

THE ARMS OF CO. WICKLOW

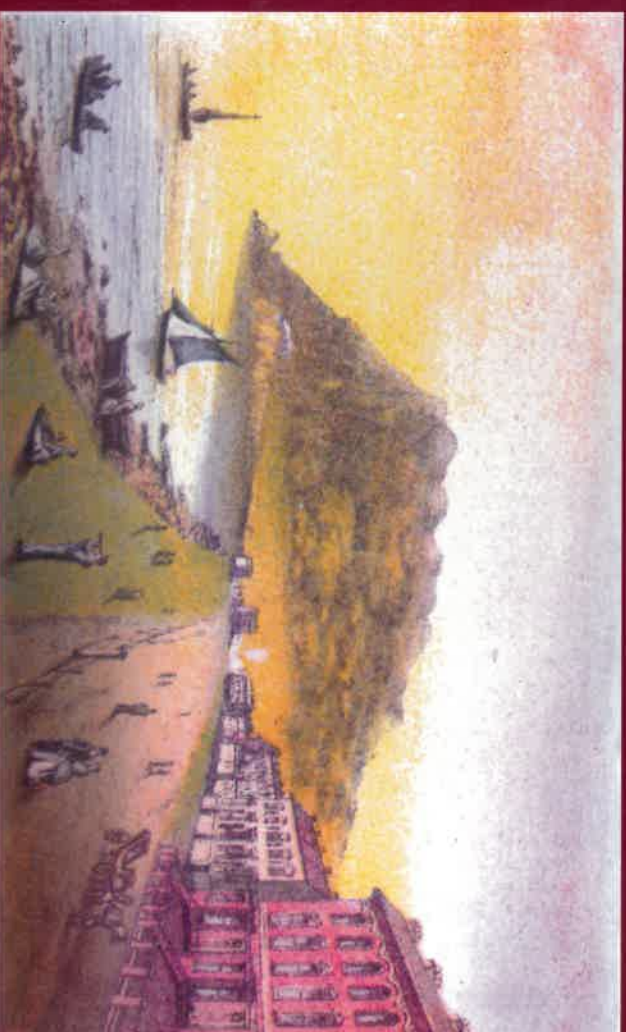


The Coat of Arms was issued by the Chief Herald on the 1st August, 1956.

In the base is a representation of St. Kevin's Church at Glendalough. The toothed (dancetté) partition line represents the Wicklow mountains. At the top of the division, a lion walking and looking over his shoulder (passant regardant), was suggested by a stone carving in St. Saviour's Church at Glendalough. Two oak branches represent Wicklow's woods – the ancient oak and the modern plantations.

The motto "Mearna Saor" comes from the following line in an ancient Irish poem "Mearna Saor as réim gach achtrann" (The spirit still free through all conflict).

IRIS
CUMANN
SCAIRE
BRI CUALANN



JOURNAL
of the
BRAY CUALANN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BRAY, CO. WICKLOW

No. 5

JOURNAL OF

THE BRAY CUALANN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2004

*Celebrating 150 years of the
Railway in Bray*

Editor:

EILEEN MURRAY

Editorial Committee:

**RAY CRANLEY, KATHIEEN KINSELLA, JIM LYNCH,
EILEEN MURRAY AND BRIAN WHITE**

EDITOR'S NOTE

This latest issue of the journal of the Bray Cualann Historical Society is published in the year when we mark the 150th anniversary of that most significant event in Bray's history – the coming of the railway.

The quality of the buildings and public open spaces, provided at that time, bear witness to the grandeur of William Dargan's vision for the development of the town as an elegant seaside resort. The Turkish Baths, described in some detail in K. M. Davies's article, is a good example.

It is interesting to learn from James Scannell's contribution that traffic delays were of as much concern to the Victorians as they are to today's citizens.

Commuters will read with envy in Brian MacAongusa's article that, in 1958, using the Harcourt Street line, it was possible to complete the journey from Bray to Dublin in 20 minutes.

Although the railway is the main focus of the journal, we hope readers will enjoy all the articles including those recording aspects of Bray's changing social scene over the period of 150 years.

We are happy to include two articles by the late Christy Brien, a founding member of the Bray Cualann Historical Society. The society, now 28 years in existence, continues to promote an interest in local history and, through its programme of lectures, provides a valuable educational and social activity in the town. New members are always welcome.

We acknowledge with thanks the work of all our contributors, our printers, Helita Typeset Ltd. (Des & Ita McGarry) and The Central Press (Aidan Flynn).

© The Bray Cualann Historical Society Bray 2004

Application to reproduce the whole or any part of material herein must be made to the Secretary, Bray Cualann Historical Society.

The cover picture was reproduced by Mr. Michael Simonds, Exchange Bookshop, Dalkey from an illustration in Gaskin's "Irish Varieties", Dublin, 1869.

CONTENTS

Foreword	<i>Colm McCormack</i>	4
Bray and The Harcourt Street Line	<i>Brian Mac Aongusa</i>	7
A Lost Victorian Treasure – Bray's Turkish Baths.....	<i>K. Mary Davies</i>	12
A Walk Along Bray Seafont	<i>Kathleen Kinsella</i>	19
The Quinsboro Road Tunnel	<i>James Scannell</i>	22
Bray Before and After the Railway	<i>Brian White</i>	24
Bray's Day Out at the Races.....	<i>Liam Clare</i>	25
The Dargle & Bray Laundry in the 1950s & 1960s	<i>Ray Cranley</i>	30
Fir Iarnróid M'Óige	<i>Diarmuid Breathnach</i>	33
The Last Train from Harcourt Street.....	<i>Christy Brien, P.C.</i>	35
Early Scouting in Bray	<i>Brian White</i>	37
Tansey's of Bray	<i>Kieran Flanagan</i>	40
Céilí Dancing in Bray	<i>Christy Brien, P.C.</i>	43
In the Footsteps of his Father: James Larkin Jnr.	<i>Breda Cardiff</i>	44
Fifty Years of Bray I.C.A.	<i>Moirá Fitzpatrick</i>	45
Wildlife from a Train	<i>Éamon de Buíttéar</i>	47
Allen's Menswear	<i>Tom Allen</i>	49
Celebrating 150 Years of the Railway in Bray	<i>Jim Lynch</i>	50

Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I write this foreword to Journal No.5 of the Bray Cualann Historical Society. I must wholeheartedly congratulate all of the people who made this publication possible. This includes our contributors, the journal sub-committee, and last, but not least, our editor. Their dedication and hard work in getting this journal published is to be praised and acclaimed. The range of material in this journal is indicative of the work that they have all done.

In general, history can be described as the account of events that have occurred in the past, and which have influenced the progress and development of a people or a nation.

Local history ranges from nostalgic reminiscence to academic research and archaeology, and can mean different things to different people. It is a record of what has happened in the past in the locality, the people who contributed to the events of the past and a recording of the changes in society itself. In fact much of local history is a social history of a particular area, the people of that locality, and how political and social changes outside the area have influenced the locality. Major historical events affect the economics and society of a locality in many different ways that may not necessarily be discernible at the time, and the repercussions are not necessarily known until a long time afterwards. Local history is essentially a microcosm of the overall broad historical picture.

Records, knowledge and memories of past events, or of personalities and people, together with the changes wrought by war, economics and the progress or development of society, need to be set down and recorded, so that they can all be sewn into the overall historical tapestry. This is where a journal such as this fulfils a particular need.

It is not an easy task to produce an historical journal, or to write articles and provide material for publication, since the recording of history is and always has been divided into two main areas, both of which can be questioned by the reader or researcher. On the one hand, a person can write of past events or situations as they remember or experienced them, sometimes after a lapse of many years. On the other hand, another person can write of the same event based on official records, figures, and recorded data. In addition, personal diaries and journals written at the time of the event can provide valuable insights into what was happening around their author. Such records may provide conflicting information, but the trained historical researcher can take it all, and possibly with information from other sources, weave an interpretation which provides an account that tells the story as near to the real truth as is possible.

In my view, it is a good thing for people, no matter who they are, to set down as much as possible on paper, before memories are lost or records damaged. All of us should strive to do so or encourage others to do so. Researchers and writers of local history provide an invaluable service to the community and to the nation.

Each day we live is eventually going to be written into the history books, but how it is recorded and remembered will affect the very same history books. People should not be inhibited from putting down what they know on paper, simply because someone else may have dealt with the same subject, since there are always many different viewpoints and aspects of an event.

One has only to listen to witnesses in a court case, or tribunal, to become aware how the same act or situation can be seen through different eyes. Direct cross-examination can sort out contradictions or discrepancies, a privilege unavailable to the historian. The newspaper accounts of the event or evidence can sometimes put a particular slant or spin on the story, just to sell more papers, or to follow a particular line of political propaganda. To the historian coming along later, further information, writings, or comments beyond the official records or the news accounts can provide an insight into how those involved or caught up in what happened, felt or were affected by the event. Just because an account has already been written should not stop others from writing their version of events, since it can all be used to paint the bigger picture.

The New Testament is a good example of this. Historical researchers, delving into the course of history from earliest times up to the recent past, have to explore every avenue to try and ascertain the truth about what happened and why. Sometimes, a seemingly unimportant document or find can provide insight into social attitudes, or personal traits, which may give clues to the cause and effect of a particular facet of history.

The development of civilisation from earliest times was initially slow, being affected by climate, food, and limitations of travel. People lived in isolated communities often unaware of other communities. However, the human brain and its curiosity led to experiments and to the development of agriculture and means of transport. Early man could not have envisaged the development of navigation of the oceans that occurred in the 15th and 16th centuries, which led to major exploratory voyages and an understanding of geography and plants or crops in places far from the then known world. Since then, our knowledge of the world and ourselves has snowballed, and the explosive development of technology has utterly changed the world and how we do things.

Even taking 'modern' science, some inventors would be amazed at what they started.

Marconi could not have envisaged, that 105 years after making his first broadcast of a yacht race in Dun Laoghaire, radio would become part of everyday life, whether it be communication from earth to outer space, or people communicating by mobile phone.

Wing Commander Frank Whittle, with his jet engine for warplanes, certainly did not realise that it would affect the lives of the ordinary working class people of Britain. They now travel by jet airliners to holidays in the sun, and Brighton, Blackpool, and Bray are no longer the Mecca for that sort of holidaymaker.

When recently sitting in my car listening to a broadcast on the car radio of Mozart's flute and harp concerto, I was struck by the extent to which we take for granted the changes in our daily lives brought about by modern technology. The leap from Mozart writing his concerto, to an orchestra of the 21st century recording it on a compact disc, which is then played by a radio station, and received in a motor car, moving along the highway, is a gigantic one and unimaginable in the 18th century.

Similarly the changes to Bray and environs are part of our daily life and, being gradual, can easily go unnoted. The recording of these in written or photographic form is to be recommended. The camera has now become a very important part of recording history at every level, from international events to simple social or family occasions. But the camera does not hear, or smell or feel emotion, and so a written comment with the picture makes an incredible difference.

All of the foregoing may be taken as a plea for the continuity of providing material in the form of articles, photographs and data that could be incorporated in our next journal.

Colm McCormack

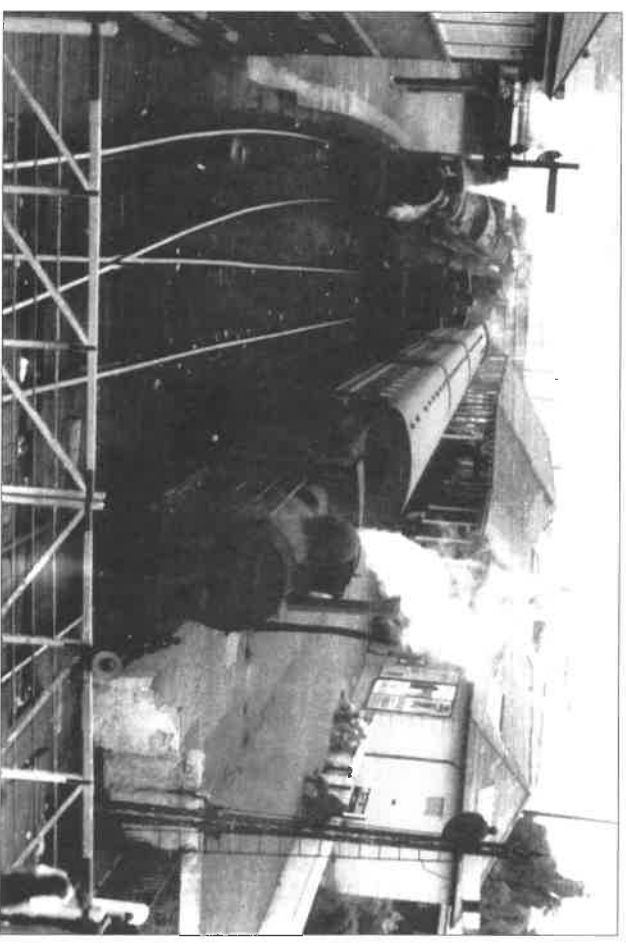
Chairman of Bray Chualann Historical Society

BRAY AND

THE HARCOURT STREET LINE

BRIAN MAC AONGUSA

Over one hundred and fifty years ago, on 10 July 1854, the first train from Dublin reached Bray traversing an inland route from Harcourt Road in the south inner city and passing through stations at Dundrum, Stillorgan, Carrickmines and Shankill. A new city terminus was opened at Harcourt Street in 1859 and new stations were added at Foxrock in 1861 and at Ranelagh in 1896. This double-track route later became the main line of the Dublin & South Eastern Railway to Wexford and Waterford, but to the people of Bray and south County Dublin it became known as the Harcourt Street Line. Until that line was abruptly closed and abandoned at the end of 1958, it played a most important role in the daily lives of thousands living along its route, not least those who lived in the town of Bray.



During the 1950s, Bray was the operational centre from which the railway services to Dublin, both by the inland route to Harcourt Street and by the coastal route to Amiens Street as well as south towards Wexford, were managed and controlled. The railway provided considerable employment in

Bray, with over 100 ground staff supporting the 34 drivers and 34 firemen rostered daily to operate the steam trains. Bray station, with its large engine shed, locomotive and traffic departments, had a significant influence on the town and the Harcourt Street Line in particular played an important and distinctive role in the life of Bray until its demise on 31st December 1958.

Many people today are surprised to learn that steam, electric and diesel trains ran on the old Harcourt Street Line. Steam trains worked all services until 1932, but between that year and 1949 two-coach electric battery trains operated most services on the route. These trains, popularly known as the Drumm Trains, derived their name from Dr. James Drumm whose team at University College Dublin developed industrial-sized batteries powerful enough to drive a two-coach articulated railcar at speeds of 45 m.p.h. This Irish invented electric railcar was much more comfortable than the old coaches of the steam trains and during the Second World War, when coal for steam trains was in very short supply, the Drumm Trains were able to maintain a full service on the Harcourt Street Line. From 1954 until closure in 1958 diesel locomotives were used on the line, as well as steam trains and diesel-electric locomotives which hauled most of the long-distance trains from Harcourt Street to Wicklow, Arklow, Wexford and Rosslare.

Before the growth of private car ownership and before CIE deliberately intensified its bus services in the 1950s along routes parallel to the railway, thousands of people used the Harcourt Street Line. Apart from daily usage by people travelling to and from Harcourt Street and intermediate stations, large numbers patronised the trains for special events and excursions. For example, up to 3,000 racegoers frequently travelled in one day on special trains from Harcourt Street to Foxrock to attend the Leopardstown Races and, in the very fine summer of 1955, over 4,000 people from the then densely-populated south inner city and its southern suburbs used the Harcourt Street Line in one day to travel to the seaside in Shankill, Bray or Greystones. On such days, the scenes at the Harcourt Street terminus were chaotic as hundreds of wildly excited city people, women and children, men and prams, tried to push themselves into trains that were already full to capacity.

For many families living in Dublin and its southern suburbs in the 1950s, the Harcourt Street Line provided a wonderful outlet for a day-trip to the seaside during the summer holidays. On fine summer weekends, thousands travelled



*Thomas Somers 1899
Guard on D.W. & W.R.*

by train from Harcourt Street to Bray. It was on such occasions that scenes of near-pandemonium were witnessed at Bray station as hundreds thronged in to find their return trains. The late J.P.O'Dea of the Irish Railway Record Society accurately painted the scene in his recollections:

"As evening wears on, returning families crowd the station and as fast as the trains leave, the platform seems to fill again. Those who came to Bray to 'do the bona fide' (to claim entry to a pub on a Sunday on grounds of having travelled at least five miles beyond the city boundary) can easily be identified, mostly by the brown-paper bags they carry but others who carry their supplies interiorly by other indications. The whole place becomes a hive of activity and any extra trains complicate an already crowded situation. This evening there is an excursion from Banagher and a mystery trip from Maryborough (now known as Portlaoise). They will have to be fitted into the intense traffic. There is relief when they are gone and things get back to their normal state of complexity."

Other pleasant outlets of escape from the drudgery of city life in the 1950s were the 'Dance Excursion' to the Arcadia Ballroom in Bray and the 'Sea Breeze' Excursion to Wicklow and Arklow. It is difficult to comprehend at the beginning of the twenty-first century what excitement attached to travelling by train for a romantic evening in the 1950s. Hundreds availed of the Dance Excursions and the convenience of the old Arcadia Ballroom, just across the road from the main entrance to Bray station, added to the attraction. No doubt the unreliable gas-lighting in the old six-wheeled carriages used on the Harcourt Street Line was also a further attraction. All-in tickets for both rail travel and entrance to the dance were sold at Harcourt Street, Ranelagh, Milltown and Dundrum stations and the newspaper advertisements proclaimed 'books of tickets for raffle may be handed in at all stations on night of dance'.

Bray was the terminus of most Harcourt Street Line trains, although five of the 23 weekday trains in the final years were extended to Greystones. Many of the other trains made a connection at Bray with trains from the Amiens Street-Bray coastal line that were running through to Greystones. To cater for services on both routes to Dublin the layout of Bray station provided a central third track between the platform tracks on each side of the station. Arrivals and departures for Harcourt Street normally used the seaward platform, while those for the coastal route normally used the main platform nearest the town. The central track was used to allow engines to run around their trains in preparation for the return trip to Dublin. When Bray station served both suburban routes to Dublin up to the end of 1958, it often presented a very busy scene especially at rush-hours and during summer week-ends when thousands of day-trippers travelled by train to Bray.

Contrary to what people may believe today, the Harcourt Street Line trains were not slow-moving. Many are surprised to learn that in 1950 the 5.00 p.m. evening express from Harcourt Street reached Stillorgan in just eleven minutes and that in 1958, just before the line closed, the weekday morning 8.50 a.m.

express from Bray, with one compulsory stop at Ranelagh, reached Harcourt Street in just twenty minutes, arriving at 9.10 a.m. Those achievements have not been equalled since, either by rail or by road, in spite of all the progress that we believe we have made over the past fifty years.

From a perspective of the early twenty-first century, it seems inconceivable that less than fifty years ago a fine double-track suburban railway from Harcourt Street through Dundrum and Foxrock to Bray was hurriedly closed and quickly abandoned. Yet the demise of the Harcourt Street Line was accompanied by little more than token rumblings of protest from a largely indifferent public. The CIÉ decision to close the line with effect from 1 January 1959, when announced at the end of October 1958, attracted relatively little newspaper coverage and was generally accepted at the time as inevitable. Ireland's largest-selling newspaper the *Irish Independent* carried its report on the proposed Harcourt Street closure under a single column headline, as follows:

"Rail services on the Harcourt Street-Bray line will be withdrawn from January 1. Dr. C.S. Andrews Chairman of CIÉ said in a statement the line had been operating at a loss for many years and its closure had been decided on in pursuance of the directive that CIÉ must be self-supporting within five years. Dr. Andrews said 74 people would be redundant as a result of the decision. The redundancies would be a matter for negotiation with the trade unions for transference or compensation for the workers concerned. The passenger traffic on the line totals about 1,000 a day. There is very little freight traffic. An additional bus service will be introduced between Bray and Dublin."

By and large, the general public at the end of 1958 was prepared to understand and accept the closure. The Harcourt Street Line had been steadily run down since the early 1950s as CIÉ developed and extended its City Bus Services into the south Dublin suburbs. By the time the closure was announced, no less than thirteen bus routes were serving the areas surrounding the seven intermediate stations on the line. Many of the bus routes had a superior frequency to that of the trains and they terminated in the City Centre, as opposed to Harcourt Street station over a mile away. It could well be argued that since the mid-1950s CIÉ had been quietly developing a policy that sought to cope with all demands for public transport in the south Dublin suburbs by expanding its City Bus Services.

An interesting insight to public attitude towards the Harcourt Street Line at that time may be found in extensive reports in the *Wicklow People* of debates at meetings of Bray Urban District Council during November 1958. Clearly some Councillors had been lobbied by patrons of the rail service to organise a public meeting to protest against the planned closure, but their efforts received only a lukewarm welcome. One Councillor, who said he had travelled very much on the railway but had by then elected to travel by road, believed the people of Bray had turned their backs on the railway and had let the railway workers down. He said railways were outdated for suburban travel and even in Bray,

people living at the northern or southern end were not going to travel on an infrequent train service when they had a bus every ten minutes. Another Councillor felt the fault lay with CIÉ. They had failed to modernise rail travel. He saw large trains running infrequently during the day, when a number of smaller diesel trains run more frequently would better suit the public's need. Some Councillors said they could not work up sufficient enthusiasm for the suggested public protest meeting. Almost everyone in the Council had sacrificed the trains for cars and buses and they themselves were responsible for CIÉ's proposed closure. If the people wanted the Harcourt Street Line they could have it, but they had forsaken it. Bray Urban District Council finally decided to seek more facts and figures concerning the proposed closure before agreeing to hold a public protest meeting.

The last train from Bray to Harcourt Street departed at 2.40 p.m. on New Year's Eve 1958, with a long blast of the horn and to the waving of hands and exploding detonators. The honour of taking the last return working on the line was given to Driver Ned Wheeler of Meath Road Bray, one of five brothers who were all train drivers. Driver Wheeler who had spent thirty-four years on the railway, was joined by Guard Jack O'Sullivan of Wolfe Tone Square Bray for the final run. The last departure from Harcourt Street was at 4.25 p.m. to the echo of exploding detonators, but the crowds present there and at the other stations were largely undemonstrative. The one notable exception was the staff of the old Dublin Laundry at Milltown who turned out in force to see the last train and blew the laundry siren in salute as it passed over The Nine Arches Viaduct for the last time. The train was met at Bray by a large gathering that included many former staff then retired from a lifelong service on the railway. Many came from families such as the Fortunes, Wheelers, O'Briens, Hannons, Hylands, Richardsons and many more that had given decades of railway service with great pride in their work and tradition. For them, the Harcourt Street Line would never be forgotten.

Sources of Information

This article is based on personal knowledge of Bray and the Harcourt Street Line since the 1940s. That knowledge has been supplemented from historical sources, as listed in the Bibliography on p.112 of *The Harcourt Street Line: Back on Track* by Brian Mac Aongusa, published by Currach Press, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, 2003. (ISBN 1-85607-907-4).



Figure 1. Bray Turkish Baths from Heffernan's illustrated plan of Bray

A LOST VICTORIAN TREASURE – BRAY'S TURKISH BATHS

K. MARY DAVIES

The opening of the railway line from Dublin to Bray one hundred and fifty years ago began the transformation of the area east of Main Street. Within a few years Strand Road, Quinsborough Road, Meath Road and the smaller roads in between were laid out and these roads have given the seaward side of Bray the unique ambience it still retains. But at the same time much of the early development has today been lost – Quinsborough Road, in particular, was the site of a number of distinctive and important buildings that have now disappeared. Breslin's Royal Marine Hotel on the seaward side of the level crossing welcomed visitors from 1855 until a fire of 1916. The International Hotel, the largest hotel in Ireland when it opened in 1862, was destroyed by fire in 1974. John Quin junior rebuilt the family's eighteenth-century hotel, forerunner of the present Royal Hotel, on the corner of Main Street and Quinsborough Road soon after the latter road was laid out, but this building succumbed to redevelopment in 1982. By this last date a fourth structure on Quinsborough Road, the Turkish Baths, perhaps the most remarkable edifice of Victorian Bray, had also been demolished; the Baths were bulldozed in order to build a row of shops in 1980.

When Bray's Turkish Baths were opened in 1859, the concept was still very new. The Victorian Turkish bath – known as the 'Improved Turkish Bath' –

was not actually Turkish at all; it was modelled on the Roman bath. The process involved the bather sweating in a series of increasingly hot rooms heated by a flow of hot, dry air, followed by a body wash and massage – these last together called shampooing – and finally by relaxation for an hour or so in the cooling room. The difference between this system and others that involve sweating lay in the use of dry air, rather than the humid air of 'real' Turkish baths, on the principle that dry air allows bathers to withstand high temperatures for longer periods than does moisture-laden air. The therapy came to be recommended for the treatment of rheumatism and gout, even for tuberculosis, and also for promoting a feeling of general well-being.



Figure 2.
Dr Richard Barter

Ireland can take credit for the very first Turkish bath of this type. The treatment was developed by Dr Richard Barter (Figure 2) at his hydrotherapy (water-cure) establishment at St Anne's Hill, Blarney, Co. Cork, and he opened a Turkish bath there in 1856. William Dargan apparently sampled the Cork bath and was quick to seize upon the idea; it was an imaginative act on his part to join with Barter in providing this relatively untried facility as one of the amenities of the new Bray. The *Freeman's Journal* reported in December 1858 that Dargan was erecting Turkish Baths in Bray; John Cunningham was contractor for the baths and for Dargan's adjoining houses on Dargan (now Duncairn) Terrace. The baths were opened to the public on 2 November 1859, two weeks after a formal opening by the Earl of Meath.

The *Freeman's Journal* of 31 December 1858 named Sir John Benson as the architect, while the *Dublin Builder* of 1 February 1859 credited 'Mr Barter' with the 'arrangement and design'. By the time of the opening Richard Barter, the architect nephew of the doctor, was being credited as architect – in 1856 he had visited Rome on his uncle's behalf to study the ruins of Roman baths. It seems that the role of Benson, who as the architect of the Great Industrial Exhibition of 1853 was closely associated with Dargan, was probably limited to the design of the exterior.

The building was built in Moorish style and cost Dargan £10,000, a considerable sum. The dimensions were given as 180 feet by 70 feet by 40 feet, the base was of cut granite from the Dalkey quarries, and the walls were of red and white bricks, with tall minarets at the corners. The bricks were laid in an ornate chequered pattern, and there was a seventy-foot high ornamental chimney to disperse the fumes from the coke-fed furnace. D.E. Heffernan included a vignette of the baths (Figure 1) on his *Heffernan's Illustrated Plan of Bray* of about 1870 (reprinted Bray, 2000), although he greatly exaggerated the height of the chimney. The Ordnance Survey plan of 1870 (Figure 3) shows clearly how the baths were symmetrical on either side of the main entrance facing onto Quinsborough Road, with other entrances on the east and west. The rear elevation, visible only from the grounds of Galtrim House behind, seems to have been of plainer appearance.

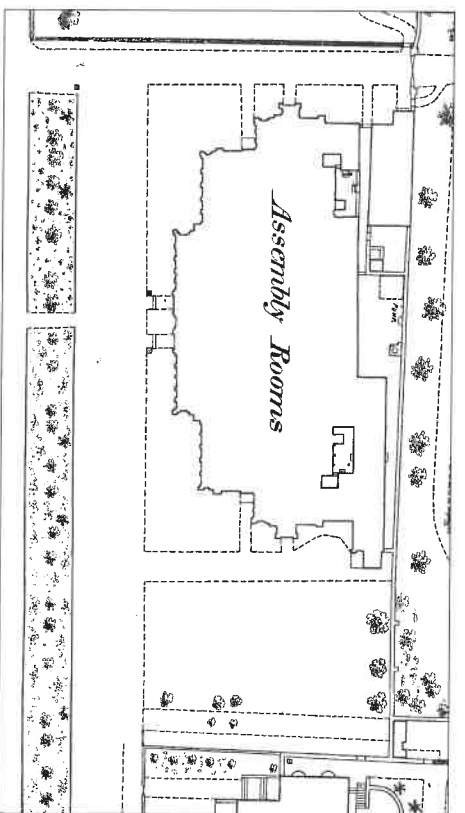


Figure 3. Ground plan from 1870 Ordnance Survey map. Original scale 10 feet to the mile

The exterior has been well recorded in drawings and photographs, but the original appearance of the interior is less well remembered. Less than two weeks after the public opening, however, on 15 November 1859, Bray's baths were described in a lecture on 'The sanitary advantages of baths, especially the Turkish or Roman bath' given to the Literary and Philosophical Institution of Cheltenham by Robert Wollaston. The lecture appeared in print in 1860, and provides us with a wonderfully detailed account. G.R. Powell, author of *The official railway handbook to Bray*, published in 1860, tried Bray's 'Improved Turkish, or new Irish baths' when newly completed and his description adds something more.

As enlorgised by Wollaston the grand entrance hall – Powell calls it the cooling room – had a dozen small apartments on either side fitted as dressing rooms, each with a couch to rest on after the bath. There were other divans 'for the purposes of reposing, smoking, and conversation'. The ceiling was painted 'in arabesque, and richly coloured with the favourite Turkish colours – green, red and blue.' Window panes of coloured glass diffused the light and added to the kaleidoscope of colours. The floor was laid with a 'tessellated pavement' – small square tiles in an overall pattern – made at Minton's Porcelain Works, Staffordshire, 'in imitation of the pavement of ancient Baths'. In the centre there was a marble fountain surrounded by flowers and ferns, shells and rock-work. (Powell wrote, however, that the centre had a circular ottoman around a mirrored octagonal pillar.)

In addition to the grand entrance hall, the warm and hot air rooms also had tessellated floors, with marble seats, and domes set with 'stars of variegated glass'. There were side chambers with tepid and cold water showers and douche baths. Wollaston added that it was intended to have attendants in Turkish costume to shampoo the bathers, and that coffee and sherbet, cigars and pipes were to be supplied 'to complete the whole ceremony of the Turkish mode of bathing'. (Barter's Dublin baths, opened a few months later, had

attendants in long scarlet dressing gowns and Turkish slippers – presumably the Bray attendants were similarly dressed.) According to Powell, all the attendants had been trained at Blarney; he also said that the building had east and west 'wings', one for ladies, the other for gentlemen. These wings, barely obvious on the exterior, must have been relatively self-contained; they were later to be separately rented out.

Powell must have tried the Bray baths soon after they were opened, for he described the experience in detail. 'Selecting a compartment, we uncased the outer man, for clothes substitute a coloured scarf, apron-wise, cast over our shoulders a loose sheet, not forgetting our wooden clogs, to protect the feet from the heated floors of the baths, and enter, like "sheeted ghosts", the first heated air room. The sensation experienced is sometimes an oppressive one. This arises from the high temperature, the mercury standing at about one hundred degrees of Fahrenheit; but an effort of the mind, and we soon become accustomed to this. There is no visible vapour whatever, merely a constant current of warm air. A slight faintness and a quickening of the pulse may be experienced at first; but this arises, in a measure, from the novelty and excitement of the process. ... Meanwhile we sit or recline on couches supporting mattresses, chat with the other bathers, and drink plentifully of delicious cold spring water.' After a quarter of an hour in another hotter room: 'should he wish it, he [the visitor] undergoes a gentle shampooing with the hand. He is now conducted into a small bath-room ... and bowls of warm water are poured on his head, a fragrant detergent applied to the skin, and a small hose, connected with a kind of apparatus, plays on him with water of agreeable temperature. This completes the bath.'



Figure 4. The derelict baths shortly before demolition

quickly made unnecessary when Dr Barter opened Turkish Baths in Dublin's Lincoln Place on 20 February 1860. (The Dublin baths were to have a longer life than the Bray baths; they were in use until 1899 and again the building survived into the latter part of the twentieth century.)

The beginning of November may not have been the best time of year to open the new baths – the last of the summer visitors had left weeks before and the winter clientele would have been mainly locals. For the first few weeks curious Dubliners probably travelled out by train, but this journey was very

Nonetheless Bray's Turkish Baths opened on a confident note. Even the opening hours were optimistic – from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., except for Sundays, when the baths closed for five hours in the middle of the day. There was a choice of public or private bathing, and bathing dresses, sheets and towels were included in the charge. Shampooing cost extra, and for some reason, perhaps to do with staffing, was not available on Sundays.

It is hard to imagine that the baths were ever full of bathers that first winter, or that they attracted sufficient numbers for seventeen hours a day to give the place an air of purpose and activity. The idea of taking a Turkish bath was still new, and although the Bray baths must have attracted those seeking relief from their winter aches and pains, there was almost immediately a medical controversy that would have deterred some potential customers.

A major attack on the use of dry air rather than humid air in the new Turkish baths appeared in the medical press in January 1860, using the baths at 'B***' as an example. It was claimed by the writer that the dry air aggravated his sciatica, rather than alleviating it, and that the treatment was actually dangerous to patients. There was a further criticism, unjustified but nonetheless damaging, that the hot air contained fumes from the furnace. The controversy raged, not only in the medical press but also more widely, with Dr Barter and his supporters indignantly refuting all suggestions that his system was anything other than highly beneficial.

Meanwhile other Turkish baths had been opened by Dr Barter in towns and cities across Ireland: by the early 1860s there were baths in Belfast, Cork, Killarney, Limerick, Sligo and Waterford, as well as in Dublin. Most of these were purpose-built and, like Bray's baths, in Moorish style. One of Dr Barter's supporters in the medical dispute claimed that the baths at Blarney, Cork, Killarney and Bray had been used by more than 72,000 persons in the period from 1856 to 1860, but, despite these encouraging figures, Bray's Turkish Baths were not a success. This was probably due to the short summer visitor season and the lack of bathers for the rest of the year. In the winter of 1862 bathers were offered free entry and by 1864 Dargan was trying unsuccessfully to sell the baths for £4,000 – a massive loss on the original investment. It is tempting to speculate, too, that costs were cut by reducing the standard of management. According to *Thom's Directory* of 1862, Dr Haslam of the Turkish Baths lived at 1 Dargan Terrace and ranked as a gentleman. He left before 1864 and was succeeded as manager by a non-medical man, J. Curran, whose address does not appear in the listings.

The valuation records note that in 1864 the baths were 'about to be removed', but the *Freeman's Journal* reported in January 1865 that, although the Turkish Baths were closed, they could be reopened if the rates were reduced. (High rates were a cause for complaint at other Quinsborough Road premises, notably the International Hotel.) They remained closed, however, and were never again to operate as originally envisaged. After several years, and presumably to the great relief of nearby hoteliers and shopkeepers faced with

dispiritingly vacant premises, a new company was set up at a public meeting in 1866 and the premises were reopened as Assembly Rooms in the following year.

This was not quite the end of Turkish baths in Bray, for in November 1867, some months after the opening of the Assembly Rooms, Dr Barter reopened Turkish baths in what was described as the north wing (though either the east or the west wing seems more likely). This must have been a very minor affair compared with the original baths, presumably reusing some of the original small bath rooms and chambers. The baths seem to have continued in this reduced form for just a couple of years – they appeared in *Thom's Directory* alongside the Assembly Rooms only in 1868 and 1869, with James Walsh as manager. (Walsh managed Dr Barter's Turkish baths in Upper Sackville (O'Connell) Street at the same time.) Presumably they closed in 1869. From this time onwards the large centre room was used for concerts and other entertainments and the east and west wings were leased out to various bodies, including the Alexandra Masonic Lodge, the Society of Friends, and the Plymouth Brethren.

Dr Barter died in 1870 at the age of sixty-eight. By this time William Dargan was also dead, and a chapter in the story of Bray's development had closed. The Turkish Baths building continued as Assembly Rooms, but apparently with mixed fortunes. In February 1877 the *Freeman's Journal* described it as 'devoted to ruin and neglect ... a perfect eyecore', with household linens on cords strung from the trees and fowl underfoot. Arthur Doran, author of *Bray and its environs*, published in Bray in about 1905, and who looked out on the building every day from his chemist's shop at 1 Goldsmith Terrace, called it a 'speckled elephant'.

The building was dramatically changed in about 1900 to the appearance by which it is still remembered. The exterior was rendered, completely obliterating the brick patterns; presumably this seemed necessary to preserve the structure. It was not, however, materially changed. In the twentieth century the Turkish Baths was used as a cinema – the Picture House. Finally it stood derelict, a sad ghost, until the demolition squad arrived in February 1980 (Figures 4 & 5). This author rescued a few bricks, which may still be incorporated into the border edgings of a south Dublin garden. No doubt other fragments remain in and around Bray – the last reminders of a lost historic building and its pioneering role.



Figure 5. Derelict baths
Note brickwork where plaster has fallen

Sources not specifically mentioned in text:

K.M. Davies, *Irish historic towns atlas no 9, Bray* (Dublin, 1998).

The history of the Turkish bath in Ireland and Britain has been extensively researched by Malcolm R. Shifrin, to whom the present author owes many thanks, in particular for supplying Wollaston's lengthy description of Bray's Turkish Baths and the photograph of Dr Barter. Shifrin's research appears as *Victorian Turkish baths: their origin, development, and gradual decline*, available on his comprehensive website: www.victorianturkishbath.org. Figures 4 & 5 courtesy the late Jan Sheehy.

ROBERT WOLLASTON'S DESCRIPTION OF BRAY TURKISH BATHS

The building cost £10,000; it is extremely handsome, of an Oriental style of architecture – of red and white bricks alternately placed, and faced with stone. The interior is very appropriately decorated, and composed of several apartments admirably adapted to their respective uses. There is a grand entrance hall, or reception room, divided into a dozen small apartments on each side of the hall, each fitted as a dressing room, with a couch, &c, to lie down upon after the use of the Bath; divans or couches placed around the room for the purposes of reposing, smoking, and conversation. The ceiling is painted in arabesque, and richly coloured with the favourite Turkish colours – green, red, and blue. The windows are all of coloured glass, and the light of the apartment is most agreeably diffused by the hues of the glass. The centre is ornamented with a handsome marble fountain; flowers and aquatic plants, and ferns, interspersed amongst shells and rock-work, adorn the fountain. The flooring is richly inlaid with tessellated pavement – made for the purpose at Minton's Porcelain Works, in Staffordshire in imitation of the pavement of ancient Baths. The warm and hot air rooms are also beautifully constructed, with marble seats and tessellated pavement; the domes are enriched with stars of variegated glass, which give a brilliant appearance. There are, in recesses connected with the hot rooms, chambers for ablution, where tepid and cold water are plentifully supplied as Shower and Dash [i.e. douche] Baths; and there are to be attendants in Turkish costume to shampoo the bathers; coffee and sherbet, cigars and pipes, will be added, to complete the whole ceremony of the Turkish mode of bathing.

A WALK ALONG BRAY SEAFRONT

KATHLEEN KINSELLA

We will start our walk on the Dublin side of Bray Harbour, just where Woodbrook Golf Club ends. Looking across the railway to the right, we can see a building through the trees which is the club house and behind it a much larger structure which was built by Sir Stanley Cochrane, owner of Woodbrook, as an Opera House at the beginning of the last century. The two railway platforms (no longer in use) were to facilitate not only golfers but also the opera trains bringing people to performances there. Among the famous artists to appear there were Dame Nellie Melba and John McCormack.



Coming back to the North Beach – at certain times of the year, when there is a very low tide, one can see the remains of a prehistoric forest which suggests that the sea area between ourselves and Wales was much narrower than at present.

An event in March 1947 is still remembered by many of the older people in the town. The M.V. Bolivar, carrying a cargo from South America, was wrecked off the Kish Lighthouse. Luckily, there were no fatalities but for weeks afterwards, cargo items, including bales of leather, were washed ashore at Bray's North Beach. Because it was a time of very great shortages immediately after the Second World War, the floissam was a real bonanza for the town. Shoes, bags and horse saddles were made from the 'Bolivar Leather'.

Proceeding along towards the harbour, we see the railway line, which was built in the early 1850s by William Dargan. The station was officially opened in July 1854. From that date on, Bray changed from a small town into a major Victorian seaside resort. Most of the buildings on the seafront date from that time.

But to return to the harbour – it is now the headquarters of Bray Sailing Club and a large flock of swans have settled there. When it was built, however, in 1891 it was a very busy place with a lot of small boats and, at least three times a month, cargo ships bringing coal and other goods for local merchants. It even had a harbour master and a lighthouse. A huge storm in September 1957 saw the collapse of the lighthouse into the sea (luckily, the keeper, Pat O'Brien, was not in it at the time). Until its recent removal, we had the only underwater lighthouse in the world!

A row of cottages (Dock Terrace) dating from 1862 beside the Harbour Bar was acquired by Bray Urban Council in 1952 for demolition. This site is now occupied by the Bray Sea Scouts' group, a small apartment building and a boat-yard.

Just after leaving the harbour, we come to a very historic terrace of houses – Martello Terrace where, at No. 1, James Joyce lived as a young boy for about four years (1887-1891). This house was the scene of the Christmas dinner in 'Portrait of the Artist . . .' and the acrimonious quarrel between the children's governess Dante and Joyce's father about Parnell. At no. 4 in this terrace, lived the Vance family with their young daughter Eileen whom James obviously fancied. He described her thus in 'Portrait of the Artist . . .', "Eileen Vance had long cool hands. One evening when playing 'tig', she had put her hands over his eyes. Long, white and thin and cold and soft, a cold white thing! That was the meaning of Tower of Ivory". Eileen was the eldest of three daughters of James Vance who set up a pharmacy at 92 Main Street with a partner and they traded as "Vance & Wilson". The pharmacy still trades under that name.

On the right-hand side on a little hill overlooking Martello Terrace, there is a round stone building with a modern roof attachment. This is a Martello tower of which there were many examples around the coast. The English built these at the time of the Napoleonic Wars as a defence against invasion. However, for many young people to-day, the real historic interest is the fact that 'Bono' of U2 lived there at the start of his career.

From the arrival of the railway in 1854, Bray continued to develop and, in the 1860s, William Dargan set out a green esplanade where strollers could enjoy the sea air. Between 1860 and 1877, the sea flooded the new esplanade area five times and so it was decided that a promenade should be built. This was finished in 1886. Up to two years ago, the sea came right up to this wall and there was a lovely sandy beach in the summer. Because of recurrent flooding and the problem of erosion undermining the promenade, a coastal protection scheme had to be undertaken. Unfortunately, the scheme chosen by the Council involved the dumping of shingle on the beach to a height level with the promenade, giving the seashore its present rather bleak aspect.

Right up to the middle of the last century, the seafront was the focus of all sorts of entertainment such as concert parties, band recitals, dancing competitions, clock golf, tennis courts and boat trips around Bray Head.

Further along the road, there is an imposing terrace of four houses called Esplanade Terrace. Dr. William Wilde (father of Oscar), built these in 1863. Dr. William, eye and ear surgeon and antiquarian, was one of the early developers of the town and a member of the Town Commission. He also owned "Elsinore" (now the Strand Hotel). He was knighted by Queen Victoria for his services to the Irish Census Board on which he served as medical commissioner. His social standing was soon, however, to suffer a setback. An alleged indiscretion in relation to a female patient led to a chain of events ending in a libel action. The young woman in question, Mary Josephine Travers, when spurned by Sir William, started a campaign of harassment against the Wilde family. She even pursued them to Bray, where Lady Wilde and her children had taken refuge at Esplanade Terrace. This led to Lady Wilde writing a letter of complaint to the young woman's father (Professor of Medical Jurisprudence at Trinity College, Dublin). Mary Travers found the letter and sued Lady Wilde for libel. She won her case but was awarded the derisory damages of one farthing. Wilde's reputation was in shreds and he more or less retired from public life. He died in 1876 leaving his Bray houses to his son Oscar. The latter and an estate agent, with whom the properties were listed, accepted offers from two different bidders at the same time. The bidder who was subsequently declared unsuccessful sued. Oscar won the case in Bray Court but with all the expenses involved, there was only £3,000 left.

Just beside Esplanade Terrace, there is a small roadway called Convent Avenue. Here, in 1835, six skeletons, buried in the Roman fashion, were found. As there is no evidence that the Romans ever settled in Ireland, it could be conjectured that the remains were those of unwelcome visitors or victims of a shipwreck. Be that as it may, the town and seafront were very popular with tourists in the nineteenth century. The Bray Head Hotel was opened by John Lacy in 1860. The Esplanade Hotel was built in 1890 on the site of the former coastguard station. It is an example of the neo-gothic/art nouveau style that was popular in the 1890's.

Bray seafront has a long and interesting history, not least because of its links with two of the most illustrious figures of world literature.

SOURCES:

- Richard Ellmann, James Joyce, Oxford 1982
- Richard Ellmann, Oscar Wilde, London 1987
- Liam Clare, The Submerged Forest (Portrait of Bray, ed. by Eva O'Cathair and Jason Forde, Bray, 1998)
- K. M. Davies, Bray (Irish Historic Town Atlas, No. 9), Dublin, 1998.

THE QUINSBORO ROAD TUNNEL

JAMES SCANNELL

On 10 July 1854, a new era in the development of Bray was inaugurated with the commencement of the Dublin and Wicklow Railway Company's train service from Bray to Harcourt Road, Dublin and Bray to Dalkey. Initially, there were 6 weekday departures/arrivals to and from Harcourt Road with 5 on a Sunday and 7 weekday departures/arrivals to and from Dalkey with 6 on Sundays. A direct service from Bray to Westland Row (Dublin Pearse) did not commence operation until 1 July 1856 after the former Kingstown - Dalkey Atmospheric line had been modified for steam locomotive traffic while the Harcourt Street Dublin terminus did not open until 7 February 1859 replacing Harcourt Road as the Dublin end of the line.

At the railway station where the Quinsboro Road crossed the tracks, a level crossing with a set of gates was erected to protect the public from trains passing up and down the line. With the passage of time, the volume of railway traffic grew, and increasingly the public encountered more and more delays at the gates. As early as 1857, a wooden footbridge was erected and heavily used by pedestrians but the problem of delays for vehicular traffic still remained. As the volume of rail traffic continued to increase, delays at the gates became a point of great annoyance and irritation for some residents but nothing was done until 1871. By this time at least 18 trains a day were arriving from and departing to Westland Row, Dublin (Pearse station), with a similar number of trains arriving from and departing to Harcourt Street.

In 1871, Edward Lysaght Griffin, Violet Hill, Bray, who was a Co. Wicklow magistrate, submitted a formal complaint to the Board of Trade about the problems and delays at the Bray Gates. This complaint was referred to the Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford Railway Co. (DW & WR) which took matters in hand. A Parliamentary bill covering a variety of items was prepared, including a novel alteration to the level crossing at Bray, which had it come to pass, would have provided the town with a unique feature.

At this time, the railway company was planning to install a third track from Shanganagh Junction to Bray which would have resulted in further delays at the level crossing, so the draft bill of their proposals was submitted to the Board of Trade (BoT) which scrutinised all railway plans and proposals to ensure that they conformed with Standing Orders of the Houses of Parliament for draft legislation and met with their requirements. The BoT indicated that, in the absence of up to date signalling equipment at Bray, a bridge or underpass should be constructed to replace the level crossing gates. The DW & WR proposal was to replace the existing level crossing with a short underpass

or vehicular tunnel some 27 feet wide, 14 feet in height extending in a downwards direction from a point opposite the front door of the former International Hotel, roughly the main entrance of Bray Leisure Bowl which currently stands on the site of the former hotel, emerging at ground level on Strand Road. The railway bridge on Seapoint Road has a height clearance of 11 ft. 3 ins. to give an indication of the scale of this proposal.

The DW & WR agreed to proceed with this road tunnel in the belief that it was carrying out the wishes of the BoT but the Bray Township Commissioners who had acquired the powers of maintaining the roads in the township from the County Wicklow Grand Jury under the *Bray Township Act, 1866*, were unhappy with this proposal as were a number of prominent citizens in the town.

Faced with a potential campaign of opposition, the DW & WR abandoned its plans for the road tunnel, provided new signals for the station and erected a new iron footbridge in place of the wooden one.

However, from time to time there were still complaints from Mr Breslin, owner of the Marine Station Hotel, who wanted an underpass instead of the iron footbridge, even offering land for it but once he was informed that the cost of building the underpass would be £1000, he ceased to object to the footbridge. Breslin seems to have had a "love/hate" relationship with the DW & WR - delighted to profit from the business it brought him but did not like the proximity of the railway to his hotel. At one time, he asserted that the railway employee who operated the gates allowed idlers to stand around and gossip, that steam locomotives sounded their whistles and blew off smoke and steam to the annoyance of his guests.

And thus Bray lost what would have been a unique addition to the Quinsboro Road though, with a height clearance of 14 feet, many modern day vehicles would be unable to use it. The level crossing gates at Bray railway station were replaced as part of the DART construction work in the 1980's with the more modern type barrier gates. But one thing hasn't changed - there are still delays to traffic from time to time due to the arrival and departure of trains, which could increase when the expanded timetable comes into operation once the DART upgrade programme which was commenced in 2003 is finally completed.

Sources

G.R. Mahon, *Irish Railways in 1870 - Part 2* in *Journal of the Irish Railway Record Society*, Vol.10, No 59, October 1972; 'Irish Railways in 1871 - Part 2', in *Journal of the Irish Railway Record Society*, Vol. 11, No 63, February 1974.

K.A.Murray, 'Bray Railway Station' - Text of lecture to the Old Bray Society, 1993. John O'Sullivan, Tony Dunne and Seamus Cannon (Eds), *The Book of Bray*, Blackrock 1989.

Ernest W. Shepherd, *The Dublin and South Eastern Railway*, Newton Abbot, 1974.

Ernie Shepherd & Gerry Beesty, *Dublin and South Eastern Railway*, Leicester, 1998.

BRAY BEFORE AND AFTER THE RAILWAY

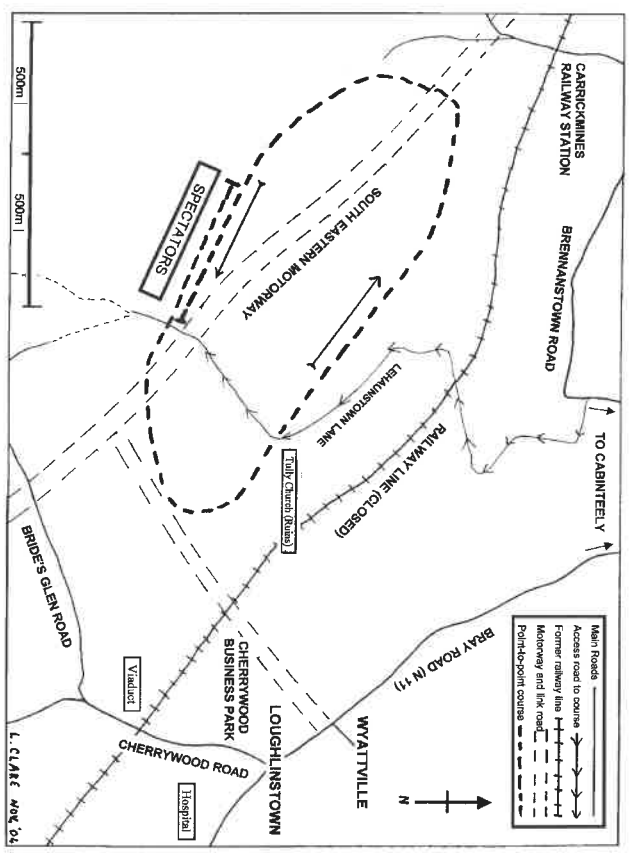
BRIAN WHITE

Two trade directories set seventy years apart give us the opportunity to look at Bray before and after the Railway. The year 1854 was a turning point in the development of the town due to the impact of the new railway service which brought employment, tourism, extensive house-building and prosperity.

	PIGOT'S DIRECTORY 1824	SLATER'S DIRECTORY 1894
Population	1,700	6,888
Location	A small, but pleasant town, ten miles south by east of Dublin	Bray is a pretty, well built town and flourishing watering place
Railway	-	With a station on the Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford Railway
Town Commissioners	-	The affairs of the town are administered by a board consisting of 15 commissioners, inclusive of the chairman and a town clerk
Churches / Schools	The church is situated on a steep and lofty eminence, overhanging the river. Near the church is a barrack. There is also a Roman Catholic chapel. The Catholics have two charity schools, one for unlimited number of boys, the other for girls; these schools are supported by annual sermons.	The old parish church, now St. Paul's Chapel of Ease, stands on elevated ground near Bray Bridge. The parish church (Christ Church) is very handsome edifice, and is situated in the upper end of the town. There is a fine Catholic church in the centre of Main Street; and also one in Little Bray; a very pretty church for Scotch Presbyterians on the Quinsboro road and one for Wesleyans
Commerce	A Savings Bank established in 1819. Bray has neither Market, nor manufactures, nor is there a pier to its harbour for the accommodation of vessels.	A branch of the Hibernian Joint Stock and a Branch of the Northern Banking Co. Limited are in the town. In 1890 the commissioners obtained an act for the purpose of constructing a harbour. The Royal Marine Hotel built for Mr Breslin in 1854. The Town Hall and Municipal buildings were erected in the Market Square. In 1884 a marine promenade and sea embankment costing £25,000 was commenced. In 1892 the commissioners used electricity for public lighting of the town
Other structures	-	-
Fairs	Fairs are held on 1st May and 20th September for cattle, sheep, woollen goods and toys	Fairs are held on the 1st Wednesday of each month

BRAY'S DAY OUT AT THE RACES

LIAM CLARE



Map showing the location of the course at Lehaunstown which lies about a mile west of the N11 between Loughlinstown and Cabinteely

The Bray Hunt's annual point-to-point races have been held at different venues – Galary, Newcastle, Ashford, but it is the Lehaunstown course, currently being bisected by the new South East motorway and soon to become part of the Loughlinstown Business Park, which I remember.

It is difficult to envisage the sense of popular interest, of excitement, of enthusiasm, of energy which was generated in this spot on a selected Wednesday afternoon in March of each year from 1946 to 1960. It was not just the regular racegoers, not just the hunting set, but people from all walks of life, young and old, who walked, cycled, drove, or travelled by bus or train to participate in the great occasion.

Point-to-point races evolved from cross-country racing and have been associated traditionally with hunts and hunting. Bray Harriers were formed in 1872 as the Bray Hunt Club. From the start, it organised an annual members' six-mile steepchase. The winner took the Bray Hunt Cup.

For decades, Bray point-to-point races were held at Calary but were moved to Lehanstown in 1946. The Lehanstown venue attracted a very large attendance at first, though the numbers declined very considerably during the late fifties, and the races were discontinued after 1960. They were subsequently re-established at Newcastle, and later held at Ashford.

Michael O'Brien, Master of the Hunt, personally prepared the course for the point-to-point races on his own farm at Lehanstown Park. Traditionally, races were held across country, over walls and ditches – or 'banks'. But later, as horses were more highly trained, ran at greater speeds and became more valuable assets and consequently a greater loss if injured, less dangerous 'bush' fences replaced the traditional banks. The change of venue facilitated the change to 'bush' fences.

Yet horses still died. I remember a horse falling at the last jump at Lehanstown on one occasion. It was shot in the head to end its misery. Townies like myself gathered around to study the animal lying on the ground. We had never seen a dead horse before.

Lehanstown was not just a test of horses but was also a major social event. Bray business closed for the afternoon – even the pubs – and the schools let their students and teachers off early, or else closed down for the full day. In 1947, Shankill Court was postponed because the court day coincided with race day.

Crowds travelled to the course by train from Bray, alighting at Carrickmines, and reaching the course across the fields. Others arrived by bus at Loughlinstown and tramped the rest of the way across country. Youngsters like myself cycled from Bray to Loughlinstown, and up the Bride's Glen. Not all race-goers, however, were from the Bray area. Crowds also came from the city because of the convenient location, the interesting course and the free admission.

Although cars were only gradually returning to the roads after the war, nearly one thousand cars were reported as being present at the first Lehanstown race meeting in 1946. After the event, immense congestion occurred when all the cars set off simultaneously for home, down the mile-long cul-de-sac lane from the point-to-point course to the nearest main road. The hundreds of pedestrians and cyclists also using the lane, added to the confusion.

The lower grassy slopes of the furze-covered hilltop of Lehanstown formed the grandstand from which spectators could see almost the entire course. Looking eastwards towards Killiney Hill, the horses lined up on the left before they thundered off to the right across Heronford Lane. They disappeared down towards Loughlinstown, re-emerging to re-cross the roadway beside the ruined Tully Church. They then sped northwards, right to left along the ridge of Tully, to Carrickmines, turned back along the side of the golf course and raced past the crowd for a second time before reaching the winning post.

The course was three and a half miles long, over firm upland, stubble, grass-land and ploughed fields. There were drop ditches, upbanks, double banks, walls and a stream around the course. Most of these were existing obstructions but two double banks were specially constructed for the course.

Each Spring, the bush fences were restored, and the ditches re-sodded for the races. Posts and rope fences were erected to create an enclosure. Tents were provided by Baileys the marquee suppliers, for weighing in and for dressing rooms, for weighing out and, of course, as a bar. On the Saturday before the races, hunt members were allowed to walk the course; next day, the public walked it.



In the early years, there were few horse boxes on the road and many horses arrived on foot the night before the races; others arrived by train at the sidings of Foxrock railway station. On the evening before the races, there was a great atmosphere of excitement in O'Brien's farmyard which was full of people and horses. And after the races, there was a huge job of cleaning up the fields when the crowds had scattered.

In the weeks before the racing season, horses were put in training, and over the years, the preparation grew in intensity as casual entries gave way to trained competitors. Owners tended to be farmers who were also hunt members. After five or six appearances at hunts, a horse got a 'hunt cert' and

could be entered in the point-to-point. Such an 'apprenticeship' was necessary because of the extra fitness needed for the extended gallop.

At Lehaunstown, there were generally six races on the programme – a Members' Race, a Farmers' Race, an Open Maiden Race, an Open Heavyweight Race, an Open Lightweight Race, and a Nomination Race to which members could nominate an entry.

The more enthusiastic owners did the rounds of point-to-point meetings in nearby counties during March and April each year. Some contestants came to Lehaunstown from as far away as Cork and Northern Ireland. The more successful point-to-point runners went on to Fairyhouse on Easter Monday and to Punchestown two weeks later. Horses which won a few point-to-point races increased considerably in value.

Jockeys often graduated from point-to-point to national hunt racing. Three jockeys had their first winners at the 1946 Lehaunstown meeting – Jack Doran, Tony Power, and 'fifteen year old Paddy Taaffe'. Pat Taaffe, in particular, went on to greater things. Well known participants, owners and jockeys, at Lehaunstown over the years included the Taaffe family – Tom and sons Pat, Toss and Billy; the Cash family – Ned and sons, John and Jimmy; Jack Doyle, Harry Kellett (Iris's father), Captain Bagalley, Spencer Freeman, Frank Flood and Frank Prendergast.

Point-to-point racing was a rough game and one could get seriously injured, so not all the hunt members participated. There were no cameras or photo finishes. However, there were some stewards. There were flagged starts and there were judges at the finishing line. Occasionally there were objections and disqualifications, mainly due to horses going the wrong side of the flags marking the course, but these were unusual.

I attended the races during their early years at Lehaunstown. Being a youngster at the time I was more interested in the side shows and fringe events than in the actual horse racing.

There were the bookies, a reported eighty-four of them in 1946. There were the tick-tack men, relaying the odds and laying off bets. There were the side-shows like 'Here's Joe, The Man With The Monkey'. Joe stood beside a large chart divided into squares, each square containing a number and a sum of money ranging from nil to ten shillings. The monkey sat on the top of the chart and was tied to its post with string. Punters paid six pence to draw a straw from a box. Inside the straw there was a cloakroom ticket and depending on the number of the ticket compared with the numbers on the chart, you might win anything up to ten shillings or you might win nothing.

Joe kept attracting the crowds by shouting "Here's another winner" and everyone seemed to be winning. A school friend of mine who ventured a sixpence, drew a blank but Joe shouted "Another winner" and pressed a sixpence into his hand. Another man with a similar game had the catch phrase "I change all classes of money except matrimony".

I recall the 'trick of the loop' man. On a makeshift table, the end of an orange box, he would place a belt with three loops. A punter paid to place a pencil into one of the loops, the 'loop' man pulled the belt and if the punter's pencil held the belt, he won the game. I never saw anyone winning this game except when the man was giving a free demonstration. Despite hours of practice at home, I failed to reproduce his secret.

Of course, the 'three-card-trick' men were also there with their associates. The card man would look away; a confederate would turn up the corner of the queen. It seemed so easy to find the queen. When the cards were tossed, a punter would pay ten shillings and pick up the card with the turned up corner only to be dismayed at finding that it wasn't the queen after all. A classmate of mine, with a lot more money than sense and a lot more money than his fellow students, lost two pounds on the game in my presence having won all the free demonstrations, but losing ten shillings each time on the real thing.

The authorities didn't like these guys. The three-card men had lightweight tables made from thin wooden frames and cloth tops. If the Gardai appeared, an operator could quickly fold the table up and hide it under his overcoat. On one occasion, I saw a Garda grab a table and smash it across his knee. The card man for the rest of the day had to use a bottle crate as a makeshift table. An acquaintance remembers a Garda from Cabinteely pushing through the crowd and kicking a card table up into the air, shattering it to pieces.

From time to time the fun was interrupted by the races.

Michael O'Brien, Master of the Hunt, resplendent in green riding gear, would race past, shouting at us juveniles to keep in behind the rope. Then the horses thundered past and headed off towards Loughlinstown to disappear for a few seconds in a dip in the ground before reappearing in the distance as they approached Tully Church to race along the ridge, right to left, towards Carrickmines. Within seconds the man in green would race past once more, again yelling at us to keep in, and the horses, five or six of them, would race to the finishing line.

I never took much interest in the races themselves or bothered to place a bet. This is not quite correct because I had one shilling each way on Clair de Lune III in the last race in 1949, and it won.

The last race was not the end of the day's events for those within the inner circle. After each year's races, a dance was held for hunt members and their friends. The Wicklow People advertised the 1952 race dance held at the International Hotel, Bray, with dancing 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. to the music of Billy Carter and his band. Tickets were ten shillings including supper and tax.

Sources of Information

This article is based on my own recollections and on information supplied by the late Michael O'Brien, Denise Young and Fintan Flynn, together with contemporary reports from the Irish Times, the Wicklow People, the Irish Independent, the Irish Press and the Irish Field.

THE DARGLE AND BRAY LAUNDRY IN THE 1950S AND '60S

RAY CRANLEY

I worked at the Dargle and Bray Laundry from February 1959 until June 1965, the first three years as a vanboy and the following three as a driver with routes of my own.

The Laundry ran a fleet of blue vans which daily traversed much of the counties Wicklow and Dublin, collecting soiled linen in the first half of the week and delivering it back, crisply laundered, in time for the weekend.

Finishing time was determined by how speedily you could complete your round, and the job was a constant race against time as one our 'lady' after another delayed things by failing to have her laundry ready when called for, while at the same time eating the head off you for being so late!

There was no such thing as going home leaving the round unfinished no matter how late the hour, and it wasn't unheard-of to be still knocking wearily on doors at half past ten at night.

Each van was identified by a letter of the alphabet, and on joining the Laundry I was assigned as helper to John Mooney on van D, whose rounds took in Bray, Dun Laoghaire, Dalkey and Killiney. My co-helper was Colm Brierton from Darley's Cottages.

On Monday mornings at eight thirty I began collecting from houses and flats on Quinsboro' Road, savouring the aromas of dozens of frying breakfasts as sleepy-eyed residents opened their doors to my knock, while Colm collected another part of the round.

At designated spots here and there I would leave little mountains of pillowcases stuffed with soiled laundry along the footpaths of Eglinton, Florence, Adelaide and Meath Roads, and on up to Raheen Park and Newcourt Road, to be picked up later by the vanman who was working in yet another area of the town.

The finished laundry was wrapped in brown paper and labelled for its particular van. Each van had its own colour-coded label. The girls in the packing department would wheel trolleys full of parcels out into the loading



bays and stack them onto deep wooden shelves. The driver and helpers would then sort them in lines on the floor and load them into the vans, last delivery first.

A weekly wash could consist of anything from a half dozen shirt collars in a little round leather box up to the huge linen 'hamper' sent by hotels and some of the big houses. In the tourist season, hotels could send two or three of these hampers at a time. In general, customers were conscientious about what they sent to be laundered, but there were always those kindly souls who wouldn't bat an eyelid while presenting you with a stomach-churning bundle that had obviously been on the receiving end of the results of an over-indulgent night at the pub.

Vanmen and helpers carried a leather moneybag at their waists supported by a strap over the shoulder. The money was cashed in if the round was finished before the office at the Laundry closed, but more often than not it was brought home overnight. I remember the strap digging into my shoulder as I made my way in the dark along the lonely Dargle Road to the Silver Bridge where I entered Pembroke Wood and climbed the steep paths through the trees by memory on my way home to Ballywaltrim.

Nowadays it would be unthinkable to walk home through dark woods night after night carrying a bag of money, but back then robberies and attacks were rare and I was more concerned that I might encounter some sort of spook.

In the 1950s the Laundry was already a long-established firm in Bray, having been in operation since the days of the horse, and the sheds we parked the vans in at night had once been stables for these hard-working animals. In the largest of these sheds were stored several large old horse-drawn wagons with the name of the Laundry painted in elegant letters on their sides. I do not know what became of these interesting relics of a bygone age when the Laundry closed in the early 1970s, but can't help thinking what wonderful floats they would have made in a present-day parade.

The era of the horse had not vanished completely, however, because Elsie Hopkins could be seen every day riding her white horse from Glencormac to her work at the Laundry and back home again.

Jimmy 'Juicy' Farrell was the longest-serving employee of the Laundry and had been there to make the transition from horse to motor van. In his youth Juicy had been a well-known footballer, playing in the 1920s for the famous 'Bray Unknowns'. (How about that for a contradiction in terms!)

Drivers were issued with uniforms about 1963, but by the mid '60s the writing was on the wall for the Dargle and Bray as well as other laundries like the White Swan, the Darty and the White Heather. Increasingly, the message heard at the doors was: '*Sorry, son. No laundry anymore, we've got a washing machine*'.

The Dargle and Bray Laundry closed its doors for the last time in January 1972, bringing to an end an establishment that had been known to generations of customers as 'The Laundry for Particular People'.

The following list of people who worked at the Laundry in the 1950s / '60s is compiled purely from memory, so mea culpa in advance to anybody I may have inadvertently left out. My thanks to Cathy Thomas (Nugent) for her help with names of female staff.

Juicy Farrell, Dominic O'Rourke, Paddy Ryan, John Mooney, Billy Brierton, Noel McCann, Bob Hamilton, Mick Mason, Ruth Mustard, Mary Seery, Anne Dixon, Lillian Harpur, Marie Mullen, Cathy Nugent, Winnie Cranley, Sonia Annesley, Breda Ashmore, Eisie Hopkins, Colin Brierton, Jackie Cummins, Steve Peake, Billy Power, Trevor Macken, Aidan Dodd, Liam McEvoy, Sam O'Leary, Dick O'Leary, Richie O'Leary, Paul Ashford, Steve Morris, Nancy Brierton, Rose Brierton, Joan McEvoy, Ann McEvoy, Mrs. Dunne, Catherine O'Leary, Sis Gallagher, Pat Darley, Ann Coogan, Margaret Coogan, Annie Jones, Dermot Coughlan, Dermot Coleman, Val Cranley, Ray Cranley, George Bishop, John O'Toole, Des Greene, Pat Brett, Pat Kearney, Liz Curruns, Phyllis Sweeney, Margie Sweeney, Brennie Cullen, Slay Cullen, Declan Cullen, Martin Thomas, Abbie Campbell, Sis Byrne, Harry Griffith, Mrs. Griffith, Willie 'Binkie' Lee, 'Nobby' Clarke, Maura Forde, Maisie Grant, Emily Byrne, Alice O'Donnell, Lucy O'Toole, Vera O'Toole, Lily O'Toole, Julia Browne, Nuala Canavan, Mary Canavan, John Murphy, Noel Murphy, Maura Dunne, Jim Martin, Lee Scanlan, Mick Kearney.

Temporary drivers for holidays etc. were: Bill Kenny, Paddy Brien and Christy Poynton, all from Doyle's Garage on the Main Street.



The author

TELEPHONE BRAY 2013.

YOUR LINEN IS ON SHOW EVERY DAY

HAVE IT LAUNDERED BY

The Dargle & Bray Laundry

DARGLE VALE,

BRAY.

FIR IARNRÓID M'ÓIGE

DIARMUID BREATHNACH

Is tuairisc é ar an am fadó, beagnach 60 bliain ó shin, gurbh iad fir an iarnróid a d'íoc as Turas na Croise a chur in airde in Eaglais Bhanríon na Síochána sa Vevay agus as an oissteansóir (monstrance) agus as an lampa sanctóra. Gan amhras ba é an t-iarnróid an fostaítheoir ba mhó i mBré san am. Níl figiúirí agam mar ghlanchruthúnas air sin, ach is cinnte go raibh a n-oibríthe níos líomhaire ná ag Solus, an mhonarcha ba mhó sa bhaile. Ar aon chuma, ar Bhóthar Uí Bhroin sa Vevay bhí siad ar gach taobh díom, os mo dhomhair amach agus taobh thiar díom, iad ar fad éagsuil le chéile ó thaobh pearsantachta de.

Taobh liom bhí Paddy Doyle. Dhéanadh seisean seiceáil ar do thicéad traenach. Bhí bean bhreá aige, í an-chineálta, ach d'fhaigneadh m'athair de locht uirthi an tuin ardósach a bhí ar a guth. Bhí sí fostaíthe lá dá saol ag an réalt scannáin Geraldine Fitzgerald. Ní raibh de locht ag m'athair ar a fear céile ach go nglanadh sé fuinneoga an tí. Is piteog nó mallat a dhéanfaidh a leithéid, dar leis. Fuair Doyle ardú céime ina dhiaidh sin nuair a ceapadh é ina mháistir stáisiúin i gCarrraig Maighín. Thug sé pléisúir ar leith dom lá samhraidh a chaitheamh lena bheirt ghasúir, John agus Eileen, i dteach an stáisiúin chiuin sin. Comharsana leis na Dúilligh ab ea Bill Flood, a bhanchéile agus a mbeirt mhac, Mylie agus Willie, agus a gceathrar iníonacha, Doreen, Justine, Violet agus Rachel. Ba é Willie an cara ba mhó agam. Fuair sé bás agus é ina bhuachaill óg. Cloisim a ghuth fós féin agus é ag fiafraí dem mháthair: 'Can Derry come out to play?'. Bhí guth breá ceoil ag Bill Flood agus ghlacadh sé páirt i gceolchoirmeacha in Halla Flórans, mar a bhfuil siopa bréagán Smyths anois. Is cuimhin liom go gcaitheadh sé carabhat cuachóige (dickie bow) ar an Domhnach, rud annamh go maith an uair úd. Cúntóir ag feisteoir nó fíter ar an iarnród ab ea é.

Ar an taobh eile dínn bhí Bill Richardson agus a bhean Rose. Is é an cúram a bhí ar Bill an bóthar iarrann timpeall Cheann Bhré a shúil ar eagla aon chlocha móra a thitim ar na ráillí. Dá mbeifeá ag iarraidh snámh a dhéanamh i bPoll an Bhranda, nó bolg a bheith le gréin agat ar an trá ansíúd, is i ngan fhios do Bill a chaitheá na ráillí a thrasnú. Fear aerach ab ea é ach bean roimh a haimisir ab ea Rós agus is amuigh sa leithreas ab éigean do Bhill gal den phíopa a bheith aige. Chloisfeá é ansíúd go minic ag portaireacht jiganna agus ríleanna go ceolmhar, rud a chuireadh ole ar mo thuismitheoir. Bhí leithris an dá theach buailte suas lena chéile sa chlós cúil agus ba sháru é an ceol seo ar an uaigneas agus ar an bpríobháid is cuí do leithris. Ní mór a thuiscint gurbh ó cheartlár na

tuaithe do mo mhuintir agus gan aon chleachtadh acu ar chomharsana ag cúngú orthu ar an gcuma sin.

I mbéal an dorais ag Bill bhí a dheartháir Tom ('Parnell'), fear tine san iarnród agus tiománaí ina dhiaidh sin. Bhíos cairdiúil le Liam, mac le Tom. Bhí an tríú deartháir, 'Happy' Jack Richardson, tiománaí traenach eile, ina chónaí i mBailtíní na Cúirte Nua, na títhe breátha a dtugadh muintir an Vevay 'the nutility cottages' orthu; bhíos ar scoil lena mhac Brendan agus bhí iníon leis, Ronnie, pósta ar Joe Loughman, beannacht Dé lena anam. Deartháir eile leo ar an iarnród ab ea Oscar, a raibh cónaí air i gCearnóg Wolfe Tone.

Ós ár gcomhair amach bhí George Harold, a bhean agus a iníon Francie ina gcónaí. Ba é George, duine breá ard beathaithe, an fear comharthaíochta sa stáisiún agus bhí sé ina gharda ar ball. Cuimhním ar Francie i ngeall ar na cluichí stráide go léir a mbíodh sí páirteach iontu. Níorbh fhada ó George a bhí cónaí ar fhear comharthaíochta eile, Dan Doyle. Cúpla doras ó mhuintir Harold bhí an tiománaí traenach Mick ('Bompsie') Murphy, a bhean agus a mbeirt iníonacha, May agus Joanie, agus a madra 'Captain' Murphy. Ar an mbóthar freisin bhí an tiománaí Harry ('Bevo') Long agus an garda Dan Troy, athair an tsagairt cháiliúil, Aidan, i mbéal Feirste (bhí cónaí air ina dhiaidh sin ar Bhóthar an Vevay in aice le Scoil Chronáin). Cuimhním freisin ar mo chara Paddy Walsh a raibh a athair, Tom ('The Hare') Walsh, ina fhear tine agus ina thiománaí ar ball, ar an tiománaí mór ramhar Peter ('Woolly') Fortune, agus ar shearphinséir iarnróid dar sloinne Murphy a bhí ina chónaí ag bun an bhóthair ag 1 Ardán Uí Bhroin.

Taobh thiar díom i gCearnóg Wolfe Tone bhí garda iarnróid dar sloinne Sullivan, ar mhac leis Tom, a dtugaimís 'Sluggie' air agus tiománaí dar sloinne Jim Monahan, a rabhas cairdiúil lena mhac Richie. Beannacht Dé dlíis orthu go léir. Is é mo thuairim go raibh a n-athreacha go léir san iarnród rómpu agus iad neamhspleách dá réir, ó thaobh cead cainte de agus saoirse pholaitiúil de, ar thiar naí talún, ar fostaitheoirí áitiúla, agus fiú ar an eaglais. Bhí an neamhspleáchas céanna mar oidhreacht dúchais ag fir iarnróid m'óige.



*The Wheeler Brothers in the late 1950s
(all train drivers)
Back L-R: Ed, Jack and Bert
Front L-R: Bill and Tom*

THE LAST TRAIN FROM HARCOURT STREET

31st DECEMBER 1958

CHRISTY BRIEN, P.C.

BRAY RAILWAY STATION was fairly crowded on Wednesday afternoon. It was evident why the people had gathered there. The last train from Bray to Harcourt Street was about to make its run.

Securing my ticket, I boarded the train and waited to move off. Nearly all the people had done the same. Then, at 2.40 p.m., the guard (Jack O'Sullivan) blew his whistle and raised his flag. Ed. Wheeler (the driver) sounded a long blast on the siren and, to the waving of hands and exploding fog signals, the last run to Harcourt St. began.

It was a sad parting, indeed. Most of the older passengers seemed rather quiet. At each station on the run-in, the train stopped to take on more passengers, mostly young ones who, in their multi-coloured scarves and



general holiday attire, added a gay touch to the scene, and so it was until we reached Harcourt Street.

Harcourt Street had rather a forlorn look about it. It was decked out in holly and coloured lights, but still it had a bare look. After some time on the platform I suddenly noticed why the place seemed bare, all the big hoarding for advertising had been stripped from the walls. This, more than anything else, brought home to me the final act. It was like looking into an empty house.

As time ticked on, Harcourt Street Station began to fill up as on a sunny Sunday in mid-July. Newsreel men, reporters, cameramen, mingled with the crowd. Civic Guards, train guards, porters and drivers chatted in groups and the children everywhere.

Then the train was made up, treble the length of the incoming Bray train. All passengers to Bray and stations between were ushered aboard. We waited in silence for the signal to drop.

At 4.25 p.m. Jack O'Sullivan raised the flag. Edward Wheeler, with three sirens at his command, blew a long piercing scream and opened the throttle. To the flash of cameras and the thunder of scores of exploding fog signals, the long train began to move. Flags, handkerchiefs, streamers, hats and in fact, anything that could be waved, was waved. Cheering and shouting, we were on the last run.

As we came near each station, the train was greeted by crowds cheering and waving. At Milltown, the staffs of the laundry there greeted the train with cheers and the laundry hooters sounded. All along the line it was the same. At Shankill, the train paused, or so I thought, a little longer as if to take a long breath for the last stretch of rail to Bray. Gathering speed, the lone train streaked past Woodbrook Halt, the junction and, with her sirens screaming, detonators and cheers, passed over the Dargle River and into Bray Station.

The last train from Harcourt Street to Bray had made its run. Another chapter of railway history was closed.

Moving among the crowd at Bray Station, I saw many old, familiar faces – men now retired from the service – Mick Rosturn, Geo. O'Brien, Joe Kenny, whose father was a Stationmaster and whose family had decades of service with the railway. I spoke with many of these oldtimers. They recalled the great days of the railway and the men who served it — the Fortunes, Wheelers, O'Briens, Hannons, Hylands, Richardsons and many more.

Some of these families, they told me, had association with the railway since the first train puffed into Bray. Now the great days were done: the pride that was once theirs was over. Bray Railway Station would never be, for them, the same. Their one reproach was 'Why didn't C.I.E. put on a steam train for the last run?'



Edward Daly – One of the leaders in the 1916 Rebellion.

Bray Railway Station is named after him.

(From the Wicklow People)

EARLY SCOUTING IN BRAY

BRIAN WHITE

The 1st Wicklow Greystones and a Dundalk Scout Group share the honours of the oldest scout groups formed in Ireland. Baden Powell, the founder of scouting, was stationed at Dundalk Barracks during his army career.

Scouting in Bray started over a book. The father of a Bray boy was in London in 1909, where he bought his son a copy of "Scouting for Boys" published by Robert Baden Powell in London, January 1908.

When the boy's father returned to Bray he had a chat with the 12th Earl of Meath "about those Boy Scouts". Lord Meath confessed he knew nothing about Boy Scouts, and was loaned the book to read. Lord Meath decided to talk to Robert Baden Powell about scouting. Baden Powell asked Lord Meath to be Scouting Commissioner for Ireland and be a member of the H.Q. Council in London. On returning to Ireland in January 1910, Lord Meath asked Rev. R. W. Lefroy to become Scout Master of the 1st Bray Scout Troop.

A newspaper of the day carried a report of the first two months activities carried out by this fledgling group.

The first Bray Troop of Boy Scouts was formed in February 1910 and, due to the great enthusiasm and interest shown by all those who joined, was a great success.

March was a busy month for the Troop. On Saturday March 5th, they marched to Kiltuddery where through the kind permission of the Earl of Meath they spent the afternoon practising Scout games and exercises.



The 1st Bray Scout Group

On Monday March 14th, Mr. Marrier, Scout Master of the Kingstown¹ Troop, examined the members of the Bray Troop in Scout Law and said at the end of his examination that he was very impressed with the progress made by the Troop members given the short time that they were in existence.

As Chief Scout, Baden Powell paid three visits to Ireland 1910, 1916 and 1928.

On Tuesday March 15th, the Bray Troop assembled at headquarters (St. Paul's School, Herbert Road, Bray, now the public car park) and leaving there at 1.30 p.m. marched down the Quinsboro Road to the Railway Station to catch the 2.00 p.m. train to Dublin. They paid a visit to the National Museum after which they had tea at the XL Cafe.

From there they marched to Portobello Barracks (now Cathal Brugha Barracks) in Rathmines where they were inspected by the Chief Scout, Sir Robert S. Baden Powell, who expressed his satisfaction with the Troop. On leaving Portobello Barracks, the Bray Troop returned home to Bray on the 9.45 p.m. train from Dublin

In 1910 any boy wishing to join the troop could contact the Scout Master, Rev. R. W. Lefroy, Cambrai, King Edward Road, Bray or the Assistant Scout Master Mr. George S. Childs, Kilruddery or the Adjutant Mr. A. F. McNulty.

Many boys were anxious to join the Troop, which soon had thirty members. There was great activity as the recruits were coached for the Tenderfoot badge, uniforms were ordered and programmes arranged. Good progress was made, and when some gained 2nd Class Badge, it was decided to hold the Troop's first annual camp in August 1910.

This was a major project, for the only member who had ever spent a night under canvas was the Assistant Scout Master George Childs. Nobody had any idea how the camp was to be organised. A further difficulty was that in those Edwardian days people regarded the night air as dangerous, and most bedroom windows were tightly closed at night. Fond mothers regarded the thought of their tender darlings encountering such dangers with horror, and great difficulty was experienced in overcoming their fears.

A suitable site for the camp was a major project, as none of the local landowners had heard of Boy Scouts, and shuddered at the thought of a lot of boys running loose on their estates, but eventually the 8th Viscount Powerscourt decided to take the risk and offered a site in Ladies Meadow on his demesne for their first camp.

The next problem was tents. The troop got a loan of one bell tent. Luckily, there was a group of Frontiers men camping in Powerscourt at the same time, and a deal was done for the troop to take over some of their tents. On arrival in Powerscourt, the troop was inspected by Lord Powerscourt and he led them to the camp site. En route to the camp, the troop took the lower road to Enniskerry, and as the troop wheeled round the road into the village to climb the steep hill to Powerscourt, the villagers rushed to see this strange column of boys in their wide-brimmed hats, khaki shirts and shorts.

A Sea Scout section was added to the 1st Bray Scout Troop in 1912 and a Cub section in 1916. The last known record of the 1st Bray Troop is dated 1943.

Abbreviations used in table

G.S.M.	Group Scout Master	C.M.	Cub Master
S.M.	Scout Master	A.C.M.	Assistant Cub Master
A.S.M.	Assistant Scout Master		

¹ Now Dun Laoghaire

1st BRAY SCOUT GROUP

Registration Date	Group HQ or Meeting Place	Name	Address	Rank	No. of Cub Scouts	No. of Scouts	No. of Rover Scouts	No. of Leaders	Total
18/08/1919	Kilruddery, Bray	Rev. R. H. Cochrane	7 Carlton Terrace, Bray	S.M. District Commissioner		17		1	18
06/10/1919	St. Paul's School Herbert Road Bray	Miss Jessie M. Grindley Miss Kathleen C. Scott	The Cottage, Bray Ennismore, Bray	C.M. A.C.M.	12			2	14
29/05/1928	St. Paul's School Herbert Road Bray & Rere 11 Goldsmith Terrace Bray	William Valentine Samuel Valentine Robert Curley George S. Childs J. Lysaght MacGowan	Ballywaltrim Ballywaltrim 8 Dargan Street	G.S.M & S.M. A.S.M A.S.M District Commissioner Hon. Secretary		11	11	3	25
01/10/1928		William Valentine Samuel Valentine Robert Curley Eric Mackenzie	Ballywaltrim Ballywaltrim 8 Dargan Street 3 Killarney Villas	G.S.M. & S.M. A.S.M. A.S.M. A.S.M.		20	11	4	35
04/10/1928		Rev B. L. Handy R. Heatley	9 Eglinton Road St. Paul's, Bray	S.M. A.S.M.		15		2	17
06/04/1943	1st Bray Sea Scout Sunbeam House, Bray	Mr. Trevor Scott Miss E. Archer Auguste Z. Scott C. Smith	1 Galtrim Park, Bray Sunbeam House, Bray Church Road, Bray	C.M. A.C.M. Hon. Secretary District Commissioner, East Wicklow District	10			2	12

TANSEYS OF BRAY

KIERAN FLANAGAN

The Corpus Christi Procession used to be one of the big events in Bray. The gold monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament was carried through the streets every June followed by hundreds of parishioners. A canopy held aloft by four men covered the priest who bore the monstrance. One of these men was Owen Tansey, a tall imposing man who always wore white gloves and a colourful Knight of Columbanus sash. Owen came to Bray from Roscommon in 1920 and set up his firm of drapers and outfitters on Quinsboro Road where that Tansey name still remains above the new shop front.

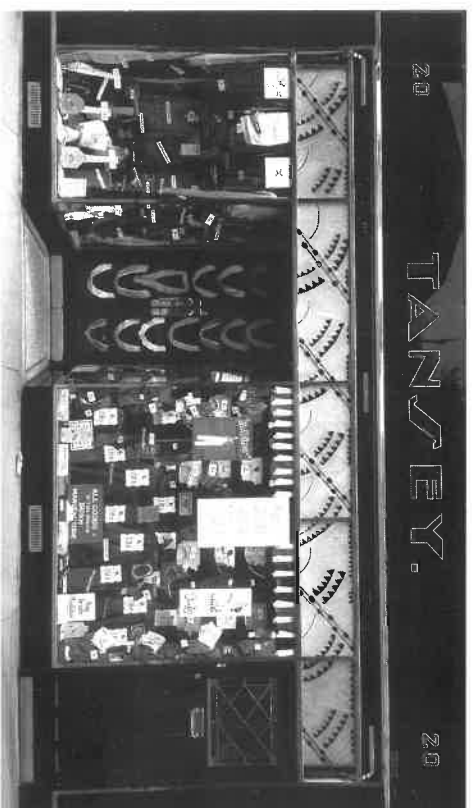


He had some good marketing ideas – often humorous ones. In an advertisement in the 1920's "our boots and shoes have tongues, they speak for themselves." But in the 1930's he came up with a more novel way of attracting new clients. "Bus or rail fares fully paid on all purchases of £2 worth or over." This brought new customers from South County Dublin, Wicklow and further afield. From the newspapers of 1930s we find that Tansey had exceptional value.

Gents Made to Measure Suits from	50/- to 70/- shillings
Boys Grey Flannel Suits	5s/11d
Mens Soft Hats all shades	3s/11d to 10s/6d
Ladies Silk Stockings	1s/- a pair
Cardigans	3s/11d

Later on, one of his slogans read:

*"Off in the chilly night
Ere slumber's chain hath
Bound you
Your sleep will be a pure
Delight
With a Tansey blanket
around you"*



There is an amusing true story about a gents overcoat which was resold in a charity shop in Australia in 1992. The story comes from the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper in 1992. A Mr Michael Tetley was buying an overcoat from a charity shop because he was going to a fancy dress party in the role of the Phantom. He bought the coat and when he put his hand into the inside pocket he drew forth a receipt for £6-10s-0d from Tansey's & Co of Bray, Ireland. The date on the receipt was January 7th 1947 and it was made out to a Mr. Walker, Putland Road, Bray. How the coat ended up in Australia remains a mystery.



In the early days Tansey's followed a policy of good solid value for locals and especially for country folk in Bray's hinterland. A more sophisticated drapers, Lees, was located on the same street. Tansey's wisely stuck to their own clientele and prospered. Lees have long gone but Tansey's remains – the new up market shop run now by Owen's grandnephew Kieran Flanagan. Owen died in 1965 and his nephew Paddy Flanagan took over until his death in 1993.

The firm has for over 50 years supplied the school uniforms for Presentation College and more recently for St Patrick's Loreto National School.

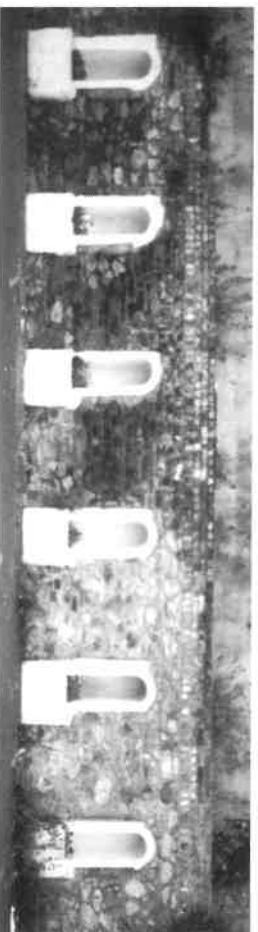
The Tansey sales staff have always been noted for their helpfulness and courtesy.

The firm received an Endeavour Award from Bray Chamber of Commerce in 2000.

PROPRIETORS AND STAFF

Owen Tansey, 1920 - 1965	Lily McGovern, 1950s (later Mrs Danny Kelly)
Tom Quigley, late 1920s - early 1970s	Mairin de Burca, late 1950s (later a political activist and journalist)
Mamie Geraghty, 1920s - early 1970s	Pat Doyle, 1960s
Gerry Whelan, 1928 - 1978	Peter McLoughlin, 1965 - present
Marie Kelly, 1933 - 1946 (married Gerry Whelan in 1946)	Nora Greaney, late 1960s
Patrick Flanagan, late 1930s - 1993 (nephew of Owen Tansey)	Maureen Kealy, 1969 - 1975
Bridie Fitzpatrick, 1930s - early 1940s (married Anthony Duggan)	Pauline Nolan, 1970s
Alice Lynch, 1930s	Roni Carroll, 1970s - present
Frank O'Rourke, 1930s	Geraldine Flanagan, 1970s
Betty McGarry, 1940s	Gemma Flanagan, 1970s
Pat Sheehy, 1940s - 1980s	Declan Flanagan, 1970s
Anthony Duggan, 1940s	Kieran Flanagan, 1980 - present
	Flor O'Shaughnessy, 1999 - present

We apologise for any omissions from the above list due to the fact that some of the relevant records were unavailable at time of going to press.



Horse Drinking Troughs which were demolished in 1998 in Florence Road Car Park, now the site of the Florentine Centre.

CEILI DANCING IN BRAY

CHRISTY BRIEN

The first organised Ceili dancing that I remember in Bray, took place in a little hall in Church Terrace during the early years of the War of Independence.

They used to pack about 100 people into the hall. It was four pence in on Wednesdays and the only music was provided by a melodeon player. On Sundays, the entrance charge was sixpence when the melodeon player was joined by a fiddler named Cousins from Dublin.

I did M.C. at times. Sonny Byrne was the official M.C. and he was helped by Andy O'Rourke from Shankill. It became known as the Ceili Hall and Paddy Grant, the dancing teacher, held his classes there. St. Kevin's Pipe Band also practiced there. At the Ceilis, we did the usual dances, the Sixteen-Hand Reel, the High-Cauled Cap, the Sweets of May and so on.

This Ceili Hall was on the edge of the cliffs of Bray and was, originally, a store for the flour mills, the buildings of which stood far down below on the Dargle bank. In 1913, the hall was used as a soup kitchen for Jim Larkin's Union (the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union) during the lock-out. It is an historic spot. A few yards in front of the hall is the site of de Ridelsford's Castle, the one built by the Normans over eight hundred years ago. Some of the stones are still there. A few yards further along are the buildings which formed the military barracks c.1700. During the 1798 rebellion, prisoners were brought here before being brought to Dublin. The buildings were later used as a fever hospital and today are used as private dwellings.

The dances in the Ceili Hall were mainly run and attended by people active in Sinn Fein. They used to meet in one of Carr's cottages on the Upper Dargle Road. It was there I attended a few Irish classes given by Bill Ford, a one-armed man who was very active in organising Jim Larkin's Union. About twenty people used to attend the classes. Then, the military raided the building and smashed up the interior. The Sinn Feiners moved across to the Ceili Hall.

The first Céilí on the Seafront was in 1922. Boards were laid down on the grass enclosure at the bandstand. It was during the Truce and the Gaelic League asked the Sinn Fein crowd to help organise it. Bean de Valera attended and addressed the large crowd.

Ceilis were held later in the Florence Hall. These were organised by Father Brady, a local curate, who was a member of the Gaelic League. He was very strict. The boys and girls were separated and if you put your arm around a girl, he would be over to you like a flash. Spinning in the dances could only be done with the elbow hold. Bray Emmets and St. Cronan's G.A.A. Club also held ceilis in the Florence Hall.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF HIS FATHER: JAMES LARKIN JNR.

BREDA CARDIFF



James Larkin (1904-1969) was destined to be known throughout his life as "Young Jim". But he was no mere shadow of his famous father, "Big Jim". They were different leaders for different times.

Young Jim went to school in Scoil Eanna in Rathfarham, a school founded by Padraig Pearse and his brother, Willie. He studied in Moscow from 1928 to 1930. On his return to Dublin, he was elected to the Dublin City Council of which he was a member until 1933.

During the thirties and up to the death of his father in 1947, he was in effect Assistant General Secretary of the Workers' Union of Ireland. In 1947, he was elected General Secretary, a position he held until his death in 1969.

He was first elected to Dail Eireann in 1943 for Dublin South Central Constituency; re-elected at the 1944, 1948, 1951 and 1954 General Elections and no doubt he would have been re-elected in 1957 but, after a decade of doubling as a Union leader and a T.D., he did not contest the election.

While remaining loyal to the Labour Party up to his death, he devoted his time mainly to the trade union movement. He was a member of the Executive Committee of Congress over the years and served as President in 1948, '51 and '59.

Larkin's speeches in the Dail were devoid of rhetoric, well structured, authoritative in factual content and original in conception. His appeal was to reason and he disdained oratorical devices. He rarely repeated himself and always commanded an attentive audience. He was regarded as one of the best speakers in the Dail. In 1964, he judged it opportune to affiliate the Workers' Union of Ireland to the Labour Party.

To have been the instrument of forging Irish trade unionism into a thinking, intelligent movement and to have given voice to it, were the historic achievements of Jim Larkin, Jnr. He outlined a blueprint for the unification of the modern trade union movement and negotiations for the National Wage Agreements. His ideas were the basis of trade union education and are still relevant.

Jim lived on Putland Road in Bray with his wife and family from the 1940's until his death. His widow, Josephine, who lived into her 90's, passed away earlier this year R.I.P.

FIFTY YEARS OF BRAY I.C.A.

MOIRA FITZPATRICK

Bray I.C.A. has enjoyed a long and fruitful life and I suppose it could now be said to be entering its Golden Years. It was founded in 1954 - fifty years ago - at a meeting of approximately twenty potential members and after all these years we can still boast of having three of those who were then present, namely, Nora Fleming, Kathleen Whittle Kehoe and Breda Cardiff.

From this small beginning it grew from strength to strength through the '60s, '70s and '80s. At one stage there was a membership of over 100.

The guild provided an enormous outlet during those years for married women, who, on the whole, did not work outside the home and the monthly meetings opened opportunities to meet socially and to participate in the many activities on offer.



Singer Tina (2nd left) with (l-r) I.C.A. members, Eileen Wilkinson, Gladys Sheehan, May Cranny, Kathleen Whittle and (seated) Kitty Wilson

The members formed a talented Drama Group who were always willing to provide entertainment at the meetings. They also participated in the then flourishing Annual I.C.A. Wicklow Federation Drama Festival and in various local festivals in Bray. Many awards were won over the years for Production, Best Actress, Best Play and so on. It was hard work but all enjoyed the rehearsing and preparation culminating in the stage presentations.

Other cultural activities included competitions in Public Speaking, Debating, Creative Writing and Journalistic Reporting. Members competed at County and National level winning many trophies and awards. Bray holds the distinction of winning the Maevie Curtis Award at National Level for Reporting in 1983. This was the last year that this prestigious competition took place.

Crafts too were big on the agenda. Some of the guild members ran classes in dressmaking, embroidery, rush work, macramé, cooking, knitting and crochet. Many Brannari and Teachers' Bars were attained.

Each year, guild members made an effort to spend a week or week-end at An Grianán, Co. Louth. A wide variety of courses were on offer and, as well as the tuition, there was excellent food and 'craic'. Everyone came back full of enthusiasm and praise for those who managed the college so efficiently.

In the 1980s, a few weekend exchange visits with the Women's Institute from Northern Ireland were arranged. They stayed as guests with our guild members and were entertained by the guild and federation. Then we made return visits to them. It was a great exercise in 'Hands Across the Border'. For me it was the start of a still ongoing valued friendship.

Over the years, many of our members served in leading positions on the Federation Committee and contributed in various capacities at An Grianán and also at I.C.A. Headquarters.

Things have changed a lot since the halcyon days of 20 or 30 years ago – women today have much greater choices in leisure activities. Those of us who remain members are very fortunate to have a dedicated president and committee and, though we are now small in numbers, the I.C.A. still fulfils an important role in our social life.

WILDLIFE FROM A TRAIN

ÉAMON DE BUTTLÉAR



Razzorbills at Bray Head

periods of low tide from autumn to spring. They come to the rich feeding grounds in Dublin Bay during the cold season, when many of their own home areas are frozen over.

Boosterstown marsh which is a little further on provides a resting place at high tide for some of these waders; it is also a popular fishing spot for herons. Teal and lapwing also frequent the marsh. As the train heads towards Bray, small flocks of oystercatchers can often be seen on some of the playing fields, taking advantage of the soft ground as they dig for worms.

In recent years Bray harbour has been a haven for mute swans. The locals feed them regularly and as the train slowly approaches Bray station, the swans can often be seen gathering together in expectation of the next meal.

Spring and summer are the best times to see the countless flowering plants growing along both sides of the tracks, many of which are there because their seeds were carried and dropped off by trains. This is also the time of year when many cliff-nesting birds including black guillemots, fulmers, gulls and cormorants are active on the seaward side of Bray Head. Leaving Bray behind and travelling on to Greystones, the landscape suddenly changes to give a panoramic view. A long expanse of shingle beach can be seen stretching for several miles along the sea southwards towards Wicklow. Keeping an eye towards the sea is always worthwhile as there is always the possibility of spotting a porpoise or two, a school of dolphins, or perhaps a grey seal patrolling the waters off-shore in hopes of capturing an unwary fish or two.

Still travelling south beyond Kilcoole, a small stretch of beach near an area known as the Breaches, is taken over every spring by about sixty pairs of little terns. These graceful birds are sometimes called sea swallows because of their forked tails. The little tern spends the winter months in Africa and is Ireland's scarcest breeding seabird. The area of beach where they breed is cordoned off with a mesh fence from April until July every year. The wardens who guard the nesting area day and night, are a familiar sight to the train driver and they usually give him a friendly wave as he passes by.

On the upper beach where a line of low sand-dunes cover the stones, a wide range of salt-resistant wild flowers add colour to the landscape and create a special attraction for many smaller visitors such as insects.

On the other side of the railway track skylarks begin nesting in springtime in the nearby grassy fields. Travelling on a train you will hardly hear their song but you may see some aerial antics. This is courtship time and the male skylark can be seen regularly rising steeply with a vigorous fluttering action, its pleasant liquid warbling tune continuing as it hovers high above the nest site before suddenly dropping down into the grass. The lark's musical performance adds a touch of magic to the backdrop of the distant Wicklow mountains.

The skylark's other little avian neighbours, the reed buntings, greenfinches and stonechats, build their nests in a far more protected spot. They choose the spiky buckthorn bushes which grow between the railway tracks and the dunes. But whatever about their wiser choice of nest-sites, they could never hope to compete as singers with the quality of the skylark's musical performance. The reed bunting's tinkling, repetitive song is quite short and the stonechat's persistent "wheet, tsak tsak" call sounds, just like two pebbles being struck together!

The passing of summer for some of us may be tinged with sadness but then the sight and sound of countless flocks of birds arriving in autumn should help to lift our spirits as they congregate along the various marshes at Kilcoole, Newcastle and a little further on at Broadlough in Wicklow. As the days become shorter, thousands of migratory birds begin leaving their frozen lands to make the long journey south to Ireland. Many of these birds choose this stretch of coastline for their final landfall, where many of them will feed during the winter. The long-distance travellers include flocks of Brent geese from the Canadian Arctic islands, thousands of duck and waders from northern Europe and wild whooper swans from Iceland. The little egret, a pure white heron-like bird which used to be a rare vagrant, has in recent times become a regular visitor and for the last couple of years has been breeding in County Wicklow.

But, why not take a train trip yourself and take a look; there are few Irish rail journeys which can compete with the magic of this stretch of coastline!

ALLEN'S MENSWEAR

TOM ALLEN

It was an era of top-hats and tails, of landlords and peasants. There were no cars or trains and we had just come through a horrific famine in Ireland, when, in 1850, the Allen family opened a bakery at 16, Main Street. At that time, horses and cattle grazed in the green fields stretching from the Main Street to the fishermen's cottages on the seashore.

The coming of the railway in 1854 was to transform Bray from what was little more than a fishing village to a fashionable Victorian seaside resort with salt water baths and waterfront hotels.

The Allen business flourished and they became successful merchants, owning a number of properties including an off-licence in the Yevay (then called Newtown Yevay). Daily deliveries of fresh bread went to Loughlinstown, Greystones, Kilcoole, Glencree, Roundwood and as far south as Ashford – all by horse and cart.

In 1909, two brothers, Simon and Edward Deignan started a drapery business at 102, Main Street. They continued trading there until 1913 when they went their separate ways, Edward setting up a business on Quinsboro Road while Simon moved two doors up to 100 Main Street. In the meantime, Simon had married one of the Allen family who were still running the bakery at 16 Main Street.

In 1923, at the early age of 12 years, William Allen, a nephew of Simon's wife, commenced his apprenticeship at 100, Main street. At that time, most shopkeepers lived above their premises. In Deignan's premises, a tailor, apprentices, a maid and the proprietor and his wife lived over the shop. They weathered two world wars and several economic depressions.

In 1949, William took over the shop and when he retired, he had completed 56 years behind the counter.

The 1960's saw flower power as the fashion. In December 1966, a disastrous fire caused major damage to the premises. In the course of reconstruction the shop was modernised.

In 1972, William's eldest son, Tom, took over and saw fashions change through the flares and side-burns of the early 70's to the Cureheads of the 80's. In 1980, Tom demolished two-thirds of the premises and rebuilt it, doubling the size of the interior. The exterior is unchanged.

In the year 2000, Allen's celebrated 150 years trading in Bray. Simon, Tom's son, had by now joined the business and he, in turn, put his stamp on it and completely refurbished the shop in the most up-to-date style. How times have changed! From selling Wellingtons, hob-nailed boots, hats and shrouds, we have moved with the times to stock the latest in top designer clothing.

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF THE RAILWAY IN BRAY

JIM LYNCH

There was a widely representative gathering at Bray Railway Station on Sunday the 19th. September 2004 when Iarnród Éireann commemorated the 150th anniversary of the opening of the station.

The celebrations were hosted by Station Master, Mr Christopher Rafferty, who welcomed the following special guests:- Councillor Anne Ferris, *Cathaoirleach Bray Town Council* Mr. Seamus Brennan, *Minister for Transport*, Dr. John Lynch, *Chairman, C.I.E.*, Mr. David Tew, *President, Bray Chamber of Commerce* and Mr. John Duggan, *Chairman, Bray Tourism*

Also present were many local representatives of political parties, local authority staff, business organizations, voluntary bodies, retired railway men and women, railway enthusiasts, train spotters, many Bray residents who used the railway over the years and last but not least 'Mr. William Dargan', who blew out the one hundred and fifty candles on the massive birthday cake made for this occasion. Bray Urban District Council, Bray Tourism, Bray Chamber of Commerce and Iarnród Éireann sponsored the afternoon.

Addressing the large assembled group, Cllr. Anne Ferris said the celebrations were yet another historic milestone in the history of Bray and demonstrated the strong community spirit in the town. 'Bray is a unique town with a special sense of pride all of its own. We are grateful for our unique position on the doorstep to Dublin but cherish our even more treasured position as the gateway to the Garden of Ireland'. She continued, 'Our location on the finest stretch of East Coast coastline provides the platform for our tourism product in Bray. It was the same 150 years ago when William Dargan realised the potential to develop Bray as the Victorian jewel in Irish tourism and so brought the railway to Bray – opening the gateway for tourism from Dublin and the rest of Ireland to Bray, a gateway that still remains very open today'.

Messrs. John Lynch, David Tew and John Duggan addressed the large attendance.



Minister Seamus Brennan pictured with Dr. John Lynch, Chairman, C.I.E. unveiling a plaque to commemorate the coming of the railway to Bray

The Minister for Transport, Mr. Seamus Brennan, then unveiled a plaque on platform 1 to commemorate the coming of the railway to Bray. He said he was delighted to be in Bray to unveil this plaque. He also spoke of the future plans for the updated DART and commuter services and the increased capacity being provided.

After the formal speeches by the invited guests, a reception was held in the Station Buffet. Then at 15.10 hours a special steam train was provided to take all the party on a return trip to Wicklow. This train was pulled by locomotive No. 4 ex NCC (Northern Counties Committee). The locomotive was a 2-6-4 T, originally built at Derby by LMS in 1947

The formal opening of the station in 1854 had been planned for the 3rd July but, due to unfavourable weather, was postponed to the 8th July. On that day, three special trains ran from Harcourt Street to Bray carrying the Directors, Shareholders of the company (Dublin & Wicklow Railway Co.) and their friends. Tea was served and a dance was held on the platform and the 1st Dragons provided the music. Some of the group visited the tunnel and extension works at Bray Head, while others toured the beauty spots of the district. On Monday 10th July 1854, the railway line opened to the public. Six trains ran between Bray and Harcourt Street, the first leaving at 7.00 a.m. with others at 9.00 a.m., 11.00 a.m., 2.00 p.m., 4.00 p.m. and 7.00 p.m. In those days, there was only one platform in Bray station.

A booklet "The way to Bray from Dargan to DART" has been produced by Iarnród Éireann to record 150 years of Bray's railway service.

SOURCES

Freeman's Journal, 40 Shades of Steam – The Story of the RPSL, The Bray People



The Taoiseach, Éamon de Valera, with members of the first Fianna Fáil Government and representatives of the Drumm Company and of G.S.R. at Bray Station in August 1932 when the 2nd Drumm train went into service. The driver was Tom Wheeler. The 1st Drumm train had gone into service in February of that year

BRAY CUALANN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

meets on the 3rd Thursday Monthly (*except June, July, August and December*)
in the Chamber of Commerce House, Quinsboro' Road, Bray at 8pm
Outings to Places of Historical Interest (May to September)

All meetings and outings are open to our members and the public.

Enquiries – 286 0987, 286 2539 and 287 7033