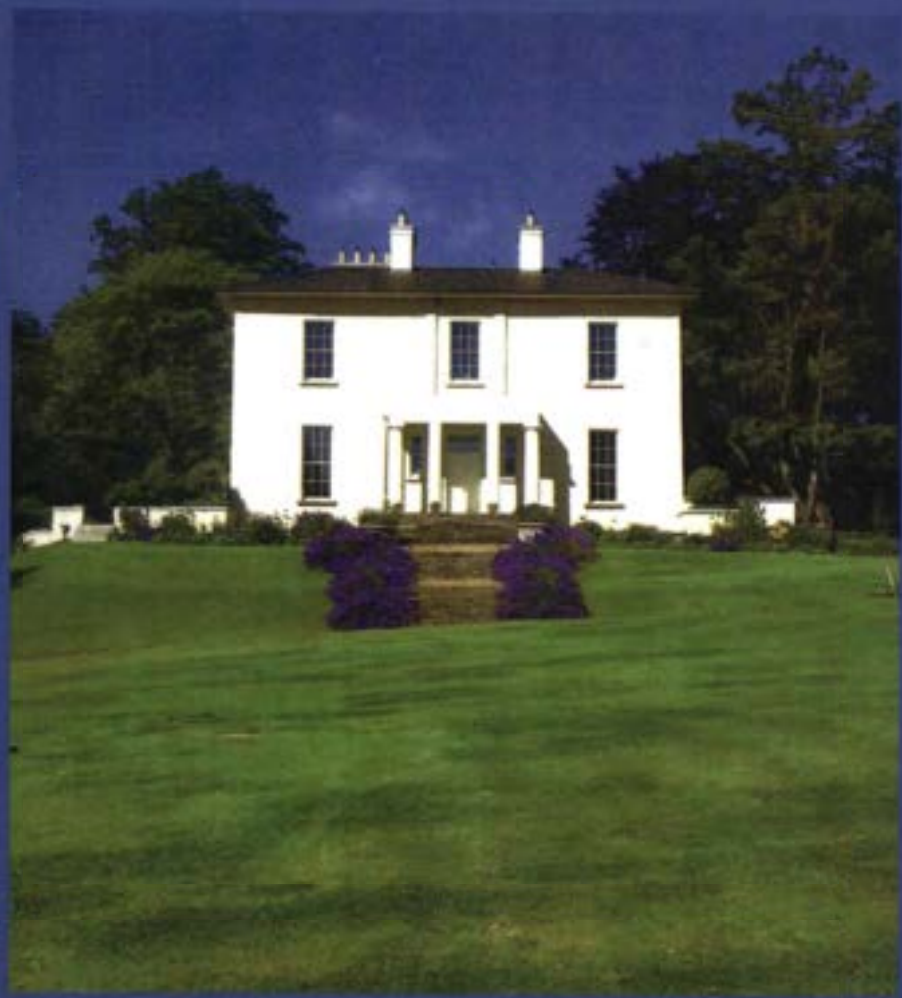


ROUNDWOOD & DISTRICT
HISTORICAL & FOLKLORE JOURNAL



Journal No. 28, 2019

€10

Additional Patron:

Andrew Doyle

Our Patrons

Avonmore Game Club	An Tochar GAA Club
Access Automation	John Boorman
Thomas & Monica Brady	Sean Byrne
Harry & Eileen Conway	Crown Roofing Ltd.
Fintan Fanning	Monica Farrell
Flynn Refrigeration	Colm & Sylvaine Galligan
Paddy & Pauline Hanlon	Noel Kavanagh Motors
Kavanagh Construction	Keeley's Hardware
McCoy's Service Station	John & Elinor Medlycott
David & Gale Menzies	The Coachhouse, Roundwood
Miller Bros. Stone Company	Sam Mooney
Roundwood Minibus Service	John & Tempe Pearson
Price's Garage	Roundwood Inn
Jim & Mary Slattery	St. Kevin's Bus Service
Sugar Mountain Café	Joe Synnott
The Green Room	Varry House
Kathryn Ward	Altura Credit Union
Roundwood Pharmacy	Ian Cantwell
Keith Grant Butchers	Brennan Woulahan Funeral Directors

Cover Photograph : Croneybyrne House after its restoration some 9 years ago

Table of Contents

Our Patrons	1
From the Chair – <i>David Menzies</i>	3
Antiquities of Wicklow - <i>Agatha Mansfield</i>	6
The Byrnes of Croneybyrne, Co. Wicklow – <i>Edward Byrne</i>	9
William Joseph Duffy – <i>Ian Cantwell</i>	22
Events of 2018/2019	25
1948-57 Glendalough Miners – <i>Joe Timmons</i>	26
Articles from the Newspaper Archives – <i>Margaret Connolly</i>	29
Some 19 th Century Soldiers of Roundwood – <i>Ian Cantwell</i>	37
RDHFS Committee's 2017 – 2019	39
Ashtown's Medieval 13th Century Church and Enclosure - <i>David Menzies</i>	40
Memories of my time as the local Postman – <i>Jack Byrne</i>	44
General Eisenhower's visit to Roundwood – <i>Joe Kavanagh</i>	49
The Fair Village of Roundwood in 1888 – <i>Chris Lawlor</i>	51

From the Chair

It is a great pleasure for me to introduce our 28th Roundwood and District Historical, Folklore and Archaeological Society's Journal for 2019.

I am delighted that Chris Corlett has agreed to launch this year's Journal. Chris has presented some very interesting talks to the Society over the years and is the author of a number of successful publications on the archaeology and history of County Wicklow, including 'Wicklow's Traditional Farmhouses', 'Beneath the Poulaphuca Reservoir' and 'Glendalough', published in 2017.

Roundwood is surrounded by history from the earliest times, through the medieval period and up to the formation of the state in the early 20th century. Our Journals, over the last thirty two years have managed to capture and record many of the events that have contributed to our rich historical heritage. I hope you enjoy reading our latest edition.

County Wicklow, the youngest Irish county – created in 1606 – derives its name from the old Norse name Vikingalo, meaning Vikings Meadow. Hence Wicklow is sometimes referred to as The Garden of Ireland. As well as having many splendid gardens, such as Powerscourt, Kilmacurragh and Mount Usher, Wicklow has a great range of other historical and archaeological attractions to entice people from home and abroad to visit throughout the year.

Nestled amongst its dramatically beautiful mountains are some of the most geologically interesting glacial valleys and lakes to be seen anywhere in these islands. One of these secluded valleys was to attract a contemplative monk to settle there in the 6th century AD. Today, Glendalough and the monastic settlement founded by St Kevin is the second biggest tourist attraction in Ireland, after Killarney.

Closer to home and within walking distance of the village of Roundwood, there are a significant number of historical sites, some with links dating back to the early settlement of Glendalough. The 'motte and bailey' ruins at Castlekevin together with the three medieval churches of Derralossary, Knockatemple and Ashtown played major roles in the power plays between state and church in the 12th and 13th centuries particularly after Glendalough came under the control of the Archbishop of Dublin in 1216.

The early medieval ringforts of Diamond Hill, Tomdarragh, Ballinahinch and a cluster of enclosures at Sraghmore indicate evidence of early settlements and farming in the Roundwood area. Surplus produce from the farms could possibly have been provided to the monks at Glendalough, for their own use or onward sale to Dublin.

From a more recent time in our history there are many fine 'big houses' in the vicinity of Roundwood, some dating back to the early 19th century and each with a unique story to tell. Closest to the village is Roundwood Park, a fine castle style country house dating from around 1810 and once the home of President Sean T O'Kelly. The visit of United States President Dwight. D. Eisenhower to Roundwood in 1962 is recounted in this year's Journal.

The Society since its foundation in 1987 has been gathering and recording information of a local historical and folklore nature. We always endeavour, through our Journals, regular talks and outings, to provide a focal point for the local community to participate in discovering and recounting these great stories and events from our past. We welcome new members, young and old, to come and join the Society, make new friends and learn about our local history and heritage.

I am delighted therefore that this year's Journal continues the tradition of including stories and articles from local families. As well as the article on President Eisenhower's visit to Roundwood there is a very fine piece on the Byrnes of Croneybyrne, The Fair Village of Roundwood in 1888 and the life and times of the Glendalough Miners.

Over the winter months our talks series has covered topics such as the building of the Military Road from Rathfarnham to Glenmalure, the formation of the first Dail in 1919 and the Kynochs explosives factory in Arklow during the First World War.

As in previous years the committee and members celebrated Christmas in the Roundwood Inn and our thanks are extended to Jurgen and Helen Schwalm for laying on a most delicious festive meal.

Our recent summer outings have included enjoyable trips to see the Royal College of Surgeons' museum in Dublin, the Medieval city of Kilkenny

and most recently to view the Robert Emmett museum at Altidore House during Heritage Week 2019.

My thanks goes to our hard working committee – Mary Slattery, John Pearson, Jane Pierce, Linda Browne and Shona Shortt – for ensuring the smooth running of the Society and the many events organised for members during the year.

I would like to extend a big thank you to our many patrons without whose assistance it would not be possible to produce this Journal.

Also, a special tribute needs to be paid this year to our Editorial Board and our Editor Mary Slattery for the many hours they have spent collating and proofing the articles for this year's edition of the Journal.

Before concluding I would like to pay a mark of respect to some recently deceased members and patrons of the Society, including Peter Farrell, Aine Schwalm, Terry Kavanagh, The Hon Garech de Brun and Dieter Lonishen.

It was with great sadness in 2018 that we learnt of the death of our Vice Chairman Peter Farrell. Peter was not only a friend but also an historian, storyteller and tireless committee worker who was ready to offer advice and guidance – and always with a smile. We offer our condolences to Peter's wife Monica and his sons Peter D., Cormac, Lochlainn and Patrick.

David Menzies

Chairman.

Copies of this Journal may be ordered from roundwoodhistorical@gmail.com or by contacting any member of the committee. Copies of previous publications are also available.

We especially welcome contributions from those living locally or overseas and those who used to live in Co. Wicklow.

Articles and/or photographs may be submitted to any member of the Society or emailed to roundwoodhistorical@gmail.com

Antiquities of Wicklow

Agathe De Vere Mansfield

There is evidence that Wicklow was inhabited by man during the New Stone Age (Neolithic) period. After the retreat of the ice about 13,000 years ago, the first farming communities arrived in Ireland probably around 3,000 BC. Much of the land was heavily forested and had to be cleared for agriculture.

As the population increased, they built "long-barrows" for burial. It was also the period of construction of varieties of the tombs.

Apart from these Neolithic tombs, one can find other monuments such as forts, crannogs, stone circles, motte-stone, standing stones, hone alignments, ancient cooking places, etc.

I must mention, that in my garden, while digging to plant the grape seedling in addition to my existing vineyard (in the greenhouse), I found a lozenge-shaped flint that stone-age people had left behind. I cherish it very much and its age was confirmed by Trinity College, Dublin.

I took these photographs while exploring the pre-historic sites with my husband, in County Wicklow. I shall describe the two passage-tombs that impressed us mostly.

*The entrance to the passage tomb on
Seeffin Mountain*

Photograph by Agatha Mansfield



The first one is on Seefin Mountain, not far from Roundwood, overlooking the Blessington Lake, a lovely climb up of about 700 feet through heather to the top of the hill where there is a passage - grave under a mound of stones. The chamber is approached through two stones bearing concentric diamond like motifs, resembling the human face. One roof stone of the chamber near the entrance bears a decoration consisting of five lines. The corbelled roof of the chamber is incomplete and I entered it through a hole in the top of it. The grave has probably been open for a long time and much of it is covered with moss, visible on the enclosed photograph. An early Christian equal-armed cross can be seen on one of the roofing stones. There is a splendid view of the surrounding area from the top of the hill.



*Passage Tomb on Seefin Hill.
Inner chamber showing corbel
technique seen from the cairn.*

Photograph by Agatha Mansfield

The other is the Burial Mound and Hill-fort on Baltinglass Hill. One has to climb up through fields over ditches and across boggy hillside to the top of the hill.

On the top of the hill there is a double ring of stones. At the northerly point of the ring there is a passage-grave with a front passage and a stone basin bearing faint decoration including one of cruciform design. Towards the south-west of the ring there is another passage-grave, this time with five recesses off a central chamber, and two stones decorated with spirals. The third grave is in the north-western position of the ring, overlain by the stones of the inner ring.



Baltinglass Hill burial mound and hillfort. Photograph by Agathe Mansfield

There are also other minor structures. The passage-graves were built in the late Stone Age.

In the early Iron Age (500 BC to AD 500) the ring of stones was surrounded on the outside by a large defensive stone wall, while further down the hill slope there are two concentric stone walls which probably also belonged to the Iron Age fortification system.

On the top of the hill is a modern-day enormous cross which is illuminated on Christmas Day every year.

Bibliography:

1. Antiquities of the Irish Countryside by Sean O'Riordain and Ruaidhe De Valera; Professor of Celtic Archaeology of University College Dublin, 1979.
2. Guide to the monuments of Ireland, Gill and Macmillan, 1975, Peter Harbison, Archaeological Officer with Bord Failte.

The Byrnes of Cronybyrne, Co Wicklow¹

Edward Byrne²

Introduction

The townland of Cronybyrne (otherwise Croneybyrne)³, comprising some 198 acres, is situated near Clara Vale, some 8 Km North of Rathdrum, in the Barony of Newcastle, Parish of Derrylossary and District Electoral Division of Trooperstown. The names 'Cronybyrne' and 'Croneybyrne' are often used interchangeably, the two spellings sometimes appearing in the same document. The writer is following the convention of using the spelling as found in the Townland Index, i.e. 'Cronybyrne'.⁴

Liam Price suggests that the name means 'O'Byrne's Hollow', the O'Byrnes, he says, very likely being the O'Byrnes of Gabhal Raghnaill, i.e. Fiach MacHugh O'Byrne's ancestral line.⁵ However, for reasons set out later, the present writer does not support this view. Local historians would suggest that the name means 'Little Wooded Valley of the Byrnes'. The first appearance of Cronybyrne in a map appears to be in the Down Survey of 1656-1658.⁶

The interest of the writer in the Byrnes of Cronybyrne arises from the fact that his great great grandfather, John Byrne (1810-1887) of Knockatemple was a tenant farmer to Andrew William Byrne, of

¹This essay first appeared in the *Irish Genealogist*, the journal of the Irish Genealogical Research Society in November 2017. It is reproduced here by kind permission of David Butler, Editor, the *Irish Genealogist*

²Edward Byrne was born in Knockatemple and lives in Portmarnock, Dublin

³Ordnance Survey *Name Books for Wicklow*, Parish of Derrylossary, Book 2 page 17, National Library of Ireland (NLI).

⁴ <https://www.townlands.ie>

⁵Liam Price, *The Place-names of Co Wicklow*, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies 1967 page 426.

⁶Map of the Down Survey of Ireland of 1656-1658

Cronybyrne, who was landlord of the entire townland of Knockatemple. No relationship between the two families has been established.

The Surname Byrne/O'Byrne

Byrne (variants: Byrnes, O'Byrne) is a surname derived from the Irish name Ó Broin and is the sixth most common surname in Ireland today⁷. In the Irish language, Ó Broin means "descendant of Bran". Bran was a son of Maolmordha, King of Leinster, who was defeated by Brian Boru, at the Battle of Clontarf in 1014. Bran succeeded his father as King of Leinster but was soon deposed. He, then, fled to Cologne, where he died in 1052⁸. The name Byrne, is therefore, monogenetic: i.e. it derives from a single person.

The name O'Byrne has no connection with the name O'Beirne, with which it is often confused and which is an entirely separate sept. The O'Beirne name is associated with the West of Ireland. Neither is there any connection with the name Burns of Scottish origin.

Paul Gorry states that, in 1851, there were 13,937 households in Co Wicklow and that 1,108 of them were of the surname Byrne (Ó Broin). This figure, he states, represented 8% of the households and of the population, thus making *Byrne* the most common surname in Co Wicklow.⁹

Arrival of the Byrnes in Cronybyrne

It is not known when the Byrnes first arrived in Cronybyrne nor is it known from where they came. Richard Pine suggests that they lived at Kilmacurragh but that, being Catholic, they were dispossessed of this land by Cromwellian soldiers and that they settled in the near-by

⁷ Sean J Murphy *A Survey of Irish Surnames 1992-1997*.
https://www.academia.edu/9204227/A_Survey_of_Irish_Surnames_1992-97.
Sourced March 2019.

⁸ Edward MacLysaght, *Irish Families*, Irish Academic Press 1991, p50

⁹ Paul Gorry, *Surnames of Co Wicklow Irish Roots*, 1997 Vol 1

Cronybyrne.¹⁰ That would seem to suggest that they arrived in Cronybyrne in the 1650s. Pine would appear to be supported in this view by The Hearth Money Rolls of 1669, which shows a Phelom Byrne in the Townland of Cronyvern (sic) and Parish of Darilosara (sic), Co Wicklow. It is reasonable to assume that Phelom was an ancestor of the Byrnes of Cronybyrne. Bernard Burke, of Burke's Peerage, suggests that they are descendants of Fiach McHugh O'Byrne.¹¹ However, there are reasons to believe that this supposition may not be correct. Firstly, it is generally believed that Fiach McHugh's line died out some 2 or 3 generations after he was killed by the English forces in 1597, as argued, amongst others, by Conor O'Brien.¹² More importantly, Dom Herbert Byrne OSB (1884-1978), a descendant of the Byrnes of Cronybyrne and one-time Abbot of Ampleforth Abbey, suggests that his ancestors came from Carlow. He further suggests that they arrived in Cronybyrne in the early 1800s.¹³

Significantly, Andrew Byrne of Croneburne (sic) in the Parish of Derrylossary made a claim on the (English) government under the '1798 Claimants and Surrenders' scheme. He successfully claimed £28-3-2 in respect of the loss of five houses during the 1798 Rebellion.¹⁴ This would place the Byrnes in Cronybyrne from, at least, the mid-18th century. A Deed of Release of 12 March 1812 from Charles Boyd to Laurence Byrne, son of the above Andrew Byrne, definitively places the Byrnes in Cronybyrne at that date.¹⁵ A date stone, taken from the original Cronybyrne House and built into the wall of one of the Cronybyrne lodges

¹⁰Richard Pine, *Charles, The Life and World of Charles Acton*, Lilliput Press, Dublin 2010 page 21.

¹¹Burke's *Irish Family Records*, London 1976, page 201.

¹²Conor O'Brien, 'The Byrnes of Ballymanus', pages 305-340, Ken Hannigan and William Nolan, Editors, *Wicklow History & Society: Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of an Irish County*, Geography Publications, Templeogue, Dublin 1994.

¹³Herbert Byrne OSB, Obituary: http://www.plantata.org.uk/obits/griffiths/byrne_h.htm, accessed 15 Feb 2016.

¹⁴1798 Claimants and Surrenders: <http://search.findmypast.ie/record?id=ire%2fenc013%2f5378>, accessed 20 March 2016

¹⁵Registry of Deeds, Book 643 Memorial 443968.

bears the name Wm O'Meara and date 1767. This would seem to suggest that William O'Meara lived there in 1767, a belief corroborated by neighbours and local historians. There is a Memorial Inscription to the O'Mearas in Glendalough cemetery. The local historians also say that the Byrnes came to Cronybyrne from Ballinabarney (near Greenane, Co Wicklow) and not from Kilmacurragh.

Andrew Byrne (1738-1820)

There is a large Memorial Inscription to the Byrnes of Cronybyrne in Glendalough Cemetery and this has been very helpful in establishing a reliable pedigree for the Byrnes.

The first definitive mention of a Byrne in Cronybyrne comes from this Memorial Inscription. We learn that Andrew Byrne died in 1820 aged 82 years suggesting that he was born in 1738. Bernard Burke suggests that Andrew is a son of John Byrne of the Gabhal Raghnaill line (Fiach MacHugh's line) but this claim cannot be independently verified and I believe that it is incorrect. Andrew Byrne's wife was believed to be Mary Ennis. She died in 1831 aged 93 years and she also is interred in Glendalough.

Laurence Byrne (1773-1840)

From the Memorial Inscriptions in Glendalough Cemetery we are told that Laurence Byrne of Cronybyrne lived from 1773 until his death in 1840. He was a son of Andrew Byrne and Mary Ennis. He married Jane Brady. She died, aged 52 years, in 1836.

William Nolan tells us that Larry Byrne of Cronybyrne was a 'middleman' who rented over 600 acres of peripheral land for little more than £100 and that he sub-let this, making a profit of over £300.¹⁶

¹⁶William Nolan, "Land and Landscapes in Co Wicklow", Hannigan and Nolan Editors, *Wicklow History & Society*, page 681.

He was also an agent for Capt Hugo of Dublin, who held more than 25,000 acres of land in 7 townlands in the parish of Derrylossary. (It is possible that the Hugos and the Byrnes were related)

Andrew William Byrne (1811-1875)

Andrew William Byrne was the son of Laurence Byrne and Jane Brady. He was born in 1811. He attended Clongowes Wood College from 1822 until 1826.¹⁷

On 17 November 1846 Andrew William Byrne made a Marriage Settlement with Frances Mary McDermott of Ballybla House, Ashford. Peter Byrne of Rathmines and Thomas McDermott (possibly Frances's brother) of Ballybla were the Trustees. As part of this Marriage Settlement and in the event of Andrew's death Frances was to receive an annuity of £200. Interestingly, the lands pledged for this settlement were the lands at Knockatemple.¹⁸

Andrew William Byrne and Frances Mary McDermott were duly married in St Patrick's Church, Wicklow on 24 November 1846.¹⁹ They had 11 children, ten of whom were baptised in Glendalough parish and one of whom was baptised in Rathmines parish.²⁰ Laurence William, the oldest, was born on 30 September 1847 and the youngest, Frances Maria, was born some 17 years later on 23 August 1864. All 6 boys followed their father into Clongowes and spent an aggregate of 36 years there.²¹ No information is available on the education of the girls.

Andrew William Byrne became a Magistrate for Wicklow in 1846 and held this post for almost 30 years until his death in 1875. During some of

¹⁷Archives, Clongowes Wood College, Sallins, Co Kildare.

¹⁸Registry of Deeds, Dublin, Year 1846, Book 18, Memorial 162.

¹⁹Catholic Parish Registers at NLI for Wicklow Parish,
<http://registers.nli.ie/parishes>: Microfilm 6482/03.

²⁰The same, Glendalough and Rathmines Parishes,
<http://registers.nli.ie/parishes>. Microfilms 6474 and 9200.

²¹Archives, Clongowes Wood College.

this period he also served as Deputy Vice Chairman of Rathdrum Poor Law Union.²²

Andrew William Byrne amassed significant wealth during his lifetime. He carried on a tannery business in Cronybyrne and he appears to have developed quite a market, giving employment to many people in the process. His grandson, Dom Herbert Byrne OSB (see below), claimed that the tannery was set up specifically to give employment to the poor in the wake of the failure of the potato crop in the 1840s.

In 1838 he is listed in Wicklow's Landed Gentry as holding 4,067 acres of land.²³ In 1852 he acquired a further 1,963 acres, from the Encumbered Estates' Court, in the parish of Hacketstown, Barony of Ballinacor South on the Carlow/Wicklow border at a cost of £7,335 or £2-14s per acre. This would appear to be less than 1/3 of the market price of land at that time. By the time of his death in 1875 his total holding was some 3,202 acres.²⁴

On 29 June 1831 Henrietta Duff leased to Andrew William Byrne the lands at Knockatemple, comprising 449 acres. On 5 June 1855 Andrew purchased this land from Alexander Jack (who had inherited Duff's interest) for £650. This was a very judicious purchase because in 1864 he received £5,574-17-6 from Dublin Corporation for the surrender of 105 acres 37 perches of this land for the Vartry Reservoir Scheme.²⁵

Whilst Andrew William Byrne was a significant employer in Cronybyrne he was, like many landlords of his time, a harsh employer: some would

²²Source: *Thom's Directory 1846-1875*.

²³Ordnance Survey *Name Books for Wicklow*, Book 2 pages 13-47.

²⁴Registry of Deeds Year 1852 Book 18 Memorial 245; Irish Farm Statistics 1847-1996

<http://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/othercsopublications/farmingsincethefamine1847-1996/>, Accessed 15 Feb 2016; Return of Owners of Land of One Acre and Upwards for Wicklow County, HMSO Dublin 1876.

²⁵Registry of Deeds Year 1864 Book 26 Memorial 37.

say cruel and vindictive. 'Wicklow had its bad landlords too and there were terrible evictions at Crony Byrne during the Famine'.²⁶

Andrew William Byrne was a prominent Roman Catholic and he appears to have held significant sway with Archbishop (later Cardinal) Cullen, who was Archbishop of Dublin from 1852 until his death in 1878. There are at least 4 extant letters in the Dublin Diocesan Archives where, inter alia, we learn that the Archbishop stayed with the Byrnes in Cronybyrne, from time to time.

On 15 December 1859 Andrew William Byrne was a co-signatory, with many others, clerical and lay, to a letter to Archbishop Cullen requesting him to convene a meeting 'of the Roman Catholics of Dublin for the purpose of expressing our sympathy to our Holy Father, Pope Pius IX'. A meeting was duly convened on 9 June 1860. Similar meetings were held in most other dioceses in Ireland. It is believed that the "sympathy" offered to the pope was on account of the changing political scene in Italy at that time and the attempts of Victor Emmanuel and others to reduce the power and influence of the Papal States.²⁷

Andrew William Byrne, aged 64 years, died in Cronybyrne on 26 March 1875 and he is interred in the family vault in Glendalough cemetery. He was survived by his wife, Frances Mary, 6 sons and 4 daughters, his daughter Frances Eliza having died in infancy.

Probate of his Will was proved at the Principal Registry on 6 May 1876 by the Oaths of Frances Byrne Widow and Laurence Byrne and Andrew Byrne Esquires, the sons, all of Cronybyrne (Rathdrum), the Executors. Effects under £16,000.²⁸

²⁶ RF Foster, "Parnell and his neighbours", Hannigan and Nolan, Editors *Wicklow History & Society*, page 898.

²⁷Refer, inter alia, to the Freeman's Journal of 15 December 1859, <http://archive.irishnewsarchive.com/>, accessed 7 March 2016.

²⁸National Archives of Ireland: *Calendars of Wills and Administrations 1858-1922*.

Frances Mary Byrne (née McDermott) (1820-1889)

On the death of her husband, Frances Mary Byrne assumed the role of executrix of the will of her late husband and she faithfully and diligently carried out his wishes. With the consent, where appropriate, and assistance of her 3 elder sons she ensured that the younger children received their share of the estate. We are told that, in 1877, Andrew William Byrne had 5 surviving sons (it is believed that Alexander died in 1874) and 4 surviving daughters.²⁹ One of the surviving daughters, Rosanna Mary, died in 1879, leaving three surviving daughters. On 19 September 1887, just two years before her death, Frances Byrne arranged for her three daughters to receive the sum of £1,000 each out of the estate. Their brothers, Eugene Dermot Byrne and Francis Joseph Byrne were, by this time, ordained Roman Catholic priests and each received the lesser amount of £500.³⁰

Frances Byrne moved to 1 Upper Leeson Street Dublin, sometime between February 1877 and November 1881 where she lived with her daughters. She subsequently moved to Alexandra Terrace, Bray where she died on 28 September 1889 and she is interred in Glendalough cemetery.

Laurence William Byrne (1847-1898)

Laurence William Byrne was born on 30 September 1847 and was the oldest child of Andrew William Byrne and Frances Mary McDermott. On his father's death in 1875 Laurence William inherited the entire estate.

On 8 February 1877 he made a Marriage Settlement with Catherine Mary Browne of Ballybanagher, Co Galway and we are told that Catherine "brought a considerable fortune to the marriage".³¹ Catherine was the daughter of James Browne and Juliana Nolan, whose marriage record indicates that they were cousins and that their marriage required a dispensation. We are told, also, that the Browne family had once been

²⁹Registry of Deeds Year 1877 Book 7 Memorial 258.

³⁰The same Year 1887 Book 41 Memorial 87.

³¹The same Year 1877 Book 9 Memorial 277.

wealthy but lost most of this 'through gambling and by a failure, three generations earlier, to secure the civil validity of a marriage by a second ceremony in the Church of Ireland before the birth of the eldest son'.³²

Laurence and Catherine were married in University Church, St Stephen's Green, Dublin on 8 February 1877. They had five girls, none of whom succeeded to their father's estate. The oldest daughter, Kathleen Mary married Owen Jones Comerford, a member of the prominent milling family of Rathdrum, in 1898, just 5 months before her father's death. Her marriage record indicates that there was an impediment to the marriage by virtue of 4th degree of consanguinity but that she received a dispensation. The officiating priest was her uncle, Fr Eugene Dermot Byrne.³³

Laurence, like his father, was a magistrate for Wicklow from 1885 until his death in 1898.³⁴ He died in the Greville Arms Hotel, Mullingar on 5 July 1898. His remains were transported by train from Mullingar to Harcourt Street Railway Station and onward to Glenealy Railway Station and thence to Glendalough cemetery.³⁵

Probate of his will was granted at Dublin to Catherine Byrne of Coney Byrne, widow, on 22 February 1899. Effects £7,639 9s 11d.³⁶

Catherine did not inherit her husband's estate: this passed to Laurence's brother, Andrew William Byrne. Attempts to establish Catherine's date and place of death and burial place have not been successful: there is no collateral information to help pinpoint the exact date. It is reasonable to assume that she is interred in Glendalough alongside her husband and that

³²Herbert Byrne OSB Obituary:

http://www.plantata.org.uk/obits/griffiths/byrne_h.htm, accessed 15 Feb 2016.

³³General Register Office: Marriage record of Owen Jones Comerford and Kathleen Mary Byrne 8 February 1898.

³⁴*Thom's Directory* 1885-1898.

³⁵Death Notice in *Freeman's Journal* 6 July 1898.

<http://archive.irishnewsarchive.com/> accessed on 16 February 2016.

³⁶National Archives of Ireland: *Calendars of Wills and Administrations 1858-1922*.

the inscribing of her name on the headstone has been overlooked. She was still living in 1908: on 10 June of that year she was party to a settlement for her daughter, Mary, whereby Mary was to receive £860 as part of a larger settlement of £4,000.³⁷

Andrew William Byrne (1849-1922)

Andrew William Byrne, the second child of Andrew William Byrne and Frances Mary McDermott, was born on 27 March 1849. He married Jane Mary Browne, the older sister of Catherine Mary Browne of Ballybanagher, some 2 months after the marriage of his brother, Laurence. (Siblings Laurence and Andrew Byrne married siblings Catherine and Jane Browne).

He learned the tannery business, went to Birkenhead, Cheshire with his wife, Jane and brother, Kevin, borrowed £20,000 and developed a thriving business there. He supplied leather to the British army during the Boer war and this was very lucrative, so much so that, at the end of the war, his business suffered a catastrophic loss and he was forced to liquidate the company. The London Gazette of 28 November 1905 carries a rather poignant notice inviting Creditors of the company to lodge their claims.

On the death of his older brother, Laurence, Andrew returned to Cronybyrne to manage the estate. It appears that Kevin also returned to Cronybyrne after the failure of the tannery business in Liverpool. Andrew, too, served as Magistrate for Wicklow from 1909 until 1922.³⁸

Andrew and Jane had 4 children: William Ambrose, Mary Josephine (affectionately known as Miss May), Arthur James and Kevin Herbert. William and Herbert both became Benedictine monks, Herbert serving as Abbot of Ampleforth Abbey from 1939 until 1963. Arthur became a seaman and served on the White Star line.

³⁷Registry of Deeds, Year 1908 Book 52 Memorial 78.

³⁸*Thom's Directory* 1909-1922.

Andrew died in 1922 and he is interred in Glendalough cemetery. He was survived by his wife, Jane Mary. Probate of his will was granted at Dublin on 10 January 1923 to Jane Mary Byrne Widow and Arthur Byrne, Ship's Purser. Effects £12,813 10s 0d.³⁹

Mary Josephine 'was educated at exclusive French convents and obtained a degree as an organ scholar.'⁴⁰ In the early part of the 20th century, she played the organ in Clara Vale church. An amusing anecdote is related by neighbours. Once, whilst playing the organ in the church the priest became impatient and asked her to 'speed up things'. Her mother, who was in the congregation, was not best pleased and she closed the access gates to Cronybyrne, thereby forcing the priest to make a much longer journey when visiting his flock.

Dom Herbert Byrne OSB (1884-1978)

Kevin Herbert Byrne was born in Birkenhead in 1884, the fourth and youngest child of Andrew William Byrne and Jane Mary Browne. He joined the Benedictine Order in 1902, was ordained priest in 1911 and joined the staff of Ampleforth Abbey, where he remained until 1927. He, then, took up parish work but was to return to Ampleforth in 1939 as Abbot, a post he held for a remarkable 24 years until 1963. During his time as Abbot the school grew from 120 boys to over 600. He was succeeded as Abbot by Fr Basil Hume OSB (1923-1999), who was to become Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster in 1976. Before Dom Herbert died Crony Byrne House was listed as 'the home of Rt Rev Herbert Byrne OSB, titular Abbot of Westminster and former Abbot of Ampleforth'.⁴¹ Dom Herbert died on 26 October 1978 and he is interred in Ampleforth Abbey.

³⁹National Archives of Ireland: *Calendars of Wills and Administrations 1858-1922*.

⁴⁰Laurence Murphy, 'Cronybyrne House', *Ashford Journal*, 1993 page 6

⁴¹Mark Bence-Jones, *Burke's Guide to Country Houses*, Volume 1 Ireland, London Burke's Peerage Ltd 1978, page 95.

Decline and Sale of Cronybyrne

After Andrew's death in 1922, his wife Jane and daughter Mary Josephine endeavoured to manage the estate but this was a daunting task, given the poor state of agriculture in the immediate post-war years. On the advice of friends, they set the farm for grazing in 'a desperate effort to save the ancestral property'.⁴² However, their efforts failed and they were eventually forced to sell the property in 1926. Jane and her daughter moved to Ailesbury Park in Dublin where she died on 28 January 1927 and she is interred in Glendalough cemetery. Probate of her Will was granted at Dublin to (her son) the Reverend William Byrne RCC on 2 March 1927. Effects £250 13s 6d. 'Miss May' died in 1961 and, at her own request, is interred in Glencaly cemetery, the last 'Byrne' to be interred in Ireland.

Conclusion

It has not been possible to establish with accuracy the exact date that the Byrnes arrived in Cronybyrne. They were certainly there in the latter part of the 18th century, notwithstanding claims by Dom Herbert Byrne that they arrived in the early 1800s and, on the balance of probability, they may have been there for up to 100 years earlier.

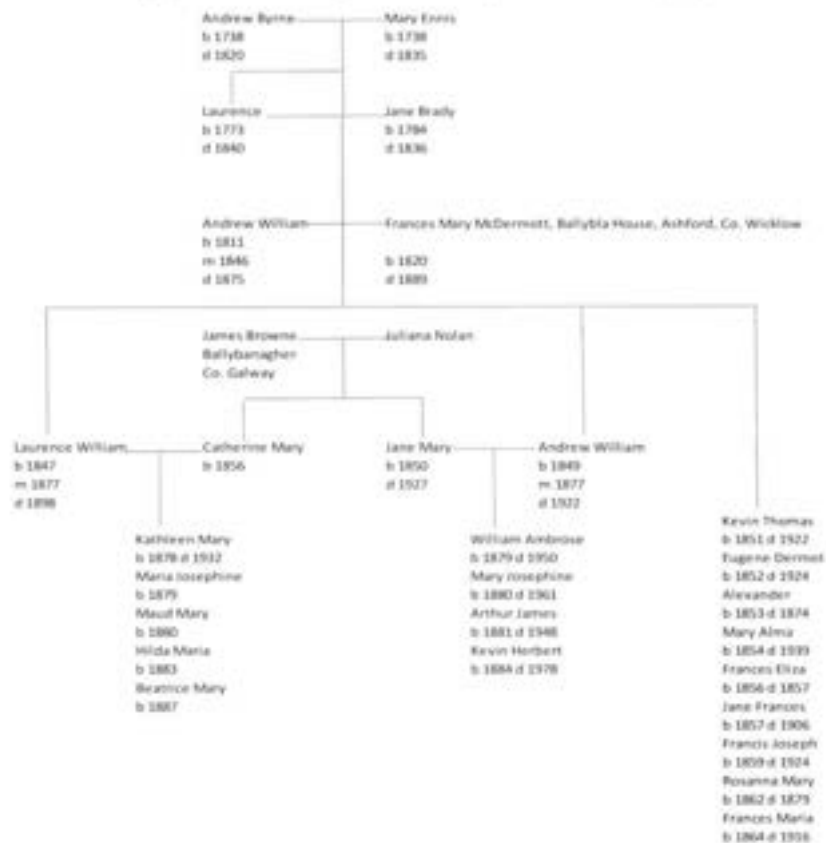
What is clear is that they had significant influence, especially Andrew William Byrne (1811-1875). They were big landowners and they were 'loyalists' i.e. they supported the British establishment in Ireland: this may explain why Cronybyrne was targeted by the 1798 insurgents. And, yet they remained steadfastly loyal to their Catholic faith: Andrew William Byrne appears to have exerted significant influence on church politics, both locally and nationally. He was very generous and gave significant financial support to the building of the new church at Laragh.

Cronybyrne House was built in 1705 approximately and was re-built in 1820. However, following the departure of the Byrnes in the 1920s the house fell into disrepair and near ruin. In 2008 all that was left of the

⁴²Laurence Murphy, 'Cronybyrne House', *Ashford Journal* 1993.

historical property were the four walls and the grounds, which were completely overgrown. It was purchased by a family who faithfully restored it to its former glory and used it as a guest house. The house and property was sold to its present owners in 2017.

Appendix 1: Pedigree of the Byrnes of Cronybyrne



Sources: Copy registrations of Births, Marriages and Deaths (BMD), General Register Office; Catholic Parish Registers for Wicklow, Glendalough and Rathmines Parishes, sourced online through the National Library of Ireland; Memorial Inscriptions in Glendalough and Glenealy Cemeteries; Census of Ireland 1901 and 1911, National Archives of Ireland.

William Joseph Duffy

A note on his origins and army career

Ian Cantwell

The origins and army career of William Joseph Duffy (1877-1951), postman, poet, journalist, raconteur and GAA supporter has, in recent times, been something of a mystery though it was known that he was born in Dublin and had Wicklow connections. His poetry, memories and obituaries can be found in earlier journal issues, particularly numbers 8 and 9.

Ancestry

It's not known where his paternal grandparents came from (the nearest Duffy occupiers to Roundwood in Griffith's Valuation, 1853, were in Brockagh, Newtownmountkennedy and Rathdrum village) but they were resident in Dublin by the early 1840s. The first evidence comes from the marriage of Philip Duffy to Rose Caldwell at St. Andrew's Parish, Westland Row, Dublin, on the 8 January 1843 (witnesses: James Costello & Mary Caldwell).

Their son, William's father James, was baptised at St. Nicholas Without on Francis Street on the 25 February 1849 (the godparents were Patrick Steven & Margaret Caldwell).

Other children in the family were:

- Margaret on 22 October 1843.
- Anthony on 24 February 1845.
- Michael Thomas on 31 March 1846.
- Philip on 12 May 1848
- Anne Maria on 18 January 1850,

All were baptised at St. Andrews Church on Westland Row, the rest were baptised at St. Nicholas Without Parish:

- Alicia on 19 February 1846.
- Maria on 25 September 1847
- Philip on 11 May 1851.

- Hugh on 18 April 1855 at which time the family were living at 34 Cross Kevin Street.

William's father, James, married Sarah Byrne daughter of William Byrne and Lucy (nee Byrne) of Moneystown, at Glendalough on 31 May 1875 (witnesses: Hugh Brown of Wexford Street, Dublin & Lucy Byrne from Moneystown); at the time James and his parents lived at 29 Upper Kevin Street.

James and Sarah had the following children:

- Philip Hugh and Mary Lucy, twins, born 24 March 1876.
- William Joseph born 6 April 1877.
- Francis Patrick born 24 September 1878.
- James born 13 July 1880.
- Roseanna born 26 September 1882.
- Christopher Valentine and George Valentine, twins, born 14 February 1884.

The family first lived at 34 Upper Kevin Street but moved to 21 Peter Street before 1878 and then (appropriately) to Duffy's Cottages on Camden Row before 1880.

Sarah died on 26 April 1885 and James on 18 December 1894. Some of their children continued to live in Duffy's Cottages and, in the 1901 census, Philip, Mary, William, James and Christopher are recorded as still being occupants of the house.

William's brother Francis Patrick married Mary Keely on the 20 January 1900; their children before 1911 were Michael James born 1901, Sarah, 1903, Francis, 1905 and Eileen, 1909. In 1901 they lived at 73/2 Aungier Street and he was a tailor's porter. In 1911 they lived at 14 Lennox Place when he was a wastewater inspector for Dublin Corporation; Francis Patrick died in 1948.

William's mother Sarah's parents - William Byrne and Lucy (nee) Byrne resided at Moneystown Hill where, in 1853, they held just over 6 acres, valued at 18/- with a house and outhouses valued at £1/2/-.

William and Lucy Byrne married before 1842 (there is a gap in the Glendalough Parish Registers for marriages between September 1838 and May 1840) and their following children were baptised in the parish:

- George on 18 February 1842.
- William on 6 July 1844.
- Maurice on 1 December 1846.
- Sarah on 6 May 1849.
- Lucy on 5 June 1851.
- Esther on 12 November 1853.
- Catherine on 17 February 1856.
- Gerald on 21 March 1858.
- John on 1 April 1860.
- Laurence on 3 August 1863. Laurence inherited the farm; his parents having died before the 1901 census.

Army career

William enlisted in the Army on 24 August 1915 at Longford and entered service at Cork on the 26th of that month. He gave his address as Laragh, his age as 38, occupation labourer and next of kin as his brother Francis of 14 Lennox Place, Dublin. He served in the 2nd and 3rd regiments of the Army Ordnance Corps (ROAC); his regimental number being 036640.

Unfortunately, the digital copy of his service record from the UK National Archives in Kew, is incomplete and faded and only lists units and dates but not where he served. However, it appears that he was in France from November 1917 after a period at the Base Depot in Cork.

He was discharged at the Irish Command Discharge Centre on 7 May 1919 and gave his address as Crosses, Rathdrum, for his discharge papers and final pay.



Events of 2018 / 2019



***Third Reunion of the 1948-57
Glendalough Miners***

in

***Lynham's Hotel,
Laragh, Glendalough,
Co. Wicklow.***

On

Friday, 16th April, 2004

*People who worked at St. Kevin's
Lead and Zinc Mine
Glendalough 1948 – 1957*

GLENDALOUGH

ARTHUR O'NEILL
JACK BYRNE
WILLIAM EDGE
JAMES ESMONDE
PATRICK WYNNE
SEAN McCOY
EDWARD STAKEM
ANDREW FOLEY
AUDREY SMITH
JOHN BYRNE (RED)
ROBERT CARTER
JAMES ESMONDE
JAMES STAKEM

LARAGH

MICHAEL BARRETT
SEAN SWEENEY
PHILAN BYRNE
AIDAN BYRNE
PATRICK BYRNE
PETER McGRATH
JOHN McGRATH
THOMAS BYRNE
THOMAS McQUIRK
JACK McDONALD
EDWARD BRACKEN
DICK CARSTRAIRS
JAMES LAWLOR
PATRICK McDONALD
WILLIAM KAVANAGH
JOSEPH ROBERTS
MICHAEL ROBERTS
PATRICK O'MAHOONY
PATRICK McCOY
MICHAEL FORTUNE
SEAMUS PORTER
MICHAEL KENNY
MATHEW LAWLOR
FREDRICK LAWLOR
ANN KAVANAGH

DERRYBAWN

JOHN McHUGH

NEWBAWN RATHDRUM

JOHN MURPHY
TOSS O'TOOLE
JOHN O'TOOLE
CHRIS BYRNE
SUNNY BYRNE
LIAM BYRNE

RATHDRUM

JOHN JOE DRIVER
COLM DRIVER
PADDY DRIVER
JOHN MURPHY
JOHN McDONALD
ROBERT BURNS
GEORGE BURNS
WILLIAM BURNS
WILLIAM NOLAN
THOMAS TIMMONS
MICHAEL KEOGH
WILLIAM FITZPATRICK
DENIS KINSELLA
MICHAEL LYNHAM
FRANK GREGORY
MICHAEL BYRNE
WILLIAM McDONALD
JAMES MERNAGH

CULLENTRA

JIMMY CULLEN
JOHN BYRNE
PETER JONES

CLARA VALE

SEAN O'BRIEN
JACK ROCHE

ROUNDWOOD

JOHN HEATLEY
PATRICK O'BRIEN

ANNAMOE

FRANK SULLIVAN
CHARLIE BYRNE
GEORGE BELTON

GLENMACNASS

TOM WALL
DENIS FARRINGTON

BARNDARRIG

GEORGE MURPHY

GARRYDUFF

WILLIAM STAUNTON
THOMAS MURPHY

GLENMALURE

LARRY CONNOLLY

WICKLOW

KEVIN VICKERS

DONEGAL

JOE BRADLEY

HOLLYWOOD

JAMES DEEGAN
STEPHEN BURKE

SCOTLAND

JOHN STEELE

GREAT BRITAIN

JACK SMOOTH

CORK

MURROUGH O'BRIEN

THE GLENDALOUGH MINES

Wake up Glendasan valley, be dreaming no more
You now are surrounded by miners galore
After years of long waiting the time has come round
And a company has formed to bring lead over ground
With compressors and jumpers they are boring ahead
Through the Currybog Mountain in search of this lead
And the young and the old they are eager to toil
For the treasure lies hidden in under Moll Doyle.

It's a long time ago since the mining fell through
When the old timers left us and bade us adieu
Never more to return to the Irish Free Stage,
Far away to Australia they did emigrate,
But they left here a land-mark on Laganure ground
Where the treasure is hidden if it can be found
There they dug many fathoms down under the soil
And when they had finished they called it Moll Doyle.

But the team of young miners I am sure will succeed,
With O'Regan and others and Esmonde to lead:
And the bold Jock from Scotland and Fortune from around
To keep the boys digging in under the ground.
But a warning, young miners if you do get the lead
Beware of the old ones they might rise from the dead
For after long years of hardship and hunger and toil
You are stealing their treasure from under Moll Doyle.

Charles McCoy

Articles from the Newspaper Archives

Margaret Connolly

June 1846 –

Thousands Throng to Annamoe and Glendalough to Pledge Abstinence

Father Theobald Mathew (1790-1856) was an Irish priest who believed many of the ills in Irish society at that time were caused by abuse of alcohol and drunkenness. He became an advocate for the temperance movement and travelled around the country preaching and enrolling people in the temperance pledge to totally abstain from intoxicating liquor. It is estimated that several million Irish people enrolled in this pledge and there was a marked reduction in the crime rate during this period. Father Mathew attracted huge crowds wherever he went, and in June 1846 when he came to bless the foundation stone for the new church in Glendalough thousands flocked to the Roundwood, Annamoe, and Glendalough area to catch a glimpse of the famous priest and to take the Temperance Pledge. The following is a description of the visit copied from the Pilot Newspaper printed a few days after his visit.

PILOT NEWSPAPER 08TH JUNE 1846

Father Mathew left The Royal Hotel, Kingstown, in a carriage and four on Wednesday morning at half passed six o'clock. As soon as the Apostle reached Roundwood, a small town distant about 2 miles from the village of Annamoe, he was met by thousands of people, accompanied by several very fine bands, come to welcome their own Father Mathew and conduct him to the residence of their very own respected clergyman Rev. E. Clarke of Annamoe. As soon as the arrival of the Apostle was known, cheer after cheer burst forth from the grateful and affectionate hearts of the assembled thousands; then was the time to witness the devotedness, to prove the sincerity, the gratitude, and the affection of our poor fellow countrymen. Many were the blessings poured upon his head: while within the immediate vicinity of the carriage might be heard the low but fervent voice of the poor peasants exclaiming " God Bless you, Father Mathew"

After addressing a few words of thanks for the very gratifying reception they had given him, the carriage proceeded, headed by the bands belonging to the several districts around, while in the rear were hundreds of vehicles who's inmates had come (some over 40 miles) to pay their respects to their beloved Father Mathew on his arrival in Annamoe. He was received by the Rev. E. Clarke and a large assemblage of his parishioners; and, after a short delay at the gentleman's house, proceeded to the chapel, where it had been previously announced he was to preach, thousands had long since been assembled. The sermon was in aid of the church of St. Kevin, about to be built in Glendalough, the foundation of which was to be laid on that day.

*After the sermon, which lasted over an hour, the Apostle proceeded to the spot selected for the site of the new church. On arrival at the ground the blessing of the stone commenced. Prayers were read by the Very Rev. Apostle clad in his sacerdotal robes and assisted by the Rev. E. Clarke. P.P., Annamoe, Rev. Mr. Grant P.P., Wicklow, and Rev. J.J. Murphy Dublin and several other clergymen. After the blessing, the foundation stone was then laid with the usual formalities by Mr. Peter Kelly Esq. of Dublin, who contributed the princely sum of 50 pounds * towards the erection of the church. Father Mathew then gave the pledge to over one thousand persons, who's anxiety to receive it from the Apostle, in conjunction with his blessing, would not allow them to wait until he had gone to the place appointed for its administration. It was with great difficulty that he was at last able to proceed upon his journey. Down the picturesque vale leading to the Churches he proceeded to the plain, which forms one of the enclosures to the lake at Glendalough. It was a grand majestic scene. Wherever the eye could reach, clinging to the sides of the surrounding rocks, and treading the wide and vast plain beneath were thousands eager to catch a glimpse of Ireland's great Apostle. On one side the ruins of the old Churches – on the other the lake smooth and placid. Before Father Mathew upwards to ten thousand human beings reciting the words of "The Sacred Pledge of Temperance" which was slowly and emphatically delivered by the Apostle, who then, with uplifted hands, invoked a blessing from heaven upon them. Afterwards during the evening Father Mathew administered the pledge to batches of one and two hundred persons. He then took his departure for the residence of Rev.*

Clarke, where a large party were invited to meet with him at dinner. It was then six o'clock and although he had not tasted of anything since the evening before, he looked well and happy, and not at all fatigued by the arduous labours of the day. He left Annamoe at eight o'clock for Kingstown and proceeded the next morning to Dublin. Thus, ended one of the most glorious demonstrations of temperance ever witnessed in Ireland.

*The sum of money donated by Mr. Peter Kelly Esq. is quoted in the above newspaper article as £50, but in another publication, it is quoted as £100, and an information plaque at St. Kevin's Church in Glendalough also credits him with donating £100.

Only five years later the Freeman's Journal carried a detailed report of the solemn blessing of the new church of St. Kevin in Glendalough on 03rd June 1851. Considering that during the intervening years the country was visited by The Great Famine, it would seem to have been a remarkable achievement to have completed the building by 1851. One wonders how many of the estimated 10,000 who took the temperance pledge at the blessing of the foundation stone in 1846 were still in a state of abstinence. A look through the local Petty Court records for the time would indicate that the local public houses had not completely gone out of business, as each sitting of the courts contained several entries for people of the locality been charged with "drunk on the public street of Roundwood" or "found drunk on the public road at Laragh" or "found drunk in charge of an ass and car at Annamoe".

May 1898 –

How Roundwood Commemorated the Centenary of the 1798 Rebellion

The following articles from the "Wicklow People" of Saturday 21st and Saturday 28th May 1898 report on Roundwood's commemoration, on 23rd May 1898, of the centenary of the 1798 Rebellion with the lighting of

signal fires on the site of General Holt's house in Mullinaveigue, at Whiterock, Ballinacor and several other surrounding sites.

THE WICKLOW PEOPLE Saturday 21st May 1898

Roundwood

An informal meeting was held in Roundwood on Sunday evening to organise the illuminations for Monday night the 23rd inst. to commemorate the date of the insurrection of '98. A considerable number was present. On the motion of Mr. James Murphy Annamoe seconded by Mr G. Dawson, Mr John Byrne was moved to the chair. On the motion of Mr. L. Murphy, seconded by J Bennet, Mr Halpin was appointed hon. sec.

The Chairman, in a few spirited remarks had the matters for discussion before the meeting, and after an interesting discussion a series of resolutions embodying the programme for Monday night as given below, was proposed by Mr James Kennedy, and seconded by Mr. James Kenna, and passed with acclamation.

Programme – Houses in Roundwood and Laragh Big to illuminate. Each townland to organise one or more bonfires. The first signal fire to be lit at nine o'clock sharp on the site of General Holt's house in Mullinaveigue (burnt down in '98). The district is requested to await this signal which will be passed to them from answering fires on Whiterock and Ballinacor Hill. We ask answer from Kilmacanogue, from Sugar Loaf, and pass our greetings on to Bray and Dublin, the same from our friends in Ballycullen and Aghowle answer from Carrig and send our greetings to Wicklow and our brothers in the lowlands.

A sub-committee formed in Laragh on Friday evening will pass greetings to Arklow, Auhrim, and gallant Wexford. We particularly ask attendance at a meeting to be held at 6 o'clock on Sunday evening, to further organise the illuminations, and to appoint a provisional committee to organise a centenary club worthy of our parish. The Roundwood band asked to be accorded the honour of lighting the signa fire at General Holt's house. The privilege was unanimously accorded them.

THE WICKLOW PEOPLE Saturday May 28th

This edition of the newspaper carried a report on the meeting held on the night before the Illuminations, where the local community had met to finalise the preparations, and it also carried a report on the event itself which was held on the 23rd.

On Sunday evening a large and influential meeting was held to complete arrangements for the Illuminations on the evening of the 23rd. Mr B. Doyle on the motion of Mr. G. Byrne P.L.C., seconded by Mr. J. Murphy was moved to the chair. Mr. A. Halpin, hon. Sec. whose great grandfather was present with Holt on Whiterock, in sight of Holt's house when it was fired by the Yeos, was appointed to take charge of the signal fire on Whiterock, and Mr. T. Nolan in charge of signal on Ballinacor. Mr. G. Byrne P.L.C. announced that members of the Moneystown Football Club suggested a bon fire in Castlekevin, on the spot where Andrew Thomas was shot. Messrs. Kean, Byrne and Toole (Bolinias) intimated the intention of that district to light one at the scene of the execution of the Brothers Morris (now Mrs Keon's house). The deputation sent to the Laragh Bridge meeting on Friday, reported that the movement had been taken up warmly, and that Laragh would remember the lovely Croppy's grave and that Messrs. S. Nolan and T. Byrne would pass the signal south from Maoilin, which if the night was fine, would be in sight of Tara Hill in Wexford. It was decided to nominate a provisional committee, with power to add to their numbers, to organise an '98 Centenary Club worthy of the parish. The following were nominated – Messrs. John Byrne, Matthew Keenan, James Kean, G. Byrne, P.L.C.; B. Doyle, M. Keenan, Pat Toole, John Doyle, Thomas Kean, James Kean P.L.C; T. Hade, P. Kelly, James Murphy (Annamos) A. Halpin hon. sec: M. Doyle, Jas Byrne, Jas Hatton, Wm Adams, John Keenan, Myles Byrne, M. Doyle, John Storey, John Toole, Darby Kearns.

Illumination Night in Roundwood

In accordance with instructions, the signal fire at the sight of General Holt's house in Mullinaveigue was started by the arrival of the Roundwood band at nine o'clock. Within two minutes the answering signals came back from Whiterock and Ballinacor, and within a short

time fires could be seen in every direction. The night been foggy distant fires were not visible, and to persons in the valleys the effect was somewhat marred, but those on the hilltops described the sight as one well worth seeing. The band discoursed several airs at the historic spot, among them been "Who Fears to Speak of '98", and "Billy Byrne of Ballymanus" and then returned to the town, followed by a large and orderly crowd, mostly of young men.

The town itself might be said to have gone en fete, each house vied with each other in the tastefulness and brilliancy of the illuminations. From end to end the street was one glow of light and certainly gave clinching proof that Roundwood did not fear to speak of '98. After discoursing airs in the streets and at the bonfire in the fairgreen, the band retired at 11.30pm when the crowds dispersed.

Everything passed off in an orderly and most peaceful manner.

December 1918 –

Roundwood Marks Historical Elections.

On December 14th 1918 the people of Co. Wicklow along with the rest of the country came out to vote in the Parliamentary Elections. This election would become of historical significance for several reasons. Firstly, those that were elected would become the first Representatives to sit in our own Irish National Parliament, and secondly this was the first time in the history of the country that women (over the age of 30) had the right to cast their vote. It was also the first time that *all* the men of Ireland who were aged 21 and over had the right to cast their vote.

From the following article in the Wicklow Newsletter and Arklow Reporter of Saturday January 4th, 1919 it appears the people of the Roundwood district did not let the event go un-marked.

The election results were celebrated in Togher on Sunday night. Late on Saturday night bonfires could be observed way east on the foothills, but Sunday evening seems to have been reserved for the general output of enthusiasm. A torchlight procession in Togher was headed by the Young

St. Laurence O'Toole Band with all the old traditions, and all the leading houses were brilliantly illuminated. A meeting was held afterwards under the presidency of Mr. John Murphy, sub-director, Newtown Polling District, and addressed by Mr. C.M. Byrne, Mr G. Cullen, and Mrs Laurence Byrne (on behalf of the lady voters) and Mr L. Byrne. In Annamoe the Drummin Pipers' Band demonstrated through the village amidst enthusiasm and then proceeded to Laragh to congratulate Mr Sweetman on his re-election to N. Wexford.

News from the Local District in 1928

THE WICKLOW PEOPLE Saturday November 10th, 1928

GLENDALOUGH AND TOGHER NOTES

Agricultural Classes

Mr McGuaren agricultural instructor has been in the district arranging for the forthcoming agricultural classes in Togher and Moneystown centres. Attention is being paid to the proper heating and lighting of the parochial hall. The classes will be held on Monday and Thursday nights in Moneystown. The members of the Togher Agricultural committee are lending their valuable aid to recruit good and credible entries for the area, and Rev. Dr. M Butler P.P. and Rev. M. Gerathy C.C. have put on a commendable "urge" in the dilatory ones in the hope of stimulating the necessary interest in the classes, which apart from their usefulness will be a source of pleasure in the breaking of the monotony of the winter nights. It is to be hoped that the class attendance will keep up the past reputation for bumper classes.

Harvest Thanksgiving

The annual harvest thanksgiving took place in the parish church of Derrylossary on Sunday last. The church was very tastefully decorated for the important event, for which special praise is due to the ladies, Miss Synge, Miss E Langerall, Miss Tindall, and Mrs. Ireon. There was a bountiful gift of fruit, vegetables, and corn, all of which offering were afterwards applied to a necissitous and deserving purpose, the Cripples' Home Bray. There was a full choir, Mrs Langrell, Fortwilliam, presided

at the organ. The anthem, a 100th Psalm "Make a Joyful Noise" and other hymns proper to the festival were rendered with delightful harmony and effect. The Rev. S. Synge, Rector, assisted by the Rev. A.E. Clarke Uganda (African Mission) conducted the service and expressed himself well pleased with the donors of the gifts so spontaneously given.

Gaelic League

"If", said Thomas Davis "we must keep our national characteristics as a nation unimpaired, we must move to save our national language". To Mr. O'Connell Ballyhad, the people, the younger folk of Annamoe are indebted for awaking new interest in the Irish language movement. A class began there recently and is very well attended indeed. Knowledge gaining is a pleasure when imparted by such cheerful members of society as Mr O'Connell. What about a class in Togher.?

Whist Winners

A whist drive for a deserving parochial purpose was held in Togher on Sunday night last, the unpropitious weather did not deter the enthusiasts. Mr Patrick McGuirk Mullinaveigue secured top score at 178. Mr Terrence Smyth Sleeman was first and Mr Agustine Malone Diamond Hill was second for gents' prizes. Owing to the ladies been in the minority, the gents did the chivalrous, and Mr John Murphy, ex P.L.C. Mullinaveigue secured second place, Miss Byrne Whiterock getting first place.

Cottage Conditions

A conference of cottage tenants in the district was held on Thursday last. Mr W.J Duffy acted as secretary to the meeting. He was asked to bring under notice of the Board of Health the sorry plight of many cottages requiring repairs.

Some 19th Century Soldiers from Roundwood

Ian Cantwell

In the 19th century young men often joined the army or navy to escape poverty. This article has information on some from Roundwood who joined various regiments. These records were found by using the FindMyPast placename index for Roundwood in their military records database at the National Archives, Kew. Regimental histories are available online; these have gone under several name changes; i.e. the 87th Regiment is now better known as the Royal Irish Fusiliers.

Christopher Dawson, labourer, enlisted in the 87th Foot Regiment at Dublin on 6th February 1819 aged 17 years; his regimental number was 1812. He served 23 years and 269 days in the East Indies and China and was discharged in Dublin on 27 October 1843 "in consequence of debility from length of service in tropical climate." He had also served in the 45th and 55th Foot Regiments; his discharge hearing states that "it appears that since his period of joining the 55th Regiment up to February 1842 at which date he was tried by a Regimental Court Martial for drunkenness on duty as a good soldier. Since his reduction his name does not appear in the Defendants book." He joined the 55th Regiment as a corporal in November 1836. From the extract of Court Martial Book supplied by the 45th Regiment it appears he was tried on the 17 September 1830 by a General Court Martial for attempting ... his own wife and wounded the colour sergeant's wife in the attempt. On 4 January 1831 he was tried by a Regimental Court Martial for neglect of duty at the Canteen at Manchuria." (WO 97/680/59)

Andrew Farrell enlisted on 4 May 1807 and served in the 50th, 97th and 103rd Regiments of Foot. He served in total 20 years "but being rendered unfit for service having had several attacks of (Ophthalmid?) in Egypt and since his return to Europe is hereby discharged & humbly recommended as a proper object of HM Royal Bounty of Chelsea Hospital and having first received all just demands of pay & clothing from his entry into the said regiment to the date of his discharge." He was described as 45yrs old,

5' 7" in height with grey hair, grey eyes, and pale complexion. (No reference)

William Jackson, cutler, enlisted in the 63rd Regiment of Foot (West Suffolk) at Mullingar on the 30 May 1825 aged 22 years. The regiment, founded in the mid 18th century, was garrisoned in Ireland between 1820 and 1825. He served 5¼ years in Tasmania and 12 years 272 days in the East Indies. He was discharged on 21 November 1846 "in consequence of disease contracted in the service without being attributable to neglect, design or intemperance and of the opinion of the surgeon." He was described as "a very good and efficient soldier, seldom in hospital, trustworthy and sober. He is in possession of three good conduct badges without pay." (No reference)

John Mason, labourer, enlisted in the 1st Battalion of the 35th Regiment of Foot at London on 13 September 1795 aged 20 years and served 22 years and 74 days and was discharged on 26 November 1817 "in consequence of chronic rheumatism and worn out". His conduct was described as good; he was 41 years old, 5' 4" in height, with brown hair, hazel eyes and dark complexion. (WO 97/526/19)

Felix Reilly, labourer, enlisted in the 1st Battalion of the 87th Regt, aged 39 years. He served 22 years and 343 days as a private, number 441, with 7 years and 215 days in the West Indies and 5 years in the East Indies. He was discharged on at Port Louis, Mauritius on 24 May 1815 in consequence of "old age and poor vision"; he was described as 5' 4" in height with grey hair, grey eyes and dark complexion. (WO 97/965/91)

While the following soldiers are listed, it was not possible to obtain further information on them:

- Patrick Murphy, 44th Foot Regiment, discharged from Royal Hospital Chelsea aged 44 years (WO 97/595/38).
- Patrick Connor 54th Foot Regt discharged aged 28 years (WO 97/670/57).
- Michael Bryan 53rd Regt foot discharged, aged 46, Plymouth Invalids after 10½ years' service in 1802 (no reference).
- John Mason discharged aged 24 years (WO 97/964/42).

- John Crawford, William Maher, George Kinsella and Daniel Carty (many spelling variants for the last).

There were also two sailors: Michael Minlay, born 1837, enlisted 1857 who volunteered for another 10 years in 1860 (ADM 139/499/9811) and John Joseph Forde, born 4 October 1877, who was a stoker between 1899 and 1911 on eight ships (ADM/473/293031).

Roundwood & District Historical & Folklore Society Committees 2017 – 2019

2017 Committee

Chairperson:	Imelda Conway Duff
Vice Chairperson:	Peter Farrell
Hon Secretary:	David Menzies
Treasurer:	Denis Scanlon
PRO:	Mary Slattery
1 st Member:	John Pearson

2017 Editorial Committee

Imelda Conway Duffy, Denis Scanlon, Mary Slattery, Lochlainn Farrell

2018 Committee

Chairperson:	Imelda Conway Duffy
Vice Chairperson:	Peter Farrell
Hon Secretary:	Linda Browne
Treasurer:	John Pearson
PRO:	Mary Slattery
1 st Member:	Jane Pierce

2019 Committee

Chairperson:	David Menzies
Vice Chairperson:	Mary Slattery
Hon Secretary:	Linda Browne
Treasurer:	John Pearson
PRO:	Shona Shortt
1 st Member:	Jane Pierce

2019 Editorial Committee

Derek Neilson, Elinor Medleycott, Jane Pierce, John Pearson

Ashtown's Medieval 13th Century Church and Enclosure

On October 8th, 1933 the eminent historian and archaeologist, District Justice, Liam Price visited Ashtown, on the outskirts of Roundwood, in the company of Richard Barton of Glendalough House in Annamoe.

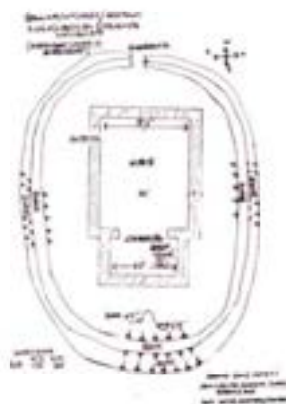
Their interest in Ashtown was the medieval religious enclosure containing the ruins of what is possibly a 13th century stone church, referred to by historians as Dergory.

The name Dergory appears to represent 'doire Guaire' or 'Guaire's oakwood', after a sept of the Ui Mail called Ui Guairi. During the 7th and 8th centuries, the Ui Mail controlled trade along the Slige Chualann, one of the most important routeways which traversed the Wicklow mountains. Their strength and importance at that time is reflected in them periodically holding the provincial Kingship of Leinster.

The old Gaelic diocese of Glendalough was absorbed into the Anglo-Norman see of Dublin in 1216 and Castlekevin became a manor of the Archbishop. A survey of the Archbishop's estates carried out in 1256 showed that a list of the tenants of the manor of Castlekevin held lands from Killadreenan and Killiskey to Ballinastoe and Moneystown.

During this period Castlekevin had three churches – Derralossary, Dergory and Villa Harpe. Price believed that the ruins at Knockatemple are those of Villa Harpe while those at Ashtown mark the site of Dergory.

Fig 1.
Ashtown Medieval Ecclesiastical
Enclosure and Church
(Drawing, David Menzies)



When Price visited the site in 1933 he was able to photograph the ruins and record the dimensions of the enclosure and the church. By today's standards the church was quite small but was obviously designed to cater for the size of the community it served nearly a thousand years ago.

The internal dimensions recorded by Price are as follows –

- Nave 31ft 6in long and 18ft 6in wide
- Chancel 24ft long and 13ft 6 in wide
- Walls 3ft thick
- Enclosure 150ft East to West and 120ft North to South

The church was constructed within a medieval oval shaped enclosure with a 4ft 3in bank and an external 3ft deep ditch. This would indicate the enclosure was of an earlier date than the church and was used as a fortification against attack by people who sought refuge within its banks.

The single entrance to the church was via a stone doorway, 32in wide and made up of large, cut granite blocks some measuring 2ft 9in thick. Considerable manpower effort would have been required to cut and lift these blocks into position. It is a credit to the builders that it has survived to this day.



Fig 2. Doorway at Ashtown. (Photo. Liam Price)

A 'bullaun stone', a granite block, with a bowl-shaped bullaun, 14in in diameter and 6in deep was found on a low stone platform in the chancel. Also, on this platform Price found some carved stones of Bath stone or oolite, unusual for a church of this size and more commonly associated with the building of large cathedrals, such as Christ Church or St Patricks in Dublin.

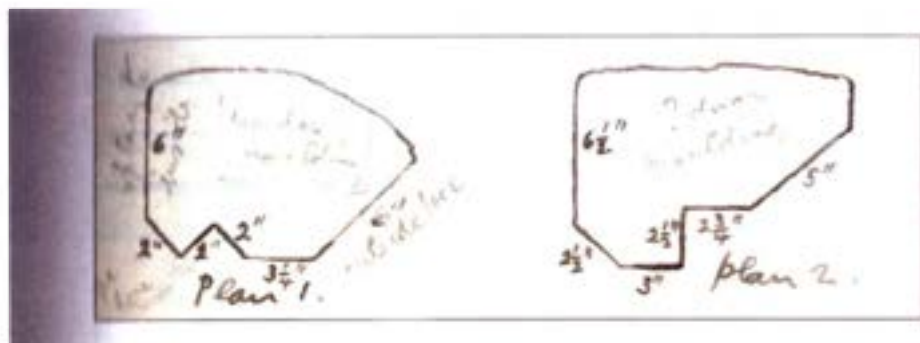


Fig 3. Bath stones. Window Moulding Left/ Door Moulding (Drawing. Liam Price)

Unlike 1933 when Price and Barton visited Dergory, today, the ruins at Ashtown are protected by tree cover and largely hidden from view. However, beneath the greenery the remains and outline of the enclosure and its 13th century medieval church can still be seen.



Fig 4. Stone wall remains of Dergory Church (Photo. David Menzies)

To appreciate what Dergory would have looked like all those years ago, I would recommend a visit to Derralossary church – the burial place of the late President Erskine Childers.

Like Dergory, the church at Derralossary sits within a medieval enclosure and in this case you can see the remains in the outside fields of two enclosure banks and ditches. There are also four bullaun stones to be seen – three outside the walls of the site and one inside. There were no gravestones observed at Dergory by Price in 1933 as compared to Derralossary today.

Sources

Corlett, C & Weaver, M. 2002. *‘The Liam Price Notebooks – The Placenames, Antiquities and Topography of County Wicklow’*. Duchas The Heritage Service

Price, Liam. 1980. *‘The Place-Names of Co. Wicklow’*. Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies

Smyth, A.P., 1994. *‘Kings, Saints and Sagas in Wicklow History and Society’*. Geography Publications

Acknowledgements

John & William Doyle, Roundwood for granting access to the Ashtown site.

Paul Duffy, Archaeologist at IAC Consultants for his guidance in understanding Ashtown’s medieval background.

National Monuments Service, Dept Culture, Heritage and The Gaeltacht for providing access to the archival records of Ashtown.

Memories from my time as the local Postman

Jack Byrne

I delivered the post in the Roundwood, Moneystown and surrounding areas for over a period of 51 years. During the first three years (1961, 62 and 63) I only did holiday and relief duty. Following this, I was appointed on a continuous basis in March 1964 until the 22nd May 2012.

Of course it was only bicycles in the early years. After ten years of delivering post on the bike, I was given the first post van to come to Roundwood. It was a six day week in my earlier years with An Post, with a fortnight's holidays. The five day week didn't come in until the mid-seventies when they added Saturday hours onto the other five. I have to say, being on the bike six days a week had to be the healthiest job a man could have, because, for the ten years I was on it, I never missed a day nor never was sick a day. When I think back on it, it wasn't easy, the Moneystown road was the only road tarred, Knockafrumpa Lane had three tracks all along it, the middle one where the horses walked along and two deeply rutted tracks on either side from the ironshod cartwheels. After a while they levelled it up with fine sand six inches deep and you might as well be trying to ride the bike through a ploughed field. Though it was a public lane, there were several gates across it at the time, similar to Trooperstown and Ballard.

But along with gates being across the roads there was anything up to 5 gates into some farmhouses, which was bad enough when you were on the bike but a real curse when you were in the van, what with getting out to open then move up, then out again to close them, imagine doing that 100s of times every day and some of them weren't exactly push button types. That was before the post boxes came, when you went up to everybody's door.

There were little incidents that happened from time to time. For example, there was a man by the name of Mick Jameson of Knockafrumpa, for whom I had a letter one day. I spotted him inside the ditch and thought this was great, it'll save me going all the way to his house. I got up on the ditch and, here he was with a jug in his hand trying to get milk for his

breakfast from a cow, which wasn't very cooperative. I called his name several times and he never let on to hear me, he was calling "suck, suck, suck, there's a lovely cow" and he would get a few squirts until she would move on again. After a good while the jug was filling up nicely with the froth starting to come over the top of it, when the cow gave a splock and away went the full jug of milk. Well, I nearly exploded, because I didn't want him to see me laughing at him. He looked up at me as if he didn't know I was there and says he "What the hell are you laughing at?" and he started to laugh himself.

I remember another incident at D'arcy's, who along with the forge, had a bull and boar at stud, and people used to bring sows and cows, as I did myself loads of times, put a rope on the sows hind leg and off you'd go a mile and a half there and a mile and a half back in our case. But on this particular day I arrived at D'arcy's with the post, when a man by the name of George Horan was coming out of the yard with a sow, the boar had just finished what he was paid to do. Now George was ahead of most people at the time, he had brought the sow in a little trailer behind the tractor but he couldn't get her back into the trailer and was going to have to walk her home and walk back for the tractor and trailer, a good four miles. So I said if he liked I would give him a hand to try to load her into the trailer. So he backed up to the bank and between the two of us we got her into it. George was delighted and said two heads are better than one, even if they are only sheep's heads.

You might be asked to hold a horse's head if it was a bit frisky while the harness was being put on or if it was being put under a cart. I often helped deliver a calf or a lamb and delivered thousands of parcels and letters but I never delivered a baby!

When I started working for An Post, the price of a stamp for a closed letter was 3d (pence) and two pence halfpenny for an open letter, which were mainly used for bills, invoices, sheep dipping notices and the like. Now, for younger readers, it must be remembered that was in the old money when there was 240 pence in a pound, which was like €1.27 in today's currency. Just imagine, you could send 80 closed letters for one pound, now it costs a full euro to send one. I was supplied with a pouch, which contained 16 shillings worth of stamps and the key to the post box

in Trooperstown. People would buy stamps and drop the letters into the post box.

I used to take shortcuts anywhere I could, probably the most notable, if the weather was good, I crossed in across Parkhill at two different points depending on where I was going. The Cullens walked out across the hill to Trooperstown School and were able to tell if I had gone the sheep path that day, as they would see the tyre marks in the muddy spots. Parkhill at that time was commonage, no fences just growing bushes, heather and bracken. As I say, I used the sheep paths. But one day I got an almighty toss off the bike. I was coming in along the front of the hill along the path as I had used thousands of times before, probably going a lot harder than I should, when I collided with a big stone which had rolled onto the path. Well I, bike, the post, the whole works landed in the middle of the briars and bushes about 20 yards below the path.

At that time there was plenty of grouse on Parkhill and of course on Meelin, Trooperstown and Ballard. You would see and hear them particularly in the Autumn and also the corncrakes calling in the meadows in the summertime and the gorgeous little yellowhammer. Now they have all disappeared and I feel sad about that.

The landscape has changed utterly over my lifetime. Farming is so different now, the countryside used to be a patchwork of fields and various crops, every single farm had a certain amount of tillage. Now, there isn't the makings of tomorrow's dinner growing on any of them, or very few. People even buy milk now, which was unheard of. The biggest change is probably the increase in forestry, which provides a haven for the exploding deer population and we now have buzzards and kites flying overhead, something we never saw before.

As I mentioned earlier, I did holiday and relief work before I was appointed to my own permanent route. There were four postmen in Roundwood, one in Moneystown and one in Annamoe. I did all six routes in 1963 on the bike of course. One that stands out I suppose was the Luggala run. I'd love to be as fit now, riding my bike to Roundwood, sort the post, deliver to all the houses in Upper Ashtown, The green road, which it was at that time, Balilam, Sleemaine and then head for Luggala,

down by the lodge and down the road overlooking Lough Tay and onto the main house, which is reputed to be two miles down from the piers; back up to the lodge and head down the valley in the Lough Dan direction, where there were another few stops to make, then turn around and face the hill again until you got to the top at the main road, then down to Ballinrush, where there three or four houses. Ballinrush must be almost three miles in along the heathery hill, and finally cycle back to Moneystown. There was certainly no need for sleeping tablets those nights! During this particular year, the last person who lived in Inchivore was still in residence. A very isolated, remote valley, lying to the west of Lough Dan, with lovely flat fields, coincidentally his name was Jack Byrne-no relation.

Back to my own route again. We were supplied with gaiters and a cycling cape, which had two thumb grips to try to keep the post dry, but in wet windy weather you were on rising ground all the way from D'arcy's corner up to Lickeen, up Trooperstown and on to Ballard and the south-westerly gales and heavy rain would catch in the cape, like a sail on a ship. I often had to walk every inch of the way and push the bike because of the wind. Then back from Ballard and push up the very, very steep School lane to the Crosses, head out the Roundhill nearly as far as the Bread and Butter stone, back down again to the Crosses and then down that beautiful sheltered valley of Glenicoria, with its 5 houses, on down through Croneybyrne and around by Garyduff to face Parkmore and its long lanes and gates.

Periods of snowfalls were always a nightmare. If it was really bad the post might not even get up from Bray for maybe 2, 3 or 4 days, which meant when it did arrive you had several days post to deal with and a lot of the time you had to leave your bike at home and walk, doing whatever you could. The same applied when the van arrived on the scene.

I remember Jack Kavanagh delivering post on horseback during some of the big snows, also Noel Murtagh. They were helping out Patsy Timmons who was postman before me.

I got trapped in Luggala valley on two occasions in snowstorms with the van. Then there was the day I took the chance and left the gate open to

make a delivery and didn't a big batch of cattle and two horses spot it and beat me to it and out onto the main road, but these are stories for another day.

For years there was only one phone on my own route and it was in the Post Office. Eventually D'arcy's got one, after another few years, Doyle's of Lickeen got one but had to get Mrs. Byrne, postmistress in Moneystown to put them through to the exchange each time they wanted to make a call. People used to call into Mrs. Byrne if they wanted to make a call and it would have to be something important for them to call in the first place. But she would ring the exchange and put them through and then hand the receiver to them, but they would often hand the receiver back to her and shake their heads saying "no, no, no, you make the call please" you would think the receiver was going to bite their ear off. How times have changed.

I am now in my eighth year of retirement. I miss the job to a certain extent, the chats and seeing what was going on around the country. What I miss most is the banter and nonsense with my colleagues in Roundwood. I never told them this but they were the best colleagues any man could wish to have. I now do a bit of farming for my sins and I suppose the good thing about that is, it keeps me out of mischief.

General Eisenhower's visit to Roundwood.

Joe Kavanagh



Photograph from Kavanagh's Pub

On August 22, 1962 General Eisenhower touched down for a four-day visit to Ireland accompanied by his wife Mamie and their two grandchildren. An old friend of the General, former Irish President Sean O'Kelly was the first to greet Eisenhower as he stepped off the plane, whilst his wife, wrapped in a mink stole and presented with a bouquet of red roses tied with green silk ribbon was welcomed by Mrs. McCloskey,

the wife of the American Ambassador. The Eisenhower's split their time between Dublin, Wexford and Wicklow.¹

Sean T O'Kelly was President of Ireland from 1945 to 1959 (he served two terms). He was the first Irish President to visit the United States of America in 1959 at the invitation of President Dwight Eisenhower. He was invited to address both houses of Congress and the visit was deemed a huge success by the Irish Government give the US hostility towards Ireland for its neutral status during World War II.

Sean T., as he was popularly known in Ireland, was a big hit. He flirted with Mamie Eisenhower and charmed his host with Irish jokes which Eisenhower told around Washington for weeks. After the White House, Sean T. was to attend the traditional dinners in Washington of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick and the Ancient Order of Hibernians. To everyone's amazement, Eisenhower insisted on going with him.² This visit cemented a friendship which resulted in General Eisenhower visiting Sean T. O'Kelly's home, Roundwood Park, in 1962.

The photograph above shows clockwise from left Malachy Brennan, Sean Kavanagh (founding member of Roundwood & District Historical and Folklore Society), Gore Taylor, Tom Roche, Kevin O'Kelly (RTE Journalist) and General Eisenhower. This day was also significant for Sean Kavanagh as it was the day of his wedding to Marie Fanning – he managed to meet the General before heading to the church! They had bought the Varry House in June 1962 which has been the location of many Historical Society meetings and talks.

¹ <https://independentarchives.photoshelter.com/gallery/President-Eisenhower-in-Ireland/G00002RUKJ46iOEg/C0000TGwWvrvowdU>, visited on 10th September 2019

² <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/an-irishman-s-diary-1.1135564> visited 10th September 2019

The Fair Village of Roundwood in 1888.

Chris Lawlor.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries fairs were held in many Irish towns and villages. Roundwood was no exception. Shortly before the famine, in 1837, it was noted that at Roundwood: 'Fairs are held on Jan. 3rd for cattle, March 8th for frieze, March 14th for cattle, May 19th, July 26th, Aug. 1st, and Sept. 5th and 19th, for frieze'.¹ The frieze fairs point to a healthy woollen sector in the locality. Coats made from black frieze were much worn in rural Ireland. The material was hard wearing, waterproof and suitable for outdoors.² Sale of frieze wool and sale of livestock and agricultural produce in general was the life-blood of rural Irish districts. Land was life in nineteenth-century upland Wicklow, and the sale of the produce of the land, be it arable or pastoral, was the principal driver of the local economy. Markets and fairs served a vital economic function, but they were huge social events as well. The staging of these events placed Roundwood within a larger network of markets and fairs and marked the village out as a nodal point within its extensive rural hinterland. The presence of a fair green was physical evidence of Roundwood's market-town status, but the adjacent village streets also played their part, as fairs could overflow easily from the green into the village, and the street provided a suitable arena for the sale of livestock and for market stalls, as was the case in Baltinglass in the west of the county.³

As already stated, both markets and fairs fulfilled vital economic functions in nineteenth-century villages such as Roundwood and their hinterlands. These villages (and towns) were consumers of produce from surrounding farms, sites of industry, mills, stores and other centres of employment for the rural population.⁴ Markets and fairs provided the mechanism by which economic interaction between rural and urban dwellers could take place. A differentiation must be made between markets and fairs, as the distinction between the two has become blurred over time.⁵ The market was a frequent, often weekly, event, supplying goods and services to the village and its immediate hinterland. It was the means by which the non-agricultural urban dwellers acquired food and

raw materials.⁶ Fairs were much larger events, attracting customers from a far wider region. They were less frequent, but lasted for a longer period, and they were much more lavish than weekly markets.⁷ In addition to their commercial functions, they were a magnet for other attractions such as jugglers and fortune-tellers, which added to their popularity.

As noted above, by the 1830s Roundwood was holding eight annual fairs (inclusive of those for frieze).⁸ The Great Famine interrupted economic prosperity in the region,⁹ and post-Famine recovery was slow, but green shoots did eventually appear. Some records of stock dealings at Roundwood have survived from the 1870s and 1880s.¹⁰ These later decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the Long Depression taking hold. The Roundwood area, and much of the wider county Wicklow region, was vulnerable to the nationwide fall in agricultural prices, which began about 1876, exacerbated by several bad harvests, which destroyed millions of pounds worth of crops, causing serious distress for smallholders.¹¹

If the year 1875 is used as a base of 100 for national agricultural prices, by 1880 practically every category in the table below showed a drop in price. Wheat, barley, potatoes, butter, eggs and beef were all below 1875 prices, while mutton was unchanged. The sole category to record an increase in price was store cattle and 8 per cent was not a large increase for a five-year period.¹²

Irish agricultural prices 1875-1880.

	Wheat	Barley	Potatoes	Butter	Eggs	Beef	Mutton	Store Cattle
1875	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
1876	103	97	101	103	107	98	116	116
1877	113	104	171	84	88	91	119	103
1878	94	97	128	81	91	95	116	110
1879	117	94	176	75	101	82	100	99
1880	99	90	88	86	97	82	100	108

Post-famine agricultural prosperity, fuelled by steady demand for Irish agricultural produce in the booming British market, came to a shuddering halt in the mid-1870s. Industrialised Britain was badly affected as the western world entered into the economic decline of the Long Depression, which would last until the late 1890s. Depression in Britain reduced demand for Irish farm produce including beef, butter, mutton and wool. The prices received by farmers for both crops and animals fell in Irish fairs and markets. Inclement weather exacerbated the problems faced by farmers, and high rents (under leases entered into during better economic times) brought the threat of eviction to many doors. It was in this climate of uncertainty that the Land League was formed, and the 1880s was characterised by the Land War both in upland Wicklow and nationally. Agrarian unrest was underpinned by the ongoing Long Depression. Under these conditions, many local fairs felt the pinch as money grew scarcer and, amid many complaints, a commission was established late in the decade to investigate market rights and tolls. The duties of the commissioners were clearly laid out.



The findings of the commission were published in a parliamentary paper in 1891. Although Roundwood was not among the towns inspected, as luck would have it, when Assistant Commissioner John J. O'Meara visited Wicklow town on 30 November 1888, he stated that 'at the termination of the inquiry I received evidence relating to the fairs at Roundwood' and he included this information as an appendix to his report on the fairs in Wicklow town.¹³ O'Meara took evidence regarding Roundwood from two deponents, the first of whom was Mr John Byrne, the lessee of the fair and its tolls, who had leased them for a term of ninety-nine years in 1874 from the fair's owner, Canon Drouet of County Tipperary. The fair green was not enclosed when Byrne took on the lease, but 'was bounded on one side by the street and [by] the county road on the other'. Byrne erected a wall to enclose the green but left 'a car-way and a shortcut through it' for a public right-of-way, with which he 'could not interfere'. The annual rent payable to Drouet for the enclosed fair green was between £4 and £5. In 1888 Roundwood had no market but held twelve mensal fairs on the third Tuesday of every month, which became the appointed date 'about five or six years ago'. Before the introduction of the third Tuesday system, the fair days in Roundwood were 3 January, 12 February, 14 February [?],¹⁴ 14 March, 12 April, 23 May, 21 June, 26 July, 23 August, 19 September, 8 October, 8 November and 5 December, but the inhabitants of Roundwood and the buyers and sellers presented a memorial to the Privy Council to change to the new system. The Privy Council acceded to the request and the change was made. Twelve fairs were also held prior to the introduction of the third Tuesday system, with tolls levied at each one. However, Byrne asserted that this was not always the case and he could remember when there were only six fairs per annum. Mr Michael Rooney, who gave evidence regarding the Wicklow town fairs, could remember that originally there were only four fairs a year. According to Byrne, the fair green was located 'at the back of the principal streets', but he evaded the question (or declined to answer) when he was asked if the green was 'a common'. He did, however, make the point that there was no shelter there, calling it an 'open field', and he admitted that he let it out to graze 'between fairs'.

When asked about the tolls, Byrne informed O'Meara that a toll board was erected on fair days, but tolls were only levied on what was sold, with the buyers paying the tolls. That, he said, had 'always been the custom'.

He outlined the charges as follows: 3*d* for a full-grown cow or bullock; 2*d* for two-year-olds; 1*d* for yearlings, calves, sheep and pigs. However, Byrne continued: 'We have no pigs since the railway came here. We are ten miles from any railway, and no pigs but small pigs or bonhams are brought here'. There was also a toll of 6*d* levied on the sale of horses, but they were 'very rarely' sold. Byrne admitted that standing charges of 4*d* were also applied at the fairs. These were levied on stallholders including those with 'cars of goods, wooden-ware, tin or anything in that way'. When pressed regarding these standing charges, Byrne's answers became somewhat vague. He 'thought' the charges were the same for all stalls regardless of size but maintained that 'we have not been particular in collecting that charge at all'. O'Meara asked whether Byrne would collect 4*d* on a cartload of bonhams and he replied that he'd 'be entitled, but as a rule it's on the public road they stand'. When asked if he collected 1*d* per bonham, Byrne answered: 'The collector might say "If you have six [bonhams] give me sixpence", but the man might have ten in the cart'. He said he never charged both the standing charge and the toll on the sale of bonhams and he only collected when the bonhams were actually sold.

On fair days cattle and pigs were sold on the fair green, but horses and sheep were sold on the street and on the footpaths. Tolls on the horses and sheep were levied when they were being 'driven out of town', with collectors standing at three gaps (but two principal ones) at the 'outskirts of the village'. There were up to ten men carrying sticks at each gap, but fewer at winter fairs, as these were 'small and not very largely attended'. These men were paid 2*s* or 2/6 each for their role as collectors, but 'sometimes a man better than the others is worth 3 shillings'. Byrne had never had any complaints about collectors injuring beasts. They simply stopped the drovers and asked them whether they had bought or sold before demanding the appropriate charges. On 'very rare' occasions, someone might 'tell a falsehood' and the collectors would stop him there [until he paid], but they would not 'seize the animals'. All cattle were branded and when sellers were driving them out without 'a dealer or his man', the collectors let them pass, knowing that they had not sold their beasts.

Assistant Commissioner O'Meara probably thought that he had spotted a weakness in the system when he asked Byrne 'Is it not customary with

the buyers... to tell the farmer... to drive [the animals] to some yard outside of town...[so] the seller is in possession of the animal passing the toll gap'? Byrne admitted that this was the case but said the seller 'tells us who the buyer is; we know where he goes and we settle'. The seller never paid the tolls 'unless by agreement', and this was very rare. In case of disputes, everyone could see the toll board on the fair green, but Byrne pointed out that during his tenure as lessee he had made no changes to the charges, which he stated were 'handed over to me by the former collector', stressing once again that 'it is the buyer who pays'. One change that Byrne made, with the help of 'the landlord' was the erection of a weigh-bridge. 'One or two buyers' objected to paying tolls in the absence of a weigh-bridge, but 'the majority did not'. Since 'the Weighing of Cattle Act came into operation last January' Byrne had 'no legal authority to charge' tolls without a weigh-bridge being available. However, no beast was weighed on it during the last fair, and Byrne suspected it would never be used because 'they are all store cattle that are bought'. The average number of cattle brought to the fair was 'between 200 and 300, but the summer fairs were larger. There were 'very large' numbers of sheep at the three summer fairs, with 'between four and five thousand sheep' presented at the September fair. 'After paying everything', Byrne's average receipts over the past five years were 'between £12 and £15'. He observed that 'the first year or two was the best'. Byrne's evidence here confirms that the effects of the Long Depression began to be felt in the Roundwood fair during the mid-1870s, with less profit being made after 1875 or so.

O'Meara then moved on to Byrne's rights and duties as lessee. According to Byrne, the grazing of the fairgreen between fairs was worth 'a couple of pounds or thirty shillings'. He did not 'effect any repairs during the year, nor did he or Mr Drouet clean the public road after the sheep and horse fairs. Byrne 'supposed the road contractor' did that. Byrne maintained that the tolls did not deter people from coming to the fairs, especially since the erection of the weigh-bridge. He admitted to collecting tolls on sheep and horses sold on the public street but added that the buyers 'grumble and say that it is illegal and that we have no law'. When asked within what limits he thought his jurisdiction to collect tolls extended, Byrne again gave a somewhat evasive answer stating: 'There are a whole lot of townlands mentioned in the patent'. At present, sales

took place 'some on the public road, and more on a little open space between the houses and more inside on the green'. When asked if there was sufficient space to confine sales to the fair green Byrne answered in the affirmative. There was ample accommodation for all the animals, except perhaps 'at one or two fairs', and Byrne undertook to 'get an additional field if required'. Finally, when asked: 'Have you any remark to make in connection with your fairs'? Byrne answered: 'No, only I thought it better to attend, seeing your advertisement, lest legislation might ignore me altogether'.

The second deponent interviewed by O'Meara about the Roundwood fairs was Mr. Michael Rooney, who had already given evidence about the Wicklow town fairs. Rooney's deposition was a lot shorter than Byrne's, but he said he often bought stock at Roundwood fair. He agreed with Byrne that the accommodation for animals was ample (except in September) and that the tolls did not deter people from attending the Roundwood fairs. The nearest other fairs were 'at Bray, Wicklow or Kilcool[e]'. The remote location of the village [and presumably its distance from the railway] affected 'the sale of fat pigs', regarding which Rooney stated: 'I remember when a large number used to go there, but there is no-one goes there now'. However, the cattle sold there were 'all store cattle and would not be injured by the long driving', and 'all the principal sheep buyers from south Meath and the surrounding counties' still attended the Roundwood fair. Following Rooney's interview, 'no other gentleman [nor lady presumably!] wanted to give evidence, so 'the inquiry terminated with a vote of thanks to the assistant commissioner'.

The inclusion of the Roundwood appendix in the 1891 parliamentary paper was fortunate, as it gives us a synchronic primary source regarding the Roundwood fair in 1888. However, the snapshot provided by Byrne's and Rooney's evidence must be approached with caution, as is the case regarding all accounts given by stakeholders with vested interests. As the lessee of the fair, it was in Byrne's interests to affirm that tolls were not a deterrent to buyers attending the event. Elsewhere, tolls were a bone of contention. There were strong objections to tolls in Dungarvan, County Waterford, where there was 'a serious row about them' and, closer to home, 'no tolls were levied in the immediate area of Baltinglass since they were abolished at Dunlavin'.¹⁵ Rooney agreed with Byrne that the

Roundwood tolls were not a deterrent, but the two obviously knew each other, as is evident from Byrne's statement regarding the number of fairs held in Roundwood in the past, where he used Rooney to substantiate his evidence. It is possible that the [sole?] motive behind Rooney's deposition was to support Byrne's evidence. Notwithstanding the possible bias in the evidence, the Roundwood appendix does provide an excellent source regarding the workings and day-to-day operation of the fair. As verbal historical snapshots go, this one has a lot to commend it, with much information imparted in a brief written account.

Following the publication of the parliamentary paper in 1891, the Long Depression continued into the remainder of the final decade of the nineteenth century. Rural Ireland, including most of County Wicklow, continued to suffer its effects. In May 1895 Canon Frederick Donovan of Dunlavin noted in his diary 'the strain on the very limited resources of our farmers by reason of the low prices obtainable at fairs and markets'.¹⁶ Indeed, agricultural prices would not really rally with any strength until the early years of the following century. In common with other rural fairs, Roundwood fair also continued well into the twentieth century.¹⁷ However, the changing nature of rural Irish life in the latter half of that century meant that these fairs petered out, and today only the memories of special, always bustling, sometimes chaotic and once economically vital days in Roundwood remain. Mr John Byrne, Mr Michael Rooney and Assistant Commissioner John J. O'Meara would doubtless be very surprised to learn of these later developments.

ENDNOTES

¹ Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland, comprising the several counties, cities, boroughs, corporate, market, and post towns, parishes and villages*, ii (2 vols, London, 1837), p. 540.

² Jim Corley, 'Ballymore-Eustace Woollen Mills' in *Journal of the West Wicklow Historical Society*, x (Naas, 2019), p. 77.

³ Stanley Jackson, 'Baltinglass cattle fairs', *Journal of the West Wicklow Historical Society*, iv, (2007) p. 86. This was also the case elsewhere. In

County Roscommon, for example, Strokestown's wide streets provided space for trading on market and fair days. Susan Hood, 'The significance of the villages and small towns in rural Ireland during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 108, (London, 2002), p. 251.

⁴ F. Aalen, *Man and the landscape in Ireland* (London, 1978), p. 121.

⁵ Karina Holton, 'From charters to carters: aspects of fairs and markets in medieval Leinster' in *Irish fairs and markets: studies in local history* (Dublin, 2001), p. 18.

⁶ Markets in Irish towns and villages date back to Anglo-Norman times and ten market sites have been identified in county Wicklow. Patrick O'Connor, *Fairs and markets of Ireland: A cultural geography* (Newcastlewest, nd), p. 12. Although Roundwood was not among these, the area was serviced by markets and fairs such as those at Bray (created in 1674 and held on Tuesdays) and Kilcoole (created in 1639 and held on Mondays and Tuesdays). *Report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the state of fairs and markets in Ireland*, [C1674], H.C. 1852-53, xli, pp 118-9. The remote location of Roundwood may have meant that the threshold from which a weekly market could expect to draw customers was slightly wider than one might expect. In England it has been suggested that this threshold was between 8 and 12.5 kilometres. Christopher Dyer, 'Market towns and the countryside in late medieval England' in *Canadian Journal of History*, xxxi, 1 (1996), pp 20-4. In Ireland it has been attested that 'buyers and sellers certainly travelled further', O'Connor, *Fairs and markets of Ireland*, p. 19.

⁷ For an excellent account of an individual fair and the various levels at which it operated, see Seamas Ó Maitiu, *The humours of Donnybrook: Dublin's famous fair and its suppression* (Dublin, 1995).

⁸ Prior to Lewis' *Dictionary*, publications such as *The gentleman and citizen's almanack* and *The triple almanack* permit one to trace the growth or decline of fairs during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

⁹ For an overview of the impact of the Famine in Roundwood and its surrounding areas, see the articles by Ken Hannigan, John Medleycott and Teresa Healy, Kevin Byrne, Pat Power and Joan Kavanagh in *Roundwood and District Historical and Folklore Journal*, 20 (np, 2009), pp 1-55 passim.

¹⁰ Frank Maguire 'Fair deals', in *Roundwood and District Historical and Folklore Journal*, 20 (np, 2009), p. 63.

¹¹ M. E. Collins, *The Land Question 1879-1882* (Dublin, 1974) p. 12.

¹² Figures adapted from T. Barrington 'Irish Agricultural Prices', *Journal of the statistical and social enquiry society of Ireland*, xv, pp 251-2.

¹³ *Royal Commission on market rights and tolls: Minutes of evidence taken before the Assistant Commissioners Charles W. Black Esquire and John J.*

O'Meara Esquire, at enquiries held by them in the provinces of Ulster, Leinster and Munster together with their reports on the markets from November 1st 1888 to January 7th 1889, Vol X, HC 1890-1891 [6268] 39, 1, pp 229-31. All other information given in the following section is taken from this appendix, entitled 'The Roundwood Fairs', unless otherwise stated.

¹⁴ The two dates in February seem very close. Perhaps the two fairs were held for different purposes. In any event, these are the dates published in the parliamentary paper. However, it is possible that this is simply a misprint. The evidence mentioning 'twelve fairs' in the next paragraph of the text above seems to add weight to this suggestion.

¹⁵ *Royal Commission on market rights and tolls ...*, HC 1890-1891 [6268] 39, 1, p. 291.

¹⁶ Chris Lawlor, *Canon Frederick Donovan's Dunlavin 1884-1896: a West Wicklow village in the late nineteenth century* (Dublin, 2000), p. 57.

¹⁷ For accounts of the Roundwood fair in the twentieth century, see the articles by Frank Nuttall, Frank Maguire and Sean Malone in *Roundwood and District Historical and Folklore Journal*, 20 (np, 2009), pp 61-67 *passim*.

