

Rathmichael Historical Record

The Journal of the Rathmichael Historical Society



The Old Bridge, Loughlinstown

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Editorial

Owing to pressure of work it is becoming increasingly difficult to produce the Record in time. We are, therefore, combining the two years 1978 and 1979 in this issue,

Octocentenary

Eight hundred years ago two documents of the greatest importance to students of the 'churchscape' in the dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough, issued from the Lateran Palace in Rome. I refer to the Papal Bulls of April 20th and May 13th 1179, in which Pope Alexander III, at the request of Laurence, Archbishop of Dublin and Malchus, Bishop of Glendalough, confirmed to them their rights over the churches in their respective dioceses.

These documents occur among the great number of 'records of Church interest collected and annotated by Alen, Archbishop of Dublin, 1529-34. Collated and edited, these records are known to students of the medieval Church as "Archbishop Alen's Register". In the introduction to his edition, Dr. Charles McNeill calls it "one of the precious pre-Reformation records of the See of Dublin... records transcribed into it...from originals still extant in Archbishop Alen's time...beginning in 1155 and continuing down to 1533".

In 1534 the Archbishop was assassinated and we will never know how much more we might have possessed had he lived and continued his work.

Some of the church and place names mentioned in the documents quoted cannot now be traced, but a large number of them, as Bishop Reeves puts it, "in their very elegant native forms" are readily identifiable.

In the first of the Bulls referred to above, that of April 20th dealing with the See of Dublin, it is interesting to see the name Rathmichael among a number of other churches well known to us, as well as that of one with which Rathmichael was to be closely associated, i.e., the little church of St. Patrick-in-Insula, just outside the city of Dublin. Probably already many centuries old, in twelve years' time it was destined to be rebuilt as a Collegiate Church by Archbishop John Comyn, later to be raised to Cathedral status by Comyn's successor, Archbishop Henry de Loundres (1212-28). It was Archbishop Henry who attached Rathmichael to his new Cathedral as a prebendary parish.

Even today, after all the quarrying that has been done, close study may still be rewarded by the discovery of just one more tiny piece to add to the mosaic of Church history. Were I ever to be asked to say what book I would take to the mythical Desert Island (BBC Radio 4) to keep me happy during a prolonged exile, I would have no hesitation in asking for "Archbishop Alen's Register".

M. Kathleen Turner

Winter talks
1978

Thursday, January 19th - Irish Watermills

by Mr. R. E Jacob and Mr. Mawhinney, Secretary, Industrial Archaeology Society

Mr. Jacob started, showing two short films of water-mills at Thomastown and Kells in Co. Kilkenny, and a modern one on the Dingle Peninsula. In between these two films he showed one of the "Destruction of Hume Street" a few years ago where the students were seen painting the house and writing defiant slogans, e.g. "We will persist", watched by, among others, Ian Fleming of the Irish Times and Dr. Garret Fitzgerald.

Mr. Mawhinney then gave his lecture illustrated with numerous slides showing the different types of water-mill - horizontal, vertical, etc., and the various means of transport of the power. Tide mills which utilized the power of the incoming tide, harnessing the water for a few hours a day, were more numerous than one might think, he said..... A very interesting lecture.

Thursday, February 16th - Stained Glass

by Mr W. Dowling.

An extremely interesting and beautifully illustrated talk by Mr. Dowling who for many years was manager of the Harry Clarke Studios in North Frederick Street and is himself an artist in that medium.

The lecture began with a short introduction showing the colouring of the glass and the technique of cutting it, illustrated with black and white slides.

He then showed slides of early windows with quaint stylized Byzantine figures of prophets wearing high hats and narrow pointed shoes - the oldest known window dating from 1065 AD is in Augsburg. Scholars have suggested that these very early windows may have been influenced by the work of the early Irish illustrators of the Gospels, e.g. the Book of Armagh, and the speaker thought it could be quite possible for an artist working in Bavaria to have been influenced by books brought over by monks from Ireland, many of whom are known to have travelled far afield on the Continent and to have founded monasteries there.

By the 13th century, stained glass began to be used extensively. Beginning with Suger's Sainte Chapelle at Paris (1244) supporting walls virtually disappeared, and as a result the external envelope of the church came to consist of stained glass walls supported in between by slender buttresses.

Ireland had no tradition of stained glass artistry in the Middle Ages, but coming up to the 20th century she produced a number of fine artists in this medium. Evie Hone and Michael Healy were only two among several who became internationally known. Harry Clarke was, of course, the best known to the lecturer, who described the acid technique developed by him which enabled him to achieve the wonderful jewelled effect for which his work was famous. Illustrations of Harry Clarke's window for the International Labour Organization in Geneva and of the exquisite panels with scenes from Keats' "St. Agnes' Eve" concluded a fascinating lecture.

Thursday, March 16th – Irish Tombstones – Historical Sources and Vernacular Art
by Mr. Julian Walton

Once again a cold, wet night and a poor attendance. The lecturer began by explaining how at first only the rich and powerful were buried inside the church, sometimes with important monuments, while the poor shared the ground outside. Gradually all came to be buried in the graveyard - even after the Reformation Protestants and Catholics shared the same burial ground until in recent times the denominations became segregated each having its own plot.

For a long time graves were either unmarked or had a horizontal slab. Upright slabs at the head of the grave were rare until their development in the 18th century.

The lecturer stressed the importance of studying tombstones of 18th and early 19th centuries as, prior to the compulsory registration of deaths in 1864, they were the only documents available to the genealogist.

With reference to the decoration of gravestones the lecturer mentioned Mrs. Ada Leask's booklet "Some Irish Churchyard Sculpture", saying that she had pioneered this research into an Irish folk-art which had survived all changes of government and theology.

Three things seemed to me to stand out from this lecture:-

1. The heavy concentration of decorated tombstones in the eastern part of the country - mainly in Counties Wicklow, Wexford and Waterford, although Carlow, Kildare, Dublin, Louth and Meath also have some.
2. The sameness of the decoration - almost entirely confined to the instruments of the Passion with only slight variations; i.e., the ladder, nails, pincers, hammer, sponge, cup on stick and crown of thorns.
3. The lack of humour in tombstone inscriptions in Ireland.

Friday, November 19th – “The Archaeological Excavations of Dublin’s Viking & Norman Waterfront at Wood Quay”

by Mr. Patrick Wallace (N.M.I.)

Again the attendance was poor, as it has been throughout the season - difficult to understand when the subject of the lecture was one very much in everybody's mind at the time.

Mr. Wallace is Director of the excavations at Wood Quay and we got, as we had been led to expect, a fascinating lecture.

Having seen his slides of some of the many interesting objects already found at this unique site, as well as its ancient lay-out, we can only wonder how it is possible for anyone to plan to destroy it before it has been thoroughly explored. Even after - surely it should be preserved in some imaginative way so that we can all see our history pictorially presented?

Miscellanea – 1978

Evening Walks - Because of the generally poor turn-out for our Sunday afternoon visits, we decided to find out if two hour walks starting at 7.30 p.m. would be more popular and would also be of help to newcomers to the area to get to know about it. We are fortunate in having several walks which combine beautiful scenery with historical and archaeological interest. Contrary to hopes, however, there proved to be no support for evening walks, so for the time being, at least, it looks as if we may give this project a rest.

Field Archaeology Course - Our fourth Annual Course was held as usual during the last week in August and was as great a success as its predecessors. Its popularity seems to increase each year with the numbers of new students swelled by many coming back who had attended former courses.

St. Paul's Church, Bray - This church, closed down last year, is now being used as a factory for building and repairing organs, although many of its friends are still hoping that it may be possible to have a museum there. This idea would certainly be suitable, and might be of interest to us also. It is time that a town the size of Bray should have a museum or somewhere to keep things of historic value and interest.

Turkish Baths, Bray - This building still lingers on. No one seems to know or care why it can neither be restored nor demolished, but must be left to fall into ruin in undignified, long drawn-out agony.

Beechgrove - Nearer home the house called "Beechgrove", situated opposite the gates of Loughlinstown House, is now being allowed to fall into ruin.

This, of course, was the 18th century Inn, known affectionately as Owen Bray's after its popular landlord; meeting-place of the famous Kilruddery Hunt and favourite haunt of actors well-known on the London and Dublin stages.

In the early years of the 19th century the inn was converted into a very attractive country house, its face turned away from the road so that it is now reached by a lengthy avenue. Now it is derelict and so we have lost the site of the one-time Owen Bray's Inn to which travellers were recommended to resort "if landed from England and sick of the seas", in the words of one of the songs written about the jovial landlord:-

*"To Loughlinstown then without any delays
for you'll never be right till you see Owen Bray's
With his Bullen a Mona
A glass of his claret for me".*

Summer Visits

Wednesday, May 24th 1978 1st Evening Walk

Carrigdolgen

Our Sunday afternoon visits of places of interest having proved badly attended for some time, it was decided to try whether evening walks of about two hours might prove more attractive, in particular to new-comers to the locality.

Meeting 7.30 p.m. at Rathmichael Schoolhouse, we drove to Ballyman Lane, parking the cars where a road leads round the west side of Cattygollagher. Paddy Corr led the walk along this road as far as the chimney of the Ballycorus Lead Mines, pointing out the peaks of the Wicklow Mountains and giving their names. From the chimney we walked back through the Forestry pine-wood towards the summit of Cattygollagher, but turning right below it to join the road and the cars.

Before setting off for home we climbed about 50 yards up the hill-side to have a look at the Alcock Memorial, once-clearly visible from the road but now hidden by the fast-growing conifers. To a perpendicular rock face is affixed a white marble plaque, 24" x 14", the badly weathered inscription on which reads:-

To the memory of one who worshipped here Doctor Nathaniel Alcock Died April 4th 1904 in his 65th year.

“A wise man is never so busy as in the solitary contemplation of God and the Works of Nature”

Seneca

Erected by his two friends.

All we know of Dr. Alcock is that he was in the habit of walking here every Sunday morning from his home in Killiney, sometimes accompanied by two ladies. At this spot he would say some prayers and spend time in contemplating the beautiful view.

On the homeward way a little further along the lane, we stopped to see what we could of the Rathmichael dolmen (or wedge-tomb as it is known today) through the hedge bordering the road on the south side.

Sunday, May 28th - Tallaght

A hot summer day marked our first outing of the season when we visited Tallaght and were shown round by Mrs. Anne Weber and Mrs. Margaret Taylor of the local Historical Society.

In Celtic times a monastery was founded here by St. Maelruain which became famous for its strict monastic discipline. Later in medieval times the Archbishop of Dublin had one of his manor houses here, the centre of administration of his Manor of Tallaght, and, from the 14th century on, the Archbishops made this their country seat - a strange choice considering its proximity to the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles, and one which they may often have regretted. In 1820 it was sold to a Major Palmer.

The Priory enshrines the only remains of the onetime Manorhouse or Palace, as it is sometimes called, of the Archbishops of Dublin - a tower with embattlemented top, loop windows, and great arch of brick which formed the main entrance.

In the Priory gardens an enormous walnut tree must draw all eyes. It is known as St. Maelruain's after the founder of the monastery. Split down the middle, it gives the appearance of being rotten, but, from its branches, sweeping down to the ground on all sides spring strong young shoots in the same manner as a lime tree. The whole tree was covered with short, fat, green catkins when we were there and was altogether a memorable sight.

Across the road we went next to see the tower of the medieval church, all that remains of the church which succeeded the Celtic monastery. In the grounds is a small, primitive cross, quite plain, and the enormous font which is a puzzle to some as it has no drain-hole.

Sunday, June 18th - Delgany Area

Delgany - In the 1976 Record we noted a visit to Delgany old church-yard and its cross-shaft with the inscription in Irish as given by George Petrie. This time the sun was shining strongly on it, so that, despite the yew and the sycamores doing their best to conceal it - (why were all these monuments so free of trees, etc., and so easy to study and photograph in the days when Canon Scott was writing, and so overgrown and difficult today ?) We thought that we could at least partially, make out some words. There also looked like what seemed to be the remains of decoration above the words, although this has never been mentioned before as far as I know.

Kilcoole - We were also here in 1976 and found church and churchyard in the same tidy and orderly state. A key is needed here and it took some time to get this despite all the arrangements made in advance. When at last it turned up, it opened nothing! Is this a way of ensuring that the church is kept tidy? Luckily, as the entrance to the nave and chancel are closed only with an iron grille, much can be seen from outside.

An unusual example of unconscious (?) humour is found on a tombstone not far from the west door. The stone is inscribed - "To my two Wifes...may they rest in peace"...

St. Mary's of the Downs - This is the name by which the church is known today, but is obviously not an old name, and in the O.S. Letters O'Curry says that some call it "Patrick's Church" while the owner of the land says he hears it sometimes called St. Anne's. O'Curry mentions the absence of a graveyard and the iron paling surrounding the church, as we see it today.

Situated in the grounds of Downs House, in a field bordering the mile-long avenue to the house, it is best approached, however, from the fairground which lies to the west of it.

If, as some think, this church is the hitherto unidentified Kilmaccabirn in the Manor of Shankill and frequently mentioned in medieval documents, this fairground must go back into very early medieval times and is said to have been in use until recently. Close to it can be seen portions of the ancient highway with its walls, the old road before the present one through the Glen was made.

In his "Place-Names of County Wicklow", Liam Price says that the name Kilmaccabirn means "The Church of the Man from Ossory" and has nothing to do with the tribal name of O'Byrne. He also says that the name indicates a very ancient foundation, and he identifies it with the present townland name of Killickabawn. As this lies to the south of the Downs, he did not take the further step of equating the ruined church of St. Mary's with the ancient Kilmaccabirn. Townlands, however, can become broken up into new names, and it is hard to resist the belief that the ruined church now called St. Mary's, was formerly Kilmaccabirn, although it must have undergone much rebuilding.

Wednesday, July 19th - Second Evening Walk Old Rathmichael etc.

Our second Walk was to the old Rathmichael church and, above it, to the Hillfort, now surveyed by the students of the Annual Course in Field Archaeology, who look forward to seeing it excavated one day.

It was good to see the old graveyard looking so much tidier than ever before. There seems to be a movement towards clearing up our ancient graveyards round the country.

Before walking further up the hill we went over to the right to have a look at the Rathmichael Relief Tank, one of three which regulate the pressure of the water piped from Roundwood to the Waterworks at Stillorgan. The other two are at Kilmurry and Kilcronea. The caretaker's house, long empty, is now a ruin.

Halfway between Rathmichael graveyard and the Hillfort, is the site of the old Rathmichael fairground, a flat stretch of green sward. Although its dates are not known, it seems to have operated throughout the 18th century, if not longer, and to have been a very good one.

This is a very good and interesting walk, but again hardly anyone turned up.

Sunday, July 22nd - Baltinglass -

This was a very interesting day, despite the miserable weather - almost continuous rain. We drove via Rockbrook and Tallaght instead of the superb way over the mountain through Glenmalur and Aghavannagh because some members from Dublin and Tallaght were joining us. As arranged we all met about 12 miles from Brittas near the Athgraney Circle (or the Piper's Stones) where we found our guide, Mrs. Ó Broin of Kiltegan and Mr. Frank Hunt already there. Across two fields from the road and up a low hill, we came to the Stone Circle, said to be one of the finest in Ireland.

From here we were guided to the Castleruddery Stone Circle three miles south west of Donard and close to the road-side. This is a double circle of stones and a bank, all very much hidden in thick, tangled grass, a contrast to the short grass round the Piper's Stones. Both Monuments are fully described in the Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society.

Next, to Baltinglass where we went to the Abbey. The first thing to do here was to have our lunch, sitting in the cars as it was still raining. While gazing at the old walls we were surprised to see the antirrhinums sprouting in such numbers from them - and especially to note that they were all white, an unusual colour. I like to think that they chose to be white in

honour of the white robes of the Cistercian monks for whom the Abbey was founded on land given by Dermot McMurrough in 1148.

After lunch, we walked in and around the Abbey ruins so well described by Canon Claude Chavasse, once Rector here. He wrote an excellent history of the Abbey itself and of the several united parishes over which he presided. It is a great help to have his book to point out the things worth noting inside the building.

The last part of the tour was the climb up the hill over the Abbey, known as the Pinnacle, to see the Passage grave which Canon Chavasse claims is the southern outpost of the famous Boyne Valley graves. This took two hours, and at 5.30 p.m. we set off for home, stopping only for a quick look at Stratford-on-Slaney, a “deserted village” built by Henry Stratford in the 18th century, well laid out with wide streets, churches, houses and a bleach green for a cotton manufactory.

And so home in heavy rain and mist....

Wednesday, September 13th - third Evening Walk – Ballycorus

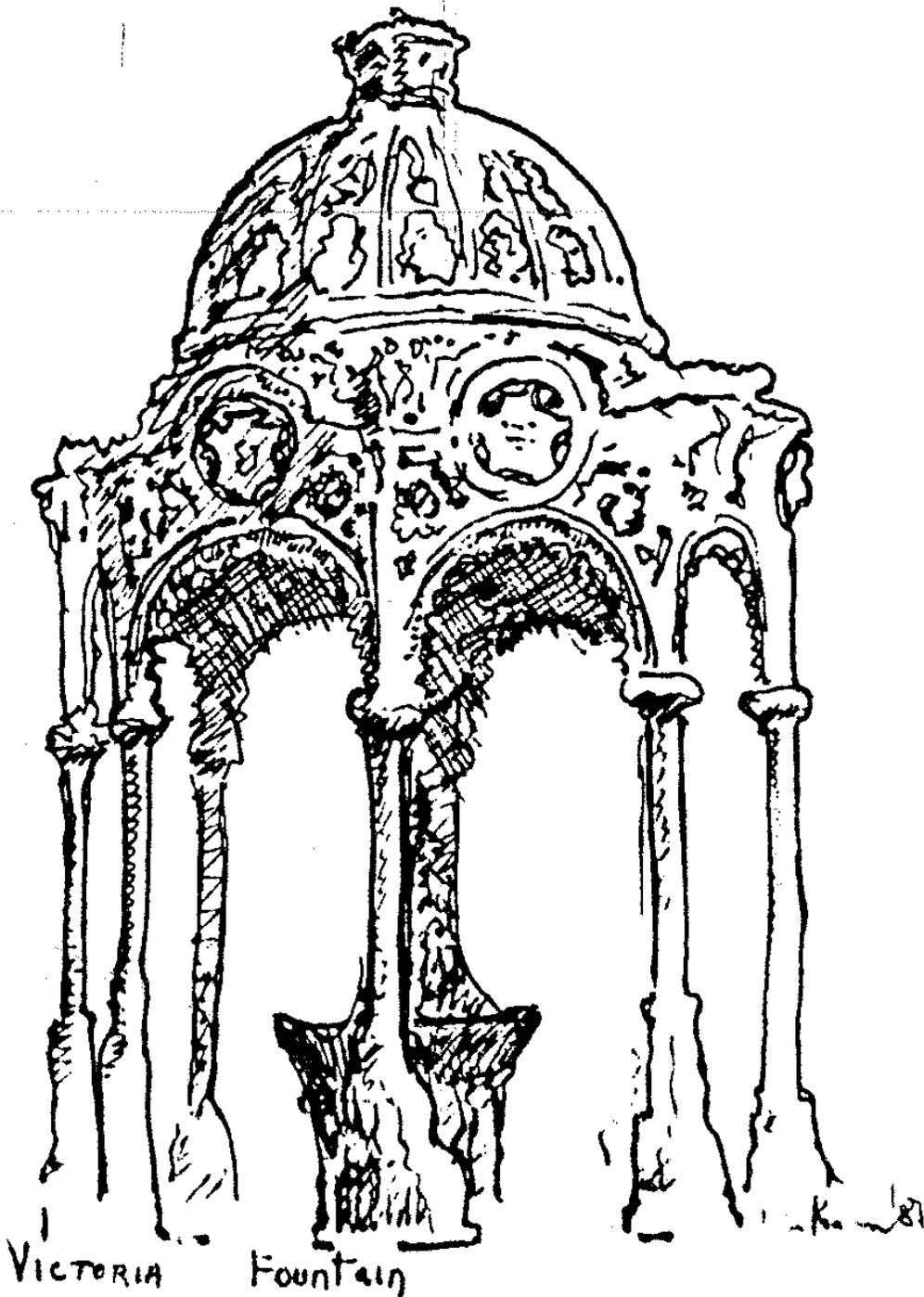
This was literally a wash-out, the rain coming down in sheets. Nobody turned up and it was already dark at 6 p.m. If nothing else, this evening proved that September is too late for evening walks; darkness falls about 8 p.m. even in good weather.

KINGSTOWN -
A Portrait of an Irish Victorian Town
Peter Pearson

Dunlaoghaire is a town whose individuality has often been overlooked and its outstanding Victorian character ignored because of its proximity to the Georgian capital. Consequently, in the face of the present rapid development of the town and borough, much that is of architectural quality is either lost or spoilt by insensitive new buildings and schemes.

It has often been assumed that the name Dun Laoghaire has little substance, that 5th century King Laoghaire did not have a fort here on the shores of Dublin Bay. But Gaelic place-names seldom lie, and Rocque's map of 1757 marks a "dun"; A further clue may be found in two stones discovered in the 1930s which would seem to have come from the site of the dun. They bear Bronze Age ornament of the concentric circle and curvilinear type. One also has an undecipherable ogham inscription whose fine cutting would appear to be contemporaneous with the other decorations. It is, unfortunately, not certain whether these stones are genuine or the work that of some eccentric. They are currently in the custody of the National Museum, but it is hoped that they may, eventually form the centrepiece of a local history or Borough museum.

In 1821, George 4th ended his royal visit to Ireland by departing from a fishing village called Dunleary where colossal works were in progress towards the building of an "Asylum Harbour". He 'graciously' left his name to the growing locality which was called Kingstown until 1922 when its Irish name was re-instated officially. Apart from war, shipwreck was always one of the greatest occupational hazards facing the 19th century. In 1807 some 380 people were drowned on the shores of Dublin Bay when two troopships were wrecked near Seapoint. The frequency of tragedies of this kind prompted the call to erect a harbour of asylum or refuge in Dublin Bay. Prior to the building of Howth harbour in 1807, the east coast offered no shelter to ships in times of adverse tides or weather, added to the fact that the approaches to Dublin port were among the most dangerous in Europe. After many petitions and much debate, the east pier was begun in 1816 and the west four years later. Many fascinating plans had been considered, including a large canal to Dublin from Bulloch or Dunleary, and various deep-water harbours in Dalkey Sound and off Sandycove. The massive granite-built harbour, finally completed about 1860, encloses some 250 acres, and for some time remained the largest artificial harbour in Europe. Half of Dalkey Hill was quarried away, the stone (ex-labour costs) given free of charge for the Asylum Harbour by the proprietors of the land, who had been persuaded to do so by a Norwegian-born Captain Toutcher whose name does not appear on the obelisk commemorating the visit of George 4th in 1821 although he was one of the most active personalities behind the construction of the harbour, its boatslips, jetties and buildings. Though the harbour started life as a place of refuge, by 1826 the steam-and-sail powered Mail Packet boats were using the newly named Royal Harbour of Kingstown instead of Howth. The Kingstown-Holyhead route was to become an exemplary service. One of the fastest and most regular in the world, it maintained an impeccable record for speed and safety. Between 1850 and 1920 this service was run by the Irish firm, the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company.



In the course of the 19th century a variety of maritime activities became established at Dunleary. As early as 1800 the Dublin Bay Lifeboat Service was founded when the first harbour proposals were being considered, and a lifeboat at Sandycove seems to have pre-

dated the Dunleary station. The 'Kingstown' lifeboat performed many heroic rescues, frequently under treacherous conditions in the Bay.

Origins The earliest buildings of Dunleary were clustered round the base of the west pier (not far from the ancient dun) where in the 18th century a Coffee house had been established. Fishing and the importation of coal were the chief trades of the little village, and throughout the Victorian era (to which coal meant what oil means to us) and up to the outbreak of World War 2, coal boats continued their frequent calls at Dun Laoghaire.

Railway The growth of Kingstown accelerated when Ireland's first railway created a radical new-era form of transport to Dublin in 1834. The steam Age, however, was not universally welcomed, and there was a great deal of well-organised opposition to the extension of the railway from Salthill, through the old harbour, to the centre of Kingstown. Gentlemen entrepreneurs like Mr. Gresham (of hotel fame) had built high-class terraces and residences over-looking the sea and harbour and were not going to have their view spoiled by a noisy, dirty contraption which to them must have appeared an extraordinary white elephant. When the railway finally arrived at Kingstown, its Station house was carefully designed by Mulvany (c. 1843) with its exquisitely neat granite masonry in the Neoclassical style, producing one of the town's most refined buildings. The entire railway in Kingstown was carefully sunk below ground level, so that today, the pedestrian is almost unaware of its existence. The architect Mulvany, a pupil of James Gandon, also designed the premises of the Royal Irish Yacht Club (1850) where, once again, he adopted the Neo-Classical style. He may have had a hand in designing the other waterfront buildings, which all had to conform to the Town Commissioners' regulations of one-storey high, so as not to obscure the view from the terraces.

The nobility and semi-aristocratic residents of Kingstown were hard to please, and in 1861, out of frustration with the railway, they established a rival service to Dublin by running a paddle steamer called the 'Kingstown' from Carlisle Pier to the Custom House. This deck-over-deck, American-styled steamer had a sister ship, the 'Dublin', and together they ferried passengers in an alleged twenty minutes! Harbour regulations were stiff, and boatmen's fares were fixed, but could be doubled on rough days when a blue flag was flown from the Harbour-Master's office. A guide book of 1860 records that "All boats are numbered and fines will be inflicted for extortion or insolence"!

By the 1840s Kingstown had become a fashionable resort and boasted several notable sea-front hotels, e.g. the Anglesea Arms and the Royal Hotel, early predecessor of the Royal Marine. The building of the superbly pompous Royal Marine Hotel in 1863 was an undertaking of the archetype Victorian entrepreneur, Mr. Dargan, (builder of the International, Bray, also). The now mutilated exterior is all that remains of McCurdy's grand French Chateau-styled hotel, with its tower, pitched roofes and elaborate plaster and iron work.

The prestige of the town was greatly enhanced by the Royal visits. Queen Victoria visited Kingstown on three occasions (in 1849, '53 and 1900), the last one being elegantly recorded by the erection of the highly ornate ironwork fountain on the harbour front. During her reign, a Royal Navy guardship was permanently at anchor in the harbour and became part of its furniture, rather like the present day red-painted lightships. (Since 1875 the Irish Lights Commissioners made Kingstown their chief depot).

A favourite pastime was a stroll on the east pier to watch the mail steamer and listen to the regimental bands, and to see some of the largest and finest yachts in the world, for Kingstown was as much a yachting centre as any in England. During the regattas the harbour was crowded with yachts from England and Scotland as well as Ireland - yachts from 40 to 400 tons - among them those of Lord Fitzwilliam and Sir Thomas Lipton. Races often totalled 48 miles.

Churches in Kingstown It is no coincidence that the numerous churches of Kingstown often owed their origins to the maritime tradition. St. Michael's Roman Catholic church was the first to be built (1824), although Mass was also said aboard the "Essex", a hulk moored near the east pier, serving as a prison for convicts awaiting deportation. The harbour works were supervised by Scottish engineers who, being Presbyterians, established their first church in York Road in 1828. Both these early churches were replaced in the 1860s by finer Gothic buildings. Fishermen from Torbay, Devon, founded the Methodist church in 1836 on Northumberland Avenue. In the same year an Anglican church, specifically for the sea-faring community - the Mariners' church was built. This large church near the harbour was always well filled by fishermen and the ranks of the Royal Navy.

Church-going was a vital part of the Kingstown tradition, and, by the end of the 19th century, in the broader area of the town, there were three large Roman Catholic churches, five of the Church of Ireland, and four more of other denominations.

The leisured inhabitants took a serious view of the Victorian notion of 'charity', and there were no less than three large orphanages such as the "Bird's Nest". There were numerous institutions for seamen and workmen which inevitably attempted to foster temperance. Others, for example, the 'Kingstown Penny Dinners', helped the many destitute.

Streets and Squares Dun Laoghaire street names show an interesting survival from the Kingstown days. Earliest names are associated with the first developers, e.g. Gresham, The Hon. G. Crofton, Lord de Vesci, ground landlord of Kingstown. Kelly's Avenue and Rumley Avenue (Mulgrave St.) were named after local family landowners. Thomas Rumley, once President of the Royal College of Surgeons, was born in Dun Laoghaire and in 1832 diagnosed a case of cholera in Kingstown for which the grateful inhabitants stoned him! Names such as Wellington, Clarence, York, Cumberland and Sussex had their origin in English titles. Others, e.g. Carlisle (pier), Anglesey and Eglinton honoured the Lords Lieutenant of the day. Kingstown itself, George's Street, Victoria Terrace, Royal Terrace and Queen's Road looked to the Crown for inspiration. Corrig, apart from Dun Laoghaire (anglicized Dunleary) is one of the few Gaelic names.

When all available sites with views of the sea had been exhausted, the developers turned inland and built three squares which, after the fashion of the Dublin Georgian squares, feature a park in the centre. Clarinda Park, Royal Terrace and Crosthwaite Park were all completed between 1860 and 1875. (John Crosthwaite also erected the Royal Victoria Baths (1840s), embodied in the present baths). They each feature large bay-windows with broad granite steps leading to the hall which, like the main rooms, has a good smattering of elaborate, mass-produced plaster work.

Many of Dun Laoghaire's most characteristic avenues run downhill at right angles to the sea, viewed in the distance, and this produces the attractive feature of stepped terraced houses well exhibited in Clarinda Park and Corrig Avenue.

Throughout the 19th century it was fashionable to rent a house in Kingstown for the 'season'. In 1860 the Parnell family rented Granite Hall, now demolished, for six months. This fine stone house was erected by a Mr. Smith - stone contractor to the harbour - who himself lived at another fine residence, "Stoneview", now in Clarinda Park. Both houses were built of the local granite and commanded fine views of the Bay. Kingstown became the favourite retreat of retired Army and Navy officers as well as some of the landed gentry who had lost their estates on account of the Land Acts of the late 19th century.

Architecture:- Many of the shops and houses in the town were simple buildings enhanced by the use of stucco ornament or detail, e.g. columns, consoles, a crouching lion or roof-line eagle. Among the earliest grocers in the town were P. Howard "Grocer and Agent to his Majesty's Cruisers" and Alex. Findlater, opened in 1834 (closed 1968) About the turn of the century most of George's Street was rebuilt in red brick and many of the elaborate shop-fronts disappeared.

The Town Hall, overlooking the harbour, was built 100 years ago, the architect, J. L. Robinson, choosing a Venetian palace design for the exterior of a building without originality but suitably grave for a town hall.

The Venetian Town Hall comes near the end of a list of architectural styles freely borrowed in the 19th century. In Dun Laoghaire you will find Georgian houses, neo-Classical, English Perpendicular, French Gothic, Venetian Gothic, French Chateau, Tudor and English farmhouse styles, all variously rendered in stone, red brick or stucco-cement.

Iron structures and decorative iron work are perhaps the most truly Victorian contributions to architectural history. In Kingstown there was the Pavilion, the fountains, bandstands, railings, gates and railway sheds, most of these made in Scotland.

The Pavilion was erected in 1903 at the height of the 'festive' period marked by frequent royal visits, as well as visiting ships of the Royal Navy, and important regattas attended by such legendary yachts as Lipton's "Shamrock". It was an elegant structure of wood and glass on an iron frame which contained a large hall, many tea-rooms and smoking-rooms and a roof-top garden. Some of the concerts, dances and fire-work displays have been memorably captured for us by contemporary photographers such as Lawrence and Charles and Nevill Cook of Kingstown.

The unique quality of 19th century Kingstown is the result of two products of the Steam Age, the steam ship and the railway. A town begun in 1830, complete with every kind of public building, Banks, Post Office, Hospital, Schools, Convents and a Coastguard Station as well as those already described, was fully fledged by 1900.

Dun Laoghaire's 19th century past paints a good picture of the Victorian way of life, and much of this is well reflected in the buildings of the town.

COMMITTEE 1978

| | |
|------------|-----------------------|
| President | Mrs. M. K. Turner |
| Hon. Sec. | Mrs. E. O'Brien |
| Hon Treas. | Mr. J. McNamara |
| | Miss Mary Treston |
| | Col. Derek Boydell |
| | Mr. Con Maxwell |
| | Mr. Dickie Pilkington |

Winter Talks – 1979

Friday, January 19th - The Annual General Meeting was held on January 19th at which the following officers and Committee were elected:-

President - Mrs. M. K. Turner

Secretary - Mrs. J. Delany

Treasurer - Mr. J. McNamara

Committee

Miss Mary Treston

Col. Derek Boydell

Mr. Paddy Corr

Mr. Dickie Pilkington

Betty O'Brien was obliged to resign as Hon. Secretary owing to pressure of work for her M.A. degree in Archaeology.

Con Maxwell, as the longest-standing member of the committee, retired temporarily. Following on the business of the meeting, a colour film with recorded commentary was shown by Bill Doran of the Survey Group. The film showed the treasures of the tomb of Tutankhamen.

Friday, February 23rd - The Lay-out of Towns in Medieval Ireland.

An illustrated talk on this subject was given by Mr. John Bradley, M.A. of the Archaeological Department U.C.D.

The lecturer started with a picture of a busy medieval town in Europe in the 14th century, saying that we in Ireland had no similar picture to show. All the evidence that we have comes from documents (when available) and excavations.

Towns connote safety and trade. And trade was certainly being carried on in pre-Norman times when our monastic settlements filled the function of a town. There is plenty of evidence of contact between the Irish monasteries and the Normans before the Conquest in 1170.

The Anglo-Normans attempted to found towns by granting burgess rights which included rights of trading, exemption from certain restrictions, etc. etc.; but these attempts proved to have been largely abortive and unsuccessful. After the peak period of about 1240 A.D. there was a marked decline until a resurgence in the mid-16th century.

The lecturer showed plans of towns which illustrated the different patterns, i.e., linear, chequered or concentric obviously following the lines of an ancient monastery.

Not all towns were walled, as the building of walls, 4½ ft. thick, meant the raising of taxes to cover expense. Drogheda was a walled town with several gates, one of which, in particular, is by far the finest example that we have - although it is not the gate itself but the barbican or outer portion. It is so magnificent as to appear that prestige, rather than necessity, governed its erection. Drogheda was one of our towns which, in size, compared very favourably with many in England, e.g. Bristol, Oxford etc.

A fascinating lecture, profusely illustrated.

Friday, March 23rd - Crosses in the Dublin Area

An illustrated talk by Mr. Patrick Healy.

About 35 persons were present - an average number - and all enjoyed the lecture as demonstrated by the many questions asked at the end.

Starting with the statement that often the only record we have of early monastic sites are neglected graveyards and/or a cross, and that we now have a fairly complete list of sites mainly in the SE coastal area, the speaker went on to discuss in detail some 20 crosses.

While some of these were already known to at least some of his listeners, Paddy Healy can always be relied on to discover something not generally noticed. For example, on the back of the Jamestown cross, he can make out a full figure where P.J. O'Reilly at the turn of the century, meticulous worker as he was, could only see "a single circle, etc." But it is at Old Court that Paddy Healy really surprises us. Whether it is his piercing eye or his feeling fingers, where the ordinary man can only see faint indications of the sculptures which must have once decorated the cross-base here, his complete list of drawings reconstructing these left at least one of his listeners breathless! O'Curry working 150 years ago, left a very incomplete record of what he saw.

Incidentally, as the speaker reminded us, this cross-base does not apparently mark a one-time ecclesiastical site; in the Ordnance Survey Letters it is recorded that it was brought here from where it had been discovered by workmen employed by the grandfather of the then owner of Old Court, Mr. Edwards, while cutting a way through a hedge on the right hand side of the road from Bray to Old Court Avenue (where the townlands of Bray and Old Court meet). Its original site will probably never be known.

Besides crosses already well known, we heard of a hitherto unrecorded one recently found in a private garden in Dalkey and thought to have come originally from the island. Another unrecorded cross is now in the chapel of St. Columba's College, Rathfarnham. The origin of this 'Kilmashogue' cross is somewhat vague. It is thought to have come from a now-vanished church once situated somewhere on Kilmashogue Mountain. The speaker quoted Joyce's "Neighbourhood of Dublin" (1912) in which the author says that "some 40 years ago there stood on the northern slope of Kilmashogue a diminutive church ruin with little of the walls standing...but of which recent search failed to discover any trace". Joyce added that in all probability it was the original Kilmashogue (or church of St. Mashog).

At Killegar recently, members of the Rathmichael Historical Society recorded finding, placed on top of the N. wall of the chancel, a cross-shaped fragment of granite.

At the old Rathmichael church a very small cross- inscribed stone fragment once fixed to the sill of the window in the S. wall, has been missing for the last two or three years.

Friday, November 23rd - The Burren - Fertile Rock

An illustrated talk by Mr. Sean White, writer & broadcaster

Mr. White has had a long and intimate connection with the Burren, which he says is a little kingdom of its own -in all its many aspects. He began his talk with the geology of the area, how the limestone rocks were formed over the ages by deposits of layers upon layers of shells

which finally rose above the water and were shaped and polished by the action of wind and water and by the glaciers of the Ice Age. At first sight a desolate place, it is not altogether so. Here and there are to be found green valleys and there are rivers which flow underground. Not far off the coast, the Aran Islands can be clearly seen. Geographically they form part of Clare, so similar are they in climate, rock formation and flora.

Mr. White showed surprisingly few slides of the flowers for which the Burren is famous, his intention being to give a comprehensive and general view of it. He described the Burren as a meeting-place of plants which had their origins in many different localities - from the Alpine heights to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. These flowers are never seen in vulgar profusion; rather they appear in small shy clusters, hidden away in the clefts of the rocks where they have to be sought.

When man first came to the Burren, it was probably from Brittany. He built imposing stone tombs for his dead, to be known by his descendants thousands of years later, as wedge-shaped gallery graves. A few hundred years before the Christian era, the ring-forts of which there are so many, were erected and these, as we know from excavation, were in use as late as the 17th century. (Here the speaker showed a very interesting slide of a fine doorway into one of these forts.) The monks of early Christian times must have found the Burren in its solitary setting much to their liking. The little churches they built, like the ring-forts continued to be built in the same way down the centuries - even to as late as the 12th century when the Irish Romanesque style was flourishing.

Summer Visits - 1979

Sunday June 24th Trim

Our first outing of the season was to Trim, Co. Meath, and had been planned many months in advance. Weather-wise, it turned out to be rather a poor day, cold and wet - the earliest arrivals, in fact, were greeted by a shower of hail!

Fr. Joseph Kelly of the County Meath Archaeological Society who is the authority on Trim, met the Group, as planned, at the Education Centre, and they had a very interesting tour of the town and Castle, enlivened with stories and anecdotes told by the reverend guide. Fr. Kelly has written an excellent pamphlet and guide to Trim, illustrated with charming pen-and-ink drawings and with maps so well thought out that one could easily find one's way around without a guide if necessary.

Sunday, July 15th Piperstown Hill – Habitation Sites and Burial Cairns

This was one of those perfect days which are so rare, with a hot sun pleasantly tempered by a gentle breeze. It was also a most interesting day.

About twelve members and non-members met our guide, Paddy Healy, at 3 p.m. at the Featherbed carpark. Early arrivals passed the time pleasantly eating icecreams.

On to the Featherbed road from which we took the first turn right (signposted to Bohernabreena and Tallaght), and drove for about a mile, when we parked the cars and took to the heather (incidentally, just coming into bloom). A walk of a few hundred yards brought us to an area where there were several habitation sites and, a little further on, some burial cairns.

It was possible in some cases to locate the entrance of these sites and the hearth. Excavation had shown quantities of flints mainly just outside an entrance, so that one could picture a worker sitting in his doorway facing south enjoying the sun and throwing away the discards in front of him to create a pile.

The cairns were heaps of stones, some surrounded by a kerb of standing stones 1' to 2' in height. Only one cairn had been excavated, and in it were found charcoal and human bones. The latter, interestingly, were quite separate from the charcoal and seemed to have been kept together in some way. Our guide told us that it was unusual, if not unique, to find burial sites so close to habitation sites.

It is worth noting that Paddy Healy had been out already that morning in order to locate these sites and to mark them so that there would be no difficulty or waste of time in finding them. How thorough and how thoughtful!

Sunday September 9th - Rathgall Hillfort & Haroldstown Dolmen

Hillfort - A perfect late summer day, mellow with a warm sun. Meeting at 2.30 p.m. at Rathdrum, a beautiful drive of 30 miles brought us to Rathgall, a few miles east of Tullow,

where the hillfort was easily reached from the road. Estyn Evans in his "Pre-historic and Early Christian Ireland", describes this as a Trivallate Fort. It consists of three defence rings, the outer of which, a bank of earth and stones, has a diameter of 350 yards and encloses an area of 18 acres. The 2nd ring is double, consisting of two banks, one higher than the other, separated by a ditch or fosse. The central ring, enclosing the citadel, is a cashel or dry-stone wall 18' wide and 8½' high - its diameter is 150'. Peter Harbison in his "Guide to the National Monuments of Ireland" says that this inner ring was built later than the others and dates to medieval times. The fort as a whole was built in the early centuries of the Christian era.

Dolmen - From the Hillfort we drove some miles in a NE direction to near Hackettstown where we found the Haroldstown dolmen in a field beside the road.

This is a classic example of a Portal Dolmen with two portal stones and a blocking stone all of the same height, about 6'. The capstone rests firmly and squarely on its supporting stones of which there are about 6 or 7. This dolmen is said to have the unusual feature of two capstones; the second, smaller one at the back resting on the ground and forming a sloping ramp up to the top one. Estyn Evans says that the chamber is unusually large, measuring 13' x 9', and that it was used as a dwelling-place in fairly recent times. At first sight the capstone - 13' across - seems to have 'ducts' like those on the Brennanstown dolmen, but only one leads off the stone.

We had tea in a corner of the field, after which it was home by a beautiful drive via Aghavanna, over the hills now purple with heather and glowing in the evening light, and through miles of forests, dark and mysterious with immensely tall trees. Home at 8 p.m. with happy memories of a perfect day.

A Glass of Claret Kathleen Turner

One day in May 1979, a bulldozer, followed by a bonfire finally settled the fate of “Beechgrove”, the house that, in the 18th century, had been one of the best-known inns in the country. The old inn, no longer needed for its original purpose, owing to improved road and transport conditions, had been rebuilt in the early 19th century, into “a gentleman’s seat”, its front, which had faced the road, was turned discreetly away from it and a wall run up between it and the road with an entrance gate at the end giving a long avenue.¹ Why this very attractive Regency house into which the inn had been converted should have been allowed to fall into ruin and be demolished must remain a mystery...

Loughlinstown in the 18th century consisted of a handful of cabins, the little river splashing its way down from Kilternan joined here by one coming across Lehaunestown, together continuing their way to Killiney Bay under the little humpbacked bridge which we see in George Petrie’s drawing. Loughlinstown House, situated on a height above the river, hidden from view by the trees thickly clothing part of the grass-covered bank which falls steeply to the river, just as Mrs. Delany saw it in those days, lay empty for almost the whole of the century, unoccupied by owner or tenant and of no use to the little community at its feet. In other circumstances it would have been “the Big House or my Lord’s or the Squire’s” from which, as John O’Keeffe the actor-playwright recalls as he reminisces over his early days, the “master would come in a coach and 2, a coach and 4 or a coach and 6.....the general rule of every man in the character of a gentleman, never to gallop or even trot hard upon a road, except in an emergency”.² Emergencies, of course, did occur. As the century progressed, despite Mrs. Delany’s bland assertion that the roads here were so safe, highwaymen became a considerable inconvenience. The Freeman’s Journal reported many instances of their work in and near Loughlinstown. In 1774 “a gentleman returning from Bray to Dublin was attacked on the hill of Loughlinstown by two footpads who robbed him of a gold watch, 14 shillings in silver, a laced hat and two ruffled shirts with which they made off towards the wood of Glenageary after cutting the girth and saddle and turning the horse loose”. In 1784 a letter to the same paper complains of “the outrageous proceedings that have of late been perpetrated in and about the environs of Bray and the road leading to Dublin”. In the same year a Mr. White of High Street, Dublin, a dealer in Flannels and Frieze, was returning from the Fair of Rathmichael when he was robbed by footpads in Donnybrook, but, luckily, he had “little of value having taken the precaution of leaving 30 gns in Bray and his watch”.

The Rathmichael Fair seems to have taken the place of one for which Sir William Domville had been granted a licence to hold in Loughlinstown back in the 17th century, complete with Pie-Powder Court, now, of course, no longer held.³

A little way along the old coach road from Loughlinstown to the South via Old Connaught and Fassaroe, etc, a new glebe house for the parish of Rathmichael was built in 1751 by Dr. John Lyon, Rector of Bray, on his appointment to that parish.⁴ A keen antiquary, Dr. Lyon was a Canon of St. Patrick’s Cathedral where he had been friend and co-worker with Dean Swift in the preservation of the Cathedral’s monuments. During Swift’s last illness, he had been in the care of Dr. Lyon. Being a bachelor, we may surmise that the Doctor must have dropped in at the local hostelry for his dinner.

To the East, a little way off, Shanganagh Castle may have been visible through the trees with, down below, the old cornmill whose wheel was turned by a race from the Loughlinstown river. Only a few years before the Kilruddery Hunt Song was written its owners, a branch of

the Walsh family who had lived there since the 15th century, had sold the castle with all its acres to Mr. Roberts who had also purchased the Old Connaught property (belonging to another of the Walsh clan), on which he was building a house.

The inn was to become the centre of social life in the neighbourhood and for many miles around. Unlike its counterpart in England, it had no special name - it was known simply as the Loughlinstown Inn or Owen Bray's after its landlord, a keen sportsman and almost a legendary figure even in his lifetime. He also kept a very good table and was widely known for his claret and venison, which latter, when he could obtain it, he was wont to advertise "to sell in his House or otherwise at the most reasonable prices". Passing travellers liked his inn. Mrs. Delany, wife of Dean Swift's friend, and a woman of fashion and good taste who dined here in 1752, describes it as "a very good inn and very pleasantly situated".⁵

Owen Bray's regular customers included public figures of the day, writers, singers and actors well-known on the Dublin stage. One of them whose plays were very very popular in London, John O'Keeffe, in his "Recollections" written long after in the 1820s, recalled his memories of it with nostalgia. It was an English comedian, Thomas Mozeen, who wrote the following ditty to Owen Bray:-

1. "Are ye landed from England & sick of the seas
When ye rolled & ye tumbled all manner of ways?
To Loughlinstown then without any delays
For you'll never be right till you see Owen Bray's
With his Bullen a Mona, or
A glass of his claret for me.

2. The days in December are dirty and raw
But when we're at Owen's we care not a straw
We bury the trades of Religion and Law.
With good claret and Bullen a Mona
A quick-moving bottle for me".

The last line seems to be a reference to the custom said to have been practised of making bottles of wine with round instead of flat bottoms and glasses with broken stems so that they could not be set down till they were empty!

Claret was the drink of the day - at 2/6 a bottle - and it was said that more was drunk in Ireland than in England and Scotland together. Dr. Ruddy tells us that French claret had become "the sole liquour with which all above the lower class regaled themselves. In 1753, 8,000 tons of wine were imported, the very bottles.....computed to cost £67,000".⁶

During the winter months the sound of the hunting horn and the familiar sight of the horses and hounds of the Earl of Meath's Kilruddery Hunt must have lent colour and excitement to the quiet scene. Owen Bray was an enthusiastic follower of the hunt and many a good day's sport was celebrated in his house and many a sorrow after a poor day, drowned. Sometimes the riders would be invited to the "plentiful board" at Kilruddery, the Earl of Meath's house near Bray, where a contemporary picture of the famous hunt still hangs. It depicts the 17th century house set against the backdrop of the Little Sugarloaf; horses and riders in the foreground and a number of outsize hounds cut out and pasted on to the canvas looking rather like huge seagulls flying over the Sugarloaf!

The song claims to have been written about a certain hunt which took place in 1744. (The full text of this song with theme is to be found in W.St.J. Joyce's "Neighbourhood of Dublin" (1912 p.87) The huntsmen and hounds are all named as well as the places over which the chase went. Most of these places are well-known today and need no explanation, but "Bushe's Grove" in verse 5 seems to have puzzled some commentators. It is, however, obvious that it refers to the Bushe family who lived in Corke, one of whose members, the Rev. John Bushe, was Rector of Bray 1730-46. A brief reference to "Carbury Byrne" turned up only recently in a law suit involving Mr. Walsh of Shanganagh Castle in 1909. In verse 4 "Lord Anglesea's wall" may refer to the castle which stood in Little Bray until it was pulled down some 30-40 years ago when Castle Street was being widened. His lordship is thought to have lived in it at one time.

The authorship of the song is not known for certain. Some say it was written by Thomas Mozeen who wrote the ditty to Owen Bray; others say the author was the Rev. Father Fleming of the Adam and Eve Chapel. It is, however, agreed that it was first sung at the house of one of the sportsmen involved, on Bachelor's Walk, only a few days after the events described in it, although it did not appear to the public till 1762 in a collection of "Miscellaneous Essays". It became an instant success and was said to be one of the best ever written.

Another hero of the hunt was Johnny Adair who has been described as a large, muscular man with a loud, hoarse voice, not unlike the most famous huntsman of all time, the Cumberland inn-keeper, John Peel. Those who like comparisons may be interested to know that the "Kilruddery Hunt" was written probably 100 years before "John Peel". Johnny Adair also had his fans:-

*"The soldiers may drink to their Cumberland brave
The sailors may drink to their Vernon
While all merry mortals true happiness have
With Johnny Adair of Kiltarnan."*⁷

Johnny Adair was the eldest son of Robert Adair of Holybrook near Bray, founder of the firm of wine-merchants in Dublin, Adair, Aldridge and Butler. In his will, which we have, he describes himself as of Dublin but he was always known to his fellow-sportsmen as Johnny Adair of Kiltarnan and his name occurs on a lease of Kiltarnan Lodge. Being a bachelor, it seems that Johnny often depended on Owen Bray to provide him with mutton, shoulders of venison and claret for entertaining his friends at home. O'Keefe calls him the "prince of good fellows" and boasts of having had a drink with him in his young days, though he can only have been 12 years old at the time of Johnny's death in 1759! In his will proved in 1760, Johnny shows a touching thought for the horse that had given him as many days of good sport - "I leave and bequeathe my old bay gelding to my said brother-in-law, William Hodson, upon consideration that he shall Foxhunt him no more than once a week during the season and that he feeds him constantly three times a day with Oats".

A postscript may, perhaps, be of some interest. The name Adair is linked to that of Hodson. Johnny's niece, Anne, daughter and heiress of his younger brother, Forster, married Sir George Hodson, Bart: bringing with her the Holybrook estate.⁸ Since then the heir to the baronetcy is always given the additional name of Adair and still possesses the giant goblets and the harp that belonged to Robert Adair.

“Harp” suggests singing and the question whether Robert Adair was the inspiration of the song, “Robin Adair”? It would however seem not. In 1969 an article appeared in “Country Life” telling the romantic tale of a young medical student in TCD who, because of an indiscretion, was obliged to leave the country. In England he fell on his feet, married a titled lady, became *persona grata* at the Court of George III, and made a fine career for himself in medicine. Lady Caroline Adair is said to have written the words of the song to an old Irish tune taught her by her husband.⁹ He eventually became the first Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland at whose annual dinner he is said to be remembered still by the singing of this song.

No mention is made of relatives in Ireland, but it would be difficult to think that he was not related to Johnny Adair, the sporting patron of the old inn at Loughlinstown.

References

1 “Narrative of a Residence in Ireland” by Miss Anne Plumptre 1817

2 “Recollections of my Life” 1826

3 A court held on the spot to settle disputes arising from the fair. (from Fr. pied poudre =dusty foot)

4 Cherrywood House - not to be confused with the Old Glebe

5 Correspondence of Mrs. Delany

6 John Rutty, MD 1772

7 “The Sham Squire” Anon

8 In 1834 a fine Tudor-style house was built on the property by the architect, Sir Richard Morrison, destroyed by fire in 1969.

9 “Country Life” October 1969 “Song of a Happy Marriage” and February 5th 1970 a letter.

Battery Wood - Contrary to expectations, this little wood leading to the battery erected there in 1803 against a possible invasion by Napoleon, has survived the rash of Council house building between Rathallagh and the sea.

Course in Field Archaeology 20th to 24th August 1979

This year saw the realization of the dreams and aims of the Society to run a training excavation. Since 1975, when this Course started the field exercises have been done by surveying an archaeological feature. On the suggestion of Mr. Patrick Healy, Mrs. Betty O'Brien applied for a licence to excavate "A Possible Fulacht Fiadh" at Ballyman. The licence was granted just one week before the start of the Course. This meant that equipment had to be acquired in a very short time. There was no site shelter - only a portable table with polythene stretched between trees above to give shelter from a few heavy showers - there was plenty of sun. Mr. Patrick Wallace, who through circumstances beyond his control was unable to allow an excursion either to Wood Quay or the Museum as planned, came down to the site and spoke about Wood Quay finds in an amusing way and was tolerant of the conditions. The excavation produced some interesting features and a number of worked flints of bronze age date were found. Subsequently two bronze-age vessels, which had been sliced in half by a bulldozer have been discovered in the bank on the way down to the site. These were removed by the National Museum.

Leo Swan continues to direct the course. Noel A. Carroll unfortunately became ill and was unable to direct the surveying - this did not matter because the excavation provided field work. The lecture programme was based on the Medieval period. Marcus Ó hEochaidh was unable to give his lecture, but Leo Swan took his place. Mr. David Newman Johnson, Inspector of National Monuments spoke about Irish Castles, Mr. John Bradley of U.C.D. - The Development of Medieval Towns in Ireland, Mr. Brian Lacey of Magee College, Derry - Excavations at Derry, Dr. Terence Barry of T.C.D. - Archaeology of Moated Sites in Ireland. Mr. John Leeson and his family were most helpful and interested in the activities and we are grateful to him for making the site available.

Once again the Society thanks Irish Cement Ltd. for continuing to give a financial contribution.

Miscellanea – 1979

Beechgrove - A sad event this year has been the final destruction of Beechgrove the once famous 18th century inn at Loughlinstown. Over the last few years it has been left empty and a prey to vandals, and in May this year the bulldozer was brought in and the work completed by a bonfire of what remained.



Beechgrove built early 19th century
demolished 1979

Turkish Baths, Bray - The end of 1979 saw the end of another building that might have been cherished - the unique Turkish Baths built in the last century by William Dargan.

The Rathmichael and Kiltuc Crosses - While yet another effort was being made to see whether the separated parts of the Kiltuc cross could be reassembled, anxiety began to be felt about the safety of the cross in Rathmichael Lane because of building activity.

Shanganagh Castle - Local conservationists were worried when they saw the boundary wall of the modern Shanganagh Castle along the Bray Road being taken down; and even more agitated when the fine gateway was also removed. At what must have been vast expense the wall was gradually rebuilt, somewhat higher than before and reinforced with iron girders, and finally the gateway was re-erected at a new entrance opposite Alley River Road. The original entrance on a curve of the road was dangerous for cars coming out from the Castle, but was all this really necessary in order to make a new exit?

Old Connaught Churchyard - The old graveyard was given a good cleaning this year when the boundary wall which had fallen down during the very severe winter of 1978/79, was being rebuilt in the spring.

COMMITTEE 1979

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