

**Once
upon
a
time . . .**



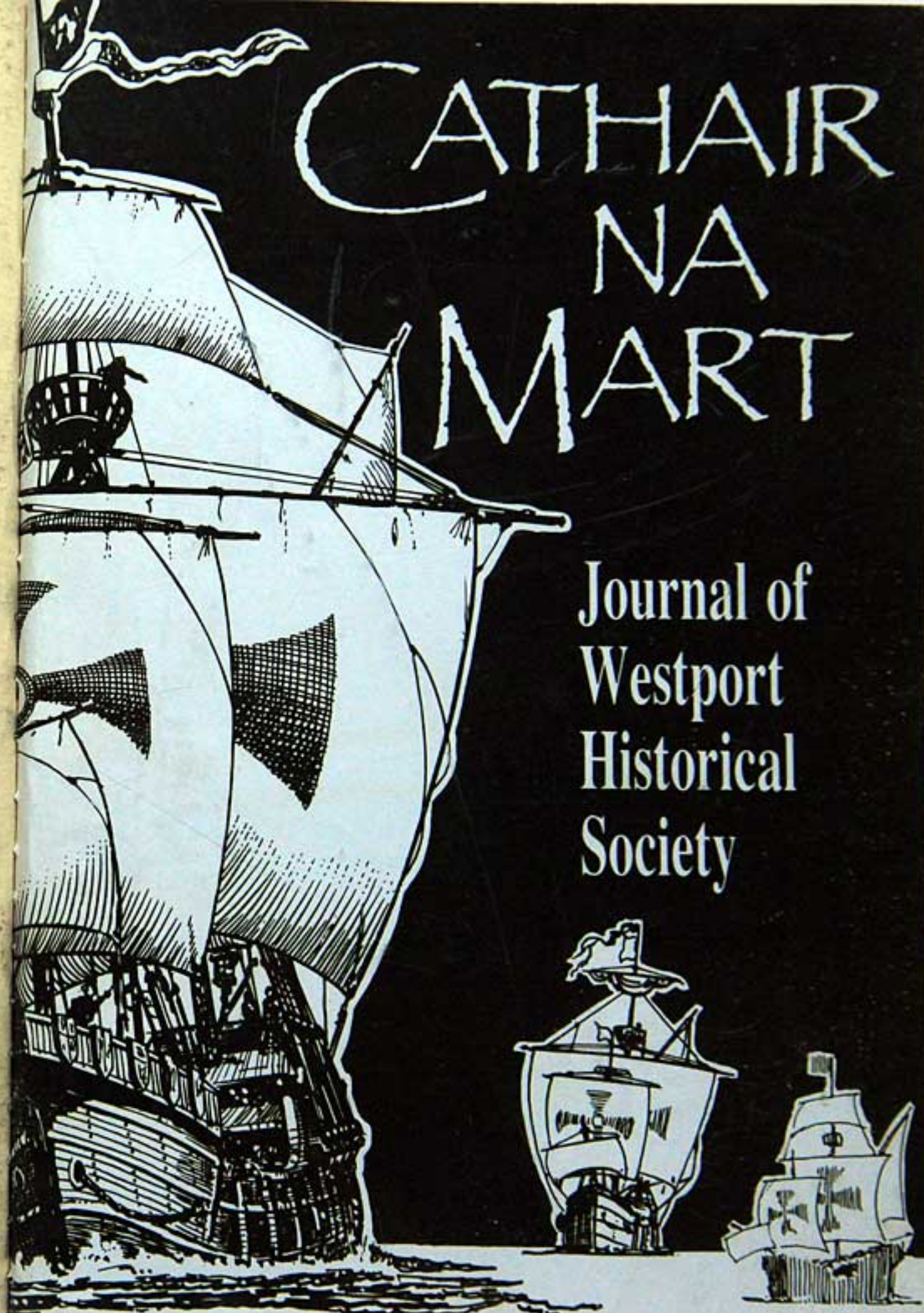
. . . 1875 to be precise, Ulster Bank Ltd. opened a branch in Westport, located on the Mall beside the Railway Hotel (now Cavanaughs). In 1883 they moved to new premises — The Eagle Hotel, where over the last 100 years they have firmly established themselves — catering for the commercial, industrial and personal banking needs of the Westport area. And today under the Management of Mr. Jack Bredin, Ulster Bank will give you that same olde worlde friendly service that has become their hallmark!

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CATHAIR NA MART

Journal of
Westport
Historical
Society



EDITORIAL

On behalf of the Society I offer to our readers Number 4 in our series of local history publications. Like the claim for other publications, we too can say that this journal is bigger and better with six very well researched articles on our history over the past 400 years. The knowledge that, although our forefathers faced very daunting problems in their day, they found within themselves the courage and stamina to carry on, should in some good measure help us to confront and overcome the problems that beset us.

At our next A.G.M. the mantle of Editorship will pass on. It is fitting, therefore, that I put on record my gratitude to the members of the Society, local historians, sponsors, printers, and of course, the contributors of the articles which made the work possible and worthwhile.

The work to ensure the continuity of our heritage is only begun. . .

JARLATH DUFFY,
Chairman,
Westport Historical Society,
Carrowholly,
Westport.

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THE ARMADA
HOW THE SPANISH ARMADA "FELL UPON THE WEST COAST OF
IRELAND" A.D. 1588 — PART 1
by Colette Purcell

... 'You will take great care lest you fall upon the coast of Ireland for fear of the harm that may befall you upon that coast. . .'

The Duke of Medina Sidonia, Commander-in-Chief of the Armada issued sailing orders to his Fleet from his flagship *San Martin*. The 'Felicitous Armada' was on its way home to Spain after its defeat and disruption off Calais, its ships damaged and its crews sickened from illness and battle. Now, the scattered ships were heading north past Scotland, then west past Ireland out into the Atlantic and then south towards Corunna. Had they kept to the course plotted for them by the Duke and his senior officers, all would have made Spain. Those who departed from the course through need of food, fresh water, and because of stormy weather, dying crews or navigational error, perished on the west coast of Ireland.

... Then parting from these Islands and rounding the Cape in 61½° you will run west south-west until you are in latitude 58° and then southwest until 53°, then south southwest to Cape Finisterre and so you will procure your entrance into Corunna or to Ferrol or to any other port of the Coast of Galicia.¹

Every ship of the Armada received a copy of these sailing orders one of which was found by the English on the captain of a captured Spanish ship.

The fleet held its course towards Norway, then northwest through the channel between the Orkneys and Shetlands (only 1 ship, *El Gran Grifon* was lost here off Fair Isle). Keeping on the latitude of 60° they bore westward clearing the north coast of Ireland and out into the Atlantic.

The weather off the west coast of Ireland in September 1588 was at its worst. Heavy gales and storm force winds battered the already damaged Spanish ships which were built for trading in the calm waters of the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas. Being square rigged they could not sail into the wind and their only hope was to tack on either side or furl sail and drift with the wind. There were two fierce storms on 10 and 20 September which scattered the ships causing some to lose course and founder on the rocky headlands of the north and west coasts of Ireland.

Added to these hazards was the fact that the navigators knew little or nothing of the western coast of Ireland and were working from inaccurate maps on which Galway and Mayo were not shown at all. Nor were any of the headlands, estuaries or islands off the coast shown. Their maps showed Ireland as having an even western coastline from Donegal to Kerry, and where Erris Head juts out for 40 miles the Spaniards expected to find 'open water'. It was due to this navigational error and the condition of the ships battered by storm and battle, that 26 of them were wrecked off the west coast of Ireland. Five of these 'fell upon' the coast of Mayo, while Galway claimed two, Sligo three, Donegal eight, Clare three (then part of Connacht), Kerry four, with a total loss of 6,549 men.

In the State papers,¹ Sir Edward Whyte then Secretary to the Connacht Council reports:

... After the Spanish fleet had doubled Scotland and were on their course homewards, they were by contrary weather, driven upon the several parts of this province and wrecked as it were by even portions. . . three ships in every one of the four counties bordering on the sea coasts, viz. Sligo, Mayo and Galway and Thomond so that 12 ships perished on the rocks and sands of the shore of the out-les, which presently sank both men and ships in the night time.

And so I can say by good estimation that six or seven thousand men have been cast away on these coasts, save some 1,000 of them which escaped to land in several places where their ships fell, which men were all put to the sword.

The man responsible for 'putting them to the sword' was Sir Richard Bingham, Governor of Connacht from 1576-1584. Known as the 'Flail of Connacht', for his cruelty and brutal treatment of the natives, he had actually been dismissed by Elizabeth I and had been recently reinstated. He had previously fought both with and against the Spaniards in the Netherlands and at Lepanto when England and Spain were allies. A veteran soldier and experienced seaman, he had also commanded an English force at Smerwick off Kerry in 1580, when a papal force of 800 men (Spanish and Portuguese) in a Spanish ship commanded by Don Martinez de Recalde — now Vice-Admiral of the Armada — made an abortive landing. They were all brutally massacred at Dún an Óir before any Irish could come to help them.

The threat of invasion of Ireland from Spain was a real one. Catholic Spain had always been the ultimate hope of Irish Catholic resistance against Protestant England and the Irish waited for the King of Spain's armies to free them from English tyranny.

Bingham issued orders on hearing of the latest Spanish 'invasion': no quarter would be given to the Spaniards or to any natives who might harbour them.

The Lord Deputy of Ireland, Sir Richard Fitzwilliam sent orders to Bingham 'to make by all good means, both of oaths and otherwise, to take all hulls of ships, treasures etc. into your hands and to apprehend and execute all Spaniards of what quality soever. . . torture may be used in prosecuting this enquiry.'

Such then was the reception awaiting the starving and ship-wrecked Spaniards who had the misfortune to step on Irish soil and it explains the brutal treatment they received not only from Bingham and his men but from the native Irish themselves to whom the Spaniards looked for help, food and water, who through fear of reprisal, handed them over to English custody or slaughtered them on the spot.

The only Irish chieftains who gave aid and shelter to the Spanish survivors were the rebel chieftains — Brian O'Rourke of Breffni 'who never paid the Queen's rent', Maguire of Fermanagh and McGlancy of East Fermanagh who sheltered Captain de Cuellar of the Sligo wreck as well as others for three months, while in the North. McSweeney ne Doe and Sorley Boy McDonnell of Antrim shipped survivors to Scotland and from there they returned to Spain via the Netherlands. For their help they paid dearly. In

1592 McGlancy was captured and beheaded while O'Rourke, who had fled to Scotland was captured and brought to London and hanged on a charge of high treason.

An estimated 750 survivors of the Irish wrecks returned to Spain. Out of the 30,000 men who set out in the Armada from Lisbon in May 1588, only 9,000 returned and out of the total fleet of 130 ships, only 68 made it safely back to Spain.

To understand the reasons for launching such an enterprise, it is necessary to look at the historical facts which precipitated the sending of this mighty 'Task Force' to conquer England, and which cost Philip II almost 10 million ducats or £2.5m. sterling (G. Parker, p.36, 4 ducats — £1 stg.). To pay for its losses he had to impose yet another tax on the overburdened Castilians, the most hated of all the taxes — 'the millones'.

The Great Enterprise of England which Philip II set in motion in 1587 was the final battle in a long series of conflicts between England and Spain — conflicts which had religious, economic and political origins. It was also the first world war in fact, since Philip ruled over an empire on which 'the sun never set'. From his father, Emperor Charles V he inherited all Spain, the Netherlands, Sicily, Milan and Naples and Franche Comté, and the New Worlds — the Americas and the Indies.

He became King of Spain in 1556 at the age of 29. On the death of his first wife, Mary of Portugal he turned to England and in 1554 married Mary Tudor, Catholic daughter of Catherine of Aragon and Henry VIII. When Mary died in 1558, he proposed marriage to Elizabeth who refused (1559). His third wife was Elizabeth of Valois, who died with his unfortunate son, Don Carlos in 1568. His fourth wife Anne of Austria, daughter of Emperor Maximilian II, gave him a son, his successor, Philip III, (1578-1621).

Philip was a fanatical Catholic and his two obsessions were to stamp out heresy and to make Spain an absolute power. The Spanish Inquisition reached its height during his reign and due to its introduction into the Low Countries came the revolt in the Netherlands and the loss of the Dutch provinces.

Protestant teaching spreading from Germany (Luther), Switzerland (Zwingli) with the aid of the printing press, was causing terrible upheavals in France, the Netherlands and the British Isles, and Catholics all over Europe were subject to penal laws and forbidden to practice their religion.

When Elizabeth I became Queen of England in 1558 at the age of 25, she established the Protestant Church and declared Protestantism to be the only religion legally permitted throughout the realm. Catholics hoped that the Catholic Mary, Queen of Scotland, would succeed if Elizabeth died. Mary had been a prisoner in England since 1568 and a threat to Elizabeth although the two queens never met. After several abortive attempts by Catholic noblemen to rescue her Elizabeth signed Mary's death warrant, and her Protestant son, James VI of Scotland, succeeded her.

The execution of Mary Queen of Scots, Dowager Queen of France at

Fotheringay Castle on February 8th 1587, shocked the whole of Europe. Before her execution, Mary had disowned her Protestant son and had in a secret letter, promised the throne of Scotland to his Most Catholic Majesty, Philip II of Spain a direct descendant of Edward III. Mary had also sent copies of this letter to Philip's Ambassador in Paris, Count Bernardino de Mendoza (previously in London) and to Pope Sixtus V by secret messenger.

Philip, defender of the Catholic Faith, felt it was up to him to free the English people from the Protestant yoke and take the crown that was rightfully his, or more correctly, as he promised the Pope, for his daughter the Infanta Clara Isabella Eugenia.

For the previous 15 years England and Spain had been at each other's throats and Elizabeth's pirate-ships were intercepting Philip's 'Plate Fleets' bringing gold and silver from the Americas, Mexico and Peru to Spain. Captain Drake's circumnavigation of the world between 1577 and 1580 (he was the first Englishman to do so on a buccaneering trip in 2 years and 10 months) in the *Golden Hind*, was a planned adventure. He entered the Pacific which no Englishman had ever done before and attacked Spanish shipping en route and captured vast treasure. He went north to California and returned by the East Indies and South Africa bringing back as well as gold and silver, the first load of spices ever to be shipped direct to England. Spices were 'priceless' at that time and the Portuguese had monopolised this trade. In 1580 Philip II had annexed the throne of Portugal (to which he had a claim by his first marriage to Mary of Portugal) and when he heard of Drake's exploits he instructed his then Ambassador in London, Bernardino de Mendoza, to complain to Elizabeth. But the Queen was delighted to hear of Drake's adventures and made him an Admiral of the Fleet on his return. Drake then sailed away on a further expedition, looting Spanish colonies in the Caribbean in 1585 and the Canary Islands, and in 1586 he set fire to the oldest Spanish city in Florida, St. Augustine. He returned home loaded with gold and silver and 200 cannon as booty.

By now Philip was determined to put an end to English piracy and in 1587 he began to plan his great enterprise. He instructed his Admiral of the Spanish Fleet, the Marquis of Santa Cruz, hero of Lepanto to assemble a fleet strong enough to conquer Elizabeth's and destroy it, if necessary. Speed and secrecy were more important than strength and Philip urged Santa Cruz who had just returned from escorting the Plate Fleet in the Azores to make ready to sail in September 1587. But the Marquis, who had been urging Philip to launch this attack for the past four years, was totally unprepared and begged for more time, more galleons, armaments and ordnance.

Meantime, Elizabeth heard through her spies of the proposed invasion which she had been expecting for some time. Drake persuaded the Queen to let him attack Cadiz which he knew to be the main centre of the Spanish fleet and the most likely place for preparations to be made. He attacked Cadiz in September 1587 and captured six good ships and burned 18 more including Santa Cruz' personal galleon. What was to have far more serious con-

sequences for the Spanish Fleet however was the capture and burning of 40 coasting vessels which were laden with staves of seasoned wood for the making of barrels, casks, butts, pipes and hogsheads needed for the vital storage of fresh water, wine and provisions. Thus in 1587 Drake could boast that he had 'singed the King of Spain's beard'. He had in fact kept the Armada from sailing that year. His raid on Cadiz caused a sense of outrage throughout Spain and Philip became more impatient with Santa Cruz, urging him to make haste and be ready to attack in December 1587, whether he was ready or not.

A further threat to Philip's possessions in the Netherlands came from England when, after the assassination of the prince of Orange in 1584, Elizabeth had sent aid to the Dutch rebels against Philip. In 1585, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester landed 5,000 foot soldiers and 1,000 horse soldiers on Dutch soil to support the Protestant revolt of the seven northern provinces (now modern Holland). Her garrisons were placed at the two deep sea ports of Flushing and Brill.

Philip's viceroy in the Netherlands, his nephew, Duke of Parma, the most outstanding soldier of his time, had been successful in subduing the Southern Netherlands (Low Countries) where the Protestant revolt had begun. Elizabeth, while supporting the Dutch protestants was willing to make peace with Parma and right up to the eve of the Armada's sailing, kept up the pretence of peace offers.

Meanwhile Parma had captured the important port of Sluys from the Dutch after an epic siege and was having a canal built between Sluys and Nieuport to protect his lines of communication from storms and Dutch attack. He had cut down the whole forest of Waas to build another 100 barges, flyboats and two small galleons. He had 30,000 men at his command in Flanders.

Philip had instructed Santa Cruz — 'you will sail for Cape Margate and the Thames. Your task will be to support Parma in crossing.' — Spanish plans hinged on the transport of Parma's Army to invade and conquer England. The problem lay in transportation, for although the Channel was narrow its control was in English hands and the sea was England's natural element, and not Spain's.

By December 1587, Santa Cruz, though still not ready, reported to Philip that he had word from England that fortifications had been erected all along the coast (beacons), that militia troops were being recruited, and that Drake was ready and waiting for them with a well-equipped fleet.

Philip had heard reports too and ordered Santa Cruz to wait till February and carry on making preparations. All through December and January Santa Cruz worked on while being bombarded with letters and instructions from Philip. At the beginning of February he became ill and on 9 February he died. He was 62. It was said in Lisbon that 'he died of overwork and the King's unreasonable demands and that he was universally mourned, by captains and soldiers alike — it was in him all hope of success had been vested'. The loss of such an experienced commander was a severe blow to the Armada, but

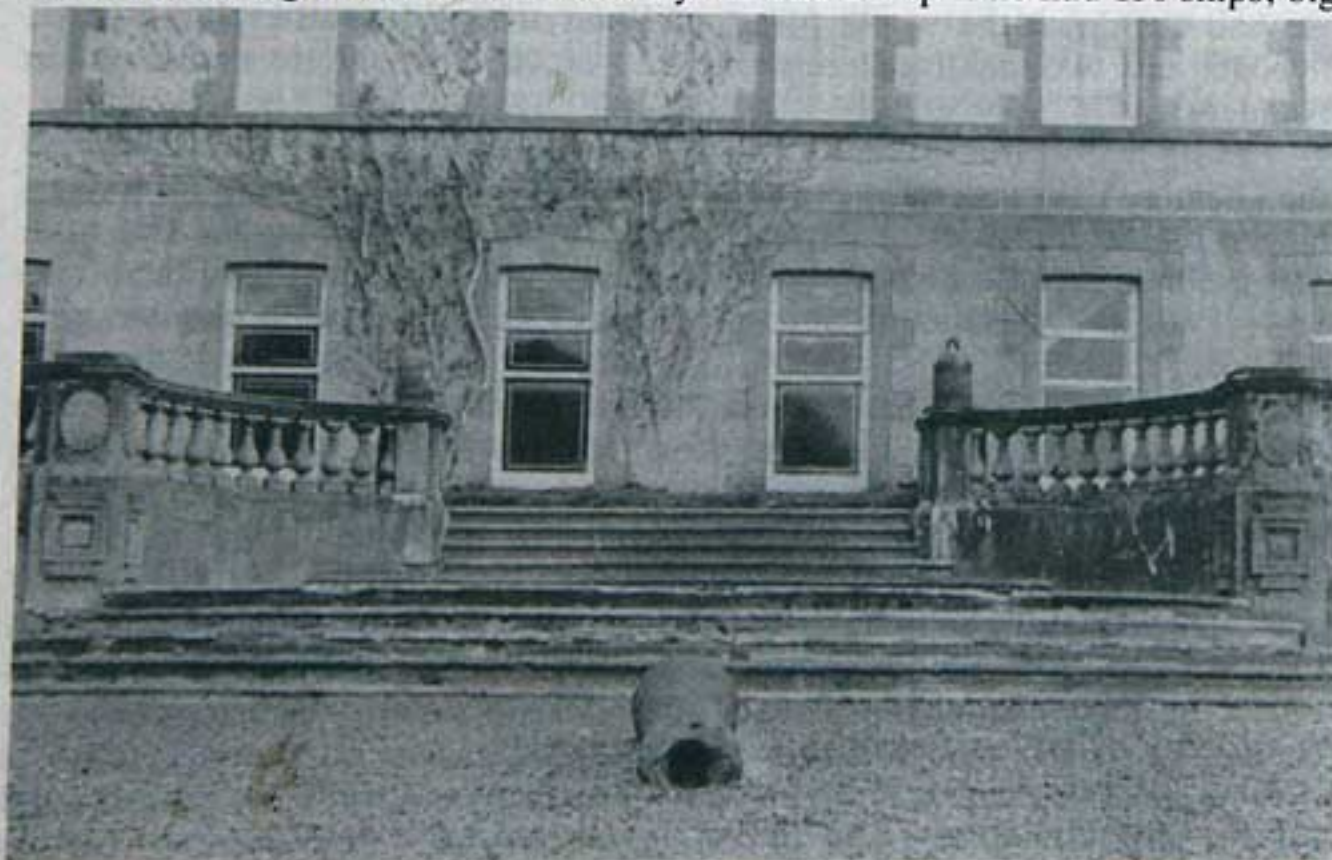
Philip had already picked his successor — Don Alonso de Guzman El Bueno, Duke of Medina Sidonia and Captain General of Andalusia.

The year before, the Duke of Sidonia's prompt arrival at the head of a band of militia had saved Cadiz from being sacked by Drake. He was 37 years old and head of an illustrious family owning large estates and tunny fisheries in the region of Cadiz. A good soldier, but a poor sailor, he had protested to Philip on his appointment.*

... I have not the health for the sea. . . I soon become sea sick and have many humours. My house owes 900,000 ducats and I am therefore quite unable to accept the command. I have not a single real I can spend on the expedition. . . The force is so great and the undertaking so important that it would not be right for a person like myself possessing no experience of sea-faring or of war to take charge of it.

But in spite of such honest and sincere objections, Philip was adamant and the Duke had no choice but to bid farewell to his family at San Lucar and make haste to Lisbon. Philip wrote to him on 22 March. . . 'Such is my confidence in you personally and in your experience and desire to serve me, that, with God's help I look for the success we aim at.'

When the Duke arrived at Lisbon he found chaos. Since the death of Santa Cruz, supplies, guns and ammunition were arriving daily and with no one in charge to distribute them everything was in a state of confusion. His first task was the distribution of guns and cargo. Some ships were overloaded and other were practically empty. There were soldiers and sailors on ships without money or proper clothing. The Duke assembled a staff of senior officers and began to restore order. By the end of April he had 130 ships, big



Cannon in front of Westport House believed to have been from the Armada.

and small, ready for sea. In fact, the fleet benefited by the delay which the Duke requested from Philip to complete his preparations. The allowance of gun powder was almost doubled and the supply of cannon balls for the big guns increased, so that each piece could fire 50 rounds. Unlike the English who kept the fleet in a state of semi-demobilisation in winter, Philip insisted on keeping his fleet in a constant state of readiness which caused problems, — desertion of men, dysentery, and the deterioration of the prepared ships while waiting for others to be assembled. Medina Sidonia and his officers did the best they could with an almost impossible situation. By now the elements of speed and secrecy which Philip had earlier relied on were out of the question. The whole of Europe knew of the planned invasion by Spain but no one knew where exactly it was going to land.

For financial support Philip had turned to the Pope, Sixtus V, who had been urging him to act in the Catholic cause since he became King. His predecessor, Pius V had excommunicated Elizabeth and in 1579 declared her a heretic. The Pope promised him one million ducats 'the day the first Spanish soldier sets foot on English soil' — a promise he had never to fulfill. The Papacy spent large sums on aid to the Catholic League in France at the time but Sixtus V knew Philip well and was determined not to part with a ducat until the invasion had taken place. To all who sailed in the Armada the Pope granted a Plenary Indulgence, Absolution and Remission of Sins and His Apostolic Blessing — everything in fact except the money which Philip badly needed.

On 29 April 1588, the Duke sent the King the General Summary of the entire Armada — ships, troops and cannon down to the last detail. It consisted of:

- 130 ships in 10 squadrons
- 64 galleons
- 4 galleasses (of Naples)
- 4 galleys
- 25 hulks (carrying stores and horses)
- 19 pataches and 13 zabras

Galleons were 3-masted men-of-war — large merchantmen converted into warships and very unwieldy to manoeuvre.

A **Galleass** was a cross between a galleon (sail driven) and a galley (oar propelled) having 36 oars manned by 300 rowers and combined the advantages of oar and sail. It had 3 tall masts and was mobile in calm weather and much more easily manoeuvred than the galleon.

'**Pataches**' and '**Zabras**' were small sailing vessels called 'pinnaces' by the English. The Spanish galleons were similar in design and armament to the English galleon except for a higher stern and fo'castle which made them less easy to handle.

In the ships were 19,000 soldiers and 8,000 sailors and 2,000 oarsmen

(convicts, prisoners and slaves) chained to their oars. There were 1,545 'volunteers' — including 300 gentlemen adventurers and noblemen, hidalgos and caballeros, German, Irish, English and Scottish captains, ships' surgeons, and other non-combatants and 180 priests and monks. Included were about 200 Irishmen, bishops, priests and exiles in Spain from Elizabethan Penal Laws.

At the gunports were 2,431 pieces of ordnance: 1,497 bronze and 934 iron cannon. The number of cannon balls (of all weights) was listed as 123,790 or approx. 50 rounds per gun.

The report also listed all the provisions: biscuit, bacon, cheese, fish, rice, beans, wine, oil, vinegar, water, in thousands of hundreweight, pipes, tuns and casks. No other fleet of the 16th century had ever been so detailed. The official publication was called 'La felicissima Armada', 'the most fortunate fleet' and the title 'Invincible Armada' was only given to it later probably because of its size and strength.

Before sailing Philip sent two months' pay for every man on the Armada 'which will send them off in good spirits' but advised the Duke to 'give only one pay before embarking, the other after they are on board'. The total sum amounted to 232,000 ducats with an additional 200,000 ducats given to the Paymaster General to take with him for expenses. The Duke had been continually pressing Philip for more money during his preparations — his men were threatening to leave as they waited in vain for their pay but Philip was always short of money to pay his troops. In spite of all the gold and silver being shipped from America and Mexico by his Plate Fleets (often intercepted by Drake who looted and robbed them for his Queen), Philip's wars on three fronts had brought Spain to bankruptcy three times: Protestant England, France under the Guises and the Turkish Sultan whose forces he defeated at the decisive Battle of Lepanto in 1571, and now the revolt in the Netherlands, the most costly of all.

But at last the 'great enterprise of England' was ready to sail. Philip had launched the most powerful fleet the world had ever seen 'because such was the vision he had received from God'. And with the grace of God, the full financial and spiritual support of the Pope, and a fair wind behind it, how could the Armada be defeated?

Philip had issued explicit instructions to the Duke:

... You will sail with the whole of the Armada and go straight to the English Channel, which you will ascend as far as Cape Margate where you will join hands with the Duke of Parma, my nephew, and hold the passage for his crossing, in accordance with the plan that has been communicated to both of you. ... once in the Channel you will not seek battle with the enemy unless you find his forces divided and are able to get the weather gauge of him. ... rather you will sail on in good order to your rendezvous with Parma. Do not fail to let everyman know that the enemy has the advantage in artillery and with his superior fire power will try to fight at long range.

The aim of our men must be on the contrary, to bring the enemy to close quarters and grapple with him. ... when you arrive at Cape Margate you will learn where my nephew the Duke wishes you to place the troops with which you are to furnish him and act accordingly. It is my desire that when these troops land they

shall be under the command of my Commander-in-Chief of the Light Cavalry of Milan, Don Alonso de Leyva until the Duke takes them over. ...

To Parma Philip had promised 6,000 troops aboard the Armada for the invasion, but Medina Sidonia had strict orders not to release them until after the English fleet had been destroyed. Philip had also provided for the one weakness in Parma's army — the lack of siege artillery, as his barges and flyboats were too weak to carry heavy guns across the Channel.

The Armada carried a complete siege train of 50 powder guns, estimated at 48 mounted on mobile field carriages together with scaling ladders and other siege tackle for use on land. These were loaded on ships with proper derricks so that they could easily have been brought ashore on landing in England. Parma, on landing was to march through Kent and take London by storm. However, if London could not be taken, Philip specified the terms of peace with England in these three principal points:

- (1) "That in England, the free use and exercise of our holy Catholic faith shall be permitted to all Catholics native and foreign;
- (2) That in my Netherlands all places which the English hold, be restored to me.
- (3) That the English shall recompense me for the injury they have done to me, my dominions and my subjects; which will amount to an exceedingly great sum."

Such was Philip's faith in Parma's leadership and crack troops that he fully expected the invasion to go as planned. During 1587 and 1588 he had sent huge sums of money and provisions to Parma in order to expedite preparations in the Netherlands for the combined operation with the great fleet. At a time when armies were made up mostly of untrained men and raw recruits, the Army of Flanders had 'the best soldiers in Christendom' (wrote Leicester to Burghly). These men were the cream of the most formidable army in Europe. Sir Walter Raleigh in his *History of the World, 1614* written 25 years after the Armada, said he 'was convinced that the English were of no such force as to encounter an Armie like unto that wherewith the Prince of Parma should have landed in England.'

An assault force of some 17,000 men was assembled at Flanders ready and waiting for the Armada in May 1588. The Duke's army had suffered heavy losses during the winter through desertion, death and disease. The English were terrified of them, especially those who had fought against them in Flanders. If he did succeed in landing, Parma could have covered the 80 mile distance from Margate to London in a week even with resistance. The fortifications of Elizabethan England were extremely poor at that time with hardly any defences between Margate and the Medway river. The larger towns of Kent, Canterbury and Rochester still had only their antiquated mediaeval walls, while Rochester Castle which commanded the main crossing over the Medway from the south-east to the Thames was in a state of decay. Philip had probably known all this — he had spent a year in England as Prince Consort and knew England's weak points. He also knew that Elizabeth had neither the troops nor money to spend on defences.

But Parma was now having doubts about the whole venture and the difficulty of getting his troops out of Flanders with the Dutch and English ships in the Channel. In May 1558 just before the Armada sailed he wrote to Philip expressing his relief for the support of the 6,000 troops aboard the Armada and wishing the number could be increased. He also adds that 'we are short of good pilots and even seamen. If the passage was a long one we could not venture on it.'

By June he was even more anxious after communications had been exchanged with Medina Sidonia. He wrote to Philip:

... The Duke will learn clearly from my letters that I cannot depart in the slightest degree from the plan laid down or from your Majesty's express orders. ... with these little, low, flat boats built for these rivers and not for the sea, I cannot diverge from the short direct passage across, which has been agreed on. ... thus jeopardising the whole undertaking. If I were to attempt such a thing by going out to meet the Duke and we come across any of the armed English or rebel ships, they could destroy us with the greatest ease. This must be obvious and neither the valour of our men nor any other human effort could save us.

On 18 July while the fleet was still in Corunna he wrote to Philip from Bruges:

... I am greatly grieved at receiving no news of the Duke of Medina Sidonia and the Armada although vague rumours of all kinds continue to reach us. The troops of all nationalities, both horse and foot are in their places, mustered near the place of embarkation as I have already informed Your Majesty. Thank God the health is generally good and the men full of spirits worthily to serve God and Your Majesty.

By 20 July he is in a panic and writes:

... The troops are in the field, and we are on the eve of the execution of the task we have in hand and yet at the last moment we may have to break up from sheer necessity. What account can I give of the fleet, of stores, artillery and all the rest unless some resources reach me from somewhere or in some form?

The Captain General of the Armada the Duke of Medina Sidonia went to the Cathedral at Lisbon and took from the High Altar the Sacred banner of the Crusade, bearing on one side of the Arms of Spain, the image of Christ Crucified and on the other, His Blessed Mother. Beneath were the words in Latin: 'Arise O Lord and vindicate thy cause'. Thus was the holy nature of the expedition advertised. Every man who was to sail with it had been to confession and communion. The Archbishop of Lisbon said Mass and gave a general Benediction to the enterprise.

At dawn on 9 May the Duke finally issued the order for departure and the fleet sailed down the Tagus from Lisbon towards Belem 'like a town on the march' — a magnificent sight — 130 ships in full sail, their Red Crosses of war against the white sails billowing in the wind, headed by the Duke in his galleon the *'San Martin'*.

But at Belem the wind was blowing hard, the pilots would not cross the bar. So the fleet had to drop anchor and wait. The weather was more like December than May, and for three more weeks the Armada lay at anchor unable to get out.

The Duke took advantage of the delay to issue stringent orders from Philip to the fleet, which were passed from ship to ship to each of the

commanders of the 10 squadrons. They must all know from the highest to the lowest that the principal reason for this enterprise was to serve God and to convert the heretical enemies of the holy Catholic faith. There was to be no blasphemy (under severe punishment), no gambling, no play at night, no brawls, no women on board, no man was to carry a dagger and no scandal. The ships' boys would say the Salve every morning and the Ave Maria and Litany at sunset.

No ship was to sail ahead of the Duke's flagship (at any time) from which orders would be issued every evening to the generals and commanding officers. Above all the Armada must keep together and sail in as close order as possible. Rations were to be strictly adhered to and especially water rations, which must be conserved. Cannon and all arms must be kept in good order and loaded, and precautions taken in case of fire.

The Duke and his officers had achieved a high standard of organisation for the fleet. They had worked out signals and communications between squadrons, arranged rendezvous points, sailing orders and fighting instructions. Every man on board knew what he had to do. Every squadron commander had several experienced pilots on board who knew the Channel and the North Sea. From the Scilly Isles to Dover they had maps showing landmarks, harbours, soundings and tides and all possible dangers. They had even devised a special plan in anticipation of Drake's probable tactics in the Channel, should he attack the fleet after the soldiers had been landed. So with a certain confidence, Medina Sidonia and the fleet finally got out to sea on 30 May despite the winds which had now abated. It was ready to meet the enemy and with its banners flying at the mast heads, its decks thronged with gallant noblemen, soldiers and sailors intent on glory and victory against Protestant England, the Duke felt sure that God would give Spain the victory.

But again disaster dogged its course. The wind blew from all directions of the compass, so the fleet zig-zagged northwards up the coast of Spain making little headway. Trying to keep the fleet together meant progressing at the speed of the slowest ships — the hulks — and eventually on reaching Corunna on 19 June, the Duke and his squadron Commanders decided the whole fleet should put into harbour for repairs, to take on fresh provisions, to replace the already rotting stores, and above all, to take on fresh water. Practically every squadron reported a shortage of water at this stage. Many of the water casks were found to be defective, and the water green and stinking. Drake's bonfires at Cadiz, of the seasoned wood for water casks and food, in the previous year, had paid off.

Suddenly at midnight on 19 June a fierce gale sprang up. About 50 ships had managed to reach the harbour, the rest were out at sea and running before the gale, scattering widely as they ran. On 21 June the Duke sent out some of the smaller ships — Zabras and Pataches — to look for the scattered ships. Eventually, all returned but many were damaged, leaking badly, anchors lost, and hundreds of men ill with dysentery from the spoiled food.

The Duke had become sadly disillusioned. Now with a fuller knowledge

of weather conditions and hazards, the inexperience of some of his crews, the rotting supplies and serious effect of the water shortage, he wrote to Philip from Corunna on 24 June, expressing his fears that since the enterprise had started so badly and so much depended on its success His Most Gracious Majesty might consider calling the whole thing off and try to reach an honourable agreement with the enemy, especially in view of Parma's report that he had only half the number of troops of the previous October. He also reminds Philip of the doubts and fears he had expressed before he took command, and adds. . .

. . . Well, Sire, how do you think we can attack so great a country as England with such a force as ours is now? I have earnestly commanded this matter to God and feel bound to lay it before Your Majesty, in order that you may choose the course best for your service whilst the Armada is refitting here. . ."

Philip's reply was brief and firm. The Duke was to do his best with repairs to the damaged ships, even leave some of them behind if necessary, but he must sail at the first opportunity after taking on fresh supplies and water.

It was the 21 July before the Fleet was ready to set sail once more with a south wind behind it, heading for England — to Philip's great relief. It was costing him 30,000 ducats a day to keep the Armada in port, and throughout Spain, he had ordered prayers and processions for its safe departure.

At four o'clock on the afternoon of Friday, 29 July, land was sighted from the crow's nest of the '*San Martin*'. The Duke ordered the Sacred Banner to be hoisted at the main mast and 'three shots to be fired as a signal to everyman to make his prayer'. At 7.00 p.m. that evening, just off the Lizard, they prepared to assemble. During that night, the Duke noted in his '*Diario*' that smoke signals were observed on the mainland as they were sailing up the Channel, and alarm beacons had been sighted signalling from headland to headland.

The Duke held a council of war with his commanders. Their opinion was that it would be madness to advance any further until they had word from Parma whether he was ready or not. There was no friendly port ahead of them where they could wait for him, and if the wind changed its present course they could not turn back. They urged the Duke to attack Plymouth where a fleet of sixty ships was anchored. But the Duke decided against it. He was under strict orders from Philip not to give battle unless he was attacked in the Channel. Instead, (he wrote to the King) he proposed to sail as far as the Isle of Wight, and stay at anchor until Parma sent him a definite date for his departure. Had he attacked Plymouth, the battle would have been won on the first day as the Spaniards had all the advantages of wind and position. The English ships under Howard and Drake could not come out against the wind until later that night. By afternoon of next day, 30 July, most of the English fleet was in the Channel. The Armada entered the Channel in perfect formation. At a signal from the Duke, every ship came about forming a 7-mile crescent across the horizon.

This first sight of the Armada must have dismayed the British fleet

divided into four squadrons, under the Lord Admiral Howard, Vice-Admiral Drake, Frobisher and Hawkins. Any ships venturing into the middle of the crescent would find it closing in on them and would be the central target for Spanish guns. Any ships coming to their aid would find themselves engaged in hand to hand fighting which the Spaniards wanted, since they outnumbered the English by five to one. The English tactics were to avoid confrontation with the enemy and keep a safe distance of over 300 yards. Spanish cannon was deadly at 80 yards range, dangerous at 150, but almost ineffective at 300 yards.

While Drake in the *Revenge*, Frobisher in the *Triumph* and Hawkins in the *Victory* sailed their squadrons into the left wing of the crescent, Howard in the *Ark Royal* attacked the right wing. The Royal Navy's strength lay in her newly designed galleons. They rode lower in the water and were narrower and longer than their previous ships, and had the advantage over the Spaniards in being swifter and far more easily manoeuvred than the huge, unwieldy Spanish galleons which towered over them when they attacked. Due to a light wind the Armada made slow progress eastward.

After two days' fighting a 'furious battle' took place off Portland Bill on 2 August. The guns rolled all day from dawn to dusk but the Spaniards, although they had the weather gauge, could not get close enough to the English ships to grapple and board them while the English who were engaged in long range gunfire were running out of powder shot, which had to be ferried out from the southcoast ports. 'We durst not adventure to put in among them' wrote Howard, 'their fleet is so strong'. According to the Duke, the two fleets exchanged more than 41,000 shots that day and left the Spaniards with 50 dead and 60 wounded. So far the English had taken only two ships, the *San Salvador* had gone on fire when its powder magazine blew up. On board was the Paymaster General and a large portion of the Armada Treasure, which was safely transferred to another ship together with survivors and wounded. The '*Rosario*' crippled in a collision with a smaller ship was, unknown to the Duke, left trailing behind the Armada. Later that night, she was captured by Drake himself (in the role of Pirate). Her commander and men were held to ransom, as well as her 46 cannon and ammunition and 15,000 gold ducats.

But the Armada kept its formation and under a very light wind, sailed slowly eastwards with the English ships in pursuit. The Duke sent urgent messages to Parma to be ready to bring out his troops, and asking for additional supplies, and at dawn on 4 August, approaching the Isle of Wight (The 'emergency landing place' proposed by Philip), Frobisher's squadron had tried to work inshore against the current to gain the weather gauge. The Duke, supported by a dozen heavy Spanish ships, attacked but most of the squadron got away, leaving Frobisher in the *Triumph* cut off from the rest. Here at last was his opportunity to board one of the biggest English ships — his only hope of victory. The boarding parties were at their posts, grappling hooks at the ready, but the Duke hesitated to give the order, the wind changed and the *Triumph* managed to move off, helped by nine launches sent

in to rescue her under the Duke's nose. To make matters worse, Drake attacked to the right tip of the crescent, and with a freshening wind the Armada was being driven north-eastward and, only for the pilot's warning, would have been wrecked on the black rocks of the Owers in another 20 minutes. The Duke fired a signal and the fleet conformed and turned away south-east. At least if he had lost the victory of the *Triumph*, he had saved the Armada.

But where was he to go? There was still no word from Parma, he could not anchor off the Isle of Wight. He held a conference with his commanders and they decided to head for the Straits of Dover and Calais. By 6 August the Armada had dropped anchor at Gravelines off Calais. The Duke sent a fast messenger to Parma to rendezvous with him there at once. But the messenger came back. Parma was not ready to embark for at least six days!

Meanwhile, the English fleet, having re-victualled their ships and taken on more ammunition from the Cinque Ports, caught up with the Armada off Calais. Now lying at anchor the Armada was in a very dangerous position. The Duke begged Parma to send him 40 or 50 flyboats (small fast ships of war) to defend himself while lying in wait, but Parma had only barges in which to transport his troops. What the Duke and his commanders now feared most was the threat of the dreaded 'fireships' by the English. Preparations were made. He ordered out a screen of pinnaces and ships' boats equipped with grappling irons and hooks, to tow the fire ships ashore at right angles to the wind into the current. He sent word round the fleet that fireships were to be expected but would be dealt with by the screen, and no ship was to shift ground unless some fireships got through the screen, when they should put out to sea and let the fireships drift inshore on the current. They would then re-anchor as soon as possible taking up their former anchorage.

At midnight on 7 August eight blazing ships driven by the wind and tide bore down on the Armada lines. The screen of pinnaces headed straight for them and were successful in heading off the first two. Then, the heated guns aboard the fireships began to go off, showering falling shrapnel onto the pinnaces, killing and wounding any man who had not been knocked out by the blast. The Duke gave the signal for cables to be cut and put out to sea but the fleet did not conform. Panic arose as the captains cut their cables and ran before the wind, scattering widely and ramming each other in the confusion. The fireships which only carried faggots covered with pitch and tar sailed on, their guns going off at random, and burned themselves out on the beach without inflicting any damage.

At dawn on 8 August, the Armada was scattered from Calais to Gravelines. Howard's fireships had succeeded in shattering the vital formation which it had adhered to strictly until now. In their panic to get away, they had left almost 100 of their best anchors at the bottom of the sea. They were later to pay dearly for this loss off the Irish coast.

The English took immediate advantage of the situation and went straight into attack, while the scattered Spanish ships tried to re-position themselves



Inishturk skipper Kevin Heanney with 400-year old anchor which he found off Clare Island, December 1983.

Photo: Liam Lyons

to fire. The fiercest fighting took place off Gravelines. The battle raged all day and the English, now fully reinforced with ships and ammunition from Dover, pounded the Spanish ships in their nimble galleons. They were able to re-load their guns three times faster than the Spaniards whom they now outnumbered, since the bulk of the fleet was scattered and trying to assemble formation against a strong north-west wind that was driving them into the Dunkirk banks. The Duke's ship, together with ten of the largest galleons, took the brunt of the fire of more than 100 of the English ships and were badly damaged in the battle. The Duke wrote in his diary that his flagship 'the *San Martin* had been the shield for the whole Armada allowing it to extricate itself from danger'. By afternoon when the main body of the Armada had rejoined, the English withdrew. In spite of their advantage, they had not succeeded in capturing or boarding any Spanish ship although they had inflicted severe damage. Two Spanish ships had gone aground off Calais and another badly damaged, suddenly sank with all 300 men aboard. The *San Martin* had been holed all over and her rigging cut to shreds, and five other ships were badly damaged. The divers set to work until nightfall with pitch and tar. The battle had cost them 600 lives and 800 wounded while the English had not lost a single ship nor more than 20 men. The next day 9 August, the Duke wished to turn and attack with the whole Armada, but the pilots told him this was

impossible as the wind and tide were against them. A strong north-west blew up and the whole fleet was being blown in the direction of the Zeeland banks, while 109 English ships bore down on them, but the galleasses were able to manoeuvre and place themselves in front while the rest stood ready to repel the attack. But the English withdrew, seeing the dangerous position of the Armada drifting helplessly onto the Zeeland Banks. It was now impossible for them to be saved except by a miracle. The Duke wrote in desperation: 'Only God could rescue us. From this desperate peril in only six and half fathoms of water, we were saved by the wind shifting by God's mercy to the south-west and the Armada was then able to steer a northerly course without damage to our ships.'

The Duke called his commanders to the flagship and held a council to decide what should be done. Eight of his best ships were lost and all other damaged: one man in five sick or wounded or dead; no chance of re-arming or taking on supplies of food or water, and now no hope of a rendezvous with Parma who was still not ready to come out. The council decided to return to the Channel if the winds were favourable and if not, 'they should take the wind south-west and sail back to Spain by the North Sea, bearing in mind that the Armada was lacking all things necessary and that the ships that had hitherto resisted were badly crippled'.

On Wednesday, 10 August, the Armada was under way, with the English fleet following them close, in case they might attempt a landing in Scotland to lie in wait for Parma. When it became clear that the Armada, having sailed past the Firth of Forth, was fleeing, the Lord Admiral turned for home. On 20 August the Duke wrote: 'We have now doubled the last of the Scottish Islands to the north and we have set our course with a north-east wind for Spain.'

The Duke then sent one of his officers ahead in a fast pinnace to bring news of the disaster to Philip, as well as his 'Diario' of all that had happened. Then, sick with dysentery and fever, he shut himself up in his cabin for the rest of the journey. On 3 September he wrote once more to Philip defending his actions and explaining that...

...The Queen's fleet had shown itself vastly superior in battle and tactics, in the range of its artillery and its manoeuvrability. I considered the best way I could serve Your Majesty was by saving what was left of it though it meant risking it in this long journey in such a latitude. ... We were driven to it also by the weather. Since the 21 August we have had four nights of storms and 17 ships have disappeared out of sight including De Leiva's and Recalde's (Vice Admiral) as well as some other important ones. Today at latitude 58° we counted 95 ships — 3,000 men are sick, not counting the large number of wounded and many are dying. ...

The *San Martin* only took 15 days to cover the '750 leagues in stormy seas' (about 1,500 miles) a credit to her skillful pilots. The weather conditions made it impossible to take any astrolabe measurement accurately, so the pilots were navigating by guesswork and experience, and the Duke records that on 16 September such a fierce storm blew up they all thought they were going to die. By 18 September only 60 ships were in sight — the rest having been forced by the gales to break formation and 'fall upon the west coast of

Ireland' in spite of the Duke's warning. When his ship put in to Santander on 22 September, the Duke wrote to Philip begging to be released of his command. ...

...I am so ill after 25 days of dysentery and fever that I am quite ill and indisposed. The trials and miseries that we have suffered cannot be described. So many of my servants have died that I am left with only two. ... May it please your Majesty to send some money as soon as possible. We have not a marevedis between us. Oquendo has all the treasure with him 55,000 escudos. As for myself I have neither the health nor the head to cope with anything at all. ...

Philip wrote to him relieving him of his command, as soon as he had made arrangements for the care of the sick. He was to leave orders for Don Alonzo de Leiva to take over as Commander-in-Chief as soon as he would arrive and make sure that Philip was kept informed of developments. Medina Sidonia returned home to his orange groves in Andalusia 'white haired, having set out with a shock of raven black hair'.

Meanwhile aboard their ships, safe in port, Don Recalde, Vice Admiral and the Paymaster General, Don Miguel de Oquendo were dying. During the next few weeks 65 ships put into various northern Spanish ports, most of them beyond repair, their crews starving and in rags. The King was kept informed, though not by De Leiva, who was still missing; 1,000 sick men in Santander alone; of 18,000 soldiers, only 5,000 now alive in Galician ports. The Armada had ceased to exist.

Whatever his feelings, Philip said nothing, although many historic pronouncements have been attributed to him by historians. He ordered 30 days mourning throughout Spain. There were 9,000 dead, 60 ships lost and 1,400 million reals scattered to the winds. On 13 October, he wrote to the Archbishop:

...Most Reverend Archbishop of our Council, we all know how unpredictable the sea is; the fate of the Armada bears witness to this. And we know too, how we are bound to render thanks to God for all that He is pleased to do and for His mercy. I have, therefore, rendered up thanks to Him, for when one considers the storms and perils that this Armada encountered it would have been reasonable to have feared for it a fate worse than the one it met. I attribute this to your prayers and special orations which can, nevertheless, now be discontinued.

In view of the tragic fate of the Armada, its failure to achieve its purpose — the invasion of England by Catholic forces — and the enormous losses incurred in men, ships and money, it might be looked on as an over-ambitious adventure on the part of His Most Catholic Majesty Philip II, 'the Prudent King'. However, the tremendous resources, human and financial, which brought about such a fleet of 130 ships and 30,000 men from Lisbon to the English Channel and Calais with the single purpose of occupying a corner of England to Spain's great advantage, justified all the risks. Had it succeeded, the course of European history would have been radically changed, and Philip's obsession with his great enterprise of England would have been his greatest victory.

Instead he had to live with the bitter taste of its failure, and watch the steady decline of his glorious empire for another decade.

1. *Treasures of the Armada*, Spanish Archives Madrid, R. Stenuit, p.100.
2. *ibid.* p.100.
3. Sir Ed. Whyte Sec. to Connaught Council.
4. *The Armada in Ireland*, Niall Fallon London 1978, p.4.
5. *Treasures of the Armada*, *op. cit.* p.30.
6. *The Great Enterprise*, The History of the Spanish Armada as revealed in contemporary documents selected and edited by Stephen Usherwood for the Folio society (p.64) London 1983.
7. *ibid.* p.66.
8. *ibid.* p.70.
9. *Spain and the Netherlands, 1559-1669*, G. Parker, 1979.
10. *ibid.* p.136.
11. *ibid.* p.136.
12. *The Great Enterprise*, (Folio Soc.) p.84.
13. *ibid.* p.88.
14. *ibid.* p.95.
15. *ibid.* p.89.
16. *Treasures of the Armada*, *op. cit.* p.69.
17. Folio p.134.
18. *ibid.* p.135.
19. *ibid.* p.135.
20. *Treasures of the Armada*, *op. cit.* p.111.
21. *ibid.* p.112.

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AUGHAGOWER

PART 3

by John Keville

Immediately following the Boyne and Aughrim battles came the Penal days, when Mass had to be celebrated secretly in shelterly valleys throughout the countryside. A large rock provided the altar, and if a suitable rock was not to hand, a little stone altar was erected. Several of these Mass rocks are pointed out in Aughagower Parish, the one in the old Lankill graveyard, already mentioned, being one of the most ingenious. Here the flags from the disused graveyard were gathered to form a column of stones about four feet high, on which the Penal Day priest read Mass for his little congregation, who always had someone on guard to avoid against the too sudden arrival of the priest-hunter.

Another very interesting altar of those days is pointed out at the historic Cave of Aille, where the people of Aedh O'Connor met their death. At right angles to the line of cliffs, where this large cove is situated, runs a second line of cliffs. Just at the angle made by those two lines and only a few feet from the base of the cliff itself is a large rock six feet long, three feet wide and four feet high, resting on two other rocks equally as large. The space between the lower rocks and the cliffs is filled up with earth to the level of the base of the topmost rock or altar. Here in the shelterly space bounded by the cliffs and the river, the priest of those Penal days read Mass and addressed his people, while a keen look-out for intruders like Seán na Sagart was ceaselessly kept from the top of the cliff overhead.

On the borders of Tavanagh and Ballybaninaun, within a hundred yards of the Tochar, are two large rocks close together and the people of Tavanagh believe that Mass was celebrated on one or other of those rocks.

After the larger Lanmore Longstone, Tochar Phádraig branches off to the right in the direction of Knappagh. After the townland of Cregg is a hollow surrounded by rocks and bushes, called Poll na Creige and there is to be seen the closed-up entrance to an underground passage extending for about fifty yards roughly in the direction of the Longstone. A few hundred yards more is the townland of Poll na gCon, where there is another hollow about thirty or forty feet in diameter, called Lag na h-Altóra and the remains of another altar of Penal times.

Here the entire congregation was out of sight and those on guard overhead had quite a good view eastwards in the direction of the Longstone and westwards and northwards towards the Knappaghs. The stones which formed the altar are still there in the little hollow but the altar is no longer recognisable as such. Its destruction some sixty or seventy years ago seems to have been caused by some young people, who chased a rabbit into the stones and had to pull down the whole structure to get him out. This information, given by one of the local people, was followed by a story about Seán na Sagart, the priest-hunter of those parts: 'The priest was reading Mass in the

lag when the man on guard gave the warning that Seán and his men were coming across the side of the hill from the direction of the Longstone. The congregation, after acquainting the priest of his danger, got ready to make their escape. The priest told them not to stir, assuring them that Seán and his party would come no nearer till Mass was over. Mass was continued up to the last prayers, while all the time the feet of Seán na Sagart and his men were glued to the ground somewhere over in the townland of Cregg.'

Still another altar is pointed out in the larger of the two Knappaghmanagh forts, five or six yards from the interesting little cillín within the caiseal.

There is an abundance of stories throughout the parish about the infamous John Mollowney of Ballyheane, who was nicknamed Seán na Sagart. The theme of all those stories is the same. Sean is always worsted and the priest escapes in the nick of time.

The following is an extract from Burke's *Irish Priests in Penal Times*:

... Examination of John O'Mullowny of Ballyheane taken before James Macartney and William Caulfield, Esquires, Lords Justices of Assize for the Connaught Circuit, the sixth day of April 1715.

This Examinat being duly sworn on the holy Evangelists and examined saith that he knows Francis Burke of the County of Galway to be reputed Vicar Generall and James Lynch, Titular Archbishop of Tuam, and that he hath known the said Francis Burke to execute the office of Vicar Generall by divorcing severall couples from the Bonds of Marriage particularly Thomas Paddin and Mary Mannin at Ballyheane in the County of Mayo in the house of Edmond Costello parish priest of Ballyheane about five years ago and also in the house of Teig Mally at Morisk in the Owles in the County of Mayo. He this Examinat was present when the said Francis Burke did order (ordain) Bryan Mulchroan and Peter Gibolane popish priests who now officiate as popish priests in the County of Mayo, and Peter Gibolane is popish priest of the parish of Cloghwell and the said Francis Burke now dwelleth neare Slewbohteen in the County of Galway neare Loughrea and that Patrick Duffy Registered Popish parish priest of Ballinrobe is reputed the other Vicar Generall of the said Diocese of Tuam, and that he came into the said office in the place and stead of Dominick Lynch nephew to the said Titular Archbishop and that the said Patrick Duffy and the said Francis Burke together with Patrick Twohill, a regular, Brian Mulcroon, Peter Gibolane, Edmund Nally, Thomas Mulkeeran all popish priests and several others of the same function not known to this Examinat met at Lane neare Aughagower in the parish of Aughagower Barony of Moriske and County of Mayo and being part of the lands of Valentine Browne and on or about the twentieth day of November last, the said Francis Burke, Patrick Duffy, Patrick Twohill, Brian Mulcroon, Peter Gibolane, Edmund Nally and Thomas Mulkeeran did celebrate seven masses from Dawn of Day till 12 of the clock, and this Examinates cause of knowing is that he saw all the said persons before named except Burke, Mulcroon and Edmond Nally in their surplaces and saw particularly Francis Burke and Patrick Twohill elevate the wafer and the same day the said Francis Burke and Patrick Duffy ordained fifty popish priests as Patrick Twohill told this Examinat and that in or about the twentieth of February last the said Francis Burke and the other persons before named were to meet on the lands aforesaid and John Nally popish priest of the parish of Barrescarny told this Examinat it would be an Act of Charity in him if he knew anything of a contract between Richard Walsh and Margaret Walsh and the rest of the said persons in order to divorce the said couple. When this Examinat went to the said place the said John Nally told this Examinat that there would be no meeting that day, that Patrick Duffy aforesaid is now dwelling in Westport in the County of Mayo and that this Examinat saw the said Patrick Duffy on Sunday 13 day of March last at

Westport aforesaid in the said street and saw great numbers of people gathered about the house of Thomas Joyce, and the said Patrick Duffy came out of the said house about an hour after the multitude of people that had been there were dispersed which gave cause to this Examinat to suppose that they had Mass the said day in the house of said Thomas Joyce and further saith not.

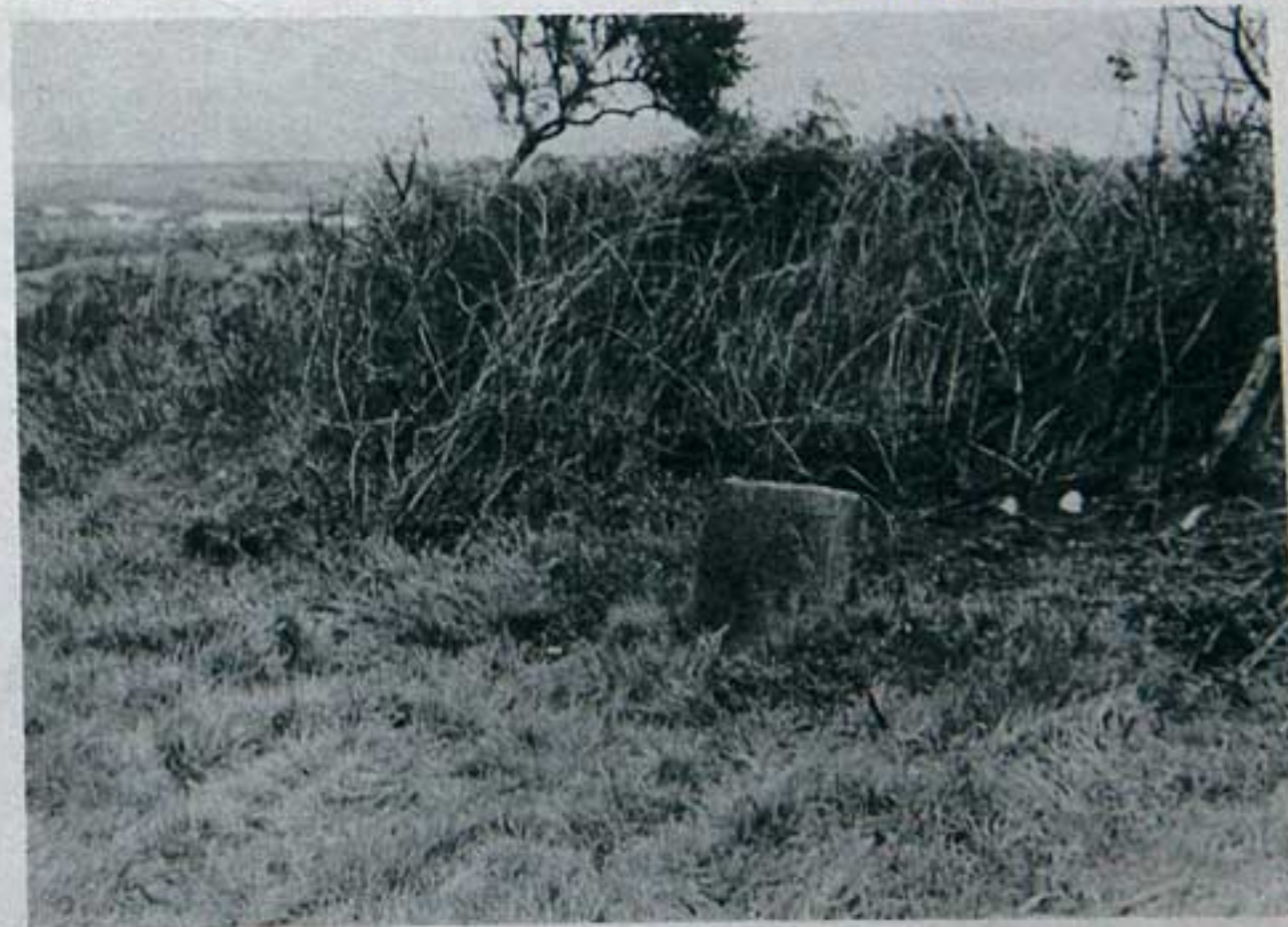
Jurat coram nobis 7 die Aprilis 1715

John Mullowny X J.A. Macartney W. Caulfield.

This document gives the names of two Aughagower priests in the early period of the Penal Times — Miles Gibson and Patrick Twohill. According to a former Parish Priest of Aughagower the correct forms of the names are Rev. Myles Gibbons and Rev. Patrick O'Toole.

In September 1798 General Humbert landed at Killala and soon Mayo was in rebellion. The Aughagower men seem to have taken an active part, one of their first acts being an attack on the house of Mr. Denis Browne of Mountbrowne, Sheriff of Mayo, and brother of the then Lord Sligo, descendant of Col. John Browne of Limerick fame.

Col. John Browne of Westport was an officer in the army of James II, and one of the signatories with Sarsfield of the Treaty of Limerick in 1691. His heir was Peter Browne, who appears to have remained Catholic. He died as the result of an accident in 1722. An inscription on a stone at an old Penal Day church on Carnalurgan Hill reads "Peter Browne 1723," but Peter is not buried here, but in Burrishoole Abbey. His successor was John Browne, a minor, who was seized by Protestant relatives, and brought up a Protestant,



Carnalurgan

becoming an inveterate enemy of his late co-religionists. He built Westport House and made the great demesne. He represented Castlebar in the Irish Parliament several times and was made a peer, taking the name Baron Monteagle, which is a rendering of Cruachan Aigle. (1760). In 1768 he was made Viscount Westport and in 1771 Earl of Altamont. He died in 1777. John was succeeded by Peter, who was also M.P. for Mayo. This Peter, the second earl died in 1780. Then followed another John, also M.P. for Mayo and at one time a Volunteer officer. Supporting Castlereagh in the Act of Union he was made Marquis of Sligo in 1800, and obtained a seat in the English House of Lords in 1806. (Substance of letter by *Veritas*, Mall, Westport to *Western People*, September 8 1934).

Denis of Mountbrowne was brother of John, the Marquis of 1800. He was sheriff of Mayo and is connected with the hanging of Fighting Fitzgerald in 1786 and Father Conroy of 1798. He played the dictator in Mayo till 1806, when he was removed by a Whig government and was never again reinstated, though the Tories came back to power the following year. He led the life of a squire of immense influence till 1828, the year of his death. He had five sons and four daughters. James, the eldest, lived at Claremount House, Claremorris (now a convent); Peter Denis was M.P. for Rye; John lived in Mountbrowne and was an unsuccessful parliamentary candidate for Mayo; the two others were Protestant clergymen viz. Denis, dean of Emly and George, vicar of Lenten, Notts. Two of the daughters married clergymen.

John the first Marquis (1800) was married to Louisa, daughter of Earl Howe, after whom Louisburg was named. They left one son, Howe-Peter, who became the second Marquis. Howe-Peter lived till 1845, witnessing half a century of stirring historical events. He was for some time Governor of Jamaica, Lord Lieutenant of Mayo, and Colonel of the South Down militia. He was succeeded by his son George John, then aged twenty-five, and sixth in descent from Colonel John of King James's army. George John witnessed the famine. On 22 August 1846 he received a large body of starving peasantry from the parishes of Islandeady and Aughagower and assured them that he had represented to the government the necessity of relief. They went away satisfied, but little was done. A year later those stalwart people lay famine-stricken corpses around the workhouse in Westport. All George John seems to have done for his people was to sign, in conjunction with Lord Lucan and Lord Oranmore, a memorial in favour of removing Mayo tenants to colonise Canada.

(Substance of account by P.G. Smyth in *Mayo News*, 8 September 1934).

The following concerning the Rebellion and the Browne family comes from Mr. P. Moran, M.A.:

... There are quite a great many letters written by the Hon. Denis Browne of Mountbrowne (better known perhaps as 'Soap the Rope') and from his brother Lord Altamont, later Marquis of Sligo.

The following are some records of Courtmartial.

Thady Lavelle of Meneen, labourer, and Bartly Langan of same place, farmer, were charged (6 October 1798) with being concerned with the rebels in the plunder of the House of Rt. Hon. Denis Browne etc. Acquitted.

Roger McDonagh of Westport was not so lucky. Charged (same date) 'with having wickedly and maliciously endeavoured by false pretences to excite the hatred and rage of the Roman Catholic inhabitants of Westport against the Rt. Hon. Denis Browne and the other Protestants of this country etc.' he was sentenced to be confined in prison at Westport or Castlebar 'for the space of three months or until he find security for himself in 40 shillings and two sureties in £5 sterling each for two years.

In a letter of 19 October 1799 Denis Browne writes 'for the information of the Lord Lieutenant that Owen Millier, a fryar and Thomas Gibbons, a farmer, have surrendered under the Proclamation as being Privates in the late Rebellion. Millier (it is probably Hillier), the priest, did a great deal of mischief in Sligo previous to his coming to this country, where he persisted in misleading the people. He swore in a whole side of a country to join the French, when they should land. Thomas Gibbons carried the rebel colours into Castlebar at the head of a great body of rebels from this Parish.

This Gibbons may have been an Aughagower man. He does not seem to be connected with Johnny Gibbons (Johnny Eamuinn) of Drummin, who was in Lord Altamont's employment and died in Antwerp 1808 and whose son was hanged in Westport or with Peter Gibbons of Newport, seemingly an Erris man originally.

Musgrave's *Rebellions* (Vol. II p. 158) mentions a Thomas Gibbons, brother to Johnny Eamuinn so it is just possible that the Thomas of the courtmartial may have been Thomas, son of Eamuinn of Drummin.

On October 1798 Patrick Agan of Kinnock, Co. Mayo was tried by Courtmartial, accused 'of having been concerned with the rebels in taking possession of the town of Westport on Wednesday, 12 September and with having acted as a leader or officer'. (Westport was first taken on Tuesday, 28 August; Races of Castlebar were on 26th). His sentence was transportation to New South Wales for seven years.

On 18 May 1800 Lord Altamont wrote: 'It appears to me advisable that the rebellion and all connected with it should be let sink into oblivion'. He favours conciliation and allowing people who had been banished to return to their places on Grand Juries' etc. 'to avoid continuous quarrels, animosity and blood-shedding'.

So Lord Altamont was not too bad. His chief anxiety was to get a high-sounding name to associate with his title of Marquis about to be conferred on him for his support of the Act of Union. He wanted to be Marquis of Connaught, or Marquis of Eyre Connaught or Marquis of Limerick, but when all failed, was content to be called Marquis of Sligo.

The Brownes had spies all over and were able to tell about movements of suspects all through Mayo and Galway.

Stock, Protestant Bishop of Killala mentions (p. 132) that 'Mr. Denis Browne sent the general at one time a whole, and at another half a buck, desiring in return an immediate remittance of 300 men'. This was after Ballinamuck and the crushing of the Rebellion. So there were deer there then.

The first Browne of Mountbrowne would probably be Valentine Browne, son to Col. John Browne of Westport (of Limerick Treaty) and

brother to Peter Browne, to whom there is a self-erected memorial at Carrawalurgan about a mile west of Westport. The memorial is in Latin — 'Orate pro anima Petri Browne qui me fieri fecit 1723'. A codicil (dated 26 January 1722) to Peter's Will says: 'I bequeathe to my brother Valentine Browne the arears of rent he owes me as a portion for his daughter, Mrs. Lynch'. The Will was proved in 1724, so Peter was then dead. His son, John, born about 1709 was then brought over to England and grew up a Protestant.

In Westport Protestant Church is a chalice bearing the inscription 'Orate pro anima domini Petri Browne qui me fieri fecit pro Conventu de Murisk, Anno Domini 1724'. This chalice was bought by the 3 Marquis of Sligo from a Dublin dealer in 1874 and presented to the Protestant Church in Westport.

Valentine Browne of Mount Browne died about 1744. His daughter Maud Browne was married to Hugh O'Donnell of Newport. A son of theirs, Niall Garbh was the first baronet, and conformed to the Protestant religion in 1763. It is not known to this author how Valentine's descendants lost Mountbrowne; it was in the hands of Denis Browne, direct descendant of Peter, Valentine's brother, in the end of the 18th century.

Nor is it known why Denis was called 'Soap the Rope'; probably it is in connection with the hangings of the '98 period. Denis, born 1763 was 23 when Fitzgerald was hanged in 1786, so he may have been connected with the hanging. The rope did break at the hanging of Fitzgerald, but he did not say 'Now my life is my own' as the legend has it.

An old road out of use for about a hundred years crossed the ancient Tochar Phádraig in the townland of Tavanagh, a quarter of a mile from Aughagower. About the point where it crosses, there are pointed out the ruins of an old house, said to have belonged to a man named Jack Reynolds, one of the most useful of the men employed about the stables of Denis Browne. Reynolds was an experienced man at gelding stallions, at tying them up with ropes on which soap had been rubbed, so that the ropes could be properly tightened and would not slip. He seems also to have been employed as hangman at times and his advice on the question of ropes on all occasions was much valued. At the hanging of Fitzgerald of Turlough the rope broke, but a second rope was procured with which Jack prepared to despatch Denis's hated enemy. Jack himself seems to have forgotten the soaping on this occasion and had to be reminded of it by Denis who cried out 'soap the rope, Jack'. This, according to the people of Aughagower, is how Denis Browne earned himself the nickname of 'Soap the Rope'.

Nothing of the fifty-two roomed house of Denis Browne now remains save the cellars. Twenty-five or thirty years ago the house was pulled down by the Congested Districts' Board who had acquired the lands from Lord Sligo. The stones were used in the building of eight Congested Board houses for tenants removed to Mount Browne from the more congested parts of the parish, as well as in the making of several miles of road through the townland.

The main part of Mount Browne House measured 84 feet by 45 feet. From the centre of the rear of the main house there was an extension

measuring 48 feet by 24 feet. An avenue from the Kinlooney road, then one of the main roads to Aughagower village, led up to the house. At a point about two hundred yards from the entrance gates the avenue branched into two parts, one towards the front of the house, the other circling around for another two hundred yards towards the rear of the house and the stables. Both branches crossed a small river by two strong stone bridges, which are still there. The back avenue to the stables is now the road leading into this part of Mount Browne. A new road, constructed from the stones of the house, continues the one-time avenue from the point where it stopped at the stables, all through the townland. One of the stone bridges still carries the road across the river, as safely as it carried the avenue in 1798 and before.

Part of the huge stables still remains and are now owned by one of the Mount Browne tenants, named Hanbury. Those stables are about 70 feet in length, 18 or 20 feet in breadth and two-storeyed. At right-angles to one end of these main stables another stable extended to the back. It was about eighty yards long and eighteen feet wide inside. Only a small part of this remains and soon it will have completely disappeared. The cobble-paved floors are in course of becoming grass-grown and in another generation or two the Bullock house of Denis Browne will be forgotten. As the name implies, its purpose was for stall-feeding bullocks.

The front avenue, after crossing the second of the two bridges, seems to have branched off into quite a number of walks surrounded by trees. All these trees have now been cut down; the field where they grow has been ploughed



Mountbrowne

up and hardly a trace of a tree has been left, not even the one, on which it is said Denis performed so many hangings.

The field to the right of the stables, just across the avenue from the back of the house, was once an orchard. Many people still alive remember this orchard, but now not a single tree or bush remains. To the front of the orchard, only a few yards from the former back avenue is the track of a pigeon-house, described by the people of Mount Browne as a 'sort of round tower', where pigeons were reared, presumably for the table of the Brownes.

A few hundred yards east of the house was the park where Denis Browne kept his deer. Kinlooe Lake nearby is now always referred to as the Deerpark Lake.

Denis was succeeded in Mount Browne by his son John, who as already stated, was an unsuccessful candidate for parliamentary honours. Local opinion of John is that he was a quiet, unoffending type of man, of a different stamp to his father. He appears to have been the last of the Brownes who lived in Aughagower. Later the lands were let by Lord Sligo to the Livingstone family who owned large mills around Westport and gave much employment to the town and countryside. The Livingstones farmed the lands of Mount Browne, using the stables and Bullock House to fatten cattle, as had been done in the days of the Brownes but they did not occupy the residence. After their period of tenure, the Mount Browne lands seem to have been let to graziers and this continued until the cattle driving movement in the early years of the present century forced Lord Sligo to sell to the Congested Districts' Board. One of these cattle-drives is still remembered in Aughagower when the grazing cattle of Teevinish townland were driven to Westport and delivered up at his demesne. Finally the Congested Districts' Board demolished the Browne residence and built houses in Mount Browne, to which they transferred congested tenants from the Lankill, Lanmore and Knappaghbeg areas.

The Famine of 1846 cleared Aughagower Parish of a great part of its population, as traces of ruins of deserted houses all over the parish show. This was the time when Protestant Associations became active in the West, but they seem to have met with little success in the parish, though they had some temporary gains on its borders. A small Protestant home for children existed on the border of Aughagower and Leenane parishes up to about forty years ago, which goes to show some small success in the poorer townlands around Killary Bay. A strong colony of Protestants was, however, planted in Knappaghmore and Knappaghmanagh and their descendants still remain Protestant.

All the Knappaghs, no doubt, were in the ancient parish of Aughagower but only one of them that is Knappaghbeg belongs to the modern parish. The Knappaghs consist of Knappaghmore, Knappaghmanagh and Knappaghbeg. Properly speaking there is no townland called Knappagh. Knappagh is just the name given in quite recent times to the part of Knappaghmore and Knappaghmanagh which adjoin the Westport-Leenane road and where the great proportion of the families is Protestant. Knappagh Catholic school is in

Knappaghmanagh. The Protestant school, church and post-office are in Knappaghmore. A good-sized stream separates Knappaghmore from Knappaghmanagh, while the latter is separated from Knappaghbeg by just a tiny stream. Knappaghmanagh, as the name implies, is central in position. the second part of the name is Meadhonach (middle) and not Meanach (of the monks). There is no tradition of monks in connection with the place.

The Cave of Knappaghmanagh is interesting, though it is by no means the most interesting of the remains of this townland. The man in whose land the cave is, describes it as follows:

... A passage about twenty yards long extends west to east, with the opening at the west side. This passage at present is too low to traverse except by crawling on hands and knees. About two yards in a side gullet to the right about two yards long brings one to the first chamber, which is about eight feet square and sufficiently high to allow a tall man to stand upright. From the east side of this chamber, another low passage about two yards long takes one to the second chamber and so on until the third chamber is reached. All the rooms are about the same in size. Huge boulders line the walls and similar boulders form the roof.

The narrator says there is nothing inside on the floors and he knows nothing about circles or solar designs on the stones. There probably are not any. It may be nothing more than the souterrain of a large fort, the ring of which has long since disappeared.

According to the same man, there was formerly a longstone somewhere near the eastern end of the gullet. Although elderly, he never saw this stone but he has it from his father that such a stone did exist. It was taken away when the Protestant church was being erected in Knappagh and used as a lintel over the door.

About two hundred yards south of the cave is a ringed fort enclosing an area of about an Irish acre. The walls of the fort composed of stones and earth are six feet in thickness and at least seven feet high. The road connecting Lankill with Knappagh has lopped off a small portion of the ring on the east side, but apart from this the ring is perfect. Ten or fifteen yards to the south of this large Knappaghmanagh fort is another very tiny fort with an inside diameter of only about seven yards. The enclosing walls composed altogether of stone were five or six feet in thickness and still remain.

Inside the large fort, close to the south side, is a little graveyard, known as all those places are as the 'Killeen'. It is very small, measuring no more than ten or twelve square perches. Some think that it is just a graveyard of the Famine times. At the part of the ring nearest the smaller fort and five or six yards from the centre of the 'cillin', is the Knappaghmanagh Mass Rock already mentioned, a relic of the Penal Days. Perhaps it was from the fact that Mass was celebrated here that the place was later chosen as a graveyard.

There are no large flags in the Knappaghmanagh cillin. The largest measures nearly three feet by two feet. Despite its smallness it is by far the most interesting of this townland and has been well described by Knox at page 177 of his 'Notes on the Diocese of Tuam etc.'

... Small crosses are incised in various forms on standing stones and slabs and are to be found in very many places so common as to need no particular notice. But a singular combination of crosses and other ornaments incised on a stone in the old

burying ground called the Killeen in Knappaghmeanagh near Westport calls for description. The graveyard is within a cashel or round enclosure of which part remains and most can be traced. On a roughly triangular slab of local greenish-grey rock have been incised two concentric circles and a cross within the inner circle. The ends of the cross expand slightly. A very small round hollow is within each quarter of the cross. Above the outer circle is a full face the chin just touching the circle. On each side at about the level of the junction of the chin and circle is a much larger round hollow. These hollows are about twelve inches apart. From below the circle three lines extend to the edge of the stone. In the lower left-hand corner are two crossed in a rectangle, like a union jack. The stone is 2'6" by 1'6". The outer circle is nine inches wide, and the inner seven. The head is 5" by 4½".

Knox's description is on the whole correct and he has certainly got the details. The stone is slightly larger than he says. It is at least 2'10" in length and certainly 2' high. The outer of the two concentric circles is 8½" in diameter; the inner 6". Both are poorly incised. The expansions at the end of the inscribed cross are very remarkable. At the centre of each of the quarter-circles is a small hollow. From the bottom of the outer circle three lines extend to the base of the flag. They are about 4" long. The one to the left is at right-angles to the base. The other two slant somewhat. The head cannot be missed. It measures, as Knox has said, 5" by 4½". The head with the two concentric circles underneath gives one the impression of a human figure. There are two fairly large hollows in the stone at the level of the junction of chin and outer circle. The one to the left is 4" from the chin; the one to the right is about 8" away. The best and deepest incisions are those forming two small crosses near the base of the stone. Those small crosses are about 2½" in length and like the large cross in the centre expand at the ends. The one to the right of the 'legs' is by itself. The other one, about the same distance to the left is in conjunction with what Knox calls a union jack and does not seem to be complete. The lower arm appears to be missing. The two crosses 'like a union jack' are not in exactly a rectangle. The figure is a five-sided one with two of the sides connected by a curve. The longest sides are 7" or 8" in length.

Besides the two forts in Knappaghmanagh, there is one in Knappaghbeg and another in Knappaghmore. The Knappaghbeg fort is half a mile to the east of the Knappaghmanagh forts and within a hundred yards of the Hangman's Bridge. It is on high ground and encloses at least a rood. The walls of this caiseal are also five or six feet thick and the ring is complete. The Knappaghmore fort (not visited) is well up the side of Lanmore Hill and according to local accounts is not nearly as large as the big Knappaghmanagh fort. The latter was in sight of the Knappaghmore fort but from the Knappaghbeg fort it was separated by a fairly high hill.

The connecting road between the Westport-Lankill road and the Westport-Leenane road from the Hangman's Bridge on the former to Knappagh Catholic school on the latter passes by the forts of Knappaghbeg and Knappaghmanagh. This connecting road, though now quite a good road and kept in good repair, is still known locally as Bóithrín na Mine. About sixty years ago, according to local accounts, there were two mills in Knappaghmore, owned by two Protestant families, who ground oats and wheat for the surrounding countryside. To get to the mill with their oats and



"Browne" Chalice

to bring back the meal when ground, people from the Aughagower Parish used this road which was then only a bóithrín. And so it became known as Bóithrín na Mine.

Little seems to be known either of church affairs or church lands in Aughagower from the time of the Synods onwards, while the lands were in possession of the Archbishop of Tuam. In 1247, the year of the O'Connor Rising against the Butlers and Lawlesses, the airchineach of Aughagower was killed by the O'Connors. The Annals of Loch Cé give the following:

... Benedictus Mac Oireachtaigh, airchineach of Achadh Fabhair of Umhall, was killed on the Festival of the Cross, the third day of summer, by the son of Chonchubair Ruadh, son of Muirheartach Muimhneach and by the son of Maghnus, son of Muirheartach Muimhneach, in treachery and deceit.

The Mac Oireachtaighs had been the hereditary airchineachs of Aughagower and it appears, that when the lands passed into the hands of the Archbishop, he let them out to the Mac Oireachtaighs as middlemen. Trouble over those lands certainly arose in the last years of the same century, when William de Bermingham was Archbishop, the other principal in the dispute being, it appears, a grand-daughter of the Benedictus Mac Oireachtaigh, who was killed by the O'Connors. Owing to the confusion caused by the spelling of names we cannot however be absolutely certain. Knox (*The History of Co. Mayo*, p. 301) tells the story to show the difficulty of settling land disputes in those days owing to the co-existence of English and Brehon Laws.

... John Staunton and his wife Joan, sued Archbishop William Bermingham for

two parts of that manor (Aughagower) as the inheritance of Joan, whereof the Archbishop had dispossessed Matthew Magalahy, brother of Joan, who is his heiress. The Archbishop replied that he need not answer Joan because she is an Irishwoman, and is not one of the five families entitled to use English law. They reply that he must answer, because his predecessor Archbishop Marianus (obit 1249) enfeoffed Benyach Macgreathay with assent of his Chapter. After death of Benyach, Adam his son and heir being a minor, was a ward of the King during the vacancy of Tuam and after Thomas O'Connor was made Archbishop, Thomas took homage of Adam, being of full age. After Adam's death, Matthew was a minor, and was in custody of Archbishop Stephen Fulebourne, to whom Matthew did homage and suit and service at the court of Archbishop William of which Matthew Joan is heiress. They say that the charter of enfeoffment was burned at Athlethan and can be proved. The Archbishop replies that she cannot prove it because she is an Irishwoman. A day is given for judgment. The decision is not enrolled.

From this account we learn that Archbishop Marianus, otherwise Maelmhuire Ó Lachtnain (1237-1249) enfeoffed Benyach Magreathay. Knox equates this Benyach Magreathay with Benedictus Mac Oireachtaigh killed in 1247. Adam was his son and heir, so this Adam was Adam Mac Oireachtaigh, who held the Aughagower lands under Archbishop Tomaltach or Thomas O'Connor (1259-1279). After Adam came Matthew Megalahy, properly Matthew Mac Oireachtaigh, who did homage for his Aughagower lands, while still a minor, to Archbishop Stephen Fulburn (1286-1288) and later to Archbishop William de Bermingham (1289-1312). Joan Nic Oireachtaigh, otherwise Mrs. John Staunton, was a sister of Matthew and it was she, as his heir, who sued Archbishop Bermingham for two parts of the manor of Aughagower.

Knox reasons that if Joan failed to establish English rights, the King's court would have dismissed the case, without pronouncing on the claim. If she fell back on Brehon Law for redress, she was not likely to get any, because the Archbishop would not submit himself to an Irish court, which had no force behind it to compel submission. On the other hand, since the Archbishops had treated her brother, father and grandfather as Englishmen, it appears that Joan had a good case for compelling Archbishop Bermingham to treat her as an Englishwoman. However, even if she succeeded in this, there was still the difficulty of the lost document of enfeoffment. It is a pity that the decision is not enrolled.

In the Taxation of 1306, a list drawn up when Edward I got from Pope Clement V a grant for two years of the Ecclesiastical Tenth, is found: Achedayer. Value £4.0.0d. This seems to be Aughagower.

In the Calendar of Papal Registers, there are two Papal Letters in connection with Aughagower in the year 1432. One of those informs us that the Vicar of Aughagower in this year was David de Burgo. It reads:

... 1432 27 September. Relaxation of two years and two quarantines of enjoined penance to penitents, who on the Sunday before the feast of Saint Peter's Chains, on which day Saint Patrick is specially venerated in the chapel of Saint Patrick, situated in monte qui tumulus Sancti Patricii nuncupatur, visit and give alms for the repair of the said chapel: whither resorts a great multitude, by whose alms the parish church of Achagaur in the diocese of Tuam is adorned with chalices and other ornaments.

Another Papal Letter a few years later shows the Vicar of Aughagower, David de Burgo, in trouble. '1440. 11 May. Mandate to assign to Milerus Valensis, clerk, of the diocese of Tuam, the rectory of Clancuan in the said diocese, void because David de Burgo, priest, who is to be removed, obtained it and the Vicarage of Achgaur without dispensation.'

Later, however, the Calendar shows that David de Burgo was rehabilitated and all the benefices again assigned to him.

In Bodkin's Visitation (1558-1559): 'The Vicarage of Acagovayr is usurped by Risterd de Burgo' — (*Notes on the Diocese of Tuam*, p. 107).

In a list drawn up in 1574 is found among spiritual dignities and other livings, both parsonages and vicarages etc.

Vicarage, Acagouyre (Knox) — (*Notes on the diocese of Tuam*, p. 216).

In a Taxation of Benefices drawn up in 1584 we find:

Rectory of Aghgoyer in Archdiocese of Tuam £2.0.0d.

Vicarage of Aghgoyer 10s.0d. (Knox) — (*Notes on the Diocese of Tuam*, p. 225).

In 1591: Vicarage Achivor, Vicar John McHenry (Knox) — (*Notes on the Diocese of Tuam*, p. 225) and in the *Composition* 1585, we get the extent of the Archbishop's lands — 7 quarters in the Barony of Murrisk and 24 quarters in the Barony of Burrishoole. Those two baronies meet close to the village of Aughagower (Knox) — (*History of the Co. Mayo*, p. 359).

In 1617 it appears that a grant of nearly all Umhall excluding most of the Church lands was made to Sir Theobald Burke, otherwise Tiobóid na Long. The names of the townlands comprising the Church Lands in 1617 are given by Knox, (*Notes on the Diocese of Tuam*, pp. 180, 181, 188), with the area of each, but he was unable to identify all of them.

Townland	Area	Identification by Knox
Ballivirrowe	4 qrs.	Not identified
Balledrom — (end illegible)	4 qrs.	Not identified
Ballyowen	4 qrs.	Not identified
Carrowb — ney	qr.	Not identified
Lecarrowvallononbowe	½ qr.	Ballydonnellan
Aughgower	qr.	Aughagower
Kiell	qr.	Not identified
Loughnagrohy	½ qr.	Not identified
Cornecarte	½ qr.	Not identified
Gortconessayn	½ qr.	Gortacussane: old name of land adjoining Ballydonnellan
Knockprechare	½ qr.	May be Crowhill
Drumgouloyne	½ qr.	Not identified
Tawnagh	Cartron	Not identified
Leckan	½ qr.	Luckane in Aughagower
Ardogommane	qr.	Ardogommon
Knockvullanmory	qr.	Not identified

Gorteen Anny	Cartron	Not identified
Killin	½ qr.	Not identified
Deriragh	qr.	Not identified
Mohastan	qr.	Moyhastin

A later document (1833) gives:

Townland	Identification by Knox
Ballendonellan	Ballydonnellan
Sunagh	Shanagh
Gortacassane	(Adjoins Ballydonnellan on the South but name not used)
Garue	Garrow
Crowhill	Crowhill
Lahertane	Lahardane
Carrakeel	Carrowkeel
Aghagower	Aughagower
Leckane	Luckane

Some of the names of the 1617 List, which Knox failed to identify are still in use. The name Gorteen Anny is still given to the narrow strip of land between the Carrowbeg River and Garrew Lake, where the land is raised above the level of the adjoining marsh. It is therefore Guirtín Éanaigh. The Margenana of the time of Felim and Richard de Burgo must have been someplace close by. Garrew Lake is still called Cornecarte Lake, so the land known by this name must have neighboured Gorteen Anny. Tawnagh, or Tavanagh or Tamhnach has been already mentioned in connection with the Tochar Phádraig. It is the valley immediately north or north-west of Aughagower about a quarter of a mile from the village. It is a well-known place and it is strange that Knox missed it.

A list of Land Denominations, mentioned in the Grant by James I in 1617 to Sir Theobald Burke shows that the greater part of Umhall passed to Tiobóid na Long. According to Mr. Moran M.A. the grant did not include the Church Lands of Aughagower which he thinks, remained in the hands of the Protestant Church for quite a long period. An inquisition regarding Church Lands, also about 1617 gives the names of each division. Many of those names are now unknown. A few of them were identified by Knox, but the names of a few others, which he failed to identify are still in use. They show that the Church Lands were mostly on the north side of Aughagower Village, and correspond roughly with the lands later occupied by the Hon. Denis Browne, and now known as Mountbrowne. A list of these land divisions, taken from Knox, has already been given.

Besides the grant of most of Umhall to Tiobóid na Long, he was rewarded by being made Viscount and became the first Lord Mayo. He was succeeded by his son Myles of the Confederation period. Myles was followed

by his son Theobald, who was executed in Galway in 1652 for his connection, supposed or otherwise, with the Massacre of Shrule. Theobald was succeeded by his brother Myles or Myler, who must have been active on Ormonde's side about the time Cromwell came to Ireland and who as a result of the wars lost his possessions. On the return of Charles II in 1660, Viscount Mayo is mentioned in the Declaration of Charles for the Settlement of the Kingdom of Ireland as one of those deserving His Majesty's "grace and favour in an especial manner" and to whom all former possessions are to be restored. This Declaration of Charles, embodied in the Act of Settlement of 1661 could not be carried out in full without disturbing the Cromwellian settlers too much, which Charles meant to avoid, as he "did not wish to go on his travels again". It does not appear that it was carried out in full in the case of Myles II, Lord Mayo, who failed to get back all his Umhall possessions. Myles II died in 1681 and was succeeded by his son Theobald.

According to Dalton, the second Lord Mayo, Myles I of the Confederation Days was a 'good Protestant.' Mr. P. Moran, M.A. does not agree and writes: "I have my doubts about Myles I's Protestantism. There is in existence a chalice bearing the following inscription — Ora pro animabus Dni Theobaldi Vi (Cecomites Mayo et uxor) is eius Meow ny chochoure Qui me fieri fecerunt pro monasterio de Mureske año dni 1635 — Pray for the soul of Lord Theobald, Viscount Mayo, and his wife Maeve O'Connor, who caused me to be made for the monastery of Murrisk, A.D. 1635). In 1635 Theobald (Tiobóid na Long) was six years dead (obit 1629); so that either his wife who survived him had the chalice made and added her deceased husband's name, or if Maeve too was dead Myles must have made it, in accordance with the wishes of his parents — hardly a likely act for a 'good Protestant.' Dalton says that Myles was a member of the Supreme Council until 1649; another says he left it in 1644, but says that he became a Catholic 'after 1641.'

This was the century of the two great Plantations, that of Ulster following the flight of Hugh O'Neill and Rory O'Donnell and the Cromwellian Plantation in the middle of the century. These Plantations forced Ulster refugees into Connacht, even as far as Umhall, where they certainly did not receive a very warm reception. They seem to have been looked on as an inferior class and treated with more or less contempt by the old-time blue-blooded families. Even yet in the Parish of Aughagower, the term 'Cúigulas', that is 'Cúige Uladhs', implying cunning, treachery, deceit is used in reference to families bearing distinctly northern names. Mr. Moran, M.A. says that the corresponding term in northern Umhall is 'Ultaigh Bhradacha'.

A family which later had an intimate connection with the Aughagower Parish was the Brownes of Westport. The exact time they acquired the Murrisk Peninsula seems not to be known. Whether it was immediately following the return of Charles II or at a later period is uncertain. A Sir Valentine Browne is mentioned, like Lord Mayo, in Charles's Declaration "as deserving of His Majesty's especial grace and favour" but according to Mr. Moran, M.A. this Valentine is not of the family connected with Westport

and Aughagower. Mr. Moran's letter is as follows:

... Sir Valentine Browne was not father or grandfather of Col. John Browne of the Limerick Articles of Agreement. Col. John's father was Sir John Browne (Baronet of Nova Scotia), son of Josiah Browne, son of John Browne, Sheriff of Mayo, killed by the Burkes in 1589. The earliest Valentine I have met with in these Brownes is a son of Col. John's who lived, I think at Mount Browne. However, there may have been an earlier Valentine, not mentioned in either of the two pedigrees I saw. There were other Brownes, the Brownes of Castlemagarrett in Crossboyne Parish, whose recent representative was, or is Lord Oranmore and Browne. One of this branch Sir Geoffrey was emissary or ambassador for the Confederates to the Duke of Lorraine about 1650 or 1651. But O'Hart does not mention any Sir Valentine in this branch. There was also a Kerry family of Brownes about which my knowledge is nil.

As I said, Col. John Brown was son (2nd) to Sir John Browne of the Neale. He became a lawyer and took King James's side in 1688 and later. In the so-called Treaty of Limerick, he was able to have inserted a special article to ensure that he would be compensated for certain expenses which had been charged to him. It has been suggested that it was with this compensation he acquired his estates in Murrisk and elsewhere. A letter of 1725 speaks of his grandson, John Browne, later first Lord Altamont, as a young man (he was only 16 at the time) of about £700 a year.

JOHN KEVILLE: *Native of Kiltimagh. Came to Lankill N.S. as Principal mid-twenties. Researched local history and in particular the history of Aughagower Parish until retirement at the end of the fifties.*



Longstone — Lankill.

JOHN McHALE ARCHBISHOP OF TUAM

by John Lyons

'On the 7 November, at eight o'clock at night
The soul of Bishop John of Tuam to Heaven
took its flight,
And as he lived for God a while through all his ministry
He's rewarded now for his labours in Blessed Eternity.'

On 7 November 1881 the bells tolled for the Lion of Tuam, the great Prelate of the West. The aged Archbishop, whose entrance into this life was so sickly, died surrounded by his priests and staff. This was the 56 year of his episcopacy, the 67 year of his priesthood and the 91 year of his life. From Tuesday, 8 November to Tuesday, 15 November, the day fixed for his obsequies, the town of Tuam wore the cloak of death. The *Tuam News* wrote:

... Black flags with devices worked in white floated in the breeze. In every street one passed under mourning arches. The old town cross, erected 900 years ago by Archbishop O'Hessian of Tuam, was encircled with the badges of sorrow and death.

On Sunday, 13 November, his remains were taken to the Cathedral. It is amazing that in those days of difficult communications, so many people should flock to Tuam. By noon on Sunday, special trains from the South and East had poured their passengers into the town; the procession to the Cathedral was almost triumphant, echoing McHale's entry into Tuam in 1834. To understand this man, to comprehend his time, to have any notion of what the West and Ireland was in the 19th century, one must go deeply into the past. Tuam had three remarkable prelates during the 19th century, O'Kelly of Curramore, Ballinasloe, McHale of Tobar na bhFiain, and McEvilly of Louisburgh. What is unusual and most remarkable is that these men came of frugal peasant backgrounds, so close to an age when only the more blue-blooded could ever aspire to the throne of an Archdiocese. To really see McHale one must know what preceded him.

In 1697 an Act was passed in the Irish Parliament which decreed that 'all popish archbishops, bishops, vicars general, deans, Jesuits, monks, friars and all other regular popish clergy and all Papists exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction, shall depart out of this kingdom before the 1 of May 1698.'

Four hundred and forty four priests were transported in 1698 to Lisbon and Corunna, but mostly to Nantes, Saint Malo and Dunkirk. By the end of 1698, 383 members of religious orders were banished from Ireland to Paris and its neighbourhoods. By this time only eight bishops remained in Ireland; many, including James Lynch of Tuam (1669-1714) had already left for the Continent on the defeat of King James. Only one western bishop remained, Maurice Donnellan of Clonfert. Donnellan was arrested in 1703, was rescued, but died soon afterwards. There were now only two bishops in the country, Comerford of Cashel and Donnelly of Dromore.

Attention was turned to the ordinary diocesan clergy. All Popish priests in the country were ordered to register, no priest could have a curate. 1089



The home of Archbishop McEvilly.

priests were registered — 259 in Connacht. The theory was that the registered priests would die in due course and that the laws already in force would prevent others from coming into the country to replace them. Bishops were banished so there could be no ordinations.

Francis Burke was appointed co-adjutor to the exiled Archbishop Lynch of Tuam in 1713, and succeeded to the See in the following year on the death of Lynch. The clergy of Connacht were poor but they had the protection of a numerous Catholic gentry. Francis Burke often used the name Miles Staunton as an alias and died in 1723; he was succeeded by Bernard O'Gara.

There is a very interesting end result of the Penal Laws of the 18 century; 18 century bishops abstained from politics and insofar as was possible stayed at their posts. The diocesan clergy preserved the unity of the Catholic Church in Ireland. Many of the diocesan clergy had received their education in some continental college, by far the greater number attending the Irish College in Paris; others went to Nantes, Bordeaux, Douay, Lille, Salamanca, Santiago, Lisbon, Rome etc. As the 18th century progressed the Penal Laws were allowed to lapse. By 1750 the lower ranks of the Army were open to Catholics. Gardiner's First Catholic Relief Act of 1778 permitted Catholics to take land on long leases, and by 1795 Maynooth College was founded for the education at home of a Catholic priesthood. The year 1800 saw Archbishop Dillon of Tuam founding Saint Jarlath's; 1806 saw Oliver Kelly the Vicar-General of Tuam. He succeeded to Tuam on the death of Dillon in 1809, and in turn was succeeded by John McHale.

John McHale was born at Tubbernavine in Tirawley on Sunday, 6 March 1791. He was a sickly and puny child, but managed to survive the 18th century to become the Lion of the 19th. His father was Pádraig Mór, his mother Mary Mulkieran, both were natives of the locality. John was the fifth son and had to be baptised at home rather than in the local church. He had 6 brothers, Thomas, Martin, Myles, Patrick, Edward, James (step) and 3 sisters Ann, Barbara (step), Ellen (step). Pádraig Mór McHale was a man of reasonable means; he had land and a tavern. He went to Dublin for dyes, exchanging them for linen and yarn at Tirawley. He sold his linen at the Linen Hall in Castlebar. He had a brother, Father Rickard McHale and their mother was Anne Moffet who died in 1795.

John McHale received his education at the hedge school in Laherdane and at the age of 6 years he began serving Mass for the local priest, Father Conry. Father Conry was educated in France and like O'Connell, saw the excesses of the Revolution. The peasants of Tirawley therefore, were suspicious of the French when Humbert arrived. Their priest civilly treated the French officers and showed them the way to Castlebar. He was later tried by Dennis Browne, High Sheriff of Mayo. The trial was hastily carried out in the Imperial Hotel, and Father Conry was immediately hanged from one of the trees near the Wesleyan Church, now the Education Centre.

In 1803 John McHale was sent to further his education at Patrick Staunton's school in Castlebar. He boarded first in town, and later with relatives some miles outside Castlebar. In 1804 his mother died and in 1807 Dr. Dominick Bellew, Bishop of Killala awarded a bursary to McHale, thus allowing him to become a student at Maynooth College. In September of that year John, accompanied by his brother, Thomas, travelled to Maynooth. Thomas was not a student but travelled to attend to some business in Dublin. McHale immersed himself in his studies. By 1814 Dr. de la Hogue, Professor of Dogmatic Theology, was in bad health, and sub-deacon McHale was appointed lecturer. Dr. Bellew of Killala who had been bishop since 1779 and who had vehemently opposed the appointment of the commoner Oliver Kelly to the Archbishopric of Tuam died. Dr. Peter Waldron succeeded Dr. Bellew to the diocese of Killala. On 25 July 1814, John McHale was ordained deacon by Dr. Murray of Dublin at Mountjoy Square. On 26 July, he was ordained priest, again at Mountjoy Square, and in July 1820 he was appointed Professor of Dogmatic Theology at Maynooth.

On 29 January 1820 the first letters of Hierophilos began to appear in the *Dublin Journal*. Hierophilos' subject was usually education in general and the Kildare Place Society in particular. In 1814 the Society was endowed by the Government to assist schools with grants 'to superintend a system of education from which should be banished even the suspicion of proselytism, and which admitting children of all religious persuasions should not interfere with the peculiar tenets of any'. All religious teaching was to be excluded, but the Bible without notes or commentaries, was to be used as a school book for the higher classes. In 1815 the State awarded a subsidy of £7,000 to the Society and this grant was increased annually until it reached £30,000 in 1831.

by which date 137,639 pupils were being instructed in the Society's 1,621 schools. Within a decade of its foundation, however, allegations were made that members of the Society were involved in proselytising activities and that the schools were being used for similar purposes. McHale, O'Connell and J.K.L. joined forces against the Society; by the mid-1820's the allegations were well-founded. In the 1820's only about two-thirds of the population were receiving a basic education.

In 1825 Dr. Waldron of Killala became ill and on 8 March of that year, John McHale was appointed Bishop of Maronia (in Turkey) and Co-Adjutor Bishop of Killala. Since 22 September 1822, McHale had the parish of Crossmolina without the obligation of residence. He did not take any money from this parish until he became Co-adjutor — then it was his only source of income.

In 1832 Bishop McHale had to admit that "there are in the diocese of Killala no churches or almost none". In 1825 Archbishop O'Kelly of Tuam was examined before a Parliamentary Committee on the state of his own See. He answered that there were 106 places for Catholic worship; "of these about 16 are slated, the rest are thatched, Mass is often said in the open air". Between 1826 and 1829, the year of Catholic Emancipation, McHale collected £1,800 and in 1827 the cornerstone of a new Cathedral was laid.

The Spring of 1831 brought Famine to the West. Bishop McHale and others travelled to London to see Lord Grey, Prime Minister. The Bishop had recognised the causes of these famines (between 1816 and 1842 there were as many as 14 partial or general famines). He wrote at the time: "Unless the source of misery is checked by some vigorous legislative provisions, it will come again and again, and be fraught at each returning visit with some new accumulation". He saw corn being exported, the linen trade in disarray, arrears of rent, seed potatoes being dug for food. His interview with Lord Grey was not successful. While in England he wrote to the editor of the *Morning Chronicle* about Maynooth College, Grand Jury jobbery, tithes, and proselytising by Bible societies. By 10 November 1831 he was in Rome, where he had a very successful visit, meeting among others, the rector of the Irish college, Dr. Paul Cullen. By mid-December 1832, Bishop McHale was back in Ballina.

On 18 April 1834, Archbishop Oliver O'Kelly of Tuam died near Rome, and on 13 May John Nolan was elected Vicar-Capitular of Tuam; he in turn set the 4 June for the selection of three candidates whose names would be sent to the office of Propaganda in Rome and one of whom would be next Archbishop of Tuam. On 20 May Peter Waldron, Bishop of Killala, died and his Co-adjutor, John McHale, now became the new Bishop of his diocese.

On 4 June the electors of Tuam selected three names — Very Rev. Bernard Burke, of Westport, Dean of the Chapter, John McHale, and John Nolan, and they were selected in that order. The Heir apparent was Dean Burke of Westport. Prime Minister Lord Melbourne waited till the clergy of Tuam had sent the names of their chosen candidates to Rome. Then he, too, addressed himself directly to Gregory XVI asking that His Holiness 'would not appoint

McHale to the vacant See — anybody but him!' On 31 August 1834 the Pope appointed John McHale, Archbishop of Tuam, thus rejecting Melbourne's overtures and seconding the choice made by the Bishops of the Tuam Province. The entry into Tuam was a triumphal one. An estimated 20,000 people greeted him and the students of Saint Jarlath's were placed immediately in front of the Archbishop's carriage. At the Tuam Pro-Cathedral McHale vested and was officially presented to his clergy. The Papal Bull of translation was read and the Te Deum announced that John McHale was installed Archbishop of Tuam. John McHale said: "If my interference in protecting the poor and staying the heavy stroke that used severely to fall upon them is a crime — it is a crime which I freely confess, but without any contrition".

Some time later he told the Duke of Wellington that he had leased a little farm to qualify him for Parliamentary elections. Since 1830 the voting qualification had risen from 40s. freehold to £10.00. McHale went on "I must, therefore, declare that after paying the landlord his rent, neither to parson, nor proctor nor landlord nor agent will I consent to pay in the shape of tithes or any other tax a penny of which shall go to the greatest nuisance (the Established Church) in this or any other country".

In 1834 Archbishop McHale visited Westport. Great crowds greeted him and the sermon referred very much to Saint Patrick. He compared Westport to Naples. Within twelve months, however, there was a misunderstanding with Dean Bernard Burke of Westport. Archbishop O'Kelly, McHale's predecessor of Tuam, had appointed Burke to the Parish of Westport for his life time. McHale, unaware of the Papal brief of Burke's title, appointed him to Kilmeena. Rome resolved the matter in Dean Burke's favour and he was P.P. of Westport until his death in 1861. It was he who brought the Christian Brothers and the Sisters of Mercy to Westport.

While the spectre of famine stalked the West in the 1830's and early 1840's, proselytism had begun to raise its head. In 1834 the Rev. Edward Nangle arrived in Achill and set up the Achill Mission Committee. Sir Richard O'Donnell of Newport gave the committee 130 acres at Dugort, Cashel and Keel and he published two papers *The Achill Herald* and *The Protestant Penny Magazine*. Although his mission had failed by 1837, Nangle's approach to protestant missionary work would soon be copied by others and on a much wider scale. The proselytisers worked mainly during times of great want and hardship. In 1852 Dr. Plunkett, Protestant Archbishop of Tuam confirmed 1294 people, of whom 840 were 'converts' from Catholicism. He consecrated three new churches during that year, and several others were in the course of construction. Pope Pius IX was worried and wrote to McHale: "Many Catholics in your diocese, through the wicked and fraudulent missionaries of their spiritual enemies, are deceived, led into error, and detached from the Catholic faith and worship".

The main proselytiser at this time was the Rev. Alexander Dallas. The society for Irish Church Missions to Roman Catholics was founded in 1849. In 1850 Dallas had congregations at Clifden, Salerna, Errislanan etc. in

Connemara. McHale fought back with monasteries in Clifden, Roundstone and Achill. He founded a convent in Clifden and sent missionaries, Fathers Rinolphi and Lockhard to redress the apparent imbalance. In the long run the Protestant missions failed; by 1869 Dallas was dead, the Protestant Church was disestablished and McHale's preachers, now helped by his many foundations of priests and nuns, and an extra preacher, Father Villas in Achill, were being successful.

There was a system of primary education in Ireland in the first half of the 19th century. The Kildare Place Society had been at work since 1814, and was administering 1621 schools with 137,639 children. A more Catholic system was pursued by Edmund Rice's Christian Brothers since 1802, and by Nano Nagle's Presentation Sisters etc. Lord Stanley's Education Bill established a National Board of Education and within 10 years a system was devised for 3,500 schools attended by 400,000 children. The Board set up a competent, economical and what appeared to be an intelligent, educational system which made a definite contribution to Irish life. Dr. McHale, however, wanted a denominational system, and he could not be reconciled to the Stanley system, even though Dr. Murray, Archbishop of Dublin was. Stanley's system was a 'mixed' one where children of all religious beliefs were taught. Even some Protestant bishops were not in agreement with it. There were some obvious defects:

1. Irish was neither taught nor used as a medium of instruction;
2. English text books were used — one Geography book informed Irish children that the "island in which we live was not always called England"!
3. A love of England as the motherland was encouraged e.g.

"I thank the goodness and the grace
Which on my birth has smiled
And made me in these Christian days
A happy English Child".

A great source of worry for Archbishop McHale was that five of the seven education Commissioners were non-Catholics. Archbishop Whately, Protestant Archbishop of Dublin was a member who favoured the National system because "it would gradually undermine the vast fabric of the Catholic Church." Twelve of the fifteen chief inspectors were Protestants and in 1839 McHale and the Connacht Bishops resolved to withdraw Catholic children from the schools. In 1840 the Irish bishops met in Dublin but not all were against the system. Nine bishops shared McHale's views while fifteen bishops and three Archbishops were on the other side. By 1841 Rome decided to tolerate the system and that controversies were to cease. McHale despatched Franciscan monks to Roundstone, Clifden, Kilkerrin, Partry, Annaghdown, Cummer, Achill and Kiltulla; the Christian Brothers were in Tuam and Westport and the Sisters of Mercy in Tuam, Westport, Clifden and Castlebar. In the end Dr. McHale was able to boast that there were 13,500 Catholic children in his Archdiocese receiving a Catholic education.



Mrs. Huston's House, near Delphi.

An interesting insight into Protestant thinking at the time of McHale is found in Mrs. Huston's book *Twenty Years in the Wild West*. She had to her the doubtful pleasure of a visit from Archbishop McHale. She had founded a school at Delphi, the master of which was a rabid Protestant campaigner. Bible reading and the Protestant faith were his two loves and Mrs. Huston tried to have the rules relaxed at Delphi so that Catholic children could attend — about 30 did.

... On one exceptionally fine day in August I, being then in the small exotic fernery, which in imagination carried me many a mile from chilly Ireland, was suddenly informed that two open carriages, both as full as they could hold of 'travellers,' were about to turn 'round the rock' on the road that led to Delphi. In a moment, being alone in the house, I brought a field-glass to bear upon the enemy, and discovered that a 'cloud,' not of 'majors,' but of priests were darkening the horizon! That they had gone to 'inspect' the school did not for a moment enter my head.

Possibly, though not probably, those eight black-coated men (for eight I had ascertained there were), had been seized with a desire to see 'the mountains', and were out on a schockarawn accordingly; or they might — seeing that the only burial ground in this mountain district was in the most dilapidated and disgraceful condition — have taken it into their reverend heads to inspect the place, and to make arrangements for the more decent interment of the bodies of the faithful. Whether or not to either of these causes could be attributed the length of time which elapsed before I again caught sight (at the turn of the very sharp rocky angle that shuts out any further view of the public pathway) of the horses' heads matters little. One fact is certain, namely, that the idea of my receiving a visit from these mysterious gentry never for a moment occurred to me. Judge then of my surprise, when — I having by that time almost given up thinking about them — a 'boy' ran up

breathlessly from the stables with the information that the Archbishop of 'Tume,' and 'all the clairy' were driving up to the house! This was indeed a surprise; and as from the drawing-room window I watched the descent, in the first place, of a stalwart priest, and then, resting a hand on his arm, that of a very old, but still erect and apparently healthy old man, the wish that it had not fallen upon me (in my unprotected state) to receive this extremely unwelcome party was very strong within me. There was, however, no help for it, and nothing remained but to receive my visitors courteously, and wait for an explanation of the visit.

After shaking hands with 'John of Tuam,' regarding whom I had of course heard much, and exchanging bows with the remainder of the confraternity, who, as it appeared to me, stood in great awe of their vigorous ruler, the latter took upon himself to explain the reason of his coming so far (he had never, he said, visited this portion of his diocese before) into the mountains.

'We have known for some time past,' he said, 'that there is a mission school, as it is called, in the neighbourhood; but I delayed, till I could take the journey, doing anything about it. We have been into the schoolhouse now, and made sure of its being true (as I was informed), and that there are no emblems in the place.'

'Emblems, your Grace!' I put in (for I addressed him according to his legitimate clerical rank, though he did speak with a brogue, and was not quite the cleanest old man with whom I had ever come in contact.). 'Emblems!' I repeated. 'I beg your pardon, but my ignorance in such matters must be my excuse. The room, too, in which your Grace has been is private property, and, although, had you asked for it, I should willingly have given you permission to. . .'

But I was not allowed to proceed. John of Tuam had clearly not bearded the Pope of Rome on his throne, to be 'put down' in her own small drawingroom, by a woman. With a wave of his hand, at which his satellites looked high approval, he proceeded to say that until 'emblems' were applied to the walls of the schoolhouse he could not permit it to exist. Emblems were with 'the church' a sine qua non, and emblems the old Archbishop declared that he would have.

Oh! how at the authoritative words the free British blood within me boiled and stirred! By what right, I longed to ask him (only he was so old that I refrained), could he close a school which was built on another man's land, and over which he could claim no earthly power? The truth was that, being of an autocratic nature and in the habit of saying that his will — namely, that of 'the Church' was 'law', he, in a senile kind of fashion, went a step too far. Close the school he of course could not, but the power was undoubtedly his to prevent any Roman Catholic child from entering it, and this power he clearly intended to exercise. A priest has only to threaten the parents with refusal to, in their last moments, 'anoint' them, and, ardently as they desire to have their children rescued from ignorance, not one amongst them would, I venture to say, brave the fearful menace which is, in the hands of the priesthood, a weapon of such tremendous force.

After a short while the old man and I understood each other. I explained to him how carefully I had guarded the children of the Romish Faith from any interference with their religion. 'But,' I said, 'we Protestants have also our prejudices, and our points of belief.' It is needless to relate the conversation, one of no long duration, which ensued. It ended (after my visitors had been offered refreshment, and had refused to partake of our bread and salt) in my informing the Archbishop that I possessed no power whatever in the matter of which he had been speaking. I would, I told him, consult 'the Captain,' and also the Protestant parents, as to the advisability of placing crucifixes, pictures of the Blessed Virgin, etc. upon the interior walls of the schoolhouse. Eventually I would, I said, inform him of the result.

'It was chiefly for the Scotch and English that the affair was set on foot,' I concluded by saying, 'and if they object to their admission, I will not be the one to force upon their children's notice that which is repugnant to their own feelings'. 'Then I have your promise?' the old man said unctuously, as he held my hand at

parting.

'My promise that I will do my best, without giving offence to others, to afford to those poor little ignorant waifs and strays, whose parents are so earnestly craving for it, the blessings of education. We cannot in any way coerce in this matter our Protestant employees. The decision is one for their own consciences alone to make, and we should consider ourselves as guilty of wrong-doing were we to interfere with them; whilst, on the other hand, we should undoubtedly be equally blamable if we paid no respect to the feelings and convictions of the Catholics who depend for their daily bread upon our retaining them on the land.' There were amongst the last words which passed between me and this undoubtedly remarkable man, this most pugnacious of the Church Militant's Western Champions. . . It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary to say that, after this domiciliary visit, not a single Roman Catholic child ever set its foot again in Delphi School.'

Archbishop McHale did try to run a school in Gowlaun Church (Lousburgh) for a short time.

In 1854 a Provincial Synod was held in Tuam, Dr. McHale presided. The secretaries were Dr. Thomas McHale and Father John McEvilly, President of Saint Jarlath's.

Interesting rules were proposed:

No more baptism or marriage in private houses

Priests were not to mix in business or attend fairs

National schools to be replaced, where possible, by Catholic schools.

At the Provincial Synod of 1858 much the same ground was covered, plus a new directive: 'We strictly forbid priests discussing during the celebration of Mass or within the church, mere secular matters, such as political elections, which may easily create dissension between their pastors and the people'.



Old school, near Delphi.

Discussion only within the Church was banned, for during the Mayo Election of the year before that Synod (1859) the provincial bishops themselves had got involved in politics. The candidates were Captain Palmer who was popular enough, Colonel Higgins who was distrusted, and George Moore. The Connacht Bishops had assembled in Tuam for the consecration of Dr. McEvilly as Bishop of Galway. They issued an appeal asking the electors of Mayo to reject Col. Higgins and return Moore. McHale's Pastoral warned against intimidation. Father Conway of Ballinrobe was particularly active for Moore. Moore and Palmer were returned, Higgins lodged a petition, alleging undue influence of the clergy and Moore was unseated.

Again in 1872 the clergy of Clonfert, Tuam, and Kilmacduagh got involved in the Galway Election. There were two candidates — Captain Trench who was identified with the Protestant Ascendancy, and Captain Nolan for the Catholic Home Rulers. Nolan won with 2,823 votes against Trench's 658; Trench petitioned on the same grounds as Higgins in Mayo earlier, and three Tuam priests were arraigned — Loftus, Conway and Father Lavelle. Archbishop McHale gave evidence before Mr. Justice Keogh, but Nolan was unseated.

John of Tuam was involved with all the great political doings of his time; the Queen's Colleges question, Tenant Rights, Home Rule and the Land League, to name but some.

He told Justice Keogh at Galway that he did not fully understand Home Rule, but that if it meant Repeal of the Act of Union he was all for it. He had finally accepted Papal Infallibility after the Vatican Council of 1869/70, but his influence was challenged in 1879. In June Michael Davitt had organised a Land League meeting in Westport. Dr. McHale condemned the meeting, but a voice in the huge crowd at Westport assured the meeting that McHale 'had got into bad company'. The 'bad company' was his nephew, Dr. Thomas McHale, D.D., who was his close confidant and adviser; the letter of condemnation purporting to come from the Archbishop was probably written by the said nephew.

To understand Archbishop McHale's position in politics in the 19th century one must remember that the prelates themselves were the only permanent natural leaders of a teeming Catholic population. Others had come and gone; O'Connell, not typical of the Catholic peasantry, and a loyalist at heart; the Young Irelanders whose liberalism the Catholic Church profoundly suspected. The bishops of Ireland were immersed in politics and the bishops of Ireland did not always agree among themselves. The question of the Queen's Colleges is a case in point.

In the late 1840's bitterness reached new heights. The cause of disagreement was the Government's plans for university education in Ireland. Up to then there was one university in Ireland — Trinity College — which, though it admitted students of all denominations, was so closely linked with the Established Church that it provided an uncongenial atmosphere for Catholics. The British Government sought to remedy this, and between 1845 and 1849 it worked out a scheme for the setting up of three new University

Colleges — The Queen's Colleges — at Cork, Galway and Belfast. These colleges would be undenominational, an intention which ran counter to the traditional insistence of the Catholic Church that education for Catholics should take place in Catholic institutions. The Government remained adamant but did make some concessions to the Catholic prelates — there could be Catholic halls of residence, Catholic deans etc. The issue on which the hierarchy divided was whether these concessions were adequate. The intransigents denounced the concessions as failing to meet the real objections to the colleges, the moderates felt that the concessions were sufficient to make the scheme acceptable. They wrote to Rome: 'We believe that much the best course for us to take, as we emerge from the miseries of the penal period, is to accept gratefully whatever benefits our Protestant government may appear to offer. . .'. Indeed, this disagreement on the Queen's Colleges question ran much more deeply — it was a symptom of the hierarchy's attitude towards the Government and towards Rome. Rome backed the intransigents, the moderates then came to regard conscience as more important than Rome's orders. It was a touch of the Gallicanism V Ultramontanism in France at the time. There were personal antipathies among the bishops. McHale was among the extremists. He and Bishop Doyle of Kildare had taken a strong national line on all national questions. McHale was described in 1854 in the following way by Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin:

. . . The sole obstacle to perfect harmony in the episcopal body is Mgr. the Archbishop of Tuam, who cannot resign himself to thinking like his colleagues, and who even changes his own opinions when they come to be adopted by others, so as to remain always in opposition'.

The great bulk of Irish Catholics stood outside the quarrel; to the average priest and layman the questions at issue were not of immediate personal concern. Of the twenty-six bishops in office at the end of 1849, thirteen were intransigents and thirteen were moderates — the older men tended to be moderates. At the beginning of 1850, Paul Cullen, rector of the Irish College in Rome, and a known anti-Queen's man, was appointed Archbishop of Armagh. He had been Roman agent of the Irish bishops and so when he returned to Ireland, he enjoyed a greater prestige at home than any Irish bishop for many years. Cullen presided over the August 1850 Synod of Thurles, at which Synod it was intended to reach a decision on the Queen's Colleges issue.

Numerically the majority of Irish bishops was against the Colleges. Rome was against them; but the moderates would not give in. Archbishop Murray of Dublin led the moderates. The Synod voted against the Queen's Colleges and immediately the moderates pleaded to Rome and relations between the two factions were at a very low point in 1850. The ecclesiastical Titles Bill of 1851 more or less re-united the bishops. Archbishop Murray died in February 1852 and his successor was none other than Archbishop Cullen.

Now there were two lions among the hierarchy, — McHale and Cullen. They were embroiled in the Tenant League question and in the whole

question of the priest in politics. McHale had endorsed Cullen's appointment to Armagh and by the 1850's both men found that they shared a great deal of common ground in their analysis of Irish grievances. First, there was the anomaly of the Established Church, second the problem of education, and third the great problem of poverty. McHale concentrated on the land question and for him Irish self-government which he was convinced could be won by constitutional means, was the key to the solution of all other problems. Cullen regarded self-government as a remote issue. Cullen was afraid that Repeal of the union might damage the Catholic religion; Bishop Moriarty of Kerry opposed repeal on political grounds — he was aware of the dangers of a situation where "the people know no patriotism except hatred for their rulers." Yet later on McHale, when asked about his attitude to Home rule, said that he didn't fully understand it, but that if it meant repeal of the Act of Union then he was all for it. The good relationship which existed between McHale and Cullen became strained. McHale was an avowed Nationalist — his letters were outspoken and generally published; Cullen was a Roman, urban bishop, much more of a diplomat than McHale.

Matters between the two men came to a head — their disagreement is the story of Father Patrick Lavelle of Cortoor.

Terence Bellew McManus, one of the 1848 leaders, had died in exile in San Francisco in 1861. Some Irish-Americans arranged that he should be buried in Dublin in the hope that his funeral would win sympathy for the infant Fenian movement. Archbishop Cullen decided that he would not allow the Church to be associated with any political demonstration and would not allow a 'lying-in-state' in the Pro-Cathedral. The lying-in-state took place in the Mechanics Institute, and no Dublin priest attended the funeral. On 5 November 1861 a notice was posted round the city, containing a letter from Father Lavelle attacking the Archbishop and clergy of Dublin for their attitudes to McManus' memory, and on Sunday, 10 November, Father Lavelle delivered the funeral oration over the grave.

Father Lavelle was educated in Maynooth and was appointed Professor in the Irish College in Paris. He was soon involved in serious disputes with the Rector, Dr. Miley, a Dublin priest. Cullen knew of these disputes and got little satisfaction from either Lavelle or McHale. So, after Lavelle's flaunting of Cullen's orders, Cullen went over McHale's head and reported Father Lavelle to Rome. Rome saw fit to support Cullen. Rome at this time was waging war against secret societies in Europe — Cullen extended that war to the Fenians in Ireland. Father Lavelle was Vice-President of the Brotherhood of Saint Patrick, a public society but with very close ties to the Fenians. McHale was essentially a constitutionalist, but his attitude to Fenianism might best be described as sympathetic. He was less strenuously against priests who were pro-Fenian than were other bishops. Over the next few years, up to 1869, the matter was tossed back and forth between Ireland and Rome, McHale tacitly approving of Lavelle's attitude towards the authorities.

Eventually the Archbishop appointed Father Lavelle to Cong — this event signalled Lavelle's retirement from public life.

Archbishop McHale had led a full life in the politics of this country during the 19th century, but time was taking its toll. His first application to Pius IX for a coadjutor in 1875 was met by a refusal on the grounds that the Archbishop was in good health. His hope was that his own nephew, Dr. Thomas McHale would be his coadjutor and would be his successor. Again he applied in the Spring of 1876. Pope Pius IX ordered that three names be submitted to the Holy See in order to have a coadjutor chosen and assigned. The election by the clergy of three candidates was the very thing which John McHale did not want. He wrote to his clergy urging them to choose priests 'who will have nothing more at heart, or who will deem no obligation more solemn, than to defend on every public occasion the cause of one Holy Church but above all, the cause in education and training properly the Catholic youth, and as far as in them lies, and as far as it accords with the position of a bishop to defend the liberty and civil rights of our dear country'. In July 1875 McHale had written to Cullen asking for Cullen's support in the appointment of Dr. Thomas McHale. To this letter no written answer can be found. On 22 August 1876 he again wrote to Cullen: 'I am preparing to proceed to Rome humbly to petition His Holiness to grant me as coadjutor Dr. Thomas McHale, who obtained a high place among those in whose favour the clergy gave, on the 17 their respective suffrages. The only one who had with him a considerable number of votes was the Bishop of Galway, whom for well-known reasons I never can consent to accept as my coadjutor.' Cullen answered on 26 August but adopted an entirely neutral stance and wished the Archbishop well. Another letter from Tuam, this time undated: 'I am still uncertain as to my journey to Rome. I should willingly go thither, either to secure Dr. McHale's election or exclude the Bishop of Galway.' All this after Dr. McEvilly had received 16 votes, Thomas McHale 12 votes. Eventually Rome understood the depth of John McHale's feelings against Dr. McEvilly and decided that a coadjutor would not be appointed for the Archbishop during his lifetime. Soon after this an effort was made to push matters in such a way as to defeat the decision arrived at. Bishops Gillooly of Elphin, McEvilly of Galway and McCormack of Achonry went to Rome. This was in Spring 1877. McHale resolved to follow them, got as far as Dublin, only to have his strength fail him. He returned again to Tuam.

Sometime after this a letter from Propaganda reached McHale, containing four charges against him:

1. Misconduct of his clergy;
2. The triumph of proselytism in his diocese;
3. Tuam priests often wrote against each other in the public press; and
4. that the diocesan clergy were insufficient for the spiritual needs of the people.

McHale refuted these accusations easily enough. They were in general not valid. As far back as 1834-35 Tuam Archdiocese had a much higher

population per priest than any other part of Ireland; the figure for Tuam was 4,199, whereas the average figure per priest in Cashel was 3,175 and Armagh 2,805. McHale's diocese, right through his episcopal life, held a most teeming population, because emigration on a large scale did not occur in this diocese until the 1880's. Many of the pre-Great Famine conditions continued in Tuam right up to the near famines of 1877, '78, and '79 and the beginning of the Land League. It was hardly fair to accuse McHale of any dereliction of duty in a most untypical of areas of Ireland. McHale, of course, wrote back to Rome, condemning the accusations and said: 'Such being the state of things, the Holy See in its usual prudence will not advise me to accept a coadjutor who is notoriously and publicly most hostile towards me.'

Pope Pius IX insisted that Dr. McEvilly of Galway be appointed as coadjutor of Tuam with the right of succession. The Pope died early in 1878 and was succeeded by Pope Leo XIII. McHale was being pushed to invite McEvilly to Tuam to begin as coadjutor, but he held out. Pope Leo XIII sent Dr. McGettigan, Archbishop of Armagh to reason with the aged McHale. McGettigan did so and sent a full report back to Rome concerning the excellent health of the Archdiocese of Tuam. Cullen was dead since October 1878 and on 22 August 1879 Leo XIII ordered Dr. McEvilly to go to Tuam and begin his work there as coadjutor. A stay of execution was put on this order, McHale visited his deaneries, and even alleged that during the celebrations of his jubilee McEvilly had disallowed the Galway clergy from attending by calling a retreat. McEvilly came to Tuam, carried out his duties as coadjutor and succeeded John McHale as Archbishop of Tuam on the death of McHale on 7 November 1881.

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Dr. MacHale (1834-1881).



Dr. MacEvilly (1881-1902).

THE UNFORTUNATE JOHN MOORE'

by Grattan Freyer and Sheila Mulloy

In no instance is the discrepancy between popular tradition, the golden legend of national sentiment, and the plain truth, more striking than in that relating to the unfortunate John Moore, eldest son of the George Moore (1729-99) who in 1792 built the fine house overlooking Lough Carra that became known as Moore Hall. In 1961 the remains of John Moore were disinterred in Waterford, where he had died on his way to transportation, and brought to Castlebar. After a High Mass in that town the remains were conveyed on a gun carriage to be reburied on the Mall. National and local dignitaries, including President de Valera, were in attendance. The monument over the new grave is inscribed in Irish and English. The English version reads:

FORTIS CADERE CEDERE NON POTEST

Pray for the soul of John Moore of Ashbrook and Moorehall,
County Mayo,

Ireland's First President and descendant of Saint Thomas More,
Who gave his life for his Country in the Rising of 1798.

Born Alicante, Spain, 1763.

Died a prisoner awaiting transportation in the City of
Waterford 6-12-1799.

By the will of the people exhumed and reinterred

Here with all honours of Church and State 13-8-1961.

The date of birth given is an error. In a letter of 1794 (see below) John Moore describes himself as 'near 27', which would make him born in 1767.³ It is also incorrect to describe Moore as 'Ireland's First President'. He was, in fact, named by Humbert as 'President of the Government of the Province of Connaught'. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the historical record to confirm that he was a leader of the calibre of Bartholomew Teeling, Father Henry O'Kane, Colonel Patrick Barrett or General George Blake of Garracloon.

The Moores had come to Ireland in the seventeenth century as a Protestant family, and they acquired their first small property at Ashbrook,⁴ near Straide in County Mayo, by purchase rather than dispossession. John's grandfather apparently turned Catholic on marriage into one of the Old English families of Galway, the Lynch-Athys. Wealth, however, only appeared after John's father had migrated to Spain. The record exists that George Moore 'formerly of Ashbrook in the County of Mayo but late merchant of Alicante', took the oath of allegiance to the Crown on 12 December 1780.⁴ This admitted him, as a Catholic, to certain privileges of a landowner of substance.

While his parents were still residing in Spain, John was sent to school in Paris. Four of his letters to them survive in the National Library, Dublin. The first, written in a neat schoolboy's hand, is dated Paris, 11 October 1783.

Another is written from London, where he and his younger brother George had now gone to study law, and sheds a certain light on his character (Appendix 1). Whether the cause of his destitution was wine, women, horses or dice, we have no means of knowing. The letter was answered by George Moore, Senior, in early May, but it apparently crossed another from father to son, written the 24 December, which must have contained the wherewithal needed. On 24 January and again on 14 February we find John acknowledging in pathetically fulsome terms the family charity and promising to reform. He announces his expectation of being called to the Irish Bar about November that year and an intention of making Dublin the 'theatre' of his activities. There is in fact no record in the Law Library of Dublin of his ever practising at the Irish Bar.⁵

When the French landed, John was evidently at the family seat of Moore Hall. Local belief that he immediately put himself at the head of a body of his father's troops, joined the patriot forces, and played a hero's role at Castlebar has to be doubted — though occasion sometimes makes the man. John himself, in his plea to Cornwallis after capture offers a different story (Appendix 2). But he was certainly on the scene, and Humbert was evidently sufficiently impressed either by his activities or by his local standing to issue the following proclamation:

Army of Ireland

Liberty

Equality

Head quarters at Castlebar, 14 Fructidor, sixth year of the French Republic, One and Indivisible.

"General Humbert, Commander in Chief of the Army of Ireland, desirous of organizing with the least possible delay, an administrative power for the Province of Connaught, decrees as follows:

1. The Government of the Province of Connaught shall reside at Castlebar till further orders.
2. The Government shall be composed of twelve members, who shall be named by the General in chief of the French Army.
3. Citizen **John Moore** is named President of the Government of the Province of Connaught, he is specially entrusted with the nomination and reunion of the members of the Government.
4. The Government shall occupy itself immediately in organizing the Military power of the Province of Connaught, and with providing subsistence for the French and Irish Armies.
5. There shall be organized eight regiments of infantry, each of twelve hundred men, and four regiments of Cavalry, each of six hundred men.
6. The Government shall declare rebels and traitors to the country all those who having received clothing and arms, shall not join the army within four and twenty hours.
7. Every individual from sixteen years of age to forty, inclusive, is **REQUIRED** in the name of the Irish Republic, to betake himself instantly to the French Camp, to march in a mass against the common

enemy, the Tyrant of ANGLICIZED IRELAND, whose destruction alone can establish the independence and happiness of ANCIENT HIBERNIA."

The General Commanding-in-Chief
HUMBERT.

The only evidence we have of the operation of this administration is a number of assignats which survived. *Saunders's Newsletter* for 19 September 1798 describes one of these as struck in copper plate, except for signature, date, and running:

No. 1

In the name of the French Government

Good for Half-a-Guinea

To be raised on the Province of Connaught

(John Moore)

September 3, 1798.

The next news we have is from the *Freeman's Journal* of 8 September, after the recapture of Castlebar by the British:

... By letters received in town on Thursday evening, we are informed, that the French retreated with much precipitation from Castlebar, abandoning a considerable quantity of stores, ammunition, etc., etc., and leaving all their sick and wounded behind them. There was taken at Castlebar, a Rebel General, named Moore, upon whom was found his appointment by the French to be President of an Executive Directory, in that part of the country. He is the son of a wealthy farmer.

Sir Richard Musgrave, who was of course a hostile witness, but was writing immediately after the events, records in his *Memoirs of the Different Rebellions in Ireland (1802)*:

... Soon after (the British) arrived, they sent for Mr. Moore, whom the French had appointed president of Connaught. He was pressed to inform them of the plans of the French and what route they had taken, but he declared his ignorance of them. On which Colonel Crawford ordered one of Hompesch's dragoons to draw his sword and cut his head off. Having made some flourishes over his head, as if they really meant to decapitate him, he shrieked and roared, and was in such consternation from fear, that he produced his commission of president, by which he criminated himself. He was in a state of intoxication, which alone could account for so egregious an act of folly.* In extenuation of his conduct, he said, that he waited on the French, and accepted the commission of president, merely to preserve the property of his father, a Roman catholic gentleman, who had an estate of 4,000 l. a year in the county of Mayo.

Humbert evacuated Castlebar on his final forced march to the defeat at Ballinamuck, on the night of 3 September 1798. The British troops under Colonel Crawford had retaken the town by the following night. John Moore after his brief interrogation was lodged in the county gaol.

The family lost no time in hiring an attorney, a certain Alexander McDonnell, for his defence. This gentleman was in almost constant attendance on the prisoner or his family from 5 September 1798 to 1 May 1799, and possibly later. The bill of costs for his services, preserved among the Moore papers in the National Library, is our principal authority for what happened. It appears that both prosecution and defence were in some doubt as to how the case might be handled, since it was never suggested that Moore

had been taken under arms. A number of respected local citizens had collaborated with the French in maintaining order in Castlebar, but Humbert's commission found on Moore placed him in a different role. He was brought to the general court martial that was trying Teeling and others in Athlone, but two days later 'ordered off' under military escort to Dublin. Thence he was returned to Castlebar. A writ of habeas corpus was successfully applied for, but the defence then opted for requesting trial by court martial. This proved abortive, and Moore's civil trial opened at the Ballinrobe assizes. But the High Sheriff refused to produce the prisoner, claiming he was still in military custody. Inexplicably McDonnell's bill does not go beyond 1 May 1799, though in a postscript to the account reduced after an appeal, he claims he was in attendance on the now 'deceased Mr. Moore' for 'near twenty months'. The original amount was to be £2,281.19.4, but it was reduced to £1,353.0.9, and evidently paid by John's younger brother George, George Moore père having died during 1799 (Appendix 3).

Of the three memorials presented to Cornwallis, two are in the State Paper Office, Dublin. One complains of the lack of fresh air and possibility of exercise, and begs for a speedy trial (Appendix 4). The other gives John's own account of his entanglement in the unhappy events (Appendix 2). On 16 November 1799, it seems John reached Waterford with a number of other Mayo prisoners en route for transportation. He was by this time seriously ill, as the *Freeman's Journal* reports:

... John Moore Esq., two R.C. clergymen of the names of Cannon and Molloney, a friar named Kileen, Valentine Jordain, a respectable farmer, all from the vicinity of Castlebar, and Fergus, an innkeeper from Westport were brought in here with eight others by a party of Hompeschs cavalry. Those whose names are above mentioned were permitted to lodge at the Royal Oak tavern with guards placed on the room they were in. They have entered into recognizance to transport themselves from his majesties dominions which measure they prefer to risking a trial. Moore was so emaciated from illness that his attendants were obliged to carry him from his carriage to the tavern.

The last we hear from John Moore is a most moving document in the shape of a letter written from Waterford to his 'dearest friend' Randle McDonnell on 18 November 1799, asking him to arrange transport for him and his servant John Nally to Lisbon (Appendix 5). This Randle McDonnell was undoubtedly an attorney as the letter is addressed to 'Edwd. Byrne, R. McDonnell and Co. Esqrs., for Randle McDonnell, Esqr.' He may perhaps have been a friend from the London days.* Poor Moore was making a last desperate bid for his life, but knew at heart that death would claim him first. This was indeed to happen as the *Freeman's Journal* of 17 December 1799 reports:

On Friday last Counsellor John Moore died at the Royal Oak Tavern, Waterford, of a lingering and obstinate disorder. His remains were privately interred on Sunday at Ballygunner. Mr. Moore, among many thousands who had justly forfeited their lives, experienced from government the most signal clemency. He had been some few weeks since on his way, with other prisoners, to Duncannon fort, but being taken ill at the Royal Oak, he was not only permitted to remain there, but received all possible medical assistance, and every other indulgence compatible with his safe keeping. The unfortunate gentleman was struck with the

lenity and humanity he met with, so that in his last moments he prayed most fervently for the King, and for the conversion of his enemies.

John Moore was a lawyer, and a member of a wealthy Catholic family, who had moved in fashionable society in Spain, France and England. He was, therefore, eminently qualified in Humbert's eyes for the important position of President of the Government of the Province of Connaught. Humbert had been disappointed that so few of the important Mayo landowners had joined him. The Protestant nobility and gentry remained hostile to a man. Moore was obviously the best man qualified for the job, and what is more significant, since he far outshone his Catholic neighbours in wealth, education and family background, was probably the only one qualified for the job.

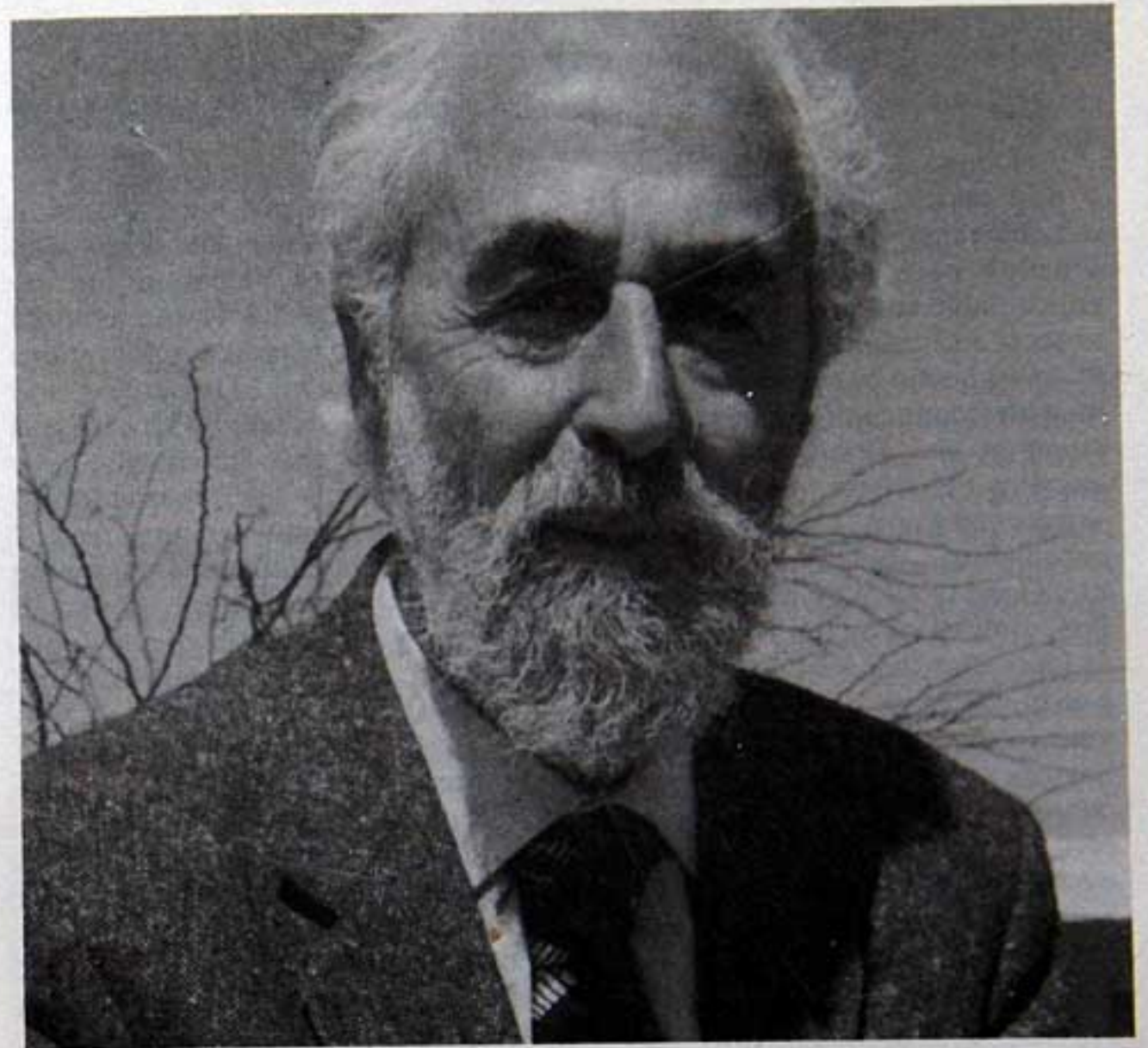
Much of the contemporary evidence produced here is very much in the conventions of the time, and the more damaging evidence comes from the pens of hostile witnesses. But it is nevertheless impossible to discover any contemporary evidence of radical leanings in Moore's opinions, or even of any interest in the wellbeing of his fellow countrymen. His letter from Waterford is completely self-centred. He complains of the conditions at New Geneva only in so far as they concern himself. It is not the 'treatment due to a gentleman'! In 1794 he had remarked to his parents on the establishment of a militia in Ireland, 'I think besides a defence to the Country it will greatly tend to civilise the lower orders of the peoples.' Hardly the comments of a democrat, but entirely typical of his class and times.

All we know for certain is that John Moore had always suffered from bad health, and had in some way disappointed his parents' expectations of him. He was to undergo much hardship and a lonely death for his part in a brief uprising in Mayo, but it is hard to avoid the feeling that nothing in his life became him like dying for his country. One is left with the perfect portrait of a reluctant patriot.

1. This article was partly written and researched by the late Grattan Freyer. It is based on material which the authors had collected for a book entitled *Eye Witnesses of 1798*.
2. John Moore's date of birth is given as 16 March 1768, in *King's Inns Admission Papers, 1607-1867*, Ed. Edw. Keane, P. Phair, Thomas Sadleir, 1982.
3. The first property acquired by the Moores appears to have been at Legaphouca or Legafouca. See George Moore, *Hail and Farewell*; Registry of Deeds, Deed relating to the lands of Legafouca, Co. Mayo, Charles Baron of Tyravley to George Moore, 18 July 1717.
4. National Library MS 889. Colonel Maurice Moore maintained that George, son of the George Moore above, became a Catholic when he emigrated to Spain. (See *Hail and Farewell*).
5. He was called to the Bar in the Hilary Term 1795. (*King's Inns Admission Papers, 1607-1867*). John Moore appears to have spent most of his time in London between 1795 and 1798.
6. We may have here a clue to John Moore's character and his strained relationship of a few years earlier with his father. Another damaging piece of evidence is in a letter from the Crown Prosecutor Daniel Webber to Alexander Marsden, the Under-Secretary at Dublin Castle, of 24 March 1799, where he writes that 'the Creature himself is a besotted wittol'. (SPO, State of the Country Papers, No. 3290). Referring to Denis Browne's involvement in the case, he writes that his 'zeal unquestionably is intemperate in the extreme.' John's younger brother George chose to overlook Denis Browne's intemperate zeal when he married Louisa Browne in 1807.
7. It is difficult to distinguish between the various MacDonnells who feature in the State Papers, and the problem is compounded by the use of alternatives such as 'Mac Donald'. This Alexander McDonnell may be the same as the Alexander McDonnell who figures in a letter

from Denis Browne to his brother Lord Altamont, written from Westport on 17 June 1798. This man came to Castlebar as the bearer of a government warrant for the arrest of Colonel James Plunkett, a Catholic gentleman from Roscommon, one of the leaders of the United Irishmen. 'Being the intimate friend of Plunkett', he 'published his business to every Person in the Town that would listen to Him.' He may, therefore, have already been involved with a United Irishman, and so come under the suspicion of Denis Browne. (SPO, Rebellion Papers, 620/38/204). We do not know if Randal, or Randle, as Moore calls him, is connected with Alexander, or if either is the Mr. McDonnell who is living in London according to a letter from John Moore to his father on 14 February 1794.

8. Another Randal McDonnell — from Killala — features prominently in the State Papers. This 'gentleman' according to letters from Lord Sligo to Alexander Marsden in July 1802, 'fixed himself in this county as a schoolteacher, and like most others that affected that Calling he was forming the minds of those around him for Revolution.' He was the first to join the French, 'had been tried convicted and sentenced to be hanged', and like a sensible man 'again broke the law by escaping from the execution of the sentence pronounced against him and tho his continuing to elude Justice should be of no great moment to the State, which I am inclined to think is the case, I cannot think it would be right that a man sentenced to be hanged for Rebellion should be allowed to live freely in the midst of those who knew the enormity of his Crimes, and perhaps had suffered from them.' He is still in Castlebar gaol in August 1803, the date of a memorial to the Lord Lieutenant in which he claims that he had been forced by Colonel O'Dowd and Captain O'Kane to join the Rebellion, that he had protected loyalists' houses from destruction, and that he had buried the bodies of Henry Rogers and Henry Smith who lay in the streets of Killala. (SPO, Rebellion Papers, 620/18A/7/ and 620/12/141/6).



GRATTAN FREYER, 1915-1983

The late Grattan Freyer was son of Major Dermot and Lorna Freyer, and grandson of the famous London surgeon born in Cleggan, Co. Galway. Born in Cambridge in 1915, he was educated at Bedale School and Cambridge University, where he studied Science and English. On obtaining his Ph.D. in Trinity College, Dublin, for a study on Machiavelli, he taught for a time in Armagh, and was married in 1939. He worked in Adult Education in England during the Second World War, and studied pottery there under Bernard Leach. Grattan and Madeleine came to Terrybaun in 1949, where for 34 years he achieved international fame as author, critic and lecturer, while working as potter, woodworker, farmer and horse-breeder. Among his published works are studies of Peadar O'Donnell (1973) and W.B. Yeats (1981). He contributed to The New Pelican Guide to English Literature (1983) and edited Modern Irish Writing (1978) and Bishop Stock's 'Narrative' (1982), while he was co-editor with Bernard Harris of The Achievement of Sean O Riada (1981).

Ar dheis De go raibh a anam.

APPENDIX 1

(A Letter from John Moore to his Parents, National Library, MS 889).
London 10 January 1794

Honoured Sir,

In taking up my pen to write to you, I cannot but have the most convincing proofs from my actual feelings of the poor, lonely and disgraceful situation of a Criminal, without the least means of palliation for my unjustifiable and disgraceful persevering conduct and behaviour and exposed to scoff and insult. Even the meanest creatures must experience sensations the most acute: but what poignancy of Grief must affect me? Descended, and the eldest branch of a respectable and antient family: educated with care and attention and among the first Roman Catholics of this Island who now enjoying the fairest fortunes can now see me reduced to the deplorable and worse condition of a pickpocket and a Highwayman by the just, I acknowledge, tho' as grievous severity of him, who in a fatal moment gave me life. Good God! Why was I not cut off with my Brother and Sister by the small Pox, afterwards by the Ague in Alicante and lastly in the flower of my Youth at Paris. But that would have been mercy indeed: and that was not to be my Lot in this World, whatever it may be in the next. I do not mean to arraign your justice — to it I have nothing to reply — but I feel the mortal regret of having survived the commission of the first offence against you and continuation to my last — but if laying aside your well merited anger for a cool moment you can still vouchsafe to restore me to your wonted favour, and what is more to your future friendship, the sneers and sarcasm of THOSE acquainted with my disgrace have made such an undeliable impression as never, never to be effaced. What I mean by **future friendship** I wish now (for the first time) to let you know the full conception I entertain of it; and were you willing to give it me; as it would be the greatest pride of my heart, so I think after a little trial not unacceptable to you — but of this more hereafter. The great separation that has been between my Mother, you and me, which I may even call continual since 1776, could give but little room to the assimilation of Tempers. Yours (and I should be hardly bold enough to say so, had you not often acknowledged it to me) is of a quick turn; and mine possible of a more passive. Hence when ever we were together, we were a loss to each other; instead of the benefit and advantage which might accrue from the assistance which as the oldest of my Brothers it was my natural turn first to have afforded you. Unhappily for me I see myself at the age of near 27 as destitute as when I first came into the World; since which I have been to you an everlasting burden — and Good God how have I repaid it — by neglect and Ingratitude. Oh my Father can you still forgive me — if I do not henceforward obey you in every thing, let me then be an outcast in Society; but force me not to disgrace you thro' want and penury. At least give me a small pittance and send me to the East or West Indies or anywhere that I may honestly earn my bread. Whilst I am writing I have but eight pence in my pocket and I do not know if Mr. Wall will give me any money: if he does it will

be more to a beggar than to your Son. For Gods sake write me as soon as possible, tho' I am sure I don't deserve it: the safest way under cover to Messrs Baring. Pray ask me any questions and by return of post I will give you an immediate answer. Excuse me writing more; I know not what I am doing, but henceforward will be really

Honoured Sir

Your Affte. Dutiful Son
John Moore.

My Dear Mother,

You will have but a feint idea of my situation but I acknowledge I justly deserve it: but the distresses I have felt, since I incurred my Father's resentment have been so poignant that if it had not been for Gods Grace which in his mercy has not quite abandoned me, I know not what I should have done, driven as I am almost to distraction. It is only you and my Father, who can relieve me and restore me to my peace of mind; as you must know I have you two, as sole and sincere friends in the world — intercede then for me, my Dear Mother, and obtain my forgiveness, as you both wish to be forgiven in Heaven. Cast a dark veil on what is past — I'll make no promises — let my future conduct be the sole test — For Gods sake, pray console me with a few lines, and I will answer them by return of post. I wish you and my father many happy returns of the new year, for my part I have firmly resolved it shall be a new one also in the whole of my conduct — when I answer the first letter you are so good as to write me, I will satisfactorily reply to the questions you may ask from me. I am too much agitated to enter into any indifferent subject at present.

Forgive me, my Dear Mother and you will find me

Your most dutiful

Affte. Son

John Moore.

George is very well and desires his duty to you and my Father and Love to our Brother Thomas.

APPENDIX 2

The Memorial of John Moore by Mr. McDonnell
(State Paper Office, 620/51/240, no date).

To his Excellency the Marquis Cornwallis.

The Memorial of John Moore of Moorehall in the County of Mayo, Esquire, now a Prisoner in the Barracks of Dublin.

Sheweth.

That from the time the French Landed in the County of Mayo, until Friday the 31 of August your Memorialist remained with his Father (who is far advanced in years) at Moorehall within a few Miles of the Town of Castlebar.

That Memorialist during this period was Employed in dissuading his Father's Tenantry from leaving their Habitations, and in endeavouring to protect his Father's House and Property.

That on Thursday the 30 of August, your Memorialist and the rest of his Father's family were overpowered by several Parties of Rebels in Arms, who plundered the House and kept possession of it until Friday Morning.

That George Moore, the Father of Memorialist, apprehensive that the Rebels would do him further Injury, did on Friday the 31 of August, direct your Memorialist to go to the Town of Castlebar, and Endeavour to procure from the French General a Protection against the Repetition of such Outrages.

That your Memt. for some hours declined obeying the Commands of his Father, but being Informed that the French General was at the House of Kirwan of Milltown near Castlebar, your Memt. about three o'clock on Friday went to Mr. Kirwan's House, in the Expectation of seeing the French General.

That your Memt. from an Unwillingness to go into the town of Castlebar, remained at Mr. Kirwan's for some time, but seeing a written Protection which had been granted to Mr. Kirwan, and finding that the French General did not come there as was Expected, your Memt. on Friday evening, and not before that time went to the Town of Castlebar.

That your Memt. Immediately after his Arrival there, Communicated his business to the French General, who perceiving that your Memt. spoke the French Language fluently, insisted on his remaining with him that Evening, and Evaded giving your Memt. any Answer until the next morning.

That your Memt. was obliged to remain in Company with the French officers until a late hour on Friday Night, during which time they became fully acquainted with the fortune, and situation in Life of Memorialist's family.

That on Saturday the first of September, your Memt. repeated his request to the French General, who thereupon handed a Written Paper to your Memt. and declared the Gentlemen of the Country must Organize it, and that plunder could not be Effectually prevented in any other way.

That your Memt. on reading the paper refused to accept of any such Authority as it Imported to give, but was Informed that resistance on the part of your Memorialist would be vain, and that he must obey at the Peril of his Life.

That your Memorialist immediately after Communicated the whole of said Transaction to a Magistrate and several other Gentlemen in the Town of Castlebar (whom your Memt. knew to be Loyal Subjects) and by whom and your Memt., it was Conceived that so far as your Memt. could protect property from Plunder he would be warranted to act but no further.

That your Memt. on Saturday Evening solicited permission from the French General to leave the Town of Castlebar, but was Peremptorily refused.

That on Sunday the 2 of September the French General demanded from the town of Castlebar first a Contribution of 3,000 Guineas, afterwards, 2,000

Guineas and lastly 1,000 Guineas.

That your Memt. and others represented the Inability of the Inhabitants to pay such a Sum, but the French General disregarding this representation, threatened to deliver up the Town to the Rebels, for two Hours to plunder unless the aforesaid sum of 1,000 Guineas should be produced on that Evening; and the French General on the same Day, namely Sunday, ordered Mr. Prendergast a Physician and Christopher Baynes a Magistrate, (two of the most wealthy Inhabitants of Castlebar) into Prison, with Threats of Military Execution unless they should produce to him a Considerable sum of money.

That the French General finding that the sum demanded could not be Produced, he on Monday morning the 3 of September threatened the aforesaid Doctor Prendergast and your Memt. with Military Execution if they did not sign Assignats to the amount of 1,000 Guineas.

That your Memt. having no doubt that this threat would be carried into Execution unless Complied with, did on Monday Evening sign about Twenty Assignats agreeable to a form prescribed by one of the French Officers.

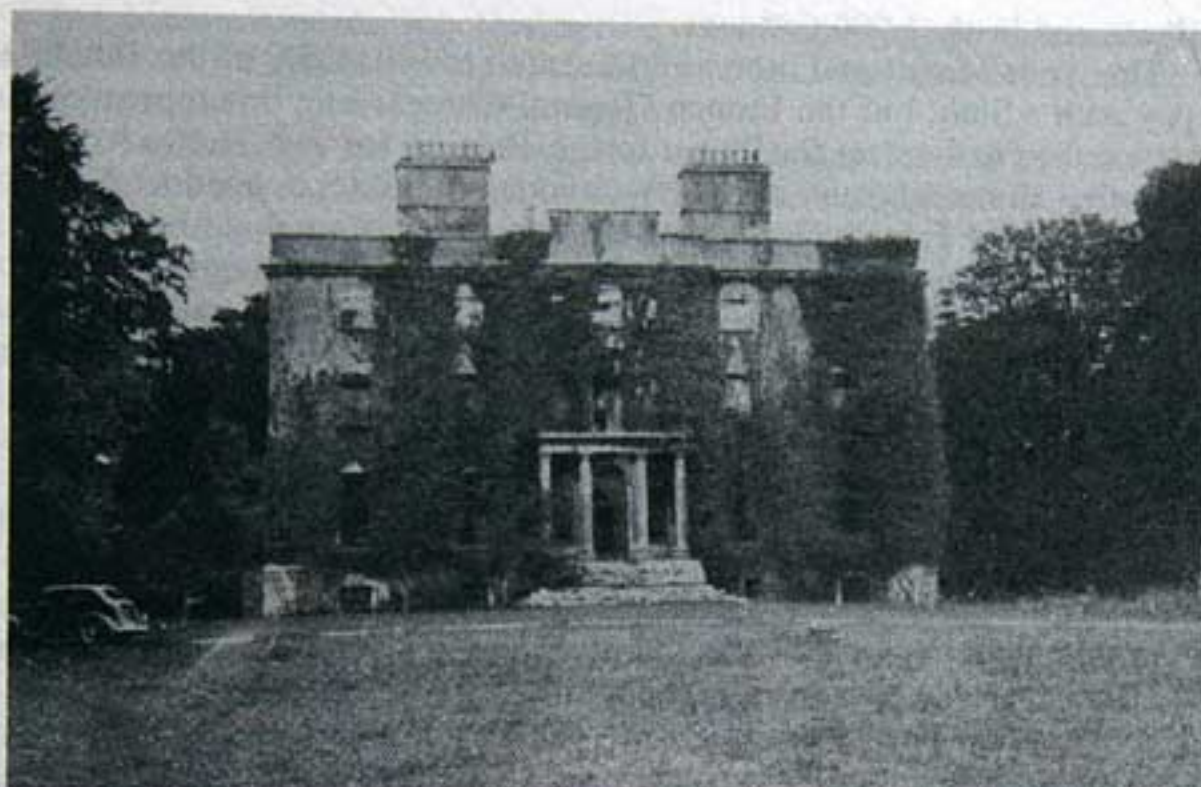
That on Tuesday Morning the French Evacuated Castlebar, and in the course of that Day, your Memt. and a Magistrate Exerted themselves to prevent a considerable quantity of Arms from falling into the hands of the Rebels, and in preserving the Cattle near the Town of Castlebar for the use of his Majesties Troops so soon as they should arrive.

That on Tuesday Night your Memorialist was arrested by Col. Crawford, in the town of Castlebar, and Delivered to him the Papers before Ment.

That your Memorialist never was a Member of the society of United Irishmen nor of any other Society in this Kingdom, nor was your Memt. in any manner Connected with any such Society.

That all the Persons (Except one now in England) who can prove the facts above Stated are resident in and near Castlebar; And your Memorialist therefore Humbly requests, that he may be Permitted to lay Affidavits before your Excellency verifying the facts above Stated, And that your Excellency may thereupon order your Memt. Either to be discharged or Tried, at such time and in such manner as to your Excellency shall seem proper.

Signed — JOHN MOORE.



Top: Moore Hall after the fire of 1923.

Bottom: Moore Hall in 1898. Maurice and Evelyn Moore on the steps.

APPENDIX 3

(Attorney's account for attending John Moore, arrested for Treason 1798).

John Moore of Moorehall, Esqre.

Dr. to Alexander McDonnell, Attey.

THE KING AGAINST JOHN MOORE Esqre.

5 September 1798

Attending Mr. Moore at Castlebar (where he was arrested for Treason) from the 5 to the 20 September '98, during which time I was busily employed in preparing proofs, examining witnesses, etc., — it being supposed that Mr. Moore would be tried by Court Marshall, and for which I charge five Guineas per day	£	s.	d.
	85	6	3

Mr. Moore having been removed from Castlebar to Athlone where it was apprehended he would have been tried, I proceeded from Castlebar to Athlone where I attended Mr. Moore, who was removed to Dublin on the 21st September to abide his Trial by Court Marshall, and for which I charge 20 Guineas for four days attendance.	£	s.	d.
	22	15	0

Paid the Keeper of the Provost Marshall in Athlone for bringing messages from me to Mr. Moore.	£	s.	d.
	1	2	9

Paid for Carriage Hire to and from Athlone, Drivers etc., 120 miles	£	s.	d.
	13	13	0

Mr. Moore having been ordered off from Athlone to Dublin where he expected to have been Tried by Court Marshall, he and his Councl. directed me to proceed Immediately to Castlebar to Examine the different Witnesses and hold them in readiness to proceed to Dublin at the shortest Notice and to procure every other possible Proof for his Defence, in consequence of which I had every matter in readiness and remained in Castlebar from the 20 of September to the 1 of November '98 in hourly expectation of receiving orders to attend with the witnesses, for which I charge five Guineas per day	£	s.	d.
	233	3	9

Drawing Draft Mr. Moore's Case for Counl. very long	£	s.	d.
	2	5	6
Fair Copy same		10	0

Drawing Draft Memorial to be prefered to Lord Cornwallis	£	s.	d.
	1	2	9

Fair Copy of said Memorial as amended by Counsel	£	s.	d.
	1	2	9

Mr. Moore having been remanded to Castlebar in the beginning of November in order to be tried by a Court Marshall then sitting there, I was obliged to attend Mr. Moore the whole of Michaelmas Term 1798, whereby I forfeited the whole or the greater part of the Profits of my

business, and I therefore charge Ten Guineas per day from 1 November to the 10 of December

455 0 0

November 15 having been sent Express from Castlebar to Dublin by Mr. Moore for Counsel to assist Mesrs. Boyd and Conmee on his Tryal which was Hourly Expected to be brought on.

Paid Carriage Hire to and from Dublin Turnpikes and Drivers, 25 Guineas

28 8 0

On my arrival in Dublin having applied to John Kirwan Esqre. to come to Castlebar specially in order to attend Mr. Moore's Tryal, he refused to leave Dublin pending the Law Term, but went along with me to Mesrs. Burston Duquery Saurin and Bush to know if either of them could attend Mr. Moore, all of whom refused, upon which I thought it prudent to advise with them what measures should be taken for Mr. Moores Protection, and a Consultation being held accordingly, they were unanimously of Opinion that an application to the Court of Kings Bench for Writs of Habeas Corpus was the most prudent step to be taken for Mr. Moore's Safety.

Paid Mesrs. Kirwan, Burston, Duquery, Saurin, and Bush on the Consultation five Guineas each

28 8 0

Drawing Draft Affidavit to Ground Motion for Writs of Habeas Corpus

10 0

Two Copies to Swear and attest

10 0

Stamp duty

3 0

Swearing affidavit

1 0

Paid filing and attesting affidavit

7 0

Drawing Draft Brief for Motion

10 10

Fair Copy for Court

5 0

Fee paid to Mr. Bush with Brief

5 13 13

Motion being Granted

Paid for three Several Writs of Habeas Corpus and Expedition to the Clerke who made them and Immediately after motion was Granted

3 19 0

Paid for the order for said Writs and filing

8 0

Fee on said three Writs of Habeas Corpus

3 0 0

On my Arrival at Castlebar with the Writs of Habeas Corpus, It was Considered prudent by Mr. Moore and his friend not to Deliver them but to submit to be Tried by the Court Marshal then Sitting at Castlebar, which Mr. Moore

offered and Waived the benefit of the Writs of Habeas Corpus, as per Letter to General Trench, yet the General refused to proceed on his Tryal

The Court Marshal at Castlebar being adjourned and Mr. Moore being in a bad State of Health, It was Considered fit that a Consultation of Physicians should be held on Mr. Moore, and an application by Memorial made to the Lord Lieutenant founded on the affidts. of the Physicians to have Mr. Moore Enlarged on Bail

A Consultation being held and the Physicians having reported that Mr. Moore's longer Confinement was likely to prove fatal to him — Drawing affidt. of sd. Physicians to that Effect

1 2 0

Paid three Physicians for their Attendance on Mr. Moore in Prison and for their Consultation 2 Guineas each

6 16 6

Mr. Moore and his Counl. having Directed me to proceed to Dublin and to have a Memorial preferred to his Excellency Earl Cornwallis founded on the report and Affidt. of the Physicians, I accordingly went

Drawing Draft Memorial

2 5 6

Fair Copy same for the Perusal of Mr. Boyd and others

10 0

Drawing fair Copy Memorial to prefer to the Lord Lieutenant as Amended

1 2 9

Attended on Mr. Moore's Business in Dublin from the 11th to the 25 December 1798 for which I charge five Guineas per day

85 6 8

It is being thought fit to Consult on the mode of preferring the Memorial and what should be further done for Mr. Moore

Paid Mesrs. Whitestone Kirwan, Boyd, Williams and Conmee on said Consultation and for Several previous Consultations two Guineas each

11 7 6

Paid Carriage Hire to and from Dublin to Castlebar Turnpikes and Drivers

17 1 3

Attending Mr. Moore every day from the 25 of December to the 20 January 1799 at his own particular Instance, for which I charge Five Guineas per day

147 17 6

20 January 1799

Hillary Term having commenced, I was detained in the Country the whole of this Term to the 10 of February at the Particular desire of Mr. Moore attending him and his affairs, whereby I lost the Greater part of the Profits of my Business, and I therefore charge 10 Guineas per day

238 17 6

10 February

The Prayer of Mr. Moore's Memorial not being Granted. It Was Decreed Necessary that I should go to Dublin to Consult with Council. whether he ought to take his Tryal at then ensuing assizes of Mayo, or not, and having Accordingly gone to Dublin, and Mesrs. Whitstone, Kirwan, Boyd, Williams and Conmee having met in consultation Sevl. Successive days, they at length after much deliberation advised Mr. Moore to abide his Tryal at the then ensuing assizes of Ballinrobe

Attending in the City of Dublin from the 10 of February to the 11 of March 1799 merely on Mr. Moore's Business, for which I charge five Guineas per day

Paid Carriage Hire to and from Dublin to Castlebar Turnpike and Drivers

Drawing and Serving special Notice on Thomas Kemmis Esqre. the Crown Solicitor that Mr. Moore would abide his Tryal at the then ensuing assizes of Ballinrobe

Mr. Moore having wrote to me to Dublin to attend at Castlebar previous to the assizes to Examine his Witnesses and arrange his Proofs, I accordingly attended from the 11 to the 23 of March in taking the Depositions of his Witnesses and Preparing his Defence, during which Period my time was wholly Occupied by Mr. Moore and prevented from attending my Records at Roscommon or Sligo, for which I charge 10 Guineas per day

Paid Messenger and Horse Hire which I sent Express to Sligo for Crown Summon's 88 Miles

Paid for 18 Summons's and Fee

52 Copies thereof for Service

Drawing Draft Brief on behalf of Mr. Moore 30 Sheets at 5s. per

Eleven fair Copies thereof for Counl. 330 Sheets at 3s. 4d. per Sheet

Paid for three Licences for Mesrs. Whitestone, Williams and Kirwan they being Kings Counl. and fee

Paid Mesrs. Whitestone Kirwan Boyd Williams Conmee Martin Kirwan John Darcy and James Moore O'Donnell Esqrs. with their Briefs at Ballinrobe 160 Guineas

Drawing and Swearing affidt. of Alexr. McDonnell of Service of Notice on Mr. Kemmis the Crown Solr.

Drawing and Swearing affidt. of John Moore Esqre. the Prisoner with respect to his not being returned on Callender and his Imprisonment

Drawing and Swearing three Several affidts. at Ballinrobe being very long and Special

Paid filing said five affidts. with the Clerke of the Crown

Paid the Cryer at Ballinrobe

Drawing a Special Notice on the Sherriff to produce the Prisoners Body being in his Custody

Drawing affidt. of Service of said Notice

Paid filing same

Sherriff not having produced Mr. Moore in pursuance of the Notice Drawing Short Brief for Counl. to apply to the Court to oblige the Sherriff to bring up the Prisoner for Tryal

Eight Copies thereof for Counl.

The Learned Judge who Presided having Heard Counsel on behalf of the Priser. and also on behalf of the Crown, was Pleased to Order that the High sherriff of the County of Mayo should bring forth the body of John Moore Esqre. then in his Custody, notwithstanding which the Sherriff did not Comply with said Order — alledging that Mr. Moore was in the Custody of the General of the District.

A Court Marshal having State at Castlebar, Immediately after the assizes — It was Supposed by Mr. Moore and his friends that he would have been Tried at said Court, and therefore detained me untill the 23 of April 1799, which prevented me from going to Galway assizes and lost 15 days in the then next Easter Term, and I therefore charge 10 Guineas per day from 23 March to 23 April.

May 1799

Drawing further Memorial to prefer to the Lord Lieutenant.

Fair Copy for Counsils perusal.

Fair Copy thereof as Amended by Counsel to be preferred to his Excellency Lord Cornwallis.

To Cash paid Mr. Eustace Lynch.

Note

I have charged a Certain Sum per day for my Attce. on Mr. Moore, rather than make a separate Charge, for every Particular Attendance, on him his Lawyers, Witnesses and friends and in going in and about his Business in General, which would Amount to a much larger Sum than what I have charged at present in Consequence of the Numerous Attendances I had during a Period of Nine Months, and I likewise forfeited the Profits of my Business during three whole Terms rather than Disappoint or Neglect Mr. Moore, to whom, and to whose Business I paid every possible attention — I underwent much fatigue and danger in going Express Several times during the Rebellion to and from Dublin, All which when Considered by Mr. Moore will I hope Induce him to think that my present Bill of Costs is a reasonable one and the moreso as he knows that I used every possible Exertion and means in my Power not only as an Agent, but as a friend to Defend him against the attacks of his Enemies.

SHEILA MULLOY: Ph.D. (N.U.I.). Editor of Franco-Irish correspondence, 1688-92, Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1983-84. Has contributed articles to Capuchin Annual, Irish Sword, Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society and the Connacht Tribune. Member of Military History Society, Mayo Historical Society etc. Compiler of O'Malley Clan booklet. Vice-Chairperson, Westport Historical Society 1983-84.

The remainder of this article is to be found in Volume 5.

MAYO AND THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1874

Gerard P. Moran M.A. H.Dip. in Education

W. E. Gladstone was forced to dissolve Parliament on January 24, 1874, because of the conflict that existed between the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament. One of the major obstacles for the government had been the question of abolishing income tax.¹ However, Gladstone still retained the respect of the Irish people, despite his failure to fulfill satisfactorily his promises in relation to the land question and the university question. As far as the Irish were concerned he was the only English statesman who had ever attempted to give Ireland justice.

The electoral struggle in Ireland was intense, enhanced by the criticism of the Tory and Liberal press towards each other. There were many significant features of the 1874 election, as compared to previous elections. Primarily, the election saw the emergence of a third political force in the country — the Home Government Association. This new force broke the monopoly which the Liberals and the Conservatives had on Irish politics since 1858. Secondly, it was the first general election which saw the operation of the Secret Ballot Act, which had come on the Statute Book in 1872. The importance of this election also lay in the fact that it saw the emergence of many important parliamentary representatives. It also witnessed the decline of the clergy and the landlords as major political forces.

Since the formation of the Home Rule movement in 1870, support for its objectives came slowly. Initially, it received support from all sections of Irish society. However, the increased participation of nationalists resulted in a gradual drifting away of the Tory sections. Its major handicap was its failure to secure the support of the Catholic hierarchy, who up to 1873 remained loyal to Gladstone. The bishops' disappointment with the government's university bill eventually resulted in them turning to support the new association. In May, 1873, the clergy of Castlebar deanery, led by their parish priest, Canon James Magee, and nine priests from the Achonry diocese, came out in support of Ireland's right to a native Parliament.² They promised to support the Home Government Association in achieving their objectives. Nationalists' reaction to the declaration was favourable, as it was looked upon as a step in the right direction. Their declaration was important because it was an open call to Mayomen to support the association. Of more significance was the fact that it encouraged the clergy, of similar views in other areas, to openly declare their support for the principles of Home Rule. Shortly after the declaration of the Castlebar deanery, the clergy of Gallen and Westport came out in favour of the Home Rule concept.

For the new movement to be successful it needed the widespread and open support of the hierarchy. This would then ensure that the Irish people would espouse it. It was not until September 1873 that the Bishop of Cloyne, William Keane, gave his approval to the objectives of the Home Rule Association and called for an assembly in Dublin to discuss the issue.³ The declaration of support by the deaneries and the Bishop of Cloyne, allowed

Archbishop McHale of Tuam to openly approve of the new movement in late September and he also contributed to its funds. McHale's open support of the Home Government Association was met with approval in his native Mayo.

Irish nationalists had supported the call for Secret Ballot legislation in the early part of the 1870's. Gladstone was supported by the Irish nationalists when he finally did introduce such legislation into Parliament. The growing support which the measure was receiving in Mayo forced Lord Bingham, the Conservative M.P. for the county, to write to the Castlebar Board of Guardians, stating that he did not consider their resolution in support of the Secret Ballot Bill justified. In his opinion, as only three guardians were present when the resolution was adopted, it was not a true reflection of the board's sentiments.⁴ Despite the opposition of such M.P.s the bill became law in August, 1872.

The suddenness of the election caught the Home Government Association completely unaware. The movement had not yet begun to implement its proposals for the election, made in November, 1873. However, in most constituencies some form of organisation was hastily convened. In Mayo it was impossible to get such a grouping together. The absence of farmers' clubs and local party organisations resulted in a total dependency on the Mayo clergy to provide organisation in the selection of candidates. In the rest of the country the clergy, along with other bodies, were involved with the selection of candidates.⁵ Their contribution was one of the major factors behind the success of the Home Rule Association in the 1874 election. While the clergy in many constituencies continued to support Liberal candidates, as in Louth, their absence from the election would undoubtedly have resulted in fewer Home Rule M.P.s being returned to Parliament. The new movement's success is demonstrated by the return of fifty-nine Home Rule M.P.s to Parliament, although, in practice, its parliamentary strength was well under this. In contrast, the Liberals managed to have only twelve Irish M.P.s returned to Parliament. At the 1868 General Election there were sixty-six Irish M.P.s returned to Westminster.⁶ Therefore, 1874 can be described as the year the Liberal party ceased to be an effective force in Irish politics.

Within a fortnight of the Parliament's dissolution, George O'Donel, Thomas Tigue, Thomas O'Dowd, John O'Connor Power and one of the outgoing M.P.s, George Browne, declared their intention of seeking the Mayo nomination to Parliament. All of them with the exception of O'Connor Power, were substantial landowners in the county. Browne was still a relative newcomer to politics having only become a member for the county in April 1870 when he replaced his recently deceased brother-in-law, George Henry Moore. The second M.P. for the county, Lord Bingham, who had represented Mayo in Parliament as a conservative since 1865, decided not to seek re-election.

All of the candidates supported the popular issues of land reform, education and amnesty for the Fenian prisoners. It was due to the promptings of Archbishop McHale and the Tuam clergy that Thomas Tigue, a Catholic landowner from Ballindine, decided to seek the nomination. The clergy's

nominees were Browne and Tigue. John O'Connor Power failed to get clerical approval because of his Fenian associations. Even the advanced nationalist sympathisers amongst the clergy were totally opposed to his candidature. Father Patrick Lavelle, the parish priest of Cong and one of the most outspoken Fenian supporters, claimed that O'Connor Power was the illegitimate son of a Cavan policeman named Fleming, who only got places because of his wit and the gullibility of others.⁷ O'Connor Power was born in Ballinasloe, Co. Galway in 1846, the son of Patrick Power, gentleman. Most of his childhood was spent in the local workhouse. In 1861 he went to Rochdale, Lancashire, where he learned the trade of house-painter. Having joined the I.R.B. he was their Lancashire organiser for some time.⁸ About 1870 he returned to Ireland where he got employment at Saint Jarlath's Tuam. By 1874 he was the Connaught representative on the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. Clerical disapproval forced O'Connor Power to withdraw from the election, much to the annoyance of the advanced section of the Home Rule Association, who were prepared to support him. O'Dowd also withdrew from the contest because of the clergy's attitude.

The majority of the constituency conventions in Ireland were organised by the clergy, tenant farmer clubs and local party organisations. In Mayo the convention was totally under clerical control. Meeting privately before the convention, they endorsed the candidature of Browne and Tigue. Despite the clerical opposition O'Donel refused to withdraw from the contest.

Browne and Tigue were declared elected as the county sheriff refused to accept O'Donel's nomination papers, on the grounds that they did not comply with normal procedure. O'Donel petitioned the sheriff's decision and this was upheld by the tribunal that investigated the case. The tribunal, headed by Judge Keogh, declared the sheriff's decision erroneous and ordered that the election be reheld.

O'Connor Power signified his intention of re-entering the contest along with the three candidates involved in the invalid contest. His proposer was James Daly, a non-resident tenant farmer of substantial holdings in Mayo. Daly was later to become one of the most important figures in the Land League in the county.

Despite O'Connor Power's re-entry into the contest the clergy continued to support their original nominees — Browne and Tigue. Evidence was produced which seemed to indicate that McHale supported O'Connor Power. However, the Archbishop's espousal of Browne and Tigue never waned, but it would appear that he was not totally opposed to O'Connor Power during the election contest, as he never openly denounced the Fenian.

The majority of the Home Rule leaders condemned O'Connor Power's intervention in the election. However, the growing support for the Fenian candidate from the advanced section of the party forced the Leader, Isaac Butt, to pursue a neutral course in the election. Some individual party members were dissatisfied with the decision and decided to actively support O'Connor Power. The most notable of these was Mr. Blunden, a secretary of the Association.⁹ The division in the Home Rule party ranks was deplored by

moderate nationalists. It was feared it would result in irreconcilable feuds and bitterness. Although three Home Rulers were contesting the two seats the sentiments expressed by the *Freeman's Journal* in May, were shared by a majority of Mayo nationalists:

... We must again raise our voice in protest against a calamity as a contest between Home Rulers for the representation of the western county."

The paper, which was the leading nationalist organ in the country, supported Browne and Tighe in the contest.

Five-sevenths of the 3,584 electors voted. The contest was evenly fought with O'Connor Power edging out Tighe for the second seat by forty seven votes.

* Much of O'Connor Power's success can be attributed to the introduction of the Secret Ballot Act in 1872. Firstly, it resulted in the abstention of the Conservatives from the contest. Secondly, it ensured that the clergy would be unable to exert their total influence over the electorate, as they had previously done. The clergy did continue to have an influence over the selection of candidates, as was seen in the 1885 General Election, but the Secret Ballot Act meant that their nominees were never certain to be elected.

The full effects of the Secret Ballot Act were not to be felt until years later. However, in the Mayo election of 1874, it was a major contributory factor in the success of John O'Connor Power. His decision to withdraw from the contest in the beginning has to be put down to his fear of the political clout of the clergy. He was supported by some of the Mayo newspapers, but this was nullified by the electoral power of the clergy. A changed situation had come about as a result of the Secret Ballot Act. O'Connor Power was also aided by the fact that the clergy were not averse to his home rule political beliefs. His electoral success demonstrated the existence of a strong Fenian element in Mayo. O'Connor Power was still a member of the supreme council of the I.R.B." and there is no doubt that he received votes from people who sympathised with his deep radical views.

The 1874 General Election saw a further curtailment of the clergy's political power. Clerical control of electoral affairs had been on the decline in Mayo since 1857. In that election, individual priests were reprimanded for using undue clerical influence in favour of George Henry Moore, in the course of the election. However, it would be wrong to say, as had been suggested in some quarters, that the 1857 election was the last in which the Roman Catholic clergy's participation was clearly evident." At the Mayo election convention in 1885 the clergy had a dominating control over proceedings. Also in the 1892 election the activities of the clergy were clearly demonstrated in favour of the anti-Parnellite candidate." What the 1874 election shows, is that the clergy attempted and failed to have matters their own way. Their influence and power like that of the landlords, was now greatly curtailed by the 1872 Secret Ballot Act. For the first time in seventeen years the electors of Mayo were given the opportunity to register their vote. In the previous three general election no election had taken place as only two candidates contested the two seats. Now for the first time they had elected

their own choice, John O'Connor Power, and not the nominees of the clergy.

O'Connor Power's electoral success had important implications for the land and political questions in Mayo. For the first time Mayo was represented by an M.P. without landlord connections. He held advanced views on the land question and it was he who rekindled the phrase in the 1870's 'the land of Ireland for the people of Ireland'. His election along with a small number of Home Rule radicals resulted in a policy of obstruction being pursued in the House of Commons. One of the greatest contributions O'Connor Power made was at a local level, where he continued to maintain contact with his constituents. O'Connor Power became the first Home Rule member to annually address his constituents. He reported on his activities during the year. When the parliamentary season ended he returned to Mayo and spoke in all the principal towns, defending his parliamentary conduct during the year. This led to a group of men convening, who were influential in the Land League in Mayo. People like James Daly, John J. Loudon, P.M. Nally, James O'Kane and Hugh Feeney were always on the platform when O'Connor Power addressed his constituents. After his address to his constituents in Castlebar in 1878, these men met and formed the Mayo Tenants' Defence Association. The election of John O'Connor Power in 1874 had dramatic effects on Mayo.

1. Taylor, Robert, *Lord Salisbury* (London 1975) p.43.
2. *The Nation*, 10 May (1873).
3. *ibid.* 20 September (1873); *Ballinrobe Chronicle* 29 September (1873).
4. *Mayo Examiner*, 25 March (1872).
5. McCaffry, L. J., *Home Rule and the General Election of 1874 in Ireland* in *IHS* IX 34 p.200.
6. Walker, B.M., *Parliamentary Election Returns in Ireland, 1801-1922*, (Dublin 1978) p.193.
7. Thornley, D., *Isaac Butt and Home Rule* (London 1964) p.184.
8. Moody, T. W., *Davitt and Irish Revolution, 1846-1882* (Oxford 1981) pp.47-48.
9. *Ballinrobe Chronicle* 16 May (1874); Thornley, op. cit. pp.246-7.
10. *Freeman's Journal*, 18 May (1874).
11. Moody, T. W. and Leon O'Brien *The I.R.B. Supreme Council, 1868-1878* in *IHS* 19 no. 75 pp.290-295.
12. Waldron, P. *The 1857 Election* in B. O'Hara (ed) *Mayo*.
13. Woods, C. J., *The General Election of 1892: the Catholic clergy and the defeat of the Parnellites* in F.S.L. Lyons and R. A. J. Hawkins (ed) *Ireland under the Union. Varieties of Tension. Essays in honour of T. W. Moody* (Oxford 1980) p.297.

GERARD P. MORAN: *Native of Castlebar. Educated at Saint Gerald's, Castlebar. M.A. (N.U.I.) "Land and Politics in Mayo 1868/1890". Teaches History and Irish at C.B.S., James Street, Dublin.*

Contributor to Connacht Telegraph, Journals of Ballina Historical Society and Galway Historical Society.

"The Church and State in Ireland — The case of the Mayo Co. Librarian, 1930-1932". (Studies — Summer 1984).

Completing work on "Father Patrick Lavelle and the Partry Evictions of 1860".

AN OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF WESTPORT PART IV

THE FAMINE YEARS, IT'S AFTERMATH — 1845-1855

by Peadar Ó Flanagan, B.A., B. Comm.

In my last article, I outlined the development of the Irish Poor Law in the years leading up to the Famine. Westport was the administrative centre for the Westport Poor Law Union, covering the coastal area between Killary Harbour and Blacksod Bay, and the site of the Union Workhouse, situated at Cahernamart, where the Board of the Union, ex officio and elected members, held their meetings, and which was only opened on the eve of the Famine by Mandamus order of the courts. In the present article, I deal with the town of Westport during the Famine years.

The Commissioners enquiring into the State of the Poor in Ireland in the years immediately preceding the Famine give a picture, drawn Parish by Parish, of a rapidly increasing population steeped in poverty, with little future prospects. The Parish of Oughaval (Aghavale), which includes the town of Westport, was no exception and the respondents to the Commissioners' queries, mostly clergymen of the various denominations, refer to the poverty of the people in general, begging for money in the streets of the town, or for food in the country areas; over-crowding in the town, with from 2 to 8 families occupying the same house and a large number of lodging houses with nightly rates varying from ½d. to 2d.; a rapidly expanding population, whose condition had continued to deteriorate since the peace of 1815. Since that date also, with the exception of faction fights, there was little violence in the parish. Though many existed at subsistence level there had been no reported deaths from starvation. The potato was the staple food of the vast majority of the Irish people, and when this was struck by disease, famine inevitably resulted. The disease struck in the Autumn of 1845 and the reaction of the Government was to set up a Relief Commission to supervise the alleviation of the distress. The commission had four means of doing this:

1. At local level, relief committees would be set up to raise subscriptions and to buy food. The funds locally raised would be equalled £ by £ by the Commissioners.
2. Public works were to be commenced so that the able-bodied would have sufficient money to buy food. The public works were to be supervised by officials of the Board of Works.
3. In anticipation of the fever which would follow the famine, each Board of Guardians was to erect a fever hospital adjacent to the workhouse.
4. The Government was to expend £100,000 on the purchase of Indian meal in the United States, which would be stored at depots under Commissary officers, and used to lower the market price for grain as necessary.

The potato disease of 1845 was only partial and it was not until 1846 when the potato crop failed totally, that the plight of the Irish people became known generally and large and massive relief measures were undertaken both

by the Government, the British Association and the Society of Friends.

The Society of Friends (Quakers) in response to the great distress in Ireland established a Central Relief Committee in Dublin and sent as their agent, William Forster to Westport in December 1846, where he was joined by his son William Edward Forster on 18 January 1847. The latter describes the state of Westport at that time:

The town of Westport was in itself a strange and fearful sight. Like what we read of in beleaguered cities, its streets crowded with gaunt wanderers sauntering to and fro with hopeless air and hunger-struck look; a mob of starved, almost naked women around the poor-house, clamoring for soup tickets; our Inn, the headquarters of the road engineer and pay clerks, beset by a crowd of beggars for work.

On 1 January 1847 the British Association appointed Count Strzelecki, a Polish noble as their agent in the North West of Ireland, and he left immediately for Westport, from where he reported:

No pen can describe the distress by which I am surrounded, you may now believe anything which you hear and read, because what I actually see surpasses what I ever read of past and present calamities.

Both the Central Committee of the Society of Friends and the British Association approved grants which were disbursed through the local Relief Committees which had been set up, including Westport Relief Committee.

A Committee for the relief of distress was formed in Westport on 16 December 1846, consisting of nine members. The Committee within the first month had raised a sum of £232.14.0d. and in January 1847 amalgamated with a number of smaller committees in the district who were represented by a further nine members, making a total of eighteen.

By 2 February the amount raised was £721.14.7d and application was made to the Relief Commissioners for an equal sum to be added to their funds.

The Committee's function was to co-ordinate the various relief measures in their area and to submit lists of the distressed. The Committee membership was representative of the local landlords, merchants, religious of the various denominations, and the Secretary of the Committee was the Rev. Patrick Pouden, Vicar of Westport, who corresponded with the Relief Commissioners in Dublin. They met regularly in a room in the town known as the Relief Committee Room. They also co-ordinated the relief measures sponsored by both the British Association and the Central Committee of the Society of Friends, whose Agents, Mr. Wm. Forster and Count Strzelecki visited Westport in the winter of 1846-47.

The activities of the expanded relief Committee were wound up at a meeting held at Westport Courthouse on Thursday, 16 September 1847, the Most Noble the Marquess of Sligo in the Chair.

It was moved by Robert Buchanan, Esq., J. P. of Prospect and seconded by Rev. Thomas O'Dowd, R.C.C. and resolved:

That the proceedings of the several committees in this Union being now brought to a close, we cannot separate without conveying to the British Association our warmest thanks for the aid which they have given us during the awful visitation with which it has pleased the Lord to visit us. They came to our aid at a period when



Workhouse

thousands of persons would unavoidably have fallen victims to famine and disease, and while wants of the destitute were thus provided for, an additional obligation was conferred upon us by the maintenance of our juvenile population in the several schools which we were enabled to keep open and thereby not alone relieve their physical wants, but extend the blessings of education so necessary for the well-being of society. Their kindness was much enhanced by the funds having being disbursed by the hands of Count Strzelecki whose urbane and courteous demeanour and anxiety for the destitute deserving of our heartfelt gratitude.

The Secretary of the Committee at this time, George Hildebrand, forwarded the above resolution to the British Association in London, to Count Strzelecki in Dublin and had same published in the daily and local papers.

Opened on 5 November 1845 for the reception of the destitute poor, the Workhouse at Cahernamart, was during the following five years, to be the only hope of refuge for those who could no longer survive on the land. The large building was capable of housing 1,000 men, women and children and segregation was strictly enforced.

The Poor Law Guardians met in the Boardroom above the Gate Lodge once a week to discuss the affairs of the Union and the running of the Workhouse. The clerk of the Board was John Large. At their meeting of 27 June 1846 the uncollected rates totalled £840.17.4³/₄d. of which sum £116.0.0³/₄d. was in respect of the Westport area. On 11 July 1846 it was resolved that stirabout be substituted for potatoes at dinner for the next week. By August 1847, £800 was owed by the Westport Guardians, £1,000 was due in repayment of the erection loan and no rates were coming in. New Guardians were elected on 29 September 1847 including the Marquess of Sligo (Chairman), James Hileas — Maryland, Sir Richard O'Donel (Vice-Chairman), Dominick J. Bourke-Greenhills, Fitzgerald Higgins, G. G.

Higgins, G. Clendenning, M. MacDonnell — the last four from Westport. By early December there were 600 inmates, and as only £62 in rates had been collected, there was insufficient money to feed them. Mr. George Hildebrand a local merchant donated £60 towards the cost of food. At their meeting of 16 December, the Guardians proposed that a rate be levied on the electoral divisions of the Union and that 1¹/₃d. in the £ be the highest rate, each electoral division to be levied in proportion to its expenses.

At the meetings of the 14 and 20 January 1847, the Guardians sent desperate appeals for help to the Poor Law Commissioners. Mr. Hildebrand's £60 had been used up and the Chairman, Lord Sligo, agreed to maintain the Poorhouse at his own expense for a further three weeks "rather than that the unhappy occupants should be expelled." Matters did not improve, however, and the Guardians found it more difficult to raise funds. At their meeting of 25 March, George Clendenning, Esq. was elected Deputy Vice-Chairman and a Finance Committee was appointed consisting of:

Joseph A. Burke, William Grant, Pat. Sheridan and George Clendenning. The following month it was resolved 'that we cannot look on the present state to which our Poorhouse is now reduced, unable to supply them with food, often a supply of credit and unable from the state of the country to enforce payment of rates.' They laid the blame squarely on the shoulders of the Poor Law Commissioners. The final meeting of the Guardians took place on 11 August when the Board was dissolved and replaced by salaried Vice-Guardians.

George John, 3rd Marquess of Sligo, inherited the title at the age of 25 in the year the Famine broke out. He was one of the principal landowners in the county and had a seat in the House of Lords. It was to him that the people appealed when on 31 August 1846, they marched through the town in an orderly body to Westport House and dropped to their knees before him. Lord Sligo was the Chairman of the Board of Guardians of Westport Union and also Chairman of Westport Relief Committee. Together with two neighbouring landlords, Sir Robert Blossse and George Henry Moore, he chartered a vessel the "Martha Washington" which was loaded with 1,000 tons of flour in New Orleans and sailed for Westport where it arrived in June 1847. From there it was distributed at half-price to the distressed tenantry; Lord Sligo bore five-eighths of the loss amounting to £3,012. Lord Sligo spoke out in the House of Lords and in letters to the London Times on behalf of the distressed tenantry and the failure of Government action. In a letter to the *Times* on 17 December 1848 he accused the government of responsibility for the situation in Ireland, stating that in 1847 26,000 people had been fed in the Westport Union and had been told to make no provision for the future:

... There are now therefore at this moment, in obedience to the law, 26,000 people in Westport who are destitute of food, fuel and clothing and the long account of money spent will not feed the crowds of destitute, the rates cannot do it and if the Union be left to that fund alone then myriads must perish by famine.

If the Famine spelt the end of the cottier class in rural Ireland, it also spelled the beginning of the end of the landlord class. Lord Sligo had a



Magdalen House

reputed income of £7,200 with outgoings of £6,000. The burden of the poor rate fell heavily on the landlord, not alone had they to pay the rate on their own land but also on any tenants with less than 4 acres. Lord Sligo was forced to borrow to pay the rates. He closed up Westport House and with his family went to live in a house in the town. A further problem as the famine progressed was the non-payment of rents, which eventually led him to consider evictions.



Rocky

The clergy of the various denominations played a major role in the relief of the distressed. They were to the fore in the Relief Committees and acted as their eyes and ears. They made lists of the distressed families and distributed relief tickets. The Sisters of Mercy who had recently come to the town, fed and educated the children in their schools and also helped out in the Workhouse. The various clergy also acted as chaplains in the Workhouse and on one day having anointed 33 persons stricken with the fever, the R.C. chaplain next day found only 3 still alive. On 23 August 1847 the R.C. Chaplain consecrated a patch of waste ground near the Workhouse, known locally as 'The Rocky' as a mass grave for those who died of the fever.

The Protestant Chaplain, the Rev. Patrick Pouden, The Secretary of Westport Relief Committee, was himself to die from having contracted the fever.

To be continued. . .

PEADAR Ó FLANAGÁIN: Graduate N.U.I., late sixties. Officer in charge of Order of Malta. Local historian and lecturer. Founding Secretary of Westport Historical Society.

WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 1984

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Born in Claremorris and educated in Saint Jarlath's, Tuam. Ordained in 1917. Served in Finney, Mulranny 1921-1933, Kilmaine, Balla 1933-1938, P.P. Aran 1938-1948, P.P. Newport 1948-1972. Died in December, 1980, in his 90th year. Joint collaborator with Padraig Uas. Ó Móráin in "Annála Beaga Pharáiste Bhuiréis Umhaill". Gael is Staráí.

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