

Rev. Luke White King – Buried at Old Connaught Graveyard in the Christie Family Plot

Born in 1797, Dr. Luke White King was the son of John King and Elizabeth Hicks, daughter of a Dublin brewer. After obtaining a degree from TCD he became a headmaster of the Ennis College & Endowed School at College Road, Ennis, Co. Clare. He was married three times and had numerous children. His first marriage was to Magdalene Ashe on 22 December 1827, in Drogheda, Co. Louth, and the couple had at least eight children. After her death he secondly married Hannah Amelia Christie in 1841. She was the daughter of Hannah Christie, owner of Christie's Hotel and the brewery in Bray, and widow of Robert Christie.

The Rev. King retired from the school in 1860 and moved to Mervyn (Cookstown House), a substantial Georgian house on 75 acres of prime land at Cookstown, Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow. On his retirement, he was presented with an address of appreciation by Lord Inchiquin and member of the small Protestant community in Co. Clare. His wife Hannah died in 1861 at Mervyn, and he subsequently married Margaret Anna Palmer, who was born in Co. Donegal, but whose family lived in Dublin.

In addition to the property at Enniskerry, the Rev. King also owned land and property in Co. Louth and at Bray, Co. Wicklow, mostly acquired through his marriages. In 1863 he provided mortgages for the purchase of his lands in the townlands of Aghakeele, Coselberg, and Lismacmanus, Co. Longford, stemming from his first marriage, to the Rt. Reverend John Kilduff, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Longford. In 1868 he mortgaged 300 acres at Longford to Bagot Blood. The charges on several of the mortgages were re-assigned to his third wife, Margaret, in a marriage settlement dated 1869.

His Bray property consisted of valuable building land at Cock Walk on the Strand Road in Bray, just north of Putland Road, and land and property on the eastern side of Main St, from the junction of Novara Avenue to the present Town Hall. The land at Cock Walk with the house, garden, cabins and path to the sea upon it, had been previously let by the Earl of Meath to Thomas Ellingsworth in 1696, and was acquired by Hannah Christie from John Chambre Brabazon, the 11th Earl, in 1850. In 1855, as executor for Mrs Christie's estate, Rev. King sold the land at Cock Walk, amounting to seventeen acres Irish plantation measure, to John Quin of the well-known hotel in Bray. In 1861 the lease was transferred to Judge Philip Cecil Crampton of Saint Valerie, Bray, not long before the latter's death.

The land on the eastern side of Main Street owned by Rev. King consisted mainly of several smallholdings, mostly with small houses or cabins on them, previously known as Lacy's holding, Dalton's paddock and Kearns's field, along with several premises belonging to Thomas Proctor, a farmer in Bray. Proctor had acquired the property from Boulter Grierson of the City of Dublin in 1770. Also included were a house and paddock formerly in the occupation of Mr William Critchley, a coach and cab owner; and a house on about half an acre purchased by Rev. King from Edward Vernon of Wilton Place, Dublin, in 1858. In total, the Rev. King owned about two dozen houses or cabins at the northern end of Main St. in 1867, including Rose Cottage (see detail 1870 map), a picturesque thatched cottage which survived until the 1940's.

Rev. King was a brother-in-law of the Rev. Robert Humphreys, of Midleton, Co. Cork, and later Dean of Killaloe, who in 1854 married Sophia Anne, fourth daughter of Robert and

Hannah Christie, at Bray Church (St. Paul's). The Rev. Humphreys also acquired several properties in this area, including a public house on Main St. and several other houses or cabins which were mostly in poor condition. In 1863 the Rev. King and Rev. Humphreys were among those who received judgements against William Critchley, then an insolvent and lodged in Wicklow Gaol, in respect of mortgages attached to a cabin and garden owned by him and situated off Main St, Bray.

Rev. King died in July 1873 at No. 3 Loretto Terrace, Bray, at the age of 76, and was buried in the Christie family plot at the Old Connaught graveyard just outside Bray. His widow, Margaret (Maude), lived there for a couple of years and later married William Harrison Peard, of Towermore, Co. Cork, in 1885. Among the better-known members of Rev. King's children is Richard Ashe King, a clergyman and writer, who was born in Ennis in 1839. After giving up his priesthood in the Church of England in the 1880's, he returned to Ireland and became a key figure in the Irish Literary Revival, writing regular columns for the Freeman's Journal. A great grandson, Cecil Harmsworth King, son of a Professor of Oriental Studies at TCD, was the senior director of the Daily Mirror and the founder of the largest publishing houses in the world, was brought up in Clonskeagh and died at Donnybrook, Dublin, in 1974. (Sources :Registry of Deeds; Valuation Records; contemporary newspapers; Google; WikiTree images)