

# RATHMICHAEL HISTORICAL RECORD

1986

22nd January 1986

## 10th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND MEMBERS' EVENING

This year's AGM was chaired by our out-going President, Joan Delany, and was attended by approximately thirty members. Reports were read by the Secretary, the Treasurer and the Director of Excavations.

The Treasurer, Howell Evans, showed that the accounts were all in a healthy state, the only one in debit being that opened for the publication of *If You Seek Monuments* which had not yet paid for the printing of the second edition. The Secretary's report was read by Wendy Guilford and outlined the activities of the Society at its meetings over the year. Betty O'Brien, director of the archaeological excavation at Ballyman, presented the accounts of the Summer School which were found to be in good order, having some funds in hand for the necessary post-excavation expenses.

Prior to the election of the new committee, the President put forward a proposal that our rules be altered to create a new office on the committee, that of Editor. There was a lot of work to be done in editing the *Rathmichael Historical Record*, a task which had been done previously by the late Mrs Kathleen Turner. This proposal was seconded and passed.

The election of officers and committee then took place. Joan Delany stepped down as President and Tanya O'Sullivan offered her resignation due to other commitments.

The following were proposed and seconded and there being no more names put forward than the number of available positions, all were deemed elected unopposed.

	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Proposer</b>	<b>Second</b>
<b>President</b>	Wendy Guilford	C. Maxwell	D. Pilkington
<b>Secretary</b>	Rob Goodbody	M. Booth	D. Boydell
<b>Treasurer</b>	Howell Evans	D. MacGarry	P. Healy
<b>Editor</b>	Damian MacGarry	G. Slevin	W. Guilford
<b>Committee</b>	Albert Mason	D. Pilkington	G. Slevin
	Alison Riseley	D. Pilkington	G. Slevin
	Patrick Healy	D. Pilkington	G. Slevin
	Etain Doyle	D. Pilkington	G. Slevin

Joan Delany informed the meeting that the late Kathleen Turner had left a suitcase to the Society which contained slides, research notes, photographs, articles and some pictures.

Following the elections we had a most enjoyable showing of members' slides of historical interest.

## 19th February 1986

### **DUBLIN TRAMS**

Michael Corcoran

Our speaker is an enthusiast in transport matters and is heavily involved with the Transport Museum. This enthusiasm was very evident in his illustrated talk which brought us the history of the tram in Dublin. At the outset there were horse drawn trams which appeared on the streets of Dublin in 1861. They continued for thirty five years and survived an attempt to replace them with steam trams, only succumbing in the mid 1890's after electric trams had been introduced. Electric trams, in turn, kept going for fifty years and were gradually replaced by buses in the 1940's. The last tram, the Hill of Howth line, continued for another decade.

Over this time there were great changes in the styles of trams and our speaker showed us the progression of design from the earliest open topped and draughty versions to the later ones which looked similar to buses. There was also the Directors' tram, a luxurious coach used by the company for prestige passengers. All of this was amply illustrated and we will all look on old photographs of Dublin in a different light, particularly as Mr Corcoran managed to put dates on photographs from the trams seen in them!

## 19th March 1986

### **SOME ANCIENT ROADS IN SOUTH COUNTY DUBLIN**

Dickie Pilkington

We do not tend to think of roads as having any particular origin, we just use them. However, the study of roads is a fascinating aspect of local history as it can help to understand the patterns of movement within society long ago and can suggest where former villages and other settlements stood. Dickie Pilkington has been examining the roads of South County Dublin for some time and has come to some important conclusions. In doing so he has examined very carefully the evidence from old maps and has combined this with a solid knowledge of the history of the district. Above all, he has not remained in his armchair by his fireside, but has gone out into the countryside looking for evidence to help in unravelling the story.

He showed that many of our roads date from the early years of the nineteenth century through a combination of military necessity and the greater mobility which was becoming available through improvements such as coach services. John Taylor's map of the Dublin area, dated 1816, shows a remarkable number of roads labelled "New Road". This includes Glenamuck Road, Ballycorus Road, Clonkeen Road, Ballyogan Road and the Upper Dargle Road, which was the new coach road leading to Wicklow.

Going much further back in time, he showed how our earliest roads can be found to lie along lines which connect the various monastic settlements. These are now often very minor back roads or have even disappeared, but they were extremely important in former years. These would include roads linking Ballyman with Rathmichael, Kilternan (Bishop's Lane) with Kilgobbin and so forth. Once we see this as an origin of roads it becomes easier to understand where we can find long-disappeared road systems.

The practical discoveries revealed in the talk included the kerbstones of a road in the grounds of a house in Glenamuck. These align with a farm laneway which was shown to be part of an earlier road when the base of a wayside cross was discovered in a garden alongside it. In the Lehaunstown area, between Carrickmines, Cabinteely and Loughlinstown, there is a wealth of old rights of way and Dickie told us of a local tradition that still calls one of these "The Dublin Road", a throwback to a time when it was the quickest route before the age of the car.

This was a fascinating talk, and an important one, and will influence the thoughts of any local historian who has heard it, helping to unravel the ever complicated history of an area.

### **20th April 1986**

#### **VISIT TO LEHAUNSTOWN**

Led by Albert Mason

The area we visited in April had featured prominently in our talk in March and we were able to explore at first hand some of the pathways which criss-cross the lands at Lehaunstown. This was not the main purpose of our visit, however. Lehaunstown was the site of a large military camp in the 1790's when there was a very real threat of a French invasion which could have taken place nearby at Killiney Bay. Our guide and committee member, Albert Mason, knows these fields extremely well and was an invaluable source of knowledge of the camp and the land on which it had stood. He told us of how remnants of the camp survive in the area, with a large bank along part of the roadside that was used as a firing range, and the stony remains of the central road through the camp still visible running through the fields. It was easy to envisage the mock battles which took place using the well-sited remains of Tully Church as a position to be defended and besieged - not something that would be approved of nowadays.

*Page 29*

### **3rd & 4th May 1986**

#### **ANNUAL WEEKEND OUTING**

Led by John Bradley

This year's weekend outing was, once again, organised by Damian and Edie MacGarry and led by John Bradley. We headed for the Sligo area and were based overnight in the Oceanview Hotel, Strandhill, though attendance was so good that some had to be accommodated elsewhere.

We met up at Boyle Abbey where we had a chance to investigate the architecture of this early Cistercian abbey while the stragglers of our party caught up. Our next stop was at Ballinafad to see the Castle of the Curlews, a curious castle which was built in the late 16th century in the style of a miniature 13th century castle. Its strength was proven in a siege during the 1641 rebellion, but lack of water led to its surrender. Further along the route we stopped to look at Castlebaldwin, a 17th century fortified house, though we merely looked from the road, not venturing into the surrounding bog to get closer.

Heading into Sligo itself, we examined Sligo Abbey, a Dominican foundation in the heart of the town. Keeping to an ecclesiastical topic, we then headed for Drumcliffe, famous as the burial place of Yeats, but also a 6th century church site with a round tower and a high cross. A curious cross it is too, with the appearance of being made of two non-matching halves.

A visit to the Office of Public Works depot at Grange gave us a chance to see artefacts from Spanish Armada wrecks in the process of conservation. Even bronze cannon need to be immersed in water for a considerable time to gradually remove the effects of sea water accumulated over four centuries.

The megalithic tombs of Creevykeel and Carrowmore were our next ports of call and both sites proved to be impressive.

*Page 30*

The court tomb at Creevykeel is large and gives a great impression of the size and layout of this category of monument. Carrowmore

is, of course, larger, but is made up of a great number of individual monuments. Even in the poor weather this site was impressive with Queen Maeve's tomb looking down from Knocknarea. These monuments are not without threat and we heard how one of the stones from a portal tomb had been knocked down in a car accident! It was a pity to see building development occurring right in the middle of this internationally important site and we could not help thinking that if large buildings must be placed here they could have been designed with a great deal more sensitivity.

On our route back towards Dublin we managed to fit in some more sites. Park's Castle, in Co. Leitrim, is undergoing a large scale refurbishment programme at the moment, carried out by the Office of Public Works. This is a large castle and a late one, dating from the 17th century. Via Dromahaire we visited, lastly, Creevelea, the last of the Franciscan Friaries to be built in Ireland before the Reformation.

This was a very full programme for the weekend, with monuments ranging across the spectrum from the Neolithic to the Spanish Armada, not forgetting Yeats. Some of our party extended this range still further with a visit to a large Mesolithic kitchen midden on the shoreline straight in front of the hotel, while lunch on Saturday was in a hostelry at Drumcliffe close to a Bronze Age wedge tomb which was also not overlooked by enthusiasts. The weather was most unkind, providing us with a virtual non-stop downpour, but this did not mar the weekend and merely left visions of multi-coloured umbrellas on the landscape of Carrowmore.

*Page 31*

**10th May 1986**

**SOCIAL EVENING AT ARAVON SCHOOL**

As part of our fund raising activities for the Excavation and Research Fund we held a function at Aravon School. The school is at Old Conna Hill, a stately Victorian mansion built by the Riall family in 1860, and this was offered to us for the evening by Mr Basil Nulty of the school's governors. The sumptuous splendour of the building formed a perfect setting for our evening's programme, particularly with its spectacular location overlooking Killiney Bay, and the Wicklow hills.

The evening's entertainment was provided by two groups. The St. Cecilia Singers, led by Sandra Ganly, performed a beautiful range of songs in the hall of the house. They were followed by a chamber music ensemble which suited the setting most perfectly.

Towards the close of the function we had an auction of paintings by the late Mrs Turner. These paintings had been executed over a number of years and featured local scenes in the area around Dublin city and the area to the south. We are very grateful to Mrs Turner's family for making these paintings available to us and we felt that by auctioning them we would achieve the dual purpose of making them more widely available to members and raising funds for the Society.

Our thanks are also due to Mr Nulty for offering the use of the school to us and Mr and Mrs O'Malley whose home we invaded for the occasion.

*Page 32*

**24th May 1986**

**VISIT TO SHANGANAGH CASTLE AND ENVIRONS**

Led by Rob Goodbody

The late medieval castle of Shanganagh stands in the grounds of a private house just to the north of Shankill close to Shanganagh Road. Close by, at the foot of a steep bank, is the remains of the village of Shanganagh.

We started our visit on Mill Lane, which, as the name suggests, is the site of the mill of Shanganagh which may be seen on the Down Survey map of this area. The remains of a mill still stand here, though virtually invisible behind a screen of ivy. This mill was built in 1847 to replace an earlier version and both got the water supply for the mill wheel from Loughlinstown some distance away. Near to the mill is the remains of a corn kiln and opposite is the mill owner's house, thankfully still occupied and in good condition.

While we were in Mill Lane the occupant of one of the houses came out to talk to us and on finding that we were interested in the history of the area told us that only a few weeks before the road had collapsed to reveal an underground passage lined and roofed with granite and leading north-south. They did not know who to notify from a historical perspective and the hole was soon filled up by the local council. This was not on the line of the mill race and seemed to lead in the direction of the castle. What the passage was can only be imagined!

The castle itself stands to its full height but only two of the walls survive, neither complete. This castle is said to date from 1408 and was unusual in this locality in having a hall attached. It is also unusual in having two fireplaces side by side at ground floor level. Traces of the original vaulting may be seen and the battlements are of the stepped type that was typical of the late medieval in Ireland. The presence of brick shows that Shanganagh Castle was substantially altered in the 17th or 18th century.

*Page 33*

We finished the afternoon with a visit to see Millfield, an early 19th century house between the castle and the mill, as the guests of Mr and Mrs Tamplin.

**22nd June 1986**

### **OUTING TO THE DUNDALK AREA**

Led by Paddy Healy

For our June outing we were brought to the Dundalk area by Paddy Healy to look at monuments in the locality. After meeting at Castlebellingham we went on to see an impressively long list of monuments, starting at the round tower at Dromisken which is a curiously squat tower with an unusually ornate doorway.

From there we went to Dundalk where we visited a variety of places, including the court house, an early 19th century building with a Doric portico.

Not far from Dundalk is Castletown where a motte and bailey castle may be seen, complete with an 18th century folly castle on the summit. The motte and bailey seem to have been built on the remains of an earlier fortification which is probably the Dún Dealgan which gave Dundalk its name. The old churchyard at Castletown is not of early origin, and has two 17th century tombs in the chancel.

A very impressive castle, Castle Roche, or Roche Castle, also stands not far from Dundalk. This is a 13th century castle which we felt was well worth visiting for its spectacular position that was obviously of great strategic value.

*Page 34*

**30th June to 4th July 1986**

### **ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY COURSE**

Organised by Joan Delany

This year's course in *Art and Archaeology* was attended by eleven participants and included the usual mix of lectures and visits outdoors.

The lectures were given by Leo Swan who spoke on *The methods of Archaeology*; Joan Delany on *The Art and Archaeology of Kilkenny*; Betty O'Brien on *Historical Dalkey*; and Noel Kissane on *Libraries*.

The visits included a look at the archaeological excavation at Glensouthwell where Valerie Keeley is excavating close to a Neolithic portal tomb; a visit to the early Medieval sites at Fassaroe and Kilcrouney; a tour of historical sites at Dalkey and a look at the library of the Franciscan Order in Killiney. On the final day, there was a seminar on *Irish Art in the National Gallery*.

The Society is grateful to Joan Delany who organises and runs this course single handedly and most successfully.

*Page 35*

**27th July 1986**

**A WALKING TOUR OF CLONDALKIN VILLAGE**

Led by Joe Williams, Clondalkin History Society

About 14 members braved some unpromising weather to be conducted on a "Walk through the past" in Clondalkin led by Joe Williams of the Clondalkin Historical Society. Mr Williams has written a 16-page book as a guide to the historic sites in Clondalkin and he led us around the circuit. This started at the round tower which time, energy and a strong lock prevented us from climbing - though with a key and some enthusiasm this may be done. We stopped at a number of other places including the old church opposite the round tower, the mill, the pub where the first scheduled omnibus service in Ireland started, Tully's Castle, and Mount St Joseph. The latter is a monastery in large, beautiful grounds which include a burial ground in which were buried not only the monks but also many local people including the Catholic branch of the Caldbeck family. At this point a monsoon-like deluge dampened our spirits and forced an early end to the day. Our thanks to Joe Williams for this most interesting, if foreshortened, tour.

*Page 36*

**12th RATHMICHAEL SUMMER SCHOOL,  
1986**

This year's Summer School once again included two field courses and the excavation at Ballyman along with the evening lecture series. The excavation continued for five weeks, through the whole of August and a bit more, and it completed our excavation at Ballyman which has been under way since 1979. Thoughts for next year are under way and include the possibility of opening a new excavation at Ballyman to test a different aspect of the site such as the former enclosing bank and ditch that surrounded the church site.

The progress of the excavation was not seriously affected by the hurricane towards the end of the month, though one of the cuttings filled to the brim with water as a result of the old drainage system becoming clogged.

We are grateful to Mr John Leeson who has allowed us to excavate on his land for all this time and who has agreed to back fill the site himself to save us the bother.

## **LECTURE SERIES**

**18th August 1986**

### **VIKING DUBLIN IN A EUROPEAN CONTEXT**

Dr Pat Wallace

Pat Wallace, who is on the staff of the Irish Antiquities Branch of the National Museum, and who was the Director of Excavations at Wood Quay, delivered a lively and superbly illustrated lecture to demonstrate Viking Dublin's connections abroad.

*Page 37*

He showed how the form of the city, in well-defined streets and surrounded by an earthen bank on all sides, derived from Britain as the Scandinavians in Dublin were not of urban origin. When compared with British towns, the layout of Dublin can be shown to be more like York than other Roman towns such as Chester and

London, possibly because of the exile of the Dublin Vikings to north-east England in the early tenth century when Dublin was being formed. The house types, however, did not originate in York, but are similar to late Iron Age examples from across northern Europe, and it is probable that rectangular houses were built in Ireland before the arrival of the Vikings.

The wealth of information about houses in Fishamble Street in the 10th and 11th centuries was a highlight of the Wood Quay excavation and was illustrated with great clarity in Dr Wallace's slides. The river defences and quays at Dublin also derived from English influence, though examination of the remains of the revetments and quays have shown that local craftsmen carried out the work.

Dublin's economic importance in Viking times is illustrated by the range of imports and exports and their geographical spread. Exports included ring pins, wool, cloth, hides, leather, marten pelts, grain and provisions. A Dublin-style ring pin has been found in a Viking house site at Newfoundland and Dublin coins are exhibited in Leningrad's museum. Imports included British pottery, fabrics, tin, horses, etc. Other exports from all over the then known world included amber, lignite, pottery, silver, pewter, gold, glass, wine and silk, the latter from as far as Turkey and Afghanistan.

*Page 38*

**19th August 1986**

### **AERIAL ARCHAEOLOGY**

Barrie Hartwell

Our speaker is a specialist in aerial archaeology based at Queen's University, Belfast. In his well-illustrated lecture he described

how air photography can be used either as a means of illustrating the extent and appearance of a monument more clearly than can be done on the ground, or as a technique for discovery.

Concentrating on the techniques for discovery, he used an ingenious combination of a model of an archaeological site and a spot lamp to illustrate the differing effects of a variety of orientations and elevations of the sun on the visibility of a range of features. He explained how seemingly destroyed walls or ditches can be revealed by different rates of growth and ripening of certain crops and how this can be exaggerated by conditions of drought. This can occur through the year with different stages of crop growth, and in the winter light snow can highlight uneven terrain by lying longer in areas shadowed from the sun. The various points were illustrated with superb slides.

Mr Hartwell then described a number of projects which he has undertaken in Co Antrim. This included a detailed survey of an area to be used as a lignite mine so that archaeological monuments could be avoided and the systematic survey of a large area of County Antrim. It also included the discovery of the Neolithic causewayed camp at Donegore Hill which is being described by Dr Mallory, and work on ancient landscapes revealed by the removal of peat from mountain sides. Finally, Mr Hartwell reminded us that air photography must not be seen in isolation from all the other techniques of archaeology, but should complement them.

*Page 39*

**20th August 1986**

**URBAN ARCHAEOLOGY**

John Bradley

Urban archaeology is a relatively recent introduction to Ireland, but so far excavations have been carried out in 26 towns. In his

lecture, John Bradley, Director of the Urban Archaeology Survey, summarised the results of these excavations. Irish towns are comparatively recent, those in the Near East being the oldest, such as Jericho which dates from about 8,000 years ago. In Ireland it is possible that urban remains may be associated with some hill forts, but the earliest certain urban communities grew up on Early Christian monastic sites. Examples such as Downpatrick, Armagh, Glendalough and Cashel can be shown to have grown into significant towns or cities with non-monastic citizens engaged in trading, metal working, teaching, courts etc.

The next series of town building was carried out by the Vikings from about 841 AD when their settlement at Dublin was founded. Viking Dublin seems to have started near Heuston Station and later moved to the ridge near Christchurch, and this was a city of craftsmen rather than warriors. Viking remains have also been excavated at Waterford, though it is not yet clear what was the relationship between the monastic and the Viking towns. From 1180 AD the Normans were establishing new towns in Ireland. Sometimes, as at Kilkenny, Kildare and Limerick, these were based on earlier towns, while others were new centres, such as at New Ross and at Drogheda, which was based on a grid-pattern.

The 17th century brought the plantation towns, some of which disappeared, but others, such as Derry and Carrickfergus, have flourished. It was at this stage that the English influence in towns appeared, the Norman towns having had more connection with continental Europe. The estate towns flourished in the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century brought resorts, while new towns and dormitory towns have appeared in this century.

*Page 40*

**23rd August 1986**

**EXCAVATIONS AT DUBLIN CASTLE**

Con Manning

In the last two years an extensive area at the perimeter of Dublin Castle on its north and east sides has been excavated by the Office of Public Works. Initially this was under the direction of Anne

Lynch. The later part of the excavation was directed by Con Manning and he presented a detailed history of the castle as it is now understood following these excavations. There appears to have been a castle here in the 12th century, but the present castle was started by order of King John in 1204, as a repository for his treasure. The castle was defended on the south and east sides by the river Poddle and on the north and west by a moat. The walls had circular towers at each corner, a further one in the south side, a rectangular tower alongside the south-west corner tower and two D-shaped towers flanking the gate on the north side.

The castle was used as a centre of administration including parliament, courts, gaol etc and in the 16th century it became the Viceregal residence. Structural problems, fire and redevelopment have caused many changes in the castle since the 17th century, and the present castle is largely a product of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Some of these later buildings had become unstable as they were built over the filled moat and they have now been demolished with a view to providing new buildings.

The excavations on the sites of these buildings have revealed that the castle had a large moat, some 20 metres wide and 6 to 8 metres deep. The bases of the long-vanished Corke and Powder towers were found along with a causeway on the site of the original castle gate. The structure of this gate suggested that it had a barbican and had a counterbalance drawbridge. Other finds included traces of houses from the 18th century, the masonry which fell from the north west corner tower in 1624 and a tremendous collection of material which had been deposited in the moat over the centuries.

*Page 41*

### **24th August 1986**

#### **EXCAVATIONS AT LOHER, Co. KERRY**

Brendan O'Flaherty

Loher is a cashel near Waterville in Co. Kerry where excavation commenced in 1982. The removal of a deep accumulation of fill from the interior of the cashel has revealed the remains of three

stone buildings and two made of wood. These were not all contemporaneous, one circular stone structure being built on the site of an earlier one which, in turn, had replaced a wooden building. Another building, also of stone, but rectangular, was also built on the site of a previous wooden structure.

Associated with these buildings a souterrain was found. These structures were within a stone cashel 24 metres in diameter which was found to have the mural steps and parapet walkway that are often found in these monuments. Finds from the site include a knife and beads.

### **August 1986**

#### **OUTING TO THE EXCAVATION AT BALLYMAN**

Led by John Lennon

So that members could have an opportunity to see how our excavation is progressing we arranged an outing to the site. Unfortunately, the day was one of the wettest imaginable and the committee assumed that no one would appear. We had underestimated the perseverance and enthusiasm of some of our members, however, as a group showed up and put the (absent) committee to shame. Fortunately, one of the group was John Lennon, an active member of the excavation team and he saved the Society's face by conducting the tour.

*Page 42*

### **27 September 1986**

#### **OUTING TO THE HOWTH TRANSPORT MUSEUM**

The Transport Museum has recently moved to Howth Castle and we took the opportunity to travel on the DART train service to visit modes of transport from an earlier period. Within a large building alongside the castle we found a tremendous number of vehicles of all kinds, including cars, buses, lorries and delivery

vans. There were electric bread vans, military vehicles, Dublin buses, private cars, motor cycles and so on. The museum is doing an extremely valuable service in ensuring that a representative sample of road vehicles is not only kept for the future but kept in good condition and, if necessary, restored. As time elapses these vehicles will become all the more rare and future generations will thank the proprietors for their foresight.

Many of our members, however, had the uncomfortable feeling that this history was all too recent and that their own lifetimes were being relegated to the status of antiquity. Others of us had the even more uncomfortable feeling that some of the exhibits are so familiar that we had not even realised that they had gone out of service!

*Page 43*

**15 October 1986**

**KILGOBBIN, KILTERNAN AND THE ENNISKERRY ROAD**

Paddy Healy

In this lecture, Paddy Healy told how the roads in the area had changed over the years with the building of new roads and changes in the lines of older roads. Using a great collection of slides he

showed the area from Balally to Enniskerry in a historical light from ancient church sites at Balally and Killegar to more modern ones at Sandyford and Kilternan. He showed what a tremendously varied history there is along the way, including Irish Giant Deer at Ballybetagh, ring forts, ancient tombs, medieval castles and old cotton and paper mills. Residents of the area included Joseph Mary Plunkett at Kilternan, Major Sirr at Sandyford and Countess Markievicz who had a cottage near Lamb Doyle's. The area was not without its troubles and we were told how Kilgobbin Castle was the scene of a battle in 1642, how the Fenians attacked and captured Stepside police barracks in 1867 and how the Black and Tans raided the Dublin Brigade's camp at Barnacullia in 1920. Those who heard the talk will now look at the area in a totally new light.

*Page 44*

**26th November 1986**

**IRISH GLASS**

Mary Boydell

Fine table glassware has been produced in Ireland since 1675. Mary Boydell described how glassware improved in quality after the invention of lead glass, or crystal glass, which was tougher

than earlier types of glass and was easier to carve when cut. This led eventually to the fine tradition of Irish cut glass.

Mrs Boydell told how the first lead glass works in Ireland stood where the Academy cinema is now, in Pearse Street. This was followed by the Round Glass works at St Mary's Lane, and later works in Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Newry and, of course, Waterford. Although these were small works, they exported significant amounts of glassware after 1780, when free trade was introduced.

Using a series of excellent slides, Mrs Boydell showed how the quality of glass making and glass cutting had improved from the earliest surviving glass of known date, made in 1715. However, the coming of steam power seems to have given the cutting more precision and, perhaps, less character. The styles included individually produced examples of Williamite glasses and Volunteer glasses, through to the more mass-produced types of the 19th century.

Apart from glasses, there were salvers, decanters, butter coolers and glass rinsers. The most common, however, were the drinking glasses and Mrs Boydell gave examples of some of the more curious mixes which were popular in the eighteenth century, such as punch, cordial, posset, cock ale, caudle and even hysterical water!

*Page 45*

**6th December 1986**  
**100 YEARS OF SOUND**

Sean Logue

We had a fund raising event with a difference in December when Sean Logue gave us an audio-visual presentation entitled *100 Years of Sound*. This was an elaborate and wide-ranging show in which we were treated to extracts from some fifty recordings

dating from 1877 to the present and which included original voice recordings of Thomas Edison, Florence Nightingale, Eamonn de Valera, John McCormack, Gracie Fields and Jack Doyle. There were also music recordings by artists such as Sousa, Fritz Kreisler, Glen Miller, Paul Whiteman and Maria Callas. To illustrate the recordings there was a continuous show of slides ranging as far back as 1845 and taking us right up to the present.

As the Society does not normally meet in December this was an additional event for which there was an entry charge, the proceeds from which were put towards the Society's Excavation and Research fund.

*Page 46*

## MURPHYSTOWN CASTLE

Among the medieval tower houses or castles in south County Dublin, one of the least known, of which any trace remains, is Murphystown Castle, near Sandyford. The surviving fragment of this castle is in private grounds which are not publicly accessible, and the ruin is not readily visible from the road. On 14th June a group from this Society visited the castle, though it was not one of the Society's own functions. It is worth recording some notes of the castle here.

In 1897, E R McC Dix visited Murphystown and published an article on his findings in his series The Lesser Castles in the County Dublin in the *Irish Builder* (Volume XXXIX, 1897, p. 199). Dix described the remains in some detail, but was unable to find any background history of the castle and finished his article with a plea to Mr F Elrington Ball to throw some light on the subject.

Ball wrote an article on Murphystown which was published in the *Irish Builder* in the following year (1898, p. 33). In it, he chronicled the various landowners of Murphystown over the years, but did not make specific reference to the history of the castle except to say that it was marked on the Down Survey map. Four years later, in the first volume of his *History of the County Dublin*, Ball included a short version of his history of Murphystown, and threw no further light on the history of the castle. P J O'Reilly, in his Christian Sepulchral Leacs and Free Standing Crosses in the Dublin Half-Barony of Rathdown (*Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries*, Vol. 31, 1901, p. 257) includes some history of Murphystown but, again, makes no reference to the castle.

It would seem, then, that there is no known history of the castle. It did not appear as a fortified property in the *Civil Survey* in 1654, and does not appear to have been the scene of any battle or skirmish that is recorded. Its builders and its date are unknown as are its occupants, unless these were the landowners whom Ball listed in his writings.

Ball did, however, refer to Gabriel Beranger's drawing of the castle dating from 1775, and which seems to have been unknown to Dix. In his *History* he included a reproduction of the drawing which shows the ground floor of a typical tower house, with one wall almost entirely missing, to reveal the barrel vaulting which is normal in these buildings. The remaining portion of that wall is shown to have a flight of steps up it, though this is likely to be either artistic licence or a later addition to the ruin. No trace appears of the upper floors of the castle. In his *Irish Builder* article, Ball stated that Beranger's drawing "shows the castle to be in much the same state of ruin as at present". Dix's article had already shown that this was not the case and in his *History*, Ball amended the statement to read "in the eighteenth century, as the picture shows, ruins of much greater size were visible".

No mention was made of Murphystown in the Ordnance Survey letters in the 1830's, but the O.S. Name Book for the area mentions "the ruins of an old castle called Murphystown Castle". The first edition of the map, published in 1843, shows that the building had been reduced to something like its present size, so the description given by Dix probably applies to its condition over a period of at least 150 years up to the present day. He found that part of only two walls remained, one being about 7.7 metres in length, and the other, joining it at right angles, being less than 3 metres long, both measurements being made internally. These walls were made of very rough rubble, chiefly granite blocks, held together with strong mortar. Originally, they would have had a cut stone facing, but this had been stripped off, except to a very small extent in one place. Nevertheless, the remaining portion was about 1.4 metres thick, despite being unfaced on either side. On the inner side of the walls, he found projecting stones at a height of about 1.8 metres, which he thought were probably part of the spring of a barrel vaulted ceiling. This conclusion is probably correct, given the presence of the vaulting as shown in Beranger's drawing. Dix was unable to determine the height of the remains due to the heavy growth of ivy.

The castle now stands much as Dix described it, except that it has elder trees growing alongside it and the ivy which obstructed his examination is now dead. The external length of the long side is about 8.6 metres and the shorter side is about 4.1 metres. Its highest point, near the free end of the shorter side, is about 4.5 metres above the ground. There is a breach in the longer wall near its base, but there is no trace of any doorway or window opening. There are rocks in places near the castle and which may be associated with it. The ruin itself is on a slightly raised ground and to the north on land which would have been within the building a platform may be distinguished with traces of walls along its edge. At the opposite side is another platform, ending at its eastern end with a low retaining wall which seems to be modern.

The castle is not a National Monument, though it is listed for preservation by the planning authority. While the lands surrounding it are zoned for residential development, there does not seem to be any immediate danger to the castle and its present owners are aware of its historic importance.

**Rob Goodbody**

10th October 1986

## **MISCELLANEA: 1986**

### **LLANMAWR, CORBAWN LANE**

Llanmawr was the house in which Mrs Kathleen Turner lived, in Corbawn Lane, Shankill. Following Mrs Turner's death in 1985 the house was sold and remained vacant. The house was not secured against vandalism and gradually it was stripped. Some of the damage was senseless, like the smashing of windows and washbasins, while some was calculated, such as the disappearance of the lead from the roof and the copper water pipes from beneath the floorboards. Eventually, this formerly sound and useful building was declared to be dangerous and was demolished in November 1986. Though the loss was a tragedy, not everything was lost. Before the machines moved in, slates and timbers were salvaged for use in the restoration of Drimnagh Castle. Even at this stage, however, a carefully-salvaged collection of coping stones from the walls of the coach yard went missing mysteriously.

### **OTHER BUILDINGS**

The unceasing loss of older buildings continued through 1986 with the loss of Llanmawr, as described above, and Beaufield, Stillorgan. The latter has been better known in recent years for its mews restaurant, but it had some interesting painted ceilings. The vogue for nursing homes has continued, and may help to ensure the survival of some of the larger houses. This year Beechfield in Shankill and The Grange, Kill of the Grange, have been converted to nursing homes, though the latter has lost a fine stone wall and its gateway to road widening.

Newtown Park House suffered vandalism and decay before being refurbished for nursing home use, and though some fine features have survived, some of the beautifully proportioned rooms have been subdivided, and vandals smashed a fine oval rooflight. Nearby, some of the houses in the village of Newtown Park have been demolished to make way for a filling station.

## **BRAY BRIDGE**

During the year extensive sewer laying was carried out on the bed of the river Dargle at Bray. Then, on 25th August, the major storm known as Hurricane Charlie, caused the flooding of the river at Little Bray. One effect of these otherwise unconnected events was to uncover clear evidence of the earlier Bray Bridge. The present bridge is a three-arched structure, with two piers having round cutwaters, and it was built in 1856. The previous bridge was four-arched and its three piers had pointed cutwaters. It is best known from the engraving by W H Bartlett which may be seen in Mrs Turner's book *If You Seek Monuments*, and another view is found in Ball's *History of the County Dublin*, Vol. 3. This would have been the bridge which was built in the 1740's to replace the first Bray bridge.

The scouring of the river bed during the storm revealed the base of the old central pier under the modern central arch, and projecting upstream from it. Although the northern pier was not revealed so clearly, some of the dressing stones of the cutwater could be discerned. The northern pier has since silted up again, but may still be picked out by the careful eye. The central one is sometimes covered, but often revealed. The southern pier was affected by the excavations for the drains and at one point rubble masonry could be seen. If anything survives of this pier it is now buried.

The earlier bridge appears to have been narrower than the present one. As it was slightly upstream, it is an intriguing possibility that the old bridge was kept in use while the new bridge was being built, and was demolished to allow completion of the new bridge once the new one was in use.

Incidentally, the present bridge was the venue for the Bray market for the first five years after it was built. This was a great inconvenience to traffic and the market was then moved to the new fair ground on Bray Commons.

RG

## **CHURCH SITE AT CORKE LITTLE**

Early in the summer, the County Council's Parks Department laid the foundations for a new gateway to the playing fields at Tyrrell's land, to the south of Shankill. This is on the main Bray Road at the corner of the access road leading to the car park for the Shanganagh Cemetery. The holes for the foundations of the four gate piers were about 50 cm deep, and the strip foundations for the connecting railings were about 20 cm deep. Examination of these revealed that the two central holes for the gate piers penetrated through a layer of rubble at a depth of 30 cm. None was visible in the other holes. The rubble consisted of broken brick and stone, some with mortar attached; fragments of slate and some iron nails. Examination of holes dug for tree planting during the winter was inconclusive as the holes were not so deep or clean cut.

It is almost certain that the rubble layer represents the remains of a Roman Catholic church which stood on this site. The church seems to have replaced an earlier one at Old Connaught which was shown on Rocque's map of 1760, and Taylor's map of 1816 shows it to have been on the Bray Road. The Ordnance Survey field notebook for the area records, in 1837, that this was Crinken RC Chapel, capable of accommodating 350 people. That is the last record, however, as it was in that year that the replacement church opened at St Peter's, Little Bray. Joseph Mills, in his *Recollections of Shankill* (1906) recounts the story that the landowner, Mr Magan, found a flaw in the Parish's title to the land which enabled him, in 1834, to give them 3 years' notice to quit. The history compiled by Rev M Donnelly in that same year, 1906, states that the old church was replaced because it fell down! Whatever the truth, it is worth noting that St Peter's, Little Bray, now a parish church, will celebrate its 150th Anniversary in 1987.

**RG**

## **IN THE CITY: SIR PATRICK DUN'S HOSPITAL**

Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital closed its doors at the end of August, its functions transferred to Baggot Street and St James's Hospitals. Dun's was established in the early years of the 19th century with money left to the College of Physicians by Sir Patrick Dun more than a hundred years previously. Curiously, it was built primarily to teach medical students and the patients seem to have been a necessary inconvenience toward that end. Obviously this situation has since changed! Architecturally, the central portion is interesting for its fine modelling, particularly in the staircase and the board room. The original wings included stone vaulting and were designed to the most advanced philosophies of medical practice of the day. There are many later additions, including the outpatients department, added in the *Art Deco* style as one of the early projects of the Irish Hospitals Sweepstakes.