

Wicklow County Genealogical Society



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WICKLOW COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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EDITORIAL

The Boer War ended just a century ago in May 1902, the outcome was probably inevitable, the crushing of a small group of Dutch settlers in South Africa by the British Imperial Army, but the fact that it took six months to defeat the Boers in open conflict and two years to suppress them in the subsequent guerilla war probably laid the basis for the concept of modern guerilla warfare. The fact that Irish fought on both sides in the Boer conflict was not new, but the lessons learned from that war were to change modern Irish history, no longer would secret military activity be seen purely as a local irritant to authority but as a direct challenge to it and a major force in it's disablement and overthrow. James Scannell reviews 'MacBride's Brigade' in which Donal P. McCracken retells the story of the Irish involvement in the Boer War, it's relevance cannot be lost on us even today.

In her diary Elizabeth Smith records being told that if all Landlords were as righteous as she and her husband, there would have been no agrarian unrest in the country and no need for leaders such as O'Connell. The Smith's were very much the exception rather than the rule however in nineteenth century Ireland and the famine of 1847 wiped out many of the remaining resident landlords in Ireland speeding the transfer of lands to absentee landlords and speculators. It is ironic that from this dark time, the seeds of the final battle for independence were sown, the growth of absentee landowners added to the creation of absentee Government in 1801 left no middle way and eventually many of the Anglo Irish classes themselves accepted some form of Home Rule as being inevitable.

In general it must be said that most people are interested in family history. The success of family sagas in books, theatre, film and television evidence this, the closeness of family ties adding an additional edge to stories of love and hate, loyalty and betrayal. Learning of ones own family in the past can be fascinating but few are prepared to embark on the voyage of discovery necessary to unearth this past.

To those presented with a ready made family tree and neatly compiled features on their ancestors there is usually little understanding of the effort and in many cases sheer ingenuity involved in uncovering these records and in identifying the participants.

Research can be frustrating, personal information can be misleading, records incomplete or illegible, contacts uncontactable or simply unco-operative, theories nurtured over many months or even years can be exploded, most embarrassing if one has already acted on them. The process is fraught with difficulties and even in success there can be dissappointment as family legends are displaced, family pride dispersed.

In the second part of our feature "The Lost Children of Gormanstown" we have attempted to follow the search for a lost family, and the show the failures as well as successes that we so often meet with along the way.

THE WICKLOW WORLD OF ELIZABETH SMITH...1840-1850

A Review.

Elizabeth Grant was born at 5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, in 1797, the eldest child of Sir John Peter Grant. Sir John's legal career meant that the family lived for the most part of the year in the Scottish capital they did spend long holidays on the family estate, The Doune, at Rothiemurchus, near Aviemore in the Highlands. Elizabeth's mother, Jane Ironside, was from County Durham.

In 1827 the fortunes of the Grant family took a serious downturn and her father decided to take up an appointment as a judge in Bombay. In her Scottish "Memoirs" Elizabeth would write sadly of her last days at The Doune, one wonders if her memories of life in the Highlands played some part in her acceptance of the suit of Henry Smith, many years her senior, a Colonel in the Indian Army, but a native of Blessington, Co. Wicklow. Just ten days before their wedding in Bombay Cathedral came the news that Henry's older brother had died and that he had inherited the family estate at Baltiboys, near Blessington.

The Smiths had been a prominent family in the Blessington area going back to the early years of the eighteenth century at least, though family tradition is that the Graydon Smiths are descended from Brian O'Grady a late thirteenth century landowner who rebuilt the castle at Boystown (an earlier name for Baltiboys) in 1270. Records show that in 1719 Joseph Smith of Balnabarney, County Kildare, and John Smith of Milltown, Dunlavin, took out a lease on 674 plantation acres at Lower Baltiboys. The land had been in the hands of John Smith, lately deceased, and his undertenants, the above mentioned were executors of his will and possibly his sons. The lease was granted by Walter Harris of Dublin and Westmeath and Joanna Bradshaw of Dublin. As well as the land, it also granted, 'Liberty of cutting and getting turf out of the bogg of Ballynehown for the use of the Mansion House of Baltiboys and three families', this would appear to confirm that there was a house on this site going back to the seventeenth century.

The Smith family rose to prominence and two John Smiths of Baltiboys were High Sheriffs of County Wicklow, the first, in 1741, perhaps the John who had lived near Dunlavin, the second, in 1768, was most likely Henry's father. He died in 1790 and he seemed to have lived up to the reputation of the hard-drinking, hard-riding, devil may care image of the eighteenth century Irish 'half mounted gentleman', a family tradition has it that he jumped off the old five-arched Burgage Bridge one evening returning from a hunt ball.

Baltiboys House would become Elizabeth's home for the next fifty years of her life. From 1840 she kept an almost daily journal in which she recorded in minute detail the events of the day, in her household, in the estate and in the wider neighbourhood.

Like all the best journals, this document which has survived, intact, for over a century, was never ostensibly intended for publication (Samuel Pepys actually compiled his journal in a personal code which was only broken centuries after his death), undoubtedly the possibility of publication would have encouraged a degree of self awareness and self censorship that would have taken seriously from the final publication, both as an accurate record and as personal testament. A few critical comments help to put the achievement of this Journal in context.

“Her witty eye never fails to animate the manners, fashions and events of her day; more than that her manuscript is an inexhaustible document of social and historical value”....

Andrew Tod...Introduction to her “Memoirs”.

“She might have been another Regency gentlewoman had she not decided to write her memoirs...These were essentially a private record of family life written for her children...and were almost certainly never intended for publication, which was probably why she felt free to express herself with blistering honesty”.

David Black...”Country Living”.

On a more personal level her sister Jane wrote...“They have made an Irishwoman of you now, and may they know the value”.

In the opening pages of the journal we are introduced to Mrs Smiths family, her husband whom she commonly refers to as “Hal” or the “Colonel” (the latter quite formal sounding, though she often referred to herself as “Mrs Smith) was already sixty one at that time, she herself forty three (late marriage was obviously not unknown in the land owning classes at that time as it was common in the land holding classes), their children, Janie, ten, Annie, eight and Jack, two.

While this book provides an invaluable source of information on the area in which she lived and not alone on family and friends but also the tenants who lived on the family estate, it might be wise to preface this publication with a warning to those of a sensitive disposition that Mrs Smith, while undoubtedly a caring and conscientious person, was not given to calling a spade other than a spade when she saw the need , irrespective of rank and circumstance.

The Leeson of Russborough were close to the apex of the pyramid in the social world in which the Smiths now found themselves. Joseph Leeson, son of a Dublin brewer, inherited his fathers fortune and built his great house in the 1740’s. The land had been originally owned by John Graydon Smith, a relative of the Baltiboys family. It has been suggested that the name is a play on the latin *rus in urbe*.

Joseph Leeson had become Earl of Milltown in 1763, and in the 1840’s the fourth Earl, also Joseph Leeson, lived at Russborough...

“Though nature inflicted one very painful infirmity on him , he is gifted with many admirable qualities, fine talents, good understanding, amiable temper, very handsome countenance, and rank and wealth and zealous friends.”

Lord Milltown’s weaknesses were his gambling, which almost bankrupted the family, his physically low stature, bordering on deformity, and his wife...

“Lady Milltown has had the misfortune to yield to a vile irritable, jealous, malicious temper which has alienated every friend, and of what avail to her is all her wit and her talent and her rank of which she is so vain now that she is getting old?” Elizabeth is not impervious to that Lady’s charms however..

“Lady Milltown and her five children to tea..this is a most amusing woman, full of wit, full of fun, full of scandal, and not particular as to accuracy...story after story...jest after jest...husband...kindred..acquaintance..all served up with sauce *piquante* for our entertainment.”

The mansion of Lord Downshire had overlooked the village of Blessington, it had been destroyed during the 1798 rebellion and never replaced. The family, who owned large estates in Counties Wicklow, Kildare and Kilkenny, normally resided on their estate in County Down, they had come into full possession of the Blessington estate through their marriage into the Boyle family, which had established the estate and town of Blessington.

Arthur Hill, the third Marquis of Downshire, regularly visited Blessington. Relation’s were not cordial with the Smith’s, Elizabeth remembered..

”The Late Lord never called upon me when I first came here although the Colonel waited upon him. The Colonel never went near him again.”

If Elizabeth considered the third Marquis of Downshire to be weak, vain, pompous and self important, she speaks very highly of his son, the fourth Marquis, who succeeded him in 1845. On a visit to the estate she remarks that, “He is deservedly loved by all,” and on a day trip to Glendalough his attentions to her personally are not found to be wanting in any way.

The Hornidge families of Tulfarris and Russeltown were close personal friends of the Colonel.. The families descended from James Hornidge who settled at Colemanna in County Carlow around 1656. Richard, his son, was established at Russeltown and Tulfarris by 1700, his sons, Richard and William who lived at Russeltown and Tulfarris respectively, gave rise to the families who lived at these two places in th 1840’s. “Old John Hornidge” had been a good friend of the Colonel’s who had served under him in the Yeomanry in the rebellion of 1798.

Other landed families in the area included the Cottons of Humphreystown, the Finnemore’s of Ballyward and the Henry family of Russeltown, relations of the Hornidges.

The town of Blessington had been founded by the Boyle family, it had received a Royal Charter from King Charles II in 1669, it had a population of 462 in 1837, in the following decade a weekly market, supported by the Colonel and a group of friends, was founded which added greatly to local prosperity. In the town Mrs Smith writes of Mr Gilhooly's fashion shop, Mrs Merry the dressmaker, Mr Kilbee, the inn keeper and livery stable owner, Gyves the nailer, Handsworth the grocer, Grace the butcher, Roberts the baker and Neale the tailor.

Mrs Smith is unhappy with the local clergy, the Presbyterians were, she said, "Morose, arrogant, sour and bigoted." The established clergy did not escape her censure, a sermon by the Rector of Blessington was described as.."Full of flourishes, splendid descriptions of metaphorical language leading to nothing".

She wrote critically of Rev Ogle Moore, Rector of Blessington and Kilbride, who was also Secretary of the local Book Society.. "We ought to have a new round of books ordered..but our indolent secretary is too busy rocking his babies and fondling his wife to attend to any thing besides: how can we expect him to mind a book society when he neglects his parish"?. "The Rev.Mr Moore", she says, "is more culpable than the Rev.Mr Foster..he knows his duty , which the other poor creature really does not"!.

Later, in conversation, she is obviously won over by his good intentions.. "He then went into some very painful family details, which did in some degree excuse his neglect of his parish duties , and appeared altogether so touched with the omissions of his proper business that I am in hope that he will seriously set to work to repair them. And few could do it better, for his heart is kind, his temper gentle, his judgement good, his piety sincere and his manner delightful".. but she is still wary.. "Yet I fear to trust him, he is indolent and facile, and unless his wife be impressed with the feeling of duty belonging to their station, I doubt his keeping his resolution".

Relations with her staff too were not always untroubled...the profligacy of her housekeeper gave her grounds for concern . "Two months too soon our coals are done, or nearer three, for thirty tons well managed are ample for the comfort of the house and always were sufficient till this year. As usual Mrs Fyfe tells me – 'We shall soon be out of coal ma'am' - , good, well meaning creature, no worse housekeeper ever tried the trade. I shall in future keep the key, give out what is proper, and if she don't like the plan she can leave us."

Mrs Fyfe didn't like the plan, a day later Mrs Smith writes.."The coal mishap has been quite a hurricane. She is like a sky rocket whenever she is found fault with or even interfered with. Quiet woman as I am, I emit the spark when much enforced, and she is, really, with all her valuable qualities, by no means an agreeable servant."

She recalls her first impression of her tenantry..“There stood to welcome me a crowd of, as I thought, beggars – queer looking men doffing the remnants of their hats with much civility..‘Thim’s the tenants’.. said the only man amongst them with a whole coat.”

While the Irish inheritance might have sounded impressive it was in fact some thirty years since Henry Smith had lived at Baltiboy and the house had been damaged during the rebellion of 1798 and remained in a ruinous condition, so much so that it was at Burgage Cottage that the family settled on their return to Ireland. The cottage, described by a visitor as “unpretending but comfortable” was a short distance from the house, the ruins can still be seen, hidden in the bands of conifers which fringe the reservoir which has done so much to change the landscape here, a reminder of how much is contained in Elizabeth’s report of a visit with her sister,

Jane, to Poulaphouca Waterfall and the deep gorge into which it used to fall..

“This is the famous ‘Pola fouca’ or Devil’s cauldron, this fine cataract is the ‘grand lion’ of this part of the country. The people come from all parts to visit it, great numbers from Dublin. The walks have been made with great judgement to shew it off completely and from every side. The tea room fronts it, and with the generality of visitors the view from it’s windows is the favourite one. The opposite bank is equally steep, but not wooded. The effect of the hill is highly pleasing and very much raised my opinion of nature’s handiwork in this, her Emerald Isle”.

Mrs Smith herself later described her first impressions of her future home, “Ruins – nettles – broken gate – road overgrown with weeds”. It was a typical Irish country house of about 1820-30, late Georgian in part, a long two storied building with a spacious network of basement rooms. She also described the chaotic state of the tenants resulting from her brother in-laws neglect of the property.

In a study of land holding and population decline on the Smith Estate, Matthew Stout shows that there were thirty holdings held by twenty eight individuals on the estate at the time of the Tithe Applotment Survey in the 1830’s, by the time of the Griffith’s Valuation a mere twenty years later there were eighteen holdings held by eighteen individuals.

In time the Smiths would bring about great improvements at Baltiboy, both to the house and to the lands that surrounded it, a visitor returning after some time was impressed..” The fields above the house enchanted him, the lay of the land is so particularly pretty and the views everywhere are so fine, he says that someday it will be a place to come and see. My whole heart is in Baltiboy – our dear happy family – the pretty place – the people – the least improvable.”

Mrs Smith did not confine her plans for improvement to her home and lands, some of her efforts such as her visits to the poor on the estate, her interest in the local schools, undoubtedly won approval but in other cases she ruefully admits that her 'scotch methods' were not always appreciated.

Elizabeth's affection for her Irish home is a recurring theme, while visiting her mother in Edinburgh she admits she is longing for the country, "Our green fields, our woods, our river, my gardens and all my home occupations..." on another visit she remarks..."The Scots certainly don't show to advantage after Ireland..." though also "...Would that such (Scottish) calmness could reach Ireland where violence of every feeling is displayed...all sides sinning alike...all parties...all creeds..and on all matters...public.. scientific...religious and domestic, they will fight to frenzy about the placing of Jack straws."

Even she herself expresses doubts about the wisdom of setting down her thoughts in such a forthright manner when they are likely to be read by her children..."These are my private opinions of people and people's actions, some of them very near and very dear to me. My tongue, I know, often goes too fast, my pen too, however, dear children, you may just remember this.. that whether wrong or right it is my honest impression at the time". Not all is criticism however, on her regular visit she notes of Tom Kelly "his whole range of offices is very complete, well laid out, well built and most creditable to him".

"The Redmonds seem pretty comfortable, the house is in good repair, clean and decent, and she is so industrious there is no fear the worst days of that family are over." "The poor Delanys looked miserable, their house a ruin and two sick people seated each side their chimney in patient misery." When the rents became due at the end of November the tenants paid well with the exception of Pat Quinn in the Bottoms 'who will never be made anything of' and Kearns..

"Little Doyle paid up all his arrears, his fright having made him all industrious—that and the temperance pledge." "Old Mrs Tyrrell has given up her holding to Mick Tyrrell, one of the most thriving farms in the place".

"Commins, as usual, had a mere nothing to give, - three or four pounds and his tickets for butter". "The poor Delaney's who owe a dozen years rent, gave up their bit of ground at once and were forgiven £15 or £16 which they were quite incapable of making in their best day"..

The year has been a good one.. "John got altogether upwards of £220. Rutherford and Williams have still to pay – another hundred nearly – and all the bills we have in Dublin won't be quite a hundred, so that leaving me £60 for present expenses we will have a very nice little sum in hand, "£150 I think, which we will not touch if we can help, that we may have a little ready money by us"...The family have been considering living abroad for a few years where they could actually save money, it was some years before the plan came to fruition.

She was impressed by the temperance campaign of Father Mathew, his temperance medal she thought..”Rather handsome”, she reported on his visit to Blackditches..

“All the country will be there, and no one before him did so much good to it, already rags are disappearing., the people are looking more cheerful. Punch and his pipe, that was the Irishman’s comfort and to enjoy it he sat in a ruined cabin, in a ragged dress, by a cold hearth, with a starving set of children around him”.

On Christmas Day, Elizabeth was reminded of Father Mathew’ recent visit to the locality..“What a pity, I forgot teetotalism when I mixed the pudding and not one of the outside men would taste them. Now when those unruly people have such self command, where they think it is a sin to yield to temptation, is it not plain that properly educated they would be a fine and moral race. Almost equally plain that those thousand crimes they do commit they have not been thought to consider crimes”.

She is less impressed by Daniel O’Connell...“A patriot, a little mad... this Repeal Absurdity will sooner or later come to bloodshed”. When, in May 1842, O’Connell addressed a huge meeting at the Curragh, it is clear that the Smiths did not approve of their tenants lending support to the Repeal cause.

“The only one of our tenants who attended was Pat Ryan. I am inclined to hope it was only curiosity that took him there but it was a very foolish undertaking and will prevent the Colonel adding to his farm as he intended..”

Later she notes a large crowd in Blessington to see O’Connell pass... “He had changed horses at Mr Kilbee’s on the way to Baltinglass where he performs tomorrow. Blessington was filled with a mob of the unwashed, but there was no enthusiasm among them, we heard – mere curiosity for the most part”.

Her friends opinions tended to support her own... “Mr O’Connell has been merely making tools of the patriots to fill his own purse”...Lady Milltown of Russborough.

“O’Connell is in great fright, pushed into measures he never contemplated, he has raised a flame he cannot quench, they would turn on him and destroy him if he were now to recede”...Anne Henry of Russeltown.

In August 1843 the Smiths left Baltiboys for France, they stayed for one year at Pau followed by a second year at Avranches, returning to Ireland in July 1845. Mrs Smith noted that there was an additional £430 in the bank and she cheerfully noted that, “we have not been so rich for many years”, not alone her own family but the neighbourhood in general seemed to be thriving, “a great change for the better since I last made my rounds among them.’ She commented upon the rainy weather, annoyed because of it’s effect on the almost ready-to-harvest hay and because of it interfered with her walks. What she did not realise, nor did anyone else, was that the wet summer of 1845 was to be a significant factor in the spread of the potato blight which was to manifest itself only a few weeks later.

The blight had occurred in the United States two years earlier and had spread to Europe in June 1845 where it was first noticed in Flanders. The overcast, cold and wet summer provided the perfect conditions for the spread of the disease, and spread it did, northwards to Scandinavia, eastwards to Prussia and Poland, south to Spain and even North Africa and westwards to Britain and Ireland.

The first reference to the disease in Mrs Smith's journal was written on 26th October 1845..“The Colonel has been very much occupied with plans for the prevention of such extreme distress as the failure of the potato crop threatens the poor with.” On 4th November the Colonel brought in two damaged potatoes, the first from their own land, a week later half of the crop in one field had been tainted. Mrs Smith is quite assertive that the damaged potatoes can still be eaten if turned into a starch and mixed with a half of wheaten flour, to her frustration the natives are sceptical, and few follow her instructions.

The harvest of 1845 had been a good one and the effect of the blight coming as late as it did was that it was to have little real effect in that year, unfortunately this was to be a very mixed blessing for it encouraged the belief in some quarters that reports of famine had been exaggerated and that the very prompt measures taken by the Tory Government of Sir Robert Peel, culminating in 1846 with the very controversial repeal of the Corn Laws, had been an overreaction and a waste of public funds.

The unpopularity of its famine relief measures was a major factor in the ousting of the Peel Government in 1846, and the Irish MPs led by Daniel O'Connell played no small part in that event. The new Whig Government of Lord John Russell was determined not to repeat the 'mistakes' of the Peel Administration and moved quickly to cancel all outstanding government orders for American corn supplies and to close down all relief schemes in Ireland, Sir Charles Trevelyan was despatched to Ireland to oversee government policy in that regard, what had begun as a local difficulty was quickly to develop into a national disaster.

Unlike the year before, the blight in 1846 began in the west and then spread eastwards. More ominously, the disease started two months earlier and in some cases the crop had been destroyed by early August. By September it had become obvious that the potato crop was doomed to be an even worse failure than that of the year before and Ireland was about to face the most intense period of hardship seen in any of the famine years. Mrs Smith writes of the problems confronting the country...

“The rain has spoiled the few miserable potatoes left, the markets are higher than has been known since the (Napoleonic) war, work is over, the landlords are generally bankrupt, three fourths of the land mortgaged to full value so that rent rolls must meet repayments leaving nothing to pay labour, no public works currently going forward, the ministry don't choose to interfere with the provision trade though the capitalists are buying up all available grain and selling at an exorbitant rate, the labourer cannot afford to feed his family at these prices.

“Something must be done, for between the poverty of the masters and the destitution, the idleness and recklessness of the people, mischief will most certainly ensue if matters are left to take their own course.” Even her tenants are no longer quite as respectful of authority as they might have been..

“Judy Ryan called to get a little money for her wedding, having announced her approaching marriage to John Doyle, in the Bottoms, an ill-tempered queer looking skeleton but he is industrious, they may do well but it is strange to me that she would not rather remain independent”. Judy, a widow, had been bought out of her own holding.. “The Priest, hearing that she had been well paid, insisted on £2 for marrying her. She resisted, paid but £1, battled the point with him and complains loudly of his extortion. Changed times!”.

“In May, the drainage operations at Baltiboy's encountered a new problem when Bryan Dempsey, one of the tenant farmers, refused to allow his farm to be drained and even refused to allow his landlords carts to cross his fields to drain other farms. Dempsey's rebellion, difficult to understand since he as well as his neighbours would have benefitted from the improvements, ended when legal opinion, being sought, ruled against him. He agreed to allow the works to go ahead, having, as he put it, ‘vindicated his rights’. Ironically Dempsey seems to have been a maverick rather than a rebel, on another occasion he had almost come to blows with a local curate when instructed to vote against the landlords nominee in the appointment of a school guardian. The appointment of a second blacksmith, one Perry, created controversy. When the man said he had been threatened and wished to leave his job, the Colonel took matters in hand, warning those involved that they would be dismissed if the threats did not cease, in this case a peaceful outcome was achieved.

The threat of violence was never far away, and the situation quickly deteriorated with the failure of the potato crop.. “A process server, Tom Lees, in discharge of his duty, had been set upon at Humphreystown Bridge, and cruelly beaten, mercifully not although some of his assailants were armed with pitchforks and reaping hooks”..

“A gathering of three or four hundred people is no longer uncommon to cut and carry off crops in the night, ill use keepers, and in all ways defy decency”.

This increasing sense of lawlessness led to the establishment of a police barracks in Baltiboy's, probably obtained through the influence of the Smith family.

There were alarming reports from other parts of the country, in Roscommon Major Denis Mahon had been murdered and his cousin, Ross Mahon, had received several threatening letters. Landlords in that locality had kept a guard of police, armed themselves and their servants and worn shirts of chain armour.

While the fears of the Smiths and their friends seem to have been real enough, the fact that the murder of Colonel Mahon should have been such a *cause celebre* is evidence of how little real violence (starving people stealing to survive can hardly constituted as an act of violence), was offered to Landlords and their Agents who busily went about evicting tenants and constraining goods even at the height of the famine. Mrs Smith herself is by no means unaware of such activities, nor is she approving.

On several occasions Elizabeth noted that while some of their neighbours, such as George Moore, Mr Armstrong and Richard Hornidge, did what they could for the poor, other resident landlords, as she put it..“Get on in the old ways, the lowest wages, little work, no help in advice or otherwise: they may throw about a few pence when importuned by beggars, but they will take no trouble – they will not do justice. there are large tracts of land belonging to absentees filled with squatters – all paupers – among whom a shilling is never spent, and who, with the neglected peasantry of the indolent landlords are all thrown back on us, the willing horses.”

The famine had brought disaster to the poor but the wealthy too were to suffer from it’s effects..“The upper classes are now suffering, the farmer class a good deal, the landlord class a great deal. Every day we hear of the ruin of additional families, many may have been improvident, yet managed to live and let live till these unjust ‘Poor Laws’ came to overwhelm them.”

“Tom Quin, the carrier, is almost ruined by having advanced money for the shopkeepers. He spent a day going from one to the other and out of fifty pounds due, he received seven and sixpence.”

“The Milltowns are penniless, their creditors have begun to lose patience. Who can reckon faults when there is so much distress. ‘Milady’ brought such a fortune and now is so reduced, her Lord was keeping her too low, and now he can’t soothe her, and really very little would make her a lunatic.”

“The steward and gardener are dismissed from Russborough – nearly all the labourers – and two maids.”

“The Moores have two hundred and forty pounds for their income, with eleven children they are keeping seven women servants and four outside men, they permit themselves every luxury and indulge in lives of utter indolence, and say in tears.. what can we do?.” “People of their condition! With just four ancestors they can name on their father’s side and zero on that score on the mother’s – like Lady Milltown and her peerage, brought in in Mr Pitt’s time, by a brewer!”

“A bankrupt sale was made for Mr Gilhooly, all sold cheaply because of the general shortage. At the conclusion the poor drunken body brought out the drunken wife and insisted on her being canted..there were no bids. Irish fun even in ruin, what a curious people.”

Hopes that the year 1849 would see the of the potato blight were dashed when, in August, the journal recorded that, “the blight has appeared on the potatoes partially”, at the same time she also recorded the sinister news of an outbreak of cholera locally. Her Doctor had proposed setting up a Fever Hospital and this was done, though by no means with universal support..“The expense will come out of the county at large and what an amount of good results...the patients are surrounded by comforts...get hourly visits from the doctors...infection is prevented from spreading...all are so satisfied that a general hospital has been suggested.”

Emigration remained the best hope for many. It was decided that the Colonel should travel to Jersey for his health, his son Jack to accompany him, while seeing him off Elizabeth was struck by a group of emigrants setting off for Australia..“There were few cabin passengers but a shipload of Australian emigrants, decent looking people, well supplied with luggage, whose adieux to the crowd which accompanied them to the Quay was a miserable scene to look at. Tears, sobs, screams even, with hysterics and fainting. To their class the parting is final and though utter desolation is left, and hope shines bright before them, the moment of separation from kindred and country must be painful to agony.” Elizabeth had her own concerns too..

“I felt lonely enough as the vessel moved away, the poor Colonel leaning forward on the rail as the easiest posture for his asthma, and little Jack, in the grey shooting coat too short in the sleeves for his growth, standing by the helm looking wistfully after me. He has been too much with me, depended too much on me, he must now be prepared for his solitary battle with life, he will fight it gallantly or I am much mistaken. It was amusing to see the sort of charge he took of his father, his activity in looking after the portmanteau, the head was higher by an inch.”

Ironically, the Colonel returned from Jersey ‘really looking well’ but Jack came home ‘like a corpse’ – he frightened me.’

A few months earlier Elizabeth had read an account of a tragedy which struck an emigrant ship:..“A Sligo steamer bound for Liverpool put into Derry from stress of weather and landed seventy two corpses. The crew had shut down the hatches on the miserable steerage passengers, all emigrants bound form America and suffocated half of them. Captain, etc, are in jail.”

Emigration caused Mrs Smith to consider closing the boy’s section of Baltiboys school ..“there are very few boys left on our side of the country, there will be very few men soon for they are pouring in shoals to America.” A Mr McDarby had taken over teaching the boys remaining on the roll in 1849 and she describes him as..

“An intelligent young man, a native of Athy, educated in a National school from the beginning and trained in Marlborough Street, Teacher Training College. He taught two years in a school of Lord Stanley’s at Doon and brings a high character with him from the agent on that estate.”

McDarby's romantic attachments highly amused Elizabeth, she refers to him as a 'flighty fool, very soft on the women' but despite this and his being too much given to beating the schoolchildren, she regarded him as a good teacher.

Despite her many privations Mrs Smith had lost none of her critical faculties, even the Royal Personage herself did not avoid censure. The first visit of Queen Victoria to Ireland in August 1849 created great excitement in social circles but Mrs Smith remained to be convinced of the appropriateness of the visit a time when the shadow of famine still hung over the land, nor was she impressed by reports of the Royal personage herself.

"Lady Downshire says that the queen is still violently in love with her husband, he is quite indifferent about her, a cold, quiet, not clever man – a nobody. Her temper is very violent. She is not the least bit pretty now, nor by any means agreeable, never for one moment disqueening herself. She never descends from her high estate, nor suffers anyone else to forget."

Despite her initial reservations, Elizabeth had quite warmed to the prospect of taking part in the festivities surrounding the Royal visit when her husband, having consulted the estate accounts, decided that the family would be unable to take any part, she was particularly dissatisfied on her daughters behalf.

"They had set their young hearts on it, having now a large dancing acquaintance among really nice people and they had been settling their dresses with the Lady Leasons." Recalling her own "merry times" when she was young, her highland days filled with "a regular bustle of fun", Elizabeth admits..."My poor girls have no fun; their life is really dull; nothing can exceed the utter stupidity of this neighbourhood, besides, the Colonel and I are intensely stupid ourselves."

The visit of the Marquis of Downshire to his Blessington estate provided a much needed consolation, the celebrations went on for days, highlighted by a Ball in the Old Hotel, the only negative aspects being the inevitable rain and the counter attraction of the Queens visit to which only grudging credit is accorded...

"She was enthusiastically received, showed herself most gracefully and abundantly and was in right good humour. She has grown very fat, was much sun burned and too plainly dressed to please the Irish."

The Smiths were not a high society family but during the visit of the Downshires there were a number of outings.."Powerscourt is very beautiful and we saw it to great advantage, but I am not intended by nature to live among the great, I could not settle myself with my book or my work in any of those splendid rooms."

Just a few days later they accepted an invitation to join Lady Milltown and her family for a day trip to Glendalough.."It was a lively day and a very pleasant party unlike what we expected, there was a good and merry dinner, a lounging walk, a tea, a boating and a charming moonlight drive home. Lord Downshire was my beau during the ramblings and for most of the hilly road home and very pleasant he is.

Lady Milltown behaved wonderfully well and did her best to to make her party go off well. Her girls manage her admirably and Edward's conduct to his father is unobtrusively devoted, they are the best children in the world."

The harvest of 1850 appeared good in mid July, "Such corn and hay and potatoes as we had not seen for many a day and difficult to get people for field labour." Some weeks later however the blight had reappeared.."The potatoes are failing again, the sight and smell of the disease is all around us."

Despite these setbacks there were definite indications towards the end of the year that the worst was now over.."Christmas Day. It is years since the thought of a merry Christmas crossed a mind, this year I feel the seasons worth...All off to church this Christmas morning, the Colonel the gayest of the party, ever since his visit to St.Fentons he has been in tip top spirits, quite like his younger days, it really makes the heart glad to see him."

Since the summer of 1849 young James King had been paying attention to Annie, the Smith's youngest daughter, Elizabeth, uncertain of the young man's character had stipulated that they should not wed until both were twenty, that would have meant a three year delay, in time she relented however.."I do think that my dearly loved Annie will be safe in his hands and that they will be happy together."

So ends Elizabeth Smith's journal of the famine decade. In the years that followed life seems to have returned to a degree of normality, though she had often expressed concerns about her own and her husband's health, both lived in fact to a ripe old age. Their son Jack was not so lucky, Elizabeth's concerns for him were sadly fulfilled when he died at only thirty five, leaving a wife and young daughter. Ironically that daughter who lost her father at just two years of age would one day have a child of her own who would become an international figure writing a final and distinguished chapter to her family's history.

Edris Stannus was born at Baltiboys House on 6th May 1898, she was the second of four children born to James and Elizabeth Stannus (nee Smith), her arrival, as she recorded later was not met with unrestrained rejoicing. The family had made plans to welcome their first born son, a bonfire was laid on Baltiboys Hill and all was in readiness to ring the farm bell, but with the announcement of a baby girl, the fire remained unlit, the bell unring. Edris's were the last branch of the family to live at Baltiboys, when she was six they sold the estate and moved to England.

Later in life Edris would recall her childhood memories of Baltiboys House, the stables, the farm bell, the gardens, the tall beech trees and the long avenue leading to a lodge at the entrance gates. In an echo of Elizabeth Smith's own journal, she would recall visiting and bringing gifts to the tenants cottages dotted around the Baltiboys estate. In particular she remembered her childhood visits to the 'home farm' about a mile away, where Kate Flanagan, the herdsman's wife, singled her out to teach her how to dance an Irish jig, if it had not been for that introduction to dance the world might never have heard the name of Dame Ninette DeValois, Internationally known ballet dancer, world famous choreographer.

Dame Ninette returned briefly to visit Baltiboys with her sister, Thelma Hornidge, in 1957, all had changed from the place she remembered, much of the property had been flooded for the Rural Electrification scheme, even the weather, dull and misty, was unwelcoming. Dame Ninette published her memoirs, "Come Dance With Me" in London in 1957, she died on 8th March 2001.

Memorials of the Dead, St Mary's Churchyard, Blessington.

In Memory of

MAJOR GENERAL HENRY SMITH

Indian Army, of Baltiboys in this County

died 27th December 1862

Aged 83 years

Erected by his son JOHN GRAYDON SMITH

Also to JOHN GRAYDON SMITH

late Capt. 7th Royal Fusiliers

Son of the above

who died deeply regretted

the 3rd November 1873

Aged 35

"Not lost but gone before"

Also of ELIZABETH, Mother of the above

wife of MAJOR GENERAL HENRY SMITH

and daughter of

SIR PETER JOHN GRANT

of Rothiemurchus, N.B.

died on the 14th November 1885

Aged 88

'The Wicklow World of Elizabeth Smith 1840-1850', edited by Dermot James and Seamus O'Maitiu, was published in 1996 by The Woodfield Press. It represents only a small selection of many hundreds of entries appearing in 'The Highland Lady In Ireland' edited by Patricia Pelly and Andrew Tod, published by Canongate Press.

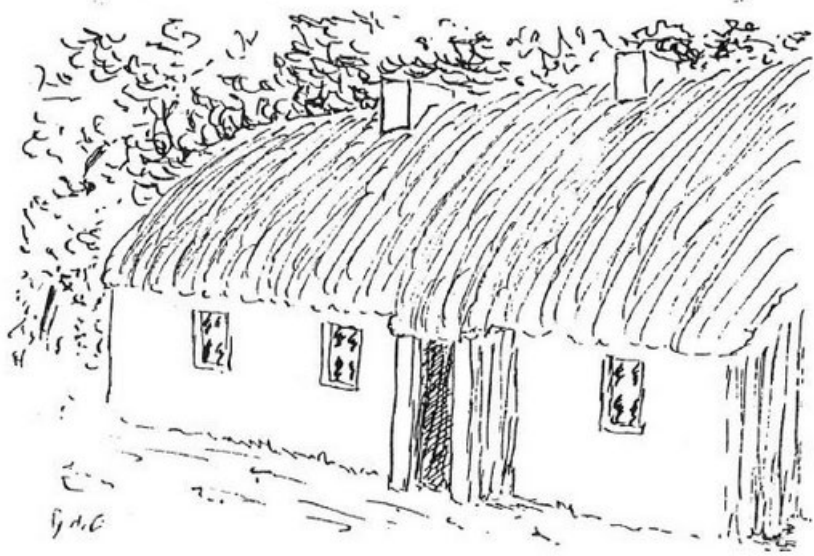
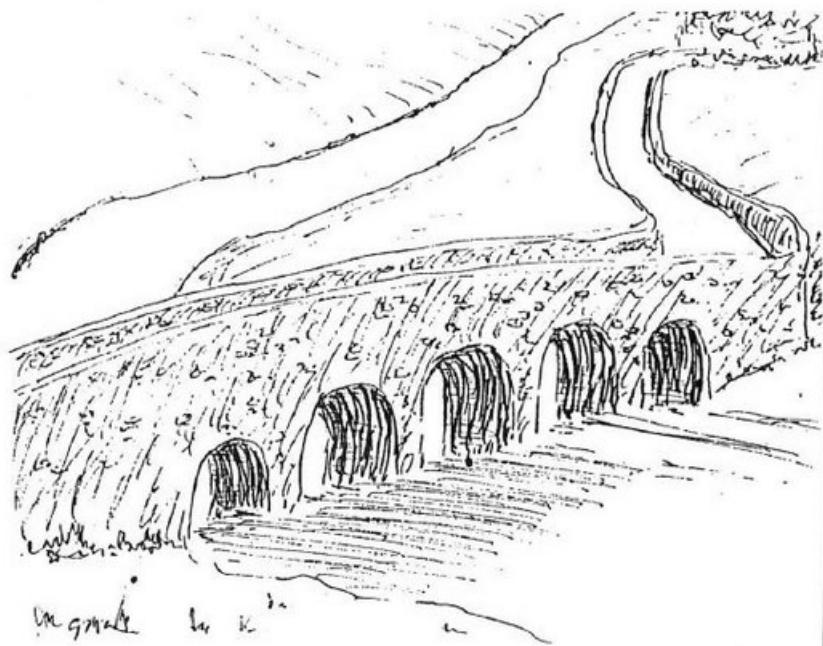
Wicklow cuttings...

Tinahely Petty Sessions...

Rosanna Breen, Rathartt, summoned Patrick Maher, of the same place, for maliciously injuring a heap of manure on 23rd ult.

In response the defendant claimed that the said manure had obstructed his free passage. The Bench found defendant guilty and imposed a fine of 2/6 and 2/6 costs.

..The Bray Herald and South Dublin Reporter, 14th February 1903.



THE WICKLOW PEOPLE OF ELIZABETH SMITH

Agar, Archdeacon & Mrs	Fyfe, Mrs	Nary, Widow
Aldboro, Lord	Glavin, Richard	Neale, Mr
Armstrong, Mr	Gardiner, Family	Neville, Jacob
Aylmer, Col	Gardner, Miss	Nimmo, Alexander
Bankes, Widow	Germaine, Rev Arthur	O'Brien, Mrs
Bourne, Mary	Gilhooly, Mr	O'Grady, Brian
Boyle, Archbishop	Grace, Family	Owen, Miss
Bradshaw, Joanna	Gray, Family	Owen, William & Mrs
Brady, William	Graydon, Family	Payne, Mr
Bridges, Mrs	Gyves, Mr	Pearson, Mr
Byrne, Family	Harris, Walter	Pennington, Col. & Jane
Cairns (Kearns), George	Handsworth, Mr	Perry, Mr
Carroll, Family	Henchy, O'Conor	Quin, Family
Carney (Carny), James	Henry, Family	Redmond, Family
Chambers, Robert	Hillsborough, Earls of	Riley, Mr
Commins, Mr	Holmes, E	Roberts, Mr
Cooper, Jane	Hornidge, Family	Robinson, George
Cotton, Family	Hyland, Betty / Mary	Robinson, John
Craig, James	Kearns (Cairns), George	Ryan, Families
Cullen, James	Kelly, Family	Saunders, Family
Darker, James & Deborah	Keogh, Tom	Scarfe, Family
Darker, Sam	Kilbee, Mr	Shannon, Family
Delaney, Family	King, Family	Sheehan (Shehan), Tom
Dempsey, Bryan	Lalor, Patrick	Smith, Family
Dennis, Mr	Leeson, Family	Stannus, Family
Dodson, Paddy & Peggy	Lewis, Samuel	Stout, Matthew
Doolen, Family	McDarby, Mr	Sullivan, Mr
Downshire, Lord & Lady	MacDonald, Miss	Taylor, Mrs
Doyle, Families	McKay, Brothers	Tod, Andrew
Doyle, R.Esq	Malthus, Dr Thomas	Tottenham, Charlotte
Drumgoole, Christopher	Meredith, Sir Joshua	Turton, Sir Thomas
Dunraven Mr W	Milltown, Lord & Lady	Tynte, Family
Fetherstone, Rev	Mitchell, John	Tyrrell, Family
Finnamore, Families	Moore, George	Wall, Henry
Fitzpatrick, Families	Moore, Rev Ogle	West, George & Mrs
Flanagan, Kate	Mount Cashel, Earl of	White, Paddy
Foster, Rev	Mulligan, Widow	Williams, Mr
Fox, Nancy	Murphy, Bartle	Wolfe, Mr
Frazer, James	Murray, John & Mrs	Young, John

MacBRIDE'S BRIGADE – IRISH COMMANDOS IN THE ANGLO-BOER WAR

by
James Scannell

One of the regular news items in the 'Wicklow Newsletter' for 1899 and 1900 relate to what was called 'The South African War' or simply 'The Boer War', but correctly should be called 'The Anglo Boer War'. There are reports of the fighting, casualties and information on those who returned home and the great reception they received as well as the fund raising carried out throughout Co. Wicklow to collect funds for transmission to South Africa to assist those recovering from wounds or illness. Roughly 5,800 men were killed in battle while a further 16,200 died as a result of their wounds – simple drugs to combat wound infections had yet to evolve as had medical procedures and technology. The Boers lost 7,000 men as the result of military actions but thousands more women and children in concentration camps where they were held in order to deprive the Boer guerilla fighters of support from their homesteads. The conditions in these camps were terrible and though following an international outcry major improvements were made a legacy of bitterness was left amongst Afrikaans for many years.

The Anglo-Boer War was the first major conflict the British Army was engaged in since the Crimea War of 1854-56 and was a costly one for them in military, economic and political terms. Although the Army had taken part in a number of minor Imperial campaigns, it was not trained for the fluid and rapid type of warfare that the Boers were skilled in and it took the best part of two years for British troops to acquire the necessary skills to defeat the Boers on their home ground.

One of the best known monuments to Irishmen who died during this conflict is the Dublin Fusiliers' Arch at the entrance St. Stephens Green at the top of Grafton Street, Dublin, on which the names of those who died serving in the British Army are inscribed and in churches throughout County Wicklow there are memorial plates and plaques to local individuals who did not return from this conflict.

But there are no monuments in Ireland to that group of Irishmen who opted to fight as volunteers for the Boer cause and who used the conflict as means to fight back against the British. These volunteers were the men of an outfit known as McBride's Brigade and their story is told for the first time in a fascinating book 'McBride's Brigade - Irish Commandos in the Anglo Boer War' researched and written by Donal P. McCracken, Professor of History at the University of Durban, South Africa, which tells their remarkable story for the first time in one very compact volume. It shows that the Irish Civil War of 1922/23 was not the first occasion that Irishmen fought Irishmen as there were a number of occasions during the Anglo-Boer War when Irishmen on both sides fought each other.

Essentially the Anglo-Boer War all about gold and diamonds. In 1870 diamonds were discovered in Kimberly and five years later in 1875, the Transvaal

was annexed by the British with the Dutch settlers (Boers) surrendering their independence two years later in exchange for British aid against the African people. In 1880 the Boers reasserted their independence, defeating the British and a year later were granted their independence by the British Government.

In 1896, Leander Starr Jameson, a British Colonial administrator in South Africa, led what was known as Jameson's Raid from Mafeking into Transvaal to support the non-Boer colonists in trying to overthrow the government. This was inspired by Cecil Rhodes, Prime Minister of Cape Colony, in an attempt to overthrow President Kruger and his government. The raid failed and Jameson spent a number of months in prison. The Transvaal government still refused to grant voting rights to non-Boer immigrants and following the failure of negotiations tension between the Transvaal and the British increased, culminating with the Boers invading British Territory. They had a number of initial successes, laying siege to Mafeking, Ladysmith and Kimberly which they were unable to take with these towns being relieved by British Forces in 1900.

When the Boers embarked on their cause they hoped that European Governments would intervene on their side but this never happened and the expected material aid never materialised, leaving them to fend for themselves. But overseas aid did come in that unique form of overseas volunteers who were prepared to fight for the Boers without pay with the result that eventually there were six foreign units serving in the Boer army.

We all remember how excellently the bi-centenary of the 1798 Rebellion was celebrated during 1998 with special events, books, pageants, films etc. The County Wicklow Commemoration Committee organised an excellent series of commemorative events, unveiling plaques at a number of locations and organising a whole host of activities. This contrasted starkly to 1898 when the centenary of the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland passed off very much unremembered with the commemorations generally being considered a failure as they did not attract mass popular interest or support. However in Johannesburg, South Africa, a centenary parade, which passed through the streets, saw the Irish being joined by a number of nationalities, including Boers. In 1899 the 1798 centenary Committee held a number of meetings at which one of these, John McBride, put forward the suggestion that a brigade of Irishmen to fight for the Boers should be established if war between the British and the Boers broke out. A letter outlining this proposal was despatched to President Kruger of the Transvaal Republic who gave approval for the raising of an Irish Corps. some four weeks before hostilities commenced between the Boers and the British.

McBride opted not to command the Corps or Brigade as it was usually called and nominated a former Irish-American US cavalry officer, Lt. John Blake as leader, he was given the rank of Colonel with McBride taking the position of second in command. Both these men had different temperaments and did not like each other. Additional volunteers came from Ireland and America in various guises – one group of Irish Americans travelled to South Africa pretending to be a

Red Cross contingent and on landing in Portuguese Mozambique, abandoned this pretence and then travelled overland to the Transvaal. While the Irish brigade was unable to affect the eventual outcome of the war, they nonetheless won the respect and admiration of the Boers and the foreign contingents fighting with them. Although the military campaign concluded in mid-1900, the guerilla war waged by the Boers lasted another two years with hostilities finally ending in May 1902 with the signing of the Peace of Vereeniging under which the Boers accepted British sovereignty, receiving £3M compensation in return for farms destroyed by the British as part of their 'scorched earth policy' to deny shelter and comfort to the Boer guerillas.

During the conflict a number of the Brigade were killed, others wounded and some taken prisoner, and at its conclusion, most had to emigrate from South Africa, returning to Ireland, America or other places.

At home the activities of the Brigade suddenly awoke the Nationalist Cause from inaction which had been caused by the Parnellite split a decade earlier and helped to relaunch the Nationalist Movement on a road which would ultimately lead to independence. Remarkably the Boers sent money to the Irish Republican Brotherhood in Ireland to assist undermining the British army recruiting campaign in progress at that time in Ireland. For publicity purposes a 'local hero' was needed so what should have been properly called Blake's Brigade became known as McBride's Brigade even though he had only commanded it for a few months.

This is a remarkable and fascinating book as the author gives sufficient details of the various engagements which will meet the interests of military historians while for genealogists the names of individuals are quoted throughout the text with a small bibliography on many of these individuals being provided in the appendix which makes further research possible. Those 'forgotten' Irishmen are yet another example of people from Ireland who took part in conflicts overseas and who were not part of the Imperial forces. The author weaves his fascinating account with details of what was happening simultaneously in Britain, Ireland and South Africa. This unique book is especially welcome as it records Irish involvement in a conflict which to a larger extent has been overlooked or forgotten both in Britain and Ireland. While a number of TV documentaries were broadcast on BBC and Channel 4 in 1999 dealing with this conflict, these have yet to be screened by RTE or TV3.

There's excellent reading in this book supported by super photographs and the author is to be complimented for producing a book that meets the needs of both historian and general reader. The Four Courts Press, who are the publishers, have a reputation for quality work, editorially and production wise and this title is another excellent book to emerge from this Irish publishing house.

'McBride's Brigade – Irish Commandos in the Anglo-Boer War' by Donal P. McCracken, published by Four Courts Press., ISBN 1-85182-449-5.

MacBRIDE'S BRIGADE - THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS

Barrett, Michael	Halley, Mike	Matthews
Barrett, P	Hanafin, Mike	Menton, Thomas
Bedford, Tom	Haney, Tom	Mitchell, John J.
Boetts, P	Harold, James	Mullins, Jack
Boyle, Johnny P.	Hawney, Thomas	Murphy, James
Brennan, Mat	Hayes, Teddy	Nolan, John
Byrne, Thomas F.	Higgins, Andy	Oates, P.J.
Carberry, Hugh	Joyce, Maurice	Oates, Tom
Cockburn, John	Kavanagh, Danny	O'Byrne, T.
Connolly, Frank	Kelly, Patrick A.	O'Connell, Jack
Connolly, Tom	Kennedy, Joe	O'Hare, Dan
Crosby, James	Lalor, P.	O'Haughey, James
Dalton, Mickey	Laracy, James J.	O'Keeffe, Jim
Daly, Jack	Lennon, Paddy	O'Kelly, Owen
D'Arcy, Martin M.	McArdle, Jack	Power, Bill
Darragh, Pat	MacBride, John	Quinn, Pat
Donnelly, Jack	McCormack, Jim	Raw, F.
Duggan	McDermott, Frank	Ryan, John
Dunlop, Frank A.	McDonagh, Dick	Ryan, John M.
Edge, D.W.	McElroy, James	Tynan, Dan
Fahey, Pat C.	McGibbon, Bob	Wade, Joe
Fitzgibbon, Thomas	McGlade	Walsh, Dr.M.S.
Flynn, Michael	McGlew, Jack	
French, Jim	McGuigan, J.	
Gaynor	McKibbin, Bob	
Glancy	Magee, Thomas	
Gorman, John	Mallon, Charles	
Guigan, J	Malone, Pat	

Note:

The above list is extracted from the appendix of 'MacBride's Brigade', further detail is available from the volume itself. Most of the volunteers came from Dublin and Belfast with small groups from Kerry, Tyrone, Kilkenny and Longford, there were no recorded volunteers from Wicklow.

A number of Wicklow men fought and died for British forces in this conflict, some of their names have been published in our 'Wicklow People at Home and Away' feature.

THE LOST CHILDREN OF GORMANSTOWN

.. A Search for the Scattered.

by

Declan Byrne

“It is the end of Gormanstown”...the words of my great grandmother to her children on the morning the farm was lost kept coming back to me as I set out to trace the family scattered on that spring morning in 1874.

It had all been so much different fifteen years earlier when Loughlin Byrne had moved the family from their traditional home at Ballykeane onto the the lands of Henry Reville in the shadow of Castletimon. The prospect of a new start on holdings at Gormanstown totalling one hundred and sixty seven acres must have seemed very attractive initially and indeed those early years at Gormanstown must have borne out that initial enthusiasm. There is a folk memory of the family making milk deliveries to the Wicklow market on a daily basis using a huge horse drawn vehicle. All that prosperity was to dissappear in one night however in the early spring of 1874 when it was confirmed that the families dairy herd had contracted the dreaded ‘foot and mouth disease’ and would have to be destroyed.

The first mention of Gormanstown had come from my mother, she remembered that my fathers family had lived there at one time, there had been a story of their neighbours, ancestors of the later prominent Everett family, having a sickness in their herd and the Byrnes lending them a goat to run with the cattle, it was a traditional Irish cure and was apparently successful and a friendship had arisen between the families that had endured, the tale was to remain unconfirmed and would be deeply ironic in view of my later discoveries.

Of the thirteen children born to Loughlin and Dora Byrne, I had information regarding the following.

Loughlin, my grandfather, presumably the eldest, he had married Mary Anne Gahan, and they had nine children, they had lived at Ballykeane.

Peter, an older brother, he had moved to Dublin where he married, he was the ancestor of the Byrne’s of Marino.

Garrett, he had been killed in an accident as a boy.

Garrett, named after his brother who died. He had moved to Dublin, later lived at Sandymount where he raised a family.

Michael, a younger brother who had married Mary Jane Cunniam. They had separated and Michael had ended his days at Ballykeane.

A sister had married Sutton, a butcher in Wicklow town, the family had eventually emigrated to Canada.

A sister, Jane, had married and settled in Sandford in Dublin.

Other possible members... William, an uncle who reputedly owned a public house.

An Aunt who may have married Ryan or Doyle and who lived in Kingstown, later Dun Laoghaire.

An Aunt Mary who lived in Dublin and worked in Browne & Nolans.

An Aunt who might have provided a link to the Kinsella family.

Since there were only three girls in the family, at least one of the last three possibilities must be ruled out. There were at least three children of whom no record existed.

It was time to replace legend and supposition with record and certainty, I had already had some success tracing my mothers family through the parish records held in the National Library, so I was confident achieving similar results with the Byrne's, I was to be sadly disappointed.

I had no exact dates regarding the lives of my great grandparents, but since my great great grandfather (according to the inscription in Redcross) had been over seventy when he died in the early 1850's, his eldest son (my great grandfather, as his chief heir, was presumably the eldest surviving son), was probably in his late thirties or early forties and already possessed of a young family by that time.

I had hoped to trace my grandfathers family and perhaps the previous generation in the parish records but I was to be disappointed in that regard. Although it was later confirmed to me that Diocesan records indicated that a Parish Register had been kept in Kilbride Barndarrig since 1791, the only extant register only dated back to 1858, copies of this register were available in the National Library but the quality was poor and most of the entries were practically illegible. It was only with the greatest difficulty that I managed to extract the following birth records..

Parish records.....Baptisms..

- 1859: December 15th Thomas.. of Loughlin Byrne and Dora Waldron, Gormanstown, Witnesses..Patrick Kelly, Mary Keane.*
- 1862: February 10th Patrick..of Loughlin Byrne and Dora Waldron, Gormanstown, Witnesses..John Keane, Margaret Deevy.*
- 1864: March 13th Honor..of Loughlin Byrne and Dora Waldron, Gormanstown, Witnesses..James Waldron, Esther Kelly.*
- 1866: April 19 Garret..of Loughlin Byrne and Dora Waldron, Gormanstown, Witnesses..John Waldron, Bessy Cullen.*
- 1868: July 27th Mary Anne..of Loughlin Byrne and Dora Waldron. Gormanstown, Witnesses..Michael Somers, Ann Waldron.*
- 1873: Sept 18th Michael..of Loughlin Byrne and Dora Waldron, Gormanstown, Witnesses..Sylvester Byrne, Mary Waldron.*

The surprising element of these entries was that the first three children named were totally unknown to me and to any other family members whom I consulted. My eldest cousin had heard of a Pat in the family but had no personal knowledge of him.

The last three named included the second child named Garrett and Michael who had lived latterly at Ballykeane. I had no definite information regarding Mary Anne, there was a suggestion that she was later to be Mrs Sutton, but the possibility that she was the unmarried Aunt in Dublin couldn't be ignored.

A striking feature of these records is the absence of any of the Byrne family (Sylvester was a neighbour from Gormanstown) or of their cousins the Brady's from the list of sponsors, this is usually a good indicator of close family and friends.

I now had definite confirmation of the existence of six of the children of Loughlin and Dora Byrne, it was obvious that the missing Parish Records contained the birth records of the seven elder children of the family, these records I knew to contain the names of my Grandfather, Loughlin, his brother Peter, his brother Garrett, killed in an accident and his sister Jane who settled in Sandyford. These records also contained three names which might never be known to me.

Having, temporarily at least, exhausted the Parish Records, I now turned my attention to that other great genealogical resource, the General Registration Office. Registration of all Births, Deaths and Marriages in the state had become a legal obligation from 1st January 1864.

The birth records would only serve to confirm the parish entries that I had already unearthed, the marriage records referring to the Byrne family would be practically impossible to isolate, the death records, even reduced to local level, would be equally difficult. . The names of Thomas, Patrick, Garret and even Honor Byrnes were quite common in all records, while those of their parents Loughlin and Dora were only marginally less so. There was an added complication in that the Byrnes, presumably from their past experiences, had had little sympathy with the authorities and downright suspicion of their need to maintain personal records, they would have avoided official registration as far as possible.

Although the parents of the family, Loughlin and Dora, should have been the natural point to begin my search, I initially decided to concentrated on their son Garrett, the reason will soon become clear..

I had been told that Garret Byrne, baptised in Barndarrig on 19th April 1866, had been named after his brother who had died in an accident. Official records had only begun on 1st January 1864 so this left a two year window of opportunity during which the death of the older brother might have been recorded. The family's distaste for official records in this case was likely to have been overruled by the need for an inquest, the outcome of which would have reported to the local Registrar by the Coroner.

I began my search counting back from the first quarter of 1866, the death registration of a Garret Byrne, age 12, proved to be for another boy. In the third quarter of 1864 I found records for two Garret Byrnes, both aged 16, older than I had expected, both proved to be for Garret Byrne of Gormanstown who had died

on 18th August 1864 of a concussion of the brain, the Coroners report had actually duplicated the original entry, once again I had two records where I only needed one.

Garrett Byrne, the first child to die in the family, had ironically become the first to be uncovered. Later I would travel to the British Newspaper Library at Colindale, North London, to research the only early copies of the local newspapers for that era (a sponsor would later finance the microfilming of these early (1857-85) papers and donate them to the Wicklow County Library, unfortunately, due to a lack of facilities, they are still unavailable to the general public). The "Wicklow Newsletter" carried the following report on Saturday 20th August 1864..

"An inquest was held on yesterday at the County Infirmary on the body of Garret Byrne, who met his death by injuries received on Wednesday last by the wheel of a car running over him near Ballintekin, the horses having ran away, his head and body was grossly injured and though every care was taken of him, he died on Thursday. The Jury recorded a verdict of accidental death."

One of the elder, if not the eldest of the family, Garret had been making milk deliveries at the time of the accident, though his age is given as sixteen it is likely that he was younger, perhaps too young to be allowed out alone with a team of horses. My search for the fate of Loughlin and Dora Byrne promised to be a little easier than for their children, both names were less common and there was a more clearly defined research period, they had both been living in September 1873 when their youngest child was born (not always to be assumed, in those times children were often born after their fathers decease, mothers often died in childbirth) and probably died before January 1890 when my father was born, for he had never spoken of them.

The likeliest entry that came to my attention for a Dora Byrne was in 1881, a death at 53 years, for Loughlin, in 1891, a death at 74 years, on request the registration copies proved negative in each case, it was a case of back to the drawing board. It was to prove to be along drawn out session at the drawing board, once again family unpredictability was to play a role..

An entry record for a Loughlin Byrne in 1884, a death at 76 years, had earlier been rejected as being too old, now on checking I found that this was indeed Loughlin Byrne, Farmer of Ballykeane. This meant that with a 10 year old son, my great grandfather had become a father for the last time at 65 years of age, not unique, it must be admitted, in those times, he was recorded as married so his wife had obviously outlived him. Most interestingly the record stated that his son, John, was present at his death, this was obviously one of his older children, previously unknown to me. Rather sadly the death of Loughlin Byrne had been due to an illness usually nowadays connected to stress rather than the more common old age or senility.

The search for Dora Byrne now began in earnest, a check of the Census for 1901 made the surprising revelation that at 67 years of age she had been living with my grandfather, his wife and seven children, at Ballykeane. In 1911 my grandfather had nine children but their grandmother was no more, it seemed likely that she had died in the intervening period. This last search should have been quite easy, and in fact I did find a number of suitable candidates, but each when tested were rejected. It was with little optimism that I requested a copy of the registration for a Dorothy Byrne in 1907. This variation of the name was never used in our family and my great grandmother had been at least fifteen years older than the age, 65 years, recorded here, yet there could be no doubt... this lady was actually recorded as the widow of Loughlin Byrne, farmer of Ballykeane. The death had been reported by my grandmother, her daughter in law, obviously a stickler for correctness with regard to nomenclature if not to arithmetic this part of my search, at least, was over.

Wicklow newspapers, like the local parish records, started later than most Irish provincial newspapers. The Wicklow Newsletter commenced in 1857, but the earliest copies in the National Library dated from 1885. The Wicklow People had commenced in 1904, but many early editions were missing, the newspapers had effectively merged in 1927.

The early local newspapers carried few notices regarding the indigenuous population, these only featured in reports of accidents, incidents or court cases. It was only with the Independence movement that native families, other than the very wealthy, ventured into print on their own behalf. The first printed notice regarding the Byrne family appeared in October 1918 and recorded the death in Kingstown of Sara, the daughter of Loughlin and Mary Anne Byrne of Ballykeane. Rather perversely I have often found that unexpected family records are often included not once but twice, and on this occasion it must have come as quite a shock to her older sister, Dora, to read of her own death in that same edition, obviously a misprint.

I began my research of the Wicklow People in the 1920's and 1930's, my reearch had to be of a general nature since I had no indication of the fate of my grandfathers siblings, this involved simply reading through the volumes on a chronological basis.

My first step was to confirm the death of my grandfather in November 1931, unfortunately this contained no information on surviving siblings (more common nowadays) when it held out no great hope of discovering the fate of the children of Gormanstown in the Wicklow papers, doubtless they had been long scattered before the 1920's, and apart from the three family members who had remained in Wicklow I was unlikely to find any reference to them, for once I was to be positively surprised. Although the death of Elizabeth, the wife of Peter Byrne in Portobello, Dublin, in 1920 carried no definite link, it encouraged me to continue.

It was a memorial notice for Garret Byrne of Sandwith Street, formerly of Ballykeane, that eventually lead me back to his death notice in the 'Irish Independent' a year earlier..

"Byrne (Dublin) – Nov.28, 1933, at Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, Garrett, late of I Murray's Cottages, Sandwith Street, son of the late Loughlin Byrne, Ballykeane, Wicklow, late employe B. and I. Line; deeply regretted by his beloved wife, son, daughters, and grandchildren. R.I.P. Funeral arrangements later."

The parental reference confirmed the connection, it was unusual that this reference (in common with the record of his mothers death) referred to his father by name since Garrett was a married man and already advanced in years at the time of his demise.

Encouraged by this I continued my detailed review of the 'Irish Independent', I found the death of his brother, Peter at Portobello just over a year later.

Since I had no further record of family members living in Dublin there seemed little point in continuing my painstaking search of the 'Irish Independent', I now switched my attention to the 'Wicklow People' for that period. This was a much easier task since the paper was weekly, the notices were fewer, and many referred to families I knew, always a consolation when one's own research is floundering..

I knew by now that my grandfather's youngest brother had lived at Ballykeane and actually survived him by a few years, I eventually found his death recorded in April 1939, almost certainly marked the passing of the children of Gormanstown .

Further research in the 'Wicklow People' took me back into the 1920's, and it was there in 1923 that I discovered the death of Mary Anne Sutton, the wife of Michael Sutton, New Street, Wicklow, she was the sixth family member to be identified, but with so little in the way personal references to the other children, it seemed likely that she would be the last.

I had found no evidence whatsoever of the lives of Thomas, Patrick and Honor Byrne, it seemed unlikely that they had married, or even survived childhood.

John, at least, had done that, however, though almost thirty at the time of his father's death, he too had dissappeared without trace. The question of emigration must obviously have arisen with regard to the breakup of such a large family, but though some admitted the possibility no one could offer anything more definite. This lack of information seemed most indicative in the case of my American cousins who knew of no other

family connection in the U.S.A., the Byrnes had never (apart from a Dublin cousin) gone to England and an Australian link, even if undefined, would surely have been known.

With regard to the other possible connections which had been suggested to me, I had had little success. When I did trace the antecedents of the connected Ryan and Doyle families, it was only to discover that these they were native to Dun Laoghaire and Wexford respectively and had no Byrne link.

The Kinsella family of Kilmurray were descended from John Kinsella and his wife Ellen Graham of Ballard...no Byrne connection. The Aunt Mary who lived in Dublin had been the daughter, not sister, of Garrett Byrne of Sandwith Street, it was his son John (sometimes known as Loughlin) who lived in Sandymount.

There was no record or memory of an Uncle William who owned a public house. A William Byrne who had married Mary Anne Donnelly, whose family owned a pub in Avoca, had been a member of the Glentague family. I was now satisfied that the William Byrne I had been referred to was a great uncle who had owned a grocery shop in Redcross.

The only remaining family member for whom I held out any hope of a successful outcome was Great Aunt Jane, who, according to family tradition had lived in Sandyford in South County Dublin. The great difficulty of tracing married female relations is that without their married names the search must come to a dead end, discovering these names from family sources is not always easy, women being so often known to their early associates only by their maiden name.

A different approach was called for in my search for Jane Byrne, without her marriage name my only hope was to search the Census records of the area in which she lived in the hope of finding a wife whose name was Jane and whose birthplace was County Wicklow. Though a Census had been taken every ten years since 1821 these had generally not been retained, a copy of the Census of 1851 had been kept but had been destroyed in the Four Courts fire of 1922, it would have contained at least some of the lost children.

The Census Records of 1901 and 1911 are the only such records open to the general public (recent legislation has ensured that the 1926 Census, the first taken by the new state, will not be released till 2026), they are held by The National Archive at Bishop Street in Dublin, and are undoubtedly one of the most important family history sources available to the researcher.

My search of the 1911 Census in Sandyford and surrounding areas for a "Country Jane" met with total failure, it was without much hope that I returned to the previous Census in the same area, there in the townland of Balally I found...

Patrick and Jane Neville (the latter born in Co.Wicklow) and their children, Michael, Loughlin and William, even before I had checked their marriage record I was confident of success, Loughlin was not a common name, even in those times. The mystery of my failure to find the family in 1911 was solved when I revisited those records. The family had moved to Murphystown, but Jane, now a widow, was recorded as having been born in Dublin, her children listed as Michael, Laurence and William. The reason why Jane took such steps to disown her country roots can only be the subject of speculation, hopefully a reconciliation with her family was achieved, certainly there was some family memory of herself and her brother Peter visiting Ballykeane in later years.

Apart from my discovery of Great Aunt Jane, my visit to the National Archive also allowed me to research the families of her brother and sister. At Murray's Cottages I found Garrett and Marcella Byrne and their four children. At Garden Villas, Portobello, I found Peter and Elizabeth Byrne and their four children. At New Street, Wicklow, I found Michael and Mary Anne Sutton and their four children, each family had lost one child, an unfortunate but not unusual feature of family life in those times.

The information gleaned from the Census records allowed me to make an approximation of the marriage dates of the brothers and sisters. In three cases I had the names of both marriage partners, isolating their records simply involved searching the indexes for the more unusual name and finding a matching reference for the other partner. In the cases of Peter and Garrett pure luck played a part, particularly in the former case. He had married in the same church that I had almost a century later, but his only connection with the area was that his wife had worked locally at the time of her marriage.

The GRO records for the Neville family were not difficult to find. Pat Neville worked as a gardener for Mr John Perrin at Rocklands, Sandyford (he was accorded privilege of being recorded twice in the Census of 1901, both at his home and at his place of work) his wife had also worked at Rocklands before her marriage. Pat died prematurely leaving his widow to raise three children between the ages of ten and sixteen. It must have been a hard life for Great Aunt Jane raising her young family alone. She would lose her son Loughlin to consumption at 26, and was seemingly still working in service when she died of old age (the official record of her age is understated by at least ten years, probably her own calculation, arithmetic obviously not her strong subject).

The culmination of my second visit to the General Registration Office should have marked the end of my search for the children of Gormanstown, I had followed every lead, no matter how tenuous and uncovered the fates of seven of the thirteen children, what more could be expected?. In the years that followed however other information would emerge, and at least one and perhaps two of the still missing children would emerge from the shadows. My search of the Census of 1901 for the townland of Tigroney, Avoca, was not specifically aimed at the Byrne family and initially my discovery promised little other than an interesting piece of information on a Great Great Aunt who lived in that place.

Anne Kavanagh had formerly been Anne Waldron, the younger sister of Dora Byrne, nee Waldron, my great grandmother, she had married Michael Kavanagh of Tigroney at a rather late age, there had been no children of the marriage, she had been widowed after about ten years, but continued to live on the family farm. The Census of 1901 recorded not only Anne Kavanagh, Widow, Farmer, 67 years, living at Tigroney, but also her nephew, John Byrne, Labourer, Single, 45 years. After nearly twenty years of silence John Byrne, last heard of at his fathers deathbed, had re-emerged as support to his elderly Aunt.

In 1911 the farm at Tigroney was in other hands, on further checking I discovered that the old lady had passed on in the interim, of her nephew, nothing. Records regarding the name John Byrne in the period 1901-11 were common, since no one remembered John, I decided to take a pessimistic view, of the death records I checked two emerged as most likely, both had died in the Union in Rathdrum, one in the summer, the other in the winter of 1908, their ages, 55 and 53, were approximately correct. Unfortunately these institutional deaths gave no indication of the origin of the deceased. The similarities between these two certs left little to choose between them, either could have been the target of my search, or none, the cause of death was the only distinguishing feature, acute bronchitis not uncommon, mitral regurgitation less so, in fact quite a precise diagnosis at a time when such were unusual outside of post mortem findings (my Pears Encyclopaedia identified it as a malfunction of the heart valve). This latter was due, I suspected, to the fact that the irregularity could be clearly identified with a stethoscope. The diagnosis of death due to mitral regurgitation seemed somehow familiar and sent me searching back through my records for a precedent, I soon found it. the same disease had caused the death of Mary Anne Sutton fifteen years later.

Mary Anne Sutton was the sister of the John Byrne whom I sought, this condition, while it could have been caused by virus or perhaps a rheumatic fever outbreak at Gormanstown (foot and mouth disease does not generally cross to humans, though there was a case, non fatal, in Britain last year) , was more likely a congenital one.

I was now reminded of a day in the GRO when I ordered copies of death records for Mary Anne's siblings Garrett, Peter and Peter's daughter Margaret who had predeceased him by just ten days, Garret and Peter had lived to relative old age but Margaret had died leaving a young family. I had looked upon the request as purely a formality to complete the family record, on receiving the certificates however, my immediate reaction was that I had been given three copies of the same document. The causes of death had been, in order, mitral disease and chronic nephritis, nephritis myocarditis, chronic nephritis. Nephritis, kidney failure, had most likely in these cases to have been secondary to chronic heart malfunction due to a congenital defect. The medical evidence did not prove that John Byrne, who died on November 5th, was the person I sought but it did increase the possibility. I was reminded of a comment made to me by a relative whose mother was a cousin of the family, he said "My father told me that the Byrnes never lived long". At the time in question I had treated my cousins remark with some scepticism. My direct family line, father, grandfather, great grandfather and great great grandfather had all lived to old age, even at a time when that was the exception rather than the rule.

The family had a relatively low infant mortality rate and compared to my maternal grandfather's family (he was the only one of eight siblings to live to old age) a low mortality rate in adolescence. In middle age, however, death was common and few of the family survived to old age. Middle aged death was less obvious in the past when life expectancy was much lower, but in recent years only one of Garret and Mary Anne's children (five in each case) lived beyond 60, none beyond 65, and none of Peters five children lived beyond 55. Of his eighteen known Byrne cousins, my father, one of the eldest, and just over seventy when he died, had certainly outlived fourteen and may have outlived them all. The preciseness of my cousins remark was beginning to strike home, the exceptions were explainable, inherited defects are rarely absolute, more commonly random in occurrence, but too common to be ignored, there was an endemic killer loose in the family, a slow killer, but a killer nonetheless. The possibility that the family disorder might still be extant was again raised by the recent news of the death in Florida of the granddaughter of Mary Anne. Gertie Sutton had died prematurely in middle age, like her grandmother (the females in the family, unusually, often seemed to predecease their male counterparts) father, uncle and aunt. Could the family weakness have found it's way to a new Continent in a new century?.

I could not assume that John Byrne, formerly of Tigronney, was a family member, without a definite link there could be no certainty, but there did appear to be a strong case for his inclusion.

With the passing of time my interest in researching the Byrne family and in fact in genealogy in general waned and it was only with the disclosure of a family history hoard that the subject once again became the centre of my attention.

The great weakness of my research had been the lack of any written or verbal family memory of the Byrnes of Gormanstown, then quite unexpectedly a source became available. The home where my Aunt had lived for many years was being sold and in the clear out the usual family memorabilia had come to light, most interesting to me had been the notes which my Aunt had inherited from an elderly relative. Mary Jane Byrne (nee Brady) and her writings have already been the subject of an article in "Wicklow Roots" 2000.

In the personal diaries Mary Jane had kept of family events among her friends and acquaintances she recorded the death of my Great Grandmother ("Dear Aunt Dolly") on 12th January 1907, and a month later, on 29th February, the death of Tom Byrne of Ballykeane. A search at the GRO confirmed this death on March 1st (this was not a leap year), the total lack of family identification once again highlighted the hopelessness of the the task I'd set myself. Tom, of whom I knew so little, had died in Dublin and had obviously lived there, quietly and unobtrusively, all of his working life. He was the eight child of Gormanstown to join my reconstructed family circle, but as with all Byrne family research, his discovery came at a price.

As with every discovery regarding the Byrne family there was a downside, the absence of any other reference to the Byrnes over a period of twenty years left a greater mystery than ever with regard to the remaining siblings. The absence of any reference to John Byrne seemed to rule out the possibility of the Rathdrum records having any relevance, particularly since the passing of John's Aunt (Anne Kavanagh died in the Rathdrum Union on 7th April 1906) is marked in the diary and the fact that he, unlike his brother, had lived locally. In effect it seemed that I had gained one brother for the loss of another.

It is interesting, but probably futile, to speculate as to why Mary Jane Brady might have omitted a family member from her diary, pure forgetfulness seems unlikely, disapproval, more likely perhaps. Though undoubtedly a caring and compassionate person, Mary Jane was a Lady of forthright religious and political views, a less than exemplary existence in either of these regards could well have incurred a degree of exclusion. I was reminded of a few local reports of roguish antics, honeymoon couples serenaded, young ladies accosted to their male friends, if not their own, disapproval, but it all seemed a little unfair to read much into such trivia.

As my search of the GRO records progressed new prospects emerged, possible family members, most however would in turn be discarded, but not without a great deal of unrewarded effort. The names of sponsors at family events provided a number of connections, Mary Anne, who (like her niece and namesake) seemed to play a prominent and binding role in the family, appeared in records of both Portobello and Sandyford. Tom, who I was later to discover in Dublin, had acted as best man at my grandfather's wedding, he acted as sponsor at a Portobello christening (actually in St Kevin's, Harrington Street), as also did Jane in happier family times. Garrett did not appear in any of the Dublin family records, following his early marriage in Barndarrig (he was only twenty) he remained close to his wife's family, the Redmonds.

There was no link with Laurence Byrne who acted as best man to Peter and Elizabeth Byrne on their wedding day, he was probably a brother of the bride whose maiden name was also Byrne, the name did not occur in the Ballykeane family.

James Byrne who acted as best man to Jane and her husband when they married at St Mary's, Sandyford could well have been a family member, the name was prominent in the Waldron (their mother's) family, it was carried on in the future generation. Extensive research identified James Byrne of Sandyford as being a native of Bray, the son of Charles and Mary (nee O'Toole).

William Byrne had acted as sponsor at the christening of one of the Byrne children of Portobello, he was a next door neighbour of the family at Garden Villas. Only a long and fruitless search ruled him out of the family circle, married to Jane Morgan he was also the son of a Charles Byrne.

Only one record on the Byrne family continued to elude me, I could find no record of the marriage of Michael and his one time bride, Mary Jane Cunniam, this in itself was probably not unusual since records were often omitted in those times.

As to the married life of the happy couple, the Census of 1901 recorded their residence at Ballinacor West, their ages given as 23 and 22, the bliss of their state had obviously compromised their more practical skills since they were in fact five years older, though still young by country standards. Ten years later loves young dream had died, the Census of 1911 recorded that Michael Byrne, farm labourer, now residing on the farm of the Burne family at Kilmacrea was a “Grass widower”.

I was finally ready to close my search for the children of Gormanstown, to be only able to fully identify eight of thirteen children in my great grandfathers family was very dissappointing, I could finally summarise all that I had learned..

Garrett, possibly the eldest child had died in an accident at 16.

Loughlin, my grandfather, had inherited Ballykeane where he had farmed, he had married and had nine children.

Peter, may have been a twin, perhaps of my grandfather, possibly intended at one time to settle in Ballykeane, he moved to Dublin, lived at Portobello, worked in the Gas Company, married, had five children.

John, may have been Peter’s twin, lived at Ballykeane and Tigronney, worked on his Aunt’s farm, never married, no final record.

Jane, moved to Dublin, worked at Rocklands, Sandyford, married Pat Neville, a gardener at Rocklands, had three children, was widowed early, lived at Balally and Murphystown.

Thomas, moved to Dublin, worked as a Labourer, never married.

Patrick, no further record, may have been still living at 12, possibly died early or emigrated. Honor, probably died young.

Garrett, married early, moved to Dublin, worked in B&I Line, had five children.

Mary Anne, worked with family in Dublin, married there, settled with her husband in Wicklow, had five children.

Michael, lived at Ballinacor, Kilmacrea and latterly Ballykeane, worked as Farm Labourer, married, separated.

There was no record of the two remaining children, both according to tradition were boys.

Records on the Byrne Family:

General Registration Office Records....

Marriages...

- 1885: *May 3rd Peter, son of Loughlin Byrne, to Elizabeth, daughter of Andrew Byrne, At Holy Cross, Dundrum....Witnesses..Laurence Byrne and Margaret Began.*
- 1886: *May 17th Garret, son of Loughlin Byrne, to Marcella, daughter of Patrick Redmond, At Barndarrig....Witnesses..John and Mary Redmond.*
- 1886: *Aug 15th Jane, daughter of Loughlin Byrne, to Patrick, son of Michael Neville, At Sandyford.....Witnesses..James Byrne and Kate Reilly.*
- 1887: *Nov 23rd Loughlin, son of Loughlin Byrne, to Mary Anne, daughter of William Gahan, At Rathdrum...Witnesses..Thomas Byrne and Mary Osborne.*
- 1898: *April 24th Mary Anne, daughter of Loughlin Byrne, to Michael, son of Thomas Sutton, At Haddington Road.....Witnesses..J.Carberry and Esther Doyle (the latter a native of Crone, Co.Wicklow).*

Deaths...

- 1864: *August 18th Garret Byrne, Bachelor, Farmers son, Aged 16 years, at Gormanstown, Certificate from Matthew H.Jones, Coroner Co.Wicklow.*
- 1884: *September 1st Loughlin Byrne, Married, Farmer, Aged 76 years, at Ballykeane, Witness, John Byrne, Son of deceased.*
- 1907: *January 12th Dorothy Byrne, Widow of Loughlin Byrne, Farmer, Aged 65 years, at Ballykeane, Witness, Mary A.Byrne, Daughter in law.*
- 1907: *March 1st Thomas Byrne, Bachelor, Labourer, Aged 47 years, at South Dublin Union, formerly of John Street South, Witness, A.Fraser, Occupier, South Dublin Union.*
- 1918: *October 6th Sara Byrne, Farmers daughter, Spinster, Aged 24 years, at 44 Lower Georges Street, Kingstown, Witness, William Byrne, Brother of deceased, Ballykeane, Rathdrum.*

- 1921: June 6th Mary Anne Byrne, Married, Farmers wife, Aged 60 years, at Ballykeane, Witness, M.A.Byrne, Daughter.
- 1922: May 25th James Byrne, Bachelor, Farmers son, Aged 24 years, at Ballykeane, Witness, M.A.Byrne, Sister.
- 1923: February 19th Mary Anne Sutton, Married, Wife of Butcher, Aged 53 years, at Wicklow, Witness, Michael Sutton, Widower.
- 1927: November 8th Jane Neville, Widow, Servant, Aged 59 years, at Murphystown, Witness, Patrick McHugh.
- 1931: November 15th Loughlin Byrne, Farmer, Widower, Aged 71 years, at Ballykeane, Witness, William Byrne, Son.
- 1933: November 28th Garret Byrne, Married, Watchman, Aged 68 years, at 1 Murray's Cottages, Lower Sandwith Street, Witness, John Byrne.
- 1935: February 8th Peter Byrne, Widower, Labourer, Aged 76 years, at South Dublin Union, late of 2 Garden Villa, Portobello, Witness, R.Laverty, Occupier, Dublin Union.
- 1939: April 10th Michael Byrne, Married, Labourer, Aged 62 years, at Ballykeane, Witness, William Byrne, Nephew

Deaths..

1941: October 28th Mary Anne Byrne, Spinster, Late Assistant Teacher, Aged 46 years, at Ballykeane, Witness, William Byrne, Brother.

The Grandchildren of Gormanstown.. a summary..

The Children of Loughlin..

Dora, married Richard Arthur, a Farmer, lived in Ballinabarney, had 7 children
William, married Aileen Keely, Worked as Overseer in Council, Farmed in Brittas Bay, had three children.

Loughlin, married Ellen Healy, lived in Bangor Road, Crumlin, worked C.I.E., had six children, only three of whom outlived him.

Sara, lived in Ballykeane, died during a visit to Dun Laoghaire, she was 24 years.

Mary Anne, lived at Ballykeane, Assistant Teacher in Newbawn, unmarried, died at 46 years.

James, worked in Kynoch, Arklow, died in Ballykeane, he was 24 years.

Jane, married Garret Byrne, he was a Farm Steward, lived in Glenealy, had three children.

John, emigrated to Pittsburgh, USA, married Rose O'Donnell, worked on Railways, had two children.

Peter, emigrated to Pittsburgh, USA, married Juel Canny, worked in School Administration, had four children.

The Children of Peter..

Loughlin, died at eight years.

John, married Mary Healy, worked in C.I.E., lived in Charleville Ave, North Strand, had one child who died at 2 years, he died at 38 years.

William, married Annie Kelly, Ballina, worked as Salesman, lived at Haverty Road, Marino, had five children, died in middle age.

Margaret, married Patrick Boyce, an E.S.B. worker, lived Garden Villas, Portobello, had at least one child, died at 39 years.

Peter, worked in Hallidays Dundalk, unmarried, died in Hackney, London, in middle age.

The Children of Jane..

Michael, last known living at Murphystown, may have emigrated.

Loughlin, died at Murphystown, he was 26 years.

William, last known living at Murphystown, may have emigrated.

The Children of Garrett..

One child, unnamed, who died young.

John Loughlin, married Mary Magdalen Murphy, worked in Johnstone Mooney & O'Brien, lived in Stella Gardens, Sandymount, had five children.

Mary, worked in Brown & Nolans, lived in Clogher Road, Crumlin, had one child, died in middle age.

Margaret, worked as Shop Assistant, lived in Pearse House, unmarried, died at 45 years.

Dora, married Patrick Ward, a Van Driver, lived in Sandymount area, had at least six children.

The Children of Mary Anne..

One Child, unnamed, who died young.

Thomas, worked at sea for some time, lived Wicklow, unmarried, died in middle age..

Dora, married William Byrne, lived at Ballycapple, had no children, died in middle age.

Loughlin, MCC, married Gertrude Gallagher, worked as a Butcher, lived in Seafield, Wicklow, had at least four children, died at 46 years.

William, emigrated to Canada.

The Great and Great Great Grandchildren of Gormanstown..

The Arthurs of Ballinabarney, Ballinacor and Ballycapple.

The Grehans of Annamoe.

The Mileys of Knockfin, Glendalough.

The Byrnes of Woodbine, Blackrock, Wesley, Sandysford and Kempton, Navan Rd.

The Byrnes of Northlands, Finglas, Glenmaroon, Palmerstown and Rochdale.

The Byrnes of Ashford, Fassaugaugh, Cabra and Ormeau, Dalkey.

The Byrnes of Pittsburgh, PA, and Dallas Texas..

The Mangans of Pittsburgh, PA.

The Carothers of Pittsburgh, PA.

The Byrne-Borlands of Mount Laurel, New Jersey.

The Byrnes of Haverty Road, Marino and Raheny.

The Boyces of Crumlin.

The Byrnes of Stella Gardens, Sandymount and Beech Hill, Donnybrook.

The Byrnes of Killballyowen, Aughrim.

The Byrnes of Clogher Road, Crumlin.

The Wards of Sandymount and Drumcondra.

The Suttons of Wicklow, Canada and New York.

Families and family history, some random thoughts...

“Why pay money to have your family tree traced, go into politics and your opponent will do it for you” ...Dr Laurence Peter.

RATHNEW MEMORIALS - AN EXCERPT

Daniel Clarkson, wd 11/2/1978. His brother, James Clarkson, wd 18/12/1984 aged 90 yrs.

John Bourke, wd 3/6/1995.

Patrick J.Dunne, Abbey Hill, Wicklow, wd 24/7/1964 aged 68 yrs.

Frank Tracey, 32 Lr Pembroke Street, Dublin, wd 19/9/1977. His wife, Julia Tracey, wd 13/6/1979. *plaques.. 'To Mammy & Daddy, golden wedding anniversary, Jan 1980'. 'To Daddy and Mammy', from Helen, Essie, Alex, Tommy, Jean and Ann. 'To Grandad and Nana', William, Julia, Anne and Brendan.*

Robert McCoy, Ballinteskin House, Wicklow, wd 8/1/1964 aged 84 yrs. His wife, Elsie J.McCoy, wd 11/4/1975 aged 82 yrs.

John Haughton, Milltown North, Rathnew, wd 9/9/1978.

Willie Dolan, Ashford, Co.Wicklow, wd 8/2/1965 aged 65 yrs.

Yvette Davis, Glenside Road, Wicklow, dtl 22/11/1992. *wife & mother.*

Augustus Cullen, Solicitor, wd 10/2/1971 aged 74 yrs. His wife, Mary Cullen, wd 29/4/1991.

Susanna Dickenson, Marlton rd, Wicklow, wd 7/11/1959 aged 48 yrs. Her husband, James Dickenson, aged 74, dtl 12/8/1980. *ebh&f.*

Emily Pansing, d 14/3/1959. Kathleen Mary Pansing, d 23/5/1960. Evelyn Mary Pansing, d 24/1/1973.

John De Courcy, wd 31/8/1958. His wife, Elizabeth De Courcey, d 12/8/1964.

Maire bean Seain O Tiomanaide, Rat Naoi, ad 11/2/1958. A fear ceile, ad 31/8/1967.

James Ryan, St Patrick's Avenue, Wicklow, wd 19/9/1957 aged 85 yrs. His wife Sarah Ryan, d 1/11/1963 aged 76 yrs. Their son Matt, wd 1/2/1983 aged 58 yrs.

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