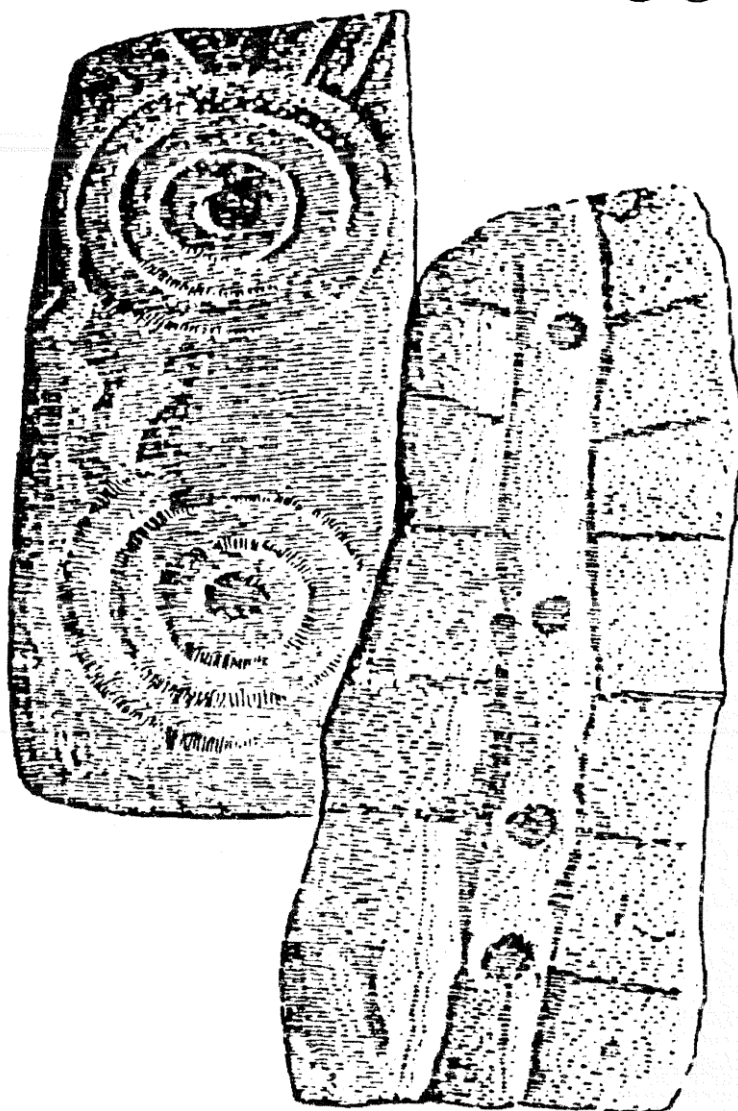


# RATHMICHAEL HISTORICAL RECORD

1998



The Journal of the Rathmichael Historical Society

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Rathmichael Historical Record 1998

Editor: Rosemary Beckett

Assisted by Rob Goodbody

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### Secretary's Report, 1998

This year was another busy year for the Society's members and committee. There were five monthly lectures, an evening course, four outings and ten committee meetings.

The Winter season resumed, following the AGM with a lecture in February by Frederick O'Dwyer on *The Architecture of Deane and Woodward*. This was followed in March by Mairéad Johnson who spoke on the Abbeyleix carpet factory and concluded in April with an illustrated lecture by Ian Lumley on "Changing Dublin".

The Summer season began in May with members of the Society joining a guided tour of some of the lesser known monastic sites of County Offaly. In June we visited Larchill in County Kildare, Wicklow gaol and court-house and Avondale House in July, and St Mary's Abbey and Marsh's Library on Heritage Sunday in September.

July also saw the publication of the Festschrift in honour of Paddy Healy. The lecturers for our evening course in August were drawn from amongst those contributing to this splendid book.

The Winter Season began again in October with a talk by Searnas Ó Maitiú on *The Townships of Suburban Dublin*. This was followed in November by a lecture from Malachy Conway on *Excavations at Cabinteely*. The year concluded in early December with three short talks by members, Jim Scannell, June Burry and Rob Goodbody.

The Committee is currently working on the programme for the coming year and will circulate you with the details as soon as possible.

In conclusion I would like to thank my fellow committee members for all their help during the year. On behalf of the Society I would like to thank Rathmichael Parish for the use of the Burton Hall and in particular Pat Booth and, finally on behalf of the committee, I would like to thank Rosemary Beckett for her hospitality to us during the past year.

Muirín Ó Briain Hon. Secretary 6th January 1999

## **8 January 1998**

### **Annual General Meeting**

The twenty-second Annual General Meeting of Rathmichael Historical Society was held in the Burton Hall, Rathmichael, on 8th January 1998.

The minutes of the previous AGM were read and signed.

The treasurer Kay Merry read her report. Although the book account had increased by £78 to a total of £1,792.31 and the summer school had made £150.20, resulting in a total of £2,743.00, the main Society account had suffered a net loss of £120.86 in the year.

There were 87 paid up members, although a further 32 members had not paid their subscription for the year. In order to counter this loss, the annual membership fees were to be increased and a number of cost-cutting measures were to be introduced by the incoming committee. Chief among these were the reduction of the total number of circulars yearly from 12 to 6 and the presentation of the following month's notices to those attending a winter lecture. Kay Merry proposed a vote of thanks to John Riseley for his help in auditing the Society's accounts.

The Secretary read his report. The President, Rob Goodbody, reported that although this had been a year in which the Society had not run any archaeology-based courses, the summer school had been very successful. The first course, on sourcing local history, had been well attended, while the second course on visual sources for local history had been booked to capacity. The five August evening lectures had also been very popular and probably for the first time ever, the latter series had made a profit.

There were no matters arising from any of these reports.

A vote of thanks was proposed to Rob Goodbody for his work as president in the previous three years. A vote of thanks was also proposed to June Burry and the other volunteers who had helped with the summer school.

After a brief discussion, the meeting moved on to the nomination of candidates for officers and committee members. The following names were proposed.

<b>Officer</b>	<b>Nominated</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Seconded</b>
President	R. Beckett	R Goodbody	Kay Merry
Secretary	Muirin Ó Briain	S Harrison	R Beckett
Treasurer	Kay Merry	Dell Lundy	M Ó Briain
Editor	R Beckett	R Goodbody	S Harrison
Committee Members			
	Aida Whelan	R Goodbody	R Beckett
	June Burry	R Goodbody	R Beckett
	JMcCaughey	R Goodbody	R Beckett
	James Byrne	R Goodbody	Kay Merry

As there were no other candidates all of the above were declared elected unopposed. The ex-President, Rob Goodbody then brought the AGM to a close before a number of members showed slides.

**4th February 1998**  
**The Architecture of Deane and Woodward**  
**Frederick O'Dwyer**

Sir Thomas Deane was an Architect, builder and patron of the arts. His father had been a builder and when he died in 1806 left his widow to carry on the business. Mrs Deane was a formidable woman. Thomas was just 14 and helped his Mother to run the business and designed his first building, the Cork Commercial Buildings on South Mall, in 1811 beating in the competition William Wilkins, the noted English architect who had designed Nelson's pillar in Dublin. He married first in 1809 and lived over the business in Deane St. on Lapp's Island, then in 1823 he bought a house at Dundannion in Blackrock, Co. Cork and later built a substantial house on the land and called it Dundannion Castle. He gained control of the business after his mother's death in 1828, her last enterprise being the construction of houses along Great Georges St. (now Washington St.) a new street driven by the Wide Streets Commissioners to form part of a new western approach to Cork. The design of these buildings was based, according to a contemporary source, on Westmoreland Street in Dublin.

Deane married again following the death of his wife, in 1827. He served on Cork Corporation for many years and was elected High Sheriff in 1815 and 1830. He was a Tory representing the merchant class of Cork; the Whigs were the aristocracy who held power in the County and this reduced the potential of his architectural practice. His main rivals were James and George Pain, who had a certain cachet to Irish patrons, having worked with John Nash in London. It was said that the Pain brothers copied Deane's design for the Cork courthouse. One of Deane's most important works was Dromore Castle, Templenoe, Co. Kerry which was built in the castellated gothic style. He did a lot of work also in Limerick, building new quays and three workhouses. Business was poor in 1840's but the establishment of Queen's College Cork was the start of his association with Woodward whom he employed as his assistant.

Benjamin Woodward was the son of an army officer and was born in Tullamore in 1816. His mother, who was from Armagh died in 1824 and by 1833 the family had moved to Dublin. Benjamin was articled to a civil engineer but was very interested in art and architecture and developed an interest in Gothic style. He did very de-tailed drawings of medieval crosses and beautiful drawings of Holy Cross Abbey. These drawings were publicised and Woodward gained a reputation as an antiquary. He worked on the Shannon Navigation with William Stokes.

In 1846 Deane was asked to prepare plans for the Queen's College in Cork on a site adjoining the gaol and Woodward was involved with the working drawings. The plan for the college was a quadrangle, but the south side was omitted due to concern in public works circles that closed quadrangles were unhealthy and had been banned for lunatic asylums.

Queen Victoria visited in 1849, but because there was cholera in Cork she was advised not to enter any buildings, and so she viewed the unveiling of her statue in the College from the safe distance of her carriage on the Western road!

Deane and Woodward's next work was Killarney Lunatic Asylum and in 1851 their partnership was formed.

In 1852 they won a competition for a lecture room building in Trinity College, Dublin, this was later known as the Museum Building and was variously described at the time as Romanesque, Venetian, Renaissance and Cinquecento, one of the great masterpieces of Gothic revival. The plan was by McKern of TCD, Deane did the elevation and the design was Woodward's. The glazing bars were painted a dark colour so they appear as voids. The marble disks are based on those at the Palazzo Dario in Venice. The beautiful stone carvings were by the O'Shea brothers working under a Mr. Roe of Lambeth. The next most important building was the Museum in Oxford, a very distinctive design with a Belgian town hall style with an iron and glass roof over the central court. The O'Sheas carved the stonework and there was a story that when they carved monkeys on a door arch, it was feared that this would be seen as supporting Darwin's theories of evolution, so they had to be changed to cats!

Sir Thomas Deane married again and at this time his son T.N. Deane, and Benjamin Woodward were running the practice, and had moved their offices to Upper Merrion Street in Dublin. After Woodward's death in 1861, T.N. Deane continued the practice in his own name. Sir Thomas died in Dublin in 1871.

A few of their designs:

Blickling Hall. Woodward designed bookcases and the O'Sheas did the carving.

Brown's Barn.

Clontra in Shankill (1859) designed in a perfect square with an Arts and Crafts motif.

St. Austin's Abbey, Tullow, Co. Carlow.

Lough Rinn in Belgian Gothic style for Sir Thomas Drew.

St. Stephen's Schools in Dublin.

The roof of the Long Room in the TCD library.

The Kildare Street Club (1861).

**4th March 1998**

**Hidden In The Pile - A history of the Abbeyleix carpet factory.**

**Mairéad Johnston**

Carpets as we know them came into use in 17th century. Before that there were tapestry carpets, though tapestries were mostly wall hangings and draught excluders.

The floors of the ordinary home or the great hall in castles were strewn with rushes and the smell was kept fairly sweet with aromatic herbs. There were French and Belgian carpets in the 18th century though wooden floors were stencilled for decoration.

In 1902, in Durrow, Robert Flower an inventor and land-lord, invented the latch hook needle which looks very much the same still, though he allowed the patent to lapse in 1901 he introduced the flat bed loom and it was sold to Lord de Vesce to make the foundation canvas for the carpets in the factory in Abbeyleix.

Abbeyleix factory was a wooden structure which was setup on De Vesce land behind Abbeyleix Motor Works. A small shed was used for the flat bed loom and the canvas woven there. The factory was extended in 1906, using timber from the De Vesce estate, which was plentiful following a storm which had blown down trees. It must have been a cold place to work with the wooden walls and just one stove. The carpets were hand hooked and the canvas was in strips. The girls sat on benches with the carpet wound up over beams in front of them, each girl worked on a strip of the pattern. There was a table where the carpet was shorn so that the pile was level. The lint which was swept up from the floor was sent away to London for kapok.

Mary Broderick was the designer of the carpets and was sent to Brussels to learn more about design.

Abbeyleix carpets won prizes in the 1907 Exhibition of Irish industries held in Herbert Park in Dublin. The following year they won a prize in Paris.

Orders flooded in from all over the world and carpets were made for the Mansion House and Kings Inns in Dublin.

1902 the Naas Co-operative Society factory was set up but as it wasn't big enough a lease was taken on St. Corbin's Mill. Funds were raised and Brintons, an English carpet manufacturer, got involved with the society through the purchase of 1,000 shares. A Mr. Bennet was sent from Brintons to help the factory and Lady Mayo was also involved with the enterprise.

The Abbeyleix factory amalgamated with the Naas Co-operative Society in 1909 taking the name Kildare Carpet Co. Ltd. It was under this name that carpets were supplied for the staterooms on the ill-fated ship Titanic. The strikes of 1911 crippled the company making supplies of coal and wool hard to get and the factory closed in 1912. A heritage centre has been set up in Abbeyleix and displays show the designs and processes used.

**1st April 1998.**  
**Dublin.**  
**Ian Lumley**

Mr. Lumley came to speak to us at short notice and gave us a long and very interesting talk on Dublin buildings and development good and bad.

The dramatic pace of development planned and in pro-cess up to the year 2000 exceeds the development in the 1960s. Cities like Amsterdam and Prague retain their integrity by planning not by choice. The concern for Dublin should be nation-wide and in Europe. We have entered Europe to play our part while retaining our individual integrity. The promises given by our politicians at the time of the Amsterdam Convention have not been adopted, it is important Dublin retains its integrity and individuality.

There isn't much left of the medieval city. Of principal importance are the Georgian doors and fanlights they are being marketed as the essence of Dublin, though the sash windows are being removed and plastic replacements put in which ruins the look. In the 1960s the Georgian doors were still painted the original green and black. At that time the Civil Service needed more offices and rented houses, breaking through the walls to make warrens of offices. The ESB Millennium project is to reconstruct the Georgian facade they removed in the 60s in Fitzwilliam Street. The 30 year old facade is now degrading, though imitation is not the answer.

1960s brought in slab-like buildings, O'Connell Bridge House was meant to be part of change in the city.

Mountjoy Square houses were as good and elegant as Merrion Square but became very neglected. Urban renewal tax incentives are helping to clear derelict areas. The "battle of Hume Street" has set in train a disastrous era of reproduction Georgian facades. In Eccles Street, despite the student protest, the Mater demolished a large number of buildings.

The 1963 Planning Act includes only weak powers in relation to listing buildings and offers no real powers to force owners to repair or conserve buildings.

The creation of loop roads and road widening catered for the car too much and poor public transport has assisted the destruction of large parts of the city.

There was a fashion for retaining the facades of buildings but this has assisted the demolition of the old staircases and plasterwork.

1986 Urban Renewal scheme gave developers tax relief in designated areas and both quays from O'Connell St. westwards were designated as was the area around the Financial Services Centre. This tax relief is not a new idea, it was used in Prague in the 14th Century, where a twelve year tax holiday was offered for building in the new areas near the city walls!

It is easier for a developer to build a new building rather than renovate an old one and there is tax relief and no stamp duty on new apartment blocks.



The building of the Financial Services Centre has refocused attention eastwards which is a positive move. Future large-scale building should take place away from Georgian areas. However, the Dublin Corporation is a key player as a property owner. The bad news is that the Corporation is short of social housing so that needy people are being housed in private subsidised flats, which encourages un-scrupulous landlords and slum conditions. Tenement conversions of the houses in the old days didn't damage the interiors, partitions were just put up but nowadays division wrecks the interiors.

Pieces of old Dublin houses and churches are now turning up in theme pubs all over Europe. What can happen next?

**Sunday 10th May 1998**  
**Outing In Association with An Óige to Co. Offaly.**

Eight members of the Society joined members of An Óige for an outing organised by Pauline McCulloch and led by Joseph Scully, to lesser known monastic and castle sites in Co. Offaly, leaving Liberty Hall at 10.30 am and returning at 10pm.

Although the outing was longer than that usually organised by the Society, partly due to a stop for a meal on the return journey, we thoroughly recommend such trips. The sites visited such as Brí Éile (Croghan), Sidh Neachtain (Caribury), Teach Tua, Cloncurry, Monasteroris, Ballyboggan and the castles Kinnafad, Grange and Carrickois would be difficult for people to locate. They were fully researched and explained by Joseph Scully.

All our members present felt that it had been a very in-formative and enjoyable day and excellent value for money at £10 per head for the coach. J.B.

**June 1998**  
**Outing to Larchill near Kilcock**

Nine of us visited Larchill Arcadian Garden near Kilcock, Co. Kildare which is claimed to be the “only still existing Arcadian Garden in Europe”. This kind of ornamental farm was popular in the mid-eighteenth century. It consists of a farm in a romantic setting, with landscaped parklands, rustic sylvan walks, an old walled garden, a lake with two islands and about nine 18th century follies. (James Howley in his book: *The Follies and Garden Buildings of Ireland* refers to these). The farm has quaint breeds of domestic animals, such as Jacob sheep, Puck goats, saddle-backed pigs and peacocks.

Larchill was an extremely fashionable resort two hundred years ago, with many carriages arriving there every Sunday. Having been neglected for over 100 years, it is now being lovingly and authentically restored by its pre-sent owner, with the help of a government granted FÁS workers.

We walked around the grounds viewing the various fol-lies and as it was such a lovely sunny day, sat for some time chatting and admiring the scene by the lake.

Among the more interesting highlights of the visit were (1) the old walled garden (2) the “Fox Earth” a sanctuary built by an eccentric former owner for foxes and himself, when, as he believed, he would be re-incarnated as a fox. (3) the fortress modelled on the Rock of Gibraltar in the middle of the lake, where the gentry used to have mock naval battles. Last but not least were several curly-tailed miniature piglets trotting happily around their pen, up to all sorts of pranks.

We finished our trip with afternoon tea in the spacious cafe.

**Sunday 19th July 1998**  
**Outing To Wicklow Gaol And Avondale**

Our July outing took us to two venues. About 15 people came. Our first visit was to the historic Wicklow Gaol. The gaol has been remarkably restored. With the help of actors, models, sounds and voices, we were given a vivid impression of the harsh conditions endured by the unfortunate convicts before they embarked on their long grim voyage to the penal colonies of New South Wales, in the 18th and 19th Centuries. Many of the 1798 Wexford and Wicklow Rebels were imprisoned here. These included Michael O'Dwyer whose cell was one of the many we saw.

The most dramatic section was the convict "Hell Ship" where the cruel loud Master left us in no doubt as to what was in store for the wretches under his control. (The Master's part was really well acted).

We were shown also how conditions gradually improved over the years and how many who survived made new lives for themselves and their descendants thousands of miles from home.

After this sobering experience we had a break for lunch and then had a complete contrast for our second venue. This was Avondale House, the ancestral home of C. S. Pamell. An 18th century Palladian mansion of relatively modest proportions. It is set in 500 acres of forest and parkland.

After an audio-visual presentation of Parnell's life, we had a guided tour of the house.

The rooms are not very large so it has a 'lived in' family atmosphere (unlike more grandiose houses). Among the interesting features were the fine front hall and the children's nursery. In the latter was a nurses couch, so de-signed that she could sleep only lightly!

The weather was too wet to enable us to walk around the beautiful grounds. However we observed an old tree trunk which fell in 1970, it had hundreds of rings and a notice indicated to us the particular rings proper to eventful years e.g. 1798 and 1845.

**Monday 17th - Friday 21st August 1998**  
**24th Summer School 1998**  
**Evening Lectures in Archaeology**

The lectures were all on a theme from *Dublin and Beyond the Pale* the Festschrift in honour of Paddy Healy. The lectures were held in the Erck Hall attached to Rathmichael Church, by kind permission of Rathmichael parish, our usual venue being unusable due to building work. All the lecturers referred with gratitude and pleasure to the help, advice and friendship Paddy Healy had given to them over the years.

**Monday 17th August 1998.**  
**Charles Pratt: Antiquarian Artist**  
**Rob Goodbody**

Charles Pratt was born in 1789 and at the age of 16 joined the army and entered The Royal Military College at Great Marlow, where he received drawing instruction. He saw service in the Napoleonic wars serving with distinction and rising to the rank of Colonel in 1846. Following his marriage in 1819 he spent a lot of time in the house "Stoneville" on Rochestown Avenue in Dun Laoghaire which he inherited after his father's death. The gate and lodge of this is all that remains and is now called "Laughton".

Pratt's sketches are all topographical with a bias towards views of antiquities and their accuracy is a rare boon to local historians.

Some of the local sketches shown to us during the lecture were of Shanganagh in the 1820s and 30s. One showed the old mill, providing a record of the style and condition of it at that time, while the artist's note on the reverse dates its demolition and replacement to 1847. Other sketches show the changes to the village and the humpbacked bridge. Many sketches have annotations on colour etc for later work, but many have notes on the back noting changes to the landscape at a later date.

One of the most spectacular sketches was a large one covering the vista from Killiney Hill looking south and taking in the panorama from the sea inland to the mountains and Carrickgolligan. The detailed drawing of the foreshore and the lands of Shanganagh, Shankill and Bray is wonderful.

Rob organised a very elaborate "set up" of two projectors and two screens to show us with great clarity the drawings. He showed a slide of the sketch on one screen, with a slide of the same place as it is now, or to show us an enlargement of a feature or detail, on the other screen. This worked very well to highlight the accuracy and fine draughtsmanship of Charles Pratt.

**Tuesday 18th August 1998«**  
**Scholastic Oghams in Co. Kilkenny**  
**Siobh ain de h Oir**

Interest in ogham and ogham studies flourished in the latter part of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century. The earliest ogham is to be found on pillar stones, usually

in a field or near an ancient grave-yard, or in a souterrain. The inscriptions on these stones usually run vertically from the bottom to the top and the stemline is formed by the edge of the monument. The language is Old Irish, the earliest form of written Irish.

The twenty-letter ogham alphabet is divided into four groups or aicmí, each letter consisting of one to five strokes on or across to the edge, which acts as a stem line.

Samuel Ferguson recognised another class of later ogham inscriptions, to which he applied the term Scholastic. It helps to differentiate between the classic early inscriptions on pillar stones and the later or scholastic oghams found in manuscripts from the end of the eighth century to modern times.

The writing is usually horizontal with the letter strokes through the stem. The beginning of the work is often marked with a “feather mark” or arrow sign. Ms de hÓir showed us slides of the many old pillar stones and the later headstones with ogham inscriptions, including one that translated into German!

### **Wednesday 19th August 1998**

#### **Lynch’s Castle, Galway City, a reassessment**

**David Newman Johnson**

Lynch’s castle is one of the seven or eight castles in Gal-way, mostly associated with the tribes of Galway. Lynch’s castle is the best preserved and appears to be late 15th or early 16th century. The castle has been in use as a bank shoe 1927, when it became the property of the Minister and Leinster Bank, who in 1930 attached a large banking hall to the Northwest of the castle along Abbeygate Street Upper, necessitating the demolition of medieval buildings on the site. In 1990 the present owners Allied Irish Bank decided to renovate the upper floors. It was suggested that a survey of any newly ex-posed original features, be carried out before they were obscured again by new work. Mr Johnson carried out the survey and showed us in his lecture the evidence, a beam socket and window tops, that the floors were no longer at the same level as originally. From this it can be seen that a vast amount of rebuilding, blocking and patching has been carried out since the castle was built. A remarkable feature of the castle is the superb carving on the facade and the head mouldings and decorations over the windows. They are all different and richly carved, some with vine leaves, bunches of grapes and some with merchant’s marks.

A box machicolation remains which would usually protect a door, this door would have been to the warehouse. There are two corbels to the left and above this, which may be the remains of another machicolation to protect the upper residential door, which would have been reached by wooden stairs or a ladder. The castle boasts gargoyles which are fairly rare in Ireland. Some are monstrous open mouthed beasts with lots of teeth and others Lympagos or lion-like beasts. The wealth of carving and many changes make Lynch’s castle a very attractive and interesting building.

### **Thursday 20th August 1998.**

#### **Lehaunstown Park, A forgotten tower house**

**Leo Swan**

Lehaunstown or Laughanstown, is located south of Carrickmines and west of Loughlinstown in the county area of south Dublin now known as Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown. The townland of Laughanstown is bounded to the north by Brennanstown, to the west by Carrick-mines great, to the south by Ticknick and Rathmichael and to the east by Glebe, Cherrywood and Loughlinstown.

The area is in agricultural use, soon to be developed, and is the site of an encampment in the 1790s. Tully Church is to the south west.

There are references to a thatched castle in the Civil Survey in 1654 but a lot of confusion is caused by the various methods of spelling Lehaunstown and Loughlinstown.

Lehaunstown Park at present comprises a large dwelling, part of which is single-storey but with a considerable portion built to the second level. There are barns, sheds, gardens and outhouses set around an adjacent spacious courtyard.

The ground plan of the house shows a core structure with extremely thick walls forming a small rectangle. There is evidence of a base batter on some of the walls and the rather odd positioning of a tiny window at second floor level on the south wall may indicate the previous existence here of a loop.

We were shown a slide of a bathroom with large areas of plaster missing, exposing a string course, much like the upper courses on a tower house. A sufficient number of features survive here which can scarcely be explained unless its origin as a tower house can be accepted.

**Friday 21st August 1998.**  
**The Medieval Boroughs of Dublin.**  
**John Bradley**

A medieval borough, at its simplest, was a place where property-owning burgesses were to be found. Burgesses had privileges, while ordinary people were tied to the soil. These privileges varied from borough to borough but were usually the right to travel, the right to set up in business or trade, the right to marry without first seeking the lord's permission, the right to trial before one's equals, as well as the right to elect a governing body and to participate in its activities. In return for these the burgesses paid an annual rent, usually one shilling, to the lord.

The lords liked the borough system because the rent could form a substantial part of their income.

Boroughs were present prior to 1169. The city of Dublin was the largest borough within the county, established before the coming of the Normans. Not all boroughs were towns. There were eleven known boroughs in Dublin county.

**Dalkey**

Nine miles south of Dublin is one of the few authentic Scandinavian place names in Ireland and it seems to be a Norse translation of the Irish name Deilginis or Thorn Island. The earliest

evidence suggests that the island was a more important settlement. It was a trading centre and a hoard of late 10th century Anglo-Saxon coins was found indicating that there was some form of settlement was here before Norman times.

The church owned most of the land and the best land was the centre of a manor but no extent, or paper of rents survives. Dalkey was not particularly important before the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the date of the formation of the borough is not known. It was the best deep-water port close to Dublin, large ships were un-able to go into Dublin because of the river silting up. The merchants of Dublin petitioned to purchase and sell their wares in Dalkey. The borough was an important bastion of the Pale and the “ferry port” of the area, predecessor of the modern Dun Laoghaire.

Dalkey retains its linear layout with lanes off the main street, the market was held on Castle Street at the eastern end where it widens to accommodate the stalls. There were fortified tower houses, the tradition is that there were seven, some of which remain. There were earthen defences around the town the traces of which can be distinguished along the southern boundary between Cunningham Road and Dalkey Avenue.

### **Shankill**

Shankill formed part of the lands of the dioceses of Dublin in 1190. It is not certain who founded the monastery, some say Comgall abbot of Bangor, Co. Down. No trace of the church site remains.

During the 13th century Shankill was one of the archbishop’s principal residences in south Dublin. The area was forested before 1229 when it was cleared to exploit the estate. It became prosperous and peaceful and its value increased from 20 to 50 marks (a mark was 2/3 of a £). The manor of Shankill became more valuable than Tallaght. After the 1290s it declines for various reasons. In 1326 a document states that it is in decay with no buildings, houses thrown down by Irish malefactors and the Burgagers have fled.

The area was sublet to the Lawless family from 1482 and in the 16th century it was in the hands of the Barnewalls. The guess is that Shankill was situated between the church site and the castle.

### **Donore.**

There are only two references to a borough at Donore. The name is preserved in Donore Avenue and the borough was probably near Donore Castle which is beside the river Poddle. This structure, a disused shirt factory may actually be a mill referred to in the 13 & 15 century.

### **Tallaght.**

Tamlacht or Plague Monument, prehistoric burial mounds contribute to the name. The bronze age burials from nearby Aghfarrell, Ballinascorney Lower, Kiltalown, and Greenhills provide clear evidence that there were concentrations of burials in the area. Mael Ruain founded the Cell De monastery in 774, they were a small elite band of monks who were often in the midst of a much larger community. There are no references to Viking raids in the Rule of Tallaght, a collection of the teachings of Mael Ruain to his disciple, because, by then, they had already

been assimilated. By the 12th century, the land formed part of the See lands of the Archbishop of Dublin, it was one of the most important ecclesiastical manors in the country, and by the 16th century it was the archbishop's principal residence outside the city, his holiday home!

The borough of Tallaght was bounded, on the south side, by the Dodder, from which the long plots run back to Main Street. Here, the name Watergate is preserved, where the Old Bawn road cuts through this boundary. The street pattern was of a long main street which expanded at its west end to form the market place. Where the road forked north past St. Mael Ruain's church and south towards Old Bawn there was a cross here which was taken down in 1778 by Robert Fowler, the then Archbishop, in the construction of a bath house.



**Sunday 6th September 1998.**

**Heritage Day Outing to St. Mary's Abbey and Marsh's Library.**

Seven members met at Meeting House Lane on a very wet and windy afternoon. We were glad to get in out of the rain to the Chapter House and Slype. St. Mary's Abbey was one of the largest and most important medieval monasteries in Ireland and covered a large area bounded by Capel Street, Little Mary Street, Aran Street East and Mary's Abbey.

The Chapter House was the most important room in the monastery, after the Church, and the Slype was the corridor which linked the privacy of the cloister with the open area to the East, where the infirmary was usually situated.

In 1975 during demolition of a 17th Century wall in Cook Street, blocks of carved sandstone were salvaged. When they were reassembled it was clear they belonged to a 15th Century cloister which may have been at St. Mary's. Paddy Healy was involved with this salvage. We then went on to Archbishop Narcissus Marsh's Library in St. Patrick's Close where we saw a really impressive exhibition of very early maps. *The Majestic World - Early Printed maps and Atlases.*

**7th October 1998**  
**The Suburban Townships Of Dublin**  
**Séamas Ó Maitiú**

Suburbs before the 1800s were generally regarded as disreputable places but by 1859 a change had taken place. The educated people and middle classes wanted to move away from the poor and the congested areas of the cities.

In Dublin the first movement took place to the east of the city to St. Stephen's Green, Parnell Square and the Gardiner Estate.

In 1834 Kingstown was the first suburban township to be set up by act of parliament Rathmines followed and was started by speculative builders who set up a board of commissioners, in the Parish of St. Peter's in the barony of Uppercross. The first ribbon development was on the Rathmines Road, Rathgar Road and Ranelagh Road. It became a township in 1847.

Blackrock became a township in 1860 and it boasted the earliest town hall.

In 1863 Pembroke township joined up with and bordered Rathmines, and its association with the Pembroke family and estate was of benefit.

1863 Dalkey township was set up, its rate base was low. In 1866 Killiney became a township though its houses were very scattered.

In 1868 Kilmainham became a township, it was mainly a working class area with Richmond Barracks and the rail-way works in Inchicore.

In 1869 Clontarf township was set up and was much like Pembroke having aristocratic connections to Lord Iveagh and the Vernon Estate.

In 1878 Drunconra was the last off the suburban townships set up. The houses here were smaller than in Rathmines and more working class families lived here, though it contained Clonliffe College and the Arch-bishop's Palace.

**Wednesday 4 November 1998**  
**The Recent Excavation at Cabinteely**  
**Malachy Conway**

The site of this excavation is at the junction of the old Bray Road and the new Bray Road, where there was a pair of bungalows and a small commercial garage which ESSO bought with a view to building a filling station. Test trenches were dug in 1995 and two levels of burials were exposed. Over the years human remains had been found here, including a cist burial and a burial found in the root ball of a tree uprooted by a storm.

A full excavation commenced in 1998 financed by ESSO, and it was expected to find about 150 burials. To date 1,550 have been found and this is only the south east quadrant of a larger site. The only other comparable site found to date is St. Brendan's at Ardfert.

All of the burials were earth-cut graves of males, females and children; there were no double burials and all were buried with their heads to the west.

In the earlier levels of the excavation staining could be seen caused by decayed wood, there seems to have been planks under the burials. This was mostly reused wood and some were charred so that they lasted longer.

There were some cist burials using schist flagstones, though they were often reused in successive phases. The head is often protected by stones as there was an early Christian belief that the soul rested in the head. Other cists or stone-lined burials had a cairn of rubble on top, these burials were not so well preserved because the decay was quicker due to air getting under the stones.

The lowest level of burial was not necessarily the oldest due to constant reuse and re-cutting. Some charnel pits were found containing disarticulated bones, neatly arranged, and one was found with a mill stone at the base.

The use of shrouds was shown by the position of the body with the feet close together, hands placed over the pelvis and shoulders narrowed. Ear muff stones or pillow stones were used to protect the head some were small quartz stones which may have been believed to have magical properties. During the excavation the position of all the bones was recorded.

Unusual burials such as "face down" were perhaps un-clean or not worthy of a proper Christian burial. A first glance before research on the bones is carried out shows some with twisted spines. A crouched burial may have been that of a cripple. One burial was of a woman with a full term baby in the breech position and some others with full term fetuses.

### **Wednesday 2nd December 1998** **Short Talks By Members**

#### **A Shooting Incident at Westminster Road, Foxrock.** **By James Scannell**

Up to 1919, Ireland had 2 Police forces - The Dublin Metropolitan Police which operated within the Dublin city area only, and the nationwide Royal Irish Constabulary, which had been established in 1837.

During the war of Independence of 1919-1921, the RIC was one of the main organisations targeted by the IRA for military action and during this period the RIC was forced to withdraw from many isolated rural stations and to operate from heavily fortified barracks in larger towns. It was thus prevented from carrying out its policing duties and other tasks for various government departments.

In many areas where there was no RIC presence, policing was undertaken by the Irish Republican Police with offenders being brought before Republican Courts, a system of justice which operated in opposition to the Crown Courts. These were held openly and were noted for their common sense verdicts. Lacking prisons, penalties were usually fines or banishment.

Following the truce in 1921, policing throughout the country was undertaken by these two forces and how they got on varied from place to place. In Bray, Co. Wicklow, both forces operated and their lack of co-operation was a factor in this incident.

On the evening of 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1921, four members of the South Dublin Brigade IRA, later identified as William Kelly from Carrickmines and Patrick Devlin, Timothy McCarthy and Patrick Mulvaney all from Deansgrange, visited the licensed premises of John Ryan in Main Street, Bray and attempted to obtain the sum of £500 with threats and menaces. They were unsuccessful and left quickly as they saw an IRA officer in the area.

This incident passed unnoticed and on December 6th 1921 the Anglo-Irish Peace Treaty was signed. It was now clear that the RIC was to be disbanded and replaced,, and from this time relations between the two forces in Bray deteriorated.

On 7th January 1922, Dáil Éireann voted on the terms of the Peace Treaty which was accepted following a series of heated and acrimonious debates. In Bray the RIC was involved in a dispute with local IR policemen on January 9th concerning a picket outside the Northern Bank on Quinnsboro Road, which was part of a nationwide boycott of Northern Irish businesses operating in the Free State, as a result of attacks against Catholics and nationalists in Belfast. The RIC called in reinforcements and the picket disbursed but returned as soon as the RIC left. The next day matters escalated when the four IRA men returned to John Ryan's pub at about 10.30 pm and tried to get him to sign a document to say the November incident hadn't taken place. The IR Police arrived and took no action when they were told by the four men that their action was "Official". Matters between the four men and John Ryan became very heated with neither side yielding, word was sent to the RIC and Head Constable Taylor and his men arrived, just as William Kelly was drawing his revolver to force John Ryan to sign, when he was grabbed by Taylor and disarmed by a Sergeant Ryan and a search of the other men revealed a collection of firearms and a knife. The men were arrested and brought to the RIC barracks where they refused to answer questions and were put in the cells.

Word of the incident reached the Truce Liaison Office in Dublin and four officers were sent to Bray to sort matters out. They went to the barracks and asked to see the detained men and when this request was refused they persisted and in annoyance the Head Constable arrested them and put them in the cells!

The next day the four IRA men appeared before a special sitting of the Bray Petty Sessions in the Courthouse before Mr Jasper White RM. They were charged with demanding money with menaces in November and by threats and menaces endeavouring to obtain a declaration to the effect that they did not commit the offence in January. The two events were recalled in court by the principal witness, John Ryan, and evidence of arrest by Head Constable Taylor. The defendants refused to co-operate and were evasive in their answers to the extent that the RM was left with no option but to remand them in custody for seven days for further inquiries. The four Truth and Liaison Officers were discharged and were allowed to return to Dublin where no doubt they reported on their experiences.

The South Dublin Brigade of the IRA was keen to release their men however a direct assault on the RIC barracks would have been a serious Truce violation causing more problems. The only solution was to release the men on their way from Bray to Dublin if they were remanded in custody at the next court sitting, so plans were made. Meanwhile, the Bray RIC did not contact the IR police to find out what the four men had been up to, but built a criminal case

against them instead On 19th January 1922 the four men appeared before Mr Jasper White RM once more and Head Constable Taylor confirmed his testimony given previously. The four men complained of being treated as common criminals and refused to recognise the court. One man complained of rough treatment in Bray RIC barracks and was granted leave to press charges if he wished. The men were allowed to question H.C. Taylor and it emerged that the RIC had not conducted a thorough investigation and had not verified the documents found on the men at the time. One claimed the right to be tried by the IRA while another said the whole matter could be sorted by talking to their IRA superiors. Mr White found in favour of the RIC and remanded the men once again. At 3.30 that afternoon the four men were placed in a charabanc and, surrounded by an RIC escort, left Bray unaware that the IRA had two ambushes in place.

One ambush lay in wait at Westminster Road just beyond Cabinteely, while the second was at the Deansgrange end of Clonkeen Road, their only means of communication being by runner in what was then a rural area. As the RIC party passed through Cabinteely village they were followed by three Crossley Tenders of Black and Tans en route from Wexford to Gormanstown, Co. Dublin for disbandment and who had halted at the RIC barracks for directions. When the charabanc reached the junction of Westminster Road and the Dublin Road, a Ford motor car was pushed across the road, forcing the RIC vehicle to brake sharply. Caught by surprise they were unable to react before they were disarmed by the IRA. The prisoners were released and as they withdrew across the fields, came under fire from the Black and Tans who had arrived on the scene. In the winter twilight there were no casualties. The charabanc was no use in the chase, its axle having been broken in the ambush, while the Ford had no petrol. In the search a young man with a cut hand was detained but after treatment for his wound he was released.

So the mystery remains, what were the four men up to and why did they behave the way they did?

## **Byways of Research**

### **June Burry**

Even the most unfruitful day of research may be enlivened by accidentally stumbling on a little gem of information, which may highlight aspects of medieval life long forgotten. For example: in November, 1306 several cases came before the Justiciar, John Wogan at Swords, concerning a ship “The Nicholas of Doun in Ulster”, laden with wine and other merchandise, which was wrecked on the rocks at Portmarnock. It seems from the evidence that not only were local fisherman and labourers involved in stealing the rescued cargo but that they were backed by the local lords and even the monks from the Grange at Portmarnock. It seemed possible that all may have been involved in a profitable wrecking business.

Another court case involving a dispute between neighbours revealed that the life of the Betagh or serf may not have been as harsh as generally portrayed. The case involved a serf who left his master, taking his wife and servant, his goods and cattle with him. He sought protection from the neighbour because he would no longer tolerate the excessive duties he was expected to carry out. These cases serve to illustrate the value of chance “finds” in broadening our perceptions about life in the middle ages which was much more complex than the common stereotypes might suggest.

## **Slides of a “Find” in the Path of a Gas Main near Rathmichael. Rob Goodbody**

Laying a gas main is a very archaeologically sensitive exercise. The draught route is checked by an archaeologist in the records of sites and monuments to guide the pipe line. Then the archaeologist walks the route using their trained eye to see if there are any unrecorded sites, then the route of the pipe line is moved again if necessary. Then a swathe of ground is cleared of vegetation and the top soil removed to one side and the archaeologist walks the area again to check for anything of importance. If anything is found at this stage despite precautions, a rapid excavation takes place to assess the site. The gas pipe is brought in and welded on site, and as it is a flexible pipe it can be moved short distances if there is any-thing in the way. The next step is to cut a trench to lay the pipe in, then the top soil is returned to the site. The whole process is very rapid and the archaeologist and their assistants have to be very quick and efficient. During the clearing and trenching necessary to lay a branch gas main from Carrickmines to Bray via Pucks Castle Lane, Ballyman and Fassaroe there were some surprising finds. A ploughed out fulacht fia was found, which wasn't in boggy ground which is unusual. Near Rathmichael Hillfort some dark soil appeared so it was decided to check it out. Large stones were found which were not “natural”, they were surrounded with a charred area and the soil had been burned to a good depth -could this represent a funeral pyre? There were markings on the upper part of the largest stone which may be plough marks over the years. It is thought that this could be a wedge tomb.

## **A Condensed Version of the Questionnaire Sent to Members Rathmichael Historical Society Where to ?**

Your Committee is concerned at the decrease in membership over recent years, due only in part to the proliferation of local historical societies in surrounding districts. In order that we can cater for the interests of the majority of our members we would greatly appreciate your taking a few minutes to answer the following questions by circling the relevant yes or no.

### **Evening Meetings**

Do you want lectures based on: Historical subjects Archaeological Subjects: If yes to Archaeological please define as follows:- current excavations, more general topics or on controversial issues.

Do you want discussions on local topics? Do you want quizzes on local topics? Should we continue having refreshments after our meetings?

Should we consider changing the day of the meetings?

### **Notice of Meetings**

Are you satisfied with the level of information given?

Are you satisfied with the length of notice given? In order to cut down costs are you happy to have advance notice of 3 or 4 events on the same circular?

## **Summer Outings**

Would you prefer just one very full day outing with, transport provided? One outing per month May - Aug inclusive? If yes to the above, do you favour travelling by private car? or public transport? If public transport do you favour joining with other groups to boost numbers and cut costs?

Duration:- Whole day? Half day?

Preferred venues:- Historical? Archaeological?, Historic Houses? Gardens? For these outings do you prefer Saturday or Sunday?

## **Annual Weekend Outing**

Are you in favour of the society organising such an event?

Are you happy with the formula as in previous years?

Which time of the year do you prefer? Spring Autumn

On this subject we would appreciate hearing of your favoured locations.

## **Summer School Evening Lectures**

Are you satisfied with the format?

Are you satisfied with the themes?

We welcome your suggestions.

## **Summer School Full- Day Courses**

Are you interested in attending?

Are you interested in promoting?

Are you interested in helping to run the course?

Do you favour a local venue or a city centre venue?

Do you consider £50 /£60 per week too expensive?

We have a wonderful society which we want to maintain and improve for the benefit and pleasure of all our members.

Please help us with your support and suggestions and either post this completed form to our Hon. Secretary Muirín Ó Briain. 14 Stratford, Orwell Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6. or bring it to our next meeting.

Thank you very much for your support,

## **Summary of the Results of a Questionnaire Sent Out in October 1998**

As collated by June Burry and read to the members at the AGM on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1998.

Firstly let me say a sincere thank you to all who took the time to reply.

We received 27 completed forms together with many helpful ideas and suggestions and just one brick bat which I will refer to later. The 27 forms represents about 34% of our membership, I am told this is 2 or 3 times the average return for public polls, so well done!

The results are interesting, we are obviously getting some things right but as all good school reports say “we could do better”.

### **Evening meetings**

Topics: 100% favour historical subjects; 93% favour archaeological subjects including reports on current excavations. 89% favour general topics. 52% favour controversial topics. While 95% are against innovations such as quizzes!

**Tea** 67% are in favour of tea after meetings.  
30% would prefer to get home early.

**Change of day.** 85% against any change from Wednesday.

15% in favour of change, Monday being the only day mentioned.

**Notices.** It is a tribute to our Hon. Secretary that there is 100% satisfaction with how the notices are sent out and with the details given.

**Summer Outings.** It is in the area of our outings that we meet the most ambiguity and it may be that somebody would like to raise this subject later during “any other business”. 52% were in favour of 1 full days outing with transport provided and 37% against. This 37% favoured our usual programme of one outing per month, May - August.

**Transport.** 37% favoured private car. 30% favoured a coach 19% were actively against this option. 41% favoured joining with other groups to keep the cost of transport down, this was tried successfully with An Óige, led by Pauline McCulloch, last year.

**Day of Outing.** 78% favoured Saturday 15% against 41% favoured Sunday 30% against.

### **Venues for outings**

Historical 74%

Archaeological 70%

Historic houses 70%

Gardens 30% (actively against: 30%.)

**Annual Weekend** 45% in favour of organising this event. 30% satisfied with the present formula. 30% each for Spring or Autumn date.

### **Summer School Evening Lectures**

85% satisfied with formula as previous years.

78% satisfied with themes as before 15% not satisfied.

### **Summer School Day course**

60% interested in attending.

19% against,

15% would help to promote.



26% would help in running the course.

Venue for above, 48% favoured a local venue.

19% favoured city centre as in last 2 courses run.

10% against city 5% against local.

Fee for above 63% prepared to pay £50 - £60 per-week. 8% thought £50 enough.

### **General Remarks**

Meetings now start at 8pm instead of 8.15 as requested. Requests for more concentration on local landmarks will be catered for with Liam Clare in February talking on Victorian Bray and Peter Pearson on his new book on the area.

Several suggestions on the Summer School including “don’t change the winning formula” which we appreciated. Also for the day courses the necessity for a local venue to be convenient to bus and Dart, was stressed. There was also a request that individual lectures should be open to those who could not attend the full course on a pro-rata basis.

For the Annual Weekend outing it was suggested that a good hotel at off season rates would be very little more expensive than B&B accommodation. I am sure your in-coming committee will look into this. There were many interesting and useful suggestions for lecture topics.

To refer again to our brickbat. One member commented that going alone to meetings, she had never been spoken to or made welcome and as a result doesn’t stay for tea. This is something we should all give a little thought to. In dashing around organising the evening, the committee members don’t always have time to welcome folk and we would appreciate the help of all members in helping to extend a friendly welcome to all, thus ensuring that this is a friendly welcoming society for all our members and visitors.