbanisation of the countryside with the proliferation of alien building styles.

Vernacular architecture

Vernacular architecture is the term used to describe types of buildings built by local people using local materials. The primary characteristics of vernacular architecture are mostly humble cottages or houses built without benefit of any formal plan, drawing, or written specifications. This building type has become associated with poverty and a perception that the buildings have become obsolete. Vernacular buildings are often undervalued because they do not represent the great, formal architectural structures, such as churches.

Retaining and reusing traditional buildings for modern living

Drumconwell cottage is one of the rare examples of a fast disappearing building type. There are approximately 7,500 listed buildings in Northern Ireland of which only a small proportion are vernacular and only 140 are thatched. The conservation of this type of traditional structure can

be at odds with modern regulations and standards. However, through the cooperation of architects, builders, owners, and statutory bodies, the cultural significance of the building can be retained. In 2005, the current owner embarked on a restoration project to make the cottage compatible with modern living standards whilst maintaining its traditional character and form.

Location

The cottage is located a short distance from the south side of the Drumconwell Road which connects the main roads from Keady and Newtownhamilton, around three miles south of Armagh City. (See: Fig.2)

Tenancy

From the Griffith's Valuation, the O'Neill family have leased and subsequently owned Drumconwell Cottage for at least 160 years. However, the O'Neill family have probably resided for much longer as the cottage dates from at least the early nineteenth Century. The cottage is shown on the 1835 Ordnance Survey map but is not included in the near contemporary 1860 Griffiths Valuations.

However, it is recorded in the 1866 valuation as being leased by Henry Prentice, land agent for the Earl of Caledon to Anne O'Neill. By 1870, Anne had passed away and the cottage was now being leased to her son John O'Neill. (see: fig.3)



Fig. 3 John O'Neill, Great Grandfather of current owner Eddie O'Neill (photo courtesy of Eddie O'Neill)

Ownership

By 1909, the cottage and land was now owned by John O'Neill. The last occupant was Owen O'Neill, son of John and brother of Edward O'Neill. See McVeigh.M. (2007) 'Red Neds. The story of an Armagh Bar': *History Armagh*, Vol 1 No.4, pp 18-21 for the story of the O'Neill family in the publican trade in Armagh. Owen died in 1943 and the cottage was passed down through Edward's family to his son Sean and then to grandson Eddie who is the current owner.

Capacity for restoration

In the late 1940s, a corrugated iron covering was placed over the cottage's thatched roof. The cottage remained uninhabited for the next 70 years. If it had not been for the attention of the owner at that time (Edward O'Neill) in ensuring that the thatched

roof and mud walls remained watertight, the cottage would have certainly been ruined. Thanks to his foresight, enough of the original fabric was retained to allow for restoration (Eddie O'Neill; Personal Communication)

Original structure

Externally: Drumconwell Cottage is an elongated single-storey, two chimneystacks, one-room-deep structure with a windbreak porch built on a sloping elevation and the gable-end facing towards the road. Both gables are built of field rubble stone (reused in restoration). The north-facing gable has a naturally slated roof which indicates that the cottage has been extended longitudinally. The front elevation faces west with walls of whitened clay.

Internally: It consists of three rooms: a bedroom, parlour and scullery, with two hearths serving both the parlour and scullery. Attached to the scullery, at the south gable, are two outbuildings which were part of the original structure, but were not integrated into the



Fig.4 & 5 showing front and back elevations with damaged materials removed. This was based on respect for the existing fabric i.e. minimum intervention. The least loss of the original fabric i.e. maximum retention (Photos courtesy of Eddie O'Neill)

circulating area of the cottage. It was common practice to incorporate a section that was previously used for agricultural use, as with byre dwellings which combined quarters for people and animals. (see figs. 4 & 5)

Vernacular features and traditional techniques

There are several notable vernacular features, both surviving externally and internally, that reflect the period style and construction timeline: Concealed underneath the corrugated iron roof covering were the thatched roof and mud walls.

Mud walls were once a common method for erecting dwellings where stone was unavailable or often too expensive for a humble building. Often the mud came directly from the site. Mud is a good load-bearing material and was often reinforced by mixing it with straw or animal hair. It was crucial that the mud walls were kept dry. This was achieved by applying layers of lime plaster. Lime provided a flexibility which kept out water while allowing for a degree of movement. Neither the front and back door nor the window openings are symmetrical, a classic feature of vernacular architecture. See: Figs: 6 & 7



Vernacular thatch represents the majority of thatch used on most traditional cottages. Most roofs were covered using long straw which was grown locally. However, other plant materials were also sometimes used, such as oats and barley.

Interior Plan Form

There are two principal layouts of vernacular cottages: lobby-entry and direct-entry. The layout found at Drumconwell Cottage is lobby-entry: a small lobby formed by a partition wall between the front door and the hearth beyond. Both front door and hearth are at the same end of the room with the hearth being sheltered by a jamb wall. See Quinn, K. (2019) 'McCreesh's Cottage: An architectural and cultural landmark in the heart of a ritual landscape. History Armagh, Vol.4 No.3 (No.15), pp 19-24 for a more in depth study of a vernacular traditional cottage. See: Figs 8, 9 & 10

Restoration: Using traditional techniques and materials

Best conservation practice was adopted in the restoration using traditional skills and materials. The contractors had the conservation knowledge, expertise and craft skills to carry out the work. The approach involved minimal intervention. As much as possible, the original fabric was retained keeping

Fig.6 (above) & Fig.7 (above right) showing south-facing gable and the rethatching using long straw. (Photos courtesy of Eddie O'Neill)



Fig.8 Half door with lobby entry (Photo courtesy of Eddie O'Neill)

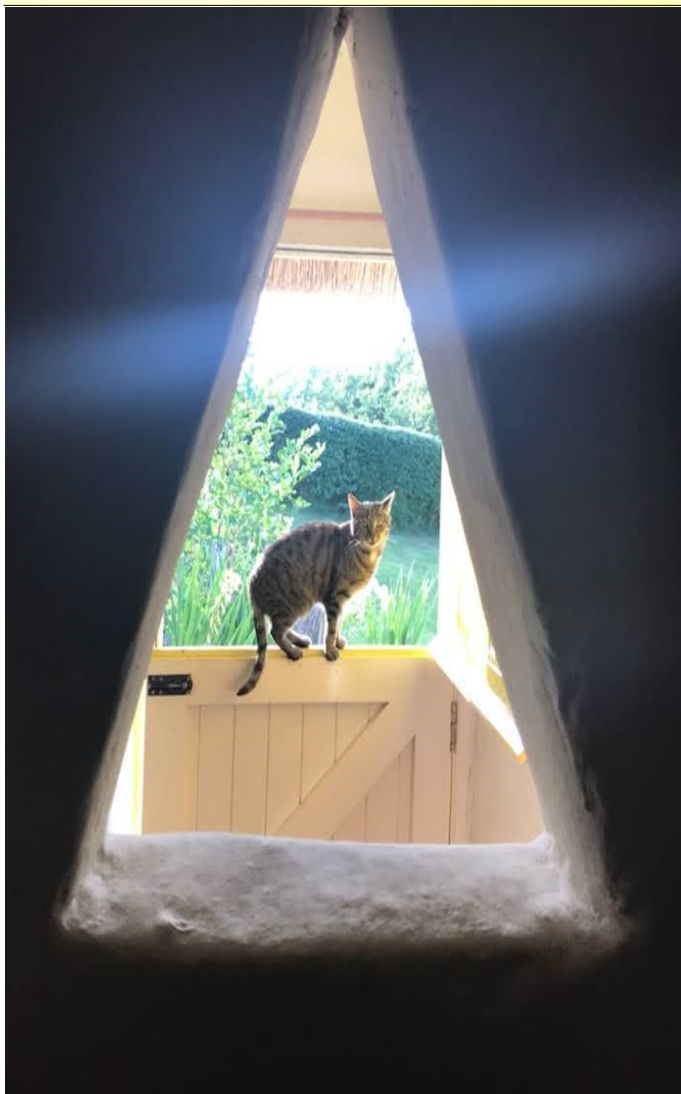


Fig.9 Jam wall with the unusually shaped triangular spy hole (Photo courtesy of Eddie O'Neill)



Fig.10 Hearth (Photo courtesy of Eddie O'Neill)



Fig.11 Front and back elevations were draped with hessian covers to speed up the drying process of the external lime mortar and to protect the same from frost while it was allowed to cure. (Photo courtesy of Eddie O'Neill)

the distinctiveness and cultural value of Drumconwell Cottage. See Figs. 11, 12 & 13.

Unique legacy of vernacular architecture.

The restored Drumconwell Cottage is a classic example of the rural and traditional vernacular cottages that have adorned our countryside for centuries. The cottage was carefully and sympathetically restored in a way which maintained the form, character and architectural

features of the vernacular tradition. Its restoration also saved a significant local historic building and has maintained an important physical link with our recent past.

See Figs. 14 & 15

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Acknowledgements

A special thanks to Eddie O'Neill for sharing the restoration of Drumconwell Cottage with the readers of History Armagh.



Fig.12 & 13 showing the removal of the hessian covers from the front and back elevations after six months of drying (Photos courtesy of Eddie O'Neill)



Fig.14 showing the back elevation after the completion of the restoration project. Fig 15 showing the front elevation can be seen on the back cover. (Photos courtesy of Eddie O'Neill)



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