

Newsletter



Issue No. 101 Spring 2014

CONSTITUTION

At an extraordinary general meeting on 26 February a new constitution was adopted. A copy has been sent to all members.

The 2013 committee felt it was desirable that the society should operate under a definite set of rules and after much discussion, and with the benefit of legal advice from a solicitor experienced in this area, a constitution was drawn up. Following discussion at the EGM this was adopted by a large majority.

At the AGM which followed immediately the following members were elected to serve on the 2014 committee.

Garry Ahern, Paulene Cunningham, Brian Dooley, Des Flanagan, Roger Greene, Rene McDonnell, Phyl O'Shea, Michael Ryan, Paddy Ryan, David Sweeney and Joe Varley.

The new committee will meet shortly to to elect from within its ranks the following officers:

President, Chairman, Hon. Secretary, and Hon. Treasurer.

Note: Where a subscription has not been paid by 31st May the Hon. Treasurer is required to remove that member's name from the register of members.

Contributions welcomed for future

issues. Contact:

malahidehistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Whats happening

April 9: *Theatre Royal- a trip down memory lane:*
Conor Doyle.

May 14: *Malahide Miscellany*, a presentation by Brian Dooley of recent acquisitions to our collection of old Malahide photographs. Plus a short talk on *Woodbine Willie:* Ken McAllister.

All talks take place in Presbyterian Church Hall, Dublin Road at 8pm on 2nd Wednesday of the month.

Free parking in public car park opposite.

Admission €4.

Non-members welcome.

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We would very much like to see more people become actively engaged in researching aspects of Malahide's past history. Possible fields include the development of the village, the road system, public water and sewage systems, light and power, shops and other traders, members of the Talbot family, the Malahide Estate, evictions, field names, how the modern village developed, - the list is endless. A great hobby and addictive!

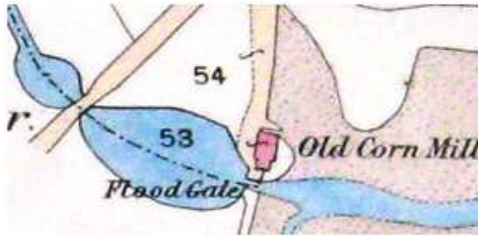
The Portmarnock Tide Mill

By Garry Ahern

The origin of tide-mills is lost in time but one such, at Strangford Lough, has been scientifically dated from the early seventh century. At least three clusters of tide-mills have been located along the east and south-east coasts of Ireland. One cluster, in north County Dublin, comprised tide-mills at Newhaggard (Rush), Kilcrea (Donabate), Yellow Walls (Malahide) and Burrow (Portmarnock). All four of these were operating until at least 1760 but the dates of their origin has not been ascertained.



Seaward view from Portmarnock Bridge of confining walls of mill-pond. The base of the former mill-house is at top left of picture.



This OS map (1869) extract provides a good illustration of the mill site then.

Tide-mills were constructed at the necks of narrow estuaries, where water could be readily confined by the building of dams and confining walls. A sufficient volume of water from the high tide, usually supplemented by an out-flowing river or stream, was trapped within the walls of the mill-pond behind the sluice-gates. At low tide, the water was released in a controlled manner and forced its way through a narrow outlet, in the process turning a wheel or paddle. The water-wheel was attached to a vertical shaft or spindle, which transferred the resulting motion directly to the upper millstone. Millstones were positioned on a higher level of the mill, one lying above the other. The grain was fed in between the two millstones where the rotation of the upper stone ground it against the lower. The faces of the millstones were dressed by chiselling, giving the appropriate degree of roughness necessary for shelling or grinding corn. The stones were adjusted for different tasks such as de-husking and milling of different types of grain.

Dissolution of Saint Mary's Abbey

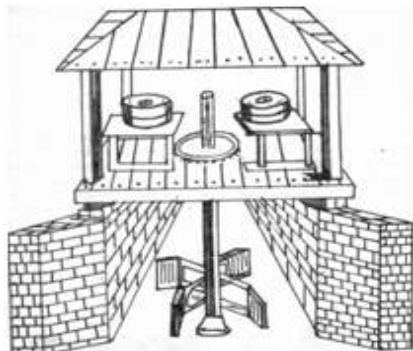
From the twelfth century until the dissolution of the monasteries in the sixteenth century, the Portmarnock corn-mill and surrounding lands were owned by the Abbey of St. Mary, Dublin, which had watermills at its various granges. After the dissolution, the Barnewall family of Turvey gained the lands of Burrow and its tide-mill. Subsequently, the mill was let to a number of different operators, before eventually falling into disuse in the nineteenth century.

In earlier records, there had been two watermills recorded in 'the V(ill) of Portmarnock'. The location of one of those, that beside near Portmarnock Bridge, at the southern end of Strand Rd., is not in doubt and much of its stonework remains visible today. The location of a second mill is not evident. The mid-sixteenth-century Civil Survey recorded just one mill, the 'tide Water Mill' at 'Connyborough'. While the buildings of that mill are now long gone, there is, for the inquisitive eye, a sizeable amount of clearly identifiable stone-work remaining from the corn-mill, including the stone base of the mill-house. The confining walls of the mill-pond, reaching out from near the bridge, are quite visible, particularly at ebb-tides. So too, are the remains of the wall across the mouth of the pond, which once held sluice-gates. The cut-stone base of the long-demolished mill-house building can be seen under a profuse growth of grasses.

The Mill in the 19th Century

Nathaniel Trumbull, of Beechwood, leased the mill in 1800 and let it to operators. A map he had drawn in 1815 shows

the mill and some attached land. The site of the mill was connected to what is now Strand Road by a causeway running to the northern end of the bridge and surrounded by tidal waters and marsh. The waters are bounded to the north by the 'Road to the Marsh', along the route, or possibly a little south of, the present Golf Links Road.



Mechanism of horizontal tide-mill, such as may have driven the Portmarnock corn-mill.

The 'mill-bridge' was essential for access to the mill and may have been initially constructed for that purpose. In November 1814, the structure had deteriorated and had not improved by 1816, when it was stated to be in danger of falling down. In 1838, the historian, J. D'Alton, was unimpressed with the state of mill. It was, he wrote, 'worked by a stream and an arm of the sea'—, *wholly useless in summer and even during a great portion of the winter*'. Even a trifling expenditure, he felt, would have enhanced its benefit to the neighbourhood.

Griffith's Primary Valuation of the mid-19th century gives a snap-shot detail of the mill. The mill and a miller's house, with almost three acres of ground, were then rented by John Molloy, tenant-at-will, who was paying twenty pounds annually to Francis Beggs. Just a few years later, Thomas Coleman was recorded as tenant from Beggs, at a similar rent, of the mill, kiln, the miller's house and three-and-half-acres of ground.

The water-wheel in use had a diameter of fourteen-and-a-half feet (4.5 m) and a 'breadth of face' of three-and-a-half

feet (1.07 m), while the 'fall of water' was two feet (0.6 m). The water-wheel rotated once per minute while driving one pair of mill-stones. These stones were 'half-French and half-Irish, medium quality, were used for shelling and grinding' and were just under five feet (1.5 m) in diameter. The mill was then worked for only about four months in the year, with water 'by the River' for six months. No work could be done at half-tides. The mill's maximum capacity was put at a barrel (approx. 200 lbs or 90kgs.) per hour. Such mills could normally be operated for only about two hours on either side of low-tide, giving a total of about eight hours potential milling in each twenty-four hours. The surveyor based his overall valuation on a calculation that the mill could be operated for an aggregate of four months per year, twelve hours per day.



Portmarnock Tide-Mill (early 20th century).

The drying-kiln measured 15 ft. (4.5m) by 13 ½ ft. (3.8m) and was 15 ½ ft. (4.7m) high. The miller's house was a long, low, rectangular building, 53½ ft. (16.3m) by 17 ft. (5.1m) and a mere 7 ft. (2.1m) high. The mill itself measured 34 ft. (10.3 m) long by 23 ft. (2 m) wide and was 25 ft. (7.6 m) high. Measured one-hundred-and sixty years later, the surviving rectangular stone base of the mill corresponds with the latter measurements.

Maintenance of the bridge and proper access along it to the mill by customers continued to be important. As late as 1860, one of the items before the County Dublin Grand Jury was a proposal for the repair and underpinning of the walls and the confining of the roadway 'across Portmarnock Millpond' at a cost of twenty-pounds. By 1867 the mill was unused as it had 'no water power'. The mill was damaged by the storm of 1903 and by 1912 it

was 'unroofed and much dilapidated'. The building was taken down in the 1940s.



An undated postcard view of the mill area



The bridge (rebuilt in 1900 and widened in 1933) over the Sluice River with the mill ruin in the background. Judging by the attire of the cyclists this photo was probably taken in the 1940s.



A watercolour sketch of the mill (artist unknown).

Possible hidden mineral wealth on our doorstep!

Extract from the Irish Times Thursday, September 12, 1872 Page 5

An esteemed correspondent has kindly forwarded to us the *Monthly Chronologer for Ireland*, printed in Dublin in 1760, just 112 years since. At page 691 following passage occurs:-

A coal vein has been discovered in the neighbourhood of Rush, and promises to produce great quantities of sea coal, which would be of signal advantage to the public if properly wrought. The winds have continued so long westerly, that no Chester traders have arrived these three months in Dublin Harbour, and several Bristol ships, laden since August last, have found it impracticable to make their passage. These winds have also created such a scarcity of coals in the city, that all the stocks for sale have not only been consumed, but coals in general, and the scarcity such as obliged many to divide their stock, while others paid most extravagant prices, as there are never wanting wretches who disregard the calamity of the public.

Within the present century excellent coal was found in the neighbourhood of Malahide, and probably the coals found at Rush belonged to the same seam. The tradition among the people is, that the working of the Malahide seam was stopped by the intervention of some English capitalists who aimed at obtaining a monopoly of the supply of coals to Dublin. The subject is one worthy of investigation. Many eminent scientific geologists are located in Dublin, and the vacation but not be better or more honourably employed than in ascertaining whether these coal fields exist. It is unnecessary to say that a coal mine in the immediate vicinity of Dublin would be of immense value.

John D'Alton writing in his *History of the County of Dublin*, 1838, (p.185) states in relation to the coast between Portmarnock and Malahide:

'Lead ore has been found in the rocks here, disposed in ramifications, and crystals resembling Kerry stones have likewise been collected here. It has also a large vein of black and some white marble, with representations of white shells mixed through it, after the manner of Kilkenny marble.'

FIRE AT MALAHIDE

MUCH PROPERTY DESTROYED.

CAUSE OF THE OUTBREAK UNKNOWN.

Shortly before five o'clock yesterday morning a serious fire was discovered to have broken out in the haggard of Mr. M'Mahon, Yellow Walls, Malahide, on the border of the demesne of Lord Talbot de Malahide, from whom Mr. M'Mahon holds over 300 acres. The alarm was given to the police at Malahide Barracks, and Sergeant Kennedy and Constable Lambert, with some other men, turned out. Between twenty and thirty men in Mr. M'Mahon's service were also at the place in quick time. The fire was then raging at its full extent. It originated in a corrugated iron shed 50ft wide by 60ft long and 20ft high. This was stored with 200 tons of unthrashed oats, 38 tons of hay, and about 17 tons of straw, all of which were in a blaze. Portion of the shed collapsed about half-past five o'clock, and it was then found impossible to cope with the fire, so that the men could only look on. Mr. G. B. Stuart, District Inspector, visited the scene in the forenoon, and made a minute inspection, but it was then impossible to assign any cause. The steward was about the place late on Sunday night, and then found everything in order.

Reproduced from *The Freeman's Journal* 3 February, 1903

MALAHIDE MANSION BURNED

Early yesterday morning the splendid residence of Mr. J. G. Jameson (a member of the well-known firm of John Jameson and Sons, whiskey manufacturers) at Seamount, Malahide, was burned to the ground. The furniture and effects in the house were completely destroyed. The occupants of the house, fortunately, escaped uninjured. The fire was first discovered by Mr. Jameson, jun.; who was awakened by the smell of smoke. This was some time about 2 a.m., and as the storm was at this time raging with terrific force, the flames were spreading with alarming rapidity. Young Mr. Jameson immediately went to his father's room and aroused him. The other inmates—Mrs. Jameson and family, Miss M'Grath (who was on a visit there), the butler and maidservants—were also apprised of the occurrence, and they lost no time quitting the burning mansion, though only partially attired. Word was then conveyed to the police authorities, but when they arrived at Seamount the fire, aided, as it was by the raging gale, had

taken such a firm grip that all hopes of saving the house or effects were but of the remotest degree. Owing to the rapidity with which the flames were spreading it was dangerous to approach within a reasonable distance of the house. As there is no telephonic communication between Malahide and Dublin, the Dublin Fire Brigade could not be communicated with. But in any case, their work would be greatly handicapped owing to the deficient water supply. The reflection in the sky of the flames from the fast-dwindling mansion was seen for miles around. It was a splendid spectacle to look at and admire, from a picturesque point of view, but when looked at with a thought of the destruction which was causing this spectacle, only a feeling of regret and sympathy for Mr. Jameson could enter the mind of the spectator. Scarcely half an hour had elapsed from the time the fire was first detected until the house was completely gutted. The damage was estimated at several thousands of pounds, and much sympathy is felt with Mr. Jameson and family.

**Reproduced from *The Freeman's Journal*
of 16 March 1905**

TRIPPERS ON THE ESTUARY FROM OUR PHOTO ARCHIVE

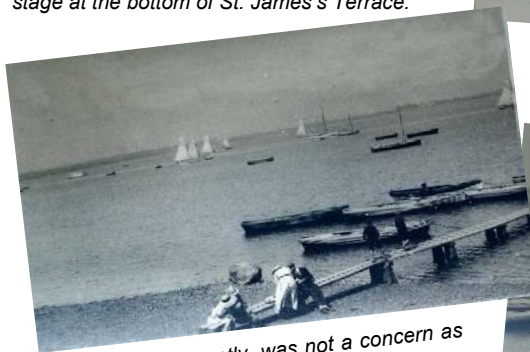


At least six boats plied for hire to row parties around the estuary commencing from the landing stage at the bottom of St. James's Terrace.

100 years ago Malahide was a popular destination for city folk seeking the sea airs. A good train service made it readily accessible to day trippers from Dublin.



The ladies wore ankle-length dresses and hats whilst the gentlemen dressed in suits and also all wore hats.



Overcrowding, apparently, was not a concern as evidenced by the fifteen people crammed into the boat on the right. And not a buoyancy aid in sight!



Some obviously did things in more style while children were happy to play on a wreck.

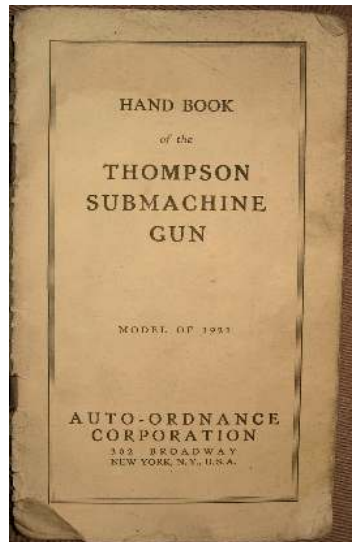
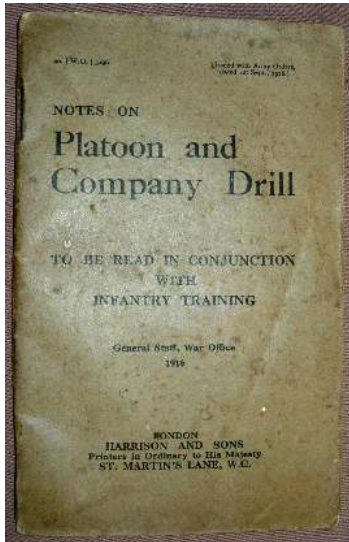
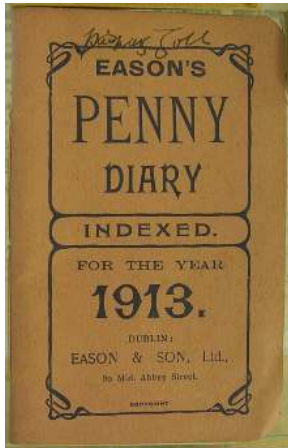


An officer needed somewhere to store the studs that held his detachable shirt collar in place on his grandfather shirt.

This novel box in the shape of a cap filled this requirement.



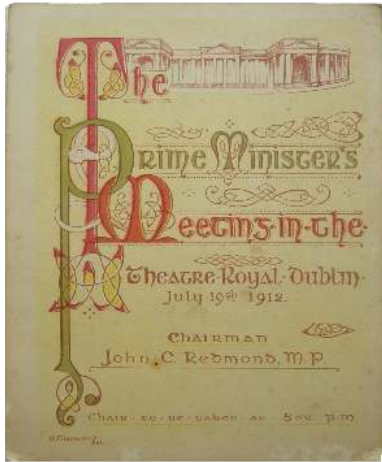
He might have used a diary like this.



Do you have any old items that you would like to donate for preservation for posterity?

Training was most important and manuals such as these would have helped to ensure consistency and high standards.

These items are just some of the large number and variety of artefacts in our museum collection. The collection is presently in storage as we await final agreement with Fingal County Council on the use of the ground floor of the Steward's House at Malahide Castle as an exhibition and storage area.



British prime minister Asquith came on a visit to Dublin in July 1912 to support Home Rule. Asquith and Redmond shared the platform at an exultant meeting of Home Rule nationalists in the 2011 seater Theatre Royal, Dublin on 19 July. Asquith stated 'I have come here to Dublin to assure the people of Ireland of the resolute determination of the British government, the British House of Commons and the British people to bring your great cause to a speedy and triumphant issue'. Women were banned from the theatre. Frank Sheehy Skeffington gained entrance dressed as a clergyman and demanded votes for women before being thrown out. Mary Leigh and Gladys Evans, members of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) over from England for the occasion, threw a hatchet at Asquith and John Redmond travelling in a carriage and grazed John Redmond's ear. The women were sentenced to five years imprisonment and went on hunger strike in Mountjoy Jail.

In our collection of artefacts we have an example, in excellent condition, of the souvenir card for this event complete with ticket.

The cover is reproduced above and the inside, including ticket, are shown to the right.

