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Contents

A brief note from the Project Manager

This latest issue of *The Archive* represents another leap forward in design and layout; we think it looks great – let us know what you think!

Although they are included in our thanks on the back page, we want to double thank Cork City Council, and in particular, Niamh Twomey, Cork's hardworking Heritage Officer. The ongoing support of our city has been both essential and invaluable, and without it, you would not have Issue 18 in your hands now, so enjoy and appreciate!

Mary O' Driscoll

The Archive

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Front Cover
Old Kinsale by Patrick Hennessy
Photo Courtesy of Crawford Art Gallery Cork
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Vampires in Folklore

DR JENNY BUTLER

On hearing the word 'vampire', most people might think of literary characters like Bram Stoker's Dracula or Anne Rice's Lestat. Others may perhaps associate the figure with television or film portrayals, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* or classics like Werner Herzog's *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979) or *The Lost Boys* (1987). For others still, the more contemporary sensation, the fantasy romance *Twilight* series (2008-2012), might spring to mind. Apart from the prevalent connection made with the garlic-hating vampires of Romania, not many people know very much about the significance of this figure in the beliefs of people in traditional cultures in other parts of the world.

Photo by Philip Burne-Jones
[Public Domain], via Wikimedia Commons

Supernatural parasitic creatures, whether living or 'undead', that subsist by feeding off the life-essence of human beings are known cross-culturally. In fact, such beings are found in the folklore and mythologies of cultures the world over, from ancient Mesopotamia, Greece and Rome, India, Africa, Asia and the Americas to almost every region of Europe. Spirits or demons are believed to locate the essence of a person through drinking their blood or otherwise drawing off their spiritual energy and absorbing it into themselves. Although these kinds of entities are now described as 'vampires', the term 'vampire' was not popularised in the Western world until the 18th century when the beliefs of the people in regions of South-Eastern Europe began to be recorded by visitors from Western Europe. This material was published, popularising the Transylvanian concept in particular.

Less well known are the bloodsucking creatures in the lore of Celtic countries and regions. In Gaelic traditions we find stories of the *baobhan sith*, 'vampiric Scottish fairies who appear as beautiful young women dressed in green … [they] dance with men until the men are exhausted, and then feed upon them' (Guiley 2005: 19). Although *baobhan sith* is a Highland term for a banshee, the term is also used to refer to this specific category of fairies (the English word fairies being used for *sith* in Scottish Gaelic and *sidhe* or *sí* in Irish). It is said that the *baobhan sith* cannot tolerate daylight and can be warded off, or killed with cold iron implements. In legends, those who are on horseback are safe, as the fairies don't approach since they fear the iron in the horseshoes.

In Manx folklore, the *lhiannan-shee* is a vampire-fairy who has the ability to appear as a very beautiful woman who attempts to lure men away, usually focusing her attentions on one man in particular, 'she attaches herself to one man, to whom she appears irresistibly beautiful while remaining invisible to everyone else; if he yields to her seduction, she will drain him body and soul, like a vampire' (MacKillop 2004: 203). She haunts wells and springs on the Isle of Man, waiting for some unsuspecting person to arrive there alone so she can sap them of their blood. This figure is not to be confused with the Irish *leanán síde* or 'fairy lover' (Smyth 1996: 184) who acts as a muse for poets and musicians; she may lure them away but without such dire consequences. The Manx *lhiannan-shee*, though vampiric in her actions, is rather different in nature to the vampiric folkloric figures of other cultures in that she is a local spirit, associated with particular human ancestral lineages and also has positive associations, at least for families to which she is connected.

In Irish folklore, the *dearg-diúlaí* or *dearg-due*, meaning 'red bloodsucker', is an entity that usually takes the shape of a beautiful woman who preys upon young men who are out late at night. She is said to haunt secluded places or to lure men with sexual enticements, drawing them away to isolated places where she can drink their blood undisturbed. Such legends of a vampiric female spirit have been told in Waterford, Antrim and Kerry (Guiley 2005: 101). These entities are also categorised as the undead, 'vampire women variously named—*dearg-due* is one version—are said to rise from their graves, especially at the New Year, to drink the blood of the living. The Irish used to build cairns on the graves, hoping the stones would keep these monsters from rising from their coffins, it is alleged' (Ashley 1998: 68).

It is interesting to consider such lore about vampiric entities in Irish folklore, in view of the influence on the literary canon of vampire stories that emerged from such Irish writers as Bram Stoker, Sheridan Le Fanu and Charles Maturin.

We are fortunate to have Dr Jenny Butler as one of our regular contributors. Her area of special interest is custom and belief.

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Our Treasure

BILLY MCCARTHY

All aboard for Glenbower Wood on a May Sunday, sometime in the early '50s as the wagonette and side-cars round the corner from Quaker Road onto Summerhill South. Courtesy of the McCarthy family

Babe-Ann was a treasure; a lady any community would be proud to call its own. The subject of my reminiscence was a respected resident of Quaker Road in the South Parish, where I was born and reared. Of course we youngsters never called her by her Christian name, no, that was the privilege of her old acquaintances and those loyal customers who frequented her meat stall on the Coal Quay and in later years in Cork's English Market. They referred to her as Babe-Ann Kane. The 'Kane' part was of course Cork slang for her maiden name which was Keane. But to me, my siblings, and indeed to our parents she was always Mrs Scannell.

Babe-Ann had one surviving child, Nora, who developed a serious eye problem at an early age. An operation was advised which they knew would either cure the disease or leave the young girl without sight. It was decided to go ahead with the procedure and tragically the latter was the result. Nora lost her sight at age 16. To commit Nora to an institution for the blind was never an option; she remained in the care of her mother throughout Babe-Ann's lifetime. Mother and daughter resided in a little single-storey, terraced house just across the road from where we lived, before moving to Evergreen Road in later times. The neighbours were quite concerned for Nora. How could a sightless, middle-aged woman cope in a strange house? But they needn't have worried. Nora, still under the care of Babe-Ann, quickly learned the geography of her new surroundings and with a little help from some good friends continued her attendance at daily Mass and her regular trips to town.

Along with doing a full week's work, Babe-Ann organised trips to the seaside and other places of interest for her customers and acquaintances. One of my earliest memories was looking out of my bedroom window on May Sunday morning to watch the departure of a horse-drawn wagonette as it made its way down Quaker Road with possibly ten people on board including an accordionist sitting at the back of the conveyance, all enjoying the strains of, and singing *Cruising Down the River* and all wearing colourful hats which my mother had fashioned out of crepe paper and sewn up on her old Singer sewing machine during the previous week. This was followed by two back-to-back pony traps each carrying four passengers, heading for Glenbower Wood in east Cork.

Throughout the summer months Babe-Ann ran a little shop and tea room at Church Bay in Crosshaven to cater for the many day-trippers who made their way there by car, bus and bicycle; her own mode of transport at that time was the little white pony and cart she kept for the purpose. I can recall one time when my father, who had worked through the war years with a horse-drawn bread van enquired as to how her business was progressing, Babe-Ann replied in her typical, amusing vocabulary, 'Sure 'tis you that know it well Mr Mac, with the wear and tear of a pony and the feedin' of a car'. You see Babe-Ann had this funny but charming way of twisting her words and coming out with the most comical expressions and we kids loved her for this.

Sadly the little white pony was killed one night when some youngsters chased it around the cliff-tops until it tumbled onto the beach below. This was surely a huge blow to someone who depended so much on her pony and cart to get to suburban villages and country towns where she plied her trade on fair days. When it was suggested that she should now rely on the kindness of motorists to assist her on her journeys out of the city, Babe-Ann replied 'Sure don't you know that in these times when you raise your hand to hitch a lift in a car the driver will simply apply his brakes and fly past'.

Each year in the month of May, Babe-Ann would organise a trip to the Marian Shrine at Knock, County Mayo. Though this was not an

official pilgrimage, nevertheless it was carried out in a pious and prayerful manner. For this outing a coach was hired from Cronin's Coaches and I was privileged to be the appointed driver, though a number of other drivers did this run before I came on the scene. However, I came to know and appreciate this group of pilgrims over a number of years. During this time arrangements were being made for my wedding and two of the invitees were of course Babe-Ann and her daughter Nora. So as the time approached the ever-thoughtful market stall-holder informed her customers that she would be missing from her station on the 7th of February as she was going to a wedding in West Cork. Now, going to a wedding was one thing, but being invited to nuptials in West Cork was something special so they obviously enquired as to who Babe-Ann might be associated with that would be celebrating their wedding in such an exotic location. So when informed that it was Willie Mac who was getting married, the same Willie Mac who drove them to Knock every year, they made a whip around and purchased a print of Michelangelo's *Last Supper* and presented it to me as a wedding gift. I am happy to say that 45 years later that picture still occupies an honoured place in our dining room. In return, I saved the top tier of the wedding cake, which was divided into 30 slices (almost beats the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes) and shared out among the group when we stopped for breakfast in Charleville on our next trip. Sadly, I would think all those lovely people have since passed on to their reward; may their good souls rest in peace.

But the most abiding memory I have of our many trips to Knock is from my first journey with this group. You see I had never travelled that road before and I missed the right-hand turn that would allow me to avoid the centre of Ennis. Now Babe-Ann and Nora were sitting directly behind the driving seat and as they spoke in a typical Cork tone I could clearly hear their conversation. Almost before I became aware of my error, Nora, who didn't have a glimmer of sight said 'Mother, I don't think we came this way before'. Now I have known these two ladies all my life and was often amazed at some of Nora's observations, but I can assure you that on hearing this remark I could feel the hair bristling on the back of my head.

Beside our Knock pilgrimages we made many day-trips to places such as Gougane Barra, Mount Melleray and Ardmore. Many stories can be told regarding these outings but perhaps they are best kept for another episode.

Babe-Ann passed away on 19 February 1980, and my wife had the privilege of nursing her through her final illness. Nora lived on for a further sixteen years, finally closing her eyes on this world on 22 August 1996. May the sacred soil of Douglas rest easy on you Babe-Ann and Nora, and may the Good Lord keep you forever in His care.

Long-time friend of the project, Billy McCarthy, has contributed another evocative Cork memory.

Goodbye to Crowley's

DR MARIE-ANNICK DESPLANQUES

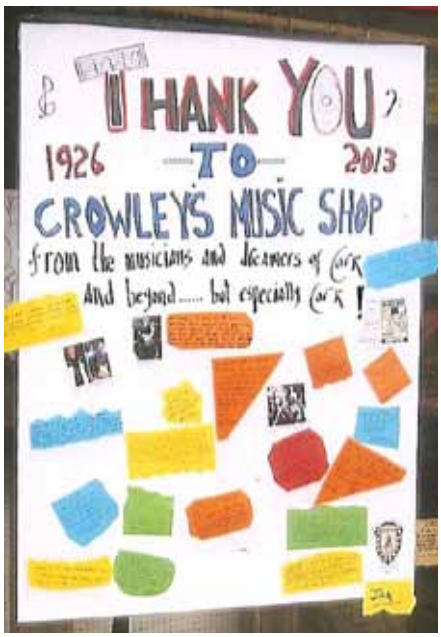
Crowley's Music Centre on MacCurtain Street closed down in August 2013, after a century of serving Cork's musicians. It was a landmark, home of 'Lee Delta' sounds, once with many strings attached, and many reeds supplied to local pipers. Musicians from Cork and beyond respectfully met in the MacCurtain Street mecca ... It was Ali Baba's cavern to me; the window displays of mythical National Steel guitars would dazzle my eyes! A treasure trove of instruments and good vibes, Crowley's was also a medical centre for ailing guitars in need of a neck job or a bit of action, a gathering place for lovers of good sounds and sound company and indeed the place to get that kit. Crowley's has ceased to be, but the memories are there to be treasured and shared.

I took the picture of the mandola in the window one evening in 2008. The instrument blended softly into the building across the road, to me a symbol of the variety of styles and sounds living healthily by the Lee.

The poster on the right, 'Thank You to Crowley's Music Shop, 1926 - 2013, from the musicians and dreamers of Cork and beyond ... but especially Cork!' was put in the window by Jack Lyons as a way for loyal supporters to leave their messages of thanks and best wishes. We would like to add our thanks to three generations of the Crowley family for their huge contribution to music and musicians in Cork and beyond.

Read the story of this historic shop in Mark Wilkins' article in The Archive *Issue #16, based on his interview with Sheena Crowley.*

Available on our website. www.ucc.ie/cfp



A Life Less Ordinary

The Patrick Hennessy Story

STEPHEN DEE

Born in Shandon Terrace, Lower Barrack View, in 1915, the artist Patrick Hennessy would grow up to be a most unusual Irishman for his time. Openly homosexual and in a committed relationship from his late teens, he defied convention, travelled the world and captured on canvas moments of changing landscapes, while never once forgetting where he came from, choosing to return to Cork again and again, in a life less ordinary.

When Patrick was five his father, who was an army officer, moved the family to Scotland where they stayed with relatives. In 1933 Patrick was enrolled in the Dundee College of Art for a five-year diploma course. The first two years covered a wide range of art history, painting, craft and design, while the last three involved specialist study in either drawing and painting or design. Patrick was lucky to have as his lecturers noted Royal Scottish Academy painter, James McIntosh Patrick, and Dudley D Watkins who was the creator of *Desperate Dan*, *The Broons* and *Lord Snooty*.

It is clear from a particular incident in 1938, during his final diploma year, that Patrick had a wicked sense of humour. While he was studying for his finals, building work began on a tenement outside the studio where he worked. He gathered all the other students together in a protest against the noise and when that had little effect he organised it so they painted the words 'Help, I'm being murdered' in blood-coloured paint on a message that they enclosed in a jam jar which was then flung out a window. A building worker found the jar and took it to the police whereupon the whole street was shut down and work was suspended. When it was discovered to be a prank the entire studio was closed for a week and the students sent off-site to a private studio, so one way or another Patrick got time free of the noise pollution.

It is not known when exactly he met his life partner, also an artist, Henry Robertson Craig, often referred to as Harry, who was of Scottish/Irish descent. Both men graduated in 1938 from the same institute, so it can be assumed, they started their diploma course at around the same time. However, Patrick was awarded a maintenance scholarship worth about £120 for his final year which allowed him to pursue post diploma studies in Paris and Rome, while Harry, who was a British citizen, was conscripted at the outbreak of the Second World War. Harry worked in military intelligence, forging documents and maps for espionage purposes.

Patrick returned to Cork in 1939, as the war heated up, and joined artist Paul Henry's group, The Society of Dublin Painters. In 1941 the Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA), the most prestigious art institute in Ireland, exhibited some of Patrick's works. This may have included his 1939 portraits of Berthold and Liv Hempel, the children of the German Minister to Ireland, Eduard Hempel. The portraits were painted prior to Hempel being forced to join the Nazi party. However, not everyone was enamoured with Hennessy's work, and in a 1940 article, writer Stephen Rynne stated, 'At present he is suffering from a mania of imitation, hunting with the ancient hounds and running with the surrealist hares. Sometimes he is crazy about Rembrandt; then he falls head over heels in love with Crivelli…the amorous adventures of Patrick Hennessy made me feel middle aged'.

***Exiles* by Patrick Hennessy. Collection: Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane.** Reproduced with permission of the Royal Hibernian Academy

Rynne however did go on to say, 'Skill and ideas go into all of Hennessy's works. His very distortions have a certain wisdom. His playfulness in the choice of colour, and a quaint conceit in his selection of subjects all indicate the beginnings of good things to come'.

In 1946 Hennessy painted the renowned Cork-born Tilly Fleischman at the piano in her Rochestown home. Fleischman was the first Irish pianist to broadcast on the BBC. She would be but one of many famous faces he would capture. While Patrick continued to exhibit at the RHA, becoming an elected member in 1949, his style of painting and possibly his open homosexuality ensured he remained on the fringes. His style often tended towards Surrealism, the cultural movement which began in the 1920s, where images, often fantastical, are placed together for their contrasting effect, like a rose blooming on a desolate battlefield. Some of his most famous Surrealist works include *The Oracle*, which sold for €10,000 in 2004, *Dialogue of the Angels*, sold for €10,000 in 2005 and *The Legend and the Sea*, which was sold for €32,000 in 2008. Perhaps the most affecting of all is his 1943 painting *Exiles*, which deals with emigration and finding a new home and the fear of what might await you across a foreign sea. It could also be viewed as his own personal journey searching for a place to fit in, which is explored further in his evocative *De Profundis* dated 1944-1945. *De Profundis* depicts two headless stone angels, one in the foreground, one shadowed in the background, surrounded by ruined buildings that would have once been architecturally splendid. The angels

remain frozen, separated by devastation, never to reconnect. *De Profundis* means 'from the depths', and was also the name given to the letter Oscar Wilde wrote while in prison to his lover, Alfred Douglas, depicting their relationship to its bitter end, when Wilde finally had his eyes opened to the selfishness and vanity of Douglas. Hennessy was possibly inspired by Wilde's tragic romanticism, but his own version of *De Profundis* could be interpreted as a more cautionary tale of how one's world could easily explode as an openly gay man of the time.

Hennessy often included gothic overtones in his works and one splendid example of this is to be found in *Old Kinsale*. The painting shows a figure shrouded in the famous Kinsale cloak, cautiously peering out of a window over the rooftops of the town. The cloak has often been used in both fiction and film such as *Dracula* or *The Scarlet Letter*. The origins of the cloak are believed to be derived from an earlier form called a *brat* brought into the country during the 12th century Anglo-Norman invasion. The *brat*, like the Kinsale cloak, was ankle length, made of wool and worn by both sexes. When Gaelic dress codes began to decline with the gradual demise of the Gaelic order from the end of the 16th century, the cloak evolved with the addition of a hood to become the Kinsale cloak. The cloak's life cycle came to an end with the onset of extreme poverty following the famine, with a shift to simpler more affordable shawls. Hennessy's painting captures beautifully the sense of mystery the Kinsale cloak evokes.

In 1947 Harry joined Patrick in Ireland and they moved from Cork City to Crosshaven, but by 1949 the couple had moved to Cobh. Both men loved to draw landscapes and in later years were drawn more and more towards gardens and flowers, but to live any sort of life away from disapproving eyes they had to leave smaller towns behind, finally settling in Ballsbridge in Dublin where they set up a joint studio. The Raglan Lane Studio had a rose garden that was possibly the inspiration for many of their works, particularly those of Craig, who painted many garden scenes. They continued to visit Cork and on one such visit Patrick did a portrait of his personal friend, author Elizabeth Bowen, at her home, Bowen's Court, near Kildorrery. It is one of Patrick's most famous works, albeit due to the fame of its subject rather than finesse. Likewise, his most famous work, *Farewell to Ireland*, depicts John F Kennedy waving from the steps of a plane, and commanded a sum of €75,000 in 2012, the highest amount ever received for a Hennessy painting.

Patrick often used his friends or their homes as inspiration. He and Harry were great friends of Major Stephen Vernon, and his wife Ursula, who was the daughter of the Duke of Westminster. Patrick often visited them at the stud farm they ran in County Limerick. There he developed a love of painting horses and often used Vernon's horses as elements in other landscapes, such as the scene depicted in *Connemara Summer*, featuring groomed horses in the rugged lands of the West. In 1960 Patrick and Henry painted miniature portraits of each other which they gave to Major Vernon and his wife, inscribed with 'to Ursie and Stephen with love from Harry, Patrick, Christmas 1960'. These miniatures were sold in 2011 to a private buyer and are rare examples of inscribed dedication, indicating the deep friendship that was shared between the couples.

Patrick continued to exhibit his work in Cork, Dublin, Scotland, London and Chicago, all to great acclaim. He and Craig travelled around Europe, America and Africa, spending summers in Ireland but wintering abroad. In 1980 Patrick and Henry relocated to the Algarve in Portugal, for health reasons, but by the end of that year, Patrick Hennessy, then aged 65, had died. Henry stayed in the Algarve, and passed away four years later. Both men were cremated and had their ashes spread at the same location in the Algarve.

Rynne finished his piece on Hennessy by saying that Irish painters were too keen to imitate foreign schools and that 'it is expected of them now that they should paint their country's scenes, its episodes and its faces'. In the forty years' worth of paintings that were to come Patrick Hennessy did exactly that, establishing himself as one of Ireland's great painters, adding with every brush stroke the real to the surreal, in a complex weave that only begins to scratch the surface of the nature of a man who dared love another man outside the shadows of convention to achieve a full and beautiful life.

Henry Robertson Craig created the Hennessy Craig Scholarship, to further the education of promising young art students. The scholarship began in 2002 and remains the RHA's highest paid annual scholarship.

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www.gorrygallery.ie/Catalogs/03nov-2.pdf The Gorry Gallery in Dublin specialises in the restoration and cleaning of oil paintings.

Special thanks *to Kenneth Baxter, Archives Assistant at the University of Dundee for invaluable information; Crawford Art Gallery Cork*; *Fernando Sanchez, Co-ordinator at the Royal Hibernian Academy; and Michael Waldron.*

***Old Kinsale* by Patrick Hennessy.** Image courtesy of Crawford Art Gallery Cork

The Fighting Irish

Faction Fighting in Cork

SEÁN MORAGHAN

Image from *Leaves From My Note-book; Tales Portraying Irish Life, by an Ex-Officer of The Royal Irish Constabulary* (Dean and Son, London, 1879)

Few public activities of nineteenth-century Ireland were as unusual as the popular past time of faction fighting. Factions were groups of local people united through family connections, parish location, social class or sectarian affiliation who met at fairs, holy days and other occasions to fight each other with sticks. The sticks used were often blackthorn cudgels, which had sometimes been seasoned over the hearth fire. Some of these were topped with a lump of lead to make them into more fearsome weapons. Stones could be flung between the opposing factions first, after which combat was engaged with sticks raised. Most of the fighters were men, but women also took part, often as stone-throwers. The sticks were known as shillelaghs or *cleath ailpín*, and some were given macabre nicknames by their owners, such as *Bás gan Sagart*, 'Death without a Priest'. A number of ritualistic activities could take place at a fight: the leader of a faction might wheel or twirl his stick above his head as a display of his skill, or he might trail his coat dramatically along the ground inviting one of his opposition to tread on it as a prompt for the fight to begin; factions also let out a particular whoop, war cry or slogan.

Communal recreational violence may have begun as an urban phenomenon. In Dublin during the 1700s the Liberty Boys and the Ormond Boys, gangs founded on their allegiances to different trades, fought street battles with each other. In Cork City, gangs from Fair Lane and Blarney Lane in Shandon, and from Blackpool, fought each other during the late 1700s. Francis Tuckey, in his *Cork Remembrancer*, records that on 5 March 1769, 'there was a desperate battle between the rabble of Fair Lane and Blackpool', while in March 1772 the same gangs, consisting of both men and women, 'met in a long field near Fair hill and fought with one another till night came on'. Unusually, these men carried Native American tomahawks, which may have appeared in Cork as a result of trade with the New World; at a following bout, this time between the Fair Lane gang and the Blarney Lane gang, 'after an engagement of some hours, one Keily received a stab from a tomohawk by which he was instantly killed, and many on both sides were wounded'. The following month, the same groups renewed their conflict after a funeral, and members of one faction tried to hang a Blackpool man, before he was rescued by the army.

The practice as a rural phenomenon appears to have originated in County Tipperary during the early 1800s. There, two celebrated groups known as The Caravats and The Shanavests engaged in battle. The origin of their fights lay in class-based antagonism, as the former were usually farm labourers and small farmers, while the latter were strong farmers. Meeting so often at fairs, the fights were witnessed by visitors and stall holders from further afield and either through emulation or through stories of fights being told elsewhere, the practice spread quickly to other Munster counties, including Cork.

The fights elsewhere were apolitical, however, and based instead on trivial causes or none at all; here was a kind of soccer hooliganism, but without even the pretext of sporting rivalry. Over time, however, as participants were defeated, injured, or killed, reasons soon formed to justify outright enmity and fights seem to have become progressively more violent as a result. The most serious injuries resulted from blows to the head, which led to concussion or instant death, or a victim might linger in bed for weeks or months until brain injury or wound infection finally took its toll. If the victim was the head of a household, the consequences for the rest of the family could be financially ruinous. At the same time, faction leaders and good fighters became folk heroes among their communities as their deeds were observed or stories of their exploits were retold, and perhaps embellished, over the home fires or inside the local shebeen. One fighter, John Walsh, who fought at Ballinhassig, was well liked by friend and foe alike; he was not regarded as a skilled sticksman, but was a stocky figure who could withstand repeated blows, and he had a face marked with scars from previous engagements.

By 1811, it was reported in Bandon that most of those committed for trial for murder had killed men at faction fights at fairs. In 1817, landlord Rev Horatio Townshend noted the prevalence of what he termed 'fierce fighting clans' in West Cork, and observed: 'In other places they fight for some object of real or imaginary advantage – in Ireland they fight for nothing but fighting's sake.' Townshend had watched a fight at the fair of Rosscarbery in December 1816, which had begun with police and magistrates arresting some men of one faction, 'stripped for

battle and half drunk', who were afterwards freed from arrest by their companions, after which the first faction was attacked and scattered by the second. He observed that 'The concourse of people assembled on this occasion was prodigious, for a fight draws as many spectators as a horse-race.'

An official report from Macroom in July 1833 explained that as some of the local Drake faction were accompanying a funeral they were met 'by a large party of the opposing faction called Walshes, when a desperate fight took place. One man named John Drake has died of the beating he received and another, Dwyer, is not expected to recover.' A riot took place in Mallow on St Patrick's Day, 1835, and the Chief Constable described how the police 'attempted to check it but were instantly attacked by the factions.'

How easily fights could be sparked, dispersed, and renewed is illustrated by a series of encounters in East Cork in July 1842. Patrick Barry, in *By Bride and Blackwater*, described how during a hurling match two players who were members of opposing factions fell out with each other and a large brawl took place. The extended parties decided to meet again in full array soon afterwards, but on that occasion they were kept apart by others and persuaded to leave by different roads. When one man looked back and taunted the other faction, the members of the latter turned back and stick-fighting was engaged for four hours. Yet the fight was not regarded as decisive and a huge number of the taunting faction assembled again at Bartlemy Fair, where their numbers persuaded their enemies to forego appearing. The gang marched up and down the fair, asserting their might, unopposed, until camping and drinking together they fell out and instead fought each other.

The heyday of faction fighting is often regarded as having come to an end in 1834, after 20 people were killed at a ferocious fight at the horse races of Ballyheagh, County Kerry. However, Donal J O'Sullivan, in his history of the Irish constabularies, believes that the last great faction fight was the one held in Ballinhassig village, near what is now Cork airport on 30 June 1845, when one faction attacked the police after they had arrested their leader, 'Ranter' Sullivan, and retreated to a house where they were set upon by a mob. The police opened fire and at least 11 people were killed: 'This faction fight and its tragic consequences appears to have been the final serious incident of this nature before they finally ceased. Some isolated fights in later years after the Famine were of a relatively minor nature and were quickly dealt with by the constabulary.'

Three forces put an end to the practice, nationally: Cork priest Father Theobald Mathew, the police, and the nationalist politics of Daniel O'Connell. The Catholic clergy had often preached against faction fighting, and individual priests often strode into the beginning of a fight to urge people to desist. However, the Church had not yet reached the levels of power and influence that it would do after The Famine: church buildings were in poor repair, regular mass attendance was low, and over zealous priests could be ignored or even shunned by their flock. Then in 1838 Cork's temperance advocate Father Mathew (1790-1856) began urging abstinence from drink at meetings throughout the country. Thousands of men took a pledge not to drink alcohol, so that the fuel was taken from the fire of the faction fights; there were 20 prosecutions for faction fighting in 1839, only eight in 1841. The Irish Constabulary was established in 1836, and this force became adept at stopping fights, arresting culprits and writing up reports which could be used for subsequent trials. O'Connell's political campaigns, firstly for Catholic Emancipation (the removal of various prohibitions against Irish Catholics) and then for Repeal of the Union between Britain and Ireland, required a compliant peasantry to devote their energies instead to attending monster meetings of what became a burgeoning nationalist movement; fighting came to be seen as a disreputable reflection upon the Irish nation and was frowned upon.

The factions declined, and the Great Famine of 1845-50 further eroded the practice of fighting, as starvation and death thinned the attendance at fairs and eliminated fighters. Emigration also removed Irish faction fighting to new locations in the United States and Canada (where gang affiliation became based less on home parish than on Irish county of origin).

The factions came to be forgotten, and were further ignored as nationalist politics grew and finally saw some success in the late nineteenth century. They did not fit with the narrative of Irish nationalist history, nor with the increasingly 'respectable' and bourgeois character of the new Irish state, and they were hardly referred to except to be condemned or ridiculed. It was not until 1975, with the publication of Kerryman Patrick O'Donnell's *The Irish Faction Fighters of the 19th Century* that any sustained attention was paid to them. Scholarly work has been done by historian James S Donnelly Jr. In 2010, TG4 broadcast an Irish-language programme about the factions, *Na Chéad Fight Clubs*.

In Cork, the tradition of stick-fighting has been revived by Martin Forrest, who teaches the skills of the faction fighters as a kind of Irish martial art with Shandon Shillelagh Social Club. I attended an exhibition class and marvelled at the strong polished sticks, and at the way my hand naturally gripped the cudgel a little way up the handle as I had seen in pictures of fights. Martin showed me some fighting techniques and it became clear that while hitting your opponent on the head could deliver a knockout blow, combat probably involved much more attack and defence, as strikes could be aimed at the shoulders, the trunk of the body and vulnerable elbows, in both striking and stabbing moves. The group uses stick-fighting as a method of combating social isolation and improving confidence among men. The old days of men charging at each other with malice, sticks in the air, urged on by their womenfolk, and watched by an excited public are long gone, and heads are no longer cracked and white shirts are no longer stiffened with blood.

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Getting the Hang of It

MARGARET STEELE

Competition and Community in Cork's Ring Leagues

2014 All-Ireland Ladies individual champion, Catherine Nott (centre, holding the Betty Cronin Memorial Trophy), with some of Betty's daughters and members of the Cork Ladies Ring League committee. Photo by Geraldine Healy for the CFP Archive

'You can't beat rings. I played camogie, I played football, and there's nothing surpasses rings, it's just a great game.' So says Ber Brady, a former All-Ireland Ladies Rings champion, and current chairlady of Cork City and County Ladies Rings League. And Ber is by no means alone in her passion for the sport. Cork City (together with pockets of the county) has a thriving community of rings players, with a rich history and a bright future.

Finbar Coffey, the president of the men's Cork Rings League, recalls that, in the 1940s and '50s, the main competitions were pub tournaments, in which players competed for turkeys in the run-up to Christmas. But these days Cork rings has come a long way from turkeys. In the 1960s, leagues were formed. First came the Southside league and the Blackpool league, and then came the Central league, which later joined in with Blackpool to form the Northside league. For many years, there was fierce rivalry between the Northside and Southside leagues. However, five years ago they amalgamated to form one Cork league. Finbar describes this union as 'the best thing that ever happened. There's strength in numbers. Now, there's no such thing as Southside or Blackpool. The best team wins and that's it.' The Cork City and County Ladies' League has always included both Northside and Southside ladies. In total, Cork has 28 men's teams and nine women's teams competing at local, national and international levels.

Rules vary, but the basics of the game remain consistent. A board hangs on the wall. On the board are hooks, numbered 1 to 13. Players must stand an agreed minimum distance back from this board. The key skill is to throw a ring so that it hangs on a particular hook. Each game has a designated target score, and the players – whether team or individual – must hang the right combination of rings so that their scores will all add up to this target. Players compete one against one, in doubles (sometimes mixed), in trebles, four against four, or five against five. The last throw in any game of rings is always a 1. Men play to target scores of 1700 and a 1, 1600 and a 1, or 1200 and a 1, while women typically play to 700 and three 1s. It may sound straightforward, but, like any game of skill, rings can be very tricky at first. Former men's All-Ireland champion Derry Desmond, who reports on rings in his weekly column for Cork's *Evening Echo*, says, 'It's a game that you could be disheartened with very easily at the start because, believe it or not, it's very hard to hang rings on a board.' Ber says that, occasionally, new players can experience great beginner's luck, but this almost always fades away. Long-term, all the players insist, the only way to maintain and improve your standard of play is to practice.

Practice not only improves a player's physical skill, but also helps them develop the focus and nerve they'll need when called upon to make a game-changing throw. 'Nomination' can be especially stressful. A player is said to be nominated when it is possible for him or her to get to the target score needed to win the game in his or her six throws. 'You can see [nominated players] going up to the line and the hand is shaking and the legs are buckling,' laughs Ber. As Derry says, 'Any player will hang [a good score] for you in their most comfortable environment. But it's when competition comes and the pressure is on to get an actual score, that's where the nerves come into it and you have to bring the best out in yourself.' Finbar recalls seeing one particularly talented player get a 74 nomination by hanging three 13s, two 12s and an 11. The players themselves have to figure out ('make up') the rings they'll need to hang to get the nomination score. This might mean getting three rings to hang on one hook, certainly as tricky a test of coordination as you could face in any sport. Even aside from the physical skill, as Finbar points out, it takes a pretty cool head to be able to do complicated arithmetic under pressure!

Players must be especially well able to operate under pressure if they make it to the All-Ireland or World Championship competitions. These contests are highlights of any rings enthusiast's year. The All-Irelands have been held at various locations in Ireland, and even took place in Dagenham in Essex for a number of years. Currently, their home is in Ennis, Co. Clare, where, for one weekend a year, an entire hotel is taken over by rings players from all over Ireland and beyond. Cork's own Commons Inn plays host to the World Championships, where players from Ireland and England square off each year. Rings has traditionally been a family game, and at the big tournaments special boards are now set up for children to compete.

There was a time when women attended these big events only as supporters and spectators. Ber recalls, 'When I started playing rings first, you weren't allowed to play in the All-Irelands and you weren't allowed to play in Dagenham, it was a man's thing. Even though we had teams here [in Cork], we weren't allowed to play there. You were allowed to travel, but you weren't allowed to play'. Things slowly began to change though. First, one women's team, from Cork of course, was allowed enter the All-Irelands at C grade. Many years on, that same team still plays in that competition. (According to Ber, the only reason they've never won it is that they've been warned that if they win it they'll be thrown out …) No matter what the level, banter and craic is part of the rings culture. Team-mates and rivals bait each other. The worst outcome is to fail to hang any of your 6 rings, scoring a 'duck'. If you do this in Cork, you might be sent 'out the Lough'. Or sometimes nothing is said and the scorer just draws a duck on the scoreboard.

Getting a duck means a guaranteed slagging, but at least it no longer means a sore back from bending down, since rings players in Cork started hanging painted supermarket baskets under the board to catch rings that players fail to hang. Tom 'The Bomber' Lynch, proprietor of Tom Lynch's on Barrack Street, recalls that before baskets came in, they were using net onion bags stretched around a bit of wire to catch the rings. These days, however, it's easy and affordable to equip any home or venue for rings. Thanks to the efforts of Kildare man J J Behan, rings and boards are now much easier and cheaper to acquire. In the past, a good set of rings might have cost £100, so that a team would have to save up and chip in to buy a set. Now, however, you can get a set for around €20.

This means that more people can afford to play rings, but it also allows individual players to own sets adapted to their specifications. Players apply layers of paint to their rings to add weight. Ber and her friend and rival Pamela Sweeney have noticed that some women have even begun to decorate their sets of rings by painting them bright colours. With repeated use, even the best rings break. Broken rings can be glued, but eventually they will be beyond repair, so some players like to start breaking in a new set before the old set is past use. Not every rings player trusts entirely to skill and physics; Ber and Pamela have noticed some of the older women players saying a superstitious phrase, 'Tar his ring!', before they make an important throw, to help the ring stick!

Those elder stateswomen must have seen many players come and go in their time, as the popularity of rings has varied with economic conditions. Derry says, 'It waned a bit when the Celtic Tiger was in, because people had too much money to do other things. But the young fellas now are going back to their locals more and they see people playing on a Wednesday night, good craic there, good fun.' Drawn in by the craic and the friendliness, some of these newcomers might never get to an All-Ireland or a World Championship, but there is still plenty they can get from participating in the game. Ber says, 'It's not all about winning, it's about going out there and having the craic.' And Finbar Coffey pays tribute to those players who continue to play week in week out even if they rarely win games, let alone trophies. He says these teams still enjoy themselves, forge lifelong friendships, and contribute hugely to the game in Cork. 'You needn't be a winner once you love the game,' he says.

It is surely a sign of a healthy sporting community when people of various skill and commitment levels can all find ways to contribute and to benefit, and it's fair to say the Cork rings community has this attribute. From World Champions to casual players, from long-serving committee members to young kids, rings is a big part of life for many Cork people. Many of them give their time and talent to compete, to have fun, and to pass on their tradition. Thanks to their passion, it seems that Cork rings won't be hanging up any time soon.

Cousins Glenn (right) and Steve Cunningham warming up before a game. Photo by Geraldine Healy for the CFP Archive

Special thanks *to the Cork rings community; to Ber Brady, Finbar Coffey, Derry Desmond, Tom Lynch and Pamela Sweeney, who gave interviews upon which this article is based; and to the families and loved ones of the late Mrs Betty Cronin and the late Mr Tony Downey, who welcomed CFP researchers at the finals of their respective memorial tournaments.*

William Thompson (1775-1833)

DR IAN STEPHENSON

Cork's forgotten pioneer of social science, women's rights and co-operatives

In contemporary Ireland, the most common co-operatively organised enterprises are the Co-op Creameries and Credit Unions. A Co-operative is a form of business where profits are divided between user members, rather than outside shareholders. The early Co-operative Movement emerged from the social upheaval of the Industrial Revolution, and the ideas of Corkman William Thompson, known as the 'Philosopher', were fundamental to its development. Between 1760 and 1820, most of the lands that had been held in common for grazing and mowing were being enclosed by the large landowners. At the same time, the spinning and weaving of textiles, which had previously been rural-based cottage industries, became mechanised. Consequently, many people were compelled to migrate to urban centres to try to find work. During the 18th century the population of Cork City rose from 17,000 to 60,000 (Bielenberg, 1991). While wealth and power accumulated in the hands of the owners of manufacturing capital, many people lived in poverty and abysmal conditions (Tucker, 1983).

Memorial to William Thompson erected by the Rosscarbery History School and sponsored by Drinagh Co-op. Photo by Tom Doig for the CFP Archive

William Thompson was born in Cork City in 1775. His father, John, was a well-off provisions merchant with a small fleet of ships. In 1787 he moved his business and family home into 4 Patrick's Street (where Merchant's Quay Shopping Centre now stands). Ninety per cent of the families living on Patrick's Street were Protestant, including the Thompsons, although only one-fifth of the city's population were of this minority. A respected member of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, John Thompson was conferred as Mayor of Cork in 1794 (Lane, 2010).

As a young man, William became a partner in his father's business, and in 1806 they acquired a 1,350-acre estate in West Cork. The Clounkeen estate at Carhoogarrif was a couple of miles north of where the Morris Arms bar now stands at Connonagh, on the main road between Rosscarbery and Leap. When John Thompson died in 1814, William inherited the business and the estate. However, the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 brought about a drastic recession for Irish merchants, and by the end of 1817 William's business was bankrupt. Nevertheless, he managed to retain Clounkeen estate and the house at Patrick's Street, but rented out the shop on the ground floor (Lane, 2010).

After John Thompson's death, William also assumed his father's position as a Proprietor of the Cork Institution, which provided subsidized adult education in the 'useful knowledge' of science to all classes. In 1818 William wrote a series of detailed letters to the *Cork Southern Reporter* that were collected into a pamphlet, *Practical Education for the South of Ireland* (1818). *Practical Education* shows that Thompson was committed to equality in education for both women and men and across social classes, believing that learning 'is one of those human goods that does not diminish by being distributed among many people, and that does not get depleted and can be a permanent possession and pleasure for a lifetime' (Dooley, 1996: 18).

William was also active in the Cork Literary and Philosophical Society. At a lecture he disagreed with an unnamed 'celebrated person' who thought it proper to talk about 'the blessings of the inequality of wealth…on the dependence, and consequent gratitude which the poor should feel to the rich' (Thompson, 1824: xix). To refute this idea, Thompson published his 600-page study of political economy, *An Inquiry into the Principles of the Distribution of Wealth most Conducive to Human Happiness; Applied to the Newly Proposed System of Voluntary Equality of Wealth* (1824). Here he tackled the ideas of Thomas Malthus, whose *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) argued that population increases at a faster rate than does the food supply to sustain it, up to a level where starvation becomes inevitable. Malthus believed that attempts to ameliorate the situation of the poor through social progress or charity would lead to them having more children, and would only increase their misery (Strathern, 2001). He maintained that 'man has no claim of right to the smallest portion of food' and such phrases were used by the wealthy as a justification for their exploitation of working people (Dooley, 1996). Thompson sought to repudiate Malthus by establishing what he called a 'Social Science' that studied the relations between happiness, wealth, labour and power, and institutions such as education, law and the state (Dooley, 1996). (Indeed, social science has since demonstrated that population levels actually stabilise when people are able to escape from poverty, and women have access to education.)

While working on *An Inquiry*, Thompson exchanged letters with the economist David Ricardo who maintained that, except for rare objects that could not be reproduced, the value of a commodity was equal to the value of the labour that produced it (Strathern, 2001). Thompson agreed with Ricardo's 'labour theory of value', but went further to argue that the best incentive to produce was for workers to be entitled to the full value of the products of their labour (Lane, 1997). Under competitive capitalism, however, workers were instead only paid the lowest possible wage, as determined by the market competition for labour. Meanwhile, the remaining surplus value was taken as profit and interest by the wealthy owners, giving them unlimited incentive at the expense of the workers (Ellis, 1972). Thompson became convinced that workers organising and working together co-operatively offered them 'the best and the only

yet devised mode of free exertion affording you any chance of enjoying the products of your labor' (Thompson, 1827: 117).

In London, Thompson met Anna Doyle Wheeler, from Tipperary, who was part of the movement promoting the concept of Co-operation. Together, Wheeler and Thompson wrote a response to *On Government* (1819), a treatise by leading Utilitarian philosopher James Mill, in which he stated that women should not be given the vote, because their husbands or fathers would look after their interests (O'Carroll, 2010). Their publication, *Appeal of One Half of the Human Race, Women, Against the Pretentions of the Other Half, Men, to Retain them in Political, and thence in Civil and Domestic, Slavery* (1825) built upon Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) and supported 'the claim of every rational adult, without distinction of sex or colour, to equal political rights' (Thompson, 1825: 9). Furthermore, the *Appeal* critiqued nineteenth-century marriage as akin to slavery, and described the mutual oppression of the sexes under conditions of social inequality (Dooley, 1996).

While in Britain, Thompson also met Welshman Robert Owen, a founding figure in the Co-operative Movement. Owen had married into a family that owned a cotton mill in Scotland and he believed that workers should be treated as a valuable asset. Owen improved the workers' conditions at the mill by reducing hours, increasing the minimum working age, and building new houses and schools (Tucker, 1983). He also proposed establishing networks of self-governing 'villages of Co-operation', both industrial and agricultural. To achieve this he believed it was necessary to court rich and aristocratic patrons. In 1822 and '23, Owen toured Ireland to promote co-operatives as an antidote to agrarian violence carried out by roving bands of farm labourers known as Whiteboys (Lane, 1997). Then in 1824, he set out to establish a community at New Harmony, Indiana, USA, bringing along copies of Thompson's *Inquiry* as a textbook. However, his endeavour only lasted for two years, as did a similar venture begun at Orbiston in Scotland after Owen had returned (Ellis, 1972).

In 1824 in London, Thompson participated in a series of debates amongst the Co-operative Movement, during which it is believed the term 'Socialist' was first coined (Ellis, 1972). Thompson distrusted Owen's approach, deeming it little more than 'an improved system of pauper management…I turned away with disgust from a system which then seemed to me to court the patronage of non-representative lawmakers' (Thompson, 1827: 98-99). In contrast, Thompson argued for self-reliance and mutual aid as the fundamental basis for Co-operatives (Tucker, 1983). He emphasised that they should be organised by direct participatory democracy among equal members, and that members should have the ownership of a Co-operative's capital and land (O'Carroll, 2010). In 1827, *Labor Rewarded: The Claims of Labor and Capital Conciliated, or How to Secure to Labor the Whole Product of its Exertions* was addressed to 'The Industrious Classes, My Friends', and urged them to raise funds through newly legalised trade unions. Through unions and co-operatives, working people could establish their own means of production, provide work for the unemployed and underpaid, grow their own food, and set up education programmes for members to learn how to organise themselves (Tucker, 1983).

Thompson was one of the first to highlight the idea of 'class' as a central concept to explain divisions and injustices within society (Dooley, 1996). He believed that working people should acquire knowledge and political power for themselves, since the wealthy would not willingly relinquish it, although he viewed the use of force as counter-productive (Lane, 2010). Thompson publicly acknowledged his own position as 'One of the Idle Classes', living off the rent from his estate, but he hoped that he would be regarded as a 'mental laborer' and 'friend of Co-operation' (Dooley, 1997).

Since 1812, Thompson had supported election candidates who were in favour of Catholic Emancipation, a campaign to remove restrictions preventing Catholics from holding public office, including serving in Parliament. The figurehead of this movement was Daniel O'Connell, who founded the Catholic Association in 1823. When O'Connell spoke in Cork, 21 August 1828, it was Thompson who proposed the vote of thanks and afterwards became the chairperson of the new Liberal Club, which was established to collect the 'Catholic Rent' to fund the campaign (Lane, 1997).

Thompson rushed to publish his *Practical Directions for the Speedy and Economical Establishment of Communities, on the Principles of Mutual Co-operation, United Possessions and Equality of Exertions and Means of Enjoyment* (1830) in time for the first Co-operative Congress, held in Manchester 26-27 May 1831. At the Congress, he announced plans to initiate a model farm school and Co-operative community on his estate in West Cork, but died before he could implement them, on 28 March 1833 at the age of 57 (Lane, 1997). He left his estate to the Co-operative Movement, but his two sisters successfully contested his will in a 25-year court case, the longest in Irish history (Ellis, 1972).

Many of Thompson's ideas were adopted by, and gave inspiration to others in Ireland and in Britain. He has been largely forgotten here, but he is remembered on the continent because Karl Marx incorporated his theory of surplus value into *Das Kapital* (1867). He deserves to be remembered for the breadth of his contributions as a pioneer of progressive social policy.

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Sound Excerpts

The interviews conducted for our DVD **If the Walls Could Talk** *contain much more material than we could include in the film. Here are some other edited excerpts from those interviews, which now form part of our permanent archive. Excerpts selected by Ian Stephenson, interviews conducted by Mark Wilkins.*

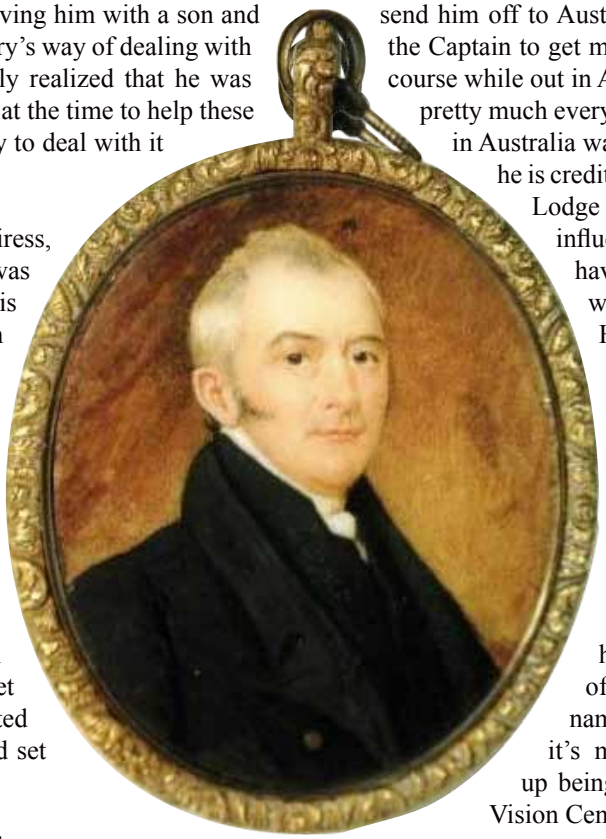
David Ryan, Heritage Curator, Triskel/Christchurch

Sir Henry Browne Hayes was the son of Attiwell Hayes, a successful merchant who also had interests in brewing, milling, glass works and pretty much everything, you know, a finger in every pie. So Sir Henry, despite being always a bit strange, managed to get a fairly influential place in the community. His first wife, Elizabeth, died in 1794 leaving him with a son and three daughters and it seems that Henry's way of dealing with the grief was to spend. He eventually realized that he was broke and since there was no NAMA at the time to help these fellows out, decided that the best way to deal with it was to find himself a rich wife.

So he set his sights on a Quaker heiress, Mary Pike, whose family was apparently very wealthy. He set up this scheme where first he tried to get an introduction to her by calling to her house. It didn't quite work because the family had a rule where guests ate at a separate table. So Henry had to think again and came up with an even more slightly crazy scheme. He sent a letter to her claiming that he was a doctor and saying that her mother was unwell and could she 'come immediately'. So she threw on her clothes, got in the carriage and set off, and along the road he intercepted her, bundled her into his carriage and set off with her.

The marriage ceremony has gone down in legend as well, because there was so much speculation about it. Some claim that it wasn't actually a real priest who conducted the ceremony, that it was a friend of his dressed up like one. Or maybe it was a priest, but it was some fellow that he'd slipped a few quid to. Anyway, he had the ceremony conducted as quickly as possible. What happened to Mary next, it's all speculation. Some claim that she was raped, others that after the ceremony he let her be and told her she could write to her family if she wanted to inform them of the good news. But in the late 18th century single women and single men did not spend time alone, you know, a single woman of a certain age was always expected to be chaperoned. So of course this caused great scandal and great distress to Mary. Her family eventually showed up to liberate her, but by that time Henry had done a runner and he managed to evade capture for two years.

Now, apparently there was a custom in the city at the time that on a Sunday fugitives could walk the street completely free and untouched. All he had to do was from a Monday to Saturday stay low and then on a Sunday he could go around and do whatever he wanted and no one could lay a hand on him. After two years he just walked into the shop of a friend of his and said, 'Look, I'm going to hand myself in, we'll split the reward'. So he was always looking for an angle in it.



Sir Henry Brown Hayes
Photo courtesy of Triskel/Christchurch

Since he was of the local nobility and wealthy and a gentleman, in the very loosest terms of the word, they said they'd send him off to Australia. While on the ship he bribed the Captain to get moved up to better quarters. And of course while out in Australia, Henry managed to annoy pretty much everyone. Despite the fact that the army in Australia was very suspicious of Freemasonry, he is credited with setting up the first Masonic Lodge in Australia. Back then, all the influential and wealthy in Cork would have had Masonic connections, it was very much a gentlemen's club. He also built Vaucluse House over there, but I think very little of the original structure survives. There is a story there that in order to keep out snakes, he surrounded his house with turf from Ireland.

He was buried here in the crypt of Christchurch, along with some of his sons and possibly some of his daughters as well. There's a bit of confusion because his father's name is on the vault, but we think that it's more likely that his father ended up being buried in St Peter's, the current Vision Centre on North Main Street.

Sister Carmel and Sister Maeve, South Presentation Convent

Nano Nagle lived with her brother and his wife, who had no family, down here in Douglas Street, which was then called Cove Lane. And one night there was a knock at the door and the brother went out to answer it, and he was talking for a while and came back in laughing. And to his wife and his sister he said, 'Well you'll never believe it, there's a man outside and he thinks, Nano, that you're running a school, you're some sort of school mistress. He wanted me to put in a word to get his child into Nano's school.' Up to then, Nano hadn't told her family all about it. She was afraid they'd get involved, and with the Penal Laws they could lose everything. So she had to admit then, she said, 'I'm sorry, I have these schools'. They thought she was praying in the church all morning when actually she was out teaching in her schools. And the brother was raging at first, he said, 'You know, you could have put us at such risk!' But then as she talked to him he quietened down, he decided he'd help her. And the sister-in-law, Frances, said she would help her too, on one condition, that she opened a school for boys. Up to then Nano only had the girls' schools, but to get Frances' help then she started with the little boys.

The Brothers came afterwards then, you see. The Christian Brothers were founded to do the kind of work Nano was doing for girls, to do that for boys, so they came to Cork in the 1800s. Well, they were Presentation Brothers at that time; they hadn't yet changed their name.

Michael Holland, Curator, University College Cork

The Cork Electric Tramway Company started off as a horse-drawn tramway company, but when it got going as an electric tramway it obviously had a power station to power the electric trams. It started off by selling surplus power to the city, to electrify the city. At the end it was the trams that were secondary to the power, and not the other way around. Starting off, they were selling their surplus, but in the end they were making their money selling to the city. And when the trams were done away with, it happened because of the ESB under the Electricity Act of 1929. Rural electrification, national electrification, became a national strategy of that first government, the Free State government. It was a very far-sighted modernization programme, but the Act only allowed for compensation of electricity supply workers who lost their jobs. So when the ESB took over the tramway company for the purposes of getting the electricity supply, they closed down the trams as a loss-making venture. It was secondary to what they were doing anyway and none of the tram company employees were entitled to any compensation. We are talking about 1929, 1930, so this is emigration and destitution for all of them, and they began a political campaign which was eventually successful and which after a while drew in two well known Cork people.

'PRESENTED TO PROFESSOR O'RAHILLY BY THE CORK JUNIOR EX-TRAMWAYMEN AS A SLIGHT TOKEN OF APPRECIATION FOR VALUABLE SERVICES RENDERED 1933'.
Photograph by Ian Stephenson for the CFP Archive

One was Alfred O'Rahilly, who went on to become President of UCC. Because of his revolutionary credentials in Cork during the War of Independence and his forceful personality, he had connections with people in power, particularly at that stage with people like de Valera. He was able to use that influence to get compensation for the tramway workers. And he worked with another person who was heavily involved, Eoin 'The Pope' O'Mahony, who was a lawyer in the city at the time. So, the two of them together succeeded in getting compensation for the tramway workers.

There were presentations made to the two of them by the tramway workers and we have one of those items, it was a silver cup, presented by the Cork Junior ex-Tramway Workers to Alfred O'Rahilly. We call it the Tramway Cup and it's a beautiful Egan's Cork Silver Cup, with a lovely line illustration of a Cork electric tram on the base.

John Farris, Minister, Trinity Presbyterian Church

We had the original church in Queen Street, now Father Mathew Street, and shortly after this building [Trinity Church] was opened there was a bit of a split, and some folk went back to the old Queen Street congregation. They continued to do that until about 1928, when it was then agreed to unite the two congregations under one minister. As far as I can make out it was a class division, sadly. If you look at the pews here they have numbers on them, and at the end of each pew, a little card holder, which in the old days would have held the name of the family that had rented the pew. Pew 19, Farris family or Smith or whatever it was, that was your pew, you paid a yearly rent for it. And that was the way they decided they would finance the ongoing care and maintenance of the building. A lot of churches did it and all the denominations at that time.

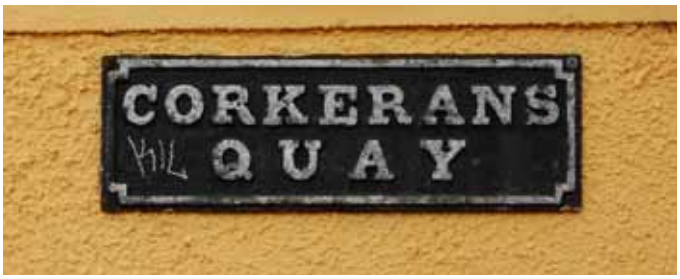
In Queen Street, however, and I researched this, money was raised for the church simply by a regular Sunday offering, and there was to be no such thing as pew rent. And I suspect that was the issue why some people decided they would rather stay in Queen Street. There would be no aspersions cast if somebody couldn't afford to rent a pew. Whether it is five shillings or a pound a year, it was probably big money enough for working people. And as far as I can trace the history, Queen Street always struggled financially for obvious reasons - poorer people - but they didn't have the burden of the pew rent.

And I can back it up in oral history in two ways. One is that this old man came to me after we did a special harvest service and he said, 'You know, my family, we were Queen Street'. And he could just remember, he was a small boy in the 1920s obviously, what it was like when there were two churches. And he sort of snorted and said, 'Trinity, they were the fur coat brigade'. So back in the 1990s, before he died, he still had that memory.

And in another way, not to mention names, but a family moved to Cork in the 1920s and the husband was in commercial life and came from the North of Ireland with his young bride. The first Sunday they went to Queen Street, which was the nearest church to where they were living. And then it was sort of intimated to them, or people said, 'Really, you'd be more happy up in Trinity, it is more your kind of people'. And thereafter they became very much part of Trinity Church. Another strong wind of the class divide, now thankfully those days are past.

Placenames and Street Signs of Blackpool

TOM SPALDING



Blackpool Street Signs. Photos courtesy of Tom Spalding

The area around Blackpool has a wealth of stories relating to the names of its streets: there is a quay (Corkeran's) without water and a Sunday School Lane without a school. There are also many cases where thoroughfares have been named, renamed and renamed again. Whilst the case of Corkeran's Quay is not unique in Cork (think of Fenn's and Coal Quays) the level of renaming seen in Blackpool is unusual. We may think of placenames as unchanging, but the opposite is actually true. Since 1750 there have been about 280 occasions where streets in Cork City centre have been changed, for a variety of reasons. To this you could add the many alleys and lanes which have been blocked up or obliterated when the council housing schemes were developed.

But, back to the beginning. While there are records of the area between Wolfe Tone St/Fair Hill and Gerald Griffin/Gt William O'Brien Streets being called Gurteenacounter and West Gurteenakane, the source of the name 'Blackpool' is contested. Some say it is a translation of an old Irish name, An Linn Dubh, others that it was always an English name. It has been considered within the city bounds since at least 1777 due to its economic importance, unlike such Johnny-come-Latelys as Ballintemple, Mayfield or Ballyphehane. On the earliest maps the westernmost of the two roads through the village is marked 'Mallow Lane'. From about 1800 the southern section, from about the Cathedral to Allinett's Lane, became known as Britain St or Gt Britain St. Later, this name appears to have been applied to a longer element of Mallow Lane as far as the present church. The lower portion was renamed Clarence St in about 1820, after William, Duke of Clarence, third son of George III and future king. This name in turn was replaced by Gerald Griffin's, a local author and Christian Brother, in about 1900. The rest of Gt Britain St became Gt William O'Brien St, after the Mallow-born nationalist politician in 1905. Confusing? Yup.

The eastern road through the village was known variously as Water-course, or Watercourse Lane. It appears that around the turn of the 1800s it was renamed by some 'Duke St' but this name did not catch on. At the same time the extension of this road, north of the church, was renamed York St (the Duke of York being Wellington's commander-in-chief) and this name did take, lasting until 1905 when it became Thomas Davis St, after the Young Irelander.

There are many other instances of renaming: Assumption Rd was Watercourse Mill Rd (till 1906), and before that Black Miller Lane, Berwick Lane became a Street, Seminary Rd was Water Lane (c. 1901), Burke's Ave (Johnson's Lane, 1905) & Gerald Griffin Ave (Peacock Lane, 1902). Note the tendency to make the new names sound grander than the originals; lanes become 'avenues' at little expense to the Corpo!

Needless to say after Catholic Emancipation, and franchise extensions in the late nineteenth century, many of these new names were nationalist and Catholic in sentiment – but not all. Barry's Place on Seminary Rd was so-named c. 1898 for the painter James Barry born in the area and is the only place in Cork named after an artist. Seminary Rd is interesting from another point of view. The iron sign at the foot of the hill is likely to be the oldest bi-lingual street sign in the city, or for that matter the country. Never before had Irish appeared on our signage.

Other interesting or quirky signs in the area include: the large plaster plaque '1886' on Madden's Buildings, the marble and lead sign at Millview Cottages with a charming hand pointing the way and the unusual 'gothic' letters over the entrance to Prosperous Place. Some of the signage in the area is old indeed. The cast iron signs on Bleasby's St, Broad Lane, Brocklesby St, Corkeran's Quay, Cross Lane, Dublin St, Hatton Alley, Hodder's & Heyland's Lanes, O'Connell St and Sunday School Lane all date from between 1840 and 1890. Signs are sometimes stolen from buildings, as is the case with the sign at the bottom of Gerald Griffin Ave which was removed c. 2011. We should see these signs as important parts of our history and built heritage, not sources of scrap metal.

Naming and renaming are sometimes controversial phenomena in Cork. The question of why the Blackpool area has seen a disproportionate amount of this is unclear to me. In the early period it was a case of names being imposed by an elite who didn't live in the area. The namings around 1900 may have been more popular, but the Corpo had the power to impose names on communities, so it is open to question whether this initiative was 'top down' or 'bottom up'. I am inclined to suspect the former as the local people may well have had more pressing things on their minds at the time.

Tom Spalding is an engineer, designer and educator with a particular interest in street furniture and the built environment. He is the author of three books, Cork City: A Field Guide to its Street Furniture, A Guide to Cork's 20th Century Architecture, *and his most recent publication, listed below. Despite having been resident in Cork on-and-off for more than 30 years, he has failed to perfect a proper Cork accent and suspects he may always be a 'blow-in'.*

Further Reading

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MacKane, L, 'Had "Blackpool" a Gaelic Origin?', *Cork Examiner* magazine, 20 March 1937.
Maps and full list of re-namings available on www.corkpastandpresent.ie

Oíche Fhéile Eoin/Oíche Shain Seáin

SÉAMUS Ó MURTHAILE

Bonnah Night

Cad é scóip agus scailéathan a bhíodh orainne, gramaisc agus cóip Shráid na Dubhghlaise, agus sinn ag tiargáil don tine chnámh an 24 Meitheamh gach bliain! Bhímis luite amach orainn féin ar feadh stáire roimhe sin ag bailiú breosla ar dalladh don ócáid mhór ráistéireachta, lár samhraidh seo sa Pharóiste Theas. Bhíodh lucht na dtinte éagsúla á fhéachaint le chéile i gcónaí ag iarraidh an tine ba mhó agus ba thaibhsiúla a bheith acu agus níor mhiste le cuid againn, uaireanta, dul ag bradaíocht ar stóras bhreosla na gcomharsan chun na críche sin, rud a dheineadh imreas agus droch-chroí a adhaint, ní nach ionadh. Ráinig, babhta amháin, gur tugadh meaits do chúil bhreosla lucht Pháirc Eoghain roimh an 24 Meitheamh, rud a d'fhág go raibh an lasair sa bharrach i gceart ansin! An saghas breosla a bhíodh á bhailiú againn – adhmadaí, seantroscáin, seanbhróga, scotháin agus thar aon rud eile, boinn rubair.

Reilig Naomh Eoin ionad cheiliúrtha na tine, í laistiar de na tithe máguaird agus í mar ionad gleáchais agus imeartha an aosa óig i rith na bliana. Lantán ar leithligh ó na huaigheanna ar a lasfaí an tine, cuid de na huaigheanna sin ann ón dara haois déag ar a laghad. Nárbh oiriúnach an ball é chun Féile Chrom Duibh a cheiliúradh!

'Bonnah Night' le William Harrington. Íomhá as *Tine Chnamh* le Liam Ó Muirthile

Ba leasc le cuid dár dtuismitheoirí cead ár gcos a thabhairt dúinn an oíche chéanna ach bhímis chomh scoite sin chuici nach bhfaighidís ina gcroí sinn a dhiúltú agus bhíodh an tine féin i radharc an tí ar aon chaoi.

Sea, bhailíodh na comharsain isteach le contráth na hoíche ó na sráideanna agus na cúlbhealaí mórthimpeall. Lastaí an tine ansin agus thógadh an slua liúnna ó gach taobh. Ba gheal lenár gcroí na bladhmanna lasracha a fheiceáil ag léimeadh chun na spéire. Bhíodh sméaróidí againn ar barr bhata agus sinn ag rith i measc na n-uaigheanna á mbeartú, agus gach aon tseanbhéic againn le barr sceoin, mar dhea. Le linn na scléipe seo go léir chantaí rabhcán nó dhó i bhfianaise na tine. (Féach Ó Muirthile, Liam. 1984. *Tine Chnámh*, Baile Átha Cliath: Sáirséal Ó Marcaigh).

Is iad gaigí na sráide is mó a bhíodh ag gabháil don saghas seo galamaisíochta agus iad líofa chun seoigh agus chun rancáis. Ba mhinic a gcantam maith féin den gceirtlis a bheith ólta acu agus diabhlaíocht ag boirbeáil iontu. Amach as buidéil ghloine a óltaí an cheirtlis agus – ach a mbíodh na buidéil diúgtha acu – chuirfí an corc ar ais go daingean ar an mbuidéal agus chaithfí isteach an buidéal folamh ansin i gcroílár na tine. Bheadh ár gcroí inár mbéal ansin againne an dream óg ag brath le 'pop' mór diamhrach na gintlíochta a theilgfeadh an léaspach chugainn.

Is ag éirí orainn ansin a bhímis de réir mar a bhíodh an oíche á caitheamh, cuid againn ag rince i bhfáinne timpeall na tine, cuid againn ag léimeadh thar an tine agus 'an daoscarshlua' ag rancás agus ag ragairne. Faoi mar a théadh an tine in éag chaití bonn rothair nó mótair isteach inti a thógfadh bladhm lasrach in airde san aer agus a ghealfadh ár gcroí uair amháin eile.

Ní miste a rá nach mó ná buíoch a bhíodh cuid de na comharsain ar maidin dínn de bharr a dhéanaí a bhíodh an chroíléis ar siúl agus go háirithe iad siúd a mbíodh braillíní geala bána fágtha amuigh thar oíche acu agus iad lán de smúit!

Bhí búistéir ina chónaí in aice na seanreilige a choimeádadh cúnna agus chaitheadh sé blaosc bó nó caorach nó muice chucu le cogaint ó am go chéile. D'fhág sé sin go mbíodh tarraingt ar chloigne ar fud an bhaill againne a úsáidimis chun ceáfrála timpeall na tine. Ba mhór an scanradh cuid de na gaigí a fheiceáil ag princeam is ag pocléimnigh agus blaosc bhán bó nó caorach orthu agus gach aon ghéim nó méileach acu!

Mise i mbannaí dhuit go mbíodh cuid againn ag luí go trom inár leaba an oíche sin.

Tharraingíodh brainsí agus ardscléip Oíche Fhéile Eoin caint chrosta ghéar ó chomharsain, ó thusmitheoirí agus ó shagairt go minic, ach ligimis thar ár gcluasa í mar oíche mhaith mhór dár saol ab ea í agus b'fhada linn go dtiocfadh sí timpeall arís.

Our 'Bonnah Night' was celebrated in St John's graveyard at the back of Douglas Street in the South Parish. This graveyard dated back to at least the 12th century. We would light our fire on a level patch near the headstones and play with cows' skulls etc left strewn around by a local butcher. It was perhaps the highlight of the year for us and we worked hard collecting combustibles for weeks before the big event. Most parents would not be overly enthusiastic about the celebrations because of the goings-on, the rowdyism and in deference to social proprieties. Nevertheless we carried on regardless!

Cork City native, Séamus Ó Murthaile studied at University College Cork and the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology and works as a translator for the Council of Europe in Brussels, Belgium.

An Ode to Cork Scribes and Wazzies

JACK LYONS

Jack Lyons was born 'as long ago as Sunday, 7th of November 1943'. Having recently retired from the Cork Post Office after 27 years, on a 'small miserable pension' he continues to write and philosophize about his local folk heroes. He is married to Maura and lives 'on Cork's Northside (No. 2 bus)'. He also drives a Piaggio Vespa. All photographs courtesy of Jack Lyons except where indicated.

Shandon

I furnish the green acres of my mental capacity with the stuff I remember about Cork. I bow down to the sunlit shadow of Shandon steeple and venerate before Conal Creedon's four faced liar we call the 'Goldie Fish'. I stop by the Loft and hear the echo in Lloyd's Lane of Father O'Flynn, the Shakespeare mad priest, struggling with the flat accents of his young charges as he invokes upon them the need for a sense of decorum while, with stops and starts, they grind their way through *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Patrick Galvin's birthplace, Margaret Street, off Douglas Street

In Douglas Street I find the academy of academies; the school of schools. Nothing could touch the South Mon'. Nothing in Eton, nothing in Rockwell, could come within a Donkey's Gudge of the school for scoundrels, blackguards, hobblers, *Echo* and messenger boys. A few doors down is the house where Frank O'Connor drew his first breath. Consumed by the ordinary brilliance of *First Confession* he stole up and seduced me into taking up a pen. A footstep away in Margaret Street I see Patrick Galvin playing as a raggy boy in Russian boots and a zipped jerkin. His mother's shawl hangs in the hall.

Jack and his brothers, from left – Jack, Patrick and Michael, Ballyphehane, 1950s

I furnish the green acres of my mental capacity with the stuff I remember about Ballyphehane. And let's give it its proper respect: B-A-L-L-Y-P-H-E-H-A-N-E. That hurtling meteorite careering through space on collision course with the Hang Dog Road. A feasting ground of subculture and St Patrick's Day haircuts. My short pants, useless against the bite of January wind, skinning my thighs to the bone as I rode to school on the back of my father's Lambretta. My wooden-buttoned cardigan, knitted in my mother's stitch in three-ply wool. Knit one, drop one, cast off, one plain and two pearl. My South Mon' belt hooked around my narrow stomach, the glorious green and gold elastic of the dreaming spires of Douglas Street. The sterna with the ball bearings smuggled out of Ford's. The smell of Robin whiting on the new rubber dollies left overnight on the window sill for Mass on Sunday morning. Street soccer where neighbours gates were used as goal posts. And kiss-or-torture in St Joseph's cemetery and who could sit the longest in the dark on the steps of the haunted vault.

Lennox's Chip Shop, Tory Top Road

The 'top shops' in Tory Top Road, strategically placed alongside each other suggesting some kind of poor man's Sunset Strip. The epicentre of this magical alignment turned out to be the eighth wonder of the world: Lennox's chip shop. The smell of batter coming from the deep fry mingled in the brain with Elvis's *King Creole* emanating from the truly most wonderful juke box. Lennox's was an academy of learning for daydreamers with charcoaled pencilled sideburns and plastic combs dripping in Brylcreem. Scallop and onion pie patty, these were all corner-boy delicacies that gelled perfectly with *King Creole*. And all of this subculture played out on a slow-moving memory screen with the soundtrack provided by my father's violin and saxophone. Freezing front rooms in Botanic Road, my father's hands purple with cold. His fingernails hacked down to halves to hold down the strings for his front room recital of *Violin Concerto in D Minor*. Me behind him, operating the old Bush tape recorder with big spools and cream buttons the size of piano keys.

Jack's father, Sean Lyons, 1960s

***Quicksilver* RTÉ game show.** Photo courtesy of RTÉ Archives

Now back in town I retire to my local bar, The Long Valley, where it would take a strong man in the full of his health with the help of three small children to munch through their mouth-watering sandwiches. I rest my boney backside on a stool and proffer up a memory to a curly headed student called Dorgan, temporarily barred from the premises but for now lurking in the back room while I go and get him his half pint. The place is packed with students from the degree factory and the art college. And through this tightly stuffed gaggle of bodies enters a character called Humphrey, wearing a large belted overcoat and eccentric bicycle clips. He pushes his bicycle ahead of him through the melee of bodies. The pedals of the bike scrape against single legged nylons borrowed from mother and ladders now run all the way to the thigh. The bicycle's journey ends in the back room where it is parked next to a table of drinks. Humphrey, the proprietor, a man of quick wit and schooled in academia; removes his overcoat to reveal a ready-to-serve white apron. 'Who's next?' he enquires, stepping behind the bar and reaching for an empty half pint glass from the tray. Alone in a corner surrounded by the gaggle sits Sean Beecher busily writing down an idea for a book on Cork slang. 'Gis the ucks!' he writes then adds a translation: 'Please be so good as to save the remaining part of the apple for me.' Then another one, 'Youghal was black!'. He jots down another translation: 'The well known seaside resort Youghal was visited by a great many people.' Having relieved himself of surplus stout Beecher returns to his table filled with a rush of muse. He reaches for his pen and writes down something he heard earlier in the day. 'Did he die though?' 'He did though.' 'Where did he die though?' 'He died in the Lido.'

I shift my boney arse on the well worn stool and furnish the green acres of my mental capacity with the stuff I remember about Stevie Hogan. The scene: a makeshift studio. The time: at night. The event: *Quicksilver*. The presenter: your friend and mine, Bunny Carr. The stakes: two fifty pences. The subject: entomology. And Bunny Carr, in a voice dripping in whispered drama relays to the hero of the hour, Stevie. 'Stephen, you have two fifty pences left on the board. Do you want to retire with them or play on?' Stevie leans forward into the microphone and with all the veneer of a man riding on half a million, says to Bunny Carr: 'Can I ask the nation?' Moments later an exasperated Bunny Carr asks the 64,000-dollar question ... ' Now Stephen, for two fifty pences, what would you call a queen bee??' There is silence. National silence. Silence all over Ireland. The quintessential Corkman has come back up for air, and somewhere in the arcade of his subconsciousness the goldie fish is chiming, the clock tells four different times, the blacka jam spreads across his mouth and stains his shirt collar, he learns to ride a bike at seven years of age by putting his leg in under the bar of his father's bicycle, his white First Holy Communion sock scrapes against the oily chain, the pigs in Lunhams are hanging by their little hooves and screaming, the South Mon' boy has gone on the lang and after pulling off Santa's beard in Kilgrews he's getting a langey home on the back of a Tedcastle coal lorry. Finally after moments of dream-like cameos; longer than it would take Georgie to remove a body from the Assembs comes the answer to 'what would you call a queen bee?' - 'A wazzie !!'

Long Valley Pub, Winthrop Street

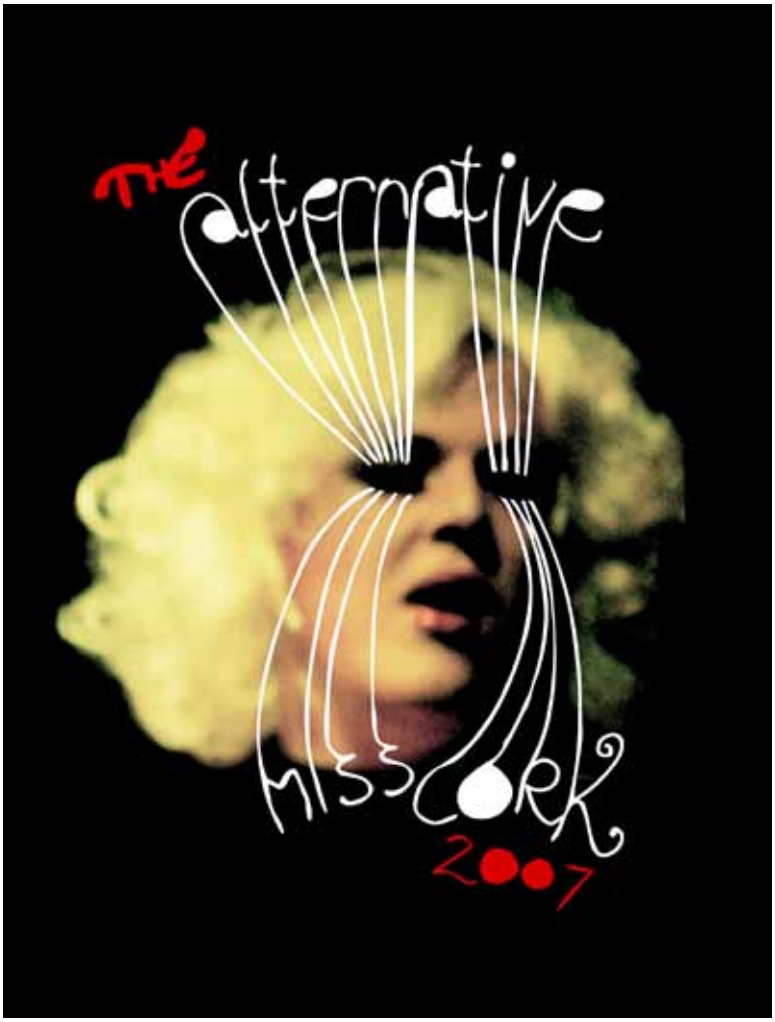
Stevie Hogan, 1970s. Photo courtesy of Hogan family

The Story of Alternative Miss Cork

DERMOT CASEY

Alternative Miss Cork launched onto the Cork Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) scene in the spring of 2002. The show was a spectacle that dazzled audiences with a vibrant mix of larger than life contestants – drag queens – dressed up in flamboyant costumes. Held at the gay-friendly venue The Half Moon Theatre, the low-key poster and flyer campaign that preceded the show stimulated a certain buzz and curiosity within the gay community. Some people expected traditional pantomime dames and female impersonators, like Cork-born legend Danny La Rue, but the show turned out to be far more unconventional, with elements of alternative theatre, comedy, punk and performance art running through it.

The first year's winner Fabula De Beaumarchais, along with the other contestants, thrilled and entertained the crowd and during the interval spectators were treated to polished performances from highly regarded Dublin drag artists Panti and Veda, who at that time were relatively unknown in Cork. The organisers admit that in the first year the event was quickly and roughly put together, but audiences didn't notice and the show was a great success that highlighted the creative energy and talent of Cork's underground gay scene.



Fabula De Beaumarchais advertising the 2007 event. Poster courtesy of Alternative Miss Cork, designed by Dermot Casey

The main impetus behind the creation of the Cork show was a Dublin fundraiser event for HIV and AIDS charities called Alternative Miss Ireland, which had been organized and hosted by Panti since 1996 and held at the prestigious Olympia Theatre. It captivated audiences and the show quickly built up a reputation all over the country inspiring gay scenes in other cities to put a contestant forward, chosen via their own regional rounds. Eddie Kay, the co-founder and organizer of the Cork show, recalls the origins of the event:

'I had a really good friend at the time who had been to the Alternative Miss Ireland event in Dublin, and she came back and told me about the show, and I was intrigued by it. So we spoke about the possibility of doing a Cork regional heat because there was already a Limerick heat happening at that time. So we kind of went on the gay scene and everybody chipped in really on the first one. The performers that came down from Dublin helped out hugely as well, and they gave us good ideas on how we should be doing it and to make it better for the next year.'

The format of the Cork show kept to the Alternative Miss Ireland model, which took elements from mainstream pageants such as Miss Ireland and Miss World. It varied from around ten to twelve contestants competing in front of a judging panel in three different sections: day wear, evening wear and swim wear. It was in the day wear section that each contestant introduced themselves for the first time, followed by swim wear which was an interview round where the contestant would try to charm the host, crowd and judges. But the highlight of the show was the final round, evening wear, and here the contestants really expressed themselves. Some participants would perform stylish dance routines, tightly choreographed with back-up dancers. While others challenged the stereotypical drag queen format of lip-synching to music, by singing live or else replacing the words of a familiar pop song with tongue-in-cheek lyrics that would have the audience in hysterics. Most contestants acted out a persona and if they remained in character and were consistent throughout, they would really stand out.

Contestants further showcased their creativity by constructing their own costumes and interpreting the sections in their own unique way. Some were extremely resourceful and made flamboyant costumes and props out of simple fabrics and materials found at charity shops or in the home. Sometimes performances were highly bizarre and surreal and may have been closer to performance art than drag. Eddie reaffirms this:

'The standard and quality of the contestants went from strength to strength every year and some of the costumes and some of the performances were just really creative, really out there, really different and not so much traditional drag again, but very arty; a lot of work went into it you know.'

Originally a somewhat underground gay event, the Cork show, also known as the AMC, grew bigger every year, soon attracting both gay and straight audiences, and consequently this growing audience needed a larger venue. In 2006 it relocated to The Savoy and by then the show's organisation and promotion had become more sophisticated. This expansion further improved LGBT visibility and acceptance in Cork and its growing reputation also made it easier to attract higher profile judges, for example TV chef Rachel Allen, comedians Karl Spain and Maeve Higgins and even the Lord Mayor.

Another important aspect to the show was the brochure that was sold on the night, because it highlighted the local charities that the show was raising funds for, such as the Southern Gay Men's Health Project and The Sexual Health Centre which helped people living with HIV and AIDS in Cork and organised various campaigns promoting sexual health awareness on the gay scene. Moreover on an economic level the brochure further bridged the gap between the gay and straight venues in Cork, says Eddie:

'It really kind of made the gay and straight scene merge, because you know, you had a lot of businesses who would financially back Alternative Miss Cork and in return we would put their ad in the program, so it was saying to the gay community that these places are also supporting you and I think these days that's just kind of taken for granted, because everyone today is more open and everywhere is gay friendly, but back then it was different and some businesses weren't so supportive.'

Poster for the 2006 event with an illustration of host, Panti. Courtesy of Alternative Miss Cork, designed by Dermot Casey

Behind the scenes, the event brought many people together: graphic designers, set designers, film students, DJs, musicians, and theatre people would all volunteer their skills for free with many also helping backstage during the show. But no matter how prepared everyone was, on the actual day of the event it was pandemonium, with contestants all arriving at once, sometimes with large entourages of dancers and hair and make-up people with them. Eddie continues:

'Afterwards when it finished you would get such a sense of joy and you would get such a sense of achievement. I suppose you would be very proud of everyone who is involved because it takes a lot to put on an event like that and I don't think people realized at the time what people put into it and how much goes into it, there were a lot of people over the years who made Alternative Miss Cork what it was.'

At the moment the Alternative Miss Ireland event is currently on an indefinite hiatus and had its last show in 2012. Because of this Alternative Miss Cork has also come to a halt. Eddie explains:

'We thought okay, you know, if the mother ship is gone, then it is pointless us continuing on, and it was a mark of respect for the Alternative Miss Ireland as well. I'm sure there probably will be other drag competitions in the future and I think there has been but I think a lot of people will remember and have very fond memories of Alternative Miss Cork, you know, I think the legacy will always kind of live on.'

He reveals that there are plans for a retrospective exhibition sometime in the future, exhibiting past footage, photos and posters of the event. Finally on being asked if the Dublin final did return whether Alternative Miss Cork would also return, Eddie answers:

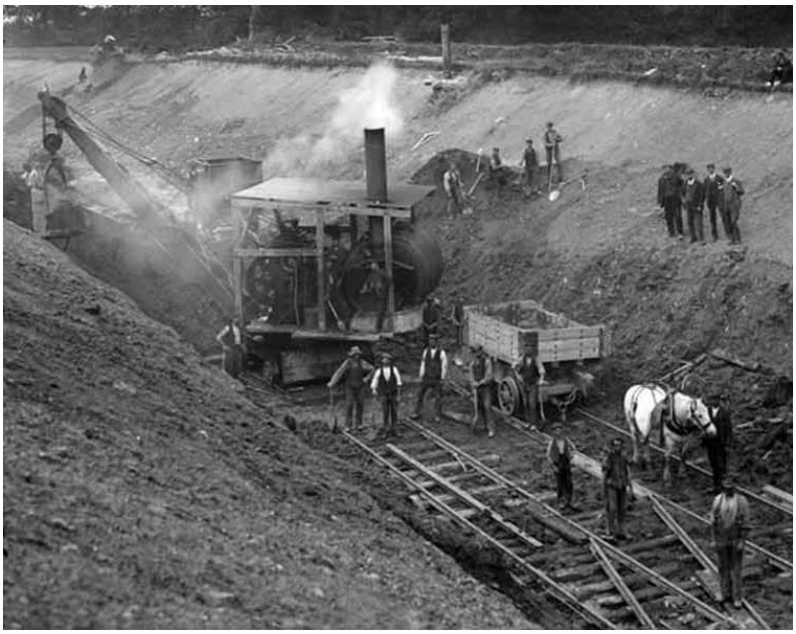
'I'd imagine Alternative Miss Cork would probably have to put a contestant in, if it was to return, so I would like to think that there would be an Alternative Miss Cork and I think that it probably would be good for Cork again. It was like gay Christmas in a sense; it was pretty much the biggest highlight of the year on the scene. So yeah, I think Cork is definitely less colourful without Alternative Miss Cork in its life.'

Special thanks *to Eddie Kay for his interview discussing the origins of Alternative Miss Cork of which he was co-founder and organiser. Alternative Miss Cork ran from 2002 to 2010.*

Highways, Railways and Navvies

PATRICK WALSH

Younger Corkonians may not be aware that parts of our city's newer road network are built on the track beds of old railways. For instance, a section of the South Ring Road, between the Kinsale Road and Bishopstown, follows part of the former rail route to Macroom. Whilst driving by construction of the two new flyovers on this section of motorway recently, I thought of those who built these original railway lines. Who were these men who cut, banked, and tunnelled their way towards Cork, eventually bringing six lines into the Munster capital? Much has been written on the builders of British and North American railways, many of them Irish, but for those who 'ironed the land' of Ireland, little material seems easily available. This brief article will attempt to throw some light on this subject with particular reference to the Cork City area.



Work on construction of a new railway cutting in Waterford. The Poole Photographic Collection. Used under the permission of the National Library of Ireland. (Reference: P_WP_1494)

Railway construction workers were known as 'navvies', a word which derived from the earlier builders of canals, who were called 'navigators' or 'navigationals'. The ranks of these workers swelled with the explosion of railway projects which resulted from the investment booms of the mid-1830s and 1840s in Britain. Ireland was slow off the blocks, having just 65 miles of lines open as against Britain's 5,000 in 1845, the year construction started in earnest in Ireland.

Around Cork, the period 1846-66 was the busiest for the navvies, with five railway lines into the city completed in these years. Through 1847 and 1848 around 1,500 men were employed building the Passage and Bandon lines and when this work was completed in late 1851, jobs for the navvies in or near the city moved north of the Lee for a few years.

Meanwhile, between 1847 and 1849, William Dargan, Ireland's biggest railway contractor, had been moving rapidly towards Cork from Thurles to complete the Dublin-Cork line. Thanks to a government loan of £500,000, Dargan made good progress and had between 15,000 and 20,000 navvies at work at various stages of construction. One of these stages, Buttevant to Mallow, involved cutting through several hills and raising the intervening low ground with the removed spoil to create a level formation for the track. Dargan had his navvies working round-the-clock shifts, using paraffin lamps and lighted tar barrels at night. He claimed that the seven mile section was completed without loss of life. On reaching Blackpool in autumn 1849, digging the tunnel began, which kept many men employed through the following five years. In February 1859, 650 men started work on the Dunkettle to Midleton section of the Youghal line and at the height of activity that summer 1,200 men and 70 horses were employed.

Before describing the dangerous nature of the navvy's work, the contrasting social and economic climate either side of the Irish Sea during the late 1840s must be acknowledged. English and Scottish navvies working in Britain at this time were earning between 22s and 24s a week. It was said that they could consume between 2lbs and 3lbs of beef a day and some contractors even allowed their men to drink alcohol on the works. The beer was held in small wooden casks carried on the navvy's back. Around payday, usually monthly, the men often went on a drinking spree known as a 'randy', and these frequently ended up in riots. Compare this with the scene in Ireland. Here, many men displaced as a result of the failure of the potato crop, eviction or unemployment, flocked to the sites of railway works desperately seeking employment at between 8s and 12s a week. Born of desperation and near-starvation, fights frequently broke out among the hordes of job-seekers jostling to be picked by the contractors. In spite of the comparatively low wage, £4,000,000 was paid out in wages for Irish railways constructed in the period 1845-52, which may have kept many from dying of starvation. When work on the Cork to Passage line began in June of 'Black '47', 70 men were hired from an estimated crowd of 2,000. Some of the more disgruntled of the unsuccessful raided a Thompson's bread van on their way back to the city, and threatened to kill the driver before removing the contents.

As late as 1860, there is an account of unemployed labourers from Youghal walking miles each day towards Killeagh, where the line to Youghal was progressing eastwards. These men sat along the ditches at either side of the line and should a navvy collapse from exhaustion, they were ready to rush forward and grab his pick or shovel in the hope of getting a few hours' work. Consider the case of Michael Kelly. Kelly was a navvy working on the Dublin to Galway line when he died in his sleep. At his inquest, held in March 1847, his wife told of how they, with their five children, had moved to Westmeath from County Offaly to find work on the railway. He earned 11s a week in the summer months but only 9s through winter. The

doctor who performed the post mortem reported that Kelly's stomach and intestines were completely empty and had the look of someone who hadn't eaten for days.

Regardless of where he worked, the navvy faced danger at every turn. In this pre-health and safety era, the graft was tough and hazardous, life was cheap and labour was plentiful. It was said of the navvy that he was broken in health by forty and dead by fifty. The most common causes of accidents were unstable banks of earth collapsing, and workmen being struck by spoil wagons carrying rubble. In March 1848, a man from Carlow was killed near the Rochestown (Douglas estuary) bridge after being hit by one of these wagons. That May, two men died of asphyxiation when loose earth on an embankment at Blackrock collapsed on them. Just one month later, another navvy died under similar circumstances near Passage. All this on just four miles of track.

Navvies working on the making of the Bandon railway, drinking in Mrs de Courcey's Bar, Halfway, Ballinhassig.
Image courtesy of Walter McGrath Collection

Where pick and shovel could not manipulate the landscape, explosives were used, further adding to the dangers already described. During construction of the Cork tunnel, a tragic miscalculation resulted in a fatal accident involving explosives. Around 9.30 a.m. on 13 March 1850, about 40 men assembled at the Blackpool end of the tunnel. Having placed several explosives about 1,000 feet in, they took cover until all the charges had gone off. As these varied in strength, the ganger believed that two smaller ones going off simultaneously represented the one very powerful explosion expected. Presuming that all the charges had blown, some of the gang entered the tunnel to clear the debris and prepare for more blasting. When they were about half-way in, the final charge exploded, killing two men instantly, while another died later that day. The *Cork Constitution* rated the recovery chances for many more who were badly injured as very doubtful.

While one might be moved to think of these navvies as being brave or even heroic, they were in fact, feared and despised by other sections of society, their reputation not helped by their fondness for drunkenness and riotous behaviour. In England they had been described as, 'heathens in a Christian country ... and were not received in good society'. A Scottish clergyman described them as an 'ugly, organic mass of labourers, sunk three times in vice by the three fold wages they are getting'. Closer to home, an Englishman travelling through Munster in 1850, having encountered navvies at a tavern near Ballinhassig, wrote 'they are English mostly, sullen, ill looking, and ignorant as hot 'n' tots'. What were English navvies doing in Ireland with the comparatively low wages being paid here? As mentioned earlier, by the time railway construction took off seriously here, Britain had twenty years such experience. There was a need therefore, for skilled navvies to come here and train in local men so contractors offered English navvies higher wages as an incentive to travel to Ireland. For the building of the 170 yard long Kilpatrick tunnel (Ireland's first public railway tunnel) near Innishannon in 1846, the contractor had to bring miners up from the Beara Peninsula due to the lack of navvies experienced in tunnelling.

The introduction of the steam excavator in the 1870s, coupled with the completion of the main rail networks in these isles, caused work for the railway navvy to go into serious decline by the early 1900s. It has been estimated that a steam excavator in optimum condition could do the work of 80 navvies. In Cork, the nine mile extension from Passage to Crosshaven, completed in 1904, was the last major project employing navvies. As an indicator of how stable the cost of living was before the Great War, navvies on the latter line were paid 15s a week in 1904. Forty-four years earlier, in 1860, navvies on the Cork to Youghal line unsuccessfully went on strike for an increase from 12s to 15s a week.

It is claimed that because of the arduous and hazardous nature of the navvy's work, few songs have been written about them, but leave it to the Irish. A Google search of 'Irish navvies' quickly offers a link to a video clip of the Ian Campbell Folk Group from the late 1960s singing, *Here Come the Navvies,* the opening lines to which go:

> I am a navigational and I come from County Cork,
> And I had to leave my native home to find a job of work,
> The crops were bad in Ireland and the tax too much to pay,
> So here I am in England digging up the waterway.

Also, remember the Dubliners' songs, *Working on the Railway* and *Navvie Boots.* The latter ditty tells of a navvy's one-night liaison with the fair sex, without removing his boots, and how he now has to pay 10s weekly as maintenance for the resultant offspring. This song could be heard in pubs around London up to the late 1960s.

Just as the name 'navvy' originally migrated with the men who transferred from canal to railway construction in the 1830s, it did so once again when the rail network was completed. Up to the middle of the last century, unskilled workers employed on civil engineering projects such as reservoirs, power stations, and yes, even highways or motorways, were also called navvies. However, the next time you speed smoothly through the countryside on an air-conditioned intercity train, spare a thought for those navvies with their moleskin trousers, white felt hats and of course, their navvy boots and the treacherous conditions in which they worked to help provide the comfort in which we travel by rail today.

For over thirty years Pat Walsh has had an interest in Cork's rich railway heritage and history. In 2004 he completed a Diploma in Local Studies and has recently completed a Masters in Local History at UCC, compiling a history of the Youghal and Cobh railway lines. He has contributed several previous articles for The Archive*, as well as other Cork publications, and has given illustrated talks to a variety of historical groups in Munster.*

The Anglia and the Summer Excursions of Yesteryear

GERALDINE HEALY

Mary and Geraldine Healy photographed in Dublin, c. 1961.
Photo courtesy of the Healy family

I remember the day that my father brought home his new Ford Anglia. It was the first car that he had ever owned and our excitement was all-consuming. The car was grey, with red imitation leather seats. The year was 1960 and it was to be the start of many adventures for us as a family. On the day in question nothing would do my Dad but to install me in the front seat of this magnificent vehicle and drive me around the block.

After a twelve month stay in Dublin, one day my parents announced that we were going to live in Cork City. As a five year old, I had started school in Dublin and I had my friends along the road whom I loved to play with. It was with sadness that I parted company with these, my buddies. On the day we left Dublin the Anglia was piled high with our belongings. Everything we owned was packed inside, with me and my sister perched amongst our possessions. Before long we and the Anglia had a new home, at the top of Western Road, on the outskirts of Cork City. There the car was washed and polished and shined, as my Dad was very proud of his car.

The car became a lifeline to places beyond the city. Sometimes we headed for Myrtleville and Fountainstown beaches, which are very near Cork. Many Cork people went to Myrtleville and spent a month in all sorts of rented accommodation. One family stayed in a converted railway compartment. People lived like nomads in these temporary dwellings, intent on enjoying the seaside for the long summer months. Families spent a month or a fortnight in these dwellings, the fathers often commuting to work in the city. In the 1960s, there was increasingly more disposable income available and an annual family holiday became the norm. Families saved during the wintertime to have money for their summer holidays.

I can remember one glorious month of childhood freedom in a bungalow in Myrtleville which we rented for a month in May 1967. Every day was spent at the beach and we explored the environs far and wide. One day, myself and my sister ventured forth to Crosshaven from Myrtleville; we felt like the great Victorian explorers as we intrepidly set forth on our expedition. It was early one morning during that holiday that I watched transfixed as the great ocean liner the Queen Mary lay at anchor in Myrtleville Bay.

Youghal strand and town was another very popular destination and it was linked by train to Cork. The bed and breakfast establishments close to the front strand were booked out for the summer months. On a Sunday, the beach was dotted with people and a great time was had by all. For us the 'Merries' (the fairground) was one of the great attractions. We would be given some money to try the bumper cars and to get pink sugary-sweet candy floss. Having arrived in Youghal, quick as lightning we were in our swimming togs and heading for the water. I recall the scene well. Parents and toddlers at the water's edge, the youngsters propped afloat with brightly-coloured inflatable rings. Everywhere buckets and shovels were scattered around. Here and there, children made elaborate castles of sand decorated with shells, which the incoming water would slowly erode. At times it was so crowded that it was difficult to get a space to sit down on the beach and spread a rug.

A walk in the bristling sea air to Red Barn, an adjoining beach, kicking the sand along the shoreline was another enjoyable pastime. Sometimes the tide would be way out and on other visits on a windy day we would walk along the promenade ducking from the spray of the waves.

Many Cork people have vivid memories of the train from Kent Station to Youghal Strand. Mothers bundled their children onto the jam-packed train with only minutes to spare before departure time. The train link to Cork was discontinued in February 1963, and sadly an era came to an end. Time passes and these days the crowds have gone from Youghal Strand. Places with exotic-sounding names on the Costa del Sol on the Spanish Riveria have taken over as destinations from this sandy East Cork beach.

We had several favourite destinations on these Sunday excursions. The 1960s was a time when horse-drawn holiday caravans were often on the roads of County Cork. I remember the long silky manes of those sturdy animals as they pulled the colourful caravans along. One had to feed and look after the animal which added to the novelty of the trip. These caravans moved slowly along the country roads from Cork City to the town of Kinsale. I would wave from the back seat of the Anglia as we passed them by, and I was always delighted if the holidaymakers returned the salute. The roads were quieter in those days. Some Volkswagens, Morris Minors and Mini Austins could be seen on the highways and byways of Ireland. Now and then a glass

topped 'bubble car', or a motorcycle with a side-car passed by. Going west along the road beyond Kinsale, the headland known as the Old Head of Kinsale juts into the Atlantic Ocean. This is De Courcey country; the Norman family came to Ireland with the entourage of Henry II, c. 1171. There stands astride the cliff the old ruin of the former twelfth century stronghold known as Dún Mhic Phádraig. The Old Head was much beloved of Corkonians for generations, and on a Sunday afternoon a procession of vehicles could be seen on the road leading up to the ruined castle. As a family, it was one of our favourite destinations. It is a very beautiful spot where a wide variety of birds live in the sanctuary of its cliffs.

Ford Anglia, 1960. Photo by Alf van Beem used under Creative Commons licence

My memory of those wonderful sunny days lives on. We would return to Cork in the late Sunday afternoon, tired and happy, facing the setting sun after another great trip in our little car.

We also visited the beautiful beach at Glenbeigh, Co Kerry. There we drove along narrow roads embanked with little mounds of cut turf, stopping to admire the lofty mountains and the amazing scenery. A donkey often stood in a field laden down with panniers full of this brown fuel. At Inch strand the Anglia nearly succumbed to the elements, after my father drove it out along the beach one day and the wheels went deep into the wet sand. With the tide coming in, there was a frantic effort to release the car before the waves claimed it. My father succeeded in freeing the car in time, with much cheering and relief from the rest of the family.

Through all our journeys the little Anglia gave good and loyal service, and so it remained for several years. Sadly, sometime later the Anglia was sold, after my father got a company van. It was a moment of sadness to say goodbye to the Anglia and to see it being driven away. I will never forget those early journeys and the freedom they gave us to enjoy our childhood days. Even today photographs of Anglia cars evoke a pang of remembrance in me and I am grateful to have had all the carefree fun that our car gave me and my family so many years ago.

A Canny Way Out Of Cork

ALVINA CASSIDY

Don Canny Jr, of Canny's Garage, next to the image of his grandfather, Christy Canny. Photo by Alvina Cassidy for the CFP Archive

In 1932, Christy Canny started the first Canny's Garage in Old Blackrock Road which now operates from White Street under his great-grandson, David. He also delivered barrels of stout for Beamish and Crawford all over Munster. The family ran Canny's Pub on Anglesea Street and the famous Grand Central Dancehall on Merchants Quay.

Canny family folklore has the story that Christy drove Liam Mellows, dressed as a woman, to Myrtleville as he made his escape out of Ireland to the USA in 1916. Mellows, a friend of Michael Collins, was an Irish Republican who participated in the Easter Rising in Galway and the War of Independence. He became a TD in the First Dáil and was executed by Free State forces in 1922.

Elizabeth St Leger: Cork's Female Freemason

MARK WILKINS

Freemasonry is not usually regarded as a practice which includes women. For many it evokes images of an all-male cabal in a secluded building acting out arcane rituals. But a number of female Freemasons have existed throughout the organisation's history.

Freemasonry is an international fraternal institution, reputedly descended from a guild of stonemasons which existed in England in the fourteenth century. Although not a religion, it is a philosophy which is concerned with moral and spiritual questions, and a belief in a Supreme Being is essential to gaining admittance to any of the branches of Freemasonry, known as 'lodges'. Most modern Freemasons say that the Masonic life is a charitable one in which one strives to do good towards others regardless of creed, class or race. The Grand Lodge of Ireland dates from 1726 and is the second oldest of its kind in Europe. The earliest evidence of Irish Masonic activity is recorded in *The Dublin Weekly Journal* in June 1725.

Elizabeth Aldworth in Masonic regalia, from a mezzotint of 1811.
[Public Domain], via Wikimedia Commons

Two years earlier, in 1723, *The Book of Constitutions of the Freemasons* officially forbade the initiation of women, yet there are accounts of women Freemasons dating back long before then. A manuscript from 1693 ascribed to the Grand Lodge of All England, at York, containing the line '*hee or shee that is to be made mason'*, certainly seems to indicate that, in certain quarters, women were being initiated into Freemasonry. One of the earliest of these was reputed to be Sabine Von Steinbach, daughter of the architect of Strasbourg Cathedral, once the tallest building on Earth. Sabine was credited with continuing the work of her father after his death in 1318, although this has been disputed amongst historians. Some maintain that she never existed at all and that she is an allegorical, rather than an historical, figure.

By the 18th century, however, certain events involving women in Freemasonry occurred which can be taken as fact. One of these took place in Doneraile, County Cork in 1712, when Elizabeth St Leger became the first woman to be officially initiated into an all-male Masonic lodge and who from then on came to be known as 'Lady Freemason'. Born in 1693 at Doneraile Court in North Cork, she was the only daughter of Arthur St Leger, Viscount of Doneraile. Both her father and brother were Freemasons, and belonged to the same aristocratic lodge. Legend has it that as Elizabeth was reading in the library of the family mansion one day she was distracted by strange sounds which she overheard emanating from a room on the ground floor. On removing two bricks from the wall of an adjacent room, she peered through to witness a Masonic ritual. Whilst watching the proceedings she was caught by the family butler, himself a Freemason and tyler (doorkeeper) to the lodge, causing her to scream and faint. Consternation followed and the rest of the lodge members were duly alerted to the situation.

On discovering that their secrecy had been uncovered, a lodge meeting was held there and then. The members eventually agreed to initiate Elizabeth into the lodge, as the oath of secrecy which she would have to swear would ensure she would not divulge the lodge's existence to others. A year later, in 1713, she married Richard Aldworth from Newmarket who (according to an article published in *The Evening Telegram* in Newfoundland in 1895) was a member of the lodge himself and had been present on the night Elizabeth was initiated. The article claims that he was chosen to keep watch over her while they deliberated what course of action to take and 'became so enamoured of her charms and so sorry for her plight that he rushed back to the council, whom he could overhear in their discussions and pleaded so eloquently for her life.' The last line of this account suggests that some members of the lodge were so incensed at her intrusion that they wanted her killed. It is doubtful that such an extreme course of action was ever seriously considered as both her father and brother were present at the meeting.

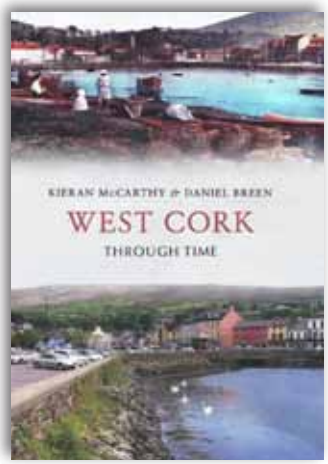
There is evidence to suggest that Elizabeth was indeed a Mason. Firstly, a plaque was erected to her memory by the Masons of Cork in St Fin Barre's Cathedral in Cork City, where she is buried. Also, a portrait of Elizabeth in full Masonic regalia hangs on the wall of the Cork Masonic Hall in Tuckey Street, home of the Munster branch of the Grand Lodge of Ireland. To this day Elizabeth St Leger remains acknowledged by historians of Freemasonry as the first woman to be initiated into its all-male world.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries various groups and lodges with Masonic origins and links attracted to their ranks highly educated and independent-minded women. Albert Pike, a 19th century writer and Freemason, stated that 'all the emblems, forms and ceremonies of Masonry are symbolical of great primitive truths, which each one is at liberty to interpret in accordance with his own faith.' Freemasonry may be rich in ceremony and ritual but unlike organised religions there is no dogma, enshrined doctrine or strict code of behaviour laid out for the initiate to follow. Perhaps this is what has drawn women of a philosophical leaning towards the otherwise all-male world of Freemasonry, but it is also notable that in the mostly male-populated world of Freemasonry much of its symbolism relates to the feminine principle (which represents the receptive and intuitive aspects of existence as expressed in mystical philosophies) on an equal basis to its masculine counterpart. An example would be the 'rosy cross' symbol used by the Rosicrucians, a mystical order dating from the 17th century, as well as by certain Masonic Christian bodies and their offshoots. (Among these are the Chapter of the Prince Rose Croix Masons No 1, who convene at Cork's Masonic Hall on Tuckey Street.) The symbol consists of a gold cross with a rose at its centre and is said to depict the alchemical union of the male and female principles. Some believe that these principles are inherent in all life and their union is the ultimate symbol of spiritual enlightenment, self-realization or oneness.

Mark Wilkins is a musician and composer from Cork City and a regular contributor to The Archive.

If you would like to know more about Freemasonry in Cork, please check out our DVD If the Walls Could Talk.

Book Reviews



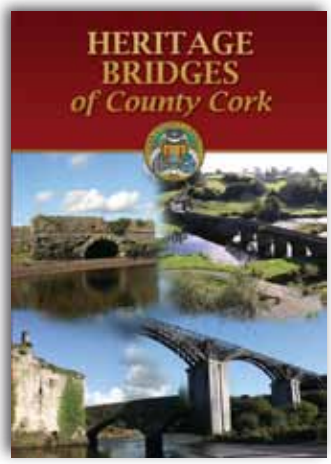
West Cork Through Time

Kieran McCarthy
& Daniel Breen
Amberley Publishing, 2013
96 Pages
ISBN 9781445620749

West Cork is a unique Irish location, a series of small towns and villages set within a calmly undulating landscape on the one hand, and along a seascape on the other. To the east lies Cork City, soon forgotten as the seeker passes through the gateway of West Cork: the towns of Clonakilty and Bandon. To the north west lies County Kerry, and to the south, the ocean. Within these bounds lies a bucolic territory defined by green hills and grey sea, dotted with towns that seem to remain ever stamped by the nineteenth century, despite both earlier origins and recent modernisation.

Daniel Breen is the assistant curator of Cork City Museum, and Kieran McCarthy, as well as being a Cork City councillor, is a well-known local historian and walking-tour guide. Their book features original postcard views of the towns and villages of the area taken from around 1913 onwards, from the collection of the Museum, and it contrasts these older images with the same or similar scenes photographed today. The authors have added some linking text, providing some historical details on the scenes presented. There is a separate chapter on the Cork, Bandon and South Coast railway line, showing what now remains of each train station. Here is a different perspective on a well-loved part of the county that locals and visitors alike will enjoy.

Seán Moraghan



Heritage Bridges of County Cork

Cork County Council
Heritage Unit, 2013
156 Pages
ISBN 9780952586968

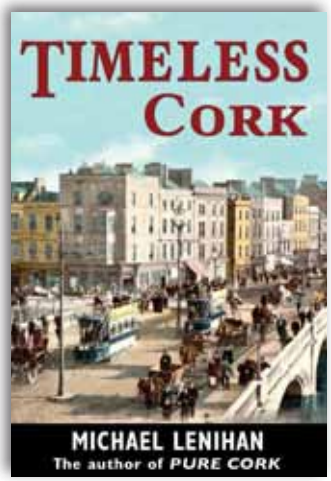
Heritage Bridges of County Cork is a wonderful guide, produced by the Heritage Unit of Cork County Council in 2013. It is a very fine collaborative effort which brings together the work of scholars from across the disciplines of history, archaeology, architecture, and ecology.

We read of the clapper bridges of Ballingeary, that cross the River Lee and which are of early origin. These consist of limestone slabs resting on rubble stone piers. The bridges are in effect archaeological monuments. There are details of Innishannon Bridge which crosses the River Bandon and which was close to a ford where the O'Neill and O'Donnell forces met in 1601 to travel on to the fateful Battle of Kinsale. There is an attractive illustration of Buttevant Old Bridge which reputedly formed part of the world's very first steeplechase, which took place between Buttevant and Doneraile in the mid 18th century.

The history of the bridges is interspersed throughout with a detailed analysis of the function, fabric and form of the bridge structures. For ecological devotees, there is a study of the fauna, flora and fish which exist near the bridges and which show how these structures can be seen as 'balconies overlooking a natural stage' and as providing a 'viewing point over ecological dramas which we cannot help but be drawn to.'

This well-illustrated guide is an attractive presentation which speaks of its production being a labour of love for all concerned.

Geraldine Healy



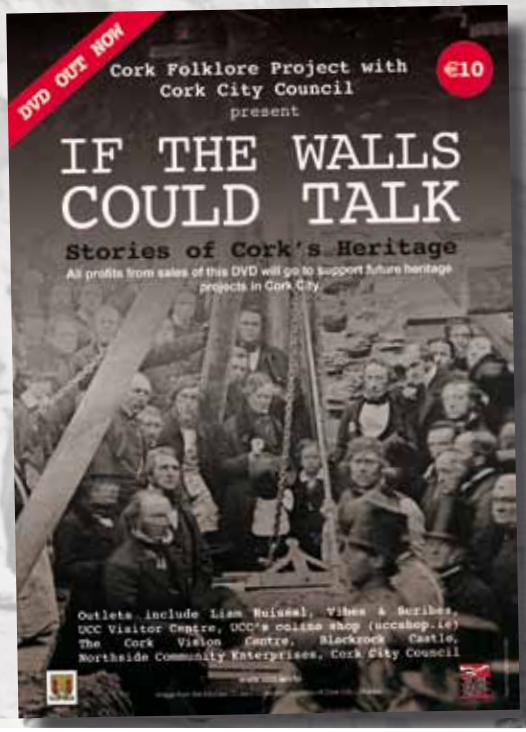
Timeless Cork

Michael Lenihan
Mercier Press, 2013
288 Pages
ISBN 9781781171684

In *Timeless Cork*, Michael Lenihan mines his wonderful collection of images to take the reader on a visual tour of old Cork. He starts with a view of Blackrock, then a quiet fishing village. From here, we go (with some pleasant detours) up the Marina, into the city and on down the Mardyke to Sunday's Well. As the song says, 'There's the Courthouse and the College where they've different sorts of knowledge, and still the half of Cork you have not seen.' But Lenihan doesn't neglect that other half. Having given readers a bird's eye view of the South Mall and Saint Patrick's Street, he explores the Northside with beautiful images of Shandon Steeple and the brewery gates at Ladyswell to name only two. Northside or Southside, recent past or distant, Lenihan's deep love and knowledge of Cork is evident throughout.

The images in the book include maps, photographs, advertisement illustrations and postcards, and they are accompanied by pithy captions. This book does not include the receipts and tickets that featured in Lenihan's *Pure Cork* (Mercier 2011), nor the longer descriptions of *Hidden Cork* (Mercier 2009). Even so, fans of those books will love this book's depiction of what the city looked like when its people lived on tripe and drisheen and its commerce ran on river and railway.

Margaret Steele



We've been busy!

If the Walls Could Talk was commissioned by Niamh Twomey, Cork City Council's Heritage Officer as part of Cork Heritage Open Day with additional support from the Heritage Council. Produced by the Cork Folklore Project, this fascinating 85-minute DVD blends excerpts from interviews with local historians and residents with audio clips, original music and images, to explore the complex and rich relationships between some of Cork's most historic buildings and the people of the city.

We were delighted when Cork Heritage Open Day won the award for 'Best Interactive Event' during Heritage Week 2013. Identified as 'the clear winner' in the category, the Judging Committee deemed our DVD as 'excellent' and the project overall as 'a really good example of what Heritage Week is all about'.

The DVD is available for €10 from outlets including: Liam Ruiséal, Vibes and Scribes, UCC Visitor Centre, UCC's online shop (uccshop.ie), The Cork Vision Centre, Blackrock Castle, Northside Community Enterprises and Cork City Council.

Check out our bigger and better online presence

On our revamped website you can read all issues of our journal, listen to and view excerpts from our radio programmes and films, and keep up-to-date with CFP news and our ongoing projects. Purchasing CFP multi-media products is a wonderful way to contribute to our work. www.ucc.ie/cfp

Cork Memory Map

Read and hear more stories from the people of Cork at www.corkmemorymap.org

Have you seen us on Facebook and Twitter?

facebook.com/corkfolkloreproject @bealoideascork

Cork Folklore Project database to go online

Soon you will be able to browse our collection of over 400 audio interviews, and to read and to listen to interview summaries and excerpts. We have overhauled our archival systems, and the fruits of our labour are scheduled to go online in the summer of 2014.

The Cork Folklore Project Team • Photo by John Sunderland
(L-R) Standing: Penny Johnston, Annmarie McIntyre, Dr Ian Stephenson, Mary O'Driscoll, Alvina Cassidy, Seán Moraghan, Dermot Casey
Sitting: Stephen Dee, Margaret Steele, Geraldine Healy, Dr Clíona O' Carroll

Thanks

To Cork City Council

- For funding *If The Walls Could Talk*.
- For funding the continuation of our Cork City Built Heritage Collection.
- For funding towards publication of *The Archive*.

To the Heritage Council

- For supporting The Cork Memory Map.
- For funding ongoing and essential archival preservation work under the Heritage Management Grant Scheme of 2014.
- And in general for their ongoing support in a context of diminished financial resources.

And thanks to all of you

- Who purchased our DVDs, radio programmes and books over the last year.
- Who made a donation to help support our work.
- Who contributed an interview, an image or other material for our permanent archive.

And to our loyal readers

Hope you enjoy our latest and stylish new issue.

THE CORK FOLKLORE PROJECT

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