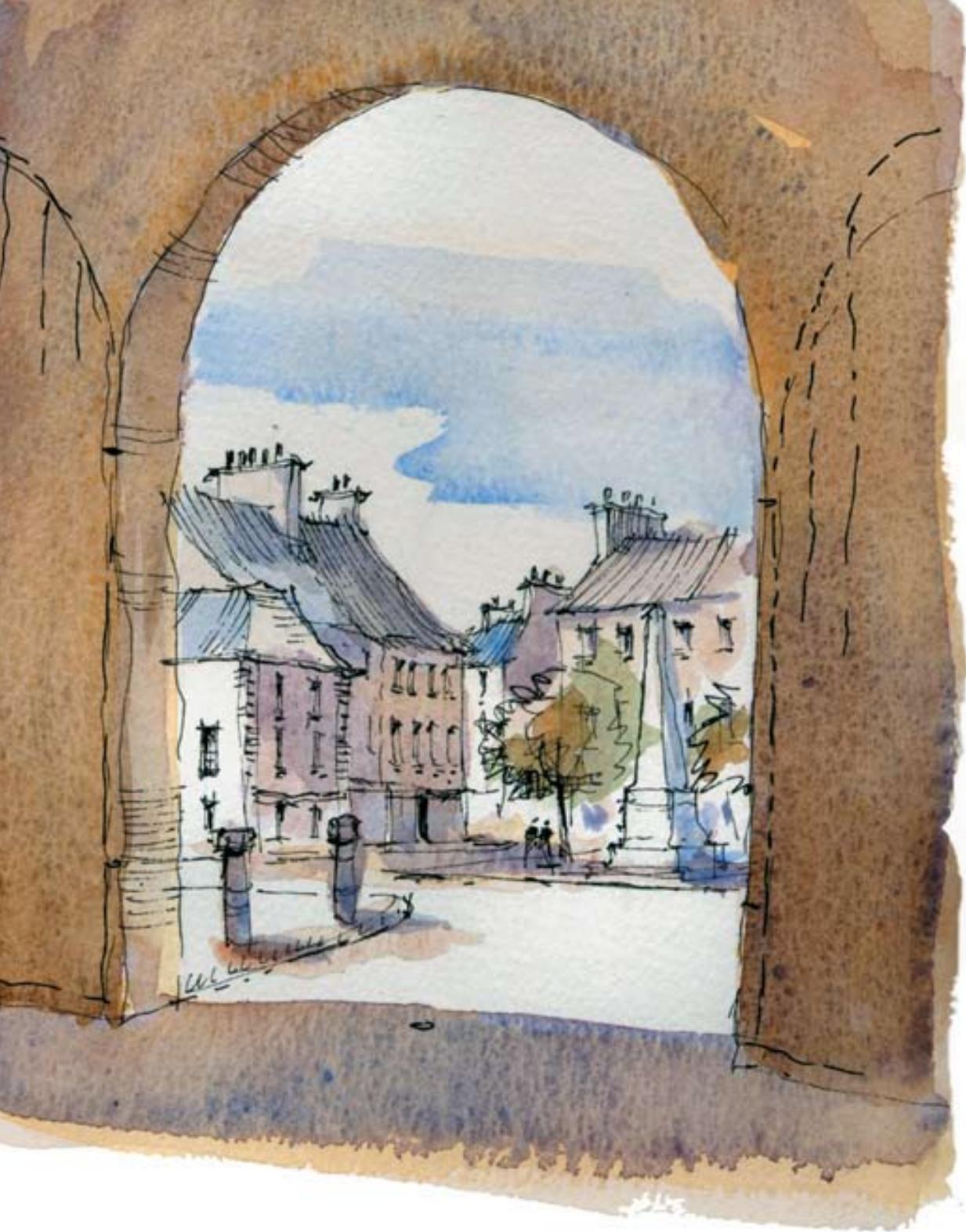


TULLAMORE
A PORTRAIT



1. VIEW OF O'CONNOR SQUARE FROM THE COUNTY LIBRARY

TULLAMORE

A PORTRAIT

Michael Byrne

Drawings by Fergal MacCabe

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for

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Endpapers: O'Connor Square and the county courthouse

Opposite half-title: Charleville Token, a thirteen-penny shilling of 1802



Comhshaol, Oidhreacht agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Heritage and Local Government

FOREWORD

Foreword by An Taoiseach, Mr Brian Cowen, T.D.

It is a pleasure to be asked to pen the Foreword to this introduction to the history of Tullamore and guide to its buildings. Both Michael Byrne and Fergal MacCabe have an intimate knowledge of Tullamore, and over many years have studied the character of Tullamore in different ways, reflecting their respective contributions.



What the author and artist have done here is to tell the story of Tullamore and what has shaped it as a town, its distinctive architectural features, the stories of its streets and buildings, both great and small. In this work it is not just the significant buildings or personages who are feted. So too are the intimate streetscapes, lanes and stories of the town and its characters brought to us with fresh perspectives. This is the way history should be – an appreciation of all that we hold dear and appreciate, but at the same time are willing to re-examine to learn more.

It is of interest to see how the town took shape after 1700. The distinctive contribution of the Quaker merchants to the development of the woollen and tanning industries is indicative of how a new community could make a significant impact. The role of the first earl of Charleville following on the balloon fire of 1785 is remarkable as was his energy in castle building. His great Gothic mansion completed about 1812 and set in the carefully planned parklands of Charleville Demesne was and remains a singular achievement. But one gets the impression that having completed this great object, perhaps twenty years in the making, it had exhausted him, both physically and mentally. Furthermore when combined with an extravagant son it considerably dented his finances. It was the enthusiasm of the young Lord Tullamore to make his town the capital of the county that eventually led

to the securing of this prized status from 1835. The achievement has given Tullamore its finest building, the county courthouse, together with the surviving façade of the county gaol.

The story of the progress of Tullamore from the time of the famous balloon fire to the Famine years is fascinating as is the progress of the town after the depression of the late 1870s and early 1880s. Now it was the turn of the Catholic middle class and the merchant families of Egans and Williams to provide the employment opportunities when the Quaker-owned tobacco factory was destroyed by fire in the 1880s. It was the same middle class that came to dominate local government after the passing of the 1898 Local Government Act. Indeed this Act has accurately been described as the legislative father of the Irish Free State. The role of the Tullamore Town Council, first in facilitating the provision of public lighting and later providing water, sewerage and housing, has a significance that is not always appreciated until there is a problem with its supply or its quality. The building by the town council of some 1,500 houses over the past 100 years has made a huge contribution to the well-being of families and created an environment where health and education could prosper. This book is timely in that its publication coincides with the 150th anniversary of local government in Tullamore and which was marked by the council in September 2010.

The population of Tullamore is now in the region of 14,000 and has more than doubled since 1961 and trebled in a little over 100 years. By some standards that is modest growth. But what can be seen in the surviving streetscapes is how carefully planned growth and design can enhance a town for decades and even centuries to come. The economist Maynard Keynes remarked that in the long run we are all dead, but in environmental and architectural matters that is no excuse for not seeking the best for future generations and having national, regional and town plans that plot how this can be achieved.

Studies of town growth are needed now more than ever such has been the pace of change over the past thirty years. The transformation of Tullamore in the last twenty five years was possibly greater than over the previous two hundred years. This growth trajectory was only equalled in the period after the balloon fire and up to the time of the end of the wars against France, and the defeat of Napoleon in 1815. Furthermore there are so many more people of all nationalities living in Tullamore now who may have only a passing knowledge, or none at all, of the history of the town and its development over the past three hundred years. This study gives all newcomers a chance to see what has gone before and encouragement to look at what can be achieved in the future.

The work of architect and town planner, Fergal MacCabe, helps to elucidate the physical fabric, but more than that it creates a sense of place in a way that words can only attempt. His drawings bring out the character of the town and often in a way that perhaps has not struck one before. The colour and character in the pictures inspires a determination to enjoy and appreciate the buildings and streetscapes developed over centuries, but perhaps not always nourished in the way they ought to have been. Change is good too and essential to development and in seeking to make progress it is good to know what has gone before and with this knowledge to continue to strive to make Tullamore a better place in which to live, enjoy and call home. Both young and old have a distinctive contribution to make in that calling.

Brian Cowen, T.D.

Taoiseach

PREFACE

Interest in Irish history and especially local history has grown enormously since the first illustrated survey of Tullamore's history was published as *A walk through Tullamore* in 1979. Over thirty years have passed since that time and a new generation has grown up in a time of great innovation and change in the physical fabric of Tullamore with new and renovated buildings, out-of-town shopping and the demise of the small independent grocer. Living over the shop is practically gone, but more people live in the town centre in new apartment developments built in the old lanes, often on the sites of the condemned housing of the 1900s to the 1950s. The housing estates of the suburbs, an innovation in the 1920s, have also expanded especially with the housing boom of the ten years from 1997 to 2007. The town of 2009 is so changed from that of 1979 that a Tullamore native coming back after thirty years would only know the town through its inner core. If what was said by Coote in 1800, that the town had risen phoenix-like from the ashes was somewhat dubious, not so of 210 years later. Notwithstanding so much that is new and different over the past thirty years there is also great continuity and of this we are handsomely reminded in the drawings of Tullamore-born architect and town planner, Fergal MacCabe, whose work illustrates this guide to what is still, in its central core, essentially a late-eighteenth century town. The drawings serve to remind us how rich

is that heritage formed over the past three hundred years. In the everyday bustle of life so much can be taken for granted and a door-case or a shop-front beautifully carved can seem as if it was always there and not something of conscious design that, if unappreciated, can disappear overnight.

The Offaly towns are all relatively modern and generally owe their origins to the plantations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The present name of the county is derived from Russ Failge, king of Leinster, eponymous ancestor of the Ui Fhailge. When the O'Connor Faly lands were confiscated to the English crown in the 1550s-1600s English local government was established with the formation of the King's County and its neighbour, Queen's County. The then queen was Mary I of England, the sad Catholic queen who married Philip, the widower and only son of Emperor Charles V in what was a childless marriage, allowing Elizabeth to succeed to the throne in 1558. Philip II was king of Spain from 1556 until his death in 1598 and had one son by his previous marriage, the ill-fated Don Carlos. The colonising power planted new English settlers in the lands of what is now east County Offaly with Philipstown as the new county town and military outpost. What is now Portlaoise in the neighbouring county was called Maryborough. Philip spent little time with Mary in England (she died in 1558)

and none in Ireland, but the colonisation process begun in the 1550s continued in the time of Elizabeth, James I, Oliver Cromwell and William III, prince of Orange after the battle of the Boyne in 1690. The county councillors who changed the name from King's County to County Offaly in 1920 because it was associated with the colonising power may not have been aware that the county was called after that champion of religious orthodoxy and hater of heresy, the Catholic monarch of Spain. Philipstown, the former county town, also reverted to Daingean about 1920. Today more than ever historical evidence can inform policy! Tullamore, settled by the English family of Moore in the 1600s was no more than a small village in the seventeenth century and its growth is difficult to document for a period much earlier than 1700. Yet, within a little over a hundred years it was competing with Birr or Parsonstown to become the largest town in the county and achieved that status in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

This short survey is mainly concerned with the physical development of Tullamore between 1700 and 2010. The guide is in the form of first, a short note on the main visitor attractions in the town and district. This is followed by an introductory essay outlining the history of the town. It is necessarily compressed and the full apparatus of footnotes has

been avoided in ease of the reader. The essay is followed by a tour through the streets with the work of Fergal MacCabe lighting the way to make the tour so much more interesting and here and there photographs to remind us of how things were and more recent changes. For those whose interest has expanded in the course of the tour there is, in addition to the essay, a time-line to bring the book to a close. This guide takes a walking-tour approach so as to encourage the reader to look at the remains of three centuries of development. This built heritage is mediated through Fergal MacCabe's superb sketch-work which seeks to capture not only the detail but also the atmosphere. Visitor and resident of Tullamore are invited to observe an evolving landscape in a middle-sized Irish town. The tour, if taken on foot rather than from the armchair, is a long one and it is recommended that it be taken in two stages or even broken up further as suits. In the town survey, street by street, the principal buildings have been highlighted and here and there reproduced in Fergal MacCabe's artwork. The brief here is to increase knowledge and appreciation of the built heritage of Tullamore and to apply that insight to other towns and villages and generally to the Irish urban landscape. An appreciation of what we have and what we would prefer to do without is one of the objectives of this book. The growth of the

many new housing estates since the 1970s and since 1999 of out-of-town retailing should push us to go back again and look and enjoy the wonderful old town centre. It is something very special with a very distinct character to be savoured and appreciated.

This book is no more than a summary of the history of Tullamore with the emphasis on capturing the mood of the town through years of observation. Author and artist are indebted to many people and we give our thanks in the Acknowledgements and with apologies to any person we have inadvertently omitted. We must here thank the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Without the support of the department and Minister John Gormley it would not have been possible to extend this introduction to Tullamore to a large format so as to give proper expression to the drawings. Our thanks also to all the members and staff of the Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society who have done so much to save and treasure remembrances of things past not in any sentimental way, but by going about the business in a systematic fashion and creating an awareness which was not there forty years ago and earlier when so many good things were lost. Key moments in changing our attitude to heritage were the saving of that old volcano, Croghan Hill, from destruction and locally the façade of what is now the Bank of Ireland in Bridge Street in the mid-

1970s just after which the first version of this book was published. Mention should also be made of seminal works of the 1970s such as that of Patrick Shaffrey, *The Irish Town: an approach to survival* (Dublin, 1975). The wheel is turning, but from time to time buildings of character and beauty are lost through dint of special pleading which in retrospect did not seem of such importance after all to justify the destruction. As with other towns there are many examples of this in Tullamore where some of the new buildings sit uneasily in the old town of 1740 to 1840.

Almost all books are interim statements. Your additions and amendments, stories of Tullamore, knowledge of new historical material and copies of your photographs of the town and its people, especially those prior to 1970, can be sent to us at info@offalyhistory.com or to the Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society at Bury Quay, Tullamore. Why not put in writing your own recollections of Tullamore or celebrate the history of your street.

Michael Byrne 30 September 2010

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Finally, we thank our respective spouses Geraldine and Brid, whose enthusiasm for the project was readily given and sustained throughout.

M.B. and F. MacC., Tullamore, 30 September 2010



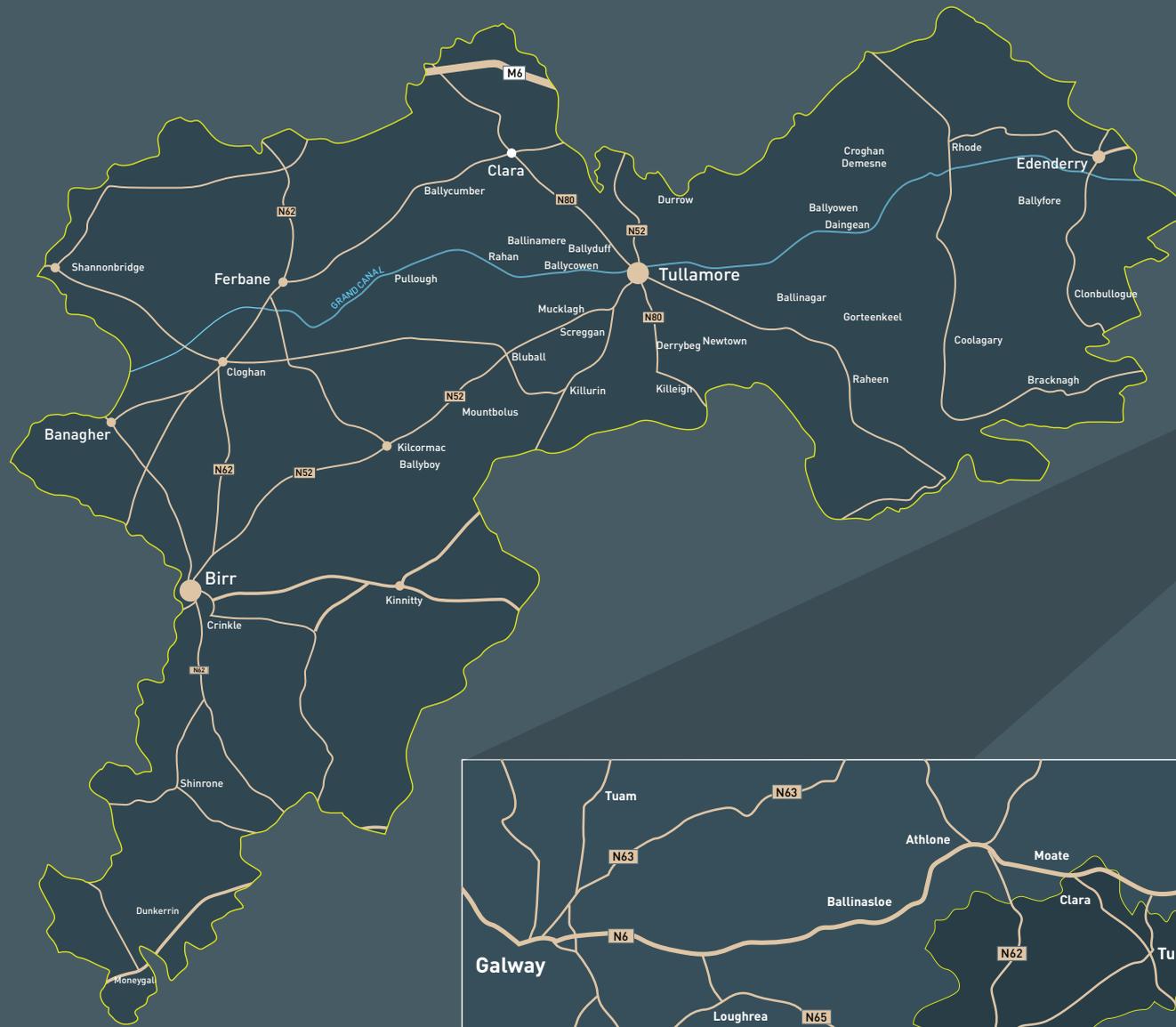
2. CLARA BRIDGE OVER THE CANAL WITH KILBRIDE STREET IN THE BACKGROUND (COURTESY OF TULLAMORE TOWN COUNCIL).



TULLAMORE FROM THE AIR ON A FAIR DAY, 1918



TULLAMORE FROM THE AIR, 2002



TULLAMORE

PLACES TO VISIT



DISTRICT OF TULLAMORE, c.1900

Much of the early growth of Tullamore was due to the extension of the Grand Canal to the town in 1798 and later to expansion in distilling and milling. The town is associated with Tullamore Dew, the famous Irish whiskey for over 100 years and a distilling history in excess of 200 years. Now it is home to the Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre situated beside the Grand Canal at Bury Quay in a bonded warehouse erected in 1897. It is also associated with Irish Mist, the world class liqueur.

Tullamore is a well preserved town providing an example of provincial town planning in some of its best moments. The streets are spacious and the houses, several of which date from the 1750s, are well finished. Some have been demolished in recent years to make way for new styles which sometimes sit uneasily in the old town.

The principal town square, known as O'Connor Square, was improved in recent years and includes an attractive market house (now the Irish Nationwide Building Society) dating from 1789 and erected by the then owners of the town, the earls of Charleville. Nearby is a restored Victorian brick warehouse facade now incorporated in the Bank of Ireland. The town library at the eastern end of O'Connor Square occupies the site of the house where W.B. Yeats' ancestors were married in 1773.

On the western side of the square is the Bridge Shopping Centre, built with a nod to the town's architectural style. To the right of the Centre is the distinctive Bridge House which now incorporates the new Bridge House Hotel of 1999. At Cormac Street (on the Birr Road) and close to the railway station is the county courthouse, arguably the most important building in Tullamore and built in the neo-classical style in 1835. It was designed by the architect J.B. Keane and one of its two semicircular courtrooms has survived. The courthouse was refurbished and enlarged in 2007. Beside it is a Gothic style gaol (now Kilcruttin Business Park) built in 1826-30. It was officially discontinued as a county gaol in 1924. One of the last public executions in Ireland took place here in 1865 and the second last woman to be hanged in Ireland went to her death here in 1903. Of the newer style of architecture in Tullamore some of the examples are the Tullamore Court Hotel (1997) at O'Moore Street, extended in

2006 to over 100 beds and the reconstructed (1986) Church of the Assumption at Harbour Street, Menarys (2001) and the Bridge House Hotel (1999). At Charleville Road is the award winning building of the Offaly County Council (2002) and at Ardan Road the new Midland Regional Hospital (2007) close to the important Scott and Good hospital of the 1930s. About a mile from the town centre is the wonderful Gothic castle of architect, Francis Johnston, known as Charleville Forest, set in the largest extent of oak woods in Offaly, Charleville Demesne, and with the famous 'King Oak' at the entrance to the demesne. Also of great interest is the town park largely redesigned in 2008 with an attractive modern design and with historical set pieces such as Kilcruttin cemetery where members of the King's German Legion are buried and Tullamore's Famine victims of 1845-9. In the grounds of the park and close to the skate board attraction is a monument to Irish ex-service men and women and erected in 1986.



3. BALLYCOWAN CASTLE DATING TO THE 1620S AND WEST OF TULLAMORE

Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre

Tullamore is famous for its whiskey, ‘Tullamore Dew’ and for its Irish Mist liqueur. The Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre recounts the role of distilling in the town’s development and the impact of the Grand Canal transport system. After the visit a courtesy taste of Tullamore Dew is provided. The museum and tourist office is housed in this bonded warehouse once used for the storage of whiskey before the tax needed to be paid on it. Tullamore Dew, until the 1960s owned by D.E. Williams Limited and more recently by Cantrell & Cochrane, is the second most popular Irish whiskey in the world. In 2010 ownership of the brand passed to Grants as part of a €300m deal. For further information see www.tullamoredew.com and www.tullamore-dew.org.

Offaly Exhibition and Research Centre

The Offaly Exhibition and Research Centre situated at Bury Quay, Tullamore (www.offalyhistory.com) incorporates the Laois/Offaly Family History Centre known as Irish Midlands Ancestry. It is the home of the Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society (OHAS, founded 1937 and reformed in 1969) and contains an extensive collection of material relating to the archaeology and history of the county. The building, once a wine warehouse, now contains much of interest to historians of County Offaly with some 10,000 books and some 50,000 photographs. Exhibitions are frequently held at the centre which adjoins the Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre. A public reading room is available each Thursday night and by appointment and an extensive array of local studies and copies of old photographs are offered for sale. The Society provides a website where access to over 1,000 items of history is available free and is regularly updated. Lectures and other events are

held monthly. The County of Offaly now has an impressive array of published literature available from this Centre and from local bookshops in Tullamore and elsewhere. Some four or five publications are added each year to the growing list of material. If you want to equip yourself with the histories and photographs of County Offaly this is the place to start. If the online 1901 and 1911 censuses have got a family history craze going it can be pursued here back into the nineteenth century by perhaps fifty to eighty years – see www.irishmidlandsancestry.com or email info@offalyhistory.com.

Offaly County Library at O’Connor Square

This 1930s centrally situated building has an important local history collection that is readily available during library opening hours. The collection is important and the serious student of local studies can spend many a happy hour here. For a small sum annual membership is available which includes access to the daily papers and the internet. The hours of opening are available in the lending library section and on offaly.ie.

St Catherine’s Church of Ireland Church

This is one of the finest of the Protestant churches in the diocese and was designed by Francis Johnston, the architect of Charleville Forest house. The church was completed in 1815 and is situated on Hop Hill, a natural mound near the town. The building is not usually open outside of services. Inside is the fine monument to Charles Moore, first earl of Charleville (died 1764), by John Van Nost, the younger. In the crypt, now sealed off, are the coffins of the Burys of Charleville from Charles William (died 1835) to Colonel Bury of Mount Everest fame of 1963. Most pathetic is the small coffin of Lady Harriet, the child of eight who was killed on the stairs at Charleville

in 1861. Her parents were both dead and she was in the care of her uncle, Alfred Bury. Also in the church are memorials to parishioners who served and died in the First World War, some members of the Bury family and several rectors.

Tullamore Catholic Church

Tullamore Catholic Church was destroyed by fire in 1983 with the exception of the bell tower and steeple. The new church (1986) has a fine interior and is of architectural interest for its steeply pitched timber structure portal frames and ceiling. The building was designed by Edward Smith and Partners, architects. The exterior of the church is somewhat unsuccessful and was compromised by the desire to retain parts of the old church and the tower and steeple. On the other hand as one commentator noted of the interior:

It is a breathtaking feat of engineering with soaring cruck-arches in laminated wood supporting the side aisles and reaching on upwards into the clerestory to support the roof. The potential for beauty inherent in mathematically-inspired structures, often reserved for bridges, is here applied to a church. The feeling of space is uplifting and the furnishings are of consistently high quality (Lawrence, 2009).

There are some six windows from the Harry Clarke Studios, designed by Clarke, and also contemporary stained glass. The large windows in new church of 1986 are from Dublin Glass and Paint Company and were executed for Tullamore while almost all the others were brought from elsewhere including the Harry Clarke designed windows which had originally been in Rathfarnham Castle. The church also houses one of the largest organs in Ireland – a gift from Copenhagen. Books on the church which



CHARLEVILLE CASTLE, c.1910



DURROW HIGH CROSS, EAST FACE

marked the rebuilding in 1986 and its centenary in 2006 are available in local bookshops or from the Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society. The interesting study (Lawrence, 2009) of the windows of the church and others in the county can be viewed in OHAS and the Offaly County Library.

Charleville Castle/Forest

Charleville Castle, or more correctly Charleville Forest, was designed by Francis Johnston and its builder, Charles William Bury, first earl of Charleville. It is open to the public by appointment and is considered to be one of the finest Gothic houses in Ireland. The fairy tale-style castle was designed in 1798 and completed over the years 1800 to 1812. This magnificent building was vacant from about 1912 to 1970. The main rooms with their spectacular ceilings have for the most part survived the years of lying empty. The castle is now lived in again and an attempt is being made to preserve and restore it to its former glory. From the tall circular tower can be seen the four neighbouring counties. Charleville Demesne includes the best extent of surviving oak wood in Offaly. Its avenues offer some of the finest walks near Tullamore matched only by the tow paths of the Grand Canal. The 'King Oak' near the entrance gate from Tullamore may date back to 1482 or earlier and is featured in Thomas Pakenham's choice of some sixty notable trees of Britain and Ireland. County Offaly with Waterford and Wicklow have now the greatest extent of surviving native woodlands. The walks in the demesne are open to the public courtesy of the Hutton Bury family. All that is requested is that visitors respect the beautiful grounds and keep to the footpaths.

Charles William Bury commenced building his castle in 1801 and completed the job in 1812. Perhaps 'in deference to the oak trees he called his house not Charleville Castle but Charleville Forest. Already there was one giant tree known as the 'King Oak' dominating like a watch tower the carriage drive to the town . . . No one knows who planted the tree - king or peasant - or whether it sowed itself. But it seems to be a descendant of the great forests of common oak (Quercus robur) that once straddled the soggy green plains of central Ireland. Estimates of its age begin at 400 years; it might be double that. With a girth of 26 feet below its lowest branches, it is one of the oldest, largest and best-preserved oaks in the country. The Bury family believed that if a branch fell, one of the Burys would die, so they supported the great arms with wooden props. Of course there was nothing they could do to protect the trunk. In May 1963 a thunderbolt splintered the main trunk from top to bottom. The tree survived, but the head of the family, Colonel Charles Howard-Bury, [famous for his Everest climb and 'Abominable Snowman'] dropped dead a few weeks later' (see Thomas Pakenham, Meetings with remarkable trees (London, 1996), pp 26-27.

Others think the 'King Oak' may be as much as 900 years old, 'but it has not been ring-counted and this may be a fanciful estimate; if the estimated age is correct, the King Oak would be a worthy candidate for the oldest living plant in Ireland' (see E. Charles Nelson and Wendy Walsh, *Trees of Ireland* (Dublin, 1993), p. 125.

Tullamore people have a story that local property developer, Thomas Acres, made a bet that he knew a tree in Tullamore that covered 'five acres'. Wagers were offered and lost when Acres placed his five sons under the great tree!

Town Walk

A walk about the town can take up to three hours, but is well worth the time taken exploring the historic centre which includes St Catherine's Church, Kilcruttin cemetery in the town park and the old streets dating from the mid to late eighteenth century. A walk along the canal, Charleville or around Collins Lane and Srah to Kilcruttin and Cormac Street offers respite from shopping and traffic and, in addition, provides healthy exercise. Much of this book is given over to exploring the streets of this town with a view to informing a leisurely stroll.

Durrow Abbey, High Cross and Early Christian Slabs: a beautiful ninth-century High Cross, early Christian slabs and St Columcille's holy well can be viewed about three miles outside Tullamore on the Kilbeggan road (N52). A monastery was founded here by Columcille in the mid-sixth century. The seventh-century illuminated manuscript, the Book of Durrow, can be seen in Trinity College, Dublin and was in the Durrow monastery until the mid-seventeenth century. Unlike Kells there is no clamour to 'bring the book home' and instead local energy was devoted to having public access, as of right, secured and the place made presentable to the public in place of the Gothic ruined appearance of the 1990s much commented on in the *Rough Guide to Ireland* at the time. Durrow Abbey house dates from the 1830s and is owned by the State, but is now leased to a children's foundation with some suggestion of its becoming a Barretstown Castle-type facility for young people hurt in foreign wars together with a large forest park. The house was destroyed by the IRA in the early 1920s and rebuilt in 1926-7 at a cost of almost £40,000 for Otway Graham Toler by Duffy Brothers, Tullamore in the domestic Tudor style. The High Cross was removed to the interior of

the eighteenth-century church in 2006. The church has now been adapted by the office of public works to hold and exhibit these sculptures so important to the early Christian history of the Tullamore district and to Ireland. The work is done well and the church has been handsomely restored. However, issues of traffic access from the public road are putting the €4m investment at risk and delaying the opening of the facility to the public. Lord Norbury, son of the 'Hanging Judge', was shot here on New Year's Day 1839 and buried in the days after 'the Great Wind' - as if God himself was expressing his anger at this wanton outrage on the rights of property! The second Church of Ireland church at Durrow (1880s) is now a private house but with access to the graveyard retained for the public.

Also in Durrow is the fine Gothic-style Catholic church of 1831 with a substantial graveyard adjoining where many local people and the old worthies of Tullamore are buried. This church has a splendid interior with plaster vaulting and was carefully restored in the early 1990s. On the exterior is a tall tower and its battlements. The corner pinnacles of the church are embellished with crockets or knobs. In the entrance hall, but moved from its place of honour in the church itself as part of 'reordering' in the 1990s, is a memorial to Pastor James O'Rafferty, for almost forty years parish priest of Tullamore. O'Rafferty was a man whose support was necessary to gain the local parliamentary seat after 1832 and who did much to secure the coming of the Mercy sisters to Tullamore as their second house after Baggot Street, Dublin. The Stations of the Cross in French terra cotta were made by the artist, Robert de Villers and intended for the church of Cardinal Verdier in Paris and came via a church in Sandymount to the Jesuit community chapel at



O'CONNOR SQUARE, c.2001



TULLAMORE DEW HERITAGE CENTRE, JULY 2003



OFFALY EXHIBITION AND RESEARCH CENTRE, 1998

Tullabeg in the 1940s. After the Jesuits departed from Tullabeg in 1991 the Stations were donated to Durrow, then in course of renovation.

Tihilly High Cross: three miles outside Tullamore on the Clara road north of Kildangan (not signposted, but opposite the entrance to Coleraine House) is Tihilly Cross. A monastery was founded here in the sixth century. The ruins of a medieval church survive together with a High Cross nearby set in a round base beside an early Christian slab. Access by permission only is from the owners of the land, Mr and Mrs Don Fox who live nearby. This is a wonderful, quiet and beautiful place, captivating in its simple beauty. The cows grazing nearby and sometimes a bull help to keep the area clean and free of strangling growth. The stream and the ancient ash trees that frame the site add to the beauty of the place. The ash trees are among the oldest in the country and for some are more exciting than the High Cross. This site has lately been the subject of a study as to what is the best for the place in terms of the preservation of the cross and its context.

The neighbourhood of Tullamore

In the vicinity of Tullamore are Srah castle, Ballycowan castle, Lynamonastery, Rahan Abbey, Lemanaghan, the shrine of St Manchan at Boher church and the monastery of Clonmacnois. In **Mucklagh Catholic church** can be seen the former Tullabeg altar of the 1940s designed by Michael Scott and made in native oak with carvings by Laurence Campbell. Further south is the town of **Kilcormac** with its wonderful 1860s Catholic church, medieval pieta and on the back road from Kilcormac, or via Blue Ball (an old inn), is **Boora Lake and Sculpture Park**. The latter now has a short and beautiful free guide – *Sculpture in the Parklands* and a website

of the same name. These places are on the route to **Birr** with its Georgian town, castle and science museum. To the east of Tullamore is the old town of **Daingean**, called Philipstown until 1920 after Philip II of Spain, and established at the same time as Madrid, but there the similarities end. Here can be seen the former county courthouse and the grave of the saintly Fr Mullen at **Kilclonfert**. Further east is the extinct volcano, **Croghan Hill**. It was saved from destruction by quarrying in 1977 and is well worth a climb. Further east is the town of Edenderry once owned by Lord Downshire with its fine 1830s Market House. If you have detailed queries there is an active historical society here and a number of fine histories published. East of Durrow and north of Tullamore is the monastery of St Hugh at **Rahugh** and the village of Tyrrellspass. The latter, an estate village, laid out by a lady gifted with ‘a masculine intelligence’, Jane countess of Belvedere. In Kilbeggan is the original Locke’s distillery and nearer to Mullingar, Belvedere House, once owned by Colonel Bury of Charleville Forest, Tullamore. The distillery and Belvedere are open to the public. For Tyrrellspass and Rahugh one can take the old road via Kilbeggan bridge and Puttaghan. Attractive guides to the county and to its heritage are available at the Tullamore Tourist Office in Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre.

Tullamore’s link with Chandler, Arizona

Tullamore created a special link with the town of Chandler in Arizona in 2009. The link was born of the desire to emulate Chandler as an attractive and vibrant hub for new service industries. The link is cultural too with several representatives of Irish heritage studies in Chandler coming to Tullamore each year.

For further information on Tullamore see the website www.offalyhistory.com also that of Offaly County Council (www.offaly.ie), and Tullamore Dew as noted above.

Local histories, historical journals, maps and old photographs can be purchased at local bookshops and at the Offaly Exhibition and Research Centre, Bury Quay, Tullamore (057 9321421, info@offalyhistory.com). The intelligent and curious visitor who wants to know more can have no excuse in this information-laden age. We should not complain at the apparent abundance. In the early 1970s there was virtually nothing available on Tullamore history to purchase. Now there is much of Offaly interest, but it serves to highlight the many gaps in historical research waiting to be filled.



4. TIHILLY MONASTERY AT LOUGHAN NEAR KILDANGAN CROSS, TULLAMORE

TULLAMORE – *Physical Features*

The physical features of Tullamore and its setting were described by the great geographer, T. W. Freeman, in an essay written some sixty years ago. The turf is still farmed by some of the townspeople at places such as Ballard, but is now not so readily available and some bogs such as that at Clara are preserved. The dependence on farming is long gone and that process was well in hand at the time of Freeman's visit.

Tullamore stands on either side of a small river named after the town, which flows into the Brosna, a tributary of the Shannon. This little river runs through wide alluvial flats, ill-drained and liable to floods, for most of its course, and receives the brown peaty water from various bogs. In the town, there is firm ground on either side, and from the inconspicuous bridge there is a slight rise northwards to the canal, 203ft. above O.D., some ten feet higher than the river, and southwards to the Courthouse, at 225ft. O.D. Most of the roads from the town rise gently across the morainic country to altitudes some 30 – 50 ft, higher than that of the bridge though there is also a low – lying road past Hop Hill which stands just above the winter flood level marked on the 1842 6" survey. The alluvial flats have since been partly drained by ditches, but are still liable to periodic floods in times of heavy rainfall.

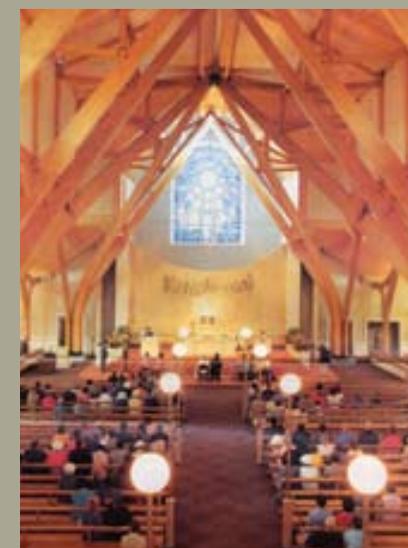
The contrast between dry ground on the one hand and alluvial flats or bogs on the other is the main geographical feature of the Central Lowland; while most landscapes of a few square miles include some bog, the drift country is of greater extent almost everywhere except around Edenderry, some twenty miles east of Tullamore. Furthermore, roads generally cross from one patch of ground moraine to another, so that the traveller by car sees the bogs much as a sailor passing through an archipelago sees islands here and there. The population lives on the dry ground, and goes to the bog for its turf supply, or pastures its cattle on the alluvial flats returning home to the farmstead securely placed on dry ground.

The dry ground is of three main types. The soils are mainly a gravelly loam, light in character, and normally well drained, overlying Carboniferous beds that include both sandstones and limestones. The countryside of gently rolling ground moraine is not flat to the seeing eye, and has a natural drainage that is one of the farmer's main assets. A second element is the terminal moraines, of sharper and more hummocky form, that are occasional features of the landscape, and a third, the long esker ridges that wind across the countryside, mainly from west to east, in a series of sinuous lines add an element of variety in a landscape sometimes regarded as flat or dull, but possessing topographical modulations that show the imprint of the glacial phase on the farmer's land or the traveller's road.

From T.W. Freeman, 'Tullamore and its environs, Co. Offaly' in *Irish Geography*, vol. i (1944-8), pp 133-50 and p. 136.



ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH, HOP HILL



INTERIOR OF CHURCH OF ASSUMPTION, 1986

Tullamore described in Samuel Lewis,

A TOPOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF IRELAND

(London, 1837)

TULLAMOORE, or KILBRIDE, a market, assize and post-town, and a parish, in the barony of BALLYCOWAN, KING'S county, and province of Leinster, 20 miles (S.E. by E.) from Athlone, and $49\frac{1}{2}$ (W. by S.) from Dublin, on the road to Parsonstown, and on the line of the Grand Canal from Dublin to Shannon harbour; containing 7,626 inhabitants, of which number 6,342 are in the town. About the year 1790 this place was an insignificant village, consisting almost wholly of thatched cabins; but having been nearly destroyed by an accidental fire, occasioned by the mismanagement of a fire balloon, it was rebuilt by the Earl of Charleville, the proprietor, in an improved manner. Its central situation in a very fertile agricultural district, and the circumstance of its being for some time the terminus of the Grand Canal, before it was extended to Shannon harbour, caused it to increase very rapidly in wealth and population, insomuch that an act of parliament was passed in 1833 [1832] to transfer the place of holding the assizes and transacting the county business to it from Philipstown, which had been the assize town from the time of the formation of the county in the reign of Philip and Mary. The small river Clodagh [Clodiagh], a branch of the Brosna, passes through it, and is crossed by a neat bridge. The town is the chief mart for the agricultural produce of a large extent of country, which in return draws from it the requisite supplies of foreign articles and manufactures: several stores have been erected on the banks

of the Grand Canal, which passes close to the town, and affords a direct communication between this central depot and Dublin on one side and the west of Ireland on the other: the distance from Dublin by the canal is 57 miles. Various branches of industry are carried on here with considerable spirit: there are two distilleries and three breweries and near the town there is a large brick-manufactory. The market, which is held on Tuesday and Saturday, is well supplied with provisions; a neat market-house has been built by Lord Charleville: fairs are held on May 10th, July 10th and Oct. 21st. The assizes for the county and the general sessions of the peace are held here, as also are petty sessions every Saturday. The new county court-house is a fine building in the Grecian style, containing all the requisite accommodations for the public business: the county gaol, erected in 1831, is a castellated building on the radiating principle. The town is a chief constabulary police station, and has a barrack capable of accommodating 3 officers and 85 non-commissioned officers and privates.

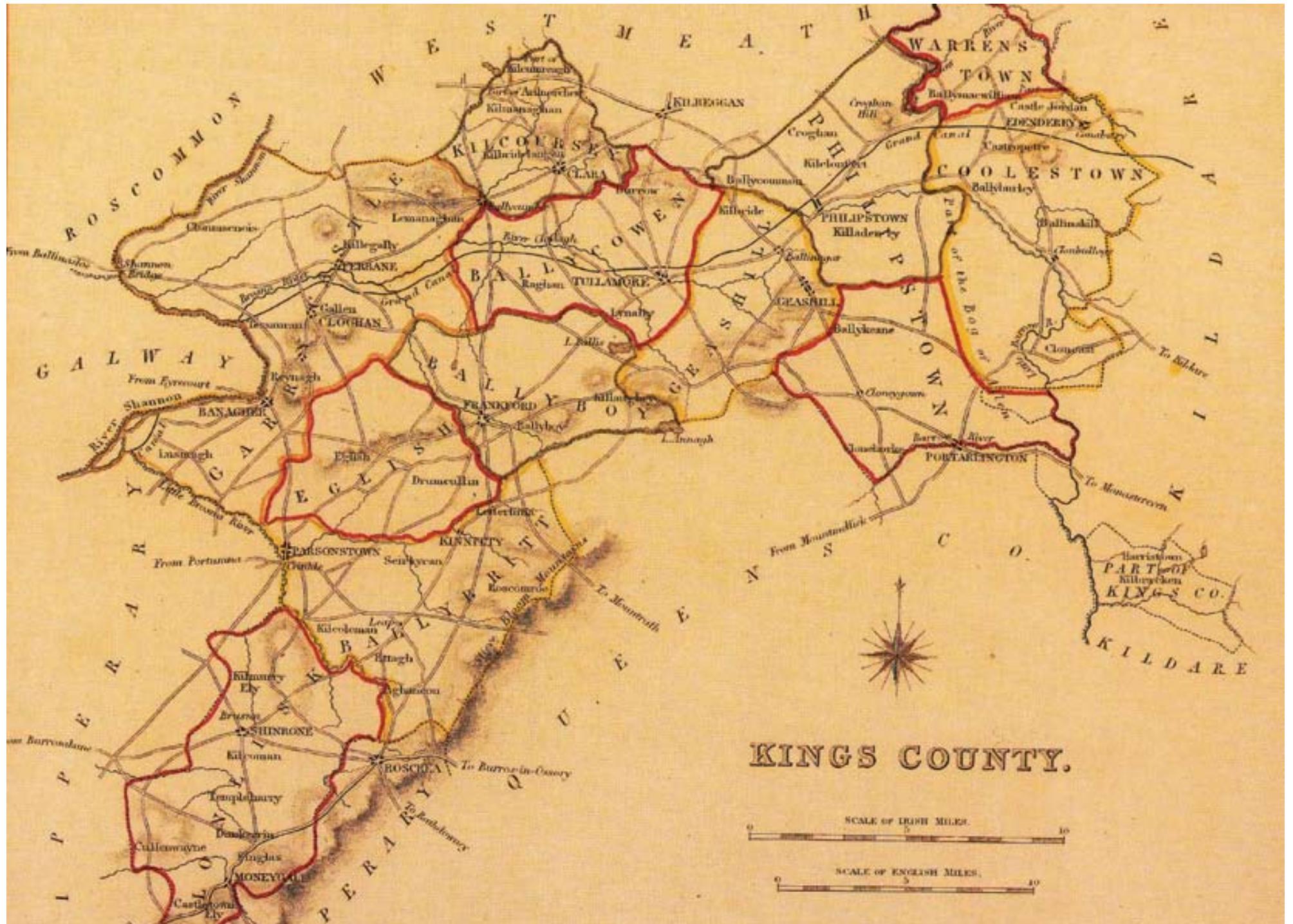
The parish originally formed part of the lands of the abbey of Durrow, on the dissolution of which they were divided into the two parishes of Dermagh, or Durrow, and Kilbride, which constituted a union until separated by an order of council. It contains $6,262\frac{1}{4}$ statute acres, the greater portion of which consists of town-parks of highly cultivated land of good quality: the remainder is of an inferior description, and includes

some boggy ground: it contains quarries of excellent limestone for building. The demesne of Charleville forest, the seat of the Earl of Charleville, extends to the town: it is remarkable for the judicious advantage taken of its great natural beauties. The mansion is a spacious modern structure, erected in the style of an English baronial castle from designs by Mr. Fras. Johnston: the demesne contains about 1,500 statute acres richly wooded, and comprises two artificial lakes, the larger of which is studded with islands. The Clodagh [Clodiagh] passes through it along a deep glen, forming several fine cascades overhung with trees; the largest of the cascades is seen to most advantage from an artificial grotto formed for the purpose of giving employment during a season of scarcity. The living is a rectory, in the diocese of Meath, partly inappropriate in the Earl of Norbury, and partly, with cure of souls, in the patronage of the Bishop: the tithes amount to £278.1.4., one-half of which is payable to the impropiator and the other to the incumbent. The glebe-house, which is near the church, was built by means of a gift of £323 and a loan of £415 from the late Board of First Fruits, in 1815: the glebe comprises $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres, valued at £9. The church, situated about half a mile from the town, on the Portarlinton road, was erected in 1818 [1815], in the Gothic style, after a design by Mr. Johnston, at an expense of £8,030 British of which £738 was a gift and £2,769 a loan from the Board of First Fruits, and the residue, amounting to £4,523, was a donation from Lord Charleville: the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have lately granted £700 towards its repairs. In the R.C.

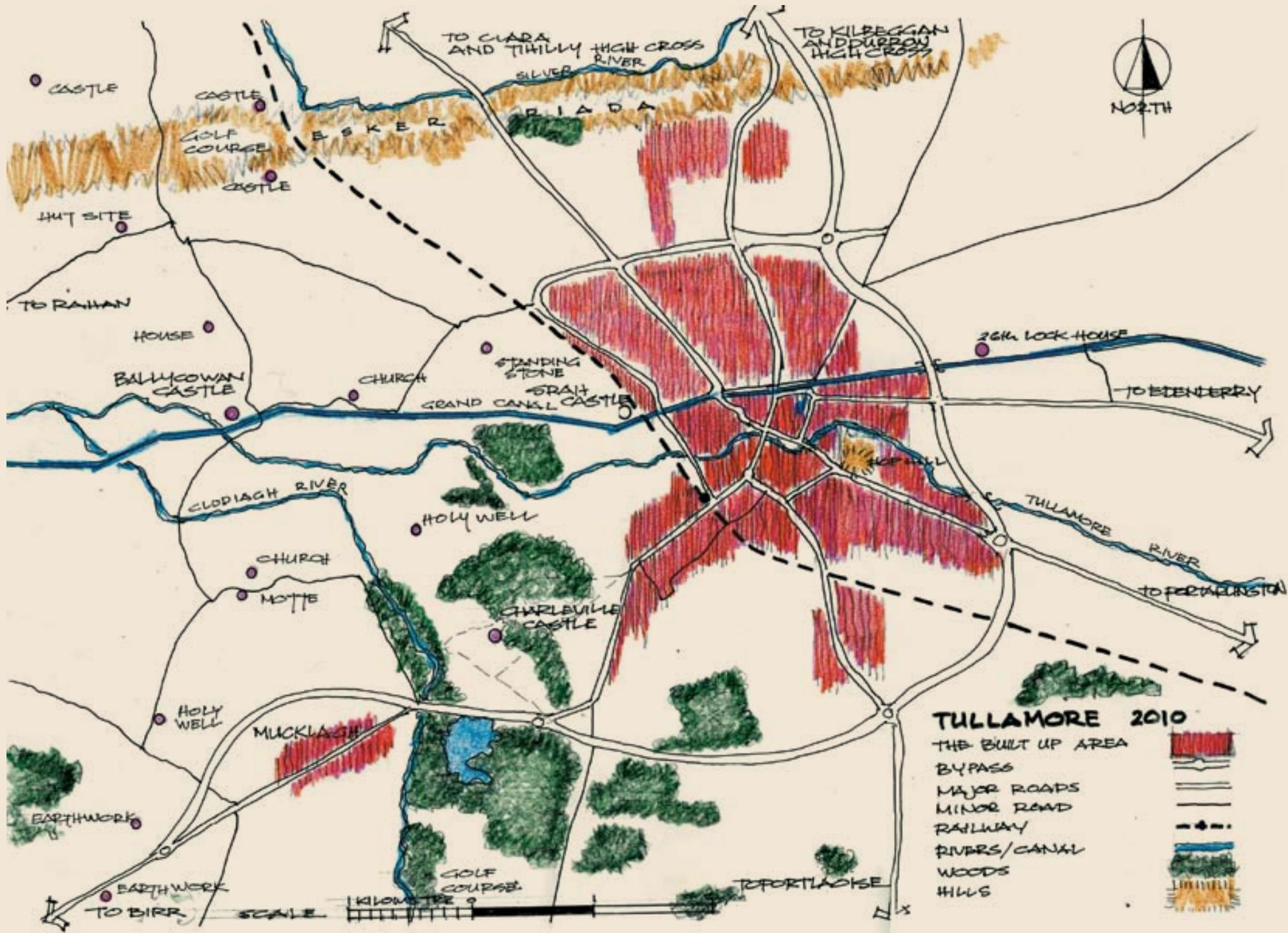
divisions the parish is the head of a union or district, comprising also that of Durrow: each parish has a chapel; that in Tullamore is a large building, to which several additions have been made in various styles of architecture. There are places of worship for Primitive and Wesleyan Methodists, and a meeting-house belonging to the Society of Friends. A male and female school is supported by the Earl and Countess of Charleville, another school is in connection with the board of National Education, and a third under the London Irish Baptist Society; in all these 578 boys and 482 girls receive instruction; and in 15 private schools there are about 360 pupils. The county infirmary is in the town. The remains of a castle, built in 1626 by Sir Jasper Herbert, on the abbey lands demised to him by Queen Elizabeth for a term of years, and afterwards granted to him in fee by Jas. I., are still in existence; as also those of three small square castles built by some of his tenants at Ballestillenury [Ballykilmurry], Aharne and Aughinanagh: the ruins of the first-named show it to have been a building of some extent and grandeur, and an inscription over the entrance records the date and circumstances of its erection. Shrahikerne castle was built, as appears from an inscription on its ruins, in 1588 by John Briscoe, an officer in Queen Elizabeth's army: its name signifies "Kearney of the Shragh," the remains of whose family house, previously to the building of the castle, are also still to be seen. There are several sulphuro-chalybeate springs in the vicinity. Tullamore gives the subordinate title of Baron to the Earl of Charleville.



THE MIDLAND COUNTIES FROM MOLL, ATLAS (1728)



THE KING'S COUNTY FROM LEWIS, ATLAS (1837)



TULLAMORE: THREE CENTURIES OF GROWTH

From 'mean village' to 'linked gateway town'



Tullamore town has a population of about 14,000 and is the largest town in County Offaly and the third largest in the midlands after Athlone and Mullingar. It is included with the latter two towns as a growth centre or 'linked gateway city' under the government's national spatial strategy announced in 2003. The county planners expected the population of the town and environs to grow to 30,000 by 2020, but in the post-2007 recessionary landscape that may not be possible.¹ Nonetheless its population is almost three times what it was in 1891. Back in the 1620s it may have been little more than a hundred.

Tullamore occupies a central position in the midlands and in County Offaly (Uíbh Fhailí) and is the capital town since 1835. The town is situated on the Tullamore river which divides it in half. To the north is the gravel ridge, the Eiscir Riada, known locally as the Ardan hills and through which the new bypass road is cut to bring a view of the Slieve Bloom mountains to the south. To the east are flat boglands relieved only on the eastern side by the stump of an extinct volcano now known as Croghan Hill, close to Daingean and Edenderry, and forming a picturesque view from the new toll road near Tyrrellspass. To the west are the monastic centre at Rahan, the castle of Ballycowan and the Grand Canal passing through the quiet countryside to the Shannon.

The name Tullamore or *An Tulach Mhór*, meaning the big mound or hill, probably refers to the hilly ground behind the junction of O'Moore Street and Cormac Street and in the eighteenth century the location of the town's windmills. It might also refer to the natural mound known as Hop Hill and now the site of St Catherine's Church, but this is unlikely given the prominence of the hill behind O'Moore Street in the eighteenth century and before the

height of that area was obscured by the housing development at the O'Moore Street and Cormac Street junctions. In the eighteenth century the town was also known as Tullamoore, a name introduced by former owners of the town, the Moore family. The name appears on a 1670 coin associated with the town and seems to have survived to the 1830s. The first occurrence of the place-name Tullamore or Tullaghmore appears to be in a land grant of 1574 to Nicholas Herbert of the monastic lands at Durrow and to include Tihilly and Kilcruttin with the obligation to build two stone fortresses on the site of Durrow monastery. An inquisition held at Durrow in 1570 contains a reference to Towllaghmore and to the rector's house being situated in the town of Kilbride, probably close to the church and surviving graveyard. At the time of the death of John Moore in 1633 the town of Tullaghmore is described as having a ruined castle, ten cottages and two water mills.

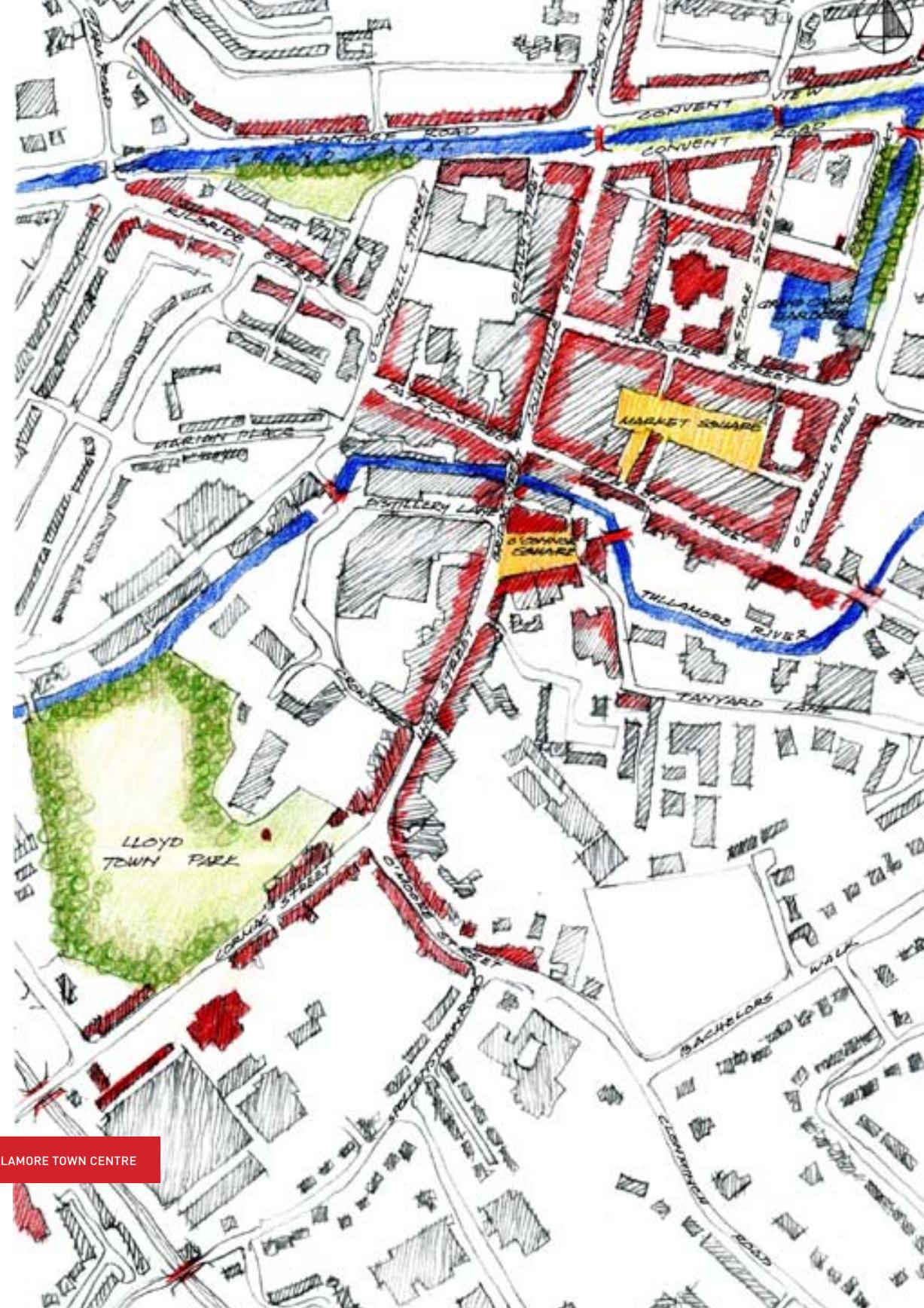
The street names of the town comprise three layers. First, the functional names of the eighteenth century such as Market Place and Bridge Street. Second, the names provided after 1785 by an all-powerful landlord who was both site owner and town planner. In this case Charles William Bury, first earl of Charleville (second creation) who gave his name to Charles Street, William Street, Bury Quay and Charleville Square. In 1905 the town council under the guidance of the Gaelic League and the adoption of cultural nationalism changed the street names to reflect Irish-Ireland themes of names of saints and great battles in which the good Irish were victorious. Thus Charles Street became Harbour Street, William Street became Columcille Street and Bury Quay became Convent Road. The town square was now called O'Connor Square in deference to the O'Connors of the eastern area of

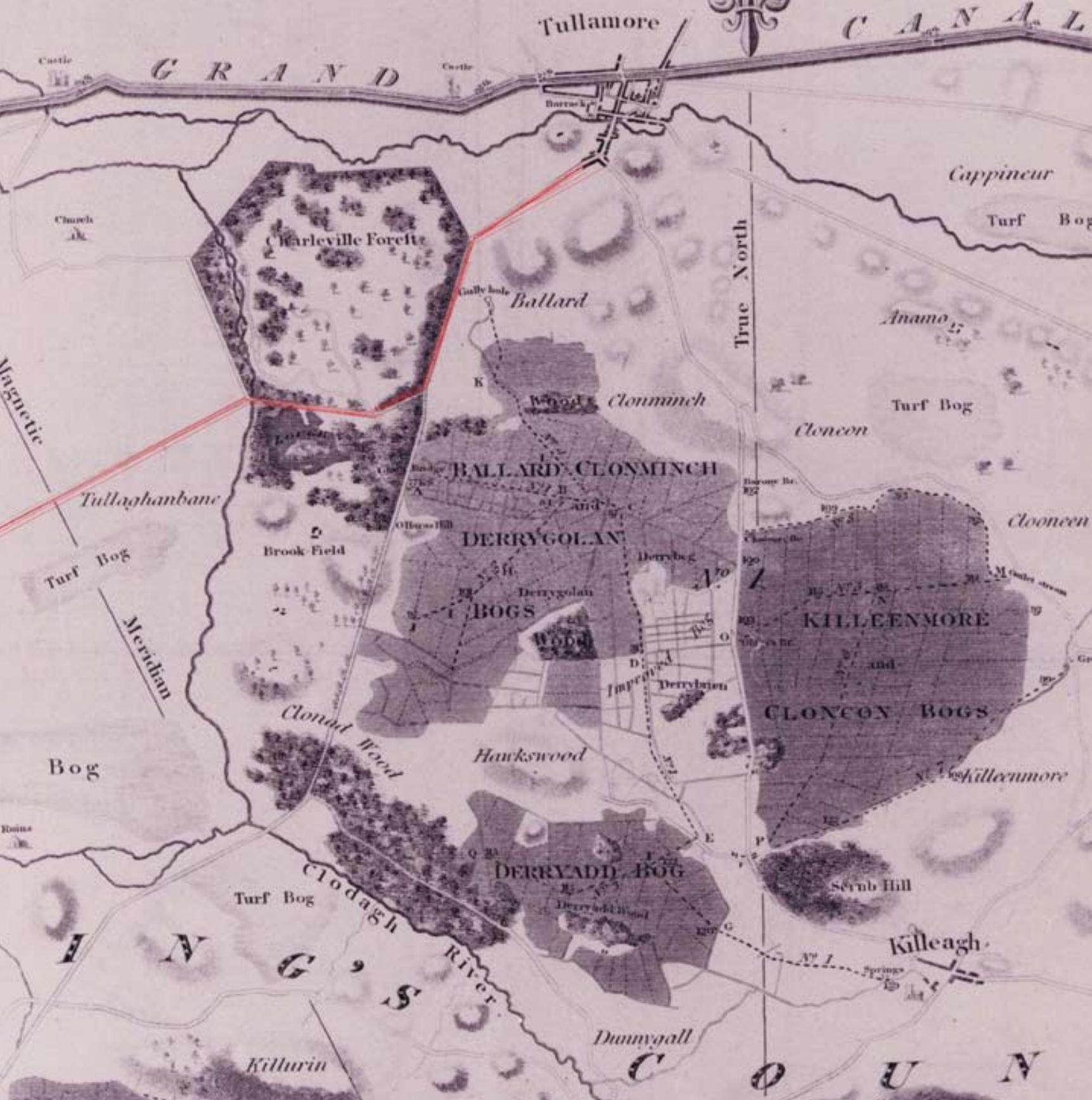
the modern County Offaly, but ought to have been called O'Molloy Square after the leading local and native family prior to the colonisation wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This historical oversight had its compensation in the naming of Pensioners Row as O'Molloy Street in 1905.

Tullamore lies in the ancient district of *Fear Ceall* which has been translated as men of the woods or men of the churches. Neither would be inaccurate because *Fear Ceall* was once covered by vast bogs and forests. The area was famous for its monastic centres at Clonmacnois, Durrow, Killeigh, Rahugh, Lemanaghan, Gallen, Lynally, Seir Kieran and Birr. The route to Clonmacnois was across the esker or great road (*Sli Mór*) while the Durrow to Birr monasteries were on a north-south corridor through the bogs. If holy places such as Durrow and Clonmacnois were once significant population centres, nothing now survives save the monastic remains. What is of interest is the way in which the old monastic north-south corridor continues to impact on the modern road transport system. Much of Tullamore's traffic comes from the Mullingar - Athlone routes heading towards Portlaoise and Birr and now by-passing Tullamore to bring the visitor east of the town and to the south at the edge of Charleville Demesne at what is known now as the middle or Barron's gate. Interestingly, Charles Moore, the first earl of Charleville who died in 1764, would have arrived at the gate of his demesne, without bothering to pass through his town, had he been able to avail of such a route in the mid-eighteenth century. The east-west traffic from Dublin by-passes Tullamore south of Kilbeggan, six miles north of the town along the route of the new (2007) Kinnegad-Kilbeggan road. Never has this great artery been so near until now. However, for the historically minded the most leisurely way to arrive in Tullamore is by canal or rail.

The Grand Canal was constructed as far as Tullamore in 1798 and was the terminus for six years until the connection to Shannon Harbour was completed while the Great Southern and Western Railway line reached Tullamore in 1854 and Athlone in 1859. The completion of the canal to Tullamore and fifty years later the arrival of the railway had momentous significance for the town. The completion of the new road from Kinnegad to Kilbeggan and now on to Galway offers further development prospects for Tullamore. This is an advantage enhanced by the opening of the town by-pass in October 2009 just 150 years to the very month after the rail connection to Athlone. Tullamore is now only an hour from Dublin by rail or road, an enormous change even since the 1960s. All that remains is to link the Dublin road with the by-pass cutting through the esker at Durrow and taking the new road east of the sixth-century monastic foundation of St Columba or Columcille and on to the south and the monastery of Carthage at Lynally. Tullamore nestles now on the plain of what was once known as *Magh Lena* better viewed by looking across from the high ground south of Mucklagh village to the Ardan hills or esker to the north.

Coming by canal boat from Dublin and Edenderry will present an image to the visitor of a holy place with the town's principal churches in view. The Catholic church, somewhat secluded in the back streets of the town centre, has a substantial spire to identify its location. This church was erected in 1802, and demolished and rebuilt in 1902. It was destroyed by fire in 1983 and again rebuilt at a cost of over £3 million in 1986. The new church has an impressive timber interior and some Harry Clarke Studio windows. St. Catherine's, the Church of Ireland church, designed by the architect Francis Johnston in 1815, is placed





TULLAMORE TOWN
AND LANDS TO THE SOUTH

BY JOHN LONGFIELD FROM BOG SURVEYS
OF IRELAND, 1810.

THE PRE-1800 ROAD CUT THROUGH
WHAT IS NOW CHARLEVILLE DEMESNE.

OPPOSITE

TULLAMORE TOWN, 1838,
FROM THE ORDNANCE SURVEY
6-INCH MAP (NOT TO SCALE)



TULLAMORE

KILCRUTTIN

TULLA

Glebe

Barracks

*Wellington Barracks
Court Ho.*

Jail

Brewery

Distillery

Casal Harbour

Ordnance Magazine Ground

St. Catherine's Church

Elm Field

Yannery

School Ho.

Flour Mill

Garn Mill

Woolen Ho.

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St. Luke

Canal

Canal

Canal

Canal

Canal

Canal

Canal

Canal

179 Roadway

183 Water

107

107

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107

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prominently on Hop Hill, to the south-east of the town. Arriving by rail, the first sight to greet the visitor will be the former Gothic-style county gaol completed in 1830, and beside it, a substantial neo-classical courthouse of 1835 - the latter now much improved in the best sense and the former now comprised of small industrial and office units, but with its fine façade intact. Either way, the visitor cannot escape civil and religious authority! A brisk walk through the main streets will reinforce the feeling of authority and of some taste because the town is laid out on a grid-iron pattern with the principal street running from the Kilbeggan road canal bridge to the north and the Birr road railway bridge to the south and beyond it Charleville Castle, the home of the former owners of the town, the earls of Charleville. This castle, designed by Francis Johnston, is considered one of the finest Gothic-style country houses in Ireland and is now open to the public. Work on the castle began in 1800 and was completed in 1812. The demesne itself, considered by the local merchants in the early 1920s as a suitable site for a new golf course, is now largely an area of special conservation with legal protection and serves as a barrier to development on the southern side of the town. The railway line serves the same function on the western side thus pushing all development to the east and the north entrances of the town. For now the gravel ridges, themselves much quarried, have literally served as a line in the sand for development to the north. It is not surprising that so much development in recent years has been on the south-eastern side with the new town retail park just off the town by-pass. Shopping patterns have greatly changed since the early 1980s when all of it was carried on in the town centre and, as a consequence, diverted much trade to Cloncollog where, in addition, parking is still free of charge.

O'Molloys and John Moore

The oldest house in Tullamore is another castle, a tower house, known as Srah, dating from 1588 and observable from the railway line and the inner relief road on the western side of the town. In the vicinity was the original O'Molloy castle, shown on early maps and mentioned in the grant of the district to the Moore family in about 1620 in the course of the plantations of James I. Its exact location now is not known. The grant or confirmation to John Moore of some 1,200 acres, in so far as it related to Tullamore may have been a formality, because Moore had already acquired the lands through a series of mortgages raised by the O'Molloys, the principal native family of the Tullamore district. Two members of a branch of the O'Molloy family, Susanna and Matilda O'Molloy, daughters of Donald O'Molloy who had married Elizabeth Cowley (daughter of an English settler), sold the town and lands of Tullamore (or a share of it) to Sir John Moore of Croghan about 1609. About 1604 Moore took a lease of the lands from Edward O'Molloy, son of Donald O'Molloy. When Edward died childless in 1608 the property passed to his two sisters who, in turn, sold to Moore. John Moore was the son of Thomas Moore, an Elizabethan soldier, who had 'received' lands at Croghan Hill in east County Offaly in the 1570s as part of the first Offaly plantation during the reign of Elizabeth I when the lands of the O'Connors, the principal native landowners, were confiscated and the family virtually exterminated as part of the land grab and colonisation. Thomas Moore was from Kent and was one of three siblings in Ireland to make his fortune. He was killed defending his castle at Croghan against the O'Connors in an uprising of 1599. His son pursued a policy of building up his estates in east and central Offaly. The Moore family let on long lease their Tullamore lands through-

out the seventeenth century, choosing to reside at Croghan castle instead of Tullamore. Croghan, between Edenderry and Daingean (then known as Philipstown) was nearer to the locus of power at the time and lay in the centre of the county of Offaly or King's County as it was known from 1557. It was only about 1570 that the O'Molloy country of Fear Ceall was incorporated in the new English county and it was after 1600 before O'Carroll's country in what is now the southern part of the county was also included. Thus calling the entire King's County after the O'Connor country of Offaly in 1920 was a misnomer, but perhaps recognition of the fighting spirit of the O'Connors and the tragedy of their fate in the bloody wars of Elizabeth 1 and her ultimately successful (for a time) efforts to quell the Irish.

Tullamore in the seventeenth century

There are no accounts to hand of Tullamore in the seventeenth century. We know it had a ruined castle, two water mills and ten cottages in the 1620s. The fact that the landlords were not resident in the town in the seventeenth century would have hindered development. The lands of Tullamore had been let by the Moore family to a connection by marriage, Sir Robert Forth, for eighty one years. Thomas Moore, who succeeded his father in 1633 and died in 1638, had married the daughter of a judge, Sir Ambrose Forth. This Thomas Moore was succeeded by John Moore, born in 1620 and died in 1682. The Moores of Croghan were said to be one of only five families in the county who refrained from taking part in the 1641 rebellion and instead Croghan castle was a place of refuge for settlers. The letting of Tullamore would suggest that the Moore family put little value on the Tullamore lands. Soon after, Forth built a large house in what is now Charleville Demesne, but formerly known as Killenroe or Redwood. Charles

Moore bought in the Forth family interest in 1740 and carried out improvements to the demesne. His grand-nephew, Charles William Bury, built Charleville Castle nearby after 1800, but the old house was apparently not demolished until about 1840.

Surviving tax collection data of 1660 would indicate that the Tullamore town population was not much more than 100 and in rank order well below Birr, with a population of nearly 1,000. The population of the county at the time may have been perhaps 25,000 to 30,000. The proportion of settler to native was relatively high in Offaly at c. 15 percent. Lord Digby's barony of Geashill had 19 percent settler as did Ballycowan while Clonlisk had 10 percent. The village of Geashill had over a quarter English while nearby Killeigh had almost 50 percent English or the highest in the county. The rank ordering of the towns and villages in the county in 1660-61 puts Birr firmly at the top at almost three times the size of Daingean (Philipstown) and having a population close on 1,000. The figures look similar to Mullingar but, interestingly, Andrews in his Mullingar study put Mullingar's population in 1660 as close to 1,000. The Colley settlement at Edenderry was no more than 150 or half that of the borough town of Kilbeggan. The old settlements at Geashill and Killeigh (castle and monastic settlement respectively) still exceeded Edenderry and Kilcormac. Unfortunately, neither Banagher nor Tullamore are specifically mentioned in the 1660 tax return. In Ballycowan barony, where Tullamore is situated, the returns are by parish and barony only with townlands excluded. Banagher in an isolated setting and lacking grand patronage was unable to compete with Birr. Tullamore is a more intriguing case. The parish of Kilbride (the equivalent of the modern Catholic parish of Tullamore) had a popu-

lation of 171 householders of which 31 were English - suggesting an overall population of some 500 in the parish and perhaps 100 in the town or village of Tullamore.

Table 1: Population of Offaly towns in 1660-61

| Towns | Irish | English | Total Householders | Estimate of Actual Population |
|-------------|-------|---------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Birr | 273 | 64 | 337 | 1,000 |
| Philipstown | 95 | 34 | 129 | 387 |
| Killeigh | 42 | 36 | 78 | 234 |
| Geashill | 49 | 18 | 67 | 200 |
| Edenderry | 50 | 5 | 55 | 165 |
| Kilcormac | 35 | 7 | 42 | 126 |
| Tullamore* | | | | |
| Banagher* | | | | |

* *not separately stated*

Birr was almost three times the size of Philipstown in terms of population, but in a regional framework it was similar in size to Mullingar and three times smaller than Athlone.

Table 2: *Midland towns in 1660-61*

| Towns | Irish | English | Total Householders | Estimate of Actual Population |
|-----------------|-------|---------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Athlone Borough | 531 | 544 | 1,075 | 3,225 |
| Birr | 273 | 64 | 337 | 1,000 |
| Mullingar | 297 | 37 | 334 | 1,000 |
| Maryborough | 150 | 48 | 198 | 594 |
| Mountmellick | 80 | 95 | 175 | 525 |
| Philipstown | 95 | 34 | 129 | 387 |
| Kilbeggan | 80 | 19 | 99 | 297 |

**based on multiplier of three. These are estimates only and the comparative aspect may be more useful than the absolute figures.*

In Arnold Horner's view, Athlone, Birr and Mullingar were primate centres, without rivals and dominating the surrounding areas. Further east the larger towns were supported by small and medium sized centres.² The primacy of Athlone in the region can be seen in Murtagh's estimate of the population in the 1620s at 1,300 with some 200 houses. Andrews, writing of Mullingar, noted that little was known of economic life in Mullingar prior to the Cromwellian period and that in the post-1660s period the chief item of inter-regional trade through Mullingar was cattle, sheep and horses.³ Birr was settled by the Parsons family (later earls of Rosse) in the 1620s and by 1641 was seeking county town status from Daingean or Philipstown, with a population of some 250. Daingean was the county capital more

by historical accident than design. As the location of an English fort inside enemy (native Irish) lines from the 1540s, it acquired county town status in the emerging new county of Offaly (or King's County as it was known until 1920), under an Act of Queen Mary in 1557, that laid the basis for the Laois-Offaly plantation. There is a reference to a trade token (local coinage) issuing under the name of Robert Worrall about 1670, but this so far as is known was the sole issue of a Tullamore token in the seventeenth century and is insignificant beside Birr, Athlone and Mullingar. The late Dr William Moran in his history of the town cites as evidence of a growing settlement Bishop Dopping's survey of the Meath diocese in 1682-5, where Dopping noted that Owen Con-

way, a popish schoolmaster, teaches at Tullamore. The insignificance of the Tullamore settlement in the seventeenth century is borne out by the fact that the town received no mention in the 1641-9 rebellion or in the Jacobite rebellion of 1689-93 by contrast with Birr which featured in both wars. The wars of the 1690s led to a temporary reduction in the Protestant population with thirty families in the 1680s in Durrow and only one in 1694. The picture was the same in Kilbride with only twenty-eight Protestant inhabitants or twelve families in the 1680s. At the time there were no services in Kilbride and with no church in Tullamore until the 1720s Protestants attended at Durrow. Catholics were not permitted churches from the 1550s (or perhaps the 1620s) until the 1760s and 1770s.

The early eighteenth century

It was not until after 1700 that Tullamore developed as the town we know today. In population size it outstripped Birr only in the second half of the nineteenth century, but had already overtaken Daingean by the 1720s. Viscount Molesworth, Daingean's landlord, writing in 1724 from his town to his wife, a letter of complaint regarding his urinary tract infection, said 'I am in a place where no herb or drug that I might have occasion for, can be had nearer than Tullamore'.⁴ A compliment to the Tullamore apothecaries of the time! The Moore family moved from their home at Croghan castle in the early 1700s and built a large house in the vicinity of the present Tullamore canal harbour. No trace of this house now remains. Through political influence, the family was able to secure a barrack to house 100 foot soldiers in 1716 (at the same time as that in Castlecomer), and by the late 1720s, a Protestant church was built in what is now Church Street - then known as Church Lane in the immediate vicinity of the Foresters hall. Nothing now remains of this building save the date-stone recently discovered after almost 200 years since the demolition of the old building. It can be seen in the Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre).⁵ Not only did the barrack provide newly arrived immigrants from Scotland and England with a feeling of security, it also generated business and gave them a means of earning a living in trade. The demise of Daingean's county town status, which did not come about until 1832, was signalled as early as 1767 in a special County Infirmaries (Amendment) Act, passed to facilitate the establishing of the county infirmary at Lifford rather than Letterkenny, and that for Offaly at Tullamore in place of Daingean. The fighting over the location of hospitals was to go on for over 200 years.

Evidence of industry and house building in Tullamore is available from landlord estate records, the Registry of Deeds and from what survives on the ground and in the street names. Unfortunately no maps are available until the 1830s and nothing of real value until 1838. In the early eighteenth century the town consisted of no more than a long street running from the new church in Church Street to the military barrack in Barrack Street. The building of the barrack situated close to the present location of the garda station in Patrick Street, formerly Barrack Street, provided an impetus to business. Entrepreneurial immigrants, such as French Huguenots from their settlement at Portarlinton and Quakers from Mountmellick and Edenderry, turn up as lessees in the building leases granted by the landlord. The first recorded building lease is one from John Moore to Richard Brennan, a tobacco spinner, in 1713. His house is now the Brewery Tap in High Street. Part of what is now O'Connor Square was known as the Market Place or New Street in the 1740s.

Notwithstanding the by-passing of Tullamore by the main trade routes to the south (via Daingean and Birr), and the west (via Kilbeggan and Moate), it continued to grow in the first half of the eighteenth century. Landlord influence was obviously a factor, but so were structural forces such as the need to create a market centre east of the isolated Garrycastle barony which comprises much of west Offaly, and west of Daingean surrounded as it was by bog. One geographer has remarked that towns are the essential cog in the machinery of rural society and, as such, Tullamore's chief economic function would have been as a market centre for the predominantly rural population. The principal trading days were those on which markets and fairs took place in accordance with the landlord's patents.

Captain Thomas Johnston, the lessee of Charleville Demesne in the 1760s to the mid-1780s, wrote in March 1765, 'I am a stout farmer, between 4 and 500 sheep, 50 calves, besides cows and horses, and I want 200 sheep more as soon as the rents come in.'⁶ At the time, pasturage was still predominant in Offaly with tillage of much less importance.

Although tillage was less significant, it played a major part in the economy of towns such as Tullamore. The Tullamore distilling business, dependent as it was on oats and barley, developed rapidly in the 1780s and survived until the 1950s with the last malt house in the town closing only in the 1970s.

Agricultural activity reflected itself in trade with the woollen and tanning industries important. The remnants of the latter trade can be seen on the large-scale 1838 maps. The linen industry was also of significance. In 1754 Charles Moore, now Lord Tullamore and successor to John, the first Lord Tullamore, gave a lease for a factory building for the linen business. This building was in the vicinity of the present-day O'Carroll Street, but does not now survive except in the associated name of Pike's Lane which connects the square with Church Street between the launderette and the Chinese restaurant. Pike was a linen weaver and a number of the weavers lived in the vicinity of the old factory house. Such was the pace of expansion in textiles that by the 1780s Offaly was a leading county for the manufacture of linen outside of Ulster.

By the mid 1760s Tullamore would have consisted of Patrick (Barrack) Street, Church Street (the narrow part), Bridge Street, part of O'Connor Square and some development in High Street. Many of the new properties about which something is known were substantial three-storey structures such as that in



CHARLES MOORE, FIRST EARL OF CHARLEVILLE



MEMORIAL TO THE EARL OF CHARLEVILLE D.1764

Bridge Street of John Vaughan, a merchant, erected in 1756 (demolished in 1992 to provide the entrance to the Bridge Centre) and beside it the premises of Maurice Tyrrell, a tanner, of 1747. This house (now Douglas and Bridge Stores in Bridge Street) has its date-stone set over the original entrance. In the development of Bridge Street from 1747-8 can be seen evidence of the building pattern moving to Vaughan's site in 1756 and taking place during the same decade in O'Connor Square with the L-plan house of Matthew Moore of 1743 (now Gray Cunniffe Insurance) to Revd Mr Dixon's house of 1752 (the house to the east of the former post office). Closing off the square on the eastern side was the most significant building of the time, a three-storey seven-bay pedimented break-front house of Quaker merchants, Thomas Pim and Thomas Wilson. This house was demolished in 1936 and is now the site of the Offaly County Library. Wilson was involved in the wool manufacture and tanning. It was at this time that Tanyard Lane saw its first burst of economic development which set it off until the 1990s as exclusively an area of manufacturing and trading activity with almost no dwelling houses. That changed in the 1990s with the completion of some forty apartments and houses in the area, including Tarleton Hall and Arbutus Court.

In High Street substantial houses date from the 1740s and 1750s including the present day Jade Inn restaurant and Sambodinos. The house on the site of the later Ritz cinema (the latter constructed in 1946 and demolished in 1982) was built about 1750 and is now a cleared entrance to a late 1980s town housing development, known as Rose Lawn. Also constructed before 1760 were the 'Round House' and the property opposite, from the former J.J. Horan's stationer's, now the 'Red Shop', to Raymond Allen

& Co. The outer limit of the town was marked by the windmills situated on the hill behind the junction of the present day O'Moore Street and Cormac Street - formerly known as Windmill Street. In the same street was Moore Hall erected in the 1750s (and substantially improved in the 1850s). The other principal street in the town was that running from the linen factory buildings (redeveloped after 1820 as O'Carroll Street, west side) at the lower end of Church Street to the barrack at the western end of Patrick Street. Here the houses (save that of the former Williams head office, now called D.E. Williams House) were smaller in size - probably mostly single-storey cabins which had developed around the 1716 army barrack. Only the major houses survived the fire of 1785 and the clearance and redevelopment that followed.

Town development received a setback in the 1760s following the death of Charles Moore, first earl of Charleville. Charles Moore, who succeeded as the second Lord Tullamore on the death of his father in 1725, was born in 1712 and married in 1737 an heiress reputed to have a fortune of £100,000. This may well be apocryphal. He was created earl of Charleville in 1758. Moore had moved in 1740 to Charleville, at the time known as Redwood, from the house in Tullamore his father had erected in the vicinity of the present harbour about the year 1700. Moore had encouraged building development through the provision of cheap sites on the basis of an annual ground rent of a shilling a foot in front with the lease for lives renewable for ever. The procedure was that the tenant nominated three lives, usually young healthy people, and when the three people died the landlord would accept three new lives at a nominal fine or levy so far as town houses were concerned. For town parks the rent

could increase substantially. This was the basis of all building in Tullamore until the advent of freehold sales in the 1920s. It provided a relatively cheap site while the landlord enjoyed on-going revenue and a measure of control of the building development at commencement stage and later by means of covenants in the leases.

On Charles Moore's death without issue on 17 February 1764, the Charleville lands of some 20,000 acres passed first to his sister's child, John Bury of Shannongrove, Limerick who died a few months later, on 4 August 1764, in a bathing accident or suicide at Ringsend, Dublin. John Wesley when visiting Tullamore three years later refers to the elaborate Van Nost the Younger monument now moved from the old church in Church Street to St Catherine's and has an intriguing reference in his journal entry for Thursday 25 June 1767 which seems to suggest the suicide of John Bury:

*I was desired to look at the monument lately erected for the Earl of Charleville. It observes, "that he was the last of his family, the Great Moores of Croghan." But how little did riches profit either him, who died in the strength of his years, or his heir, who was literally overwhelmed by them: being so full of care, that sleep departed from him, and he was restless day and night; till after a few months, life itself was a burden, and an untimely death closed the scene!*⁷

The Tullamore property, together with Limerick and Dublin estates, then passed to Moore's grand-nephew, Charles William Bury, an infant of six weeks who was born on 4 August 1764 and was the only son of John Bury and Catherine Dunalley of Sopwell Hall, County Tipperary. During the Bury minority there were no leases of more than

twenty-one years granted and thus no new building activity took place in Tullamore. This held back the progress of the town for almost twenty years. It was not legally possible for the young heir's mother to grant leases beyond the minority of the heir. A similar situation prevailed in Mullingar from 1837 until 1854 and again in Tullamore during the period that the second earl was living abroad from 1844 until 1851. Not that there was much demand for building during these years. However, it did mean that no land could be made available for a cemetery until the succession of the third earl in 1851.

From the balloon fire to the Famine

Charles William Bury's coming of age in 1785 coincided with the famous balloon fire in Tullamore. The fire was caused by an air balloon catching fire in what was an early attempt at ballooning. What is clear from the account is that the disaster was brought about by an Englishman, described as 'an English adventurer' experimenting with a new fangled air balloon at the behest of two Tullamore men. This led to the destruction of about 100 or 130 houses in the Patrick Street area. The fire had caused no damage in the Bridge Street, High Street, O'Connor Square area of which Arthur Young may have been speaking when he recorded in 1776 that part of Tullamore was well built. Nevertheless, John Wesley in his journal for 1787 felt obliged to remark: 'I once more visited my old friends at Tullamore. Have all the balloons in Europe done so much good as can counterbalance the harm which one of them did here a year or two ago?' Wesley's view that most of the town was burnt down was repeated by Charles Coote in his Offaly or *King's County survey* for the Royal Dublin Society, published in 1801. Coote looked on Tullamore as a very neat

town which owed its newly acquired consequence to the present Lord Charleville. 'About 14 years ago it was', said Coote, 'but a neat village, with scarce any better than thatched cabins, which were almost all destroyed by accidental fire...'⁸ The Coote and Wesley comments are partly true only because many of the fine houses in Bridge Street, O'Connor Square and High Street pre-date the fire, as does the former Williams head office in Patrick Street. It is likely that about one-third of the town's housing stock was destroyed, if one assumes a housing stock of some 300 houses with a population of 2,000.



CHARLES WILLIAM BURY,
FIRST EARL OF CHARLEVILLE (SECOND CREATION) *d.* 1835

A TULLAMORE LETTER-WRITER'S ACCOUNT TO THE DUBLIN NEWSPAPERS, 12 May 1785

A most dreadful fire took place on the fair day, by which near an hundred houses and offices were totally consumed.

The melancholy accident was occasioned by the liberation of a fire-balloon, or Montgolfier, which two gentlemen of that quarter encouraged an English adventurer to prepare for the amusement of their friends. Having being launched from Doctor Bleakley's yard, it took its direction with a smart wind towards the barrack, where its progress was interrupted by the chimney; and having, on the shock, taken fire it communicated to Christopher Beck's house, and raged with ungovernable fury, notwithstanding the efforts and the assistance of a number of people collected by the circumstance of the fair, till every house front and rear in Barrack Street (except one thatched and four slated houses) was entirely destroyed. The utmost distress has been experienced by the miserable inhabitants, whom the remaining houses are scarcely sufficient to afford shelter; and several of the wealthier residents have suffered losses nearly to their total ruin, particularly Mr Norris whose dwelling house, office and malthouse containing a considerable quantity of grain were destroyed. This dreadful calamity rendered more poignant, perhaps from the absurd and dangerous practice, from which it proceeded, has overwhelmed this ill-fated town with inconceivable distress and inconvenience.

Charles William Bury, the first earl of Charleville (of the second creation) presided over the fortunes of Tullamore from his coming of age in 1785 to his death fifty years later. The burning of Patrick Street gave him an opportunity to let the properties there on new leases and presumably widen the street in the process, possibly on the southern side. The fire took place on a Fair Day on 10 May 1785 and soon after some newspapers report that Bury arrived in the town and distributed £550 to assist those who had lost most in the great fire. In a sense the fire was a long term benefit because it gave the landlord the impetus to develop the town in a planned manner, an opportunity of which he availed to the full over the next fifty years until his death in 1835. The period between the fire of 1785 and the Famine (1845-9) were the years of expansion and growth not seen again until the 1990s. During this time the population expanded three-fold to over 6,000 in 1841. The new streets, such as Offally Street,⁹ Harbour Street and Columcille Street all followed the grid-iron pattern and a second market square known as the Corn Market, near the harbour stores, was provided in the 1820s. The Tullamore freeholder tenants petitioned the Irish house of commons in 1784 and in 1786 to designate Tullamore as the county town in place of Daingean, but because of the significant political influence of the Ponsonby family, then owners of Daingean in succession to Viscount Molesworth, this was not achieved until 1832. The county gaol was built in Tullamore in 1826 in anticipation of the transfer and the county courthouse in 1835. The landlord went to considerable trouble about the design of his Gothic style gaol by the Pain Brothers and the neo-classical courthouse by J.B. Keane.

Lord Charleville did not develop the residential or commercial properties himself save the town hotel, the Bury Arms. (This was later the Phoenix Arms, formerly the Charleville Arms and demolished in 2000 to provide a site for the # 1 bar and restaurant. It is now Menary's retail store.) Instead Charleville brought in the middlemen to build and sell or retain, either way at a profit rent. Chief among the developers or building speculators was Thomas Acres. His 1786 house is now the offices of Tullamore Town Council (formerly the urban district council). This house was built at the junction of O'Moore Street and High Street on a handsome site known as Kilcruttin Hill. Acres, apparently a close friend or in the employ of Bury or his family, erected a house similar in shape and building materials to the Wilson house in High Street (1789, and now Donal Farrelly and Co.). Acres and his family were involved in the building of some 140 houses in the town, or some fifteen percent of the housing stock in the nineteenth century. There were other speculators too and between them the town as we know it (excluding the centre core which is pre-1785 and suburbia which emerged after 1900) was completed between 1785 and the eve of the Famine in 1845.

ALL THE OLDER BUILDINGS OF NOTE IN TULLAMORE WERE ERECTED DURING THE FIFTY-YEAR PERIOD, 1785 - 1835:

Charleville Castle - erected between 1800 and 1812 to a design of the landlord's architect, Francis Johnston, with assistance or intervention from the patron, Charles William Bury, as surviving drawings show. This house is considered to be among the finest of Johnston's Gothic-style houses in Ireland. The park in which it is set substantially survives.

St Catherine's Church - Church of Ireland church dating from 1815 - with its Bachelors Walk which was designed probably by Loudon to give the landlord access to the church from his castle while avoiding the town centre. The church was designed by Francis Johnston.

The first Catholic church in the town was erected in 1802 on a site provided by Bury in 1794 in what would have been a backward area of the town. The old church was demolished in 1902 and a neo-Gothic style church to a design of William Hague (who designed St. Eunan's church, Letterkenny and that at Kinnegad, among others) constructed and completed by 1906 with a substantial spire to proclaim what had been denied it in the pre-Emancipation days. This church was destroyed by fire in 1983 and entirely reconstructed by 1986 save only for the spire that had survived the fire.

The former town hall or market house in O'Connor Square was erected in 1789 possibly to a design of John Pentland, the architect. Pentland had been responsible for a street-plan for building plots in William Street (now Columcille Street) constructed by Acres after 1790. The town hall is now used by Irish Nationwide. Its original open arches to ground level were closed in, possibly as early as 1820 when trading activity was removed to the Shambles and Corn Market (now Market Square). Soon after, the Tullamore Loan Fund Bank was established on the ground floor to cater for local needs.

The county infirmary in the widened and later part of Church Street was erected in 1788 and retained in the mid-1990s as to roofline and facade now known as Library Hall, an apartment block.

Bury Arms later Charleville Arms Hotel erected on the important corner site at Church Street and Bridge Street in 1786 and the first public use building to be erected after the fire, on a site that now ran as far as where the existing Methodist church is located in the widened Church Street. It was demolished in 2000.

The canal hotel at Bury Quay was erected in 1801 at a cost of £4,000 during a period when Tullamore was the canal terminus. It failed as a business and after serving for over a century as a parochial house for the Catholic clergy was demolished in 1974.

The Methodist church in Church Street was rebuilt in the 1820s in a building style still surviving in the Methodist church at Birr. The Tullamore church was rebuilt in the Gothic style in 1889.

The county gaol of 1826 - now Kilcruttin Business Park for small industries and prior to that a Salts (Ireland) Ltd spinning mill. The gaol was destroyed by fire in 1922, and save for the façade it was all demolished in 1937 to provide the site for the spinning mills.

The courthouse of 1835 by J.B. Keane, architect. This was destroyed by the Republicans departing the town in July 1922 in advance of the Free State army. It was rebuilt, but as to its interior much altered and continues to serve as a courthouse. It was used also by the grand jury and from 1899 the Offaly County Council until it vacated the courthouse for new offices in 2002. The building was substantially renovated at a cost of €15 million in 2007.

The Mercy convent, erected in 1838-41, demolished and rebuilt in the mid 1960s and may soon be vacated and sold because there are few Mercy Sisters now occupying the convent.

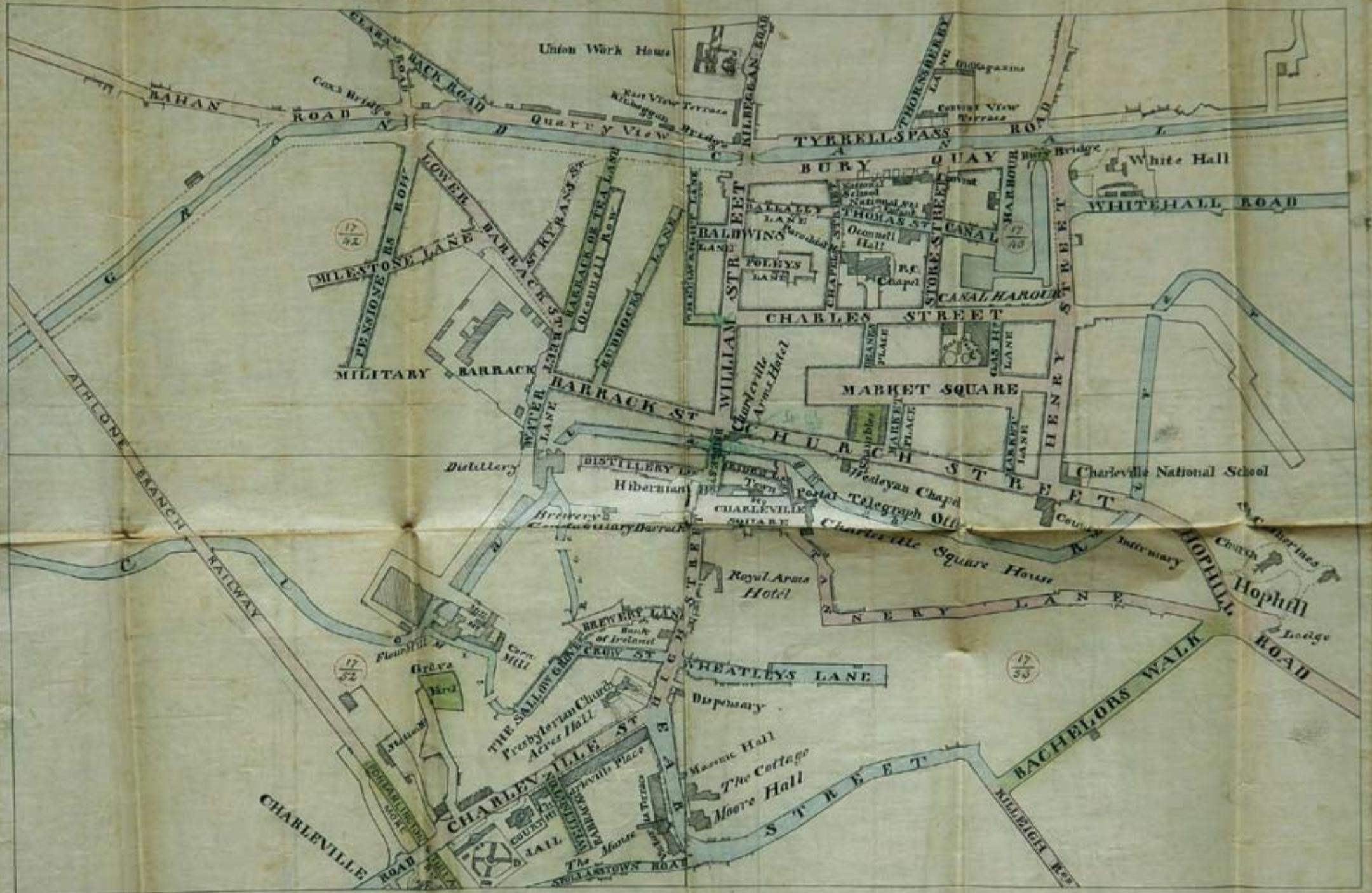
The workhouse erected in 1841 at Ardan Road demolished in the 1970s brought to an end the public building programme started in 1786 with the hotel. Part of the site is occupied by a home for the elderly known as Riada House and offices for the Midland Health Board (now HSE) which from its inception in 1970 until its demise in 2004 had its offices for the region situated in Tullamore.



CHARLEVILLE SCHOOL, c.1980



CONVENT AND KILBEGGAN BRIDGE, c.1910



STREETS AND LANES OF TULLAMORE, 1885

The new streets all followed on the landlord's coming of age and economic progress in the post-1785 period. The canal connection to Dublin was a significant catalyst as was an extravagant resident landlord. The canal connection gave Tullamore a direct link with Dublin for the first time. Among the new streets were:

Table 3: New streets, 1785-1840

| Street | Year |
|--|-------------|
| William Street (or Columcille Street) | 1790 - 1800 |
| O'Connor Square, infill to complete it | 1788 - 1810 |
| High Street - infill and development at the Acres Hall or southern end | 1786 - 1800 |
| Barrack Street/Patrick Street mostly rebuilt | 1786 - 1800 |
| Church Street, lower | 1788 - 1810 |
| Harbour Street | 1805 - 1825 |
| Store Street | 1800 - 1840 |
| Henry Street (O'Carroll Street) | 1820 - 1840 |
| Offally Street | 1790 - 1825 |
| Kilbride Street | 1790 - 1830 |
| Cormac Street | 1790 - 1840 |
| O'Moore Street | 1790 - 1840 |
| Canal Place (St Brigid's Place) | 1800 - 1804 |
| Bury Quay (Convent Road) | 1805 - 1840 |
| Thomas Street (Benburb Street) | 1812 - 1840 |
| Corn Market (Market Square) | 1820 - 1840 |

Table 4: Population of the streets and number of houses in Tullamore in 1821

| Street/Lane | Houses | Inhabitants |
|---|------------|------------------------------|
| High Street (includes Bridge Street) | 84 | 543 |
| Windmill Street | 37 | 157 |
| The Square | 10 | 89 |
| Church Street | 54 | 327 |
| Pound Street | 82 | 467 |
| Barrack Street | 34 | 302 |
| Upper [Lower] Barrack Street | 150 | 700 |
| Harbour Street | 37 | 200 |
| Bury Quay | 21 | 138 |
| White Hall | 19 | 117 |
| Pikes Lane | 15 | 55 |
| Stillyard Lane [off Bridge Street] | 13 | 177 |
| Molloy's Lane | 18 | 88 |
| Flanagan's Lane | 11 | 56 |
| Crowe's Lane | 16 | 80 |
| Wheatley's Lane | 22 | 133 |
| Charleville Road | 46 | 215 |
| Swaddling Lane | 24 | 133 |
| Fea Lane [Tea] | 33 | 165 |
| Canal Side | 29 | 143 |
| Chappel Lane [sic] | 49 | 261 |
| Wheelwright Lane | 50 | 249 |
| Rap [paree] Alley | 114 | 489 |
| Water Lane | 31 | 173 |
| Total | 999 | 5561 [5457] |

The Barracks at the time of taking the account was occupied by the Enniskillen dragoon officers, non-commissioned officers, privates and their families. (Faulkner's Dublin Journal, 10 August 1821)

Landlord influence facilitates supply more so than being a determinant of demand. The general upturn in the Irish economy after 1785 and which continued until the recession after the ending of the Napoleonic wars in 1815, was a spur to development. So also was the improvement in transport when the Grand Canal was linked to Tullamore in 1798 and to the Shannon in 1804. It was the canal that opened Tullamore to Dublin by providing a cheap link for goods traffic. The canal passenger traffic led to the building of a new hotel in 1801 which after the end of passenger traffic with the advent of the railways, served as a parochial house for Catholic priests until its demolition in 1974. The goods traffic must have been enormous because stores were built near the new harbour in what is now Store Street (these stores were destroyed by fire about 1960). The canal boats provided a direct link with Dublin at low cost facilitating the transport of turf, bricks, grain for malting and Tullamore limestone from the local quarries. The new Corn Market (now Market Square) developed after 1820 was conveniently located near the harbour and left O'Connor Square largely for recreation save for the fair days. In the nineteenth century there were two market days each week and seven fair days inclusive of an extra-large fair near Christmas. In 1897 this was changed to a fair day each month on the third Friday. It was not until the 1960s that the monthly fair for the sale of farm animals was moved to auction rooms or cattle mart at Store Street and later Ardan Road. Tullamore served as the terminus of the canal system for a vital six years until the connection to Shannon Harbour was completed in 1804. During this first decade some 350 boats operated on the canal and were capable of drawing from fifty to sixty tons each.

The road network surrounding Tullamore in the late-eighteenth century appears to have changed little. Only the Geashill to Tullamore road seems to be entirely new. The roads to Dublin were via Daingean or Tyrrellspass. The Tullamore to Athlone route via Clara seems to have been much in use. The failure to complete the proposed 'Mosse's Road' direct from Clane to Ballinagar left Tullamore without a direct route to Dublin without going north via Tyrrellspass or south via Ballyboy. The growth of postal services after 1750 had given an impetus to road building and by the 1760s Tullamore had at least three deliveries per week. The young Lord Tullamore had, in the early 1830s, hoped that his town would be included on the high mail coach road from Dublin to Galway. Interestingly in the 1880s a railway line was proposed from Edenderry to Tullamore which had it gone ahead could have provided the most direct link to the city instead of via Portarlington.

While there was substantial development from the 1780s to the 1830s there was also much poverty. At that time the Protestant vestry administered charitable relief to the poor in the years before the poor law legislation of 1838 and the workhouse of 1841. Changes came in that decade following Catholic Emancipation and the founding of a Mercy convent in Tullamore in 1836. Many of its first sisters were well-off girls who wanted to help the poor. In the years after 1800 new-born unwanted children in Tullamore were generally sent to the foundling hospital in Dublin with the carriage via a local woman who was paid £1. This was considered a much cheaper option than maintaining the child in the parish where the cost was in excess of £4 per year. Coffins bought for the poor at the time were in the range of 2s. 6d to 15s. and paid for by the vestry.

From the Famine to the Free State

The canal marked the northern boundary of the town until the 1900s, as did the railway line from 1859 on the southern side. Some of the poor of the town lived on the northern bank of the canal near the convenient water supply and beside the bog of Puttaghan and it was this area which suffered most during the Famine years. The remaining poor lived in lanes at the back of the big private houses fronting the streets, and paid rents of 6d or 1s per week with the 'lease determinable every Friday'. At that time status was not so much having a house in a particular part of town as having it fronting the principal streets. Locations such as Tara Street, Offally Street and Store Street all of which initially had substantial houses did not succeed in holding the more affluent occupiers and soon the large houses here became subdivided tenements. Sewerage was not-existent except in the principal streets and then flowed direct to the river. The drains laid down in the 1840s were in fact only for surface water. New houses built in Tullamore as late as 1907 had an earth closet only and not a water closet. In the new Convent View Terrace houses of that year the earth closet type of toilet was located in a small shed at the end of the garden with a separate back gate for cleaning and removal. The sewerage system did not improve until about 1910 and it was in fact the 1950s before significant improvements were made. Older people can remember the Tullamore River slightly blood-red following a kill of pigs in the nearby bacon factory. For drinking water people depended until the mid-1890s on a few pumps in the town, wells, storage barrels and the canal. The piped scheme from Clonaslee was introduced in 1895.

The post-Famine years, and up to the end of the First World War, saw the steady consolidation of



PORTER'S LODGE, WORKHOUSE, 1978



KING'S COUNTY INFIRMARY LATER THE COUNTY LIBRARY, 1979



OLD CHAPEL HARBOUR ST. TULLAMORE, 1902

Tullamore's position as the leading town in Offaly. Whereas the population of Tullamore and Birr was virtually the same, at 6,300 in 1841 by 1926 the population of Birr had fallen to almost half that figure, and that of Tullamore to about 5,000. This is partly accounted for by the lack of a canal system for Birr and no direct rail connection with Dublin. A paternalistic landlord in Birr may have also created an atmosphere not conducive to the excesses of growth. In fact, Clara because of the Goodbody jute business was the only town in Offaly to experience growth in the period 1861 to 1926. The towns had not fared badly by contrast with the rural areas and the county as a whole. The population of Offaly in 1841 was almost 147,000 falling to 53,000 in 1926.

Table 5: Population change in the County Offaly towns 1861 - 1926*

| Town | 1861 | 1926 | % increase/decrease |
|-----------|-------|-------|---------------------|
| Tullamore | 5,935 | 4,930 | - 16.9 |
| Birr | 6,146 | 3,402 | - 44.6 |
| Edenderry | 2,361 | 2,092 | - 11.4 |
| Clara | 1,020 | 1,726 | + 69.2 |
| Banagher | 1,426 | 788 | - 44.7 |

* *The boundaries of Tullamore used throughout are those of 1926.*

The Charleville influence in Tullamore declined after the 1840s and the earldom was extinguished with the death of the fifth earl in 1875. The merchants and the farmers (the latter refusing to pay tolls at the Tullamore fairs from 1843) came to prominence through the advent of public boards such as the board of guardians of the Tullamore Poor Law

Union (established after 1838), and the Tullamore Town Commissioners (established in 1860, so as to facilitate the provision of a town gas supply). The commercial role of Tullamore expanded after 1890, with the development of the general merchant business of P. & H. Egan and D. E. Williams. Akin to Liptons and Findlaters, both firms had a system of branch shops throughout the midlands, connected to an agricultural food-processing base in malting, brewing and distilling. The Goodbody tobacco factory employed about 150 until a fire destroyed the factory in 1886 and the entire workforce was transferred to new premises near Harold's Cross, Dublin. An example of internal migration now matched by the movement of transnational business to Eastern Europe and elsewhere. The Tullamore distillery business expanded in the 1870s and again after 1900 when D.E. Williams developed the Tullamore Dew brand. The distillery was a major business concern in Tullamore from the 1900s until the end of the First World War. It closed in 1924 but reopened in 1938. Whiskey production ceased in Tullamore in 1954, but the association of the Williams firm with the sale of wine and spirits continued until the 1980s with the sale of Irish Mist to Cantrell & Cochrane (and subsequently until 2010 also the owner of the Tullamore Dew brand) and the wine and spirits division to Edward Dillon.

Tullamore expanded its commercial role in the post-Famine years. When the rail connection to Athlone was nearing completion in 1859 a newly established but short lived local newspaper felt able to comment on the progress of Tullamore in the late 1850s. This was largely due to the new rail connections, but perhaps also partly bought with the reduction in the population by death and emigration. At a dinner in Tullamore given to celebrate the coming of age of the fourth earl of Charleville in 1872, one

of the speakers, Dr Michael Moorhead, said that over the previous twenty years Tullamore had been marvellously transformed. Dr Moorhead knew better than most as he had arrived in Tullamore in the late 1830s to serve as the physician in the new workhouse. The rail service link with Dublin from 1854, just as with the canal link fifty years earlier, led to substantial improvement and a lessening of the disadvantages of an inland location. The movement of livestock, for example, was greatly facilitated and led to an increase in the number of fairs to twelve per year by the 1890s. If the role of the canal for passenger traffic almost ceased after the advent of the railway, its function in commercial traffic continued right up to the 1950s. Tullamore's main sources of employment in quarrying, grain handling, including malt for Guinness, distilling and tobacco greatly depended on it. The old industrial fabric of the town, now almost completely erased since the 1980s, was firmly established in the nineteenth century. This could be seen in the Williams, Egan and Daly commercial buildings at the rear of High Street and at Patrick Street, together with the Goodbody and Tarleton properties at O'Connor Square, Market Square and Tanyard Lane. Several new malt houses were erected at Tanyard Lane during the years 1900 to 1914. The Egan trading empire was conducted from Bridge House with its saw mills to the rear and the brewery buildings at the rear of the Brewery Tap in High Street. The brewery expanded in the 1880s and was in operation until the First World War. The quarrying industry provided the material for the handsome fronts such as that at the bonded warehouse, Bury Quay (1897), the Bridge House (1910) and Scallys (1912, now Tullamore Shopping Mall in Columcille Street). But the end was near for the old quarrying business as witnessed by the construction of what was then one of the first

concrete buildings in Ireland for Tarleton's (now Oisín O'Sullivan's furniture store) in 1913-15 at Tanyard Lane. In 1915 it was described as the latest addition to their malting premises – 'a building put up entirely in ferro-concrete, and of immense size' and unique in Ireland.

The Charleville influence on affairs in Tullamore all but disappeared in the years after the Famine. The first earl on his death in 1835 left an estate encumbered with debt and a large house which was too expensive to keep open. He was succeeded by his son, also Charles William, who did not wish to read the warning signs and who had married perhaps for love, but certainly not money. The young earl was obliged to sell the farm stock and implements at Charleville in 1844 and retire to Berlin to live on a £1,000 a year. If debt had crushed the second earl it was want of good health that was to afflict his children. On the third earl succeeding in 1851 the farm was put back into repair. However, the third earl died in 1859 while his wife predeceased him by two years. His son, the fourth earl, born in 1852 died aged 22 in 1874 and his brother, Alfred (also a son of the second earl) born in 1829, died in 1875, and thus the earldom became extinct. Of the three daughters of the third earl, Lady Harriet Bury died from a fall on the great staircase in the castle in 1861 when only a child of eight years. Such is the origin of the ghoulish ghost stories of a haunted castle that make for spooked visitors to her old home. Her sister Lady Emily, daughter of the third earl, inherited the estates in 1875 and succeeded in restoring a degree of longevity to the family as she lived on until 1931. However, her husband died in 1885 after only four years of marriage while their daughter, Marjorie Bury, died of diphtheria in 1907. The latter's death was an unfortunate reminder that

the rich were not immune from diseases that more often afflicted the poor. Lady Emily's son, Colonel Howard Bury, died unmarried in 1963 and the estate passed back up the line to the Hutton family by reason of the marriage of a daughter of the third earl, Lady Katherine Bury, back in 1873 to Colonel Edmund Bacon Hutton. Colonel Bury preferred to live in Belvedere near Mullingar, a house he inherited about 1912 the same year in which the castle was largely shut up until leased in 1970. Lady Emily was remote from the Tullamore townspeople and had a long widowhood largely spent abroad. Relations with the townspeople were somewhat estranged with the eviction of a local family at Charleville Road in 1909.



WILLIAMS HEAD OFFICE IN PATRICK STREET, 1904



WILLIAMS' MOTOR LORRY IN PATRICK STREET, 1904

THE INDUSTRIES OF TULLAMORE IN THE EARLY 1880S FROM THE KING'S COUNTY: AN EPITOME OF ITS HISTORY (BIRR, 1884) PP 13-14.

In the olden times woollen and linen factories flourished in the county, but as in many other places in Ireland, they have been obliterated by the importation of English-made goods. At present three distilleries, or more properly two, for an extensive concern, erected in Banagher is derelict, a brewery, a tobacco factory, a jute-spinning factory, some malting establishments, marble quarries and the usual flour mills, represent the manufacturing industries of the county. One of the distilleries at present working is in Tullamore, the other in Birr. The Tullamore distillery was founded in 1829 by Mr. M. Molloy, and in the year 1847 passed into the hands of Mr. Daly, the present owner. The premises cover seven acres and contain extensive grain and malting houses. The stills, which are all old style "pot", are capable of making over 600,000 gallons (25.0.P) per annum. About 100 men are employed at the distillery and the wages paid annually amount to about £5,000. . . The tobacco factory, which is located in Tullamore is owned by Messrs T. P. and R. Goodbody, who commenced business in 1848. At present the firm employs 149 workers - 140 men and 9 women – the classes of goods produced being roll and cut tobaccos, snuffs, etc. As a criterion of the great business done by the firm, it may be mentioned that during the past year duty was paid on about 1,000,000 lbs of leaf, an import amounting to the sum of about £175,000. The works occupy one and a half acres, and most of the machinery used was manufactured by the now extinct firm of Messrs Bewley, Webb and Company, Dublin. The only brewery in the county is owned and worked by Messrs P. and H. Egan, Tullamore.

It is a most extensive concern and turns out from thirty to forty barrels of ale and porter per day, which is disposed of in the surrounding towns. The corn Stores, three in number, attached to the brewery are capable of containing 15,000 barrels of grain, and in the splendid malting houses, also attached, upwards of 8,000 barrels of malt are made during the season. The brewery affords considerable employment, the wages expended, on labour alone amounting to nearly 1,500 pounds. per annum. The jute-spinning factory is situated near Clara, and it is the property of the Messrs Goodbody. . . Of the malting establishments one is located in Tullamore and the other in Birr. Messrs John and Abraham Tarleton are proprietors of the former, and during the season - from May until October - they employ 50 men and turn out a considerable quantity of malt, which, as a rule, is disposed of to the Dublin brewers and distillers.. In Tullamore the Messrs Egan and the Messrs Goodbody have general sawmills, which are continually going and turn out daily a large amount of cut timber. . . A short distance from Tullamore are the well-known and extensive quarries of Ballyduff, worked by Mr. John Molloy. From those is obtained a close grained limestone susceptible of a high polish and admirably adapted for architectural ornamentation. The amount of business transacted by Mr. Molloy is very extensive. The excellence of the marble supplied by him and of the artistic manipulation to which it is subjected, sufficient evidence is afforded by the fact that the specimens exhibited by him in the Dublin Exhibition of this year (1883) obtained a first prize.

Local government

The year 2010 marked the 150th anniversary of the setting up of local government in Tullamore. There had been a manor court in Tullamore in the latter half of the eighteenth century and this was of some benefit. It was largely controlled by the landlord's agent and with the demise of the Charleville influence in the 1840s a gap emerged which was only filled after the death of the third earl in 1859. Birr by contrast had moved ahead of Tullamore and acquired town commissioners and a gas supply in 1852. In 1859 the Goodbody brothers, now a growing influence in Tullamore, and even occupying the houses of former agents of the landlord at High Street and Elmfield, were prime movers in the obtaining of gas for the town. They had experience as Clara was supplied that year. It is hard to conceive now that before public lighting there was only one lamp in a central part of the town, and it being the poor light of a tallow candle

The Tullamore Gas Co., Ltd. was formed in that year with a nominal capital of £2,500, divided into five hundred shares of £5 each. The first meeting of the subscribers was held on 15 September, 1859, with a mix of directors from across the religious divide. This included Robert James Goodbody, the first company secretary and with milling and tobacco manufacturing interests in Tullamore. Other directors were Edward Cantwell, John Hill (the county surveyor, Henry Manly (Quaker merchant and brewer), Thomas Pim Goodbody, (brother of Robert James), Daniel Carroll, George Ridley, Alexander McMullen, John A. Bradley, Patrick Egan (of P. & H. Egan), John Willcocks (magistrate), Bernard Daly (the distiller), Robert G. Deverell (brewer and merchant), Lewis F. Goodbody, Clara,

all of whom held 20 shares each. A site was selected in Harbour Street and work began immediately with the apparatus for the manufacture of the gas costing £755 13s. 9d., perhaps from €90,000 to €120,000 in present-day value. During the decade before the First World War the works were substantially renovated with the number of lamps increased from forty to eighty over that fifty-year period. The added investment probably arose from the ongoing council support for the gas works and the defeat of a proposal in 1913 to introduce an electric scheme. To the credit of the gas company board they had electricity under consideration and it came eight years later. P.A. Wrafter of Tullamore laconically recorded in his diary 'Electric light was lit in the streets and houses on September the 27, 1921.' Work on the construction of the electric light shed to the back of the gas works was completed in 1921. This was a hideous shed-like structure unsuited to a town square and was not removed until the 1990s. In today's light-filled town it should not be forgotten that up to the 1960s the public electric lighting was switched off at 12 midnight.

One might well ask what has this to do with local government? The answer is that pipes could only be laid in the streets with the approval of a statutory authority and this was necessary for both Birr (1852) and Tullamore (1860). The budget of the town commissioners, elected in 1860 by some 100 ratepayers, was severely limited. It amounted to little more than £200 per year and was mainly for gas lighting and cleaning of the streets. During the 1840s the profits from the Tullamore Loan Fund Bank paid for the erection of a town clock in the market house, the streets were flagged, some town pumps provided and surface water drainage

to the river constructed. Gas lighting followed in 1860 after a period of having only one oil lamp in the centre of the town by way of public lighting. It was not until 1895 that piped water was made available and from the early 1900s the first council housing scheme was built. Some improvements were made to the sewerage system, often by septic tank for an entire street where the fall to the river was inadequate. The improved economic conditions in Ireland from the 1890s up to 1918, together with the establishing of the Tullamore Urban District Council in 1900 all facilitated improvement. The council had a larger functional area of some 2,000 acres and a greater budget than the old town commissioners' board. Central government lent a hand with grants for sanitation and housing. The roads too were improved with the arrival of the motor car and were steamrolled after 1906-7. The story of local government in Tullamore since 1900 is one of incremental improvement in line with the willingness of the ratepayers to shoulder the burden and central government to make up the difference. What is surprising is how much was achieved with little money. The water scheme after 1895 together with the major sewerage scheme of 1950 were major projects, matched only by the housing programme which has provided some 1,500 houses to people in need of rehousing – of which there were many – over the period from 1903 to date.

The public buildings from the 1850s to the present day

After the great public buildings of the 1830s, the gaol, the courthouse and the new convent schools, nothing more was built before the Famine except the workhouse. Such was the scarcity of suitable accommodation in the 1840s that the dinner for Daniel O'Connell after the Tullamore 'monster



ACRES NOW TULLAMORE TOWN HALL, 2008



TULLAMORE HOSPITAL, 2007



TULLAMORE LEISURE CENTRE/SWIMMING POOL BY HOLOHAN LEISURE ARCHITECTS, OPENED BY BRIAN COWEN, OCTOBER 2008

meeting' of 1843 was held in the then disused distillery at Market Square (now the Granary). In 1865 the Presbyterian church was built at High Street and a little over thirty years later in 1889 the new Methodist church was built on the site of the old building. A new school, St Brigid's, was built for the Christian Brothers in 1875 beside the old canal hotel and near to the harbour (this school was demolished in the 1990s). Further parochial properties were added in the first decade or thereabouts of the twentieth century, the most important of which was the new Catholic church of 1898-1906. The parish priest, Fr Callary, after whom a street is named, was not content to rest at that and went on to have two second level schools completed at Bury Quay in 1911 and 1912 – one of which, the Classical School, is still standing although converted to apartments in the late 1990s. Only in 1927, and then as a result of the burnings of the 'Troubles' of 1919-23, was the first civic building completed since the 1830s, the new courthouse. Dean Craig, the younger, and who with his father had at least sixty years experience of living and working in Tullamore remarked at the opening of the new courthouse in 1927 that it was the first civic ceremony that he could remember in the history of the town. The ceremony was to be repeated again in 2007 with the opening of the refurbished building. Aside from new schools the 1930s saw the completion of the first garda station and the swimming pool. Both buildings were replaced with new structures in 2002 and 2008. The new garda station, opened in 2002 was provided by the office of public works and has accommodation for fifty gardaí. It is a somewhat flat building that has not achieved the same effect in closing off the streetscape as the old county infirmary of 200 years earlier at O'Carroll Street. It would have been difficult as the site did not allow for the building being set

back as the old 1716 barrack had been. The new swimming pool, once planned for the Harriers Club grounds at Spollanstown, was ultimately built at Church Road not very far from the old pool, but an immeasurable improvement and a pleasing modern building. Its completion in 2008 marked the end of a long campaign by community activists to have a modern facility provided. The town council did not enjoy any permanent accommodation until the then county manager, Sean McCarthy, acquired the former Acres Hall from the Egan family in 1985 with the new building completed in 1992. This acquisition was a major boost not least because of its pivotal location, although some of the old outbuildings were demolished and, of course, the interior was removed and replaced. The architect here was the late Eugene Garvey then practising in Tullamore with assistance on the historical aspects from John O'Connell of Mullingar. It was appropriate that the council should now work from the same house as the developer Thomas Acres did from the late 1780s until his death in 1836. It is also a curious irony that the main opponent to the establishment of the town commissioners in 1860 was house property owner and resident of Acres Hall, Thomas Acres Pierce. The Catholic church was almost entirely destroyed in 1983 save for the tower. The replacement building was completed in 1986, but apart from its timber-effect interior did not earn any plaudits nationally, but was well received locally. The task of providing a larger building on the same site with no money for decoration left the building itself, if not the interior, as very much in the barn-style tradition of earlier post-Famine churches.

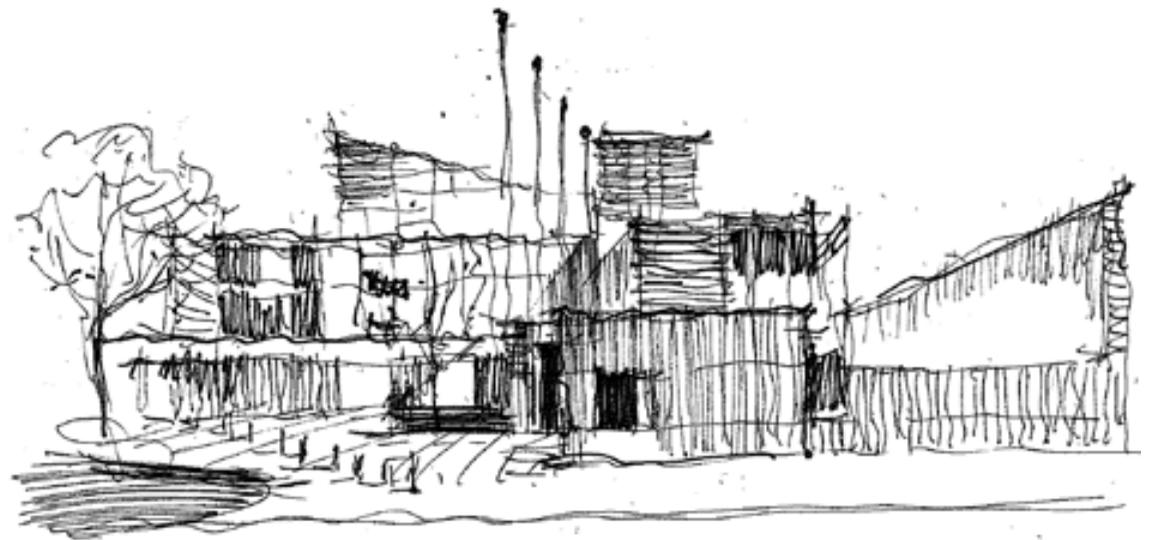
Offaly County Hospital now Midland Regional Hospital

The new county hospital which was completed in December 1942 was by far the most significant public building development in Tullamore and retains that accolade in its new manifestation as a regional hospital completed in 2007. The foundation stone of the county hospital was laid seventy years earlier in 1937. Its completion in Tullamore appears on the face of it to have been a close run thing. However, Tullamore had been the location of the county infirmary since 1767. The hospital erected in Church Street in 1788 was closed in 1921 by the Sinn Féin dominated county council as was the workhouse in Birr, on the grounds of economy. From 1920 to 1942 the workhouse in Tullamore was, in effect, the county hospital. Whereas county adm lamore once the new council met in 1899. Curiously some of the leading personnel of the new council were from Birr, such as Secretary Kingston, Conway and Mahon. It was Birr-born James Mahon whose casting vote in 1930 ensured that the new county hospital was built in Tullamore. Birr and Edenderry had to contend with promises of new local hospitals which were reneged on by the government with the coming of the Second World War. The new county hospital in Tullamore shaped up to have 90 beds in the 1940s and officially 15 staff. Tullamore man Danny Clavin tells the amusing story that while delivering meat to the hospital during the war years in his butcher's apron he was shepherded into the operating theatre in the mistaken belief that he was a visiting surgeon! Later on in the 1960s the Fitzgerald Report fixed on Tullamore as the central hospital in the region only to have this altered to an axis solution of Mullingar-Portlaoise and the closure of Tullamore. This policy was adopted by the Coalition government of 1974

and upset by the promise of Jack Lynch in 1977 to retain the hospital, prior to the general election. The promise had been given under pressure from the Save the Tullamore Hospital Committee and its election candidate, James Guinan. All politics is local in Ireland and in this case the effort of the Tullamore committee of 1977 succeeded beyond the possible expectations of those involved. This writer was a young student at the time and a member of the local committee. One recalls that the sense of mission was palpable from the time of the selection of the hospital candidate in the Central Ballroom, Tara Street, some months earlier. It was in the same year that Bernard Cowen was returned to the dáil after a spell in the wilderness from 1973. It was his son as minister for health and children in 1997-2000 who was able to redress the wrong in failing to implement the Fitzgerald Report of thirty years earlier by agreeing to the upgrade of the Tullamore hospital with, in effect, a new hospital.

The new county offices at Charleville Road

Perhaps the most significant new building architecturally is the new county council office building at Charleville Road. Here the old Elmfield house of the 1780s (remodelled possibly with help from J.S. Mulvany in the 1850s for the Goodbody family) was demolished in about 1998 and replaced with a thoroughly modern concept, a world of difference from the old offices in the courthouse. But perhaps the problem with the courthouse accommodation was the shocking accretions of the 1960s and 1990s to try and cater for the growing staff. The building as now restored and extended has handsome offices and one of the original courtrooms in the style of the 1830s with a further two new courtrooms. The new Aras an Chontae building, opened in 2002, provides a new exhibition space in the central hall, but was not able to achieve the provision of a theatre with shared parking. Whether this would have been obtainable at the alternative site off Tara Street



5. THE COUNTY OFFICE, ARAS AN CHONTAE, AT CHARLEVILLE ROAD.

where Castle Buildings now stand and addressing the town park is not known. What was uppermost at the time was the provision of a modern building on a principal road or street making a modern statement. That it has achieved this and more is accepted by the critics.

So where were the public meetings held in the nineteenth century? The courthouse was available from 1835 and when its use was denied for a political meeting in the late 1830s Fr O'Rafferty made the Catholic church available and a platform was erected at the side of the sanctuary railings. The purpose of the meeting was to welcome the appointment of the Whig chief secretary, Morpeth, and Bishop Cantwell deemed the meeting of sufficient importance to attend. The first floor of the market house in O'Connor Square served as a chapel of ease for the Church of Ireland in the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century. It too was used for public meetings and lectures up to the 1960s. The Catholic equivalent for upwards of one hundred years to the 1970s was St Mary's Hall (earlier called the C.Y.M.S. or O'Connell Hall) and a second venue from the 1960s was the classical school at Bury Quay, then renamed as the De Montfort Hall. In the early 1960s, on a private initiative of the firm of D.E. Williams Limited, a conference room was made available at Patrick Street. Up to about 1960 public dancing was available in the courthouse and the semi-circular courtroom was occasionally used for public meetings after 1922. The two hotels, Bolger's and Hayes' were also available as were some of the schools. The same school halls together with St Mary's and sometimes the Grand Central or 'Ould Hall' provided temporary venues for musicals and plays. These were later supplanted by the Bridge House, the Court Hotel and the GAA

Centre. Such was the plentitude of facilities of a sort that the need for a purpose-built theatre has not found sufficient supporters to make it happen as yet. However, all that may change in 2011 as a new arts centre may yet be built.

There is no denying that the visitor by rail to Tullamore will be impressed at the entrance to the town from Cormac Street with the magnificent façade of the gaol, the impressive portico at the courthouse and the Georgian town hall. Coming by canal one cannot but be impressed at the location of St Catherine's Church and the magnificent steeple of the Catholic church. Those arriving from the various approach roads will have views of the 1930s county hospital, Charleville Castle and its long demesne wall with the entrance gate at Mucklagh and in the distance close to the railway line, Srah Castle. The Daingean road never had any such attractions while the Geashill road now has the new retail cathedral of Tesco and the retail park complex to offer diversion.

Public sculpture

Perhaps not surprisingly there was no public sculpture in Tullamore until the 1920s. The Charleville family was virtually non-resident from the 1850s. The fifth earl, Alfred Bury, while serving as guardian to the fourth earl in the 1860s, did achieve much of value with the building of the cottages for employees on the estate. In Birr a monument had been erected in 1747 to mark the victory of the 'bloody duke' at Culloden over the rebel Scots. About 100 years later a monument was erected in Edenderry to the memory of the third marquis of Downshire, the owner of the town. It was Chief Justice Whiteside sitting in Tullamore in March 1868 who suggested that a monument be erected

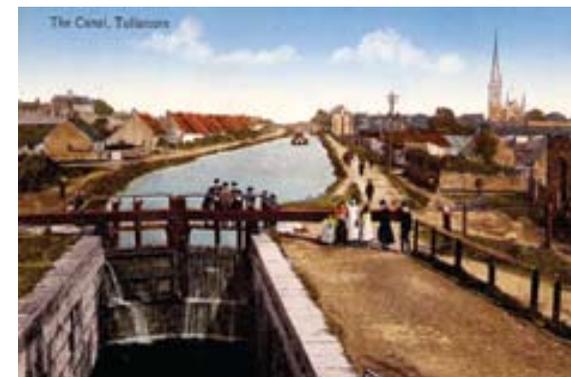
in Birr to the memory of the astronomer third earl of Rosse. The monument, the best in the county, by J.H. Foley, was unveiled in 1876. The nationalists of Birr fed up of being under the yoke of the duke of Cumberland erected a monument in 1894 to the Manchester Martyrs, and in particular to the memory of one of their own, Michael Larkin. Larkin was hanged in 1867, a few months after the death of his father in Birr. Appropriately it was unveiled by the revered Fenian, O'Donovan Rossa. The first Tullamore monument, that to the war dead of 1914-18, was erected in O'Connor Square in 1926. Previously the site had the more utilitarian gas lamp of 1860 and later a public fountain, both presented by private donors. In 1953 the members of the old IRA were commemorated at the unveiling of the monument outside the courthouse. Matthew Kane, the IRA man shot in 1921 is also remembered with a simple cross near Riverside off O'Carroll Street. Permission had been given in the late 1930s for the monument to Kane to be erected in front of the courthouse, but this was dropped later for the more inclusive approach. Another monument associated with our military history is that in Lloyd Town Park, erected in 1986, to those deceased members of the Irish Defence Forces and ex-service men and women. The broad sweep of history is now recalled in the sculpture at Market Square to the town's distilling traditions and outside the premises of the Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society is a carving representing details from the Book of Durrow. Perhaps the most spectacular of the town's sculptures is that unveiled in October 2009 to mark the opening of the Tullamore by-pass. This monument consists of four six-metre high figures created by artist Maurice Harron. Each figure holds a symbol of the scholarly and saintly traditions of the County Offaly monasteries – a book, a chalice,

a staff and a monk throwing aloft a flock of birds. The figures were made in Derry, the home town of Maurice Harron, using computer-controlled designs for the patterns and in a stainless-steel material that reacts with the rays of the sun during the day.¹⁰ In his work Harron is trying to say something about Gaelic identity and tradition and give it visible expression in iconic figures. The Tullamore figures might just as easily have been placed near the monastic centre at Clonmacnois where perhaps Harron had thought they were to be placed.¹¹ Now so near Durrow, but on the esker road to Clonmacnois, perhaps it will lead to the completion of the works at the Durrow monastic site there so as to make the place accessible to the public.

Housing in the period from the Famine to the end of the twentieth century

Very little building took place in Tullamore in the second half of the nineteenth century. Such building as did occur was largely confined to the improvement of existing properties by raising a building to two or three storeys or replacing a thatched roof with a slated one. Building activity commenced again at the beginning of the twentieth century. Three houses were built in 1898 and in the first decade of the twentieth century about fifty one houses were built, thirty six by the urban council and fifteen by private builders. Building was now taking place in the suburbs of the town on behalf of two very different clients. First, were the privately built houses erected for professional workers and businessmen. These houses were mostly on the southern side of the town, such as the five houses built at Clonminch Road in 1909-10. Second, were houses built by the town council to replace condemned houses in the lanes off the principal streets. For the most part council houses were erected on the northern and

western sides of the towns. From the beginning, the best houses in the town had always been south of the river on the higher ground and access road to the Charleville Demesne. During the period of greatest building activity after the 1780s the finest houses on the Acres estate were all on the southern side as, for example, at Cormac Street. The new Church of Ireland church was erected on this side (1815) and it was policy to promote a better class of building on the road to Charleville Demesne. The only house on Charleville Road prior to 1900 was that known as Elmfield. Thereafter new houses were constructed in ribbon fashion almost out to the Finger Board at Ballard. The cabin suburbs had developed on the northern side between the town turf banks and the canal and it was in this area that the workhouse was built. The council had tried to build on the road to Charleville Demesne in 1910, but lost the case when Lady Emily Howard-Bury appealed to the Local Government Board. The local councillors and guardians to get even then proceeded to have a new cottage built on the site of the evicted Condron family and two schemes known as Adams Villas (Spade Avenue) and Colman's Terrace. These were built off the main road. The one was fondly called after the chairman of the town council, William Adams, and the other after the founder saint at Lynally early Christian monastery.



CANAL FROM CLARA BRIDGE, c.1910



O MOLLOY ST OR PENSIONERS ROW, c.1910



DILLON STREET, c.1940

Table 6: Population and housing in Tullamore 1861 - 1926

| | 1861 | 1871 | 1881 | 1891 | 1901 | 1911 | 1926 |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Total no. of persons | 5,044 | 5,179 | 5,098 | 4,522 | 4,639 | 4,926 | 4,930 |
| No. of inhabited houses | 930 | 921 | 886 | 797 | 837 | 894 | 934 |
| No. of uninhabited houses | 32 | 13 | 71 | 78 | 32 | 33 | 37 |
| No. building | 1 | 3 | - | 4 | 2 | - | - |
| Total No. of houses | 963 | 937 | 957 | 879 | 871 | 927 | 971 |
| No. of persons in public institutions* | 480 | 473 | 546 | 532 | 492 | 428 | ? |

*This figure is included in the total number of persons.

Table 7: Population of Tullamore 1861 - 1926 using the new 1903 - 04 boundaries throughout

| | 1861 | 1871 | 1881 | 1891 | 1901 | 1911 | 1926 |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| Total population | 5,935 | 5,428 | 5,324 | 4,676 | 4,833 | 4,926 | 4,930 |
| % Increase/decrease | | - 8.5 | - 1.9 | - 13.8 | + 3.3 | + 1.9 | + 0.1 |

The 1861 figures are not of much use as the old township area of 223 acres was still in use. The acreage from 1871 to 1901-3 was 841 acres. The 1861 figure has been adjusted to include 'the town of Puttaghan', but the total figure would still be deficient. The township was enlarged again in 1903-4 by 1,099 acres to make the urban area 1,940 acres in size. However, the extra 1,099 acres did not bring more than 100 people into the new urban area.

Urban estates and private building for the middle class

Demand for new houses was not strong enough in the second half of the nineteenth century or in the first decade of the twentieth century to warrant the re-emergence of the private speculative builder. When the population of Tullamore expanded in the decade 1891-1901 there was a sufficient number of uninhabited houses available to meet the increased demand. It was only in the 1901-11 period that the need for new houses was felt. Some rebuilding had taken place before 1900. On the Acres estate ten houses were built at a cost of £150 each in 1879 to replace houses in a ruinous condition (at Cormac Street opposite the gaol and known as Charleville Parade), and in 1898 two more were erected (also in Cormac Street south of Acres Hall, now the town hall). Four houses for the warders in the gaol were completed in 1889 and now known as Gaol Lawn. Between 1900 and 1910 about twenty three houses were built privately. On Charleville Road three houses were built in 1902-9. On the Clonminch Road the secretary of the county council took a lease of building ground about 1908 and built 'two fine blocks of double villas'. He sold two of these immediately, let one to a tenant and retained one for his own use. In the same area a local businessman, John Digan, built a large residence, Clonminch

House, at a cost of £1,700 in 1910. This was sold about 1920 for £1,000 reflecting the depressed conditions after the First World War and the ‘Troubles’ in Ireland. The remaining fifteen houses were built in two schemes – one of five houses and the other of ten, both terraced. The Egan family employed local builder, Jack Cleary, to build ten houses in Chapel Street to replace existing houses. These houses were let to tenants. Cleary was active in house building and acquisition by purchase. He became an intermediate landlord with houses in the poorer areas of the town. The other five-house scheme was built by P. & H. Egan Limited about 1907 at Convent View or Tyrrell’s Road. So far as can be established Egans came into the private housing market following the failure of a committee elected at a public meeting in 1906 and charged with the task of promoting a private building scheme. This committee achieved nothing and the Egan firm may have come in to fill the breach. These houses were also let to tenants. In the Egan schemes the houses appear to have been for artisans whereas the council houses built at the time, or proposed to be built, were all for labourers, at least until the twelve ‘artisan’ two-storey houses were built at Convent View in 1912. The Egan firm got involved in building again in the late 1930s with eight houses at Clonminch Road, at a suitable distance from the new cemetery (1893).

Council Housing

The private builder operated to meet the demand for new houses because of population pressure. The local authority involvement in housing arose from concern about the insanitary condition of the housing stock and the need to replace it. The council moved in to fill the breach left by the private builder’s uncertainty about the market return. From the mid-1890s public attention was focused on the

housing conditions of the poor in the town. As early as 1884 Lord Rosse had built labourers’ cottages at Cappaneal, Birr. Following legislation in the 1880s the boards of guardians were empowered to build houses in the poor law unions. Houses were built in the Tullamore area, but these were all outside the township. From 1890 town commissioners were permitted to build houses, but no building took place in Tullamore town until Emmet Terrace was completed in 1903. This was largely because at an annual budget of £200 the town commissioners had no funds and no capacity or desire to borrow.

A report on the housing conditions of Tullamore appeared in 1897, when it was recommended that the town commissioners build houses to be let at 1s. per week. This was the prevailing rent in the market at the time, but frequently the houses were without any sanitary accommodation and consisted of only one room. In a few of the houses outbreaks of typhoid had occurred. The writer of the report hit out at the successful publican or small dealer who acquired house property, often consisting of shattered cabins, which he set about ‘remodelling’ by capping the houses with a cheap corrugated iron roof. As a result of the Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898 the town commissioners were replaced by the Tullamore Urban District Council in 1900. The council took over the sanitary powers of the board of guardians in addition to the powers of the town commissioners. Subject to funding and approval from the Local Government Board the council could now embark on house building. The first scheme of twelve council houses at Emmet Terrace was completed in 1903, although not without difficulty with the Local Government Board. This body wanted the council to proceed with a sewerage scheme first. The council was limited in its activities by its borrow-

ing powers which depended in turn on the rateable valuation of the Tullamore urban district. In 1901 the rateable valuation of Tullamore was £6,167 and the urban area 841 acres in size. Tullamore was a poorer township than Birr where the rateable valuation in the same year was £9,106, but the urban district 1,585 acres in size. The Tullamore urban boundary was enlarged in 1903-4 to 1,931 acres. In 1911 the rateable valuation of Tullamore was £8,170 and that of Birr £9,352. The rate in the Tullamore urban district in the early 1900s was low, but up on what it had been over the period 1860 to 1900. The town rate in the early years did not exceed 1s. in the £, but there was also a poor rate and county cess to be paid.

A second council building scheme was undertaken in 1907 when twenty four single-storey houses were built at Davitt Street for labourers at a cost of £120 each. A further two schemes of thirty two houses in all were completed in 1912-13. This brought to sixty eight the number of houses completed between 1902 and the First World War. The council was not happy with the rate of progress and, as regards the five-year interval between Emmet Terrace and Davitt Street, believed that small-time landlord vested interests were conspiring to block the provision of new houses for those in need. This was notwithstanding the fact that council houses were let at rents varying from 2s. to 4s. per week – a sizable sum when one considers that the average wage of the labourer in the first decade of the 1900s did not much exceed 12s. It was in this context that the council in charging 3s per week for an Emmet Terrace house (capital cost £140 each) preferred the cheaper Davitt Street house where the capital cost for each unit was £100 and the weekly rent smaller. The importance of good design for the longer term can be seen in the Emmet

Terrace scheme. The higher density per acre of the Davitt Street scheme was only repeated in O'Brien Street (1912).

The building of houses by the council was resumed in the 1920s and the programme expanded enormously in the 1930s by the first Fianna Fáil government. It has been suggested that the first Cumann na nGaedheal government concentrated more on housing for the middle classes and certainly this is borne out in Tullamore with schemes such as the 1920s Dillon Street. The new council housing probably did not meet the demand because an increasing number of houses were condemned by public health officials after 1910. In 1911 Dr Moorhead reported that he had condemned 66 houses whereas the figure was 160 in 1920. After a slow start in the late 1920s with the completion of Dillon Street/Healy Street and Parnell Street/Kilbride Street south (built on part of the site of the army barrack of 1716) building accelerated in the 1930s. This came about because of the post-1932 Fianna Fáil government policy on slum clearances and the work locally of Dr Moorhead. He had condemned 79 houses by March of 1934 – some 42 in Pensioners Row, 5 in Milestone Lane, 24 in Lower Barrack Street and 8 houses on Clara Road. In April 1934 he condemned a further 25 houses in Bride's Lane. This was formerly Ruddock's Lane off Patrick Street and had been a 'cabin suburb' since the 1780s. It is to the back of the Italian restaurants in Patrick Street and now the site of houses and apartments, known as Haviland Court – the latter a long way from the Swaddling Lane nickname that may even predate Ruddock's Lane. (Swaddlers was a pejorative term for Methodists in the eighteenth century.) A new housing scheme of 142 houses at O'Molloy Street (formerly Pensioners Row) was completed in 1938,

as was an outdoor swimming pool. Callary Street and Park Avenue of about 75 houses were completed also at this time. This scheme was located east of Davitt Street and replaced thatched cabins at Rapparee Alley on the old road to Mullingar via Tyrrellspass. By 1938 over 350 houses in Tullamore had been built by the local authority with 202 erected in the six-year period since 1932 and 140 in the period from 1902 to 1932. This rate of general house-building was not exceeded until the late 1990s and 'the first seven years of plenty' from 2000 to 2007. Dr George Moorhead did not live to see O'Molloy Street completed, dying in 1934. His father, Michael Moorhead, as noted, had come to Tullamore as workhouse doctor in the 1830s and was later chairman of the Tullamore Town Commissioners. His son, George, succeeded and for fifty years was active in promoting sanitation and housing in Tullamore through his reports on the housing condition of the poor and the need for change. Dr George Moorhead's house was the first to have piped water in Tullamore in the 1890s and, appropriately, was given to an order of French nuns in the 1950s by a grandson, also George. It was another order of French nuns who are said to have introduced the first flush toilet to Offaly in the late 1850s for their new convent in Banagher. The Tullamore link with the Moorhead family was cut with the departure of Joe (Dentist) Moorhead in 1973 and his death in Dublin some ten years later.

The war delayed further new schemes and it was not until c. 1950 that the Clontarf Road scheme of c. 80 houses was completed. This scheme was located on the northern bank of the canal and replaced the old thatched houses of Quarry View or Tinkers Row. The early 1950s saw the completion of the Pearse Park scheme of 74 houses and in 1955 the Mar-

ian Place scheme of 106 houses was opened. These great new schemes built to stylish designs (it was proposed in the 1990s to 'list' the Clontarf Road houses for protected status) were much needed. The distinguished geographer, T.W. Freeman, in a review of Tullamore's progress in *Irish Geography* in 1948 noted the housing difficulties and the lack of planning guidelines. Tullamore did adopt by-laws in 1904 and had Frank Gibney prepare a town plan in 1948-50, but it was not until the 1963 Planning Act and the first town plan of 1966-7 that clear planning guidelines came to be enforced. Freeman noted:

The industrial and commercial prosperity of Tullamore has brought in its train severe housing problems, which can only be solved by new building on a considerable scale. The factory [Salts] needs more workers, of whom some must be immigrants [from surrounding areas and not abroad] and yet it is extremely hard to find suitable quarters for those who want to come to work. Similarly, some of the shops have great difficulties in staffing, and their assistants are drawn from outside the town and, in one case, housed over the shop. The problem also affects poor families who should be moved to new council houses but live in cottages, of which some have been condemned for years and consist only of one or two rooms. The re-housing before 1942 was considerable, and the new houses have three to five rooms, with a patch of ground generally well-cultivated, and rents around 4/- to 5/- for one storey or small two-storey houses, but 12/- to 15/- for some of the better two-storied houses. The poor however complain that they could never afford a rent of even 8/- per week, and the new housing in these days of vastly increased costs

will offer great problems: it has already begun though only one short terrace of council houses had been built by 1947 [part of Clontarf Road]. Yet some of the back streets of Tullamore still have housing conditions that shocks any visitor, and the only consolation is that many poor cottages occupied even thirty years ago are already crumbling into dust. On the other hand, Tullamore has many nineteenth-century houses with two storeys and normally four rooms with a kitchen: on the whole these are the well-kept houses of artisans and have not outlived their usefulness.

Middle class housing in Tullamore is found in the town itself and, rather more obviously, beside the roads leading from the town, where there are ribbons of modern villas or bungalows, many of them built within recent years, almost all with spacious gardens and a prosperous air. These are the modern equivalents of the dignified late Georgian and severe Victorian residences that exist in the town, most of which have a garden hidden away in the rear. Many of the professional men, such as doctors, live in the town itself, and the new houses have been built by the commercial families, county officials, factory managers and others, including some professional people able to live away from their work: in all, these houses show the strength of the middle classes in the town. Their location, however, shows an acute form of ribbon development, for instead of clustering near the town they appear to shun it by seeking fresh woods and pastures new. In some cases, too there is no clear building line, for one house is near to the road and the next thirty yards from it, though a consultant on

building has now been appointed [Frank Gibney], so such errors may not be repeated.

Building in the private sector greatly improved after the war, by comparison with the years from 1914 to 1945, reflecting the economic upturn in the town. However, Gibney's concern over ribbon development fell on deaf ears. At this time Salts (Ireland) Ltd, Williams, Egans, Bord na Móna, ESB and the Offaly County Council offered substantial employment. Population growth in the urban area over the period 1926-61 increased by 26.6%. However, in the next ten years, 1961-71, population growth at 19.7% was almost as great as it had been in the previous thirty-five years. In 1971 the population of Tullamore was 7,474 with 1,571 housing units (defined as a conventional dwelling house, a structurally separate flat or a temporary dwelling, regardless of the number of private households it contains). About 264 housing units or 16.8% of the total stock were completed between 1961 and 1971. It was during this ten-year period, notwithstanding new planning guidelines that ribbon development proceeded in earnest on almost all of the approach roads to the town with the standard bungalow the order of the day, e.g. Bachelors Walk, Church Road, Clara Road, Ardan Road, Daingean Road. It was only in the 1970s that cluster schemes of the kind built sixty years earlier by the town council, commenced in the private sector such as at Whitehall and later Knockowen Road, Moylena, Charleville View and Hophill Grove. The Charleville Road sites were owned by Charleville Estate Company and leasing policy here saw to it that substantial houses only were built over the period 1898 to the 1950s on the approach road to Charleville Demesne from the railway bridge at Cormac Street to the demesne gates. Looking back fifty years ago to 1961 of the

some 12,000 houses in Offaly only half were owner occupied. Almost two-thirds had no piped water and a little less than half had a toilet. The situation was no doubt better than the county average in Tullamore because of the work of the council over the first fifty years of that century.

Public sector housing after a lull of some ten years from the mid-1950s accelerated again after the mid-1960s with the completion of the houses as shown in table 8 below. The total number of houses erected by the Urban District Council up to 2009 stood at c. 1,500 to which can be added a further 250 provided by the voluntary sector with largely government funds.

At the same time as public sector housing was expanding so too was that in the private sector. The development of an urban council owned private site at Ardan Vale (1972-94, built on the parish farm land) of over 100 houses eased ribbon development as did the Charleville View, Whitehall, Knockowen, Moylena and Hophill developments. More recently the town has seen substantial growth closer to the centre in line with a demand for more urban living and a swing away from driving out to the country necessitating the two-car family and other associated costs. In addition with the advent of 'social housing' and the now twenty percent contribution from house builders to the provision of social and affordable housing units the council has built less by direct contract and instead acquired more housing units by purchase.

Table 8: Houses erected by Tullamore Town Council, 1902 – 2009

| Street | Year | No. of Houses |
|--|---------|---------------|
| Emmet Terrace | 1903 | 12 |
| Davitt Street | 1907-10 | 30 |
| Tyrrell's Road | 1912-55 | 16 |
| O'Brien Street | 1912 | 20 |
| Adams Villas (Board of Guardians) | 1912 | 20 |
| Colman's Terrace (Board of Guardians) | 1912 | 20 |
| Dillon Street | 1920s | 30 |
| Kilbride Street | 1929 | 9 |
| Parnell Street | 1929 | 18 |
| Healy Street | 1930s | 21 |
| Callary Street | 1935 | 56 |
| O'Molloy Street | 1938 | 146 |
| Park Avenue | 1938 | 22 |
| Clontarf Road | 1947-50 | 82 |
| Pearse Park | 1953 | 74 |
| Marian Place | 1955 | 106 |
| Kearney Park | 1965 | 20 |
| Connolly Park | 1966-68 | 36 |
| Thornsberry Estate | 1972-76 | 90 |
| Ardan View (inc. Nat. Building Agency) | 1975-84 | 282 |
| St. Columba's Place | 1985-92 | 88 |
| Kilbride Street | 1985 | 8 |
| Kilbride Park | 1992 | 6 |
| Cloncollog (New Houses) | 1994-95 | 66 |
| Kilcruttin Halt | 1995 | 16 |
| Chancery Close | 1998 | 32 |
| Chancery Lane | 2000 | 16 |
| Meadow Close, Kilcruttin | 2000 | 17 |
| Kilbrook, Clonminch | 2002 | 40 |
| Church View | 2007 | 49 |
| Puttaghan (New Houses) | 2008 | 47 |

Some of the dates and number of houses are approximate

| Voluntary Housing Associations | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|----|
| Tara Crescent, Clonminch (Respond) | 1994 | 54 |
| Eiscir Riada, Cloncollig (Respond) | 1996 | 38 |
| Cluain Darach, Daingean Road (Oaklee) | 2008 | 46 |
| Tihilly (Housing for the elderly) | 1993 | 16 |
| Lann Elo (community) | 1993 | 10 |
| Lann Elo (community) | 2009 | 15 |

Table 9: Private Estate Developments Since 1970

| Street | Year | No. of Houses |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Whitehall Estate | 1970 | 94 |
| Hophill | 1980- | 141 |
| Oakfield | 1990 | 52 |
| Glenfircal, New Road | 1987 | 16 |
| Rose Lawn, High Street | 1990 | 21 |
| The Elms, Spollanstown | 1992-94 | 33 |
| Carriglea | 1994 | 3 |
| Arbutus Court, Tanyard Lane | 1992 | 14 |
| Glenkeen, Spollanstown | 1996 | 20 |
| Clonminch Wood | 1996-2002 | 139 |
| Tarleton Mews | 1998 | 6 |
| Bridge Lane | 1990s' | 5 |
| Cahir Mhor | 1999 | 21 |
| The Willows | 1999 | 20 |
| Harbour Drive, Puttaghan | 1998 - | 28 |
| Harbour Walk, Puttaghan | 1998-2000 | 59 |
| Sheena, Charleville Road | 1998-2002 | 9 |
| Eiscir Estate, Ardan | 2001- | 240 |
| Ballin Ri, Collins Lane | 2003- | 154 |
| Spollanstown Wood | 2001-04 | 52 |
| Limefield | 2000-02 | 12 |
| Chancery Park Estate | 2003- | 250 |
| Collier's Brook | 2005 | 35 |
| Deerpark | 2005 | 5 |
| Moorhill | 2007 | 7 |
| Carraig Cluin | 2003- | 168 |
| Droim Liath | 2004- | 175 |
| Cill Ban | 2005 | 43 |
| Offally Street | 2005 | 5 |
| Norbury Estate, Ardan | 2003- | 80 |
| Grand Canal Court | 2004 | 48 |
| Lockclose, Srah | 2006 | 14 |
| Church Hill | 2002-08 | 200 |

Private Site Developments Since 1970

| Street | No. of Sites |
|------------------|--------------|
| Ardan Vale | 117 |
| Charleville View | 56 |
| Ardan Heights | 37 |
| Moylena | 50 |
| Knockowen | 54 |
| Glendaniel | 61 |
| Castle View | 5 |
| Ashley Court | 32 |
| Ard na Greine | 45 |
| Clonminch Avenue | 16 |
| Chancery Lane | 16 |

Some of the dates and number of houses are approximate



DE MONTFORT HALL APARTMENTS, 2008



MILL HOUSE APARTMENTS AT SALLY GROVE, 2001

Table 10: Private Sector Apartment Building from 1990 to 2007

| Street | Year | No. of Apartments |
|----------------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Kilbride Plaza, Kilbride Park | 1992 | 12 |
| Laurelle Plaza | 1992 | 4 |
| Park Court, Tara Street | 1994 | 24 |
| Haviland Court, Bride's Lane | 1994 | 14 |
| St. Kyran's Street | 1994 | 6 |
| Tarleton Hall, Tanyard Lane | 1995 | 14 |
| The Granary, Market Square | 1995 | 33 (and 6 houses) |
| Charleville Court, Market Square | 1995 | 6 |
| Library Hall | 1996 | 25 |
| Furlong Grove | 1996 | 16 |
| River Court | 1998 | 22 |
| Harbour View | 1999 | 14 |
| The Old Mill, Tara Street | 2000 | 6 |
| Altmore House | 2000-03 | 38 |
| Main Street | 1998-04 | 72 |
| De Monfort Hall | 2004 | 8 |
| Edgewater, Convent Road | 2005-07 | 8 |

Apartment development in Tullamore commenced only in 1992 and was as a result of designation of inner town lands for tax reliefs. The sites were expensive at c. £5,000 to £12,000 per unit with the finished apartments at £35,000 to £60,000. However, the tax relief could reduce the total costs by almost fifty percent for owner occupiers and those property owners able to enjoy 'section 23 relief'. Prices of apartments had increased to €240,000 for a two-bed apartment by 2007, but have now fallen back to €170,000 and below. Completions to 2007 when the market dried up are shown in Table 10.

The census of 1991 for Tullamore at 9,432 (including environs) showed a decrease when compared with the 1986 figure of 9,445. The number of households in 1991 was (including environs) 2,613 of which 33 were temporary homes and the balance permanent households. This represented an increase of over 1,000 residential units in the period 1971-91. The urban district council contribution to this was of the order of 400. The pace of house building greatly increased in the post-1995 period and accelerated until the crash of 2007-8 with in excess of five building firms all competing in a market fuelled by the low cost of funds. Some buyers were frightened by the high level of house inflation while others were eager to acquire a deflation proof investment! The headlong rush was encouraged by a lack of fiscal policy with the removal in 2002 of the 1998 Bacon report restrictions and the restoration of mortgage interest relief to investors combined with easy credit. All of that is now too well known. The price of a building site had increased from the perpetual £2 per year in 1800 to a range of €100,000 per undeveloped freehold site on a bulk purchase basis available to developers. In Tullamore, in common with other towns, building sites for a 'one-off house' were diffi-

cult to purchase in the period 1995 to 2007 because most building land was already owned by developers. When a town site became available prior to 2007 the price was as high as €250,000, but post 2009 may have fallen to €80,000. A three-bedroom dwelling in an estate is in 2010 priced at €170,000 to €200,000 with a four-bedroom bungalow in the region of €200,000 to €240,000.

Suffice it to say that the ‘market correction’ after 2007 has seen the restoration of values prior to 2000-03.¹² The number of housing units in Tullamore and environs is now in excess of 4,000 with the population about 14,000 (including environs) being the estimated figure for 2008. The urban area population area in 2006 was 10,900, but in the environs it was 2,027 with a further 2,700 in Tullamore rural, Cappincur and Screggan. The boundaries of the urban district, as noted, are in the region of 2,000 acres. If the functional area of the council were to be increased to reflect housing and industrial growth it would greatly facilitate having comprehensible data for future planning.

The housing crisis of the 1990s led to the adoption of social housing policies at national level. The impact of the implementation of these policies at local level has yet to make itself felt because the legal requirement on developers to make fifteen percent (now increased to twenty percent) of the sites (or cash value) available for social and affordable housing will take time to become fully operational and for consideration to be given as to how it works in practice. The first council houses in Tullamore were built in 1902 at Ardan Road in a then socially unattractive area opposite the old workhouse and in what might be described as a zone of need. Now under the new planning legislation ‘zones of superfluity’ will have social housing elements not unlike

the cabin suburbs or tenements which were hidden behind the finer houses fronting the main streets in the period from 1750s to the 1900s. In practice this is proving difficult to achieve.

There is also a curious irony in the fact that many of the new apartment blocks built in lanes off the main streets were cleared of slum tenements by the 1950s and then designated for tax-relieved developments from the mid-1980s until about 2007. The purpose of the designation schemes was to bring life back into the towns and cities and provide an incentive to build. Tullamore now has upwards of 300 such apartments almost all of which are in the town centre. However, except in Main Street, there is little living over the shop and almost none where this term is understood to include the shop owner.



BALLIN RI, COLLINS LANE, 2007



HOPHILL, CHURCH ROAD, 2007

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POPULATION GROWTH AFTER 1850

Adopting the 1903-4 town boundaries which are still in use, despite regular discussions about enlarging the urban area, it is clear that the population of Tullamore declined by 16.9 percent over the period 1861 to 1926. The decline of Edenderry was on a par with that of Tullamore while that of Birr and Banagher was more marked at almost fifty percent in each case. Only Clara showed a substantial increase in population of almost seventy percent reflecting, as it did, the importance of the Goodbody jute and milling business to that town. The period marked a definite shift from the countryside to the towns and with the larger towns tending to do better than the smaller ones. This is a process that has continued in a more marked fashion after the 1970s. It was during the post-1850 period that the present-day urban hierarchy in County Offaly took shape with the position of Tullamore greatly strengthened after 1970 just as at midlands level Athlone greatly outpaced the towns of Mullingar, Tullamore, Portlaoise and Longford. Its dominant position since the sixteenth century was greatly reinforced in the last thirty years.

At the end of the nineteenth century the distilling, brewing and malting businesses were the main sources of local employment both in Birr and Tullamore. The Daly distillery in Tullamore expanded in the 1870s and again in the mid-1890s following the de facto takeover by Daniel E. Williams and the growth in sales of Tullamore Dew. Using locally sourced raw materials the industry was doubly ben-

eficial to the farmer in the initial demand for barley and the availability of waste from the distilling process for animal feed. It was said that the pigs liked the waste so much that they would meet the farmer on the road home from the distillery! The associated malting product both for the home market and for Guinness led to the building of malt houses with the familiar louvre-style chimneys on the skyline in Birr, Tullamore and at Banagher. Egans, Williams and Tarleton were the main firms in this business with malt houses at the distillery at Bridge Street, Water Lane, Tanyard Lane and Market Square. The last of the Tullamore malt houses in Tullamore at the Egan Tarleton works in Market Square closed in the mid-1980s. Gradually the louvre-style chimneys disappeared from the skyline because of the difficulties of maintenance. Some warehouses were 'converted' to apartments and shops. Grain handling continued at Water Lane until the 1990s and the sale of the Williams business to Greencore. The Williams and Egan firms combined brewing, distilling and malting interests with the development of rural shops with a public house. In these shops everything was provided for the farmer, including credit, until the harvest came in. These firms served as bankers to the small farmers until the 1960s when the Irish banks began to make credit available to the small farmer and consumer patterns changed with the growth of transport and the development of supermarkets. It was a challenging period for the old-style family firm shop and marked the beginning of a process that was to accelerate in the 1980s. The Williams firm adapted in the 1960s with its successful Five Star chain, but sold out in 1979 to Quinnsnorth. The latter was later acquired by Tesco.

The third large firm in Tullamore was that of the Goodbody family with interests in flour milling,

farm machinery and tobacco products. The farm machinery business was carried on in O'Connor Square and a new warehouse built about 1870 (the brick façade building is now part of the Bank of Ireland branch). The improvement in agriculture in the 1870s led to a growing interest in farm mechanisation which the T. P. & R. Goodbody firm was to promote through local farm machinery exhibitions from the late 1860s. The better known business of the firm was the production of cigarettes, plug tobacco and snuff at the tobacco factory off Bridge Street. This was carried on successfully until 1886 when a disastrous fire destroyed the plant and some 200 jobs. The entire business including the staff moved to Dublin and by 1891 Tullamore had reached a post-Famine nadir when the population dipped below 5,000 for the first time since 1851. The fall was noted in Tullamore because now the pubs in a town with a population of less than 5,000 had to close a little earlier. The 1890s to the end of the First World War were good for Tullamore with expansion in the Egans, Williams and Tarleton firms and new shops after 1900 reflecting the increased prosperity. At a meeting held in Tullamore in 1915 to protest against the new beer and spirit duties, Captain Bernard Daly, a director of the distillery, stated that there were 334 men and 62 women directly and indirectly employed in the brewing and distilling business in the town. This probably included malting where upwards of 100 men were employed in four firms.

Stone quarrying was another important business from the 1870s and continued as such until after 1900 when concrete products began to be used along with brick – and not all of which was sourced locally. Mr John Molloy of the Ballyduff quarry (much filled in when the Burlington factory was built) was

a leading man in the business and was the builder of the Bank of Ireland offices in High Street (now Hoey & Denning) in 1870. The experience gained in the traditional stone quarries was used in the setting up of the gravel extraction industry prominently represented in the latter half of the twentieth century by Michael Galvin & Son Ltd (later Readymix) and Condron Concrete. Local stone was used in major new stores of the 1900s such as the Bridge House and Scally's shop. No doubt it was used seventy years earlier in the construction of the gaol and the courthouse and was to be used again in the rebuilding of the courthouse in 1925-7. It was also used in some of the 1930s O'Molloy Street houses. The tradition of using stone was carried on in the new Tullamore hospital (1937-42). Brick was sourced locally for many of the new council housing schemes and was made at Ferbane and Pollagh and transported on the canal network.

The Williams and Egan firms retained a dominant role in local trade up to the 1960s. While there was much talk of Tullamore getting a sugar beet factory in the 1930s it was textiles which was to play an all important role in the economic progress of the town from the late 1930s to the 1960s and 1970s. The opening of the Salts spinning mill in 1937-8 was a key turning point while the war years were again good for barley and whiskey production. The business had been established by Salts of Bradford with the support of Sean Lemass and a Fianna Fáil government committed to protectionism. Salts told Lemass they did not mind whether it was Templemore or Tullamore as long as the town selected was the same distance from Dublin. But for pressure from local Fianna Fáil TDs and one midland businessman (probably Edmund Williams or cc vc) the factory would have been located elsewhere. That is not

the whole story however as serious consideration was given to the claim by workers' groups that it was the Laois-Offaly Labour T.D., William Davin, who secured the factory for Tullamore. Curiously the new business which had English employers and senior management was based in the old Tullamore gaol, destroyed by Republican forces in 1922 when departing from a pro-Treaty town. The symbolism of having Sinn Féin policies on industry pursued in a former British gaol cannot have been lost on Lemass. There was intense excitement in Tullamore all through the autumn of 1937 and spring 1938 at the prospect of the new industry. When eighteen people were selected for training in Bradford they were seen off at the railway station in April 1938 by over 1,000 people. The spinning mill was good for female employment. Up to then unemployed females had little in the way of job opportunities except in domestic service. In the 1880s out of 149 employed in the tobacco factory only nine were women. The 1926 census indicated that of the female population gainfully employed (and this would be no more than forty to fifty percent) about thirty percent of that number were domestic servants.

Outside of the gravel and extractive industries men were employed in the Midland Butter and Bacon factory, Tullamore which was established in 1928 as a creamery at Church Road in the vicinity of the town laundry (1908) and was intended to absorb local milk supplies in butter making. Supplies of milk to the new creamery were insufficient and eggs and poultry became more important. The bacon factory was added in 1945 and proved the more enduring for almost forty years. Probably copying the success of the Roscrea bacon factory co-operative it provided much employment down to the 1970s. In the mid-1940s the Tullamore co-operative employed



DANIEL E. WILLIAMS, D.1921

THE FIVE GOODBODY BROTHERS, c.1880.
THOMAS PIM SEATED AND ROBERT JAMES FAR RIGHT

180 workers with some 80 extra in the Christmas turkey season and 20 extra in the main egg season.¹³ Like the distilling business the raw material was locally sourced and provided an income for the small farmer and, indeed the urban dweller, willing to collect the ‘fall’ from his neighbour’s table to feed the pigs. The tradition of sausage making, puddings and rashers is still carried on, but now at Spollanstown in one of the units of the 1970s IDA industrial estate. This unit is only a short distance from a mineral water bottling plant, the successor to a long tradition of mineral water manufacture in Tullamore going back to the 1890s with the Egans, Williams and other smaller firms. Another firm close to the bacon factory but with a short life was the Tullamore glass factory established in the 1940s by Edmund Williams (son of Daniel E., died 1949). A brave entrepreneurial effort it was unsuccessful and as one local wag put it ‘they made it upstairs and broke it downstairs’. Later the premises was used as a wholesale business for the Williams firm and continued as such until recent years. Like the old laundry it now lies empty awaiting developments hit by the crisis of 2007 – the year in which Mangan’s Wholesale, its then owner, removed to a fine new building in Burlington Business Park.

After 1970 industrial development took place on the western side of the town at Srah, also at Spollanstown (Egan’s field) and Cloncollog with diversification at the former Tullamore Yarns Ltd factory which closed in 1982. The Industrial Development Authority own the estate at Srah and here was located IDA backed foreign industries such as Burlington (later Atlantic Mills and Flextronics, closed in 2002), Covidien (1982, formerly Sherwood Medical/Tyco), Boston Scientific (closed 2009), Zanini and Snickers (now closed) between

them providing about 800 jobs, and most of these were for women. The extractive industries including Condron Concrete, Readymix and Molloy Concrete employed upwards of 200 persons in the 1990s while in the service sector, the HSE and Offaly County Council employ about 1,200. The Midland General Hospital, Tullamore is now the largest employer in Tullamore with some 1,000 employed between the hospital and HSE generally.

The mid-1994 unemployment figure for the Tullamore district was 2,100, comprising some 1,500 males and 600 females. By 2010 the figure (inclusive of Clara) was almost 4,000 with another 4,600 signing on in Edenderry and Birr. The unemployment figure reflects Tullamore’s position as having about fifty percent of the business of the county and an equal share of the fall-out from the decline since 2007.

Shops and services are a significant source of employment for the town. Although Tullamore would have no more than twenty percent of the county’s population, it has fifty percent of the business and draws from a hinterland of at least 30,000. The population has more than doubled since 1961, after a period of modest growth of the order of twenty percent over the period from 1891 to 1961. Not surprisingly the periods of growth followed economic prosperity. The benefits of the Salts factory were obvious over the years from 1936 to 1951. Again in the 1960s the population increased by almost twenty percent – a pattern of growth not seen until the years after 2000 and up to 2006. The huge increase in the environs of Tullamore can be attributed to the building of big estates and one-off houses outside of the urban area together with some movement from Dublin. The population is expected to grow to 24,500 by 2022 under the new

2010-16 Tullamore and Environs Town Plan from an estimated 14,000 in 2008. One expects that this estimate will be scaled back in the light of the current recession and the prognosis for growth to 2015 and 2020.



CHRISTOPHER MAYE OF BRIDGE HOUSE, c.1985

Table 11: The population of Tullamore, 1961-2006*

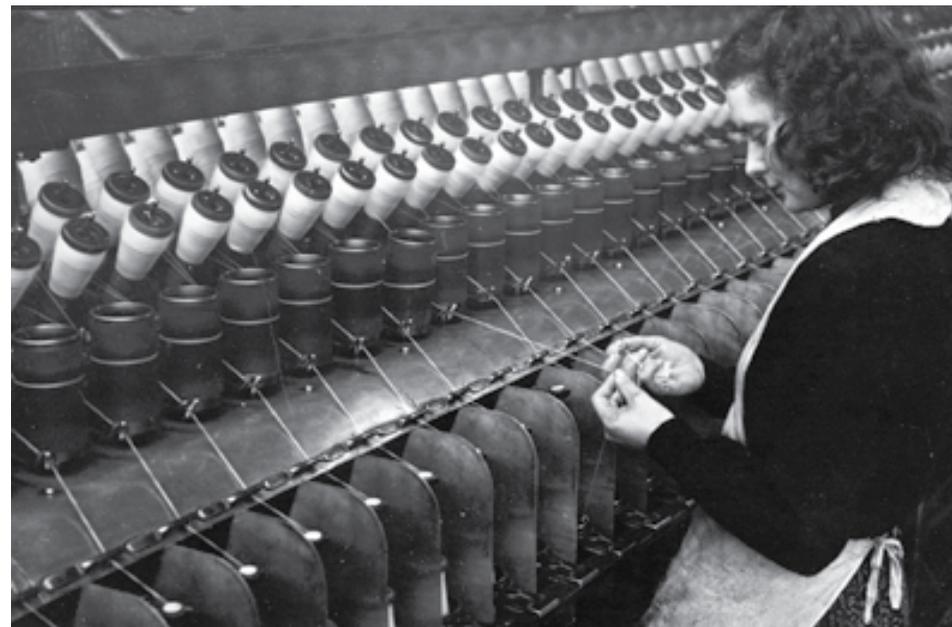
| | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1986 | 1991 | 1996 | 2002 | 2006 |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| Tullamore | 6,243 | 7,474 | 8,845 | 9,405 | 9,430 | 10,039 | 11,098 | 12,927 |
| % change | --- | 19.71 | 18.3 | 6.3 | 0.26 | 6.7 | 10.55 | 16.48 |

Includes the environs outside the urban area. The big change was in 2006 with the population of the environs at 2,027 or 144.8% up over the period from 2002 to 2006. Between 1991 and 2002 the population of the environs was just above 800.

Table 12: The population of the principal Offaly towns, 1936-56

| | 1936 | 1946 | 1951 | 1956 | 1956 (inc environs) |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------------------|
| Tullamore | 5,135 | 5,897 | 6,165 | 6,147 | Not stated |
| Birr | 3,297 | 3,224 | 3,285 | 3,257 | 3,922 |
| Edenderry | 2,093 | 2,996 | 2,596 | 2,627 | 2,729 |

A figure for Tullamore environs in 1956 is not provided



WORKING AT A TWISTING FRAME IN SALTS, TULLAMORE IN THE LATE 1940s



GORRY'S NEWSAGENTS, HARBOUR STREET, c.1980

SHOPPING IN TULLAMORE SINCE THE 1900S

Some idea of the range of shops in Tullamore is available since the 1820s. At that time the number of traders, merchants and other functionaries was ninety eight compared with 130 in Birr. At the opening of the twentieth century the great stores were those owned by Egan, Williams, Goodbody, Scally, Lumley and Kilroy. Lesser names will be found in the trade directories of the period and the Christmas puffs of the local newspapers. Freeman in his 1948 survey was perhaps the first to document the importance of shopping to local employment with some 500 employed in a range of shops from the very fine large draperies such as Scallys, to food and hardware stores such as Egans and Williams and downwards to the one-roomed huckster shops. The town's one dry cleaners and one fish shop get a mention. Freeman wrote:

Apart from these major sources of employment, the activities of Tullamore centre round the shops, though mention should be made of a small dry cleaning works, a modern bakery, and a third maltsters in addition to Williams and Egans: oddly enough, the town has no laundry [it closed in 1938]. The shops number more than 120, and range in type from the small huckster's one-roomed store to the large drapers or grocers with a considerable staff and elaborate window-dressing. There are eleven butchers, with two in the pork trade, over twenty grocers, about half of them with a licence [the bar and grocery], and about twenty drapers, outfitters and shoe shops: these

trades interpenetrate to some extent, as most of the drapers and outfitters also sell shoes, and one shoe shop has a bar attached. There are six chemists, nine ironmongers (of whom some also deal in furniture), two saddlers, four newsagents, three hairdressers, five garages, five baker's shops, and one pawn shop. The licensed premises number less than thirty, not a large total for an Irish town, but ten of them are definitely bars rather than a side line of some other business. Two shops are of special interest as they occur so rarely in country towns, one selling fruit and fish and another fruit only and occasionally flowers, for which there is very little sale.¹⁴

The pattern began to change in the early 1960s with the conversion of the Lumley shop to the first self-service in the town followed by the opening of a supermarket in Patrick Street (1964), later to be acquired by Dunnes Stores (1970). Egan's grocery and hardware closed in 1968 and in 1970 opened as the Bridge House bar and restaurant starting a tradition that was forty years in progress in 2010. Up to about 1970 most people went home to lunch everyday, but the Bridge House, followed later by many others, changed all that. The early 1980s saw the first supermarket outside the town centre at Church Road which surprisingly was not so successful until Dunnes moved from the busy Patrick Street location in 1990. This street that had been the most sought after shopping stand in the 1970s and 1980s was now much quieter. The Williams' shop, in Patrick Street since 1884, was the subject of make-overs in about 1900 and again in 1942. The latter in a startlingly modern design of Michael Scott, not only as to the exterior but also the interior. Later sold to Quinnsnorth the shop was



HANLON'S BUTCHERS, c.2004



RATTIGAN'S EARLY 1900s, NOW S. WRAFTER AND OTHERS

relocated in 1982 to a large site carved out of the gardens of the Patrick Street houses. Tesco later acquired the business and moved the store to the new Tullamore Retail Park at Cloncollog in 2004. This was the new trend and was somewhat late in Tullamore with An Bord Pleanála granting permission on appeal, and against the recommendation of its inspector, because of the town's participation in the new spatial strategy combined with Athlone and Mullingar. Some 200,000 sq ft of retail space and 800 car spaces were provided at the retail park at Cloncollog, some 2.5 times that at the Bridge Centre, or perhaps the same as Church Road, the Bridge Centre and the old Texas shop combined. In the meantime Dunnes had come back into the town centre with a second store in the new Bridge Centre opened in 1995. Tax relief designation for an area from Patrick Street to the old B. Daly and Co. distillery (part of the Williams Group) property at the rear of Patrick Street and High Street led to the commencement in 1992 of an 80,000 square feet shopping-centre for Christopher Maye of Ravine Limited and Bridge House. This development of a large store of c. 30,000 square feet, six cinemas and twenty shops, made a huge difference to the volume of trade in Tullamore with adverse implications for the Church Road shopping-centre for a time. In September 1995 the Tullamore draper, Tom McNamara, opened a new large store in the former Williams oats store built about 1930. The renovated building had the first escalator in the midlands and traded successfully in what was the old Williams yard sharing parking with Tesco until 2004. In 2007 some months before property prices peaked the entire area was sold to a Meath developer for about €42 million making it one of the most expensive sites in Tullamore. By 2009 An Bord Pleanála, with a new found emphasis on in-

ner town shopping, granted planning permission for a massive shopping development, once again against the recommendations of its own inspector who described the proposal as more suitable for an out-of-town retail park rather than the historic centre of a late-eighteenth century town. Planning was given in 2009 for another shopping-centre and apartments at Church Road on the former Coen's lands beside Dunnes and on a site acquired for about €20 million. As of 2010 because of the economic crisis neither development looks like starting. In the meantime more competition entered the shopping scene with Aldi at Church Road in 1999 and a new and enlarged store in November 2009, and Lidl at Main Street since 2002 and talks of a new or second store at Cloncollog.

Main Street was the first entirely new street in Tullamore town since the 1840s and was built by Thomas McNamara in partnership with the developer, Paddy Sweeney. The street was opened over the period 2002-4 and was built on the site of what was left of the old distillery lands not acquired by Christopher Maye for the Bridge Centre over the period of 1977 to 1995. The street consists of some 30 shops and 72 apartments together with Lidl as an anchor store, a filling station and hotel. The street name bears no relation to the old functional Water Lane and is the first example of a new marketing street name in Tullamore. The council seemed powerless to prevent the adoption of a somewhat enthusiastic and exaggerated name perhaps because the area was now private land. Although at one time Water Lane extended to the bridge by the river, near what is now the filling station in Main Street. One town wag suggested the new street be called Lidl Lane, but that was not taken up! The new street provided an access for

traffic to the 1980s western by-pass from the town centre. The through traffic requirement may have been fatal to the street and the town in that if a very large store had been built on the site the shops in the town centre, now under pressure from the retail park and parking charges, might have derived more benefit. As a bustling shopping area the new Main Street has taken longer to develop because it is not fully integrated with the town being cut off from the adjoining Bridge Centre. The much vaunted Millennium Square used in the promotional publicity for the development in the late 1990s was too small to be other than a proposed access route to the Bridge Centre by means of a pedestrian bridge over the river. Like the developments at Church Road, Gleeson's shopping mall, Bridge Centre and the Tullamore Retail Park it has added considerably to the shopping space in Tullamore such that now in recessionary times there is a view that the town has sufficient shops to cater for the population and the spending power available. Not surprisingly the large gap left by the closure of the Texas store and Tesco in the town centre needs an imaginative design and uses to bring the shoppers back to the town centre. The new Dublin and Galway roads together with additional train connections have added greatly to the sense of connection to these cities unlike in Freeman's time sixty years ago when largely isolated from Dublin and some twenty miles from Athlone, Tullamore was perceived by the natives as 'the most thriving [town] in the midlands'.

Interestingly Freeman had put the number of shops at over 120 in 1948 and this figure was somewhat similar at the time of the Census of Distribution in 1971. At that time Tullamore was placed behind Athlone and Mullingar in regard to the number of units and turnover.

Table 13: Census of Distribution 1971: establishments and turnover

| Town | All retail establishments | Annual turnover £000 |
|------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Athlone | 212 | 5,431 |
| Mullingar | 160 | 4,019 |
| Tullamore | 118 | 3,686 |
| Portlaoise | 107 | 3,109 |
| Birr | 111 | 1,790 |
| Edenderry | 57 | 993 |
| Clara | 21 | 222 |

The 1971 Census of Distribution also provides a breakdown into categories with estimates of turnover.

Table 14: Tullamore urban district and suburbs: description of business in six categories with estimates of turnover in 1971

| Category | Number of shops | Turnover £000 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Food shops | 25 | 693 |
| Grocery with Pub. H. | 6 | 159 |
| Pub. H./Wines and Spirits | 20 | 489 |
| Tobacco, Sweets, Newspapers | 15 | 104 |
| Clothing and Footwear | 18 | 767 |
| All other non-food | 34 | 1,474 |
| Total: | 118 | 3,686 |

These categories have now little relevance with all the major shops such as Dunnes (two stores), Tesco, Aldi and Lidl all providing virtually everything that was once provided by grocers, wine merchants, hardware stores, drapers and news agents. The same can be said for counting the number of units in the town today as shopping now is judged by square footage and the number of international operators with a retail presence. A Tullamore person revisiting the town after an absence of forty years would miss many of the old family-owned businesses which had been there in some cases, such as Kilroy's furniture and carpets, for almost 100 years. The same could be said of Williams, Egan, the Morris drapery and the North Offaly Co-op to name but a few. Butchers have survived keeping company now with boutiques, hair dressing salons, 'phone shops, auctioneers, building societies and so far banks, numerous bookies and even until May 2010 'head' shops. A few enterprising local retailers have bucked the trend such as the extensive Galvin's Menswear, first established some sixty years ago in the same decade as its neighbour in Columcille Street, Cloonan's hardware. The old professional businesses of pharmacists, lawyers, medical clinics and the newer business of accountants have all blossomed over the past 100 years and have maintained a strong presence in the town centre with the exception of perhaps only two practices. The number of betting shops would be a surprise and a big change from the 1930s when there were but one or two.

The view is taken locally that short-stay parking in the town streets and Bridge Centre is too expensive. It does seem to be contributing to the demise of the independent retailer with the council needing the money to pay for the new swimming pool. Such are the issues for the political economy of local govern-

ment. Many blame the cost of parking in the town centre, mainly levied by the town council since July 2007, for the flight to the retail parks, but it can be seen that there are strong structural forces at work and that the price-conscious car owner has also a preference for the range and choice of goods available in large stores. Perhaps better to have a town that one can live in and enjoy instead of hundreds of years of character flattened in the interest of making bulk goods deliverable in town centres to the large international stores so devoid of any local flavour. The problem is the speed of the change since 2000 and the fact that towns grow organically and not overnight as is clearly demonstrated with Main Street. Some of the many empty shop units in the town centre may in time revert back to residential use. Unless there is a sufficient mass as perhaps in Athlone it appears that only a certain number of boutique shops in the old town centres can survive. Such shops are in any case hard pressed in recessionary times. The problem for the town centre is to find more specialised uses and services to fill the void because of the loss of so many grocers, drapers and stationers. Rents of course have fallen since 2007 and the upwards only rent is a thing of the past. The Victorian idea of endless progress is now badly tarnished.



COLUMCILLE STREET, TULLAMORE, 1957

CULTURAL MATTERS AND THE CHURCHES

Culture here is largely confined to religion, education, sport and voluntary associations or clubs. In religion it is clear that by the end of the Meath episcopacy of Rahan-born Bishop Cantwell in the 1860s the Catholic church had moved centre stage in local society. Whereas by the 1830s the parish priest of Tullamore was on the hustings and able to propose at least one member of parliament for adoption by the King's County constituents now his influence and that of the Catholic church was to be found in the schools, hospitals, the workhouse and virtually all public bodies where they choose to serve. The Catholic church building in Tullamore was completed about 1802 and was much improved by the 1860s. The large canal hotel built about 1800 at a cost of some £4,000 was acquired as a parochial house in the 1850s. By the end of the century the old church was on the way to replacement by the most ambitious public building ever conceived in Tullamore and with a magnificent spire to the design of William Hague. The 1900s was a good decade for building and a good time to be collecting money as the most successful businessmen were now Catholics who, with the land question behind them, were pressing for self-government and wanting to see their own church rise literally from the hidden-away back streets of the late eighteenth-century town. The new church was completed over a period of eight years in 1906 and was to last until the fire of 1983 destroyed all but the tower and spire. The fine Durrow church had been completed back in 1831 and late enough to be much superior to that in Tullamore in the nineteenth century. The big setback in the 1980s was the loss of the original Catholic church in a fire. The

new building while impressive in the modern style has none of the rich ornament of the old building. A distinct addition is the organ installed in the 1990s and a gift from Copenhagen. Mass attendances are still strong in Tullamore despite the Catholic church related scandals nationally since the early 1990s.

Dying and the ceremonies that go with it are still important in Tullamore. Funerals are well attended, but the memorials are not as elaborate as in the period 1800 to 1940. As with church and school so with burial and in 1893 the new cemetery (still in use) at Clonminch was acquired by the Tullamore poor law guardians. In an interesting example of Catholic church influence at the time it was soon after transferred to the Catholic parish. This was unlike Birr where the 1869 Clonoghill cemetery on lands donated by the fourth earl of Rosse has remained civic property. The burial place for members of the Church of Ireland and other 'non-Catholic' denominations was further out Clonminch at the junction of the old road to Killeigh. The land had been acquired in the early 1850s so that the indignities associated with all the burials of the Famine years in Kilcruttin could be forgotten in the new sylvan setting in Clonminch, itself well away from residential areas. From the late 1860s and for sixty years more the Protestant parishioners would be under the care of the Craigs, father and son, who in terms of their participation in public affairs did much to promote the best interests of Tullamore and hold back the decline of the Protestant community, especially after the 1880s. The Craigs were in a long line of distinguished rectors from Ponsonby Gouldsbury who helped select the site for St Catherine's on the gravel hill near the town in 1808, to Revd John Lever, brother of the well-known novelist, Charles Lever. It was in the Tullamore rectory that the as-

tronomer, Charles Jasper Joly was born in 1864. Of less passing interest may be the fact that the Craig boys played early golf in the precincts of the rectory back in the early 1890s before the first Tullamore club was formed in 1895. The rectory, erected in 1814, was sold in the 1980s and a new smaller house built for the rector nearby. The lands together with other parts adjoining received planning permission for some 300 houses and apartments of which by 2010 some 200 had been built by developer Gerry Gannon and known as Church Hill. The Church of



TULLAMORE CHURCH, c.1910

Ireland population in the county was almost 10,000 in 1861 but had fallen by almost half by 1911.

Both the Presbyterians and the Methodists thrived in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Presbyterian community in the county was over 300 in the 1860s and mainly centered at Birr where a new church was built at John's Mall in 1885. Some twenty years earlier the small community in Tullamore completed the handsome if architecturally severe church in High Street. The total number of Presbyterians would remain much the same over the fifty-year period to 1911. Methodists were very active in Tullamore and for a while there were two churches in the town that in Church Street and another in Tara Street. A new building was completed on the present site in Church Street in 1889 with the assistance of some of the leading merchants of the town such as Lumley, Burgess and Graham. Both religious communities are still very active. However, while Methodism was strong in Offaly and Laois in 1861 with more than 400 Methodists in each county it would fall to 270 Methodists in Offaly in 1911 and some 370 in Laois. In recent years with the growth in migration from other countries a number of new and smaller churches have opened in Tullamore mostly in rented buildings. These new developments are worthy of a separate study.



CANAL AND CONVENT WITH THE GIRLS' NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL, c.1912 - A MATCH FOR THE BOYS' CLASSICAL SCHOOL NEAR BURY BRIDGE

SCHOOLS

Can there be culture without advances in education? The answer is, of course, yes but major advances require knowledge, skills, creativity and appreciation. The permanent provision of schools in Tullamore began about 1811 with the opening of the Charleville School in Church Street, a building that was still in use until April 2006. Before that schools were conducted in private houses and that would continue for the few second level students until the 1860s. The Protestant curate of the 1750s, Mr Dixon, who built a house in O'Connor Square, operated a free school for the parish in the 1750s and 1760s. A Mr Fitzgerald operated a boys' boarding school in the building where Angelo's Take-Away is now located in the 1800s. Soon after, schools were provided by the Presentation Sisters in Rahan (1817) and the Je-

suits at Tullabeg (1818) – the latter a boys' boarding school until 1886. Dr Michael Moorhead, already mentioned, sent six of his seven sons here including George, who in his later career was very much 'a man for others' in his promotion of better housing and sanitation for the poor. The big breakthrough was the building of new schools at Bury Quay or Convent Road by the Mercy Sisters in the 1830s. Such was the progress of the Catholic schools that Bishop Cantwell, when in Tullamore to confirm no less than 982 children (he confirmed every three years only and this figure may have included adults), commented on the fact that there were 700 children in the local Catholic schools.¹⁵ Further advances saw the Christian Brothers open a new building beside the old canal hotel (both now demolished) in 1875.

Again the first decade of the twentieth century like the years from 1997 to 2007 saw significant gains with a new emphasis on technical education and on second level education for boys and girls. Three second level schools were opened by 1912 with two of these at Convent Road, one of which was the Classical School now converted to apartments and the girls' school demolished in the 1960s to provide a site for St Philomena's new primary school. In the 1930s permanent provision was made for technical education, after years of rented accommodation and a spell in the courthouse, with a new school at O'Connor Square on the site of a fine mid-eighteenth house which was demolished. In the same decade a girls' primary school was built at the bottom of Harbour Street. Surprisingly the bleak 1950s saw the construction of the new second level school for girls, the Sacred Heart, and two new primary schools at Kilcruttin on the new road up to the Salts factory across from the railway station. Notwithstanding these improvements emigration was high, but at least people could travel to England or America with better career prospects. Late in the 1950s the Christian Brothers decided to build a new school on the garden of the large house at High Street they purchased from the Williams family in 1951. This was a fee-paying day school until the mid-1960s and with little or no state support a 'Bantile' type school was erected. Work started in 2010 on the new Colaiste Choilm (St Columba's School) after fifty years in prefabricated-style buildings. The old vocational school pupils moved to a new building at O'Carroll Street in the mid-1970s and at the end of that decade new primary schools were built at Ardan View. The big change is the growth in numbers with some 2,500 now in primary schools in Tullamore and a similar number at second level. The first decade of this century has seen the almost complete

withdrawal of teaching religious in the schools and the provision of new forms of state schools in Tullamore – a gaelscoil under Catholic patronage and an eight-classroom 'Educate Together', the latter a non denominational school. The gaelscoil began in a rented house in 1993 and moved to a new school at Cloncollog in 2004. Appropriately after 200 years, and having been the first permanent school in 1811, the Charleville School (Church of Ireland) moved to a new building near to St Catherine's at Church Avenue in 2006.

SPORTS FACILITIES

The development of permanent facilities began only in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The improvement in transport with the rail connections to Birr, Banagher, Tullamore and all the main towns in the midlands helped assist the competitive element in games such as tennis in the late 1870s and golf in the 1890s. The Birr Golf Club was formed in 1893 and that at Tullamore in 1895 and, while largely for the middle and upper class groups, golf did break down religious barriers. Many older readers will agree with the late Terence de Vere White when he commented that: 'Everything in Ireland was either Catholic or Protestant – newspapers, colleges, hospitals, banks, shops, professional advisers. The distinction was not applied to horses but to almost everything else.'¹⁶ Tullamore golfers claimed about 1910 to be the most popular participant sport in Tullamore with some 100 members. The new links and club house at Brookfield from 1926 boosted membership and by the end of the twentieth century it was almost 1,000. The private clubs at Esker Hills, Ballykilmurry and at Castle Barna, Daingean also did well.



O'CONNOR PARK, 2007

The rail network helped to promote racing at Ballykilmurry in the 1850s and again in the 1880s. Tennis remained very much a Church of Ireland game until the twentieth century. The club at Ardan was established in 1937 and was an off-shoot of the Catholic Young Men's Society (C.Y.M.S.) in St Mary's Hall. It was the enterprising Fr Cooney who ensured the completion of the facility together with a new handball alley at Daingean Road and significant improvements to St Mary's Hall.

The growth of athletics and cricket was helped by the purchase by a self-help group of the field at Spollanstown in the mid-1880s. But the Land War and the growing politicisation of sport meant that this field was soon associated with the Church of Ireland community and cricket. When the British garrison left Tullamore in March 1922 one of the first parades organised by local IRA men was to the Spollanstown sports field to seize it for Gaelic sports. A settlement was reached with the athletic grounds becoming an agricultural showground for some years and later grounds for the soccer and rugby clubs. The Tullamore Rugby Club was established in 1937 at a time when men's hockey was occasionally played in Tullamore. The game was well supported by a growing

middle class and in a town where the population was growing with newcomers to the club every year. Cycling too was popular but unlike tennis and golf did not survive the initial enthusiasm of the 1870s to the 1900s. In the war years and more recently it has secured many devotees without having any clubhouse or permanent stand.

Surprisingly Gaelic games under the auspices of the Gaelic Athletic Association got off to a weak start in Tullamore in about 1888, possibly because of opposition from the Catholic church for its association with the secret society, the IRB, and later, after 1890, with Parnellite elements. However, this was resolved by 1893 and by the 1900s the national and local competitions were firmly established and had the widest following across the county. Again the provision of permanent facilities was slow and it was not until 1934 that the Tullamore club opened its grounds with the then president of the executive council, Eamon de Valera performing the opening ceremony. The availability of support funding from the National Lottery and private support has led to O'Connor Park being massively upgraded to modern standards at an overall cost of €10.5m over the years from 2007-10. Offaly won the All Ireland Junior Camogie Championships in 2009 and the story of women's participation in that game has lately been recalled by the Offaly-born sports historian, Paul Rouse. Hockey for women is again popular in Tullamore while tag rugby is the new popular mixed game. If athletics received a setback at Spollanstown in the 1880s the tradition was there and the pursuit was reactivated by the Tullamore Harriers Club from the 1950s. The Harriers Club is one of the most successful clubs in the country. If in the early days men dominated now some of its leading runners are women.¹⁷ Singular effort saw

the purchase of grounds at Charleville Road about 1970 and the building of club facilities, which as part of the fundraising effort, has introduced almost all of the teenage children in Tullamore and its vicinity to Saturday dancing, first to the Celtic rock of the 1970s and thereafter the discotheque. The club was able to provide a tartan track back in 1979 – the first for a private club facility in Ireland. Outside of football, perhaps the greatest boon to Tullamore and to children was the provision of an outdoor swimming pool in 1938. Mixed bathing was not permitted for at least another ten years, but at least it was a facility that girls of all classes could enjoy. A new indoor pool was built by the town council and opened in October 2008 after some twenty to thirty years of campaigns and voluntary fundraising. The ongoing demand had been somewhat choked off at least for the middle classes with the provision of swimming and gym facilities in the two hotels in 1997 and 1999.

In the same year as the opening of the new indoor pool the soccer club moved to new grounds at Ballyduff after some thirty years at Puttaghan and almost forty years from their departure from Spollanstown. The club was a beneficiary of the Celtic Tiger agreeing an exchange of their grounds at Puttaghan, required as part of a site for a new private hospital complex, for first-rate sports facilities on a ten-acre site at Ballyduff to the back of the new Axis Business Park. Sports facilities did well during the Tiger years and the quality of what is available in 2010 is a major advance on 1980 and indeed 1995. Many are the sins of the Tiger years but good things happened also.

VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

If sport has become the new form of voluntary association it has not led to the complete collapse of cultural and social groups established as private voluntary associations. The oldest such group in Tullamore is, no doubt, the charitable Freemasons Lodge established in the town under the 'warrant' of the national or Grand Lodge in 1759. By the 1790s Catholic and Protestant social groups for religious teaching were established and conducted thereafter under the aegis of the growing number of clergymen and religious orders. Groups of community-minded people assisted in the Famine years and were probably less formally associated with the political movements and elections from the 1830s. Again in the 1820s to the 1840s the local loan fund bank was run largely by volunteers (just as with the Tullamore Credit Union from 1963) and assisted, as noted earlier, with public improvements by way of paving and sewerage in the 1840s. The better off merchants of the town met in July 1860 to agree, not without opposition, the adoption of gas lighting for Tullamore and the setting up of a local government board, the Tullamore Town Commissioners. This grouping had an earlier appearance in the eighteenth century as a manor court made up of local leaseholders and organised under the control of the landlord for local cleaning and regulation, including debt collection. After the 1880s groups emerged that have a continuing presence such as the Tullamore GAA club in the 1880s, the golf club in 1895, the Foresters in 1899. Others such as cricket, racing at Ballykilmurry, horticultural and agricultural shows, then as now, depended on the enthusiasm of local participants. As with sport it is an area that needs

to be documented. Also deserving of study are the many charities such as the St Vincent de Paul Society, The Tontine, Confraternities and Sodalities. All meant so much to people up to the 1960s when 'the television came into the house'. After 1904 the motor car played its part in facilitating the development of sport at regional and local level. Drama and musical societies were active in a more permanent way from the 1950s and were now independent of church organisation. One such drama group was The Runners, founded in 1949, and to which the then town clerk, Peter Farrelly, made a significant contribution. He was followed in the leadership role by Noel McMahon. The group won the All Ireland Drama Festival award for two years in succession in 1956-7. Another group was the Tullamore Musical Society founded in 1954. Both organisations could acknowledge the inspiration of the music and drama group known as 'The Local Lights' which operated for about ten years from 1942 to 1952. Drama groups have again been active since the 1970s. In the same decade other new groups such as the Lions, Junior Chamber, Round Table and Rotary would look to national and international bodies for organisational help and inspiration. While 'bowling alone' may be an apprehension or concern there may be little evidence of this when an audit is done of voluntary activities in Tullamore. What is different since the 1970s is the comparative isolation of people through virtual contacts only via the internet. The car, television, personal training, the growth in housing and smaller family units have all contributed to a decline in reliance on parish or purely town activities. This is always evident in the organisation of a funeral in the country as opposed to a town such as Tullamore where the ties of community and family kinship are not as strong.

One area that has made a huge difference is in the organisation of occasional festivals such as the Tul-

lamore Agricultural Show which was revived in 1991. It now attracts up to 60,000 visitors for the annual event – a long way from the gentlemen farmers meeting first held in the town in 1843. The Phoenix Festival is of recent vintage and is based around celebrating, with visiting balloonists, the great fire of 1785 and the re-birth of the town thereafter.

ENTERTAINMENT

The arts for the greatest number of people, rather than a minority, possibly only got going in Tullamore with the opening of cinema after 1900 and on a permanent basis with the new cinema house of the Foresters Club at Market Square in 1924. This soon went into private management and in 1946 the same operators, Mahon and Cloonan, opened the Ritz cinema in High Street which at the time was a stunning innovation. This was all the more so because virtually all such social/entertainment activities were under the ultimate control of the various churches. Curiously, patrons had to be repeatedly reminded to stand for the national anthem in the early programmes. Freeman, the good academic that he was listened to the concerns and suspicions he met in Tullamore as part of his 1948 survey and wrote:

Social activities in Tullamore include a wide range of clubs for athletics, dances, bridge, a modern cinema, and the occasional extra shows and matches that mean so much to the people of a country town and its surroundings. On the athletic side the new swimming pool is the most attractive recent addition (but no mixed bathing), and there are clubs for Gaelic, Association Rugby football, tennis (but no cricket) and general athletics. The dances are frequent, and include elaborate affairs such as the "Glamour Ball," with admission at five shillings, and the simpler Ceilidhe on Sunday evenings in St. Mary's Hall. The cinema is open every evening, with four changes of programme in the week, and draws its crowded audiences both from the town and the countryside: it seats 1,000 people and is generally well-filled, especially on Sundays. How far the cinema is a creator of social restlessness no one can say, but there are those who regard it as a dangerous element among the young and immature who find its sham splendours all too alluring.



RUNNERS DRAMA GROUP IN THE LATE 1950s



BRIAN HUGHES AND ANNA BROWNE OF TULLAMORE MUSICAL SOCIETY, 1978

Freeman's remarks about the cinema can be read in the context of a debate going on since the 1930s that young people were emigrating when in fact there was no need to. Was there not enough for them in the country with its pastimes and pursuits? Besides, there were dangers for young Irish girls in the English cities. The newly built parish hall of the 1930s, such as that in nearby Rahan parish and the refurbishment of St Mary's were an attempt to meet this challenge. Later on, in the 1950s, the Commission on Emigration would report what everybody knew - that work was scarce and to live many had to leave.

By the late 1960s entertainment venues such as St Mary's Hall were tired and not exciting enough for any but teenagers wanting to dance to the new discotheque sounds of innovators such as Christy Maye who, in 1970, went on to buy the Bridge House and cater for privately owned alcohol-licensed dancing facilities. In the previous year, 1969, a dance hall had been erected at Tara Street. This was part of the changes in the 1960s and was different in kind to the occasional dancing at the courthouse prior to the fire about 1960, or to the earlier Kenny's ballroom in High Street. That said dancing was popular judging by the number of venues, but none had weekly events except the short 8 to 11 Sunday night dancing. In 1937 the county ballroom in the courthouse, by far the most important venue then, was licensed for ten dances to finish not later than 4 a.m. The applicant solicitor at a district court hearing, Henry Brenan, told the justice that the guards themselves wanted their dance function until at least 4 a.m. if not all night (a full dance) as otherwise no one would go. Other venues at the time were Kenny's ballroom (as mentioned), the Foresters' hall, St Mary's Hall and the Protestant gymnasium. The

carnivals, so popular in the 1950s and 1960s were generally run for charitable purposes and were occasional. At the same time as the Central Ballroom opened at Tara Street another dance hall was started in Cloncollog known as the Emerald. Both lost out in time to the alcohol-licensed dancing in the Bridge House and to a lesser extent in the Harriers Club. Other venues have opened since but surprisingly given changing fashions and natural longevity both these venues opened about the same time retain a strong following.

Tullamore as a self made merchants' town has never succeeded in the finer arts to the extent of Birr or Mullingar where aristocratic or big house patronage was available. Among the commercial and business classes there has never been the support for theatre or for light opera such as was fashionable in Birr as long ago as the 1850s. Neither the Williams, Egan or Goodbody families, or indeed the lesser capitalists, produced those who could give leadership in this field. Possibly the young solicitor, Henry Egan, would have succeeded had he survived ill health and death in his twenties in 1907. It was another Tullamore solicitor, James Rogers, who founded the Offaly Archaeological and Historical Society in 1937. The Society suffered in the war years and was re-established as the Offaly Historical Society in 1969. Since then it has grown in importance and has its own substantial headquarters and library collections at Bury Quay. Beside it is the Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre which through its permanent exhibitions gives a good flavour of the history of Tullamore, recalling not only distilling but also the town's social history. It was during the period between 1900 and 1910 that various artistic and publishing endeavours associated with the promotion of the Gaelic League and the Irish language came to

fruition. **William Bulfin** of *Rambles in Eireann* fame and a native of Eglisk near Birr would have been a natural leader and spoke at Feiseanna and other cultural endeavours before his early death in 1910.

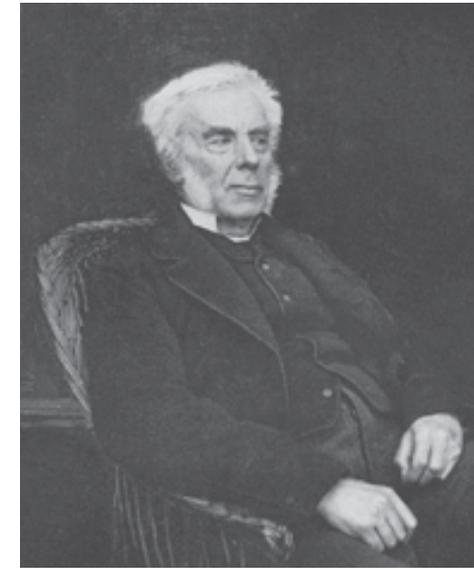
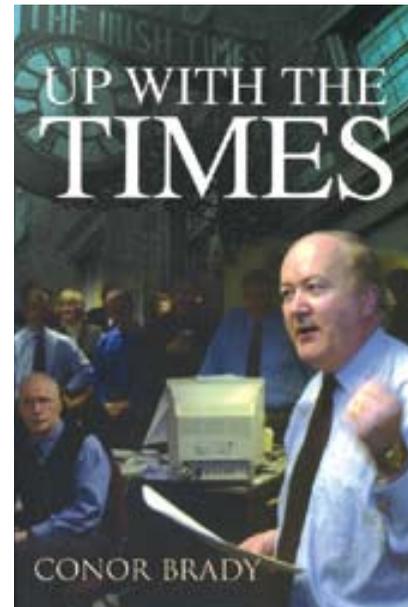
Of writers and artists Tullamore has had a few especially in recent times. Among the best known today are Marina Carr, the playwright and member of Aosdana, who has many plays to her credit including *The Mai*, *Portia Coughlan* and *By the Bog of Cats*. Her father, Hugh Carr, for many years the court clerk in Tullamore was, with his late wife Maura, a force in local drama in the 1970s and later went on to win an All Ireland drama award at Listowel Writers Week, not to mention his many other literary and dramatic successes. Another writer who has drawn on his local experiences in presenting universal themes is Tullamore-born Neil Donnelly (1946) with many plays to his credit including *The Silver Dollar Boys* and *Upstarts*. Conor Brady, whose father was a garda superintendent in Tullamore, has long had an affectionate relationship with the town and as editor of the *Irish Times* from 1986 to 2002 sought to review his experience in his *Up with the Times*. An earlier but short-lived career was that of Tony Molloy, alias Captain Mac, in the *Irish Press* and the author of a number of short stories. Donal Lunny, the well-known musician is a native of Tullamore by reason of the fact that his father worked in D.E. Williams before moving to research for Bord na Móna in County Kildare. Others with a marginal connection with Tullamore through birth or upbringing here for a short time, include Rev. Joseph Fitzgerald (1793-1856) whose father was connected with the boarding school in High Street; William O'Connor Morris (died 1904) of Gortnamona near Tullamore, the writer and county court judge; William Joseph O'Neill Daunt (1807-1894), the con-

vert and later a friend of Daniel O’Connell, whose memoir (1896) has some valuable recollections of Tullamore. Mention is made later in this study of writers such as Patrick Kavanagh and Flann O’Brien who both have connections with Tullamore and of the architects, Benjamin Woodward, Charles Blaney Cluskey and in our own time, Yvonne Farrell.

In other areas of artistic endeavour one recalls **Desmond Williams** who put his innovative mind to work in the development of the Irish Mist Liqueur Company which with its marketing and packaging was an art form in itself. More recently **Carolyn Donnelly** has, in partnership with Liz Quin, been equally successful in fashion design with a leading designer fashion label for over twenty years. Many will recall her father’s news agent’s shop in Columcille Street, Robbins Limited, where Carolyn ordered in for herself ‘strange English fashion magazines’ eventually leading to a creative and successful career. In a different category entirely is **Gerald Gardner** who was born in Tullamore in 1926 and who provided the statistical underpinnings for the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case that resulted in the prohibition of sex discrimination in newspaper want ads. He died in Pittsburg in July 2009. A woman who served her pupils well at a difficult time was **Sr Genevieve O’Farrell**, for twenty five years headmistress of the St Louise’s Comprehensive School on the Falls Road, Belfast. Born Mary O’Farrell in Tullamore in 1923 she died in Belfast in 2001. ‘In the early years of the Troubles she increased the school population from 1,000 to 2,400. She also transformed the all-girls comprehensive into one of the UK’s greatest academic achievements.’



MARINA CARR



W.J.O'NEILL DAUNT, D.1894



JUDGE O'CONNOR MORRIS, 1824-1904

Yet if the commercial leaders in Tullamore were not enthusiastic about the arts neither were they in opposition, as is clear from the discussion about the adoption of a Carnegie public lending library programme in 1924-5, when no less than three bishops opposed the measure.¹⁸ Surprisingly, in the face of such opposition the library did get going in 1925 at the courthouse and was moved to the old county infirmary building when vacated by the Garda Síochána in 1937-8. There the library languished until 1977 when it was moved to part of the premises vacated by the vocational school at O'Connor Square. Thereafter improvement was gradual only and despite some great plans for combination with an arts centre on the same site nothing of consequence has happened in either arts or library provision. This may change in 2011 as planning has now been applied for to provide a comprehensive overhaul of library facilities. At the time of writing there is some suggestion of a new purpose-designed arts centre being established in Tullamore. In many ways it is the one serious gap in the overall community endeavour since a site was acquired for the first Catholic church in Tullamore in 1794. For that we can only regret the lack of survivors in the Bury family and the absence of Lady Emily and her son (who it should be said assisted both the Tullamore and Mullingar golf clubs). Colonel Bury was principally a sportsman, a bachelor and non-resident. Had he lived locally one could have expected patronage much as was provided by the fifth earl of Rosse and his wife in Birr. The Tullamore merchants had a free hand from the 1860s and did not need to doff a cap to anyone or seek to emulate those engaged in the fine arts elsewhere. To quote Freeman again in the late 1940s, and for a visitor on a short stay he caught the essential Tullamore of which the residents, now more than twice that in number some sixty years later, are so proud.

The people of Tullamore, now nearly 6,000 strong, speak proudly of their town as “the best for many miles,” as “the most thriving in the Midlands,” or even as “almost the only good town in Ireland.” They rejoice in their widespread trade, their remunerative industries, their abundant employment, and a range of diversions that includes all kinds of athletics, a new swimming pool, a cinema worthy of Leicester Square, dances small and great, and occasional excitements such as the annual Horticultural Show, or the Annual Dog Show, which attracts entries from all over the British Isles. Within one week, it was said, Tullamore had a golf tournament, a swimming gala, and a clay pigeon shoot. Even if the cultural activities are less obvious, it is clear that here, in the very centre of Ireland, in the country commonly, but erroneously, shown as “Bog of Allen” in atlas maps, is a town of vitality, commercially and socially, in which life need not be dull for at least a substantial majority of the population.



DESMOND WILLIAMS PRESENTING ESSAY PRIZE, c.1962

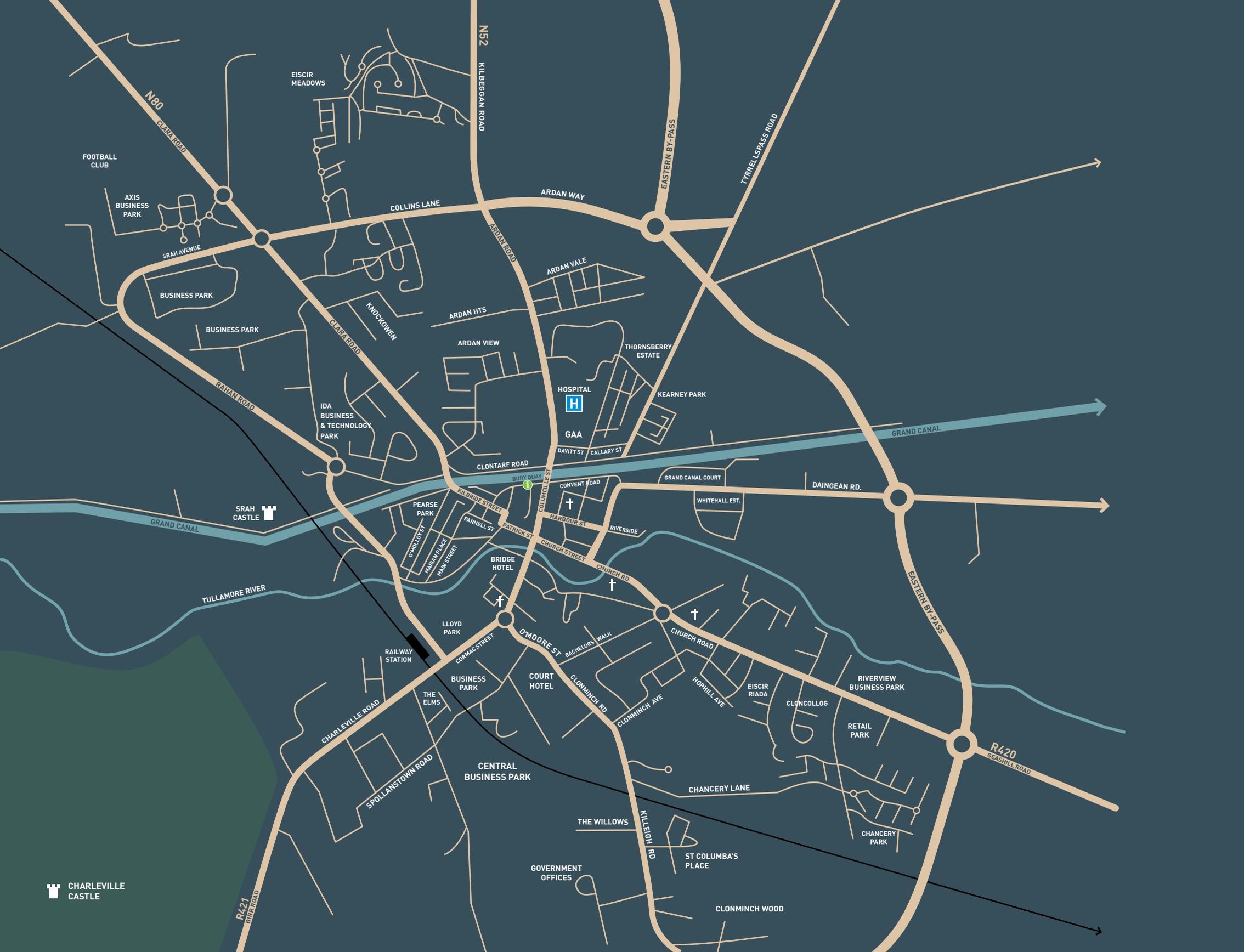




6. THE MARKET HOUSE OF 1789 WITH THE WAR MEMORIAL IN THE FOREGROUND.

THE STREETS OF TULLAMORE

From Bridge Street to O'Connor Square, Tanyard Lane, High Street, Cormac Street, Charleville Road, Charleville, O'Moore Street, Bachelors Walk, Patrick Street, Kilbride Street, Srah, Clara Road, Columcille Street, Offally Street, Church Street, Harbour Street, Chapel Street, Market Square, O'Carroll Street, Convent Road, Whitehall, Ardan Road, Collins Lane, Tyrrell's Road and Puttaghan.



FOOTBALL CLUB

AXIS BUSINESS PARK

SRAH AVENUE

BUSINESS PARK

BUSINESS PARK

BARAN ROAD

IDA BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY PARK

SRAH CASTLE

GRAND CANAL

TULLAMORE RIVER



CHARLEVILLE CASTLE

EISCIR MEADOWS

NS2 KILBEGGAN ROAD

COLLINS LANE

ARDAN WAY

EASTERN BY-PASS

TYRRELLSPASS ROAD

SRAH AVENUE

CLONTARF ROAD

KNOCKOWEN

ARDAN HTS

ARDAN VIEW

ARDAN VALE

HOSPITAL

GAA

THORNSBERRY ESTATE

KEARNEY PARK

CLONTARF ROAD

DAVITT ST

CALLARY ST

GRAND CANAL

DAINGEAN RD.

PEARSE PARK

KILBRIDE STREET

CONVENT ROAD

GRAND CANAL COURT

WHITEHALL EST.

OWBLOYD ST

PARMELL ST

BURY QUAY

COUNCILLE ST

CHURCH STREET

MANNAN PLACE

MAIN STREET

PATRICK ST

HARBOUR ST

RIVERSIDE

BRIDGE HOTEL

CHURCH RD

CHURCH STREET

CHURCH RD

CHURCH RD

LLOYD PARK

CORMAC STREET

BACHELORS WALK

CHURCH ROAD

RAILWAY STATION

BUSINESS PARK

COURT HOTEL

HOPHILL AVE

THE ELMS

OMMOORE ST

CLONMINCH RD

EISCIR RIADA

CHARLEVILLE ROAD

COURT HOTEL

CLONMINCH AVE

CLONCOLLOG

SPOLLANSTOWN ROAD

BUSINESS PARK

CHURCH ROAD

CLONCOLLOG

THE ELMS

COURT HOTEL

CHURCH ROAD

CLONCOLLOG

In this survey of the streets of Tullamore the route of the tour in *A walk through Tullamore* (1980) has been followed as much for convenience as for comparison.

Following the same route is William Garner's, *Tullamore architectural heritage* (An Foras Forbartha, Dublin, 1980). The Garner survey combined the historical notes already published with useful architectural descriptions of the buildings and some of which are incorporated here. The town is much larger now and it may be easier for the less enthusiastic walker to divide the town into four districts with the Tullamore river in the town centre serving as the principal divide on the north-south axis and Columcille Street and High St on the east-west axis. The old meeting point of 'Hayes's Cross' had geographical as well as descriptive value. From the 1850s and for almost one hundred years thereafter the town was encapsulated between the canal on the north and the railway line on the south. The railway line still serves as the western boundary and a barrier to development on that side of town, but elsewhere much new residential and commercial development has taken place. The official street names to be found on the name plates of the streets in English and Irish and on the Ordnance Survey maps in English only are used. However, in practice some streets such as Columcille Street are still better known by the pre-1905 name of William Street.

Even Mr Brian Cowen's constituency office paper uses this name. The town council renamed the streets in 1905 at the suggestion of the Gaelic League and at a time of growing cultural nationalism and a wish to become economically and linguistically self-reliant.

What is set out below is a scaffolding for a full-scale history of the buildings of Tullamore. The story of the planning and building patterns, the styles and the basic workings of the buildings are all of interest and need careful study. The photographic record is important too and often for the reader it is to see not only the exterior but also the interior - the people at home or in their place of work. The late Clement McMorris of Tullamore took pictures of this type and then only a small number. What makes Fergal MacCabe's drawings for this book important is his ability to capture the atmosphere and the spirit of a place. The place we call home - the town we know and love, not just for the buildings but the people we meet everyday - the familiars of the place. Fergal recalled the atmosphere of the 1950s in Tullamore in his introduction to a lecture on town planning in Tullamore in 2001.¹⁹

I grew up in Tullamore in the 1950s. Salts were spinning and B. Daly's were distilling. Most people walked or cycled to work. Lawless's and Scally's lived over their shops. Billy Champ parked in front of his. Jack Rogers and Gerry Burke-Kennedy lived over their banks and Dr Moorhead over his dentist's practice. The sounds I remember are the thud of the diesels of the boats on the Canal and the trundling hay bogies at harvest time. Smells come clearer to mind. The cattle fair in Columcille Street, the hot oil and coal dust as the steam train passed under Clonminch Bridge, publicans bottling stout in their backyards, barley roasting in the distillery, freshly baked bread and cakes in McGinn's and Lumley's. The bacon factory threw its offal out the back and you could forage amongst it for pigs bladders which made footballs and then wonder why your mother knew you were mitching from the smell off you.

The town abounded with lovely little shops - Billy Parker's and Mag Molloy's that sold peggy's leg and fat bacon and Ma Toolan's had the most delicious ice cream. The pictures changed every second night in the Ritz and Grand Central and Eddie Calvert played "O Mein Papa" in the County Ballroom in the Courthouse. Sergeant Rossiter stood at Hayes's Cross and watched the town. Mattie Coyne had his big blue Packard taxi at the Bus Bar that brought you to the station as it brought most of my generation and my brother's generation to those lovely hissing stream trains on which they went to England and America and they never came back.



7. THE TOWN BRIDGE AT BRIDGE STREET WITH THE BRISCOE HOUSE OF 1748 (COURTESY OF TULLAMORE TOWN COUNCIL).

BRIDGE STREET

Bridge Street is a short street linking the wider spaces of O'Connor Square and Columcille Street and dates from the 1720s. The view of the river has been improved in recent years with the completion in 2001 of the Menary's building.



This is a short street set around its river crossing function and linking the 1740 to 1780s O'Connor Square with the 1790s Columcille Street. The Tullamore river divides the town in half, but the northern side of the river would seem to have a greater density of population with the new estates at Collins Lane and Eiscir Meadows. It is probable that the town has its origins in a river crossing of the seventeenth century as a natural divide, a source of water and of mill power. It has been suggested that the oldest bridge in the town is that behind the county library in O'Connor Square, but this seems remote. It is more likely that this was a private bridge owned by the occupiers of the large house formerly in O'Connor Square known as Tarleton's (demolished in 1936 for a new vocational school) and where the Offaly County Library now stands. The bridge at Bridge Street was certainly in use by 1748 when the landlord gave a building lease for the house between Bridge Lane formerly known as Dann's Lane and Adams' chemist shop. Part of the ground floor of this house is now occupied by Tormey's butchers. The river had several water mills including the manor mill located about fifty yards from the bridge on the western side behind Smyth's public house in Patrick Street. During the drainage scheme of the 1850s this mill was removed. The last water mill surviving in the town was that further down the river in the old distillery and which, as to

the wheel, is in course of restoration in so far as that is now possible. Another part of that old mill can now be seen as an ornament in the Bridge Centre. The river is said to be less polluted than formerly. As far back as 1768 the then local authority, the town's manor court, noted:

Whereas upon complaint made this day to the grand jury that William Keough, skinner, hath and does make a practice of throwing dead carcasses and other filth into the river of Tullamore, we present that the said manor do remove all such dirt and filth out of said river...

Pollution cannot have been too severe as how otherwise are we to explain the other name used for this stream by the canal engineers in the 1800s, the Maiden river! Bridge Street, along with the narrower part of Church Street and High Street are the oldest streets in the town. The width of a street is often a good indicator of age. Bridge Street in the vicinity of the bridge was, in fact, much narrower, but was widened in 1938 when part of Dann's tea rooms was removed (now Tormey and Adams). Finally, it should be said that apart from three or four houses in Patrick Street saved from the destruction of the 1785 balloon fire all the mid-eighteenth century houses in the town are in Bridge Street and High Street. Aside from these almost all of the remaining houses in the main streets of the town centre were built between 1786 and 1840.

Bridge House

The houses in Bridge Street are almost all of an early date. The Bridge House originally consisted of three distinct buildings, some of which may date back to the 1720s. The present Bridge House facade was erected in 1910 for P. & H. Egan Ltd. Garner describes it as an 'unusually flamboyant building for a provincial Irish town'. With Gleeson's Shopping Mall in Columcille Street (formerly Scally's great store) the two fronts reflect the increased prosperity of Irish towns in the first decade of the twentieth century and the changes taking place in Irish retailing. The age when clay pipes lolled in shop windows was being left behind. The Bridge House building is of three storeys in red brick with elaborate limestone dressing supplied from the local Ballyduff quarries. Until the 1960s the Bridge House was the headquarters of P. & H. Egan Ltd., a family business established in 1852, and involved in agri-business, mineral waters, wine and spirits and retailing. The shop was considered to be the finest in the town. The family-owned company went into voluntary liquidation in 1968 and in 1970 was reopened as the Bridge House bar, restaurant and dancing venue by Christopher Maye. Since 1999 it is connected with the large hotel to the rear as one large building covering almost an acre of land and devoted to entertainment with some seventy bedrooms, dancing and leisure facilities. The Bridge House Hotel



BRIDGE STREET, c.1905



HAYES HOTEL AND BRIDGE STREET, c.1910



BRIDGE HOUSE, c.1920



BRIDGE STREET, c.1930

was designed by Louis Peppard of Mullingar in conjunction with the patron, Christopher Maye. Mr Maye retired from this particular business in 2008 after almost forty years. The Bridge House restaurant is famous throughout the midlands and is probably one of the longest established successful restaurants in the country. The dancing facilities are known to every graduate from the Harriers Club at Charleville Road and indeed to most youngsters in the midlands. In the 1970s the new venue marked a departure from the parish hall, summer carnival and other unlicensed venues. New improved dining rooms and dancing areas were added to this hotel in 2010.

Douglas and Bridge Stores

Beside the Bridge House is a building of two storeys erected by Maurice Tyrrell, a tanner, in 1747 and rebuilt by William Hall, an apothecary, in 1815. In 1777 the owner of the house was instructed to rebuild the chimneys because they were considered 'public nuisances by not being kept regularly swept. It is alleged they are so narrow as not to admit a boy to get up'. Dickens would have been horrified. The inscription over the entrance door to the Douglas jewellery shop is a nice reminder of the early history of this property. Other such inscriptions can be seen in High Street, Patrick Street and Columcille Street.

Bridge Centre

The Bridge Shopping Centre, with some 130,000 sq ft of floor space of which 50,000 sq ft is occupied by Dunnes Stores, was largely completed in 1995 by the owner of the adjoining Bridge House, Christopher Maye. The centre was built on the site of the former Tullamore distillery of which some remains can still be seen at the junction with the new Main Street. To the front of the street was the former Hoey & Denning, solicitors' offices which was built about 1756 by John Vaughan, a merchant. Vaughan bequeathed the house to his two daughters for use in their marriage settlements. The house was then divided into two parts and in the southern end one Joseph Flanagan established a distillery, not later than 1782. The firm of Hoey & Denning occupied the building from 1903 until 1980 while upstairs was used for private apartments let by the Williams company to its staff. With its demolition in 1992 went 'the handsome mid-eighteenth-century cornices with dentils and egg and dart moulding in the ground-floor rooms'.²⁰ This was the first in-town shopping-centre in Tullamore, but not the earliest shopping-centre which is that at the junction of Bachelors Walk and Church Road built in the early 1980s. Also in the early 1980s Quinnsworth built its new supermarket off Patrick Street and in the mid-1980s the Gleeson's Tullamore Shopping Mall in Columcille Street was opened.

While Church Road might be considered out-of-town at the time the real trend in this direction did not start until the move of Tesco to Cloncollog in 2004.

One of the more important contributions of the Bridge Centre is the six-screen Savoy cinema opened by Paul Anderson in 1995 and replacing the Savoy in Tara Street.²¹ Some would say that just as with the Ritz from the 1940s this is the most significant cultural scene in Tullamore and has provided enjoyment and entertainment to young and old.

Tullamore distillery

The distillery buildings, some of which are still standing, were erected on the back garden of Flanagan's house, later Hoey & Denning, which extended to the river. The distillery went out of production in the 1800s but was re-established in 1829, as was once shown on the entrance gate in the lane beside the former Hoey & Denning building and can still be seen in Patrick Street beside Credit Union House in the attractive gate entrance. Production in the 1840s and 1850s suffered because of the temperance campaign of Fr Mathew and the rise in the spirit duty. However, the distillery was considerably expanded in the 1870s to cater for a growing export market with new machinery and new stores erected in what is now the side of Main Street with its back to the river. Aside from the years 1925 to 1937 the



TULLAMORE RIVER, c.1950



SOMER'S BUTCHER SHOP, (NOW TORMEY'S), c.1900



TORMEY'S, c.1980



TORMEY'S BUTCHER SHOP, c.2005

distillery was in production until 1954. The passing of the distillery was a matter of regret because of the long association of the industry with the town. On the other hand its demise may be seen as part of an evolutionary process because from 1948 until 1985 the town was associated with the production of Irish Mist (more about this below). Remains of the distillery chimneys can be seen from Distillery Lane. The street itself was much widened in 1995 between the Bridge Centre and the Bridge House hotel. The Tullamore distilling tradition is now immortalised in the well-known brand, Tullamore Dew. The history of this whiskey can be seen in the Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre with many pictures of the old distillery.

Bank of Ireland

The Bank of Ireland carefully restored the exterior of this building in 1977-9. The conservation work here represented a turning point in the town's attitude to its architectural heritage. That portion of the building in Portland stone, represents the original Hibernian Bank branch established here in 1864. The Portland stone façade is probably dated to about 1908-10 and was designed by the architect Ralph Byrne and is channelled on the ground floor as is so often the case with banks to give the impression of strong sturdy buildings. This

rusticated effect can be seen in the former Bank of Ireland, High Street (now since 1980 Hoey & Denning), the AIB building in Columcille Street and the 1980s Credit Union building in Patrick Street. The Bank of Ireland opened a 'second class' branch at High Street in 1836. In the 1970s the bank, having merged with the Hibernian Bank, acquired adjoining buildings, including the yellow-brick building in O'Connor Square. This Gothic-style building was erected for T.P. & R. Goodbody in the early 1870s to expand its farm machinery and retail business. The Goodbodys sensibly decided to have warehouse features at the front because of poor or non-existent facilities at the rear of the building. So faithfully had the bank's architects sought to reproduce the original facade that a new hoist has been placed under the gable below the roof, but with nails now set down to stop the pigeons getting too comfortable. In Bridge Street the former Wakefield's shop and Liddy's have both been incorporated in the Portland stone façade. Inside there is no longer a 1970s style banking hall and instead because of security concerns the open plan has given way to an unattractive warren of rooms devoid of aesthetic considerations. The great banking halls have been replaced by the cash dispenser.

Tormey's butchers, G. & C. Flynn and Adams pharmacy

This 1748 house had front rooms removed in 1938 so as to widen the street, something that had been discussed by the town council for the previous fifty years. About 1950 a wing was added to the Adams pharmacy on the river side. All three shops at ground level have fine old style shop-fronts constructed since the 1980s as part of the local authority planning policy of promoting timber and painted lettering in the town. G. & C. Flynn would be the modern-day version of the old Dann's Tea Rooms removed as to its front rooms in 1938 so as to widen the street.

Menary's shop was built (as a bar and restaurant) in 2001 on the site of the old Hayes Hotel of 1786 and is discussed under Church Street. Bridge Street today seems to have no more than two or three residential apartments and compares unfavourably with the population of the street in 1901 at forty-six inhabitants.



DISTILLERY HOUSE (OFFICES OF HOEY AND DENNING, c.1990)



SOLICITORS AND STAFF AT HOEY AND DENNING, c.1910



DISTILLERY FROM THE RIVER IN THE 1970s



TULLAMORE DISTILLERY IN THE 1970s

MAVRICE TYRRELL
BUILT THIS IN
1747
Rebuilt by W^m Hall
1815



BRIDGE HOUSE, c.2008



BRIDGE HOUSE HOTEL, 2000



BRIDGE CENTRE, c.1995



POST OFFICE AT BRIDGE STREET, c.2000

DISTILLERY LANE *AND* BRIDGE LANE

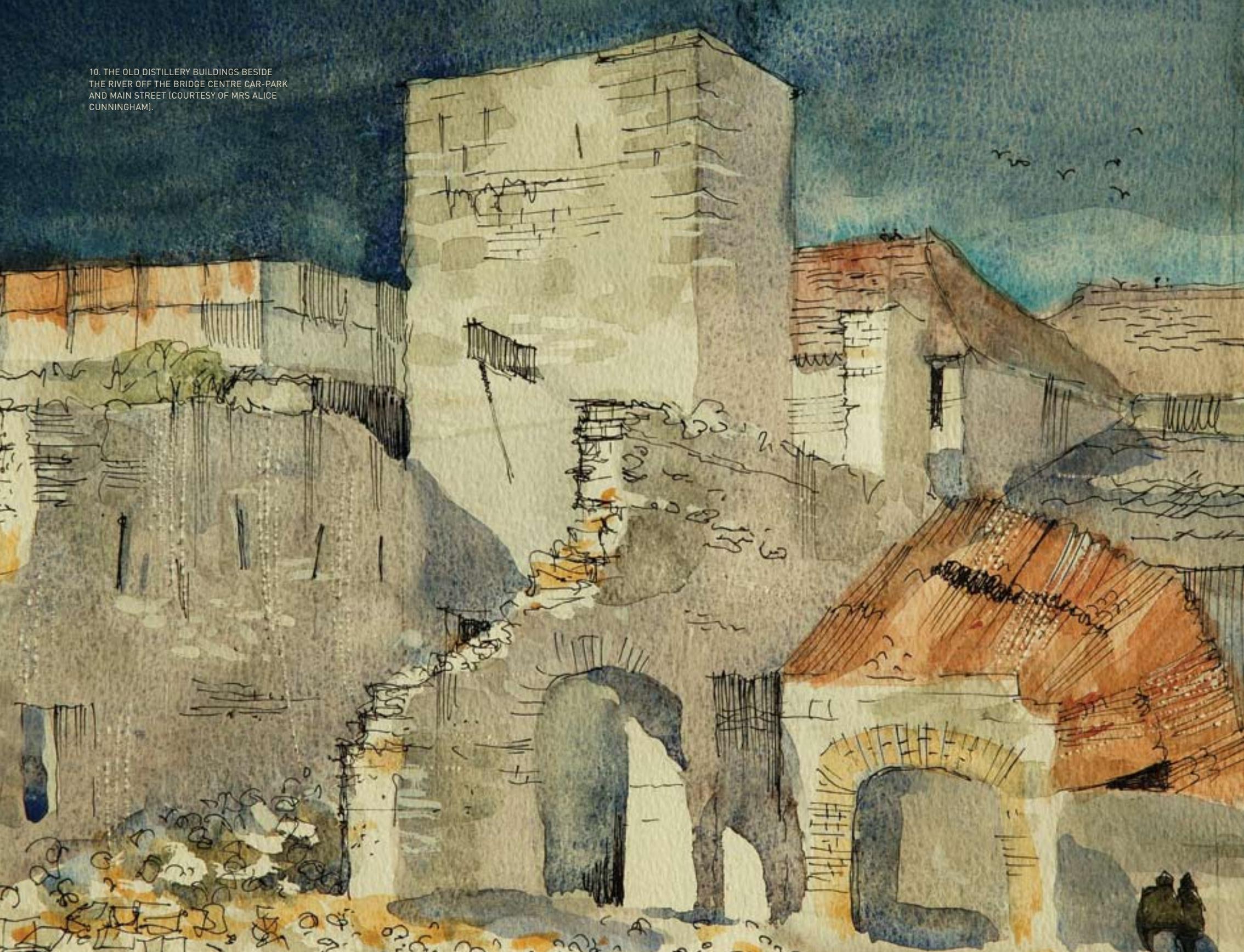
Off Bridge Street and beside Tormey's is Bridge Lane also known locally as Dann's Lane which connects in with O'Connor Square.

On the other side of the street was Distillery Lane greatly transformed by 1995 with the development of the Bridge Shopping Centre and with it the opening of a new connection over the river to Water Lane and Patrick Street. Off the same Bridge Centre car-park is a further new opening from Tara Street earlier known as Crow Street. The possibility of connecting in with the town park was not considered at this time and apartments were built soon after in that part of Bridge Centre to the south and near the river. By 2002 a further new opening to Kilcruttin was made with the development of the new Main Street shopping area. All of this greatly improved connectivity in this part of the town and opened up fully lands once closed off and forming part of the Tullamore distillery.



9. THE BRIDGE CONNECTING WITH THE DISTILLERY LANDS OVER THE RIVER AT WHAT IS NOW CALLED MAIN STREET AND WAS IN THE 1850S WATER LANE (COURTESY OF TULLAMORE TOWN COUNCIL).

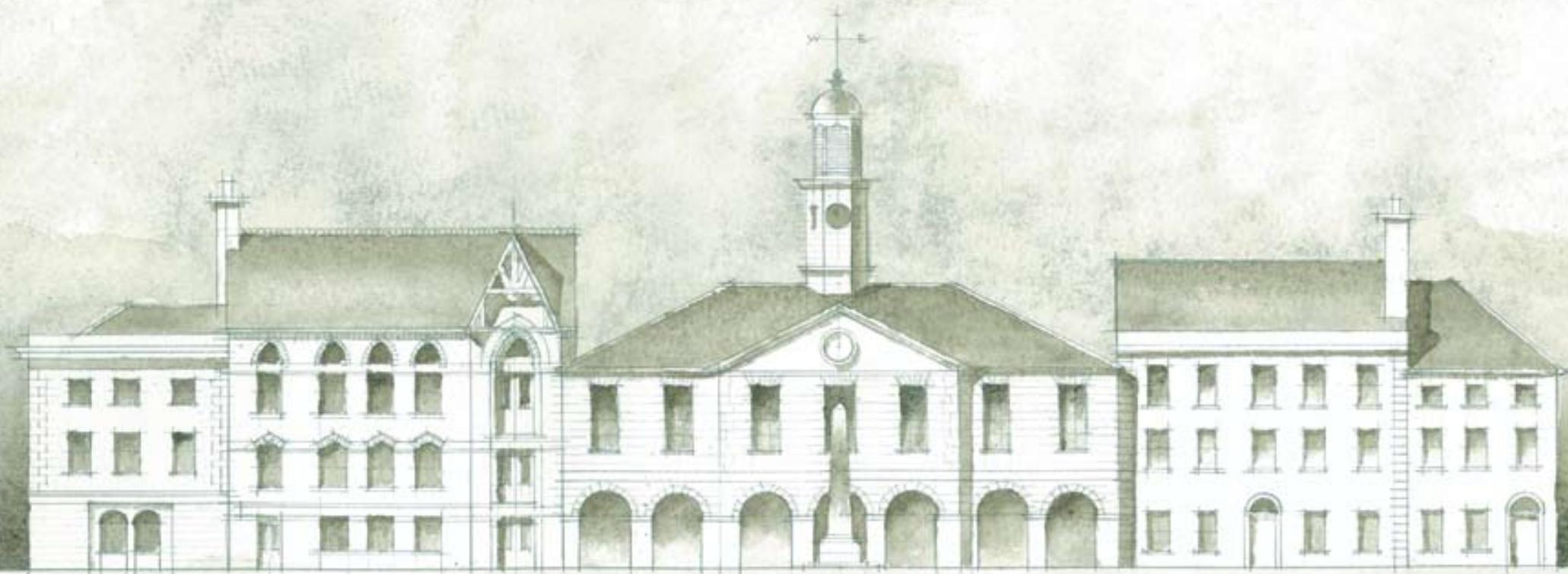
10. THE OLD DISTILLERY BUILDINGS BESIDE
THE RIVER OFF THE BRIDGE CENTRE CAR-PARK
AND MAIN STREET (COURTESY OF MRS ALICE
CUNNINGHAM).



O'CONNOR SQUARE

O'Connor Square is Tullamore's most impressive open space and the gradual development of this area into a square is reflected in the variety of names it has had. Despite its course of building for over some fifty years it has a uniformity of scale even with the much later vocational school of 1936-7, now the Offaly County Library. The newest building, that of Permanent TSB, sits uneasily with its companions, but is somewhat hidden. In 1713 this area was simply known as the Market Place.





12. O'CONNOR SQUARE NORTH SIDE WITH THE MARKET HOUSE OR FORMER TOWN HALL IN THE CENTRE

Building on the southern side of O'Connor Square began in the 1740s when the L-plan house, now west of the former post office was built by Matthew Moore, a soap boiler and tallow chandler. A building on the site of the former post office was erected in the 1750s as also was the next house with the round-headed Gibbsian door-case. The last house, before Tanyard Lane, was not erected until 1786. The large block from William Hill betting shop to the Mary Dunne Studio on the corner with the junction with High Street was erected in 1787 as can be seen from the date-stone at the Dunne's coach entrance.

In 1901 the square had 61 inhabitants and a total of 12 families. There were 12 inhabited houses and one uninhabited; all the houses were placed in the first class division. Out buildings included 28 stables, 10 coach houses, four harness rooms, seven cow houses, a calf house, a dairy, four piggeries, five fowl houses and two bailing houses. Unlike other parts of Tullamore the population was not much less in 1901 than it had been in 1821 (80 inhabitants) reflecting the first class housing not subject to subdivision. Like Bridge Street there are few people now living in this old residential quarter and no houses fully residential as was the case until the 1970s when about five of the houses were still lived in, albeit by mostly elderly people living alone.

Gray Cunniffe Insurances, EBS agency and Natural Stuff

This L-plan house of about 1743 is among the earliest documented properties in Tullamore. John Wesley preached in the parlour here in April 1787. After the 1830s it was used as a printing shop and distribution centre for the local newspaper, much as was Gorry's in Harbour Street from the 1890s to the 1990s. The distributor and sometimes printer was Richard Willis. The second countess of Charleville prepared a drawing for a new shop-front for Willis about 1830. Latterly the basement of the house was said to have held the stocks which were originally in the town square and used to punish people for minor offences. A few pamphlets are known to have been published by Richard Willis, but few survive. Willis lived on until 1882. It was about the time of Richard Willis's death that the young Arthur Fisher, who was apprenticed for five years to the Church Street draper, Warren, recalled an event of some amusement in Tullamore. The story concerned a local reporter who published anonymously a pamphlet about some of the wild young men of the town.

The County Reporter and *The Tullamore Worthies*

Frequent visits to the only book and stationary shop in the town brought me into contact with a very remarkable little man. He was the Re-

*porter who represented a number of small papers, and an occasional correspondent to the large Dublin Daily, where he could scoop news of any importance. He was greatly deformed, with one short leg, the extension of which consisted of an eight-inch iron, with a round ring at the bottom on which he walked. I loved to have a chat with the little man because of his knowledge and love of literature. He it was, who made me fond of the readings of great men, or men who on their own achieved greatness. He it was who introduced me to Smile's, Self-help, and to many other useful educational books. He knew well all the young men of the town, and I knew from samples of his rhymes that he showed me, that he only, in all the town, could be the author of an anonymous pamphlet entitled, *Some Tullamore Worthies*. It fell upon the whole town one morning, and no one knew where it came from, or who the author was. Nearly every young town worthy had a verse to himself. I, at an early hour suspected my Reporter friend, by the broad grin in his face when we discovered the matter, and the fact that I had been left out. But I never once revealed my opinion to others out of loyalty to my friend. Each young man was named and those with pride and bad language were hit the hardest.*²²



O'CONNOR SQUARE, c. 1910



O'CONNOR SQUARE, c. 1910



BREWERY TAP, c. 2000



FARRELL & PARTNERS AND DR. FAHEY,
O'CONNOR SQUARE, c. 2000

Former Post Office

A house was first erected here about 1750 and demolished in 1909 for the new post office erected by a Bray builder who managed to get himself sued for breach of promise shortly after his stay in Tullamore. The evidence included, appropriately, some hundreds of letters and postcards. The most striking aspect of this early-twentieth century building is the limestone canopy. The building of three-storeys and four bays was designed by H.G. Leask and C.W. Crowe. Leask, who was then a young man lately moved to the office of public works, is better known for his books on Irish castles and Irish churches. He died in 1964. The post office moved from this site after about ninety years to the Bridge Shopping Centre, just across the square. The sorting office closed here after one hundred years in 2009 and is now located at the Burlington Business Park at Ballyduff on the Clara Road.

Former adult education centre

This three-storey house was built in the early 1750s for the first Church of Ireland rector or curate living in the town of Tullamore and independent of the original parish church in Durrow. The appointment of a clergyman for Tullamore in the 1750s is indicative of the expansion of the town at the time. Built over a basement the house has an attractive Gibbsian door-case. At the back of it for many years

in the twentieth century was Keeley's furniture store for new and second hand items.

Dermot O'Keefe Engineer and others

This building dates to about 1786 and brought to completion the town square on this side. The six-bay, three-storey house has a round-headed blocked-architrave door-case, with coach arch and surviving octagonal spur stone on the left approaching Tanyard Lane.

Offaly County Library

The library building was formerly the Tullamore Vocational School or technical school and was erected in 1937. A fine three-storey, seven-bay dwelling, Charleville Square House, with malt house buildings to the rear stood on the site until 1936. In 1750, Thomas Wilson, a Quaker, carried on business here as a wool comber and tanner. In the 1760s it became the property of Gideon Tabuteau who had come from Southampton and was of French Huguenot extraction. It was in this house that Benjamin Yeats, ancestor of the poet, married Mary Butler in the 1770s. In 1788 Tabuteau sold the property to Joseph Manly who erected a brewery and a maltings. Later the property was acquired by Tarletons and it was here that the judges stayed during their visits to Tullamore for the March and July assizes. These spring and summer visitations of two senior judges

ceased in 1921. The county library was moved from the old infirmary to part of this building in 1977. The library is worth a visit and holds thousands of books, access to computer-based research and local history facilities. Unfortunately the service has never received proper recognition and has occupied hand-me-down buildings since 1925 in different locations throughout the town. A proposal for a major new building came too late to beat the cutbacks after 2007. Yet there is much to be thankful for and much to fight for to get proper cultural facilities for Tullamore. The library has excellent local history facilities and lots of computers. Its location is central with its reading rooms for all, and not just the affluent minority, as was the case in the nineteenth century when private circulating libraries operated. Brian O'Nolan (Flann O'Brien) when living at The Beeches, Tullamore in 1920-4 recalled using the library of the Convent of Mercy and, before 1925, the only public library available.

The new vocational school building together with a town hall had been under consideration since 1911. The school went ahead but the town hall proposal was not achieved until 1992. The architect of the school was Michael Grace of Oldcastle and Edward Boyd Barrett designed additions and alterations to it about 1950. The school opened with 140 pupils in the autumn of 1937 with the *Tribune* reporter noting that the old Tarleton House was a feudal man-



GRAY CUNIFFE INSURANCE AND OTHERS IN THE EARLY 1980s



STAFF AT THE OLD POST OFFICE, c.1910



OLD POST OFFICE, c.2000



PERMANENT TSB BANK, c.2000

sion and ‘judges lodgings’ that had seemed impregnable, but was now swept away in modern Ireland to the lasting benefit of the youth of Tullamore. The school was used for the An Tostal displays in 1953 and quite often for public lectures. One remembers the late Jack McCann as a formidable, no nonsense chairman ably assisted in running the Offaly V.E.C. by Denis McSweeney and later Liam Arundel and Séan Carton.

Permanent TSB

This is a modern 1987 building erected on the site of a 1750s house and designed as a purpose-built bank for TSB by Noel Heavey, the Athlone architect. Some twenty years later, in March 2007, the banking use was repackaged as Permanent TSB. The old house affectionately remembered as Longworth’s or Miss Mooney’s was once a post office operated by Hugh Love and later a house for lodgers in the 1950s and 1960s with many school teachers living there in the days when buying a house was not always desirable or possible. This writer recalls the dining room in the 1960s where the table was always set for the next sitting.

No. 9 and 10 O’Connor Square, formerly *Bowmaker (Ireland) Limited and now Dr Fahey together with the adjoining house known as Farrell & Partners, Solicitors*

No. 9, a three storey, three-bay dwelling house with round-headed door-case now used as a doctor’s surgery

No. 10, a three-storey, five-bay dwelling house now used as solicitors’ offices and with a similar round-headed door-case to that of no. 9. In 1786 Charles William Bury conveyed to John Scott of Mountmellick ‘a plot of ground adjoining the east end of the market house’. Scott was declared bankrupt, probably in 1792. His property, which included other houses and plots in Tullamore, was sold to the Revd Peter Turpin of Brookville (now Brookfield, Tullamore beside the Tullamore Golf Club) in 1793. Turpin sold the Scott holding to Thomas Acres, the property developer, in 1809.

No. 11 O’Connor Square, the original market house and now Irish Nationwide bank

Now the most important feature in the town square the market house is a two-storey, seven-bay building with a pedimented central break-front, clock tower and cupola. The building has a ground-floor limestone ashlar front and at first floor a roughly-cut ashlar style. As Garner notes the tympanum of the

pediment contains the monogram of the Charleville family and as such this decoration must post-date the original building by some ten to twenty years. The market house was built by the landlord, Charles William Bury, in 1789. Wesley in his *Journal* for 22 April 1789 records ‘About noon I preached in the beautiful new court-house at Tullamore.’ As he preached he noted ‘that deep attention sat on the faces of rich and poor alike!’ We can be sure Wesley means the market house because the spring and autumn sessions of the manor court, usually held at a local inn, were held at the market house from October 1790.

The market house may have been designed by the architect John Pentland. Pentland was in Tullamore at the time and was principally engaged on proposals for a new house for the landlord, a brief he ultimately failed to obtain as it was instead awarded to Francis Johnston. About 1790 Pentland was responsible for the laying out of building plots in Pound Street, later William Street and now Columcille Street. It is probable that Pentland came to Tullamore to supervise the building of the market house and perhaps a new house for Bury, but we only hear of him in connection with the secondary task of designing a layout for the new street. To the rear of the market house was the shambles or meat market. The market house was probably not used for the



THE OLD MARKET HOUSE, c.2000



MARKET DAY, O’CONNOR SQUARE, 1929



MARKET IN O’CONNOR SQUARE, 1980s



THE FLANAGAN BUILDING OF 1787, O’CONNOR SQUARE, c.1980

sale of farm produce or the rear part of the building as a shambles once the Corn Market, now Market Square, was laid out in the early 1820s. From about this time until the 1890s the formerly open ground floor of the market house was used by the Tullamore Charitable Loan Fund Society or bank, a forerunner of the credit union. The upper floor was a chapel of ease for the Church of Ireland from 1823 to c. 1920 and used as such during the winter months. In the nineteenth century it was customary for a bellman to go round the town when the weather was bad, shouting out, for the information of the Protestants of the town, 'Prayers in the Market House to-day.' The upper floor was also used for Y.M.C.A. meetings and lectures just as St Mary's Hall was, from the 1860s used by the C.Y.M.S., the Catholic equivalent. When the ground floor of the market house was used for vocational school classes in the 1950s traces of the furniture and activities of the old Tullamore Loan Fund Bank were still to be seen. The building was sold by the Charleville Estate Company, successor in title to Charles William Bury, c. 1960 and converted into a café for Seamus Morris and much frequented by the secondary school students of that time. The upper floor was still used for vocational school classes in the early 1970s before the new school was built at Riverside. Public meetings and courts were held here in former times including a great public meeting to thank Lord Tullamore and

his father, the earl of Charleville, for their exertions in 1828-33 in bringing about county town status for Tullamore. The town bell, placed in the cupola or dome in 1842 was taken down in 1980 and can now be seen in the Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre. The old market house is a building that would make an excellent gallery and small meeting rooms and if not eventually required by Irish Nationwide should be taken into public ownership as it is central to the history of Tullamore and to the square in which it is located.

No. 12 O'Connor Square now part of the Bank of Ireland premises adjoining

A three-storey five-bay Gothic-style building in yellow brick and 'remarkably colourful' with a restored façade only and the interior used as bank hall with numbers 10 and 11 Bridge Street. The present front is the result of an extensive rebuild by T. P. and R. Goodbody in the early 1870s. The Goodbody brothers purchased the house from Robert Whelan, a Tullamore solicitor, in 1871. The rear of the house was very confined having only a small yard and Goodbodys sensibly decided to incorporate warehouse features as part of the frontage. These features have been retained as part of the reconstruction of the mid-1970s and consists of a hoist below the gable.

The war memorial

The obelisk or cenotaph was erected by public subscription in 1926 and was the first piece of public sculpture in Tullamore town. Bearing a sword and shield the memorial to the fallen of the First World War in County Offaly (King's County) was sculpted by E. W. Doyle Jones, A. E. B. S. Later reference was made on the memorial to those who died in the Second World War. The stone was from Mollloy Quarries, Tullamore. The British Legion was strongly represented in Tullamore until the 1960s and each year, until the Northern Troubles of the 1970s, there was a march of ex-Servicemen to the memorial together with the sale of poppies in the days preceding. It was not uncommon in the 1930s to have upwards of 200 men in such a parade, usually led by Lieut. Col. Bury of Charleville and Belvedere together with Major Sherlock of Rahan Lodge, Captain Boyd Rochfort and Captain Surgeon Meagher. For the young children Remembrance Day was a fascinating occasion when old soldiers or family representatives could wear their medals, observe the two minutes silence and hear the Last Post sounded.



O'CONNOR SQUARE, c.1910



MARKET DAY AT O'CONNOR SQUARE, c.1910



O'CONNOR SQUARE, c.1960



WAR MEMORIAL 1990s



ARCHITECT'S DRAWING OF WAR MEMORIAL OF 1926



13. THE HIDDEN BRIDGE AT THE BACK OF THE OFFALY COUNTY LIBRARY AND THE METHODIST CHURCH (COURTESY OF TULLAMORE TOWN COUNCIL).

TANYARD LANE

Tanyard Lane or Tannery Lane or The Tanyard was an industrial rather than a residential area until the 1990s, but now has some thirty five houses and apartments. The original lane of the 1750s was extended at the corner opposite the council car-park and on to Geashill Road after the 1780s. The changes in manufacturing activity here reflect the development of industry over two centuries.

The location is accounted for by the availability of a water supply from the river. The tanneries had closed by the end of the eighteenth century, but had been replaced by two breweries and several malting establishments. The maltings continued to function until the 1950s or 1960s. Maltsters were able to send their malt to Guinness by canal when the local breweries ceased production. A walk through Tanyard Lane and a check on the inscriptions on the few buildings surviving indicate just how important the malting business was to the economy of the town in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Many of the present older buildings date from the 1900s. The building now occupied by Oisín O'Sullivan's furniture stores was one of the early concrete buildings in Ireland, erected for the Tarleton malting firm before 1915. Prior to that this yard with the Lumley and later Sullivan/Donnelly warehouses had been used for the Aylward provision business and slaughter yard and in the 1830s was extensively covered with buildings. The Aylward provision curing business seems to have ended in the late 1870s at which point the yard was given over for use for grain and a maltings. The Tarleton maltings was taken over by Egan's company in the mid-1960s only to go into liquidation following the demise of the parent firm in 1968. The

closure freed up much of the Tanyard for redevelopment with the Lumley family acquiring the former provision yard and also Egan's buildings in Brewery Lane in the early 1970s. The builder, John Flanagan, began his long association with the nurturing of local industries and services with the acquisition of parts of Tanyard Lane for 'incubator' units and later for residential developments such as the apartments at Tarleton Hall and Tarleton Mews. The scheme of fourteen houses at Arbutus Court was built by Galvin Fitzpatrick in the 1990s on land that had been formerly owned by the Tullamore creamery. In the 1970s the HB ice cream plant was rebuilt on the site of the O'Reilly's bakery, beloved of youngsters on the way home from the swimming pool. Nearby was O'Shea's bakery. The recollection of famous nineteenth century entrepreneurs and worthies of Tullamore in the names of housing developments and hotel suites is something well worth carrying further. A panel of names and citations could be established to draw from. One thinks of several of the new housing schemes of the council that have still not been named. Abraham Tarleton, who died in the 1890s, would indeed be flattered. On the other hand he might think it only adequate recompense given that the Tarleton family rates bill greatly increased in the 1900s following on their spate of building activity.



DOG SHOW IN THE TANYARD, 1948



TANYARD LANE, AERIAL VIEW, LATE 1970s



TANYARD LANE, AERIAL VIEW, 1990s

Joseph
Flanagan
A: D: G

1787

WILLIS'S LANE

OFF O'CONNOR SQUARE

On the southern side of O'Connor Square between the former post office (until 2009 the sorting office) and the house of Gray Cunniffe Insurance is Willis' Lane. As noted Richard Willis, printer, occupied the latter house for the greater part of the nineteenth century and he gave his name to the lane between the house and the former post office. Willis let his back garden for tenement houses and stores. In 1843 George Little, a blacksmith, had a forge there and Henry Clarke a grocer who lived in Bridge street had stores and stables. In addition there were also two cabins at £2 a year each and seven other cabins the rents of which were not specified. These can be seen on the 1838 large-scale manuscript map of the town. The lane must have been unoccupied by 1854 for it is not listed in the printed *Griffith valuation* and neither is it included in the 1901 census. Willis also built the ambitious Victoria Terrace in O'Moore Street and was in the property letting business. Mr Willis and the then town clerk, Robert English, were the subject of an anonymous letter sent to *The Irish Times* in 1864 on the matter of good landlords and rent abatement. Something that is now fashionable again since 2007. The writer was supposedly Katty Doolin with an address in Swaddling Lane (later Ruddock's Lane and now Bride's Lane, off Patrick Street). Robert English was the Tullamore town clerk until 1872.

To the Editor of *The Irish Times*

SWADDLING LANE, TULLAMORE,

13/03/1864

Sir - My attention has been drawn to an article in the Morning News, headed "Good landlords", givin' credit to Mr Richard Willis and Mr Robert English, of Tullamore, for makin' an allowance of 15 per cent to their tenants in this neighbourhood.

Yer honor, whin I red [sic and below] this article, me sides almost split wid lafter, for I well now that neither of those gintilmin possessed as much land as "sod a lark". Mr Englis is clark of petty sessions, has berried two wives, Lord rest their sows in glory, and is lookin' for a rich widdy in this town; the other, Mr Willis, on the rong side of sixty, is after a buxom widdy in Dublin- and both these gintilmin, for fare to show there gray whiskirs, are as close shaivin as a sally noggin. And I'm tould, yer hon-onour, that the widdys won't have them now, as they've learnt that the gay Lothorios are becomin' as wake as emasculated cats, as O'Connell used to say. If yo insert this yill hear from me agin, widdout dout - Yours - Katty Doolin.

HIGH STREET

Most of the houses in High Street date from the 1740s to the 1800s. Both the northern and southern ends of High Street face important open spaces: the northern end forms the west side of O'Connor Square and the southern end broadens out to form a triangular open space at the junction of O'Moore Street and Cormac Street. The latter is an attractive urban space where, as Garner notes, the three approaches are dominated by excellent buildings: O'Moore Street by the town hall, Cormac Street by Brian P. Adams and Tullamore House and in High street the first house on the east side of Cormac Street (now Angelo's and others) with a view of the Presbyterian church on the west side of High Street.



15. CROWE'S DOORCASE NOW SAMBODINOS AND OTHERS, HIGH STREET



14. THE MASSY HOUSE IN HIGH STREET OF THE 1750S, LATER A BOARDING SCHOOL AND NOW ANGELO'S TAKE-AWAY.



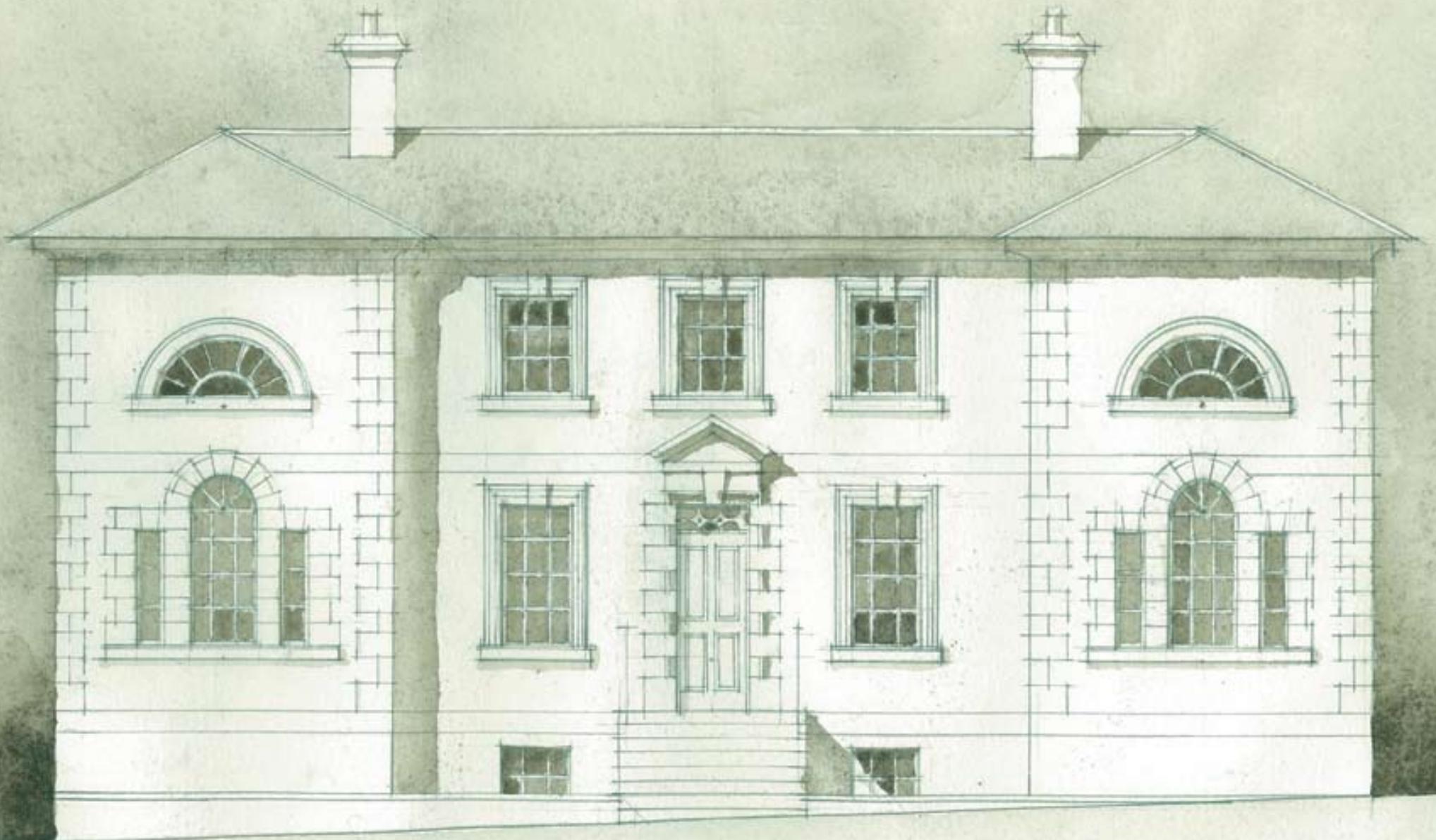
16. CONWAY & KEARNEY, SOLICITORS, HIGH STREET.



17. HIGH STREET LOOKING DOWN TOWARDS BRIDGE STREET WITH HOEY & DENNING, SOLICITORS TO THE LEFT, FORMERLY THE BANK OF IRELAND FRONT OF 1870 (COURTESY OF HOEY & DENNING, SOLICITORS).



18. THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN HIGH STREET.



19. THE HOUSE IN HIGH STREET OF BARRACK MASTER CRAWFORD, LATER CHARLEVILLE ESTATE OFFICE, AND FROM 1959 KILROY'S TELEVISION SHOWROOMS.

High Street properly commences, so far as valuation numbers and house building are concerned, with what is now the unit fronting the street and part of the Bridge Centre – the former G.N. Walshe car show-rooms house of the 1740s. As with O'Connor Square and Bridge Street almost all the houses here were erected in the mid to late-eighteenth century. When Arthur Young made his unfortunately brief remarks about the town in 1776 he noted that part of Tullamore was well built. He was surely referring to the High Street - O'Connor Square area. The northern end of High Street terminates at the open space of O'Connor Square while the southern end opens to O'Moore Street and Cormac Street where on each corner there are excellent buildings. If Young had returned in 1976 he would have been less impressed with the loss of the distinctive residential character of the former Motor Works house before 1950 (now Angelo's Take-Away), the Kilroy television showrooms about 1959 and the Jade Inn/Sambodinos restaurant building of 1974. Earlier in the 1940s a house was demolished to provide for the site and access for the new Ritz cinema of 1946 and in the early 1950s a house beside Conway & Kearney was pulled down to provide a site for the early 1960s stylish Egan's hardware shop (now Galvin's Ladies Wear). Also in the 1970s a three-storey house, Lawler's, was demolished to open up access to the car-park behind what is now Spollen's and

formerly the Lawless public house. A similar exercise was effected across the road for the car-park and access to the Bridge Centre in the early 1990s. Most recently three houses were pulled down to provide the front of street buildings for the Bridge Centre (1995). These were the former Distillery House, G.N. Walshe garage and Treacey's butcher shop.

The former G.N. Walshe car show rooms and now forming part of the Bridge Centre

The Bridge Centre dates from 1995 and at this location replaced a second house, the G.N. Walshe garage, with a projecting wing at the front and similar to the house beside the former post office in O'Connor Square. The original house here could be as early as 1740. The next house, also demolished in 1995, was built in 1786 by the town's leading business man in the late-eighteenth century, Thomas Manly. At the time Manly also owned the former car showrooms house of Walshe. Manly was a Quaker, as also were the owners of the property in the nineteenth century, T.P. & R. Goodbody. The two Goodbody brothers were members of a remarkable family who had a profound influence on the economy of the nearby town of Clara. The Goodbodys established a tobacco factory here in the mid-nineteenth century and employed up to 150 people producing such delightfully named tobacco mixtures as 'York River', 'Bird's Eye', 'Golden Flake', and 'Quaker

Twist'. Unfortunately for Tullamore the factory was destroyed by fire in 1886, a time when the town had no fire engine. The factory was rebuilt, but at Greenville, Dublin where many Tullamore people moved with their families to hold on to their jobs. Using the 1901 and 1911 censuses it would be interesting to find out what Tullamore families moved. In 1929, the firm, then in liquidation, was taken over by the Dundalk firm of P.J. Carroll. At the time of the fire the Goodbody brothers employed 140 men and 9 women. The workers were paid £3,500 a year in wages or approximately 9 shillings a week each. This was the average wage for labour in Tullamore in the 1880s. Of course, the hours were much longer and probably ranged from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., six days per week with no annual leave. The Goodbodys themselves worked the same hours or more, often starting at 5.30 a.m. and finishing at 7.00 p.m. The factory was profitable while in Tullamore, but not so beneficial to the family after the move.

The new Post Office

The new post office of 1996 is part of the Bridge Centre development and on the site of a 1780s building, for long a butcher's shop in the twentieth century for Matthew Dunne and later Pat Treacey, but before that a pawnbroker's.



DRAWING OF BANK OF IRELAND 1870,
NOW HOEY & DENNING



HIGH STREET WITH GOODBODY'S SHOP
EXTREME LEFT, c.1905



HIGH STREET, TULLAMORE, c.1912



HIGH STREET, TULLAMORE, c.1965

Brewery Tap

The site of this house was leased to a tobacco spinner in 1713, but the house may have been rebuilt in the 1780s. A brewery was established here in the 1830s when William Deverell transferred from a premises further up High Street later known as McGinn's and now Cosgrove's bar. The brewery was taken over by the Egan brothers in about 1867 and continued to function until the First World War. In the 1880s it was capable of turning out from thirty to forty barrels of beer per day and employed fifty men at no less than £1,500 a year in wages! Famous for its coffee in the 1960s when still an Egan's property it was sold by the liquidator of the company in 1968 for about £6,000. It later traded under the ownership of Paddy Adams, Kevin and Marjorie Carragher and most recently Paul and Cathy Ann Bell. It is now something of a landmark pub in Tullamore along with some eight or nine others scattered across the town.

G.N. Walshe shop now vacant

Next to the Brewery Tap is the former G.N. Walshe's shop, probably built before 1786, and used as an R.I.C. barrack in the late-nineteenth century. This was the depot for one of the town's first bus companies after 1920. The Walshe family business of almost 100 years ended in 2003 with the retirement of George Ivan (Brolly) Walshe. His was one

of the last Protestant businesses in Tullamore in a town and a street that was dominated by strong Protestant-owned businesses in the several centuries before 1900.

Conway & Kearney, Solicitors

The house of Messrs Conway & Kearney, Solicitors, has a door-case with fluted Doric columns and a fanlight. The building dates from the 1780s but the door-case may be later. The well-known barrister, Constantine Molloy, lived here until the 1880s. The house became a solicitor's office after 1900 and has been used as such ever since giving it one of the longest continuous users in Tullamore of almost 110 years, but only half that of Dolan's pharmacy in Columcille Street.

No. 6 High Street, Galvin's ladies drapery

The building of the 1960s was erected on the site of a 1750s dwelling and was remodelled in 2007.

No. 7 and 8 High Street, The Dew Inn and former P. Cleary butcher's shop, now Mayo Chix

The Dew Inn public house and the former Cleary butcher's shop, now a ladies fashion store, consists of two three-bay houses with ground floor shop-fronts. In 1786 Bury leased to John Scott the house or plot of ground situated in the High Street of Tullamore formerly held by the late John Mitchell. This was probably a single-storey thatched house which

the landlord wanted renewed and replaced by better housing. It is clear that Scott began to build on the site because in May 1791 the manor court ordered that 'the heaps of stones before the Widow Mitchell's house in High Street and which were laid down there by John Scott is a nuisance and that the same be removed before the 1st day of July next under the penalty of 20 shillings'. Scott, who also had property in O'Connor Square, was declared bankrupt in 1792-3 and the property was sold to the Revd Peter Turpin of Brookfield, a friend of Charles William Bury. It was in the former P. Cleary house that the floor fell in 1928 while a bazaar was in session causing a mild sensation at the time and leaving those in attendance in the basement, but otherwise without any serious injuries.

No. 9 High Street, Quirke's Medical Hall

A four-bay, two-storey house with ground floor shop-fronts.

In 1795 Bury leased to Joshua Brereton M.D, the house in the High Street for three lives renewable for ever at a yearly rent of £14-10s.-0d. It was occupied as a private dwelling house by Ellen Pilkington in 1843 and by John Quirke, an apothecary, in 1854 and has been in use as such since then. The Quirke family business was established in Tullamore in 1830, but the proprietors since the 1940s are the Carragher family.



HIGH STREET, c. 1910



HIGH STREET, c. 1920



HIGH STREET, c. 1960



HIGH STREET, c. 1960

No. 10 High Street, Philip McGinn now Cosgrove's public house

A two-storey house with round-headed doorway and good quality traditional shop-front.

In 1790 Bury leased to John Shaw a house and backyard in High Street for three lives with perpetual renewal at a rent of £12 10s. Again this must have been a completed house and not a site. Shaw also took a lease of the river meadow adjoining his holding for the three lives (this may be the location of much of the Bridge Centre car-park). In 1805 he sold his interest in both properties to Richard Deverell, a brewer, for £500 who later moved down to the more extensive Brewery Tap premises.

No. 11 High Street, R. Power and T. Tutty (now Sammy's Mobile Phone Clinic and Euros 4 Gold)

A two-storey, four-bay house with round-headed doorway and ground floor shop-fronts.

The house was built, about 1790 by Michael Cuddehy, or Cuddihy, a land surveyor to Charles William Bury, and whose name is to be seen on the original lease maps of the 1790s. The former Tutty shop-front was erected in the late 1870s as part of a new frontage for the Kilroy and Tutty holdings. The enamelled cigarette sign refuses to disappear and has been painted over several times to no avail. Now it is covered over by a mobile phone sign. The

old cigarette sign is a much appreciated relic of the old Daly's shop where, in the early 1960s, the Christian Brothers boys attending school across the road could buy single cigarettes and older citizens could rent Mills & Boon love stories. Its most recent covering by mobile phone advertisements one hopes will do no harm to the old signage which has surely an entitlement to exposure not withstanding its promotion of the now much maligned weed. Behind the former R. Power shop was Kenny's dance hall of the 1930s and 1940s. Both shops exhibit the on-going changes in the retail product on the high street.

No. 12 and 13 High Street, Kilroy's shop

This house was used as a furniture store for J.A. Kilroy from 1908 to 2007 when the electrical business was transferred to the Expert Retailing Group and moved to a new purpose-built store at Cloncollog in August 2009 leaving a large retailing gape in High Street.

Ulster Bank

Once a fine three-storey, four-bay house as can be seen in the local postcards of the 1900s the Ulster Bank erected a new building here in the early 1970s. The bank was again remodelled in about 2006. Ulster Bank opened in Tullamore at Cormac Street in 1892 and soon after moved to High Street. The present building is a product of the less caring 1960s

and early 1970s. The remodelling of early 2000s did something to improve the appearance, but it is essentially in the functional box style.

No. 14 High Street, Hoey & Denning, Solicitors, formerly the Bank of Ireland

A five bay, two-storey building with cut-stone front and in the Italianate style.

In 1802 Viscount Charleville conveyed to George Slater a house and plot in High Street. The house was leased to the Bank of Ireland in 1841 and sold outright to the Bank in 1874. The building, originally two houses of three storeys, was provided with a new robust front in 1870 to the plan of Sandham Symes, architect. The contractor was Mr John Molloy who was prominent in building and monumental sculpture in the 1870s and 1880s with his own stone quarry at Ballyduff, Tullamore. The Bank of Ireland is the oldest surviving bank in Tullamore with a branch in the town since 1836. After the merger with Hibernian the bank moved to renovated Hibernian premises in O'Connor Square in 1979. Hoey & Denning, first established in 1885 by George Hoey, moved to this building from Bridge Street in 1980. The law firm is the longest established in Tullamore.



LAWLESS'S SHOP IN HIGH STREET, c.1960



HIGH STREET WITH OLD BANK OF IRELAND AND ULSTER BANK, c.1910



HIGH STREET IN FRONT OF A & L GOODBODY, c.1900



KILROY'S SHOP, c.1959

Loughrey's formerly the County Arms

An eight-bay, three-storey building probably built as two dwelling houses.

The building was erected in the late 1780s, on two separate plots with frontages of about thirty-five feet each and is now an extensive licensed premises with food, dancing and accommodation. The business was in earlier times operated by William Adams and from 1959 by the Bird family, followed by John Clifford in 1967 and Frank Sweeney in the 1980s. The building has had licensed premises at least in part of it since 1829, if not earlier.

The Round House

An interesting house is the bow-fronted Round House with the Gibbsian door-case probably dating from about 1750 and of a style similar to several houses in the town of Banagher. There is a door-case of similar style in O'Connor Square, but with a fanlight instead of the blank slab found here. The houses here could be as early as 1720. Edward Crow or Crowe lived here in the 1780s. Crowe was responsible for the building of Crow Street (now Tara Street) of which nothing survives except the gable wall of a Methodist church, near the entrance to the former Central/Garden of Eden dance hall and later Savoy cinema (demolished in the late 1990s and now Altmore House apartments). The Round House has to be viewed with the adjoining houses which seem to form part of a grand scheme taking in the former Goodbody & Kennedy, Solicitors and the house on the southern side, formerly Looram's. Tasty Take Away and the house adjoining are pre-1800 and perhaps as early as 1750. The Goodbody & Kennedy business (now incorporated in J.D. Scanlon, Solicitors), was first established in the 1880s and by the 1900s was a branch of A. & L. Goodbody,

with Lewis Goodbody the Tullamore partner and his cousin Alfred in the Dublin office – the latter now one of the largest law firms in Ireland.

The Presbyterian Church

This is an attractive, plain church of classical design with a pedimented-ashlar facade and a projecting enclosed porch of identical design and was opened on 31 May 1865. In the 1860s Andrew O'Flanagan made the site available for £100. The less than amusing Victorian equation of class with intelligence is apparent in a newspaper report of the opening ceremony: 'The building which is unpretentious and chaste yet substantial and commodious cost over £300 for its erection. Of this amount Dr Edgar (of Belfast) contributed £200 and William Todd, Esq., of Dublin £50, £100 was raised through local efforts leaving a debt of only £70. About 160 persons of a respectable and intelligent class attended the opening service on Friday and were all comfortably seated.' In Birr a Gothic design was used for the new Presbyterian church built in John's Mall in 1885. Those prominently identified with the founding of the church in Tullamore included people such as Oliver Dobbin, agent or manager of the Bank of Ireland in Tullamore; James Coulter, uncle of Dr McMichael, the pharmacist in Columcille Street; Robert Law, John Dixon, Robert Wyber, David Graham, John and George Richardson, and William Ramsey, all of whom were leading members of the congregation. The Richardsons of Mullaghcrew near Mount Bolus were a well-known family as were the Wybers of Ballyboy. The Goodbody connection with the jute business in Dundee from the 1860s would also have boosted the congregation.

Motor works house, now Angelo's Take-Away

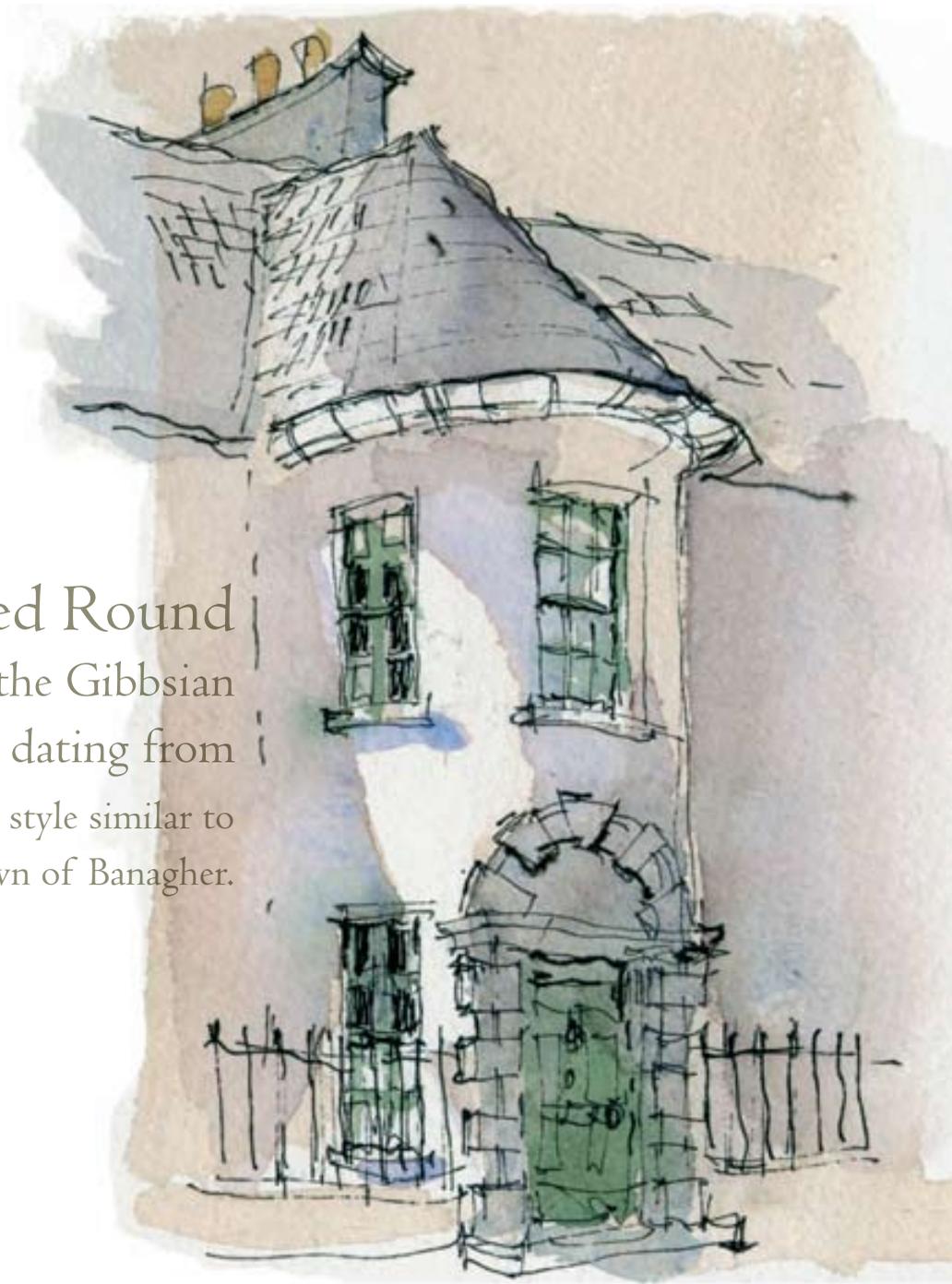
Opposite the church is a three-storey, five-bay house built about 1758. In the 1820s and 1830s the house was used as a classical school for boarding and day boys preparing for university, known as Fitzgerald's. Late in the nineteenth century the very fine De Burgo O'Malley chalice (now in the National Museum) was found in this house in a chest in the attic. The building was spoilt in the mid-twentieth century with the removal of its railings, the provision of petrol pumps (now removed) and two shop-fronts.

Marian Hostel

The houses between the former Motor Works house and Horan's Red Shop are all late-eighteenth century and early-nineteenth century in date. Part of what is now the Marian hostel was once a boarding school. It has also the distinction of being the first house in Tullamore to have piped water when it became available in 1895 and during which time it was owned by the Moorhead family. Prior to that time householders had to depend on wells which it was said were contaminated with seeping sewage. The Moorheads as doctors in the town from the 1830s did much in the 1900s to ensure the provision of safe drinking water and better housing for the poor. The family continued in Tullamore until the 1960s with service in medicine and dentistry of almost 125 years.

It will be noticed that at this point the street line changes on the eastern side. There is evidence to suggest that the houses from the former Allen's shop to Horan's shop (the Red Shop) were built in the 1750s. The same holds true of the houses between the entrance to the car-park at Tara Street and the Presbyterian church (with the exception of the two houses nearest the church on the town side).

...the bow-fronted Round House with the Gibbsian door-case probably dating from about 1750 and of a style similar to several houses in the town of Banagher.



Christian Brothers house now Donal Farrelly, Solicitor

This is a large three-storey, five-bay house over a basement and was erected in 1789 by Revd Dr Thomas Wilson, professor of natural philosophy at Trinity College, Dublin. Garner described it as a cliff-like structure set back from the street and of considerable distinction and preserved in its original condition. The Gibbsian-style door-case is later than other examples already mentioned. Dr Wilson married a daughter of Nicholas Crawford, the Tullamore barrack master, who lived in the house next door, used as furniture and television show rooms by Kilroys until recent years. Wilson is reported to have spent £2,000 on the house - his wife's marriage portion. One of the children of the marriage, Jane Wilson, married Joseph Daunt of Co. Cork and it was in this house that the politician and historian, O'Neill Daunt, was born in 1807. O'Neill Daunt in his memoir recalls his grandmother's house in Tullamore and, in particular, the two rooms in the house which were full of books including a vast pile of unbound plays, perhaps because his grandfather was somehow connected with the Smock Alley playhouse. Daunt had some education at Thomas Fitzgerald's boarding school at High Street. He certainly made Catholic friends there because in 1836 he spent some three months at the home of his aunt's valued friend, Father Joseph Fitzgerald, parish priest of Castletown Delvin and later (1847) parish priest of Rahan. Fr. Fitzgerald was son of the Tullamore school headmaster. Cogan, the historian of the Meath diocese, says Fitzgerald was an eminent scholar and divine and contributed to many learned journals. Daunt was back in Tullamore on 25 September 1842 for a large Repeal meeting. He again returned to the county in October 1842 for Repeal meetings at Thomastown, Kilcormac, Clara

and Banagher. The labourers at the Shannon navigation works turned out in hundreds. Later that day he travelled by evening boat from Ferbane to Tullamore and recalled:

Left Ferbane in the evening boat for Tullamore. Dark, cloudy sky; the moon peeped out at intervals as we slowly passed through the dreary expanse of flat bog. I could see that I loved it better than richer scenes in any other land, because it is my own beloved Ireland... When I bade farewell to my travelling companions I proceeded at once to the home of my old and kind friend, Father O'Rafferty, P.P. of Tullamore, with whom I found another old and kind friend Dr. Wallace, one of the Tullamore magistrates, a Tory in politics and a Protestant in religion, but whose heart is too good to be spoiled by political or sectarian acerbities..

Wilson's great library is long gone. The house was later lived in by the Charleville agent, Francis Berry, who in 1840 wrote of the hundreds of men at his door looking for work.

At this moment twenty able bodied men are at my door stating they are starving as there is no work: the weather being wet the hay cannot be cut and the potatoes are all sown. I do declare solemnly I fear a general plunder....

In another letter of 20 June 1840 he wrote to Lord Charleville, then tottering towards financial ruin:

My Dear Lord, I wrote to you yesterday in a hurried way; I am worse today. My House is at the moment surrounded by a large mob calling on me for support. The state of the town is appalling: Henry Trench is here and

sees the situation I am in. What to do I know not. One of the spokesmen said in plain language they could not starve: if they got work they would willingly earn it; if they did not they would help themselves, for starving was beyond human endurance. I have written to John Digby: I suppose it may follow him, but he don't feel as we do, for he is not in the line of fire as we are; but something must be done and that immediately. I have sent round the tenants to say, if they would subscribe one half year you would do the other for your part of the Cloncollogue River, as far as £25. Your Lordship sees that if I can effect this (that) it will pay itself at the same time. If the Workhouse [at Ardan Road] was going on nothing would be wanted; for the £1000 Rafter [the builder] is obliged to pay out before he gets any money, the principal part of which would be laid out in labour, would save us from the desperate state we are in . . . it is quite impossible any words I could write would give you an idea of the state we are in here now.

Berry wrote in similar terms to Lord Charleville's step-brother, John T. Tisdall and who had a financial interest in the Charleville Estate, Tullamore. The letter is of interest too in that it shows the practical difficulties that can arise with title matters which in turn delay commencement of building causing additional suffering for the unemployed. Curiously in 2010, some 170 years later, there is now only one major building project in progress in Tullamore, the building of the new school on the garden of Berry's house.

20 June 1840. My dear Sir, As Trustee to the Charleville estate in the King's County I think

Left Ferbane in the evening boat for Tullamore. Dark, cloudy sky; the moon peeped out at intervals as we slowly passed through the dreary expanse of flat bog. I could see that I loved it better than richer scenes in any other land,



it my duty to inform you of the state of the Town and neighbourhood of Tullamore. The poor are almost desperate from want of work and want of food. My house is daily beset not by individuals but by starving mobs. Lord Charleville and the town have subscribed liberally, and the last returns from our Meal Committee were that they were giving meal at half price to 3,800 persons. This is deplorable, and if we cannot do even more than this life or Property is not secure; for even if we were able to fight them, it is desperate to fight starving Men, Women and Children. Your answer to me is, what can you do? You cannot collect money for a starving population. My proposal is this. The Poor Law Commissioners have agreed to purchase a small field from Lord Charleville and the Trustee for to erect a Poor House on: the purchase money comes to £579.7.6. The Commissioners from some delay have not produced the deeds or paid the money. They have agreed to give O'Rafferty the tenant £100 for his interest. O'Rafferty would allow them to commence if it did not displease Lord Charleville. The Contractor must expend £1,000 of his own money before he gets money from the Commissioners and the most of this must be expended for labour. This expenditure would enable the poor of Tullamore to exist until the Harvest would come in; and to show you that I think the money will be paid I will be security that it will. I really think that we are in an awful way at this moment, and it is necessary some risk should be run to prevent the consequence of a burst coming. I will wait with great anxiety for your answer. Every day teems with greater danger, and the people think it is Lord Charleville that prevents it, and I believe he would do it if you would consent.

By 1849 the Great Famine was almost over and someone who had done much during those years to assist the poor, the Quaker entrepreneur, Robert Goodbody, had purchased the house. In the 1920s the house was occupied by Free State soldiers much to the chagrin of its then owner, Edmund Williams, and was sold by the Williams family to the Christian Brothers in 1951. The Brothers sold the property in the 1980s to the present owners closing off the access to the schoolboys from High Street in the process. This is a great house, but every house has its stories and its memories. On the back garden of the old Wilson house is the Christian Brothers secondary school for boys, erected in 1960 and soon to be replaced by another school to be built on the playing field at Bachelors Walk. Work on this new school started in 2010 and means the loss of the wonderful park bordering Bachelors Walk which has been part of the garden of the big house since 1789.

J.A. Kilroy television showrooms (later Expert)

The former furniture and television showrooms of J.A. Kilroy (later Expert), largely but not entirely hides the facade of an interesting mid-eighteenth century building with Gibbsian door-case (still



NICHOLAS CRAWFORD'S HOUSE, 1958 NOW KILROY TV SHOWROOMS

surviving) and at first floor lunettes or half-moon windows (see illustrations). This house could be wonderfully restored and with the Farrelly house and the private house of Dermot Kilroy provide some of the finest surviving houses of the eighteenth century in Tullamore. The building had a Peace Police Barrack to the rear of the front dwelling house in 1838 and may have been the first police station in Tullamore. In the late eighteenth century it was the home of the Tullamore barrack master and ended its days as the Charleville Estate Office in the late 1950s. It was here that the Tullamore atlas of 1786 was housed and sadly missing since the 1950s.

Kilroy dwelling house

This is a private residence of two storeys over a basement built in the 1780s and one of the few houses left in Tullamore town still lived in as a private residence. Garner noted that the round-headed door-case is set up a flight of steps with moulded nosing.

Rose Lawn houses off High Street – former Ritz Cinema and Joyce Auctioneers

This small town scheme of houses was constructed by the Flanagan Group in the 1980s on the back garden of the adjoining houses, part of Kilroy's garden and the site of the Ritz cinema. Access to the small town-house scheme is through the site of a 1750s house demolished to provide for the Ritz cinema, built in 1946 at a cost of £30,000. The cinema seated 1,000 and was remarkably good for a provincial town in the post-war years. The building was acquired by the Post Office in the early 1980s and demolished. All that is left now of the contemporary façade is the Joyce auctioneering office where on the first floor, but painted over, is part of the 1940s glass front. Rose Lawn and the Glenfircal town houses,

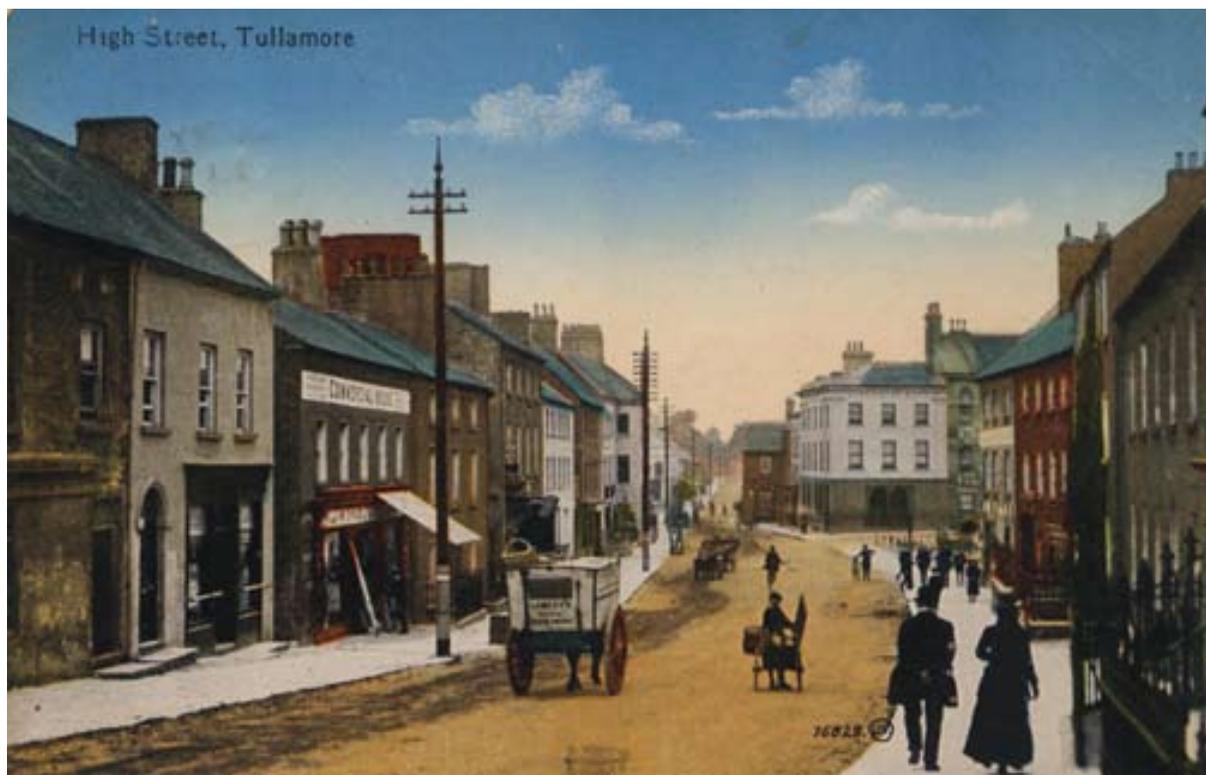
also by the Flanagan Group, were the first private town-house schemes built in Tullamore in the late-twentieth century.

Jade Inn and Sambodinos

Beside the former Dunne's shop dating to 1787 and connected with the corner development at O'Connor Square is a fine three-storey, seven-bay house with a Gibbsian door-case. The building, for many years known as Colton's Hotel, has now two shop-fronts and the original railings and low wall fronting the basement were removed in the early 1970s. This house was built in 1750 for Colonel Thomas Crowe and survived intact until about 1974. Part of the garden was used in the building of the Rose Lawn housing scheme in the late 1980s.

HIGH STREET IN 1821 AND 1901

High Street in 1821 contained eighty four houses and 543 inhabitants. As almost all the houses were built before 1821, and there were only forty-two in 1901, this would suggest that this calculation includes some of the houses in the lanes off High Street. In 1901 High Street with a population of 226 had forty inhabitants, two uninhabited houses and forty-one families. The houses were all slated and stone-walled, twenty-six being placed in the first division and fourteen in the second. As to out buildings there were nineteen stables, five coach houses, three harness rooms, two cow houses, one calf house, one piggery and five fowl houses. Lanes off the street were Molloy's Lane at the back of Conway & Kearney, Solicitors, Flanagan's Lane behind Galvin's and the Dew Inn, and Brewery Lane behind Cosgrove's bar. On the eastern side opposite the entrance to Tara Street was Wheatley's Lane, later called O'Neill's Place and since the 1970s a car-park.



HIGH STREET WITH LUMLEY'S BREAD VAN, c.1912

TARA STREET

FORMERLY CROW STREET

The Tara Street houses, now all demolished for many years, were built about 1810. Like Offally Street off Columcille Street side streets or back streets off the main thoroughfares did not prove popular for quality residential areas and were soon converted to tenement properties.



THE OLD MILL AT SALLY GROVE, c.1914

Conditions were poor with overcrowding and eventual demolition in the 1960s to provide a car-park and site for the new Central Ballroom/Garden of Eden of 1969. Apart from Kenny's ballroom in High Street of the 1940s which was on a small scale the Central Ballroom marked the entry of commercial interests into dancing and took it out of the control of voluntary groups and the Catholic Church. The hall was not licensed unlike the Bridge House night club opened later in the 1970s. This building was converted into three cinemas about 1980 and demolished in the 1990s when a new cinema with six screens was opened in the Bridge Centre. About the year 2001-2 the large Altmore apartment block of some thirty eight units was built here to a design of Leighton Johnston, a firm of Belfast architects, who also designed the large office block, Castle Buildings, to the rear. The developers were Seamus Kane and Luke Carberry and the builder Liam Daly. Altmore is a townland in County Tyrone associated with the developers. An earlier name for the area was Sally Grove, or The Sallow Grove, an area from the foot of Tara Street to the river and connecting via a bridge to Water Lane, now Main Street. Also off Tara Street was a narrow street or footpath to what is now Cosgrove's (formerly McGinn's) known as Meath Lane formerly Brewery Lane. In the eighteenth century Crow Street led to the demesne of Revd Daniel Jackson which may have been located



TARA STREET, c.1950



TARA STREET, c.1950

near the canal and railway line and was described in 1766 as:

A large convenient, well furnished house, containing twelve rooms on the first two floors, with closets to five of them, besides hall and pantry; with all necessary out-offices, stables, coach-house, dairy, laundry, brew-house, hen-house, and bleach yard; with out-rooms for men servants and store rooms; a large garden, well walled in, with several divisions planted with all kinds of fruit trees; likewise fish ponds, well stocked, and a large pigeon-house...

In the published memoir of O'Neill Daunt, already adverted to, he records his grandmother, providing a nice account of life for the better off in the eighteenth century. Mrs Wilson recalled of Mr Jackson's house:

His apartments were furnished expensively and with elegance. There were paintings by foreign artists, and ornamental china. Mrs Jackson's dressing-room was a perfect toy-shop of recherche nicknackery. The domestic staff included a butler, two footmen, a coachman, three gardeners, a housekeeper, two housemaids and a waiting-maid, besides the kitchen officials. Breakfast was at nine, dinner at three, tea at six, after which cards filled the time until ten, when supper was served...

Surprisingly nothing now survives of the house perhaps much affected by the canal and later the railway schemes. More importantly, it points to how much the landscape below the Altmore apartments has changed. The large bonded warehouse, beside the grain drums of the 1970s, and built in 1870 on the site of a gazebo probably connected with the

Crowe establishment, is gone. The gazebo can be seen on the 1838 map of the town. The bonded warehouse and the later grain drums have also been demolished. Behind Altmore House and to the rear of Loughrey's bar was a field with broiler houses on it, erected in the 1960s for breeding or 'growing' poultry when people moved away from farm chickens to the forced variety. In a deed of 1761 the field, now the Bridge Shopping Centre car-park, was described as the island meadow surrounded by a mill race and the river. By the 1960s the mill race was a dangerously polluted drain and is now covered over and piped. All that remains is the foundation of the old mill at the back of the first Deverell brewery just outside the Dunnes Stores yard. Most of the former 'Cooke's Mill', once accessed along a narrow lane beside the former Marron's house in High Street, near Tullamore Electric Diesel Limited, was demolished in the 1990s to make way for the three new apartment blocks accessed from the bottom of Tara Street. To the back of these blocks and overlooking the town park is the old mill, formerly part of the distillery, and now housing instead of mill machinery six apartments. Ned Cooke, who worked in the mill in the 1880s, was said to have haunted the building. Now instead of a clanking of chains at the mill door Old Ned is free to skate-board in the town park or view the Kentucky Fried Chicken and other take-aways in Main Street over the river. It was in the same mill building that Daniel E. Williams started work as a boy in the 1860s and went on to become a local captain of industry by 1900.

Tara Street in 1821 and 1901

In 1821 the street had eighty people and sixteen houses. In 1901 the street had eighty-five occupants, eleven houses and nineteen families. Now with the four apartment blocks at Sally Grove it would have a lot more people, but none with fowl or piggeries!



22. TARA STREET, FORMERLY CROW STREET, IN THE 1970S AND BEFORE THE DEMOLITION OF ONE OF THE BUILDINGS ABOUT 1995 TO WIDEN THE STREET FOR THE NEW BRIDGE CENTRE.

CORMAC STREET

Cormac Street is a wide street with a particularly good terrace of houses between Adams Solicitors and the courthouse. The street is still largely residential with no shops now and only some offices. Cormac Street or Charleville Street, as it was once called, is on the approach road to Charleville Demesne and has very good houses at the junction of High Street, O'Moore Street and Cormac Street. At the other end and set back from the street are the courthouse and former gaol.





24. ACRES HALL, NOW THE TULLAMORE TOWN HALL, IN CORMAC STREET WITH THE ACRES FOLLY TO THE LEFT, THE LATTER BUILT TO CELEBRATE WELLINGTON'S VICTORIES IN THE PENINSULAR WAR.

Tullamore Town Hall/Acres Hall

This handsome house was built in 1786 by Thomas Acres and is set well in from the street. It was considered to be the finest in Tullamore in the nineteenth century, but now there are several others that could compete for the title. Acres Hall, the town hall since 1992, is a five-bay, two-storey house with a limestone ashlar façade. In this respect it bears comparison with the house of Dr Wilson (now Donal Farrelly) in High Street and was built at the same time. Acres was a remarkable man about whom little is known of his early life. He was in some way connected to Charles William Bury, earl of Charleville and was from the south Offaly/ north Tipperary area as was Catherine Sadleir (of Sopwell Hall), the mother of the town's landlord from 1785. Acres may have been an agent during the minority of Bury and was later responsible for building Cormac Street, O'Moore Street, Columcille Street and, less successfully, Offally Street and part of Chapel Lane. Thomas Acres was the town's leading property developer over a fifty-year period until his death in 1836, a year after his patron, the first earl. Acres Hall may have been the first house to be constructed in Cormac Street. In the back garden of the house, better observed from the courthouse, is a mock tower house known as Acres Folly, and said to have been erected about 1812 to commemorate the Wellington victories in the Peninsular War. The houses between Acres Hall

and Dervill Dolan's offices (formerly Poole's shop) were built on the garden of Acres Hall and nearly all date from the 1800s with the exception of the two houses with the red brick string-courses and cornices, beside the smaller house also owned by the town council. Before the brick chimney stack was plastered the date 1898 could be seen. As mentioned red brick was commonly used around Tullamore for a short period from the 1890s to the 1920s.

The former Patrick Lloyd shop now occupied as offices

The large shop windows survive in what was once Lloyd's shop at the southern end of a terrace of three three-storey houses and worthy of special mention were the polished brass rods to the front unfortunately now removed.

Lloyd Town Park and Kilcruttin graveyard

As one proceeds up Cormac Street past the former Poole's shop (now Dervill Dolan) a large park can be seen, in the southern corner of which is Kilcruttin graveyard. The graveyard dates from the 1720s and has been closed since 1893. After years of neglect it is now in good condition. There are about sixty tombstones here all of which date from the 1770s to the 1850s. The most interesting tombstones are those erected to members of the King's German Legion in 1806-08, but none to the soldier shot in a

duel by a brother officer in 1807. Also of interest is the Burgess mausoleum. It should, of course, be remembered that the number of slabs or grave-stones does not in any way represent the number of burials. What looks sparse in terms of tombstones possibly covers 5,000 burials over the years from the 1740s to the 1890s. We are reminded of the horrors of the Famine years of the 1840s in a letter written by the Revd E.F. Berry to the Tullamore board of guardians in 1852. Berry wrote:

I beg leave to inform you that within the last few days I have been inspecting the graveyard of Kilcruttin where the greater number of persons who die in the Tullamore Poorhouse are buried, and I find that it is now so full that no more than 1,000 paupers have been buried within the last few years and according to Patrick Gorman's return to me, 200 have been laid there within the past year...

Almost immediately after the letter had been received, the third earl of Charleville (who succeeded his demented father in 1851) made land available at Clonminch for a graveyard (near the water tower) and also land at Ardan Road for a graveyard for the workhouse. However, Catholics continued to use the graveyards at Durrow and Kilbride until a graveyard was opened at Clonminch Road in 1893.



ACRES HALL, 2008



LLOYD'S SHOP, c.1920



KILCRUTTIN PARK BEFORE RENOVATION, c.1978



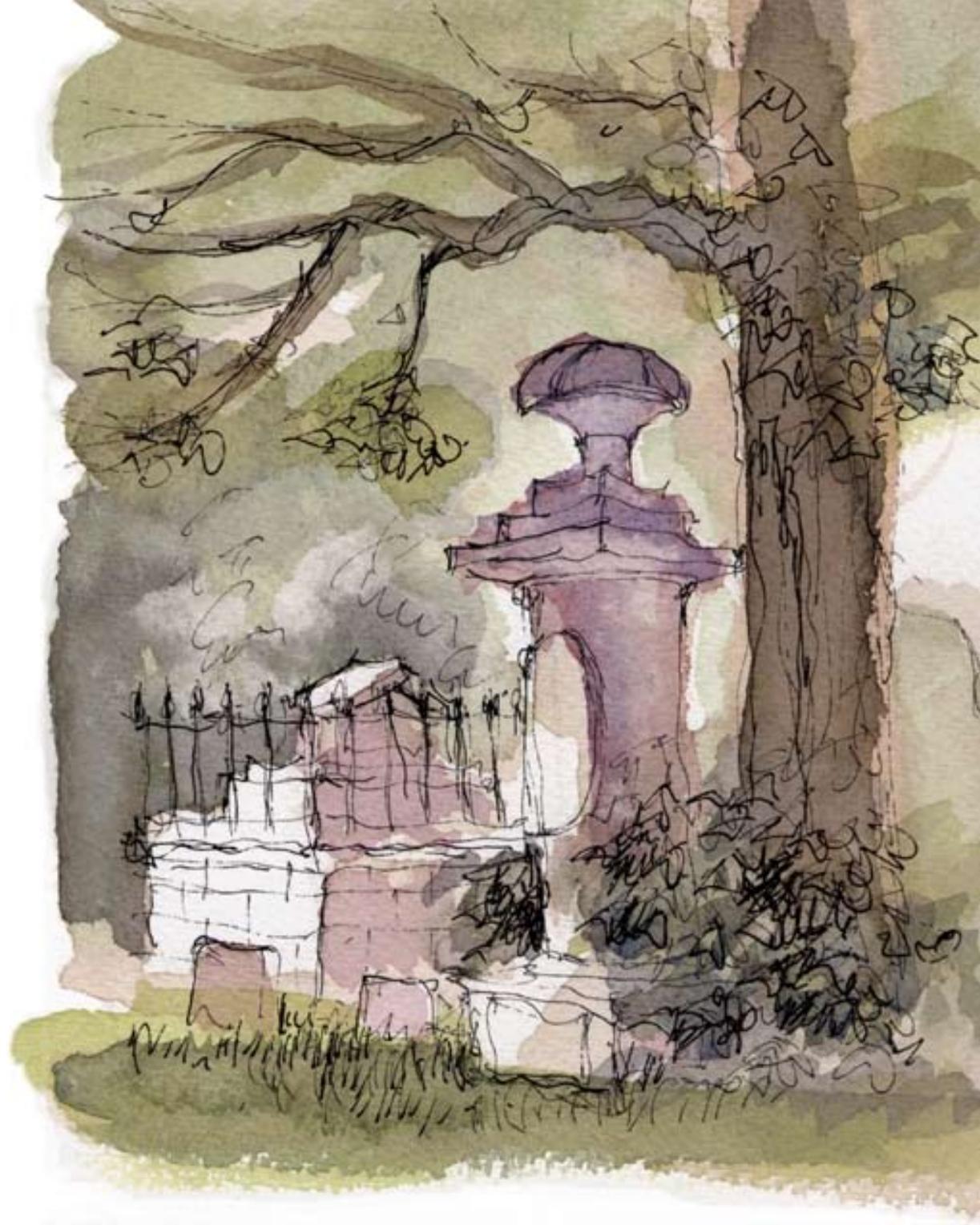
TOWN PARK, 2008



DOORWAY ON CORMAC STREET, c.2000

Sacred to the Memory
of
Fredk. Willm. Baron Oldershausen,
Late a Captain in His Majesty's
1st German Dragoons, born the
15th March, 1776, at Verden in the
Electorate of Hanover, and departed
this life at Tullamoore, the 22nd day
of December, 1808.

By His Brother Officers.



25. THE MONUMENT IN KILCRUTTIN GRAVEYARD TO BARON OLDERSHAUSEN OF THE KING'S GERMAN LEGION WHO DIED AT TULLAMORE IN 1808, WITH THE LATER BURGESS MAUSOLEUM IN THE BACKGROUND.



The story of the town park goes back to the early 1980s and benefited from a totally new design and make-over in 2007-8 which has put it into great shape. The new park was designed by Murray and Associates, landscape architects, who were also responsible for town parks in Carlow and Roscommon. For the first time the park is now widely used by adults and children for leisure activities. The opening to the park from Main Street and Marian Place provided real connectivity and indicates what might have been possible had the park opened to Bridge Street and possibly to Patrick Street. Nonetheless it is a great success and a significant achievement for the town council. Earlier efforts off Callary Street in the 1930s were halted by the war and the need for more housing. The 1960s effort at Kilbride Street beside the canal was successful as far as the improvements to the old quarry and canal bank were concerned, but did not succeed as a children's playground for very long.

Opposite the old gaol is a row of ten, two-bay, two-storey houses built in 1879 of coursed-rubble limestone with brick window-dressing and brick stacks for the Acres-Pierce family and for letting. Three of the houses still retain their original porches with pierced barge-boards while two more have reproductions. The houses are now all plastered where once the course rubble could be seen on at least some of the houses.

At the end of the terrace near the railway station is an attractive pair of two-bay, single-storey, semi-detached houses over basements. They are built of yellow brick with raised coigns and a single central stack. Each house has a tall square-headed door-case with a rectangular light, simple bracket, and a planked door. In the front is a stout wall of rusticated limestone similar to the wall of the railway bridge. The houses probably date from the building of the railway station here in the early 1860s and before the provision of what is now a public road from Kilcruttin in the 1930s. As such they were staff houses for the railway station and served as a home for the station master for many years. It was not until the late 1930s that the new road at Kilcruttin, much widened in the 1980s, was made so as to provide an access from O'Molloy Street to the new factory in the old gaol. Beside the cottages is the old lane to Kilcruttin cemetery, out of use now for many years.

From the town park a view can be obtained of the Tullamore river taking its meandering course towards Rahan where it meets the Clodiagh and eventually flows into the Brosna. Once again in view, are a few remaining distillery buildings and the corn mill, now an apartment block. The 1870s great Sally Grove warehouse and the massive grain storage bins of the 1960s and 1970s are gone and replaced by the Main Street shops and apartments.

Near to the old Acres Folly is the new office block, Castle Buildings, with some 200 parking spaces underground. The park is an excellent vantage point for a view of the courthouse and the attractive Cormac Street houses of the 1850s beside it. At the time of the building of the courthouse the countess of Charleville made a sketch for a crescent of houses opposite the courthouse. Being close to a graveyard and in soft ground the idea for houses here was not followed up. Besides, the 1830s was not a time of significant house building in Tullamore. The great building phase was now over for some seventy years.

The Courthouse

The building of a county court at Tullamore in 1833-5 signified complete victory in a fifty-year battle to have Tullamore designated the county town in place of Daingean (Philipstown) ten miles east of Tullamore, which was no longer considered suitable because of its then remote location and poor accommodation facilities. The owners of Daingean, the influential Ponsonby family, successfully defeated moves in the Irish house of commons to have the assizes transferred in 1784 and again in 1786. The building of a county gaol at Tullamore in 1826 was seen as an essential preliminary in the transfer. As soon as the gaol was completed it was argued that the county courthouse should follow, much to the chagrin of the Ponsonby family and the people of Daingean.



CORMACS STREET, c.2000



THE COURTHOUSE AND GAOL TULLAMORE, c.1910



POLITICAL PRISONERS IN TULLAMORE GAOL, 1887-8



THE UNVEILING OF THE MEMORIAL AT TULLAMORE COURTHOUSE, EASTER 1953

Lord Tullamore reckoned that the building of a county courthouse at Tullamore would bring as much as £500 profit to the town each time the assizes were held. The Ponsonby influence was a great deal less at Westminster than it had been at College Green, and with the backing of the government an act was put through parliament in 1832 transferring the assizes to Tullamore from the completion of the new courthouse which was realised in July 1835.

The passing of the act confirmed the grand jury (the oligarchical predecessor of the Offaly County Council made up of leading county landowners) in its intention to build a new courthouse at Tullamore, and in 1833 almost £10,000 was voted for this purpose. Following a competition in which there were over twenty participants J.B. Keane was named as the architect. Keane's plan was for a Grecian or neo-classical courthouse, not unlike that William Vitruvius Morrison had built at Tralee and Carlow. Here, access had been provided to two semi-circular court rooms from corridors surrounding them. Apparently, the prototype was Sir Robert Smirke's Gloucester courthouse. In a letter to the Irish Chief Secretary in 1829, an enthusiastic Lord Tullamore wrote: 'I have been at Exeter and shall visit Gloucester court-house, on my road to Ireland, for the purpose of adopting all the latest improvements.' Lord Tullamore opted for a neo-classical design, but he would have preferred something more akin to the

style of the gaol. Morrison had in fact prepared both Gothic and classical designs. Writing to his wife in 1833 he remarked:

We have selected a capital plan of the courthouse as far as internal accommodation and convenience, but with Grecian elevation, which I fear will clash with the gaol, but I could not get them to give a decent Saxon, Norman, rustic or Elizabethan plan! The democratic party runs so high, that out of all the plans, all Grecian, we chose the plainest exterior, fearing a traverse at the assizes. On the 29th we meet to declare a contractor...

The courthouse was completed in 1835. It was often remarked afterwards that it was virtually impossible to make oneself heard in either of the semi-circular court rooms. Not that it prevented election meetings from being held there which were a great deal more boisterous than anything we know.

The visitor to the courthouse today will note that only one semi-circular court room survives - the crown court where criminal cases were tried. The courthouse was burned in 1922 on the departure of the Republican forces from the town. The Free State government decided to rebuild and work began in 1925 under the supervision of the architect, T.F. McNamara. He decided not to adhere to the original ground plan and only one of the semi-circular court

rooms was retained. The royal arms was removed from the attic and some blank windows opened in curtain walls. The new building cost £32,000 (no expense to the local ratepayers) and was opened in 1927. A new chapter in the history of the building opened after 2002 when the county council moved to the new offices at Charleville Road and the Courts Service opted to renovate the old building. Suggested uses for the courthouse or part of it, such as a museum or a theatre, had been mooted but plans were soon formulated by the expanding Courts Service. Work on the plans commenced in 2002 under the supervision of Michael Grace of Newenham Mulligan and Associates, Architects, with the actual works commencing in 2005 and completed in 2007. The cost of the refurbishment was budgeted at €15 million with the completed building now providing three fine courtrooms, conference rooms and a regional office for the Courts Service while at the same time respecting the building's architectural integrity. Prisoners awaiting trial are again housed in the basement where some of the old cell doors survive as does part of the subterranean passage to the gaol. The timberwork in the one semi-circular courtroom surviving is of a 1920s date and not 1830s as has been suggested elsewhere. The refurbished building was reopened on 17 April 2007 in a much grander affair than that of seventy years earlier. This time the official opening was carried out by the then minister



TULLAMORE COURTHOUSE, FOLLOWING THE BURNING IN 1922



FACADE OF TULLAMORE COURTHOUSE, c.2000



GAOL GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE, 1887



COURT HOUSE, c.1940



27. THE FORMER TULLAMORE GAOL WITH THE COTTAGES OF THE WARDENS TO THE RIGHT ON GAOL LAWN.

for justice, equality, and law reform, Michael McDowell, TD and as in 1927 an election was in the air. Others attending included the then minister for finance, Brian Cowen, TD, who had some twenty three years earlier stood in the same building as a young solicitor and was elected as Taoiseach by the Dáil on 7 May 2008.

County Gaol later Salt's factory and now Kilcruttin Business Park

Further up Cormac Street is the Gothic-style facade of the old county gaol. The iron work to the front of the gaol and courthouse dates from 1835. At the gaol entrance gates may be seen the Roman symbols of authority, the fasces, a bundle of rods from which an axe projected. The castellated entrance front of the former county gaol was incorporated into a modern factory building by Salts (Ireland) Limited. Salts spinning mill was opened about 1938, to a design of T.J. Cullen of Suffolk Street Dublin and erected by Messrs Thompson of Carlow, at a cost of about £78,000. The former gaol was completed in 1830 and closed in 1921. Destroyed by Republican forces in 1922 during the Civil War it was adapted for use as a spinning mill in 1937-8. The preparation for the new factory involved the retention of the façade only of the old building with all the rest demolished from about June 1937, following the announcement of the new factory for Tullamore. The old walls of

the gaol were replaced by a new tariff wall designed to support Salts Irish production facility. As with so many other old buildings in the midlands some of the stone ended up in the Cistercian monks' church in Roscrea. The worsted spinning mill was closed in 1982 and the premises acquired by John Flanagan, the builder, in 1985 and adapted successfully for use for business units for letting.

Behind the facade are the modern factory buildings and units. Gaols and workhouses are often viewed as the symbols of 'British tyranny in Ireland' but the truth is often complex. The gaol at Tullamore was one of a number built in the first half of the nineteenth century as a result of the prison reform acts of 1810 and 1826. In 1820 the King's County Grand Jury appointed a committee 'to fix upon a site and procure plans for a county gaol'. A report on the Daingean gaol, then the county gaol, found it to be out of touch with the reforming spirit: 'On the whole the establishment seems adapted to further corruption of the prisoners and increase of vice from the want of all power of classification, inspection and employment.' The grand jury's committee, after looking at Galway decided upon the model at Limerick designed by the architect James Pain in 1821. Others who submitted plans included William Deane Butler and William Murray. However, the Tullamore gaol was to be smaller by about two-

fifths. Like Limerick it had a polygonal tower at the centre but with four rays of buildings diverging from it instead of five. An engineer with local connections, John Killaly, was overseer of the project. Surprisingly for a supervising engineer his name was spelt Killay on the plaque over the entrance door. The contractors were the canal builders, Henry, Mullins and McMahon who also built the adjoining courthouse.

Lord Tullamore, eldest son of the earl of Charleville, was very much involved in the political manoeuvring that was necessary to obtain support for the building of a gaol and later a courthouse at Tullamore. In a letter to his step-brother he provided an amusing account of the laying of the foundation stone of the gaol in September 1826:

I feel it will give you great pleasure to hear that the first stone is laid, and of my great success. I shall leave others to describe the scene. I feel it is impossible to do justice to it, and to you it will appear impossible as you did not witness it. The lowest calculation makes the multitude amount to 30,000. Mr Killaly [the supervising engineer for the gaol] says between 70,000 and 100,000, and is so convinced he is right he is going to measure the ground they covered and make a calculation... Such dense, enormous masses of well-dressed, orderly good-



HIGH STREET 1960s



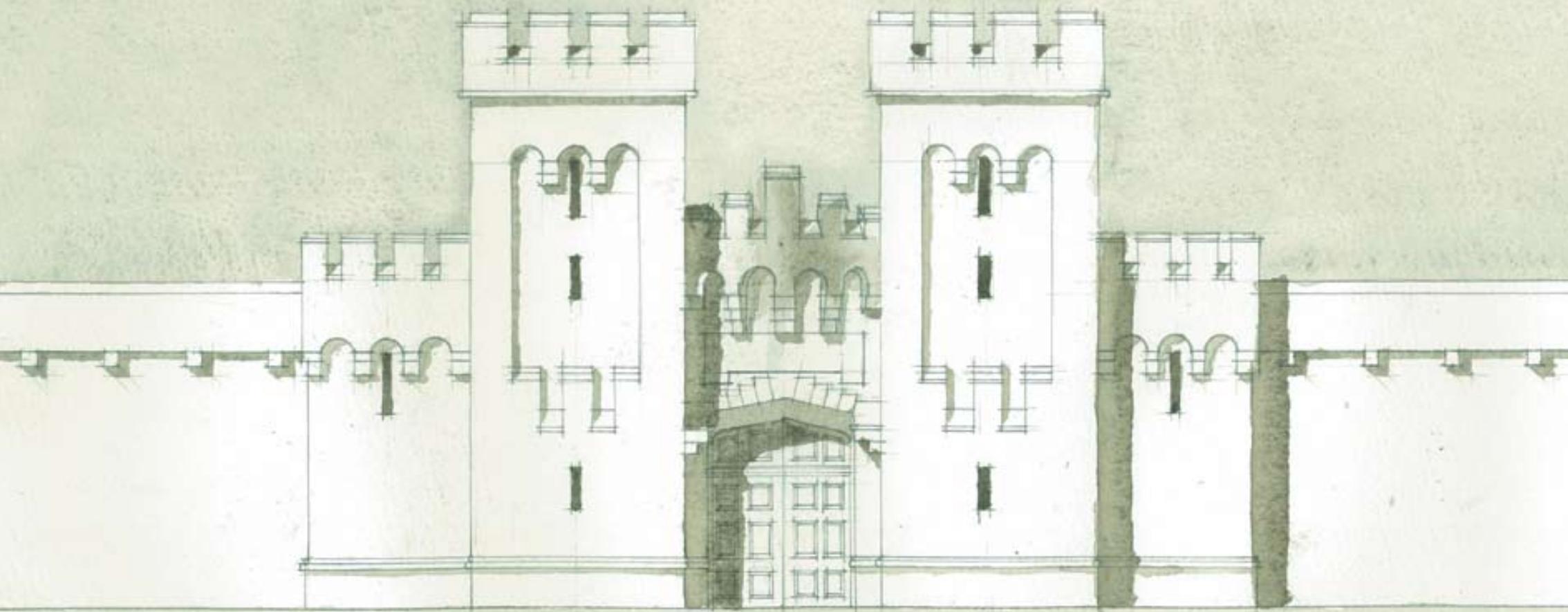
DRAWING OF COURTHOUSE BY J.B. KEANE, 1835



MICHAEL BEHAN, CORMAC STREET, BAKERY



TULLAMORE GAOL, c.1912



age, Tom Pretty (or Prittie) of O'Carroll Street could recall the public hangings of the 1830s and 1840s. The scaffold was erected in front of the prison over the entrance door. Pretty remembered that in 1844 a soldier named George Jubey, belonging to the Fifth Regiment of Fusiliers, for a time stationed in Birr, was hanged for the murder of his adjutant, Captain Robertson Mackay, who was shot while on parade by Jubey on 11 August, 1843. A great crowd witnessed the execution, many of whom had travelled all the way from Birr. Jubey came out on the scaffold with a firm step, and scanned the crowd, which thronged the road and crowded on the railings in front of the jail lawn. The hangman pinioned the condemned man on the scaffold, then adjusted the noose of the rope, and pulled a white cap down over his head. Then he pulled a lever and the unfortunate man disappeared through the trap-door, and the body was seen to dangle from the rope underneath the platform or gallows. A peculiar incident in connection with the tragic affair was caused by a crowd of chimney-sweeps who had assembled and who set up an unearthly wailing as Jubey was launched into eternity.

By the 1900s the number detained in the prison had declined considerably. However, the prison was again in the news in 1913 when some of the suffragettes were sent to Tullamore. During the Anglo-Irish war (1919-21) the gaol and the courthouse were taken

over by the British military. The remaining prisoners were transferred to Mountjoy in November 1921. During the Civil War (1922-3) both the gaol and the courthouse were taken over by the 'Irregulars' or Republican forces who sand-bagged the place in anticipation of an attack from the National army. The Republican forces had a change of mind about this and on the morning of 19 July 1922 the gaol, courthouse and military barrack were set on fire by the departing Republicans. In 1937-8 the site of the gaol was cleared to provide a site for a spinning mill for Salts (Ireland) Ltd., later Tullamore Yarns Ltd. The factory was the backbone of the town's economy for over thirty years. Prior to 1966 the work force was up to 1,000 strong, but later fell to 250 and closed in 1982. Since 1985 the place has again thrived as a centre for small-scale enterprises known as Kilcruttin Business Park.

Gaol Lawn

Beside the gaol gates is an attractive terrace of houses for gaol warders or turnkeys as they were once called and dated to about 1889.

Immediately north of the courthouse are six houses between Coleman's Lane and the courthouse dating from the 1830s to the 1850s. The two houses nearest the courthouse have good round-headed doorcases with Doric fluted columns. It was here that the temporary buildings comprising the Wellington

Barracks were located after 1800 and until the end of the wars with France in 1815.

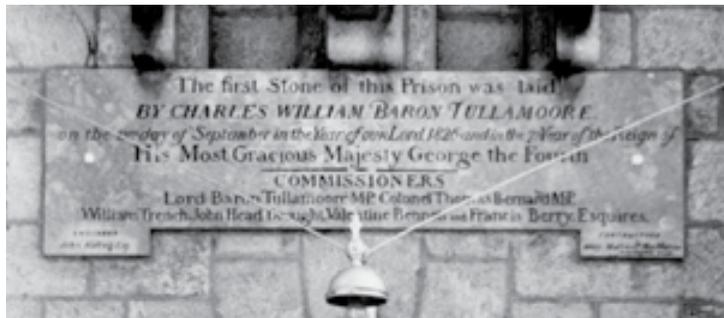
Brian P. Adams, Tullamore House and the Cormac Street terrace

On the eastern side of the street is a massive three-storey house over a basement with four bays to O'Moore Street (Brian P. Adams and four bays to Cormac Street (Tullamore House). The house is of considerable architectural importance closing off the vista from High Street. This house was built by Thomas Acres about 1800 as also was the terrace of six two-storey houses. The houses were first used to accommodate the army during the Napoleonic war years when its size was greatly increased in preparation for an invasion from France. A temporary barrack was built south of the Cormac Street terrace near to the site of the later courthouse and known as the Wellington Barracks while the permanent barrack was located at Patrick Street. Benjamin Woodward, the distinguished architect of the Museum Building in Trinity College and the former Kildare Street Club was born in the house beside that of Brian P. Adams, solicitor, in 1816, now occupied by the Offaly County Enterprise Board. His father was in the Royal Meath Militia and the family moved a few years later. A coach entrance beside this house was in recent years converted for office use.

To the south is a terrace of six, three-bay, and two-



GAOL COTTAGES, 1979



THE TULLAMORE PRISON FOUNDATION STONE LAID IN 1826



CORMAC STREET, c.1910

storey houses also built by Acres and occupied by officers and their families in the years before 1815. Thereafter they became sought after residences for the retiring wealthy with the last two houses in the terrace, nearest the courthouse, serving as a hotel in the 1830s. The houses have rough cast walls and simple, but effective, round-headed doorcases (with some containing their original panelled doors), and with astragals on the arris and plain keystones. The houses are fronted by low walls and railings. One house has three wrought-iron balconies and a simple string-course. Another house, as Garner noted, has an attractive plaque with a leopard's head and swags on it. This terrace is one of the fine Georgian terraces surviving in the town and is in better shape than that at Church Street and Convent Road and, indeed the early Victorian terrace at O'Moore Street.

The railway station

The Great Southern and Western Railway Company was responsible for building the railway line through Tullamore. The first stage from Portarlinton to Tullamore terminated at Clonminch in 1854 and a railway station was built there at the terminus. The first appearance of a train in Tullamore in early October 1854 was met by a large crowd. The better off in Tullamore would already have used the service as far as Portarlinton (from 1847) taking a coach from there to Tullamore. By October 1859 the line from Tullam-

ore to Athlone, then known as the Athlone Branch Railway, was constructed and opened. Two years later, the inhabitants of Tullamore, through the Hon. Alfred Bury (later the fifth earl of Charleville), petitioned the railway company to build a station nearer the town because Clonminch was considered to be a great distance from the town centre. By 1865 a new station was completed at Charleville Road together with the pair of houses now divided by the road from Kilcruttin and referred to earlier. The station itself has been much modified over the years so that nothing now survives except the outline of the original building and some of the out-houses near the signal box. The pedestrian bridge over the railway line was taken from Roscrea in the 1970s and re-erected at Tullamore. A second new bridge with a lift was completed in 2009 to make the station more wheelchair-friendly and together with other works cost €1 million. Beside the station is the road to the Kilcruttin national schools and now connecting with the western by-pass. This road is of recent date and, as noted, owes its origins to the opening of the Salt's factory in 1938 and the building of O'Molloy Street. To the right of it is Kilcruttin Lane which once led to the graveyard. The railway connection to Tullamore has been hugely beneficial to the town and district since the 1850s and all the more so in recent years with the growth in the number of trains and passenger numbers.

KILCRUTTIN

The important Kilcruttin relief road started off as an access from O'Molloy Street to Charleville Road in 1938, cutting through as it did some of the railway company land and separating from the station the house of the railway master. Primary schools were built here in the 1950s and early 1960s catering in Scoil Mhuire (1957) for the young children in the newly completed estates at Marian Place and Pearse Park. Within four years the new Scoil Bhríde was added and the old (1875) school at St Brigid's Place closed. This school was to cater for the older boys of the town.

The provision of a western by-pass from Ardan Road to the Burlington factory in the late 1970s facilitated in the 1980s the new bridge at Srah and at Kilcruttin. The old bridge at Kilcruttin is to the left of the new one and gives a clear indication of how narrow the old road was. On the new road was built the county fire station, a scouts' hall and later a boxing club. The available land on the southern side of the road came to be used as an official halting site for the Travellers with some sixteen houses/stands and parking areas for caravans. Beside this is an unofficial halt in use now for many years.



RAILWAY STATION



RAILWAY STATION, c. 1910



KILCRUTTIN ROAD WITH 'HALT' IN THE BACKGROUND



KILCRUTTIN NATIONAL SCHOOLS AND TOWN PARK IN 2005

29. THE CHARLEVILLE ROAD RAILWAY BRIDGE OF THE LATE 1850S WITH THE SIGNAL BOX IN THE FOREGROUND (COURTESY OF TULLAMORE TOWN COUNCIL).



CHARLEVILLE ROAD

The road to the demesne of Charleville was largely free of development until 1902 when Dew Park was built. This new house for Daniel E. Williams was erected over one hundred years after Elmfield and set the trend in this fashionable approach road from the landlord's house to the town centre.



30. A VIEW OF THE RAILWAY STATION WITH THE CEMENT SILOS.

The Charleville Road houses all date from the 1900s with the exception of Elmfield - the house which once stood between the railway line and the road to Spollanstown where the new county council offices are now located. The original house was late-eighteenth century in date, but with nineteenth-century additions probably for the Goodbody family and by the architect, J.S. Mulvany. It was almost certainly Charleville policy not to allow building here as this was the road to the landlord's demesne from the 1740s. When the lease was granted for Elmfield in 1795 the lessee undertook not to build cabins within 600 feet of the Birr road. The house was occupied by three generations of the Kennedy family from about 1904 until 1997 when it was sold to the county council for £1 million to provide a site for the new offices for the county council.

The decision to build new county administration offices in such a twentieth century architectural style and to avoid repro/pastiche in genuflection to things past was a brave initiative on the part of the council. The new building is said to have cost some €20 million by the time it was completely finished and furnished in 2002. Looking back to 1985 when Acres Hall was purchased for new offices for Tullamore Urban District Council there are few now who would not agree that the new county offices (as also the town offices) are a worthy *hotel de ville* for County Offaly and an attractive venue for official receptions and art exhibitions. If anything Offaly was slow in not following the Laois example and that of the Dublin local authorities and building new civic offices in the 1970s or 1980s. The county courthouse built in 1835 and rebuilt in 1927 following its burning in the Civil War was a warren of offices not really suitable to modern requirements. Local government was carried on at the courthouse

from 1835 until 2002 and the move was made easier for staff and the public by its being built nearby on a main road to the town. Other sites had been considered including Clonminch Business Park and in the town centre on land owned by the town council with access via the former cinema at Tara Street overlooking the town park. If the site location for new county offices is still controversial, mainly because of deficient parking, the building itself has secured much praise from the architectural community.

Aras an Chontae by ABK Architects was shortlisted for the RIAI triennial gold medal award, the highest award in Irish architecture and received a commendation – the gold medal going to Croke Park. The jury described the building as ‘a pathfinder in the generation of new civic offices in Ireland . . . an elegant assembly with considerable civic presence, which has weathered beautifully’.²³ Frank McDonald, writing in 2003, had much praise for the building stating that it was suffused with the spirit of the Finnish architect, Alvar Aalto, and that the high vaulted chamber was redolent of the town hall in Saynatsalo, built in 1952. The county buildings was designed by architects, John Parker and Paul Koralek, of ABK. Materials include Carlow limestone and iroko timber – the latter done in a form of lattice work. The building is open plan with offices on three levels on either side of the atrium, with a single-storey annexe and crèche to the rear and the council chamber to the front. The roof of the white atrium is wholly glazed and its floor is in limestone. The staircase, with its rounded landings, is not unlike ABK's dental hospital in Dublin.²⁴

Charleville Road from the railway or gaol bridge (1858) was free of almost all housing with the exception of Elmfield and some cottages on the opposite side of the road until 1902. Up to the 1900s the road to Charleville Castle and demesne was essentially a long tree-lined avenue with no hint of poverty in the form of the mud-walled cabins of the poor to interfere with the natural and the manicured landscape. It was no surprise that when housing did eventually commence at Charleville Road it was by way of a sale of land to the town's richest self-made man, Daniel E. Williams, who built Dew Park at a cost of circa £6,000 in 1902. The Tullamore board of guardians did manage by compulsory purchase order to build a few cottages on this road after 1908, but nothing which took from its essential character as the premier suburb in Tullamore where houses have been built from 1902 up to 2008. The Williams family owned the land between the railway and Dillon Street so that no building took place here until the 1940s and 1950s with the unfortunate bottling plant erected on their land in the 1970s. The latter can be viewed from the railway station and has managed to close off a ready access to the lands west of the railway line.

Dew Park and The Bungalow

Dew Park built by Daniel E. Williams about 1902 was then considered the finest house in Tullamore and succeeded Acres Hall in that coveted status. The latter house was then lived in by Henry Egan the other serious commercial man in the town. Egan took Acres Hall on a long lease from the Acres Pierce family about 1893. Dew Park was lived in by the Williams family until the mid-1980s when the house was sold and the lands to the rear in Spolanstown also built on. Nonetheless the house still has a curtilage of some three acres and a substantial front to Charleville Road.

'The Bungalow' as it was always called by the Williams family was built in the grounds of Dew Park about 1915 for Madeline Williams (a daughter of Daniel E. Williams) and her husband, solicitor, Henry Brenan and may have been designed by F.G. Hicks or T.F. McNamara. Given the style of the house Hicks is the more likely candidate. Williams had agreed to build four more substantial houses under his lease, but only this one was completed.

The houses beyond Dew Park and Dillon Street and up to the Charleville Demesne entrance gate (once known as the Red Gate) were almost all built between 1909 and 1960 including the former Lavan's (the red brick house) and that of the Moloney family (formerly John Mahon's and later

Michael Finnegan). The leases for these houses were granted about 1906-9, probably with the intention of blocking the urban council's push to build their own scheme on Charleville Road. Opposite these two houses and south of Dew Park is a low single-storey house designed by Michael Scott for Mrs Florence Williams – a big change from her previous house sold to the Christian Brothers in High Street (now Donal Farrelly's). As with the preference in the main streets of the town these houses were built fronting the public road and at a time when there was little traffic and no appreciation of the high public costs of ribbon development. Freeman had commented on it in 1948, but little was done as regards private sites. The policy of building off the main road was invoked by the local authority for the schemes at Adams Villas, Colman's Terrace and Dillon Street/Healy Street - not for traffic considerations but to maximise the lands for social housing and minimise the impact on Charleville Road. This course was later followed for the Charleville View and Sheena housing developments of the 1970s and 1990s. The earliest scheme seeking to avoid ribbon development appears to have been the small-scale private site and build scheme at Church Avenue off Church Road of about 1958.



DEW PARK, ERECTED 1902



THE BUNGALOW, CHARLEVILLE RD TULLAMORE (1915)



ELMFIELD, DEMOLISHED 2000,
WITH FRONT BY J.S. MULVANY



COUNTY COUNCIL OFFICES, 2002

D.E. Williams' mineral water factory now a whiskey bonded warehouse

This building was erected in 1975 on a field owned by the Williams family fronting Dew Park and can better be seen from the railway station. In the 1940s and 1950s part of the field was built on for bungalows with the mineral water factory of 1975 closing off a possible access to the Srah lands on the western side of the railway line. The building is now used to store whiskey for Locke's distillery at Kilbeggan. Some 250 apartments were proposed for the site in 2007 but planning was refused – a good thing perhaps for Tullamore and the would-be developers! The bottling plant, designed by Noel Heavey and Partners, Athlone covers 50,000 sq ft and cost £0.5m to build and had a capacity of 6,000 litres per hour. The water supply was from a well on the land pumping at the rate of 9,000 gallons per hour. What would the mineral water men of the 1900s have said to such output? The building brought together in DEW MIGHTY MINERALS the separate traditions in such products of the firms of Egans and Williams. Within eight years the business was under extreme pressure and was sold to Cooley Distilleries in 1991. Tom Harney's mineral water/squash works in Spollanstown like the Tullamore Meats plant in the same industrial estate are the survivors of much larger commercial undertakings.

The Tullamore Harriers Club

The club house and grounds were provided here from 1971 and was a big step-up from the old club house in Offally Street, dating back to the 1950s. The Harriers Club has a large dancing venue much frequented and loved by the teenagers of Tullamore and district until, alas, too old at eighteen, they graduate to the next level venues in the town centre. The tartan track was completed in 1979 with further improvements in the 1980s. This achievement for a voluntary group without the backing of a large national organisation or wealthy supporters is remarkable, as is the sustained progress of the club in its work for athletics over the past fifty years.

Sheena

This scheme of nine houses was built by John Flanagan Developments Limited over the period 1998 to 2003 to a design of Denis Duggan, architect, who has worked in Tullamore since the mid-1990s. The houses are in the style of the house fronting Charleville Road, known as Sheena (meaning perhaps 'the people of the Si or fairies, arising from the hill-ock on which Sheena House is built). Sheena House fronting Charleville Road was built by solicitor and county registrar, James Rogers, in 1930, on a site of some five acres. Rogers represented the Sinn Féin prisoners in Tullamore in 1916 when it was neither popular nor profitable. In favour of the Treaty he

was appointed state solicitor for Offaly in 1923 and county registrar in 1926. In 1976 the property was bought by the Offaly County Agricultural Committee for offices and subsequently received planning permission for this change of use in what was very much a residential area. The house was listed in the late 1990s for preservation. The garden where the nine new houses were erected was sold by Teagasc in the early 1990s and the new scheme completed over a five-year period. The Sheena estate is the location of the townland boundary of Ballynagh in Rahan parish with Kilcruttin in Tullamore parish with the townland divide continuing across the road to the southern boundary of the Harriers Club and separating Ballard from Spollanstown.

Charleville View

The Charleville View scheme of some 56 houses on private sites totalling some ten acres was initially developed by Major Hutton Bury of Charleville Estate Company on part of the deer park of the demesne in the early 1970s. The development was later taken over by Andrew Galvin and most of the remaining houses here were completed privately on developed sites over the period from 1980 to 2007. As with the Kingston villas in Clonminch of 1909 several of the new owners were senior management in the growing public service.



WILLIAMS' BOTTLING PLANT, KILCRUTTIN



TULLAMORE HARRIERS, TARTAN TRACK



TULLAMORE HARRIERS, CLUB

Adams Villas

The Adams Villas scheme was erected by the Tullamore board of guardians on the outskirts of the town after 1910 and called after the then chairman of the town council and member of the board of guardians, William Adams. Adams retired from politics about 1912 and died in 1914. He was the leading local politician from the 1870s up to his death. The other unofficial name is Spade Avenue. At the eastern end of this road can be seen some cottages dating back to pre-Famine times and all that remains of perhaps seven such single-storey houses which extended to the corner near Larkin's house and all just inside the Ballard townland boundary.

Colman's Terrace

This scheme of cottages with the customary one acre is not well known to Tullamore people being a cul-de-sac and was erected after 1910, probably by the board of guardians. Many new houses have since been constructed on the ample gardens coming with the original houses. The cottages at Adams Villas and Colman's Terrace were erected under rural schemes and not that of the urban council. Several thousand such cottages, with generally one acre attached, were erected throughout the county after the late 1880s. Colman was the saint at Lynally monastery south of Charleville Demesne and the monastic site is well worth a visit. For the monastery take the road west of the roundabout along the old demesne wall of Charleville at Mucklagh.

Birr Road

Charleville Demesne and the unwillingness of the owners, the Hutton Bury family, to compromise the demesne has held the line on development beyond Charleville View and as far as Mucklagh on the southern side of the Charleville Estate. Unlike other entrance roads to Tullamore there is no industrial, office or service development with the exception of Aras on Chontae and the mineral water plant of the 1970s. On the eastern side of the Birr road as far as the Finger Board and Flynn's shop the houses date from the early 1940s, such as that of the late Cecil Lumley (Sharavogue) up to two new houses of 2009 built on the site of post-war bungalows. Beyond the Finger Board shop are new houses in Ballard where Charleville cottages were erected in the 1830s and in the 1860s. The new by-pass road of 2009 now cuts through the Ballard bog from Ardan and Clonminch to intersect with the middle gate lodge at Charleville Demesne and on past the western side of Mucklagh village to join with the Birr road at the site of the old golf course at Screggan of 1906-26.



31. CHARLEVILLE CASTLE WITH ITS TELESCOPE-LIKE TURRET FROM THE BIRR ROAD (COURTESY OF MRS ALICE CUNNINGHAM).

CHARLEVILLE DEMESNE AND CHARLEVILLE CASTLE

The demesne of Charleville must rank as one of the last unspoilt areas of tranquillity in the vicinity of Tullamore and is much loved by the inhabitants of the town who are proud of the great oaks still surviving after hundreds of years and of the great Gothic mansion of Charleville Forest.



32. A VIEW OF CHARLEVILLE CASTLE FROM THE GARDEN.



Perhaps the most noteworthy feature as one enters Charleville Demesne is the great 'King Oak' featured (as earlier noted) on the cover of Thomas Pakenham's, *Meetings with remarkable trees*. Pakenham believes that 'the great tree is a descendant of the great forests of common oak (*Quercus robur*) that once straddled the soggy green plains of central Ireland. Estimates of its age begin at 400 years, but it might be double that or even 900 years old. If the latter it 'would be a worthy candidate for the oldest living plant in Ireland'.²⁵ With a girth of twenty-six feet below its lowest branches and one of its longest branches reaching seventy-six feet from the trunk it is one of the oldest, largest and best-preserved oaks in the country'.²⁶ In 1890 John Wright mentioned the tree in his *King's County Directory* confirming that its fame was already well established:

*On entering by the Tullamore lodge, the visitor finds himself in front of the 'King of the Forest,' which has survived the storms of many generations. It is a gigantic oak, with a spread of 130 feet, some of its immense arms being horizontal with, and within four feet of the ground. This remarkable tree is in the Deer Park, which with its fine oak groves and fern-furnished surface, extends for a considerable distance and on to the higher ground. In the great storm of 1839, no less than 5,000 oak trees were blown down in this forest, and a considerable number of limes, which met with similar treatment, were raised again into their former position by manual power alone.*²⁷

The oak woods still surviving at Charleville are now among the most extensive in County Offaly. What remains of these oaks date from between 150 to 500 years old. While some trees have been planted in the past 100 years generally there has been little change

in the woodlands since a survey of the trees in the early 1800s and some of the oaks may represent indigenous stock of native Irish woodlands predating the new settlers of the 1640s. These trees are now protected under various orders applying to areas of special conservation (SACs). Additionally work has been done in recent years by the owners of the estate, the Hutton Bury family, in co-operation with Offaly County Council and the Heritage Council to conserve the grotto, the Camden tower and the gatehouse at the Mucklagh entrance. The stable block is awaiting attention while the great house, Charleville Forest, is occupied since 1970 and its future hopefully secure. Plans have been laid out over the past forty years to restore the building to its former glory. However, so much enterprise and money is needed that it will take many years and much public support. The demesne is open to the public by kind permission of the Hutton Bury family.

Sir John Moore had a formal grant of the lands of Tullamore including Charleville under a patent of James I about 1619-20 as part of the distribution of the lands of the O'Molloys of *Fir Ceall* under the plantation of James I. Sir John Moore received 'the castle town and lands of Tullaghmore and one water mill' together with the lands at Kilcruttin, Clonminch, Cloncollog, the Wood of Curraghboy, Doonollan and Monehowne (now part of Charleville Demesne, Ballyard (now Ballard) and lands known as Killenroe, later called Redwood and now part of Charleville Demesne and Brookfield. Moore had already acquired lands at Croghan, King's County as part of the Elizabethan plantation or confiscation and his family acquired further lands in the county by purchase and grant over the period from the 1600s to the 1740s. So much so that when the minor, Charles William Bury, inherited the property

from his father in 1764 it came to about 23,000 acres.

In 1633 Thomas Moore leased to his brother-in-law, Sir Robert Forth of Tulbett, Co. Cavan, the castle, town and lands of Tullamore together with the lands of Ballyard, Killenroe, Clownagh [Cloonagh] and Mucklagh, for a term of eighty-one years at a rent of £100 per year. Moore also leased other lands in his possession for varying periods of time from fifty-one years to eighty-one years. The fact that he was willing to lease Tullamore, for what even by seventeenth-century standards was a long lease, suggest that either Moore put little value on Tullamore or that it was of no importance at the time. Shortly afterwards Forth built a large house in what is now Charleville Demesne, but formerly known as Killenroe or Redwood. The house was described by Charles William Bury (first earl of Charleville, second creation, 1764-1835) towards the end of the eighteenth century:

*Near where the Gothic Castle (Charleville) now stands was the original mansion house, built shortly after the year 1641, according to the fashion of that time, with many small and ill-connected apartments, but on the whole not destitute of much comfort and convenience. The interior divisions were uniformly constructed by strong partitions of oak, probably the growth of the soil, and very liberally supplied; with a ponderous and double roof, also of the same material, and covered with shingles of oak, of more ancient date, procured from the adjacent bogs...*²⁸

About the year 1699 a dispute developed between Thomas Moore of Tullamore and James Forth of Redwood as to the precise area of lands owned by

On entering by the Tullamore lodge, the visitor finds himself in front of the 'King of the Forest,' which has survived the storms of many generations. It is a gigantic oak, with a spread of 130 feet



Forth, absolutely as distinct from these let to him by Moore in 1633. The complicating factor was the lease-back of certain lands in Tullamore in 1669. The dispute was partly settled in 1704 and finally settled in the 1740s when Thomas Moore's grandson, Charles Moore, purchased the lands of Redwood for £1,259 or twenty-one years their annual rental value of £60 less an abatement of £1.

Certainly there were other occupiers of the Redwood Estate prior to the purchase by Charles Moore. Among these was the Hon. Gustavus Hamilton who died in 1734 and whose son, Frederick the third Viscount Boyne, is said to have married in secret when nineteen years old a blacksmith's daughter in Tullamore - a marriage he later disowned. An auction notice of the premises published in 1736 is of interest:

At the house in the King's County, on the 20th June next, the household goods and stock of the Honourable Gustavus Hamilton deceased, consisting of beds, chairs, glasses, plate, japan work, and cabinets, and one horse chair almost new, and the newest fashion, a pack of hounds of the right Irish Beagle, with all the kitchen furniture, brewing vessels, horses, cows, sheep and bullocks. The sale to continue till all is sold. Dated May 26th, 1736. Note, whoever buys twenty pounds worth upwards shall have three months credit giving sufficient security.

Hamilton can only have had a leasehold interest because the Redwood property was owned by the three surviving daughters of James Forth (d. 1731) all of whom joined in the sale in 1739-40 to Charles Moore. Charles Moore was son of the first Lord Tullamore who was given the title in 1715 for his support of the Hanoverian succession to the English throne and in 1716 secured the building of a barrack in Tullamore. His son, Charles, was born in 1712 and married in 1737, Hester, only child of James Coghill of Drumcondra and was an heiress with, some say, a fortune of £100,000. Charles Moore moved to Charleville from the old house in Tullamore, which his father had erected in c. 1700 and which is thought to have been located near the present harbour in Tullamore. The house at Redwood was now substantially improved and beautified and called Charleville. Charles Moore, Lord Tullamore, was created earl of Charleville (the first creation) in 1757 and died, without issue, in 1764. His sister Jane married William Bury of Shannongrove, County Limerick in 1723 and their eldest son John Bury (born 1725, married Catherine Sadleir of Sopwell Hall in 1761) succeeded to the Charleville property on 17 February 1764 and died c. 4 August 1764, possibly by suicide from drowning, leaving an only son Charles William Bury, born 30 June, 1764.²⁹

Did the custom of visiting Charleville, so popular now, start over 250 years ago? John Wesley on one of his many visits to Tullamore records in his diary for 16 July 1756, a pleasant visit and a cautionary note (where was he during the Tiger years!):



THE GARDENER'S HOUSE, CHARLEVILLE DEMESNE

Friday, 16th July 1756: We walked down to Lord Tullamore's (that was his title then) an old mile from the town. His gardens are extremely pleasant. They contain groves, little meadows, kitchen gardens, plats of flowers, and little orchards, intermixed with fine canals and pieces of water. And will not all these make their owner happy? Not if he has one unholy temper! Not unless he has in himself a fountain of water, springing up into everlasting life.

This is an interesting reference to the old house of Redwood, which stood near the farm buildings on what is now Charleville Demesne or Charleville Estate as it is now called. Charles Moore, spent money on improvements to the demesne including works to the river to re-direct its course. It was possibly about this time that the grotto was built. It stood (and is still surviving) at the end of the garden of the old Redwood house. Wesley has another intriguing reference in his journal entry for Thursday 25 June 1767 which seems to suggest that the greatly enlarged wealth of John Bury was all too much for the man of nervous disposition:

I was desired to look at the monument lately erected for the Earl of Charleville. It observes, "that he was the last of his family, the Great Moores of Croghan". But how little did riches

profit either him, who died in the strength of his years, or his heir, who was literally overwhelmed by them: being so full of care, that sleep departed from him, and he was restless day and night; till after a few months, life itself was a burden, and an untimely death closed the scene!

This monument, formerly in the old 1720s church at Church Street was moved to the new St Catherine's Church at Hop Hill, Church Road in 1815. During the minority of Charles William Bury, no more than five weeks old when his father died, the Charleville inheritance was under the care of his mother as his trustee. The demesne lands including the old Forth house were let. Everything north of the old road between Mucklagh and Tullamore was leased to Thomas Johnston, a son of John Johnston of Rath, near Birr. His relative George Stoney of Borrisokane has left a diary for the years 1765 and 1780. Mention is made at 15 September 1765 of the death of the bishop of Meath, Dr Pococke, at Charleville, following the eating of mushrooms at Ballyboy the previous day. The bishop who had just confirmed at Tullamore, returned indisposed 'went to his chamber, took a puke, went to bed about 5 o'clock, seemed to rest quietly, but was found dead at 12. He complained of a pain in his stomach, which he could impute to no other cause than a few

mushrooms eaten on the day before at Ballyboy.' Charles William Bury noted of the circumstances of the bishop's death: 'Reports exist that he indulged too freely in partaking of a delicious esculent of the Fungi tribe, called *Champignon* and imported by the French settlers at the neighbouring town of Pt. Arlington; 'tis a sad reflection, that one who had traversed the torrid Zone unmolested, should suffer from so sligh[t] a cause'. This was a reference to Pococke's visit to far-away Egypt and other eastern lands and his celebrated published accounts.

Thomas Johnston, himself, left some accounts of his activities in a letter to his brother of 20 July 1765.

I write to you on account of having sold my interest in Malbro' Street [Dublin] and removed to Charleville, which I took the 25th of March on very reasonable terms, £190. 10s a year, 410 acres, about 60 brace of Deer, and two years turf thrown in . . .

The remainder of the demesne south of the main road was leased to one Thomas Berry for twenty years - being Killenroe c. 150 acres at 15s. per acre (which contrasts with 4s. 6d. rent per acre in 1700). Berry agreed under the lease to turn up or plough no more than three acres each year under penalty of £5 per acre. Presumably this was a clause designed to protect the parklands of the demesne. In 1768 he



THE BIDDULPH COACHMAN OUTSIDE CHARLEVILLE CASTLE, 1902



THE GAMEKEEPER'S HOUSE



GATELODGE IN CHARLEVILLE



CHARLEVILLE CASTLE, 1889

had a new lease for seventeen years (the remainder of Charles William Bury's minority) at a rent of £104.50 for 139 acres. It is in this area that the lake was built after 1800 and the new golf course in 1926.

Arthur Young called on Captain Johnston at Charleville in 1776 and received from him an account of farming in the Tullamore area. The leases to Johnston and Berry came to an end with the coming of age of Charles William Bury in 1785. The following year surveys were carried out of the Charleville property including the demesne and the town of Tullamore. These surveys, excepting Charleville Demesne, unfortunately do not survive thus depriving us of what would be the earliest maps of Tullamore. The lands leased to Berry during the minority were now let on very favourable terms to his former tutor and seemingly friend of the family, Revd Peter Turpin, and the house known as Brookfield built. The Brookfield lands remained outside the Charleville estate until reacquired following the death of Revd Ralph Coote in 1868. The lands of Brookfield were leased to the Tullamore Golf Club in 1925 instead of the club's preferred option, Charleville Demesne itself. Bury spent considerable time and money improving the demesne of Charleville in the 1780s and 1790s. The building of a new house followed on his marriage to the young widow with two children, Catherine Maria Tisdall, in June 1798. It is clear enough from surviving maps of the demesne of Charleville that much work was carried out in the period from 1785 to the commencement of the construction of the castle in 1800. This included the redirection of the Tullamore - Birr road outside of the demesne by the making of a new road probably from what is now the estate office at

Charleville Road to the older gate at Mucklagh. The old road was in a straight line past the great 'King Oak' from the Tullamore gate and via the later 1860s gardener's cottage to Mucklagh, keeping the old 1641 house, in the vicinity of what is now the Charleville farmyard, on the right and close to the river. The Camden tower or prospect tower and the Mucklagh entrance gate were probably erected at this time. The grotto, erected possibly in the 1740s during a time of scarcity and famine was situated at the western end of the garden of the old house with the surviving ice house close by. Sir Charles Coote, who published his survey of the King's County in 1801 for the Royal Dublin Society was already fulsome in his praise of Charleville, although work had not even started on the house in early 1800 when his survey work was nearing completion. Coote wrote:

The fine demesne of Charleville extends to the suburbs of the town of Tullamore, and for an elegant display of taste, and many great and natural beauties, is a seat of the first importance, in this kingdom; it contains nearly 1,500 statute acres, most delightfully wooded with fine full grown timber, and a considerable part is planted with young trees, for which Lord Charleville has received the Dublin Society's premium; these plantations are carefully fenced from cattle, and in the utmost possible heart and vigour. A large tract of bog, which has been lately drained, is now preparing for another extensive plantation without-side the demesne to the bounds of the estate, and the trees are to be had from the nurseries within. The undulating hills so peculiar to this country have the most pleasing effect, and when planted are truly picturesque and engaging. The materials



THE MUSIC ROOM, CHARLEVILLE CASTLE, c.1840



VIEW FROM EAST TOWER OF CHARLEVILLE CASTLE.
The last of the night in the East of Charleville.

for a superb mansion are now preparing, and a farm-yard is building at a proper distance, with all suitable offices which are slated; the great range for black cattle is under one roof, and divided into apartments, with two rows of bales at opposite ends, that each distinct kind whether stall fed, store, plough, or milch cattle, may have each their separate division, and a stream of water can be turned through the whole at pleasure, and commands every part of the farm-yard; this, when completed, will certainly be of the most capital construction and entirely commodious. The Clodagh river runs with rapidity through the demesne, which is well supplied by several mountain streams, and rolls over huge rocks through a deep glen; its banks are laid out in elegant walks, which are thickly planted with deciduous trees, and evergreens, forming a pleasing contrast, and intersected with several rustic bridges, which with the cascades have altogether the most charming effect. The grotto, which commands a principal fall, is finished in true rustic style; the tumbling rocks, the hermit's bed, and the well are most happily situated, and the incrustations and petrifications, which are now throwing out, give it all the venerable appearance of antiquity, and shew the purest taste: when lights are introduced, they give the grandest illumination to the reflecting spar, and transparent petrifications. This grotto was designed by the late Lady Charleville, and built at considerable expense, to give employment to the poor peasantry, in a season of scarcity. A lake of near eighty plantation acres, has been cut out by the present Lord, and is interspersed with islands thickly planted, which afford fine cover to swans, and wild fowl of all kinds, that

resort the lake, and breed here. This lake was originally a moor, and was cut down to the Lac Leigh, which composes its bottom; it has consequently a clear surface without any weeds, as this clay is always hostile to vegetation. A lesser lake [the old lake now gone] adorns the opposite end of the demesne, and through all the plantation, are elegant drives cut in serpentine forms. The sublime appearance of the Slieve Bloom Mountains, the adjoining castles in ruins, and the internal artificial beauties catch the eye through best disposed vistas, and complete this delightful landscape.

Coote's congratulatory tone was sure to please. Coote, himself was the natural son of the earl of Bellamont and went on to publish five RDS surveys which, while useful, could have been much more insightful and comprehensive. The English commentator, Edward Wakefield, (1812) did not feel so constrained and said that Lord Charleville was almost an absentee. He noted that the demesne was large and with trees universally stunted by much ivy which had been allowed to grow so thick as to smother them. He went on to say of the house by now almost completed, if not the avenues:

'I never saw an instance of so much money expended in erecting a princely mansion in so bad a situation.' Clearly he did not get admission to the house during his visit! The earlier English visitor of 1806, Colt Hoare, was better satisfied with the new building marrying the baronial with modern conveniences (as the owner and the architect intended) but was unhappy with the large tower which he thought objectionable. The adjoining park he noted was well wooded but flat.

The Charleville token or thirteen-penny shilling

To facilitate the payment of workers during the construction of the castle Lord Charleville had Matthew Boulton of the famous Soho mint strike a thirteen-penny token in 1802 because the coin in circulation in Tullamore was poor and could be counterfeited. A family connection of Bury, Frederick Trench, wrote to Boulton in 1802: 'I know he [Charleville] has a wish (as I have) to have Tokens which could not be Counterfeited, Struck off – as he is at this moment building a most splendid Gothick Residence; it would be peculiarly convenient; the [local] Silver [in] Circulation being so execrable, and worse than Useless.'³⁰ The Charleville token is now considered one of the finest of its type and much collected. An example can be seen in the Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre. The name of the town was then called Tullamoore by the Charleville family, as is depicted on the token together with the arms and supporters of Viscount Charleville and the words 'industry shall prosper'. The token was 'payable at Tullamoore first Tuesday in each month. One shilling and one penny.' The use of the spelling Tullamoore seems to go back to the seventeenth century, but its use was more frequent in the time of Charles Moore, the first earl of the first creation and was continued by his grand-nephew, Charles William Bury. It went out of fashion in the 1830s with the decline in the fortunes of the second earl and a growing sense of nationalism under the leadership of O'Connell.

Work on the new house to a design of the architect, Francis Johnston, but with some intervention from the patron, began in 1800 and was completed about 1812. Lady Louisa Conolly, of Castletown, wrote to Lady Tullamore in November 1800:

I am very glad to hear that you have begun your Castle for I think there are few occupations more entertaining than Building, and Lord Tullamoore I am sure will enjoy it much, having planned it all himself.

Work on the interior of the new house now known as Charleville Forest was described in a letter of 1808 from Bury, now earl of Charleville, where he confirmed that the mason work was almost all completed as was the carpentry and stucco work in the long gallery. Although the house was not fully completed by the following year, 1809, the opportunity to have the lord lieutenant, the duke of Richmond, to lunch led to the formal opening of the new house in October of that year. Lady Charleville was able to write to her son by her first marriage, J.T. Tisdall, a young boy then at Eton, to let him know of the proposed festivities:

After everything was ready for next Monday, it is reported his Grace the Ld. Lieut. will not arrive here until Wednesday, in which case all partridges, snipe & grouse [sic] collected here will stink, & the Turbots too before his arrival. It is intended to take the horses from his carriage & draw him from Muchlow Bridge in by the Yeomen, the two bands playing 'God save the King'. The next day the Yeomen are to be reviewed in the Lawn. .

Lady Charleville wrote in the same month of October 1809:

The 25th we mean to celebrate the Jubilee by giving a dinner in the Lawn to over 1,000 workmen and labourers in Tullamoore, a dinner to the Yeomen and a Ball at the Town House. A subscription for blankets is also afoot for the poor on that day. ³¹

By 1812 the castle was almost finished, but it does appear that by now Lord Charleville had lost the appetite for building and hated the expense of it all. His descendants would share that view. The long winding avenue to Tullamore from the castle was laid out by the distinguished garden designer John Claudius Loudon. On 19 July 1812 it was noted, 'Three sides of Terrace is finished; the 4th and the approach from Tullamoore laying out by Mr. Lowdon [sic], a Scotchman: he goes off tomorrow, and says it will be two years before it is finished. Things on such a scale go too slow, and cost too much, in my mind, for enjoyment.' Many would agree with him today! Walking the avenue to the castle is always to wonder what lies ahead. Loudon certainly created a sense of drama. Not so on the old avenue to the gardener's house. Here in the distance can be seen the folly, the Camden tower, probably erected in the 1790s with the arms of Earl Camden added possibly for his visit in 1809. Later it was the home of the game-keeper until the new house was built about 1870 and the gardener's house a little earlier in 1864. Yellow brick was then in fashion as can be seen in the Goodbody building in O'Connor Square (now part of the Bank of Ireland) or further distant in the houses of the gaugers at Banagher distillery and in Geashill village. Walking back to Tullamore on the same avenue one can see in the distance the house of John Massy of 1757 (now Angelo's Take-Away) and imagine the road as a tree-lined avenue devoid of all housing except Elmfield and some cottages near what is now the railway station. Loudon later commented favourably on the demesne, noting some of the special trees planted between 1740 and the 1780s. 'On the whole, there is an excellent collection of trees at Charleville, and they appear to have made extraordinary progress' (Loudon, *Arboretum*, 1838).

The first earl died in 1835 leaving an embarrassed estate to his son, Lord Tullamore. The second earl with his attractive but penniless wife was not the man to put things right financially. Bury was obliged to sell off the farm stock in 1844 to assuage creditors and had to live on a small income in Berlin. He died in 1851 and was succeeded by his son, the third earl, who was welcomed to Tullamore in 1852 with a triumphal arch erected in his honour in Bridge Street. Unfortunately he did not long enjoy his estate dying in 1859, predeceased by his wife some eighteen months earlier. Of his five children his eldest son succeeded to the estate fourteen years later when aged 21 in May 1873. In the meantime two of the children had died, a boy and a girl. Harriet Bury, the middle girl died from a fall on the stairs of the castle in 1861 when only seven or eight years old. Her death is now used to prop up the current fashion for haunted castles. During that time she and her siblings were in the care of their uncle Alfred, who on the death of the fourth earl, after only a year in possession, became fifth earl in November 1874 and himself died in June 1875. The earldom was now extinct and the lands passed to his niece and sister of the fourth earl, Lady Emily Bury.

The history of Tullamore would have been different had the third, fourth or fifth earls survived long enough to put a stamp on things. In 1859 the fourth earl was a minor and the property was taken care of by his uncle Alfred, a son of the second earl. The minority was in the 1860s and early 1870s, at a time of improvement in agriculture and increasing prosperity for the people of Ireland. It was at this time that model cottages were built on the estate for some of the workers and also at Ballard. It was Alfred also who petitioned the railway company to move the station from Clonminch to its present location and ap-

Charleville is built of stone throughout, from the watch-tower to the stables.



pears to have been pro-active in the advancement of Tullamore. The fourth earl succeeded in 1873 and a dinner was held in Tullamore in his honour at which many of the prominent citizens of the town attended and with much talk of the progress of the town over the previous twenty years. But like his father he was not a long liver and died the following year.³² The earldom now passed in the male line back to his uncle Alfred who succeeded as fifth earl at the age of forty-five. However, the grim reaper was again close at hand and Alfred Bury died in June 1875. On his death the earldom became extinct. There were now only two daughters surviving of the third earl, Emily and Katherine. The latter had married in 1873, at about the same time as her brother came of age, Captain Edmund Bacon Hutton. Hutton, an Englishman and an amateur steeplechase rider in his spare time was then in Ireland as Extra A.D.C. to the lord lieutenant, Lord Spencer. A year before his death the fourth earl had amended his will leaving his property to his unmarried sister, Lady Emily. Unlike her predecessors she was fortunate in having a long life and survived until 1931. Yet for her family things were less bright. Like her sister, Emily married another English soldier, Captain Kenneth Howard, who assumed the name Bury. This marriage was in 1881 and he died just four years later in 1885. Of their two children a daughter Marjorie, born just a month before her father's death, died aged twenty two in 1907, but her son, Colonel C.K Howard Bury was as good as his mother and survived until 1963. As he died unmarried the property now passed to the descendants of Katherine Bury (otherwise Hutton), the other surviving daughter of the third earl. And so it was that Major W. B. Hutton, grandson of Lady Katherine Bury, assumed the name and arms of Bury in 1964 and the Hutton Burys succeeded to the Charleville estate, of course

now greatly diminished from the period before the Land Acts of some fifty years earlier. Major Hutton Bury was popular in Tullamore and had lived in the town since the late 1940s. He was wounded in the Second War on several occasions and carried an injury for the rest of his life. He died in 1982 survived by his wife and children. His successor in the property is his son, David Hutton Bury.

Lady Emily, as a young widow spent much of her time abroad and the castle was more or less permanently unoccupied from 1912. Her son, Colonel Bury, was an inveterate traveller and had been a participant in the first British expedition to Mount Everest in 1921 and is said to have coined the phrase 'the abominable snowman'. Some years earlier he inherited Belvedere House near Mullingar from Brinsley Marlay, who was a kinsman by reason of the first marriage of the countess of Charleville, who had secondly married Charles William Bury in 1798. Colonel Bury did not much care for Charleville as a residence preferring Belvedere and his house in Tunisia. A visitor to the castle in 1927, four years before the death of Lady Emily, mentions that the contents of the castle were partly dismantled and that most of the pictures were stored in Dublin. When the same person, Warwick Bond, again visited in 1936 the portraits had been returned to the castle and the library still held, perhaps 3,000-4,000 richly-bound volumes, in high bookcases.³³ Perhaps Colonel Bury did intend to return to live in Charleville but then the war intervened and, as portrayed in *Brideshead*, it changed everything. In 1942 the first auction was held at Charleville, seemingly of items of no great value. However, in 1948 a major auction was held when the contents of the house were dispersed. P. F. in the *Midland Tribune* described it as the end of an era, 'The chill November wind was chanting a weird

requiem though the trees of the forest surrounding Charleville Castle.' From a wickerwork chair, now the property of someone else, Colonel Bury had followed the proceedings closely and as the auction drew to a close he rose and thanked the auctioneers and made his way down the great oak staircase for the last time. There was no hint of sentimentality in his address. The house had largely been unoccupied since 1912 and not much occupied since the death of his father some sixty three years earlier in 1885. His mother had lived much of her life abroad. As her only son and the heir to his cousin, Charles Brinsley Marlay, he wanted for little in the way of material comforts. County house auctions were common place at the time of the sale and Charleville provides an interesting footnote for auction lovers and art collectors and ruminations on what might have been had one the prescience to purchase.³⁴

After almost sixty years of lying empty and unoccupied Charleville Castle became again a private residence from 1971. The circumstances were unusual in that the house had been used in a haunted castle commercial for an English bank. On seeing the advertisement Michael McMullen decided to explore the possibilities of living in it and was given a thirty-five-year lease at a nominal rent to allow him to occupy the castle and keep it in reasonable repair. In the late 1980s, after many years of litigation with the landlord and others, Mr McMullen sold his leasehold interest to Irish-Americans, the late Mrs Constance Heavey-Alagna and her daughter, Mrs Bridget Vance.³⁵ Mrs Vance and her family are in the process of maintaining and restoring the great house which is now open to the public by appointment and is used for concerts and other functions including the 'Castle Palooza' pop weekend.



GROTTO AT CHARLEVILLE IN 1880s



ENTRANCE GATE AT CHARLEVILLE DEMESNE, MUCKLAGH 1888

Today the visitor to the great house at Charleville will be struck by the wonderful entrance staircase to the salon and off that gallery the dining room and to the left a reception room once only half its size, but now enlarged by the removal of a wall which provided for a separate music room. The chairs which were bought at the Strawberry Hill auction can be seen in the drawing by Lady Beaujolois Bury and must accordingly date from 1842-3 and before the family had to move out in 1844, to avoid the expense of living in such a large house. The third earl may have made some improvements but possibly did not get much time as his young wife died within five years of taking up occupation at Charleville and the earl two years later. One visitor, after the style of Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, visited Charleville in

1855-6 and later published an account. Thomas Lacy published his *Sights and Scenes in our Fatherland* in 1863.³⁷ Lacy was from County Wexford and had earlier published *Home Sketches on both sides of the Channel*. Lacy made his journeys throughout Ireland over the period 1853 to 1861. It was a time when the gloom of Famine years was beginning to lift and a small measure of improvement was coming to Irish towns. With the continuing decline in population, wealth per head was improving. The improvements of the 1860s including the building of gate lodges, houses in Ballard and the houses for the gamekeeper and the gardener were still to come. Like the good tourist and in the fashion of British travelogues on Ireland published in the last thirty years of the twentieth century Lacy wrote:

While in Tullamore, the tourist should not forego the advantage of paying a visit to the magnificent castle and demesne of the Earl of Charleville, called Charleville Forest, a privilege which is conceded to respectable strangers. . . The demesne is entered by a large and handsome gateway, with a nice gate-lodge within its slightly curving sweep, and the mansion approached by a broad and well-laid-out avenue. The castle, a modern structure, in the old English baronial style, is based upon an extensive plain, which rises a few feet above the surface of the surrounding lawn, and is enriched by a massive wall, with embrasures and loopholes. This wall is strengthened

on each angle by a semicircular bastion - the whole of these warlike features giving to the ample area the appearance of a fortified plateau. On a nearer approach, however, the visitor will perceive that the extensive area is formed into terraces and nice walks - the whole of the intermediate space, with the exception of the ample square before the grand entrance, being cut into handsome flower-beds, and furnished with such rare and beautiful specimens as usually grace and beautify the elegant modern parterre. The castle, which is a large quadrangular building of four stories in height, entirely constructed of cut stone, is entered in the north front by a characteristic door, beneath a lofty open porch, formed by immense graduating buttresses, from which springs a splendid arch with a corbelled and embrasured cornice. Above the crown of this arch, which is filled with beautiful stained glass, rises an elliptic Gothic arch, containing a fine triplet window, and over that again is a square window, also of triplet character, while on each side of the centre, and in each of the four stories, is a window corresponding in style and appearance with that last mentioned. A lofty circular tower rises on the eastern extremity of this front, and is crowned with a surrounding ornamental balcony, from the centre of which springs a turret, the summit of which is enriched with corbelled and embattled ornaments, and from which floats a handsome ensign. On the western extremity of this front rises a beautiful octagon tower, with embattled ornaments. The south front, which faces the extensive and island-studded lakes, is flanked on each extremity by a slender square tower, with characteristic embellishments. There are three windows in each story of this facade, and a similar number in the east and west sides

of the castle. In the several towers appear windows of varied form, some of which are arched and some plain, some single, some double, and others of triple character. From the centre of the castle rises a square tower of large proportions, the summit of which, like that of the other towers, is decorated with embrasure embattlements. The tank that supplies the entire castle with water is placed in the upper storey of this tower. A corridor, extending from the octagon tower on the western extremity of the north front, communicates with the beautiful domestic chapel, which stands contiguous to it. This fine edifice is in the Gothic style, of oblong form, with a handsome pinnacled and embattled turret rising on each gable.

The stables and other offices, which are in keeping with the style and grandeur of the castle, are situated on the west side of it. From a building in the centre of these useful appendages rises a neat tower, containing a handsome clock. A short time previous to my visit to this grand place, a powerful machine was erected, by which, through the action of a large wheel turned by water, conveyed by pipes from the neighbouring river, a variety of important mechanical offices are performed. These consists of sawing with upright and circular saws; working a lathe, by which every description of turning can be executed; giving the requisite impulse to a grindstone, a thrashing-machine, an oats-bruiser, a chaff-cutter, a bone-crusher - with churning and conveying water from one of the lakes, which is distant a statute mile, to the tank on the summit of the castle. These several useful operations are carried on under the direction of the steward, a very intelligent man, who resides in a neat cottage immediately adjoining the farm-

yard, where the machine has been erected. The gardens, which comprise about seven acres, are carefully attended to, and contain within them every variety of fruit, whether as regards that which is produced in the open air, or in the more exciting precincts of the grapery, while plants and flowers, both native and exotic, are equally luxuriant and abundant. Leaving the gardens, the attention of the visitor is directed to the pheasantry, where large cages are provided for the use of these highly-valued birds to hatch and bring forth their young. Here were to be seen some scarce birds, including the bustard, the grouse-cock, and several birds of prey, which were confined in small separate compartments. The gamekeeper resides in a turret of peculiar construction, which is situated in the immediate vicinity of the pheasantry. This remarkable structure is of triangular shape; four stories in height, of slender proportions, and built of limestone. [The Camden Tower]. On entering the castle, the visitor becomes struck with its lofty and magnificent proportions. The grand staircase is surrounded by a spacious gallery, which, as well as the wainscoting is of native oak. Two handsome silk banners, one yellow and the other red, with the royal arms displayed upon them, hang, one on each side of the staircase, while ancient coats of armour, helmets, shields, spears, and other warlike weapons, bedeck the sides of the surrounding gallery. The ceiling, which is divided into compartments, and enriched with fine groings, part of which are finely gilt, attracts the particular attention of the visitor. The hall is lighted by the large window already mentioned, which is of eight mullions - the richly-emblazoned family arms appearing on the fine stained glass that occupies the head of the arch. The gallery is lighted by the handsome

triple window which is within the elliptic Gothic arch that stands above the former. The parlour, a noble chamber, has been formed on the same plan, and is of the same proportions, as that of Warwick Castle. The picture-gallery, a magnificent saloon, of elegant proportions, extends the entire length of the south front of the castle, and contains several fine paintings by some of the best masters, many of them full-length portraits. The ceiling is elaborately wrought, and the whole gallery splendidly decorated. On taking my departure from this charming place, I felt deeply impressed by the great liberality of the noble proprietor in thus permitting a stranger to indulge in the pleasure and gratification which a close inspection of it affords.

Since I penned my brief notice in reference to it, the earl and his much-lamented countess have paid the great debt of nature, leaving behind them five infant children, the eldest of whom, Lord Tullamore - alas for him too soon - is now Earl of Charleville, Lady Katherine, Lady Harriet, Lady Emily, and the Honourable John William Bury. It was with feelings of deep regret I saw the death of Lady Harriet announced through the public journals, who lost her life by a melancholy accident, she having fallen over the handrail of the staircase of the castle, upon which she was sliding, in the month of April, 1861 [aged 8]. During my visit in 1855, I had an opportunity, while passing down the avenue leading to the castle, of seeing this interesting child, who, together with her highly favoured, noble, and honourable brothers just mentioned, was being drawn in a light vehicle by two of the nursery maids along the fine gravelled walk. A more beautiful group than that formed by this juvenile trio it would be impossible to behold.

Today the demesne of Charleville comprises some 1,100 acres, enclosed by a substantial wall, for the most part still intact. The wall may date from the 1740s to the 1800s. Some of it may have been built by the first earl (first creation), Charles Moore, after his purchase of the property in the 1740s while the remainder dates from the improvements between 1786 and 1812. The demesne entrance from beyond Charleville View (once part of the deer park) has an estate office built in the style of the adjoining gate lodge and dating from only 1958. The gate-lodge at this entrance was erected by Alfred, fifth earl, who as noted also built other handsome cottages in the demesne for the head gardener, gamekeeper, and gate porters, and carried on extensive improvements in the demesne, grounds, garden, &c., giving the wonderful manicured appearance the place had in the 1880s and 1900s. Now to some extent nature had reasserted itself. The enclosed grounds upon which the castle stands are about five acres in extent, the pleasure grounds being in the form of a square as can be seen from old photographs. Now the yews to the front of the castle on the Birr road have grown large while on the entrance-door side much of the old tranquil beauty and elaborate views in the style of Birr castle were spoilt in the early 1970s by the construction of a block wall and the planting of many coniferous trees by the then occupier of the castle, Michael McMullen. As Pakenham wrote in 1996: 'Today the King Oak of Charleville is battered but unbowed, while the castle has lost its Arthurian grandeur, curtailed off . . . by a wall of breeze blocks.' As John Wright noted in 1890 the gardens at that time were brought to the highest state of cultivation by John Roberts, the head gardener. To such an extent that in the production of grapes especially, Roberts won many awards at shows in

Ireland and abroad.³⁸ Past the old farmyard on the left, lovingly described by Coote in 1800 is an ice-house and beside the river, south west of the castle is the 'grotto'

built of the roughest stones, taken, it would appear, from the bed of the river Clodiagh that flows through the demesne, and is constructed in a peculiar manner. The entrance to the first dismal-looking apartment is cave-like, the interior being dimly lighted by iron-framed windows. Proceeding along a rough passage through this gloomy chamber the explorer enters a circular room with an irregular roof and walls to match, called "the hermit's parlour". The floors at one time were paved with horses' teeth, collected on Waterloo and other scenes of cavalry warfare. The teeth have from time to time been carried away by the curious, till now not one remains. Thirty years ago, however, this pavement still covered several feet of the floor. By an ingenious arrangement the water from the river can be forced inside the grotto passage, through a peculiarly constructed stone trough, as though it came from a spring.

Charleville Castle in the view of Mark Girouard and Edward McParland, both leading architectural historians, is the finest Gothic house of its type in Ireland and perhaps 'the most splendid example of a Gothick interior in Ireland'. Johnston did no other work in the county except the castle and St Catherine's Church. Girouard connected the construction of Charleville in 1800 to the craze for building sham castles and noted in his valuable and seminal 1962 essay written for *Country Life* that:

The bold and simple shapes of the towers at Charleville, and of such details as the corbels and the recessed arches on the stable block, are typical of [Francis] Johnston. So is the beautiful quality of the stonework; for unlike many Irish castles, which tended to be run up in rubble and plaster, as quick and cheap as possible, Charleville is built of stone throughout, from the watch-tower to the stables. Inside the lavish decoration is in less solid materials, being of grained wood and plaster, as was customary at the time. . . The house had the advantage of not being constricted (as was so often the case in Ireland) by the need to adapt and incorporate an older building. It was newly built from the foundations up. As a result, there is a consistency about it, a nobility of scale and unity of treatment in the great echoing rooms, that is very impressive. One may find the whole sham castle movement misguided and a little absurd; but it has to be admitted that Charleville is a building in the grand manner.

The basic conception of the exterior – a high square block with towers at the corners and a square tower-like lantern rising from the centre – derives from Inverary Castle, Argyllshire, designed by Roger Morris in 1746. But the toy-fort-like regularity of Inverary is given picturesque variety at Charleville by building a long, low range of offices and stables to contrast with the high mass of the main block, and by varying the size and shape of the corner towers: small square ones on the garden side and bigger circular and octagonal ones on the entrance front. The round tower is carried up, by the addition of a turret, to a height of 125 feet. This treatment is externally perhaps rather reminiscent of a gigantic stone telescope;

but internally it gave Johnston the opportunity of building an open circular stone staircase straight up from the first floor to the top of the turret – a kind of functional counterpart to his great circular staircase at Townley [Hall].

The entrance to Charleville is conceived in a spirit of drama. A tremendous portal frames the hall window and door; and through the door one is faced with a dramatic essay in vanishing perspective, with the long and bold flight of stairs and the line of the galleries to either side all meeting at the great double door that leads into the gallery. This huge room, over 120 feet long, is perhaps the most splendid example of a Gothick interior in Ireland. The ceiling is a plaster fan vault, seven bays long, with a row of gigantic pendentives sailing down the middle; along one wall are the great doorway and two fireplaces of grained wood lavishly carved; opposite them are three windows

decorated with almost equal richness; and there are Gothic bookcases and side-tables to match. The inspiration is undoubtedly Horace Walpole's fan-vaulted gallery at Strawberry Hill; but the scale at Charleville is considerably grander. The same monumental scale is continued in the drawing room and dining room, at opposite ends of the gallery. The dining room, especially, is a room of noble proportions, and there is a breadth and boldness in the detailing of the coffered ceiling that is very satisfying.³⁶



36. CHARLEVILLE – A PANORAMA

The grotto has been made safer in recent years after much neglect and vandalism. It was built possibly in the 1740s and was situated at the end of the garden of the old Redwood house. Coote stated that it was built by the countess of Charleville in a time of scarcity and as it is shown on maps of the 1790s this would suggest a date prior to the first earl's death in 1764. The grotto is remarkable and now considered possibly the most important ever constructed in Ireland. The old Redwood house was out of use as a principal residence by 1808 and was taken down in the 1840s at about the same time as the present farm house was built.

Charleville Lake

The Charleville lake on the southern side of the new by-pass road heading towards Mucklagh is known as the new lake to distinguish it from the old lake which was still in existence in the 1850s on the western boundary of the demesne. As an ornamental feature Charles William Bury had the new lake dug out in the early 1800s and while work was progressing on the castle. A ha-ha or sunken ditch, now a little altered with the construction of the new by-pass in 2008-9, continues to give an unrestricted view from the castle and without the interruption of the new road between the castle and the lake. The lake was popular for skating and at various times in the 1860s, 1890s, 1940s and 1960s details have

been recorded of this novel pursuit in Tullamore. The most notorious incident associated with the lake was the death of young Constantine Quirke in 1901 which made national news and cast shame on the menfolk of the town who were present. The shopkeeper in Patrick Street, Martin Rattigan, recorded in his diary:

Remember Sunday, 22nd December 1901. Our dear and fond friend Frankey Quirke drowned on Charleville Lake on this memorable Sunday at about 1 o'clock. He went with others to skate [sic]. May he rest in peace. Poor child was down standing in the water, no-one to come to his assistance and a great number of gents? around. A cowardly lot, to afraid to soil their Sunday clothes. God forgive them.

On the road from 'Barron's gate' or the half-way lodge stood one oak tree outside of the demesne wall until the new by-pass works of 2009. The second oak tree was destroyed as part of council road widening in the 1990s. According to local legend and to John Wright (1890) these two oaks, twenty yards apart, 'mark the place where a duel was fought between two officers of the German Legion who were stationed in Tullamore about 1790. One of the officers was shot dead, and was buried in the old graveyard known as Kilcruttin'. This duel cer-

tainly took place with one person killed, but it was not part of the 'battle of Tullamore' episode of 1806 or back in 1790. The duel took place in early 1807 between Lieut. Bismark and Capt. Quinham, both of the 4th Battalion of the King's German Legion and Quinham was killed.³⁹

Near the old Mucklagh bridge is an arch under the road connecting the demesne with the fields to the south of the new lake and known according to Wright as 'King William's Arch, a bust of His Majesty being in a niche over the gate. This walk follows the river for a considerable distance, when it takes a different course at right angles, and winds on round to Brookfield, the beautiful residence of Ernest de S. Hamilton Browne, J.P., Agent to the Lady Emily Howard-Bury.'⁴⁰

St Bartholomew's Church

The old St Bartholomew's Church of Ireland church near the Mucklagh Bridge and west of the new by-pass road is now a private residence. The present building was used as a church for about seventy years. Its construction in the 1880s at a time when the Church of Ireland population was in decline may at first come as a surprise. But like the new Church of Ireland church at Durrow, also now a private residence, it was built to replace an earlier structure, the old Lynally chapel of ease. This chapel on the St Bartholomew's site may date from the



GOLF CLUB, c.1940



LYNALLY CHURCH, 1887



CHARLEVILLE LAKE

1740s (or earlier) and probably replaced the old monastic church at Lynally, in ruins from the 1690s.⁴¹ St Bartholomew's was designed by J.F. Fuller, the Meath diocesan architect, with Mr H. Sharpe of Kells as contractor. The church was consecrated by the bishop of Meath on 15 September 1887. The new building was largely the project of Lady Emily Howard Bury in memory of her late husband, Captain Howard Bury. According to John Wright it was built at a cost of £2,000, the greater portion of which was bequeathed by the late Captain Howard-Bury for that purpose.⁴²

Mucklagh

Mucklagh is now very much a suburb of Tullamore and has grown out of the much smaller village with its Catholic church and schoolhouse. The old church was erected there in the early-nineteenth century and was demolished in the 1980s to permit of the construction of the present building to a design of the late Edward Smith, architect, who was also responsible for the new Tullamore church and the renovations at Durrow. The altar in the church is by Michael Scott with carvings by Laurence Campbell. This altar was made in the 1940s for the Tullabeg chapel of the Jesuit community. Beside the church is the Catholic cemetery with tombstones back to the 1800s. Included are those to two soldiers, one of whom fought in the First World War and the other, Matthew Kane, an IRA man, who was shot by the British in 1921 and whose death is still commemorated in Tullamore at Easter-time with a visit to his memorial near Riverside, Tullamore.

Brookfield

Brookfield was part of the Charleville Demesne but outside the park. Before 1790 it was known as Killinroe or Redwood. The greater part was leased to the Revd Peter Turpin in 1790.⁴³ Turpin probably built Brookfield house at this time and changed the name from Killinroe to Brookfield. In the nineteenth century the property was held by the Revd Ralph Coote and on his death in 1868 was advertised for sale. The property was bought in at the behest of the Charleville trustee, Alfred Bury, probably as a residence for himself in view of the fact that the fourth earl was about to come of age and would do so in 1873. If Alfred Bury moved to Brookfield it was not for long as he succeeded as fifth earl on the death of his nephew in 1874. Alfred Bury as fifth earl died in 1875 and the house later became the residence of the Charleville estate agent, Hamilton Browne. The

house was burned in August 1922 during the Civil War but was rebuilt in 1927 by Duffy Brothers, Tullamore to a design of Ralph H. Byrne, architect. The client was Claude Bouchier, agent to Colonel Bury. Brookfield, for many years the home of Mrs Bly Hutton Bury and her late husband, is close to the Tullamore Golf Club.

Tullamore Golf Club

The first golf links, a nine-hole course, situated at Tinnycross was opened in 1895. In 1906 a links was opened at Screggan. In 1926 the club moved to Brookfield after some years of lobbying to secure Charleville Demesne instead. The course at Brookfield was designed by Captain Hewson, the pavilion was designed by Laurence Kearney, assistant county surveyor and erected by Kellys of Screggan at a cost of £1,000. It was remodelled in the 1960s and again some forty years later. Today the club has almost 1,000 members.



37. THE TULLAMORE GOLF CLUB AT BROOKFIELD.

O'MOORE STREET

Once on the edge of the town O'Moore Street was in the 1800s known as Windmill Street because of the two windmills erected on the hill behind and now obscured by the houses to the front. In the once undeveloped field opening to Clonminch and Spollanstown is the substantial Tullamore Court Hotel.



39. THE ELABORATE NEW FRONT TO MOORE HALL IN O'MOORE STREET, THOUGHT TO BE ABOUT 1850.



38. THE MASONIC LODGE AT O'MOORE STREET.



40. THE DOOR-CASE OF THE COTTAGE, O'MOORE STREET.



Moving back from Charleville and Cormac Street and into O'Moore Street, opposite Acres Hall, are houses built by Thomas Acres on the right or southern side between Tullamore House and Victoria Terrace. This street was formerly known as Earl Street and also Windmill Street. There were two windmills situated in a field behind the Cormac Street - O'Moore Street houses on the site of what may well have been the hill of Tullamore – *An Tu-lach Mhór*. Both windmills seem to have been out of use by 1800 and on the 1838 map the one remaining windmill is marked as in ruins. The terrace of seven two-storey houses with gardens in front, on the southern side near the road to Spollanstown were built by the Tullamore printer, Richard Willis, in 1837-8. Willis took a 100-year lease of the plot of ground for £21 a year and gave similar leases of the houses for £14 each annual rent. This worked out at £3 per site perpetual rent and £11 profit rent to meet the building costs over perhaps a twenty-year spread. It will be noticed that one house has a full-height, half-octagon bow with a cornice supported by console brackets over the door. The end house nearest the mid-1990s apartment block has a Doric door-case and wide elliptical-headed fan-light. The original railings and gate piers to some of these houses survive. The lease of 100 years instead of three lives renewable for ever was a change of policy on the Charleville estate brought in by the

second earl who was disgruntled at his father having virtually alienated or sold much of Tullamore town for small money. The second earl was not as flush with money as his father had been and neither in the post Reform bill period after 1832 was he as sure that Catholic tenants would vote for a Charleville-approved candidate in a general election.

Tullamore Court Hotel

Tullamore Court Hotel was opened to great acclaim in November 1997 – a project of the Flanagan Group and was officially inaugurated by the then Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, in January 1998. The hotel was the first major hotel project in the town in almost 200 years. Prior to the 1980s the town depended on Hayes Hotel and Bolger's hotel, but by the mid-1980s both had moved away from accommodation in favour of bar and entertainment facilities. For thirty years the chamber of commerce had wanted a new hotel – a dream that was realised only in 1997. Few would have thought that within ten years the town would have perhaps 250 beds available for visitors. Tullamore Court was built at a cost of £8m and then had 72-bedrooms with a 6,000 sq ft conference centre to seat 800 and a 20-metre swimming pool and leisure centre. Designed by Burke Kennedy Doyle the facility was built by the Flanagan Group taking advantage of the tax reliefs on capital investment then available. An additional 30 bedrooms



VICTORIA TERRACE, O'MOORE STREET



THE COTTAGE, O'MOORE STREET



MOORE HALL, 2000



were added in 2007 together with extensive further conference facilities. Many of the great entrepreneur families of Tullamore are recalled in the names of the various suites.

Moore Hall

On the town side of O'Moore Street are two very attractive houses, Moore Hall and The Cottage. Both these houses are opposite Victoria Terrace and have gardens in front. Moore Hall was erected about 1750 and was built for Richard Moore who had a shop in High Street. This house was considerably improved in the mid-nineteenth century and has an impressive door-case which Garner (1980) described as somewhat bizarre in its various architectural elements. Beside the house is a castellated coach entrance and Gothic-style stables in a cobbled yard. The remains of a gas lamp from after 1860 may be seen on the railings at the front. This is the only surviving vestige of the era of gas lighting from 1860 to 1921. Fortunately the proposal to widen O'Moore Street and remove part of the front garden of Moore Hall seems to have been shelved. Poor Dr Ridley who died by his own hand in Fermoy in 1888 lived here and later the Scallys of the great shop in Columcille Street. Both Moore Hall and The Cottage are protected structures. The present owner, Mr Billy Heffernan, is to be congratulated for his work in saving the house and the council for not removing the railings to widen the street.

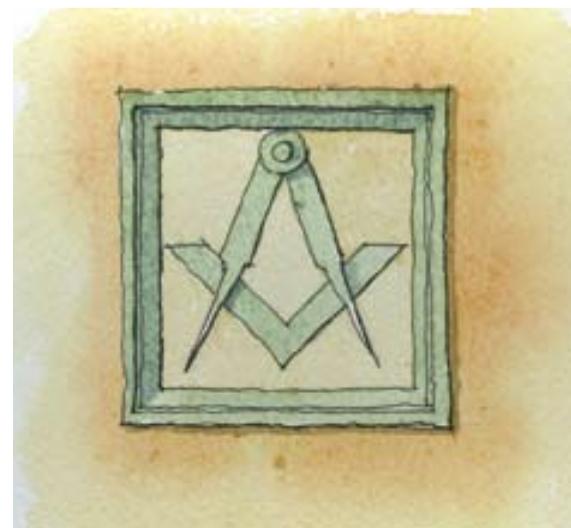
The Cottage

The Cottage is thought to have been built in the early 1800s and is a single-storey, three-bay house over a basement. It has a very fine pointed door-case and large three-light Wyatt windows. Empty for many years it is a building that when restored will add greatly to the street.

Masonic Lodge

Beside the Cottage is the masonic lodge with the masonic insignia over the door. The house was used for Quaker meetings until 1884 when it was purchased by the Tullamore Masonic Lodge. The building probably dates from 1852 and was built soon after Robert Goodbody of the Clara Quaker family moved to what is now the Farrelly house in High Street. Two of his surviving five sons already had business interests in Tullamore with the shop and tobacco factory. 'Unusually in Tullamore the original glazing bars of this house are still intact' wrote Garner in 1980. These old windows are now gone and replaced with plastic imitations. The masons continue to meet here to pursue their charitable works and celebrated the lodge's 250th anniversary in 2009.

From this point to the former Motor Works house (now in part Angelo's Take-Away) has been considerably developed since the 1850s. Originally there were sixteen single-storey houses here, built on the back garden of the former Motor Works house by a speculative builder and cabinet maker, Christopher Woods. The most prominent of the more recent houses is Tyrrell's shop of the 1940s and handsomely redecorated in 2009 following a small fire. The paint work is superb and is an example of what can be achieved with little expense and the avoidance of the brashness which has spoilt some of the town centre shops.



43. THE TOOLS OF THE MASON INSCRIBED OVER THE FREEMASON'S HALL IN O'MOORE STREET AND DATING TO 1884.

SPOLLANSTOWN

Spollanstown is now an attractive suburb of Tullamore with some green fields surviving near its boundary with Ballard. It has a mix of uses from residential to industrial and sport. The sale of Dew Park lands in the 1980s provided sites for new substantial houses and the demolition of Elmfield a site for the new county offices.

Spollanstown was in the nineteenth century very much part of rural Tullamore with access via laneways from O'Moore Street and Charleville Road at Elmfield, but not from Adams Villas as this access was not provided until after 1900 when the local authority houses were built. The townland of Spollanstown comprises an area of 362 acres which includes all of the east side of Cormac Street and Charleville Road to the Harriers Club lands and over to the boundary with the Clonminch Road as far as Gayfield. This townland boundary is old and worth preserving and runs on, as noted, to the northern boundary of Sheena where it divides Kilcruttin with Ballynagh and the parish of Tullamore from the parish of Rahan. Charleville Road forms the townland boundary with Kilcruttin, Ballynagh and Charleville Demesne. The old Furlong house which was positioned at the junction with Spollanstown was demolished in 1996 to facilitate the entrance works for the new Tullamore Court Hotel.

Spollanstown was much used by the landlord, the earl of Charleville, to provide short lettings (thirty one years) of town parks to building lessees in the town such as Thomas Acres and others. Elmfield was the only large house on the western boundary at Charleville Road until Dew Park was erected in 1902.

The population of Spollanstown in 1901 (excluding those parts inclusive of streets) was about fifty-six with only twelve houses. That the area was very much undeveloped is clear from the 1838 map showing few houses save a small row at the top of what is now Adams Villas/ Spade Avenue and a few in Spollanstown Lane. The existing houses are nearly all post 1900. The name as recorded on the ordnance survey maps is Spollanstown, but it is also commonly known as Spollinstown and Spollenstown. The ruins of some of the Acres cottages can still be seen at the back of the Harriers Club.

O'Brien Street

The O'Brien Street houses were built by the urban council in 1910-13 on land provided by P. & H. Egan. The street was called after the nationalist politician, William O'Brien, and provided some twenty houses similar in style to those in Davitt Street, but semi-detached and, apparently, colloquially known at the time as 'Little Italy'.

Behind O'Brien Street is the Spollanstown Industrial Estate developed from the mid-1970s and running up to the back of St Mary's cemetery. The IDA built a number of units here some of which are now occupied by Tullamore Meats and the Harney mineral water plant. The Lumley wholesale business represents the longest lasting family business in Tullamore with members of the family in business in the town since 1850. The wholesale business occupies the former Lewicki Electronics factory. Mark Lumley, now represents the fifth generation in business in Tullamore.

Salts (Ireland) Limited built nine houses for their key staff at about the same time as the woollen mill was opened (1938) and these are all located to the rear of the former spinning mill.



TULLAMORE COURT HOTEL, c.2000



THE ELMS, SPOLLANSTOWN



GLENKEEN, SPOLLANSTOWN

Spollanstown Wood

Near the railway bridge (1858-9), one of the few not widened, is a housing development built by James Donovan and Vincent O'Farrell, and known as Spollanstown Wood. These c. 48 houses were built over the period 1998-2004 and the initial phase was sold at about €125,000 per house rising to c. €300,000 for a four-bedroomed house before the crisis of 2007-8.

The Elms

This is a John Flanagan Developments Limited scheme completed in 1991-2. The estate of 33 houses was completed on what was known as the 'hockey field' and was part of the fields with the house known as Elmfield owned by the Kennedy family.

Glenkeen

Glenkeen is a housing development south east of the rugby club grounds constructed by John Flanagan Developments in the mid-1990s. The c. 20 houses were built on part of the garden of the former Lawrence 1940s bungalow fronting Spollanstown Lane. This laneway is a roadway that led directly from Charleville Road to the pre-1838 T-junction at what is now the rugby club and on for some distance to Ballard bog and the turf banks provided here and at Puttaghan with leasehold titles for houses in the town.

Tullamore Rugby Club grounds

In the mid-1880s a lease was provided for a Tullamore athletic field and gaelic games were played here until the 1890s followed by cricket. At the rear of Dew Park was located the first Tullamore tennis grounds while the athletic grounds became the show grounds by the early 1920s. Clearly the Gaels were unhappy about this because when the British army departed Tullamore in 1922 one of the first acts of local Republicans was to march in a body through the town to take over the former athletic grounds. Rugby and soccer were played here from the 1930s with the Tullamore Rugby Club founded in 1937. The grounds were purchased outright by the rugby club in the early 1970s.

Spollanstown Lane

What were little more than country lanes until the 1970s coming from O'Moore Street and Charleville Road into Spollanstown have since been widened as part of the housing developments in Spollanstown. Not so the laneway leading south west past the back of the Harriers Club and to the townland boundary at Larkin's house between Spollanstown and Ballard and also between the parish of Rahan and that of Tullamore. This laneway south west of Larkin's and the townland boundary led to about seven cottages, two of which still survive at the top of Adams Villas. The lane ran behind the first of these houses into Ballard bog. In the distance could be seen the cottages erected by the earl of Charleville for key people working in Charleville Demesne.

Spollanstown Road from Charleville Road to the rugby club

The houses erected on the access road from Charleville Road to the rugby club vary in date but are generally post 1970. Elmfield and The Elms estate have already been mentioned. On the southern side of the road is Dew Park. Three of the houses here were erected in the garden of Dew Park, being sites sold by the owner in the 1980s, Mr and Mrs Loomis. Next is a cottage with its gable to the road (now Mrs Choiseul and formerly Jack and Lily Clune). This house was built for a Mr Molloy who worked as a gardener in Dew Park. All the fine houses from the former Egan bungalow (designed by Fergal MacCabe, architect) and as far as the Jaffray and Walsh properties in Spollanstown Lane were all erected in the grounds of the former Dew Park lands. The sale of Dew Park in the 1980s and of the Elmfield and Lawrence lands opened up this area for development.

CLONMINCH ROAD/ KILLEIGH ROAD

Sometimes called the Portlaoise or Killeigh Road, Clonminch had little or no development until the building of the railway station there in 1854. The provision of cemeteries here in 1852 and 1893 was a mark of the isolation of the area. It was only with the economic improvements in the 1900s and the development of a locally based bureaucracy that the town saw new 'villas' built, such as the former Williams house known as Auburn and Clonminch House facing Bachelors Walk.



44. CLOONAN'S HOUSE AT THE JUNCTION OF BACHELORS WALK AND CLONMINCH ROAD DATING FROM THE MID-1920S.



45. THE KINGSTON VILLAS OF 1909 AT CLONMINCH ROAD. THIS ONE WAS OCCUPIED BY THE HOLOHAN FAMILY FOR MANY YEARS AND IS NOW A GUEST HOUSE.



CENTRAL BUSINESS PARK, CLONMINCH



OLD RAILWAY STATION, c.1855



SAINT COLUMBA'S PLACE

Those who like walking are recommended to go to the Clonminch bridge to see the old railway station opened in 1854 and closed about ten years later. Up to the 1970s the house, or two houses originally, was then very much in its original state overlooked by the old railway bridge. The widening of the bridge and the modernisation of the railway house took away its railway cottage appearance. Near the bridge is the Catholic graveyard opened in 1893. The large Celtic cross was erected as a memorial to a parish priest, Fr Behan, in 1900, and was carved by Messrs. J. & H. Bracken of Templemore. Beyond the Clonminch bridge and near the water tower is the Church of Ireland cemetery opened in 1852. East of the bridge on the left is Chancery Lane, or Lovers Lane, the only country lane near the town until the 1990s when it was largely built on. The houses between the Catholic graveyard and O'Moore Street all date from the 1900s and later. The two 'fine blocks of double villas' on the eastern side were erected by a former secretary of the Offaly County Council, C.P. Kingston in 1909. On the western side of Clonminch Road and before the Catholic cemetery are eight houses erected by P. & H. Egan Ltd. in 1935 on lands known as Buckley's Hill. Looking down towards Bachelors Walk or New Road is a fine red brick house erected in 1910 for John Digan, now known as Clonminch House. Red brick was used in a number of houses in Tullamore in the 1900s. This house was built for £1,700 but was sold in the 1920s for a £1,000 - a reminder of the very different economic circumstances prevailing after the First World War. The eight Egan houses like the four Kingston houses across the road were private developments for the middle classes and as such were rare interventions by private sector capital until the 1970s. Among the new owners were familiar names in Tullamore - Rory McCann, James Morris,

Anthony Egan, Hugh B. Douglas, Henry Burke and Stephen Cloonan.

Beyond the railway bridge are many new developments of the 1990s and the period 2002-07 including the department of education building and the three office blocks in Central Business Park together with that for Byrne Casey & Associates. New residential developments include Clonminch Wood built on the lands of Gayfield formerly owned by the Egan family and latterly by the late James P. Woods. Off Clonminch Road to the east are two large local authority residential schemes, St Columba's Place and Tara Crescent and on the western side is the Finlay development of some twenty houses known as The Willows. Smaller schemes on Clonminch Road include the Flanagan Collier's Brook development called after the stream flowing from Spollanstown to the south of the cemetery. Beside the stream is the Cahir Mhor housing development and further out the developments of Deerpark and Limefield. These are all residential building estates of the period since 1980 and more especially since 1995 and up to 2007. Over the period from 1970 to 2007 James Spollen built the housing estates of Hophill Grove, Clonminch Avenue and housing developments spanning the area between Clonminch Road and Church Road to a layout of Fergal MacCabe, architect. In addition, Mr Spollen, has sold sites for private houses as in Clonminch Avenue and Ashley Court. The most recent large-scale developments in this area were the local authority schemes in Chancery Lane.



BACHELORS WALK

Bachelors Walk, or perhaps better known as New Road, was a tree-lined avenue from its creation in about 1815 to the end of the Second World War when modest bungalows began to appear. The new walk was a recreational facility and allowed the Charleville family easy access to the new church without having to go through the dirty streets of the town such as Church Street or Tanyard Lane.

Bachelors Walk, also known as New Road, was laid out about 1815 or the year St Catherine's Church was completed. The road was part of the earl of Charleville's scheme for the improvement of the town. The avenue was planned so as to command a view of Croghan hill, the home of the Charleville family from the 1570s until the 1700s. It is not clear who was responsible for the design, but it may have been John C. Loudon, the botanist and garden designer, who was employed at Charleville in 1812. The simple design may also have been the responsibility of Francis Johnston who designed St Catherine's or the canal engineer, John Killaly. The latter lived in Tullamore and laid out the footpaths around St Catherine's Church. In recent years the road has been under attack from the motor vehicle and the local authority sanitation schemes and is showing signs of the strain. The houses here, almost all bungalows, were erected from the late 1940s when demand and the availability of building materials improved after the Second World War.

Glenfircal

The small scheme of sixteen houses off Bachelors Walk, built on part on the former Christian Brothers school playing field and other lands, was completed by John Flanagan Developments Limited in about 1990 to a design of Fergal MacCabe, architect. Like Rose Lawn these were the first private town house schemes. The development includes one house on Bachelors Walk at the entrance to Glenfircal.

Church Avenue

This is what was once the small street east of the roundabout at Bachelors Walk and for fifty years a quiet cul de sac. The sites sold here in 1958 for the going rate of about £150 to £200 were perhaps the first effort to avoid the ribbon development com-

mented on by Freeman in 1948 and Gibney in 1950. The new Charleville School was built here in 2006 and about the same time the access opened to the proposed 300-unit Church Hill estate. The name Church Avenue has come to be used in recent years and may not be officially adopted, but was preferred to Church Close by some of the residents. The latter being considered 'Too Protestant'. What would the sometime Banagher resident, Anthony Trollope, and his Barchester friends say!

St Catherine's Church

The church, designed by Francis Johnston, was built in the Gothic style with a Latin cross plan, side-aisles, a tower at the west, and a crypt at the east end. The impressive site of Hop Hill was chosen by Revd Ponsonby Gouldsbury in 1808 in preference to a site in Market Square where the Granary apartments are now located. It is frequently stated that this hill is an artificial mound formed from the material excavated to make Charleville Lake. However, the truth is less fanciful. Originally more pointed, the hill is a natural one. The church was erected at a cost of £7,000, opened in 1815, and fully completed by 1818. The earl of Charleville had provided about £3,500 with the balance coming from the Board of First Fruits and local subscriptions. The best pews were sold for thirty guineas. The earl of Charleville sat on the top left of the chancel and Mr Killaly, the engineer and Mrs Wilson of High Street on the right of the chancel with the curate and Mr Slater. Suitably, Thomas Acres sat in the front row on the left and behind were other leading townspeople and merchants all of whom are familiar as house owners in the town.

The church contains 'an elaborate memorial now partly broken up' to Charles Moore, first earl of Charleville of the first creation, who died in 1764. The monument, by John Van Nost the younger, was commissioned by

the first earl's nephew, John Bury. Unfortunately, Bury did not live to enjoy the 20,000-acre estate he had inherited and drowned at Ringsend, Dublin in the same year. Dying before the memorial was completed he is commemorated on the monument in the form of a bust. John Wesley, as noted, saw the monument in the old church and wrote in his journal at 25 June 1767: 'I was desired to look at the monument lately erected for the earl of Charleville. It observes "That he was the last of his family, the great Moores of Croghan"....'

The former glebe house near the church was erected in 1814 at a cost of £821 with a neat verger's cottage at the entrance. Now the rector lives in a modern house and the rectory may be developed as a nursing home replete with more housing 'units'. It was in the old rectory that the astronomer Charles Jasper Joly was born in 1864. The lands surrounding the church were sold for development of a planned 300 houses and apartments known as Church Hill where work started about 2005. In one weekend such was the demand that the selling price of the houses was increased for a three-bed house from €240,000 to €270,000. An astronomical price-increase Joly might have said! Now in 2010 the same houses fetch about €180,000.

Church Road

Enormous changes have come about at Church Road since the construction of the swimming pool there in 1938. It was the 1980s before the lands adjoining the urban boundary were developed by the council as enterprise units, known then as Cloncollog Industrial Estate. Sites then were a modest £12,000 per acre. The development of the old Garry farm as a commercial park by Tony Flanagan attracted Aldi to the area in 1999, followed by a number of other units including Smiths and the NCT car test-



CHURCH ROAD JUNCTION WITH TANYARD LANE AND BACHELORS WALK, C.1910

ing centre in what is now River View Commercial Park. Big changes followed the purchase by Tesco of a site here for a new 48,000 sq ft store (later enlarged) and opened in September 2004. The Tullamore Retail Park grew from this and has attracted national and international retailers, taking almost 120,000 sq ft of retail space. At the same time the new gaelscoil was opened and new housing developments such as the 250-house Chancery Park etc. A sum of €4m was paid in 2005 for two bungalow sites opposite the 1970s White House (built as a pub just outside the urban boundary) which are still not developed. A similar amount was paid for a field once owned by the late Ambrose Mangan, the guardian of the holy well at Kilclonfert. Aldi built

a new store directly opposite Tesco in 2009, opening a few months after the new swimming pool and the new Expert Store. Nowhere in Tullamore has change been so great as in Cloncollog, what with the housing, industrial warehouses and shops and the new by-pass. It represents the adoption of the car-based American way of life a long way from the medieval and Georgian town. The change to out-of-town shopping when combined with town parking charges, the new by-pass and the recession have left the town centre vulnerable in the extreme. What is made on town car-parking charges is now lost on uncollectable rates for vacant shop units. Town growth, as is well known in the United States, is not inexorable.

PATRICK STREET

Patrick Street, once known as Barrack Street, is in the heart of the old town with the fine D.E. Williams house of the 1750s facing across to the shop of G. & M. Hanlon of some sixty years later. On part of the site of the old 1716 barracks is the new garda station closing off the vista at the western end of the street. Only four of the houses here survived the balloon fire of 1785.



Standing at Menary's we can get a good view of Patrick Street, formerly Barrack Street. A barrack was erected here for two companies of foot soldiers in 1716. It was burned in 1922 and urban council housing and a garda station built on the site. The military barrack brought about 100 soldiers to the town and is thought to have been a major factor in the town's growth because of the increased demand for goods and services that followed its arrival. After the 1870s, soldiers were stationed at Tullamore only at infrequent intervals. At the entrance to the barracks, on one side, was a date-stone with 1716 inscribed and a reference to King George. On the other side of the entrance was a stone with the inscription 'God preserve the Protestant Religion and the present Establishment – Tullamore.' The building was occupied by the I.R.A. in March 1922 when the British army quit the town and was destroyed some four months later as the Republican soldiers left town before the arrival of the Free State army. Patrick Street has changed greatly since the 1980s in that few of the shops and businesses located there at that time are still in business in the same place, excepting Bob Smyth's bar (formerly McGowan's) and Fahey's pharmacy (1955). The street went into a stage of decline especially after the removal of Dunnes Stores to Church Road about 1990 and of the Tesco supermarket (formerly Five Star) to the new Tullamore Retail Park in 2004. Were it not for the Tullamore Credit Union with some 10,000 callers per week and located here since 1982 the street would be considerably quieter. Possibilities for integration with say the Bridge Centre were lost with the completion of the Bridge House Hotel in 1999. If it happens that a new shopping-centre is built on the former Texas/Tesco store in accordance with the planning permission granted in 2009 it will be interesting to see what changes come about. There is



PATRICK STREET AND HAYES' CROSS, c.1910

little or no integration in this proposed development for which effectively a ten-year planning permission has been granted by An Bord Pleánala against the recommendations of its own inspector. The design is perhaps better suited to a suburban retail park and not the late-eighteenth century town centre. Proposals are now (August 2010) being considered for a scaled-back design in the light of present needs and finance.

Head Office of Williams Group now Tullamore Music Academy

Patrick Street was rebuilt after the balloon fire of 1785, and probably widened at this time. The fire destroyed about 100 houses, mostly thatched, or about one-third of the town's housing stock. A few houses survived the fire, including the former head

office of the Williams Group, now called D.E. Williams House. This house was built about 1760 by George Ross, a brewer. It later served as the headquarters of a leading Irish company associated with Tullamore since 1884 – D.E. Williams Limited. The Williams company was sold to Greencore in 1997 and with that sale went the tradition of one hundred years of association of this street with the Williams business through the grocery shop located where Quigley's restaurant now is. Behind the former head office were the extensive warehouses to the rear stretching to the canal bank. Across from the head office was one of the entrances to the Tullamore distillery.

The former Williams head office building is set back from the street and as Garner noted has a façade of

crisply cut limestone ashlar set over a basement and with a large door-case with channelled blocks. To the rear is a connected range of warehouses of the 1890s of three storeys in height and the few stores surviving are now used as shops and offices. It was here that the Williams wine and spirit blending and tea business was conducted from the 1890s until the 1980s.

Near the head office of the Williams Group was the former D.E. Williams Ltd supermarket opened as a grocery store by D.E. Williams in 1884. This building was reconstructed in 1941-2 to a design of Michael Scott, and, unusually, was finished in Clonaslee or Rosenallis rusticated sandstone. In the Murals Bar (now gone) beside the supermarket could be seen work by the artist Sean O'Sullivan. Some remains of these famous murals were moved to what is now the Indian restaurant known as Yagdar. Whatever survives of them is now obscured by a large mirror. Unfortunately the lovely front by Scott was lost in the 1980s and replaced with the banal 'traditional' shop-fronts now to be seen when the building was divided into a number of units and a restaurant opened at the rear. This opening, known as Patrick's Court, is of interest and was designed by the late Eugene Garvey.

Joe O'Sullivan (formerly Marron's Shoe Shop, later Dominic Feely)

It is always interesting to trace back a business to its roots. Marron's shop was once on the northern side of the street and originated in a tannery established by Michael Mulready in the 1830s. Mulready owned the building now occupied on the upper floor by Paul Wrafter, accountant, and had his tannery at the rear. In the car-park at the rear of the former Copper Urn public house (earlier Rattigan's) could be seen his name and the date 1832 inscribed on a warehouse building removed in the early 1990s. The move from tannery to manufactured shoes made elsewhere illustrates the general trend away from the self-sufficient country town. The ease with which goods could be imported from Britain following the building of the railways played a big part in undermining small industries. However, it did facilitate other businesses such as live cattle exports and the Goodbody jute and tobacco businesses.

De Brun's formerly the Capital Bar/ Bernard Cash

Past the former head office of the Williams Group is De Brun's pub. This three-storey building dates from about 1840. The date-stone of the original building on this site with the inscription 'Andrew Grier 1742' could be seen set in the path near the entrance and is now cleverly incorporated in the entrance door-case.

Bolger Arms now Sue Ryder and others

The Bolger Arms hotel on the site of what is now Sue Ryder and others dates back to the 1850s and continued in use until 1985 when it was sold to First National Building Society. This branch later closed only to re-open again in the same street after 2000 and close finally in 2009 as a casualty of the banking crisis, as did two other banks in Tullamore, Halifax and ACC.

R. Smyth

On the southern side of the street can be seen the public house of R. Smyth, formerly a mill house with stores, a flour mill and kiln at the rear. The mill was incorporated in the Tullamore distillery in the 1830s and the same mill was removed in the 1850s as part of the first Brosna drainage scheme.

Hanlon's butchers, formerly K. Dunne sweet shop

The very fine shop-front is worth noting in this street and is one of the few buildings in Tullamore where the façade was retained intact in the course of the reconstruction. The round-headed door-case is described as having panelled pilasters decorated with pateras and a fluted surrounding to the fanlight.



DISTILLERY GATES, c.2009



MARRON'S SHOP, c.1950



HAYES HOTEL, c.1912



TULLAMORE CREDIT UNION, 2000

Tullamore Credit Union building

This building with rusticated ground floor, as with other bank buildings in the town, was built in 1982 for the Tullamore Credit Union at a cost of £350,000. The architect was Arthur Lardner and the builder Padraig Bracken Limited. This ‘people’s bank’ was first opened in Tullamore in 1963 with two part-time voluntary staff. Such was its success that the former Hennessy home built about 1800 was demolished in 1981 to make way for this better than usual modern building and a welcome contrast to the 1970s office building of Spollen Concrete in Harbour Street or Ulster Bank of the same vintage in High Street. About 10,000 people pass through the Credit Union doors each week making it now the ‘anchor’ of Patrick Street after the departure of Dunnes Stores from the site opposite the garda station in the early 1990s. Back in 1982 the Credit Union had six staff and 6,000 members. Today it employs about forty people and just as with the Tullamore Loan Fund Bank of 1820 it has a board who receive no fees or expenses.

Elvery’s and others

This new building of 2005 by McCarthy O’Hora, Architects was built on the site of the old Dunnes Stores. The old building may date to the 1780s and was in the 1950s known as the Central Home Stores. This business was sold in 1964 and the place converted to a supermarket. The new shop was opened as a D.O.S. Supermarket by the lovely Suzanne McDougall to an adoring crowd. Lumley’s was the first self service in Tullamore, but this supermarket was the brashest and set the new trend in shopping. It was taken over by Dunnes Stores about 1970 and enlarged to incorporate the former Brazil’s public house. That building and the other three houses between it and Credit Union House were built about 1790 by the landlord and not by building lessees on the site of houses that may have been the most seriously damaged in the fire of 1785. Many will recall the painting for many years in the front window of Brazil’s pub and painted by Tullamore man, Peter Fox. His *trompe l’oeil* style of exterior painting was to be seen on Bob Smyth’s pub for many years and has been captured in the international seller, Michael Jackson, *The world guide to whisky* (1987).

Garda Station

The new garda station designed in-house by the office of public works was opened in 2002 and built on the site of the earlier 1937 garda station. The new building was designed to house some fifty members of the force in place of the twelve of the 1930s. The site incorporated a separate police residence (later the superintendent’s office) and the 1940s fire station where as children one would gather to hear the bombing raid like wail calling the fire men to urgent attention. The Tullamore town area or sub-district now provides work for some 80 gardai.

Between the Garda Station and Marian Place can be seen remains of the old barrack wall of 1716, part of which near to the road is in the star shape popular in fortified structures of the late 1600s and early 1700s.



GARDA ROSSITER, TULLAMORE STATION, AFTER AN INSPECTION OF RECORDS IN THE 1940S



GARDA STATION, 2000



MRS TALBOT, SWEET SHOP, 1970s



PATRICK STREET, c.1940

WATER LANE AND MAIN STREET

Water Lane today is the short area between the garda station and the entrance to the Bridge Centre at Marian Place. Originally the street extended to what is now the filling station and convenience store in Main Street.



In the 1820s Water Lane had a population of over 170 people living in 31 houses. By the 1870s most of this had been swept away with the expansion of the distillery. All that survived was a few houses for distillery employees. The old street was gradually privatised such that by the 1900s the B. Daly company was able to erect a gate-house (see the MacCabe drawing) to secure the property. Part of the street was re-opened in 1995 to provide an access to the Bridge Centre and the balance in 2002-3 as part of the development of the new shops and apartments in what the promoters, Thomas McNamara and Paddy Sweeney, called Main Street. Both it and the Bridge Centre were developed from the sell-off from the 1970s of the old distillery lands. After the sale of Williams Waller Limited in 1997 to Greencore the new owner disposed of its town centre grain business-site and planning was obtained for this new shopping development, apartments and hotels. How it would all have fared if Tesco had moved to this site instead of to Cloncollog is interesting to speculate about. However, given the extent of its development at Cloncollog it is unlikely that Water Lane would have been big enough. In any case the council required the connection to the Kilcruitin Road so as take the pressure off the main streets, being Columcille Street and High Street. This ruled out a major single operator with a large store as the divided site was unsuitable.

Lidl was the first to open in 2002, followed by the other shops and apartments and a small hotel. The growing pains of a new town street, perhaps the first since the 1830s, are evident in the number of shops opening and closing. As noted earlier greater connectivity is needed from Tara Street or perhaps by the mooted extension of the Bridge Centre and the opening of a new bridge over the river.

KILBRIDE STREET

Kilbride Street dating from the 1800s developed around the barrack and originally ran not to the Clara Road canal bridge, but across the park to connect in with what is now part of Clontarf Road. Largely residential, the houses on the southern side were all built by the council. Those on the northern side are mixed with one thatched – the Mallet Tavern.

Kilbride Street was in the nineteenth century known as Lower Barrack Street and has mostly been rebuilt since the 1920s. The original houses appear to date from the first decades of the nineteenth century and followed the street line to the new canal bridge, known as Cox Bridge, of 1809. The original street line branched off about half way between the garda station and the Clara bridge and connected with the old Tinkers Row (now Clontarf Road) to the north and to the south with the Srah Road. The twist on both roads can be seen on the 1838 map and pre-date the building of the canal extension about 1800 to connect to Shannon Harbour. The original row of houses from Grennan's butchers to the Clara bridge all appear to date from 1800s to the 1830s possibly with the exception of the Mallet Tavern. Up to the 1970s these houses were largely for residential use. However, much of the north side of Kilbride Street was demolished in the 1970s and rebuilt. Demolition started with a block of houses between Hugh Lynch's and Grennan's with the construction of Kilbride Plaza in the early 1990s as part of a tax relief area or urban renewal scheme. Similar tax considerations applied to the Beck House development of four shops and offices. Beyond Beck House with its shops and offices is The Lantern public house, a new building set back from the street and erected in the 1960s on the site of the famous Carter fish and chip shop. Further up was Wrafter's grocery, Dwane's



49. THE MALLET TAVERN IN KILBRIDE STREET IN THE 1970S WITH MISS MOLLOY BEHIND THE COUNTER (COURTESY OF UNA AND PAOLO GARAU).

barbers, Mills' watch repairs and McGowan's grocery. Willie Dwane had a nice sign in his window advertising 'HAIR CUT WHILE YOU WAIT'. The price in the 1960s was as low as 6d. Surprisingly, the original houses surviving but much altered are those from the corner with Patrick Street to Grennan's butchers. This writer remembers in the 1960s the blacksmith's forge of Mr Kelly and some clay pipes lolling in a shut-up sweetshop on the site of what is now Beck House. Also of great interest at that time were the printing machines in Al Conroy's Stella Press where many a poster was run off for a local carnival or other such event. At the back of these houses was The Quarry, now Kilbride Park. The first wave of 'renewal' saw the building of Kilbride Plaza in the 1970s, followed in the early 1990s by four more shops and apartments. The Beck House development, the medical centre and apartments to its rear were built on land sold by the town council. To maximise the site the council preserved the street line of the old St Kyran's Street.

Hugh Lynch public house

The Hugh Lynch pub is long established and was a D. E. Williams branch house from early in the last century until the late 1960s. Now greatly extended it is a popular resort for young and old. Near the bridge is the home of Jim and Teresa Kenny where can be seen the last half-door in Tullamore. On the southern side of Kilbride Street are houses built by the town council in the 1920s and 1930s including the Parnell Street terraces. These single-storey houses were built on the site of the army barrack destroyed in 1922 by the departing I.R.A.

Mallet Tavern

The most interesting house in Kilbride Street is undoubtedly the Mallet Tavern, the only surviving thatched house in the town. This house may predate the fire of 1785, but given its alignment with Clara bridge it might post-date the bridge of 1809. The pub had been in the Molloy family for many generations. Many of those who frequented it in the nineteenth century were masons working at the limestone quarries at Ballyduff and Srah. Some of the quarries here were owned by the Molloy family who were extensively involved in stone cutting including work on the Bank of Ireland in High Street of 1870 (now Hoey & Denning), the Catholic church and the courthouse. Older readers will remember Miss Molloy (illustrated here) serving a bottle of stout sometimes accompanied by pig's feet or crubeens.



50. A VIEW OF THE MALLETT TAVERN WITH THE SURROUNDING HOUSES.



51. THE 1897 BONDED WAREHOUSE NOW THE TULLAMORE DEW HERITAGE CENTRE WITH THE CANAL IN THE FOREGROUND.

KILBRIDE PARK, ST KYRAN'S STREET, O'CONNELL STREET BURY QUAY

The area to the north of Kilbride Street and between it and the canal was up to the mid-1960s known as The Quarry. About 1965 the place came to be known as Kilbride Park with the construction of a simple playground and the cleaning up of the area together with the planting of trees along the canal banks. It was at this time that Major Hutton Bury of Charleville Estate Company leased the area for 999 years for use as a place of leisure. The council later bought out the lease and created the large car-park between the canal and Kilbride Street. The old quarry probably predated the canal and was in the north-west corner of the park near the turn at Clontarf Road and laneway beside the canal from Clontarf Road to the Clara bridge. It was filled in about 1900 because it had become a dump and a sanitary nuisance. St Kyran's Street between the Chinese restaurant and the Hugh Lynch pub was at one time known as Gunnood's Lane and, from at least the 1880s, St Kyran's Street. The late Revd Dr Moran when writing his short history of Tullamore (1962) assumed that a family of gunsmiths lived here because the name Gunwood appeared in the printed valuation of 1854 instead of Gunnood. The origin of St Kyran's Street like O'Dempsey Street is in a laneway which ran from the old barrack across Kilbride Park to connect with what is now the western end of Clontarf Road. It disappeared with the construction of the canal after 1800, but the outline

of it can still be seen on the 1838 map of the town. Beyond Grennan's butchers to the canal was Tea Lane, later called O'Connell Street. This was a street of cabins and small houses built on the back gardens of the corner house at Patrick Street and Kilbride Street (formerly Cullen and later Ray Kelly). In the 1850s the entire Tea Lane was sold in the Encumbered Estates Court and survived until demolition in the 1950s. It was a good example of the privately owned 'housing estates' much complained of after 1900 by Dr Moorhead and others who wanted to promote better housing for the poor.

At the junction of O'Connell Street and the canal bank is the **Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society Research and Exhibition Centre** opened in 1992 and based in a reconstructed wine warehouse of the Williams Group and part of the old Irish Mist offices and stores. The Society collects documentary and photographic material relating to Offaly community and family history and has an impressive library and facilities. Lectures and training courses are held here at the expense of the Society and funded by donations and membership. Books can be purchased here or a family history commissioned. Much free local historical material is available on the Society's website, www.offalyhistory.com

Immediately to the east of the OHAS premises is the **Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre** opened in the year



KILBRIDE STREET, c.1940



BECK HOUSE, KILBRIDE ST, SHOP FRONTS, c.2000



TEA LANE, 1950s

2000 and promoting an important exhibition of Tullamore history and its association with distilling and Tullamore Dew whiskey. The exhibitions are housed in a former bonded warehouse erected by Daniel E. Williams (the original 'Dew') in 1897. The Williams company had its own canal barge which continued to ply between Tullamore and Dublin until 1957. The Centre is operated by a community company with the support of the town council, Offaly County Council and the owners of Tullamore Dew, formerly Cantrell & Cochrane and now William Grant & Sons Holdings (since July 2010). This building is an essential stopover for visitors to Tullamore and has much for the locals also including attractive Tea Rooms and stronger drinks too. The various blendings of Tullamore Dew can be sampled here after the history tour, including the rare Heritage label. The story of Tullamore Dew and the long distilling tradition in Tullamore is worthy of a separate publication. In the meantime much can be found at www.offalyhistory.com and at the Dew Centre. The sale of the Irish Mist Liqueur brand and plant to Cantrell & Cochrane in 1985 and its later purchase of the Tullamore Dew brand provided the opportunity for this remembrance of a long and happy association of two world-class products. Many Tullamore people are immensely proud to see bottles of Tullamore Dew or Irish Mist for sale all over the world and quick to proclaim their association with

both products. Much credit for the heritage centre initiative must go to William Jaffray, a former managing director of The Irish Mist Liqueur Company Limited and the directors of C&C in the 1990s including Tony O'Brien and the late Frank McGovern. Locally the development has the support of the town council and in its development phase of the county managers in the 1980s and 1990s – Mr S.P. McCarthy and Mr Niall Sweeney.

O'Molloy Street

The 142 houses here were built as part of the Fianna Fáil housing programme of the 1930s. Some were faced in stone to provide additional local employment and all replaced the old Pensioners Row houses built for retired soldiers after the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. The street pattern followed the layout of the original houses save that the old laneway known (after 1905) as O'Dempsey Street that at one time connected Kilbride Street with Srah Road was removed. As a laneway to Srah it had been cut off with the construction of the canal to the Shannon in 1800-03.



52. A COTTAGE AT CLARA BRIDGE WITH ITS HALF-DOOR.



HUGH LYNCH'S PUB, 2007



TULLAMORE DEW HERITAGE CENTRE



KILBRIDE STREET, c. 1940



KILBRIDE STREET, c. 1940

MARIAN PLACE

This scheme of houses was erected in 1955 on land that at one time formed part of the barrack meadow and is a well laid out scheme adopting the new town planning ideas after the war and the 1950 Gibney report. The estate was completed close to the 1954 Marian year and consists of 106 houses. In many ways its completion together with Pearse Park marked the end of the severe housing crisis first indentified some sixty years earlier in the late 1890s.

PEARSE PARK

For the naming of Pearse Park with its 74 houses it was back to the 1916 leader and visionary, Padraig Pearse. All the street names in this area west of the garda station draw on the historical-religious theme with Kilbride after the medieval chapel of ease west of Tullamore, Parnell and Pearse on the period from the 1880s to 1916 and O'Molloy and O'Dempsey on the native families. Pearse Park is fortunate to have such a large park and contrasts favourably with private schemes of twenty and thirty years later such as Whitehall Estate where open space was built on in later phases to get in more housing units. Right down to the first decade of this century it was often the case that the council houses were built to a higher standard than those in the private schemes. The Pearse Park scheme preceded Marian Place by two years and the great park may well have been at the suggestion of Frank Gibney.

SRAH ROAD AND BUSINESS PARKS

The houses on Srah Road with the exception of some near Keegan's and the former 28th lock-house, all date from the 1950s and up to the present time and run out to the Ballydrohid bridge at the railway line. The bridge at Ballydrohid was built in 1859 as part of the works for the Tullamore to Athlone rail connection. The metal bridge over the canal close to Srah castle dates from the same period. Much of the former Keegan farm together with that of other landowners was acquired by the county council in the early 1970s to provide lands for the industrial and service development now comprising the IDA Business Park and Burlington Business Park. Most of the factories here date from the 1970s and 1980s and include the former Burlington factory (now Carroll Cuisine) of 1977 and the former Argyle factory (now Tyco/Covidien) which opened in 1982. Covidien employed some 650 people in Tullamore in May 2010, but the voluntary redundancy of some 200 workers was announced that year. Nonetheless after the struggles of the late 1970s and again in the last decade Covidien is a highly valued employer. The IDA Business Park and that at Burlington Business Park, once known as Srah Industrial Estate, were greatly enhanced since 2004 with new industrial and service units and fine landscaping to better suit the changing economic landscape in western Europe from industrial to service industries and the

so called 'smart economy'. Most of the houses on Srah Road are built on privately sold sites with the exception of the late Edward E. Garry's Lock Close scheme built about 2007 and consisting of some fifteen houses beside the 28th lock-house. Before the 1960s there were few houses here with the exception of Keegan's large house and the dairy nearby where one could buy home-made ice cream in the early 1960s on the way for a long walk beside the Grand Canal out to Ballycowan castle and home by Lynally and Charleville. This is still a great walk and can be done in one hour at a push. In the 1970s the road must have seemed to the residents to be very secure from burglars. At the time some six of the fifteen members of the local garda siochana lived on Srah Road giving it, one supposes, round-the-clock protection.

CLARA ROAD

That part of the road between the canal bridge and Dolan's new stores (on the site of the former Mooney's shop) is a new street that came about when the canal bridge was built in 1809. On part of it was the large garden attached to Smith's or the 27th lock-house and beside it was the house and farmyard of Kearney's – the latter now demolished. Clontarf Road residents of the 1960s will recall collecting butter milk at Joe Smith's lock-house. Opposite was another field owned by the Grand Canal Company



PENSIONERS ROW, c.1905



MEADOW CLOSE, KILCRUTTIN, 2007



SNICKERS FACTORY, SRAH, 1993



SRAH CASTLE, c.1940



54. KILBEGGAN BRIDGE WITH THE GREAT OATS STORE OF D. E. WILLIAMS LIMITED IN THE BACKGROUND (COURTESY OF TULLAMORE TOWN COUNCIL).



and to the rear the 'buildings' of a Mr Dunne contractor left unfinished in the 1950s and 1960s and converted into a garage and much improved and extended for Coltons over the twenty years since 1990. Beyond Dolan's shop was Kearney's farmyard and fields – now earmarked for over 300 houses which may not be built anytime soon. Further out are new housing developments at Moylena (Oliver Toner) and Knockowen (Andrew Galvin). Collins Lane was, until the 1970s, the boundary of the town. As part of the western relief road, and to provide access to the new Burlington factory, the road was widened here at the time and provided a new access to Kilcruttin and a convoluted by-pass of the town back through Kilcruttin, Cormac Street, O'Moore Street to the Portlaoise Road at Clonminch. The new eastern by-pass of 2009 made this detour to the Portlaoise Road and the Birr Road unnecessary. In the vicinity of Collins Lane are new housing estates erected between 2002 and 2008 and comprising some 860 housing units. These include housing estates as follows: Ballin Ri (on part of the Bracken farm), for Graham Developments, Portlaoise, in 2003-4, that of Carraig Cluain and Cill Ban (on part of the Keegan and Kearney lands), Droim Liath (part of the Collins farm) in 2004-7, both schemes by Flanagan Developments; Eiscir Meadows etc and Norbury Woods (part of the Galvin farm, 2001-8). A new non-denominational school, Educate Together, was built on another part of the Kearney land acquired by the town council and opened in 2008. A proposed development of houses and shops west of Scally's foodstore and on land owned by the nearby cattle market company was put on hold after 2007.

Since 2004 a substantial development known as Axis Business Park, erected by the Flanagan Group on part of the former Wrafter farm at Ballyduff, is

in course of completion and succeeded in providing much needed new warehousing and industrial units, until demand fell after 2007. The development includes units for the midlands radio station, Radio3FM, and a ten-acre grounds and stadium for Tullamore Football (Soccer) Club which was opened in July 2008. The soccer club was a beneficiary of the Tiger years with a successful swap of lands at Puttaghan for the new location and facilities. A fortunate outcome to their departure from Spollanstown some forty years earlier when lack of money prevented the club from completing the purchase of the old Athletic Grounds, now the Tullamore Rugby Club. Between the Axis Business Park and that of Seamus Carroll's (Burlington Business Park) can be seen the remains of the first post-Reformation Catholic church in Tullamore. This was erected in 1775 almost in the centre of the Tullamore parish and well outside the town, as it then was, and continued to be until the 1960s. It was in this area that the famous Tullamore stone quarries of the Molloy and Horan families were worked. The former Molloy dwelling house, probably of the 1870s, is located near the Clara Road roundabout on the western side. Closer in to Tullamore is a house of similar vintage erected for the Hand family and later called Moorhill House. This property was operated as a successful small hotel and restaurant from the 1970s (by Jean and Oliver Toner) until it was sold in 2005 by the Duffy family. A new hotel was to be built but this too was a casualty of the recession and is now surrounded by short stay 'holiday' homes with the original house lying empty and devoid of all the cheer it had as a successful hotel and restaurant for over some thirty years. Just as with developers in O'Connor Square (Scott) and Store Street (Behan) in the 1790s and 1800s debt and bankruptcy can be the return on development schemes.

COLUMCILLE STREET

Columcille Street, also known as William Street and in the 1790s as Pound Street, is a natural extension of High Street and leads on to Ardan Road, albeit interrupted after 1800 by the new and inconvenient canal bridge. Most of the houses here were provided on sites leased to the town's first developer, Thomas Acres.

If now the western by-pass at Carroll Cuisine and Axis Business Park at Ballyduff marks the extremity of the town on the north-western side so in the 1790s Columcille Street was the new street providing access to the roads for Tyrrellspass and Kilbeggan. At this time Acres Hall marked the southern boundary and Church Street and Patrick Street the eastern and western boundaries. William Street (after Charles William Bury) and now Columcille Street was laid out in plots in the 1790s for the landlord by the architect, John Pentland, who may also have designed the market house at O'Connor Square. Most of the sites were leased to the developer, Thomas Acres, for sub-lease or sell-on to tradesmen and small builders in what by the standards of the town was a significant development of some forty houses. A site was left vacant at what is now the junction with Harbour Street for a new courthouse or sessions house, probably for something similar to what was built in Birr in about 1803 and not for the grander-style county courthouse built at Cormac Street in 1835. In 1786 Tullamore had failed in a bid in the Irish house of commons to get county town status so it is unlikely that Bury in 1790 was thinking of anything other than a small quarter sessions courthouse. This site later provided a convenient way of accessing the proposed Harbour Street - Market Square area and connecting in with Chapel Street, Store Street, Deane Place, Gas Works Lane and O'Carroll Street. The pound for stray or impounded animals, after which the street was first named, was in the vicinity of what is now the Kilbeggan bridge, but was later moved to a yard beside the Tullamore river in Church Street, giving its function in the naming of the bridge there, as Pound Bridge.

The building of the canal to Tullamore in 1798 provided the stimulus to the development of all this area from Offally Street and Columcille Street to Harbour Street, Chapel Street, Market Square, Store Street and Bury Quay (now Convent Road). It could be called the canal quarter some 210 years before the same suggestion of Fergal MacCabe as regards the proposed redevelopment of the canal harbour. What was there before the canal? Probably some cabins in what was then Pound Street nearest to the Patrick Street and Church Street corners and along the roads leaving the town for Clara and Tyrrellspass. Acres did not get Pound Street sites near the corners with Patrick Street and Church Street as these were already with other leaseholders. Building had started here by 1795 and with the construction of the canal as far as the present-day footbridge at Convent Road in 1798 led to the removal of a row of cabins between Daingean Road and the old road to Clara via what is now Clontarf Road and known as Connaught Street. Whatever poor housing lay in the route of the canal, the new harbour and Pound Street was removed. With the development of Harbour Street after 1800 and the associated streets nearer to the harbour, including Convent Road, the present-day grid-iron pattern was laid. The new street pattern, with streets running off the main streets at right angles, was consolidated with the removal of buildings such as the old Protestant church in the vicinity of the area known later as the Shambles off Church Street and, further down the same street, the removal of the old linen factory building. The new houses in Pound Street were all two-storey, but by the early 1900s a few, owned by the prosperous merchants such as Scally, Lumley and later English were enlarged to three-storey.



55. MALACHY SCALLY'S GREAT NEW STORE OF 1912 IN COLUMCILLE STREET.

English's restaurant (later Mrs Flynn) at the corner of Columcille Street and Patrick Street will be remembered by those over fifty and was still run on formal lines with the staff dressed in the 1960s in the traditional black uniform with white starched apron. The English family was prominent in the bakery and general store business at the end of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth. One local newspaper in 1915 providing historical material and a 'puff' noted that:

It is now a little over a quarter of a century ago since Mr Thomas English founded the present flourishing provision business, the "corner" house known as the D. B. C. Restaurant. [It] was purchased from Mr Laurence Doyle, and here Mr English, with his keen business capacity, developed what is now one of the best businesses in any town in the Midlands. In the year 1890 he purchased the premises where he carries on the bakery trade, from the late Mr Denis Morgan, and, since that time, he has extended that branch of the business to an enormous extent. Up-to-date machinery has, within the past few years, been installed in the bake-house, and the output has steadily increased, the quality of the bread being unrivalled. Mr English, it may be mentioned holds a certificate of honour, won at the Royal Agricultural Hall in London, some years ago for excellence of an exhibition of bread, he being the only baker in the Province of Leinster to secure a prize. Two motor bread vans have been purchased by him within the past twelve months, and the people of the district which extends practically over the northern and a large portion of the southern division of the King's County, have now the advantage of an early bread service.

The introduction of the motor bread van is an evidence, if such, indeed, were wanting, of the splendid business ability of Mr English who has succeeded in building up a trade second to none in the Midlands.

Lumley's had a similar business and they too had a bread van which has been captured in some of the old postcards of the town. Visitors to Tullamore must have been struck with the magnificence of the premises in which Malachy Scally carried on his drapery business from about 1912. He purchased the house in which the lately deceased A.S. Poole, jeweller, resided, and which adjoined the old Scally premises and spent about £5,000, on the new building which must have been one of the finest drapery stores outside the larger cities.

Supermac's

This strong three-storey building of about 1800, like that at Cormac Street - O'Moore Street was intended to make a statement and was built opposite the new hotel of 1786. For all of the last century it was a drapery store and from the 1950s re-built for the Champ family – with Morris in Church Street the last in a long succession of Protestant drapers. The closure of the North Offaly Co-op in the late 1980s and of Champs at the same time highlighted the changes in local retailing. In 1990 the venerable old building was modernised for a new branch of Supermac's – an Irish version of the McDonald's food chain. The Irish-American experience was now a part of the meal. It was all a long way from the hush hush tones of the ladies corsets and underwear department of the old Champs store.

Gleeson's Tullamore Shopping Mall

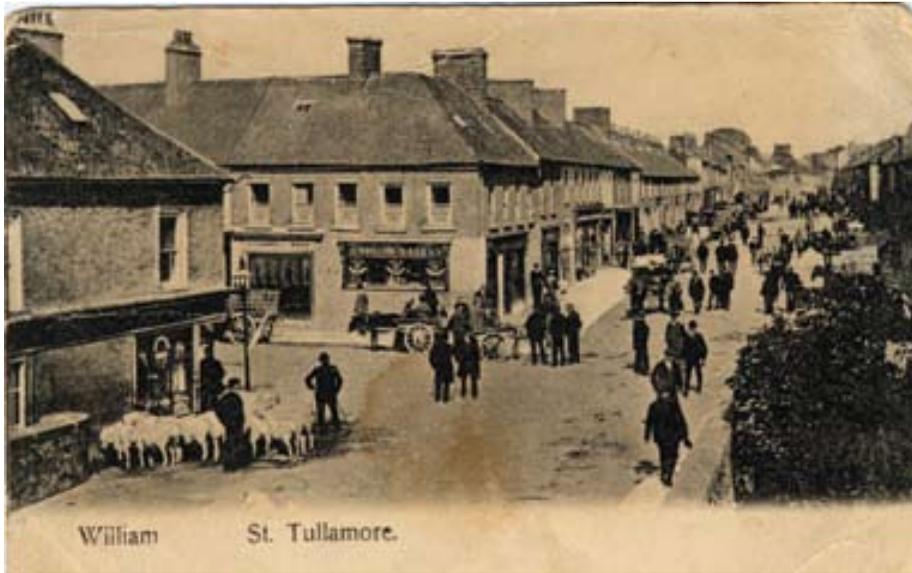
This was a massive drapery store by provincial standards and was erected by Malachy Scally, as noted, in 1912. Scally is said to have taken the design from a shop in Brussels, but the architect of the new Catholic church, T.F. McNamara, supervised the work here. The original, more decorative window frames, were removed in the 1970s. After a fire in the mid-1980s the shop was converted into a shopping mall with access to Market Square.

Allied Irish Banks

The Allied Irish Banks branch is by J. Boyd-Barrett and was erected in 1950. Extensive remodelling to the interior took place about 1990 to the design of Noel Heavey, an architect from Athlone, who had also carried out the work on the new TSB bank in O'Connor Square in the 1980s.

Dolan's Pharmacy

Beside the bank is the very nice and original shop-front of Dolan's pharmacy with six engaged Doric fluted columns. Successive chemists or apothecaries have carried on business here since 1796, which is now a record in the town in regard to continuity of function. One of the earlier apothecary's here was Adam Leech who died during the cholera epidemic of 1832 and is buried in Kilcruttin. Later in the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth the house was owned by the McMichael family.



Digan's Public house

Digan's public house is long established and older folk will recall it as William Brazel's. It was not uncommon in the 1950s to see a donkey or a horse tethered on the street or in the yard at the rear while the owner was inside. In 1937 Mr Brazel was prosecuted for having customers on the premises in winter at 9.25 p.m. The charge was dismissed on the basis that the returns of the 1936 census confirmed a town population of 5,135 for the first time since 1891. The Tullamore pubs could now remain open for an extra hour in winter until 10 p.m. The Digan family is long associated with Tullamore with some members of the family prominent in the Nationalist movement and later on the town council.

OFFALLY STREET

Offally Street was formerly known as Wheelwright Lane and was developed by Thomas Acres who purchased portion of the back garden of a dwelling in Patrick Street to provide for a new street sometimes called Back Pound Street. Acres already had the Pound Street sites and this was good planning if it could be got to work. However, the street was in a backward, sunless area and failed to attract very much besides cabins, many of which have since been demolished. The large two-storey houses at what used to be H. Collins Ltd and demolished in the 1990s represented the beginning of an ambitious plan that failed to take off. Later the street was very much associated with the North Offaly Co-Operative Stores. It is now a quiet backwater all the more so with the removal of Tesco to Cloncollog in 2004. Its commercial future is now dependent on the development of the Tesco-Texas site acquired for development in the spring of 2007. The street, rather endearingly, carries the pre-1920 spelling of Offaly/Offally before there was any certainty as to the spelling of the name. In this case the street name dates to 1905, as supplied by the Gaelic League to the council.

Health Service Executive Centre formerly Irish Mist Liqueur Co Ltd.

East of the Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre are the attractive offices of the Irish Mist Liqueur Co. Ltd, erected in 1966-7 to a design of Burke Kennedy, Architects. After the closure of the bottling plant for Irish Mist in Tullamore in 1985 the building was sold to the predecessor of the Health Services Executive as a centre for mental health. The building is the only one in Tullamore to have a shingle or oak tile rather than the conventional slate.



DOLAN'S PHARMACY, c.1979



COLUMCILLE STREET, c.1960



HOUSE ON OFFALLY STREET (NOW DEMOLISHED)



OFFALLY STREET, STREET SIGN, 2000

CHURCH STREET

Church Street is, as to the narrow section near the junction with Columcille Street, one of the oldest streets in the town. Here the first Protestant church was built in 1726 and an infirmary in 1778 , at the other end, well away from the residential quarter . The attractive terrace between the Methodist church and the county infirmary was built after 1805 and the Methodist church in 1889. The street's newest building is now the Menary's shop erected in 2001 on the site of the town's first hotel, the Bury Arms. This pivotal location in the town was known for many years as Hayes' Cross.





The next stage of this review of the streets of Tullamore begins at the site of the former Charleville Arms and later Hayes Hotel on the northern side of the river. The old hotel of 1786 was demolished in the year 2000 and the building now known as Menarys completed in 2001. A church was built in Church Street in 1726 on a site now occupied by the Foresters' hall and the former McCann's shop (now demolished and formerly situated in the Shambles). The old church remained in use until the opening of St Catherine's Church in 1815. The new church can be seen at the foot of Church Street. Beside the old church was a cemetery and it was presumably here that some early members of the Moore family were buried, including the first Lord Tullamore. William Lumley in a speech at the opening of the new Methodist church in 1889 (quoted below) recalled being told that the former Episcopalian church was on the other side of Church Street where the Shambles was subsequently placed after 1820. Also that the graveyard was exactly opposite the Methodist church and that his old informant could recall seeing the clay and even the bones of the dead carted away and spread on the fields for top-dressing and that close by was an oak tree plantation. It is said that some tombstones were found in Market Square in the nineteenth century. These may have included memorials to Mrs Ellen Moore who funded the 1726 church and other members of the family. Nonetheless the fact that nothing now survives of the old church except the date-stone and the fine memorial to Charles Moore, first earl (first creation) who died in 1764 is surprising. Wesley we know saw the monument soon after its completion. O'Neill Daunt tells the story of a rather shocking interruption to the quiet of the church in the eighteenth century.

There was a bow-legged lady who, one fine Sunday evening, asked my grandmother, then a girl in her teens, to accompany her to church. Away they went, and when near the church, a huge unruly sow bolted right between the lady's legs, lifting her off her feet. She could not have kept her seat if her young companion had not held her fast by the arm, racing smartly along to keep pace with the pig. The animal, if I recollect aright, took its course through the open door, up the aisle, and in this unprecedented fashion was the rider borne to her devotions.

Church Street did not extend any further than the old church until the erection of a factory building by enterprising linen merchants in 1754. This factory was located opposite the later county infirmary building of 1788 (now Library Hall) at the turn for O'Carroll Street. The bridge beside the former bacon factory, now known as Pound Bridge was erected in 1795, opening up the street for traffic from Geashill and reducing Tanyard Lane traffic. Until that time the street was not much more than a lane and was sometimes referred to as such.

Building leases for the lower half of Church Street date from 1786 and 1790, but as in Patrick Street these may be new leases on the site of old poor quality housing. The upper half of Church Street is wider and leases for it date from 1790 on the north side and on the south side from 1805. Francis Johnston, the architect, was responsible for the design of upper Church Street. Johnston was visiting Tullamore at the time in connection with the building of Charleville Castle. Most likely, he decided on the width of the street and the size and height of the terrace between the Methodist church and the county infir-

mary. Most of the houses below the recently vacated Charleville School at the junction with O'Carroll Street were built after 1840 and marked the end of development in the town until the 1900s. As with the bungalows built on the approach roads to Tullamore in the 1940s the scale was modest.

The twelve-year-old Arthur Fisher from Annagharevey was, in 1880, apprenticed to Archibald Warren, the Church Street draper (where Salter's shop was later located) and could recall many years later coming into Tullamore that day with his mother to begin his five-year term. At the end of the fifth year he would receive £5, his total pay for the five years, and in the meantime live over the shop with bed and board. The town he recalled was built on the river and Grand Canal. He went on:

The four main streets meet in the shape of a cross. The Charleville Hotel occupies a prominent position at the cross streets near the bridge. Entering the town from Portarlington direction, on the right, stands the beautiful Church of Ireland, on Hope Hill, now called Hop hill. It has a beautiful bell that can be heard on a calm day, a distance of four miles. The hill is well wooded with containing walls on the top and sloping grass banks to the road. The carriage drive sweeps around the hill to the west entrance of the church, but a flight of stone steps from the town side, made it pleasant to watch from above, a steady stream of well dressed people ascend the winding steps. Canon Craig, the rector, was a very, simple, approachable man, but a very poor preacher. As one entered the town over the bridge, there was the Grand Parade [Bachelors Walk]. A new road just made, which was considered the



58. THE OLD ENTRANCE TO THE SHAMBLES FROM CHURCH STREET PROBABLY DATING FROM THE 1820S.

Lovers walk of the town. It ran into Church Street on the left at right angles. The first houses to notice were the Charleville School on the right and the County Infirmery on the left. The pig and peat market came next. Mr Warren's shop was just beyond the entrance to the shambles and Market Square.⁴⁴

Hayes Hotel now the new Menary's building

Hayes Hotel, formerly known as the Charleville Arms, and prior to that the Bury Arms was erected by Charles William Bury, later first earl of Charleville in 1786, at a cost of £200. It was then leased on a perpetual renewal basis for £15 a year. It is probable that the inn was built to promote the case for having Tullamore made the county town, then under review by parliament and to fill a public need. The hotel had thirteen beds at this time which was ten years later considered by the Grand Canal Company to be inadequate. As a result a hotel was built by the company at St Brigid's Place in 1801. Mr James Hayes acquired the Charleville Arms Hotel in 1876 and it was during his time that the hotel became well known. A surprise visitor in 1882 who spoke from a window of the hotel was none other than the chief secretary, 'Buckshot' Forster. Lydia Goodbody recorded in her diary at 6 March 1882: 'W.E. Forster in Tullamore. Jonathan [Goodbody] lunched with him. He spoke to the people about rent, outrages and murder.' It was during the height of the Land War and Forster's daughter noted that her father had called on the priest, lunched at Hayes Hotel and later spoke to some 300 people from a window of the hotel. She went on: 'Amongst all the incidents of Father's public life there is none at which I would rather have been present than at this speech at Tullamore.'

Arthur Fisher, working in Warren's drapery nearby, recalled the visit too:

When I first saw him ['Buckshot' Forster] he had no guard, he walked first through the town with the fat old parish priest to the chapel, where I presume he, as a Quaker, kept silence, and then returned to the balcony of the Charleville Hotel where I heard him preach a fervent condemnation of such desperate deeds. Father McRory D.D. [McAlroy] stood beside him, so says someone near me, to cover him if he is shot at!

James Hayes sold the hotel to P. & H. Egan Ltd. in 1905, and Egans later set up the Midland Hotels Co. Ltd. From the 1970s the hotel had a succession of owners until purchased by the Flanagan Group, owners of the Tullamore Court Hotel and demolished in 2000. The new building, consisting of a bar, restaurant and nightclub, was designed by Tullamore-based Denis Duggan, architect, in the modern style. As a bar and nightclub it was closed in 2007 and re-ordered as a retail shop for Menarys in November 2008. In the early years after 1786 the garden of the former hotel extended as far as the Methodist church. The buildings on the former all vary in date from the 1840s to the 1880s. The year 2008 was the first time in over 200 years that the part of the site fronting Bridge Street was used as a retail store. It was strange that from the early 1960s when Egans modernised the old hotel and despite a succession of owners and considerable expenditure the place never seemed to thrive. Nonetheless it was a major focus in the history of Tullamore and no doubt those who remember the hotel in the 1940s and 1950s would have many stories to tell. If one could go back to when it was first completed in 1786 possibly all of the history of Tullamore could



#1 AT CHURCH STREET, c.2002 (BEFORE CONVERSION TO MENARY'S SHOP)



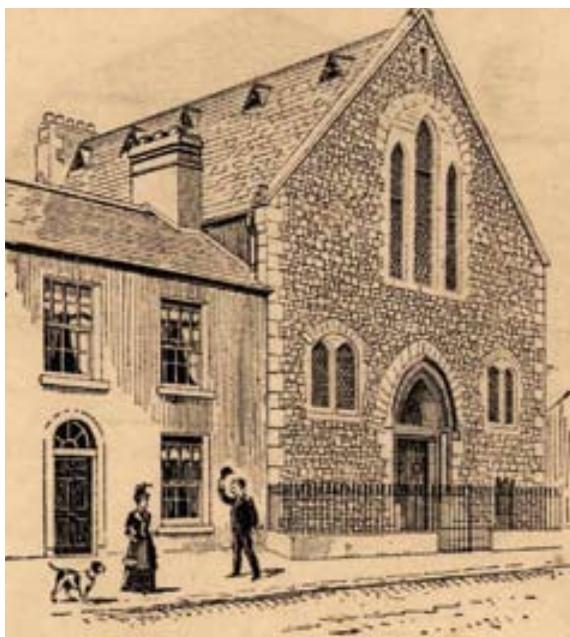
THE OLD LAUNDRY, CHURCH ROAD, 1910



ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH, 1910



METHODIST CHURCH PRIOR TO 1889



METHODIST CHURCH OF 1889

be told from its prime vantage point. One remembers the ‘corner boys’ who spent all day at ‘Hayes’ Cross’ surveying the scene until the practice died out in the 1960s. The old guests’ registers if they survived would tell a lot. The deeds tell of a succession of owners from Tydd to Doherty, Ridley, Horan, Hayes and Egan, and on to the last fifty years when numerous re-openings were reported in the local newspapers.

Methodist Church

This church was opened in 1889 and cost £2,000 to build. The building was designed by James Beckett, Dublin. The church was completed by John Egan of Church Street, Tullamore, who took over the contract from a Dublin builder who failed to carry it through. This is a tall building with a façade of rusticated limestone with some use made of Portland stone. The stone was principally supplied by John Molloy of Ballyduff, near Tullamore from the celebrated Ballyduff Quarries beside his residence. The entrance door and most of the woodwork is in pitch pine. It should be mentioned that the church is on the first floor and the school room (now used by the little darlings of the town for ballet) was on the ground floor. There were two earlier Methodist churches on the site dating from 1788, if not earlier. The second church on the site (illustrated) dated from about 1820 and was similar to one still surviving in Birr. This would suggest that William Lumley’s informant (see below) was born about 1809. The Methodists were a strong religious community in Tullamore with the founder, John Wesley, visiting the town over twenty times during his ministry. Prominent in business in the nineteenth century and for much of the twentieth century the best known representatives locally are the Lumley family. The Lumley family are in business in Tullamore since the

1850s and must now hold the record for longevity in this regard. All Tullamore people over fifty will remember their shop in Columcille Street, the sugar packing business and ‘The Peel’. The latter was a business started in the mid-1960s for packing glace cherries and peel under the name, Melco.

The Lumley family has given great service to Tullamore over many years. The younger William Lumley (died 1900) was a prominent member of the early golf club when the game was played at Screggan and before Brookfield was opened. J.A. Lumley, son of William Lumley, was an early enthusiast for the Irish language and a Home Ruler. He was a member of the town council for many years up to the mid-1930s, but that did not prevent him from being instrumental, on behalf of a ratepayers’ group, in having a commissioner replace the elected members of the county council in 1924. Later his son Cecil (a noted bee-keeper) and grandson Philip (wholesaler, sugar distributor and novelist) would also be members of the council.

Terrace beyond the Methodist Church

The houses between the Methodist church and the county infirmary (now Library Hall) were erected over the years from 1805 to 1810. Francis Johnston fixed on eleven building plots, but thirteen houses were built. This terrace like that at Convent Road and Cormac Street is among the finest in Tullamore and was until the 1960s a sought after address. The drift to the suburbs and in Church Street perhaps the busy pub scene reduced demand for these fine Georgian houses with impressive gardens down to the river at the rear. A typical price for a house in Church Street in the 1970s was £16,000. This rose to in excess of £100,000 by the year 2000 and €500,000 by the spring of 2007.

The atmosphere of an earlier

era is caught in a speech made by William Lumley at the opening of the church in 1889 when he recalled events important to Methodists at the time:

“Four great events occurred within the last four centuries,” he began. “In 1588 the defeat of the Spanish Armada; in 1688 the coming of the glorious, pious, and immortal King William; in 1788 the foundation-stone of the first Methodist chapel was laid, and in 1888 the beautiful sanctuary we have just worshipped in was built. A few weeks since an old man was passing the building. I asked him in to see it. After looking round about him and above him, he expressed wonder at the grandeur of the building compared with the one his father brought him to when a boy. When my old friend had finished his inspection he told me he remembered coming to preaching in the first chapel that was built. It was a two-storey dwelling-house, and a very small room inside for worship. The Episcopal church was on the other side of the street where the shambles now are; that the graveyard was exactly opposite; that he saw the clay and even the bones of the dead carted away and spread on the fields for top-dressing. There was no street here; all around was planted with fine oak trees. He was eleven years old.

You will be surprised to hear it was a swarm of B.'s that principally erected this new building. The first was a Mr James B.[Beckett], who planned the whole structure, and came from Dublin several times at his own expense, and helped us most generously in carrying on the work. We come next to Mr Henry B. [Burgess, the Tullamore draper whose family have a mausoleum in Kilcruttin], who gave a subscription amounting to the fourth of the whole cost of the building. After him Mr John A. B. [Bradley, Tullamore merchant] in whose parlour we made the first financial start when we raised £900 in a few minutes, and who, in addition to £100 gave a second subscription, and put an elaborate cornice round our Lecture Hall - all amounting to £160. Next comes our tried friend, Mr William B. [Brown, assistant county surveyor], our inspector of works, who watched the growth of the building with the affection of a father who watches the development of his eldest boy. We come now to Mr John B. [Bready], who gave £50, no doubt, as a thank-offering for the best wife (in his opinion) that is in Tullamore. Next is Mr Thomas B. [Burgess], brother to Mr Henry B., who sent me a cheque for £50. Mr Stephen B. [Bradley], and Mr James B., gave as much in proportion as wealthier men. With them may be mentioned Miss Ellen B., and her sister. I come now to the “Queen B.”,- viz., Lady Emily Howard B. [Bury], who sent me an order for £5 all the way from Austria with her good wishes for the success of our opening services. I wrote thanking her for her sympathy, and telling her that her great-grandmother, the Countess of C., was a patroness of our Sabbath school at the time when there was no other Sabbath school in the town. The “King B.”, I left for last and, namely, the Rev. John B. [Bond], who, in the most brotherly and generous fashion acceded to the joint request of the committee, and rendered his valuable assistance on this the most important occasion of our church history.

Those who recall the late Mr Cecil Lumley, grandson of the speaker of 1889, will remember a similar sense of dry and mischievous humour and an interest in history.⁴⁵

County Infirmary now Library Hall

This is Tullamore's oldest public building and was erected in 1788. The building is of considerable architectural importance because of its function. There is no doubt that O'Carroll Street was designed so that the county infirmary would close off the vista at the western end. The infirmary might have been demolished in the 1980s when it lay empty after the removal of the county library to O'Connor Square in 1977. At the time there seemed to be no demand for a further public use and instead it was sold for private development and apartments constructed in the mid-1990s in the shell of the old building. The small fever hospital to the rear was demolished and more apartments built here in a new block in the mid-1990s.

The building of a new infirmary at Church Street in 1788 coincided with the redevelopment of the town by Charles William Bury. The infirmary was built for £490, but was enlarged in 1812 at a cost of £800. It was reported in 1801 that the infirmary 'is humanely attended to by Lady Charleville, and a machine for restoring life to persons apparently drowned, is now erecting at her ladyship's expense'. The somewhat idiosyncratic judge, Baron Smith, of Newtown near Geashill, offered to give 114 yards of good linen annually for the patients' underwear so long as he approved of the management of the

institution. The infirmary, which catered for up to fifty patients at a time, was closed in 1921. The workhouse hospital at Ardan Road served the county until the completion of the new county hospital in 1942. The infirmary building accommodated the Civic Guards from 1923 until 1937 followed by the county library for the next forty years until 1977. Some twenty years later in the mid-1990s the present use for apartments was completed by a Kildare developer.

CHURCH ROAD

Over the river bridge is the former D.E. Williams Ltd cash and carry building, purchased in the 1980s by the County Clare firm of Mangan's, and used by this firm until 2007, when the business moved to Burlington Business Park at Ballyduff. The property is now held for redevelopment together with the lands formerly used as the Tullamore Creamery. The wholesale warehouse was first used by the Williams company as a glass factory in the years 1943 to 1945. The barrel-vaulted shed beside the former glass factory/wholesale business and close to the road was operated as the Tullamore laundry, later the Snow White laundry, from 1906 until about 1938. The creamery and bacon factory were established in 1928 and 1944, respectively, and until the 1980s gave employment to about 100 people. All

that is left of this great business is now represented by the Tullamore Meats Co-Operative producing the famous Tullamore sausages among other products at Spollanstown. The bridge itself was once known as Pound Bridge because the animal pound was moved to the former Brazil's house beside the river in the 1830s. The original pound had been in Columcille Street.

The Church Road Shopping Centre and Coen's warehouses

The Church Road Shopping Centre was opened in the early 1980s in a small development carried out by Noonans of Wexford who had also been involved in the building of an extension to the Sacred Heart School. It was the first 'out-of-town' shopping-centre and was opposed by the local traders, but planning was granted. Not initially a great success it was greatly expanded when Dunnes Stores took over the large store on the site about 1990 and the number of units increased to seventeen. The departure of Dunnes from Patrick Street was a significant blow to that street arrested only by the continuing presence of Tesco (at that time) and of Tullamore Credit Union.

In 2007 some €20m was spent by developers in acquiring the adjoining site of Coens and Forrestal Motors for a new shopping and apartment development for which planning has been granted, but



CHURCH STREET, c.1980



CHURCH STREET c.1990



CHURCH STREET, c.1912



CHURCH STREET, c.1960



59. THE POUND (SOMETIMES KNOWN AS THE LAUNDRY) BRIDGE AT CHURCH STREET (COURTESY OF TULLAMORE TOWN COUNCIL).

no development has taken place. This area had been the site of an oil-factoring company, the FCA meeting hall and, in the 1940s, an office of public works site in connection with the Brosna drainage scheme. It was later substantially developed by Coens for timber and hardware sales. The old FCA hut was bought after 2000 by Raymond Kelly (formerly with a shop in Harbour Street) for a large toy store and apartments. The TEMS garage of the 1970s (later Nissan and now Toyota) has enjoyed an extension of life with the deferral of the proposed shopping development.

Across the road is the old barrel-vaulted laundry of 1908 and behind it the glass factory and later a Williams and then Mangan's wholesale. These buildings and the adjoining creamery and bacon factory have been mentioned in the earlier essay. On the corner with the Tanyard junction and Bachelors Walk was the house of the manager of the bacon factory. Much of this area is now awaiting new development when the economy returns to growth.

Charleville School

Moving back into Church Street again, there are no buildings of interest on the northern side other than the Charleville School. This very attractive building in rough-cut limestone ashlar with Georgian glazing bars was built in 1811. Erected by the earl of Charleville for the education of the poor children of the parish of all religions, it was operated originally on the plan of Joseph Lancaster. Lancaster's system was to have small classes with the elder pupils doing much of the teaching of the younger. Louisa Tisdall, a daughter of the countess of Charleville by her first marriage, wrote a few interesting details about the school in 1824:

The school was built by Papa and is a handsome building. It was originally arranged by dear Mama on the Lancasterian plan, but in our absence it was remodelled and is now a mixture of the Bell system and Lancaster's with other additions. Introducing the bible among the school books has given great offence to the Catholics, and the whole thing was nearly overturned: there are still however a tolerably good attendance of children in the boys school; the girls we hope to revive soon again - but subscriptions were withdrawn in our absence and as usual it will all fall again on Mama's purse. The schoolmaster is clever but appears methodistical... The Irish peasantry has great natural quickness and talent, and warmth of feeling very congenial to my own. Were they but educated, civilised, done justice to, would they not be a charming people.

Surely the view of all colonists back to Roman times! In fairness Miss Tisdall was a good-natured person and did much to assist the poor in Tullamore and Mucklagh. The school was the oldest still in use in Tullamore until 2006 when a new building was opened at Church Avenue.

From the Charleville School to Supermac's restaurant at the corner with Columcille Street was from the 1800s largely owned by the Slator family who continued to have an interest in the freehold of these properties until the 1980s. Beside the Chinese restaurant (the Village of Jimmy Wan) is Pike's Lane (now Market Lane) where a number of linen weavers lived in the 1790s and now providing a connection to Market Square. Further up was Wyer's pub, once a Williams' house and earlier that of E. J. Graham, the local M.P. from 1915 until

1918. The next connection with Market Square is appropriately Market Place beside the old shambles of the 1820s. The buildings here were all rebuilt for the Foresters in the 1920s. The club is one of the oldest in Tullamore and started in 1899 on the site of the present Youth Club in Harbour Street. Opposite the old Shambles building was an Egan's public house and earlier in the 1880s Stirling's bottling and cork manufacture. All that is left now of Stirling's is The Hole in the Wall public house. After the shambles was the Morris drapery store (from the early 1900s) and until the 1970s, and overhead the Lawrence Hotel. Beside the hotel was Warren's drapery and later McCabe's hardware (now a restaurant). Warren had a second shop which was later Salter's and is now a pub. Arthur Fisher of Anagharey has, as already noted, left an account of his time in the 1880s working for old Mr Warren. From here to the junction with Columcille Street was largely dominated by drapery with the most recent being Champs and before that Alexander, Bradley and Jackson. Many will recall The Small Profit Stores, Carroll's Furniture, Sutherland's, the former *Tullamore Tribune* offices, Adams' pharmacy and Grimes' public house, among other owners and uses.

HARBOUR STREET

Developed over the period from 1800 to 1825 it could be described as the opening to the canal quarter facilitating access to the new streets at Deane Place, Market Square, Chapel Street, Store Street, Gas Works Lane and O'Carroll Street. Surprisingly for such a great artery it was never an important trading street. The harbour takes up much of the eastern end of the street together with the great distillery of the 1820s – now the Granary apartments. The original name here was Charles Street and this can be seen carved in stone on the corner with O'Carroll Street.



60. THE 'STEP HOUSE' OF MCCABES AT HARBOUR STREET WITH WHAT IS NOW THE ANATOLIA RESTAURANT TO THE RIGHT.

Harbour Street has much changed in recent years with brighter shops and many restaurants. The dead hand of banking replaced the old North Offaly Co-op building on the corner with Columcille Street. The ACC bank building was built in the 1990s, but sold by the bank in 2010 in the aftermath of the banking crisis. The old Co-Op was a famous shop in Tullamore for almost eighty years. No one was in a hurry and children could watch with fascination the 'Lanson' system of accounts payment with the cash and receipts whizzing about the shop. The same system was to be found in Morris's drapery in Church Street until the 1980s. Another famous shop here was Gorry's newsagency which closed in 1998 and is now Rita Daly's. Although a tiny newspaper distributions shop it must have been the most valuable piece of retail square footage in Tullamore given the turnover. In addition it served as a club for the 'commentariat' of the town. In the early 1960s it sold only a handful of the *Irish Times* and a lot of the *Independent* and the *Press*. Cunningham's garage was situated further down in what is now Sherry FitzGerald Lewis Hamill. The Delicious Caffè restaurant opened here in 2006 and is owned by Anne Williams, a great-granddaughter of the founder of the Williams company. Annie Kelly's is one of the old-style pubs of the town worth a visit while at Deane Place are two pubs just off what was the old Corn Market, now Market Square. The Old Harbour Bar was owned by the Wrafter family for almost fifty years and is now the property of Michael Waters. The Offaly Inn, another old pub associated with the former markets here, takes up the western side of Deane Place.

Like Church Street, Patrick Street and Convent Road, this street is at a right angle to the main street in accordance with the first earl's grid-iron style town plan. The harbour at the eastern end was completed in 1799. There is no evidence of building development here prior to that date except perhaps for the old house of

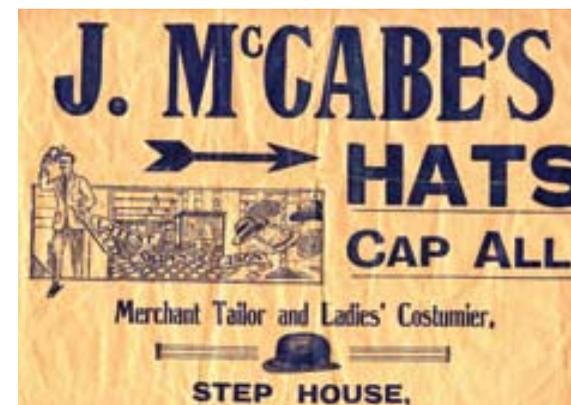
Lord Tullamore, dating from the early 1700s, said to have been in the vicinity of the harbour and probably accessed via Daingean Road, Church Lane and the old Connaught Street and road to Tyrrellspass via Rapparee Alley in Puttaghan. The landlord made building plots available on the northern side of the street (from the former ACC bank building to the harbour) in 1805 and building began immediately. The development was an orderly one with uniformity in regard to frontage and elevation. The southern side from the former Finlay's shop on the corner of Columcille Street and Harbour Street to the Granary apartments is not so well planned and is a development of the 1820s. Progress on this side was restricted because the back garden of what was Finlay's shop (recently Marie Kelly Mortgages) extended to the vicinity of Delicious Caffé. The lease dated from 1790 and indicates that the landlord had not envisaged the development of Harbour Street some years later. This is borne out by the fact that the street opening itself from Columcille Street had been intended as a site for a courthouse. A Mr James Ormond, with premises on the corner of Columcille Street with Harbour Street, published in 1811 *The Harp or King's and Queen's County Advertiser* and later, in 1822, the *Tullamore Packet* appeared. A copy of neither paper has survived and it was 1831 before the *Leinster Express* was published with distribution from the Willis office in O'Connor Square (now Gray Cunniffe Insurance). All the more appropriate that when Gorrays established their famous newspaper store in the 1890s that it should be on the back garden of the Ormond house where the first Tullamore newspaper was printed. By that time Tullamore had three local newspapers – all with a distinct political slant. The *Midland Tribune* (1881) was in the 1890s anti-Parnellite and later Fianna Fáil while the *King's County Chronicle* (1845) was

Protestant and unionist. The *Tullamore and King's County Independent* (1894) was pro-Parnellite with a strong base in Clara and Edenderry and later in Tullamore.

The harbour at the foot of the street bears little comparison with the busy port of the 1800s and 1900s. An ambitious proposal for a new 'canal quarter' in the area of the harbour was proposed by the town council in 2002 and Fergal MacCabe retained as consultant to the proposal. It was contingent on the now much maligned tax designation, Waterways Ireland vacating the harbour and other factors and is not likely to happen anytime soon. Nonetheless the idea of opening up the harbour as a park and amenity and demolishing the high walls surrounding it has merit.

Also at the foot of Harbour Street is the former St. Philomena's girls primary school erected in 1931-2 in the classical style for the Mercy Sisters and to a design of Ralph Henry Byrne, architect. The school was built on the site of the old Foresters' hall burned in 1920 by the Black and Tans in reprisal for the shooting of Constable Cronin nearby. About 1980 the school children moved to Convent Road and the building was adapted as St Mary's Youth Centre by the nuns with the help of lay people. This centre is now a valuable resource for the young people of Tullamore.

There are lots of restaurants and cafes about the town, but perhaps none more so than in Harbour Street and Main Street. The tradition of 'eating houses' in this street in the last century possibly began with the well-known Kelly's shop and restaurant, followed in the 1980s by Ann McKeon's Italian restaurant. Now there are some seven restaurants in the street serving a variety of European and Irish dishes.



MCCABE TAILOR, HARBOUR STREET



HARBOUR STREET, c.1950



MAY FAIR, 1925, HARBOUR STREET

MARKET SQUARE

Market Square is the town's second square and was designed in the 1820s to provide a place for the sale of agricultural produce and animals with ready access to the nearby transport and storage facilities in the harbour. There were no attractive mews or sub-standard housing here, instead it was comprised mainly of warehouses with the large distillery building closing off the eastern side in the 1820s and the gas works and gasometer to the back of Harbour Street in 1860. In the 1990s designation to facilitate tax-relieved income led to new residential developments here, but not in accordance with any master plan.



61. THE MARKET SQUARE WITH THE SCULPTURES RECALLING THE DISTILLING TRADITIONS OF THE TOWN IN THE FOREGROUND.

Access to Tullamore's second market square, an unusual town feature, is gained from Deane Place, opposite the church gates in Harbour Street. The leaseholders on the northern side of Harbour Street and the southern side of Church Street had to go without the benefit of long gardens so that the landlord could provide a new market place. This square was formerly known as the Corn Market and was laid out about 1823. The impetus for it came from a desire to remove merchandising and cattle from O'Connor Square and confine this activity on market days, but not fair days, to this commercial square near to the harbour and convenient to transport facilities. The way was open for the adoption of such an idea after 1808 when it was decided to build the new Protestant church at Hop Hill, and not across from the old one on a site where the Granary apartments are now located. This choice of location left the way open for the development of the Market Square some fifteen years later.

The former Grand Central cinema and Foresters Hall now Fergie's bar

Of interest here is the former Grand Central cinema. The cinema is on part of the site of the old meat market or Shambles which in turn was erected on the site of the town's first Protestant church. Mr T.F. McNamara provided plans for the erection of a cinema and alterations to the Tullamore Co-operative Society building erected in 1921 and incorporated in the Foresters' development. The work was carried out by the Tullamore builders, Duffy Brothers, and the cinema opened in 1924 funded from the compensation received from the burning of the old Foresters' hall by the Black and Tans in 1920. It was taken over by the enterprising James Mahon and Stephen Cloonan about 1930 and closed in 1983. Soon after it was converted to a public house

and the part facing Market Square is now known as Fergie's. As with the Ritz cinema in High Street, the opportunity for an arts centre in 1980-3 was not considered due to insufficient demand locally and lack of funds.

The Granary apartments formerly Egan-Tarleton Ltd

At the eastern end of the square is the Granary apartment development housed in the Egan-Tarleton grain and maltings property. The place was originally built in 1822 as a distillery by the Pentland brothers and continued as such until the 1840s. It was here that a great dinner was given for Daniel O'Connell on the occasion of the 'monster meeting' in the town on Sunday 16 July 1843. It was then used as a temporary workhouse and later as a bonded warehouse for tobacco by Goodbody's, a steam saw mills and a maltings, closing in the 1980s. The process of rebuilding the old distillery and making of it some forty apartments, town houses and some shops took place after 1990 with tax relief providing the incentive for the development. The builders were Gerry Walsh and P.J. Mangan followed by Kevin Cooke.

The square was a market place and as such was made up largely of warehouses until the 1990s when the local traders and the council began to make improvements with the benefit of tax reliefs on new buildings. The council removed the run-down public toilets and the ESB removed the old red shed originally placed there in the 1920s behind the former gas works. While not an outstanding success it is a much more attractive place than it was prior to 1990. The opportunity to create a kind of *plaza mayor* was not pursued and instead the place was laid out for parking. A degree of integration with Church Street and Columcille Street was achieved



MARKET SQUARE, c.1940



MARKET SQUARE, c.2007



MARKET SQUARE, 1980s

with the opening up of small shopping malls. The proposal to open O'Connor Square via a walkway across from Market Lane and the Methodist church at Church Street has so far not found a champion and so Market Square is still remote from the town centre and lucrative trading. Although not popular as a meeting place O'Connell found it suitably large in 1843 and the Volunteers and British army for recruiting in 1914-18. Some ninety years later the square filled for three years in succession to celebrate Irish music and culture with the holding of the All Ireland Fleadh. Not perhaps since the time of Daniel O'Connell had such crowds been seen in the vicinity of this old meeting place.

The report from *The Nation* of the great Repeal meeting in Tullamore is worth noting as it was almost certainly the largest crowd ever assembled in the town. *The Nation* would say 150,000 and at the trial of O'Connell later that year others estimated the figure at 40 to 50,000.



DEANE PLACE

Deane Place provides the opening to the Market Square from Harbour Street, is regular in building design and contains two pubs.

This short street is opposite the Harbour Street entrance to the Catholic church and is called after a leaseholder here in the 1820s. The street largely consists of two public houses facing each other, the Offaly Inn and The Old Harbour Bar both of which were much frequented by farmers attending the markets and fairs held in the adjoining square with the fair days held all over town until the mid-1960s. Older Tullamore people will recall the drinking trough for animals in the centre of this square for many years.

O'CARROLL STREET

A wide street designed to take account of the infirmary building and with large stone buildings in the Charleville School and the old distillery, now the Granary apartments. The canal harbour occupies much of the northern end of the street with considerable banking of earth there to facilitate the building of the entrance to the harbour about 1800. The street is predominantly residential in character with the terraces more functional than decorative.

The name O'Carroll Street now pays homage to the south Offaly Gaelic family of O'Carrolls. On the corner of Harbour Street and O'Carroll Street is the former classical style St Philomena's school and now a youth club. Across the road from the club is the mid-1970s Tullamore Vocational School now known as Tullamore College. North of it is the Sacred Heart secondary school for girls opened in the 1950s. O'Carroll Street, also known as Henry Street (probably after the businessman Henry Manly) dates from 1810. The name can be seen carved in stone at the junction with Harbour Street. The terrace of twelve two-storey houses on the eastern side was built in the late 1830s. O'Carroll Street was the site of a house built by John Moore in the early 1700s. John Moore became the first Lord Tullamore in 1715. His son Charles, moved to Redwood, a house near Charleville Castle in 1740 and the Tullamore house fell into ruin. It is thought to have been located near the harbour. The street is wide so as to take account of the former infirmary building now known as the Library Hall apartments, erected in 1788. The canal maps of the early 1800s show the extensive linen factory building erected between what is now Market Lane (formerly Pike's Lane) and across the middle of O'Carroll Street. The development of the new Corn Market and the distillery buildings facilitated in turn the new Henry Street. The houses here were more modest and many in the 1840s were used as lodging houses. The 1830s terrace was a continuation of the Charleville School of 1810-11. There was a gap between the terrace and Charleville School but this was built on in more recent years.

GAS WORKS LANE

Gas Works Lane provides a second entrance to the Market Square from Harbour Street with the former distillery on the east side and the later gas works on the west.

Off Market Square and connecting to Harbour Street beside the Granary apartments is Gas Works Lane. Tullamore obtained piped gas in 1860 and this continued to be used until electricity became generally available in 1921.

REPEAL IN TULLAMORE

TULLAMORE, SUNDAY NIGHT, JULY, 16 [1843]

The grand demonstration of the King's County in favour of the great national movement of Repeal came off in this town today, with all triumphant success that was to be anticipated from the well-known and long-tried public spirit and patriotism of the inhabitants of this the centre county of Ireland. The temperance bands, from various localities, arrived in rapid succession during the morning, and as each entered the town, playing some popular air, and accompanied by vast bodies of the inhabitants of their respective districts, they were received with enthusiastic shouts of welcome by the congregated thousands who had arrived before them; among them I perceived the bands from Roscrea, in white uniform; from Birr, blue uniform, and accompanied by 260 horsemen; from Tullow, green and white, with gold lace bands; Athlone, blue uniform; the bands from Killeigh, Banagher, Rosenallis, Clonaslee, Mountmellick, Kilbeggan, Kinnegad, Edenderry, Mullingar, Rhode, Philipstown, Moate, Frankfort, Tullamore, &c. &c. At twelve o'clock the members of the trades of Tullamore and the adjoining towns, each bearing a white wand with a small flag attached containing the word "Repeal," assembled at the market-place.

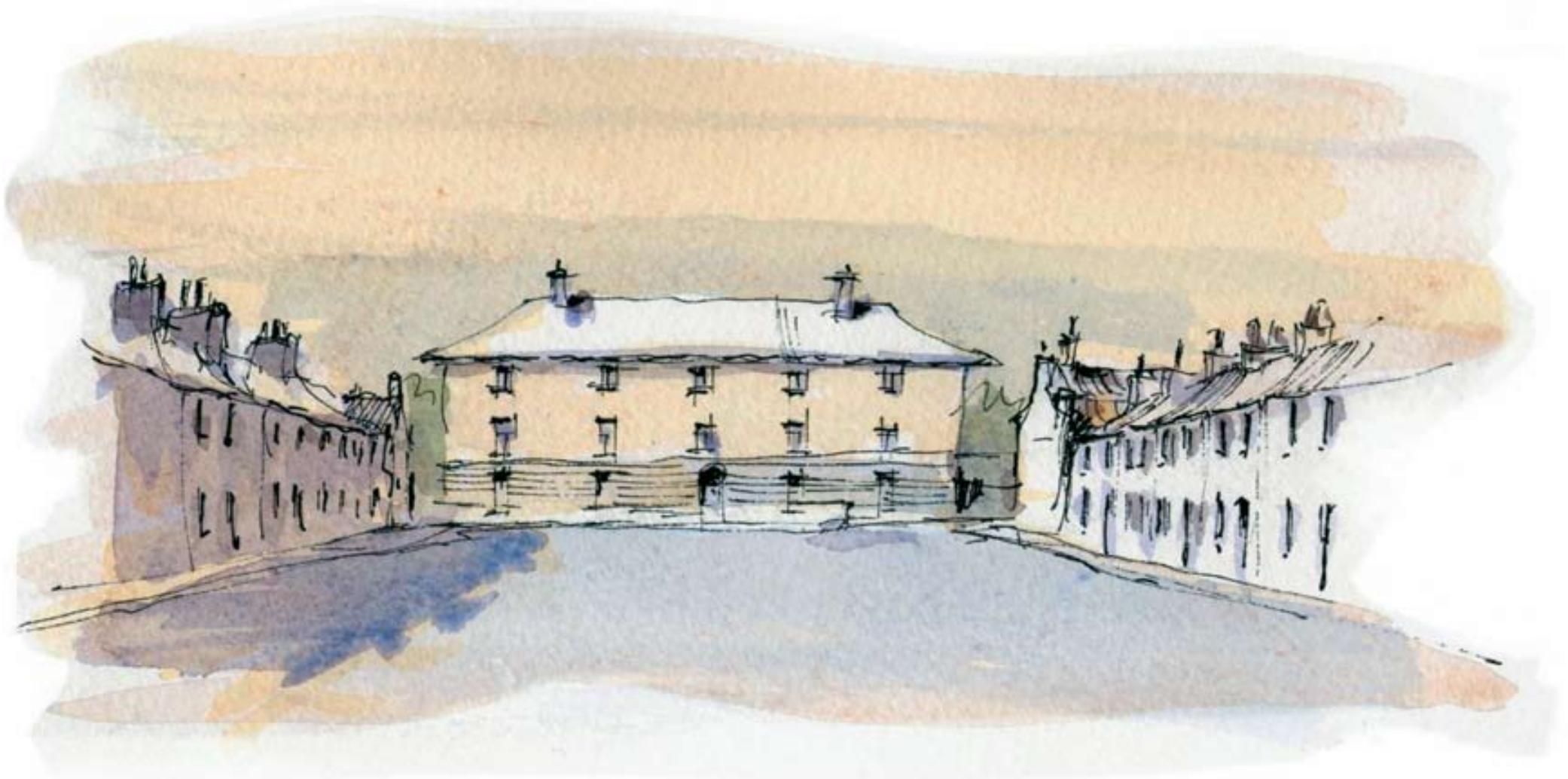
The Liberator arrived in his travelling carriage accompanied by Daniel O'Connell, jun., Esq., Thomas Steele, Esq., the Head Pacificator, and Richard Barrett, Esq., on Saturday evening, and remained during his stay in town at the hospitable mansion of the Very Rev. Dr. O'Rafferty, the respected and patriotic parish priest, where a large party of gentry was invited to meet him.

The Liberator joined the procession at the chapel gates after the last mass, and proceeded with it through all the principal streets of the town amidst the enthusiastic and soul-stirring acclamations of the multitude. The honourable and learned gentleman, accompanied by their lordships the Bishops of Meath and Ardagh, and several clergymen and gentlemen attended mass this morning at the chapel of the Convent of Mercy established here some time since through the exertions of the Very Rev. Dr. O'Rafferty, and afterwards breakfasted with the ladies of the institution.

The meeting took place in the large square of the Market-place, where a commodious platform had been erected for the accommodation of the clergy and gentry attending. After the procession the banners of the trades were ranged at the farther extremity of the square, while several appropriate inscriptions were placed in divers places along the walls. At half-past two o'clock, Mr. O'Connell ascended the platform amidst the most deafening and enthusiastic peals of applause, and at this period there must have been, at a very moderate calculation, upwards of 150,000 persons in the Market-place and adjoining streets. . .

The Banquet

In the evening the Liberator was entertained at a splendid banquet, given in a magnificent pavilion erected for the purpose in the large yard of Mr. Pentland's distillery. The pavilion was of considerable extent, and was beautifully decorated with green boughs, wreaths of flowers, and banners, and a large throne covered with festoons of flowers was placed for the chairman.



63. THE COUNTY INFIRMARY AT O'CARROLL STREET, NOW LIBRARY HALL APARTMENTS.



64. CHAPEL STREET FROM THE CHURCHYARD.



65. A TERRACE AT CHAPEL STREET OPPOSITE SMOLLEN'S GARAGE.

CHAPEL STREET

Chapel Street connects Convent Road with Harbour Street and is sometimes called Chapel Lane. It developed from the laneway to the rear of the new Columcille Street of the 1790s. The cottages at the end of the gardens of these houses provided additional income for the developer Thomas Acres. The northern boundary of the Acres sites was, on this side of Columcille Street, provided by Ball Alley Lane. East of the new laneway the landlord provided a site for a Catholic chapel in what was then a remote part of the town and before any of the streets surrounding the church were built.

Chapel Street did not share the same fate as Offally Street probably because of the Catholic church on the eastern side. Like Offally Street most of it was part of the Acres estate development with the back of Columcille Street forming a new west side to Chapel Street. One or two good houses were erected here on the western side and also on the eastern side nearest Harbour Street (behind Daly's shop), but the development failed to take off. The rest of the houses were cabins let on short leases. Some rebuilding took place after 1900 when land acquired by the parish priest possibly for demolition of houses and to open the grounds of the church to Columcille Street did not proceed. Instead Fr Callary sold the sites to the Egan family for the building of ten two-storey houses. In this street was the town's last farmyard where subsequently Oliver Clancy built a small scheme of residential units. The situation in the town now is remarkably different to the position in 1900 when a lot of people kept cows, pigs and fowl in the back gardens of their dwellings. It is doubtful if the cock crowing in the early morning can be heard in any part of the town today. Certainly there is nothing now to match the loud calling of Eddie Costello as he brought cattle into Heavey's yard beside the church in Harbour Street (now demolished) or to the milking parlour in Chapel Street – acquired by the Spollen company in the 1980s for additional parking and sold off later for the Clancy housing development.

The church of the Assumption of our Blessed Lady

The present church is the third on this site and was completed in 1986 following a disastrous fire in October 1983. The first church was completed here not later than 1802 and demolished in 1902 with the new church completed in 1906. All that

now remains of the 1906 church is the significant tower. The first post-Reformation Catholic church in the Tullamore area was erected in 1775 at Ballyduff (near the present-day Axis Business Park). This was a small T-shaped building some of the walls of which are still standing. In 1794 Bury presented the present site at Chapel Street to the parish priest and a church was erected here before 1802. The arrangement was informal and no lease was granted. By all accounts it was a fine building, to which additions were made in 1808 and again before 1850. In 1808 the parish priest, Fr Kearney, petitioned the directors of the Grand Canal Company for a contribution towards the building of an addition to the chapel because

The enlargement of the chapel has in part become necessary from the great number of people that resort to it, in proceeding to your passage boats, more particularly from the province of Connaught, and also the large portion of the labouring poor employed on your works, whose morals, if not attended to, might become so depraved as to endanger the security of your extensive works, which tho' executed with great judgement, are still vulnerable in many parts.

Fr Kearney's services as moral policeman were accepted and he received £50 from the canal company for the church building fund. Tullamore born O'Neill Daunt recalls being in the old church in 1815 and hearing a Mr Wilman of Dublin give an organ concert. Thomas Lacy who published an account of Ireland in the 1850s visited Tullamore in 1855 and described the first Catholic church on the site as a 'large structure, upon which improvements have been made from time to time, which has the effect of interfering to a considerable extent with

its original style. Its main feature as it appears at present, are those of Grecian style of architecture. It is 120 feet in length, by 75 in breadth. . . .’

Father Hugh Behan, the parish priest in the 1890s, had mooted the idea of a new church in 1898 as the old church had fallen into serious disrepair. The original cost of the project was estimated at £15,000, although at completion it ran £13,000 over budget coming in at £28,000. While the foundation stone had been laid in 1898 progress was slow at first. Not helped by the sudden death of Fr Behan in 1899. The fine memorial in Clonminch Catholic cemetery was erected in his memory. The town was recovering from a long period of depression which had seen the population fall below 5,000 in 1891. Building work began in January 1902 almost three years after the death of Father Behan, who was succeeded by Father Philip Callary – now recalled in the name Callary Street. The Church of the Assumption, Tullamore, was opened on Rosary Sunday, 7 October 1906 and in design was the concept of two of Ireland’s distinguished architects, William Hague, and his pupil and junior partner, Thomas F. McNamara. Hague had designed churches at Trim, Dunshaughlin, Termonfeckin and Cathedral House at Mullingar while McNamara had carried out the less successful Kinnegad church and a better earlier work, Castletown Geoghegan church. Hague’s best known work is the French Gothic style cathedral of St Eunan’s in Letterkenny. Hague died in 1899. One architectural historian, writing after the fire of 1983 and the decision of the local authority to demolish the east and west gables of the church on safety grounds, stated that ‘works of an equivalent elaboration and richness to St Eunan’s and Tullamore church will never be built in Ireland again’. Tullamore church was he noted ‘one of McNamara’s

richest and most successful designs’ after the style of his senior partner, the Cavan born, William Hague. Building work at Tullamore was carried out by James Wynne of Dundalk and the church was in use at Christmas 1905 when nine people were baptised. The last stone of the new church was uplifted to the spire on Holy Thursday 1906 and the cross placed in its position (209 feet up) by one of the curates, Fr Fitzsimons. The new church was designed to accommodate 1,600 persons, with another 500 on special occasions. It must have been at this time that the practice of celebrating midnight mass ceased as it was only revived in 1937 after a break of thirty years.

Doctor Gaughran, the recently elected Bishop of Meath, dedicated the new church on 7 October 1906, an autumn day filled with sunshine. In his sermon to the packed congregation, Fr John Brady, P.P. of Dunboyne said that the community of Tullamore had very much made the building of the church a work of their very own. He noted that there had been no break in the work, no flagging of zeal. ‘You have done a great work’ he said, adding ‘with stone and marble and stained glass, with brass and silver and with gold you have written in bold characters the story of your faith and your love’. That was very true and now like St Catherine’s at Hop Hill a significant monument had been added to the landscape. The dedication of the new church was considered the ‘most remarkable event that occurred in the parish within living memory. . . . At night the town was illuminated... there was scarcely a window which did not shine brightly, and indeed the whole scene was a remarkable manifestation of the faith of the Catholics of the county town. The splendid band of St Conleth’s, Philipstown [Daingean Reformatory] was present, by special arrangement and played a



THE OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH, c.1900



VIEW FROM HABOUR STREET, c.1980



AERIAL VIEW OF CHURCH, 2002

charming selection of music. The band of the Tullamore Trade and Labour Association also played through the town, and a large crowd kept walking the lighted streets until a late hour’.

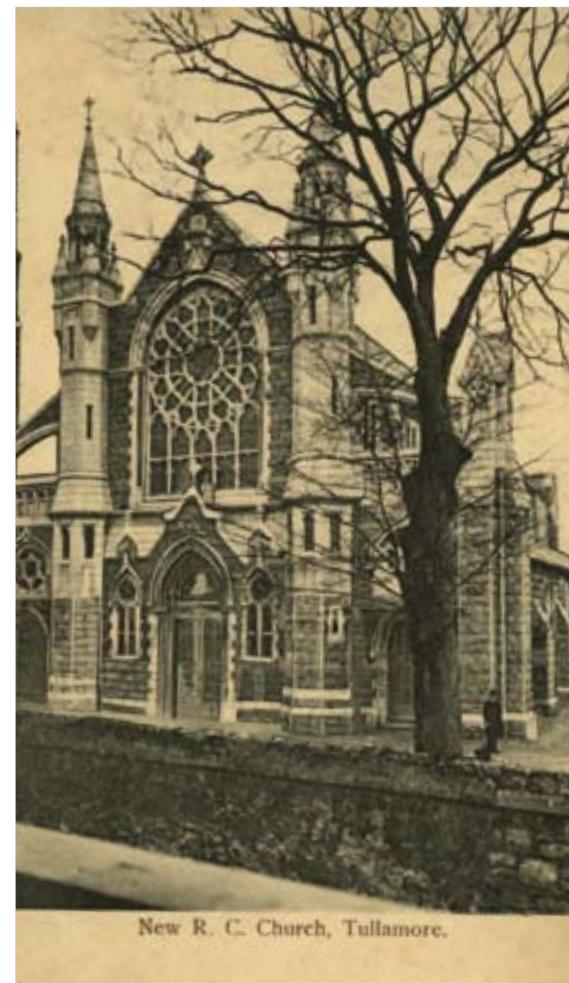
A description of the church in *The Irish Builder* (20 October 1906) is worth reproducing.

A large and important church was dedicated on Sunday week by the Most Revd. Dr. Gaughran, Bishop of Meath, at Tullamore. The church, which has but recently been completed, was designed by the late Mr William Hague, and built under the supervision of Mr. T.F. McNamara, of Dublin. The building, which is Gothic, is about 200 feet from the ground, 172 feet is the length from outside east wall to the west door, the nave 36 feet wide, side aisles 18 feet wide each. The sanctuary has on each side two chapels, behind one of which is the sacristy, and near the other a well-lighted room reserved for the nuns who have easy access to their convent. The chancel arch rests on two columns and smaller pillars of Galway granite. Over the altars the groined roof is of fibrous plaster, while that of the centre is of pitch pine. The windows contain cathedral glass, and perfection appears to have been reached in the ventilation, heating, and lighting, the last being by means of electric installation. At the west end is the organ, an instrument the look of which is in harmony with the whole edifice, and was supplied by Telford, of Dublin. The High Altar is a magnificent proof of the sculptor’s art. It is of Sicilian marble with panels of Carrara and shafts of Cork and Connemara marble, the artists being Messrs. Malone, also of Dublin. There are already also stained glass windows and the Stations, in oils. The stone

materials were taken from the local quarries and, as far as possible, local tradesmen and labourers were employed throughout. . .

In 1930 the walls of the sanctuary were decorated in mosaics at a cost of over £2,500, by the firm of Oppenheimer of Manchester, who were responsible for other work in the diocese of Meath, including the cathedral at Mullingar. In 1970 the Tullamore church was sandblasted and pointed and the spire repaired. In 1972 the organ, considered to be one of the finest in the midland counties, was completely rebuilt under the supervision of Mr Kenneth Jones and at the instigation of the then parish priest, Monsignor Denis Clarke. In 1977 the sanctuary of the church was reconstructed in accordance with the then current liturgical requirements as well as redecorated and rewired. Improvements were made to the grounds also. All this was to change in the early hours of 31 October 1983 when the Church of the Assumption was destroyed by fire. By morning all that remained was a shell.

Edward N Smith and Partners, architects, were selected by the then parish priest, Fr P. Fallon, to design the new church. The architect’s brief was to re-build the church in such a way as ‘retain or regain as much as possible of the character of the old church but in a modern idiom’. This was next to impossible to achieve. He re-used much of the old stonework especially on the Chapel Street side and went for a contemporary interior. What was lost of the Gothic exterior and interior was replaced in the self-finished timber ceilings and laminated structural frames of the interior. Full restoration of the exterior was not possible in the 1980s. For many the most attractive feature of the new church was the warm and modern interior with its timber spans.



New R. C. Church, Tullamore.

TULLAMORE CHURCH, c.1908

John Flanagan & Sons Limited was appointed builders and work began in October 1984 and was completed for the opening of the present and third church on the Harbour Street site in August 1986. The new church had cost £2.6 million with the surplus after all collections and donations placed in a trust fund for the continuing upkeep of the church into the future.⁴⁶

STORE STREET

Store Street takes its name from the canal stores erected on the eastern side of the street beside the canal harbour in the early 1800s. Following the grid-iron pattern the street connects in with Harbour Street, Benburb Street, St Brigid's Place and Convent Road.

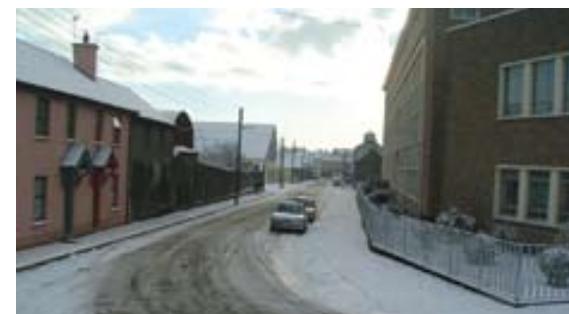
To the eastern end of the church is Store Street. The making of this street was a direct result of the completion of the Grand Canal to Tullamore in 1798. Over the high wall opposite the church is the canal harbour. Stores were built on the harbour side of this street about 1800. The plot of ground between the canal at Convent Road and Harbour Street was conveyed to the canal company by Lord Charleville for the provision of a harbour, stores and a hotel. Building on the western side began in 1805-6. One Laurence Behan, 'a canal tasker' or contractor, erected six three-storey houses, the first of which is at the former Cunningham's car show rooms, now Sherry FitzGerald Lewis Hamill auctioneers and the last (formerly Duggan's) at the house north of the Store Street church entrance. When Behan was declared bankrupt in 1810 the six houses were sold for £1,000. The next two houses close to Benburb Street are identical in style and were built by William Frazer in 1807.

The new block of apartments, Harbour View, near the corner with Harbour Street were erected by P.J. Mangan and Gerry Walsh in the late 1990s on the site of the former Cunningham's garage

The old canal stores were destroyed by fire about 1960 and the site later and for a short time became a cattle sales yard and is now owned by the town council, awaiting development of the 'harbour quarter'. Further down Store Street on the western side is a block of land largely owned by the Mercy Sisters on which the new convent was built in the 1960s while on the other side is the block of land provided for the canal hotel and the harbour master's house. The parish garden was converted to a parish car-park in the late 1990s.



THE OLD CONVENT CHAPEL OF 1841, DEMOLISHED IN THE 1960S



SNOW ON STORE STREET, 2000

66. STORE STREET WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE BACKGROUND.
(COURTESY OF TULLAMORE TOWN COUNCIL).



BENBURB STREET

This is a narrow street connecting Chapel Street with Store Street and was formed out of the property block surrounding the Catholic chapel. The Mercy convent is dated to the 1960s but most of the small houses here date from the 1830s.

Between Chapel Street and Store Street is Benburb Street, perhaps better known by its former name Thomas Street (probably after Thomas Manly). The name Benburb like Clontarf recalls the battles we won and was suggested to the town council by the Gaelic League in 1905 and adopted. Most of the houses here date from the 1830s replacing cabins erected in the 1800s. St Mary's Hall, originally a single-storey building, was opened about 1861 for the C.Y.M.S. It was demolished in 2007-8 and a new parish centre completed at a cost of €1.5 million. Many of the older parishioners have happy memories of dances, plays and musicals here from the 1940s to the 1980s. In earlier years it was also used for political meetings such as that to nominate the first county councillors for Tullamore in 1899.



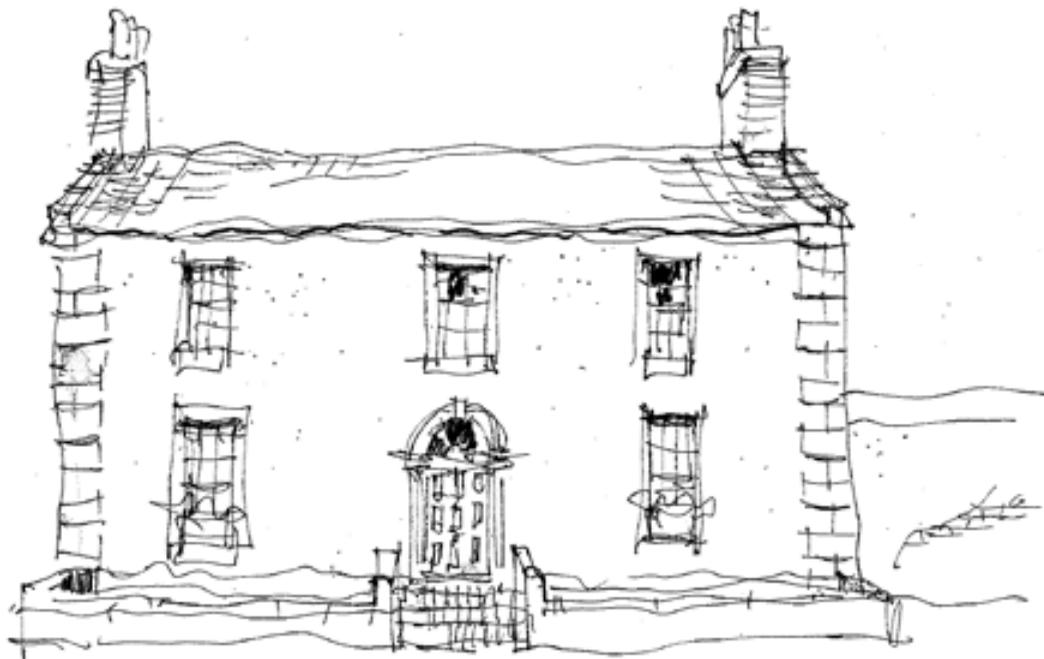
THE HARBOUR, c.1910



GEORGE EGAN'S PUB AT HARBOUR ST. ENTRANCE TO CHURCH, c.1910

ST BRIGID'S PLACE

St Brigid's Place is an attractive area with just two residential properties now and some small businesses based out of the re-constructed Grand Canal stores. When the St Brigid's school was in full swing it was a busy area with perhaps 300 boys walking to school there at the time. The school was completed in the 1870s and closed in 1961 with the boys moving to Kilcruttin. This is a quiet area and much used for parking canal boats at the entrance to the harbour. Try and picture the scene when Tullamore was the terminus of the canal and the new canal hotel of 1801, on the site of what is now the parochial house, was the resort of the well-to-do traveller using the new rapid transport system.



68. THE GRAND CANAL HOTEL, LATER THE CATHOLIC PRESBYTERY AND DEMOLISHED 1974.





Following the road east of Benburb Street is St Brigid's Place, earlier known as Grand Canal Place. The Georgian house on the corner with two storeys over a basement, was built in 1800 to accommodate the boat-fare collector. Beside this house is a parish car-park built about the year 2002 on the old parochial house garden and the site of the former St Brigid's boys' national school. The school house was built by the Christian Brothers about 1875 and demolished in the 1990s. The architect was possibly John Joseph O'Callaghan. Beside the parish car-park is the parochial house built for the Catholic clergy of the parish and completed in 1974. The new house was built on the site of the old canal hotel by Hefernan Brothers.

The canal hotel

The hotel was erected in 1801 and demolished in 1974. The building, with three storeys over a basement and seven bays, was identical to that at Robertstown which still survives. Tullamore was the terminus of the Grand Canal for six years until the extension to Shannon Harbour was completed in 1804. It was an enormous benefit to the town because it provided a direct link with Dublin and made it possible to transport goods cheaply. A canal engineer, Captain Evans, had recommended in 1798 that a hotel be built in the town because of the inadequate accommodation available. A hotel was needed for passengers, who, having left Dublin at 6 a.m. would not arrive in Tullamore until 8 p.m.



THE SCHOOL AND PAROCHIAL HOUSE (CANAL HOTEL), c.1912

CAPTAIN EVANS TO THE DIRECTORS OF THE GRAND CANAL COMPANY, TULLAMORE, 4 APRIL 1798

The letter sets out the progress in the making of the canal to date and argues the case for the erection of a canal hotel in Tullamore. Evans was staying in the Bury Arms, later called Hayes Hotel, then operated by an innkeeper by the name of Doherty

Gentlemen,

The bad weather has prevented us doing much these two days, but the banks have required the closest attention from the heavy rains which have detained us here. The passage boats are doing well already; on the 2nd inst. from Dublin four state and twelve common passengers, on the 3rd ten state and four common passengers but I am sorry to find there is by no means the accommodation I expected in this Inn, there are 13 beds only. Doherty also charges a shilling for carrying each passenger from his house to the boat; I have argued the point to no purpose. Upon the whole I conceive competition as well as accommodation necessary and without loss of time. I have taken the liberty to write to Mr Dowling for a large bell which is necessary for regularity. Mr Reynolds and I were obliged to call boatmen, passengers, and alarm the town by the horn this morning.

However, the boat went off to the minute, as there is no clock at the inn and the watches here differing with Dublin materially, there is the utmost necessity for an eight-day clock immediately. . .

The canal company built five hotels in all, but they were not a financial success. The competition from coaches and the desire of passengers to travel to their destinations as quickly as possible made the hotels unnecessary. On completion of the Tullamore hotel in 1801 the company leased it for three years at £114 annual rent. This was not allowing very much for a return on capital as it had cost £4,399. The lease was renewed in 1804, but by 1807 business had declined because of a change in boat timetables. At this point the company decided to employ their own hotel keeper at two guineas a week, but he was later dismissed because of 'the misconduct of his wife'. In 1838 it was reported that the hotel 'is generally empty'. The building was used as a temporary hospital in the Famine years of 1845 to 1851. In 1859 the building opened as St. Brigid's seminary, and from 1862 it was shared with the Christian Brothers. When the seminary closed in 1866 that part of the house came to be occupied by the Catholic curates. The parish priest took up residence with his curates in 1893 on the departure of the Christian

Brothers following a dispute with the then parish priest. The building was demolished in late 1974 despite some local protests. Across from the new parochial house is Bury bridge built in 1799. The bridge and the area to the east of it are also known as Whitehall.



MERCY CONVENT 1963-7



ST BRIGID'S PLACE, 1979



BURY BRIDGE, c.2000



PAROCHIAL HOUSE, c.1910

CONVENT ROAD

Convent Road fronts the canal running from the Kilbeggan Road canal bridge to the Whitehall bridge. When all the houses were in good shape with their original features together with the old convent and schools it must have looked well.





HERITAGE BOATS IN TULLAMORE



MERCY CONVENT, c.1910



TULLAMORE FROM THE CANAL, c.1908

The new street was in place of the old Connaught Street, but its course was entirely driven by the line of the new canal to the Shannon the construction of which commenced after 1800. Its attractive appearance presented a prosperous image of Tullamore to the passing travellers en route to Shannon Harbour just as did the spire of the Catholic church following its completion in 1906.

North of Bury or Whitehall bridge, across the canal, is the old road to Mullingar. Before the canal was constructed this area from Daingean Road to the Kilbeggan Road and Clara Road was known as Connaught Street and had a number of cabins. After the building of the canal the principal ‘cabin suburbs’ were north of the canal at Clontarf Road and Rapparee Alley (the above mentioned old road to Dublin and Mullingar via Tyrrellspass). Convent Road, also known as Bury Quay, was laid out for building plots in 1805. The area between Store Street and Bury bridge was already owned by the canal company and stores (still standing) were erected here in the 1800s. On the corner is St Columba’s Classical School built in 1912 and as a school went out of use about 1960 when the Christian Brothers completed new school buildings in High Street. The Christian Brothers had been invited back to Tullamore by Fr Callary and the new school built in a part of the town largely owned at that point by the Mercy Sisters and the Catholic church. The last of the Brothers departed Tullamore in the year 2000 after about 110 years of service to the town. Following the closing of the Classical School the building was used for some forty years thereafter for ‘Catholic Action’ groups such as the Patricians debating group, Legion of Mary and parish raffles. The building was sold in the 1990s and adapted for apartments. Like many other buildings in the town

of the 1900 to 1930 period it was designed by T. F. McNamara. The area in front of the old canal store at Convent Road was at one time known as ‘The Bell’ no doubt because this was the point of embarkation for the canal boat passengers in the early years.

Edgewater apartments

The new apartment development of 2008 opposite the footbridge in its attractive modern design and known as Edgewater sits uneasily beside the old canal stores of 1800. The block was built on the site of the former Walsh farmhouse as part of the third designated urban renewal area scheme with tax relief available on building projects.



71. BURY OR WHITEHALL BRIDGE WITH THE 1912 CLASSICAL SCHOOL TO THE RIGHT PLACE (COURTESY OF TULLAMORE TOWN COUNCIL).



Convent of Mercy and schools

Although it fronts Benburb Street and Store Street the convent of Mercy and schools are very much part of Convent Road and the original inscriptions of the 1830s can be seen in wall-mounted plaques besides St Philomena's School. The present buildings were erected between 1961 and 1967 and replaced structures of varying dates including a fine convent in the Gothic style completed in 1841. The Mercy nuns arrived in Tullamore in 1836 under the leadership of the Mercy order founder, Catherine McAuley, having come by canal from Dublin. The first convent was situated near the principal entrance to the present convent in Store Street and was a dwelling house similar to the houses still standing in that street. That the nuns came to Tullamore was largely as a result of the efforts of the town's best known and most influential parish priest, Fr James O'Rafferty. Funds to found a convent at Tullamore were provided from the estate of a Miss Pentony, a wealthy Dublin lady who retired to Tullamore to work among the poor. She died in 1835. The new convent building completed in 1841 was largely funded by Michael Molloy, the Tullamore distiller. Given the sensitivities of the principal benefactor it was thought better not to have the temperance priest, Fr Theobald Mathew, do the official opening. Some idea of the quality of the new building can be got from a letter of Catherine McAuley of January 2-3 1841 stating that the new building was a beautiful edifice and an ornament to the town. The entire concern could be seen from the canal boats. Water was brought through the house by conductors and the building she thought would last for centuries.

Terrace at Covent Road and Eugene's public house

From the St Philomena's School to the Kilbeggan bridge are seven houses similar to those in Cormac Street. These houses were erected about 1807. Plots of ground for the two houses west of the entrance to Chapel Street were leased to John Coffey. The houses are identical and have retained some of their original features. The public house on the corner, formerly Digan's and now Eugene Kelly's was built in two stages and exhibits the landlord's concern for how the town appeared, especially to the many travellers on the canal boats. The portion of Eugene's bar fronting Columcille Street was erected in 1791-2, and that part fronting Convent Road about 1805 to 1807. There is a date-stone set in the wall fronting Columcille Street. The lessee, Charles Berry, undertook to build a house uniform with other houses to be erected in Convent Road, rather than with his own in Columcille Street. Incidentally, Berry received £125 compensation from the canal company for damage done to this house. A generous sum matched by the payments to landowners for the next great building project of 2009 – the new by-pass! The building of the canal bridge had placed the middle floor of Berry's house on a level with the height of the street. For many years in the last century Eugene's bar was owned by the Digan family and was a respectable house where even young children on the way to the Mercy primary schools could stop off after lunch for a raspberry cordial.



DE MONTFORT HALL, FORMER CLASSICAL SCHOOL, 1979



TERRACE AT CONVENT ROAD, 1970S



CONVENT ROAD AND TOWPATH, 1910

WHITEHALL AND DAINGEAN ROAD

The road to Daingean, the old county capital did not in fact have much housing in the vicinity of Tullamore town, save in the area now occupied by a council car-park opposite one of the entrances to the Sacred Heart School. This was probably the area known as Whitehall, a common enough place-name in Irish towns.



WHITEHALL HOUSES ON SITE OF BALL ALLEY
AND NOW A CAR-PARK, c.1940

The construction of the canal made for significant change here with the removal of many cabins along its route except in the present-day car-park area. This plot of ground in Whitehall was, until the 1990s, owned by the Catholic Church and had been used as a ball alley from the 1940s when almost all of the remaining houses were demolished.

The connection of the Daingean Road with the road to Tyrrellspass at Puttaghan was severed with the construction of the canal in 1798. All that remained were the many cabins which could still be seen on the 1838 town map. It was not until 1802 that the Kilbeggan bridge was built and the footbridge not until 1934. Thankfully the new by-pass saved the area from another modern bridge over the canal at this point and preserved the vista at least as far as the new 2009 bridge near the 26th or Round House lock. The area from Bury or Whitehall bridge to the harbour was considerably altered with a substantial embankment constructed opposite what is now the Sacred Heart School to facilitate the new harbour. At the Daingean Road junction with Whitehall was the 1940s ball alley demolished in the 1990s and now a car-park. Some of the old cabins gracing this important entrance to the town from Dublin were only removed in the 1940s as was a terrace near the present-day ESB substation. In the early 1970s, the first private housing estate to be built on this road was that known as the Bachelors' houses (after the pop group not the peas and beans) followed by the James Spollen development, now totaling in all some 94 houses known as the Whitehall Estate. These estates were built contemporaneous with the extensive ribbon development almost to Ballinagar village where there are several large housing schemes dating from c. 2000. In the mid-eighteenth century

and perhaps to the 1820s the hope was nursed of a shorter route to Dublin via Ballinagar and Clane, but as the colonising settlers of the mid-sixteenth century discovered certain bogstuff got in the way and what was known as 'Mosse's Road' was never completed.

Those enthusiastic about the novels of Flann O'Brien/ Brian O'Nolan (1911-66) will know that the writer spent about four years in Tullamore from 1920 at the house known as 'The Beeches' about two miles out the Daingean Road and just east of the signpost for an exit road to the canal and Digby bridge. Anthony Cronin in his *No Laughing Matter*, states that the writer's father, Michael O'Nolan, was transferred to Tullamore:

a town situated in the flat, rather featureless central plain of Ireland. Brian was to use this landscape many years later [1939] as the background to The Third Policeman and to give its very emptiness and lack of individuality a curiously threatening and disturbing quality. It was Michael O'Nolan's job to oversee the payment of excise duties by the distilleries in his area. The principal ones were D.E. Williams of Tullamore, who made a brand called Tullamore Dew, and Locke's of Kilbeggan. Both of these were often mentioned later in Brian's Irish Times column; and in later years he was to affect more than a drinker's knowledge of the law governing the proof strength or otherwise of whiskey, sometimes to the annoyance of publicans.⁴⁷

So was the hell of *The Third Policeman* somewhere near Tullamore? Certainly for the farmers on the north side of Tullamore it was hell to play with the new and steep Kilbeggan bridge while that at Whitehall must have been impossible for laden animals to negotiate. The old link with Rapparee Alley at Puttaghan to Daingean Road went with the extension of the canal from about where the 1934 footbridge is now located onwards to the Shannon. All those coming from north of the canal were now obliged to use the new Kilbeggan Road bridge and after 1809 could also use Cox bridge at Clara road.

Also on the Daingean Road is the Walsh bathroom and tile shop. It was in these buildings and others adjoining and now much altered that the Cappincur Joinery operated in the 1970s and provided upwards of 300 jobs.



WHITEHALL ESTATE, DAINGEAN ROAD, EARLY 1980S

So was the hell of *The Third Policeman* somewhere near Tullamore? *Certainly for the farmers on the north side of Tullamore it was hell to play with the new and steep Kilbeggan bridge ...*



73. TERRACE AT CLONTARF ROAD OF 1947-50, ERECTED FOR TULLAMORE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.



CLONTARF ROAD

Clontarf Road is on the northern bank of the canal and provides a connection from Ardan Road to Clara Road. The roadway was part of the canal towpath up to the 1890s.

The width of the street is of its time in the late 1940s and as result is not now troubled with heavy traffic. The houses with their almost Dutch-style gables command a view of the tree-lined canal banks of the 1960s.

Some eighty houses were built by the town council at Clontarf Road in the five years after the Second World War. The old thatched houses here known for most of the nineteenth century as Tinkers Row/ Quarry View and the terrace of slated houses known as East View Terrace near the Kilbeggan bridge had been marked for demolition as early as 1937. The new houses would, as with O'Molloy Street, largely go to residents in the clearance area first. The design of the scheme is attributed to Frank Gibney, the architect retained by the town council after the war to assist with the first development plan and which he completed in 1950. The Clontarf scheme was opened in June 1950 and the foundation stone laid on the same day for Pearse Park. The attractive design of the terraces provided for the favoured four-room two-storey house with a single-storey bathroom, as if an afterthought, added in concrete. The interior design provided for a scullery with a deep sink and water supply away from the kitchen so that all pans and crockery had to be brought from the back hall or scullery to the kitchen. It was here too that the larder or wire-grilled press was kept in the twenty years (or more) before fridges came into use. The broad chimneys of the houses had no difficulty supplying a fixing point for the many television aerials that dotted the rooflines of Clontarf Road and every other street from the early 1960s in the years after RTE was established. The long gardens to the rear allowed for the growing of potatoes, peas and cabbages. Some of the more enterprising kept pigs fed on the scraps or 'fall' from the neighbours' tables. The same pigs would later end up in the local bacon factory. Instead of the open hearths of the old cabins these houses had turf-fired cast iron cookers supplemented by some with paraffin stoves. All had electricity but used sparingly.



27TH LOCK AND CANAL AT CLONTARF ROAD, 1990S



CLONTARF ROAD, c.1946

ARDAN ROAD

Ardan Road is now an important connecting route to Dublin but was for many years prior to that not much used for residential development and as such one of the reasons why the workhouse was built here in 1841. Now the natural boundary for development here is the esker known as the Ardan hills and forming part of the original Eiscir Riada or chariot ridge. It was near Condron's Works, in an area known as Turpin's Hollow, that the last duel was fought in Tullamore in 1838 when Philip Turpin was shot by Lieutenant Bailey and died three weeks later. Bailey was later acquitted of murder.

The Kilbeggan bridge was erected about 1802. The bridge was reconstructed in 1929-30 by Duffy Brothers of Tullamore. Not surprisingly, there had been a good deal of opposition when the canal bridges were constructed, because of the difficulties it created for horses trying to pull a load across it. In December 1802 Lord Charleville writing to the canal directors 'promised to use his best endeavours to put an end to the opposition heretofore existing to the proposed situation and number of bridges to be built at Tullamore'. Apart from the building of a workhouse in 1841 very little development took place on the Ardan Road until early in the twentieth century. Probably the oldest house on the road is that of a former parish priest erected about 1800 and to be seen near the entrance to the Eiscir Meadows housing development and known as 'The Slate House'. The priest's residence was located there so as to enable him to efficiently attend his parishioners both in Tullamore and Durrow. Compared with the roads out of the town to Clara and Tyrrellspass there was almost nothing in the way of development at Ardan in 1838. East View Terrace just beyond the Kilbeggan bridge can be seen on the 1838 map and perhaps after that no more than five or six houses between Tullamore and the hills at Ardan. The Horan quarry at Collins Lane can be identified on the 1838 map and a large ring fort in the vicinity of what is now the entrance to Ardan Vale. This was likely removed with the making of the new road beside the island in front of Ardan Vale.

Emmet Terrace

The handsome twelve single-storey semi-detached houses known as Emmet Terrace were erected in 1903 and represent the town council's first foray into providing houses for those in need and with a view to commencing what is an on-going pro-



EAST VIEW TERRACE, TAKEN FROM KILBEGGAN BRIDGE, 1948



OFFALY COUNTY HOSPITAL, c.1960



DAVITT STREET, 2007

gramme of helping people to get established and get out of sub-standard or condemned housing. The terrace was designed by F.G. Hicks, an English-born Arts and Crafts architect. These houses have small window panes in wide segmental-headed windows which have red brick dressings, and gable-ended roofs with eaves and barge boards (Garner, 1980). They bear comparison in some details with the 1907 Convent View Terrace. The architect may have been imposed on the council by the Local Government Board as there was some grumbling about the cost of each house at £140 whereas the 1907 Davitt Street scheme was cheaper at £100 per house.

Riada House and HSE offices

The first major development on Ardan Road was in 1841 with the completion of the workhouse to serve the Tullamore district or Union and at the time the town of Kilbeggan. The workhouse was demolished in the 1970s as part of new thinking on the care of the aged. From the 1920s it had been known as ‘The County Home’ following the abolition of the old poor law unions and the closure of Birr workhouse. Whether the County Home system was any better than the old workhouse was argued in 1937 when it was noted at a county health board meeting that the meat supplied was poor and priced at only 2d per lb. In the early 1970s the former fever hospital, by then a home for old men, was demolished to make way for the ‘temporary’ office structures of the newly established Midland Health Board. The Board was incorporated in the new HSE from 2005. Like the county infirmary of 1788 at Church Street the workhouse was built away from the town centre because of concern about the possibility of the sick poor transferring contagious disease to the better off middle classes. Just as in 1852 a ‘paupers’ cemetery’ was opened beyond what is now Ardan

Vale to accommodate deaths from the workhouse of people who had no means or family to ensure burial in their native place. The opening of this cemetery followed on the burials during the Famine years of 1845-9 at Kilcruttin which was said to be full although it was not closed for another forty years.

Riada House day care centre and welfare home was completed in 1979 and has been extended on several occasions since, most recently in 2010. It now contains some sixty beds for elderly patients in need of long term care. Beside it is a day-care centre.

O’Connor Park and Tullamore GAA Club

The sports grounds of the Tullamore GAA Club were on the outskirts of the northern side of the town when opened in 1934. At the time there were no more than a handful of houses between the new grounds and the Ardan hills. Between O’Connor Park and the canal was Davitt Street, Emmet Terrace, Tyrrell’s Road (Convent View) and the County Home and that was it. The new park called after the O’Connors of Offaly and not the O’Molloys of Tullamore was opened by Mr de Valera, the then president of the Executive Council, on 24 June 1934. GAA games in the area had first been played at the Athletic Grounds at Spollanstown (now the Tullamore Rugby Club field) in the 1880s. Games were later played on the lands now occupied by Davitt Street and later still at Ballyduff Park (not far from where now the Tullamore Soccer Club is located). The county board secretary in the 1930s was Stephen Cloonan, grandfather of Brian Cloonan of the long established hardware store in Columcille Street, and he was instrumental in leading the project to completion. In 2002 the O’Connor Park grounds were leased to Offaly County Board who immediately embarked on an extensive programme



ARDAN ROAD BEFORE WIDENING, c.1950



ARDAN VIEW BEFORE BUILDING OF THE ESTATE, 1970S



THE SLATE HOUSE, ARDAN ROAD, 1979

of improvements including the new stand (2007) built to accommodate 20,000 people (8,000 in the stand and 12,000 in the terrace) and the new dressing rooms and viewing stand of 2010. The overall spend on the new stadium was €10.5m. The Tullamore club has the extensive O'Brien Park across the road and a large hall and rooms which were erected in the 1970s, in the fashion of the time. These facilities have been further augmented with new changing rooms in recent times. The adjoining Houlihan's shop of the 1930s was demolished in 2010 for a proposed mixed scheme of retail units and apartments.

North of O'Connor Park is the important **Midland General Hospital** erected in the late 1930s to a design of Scott and Good, architects. Garner described the building as:

An early example of their work and consequently of considerable architectural interest. Although it is built in a style which is usually termed 'Modern Movement' the walls are of rusticated limestone. The main facade faces south and is of twenty-three bays and three storeys. In the centre is a three-bay section which has a full-height bow. Flanking it are ten-bay wings arcaded on the ground floors. The windows are wide and have metal frames; the roofs are flat. A glass-walled feature is made of the main staircase which is at the west end, and beside it is the entrance. The entrance block is a single storey and, since the ground rises at this point, it is on the same level as the second floor of the main block. The rear of the main block contains the lift-shafts, and the design gives the building an impressive massing. To the east is the chapel which is also of rusticated limestone, with high blank walls,

windows with dark-blue stained glass at the frieze level, and a flat roof. Several subsidiary buildings, including the porter's lodge, are also of rusticated limestone with flat roofs.

The building was fronted in Tullamore limestone and backed with Ferbane brick in order to encourage local employment. The foundation stone was laid by Sean T. O'Kelly, the then minister for local government in March 1937. The projected cost of the proposed 75-bed hospital was £90,000 of which two-thirds was provided by The Hospital Sweepstakes Trust and the balance by the county council. Scott won his appointment by one vote and it was the minister who agreed to the use of Tullamore stone which it was reckoned would mean a spend of £10,000 in the Tullamore area. It was largely due to the urgings of P.F. Adams, the son of William Adams, that this concession and a similar one for the stone-faced houses in O'Molloy Street, was secured. The builder was George Thornberry of the Phoenix Building Company and soon after he established his own brick works at Pollagh to supply the material for the new building. At the time some four million bricks a year were being produced at Gallen, Ferbane. The new hospital came into use about 1942 and continued as such until about 2008 when the new €150 million hospital was fully operational.

For Michael Scott, both the Tullamore hospital and that at Portlaoise were important steps in his career. Some of the atmosphere of the relationship between an architect and his client is caught in an interview Scott gave to Dorothy Walker when in his seventies. As Walker noted anyone can do black and white, but Scott rendered the colour:

You did several hospitals, didn't you? You did Portlaoise

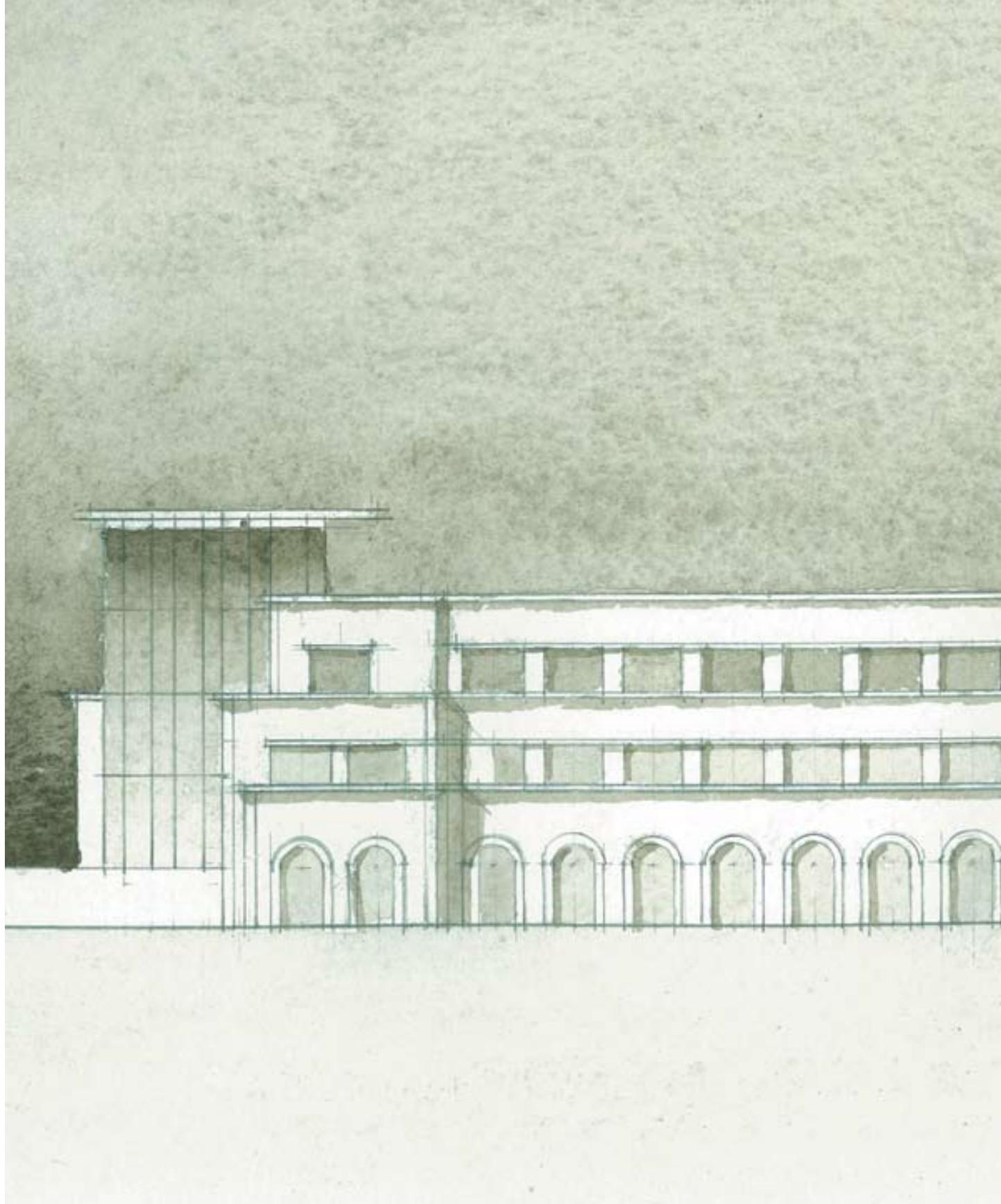
Yes, we did county hospitals in Tullamore and Portlaoise. These hospitals were both important steps in my career. Although they look very different, they are both symmetrical buildings, and they both have horizontal bands of windows, with vertical stair towers and flat roofs. Portlaoise is a H-shaped plan, with the operating theatre at its centre. It is a simple, concrete structure, painted a stunning white. Tullamore, on the other hand, has rugged stone walls and a glazed stair tower at either end.

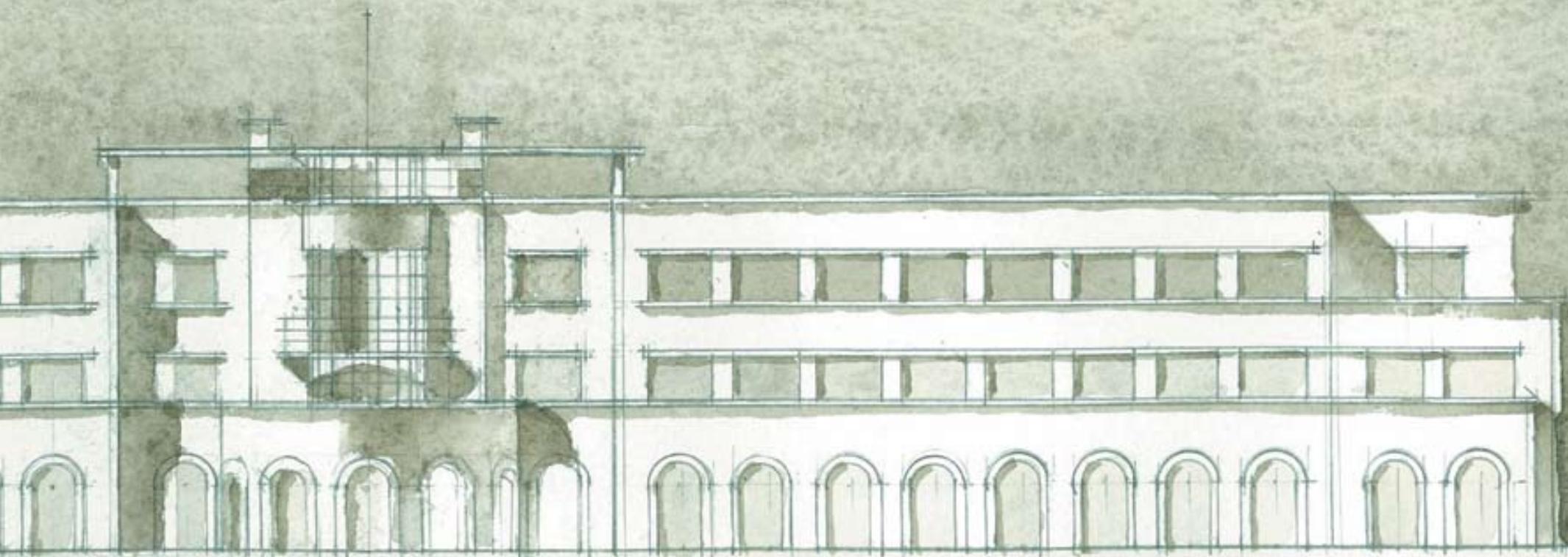
I had a terrible time with the clients, particularly in Portlaoise where there was a dreadful county manager, an appalling fellow, a big bosthoon of an eejit of a chap! He was very difficult. I very badly wanted to have a mural in the entrance hall of this hospital and he wouldn't bloody well let me have it. We had a terrible row about that, amongst many rows indeed. He brought in another architect to do the other buildings on the site. I'm not surprised – I had fought him every inch of the way. I do preserve important architectural standards. He didn't want to spend the money on the mural, something like thirty quid, something quite small. He wouldn't agree to the principle of it. However, in Tullamore the county manager was an entirely different person, and he agreed happily to the idea of a mural. I got Frances Kelly to do it, who was a good artist.

The Health Centre by Tyndall, Hogan and Hurley Architects was completed in 1977 after some initial objections to its being built on the south-facing lawn of the hospital.

Midland Regional Hospital, Tullamore (2002-07)

The new regional hospital built at a cost of €150m represents the largest public undertaking in Tullamore and exceeds the eastern by-pass of 2009 by some €34m. In the 1990s some consideration was given to extending the existing Scott hospital, but very soon it was realised that this would not be practical or useful. The then Midland Health Board appointed Brian O'Connell Associates Architects, one of the leading hospital architects in Ireland, to design the new buildings in conjunction with Murray O'Laoire, Architects. The new hospital was designed to provide some 298 beds in place of the 228 beds in the old hospital. The intention was to create a significant public building with corridors to serve as streets for patient and visitor traffic and a large open-plan reception area where a patient or a visitor can relax. The wards are designed around small courtyards like miniature town squares. A short link connects the old hospital with the new one. The new hospital has six operating theatres and the Intensive Care Unit is located directly alongside the theatre wing. All surgical beds are also located in this area. The new out-patients department is a very substantial area, and the hospital also incorporates dialysis; oncology; radiology (which includes nuclear medicine); Cat Scan; and a vastly-improved medical records department. Another major innovative design feature was the decision to move the entire catering department to the third floor of the new hospital, instead of locating it on the ground floor. The children's unit is also located in a dedicated zone on the second floor. As well as being home to the catering wing of the hospital, the third floor also houses a very large and spacious canteen as well as on-call accommodation for medical personnel.





74. THE SOUTH FAÇADE OF THE COUNTY HOSPITAL, TULLAMORE BY SCOTT AND GOOD.

The completion of the new hospital with the new by-pass represents a significant achievement for Tullamore. The hospital is now the town's largest employer and for the midlands a major benefit. Between the hospital and HSE some 1,000 people are employed in the town.

The Paupers' Cemetery

This cemetery, just north of Ardan Vale, was opened in 1852 in the aftermath of the Famine years at the same time as what is now the Protestant cemetery in Clonminch. The idea was that the coffins of the poor would not have to be brought through the town to Kilcruttin. There are just two memorials to all the people buried there. One was erected by the parish priest, Fr Callary, in 1918 and the other is to Charles Ward, a 'settled traveller' who sustained a blow to the head in a row in Ballyhaunis in the 1940s.⁴⁸ When the gaol was adapted for a woollen mill in 1937 the body of Mary Daly, who had been hanged in Tullamore in 1903, was brought here for re-burial. Soon after her family moved the body a third time to another cemetery. How did the builders of the new factory know it was her? Pa Martin, a man who was intensely interested in local history, but sadly died at the young age of 59 in 1974, is recorded as stating that she was recognised by the long hair and the boots!

Ardan Road housing

Opposite the hospital and up to the 'Paupers' Cemetery' are houses erected from 1937 onwards in the usual ribbon-development fashion. One that was much noticed when built in 1937 was a flat-roofed house, all in white, built for the assistant county surveyor, B. Flaherty, by the Phoenix Building Company. This must have been the first flat-roofed house in Tullamore, if not in the entire county. It

was followed by two more such houses adjoining—all have now been remodelled to better suit the Irish weather. The **Tullamore Tennis Club grounds** were opened here about 1937 and much improved in recent years. The club was an offshoot of the C.Y.M.S. based in St Mary's Hall. Beside the club is the old home of Alfie Lambe, the saintly Legion of Mary envoy to South America who was born in what is now Alfie Lambe House in 1932 and died in 1959 at the age of 26. At Bracken's farm was, until recent years, the last thatched house in Tullamore with the native straw roof to distinguish it from the Mallet Tavern with its Norfolk reed. At the new entrance to **Eiscir Meadows** is the c. 1800 parochial house of the then parish priest known as 'The Slate House', a name which suggests it was a departure from the thatched cabin, perhaps more common on this road at the time. The Slate House was probably in use for a short period only as the new church in Chapel Street had a house in the grounds for the parish priest, probably from 1810 or soon after.

Now Ardan Road has many new housing estates. The first was that at **Ardan Vale** consisting of lands acquired by Tullamore Town Council from the Catholic Church (the parish farm) in the 1960s and soon after divided into some 130 private sites for the new emerging middle class of the post-Lemass and 1970s Ireland. It now has some 177 housing units. **Ardan Heights** was developed by James Spollen from the 1970s with a few of the houses in the style of his estate at Whitehall, but mostly one-off houses. **Ardan View**, a large town council scheme of almost 300 houses followed in the late 1970s and early 1980s with the two schools, St Joseph's and Scoil Eoin Phol II, completed in 1980 and a connection to Clara Road. The estate itself has a magnificent spacious layout redolent of the design of Mar-

ian Place and Pearse Park in the 1950s. The lands were mostly those of Walsh of Patrick Street, the publican and undertaker and some of the Kearney land from their farm at Clara Road, among other landowners.

Collins Lane marked the northern boundary of the town and, like Chancery Lane at Clonminch, was a delightful rural walk until the 1970s and 1980s when the road was widened to provide a western by-pass and a connection to Srah and the new 1970s Burlington factory. By the year 2001 the whole area was ready for housing development and between 2002 and 2007 a remarkable total of 860 houses were built at Collins Lane comprising the estates of **Ballin Ri, Carraig Cluain, Eiscir Meadows, Norbury Woods and Droim Liath**. (For an estate to be named after the 'hanging judge' Lord Norbury of Durrow, would not have pleased the nationalist street-name committee of 1905.) In 2008 the new non-denominational Educate Together School was completed. A major development of shops and houses planned by the owners of the cattle market missed out on the boom and is now awaiting an upturn in the economy.

The traditions of quarrying and stone-cutting are strong in the Collins Lane area with certain families such as Molloy and Horans prominent in the craft. The stone-quarrying tradition has a long history back to the 1820s, if not earlier, given that buildings such as the Chapel Royal in Dublin Castle used Tullamore stone. Since the 1930s as the use of stone in buildings began to disappear because of the expense that tradition was able to draw on the sandy eskers for material for the pits of Michael Galvin (acquired by Readymix in 1974) and Condron Concrete established in the 1960s. The same sandy soil facilitated the development of the grounds of the Tul-

lamore Pitch and Putt Club at Ardan (1963) with its enjoyable eighteen-hole course. For now the esker at Ardan, and no longer Collins Lane, marks the northern boundary of the greatly expanded town of the last seventy years. The new Ardan Way road to the by-pass at Scally's shop may facilitate development to the east. If the sculptures at the entrance to the by-pass expose their sandy foundation at least they remind us of the significance of the Esker Riada as a territorial boundary and a route of communication to the west at Clonmacnois and to the east right into the old road at Thomas Street and Christchurch in Dublin.

Tyrrell's Road/ Puttaghan/ Rapparee Alley

The name Tyrrell's Road is not so much used as Convent View but the name more correctly identifies the development of this road as an access to Dublin via Tyrrellspass. That part between the 1802 Kilbeggan bridge and Whitehall bridge formed part of the old Connaught Street before realignment with the building of the canal. The main section of Tyrrell's Road with much housing, now all demolished, was that between Bury bridge and Ballydaly and connecting in with the Daingean Road until severed by the Grand Canal in 1798.

There were upwards of sixty cottages on the Puttaghan Road between the canal and the junction with the Ballydaly road before 1840. This area was also known as Rapparee Alley, a name which may have originated with the Irish tories or bandits of the 1690s. The street was later known as 'Battle Rap', but this was out of a sense of poking fun because of a squabble between neighbours that came before the local magistrates in the late 1890s. These houses

were demolished by the 1900s and many probably in the aftermath of the Famine when the poorest lost out through death or emigration.

Convent View Terrace

The Emmet Terrace scheme bears comparison in details with the five houses below the footbridge sometimes known as Convent View Terrace and may also have been by F.G. Hicks. These two-storey houses were built by the firm of P. & H. Egan Limited on part of the old army supplies or magazine site. This was a military installation of 1808 close to where Lord Cornwallis had landed from a canal barge some ten years earlier when on his way to Longford to fight the French invasion force. The magazine was offered for sale in 1861 and all that survives of it now is the stone wall of the last house in this terrace owned by Ger Scully.



CONVENT VIEW TERRACE, c.1998



ROUND HOUSE AT 26TH LOCK, C. 2002

Tyrrell's Road (Convent View) and 26th lock- house

On the same lands acquired by the council, but this time fronting the canal twelve two-storey houses were erected for artisans about 1912 at a cost of £155 each. Mr J. Duffy, Tullamore was the contractor. In all of these houses the families of the original occupants have moved on and new owners have come to enjoy the benefits of living close to the town centre with the canal line walk to 'Boland's' 26th lock-house nearby. The lock-house known as Boland's after the last family of lockkeepers who lived there has been carefully restored and is open to the public during the summer. The design with the attractive bow ends was the work of the canal contractor, Michael Hayes, and was a departure from the more meagre design of the standard lock-house including the 27th and 28th on the western side of the town. The directors of the Grand Canal Company were unimpressed and refused to meet the additional expense of £42 sought by the builder. Today the house is a Protected Structure and now includes a fine lock-house garden and the remains of an old canal barge.

One of the Convent View families was that of the writer Tony Molloy, friend of Patrick Kavanagh in the early 1940s and possibly related to him. Molloy wrote a number of children's stories such as *Caught in the callows* and under the pseudonym, 'Captain Mac', for the *Irish Press*.



75. THE ELABORATE 26TH LOCK HOUSE ON THE GRAND CANAL AT BOLAND'S LOCK.



CANAL AT CONVENT ROAD DURING THE 'BLACK WINTER' OF 1947

DAVITT STREET

When it came to Davitt Street the council was not minded to spend as much as had been spent in Emmet Terrace and was able to build in 1906-07 fifteen single-storey houses at a cost of about £100 each. Some more were added within three years. In fairness the council wanted to keep down the capital cost to have an affordable rent for the tenants.

CALLARY STREET

Fifty four houses were erected about 1935 as part of the new Fianna Fáil government's contribution to the war on overcrowded and poor housing. The houses were erected by Duffy Brothers; forty six at £226 each and eight at £260 each. The street itself was called after a former parish priest, Fr Callary, who died in 1925 and had directed the building of the new church.

THORNSBERRY LANE/ PARK AVENUE

Twenty two single storey houses were erected about 1939 by the Phoenix Building Company at £297 per house. The lane got its name before 1855 probably from a gentleman of the name Thornsberry who was a leaseholder of property in the vicinity of the present-day Brewery Tap and, like other leaseholders, had a short lease of lands near the town. The street was after 1939 called Park Avenue, but the Thornsberry name is preserved in the council housing scheme of the 1970s, Thornsberry Estate. This street name is not connected with the builder of the hospital, George Thornberry.

KEARNEY AND CONNOLLY PARK

The estates of Kearney Park and Connolly Park were built by the town council in the mid-1960s and the names commemorate the 1916 leader, James Connolly, and a former town council chairman, Joe Kearney, who was associated with public life in Tullamore as was his father, the latter for over fifty years until his death in 1942.

HARBOUR WALK AND HARBOUR DRIVE

On the road to Ballydaly are two new private schemes, Harbour Walk and Harbour Drive with some 87 houses. The area has changed greatly with the new by-pass road of 2009 cutting through Puttaghan from Ardan Road and the new bridge over the canal near the 26th lock-house. Beyond these new estates is the relatively new (1805) road to Ballydaly where the old town dump was located until the 1960s. The original road was out to Tinnycross with a long lane coming from Tinnycross via Mullaghtogher and Corndarragh and emerging near the barony viaduct on the Grand Canal. The same viaduct, built to accommodate a local stream, marks the boundary of the area between the dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin and Meath. These diocesan divisions also mark the boundaries of the old kingdom of Leinster and the kingdom of Meath. The viaduct is almost half way between the 26th lockhouse and the canal towpath at Bury bridge.

The latest housing estate in Puttaghan is one consisting of some fifty houses and apartments completed in the autumn of 2008 in an attractive modern design and a first for the town council in providing some apartments in a mixed development.



CONNOLLY PARK 2005



THORNSBERRY ESTATE, c.1975



THORNSBERRY ESTATE, c.2005



PUTTAGHAN, NEW HOUSES, 2009

Walking tours to Tyrrellspass, Durrow and Ballycommon

The enthusiastic walker has the option of taking the by-pass around the town or taking a less demanding walk from Bury bridge at Whitehall to Digby bridge and home by Flann O'Brien country at Cappincur. Another possibility is to walk from the narrow lane off the canal near the barony stream and up to Tinnycross, coming home by Tinnycross/Ballydaly or via Durrow. At Tinnycross near to the former sandpits is Hollow House, part of which survives in the cylindrical towers of the curtain wall and probably dates from the 1680s or earlier. The old road to Tyrrellspass is a pleasant walk with the added bonus of seeing the disused 1830s Kilbeggan canal extension, St Hugh's Well at Rahugh or coming in by the High Road of Durrow, or via the road from Kilmurry and Ballycommon. Now with Google Maps there is no excuse!

FAMILIAR PLACES - RECORDS OF CONTINUOUS USER⁴⁹

The Mallet Tavern in Kilbride Street is reputed to have survived the fire of 1785, but may in fact have been constructed after the Clara bridge of 1809. McGinn's in High Street, now Cosgrove's and at one time Deverell's brewery may date as a pub to the 1790s. Likewise the Brewery Tap is of the same period or when Deverell's moved the brewery from High Street to this location about 1830. Eugene's Bar at the Kilbeggan bridge should also be pre-1900 as would Bob Smyth's in Patrick Street. The liquor licence in the Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre was originally located at Wrafter's former pub in Patrick Street known as Rattigan's. Who knows, for a plentiful supply of 'spiritous liquor' a long pedigree can be discovered!

Methodist church on same site at Church Street since 1786

Dolan's Pharmacy in Columcille Street in use as such from 1796

Catholic church, off Harbour Street on same site since 1800

St Catherine's Church, Hop Hill since 1815

Courthouse, Cormac Street from 1835

Mercy Convent on the same site since 1836

Quirke's Medical Hall, High Street, a pharmacy at High Street since about 1840

Protestant cemetery at Clonminch since 1852

Catholic presbytery on the same site since the 1850s

Hibernian Bank now Bank of Ireland at Bridge Street since 1864

Presbyterian Church since 1865

Railway station at Kilcruttin since 1865 and the railway 1854-9

Tullamore Freemasons Lodge at O'Moore Street since 1884

Ulster Bank in High Street since 1892

Catholic cemetery, Clonminch since 1893

Conway & Kearney, Solicitors in use as a law office since 1901

26th lock-house in use still as such since 1799, but not now occupied by lockkeepers

NOW OUT OF THE HERITAGE RACE

Bury Arms – Phoenix Arms (demolished in 2000) in use as an hotel from 1786

Charleville School from 1811 until 2006. The new school is at Church Avenue.



76. TWO OF THE 1907 HOUSES AT TYRRELL'S ROAD OR CONVENT VIEW.

TULLAMORE

A TIMELINE OF EVENTS FROM THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY TO 2010

1557

- 1557** Lord Deputy Sydney cuts a pass through the woods from Ballycowan to Durrow.
- 1574** Earliest known reference to Tullamore - in a grant of the monastic lands at Durrow to Nicholas Herbert, the English soldier-settler whose descendant and the last of the Durrow Herberts was Mrs Frances Fox. She had works done on the Durrow 'Abbey' church in the years before 1730.
- 1582** Donald O'Molloy, son of Theobald, Lord of Fercall, slain by O'Connors at Durrow.
- 1583** Death of Theobald O'Molloy, Lord of Fercall, succeeded by his grandson Edward O'Molloy.
- 1588** Srah Castle, Tullamore's oldest surviving house, erected by Edward Briscoe, an English soldier.
- 1604** Edward O'Molloy, Lord of Fercall, leases his Tullamore lands to the English soldier/settler John Moore.
- 1608** Death of Edward O'Molloy, Lord of Fercall.
- 1609** John Moore, an English soldier-settler purchases a half-share in the castle, town and lands of Tullamore from Suzanna and Matilda O'Molloy, sisters of Edward O'Molloy.
- 1620** English government land grant and confirmation to the English settler, John Moore, of the castle, town and lands of Tullamore and one water mill as part of the Jacobite plantation, with the right to hold an annual fair in the town.
- 1633** Lands of Tullamore leased by Thomas Moore (successor to his father John) to Sir Robert Forth for 81 years at £100 per year.
- 1641** Mansion house built at Redwood now part of Charleville Demesne by Sir Robert Forth (demolished about 1840) and located near the present farmyard.
- 1670** Robert Worrall, a Tullamore trader strikes a token to alleviate the scarcity of petty currency.
- 1710** The Moore family leave Croghan Castle and build a 'mansion house' in the area of O'Carroll Street or Henry Street, Tullamore which continued in use until c. 1740 when the family moved to Charleville and the house known as Redwood.
- 1716** Military barrack built in Tullamore (at the western end of what is now Patrick Street) for two companies of foot soldiers.
- 1716** John Moore, Tullamore's landlord, promoted to the peerage as Lord Tullamore.

1725

1725 Death of Lord Tullamore, succeeded by his son Charles Moore.

1726 First Church of Ireland church in town of Tullamore erected at Church Lane, now Church Street, by Ellen Moore, the mother of the first Lord Tullamore.

1739 Grant to Charles, Lord Tullamore of the right to hold two additional fairs in Tullamore.

1740 Charles, Lord Tullamore purchases the interest in lands of the Forth family at Redwood (now Charleville) and moves residence to Charleville.

1743 Building of Charleville (O'Connor) Square commences with what is now the offices of Gray Cunniffe.

1747 Maurice Tyrrell builds a house and tannery in Bridge Street (now Douglas jewellers and others).

1748 Lease of the Tullamore watermills and windmills granted by Lord Tullamore to Charles Barrett. The windmills on the high ground at the back of O'Moore Street were in ruins by the 1830s.

1750 Tannery in operation at Tanyard Lane, Tullamore.

1754 'Factory house' erected in Tullamore for spinning of worsted yarn (corner of O'Carroll Street and Church Street or possibly nearer to the present harbour).

1757 Charles Moore, Lord Tullamore, created earl of Charleville (the first creation of this title).

1759 Masonic lodge founded in Tullamore (celebrated its 250th anniversary in 2009).

1764 Death of Charles Moore, first earl of Charleville. His property was inherited by his nephew, John Bury of Limerick, who died in the same year. Charles William Bury, a child of six weeks and grand-nephew of the earl, inherited a 20,000-acre estate in County Offaly and properties in Dublin and Limerick.

1765 Dr Richard Pococke, the adventurous traveller and Protestant bishop of Meath, dies at Charleville on 15 September after suspected poisoning from mushrooms.

1765 Captain Thomas Johnston takes a twenty-year lease of Charleville at £190 10s. 0d. per year for 410 acres.

1767 County Offaly Infirmary established at Tullamore instead of Daingean under County Infirmarys Amendment Act, 1767. This was the first county building to be erected in Tullamore, but Daingean or Philipstown remained the assize or county town for almost seventy years more.

1775 A small T-shaped Catholic church erected at Ballyduff to serve Tullamore which is part of the old monastic parish of Durrow and in a rural area north of Tullamore. The remains of this church are close to what is now Axis Business Park.

1776 Arthur Young, the celebrated English agriculturalist visits Tullamore and notes in his published *Tour* (1780) that 'part of Tullamore is well built'.

1783 Robert Belton of Coleraine, Tullamore, employs c. 100 looms in a revival of the linen industry.

1785 One hundred or one hundred and thirty houses in the Patrick Street area are destroyed by a fire caused by an air balloon - the first 'air disaster' in history. Four houses in the area survive.

1786 Patrick Street almost entirely rebuilt after the balloon fire.

1786 Methodist preaching house erected in Church Street to replace an earlier house at Swaddling Lane (later known as Ruddock's Lane or Bride's Lane and to the rear of the Sirocco restaurant in Patrick Street).

1786 Charleville Arms Hotel built for £200 at the corner of Bridge Street and Church Street (on the site of what is now Menary's store).

1786 Tullamore inhabitants petition the Irish house of commons, unsuccessfully, to have Tullamore designated as the county town.

1788 County infirmary erected at Church Street, Tullamore (1923-37, Tullamore Garda Station; 1942-77, Offaly County Library). Now Tullamore's oldest public building it was adapted as an apartment block in 1996 with only the outer shell retained.

1789 Market House (now the Irish Nationwide) erected in Charleville (O'Connor) Square. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, preaches a sermon there in the same year.

1790 Pound Street later called William Street and now Columcille Street set out in plots for building.

1798

- 1798** Grand Canal constructed as far as Tullamore. Lord Cornwallis, the commander-in-chief and lord lieutenant, taking personal command of the army, was the first to avail of the new transport system to Tullamore when he led an army to Connacht to crush the French invasion force. After the defeat of the Franco-Irish army at Ballinamuck the French officers were returned to Dublin via the same canal route. Tullamore continued as the terminus for the new canal until 1804 when the Shannon Harbour terminus was completed.
- 1798** Barriers erected around Tullamore by 'loyal' inhabitants during the 1798 rebellion.
- 1799** Whitehall or Bury bridge completed to facilitate the new harbour in Tullamore.
- 1800** Work on the building of Charleville Castle commences and is completed by 1812.
- 1801** Grand Canal hotel completed at Tullamore at a cost of £4,400.
- 1802** New Catholic church completed at Chapel Street on site of present church and replacing that at Ballyduff. Work may have started in 1794 when a site was provided by Charles William Bury in the back of the town.
- 1803** Kilbeggan bridge completed over canal (remodelled, 1929-30).
- 1806** Irish militiamen and soldiers of the King's German Legion clash in Tullamore - two killed and thirty-three wounded.

- 1807** Duel in Tullamore, reportedly near the former two oak trees outside of the Charleville Demesne (near Barron's gate) leads to death of one officer, Captain Augustus Von Quernheim, of the 4th Light Battalion of the King's German Legion on 19 March 1807. Both trees were removed in recent years.
- 1808** Army magazine for ammunition storage erected at what is now Convent View, Tullamore for possible use against a French invasion force from the Shannon. Only part of the curtain wall now survives in the garden of Mr Ger Scully.
- 1809** The English visitor and writer, Edward Wakefield, estimates the population of Tullamore as 2,500 Catholics and 1,500 Protestants.
- 1810** Upwards of 1,000 soldiers stationed in Tullamore in readiness for a French invasion.
- 1811** Charleville School built for the poor children of Tullamore parish and operated on the plan of Joseph Lancaster. The school continued in use until 2006 making it the longest established school in the town. It was also the first purpose-built school in the town.
- 1815** St. Catherine's Church completed at Church Road, replacing that in Church Street of 1726.

- 1817** An elegant outside car was established for the conveyance of passengers from the Grand Canal, Tullamore to Athlone and intended to connect with the Galway and Roscommon coaches. It arrived in Athlone at 8.30 in the morning and left for Tullamore at 5 in the evening. The car was on a newly invented plan with four wheels and two relays of horses and could carry ten passengers with ease.
- 1818** The Jesuits opened a boys boarding school at Tullabeg near Tullamore that later had the potential to become a midlands university until closed as a school in 1886.
- 1820** A silk factory was established in Store Street, Tullamore near the canal harbour by Messrs Osborne and Sinnott.
- 1821** The population of Tullamore in the first comprehensive government census was put at 5,517 persons. No detailed returns survive save for the total by street in the town.
- 1821** A Tullamore Loan Fund Bank is established with offices at the Market House in O'Connor Square. The profits from it later help to erect the town bell and pave the streets.
- 1822** A new distillery is erected by the Pentland brothers in Market Square. The distillery closed in the 1830s and in the 1990s was 'converted' to apartments by retaining parts of the outer shell.
- 1826** Foundation stone of Tullamore gaol at Kilcruttin/Cormac Street laid by Lord Tullamore in an impressive ceremony.

1829

- 1829** Michael Molloy established a new distillery (later B. Daly and Co. Ltd) on an earlier distillery site at Bridge Street. The year 1829 is the traditional date provided for the Tullamore Dew distillery. Distilling ceased in Tullamore in 1954 and the buildings were mostly demolished in the 1980s and 1990s to facilitate the construction of the Bridge Centre.
- 1830** New county gaol opened in Tullamore to replace that at Daingean. The prisoners were transferred by canal boat to the county courthouse in Daingean until 1835.
- 1831** *Leinster Express* newspaper established in Maryborough/Portlaoise to serve Laois and Offaly.
- 1832** Upwards of 200 persons died in Tullamore as a result of a cholera epidemic.
- 1833** Five men executed at Tullamore gaol.
- 1833** Ten further deaths from cholera including the pharmacist in what is now Dolan's Chemist shop, one Adam Leech.
- 1835** Tullamore becomes the county town in place of Daingean by act of Parliament of 1832.
- 1835** New county courthouse completed at Tullamore in Grecian style at cost of £10,000.
- 1835** Death of Charles William Bury, first earl of Charleville, second creation.
- 1836** Death of Thomas Acres at Acres Hall. At the time of his death, he was the owner of the freehold interest in some 120 to 140 houses in Tullamore and was the town's leading property developer. His house, built in the 1780s, is now the town hall.
- 1836** Mercy nuns arrive in Tullamore by canal boat to establish their first convent outside Dublin.
- 1836** Bank of Ireland opens a branch in Tullamore.
- 1838** A young Tullamore man, Philip Turpin, is shot in the town's last fatal duel at Ardan Road (later known as Turpin's Hollow).
- 1838** First Ordnance Survey maps of County Offaly published and on the six-inch scale.
- 1839** Workhouses to be established at Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore.
- 1839** Assassination of the second Lord Norbury at Durrow creates a political storm.
- 1839** 'The great wind' leads to destruction and death across the country.
- 1840** A public dinner was given in Tullamore to the Rev. Dr O' Rafferty P.P. Tullamore, 'as a testimony of the people's high sense of his moral worth and sterling patriotism. There was no room in any of the hotels large enough and a store attached to Mr Locke's distillery [in Market Square] was utilised: yet such a large number attended that they could not all be accommodated.'
- 1841** Population of Offaly: 146,857.
- 1841** Population of Tullamore 6,343 persons in a civic area of 223 acres or 28.4 persons per acre.
- 1841** Fr Mathew visits Tullamore to promote temperance and is successful, albeit for a short time only.
- 1841** The new Mercy convent is completed at Convent Road largely funded by the Tullamore distiller, Michael Molloy, and is expected to last for centuries.
- 1842** Tullamore workhouse at Ardan Road erected pursuant to Poor Law Ireland Act, 1838, at a cost of £8,300. It was designed to accommodate 700 persons.
- 1843** O'Connell holds 'monster meeting' in Tullamore.
- 1844** The second earl of Charleville is obliged to auction the crops, stock and farm implements in Charleville Demesne and to live abroad on £1,000 a year.
- 1845** *King's County Chronicle* (later *Offaly Chronicle*) established at Birr. This was the first successful local newspaper and catered largely for Protestant unionists.
- 1846** Over 4,000 men employed on public works in County Offaly as part of famine relief programme.
- 1846** Tullamore (Famine) Relief Committee established.
- 1847** In February 1847 upwards of 901 persons occupy Tullamore workhouse which was built for 700.
- 1847** Nine-hundred families in the Tullamore area (or c. 6,000 persons) receiving famine relief.
- 1848** 1,500 'paupers' in Tullamore workhouse and more than 1,000 on an outdoor list.

1848

1848 Dismissal of Tullamore board of guardians for incompetence.

1849 More cholera in the county.

1850 Bolger Arms Hotel established (later First National, Tullamore and now Sue Ryder and others) about this time

1850 T.P. and R. Goodbody's tobacco factory established at Bridge Street, Tullamore about this time

1852 Festivities in Tullamore for the coming of age of the third earl of Charleville.

1852 The rector of Tullamore parish informs the board of guardians of Tullamore Union that over 1,000 paupers have been buried in Kilcruttin graveyard within the last few years.

1852 P. & H. Egan family business established at Bridge Street, Tullamore and continues in business until 1968

1854 Rail link with Dublin extended to Tullamore via Portarlington.

1858 Launch of a new local newspaper, the *Leinster Reporter*, in Tullamore. Taken over soon after by the *Central Weekly Times*, a banner for the Birr-based *King's County Chronicle*.

1859 Death of the popular third earl of Charleville predeceased by his young wife.

1859 St. Brigid's Seminary established in old canal hotel (closed in 1866).

1859 The railway line from Tullamore to Athlone is completed.

1860 Town Commissioners elected for Tullamore under the Towns Improvement Act of 1854.

1860 Tullamore Gas Company Limited established and supplies piped gas for street lighting and domestic use. The company is the first limited liability entity in Tullamore

1861 St. Mary's Hall, Thomas Street, opened by local branch of the C.Y.M.S. (Catholic Young Men's Society).

1861 Death of the young and orphaned Lady Harriet Bury from a fall on the stairs in Charleville Castle

1861 Population of county: 90,043 - a fall of 19.7% in previous decade.

1862 Christian Brothers establish a school in Tullamore at former Grand Canal Hotel.

1864 Hibernian Bank branch opened at Bridge Street (a Bank of Ireland branch since 1979)

1865 New railway station opened at Cormac Street nearer to town than that at Clonminch.

1865 One of the last public hangings in Ireland takes place at Tullamore in front of the gaol.

1865 Presbyterian Church erected in High Street at a cost of £300.

1866 Tullamore Poor Law Guardians agree that Sisters of Mercy be paid a salary for attendance on the inmates of the workhouse.

1870 Margaret and Laurence Shiel, brother and sister, are executed at Tullamore gaol.

1871 Population of county: 75,900, a fall of 15.7% in the previous decade.

1873 Festivities for the coming of age of fourth earl of Charleville and marriage of his sister, Lady Katherine, to Colonel Hutton.

1874 Death of fourth earl of Charleville.

1875 Death of Alfred Bury, fifth earl of Charleville, leaving the male line extinct and the estate is inherited by Lady Emily Bury.

1875 New boys' national school completed at St. Brigid's Place, Tullamore, staffed by the Christian Brothers.

1879 Bicycle club formed in Tullamore.

1880 Land League branch formed in Tullamore.

1880 Tullamore Lawn Tennis Club established with grounds at O'Moore Street.

1881 Population of county: 72,852. Parnell visited county for first time at Clara.

1881 *Midland Tribune* commences publication. Its sister paper the *Tullamore Tribune* is established in 1978.

1883 The Tullamore tobacco factory now employs 150 persons and has an annual wages bill of £3,500.

1884 Daniel E. Williams opens his first shop in Patrick Street.

1884 The Tullamore masons move to a new premises in O'Moore Street after 125 years in existence.

1884 Athletic grounds purchased at Spollanstown for people of Tullamore.

1885

- 1885 Tullamore races at the Ballykilmurry course revived after an absence of twenty years.
- 1885 Death of Captain Howard, husband to Lady Emily Bury.
- 1885 County divided into two single-seat constituencies based around Birr and Tullamore - number of voters up from c. 3,000 to c. 10,000.
- 1886 The Jesuit boys' boarding school at Tullabeg, Rahan, is closed as a school and the remaining boys are transferred to Clongowes Wood, County Kildare.
- 1886 Goodbody's tobacco factory is destroyed by fire and 200 lose their jobs. Shortly afterwards the factory is re-established at Harold's Cross, Dublin and workers and their families leave Tullamore by special train.
- 1886 First civic fire brigade established in Tullamore.
- 1887 William O'Brien and John Mandeville and other 'Plan of Campaign' prisoners in Tullamore gaol.
- 1888 Death of the Tullamore doctor, George Ridley, by suicide at the Mandeville inquest.
- 1888 G.A.A. hurling club formed in Tullamore.
- 1889 New Methodist church erected at Church Street.

- 1891 The population of Tullamore town falls to 4,676 or 13.8 percent down on the 1881 figure (based on the current Tullamore Town Council boundaries).
- 1893 Electric light illuminates Daniel E. William's shop in Patrick Street.
- 1893 New graveyard opened at Clonminch Road - Mr Michael Gorry, newsagent, the first to be interred.
- 1894 A special Offaly edition of the *Westmeath Independent* commences publication as a pro-Parnellite paper. The *Tribune* is anti-Parnellite and the *Chronicle* is unionist.
- 1895 Piped water (from Clonaslee) becomes available in Tullamore at a cost of £10,000.
- 1895 Tullamore Golf Club formed. The present club was established in 1906.
- 1895 Hundreds skating on Charleville lake in February.
- 1896 A new local newspaper, *The Central Mail*, is started in Tullamore and survives less than a year.
- 1896 Death of Patrick Kevany, formerly master of Tullamore workhouse and grandfather of writer, Patrick Kavanagh. Kevany was master of Tullamore workhouse from 1861 and married Mary Molloy of Tullamore. They later had a shop in Harbour Street.
- 1896 A party of thirty five from D.E. Williams travel on a day tour to Belvedere Lake. 'This is the first treat of its kind by an employer to his staff in Tullamore.'
- 1896 P. & H. Egan make improvements to front of shop in Bridge House and replacing the old shops on both sides with large and complete glass front.

- 1897 Tullamore commercial and farming interests agree to hold the Tullamore fair on the third Friday of each month so as to facilitate exporters.
- 1897 Average earnings of a working man in Tullamore 11s 0d per week.
- 1897 *Offaly Independent* and Revd Fr Murphy, a Tullamore curate, commence a crusade for the better housing of the working classes.
- 1897 D. E. Williams erects a bonded warehouse at Bury Quay (since 2000 Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre).
- 1898 Foundation stone of new Catholic church laid by Dr Nulty, Bishop of Meath. Plans prepared by William Hague and subscription book opened.
- 1898 Offaly's first motor car, owned by Daniel E. Williams, appears on Offaly roads.
- 1899 'A very large and influential meeting of the townspeople of Tullamore and district, was held on Sunday evening in the Young Men's Society Hall, for the purpose of establishing a branch of the Irish National Foresters' Benefit society in that town, and enrolling members. . . The meeting was thoroughly representative in its character- the principal merchants and traders of the town, as well as a large number of working class being present. The new branch bears the title of "Con of the Hundred Battles" '. The club has survived to the present day and with the masons and GAA are the oldest in the town.
- 1900 Tullamore U.D.C. established under the 1898 Local Government (Ireland) Act and the new county council in 1899. 'For the first time in history of our country, the management of the local business of each county rests with the people. The days of jobbery are over. Thank God.'

1901

- 1901** Tullamore has 95 one-room tenements of which 66 contain two or more persons.
- 1901** First increase in population of Tullamore town for over half a century.
- 1901** Francis Quirke, a young boy died while skating at Charleville Lake. He remained standing to waist height in the broken ice but no determined effort was made to save the boy – cowardice being exhibited by the large number of people present.
- 1902** Gaelic League branch established in Tullamore.
- 1902** Technical education scheme begins in Tullamore with adult classes.
- 1902** Tullamore Cricket Club erect pavilion at Spollanstown.
- 1903** Tullamore U.D.C. completes its first scheme of twelve houses at Emmet Terrace.
- 1903** Mary Daly hanged at Tullamore gaol for the murder of her husband. Her accomplice, Taylor, is hanged in Kilkenny. Mrs. Daly's hanging was the second last of a woman in Ireland.
- 1903** Frankford reverts to its original name of Kilcormac.
- 1903** The Williams firm is incorporated with limited liability.
- 1905** New street names adopted by Tullamore U.D.C. at the suggestion of the Gaelic League more in keeping with Irish culture and traditions.
- 1905** Tullamore holds its first industrial exhibition.
- 1906** New Catholic Church of the Assumption of our Blessed Lady completed at Chapel Street at cost of £28,000. Designed by Messrs McNamara and Hague.
- 1906** The Tullamore Golf Club is reformed with new links at Screggan.
- 1906** Tullamore laundry established at Church Road by local business interests.
- 1907** Questions about the alleged Tullamore whiskey fraud in the house of commons. A large Revenue fine for irregularities by the Williams firm is substantially reduced.
- 1909** New post office erected on the site of an earlier building at O'Connor Square.
- 1910** New girls' intermediate or secondary school nearing completion at Bury Quay.
- 1910** Tullamore Golf Club pavilion opened at Screggan.
- 1911** Population of county: 56,832.
- 1911** Tullamore Pipe Band founded.
- 1912** Christian Brothers erect new classical school at Bury Quay (closed in 1960 and converted to eight apartments in 2004).
- 1914** One hundred men enrolled in Tullamore Volunteer Corps.
- 1914** Death of William Adams, for many years a leading local public representative.
- 1914** E. J. Graham defeats Patrick Adams (son of the late William Adams) in a contest for the north King's County Parliamentary seat by seventy nine votes.
- 1916** Fracas at Columcille Street involving the Volunteers, police and a crowd hostile to the Volunteers, ten remanded in custody until June 1916, when all were released.
- 1916** Tullamore U.D.C. passes a resolution condemning the 1916 rebellion.
- 1919** Death of Henry Egan of P. & H. Egan Ltd. – one of the largest and most significant funerals ever seen in Tullamore.
- 1920** Constable Cronin is shot dead in O'Carroll Street. The Foresters Hall on the site of the Youth Club, Harbour Street, is burned by the Black and Tans.
- 1920** One hundred and twenty Tullamore people on outdoor relief.
- 1920** One thousand to 1,200 pigs sold in Tullamore every Tuesday.
- 1920** Tullamore Electric Light and Power Co. Ltd established (sold to ESB in 1930).
- 1920** The name King's County changed to Offaly by the county council.
- 1921** Electricity becomes widely available in Tullamore.
- 1921** Matthew Kane, a member of the IRA, is shot dead by the RIC and buried at Mucklagh.
- 1921** Offaly County Infirmary, Church Street, closed. Patients transferred to hospital attached to 'County Home' (the former workhouse at Ardan Road).
- 1921** Death of Daniel E. Williams, founder of D. E. Williams Ltd.
- 1921** Offaly public bodies unite in favour of accepting the Anglo-Irish Treaty.

1922

- 1922 British military evacuate the gaol and courthouse and hand over to the IRA.
- 1922 Brookfield House, Screggan Manor and golf pavilion burned by Republican forces.
- 1922 Tullamore courthouse, gaol and barracks burned by Republican forces as they withdraw from Tullamore during the Civil War.
- 1922 Ulster Bank, Tullamore raided by armed men and the manager shot dead.
- 1923 Charleville Castle occupied by National troops.
- 1923 First sitting of Tullamore District Court.
- 1923 P.J. Egan (died 1960) of P. & H. Egan Ltd. elected to Dáil Eireann.
- 1923 Civic guards take up duty in Offaly. The former county infirmary serves as a garda station in Tullamore.
- 1923 Laois-Offaly four-seat constituency established and in 2010 the oldest two-county constituency in the country. The fifth seat was added in 1961. The boundaries remained the same throughout the period 1923-2010.
- 1924 Grand Central Cinema opened at Market Square (closed 1983 and now a bar).
- 1924 First sitting of the new Free State Circuit Court at Tullamore.
- 1924 Offaly County Council dissolved and commissioner appointed to take charge.
- 1925 Death of Rev. Fr. Callary, parish priest of Tullamore.
- 1925 County Library scheme established in Offaly with headquarters at Tullamore. Some reluctance from bishops over concerns about unsuitable literature etc.
- 1925 Tullamore distillery ceases production until 1937 because of the fall in demand.
- 1926 War memorial erected at O'Connor Square.
- 1926 New Tullamore Golf Club links and pavilion at Brookfield opened.
- 1926 Tullamore ranks as an 'overcrowded' town with 33 percent of its inhabitants in overcrowded dwellings, 10 percent of the population live in one-room tenements. Population of county: 52,592, a fall of 12.6 percent in the previous quarter century and down from almost 147,000 in 1841.
- 1927 Rebuilt county courthouse opened at Tullamore at a cost of over €30,000.
- 1928 Offaly County Council re-established and commissioner departs.
- 1928 Creamery established at Church Road.
- 1930 First 'talkies' film in Tullamore is shown at the Grand Central cinema.
- 1930 Upwards of 180 persons unemployed in Tullamore area and almost 1,000 in County Offaly as a whole.
- 1930 Offaly Vocational Education Committee established in place of the old Technical Committee set up under the 1898 Act.
- 1931 St. Philomena's School, Tullamore erected at a cost of €7,000 (now St. Mary's Youth Club).
- 1931 Death of Lady Emily Howard Bury after a widowhood of forty six years.
- 1931 County Committee of Agriculture set up.
- 1932 Six hundred and nine people registered as unemployed in Tullamore area.
- 1932 Lenten pastoral of Dr McNamee on the dangers of dancing.
- 1933 First dry cleaning store in midlands opened at Patrick Street by a Mr McGill.
- 1933 Efforts made to secure a sugar beet factory for the county to no avail.
- 1934 New Tullamore GAA club grounds at O'Connor Park opened by President de Valera.
- 1934 Iron foot bridge erected over canal at Convent View to facilitate access to new playground at Puttaghan. Colonel Bury makes a substantial contribution to the cost.
- 1936 National Ploughing Championships held in Tullamore for the first time.
- 1937 Garda station erected at Patrick Street.
- 1937 Tullamore Vocational School erected at O'Connor Square.
- 1937 Foundation stone of Offaly County Hospital laid by Sean T. O'Kelly.
- 1937 New Salts worsted spinning mill announced for Tullamore on site of old gaol.
- 1937 Production re-commences at Tullamore distillery.
- 1937 Offaly Archaeological and Historical Society established at Tullamore (reformed 1969).

1938

- 1938** Two hundred and two houses erected by Tullamore U.D.C. since 1932 under de Valera's slum clearance programme. Over 350 erected since 1903 of which more than half since 1932.
- 1938** Bridge at Bridge Street widened with the removal of Dann's tea rooms.
- 1938** Outdoor swimming pool opened at Cloncollog, Tullamore - one of the first civic swimming pools in the country, closed and filled in by 2002.
- 1938** Salts (Ireland) Ltd., later Tullamore Yarns Ltd., opens the new worsted spinning mill at Tullamore with a view to providing 600 to 800 jobs and catering for at least half of the Irish market. New road completed between O'Molloy Street and Charleville Road.
- 1940** *Jack Chaucer*, a horse owned by H.L. Egan of Annaghmore, Tullamore wins the Red Cross Sweepstakes at Leopardstown. Intense excitement in Tullamore following the race.
- 1942** D. E. Williams Ltd. reconstructs its Tullamore branch shop to a design of Michael Scott and with murals by Sean O'Sullivan.
- 1942** Tullamore Drama group 'Local Lights' formed.
- 1942** Offaly County Hospital opened - now a Midland General Hospital.
- 1943** Glass factory in operation at Church Road, owned by D. E. Williams Ltd (closed 1945).

- 1944** Midland Butter and Bacon Factory Ltd established at Church Road.
- 1946** Only 19.3 percent of permanent housing units in Tullamore have a fixed bath or shower.
- 1946** Ritz Cinema opened at High Street with 1,000 seats.
- 1946** Bord na Móna established - later employed c. 2,000 in the county.
- 1948** Brosna Drainage Scheme works commenced (completed 1954).
- 1948** Tullamore Chamber of Commerce formed.
- 1949** The Runners drama group founded.
- 1950** Tullamore town plan prepared by Frank Gibney, town planner and architect for town council; Clontarf Road officially opened and foundation stone for Pearse Park laid.
- 1951** Extension to Tullamore Vocational School opened.
- 1953** Tullamore Harriers Club formed.
- 1954** Sacred Heart Secondary School completed at a cost of £40,000 and with accommodation for 350 girls in 10 classrooms.
- 1954** Tullamore distillery ceases production in the wake of excise increase and recession of the 1950s.
- 1954** Nurses' Home added to County Hospital.
- 1955** Tullamore Musical Society established.
- 1955** Marian Place housing scheme completed.
- 1956** The Runners drama group win the premier award at the All Ireland Drama Festival.

- 1957** The Runners again take first prize at the All Ireland Drama Festival.
- 1960** New Christian Brothers school erected in Tullamore - off High Street.
- 1961** Twelve thousand people welcome home the first Offaly team to reach the All Ireland Football Final and runners up to Down.
- 1961** St. Brigid's Boys National School opened at Kilcruttin replaces the old 1875 school at St Brigid's Place.
- 1961** Tullamore Town Development Association formed.
- 1962** Our Lady of Consolation private nursing home, Tullamore, opened with twelve beds.
- 1963** Tullamore Pitch and Putt Club established at Ardan.
- 1963** Death of Colonel C. K. Howard Bury only surviving son of Lady Emily Bury.
- 1963** Tullamore Credit Union established.
- 1967** First town development plan adopted by U.D.C. in accordance with the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 1963.
- 1967** New Mercy convent at Bury Quay/Convent Road completed.
- 1967** Irish Mist Liqueur Co. Ltd. head offices built at Bury Quay, later owned by Midland Health Board. Irish Mist departs Tullamore 1997.
- 1970** Decision taken to locate administrative offices of Midland Health Board at Tullamore.
- 1970** Tullamore Military Band formed.

1970

- 1970** Condron Concrete Ltd. commences production of pipes with a staff of four persons.
- 1970** Tullamore branch of Junior Chamber established.
- 1971** Population of Tullamore town and environs 7,474 persons or 26.6 percent up on 1926 figure. The population of the urban district is 6,809. Population of county: 51,829.
- 1971** Sixty-eight percent of Tullamore's permanent housing units have a fixed bath or shower.
- 1971** Offaly win first All-Ireland football title.
- 1972** Offaly win second All-Ireland football title.
- 1972** *Post Primary Education in Tullamore: the case for change* published by the Phoenix Society.
- 1973** Tullamore ranks as nineteenth largest town in the Republic of a group of c. 100.
- 1973** Irish Casings Ltd. established at Spollanstown Industrial Estate.
- 1973** A geriatric unit of 100 beds completed at General Hospital.
- 1974** New Tullamore Vocational School erected at O'Carroll Street, Tullamore with the aid of World Bank funds (seriously damaged by fire in 2001).
- 1974** Old canal hotel Tullamore demolished and new parochial house built at a cost of £100,000.
- 1976** Paul & Vincent Ltd. commences production (now Avonmore, Spollanstown).
- 1977** Offaly County Hospital candidate, James Guinan, secures 4,000 first preference votes in General Election but fails to win seat. Jack Lynch, opposition Fianna Fáil leader and later taoiseach, gives election promise to retain and develop county hospital.
- 1977** Tullamore Day Care Centre for senior citizens opened at Tullamore.
- 1978** Our Lady of Consolation private nursing home extended to cater for twenty five persons.
- 1978** Lowe Alpine International Ltd. commences production at Tullamore at Spollanstown, (moves to new factory at Srah, April 1983, increased to 36,000 feet in 1986, employed 200 people by 1993, closed in 2002).
- 1978** First Junior Chamber 'Personality of the Year' competition held.
- 1978** Dowcloth Ltd. factory opened at Spollanstown.
- 1978** First issue of *Tullamore Tribune* published.
- 1979** Burlington Industries (Ireland) Ltd. commences production at Srah and rapidly increased workforce to c. 330 persons (the factory was sold to Carroll Meats in 2003).
- 1979** Tullamore U.D.C. formally adopts a development plan.
- 1979** Population in Tullamore urban district reaches 7,824 or 14.9 percent up on the 1971 urban district figure at 6,809.
- 1979** Riada House and Health Centre opened at Ardan Road.
- 1979** Pope John Paul II visits Clonmacnois on his way from Dublin to Galway.
- 1979** Tartan track opened at Tullamore Harriers Club.
- 1980** New national schools open at Ardan.
- 1980** 1,587 persons employed in manufacturing industry in Tullamore or 218 up on the 1973 figure.
- 1980** Ritz cinema closes and site is cleared for additional lands for post office. In 2009 new sorting office opened at Burlington Business Park.
- 1980** Over 700 children participate in Tullamore's first Summer Project.
- 1980** Youth Centre opened at Harbour Street in the former St Philomena's School.
- 1980** Egan-Tarleton Ltd., Market Square (amalgamated 1966) closes with the loss of sixteen jobs in Tullamore.
- 1980** Rehabilitation Industries Centre opens at Tanyard Lane.
- 1980** New bridge built over the town river (west of Kilcruttin). This bridge will link Charleville Rd with Rahan Road.
- 1980** Planning permission granted for 31,000 sq. ft 'out-of-town' shopping-centre at Church road, Tullamore. Vendor of land is Mr J. Troy.
- 1980** G.W.I. Joinery, Cappincur to close with 83 job losses. Set up by Spollen Brothers in the early 1960s, taken over by McInerneys in early 1970s, 300 jobs at peak production.
- 1981** Offaly's first victorious All-Ireland Hurling team welcomed home.

1981

- 1981** Dowcloth Ltd. goes into voluntary liquidation with the loss of 30 jobs.
- 1981** A Swedish company, Snickers Production Ltd., acquires the former Dowcloth Ltd. factory at Spollanstown to manufacture protective clothing.
- 1981** Population of County Offaly reaches 58,312, an increase of 12.5% over the previous decade.
- 1981** Tullamore is to have a major new industry in the health care field. A large U.S. company is planning to erect a substantial factory on lands made suitable for it on the I.D.A. industrial estate at Srah. The firm concerned is the Sherwood Medical Corporation.
- 1981** Castlemahon Poultry closing in Tullamore - one million birds had been 'grown' annually at full production. Some of the units were sited on what is now the Bridge Centre car-park.
- 1981** Tullamore gets straight from Japan a massive mobile telephone exchange: which leaves hope for a large number of people waiting impatiently for phone connection.
- 1981** Some of the older houses in Kilbride Street are to be demolished by the town council.
- 1981** Work on the building of the new Quinnswoth supermarket nearing completion - to open in October.
- 1981** Tullamore gets its first 'ban garda'.

- 1982** Motiv Creations [clock manufacturers] start up with a staff of three at Srah Industrial Estate.
- 1982** Twenty jobs lost at DEW Soft Drinks. The plant closed in 1984 with much of the production done in Tuam and the squash later produced by Harney Enterprises at Spollanstown.
- 1982** Approximately 1,000 registered as unemployed in Tullamore (double the 1979 figure).
- 1982** New canal bridge completed at Srah.
- 1982** Offaly wins a spectacular victory over Kerry in third All-Ireland Football Final win.
- 1982** Tullamore Yarns Ltd. (formerly Salts Ireland Ltd.) closes with loss of almost 60 jobs.
- 1983** Grand Central Cinema closes because of competition from the lately established Savoy triple cinema housed in the former Central Ballroom at Tara Street.
- 1983** Gerry Harrington and Gerry O'Reilly purchase the Phoenix Arms hotel (formerly Hayes Hotel).
- 1983** Paul & Vincent Ltd. cease production with the loss of forty five jobs.
- 1983** Tullamore's Church of the Assumption destroyed by fire on Monday morning, 31 October.
- 1983** Fifth and final phase of 58 houses bringing the total to 282 at Ardan View is formally opened by Dick Spring, minister for the environment.
- 1984** Plans for new Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary published and receive widespread approval.

- 1984** Brian Cowen elected as a TD to succeed his deceased father.
- 1984** 3,000 unemployed in Offaly or 15 percent of the workforce.
- 1984** Bolger Arms hotel closes with sale to First National by Gerry Conway.
- 1984** Shopping-centre opened at Church Road at a cost of £2m with Tesco as anchor tenant and eight shops.
- 1985** Irish Mist Company acquired by Cantrell & Cochrane.
- 1985** A £1.25 m. extension to Sacred Heart school opened.
- 1985** The former Salts factory purchased by John Flanagan for small business units. New owners for the former Lewicki factory in Spollanstown; the Mizzoni family buy the former Grand Central cinema.
- 1985** Acres Hall purchased by Tullamore Urban Council for offices.
- 1985** Balloon fire of 1785 exhibition and lectures to mark the two-hundredth anniversary.
- 1985** No more babies to be born at Tullamore hospital - closure of maternity unit.
- 1985** The former Scally's shop of 1912 is converted to a shopping mall by Gleasons following a fire.
- 1986** The former Longworth house in O'Connor Square of 1750s is demolished for new TSB bank.
- 1986** The rebuilt Church of the Assumption Tullamore is completed at a cost of £3m.
- 1986** The Fr Niall Molloy inquest opens in Tullamore and continues for a week with a jury verdict of death consistent with serious injuries to the head.

1986

- 1986** Phoenix Arms sold by Gerry Harrington to Tom Clooney.
- 1986** Northern Bank to close at former town hall in O'Connor Square.
- 1987** Trustee Savings Bank opened in new building at O'Connor Square.
- 1987** Tullamore's Mallet Tavern passes out of the Molloy family after many generations.
- 1987** Major extension for Sherwood Medical at a cost of £4m and now employs 190.
- 1987** A county club is proposed for the former Williams house at Dew Park.
- 1987** National Ploughing Championships held in Tullamore – third time in Offaly.
- 1987** More trains from Tullamore to Dublin and an 'Early Bird' service to come.
- 1988** Mental health service facility opened in former Irish Mist offices at Bury Quay. Thirty jobs go with last bottle of Irish Mist off the pipeline in November 1985. The product was first developed in Tullamore in 1948.
- 1988** Work begins on sixteen-house Glenfircal scheme at New Road – designed by Fergal MacCabe.
- 1988** Proposal to convert Charleville Castle to a hotel.
- 1988** Moves to set up a taxi rank in Tullamore and traffic lights erected.

1989 One hundred and sixteen jobs go in closure of The Midland Butter and Bacon Co., Church Road, Tullamore. The factory was established in the mid 1940s following on from the creamery of 1928 and was sold in 1976 by the Dairy Disposal Board to the Kurji family, Newbridge.

1989 End of an era as Morris' Drapery, Church St., sold to P.J. Mangan. The upper part of the building was formerly the Lawrence's Guesthouse. In the same year McGlinchey's Bakery was sold to Cathal O'Donoghue.

1989 Sale of B. Daly Ireland Ltd., with loss of 16 jobs - last link with the wine and spirit business of D.E. Williams Ltd which went back to the 1890s. The business was at the time located in the former soft drinks plant at Spollanstown.

1989 21,000 sq. ft extension to Tullamore Shopping Centre, Church Road, completed. The centre was first opened in 1984. The improvement included a fifty percent extension for Dunnes Stores and nine new retail units. Now a total of seventeen units.

1989 Three large pot stills moved from Tullamore old distillery to Locke's of Kilbeggan.

1989 Kevin and Marjorie Carragher take over the Brewery Tap, O'Connor Sq., Tullamore.

1989 Tullamore Meats Co-op goes into production at Spollanstown with ten workers from former bacon factory. The company achieves a turnover of €2.5m by 2005.

1990 Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society agree to purchase a new centre in former D.E. Williams wine warehouse at Bury Quay. The research facility was opened in May 1993 at a cost of £200,000.

1990 Sennheiser Ireland opens in Tullamore at Spollanstown with a £6.2m investment and later employs 200 people in the manufacture and assembly of headphones and loudspeakers.

1991 St. Catherine's rectory, Church Rd., sold by RCB for £110,000.

1991 Last mass in Rahan Jesuit church. The house is bought by Liam Grennan for a nursing home. The nursing home closed in 2005.

1991 Cooley Distilleries buy the former soft drinks plant of D.E. Williams at Charleville Road for £0.5m.

1991 Revival of Tullamore and County Agricultural show held in Charleville on eighty-five acre site. First agricultural show in Tullamore since 1938 when it was held at Ardan - first Tullamore show in 1843.

1991 £200,000 development at old bacon factory, Tullamore carried out by Johnny and Jimmy Feery of Tullamore Hardware.

1991 Carroll Meats Ltd wins IDA/Wang Company of the Month award. Set up as a one-van operation in 1978. By 1992 the company employed fifty people.

1991 One of the last of the old style butcher shops, Paddy MacMahon's, closes in Harbour Street. First opened by McMahon family in 1924.

1991 Offaly's population down by 2.3% or 1,387 on 1986 figures; 58,448 compared with 59,835 in 1986.

1992 Egan-Tarleton building at Market Square sold by Williams Waller Ltd. to P.J Mangan and Gerry Walsh.

1992

- 1992** New fire station at Kilcruttin opened at a cost of £1.5m. and nearby a new scout den.
- 1992** The Hoey & Denning premises at Bridge Street dating back to 1756 is demolished as part of site for new Bridge Centre. The town council moves to its new home at Acres Hall. The Alfie Lambe memorial home at Ardan is opened. Restaurant opens at Charleville Castle.
- 1992** Announcement that as part of government decentralisation 190 staff of department of education to be transferred to Tullamore before end of 1994. Work on the new government offices intended to accommodate 280 people began in 1993 with the two-storey building to have a total floor area of 59,000 sq ft. and be ready in January 1995 at a cost of £3m.
- 1992** Mr Pat Gallagher elected a TD for Laois Offaly representing the Labour Party.
- 1992** Proposed sale of Williams Group with turnover of £31m and 200 employed to Avonmore fails. The company was sold in 1997 to Greencore.
- 1993** 4,641 people now unemployed in Offaly.
- 1993** Beck House in Kilbride Street opened in tax designated area. The building is called after a Christopher Beck whose house may have been in the vicinity and was destroyed in the balloon fire of 1785.
- 1993** Gaelscoil, Scoil an Eiscir Riada Tulach Mhór, opens its doors to almost thirty students at 5 Cormac Street on 1 September 1993. A new school was built at Cloncollog in 2004.

- 1993** Lann Elo ten-house scheme opened at back of Clontarf Road, extended with new scheme of fifteen units in 2010. The development was sponsored by Tullamore Housing Association, founded 31 May 1988.
- 1994** Official opening of Isotron plant - eighty people employed at 40,000 sq ft. factory. Second urban renewal scheme launched in Tullamore includes Market Square. Fifty four 'Respond' houses at Clonminch nearing completion.
- 1994** First recital on new organ at Tullamore Catholic church - 18 tonne, 3,952 pipes, largest organ in Ireland.
- 1995** Apartment scheme announced for old library, Church Street, (former county infirmary erected in 1788).
- 1995** Gay Byrne opens £12m Tullamore Shopping Centre - 120,000 sq. ft. including six-screen cinema. The centre was promoted by Christopher Maye of Bridge House, Tullamore and Greville Arms, Mullingar.
- 1995** Opening of new Texas department store with 45,000 sq. ft. Existing staff of thirty seven to be expanded to 100. Costs £2m. and promoted by Thomas McNamara, closed in 2007 and sold for development.
- 1995** Ivan Yates T.D., minister for agriculture opens new ACC bank branch in Tullamore. The architect was David Young and the builder John Flanagan & Sons (Tullamore) Ltd. The building was for sale in 2010.
- 1995** Government offices opened at Clonminch in December 1995 at a cost of £3m and will cater for 250. Opened by Niamh Breathnach minister for education; Horan, Keogan, Ryan - architects; mainly for Department of Education as part of decentralisation programme.
- 1996** £1.5 million housing development in Clonminch by John Flanagan & Sons. Construction commences on 24 new 2, 3, and 4 bedroom houses known as Clonminch Wood.
- 1996** Treacey's butcher O'Connor Square demolished to make way for new Tullamore post office as part of Bridge Centre. Heavey house at Harbour Street demolished to provide better access to Catholic church.
- 1996** Charlie Landsborough opens Midlands Radio 3 (now Midlands Radio 103) new studios at The Mall, Columcille Street, Tullamore, managing director Joe Yerkes. Radio 3 serves Offaly Laois and Westmeath with a listenership of sixty thousand people in the midlands.
- 1996** Unemployment in Tullamore currently at 2,000.
- 1996** Tullamore girl Fiona Pender disappears and is presumed murdered.
- 1996** New post office opened at Bridge Street and Bridge Centre.
- 1997** Tullamore Court Hotel opens to great acclaim in November - a project of the Flanagan Group. It was officially opened by the then taoiseach ,Bertie Ahern ,in January 1998. It was built at a cost of £8m - 72-bedroom with 6,000 sq ft conference centre to seat 800 and 20 metre swimming pool and leisure centre.
- 1997** *Irish Times* appoints midlands correspondent, Sean McConnell and to be resident in Tullamore.
- 1998** Gorry's newsagents in Harbour Street closed after 102 years in business. Death of Francie Gorry, January 1998; McFadden drapery closes in Patrick Street - first opened in 1912.

1998

- 1998 30,000 people in Tullamore welcome home the Offaly hurlers who defeated Kilkenny in the All Ireland 2-16 to 1-13.
- 1998 Offaly County Council purchase Elmfield, Charleville Road, Tullamore and three acres for £1m as site for new civic offices.
- 1998 The Tullamore Foresters - 'Con of the Hundred Battles' Branch celebrate eventful 100 Years.
- 1998 Four hundred jobs announced for Tullamore – 300 at LMSBeach at former Atlantic Mills/Burlington site and 100 by Continental AG.
- 1998 Market Square improvements with move of ESB to Srah and work started on the Granary apartments.
- 1999 Start up funding of £200,000 announced for £10m Tullamore relief road. In 2000 a rare species of snail emerged and threatened to hold up the proposed £28 million pounds Tullamore by-pass.
- 1999 £20m development on the Williams Waller site to be undertaken at Water Lane.
- 1999 Exhibition and Conference centre opened at Bury Quay, Tullamore by Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society at a cost of £100,000.
- 1999 Electricity Company shed in Market Square removed. Last link with the first electricity company of 1921 and the gas company of 1860.

- 1999 Official opening of £7m seventy-bed Bridge House Hotel by Christopher Maye. Thirty bedrooms damaged in a fire in December 2001, but the Joe Dolan show went on as planned.
- 1999 Tullamore Court Hotel (Flanagan Group) purchases Phoenix Arms hotel for an undisclosed sum for redevelopment for a bar, restaurant and discotheque.
- 1999 Zannini, an Italian package printing company, to open in Tullamore.
- 1999 First lay principal appointed to Christian Brothers School and soon after the Brothers leave Tullamore after almost 140 years.
- 1999 Aldi opens at Cloncollog. A new store nearer to the Geashill road was opened by the same German company in November 2009.
- 2000 'Cowan fast-tracks £70m [later €150m] Tullamore Hospital project.'
- 2000 Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre opened at a cost of £1.2m with the bonded warehouse donated by Cantrell & Cochrane, the then owner of Irish Mist and Tullamore Dew.
- 2000 Moorhill House hotel sold by Oliver and Jean Toner to the Duffy family. The hotel was sold again in 2005 to Gerard and Naomi Killaly.
- 2000 The 26th lock-house on the Grand Canal (Boland's) is restored by Martin and Mary O'Rourke.
- 2000 The former Bury Arms of 1786, now the Phoenix Arms, is demolished in November.

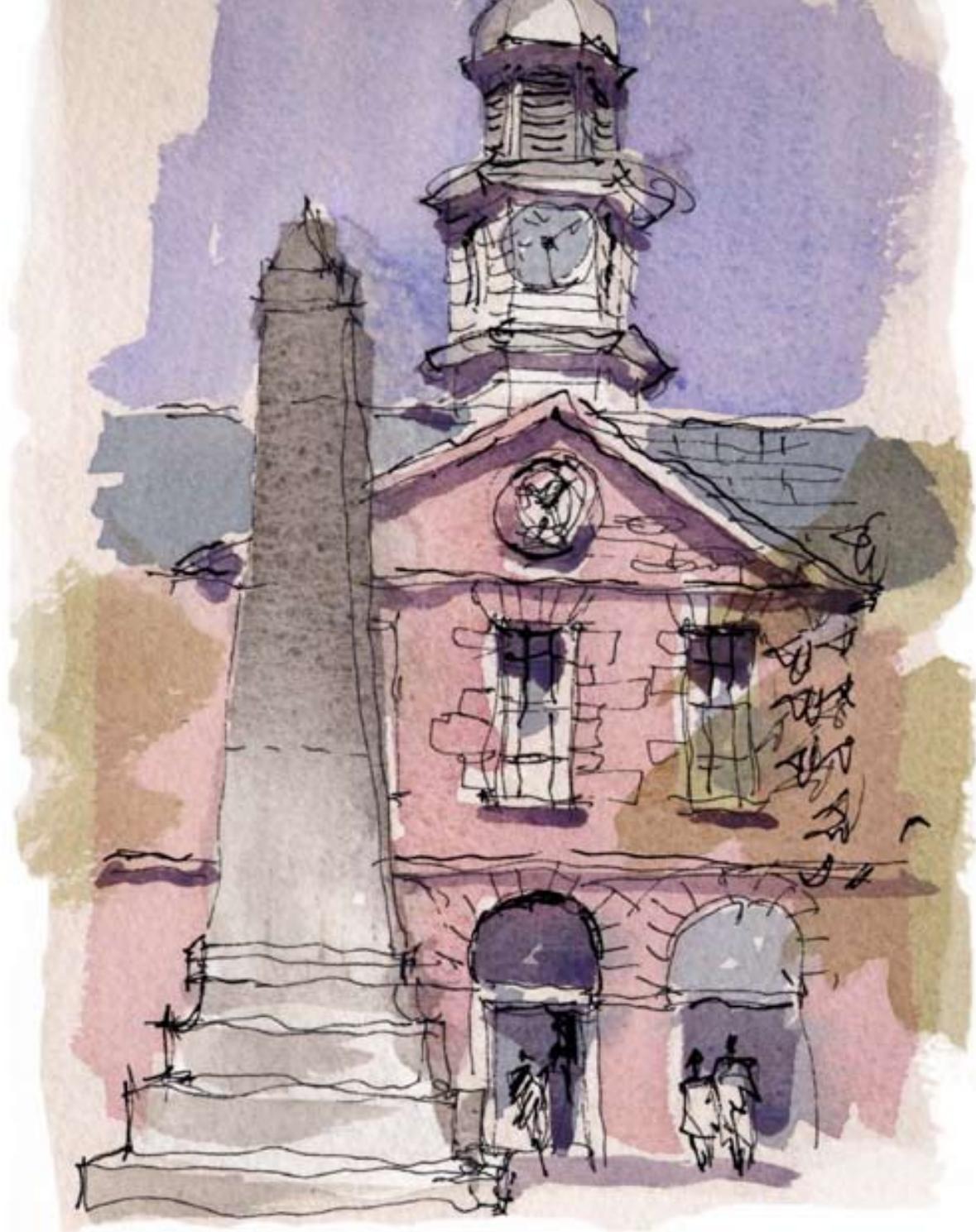
- 2000 The proposed hotel and housing development at Durrow Abbey is 'temporarily shelved'.
- 2001 Tullamore to be connected to the natural gas network.
- 2001 Elmfield House demolished and works commence on the new council offices at Charleville Road.
- 2001 The average price of a house in Offaly almost doubled in the period 1995 to 2000 according to the *Tullamore Tribune*.
- 2001 First entrant to the new 'Main Street' project on the former Williams Waller site is Lidl. Further shops opened in late 2002.
- 2001 # 1 Church Street on the site of the old Phoenix Arms is opened with a celebrity art auction.
- 2002 County Council Aras on Chontae civic offices opened at Charleville Road.
- 2002 Tullamore-born barrister Alan Mahon S.C., appointed to the Tribunal of Inquiry into certain planning matters and payments to politicians etc. and appointed a judge of the Circuit Court.
- 2002 New garda station officially opened on 22 March. The old garda station was demolished in March 2000.
- 2002 Planning permission issued for the new Midland Regional Hospital at Tullamore.
- 2002 'Gateway' status announced for Tullamore, Mullingar and Athlone.
- 2002 Plan announced for high rise buildings at Tullamore harbour and backed by the town council in 2003 following on a study by Fergal MacCabe, architect. The plan was approved in 2004.

2002

- 2002 Tullamore Scout Troop celebrates twenty-five years.
- 2002 Flextronics closes with the loss of 370 jobs.
- 2004 *Tullamore Tribune* and other newspapers bought by John Taylor's Alpha Group.
- 2004 New gaelscoil Eiscir Riada opened at Cloncollog in May.
- 2004 Newly formed Health Board Executive to be located in Tullamore and occupies the first new office block in Central Business Park, Clonminch.
- 2004 Tesco moves from centre of town to green-field site beside new Tullamore Retail Park
- 2004 The Galvin for Men shop celebrates fifty years in business.
- 2005 Day's Hotel (later the Central Hotel) opens at Main Street, Tullamore
- 2005 Work commences on the new children's playground at Lloyd Town Park, Kilcruttin.
- 2005 Plans to widen the bridge at Spollanstown rejected by the council at the urgings of local residents.
- 2005 Interpretative centre announced for Durrow High Cross and grounds. Some €4m to €5m is the overall spend inclusive of acquisition of the house and some 70 acres.
- 2006 Charleville National School children move to a new school at Church Avenue. The old school at Church Street was the oldest still in use dating back to 1811.
- 2006 O'Connor Park stand for Offaly County Board of the GAA completed at a cost of €10.5m by 2010.
- 2006 Tullamore Town Council erects parking meters throughout the streets of the town of Tullamore and free car-park completed at Whitehall on Daingean Road.
- 2006 Carroll Cuisine opens at Ballyduff in part of the former Burlington factory erected in 1977 and substantially refurbished. Work on the new Burlington Business Park is now well advanced with An Post and Mangan's, among others, moving from town centre.
- 2007 Work on the €15m renovations to Tullamore courthouse began in March 2005 and the building was formally opened in April 2007. The work was under the supervision of Michael Grace of Newenham Mulligan Architects.
- 2007 The department of finance building at Central Business Park, Clonminch is opened in July 2007 as part of the decentralisation programme at a cost of €7m.
- 2007 The All Ireland Fleadh Cheoil is held in Tullamore, the first of three over the years 2007-09 and attracting large crowds of some 100,000 perhaps over the week of the event each year.
- 2008 Lloyd Town Park opened at Cormac Street by minister for finance, Brian Cowen, after extensive renovations.
- 2008 Brian Cowen, T.D. representing Laois-Offaly since 1984, elected Taoiseach on 7 May and receives a warm welcome in Tullamore and in County Offaly.
- 2008 New public indoor swimming pool completed for Tullamore; Soccer Club move to new grounds at Axis Business Park; Midlands 103 radio moves to new premises at Axis Business Park, Ballyduff.
- 2008 Menary's fashion and home ware store opens in November in the former #1 bar, discotheque and restaurant in Church Street.
- 2009 Shane Lowry wins the Irish Open golf tournament.
- 2009 Expert electrical goods shop move from the former Kilroy's store in High Street to Cloncollog. The Kilroy electrical and furniture business had been in High Street for 100 years.
- 2009 The €116m by-pass is opened by An Taoiseach Brian Cowen.
- 2009 New town council scheme of 48 houses and apartments officially opened at Puttaghan.
- 2010 Covidien (formerly Tyco/Sherwood) announce 200 redundancies; Lann Elo extended by 15 to 25 housing units.
- 2010 Over 4,000 people are out of work in the Tullamore area (inclusive of Clara) and over 9,000 in County Offaly.
- 2010 Work commences on the new Colaiste Choilm/St Columba's College secondary school, now at Bachelors Walk.
- 2010 Tullamore Town Council celebrates its 150th anniversary on 3 September.



Lloyds Field





SOME ARCHITECTS WHOSE WORK MAY BE SEEN IN TULLAMORE (not exhaustive)⁵⁰

Ahrends Burton and Koralek (ABK Architects)

County Offices of Offaly County Council

Founded by Paul Koralek who worked with Marcel Breuer in New York. The firm is based in the UK, but is best known in Ireland for the Berkley Library, Arts Block and the Dental Hospital, Trinity College. The county offices were completed in 2002 and ABK Architects made the shortlist for the Áras an Chontae building in the competition for the prestigious gold medal of the RIAI and for which the jury described the county buildings as 'a pathfinder in the generation of new civic offices in Ireland . . . an elegant assembly with considerable civic presence, which has weathered beautifully'.

Edward Boyd Barrett (1904-c 1976)

The AIB building in Columcille Street (1949) for Munster and Leinster Bank; additions to Tullamore Vocational School, now the county library in O'Connor Square about 1950; the Sacred Heart School (1952) and opened in 1954; the Sisters of Mercy, Scoil Mhuire school, at Kilcruttin consisting of ten classrooms (1957); St Brigid's Boys school, Kilcruttin (1960-61).

James Beckett (1841 ca)

The Methodist church in Church Street (1889) was completed to a design of James Beckett, a Dublin-based architect.

Ralph Henry Byrne (1877-1946)

Hibernian Bank, now Bank of Ireland – the three-storey part in Portland stone about 1908; Brookfield House of 1927-8 and built by Duffy Brothers; Durrow Abbey at a cost of £39,000 for Otway Graham Toler and executed by Duffy Brothers; St Philomena's school of 1930-31.

Denis Duggan

1 now Menary's shop in Church Street and Sheena, Charleville Road. He worked with Burke Kennedy Doyle architects on Tullamore Court Hotel (1997) and was responsible for the design of the Tullamore Court Hotel extension in 2005-7.

Thomas Stanislaus Duggan (1892-1961)

Engineer to the county council and probably designed O'Molloy Street, Callary Terrace and perhaps Park Avenue.

Eugene Garvey (d. 1992)

Acres Hall/Town Hall with John O'Connell

Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society

Patrick's Court and renovations to the Michael Scott designed Williams shop in Patrick Street.

Numerous other commissions

Frank Gibney (1905 - 78)

Clontarf Road, Tullamore

Frank Gibney was one of the pioneers of town planning in Ireland and a prolific housing architect whose work is almost ubiquitous in Irish towns of the 1940s and 1950s and in Tullamore can be seen in the Clontarf Road housing scheme of 1947-49. Gibney generally worked in an Arts and Crafts style of high pitched roofs and strong central feature elements. He prepared the first Development

Plan for Tullamore in 1950 setting out the line of the by-pass which was delivered sixty years later. He is best known for his post-war Bord Na Móna housing schemes at Kilcormac and Bracknagh in Offaly, Rochfortbridge in Westmeath, Lanesborough in Longford, Cloontuskert in Roscommon and Coill Dubh, Kildare. These still stand as among the best examples of housing in Ireland in the latter part of the twentieth century. His own house in Howth, County Dublin is now a Protected Structure.

William Hague (1836-99)

Born in Cavan, Hague was a prolific designer of Catholic churches. After his death in 1899 his widow formed a partnership with his managing assistant, Thomas Francis McNamara. Besides Tullamore church he was also responsible for that at Ferbane (1893-1902) and that at Banagher (1899).

Noel Heavey, Athlone

His work includes the Permanent TSB building in O'Connor Square, the banking hall in AIB, Columcille Street and the bottling plant at the railway station for D.E. Williams Limited

F. J. Hicks (1870-1965)

Born in Banbury, he died in Bristol

Emmett Terrace designed about 1900;

Malt stores in Tullamore probably in Tanyard Lane in 1902-3; probably Convent View Terrace of 1907 and 'The Bungalow', Charleville Road. Both are in the Hicks English style. Hicks also designed the Iveagh Markets, Rathmines Library and Technical College.

Francis Johnston (1760/61-1829)

Charleville Forest, St Catherine's church at Hop Hill and the design of the terrace in Church Street. Johnston was the foremost architect of the period working in Ireland and responsible for many prominent Dublin buildings including the General Post Office, St George's Church and the conversion of the Parliament House to the Bank of Ireland. Charleville Forest is probably the finest building in the Gothic style in Ireland.

John B. Keane (died 1859)

Offaly County Courthouse

Built in 1835, burned in 1922 and remodelled in 1925 and 2007, the courthouse is the finest public building in Tullamore. Keane's other work includes Barmeth Castle in Dunleer, Waterford courthouse and St Mary's Church in Clonmel, Longford Cathedral, Queen's College, Galway.

Michael Grace of Newenham Mulligan Architects was responsible for the renovation works and extension of 2005-07 to the courthouse.

Burke Kennedy Doyle (BKD Architects)

Irish Mist Liqueur offices (now HSE) at Bury Quay c. 1967

Tullamore Court Hotel in 1997.

Harold Graham Leask and G.W. Crowe

Tullamore Post Office for office of public works (1909). This is the original building in O'Connor Square with the neo-Georgian door-case. Leask was later much better known for his published works on Irish castles and churches.

John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843)

Charleville Forest avenues and Bachelors Walk.

Loudon was one of the first ever city planners to promote the concepts of urban green spaces and greenbelts. He is also regarded as the father of modern landscape architecture and was a prolific horticultural and landscape design writer publishing the *Encyclopedia of Gardening* in 1822. He advised the earl of Charleville on the general laying out of the parkland and gardens of Charleville Forest and spent two or three days there in 1811.

T. F. McNamara (1867-1947)

Scally's (now Gleeson's Tullamore Shopping Mall), Bridge House façade at Bridge Street and Foresters' cinema, reconstruction of Tullamore courthouse in 1927. Built in 1910 and 1912 respectively, these magnificent emporia, Egan's and Scally's, represent the work of one of the most successful public and commercial architects of his time whose output stretches from St Davnet's Hospital in Monaghan in 1900 to several cinemas in Dublin in the 1920s. His association with Tullamore probably dates from his role as a supervising architect under William Hague for the construction of the Church of the Assumption which was completed in 1906 and was part of the same team for Kinnegad Catholic church.

McNamara was responsible for the rebuilding and modification works to the courthouse of 1925-27. His works in Tullamore are substantial and include in addition to the above plans for a proposed town hall and technical schools in 1911; the first girls second-level school on Convent Road in 1909-11; St Columba's Classical School now an apartment block at Convent Road; the Foresters Hall at Market Square (now Fergies bar); probably the Kilbride Street houses for the council of 1927-28; 21 single-

storey houses in Healy Street and seven two-storey in Dillon Street, 1930-31; the rebuilding of the English shop at Columcille Street in 1931 (this was later the ESB shop and is now closed).

Murray O Laoire Associates Brian O'Connell Associates

Midland Regional Hospital (2007)

Winner of the 2009 RIAI Irish Architecture Awards for best health building. This building was designed by MOLA who in the last thirty years have dominated the Irish architectural landscape with award winning buildings, such as Thomond Park Stadium in Limerick, Cork School of Music, Athlone Town Centre, together with the Masterplans for the re-development of the Limerick waterside frontage and the Dublin Docklands.

Murray and Associates, landscape architects

Lloyd Town Park

This firm was responsible for the design of the Lloyd Town Park, opened in 2008, and which has attracted considerable attention and acclaim. The firm also completed parks in Carlow and Roscommon.

Michael Scott (1905-89)

Offaly County Hospital

Considered the most important architect of the twentieth century in Ireland, particularly for his masterwork - the Busaras in Store Street, Dublin. Michael Scott, together with **Norman Good**, designed the Offaly County Hospital (1934-37) which, with its horizontal lines and reliance on local materials, was influenced by Dutch modernist architecture. His association with the Williams family resulted in their new shop in Patrick Street, which first used Clonaslee stone for its façade, together with its charming 'Murals' Bar (now demolished). Scott was also responsible for 'Shepherd's Wood' (1938) at Screggan and an attractive bungalow faced in Clonaslee stone on the eastern side of the Charleville Road. He contributed to the remodelling of the Jesuit Chapel at Tullabeg, near Tullamore (now broken up with the Michael Scott altar in Mucklagh church) and with Norman Good he designed the vocational school at Clonaslee.

Sandham Symes (1807-94)

Hoey & Denning Offices (formerly Bank of Ireland); a similar work in some of the details is his Banagher branch of the Bank of Ireland (1874). Many of the principal banks of the latter part of the nineteenth century (Kilkenny, Shipquay Street, Derry and Clones) were designed by Symes who also carried out work at Mount Jerome Cemetery and Ayesha Castle, Killiney.

SOME ARCHITECTS ASSOCIATED WITH TULLAMORE

Yvonne Farrell

Born in Tullamore (where her father was a solicitor and later a district court judge) she founded Grafton Architects with Shelley McNamara and others in 1977. The work of her practice has won numerous awards both nationally and internationally including the World Building of the Year Award for the Bocconi University Project in Milan in 2008. Yvonne Farrell was elected to Aosdana in April 2010.⁵¹

Charles Blaney Cluskey

Born in Ireland in 1808 he was trained in New York before moving to Savannah in 1829. He completed a number of significant buildings in Georgia including the governor's mansion and died there in 1871. Cluskey may have been the son of the Arthur Cluskey who is described as builder or architect and was involved in property development in Harbour Street between 1805 and 1820, but as yet there is no certainty about this. This Arthur Cluskey was granted a lease of three sites in Harbour Street in 1805, presumably with the intention of building and selling on to others.

Benjamin Woodward (1816-61)

Born in Cormac Street, Tullamore, Woodward, together with Thomas Deane designed some of the most important buildings of the early part of the nineteenth century, including Trinity College Museum Building (1854-8), Oxford University Museum of Natural History (1854-60) and the Kildare Street Club (1858-61). Their work was characterised by naturalistic decoration with foliage and animals carved into capitals and plinths around windows and doors. Woodward was a leading exponent of the Gothic Revival and his Museum Building in Oxford is in the Venetian Gothic style. Woodward's father was an officer in the Meath Militia and Benjamin was born on 16 November 1816 in what is now the Offaly County Enterprise Board house in Cormac Street. The family left Tullamore in 1818.

TULLAMORE: SOME FURTHER READING

The web site of the Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society, www.offalyhistory.com and the Offaly County Council website contain much that is of use and should be consulted under reading resources/Tullamore where the material is free to access. For printed material see, among others:

Peter Burke, 'The opening of the railway line to Tullamore – 1854' in *Offaly Heritage*, ii (2004), pp 130-36.

-----, '“On to Athlone”: the Extension of the railway from Tullamore, 1857-59' in *Offaly Heritage*, iv (2006), pp 202-08.

Michael Byrne, *A walk through Tullamore* (Tullamore, 1980).

-----, *Tullamore Catholic parish* (Tullamore, 1987).

-----, *Tullamore town album* (Tullamore, 1988).

-----, *The people of Tullamore in the twentieth century* (Tullamore, 2000).

-----, 'The development of Tullamore, 1785 to 1841' in William Nolan and Tim O'Neill (eds), *Offaly history and society* (Dublin 1998), pp 568-626.

----- - 'Economic development in Offaly's towns and villages in the eighteenth century and the Vallancey survey of 1771' in *Offaly Heritage*, iv (2006), pp 95-166.

----- '“The battle of Tullamore” in 1806: the King's German Legion incident and the growth of a legend' in *Offaly Heritage*, v (2007-8), pp 51-69.

Junior Chamber, *Know your Tullamore* (Tullamore, 1994). See also the three earlier editions and that of 2003.

T.W. Freeman, 'Tullamore and its environs, County Offaly', in *Irish Geography*, i, no. 5 (1948), pp 133-50.

William Garner, *Tullamore architectural heritage* (Dublin, 1980)

Mark Girouard, 'Charleville Forest Co. Offaly, Eire' in *Country Life* (27 September 1962), pp 710-14

Michael Goodbody, 'The Goodbodys of Tullamore: a story of tea, tobacco and trade' in *Offaly Heritage*, v (2007-8), pp 173-85.

Fergal MacCabe, 'The efficacy of statutory planning in the development of Tullamore, 1987-2004' in *Offaly Heritage*, iv (2006), pp 238-54.

William Moran, *The early history of Tullamore* (Athlone, 1962, reprinted by the Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society).

Tim O'Neill, 'A note on the Tullamore town improvements, 1860' in *Offaly Heritage*, iv (2006), pp 209-19.

Tullamore official guide, (Sligo, 1993).

Histories have been published of the musical society, the soccer club, rugby club and GAA club. The reader should also consult the first five volumes of *Offaly Heritage*, the journal of the Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society.

For further material the reader can consult www.irishhistoryonline.ie and the databases of the National Library.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Draft development plan for Tullamore and environs [September 2003], pp11-12 and see *Tullamore: the future of Offaly's gateway town* (Tullamore, 2008), p.12.
- 2 A. A. Horner, Stability and change in the towns and villages west of Dublin, Ph. D. Thesis, University of Dublin (1974), p. 30
- 3 See J.H. Andrews, Mullingar, in *Irish historic towns atlas*, vol. i (Dublin, 1996), p. 4 and in the same volume, Harman Murtagh, Athlone, p. 2.
- 4 *Clements MSS*, viii, H. M. C., 1913
- 5 It was thanks to the late Seamus Cahir that this important memorial was donated to the heritage centre.
- 6 Stoney, *Some old annals of the Stoney family* (London, 1879), p. 16.
- 7 McDonald (ed.) *Wesley Journals* (Everyman, 1908).
- 8 Coote, *King's County survey*, 1801.
- 9 This name was adopted in 1905 and is recorded on the Ordnance Map of 1911-12 as Offally and not the 1920 Offaly.
- 10 See Clare Dunne, in *Midlands Arts and Culture Magazine*, no. 11 (Winter, 2009), p. 19.
- 11 See the interview with Harron by John Cunningham in *Irish Arts* (September - November 2009), pp 70-73.
- 12 A flavour of the prices of local properties prevailing in 2007 and the spiel of auctioneers can be seen in Michael Parsons, a review of Tullamore in *Irish Times* 22 March 2007.
- 13 From T.W. Freeman, 'Tullamore and its environs, Co. Offaly' in *Irish Geography*, vol. i (1944-8), p. 144.
- 14 Freeman, 'Tullamore' in *Irish Geography*, p. 146.
- 15 Almost 100 years later in May 1937 the triennial figure was 400.
- 16 Terence de Vere White, 'The freemasons' in *Secret societies in Ireland* (Dublin, 1973), p. 54.
- 17 The club's website, accessed on 4 September 2010, describes very well the simplicity of club formation in the 1950s and the resolution that followed to make it a great club. 'A meeting of nine young men held under a street light in the main street in Tullamore resulted in the founding of Tullamore Harriers. The nine young men then adjourned to Clarke's Barber Shop where the first committee was elected. But even the most far-sighted of the nine men who came together on that night of 13th November, 1953 as founder members of the club could scarcely be credited with foresight sufficient to envisage the growth that was to ensue over the following four decades. The first Chairman was John Dowling who later went on to become President of the G.A.A. The other founding members were Paddy Larkin (RIP), Noel Gowran, Brendan O' Shea, Mick McDermott (RIP), Brendan McDermott, Noel Houlihan (RIP), Andrew Lowbridge, Billy Dowling and Larry Fox.'
- 18 See *Irish Times*, 23 December 1924 where it is stated that 'The Most. Rev. Dr. Fogarty, in the course of his letter to the library committee of the county council, said:- "I will have nothing to do with a Carnegie Library. I have seen some of these institutions. They are storehouses of wretched novels and semi-pagan stuff of the same cultural level as penny-illustrated papers from England, which, I am sorry to say, our people buy and smoke like opium, with the same narcotic effect on their brains and better life. We have enough of that poison without taxing the people to supply more of it. What advantage are the ratepayers, already overburdened, from the mountains of Kinnitty to the bogs of Edenderry, going to get from supplying out of their slender purse lounges and novels to the cigarette-smoking, idle, mooning youths of Tullamore and like towns; for no one else is going to resort to your fanciful treasure houses?'
- 19 Fergal MacCabe, 'The Town Planning of Tullamore - the Past Fifty Years and the Next Fifty Years', a paper delivered to the Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society on 15 February 2001.
- 20 Garner, *Tullamore*, p. 16
- 21 Anderson was profiled by Rose Doyle in *Irish Times*, 25 January 2006.
- 22 No copies of this pamphlet are known to have survived. Fisher goes on to quote a few extracts for his unpublished memoir.
- 23 *Irish Times*, 27 March and 8 April 2009.
- 24 *Irish Times*, 17 April 2003.
- 25 E. Charles Nelson and Wendy F. Walsh, *Trees of Ireland* (Dublin, 1993), p. 125.
- 26 Thomas Pakenham, *Meetings with remarkable trees* (London, 1996) and *The Times*, 26 October 1996.
- 27 [John Wright], *King's County directory* (Birr, 1890), p. 335.
- 28 Bond, *Marlay letters*, p. 113.
- 29 Charles William Bury's mother, Catherine Sadleir of Sopwell Hall near Nenagh, married Bury on 25 August 1761. She married secondly, 6 January 1766, Henry Prittie of Kilboy, 1st Baron Dunalley (died 3 January 1801), and she died 26 February 1821. She was the second daughter and co-heiress of Colonel Francis Sadleir of Sopwell Hall, County Tipperary (Burke, *Irish Family Records* (1976) p. 191.
- 30 See Whyte's, *Sale catalogue* for March 2010.
- 31 Bond, *The Marlay letters*, p.130.

- 32 For details of the dinner chaired by Dr Michael Moorhead and at which the parish priest, Dr McAlroy attended see *King's County Chronicle*, 5 June 1873.
- 33 Bond, *Marlay letters*, p. 116.
- 34 No major auction has given rise to more rumours of 'sleepers' and lost treasure than Charleville Forest, a five-day sale, which took place in November 1948. Ostensibly the oil paintings, books, armour etc. advertised by the auctioneers, Allen & Townsend, were the collections of the Earls of Charleville, a title which had been extinct for seventy five years. The heir and vendor was Colonel Howard-Bury of Mount Everest fame, a man of taste and a collector but evidently with no sentimental attachment to Charleville Forest or the family collections. A set of five views of the demesne by William Ashford were knocked down for £18. They remained in the hands of the Bond Street picture dealers, J. Leger & Son for many years; a pair was eventually sold to an Irish collector and in 1973 one was bought from another London dealer by the National Gallery of Ireland. In 1991 two of the set reappeared on the market and were sold at Christie's for £120,000 and £100,000 respectively. Colonel Howard Bury's presence at the auction aroused some interest even before he entered into a heated dispute with the auctioneer over an eleven-piece suite of French furniture which was catalogued in five lots, the fauteuils in pairs of 'easy chairs' and the canapés separately. Insisting that the suite be put up as one, he stood upon a chair and bid angrily for his own property. The Irish dealers, headed by the formidable Henry Naylor, took no part and the suite was knocked down for £45 (possibly bought in). Thereafter bidding was tentative, leaving Naylor entirely in control, standing imperiously at the head of the grand staircase and buying all the armour and many of the pictures. Nobody paid much attention to lot 402, 'a pair of enamelled and gilt Gothic back chairs with loose seats' bought by him for £3.10s. It is not clear at all as to when these chairs from Strawberry Hill were recognised, but at the time they were sold by the late Ronald McDonnell, Henry Naylor's nephew, he had in his possession the catalogue of the Strawberry Hill sale of 1842 where they had been purchased by the 2nd Earl of Charleville. See Cynthia O'Connor, 'The dispersal of the country house collections of Ireland' in *Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, vol. xxxv (1992-1993), pp 42-3. The contents of this 1948 auction would suggest than an advertised auction of contents in 1850 did not proceed.
- 35 These matters can be followed in the local press from the late 1970s and in the *Irish Reports* – for example *I.R.* 1993, pp 123-49 and *Irish Times*, 7 September 1999. Credit is due to Mr McMullen for his efforts to save the house and his occupancy of it at a critical time some two years after serious damage to the stained glass windows to the front of the house.
- 36 *Country Life*, 27 September 1962. On the occasion for the photographs the rooms were specially furnished from Lt. Col. Bury's home at Belvedere.
- 37 Thomas Lacy, *Sights and Scenes in our Fatherland* (London, 1863), pp 156-69.
- 38 [John Wright], *King's County directory* (Birr, 1890), pp 336.
- 39 *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1807, p. 486.
- 40 [John Wright], *King's County directory* (Birr, 1890), p. 336.
- 41 In the old Lynally monastery cemetery is a tombstone to the German musicians of Charles William Bury with the inscription, see *Lynally Church and Graveyard* (1994), p. 55.
- Here Lyeth the bodies
of Jacob & George Fist^c
Natives of Germany &
Musicians to Ch^s Wil^m
Bury Esq^r ag^d 30 & 31
Yrs Dep^{td} Augst 20th & 30th
May the Lord have
Mercy on their souls
1786
- 42 [John Wright], *King's County directory* (Birr, 1890), p. 336.
- 43 'The Rev. Peter Turpin, matric. T.C.D. 2 Feb. 1761, B.A. Vern. 1765, M.A. Aest. 1781, ordained deacon 27 April 1766 at St Luke's, Dublin, by the bishop of Killaloe, celebrated marriages in St Andrew's 1772 and St Anne's 1783. It is apparent he became tutor to Charles William, son of John Bury of Shannon Grove, Co. Limerick, whose matriculation at T.C.D. in October 1781 shows he was educated by Mr Turpin. ... Peter Turpin seemingly became private chaplain to the Bury family. In 1785 Charles Bury granted him at least four annuities of £100 secured on certain rents, one of which was later converted into an annuity for the life of his wife. In 1790 Bury leased him the estate of Brookville at £61 p.a., consisting of the house and 175 acres, which is now part of the Tullamore golf course, the house having been destroyed. The Rev. Peter married 19 January 1790 Henrietta eldest daughter of the Rev. Philip Homan of Surock, Co Westmeath, by his wife Mary Anne daughter of Rev. George Thomas of Rathfarnham, Co Dublin. Legal documents at this time describe the Rev. Peter as of Killboy, Co. Tipperary. Killboy was the seat of the Prittie family, and Charles Bury's mother had married secondly Henry Prittie, later Lord Dunally, so it is possible Turpin had been chaplain to the Pritties and tutor to young Charles Bury. It is clear from

Bury letters that Peter Turpin acted as agent to Lord Charleville and was also a personal friend; there is mention of Charleville guests staying at Brookville with the Turpins, and to Peter Turpin's severe gout preventing him completing the accounts. The letters also contain greetings to be passed on to the Turpins and condolences to Lord Charleville on the loss of his old friend when Peter died in December 1809. His will remained unproved until 1825.' Extracted from the late Robert W. Brown, 'The Turpin Family of Tullamore, Co. Offaly' in *Irish Ancestor*, xvi, no. 1 (1984). Turpin also acquired four properties in the town of Tullamore in 1809 and these were sold to Thomas Acres, the developer, in 1824. Acres also had early connections with Charleville. I met Mr Browne on a few occasions and wish to salute his memory.

- 44 Diary of Arthur Fisher, copy with OHAS and to be published.
- 45 For further detail see *Irish Times* 4 July 2007 on 'Tullamore grocers well grounded in the community' by Rose Doyle.
- 46 Ms Brid Broderick has provided me with the following note in respect of the interior furnishings of the church.

Building Contractor: John Flanagan and Sons Ltd., Tullamore. **Foreman:** Jim Larkin. Using local labour, the church was completed in less than two years. The belfry and steeple were cleaned and restored and new stone – to match the old – was supplied by James Murphy and Sons Ltd., Dublin from a quarry in Lecarrow, Co Roscommon. The **slate** used for the roof was Blue Bangor slate. William Pitcher and Co., Ballyjamesduff, Co. Cavan, supplied the **laminated internal timber portal frames**, which support the roof. The **Irish oak seating** was provided by Quality Wood Craft Ltd., Leitrim.

The Sanctuary and altar area: (west transept)

A major portion of the sanctuary was dedicated to motifs from the Book of Durrow. The ornate **tabernacle** (Sean Hughes and Sons Ltd) bears a replica of the Cross of Durrow.

The **brass cross** (Chris O'Callaghan and Associates) - suspended over the altar - is based on a similar cross that was carved on an early Christian graveslab at Durrow.

The marble **altar, ambo, sedes and seating** are in Caen stone, each embellished with exact replicas from the Book of Durrow. Marble works: Christopher O'Neill and Sons, Dublin. The **reredos** depicting the Twelve Apostles is the work of Kevin Kelly. The rope around the neck of Judas was toned down in the 1990s.

Commissioned Modern Stained glass windows:

The strikingly modern large window over the altar, those over the doors in the two transepts, and the one behind the organ gallery, depict scenes from The Annunciation (north transept), The Nativity (south transept), The Resurrection (west transept – over the altar), and The Assumption (east transept – behind the organ), are the work of George Walsh of the Dublin Glass and Paint Company, Inchicore.

Donated Stained glass windows:

Several magnificent **Harry Clarke (1889-1931) / Harry Clarke Studio*** stained glass windows, originally located in Rathfarnham Castle, were donated by the Jesuit Community.

* these were catalogued by Nicola Gordon Bowe in 'Gazetteer of Irish Stained Glass' in 1988

Where (A) appears after the name, Clarke was actively involved in part of the window's execution, the rest being executed under his supervision in his Studio.

Where (B) appears after the name of the work, it was initially conceived and designed by him, but executed by his Studio under his close supervision.

These include five large windows in the south transept depicting St Brendan (B), St Patrick (A), St Benignus (A), St Peter (B) and St Paul (B). All are of a similar art style and are linked by the use of the colour green – a most difficult colour to use in stained glass. Three windows in the north transept depict The Sacred Heart (B), St Joseph (B) and Our Lady (B).

A window in the east transept in a completely different style contains the work of two stained glass artists: the top half of the window depicting St Ignatius of Loyola (B) is the work of **Harry Clarke**; the lower panel depicting 'The Good Shepherd' is the work of **Hubert McGoldrick (1897-1967)**. Directly opposite is another double window depicting the conversion of St Paul in the top panel and St Peter in the lower panel. [The interested reader is also referred to the recent unpublished study by David Lawrence of the Tullamore church windows, among others, and to be seen in OHAS and Offaly County Library.

Baptismal font: This carved baptismal font (1887) was originally located in St Bartholomew's Church of Ireland, Lynally, and was kindly donated by Revd Canon Waterstone, when the Lynally church closed and was adapted as a dwelling house.

The Stations of the Cross from St Patrick's Training College, Drumcondra, were donated by Fr Sam Clyne, president of the college, and are reminiscent of the stations that hung in the old church.

Day Chapel: (east transept, situated under the organ gallery)

The **mosaic of the head of the Virgin Mary**, located on a wall of the Blessed Sacrament day chapel, is the only surviving mosaic from the old church.

Five stained glass windows from the old church in Baltinglass were donated to the day chapel. These depict St Elizabeth, St Attracta, St Ita, St Ann, and Christ on the Cross.

Hidden treasures: There are three smaller stained glass windows in a panel at the side of the day chapel altar. Two are very decorative windows: one has a central medallion depicting 'The Wounds of Christ' (B), a **Harry Clarke**; the other has a central medallion depicting 'The Lamb of God'. The centre window is a magnificent depiction of 'St Brendan's Voyage' and is one of the most beautiful and complex windows in the church.

The organ: (east transept)

The organ was built by one of the world's leading organ building firms, Th. Frobenius of Lyngby (Copenhagen), in 1965 for the great cathedral church of Denmark's capital city. It is a sizeable mechanical-action instrument, consisting of 53 speaking stops, three manuals and pedals, and 3,916 pipes. By 1993 the cathedral felt it needed a much bigger organ to fill its great space with adequate sound, and so it was decided to dispose of the existing organ in favour of an entirely new instrument. Instead of selling the existing organ for the considerable sum it would undoubtedly have fetched, the cathedral board generously decided to donate it to an appropriate church.

Tullamore's requirements for an organ at that time and their request to Prof Gerard Gillen, NUI Maynooth, to assist them in securing an instrument, together with a recital visit to Copenhagen to play one of the last recitals on the 'old' cathedral organ and his subsequent discussions with the cathedral's organist, Niels Henrik Nielsen, constituted a remarkable series of coincidences which resulted in the organ's transference to Tullamore in the latter months of 1994. The organ obviously needed a new case to fit the gallery dimensions of Tullamore's

fine new church. This was designed and built by the Frobenius firm. In the transfer the action, pipe work, keyboards, interior leather-work and wind supply were renewed; the original 32' pedal flute stop was retained by the cathedral in Copenhagen for incorporation into their new instrument, and so a new replica 32' stop was made for Tullamore. These elements apart, the organ represents a uniquely intact transplant of an unusually large all-mechanical action organ. The condition of both pipe work and action can only be described as well nigh perfect, and the voicing and regulation necessary to adjust to the new acoustic conditions of the Church of the Assumption in Tullamore, were carried out by a team of three superb craftsmen from the Frobenius firm. The net result is that Tullamore can now boast of having the largest mechanical action church organ in Ireland, and the sole example in the country of the Frobenius firm's renowned skill and craftsmanship. The organ was inaugurated in a gala concert on 10 May, 1995.

- 47** Anthony Cronin, *No laughing matter: the life and times of Flann O'Brien* (London, 1989), p. 17.
- 48** I am obliged to Mr Joe Kenny for this information.
- 49** If your premises should be in the list email info@offalyhistory.com. There are no firm dates for the age of the licensed premises in the town as the court registers do not predate 1927.
- 50** The online dictionary of Irish architects (1720-1940) developed by the Irish Architectural Archive was of considerable assistance here.
- 51** For a review of the building and the firm see Frank McDonald in *Irish Times*, 30 October 2008.

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80. THE HARRON SCULPTURES TO THE NORTH OF TULLAMORE AT THE BY-PASS.

81. ENDPAPER, THE COURTHOUSE

