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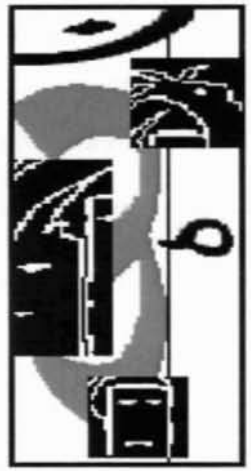

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Cover design by Jennifer McCaffrey and Nora McGillicuddy, Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick Institute of Technology. The cover incorporates the concept of past, present and future, which is depicted, firstly by the use of the Buddhist symbol *Aum*. The idea is secondly represented by three illustrative heads looking in different directions. They symbolise the search for history by past, present and future historians.

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Preface

I am very pleased to have been asked to introduce volume six of *History Studies*, a journal which is now well established in the field and going from strength to strength. This edition contains seven contributions of high quality on a range of medieval to modern historical themes. In all cases, original, primary and reflective work is in evidence. Significantly, *History Studies* has matured beyond its original brief as primarily a University of Limerick postgraduate project into a journal that routinely attracts articles from universities throughout the islands of Ireland and Great Britain, as well as from faculty members and independent scholars. While the UL History Department is well represented in this issue, internal contributors have been joined by colleagues from University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin, the University of Ulster and Oxford. Volume six also contains another new attribute of all such publications of note - a review section.

Increasingly, *History Studies* has become an important forum for historiographical and critical assessment. In this respect alone, the vision and commitment of the editorial team is to be highly commended. John O'Callaghan, Jennifer Moore and John Maguire have displayed uncommon dedication and ability in producing yet another fine edition. I wish to congratulate them on their work to date and wish them every success in the future.

Dr Ruán O'Donnell
Head, Department of History,
Patron, University of Limerick History Society

November 2005

Editorial

History Studies, in its sixth edition, has continued to attract an eclectic selection of studies, reflective of the research being conducted in Irish institutions and the field of Irish history. The contributions to this publication represent post-doctoral and doctoral research both in its nascent and concluding stages. Volume six has, for the first time, incorporated reviews of recent additions to Irish historiography. The reviews were chosen to emphasise some of the emerging new themes within Irish historical scholarship. The range of Irish historiography has expanded greatly in the last decade and the present state of research is deemed to be healthy. However, the experience of post-graduate students in particular, suggests that the services available to researchers in this country have not evolved in tandem with this development. The repositories of historical sources in Ireland are under funded and are struggling to fulfil their function. Archival institutions are often understaffed, with many holdings inappropriately housed and uncatalogued. Limited opening hours are a further impediment to research, and prove especially problematic for scholars based outside of Dublin and those working in provincial archives. Access to catalogued sources is often frustratingly inconsistent. Archaic cataloguing practices unnecessarily protract the retrieval of source material. There is an urgent need to embrace new technological developments. Specifically, a uniform policy in regard to digital photography and the creation of online databases needs to be implemented. This will aid in the preservation of valuable primary source material. In addition, it will allow for more efficient research thereby reducing the demands on the overstretched system. If these issues are not addressed, access to primary source material will remain erratic and will hinder the emergence of a more complete history of Ireland.

John Maguire,
Jennifer Moore,
John O'Callaghan,
Co-editors

Acknowledgments

The editors would like to thank the University of Limerick History Society, Dr John Logan and Dr Bernadette Whelan for their continuing commitment and support in this endeavour. We acknowledge the vital sponsorship of Dr Ruán O'Donnell and the Department of History, President Roger Downer and the University of Limerick Foundation, and the Dean of Graduate Studies, Prof Nick Rees. The advice of our panel of reviewers greatly assisted the editing process. We would like to thank Ken Bergin and Jean Turner of Special Collections, University of Limerick, who kindly sponsored the reviewed books. Finally, and most importantly we wish to thank the contributors for their submissions.

Foreword

It is with great pleasure that the University of Limerick History Society presents volume six of *History Studies*. Since its inception in 1999, *History Studies* has become an integral part of academic life in UL and the collection of articles in this year's journal, coupled with the inclusion of a reviews section, make it the strongest edition yet. This development has been made possible by the tireless efforts of our editorial teams past and present, the Department of History and all those who have contributed articles. In particular, we wish to thank our patrons, Dr Ruán O'Donnell, Dr John Logan and Dr Bernadette Whelan for their continuing support and inspiration.

The growth of the journal reflects the growth of the society and this year sees the incorporation of a dedicated *History Studies* forum, at which this year's contributors will present papers based on their articles. In addition, this year's publication comes in advance of the 56th Irish History Student's Association Conference, which will be hosted by the society in February 2006. We are satisfied that *History Studies* furthers the work of the society in promoting the study of history, both in UL and the wider academic community.

Patrick Kennedy
Auditor

John Hickey
Secretary

Illustration: The Hunt Crucifixion with Saint Claire

This image has been reproduced with the kind permission of the Hunt Museum, Limerick

Images, piety and women in late medieval devotion:
The Hunt Crucifixion with Saint Claire

Catherine Lawless

The small fourteenth-century Florentine panel in the Hunt Museum, Limerick, shows an image of the Crucifixion (see Illustration). Beside the cross the Virgin falls in a swoon, supported by one of the holy women and St. John the Evangelist. At the other side of the cross the Roman centurion and soldiers are seen. Kneeling at the foot of the cross is St. Clare (d1253), recognised by her Clarissan nun's habit and halo, and beside her is a Franciscan friar who does not have a halo. Very little is known about the panel: it is, despite its gold background, painted in a realistic manner with bulky figures and little Byzantine like stylisation. The figures show the clear influence of Giotto (1266-1336) and the panel is in fact attributed to the shop of one of his pupil's, Bernardo Daddi (d1348). The dominant position of St. Clare and the Franciscan friar indicate that it probably originated from a Clarissan convent or Franciscan friary and the small scale of the panel suggests that it was the side wing of a triptych.[1]

This article does not seek to prove the panel's authorship, secure its exact date, or place it within the oevure of Bernardo Daddi and his shop. For the purposes of this discussion the author accepts that the panel is Florentine and influenced by the work of painters such as Giotto, Taddeo Gaddi (1300-1366) and Bernardo Daddi. Instead, this article will seek to place the iconography of the panel within the framework of devotional iconography, the role of women within late medieval piety and female attitudes towards the Crucifixion, the Eucharist and the body. With the exception of St. Clare's presence, which will be discussed later, there is nothing unusual about the iconography depicted here. The focus on the suffering, dying Christ is typical of the late medieval interest in the pains of the Passion which replaced an earlier iconography of Christ triumphant on the Cross.[2] The iconography of the Crucified Christ with angels catching blood from his wounds with chalices is clearly Eucharistic, reminding the viewer that the body and blood

[1] The panel was sold in Sotheby's, 24 June 1965. Its measurements are 33 (h) x 21 (w).
[2] On the iconography of the Crucifixion, see Gertrud Schiller, *The iconography of Christian art* (2 vols, London, 1966), i.

of Christ would be consumed in the form of Communion during the Mass said in front of the altar. Frequently in Crucifixion scenes like this, St. Mary Magdalen is depicted clutching the bottom of the cross, but in Franciscan imagery she was often replaced by St. Francis. Here instead she is replaced by St. Clare and not the male St. Francis, patron of the friar's own order. The small scale of the Franciscan friar and St. Clare, and their anachronistic presence transform a narrative scene depicting a scriptural event into a devotional one where the viewer is invited to contemplate the Crucifixion as they do.

St. Clare and the friar are explicit signs of the Franciscan order but Franciscan ideals are implicit in the overall imagery of the panel. The late middle ages saw what has been characterized as an 'explosion' of lay piety and new devotional movements. Influenced by developments such as the papal reform of Gregory VII (*c*1081-85) and the writings of individuals such as the Cistercian St. Bernard of Clairvaux (d1153), devotion began to centre upon a human, suffering Christ instead of Christ the Judge.[3] The growth of a cult to the Virgin Mary was closely tied to these developments and to Bernardine writings. Emphasis shifted from a sacramental and often remote religion to one where the laity was encouraged to meditate on and empathise with the Gospel narratives. St. Francis (*c*1181-1226), who was himself both a product of and an influence on this piety, led a life in which he imitated, as literally as possible, the life led by Christ.[4] For Francis this meant absolute poverty and the renunciation of all possessions, summed up by both his critics and supporters as the *vita apostolica* or apostolic life. Francis' life also involved emotional involvement in the sufferings of Christ and the humanity that Christ redeemed, and a love of the natural world as a sign of God's creation. The imitation of Christ practiced by Francis of Assisi was rewarded by the physical imprimatur of God's approval. In 1224, while staying at the remote hermitage of la Verna in Tuscany, Francis received the five wounds of Christ on his own body and became the first saint in church history to bear the stigmata.[5]

[3] Giulia Barone, 'La riforma gregoriana', in G. de Rosa, T.Gregory and A. Vauchez (eds), *Storia dell'Italia Religiosa: 1. L'Antichità e il Medioevo* (Bari, 1993), pp. 243, especially pp. 267-8.

[4] For an analysis of how twelfth and thirteenth-century spirituality influenced Francis and his contemporaries, and the importance of the suffering Christ not only to Francis but to the Beguin movement of northern Europe, see André Vauchez, *Ordini mendicanti e società italiana xiii-xv secolo* (Milan, 1990), pp. 61-3; and Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: studies in the spirituality of the high middle ages* (Berkeley, 1982).

[5] Vauchez, *Ordini*, p.36.

Although the original ideals of Francis were soon compromised by the growth of a large religious order, the Franciscans maintained an emphasis on emotionally involving oneself with the life of Christ through prayer, meditation and imitation. The Franciscans, and their fellow Mendicant Order, the Dominicans, also emphasised spreading the word of God through preaching in the vernacular in market squares and other public places in the city states of medieval Italy.[6] Unlike earlier religious orders which had based their regimes on seclusion from the world, the Franciscans and Dominicans usually settled on the industrial working class outskirts of cities in order to preach to as wide an audience as possible. Popular preachers such as the Franciscan St. Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444), the Dominican Fra Giovanni Dominici (1355-1419), and, perhaps most famously, Fra Girolamo Savonarola, repeatedly filled great cathedrals and urban spaces with crowds. Their sermons were simple, direct, entertaining, and frequently fiery.

Typical of this new 'affective' piety were new devotional texts, often instructing the reader or listener, for texts were often read aloud, in religious history and advocating that the reader/listener imagine him/herself to be physically present at narrative stages in the life of Christ or the Virgin. One such text was the *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, for a long time attributed to the Franciscan saint, Bonaventure (1221-1274). This was diffused widely and emphasised a direct emotional relationship between the reader/listener and the figures of the narrative. Written for a Clarissan nun, it advised the reader to imagine such scenes as her holding the Christ Child against her cheek.[7] The text was essentially a narrative of the life of the Virgin and Christ, interspersed with direct invocations to the reader to imagine herself present at the scenes and to involve herself emotionally as a participant. Homely details are used in order to make the religious events described as real as possible. For instance, when narrating the disappearance of the twelve year old Jesus, the author invoked the landscape of his native Tuscany:

[6] The Mendicant Orders are generally understood to be the Franciscans, the Dominicans, the Augustinian hermits, the Carmelites and the Servites. Their common characteristic in this period was the refusal to own property. The First Order were the male friars, the Second Order were female nuns, and the Third Order, or tertiaries, were lay penitents who, although they took vows, often lived in their own homes and had greater freedom of movement. For a summary of the evolution of the Mendicant orders, see Giulia Barone, 'Gli Ordini Mendicanti', in de Rosa, Gregory and Vauchez (eds), *Storia dell'Italia Religiosa*, pp. 347-373, especially pp. 347-8.

[7] Pseudo-Bonaventura [Isa Ragusa and Rosalie Green, (eds)], *Meditations on the Life of Christ* (Princeton, 1977), p. 38.

> Very early the next morning they left the house to look for Him in the neighbourhood, for one could return by several roads; as he who returns from Siena to Pisa might travel by way of Poggibonsi or Colle or other places.[8]

Stern warnings are given to the nun to imitate the life of the Virgin in a typically Franciscan reference to poverty and humility:

> Did the Lady, whatever she worked on, make for love some fancywork? No! These are done by people who do not mind losing time. But she was so poor that she could not and would not spend time in a vain occupation, nor would she have done such work. This is a very dangerous vice. Especially for such as you.[9]

The emotional demands made upon the reader are increased with the account of the Passion, with much of it written in the present tense:

> She is saddened and shamed beyond measure when she sees Him entirely nude: they did not leave Him even his Loincloth. Therefore she hurries and approaches the Son, embraces Him, and girds Him with the veil from her head.[10]

The image of the swooning Virgin Mary, which was frequently used by artists of the period, in the Hunt panel can be traced to the *Meditations*, where the author recounted how after the side of Christ has been pierced, 'the mother, half dead, fell into the arms of the Magdalen'.[11]

The emotional intensity of the panel is clearly a product of this type of piety. With the exception of the swooning Virgin and St. John the Evangelist, all figures gaze at the crucified Christ. As Henk Van Os has pointed out, referring to a similar scene of the Crucifixion by Bernardo Daddi now in Edinburgh, the gazes of the crowd invite the viewer to participate with them in looking at the Crucified Christ. The gesture of the Roman soldier, Longinus, who points to Christ and says 'this truly was the son of God' reminds the viewer that the broken body of Christ on the cross is not only man, but God, and that even he, a cruel Roman soldier, has recognized it.[12] This was the moment of conversion for Longinus who was later venerated as a saint. The lack of landscape apart from the mount of Golgotha itself and the restricted space presented by the gold background contribute to a claustrophic atmosphere, with some of the figures overlapping with the punched borders of the painting itself. The emotional demands made on the

[8] Psuedo-Bonaventura, *Meditations*, p. 89.
[9] Pseudo-Bonaventura, *Meditations*, p. 73.
[10] Pseudo-Bonaventura, *Meditations*, p. 333.
[11] Pseudo-Bonaventura, *Meditations*, p. 339.
[12] Henk Van Os, *The art of devotion in the late middle ages in Europe, 1300-1500* (London, 1994), p. 22. The Edinburgh panel is a side panel of a triptych, the centre of which is occupied by the Virgin and Child.

viewer is typical of the Giottesque style, the 'new style' of painting which was seen by the artist and art historian Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) as the 'revival of painting from Greek [Byzantine] to Roman', by which he meant from a stylized, schematic type of painting to a realistic and natural one.[13] This style has traditionally been viewed as having been influenced by Franciscan ideals.[14]

The dominance of St. Clare instead of St. Francis is puzzling. The kneeling Franciscan is similar in scale to Clare, and only the absence of a halo suggests that that he is an ordinary friar rather than a Franciscan saint such as Anthony of Padua (1195-1231) or Bonaventure. If the painting were commissioned by the friar, then why was Clare chosen instead of Francis? Although it still may have been commissioned by a Franciscan friar, the iconography of the kneeling St. Clare in the privileged position at the foot of the cross indicates a probable female audience for the panel.[15] The position of Clare beside the cross, and also on the privileged side beside the Holy Women and St. John the Evangelist rather than the less privileged side, beside the soldiers, strongly suggests that the panel came from a Clarissan context, rather than a male Franciscan house. Further, the cult of St. Clare was not widespread outside the Franciscan order and even within it, it was largely celebrated within the female branch of the order. It was not until 1340 that the feast of St. Clare was inserted into the Franciscan liturgy.[16] The saint was therefore, until that date, of interest only to Clare's followers, the Clarissan nuns and devout women attached in some way to the Franciscan order, such as the Umbrian mystic and Franciscan tertiary Angela of Foligno (*c*1248-1309). We know the feast was of some significance to Angela, due to a vision that she received on that day, 12 August:

> ...one day while I was sitting at home, feeling sluggish and dejected, I heard the following: "I who speak to you am St. Bartholomew, who was skinned alive". He showered himself with praise, and myself as well, and then went on to claim that this was his feast day. This last statement filled my soul with sadness and perplexity. As a result I

[13] Giorgio Vasari, [Gaetano Milanesi (ed)] [herein Vasari-Milanesi], *Le Opere di Giorgio Vasari*, (9 vols, Florence, 1875-85), i, p.402.
[14] On the influence of Franciscan ideals on artistic production, iconography and style, see Louise Bourdua, *The Franciscans and art patronage in late medieval Italy* (Cambridge, 2004).
[15] See for example, the Augustinian friar, Fra Francesco Mellini's commissions for the female convent of San Gaggio in the 1460s from the painter Neri di Bicci. Neri di Bicci, [Bruno Santi (ed)], *Le Ricordanze*, (Pisa, 1976), pp. 163, 234. He was their confessor and dedicated his treatise on the Passion of Christ to them. Giuseppe Richa, *Notizie Istoriche delle Chiese Fiorentine Divise ne' Suoi Quartieri* (10 vols, Florence, 1754-62), ix, p. 61.
[16] Vauchez, *Ordini*, p.53.

> could no longer pray nor recollect myself. It was only later that I discovered that he had lied to me, when I realized that the feast that was celebrated on that day was not St. Bartholomew's but St. Clare's. This state of sadness and perplexity lasted ten days, through the octave of the feast of Our Lady in August, the day I went to Assisi.[17]

St. Clare had been born into an aristocratic family of Assisi *c*1194. Inspired by the preaching of St. Francis, she ran away from home with a friend and set up a cloistered community at San Damiano, the church which had been rebuilt by Francis himself. She was soon joined by companions and the women who wanted to live lives of apostolic poverty in imitation of Christ. Although they worked for their own needs and were provided for by the nearby Franciscan friars, the struggles of the Clarissans reveal much about the problems facing female communities in the middle ages. A community of undefended women living together without any clear male authority or rule was highly subversive and soon attempts were made to force the women to submit to older forms of Benedictine monasticism. Such attempts were highly distressing to Clare, as the Benedictine rule allowed for the holding of property, an idea which denied the Franciscan ideal of apostolic poverty. In 1216 Clare was granted the Privilege of Poverty by Pope Innocent IV (d1254), although the women were forced to follow the Benedictine rule in other respects. Clare redacted her own rule, based on the rule of St. Francis and on his last testament, which was accepted only two days before her death in 1253, and which soon became binding not on the Clarissan order itself, but only on the convent of San Damiano and one or two others.[18]

As already shown, in the panel Clare is in a place usually reserved for the Magdalen, or, in some images, Francis himself. The position thus relies on a chain of signifiers for the beholder, reminding her, or less likely him, not only of Clare's devotion to the Passion of Christ but also of Francis, the friar in whose body Christ's passion was re-enacted, and St. Mary Magdalen. The Magdalen's cult grew during this period as she could be seen as the archetype of the penitent saint. As her sin was widely assumed to have been sexual, she was seen as a more appropriate role model for the laity than the more usual virgin saint, but some, such as the Dominican tertiary St. Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) saw her as a role model for spreading the word of God and avoiding the

[17] Angela of Foligno, [Paul Lachanze (ed and trans)] *Angela of Foligno: The Complete Works*, (New York, 1993), p. 169. The feast of Our Lady in August referred to by Angela was that of the Assumption, which occurs August 15.
[18] Vauchez, *Ordini*,p. 52.

strictures against female preaching laid down by St. Paul. Catherine, one of the most fiery characters of fourteenth century Europe, involved herself deeply in politics believing that she was spreading the word of God as communicated to her in visions. In a familiar tale of male authorities trying to tame the female voice, Catherine was summoned to the Dominican General Chapter which met in Florence in 1374 to answer charges of heresy. Although acquitted, she was then assigned a confessor, Fra Raymond of Capua, to advise her on orthodoxy.[19] In one of her many justifications of her outspokenness, Catherine wrote of how: 'after the resurrection of Jesus, she preached the word of God in the city of Marseilles.'[20] According to popular medieval legends, Mary Magdalen left Palestine with her brother Lazarus and sister Martha, and went to Provence in southern France. There she lived a life of penitence in the wilderness and before dying:

> shedding tears of joy, [she] received the Lord's Body and Blood from the bishop. Then she lay down full length before the steps of the altar, and her most holy soul migrated to the Lord. After she expired, so powerful and odor of sweetness pervaded the church that for seven days all those who entered there noticed it.[21]

By being represented in the place usually reserved for the Magdalen, St. Clare is seen as a symbol of penitence, and the asceticism of the life of Mary Magdalen could be recalled by the viewer, an asceticism which was matched by Clare's own fasting and bodily deprivations, and which could be emulated by the nuns of the Clarissan order. By being associated with the Magdalen through her position, St. Clare's own devotion to the Eucharist and the Crucified body of Christ could be shown. Mary Magdalen was closely tied to redemptive and Eucharistic imagery. Not only did she witness the Crucifixion, but her anointing of Christ's feet with precious oils was seen as a prelude to anointing his dead body after he was taken down from the Cross. Further, she was the first to see the resurrected Christ, when he appeared to her as a gardener and, on being recognized, told her not to touch him, in the scene known as the *Noli me tangere*.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the aforementioned lay piety offered women more routes to salvation than before. Previously, women's admittance to

[19] Roberto Rusconi, 'L'Italia senza papa. L'età avignonese e il grande scisma d'occidente', in De Rosa, Gregory and Vauchez (eds) *Storia dell'Italia Religiosa*, pp. 427-454 especially p. 442.
[20] Caterina da Siena, [P. Giuseppe Di Caccia (ed)] *Le Lettere di Santa Caterina da Siena*, (3 vols, Bologna, 1996-1999), i, letter 61, p.78, letter to Agnese, one of Catherine's followers.
[21] Jacobus de Voragine, [William Granger Ryan (trans)], *The golden legend: readings on the lives of the saints*, (2 vols, Princeton, 1993), pp. 374-383, especially p. 381.

monasteries was closely tied to their social standing and many of poor or even modest circumstances were unable to enter convents. These new devotional currents involved an increasing number of women who lived an ascetic life, often in a cell attached to a local church.[22] The growth of the Mendicant Orders changed the perception of monasticism as a closed system remote from the world to a more open one in which the friars engaged with the world through preaching. Penitential movements offered a way in which the laity, barred from traditional monastic life, could live a life of piety, charity and devotion. Some of these were affiliated to the Mendicant Orders, but nearly all were operating within the same framework of piety.[23] Female piety could partake of these more flexible penitential arrangements, and indeed, the penitential movement of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries has been identified as almost synonymous with the women's religious movement during the same period.[24] Women sometimes lived in small communities without the sanction of a male-authored monastic rule. In northern Europe these women were called Beguins, in Italy they were known as *pinzochere*, or *bizzoche* and the church made many attempts to bring them within the confines of clerical control, usually by making them members of the more flexible third Order rather than the supposedly cloistered second order of nuns.

Typical of these trends were Florentine women such as Verdiana of Castelfiorentino (d1242) and Umiliana dei Cerchi (1219-1246). Verdiana was first a shepherdess and then a domestic servant in the house of a rich relative. Affected by the devotional climate of thirteenth century Italy, she went on pilgrimage to the Galician shrine of Santiago de' Compostela and to Rome. She spent the rest of her life in a cell with a small aperture through which food, and of the utmost importance to a holy woman, the Eucharist, could pass. Individuals spoke of their spiritual problems through this opening to her and received advice, but, according to the hagiography, some, threatened by her power threw in serpents in a bid to either kill her or drive her out of the cell. In a

[22] André Vauchez, 'Comparsa e affermazione di una religiosità laica (xii secolo- inizio xiv secolo)', in De Rosa, Gregory and Vauchez (eds), *Storia dell'Italia Religiosa*, pp. 397-425, especially p. 418.

[23] The difficulties of defining various groups of penitential men and women, and of separating them from the more traditional monastic groups have been outlined by Duane Osheim, 'Conversion, Conversi, and the Christian life in late medieval Tuscany' in *Speculum*, 58 (1983), pp. 368-90.

[24] Katherine Gill, 'Open monasteries for women in late medieval and early modern Italy: two Roman examples,' in C.A. Monson (ed), *The crannied wall: women, religion and the arts in early modern Europe* (Ann Arbor, 1992), pp. 15-47, especially p. 18.

trope common to saints lives, Verdiana instead tamed the serpents and they became her beloved pets.[25] The relics of St. Verdiana herself are venerated at Castelfiorentino, and in the nineteenth century at least, the relics of the serpents were kept in the same church; unsurprisingly, the saint is invoked against snake bites.[26] She was so popular in the fourteenth century that Boccaccio (1313-1375) was able to use her in the *Decameron*, where he satirised holy women by talking of how one very unholy woman imitated their religious practices, describing an

> old bawd who to all outward appearances was as innocent as St. Verdiana feeding the serpents, for she made a point of attending all the religious services clutching her rosary, and never stopped talking about the lives of the Fathers of the Church and the wounds of St. Francis, so that nearly everyone regarded her as a saint.[27]

Umiliana dei Cerchi was the daughter of a prominent leader of a noble faction in Florence. After her husband's death she defied her family and refused to remarry. In 1234 she married, and according to her hagiographer, the same year saw her conversion to a life of penitence and charity. Upon the death of her husband Umiliana returned to her birth family's home but refused her father's pleas to remarry and instead embarked on a hermit's life in the tower of the Cerchi house. Immediately after her death in 1246 the Franciscan Vito da Cortona wrote her biography in a clear attempt to build or respond to a cult.[28] The bishop of Florence, Ardingo, saw in Umiliana a useful model with which to control the many irregular groups of pious lay women and to channel their activity into mainstream religious life. The real or perceived risk of heresy was combatted with accounts of Umiliana's devotion to the Eucharist, Confession, and her complete submission to the authority of her confessor, Fra Michele degli Alberti.[29]

The piety exhibited by women like Verdiana, Umiliana, Angela of Foligno, and the much more famous Catherine of Siena, was often marked by extreme asceticism, flagellation, meditation and what we could now call a type of mysticism which often led

[25] Giuseppe Maria Brocchi, *Vite de' Santi Beati Fiorentini* (Florence, 1742), pp. 170-175.

[26] Luigi Santoni, *Raccolta di Notizie Storiche riguardanti le chiese dell'arcidiocesi di Firenze* (Florence, 1847), p. 269.

[27] Boccaccio, *Decameron*, 5th day, 10th story (Harmondsworth, 1973), pp. 471-2.

[28] Vito Cortonensis, 'De B. Aemiliana' in *Acta Sanctorum* (herein *AASS*), Maii iv, (Antwerp, 1685), pp. 385-400. An early Florentine vernacular version is found in Giuseppe De Luca, 'Leggenda della Beata Umiliana de' Cerchi' in *Scrittori di Religione del Trecento, Volgarizzamenti* (4 vols, Turin, 1977), iii, pp. 365-410.

[29] Anna Benvenuti Papi, 'Umiliana dei Cerchi' in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-1983), pp. 692-6, especially p. 693.

to bodily ecstasies. Much of this centered upon devotion to either the Christ Child, which in their visions female mystics would often hold in their arms, or the Passion of Christ. Like St. Francis, but unlike many of their male contemporaries, the pains of the Passion were realized in their own bodies. The Dominican tertiary Vanna of Orvieto's (1264-1306) body stiffened into the shape of the cross as she meditated in front of the crucifix in her cell.[30] Angela of Foligno felt the pains of the Passion when she looked at it in pictures.[31] Another mystic who had a prominent public voice in the fourteenth century, Bridget of Sweden (1303-1373), would drop burning wax upon her hand in memory of the Passion every Friday and if, by the following Friday it did not hurt enough, she would re-open the wound. In 1346 she founded the Brigidine Order whose insignia were the Five Wounds of Christ.[32] Clare of Rimini (d1306) would have herself tied to a column on Fridays and be whipped by her companions.[33]

So significant was this 'affective piety' that some women internalised the imagery of the Crucifixion, turning their own bodies into living reliquaries. Clare of Montefalco (*c*1268-1308), abbess of the convent of Santa Croce in Montefalco, was the subject of an episcopal enquiry in 1308, when after her death her nuns opened up her body and found on her heart the symbols of the passion, and on her gall bladder three globes of equal size and weight which they interpreted to be the symbol of the Holy Trinity. In 1317 an apostolic inquest was opened.[34] Having lived a life of piety, intense mortification and subjugation of the flesh through fasting, asceticism and intense prayer in an attempt to relive the Passion of Christ, Clare felt that the burden of the Cross was assimilated within her very body. When dying, she rebuked a nun for making the sign of the cross over her, saying 'Sister, why do you make this sign over me? I have no need of the cross outside

[30] Gaudenz Freuler, 'Andrea di Bartolo, Fra Tommaso d'Antonio Caffarini and Sienese Dominicans in Venice' in *Art Bulletin*, lxix (1987), pp.570-86, especially, p.574.
[31] Angela of Foligno, *Angela of Foligno*, pp. 141, 175.
[32] James Hall, *Dictionary of subjects and symbols in art* (London, 1979), p. 53.
[33] André Vauchez, *La Santità nel Medioevo* (Bologna, 1987), p. 156.
[34] Ernesto Menestò, 'The apostolic canonization proceedings of Clare of Montefalco, 1318-1319' in Daniel Bornstein and Roberto Rusconi (eds), Margery J. Schneider (trans), *Women and Religion in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, (Chicago, 1996), pp. 104-129, especially p. 105). See also Cordelia Warr, 'Representation, imitation, rejection: Chiara of Montefalco and the Passion of Christ' in Christine Meek and Catherine Lawless (eds), *Studies on medieval and early modern women, 4: victims or viragos?* (Dublin, 2005).

me, for I have my Jesus Christ crucified inside my heart.'[35] While dying, Giuliana Falconieri (1270-1341), a Florentine Servite tertiary, was unable to receive any food, including the Eucharist. She pleaded to be carried so that she could at least see the Host. When she did, she was reinvigorated and threw herself on the floor in the shape of the cross. She asked for the Host to be brought to her so that she could kiss it; and after being refused this by the priest she then prayed that a veil be placed on her breast and the Host laid on that. When this was done, the Host sank into her breast and was never found. When her body was washed for burial, the image of the Host, superimposed with an image of the Cross, was found imprinted 'like a seal' on her breast.[36] Catherine of Siena received, like St. Francis, the stigmata in her own body, although in the fifteenth century the Franciscan pope, Sixtus IV, forbade representations of her as a stigmatic as it took from the unique position of St. Francis himself.[37]

The depiction of the sufferings of Christ on the Cross were a reminder to the viewer that he was a man, he could suffer pain, and that he had endured suffering and death for the redemption of humanity. His humanity was visible in his body, which was consumed in the Eucharist itself, as part of the ever renewing sacrifice of the Mass. The humanity of Christ is essential to Eucharistic doctrine. The bread of the Eucharist becomes the body of Christ at the moment of consecration through the agency of the priest. The doctrine was promoted by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 as the greatest miracle that had ever occurred and one which was continuously recurring every time the bread was consecrated.[38] Eucharistic miracles abounded throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; hosts bled in the hands of unworthy priests, hosts were stolen to fertilise fields, sometimes stolen hosts revealed their whearabouts.[39] In Florence itself there was the miraculous host of S. Ambrogio. In 1228 in the Benedictine nuns' church of S. Ambrogio, a priest was preparing a chalice for Mass when he saw real flesh and

[35] Menestò, 'The apostolic canonization proceedings', p. 116.
[36] Brocchi, *Vite*, pp. 9-11.
[37] Rona Goffen, 'Friar Sixtus IV and the Sistine Chapel' in *Renaissance Quarterly*, xxxviiii, 2 (1986), pp. 218-262, especially p. 221.
[38] Vauchez, *Santità*, p. 52.
[39] See Mirri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in late medieval culture* (Cambridge, 1991).

blood.[40] The importance of the Eucharist as spiritual food to holy women has been documented by Caroline Bynum Walker, and related to the practice of the imitation of Christ. She cited St. Bernard of Clairvaux's definitions of *imitatio* as 'being in society with', 'experiencing', 'learning', 'taking into oneself', 'consuming'.[41]

In the Hunt panel, the blood of Christ drips down the cross and flows past the mouth of St. Clare herself. Late medieval visions are filled with imagery of the blood of Christ, and like the Eucharist, the blood of Christ was seen to work miracles. The following account is of the miraculous blood in the church of Sant' Andrea, Mantua:

> 1298: On the feast of the Ascension, miracles of the blood of Christ began in the church of Sant' Andrea in Mantua. On that day Fra Alberto from Trent was cured: he was arthritic and paralysed such that he could not move without sticks, and walked badly even with them. In the following days, many paralyzed men and women, lame, blind, mute and hunchbacked were released from their disabilities and pains by virtue of the precious blood of Christ.

St. Catherine of Siena frequently referred to herself as 'saturated in the blood of Christ'. Every time she received the Eucharist she tasted blood in her mouth.[42] She wrote to one of her devotees that the blood of Christ would make her strong on the field of battle as it had done for the virgin martyr, St. Lucy.[43] In another letter, this time to a Dominican friar, she wrote, in the hope that the pope would listen to her and declare a crusade on the infidel: 'I have written a letter to the Holy Father, pleading with him, for the love of the sweetest Blood, to give us permission to offer our bodies to martyrdom.'[44] Catherine wrote of the importance of the very flesh of Christ in a letter to one of her Dominican tertiary followers:

> You are a bride! You know well that the Son of God in the Circumcision, when his flesh was cut, married us all, giving us his flesh in the form of a ring, in sign of which he wished to marry all humanity.[45]

[40] Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, [Niccolo Rodolico (ed)], 'Cronica Fiorentina' in *Rerum Italicum Scriptores*, xxx, I (Città di Castello, 1903), pp. 32-3.
[41] Caroline Bynum Walker, 'Wonder' in *The American Historical Review*, cii, 1 (1997), pp. 1-26 especially p. 11
[42] Catherine of Siena, [Susanne Noffke (ed)] *The Dialogue* (New York, 1980), p. 379, quoted in Caroline Walker Bynum, 'Fast, feast, and flesh: the religious significance of food to medieval women' in *Representations*, 11 (1985), pp. 1-25, especially p. 13.
[43] Caterina da Siena, *Lettere*, i, 283, p. 366. 'The Blood animates us and makes us run to the field of battle; as Lucy did, who was so enamored of God, keeping a constant memory of the blood of the Son of God, that with a strong spirit she ran to offer her body as sacrifice'.
[44] Caterina da Siena, *Lettere*, i, p. 397.
[45] Caterina da Siena, *Lettere*, i, p. 82. Walker Bynum has pointed out that St. Catherine, who was mystically married to Christ in a vision, clearly believed that the ring used was the foreskin of Christ.

The biographer of the blessed Aldobrandesca of Pisa (d1309) told of how the holy woman, while meditating intently on the Passion of Christ in front of a crucifix felt a desire to taste the blood. Immediately, a drop of blood appeared on the side of the crucifix and she 'tasted its extraordinary delicacy and sweetness'. She then commissioned a painting which showed the Deposition of Christ, where the Virgin was shown 'with her mouth touching the wound in his side'. The Blessed Aldobrandesca could thus identify herself with the Virgin and, through the use of the image, remember both the Passion and her own taste of Christ's blood.[46]

Further, the assimilation of St. Francis with the Crucified body of Christ was recalled in the canonisation proceedings of St. Clare (1255) when a witness spoke of how St. Clare revealed a vision to her. In the vision, St. Clare saw Francis who revealed a breast to her and told her to come and suck it. She did so 'and that which she tasted seemed so sweet and pleasing that it could not be explained in any way'.[47] St. Francis's body is gendered female in this vision, as Christ's body was often gendered female in other female mystical visions. As Caroline Bynum Walker has demonstrated, male and female were not necessarily oppositional categories in the Middle Ages, rather they could be seen as being on a continuum of being.[48] Flesh was often gendered as female, with the soul, or spirit, being gendered as male. The corporeal nature of the Eucharist could be seen as giving a female nature to the crucified Christ, and in Clare's vision, this nature is then transposed onto Francis, her spiritual father. Francis' bearing of the breast is reminiscent of the Virgin Mary baring her breast and giving milk, a common image in the Middle Ages, where Mary was elevated to the position of co-redemptrix, and milk and blood were seen as the same substance.[49] Many late medieval paintings show Christ revealing his wounds while Mary reveals her breast, both acting as intercessors for humankind. A similar vision was received by Angela of Foligno, who suckled Christ and saw him place the heads of her 'sons', that is, the Franciscan friars who followed her, into

Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and redemption: essays on gender and the human body in medieval religion* (New York, 1992), pp. 172-3.
[46] Chiara Frugoni, 'Female Mystics, Visions, and Iconography', in Bornstein and Rusconi (eds) and Schneider (trans), *Women and religion*, pp. 130-164 especially, p. 137.
[47] Vauchez, *Ordini*, p. 50.
[48] Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and redemption*, pp. 108-109.
[49] See Charles Wood, 'The doctor's dilemma: sin, salvation and the menstrual cycle in medieval thought', in *Speculum*, lvi (1981), pp. 710-27.

the wound in his side.[50] She herself was embraced with the arm of the Crucified Christ and goes into his wound.[51]

In the devotional piety discussed so far, the role of the image should be noted. It is while praying in front of panels, crucifixes and other images that these women experienced their visions, bodily transformations, and ecstasies. The role imagery played in late medieval devotion cannot be over-emphasised. The Franciscan St. Bonaventure wrote in the thirteenth century, a picture is that which 'instructs, arouses pious emotions and awakens memories'.[52] Bonaventure's Dominican counterpart, St. Thomas Aquinas (d1274) wrote that art was didactic in that it taught the person what to venerate, it helped the person to remember and it inspired devotion.[53] Both authors were following in the long established tradition established by Pope Gregory the Great (669-731) who wrote, in response to iconoclasm, that art was the literature of the laity:

> it is one thing to worship a picture, another to learn from the story depicted what should be worshipped. For what a book is to those who can read, a picture presents to the uneducated who observe, since in it the unlearned see what they ought to follow, and in it those who know no letters can read. Hence a picture serves as reading specially for the people.

In a manual written for painters, the artist Theophilus wrote:

> But if, perchance, the faithful soul observes the representation of the Lord's Passion, it is stung by compassion. If it sees how many torments the saints endured in their bodies and what rewards of eternal life they have received, it eagerly embraces the observance of a better life. If it beholds how great are the joys of heaven and how great the torments in the eternal flames , it is animated by the hope of its good deeds and is shaken with fear by reflection on its sins.[54]

Imagery makes frequent appearances in the lives of the saints. Images of the Crucifixion played an important role in the conversions of St. Francis of Assisi and St. John Gualberto, the Tuscan founder of the Vallombrosan order. A Crucifix spoke to Bridget of Sweden in the Roman church of S. Paolo fuori le Mura in 1370.[55] Umiliana dei

[50] Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and redemption*, p. 129.
[51] Angela of Foligno, *Angela of Foligno*, p. 175.
[52] S. Bonaventure, *Liber Sententiorum iii, dist.9, art.1, q.2*, quoted in Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish painting: its origins and character*, (2 vols, MA thesis, Cambridge, 1953), p. 141.
[53] Gregory I, *Registrum Epistolarum*, quoted in Margaret Aston, *Lollards and reformers: images and literature in late medieval religion* (London, 1984), p. 116.
[54] Andrew Martindale, 'Patrons and minders: the intrusion of the secular into sacred spaces in the late middle ages' in Diana Wood (ed), *Studies in church history - the church and the arts*, (London, 1992), p. 143.
[55] Vasari-Milanesi, i, p.541 (life of Pietro Cavallini).

Cerchi, seeing that her little her daughter was close to death prayed in front of an image of the Virgin and Child. As soon as she finished praying her child awoke, and then the Christ Child left the picture, went to the child in the bed, and made a sign over her. The child made the sign of the cross, was cured, and the Christ Child then disappeared.[56] Villana dei Botti (d1361), a Florentine holy woman associated with the Dominican Order, prayed daily in front of a Crucifix in the church of S. Maria Novella. After Villana's death, the Crucifix was venerated not only for what it represented itself, but, like the Crucifixes associated with Bridget of Sweden, Francis of Assisi and St. John Gualberto, because of its association with the holy woman.[57] Ludolph of Saxony recounts a similar story of how a nun was so deeply affected by Christ's Passion that whenever she saw an image of Christ crucified she would lose control of herself and fall to the ground.[58] Catherine of Siena became partially paralysed when she prayed in front of Giotto's mosaic of the Calling of the Fishermen in St. Peters. Indeed, Catherine's mystic marriage with Christ was almost certainly influenced by images that she had seen of the mystic marriage of her name-sake, Catherine of Alexandria.[59]

What we know from diaries, letters, testaments and sermons about Florentine piety shows that images were used as devotional aids by the faithful of all classes. The Dominican friar Giovanni Dominici gave explicit instructions regarding the type of art that was to be kept in houses:

> the Virgin Mary is suitable, with the Child on Her arm and a little bird or pomegranate in its hands. Other good figures are Jesus sucking milk, or Jesus asleep in his Mother's lap.... So let the child look upon his own image in the Holy Baptist, a little boy entering the desert dressed in a gown of camel's hair, playing with the birds, sucking leaves and sleeping on the ground. It would not harm him to see...the Massacre of the Innocents, so that he should fear arms and armed men. And so it would be well to nurture little girls on the sight of the eleven thousand virgins, talking, praying, and fighting.[60]

[56] De Luca, 'Leggenda', pp. 396-8.
[57] Vincenzo Fineschi, *Memorie sopra il cimitero antico della chiesa di S. Maria Novella di Firenze* (Florence, 1787), p. 58; Joannes Carolus, 'Vita Beatae Villanae', in *AASS*, Augusti v (Antwerp, 1741), p.864.
[58] Ludolph of Saxony, *Vita Iesu Christi* (Paris, 1529), p. lviii.
[59] Millard Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the black death* (Princeton, 1955), pp. 105-107.
[60] Fra Giovanni Dominici, *Regola del governo di cura familiare*, quoted in Iris Origo, *The merchant of Prato* (London, n.d.), p. 371.

The diaries of the Florentine merchant Giovanni Morelli (1371-1444) stressed the importance of images in his devotional life. In language reminiscent of the female mystics, he wrote:

> And having calmed my heart and my mind, my eyes turned to the right side of the true Crucified Christ, where, looking, at the foot of the Cross I saw the pure and his holy blessed Mother, who I considered full of the such sorrow and such sadness; and considering that my sins were the reason for such affliction...but considering in the mind the sorrow of that pure Virgin, mother of the pure and precious Son, and considering the many dangers that from the day of his birth he had carried to the last in front of her eyes dead and broken by dissolute sinners.

Like the nun addressed in the *Meditations on the life of Christ*, Morelli related the sorrow of the Virgin to his own life, and his sick young son, Alberto:

> and remembering the sorrow that I carried for my son, strongly I began to be ashamed and it was no small time before I rose from prayer... rendering many thanks to God and to his blessed saints, with great comfort, it appearing to me that it had to be done, many times, holding in my arms the panel, I kissed the Crucified Christ and the figure of his Mother and of the Evangelist.[61]

Morelli's son died in 1406 aged ten, but his father noted that he had demanded that the image of the Virgin be brought to him in his bed.[62]

The image of the Crucifixion with St. Clare in the Hunt Museum could have reminded the viewer, possibly a Clarissan nun or a group of Clarissan nuns, of a number of different devotional themes. The image of the Crucified body of Christ, with angels catching his blood in chalices, would have brought to mind the sacrament of the Eucharist. The presence of St. Clare could have led the viewer to think not only of the devotion of St. Clare herself towards Christ and the Eucharist, but also, through her position at the foot of the Cross, of the more usually represented Saints Mary Magdalen or Francis. The Madonna, fainting in grief and barely supported by St. John the Evangelist and St. Mary Magdalen, served to demonstrate the intensity of emotion that the viewer should feel in looking at such an image. The gestures and gazes of the crowd around the cross all direct the viewer upwards, towards the Crucified Christ and aid its audience, who, with St. Clare and the friar, were not present at the event depicted, to see it, meditate upon it, and take part in it.

[61] Giovanni Morelli, 'Ricordi', in Vittore Branca (ed) [herein Branca-Morelli], *Mercanti Scrittori: Ricordi nella Firenze tra Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Milan, 1986), pp. 308-311.
[62] Branca-Morelli, p. 294.

Commemorating the Siege:

The Williamite marching tradition in nineteenth century Derry

Neil P. Maddox

Orange parades on the twelfth of July, which celebrate the victory of William of Orange at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, have been a regular and contentious feature of Irish life for over two hundred years. However, in Derry a separate Williamite parading tradition developed, preferring to commemorate the events of the 1688 Siege of Derry. The aim of this article is to trace the development of this tradition during the nineteenth century. The Siege occupies a unique place in Irish history. Representing, as it did, a vital turning point in the Irish Williamite wars of succession, the city became a focal point for a multi-faceted conflict that encompassed the entirety of Europe. William was fighting, not just against James II, but to frustrate the overarching imperial ambitions of Louis XIV, and for a few months at the end of 1688 the front line of the battle was traced firmly along the walls of Derry. In view of this, it is understandable that the Boyne commemorative tradition of Orange or twelfth of July parades was slow to spread to the city and such displays were of little note there until the 1860s. Derry Protestants could look much closer to home when setting their commemorative calendar and 12 August and 18 December, dates which marked the opening and closing of the city's gates, became far more popular days of celebration.[1] Ian McBride noted that the Siege carries an 'emotional charge that the more famous Battle of the Boyne lacks', in part because the city is located in Ulster.[2]

During the eighteenth century, the population of the city was overwhelmingly Protestant. Although few records of parades during this time exist, it is likely that the Siege dates were commemorated from as early as 1759, when the first Boyne parade is

[1] T. G. Fraser, 'The Siege: its history and legacy, 1688-1689' in Gerard O'Brien and William Nolan (eds), *Derry and Londonderry: history and society* (Dublin, 1999), p. 379.
[2] Ian McBride, *The Siege of Derry in Ulster Protestant mythology* (Dublin, 1997), p.10.

recorded.[3] Derry was to undergo a major demographic change in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars as large numbers of Catholic workers came to the newly industrialised city from Donegal. By 1851, Derry had a Catholic majority. The new arrivals had little empathy with the bi-annual siege commemorations, seeing them as another manifestation of a repugnant Orange tradition that gloried in triumphalism. On arrival in the Bogside, Catholics were confronted with the Walker pillar looking upon them.[4] The monument was a testimonial to George Walker, joint-governor of Derry during the Siege. Its location physically confronted Derry Catholics with the fact of Protestant ascendancy and was a constant reminder of the integral part the Siege played in securing it. The celebrations of the event came to reflect religious tensions within the town in much the same way as the Twelfth had done in the rest of Ulster. From an early stage in the nineteenth century, there were indications of the trouble to come. On 12 August 1811, a number of Londonderry yeomanry left their posts in protest at the wearing of Orange lilies in their ranks. In 1813, a Catholic priest, O'Mullan, was removed from his post for publicly describing the city corporation as Orange. The bishop who removed him, Charles O'Donnell, was known for his attempts to promote harmony between the two communities. These attempts earned him the nickname 'Orange Charlie'. After O'Mullan's departure, O'Donnell was set upon by a number of his supporters and was forced to take refuge in the local courthouse.[5]

In 1824, it was argued that the celebrations should be abandoned and the participation of yeomen forbidden.[6] There was little Williamite opposition to these events, as the city had no single Orange society. Instead, it had a number which fractured and weakened the Orange voice. The Apprentice Boys had been founded in 1814 with the purpose of commemorating the Siege and stated in that they were not 'actuated by factious or sectarian feeling' in doing so.[7] As with the Orange Order, the society suffered during the 1820s and 1830s when the disillusionment in Westminster with Irish secret societies resulted in increasing legislative hostility. There was little controversy in Derry

[3] T. G. Fraser, 'The Apprentice Boys and the relief of Derry' in T. G. Fraser (ed), *The Irish parading tradition: following the drum* (London, 2000), pp. 173-174.
[4] Fraser, 'The Apprentice Boys and the relief of Derry', p. 174.
[5] Colonel Colby, *Ordnance survey of the county of Londonderry* (Dublin, 1837), p. 70.
[6] Fraser, 'The Siege: its history and legacy', p. 390.
[7] Fraser, 'The Siege: its history and legacy', p. 392.

with the passage of the Party Processions Act in 1832, which imposed a ban on processions of a 'party' or divisive character, and it was seen as necessary by many. The displays were beginning to take on an increasingly sectarian character and one contemporary commentator noted that 'the perpetuation of such customs ha[d] become a subject of contention, it is well that the legislature interfered to smooth down a cause of useless dissension'.[8]

The Apprentice Boys were reconstituted in 1835 and in 1839 a committee was formed among the different Orange societies of the city to co-operate in the celebration of the day. A central Apprentice Boys organisation was formed in 1856 to co-ordinate the displays.[9] It was not, however, until 1860 that the first serious incident of sectarian strife connected to the celebrations occurred. The reason for the trouble was the proposal to amend the Processions Acts to encompass the display of party emblems. This measure was destined to become the Party Emblems Act 1860. On 12 August of that year, and before the bill had been passed into law, the Church of Ireland bishop of Derry, a member of the House of Lords, forbade the flying of the crimson city flag from the Cathedral.[10] He felt it was his duty, as a member of the Lords, to carry into effect a measure which that house had approved, even though it had not yet passed into law.[11] In response, The Apprentice Boys seized the keys to the tower and flew the flag from it defiantly. The local police declined to intervene, as they did not believe the law could interfere with the ancient usages of the city.[12]

The legislation was in force by the time of the second commemoration in December. Trouble was widely anticipated and 400 police, 600 infantry and two troops of cavalry were dispatched to ensure the enforcement of the new act, the passage of which had been followed closely in the city.[13] It was rumoured that the government was in possession of some special information and that trouble was being planned. The Apprentice Boys were remonstrated with to show restraint, and a large group declined to fire off cannon from the city walls. They also sought legal advice on the application of

[8] Colby, *Ordinance survey*, p. 196.
[9] McBride, *The Siege of Derry*, p. 49.
[10] Fraser, 'The Siege: its history and legacy', p. 395.
[11] John Hempton (ed), *The Siege and history of Londonderry* (London, 1861), p. 453.
[12] Fraser, 'The Siege: its history and legacy', p. 395.
[13] *Londonderry Standard*, 20 December 1860.

the new act and were assured that it would not be applied to such a 'civic demonstration'. Perhaps it was felt that the Siege celebrations were analogous to those of St Patrick's Day, the latter were often regarded as national as opposed to party or sectarian occasions.

When presented with the impressive display of force that the authorities had mustered, the Apprentice Boys were divided on how to proceed. One particularly brave group managed to haul a cannon onto the walls and fired it seven times before being stopped by the police. It was unclear whether the new act applied to the firing of the cannon and the actions of the group were primarily a means of testing the legislation. The city was reasonably calm until the victory of Gladstonian Liberals in the election of 1868 inflamed religious passions once again. The Apprentice Boys had supported the Conservative Episcopalian Lord Claude Hamilton. The Liberal Richard Dowse, who enjoyed the backing of the Catholic community and wealthy Presbyterians, opposed him. During the campaign, Dowse planned to give a lecture in the corporation hall to his supporters. Threats had been made and a small force of police arrived as a precautionary measure. A quarter of an hour before the meeting was due to begin, at eight o'clock, fifty Apprentice Boys left in procession towards the hall. On their arrival, they broke rank and drew sticks and bludgeons from under their coats. The police were so few in number that they were powerless to resist, but a body of unarmed workmen had been sent to the hall as a second line of defence and they put up sterner resistance. They tore out the banisters of the staircase to use as weapons, and successfully repelled the attack before the military arrived and restored order. The incident had little effect on the outcome of the race, and Dowse was returned to parliament on 23 July.[14]

The usual celebrations took place on 12 August and 18 December with few problems. Part of these celebrations involved the discharge of a cannon, the Roaring Meg, from the walls of the Protestant town, which overlooked the Catholic Bogside area. This was a visceral reminder to Catholics of the significance of the day and unquestionably contributed to their resentment of the anniversaries. By Christmas of 1868, they wished to repay the insult and a counter-demonstration was organised for St. Stephen's Day. The Bogsiders formed a procession with a band that played the notorious

[14] *Report of the commissioners of inquiry 1869 into the riots and disturbances in the city of Londonderry with minutes of evidence and appendix*, p. 411, [C. 5], H.C. 1870 xxxii.

party tune 'The Wearing of the Green' and carried a flag that would cause the deepest offence among many of the Protestant community. It was white with a blue fringe and bore a harp without a crown, a wreath of shamrocks and the inscription 'Hibernia flute band'. When one of the local police, a sub-inspector Stafford, encountered the processionists and attempted to get the flag from them, they agreed to unfurl it. Aside from a few shots being fired from the crowd, the parade passed off peacefully.[15]

A petition had been presented against Dowse's victory and it was not until 9 February that he was declared by a court to be 'duly elected'. A large number of his supporters organised themselves together in a procession with a band and torches to celebrate his success. The magistracy were concerned that the parade, coming as it did as the result of a highly controversial election, would lead to a serious breach of the peace if it entered the town. They decided not to allow the procession through the city walls and they posted 140 men at the gateways and 'adjoining points' including Butcher's gate, the entrance to the Bogside. It was here that violence erupted and the determination of the crowd was such that they were able to break through the police cordon and parade through the town. This resulted in an affray involving the Apprentice Boys and the Bogside residents in which a number of shots were fired, but resulted in no fatalities.[16] The disestablishment of the Church of Ireland by the new government had also enflamed matters. In April of 1869, in the worst incident of sectarian strife yet, three men died in clashes associated with the visit of Prince Arthur. The rival groupings in the town attempted to use the occasion as another opportunity for a colourful demonstration.

The Apprentice Boys fired a twenty-one gun salute for the Prince at corporation hall. Not to be outdone, the Bogsiders formed a large procession and escorted him to his hotel. They carried banners with the harp and no crown and the Hibernia band played 'God Save the Queen', 'The Wearing of the Green', and 'St. Patrick's Day' en route. The flag and choice of song were not popular among the local Protestants and generated a good deal of resentment. Later that night, the band, clearly unsatisfied with the day's festivities, marched back through the town and passed the Apprentice Boys' offices playing 'St. Patrick's Day' and letting out shouts for an Irish republic. The Apprentice

[15] *Report of the commissioners of inquiry 1869*, p. 12.
[16] *Report of the commissioners of inquiry 1869*, p. 12.

Boys positioned themselves in front of the Prince's Hotel and let out shouts for the Queen. Shots were fired and three people were injured.[17] At the resulting inquiry, the two principal witnesses on behalf of the Apprentice Boys, architects Fitzgibbon Louch and John Guy Fergusson, rejected the idea of parades as an incendiary factor in these disputes. They contended that the election of Dowse was to blame and that no long-term opposition to the parades existed.[18] It was not a view with which the inquiry was inclined to agree. It noted that the people of Derry were an orderly, quiet, well conducted, neighbourly population and that the governance of such a population should not be problematic if animosities were not generated through celebration of victory in the Williamite wars.[19]

The difficulty, in the view of the inquiry, was that academic and intellectual explanations for discrimination between Orange and Green parades may have influence amongst an educated class, but would carry little weight with the ordinary man in the street. The law must not only be fair, but it also must appear to be fair to the majority of those affected by it.[20] The inquiry called for a ban on all outdoor processions and displays with banners. It accepted that the Apprentice Boys would feel aggrieved as they were attached to the celebrations, but thought that the majority would accept the ban, as it would apply to Catholics also. Legislative intervention on a national, as opposed to local, scale was thought most appropriate. Another cause of dispute was thought to be the tendency of railway companies to run trains to the town on the Orange anniversaries, causing an influx of Orange strangers and a large amount of resentment amongst the local Catholics. Furthermore, the segregation of the two communities into discrete neighbourhoods, as was the case in Belfast, did little to heal these community rifts.[21]

Whatever the cause, the violence was getting worse. The town's Catholic inhabitants formed the Working Men's Liberal Defence Association as a counter-point to the Apprentice Boys and a rival march to the relief parade was announced for 12 August.[22] The government's response was phlegmatic and 1,000 police, six companies of

[17] *Report of the commissioners of inquiry 1869*, p. 13.
[18] Fraser, 'The Siege: its history and legacy', pp. 396-397.
[19] *Report of the commissioners of inquiry 1869*, p. 15.
[20] *Report of the commissioners of inquiry 1869*, p. 15.
[21] Farrell, *Sectarian violence*, p. 152.
[22] McBride, *The Siege of Derry*, p. 53.

infantry and a squadron of dragoons were drafted from the Curragh to give assistance to the city police force. Excursion trains from Belfast were banned, but two flute bands from Coleraine were unaffected as they decided to travel on the regular service. The enormous military and police presence ensured that the Apprentice Boys were kept within the city walls and the Catholics kept outside.[23] The measures were only partially effective and Derry was the scene of sporadic violence throughout the day. By the following December, the desirability of preventing such displays was not lost on the city magistracy, and they issued a proclamation declaring any assembly, procession or the burning of any effigy forbidden for a month.[24]

There was an attempt at negotiations and a proposal was made that the Apprentice Boys would be allowed to march without banners or music, but this came to nothing. Instead, they occupied the corporation hall and began a fifing and drumming performance which continued until the arrest of their leaders. A year later, in 1870, both commemorations were banned and the Apprentice Boys clashed with police on both occasions. In 1871, William Johnston of Ballykilbeg attended the front of the processional line. Johnston was a county Down landlord and Orangeman who led the campaign for the repeal of the Party Processions Acts. The march was stopped and the police requested that Johnston remove his sash. He refused and a magistrate was summoned. The parade continued for a short time but it was stormed by the cavalry in Bishop Street and a pitched battle ensued.[25] The repeal of the Processions Acts soon after meant that a 'kind of peace descended on the siege commemorations'.[26] Such peace would not last. The contentiousness of the parades had not diminished and it was not long until trouble flared up again on the party anniversaries. A common feature of Ulster life in the aftermath of the repeal of the Acts was the renewed interest it generated amongst the Catholics in political parading. Both St. Patrick's Day and Lady's Day, on 15 August were now the occasions for such displays. Confronted with such overt and nationalistic parades, the Orangemen soon forgot the temperate language they had used towards such demonstrations in the campaign for the repeal of the Processions Acts. No longer were

[23] Fraser, 'The Siege: its history and legacy', p. 397.
[24] Fraser, 'The Siege: its history and legacy', p. 398.
[25] Kevin Haddick-Flynn, *Orangeism: the making of a tradition* (Dublin, 1999), p. 372.
[26] Fraser, 'The Siege: its history and legacy', p. 397.

they advocating equality of treatment between Orange and Green commemorations. Rather, it was felt that such meetings were organised for seditious and treasonous purposes and, as such, should not be allowed to proceed. Derry was no different in this respect and the St. Patrick's Day procession now represented as great a threat to the public peace as the Siege commemorations ever did.

The events of 1877 are illustrative of this. Though the St. Patrick's Day parade passed off peacefully that year, a minor incident that occurred during the celebrations served to break the uneasy truce that existed between the parties since the 1872 riots. A half-gallon jar of gunpowder was left on a church wall along the proposed route of the parade. The gesture was seen as an attempted attack on the march and was not forgotten. Though the Twelfth passed over with relatively little trouble, there seems to have been a party fight in the town after nightfall.[27] There were also many disturbances in Canada connected to the celebrations that year, and these were widely reported in the Ulster press. It seems that the July celebrations were particularly provocative and complaints were voiced about some of the practices employed by the Williamites. The suspension of pendants of Orange lilies across village streets and the perception that Roman Catholic areas were deliberately targeted for such displays led to deepening enmity in those communities. One observer noted that the Orangemen, not content with the 'bravado of Twelfth', left these arrangements hanging for a week so that the Catholic inhabitants of the neighbourhoods were forced to walk beneath them on their way to church the following Sunday.[28]

By the time of the relief parade in August, a change had come over both parties and the relative peace of the past five years was to be shattered. Two eminent Orangemen, William Johnston and Stewart Blacker, were in attendance that year and personally circled the city walls on the day before the relief parade. On the day itself, cannon were heard from the early hours of the morning. Church bells were rung and the streets were decorated with Orange and crimson flags. The marchers formed at ten o'clock in the morning and halted at two o'clock at the new memorial hall. The processionists were then addressed by their leaders. Later that evening, at Lough Swilly

[27] *Londonderry Standard*, 18 July 1877.
[28] *Londonderry Standard*, 21 July 1877.

railway station, a number of Orangemen were attacked while returning home by Catholic cattle-drivers and quay labourers. Another group was attacked in the train at Inch station and decided that it would be wiser to proceed home by road. They were given an escort by the Derry Apprentice Boys and with good reason, as they were met at Ship Quay by an organised group of Catholic labourers. Mounted police succeeded in driving the assailants down the quay and the procession passed on for a short distance. However, successive attacks at the rear of the procession caused the Apprentice Boys to turn and face their assailants, and they succeeded in driving them back a good distance before the police could intervene and restore order. After leading the country people about a mile out of the town, the Apprentice Boys turned and marched back about a hundred strong. At the bottom of Waterloo Street, they encountered an angry mob which shouted loudly but did not attack them, as there was a large force of police present.[29]

Later that day, the approach to the bridge was taken by the Bogsiders, who set upon anyone who attempted to pass over it. The police made several attempts to charge the mob, but each time they retreated and regrouped. The city became gradually quieter as night approached with some intermittent violence. Two men were stabbed during the course of the day and a dozen people were sent to prison for between one and two months. The peace was undoubtedly broken and the *Standard* lamented the fact that Derry was once again gripped by sectarian violence:

> Of late people had begun to indulge in the belief that Derry had repented of its bad ways and become respectable, but the cruel rioting which alarmed the community on Monday last effectively dispelled the delusion. From the early afternoon till near mid-night the principal streets were, as it were, in a state of siege...Organised bands of ruffians clustered in riotous knots at nearly every street corner...and their pastime for the time being was to pounce on passers by and trounce their victims...The main objects of the attack were the processionists who had that day figured in the Apprentice Boys demonstration.[30]

It seemed to many that every new anniversary would bring old animosities freshly to the surface and provoke fresh retaliation. The attribution of blame was pointless as both parties exercised the right to walk and both were more than willing to accept the

[29] *Londonderry Standard*, 15 August 1877.
[30] *Londonderry Standard*, 15 August 1877.

challenge to fight. Even within the Protestant community, there was a considerable body of opinion that disapproved of the constant battling on the party anniversaries.[31]

The only remedy appeared to be the employment of a large police force. Such was the approach of the authorities for the shutting of the gates ceremony on 18 December 1877. An extra 250 police were drafted in and the public houses were shut for the ceremony. The day passed off far more peacefully but the concern of the authorities did not diminish. In 1878 Dublin Castle was anxious about the possibility of violence on St. Patrick's Day. Inflammatory placards were placed throughout the town by parties on both sides of the community and it became clear that the Apprentice Boys were planning a counter-demonstration. A supplemental force of about 300 men was sent to keep the peace and would not lie idle during the day. From the early hours, explosions of dynamite were heard in the Catholic area of the city. The Catholics did not have cannons but, not to be outdone by the Orangemen, they improvised and Green arches were erected on Waterloo St., carrying the names of the Manchester Martyrs. Placards bearing such inscriptions as 'Autonomy for Ireland' and the tricolour were also displayed.[32]

The magistracy, who were less reluctant to interfere in Nationalist parades, tore down the arches as they were regarded as an 'offensive and disloyal exhibition'. They further resolved to protect the Roman Catholic procession from opposition. It was felt that this was 'their day' and that they should be entitled to march on it. They forbade any crowd from assembling around Walker's pillar, but 1,000 Apprentice Boys congregated defiantly. One newspaper remarked that it had 'never before seen the flag of England in the centre of a less impressive squadron'.[33] They attempted to march to the pillar and this led to the reading of the Riot Act, at which the crowd dispersed. The Roman Catholic procession was enormous. Estimates of the crowd ranged from 10,000 to 15,000 people. Despite this numerous display the march was, for the most part, peaceful and orderly.

Outraged by the day's events, the Apprentice Boys returned to their memorial hall and passed a number of resolutions. First, they called for an investigation into the decision to protect the Nationalist parade. Secondly, they said that Captain Stokes, the officer in command, deserved condemnation by all loyal subjects for taking down the

[31] *Londonderry Standard*, 18 July 1877.
[32] *Londonderry Standard*, 20 March 1878.
[33] *Londonderry Standard*, 20 March 1878.

Union Jack at the pillar and giving full protection to the banners of rebellion. Thirdly, they pledged to bring their grievance before the Commons and obtain redress for this seditious behaviour. It appeared that the right to march, in Orange eyes at least, meant the right to march only on the Twelfth and associated days.[34] The day itself would not pass completely free from trouble and, in the evening, a number of the Catholic processionists were attacked as they passed by the memorial hall. Revolver shots were fired and four arrests were later made. The following day, at the opening of the spring assizes, Judge Keogh, a Catholic, addressed a grand jury in the town and congratulated the magistracy for the way in which they had handled 'the double barrelled procession' on 17 March, saying they had only interfered with such movements as were calculated to breach the peace. The decision to escort the Catholics around the city walls had been taken after consultation with the government's legal adviser. Keogh remarked that he deplored and condemned such processions and believed they should no longer be tolerated or encouraged.[35]

These were strong words from the judge, who further elaborated that such days were merely taken advantage of as a kind of retaliatory commemoration. He was of course, in this particular regard, referring to the St. Patrick's Day celebrations. However, so long as they were kept within the law, he felt they had a right to protection by the magistracy.[36] This was a robust endorsement of the approach taken by the police and magistracy and it is likely that most neutral observers supported the judge's views. The *Standard* certainly agreed. It stated that only those gatherings which were an affront to a legal assemblage were circumscribed and considered the notion that the walls of Derry were consecrated ground, reserved to the use of one party alone, as nonsensical. It questioned the motives of the Apprentice Boys by asking what precisely they had to commemorate by marching on St. Patrick's Day. It concluded that the only discernable purpose was to prevent the Catholic march and to incite a breach of the peace.[37] Such a sympathetic view of the actions of the magistrates was not shared by all. The seizure of the Union Jack by Stokes' men at the pillar generated some controversy. Keogh was

[34] *Londonderry Standard*, 20 March 1878.
[35] *Copies of the charge addressed by Mr. Justice Keogh to the grand jury of Londonderry on the 18th March 1878, as reported in the Derry Sentinel the following day*, [117], H.C. 1878, lxiii, 463.
[36] *Copies of the charge addressed by Mr. Justice Keogh*, p. 463.
[37] *Londonderry Standard*, 20 March 1878.

criticised in parliament for his remarks, which were taken to be an attack on St. Patrick's Day. He vigorously denied the accusation. It was not the commemoration of the bringing of Christian faith to Ireland that he had sought to lambaste, rather the glorified remembrance of the murder of a police constable in Manchester by Fenian agitators.[38] It was also the hijacking of the day by Nationalist political groups that he was referring to and it was his belief that such political parading was dangerous.[39]

Derry was not immune from the divisive political forces that incited both sides of the Ulster community to violence in the early 1880s. Signs of trouble had been apparent in the city at the Apprentice Boys demonstration on 12 August 1883. A Parnellite candidate, Tim Healy, had been returned at the Monaghan by-election in July. Successive speakers made provocative and insulting comments about the land leaguers, further contributing to party animosities in the city.[40] A few short months later, on the first of November and at the request of Derry's Catholics, the lord mayor of Dublin, Charles Dawson, arranged to deliver an oration in the corporation hall.[41] It was widely expected that the mayor would use the occasion to speak in favour of home rule and Parnell. The Apprentice Boys were unhappy that such a seditious meeting would be allowed in the symbolic heart of Protestant resistance in Ireland.

Under the circumstances, an affray was inevitable and 500 police were placed in the city, with a like number at the disposal of the authorities if so required. However, no police were placed on the door of the building itself. The lord mayor was to be received by a Nationalist demonstration that would convey him to the venue of the meeting. As the day progressed, his chances of delivering the speech steadily declined. The city officialdom were coming under increasing pressure not to allow the meeting to proceed and a meeting was summoned at midday to determine whether permission to use the hall should be rescinded. As anticipated, the Apprentice Boys staged a counter-demonstration and between 200 and 500 people marched from their offices, through the streets of Derry, and arrived at city hall in the early afternoon. They held aloft placards bearing the name

[38] *Londonderry Standard*, 23 March 1878.
[39] Keogh to Attorney General, 21 March 1878 in *Copies of the charge addressed by Mr Justice Keogh*.
[40] Frank Wright, *Two lands on one soil: Ulster politics before Home Rule* (Dublin, 1996), p. 487.
[41] *Copy of correspondence relating to the action of certain magistrates mentioned in the report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the origin and cause of certain disturbances at Londonderry on the 1st November 1883*, p. 491, [C. 4010], H.C. 1884, lxiii; McBride, *The Siege of Derry*, p. 66.

of Robert McClintock, city grand master and Justice of the Peace, and rushed the hall at 2 o'clock. The midday meeting was still in progress and the Williamites quickly discovered that the corporation was going to rescind the permission that they had extended to the Dublin lord mayor anyway. McClintock and several other JPs sympathetic to the Apprentice Boys actions entered the hall and united with their brethren. The city grand master took the main chair and it was decided, in spite of the corporation's decision, that they should remain steadfast in their occupation, believing the hall would be taken over by the Nationalist marchers on their departure.

There was discontent at the failure of the substantial police presence to intervene. It was thought odd that the noise of the crowd rushing the stairs and their cheering in the assembly hall led to no 'observation, inquiry or complaint in reference to the forcible occupation of the hall'. The magistracy argued that they were powerless to interfere unless there had been a breach of the peace, forcing of the outer doors or a request from the mayor to such effect. In any case, a line of constables and soldiers attempted to divert trouble by directing the Nationalist promenade away from the hall and into the Bogside. The procession approached, headed by two bands and allegedly playing party tunes. They were stopped about sixty yards from the Orange occupied hall. At this stage, a number of the Apprentice Boys had broken open the council chamber door and could now look out the window to Bishop Street. A number of their colleagues had taken positions on the roof and hoisted flags.[42] As the lord mayor's carriage arrived, a revolver was discharged from one of the hall's windows. As if this had been a starting signal, other shots proceeded to ring out from all the windows overlooking the street. The Catholics responded in kind and were then showered with slates and stones hurled at them from the roof by the Williamites. Two Catholics received serious gunshot wounds and one Orangeman was identified and indicted for firing from the window.[43]

When the Catholic procession was eventually diverted to the Bogside, a period of calm ensued and the magistrates set about ousting the Orange party from the building. A deal was struck whereby the military and police would occupy the hall until the following

[42] *Report of the commission appointed to inquire into certain disturbances in the city of Londonderry on the 1st November 1883 together with evidence taken before the commission*, p. 515 [C. 3954], H.C. 1884, xxxviii.
[43] *Report of commission to inquire into disturbances...1883*, p. ix.

day so as to prevent the lord mayor and his party re-occupying it as soon as the Apprentice Boys returned home. The lecture which was the cause of all of the above events was eventually given in the rooms of the National League on the Bogside. Serious rioting broke out during the night in various parts of the city and many blamed the Apprentice Boys for the trouble. The commission of inquiry into the disturbances lamented the repeal of the Party Processions Acts in 1872, as it was much more difficult to take steps to prevent violence at such meetings under the common law.[44] In the view of the commission, there was nothing illegal in the Orange meeting but the actions of the Williamites in abandoning Walker's pillar, the original place advertised for holding the meeting and taking over the hall, were provocative. It took the view that the hall's occupation was the 'proximate' cause of the disturbance, while the original cause was the determination of the Nationalists to hold a 'party demonstration'.[45]

The problem of party processions had clearly not gone away with the repeal of the Processions Acts. Despite the abject failure of such special measures for over half a century to curb the problem, there were still some who believed in their reintroduction. The behaviour of McClintock and the magistracy was also called into question. He had only recently irritated Dublin Castle by signing a provocative notice on St. Patrick's Day calling for a Williamite counter-meeting.[46] The authorship of this placard and involvement in the events of November were considered in some circles as unfit behaviour for a justice of the peace. The lord chancellor, Edward Sullivan, called on McClintock to account for both of these actions, stating that the language of the St. Patrick's Day placard was 'most objectionable and irritating and it expressly states that the original demonstration or meeting "is to be met and counteracted"'. This, he believed, was sufficient to render any meeting resulting from the placard a danger to the public peace.[47] In his reply, McClintock admitted signing the placard and went on to say that the history of exceptional agitation in Ireland began with the land league carrying out its

[44] *Report of commission to inquire into disturbances...1883*, p. x.
[45] *Report of commission to inquire into disturbances...1883*, p. x.
[46] *Copy correspondence between the Lord Chancellor of Ireland and Robert McClintock, ESQ, DL, JP, in reference to his conduct as a magistrate in signing and issuing certain placards under which a counter-demonstration was summoned to assemble at Londonderry on the 17th March last*, p. 511 [C. 4057], H.C. 1884, lxiii, 3.
[47] *Copy of correspondence between the Lord Chancellor and McClintock*, p. 3.

activities through violence and intimidation which resulted in a rapid spread of crime and outrage. He argued that the Orange policy of counter-demonstrations were merely a means of counteracting this. He pointed to the fact that there was nothing illegal in the Apprentice Boys demonstration and said he found the assembly room occupied by an 'orderly and respectable audience'. Any illegal acts that were committed, he argued, were done by 'a few turbulent spirits'. Sullivan issued a swift rebuke to such arguments.[48]

One of the most extraordinary manifestations of party feeling in Derry occurred in November of 1883. The female Roman Catholic employees of a Foyle factory, Messrs Tillie & Hendersons, demanded that a new doctor be appointed to the business in place of Sir William Miller. The shirt-makers and machine-sewers took grave offence when Miller had voted against allowing the use of the corporation hall for the visit of the lord mayor. Hundreds of the women turned out and secluded themselves, loudly, in the vicinity of the factory. Infantry police were summoned and half a dozen mounted men kept watch while the protesters threw stones at them. By the evening, the shirt-makers got tired of striking and they marched through the town. By this time, the police had been withdrawn and they were left unchecked in their subsequent rampage. They smashed the windows at the Salvation Army quarters, they assaulted a solitary Welsh guard who came across their path and moved further through the night smashing property as they went.[49] Three days later, on 6 November, the Catholics of the town attempted to hold an outdoor demonstration in response to the Guy Fawkes celebrations. So bad were party relations in the city that the magistrates immediately intervened to forbid the display. The continued policy of preventing counter-demonstrations was broadly welcomed.[50]

In Derry, as in other parts of Ulster, the memory of the Williamite Wars evokes vastly different emotions from different sections of the community. The defeat of James II secured the Protestant ascendancy and the freedoms enshrined in the Bill of Rights of 1689. It also led to the introduction of the penal laws and the subjugation of Catholics under a system that would be called apartheid in modern parlance. Commemorations of the wars, and particularly of the Siege of Derry which was so central to Williams victory, have been sources of violence and sectarian strife since the eighteenth century. In

[48] *Copy of correspondence between the Lord Chancellor and McClintock*, p. 3.
[49] *Londonderry Standard*, 3 November 1883.
[50] *Londonderry Standard*, 6 November 1883.

nineteenth century Derry, such parades were a means by which the Protestant community expressed its opposition to the loss of Protestant freedoms under Gladstone's guiding hand. The ability of a section of the community to march and dominate the shared city spaces was an expression of community strength. Not to be outdone, Derry Catholics took to the streets to agitate for various and increasingly nationalistic political causes. Caught in the middle was the magistracy, who were constantly confronted with the problem, which still continues, of regulating such displays. A complete ban on marches of a 'party' character was in force from 1832 to 1844 and 1850 to 1872 under successive Party Processions Acts, but did little to prevent violence in Derry during the 1860s. Nor did the repeal of the Acts lead to a period of enduring calm as violence flared again in the late 1870s and during the Parnellite agitation of the 1880s. The blatant partiality of some justices of the peace did little to help matters. However, in nineteenth century Derry at least, the intractability of the problems surrounding parades was often more reflective of the fact that such marches were outlets of broader political and sectarian tensions within communities. Until such issues were addressed, it would seem that any attempt to prevent violence at party processions by the imposition of legal penalties was doomed to fail.

Poor law politics and elections in post-Famine Ireland

Mel Cousins

There has, to date, been limited study of poor law politics and elections in Ireland in the nineteenth century. Hoppen's study of nineteenth-century electioneering and politics focused on parliamentary elections.[1] Feingold's work on poor law politics examined what he saw as the revolt in local government which was linked to the land war in the late 1870s and 1880s. Feingold's thesis was that the boards of guardians which administered the poor law in Ireland were effectively controlled by landlords up to the 1870s and that this control was gradually called into question by tenant-farmers from the 1870s. This led to the transfer of social power in Ireland.[2] Feingold's work, while enormously valuable, does, however tend to give the impression that the boards of guardians in the period before the 1870s were simply administrative in nature and that politics was rarely involved at board level in this period. This article reviews the evidence on the politicisation of the poor law and the poor law elections in the decades before the land war, focusing in particular on the period of the 1860s to 1870s.

The Irish poor law system very much followed that introduced in England and Wales in 1834 and, if anything, was intended to be a purer form of poor law, with no outdoor relief originally allowed. A key contributor to the shape of the Irish poor law was George Nicholls, an English poor law expert, who was commissioned by the British government to report on the Irish Poor Law in 1837. Nicholls assumed that, as in England, local governance of the poor law would be the responsibility of boards of guardians - the members of which were usually, but not always, elected - subject to the control of a central authority. In England the local magistrates were ex-officio members of the board of guardians. However, Nicholls noted that the number of the magistracy, or justices of the peace, in Ireland required some modification in this regard. In England the number of magistrates was such that the elected members always far exceeded that of the ex-officio guardians. However, in Ireland, the number of magistrates who would be

[1] K. T. Hoppen, *Elections, politics and society in Ireland, 1832-1885* (Oxford, 1984).
[2] W. L. Feingold, *The revolt of the tenantry: the transformation of local government in Ireland, 1872-1886* (Boston, 1984).

entitled to act as ex-officio guardians was such that it might outnumber the elected guardians. Nicholls was of the view that if this was to happen 'the elective character of the board would of course be destroyed', and even if this was not to occur 'any undue preponderance of the permanent ex-officio guardians would detract from the popular character of the goal of the body, and lower it in the confidence of the people'.[3] Accordingly, Nicholls recommended that the number of ex-officio guardians should not exceed one third of the number of elected guardians, that is one-quarter of the total board. Nicholls also recommended a further change in that no religious should be eligible to act as an elected or ex-officio guardian in Ireland.

The first Poor Law Bill, modelled closely on these recommendations, was introduced by the home secretary, Lord John Russell, on 13 February 1837.[4] The Bill provided that the boards of guardians should consist of both elected and ex-officio members with the latter limited to one third of the board, rather than one quarter as Nicholls had recommended. The composition of the boards of guardians generated debate in the House of Commons. Unsurprisingly, Daniel O'Connell opposed the presence of any ex-officio members, as few ex-officios were Repeal supporters. Lord Morpeth, the chief secretary, offered to reduce the proportion to one-quarter of the members but his offer was not taken up and the opposition to the provision was defeated.[5] A proposal to have magistrates elected by the ratepayers was also defeated. The composition of the boards was raised again on discussion of the Bill in 1838, the original bill having lapsed on the death of the King, but without any significant effect. Overall supervision of the operation of the Poor Law was the responsibility of the Poor Law Commissioners, known from 1872 as the Local Government Board.

This was the system under which the Irish Poor Law initially operated. Elections were held annually in March.[6] Ratepayers, subject to a minimum valuation requirement, were entitled to vote, and the number of votes to which each person was entitled increased in accordance with the valuation of their property. Voting was not by ballot however. Instead, voting papers were delivered to the address of the voter by the

[3] George Nicholls, *A history of the Irish Poor Law* (London, 1856), pp. 173-174.
[4] *Hansard 3*, xxxvi, col 453 et seq., 13 February 1837.
[5] *Hansard 3*, xxxvi, col 1095, 26 May 1837.
[6] See Feingold, *Tenantry*, pp. 15-26.

constabulary and subsequently collected when they had been completed. Controversially, proxy voting was also allowed. In the 1870s about 540,000 people, or ten per cent of the population, were entitled to vote in the Poor Law elections out of a total population in 1871 of 5.4 million.[7] Unions were divided, for rating purposes, into electoral divisions and one or more guardians were elected for each division. This meant that the total number of guardians in each union varied depending on the number of electoral divisions. Initially 130 unions with over 2,000 electoral divisions were established but this was subsequently increased (in the late 1840s and early 1850s) to 163 unions and about 3,400 electoral divisions.

Elections first were organised in 1839. While Feingold suggested that it not until the 1870s that Poor Law elections were politicised, it is in fact clear that, in many areas elections were immediately strongly, contested often with considerable party feeling.[8] Fraud and partiality were also alleged although Nicholls reported that there were no more irregularities than might be expected in the circumstances.[9] Allegations of partiality on the part of returning officers were common. In one case, a returning officer cast some doubt on his impartiality by saying 'As returning officer, I am precluded from interfering with the election of Poor-law Guardians, but vote for the men that the priests desired you'. The Poor Law Commission reprimanded but did not dismiss him from his post.[10] In many places, however, elections were uncontested. By March 1841, ninety-nine boards had been elected of which twenty five were without a contest. But of the 1,234 electoral districts in the contested boards, elections had taken place in only 254, or twenty-one per cent.[11] Nonetheless this is not to say that the there was no electoral competition in the 'uncontested' divisions.[12] As Gash argued in relation to uncontested parliamentary elections, the person nominated was

[7] *Return from each poor law union in Ireland, of the number of persons entitled to vote in each such union for poor law guardians...*, [253], H.C. 1874, lvi, 1.
[8] See Gerard O'Brien, 'The establishment of poor-law unions in Ireland, 1838-43' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxiii, 90 (1982), pp. 97-120. See also the complaints of the Marques of Westmeath *Hansard 3*, liii, col. 1004 et seq., 13 April 1840 and the evidence to the 1846 Select Committee on the Poor Law: *Report of the select committee of the House of Lords on the laws relating to the relief of the destitute poor...in Ireland*, [694], H.L. 1846, xxiv, 1.
[9] Nicholls, *Irish Poor Law*, p. 267.
[10] *Hansard 3*, liii, col. 1007 et seq; see also O'Brien 'The establishment of poor-law unions', pp. 109-10.
[11] Nicholls, *Irish Poor Law*, p. 267.
[12] Norman Gash, *Politics in the age of Peel* (London, 1953), pp. 239-69.

> not infrequently the result of an agreement by the influential leaders of the constituency, of personal bargains between rival candidates, or of compromises between the organized parties themselves

Given the small size of Poor Law electorates, similar practices seem likely in an Irish Poor Law context.[13]

In 1843 there was considerable opposition in a number of areas to the collection of rates and a number of boards of guardians resisted the implementation of the legislation in their local area. The Repeal campaign appears to have contributed to some of the opposition to the Poor Law with, for example, the Tuam board, chaired by the O'Connor Don MP, being one of the leading opponents. The Tuam guardians had been ordered by the courts to bring the law into effect but given continued opposition, the Poor Law Commission used its powers to dissolve the board and that of Castlereagh and to order new elections. The Commission threatened that failure by the new boards to operate the law would lead to their dissolution and the appointment of a vice-guardian to exercise their powers.[14] By May 1846, the Commission was able to report that all workhouses were open, except for the two small unions of Cahirciveen and Clifden, in which steps were being taken to bring the law into operation.[15]

The 1846 Lords select committee provides an interesting overview of the operation of the Poor Law just before it was caught up in the devastation of the Famine.[16] Although the Famine had begun at that stage, the Committee heard evidence in the first part of 1846 and it was clear that nobody expected the Famine to continue in the manner in which it did. The report provides a picture of how the Poor Law was operating, almost nationwide, in a relatively 'normal' period. Evidence was taken from many of the administrators of the Poor Law and many chairmen of boards of guardians. Their evidence made it clear that there was still a high level of politicisation amongst the boards of guardians. Both administrators and guardians gave evidence that elections were

[13] Gash, Politics, p. 240.
[14] Nicholls, *Irish Poor Law*, p. 305.
[15] Nicholls, *Irish Poor Law*, p. 303.
[16] *Report from the select committee of the House of Lords on the laws relating to the relief of the destitute poor...in Ireland*, [694], H.L. 1846, xxiv, 1, p. 5. The Lords, many of whom were fundamentally opposed to such legislation, had expressed concerns about the implementation of the poor law on many occasions. The Committee was appointed by the Conservative government to allow these concerns to be expressed in a perhaps controlled environment.

frequently influenced by political and religious feeling.[17] There was also evidence that both Roman Catholic clergy and landlords sought to influence the outcome of elections.[18]

Significant changes were made to the Poor Law legislation as a result of the impact of the Famine, in particular the legislation was altered in 1847 to allow the payment of outdoor relief in certain circumstances.[19] This legislation was strongly resisted by the Irish landed proprietors and in the House of Lords and as an apparent quid pro quo the number of ex-officio guardians was increased to fifty per cent of the total, that is equivalent to the number of elected guardians. The system continued in operation without significant change throughout the period covered by this article. While there has been little detailed study of the operation of the board of guardians in the immediate post-famine period, it does, however, appear that their involvement in party and national politics may have declined compared to the pre-famine period. In contrast to the 1846 report, there is, for example, almost no reference to such issues in the report of the 1861 select committee on the Poor Law.[20]

Local newspapers reveal the extent to which local boards were involved in broader political activities and the extent to which board elections were contested on political grounds in the 1860s and 1870s. It is important to make the point that the Poor Law guardians did have strong views on poor relief issues and were actively involved in politics, in the broad sense of the term, in relation to such issues. One example is the debate concerning the area of charge for the Poor Law which took place in the 1860s and 1870s. Poor relief paid out by a local union was funded by rates paid by the ratepayers within that union. However, there was not one overall rate for the union. Rather the unions were divided, as has been seen, into electoral divisions and individual rates were assessed on individual divisions depending, in part, on the number of the paupers chargeable to each division. This led to significant variations within unions in the level of rates charged and to a campaign in some areas for the introduction of the union rating,

[17] *Report from the select committee of the House of Lords on the laws relating to the relief of the destitute poor...in Ireland*, [694], H.L. 1846, xxiv, 1, pp. 10-11, 83, 278, 599, 620.
[18] *Report from the select committee of the House of Lords on the laws relating to the relief of the destitute poor...in Ireland*, [694], H.L. 1846, xxiv, 1, pp. 11, 172, 420-421, 686.
[19] Peter Gray *Famine, land and politics: British government and Irish society1843-50* (Dublin, 1999), pp. 276-283.
[20] *Report from the select committee on poor relief*, [408], H.C. 1861, x, 1, p.1.

that is, for the establishment of a single union rate or even the establishment of a single national rate. A number of Bills were introduced in the House of Commons by Irish Party MPs supporting the concept of a union rate. In 1870 a House of Commons select committee was established to consider the issue.[21] Resolutions for and against union rating were adopted by about 100 unions and delegations on both sides met representatives of the Irish government including the Lord Lieutenant. Without entering here into the detail of this debate, it emphasises the extent to which the Poor Law guardians were involved in Poor Law politics. Other examples can be found in relation to, for example, the provision of hospital services though the Poor Law, out relief or the role of religious in the operation of the Poor Law.

However, it is necessary to examine to what extent boards of guardians were involved in broader politics, for example, in the adoption of resolutions concerning land tenure or Irish government. The extent to which Poor Law elections were contested on political grounds must also be assessed. Given the state of Poor Law archives, there is, unfortunately, no ready index of the degree of involvement of local board of guardians in broader political issues. However, one can obtain a strong sense of the approach of different boards through reviewing the local newspapers of the period, many of which reported in detail debates at the local Poor Law unions. In addition, the more controversial activities of unions tend to have been brought to the attention of the Irish government and may be found in the official archives.

The practice of circulating resolutions to boards of guardians on a range of broadly political issues was widespread in the 1870s. Different boards took different approaches to these issues. For example, the Marquis of Sligo, chair of the Westport board, agreed to sign a petition concerning Sunday closing of public houses.[22] In contrast, the Longford board adopted, without dissent, a general resolution refusing to consider any subject foreign to the administration of the Poor Law.[23] An attempt by the chair of the Ballina board to adopt a similar approach in relation to a memorial on Isaac Butt's Education Bill was, however, overruled by the board which supported the Bill.[24] One

[21] *Law of rating (Ireland): report from the select committee...*, [423], p. 1, 1871 x, 1; p. 361.
[22] *Mayo Examiner*, 13 January 1877.
[23] *Longford Journal*, 12 January 1878.
[24] *Mayo Examiner*, 21 April 1877.

interesting, albeit unusual, example of a broader political resolution is that adopted by the North Dublin union in 1869.[25] The resolution stated that

> Absenteeism being a great evil of this country, the board of guardians of this union will call upon the Prime Minister of England to grant a royal residence and a national parliament, as the only legitimate remedy for the pauperism and widespread dissension which exists.

The resolution was moved by Mr Erson, JP, and seconded by Captain Brinkley, JP, and passed with one exception. The North Dublin union subsequently wrote to other unions seeking their support for the resolution 'with a view to united action and hearty co-operation'. The Poor Law Commission took great exception to this resolution and issued a circular to unions objecting to it and trusting that they would decline to entertain the proposal. Erson subsequently complained to the Commission denying that the resolution was introduced for the purposes of agitation and stating that he was motivated by loyal and patriotic motives. Brinkley argued that the resolution was not political agitation and complained to the Commission that they should confine themselves to administering the laws for the relief of the poor in Ireland.[26]

A further example of the involvement of boards in broader political issues is the support of Castlebar board for the release of the Fenian political prisoners.[27] In September 1871, Charles O'Malley, BL, acting chair of the board, proposed a motion calling for the release of the Fenian prisoners.[28] This was adopted by the board despite the objections of some members. This motion, or similar motions, were adopted by a number of other boards.[29] It is interesting to note that Gladstone, rather than condemning this activity, wrote to the board rejecting their request as he did not consider the crimes were political, but noting the temperate language used in the motion and the loyal feeling evinced.[30]

The support of the Killmallock board for the reform of land tenure provides another example. As Feingold reported, the Kilmallock union was the site of one of the

[25]. See the *Twenty third annual report of the poor law commissioners 1870*, 1870 [c.156], xxxvi, 1, p. 40.
[26] *Hansard 3*, cci, col. 1-2, 2 May 1870.
[27] See David Thornley *Isaac Butt and Home Rule* (London, 1964), pp. 53-6, 65-8; R. V. Comerford *The Fenians in context: Irish politics and society 1848-82* (Dublin, 1985), pp. 170-8.
[28] *Mayo Examiner*, 11 and 25 September 1871.
[29] The neighbouring Swineford and Newport boards adopted resolutions approving the Castlebar motion. Killadysert and Ballinasloe boards also adopted motions (albeit in the later case after the majority of members had left the meeting); *Nation*, 7 October 1871 and 8 June 1872.
[30] *Mayo Examiner*, 16 October 1871.

earliest battles between tenant farmers and landlords for control of the board. In 1870, William Bolster, a wealthy tenant farmer and president of the Limerick, Clare, and Tipperary farmers club, was elected as the chairman of Kilmallock board of guardians. Having lost office in 1871, Bolster regained the chairmanship in 1872 and retained it throughout the 1870s.[31] On 14 of January 1875 the Kilmarnock board met with Mr Bolster in the chair and W. H. O'Sullivan, Irish Party MP for Limerick County and Poor Law guardian, in attendance.[32] Following the normal work of the board, a circular was read from the land conference to be held in Dublin later that month requesting a deputation from the board. Bolster argued that the board should be represented but was opposed by Mr Saunders who objected to the introduction of such questions at meetings of the boards of guardians. Saunders and two other board members, including Mr. Townsend, the former chair,[33] left the meeting and it was subsequently agreed that the board would send a delegation consisting of the chair, vice-chair and deputy vice-chair. All three dissenters were justices of the peace and likely to have been ex-officio members.[34] A complaint was made to the Chief Secretary arguing that such issues should not be debated at board meetings and proposing the prohibition of discussion of issues unconnected with the Poor Law. However, when the matter was referred to the Local Government Board for its views it argued that the 'disposition to discuss politics is by no means general' at most boards and that Kilmallock was an exception due to local circumstances. The Board argued that no such general rule would be effectual.

A further example is the case of a home rule motion proposed before the Roscommon board by Alexander O'Connor Eccles, an elected member, co-founder of the Roscommon Home Rule Association, and owner of the *Roscommon Weekly Messenger*.[35] The chairman, Lord Crofton, refused to receive a motion of a political nature but sought the views of the board. When the board voted narrowly to receive the motion, Lord

[31] See Feingold, *Tenantry*, pp. 83-5.
[32] *Cork Examiner*, 15 January 1875.
[33] The nominee of the Tory Landlords' as he was described in a Bolster election poster in 1871 (National Archives of Ireland [herein NAI], CSORP/1875/2360).
[34] Although justices of the peace were entitled to be members ex-officio, in some cases JPs stood for election and served as elected members so it is not necessarily the case that all three were ex-officios: *Return of the number of magistrates, elected and ex-officio, on each board of guardians...in Ireland*, [347], H.C. 1843, xlvi, p. 583.
[35] *Roscommon Journal*, 11, 18, 25 May 1872.

Crofton and the vice-chairman resigned. Following a complaint to the Local Government Board, the Board ordered an election for the officer posts which was strongly attended by the ex-offico members. Three ex-offico members were elected to the officer positions but a resolution, proposed by the former vice-chair, barring political discussion at all future board meetings was withdrawn. Feingold noted that eight more years were to pass before the nationalist guardians were successfully able to challenge the ex-officios for the office of chairman. It appears that a number of other unions adopted similar pro-home rule motions.[36] However, as is shown by the comments of the Local Government Board on the Killmallock case, these cases appear to be exceptions to the general activities of local boards at the time.

Unfortunately, no comprehensive returns of Poor Law elections in the nineteenth century exist. However, it is clear that relatively few of the annual Poor Law elections were contested. Evidence to the select committee on Poor Law guardians in 1878 indicates that the number of contested electoral divisions varied from 9.2 per cent in 1876 to 6.9 per cent in 1878.[37] It appears that contests were more frequent in cities.[38] For example, there had been contests in four of the fourteen electoral divisions and wards in the North Dublin union in each of the years 1876 to 1878, while in the South Dublin union there had been three, eight and nine contests respectively in a union with sixteen electoral divisions and wards. A study of the local newspapers in the period also indicates that there was, in general, little controversy about the re-election of the existing officers. The officers were re-elected unanimously and *en bloc*. Analysis of the chairs of the unions, whose names were listed in Thom's directory, indicates a rather lower level of turnover. Of the 162 chairmen in 1871 (Millstreet union was dissolved at the time), 109 or two thirds retained their chairmanship in 1876 and a number of the new chairmen appear to have replaced family members in that position. Almost forty per cent of chairmen were in office in 1859, 1871 and 1876 indicating a significant degree of

[36] The *Nation*, 8 June 1872. Similar motions were adopted by boards in Dublin, Cork, Drogheda, Galway, Kilkenny, Edenderry, Mullingar, Bailieborough, Kilmallock, Killadysert and Millstreet.
[37] *Report of the select committee on poor law guardians etc.*, [297], H.C. 1878, xvii, p. 209.
[38] O'Brien, 'The establishment of the poor-law unions', p. 116 makes the same point for the period around 1840.

continuity.[39] However, at least by the late 1870s, calls for a fair share of officerships for the elected guardians were becoming more common.[40]

There is little information available on the basis on which elections were contested. Even where local newspapers reported that elections had been contested, they tended not to provide any detailed coverage of the election contests nor did they refer in detail to the reasons for such contests.[41] The evidence of the Irish witnesses to the 1878 select committee on Poor Law guardians, appointed to enquire into the system of election of local boards in England, Scotland and Ireland as a result of dissatisfaction with the existing systems on the part of many MPs, indicate some difference between the practice in Dublin and the rest of the country in this regard. Elections in Dublin were apparently contested on party and religious grounds. For example, Mr Byrne, clerk of the South Dublin union, and a former guardian stated that elections were fought 'on party grounds exclusively'.[42] Benjamin Banks, secretary of the Local Government Board, described Dublin elections as 'guided by religious and political feeling to a very large extent' and stated that lists were made up of party candidates.[43] In contrast, James Daly, editor of the *Connacht Telegraph* and a member of two boards, indicated that politics was rarely a factor in the elections in Mayo. Daly described contests as involving sometimes religious, sometimes political and sometimes private feeling.[44]

Occasionally, elections were contested very robustly contested and in a manner which went far beyond what it might be considered legitimate by the standards of the time. In March 1875 there was a contest in the electoral division of Tircahan in the Poor Law union of Bawnboy, Co Cavan. Four candidates were nominated for the two vacancies: Albert Hutton and William Reynolds, two Protestants, and Patrick McGovern and Francis King, two Roman Catholics. On the night of 19 and 20 March 1875, a party of nine or ten men, some of them who had hay ropes twisted about their necks as a

[39] This figure may be slightly inflated in that, in a number of cases, the chairs were held by titled members and it is not readily apparent when a new person succeeded to the title.
[40] See the discussion at the Naas and Mountmellick boards in *Lenister Express*, 31 March and 7 April 1877.
[41] See the reports of a heated contest in the *Limerick Reporter*, 26 and 29 March 1878 which, despite including the victor's speech, leaves the reader no wiser as to the issues involved.
[42] *Report of the select committee on poor law guardians etc*, [297], H.C. 1878, xvii, p. 273.
[43] *Report of the select committee on poor law guardians etc*, [297], H.C. 1878, xvii, 273, pp. 209 and 215.
[44] *Report of the select committee on poor law guardians etc*, [297], H.C. 1878, xvii, 273, p 269.

disguise, visited the house of one Francis Maguire and demanded his Poor Law voting papers. When he refused the crowd broke down the front and back doors of the house and defaced his voting papers. The same crowd proceeded to at least another four houses in the area but with only limited success. The constabulary report stated that there had been other similar cases in the area. However, when the petty sessions held a magisterial investigation, all the witnesses said that they did not know any of the attackers.

In the event, Hutton lost the election by six votes and complained to the Local Government Board, alleging intimidation by McGovern. Despite the clear evidence of intimidation, however, the Board replied that the returning officer could not allow defaced papers nor give a second voting paper. The Board did not believe that there were sufficient grounds for an inquiry. Later that year, Hutton's brother wrote to Michael Hicks Beach, MP, chief secretary for Ireland, complaining of the refusal of the Local Government Board to investigate. The Board, while accepting such occurrences 'happen too frequently,' argued that its powers under the Poor Law Act did not extend to the investigation of this type of voting irregularity. However, the Attorney General, whose views were sought on the matter, did not agree and felt that they did have the power to inquire. Nonetheless, Dublin castle, in view of the short period remaining before the1876 election, instructed the Local Government Board that no further steps need be taken but suggested that inquiry into the validity of elections would have a salutary effect in discouraging such irregularities in the future and pointing out that it was the attorney general's view that the Board did have the power to investigate.

This was far from an isolated case. However, as has been seen, the Local Government Board was reluctant to get involved in individual issues. In a case involving the alleged forgery of a vote, the Board stated that 'cases of this kind…are of merely local interest' and that it did not feel that it would be justified in undertaking prosecutions in such cases even where success was probable at the charge of the imperial exchequer, pointing out that any person could institute a prosecution in such cases. The limited extent of the Board's involvement in this area is illustrated by the fact that between 1853 and 1878 it issued only eighty-nine orders to the effect that a person was not duly elected or not entitled to act as a guardian.[45] This amounts to an average of just over three cases

[45] Index of Poor Law Orders, (NAI, BG2005/57, 2 and 3).

per annum. Although the precise numbers varied from year to year no particular trend is apparent and the very limited numbers contrast sharply with the fifty one orders issued in the three years between 1883 and 1885 when the Board obviously took a much more active approach.

The archives include the results of an investigation in 1878 into the extent of intimidation in close elections.[46] The detailed background to the investigation is not known but it presumably arose from concerns in Dublin Castle about the exercise of undue influence. The undersecretary, T. H. Burke, wrote to the local constabulary in twenty eight areas asking them to investigate whether undue influence, coercion or intimidation had occurred in at the recent Poor Law elections. The twenty-eight cases represent twelve per cent of the total electoral contests in 1878. It is noteworthy that most related to 'rural' areas and none were in Dublin, Belfast or Cork city unions.

As has been seen the voting papers were distributed to the houses of voters. The main concerns in relation to undue influence appear to have arisen from the fact that it seems to have been common practice for those distributing the votes to be followed by the supporters of one or more candidates. However, in only three electoral divisions was undue influence reported. In the Tullamore union it was alleged that the followers entered the voters' houses and used every means short of violence to have the papers signed in favour of their preferred candidate, in some cases filling them in themselves. In Tobercurry it was reported that the parish priest had used all his influence in favour of the Roman Catholic candidate. This had gone so far as the priest, allegedly, having led bodies of men armed with sticks to visit the house of voters. It was also alleged that candidates' names had been written and then crossed out. Although the constabulary had investigated the matter they could not get firm evidence. In the Louisburgh electoral division in Westport union, the constable delivering the votes had seen a boy of fifteen following him and entering the houses where the papers had been left. On questioning the youth, he said he had been sent by one of the candidates to fill in the voting papers. The constable investigated one case and found that the boy had filled in the paper in the name of that candidate although the absent voter had intended to vote for an alternative candidate.

[46] See NAI, CSORP/1878/8595.

In total, clerical involvement was reported in eight cases, although only one of these involved undue influence. It is interesting to note that the dictates of the Roman Catholic clergy were clearly not followed in all cases. In Drumsna in Carrick on Shannon union for instance, it was reported that the Roman Catholic clergy solicited votes but were refused in many instances. Landlord involvement was also reported in two cases.[47] However, as no specific questions were asked in relation to clerical or landlord involvement, it may well be that such involvement occurred in other instances and, not amounting to undue influence, was not reported by the constabulary. Overall the three cases in which undue influence was recorded amount to only about one per cent of all elections in that year.

Arising from the concerns about the voting procedures, Irish Party MPs proposed legislation to introduce voting by ballot - introduced for parliamentary elections in 1872 - in the House of Commons on a number of occasions in the late 1860s and 70s but without success.[48] In response to one such bill, in 1874 the Local Government Board asked its officials to report as to whether voting by ballot should be introduced in Dublin. However, they recommended against any change in the existing position that the present approach had worked satisfactorily. They argued that an interest in voting was not generally felt concerning Poor Law elections and that voting would be reduced if personal attendance was required. This, they argued, especially applied to female voters who made up a considerable portion of the constituencies in the two Dublin unions. The officials stated that they were not aware of cases in Dublin of corruption or intimidation, that the expense involved in elections would be much increased by the introduction of the ballot; and that personation would be difficult to control. The Board accepted these recommendations[49] and subsequently argued against the introduction of ballot elections for Poor Law guardians although accepting that it would reduce the type of abuse frequently complained of.[50] The select committee on Poor Law guardians in 1878

[47] Reports of landlord involvement in poor law elections were common. For example, in the 1871 elections, Lord Kingston's bailiff visited electors in the Boyle union with a letter from his Lordship seeking their vote for his land steward a Mr Dickie. See *Roscommon Journal*, 1 April 1871.

[48] Bills were proposed annually from 1874 to 1880 and continued into the 1890s.

[49] It will be recalled that while the report related to Dublin, the main concerns about this type of voting abuse, in fact, related to more rural areas.

[50] See Burke to chief secretary Hicks-Beath, (NAI, CSORP/1878/8595, 2 May1877).

recommended against the introduction of the ballot and no change was made in this regard until the 1898 local government reforms.[51]

The question arises as to whether there was any correlation between the extent to which boards were involved in broader political issues and the extent to which Poor Law elections were contested on political grounds. Unfortunately, there is insufficient evidence to come to any firm conclusions. In neither case is a high level of politicisation found but, insofar as evidence is available, electoral competition on a party political basis appears to have been more common in Dublin, and perhaps other large cities, while 'rural' boards appear more likely to have been involved in broader political issues. What can be said with certainty is that the assumption that the boards of guardians before the 1870s were simply administrative and apolitical in character is incorrect. There were a number of instances of the involvement of the board of guardians in broader politics in the period from the 1840s to the 1870s; some elections were closely fought; electioneering sometimes transgressed the boundaries of what was considered legitimate. Overall, however, this study supports Feingold's view that the vast bulk of boards of guardians in the 1870s, before the advent of the land war, were not greatly politicised, in the sense of party or national politics. Relatively few electoral districts were contested and, even where they were, party politics appears to have been involved in an organised way primarily in Dublin.[52] The limited level of politicisation is striking given the high level of political activity in the late 1860s and 1870s and given that Irish Party members raised a number of Poor Law issues such as the ballot and union rating. As Feingold showed, this position changed dramatically in the 1880s. Nonetheless, while Feingold saw the nascent political activities of the 1870s as a break with the past and a precursor of what was to come during the land war, one can perhaps better characterise these activities as a continuation, or renewal, of a longstanding involvement in politics by the boards of guardians.[53]

[51] *Report of the select committee on poor law guardians etc.*,[297], H.C. 1878, xvii, p. 1.
[52] It is unclear whether this trend also applied in other cities such as Cork and Belfast.
[53] The author acknowledges the assistance of Inga Brandes, University of Trier in the drafting of this work.

Ireland's queen of chess: Frideswide Rowland and her world

Timothy Harding

Among the category of leisure pastimes usually referred to nowadays as 'mindsports', chess is considered to be a pure game of skill with high prestige. This article is based on ongoing research into the large body of primary source material relating to chess life in the United Kingdom in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially weekly chess columns in periodicals. These columns give clues to how life was lived away from the spheres of work and politics. The standard chess history approach, written by and for chess players, has concentrated on the small elite of mostly male professional masters. Columns detailing accounts of championship events and masters' visits to various towns and cities to give exhibitions are examined. To see how chess fitted in to the culture of the times, it is necessary to recognise that in Britain and Ireland up to 1914 chess was essentially an amateur game.

There are numerous recorded instances of upper-class women playing chess from the Middle Ages[1] During the reign of Queen Victoria, the game of chess was no longer the preserve of a social elite and became an increasingly popular activity. The monarch was introduced to chess at Windsor in September 1837, very early in her reign,[2] and Lord Broughton's memoirs record several instances of chess played at court:

> The dinner at the Castle this day passed off agreeably, and, when in the drawing-room, the Queen sat down to chess with the Queen of the Belgians. H. M. had never played before; Lord Melbourne told her how to move, and Lord Palmerston also assisted her.

Chess was later said to be one of the Queen's consolations after her bereavement:

> Earl Dartrey ...was a great favourite with the Queen, and as Lord Cremorne held for some years the office of Lord-in-Waiting to Her Majesty. The late Lord Lyttelton

[1] A recent survey of the topic of female imagery in medieval and renaissance chess is Marilyn Yalom, *Birth of the chess queen: a history* (London, 2004).
[2] John Cam Hobhouse [Lady Dorchester Charlotte Carleton, (ed)], *Recollections of a long life by Lord Broughton* (6 vols, London, 1911), v, p. 100. See also p. 236 for an occasion when the Queen apparently employed Hobhouse to gain her proxy revenge at chess against 'Miss Cocks, one of her household'.

> once observed in serio-jocose tones, that Lord Cremorne owed his promotion to the earldom to his skill and services as a chess-player.[3]

A detailed history of Victorian women's involvement in chess would require a separate article, but some highlights may be mentioned. A ladies' chess club called The Penelope Club briefly existed in south London in 1847-8[4], and in connection with it, the English chess champion Howard Staunton wrote in his column:

> We can conceive no possible objection to the establishment of a Ladies' Chess Club in every city in England. These institutions, properly considered, are a sort of intellectual gymnasia; and there can be no good reason why they should always continue to be monopolised by the stronger sex.[5]

An *Illustrated London News* report on the Berkshire and Reading Chess-Club soiree in March 1851 mentioned that amongst the company 'were several ladies; and their skill in playing excited considerable attention'.[6] An illustration showed at least two women playing games against men and other women attending the event. Perhaps they were welcome as this was a special occasion rather than a regular club night. At this period, women are mentioned quite often, usually by first names or pseudonyms, in the *Illustrated London News* and other chess columns, sometimes as composers of chess problems.[7] They also occasionally played by correspondence[8]. It was only in the last third of the nineteenth century that identifiable female pioneers emerged in Britain: as public competitors, writers on the game and organisers of competitions. One of these was an Irishwoman, the main subject of this article.

Frideswide Fanny Beechey, although not a champion player of the game, was one of the first females to become famous in the chess world. Her activities span the period 1880 to 1914, during which time the game probably enjoyed its peak of popularity in Ireland, largely as a result of her work and that of her husband. In 1883, an unusual match was made, as she described thirty years later:

[3] G. A. MacDonnell, *The knights and kings of chess* (London, 1894), p. 106. The aristocrats referred to are Richard Dawson (1817-97) and George William Lyttelton (1817-76), both major figureheads in Victorian chess society.
[4] *Illustrated London News*, xi, 27 November 1847 and 4 December 1847.
[5] *Illustrated London News*, xii, 22 January 1848. However, it was not until the mid-1890s that women's chess clubs of some permanence were established in a few cities including London and New York.
[6] *Illustrated London News*, xviii, 8 March 1851.
[7] 'Judy' was a regular correspondent of Staunton's column in 1851-2; 'Stella' contributed in 1853.
[8] A person identified only as 'Sibyll' conducted a game through the chess column of *The home circle* in 1852. Moves were printed in many of the columns in vols vi and vii.

> The proprietor of the *Sheffield Independent* wrote inviting me to conduct their chess department in collaboration with Mr. T. B. Rowland, who at this time had sprung into fame, so though parted by the Irish Channel we agreed to accept the *Sheffield Independent* post and eventually met. After our marriage we conducted as many as six columns in different papers, and there has never been a break in this work.[9]

Irish chess writer, Rev. George Alcock MacDonnell, came especially from London to officiate at their wedding in Clontarf on 5 June 1884, which was reported in both the *Irish Times* and the *Freeman's Journal*. An anonymous correspondent stated that Mrs Rowland's competitive successes and talents as an authoress had 'gained for her the title of the "British Queen of Chess"'.[10] As Miss Beechey, her name was familiar to chess players throughout the world. For example, the premier continental chess magazine, the *Deutsche Schachzeitung*, noticed her wedding. It quoted a little joke about it from the chess column of the *Leipzig Tageblatt*, to the effect of wondering who, now they had united their chess skills, would be the winner in this new game.[11] By this stage she had won prizes in two chess problem composing tourneys and was conducting no fewer than five chess columns. She had already published one book and another, jointly with Thomas, was in the press. Yet, at the date of her marriage, Frideswide had hardly begun her career.

She was born in Galway on 18 April 1845 and began life with certain advantages.[12] Her father, Richard Brydges Beechey (1808-1895),[13] and her mother was a member of the landed gentry in County Westmeath. The only definite information about Frideswide's teenage years and young adulthood comes from articles that she published in 1910 She described how her father became keen on chess when, 'stationed at a lonely spot in the West', he met a Catholic curate, Dean Burke, who was an enthusiastic chess player.

> In order to be a worthy opponent of his skilful antagonist, my father purchased *Staunton's Handbook of Chess*. This book he brought home with him during furlough, and it took my fancy, and before the age of eight I used to play over the

[9] Frideswide Rowland, 'Reminisciences' [sic], in *The Four-Leaved Shamrock* [herein *FLS*], 27-28 (Summer, 1910), pp. 3-4.
[10] *Irish Times*, 6 June 1884; *Freeman's Journal*, 7 June 1884. The reports are virtually identical and both include the quoted epithet.
[11] *Deutsche Schachzeitung*, 1884, 8, pp. 234-5.
[12] Register of baptisms at St Nicholas', Galway, p. 29, 12, held at the RCB Library, Churchtown, Dublin.
[13] W. Roberts, *Sir William Beechey R.A.* (London, 1917), especially pp. 179 and 196 for family references.

> games from the book, and covering the moves I tried to guess what the next move might be.[14]

However, her talent for chess remained dormant, as she had nobody to play with regularly until late in the 1870s, when she became associated with the circle of chess players in South Devon.

> When we went to reside at West Hoe, Plymouth, my neighbour happened to be Mr Prideaux, and then he initiated me into the beautiful art of problem composition and solving. In a very short time I entered the lists of 'Brief' as a solver, and as a composer won my first prize in A. F. Mackenzie's 'Jamaica Gleaner' Problem Tourney.[15]

In her mid-thirties, Frideswide began problem solving and composing, a mode of chess activity that involved different skills from playing a game with an opponent. A good chess problem is a puzzle that should satisfy formal technical and aesthetic criteria, whereas a chess game is a direct contest. During 1880 she was a regular solver of chess problems published in the news digest magazine *Brief: the Week's News* and her first published effort at composition appeared there on 12 March.[16] In 1881 she became celebrated as the first woman to win a prize in an international tourney for problem composers which was organised by a Jamaican paper. Mackenzie's chess column and competitions originally appeared in the *Jamaica Family Journal*.[17] On 9 February 1883, James Pierce reported that the *Journal's* offices, including all Mackenzie's chess books and special type, had been destroyed by fire and that Miss Beechey was appealing for subscriptions to help him replace them.[18] Only on 17 May that year was Mackenzie was able to resume his column, which was now in the *Tri-Weekly Gleaner*.[19]

Her chess career moved into a higher gear when, in late 1882, she visited the fashionable spa of Matlock Bath, in Derbyshire, for her rheumatism. She wrote that, being alone, she had plenty of time for chess problems:

[14] *FLS*, 27-28, p. 3.
[15] Jeremy Gaige, *Chess personalia: A bio-bibliography* (London, 1987), p. 340.
[16] The start of her chess problem activity can be dated fairly accurately: there are several references to 'F.F.B.' and 'F.F. Beechey' in the *Brief* chess column throughout 1880.
[17] The tourney run by the *Jamaica Family Journal* was announced in *Brief* on 24 December 1880, to be judged by F. C. Collins (1843-98), chess editor of *Brief*. The 1881 Brief is unavailable.
[18] *English Mechanic and World of Science*, xxxvi (1883), p. 534.
[19] Ken Whyld, *Chess columns: a list* (Olomouc, 2002), pp. 141 and 169

> I asked the proprietor of a small local paper if he would give me space, and he was only too glad to accede, as he was often at a loss how to fill up his paper.[20]

Thus she became the first woman to conduct a newspaper chess column, in the *Matlock Register*.[21] Now having access to a printer, she collected problems and other matter in a book entitled *Chess Blossoms*, probably the first published chess book by a woman, which included a list of 193 subscribers, some buying multiple copies.[22] The preface makes it clear her chief intention was to encourage other women to take up chess, especially chess problems:

> This little book...was undertaken in the hope that ladies might more generally be led thereby to study the beautiful art of problem construction, at once an ennobling, elevating and delightful recreation...That ladies do not generally play chess well is owing not so much to a deficiency of intellectual capacity, as to their sensitive natures, and to the difficulty of concentrating their minds on any subject when in company. For these reasons the composing and solving of problems seem more adapted for ladies than the playing of games.[23]

Both English chess magazines reviewed it. *British Chess Magazine* observed that 'this little work presumably marks a new departure in the history of chess literature, heretofore monopolised by hard-headed, calculating man'.[24] *The Chess Player's Chronicle* initially pronounced its own theory on the inequality of the sexes in chess:

> ...notwithstanding the strong arguments in favour of the equality of man and woman intellectually, yet whenever they both aim at a certain accomplishment, work to arrive at the same results, or strive for the same objects, the attainments of man are always greater, the work superior, and results more satisfactory than those of the opposite sex. It is invariably so in Chess, and perhaps the only reason that can be assigned is that women, as a class, are not (in a sense) educated to a sufficiently high standard to compete with men.[25]

However, the next issue of the magazine assessed the intrinsic merits of the work. If the criticisms of Ms Beechey's efforts were often strict, this also indirectly paid her the

[20] *FLS*, 27-28, p. 4.
[21] According to Whyld, *Columns*, p. 264, the column commenced in the *Matlock Register*, 8 December 1882. *British Chess Magazine* [herein *BCM*], iii (1883), p. 30 stated 'This is probably the first [Chess Department] conducted by a lady.' She gave up the column late in 1883. See *BCM*, iii, p. 414.
[22] Frideswide Fanny Beechey, *Chess Blossoms* (Bath, 1883). Her *Jamaica* prize problem is number 1 on page 10.
[23] Beechey, *Blossoms*, p. 3.
[24] *BCM*, iii (1883), pp. 307-8.
[25] *The Chess Player's Chronicle and Journal of Indoor and Outdoor Amusements*, 22 August 1883, pp. 90-91.

compliment of judging them by the same criteria they would have used to review a book written by an established male composer of chess problems.[26]

1883 was a significant year for chess because as an international tournament held in London gave a boost to the game on both sides of the Irish Sea and was probably a factor in persuading some papers to institute chess columns.[27] By the end of 1883, she moved to Dublin, with her new husband Thomas Rowland where they worked on a book together.[28] Soon they had columns in the *Irish Sportsman*[29] and the *Nottingham Guardian*[30] and another followed in the *Bristol Mercury* by 1886.[31] In November 1883 she also started a chess column in *The Science Monthly Illustrated*, which (with a change of title to *The Illustrated Science Monthly*) ran until May 1885.[32] Through her columns she organised, and won, an International Two-Move Chess Problem [Composing] Tourney for ladies. The judging, as customary was done anonymous, male experts

The personality and early years of Thomas Rowland, born in Dublin on 1 June 1850, are more of an enigma than those of his wife. In the book *Chess Bouquet*, which profiled most of the important chess problem composers and chess editors of the United Kingdom who were alive in 1897, he was described as 'a descendant of one of the oldest families in the South'[33]. There seem to have been Rowlands among the gentry in Cork.[34] Thomas occasionally courted controversy in chess circles. Canon Luce's history of the Dublin Chess Club states that the club's 1897 At Home was 'an embarrassment, when

[26] *Chess Player's Chronicle*, 1883, pp. 123, 130-1.
[27] The *Irish Fireside* began its column in July 1883, edited by George Frith Barry. There had been Irish chess columns previously but they had not lasted long.
[28] Thomas and Frideswide Fanny Rowland, *Chess fruits* (Dublin, 1884).
[29] Whyld, *Columns*, p. 215, showed that the Rowland/Beechey column commenced on 15 December 1883 in the *Irish Sportsman and Farmer*, but in fact it was one week earlier and the words '*and Farmer*' had been dropped from the journal's title by then. Whyld was following a list in Oxford Bodlien, MS HJ Murray 98.
[30] Whyld, *Columns*, p. 319, stated Beechey was the editor from February to July 1884, after which local Nottingham players A. and T. Marriott took over the column.
[31] Whyld, *Columns*, p. 58, showed the Rowlands as editors of the Bristol column from 5 June 1886 until the end of October 1896.
[32] *Illustrated Science Monthly: A popular magazine of knowledge, research, travel and invention* (London, 1883-5).
[33] F. R. Gittins, *The chess bouquet* (London, 1897), pp. 77-82.
[34] The papers of the solicitor H. Franks, reported by Ainsworth and so mentioned in the Hayes catalogue of Irish MSS, contain some documents relating to the Rowland family. However this set of Franks papers remains unsorted at the NLI, and as yet unavailable.

Mr. F. F. Rowland wrote to ask why he and his wife had not been invited'.[35] However, the complaint seems justified as she had given them advance publicity for the event in her column.[36] More seriously, the second Minute Book of the Rathmines Chess Club has an entry dated Saturday 9 January 1892, which stated:

> The Members of the Committee present decided not to play the return match with the Clontarf Chess Club owing to the discourteous conduct of the Hon. Secty [Thomas Rowland] of that Club, on the occasion of the match held on the 7th Jan '92.[37]

In July 1885 Thomas Rowland commenced his most important chess column, in the popular Dublin *Evening Mail*, which also later appeared in the British weekly *Warder*. The *Sportsman* column was taken over by one of the other leading lights of the fledgling Irish Chess Association (ICA), A.S. Peake, with unfortunate consequences.[38] In early 1886, a personality clash apparently led to a trivial matter being blown out of all proportion. Thomas resigned as ICA. Secretary on 17 March 1886.[39] Rowland's side of the story is given principally in his Dublin *Evening Mail* chess columns, while the anti-Rowland side appears in various issues of the *Irish Sportsman* during 1886. Peake was replaced by a new pro-Rowland columnist in 1887.

The context in which the Rowlands did their work needs to be examined. The 1880s were a time of increased leisure and prosperity for the growing urban middle classes, and knowledge of chess was possibly one of the accomplishments expected of the respectable and upwardly mobile. Part of the reason for the success of the Rowlands was that they pitched their writings at the majority of social and occasional club players. The preface to the first edition of *The Problem Art* identified the book's chief aim as 'to impart to beginners, in as clear and comprehensive a manner as possible, primary instructions on how to compose and how to solve chess problems'.[40] Writers on chess

[35] A. A. Luce, *A history of the Dublin chess club* (Dublin, 1967), p. 14. The 'At Home' appears to have been an informal evening at which visitors to the club played a friendly match against club members.
[36] *Weekly Irish Times*, 13 February 1897.
[37] Second minute book of the Rathmines Chess Club, part of a set in the possession of the club. Entries in their first minute book showed that Thomas Rowland, although he never lived in Rathmines, was a founder member of the club and assisted its foundation in 1888-89.
[38] The tradition of anonymity among chess editors meant that the exact date that Peake took over was not clear from reading the columns themselves, but Whyld, *Columns* (again following Murray) stated it was 18 December 1885.
[39] *Irish Sportsman*, 12 June 1886.
[40] Frideswide Fanny and Thomas Rowland, *The problem art* (Dublin, 1887). An expanded second edition appeared in 1897.

problems in later decades have tended to be somewhat dismissive of the Rowland's efforts, but the point is that they saw their role as popularising the game and left to others the cachet of penning advanced treatises for the minority of experts in the field.

Thomas and Frideswide were unusual in that they generally had at least one English provincial column on the go as well as their Irish ones. Readership is hard to estimate. On 15 February 1889, James Pierce reported that: 'The current Solution Tourney in the *Sheffield Independent* has a solving list numbering 140, the largest on record, including 13 ladies'.[41] Many more people undoubtedly 'lurked', that is, they read the column and attempted to solve the puzzles but did not send in solutions or enter the tourney. The Sheffield column ended later that year, but competitions were transferred to another in the *Bristol Mercury* that continued for several years.[42] The Rowlands must have been well organised to cope with the large volume of mail they received in connection with all the competitions they were running, and to avoid repeating themselves, although this did occasionally happen. The necessity of supplying a large amount of copy to meet weekly deadlines must also have made it hard for them to travel as a couple for holidays or to attend chess events out of the Dublin area. For example, the first Ladies' International tournament in London, June to July 1897, was reported at length by the Rowlands, but always from copy supplied to them by their network of colleagues and friends.[43]

The Rowlands were masters of chess by correspondence in all its aspects. The development of correspondence chess was facilitated by the changes happening in media and communication, at the time, including a more frequent postal service, the increase in steam packets criss-crossing the Irish Sea and the growth of mass circulated newspapers. Not only did they play games of chess against distant opponents by writing their moves in letters or postcards, they also organised numerous postal chess matches and tournaments. These and their problem-composition and problem-solving contests were managed through the mailboxes of the various periodicals to which they contributed. They

[41] *English Mechanic*, xlviii (1889), p. 509.
[42] *BCM*, November 1888, p. 444, stated that the Sheffield column was ending and the competitions would be transferred to the *Bristol Mercury*, but this is contradicted by *English Mechanic* and by Whyld's *Columns*.
[43] In all their columns on various occasions, for example the *Weekly Irish Times* of 3, 10 and 17 July 1897.

exchanged columns and news with like-minded people everywhere. Thus they compiled their reference work, *The Chess Player's Annual and Club Directory*, which ran through five editions between 1889 and 1894 and, amongst other things, included contact details for chess clubs all over the world.[44] Thomas was also involved in charitable work through the Club of Living Chess, run by a prominent freemason, Dr Ephraim MacDowel Cosgrave, who was President of the Dublin Total Abstinence Society (DTAS).[45] Rowland had apparently got to know Cosgrave through the latter's involvement in the City Chess Club that met at the Coffee Palace at number six Townsend Street.[46] Established by DTAS in 1875, the Coffee Palace provided a venue for social activities, intended to wean young men from the temptations of alcohol. The game of chess was considered a suitable recreation for such men.

The Club of Living Chess raised funds for good causes by providing spectacles that people would pay to see. Cosgrave and Rowland had not invented anything new. The tradition for this kind of activity goes back at least to fifteenth century Germany, and there were numerous other examples in the late nineteenth century.[47] With a hall marked out as a giant chess-board, thirty-two people (the pawns were usually children) would dress up as chess pieces to enact a game for spectators, generally preceded by a procession to musical accompaniment. The largest such Irish pageant was held for the benefit of the Masonic Female Orphan School of Dublin in May 1892. Each lodge of masons was involved in a fund-raising scheme, as described in the advance programme.[48] The contribution of Cosgrave's lodge was the Club's performances, not only of several chess displays but also some of Musical Whist with Living Cards, a new idea borrowed

[44] The Rowlands edited the third to seventh editions from 1889 to 1894 inclusive, published in Dublin and Stroud. They had acquired the rights from the original editor, W. R. Bland, who had discontinued it a few years earlier.
[45] *Common Sense: a monthly magazine for everybody*, 1, 1, February 1893, p.12.
[46] For example, the *Evening Mail* column had news of the Coffee Palace on 9 August 1888, and on 14 August 1890 Thomas Rowland mentioned chess players attending a Coffee Palace party at Clontarf Castle, including his four-year-old daughter Frida. Thomas was briefly secretary of the City Chess Club. He resigned in September 1894. See *Evening Mail*, 20 September 1894.
[47] Thomas Rowland was aware of references to Living Chess in the seventeenth century and he mentioned Rabelais. See *Evening Mail*, *16 March 1893*.
[48] T. Stuart (ed), *Masonic female orphan school of Ireland. Grand centenary celebration* (Dublin, 1892); the whist and chess events are previewed on pp. 273-83. A booklet including the moves of the games was also printed, see E. Cosgrave (ed), *Masonic centenary fete 1892: Chess with living pieces* (Dublin, 1892). T. B. Rowland described the Masonic School events in several of his *Mail* articles and, with some illustrations of costumes, in the sixth (1892) edition of the *Annual*, pp. 7-13.

from America.

After their marriage, the Rowlands ran a club for some years in their home in Victoria Terrace, Clontarf, which was notable for its social inclusiveness. In 1910, Mrs Rowland wrote about this as follows:

> Few things would benefit Ireland more than an increase of these social chess clubs, where men of all creeds and politics might meet in one common bond of brotherhood. We had men of all persuasions, the Secretary of the Primrose League;[49] the Rev J. Maxwell, C.C.; Rev F. Saavedra [50] of the Order of Jesuits; Rev R. Fawcett, Protestant Evangelical; J. Howard Parnell, brother of C.S. Parnell; Mir Aulid Ali, TCD...and last but not least, the lady champion Miss Rudge.[51]

Mary Rudge, originally from Herefordshire but living in Clifton since 1874, was the first woman to play the game competitively to a high standard and over a long period of years. Although not a master, she was able to beat most male club players, even several at the same time. The zenith of her career was first prize in the aforementioned 1897 Ladies' International. Most chess clubs confined their membership to gentlemen but Miss Rudge had been fortunate that her local club, Bristol and Clifton, was an exception. Two years before she joined the club, no fewer than three women were involved in a match with Bath chess club in 1872.[52] As for Ireland, Dublin City and County Chess Club considered admitting ladies in 1867, shortly after its formation, but decided against what it considered would have been an innovative step.[53] However, in 1888 the Dublin club did elect Miss Rudge an Honorary Member. Miss Rudge was befriended by the Rowlands and paid several lengthy visits to them in the late 1880s and 1890s.[54]

The Clontarf club held an eight-player ladies' championship in 1892-3. Players included Mrs Rowland, who won all her games, and Thomas' sister Lucinda.[55] In 1894 the Rowlands' *Annual* included an article on 'How to form a chess club' in which the proposed Rule Two was: 'The Club shall consist of lady and gentleman members'. Yet a decade later, a reconstituted Clontarf club found a rationalisation for excluding females.

[49] Probably a reference to Lord Randolph Churchill, who was a member of Dublin Chess Club. See Luce, *History*, p. 38.
[50] Fernando Saavedra (1847-1922), a Spaniard who is buried at Mount Argos in Dublin, is famous in the chess world for composing a brilliant endgame study, although its originality has been disputed.
[51] *FLS*, 27-28, p. 4.
[52] *Land and Water*, xiv, 30 November 1872. The author acknowledges the assistance of Jackie Eales.
[53] Luce, *Dublin chess club*, pp. 7 and 45.
[54] The name of Mary Rudge appears on the subscriber list in *Chess blossoms* (p. 8), so there must have been some earlier contact between the women, although they may not have met.
[55] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 2 March 1893.

Mrs Rowland printed the text of a letter, complete with a (presumably unintended) *double entendre*, in which her correspondent's application for membership had been refused:

> Clontarf Chess Club, Town Hall, Clontarf, Nov. 21, 1903
> DEAR MADAM —
> I delayed answering your inquiry pending our committee meeting of last night. The general opinion at our meeting was that ladies attending our club would find the atmosphere unpleasant, as smoking is much indulged in, and if smoking were discouraged (as it would be by the presence of ladies) we fear that many of our male members would drop off.
> I regret, therefore that I cannot give an affirmative answer to your inquiry...
> HUGH LOVE, Hon. Secretary.[56]

Mrs Rowland was also in regular contact with another key figure in women's chess, Rhoda Bowles, who was President of the London Ladies' Chess Club, founded in 1895, and chief organiser of the 1897 tournament. Through her column in the progressive monthly magazine *Womanhood*, which ran from 1899-1907, Mrs Bowles organised six major postal chess tournaments in which both women and men competed.[57] In October 1902, Mrs Bowles and her husband visited Ireland.[58]

The Rowlands regularly published their address so that people could send them news and enter their competitions. In 1893 the family moved to Kingstown, where Frideswide's naval connections would have been of more benefit for their new venture, a local newspaper. They lived at various addresses in the borough from 1894-1903. Mrs Rowland became more active as her daughter grew up. In January 1894 they launched *Kingstown Monthly*, edited by Thomas Rowland, with Frideswide's chess column starting in the second number. The first issue was priced at two pence, but this was cut back to a penny in issue two. The first editorial expressed the hope that it might become a weekly. Although this never happened, the fact that the paper ran in one form or another for over a decade suggests it was at least a qualified success. A short-lived venture during 1896 was an Irish woman's magazine in which Mrs Rowland had a chess column. *Kingstown Monthly* carried the notice that:

[56] *Weekly Irish Times*, 5 December 1903.
[57] *Womanhood* was edited in London by Mrs Ada Ballin from 1899 until her death in 1906 and it continued for about another 18 months. The chess column by Mrs Bowles ran from the second issue.
[58] *Kingstown Society*, December 1902, p. 11.

> A ladies' chess and reading room has been started at 15 Leinster Street, the office of 'To-day's Woman'. Ladies can meet there to play others at any hour during the day.[59]

It is unclear whether the Rowlands had any further financial or editorial interest in *Today's Woman* other than the chess column. *Kingstown Monthly* gave Thomas a voice on matters other than chess. He investigated the history of the township and the mail service, and campaigned on behalf of leaseholders. It is possible that he backed Horace Plunkett MP, leader of the Irish co-operative movement, who supported their ventures by donating trophies and chess sets. Plunkett had been President of Oxford University Chess Club in his student days, and he sent the Rowlands items about chess events in Parliament. Plunkett and J. H. Parnell were the top two players in a House of Commons team that played the U.S. House of Representatives in a cable chess match on 31 May 1897.[60]

In 1897 Frideswide's national readership in the *Weekly Irish Times*[61] was increased for a few months by another column in the *Irish Figaro*.[62] Between them, the readers of her columns subscribed more than nine pounds to assist her work by buying her a typewriter.[63] The minimum contribution was one shilling, with several readers contributing more. The *Irish Figaro* at this time carried advertisements for a Remington typewriter but the price was not mentioned. A machine must have been purchased, since advertisements in the Kingstown papers later mentioned that she offered to do typing work and her profession in the 1901 census was stated to be 'journalist and typewriter'. She also developed a graphology sideline around this time, offering 'character indicated from handwriting' and claiming to have a 'certificate from a London professor'. She usually charged a sixpence fee with a stamped addressed envelope, offering 'Lessons given by correspondence in Graphology and Palmistry', but she seems to have dropped

[59] *Kingstown Monthly*, June 1906, p. 11; *Weekly Irish Times*, 16 January 1897 stated that '*Today's Woman* has ceased to exist'.
[60] *Weekly Irish Times*, 12 June 1897.
[61] The start-date of this column cannot be verified from Whyld or Murray, and no Dublin library holds this paper prior to 1897, but on 11 January 1889, Pierce announced that 'Mrs T. B. Rowland is about to commence a chess column in the *Weekly Irish Times*'. See *English Mechanic*, xlvii, p.408.
[62] The *Irish Figaro* column possibly ended because of a serious illness, of undisclosed nature, which Mrs Rowland suffered in late 1897. The *Weekly Irish Times* referred to this and her convalescence several times.
[63] *Irish Figaro*, 19 June 1897, listed Plunkett and Saavedra among the subscribers.

the palmistry quickly.[64] In March 1898, the *Monthly* was relaunched as *Kingstown Society*, apparently the target market had changed.

The Boer War impacted negatively on their activities. The *Weekly Irish Times* announced a correspondence chess tournament on 9 September 1899 but cancelled it the following Saturday, 'owing to the fewness of entries'. That cannot have been the real reason as people had barely time to respond. Similar announcements for competitions in the *Mail* had usually been repeated. The *Weekly Irish Times* chess column stopped altogether after the end of 1899. Presumably this was not due to any dissatisfaction with Mrs Rowland herself, since it made a strong come-back in November 1902, a few months after the war in South Africa had ended. Irish chess activities may have been curtailed during the hostilities to some extent, but the main reason seems to be that war coverage squeezed out leisure items from the papers. The *Mail* column appeared irregularly and with inferior content in 1900. Following a brief revival, it ceased altogether after 29 March 1902. The Rowlands' income must have fallen and they were without a mass audience for a time; by now their tourneys and matches were mostly being conducted through *Kingstown Society*. Their core chess readership was buying that paper even if they lived abroad. Then it too, went into decline after 1904 and, until its end in 1907, no longer had chess content.

In 1905, the chess subscribers transferred to a new venture, a chess paper, which Mrs Rowland called *The Four-Leaved Shamrock* because it had four pages and came from Ireland.[65] It carried problems, games and news from Irish and postal events, as well as some literary material. An important landmark came in 1908 when, in issue eighteen, she inaugurated the 'Silver Queen' Irish National Correspondence Tourney, Championship of Ireland, with a sixpence entry fee to cover expenses. It was organised as a knock-out tournament, had over twenty entries and took more than two years to complete. The format changed in later years but Ireland thus became the first country anywhere in the world to organise a regular national correspondence chess championship. Frideswide hoped *The Four-Leaved Shamrock* would be a monthly but it soon lapsed to

[64] Advertisements for graphology, with varying wordings, appeared frequently in the Rowlands' papers and also occasionally in the *Weekly Irish Times*. Palmistry was mentioned in *Kingstown Monthly*, February 1897, p.11
[65] The title page of the first issue says: *The Four-Leaved Shamrock: An Irish monthly paper devoted to the royal game of chess*, edited by Frideswide Fanny Rowland, i, 1, January 1905.

bi-monthly with eight issues in 1905. Number twelve, when she was moving house, covered May to July 1906 but the next issue did not appear until January 1907.[66] After that hiatus it is amazing that this labour of love lasted another seven years. In total there were fifty separate issues, of which several were double numbers to make up for long gaps in publication.

Mrs Rowland cannot possibly have made any money with the *FLS*. However, her will, made in 1910, showed that she received income from a post-nuptial settlement made by her father in 1885, amounting to £1209 2s 7d invested in three per cent Consols. By 1910, this had been reinvested in three and a half per cent India stock, raising the income from about thirty-six pounds to just over forty-two pounds per annum. That meant her investment income roughly kept pace with inflation. In the Summer 1910 issue, she lamented:

> When I started the *Four-Leaved Shamrock* in 1905, I had hoped it would have been generally supported by Irish players. Such has not been the case, and it is owing to the generosity of English subscribers... [that it] continues to thrive.[67]

Yet retired Trinity professor William Monck[68] was one of her lifelong supporters and his name often appears in Rowland chess columns, while the May 1913 issue shows that other Irish friends also cared. Donations came in to a printing fund. The Rev. Paul MacLoughlin of Dunmore, Co. Galway, wrote to her:

> I have much pleasure in sending you 5s for the "F.L.S.". I sincerely hope you will not be obliged to suspend the paper, as we should all be very sorry to sever the pleasant relations that have existed between us and you. Those of us especially who are isolated throughout the country should feel it a great loss if we hadn't your kind services in arranging chess matches for us.[69]

The last *FLS*, number fifty-eight, appeared in July 1914. Later in the year, the problem editor of *BCM*, B. G. Laws, explained that Mrs Rowland had to cease the paper due to 'failing eyesight'.[70] He paid her a fulsome tribute, in which he also mentioned her poetry and painting:

66 There is quite strong indirect evidence that the Rowlands may have separated around 1904-5. In April or May 1903 the Rowlands (or at least the females) moved out to Bray, further down the Irish east coast but which was connected to Dublin city by railway.
67 *FLS*, 27-28, p.4. The main patron was named as Mr E. J. Winter-Wood, of Paignton.
68 William Henry Stanley Monck (1839-1915) was at one time Professor of Moral Philosophy at Trinity College Dublin.
69 *FLS*, 51, p.4.
70 *BCM*, xxxiv (November 1914), p. 396.

> Mrs Rowland has survived several serious vicissitudes, and has bravely championed the culture of chess for about thirty years... The result of Mrs Rowland's career is a long roll of recruits.

When war broke out in August 1914, the *Weekly Irish Times* reduced in size and discontinued many regular features, including chess, this time permanently. Frideswide now only retained her column in the *Cork Weekly News*, which had replaced a syndicated English feature in 1907, carrying a lively mix of Cork, national and international news. She wrote a letter to the American collector John G. White to explain how the Cork editor helped to continue her competitions and news service to subscribers:

> The "Four-Leaved Shamrock" is extinct - but the Editor is carrying on the same tourneys in the "Cork Weekly News" and also publishes Irish chess & international news. She sends the chess slips to all her "Four-Leaved Shamrock" subscribers & they are so pleased that they renew their subscriptions. These are not "proof sheets" but specially printed for the FLS subscribers, and are just as interesting as the "Four-Leaved Shamrock". This same chess is also published weekly in the pages of the "Cork Weekly News". The subscription to the weekly paper is 6/8 per year sent weekly - but the chess slips - that are sent in a batch monthly - are only 2/6 per head. FF Rowland May 29.[71]

The last of Mrs Rowland's Cork columns appeared in April 1916. The evidence suggests that health problems were the reason she stopped. She died at home on 25 February 1919, when the flu pandemic was at its height.[72] One obituary stated that:

> Though latterly a great invalid and entirely confined to her chair, Mrs Rowland retained her love of chess to the last, and carried on correspondence games until failing sight made it impossible for her to distinguish the pieces.[73]

Thomas continued the chess work for another decade, with a column in the *Evening Herald*. He was organising an Ireland-USA postal chess match when ill health forced him to stop, shortly before his death on 13 August 1929.[74]

The decades when Mrs Rowland flourished saw chess reaching a level of popularity it never regained in Ireland or Britain until the 1972 Fischer-Spassky world championship match. In 1893, the German chess master Professor Berger calculated that the U.K. had:

71 Frideswide Fanny. Rowland to White, (Cleveland, Public Library, White Collection, OCLC48887767). The author acknowledges the help of J. Ken MacDonald of Toronto in obtaining a copy of this letter.
72 *Irish Times*, 26 February 1919, Her death certificate gave the cause as 'debility cardiac failure.'
73 *BCM*, xxxix (March 1919), p. 113.
74 The author acknowledges the help of David McAlister and Tim Conlan.

130 columns and magazines devoted to chess, 31 chess associations and 581 chess clubs, which is more than double the number reported for the United States, Russia, Germany, France and all other countries combined.[75]

Of these, nine chess columns and about thirty of the clubs were Irish. The readership of the chess columns, and so the numbers of people involved in chess activities, was far more extensive than club membership figures might imply. The game was played informally in Dublin city centre restaurants.[76] Chess played a binding role in society; attracting well-educated people, while being non-political and non-sectarian. The Irish Chess Union, formed in 1912, became a founder member of the international chess federation, FIDE, in 1924 and the game has always been organised on an all-island basis. Mrs Rowland's example and writings inspired other women. Mrs Baird[77] from Devon was one of the leading chess problem composers in the late Victorian era, and Miss Kate Finn[78] from Cork won the first and second British Ladies Chess Championships in 1904-5 and after that took first prize in two women's tournaments in Ostend. To sum up, Frideswide's long career contributed to the development of chess culture and created a loyal community of readers and players on both sides of the Irish Sea. By the time of her effective retirement in 1914, she had truly earned the title of Ireland's Queen of Chess.

[75] *English Mechanic*, lvii (July 1893), p. 481.

[76] Mrs Rowland reported in the *Weekly Irish Times* of 14 February 1903 that 'Chess is very popular in Dublin just now, and the luncheon hour at the DBC [Dublin Bakery Company], Dame street, is the favoured time to play there, whilst at the DBC in Sackville street, Lower, the rooms are quite full each evening up to 10pm.' In the Lestrygonians episode of *Ulysses*, which is set in 1904, James Joyce mentions John Howard Parnell playing chess and depicts him doing so at the DBC in the Wandering Rocks episode.

[77] Mrs William James Baird, née Edith Winter Wood (1859-1924), was the daughter of E. J. Winter Wood. She was probably the first woman to be considered in the first rank of composers.

[78] Kate Belinda Finn (1870-1932), was mentioned as a successful problem solver in the *Evening Mail*, 9 February 1893.

Borstal boys: the institution at Clonmel, 1906-1914

Conor Reidy

Throughout the nineteenth century the judicial system in Ireland and England faced an ongoing crisis in the treatment of juvenile offenders. The imprisonment of children in the same environment as adult convicts had long been deemed morally and practically undesirable. The problem was alleviated to some extent by the introduction of the reformatory school system in 1858 and industrial schools a decade later. By 1880 however, there were still over one thousand children in Irish prisons; approximately one hundred and fifty were under twelve years old.[1] The extension of the borstal system to Ireland in 1906 marked a revolutionary new phase in the treatment of young offenders. Despite the renewed focus on the issue of the incarceration of children in adult prisons from the late nineteenth century onwards, there has been limited historical research on the area of juvenile crime in Ireland. In those studies that do examine the problem, the Irish borstal institution at Clonmel in county Tipperary is largely neglected, despite it being the first and for fifty years, the only such establishment in what is now the Republic of Ireland.[2]

This paper, in broadly assessing the nineteenth century responses to the problem of juvenile offenders, focuses primarily on the foundation of the borstal institution in Clonmel from 1906 to 1914. It provides a broad assessment of the nineteenth century responses to the problem of juvenile offenders in Ireland and gives an account of the circumstances that led to the foundation of the borstal system. The role of Clonmel borstal as a national institution is reflected in an examination of the inmate population, which was comprised of boys from all parts of the country. Using the register of inmates for the institution, the paper goes on to present an analysis of the previous occupations, offences, religious background and educational achievement of the boys. This builds a profile of the typical borstal inmate and provides an insight into the conditions that tended to give rise to juvenile crime in early twentieth century Ireland. This paper will

[1] S. J. Connolly, The *Oxford companion to Irish history* (Oxford, 1998), p. 477.

[2] In Nial Osborough, *Borstal In Ireland: Custodial provision for the young adult offender, 1906-1974* (Dublin, 1975).

then, insofar as is possible, examine the lives of the inmates during their borstal incarceration. It takes account of factors that were beyond their control but sometimes ensured that their lives at the Clonmel institution were not always in line with the intended purpose of the system. The paper also incorporates an account of the work and problems faced by the main aftercare body charged with assisting discharged borstal inmates with their adjustment to life outside the institution.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Ireland was in the midst of an ongoing transformation. The population decline of the late nineteenth century had decelerated. It was a period of great change in education with a steady increase in the numbers attending school. Agriculture remained the dominant occupation but the declining population brought about a move away from human labour towards a reliance on horsepower. Machinery was more widely used and creameries and co-operatives replaced traditional production methods. Indeed Ireland's economic focus generally shifted away from those traditional methods of production and embraced a more commercially driven approach. This resulted in an improvement in living standards but it did leave the Irish economy in a weak position in the face of changes in the wider global market, where Ireland was not a significant player.[3] A large number of males were occupied as labourers in the late nineteenth century and many of those were engaged in farm work, but wages for these positions remained substantially lower than in England or Scotland.[4] Poverty remained a serious obstruction to societal development in early twentieth century Ireland. A long-standing consequence of social deprivation was the persistence of juvenile crime in the face of repeated attempts by the penal authorities in Ireland and England, to take control of the problem.

One of the most serious problems faced by these authorities in England and Ireland was the question of how to punish young offenders. The introduction of reformatories in 1858 represented a significant state intervention in the juvenile penal system. The reformatory was the place of detention for children between the ages of twelve and sixteen years who had been convicted of an offence. The system was undoubtedly a worthy alternative to prison, a place where the inmates could receive

[3] Sean Duffy, *Atlas of Irish history* (Dublin, 2000), p. 104.
[4] Mary E. Daly, *Social and economic history of Ireland since 1800* (Dublin, 1981), p. 104.

education and training in a way that had not previously been possible within the penal system. By 1911 there were five reformatories in Ireland with a total population of 668 inmates.[5]

A substantial portion of Irish children remained outside this new juvenile penal system however and by 1868 another type of institution was conceived. The industrial school was a place of protection for children under the age of fourteen years who were not criminals but were part of a criminal underworld. Such individuals were seen as being at risk, as were orphans, beggars and homeless children. Industrial schools provided an outlet for the philanthropic activities of the Catholic Church and serviced a very definite need in society. The 1911 census recorded sixty-six industrial schools in Ireland with a population of 8,709 inmates.[6] To further consolidate these changes, the Children Act of 1908 brought a formal end to the imprisonment of persons under the age of fourteen years. This legislation was aimed at the judiciary who had been widely criticised by philanthropic groups among others, for the practice of repeatedly sending children to adult prisons for short periods.[7]

By the end of the nineteenth century, penal policy makers had come to recognise the incontrovertible reality that a fresh approach was needed to the now immovable problem of juvenile crime. A new system for treating juvenile males was first considered by an inter-departmental committee on prison administration in 1895. Its three principal findings were stark and reinforced the argument for change. Firstly, in the preceding year, 16,000 custodial sentences had been handed down to those under twenty-one years of age. Secondly, following such a sentence, a typical male had deteriorated in 'character and disposition'. Finally and most significantly, the committee found that felonious tendencies emerged between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one years.[8] These facts would become central to the process that shaped a new form of institution that had its roots in an earlier penal innovation.

In 1854 a new Irish convict prisons board was set up with Sir Walter Crofton as its chairman. Under Crofton, it developed a 'progressive stage' system. A typical

[5] *Census of Ireland*, 1911.
[6] *Census of Ireland*, 1911.
[7] Osborough, *Borstal in Ireland*, p. 3.
[8] R. R. Cherry, 'Juvenile crime and its prevention' in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, 12 (1907-1912), p. 439.

sentence combined four stages: solitary confinement, hard labour, training and release on licence.[9] It was the intermediate or third stage that gained the most attention and was the inspiration for the Elmira Reformatory in New York State in 1876. This institution offered a new kind of prison regime to individuals between the ages of sixteen and thirty years. It was the prelude to a new phase of innovation in the treatment of the juvenile offender as it sought to individualise each boy and subject him to a programme of reform that was not possible in other institutions.

In 1897, the Prison Commissioner, Sir Evelyn Ruggles-Brise, visited the Elmira Reformatory. He was seeking confirmation on certain aspects of that system in order to advance plans to create a new type of institution in England. The Gladstone Committee had recommended the foundation of such an institution and this was implemented in 1900 when eight young men were moved to a prison at Bedford and isolated from the adult prisoners.[10] A year later, just outside a village in Kent, part of a local prison was exclusively dedicated to the accommodation of males aged sixteen to twenty-one years old. The name of that village was Borstal and so began a new force in juvenile penal treatment that would survive and dominate that field for the greater part of the twentieth century.

Unlike any previous initiative, the borstal would focus on the problems and needs of the offender. Only those who had developed criminal tendencies or had kept company 'with persons of bad character' would be admitted.[11] Prison and judicial authorities carefully examined each individual in order to determine an appropriate programme of rehabilitation and correction 'calculated to turn him into a useful member of society.'[12] The objective therefore was to take a young corrupt offender out of society and reverse his apparent downward spiral. Such was its success in England that it was decided to extend the system to Ireland.

Ireland's borstal experiment began without any fanfare in the 'number two' prison at the county gaol in Clonmel, in May 1906. The building had previously functioned as a

[9] Connolly, *The Oxford companion to Irish history*, p. 463.
[10] Osborough, *Borstal in Ireland*, pp. 3-4.
[11] Cherry, 'Juvenile crime and its prevention', p. 440.
[12] Cherry, 'Juvenile crime and its prevention', p. 439.

female prison.[13] Between May 1906 and March 1907, eighteen boys were transferred to Clonmel from adult prisons in all parts of Ireland, including major urban centres such as Dublin and Belfast.[14] Prior to the arrival of the first inmates, a schoolroom, a recreation room and a carpenter's shop were provided, as well as accommodation for fifty-four boys.[15] In keeping with the philosophy of the founders of the system, juveniles and adults were held in complete separation.

Prior to the arrival of the borstal in Clonmel, the town was home to an array of different penal institutions for various of categories of offenders. In the early nineteenth century it had a house of correction, a sheriff's gaol, a marshalsea for debtors, a house of industry (or workhouse) and a county gaol.[16] The original county gaol was built in the late seventeenth century. It was reputedly the strongest prison in Ireland at the time.[17] The prison subsequently encountered a number of problems including overcrowding, disease and repeated successful attempts at escape.[18] The building encompassed forty-two large single cells, 198 smaller cells, twelve solitary cells, thirteen day rooms, sixteen work rooms and twenty-four yards. It was capable of housing around 340 prisoners at one time. An 1828 report from the inspectors-general of prisons in Ireland criticised the inadequacy of the county gaol and by 1830, change was underway which led to the reconstruction of the complex by 1835. This change, coupled with the introduction of the district asylum in 1834, saw the reversal of certain categories including criminals and lunatics from the gaol, leaving mostly the poor, infirm and orphans.[19] In 1906 a portion of the county gaol was selected as the site of Ireland's first borstal institution. By August 1910, in a move indicative of an early success of the experiment in Ireland, all of the adult prisoners were transferred to other places of detention and the whole of Clonmel county gaol was reconstituted as a borstal institution.[20]

The rededication of the gaol as a borstal in August 1910 marked a new era in Irish penal history. The highest proportion of inmates by far came from the major cities of

[13] *The Nationalist*, 11 April 1906.
[14] Osborough, *Borstal in Ireland*, p. 7.
[15] Osborough, *Borstal in Ireland*, p. 10.
[16] Donal A. Murphy, *The two Tipperarys* (Nenagh, 1994), p. 137.
[17] See William P. Burke, *The history of Clonmel* (Waterford, 1983).
[18] Burke, *The history of Clonmel*, p. 171.
[19] Murphy, *The two Tipperarys*, p.137.
[20] Osborough, *Borstal in Ireland*, p. 11.

Dublin and Belfast. Between August 1910 and December 1914 235 inmates were committed. This five-year period saw sixty-nine juvenile male adults with Dublin as their last recorded residence enter the borstal.[21] This was by far the highest number of inmates from a single county. Antrim contributed the second highest number with fifty-nine. The census of 1911 reported a population of three hundred and ninety thousand in Dublin and four hundred and eighty thousand in Belfast.[22] It is clear, therefore, that the borstal register reflected the national population and from this, a number of conclusions may be drawn.

Not surprisingly, inmates were more likely to emerge from cities because of increased opportunities for the type of criminal acts in which they were usually engaged. While juvenile crime was not an exclusively urban phenomenon, these figures gave weight to the argument that discharged borstal inmates, particularly those from city areas, should be encouraged not to return to the original breeding ground of their criminal habits. The Borstal Association particularly advocated the country life, claiming that proper agricultural training would transform a 'city cornerboy' into a decent farm labourer.[23] Eleven inmates from Cork entered during these years. Cork city had a population of seventy-six thousand in 1911 and was the third largest urban centre in Ireland, a fact reflected in the borstal population.[24] Louth and Tipperary each had ten young men incarcerated in Clonmel. Londonderry and Down followed with seven and six inmates respectively. Counties of the west and midlands were among those with the lowest numbers of inmates. Galway, Mayo, Sligo, Monaghan, Longford, Roscommon and Queen's County were among those contributing just one inmate between 1910 and 1914.[25] Twelve borstal inmates gave their last address as 'no fixed' abode. A final category includes inmates from a variety of backgrounds including an industrial school, a reformatory and the military. There were just four inmates in this category.[26]

[21] Prison register (National Archives of Ireland, [herein NAI], Clonmel prison and borstal institution 1903-1928, 1/7/14).
[22] *Census of Ireland*, 1911.
[23] The Borstal Association of Ireland, [herein BAI], (NAI, Clonmel Borstal Memoranda, 1908-30, third annual report 1912–13).
[24] *Census of Ireland*, 1911.
[25] Prison register, (NAI, Clonmel prison and borstal institution, 1903-1928, 1/7/14).
[26] Prison register, (NAI, Clonmel prison and borstal institution, 1903-1928, 1/7/14).

The most common previous occupation of a borstal boy was that of labourer. This position was held by 117 of the boys, requiring only a low level of skill and providing some of the lowest wages. There were thirty-one messengers or message boys, a position that also required little skill. Newsvendors or newsboys accounted for fourteen inmates.[27]. Based on this information it seems more likely that there was a higher inclination for juvenile crime among those in low-paid and unskilled occupations. Only two occupations that could be described as requiring skill are included in the most popular careers of the boys. Six inmates each were employed as painters and shoemakers. There are many random single entry occupations in the borstal register, some were skilled though most were likely to have been low paid. A number of boys had worked in service industry occupations such as a grocer's assistant, pantry boy or draper's assistant.[28] Such jobs would also have been better paid but it would be reasonable to question the validity of an entry that records a seventeen year-old boy as a watchmaker. It is more likely that many of these boys may have been apprentices or assistants, rather than fully and qualified practitioners of their craft. Just one inmate is registered as having worked as a farmer. It is the only entry that bears a stated connection to agriculture but it can be taken that many of those employed as labourers, did so on a farm. Two inmates worked as 'heater boy in shipyard'. Another was a 'catch boy in a shipyard', all three were from Belfast.[29] Detention was usually the result of a series of crimes, rather than a single offence.

Larceny was by far the most common reason for borstal detention, with 171 convictions in Clonmel. The number convicted was almost three times greater than the second most common offence. Forty-four of the inmates at Clonmel received convictions for breaking and entering. This was followed by the similar crime of housebreaking for which twenty-four boys were incarcerated.[30] A likely distinction between both of these crimes is that those convicted of breaking and entering probably violated premises of a commercial rather than domestic nature. Fourteen inmates committed the crime of

[27] Prison register, (NAI, Clonmel prison and borstal institution, 1903-1928, 1/7/14).
[28] Prison register, (NAI, Clonmel prison and borstal institution, 1903-1928, 1/7/14).
[29] Prison register, (NAI, Clonmel prison and borstal institution 1903-1928, 1/7/14).
[30] Prison register, (NAI, Clonmel prison and borstal institution 1903-1928, 1/7/14).

receiving stolen goods. Offences of a sexual nature were perpetrated by eight of the boys.[31]

Apart from allowing a detailed analysis of the geography, professions and offences of the borstal population, the prison register also revealed further evidence of the backgrounds in which the boys had been moulded into juvenile offenders. One column on the register documented the name and address of the next of kin of each inmate. In almost every case, that person is a parent, grandparent, sibling, aunt or uncle. In several instances, the name is given but the address is listed as 'no fixed' abode. Sixteen-year-old P. C. seems to have come from a particularly disadvantaged family background. His previous residence was recorded as Trim industrial school, while his mother was listed as being under the care of Drogheda union. A similar situation existed for seventeen-year-old P. T. His next-of-kin was his brother, also a resident of Trim industrial school. With evidence such as this, the presence of these young men in the borstal is more easily explained. The register of inmates contained several such entries over the period.

The overwhelming majority of inmates were Roman Catholic with no more than two inmates from any other faith committed in a single year.[32] The only religious group other than Catholic to be represented was Presbyterian. These figures are not necessarily reflective of any class division between Catholics and other religious. Instead they point to the fact that Catholics in Ireland far outnumbered those from the other Churches and so this was reflected in the borstal population. In 1881 for example, 89.5 per cent of the Irish population was Catholic with the Protestant groups and a modest number of Jews making up the remainder.[33] The education of the boys was a crucial issue for those who designed the system. Writing in 1911, the Attorney-General, Lord Justice Cherry, commended the borstal for its success in educating the inmates. He claimed that most of the boys were committed with extremely poor literacy levels but many left with at least the ability to write a letter.[34] There was an efficient schoolmaster who taught boys up to the third standard of the National Board of Education. In 1913 the Borstal Association reported

[31] While this is not a high figure it is comparatively greater than more mainstream offences.
[32] Prison register, (NAI, Clonmel prison and borstal institution 1903-1928, 1/7/14).
[33] Ruth Dudley Edwards, *An atlas of Irish history* (London, 1973), p. 132.
[34] Cherry, 'Juvenile crime and its prevention', p. 444.

that large, well-ventilated new schoolrooms had been added to the Clonmel complex.[35] If they were deemed suitable the boys could avail of training in a range of areas including carpentry, gardening, tailoring and shoemaking. There was also a library where inmates could enjoy books selected by the Chaplain or Visiting Justices.[36] A 1911 memorandum from the General Prisons Board to the Governor directed that special grade boys should be provided with copies of *Illustrated London News*, *Chambers Journal* and *Strand Magazine*.[37]

The daily regime was designed to bring order and discipline into the lives of its previously obstreperous young subjects. Inmates were divided into three categories or grades, penal, ordinary and special. New inmates entered at ordinary grade and moved up or down according to their conduct. The penal grade was harsh, intended to be punitive towards disruptive inmates. Boys of exceptionally good behaviour and diligence found themselves in the more tolerable conditions of the special grade. The inmates of Clonmel borstal had an early start to their day, rising at 6.30 am. Breakfast was served at 7.50 am and the various work or educational activities took place from 9.30 am to 12.20 pm. Inmates returned to their work from 2 pm to 4.30 pm. Boys in the ordinary grade were locked in for the night at 6.30 pm. Those in the special grade enjoyed an additional hour of recreation and were locked in at 7.30 pm.[38] There was some variation to this routine at weekends but even this did not reduce the grim reality of the borstal day. Though the routine was often severe and generally repetitive, it did contain most of the essential elements of the new penal reformatory that was envisaged by Ruggles-Brise and the inter-departmental committee on prisons over a decade earlier.

Aspects of borstal life often involved physical exertion and it was important that inmates were provided with the essential dietary requirements in order to meet these needs. Breakfast consisted of one and a half pints of stirabout and one pint of new milk. Stirabout contained a mixture of oatmeal and Indian meal. The dinner menu varied slightly each day though it always included four ounces of beef. This was accompanied on Wednesdays, Sundays and Thursdays, for example, by sixteen ounces of potatoes,

[35] The Borstal Association of Ireland, third annual report 1912-1913, (NAI, Clonmel borstal memoranda, 1908-30).
[36] Cherry, 'Juvenile crime and its prevention', p. 444.
[37] Supply of Periodicals 1908-30, (NAI, Clonmel borstal memoranda).
[38] Osborough, *Borstal in Ireland*, p. 64.

Bread and soup were also a regular feature. Supper was served daily at 4.30pm and entailed ten ounces of bread and one pint of cocoa. Boys in the special grade experienced certain privileges on Sundays and Thursdays when they were allowed two ounces of golden syrup or jam with their supper. All the inmates received a half pint of milk with biscuit at lockup time.[39]

There was limited opportunity for outdoor recreational activity, due to lack of space.[40] In fact the only potential scope for such activity came in the form of a small plot of ground, unsuitable as an exercise or games area because it was covered in dust during the summer and mud in winter.[41] The development of indoor pursuits progressed at Clonmel and provided the inmates with welcome relief from the banality of their daily routine.[42] The fourth annual report of the main aftercare body, the BAI, outlined a number of events that had been organised for inmates during the previous year. Mr Randall K. Moore, a visiting justice, gave a lecture on 'his travels in far-off lands,' while his wife accompanied him with songs and music on a piano. A visiting justice of Belfast prison, Mr W. H. McLaughlin, gave the inmates an oral and visual presentation on his visit to South Africa. Lectures were also given by Mr F. E. Hackett of the Royal College of Science on 'Electricity', Prof Carpenter of the Zoological Gardens on 'Animal Life' and Dr P. J. McGinnis on 'Anatomy'.[43] Despite being enriched in these different ways, the problem remained that the boys were not getting adequate exposure to the one area that would most benefit them on leaving the institution, appropriate training.

The members of the BAI took up the issue of relevant practical training in their third annual report. While there were a large number of enquiries from potential employers of discharged inmates, the lack of agricultural training was a constant impediment to future employment. The association argued that the type of training received at Clonmel, such as carpentry or tailoring, would be of minimal use to the boys once they had left the institution. The report was unrelenting in its criticism of what the board believed had become a major shortfall in the system at Clonmel. It highlighted a

[39] Dietary for male inmates of borstal institutions 1913, (NAI, Clonmel borstal memoranda, 1908-30).
[40] Osborough, *Borstal in Ireland*, p. 16.
[41] Edward Fahy, 'The boy criminal' in *The Bell*, i, 3 (1940), p. 47
[42] Osborough, *Borstal in Ireland*, p. 15.
[43] The BAI fourth annual report, 1913-1914, (NAI, Clonmel borstal memoranda, 1908-30).

communication to the Chief Secretary of Ireland advocating the purchase of a 160-statute acre farm that had recently come on the market in the Clonmel area. The Association went on to spell out the benefits of such training. Such activity, claimed the report, would be particularly advantageous for inmates from large urban centres. Proper training in farm work would lead them into well-paid employment and provide an incentive not to return to the negative influences of their previous lives in the city.[44] These concerns not only serve to highlight the proactive role of the Association but draw attention to the fact that even by 1914, the institution at Clonmel remained under-resourced and physically unsuitable for its purpose. It was often only through the work of the BAI that the institution managed to thrive in the manner that it did.

The first borstal association originated as the London prison visitors' association, founded by prison commissioner Ruggles-Brise in 1901. The new body was primarily concerned with the adult convict prisons at Pentonville, Wandsworth and Wormwood Scrubs. However it was 'also charged with giving special attention' to the juvenile male adults at England's two experimental penal reformatories at Bedford, and later, Borstal. As this organisation evolved its name was changed to the Borstal Association in 1904.[45] Initially, the Association was solely a philanthropic body without power to impose conditions or restrictions on its subjects. It received official sanction with the passing of the Prevention of Crime Act in 1908, which allowed it a more authoritative role. By the time the borstal system arrived in 1906, the principles that would govern a similar aftercare body for in Ireland had already been firmly established.

The BAI began life as the Clonmel discharged prisoners' aid society at a meeting in the town on 18 May 1906. The first chairman was the noted barrister and historian Richard Bagwell DL, with Lord Donoughmore elected vice-chairman. Other founders included local magistrates, merchants, clergy and professionals.[46] Bagwell expressed a sense of guilt about the absence of such an organisation in the town already.[47] The establishment of the borstal presented both an opportunity and a challenge to the newly created discharged prisoner's aid society. The opportunity was open to create an

[44] The BAI fourth annual report, 1913-1914, (NAI, Clonmel borstal memoranda, 1908-30).
[45] Roger Hood, *Borstal reassessed* (London, 1965), pp. 162-163.
[46] Osborough, *Borstal in Ireland*, pp. 19-20.
[47] *The Nationalist*, 19 May 1906.

organisation through which these noteworthy individuals could channel their philanthropic energies. The challenge lay in the fact that the borstal was new to Ireland and the Society, like the General Prisons Board, needed to embrace an idea that had never been tried before. The General Prisons Board created the rules of this new system.

The Prevention of Crime Act 1908 gave legislative standing to aftercare bodies such as the BAI, thus paving the way for financial support from the Treasury.[48] However, for its day-to-day operations it was dependent on the charity of ordinary individuals.[49] The annual reports of the BAI named the various contributors and gave an account of their donation. The problem faced by the BAI in Clonmel was the fact of its dependence on local financial support at a time when it served a national purpose. Boys from many parts of the country populated the borstal yet their aftercare was almost exclusively facilitated by the philanthropic endeavours of the community in the locality.[50] Members of the BAI repeatedly expressed their discontent with this situation and indeed it became a somewhat controversial issue. The Clonmel based *Nationalist* took up the case, criticising the local authorities and philanthropic groups, particularly those of Dublin and Belfast for their indifference towards the work of the BAI. An editorial in *The Irish Times* in July 1910 highlighted the work of the BAI and pointed out that 'those who really desire to help the poor when they most need it could not do better than support the work of the association'.[51] It was a clear endorsement for an organisation, which, as Osborough implied, battled to stay in existence in the early years.[52] The second annual report of the BAI gave some insight into the importance of charitable contributions. An increase in donations during the year 1911-12 allowed the Association to provide a wider degree of support to discharged inmates. For example, a £50 donation from Pembroke Irish Charities Fund or £10 from Lord Iveagh allowed for the purchase of better clothing and footwear for the boys as they went into employment.[53]

It is not possible to establish with certainty the extent to which the BAI influenced the day-to-day work of the institution at Clonmel. While the annual reports illustrated an

[48] Cherry, 'Juvenile crime and its prevention', p. 446.
[49] Osborough, *Borstal in Ireland*, p. 21.
[50] Cherry, 'Juvenile crime and its prevention', p. 446.
[51] *Irish Times*, 29 July 1910.
[52] Osborough, *Borstal in Ireland*, p. 21.
[53] BAI second annual report, (NAI, Clonmel borstal memoranda, 1908-32).

acute awareness of the borstal and its operation, it seems there was limited 'hands-on' activity by the Association members on a daily basis. There was at least one documented occasion when a small gesture by the committee directly impinged on the lives of the inmates. During the winter of 1913 to 1914 the association provided a gramophone 'which helped to relieve the tedium of confinement in the long winter evenings'.[54] Committee members visited the borstal on an ongoing basis to familiarise themselves with inmates being prepared for discharge on licence. The association was most concerned with influencing borstal policy. Its reports contained critiques on a number of issues including sentencing policy, training of inmates and family life. It is likely that because of its unique position as an independent body, with a strong connection to the inmates, the association felt qualified to speak on such matters. In this respect it acted almost as an advisory body, both to the government and the judiciary.

The discharge of inmates was a joint undertaking between the institution board and the BAI. During the first week of every month, the board met to compile a list of those inmates 'who are expected to be fit for release on licence during the next month but two'. For example, the board would meet in February to select inmates for discharge in May. A form for each inmate was forwarded to the BAI, which upon receipt, began a process of visiting the homes and family members of inmates, as well as their previous employers. Towards the end of the first month the officers of the institution forwarded their opinions to the association. On the second Tuesday of the second month members of the association visited the inmate. On the third Tuesday of the following month the Association presented its report to the visiting committee of the General Prisons Board who examined 'the inmate as to his adherence to the arrangements proposed'. The committee passed on its recommendations to the commissioners for a final decision.[55] If the boy was recommended for release on licence he was discharged to the care of the BAI.

While an accurate statistical survey of discharged inmates is not possible, an examination of the annual reports of the BAI does provide some account of the success rate or otherwise of the system. The Association's assessment appeared to be largely

[54] BAI forth annual report, (NAI, Clonmel borstal memoranda, 1908-32).
[55] Memorandum from borstal association, London, to Governer at Clonmel borstal institution: Method used at borstal, January 1910, (NAI, Clonmel borstal memoranda, 1908-32).

based on information received from employers. For the year ending May 1912, forty-six out of fifty-four boys discharged were deemed to be 'doing well'.[56] A year later it was reported that seventy-seven boys had been released on licence and favourable reports had been received from sixty of their employers.[57] In its 1914 annual report the Association gave an overall assessment of the progress of former borstal inmates released since the passing of the Prevention of Crime Act (1908). During that time, 387 boys were held at Clonmel. Of that number, 229 were subsequently handed over to the care of the Association, which located employment for the 'vast majority'. The report claimed that seventy-three per cent were known to be 'doing well', most working with farmers as untrained labourers.[58] Part of the problem of information gathering was that beyond the period of a boy's licence, the association had no legal grounds on which to investigate his circumstances. In most cases, this depended on the goodwill of an employer to furnish such information. Several examples of such successes were outlined in the reports.

The association did not completely ignore the fact that the system inevitably produced a certain number of failures each year. In its 1912 to 1913 report, it surveyed the progress of discharged inmates over the previous three years. Out of 154 boys, seven could not be traced but had not been reported for breaking the law. Twenty-two boys had either been sent to prison or returned to borstal while thirty were deemed unsatisfactory. Finally, twenty-two discharged inmates from this period were deemed 'absolute failures'.[59] Nothing is known of these individuals, making it impossible to ascertain why they did not respond favourably to borstal treatment.

The institution at Clonmel was a success during its formative years. Success was measured by the ability of the institution to effectively face the challenge of reforming its inmates before they matured into the next generation of hardened criminals. The previous century had seen a disorganised and ineffectual system of dealing with criminal and wayward behaviour in young people, but by the 1900s a number of important steps had been taken towards redressing the problem. One of the great innovations in this process was the foundation of the borstal institution in Kent in England in 1901. The system was

[56] BAI, second annual report, 1911-1912, (NAI, Clonmel borstal memoranda, 1908-32).
[57] BAI, third annual report, 1912-1913, (NAI, Clonmel borstal memoranda, 1908-32).
[58] BAI, fourth annual report, 1913-1914, (NAI, Clonmel borstal memoranda, 1908-32).
[59] BAI, third annual report, 1912-1913, (NAI, Clonmel borstal memoranda, 1908-32).

extended to Ireland in 1906 with the conversion of a section of the county gaol at Clonmel. By 1910 that convict prison had become a key weapon in a new fight against juvenile crime, when it was transformed into the sole borstal institution in the country. Many of those inmates who found themselves in Clonmel had come from troubled environments with limited opportunities and no hope of economic or social advancement. They found themselves there for a vast array of reasons but the one thing they all had in common was that their criminal inclinations were already well developed and all had previously offended. At Clonmel they were subjected to a harsh and unattractive daily regime devised with the intention of turning recalcitrant and morally corrupt boys into virtuous and upright citizens. The borstal at Clonmel was not without its problems and its critics. Yet, it must be argued that this was a new system and was a breakthrough. These criticisms should be weighed up against the fact that nothing of this nature had ever been tried in Ireland before. Never before had an institution concentrated with such resolve on the individual. Arguably one of the merits of the borstal system was the extent to which it continued to intervene in the life of its subject in those crucial months after he left the institution.

Despite the countrywide reach of its activities, the BAI was almost completely dependent on local patronage. Notwithstanding such restrictions, it resolved to play an active role not only in securing employment and accommodation for those in its care, but also in lobbying government for improvements to the system. Owing to the fact that those released on licence were subjected to a return to the borstal at any time if they transgressed and were subsequently deemed to be in default of their terms, the progress of discharged inmates appears to have been quite positive. It should be noted however, that the Association placed a strong emphasis on the successful outcomes of borstal treatment with little reference to its failures. While the borstal institution in Clonmel was small in scale and sometimes imperfect in nature, it can be argued that this courageous penal innovation represented a silent revolution in the treatment of the juvenile offender.

The politics of the *New Way*, 'a modern paper for modern methods', 1917-1919

Conor McCabe

The *New Way*, a monthly journal for Irish railway workers, was first published in March 1917, and arrived with a comprehensive industrial and social agenda. It ran until September 1919, when it changed its name to *Irish Railway Review*. It was mainly, though not exclusively, the journal of the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) in Ireland. From 1917 to 1919, the NUR was one of the most radical and forward-thinking labour organisations working in Ireland, and until the rise of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU) in 1918 the railwaymen were the 'van of progress' in Irish labour.[1] That radicalism did not come from head office, but from the rank and file membership, who not only established the *New Way*, but also lobbied successfully for an autonomous Irish NUR council. This form of home rule within the NUR was one element of the ideological template put forward by the *New Way*; its other strands were industrial unionism and guild socialism, both of which were slightly more moderate forms of syndicalism. The *New Way* envisaged an Ireland of mutual respect between employer and employee, a common goal through nationalisation of the railways, and one that placed the railwaymen at the heart of the improvement of the lot of all the citizens of Ireland, 'not in antagonism to, but in hearty co-operation with all the interests affected'.[2] In 1917, for the editors and contributors to the *New Way*, the idea of an employee-oriented Ireland was far from impossible.

In historical terms, the significance of the *New Way* lies in the fact that it offered an alternative view of trade union and labour activism in Ireland to that of the more dominant ITGWU and its journal *Voice of Labour / Watchword of Labour*. At the heart of the ITGWU's analysis was the belief that only Irish unions could look after the interests of Irish workers, and as such the NUR, as a British-based union, was seen by the ITGWU leadership and the *Voice of Labour* in reactionary terms. The ITGWU also vied with the

[1] Emmet O'Connor, *A labour history of Ireland, 1824-1960* (Dublin, 1998), p. 96.
[2] *New Way*, March 1917.

NUR for membership among the railwaymen, a situation that developed into direct confrontation in the years 1921-23. The *Voice of Labour*, because of its background, put forward a one-sided and derogatory view of the NUR in Ireland, one to which the *New Way* offered a retort. In more general terms, a substantial proportion of our view of labour activity during this period has come from ITGWU sources. The existence of the *New Way* helps to address that situation, in that it adds another voice to the archives.

The journal's editor was Robert Leonard Wigzell, an Englishman who arrived in Ireland in 1913 to take up position as a clerk in the NUR Irish office on Dublin's Abbey Street. Wigzell was an English railwayman and joined the Maze Hill (London) Branch of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (ASRS) in 1906. Prior to his assignment to Dublin, Wigzell worked at the Head Office of the NUR, in Unity House, London. In 1913 he approached the union General Secretary, Mr J. E. Williams, about a vacancy that had arisen at the Dublin office and expressed a desire to be transferred.[3] Wigzell's request was granted and his arrival coincided with the labour troubles of that year, in which he played a minor role.

In December 1913 the NUR Executive Committee discussed a resolution from the Westland Row (Dublin) branch that called for the withdrawal of Wigzell from Ireland 'on account of his actions in connection with the transport workers dispute'.[4] This was linked to a move by members of the *Daily Herald League* to have children of men involved in the lock-out placed with foster families in England until the dispute ended. The idea was to help allieviate distress caused by the dispute, but was seized upon by Catholic organisations and the clergy as an attempt by the *League* to proselytise. Wigzell was involved in the *League*, and by extension in the foster family programme, a role that had the support of the North Wall (Dublin) NUR branch, as well as the NUR Executive who expressed their

> astonishment and disgust at the fact that any of our members [the Westland Row branch] should oppose arrangements made to relieve the families of strikers. We highly appreciate the action of Wigzell in assisting to arrange that children should not go hungry, and emphatically decline to accede to their request.[5]

[3] Untitled NUR papers document (Modern Records Centre [herein MRC], NUR Papers, mss 127/NU/1/1/1).
[4] Executive committee decisions, 1-7 December 1913 (MRC, NUR Papers, mss 127/NU/1/1/1).
[5] Executive committee decisions, 1-7 December 1913, resolution 110 (MRC, NUR Papers, mss 127/NU/1/1/1).

Wigzell was to remain a controversial figure, and found himself recalled to Head Office in December 1917 after a series of attacks on the union leadership and its approach to Irish matters, particularly the setting up of the Irish Council, the administration of the Dublin office, and the leadership's refusal to appoint him to the vacant position of Irish organiser. Wigzell was an 'inconveniently independent spirit'[6] and had made quite an impression, and more than one friend, during his stay in Dublin, where he was 'a well-known man in…Trades' Union circles'.[7]

Apart from its obvious labour/trade union credentials the *New Way* was also produced in collaboration with the main promoter of tourism in Ireland and a company director with the Cork, Bandon, and South Coast Railway, Mr Frederick W. Crossley. The journal was produced from offices rented by Crossley, at 28 South Frederick Street, Dublin, and the first editorial of March 1917 reflected this curious amalgamation of tourism and industrial unionism. It stated that the journal stood 'in principle for unification of capital and labour. The fabric of British trade and industry must be, in the future, based upon a comprehensive scheme of co-operation of interests.' Following from this, the producers of the *New Way* would strive 'to show the foreigner that he may travel over half the earth and yet fail to find as lovely a land as this whose beauties we invite him to explore.' Crossley was the ideal candidate for chairman of such an organisation as he was the type of co-operating capitalist needed in order for the ideas of the Guild to work. He was a well-known and respected figure in Irish business circles and had built up a large collection of friendships and contacts through his 'Irish Tourist Association'. Crossley arrived in Ireland from Lancashire during the 1880s in order to manage the Dublin office of the travel operator, Thomas Cook.[8] He quickly saw the potential of tourism in Ireland and in 1894 he set up his own publication, *The Irish Tourist*. It was a monthly journal and its objective, echoes of which can be found in the *New Way*, was

> to make better known to the world this country's charm and beauty, and to attract multitudinous visitors to annually sojourn at our health and pleasure resorts, and thus leave with us that historic "plethora of wealth," which might act as the panacea for Ireland's ills.[9]

[6] *New Way*, January 1918.
[7] *Dublin Saturday Post*, 10 March 1917.
[8] Irene Furlong, 'Frederick W. Crossley, Irish turn-of-the-century tourism pioneer', in Joost Augusteijn, Mary Ann Lyons and Deirdre McMahon (eds), *Irish History: a research yearbook* (Dublin, 2003), p. 166.
[9] *Irish Tourist*, June 1894.

In February 1917 Crossley resigned his seat on the Board of the Cork, Bandon and South Coast Railway and suggested

> in the interests of our railway, that the vacant seat be filled by a Union member of the working staff, which principle is already recognised, and is one which will doubtless be extended by the Government in the near future.[10]

Later that same year the Dublin (Grand Canal Street) NUR branch applied to the Executive Committee of the Union for Crossley to be given full membership of the NUR. The application was turned down as Crossley was deemed ineligible.[11] It does, however, reflect the unique position that Crossley held in Irish industrial circles that one of the more militant trade unions in Ireland, during its greatest period of agitation, would want to have him as a member. The idea that progress should take place through co-operation between workers and management rather than through conflict and the eventual dominance of the proletariat over the workplace was the idea of guild socialism. This cohesion of capital and labour in Ireland would come about in part through the activities of what the journal called the Guild of the New Way, and the first issue listed six principles of this new Guild in a column entitled, appropriately enough, 'OUR POLICY':

> We, railwaymen of Ireland, foreseeing the trend of affairs, and recognising that the State ownership of the railways in the near future is inevitable, desire honourably to play our part in ensuring their wise and proper management for the general good…and shall endeavor always, through the medium of these columns and through our organizations, to improve the industrial and social condition of our native land… We foresee in the future great happenings. The march of progress is continuing with ever increasing speed. The cause of the worker is moving irresistibly towards the attainment of a nobler existence, when fraternity and equality shall prevail.[12]

This was in effect a call for partnership between workers and management for the benefit of the entire country. It recognised the important role of the railways within Irish economic and social life, and wanted the rest of the country to acknowledge this as well. It was not a call for the ending of industrial unionist goals and methods, but one for the recognition of areas of mutual benefit both inside and outside the factory and the workplace. The Guild of Irish Railwaymen was set up under the chairmanship of Crossley, the purpose of which was to

[10] *New Way*, March 1917.
[11] Executive Committee [herein EC] meetings, November to December 1917, Resolution 59 (MRC, NUR Papers, mss 127/NU/1/1/5).
[12] *New Way*, March 1917.

> arrange meetings for the discussion of problems connected with railway work, and the future developments under State control, at which representatives of the Directors and Managers of railways, the various classes of railway employees, of leading merchants and traders, and of the public generally will each be able to express their own views and special interests, and to obtain a proper understanding of the views of all other sections of the community.[13]

The principles of the Guild of the New Way stated that the railways should belong to the people of Ireland as the network touched on all aspects of Irish society. Therfore, those who worked the railways worked for Ireland, and should be treated with the dignity and respect that such a position deserved. The conflicts and difficulties within the 'railway world' were due to the narrow and immediate view that all sides took when observing that world from their own position. The Guild would strike to counter this practice, and encourage all sides to 'work for Ireland.' The Guild was quite clear as to the meaning of 'working for Ireland':

1. No Irish man or Irish woman is worth anything to Ireland unless he or she *works* for Ireland.
2. Working for Ireland implies, firstly, doing the work by which I earn my living as honestly and as thoroughly as I can.
3. Using all my abilities to assist my fellow-countrymen, materially and socially.
4. Being always ready to acknowledge the good intentions and honesty of purpose of my fellow-countrymen and being eager to encourage their work, whatever their class or rank.
5. Being prepared, to the best of my ability, to base all my own work and all my support of or opposition to other people's work on facts and reasons, not on theories and prejudices
6. Working for the improvement of Irish railways and the betterment of railway workers, and as a means to those ends helping the railway trade unions and the principles advocated in the column of the NEW WAY.[14]

The Guild as chaired by Crossley and supported by the *New Way* envisaged an Ireland based on mutual respect and benefit, with its feet firmly supported by 'facts and reasons, not on theories and prejudices.' The Guild, not surprisingly, viewed the trade union movement as a positive force within Irish society, and sought to promote its principles among its fellow countrymen.

The key to the belief that the future of the railways in Ireland would be a shared future between worker and employer was impending nationalisation. In December 1916 the Irish railway system was placed under government control for the duration of the war, bringing it in line with the rest of the United Kingdom. The railwaymen believed that the

[13] *New Way*, March 1917.
[14] *New Way*, March 1917.

end of the war would bring nationalisation, so it made sense to begin the process of planning for this eventuality. That future would see the merging of the separate worlds of employer and employee. It was unavoidable. It was time for the railway companies to recognise that soon the railwaymen would no longer be dealing with them but with the elected representatives of the people, with a government that not only recognised trade unionism as a valid expression of workers' concerns, but one that could soon be made up of representatives of Labour, as had already been the case in Australia. The issue of, and preparation for, the nationalisation of the railways had been the dominant subject concerning the railways since the publication in 1910 of the fifth and final Vice-Regal Royal Commission on Irish Railways. The New Way Guild wanted to promote cooperation between worker and owner as that was where the future lay. Because of this, wrote the *New Way*,

> the keen intellectual and social intercourse which it is the aim of the Guild to promote will help greatly in the development of a real sense of the solidarity of all Irish men and women and of all workers.[15]

The main ideological templates of the *New Way* journal were, however, industrial unionism and guild socialism. These allowed the NUR in Ireland to pursue a policy of mass mobilisation of all railway employees, regardless of grade, status or political/religious persuasion, as well as cooperation with other sections of Irish society, especially employers, in preparation for the grand project of full state ownership and control of Ireland's greatest asset outside of its people and land: the railways.

The essence of guild socialism was the abolishment of the wage-system and the establishment of trade unions as full partners in the control and direction of industry. It was believed that this could only be brought about in any one industry when the trade unions had mobilised all workers in that industry into one trade union, in effect the amalgamation of skilled and unskilled unions into one, industry-representative, union. This process had begun, with regard to the railwaymen, with the formation of the NUR in 1913, and was known as Industrial Unionism. Government control of the railways, however, had not abolished the stake of the shareholders or the directors in the rail companies. Indeed, dividends had been fixed at 1913 returns, a record year. Government ownership was to last for as long as the war. On its conclusion the national necessity

[15] *New Way*, March 1917.

would be over and everything would return to the way it was. The railwaymen believed that the period of government control was a strong opportunity to push for nationalisation. Indeed, John Redmond and the Irish Party had made overtures to the railwaymen that the party would support moves towards nationalisation, particularly under a home rule government. When the railway unions talked of nationalisation, however, it was in terms of 'direct control of the railway service by the railwaymen themselves.'[16]

The adherents of guild socialism maintained that in order for the worker to achieve economic and political freedom, he or she could not remain a wage earner. The traditional policy of trade unions had been to organise workers in order to increase and improve pay and work conditions. The practise of workers as wage-earners and nothing more was not challenged. The Guild socialists maintained that, until this happened, workers would never be free. To use the entire organisational power of a trade union to affect pay rates and nothing else was a self-imposed limitation on the role of workers in society and their ability to effect and create a new, and better, society.

> To the proletarian wage-earner, whose labour - all he has to sell - is bought at a price in the labour market, little liberty is possible either in the economic or in the political sphere. Only the overthrow of the wage-system and the re-organisation of industry on a basis of democratic self-government can make possible a life of freedom for the mass of the people.[17]

To have a wage and nothing else is not to be human. It is only through the active participation in the management and direction of the industry that one works for, that any form of meaningful existence can be achieved. This was the goal of Guild Socialism. In Ireland, through the pages of the *New Way*, it was portrayed as a tangible ideal. In an open letter to the Irish Railway Executive, Robert Wigzell wrote that the day 'is past for [the railwaymen] to be content to be shuffled about like a pack of cards; they want to sit at the table and have a hand in the game'.[18] Before the state took control of the railways the railwaymen were last in a hierarchy of interests that began with the company directors and the shareholders and passed through the community before it arrived with the

[16] National Guilds League, *Towards a national railway guild* (London, 1918), p. 5.
[17] Guilds League, *National railway guild*, p.5
[18] *New Way*, March 1917.

workers. 'In a very short time', wrote Wigzell, '[the railways] will be owned by the people of Ireland, worked by and for the people'.[19]

Wigzell had grounds for his optimism. As stated, some form of nationalisation had been accepted by strong elements within the Irish Party. The recent pay dispute had ended with government control, which was seen as a precursor to nationalisation. The NUR in Ireland was growing at an unprecedented rate. Links were being made, albeit tentatively, with the railway managers with regard to future co-operation. Moves were afoot to establish an Irish Council of the NUR, a form of home rule within the Trade Union. Home rule itself was guaranteed by a bill that had, finally, passed through the Houses of Parliament. The idea of home rule on domestic matters, with a railway system subsidised by the mother parliament, made the optimism of the *New Way* all the more credible.

The most important element in this new feeling of optimism, however, was the rapid expansion of NUR membership in Ireland after the December 1916 pay dispute, which saw the Irish railway system placed under government control in order to satisfy the demands of the railwaymen. In 1913, the first year of the newly constituted NUR, the union returns for Ireland listed forty-six branches with 3,339 members.[20] Although the NUR was the result of the amalgamation of five separate unions, this had a negligible effect in Ireland as only the ASRS and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) had any sizable memberships, and ASLEF remained a separate union with seven branches nationally. The other main independent railway union operating in Ireland, the Railway Clerks Association (RCA), was, by May 1919, a success in membership terms. Out of a potential Irish membership of 2,926 the RCA had achieved 2,550 members in sixteen branches, or eighty-seven per cent of its target.[21] This was quite an achievement, as the RCA was not officially recognised by the railway companies in Britain, let alone Ireland, until 1919, an 'honour' that the NUR had received in Britain on its inception in 1913. Irish membership of the NUR remained almost static for the next three years, and never breached the 5,000 mark. The expansion that occurred after this date consisted of both the creation of new branches and the expansion of

[19] *New Way*, March 1917.
[20] Proceedings and reports for the year 1913 (MRC, NUR Papers, mss 127/NU/1/1).
[21] RCA annual reports, 1916-21 (MRC, RCA Papers, mss 55/4/PR/7).

established ones. The north of the island soon became a NUR stronghold. There were 192 members in Belfast in 1916. By the end of 1917 the NUR in Belfast was 1,925 strong, almost a 1,000 per cent increase in twelve months. In 1917 and early 1918 the emerging Irish NUR leadership concerned itself as best it could with 'bread and butter' and 'labour' issues, along with nationalisation, not only because that approach is the dominant one for every trade union, but also because these were the least contentious issues for a trade union to engage with in an increasingly polarised Irish political world. The 'bread and butter' issues were highlighted, though, for another, more simple reason: it was seen that an improvement in wages was the reason for the massive growth in union membership. 'Bread and butter' was what the new members wanted. It was this expansion, however, that allowed the Irish NUR to push for greater autonomy through the Irish council, as well as the establishment of the *New Way* itself.

The Irish NUR had gained members and strength on the premise of looking after the material aspect of that membership's working life. This was reinforced by further advances in industrial conditions brought about by NUR agitation in 1919, namely, the eight hour day and the pay increases which came out of the British railway strike of that year. The *New Way*, however, made it clear that the union's strength should be used to benefit all of Irish labour and its dependents, not just the NUR's members, and this meant participation in class-based politics. In June 1917 the *New Way* put forward a definition of 'bread and butter' politics, which stated that it was

> in short all those problems of how to reorganise the country's work in order that every man, woman and child may receive at least food of sufficient quantity and of good quality, housing sufficiently sanitary and comfortable, clothing sufficiently warm, weatherproof and artistic, education of as high a standard as the individual is capable of benefiting by, and leisure to enable all of us to live like God's creatures instead of like brute beasts - all these are political questions in the proper sense of the word, though they are usually submerged in the fierce passions of ordinary party politics. Man does not live by bread alone, but he cannot live without it, and he must concern himself with "bread and butter politics."[22]

Nonetheless, the president of the NUR, and labour MP for Derby, J. H. Thomas, admitted to the *Railway Review* on 18 June 1920 that the Irish membership was 'divided almost equally between the North and the South, and divided, unfortunately, with regard to the

[22] *New Way*, June 1917.

future government of that country'.[23] Despite this, however, there was a feeling of qualified optimism about the future, that notwithstanding the differences among its membership the moment for trade unionism had finally arrived. An anonymous engine driver from Bangor, Co. Down, wrote to the *New Way* in May 1919 to say that 'it is up to us to uplift mankind...It is our duty as workers to elevate the lives of our brother members and workers, and it can only be done by unity of action'. The policy statement of the New Way Guild in March 1917 stressed that 'the cause of the worker is moving irresistibly towards the attainment of a nobler existence, when fraternity and equality shall prevail...[and that]...the fabric of our airiest visions must be built upon fundamental facts.'

From its outset the proposals for the Irish Council contained structures that would allow the council to address not only 'bread and butter' issues such as the pay bonus, work conditions at shop floor level, and disciplinary appeals, but also give it access to an important source of income with which to support and contest elections, be they local, regional or national. The idea of the NUR as a participant in politics was a well established one, with J. H. Thomas himself an MP and a member, in 1917, of the Privy Council. Politics may have been a delicate issue in Ireland in 1917, but it was not about to be ignored or sidelined by the architects of the Irish Council. The *New Way* argued that although party politics 'make for disunion and ill-will...that does not mean that we should bury our heads in the sand and say that political questions do not concern us'.[24] It saw a direct link between 'bread and butter' issues and party politics, and had no desire to supplant one for the other. Its policy was summed up as thus:

> Our employers are quite alive to the possibilities of Parliamentary action in their own interests, and the workers must not leave the field to them alone. Whether the Parliament ought to be at Westminster or Dublin or Belfast is a question on which opinions may and will differ strongly. But we must at all times remember that any kind of Parliament - Imperial, Home Rule, Provincial or All Ireland Council - is only a means to the end of good government, and we must be careful not to exalt the means permanently above the end. Irishmen and women may differ quite widely about the means. But when once the workers get to actual discussion of what ought to be their ends they will find that their points of agreement are much more important and penetrating than their points of disagreement. That is why, whatever may be the future changes in the methods of Irish government, it will always be necessary for Irish workers to meet in mutually helpful

[23] Keith Harding, 'The Irish issue in the British labour movement, 1900-1922' (PhD thesis, University of Sussex, 1983), p. 181.
[24] *New Way*, June 1917.

> discussion of bread and butter problems on such a body as the Irish Trade Union Congress and Labour Party.[25]

By emphasising the results rather than the process of representation, it did not matter whether the parliament sat in London or Dublin as long as the railwaymen were there. The writers of the *New Way* were trying to get the railwaymen to become the authors of their own fate. In the same way, the establishment of an Irish NUR Council was seen as part of this process, of gaining as much 'ownership' as possible over their workplace

This new-found strength brought the NUR to the forefront of the Irish labour movement. It saw it develop 'the most sophisticated rank and file movement in Ireland' and become 'the van of progress' within that movement.[26] The emerging union leadership made a point of educating its membership in the ideas and ideology of the Left and of Nationalism, and actively encouraged discussion on the eventual shape and character of the Ireland of their future. In June 1917 *The New Way* stated that its concerns were

> All those problems of how to reorganise our country's work in order that every man, woman and child may receive at least food of sufficient quantity and of good quality, housing sufficiently sanitary and comfortable, clothing sufficiently warm, weatherproof and artistic, education of as high a standard as the individual is capable of benefiting by, and leisure to enable all of us to live like God's creatures instead like brute beasts.[27]

The next edition saw it proclaim that

> unless we work for a new revolution – a social revolution – in Ireland, we foreswear all our history, renounce all hope for the future, and play traitor not to Irish workers alone but to the workers of England, France, Russia, Germany, and the world.

The education of its members was catered for through the setting up of book clubs and the printing of a list of recommended reading in each issue from March 1918. The list included works by James Connolly, various guides to Marxist socialism, and books on railway administration and nationalisation. It also included works on the 'Irish question' by people such as George Bernard Shaw and George Russell (AE). While it is hard to gauge the impact such book clubs had on the membership, it does show a commitment on the part of the *New Way* editors to education and discussion and the creation of an atmosphere where issues other than the traditional bread and butter policies of better wages and working conditions could be discussed.

[25] *New Way*, June 1917.
[26] O'Connor, *Labour history of Ireland*, p. 96.
[27] *New Way*, June 1917.

The editors and contributors of the *New Way* had a plan for Ireland. It involved the use of industrial and political agitation in order to achieve not only better work and pay conditions, the traditional concerns of a trade union, but also to create a more equitable society for all. The *New* Way took the ideas of industrial unionism and guild socialism and applied them to Ireland, placing the demand for state ownership of the railways within the context of a home rule parliament. The optimism of the *New Way* was grounded in the gains achieved by the Irish railwaymen from 1916 to 1919. As railwaymen they were acutely aware of their position within the economy and society of the country, and saw it as their responsibility and duty to use that position to help achieve this better world, one that was commonly believed was due once the war ended and home rule arrived. This did not happen, and by 1921 the Irish NUR was fighting a rear-guard action to try to hold on to at least some of the pay and work conditions achieved during the period of government control. The post-war slump of 1920-21 affected all sections of the workforce, and put enormous strain on wages and living conditions. The civil war that followed saw large parts of the southern railway system closed due to sabotage and intimidation, and as a consequence large numbers of railwaymen were laid off. This led to a drop in NUR membership as its members struggled to pay their subscriptions. Finally, the NUR's head office moved in and gave the Irish NUR the choice of either the disbandment of the Irish council, or complete separation from the union. The Irish NUR chose disbandment, and the experiment of 'home rule' within the union was over. The eventual failure of the Irish NUR to remain an autonomous unit within the wider movement, however, does little to explain the initial motivation behind the experiment, and that motivation of an Ireland organised on the grounds of guild socialist and industrial unionist lines was what fuelled the writers and producers of the railwaymen's journal, the *New Way*.

Limerick Corporation and the provision of social housing, 1887-2005

Matthew Potter

One of the most significant activities of local authorities in Ireland since the late nineteenth century has been the provision of social housing. Despite its great significance it is a topic little studied until very recently.[1] Its impact on individual administrative areas such as Limerick city has been scarcely examined at all. Yet, the role of Limerick Corporation in housing has, arguably, been its greatest contribution to the city in the twentieth century. Limerick Corporation has had a role in the provision of social housing since the 1690s when the Forty Shilling or Corporation Almshouses were built.[2] The municipal authority also administered two charities, Doctor Hall's Charity and Mrs Craven's Charity, that provided social housing and were early examples of private sector involvement in this area.[3] However, the history of modern municipal social housing in the city only commenced in 1887. The towns and cities of Ireland in the nineteenth century, with the partial exception of Ulster had the worst housing conditions in Europe.[4] Most official and public commentary concentrated on the situation in Dublin, but it was generally agreed that Limerick ranked next in Ireland in terms of its social problems, poverty and appalling housing conditions. In Limerick city, employment was mainly concentrated in the areas of casual labouring on the docks, railways and related enterprises. In 1913, twenty percent of Limerick's housing stock consisted of 1,050 tenement houses, and another fifteen percent were one room flats.[5] As late as 1932, one third of the city consisted of lanes and courts, without proper water supply or sanitary

[1] Two important works on the subject are Murray Fraser, *John Bull's other homes. State housing and British policy in Ireland, 1883-1922* (Liverpool, 1996) and Tony Fahey (ed), *Social housing in Ireland. A study of success, failure and lessons learned* (Dublin, 1999).
[2] P. Fitzgerald and J. J. McGregor, *The history, topography and antiquities of the county and city of Limerick; with a preliminary view of the history and antiquities of Ireland* (2 vols, Dublin, 1826-7), ii, p. 605.
[3] Fitzgerald and McGregor, *History of Limerick*, ii, pp. 604-07.
[4] Fraser, *John Bull's other homes*, pp. 61-68.
[5] Fraser, *John Bull's other homes*, p. 68.

facilities.[6] In 1911, an article in *The Irish Builder* contained the remark that there was nowhere in Ireland 'with worse slum dwellings than Limerick or where proper houses for the poor are more necessary'.[7] It was with this miserable situation, so graphically described by Frank McCourt in *Angela's Ashes*, that the Corporation began to grapple in the 1880s.[8]

Nevertheless social housing provision in Ireland between 1879 and 1922 was more widespread and successful than in any other part of the United Kingdom. The earliest provision of social housing in Britain and Ireland was by private enterprise. In the 1840s, Lord Shaftesbury and other English social reformers set up companies to build houses for the poor. In 1866, under the provisions of Ireland's first housing legislation, the Labouring Classes (Lodging Houses and Dwellings) Act, the Board of Works was allowed to give loans to private companies and municipal authorities to pay for up to half the cost of a housing scheme. In 1866, the Dublin Industrial Tenements Company became the first Irish example of a private company set up to provide housing for the poor.[9] In 1874, the Limerick Labourers Dwelling Company was established by the formidable Catholic priest, Fr Edward Thomas O'Dwyer (1842-1917), who was then serving in St. Michael's Parish. He managed to gain the support of many of the city's business elite, and constructed a scheme of fifty social housing units in the Watergate area.[10] Later, as Bishop of Limerick, he was instrumental in setting up another such company, the Thomond Artisans Dwellings Company.[11] Limerick Corporation spent £7,500 clearing sites on Nicholas Street, which it then sold to the Thomond Company, and the latter built seventy units of social housing there.[12] The scheme was named Bishop Street in honour of O'Dwyer.[13]

[6] *Report of Mr. J. MacLysaght, B.L., Local Government Inspector into the powers, duties and obligations of the Limerick Corporation and the Limerick County Borough Board of Health* [herein *MacLysaght Report*] (Dublin, 1932), p. 24.
[7] *Irish Builder*, 18 March 1911.
[8] See Frank McCourt, *Angela's ashes* (New York, 1996).
[9] Fraser, *John Bull's other homes*, pp. 68-72.
[10] See Thomas J. Morrissey, *Bishop Edward Thomas O'Dwyer of Limerick, 1842-1917* (Dublin, 2003), pp. 24-25. The author acknowledges the assistance of Bryan McHugh here.
[11] Morrissey, *Bishop O'Dwyer*, pp. 318-19, 343.
[12] *MacLysaght Report*, p. 22. See also records of the Rates Department in Limerick City Council, B1 files, Johns B Ward.
[13] Gerry Joyce, *Limerick city street names* (Limerick, 1995), p. 18.

The Artisans and Labourers Dwelling Improvement Act of 1875 (called the Cross Act after its author, the Conservative Home Secretary Richard Assherton Cross) offered urban authorities loans to clear slums, thus creating sites on which private companies could build social housing. The Corporations could only re-house the displaced people, if no private company could be found to do so. Ironically, the first Irish borough Corporation to build social housing, Waterford, did so out of a sense of grievance at having been excluded from the workings of the Cross Act. In 1878-79, it built seventeen houses under the provisions of the 1866 Act. In the 1880s, thirteen Irish municipalities built a total of around 570 dwellings under the provisions of both of these acts. The Housing Act of 1890 allowed local authorities to build houses on virgin sites for the first time as distinct from replacing slums that had been demolished. It also extended to sixty years the repayment period during which the local authorities could repay their housing loans to the Board of Works.[14]

In 1887, Limerick Corporation built its first social housing scheme, when it constructed eighteen houses in Sir Harry's Mall and lanes adjoining it. In the same year, six more dwellings were constructed on Athlunkard Street and an adjoining lane. A total of £2,400, repayable over forty years was borrowed from the Board of Works to pay for these schemes. This total of twenty-four houses built in the 1880s was a very modest one compared to that of other borough Corporations.[15] In the same decade, Waterford Corporation built forty-two houses, Kilkenny Urban District Council thirty-seven, Sligo UDC twenty-eight, Wexford UDC twenty-six, New Ross Town Council twenty-six and Cavan UDC twenty.[16] Things did not get much better in the 1890s. In 1894, seven units were built in Mary Street, and in 1895, Nolan's Cottages (called after the serving Mayor, William Nolan), consisting of thirteen houses, was constructed. Two more forty-year loans amounting to £1,100 and £2,000 respectively were obtained from the Board of Works to build these schemes. Limerick Corporation built no further social housing until 1911.[17]

[14] Fraser, *John Bull's other homes*, pp. 70-71, 74-79.
[15] *County Borough Council of Limerick. Return of the average weekly expenses of the different departments of the corporation* (Limerick, 1902).
[16] Fraser, *John Bull's other homes*, p. 338, n. 88.
[17] *Limerick Corporation return of 1902.*

The impact made on Limerick's housing problem was very slight, both by virtue of the tiny number of houses built, and because the rents charged were comparatively high. The weekly rents ranged from three shillings to four shillings and six pence and could only be afforded by the more prosperous elements in the working classes.[18] However, due to its financial problems, the Corporation could neither build more houses or reduce its rents to a level that would make them affordable by the poorest applicants. Indeed, the biggest impact on Limerick's housing problem between 1870 and 1910 was made by Bishop O'Dwyer's two companies, which between them erected 120 social housing units compared to the forty-four erected by the Corporation. Indeed, this was the heyday of such companies, with the Dublin Artisans Dwelling Company, and the Dublin and Suburban Workmen's Dwelling Company fulfilling a similar role in the capital, while Cork saw the Cork Improved Dwellings Company construct 420 dwellings at this time.[19]

There were a number of factors in operation that brought Limerick Corporation back into the business of providing social housing after a sixteen-year hiatus (1895-1911). Firstly, the election of a succession of Labour Corporations after 1899 put housing at the top of the municipal agenda for the first time. The Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898 had widened the municipal franchise in Limerick from 709 to 5,521 voters. As a result, the local election of 1899 saw the overthrow of Limerick's ruling oligarchy and the coming to power of a Labour party, headed by John Daly a leading member of the IRB, which was more nationalist than socialist oriented and was much more representative of the masses than the old Corporation elite had been.[20] Secondly, the foundation of the Town Tenants League in 1904 provided a strong pressure group whose initial aims were to obtain the same legal protection for urban tenants as had been already won by rural tenants (the three Fs of fair rent, fixity of tenure and free sale, plus the ultimate right to buy out the landlords).[21] In Limerick, an active branch of the League soon came into existence, which threw its weight behind the demand for the Corporation

[18] *Limerick Corporation return of 1902.*
[19] Fraser, *John Bull's other homes*, pp. 71-74; p. 336, n. 70.
[20] Enda McKay, 'The Limerick municipal elections, January 1899' in *The Old Limerick Journal*, 36, (Winter, 1999), pp. 3-10.
[21] See B. J. Graham and Susan Hood, 'Town tenant protest in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Ireland' in *Irish Economic and Social History*, xxi (1994), pp. 39-57.

to build social housing. Thirdly, the role of Michael Joyce, mayor of Limerick between 1905 and 1906 and MP for the city between 1900 and 1918 became a crucial one. He became president of the Limerick branch of the Tenants League, and used his formidable energies and prestige into the campaign for social housing in the city.[22] Joyce was proud of his claim to be the 'first working man' to be Mayor of Limerick and in 1914 spoke of how, as a member of that class, he had not 'even the privilege of voting for a member of the Corporation' before 1899, let alone becoming a councillor himself.[23]

There were two other external factors at work at this time. Firstly, an economic recession lasting from 1904 to 1912 brought about a slump in the house building industry, and put an end to the activities of the Thomond Artisans Dwelling Company, and the other private concerns that had been involved in the provision of social housing.[24] Secondly, the Home Rule Party took up the policy demands of the Town Tenants League, and in particular saw the enactment of legislation to promote both urban and rural social housing, as a substitute for home rule, which had been stalled since 1893.[25] The 1906 Labourers Act gave a huge subsidy on the loans advanced to local authorities to provide social housing in rural areas.[26] In 1908, a Housing Act known as Clancy's Act (after the prominent Home Rule politician J.J. Clancy) was enacted which rejuvenated the social housing sector in the urban areas. The limits that had previously existed on the amounts of money that could be borrowed by the municipal authorities were lifted. Loan periods were extended to a maximum of eighty years. The municipal authorities did not have to begin repaying the loans until two years after taking them out. Most significantly, the first direct subsidy for urban housing was paid. These subsidies covered the cost of the interest charges on the loans. The Clancy Act created a boom in social housing in Ireland. Before 1908, Irish municipal bodies had built around eighty dwellings per year. By contrast, in 1908-9, the number increased to 329 in 1910-11 to 709, and in 1911-12, only declined

[22] See *Freeman's Journal*, 23 January, 17 February 1909; *Limerick Leader*, 28 July, 13 September 1909; *Limerick Echo*, 15 November, 20, 23 December 1913.
[23] *Limerick Chronicle*, 3 January 1914.
[24] Fraser, *John Bull's other homes*, pp. 72-74.
[25] Fraser, *John Bull's other homes*, p. 40.
[26] Fraser, *John Bull's other homes*, pp. 41-43.

slightly to 665. It would appear that the subsidy was 'the decisive factor' in transforming the situation.[27]

On 22 January 1909, the Limerick branch of the Town Tenant League requested the Corporation to adopt a scheme for the building of 200 houses under the 1908 Act.[28] Whereas Limerick Corporation had only borrowed a total of £5,100 between 1887 and 1895 to build forty-four houses, it now borrowed £19,000 between 1911 and 1912 to build eighty-nine houses. In 1911, £4,000 was borrowed and was used to purchase and clear a plot of ground on John Street, and to build twenty-three houses on this site. In 1912, £15,000 was borrowed and the most ambitious housing programme to date, consisting of sixty-six houses, began in 1913.[29] Forty-eight houses (of which twenty-eight had four rooms and twenty had five rooms each) were built in Prospect and were named Quins Cottages. Ten four-roomed and eight-five roomed houses were built in Garryowen, near the Haymarket. The City Surveyor told the Council that 'each house will have water closet and scullery, with water laid on, yard, ash-bin and clearing passage at back'.[30] They were to be connected to the water and sewerage systems and to the gas mains. 'Large open playing greens' were also to be provided as part of the housing schemes.[31]

The rents charged per week were three shillings and six pence for the four-roomed houses and four shillings for the five-roomed houses.[32] These high rents meant that only prosperous workingmen in receipt of a comparatively good and reliable source of income could afford to be housed in the new schemes. The cost of building social housing had to be recouped through the charging of high rents, which thus excluded most of those in need of a Corporation house. The subsidies paid out under the Clancy Act had made a significant impact, but did not solve the problem of how the Corporation could make large amounts of social housing available at affordable rents without incurring huge and unacceptable levels of indebtedness. The solution to this dilemma, which had been a problem since the 1880s, only emerged in the 1930s, when central government increased the level of subsidy.

[27] Fraser, *John Bull's other homes*, pp. 87-95.
[28] *Freeman's Journal*, 23 January 1909.
[29] *MacLysaght report*, p. 23.
[30] *Limerick Leader*, 8 April 1912.
[31] *Limerick Leader*, 8 April 1912.
[32] *Limerick Leader*, 8 April 1912.

Between 1911 and 1914, Limerick Corporation built eighty-nine units of social housing, compared to the 200 that had been envisaged by the Town Tenants League at the beginning of 1909. Indeed, the Corporation's total output of 133 houses by 1914 was comparatively disappointing, in view of the strong commitment of Michael Joyce and the Labour Corporations to the housing issue. By way of comparison, urban areas with much smaller populations than Limerick's had a much better record in this area. Galway had built 194 units by 1914, Kilkenny 140, Wexford 117 and Drogheda 116.[33] The reliance by local authorities on their own meagre resources to repay the loans obtained to build houses had been somewhat mitigated by the subsidies contained in the acts of 1906 and 1908. Limerick Corporation's finances were always in a parlous condition, due to the comparatively larger areas of deprivation contained within its boundaries, and the lack of manufacturing industry in the city. It is to this circumstance rather than to the lack of political will after 1899 that one must ascribe the continuing failure of the Corporation to keep pace with other local authorities in the provision of urban social housing. The Small Dwellings Acquisition Act of 1899 allowed local authorities to provide loans for occupants to buy their premises from landlords and while not a success it did mark the beginning of the role of local authorities in assisting householders who wanted to buy their own homes.[34] Subsequent Small Dwellings Acquisition (SDA) Acts widened the categories of persons eligible for such loans.

Between 1918 and 1922, hardly any new houses were built in Ireland, either by the private sector or by local authorities. In consequence, many families who would have been in a position to purchase their own homes could not do so, and were thus added to the already huge numbers in need of social housing. In April 1920, Limerick Corporation had been forced to abandon plans to build 312 social housing units in Farranshone due to lack of funding.[35] In 1922, plans to requisition Sarsfield Barracks for social housing were firmly scotched by central government.[36] Thus the housing shortage in towns was the most urgent social problem that faced the new government in 1922. Its response to the

[33] Fraser, *John Bull's other homes*, p. 92.
[34] Desmond Roche, *Local government in Ireland* (Dublin, 1982), p. 222.
[35] Limerick Corporation Minutes, 30 April 1920 [herein LCM] (Limerick City and County Archives, [herein LCCA],Limerick Corporation Minute Books, 1841-1972).
[36] Cosgrave to Mayor of Limerick, 12 May 1922 (National Archives of Ireland [herein NAI], Department of the Environment and Local Government [herein DELG], Box 4/144, No. 2527).

crisis was the Million Pound Scheme of 1922. Under its provisions, local authorities were asked to raise a rate of one shilling in the pound for social housing. It was estimated that this would raise £125,000. Three times that figure amounting to £375,000 would be then raised by the local authorities through the medium of bank loans. This would make a total of £500,000 to which the government would contribute an equal amount in grant aid thus creating the £1,000,000 for the scheme. Seventy-one out of a possible ninety-four local authorities adopted housing schemes and built a total of 2,000 houses.[37] Limerick Corporation duly levied a rate of one shilling in the pound, and borrowed £10,944 for fifteen years. This was a very short term loan compared to its previous housing loans, which were forty years in the case of monies borrowed between 1887 and 1895 and sixty years in the case of the loans taken out in 1911 and 1912. The Government contributed a grant of £27,560, which was twice the amount that the Corporation supplied.[38] The 1922-23 housing scheme consisted of eighteen houses in Church Street, Kings Island, plus twenty-eight houses on Cassidys Lane (now Garryowen Road), and eighteen houses in Mulgrave Street, St. Lelias Street, and Clare Street. This was the first social housing scheme built in the city since 1912.

However, the 1920s proved to be a barren time for the provision of social housing. The Cumann na nGaedhael administration of W. T. Cosgrave, which was in office from 1922 to 1932, was highly conservative in its social and economic policies. This government disliked the payment of housing subsidies, such as had characterised policy between 1906 and 1914 and shrank from spending large amounts of money on slum clearance and the provision of social housing on a large scale. Between 1922 and 1932, only 8,376 local authority houses were built in the twenty-six counties including those constructed under the Million Pound Scheme. Instead, housing policy was concentrated on subsidising the private sector.[39] The Housing (Building Facilities) Act of 1924 began 'a long tradition of state assistance for private sector housing'.[40] Grants of between £60 and £100 were payable to either private builders or local authorities which built houses for sale to prospective homeowners. This legislation saw the commencement

[37] Roche, *Local Government*, p. 222.
[38] *MacLysaght Report*, p. 23.
[39] Mary E. Daly, *The buffer state. The historical roots of the Department of the Environment* (Dublin, 1997), pp. 207-12.
[40] Daly, *Buffer state*, p. 209.

of 'a revolution in Irish urban housing'.[41] The middle classes, hitherto accustomed to renting out accommodation, now became predominantly homeowners, a tendency further promoted by the Landlords and Tenants Act of 1931, which marked the culmination of the campaign by the Town Tenants League, and indirectly promoted tenant purchase in the private sector.[42] In Limerick city, the Corporation borrowed £13,200 in 1924 to make available to private borrowers, but only £2,120 of it was taken up by 1927. As a consequence of this failure, the Corporation bought a four-acre site in Farranshone, on part of which it built twenty-six houses, which were then sold under tenant purchase agreements at a cost of between £320 and £375 each. The total realised from these sales was £8,840. Subsequently, a private company called the Limerick Commercial Public Utility Society was formed, and received both a loan of £1,800 and a grant of £900 from the Corporation. It built a further eighteen houses on the Farranshone site, plus twenty more in Eden Terrace. When the Utility Society ceased to operate, the Corporation received the ground rents from its houses: £98 per annum in Farranshone and £120 in Eden Terrace.[43]

The 1925 Act also allowed for state grants of up to £100 per house built by a local authority for letting. However, the provision of social housing was inhibited by the inability of the local authorities to borrow money for the purpose of doing so. They could only obtain loans repayable over fifteen years, at an interest rate of four and a half per cent. The beginnings of a solution were found in 1929 when central government agreed to allow local authorities to borrow from state funds, a practice discontinued in 1922. The loans would be repayable over thirty-five years at five and three quarters per cent. The local authorities were also permitted to raise a special rate of at least one shilling in the pound to be spent on social housing.[44] Limerick Corporation responded quickly to these measures. A rate of one shilling and one penny in the pound was raised, which produced £3,793. The government gave a grant of £5,328, and the Corporation borrowed £20,000. This money was used to build seventy-four houses between 1931 and 1932.[45]

[41] Daly, *Buffer state*, pp. 210-11.
[42] Graham and Hood, 'Town tenant protest', pp. 55-56.
[43] *MacLysaght Report*, pp. 22-23, 40.
[44] Roche, *Local government*, p. 223.
[45] *MacLysaght Report*, pp. 22-23.

The Corporation constructed a total of 297 houses between 1887 and 1932, of which twenty-six were sold under a tenant purchase scheme. In his 1932 report on the workings of the Corporation, James MacLysaght commented that this relatively small total indicated that 'the Corporation does not appear to have taken a lively interest in providing houses for the working classes'.[46] While this is undoubtedly true, its inactivity was mainly due to the lack of financial support from central government throughout most of the period. When such support became available after 1932, the situation in Limerick city was transformed, with 822 units of social housing being built between 1932 and 1940 alone.

The late 1920s saw the attention of policy makers and public opinion turn towards a realisation that the social problems associated with urban slums were in need of urgent remedial action. The newly established Fianna Fáil party took up the issue and promised to carry out a major programme of slum clearance and construction of social housing if they came into government. It was largely due to this electoral threat that the Cosgrave administration was finally convinced of the necessity for action. The result was the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 1931 based on the British Housing Act of 1930, which had been enacted by the Labour Government of Ramsay McDonald. It was a radical move indeed for Cosgrave and his administration to emulate the policies of a socialist party, even one as moderate as the British Labour party. The main innovation was the abolition of state housing grants to local authorities and their replacement by annual subsidies on loan charges. This meant that central government would pay a certain proportion of the interest on the loans taken out by local authorities to provide social housing. These subsidies ranged from fifteen per cent to forty per cent depending on the category of housing. However the private sector was not forgotten. The SDA Acts were increased in scope by allowing loans to be given by local authorities to those who intended to build houses. Prior to this SDA loans were only made to purchasers of second-hand houses.[47]

The 1931 Act was a milestone in the history of Irish public housing provision but ironically its financial scheme never came into effect. Fianna Fáil came into office within

[46] *MacLysaght Report* p. 22.
[47] For a discussion of the Act see Daly, *Buffer state*, pp. 212-18 and Roche, *Local government*, pp. 224-25.

three months of its enactment and its level of subsidies was superseded by the new administration's Housing (Financial and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 1932. The most significant changes introduced by this legislation were the increases in the loan charge subsidies, from forty per cent to sixty-six and two thirds per cent in the case of housing units replacing slums cleared and from fifteen per cent to thirty-three and a third per cent for all other urban housing. Loans were obtained from the exchequer through the medium of the Local Loan Fund. The Housing Acts of 1931 and 1932 ushered in the golden age of social housing provision in Ireland which lasted until the late 1980s. The 1930s saw a dramatic increase in local authority involvement in this area. Between 1922 and 1932, 25,500 houses had been built with the assistance of state subsidies of which nearly 8,400 were local authority units. From 1932 to 1942 the total was 82,000 of which 49,000 were local authority units.[48]

In Limerick this housing revolution was even more dramatic. Official figures speak for themselves. Between 1887 and 1932 the Corporation had built 297 units of social housing, but the output between 1932 and 1940 was 822, which increased the local authority's housing stock by an incredible 277 per cent.[49] This was a necessary response to Limerick's chronic housing problem, which was still the most acute in the State outside Dublin. Indeed, 1932 saw an episode which emphasised the scale of Limerick's housing problem. A number of tenements situated on George's Quay near Barrington's Hospital collapsed leaving a large number of the former residents homeless. These unfortunates ended up living in tents that were erected on the Quay in front of where they had formerly lived. The Corporation had no means of housing them and it is recorded that the Fianna Fáil leader Eamon de Valera was appalled when he saw this 'tent city' while campaigning in Limerick during the general election campaign of that year.[50] The tenants of the social houses built over the next 30 years were drawn from two different categories: persons displaced by slum clearance and persons on low incomes unable to provide their own housing.

[48] Daly, *Buffer state*, pp. 219-23.
[49] Limerick Corporation, *Official guide to the city of Limerick* (Limerick, 1990), p. 87.
[50] See Jim Kemmy, 'A changing city - a personal view' in David Lee (ed), *Remembering Limerick. Historical essays celebrating the 800th anniversary of Limerick's first charter granted in 1197* (Limerick, 1997), p. 374.

In 1932 the Corporation acquired the lease of the courtyard of the former Castle Barracks situated in King John's Castle, from the Board of Works and the King's Island Field from the Department of Defence to be used for the construction of social housing. The Island Field had been in the possession of the garrison of Limerick for nearly 200 years and in recent times had been used as a rifle range. A large part of the Castle Barracks was demolished, though fortunately the fabric of the actual castle was untouched. A scheme of twenty-two houses in four terraces was constructed in the courtyard while three surviving buildings from the old barracks were converted into flats. The Castle Barracks scheme thus made history on two counts: it was the first social housing to be built in the city under the Acts of 1931 and 1932 and it was situated in the most bizarre location of any housing estate, public or private, in the history of the State. Its eventual demolition in 1990 was to conclude this curious episode in the annals of both the castle and of the Corporation.[51]

In contrast, the Island Field Housing Scheme was to be the proto-type of the large-scale housing estates constructed in the succeeding five decades. Mayor P. F. Quinlan turned the first sod on 7 June 1934.[52] In total 454 houses were constructed in two phases of which the first had 380 units and the second seventy-four. The whole scheme was christened St Mary's Park. The other principal housing schemes constructed in the 1930s were in the area of Thomondgate known as Distillery (ninety-four units), in Kilalee (ninety units) and in Janesboro (152 units). The Distillery scheme received the name of O'Dwyer Villas, which was a fitting tribute to the bishop who had done so much to provide social housing in the City.

The housing drive of the 1930s represented a major change in the functions of local government all over the state but particularly in the major urban areas such as Limerick. The principal reason for this revolutionary development was the availability of generous subsidies under the Acts of 1931 and 1932 coupled with the willingness of the exchequer to make loans available, which thus finally provided the local authorities with the necessary financial resources to build houses on a large scale. Indeed, the de Valera government was the first one to make housing a priority and to provide the leadership as

[51] Kenneth Wiggins, *King John's castle: bridging the centuries* (Limerick, 2004), pp. 20-21.
[52] *Limerick Leader*, 8 June 1934.

well as the finance that would make this goal a reality. The 1930s saw the first major programme of slum clearance and the first large-scale construction of social housing in Ireland.

However, Mary Daly has drawn attention to the many flaws in the housing policy of Fianna Fáil throughout the 1930s and 1940s.[53] In particular she noted that large amounts of government funding continued to be channelled into assisting housing in the private sector. The original intention of the Housing Act of 1931 was to direct public expenditure to those in greatest need. Instead a great deal of money was spent on building labourers' cottages in rural areas and on grants for private houses. The 1932 Housing Act provided a subsidy of sixty per cent on the loan charges for the building of labourers' cottages. The term 'labourer' was interpreted to mean virtually anyone in the labour market not resident in an urban area, and often included individuals who were well able to provide their own housing. In 1932 it was envisaged that 10,000 labourers' cottages would be built, but by 1942 20,000 had been constructed. In contrast, the target of 43,600 urban units was not met, with some 29,000 or two-thirds of the total completed by 1942.

There was also a much greater emphasis placed on SDA loans. Between 1922 and 1931 only 1,090 loans to the value of nearly £478,000 were advanced in the whole Free State but by 1937 the respective figures had risen to 5,309 and £2.3 million. Tenant purchase under which local authorities could sell their houses to the occupiers became widespread in rural areas. The Labourers Act of 1936 inaugurated a major expansion in the sale of labourers' cottages to the tenants. By contrast, tenant purchase was virtually unknown in the urban areas until the 1950s. As well as paying political dividends, the disproportionate emphasis on rural housing reflected the anti-urban tendencies that were commonplace in Irish political discourse at this time, particularly in Fianna Fáil. There is no doubt that if government spending had been targeted to those sectors most in need, the urban slums could have been eliminated much more quickly than in fact was to be the case.[54]

After 1945, social housing continued to be the most important and visible function of the Corporation. During the Emergency the construction of houses had declined

[53] Daly, *Buffer state*, pp. 219-32, 248.
[54] Daly, *Buffer state*, pp. 219-32, 248.

sharply due to shortages of materials. In 1939-40 the number of social houses built nationwide were 5,383 but by 1945-6 the figure was only 697. During this period, wartime inflation caused building costs in urban areas to rise by thirty-six per cent. With the coming of peace there was a sharp rise in public spending from thirty-three and a half per cent of GNP in 1949-50 to forty-one per cent in 1951-2.[55] In Limerick city a very respectable total of 1,137 social housing units were constructed in the 1940s.[56] It was at this time that large numbers of social housing were constructed in the suburbs of the city for the first time. Matthew Macken, city manager between 1946 and 1959 was particularly committed to the municipal housing programme and in the furtherance of this aim had spearheaded the quest for an extension of the borough boundary, which was granted in 1950. During his tenure some 2,015 social housing units were built in Limerick city. In the 1950s the territory acquired as a result of the boundary extension was extensively built upon and a total of 1,751 units were built during the course of the decade.[57]

The Housing Act of 1966 modernised and streamlined the legislation governing the provision of social housing. It abolished the distinction between local authority housing in urban and rural areas, which had been governed by different bodies of legislation since the late nineteenth century. It was also a landmark in that it incorporated a shift in emphasis from slum clearance, which was largely complete, to the provision of housing for all those in need. The Act provided for each local authority to draw up a scheme of letting priorities, which set out the categories of person to be housed, and the criteria used in housing them. The sale of social houses in urban areas to their tenants only became commonplace after the Act of 1966 had simplified the procedure but was strongly encouraged, as it helped promote home ownership (of which Ireland has one of the highest rates in Europe). In the 1960s some 1,811 units were completed in Limerick city and the city's notorious slums had been finally eliminated.[58] The 1970s and 1980s constituted the final phase in the construction of large scale housing schemes by local authorities throughout the state. In Limerick city some 1,700 units were built in these

[55] Daly, *Buffer state*, pp. 321-27.
[56] *Official guide to the city of Limerick*, p. 87.
[57] *Official guide to the city of Limerick*, p. 87.
[58] *Official guide to the city of Limerick*, p. 87.

decades. These represented the culmination of the suburbanisation of the municipal housing programme for they were all situated a considerable distance from the business and retail core of the city although there were also a number of smaller schemes constructed in the inner city.[59]

The late 1980s saw a significant decline in the role of the public sector in the provision of social housing. Nationally, the prosperity of the 1960s resulted in a large increase in the output of private houses. While the amount of units constructed by the local authorities also increased, they came to represent a decreasing proportion of total output from 1960 onwards. However a major turning point was the budget introduced by the new Fianna Fáil administration in 1987. Before the 1960s local authorities usually accounted for around fifty per cent of housing construction. In the decades before 1987 they built around twenty to thirty per cent of all housing units annually. After 1987 social housing fell to ten per cent or less of total housing output. This resulted in the public sector ceasing to be central to national housing policy and instead becoming marginalized. Among the reasons for this development were a boom in private house construction, a decline in the numbers of social housing units constructed as compared to the period before 1987, an ideological shift away from the welfare state from the 1980s onwards and a growing belief that public housing was associated with poverty and social problems.[60]

In common with the other local authorities, Limerick Corporation was affected by these developments. Also the population within the borough boundary began to decline due to the increasing sub urbanisation of the city. From a highpoint of 60,721 in 1981 it fell to 52,039 in 1996 (though it increased again to 54,023 in 2002).[61] In the 1950s large numbers of social housing units had been completed in most years, for example, 200 in 1957 and 159 in 1958.[62] In contrast in the late 1980s and early 1990s the number had fallen to an average of twenty per year although there was an increase thereafter to thirty-three in 1993 and sixty-six in 1994. In the ten years to 2003 the Corporation built 580 houses and purchased 123 more, making a total of 703 new social housing units. These

[59] Limerick Corporation, *Official guide to the city of Limerick*, p. 87
[60] See Tony Fahey, 'Introduction' in Fahey, *Social housing in Ireland*, pp. 3-8.
[61] *Limerick City Council, proposal for a city boundary extension. Prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act, 1991 and regulations made thereunder* (Limerick, October, 2004), Table 1, p. 69.
[62] *Irish Independent*, 6 December 1962.

were mainly small-scale inner city developments.[63] There was also an increasing involvement in social housing by the private voluntary sector, which was similar to the role of Bishop O'Dwyer's housing companies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1993, for example, work commenced on the following such projects: the provision of nineteen retirement dwellings by the Villiers Housing Association; the building of forty-five units for elderly people by the Good Shepherd Convent; and the provision of fifteen units by the Associated Charities Trust for homeless women.[64] Other voluntary bodies involved in this area were Focus Ireland and the Respond Voluntary Housing Association. Both the Corporation and the Department of the Environment contributed financial and other assistance to such projects.

The involvement of the Corporation in the provision of social housing was the most striking contribution that it made to the life of Limerick City in the twentieth century. The area within the city boundary contains at present a total of approximately 18,000 housing units of which the Corporation built some 7,800. Some 3,200 of these are still in the possession of the local authority and are rented to tenants.[65] The remainder have been sold to the occupants either by outright purchase or under a tenant purchase agreement. Within forty-five years (1932-87) the slums were eliminated and replaced while many other persons on lower incomes were able to acquire modern and affordable houses. In addition to directly providing over forty per cent of the city's housing stock, the Corporation also made an enormous contribution to the private sector through the provision of the home loans under the Small Dwellings Acquisition Act of 1899 and its successors. It is estimated that approximately half of all the private houses in the City were purchased with the assistance of such loans.[66] Of course it was not a story of unbroken success. There is still a housing waiting list in Limerick while many social problems have arisen in the large and marginalized housing estates on the periphery of the city. Nevertheless, since 1932 Limerick Corporation's housing policy has brought about a major and peaceful social revolution in the lives of the inhabitants of the city.

[63] See *Limerick Corporation annual reports, 1991-94.*
[64] *Limerick Corporation Annual report 1993*, p. 11.
[65] *Limerick City Council Action Plan for Social and Affordable Housing 2004-2008*, (Limerick, 2004), p.4.
[66] The author acknowledges the assistance of Tom Caulfield, Finance Department, Limerick City Council.

Reviews

That woman! Studies in Irish bibliography. A festschrift for Mary 'Paul' Pollard
Edited by Charles Benson & Siobhán Fitzpatrick
Dublin, Library Association of Ireland Rare Books Group & Lilliput Press, 2005
ISBN 184351060X; €60

In the foreword to this work Maurice Craig refers to Mary 'Paul' Pollard as 'the most distinguished Irish bibliographer of the past half-century'. To honour her contribution to Irish bibliography, the Rare Books Group of the Library Association of Ireland produced a festschrift. The work was launched on 9 June in the Long Room of Trinity College Dublin Library. Those who gathered to celebrate Paul's scholarship were greatly saddened by her death less then three weeks later on 24 June.

Paul Pollard arrived in Dublin in 1957 where she worked in Marsh's Library and Trinity College Library. She established the Department of Older Printed Books in Trinity where she focused on the collection, preservation and cataloguing of early printed material. Her cataloguing standards were ahead of their time and provided new insights into the history of Irish printing. Paul's publications were considerable and are recorded in a very useful bibliography in the festschrift. She published her *Dictionary of members of the Dublin book trade 1550-1800 based on the records of the Guild of St Luke the Evangelist, Dublin* in 2000 to great acclaim.

Paul was considered the leading authority on Irish bibliography and it is appropriate that the contributors to the festschrift are important figures in the field. There are twelve studies in the collection ranging on diverse topics such as the eighteenth-century book trade in Cork by Máire Kennedy to a philosophical discourse on writing and editing by W. J. McCormack. Andrew Carpenter writes on two Cork seventeenth-century political squibs or lampoons of which 'unique copies are to be found in the Bolton Library at Cashel'. Raymond Gillespie's contribution concerns itself with Irish cathedral libraries before 1700. He has used his extensive knowledge of early modern sources to survey libraries in both the Church of Ireland and the Catholic Church. It is very appropriate to see Toby Barnard's essay on children and books in eighteenth-century Ireland. Paul Pollard was especially concerned with this period and children's books. In

his obituary for Paul in the London Independent, Barnard celebrates Paul's work 'there are left indelible memories of a figure who linked the eighteenth to the twentieth century and, in doing so, saved and illuminated vital aspects of Irish culture.'

Charles Benson mentions Paul's interest in children's literature in the introduction to the festschrift. She bequeathed her collection of children's books to Trinity College Library. It consists of some 10,000 books from the seventeenth-century to the early twentieth-century and has a particular interest on books for girls. Paul Pollard's legacy to Irish bibliography extends beyond the books she carefully collected. She encouraged a culture of scholarship and learning among those of us working in libraries. The former Director of the National Library Pat Donlon reflects this in the festschrift with an essay on Sophia Rosamond Praeger. Her essay includes an important checklist of works written and or illustrated by S. R. Praeger.

It would be negligent to finish this review without mentioning the physical properties of That Woman! It is a beautifully produced book with its off-white paper and green cloth binding. Its marbled end papers and the 12pt Caslon type are indicative of Paul's world of early printing. The editors and Lilliput Press deserve praise for the fine production of this splendid book. The print run is small and it will not be long before it goes out of print. Paul Pollard's festschrift deserves a place in the libraries of those concerned with the history of the book trade and printing in Ireland.

Ken Bergin
Special Collections Librarian
University of Limerick

Seán MacDiarmada: The mind of the revolution
By Gerard MacAtasney
Manorhamilton, Drumlin Publications, 2004
ISBN 1873437315; €19

Gerard MacAtasney's recent biography of Seán MacDiarmada is an important venture, not least because it is the first full length treatment of the life of MacDiarmada, but also because works such as this are essential in facilitating the pursuit of a more objective and rigorous historical assessment of the 1916 Rising and its participants. While MacAtasney

acknowledges the dearth of historical scholarship relating to MacDiarmada, he attributes this disregard to a belief that MacDiarmada, 'who was almost crippled with a cane,' was not as inspiring to the youth of Ireland as the more virile and dynamic Pearse and Connolly. As a result, MacAtasney attempts to amend this perception by painting a portrait of a warm and endearing personality with a remarkable capacity for friendship. Well written, and objective, this work endeavours to consider the many and varied aspects of MacDiarmada's life and times.

Unfortunately, owing to MacDiarmada's highly secretive and conspiratorial nature, MacAtasney has been heavily constrained by a lack of personal correspondence, instead having to rely on second hand information gleaned from contemporary police reports and private papers. While the facts of MacDiarmada's life are meticulously presented, MacAtasney's attempt to get to grips with the character and personality of MacDiarmada is impeded by the deficiency of primary source material. Consequently, MacAtasney lacks the insight provided by personal papers, to fully engage with his subject's private affairs and in the process present a very real sense of MacDiarmada's life and personality. This is particularly evident when detailing MacDiarmada's romantic involvement with Min Ryan. Simply referred to as 'his girlfriend in Dublin' the fact that Ryan was present in MacDiarmada's cell the night before his execution illustrates that this was more than a passing infatuation. MacAtasney is unable to provide more than a brief sketch of the relationship and the narrative is deficient in some of the intimate and routine details, which could enliven what must have been an important facet in MacDiarmada's life.

In contrast, MacDiarmada's public and political career, which is more accessible, is commendably well documented. MacAtasney considers MacDiarmada's emergent nationalism and traces his initial involvement with the Dungannon clubs in Belfast in 1906 through to his involvement with the IRB and ultimate participation in the Rising. The evolution of this nationalism, informed by childhood experiences in Leitrim, and nurtured by individuals such as Bulmer Hobson, Denis McCullough and Tom Clarke, is also explored in detail. Furthermore, MacAtasney's account of MacDiarmada's final days is both poignant and surprisingly affecting. Critically, while he leaves us in no doubt as to the import to the movement of MacDiarmada's organisational and oratorical skills,

MacAtasney's claim that he was 'the mind of the revolution' is not entirely borne out by his analysis. As he amply demonstrates, were it not for MacDiarmada's exceptional activism plans for the Rising, it probably would not have come to fruition. However, MacDiarmada's intellectual contribution to the ideology of an event, which has posthumously become associated with the concept of a redemptive blood sacrifice, is less clear. Crucially, MacDiarmada's role in drafting the 1916 proclamation, or even the circumstances in which he came to sign this most important of documents, is not mentioned. Surely a discussion on this topic should be central to MacAtasney's thesis?

Despite these drawbacks, and the limitations imposed upon MacAtasney by the primary sources, this is a fine piece of scholarship. It is a cogent, well-researched biography of a singularly neglected character. The inclusion of numerous plates, which comprise of photographs, letters and, strikingly, excerpts from MacDiarmada's old school copybooks, is a wonderful addition. In writing this biography MacAtasney has started the process whereby the 1916 Rising and its emotive association with the personae of Pearse and Connolly can be examined in a more objective manner. MacAtasney has performed a signal service to Irish historical scholarship by restoring Seán MacDiarmada to a central position within the complex and often divisive historiography of the 1916 Easter Rising.

John Maguire
Department of History
University of Limerick

Michael Moore, *c*1639–1726, Provost of Trinity, Rector of Paris
By Liam Chambers
Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2005
ISBN 1851828095; €45

In recent years historians have adopted an outward looking perspective on Irish history. Two specific projects, The Irish Abroad, and The Irish in Europe have proved invaluable in our understanding of these otherwise unknown Irish individuals. These substantial monographs, coupled with the release of *Dictionary of Irish Biography* in [2006] will facilitate insight into the Irish community overseas. The usage of archives in Europe and abroad has become a necessity in this regard and enabled detailed histories, such as this one, to come to light. Primary source material has become available in a digital format

and has facilitated access to the material beyond the archive walls. The traditional barriers of language and access are being eroded by the digital revolution.

Chambers has delved deep into the archives in Paris for his subject, the prominent émigré, Michael Moore, clergyman, philosopher and educationalist. Fundamentally Chambers has illustrated the *forte* of Irish intelligentsia abroad in the early modern period. Moore was exiled from Ireland to France and Italy where both countries were sympathetic to Catholic hindrances in Ireland and were content to educate those with the thirst and purse for knowledge. As an intellectual biography Chambers traced Moore's philosophical tendencies, his complex familial connections to both old English and Gaelic Irish, his educational influences at the University of Paris and his career in different stages. The first of which at Paris, the second on return to Ireland in the 1680s. Chambers then focuses on his exile to France and subsequent banishment to Italy in search of employment and finally a return to Paris on the death of James II.

Moore faced battles both in Paris and in Dublin, which he defended to the end. In Paris he carved out a successful career with the assistance of some influential patrons, particularly the Talbots and Fleminges. He maintained contact with many Irish in exile in Paris and formed an influential community to draw upon, particularly those in Collége des Lombards and Collége de Grassins where he commenced his career in the 1660s. Chambers depicts the influence of the various educational strongholds and gives a strong sense of an international community in Paris at this time. In the reign of James II, Moore made the logical decision to return to Dublin were he had maintained many of his connections. Moore had a very short term as Provost of Trinity College Dublin in 1689 to 1690 when clashes between the church and Jacobite court over the right of nomination saw him being banished by James II. There he published his major work defending Artistotelianism against the rising popularity of French Cartesians, *De existentia Dei humanae mentis immortalitae secundum et Aritotelis docrinam disputatio* (Paris, 1692). Chambers concludes that in Moore's eyes, Aristotelianism alone could provide a metaphysics compatible with Christianity. Such writings ensured his unemployability in Paris and required him to regenerate himself. The opportunity arose in Montefiascone in Italy where he was rector at the seminary of Cardinal Marco Antonio Barbarigo. There, he focused on educational reform, which would see uniformity and regularisation to

produce model Christian citizens. Moore returned to Paris shortly after the death of James II where he was elected rector of the University of Paris in 1701 which Chambers emphasises as a 'remarkable achievement for an obscure Irish clerical migrant. An achievement, which warrants such a study as Chamber's convincing and detailed biography on Michael Moore.

Structurally, this study has been divided by the colourful career of Moore. His longevity ensured a mix of fortunes, which mirrored the climate of uneasiness during the reign of James II at the end of the seventeenth century. Although Moore was only Provost for approximately a year, it was a turning point for Moore and illustrated the church and Jacobite court tensions which Chambers feels is not taken into account after the collapse of the Jacobite administration. Moore, in the eighteenth century is far more settled and established in his writings and influences. Chambers has utilised the inventory taken shortly after the death of Moore in 1726 to reinforce Moore's philosophy through his extensive collection of books and in his writings. This inventory has provided insight into the mind of Moore and how he defended the then out of date Aristotle, against the barrage of Descartes followers. The extensive research carried out is evident in the depth of the footnotes. This work has undoubtedly contributed to the Irish historiography in documenting influential Irish outside the country in an era when so many were forced to flee.

Jennifer Moore
Department of History
University of Limerick

Notes on Contributors

Dr Catherine Lawless has a BA and a PhD from Trinity College Dublin. Dr Lawless lectures in the history of art in the University of Limerick and is currently director of the MA in the history of art and architecture. She is a committee member of the Dublin medieval society.

Neil P. Maddox holds a BCL from the NUI. He is a Barrister at Law and is in receipt of a Government of Ireland Scholarship. He is currently working on his doctorate on Irish legal history in UCD.

Mel Cousins is currently researching his PhD on the Irish poor law in post-Famine Ireland, in Oxford Brookes University. He has written on Irish social history and published a book in 2003 on the birth of social welfare in Ireland.

Timothy Harding is conducting doctoral research on the history of correspondence chess in Britain and Ireland between 1824 and 1914, in Trinity College Dublin, under the supervision of Dr William Vaughan.

Conor Reidy has a BA from NUI, Galway and holds a Higher Diploma in Education from UCD. He has recently completed the MA in history programme in UL. He is currently researching his PhD in UL on the introduction of the borstal system in Ireland, under the supervision of Dr Bernadette Whelan.

Conor McCabe is a graduate of NUI, Maynooth where he also completed an MLitt on the munitions strike of 1920. He is currently researching his PhD in the University of Ulster under the supervision of Dr Emmet O'Connor, on the National Union of Railwaymen in Ireland between 1913 and 1923.

Dr Matthew Potter received his doctorate from the University of London and is the director of the Limerick City History Project. The publication of his book on the Limerick City Council and Corporation is forthcoming.

Information on the University of Limerick History Society

All correspondences should be addressed to: The Editors, *History Studies*, Department of History, University of Limerick, or john.ocallaghan@ul.ie

The University of Limerick History Society

The History society was formed in 1997 and in the intervening years has established itself as one of the most active societies on campus, winning various clubs and societies awards. It is involved in organising lectures, seminars, films and field trips, with the committee playing a valuable role furthering the study of history. The first edition of *History Studies* was published in 1999 and has proved to be an important landmark in the development of the history society. The society has previously organised a number of events including 'the professions of the past' aimed at involving the wider campus community. For information on joining the history society contact ulhistorysociety@hotmail.com

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Contact Details:

Editors,
History Studies,
Department of History,
University of Limerick.

Email: jennifer.moore@ul.ie
john.maguire@ul.ie
john.ocallaghan@ul.ie