

**MILLSTREET:**  
**A**  
**"CONSIDERABLE"**  
**TOWN**

Aubane Historical Society

# AUBANE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Aubane, Millstreet, Co. Cork.

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## PUBLICATIONS

- \* Duhallow—Notes Towards A History, by *B. Clifford*
- \* Three Poems by *Ned Buckley and Sean Moylan*
- \* Ned Buckley's Poems
- \* St. John's Well, by *Mary O'Brien*
- \* Canon Sheehan: A Turbulent Priest, by *B. Clifford*
- \* A North Cork Anthology, by *Jack Lane and B. Clifford*
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- A Millstreet Medley by *various authors with rediscovered material by Canon Sheehan and Eoghan Ruadh O'Suilleabhain*
- \* Millstreet - "the cockpit of Ireland" by *various authors*
- Na hAislingi - vision poems of Eoghan Ruadh O'Suilleabhain translated by *Pat Muldowney* and Revisionist History of the 18th century under the Spotlight by *Brendan Clifford*
- Aubane versus Oxford - a response of Professor Roy Foster and Bernard O'Donoghue by *various authors*

\*

Cover:

Extract From Vallencey's Military Survey Map, 1785.

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# MORE VISITORS TO MILLSTREET

## Leigh's new pocket road-book of Ireland

This guide was first published in 1827 and must have involved a visit to Millstreet, probably the previous year, as it mentions some features not usually noted by other visitors. I have left in the odd spellings and misspellings etc., in all these extracts:

*"MILLSTREET is a post town in Cork, on the mail coach line between Cork and Killarney, with a good inn. It has barracks, a church, and a Roman Catholic chapel. The neighbourhood is highly romantic, and abounds with stupendous hills, amongst which are found very ancient remains and castles. The principal objects worthy the traveller's attention are, the Danish fort of Clondrohid, with an old church ruin; M'Swiney's fortress, called Clodagh Castle; the two beautiful mountains termed the Paps, with tumuli on the conical apex of each summit; the wild district of O'Donoghue's country, with his old castle; the brilliant rocks of Kilnamatery, resembling white battlements; and the fine route to Killarney, with its cloud-capped hills.  
Pop. 1680. Fairs: March 1, June 1 and 12, Sept.1 and 12, and Dec.1 and 12."*

Later editions in 1832 and 1835 omit the fairs in June, Sept. 12 and Dec. 12 and they show a population increase to 1935 for both years.

•k-k-k

### John Barrow

(Sir) John Barrow was a much travelled geographer, colonial administrator and advisor to the British government on Chinese, Arctic and African affairs (i.e., on how they could be most effectively subjugated). He founded the Royal Geographical Society and like some more travellers at this period passed through on the mail coach. He commented as follows in a letter:

#### *"LETTER XVI*

#### *KILLARNEY TO CORK*

*Cork, 30th September 1835*

*On the morning of the 26th I took my leave of Killarney and its lovely scenery, by his Majesty's mail, a conveyance I never fail to secure when it passes along my line of road in the day-time, as I am always sure it will be the best. This was a good coach, and the roads were not less so ; but the scenery, excepting the views of some mountains on our right, was dreary and uninteresting as far as Millstreet, a poor-looking town, distinguished only by a barrack without soldiers, and a gentleman's house in the neighbourhood, Mount Leader,, probably after the name of the owner. Here we turned sharp to the southward as far as Macromp, - Macroom, as it is usually called, - road hilly, but equally uninteresting."*

("A Tour round the Ireland through the Sea-coast Counties, in the autumn of 1835...") (1836)

**"J.K."**

An anonymous traveller from the North, probably Belfast, known only as J.K., reported on his travels in a book published in 1837 as "Letters to the North from a traveller in the South" and sent the following letter from Millstreet where he describes some sharp practice by the inn-keeper:

**"LETTER VII**

*Cork-Cove-The Blarney Stone-Macroom*

*Mill-Street, County Cork, September 28,1836.*

**G**reat commercial cities differ little from one another in their general characteristics, and vary chiefly in point of situation or extent - unless in some buildings remarkable for their antiquity, or their architectural beauty, their usual characteristics are the same - regular streets, struggling suburbs, showy shops and bustling quays and marts of trade. In all these Cork resembles Belfast, or any other great trading town; its chief distinction is its beautiful location on the banks of a fine river, and at the base of a steep acclivity, along the side of which, its sprawling streets have thrown out their arms, like the shoots of a vine clambering over the arches of a trellis. Its quays are broad and well finished, running through the centre of the city; its bridges particularly handsome, and its streets wide and regular. Of public buildings it has but a few. The principal being the Court-house built after a Grecian model by Payne; the County Gaol, and the new Roman Catholic Chapel on the lower Glanmire Road; the steeple of which is the most chaste and elegant I ever saw on any building.....

*On returning from Blarney, we bade adieu to the "beautiful city" amidst the entreaties and curses of a crowd of beggars who surrounded the inn door, the most disgusting and importunate I have ever seen in Ireland - those of Drogheda itself not exempted.*

*We set out for Killarney by Macroom and Millstreet, through a country possessing less beauty, and more poverty and wretchedness, than we have yet seen in the south. A little beyond Ballincollig, we passed the ruined Abbey of Kilcrea, less remarkable for its architectural remains, than for a frightful avenue between two walls, composed of skulls and human bones, which conducted the traveller to the principle aisle.*

*At Macroom we had hoped to change our horses, but the inn-keeper, probably from a desire to enjoy the pleasure of our company for the night, denied that he had horses to send on with us; and taking him at his word, we induced the Cork postilion to go on another stage. The same trick was attempted, however, with more success at the next town, Mill-street, where the landlord positively denied that he had a horse at home, though we learned, a hour afterwards, when our arrangements were completed for the night, that he had six in the stable, ready for the road. It is a pity there is not a little opposition on the road, to teach these gentry truth, as well as civility.*

*Whilst waiting to bait at Macroom, we visited the castle and demesne of Mr Hedges Eyre; the former of which presents a singular, though beautiful appearance, being so completely covered with ivy and climbing plants, from the ground to the highest battlement,*

*as to resemble a Dutch hedge, rather than an inhabited castle. The town, owing to the presence and patronage of a resident landlord, has every appearance of comfort and prosperity, the people busy, and the children clean and neatly dressed. We counted in the village no less than eight baker's shops - a singularly large proportion in so small a hamlet.*

*We halted, as I have mentioned, at Mill-street, on the borders of the county of Cork, and in my next I hope to give you our impressions of Killarney.*

*Yours, &c.*

\*\*\*\*

### **William Sharpe**

Mr Sharpe left the following brief remarks in his diary of a tour in Ireland after passing through Millstreet on 13 October 1837:

*"In about 15 miles we left Kerry and entered Cork - we traveled thro' Millstreet a considerable but dirty town, or village; to this spot we had kept about due west but here we crossed (?) thro' the mountains to the South - in about 10 miles we reached Macroom."*

(Sharpe Family Papers, UCL)

### **Thomas S. Smith**

Thomas S. Smith was a farmer from Gloucester who took to touring Britain and Ireland after he retired. He travelled through Millstreet on the mail coach in March 1840 on his way from Killarney to Cork and has left the following remarks:

*"At nine o'clock I mounted the coach for Cork, sixty two miles. I had requested the Porter to take possession of my seat by placing my coat there when the coach came to the door. Before we were all well seated the coach as usual was surrounded by a swarm of poor people begging for Heaven's sake to give them a halfpenny. "There's time enough yet gentlemen! The coach is just going off!" exclaimed they as the driver raised his whip. "There's time enough yet your honours!" "Save your honours. Don't go away without leaving us and our poor families a trifle! I am not asking for myself, your honours, but for my poor dying children! Oh, the coach is going off, if your honours would give us anything!"*

*After leaving the town a few miles we ascended for some distance on to higher ground. We had the mountain on our right but on the left the country was open to a great extent and much like the part from Tarbert but more rocky and not such extent of bogs but no fence to be seen; After Plantations of firs and some small patches of poor looking wood.*

*My next companion was a thorough trader and had no mind for anything that was not in his line. When I observed that it was a cold wind he replied "That all weathers were the same to him if business were truly doing." From the observation I concluded he was not an Irishman.*

*We passed through Millstreet, a good looking Village, I believe called a Town, consisting of one long main street. I observed a small factory of some kind. We passed close to a Military Barracks.*

*As we proceeded the land and the country improved in appearance, passing close to some men at work a passenger who looked like a labourer said "God bless your work." The answer was "Save you too!" Praise always seems suspicious to the Irish. Praise begets envy, they say."*

(Ms. 7974, TCD)

## Michael Pyne

Mr. Pyne introduces himself a native of Macroom who lived *'five and twenty years at Dripsey Cross filling the situation as an agent, and deputy contractor of public Works for the late John Pyne, Esq., Cottage, East Muskerry in this County.'* He was a pompous plagiarist who tells downright lies and gives totally misleading accounts of episodes such as how Wallis obtained Drishane and the treatment of the heroes of the Whiteboy anti-tithe uprising from Carriganima who were brutalised and summarily executed after show trials in Cork the early 1820s - *pour encourger les autres*. He was a toady to the planted gentry and this account of his travels through Cork was written to flatter them:

*"Drifting from Carriganimy I made a stay for that night at a respectable farmer's house, of the name of Michael Reardan, living in Glountane, a part of the estate of Henry Wallace, Esq., a kind reception I got there, on my way to Caumcarrig, on the coach road to Millstreet, is well fleeced with stone, mountains, and heath, impossible to reclaim it, being a part of the estate of Mount-massey, so uncultivated land, and people, are not in this county or so bear of timber and building, and from a glin attached called Caum a Buiue, springs the river Blackwater, and passing Mount Leader, the seat of Henry Leader, Esq., who built a double house, three story high - fronting the north a portico, mounted on four fluted columns, in the year 1840, on the site of the old family residence, one mile from Millstreet, brother of Nicholas Philpot Leader, Esq., M.P. for Kilkenny. Kilmeedy castle, on same road built by the O'Donoghues, and was formerly a fortification for stopping hostages, which was in practice in them days, and now in ruins, occupied by a farmer as a cow-house in winter, surrounded by a circle of lofty hills, not a house in view but Irish cabins, bleached with rocks, bog and fern, and flowered with horse potato stims; that part of the country did not put it in my power to say a word in their praise.*

### OF DRISHANE CASTLE

*This castle was built in the year of our Lord 1450, by Dermod M'Carthy, second son of Tigue, Lord Muskerry, living in the castle of Macroom to the time, Donough M'Carthy the grandson of the above Dermod, born on the 3d of March 1517 and died 1639, aged 122 years; his son Dermod M'Carthy of Drishane Castle, Esq., and his son Donough M'Carthy, of Dunine, who forfeited the estate of Drishane Castle in 1641, and died on 1st of Oct. 1725, aged 106 years; there is no truth in the family estate being forfeited by the said Donough, though it was engraved on a tomb-stone at Drishane church yard; he willed it in shares to his nephews and nieces, and it became the property of the late John Wallis, Esq., by purchase; the grand entrance of this ancient demesne and mansion turn out, qualifies it to be ranked with any gentleman's seat in the country; this castle is built on a limestone rock, 80 feet high commanding a view of a long ridge of mountains, to Killarney, a distance of 20 miles, Claragh-fog hill, the two tops black reeks, Mangerton, lying six miles to the south of Killarney, the highest hill in Kerry county, with a lake on top*



*imitating a basin of about the circumference of half a mile, and is called the Devil's Punch Bowl, never runs dry at any season, it would be doing an injustice if I omitted the praise due to Captain Wallace, to the time of the breaking out of the Whiteboys, at Carriganimy, and other places, brought to trial in the Courthouse of Cork, and became a surety for their future conduct, by which they were discharged, his tenants makes it their boast, not a better Lord for letting his ground for the value, and giving encouragement in manure, and building, and a long term; this gentleman descended by his mother, Carleton of Woodside, grand-mother Dunscombe, Mount-desert, her mother sister to the first Sir John Conway Colthurst, created a Bart. in 1744, and her mother Conway, of the county Kerry. In the middle of the last century, lived at Caumlagane, Mill-street, the celebrated O'Leary, keeping a hospitable house and filling the office of a Justice of the peace, and standing in the street with a long wattle, supporting his steps, inviting travelling people to partake of what his larder, and cellar could afford; all disputes were left to his decision, his figure was lofty, and commanding, and ready to maintain his authority, the head of that ancient house, the last male of a long line of chieftains, the last who kept up that unlimited hospitality for many years in Mill-street, he was the father of the second wife of Denis M'Carthy, Esq., of Caumlagane, who died in 1825, aged 82 years, and willed a property in her own right of £800 a year, to her step-son, now goes by the name of M'Carthy O'Leary, living at the above said place. (The original description of the O'Leary referred to above as by Townsend, but not acknowledged by Pyne, see page 38, J.L.).*

*Travelling many years ago from Mill-street to Killarney, had to stop at a straw covered house, by a heavy fall of rain, where they collected the dues of a toll gate; I was shown into a room where there was the appearance of a bed, the host of the cottage whose name was Haly, had more importance than a prince from Spain, he told me there was not a better man than himself in Cork, or in the county of Kerry, that he was well acquainted with the Earl of Shelburn, Sir Nicholas Conway Colthurst, to both he was nearly allied, and therefore he never left either of those families pay turnpike tolls, as he wished to keep up family connections. (This is blatant plagiarising as it is the account of an experience on the Butter Road written nearly 90 years earlier by Samuel Derrick, but again not acknowledged by Pyne, J.L.)*

*An epitaph engraved on a renewed tomb, on a marble stone, in the church yard of Drishane castle, one mile north of Mill-street on the road to Kanturk, - as fine an inland demesne as in this county - sacred to the memory of Donough M'Carthy, Esq., of Drishane castle, whose great grand-father Dermot M'Carthy, second son of Thigue Lord Muskerry, built the castle of Drishane, A.D. 1450; Donough, was born 1517, and died the 3rd of March 1639, aged 122 years, his son Donough M'Carthy, of Dunine, Esq., who forfeited the family estate of Drishane castle, in the year 1641, and died the sixth of October, 1725, aged 106 years, Donough M'Carthy Oge, of Dunine, who died A.D. 1763 aged 96 years, and his three sons Justin Denis, and Alexander M'Carthy, of Nucknagree, who died March 1822, aged 80 years Denis M'Carthy, of Caumlagane, Esq., who died 1823, aged 80 years, grandfather to the present M'Carthy O'Leary, of Millstreet; Alexander M'Carthy of Cork, who died the 24th of July, 1844, erected this table as a pious memorial of their affection to their ancestors.*

*Meeting with a paper called the Nation, at a Repealer's house, near Mine-hill, in my way to Kanturk, eyed the following lines: -At a man's house named Patrick Picket, on the domain of H. Wallace, Esq., of Drishane castle near Millstreet, in the county of Cork, are some ancient timber trees; it has been remarked of one of these, that from time immemorial one of its bows put forth no foliage, whilst all the rest of the branches had their annual garniture; tradition saith that on this striking bough a hunted outlaw highway*

*robber hung himself in his own belt, to avoid falling alive into the hands of his pursuers or his remorseless enemies - no date. 'Tis true that the robber hung himself, but the limb produces its foliage as the rest - the ash-tree is over 200 years old, and this bough would make a mill-shaft. I went three miles to see the truth, it would take three men to span the breadth."*

("Biographical memoirs of travels through this county (Cork) by Michael Pyne. Privately printed about the forties of the 19th century")

### **The special correspondent of *The Times***

*The Times* sent a special correspondent to report on the situation in Ireland in 1886 and to prove that the Land League was the cause, and certainly not the result, of the problems and conditions in the country at the time. He visited Millstreet to try prove his point of his case in the boycotting of Jeremiah Hegarty. The only conclusion that someone totally unaware of the background could come to, if relying on this report, was that people in the place had suddenly taken leave of their senses because of a sudden fit of jealousy that had taken hold of them against a totally harmless and innocent man and the community had then been successfully terrorised by the Land League for years and years. If *The Times* version of events was true, there could hardly be a more despicable group of people on this earth than those of this area. However, the '*special correspondent*' ends by paying the people an unintended compliment when he says the victims were all Catholics which proves there was no sectarianism involved and the land war was fought out on its social and political merits alone. That is a reason why all later popular political movements in the area were naturally non-sectarian -the Hegarty episode did have a lot of positive benefits:

*"From Killarney I made an expedition to Millstreet and visited Mr Hegarty, who has been standing out for six years against the most aggravated form of boycotting. He had been for a considerable time a large trader in Millstreet, and was very popular and widely respected. He steadily refused, however, to have anything to do with the Land League, and this was made the pretext for trying to ruin him by those who were jealous of his position and prosperity. At the close of the year 1880 he was boycotted by a resolution of the League. Notices were posted throughout the district warning the people to have nothing to do with him, and men were told off to prevent any one from entering his doors. For some months his friends refused to desert him, but, the houses of several customers having been visited by Moonlighters, they were obliged to give in, and his business has been completely ruined. He has suffered every form of persecution, and was fired on last year on the public road; but he has held his ground and refused to capitulate. Shortly before the decree of boycotting one of his daughters died, and no one in the land, I was told, could have had a greater funeral; but if he had died himself three months afterwards there would not have been fifty people to follow his remains to the grave. Another daughter died only a short time ago, and orders were sent round the town that no one should put up their shutters for the funeral. The procession was closely watched, and those who ventured to attend were had up the following Sunday before the League and forced to apologise. He is as honest, respectable, and industrious a man as any one could wish to see, and his only offence consists in his refusal to join a movement to which he could not reconcile his conscience, coupled with the fact that he was too hardworking and prosperous. The victims in all cases I have mentioned have been members of the Roman Catholic Church."*

("Letters from Ireland, 1886, by a special correspondent of *The Times*") (1887)

## Lennox Robinson

Lennox Robinson was appointed Organising Librarian for Ireland by the Carnegie Trust in 1913 and visited the Library here in the Carnegie Hall to see and report on how it was organised and progressing. He was not impressed and reported:

*"The building was designed by Butler of Dublin who has put up a number of libraries in the South. A feature of his buildings is always a large one storey room opening off the reading room with a large skylight that irresistibly suggests billiards. Millstreet succumbed to the suggestion, got a billiard table, charged so much per game and the Library Committee were soon rolling in money. Consequently the RDC thought they would save on the rate and reduced it from £114 a year to £20 - the librarian's salary. But a little later the cloth got cut and about the same time the town of Millstreet split into two camps, Redmondites and O'Brienites. The latter captured the Library Committee, therefore the library is boycotted by half the town and therefore the funds have dropped to zero, therefore the table is unrepaired and unusable. There is no money to spend on books. Those that are there are dirty, unclassified, unread, tumbled about on open shelves for anyone to take away if they care to do so. The librarian looked dirty and ignorant."*

## FROM THE AUBANE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### A MILLSTREET MEDLEY

Three visitors to Millstreet:	Daniel Beaufort John Christian Curwen Bernard H Becker Michael Casey Canon Sheehan
Scenes from Aubane School The Boyhood of Martin Luther Mr Ruble's trees Some English works by Eoghan Ruadh "We're fighting now for Christianity!" Notes on Millstreet by Canon Browne Extracts on Millstreet from Guy's Almanac, 1914 Brennan on the ... Butter Road?	Eoghan Ruadh O'Suilleabhain 'Sliabh Ruadh' Canon Browne Terence O'Hanlon

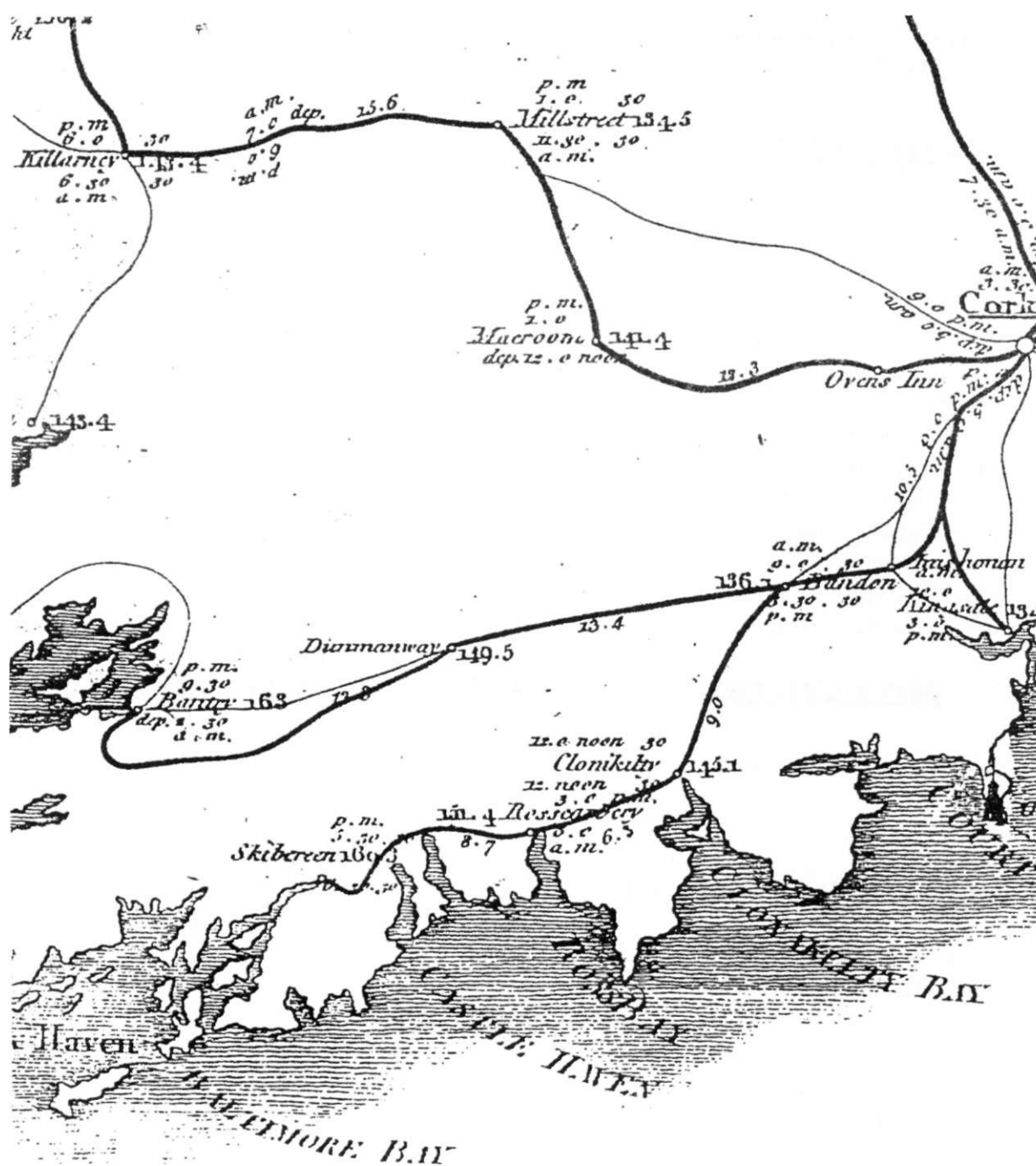
### MILLSTREET - "THE COCKPIT OF IRELAND"

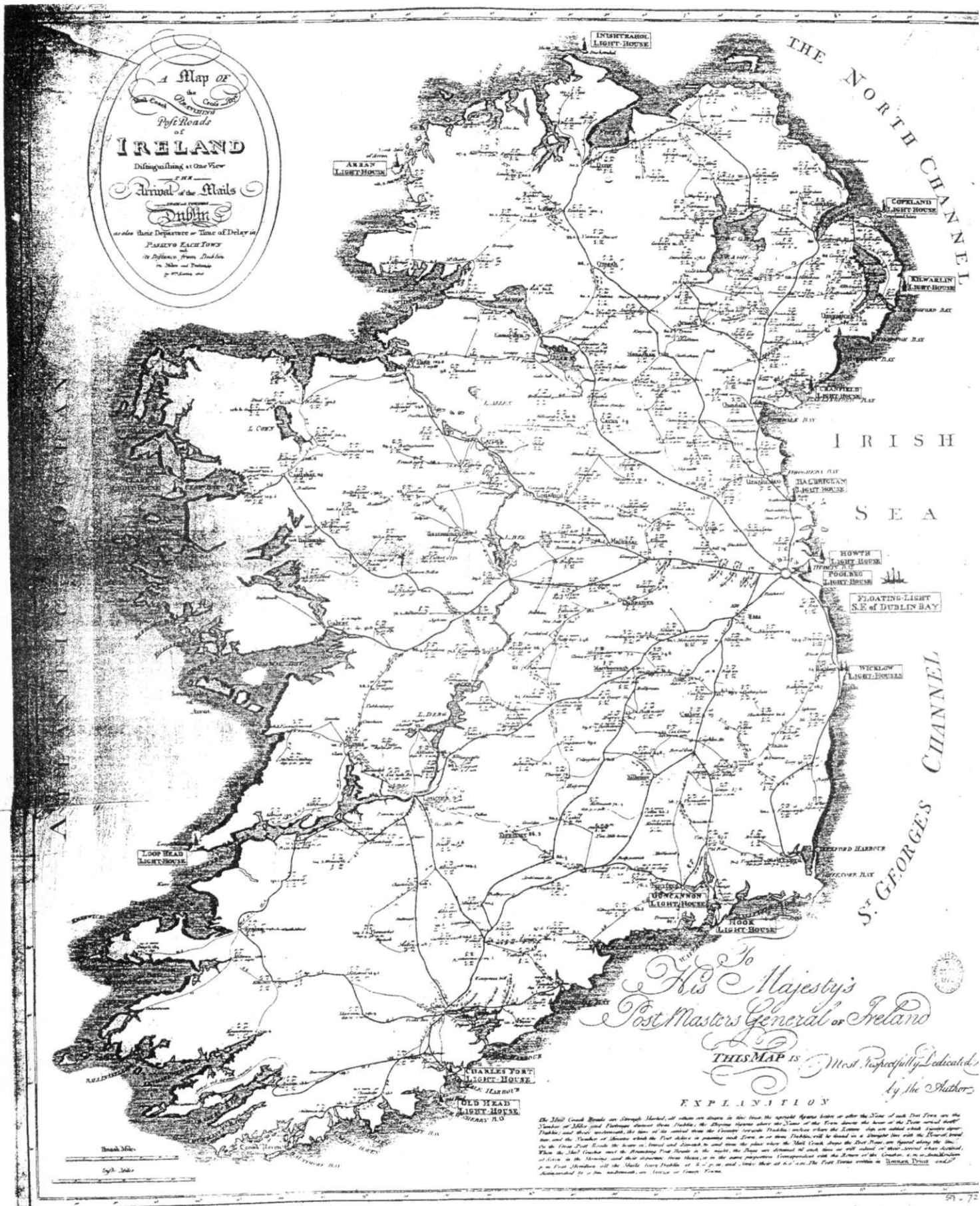
Four visitors to Millstreet:	Philip Luckombe in 1783. An anonymous traveller in 1804. Lewis Dillwyn in 1809. Jonathan Binns in 1835.
The Lament for Diarmuid McCarthy Translated by A poem on Millstreet, August 5, 1884. "Great Meeting in Millstreet", 3/4/1910 - Speeches by:	Monsignor Michael Manning, PP William O'Brien MP, DD Sheehan MP, Maurice Healy MP, Paddy Guiney MP.

# THE MAIL COACH

As evident from some of the earlier travellers' accounts above, in the pre-Railway era the Mail Coach was the main means of travel through the area, and the country, for those who could afford it. On the next page is the map for the routes throughout the country and below is an extract highlighting the Cork-Killarney stretch of the route.

The numbers immediately after town names indicate the number of miles from Dublin, the sloping figures above the town indicate the time of arrival from Dublin and those below the time of arrival from the country going towards Dublin. The other sloping figures represent the delay in the town.





## FRANCIS GUY'S FIRST COUNTY AND CITY DIRECTORY

Francis Guy introduced his first County and City Directory in August 1875 trusting that the publication 'will receive the indulgence of the public.' The entry for Millstreet below gives a snapshot of the area in that year:

### MILLSTREET.

Sub post, money order, and telegraph office, 41 miles north-west of Cork by rail (Cork and Tralee branch G. S. and W. Ry.), and 30 by road; 20 from Mallow, and 13 north of Macroom. Three trains daily between this and Cork: fares, single, 8/-, 6/-, 3/4; return, 13/3, 10/-, 5/9. The railway station is distant a mile from the town: post cars attend all trains. The market town of Millstreet is romantically situated, on the south side of the Blackwater, amidst the lofty mountains of Muskery: the road from Cork to Killarney, and that from Mallow to Kenmare, pass through the town. The scenery around is exceedingly interesting, and in its vicinity are several elegant residences. In the town are Protestant and Roman Catholic churches, infantry barracks, market house, etc. There are also, in this district, Catholic churches at Rathduane, Cullen, Dernagree, and Kilcorney. There are good fairs held in the town on the 1st of every month, and a well known horse fair on the 1st of March. Near the town is Drishane castle, built in 1436 by Dermot McCarthy, and forfeited in 1641. The picturesque castle of Duarrigle overhangs the north banks of the Blackwater; it originally belonged to the sept O'Keeffes, who also owned the castles of Dromsicane and Dromagh. On the south side of the town is the demesne of Mount Leader, the seat of Captain Leader, whose family have been in possession of the property for over two centuries. South of Mount Leader is Kilmeedy, a small castle of the O'Donoghues, now in ruins. The whole district south and south-east of Millstreet abounds with Druidical remains, raths, etc, full of antiquarian interest. The land lying to the south of the town is uneven and mountainous, the soil light and sharp; to the north the country is flat, and of a very heavy rich soil, but wet and damp in winter. Slate is found in several places, also white clay of a tenacious quality; and near Drishane castle is a good bed of limestone. Cullen, 5 miles distant, is served by rural messenger from Millstreet.

#### Fairs.

*New Fairs*—1st of every month

*Old Fairs*—6 Jan, 1 Mar, 1 June, 1 Sept, 1 Dec.

*Pig Markets* are held on previous days

*Market Day*—Friday

#### Postal.

Mails despatched at 8 p.m. daily

Postmaster and Stamp Distributor—Philip Howlett

#### Official.

Parishes—Cullen (p. 62), Drishane (p. 65), Dromtarriff (p. 66), Kilcorney (p. 76)

Poor Law Union—Millstreet

Registrar Births, Deaths, and Marriages—Dr. John Leader

Registrar Marriages (7 & 8 Vic, c. 81)—August Andrea

Petty Sessions District—Millstreet, every second Monday; clerk, Michael Sherin

Quarter Sessions District—Macroom

Resident Magistrate—Charles O'Connell

Sub-Inspector Constabulary—T. B. Wilson

Constable—John Gregg

#### National Schools.

O'Connor Timothy, Coomlegane, teacher

#### Presentation Convent.

Superioress—Mrs M. A. Berkley

#### Justices of the Peace.

Leader Captain Henry Eustace (late Capt. 16th Lancers), Mountleader

McCarthy Alexander, Liscrea

McCarthy Denis, Rathroe; and 4 Ely place upper, Dublin

O'Leary John McCarthy, D.L. (also J, P. co. Kerry), Coomlegane

#### Gentry and Clergy.

Cronin John D, Cloverfield

Griffin Very Rev Canon A. S, P.P, v.P, Coomlegane

Howard John, Brookpark, Ivale

Huggard Rev James, R.c.c, Coomlegane

Murphy Rev Edward, P.P, Kilcorney

Philpot John, Knocknaguha

Quilter Rev Thomas, R.c.c.

Twomey Rev John, P.P, Gurrane

#### Millstreet Union.

The Board of Guardians meet every Thursday. For list of ex-officio and elected Guardians, Officers, etc.—*see* end of Directory

#### Branch Bank.

*National*—John Maher Loughnan, manager

MILL STREET

**Medical Practitioners.**

Leader John, **M.D**, Keale  
 Leader Richard Radley, **M.D**, Keale house  
 O'Sullivan Jeremiah, **M.D**, Knocknaguha  
 south

**Hotel Keepers.**

Callaghau Michael Lynch Jeremiah  
 Vanstan Margaret

**Miller.**

Hickey Maurice, Mill street

**Shopkeepers.**

Andrea Margaret	Moynihan Michael
Buckley Daniel	Murphy Michael
Buckley Patrick	Murphy Patrick
Conneli Catherine	O'Brien Patrick
Cooper James	O'Connell James
Crowley Cornelius	O'Connor Timothy
Denahy Patrick G.	O'Connor Cornelius
Harding Cornelius	O'Sullivan Jerh J.
Hegarty Jeremiah	Pomeroy Thomas
Howlett Philip	Riordan Anne
Kelleher Denis	Shea Timothy
Kelleher Honora	Sherin Michael
Kelleher Jeremiah	Sullivan Jeremiah D.
Lane Timothy	Sullivan John
Linehan Mary	Twomey Honora
Lynch Jeremiah	Twomey Michael
Moynihan John	

**Principal Landholders.**

Barrett Thomas, Liscahane  
 Bennett Edward, Gortageen  
 Bride Richard, Boolmore  
 Broe John, Keale  
 Buckley Daniel, Liscahane  
 Buckley Denis, Rathduane  
 Buckley John, Liscahane  
 Buckley Timothy, Ballyvonskill  
 Buckley Timothy, Liscahane  
 Condon Patrick, Coalpits  
 Connell Charles., Lissaniska  
 Connor Jeremiah, Duarrigle  
 Cooper James, Liscahane  
 Corkery Jeremiah, Coomlegane  
 Corkery John, Annagloor  
 Corkery Thomas, Ballydaly  
 Cronin John J, Lisnashearshane  
 Danahy Cornelius, Keale  
 Donoghue Bartholomew, Knockduff upper  
 Donohoe John, Cloghboolabeg  
 Doody Jeremiah, Dooneens  
 Duggan John, Liscreagh  
 Fitzgerald William, Cloghboolamore  
 Forrest Thomas, Boolamore  
 Geran Patrick, Ballydaly  
 Hegarty Jeremiah, Liscahane  
 Hickey John, Lisnashearshane  
 Hickey John (Denis), Lisnaboy  
 Howard Henry, Glenleigh

Jones Thomas, Drishanebeg  
 Keffe Benjamin, Killetra  
 Kelleher Daniel, Dromiscane  
 Kelleher Denis, Tullig  
 Kelleher Jeremiah, Coolnagillagh  
 Kelleher John (Con), Caherdowney  
 Leader John, Glenleigh  
 Leader Patrick (Reps, of), Knockanroe  
 Leader William, Glenleigh  
 Leary Patrick, Lissaniska  
 Linehan Cornelius, Dooneens  
 Mahony Redmond, Drishanebeg  
 Mahony Timothy, Gortageen  
 McAuliffe Florence, Two Gneevs  
 McAuliffe John, Boolamore  
 McCarthy John, Rathroe  
 McCarthy Patrick, Coolnagillagh  
 McCarthy Timothy, Mullaghroe south  
 McSweeny Bryan, Kealmanagh  
 Moynihan Michael, Prohus  
 Murphy Andrew, Knockduff lower  
 Murphy Cornelius, Boolamore  
 Murphy Denis, Ahane lower  
 Murphy Denis (Matt), Coolykerrane  
 Murphy Jeremiah, Coomlegane  
 Murphy John, Coomlegane  
 Murphy John C, Claraghbeg  
 Murphy John Denis, Knockagallane  
 Murphy John H, Ballydaly  
 Murphy Patrick, Dooneens  
 O'Connell Denis, Coomlegane  
 O'Connell Joseph, Lyravackane  
 O'Keeffe Michael, Gurrane  
 O'Leary Jeremiah, Mullaghroe north  
 O'Leary Timothy, Prohus  
 Pigott Peter (Reps, of), Gurrane  
 Pomeroy Henry, Dooneens  
 Pomeroy Nicholas, Claraghmore  
 Pomeroy Thomas, Liscahane  
 Riordan Benjamin, Lislehane  
 Riordan Denis, Lisnashearshane  
 Riordan Jeremiah junr, Dromiscane  
 Riordan Jeremiah senr, Dromiscane  
 Riordan John, Cleanrath  
 Riordan John, Dromiscane  
 Riordan John, Gurteenafinnoge  
 Riordan William, Ballydaly  
 Shea Denis, Coolnagrillagh  
 Smith George, Knocknageeha  
 Sullivan Alexander, Two Gneevs  
 Sullivan Cornelius, Shanakill  
 Sullivan Eugene, Meenagloghrane  
 Sullivan Thomas, Liscreagh  
 Tarrant Nicholas, Ahanebeg  
 Twomey Daniel, Kilcrone  
 Twomey Matthew, Kilmee  
 Williams Andrew, Ballinkeen  
 Williams John, Dooneens  
 Williams Peter, Derragh

In a previous publication, ("*A Millstreet Medley*") we reproduced a report by Bernard Becker on his visit to Millstreet wherein he described the McCarthy O'Leary end of the town as no better than a piggery. Kevin O'Byrne has drawn my attention to follow-up event to this visit that was reported in the Cork Examiner, which he transcribed and given permission to reproduce below:-

**" INDIGNATION MEETING AT MILLSTREET "**

Kanturk. Tuesday.

"On Sunday last the little town of Millstreet was thrown into unusual excitement by the appearance of the local band in the streets at a very early hour, followed by a large crowd. The cause of this sudden enthusiasm was not ascertained till second Mass, when after the celebration of Divine Service the congregation, headed by the band and a large number of persons from the district of Millstreet, proceeded to the residence of Mr. McCarthy O'Leary, J.P., for the purpose of holding a meeting in the grounds.

The object of the assemblage was very soon apparent - namely, to protest against charges made in an article in the Daily News of December 11th, against Mr. McCarthy O'Leary as a landed proprietor. The article was supplied by a special representative of the Daily News, who visited the properties of several local magistrates in the district within the past month. The writer, after advertising in complimentary terms to the property of Lady Beaumont, which he stated he had examined, and found it in a condition not equalled by the best-managed property in England, gives a terrible account of the property of Mr. McCarthy O'Leary; that the labourers' dwellings on it were gigantic piggeries, and a disgrace to humanity and civilisation, that the property was savagely unreclaimed and that there was not on it a habitation that would be counted a suitable dwelling for man or beast.

In addition to these there were several other statements made with regard to the relationship existing between this landlord and his tenantry. To repudiate then those statements and charges the inhabitants of Millstreet, together with the tenantry of the estate of Mr, O'Leary, met together. The greatest indignation prevailed among the people, who covered all the ground in front of the great house. The band ably presided over by Mons. Jacobowitz, discoursed excellent and appropriate music.

At two o'clock precisely the chair was taken by Mr. O'Sullivan, who, ascending the steps at the entrance to the house was heard to say it was with the greatest possible feeling of regret he addressed them that day. They were called upon by mutual desire to assemble and by their numbers to repudiate the statements made against the character of a gentleman, a landlord who he was happy to say could not be surpassed by any in Ireland for goodness, kindness and generosity. He regretted that it should be necessary for the people of Millstreet to come there to place a vote of confidence in the character of a gentleman whom they knew so long.

It was not necessary for them to vindicate the character of Mr. McCarthy O'Leary as a landed proprietor because that was undoubted. His long stay of nearly half a century amongst them fully entitled him to that expression of confidence, without resort to public demonstration or display. It was not necessary he should say that the people of Millstreet and the tenantry of Mr. McCarthy O'Leary should assemble in public meeting today, for the purpose of relieving his character. But when charges unfair were made against the character of such a gentleman that they thought it their duty to come forward and indignantly deny these charges made without the slightest foundation. It was necessary too, that they should come there today, for there was introduced into this affair an agency which might be better



applied elsewhere, and that was the press. He did not mean to say that the gentleman, who supplied the article, bearing those statements, did so, wilfully intending to misrepresent the facts. He was sure he was misinformed for to his own knowledge he could say that there was no examination or inspection of the property of Mr. O'Leary.

But what were the real facts in connection with the case. Why Mr. McCarthy O'Leary's property was a model property as well as he was a model landlord, and it was not today or yesterday, he showed this kindness and indulgences to them; not only was he indulgent during the past years of distress and suffering in the district, but he was always so in relation to his grateful tenantry, and as evidence of the character of Mr. McCarthy O'Leary, they saw assembled that day before his residence those who came even by their numbers to throw back the foul imputation that his tenants were dissatisfied with him, or that he was not treating them as a landlord ought. But he felt pleasure too, while he could not refrain from keen regret, on one side that the townspeople of Millstreet had turned out in vindication of him, who had lived so long and so happily amongst them. Mr O'Leary had given forty years of his life to public duty.

He had always been sacrificing himself for the benefit of the people. There was never an occasion that he was not found in the right place; and was it not strange that charges should be made against him in which there was not a shadow of truth? In years gone by Mr O'Leary had rendered great assistance to the people. It was not necessary to go back to that period in '67 and '48. To say that he was kind and generous as a landlord was only stating the truth and his fairness of judgement and mildness on the bench as a magistrate had been commented upon in many places. In every respect, then, Mr O'Leary, being thus unfairly attacked, was entitled to their confidence, their affection and their friendship. He never deserved anything else. The most friendly relations always existed between Mr O'Leary and his tenantry, as well as with the people of the town, in whose welfare and happiness he always took a deep interest. And now in these dangerous times that even charges quite unfounded were so easily made, it was more unfair to this gentleman, who had lived in peace, harmony, and unity not only with the people in the immediate locality but with the whole community at large; and he would be very glad to see Ireland with landlords like Mr O'Leary. There would be no necessity for a Land bill. The country that day would not be in such a violent condition, such a disturbed state if the landlords of Mr O'Leary's type lived in the country.

Mr. Maurice O'Leary, in response, in addressing the crowd from the balcony, said, his father being unavoidably absent, he felt himself called upon to say a few words in reply to the splendid address of confidence sent to his father by his grateful tenantry, together with the people of Millstreet, and he assured them sincerely that he felt the compliment that was paid to his father, and on his behalf he should thank them for that great demonstration of popular and public feeling which was shown that day. It was great consolation, notwithstanding the very unfair attack that was made upon the character of his father in an influential English paper, to see the people of the locality coming forward in such a manly spirit to resist the insults that had been laid at his fathers door. He would long remember their kindness for the way in which they supported his father's place among them. All he had to say was that if he did as much for them and felt for their interests as much as his father did, he would be quite satisfied.

The meeting then dispersed and on the way back to the town met Mr. McCarthy O'Leary and his daughter whom they lustily cheered. Mr O'Leary appeared to be deeply moved by the enthusiasm expressed by the meeting and having addressed them in a brief but telling speech, the meeting moved off towards the town."

(The Cork Examiner, 22/12/1880)

## AUXILIARY REPORTS ON LOCAL AMBUSHES

### The Glebe Ambush at Drishanebeag.

The military authorities organised an enquiry into this ambush at the then Victoria Barracks in Cork on 15/2/1921 and took evidence from a number of people involved. The following is the evidence of the officer in charge of the Auxiliaries at the ambush. Both reports naturally portray their side in the best possible light and one absurd result is the huge numbers they claim were involved in the ambushes on the IRA side.

Lieut. Clarke, 1st Bn. Royal Fusiliers, being duly sworn, states:

On the evening of the 11th January, 1921, (*should be 11th. Feb. 1921, JL*) I was in charge of a party of 4 Other Ranks travelling from Buttevant to Killarney. At Mallow I picked up another 10 Men of the same Regiment, and I took charge of the whole party. The train left Mallow at about 20 minutes to seven. The Sergeant placed the men in two carriages.

I gave orders to the Sergeant to detail men to keep a look-out in the carriages. There were 8 men in one carriage, and 7 in the other. There were three coaches on the train - my men were in the leading coach.

No directions were given to us by the Railway Officials as to what carriages we were to occupy. I got into a first-class carriage in the next coach.

The train proceeded on its way, and we stopped at Banteer. At Banteer a lot of men, whom I took to be Cattle Drivers, got out of the train. A few people got into the train at Banteer.

I did not get out of the carriage at Banteer. I looked out of the window - I saw nothing to arouse my suspicion.

The train next stopped at Rathcoole. I did not get out of the train here, I looked out of the window and I noticed a good many people on the platform. There were so many for the size of the Station that I became suspicious. I drew my revolver and laid it under a newspaper on the seat. I was alone in the carriage at the time, and I was afraid the train might be fired on whilst we were leaving the Station. Altogether I saw only 4 or 5 men who were opposite my carriage and moving towards the Station exit. I think they were the Cattle Drivers I saw board the train at Mallow. Why I was suspicious was because they were opposite my window and close together. I saw no people on the platform when we drew into the Station. I did not notice the movements of any of the Railway Officials at Rathcoole. I did not notice anything peculiar on the train leaving Rathcoole.

About 10 minutes after leaving Rathcoole I heard the brakes go on and the train began to slow up. I dropped the window and had a look out on the left hand side of the train as it was moving forward. I saw a small bon fire on the left-hand side of the track. The train then pulled up dead. Immediately fire was opened on my carriage - I heard no shouting.

When I looked out of the carriage I saw two groups of men on the embankment; one group of men were opposite my carriage, and the other group of men were opposite the carriage in which my party were. They were on the same level as the carriages. I saw flashes and heard the

reports as they fired into the carriages. I was looking out on the left-hand side, but we were also being fired at from the right-hand side of the embankment as I noticed the bullets striking the floor from that direction.

I had my revolver in my hand - I fired at the men on the left-hand side who were opposite my carriage. When I had emptied my revolver I ducked down in order to re-load. While I was doing so I heard shouts of "come out the military" also "come out and fight" and "put up your hands".

When I had re-loaded my revolver I opened the left-hand door of the carriage and jumped on to the track.

During the whole of this period we were being fired on.

The men opposite my carriage made a rush at me. There were about half a dozen men opposite my carriage when I jumped out. They were not more than about 3 or 4 yards away from me. I fired 5 rounds at these - I am unable to say if I hit any of them; they fell back from me.

I then dived right underneath the train and got to the other side where I saw other Civilians. They fired at me. I got underneath the train and tried to make my way to the men's carriages which were about 30 yards distance from my carriage. While I was underneath the train I reloaded my revolver again.

When I was underneath the coach in which the men's carriages were I saw some of them on the track with their hands up and the Attacking Party were disarming those on the Railway Track and pulling the others out of the carriages. This all happened on the left hand side of the train. I was able to see this by reason of the fact that there was a Bon Fire and the Attacking Party carried Flash Lamps and they also had a Railway Lamp. There were shots being fired at the men while they were disarmed. I remained underneath the carriage.

The Attacking Party after disarming the men and taking their equipment, began to search for me. I heard the attacking party asking the men where was the officer. The Attacking Party searched the top of the train and the carriages but were unable to find me. They used Flash Lamps and the Guard's Lamp.

I started to crawl back to the rear of the train as my wish was to get out into the open country. When I got towards the end of the train I saw that some of the Attacking Party were drawn across the line. I then got back underneath the second coach. I climbed on to the Axle and hid myself there. The Attacking Party during this time were rushing about looking for me. I heard a man, whom I took to be the leader, shout "get the officer." I heard the men being ordered to get back into the carriages.

I heard all the doors being closed by the Attacking Party. I heard them say to the guard "get on now", and the train started. As the train started and the Axle revolved I fell off. I seized the Cross Bar of the brake which is just behind the Axle and pulled myself up half laying and half sat there. I then found out that I had been wounded in the leg. I was unable to make myself heard at Millstreet where the train pulled up owing to the excitement and fuss that there was there - I was feeling very weak and was tangled up and required help to get out. At Rathmore I managed to extricate myself from the position which I was in and I was helped up to the platform by a policeman.

At Rathmore I went and found out what had happened to my men. I also saw the Engine Driver. He then told me that as the train left Rathcoole at the far end of the platform two men jumped on to the Engine - he told me they were armed with revolvers and had given him

orders to proceed until he was stopped by them. I then gave orders to the Driver to proceed direct to Killarney as fast as he could and not to stop at Headford Junction where, in the normal course of events, he should have stopped. He complied with my order.

I estimate the numbers of the Attacking Party were at least 100. I saw two men of the Attacking Party in a Military Uniform which I took to be the uniform of the I.R.A. as it was darkish green. I saw 4 or 5 of the Attacking Party were in Service Dress Khaki. Most of the party were armed with Rifles and Revolvers. I could not identify any of them.

The demeanour of the Guard during the whole attack struck me as being completely unconcerned and I could hear him talking to the Attacking Party. When he was told to proceed they called him by his Christian name: also the demeanour of the Engine Driver at Rathmore was very unconcerned, as he did not seem to be at all excited considering what he had been through.

I think the name the Attacking Party called the Guard was "Walter". I did not hear any of the rest of the conversation between him and the Attackers. I did not speak to the Guard at all.

As we had not been detailed to the Carriages by the Railway Officials, and as the Rebels were in two parties opposite my men's carriages and my own carriage, when the train pulled up dead at Rathcoole I presumed that they must have telephoned up the line our position in the train.

I have never received any instructions or orders re disposing my men when travelling by train at Stations when the train is halted.

When I crawled from under the train on the right side I was again fired at by the rebels from that side. I saw about half a dozen Civilians jump out of the train on to the track with their hands up. I heard the Rebels shout at them to get back into their carriages which they did.

When I was under the train I was able to see what I have already stated from the lights in the compartments and the Bon Fire on the line.

The following casualties were inflicted on the party under my charge:-

Sergt. Boxold	Killed.
Pte. Hollyhome	Died of wounds.
Pte. Sutton	G.S.W. left shoulder and several minor wounds.
Pte. Lloyd	G.S.W. Hand, Arm and Side.
Pte. Hodge	Wrist and Side.
Lt. Clarke (myself)	G.S.W. through the thigh.

This evidence was read over to the witness.

(Ref.: WO 35/88B at PRO, Kew)

## The Rathcoole Ambush

Lieutenant General Strickland sent the following report on this ambush to General Headquarters in Dublin on 20th June, 1921:-

### "L" COMPANY AUXILIARY DIVISION, R.I.C.

Report on ambush of "L" Coy: by armed rebels at RATHCOOL Co. CORK on the 16th instant.

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

It is my painful duty to report the facts concerning the above ambush, in which this unit was trapped on the above mentioned date. At 19.00 hours a convoy was at BANTEER station, in order to meet a party returning from CORK, a batch of recruits and the "runner" returning from DUBLIN. The convoy consisted of 2 open Crossley tenders, 1 armoured Crossley and 1 armoured Lancia with 25 personnel of the Company. While on column of route the armoured Lancia was leading.

The convoy left BANTEER and when about four miles from BANTEER and half a mile from RATHCOOL bridge, it stopped. A reconnoitring party (acting on previous information) left the tenders and proceeded to skirmish the immediate vicinity of the road, to a depth of 400 yards on the left and right flanks. Nothing of importance or of a suspicious character was discovered during the operation. After this, the convoy proceeded over RATHCOOL bridge on its homeward journey.

When about, approximately half a mile beyond the bridge, previously referred to and on the MILLSTREET side of it, the ambush was first encountered. Here, I might point out for your information, in this ambush, the rebels had adopted an entirely new method of attack. Namely, they allowed the 1st: 2nd: and 3rd cars to proceed and then exploded an electrically controlled land mine under neath the rear car. Almost simultaneously with the mining of the rear car, the second leading car was blown up. The leading car (the armoured Lancia) being blown up last of all. The occupants of this vehicle (including myself) on hearing the explosions in the rear were practically blown out of it, when the last mine of all was fired, i.e. after the car had been turned round, in order to go to the assistance of the rest of the convoy.

Therefore it will be easily seen that the only car to escape being mined was the third in column of route. I may say that these mines were timed and fired with the utmost precision. As soon as the mines had been fired, a heavy and concentrated fire was opened up by the insurgents, along a front of 3/4 to 1 mile in length.

The fire was notably heaviest, from the direction of the thickly wooded hills on our left. A fairly concentrated fire was also opened up from the railway embankment on our right. The range when the attack first commenced, was between two and three hundred yards and gradually increased to about 700 when the fight ended. I should roughly estimate, that the strength of the attackers was about 300. From the foregoing it will be easily seen that my party, badly shaken as it was by the explosions, was at a very grave disadvantage the rebels occupied a position of great natural strength and it was utterly impossible to locate them.

I believe however that the rebels sustained severe casualties, judging from screams and groans heard coming from their directions. I

cannot speak too highly of the way in which my party behaved, outmanoeuvred as they were by twelve to one; not over looking the fact that at the commencement of the action, the occupants of each car had to fight as detached groups, until such time as they were able to concentrate. During the whole of the engagement, the discipline of the cadets was perfect. There not being the slightest sign of panic or nerves as might easily have occurred, owing to the sudden nature of the onslaught.

As soon as I considered it feasible, I sent to MILLSTREET for reinforcements. D.I.3. F. Scott being the first to go on this errand and the first to arrive at his destination some five miles distant. I cannot, find words sufficient, to express my appreciation of his hazardous task. He was single handed and under rebel fire for about a mile of his journey and finally arrived in MILLSTREET without a single round of ammunition; having expended it all on his journey.

This officer gave the alarm and reinforcements were immediately despatched. Five other members of my party were successful also in getting through to MILLSTREET, but arrived after D.I. Scott. The reinforcements that were despatched came along at the double. Some in a Ford car and other commandeered jaunting cars. Unfortunately these were delayed by reason of three trees, which had been felled across the roadway just outside MILLSTREET, by the insurgents. A small number of the reinforcements were left at these barriers and the rest proceeded to the scene of the ambush on foot. By the time these had arrived, the rebels (already beaten back) had broken off the fight, which lasted for two hours, the attack itself commencing at about 19.30 hours and ceasing at about 21.45 hours.

Wireless messages were sent out from the billet for assistance and with the utmost despatch "J" Company responded to our signals, arriving at the scene of the ambush at 00.30 hours on the 17th inst., from MACROOM. This unit with the CO. (D.I.I. Williams) in charge did everything possible to assist and help us. After an inspection I found to my regret and sorrow that Cadets Boyd W. A. H. and Shorter F.E. had been killed. Also that S/Ldr : Taylor O.C. sustained three wounds. With regards to M.T, which sustained considerable damage, I found that of the four vehicles that were in the convoy, two, the armoured Crossley and the Lancia are severely damaged.

In passing, I may state that the armour plate protecting the engine of this car, was discovered 40 yards away: having been flung that distance by the concussion, that this unit has not suffered the loss of any arms whatsoever, or ammunition, with the exception of the ammunition expended during the engagement. In closing I may state, that I consider the way in which the cadets under my charge behaved, is worthy of the highest tradition of the Royal Irish Constabulary.

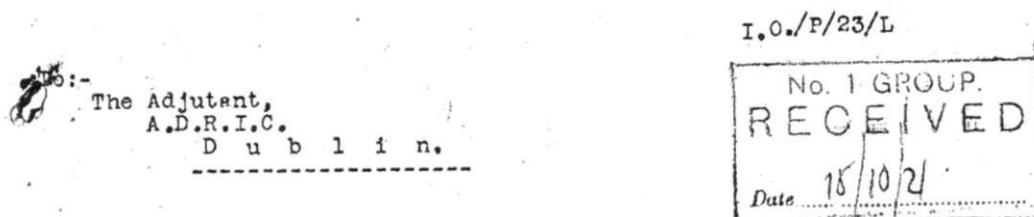
Millstreet,  
Co. Cork.  
17/6/21

(Sgd.) W. E. Crossey, Lieut., &  
& 1st B.D.L. Commanding "L" Coy.  
Aux. Div. R.I.C.

(Ref.: WO 35/88B at PRO, Kew)

## A day during the truce in Millstreet

Below is a report from the Auxiliaries stationed in Mount Leader during the Truce about an incident which they claimed was breaking the terms of Truce but which they could do nothing about and which they clearly found very frustrating.



### Non observance of the Truce;


I have the honour to report, with regard to the above subject, an incident which occurred In this area today.

At about 12.00 hours there arrived in Millstreet from the direction of Rathmore, two open motor cars and one motor cycle. These cars contained ??? men, while one rode the motor cycle. All of them were obviously members of the I.R.A. I ascertained that they were in this village for the purpose of holding an inquest! upon an individual named Murphy of this place, who was knocked down and killed by a railway train yesterday.

The man who appeared to be in charge of the party was apparelled in full I.R.A. uniform, including 'Sam-Browne' belt. This person with his bodyguard walked boldly through the town and was observed by my second-in-command and myself, Just outside the lodge gates of Mount Leader House, our billet. What the motive was in walking all the way out to what is practically the Company billet, I cannot say. But to my mind it would appear that this fellow (Moynihan by name and so far as we know a stranger in this district) was simply out to provoke the Crown Forces. 'Commandant' Meaney (one of the local 'heroes') was also in attendance on the man Moynihan in the town, and was wearing a 'Sam-Browne' over his mufti. The numbers of the cars that the party arrived in were, P.I. 245 & I.F. 730 and the motor byke number was P.I.935.

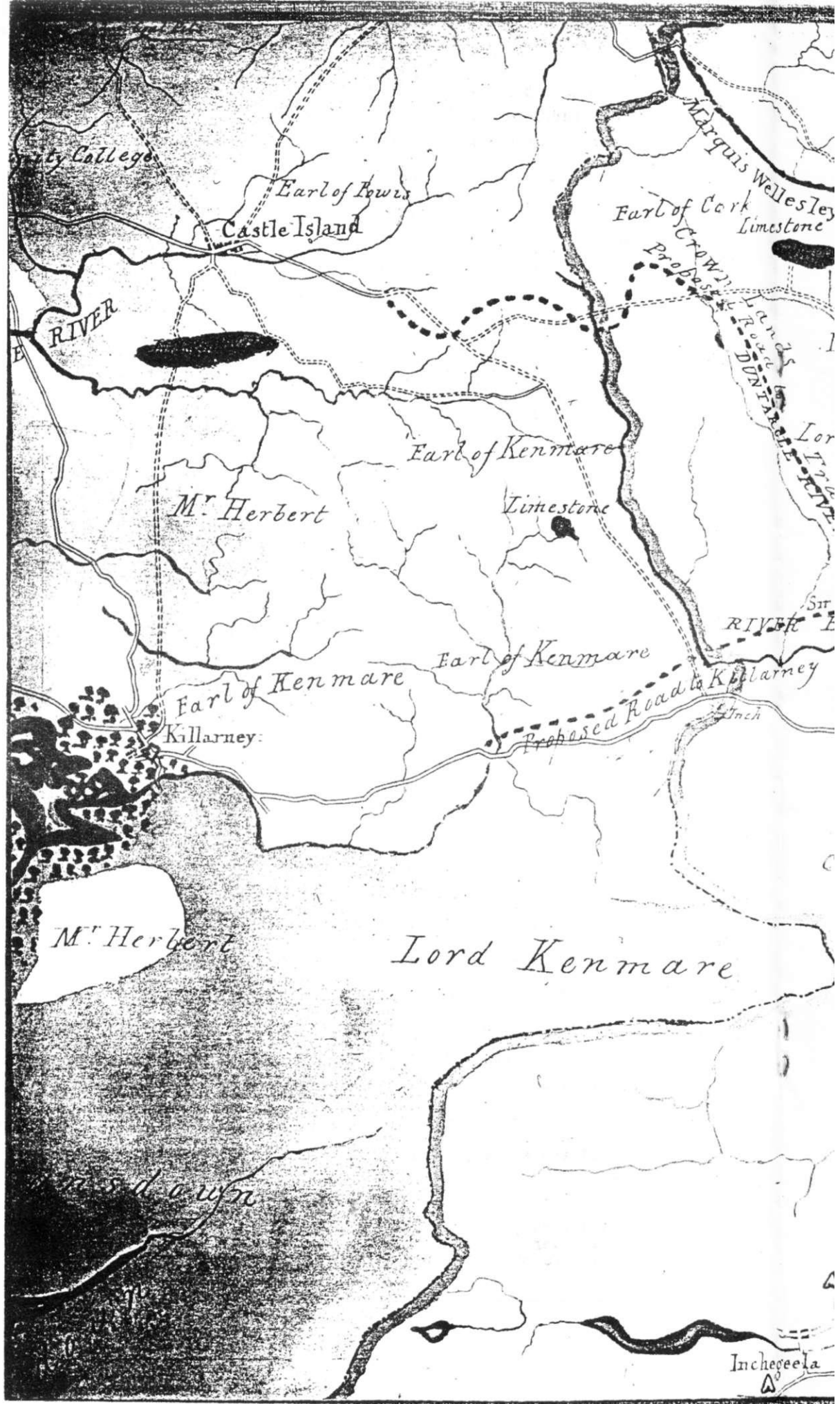
For your information I would point out that the above is not an isolated case by any means. Frequently is the Truce being broken and ignored with impunity by these ruffians and when so provocative and flagrant an insult is offered, as was the case today, the position becomes exceedingly delicate and acute.

Millstreet,  
Co: Cork,  
14th: October, 1921,

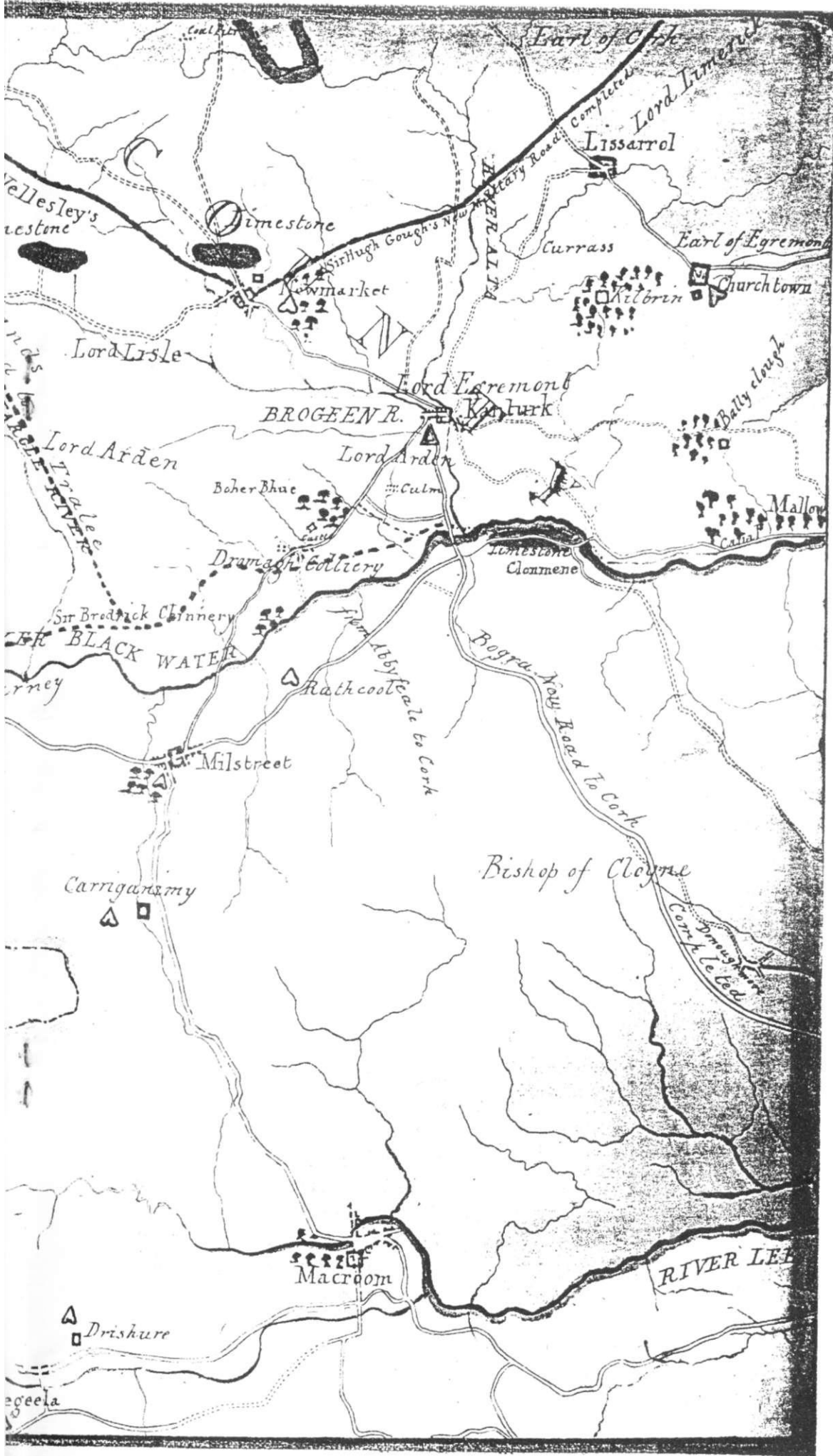
  
Lieut: & 1st: D.I. Commanding,  
"L" Company, Aux: Div: R. I. C.

(Ref.: CO/904/52 at PRO, Kew)

NICHOLAS LEADER'S







MAP OF MUNSTER (1820s)

# THE ELLIS FAMILY OF MILLSTREET

By

Peter Berresford Ellis

*Peter Berresford Ellis FRHistS, FRSAI, well-known historian and novelist, who - as Peter Tremayne, writes the bestselling Sister Fidelma Murder Mysteries - is a descendant of the old Ellis family who established themselves in north Co. Cork in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. Peter's father, Alan, was born in Sunday's Well, Cork City, and began his career on the old Cork Examiner. He eventually moved to London.*

*Peter was born in Coventry, Warwickshire, and took his degrees in Celtic Studies but initially followed his father into journalism. He went as a reporter to Belfast in 1964 and what he saw there quickly shaped his political attitudes. His History of the Irish Working Class (1972) is now regarded as a classic of Irish historiography and is still in print thirty years later. Further books, such as Hell or Connaught: The Cromwellian Conquest of Ireland 1652-60 (1975 - but still in print from Blackstaff), The Boyne Water: The Battle of the Boyne 1691 (1976) and many other works have enhanced his reputation as a major historian for which he has received several awards and honours.*

*As a novelist Peter's historical epic The Rising of the Moon (1986) dealt with the IRB attempted invasion of Canada in 1866 and went to number 4 on the best-seller lists for several weeks. His works have been translated into nearly a score of languages.*

*However, under the pseudonym 'Peter Tremayne' he has become internationally known for his Sister Fidelma Mysteries, of which a dozen titles have been published so far. Fidelma is a 7<sup>th</sup> Century Irish religieuse. She is not just a member of the Celtic Church, she is a qualified dalaigh, a lawyer qualified to the level of an ruth, (as women could be in those times) and has to solve her cases in accordance with Brehon Law. Furthermore, she is sister to the King of Munster, who then reigned from Cashel.*

*Published here and in the US, as well as in six other languages so far, the Fidelma books have caused the formation of a fan club The International Sister Fidelma Society, covering a dozen countries. Based in the USA, the Society issues a magazine called The Brehon three times a year and run a website at [www.sisterfidelma.com](http://www.sisterfidelma.com).*

*In the following article, Peter reflects on the history of his family and its connection with Millstreet.*

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**T**he Ellis family who lived in Millstreet in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries were a branch of a family of Breton origin who first arrived in Cork in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century and put down their roots in the Vale of Awbeg. The first mention of the Ellis family in Munster, the name was then spelt Elys, appears in the Justiciary Rolls in 1288. By March, 1297, the Elys family were settled enough for the Justiciary Rolls to refer to 'Elysestoun' between Buttevant and Doneraile.

The townlands of Ballyellis become frequently mentioned in later documents

and today Ballyellis House, built in 1800, is still a visible mark of the name.

Edward MacLysaght, appointed the first Genealogical Officer of the Irish State in 1943, misled many people in his book *The Surnames of Ireland* (1957), by stating that the name Ellis 'derived from the Old English Christian name Ellis or Elias...' Elias is, in fact, the Greek form of the Hebrew Elijah and hardly 'Old English'. To confuse matters further, Professor Donnchadh O Corrain points out that many medieval Irish scribes Latinised the Irish name Ailill or Oilill (a sprite or elf) as

'Elias' (See *Irish Names*, written with Fidelma Maguire, Lilliput Press, 1981).

Certainly, in the case of the Ellis family of Munster, the name 'Elias' was definitely not the origin of their name.

The Ellis family of Munster trace their origin back to Celtic Brittany and the root of the name is Gaulish Celtic *eulo* meaning 'much' or 'many'. It is still found in Welsh as *elw* (profit/gain), in Breton as *eleizh* (abundance) and in Cornish as *les* (profit). The same word is even seen in the Old Irish root *il* meaning 'much', 'many' and 'manifold' showing a Common Celtic origin.

The first survival of the name is an inscription on a stone dating back to the third or second century BC in Cavaillon, in Vaucluse, in the south of France. It appears in Greek letters as 'Elouissa'. Professor D. Ellis Evans (*Gaulish Personal Names*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1967) has shown the various cognates including a Gaulish Celtic Saint Eligius (c. AD 588-660). There was even an Irish religieuse of the name who was bishop of Angloulême (AD 862-875).

The name also occurs in 8<sup>th</sup> Century Welsh King lists as well as in the Breton genealogical texts. Breton Ellis names are also variously spelt Elys, Alis, Allis and sometimes used with the Norman 'fitz' (son of) before it, as some of them were supporters of William of Normandy in his invasion of England. According to William Smith Ellis (*Notices of the Ellises of England, Scotland and Ireland*, London, 1857-1866), the Breton Elys family who went to Ireland were grandchildren of one Conan fitz Elys. (See also Kathleen Major's 'Conan, son of Ellis' in *The Architectural & Archaeological Society of the County of Lincoln*, Vol 43,1934/5).

In 1297 Ricardus Elys of Elysestoun, appears in the Awbeg Valley. He is noted as the husband of one 'Kelsik' - which name seems to be an Anglicised form of Cellsach. Cellsach was a fairly rare Irish name but a St Cellsach was a female saint in the Muskerry area, living by the Blackwater. The Justiciary Rolls show that

Ricardus was summoned before an Assize Novel in Cork in March that year for enclosing sixty acres of mountain pastureland in Elysestoun 'which belonged to his freehold' for the use of his cattle. But the problem was that he had left insufficient access for his tenants to the neighbouring common land. He had to pay damages taxed as five shillings and court costs of ten shillings.

The main Munster branch of the Elys family, the spelling of Ellis becoming fairly standard after awhile although Allis does also occur, kept to the Vale of Awbeg although other branches had begun to spread through Munster. A branch of the family settled in Clonmel and was stewards to the Butlers, the earls of Ormond. Records from 1572 show an Elys branch as purveyors of provisions to all the Ormond households in Munster. (See - *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, 6 Vols., ed. Edmund Curtis, 1932-43). In 1495, Gerald Fitzgerald (Garret Mor - the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Kildare) gave £200 to Geoffrey Elys to hire ships and men to help him secure power in Ireland, according to Bentley's *Excerpta Historica*. And a Ballyellis place-name appeared in Co. Kildare. From this branch a Thomas Ellis (whose will is dated February 21, 1598) was appointed Dean of Kildare.

Back in the Vale of Awbeg, however, the Tudor Conquests dispossessed the Ellis family of property there. In June, 1586, a pardon was offered to 79 men who had been living rough in the mountains and raiding the new English settlements and citadels. These were guerrillas commanded by Donal MacCarthy, the illegitimate son of Donal IX MacCarthy Mor, regarded as the last regnant King of Desmond. MacCarthy Mor had refused to give up his title when Henry VIII had demanded the surrender of Gaelic titles and proclaimed himself first English King of Ireland in 1541.

MacCarthy Mor was kidnapped during Elizabeth I's reign and taken as a prisoner to London. He was allowed his freedom on condition he accepted the title Earl of Clancarthy and give up his Gaelic

title. He apparently agreed to this as a ploy but then escaped back to Munster, reassumed his title, sending ambassadors to Spain and Portugal and raised Desmond against the English.

His illegitimate son, Donal, was one of his best military commanders. On the list of the 79 men of Donal's guerrilla band was 'Roger Ellice of Castlemaine'. Roger (Ruaidri) Ellis was originally from Ballyellis but had been driven to the Desmond stronghold of Castlemaine when the English adventurer and poet, Edmund Spenser, took control of 3000 acres of confiscated lands around Kilcolman Castle which included Ballyellis. Some traditions have Ruaidri, with his former neighbours of the Vale of Awbeg, the MacSheehy clan, launching an attack on Kilcolman Castle on October 16, 1598. Certainly at this time the English colonists were driven from the valley, the castle was burned and Spenser and his family escaped to Mallow before returning to England.

This seems to be confirmed when, his pardon notwithstanding, 'Roger' Ellice is mentioned in March, 1599, in action with Donal MacCarthy again fighting the Earl of Essex at Bearnna na Cleitidhe (Pass of Plumes) near Portlaoise, Co. Laois. This was when Donal MacCarthy and Eoghan MacRory O'More sent the Earl of Essex's army flying from the field. (See - *The Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns*, 4 vols, Edmund Burke, 1994).

But after the final defeat of the Irish at Kinsale, we find Roger's son John being described as 'of Killoshera' in indentures of 1612-1625. This is Killaseragh, now a townland in the parish of Kilmeen, in the barony of Fermoy. It is clear that there had been a religious division in the family.

One branch remained Catholic and another had become Anglican or what is known today as 'Church of Ireland'. Most surrender documents after 1613 made those surrendering swear to adopt the Anglican form of Christianity. Roger's grandson in 1649 had even applied to the 6<sup>th</sup> Ulster King of Arms, Dr William Roberts, the chief heraldic authority in

Ireland, to assert the right to use his ancestral arms.

A fragment of the grant was shown to William Smith Ellis in the 1850s but has since been lost, although the Ulster and Norroy King of Arms still has a record that the grant was made. William Smith Ellis believes that the arms 'were probably founded on some very inaccurate verbal account.'

However, 'the scallops and crescents on a cross sable' have remained the basis of arms issued to members of the Irish Ellis families - whether from the Cork family or other Ellis families who were to make appearances in later Irish history.

The 17<sup>th</sup> Century is an interesting time in Ellis family history as John Ellis of Killaseragh had a sea-captain brother who was recorded as raiding English shipping even after the defeat of Kinsale and acting under *letters cachet* from the Medici Dukes of Florence. He based his ship, *Tonn Cliodhna* (Cleena's Wave) in the sheltered harbour of Leamconn (*Leim Con* = Dog's Leap) between Schull and Crookhaven. References to the deeds of Captain (Rory) Ellis are recorded in the *Calendar of State Papers (Ireland)* of both James I and Charles I, from 1607 through to 1627. Ellis the pirate made a particularly enemy of the Earl of Clanricade and it was the earl who petitioned the Lord Deputy, then Arthur Chichester, for a writ of outlawry to be applied to Ellis in 1607.

John had a son George who entered holy orders and in 1637 was appointed vicar of Knocktemple and Liscarroll, a mere ten miles from Ballyellis. (See *Clerical and Parochial Records of Cork, Cloyne and Ross*, edited W. Maziere Brady, Dublin, 1863). It seems that this branch of the family had accepted the conditions of surrender and pardon not only by changing their religion but seeking holy orders within the Anglican Faith.

One finds that religious differences were emerging among siblings. Brothers and sisters were following different sects. As late as May 17, 1790, Ellen Ellis of Doneraile, appears on the Convert Rolls

changing her religion from Catholic to Anglican while Arabella Ellis of Millstreet in 1823 and David Ellis of Doneraile, in 1843, were converting to Catholicism. (See *The Convert Rolls*, edited Eileen O'Byrne, Irish Manuscripts Commission, Dublin, 1981).

George Ellis was not to be the last Ellis to be an Anglican curate and vicar in the area. Thomas Ellis became curate of Doneraile and Buttevant in 1693 and vicar of Liscarroll from 1699-1705. His son, born in 1664, became the second recorded Peter in the family and this Peter was also sent to Trinity College, Dublin, in 1681. (See *Alumni Dublinenses*, ed. Burtchaell and Sadleir, Dublin, 1935). It was Peter's uncle who is the first in the family to marry a Beresford. Susan Beresford is mentioned in the 1660 will of her brother Michael as being married to an 'Ellis of Ballyellis' She was the daughter of Sir Tristram Beresford of Coleraine. The Beresfords had married into the de la Poer family of Curraghore, Waterford, and eventually they took the title Marquess of Waterford making their seat at Curraghmore where they remain today.

In c.1705 another Beresford lady, Arabella-Marie, eloped with Francis, son of Thomas Ellis and Mary Rashley, who were married in 1680 in Cork. Arabella-Marie is recorded in some Beresford family records but as being unmarried in the year of her death in 1732. Family tradition has it that the Beresfords refused to recognise the elopement. (See 'An Historical Account of the Beresford Family', Major C.E. de la Poer Beresford, *The Genealogical Magazine*, London, Vol. 1, May, 1897-April, 1898).

Now and then it was an Ellis custom to throw in the name of families into which they had married. The name was merely an additional forename, as is my own name (two R's were inserted to avoid the notorious 'Beresford Curse'), and not to be taken as a hyphenated surname. Hence William O'Sullivan Ellis, William Smith Ellis, Henry Brabazon Ellis, Charles Conyngham Ellis and so on.

The Ellis connection with Millstreet begins with certainty in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century. This branch was mainly Anglican. David Ellis of Millstreet married Margaret Sullivan at Kilshannig and their first son, also David, was born in Kilshannig on March 11, 1752. David, the son, was living in a house spelt in the records as 'Cicamore' (Sycamore) in Millstreet in 1787. He married there on April 21, 1787, to Ellen Daly of Doneraile. Rev. Gethin Crone performed the ceremony. The event was reported in the *Cork Evening Post* of April 26, and the newspaper mentioned that her dowry was £400.

The house called 'Sycamore' was located in the Main Street of Millstreet. The family mystery, apart from trying to find the date when an Ellis first lived in Millstreet, is exactly where the house was situated in Millstreet and how did it pass through several branches of the family instead of from father to son.

By the time David's younger brother, Nicholas, was born on May 7, 1758, the family had moved to Doneraile. David and Nicholas' sister Sarah married on June 7, 1772, in Doneraile to John Barry. It was John Barry's brother James who built Ballyellis House in 1800, having purchased the lower Ballyellis townland within the parish. The house still stands today and continues to be owned by descendants of the Barry family (Witham-Esmonde).

One of the major problems in being certain of relationships is the numerous members called David, Nicholas and William at this time. The fact that members of the family seemed to move freely between Doneraile and the house called 'Sycamore' in Millstreet seems to indicate that the family owned properties in both places and did not give up links in Millstreet while living in Doneraile.

The senior David, who had married Margaret Sullivan in 1752, also had a brother confusingly named Nicholas already living in Doneraile and who had been married on August 4, 1760, in

Doneraile to Arabella Cranfield. Nicholas died on January 8, 1783, and was buried in Doneraile. There appears to be another brother, John, who is listed in 1766 as one of the 120 Anglicans living in the Doneraile Parish.

Nicholas had two sons - Thomas Ellis (1761-1828), of whom we shall deal shortly, and William Ellis. William was born in Doneraile, March 11, 1769, and who died in Mallow on May 11, 1801.

Thomas, according to the advertisement that he placed in the *Cork Evening Post* of Monday, June 23, 1794, had opened The New Inn at Doneraile, which he had built and owned. He had married in 1773 to Eliza Schreech. To make matters more confusing in 1785 another Thomas Ellis had married a Jane Schreech but what relationship they had with our Thomas and Eliza has been impossible to trace. However, this branch were Catholics, or had converted back, and had an interesting line of progeny for Thomas and his wife had moved to Templemore, Co. Tipperary, by the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and a son Michael married Winifred D'Arcy on February 14, 1809, in Cappagh White. His grandson William married Julia Dwyer in Cappagh in 1864. This William, whose name is given as Allis in Desmond Ryan's book *Sean Treacy and the Third Tipperary Brigade IRA* (1945 p 7/8) was active in the 1867 uprising and survived to help train the Irish Volunteers in 1913.

William's brother Daniel married Bridget Noonan and a daughter was born in 1865. In 1895 she married Denis Treacy and their son was the famous Sean (baptised as John). Desmond Ryan thought her father was William the Fenian. However, there is some confusion and indeed both Ryan and Ernie O'Malley (*Raid and Rallies*, 1982, p.41) spell the name Allis although local parish publications use the form Ellis.

Sean was among those whose actions at Soloheadbeg on January 19, 1919, started the War of Independence. He was killed in a gun battle with British

intelligence agents in Dublin on October 14, 1920.

Not as well known as Sean Treacy, was Sean's cousin Daniel Ellis, Sean's mother Bridget had a brother James whose son was Daniel. Dan became commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (Doon-Cappamore) of the East Limerick Brigade and commanded the East and West Limerick Flying Columns at the Lackelly Ambush of May 2, 1921, and the subsequent action at Shraharla described in *Limerick's Fighting Story*, ed. J.M. MacCarthy, p.90. Ernie O'Malley mentions him as Dan Allis, Brigade Vice-Commandant of East Limerick' meeting him in the summer of 1920 in connection with the attack on the Rearcross Barracks and says that 'Yank' McCarthy was then commandant at Doon-Cappamore. The *Emly Parish Magazine* (1995) recounts the actions and corrects the spelling of the name 'Allis' back to Ellis,

It seems that Thomas and Eliza Ellis of Doneraile now owned or used the 'Sycamore' house in Millstreet. It is recorded that John Leader had to reimburse Mrs Ellis for materials she had given which were used at St Anna's church on December 25, 1804,

In 1796 Thomas helped Lord Doneraile constitute the Doneraile Yeomanry Cavalry. A copy of the unit's Order Book is still extant. Hayes St Leger, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Doneraile (1755-1819) an MP for Doneraile and member of the Irish House of Lords, decided to institute this military unit with Captain John Grove White of Flowerhill, Doneraile, the deputy governor of Cork. (See *An Account of the Yeomanry of Ireland 1796-1834*, Major James Grove White, Cork, 1893.)

It is recorded that on November 13, 1796, a meeting to discuss the troop was held in Thomas Ellis' New Inn in Doneraile and Thomas became the first (senior) sergeant of the corps.

By 1801 Thomas' son, also confusingly, Thomas, had joined the unit. He was born in 1782. Young Thomas was apparently enamoured by military life and Lord Doneraile helped him obtain a

commission. The Ellis family seemed to have connections with the Coote family of Limerick. General Sir Eyre Coote (1726-1783) had won India for the British during the 1770s, ironically defeating his fellow countryman, Thomas Lally of Galway (Comte Lally de Tollendal) who was the 'French' commanding general. Sir Eyre Coote had a nephew of the same name (1762-1823) who also had a distinguished military service. The Cootes owned extensive estates in Limerick and Sir Eyre sat in both the Irish House of Commons and, after the Union, in the London Parliament.

What the relationship was between the Ellis and Coote families has remained a mystery. There was an Eyre Ellis already living in Millstreet at this time and prominent in Millstreet affairs as well as being active in St Anna's church. He married Elizabeth Leader, a member of the prominent Millstreet landowning family. On December 22, 1822, their son also Eyre Ellis, was born in Cullen, Millstreet.

*The Limerick General Advertiser* reported, on August 23, 1808, that while Lord Doneraile had helped young Thomas Ellis get his commission 'his soldierly conduct attracted the notice of Lieut. Gen. Sir Eyre Coote and he had the honour to enjoy that distinguished officer's friendship and confidence.'

Lt. Thomas Ellis was serving as adjutant of the 2<sup>nd</sup> West India Regiment of Foot, whose colonel was the Earl of Cavan. Lt Gen. Eyre Coote had become Lt Governor of Jamaica and the regiment was stationed there. In May, 1808, there was a mutiny of new recruits at Fort Augusta. The mutineers bayoneted Thomas Ellis to death. The battalion commander Major Sankey Darley was also killed. Seventeen mutineers were shot in the suppression of the mutiny while sixteen escaped into the mangrove swamps and were later captured, tried by courts martial and sentenced to death, six being shot immediately. (See accounts in the *Limerick General Advertiser* of August 16 and August 23, 1808).

A memorial to Major Darley and Lt Ellis was still standing in Fort Augusta in 1895.

The death of his only son seems to have had an affect of Thomas Ellis senior for he seems to have given up The New Inn in Doneraile and moved his entire family permanently back to 'Sycamore', in Millstreet. He had three daughters. Sarah married Herbert O'Donnell, the son of the then late Counsellor O'Donnell of Agmont, Millstreet. Her wedding was reported in the *Cork Mercantile Chronicle* on Wednesday, January 16, that year. Herbert O'Donnell was a Land Agent and Justice of the Peace as well as a churchwarden at St Anna's. He died in 1856 and was buried at Drishane.

Thomas's third and youngest daughter, Eliza, was married to Nicholas Leader Esq. of Tullig. The wedding was reported in the *Cork Mercantile Chronicle* of June 16, 1811. The Leader family were one of the three big Anglican landowners in the parish and had built the imposing Mount Leader, in 1,597 acres, at the foot of Clara Mountain overlooking the town. The 1856 Slater's postal directory shows Herbert O'Donnell and Henry Leader as Justices of the Peace and John leader as the local doctor.

It was not until 1823, that Thomas's second daughter, Arabella, was married at 'Sycamore' itself to Denis O'Sullivan of Leshelans. She had converted from the religion of her sisters and parents and become a Catholic. The ceremony was performed by Father Patrick Fitzpatrick and reported in the *Cork Constitution* on July 4, 1823. Father Fitzpatrick was the Catholic parish priest in Millstreet.

It is worth noting that Father Fitzpatrick (1787-1865) was a charismatic figure and had a considerable influence in Millstreet. Ordained a priest in Killarney in 1810 he arrived in Millstreet in 1820 at the request of the Catholic parishioners, taking over from a Father Mullowney. The financial state of the Catholic Church was not good and he had to live in a portion of the Anglican vicar's house at the Glebe,

Drishane. Money was scarce but Father Fitzpatrick started on building a Catholic Church, presbytery, schools and convent, which were all completed by 1840. He became known as An Sagart Mor (The Great Priest) and a monument was erected in the church to him on his death. (See *Notes On The History of Millstreet* by Canon Michael Costello and Pdraig O Maidin, Aubane Historical Society, 2001).

Interestingly, the 1824 *Pigot's Directory* mentions Arabella, still under the name Arabella Ellis, and lists her as the Postmistress of Millstreet. It mentions that the mail coaches from Dublin and Cork arrived at one o'clock every day while mail was despatched to Cork and Dublin at 11.20 a.m. every morning. She was in charge of ensuring the mails were delivered and despatched. Her husband, Denis O'Sullivan, was one of two grocers and spirit dealers in the town.

Thomas's wife Eliza died in Millstreet in 1824. The *Cork Constitution* reported that she had died on Wednesday, September 29, at 'Sycamore' 'after a tedious illness. The newspaper is dated Friday, October 1.

Thomas had thrown himself into Millstreet life, even before his son had died. His first signature as a parishioner of St Anna's appears on April 7, 1806, although his wife is listed as being involved in the church several years earlier. On May 2, 1808, he was elected as one of two churchwardens at St Anna's the parish church of Drishane for the united parishes of Drishane, Dromtariffe, Cullen, Nohovale-daly and Kilmeen. The next year he was also appointed a sideman and re-elected churchwarden again in 1809. He was paid the sum of £1 10s for work done by his bullocks in the churchyard in 1813. This must have been in connection with the building of the belfry for in 1813 Thomas Ellis was appointed with George Cashlon, Herbert O'Donnell, Stephen Hall and John Williams to select workmen to raise the belfry and ensure that they 'execute the work in a work-manlike manner' (See *St. Anna's Church, Millstreet - A History*, by

Denis Tangney, Millstreet Museum Society, 1995, p.12)

It is in March 1818 that Eyre Ellis also appears as a churchwarden. There is an interesting note in the *Vestry Book* for July, 1819, that 'it was agreed on, that one of the pews on the north side lately built and next to the door should be given to Mr Eyre Ellis for his active exertions as churchwarden during the years 1818 and 1819.' The last signature of Thomas Ellis in the *Vestry Book* was dated April 8, 1822, while Eyre Ellis's last signature was a few weeks later on April 29, 1822.

In *Pigot's Directory* Thomas Ellis is given as one of two hotel and inn owners in Millstreet. This seems to indicate that having given up The New Inn at Doneraile, Thomas had purchased an inn or hotel in Millstreet. But its name and location has not yet been found - perhaps he had become owner of The Wallis Arms, which was the main inn in the town but this is not certain.

By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the name of Ellis appears to have vanished from Millstreet but not, of course, from Cork.

Thomas Ellis' eldest son William, born in Doneraile, had moved to Mallow. His daughter Catherine, who had also been born 'at Ballyellis' according to the register, and had married in 1811 to a George Baggs, the second of a Rev Henry Baggs, the Vicar Choral of Lismore 1774-1794. But now, with the Penal Laws vanishing, Catholic Emancipation was finally enacted in 1829. It is then we find several members of the family, converting back to Catholicism, such as David Ellis from Doneraile, a grandson of the very David who had been living at 'Sycamore' in Millstreet in the 1770. David married a Mary Flynn on October 9, 1841. And, of course, Arabella had married in a Catholic ceremony to Denis O'Sullivan at 'Sycamore' in 1823.

There were still Ellis's at Doneraile at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Michael Ellis owned lands at Croagnacree, Doneraile, in 1876. He was the son of



Richard Ellis who had married Catherine Sheehan on May 16, 1844, at Cobh. It is an interesting point that the witness to this wedding was James Barry of Ballyellis. Richard and Catherine were also married as Catholics.

Branches of the family had also established themselves firmly in Cork City. William Ellis, a son of one of the Doneraile Nicholas Ellis's - unfortunately we cannot be absolutely sure which - was born in Cork City in 1807. This branch established themselves as stonecutters in Douglas Street. This William died in 1852. His two sons David (1830-1917) and Nicholas (1840-1912) carried on the stonecutter business in Douglas Street. Nicholas, however, took time out to go to America in 1861 and he remained there until 1869. He went to Louisville and joined the 20<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Kentucky Infantry during the Civil War and rose to be a first sergeant fighting in many of the major battles such as Shiloh, Corinth and the march on Atlanta. Discharged in 1865, the family believe that he joined the IRB and was part of Colonel Owen Starr's 17<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (raised in Louisville where Nicholas had been given his honourable discharge). This unit took part in the Fenian invasion of the Provinces of British North America in June, 1866. The Fenian army, using for the first time in history the name 'Irish Republican Army' (the letters IRA embossed on the brass buttons of their uniforms) comprised 25,000 veterans of both Union and Confederate Armies. They were to cross in three sections under the command of the Cork born Major General 'Fighting Tom' Sweeny (1820-1892), a former Union army divisional commander. The invasion force had five ex-US Naval surplus warships, cannon, cavalry and weapons.

Starr's Louisville regiment was the first unit to cross the Niagara River. Quick political manoeuvring by the British, promising to pay the US reparation for supporting the Confederacy during the Civil War, led the US troops commanded

by General U.S. Grant intervening in the crossing, cutting off supplies and reinforcements to the Fenians, who by this time had secured several victories in clashes with British forces. Mainly as a reaction to the invasion, the British American provinces united as the Dominion of Canada a year later. (See 'The Battle of Ridgeway, 2 June, 1866' by Peter Berresford Ellis, *The Irish Sword, Journal of the Military History Society of Ireland*, Winter, 1986, Vol XVI No 64 and Tenian casualties and prisoners; Fenian invasion of British North America, June 1866 by Peter Berresford Ellis and Joseph A. King, *The Irish Sword, Journal of the Military history Society of Ireland*, Summer, 1992, Vol XVIII No 73.)

Nicholas returned home in 1869 and married Mary Coughlan in Cork.

His eldest son William (1873-1951) served on Cork City Corporation. He was elected to it in 1916 and remained on it until 1935 taking into account the years when the Free State abolished it for voting in a Sinn Fein Lord Mayor. In fact, William himself served as Acting Lord Mayor of Cork.

William had been elected for the South Area No 2 in 1916 as an independent nationalist. He was re-elected in 1920. After the murder of Lord Mayor Tomas Curtain by British agents and the death on hunger strike in Brixton Prison of Lord Mayor Terence MacSwiney, Donal O'Callaghan had become Cork's third Sinn Fein Lord Mayor. Threatened with assassination by the British military, O'Callaghan had to flee to the USA and his deputy Barry Egan ran matters until O'Callaghan's return during the Treaty negotiations.

During the Civil War, when Cork fell to Free State troops in August, 1922, the City Corporation defied the Free State by electing the anti-Treaty O'Callaghan for another term of office in spite of his former deputy, now pro-Treaty, Barry Egan. He believed he should take over as Lord Mayor. With O'Callaghan (also a member of the Dail) 'on the run', Alderman Liam

de Roiste (of Sinn Fein) proposed William Ellis to serve as Acting Lord Mayor. He guided the council meetings and corporation business in the city until January 25, 1924, when a new election was held.

Once more, the corporation elected a Sinn Fein Lord Mayor in Sean French. This caused the Free State Government to pass an Act in 1923, which dissolved the City Corporation. The Act empowered the Government to dissolve any local authority 'found to be negligent, insubordinate or corrupt'. It has been argued that French thereby remained technically Lord Mayor of Cork from 1924 until 1928. Protests from the Cork Progressive Association had forced a Cork City Management Act through in 1929, which provided a council and a city manager to administrate the city. Later a Fianna Fail Government reinstated the corporation and office of the Lord Mayor.

William Ellis became a key figure in developing Cork City's vocational and technical education facilities. He was president of the Irish Technical Education Congress from 1938-1942 as well as being a member of the Cork Harbour Board for many years. He died on January 9, 1951. (See *Cork Examiner*, January 10, 1951).

My father's branch of the family also descended from the same Nicholas Ellis of Doneraile who had moved to Cork City. His branch descended from a brother of William, the stonecutter, called Thomas born in 1808. My father was born in Sunday's Well Avenue in 1899. I would like to think that he had been named Alan after

Alan fitz Elys who was one of the first of the family to settle in Munster - Alan's name is recorded in the Justiciary Rolls and was living in Limerick in 1307. After all, Alan is a good Breton name meaning 'harmony'. My father started his career in 1916, the same year as his cousin William was elected to the City Corporation. He joined the firm of Thomas Crosbie as a reporter, working on the *Cork Examiner*, which was founded in 1841. He was imprisoned for a short period by the British in 1920/21 for taking eyewitness accounts of the burning of Cork City by British troops on the night of December 11/12, 1920 to Frank Gallagher's Republican Publicity Bureau in Dublin. He escaped jail and left Ireland, pursuing a writing career in South America, the South Pacific and France before arriving in London in the late 1920s.

There are still many questions that the family would like to find answers to about the Millstreet period, not least, more information on the house that was known as 'Cicamore' (Sycamore) and the relationships to one another of some of the various Davids, Nicholas, Thomas, Williams and Eyres at the time.

*Editor's note: Peter Berresford Ellis and the Aubane Historical Society would be interested in anyone who has information or memories of the Ellis family and especially the location of the Millstreet house 'Sycamore' often spelt 'Cicamore'. Contact the Aubane Historical Society, Aubane, Millstreet, Co. Cork.*

# CARRIGAPHOOKA CASTLE

## or, the story of the McCarthys of Drishane

**T**hat grim gaunt tower perched upon the rock of Carrigaphooka has always been an object of interest to tourists who travel the main road from Cork to Killarney. Beyond, that it figures in one of Crofton Croker's fairy tales, as the haunt of a "phooka" or malevolent fairy, little is known in the locality about it. But it also has a history, and those who built it and guarded it - the McCarthys of Drishane - played their part in the stormy events which make up our island's story.

It is one of the few castles, in County Cork, concerning which a detailed report has been written of its assault and capture. The man who captured it was Donal O'Sullivan Beare, whose retreat from Glengariff to Leitrim has been the subject of song and story.

Prior to the Anglo-Norman invasion, the territory in which Carrigaphooka Castle stands was known as Muscraidhe Ui Fhlainn, and extended from the Dripsey river westwards to the Kerry border. The ruling family seem to have been a branch of the Cinel Laoghaire sept - and part of the race known as Eoghanacht Ui Eanach, whose later descendants are the O'Mahonys and O'Donoghues. The Cinel Laoghaire of Muskerry were descended from an ancestor named Flann - hence the name of their territory. With their kinsmen, they dominated Desmond (or South Munster) for centuries prior to

the battle of Clontarf. On the way home from that battle, the two leading septs fell out, and internecine warfare followed, resulting in the permanent weakening of all parties. Then the McCarthys came from Tipperary, and, assisted by Turlough O'Connor of Connaught, imposed themselves upon Desmond as the ruling race.

When Henry II came he found Dermot McCarthy "King of Cork." In reality he was the ruling chief of Desmond, which extends westwards to Brandon Head in Kerry. Dermot accepted Henry as his overlord, hoping to hold his 'kingdom' from him. Henry accepted the submission, but, later on, he and his son John divided Desmond amongst their Anglo-Norman followers. In this manner Muskerry became part of a De Cogan grant.

The De Cogans proceeded to incastellate their lands, and erected an imposing castle, known as the "Great Castell" or Castlemore. Its ruins still stand near the village of Crookstown, Co. Cork, and form a picture of what those early Anglo-Norman castles looked like. From this centre they dominated Muskerry, and it is very likely that they were the original builders of Macroom Castle.

In 1261, Fineen McCarthy - descendant of Dermot's - united the Irish of Desmond against the rule of the Anglo-Norman magnates. Both armies met near Callan - on the banks of the Roughty river - not far from Ardtully, in Kerry. Fineen

gained a victory, many Anglo-Norman leaders were slain, and their newly erected castles destroyed later on. Donal Roe McCarthy - brother of Fineen - fought on the side of the invaders against his own kinsmen, and from this Donal are descended the McCarthy-Mor McCarthys of Muskerry and Drishane - in fact nearly all the McCarthy chiefs of later days - excepting those of Carbery.

At some time in the next century a descendant of Donal's, styled Dermot Mor McCarthy (circa 1350), swept eastward from Kerry, defeated the Clans of Muscraidhe Ui Fhlainn, and put their chiefs to death. The ancient name of Macroom Castle being "Cashlean Ui Fhlainn" it may be inferred therefrom that they had held it from the time of the battle of Callan to the advent of Dermot.

The McCarthys then settled in Muskerry, where for centuries they ruled Irish clansman and English settler. The great Cogan fortress of Castlemore passed into their hands, and they, in their turn, erected castles as far as the gates of Cork - the western being at Carrigaphooka, and the eastern one at Blarney.

Dermot's Mor's grandson, Teig, was chief of Muskerry until his death in 1448. He gave Carrigaphooka and Drishane Castles, with their appurtenant lands, to his eldest son Dermot. The latter died during his father's lifetime, and his younger brother, Cormac "Laidir," became chief of Muskerry. He was slain at Dripsey Castle by his brother Owen (circa 1495). He had founded Kilcrea Monastery and on his tomb there was once an inscription recording his descent from "Dermot Magnus McCarthy, Dominus de Musgry Flayn." Owen succeeded his slain brother as chief, but the son of the elder brother Dermot overthrew him to be swept aside in his turn by Cormac Oge, son of Cormac Laidir. An arrangement was made by which Cormac, the son of Dermot, was allowed to retain the

Carrigaphooka and Drishane territory, independent of any dues to the later chiefs of Muskerry.

Throughout the Tudor period, all the McCarthy chiefs appear to have been loyal to the "English connexion" and increased in power and prestige at the expense of discontented Anglo-Norman lords. They discarded Irish tenure and obtained grants from the Crown.

The chief of Carrigaphooka in 1592 was Teige MacOwen McCarthy, and in that year he adopted the "surrender and re-grant" policy. His wife was a McSwiney, and their eldest son Owen McTeige was married to a daughter of Sir Cormac Mac Teige, who had been High Sheriff of Co. Cork, Lord of Muskerry and actively engaged in bringing about the downfall of Gerald, the Earl of Desmond.

A report forwarded to London about this time stigmatised all the sons of Teige Owen to be "notorious malefactors" with the exception of Owen. There is no evidence, however, that they took any part in the "Sugan Earl's" rebellion or in the events leading up to the battle of Kinsale, in the Christmas of 1601. Owen's brother-in-law Teige (son of Sir Cormac Mac Teige above mentioned) had joined Carew and Mountjoy in besieging the Spaniards at Kinsale. When O'Neill and O'Donnell surrounded the English camp Teige deserted and joined them. O'Neill seems to have promised him the chieftanship of Muskerry if he won through.

After the rout at Kinsale, Teige fled to his sister's residence at Carrigaphooka. From that Castle, he wrote to Carew in June 1602, entreating forgiveness and asking a safe conduct to Cork. On arriving, he gave information that the ruling Lord of Muskerry (his first cousin), Cormac Mac Dermot was in league with the Spaniards, and had promised to give them possession of Blarney Castle on their next landing; also that he had received

Spanish gold from Owen McEgan, the Pope's Bishop of Ross. The Lord of Blarney was thereupon arrested, but shortly afterwards escaped from prison, scaled the wall of Cork, and joined Donal O'Sullivan Beare.

Philip O'Sullivan, in his Catholic History, observes that Teige McOwen's sons - that is, Owen of Carrigaphooka and his brothers - had also received some of the Spanish money, and were implicated in the plot to denounce the Lord of Muskerry - as well as their brother-in-law. The Lord of Muskerry, and O'Sullivan Beare, then determined to take Carrigaphooka Castle from them.

The Irish historian describes the castle as being strong in its natural situation, and difficult to storm. There was no passage by which cannon could be brought to batter it, as it was situated amongst rocks and woods. Neither could it be undermined, as it was built upon cutaway steep rock. It was surrounded by two stone walls; one near the base of the rock was "two cubits higher than a man"; the other near the top was higher still. From the lower to the higher wall, the ascent was by a narrow steep path. O'Sullivan having, with great difficulty, brought his army to the place, proceeded to surround it. He posted five hundred marksmen in the rocks and woods around. They showered bullets at the windows, doors, and battlements of the castle, and forced the defenders to remain under cover within the walls. A storming party was formed, and, covered by the fire of the marksmen, attacked the gate in the lowermost wall and burnt it. Then the pikemen passed through and climbed the rocks to the second wall. They partly burst and burned the door of that wall, got through and attacked the castle door. According to the historian the castle began to totter, and a panic seized the garrison, who surrendered upon terms. They were allowed to depart, and O'Sullivan dismantled the castle. In it was found some

of the Spanish gold, and many other treasures deposited there for safe-keeping by the neighbours.

When Hugh O'Donnell died in Spain, Cormac MacDermod, the Lord of Muskerry, saw there was no further hope and made terms with the English. In October 1602 these were finally arranged and included "*that he deliver Castlephooke into the hands of the State and obtain the release of Owen McTeige's wife, children, and people out of the traitor's hands,*" the "traitor" being O'Sullivan Beare, who still held out.

Owen McTeige appears to have been in residence at his other castle in Drishane, and somewhere in the vicinity was the camp of a brilliant Anglo-Irish leader, who was on O'Sullivan's side. This Captain Tyrell, of Tyrell's Pass, in Westmeath, had been left behind by Hugh O'Neill after Kinsale to aid the Southern Chiefs. He is described as being encamped on the Western confines of Muskerry, surrounded by bogs and woods.

Sir Samuel Bagenal - who commanded for the Queen - sent a messenger to Owen at Drishane, asking him to find out how Tyrell's camp was defended. Owen did so, and offered to guide the English to it. Through muddy, miry ways, they marched at night, until they were so close that they could see the watchfires. Then they halted, and Owen MacTeige with his first cousin Owen "Loghy" McSwiney, were dispatched to take a closer view. They got very near unperceived, and on returning informed Bagenal that the camp was in three sections; that there was a large wood at the back; in front was a bog a half mile broad; and on either side were craggy and rocky mountains. Bagenal divided his men to surround the camp, but when they were very near, one of them stumbled, and his gun went off. The camp was alarmed. Tyrell escaped; but some of his men were killed, and 1,000 cows taken, with horse,

arms, and Spanish money. This exploit did not satisfy Owen, for we read when Donal O'Sullivan Beare engaged in his last desperate retreat from Glengariff to Leitrim, the sons of Teige McCarthy attacked him and pursued him as far as the banks of the Blackwater.

These exploits do not confer any credit upon Owen MacTeige and his brothers as looked at from our standards of later days, but it must be remembered that the news of Hugh O'Donnell's death convinced them, and other southern chiefs, that no more Spanish aid was possible, and their only chance to hold their lands was to throw in their lot with the Queen's forces. O'Sullivan Beare would probably have sued for pardon himself had there been any likelihood it would have been given.

The Owen McSwiney who spied on Tyrell's camp, with his cousins, was the founder of the Mashanaglas family. He is referred to in recognisances taken in 1602, when "*Owen MacDonell Mac Swyny alias Owen Eloghy de Mashanaglas, gent; Owen MacTeige Charty de Dryshane, gent; and Donogh McCormac Carty de Cloghphilip, gent, entered into bonds that the said Owen McDonell would appear before the Lord President of Munster at Shandon Castle, Cork, before twenty one days, and answer such matters as shall be alleged against him.*"

Owen MacTeige McCarthy died peacefully at Drishane castle on November 10, 1637. By his first wife, Grania, daughter of Sir Cormac MacTeige, he had eight sons and five daughters.

(1) Donogh McOwen, who married Katherine, daughter of John Barry, alias MacRobinson, of Ballyclogh Castle near Mallow.

(2) Teige, who married, first, Catherine, daughter of David Lacey of Athlaca, Co. Limerick and, secondly, Ellen, daughter of Donogh O'Leary - the O'Leary (of Millstreet?).

(3) Donal, who married Hanora, daughter of Morrogh McSwiney, alias Morogh My Mart - a famous gallowglass leader.

(4) Cormac, who married Margaret, another daughter of David Lacey, of Athlaca.

5, 6, 7, & 8 Dermot, Callaghan, Phelim and Fynen, unmarried.

Owen MacTeige had married secondly Katherine, daughter of Thomas Fitzgerald of Co. Waterford and widow of Richard FitzDavy Barry, of Rahansky Castle near Cork by whom he had a son, Owen Oge, unmarried at his father's death.

When Owen MacTeige died in 1637 an inquisition was held into his lands. It was found that he died possessed of the Castles of Carrigaphooka and Drishane, with the lands of Coomlegane, Liscahane, Glantane, Cloghboola, Lackybane, etc. and that Donogh McOwen, his eldest son and heir, was 40 years of age.

In the current number of the Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society appears a remarkable article on this Donogh Owen McCarthy, written by Mrs. Benedicta Wyse Power, descended from him through the McCarthy-O'Leary family of Coomlegane, Millstreet. She states that he lived in Drishane Castle up to the year 1719, when he died there aged 122 years, and that his tomb in Drishane churchyard testifies to this, as well as family documents, and tradition.

If so, he must have witnessed some extraordinary events in Irish history. He was a boy of five years old when O'Sullivan Beare captured his father's castle - and, as we have seen, presumably his mother and himself also. Elizabeth was then Queen of England. She was succeeded by James I, he by his son Charles I, when Donogh was in his prime. Donogh "went out" for that Charles in

1641, and amongst those outlawed at that time we find Teige McPhelim McCarthy of Drishanebeg, gent; Callaghan McOwen McCarthy of Drishane, and Donogh McCarthy of Drishane, gentleman.

He fought under his chief (and cousin), the Lord of Muskerry, from 1641 to 1652, and as a result his castle and lands were confiscated, to be restored later by Charles II. Later on, he went into action for James II, and was in charge of Ballyclogh Castle when it surrendered to the Williamites in 1691. He claimed - and obtained - the benefits of the Treaty of Limerick and an order to the Sheriff of Cork to seize "Carrigafookey" town, castle and lands was revoked. He took the oath of allegiance to William and Mary, survived them, and their successor Anne. And George I had been five years old when the old veteran gave up the ghost.

Unlike the other chiefs of the Clan Carthy, Donogh had remained attached to the Faith of his fathers, and as a result of the Penal Laws his title to his lands became insecure. Like many other Catholic landowners of the time, he handed over title to a Protestant - one Thomas Conner of Dublin - for a bill of £500. In 1718, he made his last Will, which is given in extenso by Mrs. Wyse Power in the article referred to.

He ordered his body to be buried in Drishane Church and a covered tomb to be erected over it. To the Roman Catholic clergy of Cork and Kerry he bequeathed £200 to be divided as Father Donogh McCarthy saw fit. (Father Donogh was Bishop of Cork but this could not be made known publicly). He divided his lands and property amongst the McCarthy and O'Leary families but no attempt was made to prove the Will on account of the stringent Penal Laws relating to land ownership by Catholics.

He had been married secondly to Juliann O'Leary of Coomlegane and she

made over her life interest in the lands to her grand-nephew, Denis O'Leary. The McCarthys of Kilcorney and Dooneen disputed this, and legal warfare ensued. Meanwhile Conner, who had the "title" in trust, died, and his executors discovered it was a "sham" deed. In 1726 a man named Wallis proved that the lands were "Papist" property, and as a result, bills of sale of the castles, and lands of Drishane, Kilmeedy, Carrigaphooka, etc. were posted up in Cork, Bandon, and Millstreet. The McCarthys and O'Learys (anticipating modern tactics) put up notices forbidding the sale, but it was no use, for on May 24, 1728, Wallis bought Drishane for £450, although it was estimated as worth £3,000. His descendants held on until they sold it to the religious community which now occupy Drishane Castle and lands.

Matthew Deane of Cork bought Carrigaphooka but when he realised the injustice of the sale he did not go through with it and the McCarthys remained in possession. A tradition existed in Millstreet that Wallis turned Donogh McCarthy's widow - then a very old woman - out of Drishane Castle by force, and that she died there upon the doorstep.

Old Donogh had got a grant and charter of fairs and markets for Millstreet, to be held in the lands of Coomlegane in November 17, 1710, and this is also mentioned in his Will, when he bequeathed them to his nephew. Wallis seems to have obtained those as well, for in September, 1737, John Wallis, of Westwood, Esq., obtained a new patent to hold the fairs and markets of Millstreet on the lands of Liscahane.

Donogh's wife's relatives, Daniel and Arthur O'Leary, are mentioned in the Will. From this stock sprang Arthur O'Leary, the outlaw\*, who married Daniel O'Connell's aunt, and was slain in 1773. Townsend, in his survey of Cork, written at the beginning of the last century,

describes the then representative of that race:

*"The mention of Millstreet brings to my recollection a remarkable personality once well-known in its vicinity, a short account of whom may not be unacceptable. As the head of a respectable old Irish family, he was known only by the name O'Leary, and was one of the last of that description who affected the ancient style of hospitable living. This, too, he was enabled to accomplish on a moderate fortune as his hospitality was unencumbered with equipage or parade. He lived in a small house, the lower half consisting of little more than a parlour and a kitchen, the former of which properly supplied with every article of good cheer, was open to every guest and at every season! And, what will more surprise, this profusion was accompanied with perfect cleanliness and decorum. His cellar, well stocked with good liquors, never knew the protection of a lock and key, for, as he said himself, nobody had occasion to steal what anyone might have for asking. It derived security, however, from other causes, from deference to his sway and respect to his person, both of which were universally felt and acknowledged within the circle of his influence. He was also a Justice of the Peace for the county. The appearance of O'Leary was always sufficient to maintain order in fairs and meetings and to suppress any spirit of disturbance without the aid of soldier or constable. He possessed indeed some admirable requirements for a maintainer of the peace, for he was a very athletic man and always carried a long pole of which the unruly knew him to be no churl. To these qualities O'Leary added an inexhaustible fund of original humour and good-natured cheerfulness, and, being very fond of the bottle himself, it was impossible to be long in his company, sad or sober.*

*"Of this, I recollect one remarkable instance. A good many years ago some friends of mine arrived at Millstreet, and, being fatigued from a long journey, wished to retire to an early rest. O'Leary, who was in the town, happening to be a little acquainted with one of the party, prevailed*

*on them to take supper at his house. Thither they proceeded with a fixed determination neither to drink nor remain longer than barely necessary. But such was O'Leary's power of pleasing that they willingly prolonged their stay till near morning and were imperceptibly led from bottle to bottle till it became a task of some difficulty to repair to their lodging. In this way O'Leary lived for many years impairing, though he did not exhaust his property. He left one daughter, since married to Mr McCarthy, who has built a neat and fashionable house near the site of the old mansion."*

The Mr. McCarthy who married O'Leary's daughter was a direct descendant of Donogh, whose Will we have recorded, and had inherited the Dooneen and Kilcorney property. He married first a daughter of Felix McCarthy of Spring House, Co. Tipperary. She died in 1780 and he married secondly Helen, daughter and heiress of O'Leary of Millstreet. His eldest son by his first wife was Denis McCarthy of Coomlegane who assumed the name of O'Leary in accordance with the Will of his step-mother when he inherited her property. His son and heir was John McCarthy-O'Leary of Coomlegane, born in 1841, died in 1860 who was High Sheriff of Co. Cork in 1854 and Deputy Lieutenant of that county. He married a daughter of John O'Connell, of Grenagh, Co. Kerry - niece to Daniel O'Connell, the Liberator, and widow to O'Donoghue of the Glens. They had (amongst others) a son William born in 1849, who was Lieutenant-Colonel in the 40th Regiment and was killed at Peters Hill in South Africa, in 1900, leading his men into action. He was married to Mary Considine, of Derk, Co. Limerick and their son William was killed at Flanders in 1916 aged 22 years. Another son, Colonel Donagh McCarthy-O'Leary, DSO, MC, served through the European War and is (I presume) the oldest surviving male representative of a race which can be traced backward as far as Dermot



McCarthy, King of Cork and, if we are to believe the ancient Irish pedigrees, as far as Adam.

I had almost forgotten about Carrigahooka Castle. It is now under the protection of the Board of Works and is

likely to stand through many more centuries. Anybody who climbs the rock to its doorway even to-day, will appreciate the difficulties encountered by O'Sullivan Beare's pikemen when they clambered up 335 years ago and burst in the door.

(By "Heber" from *The Kerryman* Christmas Number, December, 1937)

\* *The term outlaw should be in inverted commas here as Art O'Leary was only an outlaw according to the Penal Laws, which were used to destroy him. J.L.*

\*

## EXPLANATORY NOTE ON THE MAP IN THE CENTRE PAGES

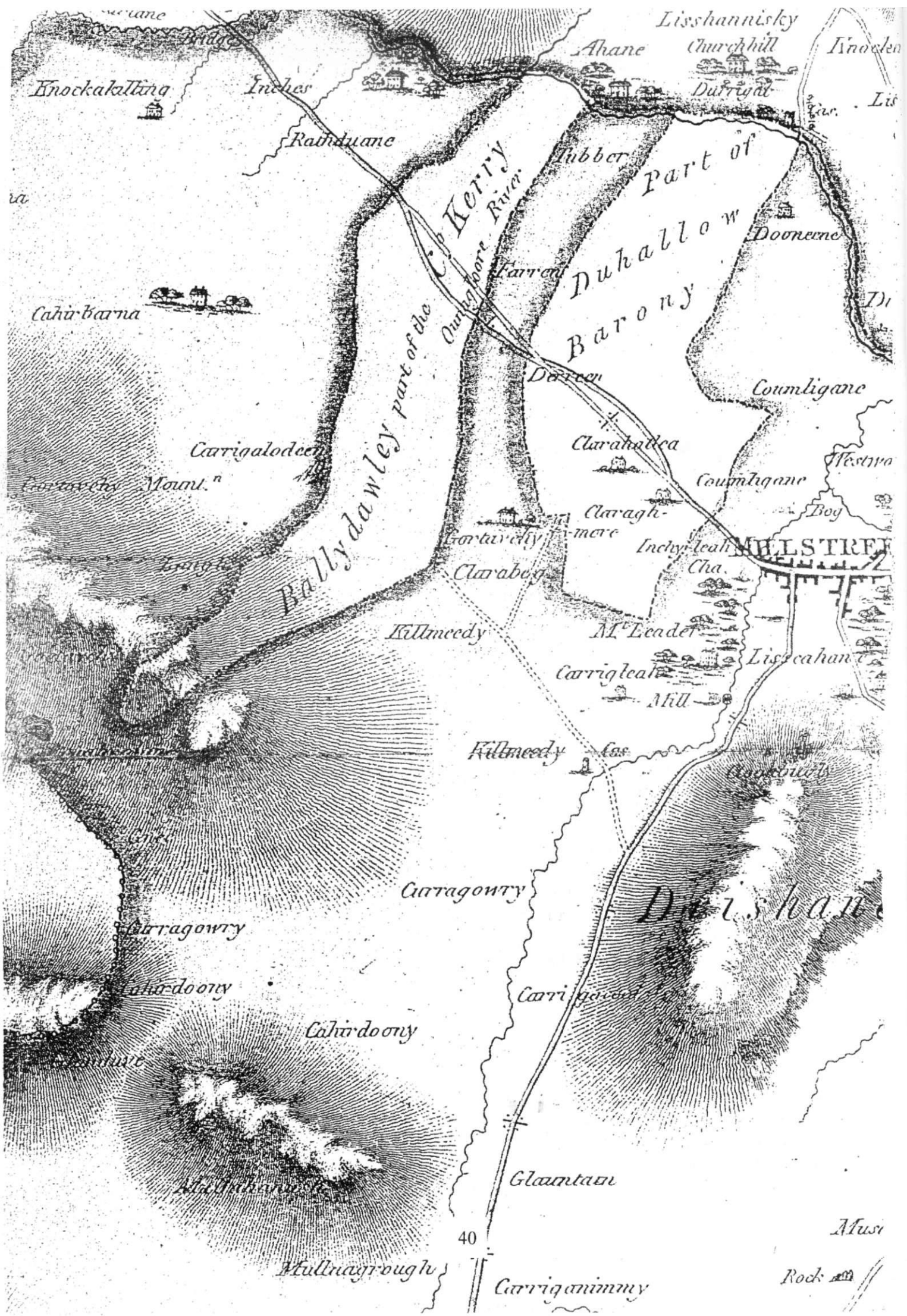
This map, from which the extract on pages 22-3 is taken, was drawn up by the landlord and owner of the coal mines in Dromagh, Nicholas Leader, who was also MP for Kilkenny. It is described as:

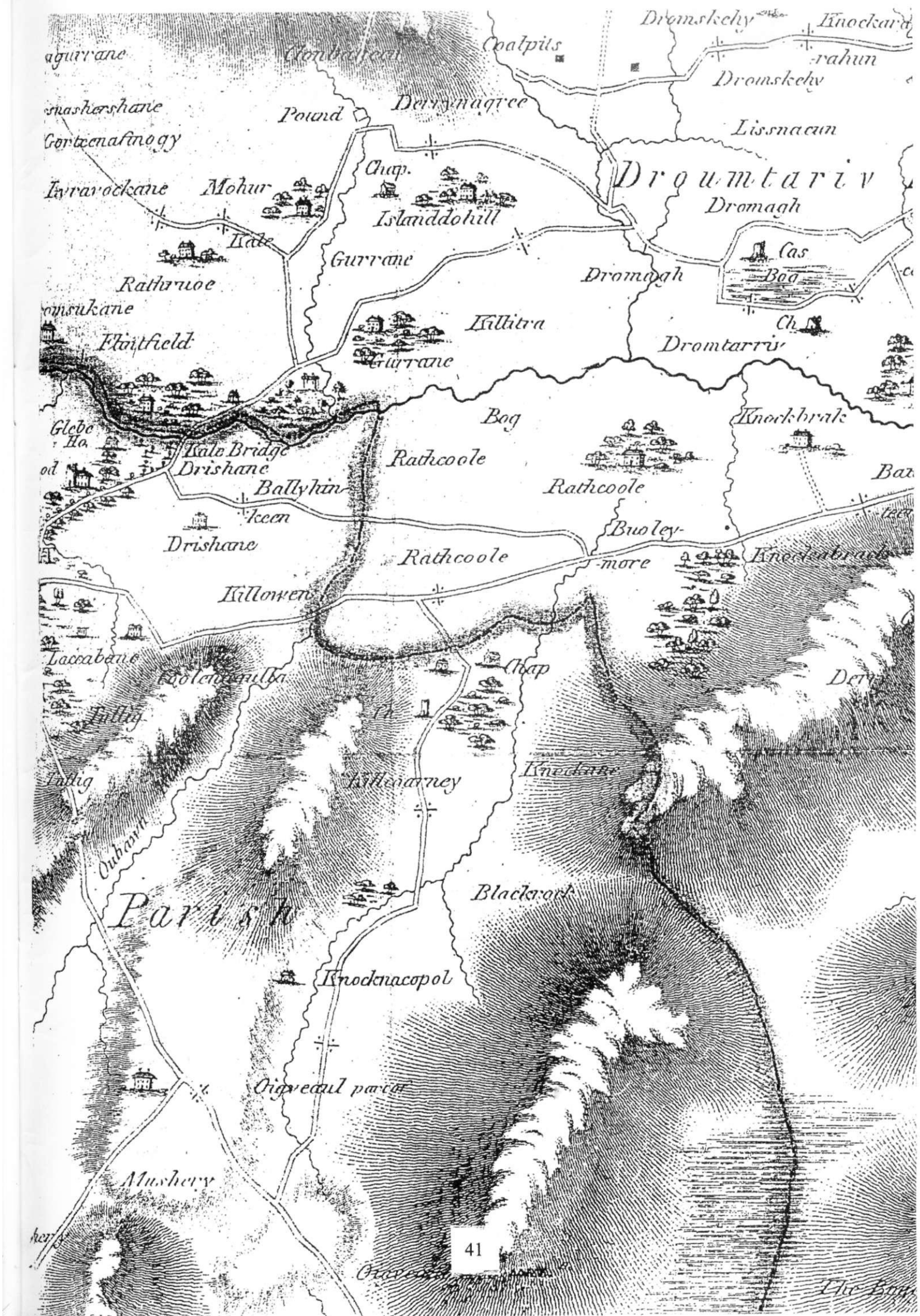
**"MAP OF MUNSTER PREPARED FOR THE PURPOSE OF  
PRESENTING AT ONE VIEW TO HIS MAJESTY, KING  
GEORGE IV, THE STATE OF THIS DISTURBED AND  
DISTRESSED PROVINCE BY THE DIRECTIONS OF AND  
FOR THE USE OF N. P. LEADER, ESQ. "**

It was obviously prepared as the Whiteboy uprising against the tithes in the early 1820s was being savagely put down across North Cork because it has a number of symbols to denote, among other things, "Places where the military put down the Insurgents". These are at Inchigeeia, Carriganima, Drishure, Millstreet, Rathcoole, Churchtown and Newmarket and the symbol is shaped like a heart Also indexed are "Places of capital punishments" and these are at Drishure, Carriganima and Newmarket. The symbol is shaped like a square and these were places of public executions. He also lists the places where there were special court sessions being held to try the 'insurgents.'

Leader also took pains to point out the vast tracts of land owned by absentee landlords as well as pointing out resident landlords and those with property elsewhere in Ireland, such as himself. The absentees are indicated by various light pink colourings which do not show up well in this monochrome copy. The holdings of resident landlords are indicated by the symbol of clumps of trees. I think he was trying to give the king and his advisors a clear hint that might enable, even them, to see a connection between the 'disturbances' and the scandal of absentee landlordism.

(British Library: Add Ms: 63632)







# CORRESPONDENCE CORNER

Professor Foster and Penguin Books.

On 23rd. July 2002 we wrote to the Managing Director of Penguin Books drawing attention to the defamatory statements made about us by Professor Foster in his recent book and requesting that they be deleted in any further reprinting of the book. We detailed our complaint in the following Memorandum:

MEMORANDUM OF REFERENCES TO THE AUBANE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN 'THE IRISH STORY - TELLING TALES AND MAKING IT UP IN IRELAND' BY ROY F. FOSTER. (ALLEN LANE/THE PENGUIN PRESS, 2001)

## 1. EXTRACT:

"...the shadowy Aubane Historical Society's eccentric North Cork Anthology."  
page 148, lines 4 and 5.

## COMMENT:

We have had a very public existence for 17 years producing 36 publication so far with the usual publicity and advertising as well as regular reviews in the press. Mr. Foster gives our full address and as you can see from our headed paper we are as open and as contactable as anybody can be. More contactable, in fact, than your good self whose name would not be made available to me when I rang your company. I should add that describing people in Ireland who comment and write on Irish history as 'shadowy' can have very ominous interpretations at the present time.

## 2. EXTRACT:

"... Bowen is excluded from North Cork sensibilities because of her ancestry." page 148, line 20.

## COMMENT:

The implication is that we have suppressed information about Elizabeth Bowen. On the contrary, we have republished material by her and we have also published a collection of material by her that had never before been made available. We have undertaken, and do so again now, that we would publish *all* her unpublished material if it was made available to us. Mr. Foster's remarks are therefore inaccurate and misleading.

## 3. EXTRACT:

"... the anthologist also describes Bowen's biographer Patricia Craig as English, though she was born and bred in Belfast." page 148, lines 22-3.

## COMMENT:

Ms. Craig is not referred to in our *North Cork Anthology*.

Penguin consulted with Mr. Foster and replied by asking us to believe that the reference to the Society as shadowy is '*perfectly in keeping with the meaning of 'shadowy' which means insubstantial or indistinct*' and that they '*do not consider it to have any more negative connotation than that.*' One wonders then why Mr. Foster did not use these other words in his book? Of course, if he did, it would pose a question in his readers' mind. Namely, why is the renowned and much lauded Carroll Professor of Irish History at Oxford, doyen of the revisionist school of history, Yeats scholar and biographer, a recent Distinguished President's Speaker at UCC, etc., etc., bothering his head with us - insubstantial, indistinct nonentities - and why had been rehearsing what he said in his book about us at international conferences for years past? If he did, Mr. Foster would have looked a bit of a fool, which he is not, so he gives us a sinister status

in order to justify his efforts at defamation. He is in the position of the Emperor in the story who has met the boy who tells him he has no clothes - and he knows it. We will keep on telling him and, if he is not exactly naked to all at the moment, Mr. Foster's reputation is looking more and more tattered. They agreed that Ms. Craig was not mentioned in the Anthology and offered to amend that reference in a future edition.

In September 2002, Penguin Books went ahead and republished the book in paperback unchanged. Apologies - they changed the cover, to one that goes much better with the telling of yarns such as are contained in Foster's about Ireland - a pint of Guinness - begorra! Will it be shamrocks and shillelaghs on his next book?

We wrote to Penguin on 16th. October 2002:-

It is regrettable that Penguin Books refuses an amicable settlement with us on the basis of the plain meaning of words as actually used.

1. *"Shadowy"* has long had the connotation of shady or sinister, and that is its intended meaning by Mr. Foster.
2. The meaning an ordinary reader would get from your book is that the Aubane Historical Society suppressed information about Elizabeth Bowen whereas in fact it gave information about her where she was clearly unknown.
3. The statement in your book was that a statement was made about Patricia Craig in the *North Cork Anthology*. You now admit that such was not the case. If Penguin Books is as careless about publishing untrue statements as your author was in constructing them, and is happy about the book as it stands, do not correct it on the supposition that this will settle matters with this Society.

Yours etc.

#### Apology from RTE and Professor Kiberd

In the course of a review of Foster's book on RTE's 'Off the Shelf' on 23rd February 2002, the Professor of English at UCD, Professor Declan Kiberd, described members of the Society as 'nutters.' We protested to the Authority and they did the decent thing (in stark contrast to Penguin Books) and broadcast the following apology on 9th March 2002:-

*"RTE and Declan Kiberd regret that a comment made on the 'Off the Shelf' programme was broadcast on the 23rd of February 2002 caused offence to the Aubane Historical Society in North Cork. This was not our intention and we sincerely apologise.*

*The Aubane Historical Society has published a wide range of material on national and local history including material on major historical figures like Parnell and Thomas Davis and writers Canon Sheehan and Elizabeth Bowen."*

For a review of Foster's book, the exchange on RTE between Kiberd and others, and more background material on our differences with Foster read "Aubane versus Oxford" from the Society and local shops.

## Letter to *The Corkman* on D D Sheehan

In a personal capacity I sent the following letter to *The Corkman* as part of the correspondence generated by a series of articles in that paper on D D Sheehan by John Dillon:

1/11/02

DD SHEEHAN - WHY HE REALLY LEFT IN 1918

Dear Sir,

Despite Niall O'Siochain's reference to the recollection of D D's daughter, Mona, (*The Corkman*, 31/10/02) when she was 6 years of age, I find a number of problems with what he says about the incident that is supposed to have caused D D to leave the country. In the "Irish Times" interview, that Niall refers to, there is no mention by Mona to there having been shots fired into their house, as Niall claims. She said in that interview: "*I suppose my father was tipped off something was going to happen.*" and they left. So nothing actually happened. It seems to be the sort of event that gets more dramatic with the telling. Why is there no date given for the event? It would surely have been well reported? There appears to be no adult witnesses to the event, not even DD himself, and no other confirmation apart from that of a nursery child(ren). D D never mentions it and he had plenty to say and write about for nearly 30 years afterwards, including editing the annual Irish supplement to the British Legion's journal, for a number of years, which would have been a very suitable and, no doubt, willing vehicle for such information.

On the contrary, D D went out of his way to praise the honourable behaviour of Sinn Fein and the IRA. In his "*Ireland since Parnell*" he said that the War of Independence: - "...was conducted on honourable lines by the Sinn Feiners. The policemen and soldiers who surrendered were treated with courtesy, and not one of them wounded or insulted. Their wives and children were also carefully preserved from danger." (Page 321). I cannot see how D D would have written that if he was treated as Niall claims - unless he was a complete hypocrite - which he was not.

I believe there is a much more obvious and straightforward reason why he left. D D could never quite adjust to the new situation created by the huge change in public opinion here between 1916 and the 1918 election, which led to the establishment of the new Sinn Fein government and its army, the IRA. He saw Ireland's future as depending on Britain's good faith (as he also explains in "*Ireland since Parnell*" page 323) and that was a very naive attitude to have taken and totally at variance with public opinion here. He was a sitting MP in the House of Commons and intended to remain one; was fully involved in British politics; he had thrown in his lot with the British Labour Party; was its chief whip during 1918 and selected by the party to stand for it at Stepney-Limehouse in the autumn of 1918. Therefore he did not adopt the Sinn Fein position of quitting Westminster. He planned to stay there, so it was very logical that he should leave Cork to fight for his new seat and serve his adopted Party and constituency if elected. Practically speaking, he could not do otherwise.

I think that was the very simple reason why the family left in that autumn of 1918 and there is no need for it to be explained by melodramatic events - which of course can now be made to fit another agenda. Maybe, at the time, a bit of melodrama was necessary for the children's sake as an explanation was necessary for them as to why they had to leave their, no doubt, happy and only home they knew in Cork. Any parent will appreciate the temptation to do such things and a bogeyman was (is?) always a very useful character to have around a nursery on such occasions.

Niall says that at the end of the war D D was "... a popular figure with a large following". He is under a great illusion if he thinks so. On the contrary, D D was about the most unpopular man there was, at the time, and with good reason. That was because of the distinctive role he chose to play in the war which was not just fighting in it - but something much more important - his very enthusiastic recruiting for participation in that war by Britain on Germany and boasting of the numbers he recruited. He made

what proved to be a colossal error of judgement in believing and selling the war in Ireland as a war for the freedom of small nations. That slogan turned out to be a complete hoax, proved conclusively here after the 1918 election.

But the hoax had become pretty clear to many after the change of government (without an election) in 1915 when the Unionists who - to oppose Home Rule had brought the gun back into Irish politics by importing thousands of them from Germany, had planned civil war and giving their allegiance to the Kaiser - were now leaders in the new Government!! Such a government was certainly not going to allow freedom for small nations, particularly Ireland. That change of Government was the moral basis for the 1916 Rising.

But D D recruited right throughout the war, continuing to do so after 1916 which was a particularly provocative thing to do when so many of his colleagues began to have very serious doubts about the whole basis of their support for the war. His most effective recruiting was among his own electorate and supporters here in Cork (which included my own two grandfathers) building on the popularity he had achieved through the many fine causes and past achievements to his credit. It is not difficult to understand the powerful resentment that developed towards him, particularly by the friends and relatives of the many whom he had responsibility for leading to horrible deaths in a fraudulent cause. And this resentment was most certainly not confined to the IRA or Sinn Fein, as I know all too well from family members.

The awful truth is that his recruiting helped more Irish people to be killed in one day - and sometimes in less than one hour - than the IRA have had reason to kill in their whole existence for the past 80 odd years. That is the context in which any possible incident such as Niall relates might be seen and judged. And there is little doubt that the IRA could have killed him outright if they wished and if they acted as suggested by Mona they may well have saved his life, quite deliberately. And maybe that is also a reason he was so fulsome in praise of their honourable behaviour.

Niall asserts that what D D and others did in the war "... was restoring and maintaining a free Europe." It was nothing of the kind. Britain launched the First World War by declaring war on Germany and thereby ensuring that the latter had to defend itself against encirclement by three hostile powers intent on its destruction. It had nothing to do with 'freeing' Europe but all to do with the latest instalment of Britain's tried and tested balance of power game to keep Europe divided.

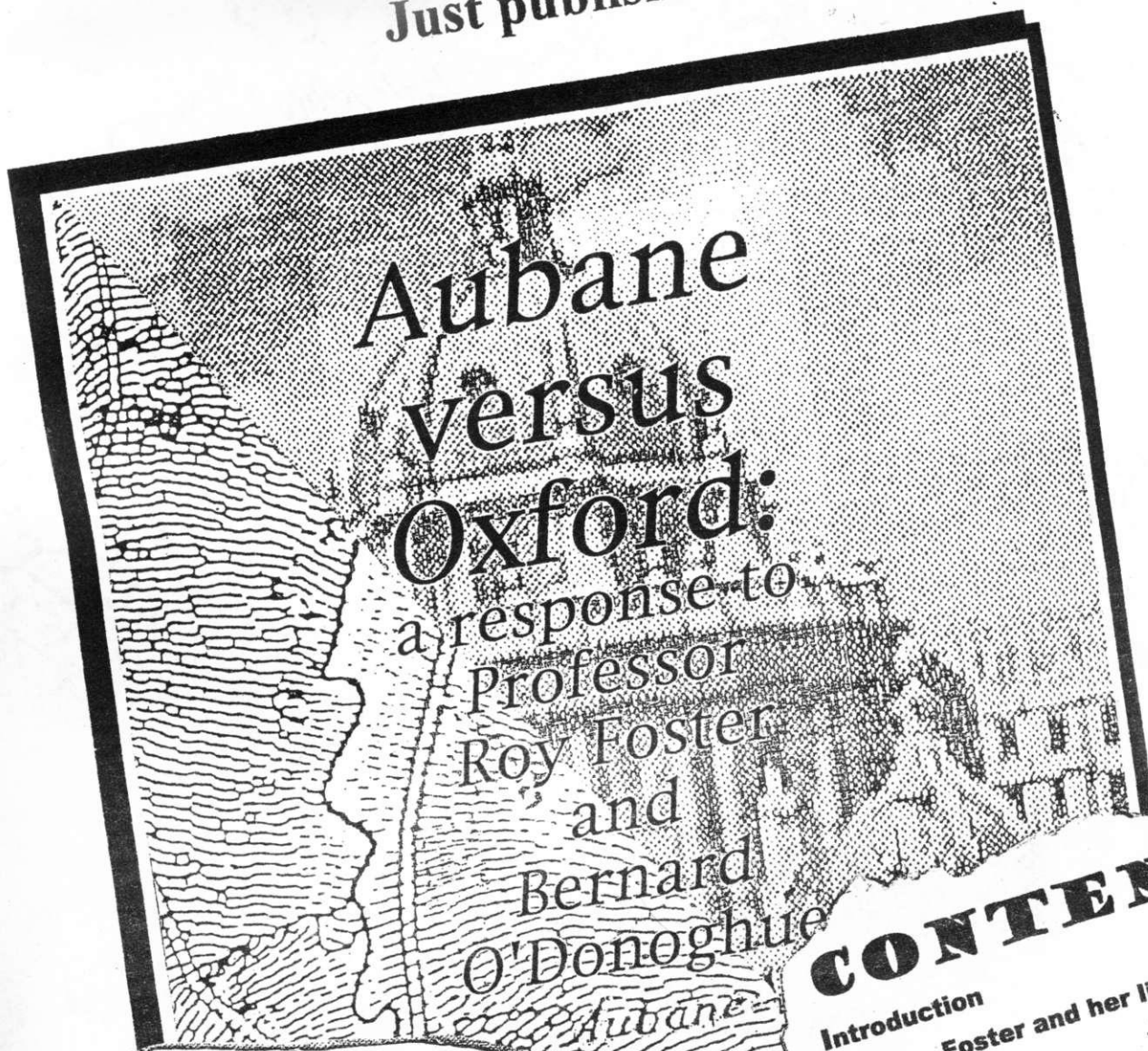
Germany never initiated, and never intended to initiate, war against Britain and therefore it was D D and others who were participating in an aggression that, far from 'freeing Europe', wrecked it again, and from which wrecking it has never fully recovered. The First World War launched by Britain was well described and explained by Roger Casement as "*The Crime against Europe*" and D D participated fully in that crime. Casement, of course, paid the price for saying so and trying to stop it.

All this is the negative and tragic part of D D's career and it is very unfortunate that it should have to be highlighted in any account of his life but that is inevitable if his actions after 1914 are introduced and justified and not put in their proper context. It gives me no pleasure at all to have to try to do so but my family members who had supported him, and then opposed him, did so for very good reasons. Niall is committed to defending his grandfather and I am equally committed to defending both of mine.

Yours sincerely,

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Just published:



# Aubane versus Oxford: a response to Professor Roy Foster and Bernard O'Donoghue

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Introduction *Jack Lane*  
Aisling Foster and her literary efforts *Julianne Herlihy*

Review of Roy Foster's book:  
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Varieties of Irishness *Thomas Bartlett*

Roy Foster  
fear na méaracán, (thimblerrigger) *Bernard O'Donoghue*  
*Seoirse Ó Luasa*

### HISTORY

Aubane versus Oxford: a response to Professor Roy Foster and Bernard O'Donoghue. *Aubane Historical Society*. 40 pp €10 brochure 30 cm 1-903497-08-6. Pamphleteering is alive and well at Aubane where historian Foster gets a roasting while O'Donoghue is put on a slightly lower heat, though the university to which he adheres (Oxford) is discovered to be a 'propaganda apparatus'. Seoirse Ó Luasa decries Foster's "cavalier approach to Irish history and someone who uses these methods is not concerned with writing history, he is up to something else" — indeed he is awarded the title thimblerrigger in two languages. Brendan Clifford, Julianne Herlihy and Thomas Bartlett also brandish their cudgels, bringing novelist Aisling Foster into the line of fire, who turns out to be Roy's other half, fosterishly unfair in her reviews of Alice Taylor, giving too much praise to Kevin Myers (that man again) and not much of a novelist either. Good lively stuff, this. *Jack Lane*

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Cappagh

Ballydaly

CLARA

Knockree

Coumatruska  
Waterfall

bog

GRIANIN