

# History Armagh



- ◆ **Monumental controversies**
- ◆ **Armagh County Club**
- ◆ **The Keady pedlars and the Armagh gang of burglars**

An Armagh History Group Publication



At the start of the 20th century two unsung women artists from county Armagh captured their world through different media. Photographer Mary Boyle and watercolourist Clara Inwin were friends who frequently accompanied each other on artistic excursions and it is fascinating to see how in their talented hands, the camera and paintbrush interpreted the same scene differently.

Mary Boyle photograph of Lower Irish Street (Above)

Clara Inwin watercolour of Lower Irish Street (Front cover)

# History Armagh

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Front cover:  
Armagh from the Keady Road  
by Clara Irwin  
Armagh County Museum collection (1.1953)

Back Cover:  
Fruitfield Jam Factory-Early 20th Century

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# The Armagh County Club

by Brett Hannam



The newly restored Armagh County club

Walking along Armagh's Upper English Street, few people will pay attention to the blue double doors of Number 33 that stands between a butcher's shop and what was once a Post Office. The entrance is perhaps rather grander than most, with a vaguely Venetian style, while the stonework of the building has clearly been recently restored and cleaned. There are no brass plates to indicate its use and the passer-by has little clue as to what lies within.

To those in the know, however, No 33 is the location of the Armagh County Club, a place where gentlemen (and now ladies) have met to socialise for over 150 years. In the nineteenth century, every county town would have had its gentleman's club, catering for gentry visiting from the country and for the city's professional men. Today, the Armagh Club is one of only three such county clubs remaining on the island of Ireland, the others being

in Omagh and Galway.

The Armagh County Club was founded in 1869 but the house in which it is located was built in 1813 by one William Bright. Before then, the site was occupied by two much older buildings, Numbers 16 and 17, that he demolished. The layout of the ground floor suggests that the ground floor might have been used as an outer and inner commercial office, with living accommodation on the two upper floors and a large kitchen and domestic offices in the basement. A garden stretched away to the rear.

By the 1850s, the building had been converted to commercial use and was being used by a confectioner, who boiled children's sweets and baked cakes on the premises, selling them from the front room.

In 1869, a local Justice of the peace, John G Winder, founded the Club and became its first Secretary. As a solicitor, Winder knew that there was a strong demand for a private space in which gentlemen and professional men could meet informally and in private. Looking around for a location, he found the ideal place at No 33 English Street. Not only was it close to the Courthouse, but it was only just a short distance from his own residence 'The Seven Sisters', further up the street.

Winder was a local worthy: Commissioner of the City of Armagh, Secretary of the Grand Jury and Chairman of the Poor Law Guardians. In 1859 he had been badly injured when he was involved in a coach accident and became entangled in the reins of a runaway horse. By 1862 he had recovered and was charged with writing to Queen Victoria to express the city's condolences on the death of Prince Albert. A somewhat irascible man, Winder resigned from the Commissioners on a point of principle when the other members dared to take a decision in his absence. Winder died in 1889 but by that time the club was flourishing, and his stern portrait still oversees the dining room.

The original Club membership numbered 129 and included local aristocrats such as the Earl of Caledon and gentry like the Molyneuxs of Castle Dillon, along with lawyers, medical men and army officers. The entry fee was £5 (equivalent to £750 today), and the members paid an annual subscription of £3 (equivalent to £450).

Originally, the Club occupied only the ground floor of Number 33, with the upper floors rented out to other occupants. In the 1880s, though, the Club bought a lease on the entire building and then, shortly afterwards, the freehold. At that time the building had a rateable value of £75. The purchase enabled the members to construct an extension bigger than the original building – in the rear garden. This comprised a huge double-height dining room capable of seating forty guests at its long table. The room was warmed by a single large fireplace that has only recently been augmented by radiators. On the top floor, the members installed a large billiard room with a full-sized table. There was also a sitting room, a reading room, a writing room and a smoking room.



Unidentified man outside County Club c1920 © Armagh County Museum

The Club records contain references to the Club staff, of whom there were many. In 1908, the Club advertised for a manageress and there are mentions in the Club Committee minutes of ‘the Boots’, ‘the Boy’, ‘the Waiter’ and ‘the Cook’. The last manageress still lived in the Club right up to the early 1980s. Outside the Dining Room door there is a mechanical display for the bell system that members used to summon staff when they were required.

The Club’s kitchen was in the basement but because the servants’ stairs were so narrow, it was difficult for the food to be taken up. A ‘dumb waiter’ was therefore installed. This was a special hand-cranked lift into which trays of hot food could be placed in the kitchen and then wound up into the dining room for serving.

Members could stay the night in the three bedrooms on the top floor. There was no plumbing at this level and the servants had to carry hot water up five flights of stairs from the basement.

There has always been a large number of lawyers among the membership. This is because the location of the Club, close to the Armagh County Courthouse, made it easy for them to come to the Club for refreshment. Judges were often entertained to dinner in the Club when they came to the Assizes and there was a tradition that they would be given a pair of white gloves and a pomander to protect them from the foul smell of the city and protect them from plague.

In 1912, the Registrar of the Court, a Mr Moffatt, dropped dead as he took his coat off in the hallway. In 1970, Judge Rory Conaghan needed a police escort back from his lunch having in the morning sentenced a civil rights protestor to 4 months imprisonment and incurred the wrath of a large crowd. Tragically, in 1974, a Provisional IRA gunman posing as a postman murdered Judge Conaghan in front of his daughter at their home in Belfast. Fr. Edward Daly, the priest who famously waved a white handkerchief on Bloody Sunday, was appointed Bishop of Derry in 1974 and in that position found that the first funeral he was called upon to officiate at was for his friend the murdered judge.

In its early years, the Club members were always conservative unionists. In 1894, the Irish Times reported that members sat up all night waiting for news of the Horncastle by-election, in which a Gladstonian Liberal was standing on a Home Rule prospectus against a Conservative Unionist. When the news arrived that the Home Ruler had lost, the paper reported that “the result was received with enthusiasm”. For many years there was a picture of the Tory prime minister Benjamin Disraeli in the dining room.

In 1908, the local Ratepayers' Association alleged that what they described as the 'Linen Lords and their friends' were meeting at the County Club before Council meetings to plot what to say and do in the Council chamber. The allegation was hotly contested but given the strong unionist inclinations of the members, hardly surprising.

The Club's activities were not limited to the Club premises. For many years it sponsored races at the Tynan Hunt Point-to-Point and the County Armagh Lawn Tennis and Archery Club was based in the Club in the late nineteenth century. At one time there was even a Club Hare Coursing team.

During the Great War, the Club was one of the few places in Armagh to have a teletype machine that could print out the latest news from London. Because of this, crowds used to gather outside the Club as the casualty lists were released. These were read out from the door of the Club and then pinned to the windows. They had to be read out because many of those desperate to hear the fate of their sons and husbands could not read.

During the Second World War, the Club was taken over for use as an Officers' Mess by the American Army stationed nearby. There is still a tradition that army officers posted to Co. Armagh can avail of a special temporary membership.

Until recently, the Club was exclusively for gentlemen. Indeed, in the 1930s, the membership rejected a modest proposal that ladies should be allowed to take tea with their fathers, brothers or husbands in the front room on a Saturday afternoon; this was considered by a majority of the members to be completely undesirable. Other rancorous disputes arose over the choice of newspapers and the quality of the Club's wines.

At the beginning of the 1980s the Club was falling into disuse. The combination of the Troubles, the downgrading of the Armagh County Court to a Magistrates' Court, the abolition of the Grand Jury system and the rise of TV meant that gentlemen went to the Club less frequently. There was a proposal to sell off the club premises and divide the proceeds among the members. However, a local solicitor, the late Dan Thompson, took it upon himself to renew the Club. Together with his great

friend the late Ralph Cowdy, he led a revival of the Club's fortunes. A new kitchen was installed on the same floor as the dining room to replace the ancient one in the basement and the Club's membership grew as parties, dramatic recitals, snooker tournaments and grand dinners were organised once again.

More recently, a second restoration of the Club was required to deal with water ingress and dry rot. Without a major repair programme, which eventually lasted over three years, the building could literally have fallen down. Roof timbers and windows needed to be replaced, chimneys restored, entire rooms replastered, stonework cleaned and repointed, and guttering upgraded. During this work, it was discovered that dry rot had infested some rooms that had been thought in good order. This had to be addressed immediately and added to the overall cost.

One example of where improvements were urgently needed was the arrangement for escaping the building in the event of a fire. Previously, members were expected to flee the flames by climbing down a knotted rope thrown from a window. This approach was long considered not entirely satisfactory. Today, the rope has been removed and replaced by a fine metal fire escape.

Thanks to the efforts of its current President, Dr Colin Mathews, Secretary, John Shephard and committee the fabric of the Armagh County Club has now been completely restored and it is now able to face the next 150 years with confidence. The work was made possible by the extremely generous assistance of its funders Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund, which was provided as part of the Armagh City Townscape Heritage Scheme.

Although the Club is primarily run by and for its members, it is open for organised tours by schoolchildren and local history groups; it has been used as a set for several films and can be hired for meetings. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council ran a Murder Mystery event in the Club in October, and this was followed by other events over the Georgian Weekend in November.



The façade with old render removed during Armagh Townscape Heritage initiative restoration



View of the roof valley mended to stop leaks



Billiard Room



Front Room - now called the Killylea Room



Dining Room - now called the Caledon Room

# Armagh Family Names

by Gerry Oates

The following essays are a continuation of the Armagh Family Names' series on the background to surnames which have been resident in Armagh from the late medieval period at least. Among the surnames, *Slevin* is regarded as one of the 'learned families' of Ireland while one branch of the *Martins* has enjoyed a long ecclesiastical association with the See of Armagh. *Tiffney* is apparently of north Connacht origin but has been recorded in Armagh since the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

## Slevin

The *Ó Sléibhín* (*Slevin*) sept enjoys a long pedigree and a reputation for learning that can be traced back to the days of Brian Boru early in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and probably earlier. *Ó Sléibhín* is derived from the Old Irish personal name *Slébine* (later *Slébhín*), from *sliabh* 'mountain', and was at times used as a pet form of *Donnshléibhe* (*Dunlevy*) 'lord of the mountain'. The most notable bearer of this name was *St. Slébine*, abbot of Iona, who died in 758 AD. *Slevin* in Ulster represents a branch of the Cineál Eoghain.

In the medieval period the ancestors of the *Slevins* settled in present-day Co. Fermanagh and established themselves as erenaghs and coarbs of Kiltierney, in the parish of Culmaine, where they were known as a leading ecclesiastical family. Their reputation for learning was noted by the Four Masters who recorded the obituary of *Muireadhach Ua Slebhene*, described as 'chief poet of the north of Ireland', under the year 1022. Another of the sept, *Giolla Chomhghaill Ó Sleibhín*, on his death in 1031 is referred to as 'chief bard of Ulster', again in the same Annals. Somewhat earlier, the same *Giolla Chomhghaill* acted as emissary for the High-King Mael Sechnaill II of Tara to rally the forces of Ulster against Brian Boru. The obituary of yet another poet of the sept, *Domhnall Ua Sléibhín* 'chief poet of Oriel', who died in 1168 is also recorded in the Annals of the Four Masters. Bishop Ó Dufaigh (Clogher) claims *Cland Slebene*

(The *Slevins*) were chief poets to the lordly O Carrolls while they were kings of Farney in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

*Slevins* then disappear from the Annals for a number of centuries, but Mac Lysaght writes that in the Ormond Deeds of 1514 a judgement of the Liberty Court of Tipperary described a certain *Terrelagh O Slevin* as 'pure Irish of the Irish nation' when charged with the acquisition of lands contrary to English statute. A cleric, *Tulio Slevin* (*Tarlach Ó Sléibhín*) was among those who accompanied the Earl of Tyrone (Hugh O'Neill) and Earl of Tyrconnell (Ruairi O'Donnell) in their flight to the continent in 1607.

As poets *Slevins* were inclined to travel, offering their literary services to local lords and dignitaries throughout the country, which would account for the prevalence of the name in the northern counties. Figures from Petty's 'census' ca. 1659 suggest that the surname *Slevin* had become established in Armagh, Tyrone and Donegal.

Their arrival in Armagh is unrecorded, but the name was established in the county by the early 17<sup>th</sup> century which probably means that they had already been there for several generations. A report from the local assizes of July 1615 recorded that *Patrick Roe Mc Slevan*, of Kilclooney, described as 'yeoman', was acquitted of the theft of two heifers. A little later, the Manor Court Rolls of Armagh included a *Daniel O Slevin* in the city in 1626. On the outbreak of the Confederate War in 1641 *Denis* and *John O Slevin* together with *Shane O Sleavan* of Loughgall were indicted in later depositions as engaged in rebellion at that time. Only one of the name, *Owen O Sleaven*, of Tivnacree in Derrynoose parish, is recorded in the Hearth Money Rolls of 1664-65, but the name appears twice, as *Slevin(e)*, among the signatories to the Franciscan Petition of 1670-71 in Creggan parish.

A century later, in 1766, a list of families in the parish of Creggan included *Patrick Slevin* of Sheetrim and three litigants named *Sleaven / Sleavin* appeared at the Armagh assizes in 1759 and 1767. Lodge's survey of the citizens of Armagh in 1770 recorded eight *Slevins* in Irish Street. In 1796, in a government initiative to promote the local linen industry the Irish Linen Board awarded *Michael Slevin* of Derrynoose parish two spinning wheels and *Bartholomew Slevin* of Armagh one; the awards were based on the acreage of flax-seed sown.

The Tithe Applotment Books (1825-40) and Griffith's Valuations (1848-64) for Co. Armagh recorded the name as *Slavin*, *Sleaven* and *Slevin* in modest numbers in Keady, Loughgall, Armagh and The Grange parishes with individual holdings scattered across the northern half of the county.

The census of 1911 indicated that *Slevin* was the most common form of the name and was mainly located in Keady and Derrynoose parishes with smaller clusters in The Grange and Armagh city. The census figures also recorded that the greatest number of *Slevins* were resident in Co. Tyrone, followed by Cos. Donegal and Fermanagh.

*Slevin* is also found among a number of other Ulster surnames currently in Cos. Longford and Westmeath which local tradition maintains goes back to the period of the 1641 rebellion when many families escaping the turmoil fled south. The 'census' of 1659 included *Slevin* among the 'principal Irish names' in the barony of Farbill, Co. Westmeath.

Finally, *Gerard Slevin*, a native of Cork, succeeded Edward Mac Lysaght as Chief Herald of Ireland in 1955, an office he held until his retirement in 1981. During his time as Chief Herald he was one of three heralds involved in designing the European Union flag, a circle of 12 stars on a blue background, for which he was made a member of the Académie Internationale d'Héraldique.

## Martin

The surname *Martin* in Ireland can be attributed to a number of Gaelic sources as well as to descendants of English and Scottish settlers.

*Martin* is one of the few non-native personal names to be used in the formation of a Gaelic surname.

The Gaelic form *Máirtín* appears to be a late borrowing from the Norman-French name *Martin*. However, an alternative form of the name, *Mártan*, had been established in Ireland at an early date as a result of a cult of devotion to St. Martin of Tours dating back to the early years of Christianity in Ireland. The 9<sup>th</sup> century Book of Armagh contains texts relating to St Martin of Tours. *Mártan* and *Máirtín* are the Gaelicized personal names which have produced the Gaelic surnames *Ó Mártain*, *Ó Máirtín*, *Mac Máirtín*, *Ó Maol Mhártain* and *Mac Giolla Mhártain* which have been reduced to *Martin* in English.

*Martin* is currently ranked among the 40 most common surnames in Ireland and among the twenty most numerous in Ulster where many will be of Scottish lineage. *Mac Gille Mhartainn* 'son of the devotee of St. Martin' in Scots Gaelic became *Mac Martin*, later shortened to *Martin*, and some of these migrated to Ulster during the period of the Ulster Plantation in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Many *Martins* in Ulster, however, particularly in the mid and south Ulster counties of Armagh, Tyrone, Monaghan and Cavan, are descendants of the *Mac Máirtín* sept which Mac Lysaght describes as a branch of the O Neills of Tyrone.

Others will trace their roots to the *Mac Giolla Mhártain* sept that once ruled the territory of Cinéal Fearadhaigh in the neighbourhood of Clogher, but were later dispersed and migrated to Connacht where the surname is still to be found in Sligo, Leitrim and Roscommon. *Mac Giolla Mhártain* was anglicized *Gilmartin*, *Kilmartin* and, simply, *Martin*.

The development of the surname *Martin* in Co. Armagh and its relationship with the townland of *Ballymartrim* in the vicinity of the city has recently been researched by Ó Mainnín (2009). Modern *Ballymartrim* represents a corrupt form of *Baile Uí Mhartanáin* 'O Martanan's townland' where the personal name *Martanáin* is a diminutive of *Mártan*. This variant, *Ó Martanáin*, occurs several times in the registers of the archbishops from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Throughout the late medieval period *Ó Martanáin* features regularly in the diocesan register of Armagh. *John O'Martanan* is recorded as 'precentor of the church of Armagh' in the Justiciary Rolls of 1305. A reference to 'the land of *Omartanan* and its appurtenances' appears in the register of Archbishop Sweteman (1361-80); and during the episcopacy of Archbishop Swayne (1418-39) *Patrick Omartanan* is mentioned several times as 'a citizen of Armagh' and his collector of rents. *Omartanan* 'captain of his nation', or local head of the sept, is cited in the register of Archbishop Mey (1443-56) as a witness in relation to a dispute over the vicarage of Tynan; and *Terra Omartanan* ('*O Martanan's* land') in a rental ca. 1541 has been identified as the current *Ballymartrim* in the register of Archbishop Dowdall (1543-58).

The Armagh inquisition of 1609 in its mission to identify church lands for re-settlement under the terms of the Plantation refers to several parcels of land in and around the city named for the *Ó Martanáin* sept: *Browagh I Martran* and *Tullyleckney Martran* in Knockadrain (now Sandy Hill), and *Leagh I Martran* in Lurgyvallen. These parcels of land, along with the townland of *Ballymartrim*, possibly refer to the *Terra Omartanan* of Primate Mey's register and were grants to the family for their services to the Church. *Martin* in Armagh today most probably represents a link with the above *Ó Martanáin* sept.

Variants of *Martin* occur in several disparate sources in the period following the Plantation. The Co. Armagh depositions taken in the wake of the Confederate War (1641-53) cited *Art*, *Patrick* and *James Moile Mackmarteen* (*Mac Máirtin*) as insurgent rebels involved in hostilities between the native Irish and the Plantation settlers. After the war, Petty's 'census' ca. 1659 listed four households named *O Martin* in Armagh barony, one of whom might have been the *Patrick Martin* who leased three tenements in the city in 1661 and is again recorded in Lower Irish Street in 1676. The Hearth Money Rolls (1664-65) listed seven *Martins* in Armagh city, Lurgan and Loughgall and one *Martyn* in Grangemore.

The Manor of Armagh rent roll of 1714 lists a *Turlough Martin* of Edenknappagh, Lisnadill, as a

tenant of the archbishop and a survey of Creggan families of 1766 includes two *Martin* households in Tullynavall and Drummuckavall. The Charlemont Estate papers (1750-1829) include eight leases granted to *Martin* households between 1761 and 1812, seven of which were in Kilclooney parish.

*Martins* appear again in Kilclooney in the Co. Armagh Tithe Applotment Books (1825-40) and in Griffith's Valuation (1848-64). Mullaghbrack, Kilclooney, Creggan, Forkill, Killevy and Loughgall were among the parishes with sizable clusters of *Martins* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and several of these will be of Scottish or English provenance.

The above Hearth Money Rolls of 1664-65 also included *Turlagh* and *Brian Mc Ilmartine* of Ballymacawley in Kilclooney parish which appear to be anglicizations of *Mac Giolla Mhartáin* (now *Gilmartin*). In Dungannon barony there were six instances of *Mc Ilmartin(e)* in the Tyrone Hearth Money Rolls of 1666. The Franciscan petition lists in Armagh diocese ca. 1670-71 recorded *Thorlaugh*, *Bryan* and *Connor Mc Ilmartin* in the joint parish of Mullaghbrack-Kilclooney among the signatories. Livingstone in his 'Monaghan Story' claims that most of the *Martins* mentioned in 17<sup>th</sup> century documents in that county are *Gilmartins*, but in 18<sup>th</sup> century records the latter name is largely absent.

The census of 1911 recorded *Martin* as most numerous in Antrim and Down, most of whom are probably of Scottish descent; the same census listed 419 *Martins* and two *Gilmartins* in Co. Armagh where many of the native *Ó Martanáin*, *Mac Giolla Mhartáin* and *Mac Máirtin* septs have now been absorbed by the common surname *Martin*.

Elsewhere in Ireland *Martin* can originate from *Ó Martáin*, a Westmeath sept, or the Anglo-Norman *Martins* that settled in Galway as one of the 'Fourteen tribes of Galway'.

## Tiffney

*Tiffney*, and its variant spellings *Tiffeny* / *Tiffony*, ranks among the rarest surnames in Ireland at present. However, *Tiffeny*, and the variant form *Tiffiney*, occur in a variety of records in north Co. Armagh from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century in the parishes of

Drumcree and Seagoe. However, research has shown that early cognate versions of this surname have been on record since the late 12<sup>th</sup> century.

The origin of the name apparently derives from the Gaelic surname *Ó Teimhneáin*, a Co. Laois surname which has spread throughout the provinces of Leinster and Munster as *Tynan*. The surname is formed from the Old Irish personal name *Temnén* (modern *Teimhnín*) meaning ‘dark’. Historian and linguist, T. F. O Rahilly, informs us that in Munster the palatal *-mh-* of *Ó Teimhneáin* is vocalized when followed by a short vowel or consonant, giving it a *y* sound as in English *Tynan*.

Historical records show that the surname *Tynan* was associated particularly with Cos. Laois, Kilkenny and Tipperary, which is still the case today. In Tipperary the personal name is found in the parish name *Cill Teimhneáin* (*Tynan’s Church*), or *Kiltinan* in English. Early forms of this place-name, however, were recorded as *Kiltevenan* and *Kiltefenan* in the period 1199-1206 with medial *-mh-* pronounced *v* and *f*. In addition to *Tynan*, early anglicized forms of the surname *Ó Teimhneáin* also occur as *O Tevnane*, *O Tyvnane* in areas where medial *-mh-* of the original was sounded *v/f*, particularly in north Connacht.

A separate but distinct *Ó Teimhneáin* sept can be traced to Co. Sligo where the surname was recorded as *O Tyvnane* in the Elizabethan fiants of 1591 and anglicized as *O Tivinne* in the Hearth Money Rolls of 1665. Rentals for the years 1663-66 indicate a *Ballytiwnan* on the outskirts of Sligo town, and Taylor & Skinners map of 1778 locates a *Ballytivenan / Ballytienvan* in the same area, presumably from a Gaelic *Baile Uí Teimhneáin* (*O Tivenan’s town*). Furthermore, in the Flax-growers’ list of 1796 the name occurred as *Toefney* in Ballisodare in the same county.

In neighbouring Co. Leitrim a surname landscape carried out by Adams in 1978 identified *Tiffoney*, *Tiffony*, *Tivnan* and *Tivenan* as anglicized variants of *Ó Teimhneáin* which were mainly confined to the northern part of that county which shares a border with Co. Sligo.

The first record of the cognate surname *Tiffney* in Co. Armagh turns up in 1770 in Wm. Lodge’s

survey of the inhabitants of Armagh city which identified a *Henry Tiffney* in Big Meeting Street whose occupation is described as ‘carman’. The next reference to the name can be found in the Armagh assizes indictments and relates to the appearance of *James Tiffney* at the Lent session of assize in 1793. In the following year, 1794, *John Tiffeny*, of Ballynamony in Seagoe parish, and twenty others were charged at the summer assizes with rioting in Lurgan and being members of the ‘Defenders’. The 1790s in north Armagh was a period of serious sectarian disturbances between the Catholic ‘Defenders’ and the Protestant ‘Peep o’ Day Boys’ which culminated in the Battle of the Diamond in 1795 and the subsequent establishment of the Orange Order. The same name occurs in a number of accounts of the period variously spelt *Tiffney*, *Tiffeny* and *Tiffany*.

The cognate surname *O Tynan*, however, had already been recorded in the county even earlier; a rent roll of the archbishop’s tenants in the city of Armagh in 1618 noted a *Dermond O Tynan* among ‘householders, owning gardens in the City’.

The Tithe Applotment Books for the parishes of Drumcree (1828) and Seagoe (1834) locate *Tiffney*, *Tiffeny* and *Tiffiney* in the townlands of Coharra, Timakeel and Ballymakeown in Drumcree and in Ballynacor in Seagoe. Griffith’s Valuation (1848-64) shows largely the same results and recorded *Tiffney* in Ballymakeown, Coharra and Timakeel in Drumcree with *Tiffony* in Ballynacor, Seagoe.

The rarity of the surname is emphasized by the census returns of 1901 and 1911. A total of 36 persons named *Tiffney / Tiffany* were recorded throughout Ireland in 1901 including 8 in Co. Armagh and 7 in Belfast; there were 10 in Leitrim and one in Sligo. In 1911, *Tiffney*, *Tiffany* and *Tiffoney* again returned a total of 36 of whom 17 spelled *Tiffney* were located in Co. Armagh in the townlands of Timakeel, Coharra, and Derrymacfall in Drumcree parish with another four in Belfast; *Tiffoney* with 11 entries was confined to Leitrim and Sligo. There were also individual clusters of the above names in Galway, Roscommon and Wexford. It is probable that the *Tiffney* entries in Belfast represent migrants from Co. Armagh.

The cognate surnames *Tivnan* (60) and *Tivenan* (40) were also recorded in the census of 1911, but only in Connacht, in Cos. Roscommon, Leitrim and Sligo. The more numerous cognate, *Tynan* (893), was concentrated in Cos. Laois, Kilkenny and Tipperary. More recently, *Tivinan* occurs twice in the 2001 electoral register of Co. Monaghan.

It would appear that *Tiffney* in Co. Armagh represents a migration from north Connacht (Sligo and Leitrim) in the 18<sup>th</sup> century or earlier. On the other hand, there was an exodus of families from north Armagh to the province of Connacht in the 1790s following the sectarian disturbances of that time. It is not known if *Tiffneys* were among the migrants, but Woulfe's location of the sept *Ó Teimhneáin* (*Tivnane*) in Co. Sligo points to a Connacht origin.

Finally, the female personal name *Tiffany* has no connection with the surname *Tiffney* or any of its variant spellings. The origin of the personal name lies in the Greek name for the festival of the Epiphany, *Theophania* 'divine revelation', which was originally given to girls born at that time of the year.

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# Brown Bess

by Pooler Archbold

## Introduction

About 2014 in the dark corner of a cluttered outhouse I noticed a badly decayed old firearm. The outhouse was on a property known as Salem Lodge in the townland of Canary, County Armagh. The weapon was essentially in its component pieces, the barrel rusted and separate, the stock disintegrating with severe woodworm and the lock detached. I set it aside and only last year began to take a detailed look at it. It is a percussion musket and it bears the mark 'AR7008' on its butt plate.



The 'Reconstructed' musket



The butt plate bearing the registration mark AR7008

What follows is a brief history of this type of musket and of the likely owner of this particular musket.

## Brown Bess

In 1715 the British government established a Board of Ordnance for the procurement of arms. For the first time a standardised smooth bore muzzle-loading flintlock musket was introduced to the army. The design of this firearm was later termed the Pre-Land Pattern musket and over the course of the next 140 years it evolved by incremental changes and adaptations (Long Land Pattern, Short Land Pattern, India Pattern, New Land Pattern, New Light Infantry Land Pattern, Cavalry Pattern, Sea Service Pattern) before finally falling out of

service at the start of the Crimean War in 1854<sup>1</sup>. The musket and its variants were generically dubbed 'Brown Bess' from at least the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. The origin of the term 'Brown Bess' is unclear. One explanation has been that it is an allusion to a soldier's wife or mistress with 'brown' meaning plain or drab and 'Bess' a non-specific name for a woman. 'Bess' may also have been a corruption of 'buss' as in the musket's predecessors the arquebus or blunderbuss. Brown could have referred to the colour of the stock or to the brown colour produced by coating the metal parts with brown varnish as a form of rust prevention (a 'Brown Bill' was a halberd used by mediaeval foot soldiers painted brown to prevent rust)<sup>2</sup>.

The India Pattern musket, originally manufactured for the East India Company, was probably the most common musket and it was produced in vast quantities (nearly 3 million were made) for Government Ordnance between 1793 and 1815 during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars.

The first percussion muskets were officially introduced in 1838. Many earlier flintlock models were retro fitted with the percussion mechanism.

Enquiries led to the identification of the musket found as an India Pattern musket, overall length 55in (139cm), barrel length 39in (99cm), calibre 0.75in (1.9cm), with conversion from flintlock to percussion mechanism (Dave Stroud, personal communication)<sup>3</sup>.

## Background to Firearms control in Ireland

At the time of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, the Irish Yeomanry (1796-1834) was established and was issued with the India Pattern musket. In the North of Ireland there was a particularly dense concentration of Yeomanry corps so there would have been a significant number of muskets in circulation at that time.

Despite the relaxation of the Penal Laws in the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the crushing of the United Irishmen in 1798, and the Acts of Union in 1800, government concern about armed insurrection in Ireland resurfaced in the 1820s with the agitation surrounding the campaign for full Catholic emancipation in the run up to the final Catholic Relief Act of 1829. This was followed by unrest when the electoral franchise was changed to raise the property valuation for voting rights, effectively excluding large numbers of mainly Catholic voters, and agrarian unrest over the payment of tithes to the Church of Ireland. All this was against the background of continuing sectarian violence in Ulster.

In 1843, the British Government was concerned enough about the number of firearms in circulation in Ireland (thought to be about 300,000) that it introduced, against much opposition, a Law on Gun Licencing in Ireland. This only officially ran for 2 years but was, in fact, not repealed in 1846. During this timeframe (1843-1846) at least 190,000 firearms are known to have been registered of which about 65,000 were in the 6 counties of what is now Northern Ireland and about 88,000 in the 9 counties of Ulster. (1843 Registration Act Survey. Dave Stroud 2015 ramrodantiques.co.uk)<sup>3</sup>.

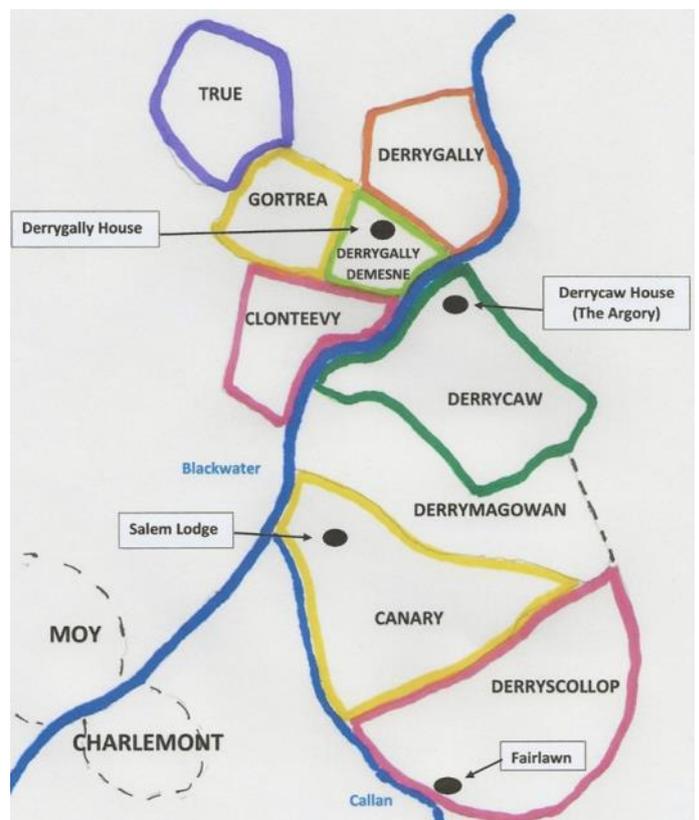
As an interesting comparison, in 2017 there were believed to be approximately 206,000 guns, both legal and illegal, held by civilians in Northern Ireland of which 153,000 were registered as owned by approximately 60,000 licensees<sup>4</sup>.

### Who owned and registered the musket?

The musket described here has the registration number AR7008 stamped on its butt plate meaning it was the 7008<sup>th</sup> firearm registered in County Armagh (AR) during the period 1843-1846. The details of the registration of firearm AR7008 are lost, so what follows is purely speculation. The most likely owner and registrant of the firearm is the man who was living in Salem Lodge in the period 1843-1846 and this was David Richardson Goodlatte. What follows is the absorbing history of the Goodlatte family and of the Goodlatte name waxing and waning over four centuries. The spelling of the name has varied over time (Goodlat,

Goodlad, Goodlet, Goodlett, Goodlatte) and the spelling used in the text has reflected the historical reference.

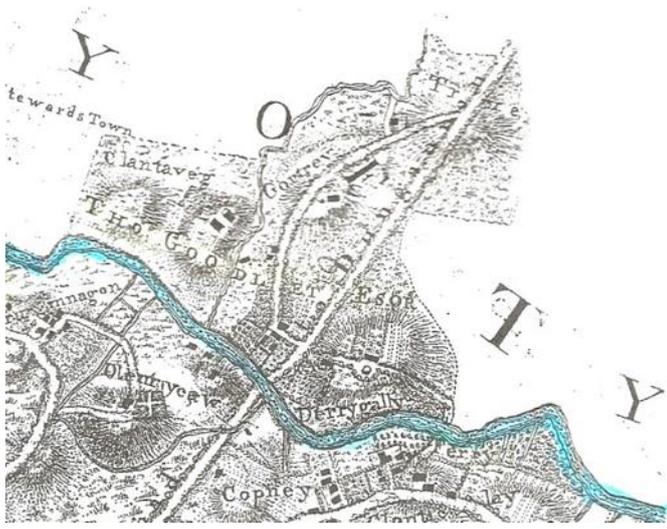
The story mainly focuses on a few townlands lying adjacent to the River Blackwater, the boundary between Counties Tyrone and Armagh. From the village of Moy the Blackwater flows north-eastwards towards Lough Neagh. About 2 miles along the Blackwater from Moy, on the Tyrone side, is the townland of Derrygally and its neighbouring townlands of Derrygally Demesne, Clonteevy, Gortrea, and True. On the Armagh side opposite, along the Blackwater or its tributary, the Callan, lie consecutively the townlands of Derrycaw, Derrymagowan (not mentioned otherwise in this story), Canary, and Derryscollop.



Outline map showing the townlands and the properties around which this history unfolds. The boundary between Counties Armagh and Tyrone is denoted by the course of the River Blackwater

### The Goodlattes

Thomas Goodlat (1575-1624) arrived in Ulster with the plantation. He was the agent of Sir Robert Hepburne and Scottish undertakers<sup>#</sup> in the Mountjoy precinct near Dungannon for which service he was granted freeholds of the townlands of Derrygally, Gortrea, True, and half the townland of Clonteevy<sup>5</sup>. The Muster Roll of 1631 for Killyman, lists William Goodlad, as having a



Section of Roque's map of Armagh (1760) showing Thomas Goodlet's estate on the Tyrone side of the River Blackwater.

sword and snaphance (an early musket), David Goodlad a sword and pike and Robert Goodlad a sword. In the Hearth Money Roll of 1666 (the Hearth Stone Tax of 2 shillings per fireplace) Thomas Goodlett of Derrygally had 2 fireplaces. At this time, Thomas appears to be the only Goodlatte with children. His daughter, Margaret (1649-1700) married Alexander Richardson of Drum Manor near Cookstown. His son, William (d1726), almost certainly the William Goodlet of Tyrone who was a defender at the Siege of Derry (1689), had married Alexander Richardson's cousin, Catherine Richardson, but they were without family. Margaret and Alexander Richardson had 3 children, one of whom, William, married Elizabeth Rynd. William Goodlatte left his estate to his nephew, William Richardson, for life and thereafter to his son, Thomas, who adopted the surname Goodlatte. Thomas married Mabella Crump, daughter of the Rector of Killyman, and they had a daughter, Mabella, who became the first wife of James Rynd, her father's cousin. She was the mother of three children among whom was Goodlatte Rynd<sup>†</sup>. Thomas Goodlatte was High Sheriff of Tyrone 1750. He died in 1770. It was probably during Thomas's tenure of the Goodlatte Estate that the ferry was established across the Blackwater. The terms of inheritance of the Goodlatte Estate meant that, as Thomas had no male heirs, the Estate passed to Thomas's brother William, who also took the name Goodlatte. William died in 1789. He was the father of David Richardson Goodlatte (I) among others. For the next century the Richardson name was incorporated into the Goodlatte name without ever assuming the

level of a compound surname.

David Richardson Goodlatte (II) (1795-1867) was the youngest son of David Richardson Goodlatte (I) of Derrygally and grandson of William (Richardson) Goodlatte. David (II) inherited the Estate in 1814 from his eldest brother William Richardson Goodlatte who had been High Sheriff of Tyrone in 1812. The Estate had become loaded with debt. How and when this occurred is unknown. In 1816, David (II) sold the Estate except for the Demesne lands of Derrygally<sup>k</sup>. In 1827 he finally sold 'that part of the Town and Lands of Derrygally known by the name of the Demesne lands of Derrygally'\* to Walter McGeough Bond of Derrycau House which was situated directly across the River Blackwater from Derrygally Demesne. Derrycau House would later be known as The Argory. The rights to the ferry also passed to McGeough Bond although it continued to be known as Goodlatte's ferry until it was superseded by the bridge (Bond's Bridge) over the Blackwater in 1895. Roque's 1760 map clearly shows Thomas Goodlatte's Estate encompassing the original three and one-half townlands. With the sale of Derrygally Demesne in 1827, the last of the original Goodlatte land was gone.

David Richardson Goodlatte (II) had another older brother, Alfred, who styled himself Alfred Goodlatte Richardson either as a throwback to his ancestral roots or in expectation of, or gratitude for, an inheritance from a Richardson relative. Alfred is said to have refused the Derrygally Estate because it was so loaded with debt but he had, indeed, succeeded to property in King's County (Offaly). In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, two generations of Richardsons had married into the Wray family of Castle Wray, Donegal. A branch of the next generation of Wrays moved to Rathbeg, King's County (Offaly) and it was into this family that both Alfred and David (II) married. Alfred married Anna Wray in 1809 and they lived in Rathbeg. They had no (surviving) family. When Alfred died in 1861, his brother David (II) was the chief beneficiary inheriting a large farm of some 350 acres in Rathbeg. David (II) married Maria (Dolly) Wray, who was the niece of Anna Wray, and they had one daughter, Dorothea born 1818, but Dolly died soon afterwards (purportedly at the

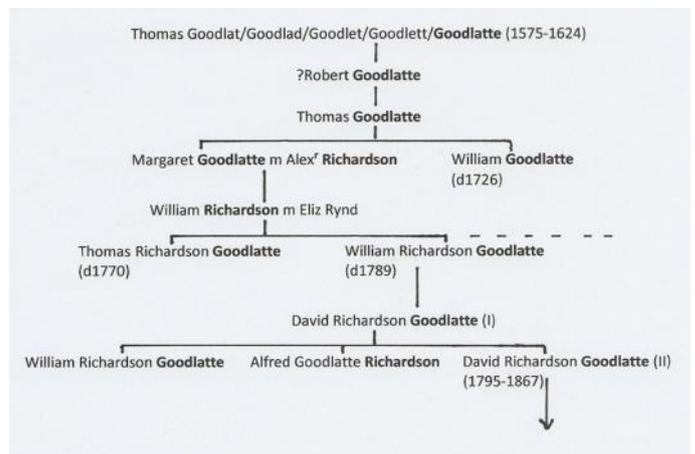
very young age of 16 years!). David (II) married secondly Elizabeth Harpur of Moy in 1820. She died in 1825 without leaving issue. He married thirdly, in 1832, Amelia Harpur, sister of Elizabeth, with whom he had 6 sons, 5 of whom reached adulthood, and 4 daughters.

David (II) initially lived in Moy carrying out his various business interests. He was listed in 1824 as a woollen draper in Moy [Pigot & Co, City of Dublin and Hibernian Provincial Directory]. He also acted at various times as Mill Agent and Meal Merchant, Land Agent, Emigration Agent for William Smith & Sons of Liverpool, Broker/Agent for shares in the new railway companies of the North of Ireland, and Farmer. In the 1830s and early 1840s he appears to have been much involved in, even leading, meetings of the Primitive Wesleyan Home Missionary Society in Moy.

From Tithe Applotment and Valuation Books it is apparent that, by 1830, David (II) had gained tenant-right to 78 acres of good land, including an enclosed steading, and 10 acres of turf bog in the townland of Canary, for three good lives, from Arthur Napean Molesworth of Fairlawn, Derryscollop. He renovated / extended the house in 1838 and named it 'Salem Lodge', perhaps a biblical allusion. He immediately advertised the property to be let or sold. The place was bought by a Mr R Henry in 1840 but in late 1842 the property was again on the market and this time David (II) bought it back and moved in with his growing family. He lived out the rest of his life there, farming and carrying out his business interests. He died in 1867 aged 73 years. His son, Alfred Richardson Goodlatte, took over most of his father's responsibilities.

Of the daughters of David Richardson Goodlatte (II), only Dorothea (by Dolly Wray), married to Charles Sibthorpe of Dublin, and Charlotte, married to Thomas Corrigan of Derryscollop, had family. Of the sons, only David Richardson Goodlatte (III) and Thomas Alexander Richardson Goodlatte married and had family<sup>o</sup>.

The last of that generation of Goodlattes, William, lived out his days in Salem Lodge and died there in 1909 despite the house and land having been sold



Goodlatte/Richardson family tree as outlined in the text.

in 1901<sup>o</sup>. The Goodlattes are buried in Killyman churchyard.

As regards the musket, David (I) had served for some time in the Royal Tyrone Militia as had his sons, William and Alfred. It is possible that the musket could have originated from the time one of these men was in the Militia or it could have been obtained later.

The surname Goodlatte of the lineage described here has now died out in Ireland and Great Britain. To my knowledge, the last to hold the Goodlatte surname, David John (Jack) Goodlatte (1906-1983), grandson of David (III), lived in London and was Managing Director of Associated British Cinemas.

Thomas Alexander Richardson Goodlatte (1848-1939) emigrated to USA in the mid-1870s. He may have been initially encouraged to emigrate by his sister Adelaide who had married William Burgess of New York in 1869. The Burgesses no doubt helped Thomas to become established in his new situation. Perhaps in recognition of this, Thomas christened one of his sons William Burgess Goodlatte. Adelaide and William Burgess had no family. After Adelaide was widowed, she returned to Ireland to live at Salem Lodge and later in Belfast with her sister Liliás, also by then widowed and without family.

Thomas seems to have prospered. Among several enterprises, he founded an Oil Cloth Company. He returned home to Ireland on 4 occasions between 1893 and 1929 to visit his surviving family. Adelaide, likewise, crossed the Atlantic, no doubt to visit her brother and his family, on at least 3

occasions between 1908 and 1927. Thomas's great grandson Robert (Bob) Goodlatte was Republican Congressman for Virginia's 6<sup>th</sup> district from 1993 until his retirement from the House in 2019. Bob's sisters Barbara (Barb) and Ann, together with Barb's husband, Max Steinheimer, and their daughter, visited Derrygally and Salem Lodge in 2018. Barb bred Irish Red and White Setters in Central California and called the kennel 'Derrygally' in homage to her family roots. Her older sister, Dorie, had apparently previously used the name Derrygally for registering Fox Terriers with the American Kennel Club.

## Conclusion

The chance finding of any object/artefact can open a fascinating window on to general, local, and family history. There is no absolute proof that the Brown Bess musket described here was owned by David Richardson Goodlatte (II) but, if the evidence of association in time and place can be accepted, a fascinating family history unfolds.

## Acknowledgements

My thanks to Barbara Steinheimer for many helpful communications and details of her family history. Thanks also to Dave Stroud for helpful correspondence about the musket.

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## Footnotes

# During the plantation of Ulster, undertakers were wealthy British landowners who 'undertook' to populate their granted land by bringing over from Britain 24 men or at least 10 families for every 1000 acres granted.

† The Richardson/Goodlatte axis also weaves through generations of the Rynd family of Fermanagh in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Lt Goodlatte Rynd (1780-1812) was mortally wounded at the battle of Salamanca in the Peninsular War. His daughter Maria (1812-1886) married Pedro José Domingo de Guerra, the Bolivian Consul General in Paris who later moved back to Bolivia and became President of Bolivia in 1879; their grandson also became President of Bolivia 1917-1920. Goodlatte Rynd's half-brother, Francis (1801-1861) was a surgeon at The Meath Hospital, Dublin and inventor of the hollow needle for hypodermic syringes. There was also a marriage into the Browne family of Belfast in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century with two of the resulting family, George William Richardson Browne (1811-1885) and Goodlatte Richardson Browne (1813-1855) emigrating to Canada and becoming notable Canadian Architects.

\*The land was sold, coincidentally, to Richardsons but not the same family described in this history. These Richardsons were Quakers from Lisburn. The family owned Bleachworks which developed into the prestigious firm of Richardson Sons & Owden Ltd, linen manufacturers, bleachers, dyers, finishes and merchants. By the mid-1830s the land had become vested in James Greer Richardson (1807-1883) who lived at Trewmount House situated about 1 mile along the road from Derrygally to Killyman.

\*The townland of Derrygally Demesne appears to have been an early 19<sup>th</sup> century creation and was previously part of a greater Derrygally townland. Derrygally Demesne was named as an independent townland on the first edition of Ordnance Survey of 1833.

ω David (III) (1836-1873) was a Merchant, Tobacco broker and Stockbroker working out of Dublin. He was also Director of Newry and Greenore Railway, and Director of several Insurance Companies in which he was heavily invested. When the Insurance Companies collapsed like a pack of cards in the late 1860s, David (III) was declared bankrupt with liabilities amounting to over £400,000. He left his wife, who was living, or went to live, in London with their young family, possibly to protect her from creditors, and returned to Salem Lodge, where he died in 1873.

ø My great grandfather James Leeman (1843-1912), of Navan, Armagh, bought Salem Lodge and the farm in 1901 and from thence, ultimately by collateral descent, it came to me in 2006.

# Fruitfield Jam Factory, Richhill

by Stephen Day



Fruitfield Factory– November 2023. Photograph by C.S.Day

## Background

Many of our readers will be aware of the tall, elegant, red brick chimney which dominates the landscape on the main Armagh to Portadown road at its junction with Richhill. For some it is a useful landmark to assist strangers doing deliveries or visiting the area. For others a welcome feature indicating that they are close to home. For most it is just a curiosity as one passes the Crewcatt/Sleepy Valley junction. Taken for granted until it is gone. In fact the chimney is the last, intact feature of a large jam factory: Another part of our early industrial heritage which may soon have disappeared.

## Memories

Over the years (late 1880s – 1970s) Fruitfield provided employment for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people. Some worked in the small factory itself, some worked in delivery services and many farmers in the surrounding countryside prospered by supplying fruit to the new local factory. For many years there was hardly a house in

Ireland that did not have a jar of Fruitfield jam in the larder.

Many people will have memories of the Fruitfield Factory in its heyday. Many started their teenage or early adult working life there and went on to lead successful lives abroad. Many others married, raised their families and spent the rest of their lives in the growing local community. Often three generations were involved in working there. Brett Hannam has provided a flavour of this in his excellent 2008 book: ‘Richhill. A Portrait of an Ulster Village’ which I will reference throughout this article.

Two names that readers might recognise are Joseph Proctor and Anne Doughty. Joseph was Armagh City and District’s sole survivor of the Battle of the Somme (1916). He died, aged 96, on 13 February 1995 leaving only four surviving veterans in Northern Ireland. His parents came from Kilmore, Richhill. As a boy of 14 Joe worked for the Lambs, owners of Fruitfield. When the Great War broke out in 1914 he joined the army as a volunteer with the Royal Irish Fusiliers After many adventures he returned to Richhill in December 1918 resuming work in his old job at the Fruitfield canning factory. (Rea: p.21-22)

Anne Doughty published a wide range of historical fiction set in Ireland and the Fruitfield factory has been fictionalised in her novel ‘A Girl Called Rosie’ (2008). Her father, Joseph was born in Richhill and his brothers and sisters lived in Liskeyborough, close to Richhill station. Her grandfather worked at the Fruitfield factory driving the traction engine. (Ann died in December 2018 aged 79.) Her book is set in the 1920s and provides an interesting insight to life in and around the factory at that time. A mixture of folklore and fact which some today might call ‘faction’ based on generational memory. (I will refer to this again at the end of this article)

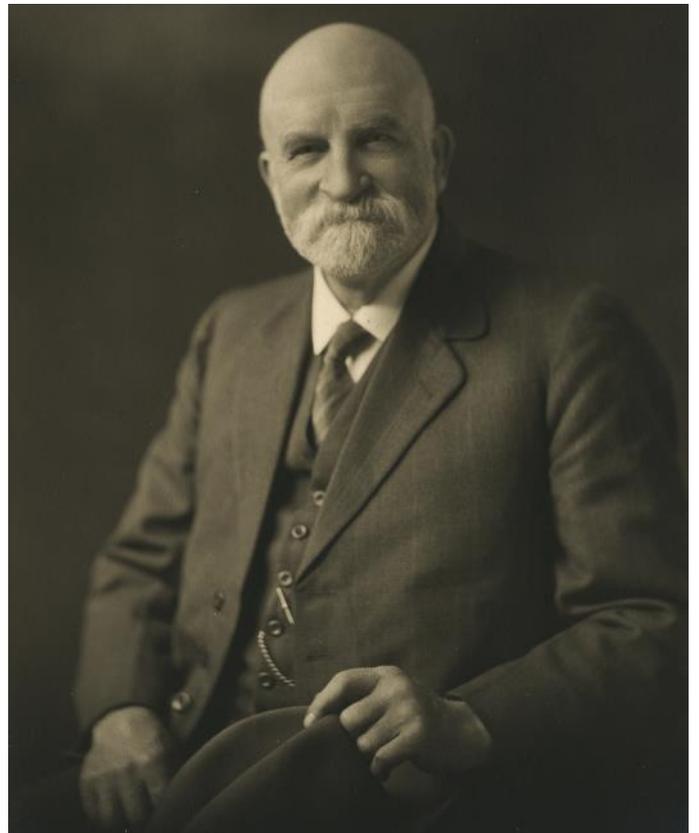
## Personal Memories

My memories cannot match these but provide a small insight into the impression Fruitfield made on children in the wider County of Armagh and beyond. I first became aware of Fruitfield Jam as a young boy, living in the south-east countryside of County Armagh. It was the early 1950s. Apart from being delicious (I particularly enjoyed the strawberry recipe) they were addictive and I enjoyed them right into adult life! An additional attraction for children was the free Fruitfield Gnome that was tucked under the label of each jar. You could send off for a colourful print of a woodland scene and stick the various collection of gnomes on the available space. If you were very lucky you might even win one of the monthly prizes. This ubiquitous advertising ploy pressurised parents into buying 'Fruitfield' and, as it turned out, much more politically acceptable than the competition: 'Robertson's Golly'. Of course, I had no idea where the Fruitfield jam came from but vaguely imagined it was some faraway magical land. Surely it must have been with a name like Richhill on the label! I certainly could not have imagined that some day I would be living within sight of the famous old building in its declining years.

## The Early Years:

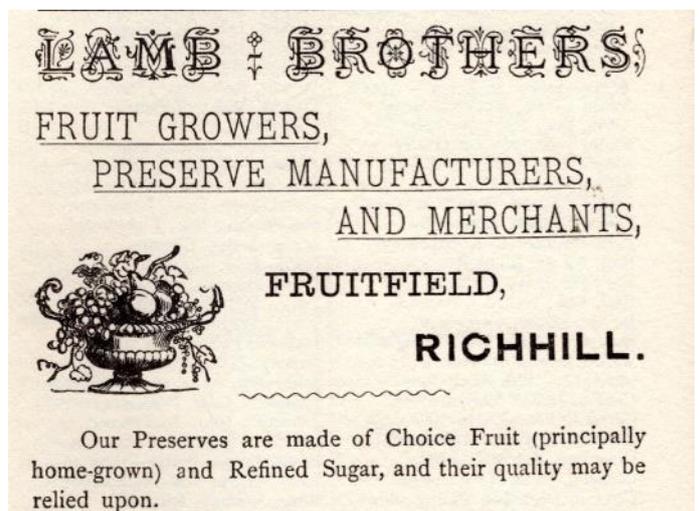
### 1870s – 1890s

A fruit preservation business was founded on the present site in the 1870s by Robert Johnston, a member of Richhill Quakers. Unfortunately it ran into difficulties and became insolvent in 1886. Charles B. Lamb (1864-1944), another Quaker, bought the fruit farm and preserving business at Crewcatt. He had come to Ireland in 1884 to work as a clerk in the famous spinning mill at Bessbrook. He and his elder brother Richard (1858-1897) were originally Quaker farmers from Oxfordshire. Charles married Charlotte Gray of York in 1887 and they moved to Fruitfield in 1888, later moving to a large house on high ground beside the Sandymount Road. It had clear views of Richhill Railway Station with the Fruitfield Chimney in the distance. (The house still exists and its current occupant is Mrs Wanda Johns.) Charles and Charlotte went on to have four daughters and four



Charles B. Lamb – Founder of Lamb Brothers Fruit Growers, Preserve Manufacturers and merchants, Fruitfield, Richhill. © Armagh County Museum D.P. Martin collection

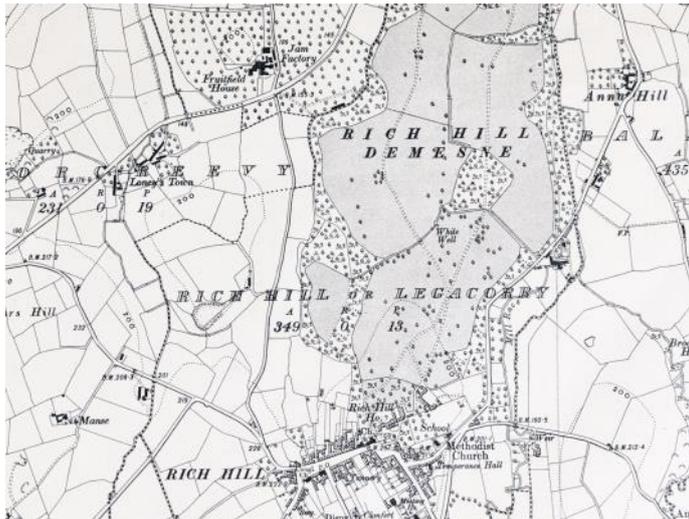
sons. Charles and Richard began making jam from their own farm and were soon exporting to England and the whole of Ireland. Main crops were strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries and blackcurrants. Soon many of their neighbours were providing fruit from the surrounding countryside which was already famous for the apple crops which thrived in the rich soil in this part of the 'Orchard County.' In its heyday it was a vibrant and prosperous business.



Bassett's County Armagh, Guide and Directory 1888

The variety and quality was exceptionally high and the Lamb Brothers received many awards including

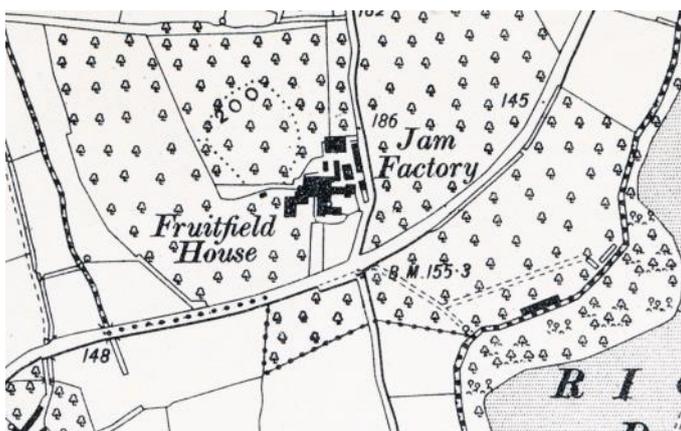
third prize at the prestigious 1892 Royal Show at Warwick, England for their collections of whole fruit jams. (Hannam: p. 160)



6 inch - 1 mile OS map Sheet 13 Co. Armagh 1908

## 1900 – 1922

As a new century began the Fruitfield enterprise went from strength to strength and in 1900 the company was able to invest in a new horizontal boiler which required a large chimney. This chimney is the one that has lasted to the present day. The impressive tall, tapering, octagon of red brick, flared out gracefully at the top and was secured by metal straps every few feet. This required great skill and craftsmanship by the designer and bricklayers. Around the same time one of the first traction engines in Ireland was also bought. The firm employed 60-80 staff in the factory but during the summer months this number could increase to 150. Another 50 worked on the family's farms. Increasing success meant increasing pressure on the few staff at the small Richhill Railway Station which transported produce to



6 inch - 1 mile OS map Sheet 13 Co. Armagh 1908

Enlargement showing Fruitfield Jam factory in detail.

Belfast and Dublin. Their ports provided a gateway to Great Britain and beyond. (Hannam: p.160)

The Belfast - Province of Ulster Directory of 1910 records that the Manager of Fruitfield at that time was a Henry Hardcastle and the busy Richhill Stationmaster was J. Lavery. The business was listed as 'Lamb Brothers, Jam Manufacturers, Fruitfield, Richhill.'

There were setbacks. In 1911 fire broke out in a store house but was confined to a single building thanks to quick action by factory workers. Fruit crops could be subject to disease and mildew. In 1915 the entire blackcurrant crop in Richhill was destroyed by a visitation of the gall mite an affliction that followed the destruction of the gooseberry harvest by American mildew. Charles Lamb was obliged to burn 9,500 gooseberry bushes to prevent the spread of the disease. No government compensation was forthcoming. The Great War (1914 -1918) also presented a challenge with fluctuating economic conditions. However, in 1917 one of Charles Lamb's sons, Wilfred, was sent to Dublin to establish a new branch of the family business and two other brothers, Harold and Gilbert would join him later. It was a fortuitous move because, by expanding the business they were able to mitigate the risk of the IRA economic boycott which affected the North during the latter stages of the Irish 'War of Independence' (1919 - 1922.) (Meanwhile, at home, in the 1918 Directory, W. Lamb was listed as being Manager of Fruitfield, Richhill.

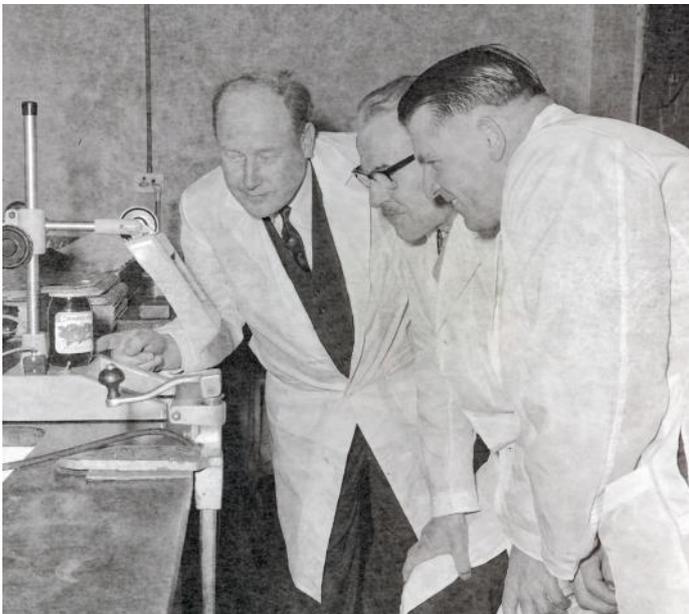
## 1923 – 1945

Following the Partition of Ireland the Dublin Operation grew rapidly and eventually eclipsed that on the small site at Richhill. From a 12-acre site at Inchicore, the Company developed a large range of jams and preserves. Gilbert was a food scientist and he developed the recipe for 'Old Time Irish Marmalade' which became very popular in Ireland, America, and further afield. (Hannam: p. 161)

Back in Northern Ireland the relatively small site, with limited access and little room for expansion, meant that the Fruitfield operation had to contend with increasing competition from home and abroad. However, it managed to survive and thrive in the

new peace-time conditions despite the economically volatile climate of the 1920s and 30s.

In the 1920s Belfast and Ulster Directories the business was once more listed as 'Lamb Bros, Jam Manufacturers, Fruitfield, Richhill.' There was no entry for 1939 – the year that the Second World War broke out – and by 1942 the only business listed was John Peile, Motor Engineer, Fruitfield. Wartime restrictions were having their impact on Jam Production. Local housewives were encouraged to return their empty jam jars as the lack of glass was a factor limiting jam production. Shortage of petrol caused transportation problems so Fruitfield arranged for collection of fruit from local farmers. The business survived and by 1944 Fruitfield was again listed in the Directory as 'Jam Manufacturers'. (This was also the year that the founder, Charles B. Lamb, died, aged 80.)



In the Lab Fruitfield jam factory January 1967 © Armagh County Museum Scott Collection

### 1946 – 1993

The War ended in 1945 but associated food and other rationing continued until 1953. The Richhill Railway Station, so important in the early success of Fruitfield, closed in 1957 with the closure of the Portadown to Armagh line. Despite this, jam production continued to be a significant part of the Fruitfield operation in Richhill. Nevertheless, innovation meant survival. Jam production continued but the third generation of the Lamb family, the sons of Mrs Charlotte Peile (nee Lamb) decided to diversify. Whilst producing a full range of jams, including marmalade from oranges

imported from Spain, they focused on preserving fruit. Production of canned fruit and foods, plus jellies increased. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s Fruitfield advertisements were listed under the name of 'Fruitfield Preserves Limited – County Armagh.' They grew much of their own fruit on their own farms dotted around County Armagh and also bought from local farmers. However, in the mid – 1960's, foreign imports started eating into the market share – mainly from Bulgaria and South Africa where the climate was ideal for growing and labour was cheap. Other expenses included production methods and old machinery that had to be replaced or updated. In the 1960s there was excitement and alarm when the back of one of the old steam boilers blew out, just next door to some female office staff, causing significant damage.

Continuing innovation meant survival and by now Peile Foods specialised in baked goods and cooked meats. These frozen and chilled 'convenience foods' which included pre-packed dinners, were often sold to ships and oil rigs. Other firms operating from the Crewcatt site were involved in food distribution. By the early 1970s The Belfast and Ulster Directories had begun to list the business as being 'Fruitfield Manufacturers and Cannerys.' (One brother, Gray Peile, operated a light engineering works that specialised in supplying curtaining for heat conservation in factories.) (Hannam: p.162) Business continued well into the 70's but the struggle against growing competition and tough economic conditions became too much and it closed around 1978.

Meanwhile, by the 1960s, the much larger Fruitfield business in Dublin was now operating fruit farms in Counties Dublin and Kildare that extended to 1,000 acres. The firm invested heavily in advertising and the Fruitfield name could be seen on posters, buses and in the newspapers. The firm continued independently until 1980 when it was acquired by Nestle. A series of corporate mergers and takeovers followed, which eventually led to the company being owned by the international Valeo conglomerate in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century. (Hannam p161)

(Ironically, a similar trajectory was followed by James Robertson & Sons Preserve Manufacturers

Limited in Great Britain. Begun as a small jam making operation in the late 1880s it had expanded greatly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century but by the early 21<sup>st</sup> century it was incorporated into multi-national conglomerates having closed most of its large factories between 1970 and 2007.)

### **1994 – 2023**

By 1994 a light engineering works operated from the old canning department and the entire factory had long since been sold. However, many of the old buildings remained intact. (Portadown Times 29<sup>th</sup> July 1994)

In the late 1990s excavation work began on the ground to the East between the factory and the main Armagh/Portadown Road. Basic foundations were laid. However, nothing further was done and for the next two decades this area became overgrown. For a time the vacant domestic and industrial buildings of Fruitfield continued to remain largely intact with rose bushes growing wild against the wall of various buildings. Fearing for their ultimate demolition a description of them was recorded for posterity on 28 February 1998 (McCorry: p.171)

‘Today (the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) the Fruitfield setting is a unique cluster of domestic and industrial archaeological remains. The tall, elegant, red-brick chimney is the dominant feature, remaining in pristine condition. In contrast, the dwellings and sheds are decidedly aged. Fronting the manufactory is the original thatched house, at first glance a one-story dwelling, with three rooms leading from a front interior corridor. However, a small interior staircase indicates that the ‘roofspace’ had been developed to provide small bedrooms, daylight entering through enlarged window openings which served both storeys. This represented the first phase of expansion. However, the second phase was more striking and consisted of a tall housing block with no architectural pretensions whatsoever. Within the first of the out-houses, the company safe remained. So also did a range of storage cabinets composed of wooden containers used in the importation of solid blocks of prunes from California; Nothing had been discarded or wasted. In one of the cabinets a little

bundle of colourful, simply-designed jam-jar labels manifested the export aspect of the Fruitfield enterprise.... At the rear of a variety of buildings and sheds an orchard remains. A glance eastward from the raised Fruitfield site reveals, almost one mile distant, Richhill Castle on even higher ground, with the Quaker village of Richhill sloping down to the valley below. Encompassed by large green fields and an impressive degree of afforestation, the setting is one of many which epitomises the benefits of cultural diversity in the industrial and agricultural development of County Armagh.’

The description of the buildings shows that the general lay-out of the site had not changed much over the previous century and more (See O.S. 1925 maps) That cannot be said to be the case today. The town of Richhill has continued to expand as has the relatively recent engineering plant located on the north-western corner of the site – Rosco Engineering.

Sadly, in the last few years, there have been cases of petty vandalism, suspicious minor fires and more recently open demolition of the remaining old buildings. The chimney still stands tall and apparently undamaged but practically nothing else remains intact.

A local businessman has confirmed his intention to develop the site and build commercial buildings but has stated that plans were at a preliminary stage.

### **Postscript**

In the early hours of Tuesday 20 December 2022 a digger was stolen by two men from the site. It proceeded directly across Crewcatt Road, down a field, on to the main Armagh/Portadown road and directly across to the Supervalu supermarket where it was used to rip an ATM from an outside building. It was described as an attack on the local community. (The ATM was swiftly recovered by police and arrests were made.) The police investigation continues. This appears to have been the first time that many people seeing the news reports became interested in the history of the red chimney in the background but, in some ways, it represented an exciting footnote to its long history.

## The Future

Some local people of a certain age feel that the record of the Fruitfield site over the past four decades can be compared to the gradual decline of an old friend. There are happy memories of better times but an understanding things must take their course. During my research into this article I found it difficult to find any photographs of the domestic and industrial buildings in their heyday – the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nor did I come across any black and white photographs of staff inside or outside the factory and offices or of vehicles being driven to and from the site. The Armagh County Museum had a few photographs of staff in the 1960s, attending a Christmas party and some of specialists in white coats, but nothing showing the actual building. The museum is committed to telling the story of local rural industries and would be delighted to hear from anyone with stories or objects connected to Fruitfield. It may even form the basis of a book which pays suitable tribute to Fruitfield and the people who worked there over the generations.

## Acknowledgements

My thanks go to Sean Barden and the Staff at Armagh County Museum, the Staff at The Armagh Robinson Library and the Staff at Armagh Cultural Heritage Service Library for their assistance with my research. A special thanks to Brett Hannam who gave me permission to use extracts from his recent book on Richhill.

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*Portadown Times – 29 July 1994*



Employees at Fruitfield Jam Factory Christmas Party 1963

© Armagh County Museum Scott Collection

# The Scrap Album

by Richard Burns

Curiosity is a curious thing, the scrap album was in my family home growing up, and for the last 15 years it has been in my possession. The book belonged to Mrs Bamford, a relative of my mother, who lived with us in Warrenpoint from before I was born. I had looked through it many times, but I never thought how it came to be in the house. I just assumed the album had always belonged to Mrs Bamford because it contained paintings of Moy and its surroundings. Mrs Bamford had lived and worked in a haberdashery shop on Charlemont Street in Moy and while living with us continued to spend part of the year with friends in Moy and later in Creeveroe until her death in 1966.

The scrap album consists of 36 boards attached by an adhesive strip into a binding. The content of the album is made up of paintings, sketches, poems, and sayings provided by family and visitors. The first dated entry is September 1900, and the bulk of the content is dated between 1904 and 1908. There is one entry by a Miss H. Stanley that is undated but from the writing appears much later and may be my aunt Hilda in the 1930s and one by myself aged fourteen in the 1960s ( see inside back cover). Apart from these later additions there was only one name in the album that I knew that was connected to Mrs Bamford and that was from Edward Johnston, dated 1904. Edward Johnston was a friend of Mrs Bamford's mother Catherine Noble nee Harpur, but with only one entry it was unlikely that Edward Johnston was the owner of the album. So the next question was, if it was not Edward Johnston's or Mrs Bamford's then who was the original owner? The first page entitled My Album eventually provided the answer, a scan of the page revealed the name Lil Davis hidden under a brush stroke at the bottom of the page. The album contained several entries from the Davis family, some from Lil, some from Lal or Lallie Davis, and one from A. C. Davis.

Lil Davis<sup>Note1</sup> was born Lilian Frances Davis in 1881 in Rathdrum, county Wicklow, the second

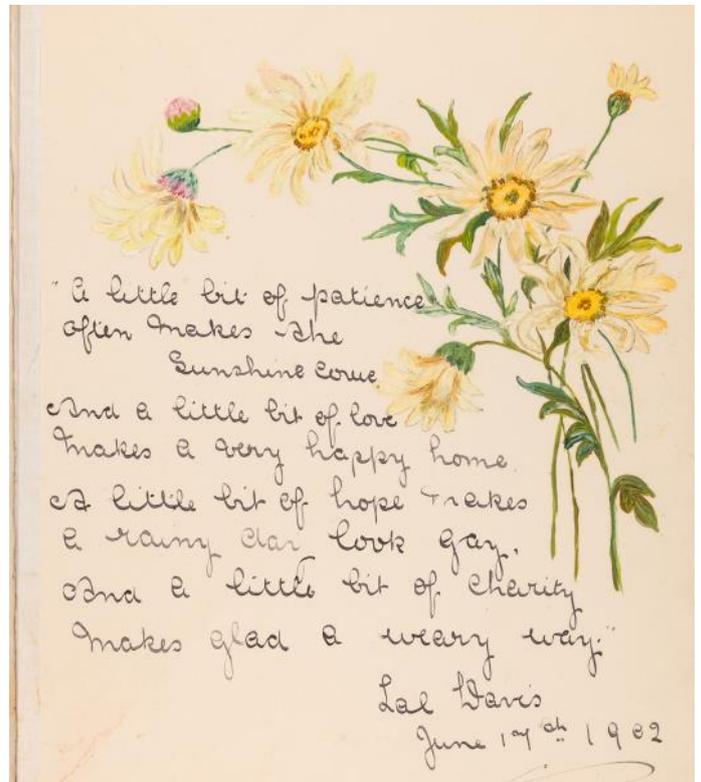
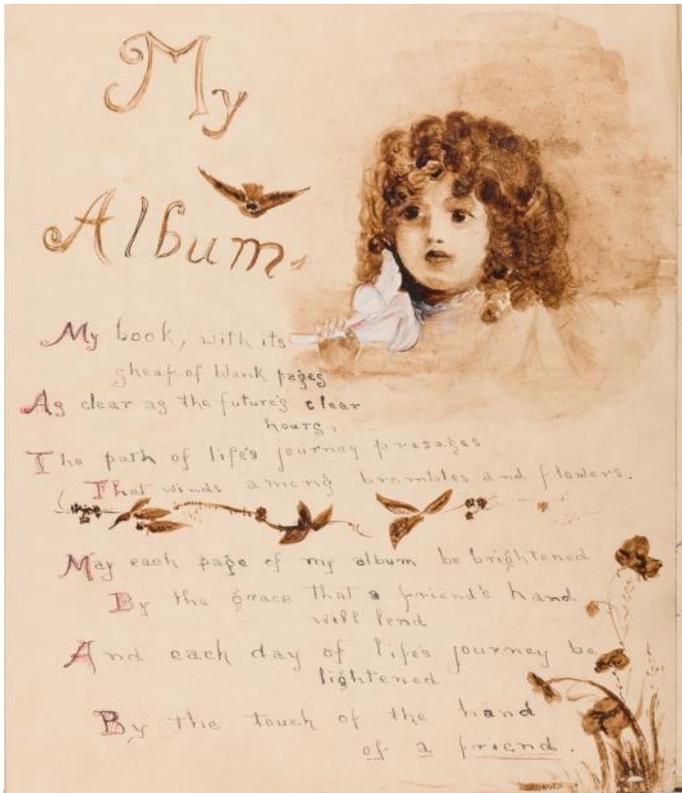


Lilian Frances Davis

child of a Methodist minister, Thomas Davis and his wife Annie Charlotte. In the 1901 census Thomas and his family were living in Dungannon Street, Moy. The peripatetic life of a Methodist minister can be seen from the census, Thomas was born in county Tipperary, his wife Annie in county Monaghan, they were married in Newry, Sarah Helen, the eldest (known as Lal or Lallie) was born in county Meath, the third child John Charles in county Leitrim, the fourth child Hilda Irene Annie, in county Kerry. The 1911 census has Lilian living in Antrim with her father Thomas, while her mother is living with the other children in Belfast. The father has presumably moved to take up another ministry which may explain the increase in entries in 1908 and the subsequent drop off after that date. This is supported by Lil's poem accompanying the Barn Dance sketch, which is addressed to Miss A. M. McK. which begins "Though our lives so soon must sever". After 1908 the next dated entry is in 1914 from an A. Harris from Enniskillen, this is probably the Rev. Alexander Harris, the minister in Darling Street Methodist church in Enniskillen at the time. The next dated entry is from an E. A. Allen in 1920, who quotes one of the Rev. Horatius Bonar hymns

and that is probably the last entry that could be attributed to Lil. With Lil moving out of Moy in 1908 how the album came to be in the possession of Mrs Bamford remains a mystery. One possible explanation is that the scrap album remained in the Methodist manse in Moy and the signatures in 1914 and 1920 were visiting ministers to the Moy. Then subsequently the album was bought in a church sale or otherwise acquired at some point by either Mrs Bamford or her friends the Johnston's as a memento of Moy.

In addition to the contributions from the Davis family there are several entries from people living in Moy and some from people visiting relatives, they include the Phipson and Templeton families. The Church of Ireland rector Charles Frederick Archer and his wife Eliza Jane have both contributed. There is a poem from a young Methodist minister George Walter Bradley dated 1905. There are also contributions from the Rose-Cleland family, who lived in Redford House in the townland of Alnavannog on the Old Moy Road.



Three of Lil's sketches and one of Lal's sketches and poem



*We Shall Be Satisfied*

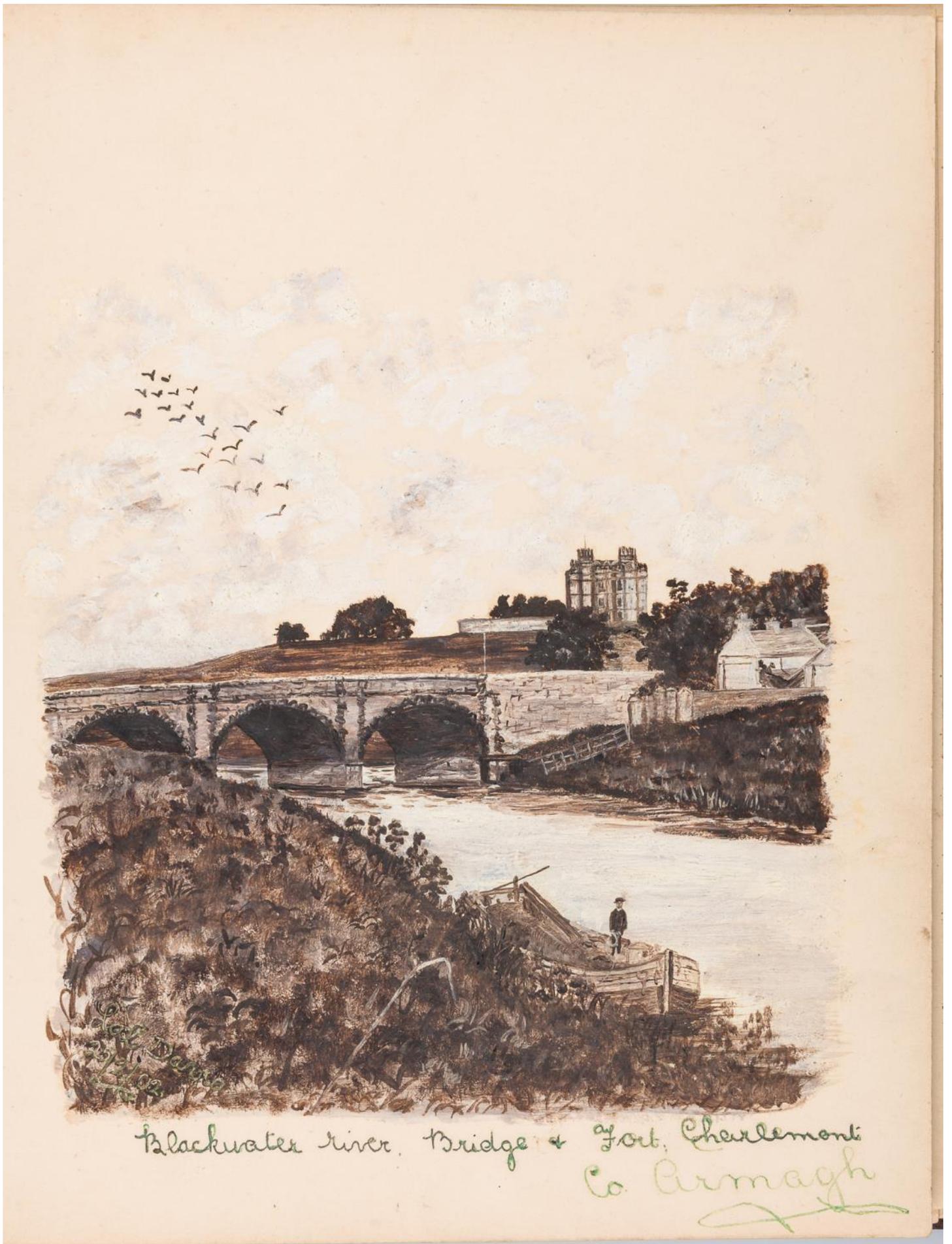
Far out-of-sight - there lies a distant land,  
Where weary hearts in peaceful rest abide,  
Where care is lifted, trouble finds no place,  
And best-of all - we shall be satisfied.

No more to watch and wait for joyous harvest -  
Of cornfields gratified, and then to find at last  
Only a crop of Dead Sea fruit - so bitter  
That even the cornucopia brings scant part.

*L. Davis  
15<sup>th</sup> June 1902*



The painting is by Lil and the poem provided by her mother Ann Charlotte Davis



Blackwater river, Bridge & Fort, Charlemont  
Co. Armagh

The above painting was by Lallie and is dated 20<sup>th</sup> September 1902



Charles Frederick Archer and his wife Jane both contributed in January 1904, Charles contributed the above watercolour entitled Roxborough, Moy, and Jane contributed a poem entitled Little Things, which is the third verse of a hymn by Mary Ann Kidder.

Elizabeth Rose Cleland contributed the watercolour on the facing page. Elizabeth Ann Hargrave Rose Cleland nee Middleton was the wife of Henry Somerville Rose Cleland, they married in May 1893. Henry was born in Rathgael House in

Bangor in 1843 the son of James Dowsett Rose-Clelland and his wife Elizabeth Steele-Nicholson of Balloo House. It may well have been the Steel-Nicholson connection to the Barcroft family<sup>Note2</sup> that brought Henry to Redford House in 1880 where he worked as the manager of the Redford Linen Company.

The Rose-Clelland surname came about when Henry's father, James Dowsett Rose (1767-1852), the son of Richard Rose and his wife Agnes Cleland, inherited the Rath Gael estate near Bangor



*In the Clonfeacle Meadows.*

*Elizabeth Rose-Cleland  
5<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1905.*

following the death of his Uncle James Cleland and adopted the surname Rose-Cleland as a condition in a will. He served as High Sheriff of County Down and held the post of Deputy Lieutenant of the same county for forty-two years.<sup>Ref1</sup>

James was a naturalist and is believed to have attempted to reintroduce snakes back into Ireland to see if they would survive or would St Patrick's banishment of the snakes still be in operation.<sup>Ref2</sup> He went over to Covent Garden in London and purchased six harmless common English snakes (matrix torqueta) and released them in his garden in Rathgael. Robert Chambers<sup>Ref3</sup> describes the outcome as follows:

*“and in a week afterwards, one of them was killed at Milecross, about three miles distant. The persons into whose hands this strange monster fell, had not the slightest suspicion that it was a snake, but, considering it a curious kind of eel, they took it to*

*Dr. J. L. Drummond, a celebrated Irish naturalist, who at once pronounced the animal to be a reptile and not a fish.*

*The idea of a 'rare living sarpint' having been killed within a short distance of the very burial-place of St. Patrick, caused an extraordinary sensation of alarm among the country people. The most absurd rumours were freely circulated, and credited. One far-seeing clergyman preached a sermon, in which he cited this unfortunate snake as a token of the immediate commencement of the millennium: while another saw in it a type of the approach of the cholera morbus. Old prophecies were raked up, and all parties and sects, for once, united in believing that the snake fore-shadowed 'the beginning of the end,' though they very widely differed as to what that end was to be. Some more practically minded persons, however, subscribed a considerable sum of money, which they offered in rewards for the destruction of any other snakes that might be found*

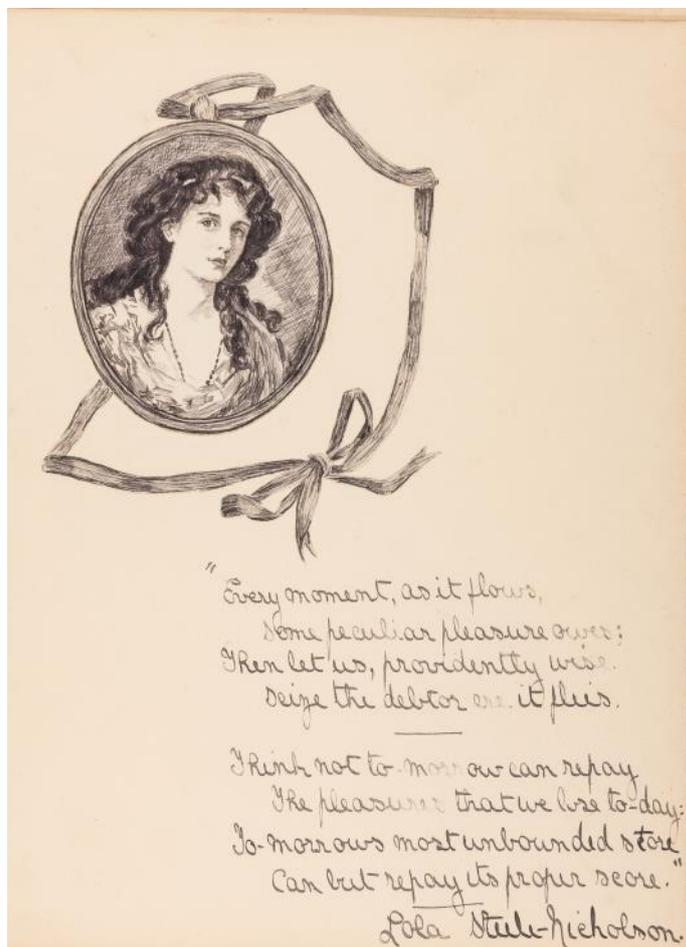
in the district. And three more of the snakes were not long afterwards killed, within a few miles of the garden where they were liberated. The remaining two snakes were never very clearly accounted for; but no doubt they also fell victims to the reward. The writer, who resided in that part of the country at the time, well remembers the wild rumours, among the more illiterate classes, on the appearance of those snakes: and the bitter feelings of angry indignation expressed by educated persons against the very fortunately then unknown person, who had dared to bring them to Ireland."

The fate of the remaining two snakes was discussed at a meeting of the Belfast Natural History Society where it was stated that they had received two English snakes from James Rose-Cleland of Rathgael House. <sup>Ref4</sup>



The above painting on silk was contributed by Henry's sister, Agnes Elizabeth Browning who also contributed several poems. She had married Alfred French Browning, a widower in 1899 and he died at Redford House in 1904.

Lola Steele-Nicholson contributed the self-portrait and poem on the right. She was Henry's niece, the daughter of Robert Steele-Nicholson and Henry's sister, Isobel Hamilton Rose-Cleland who married in 1874.



## Notes

1. This photograph of Lil was cut out from a bigger photo and pasted into the scrap album along with her signature on the page that has the barn dance sketch.
2. The Barcroft family were a Quaker family and were heavily involved in the linen industry in the area. Frederick Barcroft married Katherine Elizabeth Steele-Nicholson in 1881, she was Henry's cousin.

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# Monumental Controversies

by Mary McVeigh



Memorial, showing ornamented cross above a figure of 'Erin', flanked by an Irish Wolfhound

I only ever had a passing interest in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899 to 1902. As far as I was concerned it was a conflict between the forces of British imperialism and the forefathers of those who inflicted the abhorrent Apartheid system on South Africa. It was only when I was occupying myself during a bout of Covid by browsing early twentieth century newspapers online that I came across a number of items relating to the war and its impact on Irish politics, especially in Armagh,

which caused me to look at it and the local angle more closely.

Historians have noted how this war 'galvanised' Irish nationalists of varying shades to come together to support the Boers. This is rather surprising from a twenty first century perspective because on the face of it the mainly Catholic Irish would appear to have little in common with the Afrikaner states, the Transvaal and Orange Free State, who were in the main, Calvinistic Protestants of Dutch, German and French Huguenot extraction and who were certainly not sympathetic to Catholicism. Even more surprising was the vociferous public support given by leading radical figures such as socialist, James Connolly, who would appear to have remained silent regarding those who inhabited the land prior to Boers or Britons. However, this was a time when Nationalists had suffered a split over the Parnell affair and were still dealing with the defeat of the second Home Rule Bill in 1893. Perhaps it was less their loyalty to the Boers and more their antipathy towards Britain which motivated their support although admiration for the two small Boer republics in their brave stance against their mighty enemy was frequently voiced. Essentially thus for many throughout the island alignment with the Boers gave a focus to their dissatisfaction with British rule and empire.

## The death of Hugh Carberry

For Armagh nationalists the death of Hugh Carberry gave them the ideal opportunity to show their opposition to Britain. Here was a local man from the Banbrook area who had played Gaelic football for the Harps club, was on the team which won the Ulster championship in 1890 and reached the All Ireland semi-final. Now he was a martyr to the Boer cause.<sup>1</sup> It should be said though that he did not actually die in battle, something which appeared to be glossed over by nationalist orators at the time. He was shot in the head at the battle of

Modderspruit and died of a stroke some three months later, January 1900, in hospital in Pretoria.<sup>2</sup> He had left the city some ten years earlier with a brother to seek their fortunes in the South African goldfields and apparently had sent home 'generous remittances' from time to time. He was one of the first to volunteer to fight with Major John MacBride's Irish Brigade, 'a band of Irish men who went to war in Africa. In the tradition of the Wild geese, they joined a foreign army to fight the hereditary enemy.'<sup>3</sup>

### **The memorial campaign**

It would seem that hardly had the news of his death arrived in Armagh that preparations began to commemorate him. Meetings were held to promote a campaign to have a memorial erected in his memory. One 'large and enthusiastic' meeting held in the Foresters Hall in early September 1900 chaired by John McGlone, a Rural District Councillor, was attended by no less than five members of the City Council; Michael Donnelly, Peter Hughes, Henry Mulloy, John Short and Edward McCartan. It should be noted that under changes in local government legislation in 1898, Armagh now had a strong Nationalist majority on the Council, determined to assert its authority. Other Armagh names mentioned were James Donnelly, W.J.McKernan, E. Cleary, J.McAleavey, S. Quillan, J. Cullen, H.Newbanks, J.Passmore, J. Murtagh, A. Kearney, J.McGerrigan, P.Knipe and Robert Baxter who became treasurer for the group. Presumably because these people's names were mentioned they were recognised as the organising committee. Representatives from the Glasgow area, Liverpool and Belfast spoke at the meeting, so it was obviously going to be more than a purely local venture.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, one of these, Dr Charles O'Neill from Coatbridge in Scotland who represented South Armagh at Westminster from 1910 until his death in 1918 was an important political figure with a fascinating background story. He was a self-made man who came from humble beginnings in Co. Antrim, emigrated to Coatbridge, did a variety of jobs including delivering post and shoe repairing before being spurred by a remark about 'uneducated Irish' to pursue a university degree whilst still involved in commercial activities. He graduated as a doctor from Glasgow University and

took up a post as Assistant Professor at St Mongos College. He was active in local politics in Coatbridge as well as in nationalist circles in Ireland.<sup>5</sup> At a meeting held in Keady around the same time there was also enthusiastic support voiced by a number of prominent local figures including John Nugent, P.J.Conroy and James Arthurs.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout the following year there would appear to have been regular meetings of the memorial committee. In May 1901 the secretary, John Short announced the receipt of £5 from Mr McShane, treasurer of the New York Committee and also subscriptions from the Townhead, Glasgow and Burton-on-Trent branches of the United Irish League and Thomas Donnelly of Coatbridge. In June a contribution of £17.16.0 was received from 'Exiled Brethren' in Motherwell. At a meeting in October the Secretary noted receipt of further subscriptions from Mr McShane, this time in a cheque for a hundred dollars. A letter from Maud Gonne, the socialite turned ardent supporter of Irish nationalism, was read 'approving of the monument to do honour to Carberry' and stating that Major MacBride, whom she was later to marry, was 'pleased to know that the memory of his brave soldier was not forgotten in his native city.'<sup>7</sup>

At all these committee meetings there was much speech making. Every opportunity was taken to deride British rule. On this particular occasion the chairman, John McGlone, 'in the course of an eloquent address, congratulated those present on the success of the monument and expressed an urgent desire that the cause for which Carberry sacrificed his life would ere long succeed and hoped that the day was not too far distant when British misrule would cease to exist in Africa or elsewhere.' Another speaker, Cllr. Edward McCartan was also in full flow. His address, described as 'stirring' by the Irish News, 'rejoiced in the fact that Armagh had produced at least one true patriot who so gallantly died fighting against the hereditary enemies of our race.' At a later date it was announced that a sub committee had been established to seek out a location for the monument and on the Friday before the unveiling it was noted in the press that 'the portion of the cemetery to which it is allotted overlooks the greater part of the

town and the monument will be an ornament worthy of the sterling Nationalists of Armagh and all who have subscribed.’

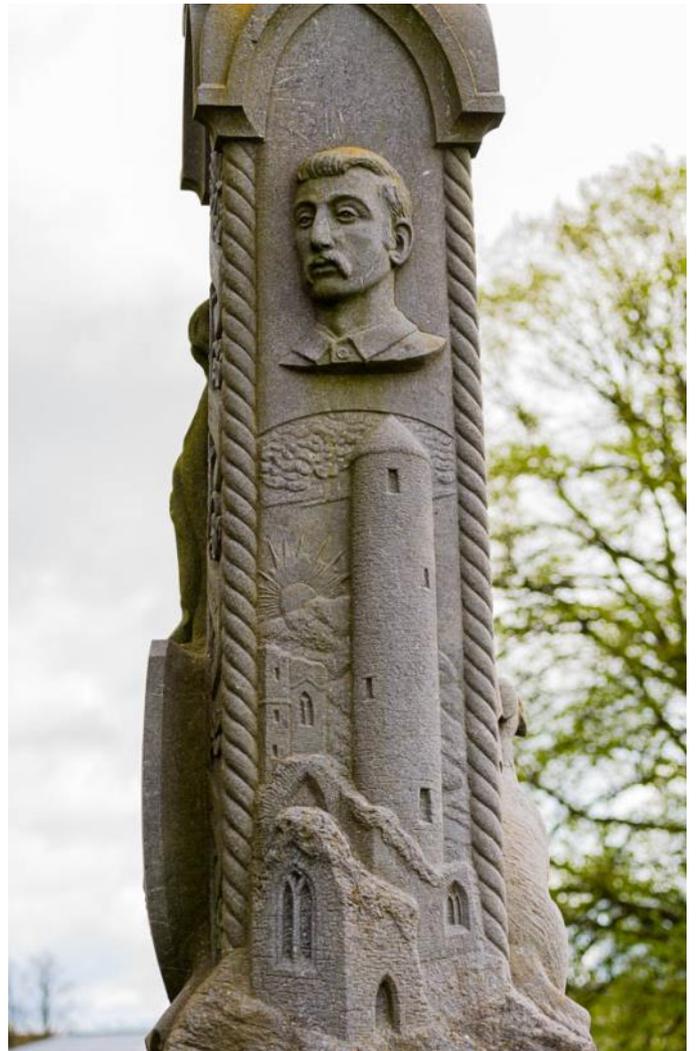
### The monument unveiled



Hugh Carberry Memorial, St Patrick's Cemetery, Armagh

There is no doubt that the monument which apparently cost £150, a substantial sum at the time, was and still remains a most impressive artwork, twenty feet tall, intricately carved in the Gaelic Revival style. It was created by sculptor, T.H Dennany who was well established in his field with a number of notable gravestones to his credit in Glasnevin cemetery and whose stone and marble works even got a mention in James Joyce's, 'Ulysses.'<sup>8</sup> The unveiling took place on Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1902 in the cemetery and afterwards there was a public meeting in a nearby field as Cardinal Logue forbade a political meeting in the graveyard. According to the Irish News: "The day was certainly one of the most memorable that the people of Armagh have witnessed for many years. From an early hour in the morning large crowds of country folk began to arrive whilst incoming trains brought large contingents from Belfast, Dundalk, Newry, Banbridge, Dungannon, Portadown, Monaghan, Clones and all the neighbouring

stations. In almost every instant each contingent was accompanied by a band and headed by an appropriate banner depicting an interesting episode in Irish history." People, bands and banners went in procession from Irish Street through the thronged streets to the meeting place. Historian, Donal P. McCracken noted that 'Michael Davitt was the star of the occasion.' He undoubtedly was a man from humble beginnings in County Mayo, a working-class intellectual who had lost his right arm in a mill accident in Lancashire when aged eleven, a founder of the Land League, a world traveller and a Westminster MP who resigned his seat in protest over the Boer War. His long speech which covered several columns of newsprint and was published extensively in the press throughout the country and beyond castigated Britain and heaped praise and admiration on the Boers. Other speakers were Dr O'Neill mentioned earlier and John P. O'Brien of the Old Guard Union, apparently a social club in Dublin for former Fenians, who gave addresses in similar but shorter vein. The only local speaker was John McGlone who chaired the event.<sup>9</sup>



A section of the detailed carving on the memorial

The occasion was not without incident. Early in the proceeding a government note taker accompanied by three policemen tried to gain access to the vehicle where the speakers were seated. They were jeered at by the crowd and pushed back out of range. When the last speaker went to give his address there was another disturbance which could have had more violent consequences. This was a second attempt by the note taker to access the vehicle, but he was now accompanied by a company of armed police which greatly incensed the crowd. The uproar caused the police to draw their bayonets, but some calm was restored after appeals from Michael Davitt. Later in the day there were skirmishes between those who attended the meeting on their way back through the town with those who opposed the event. According to the Northern Whig: "As the bands were coming up English Street and when just opposite Thomas Street corner, some slight disturbances took place. Stones were fired by the Nationalists at the opposing crowd, who were groaning as the bands went past. Some of the stones hit Messrs. Dodds windows and broke them. Some of the Nationalist bands who ventured into Protestant quarters were speedily routed. No further disturbances took place, save a few drunken rows."<sup>10</sup>

### **Claims that Carberry did not die**

In the weeks and months following the event the Armagh Guardian which had never made any secret of its intense hostility towards Irish nationalism and its representatives scathingly commented on the the organisers of the memorial event and those who attended. The former were referred to as 'wily publicans' (some members of the City Council were pub owners) and the latter as 'the scum and riffraff of Lurgan, Portadown, Lisburn, Belfast, Dundalk and other places.' The paper claimed that Hugh Carberry had not died but was alive but down and out in Pretoria. It even went so far as to name people with Armagh connections who allegedly had met him.<sup>11</sup> This apparently startling revelation was picked up by newspapers across Britain and Ireland who all reported that not only was he alive but wanted the memorial sold and the proceeds to be sent to him! It transpired that there was no truth in the story. The people who were supposed to have seen him

refuted the Guardian's report and the paper was forced to retract its allegations.<sup>12</sup> Conclusive evidence that Hugh Carberry had died in Pretoria came from friends there who sent home a copy of his death certificate and a statement from the Catholic chaplain to the Irish Brigade, Father Hammer, who attended him in hospital prior to his death.<sup>13</sup>

### **Dearth of biographical information**

Undoubtedly the Carberry memorial remains a significant physical manifestation of Irish nationalism's support for the Boers in the war. However, there would appear to be little information about the man himself in the public domain apart from his football career. Indeed, what was striking about Davitt's oration and also others at the memorial committee meetings over the year past was the lack of information on Hugh Carberry, the man, his family and local connections. He was lauded for his bravery and sacrifice but no mention at all of those who mourned him. In fact, there was even some ambiguity over the spelling of his surname. On the monument it is Carberry but, in some reports, it is Carbery with one r removed and in others it is Carbaray. Two letters from a friend, D.J.Hayes in Pretoria were published in newspapers. One praised staff in the hospital where Carberry died for their care of him and the State Secretary of the Transvaal, F.W.Reitz and his wife who visited him but it also provided the information that he went to South Africa ten years earlier to work in the goldfields.<sup>14</sup> Another, which was reprinted in the Irish News mentioned that his father was Patrick Carbery (note spelling) of Lower English Street, Armagh. The 1901 census returns confirmed that Patrick Carbery, a cattle dealer lived at that address. Intriguingly the letter referred to a brother of Carberry, a British army officer and a prisoner of war who had been injured in battle and was in another hospital in Pretoria. Hayes wrote that he had been unable to visit him to inform him of his brother's death before he was moved on. However, the newspaper promptly recorded in the next paragraph: "In some inexplicable way a mistake has crept into Mr Hayes's letter as the late burgher Carbery has not a brother in the British army." It is likely had it been the case that the two Carberry brothers were on opposing sides in the

war, newspapers like the Armagh Guardian would have been only too delighted to have embarrassed nationalists by exploiting the situation.<sup>15</sup>

### **Co-religionists in the British army**

Hugh Carberry may not have had a sibling in the British army but there were plenty of families throughout the entire island of Ireland who had members belonging to it, many of them his co-religionists. The funeral, with full military honours, of one of these men was held in Armagh in October 1901 when the campaign to raise funds for the Carberry memorial was active. The deceased was Private Gray of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, a married man with a family from County Cavan who had recently returned on sick leave from the war. According to the Ulster Gazette 'a very large number of the general public attended the 'sad ceremony' officiated at by Rev. P.E. Brady. It stated: "The coffin was draped with the Union Jack and the dead soldier's bearskin, sword and belt rested on it. On the line of march, the regimental band played Chopin's Funeral March, Beethoven's Funeral March and the Dead March in Saul. The grave having been closed; a firing party discharged three volleys over it as a parting salute."<sup>16</sup>

Whilst there were just three hundred members of MacBride's Irish Brigade on the Boer side there were some fifty thousand Irish men fighting for Britain in Africa at the time. It is inevitable that some were torn between their concern for the wellbeing and safekeeping of friends and family serving in the army and their Nationalist allegiance to the Boer cause. This must surely have been the case when the news reached Armagh in early November 1899 of the capture of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Royal Irish Fusiliers. The Northern Whig reported: "The news reached the city about twelve o'clock noon and the inhabitants were simply thunderstruck; the more especially since most of the battalion are either men belonging to the city or recruited from the immediate neighbourhood... Naturally the awful news struck home as very many of the families in Armagh amongst the working classes are represented in the battalion... The greatest anxiety prevails throughout the district, and further details are awaited impatiently." It goes on to add: "It is worthy of

notice that the Nationalist and pro-Boer opinion subsided considerably when the news became known that so many Irishmen had lost their lives or were in the hands of the enemy."<sup>17</sup>

The reasons for so many Irishmen being in the British Army were not all to do with loyalty to the Crown. It is reasonable to assume that for some it was family tradition to become soldiers, others were attracted by a sense of adventure, but the vast majority were likely motivated by economic necessity. In a country where employment opportunities were limited at least the army provided a regular wage. Although there were attempts to deter men from joining up, particularly from the more extreme pro-Boers in the Irish Transvaal Committee like Maud Gonne and James Connolly, it would seem that these did not have a significant impact.

### **Memorial controversy**

A few years after the war ended it was proposed that a memorial be erected to remember the officers and men of the Royal Irish Fusiliers who had lost their lives in the conflict. Once again there was controversy because, as already mentioned, the nationalist councillors who held the majority in the City Council refused to allow it to be sited in front of the courthouse as requested. Initially when a deputation from the Fusiliers memorial committee sought to address the council on the matter, the council in committee recommended that they should not even be heard. However, this was rejected so the High Sheriff, D.J.M. Palmer, the chairman of the County council, R.J. McCrum and H.B. Armstrong appeared before the council to make their case. The High Sheriff, acting as spokesperson, referred to 'the brave soldiers who had fallen in the war, many of whom belonged to Armagh'. This appeared to have no effect on the nationalists because they all voted to turn down the request. Cllr. Donnelly objected to the erection of a memorial in any of the leading streets of Armagh. He claimed that when the quarter sessions or assizes were being held it was one of the busiest streets in the city. He made the point that the streets were too narrow to fit a monument. Cllr. Kearney said there was space behind the Market House or on the Gaol Square belonging to the Toll

Committee but went on to ‘characterise the memorial as a ‘disgraceful one’ and said that ‘a few handful of Boer farmers’ had defied the British army and held them at bay in Ladysmith for some months.’ Cllr. Calvert also pointed out that some of the men who had fallen in the war belonged to the town and that it would ‘tyrannous’ to refuse the site requested. He moved, seconded by Cllr. Anderson, that the request be granted but his proposal fell on deaf ears as far as the nationalists were concerned.<sup>18</sup> Inevitably there was some public outrage from unionist quarters and the matter was even raised at Westminster by Thomas Sloan, the independent unionist M.P. for South Belfast, who wanted to know what was going to be done about it. He was informed that it was within the remit of the city council to grant or refuse a site for the memorial. He also wanted to know how much the extra policing brought in for the unveiling of the Carberry memorial had cost and was duly told that the amount to be paid by the local ratepayers was £20.12s.6d.<sup>19</sup>

### Memorial on the Mall

The Mall was finally chosen for the location of the memorial, a seven feet high bronze bugler about to play the Last Post designed by Kathleen Trousdell Shaw, a highly regarded artist who, although English-born was a member of the Royal Hibernian Society. Indeed she was the first woman sculptor to be admitted to any royal academy. The figure was placed on a granite plinth some twelve feet high. The names of the soldiers from the regiment who lost their lives in the war were inscribed on three sides of the base and on the fourth there was the badge of the regiment and the names of the places where engagements were carried out. Its unveiling on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1906 was an occasion of ‘pomp and pageantry.’ The Weekly Telegraph reported: “The guard of honour was supplied by about 200 men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers and that battalion being at present stationed in Dublin, the detachment with colours, band and drums arrived in the morning by special train. To the strains of stirring music they marched to the depot where they were joined by all available troops there, including the permanent staffs of the Armagh, Cavan and Monaghan Militia. About twelve o’clock the combined forces were manoeuvred into position on



The Royal Irish Fusiliers Boer War Memorial

the Mall, the guard of honour being put in front of the memorial.” It noted approvingly the flags and bunting decorating the streets but added: “However, in striking contrast to the loyal display the streets were in a filthy condition, the mud in some places being as much as four inches deep, and the comments upon the action of the urban council on which, by the way, there is a nationalist majority, and not having the dirt cleared away and the city made presentable in this respect were by no means favourable.”<sup>20</sup>

The unveiling was carried out by General Lord Grenfell, who, in the course of his address singled out some individual soldiers and one of these was Captain Carbery, the officer commanding the guard of honour. He had been ‘dangerously wounded’ in the war. It could well have been this man that D.J.Hayes thought was Hugh Carberry’s brother. However, although Captain Miles Bertie Cunninghame Carbery was in an Irish regiment he was born in Eastbourne. Sadly he died in action in France during the First World War. Another soldier

mentioned by Lord Grenfell was Colour-Sergeant Devlin, recipient of the Distinguished Conduct Medal, who was undoubtedly the Sgt. Devlin who refuted the Armagh Guardian's allegation that he had seen and spoken to Hugh Carberry in Pretoria. He pointed out that at the time this meeting was supposed to have taken place he was at home in Belfast. Other speakers at the event were the Church of Ireland Primate, Dr. William Alexander, the High Sheriff and R.J. McCrum. The platform party included gentry, military personnel and the great and the good but no nationalists. Indeed, in the previous day's paper the Irish news commented: "The nationalists of the city are, of course, abstaining from the function as they cannot forget that the war which tomorrow's display will commemorate was condemned by all right-thinking men as the most unjust and iniquitous one of modern times."<sup>21</sup>

### **No nationalist presence**

Whilst the Irish News was commenting favourably on the absence of a nationalist presence at the unveiling of the memorial it chose to ignore the fact that a significant number of the 161 names listed on it would have belonged to Irish Catholic families, probably some from Armagh itself, who may well have had some nationalist sympathies. Being in the army did not preclude someone from having political interests or concerns, bearing in mind for many it was a job rather than a vocation. This monument was just one of over twenty memorials throughout the island of Ireland, from Belfast to Kerry, including the famous Fusiliers Arch entrance to Stephens Green, off Grafton Street, Dublin commemorating the thousands of Irishmen who died in battle during the Boer War.<sup>22</sup>

There were 31 members of the Irish Brigade, including Irish-Americans, who were 'killed, died of wounds or died of disease', a tiny number compared to over 4000 from the Irish regiments in the British army.<sup>23</sup> Nonetheless, there was just a single monument erected in memory of one of them despite all the public acclamation given to the Boer cause by Irish nationalists. It could well be argued that the Carberry memorial came about primarily because Armagh nationalists had gained in confidence due to their success in local government and were glad of the opportunity to assert their

authority and their numbers were growing. It helped that Hugh Carberry was a local man with sporting affiliations.

The two Armagh monuments, within walking distance of one and other, are essentially relics of a largely forgotten war which resulted in the deaths of too many men throughout the island and, for a time, highlighted political differences and allegiances while causing controversy in the city and beyond.

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<sup>10</sup>*Northern Whig*, 9<sup>th</sup> June, 1902

<sup>11</sup>*Armagh Guardian*, 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 1903

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 6<sup>th</sup> February, 1903

<sup>13</sup>*Irish News*, 6<sup>th</sup> May, 1903

<sup>14</sup>*The People's Advocate*, 21<sup>st</sup> April, 1900

<sup>15</sup>*Irish News*, 1<sup>st</sup> June, 1900

<sup>16</sup>*Ulster Gazette*, 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1901

<sup>17</sup>*Northern Whig*, 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1899

<sup>18</sup>*Lurgan Mail*, 10<sup>th</sup> February, 1906

<sup>19</sup>*Portadown News*, 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 1906

<sup>20</sup>*Belfast Weekly News*, 11<sup>th</sup> October, 1906

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<sup>22</sup>DIVER, L., "Ireland and the South African War 1899-1902: thesis for the degree of Ph.D, Dept. Of History, National University, Maynooth.

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# Hugh Breen - Father of Astronomers

by Matthew McMahon



Fig 1. The Ulster History Circle Blue Plaque unveiled in 2023

Hugh Breen was born in Armagh in 1791, an auspicious year that saw the parliament in Dublin pass an Act for the political protection of the newly built Observatory in Armagh. Though Hugh Breen did not work at the Armagh Observatory, he was certainly familiar with it and the community of telescope makers, astronomers and assistants that lived in Armagh may have helped establish his interest in astronomy. He was born to a Roman Catholic family, in a period when the sciences were dominated by members of the established Church of Ireland who had studied at Trinity.

We know very little of his early life, where he was schooled or the like, but in 1826 he returned from a short time in Dublin to teach in Armagh. He returned with a clear understanding of both contemporary science and mathematics, as well as experience in lecturing to both children and adults in these subjects. The Armagh Mechanics' Institute was founded in January of that year and required a science teacher and master of the school, and Hugh Breen was given the position. Hugh Breen and his

wife, Mary, and his two children moved into lodgings on Abbey Street provided by the school.<sup>1</sup> His salary was £40 annually and it was supplemented by a small payment to assist with his move from Dublin. Mary passed before the Armagh Mechanics' Institute closed its doors in 1831. By 1832 Hugh had remarried and his fourth child was born in that year.

The period between the closing of the institute and his move in London in 1838 are something of a mystery however his ability as a mathematician and astronomer were known across Ireland and he had made connections to some of the most influential members of the intelligentsia at that period. In 1838 he had begun to attract unwelcome attention from the community in Armagh after voting for William Curry, a Whig Candidate in 1837. Seeking employment elsewhere he approached the Astronomer Royal in England, Dr George Biddell Airy, by way of his patrons, the Caulfield family. This letter of introduction was signed by many of his contacts and included testimony to his ability from Dr Robinson (Astronomer of the Armagh Observatory), Dr Hamilton (Astronomer Royal for Ireland at Dunsink Observatory), Dr Brinkley (the recently deceased Astronomer Royal for Ireland at Dunsink Observatory) and Dionysius Lardner, the controversial polymath. By the end of the summer of 1838 Hugh Breen was employed as a computer at the Royal Observatory in Greenwich London.<sup>2</sup>

The work of a computer in the first half of the 19th century was grueling and the fiery negotiations over the working hours of the computers has been documented very well in a recent paper (Belteki, 2023). Promoted to the role of superintendent, he formed an essential managerial link between the Astronomy Royal, and his band of young and talented mathematicians. Far from being a career that encouraged creative problem solving and prized an ingenious mind, the role of a computer was as intellectual manual labour. The science of

mathematics meeting the division of labour and the early industrial revolution resulted in a process whereby each computer was responsible for a specific, relatively simple set of equations, or reductions. These would be applied to observations that dated as far back as 1750, on a variety of telescopes and scientific instruments, and used to account for a laundry list of deviations in the data, such as temperature, pressure, parallax, and celestial motion. The equations were developed and honed with input from Hugh Breen, who then delegated them to his team. Ultimately the responsibility for the accuracy of the work fell to him, so much of the calculations crossed his desk for checks and revisions if necessary.

Viewed as disposable staff, if the computers did not perform as required, they were fired or had their pay docked and this extended to Hugh Breen. The computers were confined to the Octagon room of the Royal Observatory, which in winter was drafty and their movements restricted. Demonstrating his mathematical skill, and his managerial talents, Hugh Breen was promoted to superintendent of the computers in 1840. He had been joined by his son, Hugh Breen junior, the first of three sons to work as computers at Greenwich. Though the four men would never work there simultaneously, the 'Breen Period' lasted decades and saw a great change in the attitudes to, and the work of, the computers. Hugh Breen senior remained a lifelong learner, and in 1841 he was given permission to use the Observatory library and would request copies of new papers written by the Astronomy Royal.

Hugh Breen organized the team of computers to tackle the task of perfecting and reducing the planetary observations taken at the Royal Observatory. In 1840 this was supplemented by the task of working on the observations of the moon. In 1848 Hugh Breen published an official report on these observations. It contained data on eighty years of observations that he had completed with the help of his team, in under ten years. Hugh Breen passed away on the first of April 1848, the same year as much of his work was published. He was 57 years old and was buried in London, only five miles from the Royal Observatory at Greenwich.

T.G.F. Paterson, the curator of the Armagh County Museum, gave a talk in 1950 at the Armagh Centre of the Irish Astronomical Society, and was the first to draw attention to this "mathematician of no mean order".<sup>3</sup> In 1999 Dr Mary Brück and Sheelagh Grew published a comprehensive article in the Irish Astronomical Journal which detailed the lives of Hugh and his three sons who all worked at various points in the Royal Greenwich Observatory. The Breen's have also made appearances in the work of Dr Belteki in recent years and months as he continues to bring new information to the fore on the history of the Royal Greenwich Observatory.

In 2023 the Ulster History Circle unveiled a blue plaque to Hugh Breen on Abbey Street in Armagh which had once served as his family home while he taught at the Armagh Mechanics Institution, nearly two centuries earlier. The plaque notes the rarity of an astronomer and three of his sons serving in the same institution. The Blue Plaque would not have been possible without the hard work and research of Maud Hamill, Sean Barden, Dr Louise Devoy, Dr Daniel Belteki and Prof. Michael Burton. This Blue Plaque is one of a series that has been funded by Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council, the project is coordinated through the council's museum service.

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# 'The Keady Pedlars and the Armagh Gang of Burglars', co-operation or non-cooperation?

## The political standoff between the IRA and the RIC in Armagh City, 1921-22

by Kevin Quinn

### The political background

The Irish War of Independence ended with a truce on the 11th July 1921. The truce was followed by negotiations towards an Anglo-Irish Treaty which would be agreed upon by the IRA and the British government in December 1921. While the truce brought relative peace to the south of Ireland, it was largely ignored by the IRA in the north where the state of Northern Ireland had already come into existence in May 1921 through the Government of Ireland Act, 1920. Despite this hostility, there was some degree of co-operation between Republicans and the Crown in the newly created Northern state during the Treaty negotiations between July and December 1921. However, this co-operation was short-lived as tension mounted within the IRA over the Treaty and by early 1922, the northern units of the IRA re-commenced hostilities against the newly formed Northern State.

### Republican courts and a Republican police force

This short-lived co-operation was made possible due to the judicial system known as the Dail Courts, established in January 1919 alongside a parliament, Dail Eireann, by the Republican movement. This Republican judicial system also incorporated an Irish Republican police force which was established in June 1920. As part of this new force, each IRA unit was required to allocate a number of members to work as police officers. Following the truce, and during the negotiations which would culminate in the Anglo-Irish Treaty, the IRA appointed Truce Liaison Officers to prevent any violations of the truce and to maintain its stability. For their part, the IRA appointed Truce Liaison Officers for all 32 counties.

### The IRA 'Truce Liaison Officer' for Co. Armagh

In October 1921, John McCoy was appointed by the IRA's Officer Commanding 4th Northern Division, Frank Aiken, as the Truce Liaison Officer for Co. Armagh. Between 1918 and 1919, McCoy had been the IRA's South Armagh Battalion's Adjutant followed by the Co. Armagh Brigade Adjutant from 1919 until the spring of 1921 when he was captured and seriously wounded (a gunshot wound to the head) whilst attempting to escape from Crown forces. He was released from a Military hospital in Belfast in the summer of 1921. (see fig.1 )

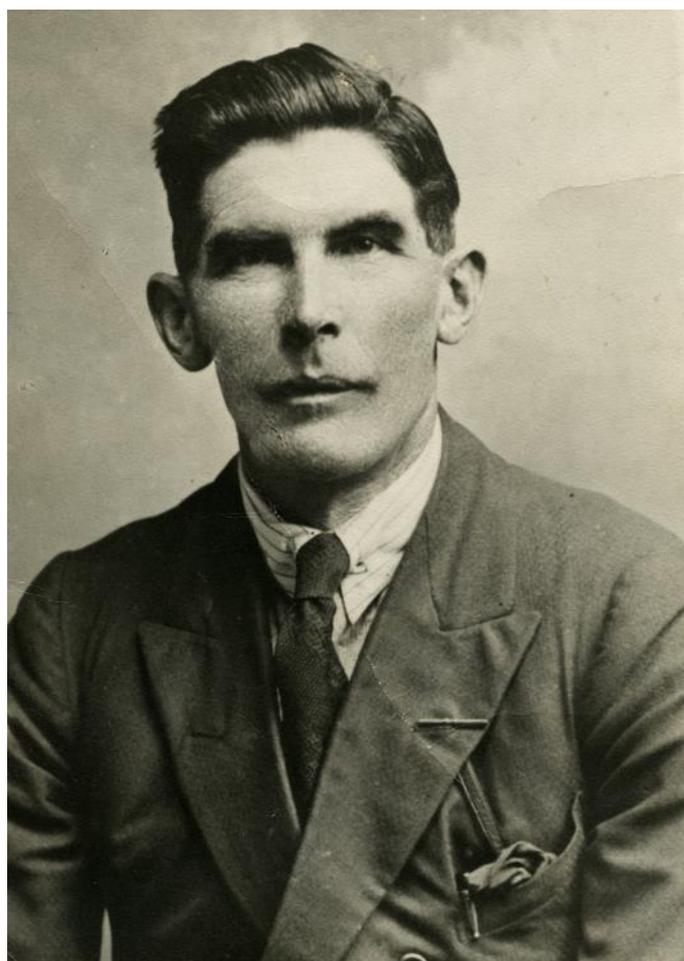


Fig. 1. IRA, 4th Northern, John McCoy.

Photo circa 1952. Dorney, John. The Irish Story. Irish History Online. March 2022.

## Truce Liaison Office in Armagh

On arrival in Armagh, McCoy took up residence in the Charlemont Hotel in the City which provided an office for his liaison work. The IRA leadership in Dublin covered the cost of the hotel, travel expenses, paid a weekly salary of £5, and gave McCoy the rank of temporary Captain for his time in post as Truce Liaison Officer.

## Meeting the RIC County Inspector

Shortly after taking up his position, McCoy met with the RIC County Inspector Major C.C. Oulton for the inspection of credentials as Liaison Officer. His brief was to represent the IRA in all matters concerning liaison work within the county. According to McCoy, the meeting was courteous, however, the County Inspector was uncertain how to engage with him and needed guidance regarding the official recognition of McCoy's position. Major Oulton concluded that he would deal with McCoy 'as far as he was allowed to do so in all matters concerning peace and good order within the County'. Despite this official recognition, Oulton outlined that the 6 northern counties were under the jurisdiction of the state of Northern Ireland and not that of the Republican government in the 26 southern counties. At the end of the meeting, once these important formalities had been made, Oulton expressed "the hope that our association and friendly cooperation should prevent any unpleasantnesses that might likely arise from time to time".

## Police arrest Keady Republicans

In his second day in position as Liaison Officer, McCoy received notification that six Republicans from the Keady district had been arrested for conducting a Republican Court, and were being held in Gough Military Barracks in Armagh City. The prisoners were charged with sedition, specifically; 'usurping the power and authority of his Majesty and with bringing into contempt his Majesty's Court'. In his capacity as Liaison Officer, McCoy was allowed access to the prisoners, but was unable to secure their release. (see figs. 2&3)

## Inconsistencies?

Following the arrests, Oulton reiterated to McCoy



Fig. 2 Armagh Guardian, November & December 1921

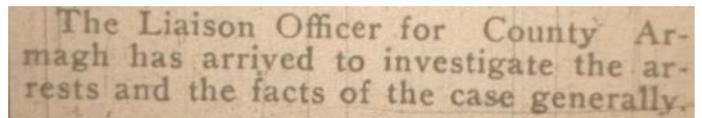


Fig. 3 Armagh Guardian, November & December 1921

that he would not tolerate Republican Courts in the jurisdiction of the new Northern state. Oulton made clear that 'the only way he would allow the Republican police to cooperate in dealing with crime was to report to the RIC and to attend British courts and give their evidence'. In response, McCoy argued 'that the arrest of the Keady Republicans was a bar to any friendly agreement with the British authorities in County Armagh in the prevention of crime and the protection of property.' McCoy could be forgiven for viewing Oulton's hardline stance over the Keady Republicans as somewhat inconsistent as a Republican Court had been held in Armagh City's most prominent civic building, the City Hall, in October 1921. This Court had not been subject to RIC hostility or interference. (see fig. 4)

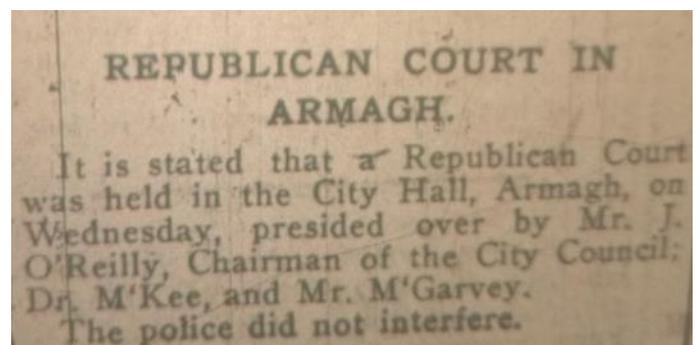


Fig. 4 Armagh Guardian, November & December 1921

## The arrest and trial of two pedlars by Republican Police and Magistrates

In November 1921, the Republican Police from K Company, 11th Battalion, 3rd Brigade, Northern Division IRA arrested two pedlars for a series of thefts from several shops in Keady. Both were charged with the larceny of oil cloth from a shop in Keady. Both pedlars were tried by Republican Magistrates and found guilty as charged. Both received a sentence of 48 hours solitary

confinement and expulsion from Co. Armagh for one year. According to the Republican Police, they had informed the RIC on several occasions that these two pedlars were behind a series of thefts and robberies in the Keady area, but the police had failed to investigate the crimes.

### Disputed circumstances surrounding arrests

According to McCoy, during their confinement, one pedlar escaped and informed the RIC. Subsequently six Republican Police were arrested, followed by the arrest of two Republican magistrates a week later. However, the RIC stated that a witness saw the pedlars being arrested in Castleblayney and informed the local police. A follow up operation led the police to a deserted farmhouse which was being used as a temporary jail to hold the pedlars. (see figs 5 & 6)

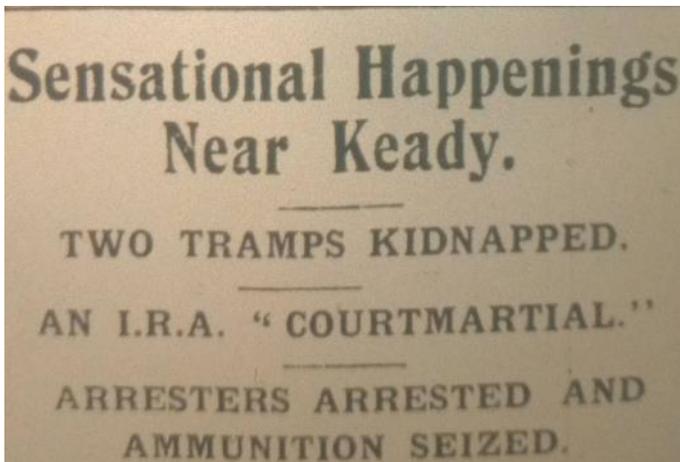


Fig. 5 Armagh Guardian, November & December 1921



Fig. 6 Armagh Guardian, November & December 1921

### The Crown Charges against the Republican Police and Judiciary

Appearing before Armagh Petty Sessions Court, six Republican police were charged with unlawful assault and false imprisonment. The two Republican Magistrates described 'as two prominent Keady business men' were charged with conducting a mock trial. The prisoners did not recognise the court stating 'as soldiers of the Irish Republic we refuse to recognise the court'. The prisoners were remanded to Dundalk Gaol. A heavily armed convoy of Crossley Tenders (Trucks for transporting military/police), transported them from Gough Barracks to Dundalk. (see fig. 7)

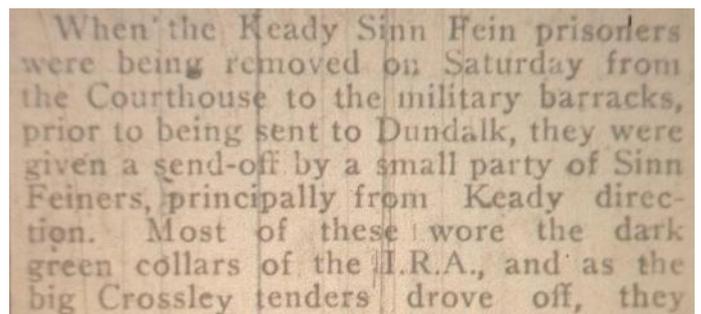


Fig. 7 Armagh Guardian, November & December 1921

### The Trial

The trial was held in Belfast under a Chief Justice and Jury. The witnesses included one pedlar from Castleblayney and another from Drogheda. Both were former British soldiers. The former had served in South Africa during the Boer War, India, and Egypt while the latter had served during the First World War. Their testimony was as follows: They were walking from Carnagh to Castleblayney when they found a piece of oil cloth on the road which they took with them. In Castleblayney they frequented two public houses, drinking two pints of porter each, and were arrested leaving the second pub by three armed IRA men who drove them to a deserted farmhouse in the outskirts of Keady. There they were held in a hayloft where they were tried by two Republican Magistrates. Their hands were handcuffed behind their backs, they were severely beaten, and given no food or water for 36 hours. Whilst serving their sentences the RIC arrived at the farmhouse and released them. At no time did either of them try to escape.

The Republican Magistrate cross examined the Castleblayney pedlar to outline to the court the type of character that he was. He pointed out that he had abandoned his wife and family leaving them destitute. At this point, the Chief Justice intervened stating ‘you are charged with a specific offence, and it does not matter if they are the greatest blackguards in creation you have no right to interfere with them’.

### **The Verdict**

The Belfast Jury took only fifteen minutes to return a guilty verdict. All defendants were sentenced to six months hard labour. A direct appeal was sent to Dublin Castle for their release (as all Republican prisoners had been released during the truce), but this was refused by Dublin Castle who said that they had no jurisdiction in Northern Ireland. However, this would beg the question why the prisoners had been remanded in Dundalk Gaol. (see fig.8)

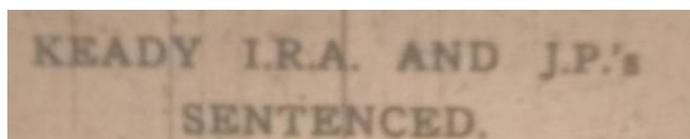


Fig. 8 Armagh Guardian, November & December 1921

### **The District RIC Inspector calls with the Truce Liaison Officer**

RIC District Inspector E.J. Conran met with John McCoy in his office in the Charlemont Hotel. The inspector requested the assistance of the Republican police in the arrest and conviction of a gang of Armagh youths who were engaged in a series of burglaries in the city. The leader of the gang was ‘a certain ‘young fellow who along with his gang inspired fear throughout the town’ making it difficult to find witnesses willing to give the evidence required to convict. The gang was committing robberies on a large scale specialising in raiding lock-up shops; taking cash and stealing non-perishable (expensive) foodstuffs. (see fig.9)

### **The response**

McCoy informed the Inspector that if the Republican Police were to get involved they would do it independently of the British authority. Unless the Keady Republicans were released, there would be no prospect of the RIC getting any

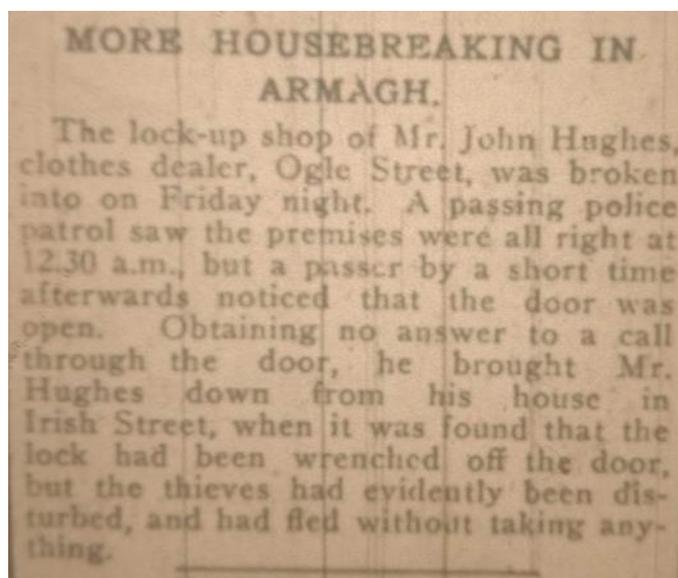


Fig. 9 Armagh Guardian, November & December 1921

Republican help in dealing with criminals. His terms were rejected outright.

### **Armagh Republican Police Investigate**

However, after the meeting with the RIC District Inspector, John McCoy instructed the officer commanding the IRA Armagh Brigade to have their Republican police investigate the gang and their activities. After a short period of time, the Armagh Republican police reported back to the Truce Liaison Officer with enough evidence to secure a conviction. The evidence included the location of the gang’s several dumps for hiding their stolen goods which included burial vaults in local cemeteries. Crucially, there were witnesses who were willing to testify.

### **Co-operation or non-cooperation**

McCoy contacted RIC District Inspector to make available all the evidence that the Republican police had gathered on the proviso that the Keady Republicans be released and that the Republican Police’s ‘existence as partners with the RIC in the preservation of law and order be recognised’. Again his offer was rejected, and according to McCoy there was no further communication from the RIC District Inspector regarding the case. As a result, the Republican Police stood down from the case and took no further role in the investigation.

### **RIC arrests the gang leader and two gang members**

In early January 1922, the RIC arrested and charged three youths for the breaking and entering

of Mr Ferris' grocery shop in Market Street, Armagh City. The three appeared in a sitting of a special court in Armagh City. The purported gang leader's address was given as Lower English Street while the other two gang members addresses were given as Banbrook Hill and Navan Street, all of which are located in Armagh City. (see fig. 10)

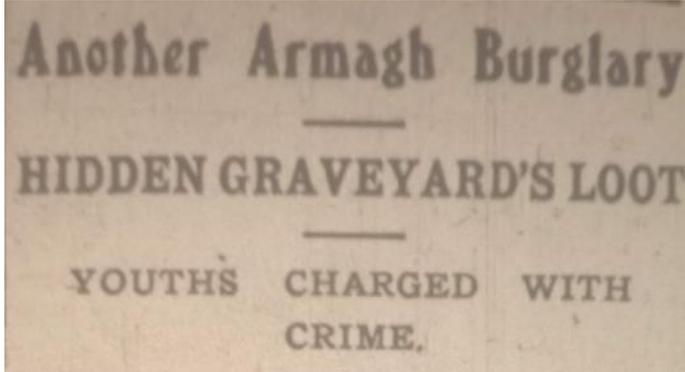


Fig. 10 Armagh Guardian January 1922

### The Stolen Articles

The items taken from the grocery shop were; a £5 piece, a £2 piece, a William IV Sovereign, £2.5s in



Fig. 11 Ferris's grocery shop was situated where the Hole-in-the-wall bar is today. The Ferris family initially leased and then owned the building from 1847 to 1955. The Hole-in-the-wall bar was created by law in 1924, when the sale of alcohol had to be in premises separated from the sale of food.

Photo by DRM Weatherup, c1969, © Armagh County Museum.

coppers, an electric torch, and a quart of whiskey. The items were identified as those which were stolen from Mr Ferris' grocery shop, along with what police believed to be the proceeds of the gang's previous robberies. (see fig.11)

### The stashed loot hidden in 'Bully's Acre'

The gang used the old Presbyterian graveyard which was known locally as 'Bully's Acre' to hide the stolen goods. The graveyard was close to the addresses of two of the accused. The items found



Fig. 12 The Presbyterian burial ground known locally as Bully's Acre that was beside the Meeting House of the Seceding congregation in Lower English Street.

February 2015 © Armagh County Museum

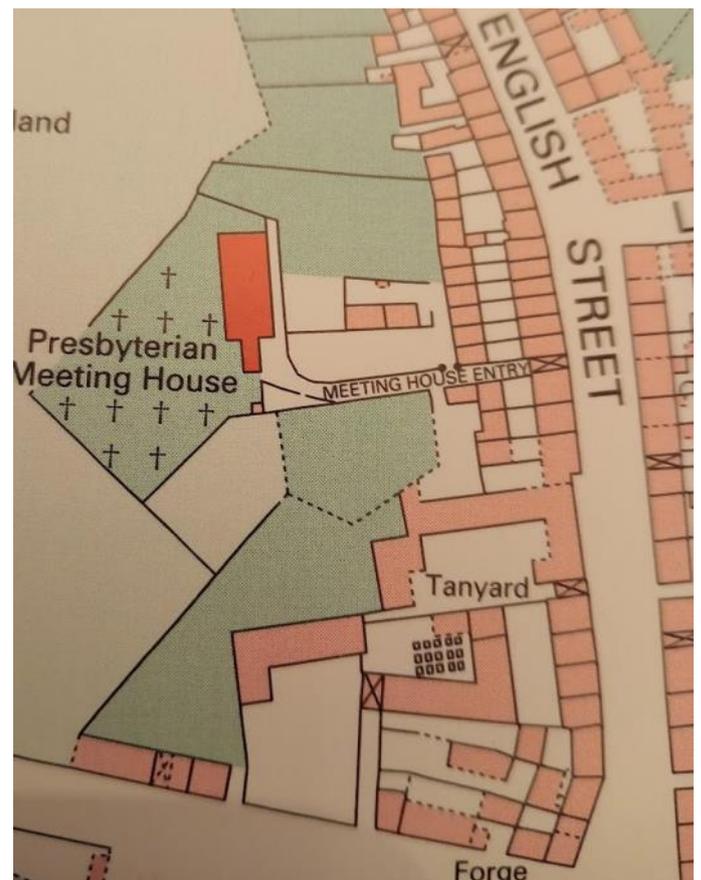


Fig.13, 1834 map from Irish Historic Town Atlas No.18 showing the location of 'Bully's Acre'. According to Stuart's Historical Memoirs 1819, the entry to the meeting house was also called 'Sydney Place'

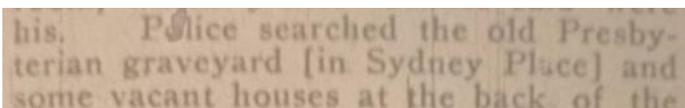


Fig. 14 Armagh Guardian January 1922

were an empty quart whiskey bottle, which bore W.R. Ferris on the label, five pricklocks, a skeleton key, and three packages which totaled 25 shillings in coppers ( see figs.12, 13 & 14 )

### **The suspects' homes searched**

During the search of the gang leader's home, an electric torch was found in his bedroom. He made no statement when questioned. The Navan Street suspect, during the search of his home stated 'I know nothing about it'. However, he was able to assist the police during their search of the graveyard. He found an envelope containing picture postcards with the printed address of a Belfast company. The gang leader's father was the local agent for the same company. Other articles found were a khaki haversack and a brown Willesden cartridge bag. At the Banbrook Hill suspect's home, eight keys were found in the bedclothes, along with a skeleton key, which was slightly bent but fitted the lock of the back door leading into Mr Ferris's backyard. All were refused bail and remanded in custody.

### **The pre-trial hearing**

The pre-trial hearing was held in Armagh Magistrate's Court before Mr McBride. Head Constable O'Donnell admitted that he could not press to have the prisoners sent for trial, as he could not connect the prisoners with the stolen articles. The magistrate commented that two things rather struck him; firstly, 'one prisoner having the torch which belonged to Mr Ferris and another having the keys, and there was no direct evidence of the prisoners having broken into the place', and secondly, '[although] he did not think these were wise things for these boys to have, they were not conclusive to the public welfare, therefore he would have to refuse informations'. (formal criminal charge)

### **A statute of Edward III**

The Head Constable said that he had 'simple evidence' to ask that the prisoners be bound over to keep the peace. The defending solicitor, Mr Lavery

asked the Head Constable under what law the application was being made. The Head Constable informed the court that he was pressing his application under a statute of Edward III, that of simple evidence. Under this section he was entitled to have his application granted. The magistrate interrupted saying that he wanted evidence, as the evidence so far was that the keys were found under the bed. The head Constable informed them that the keys were found under the bed, and a short distance from the rear of the house the pricklocks were found. Mr Lavery objected to this use of simple evidence under the Edward III statute, only to be told by the Head Constable that he was delaying the court. Mr. Lavery responded by telling the Head Constable not to be 'impertinent'.

### **RIC case collapses**

In summing up, the Magistrate stated that there was no evidence against the Navan Street youth and that the gang leader's previous convictions were not relevant in this case. Therefore, the application for the prisoners to go to trial was refused, as the magistrate had not been given any evidence by the Crown to support their case. It is more than likely that the evidence gathered by the Republican police in this case would have resulted in convictions, especially as they had witnesses willing to testify. (see fig.15)



Fig. 15 Armagh Guardian January 1922

### **Successful cooperation between the RIC County Inspector and Truce Liaison Officer**

For the most part, there appears to have been a considerable degree of cooperation between both parties. On one occasion in south Armagh, the RIC County Inspector briefed the Truce Liaison Officer that there had been a serious breach of the truce. Two Police motor tenders had been ambushed. The Republican Police arrested five Hibernians who had removed revolvers from an IRA arms dump

and had used them to ambush the patrol. The five were tried by a Republican court and fined.

On another occasion, a drunken Special Constable discharged his personal firearm in a nationalist area of Armagh City, claiming that he returned fire after coming under attack from the IRA. On investigation by Republican police it was discovered that the drunken Constable had indiscriminately discharged his revolver, firing at his own hat which he had placed on a bush. The Constable had claimed that the bullet hole had come from being fired at by the IRA, however, the County Inspector pointed out that the bullet entry would have killed him. As a result, the Constable was severely disciplined. According to the Liaison Officer, the most common complaint from the RIC County Inspector was that of armed IRA officers and men. This was usually addressed with a severe reprimand and disciplinary action from Republican Magistrates and Police.

### **Northern Truce Liaison Officers arrested**

John McCoy remained as IRA Truce Liaison Officer for Co. Armagh until the end of January 1922. He was recalled to be reappointed Divisional Adjutant of the 4th Northern Division IRA. By March 1922, hostilities had flared up again between the Northern IRA and the newly formed state of Northern Ireland. The Northern Government arrested all the six-county IRA Truce Liaison Officers which included Seamus Connolly (arrested May 1922), John McCoy's replacement for Co. Armagh.

### **John McCoy**

At the outbreak of the Civil War, John McCoy was prominent in promoting a policy of neutrality within the ranks of the 4th Northern Division. However, the pro-Treaty government did not accept neutrality. In the end, the majority of the Northern Division joined the ranks of the anti-Treaty forces including John McCoy. His first and last action in the Civil War was blowing a hole in the wall of the exercise yard of Dundalk Gaol and freeing 112 anti-Treaty IRA prisoners including Frank Aiken (Officer Commanding the 4th Northern Division). John McCoy was captured in the follow up operation to recapture

the escapees. He was interned in the Curragh Camp, escaping in April 1923 by means of a tunnel, to be recaptured two weeks later. He was eventually released in June 1924.

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"The rivers rush into the sea  
By castle and town they go;  
The winds behind them merrily  
Their noisy trumpets blow."

"Full and swollen is every sail;  
I see no longer a hill,  
I have trusted all to the sounding gale,  
And it will not let me stand still."

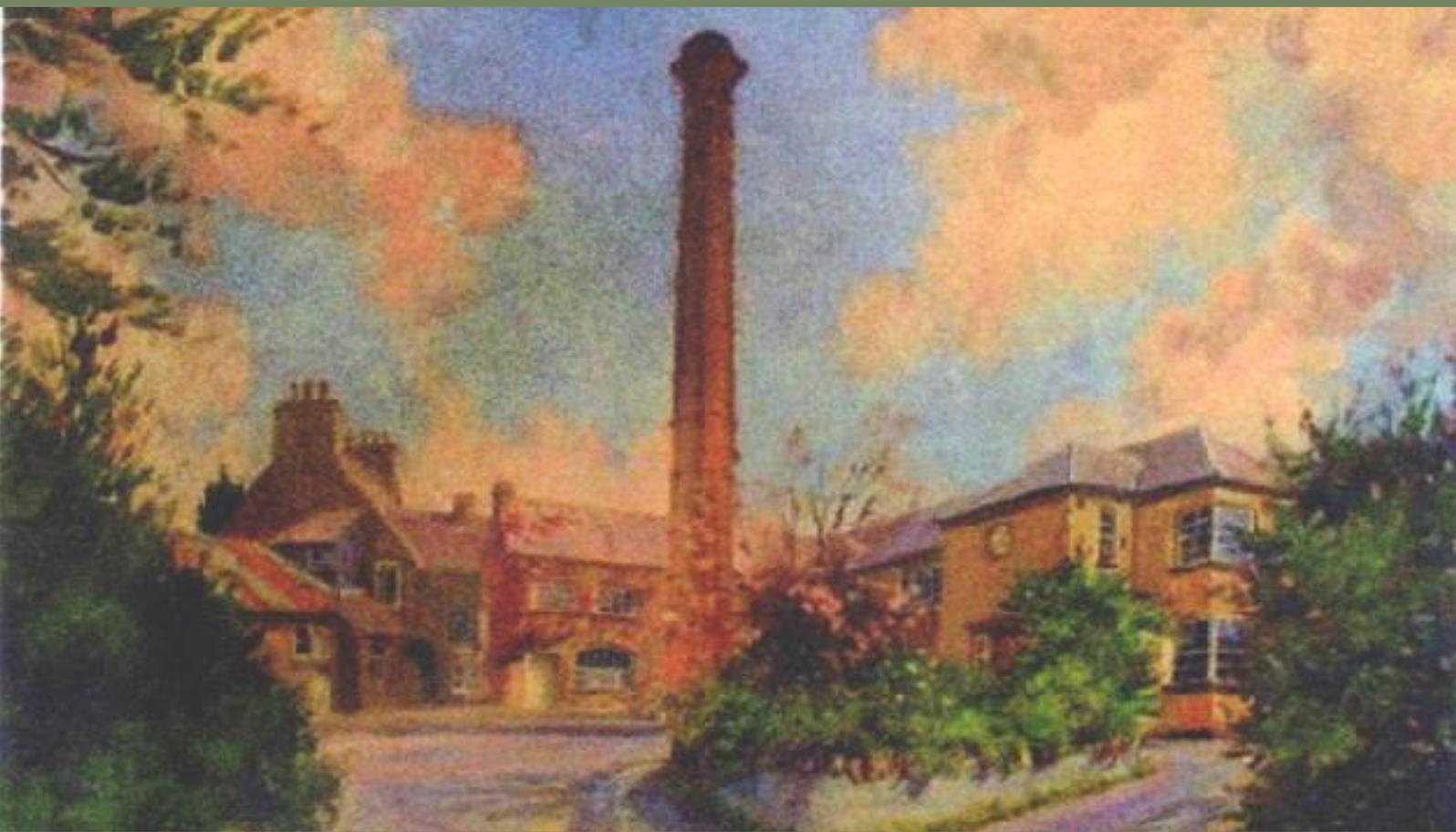
Richard Burns  
1965

"High over the sails, high over the mast,  
Who shall gainsay these joys?  
When thy merry companions are still, at least  
Thou shalt hear the sound of my voice



The above is a page from the Scrap Album. Please see article by Richard Burns on page 24.

Richard's contribution to the Scrap Album, "The Brook" by Alfred Lord Tennyson, seemed appropriate for the surrounding sketches by Lil Davis.



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