

Roundwood & District

Historical & Folklore Journal

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Roundwood and District Historical and Folklore Society

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From the Chair

The Society's 12th annual Journal will, I am sure, interest, amuse and educate our readers once again. For the second Journal of the third millennium great credit and thanks are due to all our contributors but especially to our Editor, Dr. Máirtín Mac Siúrtáin. Congratulations to Máirtín on obtaining his PhD during the year. The Society greatly appreciates all contributions from our members, friends and supporters. We will be glad to receive contributions for next year's Journal, which may be sent to the Editor.

This year has been a sad one for the Society as three of our most enthusiastic members died: Annie Taylor, Mike Kenna and Kathleen Donohoe. They all made a great contribution to the Society, regularly attending meetings and outings and, fortunately, all three wrote for the Journal. We will greatly miss their friendship, support and knowledge of the area. They will not be easily replaced but will be affectionately remembered. May they all rest in peace.

The year has been another successful one for the Society. Not only are we producing this Journal but as a contribution to the celebration of the millennium and with support from the National Millennium Committee and Wicklow County Council we are also publishing an edition of the 1838 Ordnance Survey Letters for Wicklow, in collaboration with the Wicklow Archaeological Society. This publication will be available in the Spring and it is hoped to organise a seminar about the letters and the Ordnance Survey during the year.

Our lectures this year included Noel Shields on 'The Irish in Tasmania', Professor Adrian Phillips on 'The Geology of the Locality', Martin Timmons on 'Local Townlands', Gregory Allen on 'The Roundwood Development Group 1964' and Jim Rees on 'The Clearances of the Fitzwilliam Estate'. We had outings to Newtownmountkennedy to learn about the local database and to visit the Ballinahinch standing stone; to Bray, where Mary Davies gave us a fascinating lecture-tour and in September we had our annual outing to Ferns, Craanford and Ballymore, which was much enjoyed by all. The Society had a very pleasant annual dinner in the Roundwood Inn in December.

Our thanks are due to our patrons for their continued support, to Wicklow County Council, to the local shop-keepers who sell our Journal and Christmas card, to the Kavanaghs for the use of their facilities for some of our meetings, to the Roundwood Education and Arts Centre for the use of a room for our monthly meetings and to all who have contributed in any way to our endeavours to stimulate interest in the history and folklore of this beautiful area.

I would like to acknowledge the support, work and help of all the members of the society but especially Mary Ryan, Joe McNally, Syl Lynch, Kathryn Taube, Monica Farrell, Sean Kavanagh, Derek O'Brien, Agatha de Valera Mansfield and Máirtín Mac Siúrtáin.

I hope all our readers will enjoy the 12th Journal. Several people joined the Society during the year and new members are always welcome at the Society's monthly meetings which are held on the last Monday in the month usually in the old National School.

Happy reading,

John Medlycott

*This Journal is dedicated to the memory of
Annie Taylor, Mike Kenna and Kathleen Donohoe.*

Table of Contents

From the Chair	<i>John Medlycott</i>	i
Our Patrons		iv
Appreciation	<i>M.C.T.</i>	1
Mat Hennessy, Jack Lawler and Ben Murray	<i>Kathleen Donohoe</i>	3
Anny Stecker	<i>Gregory Allen</i>	5
A Writer's Wicklow	<i>Jagoda de Valera Mansfield</i>	7
The Question of Doctor Hatch's Fee	<i>James Scannell</i>	13
Dr. Butler and the Jerusalem Pony	<i>Pat O'Brien</i>	16
Laurence Murphey and the Fair Green	<i>Kevin Byrne</i>	17
Laurence Murphey in Kilmainham Gaol	<i>Kevin Byrne</i>	18
Hotels in Roundwood	<i>Pat O'Brien</i>	19
Launch of the 11th Journal	<i>Dominic Ryan</i>	20
Our Mountains	<i>John Fitzgerald</i>	21
President Erskine Childers Remembered	<i>M. Mac Siúrtáin & W. Mullen</i>	22
Wicklow Men Mining in the Yukon	<i>Sean Kavanagh</i>	24
Peter Paul Galligan	<i>Colm J. Galligan</i>	25
Nevill's 1803 Map of Togher and District	<i>Tony Flynn</i>	30
Delia Parnell's Plea	<i>John Jordan</i>	31
My Memories of Moneystown Hall	<i>Sr. Maire O Byrne</i>	32
Field Names on the Barton Estate	<i>Larry Smith</i>	34
Woodbrook, Roundwood	<i>Máirtín Mac Siúrtáin</i>	37
Millennium Pilgrimage 2000	<i>M. Mac Siúrtáin & W. Mullen</i>	38
Moneystown Social Club	<i>Kevin Byrne</i>	40
Moneystown Drama Class 1942-48	<i>Mauny Timmons</i>	42
Avonmore House	<i>John Medlycott</i>	43
Introduction of Exotic Trees to Roundwood	<i>Elinor Medlycott</i>	45
Peter Layless and Sean Purser	<i>John Medlycott</i>	47
The Ballyduff Forge	<i>Sean Purser</i>	48
Pilgrimage to Lourdes 1997	<i>Anonymous</i>	50
Three Children	<i>Gene T. Curley</i>	51
Enjoying Coolattin's Oak Woodlands	<i>The Roundwood Hill Walkers</i>	52
The Blizzard of Tuesday 27.2.2001	<i>Máirtín Mac Siúrtáin</i>	53
When You Die	<i>Gene T Curley</i>	56

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Appreciation

Since the publication of our last Journal the Society has been devastated by the loss of three of its founder members; Annie Taylor, Mike Kenna and Kathleen Donohoe. All three attended the first meetings of the fledgling Society and since that time their commitment to its aims and activities was total. For some 12 years they were most regular attenders at meetings, lectures, field trips, exhibitions and social events.

When we began collecting material for inclusion in the first ever edition of this Journal it was no surprise to receive articles from established writers such as Leo Bowes, Shelia Holt and Frank McGillick, but so anxious were Annie and Mike to see the project succeed, which at that time was not at all assured, that they 'went back to school' and surprisingly submitted two essays on local history. As a result I decided to give Annie's article on Derralossary Church pride of place and it became the first article ever published in this Journal, with Mike's essay on St. Luin's Well being the second.

One lasting recollection of Annie occurred after the death of the former Roundwood Post-Mistress, Annie Gilbert, when the Old Post Office was put up for sale. On noticing that the house was being cleared out before the sale, Annie immediately went to work on her own initiative and rescued whatever she could, literally as the skip was being filled. Among the papers retrieved by her at the last moment was a 50 year old typed manuscript containing a collection of poems by W. J. Duffy which she immediately donated to the Society's Archive.

As a very committed 'backbencher' Mike was always at hand to help in whatever way he could. His hospitality knew no bounds and one unforgettable evening was spent in his home after a field trip to the Giant's Grave and St. Luin's Well. Another enduring memory occurred during a field trip to the top of Ballinacor overlooking Derralossary, about three years ago. The able bodied members set out to walk up the hill from Máirtín Mac Siúrtáin's house in Tomdarragh but for Annie Taylor the climb up was impractical. As usual Mike came to the rescue and with Annie on board he slowly manoeuvred his four wheel drive over the rough terrain enabling Annie to reach the summit and partake fully in a marvellous discussion on all the items of historical interest that could be surveyed from there on a beautiful summer evening. It is somewhat fitting therefore that Mike now rest underneath that same hill, in Roundwood Cemetery.

Kathleen Donohoe was a member of the well known Murphy Family of Mullinaveigue who down the years figure prominently in all aspects of Local History of the area. Kathleen embraced the Historical Society with great enthusiasm from the outset, and it became a great social outlet for her in her later years. She liked nothing better than regaling the 'new settlers' who had moved to the area and joined the Society, with anecdotes of local history and folklore. When President

McAleese came to Roundwood in 1999 to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of President Childers' death, Kathleen and Annie Taylor were delighted to be among those given the honour of meeting her. She contributed many articles to this Journal over the years and in the days before her death as she lay terminally ill she requested a tape-recorder through which she dictated one final article which we are now privileged to publish posthumously in this Journal. So even in death as she rests 'neat the ancient Round Tower at Glendalough, Kathleen is still exercising an influence on the Society.

To the families of Annie, Mike and Kathleen we express our sincere sympathy and dedicate this publication to their memory. We will surely never see their like again.

M.C.T.

Mat Hennessy, Jack Lawler and Ben Murray

Kathleen Donohoe

In my young days, well, in the 1920s, there was a small old house on the side of the road, up about 100 yards out of the village on Roundwood Bank. And in those days, an old man by the name of Hennessy, Mat Hennessy, lived in it. And he had a nephew living with him, Jack Lawler.

He was a carpenter and most of his carpentry work was for local farmers, making gates and ladders and the odd wheelbarrow. He also had a little blue and white hut in the little field opposite the St. Laurence O'Toole Church gate, which he had opened on Sundays to show some of his work there. And he was a bit of a comic. He had all the children of the village around talking to him; telling them how he was going to throw them parties and he had different ones allocated to pour the tea and hand 'round the cake and so on.

He didn't do a very big business in the carpentry but in his latter years he decided a new way to try and make some money. So he decided on making gates, wooden field gates, and put them up for card games on Sunday night. A lot of the local farmers dropped in to Mat's house on Sunday night for to take part in those games. It was usually three forty-fives for a gate and a shilling a hand and three games. And he and his nephew always at about 11 o'clock "swung the kettle" as he called it, which meant making tea for all the men. Whoever won the three forty-fives was the winner of the gate.

Mat kept a donkey and cart. And he or his nephew always travelled to Glendalough to the local sawmills there for timber and brought it home in the donkey and cart, even big long poles to make ladders. The poles were brought home, and put on a stand just outside the house and sawed in the centre to make a ladder. And holes bored inside to put in the rungs. He did quite well at that and the two of them were quite happy there on their own.

But a funny story is told about this man from Laragh who decided to have a bit of a joke on them one day. And when in the village he went up to Mat and said he "was in a bad way and wanted to get some groceries and had come away without any money and anything even to get himself a drink". So Mat said of course, he "couldn't let a neighbour down, a Laragh man, he couldn't let a Laragh man down, he would have to give him some money to tied him over" So he said the trouble was "he only had cheques, he'd no cash".

So, it was decided then that, the nephew, Jack Lawler, would go and get a cheque cashed down the village. So, Jack asked Uncle Mat "which would he get; a £50 cheque or a bigger one"? So Mat said "Oh a £50 cheque would be big enough". So, Jack Lawler, duly went into the house and came out with this bit of paper in his

hand and walked down towards the village. And after a considerable time he arrived back. "Well Uncle, I am sorry to say that in the whole village of Roundwood I couldn't get the change of a £50 note". So he had to be excused for not giving the neighbour the money.

Many other stories were told, funny stories, about Mat. Mat died and then Jack remained on in the house and after some years another old fellow from around the place, Ben Murray, moved in and lived with Jack Lawler. Jack died and the house fell to Ben. But since Ben died the house has been demolished completely. There is not a trace there. It must have been built into the bank, the bank behind must have been the same height as the roof of the house but now there is not a trace of anything there to show that it was once a house.

Kathleen Donohoe recorded this article onto tape, with the assistance of her daughters, Tessa and Brigid and son John, as she lay in bed in the parlour of her home in Mullinaveigue a month before she died on January 14th 2001. Kathleen is buried in Glendalough along with her lifelong friends Mat Hennessy, Jack Lawler and Ben Murray. May all their souls rest in peace.



Ben Murray's Cottage

Courtesy: Philip Watkins

Anny Stecker

Gregory Allen

A Sudetenlander, and proud of it, Anny Stecker was born a subject of the Austro-Hungarian empire, and became a citizen of Czechoslovakia on the creation of the new state after the Great War. In 1939, when her country was invaded, her status was changed again as an unwilling subject of the greater German Reich. After the Second World War, as a refugee in Paris, she carried papers as a stateless alien, before leaving the war-torn continent to recover her fortune as a naturalised citizen of Venezuela.

With her husband, Rudolph, who predeceased her, she read Heinrich Boll's vision of a romantic Ireland, "so quiet that the heart stood still". With joyful expectation, the Steckers recrossed two oceans, to settle in the land of their heart's desire.

As Garda sergeant in Roundwood, Co. Wicklow, forty years ago, I interviewed the Steckers on their arrival from South America.

Born in Marienbad close on ninety years ago with collateral Jewish blood in her ancestry, Anny sought the relative anonymity of Gablonz, where she married Rudolph and set up in business as exporters in the costume jewellery industry.

Separated when Rudolph was conscripted into the German army, they made contingency plans to escape to the West at the end of the war. Their worst fears were realised as the Russians advanced to occupy Gablonz under the Potsdam Agreement.

All their savings having been lost, Anny now abandoned house and home. As she was leaving, throwing some small keepsakes into a haversack, she turned back to take down an ancient crucifix. As a refugee, carrying the crucifix on her back, the family heirloom became for the remainder of her life a metaphor for suffering humanity.

With no knowledge of Rudolph's whereabouts the young woman, dressed as a man, joined the floodtide of refugees. Looking out for each other, they were reunited in Paris.

As Anny admitted, they were more fortunate than many of their neighbours, having concealed in a small bag around her neck some jewellery from their stock-in-trade. With her generous nature, she was bound to have shared their little wealth; but there was never a word of this. The last piece had been cashed by the time they reached Paris. But with the same foresight, Anny had dispatched a crate of similar jewellery to a trusted client in the French capital. The cache provided the means of survival until they were ready to travel on to their planned destination. With the last diamond ring they bought their fares, and arrived in Venezuela penniless.

In Caracas, they found employment in the hotel business, Anny as a cook. Later, as agents for Kodak, they were well placed to accept Heinrich Boll's invitation to visit Ireland where, forty years ago, time was still "on holiday."

Captivated, the Steckers decided to stay, in due course changing their passports to become naturalised Irish citizens. As sheep farmers in Knockraheen, overlooking the Vartry reservoir, they found peace at last; later, they turned to poultry rearing.

Reading Irish history as a self-imposed qualification for citizenship, the Sudetenlander in Anny was indignant at the injustices visited by 19th century landlords on tenants with no fixity of tenure. When it was time to retire, she felt duty-bound to ensure that the farm was returned to native Irish ownership.

In her childless widowhood, she lived out her declining years serenely in the comfortable old farmhouse. A very private soul, the epitome of gracious good manners, she gazed on the world with a tolerance tempered by adversity. She spoke with exemplary charity of old enemies; in her neighbourly relations, she won the affection of the Roundwood community.

Calling at Knockraheen at the turn of the new century, longing to record her wartime odyssey, I asked forgiveness for stirring painful memories. I am glad that, with so little time left, I found her with the heart to talk about her experiences.

Anny Stecker lies with her beloved Rudolph beneath an Irish sky. From the high ground of the new Roundwood cemetery, on the back road to Derralossary, you can see across the quiet Avonmore valley to the slope of Scarr mountain where, in the mind's ear, you can hear the larks ascending in their heaven.

Epilogue

It was Anny's wish that on her death the crucifix should come into my possession. I was concerned that the significance of the crucifix as a relic of the suffering of refugees should survive her passing. Having no knowledge of what arrangements she may have made, I called at her old home, but found no sign of life. Back at her graveside, I expressed my anxiety.

Returning to the city after dark, on a sudden impulse, I turned off again for Knockraheen. Passing the house, I saw the lights of a car in the avenue, and met the new occupant, Mrs Evelyn Merrigan, who had had read my *Appreciation of Anny* in *The Irish Times* of 22.8.2000. All Mrs Stecker's personal belongings had been removed by the executor, overlooking the crucifix. There and then, she was happy to give it to me. In accordance with my promise to Anny, it is now in the possession of Father Sean Smith P.P., Roundwood.

Anny Stecker died on July 30th 2000. May she rest in peace.

A Writer's Wicklow

Jagoda de Valera Mansfield

The vivid beauty of County Wicklow has provided inspiration for many of the writers who were born here, or sojourned here, or sought refuge here and a safe haven, or even just passed briefly through. The following essay can, of course, only provide a personal selection of the many and varied perspectives afforded to those writers who, once having experienced The Garden of Ireland, have been unable ever after to forget.

What is dark in me illumine...

We should first of all return to the 6th century, to St Kevin, hermit, founder of monasteries, and writer of poetry and prose - including a rule for monks written in Irish verse. St Kevin, fleeing from a decaying civilisation and the attentions of Kathleen, a young female admirer, fetched up at last at Glendalough, desiring solitude. This solitude was interrupted, though not rudely, by the arrival of the like-minded, following in his footsteps, and thus a centre for learning and contemplation was founded near the eastern shore of the Upper Lake. The monks who graduated from St Kevin's university then took their learning, and their manuscripts, to illuminate the Dark Ages of Europe - Scotus, the Latin word for Irishman, became a synonym for 'scholar'. St Kevin's own patience and love are vividly commemorated in 'St Kevin and the Blackbird', by Seamus Heaney:

And then there was St Kevin and the blackbird.
The saint is kneeling, arms stretched out, inside
His cell, but the cell is narrow, so

One turned-up palm is out the window, stiff
As a cross beam, when a blackbird lands
And lays in it and settles down to rest.

Kevin feels the warm eggs, the small breasts, the tucked
Neat head and claws, and, finding himself linked
Into the network of eternal life,

Is moved to pity: now he must hold his hand
like a branch out into the sun and rain for weeks
Until the young are hatched and fledged and flown...

Seamus Heaney, St Kevin and the Blackbird

From Aungier Street to Avoca . . .

Thomas Moore (1779-1852), the national lyricist of Ireland, was a musician as well as Ireland's best-selling poet of the nineteenth century. Born in Aungier Street in Dublin, he was eventually to reside in a cottage in the Vale of Avoca, where he wrote his widely-loved lyric, *The Meeting of the Waters*, one of his *Irish Melodies*, based on the airs collected by Edward Bunting. The Vale of Avoca is a popular tourist attraction to this day, and the tourists from far-flung places who come to visit (including, for example none other than Walt Disney!) must surely agree with Moore's own assessment of his 'back garden':

There is not in this wide world a valley so sweet
As that vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet
Oh! the last rays of feeling and life must depart,
Ere the bloom of that valley shall fade from my heart . . .

The 'vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet', the meeting-place of the waters of the Avonbeg and the Avonmore, still exists to this day.

Moore's equally-popular *The Last Rose of Summer* lives on as a favourite with women singers, and even Beethoven himself made a setting of the air, while Friedrich von Flotow incorporated the melody in his easy-flowing opera, *Martha*. And, last but not least, Moore wrote the verses of my own favourite lyric:

At the mid hour of night, when stars are weeping, I fly
To the lone vale we loved, when life shone warm in thine eye;
And I think oft, if spirits can steal from the regions of air
To visit past scenes of delight, thou wilt come to me there,
And tell me our love is remembered even in the sky . . .

What Elizabeth Saw . . .

One hundred and fifty years ago, Elizabeth Smith (1797-1885), the Edinburgh-born wife of a west Wicklow landlord, kept a daily record of household, local, and national events, written at Baltyboys House, near Blessington, now almost surrounded by the waters of the Pollaphuca Reservoir. Her *'The Wicklow World of Elizabeth Smith 1840-1850'* covers both the pre-Famine years and the Famine itself. Indeed, in the entries for the pre-Famine years, Elizabeth Smith proves herself to be prescient in foreseeing some of the causes and horrific consequences of the famine that was to come, including the over-dependence of the poor upon the potato crop, and that the landlords would dispense with expendable workers, who would then

join those already starving. In general, she gives a useful picture of life at that time, especially for the better-off, but also for the poor, where their lives intersected with the lives of the wealthy. For example, she gives a description of a picnic on Blackmore Hill in May, 1846, when she and her friends '...enjoyed the panorama, drank tea, danced the polka, and passed a merry evening . . .'

Yet the entry ends thus ' . . . The saddest sight of the day was when the doctor called me to look at a little ragged, frightened boy, the herd of some cattle grazing on these uplands, who had collected on a stone the shakings-out of the tablecloth, and who was piling-up crusts of bread with one hand and holding bare bones to his mouth with the other - the impersonation of famine. Need I say that we added more substantial morsels to his store - enough, too, for the morrow, and the doctor slipt sixpence into the poor thin hand for milk hereafter . . .'

A Riot of Waterfalls . . .

John Millington Synge (1871-1909) must be regarded as pre-eminent amongst the writers and commentators who have lived in Wicklow, or used the county as their inspiration, if only because so much of his work is based therein. The *Shadow of the Glen* for example, Synge's play about marriage Wicklow-style, offers the following stage-direction: 'The last cottage at the head of a long glen in County Wicklow. Cottage kitchen; turf fire on the right...' Synge said of this play, that, '...When I was writing *In the Shadow of the Glen*, some years ago, I got more aid than learning could have given me from a chink in the floor of the old Wicklow house where I was staying, that let me hear what was being said by the servant girls in the kitchen...' The plot of another famous play, 'The Tinker's Wedding', was based upon actual events told to Synge by a herd, an encounter recorded in the essay 'At a Wicklow Fair'.

Synge came with his parents on many of their summer holidays to Castlekevin, a Georgian house on a hilltop near Annamoe, where the wild glens and desolate places provided him with many of the names which bring a secret music to his plays, poems, and essays: 'Here and there in County Wicklow, there are a number of little known places - places with curiously melodious names, such as Aughavanna, Anamoe, or Lough Nahanagan...' And in his notebook of 1907, Synge writes: 'Glenmacnass - where after a stormy night's rain, the whole valley is filled with a riot of waterfalls...'

From the river to the snotgreen sea . . .

Just as James Joyce (1882-1941) immortalised Dublin in *Ulysses*, so did he similarly make legendary, in *Finnegan's Wake*, the river Liffey, a river which Dubliners call their own, although we in Wicklow know better, given that the river originates in the Garden of Ireland. The Liffey rises high on the heathery slopes of the Wicklow mountains, not far from the Sally Gap, where it first emerges from a peaty black pool. Joyce made the river the heroine of *Finnegan's Wake*, called her Anna Livia Plurabelle, and envisaged her first as a young girl, '...on the spur of the hill in old Kippure, in birdsong and shearingtime...', before becoming woman, flowing stronger and faster to meet at last 'her cold, mad feary father, the sea...'

Of course, this is far from being the sole Joycean connection to County Wicklow. For example, when Joyce was five years old, his family moved to No 1, Martello Terrace, Bray, to a house at the bottom of the Esplanade leading towards Bray Head. In this house was enacted, in December 1891, two months after the death of Parnell, the famous Christmas dinner scene which is recreated in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. It is from Bray rather than Sandycove that Joyce first looked out over 'our great sweet mother...the snotgreen sea', and in *Ulysses*, he writes: 'They halted, looking towards the blunt cape of Bray Head that lay on the water like the snout of a sleeping whale...'. Again in *Ulysses*, in her famous soliloquy, Molly Bloom complains of her husband thus: 'I'd never again in this life get into a boat with him after him at Bray telling the boatman that he knew how to row...'

Did I mention that...

County Wicklow was the scene of a seminal event in the life of the young Laurence Sterne (1713-1768), born in Clonmel, Co Tipperary, and whose father, an army ensign, was based in Wicklow with his regiment. It was in 1720 that, while visiting Annamoe, the young Sterne fell head-first into the mill-race, was carried through the water, and yet, miraculously, came out at the other end uninjured, and went on to provide English Literature with *Tristram Shandy*, a masterpiece which becomes more modern as each day passes. After such an disorientating knock on the head, it's no wonder Sterne had so much trouble in his novel with tricky questions about Time - although this is a theory for which, as yet, I have no evidence whatsoever.

Two of England's literary greats both have perambulatory connections with County Wicklow. William M. Thackeray (1811-1863), author of *Vanity Fair*, wrote, in his *The Irish Sketch Book*, that '...as for the young ladies of Roundwood, I am bound to say that no young person in Baker Street could be more genteel...' Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), author of the *Waverly* novels, attended the sylvan open-

air theatre at Kilruddery, and also found time to favourably record a short sojourn in Bray. Further, in a letter to Maria Edgeworth, he writes: 'I have just returned from Wicklow delighted with all I have seen...The mere wood water and wildness...are intermingled with an appearance of fertility which never accompanies them in our land and with a brilliancy of verdure which justifies your favourite epithet of the green Isle...'

Two Irish nationalist of varying degrees of public renown, but both with literary connections to Wicklow, are Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-1891) and William J. Duffy. Although not primarily renowned as a writer, Parnell, the great Irish leader, President of the Irish Land League, who was born at Avondale, and lived at Avondale House near the village of Rathdrum, was himself the subject of many poems, songs and ballads, earning for himself such avian epithets as The Blackbird of Avondale, and Avondale's Proud Eagle. Less well-known but equally fervent, William J. Duffy was postman, soldier, poet, GAA luminary, local correspondent, and prolific writer of ballads, for whom Roundwood was always the priority Number One:

The cities rush and bustle may to other minds appeal
But here contented I will stay, come sorrow, joy or weal.

Always highly-thought of is *The Way that I Went*, by Robert Praeger (1865-1935), the celebrated botanist, born in Holywood, County Down, the son of William Praeger of The Hague, himself a botanist and geologist. Robert Praeger was inspired both by the scenic charms and the archaeological fascination of Wicklow's valleys and lakes. He maintained that the proper way to see Wicklow is to walk, always to walk, for it needed leisure and study to understand and enjoy it. According to Praeger, 'the lakes of Wicklow, like most Irish waters, possess each...a gigantic water-snake with a horse's head, or water-horse with a snake's body, ever present though seldom seen, but even still vividly alive in legend...' If this Irish version of the Loch Ness monster did exist, then it's just as well for the safety and well-being of Mr Praeger that he preferred to concentrate on the flora rather than the fauna.

The presence of Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) in the seaside town of Bray, staying as a child with his brother Willie and his sister Isolda at the Esplanade Terrace which was built by his father, is celebrated each year with a summer school. And staying with Bray, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) sojourned there too, at Killarney Road, not to create yet another particularly impenetrable mystery for Holmes and Watson to investigate, but to collect and collate various photographic and literary materials for his *The Coming of the Fairies*, a work which reflected the interest in spiritualism and the occult which was to preoccupy much of Conan Doyle's later life. And much of acclaimed writer/director Neil Jordan's work, whether in the novel form, as short story, or as film screenplay, harks back to his own

childhood and adolescence hard by the seafront at Bray.

Robert Erskine Childers (1870-1922), father of president-to-be Erskine Childers, spent most of his time in Glendalough House until his marriage in 1904, where he wrote *The Riddle of the Sands*. This classic thriller concerns itself with a fictional account of German preparations to invade England, based on Childers' experiences on sailing holidays in the Baltic. This tradition of thriller-writing in Wicklow, perhaps originated with Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, who wrote his renowned novel of suspense, *Uncle Silas*, whilst staying in Bray. And the tradition has continued all the way up to the nineteen-seventies, when some mysterious and suspenseful edge to the Wicklow air attracted both Frederick Forsyth (*The Day of the Jackal*) and Alistair MacLean (*Where Eagles Dare* and *The Guns of Navarone*) to the county.

Nowadays, one can't throw a sod of turf without hitting some creative type or other walking the lanes and roads of Wicklow in search of the next good idea - Clare Boylan, Wesley Burrows, Eamonn de Buitlear, James Plunkett, Paulo Tullio, Thomas Kinsella, Bernard Farrell, Sebastian Barry, and all the rest...

Aiming for Wicklow . . .

Last word must go to our Nobel laureate, Seamus Heaney, for whom Wicklow has provided much solitude and source-material, and who wrote much of his collection *Field Work* in Glanmore, near Ashford, where he saved hugely on telephone-bills by just getting rid of the instrument. Heaney's work reminds those of us who live in the Garden of Ireland of our blessedness in being surrounded by so much natural astonishment, a land and people and water and sky which have so often provided shelter for all those in need of re-invention:

Dogger, Rockall, Malin, Irish Sea:
Green, swift upsurges, North Atlantic flux
Conjured by that strong gale-warning voice,
Collapse into a sibilant penumbra.
Midnight and closedown. Sirens of the tundra,
Of eel-road, seal-road, keel-road, whale-road, raise
Their wind-compounded keen behind the baize
And drive the trawlers to the lee of Wicklow...

Seamus Heaney, Glanmore Sonnets

The Question of Doctor Hatch's Fee

James Scannell

170 years ago the medical service available to people living in the Roundwood and Glendalough areas was very sparse and was funded mainly through the generosity of the gentry and landowners who contributed to the operation and maintenance of dispensaries which had been set up under an act of 1805 under which local people could receive treatment from medical practitioners. There was no uniformity in the system used throughout Ireland with the result that the level and quality of the medical services available varied from district to district. Dispensary doctors only visited those patients who were near to the dispensaries that they were attached to and even then most dispensaries were poorly equipped for the treatment of patients. Prior to the passage of the Medical Charities Act, 1851, people could only seek medical help in workhouse hospitals, county infirmaries and as out patients at voluntary dispensaries as mentioned above.

Under the 1851 legislation, Ireland was divided into dispensary districts, each with a qualified medical officer whose services were paid out of the poor law rate. Later from 1867 onwards the government paid half the salary of the dispensary doctor and met the costs of a midwife, if appointed, and medicines dispensed. Under the Poor Law Amendment Act, 1862, the restriction on workhouse infirmaries treating only the destitute sick was removed and these infirmaries were then opened to the sick generally. This legislation legalized the practice since the Famine of treating ill persons in Poor Law Union workhouse infirmaries. The dispensary service in each district was administered by a committee consisting of the Poor Law Guardians and ratepayers selected by the committee on a yearly basis.

Roundwood and Glendalough, were all part of the 12 Division Rathdrum Poor Law Union which also included Wicklow, Newcastle, Arklow, Killiskey, Kilbride, Dunganstown, Rathdrum, Glenealy, Aughrim, and Castlemacadam, established on October 30th 1839 with its workhouse in Rathdrum, which opened March 8th 1842 on the site of the modern day St. Colman's Hospital. Administration of the dispensary system in the areas covered by this Poor Law Union lay in the hands of the Rathdrum Board of Guardians.

The following matter surfaced at their Tuesday January 20th 1863 meeting chaired by Michael Byrne at which the attendance included Mr. D.J. Henry, Mr. M. Jones, Mr. J. Hunter and Mr. Sylvester Burke as well as a number of officials. In the course of the meeting Dr. Hatch of the Annamoe Dispensary said that he wanted to bring a matter before the Board in order to receive their opinion on it. He went on to state that sometime previously a man came to the Churches and asked if he would attend his wife who lived up in the mountains. The man stated that he was the head-keeper for Mr. Booth of Laragh and when I enquired if he had a note, he said he had

not. Dr. Hatch then said that he considered that such a man ought to be able to pay a fee and since that conversation had obtained a ticket from Mr. Murphy of Laragh. Dr. Hatch alleged that Mr. Booth found that he could not conscientiously and honestly give the ticket himself and got someone else to issue it. Dr. Hatch then posed the question - was he bound to attend in such cases?

Mr. Henry was unhappy about what had been said and stated that Dr. Hatch had made a statement against a member of the Board which ought not to have been made. He went on to say that Dr. Hatch had alleged that Mr. Booth could not conscientiously write such a note and that this should not be allowed. The doctor was bound to attend on any notice handed to him and if the parties were able to pay, then the doctor could afterwards process them for his fee. Mr. Henry added that the doctor when going to ask an opinion could do it without bringing a fee. The Board agreed with the comments made by Mr. Henry and in reply to a question from them, Dr. Hatch indicated that he had not yet attended the woman. The Board then went on to deal with other routine business and then adjourned until their next meeting which took place the following week.

Present at the meeting was a correspondent from 'The Wicklow Newsletter' which was published weekly and in his report of the meeting included the allegations made by Dr. Hatch about Mr. Booth. When Mr. Booth read the account of the meeting at which he had not been present in this newspaper at the weekend, he was most annoyed. As he was not in a position for business reasons to attend the Tuesday January 27th 1863 meeting, he sent a letter outlining his version of events to Mr. Frank Drumm, Chairman of the Rathdrum Board of Guardians in the certain knowledge that it would be read in 'Correspondence' by the Clerk at this meeting and also knowing that the correspondent from the 'The Wicklow Newsletter' would be present and therefore include it in his next report which would be subsequently published in the following week's newspaper. The Rathdown Guardian Board like most Poor Law Guardian Boards had a large number of members, 57, and it was not unusual for members not to attend board meetings if they had business elsewhere at the same time.

The Tuesday January 27th 1863 meeting of the Rathdrum Board of Guardians was chaired by Mr. Sylvester Burke with the attendance including Mr. George Manning, Mr. John Acton and Mr. A. Valentine.

In the 'Correspondence' section of the meeting the Clerk read the following letter from Mr. G. J. Booth which read as follows:

"Sir,

My attention has been drawn to a report of the last meeting of the (Rathdrum) Board of Guardians which appeared in the Wicklow Newsletter of last Saturday in which Dr. Hatch had the impertinence to state that I had got another to do that which I could not conscientiously and honestly do myself. This statement is utterly false and I should have attended the meeting tomorrow to say so but that I have occasion

to go to Dublin tomorrow so I shall be obliged if you would let the meeting know the facts of the case which are as follows -

My steward came to me one day some time ago and told me that the wife of Thomas Richmond, Mr. Hugo's new gamekeeper, was expecting to be confined in a short time and asked how she was to be attended and I said that I suppose that Dr. Hatch was bound to attend her but that he better inquire and if it was the case to get her a ticket. I did not know whom Dr. Hatch was bound to attend and I have never been furnished with any tickets and consequently had never signed any. My steward thereupon went to Mr. Murphy of Annamoe Mills and on his assurance that Dr. Hatch was bound to attend the wife of the gamekeeper, got the ticket and told Richmond he had better go and see the doctor and tell him that his services would shortly be required.

I cannot help adding that from what has come under my knowledge I am convinced that in some cases Dr. Hatch extorts what he calls fees from persons who have no rights to pay him, by refusing to attend in cases of sudden illness (in the night for instance) and when there is no time to get a ticket unless the messenger beforehand promises to pay whatever he demands, and I shall be glad to produce my cases if by doing so I can see any chance of procuring for the District, a more humane and competent practitioner.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant.

George Booth."

The board members present made some observations on the contents of Mr. Booth's letter and also on the conduct of Dr. Hatch after which the matter was allowed to drop and no further action was taken on this occasion.

140 years later one wonders if there was something going on behind the scenes between these two men as both made allegations about the other and certainly Mr. Booth did not hold Dr. Hatch in high esteem according to the closing lines of his letter. I shall research the matter further and if anything relevant surfaces, I will submit my findings to the Editor for publication in a future journal of the Society.

Dr. Butler and the Jerusalem Pony

Pat O'Brien

It was in the mid '30s that I began serving Mass in the church of St. Laurence O'Toole in the village of Roundwood. Dr. Butler used to give the children who served his Mass a "kid's eye" or thru' penny piece. Most parishes at that time had a parish priest and a curate. Fr. Butler or as he preferred to be called Dr. Butler was the parish priest and Fr. Geraty was the curate.

Dr. Butler resided in Roundwood House which used to have a gate lodge. Mr John Keenan is the present owner of Roundwood House, and was also the owner of the Coach House, which is next door.

Dr. Butler's only mode of transport was a pony and rubber wheeled trap, which was driven by his workman, a Corkman, Dan Crowley. Dan would drive him every morning to say 8.30 a.m. Mass, wait for him and then drive him home again.

St. Laurence O'Toole church was evidently having a serious problem with dampness at the time, and as money was in short supply, Dr. Butler came up with the suggestion of starting a collection to do the necessary repairs. One morning from the pulpit he asked for a subscription from the better off people, actually he suggested that it should be a pleasant surprise to start with.

Amongst the many pleasant surprises was that of a donkey, or as ordinary people would call it, an ass. Dr. Butler preferred to refer to the donkey as his Jerusalem Pony. At a local parish meeting it was agreed to raffle the Jerusalem Pony and the tickets were to be printed at 2 pence each.

The fair days at the time were held on the main street through the village. Can you imagine the condition of the roadway and footpaths, with cattle and sheep standing in one position all day long? Anyway, they decorated the Jerusalem Pony with all sorts of colours etc. and we, the senior pupils, would parade him up and down the street all day selling tickets at 2d each. Of course, that was only one day a month.

This went on for what seemed years, but alas the Jerusalem Pony wasn't ever raffled, and as far as I remember, he died of old age.

Laurence Murphey and the Fair Green

Kevin Byrne

Wicklow County Council was set up under the Local Government (Ireland) Act 1898 and also constituted were subsidiary councils called Rural District Councils.

In 1914 in an attempt to abolish the 'Old and Harmful Toll Rights' the Rathdrum Rural District Council, under which Roundwood came, decided to take the Fair Green in Roundwood under its care. The Local Government Board vetoed their decision stating that only Urban District councils had such power. In 1925 the Rathdrum Rural District Council in common with all District Councils all over Ireland were abolished. Their successor, the County Board of Health, again attempted to purchase the toll rights and Fair Green, which is situated where the new St. Laurence O'Toole national school now stands.

The following is based on a letter, read on November 9th 1926, from Mr. Laurence Murphey, Hon. Secretary Toghher Agricultural and Industrial Committee, in reply to a letter of the Board.

In the letter Mr. Murphey stated that the Fair toll rights of Roundwood had been acquired by lease of 11th June 1743, made between the Hon. John Temple and Hon. Elizabeth Temple of one part and Isaac Ambrose on the other part. By a Free Farm Grant of 4th May, 1888, the forgoing lease was converted to a Free Grant forever.

The 1926 tolls charged were: sheep, 1 penny each, large cattle, 3 pennies each, small cattle, 2 pennies each, cars or carts, 4 pennies each. The effect of the tolls was most injurious to the fairs.

The owners of the toll rights in 1926 were the Toghher Agricultural Committee and the compensation they would require for extinguishing the said tolls and vesting the Fair Green in the Local Authority was £150. It was not intended to establish new fairs. It was the purpose of the Committee to leave the existing fairs free of tolls. Mr. Murphey recommended the appointment of a caretaker at the nominal figure of £1 per year.

Order: A copy of Mr. Murphey's letter was to be sent to Local Government Department. The Toghher Agricultural and Industrial Committee were to be asked to send a deputation to the next meeting of the Board.

Finally on October 25th 1927 the matter was partially resolved when the Local Government Board vested the Board with Urban powers allowing them to purchase the Toll rights only for £125.

Laurence Murphey in Kilmainham Gaol

Kevin Byrne

Mr. Laurence Murphey of Roundwood was a Relieving Officer for the Rathdrum Poor Law Union. He was imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol in 1921 from which he wrote the following letter to the Rathdrum Rural District Council.

Meeting of the Rathdrum Rural District Council. 4th February 1921.

As you may have observed from the Press I am sentenced to a term of imprisonment. I beg to ask the Council and Guardians for leave of absence from duty as this is not voluntary nor through my fault.

Proposed by Mr. Butler and seconded by James Byrne that Laurence Murphey Relieving Officer be granted leave of absence for a period of his term of imprisonment and that Miss. A.M. Byrne be appointed to perform his duties until 31st March 1921.

Passed unanimously.

Hotels in Roundwood

Pat O'Brien

Here are advertisements for the two hotels in Roundwood
around the year 1916.

Keenan's Royal Hotel

ROUNDWOOD, CO. WICKLOW

Delightfully situated within a few minutes walk of the Vartry Reservoir,
and a convenient centre for visiting the

DEVIL'S GLEN, GLENDALOUGH, LUGGALA, LOUGH DAN ETC.

EXCELLENT TROUT FISHING. CHARGES EXCEEDINGLY MODERATE.
AND EVERYTHING UP-TO-DATE.

M. KEENAN, PROPRIETOR

Prince of Wales Hotel, Roundwood

ESTABLISHED 1780.

The above Hotel is situated in the centre of the Beauties of Wicklow,
a short distance of

LOUGH TAY, LOUGH DAN, DEVIL'S GLEN, GLENDALOUGH & WATER WORKS.

Fishing and shooting free. Headquarters for C.T.C.

BOATS CAN BE HAD ON LAKE BY ARRANGEMENT.

W. MURPHY, PROPRIETOR

Launch of the 11th Journal

Dominic Ryan

Chairman of the Childers Commemoration Committee

22nd April 2000

Mr. Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very honoured to be invited to launch the 11th Annual Journal and I would like to congratulate you on providing another gem.

I have had the pleasure of attending some of your previous launches when you have had some very eloquent speakers. I hope you are not expecting anything of that standard this evening. I am much happier working in the background than I am at public speaking.

I have a very personal interest in much of the contents of this Journal as I see you have included details and addresses delivered at the 25th anniversary commemoration of the death of President Erskine Childers which took place last November.

This was a memorable occasion for me and of course it was much more pleasurable for Mrs. Rita Childers and the extended Childers family, who very much appreciated the tributes paid to the late President by the people of the area which he loved so well.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the members of the Roundwood Historical Society who played a major role in organizing that special commemoration. The Symposium on the Barton and Childers Families which followed in the National School greatly enhanced the occasion.

Roundwood Historical Society is unique in that you place a lot of emphasis on Folklore. This is commendable as I feel that History will look after itself "so to speak". There will always be History students and historians carrying out research but many of our customs from the past will be lost if they are not recorded.

Your feature on local families in this Journal is most interesting and I hope it is something you will continue to develop in the future.

Historical Societies are doing a magnificent job in creating a greater interest in local and national history and folklore and we are lucky that we have societies in every major town and village in Co. Wicklow.

I feel that the time has come to establish a County Wicklow Historical Committee. This could be most beneficial for coordinating events and sharing information which I believe would help to give a broader historical profile to County Wicklow.

I would like to congratulate all your contributors and your Editor for a splendid job of putting it all together. I want to thank your Chairman, John Medlycott, for his kind introduction.

The Roundwood Historical Society seem to have the knack of getting very eminent Chairmen. I have always admired the commitment and enthusiasm of John's predecessor, Mr. Sean Kavanagh, and I am very pleased to see Sean here tonight.

May I wish your Society continued success and thank you for having me.

Our Mountains

John Fitzgerald

It is perhaps the sense of wilderness and freedom
which is the single most important aspect of our mountains.

They are rugged and still remote,
places where one has to rely on one's own judgements and abilities,
and where the noises, smells and wastes
of industrial society have not yet penetrated.

There one can feel the rush of the cold air,
taste pure clear water,
smell the aromas of bog and heather,
hear waterfalls in the valley far below,
see the swift movement of incomparable cloudscapes,
and walk for a whole day without meeting one other person.

In many, many ways they are our last and only wilderness.

President Erskine Childers Remembered



26th Anniversary of the death of President Erskine Childers

Derralossary - November 2000



Courtesy: M. Mac Siúrtáin and W. Mullen

Do you know anything about these Wicklow Men Mining in the Yukon?



Wicklow Men Mining in the Yukon. Courtesy: Sean Kavanagh

All the men above were from Wicklow Town or Rathdrum. The fourth man on the left with the beard, cap and shovel is Captain Robert Conway Doyle. His grandmother was a Hollingsworth, New Street, Wicklow Town. Do you know anything about these Wicklow Men Mining in the Yukon? Please let us know if you do.

Peter Paul Galligan

Colm J. Galligan

This letter is one of twelve, and the only letter which was not written in prison. These 12 remarkable letters written by my father, Commandant P. P. Galligan, were addressed primarily to his brother, Fr. Eugene Galligan, in Australia. Their present existence is no doubt due to the fact that he kept them in one lot together and in a safe place.

In the late fifties my father and mother visited Fr. Eugene in Australia and during that visit he died. So the letters were found among his belongings and brought back to Ireland and given to my sister, Maureen.

Recently a young nephew of mine in researching the history of his grandfather was given sight of the letters and so for the first time of their existence their contents can be studied by all.

*Drumlaragh
Ballinagh*

November 29th 1917

Dear Brother,

I am just after getting your letter of the 6th September and I cannot tell you how glad I was to get it. Now before I start, I think I told you in my first letter that the Government pay special attention to all my letters so you see it keeps me from saying all I would like to say and if I wrote to you a full account of the rebellion, it would perhaps be used against me or others as evidence at a later stage, but as you are so anxious for details I will give you a few facts regarding Easter week.

Of the volunteer movement which was responsible for the Rising, you know all about it. During the war we drilled and armed openly, and this after Redmond had tried to break the movement. [The] 17th March 1916 was fixed as a parade day of the Dublin battalions. The efficiency, the equipment, enthusiasm and determination of the volunteers opened the eyes of the Government and from that hour the Government [was] determined to suppress the I.V. but how was the question as we were armed and disciplined.

As time went on the Government and their spies, the "G" men, were making things hot and we knew the hour was coming when we would have either to surrender our arms or fight for them. If we gave them up, we knew too well we were surrendering the last shred of Irish nationality and we knew we had to fight to keep Ireland from becoming an English province. We knew it was Ireland's last chance but we were to wait till an hour when the Government was in a fierce struggle with

Germany and when she would either have to withdraw troops to Ireland or give us all we demanded.

Preparations were made with all haste. The Volunteer's training was gone into in detail and each company was classified, snipers, engineers, red cross armoury etc. and in a few months such efficiency was attained that as yet the British army has not attained.

It cannot be denied that we were in close communication with Germany. Good Friday was not the day as many believe but [the] Saturday before the arrival of the arms ship and why it failed was because she arrived 36 hours before her time. If she had arrived as arranged all would have been well. On Easter Sunday the Volunteer[s] [were] to act as arranged but on Good Friday the arms ship was sunk and many of us saw that its sinking was fatal to the rising, timed for Easter Sunday. But from this on, things travelled fast.

After the news of the sinking of the vessel it was decided to postpone the event but now the Government made the pace. The Privy Council met in the Lord Lieutenant's house in the Park and it was there that they decided to get 300 officers of the Volunteers arrested. A meeting of the Military Council of the Volunteers was called and it was decided to fight for this reason, that Monday would see all the Volunteers officers arrested and a general lifting of arms would take place. For once, the officers were gone, the Volunteers would only be a mob, and it was easier to go and take a position than fight for it. From Easter Sunday it was a race between us and the Government but we got there first even if it was only with a small force.

I came up to Dublin from Enniscorthy on Easter Saturday and remained in town until 3 a.m. on Tuesday, when I left for Wexford with final orders. Being in Dublin during the crisis I was at meetings, some of the facts of which I cannot write here as this letter I am sure will be censored, but all the leaders I knew intimately and I saw P. H. Pearse, W. Pearse, Connolly, Plunkett, and Mac Dermot at the GPO for the last time on Tuesday morning.

I left Dublin by bike as no motor car could be got or spared but was told a motor car would be at Naas. But when I arrived there I found that no county was in arms but Dublin. After, cycling day and night I arrived in Enniscorthy on Wednesday. Here men were ready to fight, but the officer commanding Wicklow, Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny [and] Waterford refused to accept Pearse's orders as Mac Neill was Chief of Staff and would take no orders from Pearse. (Here let me say Mac Neill did what he thought was right and what I myself would have done was I in his position.)

This was the position when I got to Enniscorthy. I immediately called a Conference of the Officers and placed the situation before them and the orders I got. I told them as I then knew that only Dublin was fighting and [I] also said that it was only a matter of time, but all the officers of Wexford decided to fight if it was only for 12 hours as they would not stand by and see their brothers in Dublin fall without striking a blow.

At this Conference our Secret Service Department sent in a report that two troop trains were ready at Wexford awaiting the landing of a troop ship from England. This was the turning point, for the Wexford officers said it would be to the everlasting disgrace of Wexford if they stood by and allowed a train with troops to pass through. All [were] unanimous in fighting.

Mobilising orders were at once dispatched [and] a few hours more spent in the study of maps, etc. We fired the first shot at 5 a.m. on Thursday morning and the republican flag was hoisted at 12 exactly amidst great cheering. I, as Senior Officer, as well as by authority from Pearse took command and was responsible for all things in Enniscorthy till the order for surrender arrived on Sunday morning at 7 a.m.

At that time the English troops were at Wexford town, only 15 miles away. At first we would not take the word of the Officer who brought Pearse's surrender and we immediately sent two Officers to interview Pearse in Dublin. At 12 noon on Monday the Officers all surrendered.

I may say we only mobilised 200 on Thursday and at 12 noon on Sunday we had over 1,000 men and if Pearse had held out for a month and that the South had risen, I say it now nearly two years after the fight, it was hard to know how things would have gone, for at that time England had no artillery in Ireland and for once we met them man to man as man to man we could beat them five to one.

As you may see by reading this that the line from Wexford to Dublin was the principal line [by] which England would move troops and for that reason, as well as others, we held it.

One word before I finish [on] the Rebellion, and [it] is to say that what you heard and read about Casement is English slander and I say that when the history of the Rebellion comes to be written, no man shall shine brighter than Roger Casement next to P. H. Pearse. I love him for I know the terrible sacrifice [he made] to prove his love to Ireland. It was from Pentoville Prison, where he was hanged, we were released and I had the honour to kneel over his grave and there I prayed for God to give me the strength to follow his principles to the end. Perhaps this you may not know, that when R. Casement asked to be received into the Catholic Church his request was refused by Cardinal Burke unless he made a statement repudiating all his actions. R. Casement refused this action of [Cardinal] Burke to interfere with his politics. The matter was brought before the Pope to where also [Cardinal] Burke was summoned and he was told that his first duty as Cardinal was to his God and never in future to allow himself to be made a cat's paw of the British Government.

I was court marshalled on May 14th and sentenced to be shot. This was at Richmond Barracks. I was then brought down to Kilmainham Jail and I was locked up in a cell there to await either my execution of my sentence or to have it commuted. In Kilmainham we got only a blanket and had to sleep on the floor and got only dried biscuits and soup to eat.

On Sunday I think it was, the 21st May, an officer came to my cell and said

the OC, the forces in Ireland commuted my sentence to five years. In fact, I was sorry, for I was prepared for death and it would have been a relief then as the whole week of the Rebellion I had not a single hour of sleep and when then on the 21st May after sleeping for a week on cold floors and in your clothes without a change, death was preferable to another week of it.

I, with others, [were] changed to Mountjoy Prison on [the] 22nd and I thought it was heaven to get a bath and a clean shirt. Here things were not too bad, the wardens were hounds but had a soft heart. On May 29th Mac Neill, Pdraig and I and about 10 others were brought to England in a cattle boat. On May 30th at 4 p.m. we were safely lodged in Dartmoor Jail. Here there [were] 57 and 55 more were in Portland. No description of Dartmoor would give you an idea of what it is, the nearest approach is an expression now often read in reference to the war "Hell with the lid off" I wish to say no more about it as it was the worse we had to contend with and enough to drive me mad. It left its stamp in us that time will never efface.

On December 20th I was brought to Lewis where things were made a bit easier for us, but we came to the conclusion that if we went on nice a quietly we would be there forever so we kicked up a row that made us famous all over the world. On June 12th 1917 I was removed to Parkhurst [on] the Isle of Wight as I was a bad hospital case and on June 17th came the glorious news of our release.

Back to Ireland to continue the work we left unfinished, back to Ireland to give another hand in the rising of the Republican flag and when it goes up again it will never come down and I may say as a final word, when that day comes there will be no prison, no jail "Freedom or Death". This is just a few incidents in our fight and some day, please God, around the fire in the far distant land of Australia, I will give you more details which I cannot write. I will tell you about deeds which have yet to be equalled but must remain in oblivion, because we are only poor uneducated and ill-advanced young men.

*Commandant Peter Paul Galligan,
Enniscorthy Volunteers*



*He was sentenced to death for his part in the Irish Insurrection, May 1916.
The sentence was commuted to five years penal servitude.*

Nevill's 1803 Map of Togher and District

Tony Flynn

The inscription on A. R. Nevill's 1803 Map of County Wicklow includes the following: Noblemen and Gentlemen of the County of Wicklow. This map of said county is taken from the actual surveys of A. R. Nevill. Published by Wm. Allen, 32 Dame Street. 1803. A copy of this map is in Kilruddery House.



*Extract showing Togher and District,
from A. R. Nevill's 1803 Map of County Wicklow.*

Delia Parnell's Plea

John Jordan

A copy of the following letter was given to my wife, Doris, and I, by a descendent of the Parnell family as we sold family shields in Tesco in Greystones in September 2000.

*Avondale,
Rathdrum,
Co. Wicklow.*

Oct. 1887

Dear Sir,

I most confidently solicit your valuable co-operation and assistance in the sacred cause of Charity, which you can give by disposing of, or purchasing the accompanying books of tickets for drawing at my table at the Grand Bazaar and Drawing of Prizes at Leinster Hall on 6th, 7th and 8th December next in aid of the Dominican Orphanage, Eccles Street.

Anticipating a favourable reply

Yours truly,

Delia T. S. Parnell

P. S. In order to facilitate the working of the Drawing, you will greatly oblige by returning blocks & postal order to me at 60 Blessington Street,

My Memories of Moneystown Hall

Sr. Maire O Byrne

The Hall was always a part of my childhood. I remember Christmas parties, films and plays. I am almost sure Dad was on the Committee at one stage when I was young.

One of the highlights of the summer months was when the touring players came. I think it was the McFadden family. They stayed a week and performed a different play each evening. The adults slept in caravans but the children often stayed with local children of their own age. One of the girls, about my age, stayed in our house and shared my room. I remember getting a free pass to some performances on the head of it! One play that I remember was called 'Murder in the Red Barn'. I remember being rather scared at that one.

In the winter months the local drama group put on at least one concert. The Kavanagh family always seemed to play a large part in these plays. On one occasion I remember them dramatising the song 'The Spinning Wheel'. Nancy was the Grandmother, May and, I think, Jack were the young lovers. One funny incident connected with this performance took place when one of Bridie Kenna's children, then a toddler in the front row, recognised "Auntie May" and called up to ask her if she wanted a sweet. We were amazed that she did not laugh or lose her place with that distraction.

The Moneystown ICA was started in the early 1950s and Mum was a founder member and for many years the secretary. I remember Mrs. Belton of Tomriland as President at one time and having to bring messages regarding the ICA to Beltons on my bike, since the Post Office phone was the only one in the area. In 1956 they organised cookery and sewing classes, in the afternoons for the girls and in the evenings for the women. The teacher was a Miss Reeves. She got us to enter cookery and craft competitions and really got us enthusiastic. I even remember spending most of my "Confirmation money", which was not all that much at the time, on cookery utensils. I still have the copy into which we had to write all our recipes. It is dated and initialled 'AR, 22/5/'56'.

Another event that was organised by the ICA together with the Hall Committee was the Christmas parties. In the afternoon was the turn of the children. Ned Kavanagh always did Santa and we loved to see him coming with little gifts for everyone. The evening party was run in an interesting way. It was for all married couples and pensioners. Some of the single adults ran the party, prepared and served the meal while the younger ones offered their services as baby-sitters, so that couples could both go to the party. Since baby-sitters were unknown, unless it was granny or an auntie, this was a real novelty for the kids too.

Films were also shown in the Hall. The only one I have a clear memory of was 'The Song of Bernadette'. Those were the years of the Marian Year and the Lourdes Centenary. I do have vague memories of Westerns and some innocent romances too, and they had to be innocent since everyone, from tots to old age pensioners, went to the same showing! I also remember a trailer on hygiene in the home and prevention of TB, which was I suppose, a sign of the times in which we were living. Another memory I have is of the films starting to slip and of having to stop the projector. As children we were in dread of it not starting again and thus losing a chance of seeing the film!

Dances were also held from time to time. I have a rather vague memory of Des Fitzgerald's band playing at some of these. This must have been in the early 50s, as he moved away from Moneystown after that. Refreshments were served at these dances and I remember that the kettles had to be boiled over an open fire which was, to say the least, very temperamental. Martha Lawlor was an expert in coaxing that rebellious fire to life. On one occasion a smart aleck commented that since she was such a good stoker she would be very useful in the next world. It took a moment for the penny to drop, but then Martha made it quite clear that she did not appreciate the implications of that compliment!

A story that I remember hearing from one of the men who worked on the rebuilding of our house in the 80s was about my Granny, Teresa Brinkley, and the Hall dances. Evidently she was very fond of dancing but, being a widow, she had no permanent dance partner. She solved the problem by taking up one of the shy young men, teaching him to dance, then telling him to go and find a girl of his own and beginning to train another. The man who told the story was one of her 'pupils'. I do remember my Aunt May Fitzgerald telling us that Granny was preparing to go to a dance in the Hall on the Sunday when she had the stroke that was to take her to her grave.

At one stage there were also woodwork classes for the men and boys in the Hall and I remember my Dad doing some lovely fretwork.

Another thing I remember in the Hall was Irish Dancing Classes. They were given on Saturday mornings by Mrs. Bella Timmons and her daughters June and Marjorie helped the younger and slower pupils.

At one stage in the late 50s Mum set up a drama group made up of those who had left school and were not yet working. They prepared a number of sketches and put on a concert to contribute to the fund for the restoration of Roundwood Parish Church. This provided these young people with something interesting and useful to do with their time. The resulting concert was so good that it was repeated in Roundwood and some of the other halls in the area.

Field Names on the Barton Estate

Larry Smith

The following story was dictated to Kevin Byrne by Larry Smith, Baltinanima when he was aged 75 years. Larry is one of the few people alive who remembers the names of the those who were evicted from the estate in the "1798" period.

The field on the Lough Dan side was called The Lodge Meadow. The fields on the Avonmore River side included The White Plains, Prospect Field, Rockpark Field, The Front Lawn, The Flat Bog Meadow, The Big Pasture, The Farm Yard, The Two Market Gardens, The Calf Park, The Rockery, The Waterfall, The Back Avenue, The Fowl Run and Lawn.

The fields on the Avonmore side included Reynold's Field, Owen Byrne's Field, Bowen's Bank Field, The Pump Field, The Shed Field, O'Neill's Field, Devitt's Field, The Lark's Nest Field, and Cavendish's (two fields), one very large and the other one small.

The fields on the Drumeen side included Hawkin's Pasture, The Seven Acres, The Six Acres, The Two Acres, The Paddock, Doyle's Field, Scarr Mountain, Harpur's Field, The Hair Brush Wood, Drumeen Hill, Wickam's Field and another big field the name of which is unknown.

Between the Lodge Meadow and the White Plains was a lot of woodland, The Brake Wood. The Back Avenue ran through this. The White Avenue ran by the Barton residence and farm to the middle of The Back Avenue. The name white derives from the fact that mining spoil was used to metal the surface. Between the Rockpark Field and the Front Lawn was where the chickens were raised in battery houses. Many of the local women worked there including the Heatleys and Rochfords. The Flat Bog Pasture was used specially for about 20 milking cows. The Big Pasture was made up of two parts one high ground at Drummin and one low pasture.

The Hair Brush Wood got its name from the shape which could be clearly seen from Baltinanima. The Pump Field got its name from an old pump with a cows tail handle. One stroke from the pump brought up a lot of water, enough to thoroughly wet you. There was a large stone trough to catch the water. The Shed Field was very small.

Reynold's, Owen Byrne's, Bowen's, O'Neill's, Devitt's, Hawkin's, Doyle's, Wickham's, Harpur's, and Cavendish's refer to land of evicted people who had land leased from the estate. These evictions took place in the time when Thomas Hugo owned the estate. The rest was original farm land. A battle was fought on Hawkin's Pasture where many clay pipes and other artefacts were found. On Harpur's Field there is only the outline of an old house. There is said to be gold buried or hidden in the kitchen.

Between Devitt's and Doyle's field is a big double ditch built of the stone of houses of the evicted. Another big double ditch between the Big Pasture and Devitt's was constructed from the same material. Structures known as moates were built in circular form walls of about six feet high and about twenty trees were planted in the centre. The stones from the fields were also dumped in them. The Shoeing Stone Road near the stream got its name from the time when dray wheels were banded there. It ran from Barton's farm yard through Cavendish's and Devitt's to the Big Pasture. There were 'Lazy Beds' on Hawkin's Pasture and on the Big Pasture. They were used for both potatoes and oats. The potato ridges were long and narrow and the oats beds were about 5 feet wide and 10 feet long.



Field names on the Barton Estate identified by Larry Smith, Mauny Timmons, Danny Rochford, Tom Gaffney, Kevin Gaffney and Liam Brady.

Woodbrook, Roundwood

Máirtín Mac Súrtáin

This policy is framed and hangs on the wall in Johnnie Fox's Pub, Glencullen for one and all to see.

Commercial Union Assurance Co. Limited

Head Office: 19 & 20 Cornhill, London, E. C.

Capital £2,500,000

Ireland Branch Offices: 37 College Green, Dublin

Sum assured £200

Fire Policy Number 3B 1559

F. H. Caulfield, Dublin

Present payment one year from 7th May 1896

7 weeks to midsummer 1897

Premium £ 4s 9d

Annual payment at midsummer £ 4s d

Whereas F. H. Caulfield of Dublin having paid the sum of four shillings and ninepence to the Commercial Union Assurance Co. Limited of London, and agreed to pay, or cause to be paid the sum of four shillings on the Twentyfourth day of June yearly for insuring from loss or damage by fire the property hereinafter described, not exceeding the sum on each article £200.- on the buildings of a private dwelling house known as "Woodbrook" and situated Roundwood County Wicklow. Said building is brick or stone built and slated or tiled.

N.B.- Warranted that there be no pipe Stove or Heated Air Flue on the premises.

Twenty ninth May 1896.

Millennium Pilgrimage 2000



Millennium pilgrimage from Old Bridge to Glendalough with Fr. Sean Smith P.P.

Sunday 21st May 2000



Courtesy: M. Mac Siúrtáin and W. Mullen

Moneystown Social Club

Kevin Byrne

The village of Moneystown once boasted a Church, a School, a Post Office, five grocery shops, a Butcher's shop, a Blacksmiths and two Mass paths. Today it has a beautiful modern Church, a School and Community Centre. The shops were Kitt Timmons', Parkmore; Brinkley's Moneystown later Fitzgerald's, then Paddy Cullen's, Kinsella's and McHugh's.

The butcher shop was opened by a man named Curren and was last run as a grocery shop by Jack Rochford. It was known as the tin shop as it was constructed from galvanised iron. The Post Office was run by the Brinkley's then the Fitzgeralds and finally by Mrs. Kathleen Byrne and closed in 1986. The Post Office and Shop which were run by the Fitzgerald family became the centre of the community being in such close proximity to the School.

The first "Cats Whisker Radio" in the area was built in the kitchen of Fitzgeralds by James Byrne, Tom Fitzgerald and Mick O'Malley. It caused a great stir at the time. As it only worked on head phones there was always a long queue to listen to 2RN or RTE as we know it today.

Cards, music and dancing were the order of the day and with the influx of young female visitors to the family in the summer, the house became a major attraction to the young men of the area.

The first idea of forming a club began in the early 1930s to fulfil the community needs. At first the stores at the side of the road was used but this was so small that only two couples could dance at the same time. With the increased demands of the members it was decided to construct a purpose built club room. The ambitious plans were proposed but the cost proved a major stumbling block. It was decided by the members to build it themselves. They had the know-how the expertise and enthusiasm in abundance.

The first Club committee was formed in 1934 and £50 was allocated for their building project. They decided to build the Club House on the opposite side of the road and to use good second hand materials whenever possible. The first load of sand for the foundations was drawn by Willy Murtagh in April 1940 from the sand pit in Tomriland. The timber for the floor was a part of some redundant hen houses on Barton's estate and also the galvanised roofing. The task of dismantling and transporting the materials was left to Ned and Dinny Kenna all being achieved with the help of a horse and cart.

In October 1942 as the building was nearing completion it was decided to have the official opening on New Year's Eve with a Gala Dance, spot prizes and all the trimmings. The history of "The Hall" had begun in style. As the New Year began

the Committee set themselves a very comprehensive schedule of fund raising events. Dances and card drives were organised. The newly formed Dramatic Society began to rehearse a concert which they would put on in the autumn.

By 1945 the Committee were in a position to extend the Hall with the addition of a Kitchen cum Meeting Room and a Stage. The plans were drawn up and opened for tender but again the cost was prohibitive. Estimates were received from Merrigans of Laragh and Andy Timmons the cost being £240 a lot of money in those days. Again it was decided to do the work themselves and for £123-9-0 they were able to not only extend as proposed but also to add a cloak room and dry toilets. The sand and blocks were supplied by Mr. M. Fagan Tomriland at a greatly reduced rate.

The building was completed in 1949. It had definitely become a Community Centre in the true sense of the word. The Committee organised a full list of events throughout the year. Whist drives, 45, Men's and Women's Nights, Irish Dancing with Mr. Bill Edge, dances with Des Fitzgerald and his Band and concerts with the Dramatic Society.

The members of the Fitzgerald band were: Tom Fitzgerald on accordion; Despond Fitzgerald on accordion; Andy Timmons on melodeon; Mickey "The Drummer" Kenna; Joe Brinkley on mandolin and Kathleen Brinkley on piano when at home.

The children's Christmas Party was the highlight of the year. It started with a Nativity Play followed by a party which was enjoyed by all the children from 1 to 90 years young. The climax of the evening was the visit of Santa. We all knew it was our own Ned Kavanagh but this only added to the fun and Tommy Plunkett photographer from Rathdrum was present to record the happy scene.

The Hall was also used in winter for wood work and cookery classes. In 1964 it was to become an addition to the school until 1968 when the new school opened. When the New Church was being built it became our Chapel from August 1968 to 8th June 1969.

To this day the Hall is renowned as a centre of good entertainment. The New Committee have again embarked on a very ambitious venture and are following in the footsteps of their parents and grandparents and are well on their way to provide a Community Centre their predecessors would be very proud to be associated with.

The figures are based on the accounts kept by Mr. James Byrne, Moneystown, who was one of the Club Trustees.

I would like to thank Willie Murtagh, Mauny Timmons and the late Mike Kenna for all their help.

Moneytown Drama Class 1942-48

Mauny Timmons

The following is a list deceased members of the Moneytown Drama Class 1942-48:

Joe Brinkley and Tom Fitzgerald who was the Founder of the Fitzgerald Band and a drama critic.

Joe Newsome and Billy Timmons who acted as number one M.C.

Patsy Timmons and Kit Timmons (Senior) who operated the curtains.

Mick Kinsella and Jack Storey who acted as M.C. later.

Jim Hawkins and George Brennan who was a singer.

Mick Bolger who played the violin and was a singer.

Ned Kenna and Dinny Kenna who acted as number two M.C.

Miley Kenna, Norah McHugh, Seamus Byrne and Willie Byrne.

Jack Kavanagh and Ned Kavanagh who acted as Santa at the children's Christmas parties.

Nancy O'Brien who was a singer and Larry O'Brien.

Billy Belton, Jack Byrne or Daddy and Paddy Byrne or Redner.

Johnie Kearney, Nancy McCabe, Lily Kenna and Kit Timmons (Junior).

Peter Darcy, Greg Cunniam, Sue Kenna and Betty Byrne.

Mick Reddy was a singer and a blacksmith at Darcy's forge.

Willy Byrne (Senior) was a drama critic and Mrs. Maggie Byrne, acted as the prompter.

The following is a list members of the Moneytown Drama Class 1942-48 who are alive in the year 2000:

Bridie Farrington, Nelly Byrne, Maura Harvey, Kathleen Gregory and May Kenna. Mauny Timmons, Martha Lawler and Desmond Fitzgerald of the Fitzgerald dance band.

Jack Kelly, George Kelly and Murt Kenna.

Hugh Kelly who was a teacher and his father worked in Barton's.

Larry Smith, who sang, and Kathleen Smith who sang duets with Larry Smith.

Two of the plays they performed were "Paid In His Own Kind" and "Damsel from Dublin".

Avonmore House

John Medlycott

Jack Doyle of Glenmacnass, who is now in his early eighties, remembers working for nearly 40 years at Avonmore House beginning in the early 1940s. He told me on 20.11.2000 that the original house was a small two storey farm house, which he thinks was built in the late 1700s. This house, which was owned by the Edges, was incorporated into the present house. Avonmore House was rented by John Millington Synge's family for several summer holidays in the 1890s.

The present Avonmore House was constructed between 1912 and 1914 by Dr. Hanley. However, due to World War I, Dr. Hanley did not complete the rebuilding but he did have the present avenue and a bridge onto the Annamoe-Laragh road constructed. The old entrance to Avonmore House was by Castlekevin and was called the "Back Avenue". Jack considers that the central part of the house and the back door were part of the original farmhouse. The billiard room sometimes called the "ballroom" has two floors; a fine ordinary pine floor which is overlaid diagonally by a splendid maple floor.

The house was empty for a few years until George Frederick Ievers (1884-1944) and his wife, Ada Augusta, acquired the place in the early 1920s. Jack remembers Mr. Ievers as being a first class farmer who installed the first silo in the area. Jack assisted with its construction. Mr. Ievers was also an excellent carpenter and he showed Travers Nuttall the coffin he was making for himself from an Avonmore oak.

Jack was working at Laragh House as a tractor driver for Dr. and Mrs. Somerville. Later in the 1930s he also helped with building work there. The in the late 1930s he went home to help his father in the Glen to rebuild part of the Doyle family home.

In 1941 Mr. Ievers had a tractor delivered to Rathdrum Station. Since nobody else locally was known to drive a tractor, Jack was asked by Mr. Ievers to drive the tractor home to Avonmore House. He then was persuaded to work full-time for Mr. Ievers. They did a lot of contract work, ploughing and harrowing etc. Jack also worked at building maintenance. Mr. Ievers died in 1944 and his daughter, Phoebe, ran the farm most capably for some years.

Mrs. Ievers and Phoebe sold Avonmore House in the mid 1950s to Lord and Lady Decies who lived at Avonmore for a few years until Dr. Jim Phelan bought it. He was originally from Aughrim and was a "medical man" for Wimpeys. He owned the place for some years and used to come to Avonmore from London for his holidays.

The next owner was Mr. Hutchinson, who had considered purchasing the property in the 1950s. He had, however, gone to Australia where he was in the oil business.

Jack also recalls that there was trouble with the water supply which came from Laragh House in cast iron pipes, which were installed in 1912. In the 1960s the local authority water supply was also available. Mr. Hutchinson was anxious to retain the good water supply for household use and to use the county council water for the farm. Jack was asked to arrange this. He obtained a valve from Tonge and Taggart and installed it. As with most things about Avonmore House, Jack has very detailed knowledge of the water supply.

Mr. Hutchinson lived there for about six years. Jack thinks that there was a tenant until Mrs. Johnson bought Avonmore House. When she took over Jack continued to help with maintenance. Mrs. Johnson undertook a very big restoration of Avonmore House. The restoration was carried out by Crampton, the builders, who had about 25 men working on the Avonmore House for nearly two years.



*Avonmore House from the Old Bridge to Laragh Road.
Courtesy: Máirtín Mac Súrtáin*

Introduction of Exotic Trees to Roundwood

Elinor Medlycott

The early nineteenth century was a period of considerable botanical exploration with the introduction of new trees and flowers to Ireland and Britain. The flora of the temperate regions of western America and Canada proved particularly exciting to the horticulturists as the similarity of climate ensured good growth. New coniferous trees were introduced including varieties of fir, pine and spruce. Woodland in Wicklow in the 1830s was largely confined to the large estates and the valleys where native trees such as oak, ash, larch and Scots pine predominated. The Wicklow mountains, however, were clad in heather, moss and fern with few trees and little shelter for farms or stock.

A young woman, Miss Katherine Baily (1811-1880) who later married Sir Robert Kane, the scientist and President of Queen's College, Cork, addressed herself to this problem. She advocated the planting of pines, firs and spruces in two articles which she wrote in 'The Irish Farmer's and Gardener's Magazine' which was published in 1833 and 1834. She wrote 'If every proprietor would annually plant a few acres with the most hardy timber trees, these in return would afford shelter to such as are more delicate, and require to be protected from the violence of the winds; cottages would soon be built under the shade of the woods and in a few years the improvement is incalculable which would take place as to the value of the lands and the scenery of the whole country.'

Miss Baily particularly recommended Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris* and European larch *Larix decidua*, Swiss stone pine *Pinus cembra*, Corsican pine *Pinus laricio*, White spruce *Abies alba* and Black spruce *Abies nigra* as being hardy and suitable for the Wicklow hills. She refers to Mr. John Nuttall of Tittour's experiments with growing these and at least twenty other coniferous trees including Douglas fir *Pseudotsuga douglasii* and Western yellow pine *Pinus ponderosa*. The two articles give detailed descriptions of the appearance, cultivation and uses of the various trees.

Miss Baily ends her articles by giving credit to the following gentlemen from the Roundwood area for the improvement they have made in reclaiming mountain heaths by planting trees: C. Frizell Esq. Castlecavan (Castlekevin); Rev. Henry Kough (Keogh) Knockraheen, T. Hugo Esq. Drummeen (Glendalough House); Boren Esq. (Byrne) of Lough Dan and Major Beresford on mountains above Lough Dan and Luggela and Gower Esq. of Roundwood Park.

John Nuttall later wrote a short article in Loudon's 'The Gardener's Magazine' Vol. XIII in 1837 on 'The Growth of the Pine and Fir Tribe in exposed and stormy situations' in which he explained how his pines became top-heavy and leaned over in exposed positions in stony soil. To counteract this he disbudded the

trees in early spring so as to force stem and root growth. New buds formed the same season and the trees recovered the next year. John Nuttall's wood was described as a Pinetum in Loudon's 'The Trees and Shrubs of Great Britain' in 1844, being a wood specialising in pines. His introduction of two Douglas fir trees was only seven or eight years after Douglas sent seeds from British Columbia to Britain in 1827. One of the Douglas firs still lives but very few of the other introduced pine and fir trees from that period survive. However, Tittour's fields are still surrounded by larch and Scots pine which he had planted earlier.

Miss Baily lived in Killiney and was a well-known botanist of her time. She wrote anonymously 'The Irish Flora' which was published in 1833. She became the first woman member of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh in 1836. She would be pleased if she could return to Wicklow to observe how well the fir, pine and spruce forests of the area have flourished even if this is primarily through State involvement.

Peter Layless and Sean Purser

John Medlycott

Peter Layless (1912-1987) lived at Ballyduff and was the blacksmith in the following poem which was written by Sean Purser (1906-1988). Peter's father and grandfather had also worked as blacksmiths in the area. His father, Jack Layless, had shod horses in France during World War 1. Peter was greatly admired for his ability as a blacksmith, his love of animals, his philosophical conversation and his loyalty to his friends.

Sean Purser was the son of Dr. Frank and Mrs Mabel Purser of Knockraheen. He was a poet who taught English Literature at Glasgow University. He returned to Knockraheen every year with his family for the summer. He loved this area and continued to walk in the mountains, which he knew intimately, until his death.

Peter and Sean were friends and met regularly at the forge especially when Mrs. Purser's pony, Lill, went to be shod. The following poem was dedicated to Sean Purser's children Geraldine, Michael and John.



Peter Layless and friends in Knockraheen in 1984.

The Ballyduff Forge

Sean Purser

On the stony slide
Of a mountain-side
Is a little grey
Cottage, tucked away
In a cosy nook
Near a running brook.
Close by it a forge
Looks down a rocky gorge
Where with his shoe and hammer
The smith sets up a clamour;
Ring, ting-a-ling,
Ting, tang, ting,
Ring, ting-a-ling-tang, ting, tang, ting.

Up the sparkles fly
Through the ceiling to the sky
And the furnace glows
Red as any rose,
And the grey smoke curls
In choking wreaths and whirls,
And the wheezing lungs
Of the bellows send up tongues
Of fire, and the shoe
Makes its loud to-do:
Ring, ting-a-ling,
Ting, tang, ting,
Ring, ting-a-ling-tang, ting, tang, ting.

The smith is tall and slim
As a willow's limb;
Forearms thick as tree-
trunks and roots has he;
The refractious ass
Under his armpit has
Many a yard carted
Shamed but stubborn-hearted;
Red-hot iron rim
Like putty is to him,

*Ring, ting-a-ling,
Ting, tang, ting,
Ring, ting-a-ling, ting, tang, ting.*

At the door he keeps
Shoes in rusty heaps:
Standing by it, he
Looks down on the sea
Lying stretched far off
Beyond the rocky path
That goes tilting, twining
Down to the plain, where, lining
The fields various patches
Are trees and cottage thatches;
*Ring, ting-a-ling,
Ting, tang, ting,
Ring, ting-a-ling, ting, tang, ting.*

Had every man his will
Would he not on Ballyduff Hill,
Become a smith and own
A forge and an old mill-stone,
And a bellows and tongs and red
Furnace; with Wicklow Head
Visible from the door
And wheels scattered over the floor?
Oh the pleasant clamour
Of the little hammer:
*Ring, ting-a-ling,
Ting, tang, ting,
Ring, ting-a-ling, ting, tang, ting.*

Roundwood - Moneystown Pilgrimage to Lourdes 1997



Three Children

Gene T. Curley

Three children lying low on warm summer days
casting love across the lake in boats of two
passing rainbow from palm to palm
like a fairy tale in silent song
all along the grass pier greetings of life
and life among the mellow plains
tears of happiness and joy
the seagulls were all disappearing
the ferns were so green and happiness
wild birds of prey, gentle sea spray
my heart was hidden and scattered
amongst the rocks of this crazy paradise
a mist lurched around my head
feeling so confused this cannot be real
feeling so tired this must be unreal
turning around inside my head my mind exploding
I remember him lost in Rome
sea sound and a reminiscing of temperatures
metaphorical reactions to warm you
the sun sprinkles dust upon the west
with the word before me, grass and grace
protect me I'll leave the rest 'till the morning

Enjoying Coolattin's Oak Woodlands

The Roundwood Hill Walkers



The Roundwood Hill Walkers in Tomnafinnoge Wood, Coolattin, Shillelagh in search of oak charcoal pits Spring 2000. Left to right: Ursela Kenna, Marie McNally, Robert Carter, Joe McNally, Bernadette Gillis, Joan Jackson, Peter McKenna, Joe Timmons, Philomena Curley, Eilish Kenna, Margaret Kenna and Sean O'Neill. Courtesy: Joe Timmons



The Roundwood Hill Walkers in Tomnafinnoge Wood, Coolattin, Shillelagh inspecting foliage for translucent glands Spring 2000. Left to right: Marie McNally, Joan Jackson, Sean O'Neill, Philomena Curley, Robert Carter, Eilish Kenna, Ursela Kenna, Joe Timmons, Peter McKenna, Bernadette Gillis, Máirtín Mac Súirtáin and Joe McNally with the spade. Courtesy: Margaret Kenna

The Blizzard of Tuesday 27.2.2001

Máirtín Mac Siúrtáin

The Roundwood and District Historical and Folklore Society AGM on Monday night, 26.2.2001, in the Old National School had just ended when the blizzard began. The blizzard heralded in the brand new committee under the chairmanship of Colm Galligan. As usual a number of the members retired to Sean Kavanagh's to discuss the affairs of the world and all were taken aback by the severity of the blizzard as they made their way home.

The blizzard blew all day long on Tuesday 27.2.2001 and Tuesday morning saw most of the roads into Roundwood blocked with drifts of snow some in excess of several feet. The road to Kilmacanogue was blocked at Brotherton's and no traffic could pass in either direction. The road from the gates of Roundwood Park to Cool Harbour had snow accumulations of several feet. Many people were unable to get to work that Tuesday.

It took all day Wednesday to open a single lane for traffic on the road from Roundwood to Kilmacanogue. And several more days to open the myriad of back roads in the Roundwood area. It was Thursday before many people were able to get to work.

The rest of the week remained very cold and even by Sunday March 4th 2001 there were still large accumulations of snow on many roads in the area as indicated by the following photographs taken on that day. Without doubt when it snows in Roundwood it snows.



Paddy McKenna, Billy Cosgrave and Jimmy Brady outside Rita's after 11.30 a.m. Mass on Sunday 4th March 2001.



St Kevin's Buses on Sunday 4th March 2001



The snow on Roundwood Bank on Sunday 4th March 2001



The snow on the Ford Road just beyond Pat Carr's and before John Sally's on Sunday 4th March 2001.



The snow at John and Elinor Medlycott's gate, Knockraheen, on Sunday 4th March 2001.

When You Die

Gene T Curley

When you die
six angles will carry you home
and the tall trees will whisper and sigh
deep down in your soul
can you hear them calling you yeah
like ships in the night
change your heart and change your mind
this is just another chapter in your destiny
so don't get uptight
tell me what it is that brings you back to this
tell me what it is that wants to make you get it off
so don't look back on yesterday man
dreams will fade and worlds will change and rearrange
at first unfolding in the womb

Copies of the Journal may be ordered from:
Elinor Medlycott, Secretary,
Roundwood and District Historical and Folklore Society (RDHFS)
Knockraheen, Roundwood, Co. Wicklow
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Articles and or photographs may be submitted to any member
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