

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 105 Spring 2016



NEWS

Museum

We recorded 1187 visitors to the museum in the period from late August to end of December 2015 and this year to 1 May a further 1,100! Thank you to those members who made this possible by acting as attendants during that period.

Until the end of May we have a roster of volunteer committee attendants for Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

During the busy tourist season it would be great if sufficient people put their names forward to enable opening on some weekday afternoons in addition to weekends.

If you would be willing to help during June and July please email to the address below giving an indication of how often you could attend and stating any preferences for weekdays, Saturdays or Sundays.

Though we have the use of two similar sized rooms in the Stewards House we have only one open to the public to date. The committee are considering what might be the best and most practical use for the second room. One suggestion, which we are investigating, is an audio-visual show based on our large collection of photos of old Malahide. If anyone knows of anybody with special knowledge or skills in producing an A/V show or with the computer technical know-how in setting up a projection system we would be delighted hear from you. We are also in discussion with Fingal Co. Council.



Brian Inglis

A capacity attendance turned up to hear our own Paddy Ryan deliver the January talk about Brian Inglis. This renowned, journalist, broadcaster and author spent his school holidays with his grandmother in Malahide and later wrote extensively in his autobiography about life in Malahide in the 1920s and '30s.

The bulk of the text of Paddy's talk is included in this issue.

In this Issue:

Page 1

Museum Update
Brian Inglis
Upcoming lecture

Page 2

Text of Paddy Ryan's talk on Brian Inglis

Page 5

A Century On: *Eoin McNeill and Laurence O'Neill*
By Garry Ahern

Page 7

The Malahide VADs during World War I
By Roger Greene

Page 10

Isabel Lady Talbot (1851-1932)
By Roger Greene

Page 14

On display at Museum

Upcoming Lectures

May 11: Brian Dooley

Once again Brian will show a selection of "images, old and not so old, from our photo archive"

Wednesday 11 May at 8 PM

Presbyterian Church Hall

Adm. 4 Euro. All welcome

Email contact:

malahidehistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Brian Inglis

By Paddy Ryan, Malahide Historical Society

Brian Inglis was the only child of Sir Claude Inglis and Vera Blood.

Grandfather Inglis was Chairman of Thomas Heiton & Co and Vice-Pres. Dublin Chamber of Commerce. He was knighted for public services, like fund raising for the Queen Victoria Jubilee Nurses Fund. The family home was Montrose House, Donnybrook.



Brian's maternal grandparents were John and Sophia Blood. He was CEO of Findlater's Mountjoy Brewery. They lived in Russell Street, near the brewery. Each year, they rented a house in Saint James's Terrace, Malahide. Mr. Blood was a founder of the Island Golf Club. Mrs Blood, had a memorial stained glass window erected to her late husband in Saint Andrew's Church.

Sir Claude spent thirty years in India where he was engineer in charge of a massive irrigation scheme in Poona. Vera returned to Dublin for Brian's birth on 31 July 1916. He was two years old when his mother returned to India.

At five (5) years of age, Brian was brought back to England and placed in a boarding school for Anglo-Indian children at Bexhill, Sussex. He only saw his parents every four years. He described their visits as like those of kind relatives who would soon disappear from his life. His reality was school and all it entailed and home life was an illusion.

His parents placed him in a prep school, called Dragon, near Oxford. He proceeded from there to Shrewsbury Public School, as a teenager. He described it as hell for those not gifted footballers or cricketers and he spares no detail of the savage regime, Victorian at the extreme. However, he developed a keen interest in history and an awareness of an Irish identity. He obtained a scholarship to Magdalen College, Oxford in 1935.

He spent most school holidays in Malahide with his grandparents, John and Sophia Blood, who each summer rented a house in St. James's Terrace, Malahide until they moved to *Ballykilty* on the corner of Church Road and Grove Road, later rebuilt by Pa Hicks. His grandmother introduced Brian to the Island Golf Club where he spent a lot of his youth. Brian and his friend, Tony Robertson were ferried across to the Island by boatmen, Vincie O'Brien and Hatch (Mr. Hatch's christian name is never used). Servants were friends as long as they kept their place. When Mary Jane, Brian's grandmother's servant, married Mr. Hogan of the village stores, there was consternation at Ballykilty when she made a social call. What should they call her? Mrs. Hogan or the old Mary Jane? Inglis was blatantly upfront about the petty snobbery of his grandmother and her friends. He was keenly aware how Catholic members of families like the Jamesons could not aspire to executive roles in the distillery.

His growing knowledge of Irish history made him question his own heritage to whom 'good family' meant everything. He noted that there was a burgeoning Catholic Malahide middle class, which his grandmother called 'artisans'. But old ways were changing in the Free State as place names, like Kingstown, were changed and signs in what his grandmother's class referred to as Erse proliferated.



A 1930s view of rear of Ballykilty .

Brian joined 'The Irish Times' as a junior reporter in 1939. This was after an intro by a family friend to the editor, Bertie Smyllie. He became friendly with Allan Montgomery whose father, Lynn C. Doyle lived in Malahide and played golf at the Island.



R.M.Smyllie



He had difficulties with the Irish language revival as more politicians began and ended their speeches in the native tongue.

His seven months at 'The Irish Times' were the stepping stone to much greater things as he began his process of trying to be Irish or Descendancy, described by Shaw as Downstart. At the outbreak of WWII he left the 'The Irish Times' to join the RAF and after some training in Cambridge, he was stationed with the RAF in Salisbury, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). His service included a year in Killadeas on Lough Erne, as a Flight Instructor. His final RAF ranking was Squadron Leader

In 1946, Brian was back in 'The Irish Times' at 6 guineas a week where he compiled *Quidnunc*. Working on the *Irish Times* then entailed drinking in the

Palace Bar, frequented by the literati of Dublin. They later moved to the Pearl Bar.

Inglis availed of a Forces Grant scheme to study for a Ph. D at Trinity College where his thesis was 'Irish Newspapers 1770- 1840'. This is recognised as a major work in this field and was published in book form. He went on to publish another historical work 'The Story of Ireland'. He lectured on Economics in Trinity for over a year before heading to London.



The literati of Dublin



Edna McKenna

He became Leader and Special Features

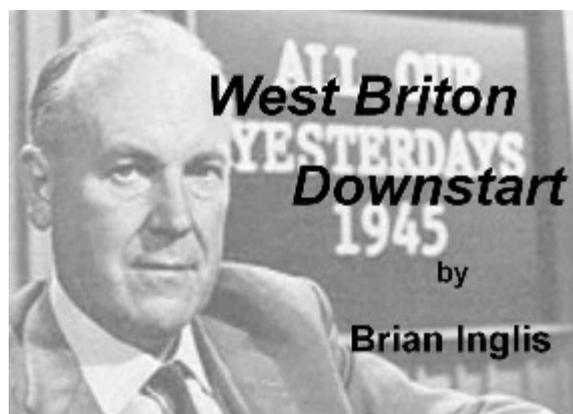
writer for the *Daily Sketch* circa 1952 at a salary of £30 a week + £7.10s expenses. A year later, he joined the *Spectator*, later becoming editor. Its Woman's Editor was Edna McKenna (later Edna Hicks) whose family had also lived in Malahide. The *Spectator's* impressive list of contributors reads like a *Who's Who* of English literati Included Kingsley Amis, John Betjeman, Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene and Ian Fleming.



Ruth Woodeson

In 1956, he began presenting *What the Papers Say* and *All Our Yesterdays* which ran for fourteen years on Granada Television.

Forty and unmarried his string of girl friends included Ruth Childers and actress Rosemary Harris; he implies there were many others. In 1958, he married American divorcee, Ruth (Boo) Woodeson, a writer who had spent her childhood in the Far East where her father was US Consul in Singapore. She had a daughter, Diana. They had a son, Neil but the marriage ended in divorce.



His book *West Briton*, for which he is probably best remembered in Malahide, was published in 1962. He went on to publish many more works on a diverse range of topics. Perhaps his greatest historical literary achievement was a biography of Roger Casement. His memories of the Island club-house, included a photograph of Mabel Casement – a winner of the Irish Women’s Golf Championship and cousin of Sir Roger Casement

Inglis had a very open mind, developing an interest in fringe or alternate medicine and wrote extensively on the subject. He was an early advocate of acupuncture which was sneered at by orthodox medical experts. He wrote extensively on effects of drugs and had an avid interest in the paranormal– ghosts, out of body experiences and the like.

Inglis took a great interest in Irish affairs and the changes taking place. He stated that, like Roger Casement, he was often torn between the pull of Ireland and his heritage of British imperialism.

Brian Inglis was a key member of the British Irish Association whose aim was to try and bring closer relations between both countries.

He was offered but declined the position of Programme Controller with Radio Telefis Eireann.

His mother died in 1972 .

He lived in Belsize Park--renowned for his parties where ‘the company, ranging from thirty year olds to those of eighty plus, would be a mixture of relatives, neighbours, ex-lovers, old and new friends. He understood his friends, rejoiced in their triumphs, laughed at their foibles and accepted them - virtues, vices and all’.

The love of his life was Margaret van Hattem, an Australian journalist on the Financial Times. More than thirty years younger than him. They had a decade together before she died, aged 41, in 1989. The year after Margaret’s death, Brian Inglis published *Downstart*– an enlarged version of his autobiography ‘West Briton’.

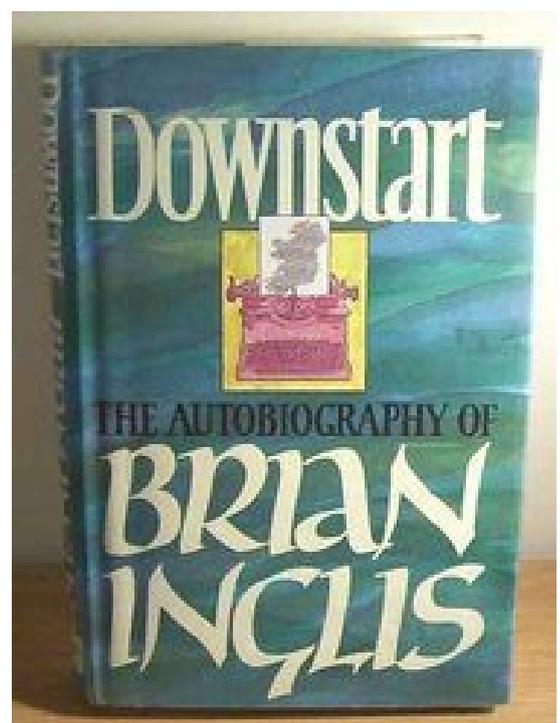
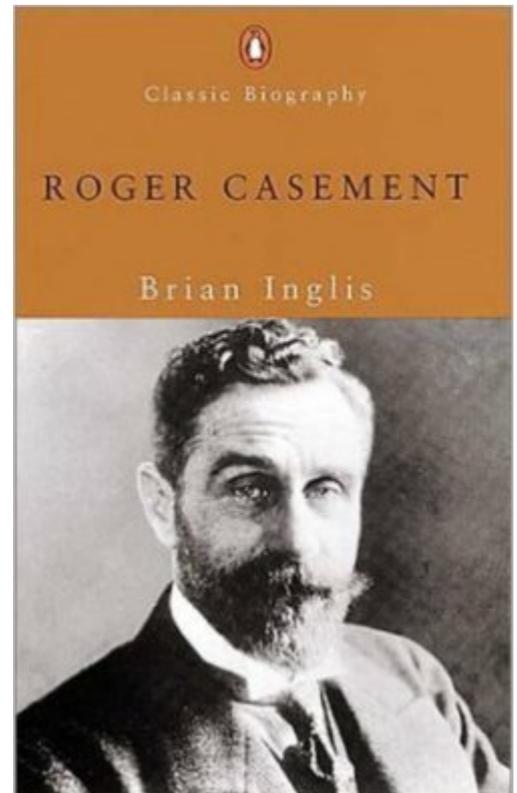


Margaret van Hattem

The speaker, Paddy Ryan, described Inglis as a most endearing man whose breadth of vision was boundless – ever open to fresh thinking and ideas, a gentleman in whose kind heart, Malahide, warts and all, had a special place.

Brian died in February 1993, aged 76.

Note: *Downstart* is available in Malahide Library.



A Century On Eoin McNeill and Laurence O'Neill

Two men with strong Portmarnock connections played leading roles in early 20th century Ireland. Eoin McNeill is widely remembered as the man who tried to cancel the 1916 Rising. He was a *'scholar and man of action'*, a distinguished academic, politician, and family man. Laurence O'Neill, on the other hand, has been largely ignored by history. He was a *'Patriot and Man of Peace'*, an accomplished sportsman, mediator, business-man, family man, and seven times Lord Mayor of Dublin. Each man made considerable personal sacrifice in pursuit of ideals. In this period of commemorations it may be appropriate to briefly recall aspects of their lives.

Eoin McNeill, was born, in Glenarm, Co. Antrim in 1867. With his wife, Agnes, he lived from 1893 to 1908, at Hazlebrook House, Portmarnock, where most of their seven children were born. McNeill was a leading figure in the Gaelic revival, co-founder, Secretary, and later, president, of the Gaelic League, editor of *'An Claidreamh Soluis'* and *'The Gaelic Journal'*, Commander of the Irish Volunteers, and Professor of Early & Medieval Irish at UCD. Elected T.D., he held several ministries, was Ceann Comhairle, chaired the Treaty debates, was elected



Eoin McNeill & wife, Agnes, at Hazlebrook House, Portmarnock, (c. 1900.)



The McNeill family at Hazelbrook House, early 1900s. (Courtesy of Michael McDowell)

to (but did not sit

in) the Northern Ireland and Westminster parliaments. Debate continues on his decision in 1916 to call off the Rising. His moral reasoning was that the planned action was not then justifiable, given the improbability of military success (particularly following loss of the SS *'Aud'* arms ship,) and the lack of wide support. He was, nevertheless, arrested and sentenced to life penal servitude. Released from jail in England after 14 months, he continued working for an independent Ireland.

Arrested again in 1920, he served seven months in Mountjoy. He supported the Treaty through the horrors of the Civil War. McNeill was then a minister of the Free State, while two sons were serving in its National Army. Another, Brian, aged 22, took the Anti-Treaty side. He was near Ben Bulbin, Co. Sligo, in a captured armour car, in Sept. 1923, with four colleagues. They encountered Free State troops and all five men were shot dead.



Two months later, when McNeill's fatally ill sister, Anne, pleaded for the sparing of the life of Erskine Childers, a rift between brother and sister occurred, one that never healed. In 1927, McNeill, on his

Hazelbrook House, c.1900 and as it was in 2012.

way to Mass in Booterstown, witnessed the shooting of Kevin O’Higgins and prayed in his ear as he lay dying. In 1923, McNeill had been appointed to the doomed Boundary Commission, but ultimately resigned. He later lost his Dáil seat and returned to academic life. He died in 1945 and is buried in Kilbarrack Cemetry.

Laurence (‘Larry’) O’Neill (1864-1943), *‘Patriot and Man of Peace’*, was born in the Smithfield area and inherited a corn & provender business. His residence for many years was Bridge House, Portmarnock. From a ‘comfortable’ family, his *‘deep empathy for the poor’* developed early. O’Neill was a noted amateur cyclist, a leader of the Irish Cyclists’ Association, and a delegate to the World Amateur Cycling body. Married to Anne, four of their six children survived to adulthood. An admirer of Parnell, he joined the Land League in Baldoyle. Elected a city councillor, poverty and poor housing became his concerns, his aim to transcend *‘politics, creed or class’*. He supported workers’ rights and the Women’s Franchise League and helped the first woman council member.



Laurence O’Neill (front) with family at Bridge House, Portmarnock in 1904.

On his land in Portmarnock, he developed the Riverside Golf Club, *‘the first democratic golf club in Ireland’*. He chaired Anti-Conscription conferences in 1915 and 1918. Though not a participant, he was arrested after Easter, 1916. Held in Richmond Barracks, he formed a friendship with Eamonn De Valera. He was released after intervention by his son, William, a British Army Medical Corps captain.

In Dec. 1916, with two other Aldermen, he hoped to visit Irish prisoners in Frongoch, but access was denied. As Lord Mayor from 1917, he quickly convened a Dublin housing conference. Independent of both Sinn Féin and Redmonites, he resisted military and establishment attempts to curb his wide-ranging role in the Mansion House, but nevertheless kept lines open to the Castle. He addressed food shortages and mediated in numerous industrial and political disputes. His negotiations led to the eventual release of 120 Irish prisoners in Britain. Conditions were deplorable for those remaining in Mountjoy Jail, (including Tomás Ashe and Austin Stack.) Hunger strikes ensued and O’Neill spoke at the funeral of Ashe, who died after being force-fed. He repeatedly visited and interceded for prisoners (including Terence McSwiney) in Mountjoy, Dundalk and Belfast. In 1918, e.g., he secured the release of pacifist Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington, and of ‘Sinn Féiners’, W.T. Cosgrave, and Dr Kathleen Lynn. Elected T.D. (1922), he was a Senator (1929-’36 & 1940-’43.) His seven years as Lord Mayor had affected his health and his business also suffered. In 1933 he donated a site for the original (‘Tin’) Church of St. Anne in Portmarnock. Larry O’Neill died at Bridge House, on July 26th, 1943, and is buried in St. Marnock’s Churchyard, (Strand Rd.)



Article contributed by Garry Ahern

The Malahide VADs

During World War I

In 1909 the British War Office issued the Scheme for the Organisation of Voluntary Aid. On the outbreak of WWI the British Red Cross and the Order of St John, were empowered to raise detachments under the War Office Voluntary Aid Scheme and they combined to form the Joint War Committee (JWC) to administer their wartime relief work with the greatest possible efficiency and economy, under the protection of the red cross emblem and name. There were over 2,500 Voluntary Aid Detachments in Britain and Ireland by the summer of 1914. Of the 74,000 VAD members in 1914, two-thirds were women and girls. The Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) referred to a voluntary unit providing field nursing and other services, mainly in hospitals, in the United Kingdom and various other countries in the British Empire. VAD members eagerly offered their service to the war effort. The British Red Cross was reluctant to allow civilian women a role in overseas hospitals. Military authorities would not accept VADs at the front line. Most volunteers were of the middle and upper classes and unaccustomed to hardship and traditional hospital discipline.

In order to provide trained personnel for this task, county branches of the Red Cross organised units called voluntary aid detachments whose members (who came to be known simply as 'VADs') were trained in first aid, nursing and other tasks.

The VADs working under the Joint War Committee (JWC) performed a variety of duties. The Committee administered auxiliary hospitals and convalescent homes in Britain and Ireland throughout the war and much of the VAD service was performed in these homes and hospitals. Volunteers performed general nursing duties and administered first aid. Qualified nurses were also employed to work in these establishments. In addition, VADs performed clerical and kitchen duties. With many men engaged in military service, women VADs took on roles such as ambulance drivers, civil defence workers and welfare officers. On a local level VADs did knitting and sewing as well as collecting clothes and funds for serving men

Lady Isabel Talbot de Malahide devoted endless energy to the County Dublin Branch of the Red Cross Society, of which she was made acting President in 1915 and then President (holding the post until 1924). Read more about Lady Talbot de Malahide later in this issue.

Lady Talbot de Malahide worked closely with Lady Arnott who was president of the Dublin City branch of the Red Cross Society. A benefactor gave the society the use of No.40 Merrion Square as an administrative HQ for the Irish War Hospital Supply Depot and Lady Talbot de Malahide was on the Executive Committee. It was staffed by a large number of volunteers, predominantly female and from the middle and upper classes. A very extensive and committed country wide organisation of groups and individuals collected money, farm produce and 'comforts' for the war wounded convalescing in numerous temporary and regular hospitals throughout Dublin and the rest of the country. The 'comforts' included shirts, bed jackets, vests, pants, and socks, operation stockings, towels, handkerchiefs, old linen, etc. The surplus was sent abroad to army hospitals in the U.K and to men serving at the front lines. An extensive list of collectors and donors with amounts raised was published regularly in



The Lady Talbot de Malahide with the Viscount French, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, at the opening of the Red Cross Fête at the Royal Hospital, Whitsuntide, 1918

The Irish Times. Malahide Branch per Mrs (name withheld) and Malahide Bandage Class per Miss Gillespie appeared frequently as did "Servants at Malahide Castle".

It would appear officer patients in the Dublin Hospital for Wounded Officers did rather better than those serving in the ranks. At a January 1916 meeting of the Joint Committee of the British Red Cross Society (Co. Dublin Branch), presided over by Lady Talbot de Malahide, the hospital Matron acknowledged the kindness of many friends who sent game and other gifts to the officers. These included Lord Dunraven, Lord Inchiquin and the Hon. Mrs Guinness.

On a more local level your society has a copy of a letter written to Brian Inglis by Win Knowles (nee Wilson) recalling life in Malahide as she remembered it when she was a young girl living with her parents at No.5 St. James's Terrace. She wrote as follows about the wartime period:

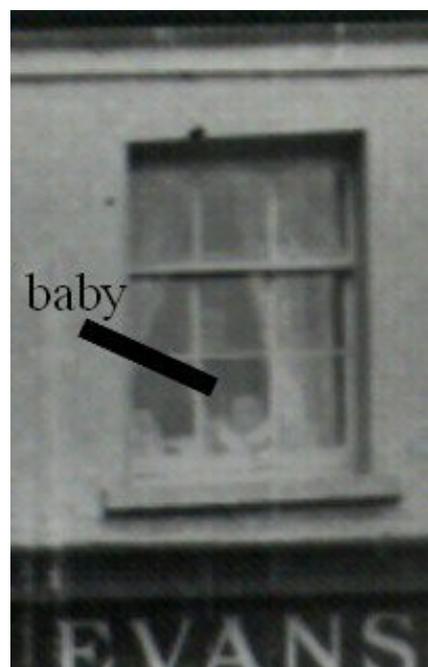
Lady Talbot de Malahide was Patron of the Red Cross and St. Johns Ambulance Services when the war broke out in 1914, and at once saw to the organising of our local depot for the making of bandages and medical aids as well as launching the local V.A.D.s . These activities provided immense interest for the females of all ages, and quite a lot of fun for the handful of really "young" like myself (I was about 15 then) and our V.A.D capers consisted mainly in putting in a smart looking and efficient team for the examinations and competitions organised by the Red Cross and St. Johns, and held in Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin. Some of our members who were the right age managed to find their way to hospitals and real war work, but I was too young to be considered then, but must say I enjoyed the competitions against the other teams from all around the County, and Malahide Team No. 48 swept all before them in 1916 at the annual display. The bandage making depot

maybe filled a more practical function and was housed in the old Golf Club beyond the Baths. The local ladies met two or three times a week to roll miles of bandages and to sew others. I suppose they were of some help, but in the light of modern sterilisation and production it was a very odd undertaking!



Malahide Golf Club pavilion about 1908

Another young local lady was Jessica Taylor. Born in 1899, Jessica was the only child of George and Mary Susan (Bishop Evans) Taylor of Malahide. In this picture of their shop on Main Street opposite the present day 'Duffys' the child in the upper right window is believed to baby Jessica.





Outside and interior of Bassett's Malahide Pharmacy in 1950s

Above Benjamin Bassett and to the left the Bassett/Taylor headstone in St. Andrew's



In 1922 Jessica married Benjamin Bassett. Son of a Waterford wine merchant, Ben trained as a druggist before emigrating to Canada. When Canada entered the war he joined the Canadian army and saw service at the Battle of the Somme, probably as a medical orderly. When discharged in 1919 instead of returning to Canada he found his way to Malahide where he became the proprietor of the Malahide Pharmacy also on Main Street about where 'Paddy Power' now trades. He and Jessica had three known children: William George, Pamela, and Patricia. The latter will be fondly remembered by many as Pat Hemmens, wife of Walter, from the top of Church Road.



Ben died in 1974 and Jessica in 1980 and both are buried in St. Andrew's churchyard.

Teenage Jessica joined the local V.A.D.s and in this photo she is 3rd from left, with rounded face, among the group of nurses, facing in direction of camera.

The occasion was the finals of the ambulance competitions in Lord Iveagh's Gardens, St. Stephen's Green on Saturday 16th June, 1917. The Malahide Detachment of the Voluntary Aid Detachment of the British Red Cross Society, under their commandant, Miss Franks ('Roseneath', Church Rd.), won both the British Red Cross Society V.A.D. and the B.R.C.S. (Co. Dublin) V.A.D. Challenge Cups.

Researched and written by Roger Greene

A listing, in PDF format, of VADs with Malahide addresses accompanies this NEWSLETTER. Brief details of their service records are included.

Source: British Red Cross website URL: <http://www.redcross.org.uk/About-us/Who-we-are/History-and-origin/First-World-War>

Lady Isabel Charlotte Talbot de Malahide

1851 - 1932

OBITUARY (*From The Times, February 23, 1932*)

*ISABEL LADY TALBOT DE MALAHIDE
A LONG AND USEFUL LIFE*

ISABEL CHARLOTTE Lady Talbot de Malahide, D.B.E. was born on December 20th, 1851, being the youngest child of Robert and Charlotte Blake Humfrey, of Wroxham House, Norfolk. Her father served in the Peninsular War under the Duke of Wellington, and lost a leg at the battle of the Nive, 1813. In 1871 she married John Gurney, by whom she had six children. He was eldest son of John Gurney of Earlham Hall, Norwich, the head of the Gurney family in Norfolk and partner in the Bank of Gurneys, Birkbecks, Barclay and Buxton (now Barclays Bank Limited). She and her husband lived for many years at Sprowston Hall, Norwich, and took a deep interest in many educational and philanthropic schemes in that city, especially the conversion of the old Norwich Castle, then the jail, into the Norwich Museum. In spite of loss of eyesight, Mr. Gurney became Mayor of Norwich in 1886, the year of the Royal Agricultural Show, when he entertained the Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII). But his health was beginning to fail, and he and Mrs. Gurney left England for the Chateau de Thorenc, Cannes, where they lived until his death in the following year, 1887.

In December 1901 Mrs. Gurney married her second husband, Richard Wogan, fifth Lord Talbot de Malahide, and thenceforth lived at Malahide Castle, Co. Dublin, until his death in 1921. She was interested in many Irish institutions, and during the War she was head of the Dublin Branch of the Red Cross, and threw herself indefatigably into this work, in which she was assisted by her secretary, Miss Draper-Newman.

On January 1, 1920, she was created a Dame of the Order of the British Empire. She was also a Lady of Grace of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem. The Irish Distressed Ladies' Homes for Children, and The movement for providing district nurses throughout Ireland were also among the objects that claimed her interest. Nor were these her only public activities. Many a sufferer in the Adelaide Hospital and in the Red Cross hospitals watched for her coming and was comforted by her quiet, cheery words.

"A few months after the outbreak of the War, a County Dublin branch of the British Red Cross Society began to work in Dublin. Its President, the late Countess of Meath, was at the time resident in England, and Lady Talbot consented to act as her deputy. She also became the President of the Swords District Branch of the British Red Cross. Here again she gathered round her many willing helpers, with whose aid large sums were annually raised until the need had passed.

"As an artist, both in water-colours and oils, she was gifted. Religion to her was a deep reality-something to be lived. The thoughts which guided her found utterance in two publications from her pen, Foundations of National Glory and Golden Opportunities, both volumes containing Addresses delivered as President of the

Mothers' Union. It is rare to find such a clear and well-balanced view of life, such literary and artistic talent, such personal charm, and such steadfast sincerity combined in one individual as were united in the person of Isabel Lady Talbot de Malahide."

Some of this work she had started long before the war, along with her founding in Malahide of a village nursery and an orphanage (Tir na nOg on Church Road), and for 15 years she was President of the Mothers Union for the United Dioceses of Dublin, Glendalough and Kildare – during which period the numbers of branches rose from forty-six to seventy-seven. She was created a Dame of the Order of the British Empire on 1 January 1924 for her various services during the war. She died in 1932.

Richard Wogan, fifth Baron Talbot de Malahide, married Emily Boswell but she died at the castle in 1898. In 1901 he met the widowed Isabel Gurney at a dinner party in London and they were married quietly there later that year.

When Lord Talbot had succeeded to the title in 1883, he found the Malahide estate much let down but he had little money to put things to rights. However, Isabel had inherited a large fortune on the death of her first husband who came from a wealthy banking family and with whom she had six children. She was immensely pleased with her new home, and at once threw herself into transforming the place - both the interior and the gardens. Her husband gave her a free hand. She proved to be a keen and expert gardener. Each Christmas she would visit families on the estate to give them presents.



The couple travelled very extensively, often accompanied by Samuel, her eldest of six children from her first marriage. When she was at home in Malahide she liked to entertain and be entertained. She liked to sing and play the piano and favourites in her repertoire included "Down by the Swanee River" and "The Old Folks at Home". She was also an accomplished artist in water-colours and oils. She is said to have been involved with Canon Lindsay and Fr. Mulcahy on the committee to establish a lending library in Malahide and in the organisation of a village nursery and the orphanage in Tir na nÓg on Church Road. For fifteen years she was President of the Mothers' Union for the united Dioceses of Dublin, Glendalough and Kildare during which time the number of branches rose from forty-six to seventy-seven. She also worked with the order



John and Isabel Gurney with their six children about 1882

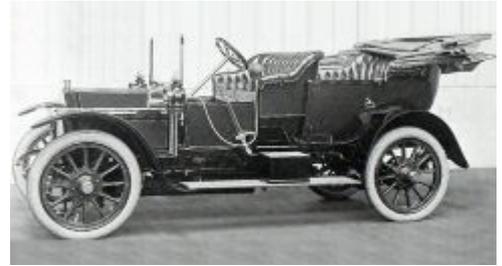
of St John of Jerusalem, the Adelaide Hospital, the Irish Distressed Ladies Fund, Homes for Children, the movement for providing district nurses throughout Ireland and the Alexandra College Guild (of which she was Vice President).



Tir na nÓg gate and avenue on Church Road today. The former orphanage is in the far background.

She became the President of the Swords District Branch of the Red Cross and on the outbreak of war she devoted endless energy to the County Dublin Branch of the Red Cross Society, of which she was made acting-President in the absence of the President the Countess of Meath who was indisposed in London. She soon became President and held the post until 1924. She was a driving force on many other committees both

around Dublin and nationally. Lady Talbot drove a Wolseley-Siddeley 20 h.p. motor car and travelled Ireland in it. She used it to give talks on gardening, to attend outings or to go to tennis parties at Mr. and Mrs Plunkett's at Portmarnock where *the girls there were all in short, exceedingly tight white dresses for playing tennis, and nothing of the human form was left to the imagination!*



The Easter Rising had no direct effect upon life at the Castle, but her son Samuel Gurney, commented in his biography of his mother as follows:

In 1916 Samuel was in Trinity College, Dublin, Officer Training Corps, doing his drills in college, but usually returning to the Castle to sleep. Then on Easter Monday afternoon Mr. Pack-Beresford came to call, and told how the Sinn Fein Rebellion had broken out in Dublin. Amid the absolute peace and quiet of Malahide such a thing seemed impossible ; it was hard to believe that anything serious had happened. The next morning the noise of repeated rifle firing could be distinctly heard when the windows were shut, but, curiously enough, scarcely at all when they were opened. Samuel cycled in to Trinity College in plain clothes, taking his uniform in a parcel; and, passing the Sinn Fein sentry on duty near Dublin, reached the College without difficulty. It never occurred to him at the time that he would not be able to return with equal ease. But return was impossible, and he did not get back to Malahide till the Rebellion was over. Meanwhile Isabel could get no news of him, until, when peace was restored, she and Lord Talbot motored to the College, and finding his friend William Craig-McFeely on guard at the front gate, were able to get reassuring news.

She had asked Lord Leicester to recommend him for a commission in the 2nd—6th Norfolk Regiment. On Samuel being moved to the Curragh she wrote:

“ I wonder how you are getting on, your first evening at the Curragh? I got this letter from Lord Leicester to-day, saying :

“ ”A line to say that I have to-day signed and forwarded your son's papers, with a recommendation that the matter is put forward with as little delay as possible.

“ ’ (Signed) LEICESTER ’ “

He received his commission not long afterwards while with the Cadet Corps at Fermoy, and joined the regiment at Filey.



Lady Talbot with her son, Samuel in 1918

In another passage he states:

The entire country was divided into districts. In her own, the Fingall Division, she united widely different elements, and raised substantial sums of money by sales at the castle. She visited the Red Cross and other hospitals regularly, usually accompanied by Miss Draper-Newman, who recalls that “she went from bed to bed, bringing brightness wherever she went.” At one time the wife of the then Commander of the Forces, General Sir Nevil Macready, lent her an armoured motor, but she was dissuaded from using it again, as it was a well known target for the enemy.

From 1917 onwards, Malahide became directly involved in the war. Airships, known as blimps, were stationed at mooring points around the parkland. These blimps were used to search for German submarines and proved important in protecting shipping in the Irish Sea and particularly steamers plying between Dublin and Holyhead. Samuel Gurney described the scene thus:

During the latter part of the War airships used to patrol the Channel, and they were moored in Malahide Park. It was most interesting to see them flying quite close to the windows in the morning, and returning to be met and pulled in by about twenty or thirty men, who hauled them down to be tethered among trees.

With the end of the war, life at the Castle soon returned to how it had been before hostilities broke out, but Ireland was changing rapidly. Her husband was a fervent Unionist and voted against the Home Rule Bill in the House of Lords in 1893. Although he did not directly involve himself in politics in later life the unrest in Ireland probably contributed to his ill health and in his latter years he suffered from deep depression. Lord Richard died in 1921. Isabel was deeply effected by his death. Her step-son, James, still a bachelor and now

6th Lord Talbot encouraged her to remain at Malahide. This she did until she moved back to London in 1924 and lived at 38 Buckingham Palace Mansions. Isabel Lady Talbot de Malahide died in 1932.



Samuel Gurney with his mother, Lady Talbot and Lord Talbot at Lady Nutting's Fete at St. Helen's, Booterstown in 1919.

Isabel Lady Talbot de Malahide, about 1930



Researched and written by Roger Greene

Samuel Gurney's biography, *Isabel Gurney, later Lady Talbot de Malahide*, was the main source. The book is out of print but a copy is available in Fingal Local Studies Library, Forsters Way, Swords.

ON DISPLAY AT MUSEUM

A local donor very kindly presented the society with this magnificent recently constructed scale model of Malahide Castle. It is on display in our museum beside the bus park at the Castle.



Do you have any interesting objects or old photographs to donate?

We would be delighted to hear from you at:

malahidehistoricalsociety@gmail.com



One wonders if the winner of the first prize on Friday, 17th March, 1916 put the rifle to use in the Rebellion?

This ticket is on display in the Museum beside the bus park at Malahide Castle

