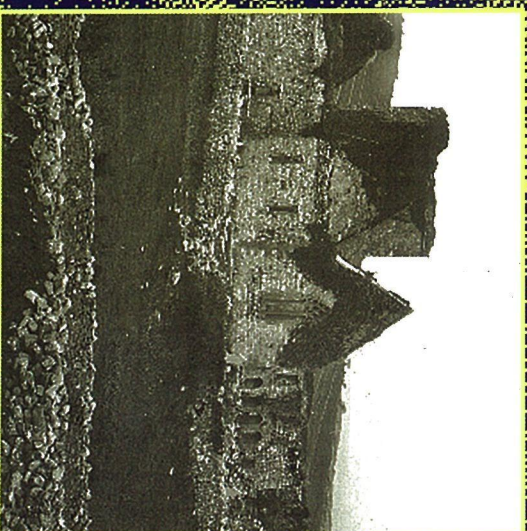
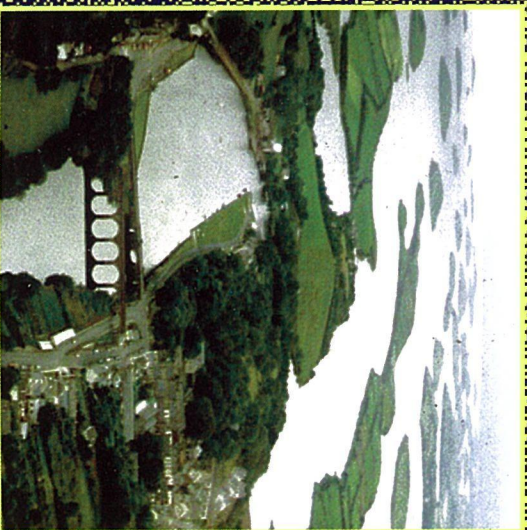
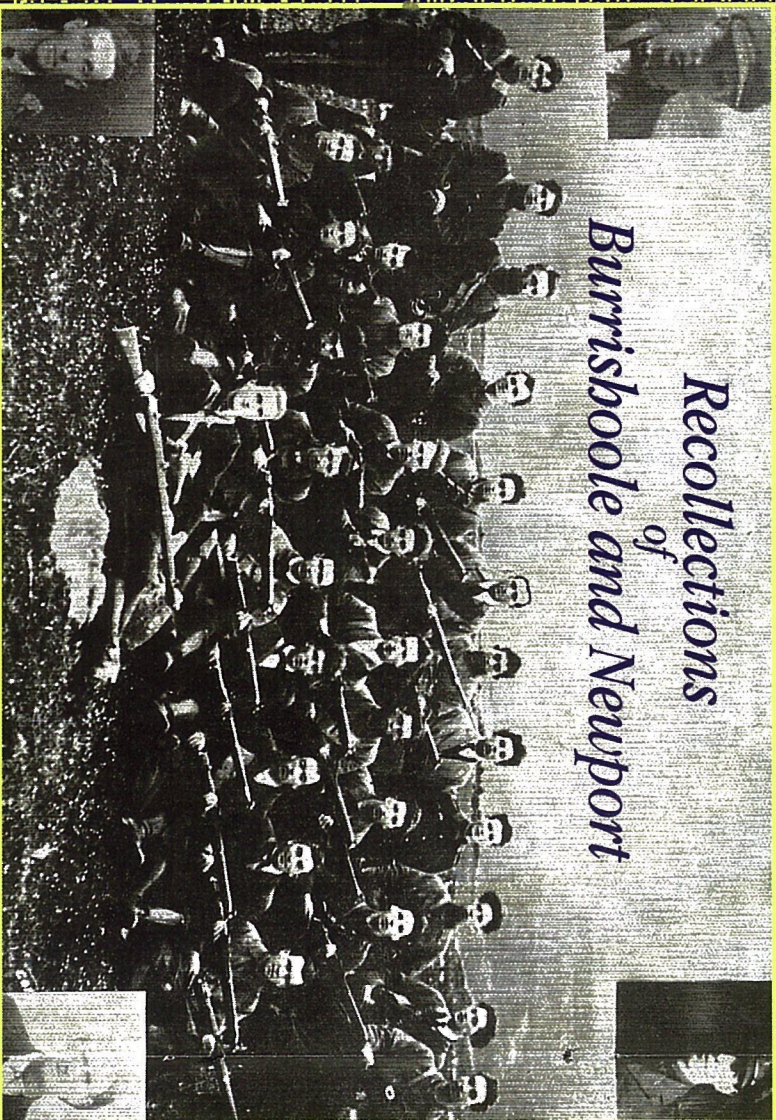


Back the Road

Recollections of Burrishoole and Newport



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Réamhrá

With pleasure and trepidation Newport Historical Society offers this its second edition of Back The Road. Encouraged by the reception of the first publication the society began work in early summer 1998 to put this manuscript together.

The society would like to thank all those who helped the project. Some people loaned photographs to be used in the text, others gave time. A special thanks goes to those who generously sponsored this edition, ensuring that the quality of the production might be maintained. The society asks that readers support those sponsors with business.

As before we need new members, more contributions of old photographs and articles for publication in future editions. Any of the raw data of history that is loaned or donated will be gratefully received and carefully minded.

The business of history is to recreate, imaginatively and with respect for the evidence, the past of people, places and events, over specific periods of time. This we have tried to achieve in this volume of essays.

The society is also looking to the future, it intends to record something of our current community so that future historians may write our history, though in all humility, our priorities may not be those of subsequent historians. The society is also entering the world of technology, an internet site will share our collected knowledge with the world at large and will undoubtedly assist those living abroad to access their past.

We believe that history is not a dead connection to the past, but an accomplice, who infuses our lives, our culture and our community with solidity and value and makes us what we are today.

Joe McDermott
Rúnaí, Cumann Staire Baile Uí Fhiacháin
Secretary Newport Historical Society
Skerdagh School
Newport
Co. Mayo
Republic of Ireland.
November 1998
Email: mcd@anu.ie

The historical society committee is as follows –

Chairperson: Tommy Hughes.
Treasurers: Nancy Gallagher, Joseph Mc Govern.
Committee: Mary Kelly,
Willie Sammon,
Peter Mallowney,
Nancy Hannon-Mulhern,
Mary Jo Guilfoyle,
Peadair Kilroy,
Jack Geraty,
Gerard Bracken,
Michael Hughes.

The Tree of Liberty

Joe McDermott

The tree of liberty was planted in the town of Newport-Pratt, by a yeoman of the name of Gibbons who was convicted on the clearest testimony, but effected out of prison his escape, thus did Dr, John Benton, Protestant clergyman of the South Mayo Militia address the court martial of James Moore and Connell O'Donel at Castlebar in December 1800. In his defence James Moore O'Donel asserts that the 'Tree of Liberty was felled by my father, Sir Neal O'Donel.'¹

Both prosecution and defence refer to the tree of liberty and there are references to the planting of trees of liberty in Ballina and Castlebar.

What is in your hand?

It is a branch.

Of what?

Of the tree of liberty.

Where did it first grow?

In America.

Where does it bloom?

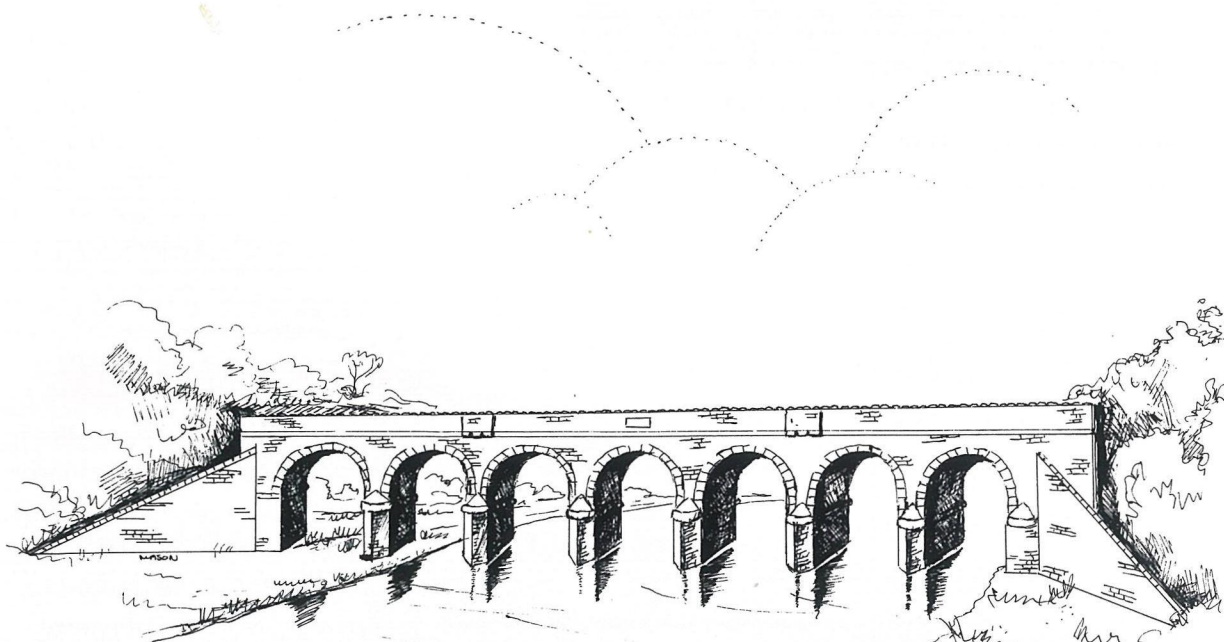
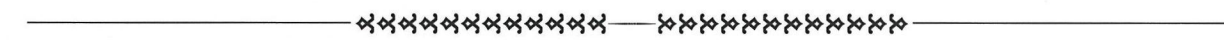
In France.

Where did the seeds fall?

In Ireland'²

Kevin Whelan goes on to point out that the United Irishmen had successfully adopted the Tree of Liberty as a populist cultural emblem. Its symbolism could link back to the May bush and the magic associated with it, the dawn of summer, the vibrancy of the colour green as the trees leaves unfurled, all factors fused into a potent cumulative symbol.³

There is no specific evidence of any one type of tree being favoured, one is not told what particular tree was planted in Newport on that fateful day in August 1798.



Newport Historical Society
A bridge to the past

1 Quoted from a paper, 'Proceedings of a court martial held at Castlebar, December 1800,' in the possession of the author.

2 United Irishman Catechism quoted in Kevin Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty*, Cork, 1996. p.57.

3 Ibid, p.85.

Saint Morcan's Loch

Nancy Hannon-Mulhern

We have been privileged to have some very fine priests in this parish of Newport.

Our own curates and parish priests we saw many times, but the chaplains who ministered to the Sisters of St. Lucy located on the Quay were seldom seen with the exception of Fr. Gullane who came here around 1983. Even though he was not a native of Newport he took a great interest in its history and subsequently wrote some articles on the area.

The following monograph on St. Brigid and Loch Marcan was written by him and presented to us by Mrs. Peg OMalley, Rossclave, to whom we extend a special Thank You.

Saint Marcans Loch and Early Ecclesiastical Ruins at Rossclave The Loch is now the head of the Rossclave Inlet, but it was once a fresh water lake, cut off from the sea by a ridge which connected with the south shore even in historical times.

Beginning from the west, we first find the ruins of St. Marcan's Church, of which only a fragment of the west wall now remains. This church was 15 feet long by 10 feet wide, and lay N.W. by S.E.. The south gable abutted on the shore and was awash at high tide. The projection from the north gable no longer exists. The church was called Teampail Marcain, and the adjoining plot

of ground was called Garrdha an Teampail.

About 50 yards south east of this church is the Children's Burial Ground in which there still seems to be evidence of a small church that was built around an ancient dolmen; as at Holywell, Ballyhaunis. This site at Rossclave was probably used for pagan worship and burials in prehistoric times. It is now called "The Green". At least one ancient relic still remains intact. It is a large, flat, white stone measuring 5x4x2.5 ft (called An Altoir). It may have been the capstone of a dolmen; Altoir Iodhail (idols). It is still venerated as a Mass Rock of the Penal Times.

Where the tide now runs into Loch Marcain there was a heap of large stones, around which pilgrims walked – and prayed as they performed the usual stations on St Marcan's Day, first August. This Leacht of stones is marked on the Ordnance Survey Map.

About 20 yards to N.N.E. of An Altoir is St Marcan's well, on the shore at high water mark. It is dry at low tide. Water from this well had a great reputation as a cattle cure. Stations were performed around the Altoir and the Well every year on the eighth day of June, which was the great Fair Day of Newport. It was usual also to swim sick cattle and horses across the lake, and invoke the intercession of St. Marcan for their cure.

About 100 yards East of the well another Leacht of stones marks the site of an ancient crannog - now called Caiseal Marcain. It is possible that St Marcan once dwelt on this crannog too. The stones marking the site are visible only at very low tide.

On the ridge to the North of this point is an ancient earthwork. It is a prehistoric Ring Fort, about 27 feet in diameter, which gives further proof that men settled here permanently very long ago.

The ruins of a small church, dedicated to St Brigid, still stand in Kilbride graveyard beside the main Westport to Newport road. Perhaps St Brigid of Kildare was the original foundress and the subsequent abbess adopted her name. Local legend carries a story of some misunderstanding between a St Brigid of Kilbride and our St Marcan, but similar stories are told of other saints too. They are simply embellishments invented by local story sellers.

St Marcan's name derives from Marcach (horseman). Modern: Ryder.

Above notes are based on a paper by Hubert T Knox, which was read to the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland on the 30th April 1918 and printed in their journal for the year 1919. St Marcan lived 500-550 A.D.. He was the first missionary to live permanently here as the Apostle of Burrishoole.

*Transcription by
Reverend P J Gullane.*

The traditional stations as performed at Rossclave, Newport on the 1st of August, the Feast of Saint Marcan.

1. First go barefoot to the Monument (the Leacht of stones). Kneel facing the east, and say seven Paters, Aves and Glorias. Next walk deiseal (sunwise) around the Monument seven times and repeat the seven Paters, Aves and Glorias en route. Then return to the starting point. Kneel and offer seven more Paters, Aves and Glorias. Finish with the Apostles Creed.
2. After this proceed to The Green and kneel at the Altoir to repeat the seven Paters, Aves and Glorias, while facing east. Then walk deiseal around the mound on which the Altoir is resting, seven times, repeating the seven Paters, Aves and Glorias en route, as before. Kneel again at the Altar Stone facing east and repeat the seven Paters, Aves and Glorias as before. Finish with creed.
3. Finally it is also the custom to perform a similar station at Saint Marcans Well. Kneel, pray and walk around as before. Here, too, according to ones personal devotion, it is usual to include some suitable prayers for the souls in Purgatory. Finish this station also by reciting the Apostles Creed.
4. The above traditional stations are often performed on other

days in the year; most particularly on the 8th of June, which is the Great Fair Day of Newport. On this day people pray for a successful live-stock market.

5. A simple way of keeping tally of ones rounds is to pick up the exact number of pebbles needed and drop one at the end of each round. This can be repeated for each station. Obviously this method of tally is of very ancient origin. Sincere thanks are due to Mrs. Nora Lavelle, an old resident of Rossclave, who very kindly supplied a written account of

the local, traditional stations. To quote her own words:- The way to do the Stations at Loch Marcain: this is how I heard it from the old people some fifty years ago. This account was written in 1984 and is based on the tradition of the local inhabitants for over a hundred years. The typed version given above is based (verbatim) on that given by Mrs. Nora Lavelle. Through her good offices it is now on record as a contribution to local history.

*Transcription by
Rev. P.J. Gullane.*

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1798 and Newport

Joe McDermott

Almost a hundred years of peace and progress followed the wars of the seventeenth century. Ireland seemed to be at peace. The old Gaelic order appeared to wither away in the face of war and colonisation. The eighteenth century saw the emergence of a new aristocracy to replace that which had been reduced to emigration or peasantry.

The enactment of the "Penal Laws" as they are referred to, ensured the subjugation of the general body of Catholic clergy, though it must not be forgotten that other dissenters such as The Society of Friends (Quakers) and the Presbyterians also suffered under penal legislation.

By the end of the century changes were afoot, and relationships between Church and state much improved; for instance 1795 saw the enactment of legislation to create St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. Both government and church saw the possibility of radical French ideas invading the country through a continentally priesthood, neither side wanted this. Newport had not existed in 1700. Its emergence as a trading centre and the focal point of the great Meddlicotte estate had been achieved by the efforts of one James Moore a highly successful land agent for the Meddlicotte landlords.

His demise led to a decision to sell the estate and at this juncture the O'Donnell family were sufficiently powerful land holders and traders within the

estate, to purchase it. They had prepared the way by joining the Church of Ireland in 1765 and fulfilling the necessary sacramental test. The O'Donels of Burrishoole where an emergent branch of the once mighty Gaelic Lords of Tir Conail who had migrated to West Mayo and with patience and endeavour re-established the family fortunes. There is some speculation as to how they acquired sufficient wealth to purchase the Meddlicotte estate, smuggling has been suggested by some and lots of evidence will need to be examined to determine if this is so.

It is into this background of a consolidating O'Donnell landlordship, a trading port town, a growing populous hinterland and nationally an emergent United Irish movement and the beginnings of the internecine religions conflict, that Newport's involvement in the 1798 conflict was to fit.

In attempting to determine the role of Newport and Newport people in the conflict (on whatever side they chose to ally themselves) the following sources are the ones to be examined.

The Rebellion papers are a series of papers which emanated from all parts of the country and are directed to the government administration in Dublin Castle. They are an invaluable source for a history of the rebellion but of course they reflect essentially the official view of events and tell little of the rebels story except

what one can deduce from them.

Here and there in the official and private papers of individuals are eyewitness accounts to the events of that year, some of these are on record in the various national repositories and some of them reflect the rebels views of the rebellion. There may still be other accounts in private papers in private hands which have yet to be published or made available to scholarly research.

There are also newspaper accounts contained in papers such as the Freeman's Journal, the Hibernian Journal and Faulkners Dublin Journal and they may be consulted in the National Library of Ireland.

A number of diaries exist for the period, Bishop Stocks account is probably the best known and General Sir John Moore's account within the context of his biography is another military account. French diaries [such as Jobits] and the lost copy of Henry O'Kane's account were relevant to the rebel cause. Other accounts may exist for Irish rebels who escaped and made their way to France. Some of these people are known to have kept records, such a one as Austin O'Malley of Burrishoole. The Rev. Little of Lacken also kept a diary. The proceedings of a court-martial held at Castlebar on charges made by Reverend John Benton, Protestant chaplain, South Mayo militia involving the O'Donels and their accusers (they were accused of being soft if not actual complicity in the

case of the rebellion in Mayo) is extant and provides some clues as to what actually occurred.

Finally in a society where in the nineteenth century the folk culture of the peasantry ensured the survival of fragments of information, stories of involvement in the rebellion were available until this the twentieth century. Richard Hayes in his *Last Invasion of Ireland* alluded to this and uses information thus acquired to reconstruct part of his account of the revolt. This account reflects the rebel view of events. So it is possible to reconstruct a scenario which sheds light on the involvement of Newport men and women in the 1798 rebellion. Working with those sources alluded to above the following story emerges.

Was the United Irish moment well organised or organised at all in County Mayo. The evidence to suggest they were is slim enough. Here and there in the rebellion papers one gets glimpses of a possible organisational drive in the 1790's. For instance James Moore O'Donnell writes to Dublin Castle to Secretary Cook.

Sir,
In consequence of having received positive information that some men from the North had themselves to reveal some persons of this town [Newport] and neighbourhood to assist and become United Irishmen. I endeavoured to apprehend them and all who had been concerned ...⁴

this letter is dated May 21st 1797 and names the northerners who were recruiting as Lennon who were claimed to be pedlars from Newry together with a Robert McDonnell and a man named Duffy, a dealer, all from the North. Michael Kilcoine, a tailor,

is the Newport man named in the letter, he swears that he is loyal and refused to be sworn into the United Irishmen, one learns that the action took place in Larmoniers pub.

As a result of the Battle of the Diamond and an ongoing state of unrest in Ulster many Catholic families had fled south and as many as two thousand persons were resettled in County Mayo. Some of these were undoubtedly settled on the O'Donnell estate and some perhaps had United Irish sympathies, in this way the Northern recruiters may have been invited to visit the town.

The other Newport men that can be traced to the rebellion through the rebellion papers and other sources are as follows:

Peter Gibbons, Newport, a leading merchant referred to in 620/7/76/7 and proclaimed a rebel.

Austin Gibbons of Newport, brother to Peter Gibbons and referred to in 620/14/189/1.

In the first case above the proclamation is printed and the following persons are also named, they are noted to be still at large and are:

"excluded from the grace and pardon aforesaid"

James Joseph McDonnell of Carnacon, Christopher Crump of Oury, M.D. Gibbons of Westport, Martin Cowley of Crossmolina, a popish priest, Miles Prendergast of Westport, a friar, Tim Mulany of Forkfield, a servant, Peter Gibbons of Newport.⁵

£500 was offered for McDonnell one of the insurgent leaders and £200 for each of the others. £100 was offered for information leading to their arrest.⁶

By 1805 one learns that many of these men are still at large

"Austin Gibbons lives in the neighbourhood of Newport". McDonald and Prendergast are concealed by tenantry in the Martin estate in Connemara. The priest is "a man much looked up to by the disaffected". A Mrs Donohue is accused of harbouring Austin Gibbons.⁷

As late as April 1805 in a letter to Dublin Castle, Austin O'Malley is reported to have returned to the Newport area. This O'Malley attained the rank of Colonel and was a second son to Owen O'Malley of Burrishoole. According to other sources reported in Richard Hayes book *The Last Invasion of Ireland*, Colonel Austin and his brother Jack as well as Patrick Coyne and others unnamed had immediately formed with Humbert in August of 1798.

Austin O'Malley and Patrick Coyne had escaped Ballinamuck and made their way to France on a yacht, stolen from Denis Bingham of the Mullet. It is not clear if Joseph O'Malley escaped or was hanged at Ballinamuck. James MacDonald of Newport appears in a letter of October 28 1803 signed by Dennis Brown "this man (McDonnell of Newport) was condemned to be hanged at Ballina for treason escaped from confinement the night before – was lately taken in Erris by Major Bingham.

This letter to Dublin Castle further suggests transportation to Botany Bay or military service abroad for McDonnells. A further letter from Stoneyford near Lisburn dated October 1799 to the Dublin Castle written by a Mr Alymer names "the priest Canning of Newport" as well as many of those already mentioned above.

Folk memory has strongly

preserved the same John McLaughlin of Tiernaur as one of the local leaders in the revolt. According to Hayes¹⁰ he was accompanied by his three sons one of whom had been expelled from Trinity College. Richard Hayes asserts that McLoughlin arrived in Killala with 250 men from Newport. Who those Newport men were or if indeed there were actually 250 is difficult to determine. Certainly the growing population of the area could well have subscribed such numbers to the revolt.

Priests played a large part in the revolt of 1798 and much has been written elsewhere about these men. One of the men who accompanied Humbert, the French Commander to Ireland was father Henry O'Kane who acted as a translator for the French, he was said to have come from the North Mayo area and might have been instrumental in advising Humbert to land at Killala and not to proceed across Donegal Bay to Killybegs as was originally planned.

Father Conroy of Lahardane advised the French on their route via the Windy Gap to Castlebar. He later paid with his life for his republican convictions, it is interesting to note that like many priests of his time his education was in France, in Nantes. Like Father Manus Sweeney he could speak fluent French and undoubtedly was sympathetic to the cause of republicanism, after all it was only in 1795 that provision was made for the seminary training of priests in Ireland at St Patricks in Maynooth, before this young Irish seminarians went to the continent for training, to France, Belgium and Spain and of course Rome itself.

The French Commander dispatched a Captain Boudet to

Newport on 28 August 1798, the day after the capture of Castlebar. It was important that another sea port be held for the French forces and Newport was strategically positioned on the North East corner of Clew Bay and undoubtedly the Newport men now with the French/Irish forces had made a case for Newport's importance to the republican cause.



The Reverend Josiah Hern church of Ireland rector of Newport 1798

There was no engagement of forces at Newport, James Moore O'Donel and his loyal yeomanry had already evacuated. His father Sir Neal the first baronet had also departed for Athlone.

Captain Boudet met with Father Manus Sweeney who, like Father Conroy of Lahardane spoke excellent French. Undoubtedly this meeting and its consequences were to mean court-martial and a death sentence for the young priest.

When Humbert left Castlebar, the O'Donels returned to Newport and retook the town again with little by way of fighting. However, Sweeney now noted as a rebel was taken and held. The Reverend Josiah Hern agreed to detain a now injured Manus Sweeney and subsequently allowed him to "escape".

Sweeney met with Captain Boudet and now decided to throw in his lot with the rebel forces. After the defeat at Ballinamuck and the subsequent hunt for rebels Father Sweeney was captured on Achill Island, returned and tried in Castlebar accused of being involved in the rebellion, levying money for the French and being an active rebel leader. Father Sweeney was executed in Newport in June of 1799 and buried in the Dominican Abbey at Burrishoole, revered as patriot priest and as Dr Mulloy's account of his life proposes "a moral leader".

The final document that gives clues as to who those Newport rebels might have been is the "Proceedings of a Courtmartial", held at Castlebar, beginning Monday 1st December 1800 and ending with the Lord Lieutenant's opinion and decision handed down from Dublin Castle 24th January 1841.¹²

This is the locally famous trial of James Moore and Connel O'Donnell on charges brought by Dr, the Reverend, John Benton, Protestant chaplain to the South Mayo Militia. He alleges that the O'Donel family at the very least where neutral in the rebellion, if not actually conspiring to await the outcome and then take sides. The allegations and the court proceedings are not the subject matter for discussion here. Rather are the people named by Benton as rebels. He is supported in varying degrees by local Newport members of the Orange order and by the half-hearted statements of Dr Ellison of Castlebar. James Moore O'Donnell in his own and his family's defence states, "Dr Benton, whom I am justified in comparing to a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour".

“We did not in the hour of victory, turn bloodhounds and urge the indiscriminate and general punishment of the ignorant, deluded and I will say deserted peasantry. We fought for the ringleaders, and we endeavoured to restore confidence and tranquillity by giving full effect to the proclamations and humane intentions of the Marquis Cornwallis.” The Lord Lieutenant found in favour of the O’Donnell family and the matter closed or so it appeared. Within a year James Moore O’Donnell was dead, shot in a duel, with Dennis Bingham of Erris who opposed the O’Donels in the above court case, if not in person, then in spirit and now in deed.

From the document one may speculate that the following persons who lived in or about Newport may have been rebels, at heart, if not actual United Irishmen. The force of Dr Benton’s allegations and the counter-arguments of James Moore O’Donnell will not allow other than speculation except where corroborative evidence exists elsewhere. Dr Benton in the course of his written allegations and stated evidence before the court names the following:

1. Pat Conroy: who has been a yeoman, but a noted rebel lives at Newport.
2. Pat Gibbons: is still in the Newport cavalry.
3. John Slatery: deserted from the cavalry now in infantry.
4. James Cumman: deserted from the cavalry and is now in Newport.
5. John Nixon: deserted but is again in the cavalry.
6. In the infantry corps are the following rebels: Edmund Hevron, Pat Kean, Hugh Sweeney, Edmund Burke,

John Maguire.

7. James Kelly: a yeoman, danced round the Tree of Liberty. Dr. Benton goes on to state that the Tree of Liberty was planted in Newport by a yeoman of the name Gibbons.
8. Patrick Heavey: a rebel leader, within a mile of the town.

Benton goes on to make the general statement “That the tenants of Sir Neal O’Donel or the chief part of them were remarkably active in the rebellion”.

Anthony Wilkes, a local Orangeman giving evidence to support Benton names others “Hugh ODonel, a Newport yeoman mounted a rebel guard at Newport and was armed with a yeoman carbine”. “Hugh Maguire, Peter Duffy, Dennis Maguire yeomen of Derrylohan are also named by Wilkes. They were bound to the King’s peace from July 1799, for varying sums up to £100.

The Reverend Josiah Hern, who may have colluded in father Manus Sweeney’s brief escape, names Peter and Henry McLaughlin and Joseph O’Malley (these were alluded to earlier in this paper) he cannot name others whom he knew only by sight. Dr Ellison of Castlebar names Stephen Davis of Newport a yeoman witness in favour of Peter Gibbons (a rebel).

John Irwin, a loyalist when pressed to name such inhabitants of Newport as he knew were

concerned in the rebellion (stated) “That it would endless work for that every Papist in the town was implicated more or less”.

The court-martial failed to find in favour of Dr Benton. Where does that leave those accused of rebellion? Probably in balance they were sympathisers if not actually active United Irishmen. Some of them have appeared in other sources. Joseph O’Malley may well be the brother of Austin of Burrishoole referred to elsewhere as Jack. The McLaughlins of Tiernaur may be related to those McLaughlins cited by Reverend Hern.

It is unfortunate that probably the great majority of those from the Newport area who were involved in the 1798 rebellion in Mayo will never be named. Such is the sparcity of written data that their names could only be speculated upon. The great population boom was well under way by 1798 and undoubtedly many young men of Newport were among those never to return from Ballinamuck.

A Note on the sources: 620/ is the designation given to a collection of papers in the National archives, which are collectively referred to as the rebellion papers. The are essentially from country sources to Dublin Castle over the years before and after the 1798 rebellion.

4 Rebellion Papers 620/30/131 National Archive.

5 Rebellion Papers 620/7/76/7.

6 Rebellion Papers 620/14/189/1.

7 Rebellion Papers 620/14/189/1.

8 Rebellion Papers 620/12/141/33.

9 Rebellion Papers 620/56/12.

10 Richard Hayes *The Last Invasion of Ireland*. This edition Dublin 1979.

11 Gerard Moran (Editor), *Radical Irish Priests* (Dublin 1998), also Sheila Mulloy, *Father Manus Sweeney (1763-1799)* in *Cathair na Mart* No. 14. 1994. pp.27-38.

12 A copy of these proceedings is held by the author of this article. There may be other copies extant in the unsorted O’Donel papers, National Library of Ireland or in the National Archives. This copy was compiled by Pdraig O Domhnaill of Newport in the 1950s and from internal evidence and correlation with other sources appears to be authentic.

13 For details on the origin of the Tree of Liberty see Kevin Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty*, Cork, 1996.

Buckagh Mountain, Townland of Callowbrack

Roseanne Murray

There were twenty houses in that village, with lots of families living there. There were two hand-loom weavers, in the village. That was in 1940. Edward Mulchrone and John Murray were both weavers. Blankets, tweed, flannels (which were for men's underwear) and bainin jackets were the order of the day. Edward Mulchrone wove the curtains for Burrishoole Lodge which was the home of Ernie O'Malley at that time. Rose Mulchrone (wife of Edward) got several prizes for her tweed which would be a suit length at shows in Castlebar. The women folk did the carding and spinning. In those days there would be a gathering of women to one house for the carding and spinning which they described as a camp, and on that night there would be a dance in that house. The tweed made would be seven yards for suit lengths.

Mrs Rose Anne Murray of Kilbride, Newport and the Mulchrone weavers cottage was regularly visited by Mrs Margaret Connolly and her daughters to have their spun wool woven into tweed by Mr Mulchrone. "The Weaver Mulchrone" received many requests to give exhibitions in Dublin but declined to do so because he felt he could only do justice to his skills on his own cottage loom, which he knew intimately and for which he had

an extra-sensitive "feel". He considered it too troublesome to transport the loom to Dublin – apart from the risk of damage to the loom in moving it! Mr Mulchrone did, however feature on a Radio Eireann documentary programme on Irish weavers.

Back in the 1940's, a Margaret Murray of Shramore specialised in using plants to dye her home-spun wool indigo blue and she had a special fleck put in the weft of the wool which was woven for her by Edward Mulchrone in Buckagh. What is not generally known is that a piece of her exclusive tweed is on exhibition at the National Museum in Dublin.

Some 50 years ago wool spinning and weaving was one of the few viable industries in Buckagh, Shramore and Shralogy areas. It is ironic, perhaps, that at the time there was more motor traffic in the Buckagh area of twenty homes, than the now depopulated Buckagh because the weaving services of Edward Mulchrone were in such great demand. He wove woollen materials for rich and poor alike, including curtains for the homes of people like Ernie O'Malley of Burrishoole Lodge and the Stoneys of Rosturk Castle. Edward Mulchrone of Buckagh was renowned throughout Ireland for his

brilliant craftsmanship and weaving skills. The late Mr Mulchrone was father of Rose Anne Murray.

- 1 Edward Mulchrone – 7 in family
- 2 John Mulchrone – 6 in family
- 3 Tom Mulchrone – 2 in family
- 4 Mickey Moran – 5 in family
- 5 Michael Gorman – No family, bought by Pat Conroy 3 in family
- 6 Tom Morgan – 1 in family
- 7 Tony Conway – Came from Skerdagh. John Brice lived there. Tommy, his son lives there
- 8 Pat McFadden – 5 in family. Bought by D. Murray
- 9 Michael Lavelle – 4 in family
- 10 John Nolan – 4 in family
- 11 Marleys – 3 in family
- 12 Celia McNally – 3 in family
- 13 Richard Brice – 5 in family
- 14 Tom Kane – 5 in family
- 15 John Murray (Weaver) – 6 in family
- 16 Anthony Geraghty – 8 in family
- 17 Jack Gorman Jack and Paddy (Brothers)
- 18 Bridget McGovern – 4 in family
- 19 Pat O'Donnell – 7 in family.

War of Independence and Civil War

Willie Sammon

The Irish Volunteers founded in Dublin in 1913, soon spread to most parts of the country. They were welcomed in Newport, as the old Fenian tradition was very much alive, and the I.R.B. was still very active. Michael Kilroy is on record as saying, that the 1916 leader, Sean McDermott, once told him "that Newport-Tiernaur, Kilmeena, and a parish in Tipperary, where the best organised I.R.B. centres in Ireland in the early part of the century".

1916 came and plans were in place for Connaught to play a big part, as the arms from the German arms ship the Aud were to be siphoned through Limerick to the West. The Aud was lost and the cancellation of manoeuvres caused Connaught to take no part, except Galway under Liam Mellows. The reorganisation of the Volunteers started in 1917 and now their aim was to carry on the fight started in 1916.

The companies were formed into Battle Battalions and Battalions into Brigades. Newport, Westport, Louisburgh and Castlebar formed the West Mayo Brigade. Michael Kilroy was appointed O.C. and Ned Lyons replaced Michael Kilroy as O.C. Newport. When he was arrested in October 1920, Josie Doherty replaced him.

The arrival of the Black and Tans made life very difficult for

the people and a Black and Tan District Inspector named Fudge, stationed in Newport, went around with a group of Tans and terrorised the countryside. He usually operated at night and scarcely a village escaped his raids. Many houses in Glenhest were wrecked by his gang and in Cuilmore, Owen Keane, Tom Lyons and Stephen McGough were very badly beaten and had their homes wrecked. An ambush was prepared at Kilbride to kill him one night, but it failed.

During the early summer 1921 many ambush positions were held but the enemy never obliged. On the evening of May 18th 1921, Michael Kilroy sent a patrol of eight men into Westport, to attack any enemy in sight. At the same time, he sent Josie Doherty, O.C. Newport Battalion, with Jim Moran, Michael Gallagher and Jim Brown, into Newport. The Newport Patrol took up a position on Carrabaun, overlooking the R.I.C. Barracks, and during the day Sergeant Butler was killed. When Michael Kilroy heard the news he immediately moved the entire column of 41 men to Clooneen Cross in Kilmeena. He anticipated enemy troops moving from Westport to Newport. The column was armed with 22 rifles, 16 shotguns and 3 with short-arms. They took up positions in the early dawn and waited. At 3 pm two lorries and a car were

sighted. The first lorry sped through the ambush position and was fired on without much effect. The second lorry and car halted at the priest's house, from where they directed heavy rifle and machine-gun fire on the IRA position. The IRA changed their position, to the fence at a right angle to the road, from where they fired on the Black and Tans.

The first lorry, which had gone towards Newport, pulled up at Rosduane School, and the soldiers made their way back up the railway line to O'Flynn's house, from where they had a clear view of the IRA lines against the fence. A machine gun at O'Flynn's was trained on the IRA column with devastating effect, and in a few minutes, several were killed and wounded. Seamus McEvelly, Paddy Jordan, John Collins, Tom O'Donnell and Pat Staunton were killed. The wounded included Paddy Connolly, Paddy Molloy, James Swift, Michael Hughes, John Chambers, John Cannon and T. Nolan. One Tan was killed and a number wounded.

The Newport men who fought at Kilmeena were: Tom O'Donnell, Jack Connolly, Michael Brown, Paddy Molloy, Pat McLaughlin, Larry McGovern, Ned Murray and Paddy O'Malley.

While the battle was still on, Fr. Killeen, C.C. Mulranny and Fr. Walsh C.C. Kilmeena went on

to the field and anointed the dead and wounded. Caught between two fires, Kilroy ordered a retreat, and carrying some of the wounded they reached Aughagowla village where Dr Madden and Nurse Lottie Joyce of Clogher tended the wounded. Later that night, the broken column made their way to Skirdagh village, where they were made welcome. Dr Madden took the wounded to McDonnells and Dyras of Upper Skirdagh and in McDonnells he amputated two toes of the wounded Swift.

The early morning of May 23rd found the men asleep in the houses of Lower Skirdagh, while sentries kept watch. Kilroy, Jim Moran and Jack Connolly were at McDonnells of Upper Skirdagh. Dr Madden was with the wounded in Dyras when a rapid volley of rifle fire broke the morning stillness. The sentry had seen a party of Tans and police near the village after making their way down the back road.

Kilroy immediately ordered Jim Moran and Dr Madden to remove the wounded to safety while he and Connolly made their way to the source of the firing, where most of the men were billeted. Before they got to the men, they were fired on by the Tans and police lining the fence. Caught in the open, with no cover, they replied to the fire and kept them at bay. The rest of the Column took cover but Jim Brown of Kilmeena was fatally wounded as he crossed the river.

Kilroy and Connolly were in a tight spot, as one of the Tans caught Pat O'Malley's horse and galloped into Newport for help. Kilroy and Connolly prevented the enemy from advancing but their ammunition was almost gone, when Dr Madden, from a

better position opened rapid fire and gave the two men time to retreat. The fight continued and, as reinforcements came, the IRA men pulled back into the safety of the hills.

By now, 40 lorries of soldiers were at Skirdagh School, and others had gone to Shramore. Five hundred men advanced up the hill in extended formation, and at the same time, they raked the hills with rifle and machine gun fire. The IRA men watched from a safe distance until night fell and then they slipped through enemy lines and made their way to Glenisland and on to Aughagower. After the retreat from Skirdagh, the entire Column came together again at Aughagower. On June 2nd at Carrowkennedy, they attacked two lorries of RIC and tans, numbering 25. The fight lasted for several hours, until the entire enemy force surrendered, after 12 were killed and a number wounded. The IRA had no casualties and they collected 25 rifles, 25 revolvers, a Lewis machine-gun, 5000 rounds of ammunition and boxes of bombs.

The truce came a few weeks later, the treaty was signed, and the Civil War was about to start.

Most of the West Mayo Column opposed the treaty and they seized most of the Mayo towns for the Republicans. Joe Ring and four Westport men from the old IRA column joined the Free State Army.

Kilroy, now a General and OC of the 4th Western Division, took over the Castlebar Barracks and made his headquarters there.

General Tom Maguire, OC of the 2nd Western Division was against the treaty, as was General Liam Pilkington of Sligo, OC of the 3rd Western Division.

The Republican forces held Castlebar and prepared to prevent General McKeon's troops from reaching the town. Word came that Free State troops had landed by boat at Westport and that the town was taken without a fight, as was Newport. When Kilroy heard that McKeon's men had reached Claremorris, he pulled his men out and made his way back to the hills North of Newport. He set up headquarters in Anthony Gibbons house of Fauleens, while Brigade headquarters was in Thomas Morans of Callowbrack.

The IRA made life difficult for the troops in Newport and every day fired on the town from the hills. The logistics of feeding a large force of men was a problem, so cattle were seized from Lord Sligo's land. They were then killed and the meat was divided among the houses where the IRA were being sheltered.

On August 27, 1922 the IRA column assembled at Michael Gormans house in Doontrusk. Father Killeen C.C., Mulranny heard their confessions and each man received Holy Communion during the Mass that he said. He also did this on two more occasions. In October the Catholic Bishops meeting in Maynooth issued a Pastoral letter, which decreed that anyone taking up arms against the state would be denied the rights of the Church. The Republican army, from then on, did not attend Mass or receive the Sacraments, until late in 1924, when, during a mission in Newport and Mulranny, a priest heard their confessions. Tom Barry is on record telling of; "a priest who was called to an ambush scene, where Free State and IRA men were wounded. He anointed the

Free State troops, refused the last rights to the IRA men, and only did so at the point of Barry's gun".

On Sunday, August 27th, 15 young women were arrested in Newport on their way home from Mass. They were held for several hours by the Free State troops and were only released after intervention by the priests. Among those arrested were the McNulty sisters of Glendahurk, Mary Agnes Reilly, Kilbride Nellie Feehan, Rossow and Agnes Gibbons. On that same Sunday a sortie of Free State troops attempted to surround an IRA post on Convent Hill which was commanded by Jack Connolly, Dan O'Donnell, Jim Clinton and J. Reilly. They were repulsed and seven of their troops were wounded, four seriously.

On September 12th a Republican force of 35 riflemen under Michael Kilroy, with an armoured car, attacked Ballina town. After a stiff fight, Ballina was captured, along with its garrison of one hundred and thirty seven men. The soldiers were released after all the arms and ammunition were confiscated. With twenty men, Kilroy set out for Newport by the North Coast Road. The North Mayo men left for the Ox Mountains, and in an engagement with the troops coming to the relief of Ballina, Colonel Joe Ring of Westport was killed.

When it became known that Kilroy had only 20 men with him, a force of one hundred soldiers was sent in pursuit, and caught up with him in Glenamoy. In the fight that followed, 15 Free State soldiers were killed and wounded, and the others surrendered. The IRA group continued towards Newport,

where they met reinforcements under Dr Madden coming to their aid. Hearing that Kilroy and his men were on the way, the Free State troops hurriedly left the town for Westport. Newport was again in Republican hands.

At this time, Newport town was isolated, as the bridges at Rossow and Buckfield road and rail were blown up, as were the bridges on the Castlebar Road, Derryloughan and Glenhest. Supplies were very low in the area. Kilroy sent Commandant Joe Baker and a number of men out to the islands. They captured a boat containing 300 tons of flour destined for Westport. They brought it to Newport where it was distributed among the people.

Meanwhile, Thomas Moran of Mulranny, known as "No. 9", made a very effective armoured car, which they called; "The Queen of the West".

On October 26th, a fully equipped IRA active service unit, comprising of 4 Ford cars, 3 lorries and 39 cyclists, with the armoured car, left Newport. They made their way to Clifden which had a large force of soldiers. The battle for Clifden lasted for eight and a half hours, before the garrison surrendered. The IRA were under the command of Peter J McDonnell and Jack Feehan, as Michael Kilroy was attending a meeting of the IRA executive in the Nire Valley in Waterford.

On November 1st, an IRA column of twenty men left Newport and in the Brockagh/Fahy area where engaged by about two hundred and fifty Free State soldiers, who were advancing from Westport. The IRA were under the command of Commandant Jack Connolly and

seeing the strength of the Free State army, Connolly ordered a retreat. He himself, with two of his men, opened fire to enable his men to escape. In a short time he was surrounded and captured. Having been disarmed, he was fired on at point blank range by a Free State officer but luckily, he missed. The officer then turned his attention to Anthony Keane, who was shot in the stomach. Arrested that day were; Connolly, Anthony Keane, Mick Gibbons, Ned Murray and Pat Lyons. Pat Mulchrone, a local man, who was unarmed, was shot dead by the same Free State officer who shot Keane. Keane was taken to Castlebar Hospital, from where he escaped. Connolly and the rest were sent to Galway jail. Connolly later scaled the jail wall, and escaped.

Later a Free State column was ambushed at Cuilmore, at Martin Kelly's house, from an IRA position on Mullarkeys hill. A number of soldiers were wounded.

On the night of the 23rd of November 1922, General Michael Kilroy held a meeting of his divisional staff in Carrowbeg House. The meeting was to brief his officers on their strategy, for the expected advance of Free State troops. Michael Kilroy, Jack Feehan and J.J. Leonard were asleep when a messenger from Feehan's of Rossow awoke them to say that the Free State troops were advancing towards Newport. An IRA column, under Paul Reilly, was in position in Kilmeena, but the Free State troops had slipped through in the dark.

General Kilroy, Feehan and Leonard immediately ran to take up a position at Kilbride, at the fence between Frank Chambers

and Peter McManamon's. When the Free State soldiers reached Ryders in Kilbride they were stopped by heavy fire from the three riflemen. The soldiers took cover and opened fire with a heavy machine gun on the IRA position which soon proved untenable. Leaving Feehan and Leonard to keep the soldiers from advancing, Kilroy crossed the road and railway line into Dyras field. He advanced further into Ryders which brought him to within 300 yards of the soldiers. From this position, he exchanged fire for some time before he fell back under heavy fire. He retreated down towards the railway line, where again he exchanged shots with the soldiers. Here his luck ran out and he was wounded and captured. 4 Free State soldiers were killed and a number were wounded. The dead soldiers were; Captain Joseph Ruddy, Captain Joe Walsh, Private Woods and

Private McEllin. Joe Walsh had been a member of Kilroy's Flying Column in the Black and Tan War.

Ryders cart was commandeered to bring the dead to Westport. General Kilroy was also brought to Westport and on to Castlebar, before being transferred to Mountjoy Jail.

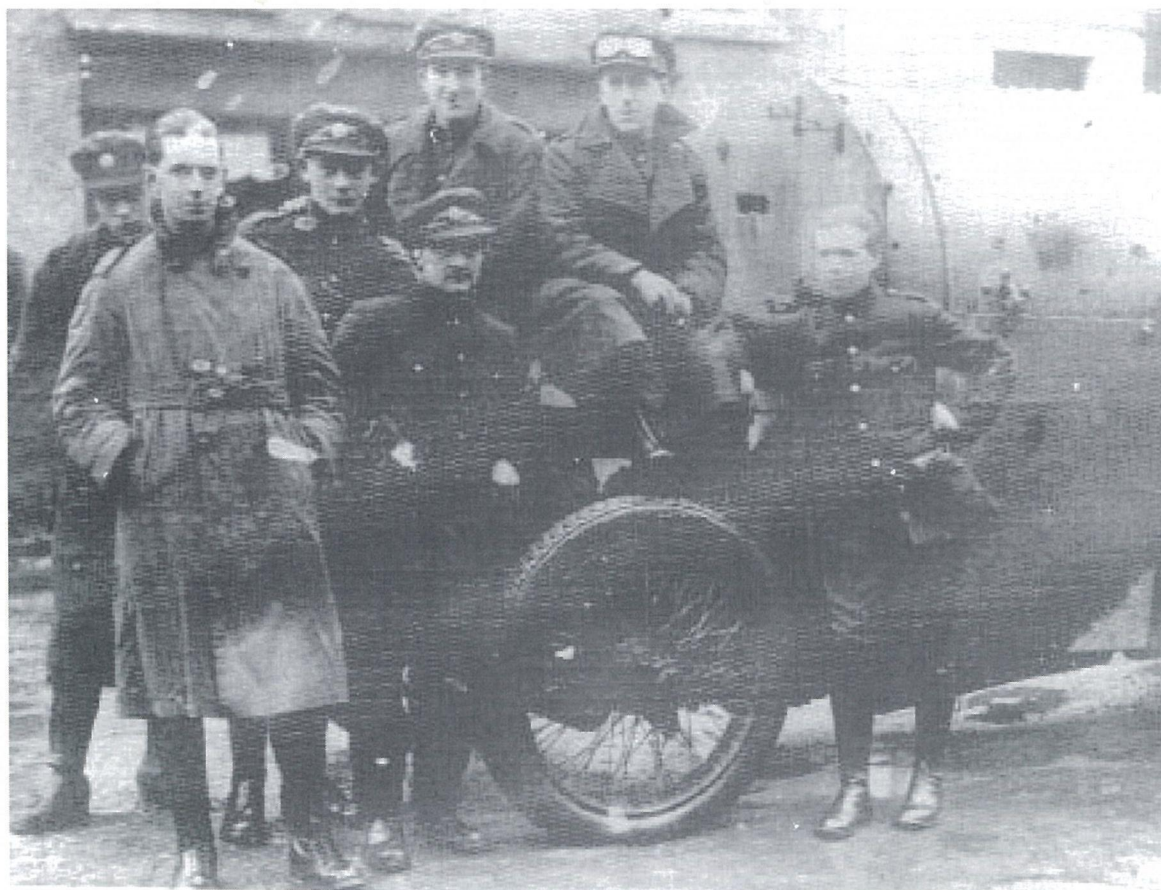
While the attack from the Westport side was being fought another column of 500 soldiers, under General Lawlor and General Symons, advanced from Castlebar. They were heavily armed, with several machine guns and an 18 pound field gun.

The IRA were expecting the attack and had in position 80 riflemen, with a Lewis machine gun. They took up a position on the hill overlooking the mill on the Castlebar Road, which stretched from Convent Hill to Bleachyard, with Peter Kilroy's house on Barrack Hill in the centre of the position.

The Free State soldiers advanced with great caution until they came to the mill bridge where they met a withering fire from the IRA lines. The battle raged from early morning until darkness fell. A sustained attack forced the IRA to pull back from their positions to the Workhouse Hill, where they came under fire from the field gun. The Free State troops crossed the river and took possession of Newport town.

The IRA suffered no casualties, while the Free State troops lost more than thirty five men, between dead and wounded.

On the 26th of November 1922, General Lawlor's report to Headquarters stated; "he had taken Newport town and occupied Mulranny, Shramore and Glenhest." He notes that he had two hundred and fifty six men in town, all wet to the waist, most to the armpits, from fording the river under fire. It was



Freestate soldiers pictured at Shop street Westport with the republican armoured car The Queen Of The West after its capture following the battle of Clifden.

raining. There were few beds, so he gave every man a glass of whisky, a quarter loaf, a quarter tin of bully beef and he built big fires to dry the men. The IRA held their position until the following day when they fell back to McDonnells of Upper Skirdagh.

An IRA column, under Commandant Joe Baker and Jim Moran were resting in Buckagh on 23rd February, 1923 when word was received that a Free State force was in Shramore, and had arrested a number of Shramore men. Baker and his men set up an ambush position over Treenbeg School, and attacked the returning soldiers. The fight lasted several hours and a young soldier was killed and a medical orderly going to his aid was seriously wounded. The officer in charge, Captain Colleran, called a truce and sent a young schoolboy – Paddy McGovern, with a white flag, to the IRA position to ask if they had a doctor with them. He hoped Dr Madden might be with them but he was not and the young medic died. His name was McQuaid and years later his brother became Archbishop of Dublin.

On the 7th of March 1923, an IRA column, under Joe Baker, was billeted in Buckagh. They received information that Free State soldiers were on their way in large numbers. Baker and his men moved to the Skirdagh Hills, and here they found themselves surrounded, and under heavy fire from all sides. Jim Moran was killed, and after consultation, the Column surrendered, although a number escaped.

Baker and his men were marched into Newport, while Jim Moran's body was brought in on a cart, and later coffined by Jack Quinn. The captured men were

taken to Galway jail, where they were court marshalled, and sentenced to death. The death sentence would have certainly been carried out had not 60 prominent Free State supporters been warned that if any of Baker's men were executed, they would all be killed. Archbishop Gilmartin sent Dean Dalton to Furnace, where he met P J McDonnell and Jack Feehan in Mrs Noone's house, who assured him the threat was serious. A short time later, six young men from South Mayo were taken from Galway jail to Tuam, and executed. The Newport men, under sentence of death were; Tom Cleary, Mick McDonnell, John Tom Maloney, Mick Horan, Willie McNulty, Willie Burke, Willie Walsh, Paddy Conway, Jack Clarke and Jim O'Donnell. The war ended shortly afterwards and no more executions took place. The ending saved the Newport men.

In July 1923 Kevin O'Higgins Minister for Foreign Affairs, stated in the Dail. At that time there were 11,367 republican prisoners in jails, and among them were 250 women prisoners, also the Free State Army had 60,000 men under

arms.

Conditions for the prisoners were very bad, and after unrest in Mountjoy, Michael Kilroy a senior officer in the Jail, called a general hunger strike, which lasted for 41 days. Ernie O'Malley, one of the hunger strikers, gives a horrific account of the strike in his book "The Singing Flame".

The prison chaplain refused to give Communion to the prisoners, and after a visit to her husband, Mrs Nan Kilroy, on her husband's instruction, went to Cardinal Logue and complained about the Church attitude to the prisoners and immediately the chaplain gave the men Communion, although some refused to receive.

Michael Kilroy escaped from jail and in 1924 most of the prisoners were released and, as little work was available, many emigrated to America.

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Proverbs and Sayings

Nancy Gallagher

In years gone by the older generation had amusing sayings in common use that expressed some truth of familiar situations. The following are a sample of the ones heard during childhood and through life.

Proverb: Kettles of steam.

Making out and the door closed.
Building castles in the air.

Meaning: Someone bragging or boasting.

Proverb: Its time every one was spittin in their own ashes.

Its going to make a grand morning.

Meaning: These were sayings if visitors were staying very late and the householder was wishing they would go before morning.

Proverb: Many a slip between the cup and the mouth.

Never count your chickens before they are hatched.

Meaning: Anything can go wrong with something planned.

Proverb: Never send a child to do a mans job.

The old dog for the long road and the pup for the boreen.

Meaning: Don't send somebody to do a job they are not capable of.

Proverb: He has as much white in his eye as would make a back for a waistcoat.

Meaning: He is fairly wicked looking.

Proverb: Have a nice time, and be as mean as you would not give a dead fly to a blind spider. Don't put your backside in a corner you cannot get it out of.

Meaning: Don't get yourself into a situation you cannot get out of.

Proverb: Someone having Bonams

Meaning: Being violently sick from over-indulging in food or drink.

Proverb: What goes around comes around.

Be nice to the small fellow on your way up or you could meet him on your way down.

Meaning: Treat people as you would like them to treat you.

Proverb: Everyone drawing water to their own mill.

Meaning: Everyone looking out for themselves.

Proverb: If a person was in the wrong acre.

Meaning: They would have completely misjudged the person they were dealing with.

Proverb: One foot in the grave and another on a bar of soap.

Meaning: That individual was looking so bad they were dead but to wash them.

Proverb: The breadth of Balla and half Manulla.

Meaning: It used to be a way of describing a plump lady.

Proverb: Often seen more land on a rotten halter.

Meaning: When someone would be demeaning some elses land.

Proverb: Somebody took a load.

Meaning: In times past that could mean anything from fainting to a massive heart attack.

Proverb: If you are happy alone in a bush, stay up there.

Meaning: Don't change your life if you are happy with it.

The Stained Glass Windows of St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church

Sister M. Consilio

A tourist who visited our Church last spring posed this question. "Do the people of Newport really appreciate the heritage which is theirs in this magnificent Celtic Romanesque building and its unique collection of stained glass windows?". In answer to that query it might be helpful to refresh our memories with a commentary on the windows alone.

Last judgement window

While each stained glass window in the church has its own particular charm, pride of place must be given to the magnificent creation of the three light, stained glass windows fixed above, and behind, the main altar in the eastern wall of the sanctuary. This was the last window designed by the late Harry Clarke and is entitled "The Last judgement". It was commissioned in August 1926 by the then P.P. – Very Reverend Canon McDonald. He met the cost (of the window) by the sale of his life insurance policy, which realised £800.

The window was not ready until 1931. Harry Clarke had been plagued by illness in the intervening years between the commission and the eventual execution of the work. Before his death in early January 1931, Harry had completed the drawings for each of the three light windows, but only the one

on the left – as one faces the altar – had been glazed and fired when, owing to his failing health he had to leave the Studio and Ireland.

Canon McDonald was very disappointed at this latest development but was cheered a little by the promise given him by the new manager of the Studio, C.B. Simmonds – that the window would not be dispatched to Newport before it would have been given Clarke's approval, on his return to Ireland. However the untimely death of the artist in early January 1931 made even this concession impossible. The window was completed in the Studio and Clarke's instructions were followed as closely as possible. It was finally fixed in St Patrick's church, in late February 1931.

Consisting of three-light openings of equal size the Last Judgment window occupies about one-third of the eastern wall. The centre opening is dominated by the figure of the glorified Christ, with outstretched hands, acting as Judge on the Last Day. At the top, and surrounding the head of Christ, are six of the Saints formerly mentioned in the old, Roman Canon of the Mass. Within an illumined circle of light below and behind the lower part of Christ's body are four adoring cherubs on either side of the Lord's feet. Immediately below the feet and with head enclosed

in the circle is an angel blowing a trumpet to summon the dead to Judgment. On the other side of the long trumpet is a seated angel with scroll and quill, recording each verdict as it is delivered. In the centre, and just below the seated angel is an illumined cross, to guide the throng of shrouded figures rising from the earth below, towards the cross and to judgement.

The opening left to centre, but on the right hand side of Christ – shows Our Lady seated in Paradise. Six apostles, namely Sts. Thomas, James Minor and Philip, Andrew, Paul and Peter are grouped around Our Lady's head. Happy angels with the joyful souls of the Just, fill the space beneath.

The remaining opening depicts the seated figure of St Patrick. Six other apostles – Saints Matthias, Matthew, Bartholomew, Saints James, John and James Major are grouped around the head of St Patrick. At his feet are five cherubs and below them, a horrifying spectacle of the damned in hell occupy the entire space below. Within the seething mass, the artist has placed at least one self-portrait.

The three openings are united into one whole by the triangular aureole of light above, and the earth's orb beneath. Brilliance of colour, skilful use of contrast of light and shade, of

the ecstatic faces of the elect and the grotesque expressions of the damned, make this window a priceless work of art.

The Michael Kilroy Memorial Windows

In 1971 two other stained glass windows were fixed in the eastern wall, behind the altar in each of the two side chapels. These were commissioned from the Clarke Studios, by the members of the fourth Western Division of the old IRA in memory of the late General Michael Kilroy (R.I.P.).

The two-light stained glass window, entitled "The Adoration of the Magi" is fixed in the wall behind the altar in the Lady Chapel. To the left as one faces

the altar – Our Lady is depicted seated with the Divine Child on her knees as He receives the homage of the "Irish Magi" in the adjoining panel. In this latter, the figure of St. Colmcille is shown standing, holding the Abbot's Cross in his right hand while his left holds a book of psalms and a quill. Standing beside him, with arms crossed on her breast is St Brigid. In front and to the left of St Brigid is the kneeling figure of St Patrick offering a miniature model of an early Irish Church. Further to the right, and also kneeling, is St Brendan, holding an oar under his left arm. At the base is a glimpse of Clew Bay, with Croagh Patrick rising majestically in the west. A flight of doves, symbol of St Colmcille

appears at the top of both openings.

"The Agony in the Garden" is the title of the corresponding two-light stained glass window above the altar in the Sacred Heart Chapel. In the right-hand opening Christ is shown kneeling in prayer, with face uplifted towards the angel in the adjoining chapel. Soldiers, bearing lighted torches, appear in the background away from the kneeling figure. In the left hand opening, is an angel with arms outstretched to bring comfort to the Lord in his agony. Huddled together to the left, and below the angel, are the three sleeping Apostles. The colours used blend perfectly with those of the Last Judgment Window behind the main altar.



High altar of St. Patrick's Roman Catholic church Newport showing the Harry Clarke windows

The Resurrection Window/ Walsh Memorial Window

Still in the Sacred Heart chapel, but fixed in the north wall is the Resurrection window, commissioned by the late Archbishop Walsh in memory of his family and executed by his great friend Richard King. Originally fixed in the Lady Chapel in 1973, the window was transferred later to its present position in order to allow more light in the sanctuary. Incidentally it was the artists last commission in Ireland.

The window itself is a two-light opening. The opening to the left portrays a magnificent figure of the Risen and victorious Lord, with uplifted hands, displaying His sacred wounds. At the top right of this opening are the words I am which powerfully sum up the theme of the window. The opening to the right is dominated by the red-haloed angel, seated gracefully above the tomb, engaged in conversation with the Holy Women below who are standing before the empty tomb. The angels left hand indicates the vacant tomb, while the right hand points to the message written boldly above The Resurrection and the Life which links it to the I am of the adjoining opening. An illumined Roman cross appears in the distance, on the right. Bold colours, skilled use of lines, curves and spaces make this window unique in its own right.

Of particular interest to parishioners of Newport is that Richard King was born just eleven miles away, in Lower Charles St., Castlebar. The family later moved to Westport and after some years there, finally

settled in Dublin. Here the young Richard enrolled as a student in the College of Art. Soon his teacher, Austin Mulloy drew the attention of Harry Clarke to this brilliant pupil. As a result Richard began his career as a designer in the Harry Clarke Studios, where his remarkable talent was used to the full. He became manager of the Clarke Studios in 1935, a post he held with distinction until he opened his own Studio in Dalkey in 1940. The artist died on 17th March 1974 just one year after the Resurrection window had been fixed in St. Patricks church, Newport. This church now possesses the last works of two of Irelands outstanding stained glass artists.

Windows of The Holy Family and of St. Michael

In the west wall of the church and on either side of the front porch, is a two-light stained glass window. Both windows were commissioned by an anonymous donor from the Dublin Paint & Glass Co. and are the work of William Earley A.N.C.A. This artist was then in the employ of the above-mentioned Co. and he now runs his own business on a smaller scale.

The two-light window at the rear of the Sacred Heart Chapel, show the Holy Family at home in Nazareth and is self-explanatory. The corresponding two-light window on the other side, at the rear of the Lady Chapel depicts St. Michael the Archangel (on the right hand) forcing Satan (on the left hand) out of Heaven. The strong and beautiful colours together with the artistic design with line and

colour can be best appreciated in the evening when they receive the full light of the setting sun. Both windows were fixed in their present position in 1981.

The O'Donel Window

This so called O'Donel window now fixed in the south wall of the church since 1988, is foreign in origin, but Irish by agency and Mercy by heritage. Originally it consisted of two separate windows, gifts of Sir George and Lady O'Donel to the Sisters of Mercy for the oratory of their new convent in Newport in 1887. These Mayer windows were executed in the Mayer Studios in Munich and are the combined work of many artists. Between 1880 and 1940 the Mayer Company had agencies all over Europe, including a few in Ireland. At one time, Joshua Clarke, father of Harry, held a Mayer agency, but it is more than likely that Sir George ordered the O'Donel windows from an agency in Co. Clare. Incidentally Mayer Studios were bombed out of existence in 1940.

Early in 1987, at the request of very Rev. Canon Moran P.P. Mr. Ken Ryan of the Abbey Studios undertook an inspection of the condition of all the church windows. His report was disquieting. The Sisters of Mercy then asked Mr. Ryan to have the O'Donel windows in the convent oratory also examined. The report was equally serious the lead fillings in all the windows inspected would have to be replaced at once. Canon Moran commissioned the Abbey Studios to dismantle, clean, repair and re-install all the stained glass windows in the church. The

Sisters, after due consultation with the authorities involved, got permission to have the O'Donel window receive similar attention. However as the Western Care occupants were not using the convent oratory, the Sisters arranged to have the O'Donel window installed instead in the parish church a fitting home for such an heirloom.

Though the O'Donel window was shorter and wider than the pertaining opening in the church southern wall, the Abbey Stained Glass Co. succeeded in fixing it as a two-light opening. The disparity in length was overcome by the insertion of two separate panels of matching glass to the base at each side. The window on the left portrays Mary Immaculate and the one on the right shows St. Joseph with the Child in his arm. In a panel at

the base of the original window is an ornamented capital M under the figure of Our Lady and a similar type capital J under the figure of St. Joseph. Beneath that panel is a further light strip stretching across the full width of both openings, bearing the words The gift of Lady O'Donel, The gift of Sir George O'Donel. Enclosed in a lighted circle in the centre of each of the new matching panels is a portrayal of the Lamb of God, on the left, and the Crucifixion on the right.

It may be of interest to note that the Abbey Stained Glass Studios once formed part of the Dublin Paint & Glass Co. but were a separate entity run by a Mr. Frank Ryan since 1944. When the parent company closed in 1986, the Abbey Stained Glass portion was purchased by Mr. Frank Ryan, his son and his

daughter-in-law and the business is ably run by the Ryans ever since. Newport is but one of the many churches which have benefited from the Ryan Expertise.

All the remaining windows in St. Patricks are fitted with leaded lights from the Sarah Purser Studios. Hopefully, in time further gems in stained glass will replace these.

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Friar Horan

Tommy Hughes

*"One morning all alone,
Out of his convent of grey stone,
Into forest older, darker, greyer,
His lips moving as if in prayer,
His head sunken upon his breast
As if in a dream of rest
Walked the monk"*.

The story of friar Horan is a strange one indeed. A mixture of legend, reality and a strange similarity to an earlier event which occurred at the Abbey at Burrishoole.

I knew very little about Friar Horan until the story was relayed to me by the late Tom Chambers RIP.

It's the late 1830's, a man by the name of Horan who lived in the vicinity of the Abbey discovered a Friar, dressed in the ancient robe of the Dominican Order wandering about the Abbey in a confused and disturbed state. He could not remember his name but was constantly asking the questions. "where were his fellow brothers and why was there no roof on the Abbey. Horan explained that the friars had left the Abbey over a hundred years earlier and the roof collapsed some time later.

Little else is known of the conversation which transpired between Horan and the Friar, but we do know that the Friar was taken in by Horan and so became known as Friar Horan.

It was soon discovered that the friar had strange powers, one of which was a cure for an affliction which was known as falling sickness at the time. We

know it today as epilepsy. The afflicted person would receive a bottle of water, which the friar would collect from a well in the vicinity. This was not the well we know today as Tobair na Súil ie the well of the eyes. Its thought the well was near the small bridge on the road to the Abbey, a short way from the cemetery.

The friar would then give the bottle of water to the afflicted person who would obtain the cure by drinking the water. There was one important condition which was set out by the friar. Once the cure was obtained the person had to hide the bottle in such a manner as to be never found during their lifetime.

A man by the name of Murray in the townland of Derrygarve received the cure. Shortly after, he went to seek work in England. Some years later his house was being demolished, for what purpose we're not sure, but judging by the period it may well have been a famine eviction. In any case, when the chimney stack was being knocked a bottle fell from among the stones and smashed to the ground. A couple of weeks later the news came that this man had dropped dead on the same day the house was knocked.

The mysterious appearance of this friar at the Abbey in the early 1830's was not an isolated incident. Earlier accounts show that this had happened before and goes on to explain why a Friar should somehow leap forward in time to appear in the future. This is the account of that incident.

There was once a friar in Burrishoole, a holy man who passed his days in prayer, labour and fasting. He faithfully followed every teaching of the Church and believed in every truth which came from God. There was one thing however, that he could not understand and that was, how short a thousand years where in the sight of God. One day as he read in his breviary the words: "For a thousand years in thy sight are as yesterday which has passed". He said: "I believe O Lord but I do not understand". While the friar was in this state of mind he happened to wander at leisure into the surrounding district. Every scene he gazed upon seemed more beautiful than the first, the morning sun shed its beams of light on hill and valley and overwhelmed the land with untold beauty. There was a strange, tranquil stillness in the air. It was indeed, "the truce of God with worldly woe and care". With this stillness there came into the friars innermost soul a peace and happiness such as he had never experienced before. As he walked by the wood he saw a beautiful white bird which sang a song more delightfully than any mortal had ever heard before. A carefree feeling came over the friar as he listened to the singing of the beautiful white bird, so much so that all his troubles were forgotten. The time seemed so short to him while his soul was filled with such delightful music. When the last notes of the song

died away the Friar heard the bell of the Abbey summoning the community to prayer. The wonderful happiness the friar had experienced immediately vanished.

Filled with awe the friar went in the direction of the Abbey. As he approached the Abbey he noticed some remarkable changes. True, the Abbey stood as it always had been, but somehow it seemed to have grown darker and greyer. The friars still sang the divine praises as he had remembered, but strangely he didn't recognise any of them and neither did they recognise him. When the Prior asked him where he came from he said he belonged to the Abbey and had been absent since early morning. "It cannot be", replied the Prior, "for I have been Prior of this Abbey for many, many years and I do not remember

having seen you til this hour". "This morning", said the friar, "I went forth from the Abbey and as I walked slowly I saw a beautiful white bird, whose sweet song filled my soul with such untold delight that I listened for so many hours, not thinking I had been absent for even minutes". "Hours! years rather", said one of the older friars. "When I was a novice many years ago a certain brother, remarkable for his exemplary life went forth from this Abbey one morning and never returned. Naturally we all concluded that he had finished his earthly career and had passed into the great beyond. And so his name was written with the other deceased members of the community". It was a strange story. The Prior and all the monks wished to inquire into the truth of it. They examined the register which had recorded the deaths of

all the members of the community who had died since the Abbey was founded. They came to an entry which stated that on a certain morning a Friar left the community never to return. And so they had finally discovered the mystery of the absent friar.

As to the friar himself, he had come to the conclusion that the Almighty had granted him a foretaste of heaven and made him realise beyond a shadow of a doubt the truth of the Psalmist: "For a thousand years in thy sight are as yesterday which has passed".

References:

Tom Chambers RIP
Father M. O'Donnell,
Burrishoole Abbey
(The Catholic Truth Society).

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Prop.: Keith Murphy

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A History of Burrishoole Fisheries

Seán Nixon

The water catchment areas of Burrishoole and Beltra Salmon and Sea Trout fisheries and their estuaries are described by many as one of the most scenic areas in the West of Ireland. The water that flows from those fisheries and their tributaries enter the estuary and the sea at the North end of Clew Bay close to Newport town.

Both fisheries are privately owned and in the early days each fishery had draftnet fishing rights, and as a result a high rateable valuation. Rates in the early days were paid to the Bangor Board of Conservators, a body responsible for enforcing the fishery laws and protecting the fisheries from illegal fishing. From the 1980's rates were paid to the Regional Boards, a body that replaced the older Boards. Each angler who fishes on those fisheries must hold a currant Rod Licence and must also obtain a permit to fish on any part of the fisheries. Sean Nixon, was born in the early 1930's and reared on an island of over 40 acres in Furnace lake, a tidal lake, part of the Burrishoole fishery every salmon, sea trout, eels, grey mullet, coal fish, and bass entered the lake under the bridge at the front of the island or under the causeway behind it, Sean got to know the habits of those fish at an early age, in the following pages he gives the reader a brief outline of the ownership, management and the general make-up of that fishery, together with the problems, that salmon

and sea trout, on all fisheries, had to endure from the 1930's .

In the late 1920's his grandfather William Nixon was clerk Inspector of the Bangor Board of Conservators and was in charge of protection in the Board's area which included the Burrishoole and Beltra Fisheries.

In his early days the Burrishoole fishery was divided. Furnace Lake estuary and Burrishoole Lodge was owned by Mr Paddy Walsh. There was very little rod angling at that time, his income came mainly from draftnet fishing, the open season was from February 15th to the end of July, rod angling carried on to the 12th of October. The other section of the fishery, Lough Feeagh as far back as he can recall was owned by the Roberts family who also owned Treanlaur Lodge. Good rod angling on Lough Feeagh depended very much on what numbers of fish were taken in the draftnets on Furnace lake and the estuary, as all fish for Lough Feeagh had to pass through Furnace to get to Feeagh.

Rod angling was very limited in the early 1930's due to access difficulties. Most rod anglers stayed in the local lodges or Nevins hotel. Some came by bus or taxi, many came by pony and trap. Good catches of both salmon and sea trout were hooked on most fisheries during a short day [11 am to 5.30pm or 6.00pm]. After the mid- 1930's more anglers from England, Northern Ireland, and from other

parts of Ireland, were arriving fish, as transport was becoming more available. All angling boats were moored at Nixon's land on the shores of Furnace lake. Sean's father acted as boatman for many of those anglers.

Wages were poor, less than 2 shillings for draftnet fishermen they were also paid 2 pence for every salmon killed, rod anglers and boatmen were paid 4 to 5 shillings a day but always got a good tip [£3 to £5 per week] depending on the number of fish caught and the mood of the fisherman.

By 1938 there were two regular rod anglers, a Mr Smith and a Mr Morgan, who had fished the Furnace fishery for a number of years. They brought the first outboard engine to Furnace lake. This meant that all sections of the lake could be reached in reasonable weather, with no hard row back to base for the boatman after a day's fishing. By the end of the 1939 rod angling season, World War Two had begun, most anglers left in a short time. Motor cars were again off the roads. Mr Smith and Mr Morgan said they would not be back until the war was over and things returned to normal again. It was the same story with most rod fishermen, there was lean times ahead for boatmen and fishery owners.

Furnace Lake, Burrishoole Lodge and the draftnet rights were sold about that time by Paddy Walsh to a man named John Brennan as there was no income from rod angling. Mr

Brennan intensified the draftnet fishing for salmon and sea trout.

Sean Nixon's grandfather retired in the early 1930's. His father was then foreman or water keeper on the Burrishoole fishery and estuary and in charge of all protection staff.

There was always a certain amount of illegal fishing but nets were hard to find so poaching attempts were mainly at the Causeway, the Salmon Leap, the Millrace or sometimes on the spawning rivers in winter time. A certain number of men were employed on different sections of the fisheries, for protection purposes, those men were paid a lump sum for the period they worked, Sean's father was also paid a fee for the use of a boat to patrol Furnace lake and the estuary.

Draftnet catches, at that time, were approximately 200 to 250 spring salmon 8 to 16 pounds, 600 to 700 grilse 4 to 8 pounds, also large sea trout were caught in the draftnets. Rod catches were also good with up to 14 sea trout at 1 to 4 pounds. Cabins or small huts were in use on many fisheries to give cover to men on fishery protection, or to draftnet fishing crews. Some of those huts were in out of the way places and had a fireplace for heat during cold weather. When Sean worked on some fisheries in other places those huts were often used to make a drop of poteen.

During the war years most rod fishermen kept in touch with regards to the fishing, including Mr Smith. In 1946 - 47 the war was over and anglers returned again. Anglers returned to fish on the lakes. Mr Smith and Mr Morgan came back. The outboard engine which was stored at Nixons house during the

war was now back in use. At this time Mr Brennan sold Burrishoole Lodge and lands to Mr and Mrs O'Malley. Mr Brennan retained the fishery of Furnace lake and the estuary and draftnet fishery.

Mr Brennan was a difficult man to satisfy with regard to salmon catches. Men who had emigrated during mid 1930's came back during the war years and illegal fishing seemed to be on the increase. The Gardai were called in to give extra protection as a result two of Brennan's boats were taken and later reported sunk in the lake which is up to 80 feet deep in places. Even though there were intensive Gardai enquiries, the boats were never found. With the war over more and more people emigrated than ever before so in a few years it would be difficult to get a man to set a net.

By the late 1940's Mr Brennan the Furnace lake fishery, the estuary and the draftnet fishing rights up for sale. There were many people interested but the fishery was eventually purchased by the Roberts family of Treanlaur Lodge. This meant the whole Burrishoole fishery would be under the one ownership and this should have been good for the fishery.

Under the new ownership, Tom Cleary and Sean's father were to look after the net fishing and rod angling until such time as Mr Roberts came to live at Treanlaur. Mr Smith was to rent one boat or 2 rods on Furnace lake and one boat or 2 rods on Lough Feeagh, Mr Smith was to supply the boats.

In the late 1930's Mr Smith had the idea of setting up a hotel in the Newport area so it was no

surprise when he purchased Newport house, he carried out a lot of repairs and set up a first class hotel for the needs of tourists and fishermen. At this time Mr Smith was staying in Abbey Villa guest house close to Furnace where the boats were kept. Sean Nixon can well remember the day that Mr Smith went from Abbey Villa guest house to Newport Quay by boat to view Newport house. That was one advantage of Furnace lake which is tidal, one could go from any part of the lake out into Clew Bay when the tide was suitable. Many farmers who lived by the shoreline of the lake owned boats and in spring time would cut seaweed out in Clew Bay and then transport it by boat under the bridge at Nixons Island to their holdings of land, special piers or quays were made for this purpose and these were later used as landing spots by rod anglers for lunch or picnic purposes.

With a big increase in tourists and rod anglers draftnet fishing was cut back, ending on the last full week in June each year. The numbers of sea trout taken were also curtailed and some areas where sea trout were very plentiful were avoided, leaving more fish for the rod anglers.

With the hotel a big success Mr Smith would only fish four evenings a week on Furnace lake. Sean would act as boatman. They always seemed to catch 6 to 8 trout each evening [3 pm to 6.30]. He always gave Sean a red ten shilling note each evening they went out. Newport house also owned the Newport river, the draftnet fishery and the use of a number of boats on Beltra Lake.

Mr Charles Roberts came back from England about 1950 to manage the Burrishoole fishery.

Tom Cleary retired. Sean Nixon's father now acted mainly as boatman to Newport house hotel. Extra boats were bought to care for the increase in rod fishermen.

In the early 1950's the following programme was carried out on the Burrishoole fishery:

Draftnet boat fishing from the twentieth of March to the last full week in June, 3 men employed, a second boat used in the estuary for about three weeks in June with two men employed.

Rod angling began as the draftnet fishing ended. There were 4 boats on Furnace and 4 to 5 boats on Feeagh. Rod angling continued up to October 12th with as many as seven men employed as boatmen.

A salmon hatchery was set up near the Lodge at Treanlaur. Fish had to be caught to supply ova for the hatchery. Three to four men were employed full time, Sean Nixon was now working full time with Mr Roberts.

The average catches for the fishery were as follows: 100 spring salmon, 500 grilse, 400 to 500 sea trout in the draftnets and 80 to 100 salmon and about 1100 sea trout on the rod fishing.

In the early 1950's the Forestry Department purchased large areas of mountain terrain in the upper catchment of the Burrishoole fishery. The big question was what effect would this have on the spawning and rearing areas of the fishery. In later years guidelines were put in place to avoid silting of spawning areas. The planting of certain trees near streams and rivers was forbidden.

In the mid 1950's Dr Went, scientific adviser to the Department of Fisheries was a frequent visitor to the fishery,

carrying out research work on Salmon and Sea Trout. After discussion with Mr Roberts and some of the directors of Arthur Guinness Son and Co., who at that time owned a number of fisheries in Connemara, County Galway, the Salmon Research Trust was set up. It was to carry out a programme of research in all aspects of the salmon species from the ova in the gravel to the return of the mature Salmon from the sea.

At that time predators were kept under control and a reward was paid when the "head" of a predator was produced to an officer of the board.

Salmon driftnet fishing was about to begin along the North West coast. This type of fishing for salmon and large sea trout was carried out in the following way. A boat crew would set out 200 to 300 yards of net 8 to 10 feet deep with a mesh size of two and a half inches from knot to knot. They would let this net drift along the coastline so passing salmon on their way from the feeding grounds to their parent rivers got meshed in the net. At first this type of fishing was of little threat to draftnet fishermen or rod angling fisheries as the heavy net had to be dried each evening. The fishermen had only small boats and with the weather conditions on the North West coastline it was only possible to fish three to four days a week.

In the course of a few years, nylon nets and later monofilament nets became available. Those types of net did not need drying, also BIM were offering fishermen larger boats, so it was only a matter of time until draftnet fishing and the salmon runs to fisheries were affected. With salmon rod

angling affected by this new type of fishing along the coastline, many anglers had to turn to the sea trout for good catches in fisheries like Burrishoole and Beltra.

To add to the problems of the over driftnet fishing off the North West coastline salmon stocks were badly affected by a fungus disease in the 1960's known as UDN. This affected most salmon rivers in the country. There was much concern regarding the future of salmon stocks. UDN was a fresh water fungus disease and was at its peak when water temperatures dropped to near freezing i.e. spawning time for salmon. Most salmon spawned but hundreds died afterwards, it was a sorry sight to see the dead salmon washed up on the shoreline of the rivers, covered in fungus. The only good thing that could be said about UDN disease was that any person who saw the ugly sight of the fish covered in fungus would never eat a spawning fish again. Sea trout were not affected by this disease. The fact that even before the UDN disease there was always a large death rate among salmon, after spawning. The numbers of fish that returned to spawn for the second time was very low. The disease died out after a number of years.

Dr David Piggons was chief biologist at the Salmon Research Trust on the Burrishoole fishery. Sean Nixon moved to Connemara, to manage the fisheries owned by the Guinness company, which were mainly sea trout fisheries. He was carried out some research and a restocking programme on those fisheries with some good success and Dr Piggons was a frequent visitor to the Connemara fisheries.

By the 1970's salmon driftnet fishing was getting out of control all along the North West coastline from Donegal to Kerry. Draftnet fishing, rod salmon fishing, spawning stocks and research on salmon stocks were all badly affected by this over fishing. Many anglers would have ceased to come to fish for salmon if this type of illegal fishing was allowed to continue. Many anglers made it quite clear that except for the good sea trout fishing they would not take out a rod licence. The old Boards of Conservators had hardly enough funds or manpower to protect salmon in the lakes, rivers and estuaries. To tackle the problems on the coastline new large boats and trained staff would have to be obtained and this meant more funds had to be found.

With pressure on the Boards and the Department of Fisheries it was decided to place two of the Naval Protection boats on Salmon Protection during the peak salmon runs i.e. 7 to 8 weeks on the coastline. The boats, approximately 120 feet long would be manned by naval personnel, a Garda Sergeant and Fishery Inspector. In the early 1970's Sean Nixon was appointed Fishery Inspector in the Connemara District which covers the area Slyne Head, Ballyconeely to the Coast Guard station at Rossaveal, County Galway. He did a number of trips on Salmon Protection on the naval ship the Fola. Mono-filament nets were illegal, 1500 yards of net were allowed Donegal to Clew bay and 800 yards in most other areas. Nets were allowed 30 meshes deep and no fishing was allowed from 6 am Saturday to 6 am Monday. Each man who fished must hold

a Salmon Driftnet licence for the district area he fished in. At times there was a certain amount of confrontation. The object of the patrols was to keep close to the coastline and keep the illegal boats from fishing. Nets of one mile to five miles were often seized. Sean was involved in seizing one net of over four and three-quarter miles long set 7 miles North West of Tory Island Donegal.

This type of protection is maintained to the present day. In 1980 the old District Boards were replaced by the Regional Boards. These provided more training, good protection boats for inshore, coastline and estuary protection. So runs of salmon again improved to most fisheries including Burrishoole and Beltra.

Salmon farms began to appear in some bays in the late 1970's and by the mid 1980's were sited in several bays from Achill to Galway bay. They were welcomed at first by many people as they gave a certain amount of employment and had the effect of keeping the price of wild salmon down. In the Connemara area where there was a large number of salmon farms some owners were complaining of some type of parasites causing problems on their cages.

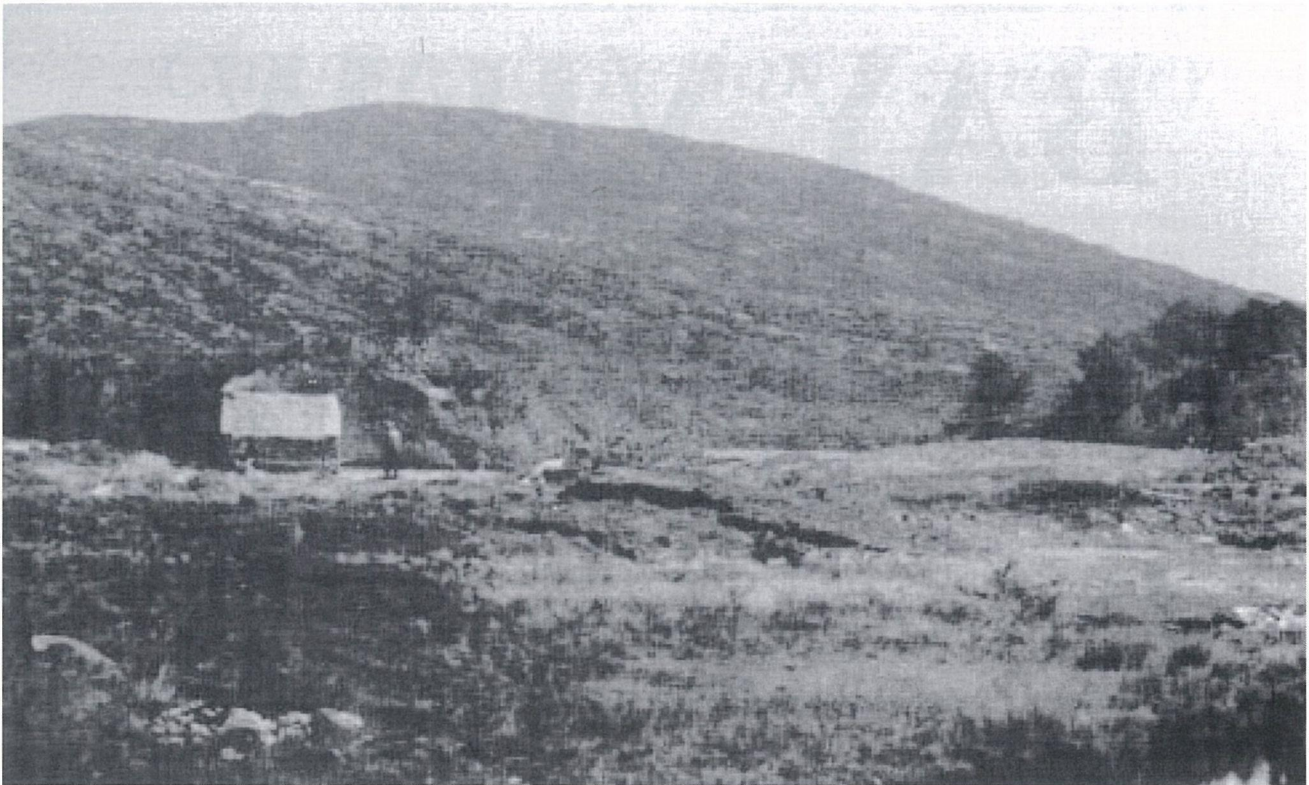
Sea trout in the mid 1980's were showing a decline. 1985 was the last good year for sea trout runs in the area Achill to Galway. 1986 and 1987 sea trout runs were at an all time low, 1988 showed no improvement. A meeting was called at Aasleagh Lodge, Leenane on October 10th. 1988. Present at the meeting were officials from Department of Marine, The Central Fisheries Board, The Western and North Western Regional Boards, The

Salmon Research Agency, fish owners and anglers. At a meeting it was decided to make a big effort to find out what was causing the sea lice problem. A survey in 1989 showed no improvement in stocks of spawning sea trout.

In 1990 there seemed to be good runs of sea trout, starting going to sea in late March, and early May. On May the 9th there was a breakthrough when research found a number of sea trout smolts that should have been putting on weight in the estuary and sea were now low weight and about to die. They were attacked by sea lice causing head damage, and fins erode. In the following few weeks hundreds of affected sea trout smolts were discovered, but were forced back to the lower pools in the estuaries by the sea lice problem. Sea lice do not survive in fresh water, so the lice problem. Some smolts returned to the estuary to feed but were attacked and eventually died. The question now was what caused the sea lice problem to go out of control.

A ban was instituted to prevent the taking of sea trout in the following fisheries in the early 1990s: Owengal, Burrishoole, Beltra, Belcliff, Bunowen, Carrownisky, Delin, Errif, Crumlin, Kylmore, Clifden, Gowla, Carna, Inver More, Inver Beg, Scree, Lettermucka, Costello, Furnace. The ban on the taking of sea trout and the sea lice problem are still there in 1999, the outlook for all those great trout fisheries of the past is very poor.

The Burrishoole fishery was sold some years ago by the Roberts who retired to England to The Salmon Research Trust



Hut used by fishery protection personnel 1940's

now known as The Salmon Research Agency, with Dr Ken Whelan the chief biologist. This fishery is very badly affected by the sea trout and sea lice problem and depends on salmon angling to fill the demands of angling fishermen.

The Beltra fishery is owned (part of) by the Central and Regional Boards and leased to the Glenisland anglers Co-op. The remainder or West side of Beltra is owned by Mr Kieran Thompson who also owns the Newport river, both banks. Spring salmon fishing begins on the Newport river and Beltra Lake on March 20th all the above fisheries close on September 30th. There has been no draftnet fishing carried out on any of the above fisheries for a number of years, this fishery is also badly affected by the sea trout sea lice problem.

Many people ask the question what are the main changes which have taken place round the above fisheries over the past 50 years.

In the area round the two fisheries over 40 households which were in use in the early days are closed up or in ruin today. There may be some new houses but it is a pity to see so many of the old dwelling houses gone. The schools where many people were educated are now closed, Derradda is now a community centre, Lettermaghera is gone as is Treenbeg, Shramore is now a ruin, Skirdagh is now a dwelling house, Glenisland is also a dwelling.

Bog roads have deteriorated and many paths that once led to beaches, lakes and mountains are overgrown or blocked off. Water quality has deteriorated in the past number of years. On most fisheries, in former days on any river, lake or stream, if one was thirsty one got down on one knee and drank enough to cure the thirst. Today with forestry operations and a change in farming methods, alga growth and a certain amount of pollution it is not safe to drink water without it being tested, so it is not

unusual at present to see staff who work on fisheries buying bottled water before going to work. Where hatcheries are in use filter units have to be installed to ensure clean water.

Bird life has also shown a big reduction from the 1970's to the present day and the following are some of the species that would be seen at certain times of the year Wild Geese, Swans Wild Duck of all types, Grouse, Corncrakes, Golden Plover, Hawks, Woodcock, Snipe, Curlew, Cuckoos, Skylarks, Common Tern and many others.

The growth of bushes and shrubs in many scenic areas have gotten out of hand and are blocking off the scenic views in many country areas. The disappearance of the wild flowers and plants that used be seen round the lakes, rivers and by the roadside, those are some of the many changes that stand out over years.

The Presbyterian Cemetery

Nancy Hannon Mulhern

The narrow strip of water which separates Northern Ireland from Scotland has provided an easy means of access, in helping the Presbyterians to come to Ireland in the early 1600's.

After 1642, the Presbyterian Church began to expand, as settlers moved inland, so the Church followed the people. As they moved south and settled in towns and villages, supported not merely by agriculture, but more significantly by the domestic linen industries, spinning and hand loom weaving.

The Presbyterian population reached its maximum in 1834. By 1901 the numbers had fallen, due to emigration.

A group of them came to Newport, and in 1856 a Church was built on the left hand side of the road, what is now the Castlebar Road. It is a very neat stone edifice and is currently used as a Youth Centre.

In the years 1965 – 68 Newport's first Secondary School occupied the building.

At the back is a cemetery containing about 20 graves, 13 of whom have headstones, that of the Keegans being the most ornamental, surrounded by a wrought iron fence.

Reverend George S Keegan first Pastor, was an Irish-speaking Minister, and resided in The Manse at Sandymount.

His son, Dr David M. Keegan who died in 1899, studied in Queen's College Galway now known as University College, graduated with honours from the Royal University, and won the senior scholarship of his college in Political Economy and Jurisprudence. He then proceeded to the Assembly's College Belfast to pursue his course for his ministry of the Presbyterian Church, but at the close of his term of study in Theology, which had been interrupted more than once, were cut short by ill health. After a year's residence in South Africa, he

returned to Newport, about a month later he passed away and his remains were interred in the cemetery of the Presbyterian Church.

In addition to the Keegans, interred are members of the Aiken family, who were well known farmers in Carrowbeg. Deveralls, shopkeepers in Newport and farmer James Hunter who was fatally shot in Tiernaur.

Headstones are simple in detail, mostly in an upright position, with a particular style of lettering easy to read.

Like many old cemeteries it is overgrown with weeds and briars.

Sources:

Presbyterians in Ireland. Mayo News.

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Headstone inscriptions from Newport Presbyterian Graveyard

Sacred
To the memory
Of
The Rev George S. Keegan
Presbyterian Minister
Of Newport
Died 16th May 1890
Aged 67 years
Blessed are the dead which
die in the Lord

In tender memory
Of
David Massey Keegan
3rd son of the
Rev George S. Keegan
Who died at the Manse
Good Friday 1899 aged 27
years
Vale dulcissime
Vale dilectissime
Desideratissime
Also his beloved sister
Mary Jane Keegan
Elder daughter of the
Rev George S. Keegan
She entered into her eternal
rest
30th Sept 1946

Sacred
To the memory of
William Aitken who died
20th July 1867 aged 14 years
also
Elizabeth Aitken beloved wife
of
Andrew Aitken who died 10
May 1877
Aged 46 years
Erected by Andrew Aitken

Sacred
To the memory
Of
Catherine
The beloved wife of
Rev George S. Keegan
Died 15th January 1875
Aged 31 years
And their son
Robert
Who died in infancy

The Lord gave and the Lord
hath taken away

In loving memory
of
Annie Crosbie Pearson
Who died 3rd September 1913
Aged 56 years
Interred here.
Also of her husband
Thomas William Pearson
Who died in London
17th April 1903 aged 64 years
interred at Norwood

For of such is the Kingdom of
Heaven
In memory of
Olive Clinton
Died 5th Feb. 1896
Aged 9 months
Till He comes

In memory of
Robert Dick
Who died at Mullaw
May 7th 1887
Aged 33

Elizabeth A. Telford
Who died
26th April 1864
Aged 5 yrs & 4 months
Erected
By her father
Robert E. Telford

In loving memory
Of
Francis McManamon
Who died June 9th 1885
Aged 33 years
Also his mother
Mary McManamon
Who died Feb 7th 1886
Aged 54 years
Erected by his sister
Jess E. Ferris

In loving memory
Of
My dear husband
Samuel Deverell
Who died 17th June 1904

Headstone inscriptions from Newport Presbyterian Graveyard

In memory
Of
William Rose
Who died at Burrishoole farm
On 2nd May 1916
Aged 66 years
Also his wife Jessie Rose
Who died 26th June 1921

In memory of
James Hunter
Who Died at Newfield
29th August 1869
Aged 48 years
Interred here.
Also
Helen Weddel
his wife
who died 17th Nov. 1903
Aged 80 years
Interred
In Dean cemetery
Edinburgh

Sacred
To the memory
Sub Lieutenant
William J.L. Aitken
RNVR
Who died at Carrowbeg
April 16 1917
aged 41 years



The former Presbyterian church on the Castlebar road, now used as a youth centre

Newport Historical Society Web Page

Peter Mallowney

The Internet is a vast network of computers that enables transfer of information and knowledge around the world. There is a large amount of information available about local history and also about Mayo. Some sites that are worth visiting are:

Mayo local history <http://www.bess.tcd.ie/roots/prototyp/mayo.htm>

Mayo on the move <http://www.mayo-ireland.ie/MotM.htm>

Mayo bulletin boards <http://mail.mayo-ireland.ie/WebX?>

South Mayo Leader Company <http://www.mayo-ireland.ie/Mayo/SMayoLC/SMayoLC.htm>

Family Tree Maker software and all sorts of genealogy links

<http://www.familytreemaker.com/>

Irish genealogy

<http://www.cs.ncl.ac.uk/genuki/irl/>

More irish genealogy

<http://www.emcee.com/~ajmorris/ireland/ireland.htm>

<http://www.irishgenealogy.com/IrishResearch.htm>

http://www.bess.tcd.ie/roots_ie.htm

<http://midas.ac.uk/genuki/big/>

and there are also several interesting newsgroups.

soc.genealogy.surnames.ireland

soc.genealogy.ireland

soc.genealogy.computing

Since the production of the first journal "Back the Road", the society decided to set up a web page, in fact to set up two. The main one is to be used for providing details about the historical society, as source of local historical information and to publicise the contents of the journal. It will be updated about once a month and will contain copies of articles from the journal, old photographs, some of which have been published in the journal and some which have not yet been published. These photos will

change about once a month so check in regularly and see what is new. It is also planned to have copies of Griffiths valuation (1857) of the parish of Burrishoole, the Tithes applotments and the 1901 census on line. These are an excellent source of information for family history. This page will include gravestone inscriptions, church records, details of rent rolls and any other historic information that comes to the society's attention, that may be of interest to the readers.

The second page is to be confined to storage of family trees for the Burrishoole parish. Currently there is a family tree for the O'Donel family who were landlords in Burrishoole for many years. There is also one with 650 names for the Chambers family and another for the Moore family. It is hoped to expand this section considerably. Therefore it was thought to keep it separate from the main Web page. If one has Newport connections and has worked out your family tree the society will be delighted to include it on this page. It is planned to set up the page so that it can be browsed online and also so that the family tree file can be downloaded for viewing on your own computer at a later date.

There are several companies that provide Web space free on their server computers. They make their income from advertisements that are included on their customers web pages so one will notice advertisements popping up as pages are browsed. The society has obtained 5 megabytes of space from www.tripod.com and 10 megabytes from www.geocities.co.

The URLs of the Web pages are:

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Park/7461/> for the main page

and

<http://www.members.tripod.com/~newporthistsoc> for the family tree page.

Fr. Manus Sweeney and the Rebellion of 1798

Tommy Hughes

*The story of our native land,
From weary age to age,
Is writ in blood and scalding
tears On many a gloomy page;
But darkest, saddest page of all
Is that which tells the fate,
Of Erin's noblest martyr-sons,
The priests of ninety-eight.*

The rebellion of 1798 was one of the bloodiest and dramatic conflicts in Irish history. Fuelled by French-inspired republicanism together with an Irish peasantry brutalised by a British imperial government. The aim was to overthrow the social order of the day and replace it with a Republic similar to that in France and America. Indeed the success of the American War of Independence greatly influenced the rebellion of 1798.

At the time the United Irish movement felt that with the help of the French, the defeat and overthrow of the British was a real possibility. After all this had been the ultimate dream of most Irishmen for many years, the reality however was to be somewhat different.

The rebellion ran its course during the summer of 1798 and ended in total failure. A combination of poor organisation, an inadequate and poorly trained native force, and also a reluctance on the part of the French to sustain the struggle were the main contributing factors towards its

failure.

Many Catholic clergy played a significant role in the rebellion. They too were impressed by the French republican ideal. But perhaps more importantly, the scars of the penal laws still ran deep and this, more than anything, influenced their participation.

So, many Catholic clergy joined with their countrymen in the fight for Irish liberty and justice. One of these priests was the Newport Curate Father Manus Sweeney.

There seems to be some controversy with regard to his birthplace. Some say he was born in Keel, Achill Island about the year 1763. A monument erected at Dookinella in 1944 celebrates his birthplace. This however may be confused by the fact that his brother held a Latin School there which Father Manus attended as a boy. The highly respected local historian Padraic O Morain claims he was born in his grandmother's house in Rossmore near Newport where he received an early education from a wandering schoolmaster. He was noted for his piety and was sent abroad to study for the priesthood in the Irish College in Paris. Since college records of the period were destroyed by fire we know nothing of the time he spent there nor do we know when he returned to Ireland.

Father Manus first came to

prominence as a Curate in Newport in the summer of 1798. On the 22nd of August of that same year General Humbert landed at Kilcummin near Killala with a force of one thousand French troops. On the 27th, Humbert marched to Castlebar and routed the British in a famous incident which became known as the "Races of Castlebar".

Some of the French forces under Captain Boudet came to Newport the following day, but the town had already been evacuated by the Newport yeomanry under Captain James Moore O'Donel. His father Sir Neal was not in Newport at the time, he had gone to join Cornwallis at Athlone together with his other two sons Hugh and Neal.

On his arrival in Newport Captain Boudet, found a Tree of Liberty which had been planted by a former Yeoman by the name of Peter Gibbons and he was also greeted by Father Manus Sweeney. The priest's apparent friendliness with Boudet on that day in Newport seemed to indicate they had met previously, though it is more likely his command of the French language accounted for this. The incident however was to become an important piece of evidence against him at his trial later in Castlebar.

Sir Neil O'Donel returned unexpectedly to Newport on

September the 5th. On his journey he was joined by Captain James Moore and about 20 men from Tirawley. The rebels were caught off guard and decided to retreat from the town. Father — Manus and Boudet were on horseback at Meddlicotte Street near the Westport Road when Sir Neil and his men approached the bridge from the old Castlebar Road. (the old Castlebar Road was then the present road passing by Peadar Kilroy's ironworks). Boudet wanted to shoot Sir Neil but Father Manus pleaded with him not to do so. By now O'Donel and his men were getting closer so Boudet and Fr. Manus had no option but to retreat up the Westport road. They were pursued by Sir Neil who eventually caught up to Father Manus and seriously injured him by driving the butt of his pistol through his cheek.

Sir Neil then brought Father Manus back to Newport, had him bound and left prisoner in the guardroom. He then proceeded, with the help of some of the people, to ransack the town and surrounding area for suspected rebels.

It must be pointed out that relationships between Catholics and Protestants in Newport were extremely good at the time. This was due mainly to the credit of James Moore O'Donel who had always banned provocative songs and insignia in the town on both sides. There was further evidence of this with regard to the Reverend Heron. He prevailed on Sir Neil to release Father Manus into his custody. He said it was improper to keep a clergyman prisoner and agreed to take responsibility for him. Sir Neil agreed and so, Father Manus was brought to the Rev Heron's

residence. (this is Derrydeva House on the south side of the river which is presently the residence of Eileen and T.J. Marsh). It was from here Father Manus Sweeney made his escape, probably with the help of the Rev Heron.

He then left Newport and met with Boudet at a prearranged place and they decided to ride to Killala. At this point Father Manus decided to join with the French, no doubt encouraged by his treatment at the hands of Sir Neil. During the course of their journey Father Manus is reported to have urged people to join with the French.

While in Killala Father Manus accepted a request to translate a letter from a Colonel Charost urging magistrates to levy money on the inhabitants for the support of the French. French funds were almost exhausted at this stage and there was little hope of receiving further funds from France.

By mid September Government troops were pouring into Mayo and Killala fell to General Trench on September 23rd. Retributions began almost immediately, hangings, floggings and burnings were commonplace. Fearing for their lives Father Manus and others decided to go into hiding. The priest began his long months in hiding in Glenlara, a valley in the mountains about six miles from Newport. He spent seven weeks in the house of a newly-wed couple by the name of Tadhg O Morain and Bridget McFadden. His concern for the welfare of the young couple, were he to be discovered became increasingly apparent so he decided to move on to Comcloon near Newport.

Here Father Manus stayed

with Neil O'Donnell and brother-in-law Seamus Toolis was to spend a further six weeks there, hiding under a turf coming out only at night for fresh air and exercise. One day he was seen by a man who considered untrustworthy. O'Donnell and Toolis advised him it was better to move. They travelled with him through the mountains by way of Glenamadoo until he got to Ballycroy. He then advised O'Donnell and Toolis to return home and he proceeded on his way until he met a man by the name of James Corrigan who escorted him across the straits to the Island of Innisbiggle. On his way he found a dead fish on the strand. He immediately saw this as a bad omen and told it to James Corrigan and said "Tiompaigh abhaile a Shear beidh mise gabaid" ["turn back James I'll be captured"] eventually made his way to the Sound and information of his whereabouts after this was somewhat vague. It is believed he spent some time with relatives the Mangans in Keele Crumpaun. He later went to a deserted village on Slieve which was then the last settlement on the island.

After this he moved to the Valley area where he was eventually discovered by Major Denis Bingham in May 1798 after eight long months in hiding. His discovery was an accident. Bingham was looking for a man called Maguire. He went to search a house owned by the Heneghans or the O'Mahony. The soldiers found nothing, just as they were about to leave someone began to thrust a bayonet into the loft. The woman of the house cried



Portion of mural in Newport showing the hanging of Fr. Manus Sweeney

fear saying “Na maraigh an sagart” i.e. don’t kill the priest.

One of the soldiers understood the native language and so father Manus Sweeney was discovered at a cost of £50 to the government.

He was then marched on foot in the boiling hot summer sun to Castlebar where he was put in jail. Tradition tells that on his

journey he became faint with thirst coming into Mulranny and asked for a drink. A soldier brought him the drink, then, just as he was about to hand it to the priest another soldier smashed the vessel from his hands. Father Manus remarked “that hand shall be the cause of your death”. Another soldier by the name of Barrett brought him a drink in his

boot. Father Manus thanked him and prayed that he may have a long life. This soldier did live to the ripe old age of 106 and died in the Barony of Erris around 1881. The soldier who smashed the drink from Father Manus is said to have shot himself accidentally while cleaning his gun.

Father Manus Sweeney was

brought before the court at Castlebar on the 22nd of May 1799. The odds lay heavily against him and his sentence seemed all but a mere formality. He was charged with taking part in the rebellion and of being one of its leaders. He was also charged with collecting money for the French and with inciting others to join with them.

Among those most prominent to testify against him were, Sir Neil O'Donel, Father Michael Conway of Killala and Anthony Wilkes. Father Manus was sentenced to death by hanging on the 22nd of May 1799. The sentence was to be carried out in Newport on the 8th of June, the largest fair day of the year. Some accounts claim he was actually hanged on the 9th. If the 8th fell on a Sunday then the fair day would be held the following day. There also seemed to be a purpose in the decision to have held the execution on the fair day, obviously to instil maximum fear and terror in the community.

On the morning of the 8th of June Father Manus left Castlebar by horse and cart with a heavy presence of soldiers on either side. The sad procession entered Newport where a large crowd were gathered. Father Manus was paraded up Main Street to the old market crane where he was to be hanged. The old market crane was situated in front of the house of a man named O'Boyle (at present the premises of Kelly's Kitchen). It was from here a table was taken, which Father Manus was made to stand on. He looked in a desperate state, his long months in hiding had taken its toll. He addressed the people in Irish and pleaded with them not to try and rescue him as he was prepared to meet his maker. The

rope was then placed around his neck and the table was pushed away. Father Manus was left to swing free in a manner which took some time to expire. A man by the name of Lightle shouted an insulting remark saying "the priest's bacon is high today". A sister of Father Manus quickly replied "not as high as yours will be before too long". This remark came to pass shortly afterwards. Lightle got lost in heavy fog travelling to Achill one night. After several months a dog strayed into the village of Owenduff with a human bone in its mouth. After a search his remains were found on the hill of Cortoon 1500 feet above sea level where a cairn still marks the spot. There is a second account of this incident which is similar except for the fact that the place, Cortoon where he was found, was in fact a few miles outside Newport on the Castlebar Road.

According to tradition the parish priest of Newport at the time, Canon Waldron, was unhappy with Father Manus Sweeney's radical views. When the priest was being prepared for burial, Canon Waldron insisted he should be buried in Achill. This was agreed. However when the horses reached the road leading to the Abbey they stopped and refused to go any further, several attempts were made to move them but they refused to budge. Eventually it was decided to bring his remains to the Abbey, a grave had been prepared earlier. And so it was here, within the walls of the Abbey, Father Manus was laid to rest.

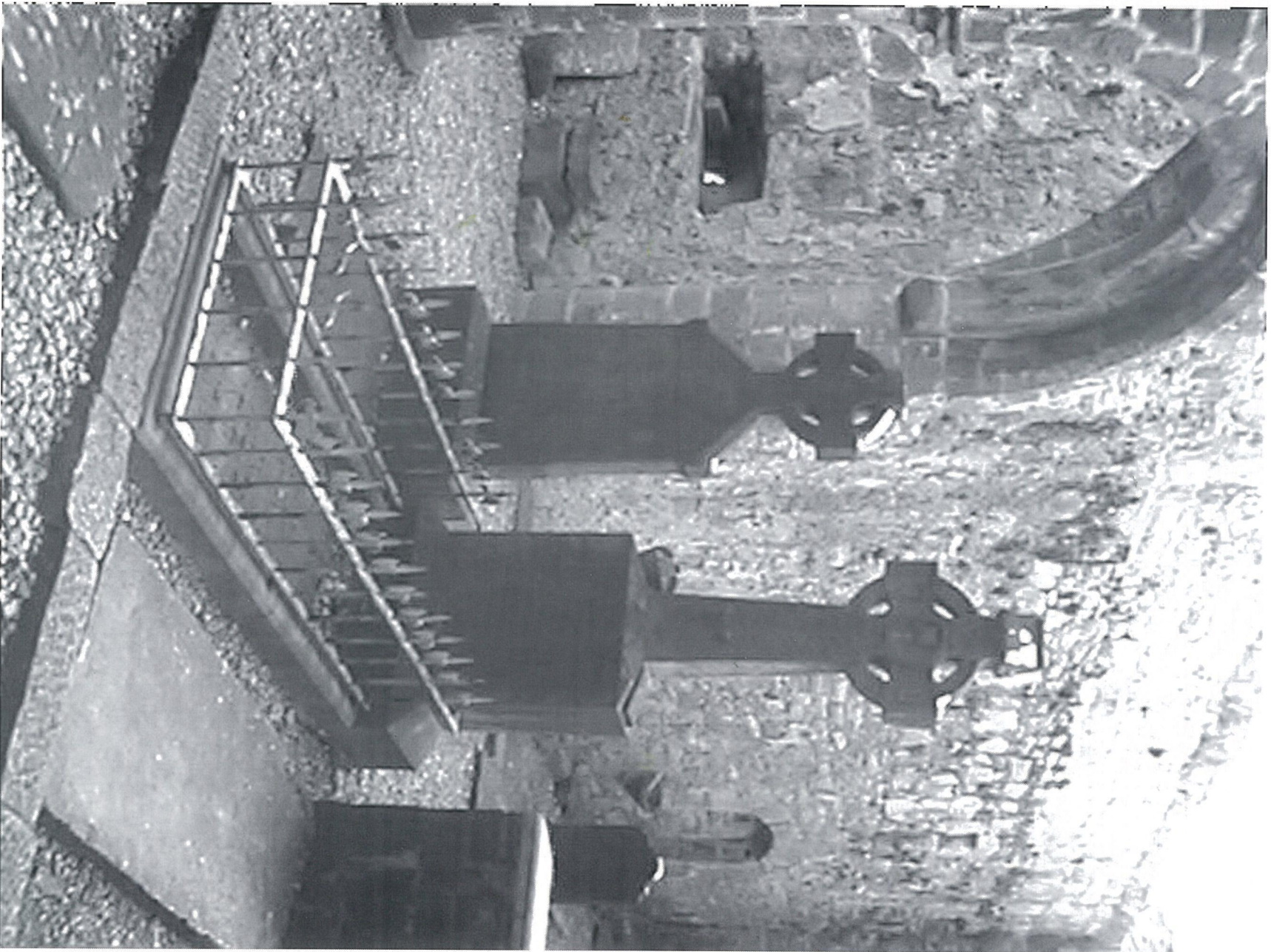
Canon Waldron was later to become Bishop of Killala. Tradition also recalls that he met with a strange accidental death. One night he was standing on a

chair winding the clock on wall when he lost his balance, and broke his neck.

The role played by O'Donel's of Newport in the trial of Father Manus Sweeney has been the subject of much criticism down through the years. Were the O'Donels of Newport failing in their duty as loyal subjects of Her Majesty's Government, or were they in some way colluding with the rebels purely by the lack of action they took against them. This was the subject of the Court of Inquiry against Captain James Moore O'Donel on the 3rd of December 1800.

The charges brought against Captain James Moore O'Donel by the Reverend John Beresford were truly astounding. Among the charges made by Beresford were:

- 1 The town of Newport was the sink of rebellion, yet despite this not one single rebel was brought to justice.
- 2 That Captain James Moore O'Donel was found in the house of a rebel by the name of Gibbons and decorated with a profusion of green ribbon and sufficient evidence to hang him, yet at his trial he produced neither what or evidence nor did he come forward himself.
- 3 That Captain James Moore O'Donel appeared before court martial as the advocate of Crump and Gibbons, convicted rebels.
- 4 That most of the New York yeomanry corps were known as rebels and at the slightest provocation of invasion would turn their arms against the government.
- 5 That Sir Neil O'Donel favoured the escape of Father Manus Sweeney a proclaimed rebel who has since been executed.



The grave of Fr. Manus Sweeney in Burrishoole Dominican Abbey - high cross and pike railing

These were only some of the charges made against James Moore O'Donel. There was certainly a strong element of truth in some of them. The names of Pat Cunney, Pat Gibbons, John Slatery, James Cummann, John Nixon, Pat Keane, Hugh Sweeney, Edmond Burke and John McGuire all appear as members of the Newport yeomanry corps. They all played some part in the occupation of Newport towards the end of August 1798, yet most of them returned to the corps after the rebellion. The charge that Sir Neil favoured the escape of Father Manus may well be true. It has been well known locally that the Reverend Heron helped Father Manus to escape. Did Sir Neil have knowledge of this? Perhaps we shall never really know.

In his defence, Captain James Moore O'Donel showed the true skills of a magistrate worthy of modern times. He completely discredited Benton. In his reply to the charge that he defended two known rebels, Crump and Gibbons, he said any condemned man was entitled to a defence and went on to say "Good God Sir, is it a part of the Christian charity for which the Reverend Doctor has learned, that an accused man on trial for his life should be denied the benefits of Counsel. Is it better to shoot the prisoner first and try him after."

In the light of all this one may wonder why Captain James Moore and his brother Connel were busy gathering hostile witnesses against Father Manus at his trial. The answer is an obvious one, the O'Donels knew their conduct was suspect and that an inquiry was most likely. It was important then that they were seen to be tough on the

rebels. These factors coupled with the evidence of a fellow clergyman Father Michael Conway who received £50 for his trouble undoubtedly sealed Father Manus Sweeney's fate.

When the centenary of the rebellion was being celebrated in 1898 it was decided to commemorate Father Manus Sweeney's death by building a memorial hall and a cross over his grave. The hall was situated in the present church grounds on the site now occupied by Our Lady's grotto. Contrary to some accounts the hall was not demolished to make way for the new church but still stood until the late 1920's or early 30's. The stone from the building was used by Pat Kelly (grandfather of P.J. Kelly, The Quay) in the construction of Dominick Kelly's house and butcher shop.

On the 9th of June 1912 a large crowd attended Mass at the Abbey to celebrate the unveiling of the Cross. The mass was said by Canon McDonald P.P. amidst torrents of rain and thunder. The crowd later returned to Newport to hear speeches from prominent politicians and Father Martin O'Donnell read an account of the events of the life of Father Manus.

Father Manus Sweeney's grave is situated in the Abbey west of the tower and close to the entrance to the Lady Chapel. The grave is surrounded by railings with each rail fashioned in the form of a 1798 pikehead. The inscription on the monument is both in Irish and English and reads:

*THIS CROSS HAS BEEN
ERECTED BY THE
PARISHIONERS OF
BURRISHOOLE TO THE
MEMORY OF FATHER*

MANUS SWEENEY

*A holy and patriotic priest
Who was hanged in Newport
June 8th 1799*

*Because he had joined with
His countrymen*

In the rebellion of 1798.

*His name shall be in request
From generation to generation*

May he rest in peace

Amen.

The death of Father Manus left an indelible impression on the people of the parish. His memory was to inspire many who would later follow in his footsteps in the cause of Irish Freedom. Perhaps it is fitting to leave the final tribute to the poet.

*Loyal children of the church were
they*

Her soldiers brave and true.

*Yet Irish hearts within their
breasts*

Were beating warmly too;

*For years of patient, studious
of Vigil and of Prayer*

*Had never quenched the patriot
Fire*

Which God had kindled there

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Skerdagh School 1840 - 1850

Joe McDermott

Before 1831 there was no government-organised education on a national scale. Some attempts had been made in the eighteenth century by the Archbishop of Dublin (Church of Ireland) to propose the establishment of schools where children would be thought the English language and the Protestant religion. This came to nothing as there was no money available. The charter school system was an implementation of this, these schools were seen as proselytising (attempting to convert students) and as a result were not very popular though State supported. The problem lay in the local management of the schools, inefficient and corrupt.¹⁴ In 1831 a new National Board of Education was set up to control the newly proposed national education system. In a letter to the new Board of National Education dated July 4th 1839 the Parish Priest of Newport refers to a local "proselytising school" he goes on to say "I am left with no means of counteracting his efforts but my own scanty revenues" he adds "at least 10 other schools wanted".¹⁵

This was the situation that obtained in the Parish of Burrishoole as the population soared towards its 1841 peak which saw Mayo with a population in excess of 450,000 and perhaps as high as 500,000.

A new road commenced construction from the town of Newport toward Glenhest and Nephin in the years immediately

after 1831. The engineer Alexander Nimmo who had designed many of the new roads of County Mayo had instigated it in an official report in 1831.

The growth of road building had a number of results, it gave employment to distressed areas, indeed it was often pursued for this very purpose and it encouraged the development of markets and trade and of course building of homes and cabins along the way. In the case of this new road into Glenhest two schools a church and a R.I.C. Barracks were to be developed. The first of the schools was to be a few hundred yards inside the O'Donel property, in the Archdiocese of Tuam in the townland of Knockmoyle, although the school would answer to the name Skerdagh. This name was to reflect the catchment area that it would serve. The Board of National Education had been set up with an initial grant of £30,000 "to enable the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to assist with the education of the people"

In order to get financial assistance from the Board of National Education it was necessary to make an application to the Commissioners of Education for aid toward a schoolhouse. It was usually the Parish Priest that made the application which was supported by other members of the community, where possible Catholics and Protestants signed jointly. The schools were to be

non-denominational and religious education was not intended as part of the daily curriculum.

Fr. James Hughes had made other applications for funding for Newport town schools³. In the case of Skerdagh School the application E D 1/61 is not actually signed by the Reverend Hughes, but undoubtedly he would have supported the application, on another occasion he had declared that "at least 10 other schools are wanted". The trustees of the school were to be Alex and George Glendenning of Westport. The first application was made prior to 1843 and was rejected. The successful application was made in time to allow for the school to open on the 1st of January 1846, in fact it was signed by Glendenning on 24th May 1845. The building must have proceeded with alacrity. For a time Archbishop McHale - a Lahardane man - had withdrawn Tuam Archdiocese schools from the Board of National Education system and forbidden his priests to sign applications for funds believing that such schools would become centres for proselytising.

Skerdagh school was to have Alex and George Glendenning, managers of the Bank of Ireland Westport, as its first trustees on a rent free lease of 31 years or 3 lives. The school was to accommodate 150 males and females in one school room 34 feet by 18 feet. The site acquired was one acre. It is situated on a



Skerdagh 1925

Front row (l. to r.): Annie Jane Mc Manamon Graffy, Nora Mc Neela Skirdagh, Katie Lavallo The Bridge, Baby Conway Skirdagh, Fred Mc Donnell Skirdagh, Mary Keane Skirdagh, Mary Chambers Glenlara, Nora Buggin Claggernagh, Second row (l. to r.): Michael Heffernan Tawneyoogan, Rose King Graffy, Kate Leneghan Skirdagh, Norah Loftus Cloggernagh, Eileen Kelly Cloggernagh, Jack Boggin Cloggernagh, Packie Chambers Skirdagh, Tom Chambers Skirdagh Upper, Thomas Mulchrone Tawneyoogan.

Third row (l. to r.): Margaret Killeen Cloggernagh, Katie Mc Manamon Cloggernagh, Molly Chambers Upper Skirdagh, A Other, John Chambers Upper Skirdagh, Martin Kelly Cloggernagh, John Willie Chambers Skirdagh Upper.

North-facing slope at approximately 200 feet above sea level and some 3.5 miles from Newport. It would appear to be isolated from all habitation and has no focal point, as does for instance the Glenhest school a few miles further out the road. However an examination of the 1838 Ordnance Survey maps shows that its location, while initially strange, was well suited to the fan-like scatter of homes that had grown up along the Black Oak River and up its tributary the "Abhainn Sciordach" toward Glenlara and Buckoogh mountain and from thence back around through Letterlough and into Graffy.

In the application for funding it was stated that local aid and funding would be available to build and maintain the school. Brackla school which was not vested in the Board of National Education was the nearest school,

it held 106 students. The current view was that clergyman were offered to the lyceum.¹⁶ Those applying felt that there was much need for the school "There is a large population living locally". The superintendent of schools visited in April of 1845 to see for himself the circumstances. When the school was built it cost £66-13-4 and to furnish it a further £7-10-0. Its size was 24 feet by 18 feet.

So on the first of January 1846 David Caine took up his position as teacher at Skerdagh School, he was aged about 40 had trained at the National model school in Dublin and worked in Derradda school for a number of years, his salary was 12 pounds per year.¹⁷ The local contribution was nil and scholars had no contribution to make. There were an average 30 males and 20 female children present.

On the 22nd February 1847

just one year into its life Skerdagh school received its 2nd school inspector. He most likely travelled on horseback from Newport along a slope improving "new line". Crossing the hill before the school would have stopped to look toward Nephin. No immediate houses in sight just a vast expanse of blanket bog, to his right Buckoogh, the crisp February morning light picking out clouds dotted along its lower slopes. His right Croaghmoyle darkened Western slopes not in the frosty sun's rays. It probably taken over and how to reach the school and word of arrival must have sped before - all was in order, all was ready except - there were only 10 students there that day, 10 boys and two girls - where were the other 130? Their average attendance had been 23 over the previous six months. The rea

may have been to do with the McHale disagreement with the Board of National Education but perhaps more significantly, this was 1847 and a famine stalked the land. That any one would be thinking of education was in itself surprising. The teacher himself when asked stated that he “was always trying to get meals for his family”¹⁸, such were the times. The hours of business of the school were from 10 o’clock till 4 o’clock in summer and from 10 o’clock till 3.15 in winter. Surprisingly the Newport parish schools show a better attendance in summer than winter, one would have expected farm work to keep students away from school.

Of the school in general that first inspection reports that the state of repairs was good, that is the roof, the walls, the floors – all except the glazing. It had not been whitewashed within six months. There were 8 desks and forms. The length of the forms was 12 feet. Mr Caine had a teachers desk and a press in which to put books. We are not told what books were used but nearby Newport used the following, which may give a clue to Skerdagh’s library. In Newport the following books were used

- Scotts Lessons*
- Exile of Siberia*
- Johnsons Dictionary*
- The Dublin Reading Book*
- Grounds of the Christian Doctrine*
- Jacksons and Jennings Bookkeeping*
- Spelling Book & Primers (supplied by parents)*¹⁹

One can assume something similar for Skerdagh. So in the midst of famine the local school struggled on. Standing before the fire on that February day, cold

with the frosty glare of the sun through unglazed windows one can sense the longing, the hope, that learning would free those young people from the grip of famine and despair. The answers point positively, the inspector found the state of the school to be improved since his last visit in spelling and reading. Privies clean and teachers literary acquirements good, his character good and his method of conducting the school good and all for a salary of 12 pounds 1 shilling per year. From 1846 until 1978 Skerdagh school served a community – spread in a great semi-circle, between mountain and lake, with Newport to its back and facing the mystical Nephin mountain, it still stands to this day while many of the cabins of the poor who used its services as an educational means,

to escape to new worlds and new beginnings, lie in ruin.

Ironically its present occupiers work in the world of learning and education, inheritors, perhaps, of the traditions of David Caine, Skerdagh schools first teacher.

[Editors note: the Newport historical society would appreciate any old photos, school books or memories of this or any other school in the area. Materials will be returned to their owners and only used with the owners consent.]

The material evidence for this short introduction to Skerdagh School is essentially drawn from the Board of National education papers in the National Archives. They are referred to as ED’s are are filed under school name, under county name.



Skerdagh 1947

Seated front row (l. to r.): Mary Marley, Annie Marley, Joan Mulloy, Margaret Mc Neela, Mary Mc Neela, Mary Murray, P. J. Leneghan
 Standing (l. to r.): Sean Marley, Sean Ducitt [R.I.P.], Dominick Murray, Pat Murray, ???, Anthony Murray [R.I.P.].

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Come Dance With Us In Derrada

Cecily Breen

Some twenty years ago a committee was set up in the village of Derradda to create community awareness and get everyone involved in social activities, the village school being the central point.

Just a few years after this the village school was closed. The community group applied for this building to be handed over to them, but without success. This caused a lot of bad feeling because, after all, the community had contributed a large proportion of the funds for the building. However, not accepting defeat, everyone got together and started fund-raising to buy the property, and this was achieved.

The village of Derradda was always known for its tradition in dancing and craftwork. All down the years there would be an odd ceili in the schoolhouse, especially around Christmas-time. Luckily, there was no shortage of musicians in the area, and ceilis were the main source of fund-raising. Musicians gave of their talents voluntarily and the ladies provided the traditional food, also free of charge. Added to this, card-games, bingo, cake-sales, etc where all organised.

So great was the success of the ceilis and the demand for same, that once the property officially passed into the ownership of the villagers they became a regular event; once a month at first, then once a fortnight, and now you can dance in Derradda twice a week! The village-school appearance of the

building remains the same, but, of course, it has been completely renovated, with the addition of a large kitchen and a five-toilet facility.

The entertainment usually takes the form of the old house dance, sets, ceili dances, the odd step-dance, and songs to beat the band. The talent is unbelievable - one man even stands on his head to amuse the tourists! Dancing has always been a tradition in this area. In fact, the story has it that a house-to-house collection was made in the early part of the century to send a man named Doherty from the nearby village of Lettermaghera down to Sligo to learn new dances. Many an enjoyable evening was spent knocking sparks out of the flag floor after his return! Hence the Lettermaghera people were always renowned for their fancy footwork. Each village has its own variation of the set; the Shramore set, which is now being taught locally, is another popular favourite. In fact, a member of the Derradda Group will shortly be going over to London to teach the Derradda, Newport and Shramore Sets.

Connie Ryan has already promoted our culture all over Ireland, and indeed in the United States. Only recently an exile from Derradda visiting Mexico witnessed the Derradda Set being danced there!

Our venue caters for all ages - last year this included a seven-month baby in a carry-cot! Only last August three past pupils of

the Derradda National School were present. The three had been pupils in that very school eighty year's ago! One man, from Chicago, danced the night away, whilst another gave his recitation - Dangerous Dan McGrew! Many past pupils have attended weekly, and great support from Newport, Achill, Westport, Castlebar and further afield, is very much appreciated.

Many visiting groups have been hosted, including ones from Auray and Plougestel, in France, which are twinned with Castlebar and Westport respectively. In fact, on two occasions Derradda groups have travelled to Brittany to display their talents. A group from Slovenia, studying Irish culture in the Ballintubber area, also spent a night by the fireside. On one particular night last season it can be boasted that ten countries were represented - including Borneo!

Tourists and their children flock to the venue. For £2.00 per adult they have first-class entertainment, and all they can devour of the fresh, home-made buns, scones, and tarts! And if they possess talents they are also included, so that often several musicians from many countries join in with the resident players. World-class Irish step-dancers seek to be part of Derradda during their visits. Every year a German family who base themselves in Louisburgh, with excellent talents, visit and help with the frolics.

Early on in the fund-raising

activities a group got together and went around with the Wren. From this a group of Strawboys was resurrected. Strawboys have always been part of the local tradition. This group consists of a lady musician, the Old Man, Old Lady, a Shanachie, and eight set-dancers, many of whom also perform individually. Recently it has become very popular in the Mayo-Galway area for such Strawboys to perform at weddings – believed to be lucky in times gone by. This group has also entertained at County Fleadhs – last year Sligo – and appeared on Aonghus McNally's RTE show, and at various dinner-dances, old folks parties, county parades, and so on.

Last October a group of 19 left Knock for London – straw hats and all! They financed the trip with monies they had raised at various functions. Whilst in London they performed in Hillingdon, and Camden Town

Irish Centre, proceeds going to a Fund for Special Children. They have their sights now on the USA!

There is also involvement in the workshop scene, and they have travelled to Dublin to teach the Derradda and Newport Sets there. Derradda has an affiliation with the Pipers' Club, who have enjoyed the craic of a late-night, early-morning session in Derradda, followed by bed-and-breakfast! In the nearby town of Newport, just 2 miles away, Connie Ryan holds an annual workshop which is attended by people from all over the country. This has always been held in January, but hopefully it will be transferred to April next year – to avoid the inclement weather conditions! It is a very special weekend, starting with a social evening in the Black Oak Inn on the Friday night, followed by dancing on Saturday and evening Mass. After dinner there is a full-

scale céilí in the Parochial Hall. After lunch on Sunday there is a coach tour of the beautiful scenic area around Newport, with a stop in Derradda Centre to dance the famous Derradda Set and sample the tea and scones!

There is a highlight for every occasion: at Christmas there is a Santa Claus; then Valentine's Night; pancake-tossing and, of course, the big event every year is the Halloween party. Many groups visit from Ballintubber, Sligo, Moycullen, and Galway, to name but a few. The Derradda group also makes return visit to all these places. Its where it all started – real, true Irish culture!

So –
COME DANCE WITH US IN Derradda!

About the author

Cecily Breen is a member of the Derradda Strawboys and has been dancing with the Derradda Group for several years.



Past pupils at Ceile in Derradda 1996

Mc Garry Fergus, John Michael Mc Nulty, Eamon O' Malley, Annie Marie Fergus, Patsy, Nancy and Noreen O'Boyle, Margaret O'Boyle, Frances O'Malley, Kathleen O'Boyle, Eileen Moran, Mary O'Boyle, Kathleen Mc Nulty, Mary Bridget Mc Nulty, Willie Moran, Cecily Breen, Pat Hughes.

O'Malley, James

Portrait and Subject Painter

Nancy Hannon Mulhern

Born about 1816, died 1888, portrait and subject painter James O'Malley was born in Newport County Mayo in or about 1816, the second son of Patrick O'Malley a well-to-do farmer and shopkeeper.

From his childhood he displayed a talent for drawing, and became a pupil of Martin Cregan in whose study he remained for some years. He began to exhibit in the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1840 and in that and the two following years contributed a number of portraits and pictures of life in the West of Ireland. Subsequently he was for some years in America, where he followed his profession as a portrait painter. A portrait of "Archbishop Hughes" of New York, was engraved in 1853.

From 1867 to 1879 he lived in Cross Street Galway, and had a fair practice as a painter of portraits and religious subjects. Two of his paintings are displayed on the west wall of St. Patricks Church, Newport: The Good Shepherd and the Immaculate Conception. A portrait of "Archbishop McHale" painted in 1862, is in St. Jarlath's College, Tuam, and another, painted in 1868 is in the Presentation Convent. Portraits of "Bishop McEvilly" "Bishop Carr" of Melbourne, and "Bishop McCormack" and "Father Tom Burke" are in Dominican Convent in Galway.

A portrait of "Charles French Blake Forster" was in the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1875 and his "Connemara Wedding" and "The Tooth Drawer" were exhibited in 1842. "The Claddagh Musician" in 1845, the "Galway Piper" in 1882.

Religious pictures by him are in the Pro Cathedral, Galway and in the Parish Church, Westport. He was a frequent exhibitor in the Royal Hibernian Academy from 1875 to 1882. He left

Galway in 1879 and the next few years lived with his sister Mrs. Nelson at Derrintagart cottage, Newport, but returned to Galway in 1884.

He again went to Newport in 1887 and died there suddenly of heart disease on the 16th of October 1888.

The O'Malley was of a modest and retiring disposition, living alone and making but few friends. Upright and sincere and devoted to his art. "Every stone" he used to say "has a beauty for me".

Source:

Dictionary of Irish Artists.

THE GRÁINNE UAILE

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Marine Sergeant Juan King

Joe McDermott

Newport, County Mayo, is a sea port and from its earliest days that was one of the town's primary functions. Throughout the eighteenth century ships of many nations sailed from the quay side.

The records of James Moore the land agent to the Medlycot estate are full of maritime references, ships names and cargoes are recorded, as is the fact that James Moore bought German and French dictionaries, to equip himself to communicate with the captains and sailors of those vessels. The quay road was referred to as "Sailors Row". It is not surprising then that Newport people should develop a seafaring tradition nor is it surprising that one of the sons of Newport should find a successful career at sea.

As historical research gathers apace and as historians turn to look at connections between Ireland and other countries, stories emerge that demonstrate the tenacity of some of those who left Ireland for other shores.

For some time historians have known and recounted the exploits of one William Brown of Foxford, County Mayo. Born in Foxford in 1777 he became a national hero in Argentina, a founder member of that states' Navy. There the matter might rest.

However it has come to light that another Irishman found fame and fortune with Admiral Brown in those heady days of Argentina's fight for independ-

ence. John King was born in Newport on October 26th 1800. He was the son of Captain Myles and Maria King. Little is known of his early life except that he served in the British Royal Navy. It is interesting to note that he refers to his father as Captain Myles King, so his father was probably a sea captain and it is this career that young John King followed.

There are still Kings living in the immediate Newport area and some may well be related to the Marine Sergeant Major, any connection to those living remains to be proved. An initial cursory search of National Library manuscripts for rent roll listings shows only a David and Daniel King in Tawnamilteog in 1838 while the later Griffith Valuation of 1855 shows a Dominick King in Derryloughan North and another Dominick King on Main Street Newport and a Patrick King in Tawnagrana. Further searches of church records and other rent rolls and state papers may reveal further Kings, it is too early yet to say how this aspect of the search will evolve.

John King or Juan King as he became known in Argentina, served from 1826 to 1852 with the Argentine Navy. On January 16th 1826 he was appointed Second Lieutenant aboard the warship "Congreso Constituyente" under the command of Captain Guillermo R. Mason. This ship was incorporated into the Republican Squadron led by

Admiral William Brown and participated in a controversial encounter with the enemy at Punta Colares in 1826. By March of 1826 Juan King had been appointed Commander of the "Congreso". In May King was made Lieutenant of the Navy by Admiral Brown, however he returned to the "Congreso" as second in command.

In the great naval battle of Los Pozos in June of 1826 the Argentine Navy under Admiral William Brown defeated a superior force of Brazilian warships. As this was such a meritorious victory all who participated would be esteemed among the brave and glorious of Argentine history. King moved back to a command position.

In May of 1827 King resigned from the Navy, but this was a ploy to allow him to operate freelance as a buccaneer against the Brazilians. In his opinion this was the only way to win against superior numbers, a sort of naval guerrilla warfare. For two years he waged a private war, continually breaking the Brazilian blockade.

In 1828 he returned to the Navy and was appointed Navy Captain in recognition of his services to Argentina.

In 1826 he married Miss Sarah McGaw. This Irish girl was the daughter of Pedro and Inez McGaw. It is worth noting that McGaw was at one time, 1730's, a Quaker family name in Newport Co. Mayo. They had seven children only two of whom

survived their mother's death in 1896.

For ten years King operated as a river pilot and Captain of the National Brigantine *Esperanze*. In 1840 Major King was forced to hand over command of his boat to Captain Tomas Craig. In 1844 he again assumed command of the "25 May". Between 1850 and 1852 he was working in administration as General Commander of the Navy. In March of 1857 Admiral William Brown died and his friend Juan King would not be long behind. He died on August 22nd 1857. His funeral was conducted by Father Fahy, Irish chaplain in Argentina. A measure of his importance in Argentina will be noted by the fact that the Argentine Navy has until now named three of its ships after him.

Torpedo 1st Class
Ara King 1890-1926

M.4
Ara King 1923-1941

Patrol boat
Ara King From 1946



John King who was born in Newport in 1800 and rose to the highest rank in the Argentine Navy.



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Griffith Valuation

Peter Mallowney

In order to value property and land for Poor Law rate in the nineteenth century Sir Richard Griffith carried out a massive programme of valuation over a period of years. It was a success and still forms the basis for rating today.

It gives a useful indicator of landowners and lessees in post famine Ireland. Below is a continuation of the list, [commenced in the first edition of this journal] of Townlands and the persons leasing land therein, in the Newport area in 1857. It is not complete, only part of the Parish is listed here for space reasons. Hopefully it will be completed in the next issue.

Bunnahowna

Henry Caine
Patrick Caine
Michael Carolan
Margaret Chambers
Bryan Corrigan
Patrick Gallagher
Austin Ginelly
Michael Ginelly
Patrick Ginelly
Patrick (John) Ginelly
Thomas Ginelly
Luke Herran
Henry Kelly
John Kilcoyne
James Loftus
Michael (Michael) Loftus
Michael (Pat) Loftus
Patrick (Owen) Loftus
William (William) Loftus
William jun Loftus
William (Pat) Loftus
Michael Malley
Mathew McNally

Daniel McNamara
James McNamara
John Molloy
Michael Molloy
Martin Moran
Neil O'Boyle
Mary Ryder
Henry J Smith
Henry J. (junior) Smith
James Toole
Michael Walsh
George Walton

Cahergal

John Burke
Richard Coyne
Patrick McDonnell
James Molony
Mary (Pat) Molony
Mary(Thomas) Molony
Sir Roger Palmer

Callowbrack

John Bryce
Patrick Bryce
John Casey
Laurence Geraghty
Patrick Gorman
John Hobin
Edward Lavelle
Michael Lavelle
Patrick Lavelle
Cicily Malley
James Malley
John McDonnell
John McFadden
Michael McNally
Patrick Moran
Thomas Moran
Thomas Mulchrone
Martin Murray
Sir Richard O'Donnell
James Ryan
Patrick Ryan
David Walsh

Camcloon Beg

David Bole
Martin Flynn
Patrick Gibbons
Patrick(jun) Gibbons
John Johnston
William McCormick
James McGawne
Thomas McManaman
Thomas O'Boyle
Michael Rourke
Daniel Ryder
John Sweeny
Michael Sweeny

Camcloon More

John Johnston

Carheenbrack

Edward Browne
Capt. A. W. Wyndham

Carrickaneady

Dominick Nelson
Claudius Nixon
Manus O'Donnell
Sir Richard O'Donnell
Henry Rose
James Rowland
John Rowland

Carrowbaun

Dodwell Browne
James Dick
Owen Feighan
Rev Robert G Gildea
James Heron

Carrowbeg North

Hugh Moran
Capt. A. W. Wyndham

Carrowbeg South

James Aikins
Dominick Gavan

Reps. James Gildea
Dominick O'Donnell
Owen O'Donnell
Dominick Quinn
Peter Quinn
Anne Wilson

Carrowbeg (Fergus)
Christopher Spicer
Capt. A. W. Wyndham

Carrowkeel
William Landrum
George Malley
William jun Malley
William sen Malley
David McAdam
James Moran

Carrowmore
Thomas Gallagher
Neal Gorman
Michael Horocho
Martin McFadden
Patrick McMannion
Patrick Moran
Richard Mylet
Dominick Quinn
John Stanton
Samuel Wilson

Carrowsallagh
John Caine
Owen Caine
Thomas Caine
William Chambers
Patrick Fadden
Edward Hoben
James Moran
Michael Moran
Patrick Moran
Patrick Noble
? Pridham
Myles Sweeney
Capt. A. W. Wyndham

Clooneshil
Patrick jun Caine
Patrick sen Caine
Ellen Deale
Thomas Duffy
John Joyce

Thomas Keatley
James Macan
Patrick Moran
Dominick O'Donnell
Honorina Rooney
Michael Tierney
Margaret Walsh

Cushlecka
Donald Carey
Thomas Chambers
Thady Grehan
John Malley
Dominick Moran
John Moran
Michael Moran
James Nolan
John Nolan

Derrycooldrim
Owen Chambers
Thomas Chambers
James O'Donnell
William B. Stony

Fauleens
Honor Berry
John Chambers
Patrick Chambers
Philip Cox
John Malley
James McDonnell
Michael McFadden
Mary McGoveran
James McMannion
Dominick Nelson
Denis Nolan

Glennamong
Patrick Chambers
Michael Conway
Francis McManmon
John McManmon

Gortfahy
John S Buchanan
Rose Chambers
Thomas Chambers
Thomas Fadeen
James Fergus
Thomas Flynn
Thomas Hoban

Ellen McManmon
Michael Murray
William B Stoney

Keeloges
John S Buchanan
Thomas Chambers
Anthony Cunningham
Michael Cunningham
Patrick Fergus
John Garum
John Grady
William Hoben
Daniel Molloy
Sir Roger Palmer
Anthony Reilly

Knockbrega
Edward Browne
Patrick Caine
Owen Carolan
Mary Chambers
Michael Cleary
John Fadeen
Margaret Filbin
John Gallagher
James Gibbons
Cibby Joyce
William Kerrigan
Rose McManamon
John Moran
William Moran
John Mullen
Michael Mullen
John Needham
Edward O'Boyle
Manus O'Boyle
Owen O'Brien
Dominick O'Donnell
Patrick Walsh

Rosgalliv
Thomas Berry
Thomas Brown
John Caine
Connor Chambers
Michael Cleary
William Deaker
Dominick Gallagher
James Gallagher
Michael Garvey
Patrick Garvey

Mark Gaughan
Mary Gibbons
Walter Grady
Edward Malley
John Marley
John Molloy
Michael Molloy
Martin Molony
Patrick Moran
Thomas Moran
Patrick Murtagh
John O'Donnell
Anthony Reilly
Richard Reilly
Michael Ryder
Henry J. (junr) Smith
Denis Sweeny

Roskeen North

Thomas Chambers
Owen Cormick
Terence Cormick
Thomas Glynn
Patrick Grehan
Bridget McLoughlin
William Moran
Henry J. (junr) Smith
John Stanton
Michael Stanton
Patrick Stanton

Roskeen South

Michael Calvy
Catherine Cannon
William Fergus
Peter Garvey
Patrick McLoughlin
John McManmon
Owen McManmon
Frank Moran
James Moran
Martin Moran
Martin (shoemaker) Moran
Francis O'Donnell
Henry J. (junior) Smith
Patrick Sweeny

Rosturk

Thady Caine
Martin Callaghan
Mary Callaghan
Michael Carolan

Margaret Chambers
Bryan Corrigan
Michael Cusack
Patrick Gallagher
Thomas Ginelly
Arthur Hammond
Thomas Joyce
Henry Kelly
Patrick Kelly
Peter Kelly
Thomas Kelly
John (jun) Kilcoyne
John (sen) Kilcoyne
Edward Malley
Michael Malley
Michael Masterson
Mathew McNally
Daniel McNamara
James McNamara
Martin Moran
Mary Moran
Edward Moroty

Francis Nolan
John O'Donnell
Mary Ryder
Henry J. (junior) Smith

Skerdagh Upper

Patrick Conway
John Donnell
Andrew Gibbons
Patrick Kane
Frank Leneghan
John Malley
James Murray
John Murray

Skerdagh Lower

Cibby O'Donnell
John Chambers
William Chambers
Frank McManmon
John McManmon

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The Pike

Joe McDermott

The harp and shamrock may symbolise a peaceful Irish nation but the Pike is forever the symbol of Irish Revolution and insurgency, and especially of 1798.

However the story of the Pike is older still, it is a weapon of great antiquity, comparable to the 'Sarisse' of the Greeks, or the 'Pilum' of the Romans. Its use extends from the late mediaeval times through armies such as the Swiss army of the 15th century, who were practically fully armed with Pikes, to the American civil war armies. It became an esteemed weapon, as part of the British infantry officers weaponry.

However, it is with Irish rebels that one associates the Pike, from the army of Hugh O'Neill through even until the 1916 rising. In general it may be said of the Pike that in Ireland for over 200 years it might be called the national weapon.

The Pike evolved from a desire to increase the reach of the user. It is a weapon which requires thrust rather than swing and could be effectively used by troops in closed ranks. Finally it was easy and cheap to make and hide. In the year of the French 1798, the rector of Lackan in North Mayo records that in the day after the French landed the manufacture of Pikes commenced at almost every smiths forge in the Country. Over 70,000 thousand were seized in Leinster and Ulster in 1797 by the government. Smiths, locksmiths, gunsmiths and indeed silversmiths were engaged to manufacture Pikes.

By 1848 'The year of the Revolutions' in Europe one Galway gunsmith was so unable to cope that he sought a quotation for the manufacture of Pike heads from an English firm, his order was intercepted but others got through and over 15,000 were supplied from Birmingham. 1798 was the last time the Pike was extensively used in large scale engagements in various parts of the Country. In 1915 just before the rising volunteers carried ceremonial Pikes at the funeral of O'Donovan Rossa and again on St. Patricks day 1916 ceremonial Pikes were carried. It is not possible to precisely date any Irish Pike as all timbers have rotted away. Some Pikes bear a makers mark have remained with families who could date their origins.

The method of using the Pike is clearly recorded

and numerous drills were used. The following is a basic stance used by Pikemen.'

Leag do phice ar bharr do spaige agus as sin suas dod' bhasta.

Cos ar do chul agus ar d'aghaidh agus ansin tabhair do shathadh'.

Drop your pike to the top of your foot and from that lift it to your waist,

put one foot behind you and the other forward then give your thrust'.

This memory of Pike drill comes not from a book but from folk memory of 1798 carried through to the 20th century. The bayonet of the 19th century was an attempt to marry the Pike and the musket in order to double arm a soldier. Only in Ireland did the Pike survive into the 20th century. In the journal 'Eire' in November 1914 we find advertised:

Pikes – Irish made with stout ash handles full length ten feet, price 7/ 6d.

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