

Clonroche Historical Society

Secretary: Mr Patrick O'Neill

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History: Analysis of Former Times

The acquisition, by Co. Wexford Library, of the microfilms of *The Wexford Conservative* from 1832 to 1846 and that of *The People* with all of its issues from its inception in 1853 is a most useful development for all studying any aspect of the history of the Co. Wexford. These papers may be read by prior arrangement at Wexford town Library.

There is a common misunderstanding that the study of history is a matter of memorising dates of battles and the birth dates of powerful men that lived in a bygone era. History is an analysis of the past based on the extant evidence: there is invariably an ambiguity but the remarkable thing is that so much may be determined as fully true, especially in relation to events and personalities that

obtained long before our time.

The gifted mediaeval historian the late Denis Bethell asserted that history is also a form of literature; one reads about history out of curiosity and for enjoyment. Conversely the historian is challenged to resort to the full repertoire of literary skills to express the complexities, nuances, ambiguities and (to a modern reader) the unfamiliar conditions of times long past. The past is a foreign place and the most obvious mistake that one may make is to assume that it may be comprehended in the references, concepts and terms of the present. Neither may one imagine the past; the extant evidence is the only key available to the historian.



Heroes of the Past

After the victory of Wexford in the 1955 All-Ireland Senior Hurling final, Fr Nicholas Redmond C.C. Poulpeasty told the crowd at a function in the hall at Clonroche:

“By winning the final Wexford have brought

great honour to the county and they were proud that they of the parish of Cloughbawn had two men on that team. As the Canon [Michael Murphy] had said, they were really heroes and their names would be celebrated in

song and story in the years to come. At the fireside in the future they will hear the names of Tim Flood and Billy Wickham and their deeds will be forever discussed.”

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Special points of interest:

- Bill & Nick Cosgrave launch their biogeography of Dr Browne, Bishop of Ferns in the National Heritage Centre on Thursday night Feb 25th at 8 p.m
- Ui Chinsealaigh Historical Society A.G.M 1798 Centre Thursday 25th Feb
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Fr Tom Furlong P.P Kilegney

Fr Tom Furlong was born at Barry's Cross, Harriestown, near Taghmon. The probability is that he became Parish Priest of Kilegney in 1816. This parish comprised the parishes of Kilegney, Chapel, Killane, Templeudigan and Poulpeasty.

The overwhelming probability is that Fr Furlong was of the aristocratic family that had up to the Rebellion of 1641 held extensive tracts of land in south Co. Wexford. The Furlongs of Templescopy are a branch of this family.

Fr Furlong was of the Gallican theological disposition: the conviction that the Church should adjust to local and national necessities and find common ground with the Established Church in Ireland.

Fr Furlong did not so much seek the company of the high born as that the high born sought his confidence and

friendship. The first Lord Robert Shapland Carew wrote to him describing him as an old friend but the most enigmatic connection of his life was that of his close friendship with the Liberator Dan O'Connell. When O'Connell visited the Co. Wexford, Fr Furlong was observed in O'Connell's carriage as it entered Wexford town.

In late 1842 Fr Furlong presided at the marriage of Edward M'Swiney of Drumquinna Co. Kerry to Kitty Fitzhenry the first daughter of Col. Jeremiah Fitzhenry, at Boro Hill. M'Swiney was a nephew of Dan O'Connell. Another daughter of Fitzhenry, Adelaide, had married circa 1832 Lieut. Col. Senior of Dun Quin Co. Kerry. Dan O'Connell had done legal work re a right of way for Fitzhenry in 1824: the exasperating uncertainty here is whether Fr Furlong introduced the Liberator to Col. Fitz-

henry or whether the latter introduced Fr Furlong to Dan O'Connell. Before the construction of "Mountain View", the present Presbytery at Cloughbawn, Fr Furlong lived for a period at Boro Hill. The writer's suspicion is that Fr Furlong was related to Dan O'Connell.

Fr Furlong saw the Carews as model landlords but by the end of his life the younger clergy were eager for agrarian reform and when at a meeting in Enniscorthy in May 1852 Fr Furlong sought to direct the delegates present to support young Robert Shapland Carew as candidate in the coming election the Tenant Right shouted him down. Fr Furlong died in September 1852 and was buried in the old chapel but his remains were later re-interred in the present St Clement's Chapel.

Hugh O'Neill

It is anticipated that The Past 2009/10 will be published in July to coincide with the 90th anniversary of the Uí Chínseallaigh Historical Society. Tom Mc Donald's article on the Cloughbawn schoolmaster Hugh O'Neill will be one of the features of this coming issue of The Past.

St Patrick's Day Parade

We may assume that the St Patrick's Day Parade is now an established event in Clonroche and a most spectacular one! Most organisations participate in the Parade and it would be desirable for our Historical Society to have a float out on St Patrick's Day. Any ideas are most welcome. The history of the locality is so replete with legendary and fascinating personalities that it should be possible to have one of them to return to terrestrial life and walk the road to Clonroche: Fr Tom Furlong, Col. Fitzhenry,

Dr Freddie Stock, Pat Kennedy, the master Hugh O'Neill, the Lords Carew, Laurence Sweetman, Fr Denis Doyle, Ned Carroll, Rev. James Gordon, Richard Radford Rowe et al come to mind

