

Mid-Ulster Local History Journal



Cookstown, from Loy Hill.

Look Back

Volume 7 ... £4.00

Nine Famous Irishmen

In Ireland, nine men were captured, tried and convicted of treason against Her Majesty, the Queen, during what has been referred to as the "Young Irish Disorders", in 1848 or thereabouts. The nine, who were sentenced to death, were Pat Donahue, Charles Duffy, Michael Ireland, Morris Lyene, Thomas McGee, Terrence McManus, Thomas Meagher, John Mitchel and Richard O'Gorman.

The Judge asked if there was anything any of them wished to say before being sentenced. Meagher, whose response summed up the attitude of them all, replied, "My Lord, this is our first offense, but not our last. If you will be easy with us this once, we promise on our word as gentlemen, to do better next time - sure we won't be fools to get caught."

The Judge, outraged rather than amused at Meagher's remarks, indignantly decreed that the defendants should be hanged until dead, and then drawn and quartered. Passionate protests, however, influenced Queen Victoria to commute the sentence to banishment for life and transportation to far wild Australia.

In 1874, an astounded Queen Victoria received word that the Sir Charles Duffy who had been elected Prime Minister of Australia was the very same Charles Duffy who had been transported there some twenty-five years before. Curious about the fate of the other eight, the Queen demanded that the records of those transported in the 1848 incidents be researched and revealed. This is what was found:

<i>Thomas Meagher:</i>	<i>Governor of Montana</i>
<i>Terrence McManus:</i>	<i>Brigadier General, U.S. Army</i>
<i>Patrick Donahue:</i>	<i>Brigadier General, U.S. Army</i>
<i>Richard O'Gorman:</i>	<i>Governor of Newfoundland</i>
<i>Morris Lyene:</i>	<i>Attorney General of Australia</i>
<i>Michael Ireland:</i>	<i>Attorney General of Australia, after the term of Morris Lyene</i>
<i>Thomas McGee:</i>	<i>Member of Parliament, Montreal. Minister of Agriculture and President of Council Dominion of Canada</i>
<i>John Mitchel:</i>	<i>Writer and prominent New York politician His son became Mayor of New York City</i>

EDITORIAL

Our Cover Picture, which gives an evocative picture of Market Day in Cookstown, is taken from a point on Loy Hill looking down the Main Street. Judging by the laden carts, it has been a good season for hay. Note the neatly parked carts. The horses have been unharnessed and stabled up the various entries off the Main Street. One of these is Doris's entry, just over the hill to the left.

Our Journal has a wide range of photographs, old and new. These will surely conjure up many memories of people and places for our readers. We are greatly indebted to Norman Bell and David Lennox, and to Noel McGirr of Cookstown Office Supplies Ltd. for the varied and wonderful array of photographs which you will find here.

The subject-matter of the Journal, too, is very varied. Some of you will remember, and most of you will have heard of Cookstown's unforgettable citizen, the late Billy Donnelly. Tony McNally's article perfectly captures both Billy's personality and his unique talents.

Roy Kelso's perceptively nostalgic contribution on 'The Tech' will reawaken fond memories for the many people on its rolls over the years.

John Devlin and Philomena Begley, helped by the research of Journal Committee member Aileen Larmour, have given us a fascinating glimpse of the operations of 'Fisher's Factory' famous world-wide for its top-of-the-range hats.

Eddie McCartney's article featuring former Cookstown High School Hockey Teams from the Fountain Road era of the school's history will strike a chord with past pupils, no doubt, especially those with memories of the Pitch at Clare!

Ian McNeill has added reminiscences here also

Then there is the incredible account of the Nine Famous Irishmen provided by Billy Magee. If ever there was a story which proves that truth is stranger than fiction, then this surely has to be it!

An article in a previous Journal will have aroused your curiosity about the Prisoner of War Camp at Monrush. The unique Plan of the Camp provided here by John Twigg and which had belonged to his Father makes for compelling scrutiny.

Carmen Ferguson, now living in Canada, vividly recalls the Union Street of his childhood, while Committee Vice-Chairman Ivan Bell tells about another well-known Cookstown personality, Joe Parke, Boxing Promoter, Cookstown's answer to Jack Solomons.

Billy Bownes' article is a fitting tribute to Cookstown Silver Band.

Former patrons will enjoy the story of how Cookstown's famous family-owned shop, Blackley's, came into being and prospered over the years.

Ruth McKenzie shares fond memories of Grange School, and Mary Rainey of the Church there. Ruth has allowed us to publish childhood memories of the 1935 Silver Jubilee written by her late sister Nancy, who delighted us with her whimsical articles in previous Journals written under the pseudonym of 'Tullyhogue Correspondent'.

Eddie McCartney recounts the History, triumphs and tribulations of the Lindsay (Lindesay) dynasty who lived at Loughry Manor for several centuries. In this issue also, Aileen Larmour has dipped into the history of Drum and Winifred Richardson has contributed A Tullywiggan Tale.

We are indebted to Mrs. Hazel Dolling for two contributions of considerable local interest. One tells of her ancestor, The Barefoot Baronet. The other is enigmatically entitled 'The Greenfinches' Tales'.

As well as finding Tony McNally for us, Paschal Rushe has provided a tremendous assortment of Sportsmen for you to look at, admire of course, and identify, a veritable Hall of Fame!

Lastly, with a very rare photograph of the Fair Hill, Eddie has written about the Hiring Fairs of former days, and also "Footballers of Yesteryear".

Your comments on our previous Journals have been very encouraging. We hope that you will find this, our seventh Journal, equally enjoyable.

E. McCartney



Sadly, since our last Journal was published, Redmond Getty, a valued member of the Editorial Committee, has passed on. Redmond will be greatly missed. He made an outstanding contribution to the production of our Journals.

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*In this our seventh Journal, we have chosen to highlight **Union Street...***

Photographs from David Lennox's Collection

The original houses in this street and in most of Coagh Street were built in the 1830's to house workers in the Unagh Iron Mines, then going extremely well. The Gas works were in Union Street and so was the Flax Market.



We stand on Coagh Street, looking south down Union Street at the turn of the last century. Prominent on our left is the Railway Hotel, a grand establishment, for it had an Oyster Saloon with Carlingford Oysters a speciality. James Mullan, the well known proprietor was a Town Commissioner. The Town Commission preceded the Town Council.

Again we look from Coagh Street towards Molesworth Street. Note the water pump at the corner, useful because some people in Cookstown were still using water from pumps until the early 1950's. Beyond the pump, same side, was the entrance to Moorhead's Greyhound Hotel. More recently, this was Wright's Dairy. Facing us, at the bottom, on Molesworth Street was Johnny Mayne's Hotel.



Here, we look up Union Street to Coagh Street. Later, railway lines were laid across the street to connect the station with the Market Yard. This facilitated the loading of stock and agricultural produce. Facing us, on Coagh Street, is Thom's Royal Hotel, previously owned by Billy Ferguson.

THE PLAZA

I am sure that if anyone asked you if you could tell them where in Cookstown was 'The Plaza', very few could answer the question. Firstly, you would need to be at least seventy years of age!

But, to the locals, it was known as Joe Parke's yard halfway up Union Street on the left, going towards the Royal Hotel. The premises were the headquarters of Joe Parke's haulage business for he was a Haulage Contractor in those far-off days of the Hungry Thirties. The business which employed quite a few men conveyed goods from the near-by Railway Station to various destinations in the area. There were yarns and finished goods to be transported from the local Linen factories. Of course, this was before the use of motor vehicles, and so quite a few horses were involved, pulling long carts filled with all kinds of materials to the various shops in the town.

Being a very ingenious person Joe Parke saw the need for some recreational activities, and so he had a Dance Hall constructed at the far end of the Yard, high up on pillars. To enter the Dance Hall, one had to negotiate a flight of wooden steps. Being up from ground level made

the dance floor very springy. In fact, this was reckoned to be the best dance floor in Mid Ulster. The Resident Band for this venue was 'Tommy Donnelly and his Swingtette.' Dances were held at least twice weekly and they proved very popular. Many found their future partners at the Plaza.

During the war years, there existed in Cookstown a very successful Boxing Club, which also had its headquarters in Joe's yard. From time to time, Boxing Matches were organised, bringing participants from all over Ireland. For these events, the Contractor's yard was transformed into a first-class arena with seating tiered all over the yard to overflowing. These events were eagerly looked forward to by the sporting fraternity from a wide area. The commencement of hostilities put paid to many of these enjoyable events. But many people have fond memories of 'Joe Parke's Yard.'

If any of our readers would like to contribute further memories they would be very welcome.

Editor's Note: This contribution which reached us anonymously was signed 'OLD FOGEY, COOKSTOWN'. It is our belief, however, that a certain Mr. Ivan Bell may know something about it, if questioned closely.

MEMORIES OF UNION STREET AND MORE...

(Submitted by Carmen Ferguson, Russell, Ontario, Canada)

I was born in Cookstown back in 1939 and left there to emigrate to Canada in 1956. The stories in the 'Look Back' books bring back wonderful memories, including Mr. McCartney's about the POW camp at Monrush. I too visited the camp and with payment of '5 Woodbine', '5 Turf', or '5 Pasha' got small toys made by the German prisoners. My favourite was one, which looked something like this:



The sticks looked like they were burned with a hot poker

You squeezed the two upright sticks and the little man would swing around the string. I lived in Union Street and remember 'us children' marching up and down the street with our band. Our instruments consisted of biscuit tins for drums, old bicycle pumps with holes punched for flutes, combs wrapped in paper for mouth organs (which no-one could play), jew's-harps, washboards, pot lids for cymbals and numerous other instruments the descriptions of which now escape me.

The children I recall were the Downeys- Uel, Ian, Robin and Beth, Leckeyes- Tommy and Davy, Fergusons (my older brother Douglas, and me), Fords- Olive, Ivor, Gwennie, Robinsons- Chrissy and Teddy, Gildea-Maureen, Murrays- Pat and Pierce, Forrest- Bert, Kellys -Tom and Ronnie, and McLemons- Harry and Ruth.

We were lucky living in Union Street. If you got hurt there was Nurse Robinson or Nurse Murray to help take care of you. The Market Yard was close by to play in and so was the Gas Works. Sgt. Greer, while a 'Bear' of a man, was always kind to us kids - even when squibs were placed on his doorstep on Halloween. Dick Crane had many stories and more stories from Mr. Jimmy Murray - always stories about trains. If you needed milk, Wright's Dairy was at the top of the street. Needed bread? - Mr. Irwin, who lived in Coagh street near the top of Union Street, was most often called Mr. Inglis and he was always happy to oblige. And when you had saved enough for a bag of chips you could run down to Pelligrini's in Molesworth Street (later owned by Quinn's and located beside the Royal Cinema). Mr. Paddy Murray, Nurse Murray's husband, worked in Pelligrini's and he would always give us a little extra in our bags.

We had fun playing 'Rounders', 'Piggy', 'Scudging Hoops' and making racing carts with ball bearings for wheels. Tommy Hamilton, who owned a 'Motor Garage' at the back of where Maureen Gildea lived, generously donated these. Faster carts had pram wheels but these were much harder to acquire. The 'hoops' for scudging were given to us by a very kind man called Billy Rankin who worked in Ernie Hamilton's bicycle shop in Molesworth Street - right across from Bobby Allen's butcher's shop.

At the bottom of Union Street was 'The Market Yard' or 'Shambles' - usually pronounced 'Shammels'. On race day it was used as the paddock for the motor bikes and it was great fun to go around and get autographs from the riders - people like Geordie Reid, George Brockerton, and Toddy Greer. The Market Yard also saw George Brockerton and his wife (was she called Dare Devilena?) ride motorbikes in the cage of death. I believe this was subsequently moved inside to the Courthouse, which was at the end of the High School entrance on Chapel Street. Just inside 'The Yard' was Sammy Simpson's with his many rabbits, pigeons, eggs etc for sale. Across the street was the railway station - another great place to play. The station master, Mr. Bob McKee, was very tolerant of our games which extended all the way down to the NIRTB yard (predecessor of the UTA). If you were caught by Mr. McKee you could expect a 'good talking to' followed by a sweet to 'not play here again'. However, woebetide you if you were caught by Connie Black (a guard) - a good cuff on the ear and told to not come back was what you got instead of a sweet. Many of the people I mentioned as living in Union Street joined the throng of people, myself included, at the station to welcome home Johnny Murphy, who was a sailor aboard the Amethyst, back in 1949. (Journal Number 6 carried an article about Johnny Murphy's exploits.)

Union Street was often the street of choice for the American soldiers to travel when returning to Cluntoe with their loads of coal for the camp. Huge lumps of coal frequently 'fell' off the back of the trucks and boy what a scramble it was for us youngsters to gather up as much as we could carry and run home with our 'Prize'.

Burn Road School with Master Marshall and his weekly 'Go as you please, sit as you stay' puzzles brings memories - not always fond. You had to complete this Math or English puzzle before you could leave the school. I well recall being sent to Sheehy's to purchase a cane, then trying to find some horse hair for my palm before return to school for my reward. Master Marshall certainly had good eyesight. I never did find out if the horse hair would have worked and 'split' the cane. But we all got through it and most went on to either the Tech or Cookstown High school; Maureen Gildea and I went on to The Rainey in Magherafelt.

Boy Scouts at First Cookstown Presbyterian Church with Mr. Alex Fraser - what a very kind man. The annual camps at Blair's Field, Portrush with the morning dips in 'LegWee' - what a funny name for a pool of water among the rocks. When the weather was particularly bad we would spend the night sleeping on the floor of the Assembly Hall at the Reformed Presbyterian Church at Dhu Varren. I believe this was arranged by Mr. Fraser and the Rev. W.J. McKinstry Wallace who was the minister of First Cookstown.

When winter rolled around we used to throw buckets of water on the middle of the street. The water would then freeze and make a great slide. Unfortunately one lady, Rosie Elliott never thought this much fun and used to sprinkle salt on our wonderful slide ending our 'home made' fun.

Right up the street at the back of McLernon's house was an old loft that belonged to a man called Joe Parke.



A modern day view of Union Street looking from Coagh Street

Anyway, periodically there were little variety shows put on in this loft. The most favoured was one called, I think, 'Bam Bam Boozle Em' - this was a magic show which always drew a large crowd of children, dear knows where they all came from. I well recall the magician (would that have been 'Big Billy Donnelly'?) making something disappear and then launching into song with 'Umpa umpa stickit up ya jumpa' - I guess he hid whatever disappeared up his jumper. This loft was later used for a boxing club. (Read about this in 'The Plaza')

No TV in those days. The big treat on a Saturday night was to go with your ration coupon - was it a 'D'? - to McElkearney's sweet shop in the Main Street with its many many jars of sweets.

Getting your favourite 2oz and rushing home to listen to The McCooeys on the radio. And of course enjoying your sweets.

A stone launched from a catapult strikes the rump of Mr. Armstrong's horse. It gallops down Union Street with milk bottles flying through the air from each side of the milk cart it pulls. Two small brothers cower in a gateway watching and knowing what will come next. For some time following this episode they both had difficulty in sitting down. You know, I can almost feel it, - even today.

The gas works was just down the street, what a wonderful place to play, however, one's shoes and clothes were subsequently covered with a green/grey dust, this never sat well with my mother, I could never understand why!! The 'plantin' which was opposite the waiting room for GNR trains was a great place to play. We had carved out a boxing ring and bicycle race path through the trees. These proved great fun when we were not being 'Sitting Bull' and 'Buffalo Bill' or "Kit Carson" or "Hopalong Cassidy".

My mother's brother, called Henry, had lived in Ultimo House, Ballymoyle, Coagh since 1932. Our family used to go and visit them and to do so had to pass the 'gypsies' at Tamlaght Stone. I never once saw them harm anyone, however, there was always a certain fear as you passed their encampment particularly if you were on your bicycle. It always felt good when you reached Ruskey Cross Roads.

Life moved much slower then, children made their own fun and they were allowed to join the adults for the 'craic' - as Beatrice Morrow wrote in Volume 6 - 'I miss the evening chats around the fire'.



A view of Union Street from Molesworth Street today



Union Street's official Birthday was in 1836, so Union Street 2002 is 166 years old.

Photographs by Norman Bell

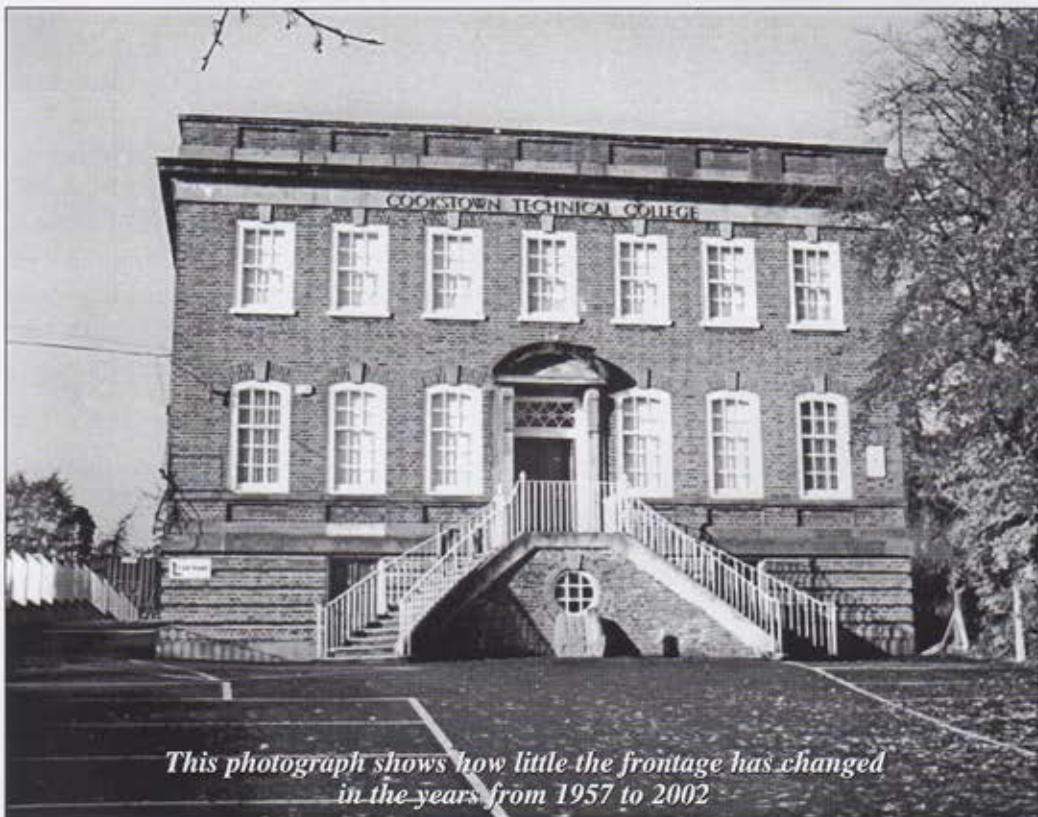
'The Tech'

by Roy Kelso

Looking back now it is difficult to imagine that exactly fifty long years have passed since I took that impossible leap from Primary into Higher Education. In those days my Granny Kelso judged one's scholastic achievements on the number of pens protruding from his breast pocket and thickness of his school satchel. Having plodded up that seemingly endless avenue in Loy Street and breathlessly climbed the steep steps to gain entrance to Cookstown Technical School on that Monday morning of September 1951, I soon began to regret paying a bit of heed to her.

days, with their simplicity of slaps and singing and sums. Yet my parents in their wisdom had decided that my un-Atlas like physique would be no match for the rigours of employment in field or factory, which my contemporaries had happily left the Primary at age fourteen to undertake. No, I was going to take on the world of Commerce whether I liked it or not. When secretly all I ever wanted to do was become a gypsy when I grew up!

Surprisingly there was an air of calmness about the



This photograph shows how little the frontage has changed in the years from 1957 to 2002

For not only did I feel overdressed in my new black blazer, grey flannels, white shirt and yellow and black striped tie. But I sensed somewhere in the depths of my fourteen-year old soul that the row of pens proudly displayed in my breast pocket like campaign medals wouldn't impress anyone in that grand establishment. And the truth of my academic ability would out before my first day of new term began. Add to that the weight of un-digestible textbooks with which I had stuffed my schoolbag, leaving me expiring loudly, red-faced and more conscious than ever of my plague of freckles.

Pausing on the top step to gain my composure, I vainly tried to pat down my cow's lick with a sweaty hand - but to no avail. And longingly looked down the long stretch of Chapel Street towards my old school at Derryloran. Suddenly overcome with nostalgia for those childhood

school on entering the reception hall. With none of the ringing bells, shouting teachers and crying children that I normally associated with first days. Glad to see a few faces whom I knew from about the town that were looking just as bewildered as me, the school secretary, May Patterson gave me a school time-table in exchange for my birth certificate, and I was in. Ready to stretch my feeble mind with the intricacies of Bookkeeping, Commerce, Shorthand and Typing. With the non-academic subjects of Woodwork for the boys and, Domestic

Science for the girls thrown in to keep us on this side of sanity.

As the days and weeks rolled by and the leaves on the avenue trees turned to red and gold, we new recruits began to blend in to the general atmosphere of life at Cookstown Tech. New friendships were made and I found myself seated with people from such strange places such as Ardboe, Stewartstown, Coalisland, Coagh and the Sandholes. My immediate classmates were Billy Black, Paddy McNally and Seamus Coyle and the common denominator binding us together was that we were completely at sea in this new world of Commerce, and its required attached skills. Bookkeeping baffled us, typewriters were an enigma, and they might as well have asked us to decipher the Red Sea Scrolls (or was it the

Dead Sea?) as make either head nor tail of shorthand.

Mr Curley took us for Bookkeeping and he was an immediate hit with the girls in our class with his dark Italian looks and soft Irish brogue. Yet despite his obvious dedication for the subject and fine teaching methods, Trial Balances and Profit & Loss Accounts were just as foreign to me at the end of my two-year attendance as they were on the very first day. Yet I never really had the heart to tell my Granny that she would have to lower her sights a bit. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's job certainly wasn't under any threat from yours truly in Cookstown!

The mastery of shorthand was an even more difficult requirement. One had to listen to the phonetic sounds of the spoken word to convert them into the required squiggle. And while after hours and days of practice some skill was acquired in converting the spoken King's English into recognisable shorthand, it was a different story when trying to record the spake of your average Tyrone man. Whose oscillating dialect and speed of speech was never envisaged by the inventive Mr. Pitman.

If Miss Munnis never did win over our hearts and minds on the future benefits of shorthand, she had better success when it came to typing, at least as far as I was concerned. Long and neck-creaking hours were spent plonked in front of an Imperial or Royal Typewriter as we endeavoured to get some rhythm into our young souls. Pounding the keys to scratchy gramophone renderings of 'The Bluebell Polka' or the waltzes of Johann Strauss. While our worthy tufor kept up a steady beat on her desk with a ruler - and at times our knuckles if one's eyes dared stray near the keyboard. Those that didn't acquire the skills of touch-typing at the Tech at least came away with some appreciation of music.

Master Burke, the Head was a tall, imposing man. He taught the rather vague subject of Commerce. That involved the ability to write a proper business letter, which he grandly referred to as Commercial Correspondence, as well as knowledge of Promissory Notes, Bankers Drafts and other strange documents that we never heard tell of. To keep us up to date in the business world he encouraged us to read the daily papers, and we also had to be able to use the telephone.

Our household only got a newspaper every Sunday (a practice which the more holy of my great aunts strongly disapproved of). And the Editor of that broadsheet didn't seem to have a wild big interest in Commerce either. So, having satisfied my adolescent curiosity over the more risqué of scandalous goings on in the Mainland, the only other news grabbing the headlines in that year of '51 was that food rationing was still in vogue. HMS Belfast was in action off Korea, where the opposing sides had reached stalemate on the 38th Parallel, and Marilyn Monroe was the new American Pin-up girl. While on the

local scene the Fairhill Picture House was featuring "The Quiet Man."

My first use of the telephone was a disaster. Having arranged with a friend to take my call, my way was made to the telephone box at the foot of the Sandies. With sweaty hands I placed two damp pennies on top of the metal console, checked that the A and B buttons were in place, lifted the black receiver and tentatively dialled the number. There was a distant ringing, but before I even got a reply a huge hand grabbed me by the shoulder and hauled me out into the street. It was the Bear! With my face alternating between red and white my stuttering explanation that I was on an important mission for the Head, Mr. Burke was futile against his tirade about vandals. It was to be some years before I dared approach a telephone again, I can tell you. Yet I've always wondered just who benefited from that precious tuppence?

Perhaps the subject I liked the best at the Tech was Woodwork. Mr Clements, the Teacher had a real passion for his craft. And if at times that passion manifested itself in a wooden mallet flying over your silly head for having ruined a beautiful bit of mahogany, it was understandable. Despite his best efforts the improbable pipe rack, kitchen stool or egg holder we proudly took home to mother never did stand the test of time or function, but came in handy on a cold winter's morning when the kitchen fire refused to draw.

Those formative years at the Tech were punctuated by long summer holidays, great Christmas parties in the long woodwork room of Mr. Clements, dancing or playing traditional party games to the music of Bobby Sampson's accordion. Or running to Grab-an-Annie's during break to buy scrumptious toffee apples. But perhaps the greatest advance in our education was the realisation that the girls in our classes, despite their long, unflattering gymslips and 50's hairstyle, were not simply made of sugar and spice. Yet gaining their consent to carry their schoolbag on the way home from the Tech was at times a double-edged sword. For on Cookery days one had to keep a straight face when lying about the quality of their baking, while trying to preserve what little, milk teeth remained as one munched bravely at terrible tarts or granite rock buns!

Too soon though the staggering age of sixteen was reached and it was time to leave and look for gainful employment. And after a couple of trial runs I finally secured a job in the Bacon Factory in the Despatch Room. That my brown shop-coat was covered in blood from top to tail from my daily wheeling of bags of pigs livers from Despatch to the goods train at the Factory siding didn't faze Granny Kelso one bit as she proudly looked across from her gateway at Coolnafranky Cottages. I had a top pocket full of pens. I had arrived.



Cookstown Technical School - Class of 1951

Front Row (ground L - R): Roy Kelso, Billy Black, Noel Hampsey

Front Row (seated L - R): Shirley McFarland, Mary Devlin, Mavis Murphy, Maud Farrell, Meta Graham, Teresa McKenna, Norma Davidson, Mr. N. Clements, Miss M. Munnis, Mr. R.C. Burke (Principal), Mr. F. Curley, Sheila Wilkinson, Rene Harkness, Lily McCullough, (?), (?) McCrory, Helen Hamilton, Jean O'Neill

Middle Row (L - R): Lily Espie, Eileen O'Neill, Patsy McVey, Joan Carson, Edith Wilson, Edith Sloan, Audrey Smallwood, Ellen McCrory, Marie Hamilton, Marie Hamilton, Hilary Hamilton, Kathleen Rodgers, Bertha Morrow, Honor Kane, Annie Monaghan, Shirley Ferguson, Edith Bell, Chrissie Robinson, Kathleen Carson, (?) Lagan

Back Row (L - R): (?), Vernon Turkington, Paddy McNally, Bertie Cuddy, Desmond Back (?), Norman Bownes, Tommy Quinn (D), Walter Bell, Gerry Mullan, Sammy Russell, George Early, Ted McQuaid (D), Johnny Gillen, Cathal Lagan, Seamus Coyle

Did you know!

That Coolnafranky House, built by John B. Gunning Moore in 1868, was originally called Loymount.

That the Burn, which gives its name to Burn Road and the Burnavon, runs under the Carpark.

That in Derryloran Old Graveyard are buried the remains of men who fought at Waterloo (in 1815), at the Siege of Derry (in 1689) and at the Battle of the Boyne (1690).

That on the proposed new Cookstown Street plan dated 1736 there is no Union Street. The houses in Union Street were begun in 1833 and the street laid out in 1836.

That when the Great Northern Railway line came to Cookstown in 1879, the old Belfast and Northern Countries, to protect their trade, decided to run a line from the Station Yard to the Market Yard where farm produce could be loaded with ease.

The Lindsays (or Lindesays) of Loughry

by Eddie McCartney

The Lindsays were a Plantation family from Scotland. The estates of Loughry and Tullyhogue were granted in 1610 by James I to Robert Lindsay, Chief Harbinger to the king and second son of Thomas Lindsay of Leith. These settlers or 'undertakers' as they were called were naturally resented by the native Irish so as part of the settlement, the planters were supposed to build, within a given time, bawns or enclosures for cattle, to build a castle or manor of stone and to maintain men and arms for defence.

The Lindsay estate was to remain in possession of the Lindsays from 1610 until 1893, in direct descent for 283 years, before eventually coming into private ownership. The first Lindsay lived in a wooden building near to Tullyhogue village. It was protected by a ditch, a high bank of clay and a quickthorn hedge. Its exact site is not known. It was the son of the first Lindsay, another Robert, who built the first stone manor on the present site, this denoted by a datestone 1632 on a wall. Robert called it Lindesay Manor. (The name was originally spelt with an 'e' in it.) But, over the years the manor came to be called Loughry, said to mean 'King's Gift.' Eventually the estate of 1260 acres had a total of twenty-two tenants.

In 1641, Ireland was in the throes of a Rebellion. Loughry Manor was severely damaged by fire during this conflict.

The first Robert Lindsay was buried in the ancient Abbey burying ground of Donaghrisk which was then part of the Loughry Estate, and traditionally this was the burial place of many of the Lindsays. The circular walled graveyard is easily visible on the right hand side of the road just before you enter the village from the Cookstown direction. Donaghrisk means 'the church in the field of rushes.' Donaghrisk graveyard was also the burial place of one of the most famous Irish families, the O'Hagans. The O'Hagans were stewards of the famed O'Neills, the Kings of Ulster. The O'Hagans were responsible for maintaining Tullyhogue Fort. For almost five centuries the O'Neills were crowned in an elaborate ceremony on top of the Fort hill.

Down the centuries, the O'Hagans had the important role of organising the crowning ceremonies of the O'Neills. The last O'Neill to be crowned, on the stone throne at the Fort was the famed Hugh O'Neill. In later years, Phelim O'Neill was crowned at Tullyhogue Fort, but not on the ancient throne because by that time it had been smashed on the orders of the Lord Deputy, Mountjoy.

The third Lindsay to inherit was, with his family, among the besieged within the walls of Derry. His brother Alexander, with Alexander's wife, was killed during the siege. The fourth squire, also the fourth Robert, inherited the estate in 1691. This Robert Lindsay was Member of Parliament for County Tyrone and a Judge of Common Pleas. In his writings Sir Walter Scott, famous Scottish author, referred to Judge Robert Lindsay as an 'eminent lawyer.' Judge Lindsay was a very sociable man and in his day Loughry was the scene of many glittering functions. Lindsay was very able, with considerable literary ability. He visited Dublin often. Here, in this seat of learning, he mixed with the leading lights of the day and stayed in a house that he had bought in Mountjoy Square. Through a common interest in literature, he struck up a friendship with Jonathan Swift, Dean of Saint Patrick's. Dean Swift was one of the foremost men of letters of his time. Swift was very outspoken, especially when he observed an injustice. He was a champion of the underdog, and this earned him the respect and affection of the underprivileged regardless of creed or class. However, his outspokenness did not make him a favourite with the powers that be, and this explains why, though a brilliant man, he did not rise higher than the position of Dean in the Church.

From time to time, Jonathan Swift stayed as a guest of the Judge at Loughry Manor, thus escaping from the hustle and bustle of city life to where, in the peace and solitude of Loughry, he could concentrate on his writing. The summerhouse in a secluded part of the Loughry gardens came to be known as Dean Swift's Cottage.

Dean Swift and Judge Lindsay sometimes conducted their conversations in spontaneously composed verse. On one occasion, Swift enquired of Lindsay if he, Swift, should curb his inclination to make scathing comments about those who displeased him. Lindsay expressed the opinion that he should be more careful in his criticisms. 'This interchange, conducted in rhyme, went as follows: Swift:

'Since there are persons who complain
There's too much satire in my vein;
That I am often found exceeding
The rules of raillery and breeding;
With too much freedom treat my betters
Not sparing even men of letters;
You who are skilled in lawyers' lore
What's your advice? Should I give o'er,
Nor ever fools or knaves expose,
Either in verse or humorous prose?
And to avoid all future ill
In my 'Scoterie' lock my quill?.'

Lindesay: 'Since you are pleased to condescend
To ask the judgement of a friend,
Your case considered I must think
You should withdraw from pen and ink,
Forbear your poetry and jokes
And live like other Christian folks;
And if the Muses must inspire
Your fancy with their Pleasing fire
Take subjects safer for your wit
Than those on which You lately writ.'

It was in the summerhouse that Jonathan Swift wrote many poems and other works, among them 'The Tale of a Tub. Swift is best known for 'Gulliver's Travels', at first intended as a political satire. The learned Dean would have been very surprised and probably very amused to know that 'Gulliver's Travels' would in the course of time come to be regarded as a classic of children's fiction. Judge Lindsay died in Dublin in 1742, and was succeeded by his brother John, the fifth Lindsay to inherit. The Lindsay brothers had not always been in agreement in matters political. While the Judge supported William of Orange, John strongly upheld the claims of James II.

John married late in life. During his time Loughry was burnt for the second time. The fire broke out in the nursery. His wife managed to rescue their child, another Robert, and she took him to the Glebe House in Ballymully. Her husband John, not a young man, made a desperate attempt to save whatever heirlooms he could from the flames and almost met his death before he managed to escape from the burning building. He rebuilt the Manor on the same site and died in 1761 in his eighty-fifth year.

The sixth owner was John's son Robert. As he was only fourteen and still a minor, his mother was in charge of the estate until he came of age. This Robert was a brilliant scholar. He was educated at the Royal School, Armagh, Trinity College, Dublin and Christ Church, Oxford. He studied Law and was a D.L., J.P. and High Sheriff of County Tyrone and he represented the Borough of Dundalk in the Irish Parliament from the year 1781. He was Chairman and Assistant Barrister for County Tyrone from 1800 until 1829. When he retired the Magistrates of Tyrone presented him with a massive silver salver as a token of their appreciation of the efficient way in which he had carried out his duties.

We move on to the tenth Squire of Loughry. He was Major Frederick J. Sandys Lindsay, D.L., J.P. If you said that the Lindsays had a black sheep in the family, then this particular gentleman was it! And during his tenancy, the Lindsay fortunes went into serious decline. Major Lindesay was a very handsome young man. Loughry

saw very little of him as he spent much of his time in London enjoying the delights on offer. You could safely say that he neglected his inheritance. Colonel Lowry of Pomeroy House recounted this story of the dashing young Frederick. He had an allowance from his father, but this did not cover the expensive life style he enjoyed in London. Gambling was not at that time a vice which he had sampled, but he had the same dream on three successive nights that a horse called Hermit had won the Derby. At the same time, he had an unexpected windfall, a legacy of £500. Impulsive Lindsay decided to risk all by placing a bet on Hermit to win the Derby. And the horse, a complete outsider, won at the enormous odds of 40 to 1. Lindsay had won a fortune.

However, this massive win did not prove to be an advantage for Lindsay in the longrun. If his lifestyle had been extravagant before, it now became even more lavish. He even purchased a yacht for himself. It just couldn't last. The money was spent. Vast debts were incurred, and Loughry estate was mortgaged to the hilt. In a short space of time, Frederick had reduced his great inheritance to a state of bankruptcy. His was a short life and a merry one.

He was succeeded by his brother Joshua, who was the eleventh and last Lindsay to inherit Loughry. He also inherited his brother's liabilities, including a sum said to be in the region of £42,000. Joshua made a tremendous effort to free the property and pay off his brother's debts. He drastically cut down expenses and lived by himself in that vast house with only one manservant. But the task was beyond him. He died unmarried in 1893. The Lindsay dynasty had ended.

Initially, the Loughry Estate was based in the parishes of Desertcreat, Ardrea, Derryloran and Stewartstown. Farms on the estate were The Priory, Rock Lodge and Lime Park. These were Dower Houses. Rock Lodge was the last of these to have a Lindsay as a tenant. The Lindsays had close connections with Desertcreat and Derryloran Parish Churches, and at one time a Lindsay was Rector of Desertcreat. After the death of Joshua Lindsay in 1893, Loughry, after nearly 300 years of Lindsay ownership came into what might be termed private ownership, being acquired by a Mr. John Fleming.

Shortly afterwards the upper storey of the manor was damaged by a fire, the third in the long history of Loughry. The house was subsequently repaired and house and estate were acquired by the Government.

The Ulster Dairy School was set up in the Manor. A portrait of Robert Lindsay, the sixth owner and his wife Jane was presented to the Dairy School in 1933.

The Dairy School utilised the premises as follows:

Loughrey Manor, Cookstown



Rooms in Loughrey Manor.

Library, Dining Room, Small Drawing Room, Large Drawing Room, Bedroom (Blue Room.), Bedroom with Dressing Room, Yellow Room, Bachelor's Walk - six rooms, Banqueting Hall with Musicians' Gallery and Turret at one end.

Rooms in The Dairy School

Office, Sewing Room, Superintendent's Room, School Room, Staff Sitting Room, Small Dormitory, Superintendent's Room and Teachers' Wing. Dormitory.



Ulster Dairy School, Loughrey-Cookstown

The establishment now Loughry College has progressed to meet the changing needs of the time. Today, Loughry College is at the very forefront in the field of Food Technology. Cookstown Council has the ambitious plan of providing for the community of Cookstown and its district a multi-purpose state of the art sports complex at Loughry.

Some sixty years ago, this description of Loughry was given: 'All visitors to Loughry are impressed by its natural beauties. The mansion is surrounded by a park of 365 acres, intersected by a narrow river flowing with a waterfall close to the house. Near this spot the river is crossed by an old wooden foot-bridge, overgrown with creepers and climbing plants. The river winds through a deep ravine, trees and ferns on both sides. On one of its banks is the traditional 'Banshee Rock', and on the other

is the famous 'Wishing Well'. The Park contains also supposed Druidical ruins, known locally as the Giant's Grave. The house is approached by three alternative routes, with entrance gates and lodges. The main entrance leads through what was once a fine avenue of beech trees. Another follows the river to the road from Cookstown to Tullyhogue. An old Lindsay prophecy was to the effect that 'when the beech trees fell, the Lindsays would disappear from Loughry.' The prophecy would seem to have been fulfilled.

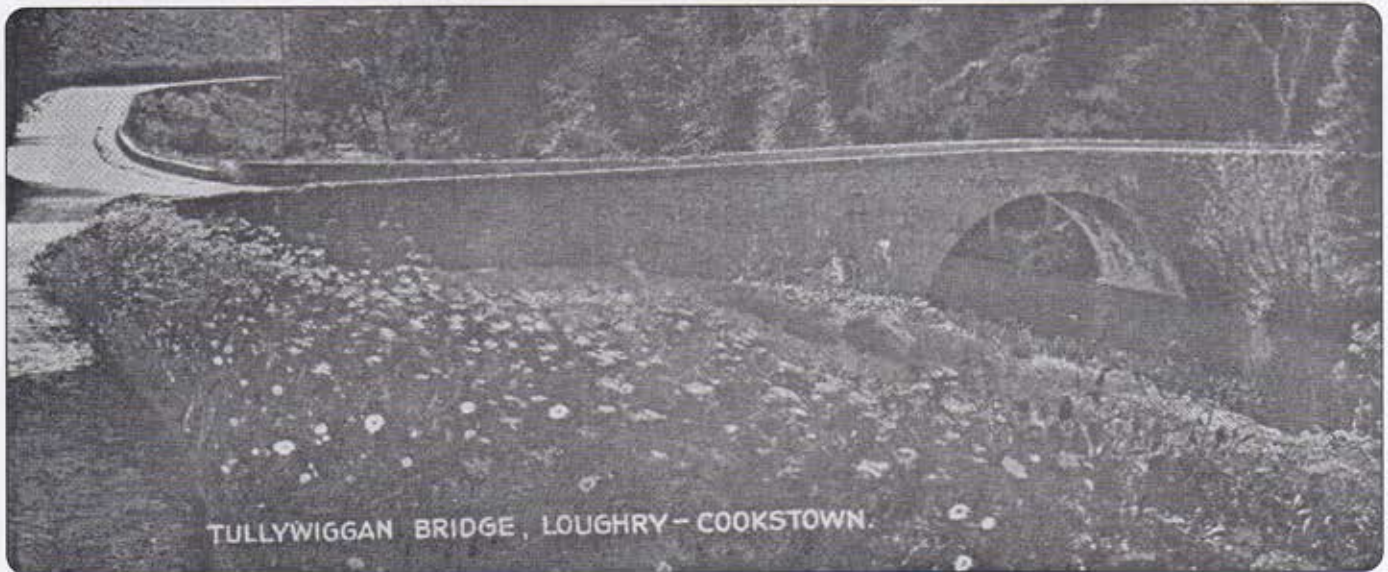
Eddie McCartney.

This article is compiled from information collected some sixty years ago by Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey, descendants of the Lindsays. It was passed on to Mr. Stewart Twigg and kindly made available by his son John.



A Tullywiggan Tale

by Winifred Richardson



Many stories are told about Colonel Frederick Lindesay and his wife and family who lived at Loughry House. They had a lively social life, but this was handicapped by the fact that a long detour had to be made to find a crossing point on the Ballinderry River, such as at the Dark Bridge or the Desertcreat Bridge.

Colonel Lindesay had a daughter who was one of the most attractive girls in society. Many would-be suitors called, one military man actually bringing his horse by train to Cookstown from Londonderry, then riding out to Loughry in style, in full dress uniform,

His suit was welcome, but another man got short shrift because he was deemed unsuitable. Instead of leaving gracefully, it is said that he became abusive. Referring to the fact that people often drove past Loughry House to reach the Desertcreat Bridge, he scornfully called it 'A car-man's inn out by Strife Hill.' Stung by this criticism, the Colonel immediately ordered a local builder, Henry Forrest, to build a bridge outside Tullyhogue, and to

re-route the road so that the entry to Loughry would be direct. To speed the completion, workers were paid an extra penny an hour. And so Tullywiggan Bridge was built.

In recent memory, Lord Brookeborough unfurled a new banner at Tullyhogue. There was great excitement in the district. Tea was to be served, and preparations were intense. Tarts and flans, cakes and pastries were produced in abundance, and people wondered which sweet-meat Lord Brookeborough would prefer. John Nethercott of Tullyhogue tells us that it was his mother's wheaten bread which proved to be His Lordship's favourite, baked in the old fashioned way.

Today, we are inclined to take Tullywiggan Bridge for granted; sometimes it seems as if it had always been there. Imagine how inconvenient it would be for us if it had not been built . . .

Thanks to John Nethercott for his help.



Cookstown High School

(FOUNTAIN ROAD ADDRESS)

by Eddie McCartney

Prior to 1955, Cookstown High School was situated at the Fountain Road, approached down the first entrance to the left as you turned off the Main Street. This small co-educational school with about 150 to 200 pupils had a four-classroom main building, supplemented by two others, one with two rooms, the other an art room. The main building had a science lab and a library, with two rooms separated by a wooden partition to allow for the holding of a full school assembly. To one side of the two-room classroom, was a long tin covered structure, the much-used bicycle shed (for very few pupils were brought to school by car in those days.) The bike shed was a popular gathering place for the pupils, and it provided shelter when it rained.

To the rear of the Headmaster's residence, on the Main Street opposite to Derryloran Primary School, were two further classrooms referred to as the Kindergarden. Nine rooms in all, it was indeed small in comparison with

grammar schools of today, and as in many schools of that era, its facilities were basic. But it was a small, happy, friendly school, whose dedicated staff included, Headmaster Mr. William McNeill (Latin), Mr. Hugh Taggart (History, Mathematics, English), Mr. Raymond Howell (Science, Geography), Mr. Alfred Armstrong (Geography, Mathematics), Mr. Armstrong was succeeded by Mr. Edmund Christie (Geography), Miss Jean McCormick (English, French), Miss Ekin (English, French), Miss Betty Ard (Science, Mathematics), Miss Vera Treacy (French), Miss Anna Martin (Mathematics), Miss Dorothy Strawbridge (French), Miss Dorothy McKinney (Art), (Information may not be complete. As time passes, details get blurred.)

Even with its relatively small numbers of Pupils, the excellence of all the schools hockey teams deserves to be mentioned. All the successes of the boys' teams on the hockey field owe much to the coaching ability of Mr. Hugh Taggart.

HIGH SCHOOL HOCKEY PHOTOGRAPHS



1948 - 1949 Senior Boys First Eleven

Back Row - left to right: Jim Millar, Eric Irwin, John Smith, Sinclair Allen, Bert Harris, John Dougherty, Hugh Taggart.
Front Row: John Gamble, Allen McClay, B. McGeagh, George Glasgow (Capt.), Bertie Crooks

Note: McClay and Glasgow were chosen to play for Ulster, and here are seen wearing their Ulster shirts.

1948 - 1949 Junior Boys Eleven

Left to Right: Stewart Colgan, N.K., N.K., Charlie Davis, Mervyn Greer, John Twigg, N.K., George Harris, Davy Martin, Hughie Taylor, N.K.

Note: A few years later, John Twigg played for Ulster. The Clare pitch where this photograph was taken had an extremely uneven surface, sometimes water-logged. Could this have been a factor in explaining why the High School produced so many skilful players? Skills of a very high order were necessary, in order to overcome such difficult conditions. Compared with Clare, how easy it was to play on the billiard table which was Bladon Drive, Belfast, the ball always running true, not hitting a rut and coming at you from an impossible angle.





The 1952 - 53 team won the school's first major trophy. Here, the team is shown with the Richardson Cup, showing this as the best 15 & under team in the Province. Boyd Millar, who holds the Cup, was subsequently chosen to play for Ulster.

L to R (back row): Sam Slaine, Stanley Donaghy, Brian Hamilton, Ian McNeill, Geoffrey Faulkner, John Clements.
L to R (front row): Cyril Forrest, Maurice Clements, Boyd Millar, Billy Morgan, Davy Harris.



Every school hockey team wanted to win the Burney Cup. This High School senior team nearly did it. In a keenly contested final against Friends' School, Lisburn, Friends' won. Boyd Millar, Ulster Schools cap, had a particularly outstanding game.

L to R (back row): Billy Howard, Eric Howard, Hugh Taggart, Harry Gibson, Murray McKee, Eddie McCartney.
L to R (front row): John Campbell, John Clements, Bertie Wilkinson, Bertie Faulkner, Billy Ferguson, Dessie Nesbitt.



They finally did it! The 1954-55 Boys' senior team with Ulster Caps Brian Hamilton and Billy Morgan is shown here. Billy later played for Ireland. Winning the Burney Cup coincided with the move of the whole school to new premises at Coolnafranky, and a new era of major sporting achievements lay ahead..

L to R (back row): John Henry, Brian Hamilton, Ian Duncan, Basil Anderson, Dessie Nesbitt, Sam Slaine.
L to R (front row): Cyril Forrest, B.Reid, John Clements, Billy Morgan, Norman Forrest.

by Eddie McCartney

THE HIGH SCHOOL

contributed by Ian McNeill



Here we see the Hut and the old red tin block, looking East towards Rocheville. This hut almost certainly came from the P.O.W. Camp at Monrush. There was another hut beyond the red block alongside the cypress tree in the photograph. It most likely came from the auction of stuff at Toome Aerodrome. This Auction was on March 12th, 1947, a very famous date in Ulster's weather history, as it was the day of the second great snowstorm of the terrible winter. The train from Toome back to Cookstown just made it! That evening a train on the Ballymoney to Ballycastle line was snowed in, and was stuck for days.



The red block was the main building of the school. Its red colour was a weak, flat sort of red, not by any means a bright pillar box! You entered centrally on the south side, just opposite the car. There was then a central corridor, with lockers and coat-hooks. Four rooms opened off this: the Library (with one cupboard of books) and the Lab which doubled as a lunch time staff room; on the left was the Music room (one piano) and another classroom on the right. This other classroom had been the Art room, but Art moved out to the hut beyond. The two rooms on the right had a partition between. This could be slid back to produce a large hall for morning assembly. At the far end of the corridor, steps went up to a ladies' toilet - the male staff had to do with the boys' lavatories in a block to the rear.

The chestnut tree was much loved by the pupils. Even the "hard men" loved it for its beauty in the spring and early summer, but they could still prove that they were hard men by climbing up and marking their initials on a high bough. It provided shelter from the rain on all but the wettest day, and then of course it gave an on the spot supply of conkers! The remains of the Monrush Hut are on the left - the posts on the right are the remains of the boys' bicycle shed. The girls' bicycle shed had run along the front of the fence visible to the right of the Chestnut tree. Note Swing!

Ian McNeill

I. J. Fisher & Company Ltd.

Hood and Hat Manufacturers, Cookstown

1947 - 1974

by John Devlin, Philomena Begley and Aileen Larmour



Due to the political circumstances in his native Budapest, Imre John Fisher at the age of 58 left behind his hat factory and with his family came to the disused Adair's Linen Factory in Cookstown to commence again the manufacture of furfelt hoods and hats.



These hoods were made from rabbit and hares' fur. These two types of fur were mixed together to a particular specification, formed over a large forming cone and shrunk by various reducing methods until the hood was

down to the required size for dyeing and finishing. The finished hoods were sent to various milliners and hatters for blocking into the required style of hat at the time.

Rabbit fur felt was used for the short-piled velour finish, and hares' fur for the longhaired type called Millusine quality. 95% of hoods produced were for ladies' hats, and the small number of men's hats were finished and sold to the top retail stores throughout the U.K.

The various products were named after the Solar System: Mars, Venus, Jupiter etc. The finished hoods went to milliners all over U.S.A., South Africa, Australia and Japan. During the 1950's a large extension was built to the factory which then employed over 400 people.

Fisher hoods and hats were regarded as the best, and it is interesting to note that the House of Dior in Paris and the Royal Milliners used Fisher products exclusively.

On the sports side, Fishers had a Football and skittle team which competed fairly successfully in local leagues. The Fisher staff and employees were always regarded as one big happy family. Sadly, the decline in hat wearing caused the factory to close in 1974.

FISHER'S FAMOUS SKITTLES TEAM



Front Row: Stanley Robinson, Harry Patterson, Tot Hodgett, Seamus Maguire.

Back Row: Late John Cooney, John Gilmore, Alex McCormick, Late Jim McGahan, Late Ossie Gourley, Barney Maguire, Alex Abbott, Bill Joy.



Doctor Jack Fisher is now an author. His last novel is 'One Day in Autumn.' The Editors are grateful to John Devlin for contributing this article to our Journal. Many local people have no doubt got their own memories of time spent there, and Philomena Begley, the famous and popular Country singer worked in the Hat Factory for seven years, recalling that these were the happiest seven years of her life. "The crack was good, the people were great. I enjoyed every minute of it" she writes. "There was always a laugh. One big happy family." Philomena who started in the main shop finished up in the chipping department. She used to go to Galway to sing with the Band, but was always careful to be home in time to catch the bus to work.



← Mary Lindsay and Doreen Kilpatrick. Note Fur Hoods in preparation for Hat-making.



John Devlin →

GRANGE

contributed by Ruth McKenzie & Mary Rainey

Today, the village of Grange is a quiet little hamlet. Let us remind those new to this area about where it is. Take the minor road to the left, opposite to the Fork Filling Station at the south end of the town, and 2½ miles will take you there.

It's a quiet place now, but the older people can recall different days, when this hive of activity boasted two shops, a pub, a beautiful Covenanter Church and a Public Elementary School. Today, the pub still flourishes, but the school has closed and the church has tumbled down.

The pleasant rural school up the little hill had but one classroom, and its large windows had shutters on the outside. Behind a high desk at one end of the room sat Miss Tannahill the Principal, who had driven to school in her Austin Seven. The Assistant Teacher, Miss Hutchinson who came on her bicycle taught the little ones, and she prepared the musical items for the end-of-term concerts to which everyone looked forward: children, parents and friends.



*The boys and girls who attended the former Grange Public Elementary School, near Cookstown, in the early 1920s.
Back (from left) - Russell Vance, Lena Patterson, Jean Elliott, Sadie Berkeley, Lila Vance, Alex. Dougle, Eric Dougle.
Third (from left) - Joe Mayne, Willie Elliott, Jean Currie, Albert Hutchinson, Lily Boyle, Ida Anderson, Mary Mayne, Violet Glendinning, Victor Glendinning.
Second row (from left) - Fred Glendinning, Annie Glendinning, Annie Dougle, Elizabeth Elliott, Lydia Currie, Winnie Shannon, Maisie Patterson, Winnie Glendinning, Maggie Kelly.
Seated - Lila Stewart and Noel Stewart.*

The photograph shows what a broad age-group attended a P.E. School in the Twenties. But the times they were a-changing. A new school was built outside Tullyhogue, to which pupils transferred in 1932. Maybe still, in the long summer twilight of an evening, if you listen really hard you can still hear the sound of children's voices wafting on the breeze. But this is a Historical Journal. No room for fantasies here.

The stone wall and beech trees of the graveyard run parallel to the road, and there are two entrance gates: a small single one and a pair of double gates in the centre. The church was formally closed in 1944, and the stone from the building was removed to build a family residence on the Drum Road. (see overleaf)



Chair from the old Covenanter Church



Properties from the old Covenanter Church



The Grange Church

The congregation had been a constituent member of the Reformed Presbytery when it was reorganized in the 1790's. It is thought that this church may have been founded ten years earlier through the ministry of William Staveley.

The first burial recorded is that of John Orr, the date August 1809. The last burial was that of Harold Mervyn Anderson in December, 1989. The last marriage recorded was that of the daughter of the Minister, the Reverend Robert Hawthorne Davidson. On 28th July, 1938, Margaret Evelyn Hawthorne Davidson married Thomas Rowley Booth Deans. The ceremony was conducted by the Father of the Bride, who was the last serving Minister of Grange Church, and who was buried in the graveyard.



*Wedding Photograph:
Newly Married Cherie & Rowley
Deans with James Brown & Mary Ekin*



Mr. & Mrs. Davidson



Rev. William Staveley Ferguson died in 1905, in his 95th year. His mother had been Annie Staveley, daughter of the Reverend William Staveley mentioned in the article above.

The Reverend W. S. Ferguson was Minister in Grange Reformed Church from 1844 until 1894. He was the Great-Grandfather of Mrs Mary Rainey.

HARPS CYCLING CLUB

The Harps Cycling Club, formed in the late 1940's by three local enthusiasts, the O'Neill brothers (John and Pat) and Moneymore Man, John McQuillan, gathered together some of the best cyclists in the area for some 25 years until it wound up in 1972.

In the early 1950's the club was in the capable hands of men like Jack O'Neill, Master Leyden and Gerry Long who was chairman.

The club became affiliated to the National Cycling Association of Ireland enabling it to participate in races under the Association's control throughout the whole of Ireland. Club membership to the N.C.A.I. was £5.00 with individual membership to the club being half-a-crown (12½p). The N.C.A.I. was itself affiliated to the Gaelic Athletic Association in the early days of its existence, eventually breaking away to become an independent sporting body, retaining the four provincial governing councils - Ulster, Munster, Leinster and Connaught Boards.

Cookstown's Harps Cycling Club under the Ulster Council's authority rode in green, red and white colours. Gerry Long recalls the good times in the Harps Club and its many wins at events all over the country in very tough and physically demanding sport. In those days cars weren't as commonplace as today. Club members thought nothing of cycling to Dundalk, Monaghan or even Cavan to take part in a cycle race and then cycle home again.



Norman Carmichael enjoying a cuppa with members of Harps C.C.

John O'Neill with George Bloomer after winning an Open 25 Mile T.T. on the Antrim Roads in 1949 (Time: 1.06)



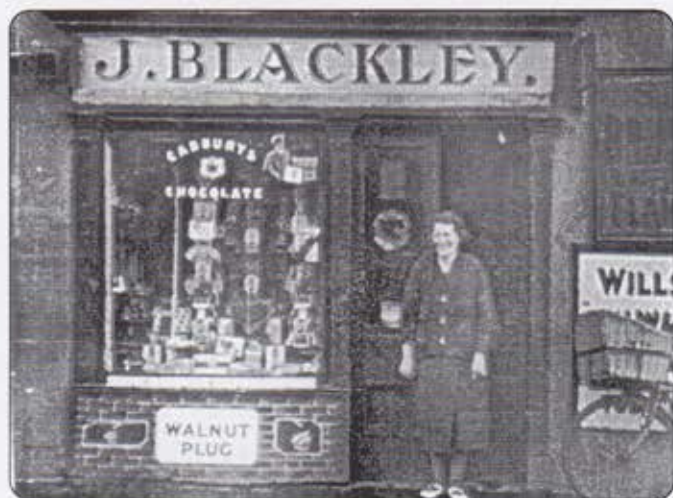
Members of Harps C.C. returning from a sports meeting



Tom Rodgers with his trophies in the 50's

Blackley's Shop

by Eddie McCartney



This photograph shows one of Cookstown's well-known family shops which served the Cookstown public so excellently for decades. Taken in the 1930's, Lucy Blackley stands in the doorway of the confectionery and tobacconists which she managed with her husband James, later joined by their son Jimmy. Former patrons will recognize the shopfront, with its advertisement for Walnut Plug, a 'pungently aromatic pipe tobacco' on display.



Mrs. Blackley was a member of the well-known Sinclair family who had a lodging house in Coagh Street, while James, a Ballymena man, had formerly been employed by the Ballymena Observer. When he came to Cookstown, about 1902, he worked as a letter-press machinist for the Mid Ulster Mail. Always enterprising, James saw opportunities locally for a hackney business, and he travelled to Manchester to purchase for £160 his first taxi, a Model T Ford. Much of his trade in those days consisted in transporting commercial travellers, who had arrived in Cookstown with their samples, about the town and surrounding district. These men might have spent several nights in one of the numerous hotels and lodging houses, as they called on customers and collected orders.

Blackley's shop opened for business in 1912, Mrs. Blackley tending the shop, James plying his hackney trade. Eventually, as business increased, both concentrated their efforts in running the shop. The premises, originally rented, were purchased from Gunning's, (Milburn Linen Factory) in 1920. Blackleys soon added, at the rear of their premises, a Billiard Hall with two tables. One, three-quarter length upstairs; a full length one downstairs, this for the more skilful players. Billiards was in those days a very popular recreation with local businessmen, who, when a billiard game was over, had the occasional game of poker. A star billiard player of the time was Alec Webb, who owned a jeweller's shop in Molesworth Street, and, an accomplished footballer, played for the Whites for many years.

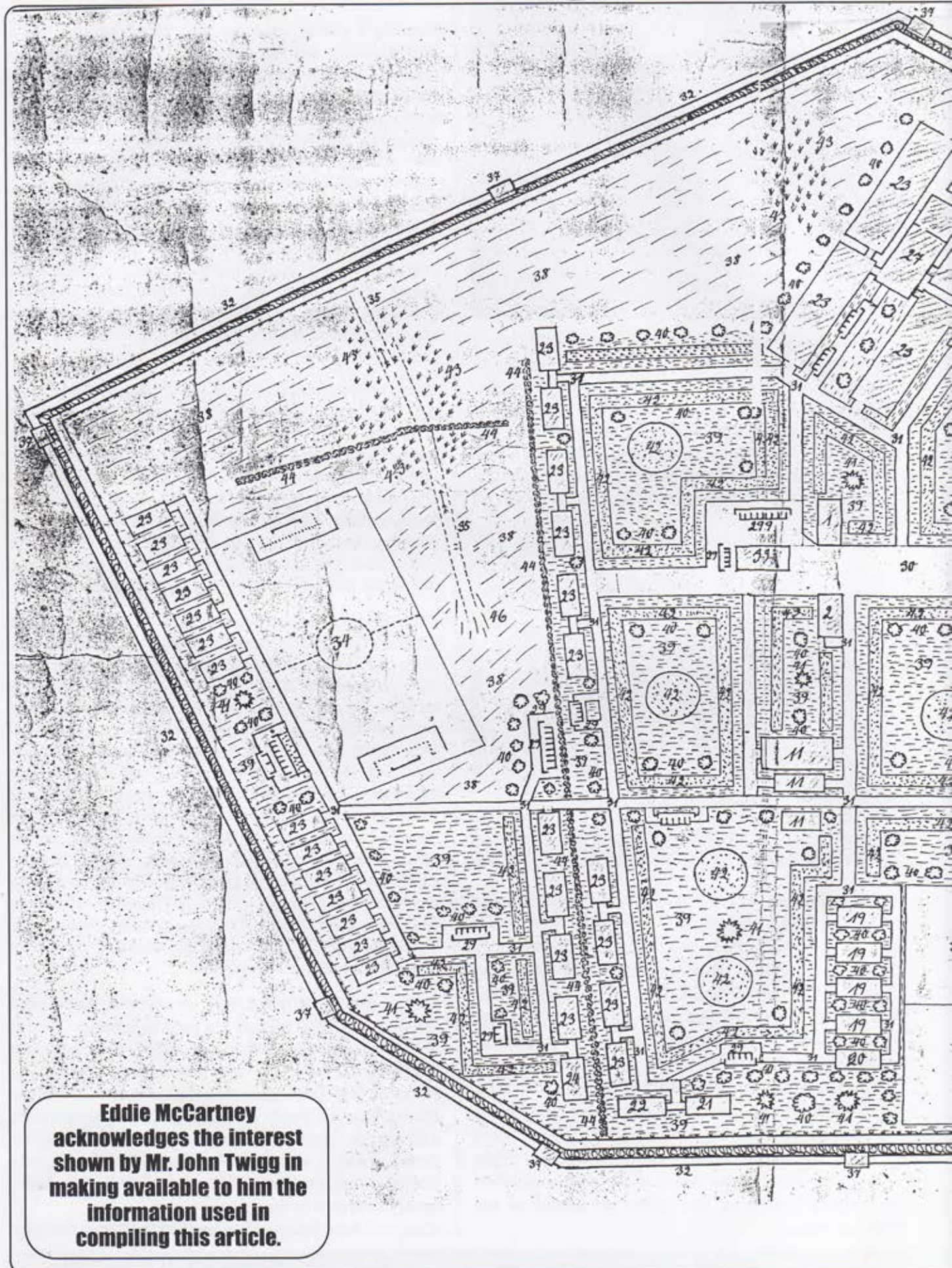
Later, under Jimmy's management, having taken over the adjoining Turkington's premises, the business expanded to include a cafe, popular for a tasty snack. One of Jimmy's innovations in 1950's was the introduction of Ice Cream, using state-of-the-art ice-cream making equipment. Originally, the ice used in the process was brought from Belfast by train in three-cwt. blocks. Jimmy gained many awards at various Food Exhibitions in London and elsewhere, as the numerous framed diplomas on display in the shop bore ample testimony.

Evenings and on Saturdays in the 1940's and 50's found the shop thronged to capacity with men customers, who often had to stand in the kitchen or ensconce themselves on any available chair. It was typical of the homely efficient informality of the shop that the proprietors were not the slightest bit perturbed by this intrusion of their living quarters. It was obvious that the customers were waiting for something. What could it be? A large package is carried in. Blackley's supply of Ireland's Saturday Night collected post haste from the Belfast train just into the station! It is the football page, not the other items of interest, which is being eagerly scrutinised. Soon the pile is considerably depleted as the contents are perused. When the results have been absorbed many lively Saturday evening debates and discussions ensued concerning the merits of the various football players and their teams.

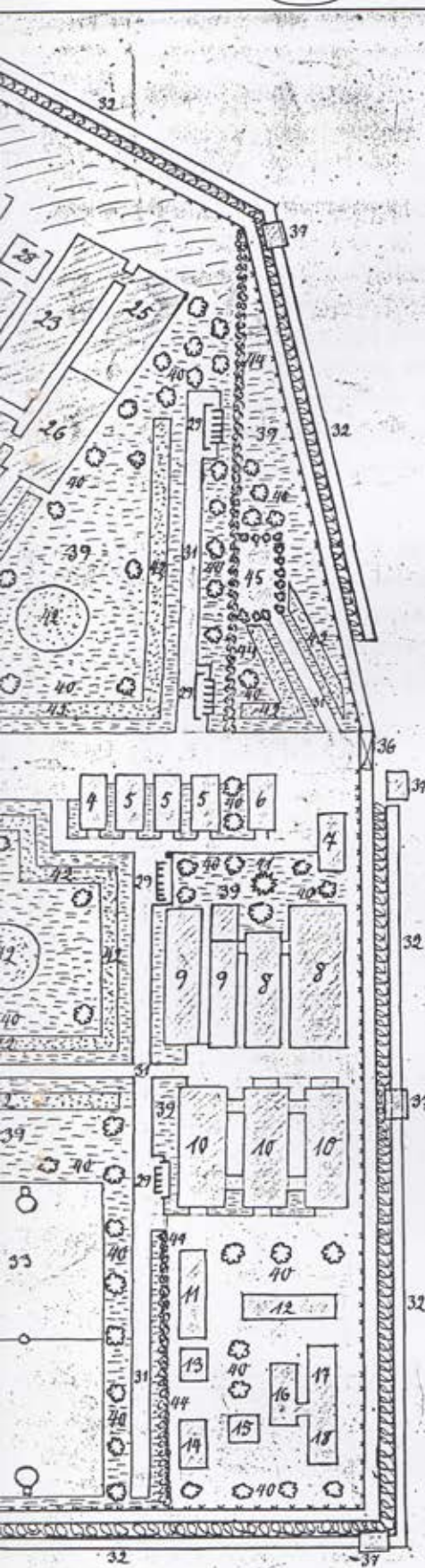
In the 1940's, at the corner of Oldtown and Coagh Streets was Paddy McRoy's, a popular hostelry. Next to it was Turkington's bicycle shop. (Remember how Ivan Bell recalled, in a previous Look Back Journal, the career of Tom Turkington the violin virtuoso?) Next was Blackley's, then Paddy Farrell's the green grocer. Paddy, a distinctive figure in the town, habitually wore breeches. Beside Paddy's was Slaine's Mistletoe Cafe. Happily, The Mistletoe is still in business, one of the few remaining family concerns in the town.

Compiled from information supplied by Jimmy Blackley

Grünanlagen des



s Lagers Monrush



- 1 Dolmetscher Office.
- 1a Interpreting Office.
- 2 Lagerführer.
- 2a Camplader Office.
- 3 Lagerraum.
- 3a Shop.
- 4 Unterrichtsraum.
- 4a Education room.
- 5 Leseraum.
- 5a Reading room.
- 6 Proviandraum.
- 6a Ration room.
- 7 Kantine.
- 7a Kanteen.
- 8 Speiseraum.
- 8a P.O.W. Dining room.
- 9 Küche.
- 9a Cookhouse.
- 10 Revier.
- 10a Hospital.
- 11 Waschraum.
- 11a Ablutions.
- 12 Baderaum.
- 12a Bathroom.
- 13 Geräteraum.
- 13a Tools.
- 14 Pfarrer.
- 14a Prissl'room.
- 15 Arzt.
- 15a med. Officer's room.
- 16 Rev. Küche.
- 16a C.R.S. Kitchen.
- 17 Stamm Speiseraum.
- 17a Staff Dining room.
- 18 Offz. Speiseraum.
- 18a Off. Dining room.
- 19 Stamm baracken.
- 19a Staff huts.
- 20 Handwerker-Baracke.
- 20a Tailors, Barbers, Shoemakers.
- 21 Friseursstube.
- 21a Barber's shop.
- 22 Schuhmacherwerkstatt.
- 22a Shoemaker's shop.
- 23 Wohnbaracken.
- 23a Huts.
- 24 Schneiderwerkstatt.
- 24a Tailor's shop.
- 25 Kirche.
- 25a Church.
- 26 Theater.
- 26a Theatre.
- 27
- 27a
- 28
- 28a
- 29 Aborte.
- 29a Latrines.
- 30 Anstehplatz.
- 30a Paradise place.
- 31 Wege.
- 31a Ways Paths.
- 32 Stacheldraht.
- 32a Wirze Paths.
- 33 Korbballplatz.
- 33a Basket place.
- 34 Fussballplatz.
- 34a Football place.
- 35 Graben.
- 35a Tranche.
- 36 Eingang.
- 36a Entrance.
- 37 Wachturme.
- 37a Watch-Tower.
- 38 Liegewiese.
- 38a Play-ground.
- 39 Rasen.
- 39a Lawn.
- 40 Laubholzer.
- 40a Tree's.
- 41 Nadelholzer.
- 41a Fir Tree's.
- 42 Blumenanlagen.
- 42a Flowerbeds.
- 43 Wasserstellen.
- 43a Marstey-ground.
- 44 Weissdornhecke.
- 44a Hedges.
- 45 Birkenplatz.
- 45a Birch tree's ground.
- 46 Wassersammlung.
- 46a Drainage.

THE INTRIGUING MAP

An article in a previous Journal about the Prisoner of War Camp at Monrush revived some people's memories of the Camp. And now a remarkable document has come to light, a detailed plan of the Camp, with a Key in both German and English. The Plan, drawn by prisoners and authorised by the Camp Commander, was given to Mr. Stewart Twigg as a memento. Mr. Twigg was the local commandant of the Home Guard and was often invited to visit and dine in the British Officers' Mess.

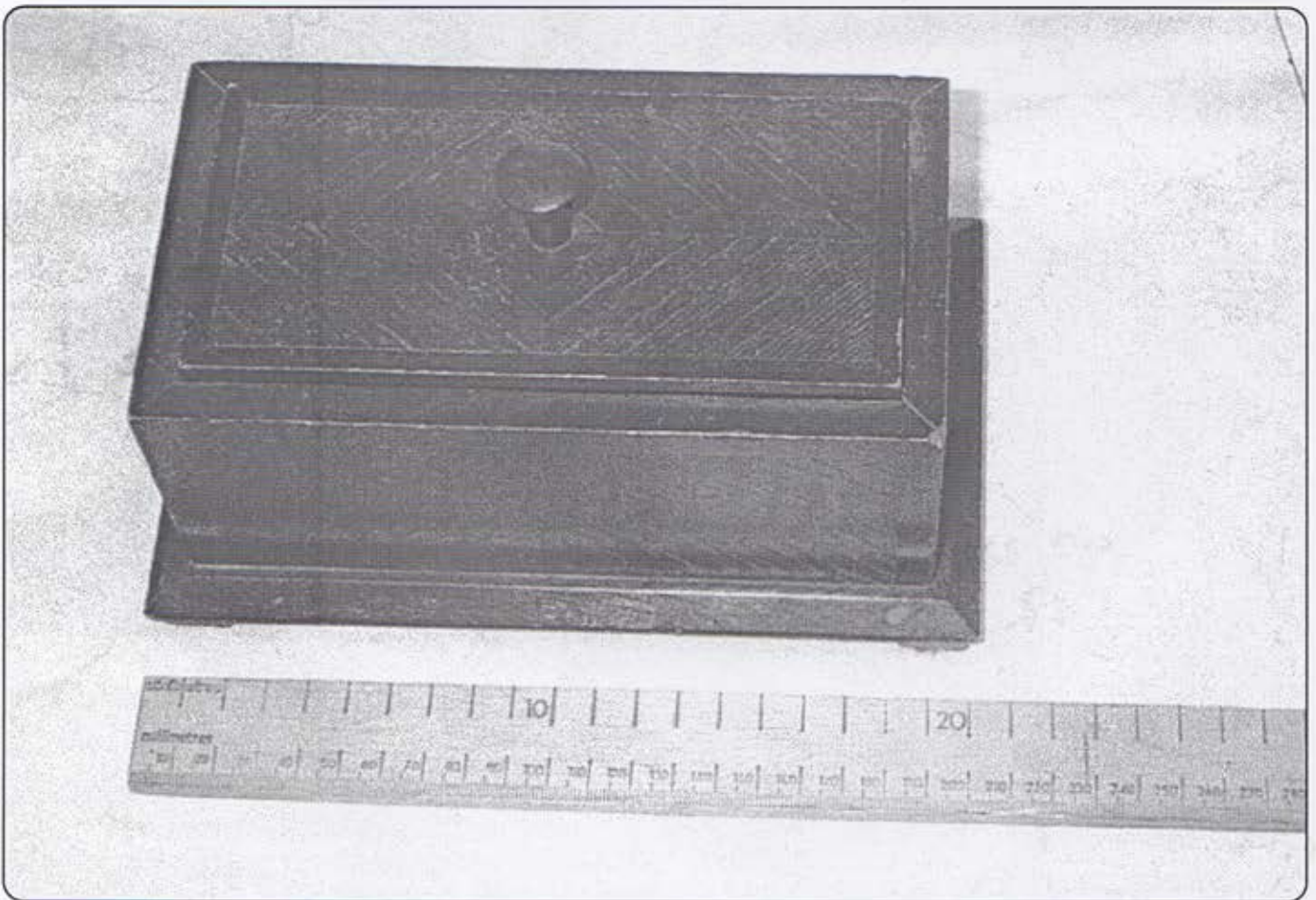
This map, which makes fascinating study, shows that the prisoners were provided with more than adequate facilities. We are indebted to the late Mr. Twigg's son, John, for passing the map to us to be reproduced in our Journal.

On one of his visits to the Camp it was mentioned to Mr. Twigg that the prisoners wanted to build a model of a Rhine Castle but that they needed a plan to work from. The problem was solved when Mr. Twigg brought along a book of Grimm's Fairy Tales which belonged to John and his sister. The book contained a picture of a Fairy

Tale German Castle and this was used as a design for the structure, which in due course stood impressively inside the Camp Entrance Gates at the Lissan Road. The castle later passed into private ownership.

Occasionally, prisoners were allowed out of Camp to perform certain duties under the supervision of a guard. One fine summer's day two P.O.W.s, professional gardeners from some German Park, arrived at the Twigg home accompanied by a soldier. The young John Twigg was greatly intrigued by these two men who spent the day happily working in the garden, only pausing to enjoy the snacks which his mother prepared for them. John vividly recalls the occasion, and how the guard was quite relaxed, having a smoke and with his rifle propped against the house wall!

The Prisoners of War made a variety of interesting objects in the Camp Workshop. We include here a photograph of a carefully crafted wooden cigarette box which was made for Mr. Stewart Twigg and presented to him on one of his visits to the Camp.



*Photograph of the wooden cigarette box which was presented to Mr. Stewart Twigg on a visit to Monrush
See overleaf for map of "Monrush Prisoner of War Camp"*

Mr. William Donnelly



by Tony McNally

*above photo taken in Tony's
Coalisland home*

I have been asked to write down as much as I know about the man known to the people of Cookstown and surrounding districts as Billy Donnelly, so I take up my pen and cast my mind back to my earliest recollection of a remarkable man who later became a good friend. I must have been about seven or eight when I first saw Billy on stage in the Convent school doing his conjuring act, and watched with amazement as he squeezed a hen's egg into the top of his head and saw him draw it out of his mouth. He produced loads of silk scarves from empty boxes, and performed other tricks known as 'close-up' or 'Drawing-Room' magic. Later, in the second half of the concert, he came on stage with his ventriloquist's dummy, and performed a very funny 'Vent' act greatly appreciated by his audience, who had already been in stitches at his earlier performance.

I was am amazed at the cleverness of the man. Later on, when my mother called at Donnelly's the butcher's, Billy might be loading up his van to go on his rounds of the outlying districts selling meat and sausages, I was amazed to find that he was just like an ordinary man.

His brother Hugh and his sister Alice ran the Butcher's shop in Molesworth Street, but if Billy was in the shop when someone came in accompanied by a child, Billy might stare at the child with concern, then reach over and extract an egg or a billiard ball from the child's ear.

In the districts where he sold meat, if a child saw his van coming, he or she would raise the cry: Here's the Magic Man!! and Billy would give an exhibition of card magic or sleight of hand for a circle of dumb-founded children.

When I finished school, I heard a rumour that our P.P Canon Hurson, was starting up an organization like the Boy Scouts. With my friends, I attended the first meeting and found it was a Catholic Action Group for young people. We were enrolled in the Young Christian Workers' Movement. I used to take part in the production

of a Variety Concert every year known as a Parents' Night. - I did 'Single Spots' performing monologues of SPOOF SERMONS or as a Quack Doctor I would sell medicine and pills. Billy Donnelly approached me to see if I would do a couple of 'Spots' at a concert for a Football Club.

That was the start of my association with Billy, and I went to dozens of concerts over the seven years until I got married and moved to Coalisland to live. Sometimes, when I was asked to appear at a Concert which seemed a bit short of a two-hour show, I would ask Billy to help out, which he always did.

Billy was a member of the Northern Ireland Magic Circle. He knew all the conjurers and illusionists travelling around Ireland, besides a lot more whom he met in England at Magicians' Conventions. In 1957, while working in Birmingham, I attended a Magicians' Convention where various conjurers and illusionists performed. I bought a Programme which showed photographs of the artists and some details. about each. When I returned home, I went to visit Billy, and gave him the programme. He opened it and his face lit up like a child's at a party as he recognized a magician he had met or one who occasionally wrote to him. Going to a chest of drawers, he opened the deepest drawer at the bottom. It was full to the brim with show-business books, letters and other memorabilia, all neatly arranged. He sorted through the letters, occasionally handing me one from some one of the magicians in the programme, some with signed photographs. He had letters from international illusionists, some of them just a few lines saying: 'I am now with Duffy's Circus, and our latest poster shows that we will be in Cookstown on the umpteenth of Judember!! Hope to visit you on that date.' That bottom drawer had dozens of books of monologues, dialogues, cross-talks, sketches, and also books of humorous songs and poetry. Billy told me

about attending a European Convention of the Magic Circle in Paris. On the first evening, he was approached by a big man who pointed to the empty seat and asked if anyone was using it. Billy said not, and the man sat down and began to chat. He asked where Billy came from, what tricks he used, etc. He asked Billy to keep a seat for him every evening, and they chatted like old friends until Friday night, when Billy's new friend didn't come in. Billy was puzzled by this, until the man's name was announced and he came on stage doing a brilliant act of 'Spoof Magic' where all his tricks went wrong and he would give what Billy called 'a big eejit of a laugh.' This had the audience of magicians in fits of laughter. Billy said, if I ever saw a poster with this man's name on it, don't miss the show. He's a big fellow, over six feet tall and he's called Tommy Cooper. I never did see him until I watched a Television programme which had a magic spot in it. When I saw the big chap with the red fez I realized I was seeing Billy's friend, and it was my turn to be in fits of laughter.

I have a lot of funny episodes about Billy in my memory. Some were told to me by other people. When Billy was a wee lad, he was playing Hide and Seek with a crowd of lads at the local Railway Station. Billy had a brilliant idea. He went onto the platform where there were empty bread hampers belonging to Brewster's and Inglis' bakeries. Billy lifted the hasp of one, raised the lid, got inside and dropped the lid down to conceal himself. It was at this juncture that his idea blew a fuse and his young life took a turn for the worse. When he had slammed down the lid, the hasp fell and dropped over its hook. Billy's pals went off when they couldn't find him. The Station Master and a porter appeared. A train rumbled in from Belfast. Billy had long since realised he was trapped, but he was afraid to call out to the staff, even when they began to move the hampers. Then it was too late!! He was packed on the train! It was when a porter opened the Guard's Van at Dungannon that Billy's cries of terror were heard and he was returned to Cookstown by the next train.

When Billy was about thirteen, he saw an advert in a Comic urging people to learn to 'throw their voices'. He wrote his address on the coupon and posted it off. About a week later, Billy's father answered the door and found a smartly dressed man who asked if he was Mister Donnelly. He stated that he had come to teach him the art of ventriloquism, as requested by Mr. William Donnelly. Suddenly the penny dropped. Billy's father said, 'Are you aware that Mr. William is a young eejit?' The man said he would have to be paid his fee and expenses, so he may as well teach the lad. And that is how Billy became a ventriloquist. (By the way, these stories about Billy's childhood I have just been told. I wasn't born at the time.)

In my last two years at school, I began to pal around with John Burke, son of the Technical school headmaster and John Mulgrew, son of Frank Mulgrew, the publican,

auctioneer and undertaker. Frank's yard had a row of stables on one side and a row of cow byres on the other. John got permission to use one of the stables as a 'den' or social room for his friends. We called it the Shamrock Club, and we kept it swept and tidy, with four beer crates for a table and extra ones as chairs. We had the idea of running a concert, and I asked Billy Donnelly if he would help, which he of course did. Billy coached us in a couple of comedy sketches. We had two other adults on the programme. Paddy McGeown entertained with songs and mouth-organ music. Bill Barrett played the violin, and then he played tunes on a carpenter's saw using his bow. We also had some Irish Dancers.

It was quite a good programme and was enjoyed by adults and children. Joe Quinn's sister mentioned it to a visiting priest, Father McSorley from the Parish of Broughderg who asked if we would stage a concert for his Parish funds. We worked on some new acts, and I asked if the six dancers could go. They got their parents' permission, so we had two car-loads of people when we went to the little hall in Broughderg, where Billy's magic and his 'Vent' act were received with thunderous applause. All the sketches, dancers, singers and musicians were loudly applauded too.

About a year later, Fr. McSorley saw a Young Christian Workers' Parents' Night and he came to my house and asked if I would stage it in his new Parish Hall at Cullion, Desertmartin. About half an hour of our Parents' Night was taken up with songs and hymns by our Y.C.M. Choir, so since we couldn't transport them to entertain, I asked Billy if he would fill the breach and again he readily agreed. As we were getting ready in the dressing rooms we heard loud talk and then laughter from the people in the hall. Looking through the curtains we saw an old lady walking with half a brush shaft. She was shouting at people she recognized, and each of her outbursts we saw caused loud laughter from the audience. We were told she was mentally retarded, but we soon twigged that she was playing up to her hearers. As the first two artists stepped on stage, she called loudly to the people: 'Oh! I wonder what this girl is going to do' or 'Look at this fellow. What's he come out for?' The poor victim had to wait for the laughter to die down. I said to Billy that the woman was a disaster and some thing would need to be done. Billy said: 'Don't worry, I'm on next. I'll shut her up alright.' When he stepped on stage with the dummy she shouted 'Oh! Will you look at the wee man?' Billy stood calmly until the laughter subsided, then said loudly, 'Would somebody give that jack-ass a wisp of dry hay to keep its mouth shut!' The audience laughed loudly and some clapped. The show went on without a sound from the old girl and I would guess she would never try her tricks at a concert again.

Around this time, there was a re-appearance of a once well-known comedian called 'Wee Teddy Linden' who was about 4 feet 10 inches and used to travel round halls in towns like Portrush, Portstewart etc. and I think his

acting was based on his size, for he dressed as a school-boy. For whatever reason, he disappeared from the theatre scene for some years. He was married and had a little boy and girl about eight or nine years of age. He had a singing act on stage when he arrived at Killeenan Hall with his wife, mother-in-law and children. How long he was there I don't know, but I believe he was in debt and hadn't enough money for travel. He rang Billy whom he knew and asked for help. Billy came to ask if I would help with a couple of comedy spots and if my two friends would join in as well. I approached them and they agreed so my friends James Brennan and his cousin Paddy Murphy, now sadly deceased, brought their guitars and we performed our Hill-Billy act at the concert on the following Sunday night. On the next Friday, Billy came to me with the news that 'Wee Ted' had moved a few miles to Keenaghan and was stuck again for money and needed our help. So we went back and staged our acts again. What money the show raised for him I do not know, but a fortnight later, Billy told me he had just had a letter from Teddy, asking if he would send him £50. Billy was fuming and said, 'Teddy thinks that I'm a soft touch and he's the sort who likes to milk the ould cow dry.' Though Billy seemed offended about the begging letter, I would hazard a guess that Bill sent on some money, for he really was a soft touch and I am sure thought of Teddy's two children.



*Two Cookstown Comedians!
"Jimmy Cricket" Jim Mulgrew and myself taken after
the Glasgow Pantomime*

Billy liked people! No matter who they were, he made no distinction between the people he met or entertained in either Hibernian or Orange Halls, and in return he was respected wherever he went. He was often called upon to appear in concerts staged in the First Presbyterian Church Hall just across the Fair Hill Road from his house. Once when he was to appear, he was struck down by illness and had to get his brother Hugh to explain the

case to the Hall Committee spokesman. On the evening of the show Nurse Donnelly, Billy's sister, was feeding the hens in the garden when she heard Billy's distinctive voice coming over loud speakers in the hall. She hurried down to the house in a rage, and said to her sister Alice, 'You'll never believe this but your idiotic brother has sneaked from his sick-bed and is over in the Hall acting the eejit.' They rushed up the stairs and found Billy lying reading. When they told him what Mamie the nurse had heard, Billy went into kinks laughing and said, 'That will be George Hanna impersonating me.'

George Hanna was the compere and stand-up comic at Protestant concerts and a great friend of Billy's. He went to visit Billy to find out his state of health. Mamie told George she was newly distracted with Billy's refusal to take the tablets which she had got for him. He could be very stubborn. When George was talking to Billy, he said it wasn't right to refuse what was necessary for his recovery. Billy said he always hated taking pills and tablets. George said, 'There's nothing to it. Look here, Billy, I'll make a bargain with you. If you take one of them, I'll take two.' Billy agreed with a broad smile on his face, for he knew he had been told the tablets were for someone very badly constipated. For the next two days, George had to stay very close to a toilet!

There was an Englishman who resided in Cookstown for some time. Billy offered to take him out to some of the best fishing places. On the first day, Billy took from his bag an enormous load of sandwiches, beef, ham and chicken. He asked Mr. Veggar to select his choice. Mr. Veggar thanked him but said he'd come prepared. He produced his sandwiches, with loads of green leaves bulging out. Billy, eyeing these vegetarian delights, said, 'If you'd told me in time, I would have brought a rope and tethered you out with those cows over there.'

Once during wartime he was driving to Belfast with a load of meat from cattle illegally killed on a farm. A few miles from the city he spied a young man thumbing a lift. Billy picked him up, and when he was driving through the outskirts the young chap said his destination was a side street round the next corner. Billy drove on, turned the corner and stopped. Just then, he spotted two constables about twenty yards away looking towards the van. As the lad thanked him he replied, 'May the devil trip you anyway. You made me stop right in front of two big Grassies, and me with a van-load of beef on the Darkie'. The expression GRASSIES meant Grasshoppers, i.e. Coppers, and DARKIE meant Black-market. Once while fishing, a bus-load of anglers from a club arrived and spread out up and down the river. To Billy's disgust they began SPINNING, and the lines with lead weights flew over the river surface like bullets. One chap, having a break, came over to Billy, and during his conversation he mentioned that the fish weren't rising. Billy said, 'I don't blame them. They're afraid to pop up their heads in case they get their brains smashed out with a chunk of lead!'

One of Billy's angling friends, Jimmy Craig of Killymoon street, told me of an encounter with Billy as he was cycling past his house. Billy called him, so Jimmy went over to Billy's garden wall where Billy was taking a breather, prepared either to hear some jokes or some fishing tales. Billy said, 'Oh Jimmy, you missed a good evening's fishing on such-a-day (mentioning the day). I was out fishing at the Ballinderry and had cast a line in a nice quiet spot. Within twenty minutes I got a bite that nearly pulled me in. I wrestled and fought for about five minutes and pulled one out that was about that size (indicating the size with his hands wide apart.) Jimmy said, 'You were very lucky, Billy, and what you should do now is dry it out on the hearth-stone for a couple of days, and when it's chopped up it should light your fire for five or six days.' That was the sort of witty reply Billy had expected from Jimmy who was noted for his quick wit and dry humour, such as the day he got stung while working on an outside job. He gave a loud gasp. When asked was it a wasp or a bee which stung him, 'I don't know, but it was either a wasp or a fly with very sharp feet.'

Billy was one of Cookstown's best known and wittiest characters and was an Irish speaker. He asked me once if I would go with him to spend an evening with Peadar Haughey and his wife, the last two native Irish speakers in Tyrone. When Billy was studying Irish he used to spend occasional evenings with them to 'hone up' his language and dialect. On the appointed evening, he was greeted like a son and the three of them were chatting there with tongues going like handbells. There were two girls there from a neighbouring house who danced Irish Jigs and Reels. The old couple did step-dances, sang solos and duets. I sang some Hill-Billy songs with my guitar, and some comic songs as well. I really enjoyed that evening, thanks to Billy and that lovely old couple. All three have long ago gone to their Eternal Reward and I hope they are now sitting in a corner of Paradise chatting away in their native Tyrone dialect.

May they rest in Peace.

Tony McNally is one of the family of ten of Jimmy and Annie McNally of Cookstown. He now lives in Bradford, but we think from his writing that he left his heart in Cookstown, where he keeps in close contact with his friend Paschal Rushe, who asked him to contribute this article.



Tony's nephew Bernard was a footballer, captain of Shrewsbury before being transferred to West Bromwich. He was in the Northern Ireland squad which went to Mexico, and has been on 'This is Your Life.'



Bernard McNally with wife and family at a family 'get-together' of the McNallys held at the social hall of the 'Blarney Stone' in Birmingham, 1995.

Did you know!

That water from the Barrel Well and McGeagh's Well, in the townland of Coolreagh, was brought by cart to the town and sold from the cart in the Oldtown. This was good drinking water, and the wells never ran dry. Of course this predated Montober.

That William Street and James Street are called after members of the Stewart Family, associated with Cookstown since the castle at Ballymenagh was built about 1619. The family later moved to Killymoon. Eldest sons in alternate generations were called William and James.

That a stranger came to visit Cookstown. First person of whom he asked "Am I in Cookstown yet?" replied "Oh no. This is the Blue Doors!" (or "Duir"). Later he asked again, "Am I in Cookstown?" Answer, "This is Gortalowry, sir". Later, "Where am I? Is this Cookstown?" Answer, "This is Loy you're at". "Where now?". "The Oldtown!"

When he reached the Moneymore Road, the stranger was both surprised and annoyed. "I have evidently walked through Cookstown," he said, "and nobody even told me!"

Silver Jubilee Celebrations 1935

COOKSTOWN STYLE

An account written by Nancy Hutchinson, the late sister of our correspondent, Ruth McKenzie, when as a schoolgirl she saw it all.

The Cookstown district paid tribute to the King and Queen, on Monday, the 6th May, the occasion of the Silver Jubilee. People rejoiced at their being spared to reign for 25 years on the throne, and enjoying such good health.

From early morning till late at night, the streets were crowded. Never had such a crowd of people been seen in Cookstown for a long time. Happily it was a beautiful day, and the streamers, bunting and other decorations fluttering in the spring breeze made a sight long to be remembered.

Almost every house was decorated. Some had photographs of the King and Queen in their windows. The Cenotaph was surrounded by a draped balustrade swathed with the royal colours, and at night it was lit up by floodlights.

At 10.30am the programme began with a short service held at the Cenotaph. Then followed a parade of ex-Servicemen led by Killymoon Flute Band, followed by the Girl Guides, under Miss Rhoda Anderson, then First Cookstown Boys' Brigade led by Derryloran Flute Band. The procession paraded to Derryloran Parish Church for a united service of thanksgiving and prayer. At the conclusion of the service, the march re-formed and paraded back to the Cenotaph, where they were dismissed. The next event would not begin until 2.30pm.

At half past two, the school children of Cookstown and district assembled in the Market Yard. From there, headed by Cookstown Pipe Band they went to the Parish Hall, where all were entertained to tea. Each child received a Jubilee Mug and a bag of sweets.

Starting in the evening at 6.30 was a cycle and fancy dress parade. All gathered in the Market Yard, and then

after parading through the streets to the Fair Hill, followed by a large crowd, they were judged, and prizes were awarded to the best in each section.

The evening continued with a parade of four local bands: Cookstown Pipe Band, Tamlaghtmore Brass, Killymoon and Derryloran Flute. Each band had a following of supporters, and as they paraded past the supporters would cheer and clap.

By this time, darkness was falling, the windows became ablaze with lights, some with the flicker of candles. It was now 10.45 and there was no moon. A single rocket was fired, the signal to light the bonfire. The flames leapt fifty feet into the air, sending forth showers of sparks. More rockets were sent up, cutting the darkness with their bright sharp light. At last the rockets ceased, the bonfire burned down, people started to return home, tired but extremely happy. The Jubilee will be remembered by all, as a day of pleasure and great rejoicing.

Editor's Note: The report of the Jubilee Celebrations in the Mid Ulster Mail adds the following details to Nancy's account:

A thousand Jubilee Mugs had been delivered, 1300 children came. This caused great disappointment and it didn't only happen in Cookstown. So great was the under estimate of numbers that the Pottery in Stoke had to do a complete re-run.

Two decorated floats accompanied the Fancy Dress Parade. The first was the Lorry of Mr. Robert McGucken. It was called 'Covered Wagon' and amongst those on the Wagon was little Ivor McGucken. The other float which came from Donaghmore was full of Irish Colleens advertising Colleen Soap. Thelma McGucken went as Miss Amy Johnston in flying gear and young Ivan Bell modelled 'A Clean Sweep'

Some person who climbed Slieve Gallion on Jubilee Night for a better view counted close on a hundred bonfires.

Cookstown Silver Band

William Bownes and William Bleeks



Cookstown Silver Band - 1950

Front Row: J. McDowell (Dec'd), J. Forrest (Dec'd), B. Bleeks, I. Scott, S. Blackley, R. Bell, N. Simpson, S. Black (Dec'd), S. McKinney
2nd Row: C. Renyolds (Dec'd), B. Simpson, F Greer (Dec'd), H. McLernon (Dec'd), W. Bownes, W. Rankin,
R. McDowell, D. Shannon, I. Faulkner (Dec'd), D. McKinney
Back Row: N. Bownes, T. Forrest, R. Greer, B. Thompson, G. Forrest, B. Forrest, S. Stewart, B. Creighton, R. Greer
W. Wilson (Dec'd), J. Armstrong

Mr John McDowell, who was a member of Mountpottinger Salvation Army Band, saw the need for a brass band in Cookstown when he moved to the town from Belfast. Following a meeting of interested persons in the Council Chamber at Molesworth Street in the year 1948, it was decided to form a band to be known as Cookstown Silver Band. Its aims and objectives were to further the art of brass band music among the young and not so young in the district and to assist pupils from the local schools in their musical skills. The latter was greatly appreciated by their music teachers and in fact a former Band Conductor was responsible for the formation of a school band attached to Cookstown High School. The Band has attracted learners from the schools despite many counter-attractions. The first set of instruments was purchased from Mayers and Harrison in 1949 at a cost of £475. Shortly afterwards, a set of second-hand English Police uniforms were purchased from Mr James Carnaghan, Cookstown. Band practices are held on Monday nights, the attendances of which are well maintained. Rented accommodation was taken at Coagh Street and William Street and eventually a Nissan Hut was acquired at Fairhill Road. In 1971, a site was purchased at Park Avenue on which to erect a new Band Hall. The Band was fortunate in having members who gave of their time and skills to build the hall at a cost of £3,000.

The Band has had a total of four uniforms since its formation; the present one having been purchased in 1992. It was decided to enter for the Parkmount Contest in Portadown and prizes were awarded in 1950, 51 and 52. John McDowell, the foundation conductor, died in 1954 and his son Raymond was appointed to fill his late father's footsteps. He will be remembered for his capabilities in composing some of the Band's marches and other tunes. Because of other commitments, he tendered his resignation. The Band was fortunate to obtain the services of Mr William Newell as its conductor. Subsequently, Mr John Robinson was appointed to the post. The present conductor is Mr Jim Armstrong under whose baton the Band has reached a high standard of performance. The type of music played consists of marches, selections and sacred tunes. The main engagements since its formation are Christmas Carols at the town's Christmas tree; Remembrance Sunday parades and services at the Cenotaph; indoor and outdoor concerts; Church services; programmes at Nursing Homes and Sheltered Housing; parades for youth organisations. The Band was honoured in being asked to attend civic functions including the visit to the town of the Duke of Edinburgh; Festival of Britain 1951; community hymn singing; welcome home to Cookstown in 1949 of Able-seaman Murphy who was aboard the H.M.S. Amethyst; official opening of the

Royal British Legion premises at Burn Road by Sir Ian Fraser in 1954. A complete set of new instruments was purchased in 1995, the total cost of which was grand aided by the foundation for sport and the arts. In 1998, a social evening was held in the Royal Hotel to mark the

50th anniversary of the formation of the Band. It was pleasing to have twelve former members in attendance together with two foundation members - Billy Bleeks and Billy Bownes, the former of whom still plays with the Band - marching excluded!



Cookstown Silver Band - 2000



Long Service members of Cookstown Silver Band



Former members of Cookstown Silver Band



Cookstown Silver Band on parade at the opening of the Queen Elizabeth II Orange Hall at Moree in 1952

Composed by William Bleeks and William Bownes - January 2002

Photographs courtesy of Mid-Ulster Mail

"COOKSTOWN CONNECTIONS"

The Goldfinches' Story

Mrs Dolling
has contributed
this article

WHICH BEGINS ON THE ISLAND OF TASMANIA

Travelling eastward from Fingal for a distance of five miles along the Esk Highway one crosses the Break o'Day River on a narrow bridge and about a mile farther along the road arrives at the iron gate of Killymoon; these gates are said to have been landed from a ship at Falmouth on the east coast of Tasmania.

A long approach road leads to the house in its setting of trees. It has an air of importance and dignity and is said to have been built in the style of Killymoon Castle, Cookstown and dates from 1840.



*Front View of
Killymoon Castle,
Tasmania*

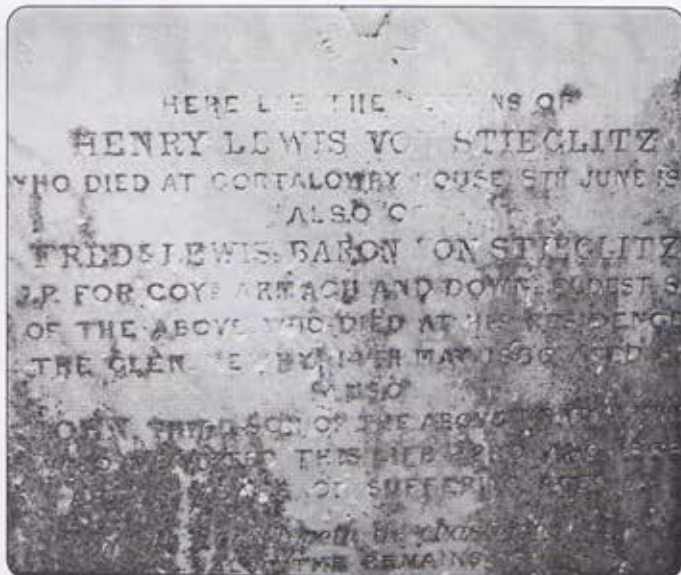
The choice of the name for this impressive homestead was due to the arrival in Cookstown in 1802 of Baron Heinrich Ludwig von Stieglitz who moved from Pilsen in Bavaria to a property called Lewis Hill in the townland of Derrycrummy. Nine years later his family took up residence in Gortalowry House where the Baron died on the 8th June 1824 and was buried in what is now Derryloran Old Churchyard.

The family had little money and three of the sons decided to emigrate to Tasmania and arrived at Hobart in the "Lion" on the 7th August, 1829. Frederick received a grant of 2,000 acres on the Break O'Day river which he named Killymoon and here he built his big house. F.L. as he was commonly called married a wealthy widow, a Mrs. Ransom who had previously owned an inn and was famous for her cooking so he was able to increase his property by a further 3,000 acres.

In 1841 he was appointed a Justice of the Peace and in 1851 was elected to represent Fingal in the first elective council. When his wife died in 1857 he sold the property to his stepson Thomas Ransom and returned to N. Ireland. Killymoon has remained the property of the Ransom family to the present day.

Back in the Old Country he assumed his title of Baron and in 1859 he married Hester Blacker, a member of an old Cookstown family. Frederick died in 1899 at his residence The Glen, Newry and was buried in the family vault in Cookstown. Two of his brothers also share this grave - John who died in 1866 and Robert who was J.P. for Down and died in Kilkeel in 1876.

The family tomb in Derryloran Old Churchyard is worth a visit. On its elaborate crest is the motto SPES MEA IN DEO. The shield is surmounted by a helmet with visor and crown; above this an arm rises at an angle - it holds a small dagger. Here too we see the Stieglitz, or Goldfinch, the lively brightly coloured little bird who shares its name with this distinguished and much-travelled family.



*These photographs by
 Norman Bell show Von
 Stieglitz Tomb in Derryloran
 Old Churchyard and the Old
 Graveyard at Grange*



THE BAREFOOT BARONET...

contributed by Mrs. Hazel Dolling



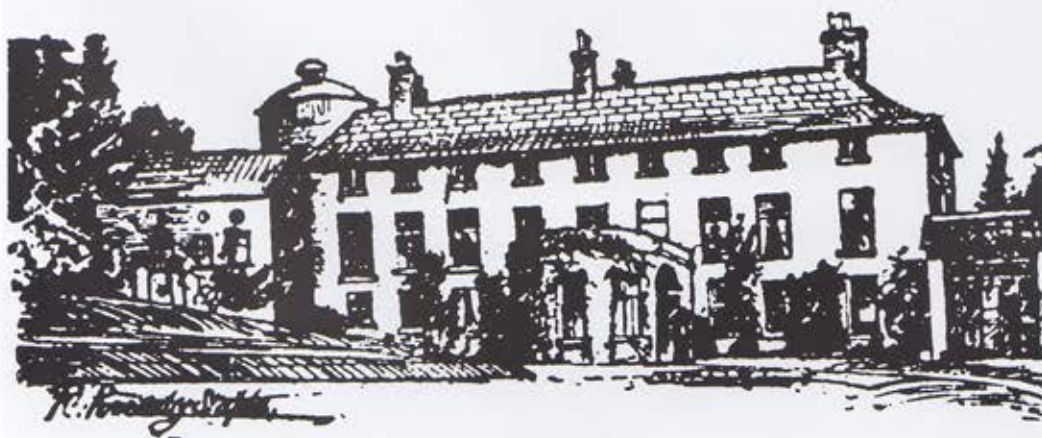
Sir Robert Ponsonby Staples walked about in his bare feet for many years of his long life. In an article for the Sunday Dispatch, written in April 1933 when he was 79 years old, he wrote: 'Many people laughed at me for walking in my bare feet, taking it as an eccentric habit. Doctors laugh too....'

This habit had come to Sir Robert Ponsonby Staples accidentally. After trying out a pair of Russian sandals, the irritation of sand and grit inside encouraged him to take the sandals off. But he carried with him a pair of slippers to put on, should the cold become too intense.

The new habit continued, despite puzzled stares and amusement. The 'Barefoot Baronet' continues: 'It is a scientific fact that the ground is more highly charged with natural electricity early in the morning than later in the day. Being bare-footed, I am always in electric contact with the ground and with any radioactive properties that are there... Rheumatism and Lumbago

become non-existent', and the newspaper article was entitled: THE SIMPLE WAY TO HEALTH. LAUGH AWAY- BUT I NEVER HAVE COLD FEET

Sir Robert Ponsonby Staples was a fine artist and a very human man. A keen observer of people and their mannerisms, he brought all sorts of characters of the Edwardian era to life with humour, talent and charm in sketchbooks of his travels in England, Ireland, Holland and France. His candid portrayal of people from all walks of life has lent to his artistic output a very human appeal.



Miss Hazel Marion Staples, 28 year old senior assistant purser abroad the Queen Mary, who hurried ashore before the liner sailed yesterday carrying one of Mr. Churchill's shoes. The zipper on the shoe - which makes up one of the Premier's favourite pairs - had stuck. She took it to a shoe makers in Southampton, had it repaired and was back on board before the liner was due to sail. Miss Staples, who has been with the Cunard Company for four years is the daughter of Sir Robert Staples, of Barkfield, Freshfield Road, Formby, Lancashire.

DRUM

Aileen Larmour, assisted by Kathleen Lees



Drum Manor Forest Park is much enjoyed and well frequented at all seasons of the year by people who live locally, and who come to walk, to socialize and to picnic. Many who visit come from a distance, as a glance at the number plates in the Car Park on a busy weekend show. Some motorists may have stopped off for a picnic, to break a long journey, and their pleasant memories of wood-land, lawns and lakes in dappled sunshine make them determined to come again. At Drum, you'll meet people interested in tree species and woodland management. You'll meet butterfly enthusiasts and bird watchers and toddlers who come with their parents to feed the ducks. I even met a musician once who thought the background of spring morning birdsong would enhance the tape he was making.

But how many people know a lot about the history of this Forest Park, opened to the public in its present form in 1970? When was the Manor constructed, and by whom? Who planted the old trees, laid out the lawns and designed the ornamental lakes?

Drum Manor was formerly, we are told, a section of the

territory of the O'Hagans of Tullyhogue. After the Rebellion of 1641, the lands were forfeited to the Crown from the Earls of Tyrone, the then owners. Some time later, Kildress Parish, of which Drum is part, came to be called Manor Richardson, for King Charles had granted it to a gentleman of that name.

It is claimed that the Manor House was built by Major Richardson Brady in 1829, the four-storey tower being added some forty years later by Viscount Stuart later Earl of Castlestuart whose seat locally is near Stewartstown. He had married Augusta Richardson Brady in 1866.

One of their two daughters, Lady Muriel Albany Stuart married Major Maxwell Close in 1891, and with the mention of her name we come within the range of family reminiscence and memory today. Some old people remember Lady Muriel in their early childhood, a gentle person who loved flowers and small animals. She visited Glenarney School frequently, telling the children (and they never forgot) not to put a collar on a cat, in case the animal climbed a tree, had an accident and got strangled.

Lady Muriel disliked cut flowers for their lives, she said, were gone when their stems were cut. The walled gardens of Drum owe much to her thought and care. Lady Muriel was President of Kildress Mothers' Union and she held some of the meetings at Drum. These were much enjoyed.

Let us imagine that we enter the Manor through the imposing porch. We stand in a large central hall overlooked by a balcony where many fine oil paintings, including family portraits are displayed. Here stands a baby grand piano. Someone is evidently a musician. We glimpse a magnificent marble fireplace in the drawing room, and there is rich oak panelling in the library. The lawns slope away from the back of the house, merging into parkland with fine trees and at the foot of the slope, three lakes have been created, the largest being big enough for a boathouse with its small rowing boat, the smallest called by some Kitty's Lake, perhaps after Catherine, wife of Archibald Close, whom we must now meet.

Major Maxwell Close had come from Drumbanagher, near Poyntz-pass in County Armagh to live at Drum, on his marriage to Lady Muriel. They had a family of four: Captain Maxwell Close, who lived in Drumbanagher, two daughters later Ladies Smith and Hallihan who visited Drum occasionally, and the youngest was Archibald. Archie married a Stornaway nurse in 1936. It's a small world!

A Nursing Sister who had come from Stornaway was working in a local hospital, and was able to tell her friends hereabouts of the 'tall young fella from Ireland' who was come a-courting a Stornaway lass called Catherine McSween.

Like his mother, whose favourite walk with her dog was from the Gate Lodge along the tree-lined shady road to Drum Bridge, Archie loved walking, and he seems to have combined a love of walking with a love of music. It is recalled that he enjoyed playing the bagpipes as he

took a mile-long midnight stroll from one gate lodge to the other. He died in 1988: his wife nine years later. Archie and Catherine are buried in a vault in Clare Churchyard, while Lady Muriel, who died of pneumonia in early 1928 aged fifty was buried as was her husband, in Drumbanagher.

Up until the 1930's there were probably as many as twenty-five people employed indoors to staff the Manor House. Among these were a butler, a footman, a cook (Mrs.Beckett is remembered) maids Sydney West from Armagh, Nellie Houston and Mary Conlon who married Johnny Ferson. Sam Cowan the breadman with his horse drawn vehicle and Bob Ford with his bicycle are remembered too. Old Glenarney pupils remember summer picnics on the lawn, with lemonade and some of Mrs.Beckett's buns.

The estate was extensively farmed. There were two farmyards, now the car parks. There were many outdoor workers. Today's main car park was originally the coach yard where there were stables with living quarters for the grooms. The three farm horses were shod by William J. Cander of Knockaleary. The land-steward's house still stands in the Shrub Garden, its last occupant as Land steward a Mr. White.

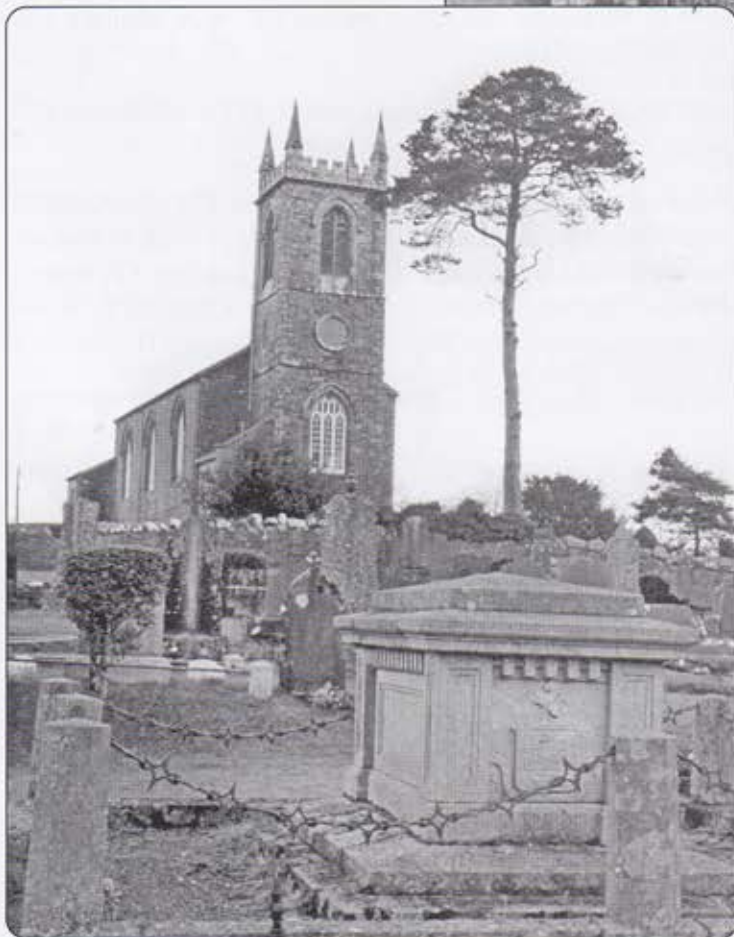
In Archie's time, and this included the Second World War with the occupation of Drum by military personnel from both sides of the Atlantic, the house had fallen into a state of some disrepair. When the house and grounds became the property of a Government department, it was decided that the house would be too costly to restore and maintain. It was decided, while retaining something of the facade and shell, to replace the material internal structure with a landscaped garden, somewhat Japanese in style. This is how the building remains, although contemporary thinking might not have arrived at the 1960's architectural conclusion. The Tower still stands and the whole is maintained by the Forest Service of Northern Ireland.



The Vault in Clare Churchyard



*The Coats
of Arms*



*Kildress
Parish Church*

LEO BELL

This photograph shows Cookstown man Leo Bell with an army mate on patrol in the Malayan Jungle in 1949. Leo served with the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers from 1947 to 1953. The original photograph was discovered by Paul and Sinead Rushe while on a visit to Enniskillen War Museum. Paul and Sinead had a copy made and this they presented to Leo.



COOKSTOWN FOOTBALL CLUBS OF YESTERYEAR

Football has been a passion in Cookstown down the years, and if you go back more than a hundred years, it is clear that football was just as popular a part of the Cookstown sporting scene as it is today.

Take the year 1895, for instance, 107 years ago. That year, the most prominent of the number of football teams that existed was COOKSTOWN ATHLETIC. Certainly a list of its office bearers reads like a Who's Who of Cookstown at that time. And it is interesting and significant that the names of many office-bearers of the various teams of that period are names still common in the town more than 100 years later.

1895's Office-bearers were:

COOKSTOWN ATHLETIC FOOTBALL CLUB: Baron Dunleath (Patron), J.B. Gunning-Moore, D.L., J.P., (President), Hugh Adair, J.P., T.L. Corbett, F.P. Gunning, J.P., W. Leeper, J.P., C.L. Magill, J.P., W.A. Munnis, Col. W.H. Poë C.B., Sir N.A. Staples, Bart., D.L., J.P., (VICE PRESIDENTS)

First Eleven: D.H. Hamilton, (CAPTAIN), S. Morton, (VICE CAPTAIN), W.H. Montgomery, (TREASURER), J.M. Stevenson, (FINANCIAL SECRETARY).

Cookstown Athletic also had a Second Eleven which played under the name of Blackburn Rovers. The reason for the choice of this prestigious name was that Blackburn Rovers were the most famous English League Club of that era. In the years from 1883 until 1891 Blackburn Rovers won the F.A. Cup six times, playing as Blackburn Olympic in 1883. Blackburn Rovers, ie Cookstown Athletic Second Eleven had on its team list A. McNally (Captain), J. Moore, (Vice Captain), M. Quinn, (Match Secretary), and its Committee consisted of these office bearers and H. Forrest, J. Mason, A. McCrum, J. Smith and M. Quinn. Its playing grounds were listed as Glenavon.

Other Cookstown Football teams of 1895 were:

COOKSTOWN OLYMPIC FOOTBALL CLUB: John Toner (Captain), Wm. Frazer (Vice Captain), John Scott (Treasurer), Hamilton Clements (Secretary). Playing Grounds: Milburn Street

GREENVALE SWIFTS FOOTBALL CLUB: Dan McGuckin (Captain), Robert McCrum (Vice Captain), John Loudon (Treasurer), Joseph McGucken (Secretary). Playing Grounds: Coolkeighan (Editor asks: Where's that?)

KILLYMOON RISING STARS FOOTBALL CLUB: Robert Thomson (Captain), Wm. McFadden (Vice Captain), William J. Harkness (Treasurer), W.J. Clarke (Secretary).

MOUNTJOY ROVERS FOOTBALL CLUB: Joseph Glackin (Captain), Nicholas Ward (Treasurer), David Watterson (Secretary).

There follows a selection of photographs of Cookstown Football Teams of later years, whose players, long before Match of the Day, entertained the sporting public with their considerable footballing skills.

Eddie McCartney

Local Football



Hotspurs F.C. Mid 1950's

Back Row L to R: Billy Gamble, Tom Wilson, Jim McKinney, Jack Harris, Allen McClay, Dessie Scott
Front Row L to R: Tommy Campbell, Sinclair Allen, Harry Mitchell, Cecil Purdy, Bertie Fraser



Bacon Factory Football Team 1961

Back Row L to R: T. Howard (Manager), R. Speirs, P. Rushe, S. Creighton, R. Hamilton, T. McGeown, N. Lindsay
Front Row L to R: J. Hill, G. Larmour, J. McNickle, M. Hamilton, J. Taylor, J. Charlton (Mascot: G. Nelson)



Bilberet (Drapersfield) 1954

Back Row L to R: T. Leonard, B. Larmour, B. McElvogue, J. Hunter, R. Harvey, R. Robinson, G. Ruddell, J. Hunter, A. Donnelly, N. Leonard, P. Hunter, B. Dent.

Front Row L to R: T. McElvogue, J. Lees, P. McCaffrey, R. McNicholl, T. Patterson, H. Leonard, J. Conlon.



Townsend F.C.

Back Row L to R: John Cooney, Ronnie Carson, Billy Carson, Geordie Ruddell, Ossie Gourley, Pat McCaffrey, Mr. Gourley.

Front Row L to R: Harold Leonard, Malcolm Allen, Benny McGeagh, Jim Bell, Joe Anderson, Joe Currie.



Boys' Brigade 1st Cookstown Battalion Mid Ulster Shield 1969

Back Row L to R: David McWhirter, Sam Gibson, Derek Anderson, Thomas Megarry, Alan Anderson, Derek Earls

Front Row L to R: Richard Earls, Mark Burns, Gary Black, Norman Purdy, William Campbell, Gary Robinson



Derryloran Football Club

Back Row L to R: J. Curran, S. Lewis, T.J. Atcheson (Treasurer), J. Newberry (Trainer), D. Major, H.S.E. Elliott, H. Toughill, T.M. Coffey, J. Mason, J. O'Neill
 Middle Row L to R: W. Smyth, R. Holly, W.R. Loughran, J. Cochrane, S. McAlister, S. McKeown, A. Ramsey, W.H. Newell, T. Darragh, J. Smith, J. Corey
 Front Row L to R: H.G. Fitzsimons, P. Rodgers, W. Wilson, J. Allen (Secretary), E.S.T. Cooper (Captain), R.J.S. Allen, J. Quinn, W. Gough



Members & Officials of Cookstown United F.C. (Winners of Dungannon & District League Cup)

Back Row L to R: B. Armstrong, B. Somerville, S. Taylor, A. Thompson (Junior), I. Scott, S. Creighton, N. Harvey, A. Thompson (Senior), N.K., N.K.
 Front Row L to R: T. Wilson, T. Hodgett, D. Scott, O. Gourley, R. Creighton, B. Joy, W. Cameron



Drapersfield F.C. 1952

Back Row L to R: W. Kidd, A. Donnelly, R. Harvey, G. Ruddell, F. Curran, J. Hunter
 Front Row L to R: P. McCaffrey, J. Bell, H. Leonard, T. Richmond, T. Patterson, S. Glackin

'THEY HIRIED HIREE OUT'

See old photograph of the Fairhill on Page 48

Hiring fairs grew out of the Fairs established for farmers to assemble in order to buy and sell their produce and their live-stock. Gradually, other traders came to attend these Fairs. So a wider outlet for farm produce was established.

The Fair came to be regarded as a day out. Many people came to socialize and to enjoy the general hustle and bustle. Large gatherings always give the opportunity to earn money by providing entertainment, and so eventually Fairs had sideshows, street entertainers and a motley crew of tricksters only too willing and able to relieve the gullible of the few coppers they had to spare. (There is a very graphic description of this aspect of a typical Fair Day in Cookstown by the late Billy Donnelly in one of our earlier 'Look Backs'.) Billy was a famous Cookstown personality.

As the Fairs catered primarily for the farming community it gradually evolved that fairs would be attended by farmers seeking workers and by people willing to offer their labour. Hiring took place at Fairs held in May and November. These months marked the beginnings of two separate periods in the farming calendar. By November the harvest was over. From November, preparations would be made for the next farming year proper to begin the following May.

It became customary that each town which had a Hiring Fair would have a specific location where those seeking employment would gather. In Cookstown, boys and men seeking farm work tended to assemble along the front of the Hibernian Bank in William Street. Women and girls gathered on the opposite side of the street. Fortunately we can see exactly where the Hibernian Bank was located as the attractive facade has been retained by the present occupier, a Travel Agent.

Irish Hiring Fairs, most common in Ulster, came into their own in the early 1800's. In areas where there were large numbers of people seeking farmwork, there were fairs specially devoted to hiring. But in Cookstown, as with the majority of other towns, the hiring took place on a normal fair day. It is difficult to get a clear picture of the lives of people hired out. Each had different experiences to recount.

We can form a general picture of the life of a farm hand from snippets of information collected from various parts of the Province, much by word of mouth. However, Patrick MacGill, born in humble circumstances near Glenties in Donegal, a man who found fame as a poet and novelist, has given a vivid picture of his personal

by Eddie McCartney

experiences as a hired hand.

Those who hired themselves out probably could not find employment in their own home areas. In those early days no employment meant starvation or at best, the Workhouse. Many living on smallholdings could not support all the members of their families and so children as young as ten years headed for the Hiring Fair. You can only imagine how traumatic an experience this was for a child never away from home before, who would have to go and live with and work for a stranger. It was particularly daunting for a Donegal child. In those days, Donegal was considered to be very remote, and people who crossed the mountain to work in other parts of Ulster referred to the area where they were going as 'The Laggan', no matter where it was.

There was a better chance of obtaining work at the May Fair than the November, as this was the beginning of the busy period in the farm year. The full six months was called a 'Term.'

Right up to the 1920's and 1930's, people walked considerable distances to reach the Fair. Patrick MacGill aged ten recounted his experiences in 1881 travelling to Strabane. With twenty-five others he walked thirty seven miles to Ballybofey from the Rosses, barefoot, with his boots in his bundle, sleeping overnight in barns, being charged threepence for his board each night and catching the train in the morning to Strabane. In order to indicate that they sought work, men and boys customarily carried their possessions bundled up in a piece of material or in a shirt. Young girls similarly would have worn aprons.

Sometimes, before a contract was sealed, a humiliating ritual had to be undergone. A boy might be questioned closely as to his state of health. He might be asked to parade up and down to ensure that he had no infirmity. Some men avoided this kind of indignity by making their bargain with their employer before the fair started. It was a proud boast to be able to say that they never had to 'stand at the fair.'

When the preliminaries were over, the bargaining over wages would begin, to be decided according to the range of tasks and the age of the prospective employee. Children often had one or both parents to bargain on their behalf. People from Donegal had particular difficulties, in the early days of hiring, as they knew little English, Gaelic being their first language. When the deal was struck, frequently with the assistance of a

middle man, as happened also in the buying and selling of livestock, the farmer sometimes took the hired hand's bundle as security. It was further customary for the farmer to give the employee a small payment, when agreement was reached, as a token that the bargain had been sealed. 'Earnest', as this was called, probably derives from the Greek for 'pledge'.

Prior to 1930's and mechanization, most farm work was manual, the range of tasks depending on the type of farm. While some concentrated on the rearing of livestock, others were mainly arable with potatoes, barley, oats and wheat. Many were mixed farms, both rearing livestock and growing crops.

When there was a lot of work on hand it was a case of all hands to the plough. At harvest time, everyone, men, women and children cut hay, stacked corn or lifted potatoes or got in the turf. As it was mainly smaller farms which hired labourers, the farmer himself had to work just as hard as his men. Larger farms usually employed people who lived locally on a permanent basis. These might even live in tied cottages.

Hired girls and women worked just as hard as men, if on lighter tasks, cooking and doing the household washing and cleaning. They looked after the more manageable livestock, pigs, calves and hens, collecting eggs, milking, and having the very exhausting task of churning the milk into butter using a hand churn. Women were also expected to twist hay and straw into ropes, very tiring work this. And there were turnips to be snedded. But no fixed rules governed the division of labour, and a girl could be given arduous tasks more suited to a man. One young Tyrone girl commenting on a working day said, 'At 6.30 every morning, Sunday no exception, the door of my sleeping quarters was nearly driven in. It didn't take me long to get dressed, as I had to sleep with most of my clothes on during the winter months to shelter me from the biting wind whistling through the rafters. I was handed a hurricane lamp with a cracked dirty globe. I had ten cows to milk by hand.'

And 'Time to go to the field to sned and load the turnips. I wheeled a box barrow down the clay field. The big wooden handle of the snedder was very sore on the hands. Many a skelf you got in the hand, but you pulled it out with your teeth and went on ahead. When the barrow was full you had to wheel it back to the house. It was pure murder.'

'After dinner - a few spuds, a slice of home-made butter, a big onion and a mug of buttermilk - I had to wash the dishes and sweep the rough tiled floor. I cleaned the eggs for the eggman coming the next day. And then I was allowed to go to bed.'

Wages varied depending on the tasks that a hired hand performed. For instance, a Tyrone newspaper in 1894 gave the following information for a six months term for a hired help:

Ploughman from £5.00 to £7.00
Boys from £3.00 to £4.15 shillings.

Women from £3.00 to £3.15 shillings.

Girls from £2.00 to £2.10 shillings.

From the pay scale we can see that a grown woman was not as highly valued as a young boy. By the 1950's an adult's wages for a term had risen on average to about £14. In addition to their wages the employees had their bed and board. And the accommodation they had and the quality of the food weighed heavily when a hired hand was deciding who would have his service. However, some workers endured dreadful conditions and were poorly fed, whereas others lived on a par with their employers. Females usually slept in the farmhouse, sometimes sleeping on a mattress in the kitchen. Quite often males slept in outhouses and barns. Potatoes, buttermilk and 'stirabout' (porridge) formed the staple diet. There were also vegetables and home baked bread with occasionally meat, bacon or salted fish.

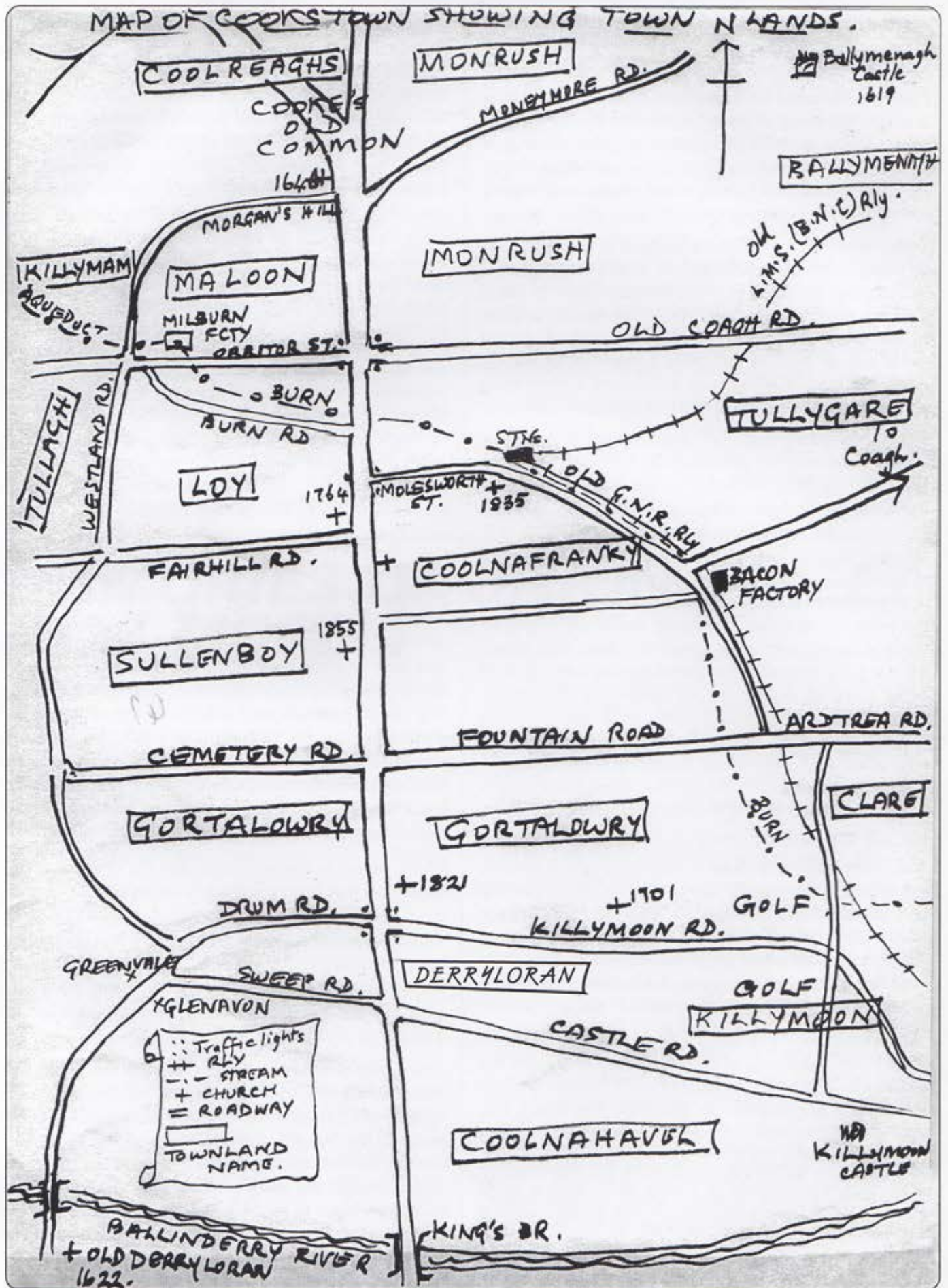
Hired hands worked from daylight until darkness, with one or two or three one-hour breaks making on average a ten hour working day. Employees worked six days a week and usually part of Sunday. By the 1930's, the hiring system was largely fading out. Farms had gradually become more mechanized with the advent of the tractor to replace the horse. Many other farming activities which had been done manually now could be accomplished by machinery.

Perhaps the most important factor that hastened the end of the hiring system was the introduction of state benefits. Prior to this, one advantage of being hired out was that you were in constant employment with board and keep - whereas in other jobs you were paid on a weekly basis and could be laid off with no wages when you were unemployed. One hired hand remarked gleefully: 'Man, the farmers did not like putting on the stamp.' 'They knew you see that once that carry-on started they'd get nobody to work for them.' The introduction of the dole had removed one of the important advantages of the hiring system.

Many would in retrospect say that the hired man was exploited. However, you have to consider the system in the context of the time it was in operation. The priority for the labouring man was to earn enough to provide the basic essentials with the prospect of no support if he did not have employment. For the hired hand the wages were low but the system did also provide food to eat and a roof over his head.

One Cookstown senior citizen recalled that he had an enduring memory of men for hire heading down the Oldtown Hill to the Fair, their few worldly possessions wrapped in bundles under their arms. The building where they tended to gather is now a Travel Agent's. Today, people can book a holiday and jet off to some exotic location. In the days of the hiring, the furthest journey men who gathered there might make would be to the farm where they were to be employed. And they certainly weren't going on a holiday!

Townland Placenames



*“Oh the Ironman came with a sword and a spear
And the edge of his iron to carve him a throne,
And the words of the Ironman stay with us here
For he christened the places in County Tyrone.”*

So wrote W.F. Marshall, and many variants appear of Irish placenames, and many variants also appear of the likely meaning of these names.

As the Englishmen who surveyed and mapped the Local area knew little about the Gaelic, the Government retained the services of a Doctor O'Donovan while working on the Parish of Gortallowry. So we learn, for instance, that:

LOY was originally **BALLINCLOGHY**, the town by the lake, for Clogh or Clough means a lake or lough.

KILLYCURRAGH:- Marshy Wood

GORTALLOWRY:- O'Lavery's Hill or Field

MONRUSH (originally MULRUSH):- Boy of the Point

COOLREAGHS:- Back of the gray ridge

MALOON:- Plain of the Lambs

TULLYCOLL:- Hill of the Hazel

KILLYMOON:- Mughaine's Wood, or "Wood of the Fat Pig"

COOLNAHAVIL:- Back of the Orchard

COOLNAFRANKY:- Back Slope of the Frenchmen, or perhaps "Where Rats are numerous"

AUGHLISH:- A place of stables

ARDCUMBER:- Hill of the confluence, under which rivers meet.

SULLENBOY:- Yellow place of sallows or willows

TOBERLANE:- Large Well

TULLYGARE:- Short Hill

LOUGHRY:- A place abounding in rushes; cold, stiff retentive soil

TULLAGH:- A hill, hilltop or mound

CLAGGAN:- A round, rocky hill

CORACRICHE or CORCREAGH:- Round Hill of the Boundary. This was the townland renamed 'Cookstown' when Allen Cooke came along in 1609 or thereabouts, and built on the Oldtown.

DERRYLORAN:- Loran's Oak Wood

TULLYWIGGAN:- Hill of the Bulrushes

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FINAL EDIT



It was surely an arduous task to contain animals here. Note the farmer, bottom right, who has his sheep "capped" against the wall



Not popular with the residents, because the street was hard to clean up afterwards



McClellands, the fore-runner of the Walk-Round-Stores, sold books, stationery and fancy goods. The bags of meal are outside Harbinson's, established 1839.



This old red shed, still on the Lissan Road, pre-dates the 1939-'45 War. It was adjacent to the Prisoner of War Camp and was used by the military for storage.



Killymoon Castle, Cookstown, in the snow, 2002.

Thanks to Management and Staff at Gortreagh Printing, Cookstown and to Elsie Clarke for the use of the map on the back cover.



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