

Heatley Terrace Bray

Heatley Villas, Pearse Road, Bray Commons, Little Bray, Co. Wicklow

A pair of two- storey, two- bay, three-bed semi-detached houses dating from 1898.

Finished in lined and ruled render with gable- ended slated roof and corbelled chimneys with terracotta pots. Flat-headed window and door openings with a plain rectangular fanlight or transom window over the front door. One of the houses is embellished with raised moulded window surrounds picked out in a contrasting colour. The small front gardens are enclosed within smooth round -topped render walls with timber gates and distinctive multi-faceted pyramidal topped gateposts. The houses were built on land which was originally part of Bray Commons that was developed following the enactment of the Bray Commons Enclosure Act of 1859. The road on which they were built was originally known as the Cross Road (or Middle Cross Road), as it was one of the new roads built to connect what are now known as Upper and Lower Dargle Roads.

Heatley Villas were owned by George Abraham Heatley (1860-1950). From a Church of Ireland family who had been farming in Wicklow from the 1730's or earlier, he was described as a labourer in 1884 when he married Sarah Sherwood from Glanboy, Kilbride, Co Meath, at the parish church at Oldcastle. In the 1901 census he was described as a shepherd and was living with his wife and eight children at a small two-roomed cottage at Old Connaught, Rathmichael, Co. Dublin, located on land which he was renting from Lord Plunket of Old Connaught House. The houses at Heatley Villas were generally rented out and in 1903 he was offering one of the houses to let, described as three-bedroom with gardens and unfurnished, for £22 per annum. In 1908 the tenants of the houses were Thomas Adderly and Jane Yeats. In the 1911 census, (then described as a dairyman), George was recorded as living at Heatley Villas, Cross Road, with his family. The adjoining house was occupied by Frederick Stedman, a professional cricketer employed by Sir Henry Cochrane of Woodbrook, who played for Ireland against South Africa in a tournament of 1912. In addition to the two houses,

George had a yard and shed adjoining them, partly on a site which he had purchased from James McCormick, the coal importer and owner of Boghall Brickworks, in 1904.

George Heatley was active in local politics both as a member of Wicklow County Council and the Bray UDC and behind the scenes as a member of the Orange Order. In 1900 he attended at a meeting in Bray in support of Francis Elrington Ball, the author and antiquarian, an independent Unionist candidate for South Dublin who claimed that the official candidate Sir Horace Plunkett was too soft on Home Rule. He put his name forward as an independent Unionist candidate in the 1906 Little Bray local elections, the other candidates being Patrick J Dunne (owner of the Dargle Tavern) and Stanislaus McConry of Millview Terrace. In the event Heatley and McConry both withdrew their candidatures and Dunne was elected unopposed. When his son George Henry Heatley, died unexpected aged 33 in 1918, wreathes were sent from the Prince of Wales Masonic Lodge No 222, the Bray Orange Lodge No.1954, and all at St Paul's Herbert Road, and at Somerton, Dargle Road, the homes of uncles of the deceased. In 1916 he was one of the trustees when a new Orange Hall was built at Sunnybank. By 1917 he had an address Verdun House which was located nearby and later became an old folk's centre run by St Vincent de Paul.

George Heatly died in March 1950 at Knocklinn, Ballyman Road, Old Connaught. His death was registered by Louisa E. Sutton, a daughter, of 38 Dublin Road, who was present at death. Following the funeral service at St James's, Crinken, he was buried at Enniskerry churchyard. At a subsequent meeting of the UDC he was described as "a fine gentleman who had always shown great interest in farming and the farming community". One member, Mr Byrne, described him as "an excellent member, honest and sincere, who gave a great deal of his time to public business".

(Photo :Haines estate agents; This post appeared on the Victorian FaceBook page in January 2025)