

Mid-Ulster Local History Journal

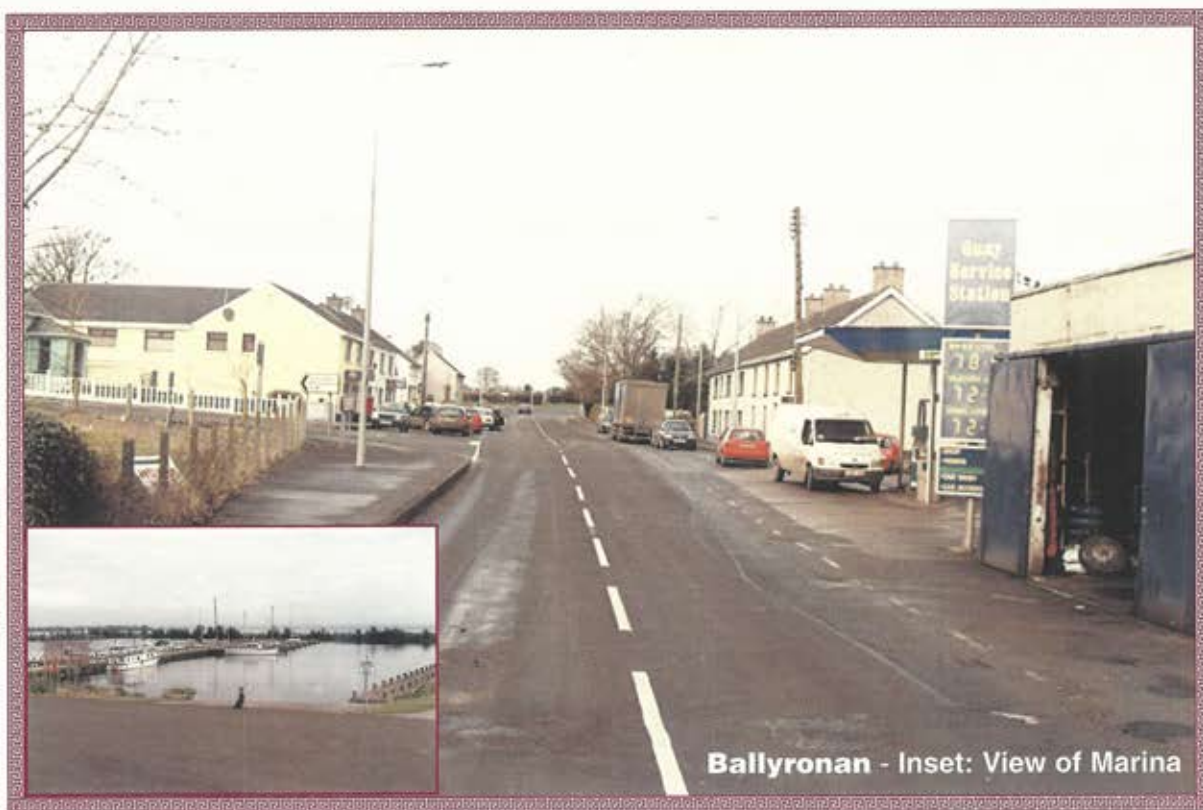


Look Back
Millennium Edition

VOLUME 6 £5

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Editorial

Welcome to the Millennium Edition of 'Look Back'. This larger Journal contains by special request some articles from earlier numbers, now no longer available. We trust that you will find all contributions and photographs both informative and evocative of the people and events of a by-gone day.

This Millennium year is a time for retrospection and also a time for looking to the future. It has been our Journal policy to attempt to capture the flavour of Cookstown Past. The town has certainly changed considerably since Doctor Allen Cooke's few humble cottages were erected on the historic aptly named Oldtown Hill less than four hundred years ago.

However, some things do not change, and these help to maintain our links with the past. Stand on Cookstown street, impressive, the longest in Ireland, and look North. There is Slieve Gallion (Callan's Mountain). To the South of the town is Tullyhogue Fort, still a prominent feature, the crowning place of the O'Neill dynasty and before that a sanctuary in Neolithic times.

These two notable landmarks, one natural, the other man-made, were there before Cookstown existed, when the area was covered by the vast oak forest of Glenconkeyne. This historic forest which at one time stretched, it is said, from Maghera to Maghera, has now disappeared, but was perhaps the last great wilderness in Ireland.

But Cookstown is now firmly on the map, set fair to stride confidently into the next Millennium.

Meantime, what of this our Millennium Journal? Some old friends are here: Roy Kelso and Maud Henderson again have written for us. Besides, you may read of Ernie Hamilton, Dick Crane and Johnny Murphy, all Cookstown men, and Mrs. Hazel Dolling has contributed 'The house that Robert built', while Jack Mullan, cousin of Journal Committee member Paschal Rushe, will make you smile with his 'Little Bit of Nonsense'!

Molesworth Street

We have chosen to highlight Molesworth Street in this Issue. In this and the following pages are some interesting photographs for the use of which are indebted to Noel McGirr, of Cookstown Office Supplies.

Colonel William Stewart, a grandson of the original settler of the name who had leased a small area of land in Ballymenagh, was by mid-eighteenth century one of the largest landowners in County Tyrone, and he planned to build a new Cookstown – south of Allen Cooke's original 'Old Town' – in about 1734. The street shown here was originally called Coagh Street. It led to the newly built Presbyterian Church in 1836. The Stewart period of influence in Cookstown ended in 1852 when Killymoon castle was sold. Colonel William's mother was the daughter of Viscount Molesworth, hence the name 'Molesworth Street' adopted at some time mid-century.

Here we look towards the Main Street, and the date is about 1950. The Munster Simms Petrol Station to the left was owned by Jim Reynolds. Bobby Allen's butcher's shop is to the right. The proprietor now is Archie Knipe. Folk will remember the white building on the main street as Rea's, then Turkington's, then Milligan's (all grocers) . Now it is the 'More Store' but in earlier times this was the spirit grocery of Andy McCollum, where the fire took place (see page 75).



• Circa 1950. Molesworth Street looking towards the main street. The Munster simmo petrol station to the left was owned by Jim Reynold's. Bobbie Allen's butchers shop is to the right. The proprietor is now Archie Knipe. The white building on the main street was John Turkington's grocery shop, later Milligan's and now 'The More Store'.



The buildings in Molesworth Street are basically late nineteenth century. Beyond Cosgrove's Spirit Store the imposing red brick building with the oriel window dated 1884 was where the Town Commissioners, forerunners of the Urban Council met. If Cookstown in the first decade of the twentieth century had a Town Hall, this was it! Note the motor vehicle, the telegraph poles and the solitary gas light. Tarmac has not yet reached Cookstown.



Molesworth Street, Cookstown, from West.

• There are telephones, and Policemen and bicycles. And Willie Anderson, draper and outfitter is in business.



• A busy scene has been captured on St. Patrick's Day, 1905. Note the cobbled pavement in the foreground, and the well-dressed and hatted populace out for the day.



Molesworth Street The Milk Bar

Contributed by CLIFFORD DEVLIN

Just by the Bank of Ireland, on the corner of Molesworth Street was the Milk Bar, which during the 1939-1945 War Years was owned by my Uncle, Alex Devlin.

I, myself, was living at that time outside the village of Benburb, on the Tyrone-Armagh border. Every Sunday when my parents and I came to Cookstown, all of us carrying our gas masks in their square cardboard boxes, my first run was down to Uncle Alex's, where the Bar would have been full of American troops, having Milk Shakes, coffee and of course, doughnuts.

After the War, when the 'Yanks' were all gone, my Mother Mabel and my Aunt Harriet Devlin bought over the Milk Bar and they ran it for nearly twenty years. By then my Mother and I had come to live in Cookstown, following the death of my Father in 1944, and I was helping out in the kitchen, doing dishes or fetching groceries from Thompson's the grocer across the main street.

Mabel and Harriet, as I shall call them, bought their special pastries from a Baker in Lisburn, and these came to Cookstown by train, early on Friday mornings, in a special large wooden container.

At this time too, helping in the Milk Bar were Violet Craig (now Mrs Creighton), Vera Reid, Josie Vincent from



• In about 1900 we look eastwards from the Main Street, towards green hills in the distance. To the right near where the people are standing is the building which became Devlin's Milk Bar in the 1940s and 1950s. Clifford Devlin has written some interesting reminiscences. At that time there were very few Milk Bars outside Belfast.

Killybearn and SallyMurphy who is now Mrs Loughran.

While the Daintifyt was in full production, two hundred or more women and girls were employed and every day at lunch time some of them would crowd the Milk Bar for lunch; a bowl of soup (seven pence in old money) different types of sandwiches at six pence, and threepence for a cup of tea, sixpence for coffee completed the menu.



• Vera Reid and Violet Creighton - 1954.

Farmers from the Market Yard across the way frequented the Milk Bar, and enjoyed the soup, hot minced steak baps and roast beef sandwiches. Violet Creighton is of the opinion that many a deal was finalised over these refreshments.



When in the 1950s the R.A.F. came to Cluntoe, three nights a week they came into Town, and called at the Milk Bar for a cuppa. Violet would even claim that many a local girl met her future husband there.



So it was a very social and sociable place, with contemporaries of Harriet and Mabel also calling in for a chat. The two policemen on town patrol might call for a surreptitious snack in the kitchen, while I watched outside for a sight of the Sergeant.

On the day the Bulldozer moved in to demolish this cheerful rendezvous to make way for the new office building of John Sally, Solicitor, I confess that I sobbed myself to sleep. More than just a building had gone. It was a link with the past, and a wee bit of the friendly social scene of Molesworth Street gone for ever.



Thank you, Clifford and Violet for sharing your reminiscences with us.



• Winner of the Cookstown 100 - Sammy Miller 1954



• Mabel Devlin with some of her staff outside the Milk Bar in 1954.

Dick Crane

Dick Crane was the central figure of every Cookstown Fair Day, and when not on duty on the Fair Hill he was to be found in the vicinity of the Market Yard.

There from first light in the morning, he was to be seen organising the animals and the farmers, pointing out the best beasts to prospective buyers, clinching bargains and greeting his many friends.

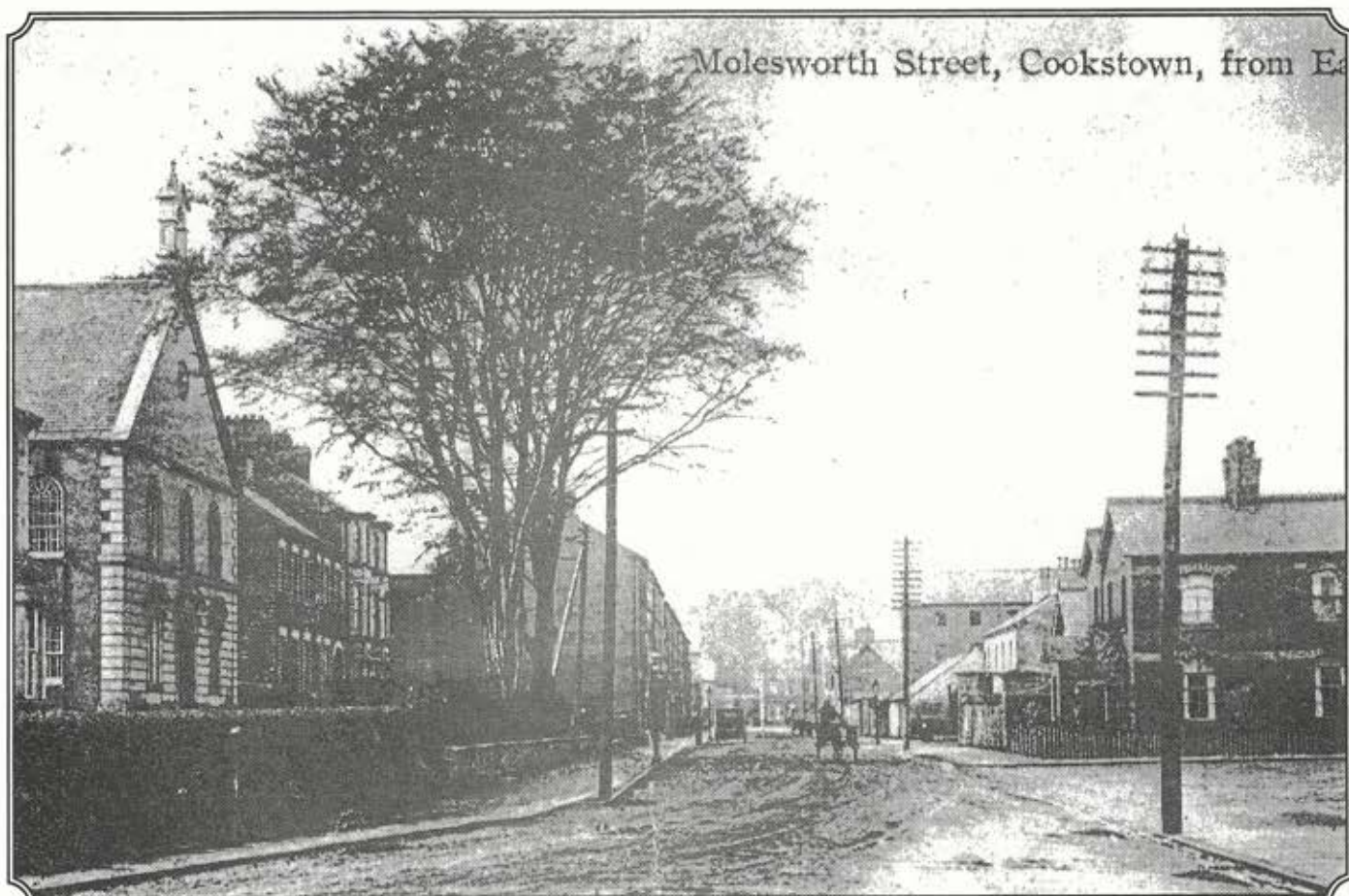
His grey hair concealed beneath a respectable hard hat, his voice could be heard above all the din and chatter.

When 'off duty' a favourite seat of his was on a low wall at the Burn Road corner. From there he surveyed the town and its people, with a word for young and old, friend and stranger alike. Now he's gone and with him an easier, friendlier way.

Dick would have been very much at home in a scene such as that below.



• Horse drawn carts are seen in this busy thoroughfare which led to the LMS and GNR stations. The Market Yard ("the Shambles") is behind the building on the left. Two types of cart are shown here: the older flat cart and the Scotch cart which largely replaced it. There were 2 hotels in Molesworth Street - because of the Railway, Gerry Maynes' Temperance Hotel and the Gunning Arms.



To the left is Molesworth Street Presbyterian Church (1835). The imposing building to the right, behind the Telegraph Pole is the Station Master's House. Mr Robert McKee was the last Station Master. The multi-storeyed building beyond was the warehouse in the Market Yard.



A lamp lighter came round each night at dusk. Cookstown Gas Company was situated in Union Street; its last manager Mr McMurray. Some citizens of Cookstown did not think highly of the Street Lighting (see page [74]).

On this side of the Church facing the Railway Station, is the Manse occupied by the Entrican Family.

Mary Entrican who was born in Cookstown in December, 1901, together with her sister Kathleen spent much of her childhood in Cookstown, where their Father was Minister of Molesworth Presbyterian Church. While living here, Mary attended the Ladies' School for a time.

Much later in life, at the age of 89, Mary, who was then living in Lisburn, was encouraged to join a Creative Writing Class. After her death two years later, in 1993, some of her writings in this Class were collated in book form, the book entitled 'Under the Apple Tree'.

Here, with the permission of Mary's sister Kathleen, now Mrs Sloan, we print some material of local interest. Thinking in later years of a front room in the old Manse, Mary wrote: -

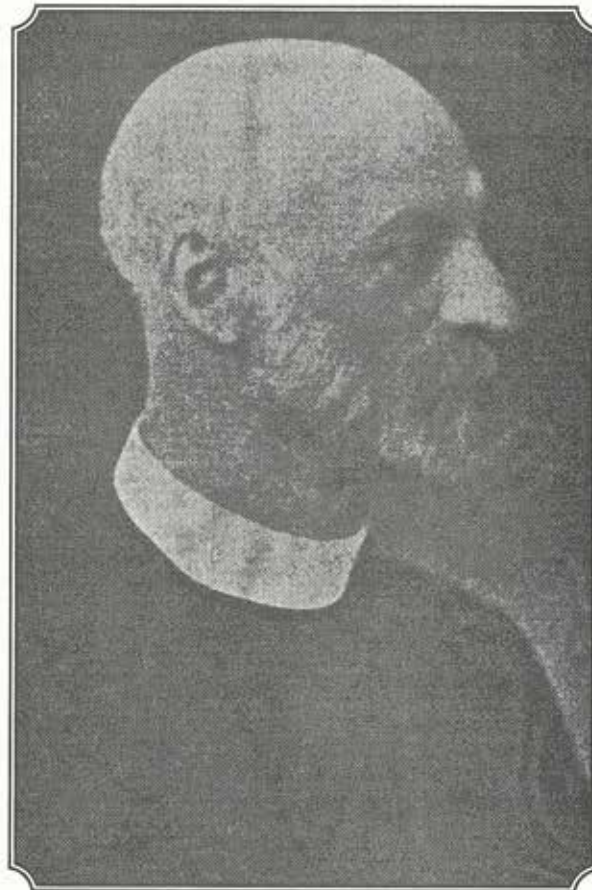
A Room with a View

“We would look out over our lawn, the railings and the road and beyond to the wide open space of the railway station forecourt. We were extremely well-served by the railways.

our house with an empty cart but, on their return, a large tree trunk would be lying on the cart – a sad sight really – the horses straining to pull this heavy load which was held down by big chains. It was

We had three trains arriving at two different stations – there was another station a little further down the line. From the window, we could watch the world pass by: all the people going one way or another, and we soon got to know the regulars. All traffic was then either horse-drawn or by one's own two feet. The station passengers would arrive and be taken to their destinations by jaunting car.

These cars and horses would line up outside the station and await their fares. We got to know most of them as they came every day – and we knew the horses, too. Our favourite was a lively, reddish mare we christened 'Jumping Jessie' and she was beautiful in our eyes though we did not know her real name. There was Bob, too, a strange horse, very large and strong, yoked with a companion behind him. They drew a long cart without sides. These two would walk past

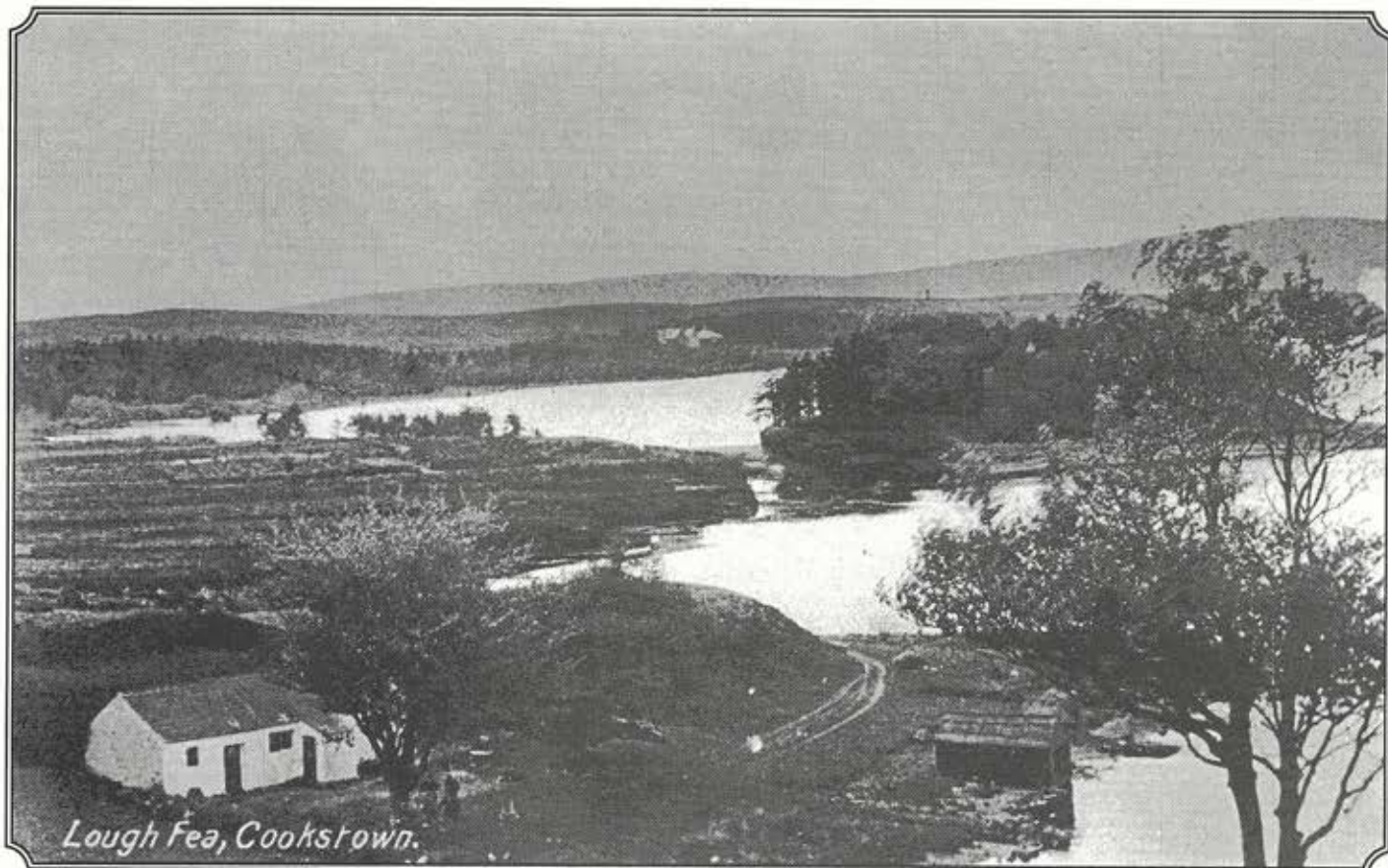


Rev. John Entrican, B.A.

bound for a little sawmill half-way up the town's main street and later we could hear the puffs of the little steam engine, in the quiet of the afternoon, as the trunk was cut up into planks. 'Puffing Billy' passed our house several times a day. It was an engine hauling a kind of wagon up to the quarries in the hills. It came down filled with broken stone, puffing its way to the second station goods yard. The stones were to be used for road-making.

Sometimes, our eyes looked down to our own lawn and then we would see the top of the bow-windows just below us. We would often step out onto it. There were three windows in the front of the house. Once, walking to the

edge to look over, I got a dreadful shock to see the ground so far away; the boys, however, danced about and jumped from one to the other but I was too scared to follow. Once my mother was down below



Lough Fea, Cookstown. Photograph taken 1912.

picking roses and heard a little noise. Looking up, she saw her eldest son, about five years old, dancing on the top of the bow-window with nothing between him and the drop. Because she was a quick-witted woman, she called out "Look in the window and see me coming through the door!" She flew up the stairs – much later she told me she felt no treads as she went up, seeming just to fly up. With her heart in her mouth, she opened the nursery door and saw his little face looking in at her.

We were not scolded or even forbidden to do it again. But the next morning there were three brass bars across the lower half of the window. Yet nothing could change our view from the window. We still saw the station room and, away beyond it, the top of the green hill where red-and-white cattle grazed and, above that, away in the distance, stretching along the horizon, lay our mountain. Ever-changing in colour and appearance, sometimes near and clear, often misty and far away but always there, Slieve Gallion, 1623 feet high, the guardian of our known world.

In the summer time we always had a picnic on or near 27th June – mother's birthday. This was also marked by having strawberries for tea – both enjoyable treats.

The picnic was to a little lough up on the hill, Lough Fea by name. We usually went in the pony trap but later on bicycles. The road was steep uphill whether by trap or bicycle and most of the way was at walking pace. Sometimes when the trap was full of children and picnic baskets my father told us to get out and walk up the steep hill – we felt very small walking behind the wheels of the big trap. My father once made the pony trot – I remember the feeling of being left alone on the mountainy road, the trap getting smaller and smaller in the distance. Of course it was only for a little while but we got in with relief.

Lough Fea lay all alone among the hills. The land around was boggy and mossy but there were paths quite firm to walk on. A nearby hill was usually our first effort and as we climbed through the heather we looked for bilberry bushes. We called them blaeberrys and we knew we were expected to pick some for my father's delight was blaeberry pie.

Halfway along the shore the land ran out into the water in a little peninsula almost dividing the lough into two. This fairly wet part was, or seemed to be, a complete circle and there seemed to be a little path round it – rather mossy and damp. We called it the 'racecourse' for it looked exactly like that. In the

middle there was a mound of trees – what country folk in Ulster call a ‘fort’: I think it has archaeological significance.

There was a small cottage near the shore and Minnie lived there – a tall woman who always had a gorgeous turf fire in her kitchen and who would boil a kettle for our picnic teas. No thermos flasks in those days!

Minnie was well known for her hospitality. A young man who often visited the lough left Ireland and went off to Canada. Sending postcards to his family, he wrote one to Minnie. Not knowing her address – or even her surname – he simply addressed the postcard to “Minnie, Lough Fea” – and it duly arrived. It was kept on the kitchen mantelpiece and shown to all and sundry.

Coming home was quite exciting – downhill all the way though with a few ups as well as downs. Asked how far it was to the lough one local responded “Oh – about seven miles up and only one down.” He was a cyclist!

The town lay in the flat before us and seemed to be covered in trees with the lovely Roman Catholic church spire standing among them, getting larger as we descended. Home again, carrying carefully the blaeberreries and all the picnic paraphernalia.

Good-by Lough Fea. It really was good-bye, for the Water Board has acquired all that area and the whole place is different. So things change as the years go by. All we have now are the bright memories shining in the dim light of long ago.”

LOUGH FEAS

by J. N. CLEMENTS

I, from thy lovely banks, survey
The lonely, moss, hill-bound shore,
The grand old wood across the bay,
Where pigeons coo and blackbirds pour
Their mellow song across Lough Fea.

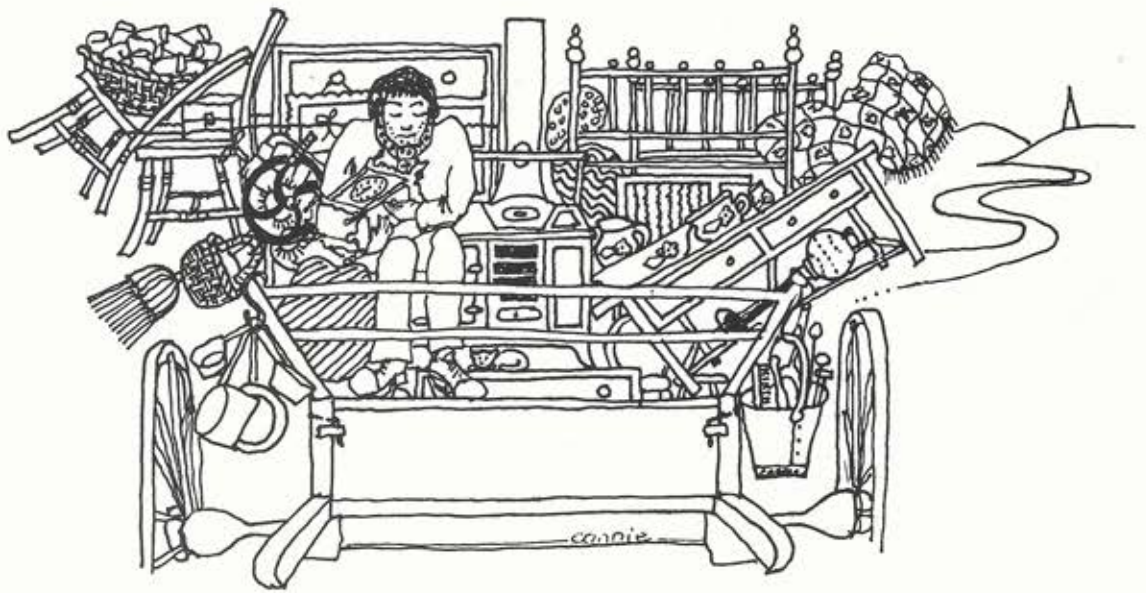
Slieve Gallion’s lofty slopes convey
The scented breezes, cool and sweet,
Of heather, moss and new-mown hay
Enriched with breath of mountain peat,
To fan the waters of Lough Fea.

The Lark did sing in majesty
When I was in a pensive mood.
Methought that in that heavenly lay
God spake to Man in solitude
By tranquil waters of Lough Fea.

The stately Lodge across the Bay
That nestles there, ‘tween mere and hill
Surveys the mountain crag and brae
And little streams, that flow to fill
That silver gem, my own Lough Fea.

And lusty trout, that dart and play
In thy blue waters, sometimes lie,
And often wonder, in dismay,
If they shall taste that luscious fly
That glides, exotic, on Lough Fea.

You will not find, go where you may,
A lake so clear, serene and fair
Ah! Let your skies be blue or grey,
No other with you can compare,
My lovely, lonely, hill-bound Fea!



From Cousin Carnie in Gortagilly Land last week it did arrive
 A letter to inform me he was going for to leave
 From the house that he was living in he asked me, as a friend
 To come and bring a longst with me a helping hand to lend.

I went and brought alongst with me Dan Murphy and Magee,
 McCormick and McGilligan and another two or three.
 We set the flitting on the street and then upon the cart.
 It wasn't too long after boys until then we made a start.

Now Murphy he sat on the cart to keep the clock from harm,
 You'd thought it was a baby he was holding in his arms.
 Then one of the chairs fell off the cart and Murphy like an ass
 Made a grab for it, he dropped the clock, and smashed the looking glass.

Now the breaking of the looking glass set Carnie's blood on fire,
 Says Carnie, Murphy you're a fool. Says Murphy you're a liar.
 Then Murphy made a grab for him. Down off the cart he fell.
 So did a chair and table and chest of drawers as well.

Now they got the things piled on again and started on the new.
 To keep the thing from tumbling off we had enough to do.
 Just then another thing arose which made poor Carnie frown.
 When one of the wheels fell off the cart and then the horse lay down.

And then while wrestling with the horse another yell arose,
 When the stove pipe it fell off the cart and broke McCormick's nose.
 Now when just a half mile out of town it started for to rain,
 And then for to complete the job the horse lay down again.

Now between falling into ditches and tripping over stones
 Some how between the crowd of us we got the flittin' home.
 And when we got inside the house sure all the fellows swore
 That they'd never give a helping hand to flittin' any more.

Joseph Greer, Dunleath Avenue, Cookstown

*We are grateful to Joseph, son of Johnny, a noted flute player himself,
 for submitting this amusing poem for publication*

Long, hungry Cookstown Where the stones are tied And the dogs are let loose.

Not a very complimentary image of the town into which I was born in 1937. My birth was an event which went largely unnoticed outside the confines of my home and family circle, for in the wider world the United Kingdom was still coming to terms with the Abdication Crisis of 1936. This was when King Edward VIII gave up the throne in favour of the hand of Mrs Simpson. And in Europe the first threatening clouds of war were gathering. After Neville Chamberlain's failed appeasement policy with Germany in 1938 it all culminated with the grave announcement to the nation on 3rd September 1939 "... A state of war now exists between this country and Germany".

brothers fed, I was allowed out to play. A frosty sun glinted off the dash of the houses turning the flints, pebbles and pieces of blue glass into jewels. Aimlessly prising loose the larger flint stones with my penknife, they were pocketed for later use. If struck sharply against each other it was possible to make small sparks fly, under the darkness of the bedclothes.

One soft Autumn evening I watched a man moving along the hedgerows. Curious, I moved closer, to discover he was gathering blackberries. His jar was half full of the black fruit, and he commented that it was a good year for the berries. I made a mental

How

WORLD WAR III

Affected Me

by ROY KELSO

Against this background our family lived at Fortview Terrace in Cookstown. By 1940 our small house was bursting at the seams with the addition of two brothers, making a total of five children. Mum always allowed that I was slow to speak, but perhaps I just couldn't get a word in. What was lacking in speech was made up in energy, for once on my feet the wonders of the Terrace were there to be explored. Parental supervision was dramatically halved when our father went off to the war.

Once my sisters had gone to school and my baby

note that at the first opportunity I too would don my wellies and go tramping through the fields.

Tyrone with its small neat fields and bramble bushes was a great place for gathering. Growing up there during the War years, our time off school was spent in the fields and woods. Many happy hours passed gathering chestnuts, hazelnuts and blackberries. On our adventures, with the rushes flailing our fair legs, we made a host of discoveries: a badger's den with its tracks showing clearly in the dew-laden grass; a robin's nest still sworn to be warm from the summer

departure of the fledglings; a crab apple tree whose bright red fruit belied their bitter taste.

Blackberries were like black gold. Quart and half gallon tins bought from the tinkers were patiently filled. With our good school shoes squelching from the boggy fields, we would hurry down to Carr's corner shop. From behind the dark counter a sixpence for the quartful, a shilling for the half gallon of blackberries, would reluctantly slide across to our eager, juice-stained hands.

Sometimes it was hard to meet the quota. Perhaps a bad season, or perhaps we spent more time playing than picking. Thus more devious methods to fill the cans to the required brimful had to be adopted. Quite unashamedly we would add a wee bit of water to the fruit to bring them up to the required level. If that gentleman ever did catch on to our trickery, he never said a word.

Grabbing payment, we would empty our gatherings into large, black porter barrels, and flee. Having given part of our blackberry money to our Mums, we would return to his shop a few hours later, our angelic faces scrubbed red with carbolic soap, and we would purchase Macowan's toffees.

Should I be successful in filling a quart – or even a half-gallon – jar in these strange fields of the Causeway Coast, I might still be tempted to add a little water. This time, though, I'll make blackberry wine, and drink a toast to Carr's corner shop. You see he came out a winner in the end. His competitor up the town was giving thruppence a quart!

ROY - YER WANTIN'!

There was a wild commotion coming from the Main Street one winter day in 1942, an excitement that spilled over into the Terrace where Derek, Stewartie and I were playing. Despite the fact that it was out of bounds, we forgot parental threats of the strap and we ran to the end of the street to see what was happening.

"The Yanks are coming!" was the cry on the lips of the assembled people.

While vaguely familiar with the Hollywood stars, courtesy of my elder sisters, I had never seen a real, live American before. Taking up a grandstand position in front of Meenagh's house we waited with barely concealed excitement.

Before long, the first convoy came into view. Trucks, lorries, half-tracks and big-wheeled guns trundled past our gaping mouths. Their treaded tyres made that peculiar singing sound, here heard for the first time. From the back of the transport the Yankee soldiers returned the waves, cheers and blown kisses of the populace. Shocked out of our reverie, we gave voice with the other yelling children, and uttered our very first words of American slang: "Got any gum, chum?" We didn't go unrewarded. A mad scramble ensued as, like manna from heaven, chewing gum and candy rained down on the cobbled footpath.

While we didn't know it then, history was in the making that day in Cookstown, and throughout Northern Ireland. In the previous December, 1941, the Japanese had attacked the Naval Base at Pearl Harbour, thus bringing America into World War II. The first American servicemen arrived in Belfast on 26th January 1942. In the coming months and years the Yanks became a common sight in our small town, and it was to the benefit of the children who received gifts of candy, American comic papers and shiny US badges from those kind and generous young men.

For what seemed like hours the three of us sat on that cold kerbing watching convoy after convoy of our new allies journeying to the south end of the town to their newly built Nissan hut camp at the Drum Road. As our numerical ability didn't stretch very far, we soon lost count, but agreed that our next game would be that of soldiers.

Lost in dreams of coming battle, I was brought down to earth by the screams of my sister's voice coming from the Terrace, "Roy, yer wantin'!" Reluctantly leaving my pals to absorb the remainder of that historic moment, I dragged my feet down to our house. My small brain reminded me that it was Friday, with all the horrors that entailed for those opposed to bathing!

TRIBULATION

Routine and good order were as necessary to the civilian population as to service personnel. With five young children, Mother stuck to those criteria rigidly. Not only was Friday our bath night, it was also when Andersons delivered the groceries (or goods, as we called them). Howard's coalman

delivered the weekly ration of fuel, and Mr Hamilton, the Insurance Man, called for his weekly premiums. In the midst of all this activity the Terrace would echo with the cries of the fishman, Charlie Kane, as he yelled, "Harns alive!" in an effort to sell his wares. That his 'herrings' were really Lough Neagh pullen didn't seem to bother us at all. Such interruptions used to bother Mum intensely, and there would be a great flurry of wet, naked children hastily begowned when our front door was knocked.

Prior to this weekly tribulation, the black range was stoked until it glowed red. Large pans of water were boiled both on the gas cooker and the range. The large tin bath was brought in from the back yard and placed in front of the fire. A change of clothing from the skin out was draped in colourful array around the kitchen to 'air' in the unaccustomed warmth, and the blackout blind was lowered to protect what modesty we had left. Monies and documents for the various callers would be left out to minimise the transaction time.

When the water had been tested with the traditional elbow, June and Joyce got first go, not only because they were eldest, but, being girls, they would have accumulated less dirt during the week. It also meant that the precious water was preserved for when it became the boys' turn to immerse themselves in its carbolic depths. While we sported and splashed amid shouts not to totally flood the house out, Mum vigorously attacked the girls' tatted hair with a fine-toothed comb, killing off any nits that had survived the generous soaping, and in a vain attempt to restore their hair to some semblance of the Forties look. She ignored their cries of protest in the process.

Finally, with our hair shining, faces glowing and clad in fresh, clean clothes, Fridays didn't seem so bad after all. The girls were given a reprieve from school homeworks until Sunday night, so they helped out with the tea. This was usually a special treat seeing as how the weekly goods had come. After tea the usual debate between my sisters, as to whose turn it was to wash or dry the dishes, was avoided. Everything was left in abeyance, and the youngest hushed as we sat around our kitchen table in silence, listening. In a seemingly emotionless voice the man in the wireless would announce, "This is the six

o'clock news... ."

The expression on Mum's face would tell us the rest of the story...

HOME COMING

Eventually the war came to an end. On the 'Home Front' wives and sweethearts anxiously waited. The euphoria of VE Day had passed, leaving an atmosphere of anti-climax in our Tyrone Terrace. The Yanks had vacated their Sweep Road billets, leaving us kids a legacy of shiny US badges, American slang words and hardened lumps of chewing gum hidden furtively under the kitchen table.

At the other end of our town the Prisoner of War Camp was also empty, its inmates remembered only for their white, sad faces seen at our bathing place on the Ballinderry River, and their simple but ingenious wooden toys which could be acquired for a quarter pound of ration-book tea. The feel of a ghost town was added to by the soulful cry of Gunning's factory horn, urging the women to work in the early mornings.

All the little dramas which had been enacted over the war years in our fatherless streets seemed to pause, as if caught in a forgotten interval between acts. For us children many of the old fears had disappeared. In the eerie glow of our gas-lit streets, banshees no longer cried for help from the nearby fort. Gas-attacks, impetigo, school inspectors and nit searching nurses were only bad memories to be laughed at. Even the measured tread of the Bear's hob-nailed boots patrolling our Terrace took on a more friendly tone. They were all replaced by a new, and as yet unknown, threat from harassed mums, "Just you wait till your father comes home...!"

I can't remember the preparations made for his homecoming, but no doubt they were varied and frenzied. The front door step would be cardinaled a bright, deep red. The black-out blinds would have been replaced by crisp, white net curtains. Our kitchen range, which my mother had fought a losing battle with over those dark, lean years, would be gleaming maliciously in its fresh coat of black lead. Our father's bound volumes of the works of Dickens would be dusted down and the forbidden door of the parlour, which only admitted us grubby children

at Christmas time, would be thrown wide open.

That year of 1945 had almost passed when the man we were to call Dad came home. In the fields beyond our Terrace the singing Land Army girls had saved their last harvest. Blackberries hung heavy on the brambles and hazelnuts and wind-blown crab apples were in abundance, as if nature, too, was laying on its bounteous feast for the returning heroes.



"COOKSTOWN TOP TEN" 1948.

Seated Front Row left to right: Pat Beckett, Marie Simpson, Noelle Nelson, Gwennie Bownes, Ena Jordan.

Back Row left to right: May Kempton, Annie Leonard, Annie Anderson, Sadie Leonard and Jean Elliott.

Then, almost without warning, he was in our midst, his awesome presence seeming to fill our small kitchen. The camphored smell of his rough, khaki battle-dress assailed our senses and reddened our scrubbed faces as my father hugged my sisters, brothers and me.

While my mother stood proudly by his side he opened his voluminous kit-bag and dispensed presents to his offspring with a dramatic flourish: crystal studded bracelets for my sisters, and Italian pocket watches for us boys. I remember being disappointed at not getting the promised brass bugle, but it was gently explained away as having been lost during the fight. To this day I often wonder does that bugle adorn the mantle of some distant foreign soldier.

In the winter nights which followed, relations and friends would gather in our home. Long after we children were abed the celebrations went on. The high nervous laughter of the women drifted up to our bedroom, and in the background the furtive tinkle of stout bottles, and the low drone of men's voices, like low-gear'd armour, re-telling their war stories and remembering absent friends.

Dressed in his de-mob suit, with arms swinging smartly, Dad returned to his civilian job as law clerk, while we children returned to our games, or struggled with a school geography which had redrawn the map of Europe behind our unsuspecting backs. Following church on Sundays he would take us for long, interesting walks out by Strifehill, Drapersfield or Tullagh, imparting his knowledge of the countryside and nature. On Armistice Day at the Cenotaph we were especially proud of him as, with Service medals tinkling softly in the cold November air, he marched with other ex-service men and women to the beat of Cookstown Silver Band, remembering the fallen of two world wars.

Perhaps we were getting older, but somehow the old excitement seemed absent from our games in the Terrace then. Families had been made whole again with the return of absent fathers and a lot of the old hardships were removed. Running into a neighbour's house to borrow a twist of tea or a Cullen's Powder for a sick wean became a thing of the past. The war was quickly relegated to the pages of history, and all looked forward to the promised post-war boom.

Eileen McIver

REMEMBERS

On reading an article on 'The Town of Moneymore' in Volume 4, page 4 of the Journal 'Look Back', mention is made of a Doctor's House and Dispensary in High Street. That Doctor was my father-in-law Dr William McIver, who spent a lifetime tending the sick, single handed in Moneymore.

Doctor William McIver was born in 1841. He married Annie, daughter of Robert Dickson of the Demesne, Waringstown in 1875 and had about ten children. His wife died.

He married again about 1890 in Castledawson, a daughter of Stewart Lecky of Coalisland, County Tyrone. They had three living children.

In the Family Bible it is recorded that all of these children were born in Moneymore's High Street, in the house with pillars – it now houses on the ground floor the local Branch Library.

Doctor William McIver was a brilliant Medical Student at Queen's University, Belfast, a close and intimate friend of Sir William Whitla.

As his first wife was in poor health, the Doctor took her and their children by sailing ship to New Zealand. He thought the climate of New Zealand would help his wife but alas, she was unhappy there and they all sailed back to Moneymore. I've been told that he put his plate up on board the sailing ship to make some money.

When his first wife died, the Doctor was left in Moneymore with a family of children. Going to

Magherafelt by train about his business as Coroner, he met a Miss Josephine Lecky. Miss Lecky was returning to London (where she did private nursing) having been on a visit to her widowed mother who lived in Cookstown.

All of Doctor William McIver's children were given opportunities of University education – if any of them wasted this chance they were dispatched to U.S.A., Canada, Australia etc. There are many McIvers in Canada and the United States, all descendants of the Moneymore Doctor McIver. My children are in touch with many of these McIvers.

My husband was the youngest of the ten or twelve children. He was sent to Queen's University, Belfast, but as there was no Dental School there, he transferred to Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin and there qualified as a Dentist.

About the time he qualified, his father died so he came to Moneymore and set up a practice there in the house with his mother and aunts. This wasn't very suitable so he moved to Cookstown and set up practice two doors above McGucken's Hotel. He practised there (singled handed) until he died in 1959.

When Doctor William McIver went to New Zealand with his ailing wife and children, he worked in a hospital in Wellington (I think). My daughter Janet visited this hospital recently and was able to see a record of her grandfather's having worked there.

Doctor William McIver rented to Mr Harris (a Vet in Moneymore) a piece of land in the centre of the village to enable Mr Harris to build a house there (It

is now the Post Office). This land was let in perpetuity and I still own this field. The Harris family pays me an annual rent of £15.

Doctor William McIver died in 1925 and is buried in St John's Churchyard. My husband Henry McCaw McIver is buried in the same grave. Doctor George McIver (also a son of Doctor William McIver) is buried in the Presbyterian Cemetery on the Cookstown Road. I was appointed to the staff of Cookstown High School in 1934.

Cookstown High School was, it is said situated 'in an orchard' at the back of the Council houses along the left side of Fountain Road. The old Cookstown College became Cookstown High School in 1934 with a newly elected Headmaster and Staff.

Headmaster Mr William McNeill who taught Latin, History and Geography.

Miss Eileen Ekin was appointed to teach English and French.

Miss Eileen Beattie (later Mrs Harry McIver) was appointed to teach Physics, Chemistry and Maths.

Mr William Moles was appointed to teach languages.

Part-timers Miss Dorothy McKinney (Art) and Mr. Pearson (Music) completed the line-up of members of staff. Pupils at this time numbered some 200.

Behind the house fronting on to Chapel Street where Mr. McNeill lived was a number of old out-houses which were used as extra classrooms, and were reached up a flight of rickety stairs. The school building itself was four square, of corrugated iron construction, and it was painted crimson. (See Photograph on page 25.)

On Thursday afternoons, the senior girls walked to Cookstown Technical College, where they cooked and stitched with efficient Miss Ditty.

Further up Fountain Road, at Clare Bridge, was the rough Hockey Pitch, sometimes under pasture, sometimes producing crops in summer.

Christmas party venues were either the Court House or the Parish Hall.



• Those were the days... Photograph of pupils at Cookstown High School taken around 1936/37, with in front, Miss Eileen Beattie beside the headmaster.

CLAY PIPE MAKING

A Mid-Ulster Industry



• The man with the beard is James Turkington - the other man, his son, is also James.

It is not such a far cry back to the time when clay pipes enjoyed a wide spread popularity, but then they were gradually superseded by the briar pipe and the cigarette. Consequently the clay pipe industry which once flourished locally to a remarkable extent gradually dwindled away.

The once big demand for these pipes was met chiefly by private manufacturers all over the country, who turned out vast quantities of these delicate yet serviceable articles.

Clay pipe making came into prominence in County Tyrone in or about 1850, when a man called McGuiggan of Broughderg started a workshop. Twenty years later, another factory was started in Coalisland by a man by the name of Sherry, and

about the same time pipes were also turned out by Frank McCullagh at Newmills, who some time later transferred his operations to Agharan. There were other private manufacturers, but the time came when demand fell off, never to be resumed. A few miles from Cookstown, Mr James Turkington of Lisnanane traded under the name of Harper Brothers, the business having been founded by his father, also James Turkington, and an uncle called Harper.

James Turkington's workshop, as old people remember it, adjoined the dwelling house. It contained several work benches and a rack on which thousands of pipes awaited their turn to be fired in the kiln. Other pipes lay about in the embryo stage, while a large tub contained a quantity of pipe clay in a plastic state. Blocks of pipe clay came to Lisnanane from Devonshire. Over the years, as the fashion fluctuated, so did the demand for clay pipes., From a production of 6000, it reached at its peak some 150 gross, and at that time, five men were employed.

In the old days, Harper Brothers supplied shopkeepers and others in Cookstown, Stewartstown, Omagh and as far away as Monaghan, Cavan and Derry. For many years they supplied by

contract Monaghan City Asylum, which used between 40 and 50 gross in the year.

James Turkington sat down at the bench. He took up a heap of clay roughly fashioned into lengths, and in no time at all had six pipes lying before him. 'Easy' as the man says, 'when you know how', and when no doubt, 'practice makes perfect.' But

the process is simply this: the hard clay is first softened to a putty like consistency. The worker then takes a small quantity and beats it with an iron bar, thereby making it more plastic still. He then breaks off sufficient to make two pipes (this can only be done quickly and accurately by experience) subdivides this equally, a piece in each hand, and rolls them on a board into the shape of a thin carrot, tapering in diameter from a little more than one inch to about half an inch, and about six inches long. After rubbing the surface of each length with a mixture of paraffin and sweet oil, to keep it from adhering, it is put into an iron mould which opens in two halves. This is put into a vice arrangement on the bench which squeezes the halves closed, and while held thus a punch above is pressed down to cut the bowl of the pipe. A snick with a knife to level the head of the bowl completes the operation. The hole in the stem is made with a thin skewer rod which is inserted before being put into the mould.

The pipes are then placed in grosses

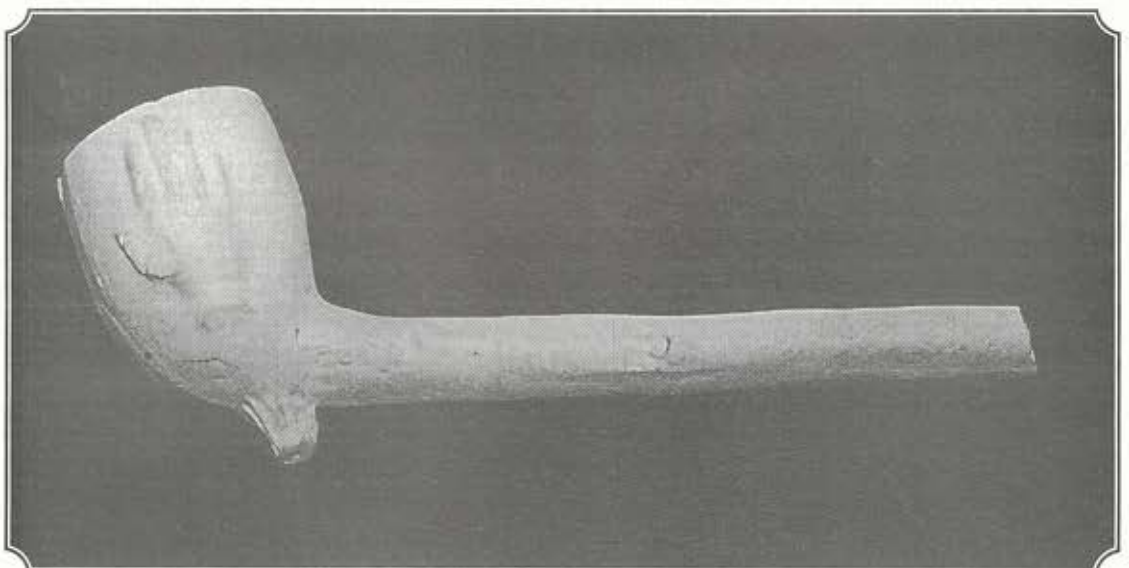


• Robert and Cecil Turkington. On the table is one of the original moulds.

on long boards to dry to a certain hardness before being put into the kiln.

This kiln, with space for about 150 gross takes 10 cwt of coal to burn for the required time – 24 hours. The pipes are taken out after another 14 hours, when the kiln has cooled.

Mr Turkington considered, at the end of his working life, that he was the only pipe worker in the Province, though he thought there might have been a clay pipe factory in Belfast.



• A finished clay pipe.

School Holidays

by Oliver McGuckin (guest contributor)

The school bus wound its way out of Cookstown, up through the Oldtown and on towards Moneymore.

It was the end of term and ahead lay the long summer holidays. The bus resounded with the buzz of excited children's chatter as we discussed our plans for the eight week break from our studies.

For me, there was the anticipation of seeing my Scottish pals, Gilbert and Brian, arrive over from Glasgow on their annual vacation. I smiled as I thought of how they were always on my doorstep within minutes of dumping their luggage in their aunt's house.

Then we'd be off on our first expedition, fishing for trout in the Brewery River that ran past the back of the Manor House Hotel.

If the season was promising there'd be other such outings planned, to places like Ballinderry Bridge, the Oewnkillew River at Gortin and Drapersfield Weir, just outside Cookstown.

On many of these trips another friend, Terry, joined us. His enthusiasm knew no bounds, and we used to laugh when he would put the worms which we gathered from a dung-heap straight into his pocket.

When we were bored with fishing, we'd turn to other pursuits, and on warm, sunny days the slopes of Slieve Gallion beckoned. A bicycle ride took us to Quilly in the foothills of the Sperrins, and from there it was a race to the top by foot, spurred on by the taunt that 'the last one up's a donkey'.

On the way back we called at Carndaisy Glen and played Cowboys and Indians or Robin Hood before making for home as the evening shadows fell.

Sometimes, if our parents were in a good mood, they would give in to our pleas to be allowed to camp out for the night. This was a real adventure, as we pitched our tents by the riverside in Frank Ross' field and lit a fire on which we would later cook the fish we caught.

And I was looking forward to the Saturdays when we would thumb a lift to Cookstown to take in the many and varied attractions on offer at the market stalls which lined both sides of the long, main street.

When the day's trading was over, we hung about outside the pubs as the 'dalers' in cloth caps staggered out after too many bottles of stout and half 'uns. Funny as it was, we were not there for the spectacle. Often their happiness induced a spirit of generosity, and they would toss us a threepenny bit or a sixpence. And other times they dropped their change accidentally.

The long summer nights also meant we'd get extra time to play football on the Fair Hill green, where it would often be a case of 16 or 17 a side and no quarter given or asked for.

And no matter what the score at the time, the games were nearly always ended with the ruling: "Next goal's the winner".

Ah yes, this will be a great summer, I thought to myself ...

But suddenly there is a loud ringing noise in my ear. It is the alarm clock, calling me to get up for work in Belfast, in the year 2000.

School Days

by BAYNA WILSON

I started school on the first Monday in September 1918. We had lived through the War in the City of Glasgow, and things were very tight. In a city, as compared to the country, you could get nothing that was not paid for; no free sticks to light the fire, no extra milk or butter, and in 1918 rationing of the essentials was strictly enforced.

We lived very near the River Clyde and the Shipyards, and the school I went to was about a mile or so from our home. The School was a large one with over a thousand pupils, a two-storey building which had probably been constructed just before the War on the very outskirts of the City. I am surmising the date. I don't remember a date anywhere inside or outside though I am sure now that there must have been one. The school was a field's length away from the main road, with big iron railings along the side of the field and, I think, all round the playground. During the first winter, I remember deep white sparkling snow on the field, clean and pristine until it met the footpath where the white snow was soon trampled by us into dirty grey slush. Most of us had to walk at least from the main road if we came by tram.

When Spring and Summer came, the field was transformed. It became green, and the feet of the railings were smothered in dandelions. I thought them beautiful. To this day I think it a pity that the dandelion is a weed.

I remember getting dressed on the cold dark mornings. My mother got up early and soon had the fire going with a lovely bright blaze. I had a navy blue dress with red trimming that I am sure my mother had made, for she had a sewing machine and was very clever with her needle. I remember standing on a chair to get dressed and have my hair done. It had been made into ringlets the night before by being wrapped round strips of rag. My mother was a good knitter too, and had made me

black stockings. It seems there was not a school uniform. For wet days, I had a yellow oil-skin, and so I was nicknamed 'Banana.'

Two things stand out in my memory for that first year. In the Spring, a German Zeppelin came right across the school and playground at no very great height. I think we must have been enjoying a break at the time, or else someone must have heard it coming and we were allowed out of school, for I distinctly remember being in the playground and looking up and being terrified.

The other thing that I remember was that about the end of September or mid-October an enormous heap of hyacinth bulbs was put on the platform in the school Assembly Hall. Each child took one home to grow it. On a certain date when the hyacinths were in bloom, we all brought them back to school and the best one got a prize. Can you imagine the perfume in the hall that day, and the colours: red, blue, pink and white? Were they a gift from Holland? I don't know, but it never happened again in my time.

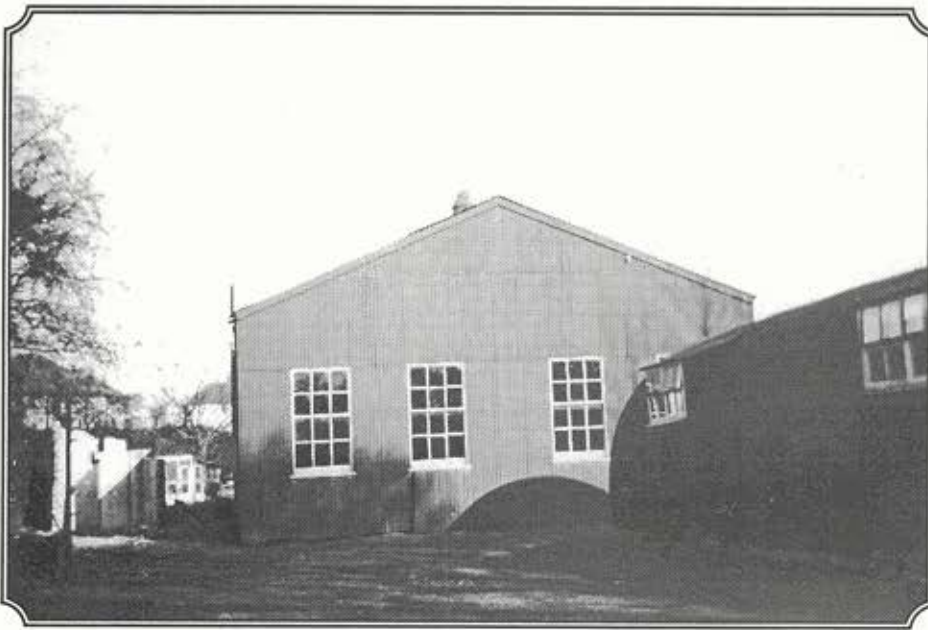
That lovely big playground was all paved with cream slabs of concrete which reminded me of big cakes of shortbread, especially as the slabs were plain around the outside and patterned in the centre, just like shortbread.

At that time, Scottish Education was considered to be the best in the world. Certainly I got a good grounding during my short time there. Our teacher was a Miss Lord. Like most Scottish teachers, she was a graduate. Miss Lord was not more than five feet one, dark haired with a roly poly figure. She was a splendid teacher. The school was organised in such a way that Miss Lord had the same class for three years. Then she went down to the beginners again. We concentrated on English, Reading taking priority and number work being left till later. We

had coloured chalks and drawing books, and we had plasticine. The Assembly Hall had climbing frames with big strong ropes. We were taught Scottish Dancing. Even then, the senior pupils went to swimming once a week.

You can imagine how I felt when I arrived at Burn Road P.E.S. – no paved playground, outside toilets, no Assembly Hall, and no prospect of swimming in the foreseeable future, if ever!

I think I was able to read quite competently when I went to school, for I have books which I never had difficulty in reading. In Scotland, the phonic method of teaching reading was favoured. When I went to Burn Road, Mr Thompson took me round the school, starting at the infants and working his



• Old High School c. 1955.

way upwards to try to assess my reading ability, with a view to placing me in the appropriate class. Well! 7th Standard, 14 years olds would have done as well as any. But then he decided to try a little Arithmetic and I very nearly ended up with the infants!

Another thing that was standard practice in Scotland was that our books were all free. The Scots really had a very high regard for Education. It was the key to a better life!

Burn Road Public Elementary School had four teachers. Mrs Sidney Thompson known to all as Mrs Sidney, took Infants, Senior Infants, First and Second Standards, while Miss Edie Thompson, known as Miss Edie, took Third and Fourth

Standards. Miss Graham took Fifth and Sixth Standards, Mr John Thompson the Seniors. I think that in those days and for a good many years after I left Burn road, the Quarterly Average had to be forty five pupils per teacher. That really meant classes of fifty plus- and the average had to be sustained over a lengthy period before another teacher could be appointed. This practice was not remedied till many years later, possibly in the Butler Report of 1948. I know that after teaching for three years I became redundant due to falling numbers, even though most classes in that school numbered in the high fifties. Three of the four teachers in Burn Road were called Thompson. Miss Edie was the Principal's daughter, but as far as I know Mrs Sidney's husband was no relation. There was another daughter of Mr Thompson's in the school at the time. Bunty, or

Eleanor to give her her proper name, was in Miss Edie's room at the same time as I was, and we in the class were really sorry for that girl for she got blamed and scolded for everything that went wrong.

Edie was engaged to Jim Thompson from the Coagh area. He had emigrated to New Zealand a few years earlier, and had set up business there as a builder's merchant in Christchurch. It developed into a very good business and they had a lovely home overlooking the city.

There was great excitement in school when Edie set off for New Zealand to be married. In those days it was a six weeks trip by ship. Edie never came back to Ireland. They had a son and daughter. The son was to take over the business but unfortunately he was killed in an accident and that broke his father's heart. Edie had died some years before.

But to go back to Burn Road P.E.S., in the twenties. Mr Thompson had a habit of prowling round the school, missing nothing in his rubber soled shoes. He was a small man. He could suddenly appear beside you. He must have heard many interesting stories and comments.

One day an old pupil called in to see him. Noel Sloan, home on leave from the Air Force, had

looked in. He came in his uniform. I was impressed! Better still, because of his visit we got the rest of the day off school. Totally unprecedented that was, I can tell you! I don't know where it was official or not. You see, the Roll would have been marked in the morning and numbers entered in the Records Book, and as we got less than one hour for lunch, there was no roll call in the afternoon, so maybe Mr Thompson just took the risk.

At that time, Mr Samuel Weatherup was the Schools Inspector. When he came to Cookstown, he stayed in the Gunning Arms Hotel in Molesworth Street. It was not long before every school teacher in the district got word through the grapevine that his little grey car had been seen on the Moneymore Road, at Stewartstown etc. Many a morning I got a wave from him on my way to school. As he was courting Miss Black who taught in the Orritor area, maybe we got more than the regulation number of visits.

Mr Thompson held a class for senior pupils who wished to sit the King's Scholarship Examination which gained entry to the Teachers' Training College in Dublin. Many girls who got the exam became Junior Assistant Mistresses in two-teacher schools throughout the country. That came to an end when Cookstown College was set up and it was decided that pupils should sit Junior and Senior Certificate Examinations, also King's Scholarship and Matriculation for entrance to University as full time study, with a bit of teaching practice thrown in for those doing King's Scholarship.

I remember an awful day when I was in Miss Edie's class. Normally, I had no trouble with spellings, for I was made do my homework, but on this particular day my brain refused to do anything I wanted and I could spell nothing! One of the words I remember was 'shovel'. But if my life depended on it... it was not hard work, for I loved school.

One day in early summer we decided to go into the field next to the school. There was a barbed wire fence, but that did not deter us. We climbed between the strands. I did not tear my clothes, but caught my leg on one of the spikes. I carried the scar for many a long day, for of course I dare not tell what had happened. Lucky I didn't get blood poisoning.

One of my chores was to bring home the Newsletter each day. Sometimes I forgot about the shop's half-

holiday, and Granny was deprived of her paper. She missed it dreadfully. The first page to which she always turned was what we called 'Hatches, Matches and Dispatches.' Remember that at that time there was no radio, no television and no telephone. The radio must have arrived in our area about 1925 or 1926, for I remember an aunt who had one of the crystal sets, and since she died in 1927 it must have come before that.

Violet Cooke was a pupil at Burn Road. She got a beautiful new bicycle, all shiny chrome with a leather saddle and cords on the wheels to protect your skirt when riding (no one then would have dared to wear slacks!) I am sure that this bicycle was the apple of Violet's eye, but that did not deter us. We must borrow it and learn to ride it. First up and down Burn Road till we could manage it, then up the Main Street, over the Oldtown Hill, round by Gunning's Factory, and back to Burn Road. Great fun and enjoyment was had by all except Violet, but the bicycle survived.

Were you ever sent to buy something, and you weren't sure whether it was real or a leg-pull? My errand one day was to Alexander's (Menary's now) for a huckaback towel. Never having heard the word before, it was with great trepidation that I made my request. Result: a successful purchase and a new word for my vocabulary. Huckaback towels were not in everyday use, being regarded as for special occasions when visitors came to stay, or when the Doctor had to wash his hands after a visit.

Intelligence Tests were the whole fashion in the mid-twenties, and these were used in the Scholarship examinations which were then coming on stream.

Cookstown College was an amalgamation of the Boys' College on the Fair Hill and the Ladies' School run by the Misses McKenzie in my mother's day, and later by Miss Rowan. When the schools were amalgamated, Mr McKinlay was brought in as Headmaster. Miss Rowan taught English and French and was one of those grown-ups who never admitted to not knowing everything! She was a stickler for having everything done properly and in order. Mr McKinlay was of a more modern breed, and as different from Miss Rowan as it was possible to be! Yet I must in all honesty say that both were really good teachers, honest in their endeavours to do their best for us.

The End of a Shopping Era

David Hamilton, now living in Australia has contributed this piece

FAULKNERS of 25 William Street closed its doors to the public last November after 85 years in business but the popular chemist/grocers still lives on in the memories of those who shopped in it over the years.

The family run firm was established in 1912 after George Faulkner joined ranks with Isaac Houston Henry to take over the main street store.

Mr Henry had owned the store since 1897 – leaving it two years after his union with George – in 1914.

George was then to take control of the new store with his wife Minnie for over 30 years until his death in 1950. His son John took over the reins for 54 years after him – serving the customers from 1940 to 1994, while daughter and recent owner, Jean, was

to take over after John's death before deciding to finally call it a day last November.

Now putting her feet up at 77 years of age, Jeans says she has nothing but fond memories of her time spent at the store. "Looking back, I cannot remember any particularly bad moments. Just a lot of pleasant ones as we have had such good customers and staff who served us well over the years."

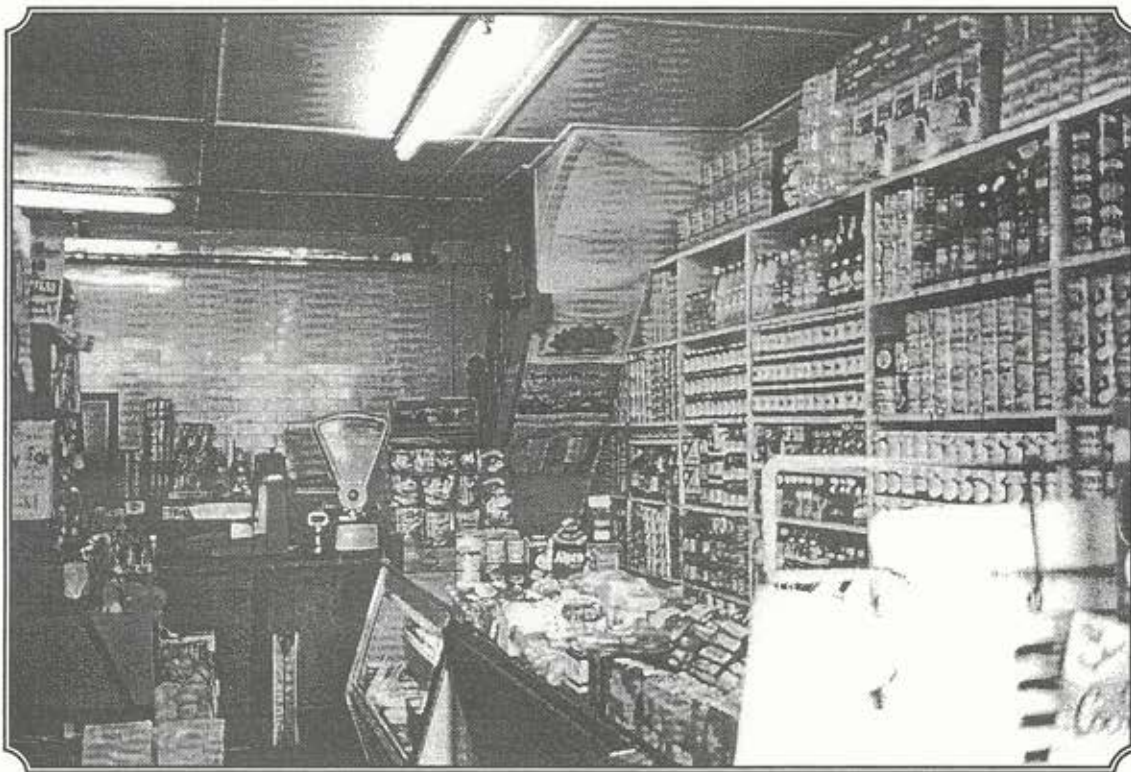
"But what many people may consider coming close to the dark times was the war and the rations that came with it," she said. "It was a bleak time for everyone in the town. People would come to the store with their ration books looking for simple but important things like tea and butter. Luxuries like perfumes or sweets certainly weren't on top of customers' lists then." The shop has not seen many

alterations in its interior in its 85 years apart from being reshelved and refitted in 1934.

The outside of the store, as it now stands, was once in wooden framing instead of granite surrounding. In more recent times, its front windows have also had to be replaced as a result of bomb damage. But changes there were – especially



• A smiling Jean greets her customers.



• Well stocked shelves of the Grocery Department.

in the shops' opening and closing times. As Jean recalled "Before the war, the shop used to close at 9pm every Saturday night after opening at 8.30am that morning. During the week, we would also close our doors at 6.30pm every evening instead of today's times at 5.30pm or 6pm. But we always kept to the rules of being open for a half day on Wednesday," she said.

As for Cookstown itself, Jean says the town has seen many changes down the years.

"The wide street is still there but it seems smaller now with the central reservations, traffic lights and the amount of traffic using it every day. The shops would also seem to have got much bigger stocking so much more now than they did before."

And so, after being so long in the public eye, does she now not miss being behind the counter of the family store?

"I felt the time was right to close the shop," she said. "As for the customers themselves, I don't have to go very far to see them again. I just have to go out through my side door and am guaranteed to see one or two of them in the streets."

George Faulkner qualified as a pharmacist in 1912 after taking his exams in Dublin, while son John qualified in 1941, after studying in Belfast.

Jean extends her gratitude for the loyalty and support given to her, her father, mother and brother over the past 85 years.

She thanks her staff Ronald, Renee, Dorothy and Sam together with the many others who were in employment at Faulkners in earlier years.

Beatrice Mahod, née Morrow, was born in Millburn Street, where she spent her childhood. Readers may remember reading in an earlier Journal about her memories of 'Wash Day' there. Now living in North Carolina, Bea recalls our local speech as she writes:

What are ye ochin about?

I'm homesick for the sound of Irish speech,
the guttural reverberations in the throat
of words like lough
that slants its rhyme to cough

There is a preponderance of ochs in talk,
not the clipped polite, Oh yes,
instead, a need to clear the throat
in sentences beginning with Och aye.
Is it connected to the weather?

I miss the evening chats around the fire.
Och aye, 'Deed aye, I sigh.
My nostalgia is not
for the weather but the blether.

SAMMY CREIGHTON

The handsome photograph shows Sammy Creighton, who hailed originally from Coagh, and who made the Hall of Fame between the goalposts.

Sporting life for Sammy began at the age of seventeen, when he joined Moyola Park. Three years later, when he was about to move on, the Castledawson team had reached the Ballymena District League Championships.

After a short stay with Linfield Rangers, Sammy played in the intermediate league for Ballyclare Comrades, collecting several medals on the way.

Next came Coleraine and the thrill of the semi final of the Irish Senior Cup. Then aged 24 he played (in goal of course) for Northern Ireland in an amateur International. In that year, 1957-58, he played along with Derek Dougan in an International at Windsor Park against Romania.

Later on, captaining Clondeboye in Bangor,



• Sammy in 1957.

Sammy's name appears with those of Terry Neill and Jackie Milburn, who of course was uncle to Bobby and Jack Charlton. Sammy though offered trials for English Clubs including Manchester United, felt that because of business commitments he could not leave Northern Ireland.

In later years, Sammy has been involved with football amongst young people, encouraging local clubs to seek out and foster the talent of local boys, rather than scouting around in other towns. And while congratulating him on his sporting successes, we feel that we should congratulate Sammy also on his attitude of encouragement towards local stars of tomorrow.



• Sammy receives a presentation from colleagues at the Bacon Factory in 1957.



LISSAN

The Staples Inheritance

The House that Robert Built

In the year 1600 or thereabouts, the young Thomas Staples, a Barrister of the Middle Temple, rode out from Moneymore to choose a site for his future home. He chose well; the rising ground on the banks of the Lissan river below Slieve Gallion in the townland of Tatnagilta. There he found the haematite iron which the Staples family worked for the next 100 years.

Charlesworth in his Survey mentions the fold of land through which the Lissan river flows as unique in its variety of rocks and glacial remains. It is shown that in this small stretch was not only iron but sand, gravel, clay and sandstone, all valuable building materials; the fast flowing river with its good fall provided power for the mills which were

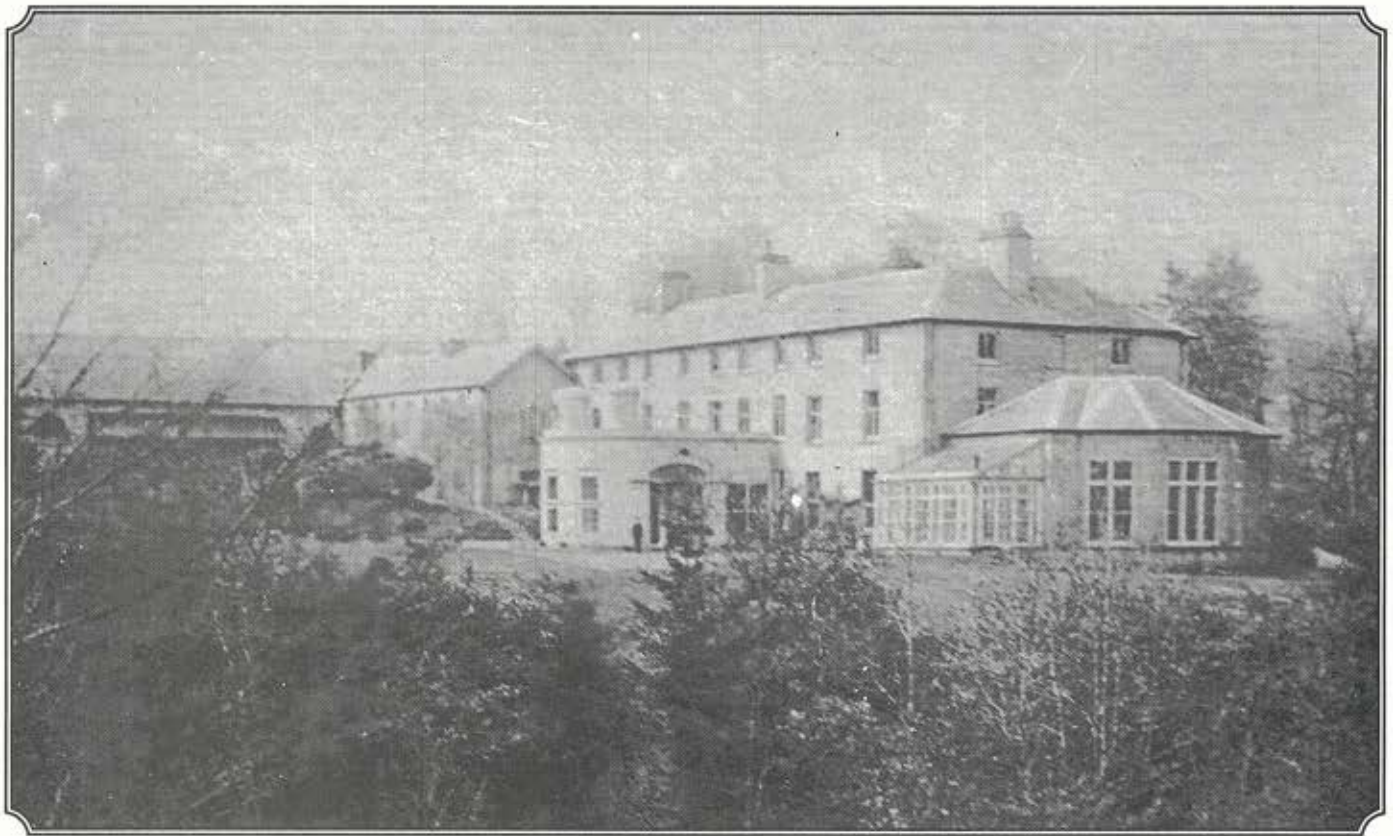
built along its banks and a spring of sweet drinking water in the oak forests in the hills behind the house has never failed to the present day.

The ancient oaks were essential for building the great house and the huge barns in the beautiful courtyard, where original beams themselves 400 years old at the time the trees were felled, still support the roof. Botanists listed wintergreen, grass of parnassus and other rare plants in the Lissan woods; few can be found today though a family of birdsnest orchids still survives.

Young Thomas did everything he could to secure his inheritance. He abided by the conditions of his lease and he married a very wealthy young woman,



• Aerial view of Lissan House.



• Lissan House, showing the Conservatory built by Sir Nathaniel.

Charity Jones, the heiress of Baptist Jones of the Vintners' Company who owned acres of land round Bellaghy and he was rewarded by Charles I who made him the first Baronet of 'Lysson' on the 4th day of June in the 'fowrth' year of Our Reign 1628.

The Staples were on excellent terms with their neighbours; Thomas employed local people to work the iron and built the original small stone house where he lived with his family and where the forge was situated. Forts had to be built where cattle could be secured against wild animals and the wild clans who lived in the forests.

So it happened in the 1641 Rebellion O'Quinn of Lissan was given orders by the Chieftain Sir Phelim O'Neill to keep the Staples home free from pillage and the start of the great house survived when Cookstown was devastated. Sir Thomas was away from home but Lady Charity and the children were captured and imprisoned in the Moneymore Bawn; her husband raised a troop of men in Newtown Stewart and she was rescued. One of these children was the great Robert who completed the building of Lissan House, the farm buildings, extensive gardens and landscaping about 1690.

Robert married late in life for those days, Mary de Vesci daughter of the Bishop of Tuam; they were

together for 32 years and had 10 children of whom all but 4 died in infancy. He it was who built the Big House in the Grand manner with large handsome rooms, a vast hall, parlours wainscotted in oak and a magnificent staircase all of which were highly commended in reports to the Archbishop from whom the land was leased. Letters survive from guests who complained of the noise of the bellows in the forge which worked all night. The bloomery, as the ironworks were called, was later removed 200 yards from the house to the highest point of land where the original small houses were built and its remains are still standing. It is hoped they will be restored.

A tremendous number of people must have laboured in this great undertaking; there were sawmills all along the fast-flowing Lissan water and all other building materials were to hand. Hugh stone blocks still survive in the walls which surround the 4 acre garden, and in the old byres and stables, but after 350 years help is urgently needed if the whole complex is to survive. Robert was an excellent landlord and carried out great drainage schemes; he started the cultivation of the water gardens and he planted huge orchards. He was High Sheriff in 1703 and MP for Dungannon and Clogher.

One of Robert's sons, the Reverend Thomas Staples



• The ballroom today.

was Rector of Cookstown and worked with the Primate and others to open up the mines in Coalisland in 1749 using £10,000 of his own money.

The next member of the family to live at Lissan in great style was the Rt Hon John Staples QC, MP for Antrim and the last Speaker of the Irish House of Commons. He lived from 1736 to 1820, was twice married and had 13 children. His second wife was Henrietta Molesworth – Harriet – one of the three sisters who survived the great fire in their home which killed their Mother and 9 of her household. Harriet fell on iron railings and her leg had to be

amputated but she survived the ordeal and lived a long and happy life. She had 10 children and her daughters, with their Mother's good looks and their Father's wealth, married into grand families all over the land. At this time Lissan was a hub of social life. A great many servants were required both inside and out. Descendants of some of those who worked on the estate still visit the 'Castle' as it is known locally and they come from all over the world.

Sir Thomas 10th Baronet added a beautiful Ballroom on the east side of the house especially for his musical recitals. Built around 1875 it has double glazing and central heating.

The planks in the floor are dove-tailed without a nail. Panels of Chinese paper decorated the walls. The fireplace is of white marble. This room has served the community and the family well over the years before the days of Golf Clubs and Parish Halls.

When Sir Nathaniel returned from India and his travels on the Continent, he made a number of improvements. He introduced plate glass to the large hall windows, built a fine conservatory and repositioned part of the great staircase which now boasts 605 banisters with 62 steps and 5 landings. He also purchased the clock from the Diamond in



• Part of the main staircase



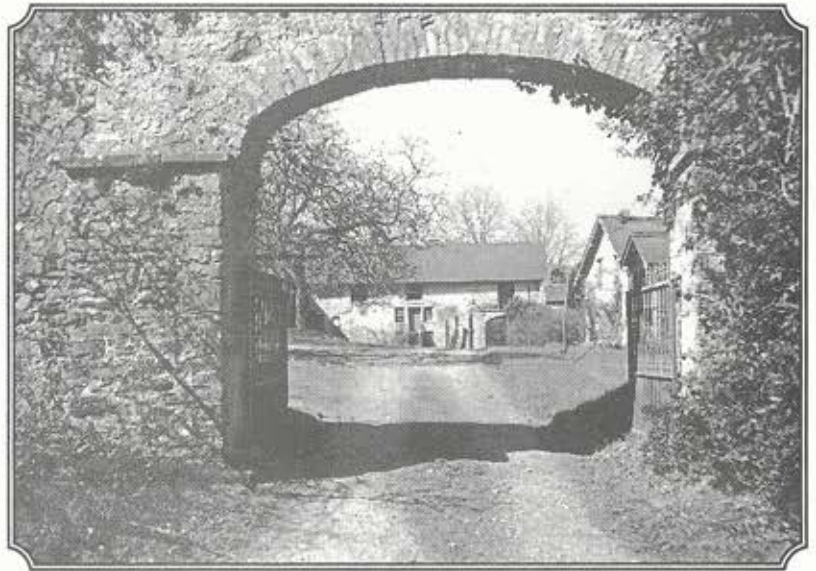
• The Hall in Lissan House with portraits of Rev. J.M. Staples and his wife Annie Alexander.

Magherafelt and built the tower to accommodate it.

Nathaniel's younger brother James returned from his home in Scotland to take charge of the demesne on his brother's death. He and his wife introduced the laundry and creamery, took in paying guests and formed the 'Lissan Co-operative Society' where Mrs Staples taught cooking and lace making to try and help local girls find employment. Times were hard and money very short but there were 26 people on the payroll. Though earning very little, some of these workers paid only 6 pence a fortnight rent for their houses and this included electricity after 1902 when a water turbine was installed. It supplies 240v D.C. and is still running today.

Robert Ponsonby Staples the artist well-known for his belief in early barefoot walking and still remembered in Cookstown today and his son Robert Alexander both came home to Lissan at the end of their lives and with very limited means did all they could to keep faith with the ancestors who had handed down to them 'this Golden Place' – Ponsonby Staples' name for Lissan.

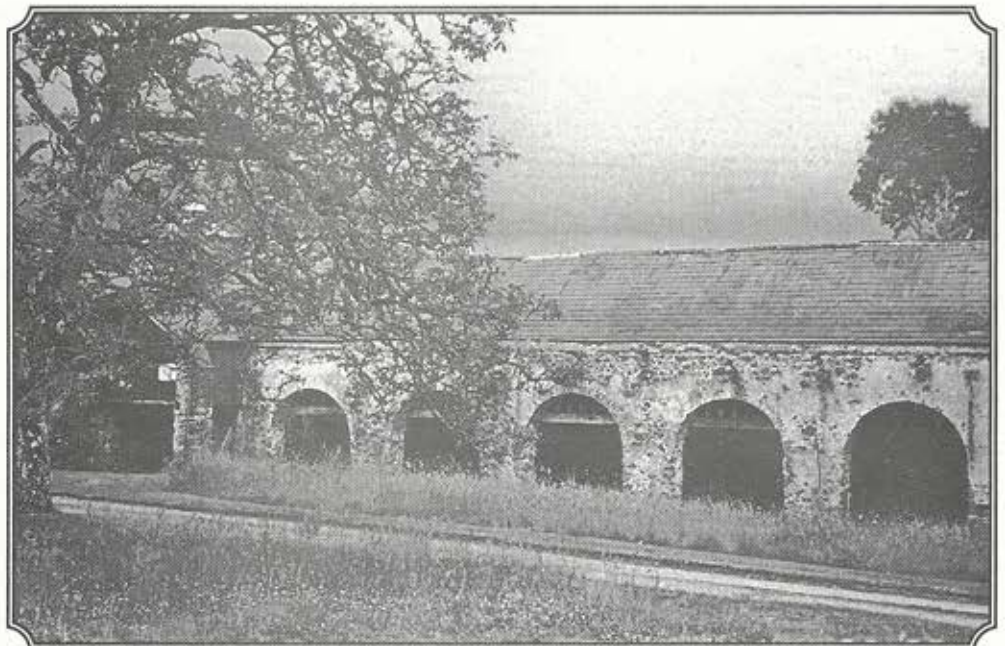
Robert entailed the demesne to his daughter Hazel and she at the end of her life has given the property to a charitable trust The Friends of Lissan, a team of local people who will do their best to return the estate to its former glory, a centre for all the arts, open to the whole community and to visitors from overseas. This is a tremendous undertaking, but Lissan spans the river and stands in both Co Tyrone and Co Londonderry; an ideal centre for Peace and Reconciliation and the Arts. This a peaceful place where no-one feels threatened or disadvantaged. It was home for both traditions in the past and it will be so again.



• Entrance to the Courtyard.



• Carriage horses would have stood beneath the Walnut Tree.



• Used for storing turf.

The Ballinderry River

By the late NORMAN CLEMENTS

Twisting thro' the bracken as it sings its merry lay
How lovely is the country where the river wends its way.
A shining silver streamlet as it passes Dunamore
By hamlets neat and meadows sweet thro' Coagh to Lough Neagh's shore.

I love the Ballinderry when just a mountain rill
I love it when its waters deep are very calm and still,
Or tumbling down the valley in a rush of foam and spray
But I love it best when it comes to rest in the bosom of Lough Neagh.

By lovely Wellbrook of the woods the roaring tail-race churns.
Majestic is the rhythmic tread as the mighty mill-wheel turns.
On through Clare the river there o'er bubbles laughing leap
By Kildress ridge and Aughlish Bridge it enters Tullagh deep.

Onward, ever onward the Ballinderry glides.
And wider, ever wider as streamlets passive slide
By the stately towers of Killymoon the river rolls along
Through bushy bends its way it wends singing a merry song.

Rushing o'er the rocky weir by Cloghog ruined mill
Cascading into myriad spray the boiling waters spill.
Then slower into eddy turns to tinkling trebles small.
Where meadows flank the grassy bank of lovely Lisnahall.

By Mullan's side the banks are wide, the glassy shades are deep
And somewhere outside Mullan Point the river falls asleep.
But the lovely Ballinderry that sang its song of yore.
Still lilt its way o'er stony ways and will for evermore.

MEMORIES of Life at Wellbrook

by Maud Henderson

Having written for a previous edition of this interesting magazine, I am indeed flattered to be asked to write again. Now the question arises – what shall I write about that will be of interest to the Journal's readers?

I often think of all the good neighbours and friends over the years at Wellbrook – sadly many of them have passed on, including my late husband who much enjoyed life there. I had written in the previous article about the Cahoon family who lived at the end of our avenue. At the other end, on the old road leading from Cookstown to Omagh, we were fortunate to have Owen and Marion Williams. They were most loving and caring people. I remember having been in hospital and on the day of my return home, Marion who was a nurse, called to tell me that she was coming daily to look after me until my recovery – an angel of mercy indeed.

The Greer family lived further up the road on the farm adjoining ours. One summer's day, rain was forecast. As we sat bemoaning the fact that our carefully saved hay was going to be lost in the rain, in the distance there appeared a tractor and trailer with Fred Greer and his farm helper and in no time they had our hay safely in the hayshed, before the deluge.

Further up the road in the other direction, lived Mrs Minnie Black with her family, a most generous lady. Rita McFarland, who ran a very useful country shop, owned the next house. My two daughters Heather and Ruth frequently went there on their bicycles, for some cooking ingredient that was urgently needed. In those days the roads were not nearly so full of traffic and children could cycle without any feeling of danger.

On one such day when I was making an apple tart, I discovered that the cloves in my cupboard were finished, so Ruth offered to go to Rita's to get some. After a chat with Rita, Ruth announced her message – 1lb of cloves. Rita suggested that maybe it was 1oz of cloves, but the messenger insisted that 'No, it was 1lb'. Forty years later I still have a plentiful supply of this commodity. I expect we must have exhausted Rita's complete stock of cloves. Perhaps we were put off by this superabundance of the clove flavour, for nowadays I seldom seem to use them.

Another family of Black's owned and managed the Doons general family business further up the road and it was useful for things like paraffin oil, and meal for the chickens. A short distance further was the nearest Post Office owned by the Reids. Joyce, their only child, went to school, Brownies and Girl Guides with our children.

Later on a Guide camping area was established at Wellbrook across the bleach green, by the Ballinderry river. We could see the goings on from what we called the 'Oakroom' Window. From the beginning there was a firm and well understood rule 'Definitely no visits to the house'. It was strange to see our children passing by the kitchen window, as though they were aliens.

In those days children created a lot of their own fun, as my generation did. A favourite pastime was what was called 'wee houses'. Our two were no exception. All sorts of places were used for these pretend houses, from the cellar to the attic and, every so often, they could be seen on the move to a different location. Once the 'wee house' was even created up a tree.

Then a new idea was born – a pretend Travel Agency. It was up to the attic this time and their Dad was conscripted any time his business took him to a town with a proper Travel Agency – 'Please get us some travel leaflets and brochures'. On his return home there was great excitement to see what had been found. The Travel Agents must have wondered if this gentleman did nothing but travel all over the world.

Then when visitors came they were dragged to the top of the house to 'book a holiday'. I remember the rector with his wife and daughter called and of course Pamela their daughter was conscripted to visit the travel agency. Shortly afterwards she came running down in great distress – 'Oh, Daddy, I've booked a holiday for £60 and I haven't got any money – what will I do?'

The 'Oakroom' at Wellbrook is such a unique and exciting room that I think readers would be interested to hear of its history. When the Leeper family purchased Wellbrook some 140 years ago the house was much smaller, so it was decided to enlarge it. As the land was heavily wooded, oak for this purpose was cut down and seasoned for seven years. The work of creating this beautiful room must have been well thought out and planned over the waiting years.

The space chosen was what was then the kitchen and when we went there in 1958, workers who knew it in the old days referred to the 'Oakroom' as 'the old kitchen.' The walls were panelled with this seasoned oak with about 18 inches left at the top for a ledge

to display plates or whatever. The ceiling was white with oak beams suspended. At various strategic points, recesses were left in the thick walls to create cupboards. Some of them were given glass inset leaded panes. The semi-circular window also had leaded panes and around Christmas the winter jasmine outside came into flower, and those lovely yellow blooms peeped through the window.

A large fireplace was created with deep red tiles surrounding a commodious bucket grate. Each morning logs were carried in from the shed and piled inside this recess to provide a cheery fire all day. The floor too was of oak and when the fire got going the hanging brass lanterns and brass fender gleamed so that the temptations to travel outdoors no longer seemed so inviting.

As a child with 6 sisters and 1 brother, I grew up on our parents' farm about 3 miles from Magherafelt. As we walked to school each day we passed a nice old house and farm known as 'Hollymount'. This place was owned by a family named McGucken. I discovered recently that this was where the Leeper family lived before moving to Wellbrook. When the last members of the McGucken family died a few years ago, leaving no heir, Hollymount was put up for sale. As my brother's farm skirted Hollymount, he purchased the house and lands and they became an extension to our original family holding. The house is now being restored and hopefully one of my nephews will live there. How the wheels of history turn full circle.

I hope that the Henry family is enjoying living in Wellbrook as much as we did. They too have made a lot of changes, as we all like to put our own stamp on wherever we live. So many of the beautiful old houses all over the country have fallen into disrepair but we are so pleased when we got there to see Wellbrook standing proudly looking over the garden and lakes, as the late W F Marshall said in one of his poems 'Tyrone among the Bushes'.

With his permission, it gives us great pleasure to print in this, our first edition, the script of a talk given recently in Cookstown by Mr Railways himself, Tom McDevitte, on the occasion of the opening of the old Station Building as in Information Centre.

AT COOKSTOWN OLD STATION

by T.P. McDevitte

Tom begins:

First of all, allow me to congratulate all concerned on the transformation made to this dear old Railway Station, which after the closure became very dilapidated.

Thanks also for preserving the imposing gateway to the old GNR Goods Yard. I think it is quite unique on the whole of the old Great Northern system which covered 500 miles of tracks in twelve counties from Dublin to Derry and Belfast to Bundoran, including other important places – such as Cookstown.

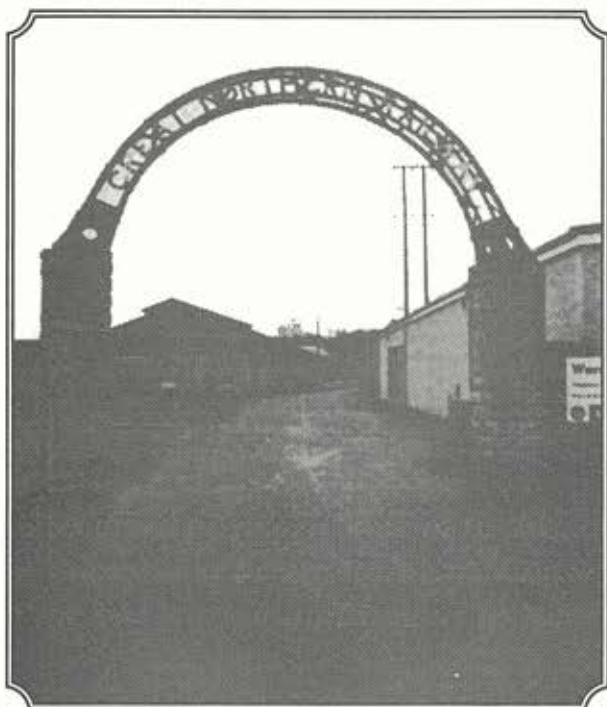
I seem to remember that in the office attached to the Goods Shed (now I think occupied by the DOE) there was a fender in front of the office fire made from a piece of rail and embossed with the initials G.N.R. I wonder is it still there??

Apart from Strabane, COOKSTOWN was the only town in Tyrone to have two railways running into it – and into two different stations side by side. One

of course was the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway, later the Northern Counties committee which reached Cookstown in 1856. As you know, their handsome station is still in good repair and decoration just next door to where we are standing, but now selling parts for motor traction which

arrived here on 28 July 1879. Because there was intense rivalry between the two railway companies the GNR built its own station (this is it we are in tonight) and for years there wasn't a rail connection between the two stations. This meant that anyone travelling from, say Dungannon (or Stewartstown) to even Moneymore or Magherafelt had to change trains (There's a story about a very famous person who had to do just that, but I'll tell you about that later.)

Cookstown was a very busy station at times – not only passengers but plenty of Goods Traffic. Between the two companies there were about eight trains a day to and from Belfast, from 7 in the morning to 7 at night, and even until midnight on Wednesdays and Saturdays. This in addition to day and night goods trains which brought coal, bread, meal etc. from Belfast and also set out linen from Gunning's factory, goods from the Tape and Webbing Factory, not forgetting the famous Bacon Factory (still as fresh as ever thank goodness!) There was also a hat factory



• Entrance to the Goods Yard, Cookstown Railway Station, a unique landmark which fortunately still exists.

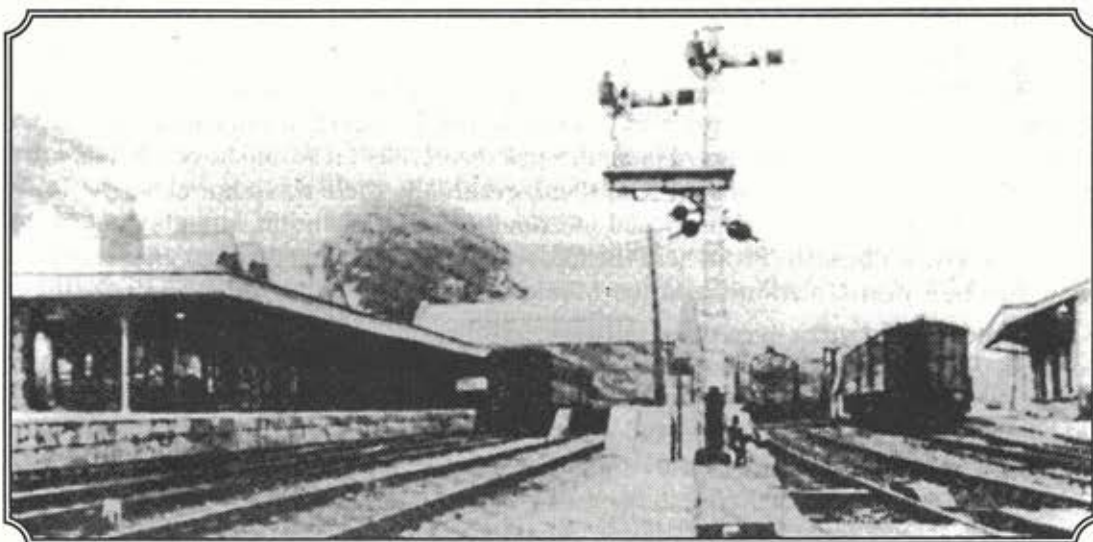
helped to close the railway down.

The Great Northern Line from Dungannon to Cookstown first

established by a refugee from mid-Europe – incidentally situated not far from a POW camp.

Before the days of lorries, every train coming into Cookstown had its quota of general goods for the various shops as well as daily supplies of bread from bakeries in Belfast. This situation (and the NCC) were vital focus points in the commercial life in Cookstown, and vital to the life of the country – and to the Anglo-American effort in World War Two – for remember, there were thousands of soldiers of various nationalities stationed in the vicinity. However, eaten grass is soon forgotten – and not long after the war ended, the road minded authorities lost no time in closing the railways down.

Believe it or not, Cookstown might have been an important station on an inland through railway from Dublin to Derry via Coleraine! In fact the first 40 miles of that track was laid from Dublin to Kingscourt in Co Cavan and but for the intransigence of some local landed gentry who didn't want "snorting monsters running through their lawns", it would have gone on north to Carrickmacross and Castleblayney. From there, eventually there was a line across the hills via Keady to Armagh, which it was proposed to extend on to Dungannon, and of course, connect with the Cookstown branch. From here thence, via Magherafelt and the Derry Central Line for Macfin Junction near Coleraine, and the Maiden City.



• 1936, GNR LOOKING WEST

But not content with two or even three railways, another one was proposed (a narrow gauge 3 ft between the rails) over the hills through Gortin to Donemana, there to connect with the narrow gauge line to the Port of Londonderry. I understand that horses and carts were hauling stones across the hills to Cookstown for shipment to Belfast – and some of the stones had gold in them. Yes, 'there's gold in them thar hills!' – I got a lump of it out of a river one day while doing a documentary for the BBC. Of course there was more stone than gold!

I once saw some interesting photos of the old NCC station and staff in Cookstown. They were up in the Railway Bar – (the PHOTOS, NOT THE STAFF!). They showed the engine driver, Jimmy Muray, who drove the last NCC train out of here in January 1951 – as far as I can remember. His fireman was Willie McGarvey and they were being seen off by two platform men, Con Black and Paddy Loughrey.

Another photo on the wall was of the station staff in 1936. It was joint staff, mostly NCC men. The last Great Northern Stationmaster

was George Lavery and he was transferred to Strabane in 1916! The last Stationmaster was an NCC man, William (or was it Robert) McKinney?

In the 1936 photo, the Stationmaster was Eddie McIlwaine – later SM at Ballymena. Sitting beside him is his successor, William Wilson whose daughter continued the railway tradition by marrying Tom Hutchinson, himself from a railway family in Castledawson. He was stationed later in Portrush and Carrickfergus and became Operating Supt for the Belfast-Larne line. Another well known Stationmaster in Cookstown was P.J. McLarnon, whose son in law is now RC Dean of Armagh – and very interested in Railway matters still.

One of the old NCC Stationmasters in Cookstown was Sam Bryson and he had a great habit of coming into the Goods office, lifting up the tail of his frock coat – which all Stationmasters at the time wore – and standing with his back to the office fire.

One day, unknown to him, a mischievous young clerk, Wilfie Brennan, had put a fog signal (a

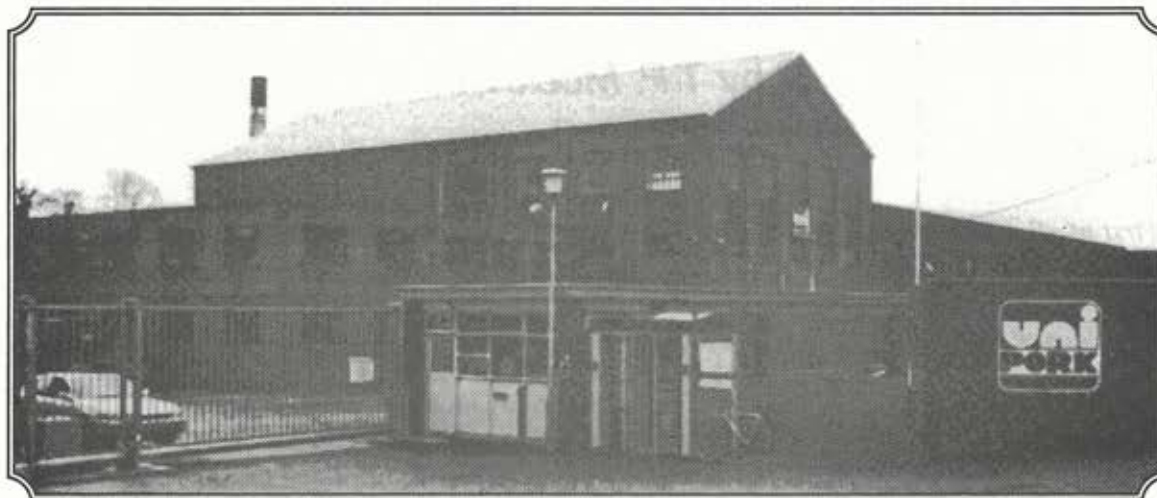
detonator) into the fire among the black coals. When the Stationmaster kicked the fire to liven it up, off went the detonator, and out of the door flew the Stationmaster with his coat tails blazing like a jet propelled sparrow. Of course 'nobody knew nuthin'.

As I was saying, some very important people travelled through Cookstown – in fact, as early as 1885, the then Prince and Princess of Wales (later King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra) had been visiting the Duke and Duchess of Abercorn at Baronscourt near

Many's a sore head I had drinking your mother's health. Here, take that with ye – It'll be something to read in the train."

That story was vouched for me by no less a person than the late Mr Twigg, the Solicitor for all the

railways and local government schemes in Cookstown. Furthermore, he told me that his mother was a member of a ladies' choir who stood near Edward and sang 'God bless the Prince of Wales' – and she heard the whole happening.



The presence of the Railway was an important factor in the choice of the site for the Bacon Factory.

One a Sunday night – 16 January 1956, the last train left Cookstown at 7.40pm, the last ticket was issued by John Morrison of Molesworth Road in the town here and the last Porter was Sammy McKinney of Coagh Street. No doubt there were fog signals exploding in bangs that night as the steam rose in clouds along the line to Dungannon.

Ernest Thompson of Oldtown Street was there with his taxi, as usual, just as his father before him had attended all trains with his jaunting car. One of the passengers who travelled in that last train, which signalled the end of railway history in Cookstown, was Mr S McCully of Churchtown, out the road to Lough Fea. He had travelled every day for twenty years to his work in the offices of Customs and Excise in Portadown – and his son, the Vet, remembers the trains too and the tales his father told of the daily travellers.

Newtownstewart, and travelled from there via Omagh and Dungannon, on their way to England via Larne and Stranraer. Of course, even they had to change stations at Cookstown and this gave the town Commissioners (predecessors of the Council) the opportunity of giving their Majesties an address of welcome on a parchment roll. The then chairman of the Town Commissioners had a 'spirit grocery shop' (groceries at the front and spirits at the back), took a wee dram to steady his nerves as he left the shop, and took a wee drop or two with him in a bottle just in case to steady them further at the station. Well maybe the train was late or maybe he wasn't as steady as he might have been, but when their Royal Highnesses got out of the train, he fumbled for his glasses (maybe he couldn't see through them anyway) tried to read the parchment, and said "Your Royalties – eh Your Highnesses – man da ddar you're welcome here!

That story had a sequel years later when a member of a leading Cookstown family who became Sir Havelock Charles, Physician in Ordinary to His Majesty King Edward VII, was asked once by the King where he had come from "From Ireland Sir – a little place called Cookstown in County Tyrone. You'd hardly have heard of it, your Majesty". "I KNOW IT WELL" he replied. "That's the place where the old gentleman had headaches drinking Mother's health!"

I could hardly mention Cookstown without mentioning Coagh and while it hadn't any rail connection, it had a steam lorry connecting with the railway at Moneymore for a few years until the Council banned it for cutting up the roads. Driving a steam lorry was of course a dirty job but the driver didn't mind. He was a black man anyway and how he came there is a story in itself.

About 100 or more years ago a local gentleman named Marks was out in Africa and as he was about to sail for home he saw a naval vessel which had rescued a boatload of black boys who apparently were being shipped to America as slaves – and were being offered free to anyone who would take them.

This gentleman saw this black boy gazing at him, no doubt with his wide terror stricken eyes – and he took pity on him on that Monday morning – and dubbed him Johnny Monday. He brought him back to his sister's house in Dublin where he was treated like a son: fed, clothed and educated so well that he became a well known singer; very handsome and neatly turned out. He also had an aptitude for mechanical things and learned to drive one of the new fangled horseless carriages. So was it any wonder that when he was visiting his 'Uncle Marks' in Coagh around the time that the mechanical monster was introduced, he was

the only one who could drive it and between himself and John McIlvenna, he got her going! When the wagon was taken off he



A rare photograph of the No 75 Belfast – Cookstown Passenger train in the Moneymore Station on 24 August 1950

returned to Dublin, married the daughter of the then Lord Mayor and I saw a photo (in Mr McCully's house) of him driving one of the early limousines in Dublin. That's the story of Johnny Monday from Coagh or Moneymore.

John Dunlop once told me that

there were some wonderful excursions from Moneymore to Portrush. To him it seemed that thousands thronged the platform and they were warned to 'keep well away from the edge or the train will suck you in.'

Nobody need have bothered shouting anything for when the train came in there was a mad rush into the carriages. Everyone trying to get in with their friends; fellows trying to get in with their girlfriends – even if the girls didn't want them. But of course they were out to enjoy themselves. Away we went into the clouds of steam and smoke, looking out at every station on the old Derry Central Line – Maghera, Kilrea,

Garvagh, Macfin and long before we got to Portrush we could smell the salt sea air – that gave us a quare good appetite for lunch we got in the railway pavillion beside the station. A great trip – a great lunch – a great day altogether and although the children got free, the adults had to pay two bob – a great value altogether.

There was even a great poem made up about it which ran: -

*Twas the sixth of June they made it – and 'twas pleasant never fear
When the Sunday School excursionists all got on their fancy gear,
And the lads got squeezin lassies that they'd never squeezed before,
From Dunman and from Lissan and of course from Moneymore.*

*Still there's one or two owl hasbeens and they've never yet got wed,
Tis a marvel how owl fogies get young notions in their head,
They were the first to buy the tickets and 'tis true one never knows,
What wee damsel may take courage and invite them to propose.*

*Oh how their souls are longing for the merry sixth of June,
And there's fellows from Cookstown think it couldn't come too soon,
Last year I took this outing and I'll go this year again,
Sure I wouldn't miss for twice as much the squeezing in the train.*

Thirty Million Yards of Webbing

An Ulster War Record

This Article appeared in the
'Cabinet Maker and Complete House Furnisher' on 9 March 1946

The remarkable war effort of a little factory at Cookstown, County Tyrone, Northern Ireland, has just been revealed. The factory is owned by the Ulster Tape and Webbing Manufacturing Co., Ltd., whose contribution to victory was the output of 30,000,000 yards of webbing for Government contracts of all kinds.

In peace time webbing is largely used for upholstery purposes, such as understrapping easy chairs, settees, etc. In war, however, it assumes a much wider importance. It is used for haversacks and kitbags, parachute harness, gas masks, ammunition pouches, waist belts, chin straps, shoulder straps. Mae West jacket straps, and an almost bewildering variety of other straps for the Army, Navy, Air Force, the Civil Defence and other services.

For almost six years the Ulster Tape and Webbing Manufacturing Company was busy with all these things. In the weaving shed at Killymoon the engine throbbed day and night, and the looms went for eighteen hours a day as the busy shuttles flew to and fro, churning out mile after mile of narrow fabric.

In pre-war days the products of this Cookstown industry were in constant demand by the furnishing trade, particularly in England. The war put an end to all that. The entire output was reserved for the Ministry of Supply, and the machines of the factory were licensed only for narrow fabrics – any woven material having two selvages from one eighth of an inch to 18 inches in width.

Narrow fabrics assumed such importance that a special department was set up in the Ministry under

the title of the Narrow Fabrics Directorate, and the old trade terms – tapes, spindles, banding, webbing – became almost a thing of the past. It will be interesting to see if these old names come back to favour with the return of peace and the gradual reversion to civilian orders. Be that as it may, the term 'narrow fabrics' will be of lasting significance to the webbing industry, and in particular to this concern which played such a part in putting Ulster narrow fabrics on the war map.

When the firm was founded in 1922 by Mr S H Devlin it had only two looms and a single weaver. In 1926, however, it was registered as a limited liability company, and a new era set in which was marked by steady expansion. Gradually the plant was extended until there was a battery of 26 looms, and under the guidance of Mr Devlin's son, Samuel Devlin, the factory entered the war period in every way fitted to turn out webbing on a considerable scale.

It was linen that was used for the more important contracts, like parachute harness, Mae West jacket straps, and so on. As it poured off the machines in a web that seemed endless it survived test after test for strength and durability before being despatched to play its part in the protection and saving of human life.

Hemp, also spun in Ulster, was very largely used for these war contracts, together with cotton and jute. The cotton was dyed khaki and navy blue by Ulster firms and was utilised for practically everything except the 'danger' jobs, where only linen could be allowed, once when there was an S.O.S. from England, the firm had to despatch some of its

precious cotton ration to Bradford to help out production.

There were difficulties by the score and 'headaches' by the dozen, but through them all these weaving workers, from the boss down, kept smiling and completed their jobs – every order went out on time.

Today the firm prizes a letter from the Ministry of Supply, written at the end of the war in Europe, expressing deep appreciation of a remarkable effort and appealing for the same again until the Japs were defeated. With the crash of the Japanese Empire and the end of hostilities there came another letter conveying the thanks of the Ministry's Directorate on a 'great job' in helping to meet the heavy demands of

the Services for narrow fabrics during the war and wishing the firm prosperity in the future.

The Cookstown factory was only a very small cog in the war effort, but it was a vital cog, and a cog which never got out of gear no matter how weighty a burden it carried. Today it is still engaged on Ministry of Supply contracts, but as the largest manufacturer of narrow fabrics in Ireland it is also preparing for the commercial market.

When raw materials become available, it hopes again to take its place in supplying the needs of the furniture and kindred trades and in playing in peace a role in keeping with that which it played in war.



• STAFF OF THE ULSTER TAPE & WEBBING COMPANY PICTURED IN 1951
BACK ROW: John Mallon, Harry Brown, Charlie Mallon, Herbie Devlin.
MIDDLE ROW: Billy Greer, Tommy Kempton, Bobby Henry, Robbie Steele, Jim Henry.
FRONT ROW: Sarah Spratt, Sadie Steele.

Cookstown - Skittletown

Did you know that the game of skittles, as played here in Cookstown, is unique in this country, indeed in the world? Skittles are played in Cavan, certainly, but not with the unique Cookstown equipment.

Who better to bring to life the atmosphere of sharp competition, friendly rivalry and good fun than Billy Larmour, to whom we are indebted for the material in this article?

Born in Gortlowry at a time when TV and videos were unheard of, when games and pastimes were for taking part in and not merely for spectating, when ceilidh houses were full every night and when outside doors were never locked, Billy doesn't actually remember the day he was born, but he is proud to record that he was delivered by the late Doctor Jack Glasgow, and no doubt liberally sprinkled with cigarette ash as Nurse Donnelly performed her duties in attendance.

As far back as he can remember, Billy recalls hearing the clink and ching of Skittle Bars in the Sweep Road. Reminiscing over the 1940s and 1950s gives him great pleasure, for then Skittles had their hey-day before the pressures of modern life took over and the volume of traffic became a menace. The names of Johnny Owens, Harry Patterson, Billy Magee and John Gilmore are in Billy's mind with many more. Some have moved from the district, some sadly have passed on, but many are still going strong. John Cooney held the meetings in his house and organised everything. The most approachable of men, he had a sympathetic ear and a fund of good advice for everyone.

The magnificent Twigg Cup was presented by enthusiast the late Mr R S Twigg, and Mr E T Green of the Meal Firm presented a cup now valued at around £700.

In the good old days which all Skittle Men love to recall, there was even a Skittle Band, complete with Banner. This interdenominational Band of men and boys walked proudly behind their Banner, playing an assortment of musical instruments; mouth



• Mr. Stuart Twigg presents the Twigg Cup for the Competition. On the extreme left is John Cooney with Boobby Henry, Stanley Brown is on the right.

organs, accordians, flutes, even the odd talented performer on a comb or a Jew's Harp. Playing lively tunes (but not party ones) they headed for Jack Conway's of the Belfast House, led by the late Tom McGarvey, marking time with a brush and followed by many enthusiastic supporters of both sexes and all age groups. Billy Magee tells a good story about how a visiting citizen of the USA, seeing and hearing the Band, felt urged to reach for his wallet and make a generous contribution merely asking "Which Lodge are you, boys?".

The parade of the Town ended at Gortlowry, where Matches were played on the public road in those traffic free days. With increased traffic, however, a concrete base was made in Sweep Road – but gradually it was on pitches in waste ground behind the public houses that the Skittles games took place. With this withdrawal from the main scene began the decline of Skittle-mania.

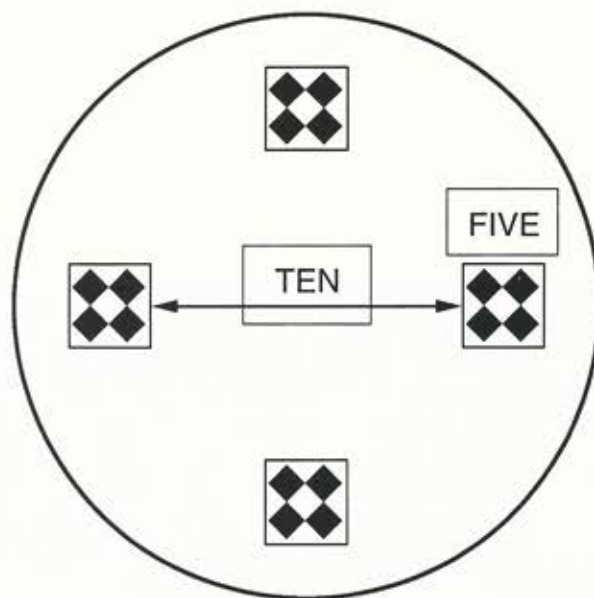
The Bacon Factory (where each department fielded a team), Fishers, Gortalowry, The Blue Doors; these are some of the teams involved, but there were more. Jim Lawn captained Chapel Hill when they beat Fishers in the final of the Twigg Cup one year. The trophy was handed over by Mr Twigg in Killymoon Band Hall amid cheers, and the ceremony was followed by a social and dance, for which Messrs Nelson and Beattie supplied the music and Mr Bobby Henry acted as MC.

The members of the Chapel Hill Team were:


Jim Lawn (Capain)	Jim Mullan
John Devlin	S McComb
S Robinson	S Brown
W Lawn	D Saunders

Beaten finalists Fishers Team members were

M Mullan (Captain)	Joe Smith
Catherwood	T Hodgett
McGahan	I Quinn
Spiers	H Patterson



Key

 these were four fives, each of wood 3 inches long, 1 1/2 inches in diameter and one ten, or middle peg.

On that occasion Mr Twigg expressed the hope that the good clean sportsmanship which existed among skittle fans would long continue.

The Blue Doors had a successful Skittle Team, due some would say to their Good Luck Charm. A certain horse shoe decorated with a piece of red and black material, had strong powers when it was placed at the back of the pitch before action commenced. One day came, still remembered, when the Horse-shoe could not be found. Some prankster had hidden it.

The late Bob Stewart stood in front of the Bar and refused to move till the shoe had been found and placed in position.

Now for some information

One foot from the first Five was an Iron Bar, at least 1/4 inch thick and four feet long. Twelve yards from the first Five was the Butt, behind which the thrower stood, armed with 3 throwers of iron or steel, round in section

and 8 inches long. Each club had its own pitch and set of skittles, which were to be used in 'Home Matches'. One or more Umpires, placed where they had a good view, informed each Team when a score of 70 had been reached, and Game was achieved with 100 points. Trophies in 1955 were listed as: Harp Lager Shield, Dr S J Glasgow Cup, Fisher Cup, Wrights Dairies Cup, Mundies Cup, The Twigg Cup.

A spectator describes the action of a player thus; "He placed his feet wide apart, grasping the iron firmly and began a pendulum motion, the arm passing backwards and forwards between the legs and releasing the iron bar on the forward swing." The bar, if skilfully thrown, travelled with deadly accuracy on to one of the skittles.

In 1955, the League Final was televised, thanks largely to the interest and enthusiasm of Ivan Bell, to whom Skittles in the Bacon Factory owes a lot. The film was a silent one, but the showing in the Killymoon Band Hall was noisy enough.



• Festival Skittles Match on Sweep Road, June 1995 from left to right back row: Johnnie Owens, Billy Larmour, Harry Patterson, Mrs. Harry Patterson, Mrs. Harry Eastwood, John Gilmore, Miss Brenda McCreesh, Billy Magee, Teddy Atkinson & Dickie Hamilton (Runners Up). Seated winners of the competition Tom Hodgett & Stanley Brown.

In June 1995, as part of a Cookstown Festival, a Skittles Match was played on the Sweep Road Pitch. When Billy Larmour, whose idea this revival was, went round the old stalwarts like Billy Magee and Johnny Owens, he says he was met each time with the

same reply; "You're talking about the Good Old Days."

The Match itself was a great success, and spectators came from far and wide, as far as Spain in fact. The evening was warm. Lemonade was on sale and some people made paper hats of their programmes because of the strong sun!

Johnny Owens brought some old skittles along. Billy Larmour got some new pegs and bars cut locally. The old rules still applied, and new equipment was carefully scrutinized. Seamus Maguire, Vice Chairman from the old days was present, and so were Harry Patterson and Billy Magee. Some of the young people present determine to revive Skittles in Coolnafranky.

In years gone by Skittles was a man's game, though women no doubt followed the Band and attended the Skittle Dances, in the Band Hall. Of the 40 odd who took part in 1995's competition, some were old, some

young men partnered their fathers, and there were at least four ladies: Violet Pitts and her sister Shirley Smith, Madge Donnelly and Anne Hampsey.

Old timers on that occasion showed that they had not lost their skill, because the winners were Tom Hodgett and Stanley Brown, old Fishers' men, who beat old Bacon Factory stalwarts Dickie Henderson and Teddy Atkinson. A good time was had by all.

Thanks to Billy Larmour for sharing his interest and enthusiasm. He could go on

to tell of Hoops and Scudgers, when small boys with number plates on their backs competed barefoot in Summer races.

Those were the days!!

David Hamilton Remembers

David and Olive Hamilton of Warwick, Queensland, Australia have written recently to the Editors. They had been introduced to 'Look Back' by sisters Margaret and Mary, Mrs Faulkner and Mrs McFall, formerly the Misses Kennedy of Drum, Cooksown. Incidentally, David finds that he and Margaret probably attended the same Sunday School at Orritor.

David Hamilton is a foundation member of Warwick Historical Society, which has celebrated its thirty third birthday. The town of Warwick seems to resemble Cookstown in having a Main Street 1¼ miles long and a population of just over ten thousand. There the similarity ends, however, for Warwick has a sub-tropical climate!

Has anyone, asks David, recorded the names and details of the headstones of the many graveyards in the Cookstown district? Any volunteers?

David Hamilton introduces himself to us by writing that he is the sixth of eight children born to David Herbert and Anna Maria (nee Faulkner) at Ganvaghan, Castlederg, County Tyrone, in Killen Creamery Manager's House on the 18th August, 1927. His parents left Killen and moved to Corvanaghan Lodge in January 1929, and David attended Corvanaghan Public Elementary School, 1931 - 1941. His father was manager of Doons Creamery from 1929 until its closure in 1943.

David's grandfather on his mother's side, John Faulkner, had been a teacher, first in Drumcraw and then in Glenarney National School.

He reminisces on events in his childhood, and these may stir memories amongst our readers.

In about 1934, at Scott's Air Display in Omagh, an aeroplane ride would have cost five shillings (25 pence today).

May 1935 saw the Silver Jubilee celebrations of King

George V and Queen Mary, when all the local school children paraded to the Fair Hill and were given tea and Paris Buns. The same parade location and the same menu of tea and Paris Buns two years later for the Coronation of George VI and Elizabeth.

Meantime, Corvanaghan School had been closed for repairs, and the temporary school setting was McFarland's Barn. Unfortunately, the manure heap close to the Barn meant a continuous bad smell and continuous swarms of flies.

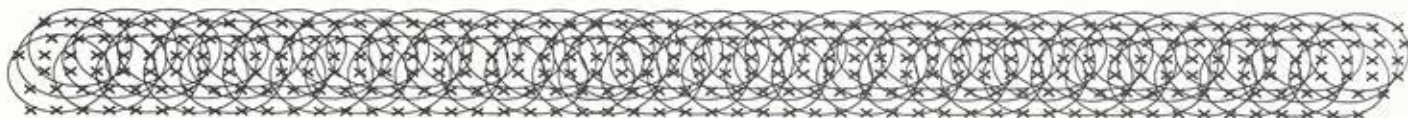
David remembers standing on a rock with his father, Lyttle Black and Bertie Hamilton on a hill above his home on Sunday, 3rd September, 1939, watching the lightning in one of the worst thunderstorms he ever witnessed. War was declared that morning at 11am.

On a later day, Harry Davidson, one of David's Corvanaghan schoolmates, ran up the playground shouting 'France has Fallen!' in June, 1940. Harry had heard the news on the wireless. 'Not many wirelesses in those days,' comments David.

Doons Fort was opened up at the time, when rumour of invasion was rife, and it was said about that time too that a young Austrian woman who came as Book-keeper to the store of John Knox Black and Sons was in reality a German Spy.

Elsewhere in this Journal, readers may find out about the Prisoner of War Camp in Monrush. Prisoners came, David remembers, to use the Lathe in Bradford's Garage, and he heard of a prisoner working in the store belonging to Bobby Allen across the road from the Garage who set the shed on fire. Little damage, however was done.

More serious was the fate of the pears belonging to a retired policeman whose garden bordered the High School grounds. Massive crop of beautifully ripe pears. Air Training Corps Meeting one night. Next morning - one sigle pear at the top of the tree! Now, who could possibly know anything about that?



The Prisoner of War Camp

Edward McCartney, retired School Principal, was born and reared at the North end of Cookstown. Childhood memories still vivid are recalled by him.

It was with considerable trepidation that some of my school friends and I approached the barbed-wire enclosure that surrounded the German prisoner-of-war camp that was situated at Monrush during the war years. After all, we constantly heard our elders discussing the progress of the war and knew something of the dreadful suffering and destruction that terrible conflict was causing. We found it difficult to believe that we actually going to see the enemy. Our visit was not only out of curiosity. There was another reason. We had heard that the prisoners made interesting little toys which they would exchange for cigarettes.

We went as close as we could to the enclosure. Just inside the enclosure was an elevated sentry box and the soldier inside it seemed totally unconcerned at our presence and viewed with amused interest the transactions that later took place. Then gradually some of the prisoners became aware of our presence and drifted out of the nissan huts which were their quarters. They were all dressed in long greyish great coats and wore shapeless peaked caps. The regime in the camp must not have been unduly harsh as the sentry allowed them to come quite close to the enclosure.

The enclosure was made of rolls of barbed wire about eight feet wide and tapering to about fifteen feet in height. This encounter with the Germans filled me with mixed emotions. I was certainly glad to be

separated from them by the barbed-wire enclosure and yet to a young boy, these men who were the enemy seemed perfectly normal. They called out greetings to us in a language we did not understand and all the time laughing and joking. They held up their wares for us to see. By a process of pointing and gesticulating the bargains were struck and it was finalised which of the prisoners each of us was to deal with.

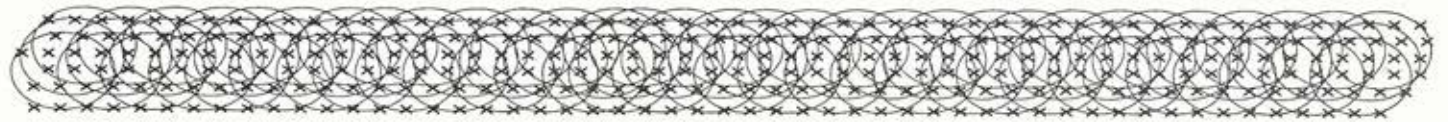
In due course, one of the prisoners flipped over the enclosure an object which landed at my feet. I, in turn, threw over a packet of five Woodbine cigarettes and the deal was completed. I inspected my prize. It was a small, beautifully carved wooden aeroplane – and the markings on it, obviously made with a hot poker.

I do not remember what became of that little aeroplane. I wish that I had carefully preserved it as it would have been an interesting memento. Some of the artefacts that the prisoners made undoubtedly required great skill and patience considering the limitations of the materials they had and the tools they used.

One toy was particularly ingenious. It was rather like a table tennis bat. Round the edge of it were four chickens. There were strings attached to the chickens and the strings in turn were attached to a central weight. When you held the bat and rotated it, the chickens' heads moved up and down in a pecking motion.

This is one recollection I have of the prisoner-of-war camp. There are several others, I vividly recall one

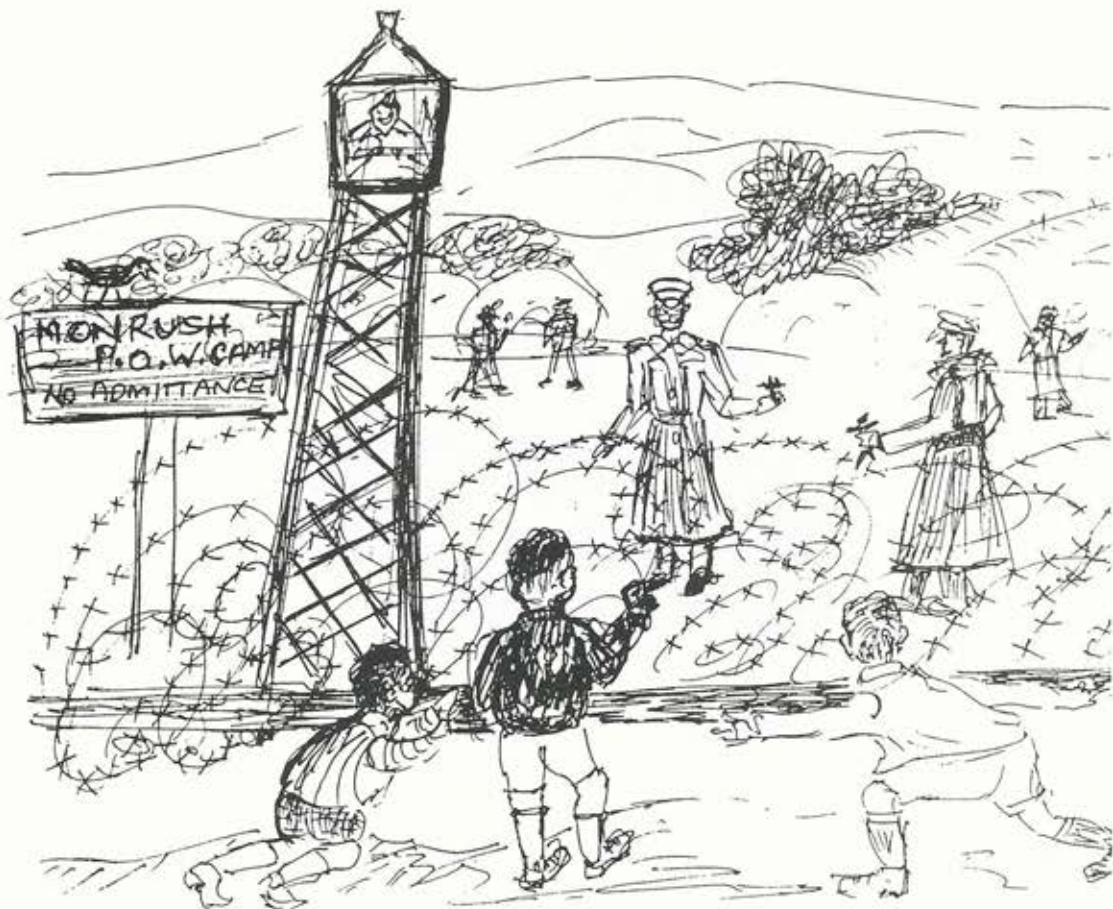




winter seeing prisoners, just like school-boys, engaged in a boisterous snowball fight. Some of their comrades had cleared away the snow from a cement path and were lining up in orderly fashion to take turns in flying down a slide, their great coats flapping in the wind. I remember that I was amazed to see these battle hardened veterans engaged in this innocent pursuit.

to witness that particular exploit. Who knows – I might have become another Tommy Lawton. Hardly likely, you might think. Still, one is entitled to dream

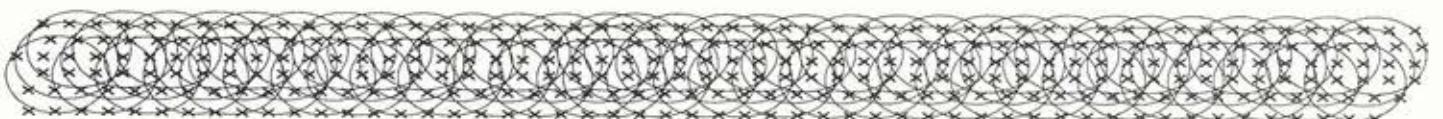
On another occasion, myself and a companion were on the Lissan Road side of the camp when we saw a body of men in the distance marching down the road towards us. As they approached we became

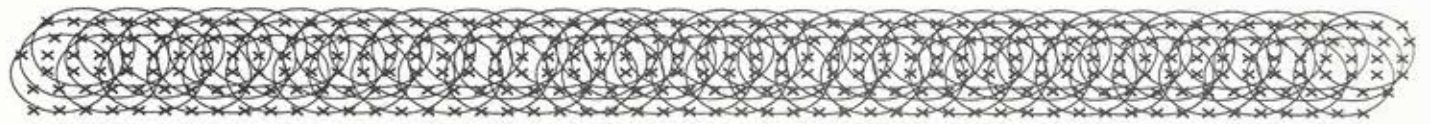


It seem to incongruous that men who had witnessed and indeed participated in the horrors of warfare should be so obviously enjoying this childish activity.

A welcome legacy of the prison camp was the football pitch, which was made for the prisoners. We had the use of it for a considerable time. I recall scoring a hat-trick in a match. Only I remember that! I think that it was a great pity that a football scout wasn't present

increasingly apprehensive as we realised that the men were German prisoners out on a march as a relief from the tedium of camp life. If I said that they were under armed escort, this would be an exaggeration. They were accompanied, rather than guarded, by two soldiers, both armed however. One soldier marched at the front and the other brought up the rear. The whole atmosphere was casual and relaxed. I can only assume that parties of prisoners were allowed out for





a march from time to time and agreement had been reached that they would not try to escape. When I think of it, I suppose that none of the prisoners would have entertained such an idea. They had probably accepted that for them, the war was over.

I recall my friend and I climbed up on the wayside bank and if the hedge had not been impenetrable at that spot, we would have made our way through to the other side. As it was, the prisoners marched past at a brisk pace, perfectly in step and singing a rousing marching song. I'm sure that they were completely unaware of the anxiety their proximity created in the two young boys who watched them pass.

Inside the camp, near the main camp gate, you could catch a tantalising glimpse of a large replica of a Rhine castle that the prisoners had built. When the camp closed and the prisoners were gone, I remember viewing it at closer range. It was a marvellous construction placed on a large mound of rocks and surrounded by a moat, complete with drawbridge. It was truly a work of art and had a lot of intricate details with turrets and crenellated walls.

It was a saddening thought that the men who had so carefully built that castle, would have, in the course of combat, engaged in acts of wholesale destruction. To me that castle was a potent symbol of man's ability to create or destroy.

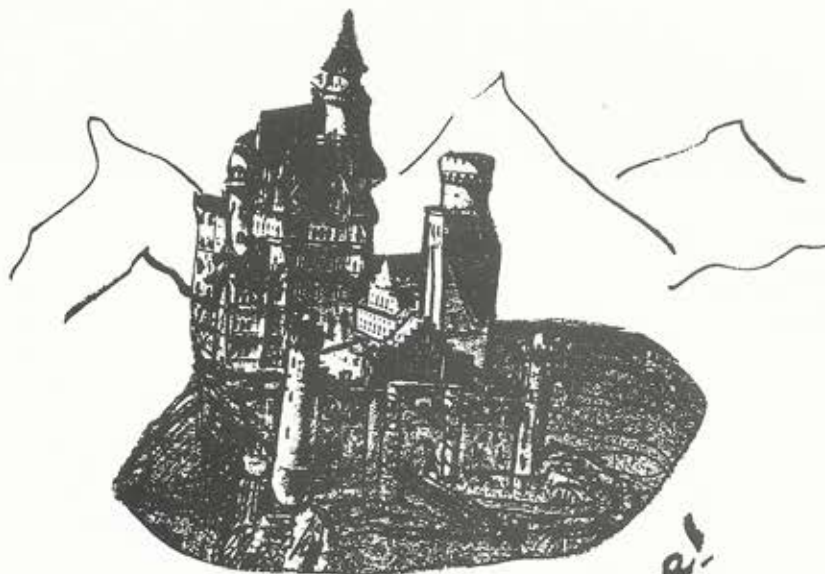
And what of the soldiers who manned the prison camp? One particular memory stays with me. Just opposite the camp on the Lissan Road side, was a field that, for a time, was used as a football pitch. I remember being at a match. I'm fairly certain that one of the sides was Cookstown Athletic, who wore a blue strip. A couple of off-duty soldiers had come over from the camp to watch the match. As they were standing there, one of them called out 'Jack!' To my surprise, a jackdaw glided down from a tree and landed on his shoulder. It preened its feathers for

a time and then flew back to the tree. Eventually, the soldiers strolled off to return to camp. When the soldier called out again, the jackdaw dutifully flew out of the tree to once again perch on the soldier's shoulder.

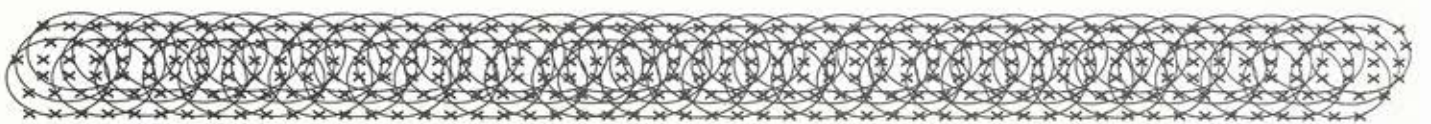
When I think of that particular soldier, a well-known wartime song comes to

mind. It is 'The White Cliffs of Dover', so poignantly sung by the forces sweetheart, Vera Lynn. In it there is a line which expresses the hope that there will be a brighter future ahead. The line is 'There'll be blue birds over the White Cliffs of Dover.'

I wonder what the future held for that soldier who had befriended a jackdaw. Did he see the bluebirds over the white cliffs of Dover?



Watch on the Rhine!



The Cookstown Bacon Factory

Ivan Bell, spent 47 years working in Cookstown Bacon Factory. He was involved in all aspects of the work, ranging from the factory floor to administration. He retired from the position of Sales Manager in 1985. Here he records the setting up of the factory in Cookstown.

In the year 1934 the Pigs' Marketing Board was formed. This Board was instituted so that orderly marketing of live pigs and possible dead carcasses, would ensure for farmers the best possible prices.

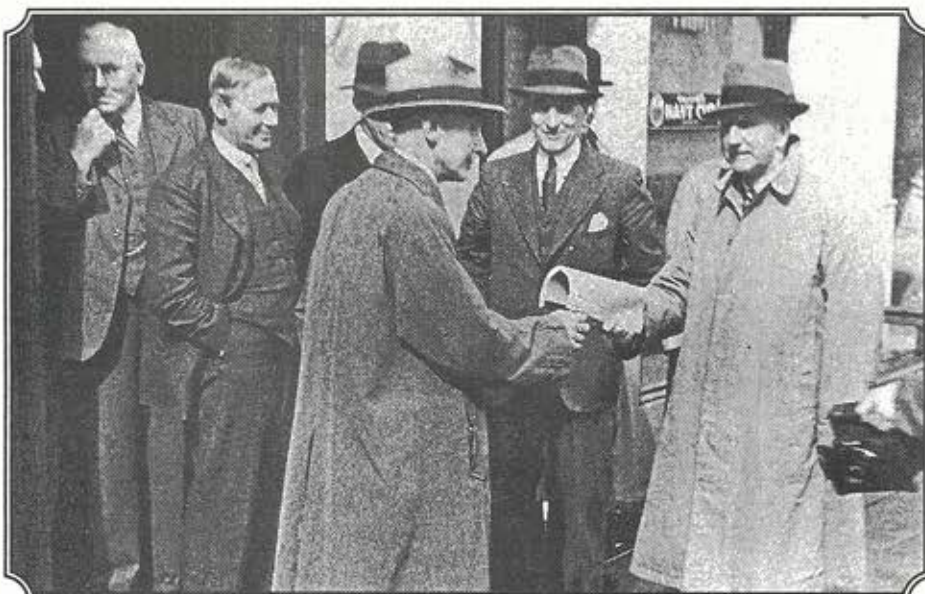
Prior to the formation of the Board, most pigs were shipped to England 'on the hoof', that is they were sent over by boat live to curers, mostly in the North of England. They were then slaughtered over there and eventually would be sold as pork or cured for bacon. This exercise, as far as the producer of pigs was concerned, was not a successful venture. Firstly, the pigs were loaded into Railway Wagons at various centres throughout Northern Ireland and transported to Belfast Docks. From there,

they were unloaded and put on the Liverpool Ferry, again unloaded, and then transported to the various Killing Centres. This was a costly exercise, and more importantly, the animals were abused during the frequent loading and unloading, thus the price paid to the producer was reduced, because of the bruising and frequent death of animals during transit.

This position continued for several years during which the board decided to investigate the possibility of building a factory somewhere in Northern Ireland to kill and process pigs, and thus ensure that a better future for the industry was established. A Member of Parliament at the time was Mr Rowley Elliott, who was also a member of the Pig

Marketing Board and who lived just outside the village of Coagh. Mr Elliott was quite keen to have this proposed new factory in his constituency and asked the Board to consider the Cookstown area in conjunction with other interested areas. This the Board did and a site was earmarked as a possibility.

Hearing of the interest expressed in the Cookstown site, Mr Joseph Allen, a well known auctioneer and estate agent and one who had the interest of the area at heart, immediately called a meeting of the traders in the town and told them of the benefits which would flow from a new factory on a green field site in a depressed area. The end result of the meeting was that the traders decided to purchase the proposed site and present it to the Board. The Board was delighted with this generous offer and after several meetings with interested parties, they agreed to site their new Wiltshire Bacon Curing Factory on the outskirts of the town. This announcement was made on Monday 6 September 1937. The site was purchased from Mr James Coulter of Tyressan. The local Lawn Tennis Club had its courts on this property, but sadly the erection of the factory brought about the demise of the Lawn Tennis Club. The G.N.R. railway line passed close to the factory and a special siding was constructed to facilitate the delivery and despatch of



1937: Joseph Allen handing over Title Deeds of site for Factory

goods.

The new factory was officially opened on 10 September the following year. The cost of building and equipping was approximately £50,000. While the building operations were proceeding, the manager designate of the new factory intimated in the local press that interviews would take place for employees, and asked for applications – **the response was overwhelming.**

It was the intention of the management that they would recruit twenty men to train in the skills of butchery and bacon curing at two factories in Yorkshire, namely Malton & Sharburn, both having years of experience in this field. After weeks of selection, twenty 'AMBASSADORS' left Cookstown Railway Station for Yorkshire. This was the month of November 1937. During their training period the participants were allowed home for a weekend every three months. These 'GREEN' recruits soon developed skills which they hoped to pass on to other workers at Cookstown when the new factory opened.

The trainees who went to England were Sammy Allen, Bob Carson, Ned Carson, Jack Carson, Tommy Donaghy, Archie Davidson, Eddie Dunn, Tommie Faulkner, Tom Moore, Tom Hudson, Tommy Kennedy, Joe Morrow, Lewis Morrow, Mitchell Marks, Billy McConville, Norman Nelson, Gerald Rooney, Hugh Scullion, John Taylor and James Teague.

The workers had to get used to wearing clogs. This novel form of footwear was imported from DENMARK.

Meanwhile, back at Cookstown, the factory was being built by contractors M/S Courtney & Co.



Belfast, working around the clock. This process had not occurred in the area before, and interested people came from near and far to see the floodlit building operations in progress.

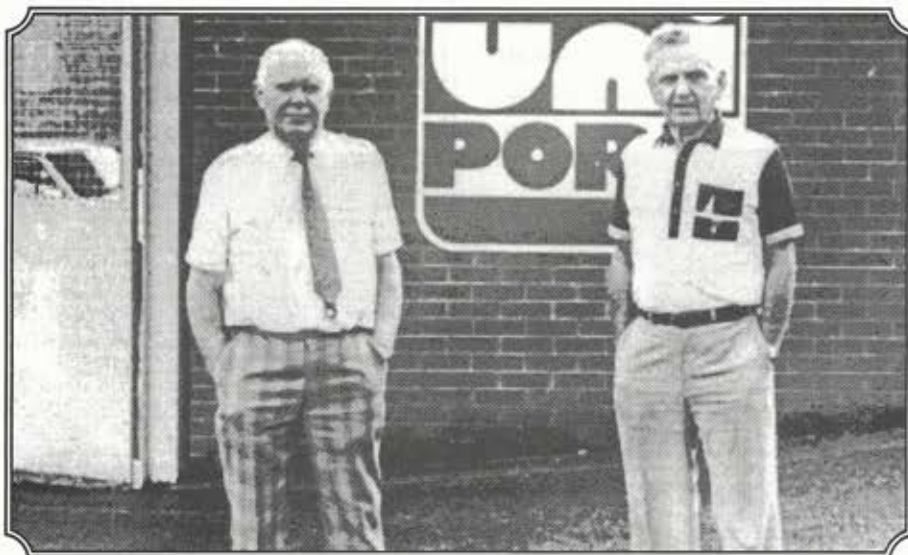
No bulldozers were there but lots of spades and shovels were used. In addition, the most modern Danish Machinery of the time was installed as the buildings became available. Danish Engineers were there to supervise. Refrigeration Engineers came from England – a motley crew from all parts of the world took up residence in the hotels and boarding houses of the town. The girls from the area had a great time!

Moving near to completion, the Yorkshire trainees returned to oversee the final preparations for the first pigs to be killed in the New Plant. By this time a further twenty persons had been engaged to be trained by the Returned

Exiles. A further eight office workers were learning the office procedures. When the factory commenced production on 3 September 1938, altogether 46 persons were on the Pay Roll. On that date the first pigs killed were 100 from the farm of Mr Rowley Elliott M.P. The 'Mid Ulster Mail' of that week announced that the factory was 'The Most Modern Pig Processing Plant in the United Kingdom', and incorporated all the latest equipment available to Processors for the production of Wiltshire Bacon.

The original title of the company was 'The Northern Ireland Farmers Bacon Co. Ltd' and it had the brand name 'COOKSTOWN'.

Cookstown, like many provincial towns in the 1930s, was then facing deep industrial recession, since its economy depended a lot



• Pictured outside Cookstown Bacon Factory are Ivan Bell (left) and Tommy Kennedy. Tommy Kennedy has since died.

on the agricultural industry. The linen mills in the vicinity were in decline due to the introduction of man made fibres. It was against this background that in 1937, this new industry was about to break upon the scene. The prospects of steady employment in the area caused great euphoria and when applications were invited for jobs in a Bacon processing factory hundreds of men queued for long periods to be interviewed. The interviews were held adjacent to Molesworth Presbyterian Church in a room recently converted from stables used for accommodating worshippers' horses during Church services. The newly appointed Factory manager, Mr Michael Forsyth conducted the interviews. Mr Forsyth had experience of working in Bacon Factories in Yorkshire. The sight of long queues of prospective workers outside the offices where the interviews took place was the talk of the district. Among those in the queue was a lad of seventeen - Tommy Kennedy. Later he was delighted to learn that he was one of the twenty men selected to go to Yorkshire to train in the butchery skills necessary for the new factory. Tommy was the youngest member of the party to leave Cookstown in the Autumn of 1937 bound for Yorkshire, accompanied by Mr Forsyth. It was with a degree of excitement and not a little trepidation that the Mid Ulster novices, after depositing their battered suitcases, set sail from Belfast on the Saturday evening bound for Liverpool. For most of the party this was their first experience of a cross channel boat and travelling to 'foreign soil'.

When the boat docked, all went to collect their meagre belongings but despite frantic searching of the boat Tommy Kennedy's suitcase could not be located. What a start

for a seventeen year old on his first trip! Thankfully Factory Manager Forsyth promised that the items lost would be replaced on reporting for work on Monday morning. Tommy was introduced to the Office Manageress who enquired what the suitcase contained. She acquired replacements and when Tommy saw the tailored suit, shirts and Irish Linen handkerchiefs, the quality and style of which he had never seen before let alone possessed, he could not believe his good fortune. In fact he turned out to be the best dressed trainee in England.

Tommy and two fellow trainees



were to spend their time in 'digs' in Parliament Street, Malton. The highlight of their first day in England was the Sunday lunch, no less than roast beef and of course Yorkshire pudding, which was quite a delicacy for the 'country boys'. To their surprise the landlady asked would they like gravy or treacle with their lunch. One of the diners, to Tommy's surprise, asked for treacle- it soon emerged that his adventurous choice was the wrong one because immediately after lunch he insisted on taking a stroll into the countryside, disappeared into a ditch and got rid of his dinner. His misfortune was the subject of much 'leg pulling' during the rest of his stay in England.

It was with a mixture of apprehension and excitement that the trainees gathered at Malton and Sherbourne Bacon factories on Monday morning to be kitted out with Danish clogs, butcher's aprons, smocks, leggings, etc. They first of all observed the skilled butchers employed by R.H. Thompson who owned both factories. Then after acquiring the various butchery techniques they participated in the various production lines. One abiding memory is the friendliness and generous hospitality shown to the County Tyrone men. Frequently they were entertained in the homes of the factory workers and in fact as the only unmarried trainee Tommy was the only ambassador to spend Christmas in England. It proved to be a most enjoyable time. He was invited to join the locals go 'Fist footing' which involved visiting many of the 'Big Houses' occupied by the gentry in the area, where they were given food, drink and even money. Horse racing was very popular in this part of Yorkshire and many of the jockeys were employed in the Bacon factories.

Training progressed rapidly and in the spring of 1938 they returned to Cookstown to assist with the final fitting out phase of the new factory. Construction took place around the clock, floodlighting being used for the first time in the Mid Ulster area. Tommy was assigned to assist the engineering and refrigeration company J & E Hall. Soon the new plant was ready to receive a trial batch of pigs supplied by Mr Rowley Elliott from Coagh. On the evening before the most modern Danish equipment was to be tested the pigs duly arrived but disaster struck when the pigs escaped from their trailer during transfer to the factory's holding pens. Tommy

was among those who made sterling efforts to round up the escapees and minimise embarrassment to the factory's manager. Cookstown Bacon factory opened in September 1938 and as Wiltshire cured sides left the factory by rail many locals were sceptical that farmers could maintain supplies of pigs as the factory was killing so many so quickly.

War was declared in September 1939 and in 1940 Tommy Kennedy left Cookstown to join the Royal Navy, seeing service in South Africa, Singapore, Hong Kong, The Faroe Islands and Malta. Of the countries visited, Tommy was most impressed by Malta. In 1947 Tommy returned to Cookstown and put his Naval experience to good use in the Engine room of the Bacon Factory which was just recovering from the scarcity of pigs due to the lack of imported feedstuffs during the war. Work in the Engine room proved interesting and challenging, including maintenance and repair of all factory plant. Frequently spare parts had to be manufactured on site to keep vital machinery running.

It is said that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing and this proved to be the case when Tommy recalls the story of one worker who had watched electricians install equipment and then offered to wire up a new light in the scullery in the lodgings where he and several other factory workers stay in Millburn Street, Cookstown. The helpful lodger spent several evenings sorting out the cables and when the big moment arrived and the light switch flicked on, there was a tremendous explosion which blew the meter board off the wall, plunging the house into darkness and sent the 'rookie electrician' reeling and covered in grime. Naturally this incident was the



Pictured in 1938 pumping sides of bacon are Ossie Uttley (foreman), Gerry Rooney, Mitchell Marks and Tommy Faulkner.

subject of much banter at the factory for weeks.

In the early days the work was tough. Nevertheless there was a tremendous camaraderie among the workers, Catholics and Protestants working side by side in harmony – singing songs from each tradition while they went about their work. Excursions by train were popular and the highlight of the social year was the 'Factory Dance' held in the Court House, spot prizes being provided by many of the factory suppliers. The Jimmy Millsop showband provided the music. The game of skittles was a favourite pastime with keen rivalry between the various departments in the factory. Tommy was an enthusiastic member of the Engine room team. A very good football team also participated in a local league.

For many a year the population of Cookstown and surrounding district set their time pieces on the sounding of a steam horn at Gunning's factory located at Milburn, Cookstown. On the closure of this linen producing mill the manager of the Bacon Factory Mr Tony Raw with the co-operation of Mrs A M Leeper arranged to have the horn relocated at the Bacon Factory. Tommy Kennedy was the man

who removed and installed this popular feature of Cookstown life. The horn sounded at 7.30am, 12.00noon and 1.00pm. farmers working in the fields over a wide area depended on the factory horn.

Tommy progressed in the engine room and in 1968 was appointed Factory engineer and continued in this role until his retirement in 1985. When Tommy reflected on a life spent in the factory he remembered the friends he made at work and also the many pranks that were played on unsuspecting colleagues. There were many visitors to Northern Ireland's leading bacon and pork products factory, ranging from Rinty Monaghan world champion boxer who often sang 'When Irish Eye are Smiling' for the factory workers, to the then Prime Minister for Northern Ireland, Captain Terence O'Neill, not forgetting George Best who did the famous Cookstown sizzle Advertisement.

Tommy had nothing but fond memories as he looked back on over four decades spent as part of a team of hard working men who laid the foundation for a successful Bacon Processing Factory which has brought the 'COOKSTOWN' name to many parts of the world.

Johnny Murphy of the 'Amethyst'



A Cookstown man who had been a national hero over fifty years ago attended a Naval Reunion on Sunday 25 April 1999 in England at St Nicholas' Church, HMS Drake.

There, Johnny Murphy of Orritor Crescent met some of the crew of H.M.S. Amethyst, who had won the hearts of the nation when the ship ran the gauntlet of heavy Artillery Fire from Communist Forces on the Yangtse River during the Chinese Revolution of 1949.

Johnny Murphy, now retired Post Office Engineer, was one of eight Ulster men on board the Amethyst. Over the years, these lads had lost touch with each other, but now have renewed their friendship.

H.M.S. Amethyst became national news when for three months the ship lay marooned under fire. Orders had been received to sail to Nanking at the outbreak of fighting, to carry supplies to the British Embassy and also to be on hand in case of evacuation.

But more than a hundred miles from safety, and in a narrow stretch of the Yangtse River, Communist heavy guns opened fire, killing eighteen officers and crewmen. This number included the Captain. Another forty were wounded. The ship then ran aground on a small mid-river island.

Though the order was given to abandon ship, fifty men including Johnny (then a nineteen year old Able Seaman) stayed behind. 'It was not an act of bravery', he says. They could have slipped overboard and run the risk of being killed by either the Communist or Nationalist forces, or they could have stayed behind and taken a chance. They chose the latter.

An appeal was made to the Chinese for fuel, not to run the boat but to keep the ventilators working and so prevent the risk of dysentery on board. When the fuel arrived, it was slipped into the tanks and a 'do or die' decision was made to slip anchor in the August darkness. For the hundred and fifty mile run to safety, the Amethyst was in continuous danger, but managed to get through. The crew's

bravery played a part. Poor marksmanship by the enemy was another, but the ship took no chances, sailing without lights and only at night.

A film 'The Yangtse Incident' starring John Gregson and Ronald Coleman was based on this affair. In it Richard Todd, who had spent childhood days in Moneymore, played John Simon Kerans, the new skipper (actually from Limerick) who was flown in, in a Sunderland Flying Boat, as a replacement for the dead Captain.

Adventures over, each man on board became famous. Our John received a tremendous welcome when he arrived home in Cookstown on the evening train, Thursday November 3rd, 1949. Fog signals placed on the line were detonated as the train entered the station. Hundreds of people went wild with excitement as John stepped down, to be officially welcomed by William Gough, Chairman of Cookstown Urban Council. John was carried shoulder high up the platform and out on to Molesworth Street, where a car decorated with bunting was waiting to take him and his family home. Cookstown Silver Band marched in front of the car. Along the route, people cheered and sang 'For he's a Jolly Good Fellow'.

So you were, John, and a brave one too! Thanks for sharing your story.



Johnny with his pals.

Backs to the Wall

By Mrs WINIFRED RICHARDSON

Do you remember the old grey stone workhouse with its diamond pane windows which faced the Burn Road? The short avenue leading up to it is still there, but new Council Offices have replaced the old grey building. This Workhouse afforded one night's shelter to the poor and homeless, who were usually tramps. On entering the large stone-flagged hall, each newcomer was hustled off for an obligatory bath in the downstairs reception room, before climbing the spiral staircase the tramps' sleeping quarters. Here, the uneven walls were whitewashed, the floor was boarded, and there was a coal stove. The windows opened on hinges at the top. When the building was no longer used as a Workhouse, it became the Offices of the District Council, with a Relieving Officer to deal with the needs of the poor.

On that wet and thundery Sunday morning, 3 September 1939, Mr Neville Chamberlain announced in an 11 o'clock news bulletin on the wireless that we

were at war with Germany. Cookstown's food Control Office was opened on 2 October 1939, in the former dormitory up the spiral staircase, and a committee and officers were appointed to deal with food rationing. Two sections were operated; one for trade and one for consumers. Two months later rationing began.

Ration books were issued to consumers twice a year. Each householder had to complete a form giving the address, name and date of birth of each member of the household. Adults received buff-coloured books. Blue books were for children of school age, while those under five had green books with entitlement to orange juice and cod liver oil.

The first two issues were posted, but after that, new books had to be collected at the Food Office or at temporary offices in schools or Church halls throughout the district. This district included Stewartstown, Pomeroy, Tullyhogue, Sandholes and



With Mrs. John Glasgow, Chairman of the Food Control Committee are Tom Scott, Tom Newell, Phyllis Turkington, Dolly Hogg, Rowley Hutchinson, Rita Bradford, Una Nelson and Viola Kee.

Ardboe. Sugar was rationed first, followed by butter, tea, meat and cheese. Dried egg was reconstituted with water for use in cakes etc., and scrambled egg made in this way was sometimes dubbed 'Yellow Peril!' Numerous recipes were tried, using grated carrot, beetroot and parsnips as sweetening agents. Potato bread was popular. People were conscious of the dangers faced by our Merchant Navy convoys importing essential oil, food and other products, so petrol was rationed and there was an increase in walking and cycling. Gardens were dug to produce fruit and vegetables, and still more land was ploughed for cereals and other crops. The hedges were searched for edible berries, rose-hips and sloes.

The evacuation which followed the bombing of Belfast in 1941 brought extra work for the Food Office. City dwellers arrived, mostly by train, and immediately went to the Food Office for emergency Food Coupons. Itinerants, too, needed supplies, and often it was not easy for them to travel from their roadside camp to a distribution centre. One Food Office Clerk voluntarily delivered the orange juice and cod liver oil which were due to the caravan children.

When the family were moving on, the father called at the clerk's home and left a tin can which he had made as a token of thanks to the 'Food Lady'.

Some other people were selfishly seeking more than their share. One man complained that he had been refused extra sugar for jam making. When it was pointed out to him that he had neither garden nor orchard he admitted,

"Well I had to do something. I just 'let on' that I had, for what use is half-a-pound of sugar to me?"

By contrast, some paupers could not afford to buy all their rations. They queued in the reception hall below the Food Officer, to collect the meagre amount of 'Outdoor Relief' money which each was allowed. They were ragged, mostly old: unfortunate people who lived in hardship.

As there was no water upstairs, a Food Office Clerk had to come down to fill a kettle. On one occasions, a 'Wag' called out, "Och, Missus dear, ye shouldn'y be making tay for us, but thank you very much!"

This was greeted with much shaking and wheezing with laughter. Worldly goods were in short supply, but sense of humour was not. This was the spirit which helped to win the war.

When rationing ended, scientists noted that the population was healthier and fitter than before, and this was attributed to the more sensible balanced diet and increased exercise occasioned by the War,

which people referred to as "The Duration".

An added bonus was cheerfulness, sharing, a sense of 'belonging' and a determination to survive. Throughout the war years of 1939-1945, many people echoed the words of Robert Burns:

"We hae meat and we can eat, And so the Lord be thankit"

The writer gratefully acknowledges the help given by the "Tullyhogue Correspondent".

ECONOMICAL WARTIME CHRISTMAS PUDDING

from the Essex Cookery Book, 1944
Price fourpence.

Christmas Pudding (II)—Economical.

1 cup flour.	½ cup dried fruit.
½ cup suet or margarine.	1 teasp. baking powder.
1 cup breadcrumbs.	1 teasp. mixed spices.
1 cup grated raw carrot.	1 dried egg.
1 cup grated raw potato.	Milk or water to mix.
½ cup sugar.	

Mix dry ingredients. Add carrot, potato and fruit. Add enough milk or water to make a soft consistency. Turn into greased basin. Cover, and steam 4 to 6 hours.



COOKSTOWN Motor Cycle Race

In 1999, Cookstown Hundred abandoned its temporary Sherrygroom Course and returned to the Orritor Circuit where it had first been run in 1922. Our older readers no doubt remember the Race Day very well, with little boys selling Race Programmes on the Main Street the night before, and the milkmen and bread delivery personnel on the road from first light. No school opened on that day. Shops closed for the Race period. The sun shone. Dogs barked, and the smell of warm tar and oil combined with the roar of the machines down the Orritor Straight and along the Main Street before heading again for the country up the Drum Road will be remembered by many spectators as well as by participants.

Students of Form will be interested to read that in the first race of 1922, there were six riders only on the starting grid. Their names are recorded here, with details of their machines.

Thomas McGucken	Cookstown	Douglas 125
Thomas Hamilton	Cookstown	Norton 350
Harry McIver	Moneymore	New Imperial 225
Glenny Weir	Cookstown	Triumph 400
James Fearon	Cookstown	Norton 350
Thomas Mallon	Belfast	Sunbeam 350

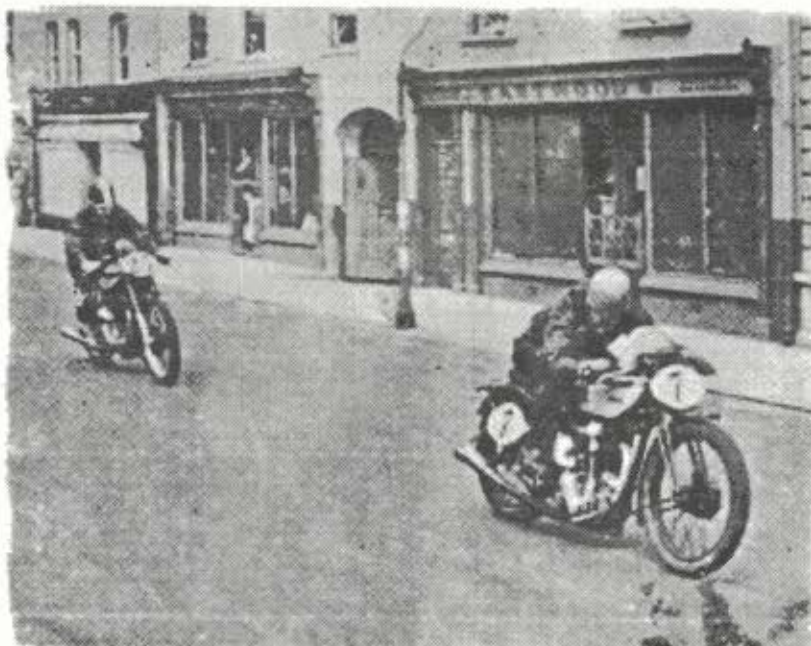
Incidentally, you will read more about local Dentist Harry McIver elsewhere in the Journal.

The six riders had to cover five laps of the Circuit, which was a distance of about thirty miles. The race resolved into a tussle between Jimmy Fearon (handicap 2 minutes) and scratch man from the big city of Belfast, Mallon. The Cookstown rider almost parted company with his machine at one of the corners and broke the rear mudguard. Even worse was to follow, for he lost his goggles, a big handicap in those days as the roads were little better than dirt tracks, from which the machines threw up clouds of dust and grit. The result was a win for Mallon in 38 minutes 30 seconds, followed by Fearon in 40 minutes 45 seconds. Hamilton took third place. McGucken and Weir had to retire. The winner's average speed was 48 miles per hour.

In the years that followed 1922, interest grew in motoring and motor cycling and competitors came from farther afield.

By 1950, the Race, re-organised after the War, had both open and local competitions and a number of Lap Prizes, one of which was presented, with One Guinea, by H McIver, Esq., MDS of Cookstown to the local competitor who, not having won a prize in a previous Cookstown Hundred race, put up the best performance.

J J Downey, Esq., of Cookstown presented a prize in 1950 of Five Guineas to the competitor who set a new lap record.



The cups in the year 1950 were these:

OPEN

First Prize and Thomas Greer Memorial Cup with £30 Special Prize £10 and T J Eastwood Perpetual Cup for Competitor completing race in fastest time

Local Competition (Competitors residing within a twelve mile radius (as the crow flies)). First Prize £15 and Sloane Perpetual Cup

LAP PRIZES

Winner in 500cc Class Cookstown Motor and Cycle Traders' Perpetual Challenge Cup and £1-1.0 presented by W D Duff Esq., of Coagh

Winner in 350cc Class – Lobitos Perpetual Challenge Cup and £1-1.0 presented by L A Moore, Esq. of Magherafelt

Winner in 250cc Class – Crooks and Marshall Perpetual Challenge Cup presented by F Cheevers, Esq. of Cookstown

Fastest Lap in 500cc Class – One guinea, presented by J Carnegie, Esq. of Cookstown

Fastest Lap in 350cc Class – One guinea, presented by J Wilson Esq., of Magherafelt

Fastest Lap in 250cc Class – One guinea, presented by G McGowan Esq., of Cookstown

A prize of £2.10s was presented by MOC Garages Ltd, Cookstown, to the competitor (local member) with the fastest lap. (MOC stood for Magherafelt, Omagh and Cookstown). Finishers' Plaques were presented to the first ten riders home, other than those who received cup replicas.

The same 1950 Race Programme contained a tribute to Thomas Greer, JP, the first President of the Cookstown Club, who had never missed a race in all its 26 years.

The Race Programme, besides carrying vital information about the riders, their machines, times, prizes and warnings from the organisers listed the Race Officials and gave glimpses too of other local activities, through its advertisements.

Below is one from the 1952 Programme

IN MEMORIAM



THE LATE MR. THOMAS GREER, J.P.

THIS afternoon, as the crowds gather, as officials go about their appointed tasks, and the competitors prepare for the start of the race which raises the curtain on the road-racing season in Ireland, one familiar figure that of the late President of the Cookstown Club, Mr. Thomas Greer, J.P., will be absent—for the first time since the race was inaugurated 26 years ago.

The thoughts of many motor-cyclists, past and present, and particularly those who were for so long associated with him in the activities of the Club, go back to that other fateful afternoon in July of last year, when the veteran motor cyclist, the doyen of the sport in this country, rode

MONEYMORE
Eighth Annual Show
THURSDAY, 5th JUNE, 1952

OVER 200 CLASSES

— FOR —
Horses, Cattle, Sheep, Pigs,
Poultry and Home Industries
Horse and Pony Jumping
SPECIAL CHILDREN'S SECTION
featuring
Handwriting Championship of
Ulster

£600 IN PRIZES
20 CUPS and NUMEROUS SPECIAL AWARDS

SCHEDULES FROM
WALTER W. BOLE,
SMITH STREET, MONEYMORE.

J.B.K (Mr J B Killips) wrote articles in the programme from time to time. Some of these sought to interest the spectators, and to provoke them to think about the making of the Programme and how necessary the revenue from the Programmes was in keeping the Race on the road. For a Programme price of 1/6 (= 7 1/2p in today's money) JBK felt it was necessary that the Programme should have at least 40 pages, so as to seem value for money! The overall figure of £600 is given as total expenditure on the Race in 1952. Programme sales brought in about £250.

Spectators along the Race Course provided the atmosphere of excitement and anticipation. The riders provided the thrills and spills and the Race Committee did all the hard work. So the Programme said!

Official Rules and Regulations had to be scrutinised and observed. The date had to be fixed. The Roads Committee had to vet the roads and see they were in perfect condition. That meant contacting the County Council of the Day, the Urban Council and the RUC. There were Entry Forms to be distributed and prizes organised. In 1952, prize money amounted to £190. The year 1953 saw the addition of another cup presented by Brigadier J A Sinton, VC of Slight Freedan Lodge. While insurance cover for the Race before the War had been £6-10s, by 1953 it had become £26. Marshall's Loud Speaker Commentary System, the securing of the Market Yard for a Paddock, the finding of a bus to act as Timekeeper's Box; all these had to be looked into, and it was important to observe the ruling that the number of entries should not exceed 60. The entry list when completed was sent to Belfast in order that the handicaps could be worked out.

Came the day. At last the starter's flag falls, off go the limit men, and the Race is on! In the year 1953, Yvonne McCord presented the prizes at the Race Dance in the newly opened Town Hall.

Did you ever think of the Official Timekeeper's duties on an occasion such as this? He is seated in his bus,

parked by the starting and finishing line on the Main Street. But he is much too busy to look around him. Mr Robert H Wright has been "doing time" in every race since 1922. Over these years, he has acquired some expertise, but by 1955 his job is no longer one-man-with-a stop-watch. The road surfaces are now smoother, the machines more powerful, speeds greater and expert time-keeping necessary.

"Spotters" note the numbers of the riders as they complete each lap. The spotters' slips of paper are passed in. With his expensive synchronised chronometer, the timekeeper calls out the exact time of each machine, and time sheets are filled up. Times for each lap are calculated, and the leaders' speeds can be worked out for the benefit of the loudspeaker commentator and the Press. And when the race is over, a quiet corner is necessary for the Timekeeper and his assistants in order that handicaps, average speeds, placings, checking and re-checking, allocation of awards and preparation of Prizewinners' Lists can be completed. Only then can the Timekeeper and his voluntary officials avail themselves of the Club's hospitality.

Over the years the Programme records that a number of faithful friends and supporters of the Club 'crossed the Last Finishing Line.' Frank Cheevers had been an enthusiastic motor cyclist himself, having ridden a 596 Scott in the 1932 race. George Hanna, too, had ridden in the Race before the War, and had served in various official capacities. George Magowan, a Vice President of the Club, was for some years responsible for the laying of Street markings for the event. Obituaries to these three men were printed in 1955, and ten years later in 1965 the death of Mr S S Sloane in November, 1964 is recorded, with a comment about his cheery presence and helping hand at Race time. William Davison Duff died in 1971. His was a familiar figure to riders and spectators on Race day, for he carried out the duties of Clerk of the Course and when he wasn't checking marshalling arrangements around the Course he was found at the starting grid welcoming riders and officials. He had held various offices, including those of Chairman, President and Patron.

Even the Cartoonist took a hand out of the Cookstown Hundred, as this P&J Cosgrove Travel Agency has a laugh at the motorcyclist's expense.



But for Comfortable Air and Sea Travel Consult P. & J. Cosgrove,
Phone—2129
TRAVEL AGENTS, COOKSTOWN

These photographs of the Snowdrifters and Grafton Showbands come from Race Programmes in the 1960's.



• The Snowdrifters 1967



• The Grafton Showband 1966

To indicate the complicated character of the arrangements, we reprint a 'Thank You' notice from 1973, signed by two enthusiasts of the Race, both of whom have since died.

A WORD TO SPECTATORS 1973

The "Cookstown 100" is officially recognised as a competition of some considerable importance in the List of Fixtures approved by the Motor Cycle Union of Ireland (Ulster Centre), and the general public, by their willing and enthusiastic co-operation with the Promoters, have shown that it is an event to which they look forward.

To those of you who are privileged to watch the Race, and to follow the progress of the Competitors in their battle of skill and speed, do not forget that there is an element of danger which you, in your enthusiasm, may not appreciate.

In order to provide for your safety it has been necessary to make certain zones prohibited areas. All round the Course, and particularly at those points where large numbers of spectators are likely to concentrate, you will find Police and Road Marshals who **MUST KEEP THE COURSE CLEAR.**

We ask you to co-operate with them and to do what you can to ensure that the good reputation of our organization will not be impaired, so that we may continue this annual event.

DO NOT, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, EITHER CROSS OR ATTEMPT TO CROSS OR ENCROACH ON THE ROAD AT ANY POINT ON THE COURSE OR IN ANY PROHIBITED AREA.

DO NOT ALLOW DOGS OR OTHER ANIMALS NEAR THE COURSE.

Do not throw down any loose paper or other material which may cause a Competitor to swerve.

Please remember that after the Official Car passes bearing the words "ROAD CLOSED," the road is officially and lawfully Closed to the public until after the conclusion of the Race when the Official Car bearing the words "ROAD OPEN" will pass you.

You may have the inclination to get away after the winner passes; but don't forget that **IF YOU ENCROACH ON THE ROAD YOU MAY ENDANGER YOUR OWN SAFETY AND THAT OF THE REMAINING COMPETITORS.**

THANK YOU.

W. J. HAGAN
(Clerk of the Course)

THANK YOU 1973

The Cookstown and District Motor Cycle Club take this opportunity to convey sincere and grateful thanks to:—

- All Entrants in the Race for their support.
- The Ministry of Commerce, N.I., and Tyrone County Council for the manner in which they facilitated the Club in making arrangements for the Race.
- Mr. McCleary, B.A., M.I.C.E.; Mr. D. Shields, B.Sc., M.I.C.E., for their co-operation and work in preparing the Course.
- The Residents in the vicinity of the Course for their interest in the event and their cheery forbearance of any inconvenience the closing of the roads may have caused.
- The Northern Ireland Hospitals Authority.
- Members of St. John Ambulance Brigade for their willing services, especially Mrs. A. M. Leeper, M.B.E., U.D.C.
- Those members of the medical profession who voluntarily placed their services at the disposal of the Club.
- The Officials of the M.C.U.I. (U.C.) for their courtesy and valuable assistance.
- The Marshals, Stewards, Officials and the Programme Sellers for all their efforts towards the success of the Race.
- The Proprietor of the Commercial Hotel, Cookstown, for his kindness in granting the Club the use of room for meetings free of charge.
- Mr. S. Eccles for use of premises for Scrutinising.
- Mid-Ulster Printing Co., Ltd., Cookstown, for their help in preparing Race Programme, and Belfast and Local newspapers for the publicity given to the race.
- The Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers Ltd. (Cookstown Dept.) for their generous donation to sponsor the Unlimited Class Race.
- Bradford Bros., for use of electric horn system.
- The Automobile Association for interest shown by re-directing motorists by sign posting.
- The U.D.R. for Course Communications.
- All Advertisers in the Programme for their support.
- All Riders for their good sportsmanship.
- Lastly the Officers and Members of the R.U.C. for the splendid way in which they always assist in marshalling the Course.
- All concerned in the success of the Cookstown "100," 1973, individually and collectively.

On behalf of the Club, F. M'ALLISTER, Hon. Secy.
MANY THANKS. G. E. McCORD, Asst. Hon. Secy

Travelling People indebted to Cookstown Man

One of the few remaining wheelwrights in the country was the late Ernest Hamilton of Rocheville, Cookstown. There in his workshop, crammed with old wheels, timber cuttings, wood shavings and other relics of his trade, his hands guided his chisel and planes in the formation of his products. These consisted mainly of trailers and carts ordered by local farmers.

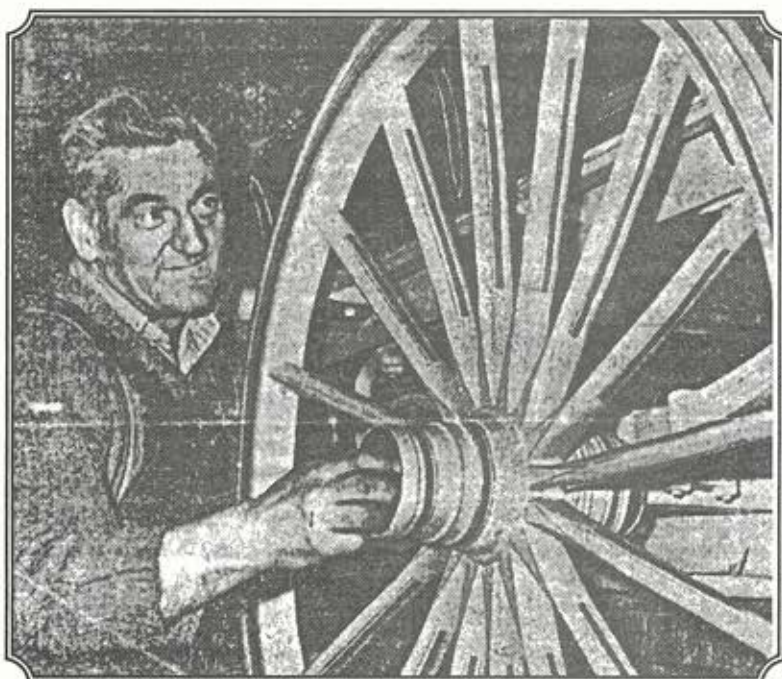
But Mr Hamilton turned out another particular product, which he believed only one other person in Ulster made, the tinker's caravan. Up a flight of stone steps in a yard just off the main street in Cookstown, was where he made his caravans. These caravans attracted travelling people and tinkers to his workshop.



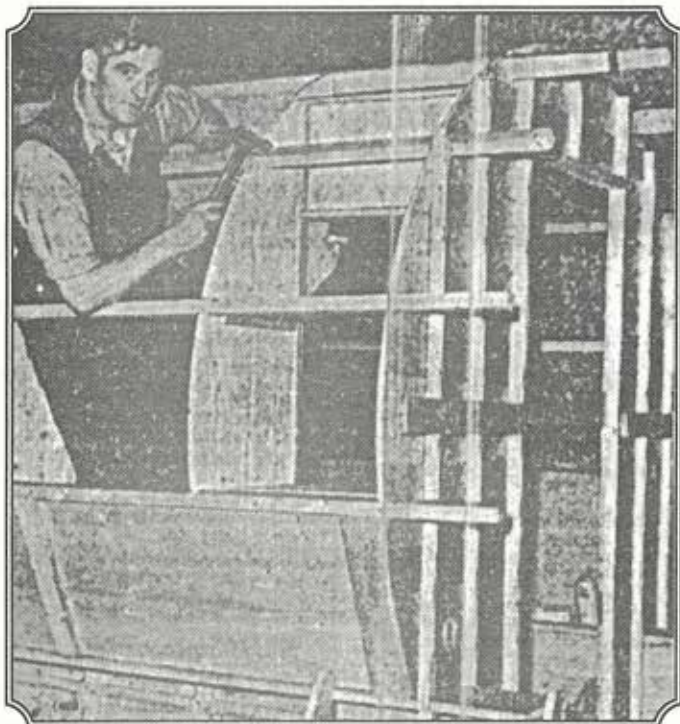
• Model of one of Ernie's caravans.

They came to buy his specialities: exquisitely carved horse drawn caravans painted in vivid colours that added gaiety to the highways and byways of Ireland. It all started off some years ago, when a tinker from Donegal asked Ernie to build a spring cart. The job pleased him so much that he ordered a gypsy caravan. These caravans took up to six weeks to build. No two were identical in design and each cost between £300 and £500.

Larch, hickory, pine and deal were used to produce these homes on wheels. Each weighed in the region of ten hundred-weights. The furniture consisted of a pull-out bed, a cupboard, a fireplace and a table. There were two windows, one at the front, one at the back. Dickie, Ernie's son, used to help in the task of painting these caravans. Up to nine colours, and all sizes of brush down to the smallest child's paintbrush, were needed for this job. Even the spokes of the wheels were meticulously painted and lined. Each of these homes on wheels measured eleven feet, with the living space two feet shorter.



• At work on a wheel, Ernie in 1964.



• Mr. Hamilton prepares a caravan for roofing in 1957.

When the caravan was completed in the workshop it had to be carried in sections down an outside staircase and reassembled in the yard which led to the Cookstown main street.

The roof with its framework of laths was padded with cotton wool, which was held in place with blanket material while on the outside protection from the elements was afforded by waterproof tarpaulin. The life of a caravan was usually about ten years.



• Ernie and his grand-daughter Elaine are pictured in a 4 wheel horse drawn "dog cart" built in 1860 and originally owned by the Duke of Manchester, to take him and his dogs to hunts throughout the country. The cart was restored by Mr. Hamilton. Picture taken March 1972.

Ernest was featured on the UTV programme 'Round About', working at his Caravans. His son Dickie recalls how one man came up from the South of Ireland and bought a caravan, took it to the Dublin Show, won a prize, sold it for a profit and bought another one.

May 23rd, 1959 was a very big day in Ernie's life. On that day, while making a tour of Northern Ireland to learn at first hand of ancient crafts many of which were fast dying out, the then Governor, Lord Wakehurst, called at the workshop and spent nearly an hour taking photographs and talking about the caravan trade. He was very interested in the hooping of the wheels, for which the iron had to be heated on the Hooping Plate over a turf fire, which was the traditional method.

However, cars soon took over as a handy and speedy means of transport, and so cost and progress reduced the demand for these homes on wheels.

To turn out such masterpieces as these is the mark of a true craftsman. The late Mr Ernest Hamilton was one of these. He inherited his skills from his father the late Robert Hamilton of Church Street, Cookstown, who was a coach-builder. Mr Hamilton's son Bertie continued true to the family's calling and was a wood work instructor in the Belfast College of Technology before going out to the Mission Field.

Ernie always said that the travellers were the best men to do business with. When they placed an order they usually left most of the money, or paid promptly without excuses.

We are indebted to Mr Dickie Hamilton for all the information given and to Aileen Larmour for the accompanying photographs.

How does a Pipe Band Begin?

From Pashcal Rushe comes (photo below) the Saint Patrick's Pipe Band, now fully uniformed and photographed in 1956. On the right is Tommy Joe Eastwood joint founder of the Band with his brother Jack.

Readers will be interested to know that this Pipe Band was formed in the year 1931. A group of men coming from October Devotions were standing outside the Church gates talking about Bands, when someone came up with the idea of forming a Pipe Band in Cookstown. These men were members of the INF. They decided to buy a number of Practice Chanters and to engage an Instructor to teach the members. As they advanced with their practice, they purchased their Pipes and in about one year the Band was on the road.

All went well for some years. Then owing to some members falling away, the Band declined and a new Committee was formed, headed by J J Downey.

A Pipe Major, Scotsman Jimmy McCormack was engaged and he remained with the Band for a time. He was succeeded by another Scotsman Pipe Major Thomas Green, who taught the Band until the outbreak of war in 1939 when he was called up for Active Service. During his time with the Band many competitions were won both locally and at more distant venues.

Local man J Mulgrew took Thomas Green's place for a time, but once more numbers declined. A committee headed by T J Eastwood and his brother Jack took over, and the climax of the most successful period in the Band's history was the winning of the All Ireland Championship in Bangor under Pipe Major Harry Sawyers.

Sadly the story ends with the Band's winding up, due to lack of members and loss of interest.



Front Row left to right: J McQuillan, J McCoy, P Donnelly, B Donnelly, T O'Neill, J Eastwood
Back Row left to right: J Campbell, R McKenna, B Moore, B Conway, T Donnelly, J Hughes, J McGinn, P Hunter, J Harris, J Corr, P Doris, P O'Neill, T J Eastwood



COOKSTOWN INDEPENDENT PIPE BAND PICTURED IN 1930.

**Front Row, seated from left: Jim McCrystal, Hugh H. Magee, John J. Downey, Jack O'Neill, John Mulligan, John Mulgrew.
 Standing, left to right: Eugen Mulligan, Joe McDonald, John McQuillan, Thomas Nugent, Seamus Kelly,
 John Glackin, John O'Neill, Edward Glackin, Pat Hunter, Bernard McKeown, Joe Boyle, John McCaughey,
 James Donnelly, Bernard Mulligan, Joe McCord.**



Cookstown Irish National Foresters' Pipe Band (Pipe Major Thomas Green) is shown here. The photograph is probably 70 years old. These Bandsmen are not wearing a uniform.

This photograph has been loaned by Pat O'Neill whose late father Jack is pictured in the front row with co-founder of Cookstown Independent Pipe Band, John J Downey.

Killymoon Part Music Flute Band

by Eddie McCartney

The decision to form Killymoon Flute Band was taken by a number of young men as they sat one summer evening at the Sweep Road. The year was 1887.

The first meetings were held in the Killymoon the Orange Hall inside the grounds of Killymoon Estate, the Orange Hall for Strife Hill Lodge. Eventually the band obtained its own band hall which was situated at various locations over the years. One of the founder members of the band was Johnny Storey, father of the plumbing contractor, Ernie Storey.

By 1920 the band met in Church Street at a place called Betty's Green, beside the late Robert Marks' house. Sir Robert Anderson an outstanding preacher with the Plymouth Brethren, preached here on one occasion to a very large gathering of people. This Robert Anderson was the man responsible for setting up Scotland Yard. Later on the Band had a hall near the entrance to the Castle Road.

For many years the Drum Major was Billy Moore, an imposing figure as he led the band,

resplendent in his distinctive scarlet tunic, which had been a gift from the Larmour family on the death of their son George who wore it in the Irish Guards.

The band's first conductor was Thomas Harpur from Tullyhogue. The late William Taylor, from Milburn Street, was conductor for many years. A long serving member was the late Hugh Davidson who was bandmaster and played in the band for over forty years. His brother Edward (Ned) Davidson also from Louisville (the Creamery) was leading drummer in the band.



• Alvin Mullan (left), Jim Davidson (flute), Rodney McFetridge (drum), Ossie Gourley (bass drum) and Joe Hill (drum).

A report of a 1930 meeting held in the Band Hall tells us that the secretary Jim McLernon reported that the band had added E Flat and B Flat flutes to their instrumentation. The following officers were elected: - President Mr Thomas Gibson, JP UDC; Vice President Mr David Hamilton UDC; Conductor William Taylor; Bandmaster Hugh Davidson; Secretary G Moffett; Assistant Secretary William Donaghy; Chairman, Edward (Ned) Davidson.

The Committee was R Simpson, A Montgomery, R Hamilton, R Smith and Sammy Thompson.

Those mentioned are just some of the men who gave Killymoon Flute Band dedicated service during the many years of its existence.

The band folded about 1974 but was reformed in the early 1990s. It has gone from strength to strength and this historic band looks set to continue playing an important part in the life of the town for years to come.

(This article is compiled from a wealth of information collected by Pastor Alvin Mullan, a former band member whose father William Mullan was a leading drummer in the band)



TAKEN OUTSIDE THE BAND HALL IN CASTLE ROAD IN 1948.

Back Row L-R: J. Jackson, T. Hamilton, Sammy Thompson, Billy Taylor, Tommy Crooks, J. Mallon.

Second Row: Tom Taylor, Billy Thompson, Billy Curran, Hugh Davidson, Billy Osburne, Jackie Crooks, Jim Davidson, B. Hamilton, H. Brown, W. McElvogue, B. Campbell.

Third Row: Tommy Campbell, William Mullan, Billy Moore, R. Hamilton, J. Anderson, G. Moffett.

Front Row (Kneeling): Norman Crossett, Tom Patterson.

Not in photograph: E. Storey, A. Mayne, F. Mallon, J. Jackson (Sen.)



TAKEN AT DERRYLORAN RECTORY - 1915.

Back Row from Left: John Wilson, James Craig, John Storey, Sam Duffy, Robert McGennity, Edward (Ned) Davidson, William Henry.

Second Row: David Hollingsworth, Jack Wilson, Fred Wilson, Robert Simpson, Jack Henry, William Duffy, Hugh Davidson, James Field.

Third Row: William Donaghey, George Moffett, Charles Campbell, Percy Henry.

Front Row: William Reid, Robert Hamilton, John Donaghey.

A Wee Bit Of Nonsense

Dear old Cookstown you're not the same
Since you went and changed the bloody names!
The St. Jeans Mt. Royal that once I "knew"
Has now become the Westland Road
And another reason for my moanin'
Morgan's Hill Road was the Bandgers Loanin
And I think it is a crying shame
That I daren't call Orritor St. "The Lane"
And just to make the place sound decent
The Old Back Row's called Orritor Crescent
And Roche's Avenue did not sound swanky
So they changed the name to Coolnafrankey
And Tullagh River's called the Ballinderry
And where the hell is Gortalowry?
Ah! Dear Cookstown you're not the same
Since you went and changed the bloody names!

And all the pubs I once frequented
Have fancy names someone invented.
To older folks it's not the same,
We knew them by their owners' names,
Like Fearn's and Morris and Henderson's
And Eastwoods and Dargan's and Harbisons.
There was Turner's and Heaney's and Lenny's too
And I think there was one called Mullgrew's.
But to the best of my belief
I knew no family called "Dunleath".
What once was Quinn's became "The Classic"
Now please don't think I'm being sarcastic
But The Classic then became "The Central"
Sure it's enough to make a man go mental
So I sip my beer and sit a-thinking
Just where the hell it is I'm drinking?
Ah! Dear Cookstown you're not the same
Since you went and changed the bloody names!

But I love you still, and back I'll hurry,
For to me it is a constant worry
That before I get aboard the plane
You'll have changed the bloody names again!!!!

Paschal Rushe's cousin Jackie lives in London but his heart is in Cookstown.



Cookstown United – 1928.

Thanks to Paschal Rushe, from 1928 comes this photograph of Cookstown United. Names of known members of the Band are given here, and they come with an appeal for someone out there to complete the list. Please contact

Paschal if you can help
 Front row left to right
 W Anderson, S Taylor, n/k, n/k, B McConville
 Back row left to right
 W Scott, S MCDonald, J Devlin, P Smith, C Farrell, McKeown
 Since the names are of players

only, we would also like to know the identities of others in the picture, particularly the little mascot in the white starched collar. And can that be the legendary Walter Watterson wearing the hat, far right?



Fr. Rocks G.F.C. 1952. Back Row: T. Rushe, B. Dargan, T. Lenny, P. Murphy, J. Murphy, T. Hagan, C. Hampsey, D. Kerr. Front Row: J. Rushe, J. Burke, F. Rushe (Capt.), P. Hunter, J. Bloomer, P. Mulgrey, T. Heaney.

The children of Coagh School interview one of Coagh's Senior Citizens regarding his school-days in the village.

Alfie Charlton

81 years, tells his story

I can remember my first day at school. My brother or sister brought me there. I was five years old. It was autumn and there were lots of apples and pears. Mrs Duff, the teacher, went to cut the apple in two and I remember crying. I thought I should get the whole apple.

There was a big fire in a stove in the middle of the school-room. A pipe ran the whole way along the wall to a small chimney at the far end of the room. I lived across the road from the school. My father was sexton in the Presbyterian Church. there were nine of us in the family. My mother had died when we were small and it was my sister, who left school at an early age who looked after us all.

I was good at Art and very good at Music. The master used to get us all standing out for our music lesson. He had a tuning fork which he hit with a rap on the desk, and he would say "Doh, Ray, Me, sound that chord!" He thought everybody should be able to sing but unfortunately from the sounds that emerged, this was not the case. the songs that we sang were 'Poor Old Joe', 'Swanee river', 'Sweet and Low', etc. One song I do not hear to-day was:

*"I pass by your window
When the morning was red
The dew on the rose-bush
The lark over-head
And tho' I say softly
When no-one can hear
Good-night and God bless you
God bless you my dear."*

Our school was known as Coagh National School and was attended by Presbyterians but some Church of Ireland children attended. The masters, I remember, were Toome, Lowry and McKeague. Every morning in school we had Religious Instruction. Someone was given the task of putting out the Bibles on our desks.

The young boys and girls who entered school at 5 years of age were dressed alike - petticoats and long hair. It was difficult to tell boys from girls. We had slates and wrote on them with chalk. If you wanted to rub out you used your sleeve, though you were expected to wait for the teacher to rub it with a cloth.

The games we played were 'The Farmer Wants a Wife' - 'Ring a Ring a Rosy' - 'All Gather Up for a Big Big Ring'. we had swings up round the trees. these were kept in school when not in use. Come play-time the swings were carried out and hooked on to spikes driven into the trees. When play-time was over, the swings were taken into the school again. For P.E., Mrs Duff took us to a big shed beside the Presbyterian Church. It was mostly 'Drill' - marching 'Right - Left, Right - Left, Right about turn', 'Hand up - hands down - hands sideways' etc.

We had dry toilets. When you wished to go, you had to ring a small bell at the side of the classroom to draw the teacher's attention - sometimes it was too late, and you didn't get away in

time!

There was a 'Dunce's Cap' - you were put into a corner wearing it if you didn't know your lessons. Often, the other children made fun of the victim in the corner.

I remember being sent outside with two other boys to clean the windows with paraffin and cloths. However, it ended with us throwing paraffin at each other and making fun of the children inside. The master caught us and we were brought inside immediately.

Master Lowry had a cane. He called it 'The Doctor'. He sometimes brought you out and would say, "This hurts me more than it hurts you." I never could understand that. Most times he never touched you - but when he hit you, you knew you were hit!

We had head-line exercise books when we out-grew the slates - these were books of copper-plate writing and we were expected to copy them as best we could.

The girls had cookery and sewing lessons. We had to sweep the school after school hours.

When I left school I used to go to the pictures in Cookstown. They were silent pictures then. admission was three pence. I rode an old bicycle and often got wet as I had no rain-wear.

I had many hobbies. I collected cigarette cards which came in series of 48 or 50. these were

enclosed in the cigarette packets. I must have collected 500 or more - which unfortunately I lost down the years. They were of cricketers, footballers, film stars and wild-life.

There was a sheugh or drain nearby. I made windmills, waterwheels and turbines. At school or at home we had no electricity or radios. We had to make our own amusements. I was particularly interested in fretwork and some of my work has gone to America, Canada and Sweden.

I worked in Duff's factory and was also keen on music. It was Mr. Duff who brought my first accordion from Belfast. It cost me 13 shillings. Everyone in our house could play at least one tune on it. I played snare-drum in Coagh Band for many years. I then joined Tamlaght band when it started in 1947, and played there until 1992. I taught myself the Banjo and Mandolin.

I ended up teaching bands in Drumbonaway and he Kennedy's Stewartstown All Accordion Band. I have a mandolin in the house over a hundred years old which I restrung myself.

I worked in later years in the Bacon Factory in cookstown and when I got my redundancy, George Mitchell and myself played in the dance band called 'The Grand Ol Dance Band' in neighbouring halls, as well as clubs and pubs.

I now live in retirement with my wife Rose, a few yards from my old school. It is now a Church Hall, having been replaced by a new school in 1938.

If Only...

A little school girl remembers School holidays at Granny's

Ho often we say it with a sigh - "we always seem to want something that we haven't got - don't we?"

Just recently I was trying to remember some of the stories my Granny used to tell us about her childhood ... IF ONLY ... I had listened better.

As my mind wandered I thought about Granny's lifestyle in comparison with mine because, you see, I'm a Granny now too!!

As a little girl I have fond memories of holidays spend with my grandparents; we only lived a few miles apart, but it was such a thrill to pack a week bag and go and stay with Granny.

Her day started very early - the first task was to light the range because without that the kettle couldn't be boiled or breakfast cooked - IF ONLY - she had an oil cooker. At the side of the 'range' there was a tank which was filled with water which heated up as the fire got going; a quart tin was used to take the water to the sink and all the dishes were washed and dried - IF ONLY - she had a dishwasher. Now - up the stairs - beds had to be made, all those layers of blankets on big, high beds - IF ONLY - she had divans and duvets. When, then a delicate little task had to be performed about which I will not go into detail, but I refer to a delph 'container' under the bed - IF ONLY - the 'loo' hadn't been half way across the yard!!! The morning is passing and bread, pies or maybe a cake to be made and all mixed by hand of course - IF ONLY - there was a mixer or a blender. Nearly dinner time so I'm sent to the garden to pull peas and pod them - IF ONLY - Granny had a freezer we could have frozen peas. Wash day was hard work, all that scrubbing and scratching - IF ONLY - there was an automatic washing machine. Then came the ironing - heating those stone things to put into the iron and sprinkling the starched clothes - a steam iron - IF ONLY - IF ONLY.

In Granny's house there were lots and lots of mats which all had to be taken outside, hung over the hedge and beaten vigorously with a carpet beater. I inherited this item, but, yes you guessed - it hangs on my wall nowadays as a 'feature'... If the floor was tiled, out came the 'Cardinal' and then after a lot of 'elbow grease' a brilliant shine. Cement floors were scrubbed on hands and knees, strange, nobody seemed to have sore backs in those days.

Well I could go on and on and bore you with my memories, but, I will finish off with my telling you that my Granny was a very happy person who rarely complained and she lived to be over 90! So, the next time I am having a wee moan about something, instead of saying - IF ONLY - I'll just think of Granny and coun my blessing...

SCHOOL DAYS IN BROUGHDERG

A hundred years ago in Broughderg, schooling took second priority to farming and so, though school was compulsory, not many schools had a full weekly attendance record. There was always something to be done by the extra pairs of hands and feet.

Some children had to bring a penny a week, to pay the teacher, who perhaps got ten pounds a year. The penny was easily carried, and so was the 'piece' of soda bread and country butter, wrapped up in newspaper. To supplement this playtime fare, on the way home there was maybe kale or a turnip or someone's apples to be crunched. Some also carried a turf, to take the chill off the classroom air.

The winter months saw some of the older children hired out for a period of months. Cattle minding, or gathering stones in the corn fields could be fitted in after school, to keep people out of mischief. The real hiring fairs were in May and November. All travelled to Cookstown and gathered at Orritor junction, their possessions in a piece of cloth on a stick.

One means of livelihood was the turf cutting. The won turf was taken by cart to Cookstown, eleven miles away, and sold round the town for four or five shillings a load. This money bought bread, cigarettes and tobacco. Taking two or three loads of turf to the town in the week continued as long as weather permitted. Meantime, women knitted and did crochet work for sale also. For no-one had a steady income. Times were hard. You didn't see much money. Many people owed money. They couldn't help it.

McConnell's the grocers in Molesworth Street knew what it was like, though Mr McConnell tried desperately but unsuccessfully to get the money in. There was a mission in the district. A particular priest spoke out strongly about paying debts. In the next few weeks, Mr McConnell noticed the difference. But after some time, the debts began to mount again. Mr McConnell met John Doris one day, "Any chance that the beardy man would be visiting Cookstown again?"

Home industries helped. In a stretch of road a mile long were tailors, coopers, carpenters, blacksmiths, weavers, a tin smith, a baker, a sweet maker, a shoe maker, and there was even an enterprising woman who

went across the hills to Derry for apples, which she sold, while the blacksmith shoed horses, set scythes, fixed ploughs and could even fix a new welt of iron on the sock of the plough, and reinforce it with steel. While nuts and bolts and spare parts could be bought in Cookstown, improvisation was the name of the game in the country, and everyone had a skill of some kind.

Thatching was another craft. The thatcher used flax or lint, green rushes or corn straw. Rushes would have to be renewed every year or so. Corn lasted better, but the flax or lint was good for eight or nine years. It came into use more when there was a decline in the linen industry.

The pork butcher had a trade also, for nearly every house had one or two pigs, which grew fat on cabbage and swill. Slaughtered, they were boned and cured in salt water.

Then there was the turf cutting in April and May, when the weather was kind. Sometimes everyone was called out to help in the moss: men, women, boys and girls. They worked from early morning till late evening. Tea brewed in the moss, and boiled eggs never tasted so good. If the women's services weren't required in the moss, they often used that day to wash the bed clothes at home, for it would be a day when there was good drying, and they could get at the job without the interruption of making dinner for the men. A special meal would be prepared in the evening for the workers who would return, tanned and maybe midge bitten, tired after one of the most enjoyable days of the year.

At nights stories told around the fireside often featured ghosts, banshees and fairies. One man's theory was that the fairies were really fallen angels. Lucifer being the lead angel thought he was as powerful as God. Many of the other angels turned against him. There was a battle, and Lucifer and his supporters were driven out of heaven. Lucifer became the Devil, while other angels who landed on earth became the fairies.

You know why the Irish gate posts are like this?
That's so the fairies won't dance on them.
You know the streamers you see in the sky.
That's the fairies doing their baking.

The Parish of Lissan

Material for this article comes with permission from the Ordnance Survey Memoir of Ireland XI – Parishes of Co Londonderry, 1821, 1833, 1836-7.

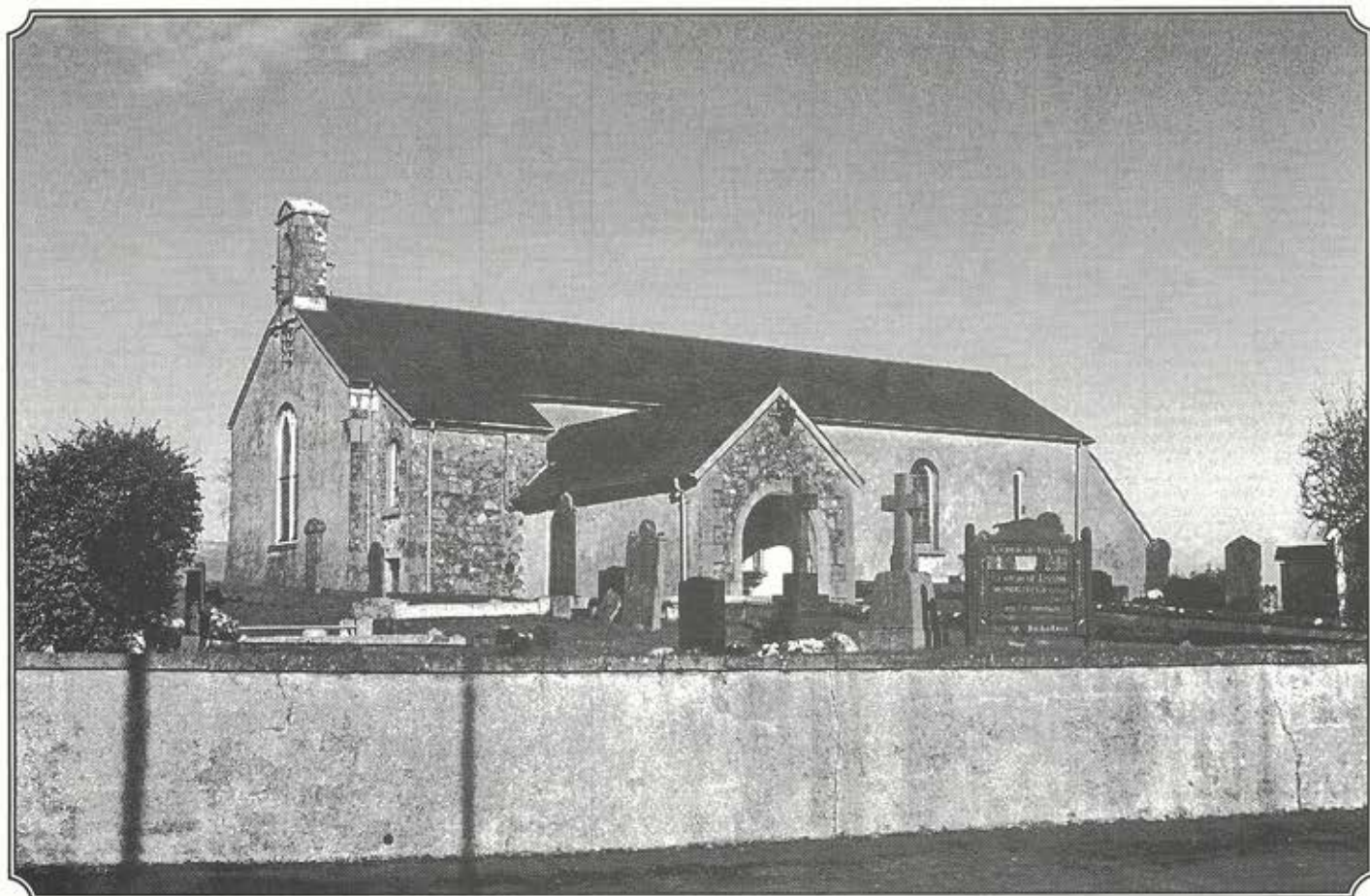
Edited by Angelique Day and Patrick McWilliams
The Institute of Irish Studies, The Queen's University of Belfast

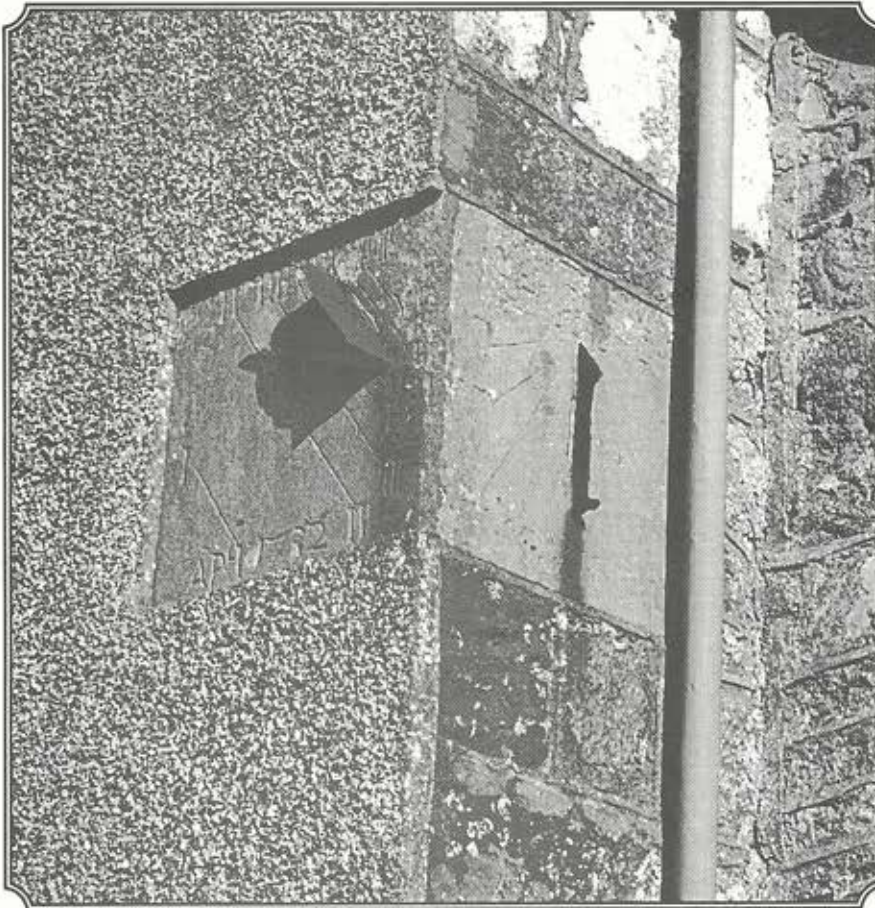
In 1824, the then Prime Minister, the Duke of Wellington, recommended a townland survey of Ireland with six inch scale maps to facilitate a uniform valuation for local taxation. Royal Engineers, sappers and miners with their officers and some civilian assistants recruited to help with sketching and map engraving were all under the command of Colonel

Colby.

Written notes containing detail obtained through talking to local men accompanied the maps, and the first Memoirs for Antrim, researched in Parishes, came out in 1830. Down and Tyrone were written up by 1837. But two years later, the whole scheme collapsed. A new Prime Minister could not countenance the expenditure of money and time, and therefore much material has remained in manuscript form.

These Memoirs are unique and detailed in the picture which they paint of life in Ireland before the Famine decade of the 1840's. They could almost be called our local nineteenth century Domesday Book.





• The Sundials on the West wall.

Memoirs of the Parishes of Desertlyn and Lissan are of interest to us hereabouts. We read of the activities of the Agents for the Drapers' Company in promoting works to improve the infrastructure of the area, including the provision of housing and schooling. We learn that the Drapers' Company School children wore 'Smock Frocks', while the poor of Lissan were forbidden to beg; though the Company exerted pressure on the larger farmers to be generous with the matter of maintenance of their tenants' dwellings. We read of the famous Horse Fair in Moneymore, and of how, due to decline in the local economy, particularly in linen weaving, Ballybriest people had taken up besom-making .

In the Lissan Memoir, we read of Slieve Gallion, formerly Slieve Kallan and before that Slieve Inivear, 'over topping in every direction the landscape of the townlands.' We read of Lough Fea, three miles in circumference, and the neighbouring small Lough-na-Muck, so called because a number of pigs had drowned in it.

The origin of 'Charley's Ghost' is given as follows. A man called Charley Devlin was nearly drowned there, and the stump or 'Ghost' was put up by one William Wright to whom the townland then belonged, as a

warning to others. William Wright lived in Grouse Lodge.

Around the Lough in olden days, it was said that many contests of strength and skill, both human and animal, took place. Greyhounds (Grues) were trained, it is recorded, to swim across the Lough in competition 'with as much intent and sagacity as if of the human kind'. So the Lough was named Loughnacuin, the grue or greyhound lake. There is no explanation given for why the name was changed to Lough Fea.

Lissan Parish Church is described in detail. Its inside measurements were 70 feet by 16, and it accommodated some 240 people. There was stained glass in the Eastern window and the aisle was flagged; all in good repair. Without tower or steeple, the originally shingled roof had been replaced in 1807 by one of slate. In

order to render the building more comfortable and dry, the walls were studded and plastered in the 1830s, and a fireplace and grate added.

Two vertical sun dials, the gift of the Rector, William Martin had been placed on the South angle of the West Wall, and three beech trees planted in the graveyard. The architecture of the Glebe House, Lissan Rectory is described and commented upon. Among names in Lissan Graveyard at that time, 170 years ago, were: Willson, Conyngham, Custré, Kirgan, Magill, Logan, McGlone, Donnelly, Doris, McKeirnan, Mullon, Conlon, McCann and Conelly.

Further up the road was the Roman Catholic Church, 72 feet by 37 and slated. Presumably, Mass was celebrated in the open before its construction, begun in 1803 and completed 30 years later.

William Magill of Crieve is said to have moved stones from the ancient ruins of a Church in the townland of Claggan to build a bleach mill with. Human bones were found in the digging of a field nearby, still called the Church Field on the farm of John Ramsay, the same who had owned and worked what was then a corn mill but had probably earlier been a bleach mill. The decline of the home-based linen industry is

commented upon. There had formerly been a bleach green in the townland of Ballybriest. Using the same water supply, there is word of a spade mill also.

An annual Fair was held at the Parish Church in Churchtown every 26 November for about 50 years. This was discontinued by order, on account of the frequent quarrels and riots at it, in the year 1832.

Grouse Lodge, in Ballybriest, was the property in turn of William Wright, William Morgan and Rowley Miller. In a thatched cottage nearby was a school, endowed, as was Lissan School with Erasmus Smith funding. An excellent Spring well called Crockanna Well recalls a fascinating local legend. Anna Corr, an old woman who lived near, was taken for a ride by a passing stranger on his way on horseback to Moneymore Fair. After they passed over the top of the hill, horse and riders disappeared without trace. But now, a little fairy called Anna Corr cries loudly in the townland to signal some coming misfortune.

Other gleanings of interest include these:

The old bridge at Dunman which separates Tyrone

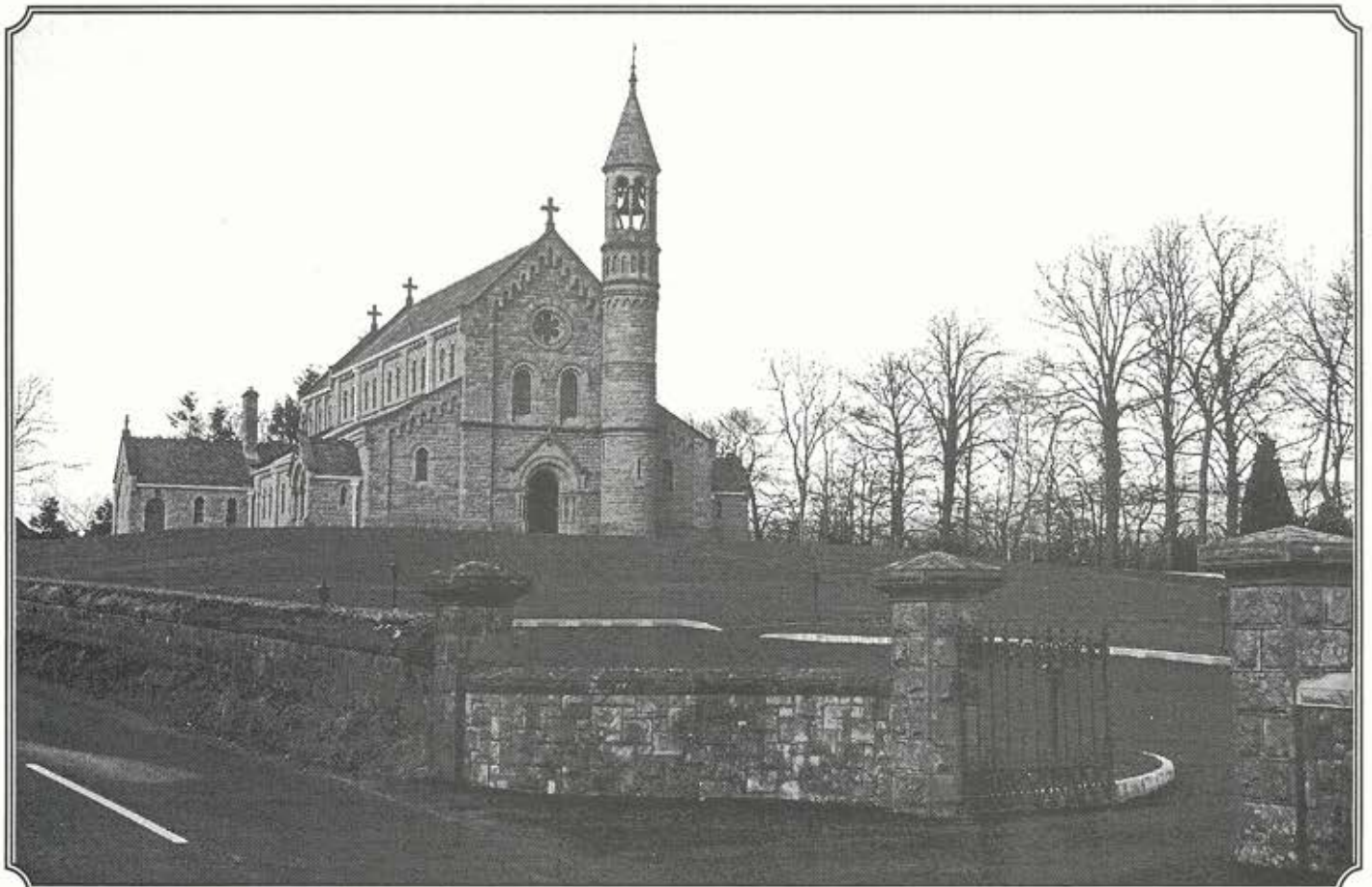
from the townland of Ballyforlea in Derry had two arches, each with a 20 foot span. The roadway was 19 feet wide, and the walls of the bridge 4 feet high.

An ancient gold ornament, crescent like and very thin was reported as being found by Hugh Crawford as he dug his potatoes in the townland of Dunnabraggy.

Parts of an ancient suit of armour, a helmet, part of a coat of mail together with a sword 2 feet 8 inches long, were found with spurs, stirrups, saddle and bridle and an interesting story is attached. This armour was worn, the document says, by a French General who was killed at the Siege of Derry by one John McKee of Moneyhaw.

Iron works were carried on at Lissan. It is said that the iron which made the chain extended across Lough Foyle at the Siege of Derry, as a barrier to enemy shipping was made from Lissan Ore.

Fairy Bushes were numerous. There was some illicit distillation. And there's plenty more. Reading, I mean, not illicit distillation. These Memoirs all repay careful study.



Cookstown's local newspaper, the Mid-Ulster Mail, first appeared in February 1891. Here are some extracts from that year's news:-

The Editorial of the Mid Ulster Mail, published in February 1891, begins as follows:-

It is usual on the first appearance of a newspaper to make a declaratory policy, by which its future career is supposed to be shaped. I shall therefore take this the first opportunity to indicate how we shall endeavour to act, as far as we are able, the principle we shall try to uphold and the aims we shall try to realise.

Probably the first thing the reader will notice when he lifts the Mail, after having admired the typographical beauty as in duty bound, is that we are supplying readable material instead of 'leading articles' in this column. We have decided to use the space thus gained for the production of short paragraphs on matters of current interest which we hope to have contributed by some of the best writers in the Province.

Here is some of the correspondence from February 7th, 1891.

A Half Holiday in Cookstown

To the Editor of the Mail

Sir,

Might I through the columns of your newspaper, draw the attention of the shop assistants in Cookstown to the advisability of inaugurating a movement having for its object the provision of a weekly half-holiday such as has been started in other towns. I believe we have fully as industrious and hard working a group of assistants as can be found in any business community, and we are sure that if the matter was taken up our employers could be counted upon to try at once to fall in with the movement. Cookstown holds a premier position in Cookstown with regard to business hours, and I am sure they are not going to lose their pre-eminence thro' the refusal of a paltry half-holiday.

Yours respectfully

FOOTBALL

The Public Lighting of Cookstown

To the Editor, Mid Ulster Mail

Sir,

The public lighting of the town is simply disgraceful and by no means creditable to a prosperous community like Cookstown. I don't mean to convey that the lamps are not sufficiently numerous, although some improvement in that respect is really necessary. It is rather the inadequacy of the light given out by the feeble and inadequate burners that adorn the lamps, to which I wish to draw attention. Some of these so called illuminants merely serve to make darkness visible and when the business establishments of the town are closed the streets present an appearance dreary in the extreme.

Yours etc.,

LIGHTS OUT

Another letter deals with

Inadequate Fire Fighting Apparatus

About eighteen months ago, the Cookstown Town Commissioners erected a shed for their fire engine which had previously been in lodgings, and after permitting the hose to reside there in peace for a long period, they have recently discovered that the hose was defective. Indeed, it was rumoured that more than one of their number, when attending the experimental testing of the machine and hose, got his clothes badly soaked through the escape of water from many outlets other than the legitimate one at the nozzle. They have now ordered a new hose, and it is hoped that it and a new supply of hose will arrive before there is a major conflagration.

Saturday, March 17th 1891

At a recent meeting of our municipal legislators, a member asked if they were going to form a Fire Brigade. No one present had any such idea in his head, for even a Town Councillor cannot foresee the future. Scarcely had the poll been taken when a message was brought in haste that a fire had broken out and now behold the City Fathers, rushing in hot haste to quell the conflagration with all the readiness of a trained brigade. And they who but a few minutes ago were speaking sarcastically to each other now worked shoulder to shoulder to stop the process of the destroying element. Such is life.

and even more disturbing

On May 16th, 1891, the Newspaper reports a

Fire in Cookstown

On Monday morning, a fire of a very dangerous nature broke out on the premises of Mr A J McCollum. The first indicator was flames coming out of the hay lofts at the rear of the buildings, and over the stables. The inmates were got to a place of safety, and horses and cattle were got out at a great deal of personal risk. The police were informed but they had more than enough to do in getting to the fire engine house.

During a period of delay when many more helpers arrived, the fire engine was got out and assembled on the Fair Hill. Meantime the flames were spreading rapidly to the front, and it was thought best to remove the contents of the building, furniture and stock in shop, out of the reach of the fire. When this was done, we believe, a considerable quantity of bottled liquor was carried out and hidden away for future use. At half past one, when the entire back buildings were a mass of flames, and when the pessimists were prophesying the destruction of the houses to the Workhouse Road, the hose was attached to the engine, and buckets and cans had been borrowed to keep the engine going from Loy Pump. The roof was getting hotter. Sheets of iron were procured. A number of volunteers went up to meet the flames, while down below merchants, bankers, lawyers, and indeed all sorts and conditions of men worked with might and main at the more prosaic but equally useful task of manning the engine and carrying the water. In less than half an hour, the jet from the hose, aided by the water thrown up from rooms adjoining by the forlorn hope of drenched and dirty men had subdued the flames, and about this time the single pump gave out. The engine worked well, throwing water over the roof, in spite of the friction of the hose and the leakage at the joints. It was now shifted nearer, but the hose was not shortened, and a supply of water from tanks and barrels became available in the Post Office Yard. In less than an hour the danger was over. The engine was started at intervals until four o'clock, when it was abandoned. There was great difficulty in getting assistance, though a great crowd was present, but evidently the stock lying about or concealed in the neighbourhood had more attractions than the engine had. Those however who were willing to work had plenty to do, and a large section of them were two or three days in getting better.

Acknowledgements

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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Chairman: Eddie McCartney, Vice Chairman: Ivan Bell, Treasurer: George Logue, Billy Larmour, Redmond Getty, Aileen Larmour, Winifred M. Richardson, Maura Johnston, Maurice Corrigan, Paschal Rushe, Beatrice Miller, Betty Greer.

We greatly regret the passing of **Nancy Hutchinson**, a frequent contributor to our Journal and an enthusiastic member of Cookstown Local History Group. Nancy's writings were a delight to read, full both of accurate information and whimsical humour.



Since writing her article in which she reminisced on her husband's family history and on life in Cookstown nearly fifty years ago, **Eileen McIver** has sadly died. Her daughters Barbara and Janet recall with affection the people and places of their childhood in Cookstown. Barbara has had a distinguished medical career, and is now Senior Lecturer in the Department of Child Health in the University of Aberdeen, where her husband is a Professor of Medicine. The Goldens have a son and daughter. Janet, B.A.(Hons), Q.U.B. lives in Maryland, U.S.A. where her husband has a post in the World Bank in Washington. They have an eight year old son, Aiden.



Look Back

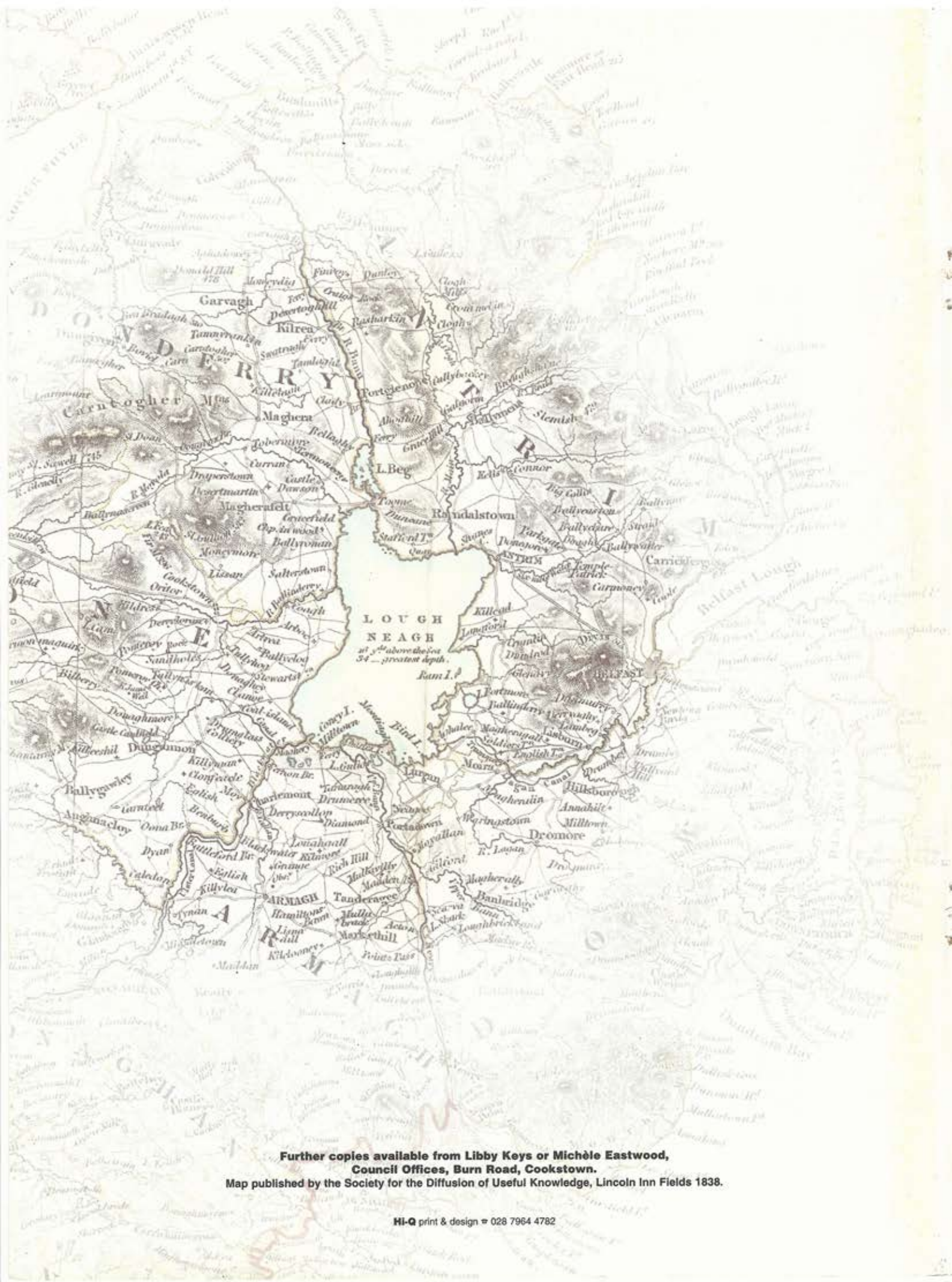
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