

Roundwood & District



Historical & Folklore Journal

No. 18

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Roundwood and District Historical and Folklore Society

Officers 2007-2008

Chairman	Mary Byrne
Vice-Chairman	Bat Corcoran
Secretary	John Medlycott
Treasurer	Joe McNally
PRO	Joe Timmons
Photographer	Agatha de Valera Mansfield
Editorial team	Claire Chambers, Dairine Coffey, Ita Corcoran & Ann O'Brien

From the Chair

Mary Byrne

Welcome to the 18th Journal of the Roundwood and District Historical and Folklore Society. It was startling to be reminded by Martin Timmons that this is actually the 20th anniversary of our Society. Although the passage of time may have caught us unawares, it is most gratifying that we still have such an active membership after so long. However, we regret the passing during this time of three staunch and valued founder members of our Society, Sean Kavanagh, Fr Breen and Syl Lynch, together with many other active members and contributors to this Journal over the years including Leo Bowles, Pat Doyle, Kathleen Donoghue, Sheila Holt, Mike Kenna, Larry McAllister and Annie Taylor. May they rest in peace.

The past year provided us with so much of interest each month - a reflection of the enthusiasm and hard work of all involved in arranging the calendar that we were able to fit it all in. The finale of last year, under Derek O'Brien's chairmanship, was a magnificent feast to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the shiring of Wicklow, held in the Roundwood Inn. This year began with the story of the life and times of Anne Devlin, in a talk given by Michael Doibhilin about the 'woman behind the myth'.

A showing of the video about the Glendalough Mines by Robert Carter was enthralling, illustrating how lead and zinc were mined from the early days in the 1800s up until the final closure in the late 1950s. It was particularly significant and poignant, as so many families from the locality would have had a personal involvement in some way or other with these important mines. This brightened our AGM in February!

Of local interest was a simply wonderful evening at Saint Saviour's Church, one of the Seven Churches of Glendalough, with a talk by Mary Kelly of the OPW. Mary laid on some temporary 'time travel' for us, such were her vivid descriptions of the valley 'way back then'!

Cathal O'Shannon sadly took ill and was unable to come but kindly permitted us to see his thought-provoking documentary 'Even the Olives are Bleeding', which described the involvement of Irish men and women on both sides of the Spanish Civil War.

Closer to home, the Society's visits to three local houses and estates provided us with much to reflect on. Photos show the members enjoying the unexpected hospitality provided!

In Glendalough House, where lunch was kindly provided, Caroline Rochford told us about the Barton and Childers families' involvement in Ireland's troubled political past.

Next was the visit to Roundwood Park Estate, hosted by Oliver and Yona Caffrey. Frank Darcy kindly showed us round. Martin Timmons talked to us about Roundwood Park Estate, residence of former President of Ireland, Sean T and Mrs O'Kelly, and its interesting history - including the memorable visit by helicopter of President Eisenhower.

Alan and Emma Oram talked about the history of Castlekevin House, including its association with JM Synge and the Frizells. We should not forget that the fern, *Athyrium filix-femina*, 'Frizelliae', discovered in Castlekevin 150 years ago. Its common names are the Frizell or Castlekevin Fern or the tatting fern, (*See page 38 in this Journal*). On return to Roundwood, Rita Byrne showed us the bread oven.

Our summer outing took us to Dublin, with visits to Collins Barracks, the Freemasons' building in Molesworth Street, St Michan's Church and the Law Society. The building was formerly Kings Hospital School.

Further afield, we had an enjoyable trip to Kildare to see Jim Boland's vintage cars. It was fascinating to see the development from horseless carriage to those elegant cars spanning the years under one roof and to know they are still driven. Four of the cars were pre-1904, thus eligible for the London to Brighton run. Jim has taken part in this over the years.

In September we had an illustrated talk on vernacular farmhouses of Wicklow by Chris Corlett (*See page 3 in this Journal*). This was very stimulating and brought forth many reminiscences from the audience on the old houses, furniture and farm implements.

At the time of going to press, it is hoped to have a talk by Ronan Kelly about Thomas Moore (the Meeting of the Waters).

As ever, our thanks to the Patrons, whose generous support makes this Journal possible. Thanks also to the local shops that sell the Journal. Finally thanks are due to all the regular and new contributors to the Journal and the editorial board, Claire Chambers, Dairine Coffey, Ita Corcoran and Ann O'Brien. I hope you enjoy the journal and get a flavour of life in Roundwood past and present.

New members and contributors are always welcome.

Formation of Roundwood and District Historical and Folklore Society

Father Breen's idea to save local history led to the formation of this Society. The inaugural meeting was held in the Old School in December 1987. The very select few who turned up were Fr Breen, Imelda Duffy, Colm Galligan, Sean Kavanagh, Syl Lynch and Frank McGillick. From a small acorn the oak tree grows!

A Pub Crawl through Rathdrum

This poem was found in Roundwood and District Historical Society Archives and on the back the name 'Sean Kavanagh' was written. He of course was the founding resident of the Society, sadly no longer with us. When it was written is also not known but some of the hostelrys are no longer there.

It is not clear if Sean was the poet or collected it but we thought it would cheer and may be bring back memories!

One day as through Rathdrum I passed
A friend I chanced to meet
A man I had not seen for years
I met in the Lower Street

We went into the Ivyleaf
A place I had never been
The place was neat and tidy
Everything looked nice and clean

We went up the hill to Barrys
Where many a night we spent
With the dancehall just across the road
It was there we always went

After major reconstruction the place
Is looking swell
Sure they turned the whole place inside out
and called it Jacobs Well

We went up to the Corner House
To welcome the new man
The place was neat and tidy
Everything looked spic and span

We had a shot of whiskey hot
Before we hit the trail
Sure I often wondered why
It's so often up for sale

We there and then decided
To make Pierces our next call
Sure they made so many changes there
You wouldn't know the place at all

The lounge had lots of vacant seats
But the public bar was full
I was often there in my fathers time
To sell the bit of wool

Says he we'll go to Morgans
Begod says I we will
Dessie was behind the bar and
He told us lies until

We left and went to Lawlors
It was just across the square
I was very interested to see
How things was going there

Now Tommy was at the head of life
I had not seen him for a while
With his sister Maureen and Himself
It was service with a smile

The drink was good and the price was right
Sure on the pint you would trot a mouse
I often wondered how they come
To call it the Railway House

Now we had to go to Paddy's
Before we left the town
I know some day he'll plant me
All of six feet under ground

We had a drop of brandy and
Some lager laced with lime
But the floral wreathes and crosses
Sent the shivers through our spines

Now we would like to go to Mileys
But alas our time had gone
So we headed out to Savilles Cross
And made the road for home

But if and when we meet again
We'll pay Rathdrum a call
Sure in spite of what some people say
It's not a bad old place at all.

The Disappearing Farmhouses of Wicklow

Chris Corlett

As an archaeologist who has spent many years speculating about our surrounding ruins that span hundreds and often thousands of years, it was a real wake up call when my eyes were opened to something that was staring me in the face. Little had I realised that everywhere I went I was passing some of the most interesting historical remains in our landscape. But once my eyes were finally opened, to my innocent surprise a vast archive of the recent past appeared.

Well, 'appeared' might not be the right word. Very often the most interesting old farmhouses are tucked down the end of an overgrown bohreen, or even in a clump of bushes and trees beyond where any road might take you. So, to find them at all sometimes requires a little bit of luck and detective work, yet very often these are the most rewarding. Of course many old farmhouses have been renovated in recent years, and thankfully the majority of these will remain with us for many years to come. But the most interesting examples of the really old style farmhouses are invariably abandoned and gradually falling into the decay (Fig 1). Yet, precisely because they have not been renovated, or by some miracle have escaped the jaws of the bulldozer, they frequently feature rare survivals of



Fig 1 - Abandoned farmhouse at Castlekevin.



Fig 2 - Spy hole inside the door of farmhouse at Castlekevin.

an era that many readers might remember, but most are happy to forget in favour of more comfortable or spacious living.

The first feature to greet the visitor to these houses is the half door, to help air these once smoky kitchens. In many there is a spy hole window in the lobby so that the household could keep an eye out from the comfort of the kitchen fire (Fig 2). Over the fireplace might be a canopy of timber, or even of wicker and clay, (Fig 3) that captured the smoke, or some of it at least. As one man said, if you looked up to the chimney you could see an acre of sky above. Though



Fig 3 - Looking up a wicker and clay canopy over a fireplace at Castlekevin.

they might have been impractical fireplaces in some ways, they were also very sociable. The entire family, or perhaps a visitor dropping by, could sit around the cosy fire, while the woman of the house prepared the dinner or boiled the kettle. A piece of timber spanning the fireplace might hold the iron racks to hold the cooking pots over the fire, but for anyone with a little bit of money there might be a fancy iron crane. In some cases, and with a little bit of luck, some of the old furniture might still survive – the kitchen table and chairs, the fireside stools, the dresser (Fig 4) or even a



Fig 4 - Dresser in farmhouse at Carrigeenduff, Lough Dan.

settle bed. Overhead the old thatched roof sometimes survives intact, disguised on the outside by a corrugated tin roof (Fig 5).



Fig 5 - Thatched roof exposed after the removal of the tin roof of a farmhouse at Castlekevin.



Fig 6 - Feeding stalls within a thatched cow house near Roundwood.

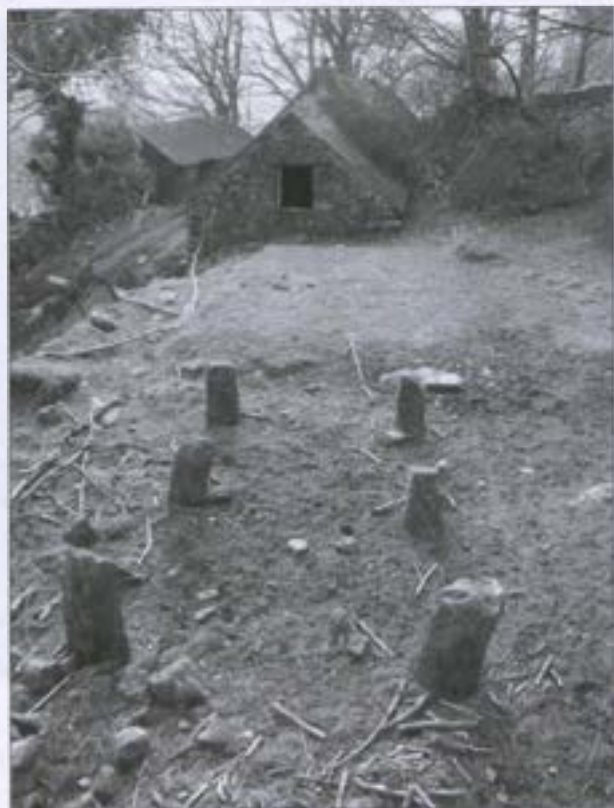


Fig 7 - Corn stand (foreground) and a grass-covered rick stand in the haggard of a house near Lough Dan. Beside the rick stand on which the hay stack was built is the door of a hay loft where the hay could be brought when it had dried. Below the hay loft was the cow byre where the cattle were kept over winter. The hay from the loft could be thrown down to the cattle as needed.

Once you move around the outside of the house, a whole range of farm buildings and other features often survive. There are various sheds, barns and buildings to house the farm animals, such as the pig house or the cow byre (Fig 6), and some also had a dairy. Then, in the haggard there might be more features, such as the rick stand – a long stone platform to dry the hay before bringing it into the barn (Fig 7). Also the corn stand or frame stand – the stone pillars, maybe forming a rectangle or a circle, designed to form a suspended frame on which to build a stack of oats that would be thatched in to keep the rain off – the whole structure designed to keep rats from getting up into the oats (Figs 7 & 8).



Fig 8 - Remains of a long corn stand near Roundwood.

Many readers will probably remember the old farmhouses as if they were yesterday. However, if you are reading this article in fifty years time, and probably less, these once common buildings will be as rare as our medieval castles, and the way of life that went with them remembered only in writings. If we hesitate any further these buildings, and the lives of the people who lived in them, will be gone before we have even had a chance to notice. But, if we seize the opportunity now to document and photograph them we will be providing a record that future generations will marvel at.

The writer would welcome any information that readers might have about the old farm houses in their area.

Maps Tell the Tale of the Changing Face of Roundwood

Mary Davies

It is fifteen years since the Roundwood and District Historical and Folk Society published a pictorial map of Roundwood - a central large-scale plan of the village as it stood in 1992, accompanied by nineteen sketches of its buildings and one of the main street. This involved updating the map from the 1911 Ordnance Survey large-scale sheet (getting the new school right was the trickiest part) while Kelvin Davies drew the illustrations. It wasn't many years before this publication, up-to-date when it appeared, became itself an historical document; Roundwood is changing fast and there may be even more rapid changes in the future.

The earliest accurate map of 'Togher or Roundwood' appeared on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey six-inch sheet, so it is possible to look back at the changes that have occurred over the last hundred and seventy years or so. When the Ordnance Survey surveyors arrived in 1838, there was not a great deal to be mapped. There was only a scatter of houses along the main street - mostly as today on the western side - but with one solid row of cottages on the east. There were also buildings clustered just up the Ashford Road. Only two buildings were important enough to be named. One was the 'R.C. chapel', on the site of the present church but then an older building of cruciform shape. The other was the police station, where Terry Kavanagh's butchers is today. There were also two cattle pounds, one at the road junction by the present Doyle's Garage building and the



The Tavern 1992



The Tavern today



Roundwood 1911 from the Ordnance Survey

other part way up the main street on the east side. Most buildings in Roundwood would probably have been thatched, so although the village already had something of its present shape, its appearance would have been very different. And, of course, there were no lamp posts or electricity wires and the untarred roads.

By the time of the six-inch map printed in 1911, Roundwood had more buildings important enough to be named - showing that it was clearly a local centre. The 'R.C. Church' had its modern ground plan. The west side of the main street had the Constabulary Barrack and the Post Office (both of these survived to be sketched on the 1992 map) together with the Dispensary: the Fair Green and a sheepwash were behind. There was a smithy next to the Fair Green on the Lough Dan road - a building that only disappeared fairly recently - and another smithy on the Laragh road. The smithies, Fair Green and sheepwash indicate, as the two pounds did seventy years before, how important animals have always been to life in Roundwood.

Roundwood House was named, with its garden and drive, and so was Vartry House. There were small ruined cottages, perhaps five in all, where the Parish Hall is now, next to the ones that have survived. Curiously though the Parish Hall was built in 1910, it does not appear on the 1911 map, probably as there is a timelag between surveying in 1908 and the production of the maps. And, of course, the Vartry reservoir was by now just across the fields.

The more detailed OS map at twenty-five inches to the mile that appeared at the same date added two more names: the Coach House and the Roundwood Inn each appeared as 'hotel'. After 1911 and before 1992 Roundwood acquired some new public buildings - what is now the Old National School as well as the present National School, the Garda Station, the Parish Hall and the Health Centre; the Post Office moved across the road to the house opposite the Church where it remained until 1993.

Coming up to the present day, five of the nineteen buildings sketched in 1992 have already disappeared: the Togher Stores has been replaced by a modern two-storey shop; the old R.I.C. barrack, more recently the Wicklow Willows Craft Shop, has also been replaced by modern shops; the Post Office was demolished on the building of Churchmount; the Garden Café, long a landmark for visitors driving through Roundwood, is now

Buildings lost since 1992



Toghher Stores



*Wicklow Willows Craft Shop
(Old R.I.C. Barracks)*



Post Office



Garden Cafe



Health Centre

derelict without a roof; the Health Centre has been rebuilt. Planning permission has just come through to replace the Parish Hall on the existing site.

Of the surviving buildings featured in 1992, the exterior of Byrne's is intact, but the shop is closed; Terry Kavanagh has moved his butcher's shop to one of the new premises and his old place is now a general store; Tochar House has a new second storey added; and The Tavern's timber decoration has vanished under a coat of cream paint. So half of the featured buildings have either disappeared or have changed significantly in the space of fifteen years. But on the credit side, looking at Roundwood, it is clear that it has been much brightened by new paint - once rather shabby buildings are now spick-and-span. And intrusive poles and wires have been removed and replaced by handsome street lamps.

Of course there is more to Roundwood today than just the core area, with the development of housing on all sides, particularly off the Dublin road in Ashtown and Lough Dan Road. The population has grown considerably in recent years to around 700 today. And what of the future? The Roundwood Town Plan published this year by Wicklow County Council has two maps - Map 1 shows land-use zoning objectives, Map 2 shows heritage objectives.

The heritage map is dominated by the greenbelt that surrounds Roundwood village as a narrow, variable band on all sides; within it on the west is a small ecclesiastical complex with a ruined church, font and buallaun stone. There are two protected structures - the Old National School and the Church — and two important viewpoints towards the reservoir.

The land-zoning map has a much fuller patchwork, with a dozen main categories, ranging from residential (existing, proposed phase 1 and proposed phase 2), to open space, tourism and employment. There is also an arc set aside for a ring road from the Lough Dan Road to the Glendalough Road - very much needed! One striking feature is the 200-metre buffer zone along the reservoir shore. Land is allocated for housing on either side of the main road within the existing built-up area. Two particular areas on the south-east are singled out for development. The first, running behind the Coach House and the Parochial Hall, is to have shops, houses and a Village Green; the second, next to it but leading from the Ashford Road, will have houses and open space. The Draft Plan



*Three ages of Roundwood's main street:
Old cottages, the Parish Hall and new town houses*

envisages the population of Roundwood increasing by perhaps 400 (57% - over the next ten years ('a population of 1130 by 2016')). With luck, Roundwood will manage to retain its distinctive character, while expanding smoothly.

Footnote: The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage includes six buildings in Roundwood village on its web-site list: Doyle's Garage with its 'mildly Art Deco parapet', St Lawrence O'Toole's Church, the Garda Station, the Coach House Hotel (but not, oddly, the Roundwood Inn) the old National School and the Parochial House. It also lists a further seven in the area — mostly connected with the reservoir, but also including Roundwood Park and Lake Park. See www.buildingsofireland.ie

* * * * *

Two men walking home from a party decided to take a shortcut through the graveyard. Halfway through, they are startled to hear a tap-tapping noise coming from the misty shadows. Shaking with fear, they are relieved to find an old man with chisel, chipping away at one of the headstones.

'You scared us half to death,' said one of the men. 'We thought you were a ghost. What are you doing working here so late at night?'

'Those fools!' the old man grumbled. 'They spelt my name incorrectly.'

A Short History of Roundwood Parish Hall

Martin C Timmons

Roundwood Parish Hall is currently in the news with major developments due to take place so perhaps this is a good time to take a brief look back at its social, artistic and educational contribution to the area over almost a century. The hall was built in 1909/10 under the guidance of the local parish priest Fr Michael Butler. Land for the site was acquired from the Kane family in a central location in the village across the road from Roundwood church. The influx of workers as a result of the ongoing building of the 'New Works' (the second phase of the waterworks) had created an increasing need for a hall to serve the social needs of the parish and provided an alternative to Public Houses and 'House Dances'. Both the construction company on the works and Dublin Corporation were involved in what was a large undertaking at the time.

Much of the money needed to build the hall was apparently collected by Fr Butler from the 'Navvies' who were employed in the construction of the works (many of whom were non-Catholic) and they also carried out much of the construction work on the hall. It was an elaborate construction for its time and included living quarters for a caretaker. The building of the hall caused some controversy however, as the pre-fab type timbers were imported from England. This was probably done to speed up the process but at a time of growing nationalism some people took exception to this and letters appeared in the press condemning the action.

From the outset, the hall provided an important social outlet for the people of the area and in late June and early July 1910 some of the first major events were held in the hall when the 'Roundwood Sports, Concert and "Cead Mile Failthe" Bazaar' was held and advertised as follows:

'A company of celebrated artistes, vocal and instrumental, from the city of Dublin, will give a concert in St. Laurence O'Toole's new Parochial Hall on the evening of Wednesday, 29th, commencing at 8 o'clock. At about two o'clock on Friday, 1st July, the "Cead Mile Failthe" Bazaar, which promises to be largely patronized, will be opened in the new hall, and the ceremony will be performed by a visitor of rank

and distinction. Saturday will be the sports day, and that day, and the following Sunday, there will be jumping competitions, races on foot and on bike, tugs-of-war, and quite a lot of most exciting events. If weather favours, as is likely, there will be a most pleasant week-end for tourists and visitors, and a cordial welcome for them all in picturesque Roundwood.'

The hall was put to practical use in the early days as noted in July 1910 when *'a very successful session of technical instruction classes were brought to a pleasant finish by the distribution of prizes to the best students'*. The class was instructed by A J Smyth of Wicklow and Mr R Sullivan a member of the committee, in his address, *'emphasized the usefulness of the new Parochial Hall, without which the classes could not be held'*. The joint winners of the senior class were, John Moran, Ashtown and Joe Healy, Baltyanima. The joint winners of the junior section were Patrick Byrne, Raheen and Edward Murphy of Mullinaveigue. In November 1910, the Roundwood Dramatic Class was noted by the local press as in rehearsals and intending to stage *'The Colleen Bawn'* about Christmas time in the hall. *'The hall is a very suitable one indeed for staging concerts, etc, in, and is no doubt a credit to the locality and to the parties that helped in its erection'*.

Films were shown in the hall from an early stage. In December of 1910 Mr. Barton of Annamoe gave:

'a cinematograph entertainment to his tenantry and their friends and the people of the district in the Parochial Hall in Roundwood. The afternoon was devoted to the children and the night for the adults. The spacious hall was packed to overflowing and much interest was centered on the different pictures as they were thrown on the screen. A vote of thanks was given by Rev Fr Butler and Larry Murphy.'

During the 'Trouble Times' circa 1921, the hall was used to hold Republican Parish Courts where civil claims under £10 and petty crime issues were settled. The hall also became home to the members of the Roundwood Brass and Reed Band, which was said to have been the oldest in Ireland until its demise in the 1950s. By the early twenties, the Roundwood Dramatic Class was well established utilizing the fine stage in the hall.

In August 1922, the 'Boland and Gill Travelling Picture Show' from Dublin, took place for two nights in the hall. Among the footage shown was the shelling of the Four Courts and the fighting in Dublin which sparked the Civil War. This show was very topical, as the incidents involved had taken place only a few weeks previous. The show was described as a '*welcome innovation*' and was followed by music, dancing and vocal entertainment provided by locals. In the 1940s a projector room was built over the front entrance by local businessman Ned Curley and this was put to regular use to show films until the 1960s. During the emergency years of World War II the LDF used the hall for training as did the FCA and Civil Defence in later years. It was used for many years for the ICA run Art and Crafts competitions on Ploughing Match Day.

In more recent times the hall has hosted many variety concerts and plays performed by both local and visiting drama groups. In the late 1960s and early 1970s it was the venue for the nationally know Roundwood Drama Festival which at its height ran for three weeks and attracted drama groups from many counties. Jim Sheridan who later won an Oscar for '*My Left Foot*', was one of those who took part in the festival. It was down the years also the venue for meetings and fund raising dances for numerous local voluntary and sporting groups. In the early 1960s when building work necessitated the closing of Roundwood National School, the hall was temporarily used to hold classes. Conditions were cramped with two curtains being used to divide the classes between three teachers.

In 1981 following the 'Stardust' night club disaster in Dublin, the hall was under threat of closure due to new fire regulations. A fund-raising committee was quickly formed under Fr Geoffrey Nevin and a house-to-house collection conducted by which the monies to refurbish the hall were quickly raised. The work was carried out voluntarily on a tight budget. Throughout the summer of 1981, the hall was stripped of its corrugated iron and the timber-clad walls were removed. Concrete walls were erected and a new roof and floor installed. The main roof beams and the foundations were retained. This resulted in the hall being cleared to reopen by the Fire Officer in the autumn of 1981.

The work had been undertaken by a group of volunteers under the direction of Liam Timmons and others. Shortly after central heating was installed with the aid of funds provided by the London/Wicklowmen's Association

and a loan provided by a local benefactor. From the early 1980s, the rebuilt hall hosted the Roundwood Home Produce Market on Sunday afternoons from March to December.

In 2001 as a result of property developments nearby, moves were afoot to demolish and relocate the hall. In the event, this did not happen and plans were drawn up by the committee to upgrade the hall on its original site. These plans were put on display to the public in the Parish Hall on Saturday, May 31, 2003 but did not immediately come to fruition. In 2005 new plans were afoot to rebuild the hall. After a protracted planning process permission was granted in mid 2007. At the time of writing work on the demolition of the old hall was due to begin. It is hoped that the new hall will be in operation by the summer of 2008 in time for the centenary of the opening of the original hall which will take place in 2010.

Memories of Maura Curley



I am the eldest daughter of Thomas and Margaret Brady and was born at home. This was a normal event at that time in 1936. I believe the doctor and the midwife were both in attendance at my birth, which thankfully was straightforward.

What makes me special, was I was born in the Parish Hall! At that time, there was a separate private house attached to the back of the hall. My parents were the caretakers of the hall of the hall and looked after it. The house was not large and soon the family moved down to Togherbeg, the other end of the village to a cottage near the supermarket and campsite.

The community needs also changed and what was our house then became the back area of the hall. In today's hall, the house is where the kitchen and open backstage area is.

Schools Manuscript Collection 1937-1938

Ita Corcoran

The Schools Manuscript Collection was organized in 1937 by the former Irish Folklore Commission now the Department of Irish Folklore at UCD. James Delargy, then honorary director of the Commission (he would later become Professor of Irish Folklore) with the cooperation of the national school teachers and the Department of Education got the school children to record the folklore of their districts. Over 5,000 primary schools took part. Children were urged to collect oral traditions from their parents and neighbours. Some fifty topics were suggested to them, such as; riddles, weather, old crafts, marriage customs, proverbs, old houses, graveyards, prayers, local cures, bird lore etc.

The scheme is regarded as having been a great success and about 50,000 copybooks are now stored in UCD. It provides a remarkable record not only of traditions and beliefs at a time before the rate of change began to accelerate, but the language and way of thinking of Irish children in 1937-1938 is captured.

I looked at the manuscripts from 3 schools in the Roundwood area, Calary, Annacarter and Roundwood, and from a large collection I choose the following. I am quoting exactly as they were written in the manuscripts.

Calary School

Old Houses

The majority of the houses long ago were thatched or had zinc roofs. The thatch was got from the bog, they use to bring up the rushes and tie them at the top and they tie them on the house for a roof. Beds were always in the kitchen in former times and are still. They are called a settle bed in this district. They form a seat in the day and a bed at night.

Most of the fires were at the gable end then the fire in the parlour fire was at the side wall. My Grandmothers fire place in the parlour is in the corner Name Mrs T Pielow, Tomdarragh, Roundwood. Before my Grandmother got in the range the front of the chimney was made of wicker work and clay.

Long ago all the floors were made of earth and were called 'Earthen floors'. There are a few still in this district. Mr Patrick Nolan, Calary, Kilpedder, and Mrs Stephens, Carrigower, Kilpedder.

Half doors were in every house in this district long ago, and when they got broken the people never bothered to put them up again and so it is nearly gone out of fashion. Only in some houses they are still to keep out the hens and chickens. As the people have no way of shutting them away. Wood and turf was the most plentiful fire in old times, and is still.

Lights were made from rushes in former times. They used to get a whole lot of rushes and peel them and then they used to soak them in some sort of oil, boiled down from the fat inside of some beast. These used to be made in every house in this district.

More people used to get some sort of hemp or cord and twist it round and round until it was a fairly thick wick and they used to boil down the lard from the wild animals and put them in jars and dip the wick in the middle and they use to have grand candles. This was done in parts of this district.

Alice Sutton, Moate House, Glasnamullen, Kilpedder.

Information in foregoing composition received from
Mrs J Sutton, Moate House, Glasnamullan.

(N.E.C.S: 912 pgs. 160-162)

* * *

Herbs

The yew tree is very poisonous when it is cut and let wither for about three days. It would kill cattle. No harmful weeds grow on our farm but in Powerscourt Waterfall the yew tree grows. They are harmful because they kill the beasts. Scutch and dock grow on very poor land, it is not harmful but it destroys the crops. The thistle grows very rapidly on good land. Penny leaf boiled with washing soda cures ring worms. Marshmallows made into ointment with lard would cure any boils or sores. There is a very good ointment made from nine herbs, lard, woodbine, ivy, alder bark, marshmallows, planding leaf, rib grass, daisy leaves and dandelion. Green broom is very good for worms in horses.

Foxglove boiled would make a lovely dye for a black dress. Everything was cured by herbs in olden times. A man by the name of Michael Bailey was cured by herbs. He had scurvy. Black heads and cocheled roots

washed out and boiled. Then strain the water off and take a glass of it every morning before breakfast would cure scurvy. Nettles and dandelion mixed up in Indian Meal is very good for young turkeys when they are getting the red heads.

Maggie Fleming, The Paddock, Kilpedder
(N.F.C.S.: 912, pgs. 178-9)

* * *

Local Roads

There are various names on roads in our district:- such as 'The Red Lane' and Arragower Road and the Back road which leads to Roundwood, and the main road also leads to Roundwood.

Smiths Avenue is called after Mr Smith who lived in the middle of it.

There is the 'Old Long Hill' on the Back Road which the Old people used travel long ago before the new one was built. There is a narrow path leading across Mr Stokes' land and it is so flat, that it is supposed to have been a little lorry which used to run along there with 'Pancakes' on Pancake night selling them. It is a short cut to the Church.

There is a path leading from Calary Lower across the Hill to Calary Upper. About fifty years ago there was no bridge on the Church Lane. It was crossed by means of stepping stones. There were so many people nearly drowned they put up a new Bridge and gave good employment to poor people. The Varthrey river is crossed at Calary at a shallow place and also crossed a little below the School House by a foot stick. This place is called the 'Rail Road'. It is said if you have warts and get eight little stones and rub it on them and put the stones in a little parcel and leave them at a crossroads and it will cure them. Another cure for warts is to rub half an apple on them and then go and bury it at a crossroads and they will go away.

At Ballyduff cross roads there is a red cross with RIP on it as there was man by the name of O'Toole killed there while riding a horse. There is a path leading from the Long Hill from the commons across Ballinteskinn down to Kilmacanoig. The people go to Mass across it as a short-cut.

Alice Sutton, Moate House, Glasnamullen, Kilpedder.

Information in foregoing composition received from (40 yrs)

Mrs Sutton, Moate House, Glasnamullen, Kilpedder
(N.F.C.S.:912, Pgs. 181-183)

Annacarter School

Collected from the school of Annacarter, Roundwood in the barony of Ballinacor North

(No names were provided)

Faction Fights

Faction fights took place in this district about fifty years ago. One team fought another, they fought with Blackthorn sticks, which used be left 'seasoning' for a month before each fight. Mr John Burke of Knockraheen claims that he killed a tramp at Fiddlers Hotel, now known as Ballinastow cross roads, which was a well known meeting place. Patterns were also held in Glendalough, and at these patterns the wrestling matches used to take place.

Up to 80 years ago a Pattern used to be held in Glendalough on the feast of St Kevin. People from different counties assembled there, it always wound up with faction fights.

(N.F.C.S.: 917, pg. 257)

* * *

Ruins & Monuments of Stone & Earth in the District Stating Precise Location

In a field near Laragh a small village between Glenda Lough & Annamoe there is still to be seen a small stone cross, it is said that it was erected over a soldiers' or 'Croppy Boys' grave.

In the corner of a field near Roundwood there are still traces of the house in which General Holt lived. It was burned in his absence (1798).

In the side of Djouce Mountain there is a small cave built of stone. It is named after General Holt.

In the garden of a house near Roundwood there are the graves of three '98 soldiers.

There is a moate about six miles North of this school. On this moate there was a lot of burned furze and it is believed that old Mr A Sutton gathered a bundle of these burned sticks in an old sack apron and when she got to the road they disappeared.

(N.F.C.S.: 917, pgs.: 264-265)

Belief in Fairies

In this locality there is an elder tree growing alone. It is on the land of Mr Michael Brady, Shraughmore, Roundwood. It is believed that Mr Michael Brady's father cut some boughs of this tree, and that a flock of birds came round him and he had to leave it. It is also believed that all his sheep & cattle died that year.

It is firmly believed in this locality that if a lone bush is cut, the fairies would take revenge by killing an animal of the farm or by doing some other destruction.

Mr Patrick McGuirk, farmer, who lives in Mullinaveigue about a mile from this school, relates that he cut a bough off a lone bush and that immediately his cow died

On the farm of Mr O'Donohue, Annacarter, Roundwood, about a quarter of a mile from this school, is a mound and if this mound is ploughed, the sod is turned back in the morning.

On the farm of Mr John Byrne there is a mound, and it is believed that the man before him, Mr. Sally ploughed it and immediately he went mad.

On the farm of Mr John Sutton about three miles from the school, there is a mound and it is believed that when Mr John Suttons' father dug it and that his hair turned black and gray that night in bed.

Mr John Byrnes farm is about half a mile south of this school, and Mr John Suttons' farm is a mile farther on.

People still believe in Banshees in this district. They believe that the Banshee will come & cry outside the window before a death in the house. The Banshee is said to follow the 'O's & Mac's'.

It is said to be unlucky to burn the branch of a mountain ash.

If a cock crows after six o'clock in the evening it is said to be unlucky.

(N.F.C.S.: 917, pgs.: 274-275)

Schoolhouse, Roundwood

Mo ainm Patrick Brennan.

Fuaras an scéal ó - Mr Matthew Murphy, Roundwood.

The Hidden Treasure

About half a mile from Roundwood on the road to Lough Dan, on the right hand side, there is a field, in which there are the remains of an old church. The ruins of this church are about four-hundred yards from the road ditch. A man by the name of Mr O'Doherty started excavations around this church, and himself and Mr Murphy found a large bell there. They showed it to a carpenter of the name of Mr Jeremiah Maloney and he carved one out like it in wood.

The real bell was kept in Mr Keogh's house, who was then the landlord of this parish, and it was named St Vicars bell. After Mr Keogh's death, this bell was sold at an auction of one of his houses in Dublin. A Jewman of the name of Mr Levey bought it, but afterwards it was bought back from him by a priest, and it is now in the Belfast Museum.

There was also a glass chalice found in the same place as the bell.
(N.F.C.S.: 918, pg.1)

* * *

Mo ainm Sean Brady, Roundwood.

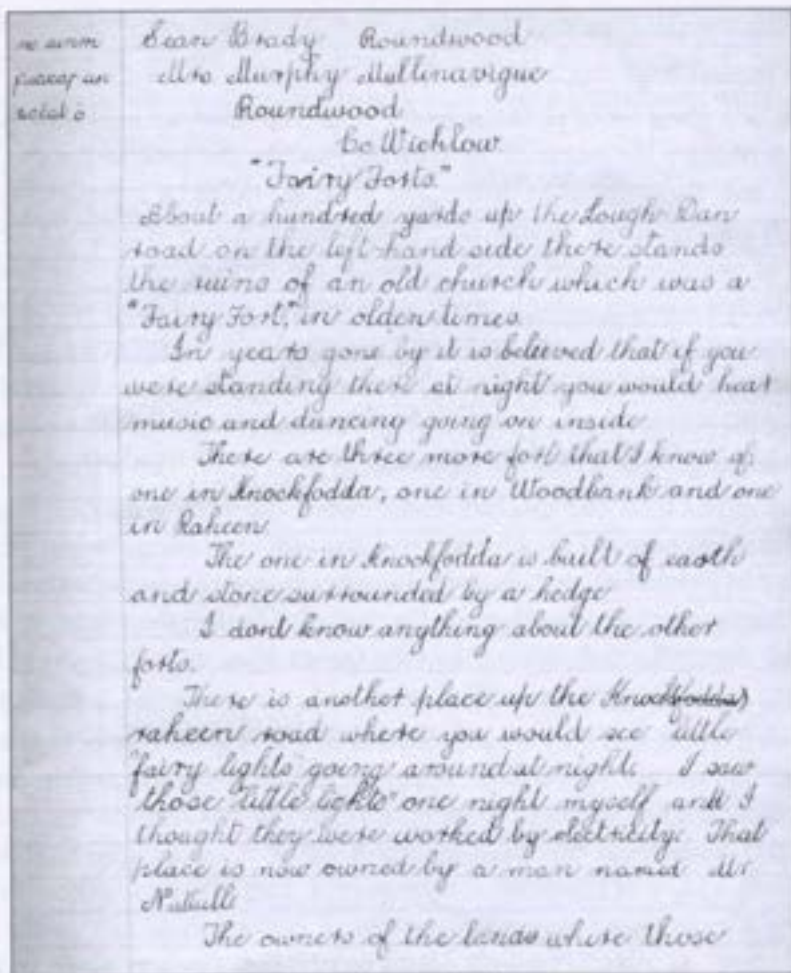
Fuaras an scéal ó Mr Murphy, Mullinaveigue.

Fairy Forts

About a hundred yards up the Lough Dan road on the left-hand side there stands the ruins of an old church which was a "Fairy Fort" in olden times. In years gone by it is believed that if you were standing there at night you would hear music and dancing going on inside.

There are three more forts that I know of; one in Knockfadda, one in Woodbank and one in Raheen. The one in Knockfadda is built of earth and stone surrounded by a hedge. I don't know anything about the other forts. There is another place up the Knockraheen road where you would see little 'fairy lights' going around at night. I saw those 'little lights' one night myself and I thought they were worked by electricity. That place is now owned by a man named Mr Nutall.

The owners of the lands where those forts are situated never interfere with



The actual copy book page

them when ploughing or preparing the soil for the planting of the crops. The farmers believe that if they interfered with them their crops wouldn't grow.

There is another place outside Roundwood which is owned by Mr Kearns. The ditches are all covered with a little hedge and in the middle of the field there stands a loan tree. A couple of years ago Mr Kearns cut down that tree because it was keeping the sunshine from coming in through his window. That night he heard the bean-she crying at his window and he had to put up the tree again.

(N.F.C.S.: 918, pgs. 25-26)

Mo anim Patrick Brennan, Roundwood.

The Potato Crop

We grow a good lot of potatoes every year. The most we ever sow is an acre. A man by the name of Jack Lowe ploughs the ground for us. We always sow the potatoes in drills. The drills are made by a plough in our field. It was never the custom here to sow the potatoes in ridges. I never heard of wooden ploughs being used here. Some people make drills with shovels, not wooden shovels but shovels bought from a shop. Before the potatoes are sown they are cut in half and the buds are broken off. Then they are sprinkled over with lime to prevent their juice from coming out.

It is not the custom for the people here to help their neighbours. Sometimes the potatoes get blight and the tops have to be sprayed with a fluid.

When the potatoes are ripe Jack Lowe opens the drills with the plough. My father and some of my brothers pick the potatoes. We put some of the potatoes in pits and some in the loft. The pits are made about three feet high and slanting on each side. Here are the names of the local potatoes. British Queens, Arran Banners, King Edwards, Queen Victorias.

There is a new potato sold by Mr William Murphy of Mullinaveigue called Sharpes Express, and they are supposed to be a very good type of potatoes. Our school teacher says that he remembers his own grandmother using potatoes instead of starch.

(N.F.C.S.: 918, pgs: 36-37)

* * *

Mo Ainm Sean Brady, Roundwood.

Fuaras an scéal ó Mr D Hayde who recently resided in Roundwood, Co. Wicklow.

The Care of the Feet

It is believed that in olden times people did not wear boots until they reached a certain age and that was about eight years.

Some children at the present time go to school barefooted in summer.

It is believed that the water which you wash your feet in, is good for curing certain deceases such as ringworm and shingles.

There are only two shoemakers in this district whom I know of and they are William Gilbert and Michael O'Malley. This trade has been carried out

by their ancestors. There was a big shoemakers shop in Roundwood in years gone by, where Mr Robinson now holds the Fianna Fail meeting every month. This man made clogs, which nearly every body wore.
(N.F.C.S.: 918, pgs. 40-41)

* * *

Mo ainm Patrick Brennan, Roundwood.

Fuaras an scéal ó Mr Matthew Murphy, Roundwood.

The Local Forge

There are five forges in this district. Here are the names of the smiths. Mr John Darcy, Mr Peter Darcy, Mr Patrick Brennan, Mr John Ferguson and Mr Denis McCoy who owns a forge in Glendalough.

Mr John Darcy's people have been smiths for many years, and Mr Peter Darcy who owns the forge in Moneystown is a brother of him. All the forges are situated near cross roads. The forge in Roundwood has a felt covered roof on it. There is one fireplace in it and one bellows. The bellows is about six feet long and four feet wide. It is made in the shape of a heart and at one end of it a pipe runs out and it is through this bellows that the wind comes. The smith uses hammers, sledges, tongs, pinchers, vices and knives to pare the hooves of the horses.

The smith shoes horses and asses but he does not shoe cattle. He makes spades and shovels and he repairs ploughs & harrows, and axes and other such farm implements. The smith seldom works out in the open. He shoes cart wheels out in the open. Forge water is supposed to a very good cure for warts. The blacksmith in Roundwood is a very strong man. They tell stories and play cards in the forge on the winter nights.

(N.F.C.S.: 918, pgs. 41-42)

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Newtown session 1886

Wicklow Newsletter, 13/11/1886

Newtown Petty Sessions. Peter Fitzpatrick, a young man, was charged by Sergeant Thomas Bergin with having on the 31st ult being in unlawful possession of a dead rabbit at Roundwood, where he resided. The rabbit was found under the man's coat by the constable, who stopped him in the street and searched him (under the 25th and 26th Vic, which says that parties found with game in their possession must give a good account of where they obtained it). Defendant, in answer to the Bench, said that that he got the animal 'from another man,' whose name he was, however, not able to provide. The constable stated that on stopping the man the 'only satisfaction he got was abuse.' Both defendant and the man he was with were notorious poachers; he knew that by repute. Defendant – Then why haven't you had me up before? Constable – This is the first time I have caught you. Fined 5s and costs, the rabbit to become property of Bergin.

* * * * *

Urban Dwellers Guide to Countryliving

Your polished €60,000 car looks impressive, compared with my dusty pickup truck. Could make you feel superior, as you speed past, but learn not to judge the book by the cover.

I may look simple, probably am. Who else would leave a €250,000 machine in the barn and only use it for about three weeks a year?

Stiles, Milestones & Kissing Gates

Canon Robert Jennings

A member of this journal asked me if I would contribute a small article on stiles. I confess I am not a total expert on styles spelt with a y as one might see on Ladies' Day at the Dublin Horse Show. However, stiles spelt with an 'i' have always fascinated me. I have a special affection and interest in them. When I come across one, often hidden in the briars, I stop to wonder why it is there and to what Church, national school or stately mansion or to some more humble dwelling it leads.

They are part of our countryside heritage, usually forgotten, often unrecognised and rapidly disappearing.

A stile, normally of stone is a number of steps over a ditch or wall into an adjoining field or building. Animals can't climb them but they give easy access to pedestrians.

There is a wide variety of designs depending on the obstacle to be climbed. Some are built at the side of the wall, others are at right angle to the wall. Some are beautifully carved, others built of flat field stones. Usually at the top cross stone there is the shape of a crescent moon cut through the stone so that one's foot can go through for safer and easier crossing of the stile.

When there were fewer roads and no bicycles or cars the majority of people had to walk to their destination. The stiles and pathways led across fields and were the quickest way to school, Church, village or to work. Usually when you see one stile it will be one of a series of stiles across the countryside. For instance in Annamoe, there is an old lane that leads up past the former Childers' Estate and half way up a stone stile and former path leads across a field to another stile. On the other side a third stile has been removed at the entrance to a new house. It may be they were part of a series of stiles that led to Glendalough.

Around Calary Church there are also three stiles. One is at the back of the Churchyard, another is beside the gate of the Church and a third across the road into a field belonging to the Delamere family. Only a few broken and protruding stones show where it had been. *[Photo 1]* The old road, which can still be traced, went behind Calary Church and was the original way to the Church and to a school in Myer's field. The site of the school



Photo 1 - Stile at Calary Church

is marked on old maps but now there is no trace of the building. Myer's field was once well known in the Roundwood and Calary area as it was part of the circuit of the Calary Point to point races. On occasions the races started in this field and one of the jumps was known as the 'Church Bank'. In the Newcastle area there are a series of seven stiles leading across fields and along old lanes from the direction of Coynes Cross to Newcastle. One is so hidden in briars that even the farmer who had lived there for years did not know of its existence. It would be of great historical interest to continue to trace some of these stiles to their ultimate destination. However I would not like a repeat of one occasion when I was walking a mass path to Kilquade Church on a Wednesday morning. I was met by a local farmer who said I should not be walking there. I pointed out that it was a recognised mass path. The amusing and subtle reply was 'I know it's a mass path but today is Wednesday and there is no mass in Kilquade Church today'.

If you want to experience a walk on an ancient mass path then go past the Roman Catholic Church in Enniskerry and on the left hand side, about 300 paces this side of the Monastery Garage a stile at the side of the road leads to Killegar Church. On the way you will climb over four lovely stiles before reaching the ruined Church. Killegar is first mentioned in 1172 in

Strongbow's Charter where it is spelt Celladgair. It has some very ancient crosses and graves.

Stiles can still include a series of steps going up or down to a particular site of interest. A good example is to be found in the townland of Glasmullen in Calary where steps lead down to St Kevin's Well. Glasmullen or Molingstream refers to St Moling's old ruined Church nearby. It is a site of particular interest and significance as it is associated with St Kevin and St Moling. Although largely connected with the Diocese of Ferns, St Moling also ruled over the monastery of Glendalough for some years. St Kevin's Well is down the steps beside the old bridge nearby. A large whitethorn tree once grew over the wall where people came to pray and tied pieces of cloth to its branches as a personal symbol of their presence there. A laurel has now taken the place of the whitethorn tree and the well has been filled in to prevent cattle or sheep falling into it.

Roundwood people and visitors will be familiar with the stiles around the reservoir, but they are of more recent construction.

A poem entitled 'Lament of the Irish Emigrant' by Lady Dufferin tells of the sad memories of a young man who had emigrated and now recalls the stile where he once sat side by side with his young bride who had died. Part of the first and last verse tells of his memories of a stile far away in Ireland.

I'm sitting on the stile, Mary,
Where we once sat side by side
On a bright May morning long ago,
When first you were my bride
The corn was springing fresh and green,
And the lark sang loud and high
And the red was on your lips, Mary,
And the love light in your eyes.

And often in those grand old woods
I'll sit and shut my eyes
And my heart will wander back again
To the place where Mary lies
And I think I'll see that little stile
Where we sat side by side
In the springing corn and the bright May morn'
When first you were my bride.

Milestones

In years gone by milestones were a familiar and informative sight along our roads. Sadly with the widening of roads and their replacement by metal signposts, they have now almost disappeared. The milestones (Latin *Milliarium*, a 1000 paces) do not usually occur every mile but at crossroads in towns and villages. They can be a welcome sight with assurance that you are on the right road and also indicate the miles you still have to travel to the next town.

Some countries used them to signify the centre, or a starting point of importance. They were used extensively throughout the Roman Empire and in the centre of Rome there used to be a Golden Milestone that was said to mark the centre of the empire. This gave rise to the expression 'All roads lead to Rome.' This may have led to the erection of a zero milestone in Washington to signify that all American roads started from the capital of the United States.

London has two starting points, one for time and the other for distance. The meridian is the starting line for world wide time, and a plaque at Charing Cross London is the starting point from which the distances to all cities and towns in England are measured. The distance to cities and towns in Ireland is measured from the GPO (General Post Office) in Dublin.



Photo 2 - Milestone at Newtown

As an historical point of interest, Wicklow has an ancient connection with Queen Eleanor of Spain, wife of Edward I of England. When she died Edward set up crosses in a number of places between Wales and London, the most noted being the one to Queen Eleanor at Charing Cross. In documents relating to Ireland 1285 to 1292 we read that '£60 of silver to be expended on carpenters for the timber of Eleonora Queen Consort, and carriage of the same out of the woods of Newcastle the Mackingen and Glencree by sea to the Queen's castle of Hereford in Wales'. For hundreds of years oak was exported to England to build palaces, churches and ships. I understand there are still Irish oak beams in Salisbury Cathedral.

Irish milestones are still to be seen mostly in the west and in Sligo in particular. People tell me there is a milestone in such a place but when I go to visit the spot it is usually no longer there.

One of the more interesting local ones is opposite the doctor's surgery in Newtownmountkennedy. [Photo 2]. The building there was once an old coaching house and it is appropriate to have a milestone close by. It is a square granite stone about 4 ft tall with sun rays on the domed top and has the distances in Irish miles to Dublin, Wicklow and Bray. One side reads 'From Dublin 17 Miles' another side reads 'From Wicklow 7 miles' and the third side 'From Bray 5 miles'. There are two more milestones close to Newcastle.

Kissing Gates

Kissing gates have in many places replaced stone stiles and the more modern ones, still found extensively, allow easy access for one individual at a time but no animals can get through them. This change accounts for their description as turnstiles.

The usual construction is a three-quarter circular iron enclosure with a swinging gate in the middle. The gate is constructed in such a way that it is self-closing away from the field in which animals graze. One explanation for the name 'kissing gate' is that the first person through the gate extracts a kiss from the following person before they are allowed through. We are all familiar with having to pay a toll on roads and bridges as a kiss is no longer acceptable!

The original term 'Kissing Gate' is probably much less romantic, as it is a technical engineering term. These gates were hung in such a way that they would always close of their own accord when you passed through. This arrangement whereby the central gate touched the surrounding bars is known in engineering technology as kissing. However, if you are neither romantically or technically minded you just call them donkey gates.

I still like to refer to the five such gates you pass on the mass path between Kilcoole and Kilquade Church as 'Kissing gates' rather than donkey gates. I hope the Church authorities would approve!

Stiles, milestones and kissing gates are all part of our shared heritage and should be preserved and recorded. If you know the location of any of these, including rotary quern stones or cup mark stones please inform a member of this Journal's committee or me at 01 281 0777 so that a local record may be compiled.



One of the five 'Kissing Gates' on Kilcoole Mass path

Highlights of the Society's Meetings & Outings

Photos by A de V Mansfield

Wicklow 400 - in the dress of 1606 !



Monica Farrell & Colm Galligan



Ned Hatton at Wicklow Feast



John Flynn



*Photographer Agatha
but on the Dublin Outing*



Our hosts Oliver and Yona Caffery at Roundwood Park brought in the famous Sunday Times photographer, Crispin Rodwell to record the occasion. And they did not even know that Agatha was absent!



Dinner at Glendalough House



Glendalough House



*Castlekevin
Mary Byrne & Susan O'Neill*



*Castlekevin
Martin Timmons teaching us the history*



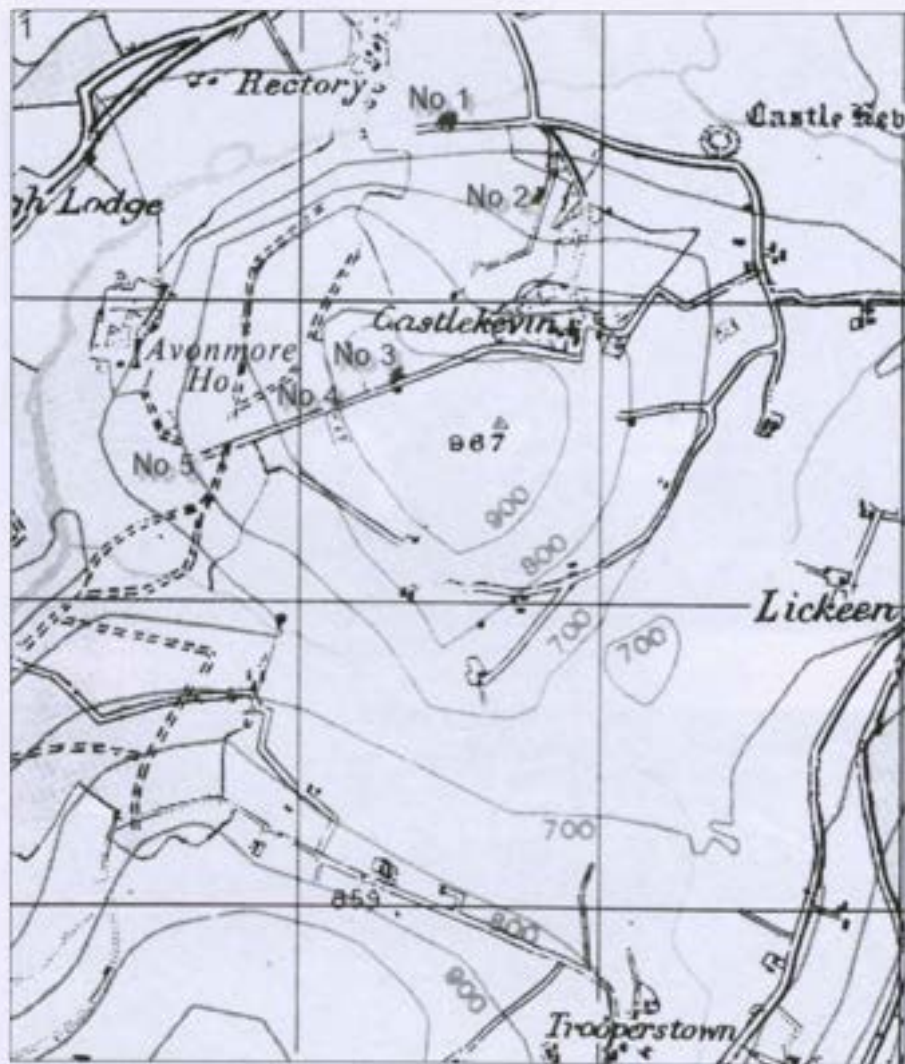
Martin Timmons framed by the 'fern', Derek & Máirtín - background



Collins Barracks - Dublin Outing



Jim Boland explaining a finer point of engineering



- 1 John Rochford's first house the "Piers".
- 2 Thomas Rochford's at the back Kings on Back Avenue to Castlekevin House.
- 3 John Rochford's second house is on the hill.
- 4 Flax pond.
5. "The Famine Road to nowhere" Or the Pond road.

Castlekevin House

Mauny Timmons

Charles Frizell (1741-1812) bought Wilmount House (Castlekevin) from WF Ayres Esq in 1789. Charles was Deputy Lieutenant of Co Wicklow and he married Sarah Adrian of Dublin (she was of French Huguenot decent).

Charles Frizell brought two brothers Thomas and John Rochford as Stewards for his new estate. As part of his agreement with them he gave them the pick of sites on his estate to build themselves houses and also made an agreement to lease them land to farm. John Rochford chose a site know as the 'Piers' near the river next to the present back gates of the estate. He later changed his mind and built his house on the hill where I lived with my Aunt for many years. He built the house entirely with his own hands and it still stands today. Thomas chose a site at the back of the present house known as Kings on the back avenue to Castlekevin house. The ruins are still there. The back avenue used to be known Dick's (Rochford) lane.

There is a story that John Rochford while riding out with the Redcoats in 1798 near Castlekevin, noticed Father Lowe the local Catholic priest hiding in the undergrowth. He asked Fr Lowe why the other Redcoats had not seen his hiding place. He replied that only those with the Holy Oils on their forehead could see him. It is said that a woman in Annamoe fostered John as a young child and while in her care he was baptised as a Catholic. As we can see from above the time scale does not fit the story but perhaps the two Rochford brothers had children when they arrived in Castlekevin.

The Rochford brothers fought in the battle of Newtown 1798 and later fought on opposite sides. John's descendants later became Catholic.

There were four Rochford graves in Derralossery cemetery but during repairs to these one of the stones disappeared.

The rebels on their return from the battle of Newtown burned Wilmount (Castlekevin House) in 1798. Charles Frizell made a claim for compensation for the loss of his house, furniture, cattle, wine, hay and straw Total £1,985-1-2. John Frizell, his son built the present Castlekevin

house in 1826. The site of the old house is two fields up from the lawn gates.

Dr. Charles Frizell MB, MA (1783-1856) bought Castlekevin from his eldest brother John in 1829. He developed the fine plantation at Castlekevin.

During the Famine 1845-1851 he had the road from his house across the hill to the bog near the river built, with the intention that Commissioners of Public Works (works instituted as part of Famine relief program) would build a bridge across the river and complete the road to meet the Annamoe to Laragh road. The Commissioners were not interested and the road remains like many others of that time 'A Famine Road to Nowhere'.

He later evicted many of the tenants from his estate making himself very unpopular to the extent that no one would work for him, even the local blacksmith Darcy (An ancestor of Darcy's forge, lower Moneystown) refused to shoe his horses.

John Rochford's House on the Hill

John Rochford's house on the hill remained in the family until (1997) and I was the last member of the family to live in it.

While undertaking renovations to the house on the hill (1961) the thatch was replaced with galvanized iron sheeting an unusual discovery was made. Concealed near the chimney of the house was a well preserved 1798 bayonet. The leather of the scabbard was gone but the brass tip and belt clip as well as the bayonet were in very good condition.

Another bayonet was also found concealed in the thatch at Crosses house, Trooperstown just across the valley. (*See Photographs*)



The bayonet is from Mauny's house

From Mauny's Photo Albums



Mr Michael Rochford in foreground, Ned Rochford behind him, Miss Elizabeth Rochford, (later Mrs. Patrick Timmons Mauny's mother) and Miss Margaret Rochford (late Mrs John Byrne.) Year 1918.



Bread being taken from the pot oven that had been made on the open fire in her house in Moneystown - a taste never forgotten and with her own churned butter



Dresser - Moneystown



Mauny's house at Moneystown



Mauny and her uncle during renovations to her house in Moneystown, 1936

FIFTY POUNDS REWARD.

WHEREAS on the Night of the 15th of FEBRUARY, 1845,

THE HOUSE OF WILLIAM S. WEEKS, ESQ. OF

CASTLEKEVIN, NEAR ANAMOE,

Was BROKEN INTO by a number of Persons with their Faces Blackened and Robbed of SIX TEN POUND NOTES, of the Waterford Provincial Bank, (probably Endorsed "William S. Weeks") SOME SOVEREIGNS, AND A GUINEA of the Coinage of King George the Third, also ONE CARABINE, ONE FOWLING-PIECE, AND ONE PAIR OF HORSE PISTOLS, all numbered 959 W. I.

A Reward of Fifty Pounds

Will be given to any Person or Persons who will give such Information as may lead to the Detection and Conviction of the Perpetrators of the above Outrage, or

Thirty Pounds

For such PRIVATE INFORMATION as will lead to the discovery of any of the Parties concerned therein.

WILLIAM T. BOOKEY.
THOMAS J. BARTON.

Dated this 17th day of February 1845.

H. & W. MacPhail, Printers, Wicklow.—Henry MacPhail, Licensed Auctioneer.

Operation Shamrock: Saving The German Children

J. Agatha De V. Mansfield

If we take a walk through the St. Stephen's Green, we are going to notice the bronze group portrays three legendary fates, spinning, cutting and measuring the thread of man's destiny. This fountain called the 'Nornenbrunnen', designed by the German sculptor Josef Wackerle is the gift of the people of the German Federal Republic 1954 to mark the gratitude for Ireland's help after the war of 1939-45. One can read the inscription: 'With gratitude for the help given to German children by the Irish people after World War II.' And is signed by Roman Herzog, President of Federal Republic of Germany, 23.03.1997.

To set the scene, Glencree barracks, where the children were brought, is about 1,100ft above sea level. It is an extensive buildings, originally one of the series of barracks erected by the British government along the Military Road, in their attempt to maintain control of the Wicklow mountains as they pursued Michael Dwyer and other rebel leaders following the Rebellion in 1798.

In the 1850s, a high increase in juvenile crime and children in prison prompted Lord Powerscourt, then owner of the land of Glencree to offer a lease on the abandoned barracks. The facility was converted in 1858 into St Kevin's Reformatory and operated as such by Oblate Fathers until 1940.



Some of the children on a chilly day 1946 / 47

SAVE THE GERMAN CHILDREN SOCIETY

South City Branch, 3 Lr. Abbey St., Dublin.

present

Grand Variety Concert

Rathmines Town Hall

Sunday, 5th March, 1950

Hamburg State Opera

Song Recital

Olympia Theatre

30th April, 1950

Advert for a variety concert to raise funds for Save the German Children

The reformatory school became self-sufficient to accommodate over 300 boys. They worked on land and were trained in wide variety of trades. During the Second World War the complex operated as a camp for Turf Development Board employees who were attempting to exploit the Sally Gap bog during the Emergency.

From 1945 to 1950 at the end of World War 2, under the auspices of the Irish Red Cross, Glencree became a temporary refugee centre. The French Sisters of Charity looked after thousands of German, Polish, Austrian and French orphans under the UN sponsored three month rest programme en route to longer stay fostering in Irish homes. Some of these children were later adopted by the Irish host families.

When the World War II ended in 1945 most of Europe lay in ruins. Dire need and misery reigned in the bombed out cities of Germany, people searching desperately for somewhere to stay and searching for food in order to survive. It became evident that children in Germany would suffer most under the hardships of the coming winter. It was at this point that an Irish Paediatrician Dr Kathleen Murphy gathered a group of like-minded people around her to find ways and means of helping these children and in October 1945 they formed the Save the German Children Society. Their

aim was to find homes in Ireland for the orphaned, homeless and starving German children.

This became known as 'Operation Shamrock'. In 1946, hundreds of children were brought to Ireland by the Irish Red Cross Society to escape devastation of post war Germany, with Germany's infrastructure completely broken down.

By the spring of 1946 the society had offers from 500 Irish families who were willing to take in orphans from Germany. Unfortunately the Allied Control Commission firmly refused to issue exit permits. However, with the help of some influential people such as Field Marshal Montgomery, the Archbishop of Dublin and members of the Dail and the British House of Commons the barrier was removed and it was agreed that all arrangements would be administered and supervised by the Irish Red Cross. The first group of 88 children arrived in Ireland to be followed by a further 350. Some of these refugees were not orphans but their parents were unable to look after them. The children were malnourished when they arrived. Some were near death.

Various groups of these children were to reside at Glencree during the period of 1946 to 1948 and were looked after by the French Sisters of Charity, nurses and carers. Quite a number of these children were fostered in Ireland while others returned to their native Germany.

"It could have been our children!"

Don't you want to help?

HERE'S HOW:

Join one of the branches or help to form one in your area.

Collect money - even a penny a week -
from your colleagues in the office, workshop or factory.

Send us your cast-off clothing and footwear.

Save postage stamps from your mail.

If a shopkeeper, place a collection box on the counter
for voluntary contribution.

Distribute copies of the Bulletin to your friend, when read.

Another advert in 1950

After arriving by boat at Dun Laoghaire, they were taken to Glencree in Co. Wicklow where they received specialist medical attention for malnutrition, their health was gradually built up until they were strong enough to go to foster parents around the country. The children were pleased with Irish families who had responded to advertisements placed in the newspapers by the Irish Red Cross.

There was a poster explaining the founding of the Operation Shamrock and stating the aims of the society: 1) To provide homes in this country for the orphaned, homeless and starving children of Germany; 2) To donate any money collected to the alleviation of the suffering of German children in Germany in the event of its being impossible to bring them to Ireland.

There were many fund raising efforts in Ireland at that time and a statement from the International Red Cross in Geneva is indicative of the generosity of the Irish people at that time. The statement read as follows. 'The Irish people raised the sum of 12 million pounds for victims of the Second World War and it was the largest single donation from any country for post war relief'.

At the exhibition in Glencree in 2006, there were many interesting photographs of the children and some of their letters, for example, the letter by 9 years old Ingrid Kroschel from Paderborn 1947, Liz Furst - article from a German newspaper - Grösse ous Irland - Greetings from Ireland to Homeland. The drawing of 10 years old Renate Engelhardt from Ostendland to all parents of siblings, for recreation on the Green Island. 'I have gained weight. We get chocolate and oranges on 31st (*October*), the Irish have a big celebration, we get cakes. Who finds a ring in the cake, gets married this year and who finds a stone in it stays unmarried, etc.'

St. Patrick's Day 17 March 1949, extracts from the diary: 'Today 40 of our children have been in Ireland for almost 2-3 years'.

A letter by Ingrid to her mother:

For me a journey was like fairytale - it lasts three days at all, we started by car to Rheine and changed to the train leading us to Hock Van Holland. There we went on a ship to Harwich. In England, we have been collected by cars, which brought us to London. We have been welcomed with open arms and enjoyed the marvellous meals.

The next day again we travelled by ship to the harbour of Dublin.

One of these German children is our neighbour here in Roundwood. The founder and designer of the inspirational sculpture and philosophy park 'Victoria's Way' overlooking Djouce Mountain, Victor Langheld. The park comprises of combined Irish and Indian works of art. A meditation path gives us contemplation space and offers us the exploration of human capacity and willingness for creative change and channelling our energy into meaningful activity. One expects such ideas from Victor who emerged from firestorm of Dresden in Germany to begin his second life in Ireland as a six year old boy in 1946. He grew up in Bray, Co. Wicklow.

50 years later, there was the great reunion at Glencree . . . To-day, 22 people still live in Ireland, their new Heimat, some married to the Irish. They remember fondly the big 'adventure' of their life and are grateful for the generosity of Irish people's humanitarian actions, aware of the dangers of the war.

Glencree continues as a Centre for Reconciliation. In the nineties, there was an appeal and the Glencree Peace Bond was issued with the motto:

Remember that while governments are responsible for making peace, and security forces are responsible for keeping peace, we are all responsible for building peace.

It is an autonomous organisation that seeks to work together with all who are trying to build peace. In whatever area of society, Glencree is firmly identified with the aspiration to build a pluralist Ireland.

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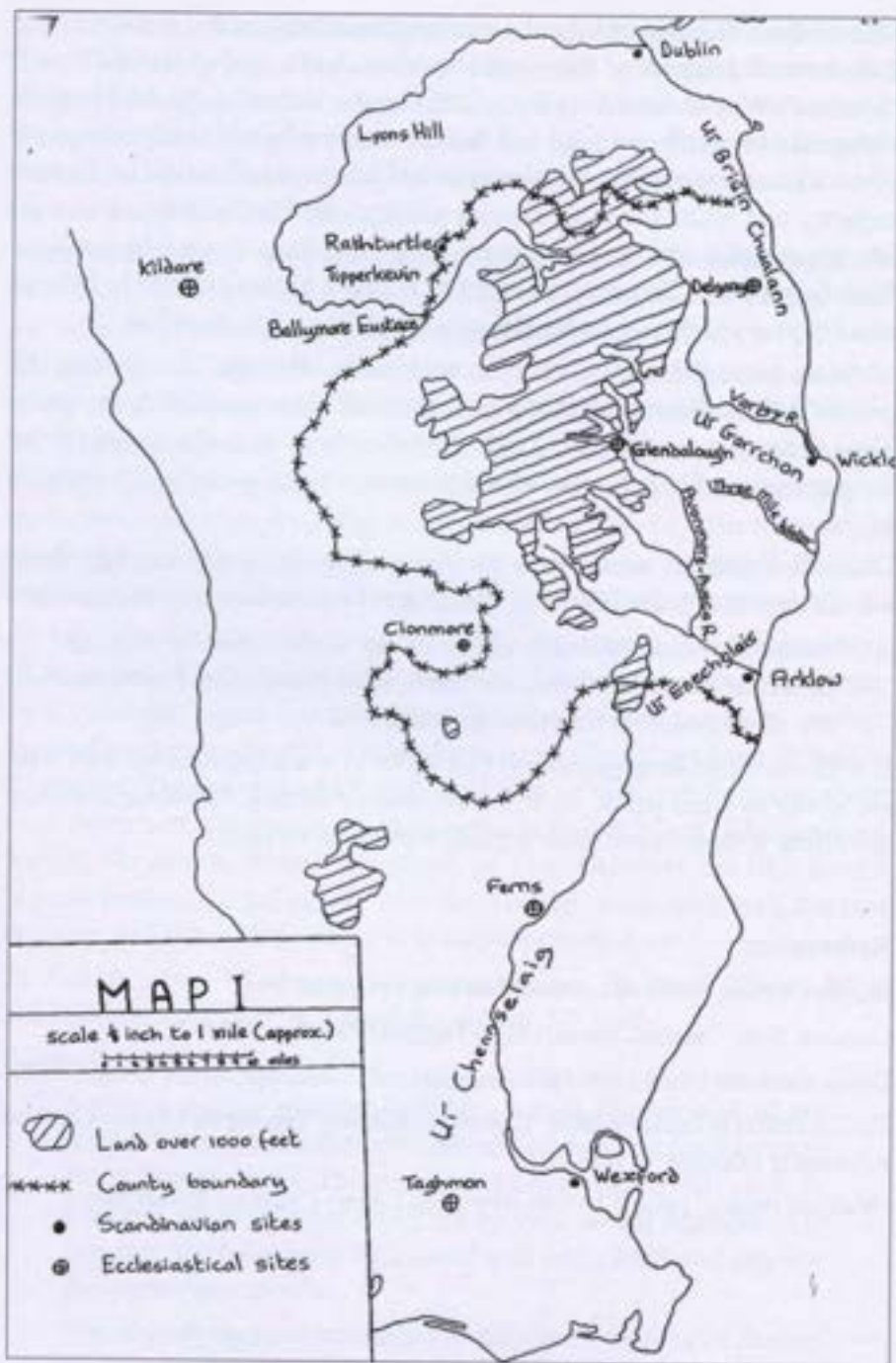
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The Exhibition in Glencree 2006, 'Operation Shamrock', Saving the German Children Reunited at Glencree 50 years later

'Wicklow People' 1946 to 1950 Ballywaltrim Library Courtesy: Robert Butler



The Vikings in County Wicklow

Colmán Etchingham

**Given as part of the Society's seminar
'Wicklow's History 400 -1606', 21 October 2006**

The Vikings are notorious for the raids they mounted on various parts of Europe from the late eighth century. It is increasingly appreciated that the Vikings were also settlers and traders who, in the case of Ireland, pioneered the development of a number of leading coastal towns: Dublin, Limerick, Waterford and Wexford, as well as smaller, less well-documented places, like Arklow and Wicklow. Elsewhere in western Europe, unlike Ireland, Viking settlement was mostly rural. Until relatively recently, historians and archaeologists considered that Viking settlers in Ireland confined themselves to coastal trading towns. Absence of rural Viking settlement suggested little interaction between Vikings as settlers and the native Irish. More recently, however, limited evidence for rural settlement in Ireland is recognised. Viking rural settlers supplied the adjacent town-dwellers with foodstuffs and raw materials. Dublin was, perhaps, the urban focus for rural Viking settlement in Co. Wicklow, extending to Arklow and beyond (Bradley, 1988).¹ Alternatively, perhaps small towns at Wicklow and Arklow were themselves the foci of local rural Vikings. Interpreting the fragmentary evidence for the early Middle Ages is generally hazardous. This paper will largely avoid conjectural interpretations and will simply outline the evidence for the Co. Wicklow Vikings: contemporary documents, archaeology, later records shedding retrospective light on the Vikings, and place-names.

Vikings are first noticed in Co. Wicklow in the annals - contemporary brief notices of key events - for 827, when Vikings destroyed a Leinster encampment and killed the ruler of Ui Garrchon (near Wicklow town) (Map I). This was the era of the earliest Viking coastal raiding bases, some of which - such as Dublin, established by 841 - subsequently became towns. Vikings from *Inber Deae*, a base apparently on the Wicklow coast,

¹ Space precludes references to all sources, which are found in my longer paper on the subject (Etchingham, 1994)

raided Kildare in 836. Liam Price made a good case for identifying this place with Arklow (Price, 1941, 274). It is the first Viking raiding base in Ireland named in the annals. It was probably from *Inber Deae* / Arklow that other churches were raided: Glendalough (834 and perhaps 836), Clonmore Co. Carlow (835), Ferns Co. Wexford (835 and perhaps 839). We do not know if *Inber Deae* / Arklow was settled continuously thereafter, or if Viking Wicklow also dates from this time: annals tell us little more about Vikings in Co. Wicklow, but further raids on Glendalough occurred in 889 and 983, the latter mounted from Dublin.

Some archaeological evidence of Scandinavian settlement in Co. Wicklow is early, some later. Two silver-decorated bronze oval brooches, a silver wire chain and silver needle case, found in the nineteenth century, somewhere between Three-Mile-Water and Arklow, indicate female Viking pagan burial. The date is before about 950, when Christianised Vikings began to be buried without grave-goods. Fourteen fragments of a silver-decorated Viking sword found at the Murragh, Wicklow town, in 1888, also suggests a burial. The Round Mount at the north end of Wicklow town (Map III) could be, in origin, a Viking assembly mound (Price, 1945-67, xxii), close to the early ecclesiastical site of St Patrick's. A grave-slab inscription at Glendalough, now obliterated, allegedly commemorated *Gutnodar* - a Norse name - as carver (Macalister, 1945, 84-6, plate XXXVI). Thus, by the eleventh or twelfth century, an ethnic Viking perhaps worked as craftsman for a church raided by his forebears. Finally, Rathturtle hilltop fort near Blessington (Map I) is a pre-historic earthwork evidently re-used by settled Vikings. The element 'Turtle' comes from Torcall, the eleventh-century founder of the twelfth-century Mac Torcaill Dublin ruling family. The *Book of Rights*, about AD 1100, describes nearby Lyons Hill, on the Dublin-Kildare county boundary, as a Dublin Viking stronghold.

In the twelfth century, local Irish rulers, Uí Enechglais and Uí Garrechon, were still in situ near Arklow and Wicklow, despite Viking settlement (Map I). The *Book of Rights* calls the ruler of the Arklow area *rí an Indbir* ('king of the Estuary'), referring, it seems, to *Inber Deae* (later *Inber Mór*). Does this mean that Vikings of Arklow (and Wicklow) were subjects of the local Irish, but that Arklow, at least, was the centre of the local lordship? There is fragmentary evidence of continuing Viking presence in north Wicklow.

Annals report the king of Leinster defeating the king of Dublin at Delgany (1021), with a 'slaughter of the Foreigners in *Uí Briúin Chualann*', presumably Viking settlers in south Dublin and north Wicklow (known as Cualu). In the early twelfth century, the Irish lord of the 'Men of Cualu' induced his superiors, the kings of Dublin and Leinster, to relax onerous Dublin taxes on the lands of Cualu. It seems north Wicklow Irish and Vikings alike in this period were direct subjects of the lord of Cualu, who was, in turn, subject to Dublin, whose king was sometimes, in turn, subject to the king of Leinster.

Further links between Dublin and Christianised Vikings of north Wicklow are the Rathdown grave-slabs, from the barony of Rathdown, straddling the Dublin-Wicklow county boundary (Map II). Motifs on these slabs resemble carvings from Viking Dublin (Ó hÉailidhe, 1973) (Figures 1, 2). Among churches housing Rathdown slabs, Tully, near Cabinteely, has documented links with the twelfth-century Dublin Mac Torcaill family. Tully, like most Rathdown slab sites, is in Co. Dublin, but Killegar near Enniskerry - location of the most elaborately carved slab - Kilbride (Violet Hill) and Kilbride (Fairy Hill, properly Killarney) - both in Bray - are in Co. Wicklow. Killegar and Ballyman, just 100 yards outside Co. Wicklow, were attached to Glendalough - where the Viking carver Gutnodar was allegedly commemorated.

Anglo-Norman documents shed retrospective light on the 'Ostmen' ('Easterners' or Norwegians), as Viking settlers called themselves. A charter of 1185 grants to St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, 'land at *Wichinglo* that belonged to the Ostmen'. This indicates an identifiable Ostman community at Wicklow and shows the original form of the name Wicklow contained 'Viking', used as a personal name, combined with *ló*, 'a low meadow near water' ('Viking's meadow'). Arklow contains the latter element, combined with the personal name Arnkell or Arnetill. Other late twelfth and thirteenth-century documents mention residents of Wicklow town and Arklow, whose names show they were Ostmen. The 'Lands of Wicklow and Arklow' under the Anglo-Normans denoted the towns plus their extensive hinterlands, perhaps reflecting small Hiberno-Viking lordships that pre-dated the Anglo-Normans' arrival (Map III). Whether these were distinct from, or overlapped with local Gaelic lordships, *Uí Garrechon* and *Uí Enechglais*, is unclear. The Anglo-Norman lord of Leinster Strongbow's

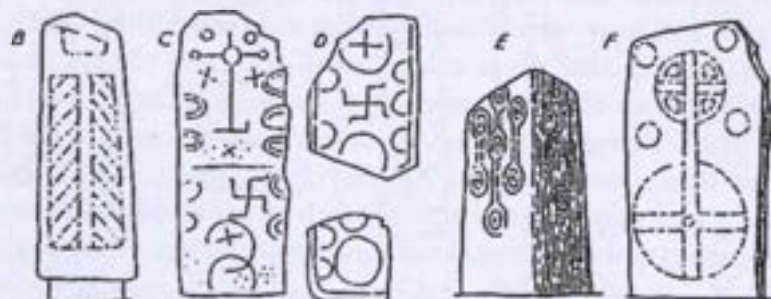
charter to Glendalough, given before 1176, lists numerous possessions in the 'Lands'. There is negligible evidence of Norse place-names, but Ballydonnell and Ballycapple townlands, near Redcross, commemorate Domnall mac Capaill, the local lord when the Anglo-Normans came. *Capall* is rare as an Irish personal name, and it might translate the Norse word for a horse, *hest*, which occurs as a personal name (Price, 1945-67, 452). Was Domnall ethnically or culturally half-Irish, half-Viking? Finally, a possible late reflex of Viking settlement is the surname Doyle (from Irish *Dubgall* 'Black Foreigner'), borne by sixteenth and seventeenth-century tenants of Butler estates around Arklow (Price, 1941, 285). *Dubgall* denoted a Viking in ninth and tenth-century Irish annals but, by the early eleventh century, it was a personal name among Gaelicised Viking settlers.

Viking settlement in north Wicklow is corroborated by Anglo-Norman documents and place-names. Early thirteenth-century landowners at Ballymore, near Blessington (Map I), included 'Downall son of Helge' (from Norse *Helgi*) and Turstinus (from *Thorsteinn*), a canon of St Patrick's, Dublin. Strongbow granted Walter de Riddlesford 'Brien and the land of the sons of Turchil'. This refers to the Mac Torcaill Dublin rulers aforementioned, whose lands granted to de Riddlesford extended from Tully to the Dargle at Bray. They included Curtlestown near Powerscourt, which contains a corruption of 'Torcall'. Thirteenth-century land-holders in Glencree and Glencullen bore names showing they were Ostmen. Windgate and Coolagad, townland-names south of Bray, contain the Norse word *gata* ('road'), referred to in the early thirteenth century as the 'royal road that is called *Windgate*'. This was probably a pre-Norman road from Dublin to Viking rural settlements in north Wicklow, and perhaps beyond. Ballygunarr (containing the Norse personal name Gunarr) is an obsolete place-name, seemingly in Bellevue townland, near Delgany (Price, 1945-67, 318-320, 325). Viking settlement hereabouts ties in with the record of the battle of Delgany in 1021 (Map II).

Limited evidence permits but limited conclusions about the Vikings in Co. Wicklow. There was early Viking raiding and an early base, likely located at Arklow. There were probable pagan burials near Three-Mile-Water and at the Murrough, while Rathturtle suggests Dublin influence in northwest Co. Wicklow around AD 1100. There is historical, archaeological and place-name evidence for Viking settlement in northeast Co. Wicklow,



Bvam from stave church. Sweden



Tanfield.

Craignurget

Aspatria

Innerleithen

Llanspyddy

NOT TO SCALE

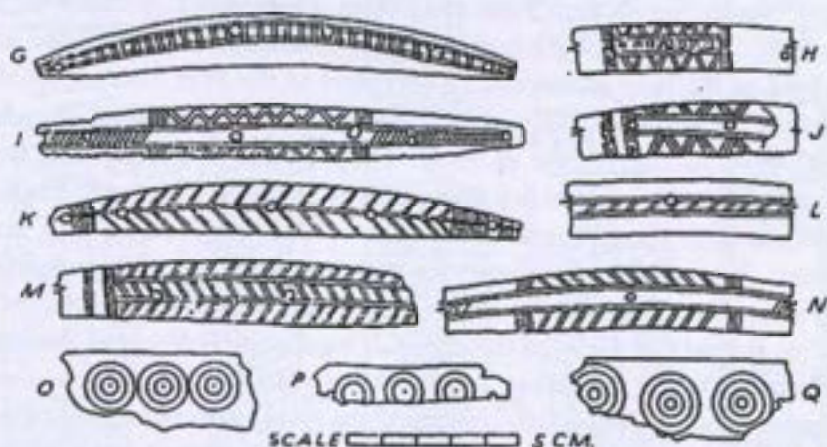


Fig.2 Parallels with the motifs of the Rathdown slabs: A-F, wooden and stone monuments (B-D Northumbria, E Scotland, F Wales); G-Q, bone and antler carvings from High St. and Winetavern St. (after Ó hÉailidhe, *R.S.A.I.Jn. ciii*, p.58).

evidently an extension of the Dublin urban centre, but local Irish lords of the 'men of Cualu' also wielded influence here. Further south, it is not clear whether the centres at Wicklow town and Arklow dominated, or were dominated by the adjacent local Irish lordships. One cannot discern an effective Dublin lordship - the *Dyflinarskíri* ('Dublinshire') of Norse saga, beloved of some modern writers - extending to Arklow and beyond. In Co. Wicklow, as elsewhere, the relationship between Viking rural settlements and the neighbouring Gaelic Irish was probably more complex but, in truth, remains largely obscure.

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* * * * *

Thoughts on Changing Lifestyles

How to tell our fortunes now? Tea bags sit as a lump at the bottom of the cup. None of those wonderful patterns of tealeaves to read to foretell the future. Does this mean life is solid and boring?

When will there be post? Tea leaves floating on your cup could predict whether it was a letter or parcel and delivery day!

We were told at school that if you used the same pencil for a test that you used for studying, the pencil will remember the answers. Was never sure this was true, either that or I only had stupid pencils. Can biro's be trained better.....

What do you turn for good luck, when you see a new moon outside? It used to be silver, but which € coin will it be?

St Kevin's Depot



Aerial view taken in the days of the Garden Café probably mid 80s



In 1990s

W S Doyle And The St Kevin's Bus Service

Martin C Timmons

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the founding of the S. Kevin's Bus Service by Willie Doyle and here we take a brief look at its history and unique contribution to the area. WS Doyle was a native of Greystones who married local girl Jane Maloney. He first came to Roundwood to work on the construction of the 'New Works' of the reservoir. As a result of being involved in organising a union for the workers, he fell foul of management and subsequently left after a strike, circa 1921. He then started a taxi service after purchasing a car from Rev Halligan, the protestant minister of Derralossary. This had previously been the first car registered in the locality. He subsequently started a small garage and filling station at Togher Beg and soon deduced that Roundwood and Laragh were badly in need of a bus service.

The Wicklow Hills Bus Company owned by Thomas Fitzpatrick had operated from Enniskerry to St. Stephen's Green from 1923. Later it also served Bray, Greystones, Delgany and Kilcoole. Willie Doyle no doubt felt that the rural areas of Roundwood, Annamoe and Laragh were badly in need of a similar service. Community leaders such as Fr Butler and Dr Harte supported Willie Doyle in his endeavour as did all members of the community. At the time, most of the ordinary people in the area had to walk or cycle to Bray, Wicklow Town and Rathdrum on business and shopping trips.

Although there were few cars in the area luckily there was one local family who knew all about motorized transport. The Archer family held the first franchise for Ford cars in Ireland and owned lands at Ballinrush near Lough Dan. Willie Doyle sought the advice of Dick Archer about his plan and he gave the young entrepreneur every backing in his efforts. As a result, Willie Doyle acquired a 14-seat Chevrolet from Archer that he christened the St Kevin's Bus Service and it took to the road from Roundwood to St Stephen's Green in Dublin for the first time in 1927. In 1928, a special Sunday Mass bus was provided for outlying areas, which took a route via Annacarter, Stoneypass, Glasnamullen, Powers Lane and Ballinastoe. This service ran until the 1960s.



William Doyle and the first bus in 1927

The garage at Togher Beg was the original depot before the new garage on Main Street across from the church opened circa 1933. This garage served until recent times when a new state of the art depot was constructed at Newlands beside where Willie Doyle had built a fine house circa 1940. The early days on the Dublin run were difficult with no tarmac on the roads and the potholes on Calary were so bad that Willie was obliged to carry a saw to cut bushes by which he marked the holes so as not to drive into them on the return journey.

There were other more serious problems however as in 1932 when the Irish Omnibus Company (who had the contract to carry the mails from Greystones to Roundwood) on seeing the potential of Willie's venture attempted to compete on the route. Willie Doyle had a circular printed, which was handed out at church gates asking the local people for support. As a result, the service was saved and with few exceptions has run continually ever since.

During the Emergency (War) years here, the Department of Transport wanted the Sunday bus service to be cancelled, to save fuel. However, St Kevin's Bus Service was used so much at the weekend. It was a two-way traffic, giving people working elsewhere the opportunity to come home for the weekend and also allowing locals to visit sick and hospitalised relatives. A compromise was reached, the weekend service remained but a midweek run was cancelled.



The fleet outside the 'Wicklow Hills', now the Roundwood Inn - 1950s

CIE was founded in 1945 and basically became a state transport monopoly in 1950, it showed no interest in taking over St Kevin's route as it was not considered profitable.

The only time the St Kevin's Bus was off the road for a sustained period was during the 'Big Snow' of 1947. A blizzard blew up on Saturday night February 1st 1947 and the bus was unable to travel for the first time on Sunday 2nd February. It was to be some six weeks later on St Patrick's Day before the bus was back in regular service.

Throughout the years, the bus has fulfilled many roles and has provided a very personal service to the people of the district. Miss Smyth of Glendalough used to hoist a flag outside her house if she wanted the bus to stop to collect her in the morning. During the Second World War when fuel was scarce, the bus was barely able to cope, with passengers being literally stuffed in to all available spaces. The St Kevin's has been used as an emergency ambulance to Wicklow and as a hearse to Glendalough. It has also been used to transport animals and agriculture produce by local farmers. Bonham's in sacks were carried on the racks, and on one occasion a horse owned by a traveller was carried when the owner promised the mare would be quiet and lie on the floor.

It was on the St Kevin's Bus that generations of excited local children made their first journey to Bray and Dublin to see Santa etc. On a more serious note, the bus carried many an emigrant youth from the area on the first part of the journey to England to seek work. The conductors and drivers also fulfilled many social roles from putting on a bet, to bringing home urgently needed medicines for sick people in the Roundwood/Glendalough area, which until recently had no pharmacy.



*St Kevin's Bus in Bray - 1968. This was a Leyland with a Tiger Body: bought from the Ribble Valley bus company hence the English plates.
Photographer: John Turner*

Many a local living in Dublin was known to wait at Stephen's Green to have a chat with the driver to enquire how things were 'up the mountains'. The St Kevin's Bus believed in tradition to such an extent that it was said that if a native from the area arrived back in Ireland after many years away and made their way to St Stephen's Green around 6pm they could easily spot the blue and white bus with the St Kevin's logo. It would be parked and ticking over, ready to head for the hills as it has done almost uninterrupted since WS Doyle departed from the Green in his 14-seat Chevrolet in 1927. Unfortunately, this tradition ended in 2004 when new traffic management plans came into force. As a result, the Dublin terminus is now located in Dawson Street.

In 1955, W S Doyle was succeeded as proprietor of the service by his son Pat, who in turn was succeeded by his son John. Recently, John's son William, (Great Grandson of WS) has taken over the running of the company and thus carries on a proud tradition started by his great grandfather over 80 years ago. Obviously, buses do not run forever either and over the eighty years, more than forty buses have sported the St Kevin's livery, which also changed in design over the years.

Ballinasoostia

Mrs Nancy Somers's memories, as told to Dairine Coffey

The townland of Ballinasoostia is divided by a green road, the old Viking road. To the west is a second crop of young trees planted by Coilte. To the east, there is well-tended farmland, gorse and rocks, steep land with sheep grazing - magical views over Calary towards Djouce and spreading south and eastwards with a glimpse of the sea. The small house amongst some trees is far from anywhere, with the remains of stone farm buildings and the upright stones of a corn-stack next to it. The farm track passes the outline of the dry-stone garden wall, once protecting red and black currants, gooseberries and other fruits and vegetables, apples too, and then passes steeply through massive dry-stone walls with a mix of huge boulders and more ordinary stones, and on across the fields. The farm is surrounded by well maintained dry-stone walls.

The house and farm were bought by the Somers family just over a hundred years ago, the house known as the Coachman's House from the time when it was part of the Altidore Estate. Joe and Nancy Somers lived there for a



The farmhouse at Ballinasoostia 2007

few years after they were married, but in 1961 moved to the Hughes' house at Killinpark, just down the road, extending their farming and with better access to schools for their two boys. Peter Somers, one of her sons, is now the farmer. People may remember Ballinasoostia house as it appeared in Ballykissangel.

There was no electricity. The drinking water came from a nearby well, but there was tap water from a hydraulic ram installed by Joe Somers when his first son was born. A Rayburn was also installed at the same time - plenty of hot water. The ram was the same as one he had seen at Derrylossary School.

The hydraulic ram was invented by Etienne Montgolfier in 1797, (one of the Montgolfier brothers, inventors of the hot air balloon!). It is a way of getting flowing water to rise above the flow without any additional energy. This one is still at the bottom of the hill, by a stream with a good flow though a mere hand-span wide. The water was raised up a steep field and stored in a tank. Sadly the spare parts are unattainable and the ram is no longer chugging away! The Derrylossary ram was eventually bought by Joe Somers and was set up at Killinpark, but is now in bits.

Mrs Somers, now over ninety, has good memories of the first five years of her marriage at Ballinasoostia: of how the best bread she ever made was



The hydraulic ram

in a pot oven by an open fire, with buttermilk from their own cows who grazed the hill grass there. When the cows were moved to Killinpark the butter was never so good as it had been and it did not age well. (No, the cows were not fed on rape or turnips! Perhaps it was the change to lush lowland grass.)

Her mother's version of Colcannon: *It used to be done with new potatoes and parsnip and onion and white cabbage. They'd be all cooked together, all mashed together and then they'd be given to us and we'd get a plate of that with a big piece of butter in it.* (Homemade, of course.)

Then in the morning we always had what we used to call stir-about. We always laugh about that. It's porridge now. And it was made with oaten-meal, and my father used (to take the oats down to the mill... the pinhead oatmeal... , and it would be made in the evening and be left there on a hot coal, hot ashes, beside the fire all night... the three legged skillet pot and a lid we had that with lots of milk. And the skin... everybody wanted the skin in the morning. (The crisp stir-about skin that was stuck to the pot.)

Dancing at the mill at Ballinastoe

I took my bicycle there. There used to be dances and country clubs up around there: ceiles, step dances, set dances, waltzes - I loved waltzing. Someone singing; the music a harmonica played by ... was it Joe Taylor? People came from Greystones. There was a girl in it, a McDonnell, and she married a Doyle. (She was a one of the 'McDonnell's of the mill' as it was always known. The mill building has now gone, but the Doyles live next to the site of it.)

Killinpark. 1961

The Hughes' cottage, to which they had just moved, had an extension known as the bungalow. Ben Clarkson was a family friend and neighbouring farmer. *There was a little bungalow out there. Do you know about the bungalow? Hughes, they'd people used to come there for the weekends... a group of walkers and others. Of course it was my brother-in-law, Joe's brother, Jimmy.... I didn't recognise him. We met with Ben the next day. Ben said, 'Oh she didn't know me says he, says Jimmy, going off with her nose in the air'. So Ben: 'That's going to be what she's going to be like from all that now because she's moved down amongst the elite people, and she'll be too grand to live with me!'*

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We especially welcome contributions from those living locally or overseas
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