

OLD WATERFORD SOCIETY

DIGGERS

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EDITORIAL.

The purpose of this pilot issue is to test the demand for a magazine that will give an outlet to current research on the history of Waterford City and hinterland. In this issue we have appealed to as wide a range of historical interests as possible. Future development depends on response to this.

We would suggest the following as future potential for the magazine;

- (a) As a forum for research, questions, snippets, curios, etc.
- (b) As a means of interesting youth in Local History through relating some of the articles to their Intermediate and Leaving History Courses.
- (c) As a stimulus to investigation into the many aspects of Waterford's history, including Folklore, that have hitherto had no outlet.

If you feel these aims are worth achieving, let us know. If you have any other recommendations, do please contact one of us. Most important perhaps, if you have done or are conducting an investigation into any aspect of Waterford history, please let us know - it's you we depend on to supply us with questions, opinions or dissertations.

If we hear from enough of you we should be able to publish again in the late spring, and will send copies to members of the Old Waterford Society. Non-members may join for 1976 by remitting a mere £1.50 to Miss K. Kelly, Bela Vista, Priest's Road, Tramore. For this they will get notice of meetings and outings of the Society, which they are of course entitled to attend; O.W.S. magazine "DECIES"; and the annual journal of the O.W.S., edited by the Chairman, Mr. J. J. Walsh.

Your suggestions, then, please to Des Cowman, "Knockane", Annesstown,
(phone 96157)
hon sec. or Sr. Virginia, Ferrybank Convent,
(phone 4112)
or Noel Cassidy, Lisacul, Marian Pl.
(phone 3130)

and £1.50 for membership

hon treas to Miss K. Kelly, Bela Vista, Priest's Rd
Tramore

"AND HOW DO THEY KNOW ----?"

What was Waterford life in the mid-eighteenth century? Mr. Heylin went to look at a contemporary painting in the City Hall and confirmed his impressions from Smith's 1746 account of Waterford. How did Waterford priests manage in post-Reformation Europe? Miss Kelly traces this through the career of Fr. Sherlock, using as sources articles from the Irish Ecclesiastical Record, from a Waterford News of 1920, from Waterford and South East Archeological Journal and from a letter in her possession.

Mr. Carroll, looking at an Ordnance Survey Map of 1840 wondered about a strange square near Five Cross Roads, asked questions locally and consulted Canon Powell. Likewise, Sean and Sheila Murphy, puzzled about isolated standing stones in their locality, consulted standard archeological text-books, checked with Ordnance maps and uncovered local traditions. (Incidentally, they themselves have already provided an excellent source for present and future local historians in their two booklets, "The Comeraghs - Fact and Famine").

(Continued on back page)

ANCIENT CHURCHES IN EAST WATERFORD.

CROOKE: In this edition I propose to deal briefly with the church at Crooke. Dr. O'Donovan was puzzled by this name. My own guess is that it is not a Gaelic name.

The church building was monastic and pertained to the adjoining preceptory of Knights Templars. Beside the church is a well known as St. John's well. The church was probably dedicated to St. John the Baptist.

This church is seventy five feet in length and twenty one feet wide. It had a nave and choir and was the largest church in the Barony. The walls are approximately two feet thick. The East gable contains three Lancet windows of early English type. The centre window is nine feet high on the inside of the ruin. There is one low Gothic window in the South wall. A window about one foot nine inches can be seen about four feet from the East gable.

The doorway was in the South wall. Beside it is a most unusual holy water font formed from a single block of stone about two and a half feet long.

There are some indications of the existence of a small tower in the North east corner. The church must be in ruins for nearly three hundred years now, as a tomb bears the date 1710.

Local tradition points to a stone some five feet from the central high window in the East gable, which is said to mark the resting place of the Croppy Boy (which one, if any?) of 1798 fame!

James O'Meara.

CROMWELL'S CAMP AT KILBARRY?

Generations of Historians have had occasion to bless the Ordnance Survey. Not only these old maps inform us; they also leave us guessing sometimes. For instance, what are we to make of the representation in the 6" map of 1840 of what must have been a camp site beside the road from the Five Cross Roads to the Moore Park, south of the city boundary at Ballybro? It is located on the south side of this road a little to the west of the former railway bridge and at the corner of a private road that runs southward to the Moore Park. It measures about 250'x150' and is in the traditional shape of a fortification, i.e., a square with diagonal projections at each corner. The map indicates that the perimeter consisted of earthen banks. These may of course have been a stockade. It has been much disturbed since 1840. If it were not on the map it would never be noticed. Its townland location is at the extreme northern boundary of Duagh. Canon Power quotes an account that it was used "as a battery" in 1798. He adds, however, that it is as much older and that there is a local belief that it was used in the time of Elizabeth. It is hard to give credence to this latter belief but I would say that it certainly pre-dates the Cromwellian War period. Could it have been the site of Cromwell's Camp at Kilbarry in December, 1649? After all, the old parish of Kilbarry is only across the road from it.

J. S. Carroll.

SUPERSTITION & THE PILLAR STONES OF KILROSSANTY

What are pillar stones? In brief we don't know. The remains of five of them still exist in this parish. Some may be the remains of druidic stone circles; others may simply be uninscribed grave markings from ancient times. Whatever the origins, they are still regarded with a certain awe around Kilrossanty parish.

There is one, for instance, near the Dalligan bridge on the Mauma road which was a stopping point for funerals up to the introduction of motorised hearses. It stands 8' high and is marked on O. S. maps as "Dallaun" (the word most used in Waterford for pillar stones). How it was manoeuvred into position or its original function, must remain hidden in the past.

In nearby Curraun stands another such stone known as the "Fear Breige" (the false man), presumably because of its resemblance to a human figure standing sentinel on the hillside. So prominent was it, that in 1921 the I.R.A., unaffected by local superstitions, knocked it down as it provided too handy a landmark.

In the gap of the mountain known as Bearná na Madra are three pillar stones which may well have formed a circle. Here too, funerals used to halt and a story is still told of the traveller in the early eighteen hundreds whose corpse was found huddled at the foot of one of the stones.

No particular stories attach to the other two stones. A large one further north is called "Staca Phadraig Mhoir", and a smaller one in Ash-town has no recorded name.

Perhaps these are mere geological anomalies and the superstition accrued later, as with so many other prehistoric features. If not, we would certainly like to hear the opinions of others.

Sean & Sheila Murphy

THE HISTORY OF A WATERFORD FARM

(- the farm in question being that of Mr. Tom McGrath, Georgestown, Kill).

Before the Cromwellian Plantation the farm was owned by the Killmeadan branch of the Power family. In 1617 a "Nicholas Power of Georgestowne" was imprisoned and fined £20 for recusancy. A marriage lintel of 1627 is still preserved on the farm, bearing the initials B C 1627 BL. Cardinal Rinuccini mentions the Irish custom of engraving on the lintel of a new house the wedding date and initials of the newly married couple - but who B C or B L of Georgestown were I don't know.

Nicholas seems to have been succeeded by his son John, who was hanged on a tree in his estate in 1649 or 1650 by Cromwell and his family banished to Connaught in 1650. Seven years later however, Georgestown was restored to the family under the Acts of Settlement and Explanation, and was inhabited by John Power (junior). In 1720 yet another John Power held the farm, but his son (John) was the last of the male line of descent of the Powers of Georgestown.

This last John Power's sister, Margaret, had married in 1738 a James Barron of Carrigbarrahan and their son Pierce ("of the rock") Barron eventually inherited Georgestown in 1782. When Pierce's second son, John married a Mary Maddock about 1788, he was given Georgestown. He then apparently decided to build himself a new house, (the present "Georgestown House"), about a hundred yards east of the 1627 house, as well as a large farm house for his agent a little to the north. He (John Barron) borrowed £4,000 for these buildings but had to be sued in 1804 by William Grant of Woodstown for the return of the money. John Barron had other financial worries also because one of the conditions of his father's inheritance was that an annuity of £150 p.a. should be paid to the Power family.

These problems he passed on to his son James Barron who died around 1831 in his early forties without a son. His daughter Catherine inherited the farm, and married James Sherlock Harper. Dogged by financial difficulties they mortgaged the farm in 1861 for £4,800 to Edward Barden, who in turn sold it to Edward Kelly of the Adelphi Hotel, Waterford.

Catherine must have been childless as she left the farm to a cousin, John Marcus Barron (who was married to a Mary Barron of Dungarvan!) John and Mary lived in Georgestown until 1879. Edward Kelly meanwhile had the mortgage. The house then lay empty and £150 p.a. had still to be paid to a Richard Power. At this stage the son of Barron's solicitor, a land valuer who was interested in horses, decided to buy Georgestown farm for himself and gave Richard Power £2,200 for the annuity in 1890. He had to wait a further two years before Edward Kelly's mortgage became official ownership and Edward sold it to him. Coincidentally, he too was a Kelly - Richard Henry.

And so, in 1892, after one hundred years of legal and financial difficulty the land and two houses passed out of the hands of the Powers and Barrons, into the possession of Richard H. Kelly, the land valuer. Here he lived for 30 years, building stables and fences, as well as draining the land. He never married so that in 1922 the farm went to his married sister's family (Stephansons of Carrick-on-Suir). In 1927 his nephew mortgaged it to the National Bank, which sold most of it to Richard McGrath of Moylan in 1929. He moved into the farm house selling Georgestown House and some acres around it to Lord William Beresford in 1931. His sister, Lady Patricia Miller still lives there, while the present writer, a nephew of Richard McGrath farms "Georgestown Farm".

NOTE: As it happens, only a small portion of the farm now lies in the townland of Georgestown, most of it being in Farranaleshessery ("the place of the half ploughland"). Seisreach refers to the six men who were needed for ploughing but later came to be applied to any ploughing teams. The functions of the six are interesting; one man ("An Tantoirbh") held the plough; another drove the team; a third followed, pressing the turn of the team down with his foot; the fourth pressed the plough into the earth with a forked stick ("Gabhlog"); a fifth acted as mechanic with hammer and wedges; the sixth man superintended operations.

Tom McGrath.

"VENPERS": This is a word used along the Waterford coast for flotsam and jetsam. What is its origin; how should it be spelled; how widespread is its use?

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE: Does anybody know anything about this nineteenth century Vocational School in Waterford.

VIEW OF WATERFORD 1736

In the council chamber of the City Hall hangs a seven foot canvas - an oil painting of the Waterford of 1736 painted by one Johann Van de Hagen. From an artistic and historical point of view, it is perhaps one of the most valuable paintings in the municipality. The artist, a Dutchman, was commissioned by the City Fathers to portray our city "warts & all". The picture is somewhat idealized, but enables us to form a rather good idea of the Waterford of that day.

Those were the so called spacious days, though our city was anything but spacious. The many houses lay thick-set within the city walls and were they arranged even according to modern town planning, would take up an area four times as large. It will help us to realize this better if we remember that a large block of buildings filled the present Barronstran and Broad Streets. The open space at the Apple Market was occupied by congeries of tenements. Another wedge shaped block stood at the junction of Patrick and Stephen Street. The present Alexander Street had once a range of houses up its middle, as also had John Street.

The vantage point of the artist was rather where the Ardree Hotel now stands, so that the river and quay frontage were strong points in the composition. The old Quay is shown from Reginalds Tower to beyond Gladstone Street; centre way is the arcaded Exchange which housed Van de Hagen painting for half a century before the City Hall was built. Christ church as it was before 1770 shows prominently left of centre and on either side of it, the similar square campanile towers of the early thirteenth century Franciscan and Dominican Abbeys. The Norman west wall and towers are very much in evidence and a wind mill where John's Hill now stands.

Frank Heylin.

BURIAL VAULT IN OLD GRAVEYARD, Lady Lane.

In November 1971 we were asked to excavate some trial holes on the site of a proposed Special Care Unit for mentally handicapped children in Lady Lane.

The site was originally a graveyard and was in use as such up to 1858 as shown by the date on one of the grave stones.

One of the stones has an interesting inscription:-

"By whom erected.

Capt. J. J. Foster Royal North Lincoln Militia.

Rests the remains of the late Private Thomas Anderson who
died on the 10th October, 18? aged 30 years.

His son, Paul Anderson died 21st. December, 1858 aged 16 years."

Anderson was a good officer who looked after his men even when they
were sent out of his care.

Afterwards the graveyard was used as a drying ground attached to the laundry run by the Sisters of Charity up to about 13 years ago. In 1968 the laundry buildings and a large house in Lady Lane (The Mason School) were demolished and the site levelled.

In digging the trial holes we came on a brick structure about 2' below ground which at first looked like the covering of a culvert, but further investigation showed that it was limited in extent. A hole was excavated at one end to about 2' below the crown of the brick-work just barely big enough to allow a person to climb in backwards, into what appeared to be a burial vault.

The entrance was about 3'4" wide between masonry walls and led into a large chamber approximately 13' long, 11' wide and perhaps 9' to the crown of the vault. At the far end there was a smaller vault about 9'x5' and to one side of the entrance to this smaller vault could be seen what appeared to be a tomb with parts of a skeleton still in place.

The entrance passage had been filled in with rubble and rubbish which had entered the large vault leaving the surface to the rubble sloping down to the floor. There was about 2'6" of water in the vault and underneath could be seen the remains of at least 4 coffins and some scattered bones. The water was very clear and a sample taken was found to be one of the purest ever tested by the local Health Authority.

It seemed that at one time it had been open, with possibly a flight of steps leading down to it, and then, possibly well over a hundred years ago, a wall had been demolished and thrown into the passage and a new wall built (this wall has in its turn been removed and a concrete block wall built on its site).

I am fairly certain, and so is Mr. Stan Carroll, who has seen the place, that it had not been entered since it was first partly filled in. This vault is situated in one of the oldest areas of Waterford City, as can be seen on old maps, and if funds, and qualified persons, were available for excavation the results could rival those of High Street in Dublin. The vault is at present covered by the new Special care Unit but the entrance to it is just outside the foundations and could possibly be investigated in the future if someone had the time and money for the effort.

John Hodge.

A DIP IN THE ARCHIVES (part 1)

In the context of its own affairs, Waterford Corporation has preserved a most valuable set of Archives containing some unique items. These documents may be conveniently divided into four categories (i) Royal charters (ii) a roll of the reign of Richard II (1377-99) (iii) an unbound volume styled "Liber Antiquissimas Civitatis Waterfordiae" or the Great Parchment Book and (iv) the volumes commencing 1600 containing proceedings and orders of the City Council.

Some other documents have also come into the possession of the Corporation, a good example being the back-length manuscript letter written from Van Diemen's Land by Thomas Francis Meagher to his friend Gavan Duffy containing a colourful account of the journey out, conditions at the settlement, and some personal reminiscences.

First, the Charters; about thirty in all were granted to the City by English monarchs between 1205 and 1815 A.D. Not all have

survived, but the first skins of a number of them (Charles 1, Henry vii, Henry viii, Phillip, Mary, Elizabeth 1 etc.) - some beautifully illuminated with portraits of the granters - are on permanent exhibition since 1955 in Reginald's Tower.

One of the Charters, that of Charles 1, was justly called the Great or Governing Charter in so far as it regulated the affairs of the City from 1626 to the passage in 1840 of the Municipal Corporation Act. It contains a most panoramic insight into the life and times of centuries - ago Waterford; and (at a period for most of which local government as it is understood to-day did not exist) contains precise, detailed, far-ranging provisions for the organisation of affairs in the City.

The 1626 Charter opens with an abbreviated recitation of previous royal Grants, after which Charles, with "royal consideration, foreseeing these and many other things, out of our special grace and certain knowledge and mere motion" goes on to "will", "ordain", "grant" and "appoint" as required by the situations, circumstances then following.

The City - which, by the way, as a result of withdrawal by James of the earlier Charter provisions, is described in the preamble as having "decayed from its ancient flourishing condition" - was reconstituted as a Free City by the name of the 'County of the City of Waterford' for ever "distinct and separated from the Counties of Waterford and Kilkenny".

The Mayor, Sheriffs and Citizens were created one body corporate and politic with perpetual succession, with power to purchase and demise, sue and be sued, answer and be answered, defend and be defended, do, permit or execute; and act under common seal.

The definition of the bounds of the City and the composition of this new Corporation can form the basis of another article.

Tom Ryan.

Rev. Doudney: A descendant of his would like details of his career after the collapse of the industrial schools in Gnamahon in 1859.

SPA WELLS: There were the spas at Kilmadon or Mill St. Michael's. Were there any other spas in East Waterford.

Fr. PAUL SHERLOCK S.J.

In the seventeenth century Waterford men were prominent in the Irish Colleges of Spain, France and Italy. They came of well-known merchant families and were, in many cases, related one to another. Fr. Paul Sherlock was one of these. His father, James Sherlock of Ballydavid, was married to Margaret Ley or Lee, and was the son and successor of James of Gracedieu.

Also, in the later part of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the South-East of Ireland had a very fine classical tradition of education. Peter White, a Waterford man, in his native city, and later in Kilkenny, John Flahy of Waterford, and Robert Saul of Cashel were among the successful masters of the period. There was as well a notable school at Clonmel where Bonaventure Baron began his education. These masters prepared many future scholars, professors and administrators for the Irish colleges abroad.

Paul Sherlock left Waterford in 1612 at the age of seventeen, and entered the Society of Jesus in Spain at Salamanca. Here he completed his studies for the priesthood and was ordained. He became Rector of the College at St. Iago de Compostella, and in 1631 was nominated Rector of the Irish College of Salamanca, where Irishmen studied for more than three hundred years. He was also appointed Censor of Doctrine by the Sacred Inquisition. During these years he continued to profess various theological subjects and to pursue his own studies.

In 1640 his most famous work entitled "Antequis Cogitationum in Salmonis Cantico Cantico", a prologue for meditation on the Canticle of Canticles. It was welcomed with praise by Calderon, the Biblical scholar, and Joannes de Jes celebrated its publication in verse in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. It has since been reprinted several times, and was to be found in most well equipped theological libraries. His other works are not as well known, but were widely read by biblical scholars. There was also in Salamanca a manuscript life of Fr. William Bath which was attributed to Fr. Sherlock.

A few years before the death of Fr. Sherlock Fr. Robert Nugent, the Superior of the Jesuits in Ireland wrote to the Fr General Vitellishi on the 24th April 1642 asking for two Waterford men to work in the city "Fr. Peter Wadding from Bohemia, or his brother Luke from Salamanca and Fr. Paul Sherlock". Almost a year later Fr. Nugent wrote again on the 28th February, 1643 "I hope your paternity will send us from Spain Fr. Luke Wadding and Fr. Paul Sherlock who are absolutely necessary to this mission". The fathers Wadding referred to by Fr. Nugent were cousins of the famous Fr. Luke the Franciscan. But neither priests as to minister in his native land. However, if they were not able to come home, Waterford Jesuits who held various chairs in Continental Universities were permitted by the Father General to send the books for their special use to the Waterford residence. When the last Jesuit pastor of St. Patrick's parish died his books were given to the library of St. John's College, and it is possible that some of these gifts from overseas were among them.

Fr. Sherlock was not of very robust health, but that did not prevent him from wearing a hair shirt, practising severe austerities and taking the discipline every day for as long as he was able. He died in Salamanca on August 9th 1646 at the age of 51.

"And How Do They Know ---?" (continued).

So there are no mysterious processes involved in uncovering the past of a locality, and there are really no "authorities" in local history. Hence we invite anyone who has any unpublished local information to submit it to us, that it may be recorded before it is forgotten. Much of such published information as is available, is in the standard histories of Waterford (by Smith, Ryland, Hansard, Egan and Downey); in Canon Power's two books; and in the "Waterford and South East Archeological Journal's. While it is difficult to buy these now, they may be consulted in the Reference Room in the City Library. In addition to these the County Library in Lismore has a good selection of pamphlets on various aspects of Waterford's history.

A visit to Dublin is necessary for those who wish to consult the other major sources. In the National Library, for instance, one may consult the census figures for Waterford going back to 1821, or the published details of ownership of land in the mid-nineteenth century from Griffith's primary Valuation. Even more useful, perhaps, are the largely manuscript documents on the nine miles of shelving in the Public Record Office, but it is difficult to know just what to ask for. Here one may find details of land-ownership and confiscation in each parish during the Cromwellian Plantation from the Down Survey and Maps, or the reports of the Famine Relief Committees for each district, for instance. Photocopies of many of these are available for the use of teachers in the Teacher's Centre on the Mall. Copies of the index to them are available on request.

Here are some snippets from the Teacher's Centre collection:-

(a) from the Book of Postings and Sales; On June 16th 1703 Captain W. Harrison bought 282 Irish acres (i.e. 550 statute acres approx.) in Whitestown ("In the Parish of Mottle --- distant from Waterford 9 miles") for £240. The previous owner, Walter Galway, had forfeited this land because of his support for King James. It is described as "Arable and Coarse Pasture" with two tenant farmers (John Kent and Charles North) plus six cabins.

(b) from Appendix to the Second Report from the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1826; before the introduction of National Schools there were already no less than 30 schools catering for over 1400 pupils in the parish of Trinity-Without alone. By far the largest of these was Edmund Rice's Mount Sion with 12 teachers and 650 pupils, described as "stone, lime and slated; cost £2,400". The others ranged from Patrick Power's "slated house; might cost £60" where 121 Roman Catholics paid from 2d to 7c weekly, to Mary Faulkner's mud cabin, thatched; cost £6 where 10 girls and 3 boys were taught for 1d to 1½ weekly.

(c) And what do you make of this?

The Greatest Wonder of the World: at the Ship, 110 Quay, Waterford. This wonderful AMPHIBIOUS ANIMAL --- sprang on board (the ship "Mary") during the night, the height being 7 to 8 feet from the sea, 50 miles out from land. Its head resembles that of a tiger; its neck is so formed that the animal can extend it 18 inches, and withdraw it at pleasure, and is as active as an eel; --- it can extend itself from 5 to 5 feet in length; --- it is so beautifully spotted that no leopard can equal its richness. --- Its stay here is limited, as the proprietor does not know what time he may receive orders to go to the Exhibition of London of 1862. It will repay a discriminating Public for a visit.

Hours of Exhibition; Ladies and Gentlemen, from 10 to 4 p.m. Admission 6d. From 6 to 10 p.m. for working classes. Admission 3d.