

Martello Terrace and Harbour area



Key Dates

- 1859 Martello Terrace built by Mr Edmond O'Kelly (Kelly Sea baths beside no1).
- 1891 Foundation of harbour laid.
- 1897 Lighthouse at Harbour commissioned.
- 1942 Last commercial importation at Bray Harbour.
- 1957 Shannon Caravans Ltd began production at Bray Harbour Industrial Units.
- 1957 Lighthouse falls into the sea.
- 1965 5th Wicklow Sea Scouts formed.
- 2012 Bray Boxing Club refurbished.

With the coming of the Railway to Bray in 1854, local gentry using the Towns Improvements (Ireland) Act 1854 established a committee to organise the affairs of the seaside resort. The town was granted full township status in 1866 and fifteen Bray Town Commissioners were appointed and were responsible for sanitation, roads, public lighting and housing, other functions were subsequently added later.

In 1859 Mr Edmond William O'Kelly sought permission to build ten houses and a sea baths. The houses became known as Mr Kelly's houses and later Martello Terrace. The original houses did not have a balcony. In 1887 No 1 Martello Terrace became the home of Stanislaus Joyce the father of James Joyce. Next to the Joyce House was the Hot Water Sea Baths known as Mr Kelly Baths.

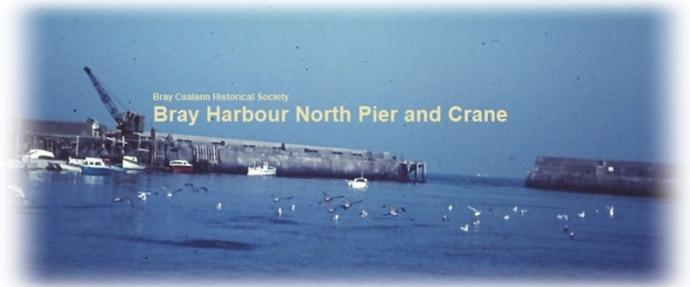


In order to protect the houses and baths from the sea during the winter gales, Mr Kelly built a rampart as a flood protection scheme.

The houses got increased protection in 1890 when the Bray Town Commissioners decided to build a harbour at the mouth of the Dargle River, an area of eight acres which was bound by a north and south pier.

Bray had only 30 vessels and boats registered in 1893 including half decked, open deck and rowing boats.

The north pier which was used by Thomas Miller, trading as Colliers, imported coal, slate, and timber and exported coffins. Other traders to use the piers included Wallace Brothers, Cuthberts, George Seymour, George Morgan & Sons, Thomas Heiton and J.E. McCormick (Boghall Brick).



The south pier had a lighthouse with two white flashes every 2 seconds and was commissioned in 1897. The lighthouse fell into the sea in September 1957 when it was struck by Hurricane Carrie, causing over £30,000 worth of damage to the harbour wall. The lighthouse was removed giving way to a local saying "Bray was the only place in the world with a lighthouse for submarines"



The north strand between the harbour and Killiney had coastal defences which were breached and badly damaged in 1911 and the railway line had to be rerouted. The railway company complained about persons removing sand and gravel that undermined the coastal defences.

In 1936 Mr Michael Smith, of no fixed abode and a native of Liverpool, who was living in a caravan at the back strand was arrested in connection with stolen jewellery. A local boy Thomas O'Neill found the jewellery at the Refuse dump. His mother Catherine O'Neill gave evidence in court that her son found the jewellery in a stocking close to Smith's caravan.

The first steamer to dock at Bray Harbour was named "Flagstaff" from Liverpool with a consignment of Coal. Mr Thomas Daniel Scraggs was appointed Harbour Master in 1897. In his first year he collected £260 in harbour dues. He retired in 1915 and record show he collected over £968 in harbour dues in 1915. At the peak of activity 330 men were employed at Bray Harbour. The harbour ceased as a commercial port in 1942 when a consignment of sand arrived from Co. Donegal for Solus Teo.

Today the harbour is used for social and leisure activities by the Bray Sailing Club established in 1896, and the 5th Wicklow Sea Scout, based at the Harbour and was established in 1965 and their den was built at Dock Terrace in

1970 (the 1st Bray Sea Scouts was there from 1912) The oldest building in the Harbour is the Harbour Bar and is shown on maps and paintings from 1813.

Shannon Caravans was established in 1957 and built at the harbour industrial estate. The finished caravans were retailed in Stillorgan.

After Katie Taylor's gold medal at the London Olympics in 2012. The former Boxing Club was refurbished to a gold standard with up to date training facilities and equipment.

Bray Cualann Historical Society National Heritage Week 2020