

## Cliff Walk and Coastguard



Cliff Walk (without seaward protection)

### The Cliff Walk

Hundreds of people per day walk the 6km (4 miles) coastal path between Bray and Greystones. The path is built into the cliff face and affords outstanding views of the coastline and railway.



The first part of the path between Bray and the Halfway House was the property of the Railway Company. The Halfway House is also called (Lord Meath's Lodge, Cliff Walk Toll Cottage, Bray Head Cottage and Cliff Walk Cottage and Loughlin's Cottage). The cottage was built in 1861 and for nearly 100 years was occupied by tenants of Lord Meath named Loughlin. James Loughlin was born at old Boleys near Glencree, Co. Wicklow in 1856. In 1882 he married Ann McGuirk also from Glencree Valley. James became a herd's man for Lord Meath and his wife Ann manned the toll gate on the Cliff walk. Visitors could also purchase refreshments. The

gates at the house were closed at 6pm daily. On Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1891 William Dixon tried to pass at 7pm on his way to Delgany. William Dixon was accompanied by Andrew Ryan on arrival at the gate Mr Loughlin came out of the cottage and refused to open the gates. Dixon caught Mr Loughlin by neck and tried to assault him. Mr Loughlin set off to get the police. Mrs Loughlin came out of the house and called Dixon a "vagabone" and all the bad names she could use. Andrew Ryan stated the Dixon only caught Mr Loughlin on the shoulder. The magistrate fined Mr Dixon 30 shillings and one month in jail with hard labour.



In September 1901 Head Constable Griffin and Sergeant O'Neill called to arrest a lodger staying at the Cottage. She used the name Guilfoyle and pretended to be a bookkeeper for Arnott's Of Dublin. She had used different names when she stayed in Houses in Kilcoole, Greystones and Kingstown (now Dun Laoghaire), Miss Guilfoyle had stolen some money and items from the other houses where she stayed.

Mrs Ann Loughlin died at Loughlinstown Hospital in June 1921 and her husband remarried Sarah Teresa Bellamy in August 1921. James died in August 1928 aged 72 and is buried with his first wife Ann in Curtlestown Graveyard. Sarah died on 16th September 1971 and is buried in St. Peter's graveyard, Little Bray.

Heading back towards Bray the path passes over the railway near the old Bray cove baths and the Chair lift. The bridge today is called Fiddlers Bridge. Since the railway line was opened around Bray Head in 1855 a number of fiddlers by the name of Peter Ledwidge, Joe Kelly, Edward Edge and Paddy O'Grady have played near the bridge. Paddy O'Grady was a blind fiddler and each summer would travel from the Beara Peninsula in West Cork to Bray. He died in 1941.

"Wicklow Dialect and Vernacular Usage" published in 1899 by Herclues Henry West on the saying's and phrases used by Edward Edge who died in 1894 aged 80 years. Mr West made jottings and notes on phrases used by Mr Edge. In one claim Mr Edge stated that Edgeware Road in London was called after one of his ancestors. Mr Edge would play a fiddle and Bag-pipes on the path around Bray Head. Mr Edge hailed from Newtownmountkennedy.

### **The Coastguard**

The coastguard service in Ireland was established in 1822 and the following year a station was opened in Bray beside the Martello Tower overlooking the mouth of the Dargle River.

In 1840 a new station was opened on the site of the Esplanade Hotel today. In 1863 moved to the Boathouse at the junction of Putland Road and Strand Road. In 1870 a customised Coastguard Station was built off the Putland Road. On 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1922 it was occupied by a command of the national army, its commanding officer Lieutenant Walsh. The troops were addressed and presented a flag by Mrs Mulcahy. This was the first time in history that national troops were addressed by a woman.





**Bill Richardson at No 1 Railway Hut, Bray Head (Courtesy Irish Times 22/10/1949).**

Bray Cualann Historical Society National Heritage Week 2020