

History Armagh



- **Vicars' Hill, Armagh – Origins and Development**
- **Memories of the Shambles**
- **Armagh Built on Seven Hills: a local myth or a historical geographical reality?**

An Armagh History Group Publication



No. 5 Vickers' Hill (The main Registry Room). Photograph courtesy of Northern Builder.



No. 5 Vickers' Hill (The Robinson Room). Photograph courtesy of Northern Builder

History Armagh

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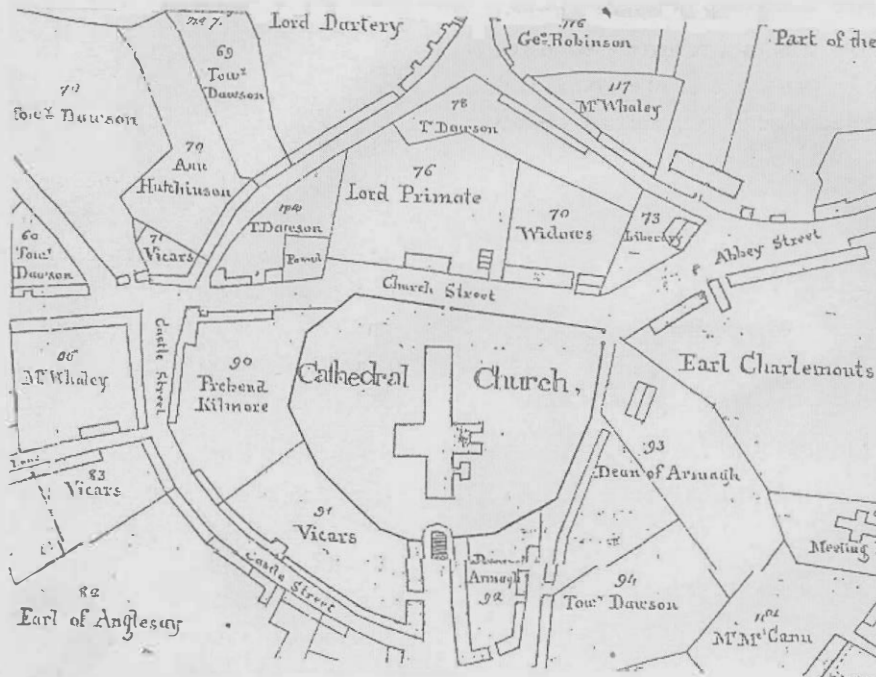
A local myth or a historical geographical reality?

by Kevin Quinn 32

Vicars' Hill, Armagh

Origins and Development

by Stephen Day



Livingstone's map of Armagh 1766

The row of buildings, located on the western crest of the ancient Hill of Armagh and directly facing St. Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, is today known as Vicars' Hill. It is a charming curved terrace of Georgian houses, each house having a garden of varying size at the rear. (Brett & O'Connell: p 121)

In the early 1700s the small street which runs along the frontage of these houses had been known as Pound Hill (1760) after the animal Pound or enclosure which was located on its southern slopes just below what is now Number 11. (Rocque Map). It was also referred to as Church Street (1766) for obvious reasons. (Livingstone Map). Its current name may come from the Vicars' Choral, or gentlemen of the choir, a Body Corporate. Some of these were provided with houses here from the 1780s onwards in return for their services to the Cathedral Choir. However, any perception that the dwellings in this row were solely for occupation by Vicars and members of the choir would appear to be wrong. Some certainly were but, as we shall

see, the majority were often occupied by others.

Early History of the site

The history of the ancient Hill of Armagh (Ard Macha) goes back into the mists of time. It was always an attractive strategic site for settlement with magnificent views of the surrounding countryside. In the first century BC, after the decline and destruction of the stronghold of Emain Macha, (Navan Fort) located on another hill, two miles to the west, the Hill of Armagh became the major centre and sanctuary for pagan and Celtic settlement. It later became a centre for Christian activity, around 444AD with the foundation of Saint Patrick's Church. This early Christianity flourished and over the next three centuries it became the paramount ecclesiastical centre in Ireland.

Just across from what is now Vicars' Hill, there is some evidence to suggest that there was a round tower a few metres to the west of the ancient Church. The first of many Viking raids

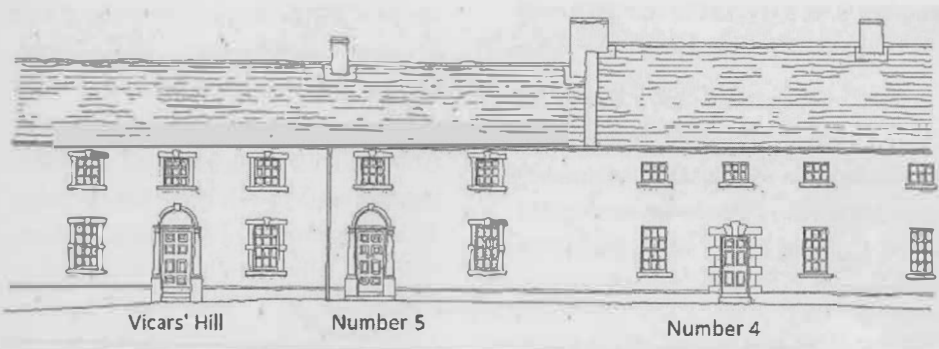
on Armagh is recorded as being in 832AD and this heralded a period of death and destruction which lasted for well over a century. Little was left of the settlement on the Hill but there were periods of recovery and by 1268 the foundations and basic form of the current Cathedral were established. Periods of peace followed but over the ensuing centuries, these were also interrupted by periods of war, between rival Irish chieftains and between the Irish and forces from England and Scotland. Often Armagh was a strategic centre for these opposing forces and it is estimated that from the 5th to the 17th century the Church/Cathedral on the Hill was destroyed seventeen times. The last two times were in 1566, in events leading up to the Nine Years war (1594 – 1603) and in 1642 during the Irish Rebellion (1641 – 1653). (Bartlett's map of 1601 shows the devastation caused during the Nine Years war. It also seems to indicate that, at that time, there was no through road over the western top of the Hill along the line of what is now Vicars' Hill. When that road was constructed traffic could travel over the Hill and down into what is now Irish Street. This new through road was only closed off at the Irish Street end, outside Number 11, in the 20th century when the increase in heavy motorised traffic made it impractical.)

The war between King William III and King James II (1688 – 1691) proved to be the end of major land warfare in Ireland. The intermittent and significant violence of these three periods had left its mark on Armagh and hindered its development but from 1700 onwards there was a sustained period of relative peace and stability which allowed the City to recover and grow. On the Hill, the development and improvement of the Cathedral received priority but thoughts also

turned to the development and building of other administrative and private dwellings in the immediate vicinity.

Vicars' Hill in the 18th century

Although the Vicars' Hill we see today is a terrace of buildings of similar height and appearance, subtle differences hint at the different origins of the buildings. The Church of Ireland Primate during the period 1724 – 1742 was Archbishop Hugh Boulter. He was responsible for the first stage of the development.



Number 1 – 4 The first four houses were built for the widows of clergymen in the Diocese. They were financed from a fund which the Archbishop had 'by his will appropriated for that purpose and they were endowed with £50 per annum.' (Stuart: p 379) These are early Georgian houses having been built during the reign of George II. They are small two storey buildings which can be distinguished from the later ones by the tiny first floor windows and Gibbian doorways topped with flat heads and fan shaped keystones.

In his 1770 census of Armagh inhabitants (Lodge 1777) the Reverend William Lodge (Dean and Keeper of the Library 1785 - 1813) recorded that three widows and a proctor and his wife lived in these four houses on 'Pound Hill.' In various older houses (with vacant sites in between) and extending down to the Pound and beyond, there lived a parish clerk and his wife, an organist and his wife, a sadler who was also Pound Keeper and his wife, a further sadler and his wife and finally an old dancing master. (By the time of the 1901 census the occupants included a governess at

Number 1, a sexton at Number 2, a basket maker at Number 3 and a grocer at Number 4.)

Lodge's list had been prepared for Archbishop Richard Robinson who was Primate from 1765 until his death in 1794. On Robinson's arrival, Armagh was in a relatively improved state but some areas, like Pound Hill, appeared to be incomplete and the City had very few impressive buildings. (It was around this time that the name appears to have been changed to

Church Hill.) Archbishop Robinson has been called the 'builder of Armagh' and he had a strong vision for the improvement of the city. In addition to Armagh Public Library (1771), which is located at the entrance to Vicars' Hill, his legacy includes: the Archbishop's Palace (1700); the County Infirmary (1774) which is located just across the road from the Library on the approaches to Vicars' Hill; the Royal School (1774); the Gaol (1780) and the Observatory (1791): However; a less well known legacy was the construction of the remaining houses, Numbers 5 to 11. This completed the understated but neat and elegant row now given the new address of Vicars' Hill.

(Note: All of Robinson's buildings were completed during the first half of the reign of George III and he set the standard for others to follow. His architectural achievements form the basis of the Georgian city we see today. The other building located at the top of Abbey Street, opposite the Armagh Public Library and facing the entrance to Vicars' Hill, is Church House. It was officially opened and dedicated on 27th May 1913.)

Number 5 – The (former) Registry – Armagh's Hidden Gem Built in the early 1770s as the Metropolitan Registry to hold records for the Church of Ireland and Armagh Diocese, this building was not built to be lived in. It was designed specifically as a repository and an administrative building where secular and ecclesiastical matters were dealt with, recorded and stored. The terms of governance for this building and the Armagh Public Library were drawn up and signed by Archbishop Robinson and the Keeper of the Library, Dean of Armagh, Hugh Hamilton in an indenture dated 10th day of August 1782. (Love: p 3-5)

This unique building has two main large octagonal rooms which were designed in such a way that air could circulate in a controlled temperature. This helped to ensure that the records could be preserved in good condition. There were no wooden floors and the original flagstones (Armagh 'marble') remain to this day.

The door to this building and to all but one of the other buildings in the row is distinguished by a semi-circular fanlight – very familiar in Dublin Georgian architecture of the time. The upper windows are also slightly larger than those in Numbers 1 – 4.

In the 1930s, as space began to run out, the records began to be moved elsewhere. This was a process which continued at intervals throughout the ensuing decades and today, the majority are stored in the new Public Records Office at Belfast. To keep the building in good condition, it was decided to adapt the building as a dwelling and from 1935 until the turn of the century people lived here. These included families, retired lay persons, retired clergy and widows. The last resident was Esme Strain and when she died, a decision had to be taken: upgrade the building for 21st century residents or restore it. Most of the original features remained and a full restoration was approved. This was completed and the building was officially opened to the public on 14th

March 2011.

This beautiful and fascinating Grade A listed building is now a museum and it retains some original records dating from the early 1600s. Also on display are ancient coins, gems, significant prints, early Christian artefacts and other collections and curiosities which had belonged to the Archbishops and which hitherto had been preserved in Armagh Public Library. There are interactive display facilities including touchscreens which are suitable for all ages. Visitors are also able to view the Armagh Ogham Stone, a timeline of Archbishops and their predecessors on 'the Hill' from St. Patrick (444AD), and copies of maps which show the development of Armagh from 1600 onwards.

(Number 5 is open to the public Tuesday to Saturday inclusive from 10am to 4pm. Bookings for Group Guided Tours can be made via Armagh Public Library: Tel. 028 3752 3142)

Number 6 This house was also built in the early 1770s and has been continuously occupied since then, mostly by clergymen or widows but also by retired persons and sometimes families. The Rev. Richard Allott, Precentor and Rector of Killeavy (1834-1857) lived here, as did a young curate W.E.C. Fleming (1956-1961).

In 1888 a widow, Mrs Prior, and her small family lived here. One day when her teenage daughter, Bellina, was alone in the house with a young three year old child, Anne Slavin from nearby Callan Street, she killed the child by drowning her in a downstairs room. Bellina was found guilty but insane and was committed to Armagh Lunatic Asylum. During the 20th century and beyond the facts were forgotten, the story became more gruesome and the myth grew of a ghost, 'the Green Lady,' who haunted the house and the Hill. However, most residents of Number 6 still seem to have slept easily including the current occupant! (Barden: p 10-11)

Numbers 7 – 11 These buildings, including the spacious music hall in Number 9, were built in sequence for

Archbishop Robinson from the late 1770s onwards. Over the past two hundred years many of the occupants and their visitors epitomise the great tradition of Christian music on this ancient Hill which can be traced back to the 9th century and beyond.

The Hill begins to slope down at this point and, as one gets nearer to Number 11, the houses gain an extra storey. In 1896 James Fanning was appointed Master of the Cathedral Grammar School and stayed for nearly forty years. He and his family lived in Number 8 as recorded in the 1901 and 1911 census. (McKee, 2010)

Recitals, receptions and Cathedral Choir practice still take place on a regular basis in the music hall (Number 9) and it is also a space where visitors to the Hill can enjoy refreshments by appointment.

Number 10 is still known as the house that the Cathedral organist usually occupied although it is home for another family at present. In 1901 eleven members of the Tarleton family lived here.

Number 11 is a large three story house at the end of the row which displays a plaque in memory of a famous son of Armagh, Charles Wood, a renowned musician and composer who was born here on 15th June 1866. He left behind a legacy of over 250 sacred works plus a large number of hymn tunes. His father, Charles senior, was a tenor in the choir and was later appointed Diocesan Registrar and Private Secretary to the Archbishop. He and his wife Jemma raised a family of 14 children in this house. (Cathedra, 2010)

Numbers 12 – 15 It is often forgotten that, until recently, the houses on 'Vicars' Hill' did not end at Number 11. There were four more beyond that. These were of poorer quality but, by all accounts, of great character. They were of varying shapes and sizes and sloped away sharply down to the junction with Callan Street. (Weatherup: p 4) In the 1901 census the occupants included: Number 12 – a cattle drover and his seamstress wife; Number 13 – a

labourer, his wife and daughter; Number 14 – an unmarried woman and her niece and Number 15 – a baker and his wife.

These houses appear to have been still in existence in the late 1950s but suffered badly from the bomb attack by the IRA on the old Upper Irish Street police station in 1957. They are now demolished and a parking space occupies the old site.

The 1957 Bomb

In 1953 the IRA embarked on a sporadic period of violence which became known as 'the Border Campaign.' It petered out in the early 1960s. There were few incidents in Armagh city but one had a direct impact on Vicars' Hill. On Monday 30th September 1957 at 12.35am, 'raiders' delivered a bomb to a position outside the RUC Irish Street Station, commonly called 'the barracks', which was located at the junction of Irish Street, Callan Street and Vicars' Hill. (It was protected by sandbags). Other armed men took up a position behind the low wall at the bottom of Vicars' Hill, adjacent to Number 11, and when the bomb exploded they opened fire on 'the barracks'. There was an exchange of fire but no one was hit.

The bomb caused minor damage to the building but the blast was deflected back causing considerable damage to the surrounding area, including Vicars' Hill and to the west side of the Cathedral. Most of the historic and valuable stained glass windows were blown out. Some residents were severely shocked but lucky not to be seriously injured. Most appear to have been in the relative safety of their beds at the time of the explosion. (Ulster Gazette & Armagh Observer.)

Vicars' Hill 1957-2013

Relative tranquillity and normality soon returned to the Hill. The busy life of the Cathedral continued and the residents were able to observe the routine events of christenings, marriages and funerals as well as major services. The latter were often attended by leading figures in society including,

on occasion, heads of Government and Royalty.

The clergy routinely dressed in the style of clerical clothes similar to that worn since the late 1700s. This included frock coats, gaiters and spats. The Dean of Armagh, James Thomas McEndoo (1938 – 1955) is particularly remembered as a familiar figure. In this attire he had a particular presence as he walked the streets around the Cathedral. He spent his last years in retirement at Number 5 Vicars' Hill and died in 1957 but this mode of dress continued until the arrival of a new Archbishop, Dr George Otto Simms, in 1969. The story is told that he arrived dressed in a lounge suit and that the other clergy gratefully took this as a signal that a more day to day modern style was approved of!

When the BBC broadcast the 'Barchester Chronicles' (a tongue-in-cheek satirical story of clerical life in the late Victorian era) it was much enjoyed by the local clergy and lay people on Vicars' Hill. They could still remember the style of dress, the mannerisms and the intrigue that occasionally added a bit of spice to everyday life.

Today, the majority of houses in Vicars' Hill are still occupied and many of the residents continue to be involved in church life and in providing voluntary assistance to the Library and to Number 5. It continues to play an important and vibrant role in everyday life on the ancient Hill of Armagh.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Canon W.E.C. Fleming, Mrs A Cassidy, Mrs Z Dawson, Mrs M Dawson and the Assistant Keeper of Armagh Public Library, Ms C Conlon for their unstinting advice and guidance for this article. My thanks also go to the staff of The Irish and Local Studies Library in Armagh for their assistance in my research.

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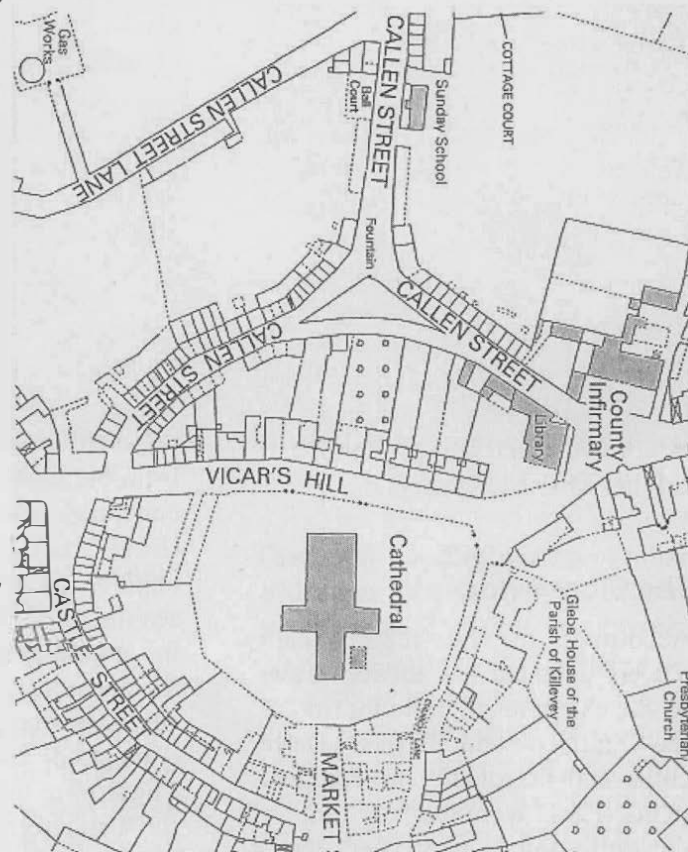
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Armagh based on OS map 1834

A Remarkable Sale

by Marjorie Halligan

In the *Armagh Guardian* of June 5th, 1931, a long column was devoted to a report of the sale which had taken place between May 21st and 23rd of that year at 5, Beresford Row, Armagh. The



No. 5 Beresford Row today photographed by Sean Barden

auction conducted by Matthew Bell of English Street was for the disposal of the effects of the late Miss Harriet McKinstry [1854-1930]. Bell's sale notice of May 19th had listed "the Exquisite and Valuable Furniture and Effects" as well as the "valuable Cut Flint, Dinner and Dessert Services" which were for sale. The report of the auction was more informative about the lots, the atmosphere at the auction and the character of the late Miss McKinstry. Instead of using her surname in future references as is correct, I intend to continue to call her Miss McKinstry.

The Closed House

According to the report many dealers attended the auction drawn by the examples of period furniture, the Stafford and Crown Derby china and the quality leaded glass items. These were the "cut flint" of the Bell's sale notice. There was a good attendance at the sale. Local ladies were well represented. This was the opportunity for them to buy whilst at the same time satisfying

their curiosity about the house which according to the report "has been all but closed to outsiders for many years". The 1901 and 1911 census returns confirm Miss McKinstry as the sole occupant of the property. Daphne Weir, a member of the U3A History group remembers that her aunt, the late Miss Foster, had visited Miss McKinstry. Her aunt's accounts agreed with the atmosphere of the house described in the newspaper report where "privileged visitors were only admitted to two rooms".

Quality Items

The description of the atmosphere at the sale contrasted with the impression of the former quiet of this house as dealers bid high prices for the valuables from the East and period furniture. Venetian glass, Spode and Crown Derby china the contents of large china closets also fetched high prices. This range of lots suggested a family used to frequent and generous entertainment. Another clue to the family history lay in the lot which contained the log book and other books of one of H.M. ships of war. Obviously a McKinstry had served in the Royal navy and may have been responsible for acquiring the items from the East. A more mundane lot contained cases of stationery with their accompanying small ungummed envelopes and attendant sealing wax. The sealing wax was in pound boxes stamped John McWatters, Armagh. Nibs and pins carefully wrapped up in little boxes completed the stationery items. These were the necessary requisites for a nineteenth century family to keep in touch with loved ones. In contrast to the high prices for the luxury items, the side car "which a trio of decades ago was the family car" (*Armagh Guardian*, June 5th

1931, 2) was sold to someone from Lisnadill for twenty-five shillings. It is interesting that Griffiths Valuation lists James McKinstry living at Lisnadill, though no McKinstry is listed in Lisnadill in the 1911 census.

No Petty People

There is considerable evidence to prove that the McKinstry family were of note in Armagh. Miss McKinstry's Death notice in *Armagh Guardian* of January 2nd, 1931, states that she, Harriet King McKinstry, was the only surviving child of the late John McKinstry, of The Mall and his wife Margaret, daughter of George King. Her father's obituary in the same paper of October 24th 1884 described him as a solicitor, Deputy Clerk of the Peace, Registrar to County Court, Local Inspector of the County Prison and a Poor Law Representative for Armagh City. The description of his funeral in the *Armagh Guardian*, of October 31st testified "to the esteem" in which her father was held. Blinds in the private houses along the Mall were drawn and many of the shops closed until after the funeral. Chief Mourners were Robert McKinstry M.D., Colonel McKinstry and Robert McKinstry, jun. Robert McKinstry was the resident physician at the local lunatic asylum. Further evidence of the prominence of the family can be found in the notebooks of T.G.F. Paterson in Armagh County Museum (Paterson Mss 57, vol.1, 61-76). He traced the family's arrival in Ireland from Scotland back to the Hearth Money Rolls of 1666. Other notes show emigration of John McKinstry to United States of America in 1718.¹ He puts Thomas McKinstry as the first of the family locally at The Glen, Keady. In Lodge's census of 1770,

Lee McKinstry (1732-1810) is noted as living in Scotch Street. Clarkson in his work on the census described him as the leading inn keeper in the town. Paterson drew up his family tree. His descendants Harriet King, Edwin Lee George, Reginald Walter and Madeline Pears (died 1877) the children of John and Margaret McKinstry were included. Paterson added a note to this which indicated that he had copied some of the information from a record in the possession of the late Miss McKinstry of Beresford Row who died in 1930. Further notes made by Patterson stated that Reginald was living in Liverpool and that Edwin had married and was living in Tasmania (Paterson 69). He does not reference this information but it may also have been gained from Miss McKinstry. The accuracy of his information about Edwin is confirmed by the report of Miss McKinstry's will in the *Armagh Guardian*, August 21st 1931. Apart from two minor bequests, she left the residue of her estate to "her nephew, Reginald J. McKinstry of Australia".

Sources of Wealth

Miss McKinstry left property to the value of £49,444 15s 8d. In the 1911 census she entered "Interest of money and annuity" under the heading "occupation". The family wealth which came to her came from a family that owned property, were professional people often in state service and entrepreneurs. These skills can be seen in the career of Lee McKinstry (1777-1832). He was a solicitor and was able to develop tenements which he owned into what we know as the main part of Russell Street. Evidence of this can be found in Map 7 of the *Irish Historic Towns Atlas No. 18, Armagh*. Another Lee described in Paterson's notes as "then of Belfast" was forced to sell his estate in 1859 under the terms of the Encumbered Estates Act. The information from this entry gives some idea of the property owned. The sale included lands in Darkley, Tullyglush, Newholland,

Recarbery, Curryhughes, Clay and Lagan. There were also houses in Keady and premises in Armagh City. Miss McKinstry's father rented two properties on the Mall, 5 Beresford Row and 5 St. Mark's Place (Griffith's Valuation 1864).

Captured on camera

The balcony on 5 Beresford Row now owned by the Royal School² (2013) makes it a distinctive building amongst an area of famous buildings. D.P.Martin added photographs of John McKinstry and his sons Edwin and Reginald to his collection of prominent Armagh residents. These can be seen in Armagh County Museum. The late Mary McConnell (nee Dorman) who grew up in 5 Beresford Row and later lived there when married photographed a portrait of Miss

included shawls and wraps of Shetland floss, stockings, mittens, slippers and vests of the finest hand work. There were yards of petticoat edging in Broderie Anglais, webs of thick silk and rolls of red flannel. Linen sheeting of superlative quality vied with beautiful table cloths and napkins for the attention of the lady bidders. Anna Beamish, a member of Armagh and District Local History Society, can remember that her mother bought some of the high quality linens. These could be understood as the items which might have been in a lady's "bottom drawer". The retention of yards and yards of spring steel for making crinolines, real crinolines, bustles and padded silk and satin petticoats packed in travelling bags is hard to understand even for an age which threw nothing away.



Portrait of Miss McKinstry, courtesy of Dr. Brian McConnell

McKinstry as a child. This portrait used to hang in the house.

And so to Miss McKinstry

A return to the report of the 1931 sale gives an insight into her character. These are the items for sale which were described as those which "only a woman could properly appreciate". There were laces, ribbons beading and embroidery, oriental fans and caskets and necklaces and scarves of silk and cashmere. Knitted items

There was a roll of muslin peculiar to the use for the canopies of four poster beds. Piles of patchwork, crochet, tatting and macramé materials were enough to keep an army of women engaged in craft work. A big drawer full of wool rolled in balls ready for use told of the days when wool came in hanks and perhaps the reporter had knowledge of the unwilling hands held out whilst it was wound into balls. This wool was sold for one pound.

Her Wedding Dress with Limerick Lace

The report dealt sympathetically with Miss McKinstry's wedding dress castigating the women who pulled it about. Its presence was explained as telling of a broken romance and a bridegroom who on the wedding eve married another. No information is given as to the fate of the wedding dress. Miss McKinstry may have been fated to remain unmarried and to have largely turned her back on Armagh society but as Patterson's notes indicate she kept in touch with the extended McKinstry family. He includes two letters to her from family in America in his archive. Pride in her family may have been her sustaining motif.

Endnotes

¹In the nature of serendipity members of the family from U.S.A. called in Armagh County Museum in the last fortnight of July 2013 to enquire about family history. Information supplied by Museum staff. August, 2013.

²I am indebted to Tom Duncan for confirmation of this information. Headmaster, Royal School, Armagh (1988-2002).

Acknowledgements

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I appreciate all the help given to me by all the staff of the Irish & Local Studies Library whilst preparing this article.

HISTORY GROUP WEBSITE IS AN IMPORTANT LOCAL HISTORY RESOURCE

Armagh & District History Group's website is now over two years old and contains a wealth of information for the local historian.

The Group publishes the successful magazine *History Armagh* and back issues can be difficult or impossible to obtain. As a consequence of this a decision was taken to make the magazine content available on-line. Over 60 articles are available on-line and the search facility means that these articles are easy to access. The website also has links to other mainly local websites that may prove useful to people with an interest in the history of the locality

Another valuable resource available through the website is a digitised and fully searchable version of William Lodge's census of Armagh city in 1770. This provides a fascinating insight to life in Armagh over 240 years ago.

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26th Nov 2013

Members are cordially invited to a book launch by Michael McArdle on 26th November 2013 in Newry Arts Centre at 8:00pm. The book is entitled *The Struggle for the Union in Newry: 1900-1925, if...*

More >

October's Lecture - Two Pre-Famine Commissions in Ireland

9th Oct 2013

Dr Frank McCorry is a great favourite with the history group

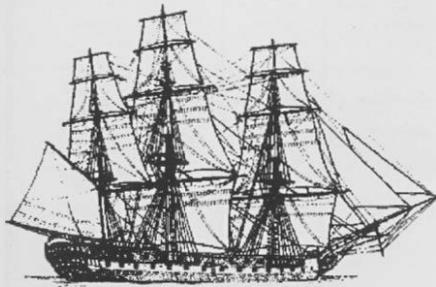
The website also has a news section to keep members informed of events and talks and is proving a useful way of keeping in touch with our programme throughout the year and other events of note. So if you are interested in the activities of the group why not visit www.armaghhistorygroup.com

Between a rock and a hard place:

the emigration of female orphans from Armagh workhouse to Australia in 1848

by Mary McVeigh

They were between a rock and a hard place, you might say. The 26 teenage girls who left Armagh in 1848 for Australia were leaving behind the prospect of relentless poverty and hardship either within the confines of the workhouse or outside it and instead were going from the homeland they would never see again, for life in a totally alien environment, at the other end of the earth.



They were among the first shipment of female orphans from Irish workhouses selected for emigration to Australia to meet what was seen there as a desperate need for women as servants and indeed spouses. In some areas in the interior over 80 per cent of the population were male and in others women were 'as scarce as black swans in Europe'.¹ This initiative was the brainchild of the Colonial Secretary at Westminster, Henry George, Third Earl Grey, and it was undoubtedly one which found great favour with the Irish Poor Law Commissioners who had overall responsibility for the administration of workhouses. At this time the Great Famine was still very much in evidence: workhouses were filled beyond their capacity, outdoor relief had to be given to those who could not get into them and the various illnesses which came under the umbrella term, 'famine fever' were still raging throughout the island. Between 1848 and 1850 when it

ended over four thousand girls had emigrated via what became known as the Earl Grey scheme.

In Armagh, not by any means one of the worst hit areas of the Famine, in the weeks before the girls left for Australia, three houses were taken over in Barrack Hill because the workhouse could not accommodate all who were forced to seek refuge there.² A chilling reminder that the death toll was high and constant was the note in the Board of Guardian minutes that 'Mr John Connolly, carpenter,' had been engaged and that 'all coffins required be made by him or under his superintendence'.³

The upkeep of workhouses was a heavy burden on local ratepayers and was the cause of much resentment. Overseeing the running of each was given to a Board of Guardians, men elected by the ratepayers for the purpose. A considerable amount of time at their meetings was taken up on financial matters and what they saw as the heavy burden on those who had to foot the bills. Indeed the *Armagh Guardian* newspaper dramatically declared that the costs inflicted by the Poor Law were 'destined, at no very remote period, to plunge the whole kingdom in the lowest depths of misery'.⁴ Thus it takes no great insight to see why this scheme for orphan emigration, initially intended to include boys but never did, was very attractive to those who administered and subsidised the workhouses, particularly since the colonial authorities were meeting the travel costs from England to Australia.⁵

Getting ready to go

There was no problem getting girls to go from Armagh, or indeed

anywhere for that matter, it would appear. The Board of Guardian minutes for 7th March, 1848, recorded that it was decided that 'the master select for inspection all girls in the house between the ages of 14 and 18' and four days later it was reported that '27 orphans of the ages specified' had been deemed to 'likely suit as candidates for emigration to Australia'. In actual fact 26 girls from the workhouse were chosen from the list of possible candidates by the Emigration Commissioners in London. They were handed over on 25th May in Belfast for the first leg of their journey on the ship 'Athlone' bound for Plymouth at a cost of £1.0s.6d per person.⁶ It must have been an exciting but daunting prospect for them. None of them would have travelled but a few miles from her home place, had probably never seen the sea before let alone travelled on a ship.

They were certainly better equipped than they had been on entering the workhouse. The various Boards of Guardians were instructed to provide each one with six shifts, two flannel petticoats, six pairs of stockings, two gowns and two pairs of shoes. Their moral and religious welfare was not to be overlooked because each, depending upon her religious persuasion, was given either a King James Bible and a book of Psalms or a Douai Bible and a prayer book. Everyone was to have a wooden box made of 'good material' with strong locks in which to keep her possessions. A cheque for £22.7s.4d had been paid in April by the Guardians to the Armagh Sewing Society for 'clothes got for emigrants', presumably the garments supplied to the Australian bound orphans.⁷ Undoubtedly despite being faced with a very

long sea journey they were much better off than those who were forced to cross the Atlantic on the notorious 'coffin ships'. For instance, their food rations were superior to those of ordinary emigrants with a daily quota per person of a half-pound of beef, pork or preserved meat as well as bread, tea, sugar, coffee and other items.⁸

Bound for Sydney

They left Plymouth bound for Sydney in New South Wales on 4th June along with another 159 girls from mainly Ulster workhouses on the ship, *Earl Grey*. (It is not known if this vessel had any connection with the Colonial Secretary of the

former inmates of the Dublin Foundling Hospital who had definitely not been looked after. It would appear that they had been frequently drunk and consorted freely with the ship's officers and the captain kept one constantly in his cabin. A poor unfortunate was seduced by the Chief Officer and died on board following an attempted abortion. Another who had consorted with the Third Mate during the trip joined one of the most notorious brothels in Sydney and several others also became prostitutes.⁹

By the time the workhouse orphans on the *Earl Grey* ship arrived in

the transportation of convicts to New South Wales.

They were classed as inferior

Even before they set foot on Australian soil aspersions were cast on the orphans. An Anglican clergyman who saw them at Plymouth patronisingly declared: "They certainly, poor things, could not boast of much beauty or personal attractions...On the whole I would say they were better calculated for milking cows and undergoing the drudgery of a farm servant's life than to perform the office of lady's maid". They were deemed inferior to English and

LIST of Immigrants per Ship <i>Earl Grey</i>																			
No.	NAME	MARRIED		AGE															
		H.	E.	14 years and upwards					1 and under 14 years										
				M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.								
28	Clarke Jane					18													
29	Clarke Sarah					19													
30	Conn Elizabeth					17													
31	Curray Catherine					16													
32	Coney Anne					20													
33	Cranston Margaret					18													
34	Cunningham Margaret					19													
35	Curray Eliza					17													
36	Daniell Mary					16													
37	Devlin Margaret					16													
38	Devlin Sarah Anne					18													
39	Downey Ellen					16													
40	Doyle Bridget					16													
41	Doyle Eliza					18													
42	Duffy Sarah					20													
43	Duffy Anne					15													
44	Duff Jane					15													
45	Flynn Mary Anne					18													
46	Ford Susan					15													
47	Foster Anne					18													
48	...					17													

Arrived on the 6 th October 1848.				
CATEGORY	NATIVE PLACE AND COUNTY	RELIGION	READ OR WRITE	REMARKS
House servant	Belfast Antrim	R.C. of England	Read	
do	Downpatrick Londonderry	do	do	
do	Armagh	do	do	
do	Markethill Armagh	R. Catholic	do	
House servant	Antrim	do	do	
Nursemaid	Belfast	do	read	
House servant	do	Presbyterian	Both	
do	Armagh	R. Catholic	Read	
Nursemaid	Belfast	R. of England	do	
House servant	Keady Armagh	R. Catholic	do	
Nursemaid	do do	do	do	
House servant	Killybegs Armagh	Presbyterian	read	
Nursemaid	Bungannon Tyrone	R. Catholic	Both	
House servant	Belfast	do	Read	
House servant	Bungannon Tyrone	R. of England	Both	
Nursemaid	Bethelmore do	R. Catholic	do	
House servant	Stratford Down	Presbyterian	Read	
House servant	Lisburn	R. of England	do	
Nursemaid	Bethelmore Tyrone	do	read	
House servant	Belfast	do	Read	
Nursemaid	Kilmore Armagh	R. Catholic	Both	

same name. None of the relevant histories has commented on it.) The Poor law Commissioners in Dublin were going to make sure that their welfare and indeed behaviour on board ship was closely supervised and so a surgeon-superintendent, a matron and others were appointed to keep them well and in check. This action was taken because of past experience before the Earl Grey scheme got under way. Indeed a case in point was the behaviour on board a ship called the *Subraon* which arrived in Sydney in April. Among the passengers were 12

Sydney after 122 days at sea two of them had died including one from Armagh, a girl of 13 who had given her age as 15 in order to be selected for emigration.¹⁰ Even though women were in great demand the reception from the colonial Movers and Shakers towards these girls was anything but welcoming. In fact there was considerable hostility towards them. It did not help that the colonists were aggrieved because they had to foot the bill for their travel and the architect of the emigration scheme, Earl Grey, had upset them by attempted to expand

Scottish female emigrants and indeed the Emigration Commissioners in London decided to allocate them to separate ships because 'their habits and manners make them very unacceptable companions to English emigrants'.¹¹ The surgeon-superintendent who was responsible for looking after the girls on the voyage lost no time in castigating them. He claimed that they were prostitutes, were married and came under false pretences. It transpired that it was a group of feisty ex mill girls from Belfast who had caused

him consternation. Their bad language was seen by him as evidence of their immorality.

The view that the Irish were of an inferior race was not just confined to sections of society within Victorian England but had reached as far as the Antipodes. Those in authority in the former penal colony were determined on a path to respectability and these young girls fresh from Famine stricken Ireland were certainly not seen as assets. According to the Australian writer, Thomas Keneally, their importation was considered the equivalent of the introduction of criminality into society and he noted that in Sydney they were described as 'professed public women' and 'little country beggars'. Their lack of domestic skills was lamented upon even though their labour was cheap and there were fears that they were part of Papist plot to takeover Australia. This was the message put about by a Scottish Presbyterian clergyman, John Dunmore Lang and it received considerable support from colonists.

They left no written memories

Nonetheless, in spite of all the adverse publicity and possible lack of skills the Armagh girls, who, ironically, were fairly evenly mixed in terms of religion, would appear on the whole to have integrated into colonial society. They likely fared better than they would have done had they stayed in Ireland although they must have had to face many challenges. Unfortunately there is no written evidence from their perspective. There are no letters, diaries or testimonials of any form which would give us some insight as to what life was like as they saw it. We can only imagine what they must have had to endure alone in a land that was strange to them in every respect. All that remains are the reports of officialdom. It is thanks mainly to the highly impressive and painstaking research carried out by the historian, Dr Trevor McClaughlan, we know anything at all of their stories.¹² Indeed a very useful data-base of the female orphans who emigrated

under the Earl Grey scheme, composed primarily of his findings, can be accessed online.¹³

Success stories

One who certainly deserves admiration was Catherine Fox, from Killyman parish who arrived in Armagh workhouse thinly clothed and hungry but ended up leaving £532, a substantial sum at the time, when she died in 1920 at the age of 89. She married a widower originally from Keady, Archibald Graham, a baker, farmer and miller whose estate on his death was valued at £5,500. She may have ended up a wealthy woman but was obviously not averse to work or responsibility because she raised 6 surviving children of the first Mrs Graham, 12 of her own and 2 belonging to her stepson.

Another who did well financially was Rose McDonnell who ended up in Ipswich, Queensland, a long distance from Sydney where she landed. She married Patrick Casey, a labourer turned farmer, had 11 children and when she died her estate was valued at £563. Her origins are a mystery. According to the shipping record she is supposed to have come from Killaid¹⁴, Armagh but a townland of that name does not appear to exist and there is no record of her birth in the Armagh Diocesan Archives although her religion is given as Catholic.¹⁵

Not all prospered

Not all prospered but one in particular seemed very unlucky with the employers she had. Poor Mary Littlewood from Richhill entered Armagh workhouse at the height of the Famine with her parents, a brother and sister. She was described as being thinly clothed and destitute. Both parents died just over a year of one and other, her mother just months before Mary, aged 16, was sent to Australia. Her first employer, a Mrs Curtiss, hammered her on the face until she was faint with loss of blood. Luckily a neighbour

intervened on her behalf. She was then sent 'up country' to a place called Scone where she again fell foul of her employer, Elinor McGrath, also a recent arrival from Ireland. We do not know what expectations were had of her by Mrs McGrath but the hapless young woman ended up being imprisoned in the house. In her attempt to escape she was accused of 'tearing the curtains of the windows, seizing the cushion covers or tidies, and attempting to tear them to pieces, at the same time using the most blasphemous expressions all around her, damming her soul to hell and she would get out the window and throw herself into hell'.¹⁶ She was sent to Maitland in the Hunter Valley as penance and that was the last heard of her.

Just one of the Armagh girls who was not in fact an orphan but had a mother living in Armagh was described as being 'comfortable' and 'clothed' on her arrival at the workhouse. What were the circumstances which brought 18year old Sophia Chambers to seek refuge there? Sadly we will never know and, to date, we do not know what fate befell her because the only other information recorded about her is that she was employed as a house servant by a Mr Douglass of Sydney. There was another girl who had an address in the city, Hannah Gowdy, from Chapel Lane and she also was employed as a house servant. Again there is nothing about what became of her – no mention of a husband or family. For a number of others also the only information on their lives in Australia was the names of their first employers. Initially all were apprenticed for a yearly term to their employers as nursemaids, farm servants or house servants and the payments received ranged from £8 to £12 per annum. It would seem that this was cheap labour but there were a number of instances noted where contracts were broken. At the outset of the Earl Grey Scheme however, work was plentiful and the girls could move on. It would appear though that there were times when indentures were cancelled due to misdemeanours or unsatisfactory

work resulting in the 'guilty' girls, such as poor Mary Littlewood mentioned above, being penalised by being sent 'up the country', presumably to the outback. Ironically one who was so dispatched was Mary Anne Kelly of Middletown whose occupation on the shipping list was given as a nursemaid on the shipping list but could also 'milk and churn'. Obviously her additional attributes were either not needed or not appreciated.

Stories of sisters

Mary Anne was one of three sets of sisters. She and her sibling, Rose, who had entered the workhouse, thinly clothed and hungry with other members of their family, left behind their mother in Middletown. Other sisters were Jane and Anne Hunter from Loughgall who were thinly clothed, destitute and could neither read nor write on arrival at the workhouse. Anne, aged 15, was apprenticed for three years which was the longest period recorded for any of the Armagh girls. More is known about the Devlins from Keady than most of the orphans. Sarah, 18, and Margaret, 16, were both employed as servants by a substantial landowner of Clarence River in Northern New South Wales, a remote area that was known for its sheep, maize cultivation and the production of tallow. At that time it was 'one of the frontiers of white expansion and settlement'. Before long Margret was seduced by her employer's son and had a baby boy. Fortunately for her the Sydney Orphan Committee, a body of clergymen and others set up to look after the welfare of the girls, came to her aid. They arranged for her confinement, placed her son in the Protestant Orphan Institution in Sydney and after lengthy negotiations, including threatening legal action, managed after 2 years to extract maintenance of £50 in a lump sum payment. How much of it, if any, Margaret received or how she felt about having to give up her child is unknown. She went on to have a daughter by a seaman and then

another seven by her husband, Joseph Kerrison, a bricklayer from Norfolk. Her sister, Sarah, married a convict, James Baldwin who had been transported from England. They ended up in Armidale, halfway between Sydney and Brisbane and a long way from where she first set foot in Australia. They had 11 children and evidently prospered because when he died James Baldwin's estate was valued at £1,500. Unfortunately poor Sarah did not live long to enjoy it because she died of paralysis at aged 42. The Devlin sisters remained in touch with their family back home and, on separate occasions, nominated their brothers Patrick and Bernard for emigration thus uniting the family. At the time of his death in 1921 the *Armidale Chronicle* recorded that Bernard, known as Barney, was an ex-soldier who had served at the Indian Mutiny, narrowly missing death at the relief of Lucknow and was known to parade with his medals on show on special occasions.¹⁷

It is striking how many of the women had large families. Besides those already mentioned other examples were Elizabeth Conn of Ballinahone who had 13 and Catherine Conway of Markethill who was mother of 9. Another observation was that most of the Armagh girls could at least read but there were five who could neither read nor write, 4 were Protestant and 1 Catholic. On the topic of religion, it is worth noting that in spite of the antipathy towards Catholics those who would seem to have prospered most in this group were of that religion: Sarah Devlin, Catherine Fox and Rose McDonnell.

Conclusion

Emigration to Australia is still today a daunting prospect for many even with advances in travel, increased skills and expertise, knowledge of what to expect from the environment and way of life and some degree of financial security. Just how different it was back in 1848 for those young

women who left the horrors of the workhouse for the Great Unknown! They certainly deserve to be remembered and their history noted. One can only concur with the sentiments expressed by former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, when, in 2002, she visited the Australian Monument to the Great Famine located in Hyde Barracks Sydney. This building had been the base for girls who emigrated under the Earl Grey Scheme and the monument was inspired by their stories. She said it was very important that the Irish community remember those who were very marginalised, very poor, very disregarded, and very low in their own self esteem. She quoted from the poet, Evan Boland: "I want women who have been outside history to be written back into history, finding a voice where they found a vision".¹⁸

Endnotes

- ¹ROBINS, J.A., "The lost children: a study of charity children in Ireland, 1700 -1900", Dublin, 1980, p.199.
- ²BG2/A/5 Armagh Board of Guardian Minutes, 16th January, 1848
- ³Ibid., 1st February, 1848
- ⁴*Armagh Guardian*, 28th February, 1848
- ⁵BG2/A/5 March, 1848
- ⁶Ibid., April, 1848
- ⁷BG2/A/5 B of G Minutes, 8th April, 1848
- ⁸ROBINS, p206
- ⁹ROBINS, J.A. "Irish orphan emigration to Australia, 1848-1850", *Studies*, Winter 1968, pp372-388
- ¹⁰ROBINS, *The lost children* ..p.210
- ¹¹ROBINS, *Studies*, p.377
- ¹²See McClaughlin, T. "Barefoot and pregnant? Irish famine orphans in Australia", Melbourne, 1991
- ¹³See www.irishfaminememorial.org
- ¹⁴www.records.nsw.gov.au, List of ships, 1848, 6 Oct., Earl Grey, Reel 2135, [4/4746]p.155
- ¹⁵Armagh Diocesan Archives are held at the Cardinal O Fiaich Library and Archive, Armagh
- ¹⁶MCCLAUGHLIN, T., "Lost children? Irish Famine Orphans in Australia.", *History Ireland*, , Vol.8, No.4 (Winter, 2000), pp30-34.
- ¹⁷MCCLAUGHLIN, 'Barefoot and pregnant?', pp.17-19
- ¹⁸www.irishfaminememorial.org

Edward Stanley: a life of adventure

by Richard Burns



Edward Stanley 1885

Edward John Stanley was the youngest surviving son of John and Catherine Sarah Stanley, born on 2nd October 1850 in Armagh. He attended the Royal School Armagh from August 1864 to July 1868 and then began to work towards becoming a solicitor. Following the death of his father in 1873 he joined the Royal Irish Fusiliers as a Lieutenant in search of adventure. This need for adventure led to him setting off for Canada in 1874. His elder sister Septima had married George Ward Street, a Canadian serving in the British Army in 1859 and was living in Winnipeg at the time Edward arrived in Canada, and he made his way to Winnipeg to seek employment. He travelled extensively in Northern Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta with survey parties. He also filed on a homestead on the north bank of the South Saskatchewan River, later known as Stanleyville. In 1891 Edward married Elizabeth Moore Dunlop, Elizabeth had emigrated from the Croagh District in county Antrim with her two brothers in 1890 and was the first teacher at a newly built log school in the Cecil District about 13 miles east of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. They had three children.

On his retirement he wrote an account of his adventures for his family and friends. The account covers the years 1874 to 1921 and is mainly concerned with his early years in Canada from 1874 to 1878 working with survey parties. Following his marriage in 1891 he entered the service of the Indian Affairs Department as a farm instructor at Montreal Lake, North West Territories. In 1892 he was transferred to the Touchwood Indian Agency and was a farm instructor on the Poorman Reservation. Later he became a clerk at Kutawa and Punnichy Indian Agencies. Edward retired in 1921 after serving with the agency for thirty years. They continued to live in Punnichy till 1927 when they moved to Victoria, British Columbia. He died there on 6th December 1935

The following are extracts from the account of his adventures:

Travelling to Winnipeg

A small tug boat and a barge were in waiting on the river, going down the Red River to Winnipeg, a distance of about 300 miles. Six of us boarded the barge as there was no accommodation on the tug and after getting underway, we were told that we would have to find shelter for the night in the wood pile on the barge (the wood was being used for fuel for the engine of the tug), and also we were to supply our own grub. I had not a blanket nor a bite of provision with me, but fortunately an old gentleman kindly offered me some cheese and crackers, and a share of his wraps for the night.

Next day we were told we could go ashore to a village some two miles away while the negroes were loading on wood. All we could get at this place was mighty little to keep a fellow in good cheer.

The following day we were told we could mount the high banks and shoot prairie chickens, some 100 feet of broken banks and we no sooner got to the top when the whistle blew and we made a dash down through clay and scrub brush for the boat which just drifted out a little, sufficiently far that we had to make a good jump to reach the barge. One poor young fellow that was right behind me, threw his gun before him, stock foremost, and it went off and the charge entered his chest and right on through his back between his shoulder blades.

We picked him up and carried him to our shakedown and used cotton batten to absorb the flow of blood. He seemingly was unconscious and simply gasped as he quickly breathed all night and the next morning we made a rough stretcher and carried him across the prairie to a small village where there was a doctor, but the poor lad succumbed when he reached there.

Finding a job

The D.A. General of that district took quite an interest in me and asked that I should get a commission in the North West Mounted Police. I was informed that it would be some time before this could be obtained so I became more or less discouraged and joined a survey party for six weeks and returned to Winnipeg.

Finding nothing decisive with the police force I made another strike in July the same year with Professor Bell' of the Geological Society. We struck west 250 miles with what we call Red River carts - all wood, and we boys had to foot it to a place called Fort Ellice, a Hudson Bay Post. On this trip we encountered the grasshopper pest. These miserable things filled the sky like a snow storm and the cart trails were filled to a foot deep, the little beggars simply ate the shirts off our backs.

Later employment

While living at the barracks, on December 3rd the same year, after officer's mess was over, two officers, Frenchmen Martineau and Decaze and myself strolled downtown. On the way I said I would like to strike another survey party for the winter. Mr. Martineau remarked he knew an old Magill College man who had a long survey in view and was to be in Winnipeg that night and if I liked he would ask his friend to take me on.

We at once went to what was then the only hotel in Winnipeg. At the door I noticed a pile of new snowshoes. I asked him what this meant. He said, "My friend, Reid² must be in and this is part of his outfit". We then asked for Mr. Reid and a jolly fellow with spectacles appeared. I was introduced and Mr. Martineau asked if I could get a job. At that time I was wearing a lovely beaver overcoat which I had bought from Col. Irvin³ of the force in Winnipeg. (Gosford Irvin is connected to the Earl Gosford of Armagh). This coat did not fit Irvin so I bought it cheap. Well, Mr. Reid had a hearty laugh and remarked that surely a man wearing a coat like that would never present himself for a survey party. I said, "Never mind the coat, that is not hard to dispose of." However, we had a pleasant meeting and Reid asked me to call in the morning to talk the matter over. Early the following morning I called at the hotel. Mr. Reid was still in his bed. I was ushered to his room and he was very jolly but said he thought the work would not suit me and moreover that his staff was filled from headquarters in Ottawa. He laughed again and said he was ashamed to offer the only job he had. I said, "Out with it!" and he said he had not as yet appointed an assistant cook, and he did not think I could fill it. "Yes," I said "I can, give me a show!" and off I went the next day to wash plates and carry wood for the cook at \$30.00 a month.

Working as an assistant cook

Our first move was to an island heavily timbered. Next day the

party went off to work on the line and I was left to get all the wood to supply the camp. Not knowing dry from green timber I did not bring in the best for burning. The cook smiled and said the wood I brought was not good so he came out to show me the difference. Of course this was my first experience in big timber.

Well, I succeeded fairly well until I came across a large tree and when I felled it I had to cut it in lengths so I could carry them. I had my snowshoes on, and as I said before the snow was deep and when the tree fell it buried itself. I started cutting it blindly into lengths, only to find that I had chopped the whole front off my nice new snowshoes. With a sad countenance I faced the cook, and didn't he laugh! "Never mind," he said, "Hang them on a tree and take a new pair and if the boss says anything, tell him that our train dogs chewed them up."

A bachelor's home

I must tell a story of my home. My house was built on the north bank of the South Saskatchewan River far from everybody, a belt of pines lay a mile below me, bears around were plentiful, and if you will credit me, I used to boil barley for my horses. One night I left the iron pot outside the door, and on rising I noticed a bear with its head in the pot. After that I made a point to leave the pot out with a little feed for the bears. One evening I came home with a young friend who had not seen a bear. I told him I could show him one soon, and that night, placed the barley pot outside the door. Before we retired we took a look out of the window and saw the homely brute having his supper.

Near my stable was a gully where I watered my horses. One day toward spring I was strolling along this gully when I came upon a bears' den covered with leaves and moss. I uncovered the top of the den and killed a big brown bear and, strange to say, found two cubs, one black and one brown which I took to my house. I kept these little pets for some months--the brown one got very rough to handle and I often had to fight him when putting him

to bed in a big packing case. Some ladies came to see the bears one day and they very kindly undertook to clean my bachelor shack, bringing nice curtains with them etc. A few days later, I had occasion to go to Prince Albert, 16 miles and return the next day. To my disgust I found that these little ruffians had torn everything to pieces, so I disposed of them after that.

Marriage and a more settled life



Elizabeth Moore Dunlop

After this latest experience, I began to realize that I was getting up in years and would not be fit to stand the hardships much longer. I went back to my homestead where I got steadied down to more routine life and began to feel more at home with the fair sex by going to evening parties, etc. At length I arrived at the most interesting part of my life when I came across one whom I liked better than myself. In due course and better acquaintance I presumed to think I was the right man in the right place and popped the question. Glad to say, was accepted, so in a year or so after, I became a benedict in 1891.

That same spring I got an appointment as instructor to the Montreal Lake Indians, about 90 miles north of Prince Albert, and to this place my good wife insisted on accompanying me. We struck out together with a light wagon and

two horses across the north branch of the Saskatchewan River and drove through heavy bush country all the way. There were creeks to cross and worst of all muskegs, which our horses often fell through and we were obliged to single them out and lead each by hand, then go back to our wagon, take it apart and carry it in parts to where we could reach solid ground. I would go ahead with my axe and have to cut a new road in places, while my wife would handle the team.

We reached our destination safe and sound, introduced ourselves to our new Nichee Indian friends and arranged with them to help build a little house, we only had our tent.

The Indians seemed quite willing and the next day we cut logs, and in a week we were into our new shack, on the shore of a fine lake some 50 miles long and 20 miles wide, with a nice gravelly shore. There were no white folk within 100 miles of us. Before leaving Prince Albert, the Church of England Missionary promised my wife that if we could find sufficient Indian children in that locality who would attend school, that we could spend \$100.00 on the erection of a school house.

I talked the matter over with my Indians and all agreeable, they set to work with me and in a little over a month the building was completed. During the time we were building, my wife visited the scattered parents who were camped through the woods and solicited children of school age. By the time we were ready she had 34 pupils enrolled and the school was opened for instruction. Many of the children had to come from far off points on the lake, and it was astonishing to witness the little frail birch canoes paddling every morning across the open stretches of water, handled by one squaw and four or five little ones.

In September, we had a visit from the Bishop of Saskatchewan and his missionary, Archdeacon McKay. They were well pleased with the school, and in fact everything.

About the same time our department officials arrived to pay the Indians their annual annuity

money. They were surprised to see us in such an outlandish place, and said that when they got back to headquarters they would report and have me sent to a more civilized reserve. So at the end of the month I got my instructions to proceed to Touchwood Agency, and no time was lost packing up. At the same time we were sorry to leave the children behind with whom my wife was beloved.

After a long wagon journey we got to our destination at Touchwood on October 16, 1892, a distance of 260 miles. I was placed in charge of Poormans and Day Star Indian Reserves, under the Indian Agent, Mr. Hilton Keith.

Routine duty was then performed and nothing of a very serious character occurred up to the present time, with the exception, of my promotion from Farm Instructor to the Agency Clerkship at headquarters of the Agency at Kutawa.



Edward Stanley in Indian beaded costume at retirement from Indian Agency 1920

On his retirement he was presented with an Indian beaded costume by the Indians on the reserve.

Notes

1 – Robert Bell was born in Toronto, Ontario in 1841. He took an early interest in geological surveys, working as a summer assistant to Sir William Edmond Logan with the Geological Survey of Canada when a 15-year old teenager. He maintained an interest in both academia and surveys before becoming a permanent officer with the Geological Survey of Canada in 1869 and rising to the rank of Acting Director in 1901. Bell led many extensive explorations in northern Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, the eastern Arctic, Saskatchewan prairies, and

Athabasca oil sands. He is credited with mapping the rivers between Hudson Bay and Lake Superior. Bell's work was appreciated because he collected specimens and made notes on geology, flora and fauna, climate and soil, indigenous populations, and exploitable resources. Survey colleagues dubbed him the father of Canadian place-names because estimates credit him with naming over 3,000 geographical features in Canada. Bell wrote over 200 reports and papers, mostly on geology, biology, geography and ethnology.

2 – John Lestock Reid was born at Bowmanville, Ontario in 1841. He was a civil engineer and Dominion Land Surveyor, and practised his profession in Australia for some time. Returning to Canada he came to Winnipeg in 1871 and in 1875 moved to Prince Albert where he had charge of surveys for the Dominion Government for many years. A great part of this province was surveyed by him. He died at Prince Albert in 1910.

3 – Acheson Gosford Irvine was born in Québec in 1837, the son of Lieutenant-Colonel John George and Annie Bell Irvine. He joined the militia in 1864 and served with the Québec Rifles in Manitoba on the Red River Expeditionary Force in 1870. Following the Red River Rebellion, Irvine remained in Manitoba, where he was the provincial infantry commander. After being promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in 1872, Irvine joined the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) in 1875, was appointed Assistant Commissioner in 1876, and became the NWMP's fourth Commissioner from 1880 to 1886, the first native-born Canadian to do so. On March 26, 1885, Commissioner Irvine led a force of 83 NWMP members and 25 civilian volunteers from Prince Albert to Fort Carlton to relieve the forces of Superintendent Leif Crozier. Before the relief column arrived, Crozier engaged in battle at Duck Lake with the Métis forces of Gabriel Dumont. Twelve of his men were killed, and eleven were wounded; four Métis and one Indian were killed, and three were wounded before Crozier's men could retreat to Fort Carlton. The following day, Commissioner Irvine decided to abandon Fort Carlton. During the pullout, a fire broke out in the hospital, which spread to engulf the entire fort, burning it to the ground. The combined forces of Irvine and Crozier successfully retreated to Prince Albert on March 28, 1885. Irvine was criticized for his inaction during the 1885 Resistance and forced to resign in 1886. Irvine also served as a member of the Executive Council of the North-West Territories from 1882 to 1886. Following his retirement in 1886 he became warden at Stony Mountain Penitentiary in Manitoba until 1913, and then warden of Kingston Penitentiary from 1913 to 1914. He was awarded the Imperial Service order in 1902. He died in Quebec on January 9, 1916.

Armagh historian provides new Irish Famine Atlas with local insights

by Eric Villiers

In overhearing a recent conversation, I was reminded of the resilience of myths in the face of historic facts. As the newspaper editor put it in the Western movie *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* 'when the legend becomes fact, print the legend'.

Early in 2013 I was on a train travelling from Dublin when I eavesdropped on three of my fellow passengers in the next seat. Since one person, quite loudly, led the conversation I was in reality listening to a dialogue by one man (isn't it usually a man in such scenarios) who quickly established that he spoke three languages ('Irish badly'), and lived overlooking the sea at Omeath. Little was said by the other two passengers ostensibly taking part in the 'discussion' with a man who was clearly a stranger to them.

Much of what he said was mundane but since he skipped along in harmony with the train's drone I found my disinterest mounting until my attention was caught as he began an angry critique of ITV's hit show the aristo-soap-drama *Downton Abbey*. His interest, he quickly and grandly added was not about the silly goings on at the big house *per se*, but by the unrealistic reactions of the landed gentry in an early episode to the chauffeur's revelation that he was an Irish Republican.

After a brief diversion to correct one of his listeners who thought that 'Downton Abbey' was a real place rather than fictional big house, he segued into a riff on the abominations visited on Ireland by Queen Victoria. Chief among his accusations was that the 'Famine Queen' had been a monster, as shown, he said, by another television programme, a documentary that same week, which highlighted the egotistical behaviour of the queen, and how it had ultimately alienated her from her daughters.

Although Victoria had been dead for a good few years before the period in which the ITV drama is set, our in-carriage television critic, carried on to announce in the most authoritative tones that 'of course she had been a

horrible woman, sure didn't she only sent £5 to the famine relief fund.' "You know", he added, 'that would have been what a maid at Downton got for a whole year's wages'.

And so, suddenly our informant was into the territory where myths thrive as dogmas that sustain thousands in comforting prejudices. Fed to generation after generation these refuse to die no matter how much solid contrary evidence is brought to bear on them in history books. Right up to today even fervent royalists are prepared to believe the worst of a monarch whose poor public relations skills struggled to win over the hearts of the most ardent monarchists throughout her long reign.

Back on the train I refrained from leaning over into the next seat to tap the man's shoulder and point out that Queen Victoria, far from being parsimonious had in fact been generous. Other less relevant facts I recalled were that the Quakers had provided the most effective practical assistance as well as cash and that American Red Indian tribes had sent aid. Unfortunately I could not quite remember if it was £1,000 or £2,000 that Victoria had donated, so I remained silent.

My latest information about the famine had come from the recently published *Atlas of the Great Irish Famine*, although I knew from other reliable sources that Victoria had been personally affected even if her cabinet ministers were obscenely negligent in offering support. The *Atlas* confirms all this but has gone further with new insights into what was going on around Armagh at the time.

First, as a chapter by Christine Kenealy points out, Victoria was quick to make a donation: '... when she was named as the first person to donate to the newly-

formed British Association for the Relief of Distress in Ireland and Scotland. In fact, her £2,000 gift made her the largest individual contributor of famine relief'. Today that subscription of £2,000 represents around £1.5 million if taken as a comparison of average earnings in 1847 and the same index today. Moreover Victoria sent the money early in 1847 in spite of strong opposition from her government ministers and the press. The *London Times* attacked her for 'helping to perpetuate Irish independence on the poor people of Britain'.

As to the effects of the famine in this locality the *Atlas* includes major contributions from historian Gerard Mac Atasney, who will be well known to members of Armagh and District History Group for his talks on Irish history in general and Armagh topics in particular.

In two *Atlas* contributions 'Lurgan workhouse' and 'The Great Hunger in Belfast' (the second with Christine Kenealy) Mac Atasney helps to dismantle the myth that the north east escaped the worst of the hunger and disease. Among the misconceptions corrected by Mac Atasney's pen is that Armagh got off lightly, and where it did impact on the people it was the poorer Catholic population that suffered. As *Atlas* points out the roots of such myths go back to shortly after the worst of famine. In 1849 the *Newry Telegraph* wrote: '... we are a painstaking, industrious laborious people, who desire to work and pay our just debts, and the blessing of the Almighty is upon our labour. If the people of the South had been as equally industrious with those in the North, they would not have had so much misery among them'.

The mythical position seemed to comfort people in the north and was re-

inforced particularly in the 19th century when the northern majority were ever more reluctant to believe that the United Kingdom had abandoned their forbearers to their fate.

Mac Atasney's own study of north Armagh reveals horror stories to match anything coming out of the south west of Ireland. Here his view of the dismal failure of Lurgan workhouse is enlightening. In a case recorded in April 1847 by John Dilworth of Kilicomaine, Portadown, Mac Atasney uses Dilworth's own words as he worked to help the destitute of Lurgan Poor Law Union:

About the beginning of this month on the old road leading to Portadown, I called on a family named McClean and found the house like a pig-sty. Having fled from Lurgan Poor House, where fever and dysentery prevailed, they returned home only to encounter greater horrors. Want sent the poor man to bed and I gave him assistance, but he died a few days after. The wife almost immediately after met the same melancholy fate; and the daughter soon followed her parents to the grave. On the Thursday after, I repeated my visit, and just within the door of the wretched habitation I saw a young man, about 20 years old, sitting before a live coal, about the size of an egg, entirely naked; and another lad, about thirteen leaning against a post. On turning to the right I saw a quantity of straw, which had become litter; the rest of the family reclining on this wretched bed, also naked, with an old rug for covering. The boy who stood against the post directed my attention to an object at my feet which I had not seen before, and over which I nearly stumbled, the place being so dark – and oh! What a spectacle – a young man about fourteen or fifteen, on the cold damp floor, off the rubbish, dead!; without a single vestige of clothing, the eyes sunk, the mouth wide open, the flesh shrivelled up, the bones all visible, so small around the waist that I could span him with my hand. The corpse had been left in that situation for five successive days.

A week later when he went back Dilworth found three of the eight family members still alive but wrote: 'none of these will be any time alive'.

The Dilworth record could be matched by those relief workers tracking families who had fled from Armagh workhouse after fevers had struck down 400 of its 1,200 occupants. One of these, the *Ulster Gazette* reported,

related to a mother found dying with her four children huddled around her, starving to death in 'a small hut at Killycoply'.

With few resources local papers struggled to convey the breadth and depth of the destruction visited on their localities. Here the *Atlas*' methodology comprehensively provides today's readers with the most reliable facts, in figures, maps, graphs, illustrations etc., to present an overview of those terrible years which the local newspapers only hint at.

With regard to Armagh one particular map is striking in its coverage of the 'towns' that disappeared between 1841 and 1851. 'Towns' were regarded as any community with more than 20 houses, and some 165 of these communities, with, say populations of up to 500 people, were wiped off the map including Derryscollop, Armagh. With whole communities dying or fleeing the countryside it is little wonder that the Killycoply mother, with no one to turn to, could do no more than gather her children to her and await death.

For insights into the scale of the Famine in Armagh, there is no better primary source than the minutes of the Board of Guardians meetings, held by the Irish and Local Studies Library, Armagh.

By the spring of 1847 Armagh's workhouse was so overwhelmed by demands for aid that they issued a blanket warning to national, regional and local authorities that they could no longer cope. On March 27, with the house already overcrowded and infested with disease, 32 people were admitted and three applicants rejected. Considering the stresses on the staff at this point we can imagine that the state of those 32 souls was heart-breaking.

On that same day a letter arrived from the Central Board of Health 'enclosing a resolution from Mullabrack and Kilclooney Relief Committee in reference to a temporary hospital for fever cases [being] provided'. At its meeting the Board could do nothing more than acknowledge the letter and suggest that the Relief Committee rent a house or building as a temporary hospital for the sick. It was now, so to speak, a case of every parish for itself.

The workhouse was reaching its limits, and two weeks later on April 10, another 59 applicants were granted admission. A week after that with admissions having risen to 72 in the

interim, the Board called a halt to the process of admitting anyone who was ill. The chief medical officer Dr J. L. Riggs issued an order that no one with a contagious disease was to be admitted.

In the previous week no less than 179 people had turned up at the workhouse gates, and a decision was taken to turn everyone away at the gates. The Clerk was instructed to notify 'parish wardens etc' that the house was full 'and much sickness and mortality having been the result of overcrowding in other houses the Guardians are obliged to stop all admissions... there being still 300 cases of fever in the house'.

On May 5, the day after Dr Riggs issued his order, Patrick McCarren arrived with his three children and gained admission. Apparently two Guardians who were present took pity on the family and ordered the 'Master' to admit them.

Two of the McCarren children had contagious diseases and Dr Riggs did not hide his anger that his order about not admitting the sick had been ignored. His mood would not have been helped by the fact that Patrick McCarren, after successfully getting his children into the relative safety of the workhouse, promptly disappeared without taking up his own residency.

By then the medical staff were dealing with '397 cases in the hospital, temporary wards, infirmary and convalescent hospital'. Meanwhile in the workhouse proper an 'overflow of 200 people were being accommodated in sheds and the number of inmates is above 1,400' in a building that had been planned to house 1,200.

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Irish Surnames

by Gerry Oates

O Callaghan

The Annals of Ulster record that the sept *Ua Céileacháin* with their allies carried out a cattle raid on the assembly at Aenach Macha in AD 1021 against Aedh Ua Néill and his followers. The Annals also state that the *Ua Céileachain* were at that time the principal family of the Uí Bresail Macha, which means they were rulers of extensive territory surrounding the city of Armagh.

The Uí Bresail tribe to which they belonged claimed descent from Coll-da-chríoch, one of the founders of the ancient kingdom of Oriel, which included the modern counties of Armagh and Monaghan. The surname is based on a diminutive form of the Gaelic *céile* 'companion'. The more correct anglicised form of the name is (*O*) *Keelaghan*, but this has been almost totally absorbed by the more numerous Cork surname *O Callaghan*. Indeed, *O Callaghan* is the form used by descendants of the *Ua Céileacháin* sept in Armagh at present.

As an important medieval family the name occurs frequently in the Annals of the Four Masters and Annals of Ulster. *Archu Ua Céileacháin* is recorded as king of Uí Bresail in AD 1037 and *Niall Ua Céileacháin*, lord of Uí Bresail in 1044. *Cú Uladh Ó Ceileacháin*, tanist and later king of Oriel was slain in 1096 in one of the many internecine battles between warring tribes in the early medieval period. The *Ó Céileachain* sept was also prominent in Church affairs of the time, for *Madagan O Kelechan* is recorded as precentor of Armagh and prior of the Culdees in 1063. In the late medieval period *Donald O Kellachan*, a canon of Armagh, was elected prior of the Culdees in 1430 and, after a prolonged dispute

which involved appeals to Rome, was licensed by the Primate to continue in the enjoyment of the perpetual vicarage of the parish church of Tynan, which he had previously held. And again in 1440, another of the sept, *David O Kellachan*, was appointed vicar of Drumcree.

As a prelude to the Plantation of Ulster the 1609 Inquisition in Armagh identified the territory of *Ferrenmunterkellaghan* (*Fearann Mhuintir Chéileacháin* - 'O Kellaghan's ploughland'), within the Manor of Armagh for the settlement of English planters. *Neale O Calligan* of Dorsey, 'a good and lawful man,' was one of the jurors representing the native septs consulted by the Inquisition. Prior to that, many of the name must have been involved in Hugh O'Neill's rebellion of the late 16th century, for the Fiants of Elizabeth record pardons issued in 1602 to three *O Kellichans*, one *O Kellychan* and one *O Kellechan* from the Fews of Ulster. Later in the same century there are seven entries for *O Kellaghan* in the Armagh Hearth Money Rolls of 1664, scattered across all the baronies except Tiranny. In Petty's incomplete 'census' of Ireland of 1659, which set out to identify landholders, we find six entries named *O Kelloghane* / *O Kealoghane* in the barony of Fews.

The present spelling (*O*) *Callaghan* in favour of the older, more correct form above only begins to appear in local records in 18th century documents. A list of families in the parish of Creggan in 1766 includes 16 households name *Callaghan*. In the Assizes Indictments 1776-97 litigants named *Callaghan* are recorded on three occasions. During the same period William Lodge's 1770 census of the Archbishop's tenants lists six *Callaghans* in Irish Street, seven in School Lane and one in Castle Street and all had by

that time discarded the prefix *O*. Renewed interest in Gaelic culture with the growth of the Gaelic League in the late 19th & early 20th centuries led to many families reclaiming the *O* prefix and adopting it officially. In Armagh, however, the ancient sept of *Ó Céileachain* like most Irish families maintained the version imposed on them two centuries previously.

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Lappin

The Annals of the Four Masters record the death of *Aengus Ua Lapáin*, bishop of Raphoe, in AD 957 which makes *Ua Lapáin* one of the oldest hereditary surnames in Ireland. The sept *Ó Lapáin* (*Lappin* in English), belonged to the Cenél Enda tribe of Donegal and held territory in the vicinity of *Loch Lapáin* (now Port Lough), east of present-day Newtowncunningham. They were a family of some importance, for another member of the sept, *Uisíne Ua Lapáin* was superior of the monastery of Doire Calgach (Derry) in 983, and a second *Aengus Ua Lapáin* is recorded by the Four Masters as king of Cineál Énda in 1010.

From their position as a leading sept of Tirconnell (Donegal), with their chief as lord of Cenél Enda, little is heard of them in historical documents after 1100. However, late Tudor and early Stuart records show the *O Lappans* as well established in Co. Armagh by the beginning of the 17th century. The date of their migration from Donegal to their present location is not recorded, but it is quite probable that they followed in the wake of the O'Neill migration from Inishowen in the early 14th century to lands adjacent to their new settlements around Tullyhogue and Dungannon.

The surname *Lappin* is almost exclusively confined to the Ulster counties and is particularly numerous at present in Armagh. John O'Donovan, while carrying out his research for the Ordnance Survey in the 19th century also found the name to be still common in Inishowen, close to their original homeland. Matheson's survey of the register of births for 1890, however, shows a total of 26 with 24 in Ulster, mostly confined to Armagh, Tyrone and Antrim. The Gaelic

version *Ó Lapáin* is thought to derive from *lapa* 'paw' and the earliest anglicised forms appear as *O Lappan / O Lappane*. Only in the late 18th and 19th centuries does the version *Lappin* begin to appear; this was a period when there was much pressure on the native population to conform to English standards in all aspects of society. The surname *Lappin* also existed in England, based on the French *lapin* 'rabbit', and was applied to one who dealt in rabbits, or was a nickname for one of a timid nature; the first documented record of the name in England was in Kent in 1320, almost four centuries after the appearance of *Ua Lapáin* in Ireland.

As previously mentioned, the name *O Lappan(e)* occurs frequently in records relating to Armagh in the late 16th and 17th centuries. The Fiants of Elizabeth in 1602 and the Patent Rolls of James I (1603 - 1628) produce six entries while there are a further three in the Manor Court Rolls of 1625-7. A further ten named *O Lappan* are listed as tenants on the Primate's mensal lands of Glenaul between 1615 and 1631. Petty's census of landholders in 1659 includes *O Lapan* as a principal Irish name with nine entries recorded in the barony of Tiranny.

The form *Lappan* (without prefix *O*) persists throughout most of the 18th century and Lodge's survey of the residents of Armagh city in 1770 locates 14 *Lappans* in Callan Street and another two in Irish Street. The spelling *Lappin* begins to appear in 1770-71 in records of the parish of Old Eglis. The name was also recorded twice in the parish of Creggan in 1766 as *Lappen / Lappin*. In Urney graveyard, on the Armagh-Louth border, there is a memorial inscription to a local man, *Thomas Lappin*, blacksmith and United Irishman, who died in 1798 as the result of a whipping.

Documentary records from the 19/20th centuries confirm *Lappin* as an established Armagh surname with a traceable lineage going back more than a thousand years. The current distribution of the name is

concentrated within the city and adjoining districts.

According to Mac Lysaght, *Delap* is a Donegal variant of *Ó Lapáin* and it is curious to note that a *John Dulapp* of Drumsill appears in the Armagh Hearth Money Rolls of 1664.

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Halligan

Halligan (Ó hAilleagáin) is one of the earliest surnames recorded in the Armagh area. First mention of the name is found in the Annals of the Four Masters under the year 1042 AD when the death of *Maelpéadair Ua hAileacain*, lecturer of Armagh and chief of students, is recorded. Surnames were introduced in Ireland in the first half of the 10th century which suggests that (*O*) *Halligan* is among the oldest recorded family names, not only in Ireland but in western Europe where the use of surnames did not become general until the late 11th century. It is based on the Gaelic *áille* 'beauty'.

Historically the O Halligans are a sept of the ancient kingdom of Oriel (Armagh, Monaghan and Louth) and from an early stage were associated with the parish of Kilmore. They are known in medieval documents as *Munter Alle-gane*, a corruption of the Gaelic *Muintir Uí Ailleagáin* (the *O Halligan* people). Along with the O Cullens and O Fearons they were one of three erenagh families responsible for the maintenance of church lands in the parish of Kilmore in the late medieval period. During that period they owned the modern townlands of Ballywilly and Tullygarden and, as an erenagh family, enjoyed considerable prestige and influence in church affairs locally. Medieval documents often confuse surnames with initial *H* with those beginning *F*, written thus *ff*, which produced the variant forms *O Fallegan*, *O Falligan* etc.

Their influence on church affairs is reflected in the number of clerics bearing the name who held important office during the 15th century, including rectors and vicars of Kilmore, Drumcree and Clonchony (now Lisnadill) as well as the posts of canon and treasurer of the Cathedral church of Armagh.

In preparation for the Plantation of

Ulster King James I set up an Inquisition in Armagh in 1609 to distinguish, among other things, the Church lands from those claimed by the Crown. As erenaghs and administrators of church lands the *O Halligans* were identified as "the sept of *Mounterallegane (Muintir Uí Ailleagáin)*, and their ancestors, time out of mind" in possession of Ballywilly and Tullygarden. Similarly, the Inquisition reported that "the sept of *James O Fallagan*, and their ancestors, time out of mind, have been seized of *Balliard I Fallagan (Ballyards)* and Tullymore". The Plantation provision for Co. Armagh decreed these lands were then to be divided into 42 portions to be allocated as follows: 28 to Undertakers (English and Scottish settlers), 6 to Servitors (army and civil servants) and 8 to Natives (the displaced Irish).

By 1616 the 'church families' of Kilmore, O Fearons, O Cullens and *O Halligans*, were still residing on the lands where their 'ancestors, time out of mind' had lived for centuries. Their role was now that of tenants of the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh. Evidence from the Manor Court Rolls of 1625-7 indicate that there were at least three *O Halligan / O Fallagan* families still in the area, but in the Hearth Money Tax Rolls of 1664 there are none of the name recorded in their former townlands; only *Shane O Hallygan*, residing in the Manor of Castledillon, appears among those recorded. The appointment of *James O Halligan* as Dean of the Cathedral of Armagh in 1628 continued the tradition of 'church family', but also illustrates the willingness of some to adopt the reformed faith.

The name *Halligan* reappears in the late 18th century during the sectarian disturbances in 1795 involving the Protestant Peep o' Day Boys and Catholic Defenders. *John, Neil & Pat Halligan* attended 'a meeting of several respectable inhabitants of the lower part of

the Parish of Kilmore and Ruducke-Grange' to call for calm. They further resolved to 'detect and give information against each and every disturber of the peace and tranquillity of this neighbourhood, let his religious persuasion or condition in life be what it may and we invite all our neighbours of every description to do the same'.

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Memories of the Shambles

by Phil McGinn

The Shambles is an area at the lower end of Armagh City, which would include possibly fifty/sixty yards in all directions from the mini roundabout in front of the former fire station. This is Lower English Street, out Cathedral Road, and up Dawson Street and upper English Street. When I was growing up the old people referred to Dawson Street as “The back of the Shambles.”

The dictionary tells us that the word Shambles can be: 1. a place of great disorder, 2. any place of slaughter, 3. a row of covered stalls or shops where goods, originally meat, are sold, 4. a place where animals are brought to be slaughtered.

I would imagine that number 4 was the reason behind the name being given as indeed there was an abattoir sited behind the houses almost opposite the main gate into the Shambles Yard where cattle and sheep were killed. Dungannon has a street called Shamble Lane and like Armagh it had an abattoir in its vicinity.

Number 3 could apply to the Shambles at the present time but while some form of disorder has occurred from time to time (number 1) it would be carrying things somewhat far to suggest carnage (number 2). A report in the *Ulster Gazette* of Saturday 18th July 1903 tells us that on the previous Saturday night a man, who had been arrested at the Shambles for disorderly behaviour, had to be carried by the police to Russell Street police station followed by a good-natured crowd of some two or three hundred with much banter being exchanged. An earlier report in the 1890's tells of an Orange Parade being stoned there at a time when Cathedral Road was known as Mill Street.

A second city centre

So much has happened around the Shambles over the years that one could be forgiven for thinking that it and not Market Street was the centre of the city. It's a favourite place for crowds to gather on special occasions – St Patrick's Day parades; religious processions; welcoming home our Cardinals after they had received the Red Hat; greeting victorious football teams after some great success at national level; waiting in silence to pay tribute at some particularly sad funeral, or the funeral of a person of note.

The Shambles has also been a place of rendezvous – where footballers used to gather and wait for transport to take them to the games; where lovers would have met before going for a walk or to one of Armagh's three cinemas which then existed; where in the summertime fruit pickers would wait for a lift probably on the back of a lorry to their place of work; and during World War 2 where the “Utility Farmers” got their lift which would take them to their jobs of perhaps pulling flax.

Two of the better known locations in the area are the Shambles Corner and the Shambles Yard. For well up to the 1960s or 1970s the Corner had been a gathering spot for men from the immediate area and beyond but with the advent of modern entertainments, in particular television, it seems to have lost its appeal.

A priest, Fr. John Gallogly, a curate from Tullyallen near Drogheda, who had helped to raise money that went towards the building of the Cathedral in the mid-19th century wrote a book detailing many of the events surrounding it. In it he told how he just had to mention a character called Jemmy Fitzpatrick who was well known to the citizens

of Armagh and to most of the clergy of the Archdiocese. He told how Jemmy had been appointed by Archbishop Crolly in the early days of the work on the Cathedral, as Guardian of the Hill and night watchman. In addition, he was land steward, grave-digger, general marketman and bailiff. After Crolly's death in 1849 he still held the office of night watchman. He hadn't much to do but occasionally he would patrol the hill with his bull terrier dog Bloss, and his gun which he would now and then discharge. During the next day, the adventures of Jemmy and his dog, we are told, was the theme of the corner boys at the Shambles. The courage and sagacity of his dog Bloss in seizing a fellow by the calf of the leg and holding him prisoner until released, was widely spoken of, though no one believed it, least of all Jemmy himself. Proof, if such was needed, that there were men standing at the Shambles Corner in the mid-1800s.

“Shambles Dodgers”

Someone once coined the phrase “Shamble Dodgers” when referring to the men who gathered at the Corner chiefly on summer nights after teatime or after Sunday's 10 o'clock Mass, which in those days was celebrated in the Cathedral. They say an animal such as a horse has 180 degrees vision. So too, had the men who took up early positions at the edge of the kerb at O'Neill's corner between Lower English Street and Cathedral Road. At that spot they would miss very little of what was happening in a few directions. Others were content enough to stand in their own groups with their backs to the walls of houses or shops on both sides of the road, and if a window sill was high they would rest their elbows on it, or if it was low perhaps sit on it.

Conversations would take place on many topics such as football or a recent or upcoming road bowls (bullet) score; maybe an incident at their place of work or some local gossip. "I heard it at the Shambles" was, and still is, a well-known phrase used when one might be asked later how he had heard some news which he had passed on. There would of course have been a lot of banter and good humour and many a local character passing by on a bicycle might have received a loud cheer.

The Shambles Corner gatherings would have been in their heyday in 1945 when a Gaelic football team was formed to take part in the famous Armagh Streets League which created great interest throughout the city and surrounding areas and gave such a lift to the people just when it was needed at the end of World War 2. Five teams took part – Navan Street, Irish Street, Thomas Street, Milford and The Shambles. The whole venture was a huge success with the games eagerly awaited as well as the reports and the humorous asides each week. Among those who represented the Shambles in the different games were – Joe and Pat Houlahan, Sean and Ted Hart, Eugene Toal, Joe Dotters, Pat Toner, Tommy McAvinchey, Jimmy Dougan, Redmond Halligan, Jim Vallely, Francie Grimley, Jackie McKinney, Donal Lennon, Jackie Rafferty, Paddy McGerrigan, Joe McStravick, Gerry Cush, --- Corvan --- McAleenan, --- O'Brien. After many enjoyable weeks of football, Irish Street beat Navan Street in an exciting final.

Quiet streets

What added to the life and soul of the Shambles at that time was that many families lived in the area – a lot more than nowadays. Most business people and their families lived on the premises – people like the O'Neills, Grimleys, Harts, Frazers and Murphys. Nowadays we find that most shops are locked up in the early evening and except for weekends when the public

houses and fast food carry-outs are busy, the streets, like those in towns of a similar size, are fairly empty and quiet after 6 pm.

Of course most shops have changed hands since my younger days and sadly a number of the buildings are vacant and boarded up. One very busy establishment in the past was McNiece's where Macari's is now. As well as newspapers, cigarettes and tobacco, confectionery and grocery items could have been purchased there, and they also had a sub-post office. The proprietors were two elderly McNiece sisters, one of whom had a bad shake in one of her hands. A local wag once referred to them as the "Missuses McNieceses." Helping them was a small, smart white haired lady called Lallie Trodden who always seemed to be busy. Imagine my surprise one day when on entering the shop I saw Lallie with blue hair. Knowing nothing about rinses (then or now) I couldn't wait to get home to tell my mother.

There was a public house on either side of McNiece's just like today, which were owned by Jimmy McAneney and Francie Donnelly and on either side of those were Hart's and Johnston's which sold paint and wallpaper and many items of hardware. Edward Hart, the father of Ted, was a master craftsman with wood and his fretwork pieces just had to be seen to be believed. Completing that block of six businesses was a chemist – once Emerson's and later Egan's. It was possibly the site of an earlier shop owned by a man whose name, if it was written just as it was spoken, was Jaunt McCart. When I enquired on one occasion about the unusual name I was informed that his name was really John T McCart and that once when his shop front was being repainted the sign writer had left no space between the John and the T, so people with probable amusement, just referred to him as Johnt. So even seventy or more years ago, it was quite easy to get a nickname in Armagh.

Behind that row of shops were old out-houses where apparently at the

beginning of the 20th Century a local priest called Father Dunne organised a boys' club. In 1904 a football and hurling club called Tir na nOg was formed from there. They togged out in the club rooms for their home games and walked out to their pitch at Duke's Grove. They had immediate success winning both the County senior football and hurling championship titles but after a couple of years these teams ceased to exist.

Music

A pipe band with the exciting name of O'Neill Warpiper Band Armagh was also formed with a majority of the members coming from the Shambles area and the lower part of the town. It was known locally as "Father Dunne's Pipe Band" and under the guidance of its pipe major, Edward Hart, the father of Sean and Ted, it became one of the country's leading pipe bands winning the North of Ireland and All Ireland cups in 1911. One good friend and supporter of the band was a very famous Belfast antiquarian Francis Joseph Biggar who appears in what is possibly the only photograph taken of the band.

Across the street from Macari's at the corner of Lower English Street and Cathedral Road, was Barney O'Neill's shop where the majority of men would gather. Barney was said to have been a talented musician who played in many orchestras and in earlier years had, with his sister, provided the music for the silent films in the local cinemas. Barney was also a great man for the fishing and one section of his window displays was devoted to all things angling – fishing rods, flies, reels, nets etc. I used to gaze in at this section when waiting for a bus early on a morning when the weather was bad, to take me out to the old Tullymore School where I taught in the late 1950s, and soon a cleverly written little poem by that most prolific of poets "Anonymous" caught my attention.

The Fisher

A fisher on the bank serene

Sat down where all was green

And looked it

He saw the light was growing dim

A fish – or else the fish saw him

And hooked it

He took with high erected comb

The fish – or else the story home

And cooked it

“Anon”

Two buildings away, a large red bricked building, where Currans used to live, once belonged to Barney's father, Charles. Above the front door and lower window at the present time some sign writing which had been hidden for a long time has appeared through the fading paintwork telling us that the building was once “O'Neill's Refreshment Rooms.” Charles was a prominent businessman and a noted sports personality having played for Armagh Harps' County and Ulster Championships winning team of 1890 and later acted as both club and county chairman in the early years of the 1900s. A report in the newspaper *The Frontier Sentinel* tells us that on 2nd August 1903 a hurling team from the Belfast club, Ben Madigan, a highly regarded team, visited Armagh to play Harps, and having been entertained royally in Charles O'Neill's tea rooms at the Shambles, the teams were paraded to Abbey Park by the Foresters band. The game was, I believe, a fund raiser in connection with the second Great Bazaar which had been organised to raise money for the completion of the work on the new Cathedral.

“Armed aliens” arrest Eoin O'Duffy

Jumping forward to 1920, we find that according to the minute book

of the Ulster council G.A.A. for that period, the Ulster Convention, which had been held in Clones and was adjourned, was re-convened for Armagh in Charles O'Neill's restaurant on Saturday 17th April. The Armagh delegate, as a matter of interest was the former Principal of St Malachy's Primary School, Mr Jim Cooney.

The Secretary of the Ulster Council at that time was Monaghan's Eoin O'Duffy, a big name in both politics and sport and a very controversial figure. The meeting had just begun when it was interrupted by members of the security forces. The minutes of the meeting tell us: “At this stage, armed aliens surrounded the place of the meeting and invaded the room. The secretary was taken away by the military oppressors. The Council deliberations were only suspended while members wished our secretary God speed and good wishes for a safe return. For some time the meeting was carried on under the eyes of the oppressor, as an armed guard was placed in the room.” The minutes of the following meeting on 22nd May stated: “A vote of welcome and congratulations to the secretary on his return from prison was passed. This was spoken to by the Chairman and several members. The secretary replied and took up duties again.” Another piece of excitement at the Shambles!

Neighbours of O'Neill's include Pat McGee who spent most of his teaching life in St Patrick's Boys Primary School on Banbrook Hill and whose son Pdraig became a well-known stage and film actor and also Owen Murphy, an old potato merchant who had storehouses for his wares in the Shambles Yard. On their way to winning the 1948 County Championship the Harps minors had scored a great win over the titleholders Keady Dwyers. When their coach Maurice McNally was asked to what he attributed their success, he answered, “Early to bed and early to rise and a good feed of Owen Murphy's new spuds.”

Trades of all sorts

Further down Lower English Street could be found Jimmy Murphy – the last of a dying breed – the tinsmith, an expert in all kinds of making and mending kitchen utensils. McKenna's Sawmills always held an attraction for young boys sauntering past. We used to enter by the main entrance in Lower English Street, and walk through the sawdust and wood shavings to the sounds of the electric saws and planes and come out past the abattoir onto the Cathedral Road. I remember once looking into the abattoir yard through a gate which was usually kept closed but which on that day had been left open, and seeing a sheep which was stretched across a type of trestle being killed by a man who was wearing wellington boots and a leather apron. I'd imagine the Health and Safety people of nowadays would have something to say about that method.

McKenna's were also building contractors who employed many tradesmen and trained young men as apprentices in most of the trades. I once heard someone remark that it was easy to spot a tradesman who had been trained in McKenna's for not only were they skilled in their work but they were neat and tidy workers who cleaned up after the job was completed. Among the many buildings erected by McKenna's workers was St Malachy's Church in Lower Irish Street.

Another place nearby which we liked to call into was the forge where the blacksmith Peter Starrs plied his trade. It was a place of different smell with that of a scorched hoof being most prominent. As Peter worked away using his hammer and anvil to shape the red hot metal bar into a perfect horseshoe he might glance over at us. He wouldn't say a word but he wouldn't chase us away either. It was just as Longfellow described in his poem “The Village Blacksmith” – a scene which very few children could witness nowadays.

*And little children coming home
from school
Peep in at the open door
They love to see the flaming forge
And hear the bellows roar
And watch the burning sparks that
fly
Like chaff from a threshing floor.*

The Shambles Yard of course has been used for a variety of purposes down through the years, but most people would associate it with the twice weekly markets, which are held on Tuesdays and Fridays. Some literature produced by Armagh City & District Council tells us that rights for a market have existed since the 15th century and until the end of the 19th Century the enclosed area was used for the sale of pork, hay, straw and hides. A slaughter hall was contained in the Francis Johnston Building, which was originally a Corn Market and is now listed by the Historic Monuments and Buildings Branch of the Department of the Environment. This building is the one with the clocks on top, which are commonly known as the Shambles Clock.

Francis Johnston was a well-known Armagh born architect in the second half of the 18th century. The Armagh Observatory was built from his designs and among other achievements, he played a major role in the finishing of the Primate's Chapel adjacent to the Primate's Palace.

Cattle market

In George Henry Bassett's "County Armagh Guide and Directory 1888", we read, concerning the Markets, that the Flax Market was Irish Street, the Egg and Poultry Market in Dobbin Street and that the Shambles Market at Mill Street was where grain, hay grass seed, straw and pork were bought and sold. Earlier in the 20th century, we're told, the Bye-Laws, made under the Armagh Urban and

District Council Act, extended the use of the Market, and since the early 1950s the Shambles Yard was used as a cattle market before this declined and was eventually closed in the mid-1970s. My own belief is that it was used as a cattle market before the 1950s, as I remember, along with other young boys, helping drovers to drive the cattle from the railway yard where they had arrived in cattle wagons, to the Shambles Yard. Our main task was to stop any animal from straying down the side streets on Banbrook Hill, making us feel important. One of the drovers on many an occasion was a Banbrook man himself - Tom McGuinness.

When a fun fair or circus came to town it usually set up in the Shambles Yard - the circus for a few days and the fun fair for a couple of weeks. One such fun fair in the late 1930s or early 1940s had as their main attraction a Wall of Death and the proprietors had on offer a silver cup for any local who would have the courage and skill to successfully ride a motor-bike around the inside wall. Arthur Halligan took up the challenge and as his mother told the story years later: "His father and I were sitting in the house when we heard the loud cheering of a crowd coming up Banbrook Hill and, as we went to the front door to find out what it was all about, the crowd of young men appeared around the corner into Patrick Street with Arthur on their shoulders holding the cup aloft."

During World War 2, the Yard was also used by American troops who entertained onlookers with their drilling and marching skills. Today more modern activities are held there. Every few weeks a major car boot sale is held and in recent times an outdoor concert was held, featuring Eoin Quigg who was an *X-factor* runner-up. For this event large screens were erected along the wall and railing which enclose the yard, to keep non-payers from viewing the performers, though

clearly they could hear them.

Old apple peeling station

Many locals when speaking of the Shambles Yard drop the final 's', calling it the Shamble Yard. In a similar way they might speak of the Shamble Road when referring to the Cathedral Road. I was reminded of this recently upon seeing a photocopy of a poster advertising a boxing tournament which was promoted by some local boxing enthusiasts in 1945 behind an old mill on the Cathedral Road, approximately where J.F. McKenna's business now stands. The old people referred to the mill as McArdle's Mill and it was probably the reason for the Cathedral Road once being known as Mill Street.

The old Fire Station had once been used as an apple peeling station. The peeled fruit was then forwarded to a local canning factory which alas, like many other industries which had given employment, is no more.

Next door to that building was Kerr's bicycle shop where James and his son Malachy sold and repaired bicycles, and where country people, who depended on the bicycle to get them to town and back home again, could safely park their bicycles for a nominal fee of one or two pence.

That row of buildings included three where a person could have got his or her shoes repaired. Charlie McQuade, Mick Vallely, and Joe Halligan were the men who might have been termed cobblers, shoemakers or menders of soles.

A larger shop, Gillespie's, sold groceries. It later became Andy Gordon's and later still Pat-a-Cake. Mr Gillespie to us was somewhat strange in that he didn't wear a white coat or apron like other grocers and their assistants, but was

dressed in a nice suit and hat and wore dark glasses as he stood behind the counter, and if he hadn't a cigarette in his mouth, then he was in the process of lighting one from another. Needless to say his ample moustache was stained brown from the nicotine.

The Shambles is, and it appears always was, a place where one could have a bet or gamble. An old newspaper article of just over one hundred years ago tells us how in the first week in January 1908, as a result of a friendly argument, Paddy McKenna or Diamond Bar renown, made a wager with one Tom Leonard that Tom wouldn't walk from Armagh to Portadown in two hours. The wage of two pounds was quite a sizeable one for that time and it turned out the publican was the loser. The road was in good condition and Tom must have been some walker as, according to the report, he covered three and a half miles in the first half hour. A Doctor Herron had been appointed timekeeper and judge and he declared at the finish that Tom had completed the distance with thirteen minutes to spare.

Bookies and barbers

Within living memory there have always been bookmakers' shops around the Shambles. Back in the 1940s and 1950s they were illegal and every now and then they were raided by police. The punters would quickly scatter but the few who were left along with the bookie's clerks would be summoned and receive small fines, which would be paid by the bookie.

There were also a number of barber shops in the area which were gathering places for men particularly on the mornings after important football matches had been played and where the games could be "played all over again." One shop was unusual in that while the room on the right of the entrance hall was just like any other barber's, where the cutting and

trimming of hair and the shaving of chins etc. took place, the room on the left was a bookie's office. When the phone in this room would ring it wasn't unusual for the barber to down tools and switch to taking bets or getting race results over the phone, leaving his son to finish off the customer in the barber's chair.

The punters of those days could scarcely have imagined what bookmakers' shops of the 21st century would be like, with their multitude of television screens showing the betting in all the horse and greyhound racing, and all shown live, together with all kinds of information including the day's results. Some bookmakers provide cups of tea or coffee for their customers and suites of furniture, so the punters can sit in comfort and almost enjoy watching their money wave bye-bye.

Another form of gambling in the entries was pitch and toss. Of course it was always illegal and once again there would be a scattering and the abandonment of money on the ground when the police raided. Fellows would scatter in all directions with the more agile climbing over walls into people's back yards and then entering houses through the back doors, to the surprise of the occupants, and out through the front doors to safety.

A well-known figure of over sixty years ago was a man called Donnelly who lived in Dawson Street at the back of the Shambles. His Christian name I think was Patrick but he was better known as the Poet Donnelly, who wrote poems about local people and places which were sometimes published in the local newspapers. My memory of him is of a sturdy, tidy, well-dressed man with a large moustache and wearing a hat tilted slightly to one side. I failed to find any of his poems but I hardly think he was the author of a well-known nonsense verse, which referred to some shopkeepers and others who

lived around "The Shambles."

"There's a fight," said Sammy Wright

"Where, where?" said Mickey O'Hare

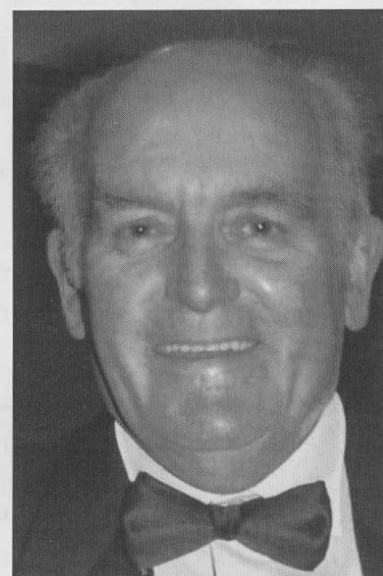
"At the back of the Shambles," said out Pat Campbell

"Run for the police," said Maggie McNiece

"Here they're comin," said some out woman

"Put them in a box" said Barney Fox

"Leave them alone" said Larry McGeown.



Phil McGinn - 1933 - 2013

The Shambles area of Armagh City is in the shadow of Banbrook Hill where Phil McGinn was born and reared. Phil was educated close by at Banbrook Primary School and St Patrick's College, before graduating from St Joseph's Teacher Training College in Belfast. He spent his whole career in education; the majority as a teacher and school principal in St Malachy's Primary School in Chapel Lane in Armagh City. Phil was also a noted athlete with Armagh Harriers, winning provincial honours at Ulster underage level, and of course was widely known as a player and administrator with his beloved Armagh Harps, holding many positions within the Club and winning the Hall of Fame in 1991.

The Famous O'Neill Warpipe Band Armagh

Winners of the North of Ireland and All Ireland Championship Cups 1911



This band accompanied Harps to important away games at the beginning of the 20th century and also played at games in Abbey Park. The bandsmen wore a unique and distinctive uniform of assorted colours. Each uniform represented one of the clans of Ireland.

Back row: Fr. John Ward, Paddy Loughran, Dean Quinn

Third row: Michael Sweeney, Jimmy Cregan, Tom Hannaway, Johnny McKenna, Frank Hannaway, Francis Joseph Biggar

Second row: Jim Cusack, John Mallon, Paddy Maxwell, Ned Redmond, Jimmy Monaghan, John Redmond, Edward Hart (Pipe Major), Canon Dunne (Founder)

Front row: Jimmy Donnelly, Tommy Hughes, Tommy Smyth, Ned McArdle

The Tir na nOg hurling team of 1903



People who were identified

Middle row (standing) - first two: Joseph O'Hagan, John Knipe, very centre: Peter McNally

Front row - first two: Neil McVeigh, John Gibney, sitting very centre wearing a ribbon: John McKenna (Captain), last three players: F. McQuade, Pat O'Connor, Joe Fegan

One of the other officials is possibly Mr. H. McAleavey and the other team members who could not be identified were possibly P. Molloy, C. Dalton, ... Donnellan, J. Murtagh, Joe Mackey, J. Murphy, J. Gavin, J. Mcaleavey, J. Fahy, E. Kearney, J. Corr and J. McQuade who were all team members in 1903

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ARMAGH

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and South Africa

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One of the Fighting Brothers

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This Boxing Show it is hoped will be the forerunner of many more and it is hoped that all local enthusiasts will support this venture to the hilt. FOR FURTHER DETAILS WATCH LOCAL PRESS



A selection of postcards from the collection of Roy Cummings

Armagh Built on Seven Hills:

A local myth or a historical geographical reality?

by Kevin Quinn

Over the years I have been a member of various table quiz teams involved in the local quiz circuit. On occasion, mostly in specialist rounds on Armagh, the same question would often be asked; "name the seven hills that Armagh City was built on"? Well, no sooner had the question left the quiz master's lips when the inevitable heated debate would ensue. In all probability, the final answer would nearly always be based on where the team members lived or if their family had a connection to a certain hill. It was also inevitable that the answers would vary even more so because the seven listed as the official answers on the night did not include some team's selection. So depending on how strict the quiz master stuck to his list, the final answer on occasions could include combinations of as many as a dozen named hills.

The Literary Origin

The earliest written references suggesting that Armagh was built on seven hills seem to date to the early years of the 20th century. The references to the seven hills of Armagh first appear around the period after the dedication of St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral in 1904. Two references are found in written sources connected to the Catholic Church or quotes attributed to Catholic clergy in historical or archaeological journals. A third source is found in a Dublin publication from 1906 and a more recent fourth source also appears to go along with the local tradition of seven hills.

Written Sources Referring to "The Seven Hills of Armagh"

One of the earliest references is found in Stephen Gwynn's "The Fair Hills of Ireland" (1906). His

book was more a tourist guide and a product of the Gaelic revival combining general aspects of Irish history with Irish mythology such as the "Ulster Cycle". In his chapter on Armagh, Gwynn describes the former Archbishop of Ireland's residence (The Palace) as being sited on the Janiculum of the city. [The *Janiculum* is the hill west of the Tiber and outside the city boundaries that overlooks the proverbial Seven Hills of Rome] Gwynn states,

"Over to the north, on the Janiculum of this city of the seven hills, stands the great palace"¹

Another early reference can be found in the journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society in September 1909. The society's annual trip was to Armagh on Thursday 25th July and part of the visit was a tour of St Patrick's RC Cathedral by Adm. Rev Michael Quinn:

"On the terrace without our Rev. Guide pointed out how the chief buildings of the city lay around on the hill, for Armagh, like Rome, sits proudly on her seven hills."²

A further reference can be found in "The Irish Monthly" from February 1925, published by the Irish Jesuit Province, entitled "The Passing of the Primate" (Burial of Cardinal Logue 1924):

"The soft tread of marching feet. Lining the route on either side the waiting multitudes, who had travelled to honour the man.....Tread lightly, men of the Gaelic and the Gall, for every inch of this ground is full of memories and re concepts. "The seven hills of Rome," someone whispered in our hearing. The eternal hills looking down slowly and silently they bear the latest of Patrick's successors."³

A more recent source appears to make a connection between mythology and Armagh by attaching significance to the number seven. The North South Ministerial Council's 2011 annual report states the following:

*"Front Cover: Artwork for the inner atrium wall of the NSMC Joint Secretariat by Cork born artist Declan O'Mahony... There are seven distinct sizes in the multi-coloured layering in the artwork. In mythological terms the number 'seven' was known to symbolise perfection and completeness and Armagh, geographically, is nestled among the Seven Hills"*⁴

Written sources with no reference to or place any significance on "The Seven Hills of Armagh"

James Stuart in his "Historical Memoirs of Armagh City, 1819," refers to Armagh being located on the sides of one central hill. He states on p79;

*"Armagh situated on the sloping sides of a gently ascending hill.....The ground on which this city was built was originally denominated Druimsailech the hill of Sallows.....afterwards was styled Altitude Sailech or Ardsaillech the height of Sallows"*⁵

He continues on p471,

"The ancient cathedral town which crowns the summit of Druimsailech Hill is at once the most central point and the most conspicuous object in the city.....some of the streets seem to converge like radii to a common centre others ascend in more oblique directions from the base of the hill and are intersected by those of greater magnitude which encircle the town."

Edward Rogers in his "Record of

the city of Armagh, 1861, probably provides the logical interpretation on the development of Armagh and indicates that it had geographically spread by the middle of the 19th century;

*"To point out the precise time when Armagh was built would be a vain attempt and not reasonably to be expected especially if it is considered that few cities are laid out at once. It is situated on the sloping sides of an ascent originally denominated by Drumsalilech the hill of the shallows."*⁶

Writing in 1888, Basset is the first written source (other than a town plan from the period) to show that Armagh had geographically moved away from the central hill and had taken in a number of the adjacent hills/drumlins. Basset also names and numerates the hills/drumlins but does not place any emphasis on seven distinct hills. He states,

"A Cluster of hills rising gently out of a valley.... Three of the hills are crowned by imposing church edifices, including the ancient and modern cathedrals of St Patrick and the church of St Mark. A fourth hill bears upon its summit an observatory. The Royal school a fifth, the military barracks the sixth, the Catholic convent the seventh and the eight is divided between the Union Workhouse and Sheil's Institution".⁷

There have been around six editions of "Armagh City Tourist Guides" published between the 1920's and 1960's. None of these guides allude to or state that Armagh is reputed to have been built on seven hills. They contain phrases such as,

*"Two Cathedrals each on its own hillock....The city stands on the slopes of several hills of modest elevation."*⁸

In his (1954) MA Thesis on the historical geography of Armagh, H.D. Mc Reid does not place any significance on or even mentions that Armagh is built on seven hills.

Pre/early Christian, late middle ages to pre-plantation Armagh 400-1600AD

The archaeological, historical and topographical evidence suggests that Armagh remained pretty much static, sited around the one central hill for around 1000 years. It appears that Armagh only began to gradually expand around the early 1600s mostly due to the plantation. The earliest evidence for occupancy dates to around 2000 BC. Traces of human settlement were discovered when an archaeological excavation in 1979 unearthed a large circular enclosure, probably ceremonial in nature, in Scotch Street on the site of the present day Hawthorne's furniture shop.

Further archaeological evidence suggests that a fifth century or earlier pagan sanctuary existed on the central hilltop, enclosing 50 metres of its south-west side, which eventually came to encompass the core of Christian Armagh. Also, Tempul na Ferta [Church of the Repository] is sited where present day St Patrick's Fold is located in Scotch Street and was probably the earliest Christian site, pre-dating the hilltop settlement. The top and upper reaches of the central hill basically developed into a monastic site, with the secular Trians covering the lower reaches on the north, east and south sides. The only significant build away from the central hill was the Franciscan Friary in 1263/4.

The [Bartlett] (1601) pictorial map of Armagh shows what remained of Armagh in the aftermath of the Nine Years War, depicting a ruinous settlement situated on and around the slopes of the cathedral hill. During the previous 800 years, Armagh had been battered, burned and wrecked numerous times. Probably due to the periodic destruction of the town and the site's natural barriers, Armagh's expansion was significantly hindered during this period.

The Growth of Armagh 1601-1906

Seventeenth Century

By 1618 due to the restoration of

peace and the introduction of the plantation, Armagh had expanded slightly to the east of the Cathedral Hill as there was a natural shoulder on that east side [Present day Market, English & Scotch Streets]. The steepness of the gradient on the west side [Callan Street] made it difficult to expand in that direction. This initial growth was significantly impeded when Armagh suffered significant destruction during the 1642 rebellion and the Williamite Wars (1688-92). Armagh had gradually recovered by the early years of the eighteenth century but its buildings were still mostly clustered between the east slope of the hill and the marshy valley [The Mall].

Eighteenth Century

From the early to middle of the eighteenth century, Armagh was recognised as being the natural capital of the district. This status saw the construction of the town's principal public and private buildings during this period. The circumventing of the central hill with the construction of Ogle and Thomas streets in 1759, and the development of the Mall from the late 1790s are probably the two most significant improvements in opening the town to expansion. The appointment of Archbishop Robinson in 1765 and his subsequent works saw, for the first time, the construction of buildings along the slope of the valley facing the central hill [Mall East]. These new buildings were the Infantry "Gough" Barracks, built in 1773 [Known as Barrack Hill by 1819], and the Royal School and the Observatory, 1774 and 1789 [Known as College Hill by 1834]. A private residence [The Deanery 1772] had been constructed on a rise on the north side of College Hill [Dean's Hill]. Also by 1760 a windmill [Windmill Hill] had been constructed to the west of the central hill and a basin reservoir built 1793 to the south-east on present day Folly Hill.

Nineteenth Century

By the middle of the nineteenth century Armagh had expanded

considerably. The Lodge census of 1770 named 1,948 people living in 499 houses. By 1831 the population reached 9,470 living in 1,570 houses. The valuation records from the 1830's showed housing had grown along the major roads and within the municipal boundary, with the cheap housing mostly packed around the steep south-western slope of the central hill. In 1811 St Mark's Church was added to the sky line of the valley facing the central hill. In 1841, to the north-west of St Mark's, the Union Workhouse was established on present day Tower Hill. The 1840s saw the construction of the most significant building on [Knockdrain/Knockadrain Hill or Sandy Hill] probably since the construction of the great stone cathedral on the opposite hill. In 1840 the foundation stone was laid for St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral. Six years earlier in 1834 Sandy Hill grave yard was established on its south-east slope followed by St Patrick's College in 1838. Below on its east side St Patrick's National School was established in 1846 on Banbrook Hill. In 1860 Mount St Catherine's was established to the north of the windmill [Windmill Hill] but is referred to as Convent hill.

The Emergence of Armagh Streets with "Hill" officially in its title 1703-1947 and a possible source for the claim for the "Seven Hills of Armagh"

In the topographical section titled "Streets" in the "Irish Historic Town Atlas" on Armagh City, nine of the streets listed contain the word "hill." Four of the streets were serving the same hill, i.e. Vicar's and Primrose hills providing access to the central hill and Barrack Hill

Lane and Barrack Hill to the same elevated site. In some cases not all the streets were initially referred to as hills, with some subject to title change over a considerable period which indicates that there was not that much significance placed on describing them as hills. However, between 1703-1947 there were seven distinct areas of various elevations within the town boundary officially referred to as hills which still is the case today.

The following listed are;

Banbrook Hill [Bondbrook, 1740, road to Loughgall 1760, known as Banbrook Hill by 1839]

Barrack Hill [Unnamed road to Richhill 1760, known as Barrack Hill in Stuart 1819]

Barrack Hill Lane, [Barrack Hill Lane, 1839, known as Lang's Road from 1947]

College Hill [Unnamed road to Castle Dillon 1760, known as College Hill by 1834]

Gallows Hill [Gallows Street 1660, Gallows Hill 1703, known as Gallows Hill Lane by 1891]

Vicar's Hill [Pound Hill 1703, Church Street 1766, Pound Hill 1770, and Vicars Hill 1788 spelled Vicar's Hill by 1906]

Primrose Hill [Monaghan Street 1618, Belnayleg Street 1760, Charter School Lane/Poor School Lane 1766, Belnayalea Street 1767, Primrose Lane 1794, Primrose Street 1834, Primrose Hill 1856, Primrose Street 1862. Name plate Culdee Street 2013]

Tower Hill [Laid out 1841. Unnamed 1851-1933, known as Tower Hill by 1947]

Windmill Hill [Road to Callan Mill 1703, known as Windmill Hill since 1760]

Conclusion

By 1906 Armagh had reached around ten areas of various elevations, but there remained significant gaps of undeveloped/open land between some hills and the core of the town which still only encompassed the central hill. Most of these heights were occupied by one or two somewhat isolated prominent buildings. It would take the next hundred years or so for urban infill to reach these outlying elevated sites and for their eventual encirclement by industry, housing estates and modern housing developments. Armagh is just one of around seventy cities in the world reputed to have been built on seven hills. It appears that the origins of this presumed similarity with the eternal city emerged in the early decades of the twentieth century. At that time, there appeared to be an attempt to draw comparisons between Armagh and Rome, probably more spiritually than geographically. However, unlike Rome, Armagh remained stationary on the one hill for a millennium.

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Endnotes

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⁷Basset, G.H. *The book of County Armagh*. Dublin. 1888. P59.

⁸Armagh City Tourist Guides, 1920's-1960's, Armagh County Museum.



Richard Bartlett's map of Armagh (1601), taken from a copy of 'Ulster and other Irish maps' edited by Hayes-McCoy in the Irish & Local Studies Library, Armagh



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