

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 102 Autumn 2014



NEWS

Lambay visit

A number of members from this society joined members from the Fingal Heritage Network for a very enjoyable guided tour of Lambay Castle and Gardens in June.

Lissen Hall

A large group of members and partners visited this little known 17thc. local mansion on a beautiful July morning. During a tour of the principal rooms we were told of its history and those who lived there in times past. The visit also included the grounds and walled garden.

Fingal in 10 Items

This popular annual event rotates around Fingal and this year was held in St. Sylvester's Parish Centre, Malahide with an attendance in excess of 80. The evening consisted of short presentations about a wide and interesting variety of objects and events.

Heritage Week

About 40 people tuned up for Joe Varley's guided walk about central Malahide. The Society mounted an exhibition of "Then and Now" photographs of Malahide in the Library.

Museum

We hope to take possession this month of new accommodation in the Steward's House at Malahide Castle. Much work will remain to be done - arranging display cases, unpacking and selecting items for display, labelling, etc., etc.

Although the available space is less than heretofore we are especially grateful to Fingal County Council in facilitating this move to a recently refurbished heritage building in a very prominent position. More information later.

Whats happening

Lecture Programme

8 Oct. A Country House in the Great War.

By Colm McQuinn,
Fingal County Archivist

12 Nov. The Birth of Aviation in Ireland.

By Paddy Donoghue
Ex Air Corps and Air Lingus

10 Dec. Bring & Tell.

Members' items with a story to tell

14 Jan. Laurence O'Neill of Portmarnock, Lord Mayor of Dublin-a patriot and man of peace.

By Thomas Morrissey, Author.

11 Feb. National Archives.

By Catriona Crowe, Head of Special Projects, NAI.

11 Mar. Battle wounds – murder and death in early medieval Swords.

By Edward O'Donovan
Archaeological Consultant

8 Apr. John Beresford, an Irish statesman, and the Abbeville connection.

By Paddy Ryan, Malahide H.S.

13 May Recent photo acquisitions.

By Brian Dooley, Malahide H.S.

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

Admission €4.

Free parking in public car park opposite.

Saint Marnock- Who Was He?

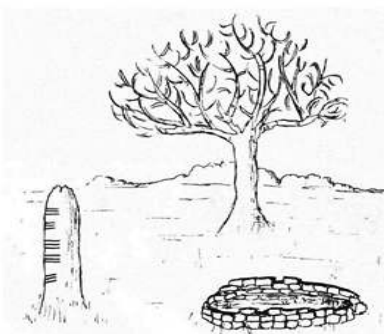


St. Marnock's Church, now in ruins

Saint Marnock may be regarded as the patron and founder of Portmarnock (*Port Mearnóg*/The Landing Place of Marnock), but relatively little is known of him.

While his name survives, accounts of the man himself are skimpy, to say the least. He has been linked with Rathnew, Co. Wicklow, and Ballyboughall, Co. Dublin. There is a belief that the name 'Mearnóg' is derived from the name of (Saint) 'Eirnin' and that 'Eirnin'/'Mearnóg' had connections with Clonmacnoise, where he studied before becoming a bishop. Marnock's arrival in Portmarnock is put at the sixth century, when he established the church named after him on the dunes (at Burrow, off the present Strand Rd., Portmarnock). Marnock's death is recorded as having occurred in 620 A.D. The stone church now in western ocean', led Brendan to undertake his epic voyage to North America.

A minute but precious insight into 'part of ye life and rule' of the elusive saint has been gleaned by Dr Joseph Byrne from the text of the Talbot 'Rhapsody', a short section of which relates specifically to Portmarnock. This tells us that Marnock retired as a hermit to Portmarnock (*for his sanctity*) to build a church there, without human assistance. His diet was barley bread, fish roots, and water.



St. Marnock's Well and Ogham Stone (19th c. sketch, Megan Browne)

The high point of the foundation was probably from the 13th to the early 16th century, under the patronage of the flourishing Saint Mary's Abbey, Dublin. The stone church had a triple-arched bell-tower, typical of early Fingal churches. The Reformation brought closure and the church was reported to be in ruins by 1630.

The Talbot family of Malahide Castle had a strong connection with this church and with the adjacent holy well. When Sir Peter Talbot died in 1528, his will provided for a donation to the clergy of St. Marnock's Church. The making of an annual pilgrimage to the site had become a Talbot family trait. In 1655 John Talbot had his lands confiscated and was banished to Connacht. He managed, however, to return temporarily and made his pilgrimage to Saint Marnock's Well. It is believed that John's grandson, Richard Talbot the Elder, was the author of the document which encapsulated the family's devotion to the pilgrimage. In this, the family's continued good fortune and receipt of divine favour were intertwined with devotional ritual in which the annual pilgrimage to the well was central.

When compiling his *'Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey'* (Dublin), in 1884, J.T. Gilbert could find no record concerning Marnock in the surviving records of the Abbey. Gilbert did, however, refer to the initial preservation of the saint's body in his church at Portmarnock and its late fifteenth-century disinterment and re-burial in a specially-erected chapel named after him in Saint Mary's Abbey.

St. Marnock's Well was located near the church (to the south of the approach track-way to the churchyard from Strand Rd.) The well was accessed by sixteen steps and close by stood an **Ogham stone**. While associated

with Marnock, the well may possibly have existed in pre-Christian times. Whatever the case, following Marnock's coming this was a holy well and a place of pilgrimage for many centuries. The 'pattern' or Patron's Day, was held at the well each August, when traditional 'rounds' were made. This event was discontinued at some point, possibly in the first half of the 19th century. In the mid-19th century, the well was covered over and the adjacent Ogham stone was broken up. Nowadays, beneath the concrete or plaster cap later super-imposed, sections of the original brickwork of the well can still be seen.

Fr. John Shearman, a priest in Howth, rescued fragments of the Ogham stone in 1868 and recorded features, making drawings of the stone's inscriptions. These, believed to be the only extant record of that stone, are preserved in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. Writing in 1912, W. St John Joyce, observed that it was *'much to be regretted that portions of this interesting relic were incorporated in the masonry of the well, when it was enclosed about 1855, and a pump erected over it, as the inscription was well defined and undoubtedly genuine'*.

The ruined St Marnock's Church, the churchyard burial-ground, the Ogham Stone site, and St Marnock's Well, are all included in Fingal County Council's list of protected monuments, as they are also in the National Monuments Service's list of monuments.

Thanks to member Garry Ahern for contributing this article.



St. Marnock's Well site in 2013

FIRE AT MALAHIDE

(As reported in *The Freeman's Journal*, 20 May 1901)

At a quarter to three a telegraphic message to the following effect, reached the Central Fire Brigade Station:—"Come at once. Town will be burnt. Postmaster, Malahide." A message notifying the outbreak of the fire was also sent to the Mansion House. Captain Purcell on receiving the communication got into telephonic communication with the Mansion House for the purpose of consulting with the Lord Mayor before taking the Brigade out of the city, this course being adopted as a matter of courtesy and custom. He found, however, that the Lord Mayor was not then at home he having only returned from London at a later hour. Captain Purcell decided, having regard to the gravity of the message, to start for Malahide, and render what assistance he could. Accordingly he started, taking with him a steam engine, a hose cart, and nine men.

Driving rapidly to the scene of the fire, the nine miles to Malahide were covered in about three-quarters of an hour. On arriving they found that Mr Parkinson's premise had been practically burned down, with the exception of a bottling store at one end, and a residential portion of the building situate over it. This was portion of the main building, though lying at a slightly lower elevation. The main part of the flooring had fallen in, as had the roof, except for a small portion, which remained standing at one end. The wooden partitions within the house had also been burned away, and the furniture and the contents of the two storeys had been destroyed. The iron girders that had supported the walls were bent and twisted as if they had been so much wire.

Before the arrival of the Brigade the efforts of the police, coastguards, and civilians had been directed to the endeavour to prevent the flames spreading beyond Mr Parkinson's premises. A bucket brigade had been formed, ladders had been placed against the adjoining houses so as to admit of access to the roofs to which the coastguards had mounted, and on which they continued to pour water to keep them cool. A short examination convinced Captain Purcell that there was very little danger of the fire spreading, as fortunately the morning was exceedingly calm. The only water available was from the pumps of the town and the sea. The tide was out at the time, exposing a large expanse of bare strand.

Had there been danger of the fire spreading Captain Purcell would have run the engine into the sea, and in that way obtained a plentiful water supply, but as matters stood there was no necessity of adopting that course. He utilized the police barracks pump, from which he laid down a line of hose, and he kept the engine going for about an hour, until the burning debris had been cooled down. When all danger had passed, Captain Purcell and his men returned to the city.

Captain Purcell considers that if a wind had been blowing the conflagration would have assumed very disastrous dimensions before he and his men would have reached the place. The Catholic Church lies only about seventy yards distant, and had the wind been blowing from Mr Parkinson's premises in that direction there would have been great danger of the fire catching the church. As it was, owing to the calmness of the morning and the precautions adopted by the coastguards, the police and their civilian helpers, the flames were confined to Mr Parkinson's premises until the arrival of the Brigade, when, of course, with the appliances at the command of Captain Purcell, the task of completely subjugating the flames was a comparatively easy one. The adjoining houses escaped injury from the fire, though the residents had adopted the precaution of removing their furniture into the street. The coastguards also saved some of the beer barrels which had been lying in Mr Parkinson's store.

Mr Parkinson's troubles did not end then for Dublin Corporation subsequently subsequently sued him for reimbursement of expenses incurred by their fire brigade. *The Freeman's Journal* of the 26 October, 1901 carried this report:

CASE AT THE POLICE COURT

Yesterday, in the Northern Divisional Police Court, before Mr Wall, K.C., the Corporation of Dublin summoned William Parkinson, Main street, Malahide, to recover expenses incurred in connection, with the attendance of their Fire Brigade with engines, implements and apparatus at Malahide on the 18th May for purpose of extinguishing a fire which occurred on premises of which the defendant was the owner. They also sought to recover a reasonable sum for the use of the engines, implements and apparatus and for the attendance of the Brigade.

Mr. Ignatius Rice, solicitor, prosecuted; and Mr. Menton, solicitor, defended.'

Mr. Rice said the Fire Brigade was called out to Malahide, which was outside the County Borough of Dublin, and the Corporation were entitled to recover the expenses incurred by the Brigade and also reasonable remuneration for their services, and compensation for the wear and tear of the appliances. Mr. Menton said he admitted the liability. What he objected to was the unreasonableness of the charges made. They admitted the actual expenses. There was a case similar to the present one heard in the that Court some 30 years ago in which Mr J.C. O'Donel made out a list of expenses which he (Mr Menton) was willing to adopt now.

Mr. Rice said Captain Purcell estimated that the Brigade saved property value approximately £500.

Mr. Wall said that when in London he frequently dropped into the Fire Brigade Station and told those in charge that a result of his experience he would strongly recommend them to come over and see how our Dublin Fire Brigade was administered. It certainly was a credit to the city.

Mr. Rice said Mr. O'Donel's decision was given in reference to a fire which occurred at Clontarf. The scale of remuneration for firemen was 3s an hour.

Mr. Wall—That is very small pay for a man to risk his life

Captain Purcell said they had an engagement with the insurance companies that the latter were to pay a certain scale

in case of fires in insured property. That scale was in accordance with the scale drawn up by his predecessor, Captain Ingram, and it formed the basis of the present demand, in which there was no insurance company concerned. The charge for the steamer was £10 for night and £5 for day work for five hours. They had to go to Malahide at a very high rate of speed.

Mr. Wall – Would you take into consideration the case of a man who was not very wealthy?

Captain Purcell said no doubt the Committee would make a reduction in such a case if the owner of the property made an application to them.

Mr. Wall said he would let the case stand for six weeks to enable Mr. Parkinson to make an application to the Committee for a reduction of their claim.

We do not know the final outcome of the case but the good people put their hands in their pockets to assist the Parkinson family in a way which might be regarded as rather strange given that they had probably lost all in the fire. Again, *The Freeman's Journal* of the 18 October, 1902 carried this report:

ADDRESS AND PRESENTATION

It will be remembered that in May 1901, a disastrous fire completely destroyed the fine new business premises of Mr W. Parkinson, D. C., Main Street, Malahide. A very general feeling of sympathy was felt through the district for the sufferers in the calamity, and a movement was started to show that sympathy in a practical manner. A committee was formed, with the venerated P.P. of Malahide and Swords as chairman, and it was decided to present Mr. and Mrs. Parkinson with an address and presentation. The project received the support of all classes and creeds in Malahide and district, as well as that of many Dublin friends, and was brought to a successful conclusion on Tuesday evening, 7th inst. by the presentation of a beautifully illuminated address and magnificent silver tea and coffee service and silver tray.

There were present – Very Rev D. P. Mulcahy, P. P.; Rev. J. Jones, C.C.; Rev. N. Russell, C.C.; Rev. A. Ryan, C.C.; P.J. Kiernan, M.D.; W.H.Hayes, solicitor; H. Milling, C.E.; P. Hogan, D.C.; T. Early, solicitor; P.J.Kettle, D.C.; J. Parkinson, J. Stack, P. Cullen, M. Brereton, T. Connolly, T. Foley, H. Holton, R.G. Taylor, C. M'Allister, G. Griffin, T. Clery.

Father Mulcahy presided, and in making the presentation referred to the great sympathy felt for Mr. and Mrs. Parkinson in their trouble, and to the many good works which the former had accomplished since he came to reside in Malahide.

Mr. Parkinson replied in a very feeling speech, and returned thanks on behalf of himself and Mrs. Parkinson for the address and presentation.

The company was the most hospitably entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Parkinson. The toasts of "The Host and Hostess" and "The Chairman" were duly honoured.

According to the 1901 census William Parkinson, aged 36, was married to 24 year old Annie and they had a 2 year old daughter, Mary Angela. All were Roman Catholics. He is described as a Grocer and Publican. He was a member of the first Dublin County Council established in 1898. He was born in Co Tipperary as were two of his male assistants.

This building had eleven out offices. These were a stable, a coach house, a piggery, a shed, five stores, one coal shed and one bottle shed. In addition he had three male grocer assistants, a nurse and a servant. After the fire it appears that the present red brick range on Main Street was constructed comprising a dwelling house, grocery and possibly a pub.

The 1911 census papers tell us that there was a Joseph Hogan, age 30, from Carlow living in Main Street. He is described as a grocer's manager: in the house with him was his 31 year old cousin, Elizabeth Hogan, a book-keeper also from Carlow. They were accompanied by two youths, a 19 and 15 year old described as a grocer's assistant and a grocer's apprentice respectively, both also from Carlow. Next door was an uninhabited public house. It seems likely that Joseph Hogan used this as his business premises or was managing it for Patrick Hogan, aged 49 and also from Carlow, who traded as a grocer and publican in what is now Fowler's in New Street. The Hogan family continued to trade as 'Hogan Bros.' in New Street until the 1960s and for a further period in Main Street.



The Flower Show at The Square around 1904. The elderly bearded and stooped gentleman about to step off the grass in the lower photo is the famous artist, Nathaniel Hone.

ARMY MANOEUVRES IN MALAHIDE



Scottish troops, who may have marched out from Dublin or arrived by train, turning from Main Street on to St. James's Terrace, on their way to the sand flats and dunes where the Seabank car park is now located. We know from contemporary newspaper reports that the band of the Seaforth Highlanders played at the 1904 flower show in what was then referred to as St. James's Square, now the tennis grounds. A special prize was awarded to the Highland pipers who danced a reel. The following year the band of the Cameron Highlanders played at the show. It seems reasonable to assume, therefore, that the Highlanders pictured were from one or other of those regiments. The date is post 1901 as the church spire is in evidence. Note the conservatory with curved roof on what is now the garda station.

Below, mounted officers follow their men. The building on the left is puzzling. As will be seen on the next page we think the photo is earlier than 1910 so it is unlikely to be the library, built in 1910. Also, nowadays there is just one large double chimney which appears to be part of the original elaborate Portmarnock brickwork. **Any thoughts?**





Highlanders passing along the 'waste' road, probably just past the Grand Hotel. Note one has a cycle. The damage to the photo does not allow identification of the load on the horse-drawn cart. The long shadows suggest evening time.

Below, they are proceeding to the sand flats and dunes in front of Seapark and are now carrying large back packs. The horse-drawn cart has an unidentified load. Muldowney House is in the background and the unconverted Hick's Tower in the distance, making the photo earlier than 1910.





The Highland troops exercising approximately in the area where the Seabank car park is now located. The quality of the 110 year old photo, unfortunately, is not good. Note the shadows of the spectators in the foreground.

The Seaforth Highlanders was a historic regiment of the British Army associated with large areas of the northern Highlands of Scotland. The regiment was created through the amalgamation of the 72nd Highlanders (Duke of Albany's Own) and the 78th Highlanders (Ross-shire Buffs), as part of the Childers Reforms of the British Army in 1881. It served in various foreign campaigns including: the Anglo-Egyptian War (1882), Tel El Kebir (1882), the Chitral Expedition 1895, the Second Sudan War (1896 – 98) fighting at the Battle of Atbara and the Battle of Khartoum, The Second Boer War 1899 – 1902 fighting at the Battle of Paardeberg. A second battalion was formed in the early 1900s and based at home. It was perhaps this battalion that spent time in Ireland around 1904.

With origins firmly based in the Highlands, the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders were formed at the height of the French Revolutionary Wars in 1793. Raised by Alan Cameron of Erracht, the regiment served in many battles across the world including the Dutch Helder Campaign, Quatre Bass, Waterloo, the Crimean War and the Second Boer War. The regiment also has a strong record of achievement in piping, both playing and competing.

In 1961 The Seaforth Highlanders and the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders merged to form the Queen's Own Highlanders. In 1994 the Queens Own Highlanders was further merged with the Gordon Highlanders to form the Highlanders (Seaforth, Gordons and Camerons). In 2006 the Regiment once again amalgamated, with The Royal Scots Borderers, The Royal Highland Fusiliers, The Black Watch, and The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders to form the Royal Regiment of Scotland.



Malahide Rugby Club

1940/44. This picture taken at Trinity College, Dublin.

Back:

M.Daly, P.Phelan, P.H.Giles,
T.Hunt, C.J.Hughes,
G.Manning, M.F.Hughes,
J.O'Frainer.

Front:

J.J.Hughes, G.McSwiggan,
J.Cullen, H.Scally,
N.J.O'Hanlon, F.McSwiggan,
R.J.Montgomery

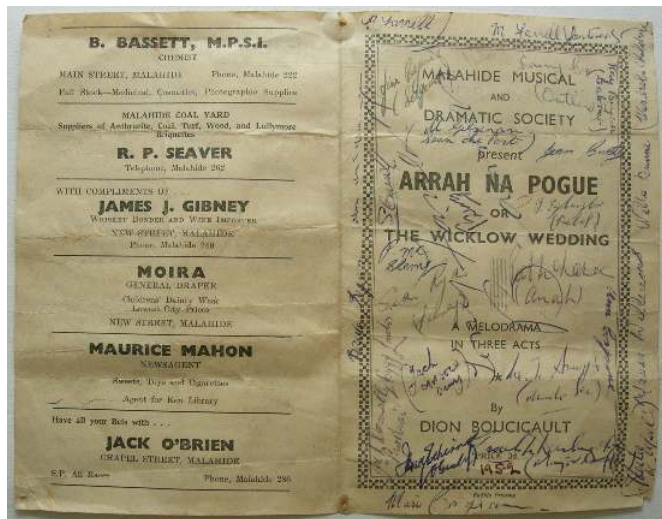
Malahide Musical & Dramatic Society. The 'peasants' in the cast of the 1952 production of *Arragh na Pogue* or *The Wicklow Wedding*.

Standing: Patty Dunne, Berna Farrell, Nuala Carroll, Shiela Carroll, Peggy Lawler, Kay Bryan, Tessie Troy, Marie Cosgrave, Mamie Greene, Ann Tighe. Carmel Cox, Anna Cunningham.

Kneeling: Teresa Kelsh, Marie O'Neill, Jean Carty, Maura McNamee, Breda Fagan, Maura Williams.



Programme for the Malahide Musical & Dramatic Society 1952
production of *Arrah na Pogue*.



The original programme is in our Museum collection of artefacts.

We would welcome further donations and/or opportunities to scan and return original papers or photographs.

