

**The establishment and evolution of  
an Irish village: the case of Dunlavin,  
county Wicklow 1600 –1910.**

**Vol. 1 of 2**

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**Thesis for the degree of PhD**

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# Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of PhD, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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**Abstract. Chris Lawlor. PhD thesis on Dunlavin, county Wicklow 1650-1900.**

This study traces the history of the village community of Dunlavin in west Wicklow over three centuries. The Dunlavin region straddles both counties Wicklow and Kildare. The study follows the evolution of the village in its regional setting, examining the long and formative impact of Anglophone settlers during the era of 'Protestant Ascendancy', positing a model, possibly applicable nationally, of their rise in the seventeenth century, through their zenith in the eighteenth, to their decline in the nineteenth, and replacement by the emerging Catholic interest in the twentieth.

Sir Richard Bulkeley erected the new village of Dunlavin on a greenfield site after the 1641 rebellion. In 1710, Sir James Worth Tynte inherited the village. Tynte and his eighteenth-century successors pursued a model of paternalistic landlordism, but the 1798 rebellion, and the Dunlavin massacre, fractured the relationship between the elite and the masses. The paternalistic model of landlordism failed in the early nineteenth century, and the severe experience of the area during the Great Famine was testament to this. In the post-Famine era, Joseph Pratt Tynte never regained the levels of deference he and his fellow landlords had previously enjoyed. Tynte's influence was challenged by invigorated nationalism and resurgent Catholicism. The Catholic middle class took control of local politics, and Dunlavin entered the twentieth century with middle-class Catholicism in the ascendancy. The irreversible eclipse of the elite was already advanced, and the process was completed later in the twentieth century.

This study locates the Dunlavin region in the larger tapestry of Irish history.

Dunlavin's past is as integral to national history as the past in any other part of the island. This case study illuminates an individual section of a complex network of past local experiences, and reveals one part of the range of past behaviours in Ireland.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

B.L.	British Library
C.	Command
C.B.	Companion (of the Order) of the Bath
C.C.	Catholic curate
Co.	County
D.D.A.	Dublin Diocesan Archive
D.D.D.P.L.	<i>Dunlavin Donard Davidstown Parish Link</i>
D.E.D.	District electoral division
D.F.A.B.	<i>Dunlavin Festival of Arts brochure</i>
E.D.	Electoral division
G.A.A.	Gaelic Athletic Association
G.R.O.	Gloucester Record Office
H.C.	House of Commons
H.M.C.	Historical Manuscripts Commission
J.K.A.S.	<i>Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society</i>
J.P.	Justice of the Peace
J.R.S.A.I.	<i>Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland</i>
J.W.W.H.S.	<i>Journal of the West Wicklow Historical Society</i>
K.C.L.	Kildare County Library
M.P.	Member of Parliament
N.A.	National Archive, Kew.
N.A.I.	National Archive of Ireland
nd	No date (of publication)
N.L.I.	National Library of Ireland

np	No place (of publication)
N.S.	National School
O.S.	Ordnance Survey
P.L.G.	Poor Law Guardian
P.L.U.	Poor Law Union
P.P.	Parish Priest
P.R.O.N.I.	Public Records Office of Northern Ireland
Q.C.	Queen's Counsel
R.C.B.	Representative Church Body
R.I.A.	Royal Irish Academy
R.I.C.	Royal Irish Constabulary
N.U.I.M.	National University of Ireland Maynooth
R.M.	Resident Magistrate
T.C.D.	Trinity College Dublin
U.N.L.	University of Nottingham Library
V.F.	Vicar Forane
W.C.L.	Wicklow County Library
W.P.	Walsh Papers

## INTRODUCTION.

### **1. Rationale: Reasons for studying Dunlavin and defining the area of study.**

Dunlavin is a village in western county Wicklow, a medium-sized maritime county, 782 square miles in area, <sup>1</sup> on the east coast of Ireland between counties Dublin and Wexford. The village lies on the border between the baronies of Lower and Upper Talbotstown, with the urban space principally located in Lower Talbotstown, though some adjacent townlands are in Upper Talbotstown (map 1). The two Talbotstown baronies form a distinct region within the county, and are physically separated from east Wicklow by the Wicklow Mountains. The mountains, and the difficulty of travelling across the range, create a geographical obstacle. East Wicklow, with its major towns of Arklow, Wicklow and Bray, is a world away from Dunlavin; each town in the east of the country is more than forty miles away. <sup>2</sup> Hence, the communities of the Talbotstown baronies look westwards towards Kildare rather than eastwards towards Wicklow, and are more closely linked with Naas and the plains of Kildare than with the eastern coastal towns. <sup>3</sup> Such linkages have created a trans-county Dunlavin region, and, while this study focuses on a small urban settlement, it acknowledges the fact that no settlement exists in isolation, so events that occurred in the wider region are utilised to provide a context for the history of the village. Much of the relevant historical evidence is only available at parish, barony or county level, but the area encompassed in this study is not an administrative unit *per se*.

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<sup>1</sup> John Lynott, 'Some County Wicklow facts and figures', *Dunlavin Festival of Arts Brochure*, xvii (1999), p. 26. This equates to two thousand and twenty-five square kilometres.

<sup>2</sup> Dunlavin's location within its region is addressed in Chris Lawlor, *The massacre on Dunlavin green: a story of the 1798 rebellion* (Naas, 1998), pp 9-14.

<sup>3</sup> Brian Gurrin, 'Population, economy, religion and society in Wicklow 1660-1800' (PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2006), p. 113.

**Map 1. Dunlavin's location within Wicklow's baronies and adjacent counties.**



**County Wicklow contains the baronies of Arklow, Newcastle, Half Rathdown, Ballinacor North and South, Shillelagh and Talbotstown Upper and Lower. Source: William Nolan, 'Land and landscape in county Wicklow c.1840', in Ken Hannigan and William Nolan (eds), *Wicklow history and society*.**

The fertile lowlands of county Kildare lie immediately to the west of Dunlavin, and much of the village's natural hinterland is located within its neighbouring county. Dunlavin village is one mile from the county boundary, and the inhabitants of the village have long transacted trade, commerce and general social intercourse in the Kildare settlements of Ballitore, Ballymore-Eustace, Kilcullen, Newbridge and Naas. The geography of the Dunlavin area is a good example of why the county does not constitute the most appropriate unit of historical analysis for some communities. Peripheral to the county as a whole, Dunlavin elicits only passing mention in studies of county Wicklow. Yet

historians in neighbouring Kildare have also concluded that Dunlavin and its hinterland lie outside their geographical area.

Dunlavin is in a frontier region, between the plains of Kildare and the Wicklow Mountains, and this has helped to determine its character over the centuries. The old Gaelic world survived in the mountains long after the Normans anglicised the earldom of Kildare, and tension long existed between the two worlds.<sup>4</sup> Dunlavin's frontier position between the lowland world of law and order and the highland 'other' world beyond the law has exercised an enduring and formative influence on its history.

Dunlavin, then, lies within a topographical transitional zone. Two miles north of the village at Kennycourt, there is a magnificent, uninterrupted view across the plains of Kildare to the Hill of Allen. Two miles southeast of the village, at Loughmogue, a panoramic vista of the Wicklow Mountains exists. Both Dunlavin Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic parishes extend into these mountains, encompassing Donard and the Glen of Imaal. The parish boundaries of both denominations are broadly similar; the Roman Catholic parish is shown in map 2.

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<sup>4</sup> Seamas Ó Maitiu speaking on video *A journey through west Wicklow* (West Wicklow films, 2004). Over the centuries the mountains harboured those who sought refuge from the authorities – the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles in the seventeenth century; raparees and highwaymen in the eighteenth; Michael Dwyer's rebels in the early nineteenth and I.R.A. men and irregulars in the twentieth. Ó Maitiu elaborates on this theme in his essay on Lackan in Brian Ó Dálaigh, Denis A. Cronin and Paul Connell (eds.), *Irish townlands: studies in local history* (Dublin, 1998), pp 206-17 passim.

**Map 2: Dunlavin Roman Catholic parish.**



**Source: Archbishop's palace, Drumcondra, Dublin.**

The boundaries of Dunlavin Roman Catholic parish were described in 1926:

‘Geographically ... the parish of Dunlavin ... touches upon Hollywood, Ballymore-Eustace, Kilcullen and Narraghmore, and forms, to a great extent and for many miles, the north-western boundary of Wicklow’.<sup>5</sup> Some measure of unity has long existed within

<sup>5</sup> Patrick O’Byrne, ‘West Wicklow’, *Souvenir guide and programme of the Imaal bazaar and fete* (Naas, 1926), p. 56.



Dunlavin parish; the parish registers attest to this, with people from the highland part of the parish being baptised and married in Dunlavin church, until separate churches were constructed in Donard and Davidstown, in 1835 and 1875 respectively. However, map 2 also reveals that Dunlavin village is not centrally located within its parish; even in this context the village is peripheral, isolated in the lowland northwest of a chiefly highland, sparsely-populated parish. Many townlands in neighbouring parishes such as Kilcullen are closer to Dunlavin than to their own churches, leading to a degree of devotional overlap. The parish unit, therefore, is not necessarily a good model to employ when researching Dunlavin's history. It reflects in microcosm the problems associated with examining Dunlavin in a county Wicklow context. The village is peripheral to both units, and draws on its cross-border hinterland, outside of both the parish and county, for much of its everyday existence.

The cross-border hinterland, and the adjacent Talbotstown baronies of west Wicklow, form a distinct region around Dunlavin village. The major urban settlements of west Wicklow and east Kildare such as Baltinglass, Blessington, Naas and Newbridge are all situated approximately 12 miles from Dunlavin (map 3). Within this radius, with Dunlavin as the centre of the circle, lie places as diverse as Kilcullen on the Liffey, the remote Hollywood Glen, the Quaker village of Ballitore and Stratford-on-Slaney. Dunlavin's pivotal geographical and historical position within this region was identified by James Boyle in 1847, who described it as 'the capital of a great district'.<sup>6</sup> The

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<sup>6</sup> James Boyle to Mr. Walker, 17 Jan 1847, *Measures adopted for the relief of distress in Ireland: correspondence: Commissariat series ii* [796] H.C. 1847, liii, p. 20. The adjective 'great' evidently does not refer to demography, as the area was not especially populous. It refers rather to the size of Dunlavin's

geographical concept of region is vital in defining Dunlavin's hinterland, and another geographical favourite, the Core-Periphery model, is useful in determining Dunlavin's status within its region. The centrality of Dunlavin village must be placed within the context of its cultural region in order to examine its past communities,<sup>7</sup> and this study recognises the importance of the trans-county Dunlavin region in shaping developments in the village over the centuries. The Dunlavin region was bounded by many larger settlements, in both counties Kildare and Wicklow, within a comfortable day's return journey. These included Naas, Newbridge, Kildare, Athy, Baltinglass and Blessington. The existence of these larger market towns nearby meant that there was little need for Dunlavin's residents to travel beyond them, so they may be conveniently utilised to mark the limits of Dunlavin's economic and cultural region. The marriage registers of both the Anglican and Catholic churches of Dunlavin testify to this fact. Seldom does at least one of these larger towns fail to feature on a folio. The overwhelming majority of all marriage partners for Dunlavin's inhabitants during the study period came either from these larger towns or from the villages and rural townlands within the geographical perimeter formed around Dunlavin by these towns.<sup>8</sup> While it may be difficult precisely to delineate its borders, the Dunlavin region encompasses a distinct geographical area, centred on the village, which, while in many respects off the beaten track, had linkages of transport, kin,

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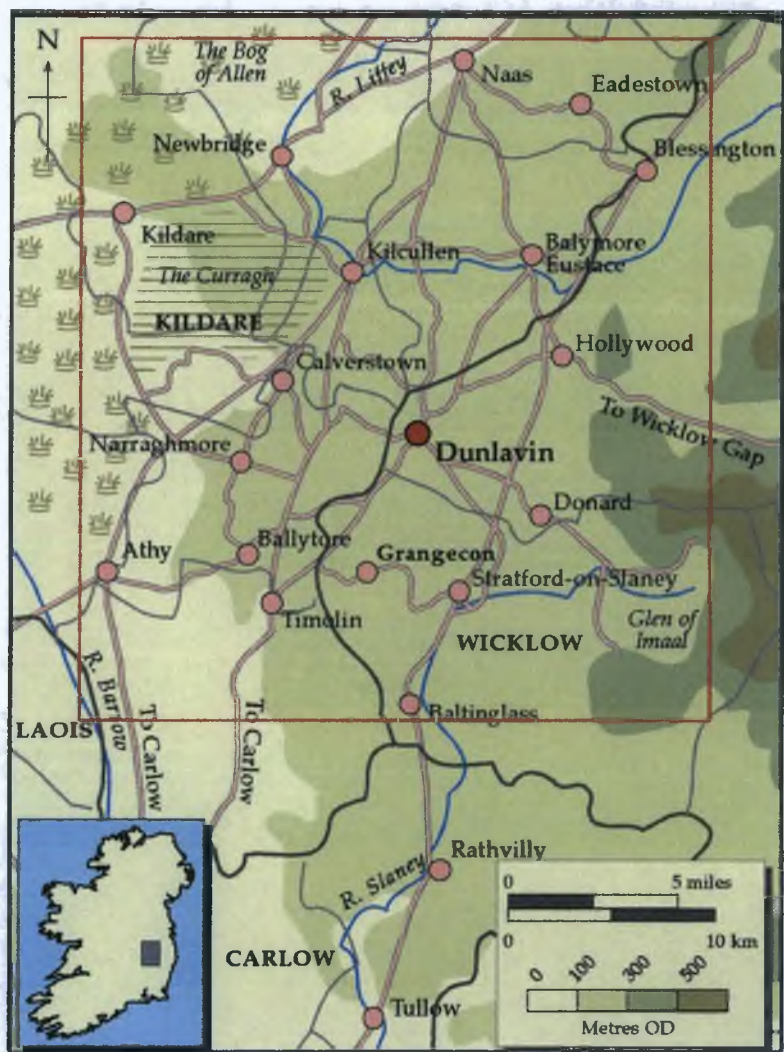
extensive geographical hinterland, which used the services, markets and fairs of the 'good market town' for trade, commerce, banking and general social intercourse on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

<sup>7</sup> In his excellent study of south Munster, David Dickson notes that the 'borders of the Cork region were never precise, but the city's sphere of influence in the eighteenth century was fairly clear'. He goes on to demonstrate the centrality of Cork to its region by identifying twenty-six towns across counties Cork, Kerry and Waterford to which the Cork *Hibernian Chronicle* was delivered by courier in 1772. These newspaper deliveries indicate that the towns in question were within a comfortable day's return journey from Cork: David Dickson, *Old world colony: Cork and south Munster 1630-1830* (Cork, 2005), p. xii. In the case of the present study, where the borders of the Dunlavin region were also never precise, the village received newspapers from both counties Wicklow and Kildare.

<sup>8</sup> The Anglican registers are in the RCB library, Dublin. The Catholic ones are in local custody.

trade and commerce to many surrounding settlements. This gave the Dunlavin region its own dynamic, ensuring that events in the region are integral to understanding the history of the village.

**Map 3: Dunlavin village and its region, the area encompassed in this study.**



**Source: Chris Lawlor, *The longest rebellion*.**

The accepted regional application of the Core-Periphery model would classify the village of Dunlavin as peripheral to the larger towns (higher order centres) of Baltinglass, Blessington, Naas and Newbridge. Moreover, in Christaller’s geographical ‘Central Place

Theory', villages are classed as 'lower order services centres', suggesting that the histories and past events within villages such as Dunlavin are also 'lower order'. I have argued elsewhere <sup>9</sup> that this geographical model must be inverted to capture accurately the life experience of the villagers of Dunlavin. The inhabitants of Dunlavin conceived of themselves as being at the centre of their own world, rather than on the edge of somebody else's. <sup>10</sup> In the slower, less globalised world of the past, the various communities of Dunlavin perceived the village as central to their lives. Neighbouring towns such as Naas, Baltinglass, Kilcullen and Blessington and Donard, villages such as Stratford, Ballymore-Eustace, Narraghmore and Ballitore, and outlying rural areas such as the Imaal, Crehelp, Tober and Merginstown were peripheral to Dunlavin, though events in this periphery had a huge bearing on life within the communities in Dunlavin village.

The Dunlavin region is bounded by the Wicklow Mountains to the east and the Bog of Allen to the west, while the higher order centres of Naas and Baltinglass delineate the regions northern and southern borders respectively. The mountains and the bog formed natural physical barriers, and the presence of the higher order towns meant that there was little need to travel further north or south in the course of everyday life. In other words, this is Dunlavin's cultural region. <sup>11</sup> The interpretation of the past in small localities, and

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<sup>9</sup> Chris Lawlor, *The massacre on Dunlavin Green: a story of the 1798 rebellion* (Naas, 1998), p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Chris Lawlor, 'Ancient anarchy and medieval mayhem – around Dunlavin?', *Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society*, xix, 3 (2003), p. 399.

<sup>11</sup> The term 'cultural region' is used in the sense of the model put forward by Charles Phythian Adams. See, for example, Charles Phythian Adams, *Re-thinking English local history* (Leicester, 1991) and especially Charles Phythian Adams, *Societies, cultures and kinships, 1580-1850: cultural provinces and English local history* (London, 1998). Phythian Adams's ideas regarding cultural regions are also evident online at [http://www.localpopulationstudies.org.uk/PDF/LPS51/LPS51\\_1993\\_30-45.pdf](http://www.localpopulationstudies.org.uk/PDF/LPS51/LPS51_1993_30-45.pdf), which comprises the text of a lecture he delivered at Madingley Hall, Cambridge, entitled 'Local history and societal history'.

their various communities, can help to illuminate the bigger national or even international picture, but it is also significant in itself.<sup>12</sup>

If Irish local history is to rid itself of its 'Cinderella' image, its intrinsic significance and its inherent value and importance must be recognised. It is of particular importance to the people of that place, those whose lives it has shaped. As one writer has observed:

Few people really care about identity and place, confusing it with nostalgia. Identity and place have no importance in the modern world. They have no real meaning, emotionally or socially. Unlike other languages there isn't a word in English to describe an atavistic attachment to a native place, where a person is born and formed by its beliefs and culture. The German language conveys the meaning better than English with the word *heimat*, which means local or native place and, at the same time, identity with that native place.<sup>13</sup>

Local historical studies are vital in recovering the past life experiences of local worlds.

The idea that some people write only local history because they can may have its adherents, but it is also true – certainly in my case – that some people do so because they want to. Donald Harman Akenson suggests the 'reason a professional Irish historian should not do local or regional history is that there is scant professional credit in it'.<sup>14</sup>

Moreover, he also points out that there is 'another, less obvious reason that Irish

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<sup>12</sup> Donald Harman Akenson encapsulates this idea very well in his study of Islandmagee. He does 'not compare or contrast' Islandmagee to other areas, nor does he 'make any scholarly judgement about whether Islandmagee was typical of other small Irish communities, or was unique'. As a result, he argues, his study is a 'historical discussion of a clearly delimited community, the description of which will stand intact': Donald Harman Akenson, *Between two revolutions: Islandmagee, county Antrim 1798-1920* (Ontario, 1979), pp 4-5.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Allen, *The night a quarter moon fell on a ten-cent Wicklow town* (visited 9/8/2004), online story at <http://www.irishstoryteller.blogspot.com>.

<sup>14</sup> Akenson, *Between two revolutions*, p. 1. Akenson continues 'Local studies usually are done by retired colonels, by unpromising postgraduate students (those judged too weak to be steered toward important topics) and by clergymen of antiquarian predilections'.

academic historians have avoided the field: it is devilish hard work'.<sup>15</sup> However, despite its demanding nature, the whole field of local history is fascinating, challenging, sometimes frustrating but ultimately rewarding.<sup>16</sup>

Most recent Irish local studies focussed on short-term periods, or on single events.<sup>17</sup> This work differs from such studies in that it examines one village, in a small geographical cultural region, in depth over three centuries. This *longue durée* approach is best equipped to reveal change and continuity over time in the area of study, and to identify the reasons behind both. The Dunlavin region can – rightly or wrongly – be viewed as a microcosm of national life, but it must also be perceived as a local world in its own right, whose communities' past experiences are as valid a part of the national experience as those of better known or more attractive social, economic and intellectual communities, often seen as more appropriate subjects of study. Raymond Gillespie has pointed out that:

The local worlds of Ireland in the past are as complex and sophisticated as the national framework in which they are set. The communities, which peopled these local worlds ... shaped and were shaped by their environments to create a series of interlocking worlds of considerable

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<sup>15</sup> Akenson, *Between two revolutions*, p. 1: 'In preparing this study I discovered that the research demanded was much more onerous, the resources more widely scattered, and finding-aids less readily available than in the research I previously had done in the fields of educational, religious and political history'. Akenson goes on to identify the problem of working with manuscript and printed sources, where the local historian has to search, usually without the aid of an index, for any mentions of his particular area, contrasting this with 'a scholar working, say, on the administration of the Irish poor relief system [who] can quickly find most of the published governmental material simply by using the indexes'.

<sup>16</sup> The study of local history has blossomed in recent years. Pioneering works abroad, such as those by Rhys Isaac (U.S.A.), Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie (France) and W.G. Hoskins (England), among others have inspired the study of the discipline at university level in Ireland.

<sup>17</sup> The Maynooth local studies pamphlets provide excellent examples. The principal exceptions to this trend are Akenson, *Between two revolutions*, Dickson, *Old world colony*, and Peter Carr, *Portavo, an Irish townland and its peoples* (2 vols, Belfast, 2003 and 2005). These works adopt a *longue durée* approach, albeit that the scale of the geographical areas covered differs significantly. Akenson focuses on a small community; Dickson examines a substantial provincial area; Carr focuses on one townland, but it is the townland where the local landlord family, the Kers, resided, and the work contains much material on the history of the family, so it is as much the history of an elite family as of the townland, though both aspects are excellently addressed.

complexity. Those past worlds are best interpreted not through local administrative divisions, such as the county, but in human units: local places where communities of people lived and died. Untangling what held these communities together, and what drove them apart, gives us new insights into the worlds we have lost.<sup>18</sup>

Two of the principal communities in the Dunlavin region were defined by religion; the Anglican community and the Catholic community. These different religious bodies also often held different political views, resulting in the over-simplified generalisation of equating Catholicism with nationalism and Protestantism with loyalism and/or unionism, especially in the post 1798 period. However, for most of the three centuries considered in this study, the two communities generally shared a peaceful coexistence, or, enjoyed a high degree of accommodation. There were notable interruptions, when cleavage occurred and the two communities fractured: the 1641 rebellion, the 1798 rebellion and, less obviously, the tithe war and the land war of the nineteenth century are the most notable such instances. The changing nature of social relations over time in Dunlavin reflects the underlying economic, religious and political relationships and tensions in the region, which only became overt at specific flashpoints.

Alan Rogers suggested that building up a picture of the past is ‘an enormous task, perhaps too big for one man ... and in one sense this is a recognition of the inevitable. For the complete picture of the past is gone, we can never know much about the quality of life of past communities’. However, Rogers also observed that ‘the task may be attempted’,<sup>19</sup> and this study attempts to examine the local world of a village and its

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<sup>18</sup> Raymond Gillespie (series ed.), ‘Maynooth studies in Irish local history’, Chris Lawlor, *Canon Frederick Donovan’s Dunlavin 1884-1896: a west Wicklow village in the late nineteenth century* (Dublin, 2000), p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Alan Rogers, *Approaches to local history* (London, 1977), p. 223.

communities over three centuries, in an effort both to add to the corpus of work on Irish local history, and to illuminate one thread in Ireland's complex historical tapestry, significant in its own right.

## **2. Sources.**

The many themes and threads of this study mean that, of necessity, the sources utilised are wide and varied. In contrast to many other communities that have been the subjects of local historical studies, there are no estate papers available for Dunlavin. The absence of these has meant that the present study has had to compensate by recourse to many other sources. However, source material *per se* is of little value in increasing our understanding of the past unless we interrogate those sources correctly. The introductory sections to each chapter contain some remarks on the sources therein, but a brief overview, particularly of the principal primary source material, is also helpful in identifying the themes and issues that a study such as this can consider.

The study begins in the seventeenth century, and the principal source for the early seventeenth century is the 1641 depositions for county Wicklow, most of which date from the 1650s. The depositions can be used to build up a picture of the Anglophone presence in the Dunlavin region in the aftermath of the shiring of Wicklow in 1606. They reveal the emergence of a Protestant and anglicised community. The depositions also highlight the fracture that occurred in the area in the 1640s. Finally, they testify to the new reality of landholding change in the wake of the failed rebellion. This phenomenon is amplified by the correspondence of the first Sir Richard Bulkeley, the founder of the



new Dunlavin village, through which one can trace the growth of the settlement, and the character and beliefs of its founder. His son, the second Sir Richard, had a still stronger impact on the locality, principally because of his ambitious scheme to build a university in the village, which he hoped might become a haven for displaced Huguenots.<sup>20</sup> The second Sir Richard's unorthodox religious beliefs, and his dalliance with the French Prophets, generated much comment, both by him and about him, and many pamphlets were published on the subject. These have been used to illuminate the character and thinking of the man, who on his death in 1710, left his Dunlavin estate to his niece and her husband, Sir James Worth Tynte.

In many respects, the eighteenth century is ill-served source wise, but passing references to Dunlavin's first Tynte landlord, James Worth Tynte, in the Smythe of Barbavilla papers, and contemporary publications such as the *Post chaise companion* and newspapers such as the *Universal Advertiser*, sustain the impression of landlord-driven improvement, such as that identified and described elsewhere by Proudfoot, Graham, Hood and others. In the case of Dunlavin, this stagnated somewhat after Tynte's death in 1758. There is not much extant documentation with which to explore the architectural transformation of the village, but the physical evidence of the village layout, streetscape and architecture is a valuable substitute. W. G. Hoskins advised that 'to ignore all this visible evidence because it is not supported by some document in the Public Record

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<sup>20</sup> Though the Historical Manuscripts Commission calendared some of these documents in the nineteenth century, most of the Bulkeley correspondence of both father and son is in manuscript repositories in Britain, notably the British Library, the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the University of Nottingham Library and Gloucester Record Office.

Office or the parish chest seems to me an extraordinarily one-eyed view of history'.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the interruption in the physical growth of the village c.1760, Dunlavin's fairs and markets continued to thrive throughout the eighteenth century, and tracing their progress is crucial to establishing the capacity of the region to provide an adequate means of livelihood for an expanding population. *The gentleman and citizen's almanack* provides a useful perspective of this and allows one to locate Dunlavin within its economic cultural region. The Protestant parish register provides an incomplete guide to demographic changes in the area; it demonstrates that the settler community took root, but failed to dominate the region numerically, as the century advanced. Both Moll and Nevill mapped the region in the eighteenth century, and these maps, when used in tandem with Taylor and Skinner's road map of the Tullow road, permit the reconstruction of the growth of the route network around the village, and provide evidence of its agricultural potential.

The final decade of the century witnessed political turmoil, which culminated in the 1798 rebellion. The rebellion continued in the Dunlavin region until 1803.<sup>22</sup> Such turmoil generated much correspondence. The State of the Country papers and the Rebellion papers, both in the National Archive of Ireland, are revealing of the political and religious cleavage in the region.<sup>23</sup> The Rebellion Papers are an especially rich source for the first half of the opening decade of the nineteenth century, when Michael Dwyer continued to

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<sup>21</sup> W. G. Hoskins, *Local history in England* (London, 1959, third ed., 1984), p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> The rebel leader Michael Dwyer remained at large in the uplands adjacent to Dunlavin until December 1803.

<sup>23</sup> The papers, including reports from spies, military documents, captured Orange and United Irish documents and correspondence from local gentry figures testify to the rupture of the religious communities in the Dunlavin region. The records of courts martial and Michael Dwyer's correspondence are also significant sources, attesting to the depth of division in the area. In addition to the levels of violence, the papers are indicative of the longevity of disturbances in the region and the economic disruption that continued in the area in the opening decade of the nineteenth century.

cause havoc in the region. The stagnation of the local economy, caused principally by the protracted violence, can be established from a statistical survey published in 1801.<sup>24</sup>

Ireland's great age of surveying and record keeping began in the nineteenth century, and the great cadastral records that were generated are central to any reconstruction of the history of the region during that century. Landscape and topography are best catered for by the Ordnance Survey, established in Ireland in 1824. Apart from the Ordnance Survey maps, other maps of the area produced in the nineteenth century permit one to track the growth of Dunlavin village, and the increased urbanisation in the region propelled by rapid pre-Famine population expansion. Demography is a crucial theme, and although both the 1821 and 1831 census returns are not as detailed as the returns for 1841 and subsequent decades, a fairly full picture of post-1821 population trends in Dunlavin can be constructed.<sup>25</sup> The pre-1821 situation is more tantalising, but the parish register in the Catholic church in Dunlavin dates from 1815 and is an important, if limited, source of demographic information. Establishing the pattern of migration into and out of Dunlavin is difficult, but census figures in the post-Famine period reveal a long-term trend of out migration from the region.

Agricultural returns and statistics were published from the mid-century onwards, but the village of Dunlavin was home to many means of livelihood. From 1821, the census allows a breakdown of occupations. Directories such as *Piggott's*, *Thom's* and *Slater's*

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<sup>24</sup> Robert Fraser, *General view of the agriculture and mineralogy, present state and circumstances of the County Wicklow* (Dublin, 1801).

<sup>25</sup> Censuses also provide other information on the village and its region, some of which, such as changes in the numbers of buildings, quality of housing and educational and literacy data, is also utilised in this study.

are used to piece together a fragmentary picture of Dunlavin's occupations later in the century. Agriculture and land was central to the economy, society and, increasingly, the politics of the region. In the absence of Tynte estate papers, other sources, such as the Wicklow papers in the National Library and the Rathsallagh papers and ledgers in the R.D.S., have been mined to provide information on land and leaseholding in the region. Sources such as the Dunlavin Tithe Applotment Books and *Griffith's Valuation*, and government enquiries such as the *Devon Commission* and *Bessborough Commission*, permit further insights into land and landholding, and provide a context for the investigation of agrarian issues.

Agrarian crime was a recurring nineteenth-century motif. The claims for compensation lodged in the wake of the 1798 rebellion are an important source, but do not paint a full picture as only loyalists were compensated.<sup>26</sup> The tithe war of the 1820s and 1830s witnessed considerable agrarian unrest around Dunlavin. Many sources, principally the CSORP papers, and especially that part of the collection known as the outrage papers, in the National Archives, attest to this. The Fenian papers and the Land League and National League records provide information on later nineteenth-century political developments. The Fenian movement was weak in the region, but unrest flared again during the land war. A unique Dunlavin source relating to the 1880s and 1890s is Canon Frederick Donovan's diary. Donovan was deeply involved in the National League, and he provides an invaluable perspective on agrarian unrest, that complements and deepens that offered by local newspapers such as the *Leinster Leader*.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> County Wicklow was the second highest claimant county (£130,379) behind Wexford (£515,191).

<sup>27</sup> The *Leinster Leader* was first published in Naas in 1880.

The Great Famine also engendered unrest, and it generated much documentation. The Murray papers in the Dublin Diocesan Archive offer a useful Catholic perspective. Government reports and correspondence were published in parliamentary papers, many of which have been consulted in the course of this study. These reveal the scale of local distress, and of public works in the region. Another important primary source is the (now published) diary kept by Elizabeth Smith of Baltiboys House. Comparisons between the 1841 and 1851 (and later) censuses are utilised to establish demographic trends.

No settlement exists in isolation, and transport was central to the relationship of the Dunlavin region with the wider world. Fraser's and Radcliff's surveys provide useful information on transport networks in the early nineteenth century, while maps reveal changes in road patterns. Christopher Woods' 'Guide to travel writings'<sup>28</sup> reveals that Dunlavin is literally along the path less travelled. Compared to main road settlements, there is a dearth of information of this nature for Dunlavin. Yet nineteenth century directories, such as *Slater's Directory* 1881, record inter-town transportation links, and links to the capital city. These Dunlavin-Dublin links are also evident in the business documents of Dunlavin shopkeeper Martin Kelly from 1860s and 1870s. Dunlavin's links to Dublin were strengthened in 1885, when the railway station opened, and local newspapers reported on the railway's progress.

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<sup>28</sup> Christopher Woods, *Guide to travel writings* (Russell Library, N.U.I.M.). See also C. J. Woods, *Travellers' accounts as source material for Irish historians* (Dublin, 2010).

The *Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction* provides a picture of the educational situation in Dunlavin in 1835.<sup>29</sup> The existence of nine schools in Dunlavin is indicative of a youthful population, and of the value placed on literacy by Dunlavin's inhabitants. The census returns also contain information on education. Later in the century, entries in Donovan's diary provide a detailed perspective on Catholic schooling, which complements the findings of school inspectors regarding religious instruction in the national school system. Increasing levels of education and literacy encouraged the emergence of regional newspapers, such as the *Leinster Leader*, which became a rallying weapon for tenant resistance during the Land War.

Religion and religiosity was hugely significant in nineteenth-century Dunlavin. The Catholic parish register (dating from 1815) provides demographic as well as religious indicators. Peripheral Dunlavin scarcely features in the only Catholic diocesan history published to date.<sup>30</sup> However, this absence is compensated by two unique sources: the Shearman Papers dating from the 1860s, in the Russell library in Maynooth, and the aforementioned Donovan's diary, in Dunlavin Catholic church. Both reveal a devotional Catholic parish. Rector Samuel Russell McGee published an account of his Dunlavin tenure during the 1890s.<sup>31</sup> There was also a world of informal religion in nineteenth century Dunlavin, captured by the Shearman papers. The physical evidence of churches, memorials and headstones provide additional perspectives.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> As well as a description of each school, the report lists the schools' sources of support, the number of children on the books at the time, the average daily attendance, whether the attendance is increasing, stationary or diminishing and the kind of instruction given in each school.

<sup>30</sup> James Kelly and Daire Keogh (eds.), *History of the Catholic diocese of Dublin* (Dublin, 2000).

<sup>31</sup> Samuel Russell McGee, *Dunlavin: A retrospect* (Dublin, 1935).

<sup>32</sup> Many snippets of local history are to be found written in stone, either in the churches or on the gravestones of the people involved. A word of warning though – just because something is written in stone

In addition, nineteenth-century political sources have been consulted for this study. The State of the Country papers and the Rebellion papers are the principal source of information on the region in the aftermath of the 1798 rebellion. As the century progressed, political information is found in other sources, such as the CSORP and outrage papers. The Murray papers mention political clubs in county Wicklow during the 1840s, and newspapers such as the *Dublin Penny Journal* and *The Freeman's Journal* offer additional evidence. The Fenian records in the National Archives and the police reports of the time reveal the weakness of the movement in the Dunlavin region. Newspapers, now more localised, are a vital source for the later nineteenth century. The *Leinster Leader*, for example, is a reliable guide to national, county council and poor law guardian elections, in all of which the Catholic middle class were becoming dominant,<sup>33</sup> as the power of the Protestant elite waned.

A large number of secondary sources were also utilised throughout the study. Many of these were drawn from the corpus of academic Irish historiography, and they provided background and context to events in the history of Dunlavin. Secondary sources specific to Dunlavin were also consulted, and, though it may not be considered best practice to cite such sources if they have not appeared in academic publications, it is important to recognise the role of pioneering local historians of the Dunlavin region, such as Fr Joseph Whittle and John Lynott (among others), whose well-researched local historical essays

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is no guarantee that it is correct. In Dunlavin Church of Ireland cemetery, for example, one can read an inscription which says that a certain Catherine Smith passed away at the tender age of fourteen in 1868. On the same tombstone, the reader is informed that Catherine's father died in 1846 and her mother in 1851!

<sup>33</sup> Canon Donovan's diary also expresses his delight at the election of the first Catholic to the local board of guardians.

provided clear insights into the history of Dunlavin. Their valuable observations and conclusions should not be overlooked. A review of one of my previous books stated 'Lawlor has a keen eye for often overlooked local sources', <sup>34</sup> and I wish to acknowledge the unsung authors of such local secondary sources in this study.

In conclusion, the available sources permit a multi-focussed reconstruction of the Dunlavin region. <sup>35</sup> They allow one to trace the establishment of a Protestant settler community in the seventeenth century, the effort to implement a model of paternalistic landlordism in the eighteenth, the negation of that effort during the 1798 rebellion and the Great Famine, and the eventual loss of socio-economic and political control by the landed elite, as the Catholic middle class came to prominence in the late nineteenth century. The *longue durée* approach employed differentiates this work from most other recent local studies, but it may be used in conjunction with these studies to establish Dunlavin's position within the spectrum of past experiences and behaviours. The interrogation of a diverse body of source material helps to place one thread of Irish local history – that of the Dunlavin region – within an overall historical pattern. In an effort to establish the wider significance of such an approach, David Gagan, in his study of Peel County, Canada, claimed that his work was 'not, except incidentally, a piece of local history'. <sup>36</sup> However, though it has wider significance, his work is, in fact, a hugely important piece of local history. It is hoped that this study provides similar perspectives and insights.

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<sup>34</sup> *Irish Democrat*, 22 May 2004.

<sup>35</sup> Akenson captures this idea very well: 'In reality, the framework of life for the typical Irishman... was the parish or town... Irish life at local level was a marvellously complex web, in which each element reacted with every other'. Akenson, *Between two revolutions*, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> David Gagan, *Hopeful travellers: Families, land and social change in mid-Victorian Peel county, Canada West* (Toronto, 1981), p. xix.



## **CHAPTER ONE.**

### **FOUNDATION AND DEVELOPMENT: THE EMERGENCE OF DUNLAVIN, 1606-1710.**

#### **Introduction.**

The shiring of Wicklow in 1606 <sup>1</sup> was followed by the establishment of a new Anglophone, Protestant settler community in the west of the county. Their progress was interrupted by the 1641 rebellion, but they emerged victorious. Dunlavin was one of a sizeable number of new villages, which were more ambitious in their layout and character than villages where foundation predated the rebellion, established in Ireland at this time. This was in keeping with the great changes in demography and landholding that accompanied the Cromwellian plantations, and the greater security and increased prosperity that followed during the Restoration period. <sup>2</sup> In the Dunlavin region, these changes resulted in the replacement of the Sarsfield family as the major landowner in the region by the Bulkeley family. <sup>3</sup>

This chapter contains four sections, reflecting both the phases involved in the foundation of Dunlavin village and the motivation of its founders. The first section examines previous settlement in the Dunlavin area and investigates the pre-1641 process of Anglicisation, before assessing the local impact of the 1641 rebellion, and providing a brief snapshot of the region in the mid-seventeenth century. Although no village existed on the site in 1650, events over the preceding half-century created an

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<sup>1</sup> This is the accepted date. The Wicklow 400 committee oversaw commemorative events in 2006.

<sup>2</sup> L. M. Cullen, *Irish towns and villages* (Dublin, 1979), p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> The first and second baronets Dunlavin are described here as Richard and Sir Richard Bulkeley to distinguish them.

environment wherein the establishment of the new village was a possibility. One of the most important was the shiring of Wicklow, as there followed an influx of English settlers and a degree of Anglicisation throughout the county, including the Dunlavin region. Section two investigates the impact of Richard Bulkeley (1634-1685) on the region following the quelling of the 1641 rebellion, and the creation of the first settlement on the site of the present village. Bulkeley wished to establish a village on his newly acquired lands and introduced both market and ecclesiastical functions to the new Dunlavin, which was a mere hamlet during his lifetime. He was a significant figure in west Wicklow; he held public office at county level, and was created the first Baronet Dunlavin in 1672. When he died in 1685, his son, Sir Richard (1660-1710), succeeded him. The second baronet was steeped in the late seventeenth-century culture of learning, science, improvement and religious zeal. Section three examines the character and motivation of this man, who consolidated and expanded the work begun by his father, transforming Dunlavin from hamlet to village. This process is examined in section four, which also locates Bulkeley's planned university project in the context of his beliefs and aspirations.



## 1. The beginnings of Dunlavin in the mid-seventeenth century.

The area that now forms county Wicklow long resisted the English administration in Ireland's efforts to bring it fully under control. In Norman times, it was a *terra guerre*, never under Norman control, even though well 'east of a line between Antrim... and Cork' that constituted the frontier of Norman Ireland.<sup>4</sup> In west Wicklow the original settlement of Dunlavin was atop and around the earthen mound known as Tornant [Tournant] Moat, one mile south of the present village.<sup>5</sup> The Tornant/Dunlavin area was settled long before the Norman occupation; the 'Tornant stone' indicates pre-Celtic settlement.<sup>6</sup> The main evidence for locating the original settlement at Tornant is provided by an entry in 'the list of Ballymore feoffes' (c.1260), which records that 'Yvo de Dunlovan holds a carucate of land, le Rathe of Dunlovan'. Yvo was a Norman settler who flourished around 1250-1270.<sup>7</sup> 'Iveston' was an earlier name for Tornant and it was named after 'Yvo de Dunlovan'.<sup>8</sup> However, Yvo's settlement was soon abandoned. In 1326, Iveston was 'Iveston alias Tornant at present'.<sup>9</sup> The name 'Tornant' means the 'Mound of the Nettles',<sup>10</sup> which suggests that the 'Rathe of

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Roche, *The Norman Invasion of Ireland* (Dublin, 1970), p. 107 states that 'By 1200 the foreigners had occupied territory east of a line roughly drawn from Antrim to Clones, then to Athlone and Limerick and south to Cork'.

<sup>5</sup> Tornant is identified as the site of the original settlement of Dunlavin in both Chris Lawlor 'Dunlavin – What's in a name?', *Dunlavin-Donard-Davidstown Parish Link*, i, nos. 2, 3 and 5 (1995), pp 6, 4 and 5 respectively and Christiaan Corlett, 'Dunlavin and Tornant – A tale of two towns', *Wicklow Archaeology and history*, ii, (2002), p. 77.

<sup>6</sup> John Lynott, 'Some field monuments in the Dunlavin area', *Dunlavin Festival of Arts Brochure*, ix (Naas, 1991), p. 31. The Tornant stone is in the National Museum. For a sketch of a carved boulder which was once at Tornant moat, see Lord Walter Fitzgerald, 'Dunlavin, Tornant and Tober, County Wicklow', *Journal of the Co. Kildare Archaeological Society*, viii, no. 4 (1913), p. 232.

<sup>7</sup> Charles McNeill, *Calendar of Archbishop Alen's register of early Church documents c.1172-1534* (Dublin 1950), p. 121.

<sup>8</sup> The inextricable links between Iveston and Tornant are mentioned in McNeill, *Calendar of Archbishop Alen's register*, pp 121-3, 190-3. See also Liam Price, *Place names of Co. Wicklow*, ii (Dublin 1945), pp 200-1. Iveston has actually been identified as Tornant in Lawlor 'Dunlavin – What's in a name?', 5, p. 5 and Corlett, 'Dunlavin and Tornant – A tale of two towns', p.80.

<sup>9</sup> Price, *Place names*, p. 200. The phrase is 'Iveston nunc Tornant'.

<sup>10</sup> In this translation, I take the word 'Tor' to mean mound (or outcrop – in the sense of the tors of Dartmoor for example). The name has also been translated as 'Túr neannta' – the tower of the nettles, which is also a possibility. See Corlett, 'Dunlavin and Tornant', p. 80.

Dunlovan' granted to Yvo in 1260 was disused and overgrown by 1326. The settlement at Tornant was defunct by the beginning of the seventeenth century.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the demise of Tornant, the manor of Dunlavin still existed. There is no indication of the precise extent of these lands, but the estate was probably in excess of 2,000 acres.<sup>12</sup> The first recorded tenant of the manor was Sir William Sarsfield of Lucan and Tully, who died in 1616.<sup>13</sup> By the sixteenth century, the manorial system was intimately connected with the English reconquest of Ireland, although in Wicklow the system was confined to the lowland areas, as wooded mountainous areas became a refuge for the dispossessed and the malcontent.<sup>14</sup> Sarsfield held claim to the manor, but the Dunlavin region remained dangerous, punctuated by violent incidents, especially the raids of the O'Byrne faction.

By the sixteenth century the O'Byrnes, a clan driven into Wicklow's Mountains following their expulsion from their ancestral lands in county Kildare at an early stage of the Norman invasion,<sup>15</sup> occupied lands in east and west Wicklow, but were not unaffected by the spread of New English influence. Tentative efforts were made to shire the county as early as the mid-sixteenth century. In 1535, Thaddeus, chief of the O'Byrnes, submitted to Henry VIII and requested that his territory be shired. As Sir John Davies recalled: 'the Byrnes of the mountains, in the thirty fourth of Henry the Eighth [1542] desired that their county might be made shire ground and called the

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<sup>11</sup> It has been suggested that the first village of Dunlavin based around Tornant was abandoned as early as the end of the fourteenth century. Corlett, 'Dunlavin and Tornant', p. 81.

<sup>12</sup> The Tynte family succeeded the Bulkeleys on this estate and there is no record of additional purchases to enlarge the holding. In 1883 the Tynte estate at Dunlavin amounted to 2,532 acres. John Bateman, *The great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (4th ed. 1883, reprinted New York 1970), p. 462.

<sup>13</sup> Lord Walter Fitzgerald, 'Patrick Sarsfield, Earl of Lucan, with an account of his family and their connection with Lucan and Tully', *Journal of the Co. Kildare Archaeological Society*, iv, no. 2 (1903), p. 116.

<sup>14</sup> Brian Shanahan, 'The manor in east County Wicklow' in James Lyttleton and Tadhg O'Keeffe (eds), *The manor in medieval and early modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2005), p. 132.

<sup>15</sup> J. F. Lydon, 'Medieval Wicklow – a land of war' in Ken Hannigan and William Nolan (eds), *Wicklow: History and Society* (Dublin, 1994), p. 153.

county of Wicklow'.<sup>16</sup> However the clan rejected this proposal, removed Thaddeus from the leadership and elected a new chief, Shane Mac Redmond, who opposed this scheme. The area remained volatile. In 1566, Shane's son, Hugh Mac Shane O'Byrne, raided Ballymore Eustace and exacted black rents there.<sup>17</sup> During the late 1570s, further plans for the shiring of Wicklow had to be shelved as the area erupted into open rebellion culminating in the heavy defeat of English forces at Glenmalure in 1580. The region experienced continued unrest during the Baltinglass rebellion. Viscount Baltinglass was a religious zealot, channelling Gaelic resentment in the name of the Catholic faith, but his principal ally, Fiach Mac Hugh O'Byrne, seems not to have shared his religious convictions.<sup>18</sup> In the Dunlavin area, Edmund of Tubber [Tober] also supported Baltinglass. Edmund was the viscount's younger brother and succeeded to lands in Tober, where there had been a settlement in medieval times.<sup>19</sup> Following defeat, Edmund fled to Scotland and was attainted in 1585. He went to Spain and served with the Spanish Armada, before dying in Portugal in 1594.<sup>20</sup> In the 1590s Shane's grandson, Fiach (Feagh) Mac Hugh O'Byrne led his clansmen against English forces during the Nine Years' War (1594-1603). Though this war was primarily a revolt by Ulster chieftains under Hugh O'Neill, there was also a Wicklow theatre, where Fiach Mac Hugh's resilience and tenacity in the face of adversity earned him the sobriquet of the 'Firebrand of the Wicklow Mountains'.<sup>21</sup> O'Byrne's headquarters was in Glenmalure, but the Dunlavin region was in the path of his advances through the Glen of Imaal towards Naas and the Pale. The region

<sup>16</sup> Sir John Davies, *A discovery of the true cause why Ireland was never entirely subdued nor brought under obedience of the crown of England until the beginning of his majesty's reign* (London, 1612), pp 267-8.

<sup>17</sup> Catalogue of the battles of Hugh O'Byrne by Ferganaim McKeogh (TCD, Tales and poems, transcribed by Hugh O'Daly in the year 1750, MS 1288, f. 91). Black rents were a form of protection money.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher Maginn, *'Civilizing' Gaelic Leinster: the extension of Tudor rule in the O'Byrne and O'Toole lordships* (Dublin, 2005), pp 178-9.

<sup>19</sup> John Lynott, 'The parish of Tober', *Dunlavin festival of arts brochure*, xii (1994), p. 61.

<sup>20</sup> Claude Chavasse, *The story of Baltinglass* (Kilkenny, 1970) pp 32-3.

<sup>21</sup> Chris Lawlor, '1597-1997 – The Firebrand and the Wicklow Legend that's still burning', *Dunlavin - Donard - Davidstown Parish Link*, iii, no. 6 (Dec 1997), p. 7. See also Chris Lawlor, 'Some Wicklow history – originally recorded', *Dunlavin Festival of Arts Brochure*, xxi, (Naas, 2003), pp 49-52 *passim*.

constantly played host to marauding groups during the late sixteenth century. The land under O'Byrne's control was referred to as 'Fiach Mac Hugh's Country' or 'O'Byrne's Country', <sup>22</sup> and his presence so close to Dublin was both an embarrassment and a challenge to the authorities. Following his death – in battle – on 7 May 1597, hostilities continued under the leadership of his son and successor Phelim Mac Feagh O'Byrne. <sup>23</sup> Eventually, this revolt was crushed and the Dunlavin area was enclosed by the boundaries of the new county Wicklow, formally shired in 1606 – the last county to be created in Ireland.

The Dunlavin region suffered much during the revolts of the Elizabethan era, but the early seventeenth century witnessed the beginnings of the emergence of a new economy and society associated with the process of Anglicisation. The shiring of the lands meant not only that the physical boundaries changed, but also the lifestyle of the inhabitants within those boundaries. Shiring encouraged an influx of English settlers and the introduction of English ways to a hitherto almost exclusively Gaelic area. West Wicklow was remote – no road connected it to the east of the county <sup>24</sup> – and sparsely populated. Intra-county links were underdeveloped and the Wicklow Mountains formed a physical obstacle to cross-county links. Mountainous west Wicklow, with its granite outcrops and thin, acidic soils, was difficult terrain for agriculture, but the depositions provided by victims of the 1641 Rebellion reveal the presence of an improving culture of farming in the region and provide some evidence of how far the process of Anglicisation progressed during the period from 1606 to 1640. Eight deponents from west Wicklow made claims relating to the loss of

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<sup>22</sup> Cora Crampton, 'Wicklow Biographies – No. 8', *Journal of the West Wicklow Historical Society*, iii (1989), p. 15. For an excellent treatment of this subject see Maginn, *Civilizing Gaelic Leinster* (Dublin, 2004).

<sup>23</sup> Andrew O'Brien, 'Phelim MacFeagh's Revolt', *Journal of the Wicklow Historical Society*, ii, no. 4 (1998), pp 78-86.

<sup>24</sup> Archbishop William King to Colonel Allen, Mar 1708/1709 (TCD, William King Letterbook, ii, MS 1489/2, ff 65-6)

agricultural goods, livestock and crops. These depositions cover Dunlavin and embrace much of its extensive hinterland, including areas such as Baltiboy and Hollywood. The depositions do not allow one to measure the size of the settler population within the region, as only heads of households of considerable wealth and social prominence deposed.<sup>25</sup> English labourers, cottiers or servants do not usually feature in the depositions, but they existed.<sup>26</sup> In addition to the eight west Wicklow deponents, the claim of Archdeacon William Bulkeley of Old Bawn, Tallaght, county Dublin, whose father purchased land in the Dunlavin region from the Sarsfields, prior to the 1641 rebellion, referred to property at Dunlavin, but this claim is devoted primarily to the Tallaght properties and does not quantify the losses at Dunlavin separately.<sup>27</sup> The west Wicklow deponents and their claims are listed in table 1.

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<sup>25</sup> For an excellent example of using the 1641 depositions to evaluate settler infiltration in a region (Munster) see Nicholas Canny, 'The Irish background to Penn's experiment' in Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn (eds), *The world of William Penn* (Philadelphia, 1986), pp 139-56.

<sup>26</sup> *The most complete history of Dublin on the web – Parish of Tallaght*, (visited on 4/7/2001) at <http://indigo.ie/~kfinlay/ball1-6/Ball3/ball3.1.htm> contains the following information relating to the 1641 depositions: The depositions of the Bulkeleys' servants and tenants, in most cases like themselves, of Welsh extraction, give a deplorable picture of the damage. Old Bawn House, with its offices, garden, and orchard was stated to have been completely ravaged, and at Dunlavan, we are told, the destruction of a house only just completed and of a garden and orchard newly surrounded with quick-set hedges was lamentable to behold. Servants' and tenants' depositions were, however, the exception rather than the rule.

<sup>27</sup> In Fitzgerald, 'Dunlavin, Tormant and Tober', p. 220, the implication is that Dunlavin was among Sarsfield lands confiscated following the 1641 rebellion. However *The most complete history of Dublin on the web – Parish of Tallaght* (visited on 4/7/2001) at <http://indigo.ie/~kfinlay/ball1-6/Ball3/ball3.1.htm> indicates that the Dunlavin lands were already the property of Archdeacon William Bulkeley in 1641 and this is borne out by his deposition.



**Table 1. West Wicklow deponents in the 1641 depositions.**

<b>Claimant</b>	<b>Amount Sought</b>
George Bentley	£2,700.0s.0d
Henry Harrington	£2,535.10s.0d
John Wren [?]	£1,349.10s.0d
John Mountford	£729.0s.0d
John Sparrow	£396.0s.0d
William Miles	£304.6s.0d
Margaret Hall	£50.0s.0d
Hugh David	£28.10s.0d

**Source TCD, 1641 depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811**

Both George Bentley of Milltown and Henry Harrington of Grangecon claimed in excess of £2,500 and John Wren's (?) claim of over £1,300 indicated that he was also a settler of substance.<sup>28</sup> It is tempting to use the depositions as an indicator of the wealth of the settlers and to use the size of their claims as a means of ranking them in wealth and importance, but the claims reflected their losses rather than their wealth. Losses varied according to the number and ferocity of attacks and Wren's property at Whitestown, for example, suffered eight separate attacks, while Hugh David experienced only one attack. The £28 10s. claim made by David may reflect a small amount of damage to an extensive landholding. However, we may assume from the claims of Bentley, Harrington, Wren and even Mountford that they were people of substance and significant figures in the economic life of the region. They were the

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<sup>28</sup> Depositions of George Bentley, Henry Harrington and John Wren [?] (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, f. 1066, ff 1152-3 and ff 342, 342v, 343)

emerging landholding elite of west Wicklow, and the claims provide tantalisingly fragmentary evidence of how well this elite had settled into the area by 1641. Nearly all the depositions refer to household goods of considerable value, but most content themselves with a general statement. The deposition of Hugh David of Boystown, claiming he had lost 'household goods and other commodities', is typical.<sup>29</sup> Occasionally though, the depositions reveal more about the nature of the goods lost. Both Margaret Hall of Carrigower and John Wren of Whitestown lost pewter; Hall also claimed for the loss of brass and linen.<sup>30</sup> Wren claimed for a library containing 'all his noates and books', which he valued at £70. Such belongings suggest that these settlers enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle in well-furnished houses, and the inclusion of gardens and orchards in the claims of Bulkeley and Hall bear witness both to their relative affluence and to the fact that they had established permanent dwellings within an anglicised local landscape. The depositions provide a snapshot of an emerging landholding elite in west Wicklow, and since they usually provide their precise location it is possible to map their emergence in the local landscape (map five).<sup>31</sup>

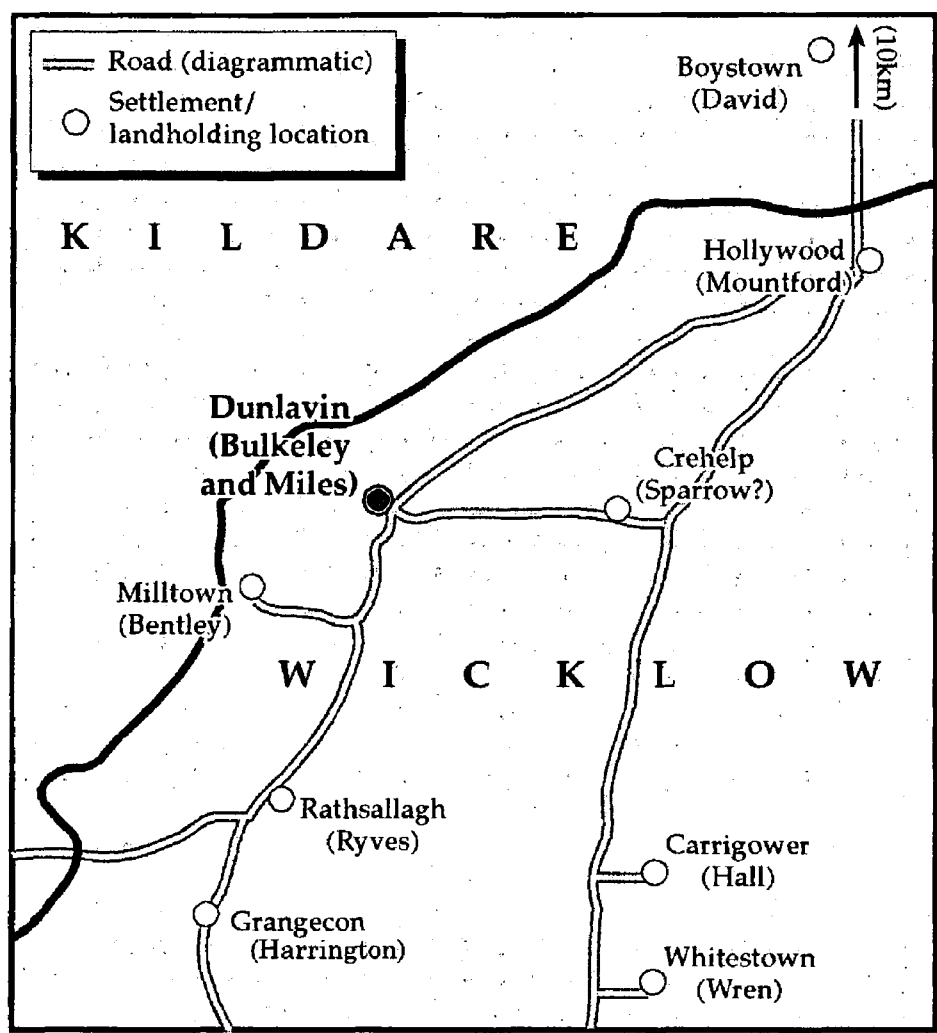
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<sup>29</sup> Deposition of Hugh David (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, f. 1274)

<sup>30</sup> Depositions of Margaret Hall and John Wren [?] (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, f. 1150 and ff 342, 342v, 343)

<sup>31</sup> John Sparrow is the exception in this regard; his location is given as Talbotstown barony, without more precise detail. However, the road from Dunlavin to Crehelp is to this day known as Sparrow road, so it is possible that Sparrow had a house, or at least held land, in or near Crehelp.

**Map 5. Schematic map of Dunlavin and its immediate hinterland showing settlers/landholders c.1640.**



**Source TCD, 1641 depositions, County Wicklow, Ms 811**

The two principal figures to feature in the depositions specifically from Dunlavin were Archdeacon William Bulkeley, whose father purchased land from the Sarsfields, and William Miles, who had evidently just moved into the area. The presence the Old English Sarsfield family in west Wicklow during the decades following the shiring of the new county indicated that not all of the landed families in the area were of New English settler stock such as Bulkeley and Miles, who had embarked on the process of improvement and introduced new English-style houses and English farming methods.

The 1641 depositions provide a guide to the nature and extent of the introduction of agricultural improvement and anglicised farming methods in west Wicklow in the early-seventeenth century. The reference in Bulkeley's deposition at Dunlavin of a 'house only just completed and a garden and orchard newly surrounded with quick-set hedges' in 1641 testifies to the improvement of the landscape and to small-scale fruit production. William Miles also built a stone house at Dunlavin, which he was furnishing in 1641. Miles' deposition also attests to the presence of corn in the Dunlavin area. This must have grown on the lowlands near the Kildare border, as the upland area to the east of Dunlavin is too mountainous. Miles also refers to cattle and hay, indicative of the pastoral farming more associated with the area. Land clearance by settlers may also have provided the basis for timber production as Miles recorded the presence of £44 worth of 'planks and cutes of timber'.<sup>32</sup>

The Anglicisation and improving rural culture, specifically of agriculture, evident at Dunlavin can also be perceived in the wider region. The new county was subject to the rule of English law. On 19 September 1627, William Dixon was appointed as clerk of the peace for county Wicklow.<sup>33</sup> The introduction of such officials created more amenable conditions for the establishment of a market economy. This is best exemplified in west Wicklow by the establishment of a new market at Rathsallagh, a mile from the present Dunlavin village on the road to Grangecon. This was granted on 20 June 1632 to William Ryves, who was licensed to hold a market every Saturday

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<sup>32</sup> Bulkeley's improvements are outlined on 'The most complete history of Dublin on the web – Parish of Tallaght', (visited on 4/7/2001) at <http://indigo.ie/~kfinlay/ball1-6/Ball3/ball3.1.htm>. Miles' evidence is given in Deposition of William Miles (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, f. 22). The total value of Miles' claim was £304 – 6 – 0.

<sup>33</sup> James Morrin, *Calendar of the Patent and Close Rolls of Chancery in Ireland of the reign of Charles the First. First to eighth year inclusive* (London, 1863), p. 245.

and an annual three-day fair starting on the feast of St Bartholomew (24 August).<sup>34</sup> The new market was established against a backdrop of agricultural advancement, confirmed in the 1641 depositions. Henry Harrington of Grangecon introduced sheep 'of English breed', and Margaret Hall of Carrigower listed 'English cowes, English hoggs and English steers and heifers' among her livestock.<sup>35</sup> Harrington also built haggards and barns, and the presence of ploughs on his land attests to tillage in the area. Arable farming was also introduced to Whitestown, where sizeable amounts of 'corn and wheat' ('the whole crop of two ploughed villages') are mentioned. The differentiation shows that both barley and wheat were sown, and the presence of 'winter corn' provides more evidence of an emerging tillage sector.<sup>36</sup> Whitestown is approximately three miles from the present village of Dunlavin and lies within both the Catholic and Anglican parishes of Dunlavin. Adjacent to Whitestown, on its eastern side, the Wicklow Mountains begin their steep ascent towards Lugnaquilla and Keadeen, so the region was the lowland frontier for tillage. However, references to hay and livestock indicate that mixed farming was practiced in the Whitestown area. Similar geographical conditions applied to Hollywood, where the presence of horses and plough harnesses attested to tillage. However, the principal type of farming in the area was pastoral; John Mountford had established a large herd of cows at Hollywood by 1641. Mountford also listed wool among his possessions, indicating the presence of sheep farming, the principal economic activity in the upland area adjoining Hollywood; it is clear from Harrington's deposition that English breeds of sheep had been introduced.<sup>37</sup> English breeds of cattle and the references to both

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<sup>34</sup> Morrin, *Calendar of the Patent and Close Rolls of Chancery in Ireland of the reign of Charles the First*, p. 245. Date of St Bartholomew's day given in C. R. Cheney (ed), *Handbook of dates for students of English history* (Cambridge, 1997 reprint), p. 44.

<sup>35</sup> Depositions of Henry Harrington and Margaret Hall (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, ff 1152-3 and f. 1150)

<sup>36</sup> Deposition of John Wren [?] (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, ff 342, 342v, 343)

<sup>37</sup> Deposition of John Mountford (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, f. 1244)

spring and winter wheat are further evidence of agricultural Anglicisation. New stone houses and bawns show that by 1641 the post-1606 settlers were firmly established in the region.

The settlers' security was shattered when the resentment of the native Irish boiled over in the 1641 Rebellion.<sup>38</sup> Raymond Gillespie has identified Wicklow as one of the first counties outside Ulster where the 'Ulster rising found an imitator within weeks'.<sup>39</sup> While the rising in county Wicklow would hardly have happened without its Ulster precursor, at local level the violence was no mere imitator of events elsewhere. Wicklow rebels were eager to attack Wicklow settlers to settle scores and unleash their resentment on the newcomers. By mid-November the O'Byrnes were in revolt and were creating terror within a few miles of Dublin.<sup>40</sup> The 1641 depositions for county Wicklow suggest that west Wicklow was engulfed in violence throughout the 1640s. Robbery and the destruction of property were commonplace. Seven of the eight west Wicklow deponents reported significant losses, bringing the process of Anglicisation to a sudden halt. The violence in the region lasted for almost a decade and the Kildare-west Wicklow region was only finally subdued when Naas was captured by Cromwell's officer, Colonel Hewson, in 1650.<sup>41</sup> The extent of the destruction experienced by the settlers in the Dunlavin region is attested by the experience of William Miles, who deposed that on or about 3 December 1641 he 'was horribly robbed and dispossessed of his goods'. Miles accused James

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<sup>38</sup> R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London, 1988), p. 87.

<sup>39</sup> Raymond Gillespie, *Seventeenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 2006), p. 147.

<sup>40</sup> J.C. Beckett, *The making of modern Ireland 1603-1923* (London, 1966), p. 85.

<sup>41</sup> Stan Hickey, Liam Kenny and Paddy Behan (eds), *Nas na Riogh: From Poorhouse Road to the Fairy Flax... an illustrated history of Naas* (Naas, 2001), p. 142.

Wolverston of Rathbran, Thomas Kehoe of Knockandarack and William Cullen of Merginstown of responsibility.<sup>42</sup>

Unrest was widespread throughout west Wicklow in the early 1640s. The depositions paint a picture of turmoil in nearly every village and parish in and adjacent to the Dunlavin region. Henry Harrington of Grangecon, one of the most substantial settlers in the region, claimed that a band of rebels that included Thomas Moore, John Lawler and Marcus Graham caused massive destruction.<sup>43</sup> Harrington's claim listed livestock including '517 sheep of English breed' valued at £115, bedding and household goods worth £50, the destruction of haggards and barns worth £400, and he claimed £1,500 because he lost his 'interest in lands at Grangecon and Griffinstowne' which belonged to his father. The large flock of sheep and value of buildings meant that Harrington claimed the huge total of £2,535.10s, the third largest in west Wicklow.

The scale of the losses of other settlers was more modest. Hugh David of Boystown reported being 'forcibly robbed and dispossessed of his goods' by Anthony and Dudley McDonnell and Diarmaid McWalter.<sup>44</sup> John Sparrow, from Talbotstown barony, testified that he was robbed by a band of rebels two of whom he knew as

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<sup>42</sup> Deposition of William Miles (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, f. 22). The place name 'Knockandarack' may refer to either of the nearby townlands Knocknarigg or Knockanarrigan. Rathbran and Merginstown are also both within about three or four miles of the present village of Dunlavin. The total value of Miles' claim was £304-6-0. Dunlavin, which was then a rural area, is referred to as being 'in the Barony of Upper Cross, Dublin or Talbotstowne in the County of Wickloe', so there was some dispute as to its exact location. Though the county was shired in 1606, there was some uncertainty regarding its exact borders. As late as 1627 there was a 'Commission to inquire into the boundaries of O'Byrnes' Country'. See Morrin, *Calendar of the Patent and Close Rolls of Chancery in Ireland of the reign of Charles the First*, pp 48-9.

<sup>43</sup> Deposition of Henry Harrington (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, ff 1152-3)

<sup>44</sup> Deposition of Hugh David (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, f. 1274). David's total claim amounted to £28 - 10s which contrasts sharply with the total of £2,535 - 10s claimed by Henry Harrington. It is of course probable that both deponents maximised their claims to the full. Such vast differences in the amounts claimed mean that the calculation of average claims in the West Wicklow area is a somewhat fruitless exercise. Perhaps the only conclusion that should be drawn from the huge range in the figures claimed is that in the mid-seventeenth century, as now, there was much inequality in rural areas such as West Wicklow.

Morris and Nowlan and other ‘companions not named, knowing them not’.<sup>45</sup> Edmond Eustace of Ballymore Eustace was also named as a rebel, and was allegedly responsible for the attack and robbery of a house at Whitestown, one of eight similar attacks on this townland. According to John Wren, Eustace ‘did by virtue of a warrant under the hand of Colonel Maurice Eustace of Castle Martin [half a mile from Kilcullen]... seize upon nine reeks of corn and wheat’.<sup>46</sup> It was unsurprising that the Eustace family of Ballymore Eustace and Naas were involved in the rebellion in the region as they were a leading Old English family with a long history of involvement in rebellion. Some Spaniards who escaped the Smerwick Harbour massacre in 1580 sought shelter with the Eustaces before they were discovered and killed on the site known as the Fod Spainneach in Naas.<sup>47</sup> Naas also featured in the deposition of John Mountford, who lost goods worth £82 during a rebel attack on the area. Mountford claimed £548 for losses incurred at Holliwood [Hollywood] during the rebellion.<sup>48</sup> Similar testimony was given by George Bentley of Milltown.<sup>49</sup> The deponents refer to raids on property perpetrated by rebels and provide evidence of the extent of the violence, the damage to the recent agricultural improvements, the large-scale economic disruption and the huge impact of the rebellion throughout west Wicklow. The total damage estimated by the 65 loyal subjects examined in the county was

<sup>45</sup> Deposition of John Sparrow (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, f. 1306). Sparrow had resided in Talbotstown barony, in a townland that seems to be named as Kilcorlany [?]. I can find no record of such a townland, nor of any that closely corresponds to this name anywhere in Talbotstown barony. It is possible that it was near Crehelp, where the road still bears the name ‘Sparrow Road’.

<sup>46</sup> Deposition of John Wren [?] (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, ff 342, 342v, 343) This deposition was given before William Ryves of Rathallagh, a settlement within a mile or so of the present village of Dunlavin. This settlement went into decline as the new village of Dunlavin began to expand in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries – of which more later.

<sup>47</sup> Chris Lawlor, *From the Norman Moat to the Spanish Field: A history of Naas Christian Brothers' school* (Naas, 2002), p. 74.

<sup>48</sup> Deposition of John Mountford (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, f. 1244). Mountford’s Hollywood claim included land worth £100, horses worth £224 and cows worth £224. His claim for damages at The Naas pertained to cows worth £14, plow harnesses for ye plow worth £5, wool to the value of £15, hay worth £20, poultry to the value of £2 and other possessions totalling £16.

<sup>49</sup> Deposition of George Bentley (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, f. 1066). I take it that the Milltown referred to in these depositions is the Milltown about one mile from the present village of Dunlavin. Liam Price, *Place names*, p. 199 refers to forms of the place-name Milltown as ‘Milltown de Dunlowen’ or the ‘Milltown of Donlovan’ from 1618 and 1621 respectively.



£132,457.14*s.2d.*<sup>50</sup> Only counties Cavan, Monaghan and Fermanagh recorded higher totals nationally.

It is evident from the depositions that the rebels raided and plundered throughout west Wicklow with impunity during the rebellion. However, the depositions also reveal deeper underlying issues dividing settler and native in the region, and violence as a manifestation of deep-seated religious and socio-economic grievances. The best-documented example relates to the hanging of a Protestant woman named Jane Flood (Flood) in Hollywood during the spring of 1642.

Jane, the wife of Philip Flood of Naas, was in Hollywood when rebels under the command of Anthony and Donal Oge McDonnell attacked the village. Some of the 'said robbers took away the said Jane Flood and carried her out of the town... and [she] was hanged by the said rebels'.<sup>51</sup> William Mansfield witnessed the incident and deposed that a certain John Murphy was the ringleader of the rebels responsible for the hanging.<sup>52</sup> According to Nicholas Buckley, Morgan Donnell of Holliwood, accompanied John Murphy, also of Holliwood, and they killed Jane Flood and buried her. Buckley also implicated a lady named Sarah, whose surname he did not know, in the atrocity, stating that she had carried a winding sheet and helped to bury Jane Flood.<sup>53</sup> Both Murphy and Morgan McDonnell (the Morgan Donnell referred to by Buckley) gave evidence before the commission in March 1653. McDonnell denied knowing either Jane Flood or her husband Philip, while Murphy admitted knowing them, but denied complicity in the murder, stating, however, that he had heard that the

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<sup>50</sup> County Wicklow Heritage Project, *The last county: the emergence of Wicklow as a county 1606-1845* (Wicklow 1993, reprinted 2006), p. 15.

<sup>51</sup> Deposition of Shane O'Furileyes [?] (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, f. 1982)

<sup>52</sup> Deposition of William Mansfield (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, f. 1986)

<sup>53</sup> Deposition of Nicholas Buckley (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, ff 1978-9)

Irish rebels had hanged her.<sup>54</sup> McDonnell's deposition was given through an interpreter. At least one other deposition regarding the case was also given thus, suggesting that Irish was the language of the native residents of west Wicklow at this time. The verdict on Murphy and McDonnell was not recorded in the depositions, but it is likely that they were found guilty, as Murphy was dead by October 1653.<sup>55</sup> The summary execution of Jane Flood points to the existence of sharp ethnic animosities in the region. Jane Flood, a Protestant (although the depositions never actually state this clearly), was in the wrong place at the wrong time.<sup>56</sup> Her execution by the rebels may have been a strategic military consideration, but the rebels only perceived it to be so because of her Protestantism. In this context, the episode also becomes a sectarian manifestation, and attests to an undercurrent of sectarianism in the region during the mid-seventeenth century.

The Civil Survey of the 1650s throws additional light on sectarian violence during the 1641 rebellion and the resulting reduction of the native Irish, Catholic population in the region. County Wicklow was not included in the Civil Survey, but the entries pertaining to villages and parishes in county Kildare close to Dunlavin demonstrate sectarian upheaval in the region. In the parish of Kilcullen, it was not possible to establish to whom 'the tythes of ye aforesaid Parrish of Kilcullen had belonged in the year 1640... by reason that most of the ancient inhabitants of the said half-barrony are either dead or transplanted into Connought'.<sup>57</sup> Comparable entries exist for the adjacent parishes of Davidstowne and Uske (Usk).<sup>58</sup> The survey also provides indices

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<sup>54</sup> Depositions of John Murphy and Morgan McDonnell (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, ff 1990-1 and 1994)

<sup>55</sup> Deposition of Nicholas Buckley (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, f. 1980)

<sup>56</sup> The very fact that her case is featured in the depositions is indicative that she was Protestant.

<sup>57</sup> *The Civil Survey A.D. 1654-1656* (with introductory notes and appendices by Robert C. Simington), viii, *County of Kildare* (Dublin, 1952) p. 78.

<sup>58</sup> *The Civil Survey A.D. 1654-1656, County of Kildare*, pp 97-9.

of Irish Papist and English Protestant proprietors for each barony.<sup>59</sup> These reveal sectarianism operating more subtly. Throughout Ireland, Protestants were replacing Catholics as landowners, evident in county Kildare in the emergence of such Protestant proprietors as Sir William Dixon of Calverstown and Sir William Parsons in Halverstown. They replaced older Catholic proprietors such as Peter Sarsfield of Tully, whose lands were confiscated. The Civil Survey leaves no room for doubt regarding the separateness and the sharply contrasting fortunes of Catholic inhabitants and Protestant settlers.

Early seventeenth-century social relationships that crossed ethnic and religious lines occasionally occurred,<sup>60</sup> but the protagonists of the 1640s and early 1650s perceived themselves as polarised along lines of ethnicity and religion. The 1641 depositions refer unequivocally and unapologetically to 'Irish rebels' and, more respectfully, to 'English forces'.<sup>61</sup> The Civil Survey of the early 1650s divided landowners into 'Irish Papists' and 'English Protestants'. This sense of a society divided along ethnic and religious lines present in contemporary English documents was also reflected in contemporary Irish literature, particularly poetry. The allegiance of Gaelic Ireland remained with its vanquished leaders, rather than with the new settlers, who were perceived as an alien, Protestant gentry, the confiscators of Catholic land.

The confiscation of Catholic land pursued in the 1650s was not a new phenomenon in west Wicklow. It began with the dissolution of Baltinglass Abbey on 15 December 1537, when Abbot John Galbally surrendered the abbey to the King's commissioners.

<sup>59</sup> *The Civil Survey A.D. 1654-1656, County of Kildare*. The relevant indices for the areas directly bordering Dunlavin parish are on pp 80 and 100.

<sup>60</sup> See, for example, the cases of Philip MacMulmore O'Reilly and George Creighton documented in Joseph Cope, 'The experience of survival during the 1641 Irish rebellion', *The Historical Journal*, 46, (2003), pp 295-316.

<sup>61</sup> See, for example, Depositions of Nicholas Buckley and William Mansfield (TCD, 1641 Depositions, County Wicklow, MS 811, ff 1978-9 and 1986)

Sir Thomas Eustace was made tenant of the abbey, granted these lands and became Viscount Baltinglass. Following the failed Baltinglass revolt, the Statute of Baltinglass of 1585 outlawed this branch of the Eustace family. The Harringtons (who eventually settled in Grangecon) succeeded them as tenants of Baltinglass abbey.<sup>62</sup> Following the defeat of Feagh Mac Hugh and Phelim Mac Feagh's rebellions, more Catholic land found its way into Protestant ownership. However, this was Gaelic Irish land. In the 1650s the confiscated lands belonged to Old English families – the great losers in the Cromwellian settlement – such as the Sarsfields.

Peter Sarsfield was outlawed for his participation in the 1641 rebellion and his lands were forfeited.<sup>63</sup> He died in 1654. Sarsfield's heirs protested his innocence and, following the Restoration, lodged a claim in the Court of Claims established by the Act of Settlement of 1662. On 17 June 1663 Peter's son Patricke, his wife Anne and their son William claimed a large amount of land, chiefly in counties Kildare and Dublin. However, George Stockdale, a Dublin gentleman, swore that he had seen Peter Sarsfield 'with Rory O'Moore and divers others at a meeting for collecting monies to pay the Irish army'. Peter Sarsfield of Tully was indicted and outlawed and the claim made by his heirs was not upheld.<sup>64</sup> No mention of land at Dunlavin was made in the claim of Patricke Sarsfield, however, which supports the contention that the Bulkeley family purchased the Dunlavin lands before the 1641 rebellion. This would explain the absence of Dunlavin from Sarsfield's claim of 1663 and the reference to a house at Dunlavin in Bulkeley's 1641 deposition. The rebellion hastened the demise of the Old English nationally and of the Sarsfields locally, whose links to their Dunlavin lands were ended. County Wicklow had 35 per cent of its land

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<sup>62</sup> Chavasse, *The story of Baltinglass*, pp 24-33 passim.

<sup>63</sup> Fitzgerald, 'Dunlavin, Tornant and Tober', p. 219.

<sup>64</sup> Geraldine Tallon (ed), *Court of Claims: Submissions and Evidence 1663* (Dublin, 2006), pp 156-7.

confiscated in the Cromwellian settlement, and the Dunlavin region entered the 1660s firmly in Protestant possession.<sup>65</sup>

## 2. Sir Richard Bulkeley, the first Baronet Dunlavin.

The Bulkeleys, who emerged as one of the dominant families in the Dunlavin area,<sup>66</sup> had a long and venerable history. The family can be traced back to the reign of King John (1199-1216), but the first figure of note was William Bulkeley, who supported the Lancastrian side in the Wars of the Roses during the reign of King Henry VI (1422-1461).<sup>67</sup> A branch of the family settled in Beaumaris, North Wales. Richard, third in descent from the above William, had a large family; his youngest son Launcelot (or Lancelot) was born c.1568. Launcelot became a man of the cloth, secured an MA from Oxford, and was beneficed in Wales from 1593 to 1620. In 1613 he became archdeacon of Dublin and settled in Ireland.<sup>68</sup> He became Lord Archbishop of Dublin on 11 August 1619.<sup>69</sup> Bulkeley's clerical career flourished and in 1634 he became treasurer of Cashel. As archbishop of Dublin, he made a bid for the primacy and raised the matter with the viceroy, Thomas Wentworth, earl of Stafford, but Stafford ruled in favour of the primacy remaining with Armagh. Despite this setback, the archbishop purchased circa 2,500 acres at Dunlavin, before the 1641 rebellion. He fared badly in the 1640s and was jailed in 1647; the Commonwealth sequestered his see in 1649 and he died in his residence at Tallaght in September 1650.<sup>70</sup> The Dunlavin estate was bought for Launcelot's son William, archdeacon of

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<sup>65</sup> Karl S. Bottigheimer, *English money and Irish land: The 'Adventurers' in the Cromwellian settlement of Ireland* (Oxford, 1971), p. 215.

<sup>66</sup> Fitzgerald, 'Dunlavin, Tormant and Tober', p. 220.

<sup>67</sup> *The English Peerage or, a view of the ancient and present state of the English Nobility* (London, 1790), p. 269. Also William Williams, 'History of the Bulkeley Family', *Anglesey Antiquarian Society and Field Club Transactions* (1948), pp 40-7.

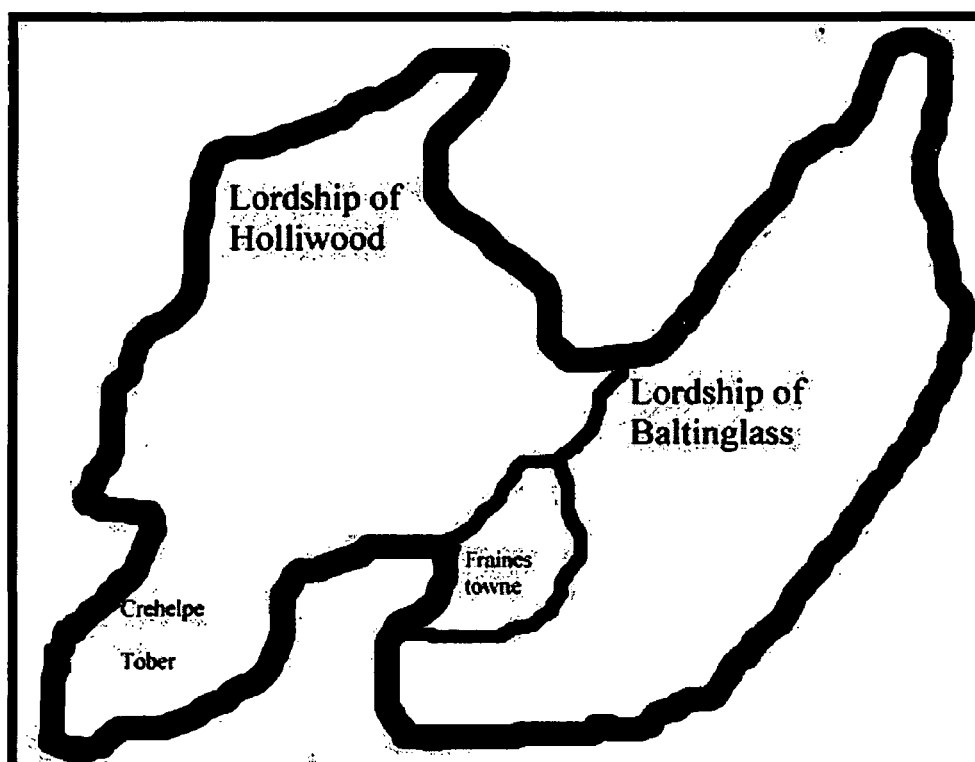
<sup>68</sup> [http://www.pgil-cirdata.org/html/pgil\\_datasets/authors/b/Bulkeley,L/life.htm](http://www.pgil-cirdata.org/html/pgil_datasets/authors/b/Bulkeley,L/life.htm) visited on 12 Oct 2007.

<sup>69</sup> Fitzgerald, 'Dunlavin, Tormant and Tober', p. 220. Also *The English Peerage*, p. 269.

<sup>70</sup> Kevin Breathnach, 'Dunlavin's University College', *Dunlavin Festival of Arts brochure*, xxii, (2004), p. 41. Also [http://www.pgil-cirdata.org/html/pgil\\_datasets/authors/b/Bulkeley,L/life.htm](http://www.pgil-cirdata.org/html/pgil_datasets/authors/b/Bulkeley,L/life.htm) visited on 12 Oct 2007.

Dublin, of Old Bawn House at Tallaght, county Dublin.<sup>71</sup> William passed the Dunlavin lands on to his son Richard (later Sir Richard Bulkeley, the first Baronet Dunlavin), who was born on 7 September 1634 at Tallaght. He was the son of Archdeacon William Bulkeley and Elizabeth Mainwaring. He married twice. His first wife was Catherine Bysse, daughter of John Bysse and Margaret Edgworth, in 1659. He later married Dorothy Whitfield, daughter of Henry Whitfield in St Nicholas's Church in Dublin.<sup>72</sup> This was the man responsible for the erection of the first houses on the site of the present Dunlavin village.

**Map 6. Sketch of baronial map of the Dunlavin region.**



**Source: Down Survey Baronial Map V 20-119, 4/609/9 (5).**

<sup>71</sup> Fitzgerald, 'Dunlavin, Tornant and Tober', p. 220. Also 'The most complete history of Dublin on the web – Parish of Tallaght', (visited on 4/7/2001) at <http://indigo.ie/~kfinlay/ball1-6/Ball3/ball3.1.htm>.

<sup>72</sup> There is uncertainty about the year of Bulkeley's second marriage. According to *thePeerage.com* the marriage took place on 8 Feb 1684 or 1685. However this conflicts with Bodleian Library Oxford, MS Carte 219, f. 255. Bulkeley died soon afterwards on 17 Mar 1684 (or 1685) aged fifty. His will (dated 17 Jan 1684/5) was probated in 1685. *thePeerage.com*, at <http://www.thepeerage.com/p18891.htm#i188906> (visited on 17/2/2007)

Though absent from the Civil Survey, county Wicklow was included in the Down Survey of c.1654-1659 and the Dunlavin region is represented on a Down Survey baronial map (map 6).<sup>73</sup> Significantly, Dunlavin village is not plotted; Crehelp and Tober appear on the map, but no settlement is shown on the site of the present village, and the placename 'Dunlavin' does not appear in the survey.<sup>74</sup> Evidently, the village of Dunlavin did not exist in the mid-1650s, but this was soon to change as the new village was established on a greenfield location. The chosen site was a well watered, but dry-point, hillside on the road to Kilkenny.<sup>75</sup> Its location on this road was a key factor in Dunlavin's early development.<sup>76</sup> In 1661, Richard Bulkeley petitioned King Charles II, stating that 'Dunlavin town lies near the mountains of Wicklow and there is a great want of markets and fairs in that country. The town of Dunlavan is well situated for such a fair.' As a result, on 25 April 1661 Richard Bulkeley was granted 'the right to hold a market at Dunlavin on every Wednesday and fairs on the second Tuesday in May and the second Tuesday after Michaelmas, each lasting for two days.'<sup>77</sup> This document provides the first mention of the town of Dunlavin, which suggests that some settlement, though it can only have been a hamlet at this stage, existed on the site of the present village in 1661. Permission to hold a weekly market and biannual fairs was confirmed in a letter from the King to the Lords Justices of Ireland.<sup>78</sup> Written from Whitehall on 25 February 1662, the letter affirmed:

<sup>73</sup> N.A.I., Baronial map of Talbotstown, V 20-119, 4/609/9 (5).

<sup>74</sup> No mention of Dunlavin is made in Y. M. Goblet, *A topographical index of the parishes and townlands of Ireland in Sir William Petty's MSS. barony maps (c 1655-9) and Hiberniae Delineatio (c 1672)* (Dublin 1932), p. 339. The nearest settlement to the present Dunlavin village that appears in Goblet's work is Rathsalagh, the seat of the Ryves family.

<sup>75</sup> Sir Richard Bulkeley to Bishop of Derry, 9 Dec 1699, *First Report of the Royal Commission of Historical Manuscripts*, i, [C55], H.C. 1870, Appendix IV, pp 238-9. The water supply came from the River Griese (Greese).

<sup>76</sup> Crossing the Liffey at Ballymore-Eustace, this road proceeded through Dunlavin to Athy and Castlecomer.

<sup>77</sup> *Calendar of the State Papers relating to Ireland preserved in the Public Record Office 1660-1662* (London, 1905), p. 511. The fact that the petition located Dunlavin is an indication that it was a very new settlement.

<sup>78</sup> Petition of Richard Bulkeley for a fair at Dunlavin, 25 Feb 1662 (Bodleian Library Oxford, MS Carte 42, f. 503). The document is signed 'By His Majesty's Command, Will[iam] Morice'.

that the said town of Dunlavan lyes near to the mountains of the said county [Wicklow] and that there is a great want in that part of the country of markets and fairs to which the inhabitants of the said mountains and other parts may resort to buy such things as they want and to sell such things as they have to spare, and that the said town of Dunlavin is a place very convenient for those uses... Wee, taking into our Princely consideration the advantages that may come to our loving subjects by the increase of commerce and being willing to accommodate them with such conveniences as may be most for their ease... cause effectual letters patent to be passed under the great seale of Our Kingdome of Ireland containing a grant unto the said Sir Richard Bulkeley.

Having acquired a market function, the new village was on its way to becoming a node of integration. This new function placed Dunlavin within a larger network of market and fairs, which will be examined more fully in the next chapter.

Following the establishment of its market, Dunlavin was to take another major step forward when, on 14 June 1664, Bulkeley petitioned the earl of Ossory for permission to build a church within the settlement.<sup>79</sup> This would fulfil the second requirement for the settlement to become a true node of integration.<sup>80</sup> Bulkeley's petition stated that 'in the towne of Dunlavan, in the county of Wicklow, there are about twenty severall Protestant families inhabiting the said towne who are much dispersed and scattered abroad to severall places to heare Divine Service read and the word of God preached unto them, there being not any church in or neare the said towne of Dunlavan'.<sup>81</sup> It is difficult to estimate the number of people in the village from the reference to 'twenty

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<sup>79</sup> Ossory was the son of the first Duke of Ormonde, which explains his presence at Dublin Castle. He was 'deputy Governor of Ireland for his father from 21 May 1664 to 3 Sep 1665, and Apl 1668 to May 1669'. George Edward Cokayne (ed), *The Complete Peerage* x (London, 1982 reprint) p. 155.

<sup>80</sup> William J. Smyth, 'Territorial Organisation of Irish rural communities' [two parts], *The Maynooth Review*, i 1 (Jun 1975) and *The Maynooth Review*, i 2 (Nov 1975). Smyth identified a commercial function and the presence of a church as characteristics of nodes of integration. 'The most important nodes of activity and integration normally include a church...' Part one, pp 64-5. 'Units such as... the village/church community zone... were defined as the most important institutions which anchored rural dwellers to a specific community and territory'. Part two, p. 52. This was as true for seventeenth century Protestant communities as it was for twentieth century Catholic ones, of which Smyth was writing.

<sup>81</sup> Petition of Richard Bulkeley for a church at Dunlavin, 25 Feb 1662 (Bodleian Library Oxford, MS Carte 159, f. 90v).



severall families', but a conservative multiplier of 5 would suggest that there were at least 100 inhabitants.<sup>82</sup> The petition went on to propose that Bulkeley 'may provide a place, at his own proper cost and charges, where the severall inhabitants may assemble themselves to hear Divine Service read and the word preached unto them' and sought a 'lycence... to build a church in the said town of Dunlavan notwithstanding the statute of mortmaine'<sup>83</sup> Ossory referred Bulkeley's petition to the lord chancellor and the archbishop of Dublin, who looked favourably on the idea, and advised Ossory on 10 February 1666 that Bulkeley should 'bee authorised and required to lay out a convenient piece of ground adjoining to the said church for the churchyard thereof'.<sup>84</sup> A cemetery exists within the present village, where some headstones date from this period. The ruins of the village's former Protestant church lie adjacent to the cemetery.<sup>85</sup> This suggests that Bulkeley complied with the suggestion made by the Lord Chancellor and the Archbishop of Dublin and provided a churchyard. On 23 July 1666 Ossory wrote from Dublin Castle ordering 'His Majesty's Attorney and Solicitor General or either of them to draw up a fiant in due form of law containing power and authority unto the petitioner [Bulkeley] to such purpose'.<sup>86</sup> The new Dunlavin church was a step closer to becoming a reality.

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<sup>82</sup> A multiplier of between 5 and 5.5 was suggested at the beginning of the nineteenth century in Robert Fraser, *General view of the agriculture and mineralogy, present state and circumstances of the County Wicklow* (Dublin, 1801), p. 240.

<sup>83</sup> The Statute of Mortmain was passed in 1279 by King Edward I and was aimed at preventing land from becoming the property of perpetual institutions such as the Church, because when this happened the land was no longer within the tax net of the state. There were actually two statutes enacted, in 1279 and in 1290; the second statute is more properly known as Quia Emptores. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statute\\_of\\_Mortmain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statute_of_Mortmain) (visited 15/11/2006). <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/ed1-mortmain.html> (visited 15/11/2006). <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10579a.htm> (visited 15/11/2006). <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/medieval/mortmain.htm> (visited 15/11/06). <http://www.domesdaybook.net/helpfiles/hs1730.htm> (visited 15/11/2006).

<sup>84</sup> Bishop of Dublin to Ossory, 10 Feb 1666, (Bodleian Library Oxford, MS Carte 159, f. 91).

<sup>85</sup> I am indebted to Mr Gerard O'Dwyer of Dunlavin for bringing these headstones to my attention.

<sup>86</sup> Ossory to Attorney and Solicitor General, 23 Jul 1666 (Bodleian Library Oxford, MS Carte 159, f. 91)

Considering Bulkeley's background, his decision to build a church was in character. Though not a man of the cloth himself, the cloth coursed through his veins, and he was deeply concerned with religious matters. Two letters written by Bulkeley from Dunlavin on 23 December 1664 provide some insight into his mentality. These letters confirm that Bulkeley was in residence in the new village for at least some of the year and probably spent Christmas 1664 there. The first was to Sir William Tichborne and revealed that Bulkeley believed that an Anabaptist insurrection was planned for Ireland.<sup>87</sup> He informed Tichborne that 'a neighbour of the country who we always suspected to be a fanaticke came and caused me to be awakened out of my sleepe'. This neighbour told Bulkeley that 'an acquaintance of his, being an Anabaptist, formerly a corporall to an Anabaptist Collonel, coming from Dublin told him that there was ten Anabaptist Collonels... have taken houses in Dublin on purpose together'. Their intention, Bulkeley stated, was upon hearing 'news or notice from England where same is intended, to rise up in rebellion in Dublin and then in ye country'. Bulkeley claimed that 'the man that acquaints me is noe foole and doth assure me it is truth'. He concluded the letter by telling Tichborne he 'may make the best use of [this information]' and, if there is a need to 'defend and prevent bloodshed', Bulkeley assures him that 'I am here and ready'. The second similar letter was to Lord Chief Baron Bysshe, alerting him to the alleged Anabaptist plot.<sup>88</sup> Bulkeley told Bysshe that his informant was suspected of being 'an Anabaptist' rather than 'a fanaticke'; the distinction may be indicative that he was sympathetic to some forms of Protestant radicalism. Bulkeley also thought it was his 'duty, for the publick peace etc. to send this [letter] on purpose to acquaint you'. This concept of duty

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<sup>87</sup> Bulkeley to Tichborne, 23 Dec 1664 (Bodleian Library Oxford, MS Carte 215, f. 119). The writer's address is erroneously given as 'Dunhaven' in the calendar of the Carte manuscripts.

<sup>88</sup> Bulkeley to Bysshe, 23 Dec 1664 (Bodleian Library Oxford, MS Carte 215, f. 118). The writer's address is erroneously given as 'Dunhaven' in the calendar of the Carte manuscripts.

further confirms Bulkeley's religious and Anglican clerical background and mentality. The threat of an Anabaptist revolt in Ireland was not serious in the 1660s, despite this era being the zenith of Anabaptism nationally. However, Bulkeley perceived the threat to be real, and he acted swiftly to inform others and to avert a situation where a clear and present danger to the established church could emerge. As a man of some standing in west Wicklow, Bulkeley was eager to defend the established order from the threat of revolt.

Further evidence of Bulkeley's standing in county Wicklow was provided in 1669 by a despatch from the Earl of Ossory to Cromwell Wingfield, the sheriff of the county. Ossory ordered that a list of all militia officers within the county be drawn up, recording the number of men 'in each troop or company as they now had or were on the last muster taken of them' and the names of places appointed for the storage of arms.<sup>89</sup> Apart from Wingfield, copies were to be sent only to John Boswell (of Kilcorey)<sup>90</sup> and Richard Bulkeley in county Wicklow. By the late 1660s Richard Bulkeley was a significant force within the county. He held the office of sheriff in 1660 and he was M.P. for Baltinglass from 1665 to 1666. Baltinglass was the principal settlement in west Wicklow and Bulkeley's status as an M.P. provides evidence of his rising political stature. This was confirmed on 9 December 1672, when he was created the first Baronet Bulkeley, of Dunlaven, county Wicklow.<sup>91</sup>

Bulkeley's first wife, Catherine Bysshe, was buried on 14 February 1662 in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. Catherine was the mother of Bulkeley's son, also called Richard, who would eventually become the second Baronet Dunlavin. In 1681,

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<sup>89</sup> Ossory to Wingfield, 8 Apr 1669 (Bodleian Library Oxford, MS Carte 144, ff 125, 125v)

<sup>90</sup> Charles Mosley (ed.), *Burke's Peerage and Baronetage*, ii (106th ed., Crans, Switzerland, 1999), p. 2971.

<sup>91</sup> *thePeerage.com* <http://www.thepeerage.com/p18891.htm#i188906> (visited on 17/2/2007)

Charles II sent a mandamus to Trinity College, Dublin, for the election of Bulkeley's son Richard to a fellowship in the college.<sup>92</sup> Ormond noted that the young Richard 'is a deserving man [and is] the eldest son of his ffather, heire to an estate of £1,000 a year... being somewhat misshapen and his ffather having maryed a Presbyterian wife, ye young man cannot live with pleasure in his ffather's house'.<sup>93</sup> The value of Bulkeley's estate, embracing property in England, Dublin and Cork as well as Wicklow, shows that he was a man of substance and one of the leading members of the post-Restoration landed elite in west Wicklow. His marriage to Dorothy Whitfield, a Presbyterian, demonstrated that Bulkeley was located at the radical end of the spectrum of opinion within the Church of Ireland, despite being a product of a very traditional Church of Ireland family. The Church of Ireland was a Church inclusive of many differing views and perhaps the liberal Bulkeley believed that, unlike other Protestant radicals, Presbyterians were not 'fanaticks'. Bulkeley's tolerance led to his coming under suspicion of fanaticism himself, and in 1683 he was called before Archbishop Boyle to answer charges that he was a regular attendee at conventicles.<sup>94</sup> Bulkeley defended himself so successfully that Boyle was utterly convinced of his trustworthiness and proposed to nominate him to the Commission of the Peace. However, Ormond blocked this appointment, believing that Bulkeley was 'as yet unfit for it as ever he was'.<sup>95</sup> Evidently this change in Bulkeley's religious outlook caused a degree of friction between the first baronet and his son, who experienced difficulties staying in his father's house in the 1680s. During his later

<sup>92</sup> Ormond to Arran, 22 Jun 1681 (Bodleian Library Oxford, MS Carte 219, f. 255). This document calls into question the exact date of Bulkeley's second marriage. [See note 66 above]. *Webster's Dictionary* defines 'Mandamus' as an "extraordinary writ issued, in the absence of any other legal remedy, to a corporation or to any person commanding the performance of some clear public duty imposed by law".

<sup>93</sup> Bulkeley married the Presbyterian Dorothy Whitfield, daughter of Sir Henry Whitfield, on 8 Feb 1684 at St. Nicholas's church in Dublin. *thePeerage.com* <http://thepeerage.com/p18892.htm#i188916> (visited on 17/2/2007). The value of £1,000 evidently refers to the entire Bulkely estate, rather than just the Dunlavin lands.

<sup>94</sup> K. Theodore Hoppen, *The common scientist in the seventeenth century: A study of the Dublin Philosophical Society 1683-1708* (London, 1970), p. 40.

<sup>95</sup> 'Letters of Boyle to Ormonde dated 2 May 1683 and Ormonde to Boyle dated 7 Jul 1683' in *H.M.C., Calendar of Ormonde Manuscripts* vii, (new series, London, 1912), 19, 66.

years the first baronet, who had travelled much in early life, contented himself with superintending his fine stud of horses.<sup>96</sup> He died in 1685 and the title passed to his eldest son, the young Richard,<sup>97</sup> who was responsible for consolidating and enlarging the new settlement of Dunlavin, and for turning a hamlet into a thriving village.

### 3. Sir Richard Bulkeley, the second Baronet Dunlavin.

The second Sir Richard Bulkeley was probably born in 1660 and 'though deformed in body, [he] was a man of extraordinary cleverness and learning'.<sup>98</sup> Bulkeley had a hunchback and had to wear a truss.<sup>99</sup> Physically inactive, the young man, John Lodge observed, 'in a few years acquired a very great measure of learning' and was 'blessed with so great a memory at sixteen years of age he had a large stock of human learning and faculties of soul scarcely equalled; wit, fancy and apprehension extraordinary; but a memory almost miraculous'.<sup>100</sup> Bulkeley graduated with a B.A. from Trinity College, Dublin in 1680. Thanks to the royal mandamus, an M.A. ensued in 1681,<sup>101</sup> and he became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1682.<sup>102</sup> He married Lucy, daughter of Sir George Downing on 16 February 1685/86 in Westminster Abbey, London. His politics were Whiggish and he served as M.P. for Fethard (county Wexford) from 1692 until his death in 1710.<sup>103</sup> Typifying the spirit of public service, improvement

<sup>96</sup> <http://www.eiretek.org/chapters/books/ball1-6/Ball3/ball3.1.htm> visited on 17/5/2005.

<sup>97</sup> Fitzgerald, 'Dunlavin, Tornant and Tober', p. 220. It is possible that Bulkeley died in 1684. [See note 76 above].

<sup>98</sup> Fitzgerald, 'Dunlavin, Tornant and Tober', p. 220. Fitzgerald stated that the second baronet was born in 1644, but this is obviously incorrect since his father was born in 1634 and his father's first marriage was in 1659. <http://www.thepeerage.com/p18891.htm#i188906> (visited on 17/2/2007) gives the date of his birth as 17 Aug 1660. I take 1660 to be the correct date. Also, Ormond to Arran, 22 Jun 1681 (Bodleian Library Oxford, MS Carte 219, f. 255) describes Bulkeley as a 'young man' in 1681, so the natal date of 1660 seems the more probable.

<sup>99</sup> Andrew Kippis, *Biographia Britannica*, iii (London, 1784), entry for 'Edmund Calamy', p. 144.

<sup>100</sup> J. Lodge (revised by M. Archdall), *The Peerage of Ireland*, v (Dublin, 1789) p. 23.

<sup>101</sup> TCD, George Dames Burtchaell and Thomas Ulick Sadlier, *Alumni Dublinenses: A register of the students, graduates, professors and provosts of Trinity College in the University of Dublin 1593-1860* (Dublin, 1935), p. 110. See also Hoppen, p. 40. See also 'The most complete history of Dublin on the web – Parish of Tallaght' (visited on 4/7/2001) at <http://indigo.ie/~kfinlay/ball1-6/Ball3/ball3.1.htm>

<sup>102</sup> *Early letters of the Royal Society* at <http://www.livesandletters.ac.uk/rs/pilot/ref/biographies.html> (visited on 21/1/2008).

<sup>103</sup> 'The most complete history of Dublin on the web – Parish of Tallaght' (visited on 4/7/2001) at <http://indigo.ie/~kfinlay/ball1-6/Ball3/ball3.1.htm>. See also Hoppen, *The common scientist*, p. 40. See also *thePeerage.com*, <http://www.thepeerage.com/p18891.htm#i188906> (visited on 17/2/2007).

and inquiry of the age, he was an enthusiastic parliamentarian, presenting ten bills between 1697 and 1703, though none was enacted.<sup>104</sup>

Bulkeley was a prolific writer and a leading member of the late seventeenth century intelligentsia of Dublin, which was a centre of 'New Learning'. William Molyneux founded the Dublin Philosophical Society in 1683.<sup>105</sup> It has been argued that in a European context, the Dublin Society was 'of little importance in the development of original thinking about the role of science in relation to the contemporary human condition', but in the Irish context 'the intellectual positions of the members were significant'.<sup>106</sup> The society exemplified the thirst for knowledge characteristic of the age, and built on the foundations of earlier proponents of New Learning such as Miles Symner.<sup>107</sup> In T. C. Barnard's words, the society was symbolic of 'the slow spread of a new spirit [and so] belonged to a tradition which can be traced back to James Ussher and Nathaniel Carpenter and which owed much to Hartlib's friends, William Petty, Robert Wood, Miles Symner and Benjamin Worsley'.<sup>108</sup> These men typified the new

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<sup>104</sup> The bills presented were (1) For paving and cleansing the streets of the city and suburbs of Dublin, and other places in the county of Dublin, within the weekly bills of mortality, for illuminating the streets and removing the nuisances therein. Bill 2211, Session 1697 (2) To prevent Protestants turning Papists, and converts from being reconciled to the Church of Rome. Bill 2058, Session 1697 (3) To prevent the undue raising of money by grand juries. Bill 2336, Session 1697 (4) For ascertaining the meares and bounds between the county of Dublin and the county of the city of Dublin. Bill 1834, Session 1698 (5) To encourage the improving of unprofitable lands in this kingdom. Bill 5169, Session 1698 (6) For the better making and screening of malt for sale. Bill 1777, Session 1698 (7) To prevent the illegal raising of money by grand juries and the misapplying of money legally raised. Bill 2367, Session 1703 (8) For the better regulation of the markets and sale of goods within the city and suburbs of Dublin and the several liberties adjacent, and to oblige the retailers of salt and meal and other ground corn to sell by weight. Bill 3668, Session 1703 (9) For collecting and recovering the arrears of the late poll tax. Bill 3272, Session 1703 (10) For supplying the defects of an act for preserving timber trees and woods. Bill 3960, Session 1703.

'Irish legislation database' (visited on 3/11/2008) at [http://www.qub.ac.uk/ild/?func=name\\_search&search=true&name\\_search\\_string=bulkeley&submit.x=67&submit.y=9](http://www.qub.ac.uk/ild/?func=name_search&search=true&name_search_string=bulkeley&submit.x=67&submit.y=9).

<sup>105</sup> Henry F. Berry, *A history of the Royal Dublin Society* (London, 1915), p. 2.

<sup>106</sup> K. Theodore Hoppen, 'The Dublin Philosophical Society and the New Learning in Ireland', *Irish Historical Studies*, xiv, 54 (Sep 1964), p. 109.

<sup>107</sup> Symner's career is documented in T. C. Barnard, 'Miles Symner and the new learning in seventeenth-century Ireland', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, (henceforth cited as J.R.S.A.I.), 102 (Dublin, 1972), pp 129-42. However the actual significance of Symner's contribution to the intellectual movement of the era is questioned in K. Theodore Hoppen, 'Correspondence: The Hartlib Circle and the origins of the Dublin Philosophical Society', *Irish Historical Studies*, xx, 54 (1974), p. 41.

<sup>108</sup> T. C. Barnard, 'The Hartlib Circle and the origins of the Dublin Philosophical Society', *Irish Historical Studies*, xix, 54, (Mar 1974), p. 57.

spirit of learning and improvement in Restoration Dublin. Later, this spirit would spread beyond Dublin, but it was 'only in the 1680s, when settlers had been longer established did they... identify, through their mansions, estates, kin and clients, closely with a region'.<sup>109</sup> The diffusion of the new spirit was influential in improvements to the rural landscape and villages, which flourished in the late seventeenth century, not least in Dunlavin, of which more later.

The Dublin Philosophical Society was established 'agreeable to the design of the Royal Society in London'.<sup>110</sup> Bulkeley became a leading member and brought an able mind, huge enthusiasm and a substantial fortune<sup>111</sup> to the new experimental philosophy. He was avid in his pursuit of knowledge and contributed to the society's work in many fields, including chemistry, meteorology, transport and geology, indicative of his wide-ranging interests.<sup>112</sup> He was imbued with the thirst for knowledge and wished to contribute to the scientific advances of the late seventeenth century. However, due to his disability, Bulkeley was only able to attend the early meetings of the Society, though he maintained correspondence subsequently from Old Bawn.<sup>113</sup>

Political developments arising out of the accession of James II to the throne and changes in policy in Ireland had a still more disruptive impact. Fearful of an imminent

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<sup>109</sup> T. C. Barnard, 'The Hartlib Circle and the cult and culture of improvement in Ireland' in Mark Greengrass, Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor (eds), *Samuel Hartlib and universal reformation: studies in intellectual communication*, (Cambridge, 1994), p. 289.

<sup>110</sup> Capel Molyneux, *An account of the family and descendants of Sir Thomas Molyneux Kt.*, (Evesham 1820), pp 63-4.

<sup>111</sup> Hoppen, *The common scientist*, p. 40. Bulkeley's estate was worth more than £1,000 per annum.

<sup>112</sup> Bulkeley's contributions included a paper on the acid-alkali reaction involved in digestion, 5 May 1684 (British Library [henceforth cited as BL], Add MS 4811, f.162v); the invention of an improved anemometer, 10 Nov 1684 (BL, Add MS 4811, f. 166v.); work on a new carriage, published in London (Hoppen, *The common scientist*, pp 148-9) and questions regarding the Giant's Causeway which were also later published in London (Hoppen, *The common scientist*, pp 139, 182).

<sup>113</sup> Hoppen, *The common scientist*, p. 40.

uprising in Ireland, either from Papists or Protestant radicals, Bulkeley withdrew to London in 1686, where he continued to practice the new learning and participate in the inquiring spirit of the age. He presented a paper on 'a new sort of calesh' to the Royal Society in 1686.<sup>114</sup> This new mode of self-propelled transport was, Bulkeley claimed, very comfortable for invalids and was almost impossible to overturn. However, the calesh also had disadvantages. It would 'only hold one person, was ready to take fire every ten miles and it created an almost insufferable noise'.<sup>115</sup> These difficulties proved insurmountable so the new calesh never entered production.

Bulkeley subsequently presented other papers on themes ranging from agriculture and forestry to geology to the Royal Society. In 1693 Bulkeley astounded the academic world and the London intelligentsia with a paper on the Giant's Causeway in county Antrim.<sup>116</sup> The bishop of Derry made the discovery a year earlier. Bulkeley described the causeway in detail, posing a number of questions such as were the columns all hexagonal and were they solid or hollow. The news caused a stir, and the causeway became part of the Grand Tour, with William Molyneux removing one of the columns and sending it to the Royal Society in London in 1697. In the same year a draughtsman made drawings of the columns and a year later Bulkeley's paper on the causeway was superseded by Molyneux's much-improved description.<sup>117</sup> Also in 1693, Bulkeley addressed the Royal Society on the theme of agriculture. He had

<sup>114</sup> Marsh's Library, 'Part of a letter from Sr. R. B. to Dr. L. concerning a new sort of calesh' in *Philosophical transactions of the Royal Society, giving some account of the present undertaking, studies and labours of the ingenious in many considerable parts of the world*, xv (1686), p. 1028. Henceforth cited as *Philosophical Transactions*. Webster's Dictionary defines 'Calesh' (also 'Calash') as "a light, small passenger carriage with a folding top".

<sup>115</sup> John Evelyn (E.S. De Beer, ed.) *The Diary of John Evelyn*, iv (London, 1951, reprinted 2000), pp 483-4 & note.

<sup>116</sup> 'Part of a letter from Sr. R.B. FRS to Dr. Lister concerning the Giant's Causway in the County of Atrim in Ireland' in *Philosophical Transactions*, xvii (1693), pp 708-10. Incidentally, Bulkeley's surmises were far from accurate and he posed a number of questions, which were answered (again with dubious accuracy) by Revd. Dr. Samuel Foley, 'Answers to Sir Richard Bulkeley's queries relating to the Giant's Causway, wrote down when we were upon the causway' in *Philosophical Transactions*, xviii (1694), pp 173-5.

<sup>117</sup> Hoppen, *The common scientist*, pp 139, 182. See also 'Giant's Causeway Official Guide' (visited on 27/4/2001) at <http://www.giantscusewayofficialguide.com/beginning.htm>



presented a paper on farm economics to the Dublin Philosophical Society as early as 1686.<sup>118</sup> He now outlined how the cultivation of maize would benefit Ireland.<sup>119</sup> He described a series of experiments he had carried out to ascertain the advantages of growing particular strains of maize and concluded that the crop would be beneficial to the Irish economy and to the individuals involved. In another address to the Royal Society, Bulkeley advocated the growth of elm trees, an idea that he had following a discussion with 'a poor meer Irish labourer'.<sup>120</sup> Once again the baronet concluded that production would be economically and monetarily beneficial, create an industrious ethos among participants, and meet the high demand for timber, which was in short supply.

The principal political event that interrupted Bulkeley's intellectual endeavour was the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, and the protracted struggle that followed between James II and William of Orange. Bulkeley was attainted by the Irish Jacobite parliament in 1689.<sup>121</sup> In the Williamite-Jacobite wars, Bulkeley was very firmly on the Protestant side and, despite his physical frailties, took up soldiering.<sup>122</sup> He fought at the battle of the Boyne and on his return from the battlefield was involved in an incident indicative of his attitude towards Roman Catholicism. His return journey took him past St. Doulagh's church in north county Dublin. Outside the church a significant feature – St Doulagh's Well and St Catherine's Pond – caught Bulkeley's attention. The interior walls were decorated in 1609 with frescoes depicting the

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<sup>118</sup> Hoppen, *The common scientist*, p. 152.

<sup>119</sup> 'Extract of a letter from Sir Richard Bulkeley [sic.] FRS to Dr. Lister concerning the improvement to be made by maize; with a note on the same by John Ray FRS' in *Philosophical Transactions*, xvii (1693), pp 928-30.

<sup>120</sup> 'An extract of a letter from Sir R. Bulkeley [sic.] concerning the propagation of elms by seed', in *Philosophical Transactions*, xvii (1693), p. 971.

<sup>121</sup> George Edward Cokayne, (ed), *The Complete Baronetage*, iv, (Gloucester, 1983 reprint), p. 207.

<sup>122</sup> I realise that 'Protestant' is a complex term, including many shades of opinion and belief. Indeed, Bulkeley's own deeply-held religious beliefs were complex and in later life he was a follower of the so-called 'French Prophets'. For the purposes of this thesis however, a clear division is drawn between the Protestant King William and the Catholic King James.

Descent of the Holy Ghost, St. Patrick, St. Bridget, St. Colmcille and St. Doulagh dressed as an anchorite. Bulkeley defaced the frescoes and destroyed the site,<sup>123</sup> wreaking this destruction in the name of his new sovereign, William.

Bulkeley may have known Queen Mary personally as he was in correspondence with her. The correspondence also indicates that he viewed the Glorious Revolution as a precursor to a moral revolution and he used his access to Mary to promote his ideas on the control of public morality for the common good. Some of this correspondence – a series of letters (probably dating from 1689) – shows Bulkeley to be a man of deep religious convictions. In addition, he held strong views on both social justice and public morality. In one letter, he observed that some of the duties imposed by the Holy Scriptures were ‘less necessarily required of some sorts of persons than of others’; he indicated that the duties of justice and mercy are more often required of those in authority and noted that it is the duty of all to give substance to the poor. He also flattered the Queen, observing that if she accepted his advice she was sure to be ‘receiv’d into everlasting habitations and shine as ye starrs for ever and ever’.<sup>124</sup> In another letter Bulkeley suggested that people ‘should reform and amend our lives and turn from our wicked ways’ and he presented a draft of a ‘Proclamation against cursing, swearing and drunkenness’ for use by the queen. He also advised Frederick, Duke of Schomberg, to punish all drunkenness and debauchery in the army. The fact that he had the confidence to advise the powerful Schomberg, and take him to task for being lax in not punishing army miscreants severely enough, attests to the strength of

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<sup>123</sup> John Lynch, *The life of St. Patrick from Walter Harris’s translation of Sir James Ware’s works together with the Confessio Sancti Patricii and the Epistola ad Christianos tyranny Corotici subditos Sti. Patricii* (London c.1870), cited in Eamon Kiernan (ed), *A guide to St. Doulagh’s church*, (no date), p. 18. See also [http://www.malahide.dublin.anglican.org/blog/?page\\_id=32](http://www.malahide.dublin.anglican.org/blog/?page_id=32) (visited on 5/7/2002).

<sup>124</sup> Richard Bulkeley, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baronet Bulkeley of Dunlavin, to Queen Mary II, [1689], (University of Nottingham Library [Henceforth cited as U.N.L], The Papers of Hans William Bentinck, First Earl of Portland, Part Two, Public Miscellanea, [Henceforth cited as Bentinck Papers], MS Pw A 2324)

his conviction. He also claimed that the miseries that had befallen the Protestant subjects of Ireland 'do with a loud voice call upon us to endeavour to divert the Divine displeasure'.<sup>125</sup>

Bulkeley's correspondence with the Queen indicates that he was religiously and socially motivated, with an active programme of ideas for reform. On one occasion he addressed the 'future easing of this city [London] and kingdom [Britain] from the great burden of the poor'. Bulkeley was troubled by the great number of poor and believed about one eleventh of the nation 'are not worth £5 in all their worldly goods'. In order to alleviate this poverty, Bulkeley advocated an ambitious institutional response, dealing with key aspects of this poverty. He favoured establishing houses where all children whose parents could not maintain them were taught to read and write and 'kept and bred in the fear of God and in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures'. He also suggested establishing workhouses where all adult beggars could be maintained and 'work at such sort of work as fits their strength and other circumstances', and advocated establishing a bank to assist tradesmen who fell upon hard times to re-establish in their trades. He advocated that funds should be established to support those who were too sick or too old to work, and to provide apprenticeships for boys and marriage portions for girls from the workhouses and suggested a fund 'for the nursing and bringing up of children that are found, that our land may not be under the guilt of any one murder of an innocent infant'. Additionally he advocated a fund for all sailors maimed in service.<sup>126</sup> Bulkeley also suggested a similar system of reform specifically for Ireland and noted that 'the right way can be

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<sup>125</sup> Proclamation against Cursing, Swearing and Drunkenness drafted by Richard Bulkeley, undated 1689 (U.N.L., Bentinck Papers, MS Pw A 2325)

<sup>126</sup> Sir Richard Bulkeley's Proposal for ye future easing of this City and Kingdom from the great burden of Poor (U.N.L., Bentinck Papers, MS Pw A 2326). This document referred to London and the whole kingdom of Britain and Ireland.

made known to the generation that is yet to come' and that it was important to 'teach and instruct the youth in our religion'.<sup>127</sup> Education was evidently at the heart of his reformist vision. Bulkeley, who feared and was aware of potential enemies of his reforming agenda everywhere, also emphasised the importance of having good governors of the Church of Ireland, 'the most corrupt Church of the reformed religion this day in the world'. In Bulkeley's mind at least, the Glorious Revolution generated an opportunity for moral and social reform. Bulkeley's plans were not a direct response to the Revolution, but he viewed the event as the vehicle that would make the implementation of his plans possible. He sent these plans to the Queen in the hope they would be pursued, as he again wrote to Mary later in 1689 advising her that his proposals may look difficult, but the work was righteous, despite 'the divell, and all his devices, to deal withal' and, he advised, 'no great actions are accomplish'd without difficulty'.<sup>128</sup>

Bulkeley targeted other potential allies with his ideas for reform and improvement in Ireland. In a letter to the bishop of St. Asaph in 1689, he advocated the cultivation of linen in Ireland, which could be done more profitably than in England, and suggested that the King could employ prisoners on such a scheme, thereby reducing the cost of keeping them. Bulkeley himself was prepared to live privately on his estate in Ireland if the Queen would lend him the money to establish the linen manufacturing scheme there.<sup>129</sup> The establishment of a linen industry in Dunlavin by Bulkeley's successor, James Tynte Worth, in the eighteenth century will be dealt with in chapter two, but

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<sup>127</sup> A Charity for Ireland humbly proposed to the Consideration of Her Majesty in the hand of Richard Bulkeley (U.N.L., Bentinck Papers, MS Pw A 2327). This document extended his ideas on reform to Ireland, and referred specifically to this island.

<sup>128</sup> Richard Bulkeley, Second Baronet Bulkeley of Dunlavan to Queen Mary II (U.N.L., Bentinck Papers, MS Pw A 2328)

<sup>129</sup> Bulkeley to William Lloyd, Bishop of St. Asaph (U.N.L., Bentinck Papers, MS Pw A 2329)

this reference to the matter suggests that Bulkeley laid the foundations for local linen before Tynte Worth's founding of the industry.

Bulkeley's plans for his Dunlavin estate were not confined to manufacturing. He was driven primarily by his interest in promoting moral and religious schemes for the public good and his efforts attracted some attention. Bulkeley stated that he was approached by some Irish gentlemen who knew he had access to the king and queen, and who would give money for 'public and pious uses' – enough, Bulkeley thought, for twenty schools 'for the instruction and conversion of the Irish children'.<sup>130</sup>

Bulkeley also promised to help some gentlemen to obtain posts as secretaries to the commissioners appointed to judge whether the Irish are guilty or innocent of rebellion on condition that they gave half the profits for 'publick and pious uses' such as converting Irish children and 'breeding them up in ye fear of God and in the knowledge of the scriptures'.<sup>131</sup> He estimated that £3,000 would be required.

Bulkeley's reforming schemes were proposed with the greater good in mind. The baronet had a social conscience, and his moral and religious beliefs were behind many of his suggested improvements. He realised that these schemes would benefit all people, including Papists, and he saw the education of Papist children as an integral part of his drive for reform. Bulkeley personified the desire for both material and moral improvement, and differed from most Irish Anglicans in his willingness to cross sectarian boundaries in the implementation of his schemes for the greater good. They inevitably led to controversy with established religious circles.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Bulkeley to 'Rev[eren]d S[i]r (U.N.L., Bentinck Papers, MS Pw A 2330)

<sup>131</sup> Notes in the hand of Richard Bulkeley (U.N.L., Bentinck Papers, MS Pw A 2331)

<sup>132</sup> Toby Barnard, 'Reforming Irish manners: the religious societies in Dublin during the 1690s', *Irish Protestant ascents and descents 1641-1770* (Dublin, 2004), pp 156-7.

Bulkeley's later life was bedevilled by religious controversies, one of the earliest of which was his involvement in the Toland affair. Donegal-born,<sup>133</sup> but based in the Netherlands, John Toland, author of *Christianity not mysterious*, was a controversial figure who propounded anti-clerical, anti-scriptural and anti-Trinitarian beliefs.<sup>134</sup> He argued that scripture, just like any other written work, was expressed through language and so it was open to rational scrutiny. If, like other books, the Bible was subject to corruption or alteration, Toland argued that the use of reason was necessary to distinguish falsehood from truth in matters of revelation. Toland met with a hostile reception on his arrival in London and so he followed his political patron, John Methuen (1650-1706), to Ireland, when the latter became Lord Chancellor. Toland arrived in Dublin towards the end of March or in early April 1697: his reception was as hostile, if not worse than in London. In Dublin, Bulkeley chaired the House of Commons Committee of Religion that condemned Toland and his book, which was symbolically burnt in September 1697. As a result, Toland was obliged to flee the country in poverty and disgrace.<sup>135</sup> Bulkeley's role in this affair is indicative of his high standing within contemporary Dublin society, and demonstrated that he was still working within the confines of the Church of Ireland at this time. Significantly, the Toland affair was a product of the frenetic campaign against sin and the teachings that engendered it, and the zealous Bulkeley was a leading campaigner. This zeal extended beyond the letter of the law. In the early 1690s Bulkeley, (who held no commission or office) in collaboration with Ralph Hartley (a judicial officer), set up in a room in Lincoln's Inn and set about prosecuting and punishing the 'ungodly' without due legal

<sup>133</sup> Phil Kilroy, *Protestant dissent and controversy in Ireland 1660-1714* (Cork, 1994), p. 8

<sup>134</sup> J. G. Simms, 'John Toland (1670-1722), a Donegal heretic', *Irish Historical Studies*, xvi, 63 (Mar 1969), pp 304-19 *passim*. *Christianity not mysterious* was published in 1696.

<sup>135</sup> Barnard, 'Reforming Irish manners', p. 167.

procedure. Henry Tenison, the son of a reforming bishop, assisted them.<sup>136</sup> Bulkeley directed prosecutions, encouraged informers and distributed thousands of blank warrants at his own expense to make convictions.<sup>137</sup> The thrust of Bulkeley's religious and social outlook was that sin was no private matter but of intense public concern: all efforts should be employed to strike either at the sinner or cause of sin.<sup>138</sup> The letter of the law was no restraint to God's work!

Encouraged by his convictions, Bulkeley gradually became disenchanted with the Church of Ireland in the last decade of his life. His radical strain caused him to change his Anglican views, thus paralleling in an odd way the pattern exhibited by his father. However, whereas his father had merely married a Presbyterian, the second baronet's departure from the views of the established church was more radical. The zeal for the Church of Ireland demonstrated by Bulkeley during the Toland affair was transferred to another religious cause, as within a few years the baronet supported an obscure millenarian sect. Millenarianism, the belief that the prophecy of a millennium of universal peace and the triumph of righteousness would come to pass, tied in with Bulkeley's beliefs regarding the personal and communal enhancement of life. Embittered by opposition from the formal Church of Ireland toward his proposed university at Dunlavin, which will be dealt with in section four, Bulkeley turned to informal religion and was 'carried away by some religious enthusiasts known as 'French Prophets'.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Barnard, 'Reforming Irish manners', p. 171.

<sup>137</sup> Justin A. I. Champion, 'Making Authority: belief, conviction and reason in the public sphere in late seventeenth century England', online paper posted on the Royal Holloway University's [Department of History] website, (visited on 4/1/2001) at <http://www.rhbc.ac.uk/~uhra026/mystery.html>

<sup>138</sup> Toby Barnard, 'Reforming Irish manners', p. 171. See also <http://www.rhbc.ac.uk/~uhra026/mystery.html>. For a fuller treatment of the subject see J. A. I. Champion, *The pillars of priestcraft shaken: the Church of England and its enemies 1660-1730* (Cambridge, 1992).

<sup>139</sup> 'The most complete history of Dublin on the web – Parish of Tallaght', (visited on 4/7/2001) at <http://indigo.ie/~kfinlay/ball1-6/Ball3/ball3.1.htm>



The prophets originated in Southern France; specifically in the area of the Cevennes Mountains in Languedoc.<sup>140</sup> From here the movement spread, and in the wake of the Camisard uprising of 1702, the movement reached the British Isles when three prophets or 'inspires' arrived in London in 1706.<sup>141</sup> The behaviour of the prophets was dramatic and began to attract interest.<sup>142</sup> The movement gained momentum in London and attracted a motley crew of followers. Its adherents included 'baronets and watermen, a protégé of Isaac Newton and the inventor of a perpetual motion machine, a poor woman who sold pies and a wealthy man who was apothecary to Jonathan Swift'.<sup>143</sup> However, the prophets attracted critics as well as admirers and some within the establishment perceived their behaviour as a threat. They were accused of false prophecy and some cases went to trial.<sup>144</sup> Despite the risks, Bulkeley was fascinated

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<sup>140</sup> Hillel Schwartz, *The French Prophets: the history of a Millenarian group in eighteenth century England*, (Los Angeles, 1980), pp 11-22 passim. This area had a history of heresies. Albigenianism flourished during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *The peasants of Languedoc* (Illinois, 1976), p. 12. See also Marcel Duran and John Bowle (eds), *The Larousse encyclopaedia of ancient and medieval history* (Paris, 1964, reprinted edition London, 1981), p. 317. Later the Cathar movement swept through the region. Ladurie, *The peasants of Languedoc*, p. 165. The impact of Catharism on one village has been documented vividly in Ladurie, *Montaillou* (London, 1978). The Camisard movement flourished here during the period covered by this chapter. Ladurie, *The peasants of Languedoc*, pp 275-300 passim. See also Schwartz, *The French Prophets*, pp 22-36 passim.

<sup>141</sup> Schwartz, *The French Prophets*, p. 72.

<sup>142</sup> Henry M. Baird, *History of the rise of the Huguenots*, ii (London, 1880), pp 103-4 gives the following account: 'Respecting the physical manifestations, there is little discrepancy between the accounts of friend and foe. The persons affected were men and women, the old and the young. Very many were children, boys and girls of nine or ten years of age. They were sprung from the people – their enemies said, from the dregs of the people – ignorant and uncultured; for the most part unable to read or write, and speaking in everyday life the patois of the province with which alone they were conversant. Such persons would suddenly fall backward, and while extended at full length on the ground, undergo strange and apparently involuntary contortions; their chest would seem to heave, their stomachs to inflate. On coming gradually out of this condition, they appeared instantly to regain the power of speech... From the mouths of those that were little more than babes came texts of Scripture, and discourses in good and intelligible French, such as they never used in their conscious hours'.

<sup>143</sup> Schwartz, *The French Prophets*, this quote is taken from the inside back dust jacket of the book.

<sup>144</sup> Such cases were sometimes featured in contemporary press reports. For example *The Post Man* of 27-29 Nov 1707 reported: 'Yesterday the Sieur Marion, one of the pretended French Prophets, and 2 Gentlemen who published his pretended Propheticall Warnings, received their sentence at the Queen's Bench, whereby they are Fin'd, and to stand on the Pillory'. *The Post Boy* of 4-6 Dec 1707 contained the following article: 'The following Words were written and fix'd to the pretended French Prophets, when they stood on a Scaffold. Elias Marion, Convicted for falsly and prophanelly pretending himself to be a true Prophet, and printing and uttering many things, as dictated and revealed to him by the Spirit of God, to terrifie the Queen's People. John d'Audé, and Nicolas Facio, Convicted for abetting and favouring Elias Marion, in his Wicked and Counterfeit Prophecies, and causing them to be printed and publish'd, to terrifie the Queen's People. Whereas it has been falsly reported, That the pretended French Prophets, were supported by some Refugee-Ministers; this is to inform the Publick, that the said pretended Prophets, and their Abettors, have been prosecuted at the Suit and Charge of all the French Churches in this City and Suburbs'.



by the prophets and became one of their staunchest devotees. Bulkeley's reasons for supporting the prophets were probably twofold. Firstly, his religious convictions and social conscience meant that he continuously strove for Godliness. Secondly, he was conscious of his deformity and was in worsening health during this period, and he 'cherished the confident expectation of being cured of a crooked back, a deformity natural to him'.<sup>145</sup> Bulkeley's health was indeed a concern. He wrote: 'I am under this unhappy dilemma, that while I am out of bed, which is a few hours in the day, I am miserably pained, and while I am in bed my thighs, legs and feet sweat continually, so that I am much wasted'.<sup>146</sup> The prospect of a cure must have been enticing for the baronet.

Bulkeley's devotion to the prophets embroiled him in more religious controversy, this time with London's Huguenots. By c.1700, following a period of very rapid immigration, Huguenots comprised 1 per cent of the population of Britain. They were principally located in four urban areas, one of which was London.<sup>147</sup> The sober Huguenots were greatly scandalised by the behaviour of the prophets. Many of them, including the Savoy congregation, acknowledged the bishop of London as their ecclesiastical head.<sup>148</sup> They feared the activities of the prophets would arouse anti-French sentiment in London. In 1707 James Ianson [Janson] and others accused Bulkeley of supporting the 'impostors'. Bulkeley was also accused of trying 'daily to revenge himself by making the French [Huguenots] odious to the nation'. Bulkeley did not approve of the Huguenots, who had denounced the French Prophets publicly.

<sup>145</sup> Andrew Kippis, *Biographia Britannica*, iii (London, 1784), entry for 'Edmund Calamy', p. 144. See also 'The most complete history of Dublin on the web – Parish of Tallaght', (visited on 4/7/2001) at <http://indigo.ie/~kfinlay/ball1-6/Ball3/ball3.1.htm>

<sup>146</sup> Notes written by Sir Richard Bulkeley, undated, but probably post 1706 (Bodleian Library Oxford, MS Lister 3, f. 35)

<sup>147</sup> Robert Winder, *Bloody foreigners: the story of immigration to Britain* (London, 2004, reprinted 2005), p. 88. The other urban centres were Canterbury, Norwich and Southampton.

<sup>148</sup> Edward Smedley, *History of the reformed religion in France*, iii (London, 1834), p. 307.

Ianson and his cohorts further stated that Bulkeley, who had evidently diverged significantly from the teachings of the established Church by this time, putting all his faith in the prophecies of the inspired prophets, had spoken 'in most impious terms by saying that the old and new testament were good for nothing'. They also suggested that he 'did out of malice single out' one of the elders of the Savoy Church and his followers and 'caused them to be bound over to the next quarter sessions for riots'.<sup>149</sup> On that occasion, two Church members, John Ianson and John Arnaud, were imprisoned for an assault on Bulkeley,<sup>150</sup> who was undeterred as a prophetic disciple, and remained convinced that the movement represented his best chance of achieving both Godliness and a cure for his disability.

Regarding the former, the erratic moral commissar Bulkeley clung to the hope of blending personal with communal, material and moral betterment,<sup>151</sup> and the prophets seemed to provide a path to this, although his conversion to their teaching caused a stir in ecclesiastical and political circles and was ruthlessly exploited for party political purposes by the Tories, who were at pains to stress Bulkeley's Whiggish credentials.<sup>152</sup> Bulkeley was attracted by the 'New Jerusalem' ethos of evangelism and reform and hoped for a comprehensive universal church.<sup>153</sup> As we shall see, Dunlavin was the proposed location for Bulkeley's personal 'New Jerusalem' and was intended to become a centre of proselytism and evangelical learning. A chimneypiece in Bulkeley's residence at Old Bawn depicted the scene from the Book of Nehemiah

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<sup>149</sup> Petition of William Portal, Luke Martin, Peter Tournard, Paul Baudry Jr., Isaac Gautir, Jane Fordan, James Janson, John Arnaud, Samuel Barrell, John Bouillard & others to the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty (B.L., Blenheim Papers, dxviii, Add. MS 61618, f.138)

<sup>150</sup> Sentence imposed on John Ianson and John Arnaud (B.L., Blenheim Papers, dxviii, Add. MS 61618, f.135)

<sup>151</sup> Barnard, 'The Hartlib Circle and the cult and culture of improvement in Ireland', p. 296.

<sup>152</sup> Barnard, 'Reforming Irish manners', p. 172.

<sup>153</sup> Schwartz, *The French Prophets*, p 72.

of the rebuilding of Jerusalem.<sup>154</sup> This was indicative of Bulkeley's psyche and plans for the village of Dunlavin were characteristic of his thinking. Regarding his health, Bulkeley claimed that he had actually been cured of 'continuous headache, of stone and of rapture' [rupture?], so that he was no longer required to wear a truss.<sup>155</sup> However, in reality Bulkeley showed all the signs of a severe and degenerative spinal disease.

This situation did not escape the notice of one female prophet, Anne Topham, who promised Bulkeley a cure. Her ministrations did little good but, in the process, she extracted large sums of money from her patient. The French Prophets later expelled Topham, but the experience did not shake Bulkeley's belief in the movement.<sup>156</sup> In defence of the prophets, Bulkeley wrote *An answer to several treatises, lately published on the subject of the prophets*, in which he defended the prophets by ascribing a long list of cures to them and by pointing out that the genuine nature of their speaking in tongues when under inspiration.<sup>157</sup> This tract prompted a flurry of replies.<sup>158</sup> The excitement inspired by Bulkeley's writings was hardly surprising, as

<sup>154</sup> Schwartz, *The French Prophets*, p 273.

<sup>155</sup> Edmund Calamy, *An historical account of my own life, with some reflections on the times I have lived in*, ii (London, 1829), 75.

<sup>156</sup> Breathnach, 'Dunlavin's University College' p. 44.

<sup>157</sup> Richard Bulkeley, *An answer to several treatises, lately published on the subject of the prophets* (London, 1708), pp 40-90 passim for lists of cures. On pp 92-4 Bulkeley averred that 'Mr. Lacy who had not read a Latin book for twenty years last past, when under the Latin impression, spake that language fluently, without being able to construe his speeches' He also cited the case of 'Mr. Dutton, a young gentleman, an attorney in the Middle Temple, who has no more Latin than is just necessary for his profession, but knows not one Hebrew letter from another, nor hardly a Greek one, would utter with great readiness and freedom complete discourses in Hebrew for near a quarter of an hour together, and sometimes much longer'. Bulkeley confessed that he could 'not talk Hebrew, but I caught at several words here and there which I knew to be Hebrew – of all which he understood not one, but had an impression upon his mind that it was a hymn of praise to God for the calling of Israel. And afterwards, under inspiration it was declared to him in my hearing "thou shalt speak the Hebrew language better than any does speak it"'. Dutton was evidently more coherent than some other prophets. For example one, Durand Fage, uttered the phrase 'Tring trang, swing swang, hing, hang' while inspired. The words were recorded by a bemused Nicholas Facio, who did not recognise them despite being conversant in many languages! Smedley, *History of the reformed religion*, p. 309.

<sup>158</sup> Bulkeley's tract caused quite a stir. Some of the replies it inspired follow: Anonymous, *Reflections on Sir Richard Bulkeley's answer to several treatises, lately publish'd, on the subject of the prophets* (London, 1708). Edmund Calamy, *Sir Richard Bulkeley's remarks on the caveat against new prophets consider'd, in a letter to a friend* (London, 1708). Anonymous, *The Prophets; an heroick poem. In three cantos. Humbly inscrib'd to the illumin'd assembly at Barbican [and occasioned by Sir R. Bulkeley's 'Answer to several treatises, lately*

he had a proven track record in the field of ecclesiastical debate, always ready publicly to defend religious teachings in which he believed.

By now Bulkeley had latched onto another prophet, Abraham Whitro[w], who had come to prominence by promising Doctor Emes, a medical practitioner on his death bed, that he would experience a speedy resurrection, and announced that the event would happen on 25 May 1708, five months after the physician's interment.<sup>159</sup> On the appointed day a multitude of believers assembled at Bunhill Fields cemetery between 12 noon and 6 p.m. (the hours named for the expected miracle). The prophets expected that they would be 'guarded by an angelic host, that the dead man would rise without any disturbance from his grave and that he should walk naked, but without shame or indecency to his own habitation'.<sup>160</sup> Unfortunately for Whitro[w] and his followers, Emes failed to rise to the occasion!

Hillel Schwartz has questioned how a man like Bulkeley could 'go off with the wild levelling prophet Abraham Whitro?' Schwartz offers as an answer the idea of what he calls 'the wild within the walled'. Basically he argues that even the most staid and conservative of men have the capacity to surprise in regard to matters of faith.

Bulkeley loved to 'cultivate and domesticate' and sought educational and moral betterment. Yet, he lived a life of physical constraint and ill health – he referred to it as 'my crazy life'. Whitro's teachings resonated with Bulkeley and the prophet's

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*publish'd, on the subject of the prophets' of the reign of Queen Anne*] (London, 1708). Benjamin Hoadly, *A brief vindication of the antient prophets from the imputations and misrepresentations of such as adhere to our present pretenders to inspiration* (London, 1709). N. Spinckes, *The new pretenders to prophesy re-examined and their pretences shewn to be groundless and false. And Sir Richard Bulkeley and Abraham Whitro convicted of very foul practices in order to the carrying on of their imposture* (London, 1710).

<sup>159</sup> Schwartz, *The French Prophets*, pp 273–6 passim. Schwartz's exposition on the idea of 'the wild within the walled' is given in pp 251–79.

<sup>160</sup> Spinckes, *The new pretenders to prophesy re-examined*, p. 49.

levelling doctrine reconciled the paradox between Bulkeley's aspired-for life and his actual circumstances.<sup>161</sup>

Following the Emes debacle, the prophets went into decline.<sup>162</sup> Bulkeley, however, remained loyal to Whitro and refused 'the test of sense' as conclusive in a matter so highly spiritual as the resurrection of Emes. He penned a controversial introduction for a work published by Whitro in 1709, in which he questioned those who did not believe that Emes rose from the dead.<sup>163</sup> Meanwhile, Whitro and his wife Deborah were ostracised by the prophets and accused of 'speaking their own words in the person of God', which caused a schism that further divided the depleted movement. Whitro was accused of being 'always drunk and beat[ing] his wife so grievously since he was inspired that she was in danger of her life'.<sup>164</sup> In his preaching though, Whitro used the image of Christ the carpenter building the New Jerusalem in the fashion of the biblical Nehemiah account. The builders of Nehemiah's New Jerusalem were soldiers and operated with both the trowel and the sword. This had resonances with Bulkeley's personal vision of building a utopian settlement,<sup>165</sup> though, by this time, his health was failing badly. Sir Richard Bulkeley died on 7 April 1710 and he was interred in Ewell in Surrey. As he died without male issue, the baronetcy of Dunlavin ceased with him.<sup>166</sup> Bulkeley's writings on many subjects form part of his legacy, but he also left a more tangible legacy in west Wicklow – Dunlavin village.

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<sup>161</sup> The idea of 'the wild within the walled' is explored in Schwartz, *The French Prophets*, pp 251-79.

<sup>162</sup> Smedley, *History of the reformed religion*, p. 313.

<sup>163</sup> Abraham Whitro, *The warnings of the eternal spirit with a preface by R. Bulkeley*, (London, 1709), B.L., 875.b.18. In his preface Bulkeley wrote 'If I should ask these men how they knew that Mr. Emes was not raised at the time predicted, they must not own it to be a sufficient answer (even if they had been then in the burying place) that they did not see him; for I have shewn out of scriptures that the eyes of unbelievers are holden, they are too dim to perceive a raised body', p. 19.

<sup>164</sup> Dr. Woodward, a clergyman engaged in controversy with the prophets, cited in Smedley, *History of the reformed religion*, p. 313.

<sup>165</sup> Schwartz, *The French Prophets*, pp 276-7.

<sup>166</sup> Fitzgerald, 'Dunlavin, Tornant and Tober', p. 221.

#### 4. The second baronet's impact on Dunlavin village

By 1669, when the hearth tax returns provide a demographic snapshot, Dunlavin was a small settlement with a church, a market and at least 39 households.<sup>167</sup> If we apply a multiplier of 5 to this number we may conclude that the Protestant population of the village was circa 195. In addition, some homes may have contained Protestant servants,<sup>168</sup> which increased the Protestant population to a figure probably in excess of 200 at that time. Construction in Dunlavin accelerated thereafter and was well underway in 1689, when Bulkeley wrote about the new village, which he envisaged as an exclusively Protestant settlement to which he was eager to attract settlers.<sup>169</sup> Bulkeley's notes about Dunlavin provide a snapshot – albeit a limited one – of the village and its community. Bulkeley's document was written in French, indicating that it was meant for circulation among Huguenots in France, or among the overcrowded French communities in London and other parts of England, and it read as an advertisement for the new village.<sup>170</sup> Advertising was used to attract settlers, especially skilled labour, to villages.<sup>171</sup> Bulkeley portrayed Dunlavin in a most attractive light. According to his account, the village was 19 miles (6 leagues) from Dublin, well situated on fertile ground with abundant water. There was a market there

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<sup>167</sup> Hearth Money Roll, County Wicklow 1669 (N.L.I., MS 8818 [G.O. 667]). Interestingly, Dunlavin had the highest number of taxpayers in the west of the county. Baltinglass had thirty-eight and Donard thirty.

<sup>168</sup> Bulkeley's servants and tenants, in most cases of Welsh extraction, feature in the 1641 depositions. The mention of Welsh tenants is interesting as the Welsh branch of the Bulkeley family maintained some links with Ireland during Bulkeley's life and even after his death. The Diary of William Bulkeley, Brynddu, Llanfechell, i (University of Wales, Bangor [U.W.B.]) contains the following entry for 2 Apr 1739: 'Paid petty constable for this parish 1s 10d... towards repairing of hall and transporting vagabonds over to Ireland'. Incidentally, the Welsh Bulkeleys also took a dim view of Catholics and Catholicism. When speaking of a Welsh wake on 24 Mar 1738, William Bulkeley recorded that 'there was used on this occasion that Popish superstition of this country of giving meat and drink and money over the corps'. Diary of William Bulkeley, i (U.W.B., f. 323). There were not many Catholics in the area inhabited by the Welsh Bulkeleys however. *The Manuscripts of the House of Lords 1689-1710*, (London, 1900), p.417, contains the following reference from Lord Bulkeley of Anglesey, written on 2 Feb 1705 from Barronhill: 'We are happy in this county that we have never a papist but one, and he is a person of a mean fortune and an old man'!

<sup>169</sup> Richard Hawkshaw was appointed sequestrator of Dunlavin, Imaal, Donard and Hollywood in 1689, as political and religious upheaval impacted the region. Hugh Jackson Lawlor (ed.), 'Diary of William King D.D., archbishop of Dublin, during his imprisonment in Dublin Castle', *J.R.S.A.I.*, 2, xxxiii (Dublin 1903), p. 126.

<sup>170</sup> Notes about Dunlavan village in the hand of Sir Richard Bulkeley (U.N.L., Bentinck Papers, MS Pw A 2333).

<sup>171</sup> D. G. Lockhart, 'Planned village development in Scotland and Ireland, 1700-1850' in T. M. Devine and David Dickson (eds), *Ireland and Scotland 1600-1850: Parallels and contrasts in economic and social development* (Edinburgh, 1983), p. 136. The *Dublin Journal* advertisement cited referred to Fuerty, county Roscommon.

once a week, which was the best attended and best supplied with ripe produce, animals and fowl in the entire province, and two big annual fairs were held. This was evidently a reference to the market and fairs established by Bulkeley's father in 1661. Coal was used for heat, 'the best coal in the world', which we buy at a very good price and which makes neither smoke nor cinders, but which burns like red iron and which lasts a very long time in the fire'. People also had access to the bogs for peat.

Bulkeley stressed Dunlavin's advantageous trading position, commenting 'this place is only eight miles or two and a half leagues from a navigable river, from where you go down 50 miles (16 leagues) to the beautiful and rich town of Waterford, the second town of Ireland which has a very fine harbour frequented by a quantity of merchant vessels, by which all sorts of goods can be transported easily from Dunlavin to England or Holland'.<sup>172</sup>

Bulkeley was careful to emphasise the exclusively Protestant nature of the new settlement. He did this to appeal to persecuted French Protestants, many of whom fled France following the revoking of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Large numbers arrived in England, and colonised areas in central London such as Spitalfields and Westminster, but soon these Huguenot strongholds became overpopulated and new refugees drifted into outlying villages such as Putney and Wandsworth.<sup>173</sup> It was people such as these that Bulkeley hoped to attract to his new Protestant haven in Dunlavin as, in addition to extolling the virtues of the new village, he advertised it further by offering five inducements to Protestant immigrants. These promises showed that Bulkeley wanted to attract artisans and skilled workers, but he also

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<sup>172</sup> Notes about the village of Dunlavin in the hand of Sir Richard Bulkeley (U.N.L., Bentinck Papers, MS Pw A 2333). The original document was written in French and I am indebted to Mr. Joseph Walsh M.A. of Méanscoil Iognáid Rís, Naas, who provided a literal translation. The document is transcribed in appendix one.

<sup>173</sup> Winder, *Bloody foreigners*, pp 79-84 passim. There were nine French churches in Spitalfields and fourteen in Westminster.

sought labourers, who were necessary to build the village and work in the fields. He promised to see to both the temporal and spiritual needs of the new settlers, by providing food for the market and by installing a French minister. He also wished to create a social hierarchy in the village, promising to befriend and encourage those worthy of his patronage. However these promises presupposed that the settlers conformed to established Protestant beliefs:

1. I promise all French Protestant artisans who will want to live in our village to give them houses, according to the size of their families, which they will have free of charge for two years.
2. When they make up a hundred people, I will provide them with a French minister.
3. I will ensure that the market always be provided with a good quantity of vegetables such as carrots, cabbages, artichokes, peas, onions, leeks, potatoes etc. and all sorts of garden herbs.
4. As for labourers, if there are any who will want to live there, I promise to employ them all year round at the going rate, to supply them with lodgings or houses for their families, rent-free for the first year and I will rent them small plots or orchards in which they can work. I also commit myself to pay them a fixed sum as welcoming money at their place of disembarkation.
5. I will engage from the moment I meet them to ensure that justice is done to them, as long as they conform. I will protect them so that nobody will injure them and I will encourage all of those whom I consider worthy of my friendship.<sup>174</sup>

This document provides evidence that Bulkeley, who at this stage of his life (1689) was still secure in his Anglican views, aspired to attract Huguenot refugees into the expanding village of Dunlavin. However, there is no evidence of Huguenot settlement in the area. Unlike Portarlinton for example, where Huguenot settlement from 1692 was successful, Dunlavin's bid for Huguenot settlers did not have support from the highest levels within government. In the case of Portarlinton, the marquis de

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<sup>174</sup> Notes about the village of Dunlavan in the hand of Sir Richard Bulkeley (U.N.L., Bentinck Papers, MS Pw A 2333).



Ruvigny, lieutenant general of the armed forces in Ireland, instigated the project.<sup>175</sup> Portarlington experienced two waves of Huguenot arrivals between 1692 and 1702.<sup>176</sup> By contrast, Dunlavin's parish register dates from 1698, and an examination of its surnames does not reveal an influx from France. Far from it – the names in the register are mostly of English origin, with some native Irish surnames interspersed.<sup>177</sup> In fact 66 per cent of the surnames registered may be of English origin and 58 per cent are definitely English.<sup>178</sup> There was not even one French surname recorded in the parish register during this period. However, one French family did move into the region: the La Touches, who settled in the Harristown area, just across the county Kildare border from Dunlavin.<sup>179</sup> Bulkeley possibly had contacts with this family and his ideas regarding the enticement of Huguenot families to Dunlavin may have been informed by these contacts. Huguenot soldiers pensioned out of William III's army were enticed to Portarlington, though most Huguenots who settled in Ireland after the Williamite Wars stayed in Dublin, opting for the security provided by the larger settlement.<sup>180</sup> However, though rural Ireland was not attractive to Protestant settlers due to the religious political context,<sup>181</sup> some English Protestants did settle in Dunlavin at this time. The sixth baptism recorded in the parish register of the village is that of Mary Hanbige. The Hanbi[d]ge family remained in the region throughout

<sup>175</sup> Raymond Hylton, *Ireland's Huguenots and their refuge 1662-1745, an unlikely haven* (Sussex, 2006), pp 86-7. In addition, Ruvigny was earl of Galway and Lord Justice of Ireland from 1697-1701 and 1715-7. Ibid, p. 81.

<sup>176</sup> The first was 1692-8 in the aftermath of the Williamite wars; the second 1698-1704 following the Peace of Ryswick (1697), which ended the War of the Grand Alliance. Hylton, *Ireland's Huguenots*, pp 93-102 and 103-5.

<sup>177</sup> Dunlavin Parish Register, (1697-1835), i (Representative Church Body Library, MS P.251.1.1). The first entry in the register is the baptism of George, son of Daniel and Elizabeth Champion and is dated 8 Mar 1698. The first marriage recorded was between Thomas Winn and Margaret Hewet on 20 Jun 1698. The first burial to appear in the register is that of Henry Warren on 3 Nov 1698. Entries in the parish baptismal register from 1698 to 1801 are transcribed in appendix two.

<sup>178</sup> I am indebted to Mr. Paul Gorry FSG, MAPGI, for his assistance in classifying these surnames.

<sup>179</sup> The executrix of J. J. D. La Touche presented a cashbook covering the period 1692-1697 to the old Public Record Office in 1907. A copy of *Livre pour les Actes Consistoriaux de l'Eglise Francaise de Dublin 1692-1716* was presented to the same institution by Christopher La Touche in 1900. Herbert Wood, *A guide to the records deposited in the Public Record Office of Ireland*, (Dublin, 1919), pp 283-4.

<sup>180</sup> Hylton, *Ireland's Huguenots*, pp 93-102 passim. Ruvigny encouraged ex-soldiers to settle in Portarlington as he wished to create a buffer zone in the midlands to counter the threat of a possible French invasion through Cork and Waterford. Ibid, pp 88-90.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

the period of this study and a descendant of the first settlers later wrote ‘The first Hanbidges... came to Ireland with I think William the Third, Prince of Orange’. <sup>182</sup>

In-migration of Protestant families was now a reality in the Dunlavin region.

It is possible by examining the parish register initiated in 1698 to provide a limited demographic snapshot of Dunlavin village during the thirteen-year period between then and Bulkeley’s death in 1710. The first twenty years or so of the register were evidently transcribed from an older book, but its reliability is suggested by the fact that the minister and two churchwardens certified the copy. There is some overwriting where the ink has faded, but all the entries for this period are legible.

The thirteen-year period 1698-1710 witnessed the baptisms of 100 male and 91 female Protestants in Dunlavin. The assumption is that these were all infant baptisms, so the figures provide a crude indication of Protestant birth rate. There was a slightly higher male birth rate, but this cannot be taken to show a gender imbalance in favour of males within Dunlavin’s Protestant community. This situation merely reflected the norm whereby more male babies are born, but in general females tend to live longer and the figures even out over time. <sup>183</sup> Most surnames are English in origin, but the presence of names such as Toole, Byrn and Walsh indicate some level of conversion to Protestantism within the community. There are 90 separate surnames recorded. Even allowing for variations of the same surname (for example Wornal, Wornel, Wornell and Woznel could refer to the same family), the 84 separate surnames that emerge still indicate substantial Protestant settlement in the area by Bulkeley’s death. Of these, 54 surnames may be English. There are doubts about 7 of the 54; for

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<sup>182</sup> William Hanbidge and Mary Ann Hanbidge (W. J. McCormack ed.), *Memories of West Wicklow 1813-1939*, (Dublin, 2005), p. 4.

<sup>183</sup> Central Statistics Office and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, *Ireland North and South: A statistical profile*, (Dublin, 2003), pp 4 and 11.

example Scot may be English or Scottish and Noble may be English or Norman Irish, but nearly 60 per cent are of English origin. Of the remainder, two may be Scottish, and four may be Welsh – suggesting some settlers may have arrived from the Bulkeleys' place of origin in North Wales. There are also six Norman-Irish (Old English) surnames and fifteen Gaelic Irish surnames in the register. The latter figure indicates that about 20 per cent, or one in five of Dunlavin's Protestant community came from a Gaelic Irish background, so the Protestant village housed a sizeable number of converts if surnames are a reliable indicator of ethnicity. The presence of 84 surnames means there were likely to have been more than 100 Protestant families in Dunlavin at this time as some families probably do not appear in the register – those too old to have children, those of childbearing age unable to have children, unmarried settlers etc. However, it can be assumed that the register records a large proportion of the Protestant community, since settlers and colonisers were usually young adults, with the energy and skills necessary to begin a new life in a new place as many of these families did in the late seventeenth century.

The register attests to the increase in the Protestant population in the area during the late seventeenth century. As early as 1664 there were 'twenty severall' Protestant families in the Dunlavin area.<sup>184</sup> By 1668 there were 39 hearth taxpayers,<sup>185</sup> most of whom were probably Protestants, since Protestants were more likely to own better houses with more hearths and thus more likely to be caught in the tax net. Also, it is probable that they were clustered into small quasi-urban areas (Dunlavin being a case in point) and it was easier and cheaper to levy the tax in such areas.<sup>186</sup> Household

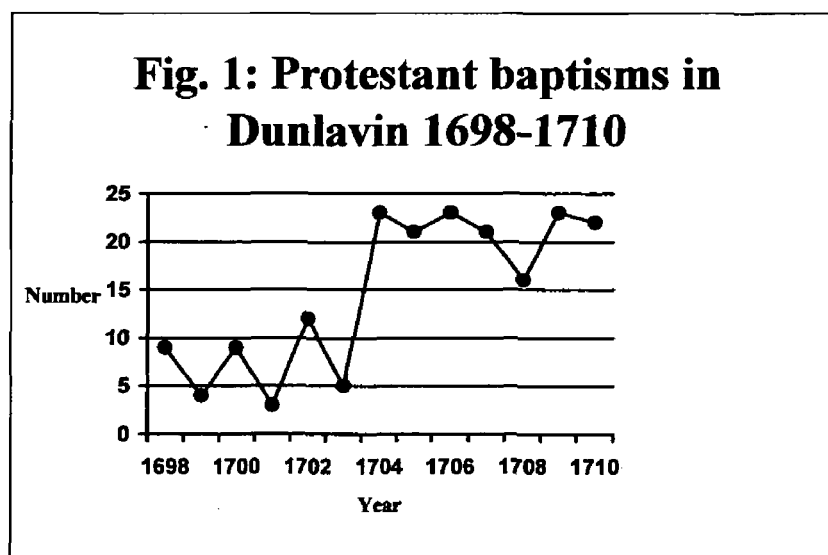
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<sup>184</sup> Bodleian Library Oxford, Petition of Sir Richard Bulkeley, MS Carte 159, f. 90v.

<sup>185</sup> Hearth Money Roll, County Wicklow 1669 (N.L.I., MS 8818 [G.O. 667])

<sup>186</sup> Brian Gurrin, *A century of struggle in Delgany and Kilcoole: An exploration of the social implications of population change in North-East Wicklow 1666-1779*, (Dublin, 2000), p. 12.

foundation accelerated in Dunlavin subsequently, and by first decade of the eighteenth century there was probably in excess of 100 families resident in and around the village. This growth continued into the eighteenth century, for the pattern of Protestant baptisms between 1698 and 1710 provides evidence of substantial growth within this period. As figure 1 shows, there were less than 10 baptisms recorded for five of the six years from 1698 to 1703. However, that total increased to over 20 per annum during six of the seven years between 1704 and 1710.



**Source: Dunlavin Church of Ireland parish register.**

The low number of baptisms between 1698 and 1700 coincided with a subsistence crisis in Ireland. Subsistence crises such as this drove up the price of grain – the potato was not yet the staple foodstuff – and the authorities tried to prevent profiteering by issuing proclamations against the export of grain or its hoarding for future profit. Such proclamations were in force for the period 1697 to 1699.<sup>187</sup> The first such proclamation issued in the eighteenth century was in 1708,<sup>188</sup> and baptisms that year dropped below 20 for the only time between the years 1704 and 1710.

However, this evidence is too circumstantial to state with certainty that Protestant

<sup>187</sup> Robert Steele, *Catalogue of Tudor and Stuart Proclamations 1485-1714*, ii, (Oxford, 1910), pp 170-1 and 174 [numbers 1380, 1389 and 1407].

<sup>188</sup> Steele, *Catalogue of Tudor and Stuart Proclamations 1485-1714*, p. 194 [number 1570].

baptisms were influenced by such shortages. The figures show that the Protestant population of Dunlavin grew appreciably during this period, though the rate of growth stabilised before Bulkeley's death.

Bulkeley's support for William of Orange, his social conscience, his burning desire to educate the Irish Catholics and his general spirit of improvement were all motivating factors in his scheme to populate the new Protestant village of Dunlavin. The project was less about a new village of bricks and mortar than about creating an ideal settlement where Protestantism would pervade all areas of village life. In his design, Bulkeley mirrored the aims and objectives of some of the more radical Protestants, who crossed the Atlantic to establish their own versions of Utopia. The town of Dedham, Massachusetts, for example, began as a utopian experiment and the first settlers there began by drafting the Dedham Covenant of 1636, which opens with the lines 'We, whose names are here unto subscribed do, in the fear and reverence of our Almighty God, mutually and severally promise amongst ourselves and each other to profess and practice one truth according to that most perfect rule, the foundation whereof is everlasting love'.<sup>189</sup> In Andover, another Puritan settlement in Massachusetts, settlers remained deeply religious, but their religious experiences and concerns changed as their personal and familial experiences changed over time.<sup>190</sup> As Protestant settlers became established in the American colonies, religion began to take on a more formal aspect. For example, in Christ Church, Lancaster County, Virginia, (one of a number of similar churches) worshippers prayed in a room which was so much larger than anything else in the settlement that it could not but emphasise the

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<sup>189</sup> Kenneth A. Lockridge, *A New England town: the first hundred years. Dedham, Massachusetts 1636-1736* (New York, 1970, reprinted 1985), pp 4-5. An excellent account of the Utopian nature of the Dedham experiment is given in section one, pp 1-90 passim.

<sup>190</sup> Philip J. Greven Jr., *Four Generations: Population, land and family in colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca N.Y., 1972, reprinted 1995), p. 278.

dominant place of religiosity within the community.<sup>191</sup> In the case of Dunlavin, Bulkeley laid out his ambitions for new Protestant settlers in his five promises, but the onus was on the new arrivals to conform to the rule of law and to the Established Church. Moreover, when Dunlavin was incorporated as a bourg or town, he expected the inhabitants, after their first year, to give one day a week to help to build a village church.<sup>192</sup> This was an interesting stipulation, as it meant that the church for which Bulkeley's father had successfully petitioned in 1664 either had not been built or, more probably, was of such a small and temporary nature that it needed to be replaced as the Protestant population of the village increased.

The building of Dunlavin village continued into the early eighteenth century, raising the question of household size. A century or so later, the average number of persons per household was given as between 5 and 5.5.<sup>193</sup> However, there is no record of how many of the 90 Protestant families migrated out of the Dunlavin area during the period 1698-1710, so establishing the level of population – even Protestant population – from the parish register is difficult. To compound this difficulty, the parish register contains names of people from outlying rural areas, who did not live in the village proper, and may even list baptisms of people from other parts of west Wicklow – Harrington, for example, is a name more associated with Grangecon than Dunlavin. In addition, the population of the region included many Catholics at this time and there is no record of their numbers or even of the numbers baptised. However, of 22 Catholic priests recorded in county Wicklow in 1697, two of them, Fr Patrick Haggan

<sup>191</sup> Rhys Isaac, *The transformation of Virginia 1740-1790*, (New York, 1982, reprinted 1988), p. 61.

<sup>192</sup> Notes about the village of Dunlavin in the hand of Sir Richard Bulkeley (U.N.L., Bentinck Papers, MS Pw A 2333)

<sup>193</sup> Fraser, *General view ... of the County Wicklow*, p. 240. Fraser's figure is actually slightly smaller than those for other Leinster counties of 5.8 for Kilkenny [William Tighe, *Statistical observations relative to the County of Kilkenny*, (Dublin 1802), p.461] and 6.0 for Wexford [Robert Fraser, *Statistical survey of the County of Wexford*, (Dublin 1807), p.75].

and Fr Brian, were based in Dunlavin, suggesting that its Catholic population was more substantial than that of neighbouring Hollywood for example, where only one priest, Father Kernan, was recorded.<sup>194</sup> As the penal laws began to take effect, the number of priests in Wicklow declined. In 1704 following the passage of the Registration of the Clergy act 13 priests registered in county Wicklow. Despite the diminished total, Dunlavin maintained its two-priest status. Fathers Patrick Haggan and Patrick Kernan, aged 46 and 59 respectively, both served in Dunlavin. The only other settlement with a priest in west Wicklow was Baltinglass, where one priest, Father James Makee, registered.<sup>195</sup> This suggests that Dunlavin was among the most significant urban settlements in the region, although the rural hinterland served by the village was very extensive. From the outset therefore, Bulkeley's vision of creating a totally Protestant village in west Wicklow was never the reality.

However, the venture evidently met with some success and the new church was functional by 1698, as evidenced by the inauguration of a Church of Ireland parish register.<sup>196</sup> The village he created from a hamlet had achieved another milestone with the building of a church for its Protestant population, but Bulkeley's vision was still grander. He wished to establish a university college in Dunlavin. In 1699 he wrote to Bishop William King at Londonderry, proposing that a university should be established somewhere away from Dublin.<sup>197</sup> King replied encouragingly, and thanked God who had 'inspired you with so good a spirit for the Church and Kingdom, which is the more valuable because it falls in a time when charity is grown

<sup>194</sup> County Wicklow Heritage Project, *The last county: the emergence of Wicklow as a county 1606-1845* (Wicklow, 1993, reprinted 2006), p. 21.

<sup>195</sup> County Wicklow Heritage Project, *The last county*, p. 22.

<sup>196</sup> R.C.B., Parish Register of Dunlavin i, P.251.1.1. As the first entries were copied into the new register, it seems probable that this date marks the opening of a new church in the fledgling settlement. I am indebted to Mrs. Heather Smith of the R.C.B. for this information.

<sup>197</sup> Bulkeley to Bishop of Derry, 4 Nov 1699, *First Report of the Royal Commission of Historical Manuscripts*, i, [C55], H.C. 1870, Appendix IV, p. 238.

cold and public provisions for caring and for piety are so little encouraged'.<sup>198</sup>

Having complimented the baronet, the bishop referred to the fact that Kilkenny was also lobbying to have a university situated there. Kilkenny had been the Confederate capital during the 1640s, and was a much larger settlement than Dunlavin.<sup>199</sup>

However, Dunlavin had one advantage over Kilkenny – its proximity to Dublin. King informed Bulkeley that 'I think Dunlavan may be a properer place than Kilkenny. The scholars... will be nearer the place on which they depend and so maintain a better intercourse with it'. King warned Bulkeley, however, concerning mortmain letters of foundation, which 'as the world is at present, I do apprehend difficulty of obtaining them'. King thought that the relevant parties 'will not easily be induced to apply their minds to the consideration thereof with the seriousness that is necessary'. King overtly encouraged Bulkeley, but he also warned of difficulties ahead. Ironically Bulkeley, with his established Church background, now faced obstacles from within the Anglican hierarchy, and the problems cited in King's letter were among the first hints of clerical reservations with his plans.

A month later Bulkeley again contacted King and proposed 'founding a college at ye town of Dunlavan, twenty miles from Dublin, upon ye Kilkenny road, in a plentiful, healthful and very pleasant country, a good market and a large quantity of English and to be of ye University of Dublin'.<sup>200</sup> This reference to 'English' obviously referred to English Protestants, providing further evidence of the lack of French settlement in the Dunlavin area. Bulkeley proposed to endow the college 'with £420 per annum rent charge' and argued that 'ye rents of that lordship will be its maintenance and which

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<sup>198</sup> William King Letterbook, i (TCD, MS 1489 [1], ff 101-4). The letter is dated 15 Dec 1699.

<sup>199</sup> For an excellent treatment of the saga behind Kilkenny's proposed university see John Leonard, *A university for Kilkenny: Plans for a royal college in the seventeenth century* (Kilkenny, 1996).

<sup>200</sup> Bulkeley to Bishop of Derry, 9 Dec 1699, *First Report of the Royal Commission of Historical Manuscripts*, i, [C55], H.C. 1870, Appendix IV, pp 238-9.



probably thereby be ye better paid'. The baronet also proposed to build a feeder school (along the lines of Westminster School for Christ Church, Oxford) when he promised to provide 'beside £80 per annum and a schole house and a schole-master's house for a public Latin schole in ye same towne for a nursery for ye same'. The new college would become both a centre of learning and of religious zeal. Its purpose would be 'to give mankind a politer education, but especially as I intend it to send forth more labourers [unto the?] Lord's harvest'. The baronet continued: 'I believe I shall not need fear scarcity of scholars to such college, for its discipline shall be most strict, even whatever relating to that ye statutes of every college in Oxford or Cambridge can hint to me; for I take discipline to be ye life of a society that consists of subordinate ranks'.<sup>201</sup>

Bulkeley returned to the idea of building a university in Dunlavin again just before Christmas in 1699. He extolled the advantages of the village, claiming: 'ye whole estate of Dunlavin is in ye summer a paradise'. This time, however, he made it clear that there would be some charge involved, as he wrote: 'I intended not to give ye land, but onely to charge it with about two thirds of its value'.<sup>202</sup> This may have been one reason why 'the University of Dunlavin' never materialised. However, there was another, more significant reason behind the failure of the project – opposition from within the Church of Ireland – that Bulkeley could not surmount, with the result that

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<sup>201</sup> Bulkeley to Bishop of Derry, 9 Dec 1699, *First Report of the Royal Commission of Historical Manuscripts*, i, [C55], H.C. 1870, Appendix IV, pp 238-9. Bulkeley's association with the French Prophets offers a possible explanation for Bulkeley's cooling of his relationship with the established church. Opposition from the established church was to be a major factor in the failure of Bulkeley's University of Dunlavin project. This will be shown in the paragraphs following this footnote in the text. There is an indication of both ecclesiastical procrastination by the Bishop of Derry and Bulkeley's impatience regarding the university project in Bulkeley to Bishop of Derry, 9 Dec 1699, *First Report of the Royal Commission of Historical Manuscripts*, i, [C55], H.C. 1870, Appendix IV, pp 238-9, when Bulkeley informed the bishop 'it is true indeed in all matters of moment festina lente is good advice; but however in this thing ye emphasis must be on ye festina'. Bulkeley's experience with the established church in respect of his proposed Dunlavin university experiment may have embittered him and turned his ideas toward a less formal church (what Schwartz refers to as "a comprehensive universal church in *The French Prophets*, p. 86) and made him more receptive to the ideas of the prophets.

<sup>202</sup> Bulkeley to Bishop of Derry, 9 Dec 1699, *First Report*, H.C. 1870, Appendix IV, p. 240.

the project came to naught. This opposition widened the emerging gulf between Bulkeley and the Anglican Church. The failure of the Dunlavin university proposal may have been the catalyst for Bulkeley to cultivate his innate propensities and openly display his formerly hidden traits of the 'wild within the walled'.

Bulkeley's idea was not a mere pipe dream, and the steps taken to advance the plan for the proposed 'University of Dunlavan', suggest that the new university was to be a separate institution rather than a mere college of the University of Dublin, as originally proposed. Moreover, the planning reached an advanced stage and had the backing of some of the most influential people of the day. Additionally, there were no objections to the proposal from many sources that might have placed obstacles in Bulkeley's path. Bulkeley's university petition reveals the intricate manoeuvring that occurred before the ultimate failure of the project.

The original petition maintained that the petitioner 'purposed by God's grace to found and endow a college on his estate at Dunlavan'.<sup>203</sup> The reasons given were 'to the glory of God; for the propagation of true religion; the increase of learning and the teaching of good manners among the King's Irish subjects'. Bulkeley reminded the King of his 'early adherence to Your Majesty's interests' and his 'accompanying Your Majesty's first expedition from Holland' in 1688. Bulkeley had also been 'as early a sufferer in his estate in Ireland' and was supported by William's wife, Mary ('the glorious charity of Her Late Majesty of blessed memory'). For this reason, and

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<sup>203</sup> Humble Petition of Sir Richard Bulkeley of Dunlavan in the Kingdom of Ireland, Baronet [Henceforth cited as Petition of Sir Richard Bulkeley], (Gloucestershire Record Office [Henceforth cited as G.R.O.], *Lloyd Baker Collection*, MS D3549, 6/1/B36). I am indebted to Mr. Paul Evans for his help in searching for these documents, and in some matters of contextualisation and interpretation. All other references in this section come from the above series of documents, all of which have the same shelf number. I am indebted to Señor Miguel de Avendaño of Madrid, Spain, member of both the Spanish and Irish Societies of Genealogists, for informing me of the existence of this document. I am also indebted to and wish to record my thanks to Mr. Nicholas Kingsley of the Gloucestershire Record Office for his patience and invaluable assistance.

for Mary's 'overflowing charities to the rest of the refugees', Bulkeley proposed to name the college 'Queen's College' in her honour. Bulkeley requested that the King grant letters patent for the new college, and constitute the board into a 'body politic, capable of continuing a succession, of receiving land annuities... and other gifts... for maintenance' purposes. The members of the new university would enjoy 'such privileges and immunities ... as to Your Majesty's great wisdom shall seem meet'. <sup>204</sup>

The King referred the petition to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the earl of Rochester on 18 April 1701. Rochester was to 'consider thereof' and report back, 'whereupon His Majesty will declare his further pleasure'. William's secretary of state, James Vernon, signed this document. Following this referral, Bulkeley presented a petition to Rochester, to complement his petition to William, presented 'on 11 April last'. The second petition covered much the same ground and suggested that, as 'the said college will in its infancy be under great disadvantage compared with the present College of Dublin, which is a Royal Foundation of over one hundred years standing', some 'ecclesiastical dignity...(not having care of souls)' might be attached to the headship of the new college. Bulkeley had done his homework and suggested that the deanery of Dromore might be a suitable position to 'annex' to the headship of the proposed university. This would also, Bulkeley argued, 'be a testimony of the government's favourable approbation and encouragement' of the new venture and any money that it brought in would help to defer costs and would allow Bulkeley himself to contribute more to the fund 'to the augmenting of the number of scholarships' in the new Queen's College. <sup>205</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Petition of Sir Richard Bulkeley (G.R.O., Lloyd Baker Collection, MS D3549, 6/1/B36).

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

On 17 December 1701, Rochester made an order to the attorney general of Ireland, asking him to 'give notice to the Provost and Fellows of Trinity College near Dublin'. The academics were asked to respond to the Dunlavin proposal, so a report could be sent back to William, that he 'may encourage the petitioner in his pious and charitable design'. The attorney general, Robert Rochfort, was efficient, and his report, containing much detail about Bulkeley's Dunlavin proposals, was delivered on 22 December 1701. Rochfort described the outlines of the proposal in his preamble and reported that the provost of Trinity College, 'the Reverend Doctor Peter Brown, appeared before me and told me he had acquainted the fellows of the said college'. Brown 'had seen and perused the petition before and that neither he nor the said fellows had anything to object against the petitioner's pious intentions'.<sup>206</sup> Bulkeley had surmounted the obstacle of Trinity College.

Rochfort recommended that letters patent be granted to Bulkeley and/or his nominees to found the new college. A rector and fellows should be appointed and a 'body politic and corporate' should be established to have 'perpetual succession to the name and title of the Rector and Fellows of Queen's College at Dunlavin'.<sup>207</sup> The king should also grant a licence to Bulkeley to grant, assign or bequeath such lands, income and gifts to the governing body of the new college.<sup>208</sup> The new college should be granted 'one common seal' and should have power to 'break, alter and change' its rules from time to time 'as occasion shall require', as long as these rules accorded with the laws of the kingdom. The college should have power to administer oaths and

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid. The rector and fellows could 'take and hold mannours, lands, tenements, rents, reversions, pensions, leases, rectories, portions, tithes'... and 'gifts... to the value of £2,000 sterling per annum of English value'.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid. This body would have power 'to plead and be impleaded, to sue and be sued, to answer and be answered in all the courts'.

‘for the better strengthening of discipline, the rector and his successors to have the authority of a civil magistrate within the liberties of the said town’ (Dunlavin).<sup>209</sup>

With Bulkeley as benefactor, the college would provide bibles ‘to be dispersed yearly gratis... among the poorer rank of people in this kingdom, and also a number of the like books to be sent to the English plantations in America to be in like manner disposed of’, so the college should be empowered to print bibles, and books of common prayer. Rochfort also found in favour of Bulkeley’s proposal to set up a feeder school in Dunlavin, modelled on Westminster School attached to Christchurch in Oxford and Trinity College in Cambridge. The new feeder school would be attached to the new third-level institution, which would have the formal name of ‘The University of Dunlavan’ and Queen’s College would be its first constituent college. This clause seems to confirm that the institution was to be separate rather than a college of Dublin University. Bulkeley had also asked William to refer the matter of the new feeder school to the deans of Christchurch, Oxford and Trinity, Cambridge and the other heads of colleges and halls in those universities, so that two from each university might report back and advise him about the establishment and running of the feeder school. Rochfort thought Bulkeley’s requests were very reasonable, and that his ‘zeal to the public good and pious intentions in this great work deserves all imaginable encouragement’, and recommended that it was ‘in His Majesty’s power to grant’ (his request). The reports from Oxford and Cambridge were eagerly awaited, and the idea of attaching the deanery of Dromore to the new college met with approval, as ‘by the annexed certificate of the Reverend W. Cope, Chaunter of Armagh, the deanery is a sinecure’ and is ‘in the gift and presentation of His

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

Majesty'. Rochfort concluded that in his opinion 'Your excellency [Rochester] should recommend the petitioner to His Majesty's grace and favour'. Permission was given for the new University of Dunlavin, as Rochester concurred with Rochfort's report and recommended the project to secretary of state, James Vernon.<sup>210</sup>

However, Rochester's report 'lay a considerable time undelivered'. A snag had arisen, and it would become a major obstacle. The delay in delivering the report was due to 'a treaty between the said Sir Richard Bulkeley and the See of Dublin about transferring the temporal jurisdiction of the Lordship of Dunlavan'.<sup>211</sup> Archbishop Narcissus Marsh pointed out that while it was on Bulkeley's estate, Dunlavin was also 'within the liberty of St. Sepulcher, in the suburbs of Dublin' and significantly 'belonging to the said see [Dublin], to the courts whereof the inhabitants are bound to do suit and service, though twenty miles distant from them'.<sup>212</sup> If Bulkeley proposed to transfer jurisdiction to the new university, the bishop continued, the matter must be 'transacted in the parliament in Ireland'.<sup>213</sup> The attitude of the archbishop of Dublin was not helpful to Bulkeley's dream. The loss of diocesan funds, which would have resulted from the establishment of the university, ensured that Bulkeley's plans had a formidable opponent. The resultant standoff caused a long delay and the favourable report was not delivered to William until after Rochester 'went out of that government'. Hence, Bulkeley (despite in the meantime having received encouraging replies from both Oxford and Cambridge) had to present another petition to William seeking letters patent for the new project. These were never issued, principally due to

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> The word 'treaty' here obviously does not mean an agreement or contract; rather it refers to what *Webster's Dictionary* defines as 'discussion aimed at the adjustment of difference or the reaching of an agreement'. The fact that the University of Dunlavin was never built strongly indicates that, in the case of Bulkeley v Dublin Diocese, an agreement was never reached!

<sup>212</sup> Measurement was evidently in Irish miles.

<sup>213</sup> Petition of Sir Richard Bulkeley (G.R.O., Lloyd Baker Collection, MS D3549, 6/1/B36)

opposition from the archbishop, and Bulkeley's college never materialised.

Bulkeley's experience with the established church in respect of his proposed Dunlavin university experiment embittered him. He subsequently spent more of his time in England, where he became embroiled in many heated religious debates and controversies.

Thomas Molyneux, who travelled extensively around Ireland and wrote about his travels, witnessed Bulkeley's philanthropy and his expenditure, and he offers the best evidence of just how far Dunlavin's university project proceeded. On Thursday 10 November 1709 Molyneux 'left Blessinton and went to see a great fall in ye River Liffey called by the people here Poluphogher [Poulaphuca]. It lies in a dreadfull romantick glyn and makes from the adjacent hills... a very pretty prospect. In about an hour and a half you come to Dunlavin, a dirty village, but prettily situated on a hill, belonging to Sir Richard Bulkeley, who talked of establishing a university and building a colledge here; nay, went so far as to have bricks burnt for this purpose, but I think that project is now at an end'.<sup>214</sup> The bricks may have been burned, but ecclesiastical opposition ensured that Bulkeley's vision also went up in smoke!

Unlike Ewell, where his English home was sold to pay his debts, Bulkeley's Dunlavin estates passed on his death to his niece Hester Bulkeley, and through her to her husband, James Worth-Tynte. Bulkeley's descendants, the Tynte family, remained the dominant landlords in the Dunlavin area, building Tynte Park House in the 1830s. The house remained in the ownership of the Tynte family until it was sold in 1964.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Thomas Molyneux, *Natural History of Ireland*, ii, (TCD, MS 883/2, f. 87). Commonly referred to as the Molyneux Papers.

<sup>215</sup> Fitzgerald, 'Dunlavin, Tormant and Tober', p. 221. For an excellent treatment of the complicated linkages between the three families, see John Lynott, 'The Bulkeley-Worth-Tynte Connection', *Dunlavin Festival of Arts*

The Bulkeley name died out in the Dunlavin area, but the market established by the first baronet had succeeded, unlike the second baronet's university. The other part of the second Sir Richard Bulkeley's vision – that his new settlement should be exclusively Protestant – did not come to pass either. Bulkeley's new village attracted a certain number of immigrant Protestants, but Bulkeley wished to create a Protestant-dominated village, and he ultimately failed in this objective. The continuing presence of native Catholics in the Dunlavin region ensured that conquest and colonisation sowed the seeds of long-lasting division.

## Conclusion

This chapter has described the formative impact of the first and second baronets as founders and developers of the village of Dunlavin. No village existed when the Sarsfields held the manor of Dunlavin and the O'Byrnes and other Gaelic clans held sway in the adjacent uplands. A process of Anglicisation was well underway before 1641, but the rebellion halted this. The rebellion changed all, and in its aftermath the first Sir Richard Bulkeley began the process of normalisation and was responsible for the erection of the first dwellings in Dunlavin village, which by 1664 contained approximately twenty Protestant families. The second Sir Richard Bulkeley expanded Dunlavin village. He also wished to build a new university on the site, but this plan failed. During Bulkeley's lifetime and after his death, the village stabilised and prospered, becoming the market town of his father's dreams, rather than the university town he desired. Chapter two will treat of developments in and around that market town, and will investigate the demography, economy, religiosity, and society in the area in the eighteenth century.

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*Brochure*, viii (Naas, 1990), p. 59. See also Samuel Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland*, i (3 vols, London, 1837), p. 583. In Burke's *Guide to Country Houses, Ireland*, i (London 1978), p. 279 the date of the sale of Tynte Park is erroneously given as 1974.



## **CHAPTER TWO.**

### **IMPROVEMENT AND DISIMPROVEMENT: DUNLAVIN 1710-1785.**

#### **Introduction.**

The eighteenth century was an era of building and improvement across Ireland. The elite, who found themselves in possession of practically all of the land in the country in the wake of the Williamite War, was in a position of unprecedented power on the island. This encouraged them to accelerate their efforts to shape the landscape in their own anglicising image, by building country seats, founding new villages and improving existing ones. Bulkeley's successor, James Worth Tynte, was a sporting member of the elite, and he endowed the village with a hunt and a racecourse. His village improvements also included extension and streetscape change, with a new market house as the centrepiece. Tynte moulded the village into the image he wanted, asserting his ownership and identifying with the place. This paternalistic spirit was also evident in Dunlavin's rural hinterland, particularly in improvements to the road network. However, the improvements and the aristocratic lifestyle of the elite highlighted the gulf between their way of life and that of the ordinary people, especially the poorest sections within society. This gulf was exacerbated by the cultural and religious differences that divided the elite from the masses, symbolised by the Penal Laws. These laws may not have been always applied, but one priest in the Dunlavin region, Fr Owen McFee, was among those who experienced their effects. Even when they were no longer strictly enforced, the laws remained on the statute book as a threat that could be invoked by the exclusively

Protestant elite. Tynte's successors discontinued village improvement, but they could rely on support from a settled Protestant community. The paternalistic model of landlordism that the Tyntes epitomised was still at its optimum in Dunlavin during most of the eighteenth century, and encountered no serious resistance until the later decades, when it came under threat from new political ideas, polarising communities along sectarian lines.

This chapter contains four sections, examining different aspects of the Dunlavin region during the eighteenth century. The first section examines the impact of Sir James Worth Tynte and his lifestyle. However, the shortage of primary sources directly relating to Tynte or to Dunlavin, particularly the absence of Tynte papers, means that this section is necessarily skeletal. Once his possession of Dunlavin was secured, Tynte changed the spatial form of the village, adding new streets and a market square with a fine market house. Section two examines economic developments in Dunlavin during the landlordship of James Worth Tynte and his successors, Robert Tynte (landlord 1758-1760) and James Stratford Tynte, who died in 1785. However, there is little evidence of rural or agricultural improvement on the Tynte estate, particularly under the absentee stewardship of Stratford Tynte. Section three analyses developments within Dunlavin's rural hinterland, one of which, the establishment of Stratford-on-Slaney, changed the religious composition of the region. Section four concentrates on regional demography and religious composition, which had implications for the growth of political extremism in the 1790s.

## **1. Establishing the Tynte supremacy, 1710-1735.**

When the second Sir Richard Bulkeley died in 1710, Dunlavin village was already one of the principal settlements in west Wicklow. The village was flourishing both physically and demographically. Demographic growth was assessed in chapter one. The physical growth of the village is difficult to reconstruct, particularly as no detailed maps are available. However, some attempt may be made to plot the spatial pattern and morphology of the village in the early eighteenth century, and as it developed thereafter.

L. M. Cullen has suggested that Dunlavin's fairgreen constituted the original settlement and is spatially slightly away from the planned village of the mid-eighteenth century dominated by a square with a market house.<sup>1</sup> The market house did not exist in 1710, but was built beside the seventeenth-century Anglican church in the late 1730s. However, if the fair green was laid out shortly after the successful petition to hold markets and fairs in Dunlavin in 1661, both the church, for which permission was granted in 1664, and the fairgreen date from the same period. These features marked the extremities of the settlement and, given the evidence of later maps, oral tradition and the present layout of the village, the area between them formed the nucleus of early Dunlavin, with buildings along a very wide, right-angled main street running from the church to the fairgreen.

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<sup>1</sup> L. M. Cullen, *The emergence of modern Ireland 1600-1900* (London, 1981), p. 63.

**Map 7: Dunlavin c. 1710**



**Source: author's sketch based on Bulkeley correspondence.**

The fairgreen was not the centre of the original settlement, but acted as its south-eastern boundary. Triangular fairgreens were common in Irish villages and towns during this period. They have been described as ‘the hallmark of early seventeenth-century settlement’.<sup>2</sup> Such greens have been identified in approximately 120 Irish villages.<sup>3</sup> It has further been suggested that triangular greens were a focus of defence in many

<sup>2</sup> Cullen, *The emergence of modern Ireland 1600-1900*, p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 64.

villages.<sup>4</sup> Malin in county Donegal is a good example; there the green is at the centre of a triangle formed by three streets. However, because the fairgreen in Dunlavin was on the periphery of the settlement and was not surrounded by buildings, it had no defensive function. The triangular green in Dunlavin was merely following the fashion of the time, when such triangular fairgreens provided an instantly recognisable symbol for an equally recognisable function. The apex of the triangle occurred at a point where two roads meet, so the physical road pattern favoured the use of the land between as a triangular fairgreen at the entrance to the urban space of the village.

Below the fairgreen, the village possessed a linear L-shaped pattern, with two streets joining at a right angle at the centre. The strict linear pattern was a feature of many Irish villages and towns at this time. Formal planning – the creation of regularly structured space in accordance with some preconceived ideal –<sup>5</sup> was evident in Dunlavin's rigid street pattern. Linear streets and straight axes created a sense of spatial conformity in many villages.<sup>6</sup> Dunlavin was one such place, where small scale but extreme formalism replicated the baroque planning ideas characteristic of the great European cities.<sup>7</sup> This formalism in the planning of even the smallest settlements such as Dunlavin derived ultimately from sixteenth-century Renaissance principles,<sup>8</sup> and aspired to civilise society

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<sup>4</sup> L. J. Proudfoot, 'Spatial Transformation and social agency: Property, Society and improvement, c. 1700 to c. 1900' in B. J. Graham and L. J. Proudfoot (eds), *An Historical Geography of Ireland* (London, 1993), p. 235.

<sup>5</sup> L. J. Proudfoot and B. J. Graham, 'The nature and extent of urban and village foundation and improvement in eighteenth and early nineteenth century Ireland', in *Planning Perspectives*, 8, (Dublin 1993), p. 260.

<sup>6</sup> Susan Hood, 'The significance of the villages and small towns in rural Ireland during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 108, (London 2002), p. 253.

<sup>7</sup> Hood, 'The significance of the villages and small towns', p. 251.

<sup>8</sup> B. J. Graham and L. J. Proudfoot, *Urban improvement in provincial Ireland* (Athlone 1994), p. 3.

and townscapes through the medium of polite culture.<sup>9</sup> In practice, formal townscapes and town plans such as Dunlavin reflected the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century mindsets of the landholding elite. Much debate concerning the suitability of the term 'landlord town' has taken place in Irish settlement studies<sup>10</sup> but this is not central to the present work. In all respects, Dunlavin was a landlord town, the creation of the Bulkeley family, and it owed its existence to their decision to build a new village on a greenfield site. In building the new village, the Bulkeleys conformed to the town planning norms of the time and Dunlavin possessed a linear street plan with extremely wide streets for such a small settlement. The present street from the old Church of Ireland site to the angle of the L is approximately 51 feet wide and the street from the angle of the L to the fairgreen is approximately 75 feet wide. There is no record that either street was ever widened, so it is logical to assume that they reflect the original design. The buildings that framed the streets were probably lower in the early eighteenth century, as most of the present houses in Dunlavin are two-storey slated buildings dating from the nineteenth century. Even today, the width of Dunlavin's streets actually detracts from the buildings on either side. This was the case in many Irish villages and towns, such as, for example, Strokestown in county Roscommon.<sup>11</sup> The wider street leading from Dunlavin's fairgreen served a useful function; markets and fairs could overflow easily from the green into the village and the wide street provided a suitable arena for the sale of

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<sup>9</sup> Graham and Proudfoot, *Urban improvement*, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> See for example Graham and Proudfoot, *Urban improvement*, p. 2; Hood, 'The significance of the villages and small towns', p. 247; B. J. Graham, 'The processes of urban improvement in provincial Ireland' in T. E. Eliasson and G. A. Ersland, *Power, profit and urban land: Landownership in medieval and early modern Northern European towns* (Aldershot 1996), pp 218-9.

<sup>11</sup> Hood, 'The significance of the villages and small towns', p. 256.

livestock and for market stalls, as was the case in nearby Baltinglass.<sup>12</sup> In addition, the wide streets and the emphatic linear planning of Dunlavin<sup>13</sup> added a sense of spaciousness, so characteristic of the early eighteenth century.

This was the village that James Worth Tynte inherited on the death of Sir Richard Bulkeley.<sup>14</sup> Tynte married Hesther Bulkeley, the daughter of John Bulkeley of Old Bawn, county Dublin (to which property Tynte also succeeded) and the niece of the second baronet Dunlavin, on 15 April 1702.<sup>15</sup> Tynte was born in 1682, the son of William Worth and his second wife, Mabella Tynte, a daughter of Sir Henry Tynte. The young James assumed the surname Tynte when he became the heir of his uncle, Henry Tynte of Ballycrenane in county Cork.<sup>16</sup> Henry Tynte's will was proved on 22 October 1692 and James Worth became James Worth Tynte soon after.<sup>17</sup> He was educated at Kilkenny College and studied at the Middle Temple.<sup>18</sup> He served as the High Sheriff of Cork in 1711.<sup>19</sup> His Bulkeley inheritance confirmed him as a man of substance with property in many parts of Ireland.

Because Sir Richard Bulkeley's will was contested, Tynte did not enjoy beneficial ownership of the Dunlavin estate for some time. Acrimony between Tynte and his

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<sup>12</sup> Stanley Jackson, 'Baltinglass cattle fairs', *Journal of the West Wicklow Historical Society*, iv, (2007) p. 86. Strokestown's wide streets also provided space for trading on the market and fair days. Hood, 'The significance of the villages and small towns', p. 251.

<sup>13</sup> Proudfoot, 'Spatial Transformation and social agency', p. 236.

<sup>14</sup> The Bulkeley-Tynte line of succession to the Dunlavin estate is given in appendix two.

<sup>15</sup> Edith Mary Johnston-Liik, *History of the Irish Parliament 1692-1800*, (6 vols, Belfast, 2001), v, 446.

<sup>16</sup> Johnston-Liik, *History of the Irish Parliament*, v, 446. Also Fitzgerald, 'Dunlavin, Tornant and Tober', p. 221.

<sup>17</sup> Fitzgerald, 'Dunlavin, Tornant and Tober', p. 222 v.

<sup>18</sup> T. U. Sadlier, *The register of Kilkenny School 1685-1800*, unpaginated, entry for 18 Aug 1695. Also H. A. C. Sturgess, *Register of admissions to the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple* (3 vols, London, 1949), i, 244.

<sup>19</sup> Johnston-Liik, *History of the Irish Parliament*, v, 446.

mother-in-law Jane Bulkeley is revealed in surviving correspondence, which also sheds some light on Tynte's character. On 24 February 1718, Jane Bulkeley wrote to her cousin Mrs. Bonnell stating 'I have not got one penny from him [Tynte] yet. He is a sad dog. I pray God mend him'.<sup>20</sup> Evidently Jane Bulkeley entertained low opinions of Tynte, who was slow to pay her money she expected to receive in connection with his inheritance, including that at Dunlavin. On 25 July in the following year, Jane Bulkeley confided to Mrs. Bonnell: 'I have taken courage and prest Mr. Tynte for money, but to very little purpose. He has at last promised me to let me have [a] sum next month. I question it very much; it makes me very uneasy, but what will I do? It is death to me to think of going to law with him and I fear I shall get little without it'.<sup>21</sup>

The financial standoff continued into the 1720s, and may have been why Tynte was 'in a cloudy humour' in November 1726.<sup>22</sup> On 2 March 1727 Jane Bulkeley confided to Mrs. Bonnell that she was not alone in having difficulties dealing with Tynte. She stated: 'Mr. Sanders has had no answer of his letters though they writ three times'.<sup>23</sup> Nearly a year later, Jane Bulkeley made further scathing references to Tynte in another epistle, saying 'Mr. Tynte is... come to town and I fear that he is much the same man'.<sup>24</sup> Relations between Tynte and his mother-in-law remained difficult until 1733. In October that year, Jane Bulkeley wrote to Mrs. Bonnell and enclosed an undated letter she had received from Tynte. In it Tynte stated that 'the difficulties that frequently arose during a long and

<sup>20</sup> Jane Bulkeley to Mrs. Bonnell, 24 Feb 1718, (N.L.I., Smythe of Barbavilla papers, MS 41,580/4)

<sup>21</sup> Jane Bulkeley to Mrs. Bonnell, 25 Jul 1718, (N.L.I., Smythe of Barbavilla papers, MS 41,580/4)

<sup>22</sup> Ann Worth to Mrs. Bonnell, 26 Nov 1726, (N.L.I., Smythe of Barbavilla papers, MS 41,580/27)

<sup>23</sup> Jane Bulkeley to Mrs. Bonnell 2 Mar 1727 (N.L.I., Smythe of Barbavilla papers, MS 41,580/4). Tynte is not actually named in this letter, but the content of the letter makes it likely that he is the man to which Jane Bulkeley was referring. The Mr. Sanders mentioned was probably from the landowning Saunders family of Saundersgrove near Dunlavin.

<sup>24</sup> Jane Bulkeley to Mrs. Bonnell, 14 Jan 1728 (N.L.I., Smythe of Barbavilla papers, MS 41,580/4)



uncertain treaty with Mr. Bulkeley was the reason why I could not possibly give you any account before this time how my wife's affairs stood in relation to him'. There had evidently been friction between Hester Bulkeley Tynte and a male relation from the Bulkeley family, perhaps a cousin, as Hesther was an only child and her father predeceased Sir Richard in 1699.<sup>25</sup> Various relatives contested the baronet's will.<sup>26</sup> Sir Richard was declared *non compos mentis* by the Court of Chancery in 1710,<sup>27</sup> and was prevented from selling his estate to benefit Abraham Whitro[w].<sup>28</sup> The Mr. Bulkeley of Tynte's letter may have used the baronet's state of mind to contest his will, thus delaying Tynte assuming control in Dunlavin. In his letter to Jane Bulkeley, Tynte went on to observe that 'after many uneasynesses and very great expences on my part, I have brought all differences between her and him to a conclusion... executed on both parts'. He continued: 'I have paid him £3,000 down and have given bonds to pay him £100 a year till £1,000 is paid, if I enjoy the estate of Sir Richard Bulkeley so long'. However, Tynte was secure in the knowledge that his investment was worthwhile because: 'the rents of the estate which are now due will pay more than that money'. He also reported that 'I secure My Lady Bulkeley's claim, which is mine'. In summation, Tynte concluded: 'I judged most prudent to comply with terms by which I could not possibly lose, but by which I may most certainly be a gainer.' Tynte's signing off as 'Your most dutifull and obedient son, James Tynte' is indicative of his wish to put his relationship

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<sup>25</sup> Egerton Brydges, *Collins's peerage of England, genealogical, biographical and historical, greatly augmented and continued to the present time*, iii, (9 vols, London, 1812), iii, 14.

<sup>26</sup> Schwartz, *The French prophets*, p. 132.

<sup>27</sup> George Berkeley to John Perceval, 1 Mar 1710, in A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop, *The works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, (9 vols, London, 1948-1957), viii, 31. This letter is also cited in Schwartz, *The French prophets*, p. 132.

<sup>28</sup> Hoppen, *The common scientist*, p. 186.

with Jane Bulkeley on friendly terms, but it was not to be.<sup>29</sup> A month later, Jane Bulkeley was 'seized with a violent fit and died'.<sup>30</sup>

With the Dunlavin estate securely in his possession, James Worth Tynte was in a position to make his mark on the community, and he was clearly disposed to think in ambitious terms. Tynte was a man of substance, returned as M.P. for Rathcormack, county Cork in 1715 and for Youghal in 1727; he was raised to the Privy Council in 1716, and became a founder member of the Dublin Society in 1731. He served on no less than 68 committees in the House of Commons and held many positions of influence.<sup>31</sup> Tynte also lived in a manner befitting his social status. Jane Bulkeley had noted that his failure to repay his debts did not stop him spending huge sums to support a lavish lifestyle. In one of her letters she wrote: 'I am sure it is very hard on me and I have a great deal of vexation to see the extravagant way they live, and, I fear, take little care to pay debts, but they are too great and too wise to be spoke to, especially by me. I wish they had more prudence and goodness in all their conduct, but I think they grow worse rather than better. I wish I could say otherwise'.<sup>32</sup> Jane Bulkeley's writings suggest a pattern of conspicuous consumption on the part of Tynte and his wife, that was the hallmark of many members of the Irish aristocracy and gentry. It has been pointed out that this type of lifestyle was not unique to the Irish elite, but was entirely normative behaviour indulged in by similar *ancien regime* landed elites throughout eighteenth-century Europe.<sup>33</sup> However, such behaviour, witnessed at first hand by the dispossessed Gaelic Catholic tenantry, was one

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<sup>29</sup> James Tynte to Jane Bulkeley, undated, (N.L.I., Smythe of Barbavilla papers, MS 41,580/4)

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Curtis to Mrs. Bonnell, 6 Nov 1733 (N.L.I., Smythe of Barbavilla papers, MS 41,580/4)

<sup>31</sup> Johnston-Liik, *History of the Irish parliament*, v, pp 446-7.

<sup>32</sup> Jane Bulkeley to Mrs. Bonnell, 25 Jul 1719 (N.L.I., Smythe of Barbavilla papers, MS 41,580/4)

<sup>33</sup> J. Black, *Eighteenth century Europe 1700-1789* (London, 1990), pp 208-30.

reason for the traditional hostility accorded to Irish landlords in the popular historical imagination.<sup>34</sup> Tynte's lifestyle was ostentatious and this was reflected in his impact on the village of Dunlavin.

## **2. Dunlavin's urban space, 1710-1785.**

Once he had reached a settlement with Bulkeley, James Worth Tynte was in a position to put his own mark on his newly acquired village of Dunlavin.<sup>35</sup> The provision of market houses constituted the most common form of proprietorial intervention in Irish towns and villages. The characteristic arcaded ground floor was not only functional, but also acted as a recognisable symbol. The provision of such buildings was considered essential to attract linen and other merchants and craftsmen.<sup>36</sup> The building of market houses, typically finely-proportioned, cut-stone buildings with arches and pedimented fronts, also celebrated the economic prosperity of the time.<sup>37</sup> However, though a finely-proportioned, cut-stone building with arches and pedimented fronts, there was very little typical about the market house that Tynte erected in Dunlavin. The architect of Dunlavin market house is reputed to have been Richard Cassels, who was responsible for the larger and still more prestigious county Wicklow buildings of Powerscourt House and Russborough House. No expense was spared and Dunlavin was given a classical market house that set the standard for later buildings. This baroque building was extraordinarily sophisticated and

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<sup>34</sup> E. R. Hooker, *Readjustments of agricultural tenure in Ireland* (Chapel Hill N.C. 1938) and J. E. Pomfret, *The struggle for land in Ireland*, (Princeton 1930) cited in Lindsay Proudfoot, 'Land ownership and improvement ca. 1700-1845', in Lindsay Proudfoot (ed) and William Nolan (series ed), *Down History and Society: Interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin 1997), pp 204 and 234.

<sup>35</sup> Tynte followed in the Ascendancy desire to build and to plan, which may have indicated at a wider level anxiety about a landscape recently won and insecurely held. R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London, 1988), p. 192.

<sup>36</sup> Graham, 'The processes of urban improvement in provincial Ireland', p. 235.

<sup>37</sup> Hood, 'The significance of the villages and small towns', p. 253.

was superior to the many neo-Palladian market houses in other parts of Ireland.<sup>38</sup>

Dunlavin's cruciform market house utilised an architectural repertoire far in excess of that applied to many plainer contemporary examples.<sup>39</sup> Thus Tynte's market house was more than a functional building; it was also highly symbolic. Various writers have commented upon both its dominance in the townscape and its aesthetic beauty.<sup>40</sup>

Dunlavin market house is one of the earliest instances of such handsome village furniture that has survived in a largely unchanged state.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Graham and Proudfoot, *Urban improvement*, p. 37.

<sup>39</sup> Proudfoot, 'Spatial Transformation and social agency', p. 241.

<sup>40</sup> See for example R. A. Warke, *St. Nicholas's Church and Parish, Dunlavin* (Naas, 1967), p. 7 and Samuel Russell McGee, *Dunlavin, Co. Wicklow – A Retrospect* (Dublin, 1935), p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> Cullen, *Irish towns and villages*, p. 12.

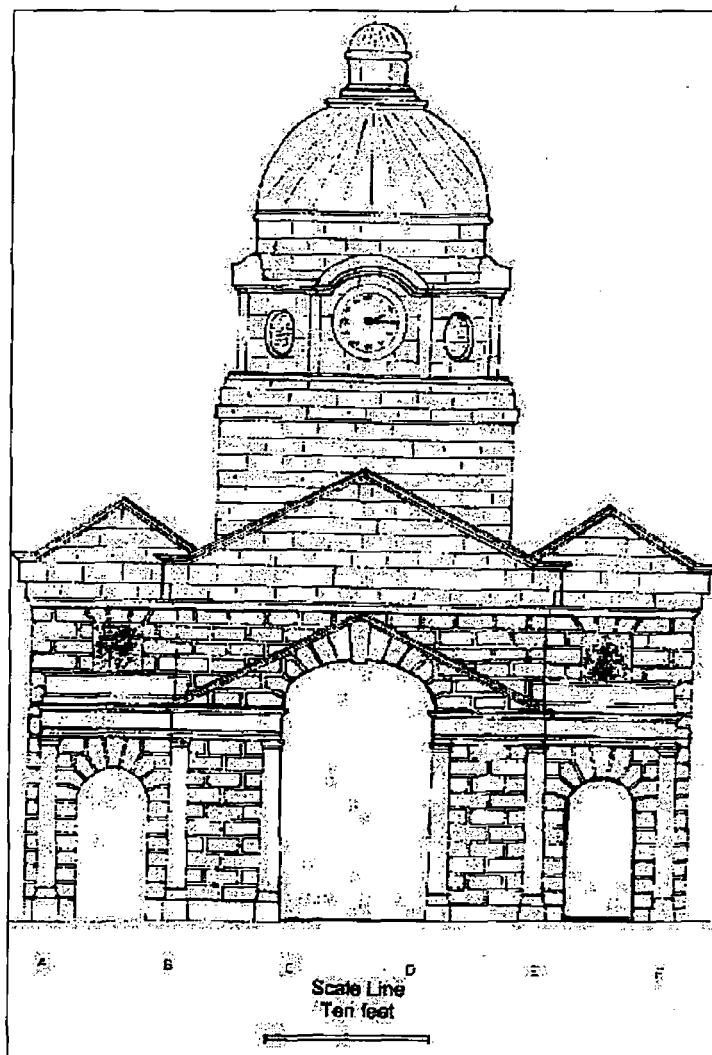
**Illustration 1: Dunlavin Market House in 2008**



**Photo by the author, 2008.**

Dunlavin market house is basically rectangular in shape if one includes the porticoes in the overall design. Without the porticoes, the building is cruciform, and is portrayed thus in the 1838 valuation map. The map also indicates the long axis of the building extends from north-northeast to south-southwest.

**Illustration 2. Elevation of south-southwestern façade of Dunlavin market house.**



**Source: Private possession.**

The south-south-western façade of Dunlavin market house may be divided into three zones. Firstly, two open porticoes flank the lower central zone wall of hewn granite blocks. The central arch is open, and breaks into the triangular pediment above. The arch was used for entry and exit to and from the building, and was wide enough to facilitate

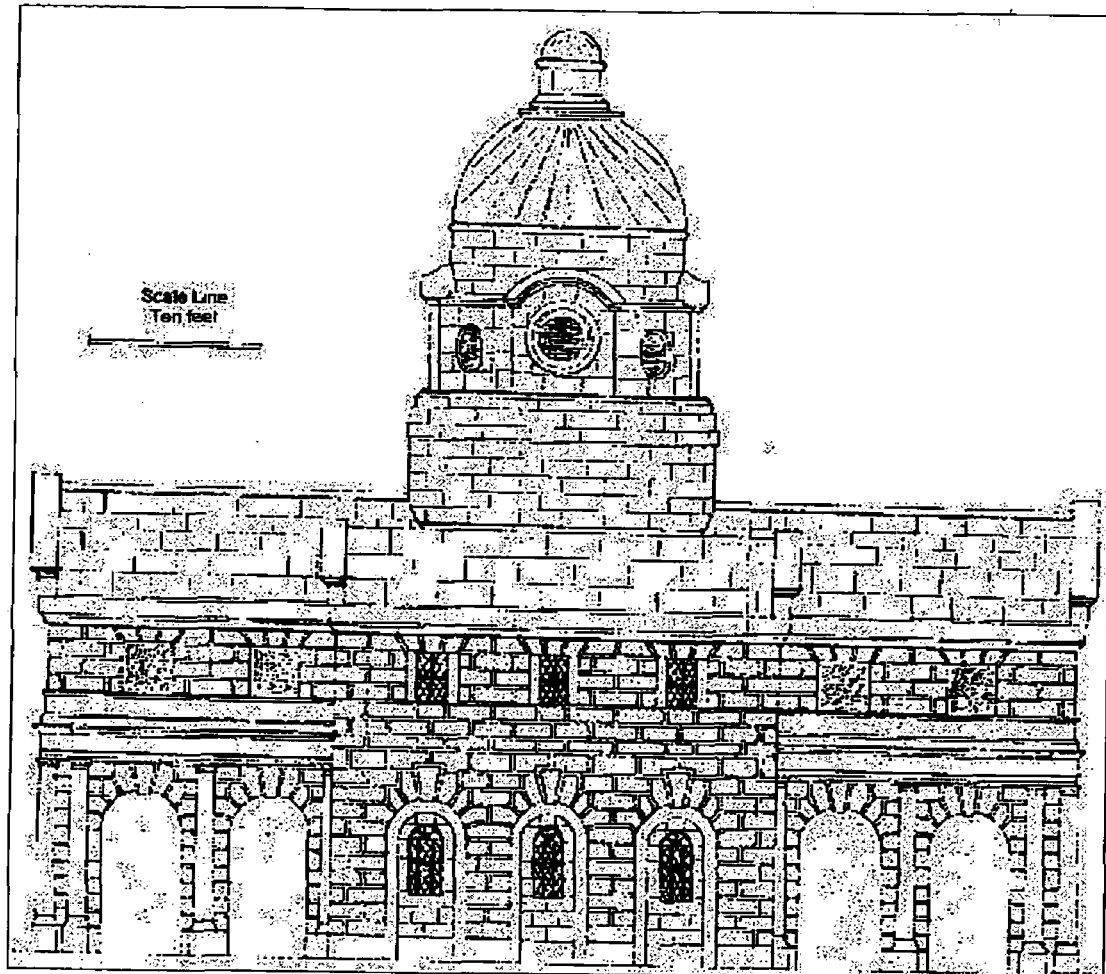
the passage of cartloads of produce, though there is no evidence that tolls were ever exacted on carts passing into the village through the arch. Two porticoes at either end of the south-south western façade form the second zone of this facade. The colonnades of the porticoes may have been used to hang sides of meat and other comestibles when the market was in operation, while other farm produce such as corn, potatoes and vegetables, was displayed inside the building. Thirdly, the upper central zone is located above the pediment. The gable ends frame the crowning glory of the building, the dome.

Beneath the dome, at the centre of the building, the hewn granite rises in a circular shape, tapering gently at the top before a line of thinner stones forms the base of the clock tower. The clock was a later addition. Above the clock tower is a line of thin stones that forms the base for the great fluted granite dome, so reminiscent of the great dome of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. The market house was known locally as 'St. Paul's'.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Rev. R. A. Warke, *St. Nicholas's church and parish, Dunlavin* (Naas, 1967), p. 7.

**Illustration 3: Elevation of west-northwestern façade of Dunlavin market house.**

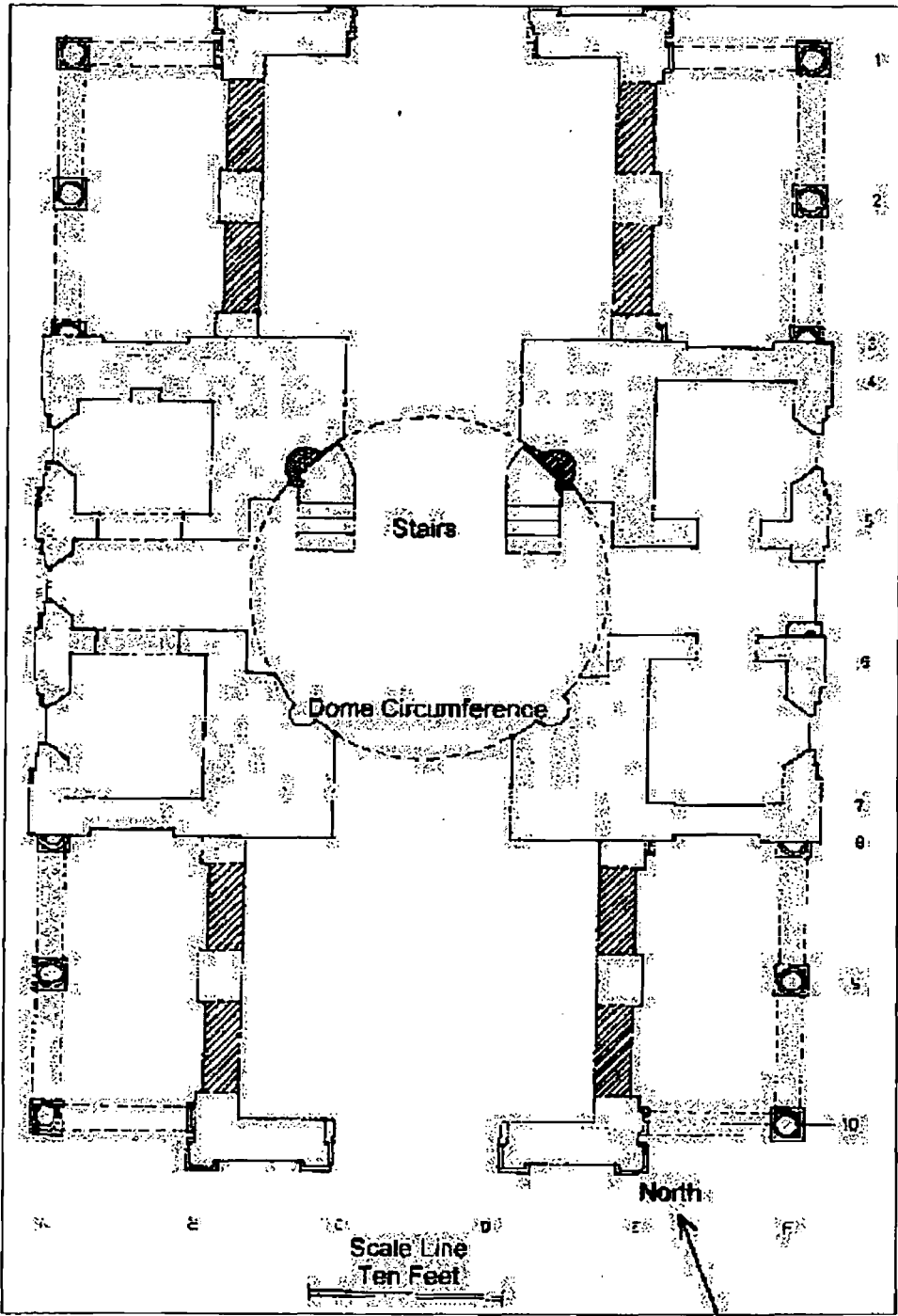


**Source: Private possession.**

The west-northwestern façade is elongated, with three arches. The east-southeastern façade mirrors its counterpart.



**Illustration 4: Plan of Dunlavin market house.**



**Source: Private possession.**

Market houses, often arcaded, are to be found in county towns throughout northern Europe.<sup>43</sup> However, in Ireland market houses are not confined to county towns. Even modest villages and towns were frequently dignified with handsome features.<sup>44</sup> Almost every village in Ulster has, for its principal, or only, public building, a court or market house.<sup>45</sup> In county Wicklow, Dunlavin is not the only small village to possess a market house. A fine central market house also dominates Tinahely. Like Dunlavin, the market house in Tinahely is literally central as it is built in the middle of the street. As in Dunlavin, the local landowner, in this instance Lord Fitzwilliam, erected Tinahely market house.<sup>46</sup> However, Tinahely's market house is not nearly as ornate as Dunlavin's. In Ulster also it was usually the landowner who provided the village market houses. The motive was an enlightened kind of self-interest, for if a market house was conducive to the prosperity of the tenants, it was even more conducive to the prosperity of the landlord.<sup>47</sup> Recent research has suggested that both members of the landholding elite and their more powerful tenants often cooperated in village improvements.<sup>48</sup> However, the tenants – even the larger ones – lacked the capital necessary for large-scale projects such as market houses,<sup>49</sup> so Dunlavin market house was totally a Tynte-driven project.

For nearly a century Dunlavin market house served a solely commercial function, but part of it was later converted to a courthouse (see chapter four). The dual purpose of the

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<sup>43</sup> C. E. B. Brett, *Court Houses and Market Houses of the Province of Ulster*, (Belfast 1973), p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> Cullen, *Irish towns and villages*, p. 12.

<sup>45</sup> Brett, *Court Houses and Market Houses*, p. 6.

<sup>46</sup> Cullen, *Irish towns and villages*, p. 12.

<sup>47</sup> Brett, *Court Houses and Market Houses*, p. 10.

<sup>48</sup> See for example Graham and Proudfoot, *Urban improvement*, pp 3, 11-2, 19 and 42-6 and Hood, 'The significance of the villages and small towns', pp 244-5, 254-8. Also Proudfoot, 'Spatial Transformation and social agency', p. 239.

<sup>49</sup> Graham, 'The processes of urban improvement in provincial Ireland', p. 236.

building – market house and courthouse – was not unique to Dunlavin. According to C. E. B. Brett: ‘Originally the market house was no more than a covered space for the exchange of produce in wet weather. It was found convenient to provide a two-storey building whose lower floor was open, but whose upper floor contained a court room, or an assembly room, or some combination of these functions: so the scales of commerce frequently came to share a roof with the scales of justice’. Brett continues: ‘At first, these dual purpose buildings were usually (though not always) very modest in their architecture; but in the latter part of the eighteenth century improving landlords began to pay much more attention to their design’.<sup>50</sup> Dunlavin market house pre-dates the better architectural market houses by some fifty years or so. The early buildings were usually ‘very modest in their architecture’, but Dunlavin clearly is an exception.

One of these later examples is to be found in Naas, at the canal harbour. The original market house stood in the centre of the main street of Naas.<sup>51</sup> Like Dunlavin, Naas market house had open arcading.<sup>52</sup> The most obvious comparison between the two buildings is the pediment that appears at roof level in Naas. Other market houses in Leinster that had open arcading include Kildare, Portarlington and Athy – but none was as ornate as Dunlavin. Outside Leinster, Portaferry market house (1752) dates from the same period as Dunlavin market house (1737-1743), but is much simpler in design.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Brett, *Court Houses and Market Houses*, p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> Con Costello, ‘Naas Market House’ in *Leinster Leader* ‘Looking Back’ series 738. The location of the original market house in Naas was evidently similar to Dunlavin’s building – i.e. in the centre of the principal street. Costello cites Samuel Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland*, 2 vols, (London 1837).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Brett, *Court Houses and Market Houses*, p. 76. The date of Dunlavin market house is given as 1737 in N. U. I. Maynooth, *Shearman Papers*, vii, f. 142v. The date is given as 1743 in Cullen, *Irish towns and villages*, p. 12. Dunlavin market house was built ‘in the 1740s’ according to Frank Goodwin, *The Market House, Dunlavin: Restoration and History* (Naas, 1979), p. 11.

Tynte's new market house was the centrepiece of his ambitious plan to develop Dunlavin village. He remodelled the old Bulkeley settlement extensively. The area adjacent to the new market house on the southwestern side became the market square, improving the commercial and economic viability of Dunlavin. The old main street was extended and widened. The 51 feet wide street broadened to 87 feet as one entered the market square from the southwest. The square became even wider at the market house itself. At its widest point the square measured 108 feet across. This extra width was achieved by taking some land from the existing churchyard. An almost right-angled triangular piece of land measuring approximately 45 feet by 21 feet by 39 feet, formerly part of the churchyard, was incorporated into the new market square. This can be attributed to the fact that the market house was built in line with the existing street. The churchyard land had to be utilised in order to maintain an alignment with the rest of the village, and in order to provide roads on both sides of the market house leading into the new market square. As a result, some graves had to be moved and the bodies reinterred elsewhere in the churchyard.<sup>54</sup>

Dunlavin was in the group of improved villages where the square was to one side of the street, which it straddled unevenly, and this is clear evidence that the planner was coping with existing features from an earlier time.<sup>55</sup> In the case of Dunlavin, a symmetrical market square opening out evenly around the market house would have required the movement of all the bodies in the Church of Ireland churchyard, so the planner

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<sup>54</sup> I have found no written evidence of this, but there is a strong oral tradition around the moving of the graves. I am indebted to the late Mr. Walter Coleborn of Dunlavin for this information.

<sup>55</sup> L. M. Cullen, *The emergence of modern Ireland 1600-1900* (London, 1981), p. 69.

compromised.

**Map 8. Dunlavin c. 1740.**



**Source:** author's sketch based on contemporary documentary sources.

The main street was also extended below and to the northeast of the market house, effectively more than doubling its length. Finally, the street to the fairgreen was extended towards the west-northwest along the Carlow road. The remodelled village lost its old L-shape and took on the distinctive T-shape still associated with Dunlavin. The market square now stood at the middle of the down-stroke of the T. Oral tradition in the village states that this was done to give the village a form that reflected the initial letter of the

landlord, Tynte, which is possible. Dunlavin is still known colloquially as ‘the town like a T’.<sup>56</sup>

It is uncertain just how long this process of village improvement took, or whether it happened in one or more phases, but the latter is likely as the market house was only one of the major new buildings put in place. Other improvements added to Dunlavin’s leisure and recreational functions. The *post-chaise companion* recorded that Tynte ‘embellished this town with several new buildings, a good inn and other improvements’.<sup>57</sup> The innkeeper in 1754 was one Lawrence Toole.<sup>58</sup> One of the new buildings was a playhouse, as one existed in the village in the eighteenth century.<sup>59</sup> The provision of a theatre in Dunlavin was in keeping with Tynte’s character and provides evidence of a further attempt to furnish the village with urban features. Oral tradition locates this theatre below the market house on the Kilcullen end of Main Street, later known as Kilcullen Street.<sup>60</sup>

There was also a racecourse on the southeastern edge of the village. Though no record of the building of the racecourse exists, it is likely that it was part of James Worth Tynte’s scheme to improve Dunlavin village. This racecourse indicated a degree of prosperity as,

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<sup>56</sup> Jim Whittle (ed), *Sons of Saint Nicholas: A history of Dunlavin G.A.A. club* (Naas, 1984), p. 94.

<sup>57</sup> William Wilson, *The post-chaise companion or traveller’s directory through Ireland containing a new and accurate description of the direct and principal crossroads with particulars of the noblemen and gentlemen’s seats, towns, parks, natural curiosities, antiquities, castles, ruins, manufactures, loughs, glens, harbours etc.* (Third edition, Dublin, 1803), p. 464.

<sup>58</sup> *Universal Advertiser*, 15 Jan 1754.

<sup>59</sup> W. J. McCormack, *The silence of Barbara Synge* (Manchester, 2003), p. 188. There is no actual record of Tynte building the playhouse, but it seems probable that the project was his. By 1834 this playhouse had been demolished and the site bequeathed to a local doctor.

<sup>60</sup> I am indebted to the late Mrs. Breda Lawler of Dunlavin for this information.

in addition to the village dwellers, it attracted the county gentry on race days.<sup>61</sup> The racecourse reflected the aristocratic order that Tynte represented, and underlined social order within the Dunlavin region. The gentry's sporting fraternity placed the horse at the centre of their world. Fashionable gatherings attended race meetings at Ballymore Eustace,<sup>62</sup> Donard and Baltinglass.<sup>63</sup> The meeting at Baltinglass in 1755 included a race for a £30 cup, donated by the Dunlavin hunt.<sup>64</sup> The presence of a hunt in the village is further evidence of Tynte's love of horses and of his place within the equine sporting world. This racecourse in Tynte's village was in keeping with the ostentatious lifestyle of the landlord, who also had gambling debts.<sup>65</sup> The village changed so much during the mid-eighteenth century that, in the popular memory, it became identified as a Tynte village and the fact that it was a Bulkeley foundation has been largely forgotten.<sup>66</sup>

The improved village of Dunlavin with its fine market square reflected the status of the settlement as a thriving market centre. Both the weekly markets and the biannual fairs granted in 1661 fulfilled vital economic functions in eighteenth-century villages such as Dunlavin and their hinterlands. These villages (and towns) were consumers of produce from surrounding farms, sites of industry, mills and stores and other centres of

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<sup>61</sup> Patrick Power, 'A survey: some Wicklow maps 1500-1888', in Ken Hannigan and William Nolan (eds), *Wicklow: History and Society*, Dublin 1994, p. 733. There were also racecourses in Baltinglass and Donard in west Wicklow.

<sup>62</sup> *Universal Advertiser*, 17 Jul 1749.

<sup>63</sup> *Universal Advertiser*, 12 Jul 1757. Also *Universal Advertiser*, 3 Dec 1791 contains a report of a large race meeting at Baltinglass, with races for cups given by both the Earl and Countess of Aldborough.

<sup>64</sup> *Universal Advertiser*, 16 Aug 1755.

<sup>65</sup> Jane Bulkeley to Mrs. Bonnell, 25 Jul 1719 (N.L.I., Smythe of Barbavilla papers, MS 41,580/4)

<sup>66</sup> Today many Dunlavin inhabitants know of the village's Tynte history, but the name of Bulkeley has passed out of folk memory. Dunlavin has also been identified as a Tynte village in academic writings. See for example Cullen, *Irish towns and villages*, p. 12.



employment for the rural population.<sup>67</sup> Markets and fairs provided the mechanism by which economic interaction between the rural and the urban dwellers could take place. A differentiation must be made between markets and fairs, as the distinction between the two has become blurred over time.<sup>68</sup> The market was a weekly event, supplying goods and services to the village and its immediate hinterland. It was the means by which the non-agricultural urban dwellers acquired food and raw materials.<sup>69</sup> Fairs were much larger events, attracting customers from a much wider region. They were less frequent, twice yearly in the case of Dunlavin, but lasted for a longer period, and they were much more lavish than weekly markets.<sup>70</sup> In addition to their commercial functions, they were a magnet for other attractions such as jugglers and fortunetellers, which added to their popularity.

Dunlavin market had to contend with competition from nearby markets from the outset, but as Dunlavin's market was not on the same day as either Rathsalagh or Kilcullen, this competition was not a threat. Dunlavin's market's main competition came from Ballymore Eustace, some six miles distant in county Kildare, and the success of Dunlavin

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<sup>67</sup> F. Aalen, *Man and the landscape in Ireland* (London, 1978), p. 121.

<sup>68</sup> Karina Holton, 'From charters to carters: aspects of fairs and markets in medieval Leinster' in *Irish fairs and markets, studies in local history* (Dublin, 2001), p. 18.

<sup>69</sup> Markets in Irish towns and villages date back to Anglo-Norman times and ten market sites have been identified in county Wicklow. Patrick O'Connor, *Fairs and markets of Ireland: A cultural geography* (Newcastlewest, undated), p. 12. Although Dunlavin was not among these, the Dunlavin area was serviced by markets such as those at Kilcullen (created in 1403 and held on Saturdays) and Naas (created in 1569 and held bi-weekly on Mondays and Thursdays). *Report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the state of fairs and markets in Ireland*, [C1674], H.C. 1852-53, xli, pp 52-3. While Naas was twelve miles from the site of Bulkeley's Dunlavin and perhaps slightly beyond the threshold from which a weekly market could expect to draw customers, Kilcullen was only five miles distant and Dunlavin was certainly within its market hinterland. In England it has been suggested that this threshold was between 8 and 12.5 kilometres. Christopher Dyer, 'Market towns and the countryside in late medieval England' in *Canadian Journal of History*, xxxi, 1 (1996), pp 20-4. In Ireland it has been suggested that 'buyers and sellers certainly travelled further'. O'Connor, *Fairs and markets of Ireland*, p. 19. Rathsalagh, where the market dated from 1632, was even nearer to Dunlavin.

<sup>70</sup> For an excellent account of an individual fair and the various levels at which it operated see Seamas O Maitiu, *The humours of Donnybrook: Dublin's famous fair and its suppression* (Dublin, 1995).



in the region can be measured by the fact that the Ballymore Eustace market was discontinued in the late eighteenth century and not revived until the 1830s.<sup>71</sup> Dunlavin benefited economically as a market centre from Tynte's construction of the market house, and its expanding market function enabled it to see off competition from its nearest neighbouring county Kildare village as the eighteenth century progressed. Tellingly, by 1735, Dunlavin held four annual fairs while Ballymore Eustace only held two.<sup>72</sup> Tynte's investment and development plan for Dunlavin meant that Ballymore Eustace lost out in the commercial competition between the two villages in the early eighteenth century.

The success of Dunlavin's fairs also had an adverse effect on the fairs held in nearby Rathsalagh. Barely a mile separated the two fair sites, and although not held at the same time, it seems likely that local buyers and sellers gravitated towards the Dunlavin event, held in a more developed and thriving location. By the 1730s the number of fairs held at Dunlavin had increased to four per year while Rathsalagh continued to hold only one fair annually.<sup>73</sup> The increase in the number of fairs reflected the increasing importance of Dunlavin as a commercial centre, and the augmented economic activity generated by the growing settlement encouraged the urbanisation of Tynte's village from the 1730s onwards, with the building of the market house providing a tangible symbol of economic success.

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<sup>71</sup> Samuel Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland*, 2 vols, (London 1837) i, p. 152. The discontinuation of Ballymore Eustace market happened after the main road from Dublin was rerouted away from the village in favour of Kilcullen. Also *Report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the state of fairs and markets in Ireland*, [C1674], H.C. 1852-53, xli, pp 52-8.

<sup>72</sup> John Watson, *The gentleman and citizen's almanack*, (Dublin), 1735, pp 74-90.

<sup>73</sup> Watson, *The gentleman and citizen's almanack* (Dublin), 1735, pp 74-90.

As the eighteenth century progressed, Dunlavin consolidated its position as the leading market town in its area of west Wicklow. In the 1750s Dunlavin was consistently described as 'a good market town'.<sup>74</sup> The opening of the village market became a significant event, and in 1789 the 'market of Dunlavin was opened on 9 December, toll free and custom free, by the generous contribution of Lady Tynte, combined with the humane, public-spirited activity of M. Saunders and Richard Bookey esqrs. A great quantity of corn, provisions, poultry and wares of all kinds were brought from all parts of the country; the whole were sold, and everyone seemed well pleased with the prices'.<sup>75</sup> The importance of Dunlavin in the economy of west Wicklow, signified by the number of fairs held in the village, mirrored the expansion of economic activity in the area, which is well attested by the increased number of fairs across the whole region.<sup>76</sup> This increase in the number of local fairs attests to the economic growth of west Wicklow in the eighteenth century. A new biannual fair, principally to sell textiles, was also established in the new village of Stratford-on-Slaney in 1774.<sup>77</sup> Stratford was a model textile village established by the second Earl of Aldborough between Dunlavin and Baltinglass.<sup>78</sup> The textile industry was soon well established in the upland region above Stratford, and in 1790 there was 'scarcely a cabin, even in the most mountainy part, but the carding and

<sup>74</sup> See, for example, *Universal Advertiser* 9 Jul 1757 and 2 Jan 1759.

<sup>75</sup> *Hibernian Journal*, 18 Dec 1789.

<sup>76</sup> In 1744 Dunlavin held four annual fairs, compared with one at Rathsalagh and two at Ballymore Eustace. Both Donard and Kilcullen also held two fairs that year. The situation was unchanged in 1750. By 1760 one new annual fair at Calverstown in county Kildare, four miles from Dunlavin, had begun. In 1770 the situation had changed a little; another new fair was listed for Usk, a mere mile or so from Dunlavin village, just over the Kildare border. However, there was also a new fair site at Hollywood, with four annual fairs on 1 Feb, 3 May, 1 Aug and 1 Nov. The situation remained much the same in 1780, by which time the inhabitants of the Dunlavin region had a total of sixteen fairs available to them – four in both Dunlavin and Hollywood, two each in Donard, Kilcullen and Ballymore Eustace and one in both Usk and Rathsalagh. (See footnote 80).

<sup>77</sup> Watson, *The gentleman and citizen's almanack* (Dublin), 1776, pp 99, 109.

<sup>78</sup> Chavasse, *The story of Baltinglass*, p. 45. The foundation of Stratford-on-Slaney is addressed in Ronald W. Lightbown *An Architect Earl: Edward Augustus Stratford (1736-1801), 2nd Earl of Aldborough* (Thomastown, 2008).

spinning of wool is the occupation of the female part of the family, and the clothiers of Dublin find it much to their advantage to send the raw material to that part of the country to be prepared for the loom.<sup>79</sup> These fair sites were all within the customer threshold of Dunlavin village. By 1795 Dunlavin had established an extra annual fair, bringing its total to five. Hollywood's four fairs remained in operation, as did the two in Kilcullen, Donard and Ballymore Eustace. Both Rathsallagh's and Calverstown's sole fairs had survived, but the fair at Usk had been discontinued.<sup>80</sup> Thus from the two fairs granted in 1661, Dunlavin prospered as a commercial centre and by 1795 it had become a leading regional market town, staging no less than five annual fairs.

### **3. Dunlavin's rural hinterland, 1710-1785.**

The growth of commercial activity in Dunlavin village mirrored the improving economic conditions in west Wicklow during the mid to late eighteenth century. Another manifestation of this economic growth was the improving infrastructure in the area. Cartographic representations of county Wicklow are particularly useful for constructing a view of the road network within the county. The first view of Wicklow's principal roads is provided by national maps published by Charles Price and Herman Moll.<sup>81</sup> Moll's map is the better of the two, though only the principal routes were shown. Notably, Moll indicates no trans-mountain routes, though cross-mountain tracks were in use since the

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<sup>79</sup> *Hibernian Journal*, 13 Oct 1790.

<sup>80</sup> The information in this section (including footnote 76) has been compiled from Watson, *The gentleman and citizen's almanack* (Dublin), 1744, pp 71-89; *The gentleman and citizen's almanack* (Dublin), 1750, pp 81-95; *The gentleman and citizen's almanack* (Dublin), 1760, pp 92-115, *The gentleman and citizen's almanack* (Dublin), 1770, pp 85-109; *The gentleman and citizen's almanack* (Dublin), 1776, pp 99, 109; *The gentleman and citizen's almanack* (Dublin), 1780, pp 97-115 and *The gentleman and citizen's almanack* (Dublin), 1795, pp 102-18.

<sup>81</sup> Charles Price, *A correct map of Ireland* (London, 1711) and Herman Moll, *New map of Ireland* (London, 1714).

Bronze Age.<sup>82</sup> The main roads may have been paved, but gravel was considered sufficient covering for Wicklow's minor routes. In 1758 the select vestry of Rathdrum approved a cess to 'make, raise and gravel a road' to Ballykine churchyard.<sup>83</sup> This surface was later deemed to be 'good and sufficient'.<sup>84</sup> The existence and quality of roads was crucial to economic development and was especially important in the case of county Wicklow, since good roads were necessary to overcome the difficulties presented by the mountainous environment and to integrate the distinct regional economies, such as that of Dunlavin on the county's western extremity, within the national economy. However, as late as 1792, according to Daniel Beaufort, there was only one road linking the Dunlavin region with Dublin, running northwestwards to Naas and on to the capital, rather than northeastwards through Blessington.<sup>85</sup> Clearly Dunlavin was still not integrated into a county framework of roadway communications. The absence of roads to east Wicklow meant that west Wicklow's inhabitants turned to county Kildare for their everyday business, thus ensuring that the mentality of west Wicklow's people had more in common with their neighbouring county than with eastern parts of their own.

These crucial limitations apart, the road network in west Wicklow expanded and improved as the century advanced. The problems created by the lack of an east-west routeway through the county were captured by Archbishop William King in a letter dated March 1708/09:

When I was last in County Wicklow I considered the situation of the county and did find that a great part of it lay on the other side of the

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<sup>82</sup> Price, *Place names*, vii, p. xi.

<sup>83</sup> Vestry meeting, 13 Nov 1758 (R.C.B. Library, Rathdrum vestry book, i, p. 5)

<sup>84</sup> Vestry meeting, 21 Apr 1760 (R.C.B. Library, Rathdrum vestry book, i, p. 13)

<sup>85</sup> Daniel Beaufort, *Memoir of a map of Ireland* (Dublin, 1792)

mountains and that all those that inhabit about Blessington, Donard, Dunlavin and other places on that side of the mountain have no nearer way to go to Wicklow, their assize town, than by Dublin, which makes the distance above forty miles, and the mountains being impassable are thereby made much more unprofitable than they might be.

King observed 'I know that if a direct way were made from Donard or Hollywood through the mountains the distance would be about sixteen miles and the county would be opened out and inhabited and commerce promoted'. King believed that this situation should be addressed and he knew the man to do it. 'I have found a person that knows the designed passage very well... and will undertake to make a good coach road from Wicklow to Donard or Hollywood for £300'. According to King 'The county of Kildare will have a considerable benefit by it as well as the county of Wicklow... among other advantages, it would be a common security against rogues and thieves'.<sup>86</sup>

This latter point was significant as highland Wicklow was still a lawless place in the early eighteenth century. The Wicklow Mountains historically represented a refuge for fugitives and harboured such figures as Art O'Neill and Red Hugh O'Donnell following their escape from Dublin Castle in 1591. Following the Williamite wars, raparees retreated into the fastnesses of the mountains, and highwaymen such as O'Connor, Lawlor and the notorious Captain Freney, operated there from the early eighteenth century.<sup>87</sup> Their activities are attested by a proclamation from 1715, which stated that 'a barbarous and bloody murder was committed on the body of Mr. Abraham Coats, in his dwelling house at Killinure, in the county of Wicklow, on Wednesday the seventh of

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<sup>86</sup> King to Colonel Allen, Mar 1708/09 (TCD, William King Letterbook, ii, MS 1489 (2), ff 65-6)

<sup>87</sup> Dorothy Leonard, 'The Hollywood highwayman', *Journal of the West Wicklow Historical Society*, iii (Naas, 1989), pp 56-9.

December last, between nine and ten of the clock at night, by shooting the said Abraham Coats with a pistol, whereof he instantly died'.<sup>88</sup> The Kilkenny highwayman, James Freney was particularly notorious. In one incident he held up the stage coach travelling from Blessington to Castledermot when it stopped to pay the toll at Merginstown toll gate, about two miles from Dunlavin. Gold sovereigns, watches, chains and fobs were taken from the men, but the ladies were left alone. Freney galloped off before the toll collector came out of the tollhouse.<sup>89</sup> A good coach road through the mountains would help to stifle such lawlessness. The absence of such a cross-county road in Wicklow highlighted by King was confirmed by Herman Moll's *New map of Ireland* published in 1714, where the north-south direction of the roads is fascinatingly obvious.

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<sup>88</sup> The full text of this proclamation is given in Chris Lawlor, *The massacre on Dunlavin green: a story of the 1798 rebellion* (Naas, 1998), pp 17-8.

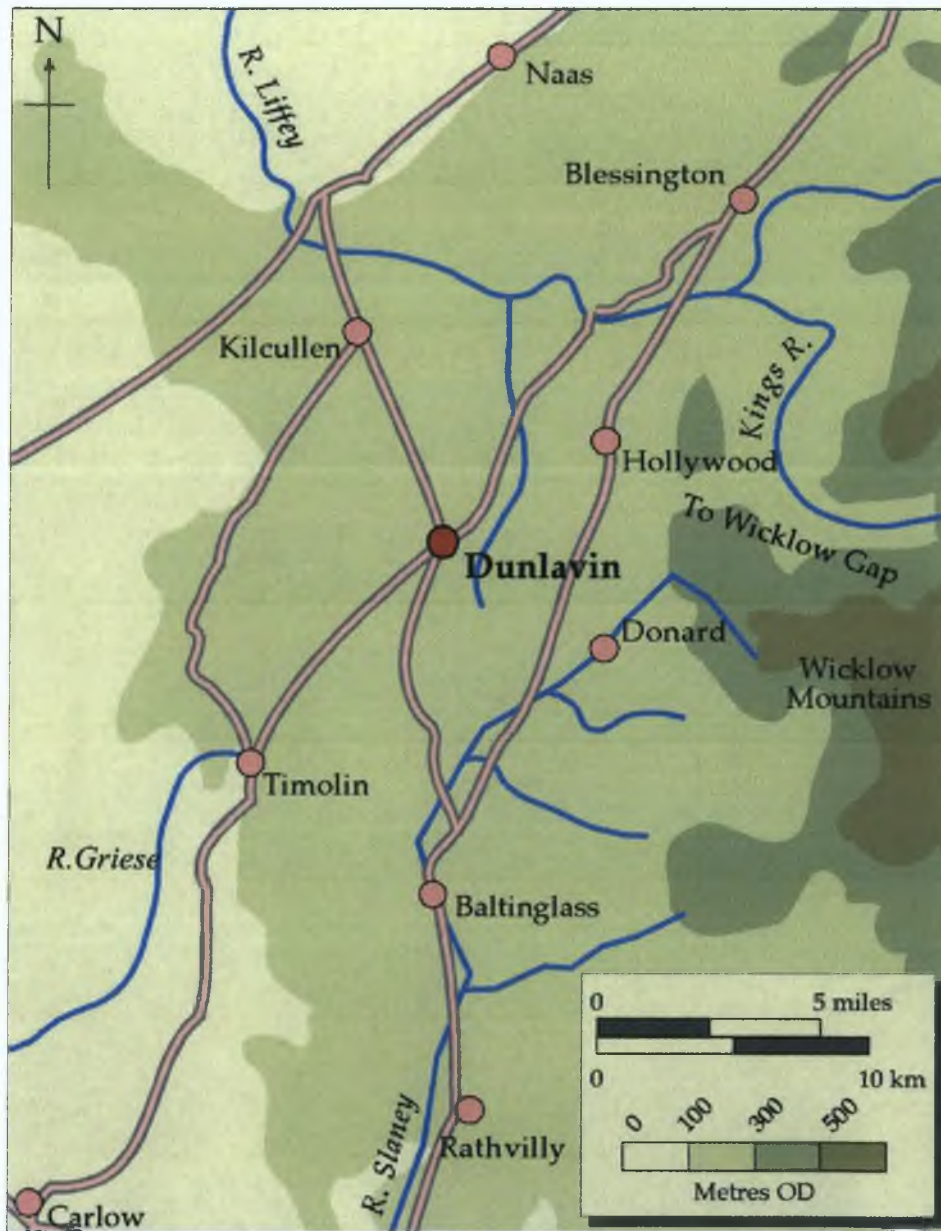
<sup>89</sup> Leonard, 'The Hollywood highwayman', p. 56.

**Map 9 (a). West Wicklow in 1714.**



**Source:** H. Moll's *New Map of Ireland* (1714).

Map 9 (b). Sketch from map 9 (a).



Source: H. Moll, *New Map of Ireland* (1714).

Moll's map shows 'Dulavan' [Dunlavin] as a settlement where the road from Blessington divides,<sup>90</sup> one branch joining the Baltinglass road and the other continuing through

<sup>90</sup> Blessington was founded by Michael Boyle, Primate Archbishop of Armagh. Kathy Trant, *The Blessington estate 1667-1908* (Dublin, 2004), pp 30-1. It was granted a charter and incorporated as a



Timolin and on to Carlow. Dunlavin's growth was hampered because the main road from Blessington to Baltinglass (another principal settlement in west Wicklow, and a place of regional significance since the foundation of a Cistercian abbey there in 1148)<sup>91</sup> bypassed the village. Dunlavin was on the 'great road from Blessington to Timolin'.<sup>92</sup> However, Timolin never developed into a major settlement and travellers from Dublin to Carlow could either go via Kilcullen or via Baltinglass, so Dunlavin did not acquire the status of a main road settlement. Despite this, the centrality of the village to the whole west Wicklow-east Kildare region helped its development. Dunlavin was approximately eleven miles from Naas, Baltinglass and Blessington and even closer, about five miles, to Kilcullen and Ballymore Eustace, while smaller settlements in the region such as Hollywood, Donard, Ballitore and Narraghmore were within four miles or so. As a market town, Dunlavin existed in a world where travel and trade were growing in importance, and the inclusion of distance indicators on Moll's map reflected this. Moll later produced a series of twenty Irish maps, which included part of county Wicklow, in 1728.<sup>93</sup>

Maps also provide a revealing perspective on the economic development of county Wicklow. When Jacob Nevill's, *An actual survey of the County Wicklow*, was produced in 1760, when the situation in the county had improved visibly.<sup>94</sup> This map was

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borough in 1669. PRONI, *Downshire Papers*, MS D.671/D2/2/1. See also Cullen, *The emergence of modern Ireland 1600-1900*, p. 61. It was, with Dunlavin, one of the leading settlements of west Wicklow.

<sup>91</sup> Chavasse, *The story of Baltinglass*, p. 10.

<sup>92</sup> Wilson, *The post-chaise companion*, p. 464. Though published slightly later, Wilson's work was undertaken in tandem with the road maps of George Taylor and Andrew Skinner, which were surveyed in the 1770s and published in 1783.

<sup>93</sup> Patrick Power, 'A survey: some Wicklow maps 1500-1888', in Ken Hannigan and William Nolan (eds) *Wicklow: History and Society*, (Dublin, 1994), p. 731.

<sup>94</sup> Jacob Nevill, *An actual survey of the County Wicklow* (TCD, Gilbert Austin Collection, 56)

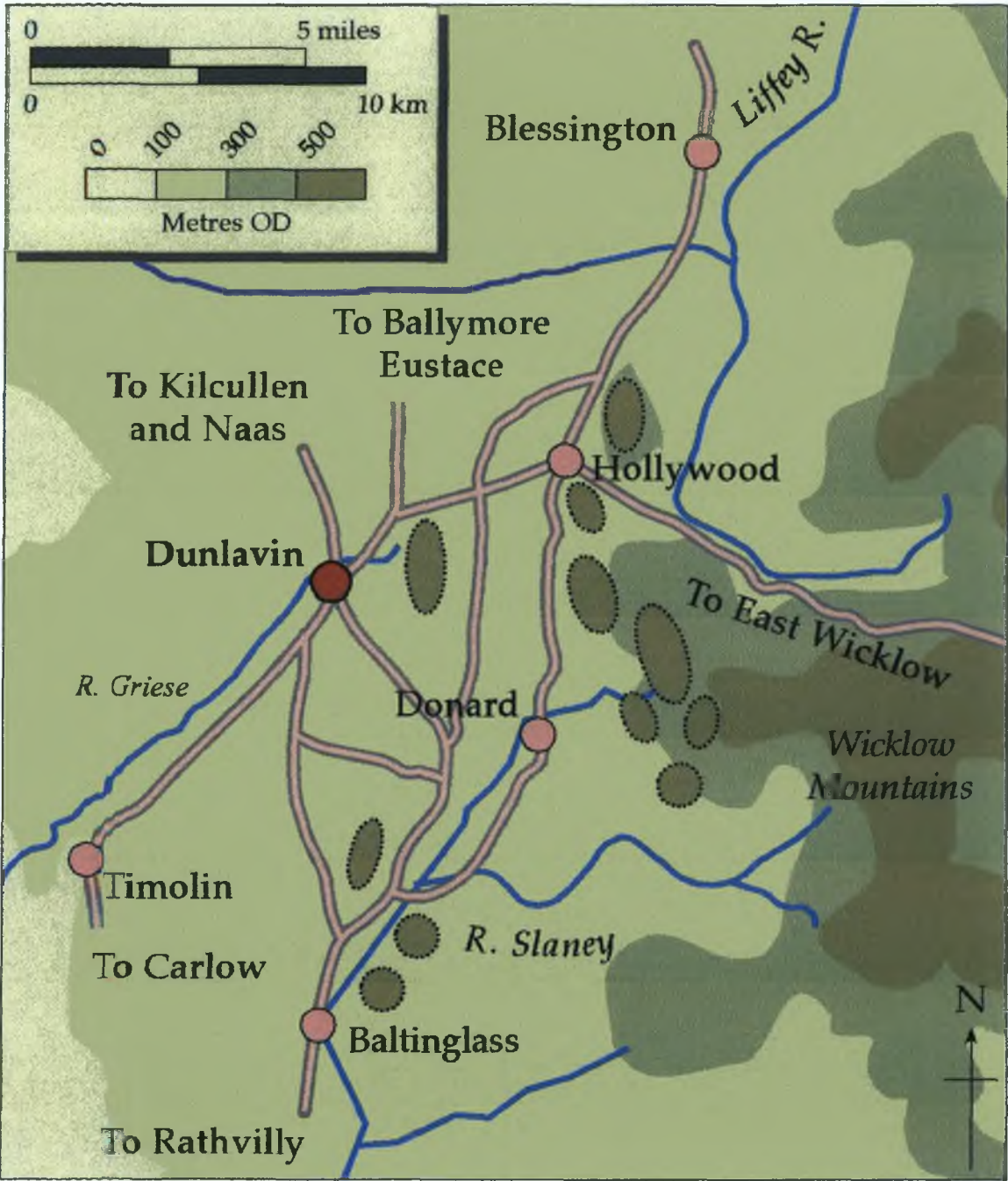
commissioned by county Wicklow's grand jury and was more detailed than previous maps. Nevill's map showed the main roads, the principal rivers, the barony boundaries, the urban settlements, significant buildings including Anglican parish churches, Catholic chapels, mills and great houses. Moreover, Nevill also provided an indication of the means of livelihood and agricultural practices within Wicklow by differentiating between ground under grass, land under corn, woods and groves, bogland and rocky ground. Deer parks, racecourses, pounds, quarries, bleaching greens and market towns were also shown. Hence the map provides a snapshot of Wicklow, and of the Dunlavin region, in 1760.

Map 10 (a). West Wicklow in 1760.



Source: J. Nevill, *Actual survey of the County Wicklow* (1760).

Map 10 (b). Sketch from map 10 (a).



Source: J. Nevill, *Actual survey of the County Wicklow* (1760).

In 1760, the boundary with county Kildare and part of county Dublin followed the road from Tubber [Tober] into Dunlavin village. The barony of Uppercross, centred on Ballymore Eustace, was part of county Dublin, despite being detached from the main body of the county.<sup>95</sup> Thus on Nevill's 1760 map the words 'Three counties meet here' are found adjacent to Dunlavin on its northern and western sides.<sup>96</sup> The T-shaped crossroads is evident within the village, but no effort was made to show the widened market square on the main street.<sup>97</sup> The improved road system around Dunlavin in 1760 is evident, with many extra minor roads. These included the alternative road from Blessington to Baltinglass via Crehelp not Donard, and, crucially, a new road across the mountains.

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<sup>95</sup> Michael Dore, 'Ballymore Eustace: odds and ends of its history', *Journal of the West Wicklow Historical Society*, iii (Naas, 1989), p. 71.

<sup>96</sup> The present border follows the course of the Griesse [Greese] River and was redrawn in 1836. In that year Uppercross was taken out of County Dublin and distributed between counties Wicklow and Kildare under 6 and 7 William IV, c.84, s.51. The name of the river is variously spelled 'Greese', 'Griesse' and 'Greece'. On Nevill's 1760 map it appears as 'Greeces'.

<sup>97</sup> The scale used was insufficient for such small features to be portrayed. Similarly, the T-Shape formed by the buildings is difficult to discern, because the width of the lines representing the village houses includes all of the western end and most of the eastern end of the cross-stroke of the T. The name of the village was capitalised on the map, indicating that it was a market town and the Anglican church also appeared on the map. The racecourse is shown on the southeastern edge of the village, but the detail is insufficient to discern any other features pertinent to the urban space of the village.

Map 11. Dunlavin in 1760.



Source: J. Nevill, *Actual survey of the County Wicklow* (1760).

The varying land uses in the area surrounding Dunlavin can also be identified from the available cartographic record. This provides evidence of the different conditions that pertained east and west of the settlement. Most of the land within two miles or so southwest of the village, on the road to Timolin (marked in Nevill's map as part of county Wicklow though this is no longer the case), was under corn. Lands further west, in county Kildare (not portrayed on Nevill's map) were fertile lowland areas, so the corn

belt (interspersed with grassland) continued into these areas. To the south of Dunlavin, most of the land was under grass. A mile or so east of the village, the hachuring depicts the first ridge of high land, an uncultivated mountainous area stretching from Lemonstown to Slatequarry. Further eastwards from Dunlavin the land increased in altitude, culminating in what the map referred to as 'this vast tract of mountains', running from Sorrel Hill southwards towards the summit of Lugnaquilla, Leinster's highest mountain. There were two great houses with demesnes within two miles or so of Dunlavin. Tober House, a three-storey, five bay, early eighteenth century building, the seat of the Powell family,<sup>98</sup> was to the northeast, while Rathsallagh House, the seat of the Ryves family lay to the southwest, where the fertility of the soil was vividly revealed in 1790 by the growth of about a dozen huge potatoes, the largest of which weighed over twenty-six pounds.<sup>99</sup>

Large country houses such as Rathsallagh and Tober were the most obvious symbol of the now universal paternalistic landlord-tenant relationship that concentrated wealth in the hands of the landlords during the eighteenth century.<sup>100</sup> Landlords were linked to their tenants by economic rather than by social ties, and separated from them by language, ethnicity, religion and culture. Landlord mansions, or 'big houses', were home to the landed elite who paternalistically controlled the country throughout the late

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<sup>98</sup> Mark Bence Jones, *Burke's Guide to Country Houses: Ireland, I* (London, 1978), p. 273.

<sup>99</sup> *Hibernian Journal*, 24 Nov 1790. The potato was displayed in Dunlavin 'to be occasionally inspected by the incredulous'.

<sup>100</sup> Frank Mitchell, *The Irish landscape* (London, 1976), p. 200. By 1703 the vast majority of Ireland's landlords were of English or Scots origin, and had acquired their property during the plantations and subsequent land confiscations. These land transfers constituted both a cultural and economic revolution in land ownership. During the eighteenth century their numbers rose to an estimated 5,000 families by the 1780s and they owned over 95 per cent of all the productive land in the country. L. J. Proudfoot, 'Landlords' in S. J. Connolly (ed), *The Oxford companion to Irish history* (Oxford, 1998), p. 297.

seventeenth century. Rathsallagh was one of the earlier houses to be built in the Dunlavin region. Richard Ryves, who served as Baron of the Irish Exchequer under King William III, retired a rich man. In 1703 he commissioned the construction of a new stable at Rathsallagh. It is likely that the original Rathsallagh house dated from the same period. Ryves's family became influential in county Wicklow. Richard Ryves's eldest son Thomas was high sheriff in 1714, and his son, William, also served as high sheriff in 1734.<sup>101</sup>

The elite became more secure as the eighteenth century advanced and other big houses were constructed throughout west Wicklow and south Kildare. These big houses were the focal points of their surrounding estates, which varied in size from hundreds to thousands of acres.<sup>102</sup> In 1716 Morley Saunders, MP and Second Serjeant-at-law, purchased an estate between Baltinglass and Dunlavin and commissioned Saundersgrove, a large three-storey mansion. Morley Saunders' position as a significant member of the elite was strengthened when he was married, by the Lord Primate of all Ireland, to Martha Stratford of Belan House in county Kildare in 1753.<sup>103</sup> By 1758 Saundersgrove was set on 136 acres of demesne land and was:

good for hunting fowling and fishing. The house is fit for any nobleman... with stabling for above thirty horses... There are fishponds, a pigeon house and a rabbit-borough, all well stocked. The gardens are in good order, and there is a large orchard, well

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<sup>101</sup> [http://www.turtlebunbury.com/history/history\\_houses/hist\\_hse\\_rathsallagh.htm](http://www.turtlebunbury.com/history/history_houses/hist_hse_rathsallagh.htm) (visited on 12/2/2008).

<sup>102</sup> The estate system in west Wicklow is examined more fully in chapter four, as accurate records of the sizes of these estates were compiled in the early to mid-nineteenth century. In the nineteenth century for example, Rathsallagh estate was 1,940 acres; Russborough was surrounded by 550 acres, Saundersgrove had 3,143 acres and Tynte's Dunlavin estate was 2,532 acres. *Return of the names of proprietors and the area and valuation of all properties held in fee or perpetuity or on long leases at chief rents*, H.C. 1876 [412], pp 47-8 passim. For county Kildare landowners, see pp 11-4 passim. However many of the big houses are of eighteenth century origin.

<sup>103</sup> *Universal Advertiser*, 24 Feb 1753.



planted with the choicest kind of apple trees... and there is a great convenience of water to supply the house and demesne.<sup>104</sup>

The house was completely and elegantly furnished, and the farm stock consisted of:

Ewes, wethers and some lambs, a parcel of well-bred horned cattle, two sets of excellent plough cattle, some bay coach horses, draft horses and mares. [Crops included] wheat, barley, oats, beans and vetches.<sup>105</sup>

Saunders was only one of many members of the landed elite in the west Wicklow-Kildare region to construct a fine residence during the eighteenth century. His brother-in-law, George Pendred, who in 1715 succeeded Thomas Ryves as high sheriff of Wicklow, constructed Fortgranite outside Baltinglass c.1730. Joseph Leeson, the first Earl of Milltown, commissioned the magnificent Russborough House, designed by Richard Cassels (assisted by Francis Bindon), near Blessington, on which construction was begun in 1741. Across the county Kildare border at Kilcullen, Castle Martin was built for a Dublin banker named Harrison c.1720.<sup>106</sup> In 1743 Cassels and Bindon also worked on Belan House at Ballitore, home of the Earls of Aldborough. Burtown House between Athy and Moone, home to the Houghton family, dates from the same period. Closer to Dunlavin, in the 1770s the Huguenot La Touche family of bankers employed Whitmore Davis to design a new house at Harristown.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> *Universal Advertiser*, 19 Dec 1758.

<sup>105</sup> *Universal Advertiser*, 26 Dec 1758.

<sup>106</sup> The estates in county Kildare were of comparable size to those in west Wicklow. In the nineteenth century for example, Castle Martin estate was 948 acres; Belan was surrounded by 964 acres, Barretstown Castle at Ballymore Eustace had 2,351 acres and La Touche's Harristown estate was even larger at 11, 282 acres: *Return of owners of land of one acre and upwards in the several counties, counties of cities and counties of towns in Ireland to which is added a summary for each province and for all Ireland*, H.C. and H.L. 1876 [1492], pp 27-34 passim. For county Wicklow landowners, see pp 98-102 passim.

<sup>107</sup> Bence Jones, *Burke's Guide to Country Houses*, pp 35, 50, 72, 126, 149, 255 and 273. See also [http://www.turtlebunbury.com/history/history\\_houses/hist\\_hse\\_rathsallagh.htm](http://www.turtlebunbury.com/history/history_houses/hist_hse_rathsallagh.htm) (visited on 12/2/2008).

These were the families with which the Tyntes of Dunlavin socially interacted. However, there was no Tynte residence in the Dunlavin region, although James Worth Tynte, who had improved the village in many ways, 'intended to have built a handsome seat there had he lived'.<sup>108</sup> Following the death of his first wife Hesther [Bulkeley], Tynte married Elizabeth Kelly of Dublin and with her he had a son named Robert.<sup>109</sup> James Worth Tynte died in 1758 and was interred in Donnybrook.<sup>110</sup> The Dunlavin lands were bequeathed to Robert, a councillor at law, who was in poor health.<sup>111</sup> There are indications that there were problems during his short tenure as landlord of Dunlavin, as Hugh Moore challenged his right to sell 'several full grown ash and sycamore trees on the estate of Dunlavin', claiming that he became entitled to the estate on the death of James Worth Tynte, because Worth Tynte had been indebted to him on his death. Moore preferred a bill regarding the Dunlavin estate in the High Court of Chancery in Ireland against Robert Tynte.<sup>112</sup> Tynte was appointed high sheriff of county Dublin in 1759,<sup>113</sup> and though Moore's claim was rejected, and the Dunlavin estate remained in the possession of the Tynte family, the strain of such legal proceedings may have been a contributory factor in the death of the frail Robert Tynte in 1760. The estate passed thereafter into the hands of Robert's son, James Stratford Tynte, grandson of the first earl of Aldborough.<sup>114</sup> This unstable pattern of succession, particularly the short tenure of Robert Tynte, disrupted development in Dunlavin. James Worth Tynte had altered the village considerably and endowed it with ostentatious village furniture, but Robert did

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<sup>108</sup> Wilson, *The post-chaise companion*, p. 464.

<sup>109</sup> Fitzgerald, 'Dunlavin, Tornant and Tober', p. 221.

<sup>110</sup> *Universal Advertiser*, 15 Apr 1758.

<sup>111</sup> *Universal Advertiser*, 7 Jun 1758 states that Robert Tynte sailed in the Prendergast packet boat for Holyhead, on his way to Bath, for the recovery of his health.

<sup>112</sup> *Pue's Occurrences*, 12 Aug 1758.

<sup>113</sup> *Universal Advertiser*, 23 Jan 1759.

<sup>114</sup> Fitzgerald, 'Dunlavin, Tornant and Tober', p. 222.

not have time to follow the pattern established by his father. During the period 1760 to 1785 the area was in the hands of James Stratford Tynte, but neither the village nor the area improved significantly during his occupancy of the estate.

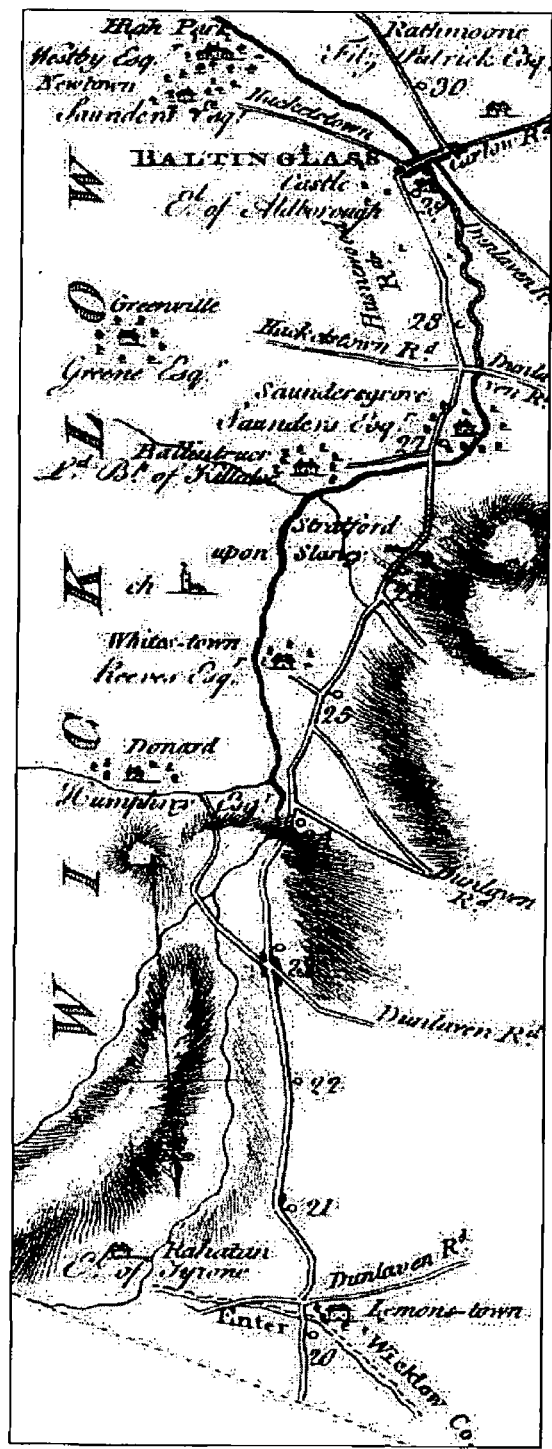
Stratford Tynte was the landlord of Dunlavin when the next significant maps of the region were produced. These were a series of road maps by George Taylor and Andrew Skinner drawn in the late 1770s. However, Dunlavin was not included in any published map. By this time the road crossing the Liffey at Kilcullen and passing through Carlow had become firmly established as the main road to Kilkenny, superseding the alternative road via Dunlavin and Castlecomer. This meant that one of the principal locational factors involved in Bulkeley's original siting of Dunlavin village – its position on a much-used road – was now no longer relevant, effectively isolating the village from any principal commercial route. Even the road to Tullow in county Carlow bypassed the village, passing from Ballymore Eustace to Stratford via the townlands of Lemonstown and Crehelp, both within a mile or so of Dunlavin.<sup>115</sup> Taylor and Skinner mentioned the road through Dunlavin as an alternative way to Tullow in the companion volume to their maps, and a short description of the village was included,<sup>116</sup> but Dunlavin was not shown. By the 1780s, Dunlavin village had become something of a 'beached whale', nestling between two principal routeways to the southeast of Ireland, but effectively cut off from both, and without the presence of an active landlord such as James Worth Tynte to fight its cause, the village languished in its remote location, and the neglect by the absentee James Stratford Tynte served only to exacerbate this unpalatable situation.

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<sup>115</sup> George Taylor and Andrew Skinner, *Maps of the roads of Ireland*, (Reprint, Shannon, 1969), p. 139.

<sup>116</sup> Wilson, *The post-chaise companion*, pp 464-5.

Map 12. Dunlavin bypassed in 1783.



Source: Taylor and Skinner's Tullow Road map (1783).

The omission of Dunlavin from Taylor and Skinner's maps was indicative of the failure of the village to build on and to develop beyond its market function during the late eighteenth century. The village had become a leading market town during the lifetime of James Worth Tynte, but there was a regional lack of industry. The improvements carried out by Worth Tynte in the 1730s and 1740s were principally in the area of village furniture. The market house, market square, inn, playhouse and racecourse did little to encourage industry or agricultural practices in the area. James Worth Tynte's village changes smacked of ostentation rather than of economic development. The Tyntes were absentee landlords throughout and there is little evidence of efforts to improve agriculture on their Dunlavin lands. Though the eighteenth century was a time of agricultural improvement generally, Tynte's Dunlavin lands were little touched by the improving spirit. Open-field organisation was retained in the upland areas near the village even when enclosure had been completed on nearby estates and farms.<sup>117</sup> Neither was there much agricultural improvement carried out during the second half of the eighteenth century. In a survey from 1801, the Dunlavin area was singled out: 'Of this land, at present in a state of unimproved wastes and capable of all being equally improved with that which I have mentioned, there is a vast extent on the tract of country around Dunlavin'. Landlord neglect left its impact on the Dunlavin region. The quality of the land was evidently not the reason for its infertility as the surveyor continued 'On part of this tract of moory land consisting of thirty acres, taken in from the waste in 1799 and covered with limestone gravel, I saw a very fine crop of potatoes'.<sup>118</sup> The lack of agricultural improvement in the region hampered the local economy. While some tenant

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<sup>117</sup> F. H. A. Aalen, 'The origin of enclosures in eastern Ireland' in N. Stephens and R. E. Glasscock (eds), *Irish geographical studies in honour of E. Estyn Evans* (Belfast 1970), p. 215.

<sup>118</sup> Fraser, *General view... of the County Wicklow*, p. 81.

farmers may have carried out agricultural improvements, this survey made it clear that such tenant action was not the norm: 'In this county, and in every part of this island where I have had the opportunity of investigating, it is not the small farmer, even those under leases for ever, who makes any improvement'.<sup>119</sup> Usually it was the landlord, or a good agent, who was behind such improving works, surveying and laying out new field alignments, digging ditches and throwing up banks, planting hawthorns, sometimes breaking up old clachans and generally improving tenants' lands as well as their own.<sup>120</sup> Perhaps the landholding elite and their more powerful tenants cooperated occasionally in agricultural improvements, but this was unlikely when, like the Tyntes, the landlords were absentees. The absence of records from the Tynte family landholdings makes it impossible to be specific about agricultural practices on the estate, but evidence such as the 1801 survey points to a general lack of improvement.

One possible exception to this trend involved a short-lived linen venture in Dunlavin. Linen was one of the most significant crops in eighteenth-century Ireland and its novelty made it fashionable. It was Ireland's most important manufacturing industry, with exports increasing from two million yards in 1713 to over forty-seven million yards in 1796, when it accounted for over 56 per cent of the value of all Irish exports. Linen was well suited to Ireland as it was labour rather than capital intensive.<sup>121</sup> In 1711 the government established a Linen Board to promote the growth of flax and to supervise the industry.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Fraser, *General view... of the County Wicklow*, p. 215.

<sup>120</sup> Mitchell, *The Irish landscape*, p. 202. This view of the landlord as the prime mover behind rural improvement schemes is confirmed in T. Jones Hughes, 'Historical geography of Ireland from circa 1700' in G. L. H. Davies (ed.), *Irish geography: the Geographical Society of Ireland golden jubilee 1934-1984* (Dublin, 1984), pp 155-6.

<sup>121</sup> Andrew Bielenberg, 'Linen' in Connolly (ed), *The Oxford companion to Irish history*, pp 317-8.

<sup>122</sup> Proudfoot, 'Land ownership and improvement', p. 226.

Later, in 1726, a Linen Hall was erected in Dublin to facilitate the sale of linen.<sup>123</sup> Linen became popular during the early eighteenth century; encouraging the industry was perceived as a fashionable pastime among the landed elite, and James Worth Tynte was not to be excluded from this fashion. In 1732, once Tynte had sorted his legal difficulties concerning his acquisition of Sir Richard Bulkeley's estate, he became a trustee of the Linen Board for Connaught.<sup>124</sup>

James Worth Tynte also encouraged the production of linen in the Dunlavin area in the 1740s, when Dunlavin was described as 'a pretty good market town and greatly improving by a colony of linnen manufacturers settling in it'.<sup>125</sup> However, there is no further record of these linen manufacturers, so the venture evidently failed within a short time. The early 1740s was a period of food shortage and economic crisis in rural Ireland. Such crises were not infrequent; the late 1720s had also seen a harvest crisis manifest itself in the form of rural distress.<sup>126</sup> However, the distress of the 1740s was experienced on a continental scale throughout Western Europe.<sup>127</sup> Harsh winters, grain crop failures

<sup>123</sup> <http://www.chaptersofdublin.com/books/OldDub/chapter2.htm> (visited on 5 Jul 2010)

<sup>124</sup> Tynte retained this position until his death in 1758. Johnston-Liik, *History of the Irish Parliament*, v, p. 446. Flax was grown across the north midlands and into Connaught. Conrad Gill, *The rise of the Irish linen industry* (Oxford, 1925), p. 25. Large quantities of linen thread and yarn were sold at markets such as Ballina in County Mayo. James McParlan, *Statistical survey of the County of Mayo* (Dublin, 1802), p. 27. The work of Tynte and the Connaught linen board ensured that, like the fattening of cattle, the linen industry also spread into the western counties of Ireland north of County Galway. J. H. Johnson, 'The two Irelands at the beginning of the nineteenth century' in N. Stephens and R. E. Glasscock (eds), *Irish geographical studies in honour of E. Estyn Evans* (Belfast, 1970), p. 215.

<sup>125</sup> Armagh Public Library, *Topographical and statistical returns from various respondents sent to Walter Harris and Physico Historical Society* (1745), MS KI II 14. This survey is reproduced in Brian Gurrin, 'Three eighteenth century surveys of County Wicklow', *Analecta Hibernica*, 39 (Dublin, 2006), pp 120-4. The reference to Dunlavin is on p. 122. A footnote in the original survey stated that '[Dunlavin] is on the estate of Mr Tinthworth who is building a handsome market house of hewn stone in it', so the information for this survey was probably gathered in the late 1730s and/or early 1740s.

<sup>126</sup> James Kelly, 'Harvests and hardship: famine and scarcity in Ireland in the late 1720s', *Studia Hibernica*, xxvi, (1992), pp 65-105.

<sup>127</sup> John Post, *Food shortage, climatic variability and epidemic disease in preindustrial Europe: the mortality peak in the early 1740s*, (New York, 1985), pp 86-110, [pp 96-8 refer to Ireland].

and potato crop failures punctuated the 1740s,<sup>128</sup> so the fledgling linen colony in Dunlavin was established at a time of scarcity,<sup>129</sup> and it evidently failed in these economic circumstances. Significantly, no bleaching yard was shown in Dunlavin in Nevill's 1760 map, but Baltinglass had such a yard.<sup>130</sup> Thus, economic hardship and perhaps competition nearby from the established textile town of Baltinglass combined to scupper the infant linen colony in Dunlavin.<sup>131</sup> Later, competition also emanated from the new model village of Stratford-on-Slaney, which was founded specifically as a textile village.<sup>132</sup> The new settlement thrived and bade 'fair to become one of the most flourishing in that part of the county of Wicklow, as several well built streets were inhabited by opulent adventurers who carried on the plain and stamped linen, diaper and cotton manufacture, with very encouraging success'.<sup>133</sup> Indeed, experienced textile producers, the Orr brothers, John and Henry from Hillsborough, county Down, were attracted to Stratford by Lord Aldborough. They brought a nucleus of Scottish workers from Paisley into the village.<sup>134</sup> The Orrs dissolved their company of Orr, Smith and Company in 1793, and the town of Stratford, all the machinery of the 'most complete

<sup>128</sup> For an excellent treatment of the phenomenon of cold conditions (lasting some twenty-one months continuously), and its associated problems in the early 1740s, see David Dickson, *Arctic Ireland: the extraordinary story of the great frost and forgotten famine of 1740-41* (Belfast, 1997).

<sup>129</sup> D. Dickson, C. O Grada and S. Daultrey, 'Hearth Tax, household size and Irish population change', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, lxxxii, c, 6, (1982), pp 167-8. Also L. M. Cullen, *An economic history of Ireland since 1660*, (Second ed, London, 1987), pp 68-9. Also Michael Drake, 'The Irish demographic crisis of 1740-41', *Historical Studies*, vi, (Dublin 1968), pp 106-7.

<sup>130</sup> Jacob Nevill, *An actual survey of the County Wicklow* (TCD, Gilbert Austin Collection, 56)

<sup>131</sup> Though no further mention occurs of a textile industry in Dunlavin, the Baltinglass textile industry continued to flourish throughout the eighteenth century. On 18 Nov 1796 Martin O'Brien and Adam Mulholland leased a bleach house and bleach green from Annesley Derinzy. [Registry of deeds, 657/437/453021]. Martin O'Brien was the father of General John Thomond O'Brien, who would become a prominent freedom fighter in South America. See Chris Lawlor: 'John O'Brien: the early years' in Chris Lawlor and Donal McDonnell (eds), *General O'Brien: West Wicklow to South America*, (Naas, 2006), pp 7-15.

<sup>132</sup> Chavassee, *The story of Baltinglass*, p. 45. The best account of Stratford's textile industry remains A.K. Longfield, 'Linen and cotton printing at Stratford-on-Slaney, County Wicklow', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 75 (Dublin, 1945), pp 24-31.

<sup>133</sup> *McDonnell's Dublin Weekly Journal*, 3 Dec 1791.

<sup>134</sup> Chavassee, *The story of Baltinglass*, p. 47.



printing concerns in the kingdom' and 140 acres of land were advertised for sale in March of that year.<sup>135</sup> By then, however, the introduction of the textile industry to Aldborough's model village had the unforeseen and significant side-effect of introducing a sizeable number of Presbyterians into west Wicklow, where throughout most of the eighteenth century there had been only Anglicans and Roman Catholics in the populace.

#### 4. Religious, social and demographic developments 1710-1785.

The prebend of Dunlavin Church of Ireland parish was presented to Jonathan Swift in 1700.<sup>136</sup> As honorary canon of Dunlavin, Swift was entitled to the tithes of the parish.<sup>137</sup> The amount was meagre, as his account book for 1708 set the tithes for Dunlavin at £14. 8s. 0d.<sup>138</sup> This sum suggests that the Protestant population of Dunlavin was small, but it is also indicative of a consolidation of the numbers within the Anglican parish. However, Dunlavin was a mere sinecure, which Swift probably never visited and he 'had no obligation to the parish'.<sup>139</sup> Reverend J. Espine succeeded Swift in Dunlavin in 1713, at a time when the failure of Catholics to convert to the established Church was the subject of some scrutiny.<sup>140</sup> One pamphlet published in 1712 suggested that one of the reasons why the reformation failed in Ireland was 'want of sufficient number of [Church of Ireland] clergy in most parts of this kingdom'. Swift's absence from Dunlavin parish at this time may have been a case in point. The pamphlet also proposed that laws should be passed

<sup>135</sup> *Hibernian Journal*, 20 Mar 1793.

<sup>136</sup> Louis A. Landa, *Swift and the Church of Ireland* (Oxford, 1954), p. 30.

<sup>137</sup> Chris Lawlor, 'Dean Swift of St Patrick's – and Dunlavin', *Dunlavin Festival of Arts Brochure*, xviii (Naas, 2000), p. 8.

<sup>138</sup> Landa, *Swift and the Church of Ireland*, p. 46.

<sup>139</sup> Landa, *Swift and the Church of Ireland*, p. 34.

<sup>140</sup> Samuel Russell McGee, *Dunlavin, Co. Wicklow: A Retrospect*, (Dublin, 1935) p. 17. A full list of rectors and prebendaries of Dunlavin from 1660 to 1910 appears in appendix three, with a full list of known Roman Catholic clergy in the parish during the same period.

and 'measures taken against those of that persuasion [Catholics]'.<sup>141</sup>

The Penal laws were enacted during the early eighteenth century. Just how strictly these were enforced has been the subject of much debate,<sup>142</sup> but their existence served to give a sense of security and power to the Church of Ireland minority that ruled the country, and there was certainly some level of enforcement in the early decades of the eighteenth century. The infamous priest hunter Edward Tyrell, who captured several priests in Ulster in 1712,<sup>143</sup> was also active in county Wicklow during that year.<sup>144</sup> Further evidence of anti-Catholic repression occurred on 3 June 1714, when Wicklow's high sheriff, Thomas Ryves of Rathsalagh,<sup>145</sup> attacked the annual Saint Kevin's day pilgrimage at Glendalough and 'pulled down their tents, threw down their superstitious crosses, filled up and destroyed their wells and apprehended one Toole, a Popish schoolmaster'.<sup>146</sup> Ryves was also responsible for the arrest, in October of that year, of an elderly Ballymore-Eustace-based Catholic priest, Owen McFee, who was incarcerated in Wicklow Gaol while awaiting transportation.<sup>147</sup> Active, if sporadic, persecution of the

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<sup>141</sup> Anonymous, *A representation of the present state of religion, with regard to infidelity, heresy, impiety and Popery, drawn up and agreed to by both Houses of Convocation in Ireland, pursuant to Her Majesty's command in Her Royal Licence* (London, 1712), pp 19-20.

<sup>142</sup> See, for example, Patrick J. Corish, *The Catholic community in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*, (Dublin, 1981), pp 73-81 passim; Thomas Bartlett, *The fall and rise of the Irish nation: the Catholic question 1688-1829*, (Dublin 1992), W. N. Osborough, 'Catholics, land and the Popery Acts of Anne' in T. P. Power and Kevin Whelan (eds), *Endurance and emergence*, (Blackrock, 1990), pp 21-56.

<sup>143</sup> Oliver P. Rafferty, *Catholicism in Ulster 1603-1983, an interpretative history* (London, 1994), p. 69.

<sup>144</sup> William P. Bourke, *Irish priests in penal times 1660-1760* (Waterford, 1914), p. 299. Tyrell was executed the following year for having several wives: T. W. Moody, J. G. Simms and C. J. Woods, 'Eighteenth-century Ireland 1691-1800' in T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin and F. J. Byrne (eds), *A new history of Ireland: A chronology of Irish history to 1976* (Oxford, 1982), viii, 260.

<sup>145</sup> [http://www.turtlebunbury.com/history/history\\_houses/hist\\_hse\\_rathsallagh.htm](http://www.turtlebunbury.com/history/history_houses/hist_hse_rathsallagh.htm) (visited on 13/1/08).

<sup>146</sup> Thomas Ryves to the Clerk of the Privy Council 30 Oct 1714, cited in County Wicklow Heritage Project, *The last county: the emergence of Wicklow as a county 1606-1845* (Wicklow 1993, reprinted 2006), pp 23-4.

<sup>147</sup> Bourke, *Irish priests in penal times*, p. 309.

Catholic clergy continued until about 1730,<sup>148</sup> but the absence of further prosecutions in county Wicklow suggest that the following decades witnessed the demise, if not of the Penal Laws, at least of their strict enforcement.

The absence of the full implementation of the penal laws did not mean that either the country or the Dunlavin region was totally peaceful though. Derek Lundy has observed:

Of course the native Catholic Irish were violent. They had always had that reputation in England. How could they not, these unshakable papists, with their intractable unwillingness to be 'civilised', their risings and rebellions?<sup>149</sup>

Lundy also points out that in 1753 the Irish were described as 'violent in all their passions, inconsistent, cruel, bloody, thievish, perfidious, seditious [and] revengeful', while in 1766 Ireland was 'noted among all nations in Europe for its many riots violences and murders'. Crime rates in Ireland were higher than in England. Individual murders were one thing, but the same activities carried out in an organised manner were something else. That smacked of rebellion and a degree of disorder that might not be containable.<sup>150</sup> One contemporary observer noted:

We have seen with sorrow many instances of cruelty in quelling popular disturbances. The idea of shedding the blood of our fellow creatures... cannot be admissible but upon the pressing and momentous necessity, when either the peace of the kingdom or the existence of society is menaced with destruction... but the vengeance due to this enormous crime should not be exercised upon every trifling appearance of instinctive resistance... a disorderly assemblage of half-starved unarmed wretches... who assemble either to communicate their grievances and hardships... are by no means

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<sup>148</sup> Corish, *The Catholic community*, p. 76.

<sup>149</sup> Derek Lundy, *Men that God made mad: A journey through truth, myth and terror in Northern Ireland* (London, 2006), p. 147.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*, pp 147-9. In the 1730s the murder rate in County Armagh, for example, was almost four times that of any English county. The contemporary descriptions provided by Lundy are not referenced.

objects of dire vengeance, but rather of pity and heart-rending commiseration... if the magistrates conscientiously discharged their duty, little tumult or riot would disturb the peace of the country, and the people would never, from despair of redress be brought to the perpetration of deeds of violence or outrage.<sup>151</sup>

It is difficult, in the absence of detailed police and outrage reports, such as exist for the nineteenth century, to determine whether outrage had its roots in merely localised matters or in more organised resistance to the authorities. It is also difficult to ascertain if such organised resistance had a political or sectarian aspect to it, but one tantalising reference to Jacobitism in Dunlavin survives. On 25 March 1734 the inhabitants of Talbotstown barony presented a memorial complaining that the collection of the Talbotstown excise office was always held at Dunlavin, but 'two years ago it was moved to Castledermot in county Kildare to the great inconvenience of the memorialists, many of whom were seventeen [Irish] miles from Castledermot'.<sup>152</sup> In his reply to this memorial the collector, Richard Evelyn, explained that he 'removed the office from Dunlavin to Castledermot because the woman of the house's son where the office was held drank the pretender's health and there was not another convenient house there'. Evelyn stated that if the board directed he would find another location in Dunlavin; the board later directed him to 'find a proper house in Dunlavin on the best location for the office'.<sup>153</sup> The reference to drinking the pretender's health suggests latent Jacobite activity, or at least sympathies in the village, which may have been perceived as a threat by the local Protestant population.

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<sup>151</sup> James Mullalla, *A view of Irish affairs since the revolution of 1688 to the close of the parliamentary session of 1795, with introductory remarks and a preliminary sketch of the revolution*, ii (Dublin 1795), pp 262-4.

<sup>152</sup> Memorial of the inhabitants of Talbotstown to Richard Evelyn, the collector to hold the excise office at Dunlavin as formerly, 25 Mar 1734 (National Archives, Cust 1, 26, f. 1)

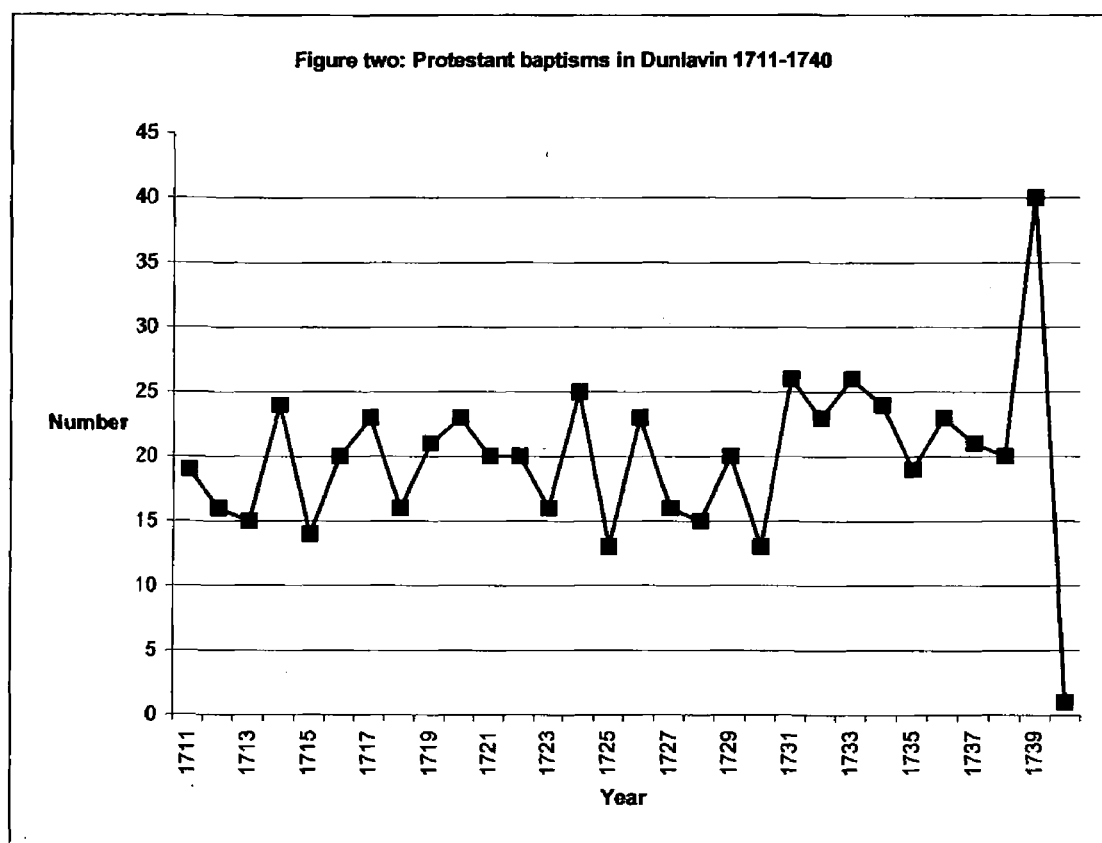
<sup>153</sup> Richard Evelyn to memorialists, 3 Apr 1734 (National Archives, Cust 1, 26, f. 11). In addition to providing evidence of Jacobitism in Dunlavin, this exchange attests to the centrality of the settlement to the inhabitants of Talbotstown barony.

Later in the century, a violent incident occurred at Baltinglass, when an apothecary 'assembled some people to take possession of a place called Balliboy and several persons were desperately wounded in the attack and one was killed on the spot'.<sup>154</sup> This may have been part of a localised dispute, as there is no evidence of a sectarian motive for the incident.

Dunlavin's Protestant population stabilised in the early decades of the eighteenth century, as evidenced by the pattern of baptisms in Dunlavin Church of Ireland parish. Steady growth saw the average number of baptisms per annum rise from 19.1 during the decade from 1711 to 1720 to 22.3 per annum in the decade from 1731 to 1740. Forty baptisms were recorded in 1739. This was the highest number for any year in the eighteenth century, but the accuracy of the register is called into question because the lowest number for any year that century – only one baptism – was recorded the following year. Even allowing for such anomalies, the picture of a stable Protestant population with an average of approximately twenty baptisms per annum throughout the 1710s, 1720s and 1730s is easily discernable.

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<sup>154</sup> *Dublin Morning Post*, 25 Nov 1784.



**Source: Dunlavin Church of Ireland parish register.**

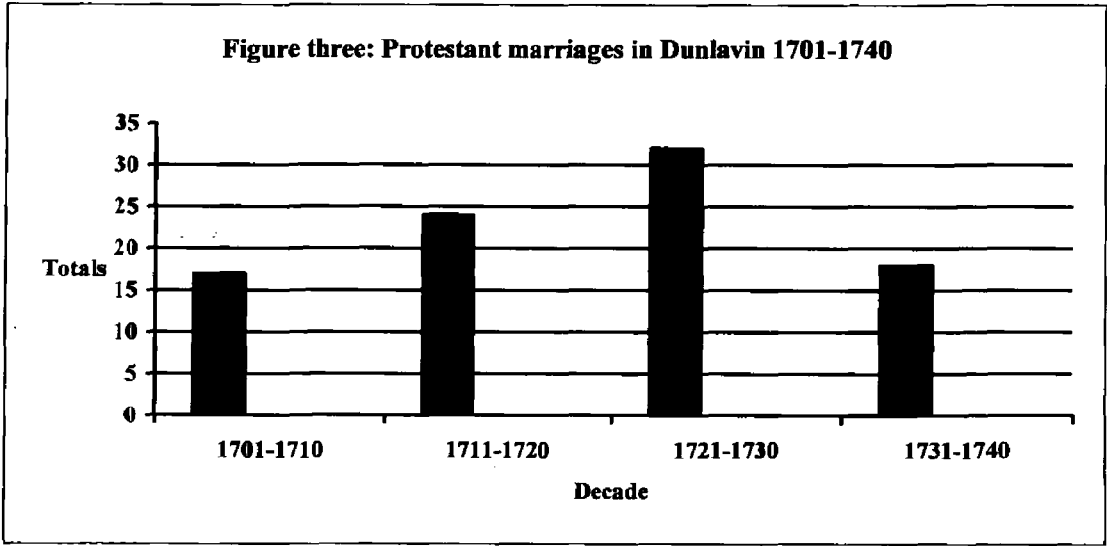
The 1730s also saw an attempt to record the relative strengths of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in Ireland.<sup>155</sup> In 1731 the archbishop of Armagh, Hugh Boulter, chaired an inquiry into the state of popery in Ireland.<sup>156</sup> This resulted in the first real attempt to hold a census in Ireland – the Religious Census of 1732 – taken by the hearth tax enumerators. However, the census enumerated heads of households rather than actual population figures. Only the county Wicklow barony figures have survived. These showed that there were 660 Protestant households and 1,322 Papist households out of a total figure of

<sup>155</sup> Brian Gurrin, 'Three eighteenth century surveys of County Wicklow' in *Analecta Hibernica*, 39, (Dublin, 2006), p. 83.

<sup>156</sup> P. F. Moran, 'The bishops of Ossory from the Anglo-Norman invasion' in *Transactions of the Ossory Archaeological Society*, ii, (1883), p. 490.

1,982.<sup>157</sup> Protestants comprised almost exactly one third of the total number of households. It is tempting to take the barony figure as representative of the situation at village level in Dunlavin, but this has inherent difficulties. The best conclusion is that these figures were representative of northwest Wicklow as a whole and it is probable that the religious composition of Dunlavin was not dissimilar.

If we take marriage rates as indicative of household formation during the early decades of the eighteenth century, Dunlavin parish register indicates that Protestant household formation in the region, which accelerated in the first three decades of the eighteenth century, decreased and stabilised by the 1730s.



**Source: Dunlavin Church of Ireland parish register.**

Dunlavin does not feature in the 1732 census. There is no record of a chapel, mass house or priest in the village. Whether Fathers Patrick Haggan and Patrick Kernan, who had

<sup>157</sup> An abstract of the number of Protestant and Popish families as return'd to the hearth money office, anno 1732, pursuant to the order of the commissioners of the revenue, (Lambeth Library, MS 1742, f 46: microfilm PRONI 310). Also Brian Gurrin, 'Population, economy, religion and society in Wicklow 1660-1800' (PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2006), p. 113.

been in Dunlavin in 1704, were replaced is difficult to ascertain. There was certainly both a priest and a mass house in the village in the final decade of the eighteenth century, if not in the 1730s.<sup>158</sup> Of the adjoining parishes, only a newly-appointed priest in Hollywood and a chapel in Kilcullen were recorded.<sup>159</sup> Moreover, the accuracy of the 1732 data has been questioned. It has been suggested that the figures should be adjusted to reflect an increase of between 14 and 34 per cent.<sup>160</sup> It has also been suggested that some Protestant households contained Catholic members at this time.<sup>161</sup> This is just one reason why the 1732 figures probably exaggerate the strength of Protestantism both in Wicklow and nationally. Catholics were also more likely to be exempt from hearth tax, and many Catholics resided in isolated areas (of which there were many in Talbotstown barony). In addition, Catholics were more likely to have avoided enumeration, and some Protestants only nominally professed that religion for social and economic reasons, especially if they had intermarried with Catholics.<sup>162</sup> Across the Kildare border in the village of Kill, some fifteen miles from Dunlavin, three priests were reported to be going 'about the country marrying Protestants to Papists'.<sup>163</sup> Allowing for all of these factors, the true ratio of Protestants in Talbotstown (and many other places) was probably nearer to one in four or one in five rather than one in three in 1732.

Indicatively, the decades following the 1730s saw a decline in the number of Anglican

<sup>158</sup> Chris Lawlor, *The massacre on Dunlavin green: a story of the 1798 rebellion* (Naas, 1998), p. 44. Also Chris Lawlor, *In search of Michael Dwyer* (Naas, 2003), p. 36.

<sup>159</sup> The full returns for Dublin diocese were published in 'Report on the state of Popery in Ireland 1731', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 4, (1915), pp 131-177.

<sup>160</sup> D. Dickson, C. O Grada and S. Daultrey, 'Hearth Tax, household size and Irish population change', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, lxxxii, c, 6, (1982), pp 147-150.

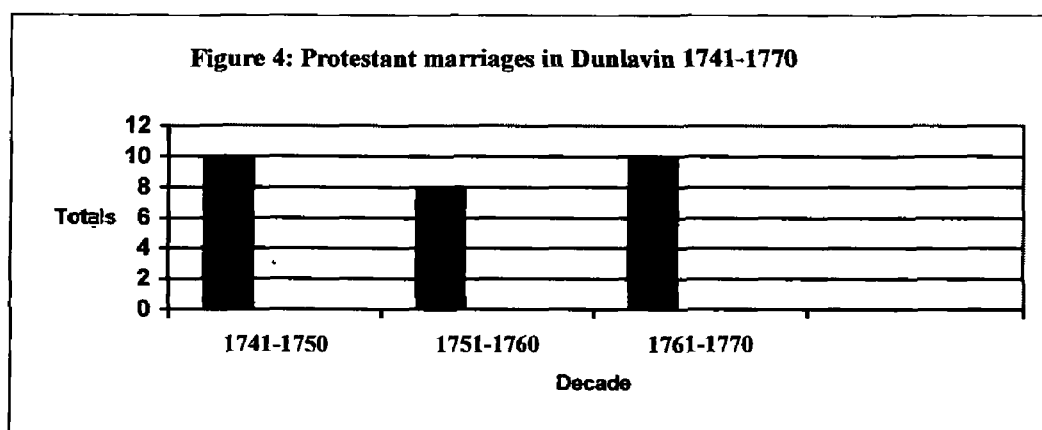
<sup>161</sup> Gurrin, 'Population, economy, religion and society', p. 113.

<sup>162</sup> Gurrin, 'Three eighteenth century surveys', pp 86-9.

<sup>163</sup> 'Report on the state of Popery in Ireland 1731', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 4, (1915), p. 151.



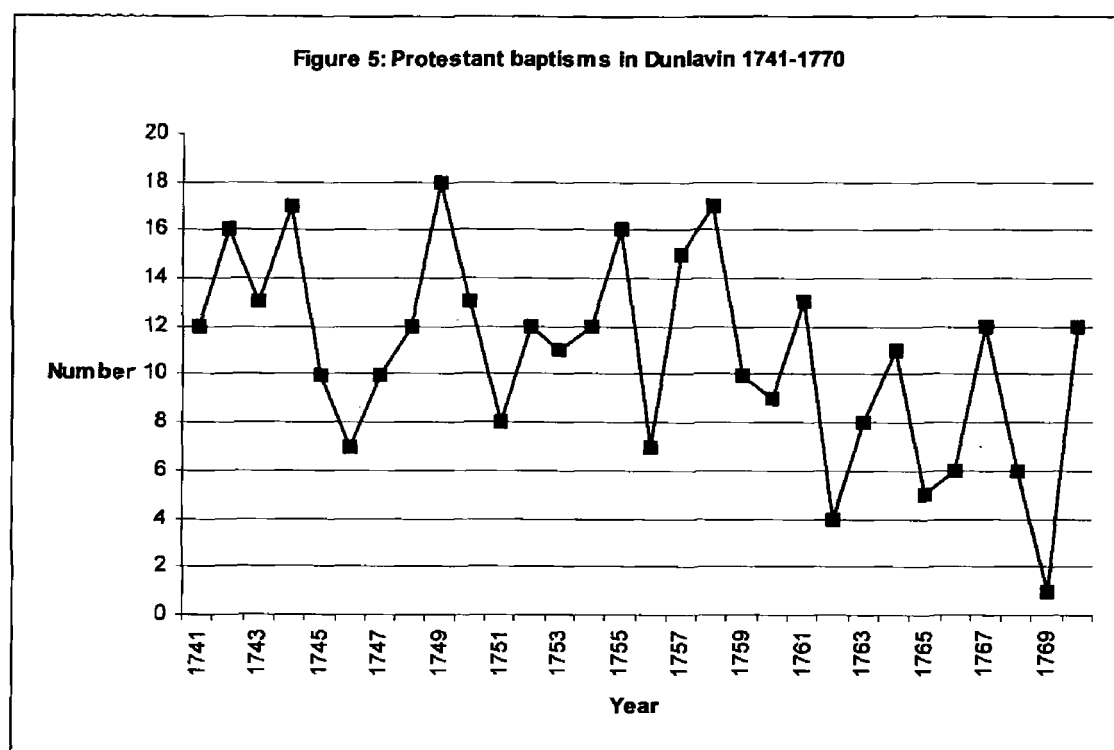
baptisms in Dunlavin. The 1740s witnessed a widespread economic crisis. There were also periods of distress in the late 1750s and mid-1760s. In county Wicklow the decades from the 1740s to the 1760s saw a drop in crude Protestant baptism rates.<sup>164</sup> Brian Gurrin has adjusted the figures for six Wicklow parishes – five in the east of the county and Dunlavin in the west – where records are reasonably complete. Dunlavin's adjusted annual baptism totals with deficient years excluded, with interpolation applied to reduce monthly deficiencies and with annual interpolation estimates for deficient years have been graphed.<sup>165</sup> The unadjusted figures presented in figure 5 also clearly show a fall in the rate of Protestant baptisms in Dunlavin during the 1740s, 1750s and 1760s. Moreover, figure 4 provides evidence that the number of Protestant marriages during these decades decreased significantly from those in the earlier part of the century plotted in figure 3 above, suggesting that the economic difficulties experienced from the 1740s onwards had a significant impact on Dunlavin's Protestant community.



**Source: Dunlavin Church of Ireland parish register.**

<sup>164</sup> Gurrin, 'Population, economy, religion and society', pp 200, 196,

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, p. 149.



**Source: Dunlavin Church of Ireland parish register.**

During the 1760s another religious census was taken. In 1766 the clergymen of the Anglican Church; rather than taxation enumerators, recorded this. Heads of households were again targeted, so overall population figures were not recorded. Returns for the village of Dunlavin do not survive and the barony of Talbotstown only includes summaries for a handful of dispersed parishes (excluding Dunlavin). Given the very incomplete nature of the Talbotstown data, it is almost impossible to reach conclusions in respect of the population of Dunlavin and its environs, or its religious composition in 1766. Figures from nearby Baltinglass and Ballinure, approximately ten and four miles south of Dunlavin respectively, have survived. There were 99 Protestant and 230 Catholic heads of households there in 1766. Despite this, mass had not been celebrated in

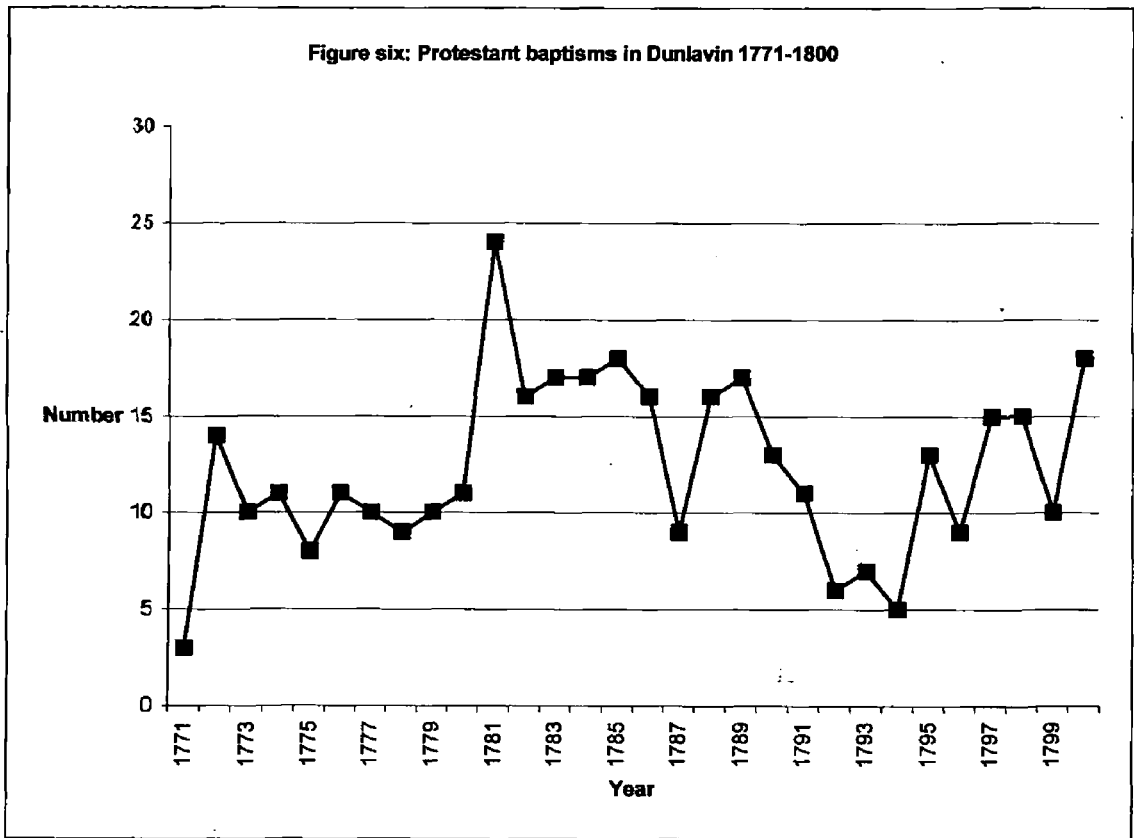
Ballinure within living memory, suggesting a disorganised Church.<sup>166</sup> Ten miles or so to the northeast of Dunlavin, Blessington returned a total of 32 Protestant heads of households against 32 Catholics. This 50-50 split is most uncharacteristic of the 1766 data elsewhere in Talbotstown, and the surviving returns for the rest of county Wicklow. The Blessington figure probably refers to the urban area of the town, while the Boystown figure represents the town's rural hinterland. This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that the words 'and Boystown' are scored out after the word 'Blessington' in the census. Boystown was then entered as a separate entity, with 62 Protestant and 250 Catholic heads of households recorded there. It is tempting, particularly given the similarities in the ecclesiastical backgrounds of the founding families and the dates of foundation of Blessington and Dunlavin, to use the Blessington figures as a model for nearby Dunlavin. However, any such attempt must be based more on conjecture than on evidence. The only conclusion that we can be certain about is that there was a mixed population of Anglicans and Roman Catholics in the Dunlavin region and its west Wicklow hinterland at this time, and that the latter outnumbered the former, especially in the rural areas.<sup>167</sup> There was, as yet, no Presbyterian influx into the area. That would happen when Scottish workers were attracted to work for the Orrs in the textile village of Stratford-on-Slaney.

The final decades of the eighteenth century saw the number of Protestant baptisms in Dunlavin recover slightly during the 1770s and 1780s before falling off again in the 1790s. Certainly the number of baptisms in the parish never reached the pre-1740 levels,

<sup>166</sup> M. Comerford, *Collections relating to the dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin*, i, (Dublin, 1883), p. 274.

<sup>167</sup> Summary of Dublin diocese, 1766 census (NAI, MS M 2476/1). Also, the Blessington, Boystown, Baltinglass and Ballinure figures are given in Gurrin, 'Three eighteenth century surveys' p. 99.

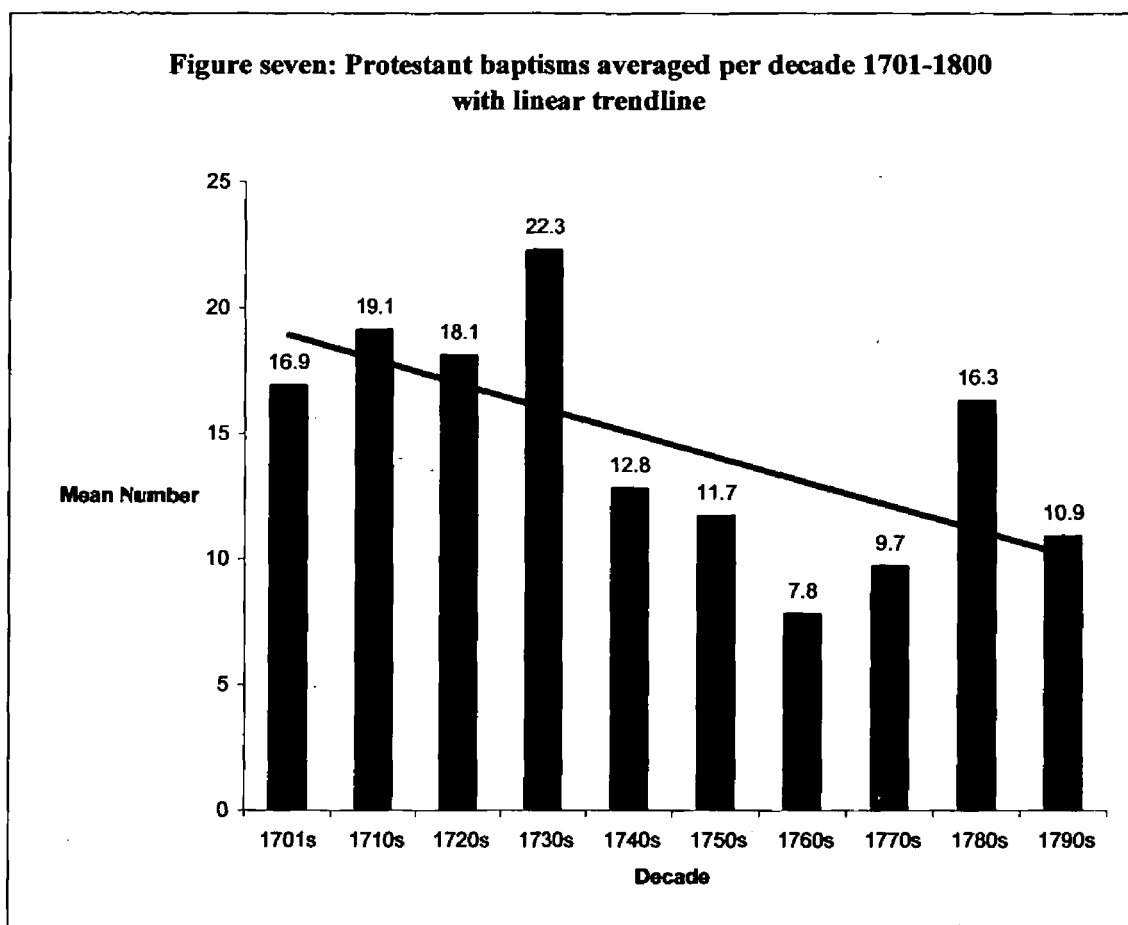
suggesting that the second half of the eighteenth century was a time of decline for Dunlavin's Protestant population.



Source: Dunlavin Church of Ireland parish register.

This becomes more evident if the average number of baptisms per decade throughout the eighteenth century is calculated.<sup>168</sup> In figure 7 the bar chart showing the mean number of baptisms per decade is combined with a linear trendline, which clearly shows the overall decline in Protestant baptismal numbers in Dunlavin during the eighteenth century. The evidence of the parish register suggests that Protestant numbers in the village and its hinterland remained small, but the political realities of the time also meant that, in the Dunlavin region as elsewhere, Protestants were in possession of both wealth and land.

<sup>168</sup> In calculating these from the parish register, I have begun each decade with the year ending in one and ended the decades with the year ending in zero. Hence the year 1750 for example is included in the 1740s decade, which represents the years 1741 to 1750.



**Source: Dunlavin Church of Ireland parish register.**

By 1750, 95 per cent of county Wicklow was divided between 70 families, who leased and sublet to about 700 freeholders, occupying holdings of varying size. All were members of the Established Church.<sup>169</sup> The frenzy of great house building and village improvement engaged in by the elite throughout the eighteenth century was, it has been suggested, an attempt both to control the landscape and to create a sense of place and a sense of Irishness for themselves, their class and, perhaps, their religion.<sup>170</sup> It has further been argued that the form of many villages mirrored this desire on the part of the elite,

<sup>169</sup> Pat Power, 'The Ascendancy in Wicklow 1600-1790', (unpublished essay, 1997), p. 24. Copy in author's possession.

<sup>170</sup> Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*, pp 192-4.

with Anglican churches often found at the centre of settlements, adjacent to the market square and market house (themselves icons of Anglican authority), while Catholic chapels or mass houses were on the urban periphery, often beside the fairgreen.<sup>171</sup> This was precisely the case in Dunlavin, where the Anglican church was in the market square and the Catholic mass house was located at the edge of the fairgreen on the village periphery. Whatever the case regarding spatial hierarchy in villages, by 1780 the elite's claim to the Irish nation was founded on the destruction of Catholic power and the confiscation of Catholic land.<sup>172</sup> This claim would come under challenge in the final decades of the century, impacting directly on the Dunlavin region in 1798.

## Conclusion

This chapter focused on architectural, economic, social, religious and demographic developments in and around Dunlavin during the eighteenth century. This period is particularly thinly documented, but a picture of slow village growth, consolidation and stagnation can be divined. The transition from Bulkeley to Tynte ownership occurred at a time when Dunlavin continued to rise as a market town, outperforming adjacent settlements and their markets. The village changed physically in the lifetime of James Worth Tynte, whose fine market house stood as a symbol of village improvement. However, Tynte's successors, Robert and particularly James Stratford Tynte failed to sustain the pattern of paternalistic improvement. Dunlavin did not develop beyond its market function and, crucially, was bypassed by roads from Dublin to the southeast. The

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<sup>171</sup> T. Jones Hughes, 'Village and town in mid-nineteenth Ireland', *Irish Geography*, 14, (1981), pp 99-106 passim.

<sup>172</sup> Graham and Proudfoot, *Urban improvement in provincial Ireland*, (Athlone 1994), p. 35. For an excellent treatment of this topic see Thomas Bartlett, 'A people made rather for copies than originals: the Anglo-Irish 1760-1800', *International History Review*, xii, (1990), pp 11-25.

population failed to grow significantly during this time and the 1731 and 1766 religious surveys, used in conjunction with the Protestant parish register, indicate a decline in baptismal numbers, especially during the second half of the eighteenth century. The lack of Catholic records makes it impossible to provide a full demographic picture. The power imbalance between the minority Protestant landed elite and the majority Catholic population also fuelled sectarian tensions in the region. Chapter three will examine how those tensions, coupled with new political ideas, impacted on the Dunlavin region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

## **CHAPTER THREE.**

### **DIVISION, MASSACRE AND RESISTANCE: DUNLAVIN, 1775-1805.**

#### **Introduction.**

Dunlavin and its hinterland were transformed during the seventeenth century through a process of conquest, colonisation and settlement. Enjoying sharply contrasting fortunes, at one extreme was a small but powerful landed Protestant elite and at the other a large but powerless lower class. The situation was inherently unstable, and thus susceptible to the winds of change that blew with increasing strength in the late eighteenth century. Liberal elements within Protestantism were the first to raise reformist voices and the Volunteer movement was active in Dunlavin. However, the Volunteers lost their political impetus during the 1780s, leaving a legacy of division as Protestants divided into liberal and conservative camps. These divisions worsened in the 1790s, and the advent of the United Irishmen in west Wicklow, though late, was well supported among the masses of the area's populace. The response of the local Protestant elite was to have recourse to harsh counter-insurgency measures that culminated with over forty executions in Dunlavin on 24 May 1798.<sup>1</sup> These executions ensured that resentment lingered in west Wicklow, and contributed to the longevity of rebel resistance, led by Michael Dwyer of Imaal, which continued until December 1803. The 1798 rebellion undermined paternalistic landlordism in Dunlavin, and the nineteenth century opened with political and sectarian cleavage in the locality.

This chapter contains five sections. The first examines the polarisation of society in

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<sup>1</sup> Some sources give the date of the executions as 25 or even 26 May, but 24 May is the correct date, as this chapter will explain.



west Wicklow during the late eighteenth century and evaluates the reformist ambitions of the Volunteers. The second also investigates polarisation, analysing the rise of the United Irishmen, while charting the demise of liberalism and the rise of ultra loyalism in west Wicklow. Section three deals with the draconian security policy pursued by loyalists and analyses its effects on the region. Incidents in towns and villages in the immediate and extended hinterland of Dunlavin played an integral role in creating a culture of violence, which fostered the conditions in which atrocity was possible. The fourth section explores the most infamous such instance, the Dunlavin massacre, which was the zenith of the terror visited on the region from late 1797. This section closely analyses the events in Dunlavin on the day of the massacre from the available historical record and investigates the role of key individuals. Fallout from the massacre prolonged resistance in the region, even when the rebellion had concluded elsewhere. Section five examines Michael Dwyer's protracted guerrilla campaign and its impact on the area.

## **1. The beginnings of politicisation: the Volunteers in Dunlavin.**

When James Stratford Tynte died in 1785, there was little to suggest that the control wielded by the elite would face a challenge within a dozen years or so of his death, but the outward stability masked deep fissures that were to widen within a decade. The American Revolution and the loss of the colonies led to the raising of a part-time Volunteer corps by local initiative,<sup>2</sup> and in the absence of the non-resident Tynte, other members of the gentry led this force in the Dunlavin region. There was a strong Volunteer movement in the area, providing a platform for the liberal element within Protestantism, but they also introduced an element of instability in both national and local politics.

The first Volunteer corps in Dunlavin was a cavalry unit, the Dunlavin Light Dragoons, founded in 1777 under Colonel Morley Saunders of Saundersgrove and Captain Charles Oulton.<sup>3</sup> This unit trained actively and it is a measure of their pride and commitment that on 17 March 1779 Private M. Garron was awarded a silver medal for horsemanship and lance drill.<sup>4</sup> Two infantry corps were also established in the village. One was variously known as the 'Dunlavin Corps', the 'United Corps of Dunlavin', the 'United Corps of Dunlavin Volunteers' and the 'Dunlavin Volunteers' between 1781 and 1783, but there was also a third Volunteer unit, variously called the 'Dunlavin Independents', the 'Dunlavin Invincibles' and the 'Dunlaven Independents' between 1780 and 1783.<sup>5</sup> Stratford Tynte lived in Dublin, but he was responsible for

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<sup>2</sup> S. J. Connolly (ed), *The Oxford companion to Irish history* (Oxford, 1998), p. 581.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas MacNevin, *The history of the Volunteers of 1782* (fifth edition, Dublin, 1846), p. 227. This unit existed in several different guises being variously referred to as 'Dunlavin Independent Light Dragoons', 'Dunlavin', 'Dunlavin Dragoons' and 'Dunlavan light Dragoons' between 1777 and 1784. Padraig Ó Snodaigh, *The Irish Volunteers 1715-1793, a list of the units* (Dublin, 1995), p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> James Adam salerooms, *Catalogue of sale on 1 Sep 1999*, unpaginated, lot 217.

<sup>5</sup> Ó Snodaigh, *The Irish Volunteers 1715-1793*, p. 38.

the raising, if not the day-to-day command of this corps of infantry in Dunlavin.<sup>6</sup>

Tynte was a general in the Volunteer movement, and a glowing eulogy to him appeared in 1785:

A more amiable character [than Tynte] in private life no man possesses; blessed with an affluent fortune, he spends it in hospitality and acts of beneficence; his connexions are numerous, respectable and patriotic; of his own patriotism too no man can doubt; he has exemplified it on many occasions, particularly by the active part he took on the Volunteer cause, and his being a delegate in the late and present congress.<sup>7</sup>

Tynte's zeal for volunteering was also encapsulated in his epitaph:

The body of Sir James Stratford Tynte, Bart., General of the Army of the Volunteers of Ireland, who died the 10<sup>th</sup> November 1785, was here interred with military honours... Whilst the patriotism of a Volunteer... and loyal subject are thought estimable, the memory of Sir James Tynte will be revered.<sup>8</sup>

The name 'Independents', chosen by Tynte, made a statement about the aims and objectives of the unit and its absentee commander. These Volunteers were not supportive of the establishment, and aspired to reform the political system by securing legislative independence. On 10 November 1781, the Dunlavin Independents, in uniforms of white, faced with black and trimmed with silver lace, attended a meeting at Dublin's Royal Exchange, as part of a campaign that led to legislative independence the following year.<sup>9</sup> On 23 March 1782 Tynte was in Dunlavin and chaired a meeting of the Dunlavan Light Dragoons, which resolved to endorse the 'spirit, moderation and liberality of sentiment expressed in the resolutions entered into

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<sup>6</sup> Despite residing in Dublin, James Stratford Tynte was appointed High Sheriff of county Wicklow in 1785. *Dublin Morning Post*, 24 Feb 1785.

<sup>7</sup> *Dublin Morning Post*, 15 Jan 1785.

<sup>8</sup> Part of the inscription on the obelisk to Tynte's memory at Donnybrook, Dublin.

<sup>9</sup> MacNevin, *The history of the Volunteers*, pp 145, 227.

in Dungannon by the delegates of the province of Ulster' regarding independence.<sup>10</sup> Further testament to the strength of Volunteering in west Wicklow was provided in November 1783, when Morley Saunders and the Earl of Aldborough were two of the five county delegates to the Grand National Volunteer Convention.<sup>11</sup> However, in 1783 the Volunteers began to lose political momentum and the respectability they had enjoyed from 1775 to 1782.<sup>12</sup> Middle-class radicals exercised increasing influence in the movement, leading to the withdrawal of Protestants who disliked the confrontational tactics of the Volunteers. The Protestant parliament was not representative of the majority of the population and radicals such as Napper Tandy, who wished to build an alliance of the Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter middle classes to press for parliamentary reform, did much to alienate moderate liberal Protestants. Tandy spearheaded efforts to revive the Volunteer movement and the 'new Volunteers' were a middle class rather than aristocratic-led force, which included Catholics in their ranks, thus increasing the numbers of the elite leaving the organisation.<sup>13</sup> Enthusiasm for volunteering diminished and by late 1784 it was reported in a 'secret return of the Volunteers of Ireland', prepared for Dublin Castle, that the 'present strength of county Wicklow corps cannot so well be ascertained, as they have not been assembled for a considerable time'.<sup>14</sup> Significantly, Tynte's infantry corps was the then largest single unit still operational in the county. Of a total strength of 165 Volunteers in the county, 50 were in Tynte's corps. This represented

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<sup>10</sup> C. H. Wilson, *A compleat collection of the resolutions of the Volunteers, Grand Juries &c of Ireland which followed the celebrated resolves of the first Dungannon Diet to which is prefixed a train of historical facts relative to the Kingdom, from the invasion of Henry II down, with the history of Volunteering &c*, i (Dublin, 1782), p. 100. Other resolutions passed at the meeting expressed gratitude to the county Wicklow MPs for their endeavours to redress grievances; gratitude to Tynte for 'his unremitted attention to the order and discipline of this corps and his upright conduct in the chair', and a resolution to publish all resolutions in the *Dublin Evening Post*, *Faulkner's* and the *Carlow Journals*.

<sup>11</sup> MacNevin, *The history of the Volunteers*, p. 240. Stratford Tynte was a delegate for County Dublin.

<sup>12</sup> James Kelly, 'Select documents XLIII: A secret return of the Volunteers of Ireland in 1784', *Irish historical studies*, xxvi, 103 (Dublin, May 1989), p. 269.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, pp 270-3.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p. 285.

over 30 per cent of the county's Volunteer resources, and if the earl of Aldborough's 25 strong Baltinglass cavalry corps is also taken into account, some 45 per cent of Wicklow's Volunteers were based in the sparsely populated west of the county.

Though strong in the early 1780s, Tynte's death and Aldborough's conversion from liberalism during the latter years of that decade meant that the torch of liberalism in the Dunlavin region passed to Morley Saunders of Saundersgrove. In 1793, however, the Gunpowder Act and the Convention Act effectively killed off the Volunteers, while the raising of a militia (and later yeomanry) removed their justification as a defence force.<sup>15</sup> The Volunteers were defunct by the 1790s, but by that time many of those seeking reform had another organisation to which to turn.

## **2. The polarising of society: United Irishmen and loyalists in Dunlavin.**

The society of United Irishmen was founded in Belfast in 1791, and before its inaugural meeting on 18 October 36 members had been sworn; an additional 6 were elected on that occasion. It aspired to achieve a cordial union among the people of Ireland, to reform parliamentary representation, and to include Irishmen of every religion in that reform.<sup>16</sup> The United Irishmen modelled their ideals on revolutionary France, and admitted Catholics into their ranks. However, the outbreak of war with France in 1793 left the society open to accusations of treason, and the organisation was banned in May 1794. When the liberal viceroy Earl Fitzwilliam was recalled following a mere two months in office in March 1795, many political reformists became demoralised. From May of that year, the United Irishmen began to reorganise on paramilitary lines as an underground mass movement and became much more

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<sup>15</sup> Connolly (ed), *The Oxford companion to Irish history*, p. 581.

<sup>16</sup> Frank Mac Dermot, *Tone and his times* (Tralee, revised edition 1968), p. 73.

radical, seeking to break the link with Britain altogether. The society flourished, and by 1796 was growing rapidly in counties Kildare and Wicklow. The organisation of the society was strictly intra-county. The basic unit used by the United Irishmen was that of the barony, which was answerable to a county committee.

The reorganised United Irishmen flourished in county Kildare, where the movement had the support of some of the aristocracy and gentry – Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Wogan Browne, for example – which was not the case in county Wicklow.<sup>17</sup> Thomas Kelly, the postmaster of Kilcullen was described as ‘a captain and swears in many’ on a list of suspected persons.<sup>18</sup> Mary Leadbeater, a Quaker woman, who lived in the Kildare village of Ballitore near Dunlavin, noted the emergence of new political ideologies in the area. In December 1796 she wrote: ‘Robinson, the minister of Bomba Hall [Grangecon], I suppose a curate for either Stratford or Dunlavin, an industrious intelligent little man, sometimes called upon us. He expressed very liberal sentiments, and rather more in the new way that one should expect from his cloth. Republicanism, both in Church and State affairs, seemed now to be very prevalent; and serious divisions arose in our Society [of Friends]’.<sup>19</sup> The conversations of Robinson and his peers are highly suggestive of the extent of political awareness in the region, and of the strength and confidence of the liberal interest in the region at that point.

The impact of radicalisation and disaffection in Wicklow became apparent in May

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<sup>17</sup> Liam Chambers, *Rebellion in Kildare* (Dublin, 1998), pp 28-30.

<sup>18</sup> Peadar MacSuibhne, *Kildare in '98*, (Naas, 1978), p. 185.

<sup>19</sup> Mary Leadbeater, (John MacKenna, ed), *The Annals of Ballitore* (Dublin, 1986), p. 58. Leadbeater's statement regarding the prevalence of republicanism suggests a degree of radicalisation towards the end of 1796. The Quakers of Ballitore, who espoused pacifism and moderation, were not immune from the politicised thought in the locality, and their community experienced internecine strife concerning the ideas of the United Irish movement.

1797. This was precipitated around Dunlavin, when United Irish organisers Malachy Delaney from the Ballitore/Narraghmore area,<sup>20</sup> who had brothers and brothers-in-law in Dunlavin and Blessington, and William Metcalfe from Belfast, arrived in Dunlavin in late April.<sup>21</sup> As a northerner, Metcalfe was a suitable liaison with the textile workers of Stratford-on-Slaney, and he was followed by a still more effective Ulster activist, William Putnam McCabe, whose brother was one of the foremen in Orr's textile factory in Stratford-on-Slaney.<sup>22</sup> The growth of the United Irishmen in county Wicklow owed much to McCabe's one-man mission in the spring of 1797.<sup>23</sup>

The United Irishmen was an oath-bound society, but reports by informants to Dublin Castle are our principal source of information regarding its growth in west Wicklow. United Irish activity was described by an informant named John Smith in a letter to Edward Cooke, the under secretary, on 16 May 1797.<sup>24</sup> While in Hollywood, Smith uncovered infiltration of the Dunlavin yeomanry:

I drank some punch at a public house in a mixed company. One man named Patrick Burke and who keeps a whiskey shop in Hollywood declared himself publicly to be up, i.e. An United Irish Man. There was likewise in company a person of the name Noble – a private in the Dunlavin Cavalry. Burke asked him was he up? ... Noble replied that in the cause he was engaged in he would persevere even to death. Burke then said "Why, more than half the Dunlavin Corps are up and I am the lad that knows it".

Encouraged by their evident success to date, the United Irishmen recruited actively in west Wicklow in the summer of 1797. Though the organisation was soon well

<sup>20</sup> Liam Chambers, 'Patrick O'Kelly and the interpretation of the 1798 rebellion in County Kildare' Nolan and McGrath (eds), *Kildare, History and Society* (Dublin, 2006), p. 454.

<sup>21</sup> Ruan O'Donnell, *The rebellion in Wicklow 1798* (Dublin, 1998), p. 57.

<sup>22</sup> Ruan O'Donnell, 'General Joseph Holt and the rebellion of 1798 in County Wicklow', (M.A. thesis, U.C.D., 1991), p. 83.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas King to Castlereagh, 22 May 1798 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/3/32/6). Also L. M. Cullen, 'Politics and Rebellion: Wicklow in the 1790s', *Wicklow, History and Society* (Dublin, 1994), p. 456.

<sup>24</sup> John Smith to Edward Cooke, 16 May 1797 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/30/89)

established in the area, Smith's report suggests that it was susceptible to infiltration. Smith's allegations against the Dunlavin yeomanry suggests that some local yeomen were active members of the United Irishmen. Loyalists regarded the Saundersgrove Corps, which contained many Catholics, with particular suspicion.

In June 1797 Smith identified the area of most virulent United activity in west Wicklow as encompassing a quadrilateral of small urban settlements, with Dunlavin among their number.<sup>25</sup> Smith reported that the area was tense; he mentions a 'battle' that may have been a faction fight, and he informed the authorities that the United Irishmen were using popular sports to provide cover for subversive recruiting.

A junta, belonging to Ballymore-Eustace, Dunlavin, Donard and Hollywood are continually promoting mobs under the pretence of cock fighting etc., but their real motive is to sow the seeds of sedition... Riots are daily committed and last Sunday [was a] week there was a regular battle between some mountaineers and Baltiboy men.

The United Irishmen struck terror into loyalists during the summer of 1797 by organising subversive activities around Dunlavin. Benjamin O'Neale Stratford observed:<sup>26</sup>

My brother John [O'Neale Stratford] who has been at my house some time went yesterday to Dunlavin to enquire into the state of that town and heard the United Irish Men were committing depredation and robbery within three miles of it and had wrote letters to the townspeople that they would be there in a few days to take away their arms. He saw in the town a field piece, which belonged to my late nephew Sir James Tynte,<sup>27</sup> and he thinks it dangerous to have it there.

Evidently, there was considerable unrest in and around Dunlavin as early as June

<sup>25</sup> John Smith to Cooke, 16 Jun 1797 (N.A.I., State of the Country Papers, S.O.C. 3086).

<sup>26</sup> Benjamin O'Neale Stratford to Cooke, 9 Jun 1797 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/31/65)

<sup>27</sup> James Stratford Tynte. Following Tynte's death in 1785, his widow (nee Hannah Saunders, daughter of Morley Pendred Saunders of Saundersgrove) married Fitzmaurice Caldwell, second son of Sir James Caldwell of Castle Caldwell, County Fermanagh: Fitzgerald, 'Dunlavin, Tornant and Tober', p. 222v.



1797. Arms raids took place on loyalist houses within three miles of Dunlavin, as the United Irishmen sought to stockpile arms in preparation for a rebellion. Protestant inhabitants also received threatening letters. John Ravell Walsh, a county Kildare loyalist, was in Dunlavin during that same week. He reported:<sup>28</sup>

Being in the county of Wicklow yesterday, I received the following private information, which I think it my duty to communicate: viz. that there is one field piece in the house of Mr. Hobson of Tubber near Dunlavin, and that there are eight patereroes in the house of a Mr. Armstrong Ryves of Whitestown in the same neighbourhood which, though at present in the houses of well affected men, may fall into the hands of enemies as the above mentioned places adjoin the county of Kildare.<sup>29</sup>

Putnam McCabe revisited county Wicklow in the autumn of 1797 to renew the society's recruiting drive.<sup>30</sup> Arms raids continued in west Wicklow, terrorising Protestants. In December, Richard Nevill of Furness, a county Kildare loyalist, reported that six households had been robbed and arms taken in his locality; he identified Dunlavin as a centre of sedition, stating: 'We think it would be not only useful but necessary to have an officer and twenty men stationed at the village of Rathmore, it being the pass from the Blessington mountains to Dunlavin'.<sup>31</sup>

The arrival of United Irish organisers in Wicklow was late, with the first only arriving in the spring of 1797, but growth was rapid, and there was a significant subversive

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<sup>28</sup> John Ravell Walsh to Cooke, 6 Jun 1797 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers 620/31/45)

<sup>29</sup> Patereroes were small pieces of ordnance used originally for discharging stones and later used for any type of shot. They were usually breech-loaders. They were often made of brass and sometimes used on ships. In Ireland the term may have been merely used as a description of any small cannon made of brass. I am indebted to K. R. Miller, Head of the Department of Weapons, Equipment and Vehicles, National Army Museum, Chelsea, London for this information.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas King to Castlereagh, 22 May 1798 (N.A.I. Rebellion Papers, 620/32/6). Also L. M. Cullen 'Politics and Rebellion: Wicklow in the 1790s', *Wicklow, History and Society* (Dublin, 1994), p. 456.

<sup>31</sup> Richard Nevill to Cooke, 10 Dec 1797 (N.A.I. Rebellion Papers, 620/33/139) Those robbed were 'the widow Finnamore near Killeel, where two blunderbusses were fired into the house and one man severely wounded; Peter Burchill of Killeel, where one blunderbuss was fired and both houses robbed of arms; Roberts and Byrne of Rathmore of arms and money; Hill of Cromwellstown of money; also Adam Abraham and Slater at Beggars Inn'.

movement in place within the county by early 1798. Information about the society in Wicklow was conveyed to the authorities via a spy referred to as 'A. B.',<sup>32</sup> who reported on the first meeting of the county Wicklow committee (in Annacurra), and identified the delegates from Talbotstown as 'Kavenagh, a yeoman in uniform and a lame man'.<sup>33</sup> Thomas Kavanagh was a member of the Baltinglass cavalry, and the lame man was John Dwyer of Seskin in Imaal.<sup>34</sup> The strength of the United Irishmen in the Wicklow baronies at the beginning of 1798 was as follows:<sup>35</sup>

**Table 2. United Irish strength in county Wicklow baronies, 22 January 1798**

Area	Strength	£	s	d	Remarks	£	s	d
Talbotstown	2,974	20	3	4	1st pay	12	10	3
Lower Talbotstown	700	0			2 do	22	15	0
Arklow	2,400	59	8	3	3 do	37	19	3
Roundwood	1,200	17	0	0	No. 2			
Newcastle	1,000	35	15	0	Advanced	12	6	5
Upper Ballinacor	1,000	13	15	0				
Lower Ballinacor	840	0	2	0		85	10	11
Shillelagh	1,000	7	19	3				
Totals	12,794	162	3	4		Rest to province		

**Source: N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/35/55**

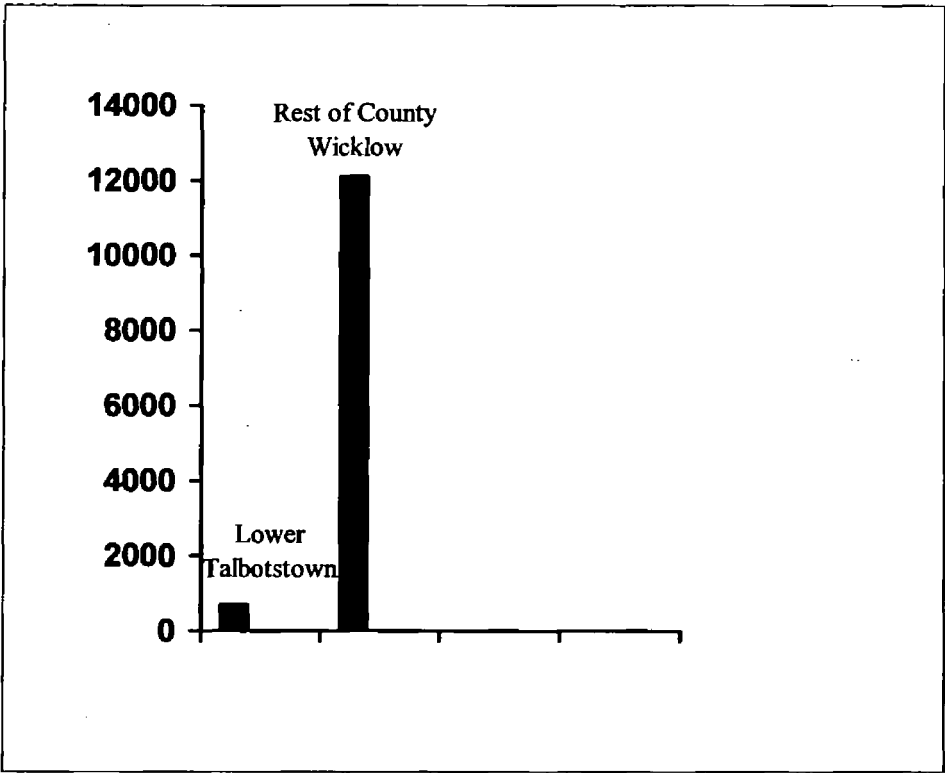
<sup>32</sup> A. B. was actually Thomas Murray of Sheepwalk, Arklow. Pat Power, *People of the rebellion, Wicklow 1798* (Dun Laoghaire, 1999), p. 72.

<sup>33</sup> Cullen 'Politics and Rebellion', p. 456.

<sup>34</sup> O'Donnell, *Rebellion in Wicklow*, pp 43 and 70. Dwyer of Seskin was a cousin of insurgent leader Michael Dwyer.

<sup>35</sup> Returns of the County Wicklow committee, 22 Jan 1798 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/35/55)

**Graph to accompany table 2. Relative strength of Lower Talbotstown United  
Irishmen within county Wicklow in 1798.**



**Source: N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/35/55**

The provision of information on the strength of the United Irishmen in Lower Talbotstown attests to the rising strength of the movement in the Dunlavin area, as the village was the major urban settlement in the half barony. The baronial United organisation had raised no money, but the 700 strong society had grown rapidly and, in early 1798 it accounted for 5.5 per cent or more than one in twenty of the total county membership.

**Table 3. Return for arms, county Wicklow, 22 January 1798**

Area	Guns	Muskets	Pistols	Swords	Pikes	Musket Balls	Ball Cotton	Pounds of Powder
Talbotstown	181	70	66	134	321	3331	8315	75
Arklow	265	85	60	87	200	400	8050	500
Roundwood	105	94	62	75	380	980	500	17
Newcastle	150	41	20	30	355	000	5965	169
TOTALS	789	298	216	326	1256	4711	22820	761
Arklow	210	75	62					
Roundwood	200	00	00					
Newcastle	100	00	00					
TOTALS	1,299	363	278					

**Source: N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/35/55**

The accompanying return for arms (Table 3) showed that Talbotstown barony as a whole had 317 firearms and over 3,000 musket balls, but gunpowder was in short supply, with only 75 pounds in the whole barony. The figures in this document are not always internally consistent and the totals do not match the column entries. Despite this, the figures show that the Talbotstown United Irishmen had amassed a considerable arsenal by early 1798. However, the term 'United Irishmen' was something of a misnomer, as there were by now two wings within the movement. Both aspired to the idea of revolution, but the moderates felt that such a rising should only take place with French aid, while the radicals felt that it was best to proceed with or without the French, and embarked on a policy of mass enrolment. Hence, in Wicklow as elsewhere, the United movement was actually divided.

Despite their differences, county Wicklow's United Irishmen formed a substantial subversive force. The figures for United numbers in most counties of Leinster in the spring of 1798 have survived.<sup>36</sup> The figure for Wicklow (significantly the largest return) seems rounded off and may be estimated, but it attests to the strength of the movement within the county. The west Wicklow organisation planned to attack local garrison towns to gain control of the roads through and adjacent to Dunlavin from Dublin to the southeast in the event of rebellion, and loyalism was divided on how to respond to this threat.

**Table 4. United Irish Strength in parts of Leinster, 1798**

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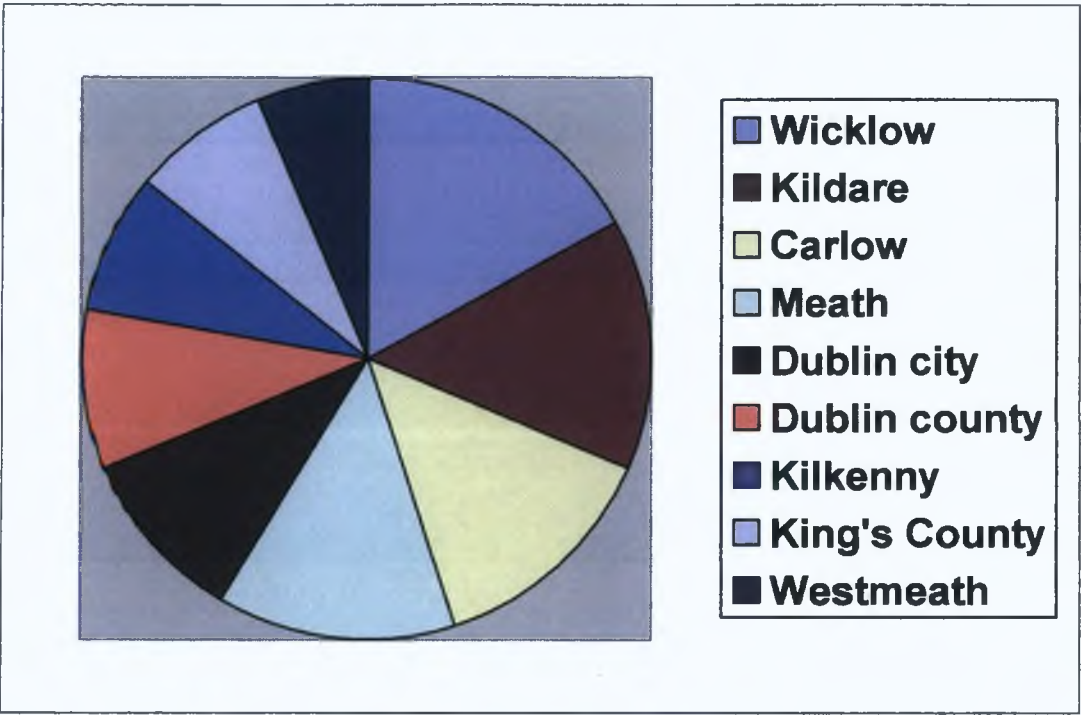
Wicklow	14,000
Kildare	11,919
Carlow	11,300
Meath	11,110
Dublin City	8,396
Dublin County	7,412
Kilkenny	6,700
King's County	6,500
Westmeath	5,250

**Source: NAI, Rebellion Papers, 620/37/208**

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<sup>36</sup> Returns of United Irishmen in parts of Leinster (NAI, Rebellion Papers, 620/37/208)

**Figure 8. Numbers of United Irishmen in nine areas of Leinster, including county Wicklow, 1798 (from table 4).**



**Source: NAI, Rebellion Papers, 620/37/208**

County Wicklow had a substantial loyalist population. However, Wicklow’s loyalists were also divided. The basic division was between hardline loyalists (ultras) and moderate liberals (Whigs). In Wicklow, unlike most other counties, the Whigs, who promoted an inclusive approach as the best means to resolve the Catholic question, were in political control. In the 1797 election, two Whig M.P.s, William Hume of Humewood and Nicholas Westby of Highpark, were returned for the county. Liberal dominance in the county was a source of increasing disquiet among loyalists once the possibility of a French invasion to aid the growing United movement emerged.

West Wicklow’s leading liberal was Morley Saunders of Saundersgrove near

Stratford-on-Slaney, home of the earl of Aldborough's ultra-loyal younger brother, the Hon. Benjamin O'Neale Stratford. It is a measure of the closeness of the family connections that bound the Protestant community that Morley Saunders was a nephew of Lord Aldborough, and of O'Neale Stratford. Saunders was not the only liberal figure among the gentry and aristocracy of the Wicklow-Kildare borderlands around Dunlavin. Colonel Maurice Keatinge of Narraghmore was also Whiggish, as were the Harrington Walls of Grangecon. In west Wicklow, apart from Saunders, the major champion of liberal values was William Hume of Humewood. Hume was a member of parliament with considerable political influence. Saunders, by contrast, was minor gentry, which meant he was an easier target for dissatisfied loyalists.

Despite his liberal views, Saunders was as committed to combat sedition as other members of the gentry. He commanded a yeomanry corps, formed to assist the regular military and to defy any French invasion. Saunders entered into his military role with gusto, and he was proud of his corps. Saunders' uncle, O'Neale Stratford, commented on his nephew's pride and the 'uncommon pains' that he had taken with his corps.<sup>37</sup>

The Saundersgrove corps was predominantly Catholic. Another predominantly Catholic corps of yeomen existed nearby in county Kildare. The 'foremost gentleman' of Ballitore was Squire [Maurice] Keatinge, who, having raised a regiment, became a colonel.<sup>38</sup>

Saunders' and Keatinge's corps were continuously suspected of United Irish activities by loyalists. The thought of local yeomen gaining military knowledge and expertise under the command of such Whiggish figures and the spectre of armed Catholics

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<sup>37</sup> Benjamin O'Neale Stratford to Cooke, 23 May 1798 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers 620/37/133)

<sup>38</sup> Leadbeater, *The Annals of Ballitore*, p. 56. Keatinge's liberal views were well known. See Chambers, *Rebellion in Kildare*, pp 21-2, 50-1, 60-6 passim.

within the region, waiting for a suitable opportunity to stage a United Irish rising, was terrifying for loyalists, who felt beleaguered by late 1797. Saunders also had another leadership role, as a magistrate in the community. The more hardline loyalist population also perceived liberal magistrates as a threat, especially from late 1797 onward.

One can secure an insight into the concern at the stance of liberal magistrates as early as June 1797 from the report of John Smith:<sup>39</sup>

It is notorious to all in these parts but the magistrates that men from Dublin or the North attend to swear people in as United Irish men, and that they are called by the people recruiting sergeants... to give a still more forcible idea of the vigilance of our sapient magistrates, I shall take the liberty of informing you Sir, that from within one mile of Blessington is a place near where I live called Ballymore Cross... where there are nine whiskey shops, some unlicensed, the majority of which are kept by men of atrocious character, are full most nights, some are full all night.

Loyalists were particularly alarmed by events in west Wicklow, which was seen as a flashpoint that should be carefully watched. However, evidence was needed to convict United Irishmen. Hardline loyalist fears regarding the leniency of the magistrates did not take into account the fact that those same magistrates could not act if they lacked such evidence. Judge Robert Day made this clear when he wrote from Naas on 16 August 1797.<sup>40</sup>

Sixteen prisoners have been this evening discharged, each of whom I have no doubt would be acquitted, and who now, instead of the triumph and audacity inspired by impunity, carry home with them impressions of the moderation and mercy of that Government which they are taught to abhor... Thus [Thomas] Conolly has committed twelve or fourteen as implicated in the same offence, and though the information be very loosely drawn, and the committal such as they might well be bailed upon... I have been forced to grope my way

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<sup>39</sup> John Smith to Cooke, 16 Jun 1797 (N.A.I., State of the Country Papers, S.O.C. 3086)

<sup>40</sup> Robert Day to ?, 16 Aug 1797 (N.A.I. Rebellion Papers 620/34/14)



here for want of evidence, and much time has been wasted in dispatching expenses through this county for the justices.

The apparent weakness of the law meant that hardline loyalists increasingly promoted a draconian response to subdue the threat of insurgency. Such loyalists called for unity to resist the threats posed by United Irishmen, Whiggishness and weak magistrates. The Orange Order, recently formed in the north of the country, encouraged hardline loyalists to express these feelings, and the movement found receptive ground in the Dunlavin region. The growth of the Orangeism both in Kildare and west Wicklow gave rise to another threat, that of Orange violence.

The advent of the Orange Order intensified and encouraged the spread of sectarian tensions. With radicalism growing in and around Dunlavin, the Orange order was attractive to the local loyalist population. The order had spies within the United movement. Such infiltration was encouraged, and perceived as a useful intelligence-gathering tactic in the conflict with potential insurgents, as this letter found in the drawing room of John Harte on 27 March 1798 shows: <sup>41</sup>

We are very glad too, or that you got yourself made a United Man, for you will know all their secrets, you are the only man in that county that we can depend upon to give us all intelligence... We understand the barony you live in is very strong and in general the whole county. You had better make out a list how many United men in the country, as you said you could do it and send it to us in Naas... and we will all know better what to do, may our orange cockade be strengthened, now over from our society at present. I.H., I.C., C.W., D.J. 4 friends. Burn this letter as soon as you read it.

The dominant landowner in west Wicklow was the earl of Aldborough, a one-time

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<sup>41</sup> Anonymous to ?, undated (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers 620/36/1)

advocate of reform, who had been active in the Volunteers.<sup>42</sup> He felt that the Volunteers would 'prove themselves the friends of the constitution'.<sup>43</sup> As the force became more radical, Aldborough amended his reformist views, and became increasingly hardline in his attitudes. Aldborough is associated with Stratford-on-Slaney,<sup>44</sup> but the family also had a mansion at Belan in county Kildare. The Stratfords resided at Aldborough Castle, and felt threatened in Stratford-on-Slaney early in 1798. Geographically, the Stratfords were located between the powerful Whig William Hume, and the liberal Saunders. The hardliners found themselves in an uneasy position, attested to in the correspondence of Aldborough's brother, Benjamin O'Neale Stratford (who succeeded to the title in 1823).<sup>45</sup> O'Neale Stratford, a member of Orange Lodge Number 176,<sup>46</sup> was a regular correspondent to Dublin Castle. In early November 1797 he acted as spokesman for the local gentry, and asked that county Wicklow be proclaimed, so lawless was the situation within its borders.<sup>47</sup> The response to this request was revealing; no area under the control of the influential Hume was affected, but in a partial victory for the hardliners, the barony of Talbotstown, including Dunlavin, was proclaimed on 10 November 1797.<sup>48</sup>

By 1798 county Wicklow had Orange lodges in Tinahely, Newtownmountkennedy, Carnew, Coolkenna, Rathdrum, Wicklow town, Shillelagh and Donard.<sup>49</sup> There were

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<sup>42</sup> Aldborough, Saunders and three east Wicklow colonels, Westby, Nixon and Hayes were the five county delegates to the Grand National Volunteer Convention of 1783: *History of the proceedings and debates of volunteer delegates of Ireland on the subject of a parliamentary reform* (Dublin, 1784), p. 140. See also MacNevin, *The history of the Volunteers*, p. 240.

<sup>43</sup> James Kelly, *Proceedings of the Irish House of Lords, 1771-1800, in the reign of George III*, 2 vols, (Dublin, 2008), i, p. 146.

<sup>44</sup> Chavasse, *The story of Baltinglass*, p. 45.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, p. 54.

<sup>46</sup> Cullen, 'Politics and rebellion', p. 472.

<sup>47</sup> Benjamin O'Neale Stratford to [Cooke?], 8 Nov 1797 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/33/32)

<sup>48</sup> J. Kelly and M. Lyons (eds.), *Proclamations of the Kingdom of Ireland 1660-1820* (forthcoming).

<sup>49</sup> Ruán O'Donnell, 'The Rebellion of 1798 in County Wicklow', *Wicklow, History and Society* (Dublin, 1994), p. 369.

also Orange enthusiasts in both Donard and Dunlavin early in 1797.<sup>50</sup> West Wicklow's hardliners organised in response to the growth of radical republican ideas in the region. O'Neale Stratford noted an increase in violence associated with such ideas. In June 1797 he wrote to Cooke at Dublin Castle, attacking lenient magistrates and averring his own loyalty:<sup>51</sup>

I hear that the contagion of the County Kildare is likely to creep into this part, to which I am sorry to say it is too near and that the Magistrates of the nearer part, have not been as strict as they should be is too visible. I will however engage with my life if sufficient powers be given any spirited person on whom Government may have reliance, with myself to put a stop to the growth of such principals [sic] here.

West Wicklow's loyalists' endorsement of harsh counter-insurgency measures inevitably increased sectarian tension in the area. In response, O'Neale Stratford played down the notion of an Orange plot, and suggested that any reports of such a plot were a fabrication spread by the Defenders.<sup>52</sup>

Our neighbours from the counties of Dublin and Kildare... have sent emissaries hither who have industrious[ly] propagated a report that the Protestants under the title of Orange Boys were determined to assemble and murder the Roman Catholics and burn their houses and had fixed on Thursday night last for beginning, and that the town of Stratford-on-Slaney was on that night to be set fire... As the most part of the inhabitants of that town are, and I fear not unjustly, suspected to be United Irish Men, it occurred to me that such a vile report was calculated for mischief of the worst sort.

This letter points to the use of the Orange threat to recruit more United Irishmen. It also indicates the inflaming of passions on both sides of the sectarian divide was far advanced by the late summer of 1797 in west Wicklow. Stratford finished his letter

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<sup>50</sup> O'Donnell, *Rebellion in Wicklow*, p. 120. Donard actually earned the unofficial epithet of 'Orange Donard', a phrase occasionally used by west Wicklow residents to this day.

<sup>51</sup> Benjamin O'Neale Stratford to Cooke, 9 Jun 1797 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers 620/31/65)

<sup>52</sup> Benjamin O'Neale Stratford to Cooke, received 7 Aug 1797 (N.A.I., State of the Country Papers, S.O.C. 3099). There is scant evidence of the Defender movement in west Wicklow, but the terms 'Defender' and 'United Irishman' were used interchangeably in loyalist correspondence.

with an assurance that he was not personally alarmed, but the inauguration of a nightly patrol to protect Protestants suggests that the region was rapidly descending into lawlessness:

I request the advice of the Government how to act and to know if I may continue to keep up a nightly patrol as the Protestants in this part, except myself, are really alarmed, from the numbers of the other class.

Tension in west Wicklow increased still further over the winter and spring of 1797-1798, as loyalists learned of a planned rebellion in May. O'Neale Stratford urgently conveyed this intelligence to Dublin Castle:

I... wish to convey to you the first intelligence of the plot designed, of which the enclosed will give a full account. Indeed it has been known, I may almost say to a certainty, that a rising was intended in May, and I am confident that the reason Mrs. Griffen gave the Oath mentioned to Mr. Cooke, a copy of which I sent my brother John to communicate to Government. [It] was intended to inflame the minds of all Catholics and prepare them to be as numerous and violent against us as possible.<sup>53</sup>

The letter also expressed fear of the Catholic priests, and suspicions regarding United Irish infiltration of local yeomanry corps.

The priests of this town [Stratford] and Dunlavin, who I really believe to be at the head of the whole... That there is no time to be lost in this business I am positive, and trust me there is no task ever so arduous, that Government shall deem necessary, but I will undertake, with alacrity, and I will vouch for thirty eight of the corps I have the honour to command doing the same, though from the great fatality of death of horses and dismissal of some very improper persons, who mounted themselves I can only at present say I have twenty six mounted. I enclosed the Priest's letters and other circumstances to Mr. Cooke in order that Government may know and see what has been his uniform conduct and form an opinion of his present.

West Wicklow priests were repeatedly vilified in loyalist correspondence, but there is

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<sup>53</sup> Benjamin O'Neale Stratford to Cooke, 10 Apr 1798 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers 620/36/186)

no evidence that either Father William Travers of Stratford or Father Paul Byrne of Dunlavin was involved in subversion. Travers was arrested twice in the spring and early summer of 1798 and incarcerated in Carlow gaol, where he suffered a nervous breakdown. He was released in May and narrowly escaped death at the hands of a group of yeomen at Stratford on 24 of that month.<sup>54</sup> There is no record of Byrne's movements in the period before or during the rising.<sup>55</sup> Stratford's fear of fifth columnists within the local yeomanry would have terrible consequences in Dunlavin the following month.

### 3. Terror.

The government response to intensifying United Irish activity was to clamp down hard on suspected rebels and on the Catholic populace. As the situation worsened in the spring of 1798, outnumbered loyalist Protestants were living in palpable fear of the Catholic masses around them. O'Neale Stratford, warning Cooke about 'every Catholic in the country being sworn', advised repeatedly how information on the United movement in the Dunlavin region might be secured:<sup>56</sup>

I sometime since communicated to Government that Bartle Griffin one of my Corps, and brother to the person of that name now I believe in custody in Town, could give great information. He knows every Catholic in this country to be sworn.

In this letter, O'Neale Stratford named Michael Kearns as a 'very designing villain'. The accuracy of Stratford's information was confirmed when Kearns, a carpenter from Baltinglass, later joined Michael Dwyer's group of rebels and remained with

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<sup>54</sup> Robinson to Cooke, 7 May 1798 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/37/35). Also Chavasse, *The story of Baltinglass*, p. 52. Also Carlow in '98: *the autobiography of William Farrell of Carlow* (Dublin, 1949), pp 167-9.

<sup>55</sup> Fr. Patrick Finn, 'The View from the Mountains', *Dunlavin, Donard, Davidstown Parish Link Magazine*, vol. 3, no. 5 [4?] (Oct, 1997), p. 1. Also Chris Lawlor, *The Massacre on Dunlavin Green: A Story of the 1798 Rebellion* (Naas, 1998), p. 96.

<sup>56</sup> Benjamin O'Neale Stratford to Cooke, 10 Apr 1798 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers 620/36/186)

Dwyer until 1800.<sup>57</sup> Stratford also enclosed an anonymous warning he had received:

The united men of this kingdom both great and low, they are all to turn out in the space of one hour through the kingdom. They expect to go on with this unlawful tyranny in less than a fortnight. Entrust no Roman in your corps, they expect the most part of the army of this kingdom to join them as there is thousands would.<sup>58</sup>

Suspecting a widespread plot, Stratford admitted to feeling vulnerable in the midst of a largely Catholic population. An undated letter, in which he described how a false message revealed another plot that he foiled, provides an insight into his mindset.<sup>59</sup>

Once again the priest of Stratford, William Travers, came in for vitriolic attack:

[The messenger's] plan thus was a concocted plan in order to get the foot away, that an attack might be made on the town on which account I had the cavalry under my command (except such as went in search of the fellow under arms) all night with the remainder of the corps and I am certain thereby prevented further mischief intended hereabouts. I hear Mr. Saunders' arms were destined to be taken; mine and Lord Aldborough's attempted. From two letters without names and strong circumstance, I have every reason to believe the priest of this parish to be at the bottom of all this business and that he is aided by persons of property.

Loyalists had reason to be worried about the situation, and they warmly supported the draconian counter-insurgency measures to disarm United Irishmen. They felt justified in pursuing this strategy by the amount of arms in the area, as evidenced by the list of arms seized, compiled by Major Joseph Hardy.<sup>60</sup> Ultra loyalists viewed this list as the possible tip of the iceberg of an underground rebel arsenal! The list included an iron four-pounder, probably the field piece at Dunlavin mentioned above. Hardy's list was accompanied by a note stating:

This return falls short of the number in the different depots of

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<sup>57</sup> The Michael Kearns of this letter was arrested on 5 Mar 1800: Charles Dickson, *The life of Michael Dwyer with some account of his companions* (Dublin, 1944), p. 103.

<sup>58</sup> Anonymous to Stratford, undated, [enclosure to Cooke] (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers 620/36/186)

<sup>59</sup> Benjamin O'Neale Stratford to Cooke, undated (N.A.I., State of the Country Papers, S.O.C. 3119/1)

<sup>60</sup> Return of arms etc. taken and surrendered to King's troops and yeomen corps in Major Hardy's district (Wicklow and Carlow), 20 Nov 1797 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/33/102)

Baltinglass, Hacketstown, Tullow, Dunlavin and Coolatin as several stand of arms have been brought in by other parties of which there is no general return but a more correct one shall be made from the different depots.

**Table 5: Return of arms etc. taken and surrendered to King's troops and yeomen corps in Major Hardy's district (Wicklow and Carlow), 20 Nov 1797.**

C – Cavalry. I – Infantry.

Unit	Iron Four Pounders	Brass Pateraroes	Muskets	Fowling Pieces	Blunderbusses	Pistols	Bayonets	Pikes and Shafts	Scythes on Shafts	Swords and Cutlasses	Bearded Spears
Captain Ryves C	1	8	34	53	6	15	11	0	0	15	7
Earl of Aldborough C and I	0	0	7	11	0	1	7	4	0	0	4
Captain Eustace C	0	0	62	32	2	16	8	0	0	3	0
Captain Saunders I	0	0	15	28	9	6	5	7	0	9	10
Captain Harrington I	0	0	6	7	1	1	0	0	0	2	0
Captain Wainwright C and I	0	0	44	76	3	17	12	0	0	17	0
Captain Hume C	0	0	37	58	7	11	8	5	3	14	0
Captain Stratford C	0	0	11	24	2	7	9	3	4	17	9
Captain Hornridge C	0	0	7	9	4	8	2	0	0	8	0
TOTALS	1	8	223	298	34	82	62	19	7	85	30

**Source: N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/33/102**

This list offers a useful perspective on the extent of United Irish armament in the region in late 1797. Moreover, because the number of weapons seized was substantial, the impact of the seizures considerably diminished the United Irish threat to the loyalist community, though there was no reduction in the level of Protestant alarm. Major Hardy's district included west Wicklow and a small part of Carlow. There were

nine locations with yeomanry and eleven different units because Aldborough and Wainwright commanded both cavalry and infantry corps. Captain William Ryves of Rathallagh and Captain Morley Saunders of Saundersgrove were both adjacent to Dunlavin and, in the absence of a Tynte yeomanry, the defence of Dunlavin village and its immediate hinterland was in the hands of these corps. These yeomanry units uncovered hidden arms from late 1797 and the hardline Ryves was at the forefront of this undertaking. The figures recovered by his cavalry corps are among the highest recorded (Table 5).

Counter insurgency measures were also actively pursued in east county Kildare.<sup>61</sup>

Ballitore suffered from the billeting of militia among its inhabitants as well as

continuing arms raids by United Irishmen in December 1797:<sup>62</sup>

Soldiers now constituted part of the inhabitants of Ballitore; the Cork militia were stationed here. William Cooke, of Ballylea, about three miles hence, was attacked by a number of men, who set fire to his house, and demanded his arms. The house was burned, the family went to Baltinglass, and we all saw with dread the approaching flames of discord.

As elsewhere in the region, arms raids struck panic into the loyalist population, but the counter-insurgency efforts of the government were no less destabilising to the area. The premonition of the approaching flames of discord was to prove justified. The situation around Ballitore worsened in the spring of 1798. Mary Leadbeater wrote:<sup>63</sup>

Amongst other precautions, the names of the inhabitants were posted on the doors of each house, and the authorities had liberty to enter at any hour, night or day, to see whether they were within or not... Notices were put up demanding the arms taken by the United men to

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<sup>61</sup> Chambers, *Rebellion in Kildare*, p. 66.

<sup>62</sup> Leadbeater, *The Annals of Ballitore*, p. 59.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, p. 60.



be restored, on pain of allowing the military to live at free quarters; for many nightly incursions had been made by these robbers to plunder houses of whatever arms they contained.

The enforced billeting of soldiers in people's houses (free quarters) never applied to Wicklow, but county Kildare was different and the impact of this tactic added further strain on an already tense community in Ballitore, as Leadbeater testifies:<sup>64</sup>

Hitherto the soldiers were quartered in our houses but found themselves in provisions; the threat respecting free quarters was now put into execution; foraging parties went into the country, shops and private houses were searched for whisky, which was ordered to be spilled; and seditious papers were sought for...

Free quarters and the army's continuing presence in Ballitore further increased tensions in the area:

Great waste was committed, and unchecked robbery. One hundred cars loaded with hay, potatoes, oats etc. led by the poor owners, and guarded by soldiers, were in one day marched into Ballitore.

The tactic of free quarters in Ballitore created what has been described as a 'reign of terror',<sup>65</sup> and these tactics, so effective in Ulster, were also practiced in the Ballitore-Dunlavin region. The term 'reign of terror' is an emotive one. However, the fear instilled into the local Catholic population in response to the disarming strategy adopted by the military at this time, can reasonably be described as state-backed terror tactics. One contemporary letter actually uses the term 'terror' in connection with the 'active measures' of the military:<sup>66</sup>

The detection of Rebels and recovery of concealed arms, have been pretty successful this week past ... The terror excited throughout the... parish of Baltinglass and county of Wicklow by the active measures adopted in the above mentioned neighbouring towns... so the knot is effectually now broken in the parish of Baltinglass and about eight

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p. 61.

<sup>65</sup> The term is used for example in O'Donnell, 'The Rebellion of 1798 in County Wicklow', p. 344.

<sup>66</sup> Anonymous to Cooke, 14 May 1798 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/3/32/5). The letter is anonymous, but definitely in Robinson's hand.

hundred stand of different kind of weapons are already come in.

It is impossible to gauge the full effect of this draconian campaign, or to ascertain the numbers killed or even tortured at this time, but there is some suggestive evidence.

There were 'random floggings' in Baltinglass,<sup>67</sup> 'moderate floggings' in Athy<sup>68</sup> and at Dunlavin over fifty men were flogged in the market house in early May 1798.

Captain Richardson of the Wicklow militia presided over the flogging of four or five prisoners a day for over a week, despite the protests of Dunlavin's rector, Moore

Morgan.<sup>69</sup> While whipping suspects may have been exemplary, deterring prospective rebels, the number flogged in Dunlavin seems excessive. In the final analysis, whether the measures adopted by the military are described as 'draconian tactics', 'measures of rigour' or 'a reign of terror' is a matter for debate. What was crucial at the time was the effect of those measures on the Catholic population, as the region succumbed to an intensifying cycle of violence in the early months of 1798.

The 'terror' reached Dunlavin as early as the autumn of 1797. Blacksmiths were targeted specifically suspected pike-makers;<sup>70</sup> Owen Finn of Narraghmore was executed in 1798, and the Thomas Egan referred to in the following extract narrowly escaped the hangman's noose on the day of the Dunlavin massacre. A vivid, though perhaps partisan account of the persecution of local blacksmiths was published in the *Press*.<sup>71</sup>

In the morning of the 20 October last [1797] between the hours of one and two, Lieutenant H\_\_\_\_\_ of the Antrim Militia, Richard Fowler of Dunlavin and Thomas Butler of the County of Kildare went to the house of Michael Egan, and having broken open the

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<sup>67</sup> Major Joseph Hardy to Cooke, 14 May 1798 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/3/32/3)

<sup>68</sup> Colonel Colin Campbell to ?, 14 May 1798 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/37/67)

<sup>69</sup> Cullen Papers (N.L.I., MS 8339, ff 8-9)

<sup>70</sup> Chambers, *Rebellion in Kildare*, p. 66.

<sup>71</sup> *The Press*, 15 and 22 Feb 1798.

door, desired him and his son Thomas Egan to come down out of their beds – they were not even allowed to dress themselves – and on the very instant that they appeared, they were knocked down and received many desperate stabs: naked and bleeding as they were, they were then conveyed to the guardhouse of Dunlavin, and on daring to complain of such treatment were again knocked down and beaten in a most unmerciful manner. On their arrival at the guardhouse, they were offered reward and to swear against thirteen [United] Irishmen, but on the solemn declaration of the father and the son that they had no connection with persons of that description, they were again stabbed with bayonets.

The report detailed the torture of the men before continuing:

They said that since he [Thomas Egan] would not give them any information they would hang him. To this they proceeded and, putting the rope around his neck, led him to the winding staircase where (again not being able to obtain information from a person who had none to give) Lieut. H\_\_\_ ordered Mr. Causker, a corporal, to tie him up, which was instantly done; he was then turned off. They then threatened the father that they would kill him also if he would not inform; but at this time, a gentleman of profession, hearing the shrieks of the relatives of these miserable men, came to the window and prevailed on the barbarians to let Thomas Egan be cut down.

Following their ordeal, the badly-injured father was confined to his bed and the son was incarcerated in Wicklow Gaol. He was charged with United Irish membership at Baltinglass assizes in February 1798, but the charges were dismissed due to lack of evidence. The situation deteriorated further during the spring. Dunlavin was on a knife-edge, and as it became increasingly clear that the United men were indeed planning a rising, the military response was to clamp down even harder on the troubled countryside. In April, the house of John Dwyer of Seskin in Imaal (a relative of rebel leader Michael Dwyer), was looted and burned. Dwyer was a suspected United Irish baronial delegate. This was probable, as 'Imale district and that bordering on the county Kildare was represented by one of the O'Dwyers and a young man named Hayden, both of whom were shot afterwards in the massacre of Dunlavin on

24 May 1798'.<sup>72</sup> John Dwyer was incarcerated in Dunlavin market house, which served as a temporary prison.

In east county Kildare, the military clampdown resulted in the capture of an increased amount of arms in May 1798. Colonel Maurice Keatinge's pleas for leniency were ignored.<sup>73</sup> As the harsh tactics continued, action was taken against suspected members of Keatinge's Narraghmore corps. In May 1798, the liberal Keatinge bowed to loyalist pressure and decided to leave the area.<sup>74</sup> The protection he had afforded his men disappeared with him. There was an intensified loyalist backlash in the area, and the military presence was stepped up to enforce such measures as were deemed necessary to cleanse the local yeomanry. The observant Leadbeater noted the increasing number of soldiers in her diary.<sup>75</sup>

To the Tyrone militia were now added the Suffolk fencibles; and the Ancient Britons, dressed in blue with much silver lace – a very pretty dress – came from Athy... The torture was excessive, and the victims were long in recovering... These violent measures caused a great many pikes to be brought in: the street was lined with those who came to deliver up the instruments of death.

The deterioration in the situation led to the arrest and imprisonment of some members of the Narraghmore corps of yeomen. Leadbeater recorded the day that these men were taken prisoner.<sup>76</sup>

A party of military from Naas entered Ballitore and took prisoners, twelve of our neighbours, whom they removed to Naas gaol... Six yeomen were taken prisoners to Dunlavin. I was walking in our garden when they passed on a car, with their coats turned inside out, and one of their guards, a mere boy, cried out to me in a tone of insulting jocularly.

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<sup>72</sup> NLI, Luke Cullen MSS, cited in Dickson, *The life of Michael Dwyer with some account of his companions*, p. 26.

<sup>73</sup> Chambers, *Rebellion in Kildare*, p. 66.

<sup>74</sup> Leadbeater, *The Annals of Ballitore*, p. 62.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, p. 62.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, p. 63.

The arrest of the six yeomen was part of a wider pattern of events unfolding in the region. The prisoners were publicly humiliated and paraded before the populace as turncoats. If such terror and humiliation continued unabated in the region, the Catholic populace would reach breaking point. This is exactly what happened in late May, and it was no accident that Kildare and west Wicklow were the first areas in Leinster to experience rebellion.

Although the atmosphere in Kildare worsened in May 1798, the rebellion itself was unexpected. The authorities thought the terror was working. General Ralph Dundas wrote a reassuring letter to Cooke on 16 May: <sup>77</sup> 'Be assured that the head of the Hydra is off, and the county of Kildare will, for a long while, enjoy profound peace and quiet'. Like Dundas in Kildare, Wicklow's Major Joseph Hardy was confident that the county was under control and in a letter dated only two days before the outbreak of rebellion in west Wicklow he wrote: <sup>78</sup>

The spirit of insurrection is fairly broke in this county [Wicklow], and though I have been eight months in it, both in civil and military capacity, had no idea the evil had so generally spread, and pervaded the whole mass (military excepted and even they not totally untainted) except some few staunch Protestants, but hardly a Papist who was not corrupted... Several parts, or spots, still resist but as there is a general surrender, all must yield by steady perseverance.

Hardy conceded that the military was 'not totally untainted' in relation to United Irish activities. Such suspicions in west Wicklow were directed at the Saundersgrove corps of yeomen. A yeomanry test, essentially an oath, was introduced. However, some liberal commanders held out against administering it. This deepened the antipathy of

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<sup>77</sup> Dundas to Cooke, 16 May 1798 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/37/90)

<sup>78</sup> Hardy to Cooke, 22 May 1798 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/37/128)

loyalists towards Whig commanders such as Saunders. Despite the worsening situation, Saunders did not see any need (or stubbornly did not want) to implement the yeomanry test on his corps. Only when Saunders received new and compromising information about his corps did he call them out on parade and about twenty were taken into custody on 22 May 1798. They were escorted to Dunlavin market house, and imprisoned with members of Keatinge's Narraghmore yeomen.

Saunders was subject to particularly sharp criticism by hardline loyalists. Under Secretary Edward Cooke was informed about Saunders by Rev. Christopher Robinson in May 1798. Robinson refers to 'Republican assassins and 'fiery Jacobins'. The liberal William Hume of Kiltegan was targeted and Colonel Keatinge of Narraghmore was also mentioned as a French sympathiser, but the most heartfelt attack was reserved for Saunders and his yeomen.

It is shameful to see how Mr. Saunders of Saunders' Grove still labours to nurture and screen that hellish group of Republican assassins, the heads and leaders of Stratford on Slaney. It is also unpardonable how he connived at and cherished them and those of his own Corps and every other description of rebel since the first outset of this abominable system, and how he and Mr. Travers, the parish priest of Baltinglass, with these fiery Jacobins of Stratford on Slaney, humbugged, browbeat, and cajoled by arms, the inhabitants of their whole neighbourhood and one another into a motley but inveterate union of arms, bloodshed and anarchy... I fear our high Sheriff, Mr. Carroll is too much infected with the Whiggism of his uncle Bagnell, and the liberty and equality of his cousin Keatinge... Mr. Harrington of Grangecon is a very great detriment in the way of getting in the arms, as he and Saunders are labouring to lump the arms for each land and grant a general protection without any further discriminating between the guilty and innocent... I wish Mr. William Hume of Humewood was properly cautioned from screening the disaffected of his own neighbourhood.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Anonymous to Cooke, 16 May 1798 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/3/32/5). This letter was enclosed [by Cooke?] with another letter, also from Robinson. Although both letters are anonymous, they may be compared with document 620/38/51, which contains Robinson's signature, and the handwriting is the same.

This letter is indicative of the suspicious state of mind of ultra loyalists and the depth of the hostility they bore Saunders. Robinson accused Saunders of being in league with the Catholic priest, William Travers, echoing John Smith's view that local Catholic clergy were a threat, and Stratford's belief that the local Catholic priests were 'at the head of the whole'. Robinson alleged that Saunders and Travers actually colluded in United Irish activities.

Three days later on 22 May, Robinson again wrote to Cooke. He made specific reference to the Saundersgrove yeomanry, and alleged that a half-dozen or so of the corps were involved in a plot to kill Saunders. Saunders discovered such a plot at this time, leading to the arrest of many of his men. Robinson's letter also pointed out that only three or four of the Saundersgrove corps were non-Catholics. Robinson, who implied that all Catholics were dishonest and subversive, perceived the predominantly Catholic Saundersgrove corps as an immediate threat. Robinson even suggested that Saunders was a United Irishman. This is extremely unlikely. West Wicklow, however, was adjacent to county Kildare, where some aristocracy and gentry figures were involved with the United Irishmen, and Robinson evidently thought that the Kildare phenomenon had spread into west Wicklow in the person of Morley Saunders.

It is melancholy to think how slowly the inhabitants of this town [Stratford] and Southern farms of the parish of Baltinglass are delivering in their concealed arms. If it were possible to get an honest or loyal parish priest to put in place of William Travers, the arms would soon come in ... I hear this morning that six men of Mr. Saunders' yeomen are discovered to have conspired some time back to assassinate him. He need have expected no better fate from the villains that he enrolled. It is terrible to think how he temporises and cringes to those rebels ... [Cornet Joseph Cardiff] even heard that Mr. Saunders was sworn a United Irishman by Mr. Maxwell of Stratford, near twelve months ago.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Robinson to Cooke, 22 May 1798 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/37/109). The letter contains the following information about United Irishmen in the area: 'Cornet Joseph Cardiff of Lord Aldborough's Cavalry was sworn a United Irish Man by John Whittle his brother in law of the Ballimore Cavalry and

Saunders' liberal tendencies, his almost wholly Catholic corps of yeomen, his stance against the test oath for yeomen and his lenient magistracy were all pointed out by Robinson. However, as the situation deteriorated, Saunders was under mounting pressure to adopt a more draconian attitude.<sup>81</sup> Matters came to a head when a spy named Joseph Hawkins provided Saunders with more information about his corps. In this environment, Saunders found it harder to withstand the increasing loyalist anger, and a corporal was arrested. As a result of his interrogation, new facts emerged and a number of the Saundersgrove yeomen were arrested and incarcerated in Dunlavin. A plot to kill Saunders involving some of his yeomen was uncovered. Crucially Saunders, to this point unconvinced by allegations against his corps, now accepted that the plot was real and that his corps was a threat to the authorities and himself. This was a key moment in the triumph of the ultra loyalists over the liberal faction in west Wicklow, as the threat to Saunders' life led to a decision to cleanse his yeomanry corps of subversives. It was also a key moment in the decision to use draconian measures of rigour to tackle counter-insurgency in the military. On 23 May, O'Neale Stratford wrote to Cooke and suggested that those involved might be executed.

In consequence of some serious and interesting information, though far from well, I rode to Dunlavin and there made out to Mr. Saunders' full conviction that most of his corps and servants were United Irish Men. I really pity my dear nephew; he had indeed taken uncommon pains with his Corps and was both their Commandant and friend and had the day but one before, on my mentioning my suspicions more strongly than I had done for some months before, called on each on parade and informed them he had heard it and desired that if any were so they would voluntarily confess it. He offered to swear they knew nothing about any such thing, yet on the clearest proof he yesterday called them out, twenty beside the one I

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his nephew Anthony Metcalf of Donard, Shopkeeper... Mr. Joseph Fox now in Dunlavin Guard House can if he pleases corroborate his testimony, as he was, I understand, an under Secretary and attester to Mr. Headon. Those two men know more material information of the quantities of arms in each parish and in the whose hands they are, than all the men within five miles of them, and if such men be whipped and then liberated farewell to the recovery of arms'.

<sup>81</sup> Cullen, 'Politics and Rebellion: Wicklow in the 1790s', p. 467.



had before in custody, among whom were five of his servants, Moran and the other young lad, Prendergast and Farrel two of his masons, the Duffys, Williams, Sub-Constable Doyle, his smith, his slater etc. The most horrid and infernal plan was formed against his life and all his family, which I trust in God I have prevented, indeed my dear fellow expressed his thanks in the prettiest manner, yet none did I deserve. I only would have done what common humanity demanded of me by any man and was my duty, a ten fold obligation for affinity friendship, esteem, long acquaintance etc. He has not as yet satisfied me; the worst are still in his house, and the Corps must be better thinned. Sorry am I to say that we have now the clearest proof of the... Catholics' intention, but as Government are appraised of it, I trust proper means will be used to put a total stop to the business in which the priests (that is the majority of them) will be found deeply concerned.<sup>82</sup>

O'Neale Stratford felt that he convinced Saunders about the guilt of the arrested members of his corps, and Saunders' reaction was indeed suggestive of a man both humiliated and betrayed. The avuncular reference in the letter [my dear nephew] is also unusual, and perhaps revealing. Though O'Neale Stratford often mentioned Saunders in his correspondence, he usually gave him his proper title. The familial reference indicated that O'Neale Stratford now felt that he had a degree of control over Saunders, which was not hitherto the case. Saunders was now compliant with the wishes of his uncle, who favoured draconian measures.

The undoing of Morley Saunders meant that he became the most eminent casualty in the Dunlavin region, both of the counter-insurgency campaign pursued by ultra-

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<sup>82</sup> Benjamin O'Neale Stratford to Cooke, 23 May 1798 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers 620/37/133). O'Neale Stratford had met Saunders in Dunlavin on the previous day, Tuesday 22 May. Stratford visited Dunlavin because he had received information via the informant Joseph Hawkins on Monday 21. This information led to the arrest of Corporal James Dunn, whose information against other members of the corps probably saved his life, as he was not executed on the fairgreen. Dunn is alluded to as 'the one I had before in custody'. According to the letter, Saunders 'the day but one before' (i.e. Monday) called on each man on parade and informed them he had heard accusations of United Irish membership, and he asked the men to 'voluntarily confess it'. However, the yeomen were not asked to take the test oath, not dismissed from the corps by Saunders and not given a chance to resign. On the Monday night Dunn's information changed the situation. The corps was assembled again the next day and arrests were made. The letter referred to twenty men who were taken into custody. Eighteen members of the corps were shot later at Dunlavin, including those named in this letter, so Stratford's figure may be approximate, rounding to twenty.

loyalists, and the plans of radicals to foment rebellion. The liberal Saunders was caught between the radical infiltration of his corps and the determination of the ultras to root out every manifestation of sedition. Moreover, as a liberal opposed to revolution, Saunders was at fault in not properly securing his corps from infiltration, and the consequences were serious. The fall of Saunders utterly discredited the liberal middle way, effectively leaving the initiative securely with the ultras, and finally leaving radicalism and the ultras to face each other directly, which precipitated one of the major atrocities of 1798 – the massacre on Dunlavin green.

The other two captains of the garrison town of Dunlavin, Edward Richardson of the Wicklow militia and William Ryves of the Dunlavin cavalry, were very different to Saunders. Ryves was a magistrate and captain of the Dunlavin's cavalry corps, which, despite John Smith's insinuations, was never under the same suspicion as the Saundersgrove corps. There were two branches of the Ryves family in residence near the village of Dunlavin at this time. The first, headed by Armstrong Ryves, resided in Whitestown. William Ryves' family lived in Rathsallagh House.<sup>83</sup> William Ryves was perceived by his peers as a loyal man and a sound officer. Robinson described him as 'sensible, cool, loyal and persevering'.<sup>84</sup> According to Robinson, Ryves was a more loyal and better officer even than Stratford. William Ryves took his yeomanry duties very seriously, as a letter, dated 9 May 1798, demonstrated.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> The original Rathsallagh house was burned out during this period, but the old stables were converted into a fine country house, which now contains a luxurious hotel and a superb golf course. Information from <http://www.rathsallaghhousehotel.com/> visited on 12/4/2002.

<sup>84</sup> Anonymous [Robinson] to Cooke, 16 May 1798 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/3/32/5)

<sup>85</sup> Robinson to Cooke, 9 May 1798 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/37/43). This list of nine men was enclosed with the letter and was entitled 'A list of persons who can give effectual information respecting the present Rebellion, the number of arms concealed'. The names on the list were Thomas Walsh, of Mullamast near Ballitore, Doctor Johnston of Ballitore, John Moore of Blackwrath, Joseph Fox of Stratford-on-Slaney, Roger McGuire, smith of said Stratford, James Dunn, Yeoman in Mr. Saunder's Corps, James Doyle of Rathbran, Pierce Headon of Ballyhooke and One Colgan of Ballyhooke.

It is vexatious to see how the guilty are flying from the punishment they have so richly earned... If you think proper to have the persons named in the within list apprehended, it should be done speedily lest they may abscond. Captain Ryves, and a few chosen men of his Corps, with a party of Regulars or Militia would be the best men to take these last mentioned.

Ryves enforced the law with rigour, and during the deteriorating situation in May 1798, did not offer any general protection as an inducement to United Irishmen to bring in hidden arms. His protections were offered on an individual basis, only after hidden arms had been produced. Ryves was, by all accounts, an efficient, cool-headed officer. More evidence of Ryves calmness and clarity is to be found in proceedings of post-rebellion courts-martial. Ryves was sole witness against seven prisoners in Baltinglass on 2 April 1799.<sup>86</sup> He was a reliable, lucid witness and the court martial reached a verdict on his evidence alone; a clear, efficient performance by Ryves. Captain Richardson of the Wicklow Militia was not local, and was more detached from Dunlavin's populace than either Ryves or Saunders. O'Neale Stratford provided the following revealing insight: 'I wish we had Richardson with our county militia here. He is near us in Dunlavin, and very well, I saw him yesterday'.<sup>87</sup> Stratford perceived Richardson as reliable, and there is no evidence to suggest that Richardson buckled under the strain of the tense Dunlavin situation, as he was 'very well'. Richardson had come from Ballitore, where the military employed draconian measures. Richardson and Ryves were cool, efficient officers. Under their command, counter-insurgency measures would reach their zenith in Dunlavin on 24 May 1798.

#### 4. Massacre.

As 23 May 1798 dawned, Dunlavin and its hinterland were tense, but such was the

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<sup>86</sup> Court martial record of Ned Fitzharris, John Perkyns, Patrick Connor, Edward Doyle, Ned Quinn, Thomas Coyle and John Condra (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/17/30/9)

<sup>87</sup> Benjamin O'Neale Stratford to Cooke, 23 May 1798 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers 620/37/133)

effect of the efficient counter-insurgency measures that fears of a rising were on the wane. However, an express galloped into Dundas's headquarters in Kilcullen with news that a rising was expected at any moment in Dublin and adjacent districts.<sup>88</sup> The pre-arranged signal was simple: the mail-coaches from Dublin to the provinces were to be stopped. On that night of 23 May 1798, the Munster mail-coach was attacked it and the passengers were brutally murdered near Naas. The coach was set alight. The rising in Kildare and west Wicklow had begun.

The burning of the Munster mail coach meant that much of Kildare was soon in full revolt and eight engagements took place in the county on 24 and 25 May.<sup>89</sup>

**Table 6. Battles and engagements in county Kildare**

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Prosperous.....	24 May
Clane.....	24 May
Old Kilcullen.....	24 May
Naas.....	24 May
Monasterevan.....	24 May
Narraghmore and Red Gap Hill.....	25 May
Rathangan.....	25 May

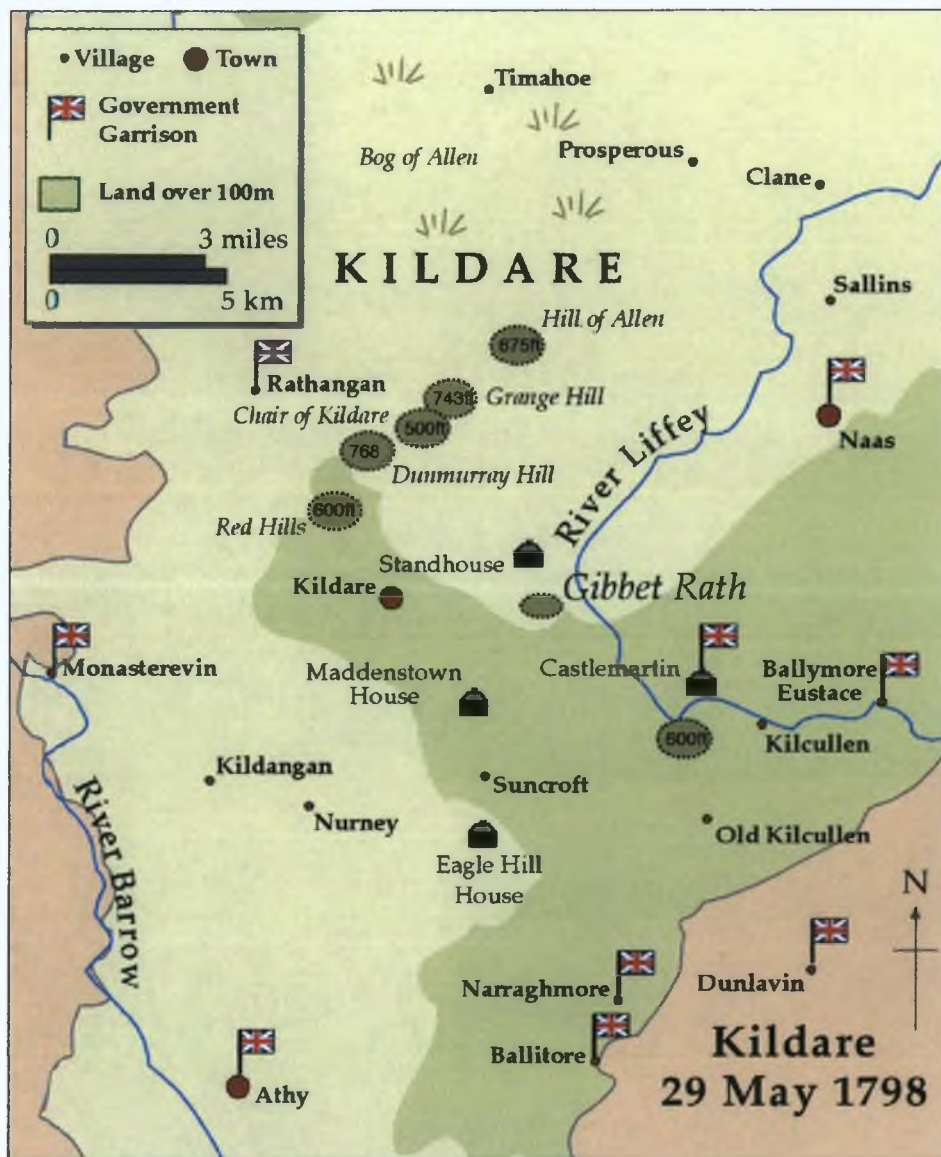
**Source: Peadar MacSuibhne, *Kildare in '98*.**

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<sup>88</sup> Thomas Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty* (London, 1972), p 129.

<sup>89</sup> Peadar Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98* (Naas, 1978), p. 3.

**Map 13. Engagements in county Kildare mentioned in table 6.**



**Source: Brendan Farrelly and Michael Moore, *Massacre at Gibbet Rath 1798*.**

The proximity of many of these places to Dunlavin ensured that the reverberations of the rebellion impacted the region. In particular, the links between Dunlavin and both Ballymore Eustace and Naas were close. The battle for Naas was a vicious affair, and the rebels, led by Michael Reynolds of Johnstown, took very heavy casualties. About 300 rebels were killed, and more than 800 pikes and about 25 guns were recovered the

next day. Also on that day (25 May), three rebel sympathisers were hanged on the main street of Naas. Michael Reynolds escaped and was later prominent in the second battle of Hacketstown.<sup>90</sup>

Although the rebel attack on Naas ended in failure, it had an identifiably destabilising impact across the region.<sup>91</sup> Mary Leadbeater attests to the ‘hurry and confusion in Ballitore on 24 May 1798’.<sup>92</sup>

The morning of the 24th of the Fifth-month [May] orders came for the soldiers quartered here to march to Naas. A report was circulated that Naas gaol had been broken open – that Dublin was in arms, and so forth. All was uncertainty, except that something serious had happened, as the mail-coach had been stopped... the mail-coach had got to Naas before it was stopped, yet its detention there persuaded the people that the day was their own. They threw off the appearance of loyalty, and rose in avowed rebellion... All was hurry and confusion in the village. Several who had kept out of sight now appeared dressed in green, that colour so dear to United Irishmen, and proportionally abhorred by the loyal... The courthouse at Narraghmore was attacked, and many met their death there. We heard the report of firearms, and every hour the alarm increased.

Dunlavin awoke on the morning of 24 May 1798 to find that the entire region was up in arms. It was a fair day in Dunlavin, which was significant in the gathering of information and the spreading of rumour. As more people arrived in the town during the morning, the false news that reached Ballitore – heavy fighting in Dublin, the jail in Naas captured by the rebels and other rumours – also reached Dunlavin. There was an influx of alarmed loyalists fleeing to the garrison town of Dunlavin for protection as they found the surrounding region up in arms. Rev. Christopher Robinson provided

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<sup>90</sup> Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, pp 80-5. Also S. T. Ó Duinn CFC and research team, ‘Brief history of Naas and surrounding districts’ in *Meanscoil Iognaid Ris*, ii, (Naas, 1973), p. 15.

<sup>91</sup> Chambers, *Rebellion in Kildare*, pp 72 et seq.

<sup>92</sup> Leadbeater, *The Annals of Ballitore*, pp 63-4.

the Castle with a good overview of events on 24 May in the region: <sup>93</sup>

About 9 o'clock a.m. on Thursday the 24th May 1798 the Rebellion broke out through the entire neighbourhood of Dunlavin, Ballitore, Baltinglass, Stratford on Slaney, Castledermot etc., and the men, women and children joined in procuring arms of all description. They sung horrible songs and never before heard by any loyalist, to excite the Rebellion. They openly declared extripation to the Protestants; not one Papist out of 100 but assembled that day, first in a tumultuous manner in small parties and then joined in bodies of about 200, 300, 400, or 500. The militia, particularly the yeomanry corps of Dunlavin, Baltinglass, and Hacketstown, as also the light company of the Wicklow Militia under Captain Richardson, behaved most gallantly and by that day's exertions cut down and dispersed the rebels so effectually as to prevent a plan they had formed of forcing the garrison of Dunlavin and Baltinglass that night, instead of which many of them fled to the mountains and joined their camps on the hills.

This letter suggests the local United Irishmen had a plan to take the garrison towns, including Dunlavin, in the region, but the rebellion was too disorganised for such a plan to succeed. Neighbouring Stratford-on-Slaney did, however, fall into rebel hands, but success was short lived. <sup>94</sup>

The same day [24 May] other attacks were made by rebels in different parts of the counties of Kildare and Wicklow – about one o'clock they appeared in the neighbourhood of Baltinglass to the amount of at least four or five hundred. Thirty of the Antrim Militia under the command of Lieutenant Macauley and Cornet Love, with twenty of the Ninth Dragoons, were sent to attack them; but the instant that they were advancing upon them in the town of Stratford upon Slaney, Captain Stratford appeared at the other end of the town,

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<sup>93</sup> Robinson to Cooke, 29 May 1798 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/37/211A). Another passage in this letter once again confirms loyalist suspicions of Saunders and support for O'Neale Stratford and Richardson: 'It is therefore much to be wished for in that quarter that Morley Saunders Esq. would entirely desist from interfering so incessantly with the other magistrates in favour of rebels, or from enrolling such men in place of those of his Corps of Yeoman that were shot for treason; or from embodying a multitude of the men of Stratford-on-Slaney whom he must know were United Irishmen... and it is equally to be desired that Captain Stratford and Captain Richardson of the Wicklow Light Company would be firmly supported in finding out and bringing such rebels to condign punishment, as they in general seem inclined to do their duty in support of the present establishments but by the interference, and influence, and duplicity of other gentlemen and officers of doubtful character, they are baffled in their endeavours to punish the traitors and protect and cherish the man of honour and loyalty'.

<sup>94</sup> Letter from Lt. Macauley of the Antrim Militia to Major Hardy, undated, cited in Dickson, *The Life of Michael Dwyer with some account of his companions*, p. 30.

with part of his corps. The rebels were attacked on both sides, and completely routed, leaving near two hundred men killed, besides many wounded amongst those who had made their escape.

Ballymore-Eustace also experienced action on the morning of 24 May. The rebel attack there was almost successful, and Captain Beavor's Ninth Dragoons suffered seven fatalities, along with a lieutenant of the Tyrone militia, before the attack was repulsed.<sup>95</sup> Members of the Ancient Briton<sup>96</sup> regiment then executed twelve captured rebels in reprisal. A party of Ancient Britons then left Ballymore-Eustace for Dunlavin. An atrocity they perpetrated on the way was recorded:<sup>97</sup>

May 24th 1798: Twelve insurgents were shot on the green of Ballymore Eustace. These were commanded by Horan, a protestant. Next day [the timing is confusing here, but if the Ballymore executions happened at approximately 4 a.m. and the soldiers left Ballymore at about 6.30 a.m., it is possible that the phrase refers to the morning of the twenty fourth, as the Ballymore executions were perceived as happening on the night of the twenty third] the military marched to Dunlavin and passing through Lemonstown halted at the house of one McDonald, a farmer, (one Fox, a miller of Hollywood, having given secret information concerning his (McDonald's) sons). McDonald, his wife and sons Kit, John, Harry and Tom were at dinner. When the troops rushed into the house the sons were taken into the barn before the door and one of them was compelled to put a burning turf into the thatch of the house, and while doing so his hand was shot off by one of the Ancient Britons. In vain the aged father protested his and his sons' innocence, and produced a written protection given to him by Captain William Ryves of Rathsallagh. Notwithstanding, two of his sons, Kit and Tom, were put on their knees. The father knelt down then to deprecate mercy or shoot him also. They were shot down in the presence of their parents. Harry and John escaped in the confusion concealed by the smoke of the burning homestead but being perceived they were chased to the recess of [Sluwgad?] Church Mountain, escaping unhurt amid volleys of bullets from the pursuers. Their aged parents concealed the bodies of the others until the following Sunday before daybreak when they buried them in sacks in a churchyard at Hollywood.

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<sup>95</sup> Chambers, *Rebellion in Kildare*, p. 75.

<sup>96</sup> This Welsh regiment, the Ancient British Light Fencible Cavalry, had acquired a reputation for notoriety in many places, particularly Newtownmountkennedy. For an account of their activities see Myles V Ronan, (ed) *Insurgent Wicklow 1798* (Dublin, 1948), pp 18-28 *passim*.

<sup>97</sup> Fusillade at Dunlavin green (NUI Maynooth, Shearman Papers, xvii, f. 131)



News of the attack on Ballymore-Eustace reached Dunlavin via a local youth, Charles Doyle of Merginstown, as John Williams, the son of one of the executed men reported: <sup>98</sup>

A young man named Charles Doyle, the son of a wealthy widow farmer from Merginstown, came into the town apparently in a great fright. He had been with the insurgents on the previous night in the attack on Ballymore Eustace. He returned home. . . he went to Dunlavin. This report filled the ruling party with the greatest alarm.

This report was followed by the arrival of the Ancient Britons at Dunlavin. They reported the attack on Ballymore-Eustace and subsequent executions. This may have set a precedent for Saunders, Ryves and Richardson to follow. <sup>99</sup> John Williams continued his account: <sup>100</sup>

Morley Saunders, Ryves and Captain Richardson of the Wicklow militia were... made acquainted with Doyle's report and being apprehensive of the insurrection becoming formidable they were filled with rage and confusion and the prisoners were ordered out to the fair green, each two men being tightly tied together.

Evidently, the suspected United Irishmen in the market house were perceived as a potential threat. If the village was attacked and the prisoners were liberated, loyalists could not expect mercy. If an attack occurred, the prisoners could constitute a dangerous fifth column within the village. Were they to escape (or be liberated by sympathisers in the confusion of such an attack), they had the potential to turn the tide of battle. These unpalatable facts, according to John Williams, filled the captains

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<sup>98</sup> Dickson, *The Life of Michael Dwyer with some account of his companions*, p. 34.

<sup>99</sup> Sir Richard Musgrave, *Memories of the Irish Rebellion, third edition 1803* (Dublin, Reprint 1995), p. 222.

<sup>100</sup> Dickson, *The Life of Michael Dwyer with some account of his companions*, p. 34.

‘with rage and confusion’, and the decision to execute the prisoners was taken.<sup>101</sup>

There is confusion as to the actual number of men executed in Dunlavin on that day.

This arose because some prisoners were hanged from the market house while others were shot on the fairgreen. Sources do not agree on the names of the victims.<sup>102</sup> Some prisoners in the market house were taken out and paraded through the town to the fair green, where they were tied together and shot. The Ancient Britons carried out the executions.<sup>103</sup> Other prisoners were later hanged at the market house.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> There has been some confusion about the date of the massacre. This was caused by the account written in the 1860s by a Dunlavin curate, Father John Francis Shearman. Despite the time lapse, Shearman wrote: ‘The memory of these events is still green in Dunlavin, but few unless one in my position could elicit much information on a subject always dangerous to touch in that locality. I append other episodes, for the truth and correctness of which I can give every guarantee’. *Fusillade at Dunlavin green* (NUI Maynooth, Shearman Papers, xvii, f. 128). There is one error in his account however. He dated the massacre as 26 May 1798, but the event actually occurred on 24 May. There are at least three pieces of evidence to confirm this. Firstly, if the massacre occurred after Charles Doyle had arrived with news of the skirmish in Ballymore-Eustace, then it was the morning of 24 May. Secondly, the incident with Fr. John Murphy in Wexford definitely occurred on 26 May and he had already received news of the Dunlavin massacre. This would be impossible if the massacre had also occurred on 26 May. Thirdly, the rebellion in the Dunlavin area had failed by 26 May and the danger to the Dunlavin garrison had abated, so there was less likelihood of prisoners being executed. In fact, later dating of the Dunlavin massacre on 26 May probably relied on Shearman’s account for its authenticity. The correct sequence of events was as follows. The arrest of James Dunn, a corporal in the Saundersgrove corps on 21 May resulted in information against other members and their detention on 22 May in Dunlavin. They were there when the rebellion broke out on the night of 23 May, and they were executed the following morning: Cullen, ‘Politics and Rebellion: Wicklow in the 1790s’, pp 468-9.

<sup>102</sup> A full list of all known victims of the massacre appears in appendix four. Thirty victims are named in *Fusillade at Dunlavin green* (NUI Maynooth, Shearman Papers, xvii, f. 130). Thirty-four are named in Dickson, *The Life of Michael Dwyer with some account of his companions*, pp 370-1. One is named in *Leinster Leader*, 25/9/1948 and one more is named in Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, p. 133. The total number of named victims now rises to fifty-two allowing for different Christian names, but some (e.g. Shearman’s Peter Prendergast and Dickson’s David Prendergast) are obviously the same man. However it seems safe to assume that the death toll in the village that day must be revised to a figure somewhere in the mid-forties at least.

<sup>103</sup> Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, p. 2.

<sup>104</sup> O’Donnell, ‘The Rebellion of 1798 in Co. Wicklow’, p. 349. More evidence of hangings is given in Mac Suibhne, op. cit. p. 188-9 in the following passage: ‘Dunne who was hanged in Dunlavin was a forefather of Mick Dunne, Ballyshannon. Another brother was hanged in Carlow. The judge asked him did he know anyone in Carlow who would get him off. He said ‘yes’, pointing to a neighbour from Narraghmore. But the neighbour denied all knowledge of him. There was a good deal of this. This Dunne lived in Blackhall. They moved to Ballyshannon and Dillons moved in. There were different hangings in Dunlavin. Evidence of A. Hendy and Paddy Lynch’. Also, during his address at the opening of the refurbished market house on 25 May 1979, Mr. Frank Goodwin stated: “During the rebellion of 1798 [the market house] was fortified and garrisoned for the protection of many families who fled to this town from the battles in the surrounding countryside. It is said also that people were hanged in those days from the colonnades above our heads”. Frank Goodwin, *The Market House, Dunlavin – Restoration and History*, (Dunlavin Community Council, 1979), p. 11.

A vivid account of the events of 24 May 1798 in Dunlavin, written 64 years after the executions, recorded eyewitness testimonies given from memory.<sup>105</sup>

About 8.06 [a. m.] these unfortunate men were marched to the green, which is situated on the rising land of the village of Dunlavin, at an elevation of more than four hundred feet above sea level, commanding a most magnificent prospect. The men were placed in a hollow on the north side of the green midway between the last house of the street opposite Sparrowhouse road and the chapel. A platoon of the Ancient Britons stood on the higher ground on the south side of the Boherboy road and fired on the unfortunate men with dread effect. All fell together dead and dying. Of the thirty-six men a few were only wounded. After the first fusillade the Ancient Britons returned to the market house to complete their savagery by flogging and hanging other unfortunate prisoners to strike terror into those who were going to the market for rations etc. On the green, when all was quiet and the men left for dead; their friends and sympathisers beholding the remains watching from behind the neighbouring fences, the soldier's wives came to rifle the bodies of the murdered men. One poor fellow was only wounded; when he felt his watch being taken away made an effort to retain it, but in vain for the savage woman got up her husband who dispatched the unfortunate man by firing a pistol into his ear. Another man, Peter Prendergast, who was wounded in the belly so that his bowels protruded; lay as dead and offered no resistance to the plundering and escaped. Towards evening the bodies, which were not already carried away by their friends, were carried to Tournant cemetery and there buried in a large pit. Prendergast being found alive, a woman replaced the entrails and bound him up in her shawl and had him carried in security to [his] home where he recovered and lived to an advanced age. Some few persons still living have a vivid recollection of these cruel and savage times. One old man remembers going to the market with his father and saw men writhing in the agonies of death hanging between pillars of the market house. He tells of one event which he witnessed and which relieves the savagery of the scene. A man, John Martin, snatched a sword from one of the soldiers. He was dragged to the M[arket] H[ouse], the sword taken and hanged up on a peg. The delinquent was let away at the intercession of a magistrate present. While this was pending a soldier's wife took the sword from the peg to cut the rope by which one Tomas Eagan, a blacksmith, was hanging and blowing in death's agony. He came to and found means to escape to Dublin.

In this account, Ryves is perceived as the chief instigator of the executions. This collides with the ballad 'Dunlavin Green', where Saunders was repeatedly vilified.

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<sup>105</sup> Fusillade at Dunlavin green (NUI Maynooth, Shearman Papers, xvii, ff 127v-31)

Local oral tradition maintained that the Catholic priest of Dunlavin was the author of the ballad. If this was the case, the author could have been Fr. Paul Byrne, who died on 15 December 1799, aged thirty-four, and who is buried in Tornant graveyard, where the executed men were also interred.<sup>106</sup> The ballad is a broadside ballad, a genre kept alive in Ireland by the 1798 Rebellion.<sup>107</sup>

The prisoners were tied together before being shot and this has raised an anomaly about numbers. If the men were tied and executed in groups of five, as one source suggested,<sup>108</sup> this would imply that only 35 men (not 36) were shot. However, John Williams stated 'It was the lot of my father, the only Protestant that was shot, to be tied to Mat Farrel, a brave and resolute man'.<sup>109</sup> This indicates that the men were tied together in groups of two and/or three. Perhaps some of the twos and threes were shot together, thus causing the later confusion regarding groups of five. However, if 36 men were shot that day, only 35 died. Considering that the Ancient Britons were shooting at point-blank range and at stationary targets, and 'the aim was so sure and deadly that the first volley done the business'<sup>110</sup>, the survival of David Prendergast is incredible. Prendergast was shot in the stomach. He fell and lay still among the corpses until the soldiers left the scene of the execution. Prendergast was discovered, seriously wounded, rescued and smuggled out of the village to the home of Mr. Lee in Grifflinstown. Prendergast recovered and lived in Ballinacrow until 1842.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Fr. Patrick Finn, 'The View from the Mountains', *Dunlavin, Donard, Davidstown Parish Link*, iii, 5 [4?] (Oct 1997), p. 1.

<sup>107</sup> Matthew Hodgart, (ed), *The Faber Book of Ballad*, (London, 1965), p. 18-21 The use of the present tense in the ballad provides more evidence that it may be a primary source.

<sup>108</sup> *Leinster Leader*, 25 Sep 1948.

<sup>109</sup> John Williams cited in Dickson, *The Life of Michael Dwyer with some account of his companions*, p. 34. Also *Leinster Leader*, 25 Sep 1948.

<sup>110</sup> Dickson, *The Life of Michael Dwyer with some account of his companions*, pp 370-1.

<sup>111</sup> Chris Lawlor, 'Dunlavin in 1798', *Tenth Annual Dunlavin Festival of Arts Brochure*, (1992), p. 56. Local oral tradition maintained that Prendergast was dragged out of sight and hidden in a pigsty until he could be spirited away after dark. The pig dung congealed and acted as a kind of poultice, helping to

The effects of the Dunlavin atrocity rippled through the area. It entrenched the views of both sides. It represented a crossing of the Rubicon by the authorities and many rebels regarded it as the event that pushed them beyond the point of no return. The rift in the loyalist community and the enmity against Saunders before the massacre meant that the local circumstances of the preceding weeks made the event particularly chilling.<sup>112</sup> One commentator has noted:

At Dunlavin, it is true, the victims were yeomen, and there was good reason to suspect their fidelity. All over that region, the yeomen and especially the Catholic yeomen had gone over to the rebels. The garrison expected an attack at any moment. It is at times like this that one expects atrocities to occur.<sup>113</sup>

However, despite the expectations of the garrison, no attack was made on the village. In this respect Dunlavin was unlike Stratford-on-Slaney, where rebel deaths were caused by fighting, and unlike Ballymore Eustace, where the executions by the Ancient Britons were a direct reprisal for loyalist casualties during the fighting. There was a minor engagement involving Captain Richardson's Wicklow Militia near Dunlavin in the afternoon of 24 May,<sup>114</sup> but this occurred after the massacre, and had no bearing on the decision to shoot the prisoners. The authorities had implemented harsh counter-insurgency measures in west Wicklow for months and the methodical way in which the condemned men were bound together and shot in groups disabuses any contention that the garrison acted out of panic. It is more likely that the executions were intended to intimidate wavering rebels in Talbotstown and to punish

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stem the bleeding from his wounds and possibly saving his life. I am indebted to Mr. Michael Deering of Lemonstown for this information.

<sup>112</sup> Cullen, 'Politics and Rebellion: Wicklow in the 1790s', p. 469.

<sup>113</sup> Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty* (London, 1972), p. 156.

<sup>114</sup> N.A.I. 620/37/211A. Also O'Donnell, 'The Rebellion of 1798 in County Wicklow', p. 349 contains the following passage: 'Later in the day two to three hundred rebels in the vicinity of Dunlavin, a separate group from those repulsed from Stratford, may well have been about to attack before they were confronted by Richardson's militia and mounted yeomen (probably Ryves's cavalry corps) and driven off into the mountains'.

those whose comrades had inflicted heavy casualties in Ballymore-Eustace.<sup>115</sup>

Another commentator observed 'It is probable that the proximate cause of the massacre was fear that if the garrison was attacked the prisoners would escape'.<sup>116</sup>

The Dunlavin executions were the most striking manifestation of the overt sectarianism that had developed in the region during the 1790s. The authorities were motivated by fear, but the incident is remembered as the Dunlavin massacre. The emotive term 'massacre' is often applied to much larger events. It is defined as 'the act or an instance of killing a considerable number of human beings under circumstances of atrocity'.<sup>117</sup> While other massacres may have been larger, the execution of over 40 untried men in a village whose population was less than 1,000 people constitutes a massacre under the terms of its definition. In a regional context, 40 men constitutes 'a considerable number of human beings'. Massacres, though, are not to be ranked in order and judged by scale. Nothing can deflect from the horror and terror in the village of Dunlavin on that day. It was an appalling event, which became indelibly imprinted in the region's populist folk memory, and became central to how the villagers commemorated 1798 in later times.<sup>118</sup>

Paradoxically the massacre, which intended to ensure that rebellion did not break out, actually prolonged resistance in the region. The massacre contributed to the reluctance of Imaal's Michael Dwyer to accept a protection and turn himself in after the rebellion, ensuring that the Dunlavin region, especially the upland parts of Dunlavin parish, would become the scene of protracted guerrilla fighting for over five more

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<sup>115</sup> O'Donnell, 'The Rebellion of 1798 in Co. Wicklow', p. 349.

<sup>116</sup> Dickson, *The Life of Michael Dwyer with some account of his companions*, p. 34.

<sup>117</sup> Webster's third new international dictionary, (3 vols), ii (Chicago, 1986), p. 1388.

<sup>118</sup> An account of some of these commemorations appears in Chris Lawlor, *The longest rebellion* (Dublin, 2007), pp 154-76.

years.

### 5. Michael Dwyer's resistance.

Imaal, within the Roman Catholic parish of Dunlavin, was the birthplace of Michael Dwyer in 1772.<sup>119</sup> The long, narrow morphology of the glen, following the upper valley of the River Slaney, makes the area inaccessible from three sides. This physical isolation led to social isolation also. Dunlavin was the local market town and in 1798 the only mass house in the parish was located in Dunlavin and the Dwyers used it as their place of worship.

Michael Dwyer was born and raised a Glensman. He attended a hedge school run by Peter Burr, a protestant graduate of Trinity College and a liberal and progressive thinker.<sup>120</sup> Burr instilled his students with a sense of injustice regarding social, political and religious inequalities in this area, where the earl of Wicklow was the dominant landowner.<sup>121</sup> Dwyer spent his boyhood on the earl's lands, but his youth was laced with hardship. The only break from the laborious existence of the tenant farmer came in the form of illicit gambling sports such as dog or cock fighting and in the consumption of alcohol. According to his brother John, Michael was a 'well-behaved, good natured young man; moral in his conduct, civil and obliging to his

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<sup>119</sup> Charles Dickson, *The Life of Michael Dwyer with some account of his companions* (Dublin, 1944), p. 22.

<sup>120</sup> O'Donnell, *The Rebellion in Wicklow 1798*, p. 69. Also John Thomas Campion, *Michael Dwyer or the insurgent captain of the Wicklow Mountains: A tale of the rising in 1798* (Glasgow, undated), p. 5. A schoolmaster named Birr (probably the same man) was a member of the United Irishmen and he later ran for election as a captain in the Imaal area. Dickson, *The Life of Michael Dwyer with some account of his companions*, p. 23.

<sup>121</sup> Campion, *Michael Dwyer or the insurgent captain*, p. 6. The Howard family held the title of Earl of Wicklow and they had extensive lands, in Wicklow and Donegal. The Howards first came to Ireland in 1636, and in 1667 Ralph Howard M.D. acquired estates in north Arklow and the Glen of Imaal. Although the Howards lived at Shelton Abbey near Arklow, they retained a land agent in Imaal. Later, in 1776, another Ralph Howard was elevated to the peerage as Baron Clonmore of Clonmore castle, county Carlow. The Howard family were respected members of the landholding elite; in the early nineteenth century they held 2,330 acres of land in the Glen of Imaal. Heaney, 'Land and Life in the Glen of Imaal 1830-1901', p. 10.

acquaintances and very true to his friends; by no means quarrelsome but always of a bold and daring disposition'.<sup>122</sup>

Putnam McCabe's recruitment drive occurred during the summer of 1797;<sup>123</sup> and Dwyer joined the United Irishmen around this time.<sup>124</sup> The Dunlavin executions, including that of John Dwyer of Seskin, affected Dwyer deeply and the killings instilled in him a thirst for revenge, which was left unsatisfied right up to the time of his ultimate surrender in December 1803.<sup>125</sup> The arrest and ill treatment of his father, the death of his cousins and neighbours in Dunlavin gave a fixity of purpose to his determination that could scarcely be relaxed.<sup>126</sup>

The attentions of the authorities forced Dwyer into hiding during the week preceding the outbreak of rebellion. Thus Dwyer was cut off from the earliest hostilities in west Wicklow and he may have been unaware of the existence of insurgent camps in the border areas of counties Wicklow, Dublin and Kildare.<sup>127</sup> However, news of the defeat inflicted on Crown forces at Oulart Hill in county Wexford reached Dwyer on Tuesday 29 May.<sup>128</sup> On that day, Michael Dwyer decided to throw in his lot with the Wexford men and he set out for that county. He fought in north Wexford, and escaped from the doomed rebel force after Vinegar Hill.

Despite Dwyer playing a leading part in a rebel victory at Ballyellis on 30 June during

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<sup>122</sup> Elaine Hoxey and Caoimhin de Lion: *Michael Dwyer: Battle of Doire na Muc*, (Naas?, 1988), p. 4.

<sup>123</sup> John Smith to Cooke, 16 May 1797 (N.A.I., Rebellion Papers, 620/30/89). See also Cullen, 'Politics and Rebellion: Wicklow in the 1790s' pp 449 et seq. and Dickson, *The Life of Michael Dwyer with some account of his companions*, p. 25.

<sup>124</sup> Charles Dickson, *The Life of Michael Dwyer with some account of his companions* (Dublin, 1944), p. 25.

<sup>125</sup> O'Donnell: *The Rebellion in Wicklow 1798*, p. 178.

<sup>126</sup> Ronan (ed.), *Insurgent Wicklow 1798*, p. 49.

<sup>127</sup> O'Donnell: *The Rebellion in Wicklow 1798*, p. 165.

<sup>128</sup> Dickson: *The life of Michael Dwyer with some account of his companions*, p. 36.



which the Ancient Britons sustained losses of about thirty dead,<sup>129</sup> nothing could disguise the fact that the rebellion was effectively over. By July the tide of war had firmly turned in favour of the government forces. Retreat into the fastnesses of the Wicklow Mountains was now the only sensible option, and on 7 August Dwyer arrived back in Dunlavin parish and into the Glen of Imaal.<sup>130</sup> The community was close-knit, and Dwyer had many friends ready to shelter him. Even some elements of the yeomanry were prepared to harbour the fugitive.<sup>131</sup> He also had an extended web of kinship and could rely on popular support, a factor crucial to the longevity of his mountain campaign.<sup>132</sup> Such support and shelter influenced Dwyer's decision not to avail of a protection offered him in August. He also feared becoming the target of a loyalist reprisal attack.<sup>133</sup> Loyalist attacks, such as the murder of John Metcalf on Church Mountain in August 1798 continued to punctuate Dunlavin parish.<sup>134</sup> Following Holt's surrender in November, the intrepid Dwyer was the only insurgent leader of note still at large in the Wicklow Mountains.

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<sup>129</sup> I am indebted to Mr. Paul Haycock, a military historian of Wigton, Cumbria, for this information.

<sup>130</sup> Dickson: *The life of Michael Dwyer with some account of his companions*, p. 47.

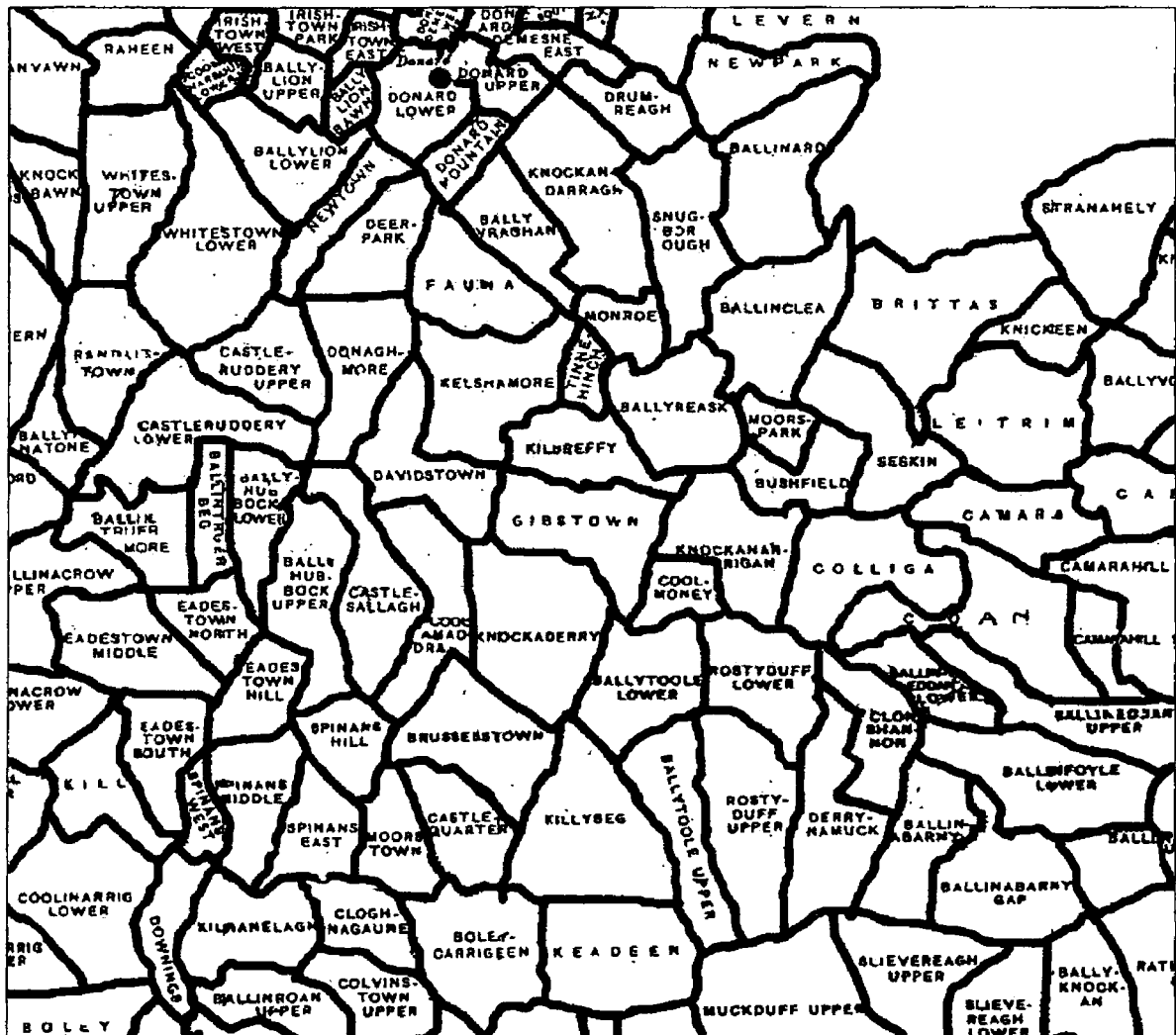
<sup>131</sup> Thomas Bartlett, 'Masters of the mountains: the insurgent careers of Joseph Holt and Michael Dwyer, County Wicklow, 1798-1803', Hannigan and Nolan (eds.), *Wicklow: History and Society* (Dublin, 1994), p. 387.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 386.

<sup>133</sup> Lawlor, *The Massacre on Dunlavin Green*, p. 126. See also O'Donnell: *The Rebellion in Wicklow 1798*, p. 296.

<sup>134</sup> Fusillade at Dunlavin green (N.U.I. Maynooth, Shearman Papers, xvii, f. 131)

**Map 14. Townlands in upland Dunlavin parish, centred on Donard and Imaal,  
mentioned in the text.**



Source: Townlands index.

From this time onward, much information about Dwyer becomes anecdotal. No more than fifteen men usually accompanied Dwyer.<sup>135</sup> Sometimes the number of followers was as low as three. Given these conditions and the overwhelming odds, many episodes relating to Dwyer concern his narrow escapes from the authorities and his harassing of Crown forces. These activities were carried out in close proximity to Dunlavin, ensuring that the village and its hinterland remained unsettled and volatile in the aftermath of the 1798 rebellion. In November 1798, for example, Dwyer's band attacked a contingent of the 89<sup>th</sup> Highland Regiment that had been detailed to collect peat in Imaal. The Highlanders were almost out of ammunition when Saunders and his yeomanry corps, who had heard the shooting, arrived to save the beleaguered group. The Saundersgrove men were greeted by 'above three hundred' musket balls, and retreated quickly with the Highlanders.<sup>136</sup> Such incidents unsettled the military and heightened the tension in Dunlavin parish, where the threat posed by Dwyer and his band was uppermost in many loyalist minds. This mindset was demonstrated by the shooting and wounding of Joseph Molyneaux, a member of Ryves' Dunlavin cavalry unit, who was incoherent when giving the password to a vigilant sentry, who took no chances regarding the defence of Dunlavin!<sup>137</sup> As 1799 dawned, despite determined efforts to capture him in December 1798,<sup>138</sup> Dwyer held out in Imaal.

The next phase of Michael Dwyer's insurgent career was the one that established his renown. Dwyer's guerrilla war has been well documented elsewhere.<sup>139</sup> Dwyer was

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<sup>135</sup> O'Donnell: *The Rebellion in Wicklow 1798*, p. 340.

<sup>136</sup> *Finns Leinster Journal*, 1 Dec 1798.

<sup>137</sup> *Finns Leinster Journal*, 1 Dec 1798.

<sup>138</sup> Dickson, *The life of Michael Dwyer with some account of his companions*, p. 99.

<sup>139</sup> Books on Dwyer include Charles Dickson, *The life of Michael Dwyer with some account of his companions* (Dublin, 1944); Myles V. Ronan (ed.), *Insurgent Wicklow 1798* (Dublin, 1948); Kieran Sheedy, *Upon the Mercy of Government and The Tellicherry Five*, (Dublin, 1988 and Dublin, 1997); Ruán O'Donnell, *Aftermath: Post-Rebellion Insurgency in Wicklow 1799-1803*, (Dublin, 1999), Elaine Hoxey and Caoimhin de Lion, *Michael Dwyer – Battle of Doire na Muc*, (Donard, 1988); John Thomas

not a mere criminal or bandit. From late 1798 onwards banditry and minor raids continued as long as there were small numbers of unreconciled rebels and this could not be considered as insurrectionary warfare.<sup>140</sup> However, Dwyer was a United Irish captain and his status as a rebel leader was real enough. While small-scale operations were his principal *modus operandi* during the protracted guerrilla campaign, there was always the element of striking crown forces. Dwyer's operations were of necessity small-scale due to the dearth of numbers within his following. Moreover, the very nature of guerrilla warfare involves small bands that hit both hard and fast before moving on rapidly. Such a campaign suited Dwyer, who was on home territory and whose fieldcraft and survival skills were of the highest order.<sup>141</sup>

As the campaign progressed Dwyer became a household name. He was far better known than many of the now more famous United Irishmen whose roles were re-appraised during the post-famine era.<sup>142</sup> Dwyer's exploits were well known during his lifetime and news of his daring escapades fuelled the growth of his legend. With every daring raid or narrow escape, his reputation grew.

Dwyer's mountain campaign of guerrilla warfare, which continued until 1803, had a detrimental effect on the economy of Dunlavin parish and of west Wicklow generally.

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Campion, *Michael Dwyer or the insurgent captain of the Wicklow Mountains: A tale of the rising in 1798*, Glasgow (no date); Chris Lawlor, *In search of Michael Dwyer* (Naas, 2003). Essays include Thomas Bartlett, 'Masters of the mountains: the insurgent careers of Joseph Holt and Michael Dwyer, County Wicklow, 1798-1803', Ken Hannigan and William Nolan (eds.), *Wicklow: History and Society* (Dublin, 1994); Paul Gorry, 'The Family of Michael Dwyer', *Journal of the West Wicklow Historical Society*, i, 1983-1984; Joe Whittle SDB, 'Michael Dwyer of 1798: the day the quiet sow saved his bacon', *Dunlavin Festival of Arts Brochure*, xvi, (Dunlavin, 2003); Con Costello, 'Michael Dwyer in Captivity', *Journal of the West Wicklow Historical Society*, II, 1985/1986. Ranging from the academic and insightful through the specialist to the anecdotal, all have something to add to the body of historical information on Dwyer.

<sup>140</sup> O'Donnell: *The Rebellion in Wicklow 1798*, p. 340.

<sup>141</sup> Bartlett, 'Masters of the mountains', p. 388.

<sup>142</sup> O'Donnell: *The Rebellion in Wicklow 1798*, p. 5.

A survey of county Wicklow undertaken in 1800 recorded that the complete baronies of Upper Talbotstown and Ballinacor, 'almost 100,00 acres in extent' had been 'wholly laid waste' and the survey noted that 'it was not safe to explore it'.<sup>143</sup> There were huge 'unimproved wastes' all across 'a vast extent on the tract of country around Dunlavin and extending to the Tallaght hills' amounting to 'between eight and ten thousand acres'.<sup>144</sup> The survey also stated 'from the destruction which took place in this part of the country, many have not yet rebuilt their houses or returned to the country... almost every house in this neighbourhood has been destroyed except Russborough, [the seat of the Earl of Milltown] which is formed into a garrison'.<sup>145</sup> This state of affairs was due to the activities of Dwyer and his followers. Rathsalagh House, the seat of William Ryves, was also burned out during this period. After the rebellion had ended, Mary Shackleton, a Quaker from Ballitore, and a friend went to Rathsalagh in order to retrieve 'some of our plundered property' which Ryves, as a magistrate, was safeguarding.<sup>146</sup>

The way seemed long, lonely and dreary. The large old mansion of Rathsalagh exhibited a melancholy air. Its neglected appearance, barricaded windows, the absence of the female part of the family and the presence of a military guard made us think our own situation preferable, as we were permitted to enjoy domestic comfort. Some of our things were here and while the squire restored them to us, he smiled, and warned us of our danger of being robbed again.

Many other big houses in west Wicklow also suffered due to the longevity of the insurgency. In the 1830s it was reported that in Blessington 'The Marquis of

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<sup>143</sup> Robert Fraser, *General view of the agriculture and mineralogy present state and circumstances of the County Wicklow with observations on the means of their improvement drawn up for the consideration of the Dublin Society* (Dublin 1801), p. 98. [Though published in 1801, the text was written in 1800].

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 91 and 97.

<sup>146</sup> Shackleton cited in Lawlor, *The longest rebellion*, pp. 85-6. Captain William Ryves died in Feb 1803 and was succeeded by his son, also William, a solicitor, who took over as captain of his father's yeomanry corps.

Downshire has a handsome mansion . . . the interior was burned by the insurgents in 1798 and has not been restored'. In Ballymore-Eustace 'the late Earl of Milltown took a lively interest in this spot . . . but owing to the disturbances of 1798 he went abroad'. In Boystown or Baltiboy's 'there are several gentlemen's seats, among them are Tulfarris, the seat of R. Hornidge, Esq. which was partly burned by the insurgents in 1798'.<sup>147</sup>

Evidence about the negative impact of the continuing insurgency on the economy of the Dunlavin area is also provided by the claims for compensation made after the 1798 rebellion.<sup>148</sup> The staples of the rural economy, such as arable crops, potatoes, livestock, working horses, timber and fuel were all ruined during the violence. The claims point to the destruction of the rural economy around Dunlavin: for example Patrick Mullally of Lemonstown lost two mares, a bull and sheep worth £37; Richard Whittle of Merginstown claimed for a house, sheep and flax (to supply the textile industry in nearby Stratford-on-Slaney and Baltinglass) worth £22 and George Powell of Dunlavin lost livestock worth nearly £40.<sup>149</sup> Many people of substance, such as Edward Fisher of Merginstown, had their properties burned down. As much of the rural economy centred on the big houses, attacks on them impacted negatively on those dependant on the landlords as buyers and employers. Fisher claimed the not insignificant sum of £873 17s.1d. for a house, furniture and clothes. Local oral tradition maintains that Tober House, the seat of the Powell family, was also burned out at this time. William Powell of Tober claimed compensation for timber, crops, pigs, clothes and a house, but the amount requested cannot be established due to

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<sup>147</sup> Samuel Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland* (1837), cited in Dermot James and Seamas Ó Maitiu (eds), *The Wicklow world of Elizabeth Smith 1840-1850* (Dublin, 1996), pp 151-4.

<sup>148</sup> Appendix five lists the claims made in the Dunlavin area.

<sup>149</sup> John Lynott, '1798 Claims', *Ninth annual Dunlavin festival of arts brochure* (1991), pp 15-8.

damage to the original claim.<sup>150</sup> The Powells never rebuilt Tober House and left the Dunlavin area early in the nineteenth century. Despite a reward of 500 guineas being offered for his capture,<sup>151</sup> Dwyer held out for more than five years, during which west Wicklow stagnated and was perceived as an unsafe area. Economically, Dwyer's activities impacted profoundly and negatively on the Dunlavin region and on west Wicklow generally.

As the years passed, hope of French intervention, which sustained Dwyer's rebel group, diminished. In July 1803 Robert Emmet's attempted revolt petered out amid a mixture of incompetence and bad luck.<sup>152</sup> Meanwhile the net was tightening on Dwyer and his followers. The completion of the military road through the mountains was a major boost to the Crown forces.<sup>153</sup> This considerably hampered Dwyer's capacity for movement within the heart of the mountains. The military also pursued a campaign of arrests against known or suspected friends and relations of Dwyer, straining his kinship network almost to breaking point. When a renewed military campaign against him began on 10 December 1803,<sup>154</sup> Dwyer's thoughts turned to the drawing up of terms of surrender. He made overtures via his wife to local M.P.

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

<sup>151</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 15 Jul 1800. Smaller rewards were also offered for the capture of John Memagh, John Harman, John Porter, Andrew Thomas, Thomas Halpin, William Burke, Christopher Byrne, John Byrne, Patrick Byrne, Bartle Byrne, James Cullen, Hugh Byrne, Martin Burke, Lawrence Harman, Nicholas Harman, James Doyle, John Mangan, John Byrne, Terence Byrne, Edward Brady, George Doyle, James Kelly, Miles Toole, Charles Hannigan, William Grant, James Kelly, Thomas Grant, Richard Butler, John Arnold, James Flin, John Clary, Denis Redmond, Lawrence Cavanagh, Michael Byrne and William Bryan. Repeated names refer to different people.

<sup>152</sup> Sean McMahon: *Robert Emmet* (Cork, 2001), p. 41. For a detailed account of the actual rising, see Ruan O'Donnell, *Robert Emmet and the rising of 1803* (Dublin, 2003), pp 56-109.

<sup>153</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 1 Oct 1800 contains a report on the progress of the building of the road. The road was not fully completed until 1809, but enough of it was operational for it to become a major factor in Dwyer's decision to end his military campaign in 1803. O'Donnell: *Exploring Wicklow's Rebel Past*, p 32. Military barracks were occupied at strategic points along this road. There were garrisons stationed at Leitrim, Glencree, Seven Churches, Glenmalur and Aughavanna. *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Mar 1803.

<sup>154</sup> Kieran Sheedy: *Upon the mercy of government* (Dublin, 1988), p. 43.

William Hume of Humewood, who gave some assurances to Mary Dwyer.<sup>155</sup> The exact nature of these assurances, or at least of Hume's ability to honour them, is unclear. Certainly Dwyer's life was to be spared<sup>156</sup> and safe passage to America for four of his leading followers and himself was probably agreed upon.<sup>157</sup> Dwyer laid down his arms on what he believed were his own terms and surrendered himself to Hume on 14 December 1803,<sup>158</sup> ending a long campaign.<sup>159</sup>

Posthumously Dwyer became an icon for nationalists and later, for nationalist historians. Later nationalist historians used his guerrilla campaign as a form of propaganda. In reality though, Dwyer's guerrilla campaign ensured that west Wicklow remained turbulent for nearly six years – seven, if one includes the counter-insurgency measures adopted in the area from the autumn of 1797 onwards. Economically this was disastrous, and the slow process of recovery from the violent upheaval of the campaign began in Dunlavin parish as the nineteenth century dawned.

## Conclusion.

This chapter focussed principally on the 1798 rebellion in Dunlavin and its environs. The period exposed differences and created divisions in west Wicklow that left a long register. The moderate reforms of the Volunteers were sidelined as sectarianism increased in the 1790s. The accommodation that had existed between religions during most of the eighteenth century became strained, and the divisions within late eighteenth century society widened. The paternalism of the elite was challenged, and

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<sup>155</sup> Sheedy: *Upon the mercy of government*, p. 47. See also O'Donnell: *Aftermath: Post-Rebellion Insurgency in Wicklow 1799-1803*, p. 171.

<sup>156</sup> Sheedy: *Upon the mercy of government*, p. 47.

<sup>157</sup> Wicklow County Council, *Wicklow commemorating 1798-1998: Calendar of Events*, p. 19.

<sup>158</sup> Ronan (ed.), *Insurgent Wicklow 1798*, p. 124.

<sup>159</sup> For a brief account of Dwyer's later life see Lawlor, *The longest rebellion*, pp 106-8 and 186-8.



the rise of ultra loyalism at the expense of liberalism provided the conditions in which harsh counter-insurgency measures could sweep through the area, leading to fracture. The Dunlavin massacre was one of the worst atrocities engendered in this climate. It was also the most ferocious manifestation of sectarianism in west Wicklow since the 1641 rebellion. The executions engendered resentment in the locality and Michael Dwyer's campaign in the upland part of Dunlavin parish kept the area unstable until December 1803. The instability also had economic effects, and Dunlavin and its environs had a shattered economy and a war-torn landscape as the nineteenth century began in a climate of mistrust, in which paternalism would be difficult to restore.

## **CHAPTER FOUR.**

### **A TIME OF GROWTH: THE DUNLAVIN REGION IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY.**

#### **Introduction.**

The early nineteenth century in Leinster was an era of rebuilding as those parts of the province that had experienced rebellion in 1798 came to terms with the destructive legacy of the event. Dunlavin's agrarian economy recovered slowly, and the village and its region embarked upon an era of unprecedented demographic growth. This put pressure on resources, especially land, and resistance, particularly to tithe, but more generally to landlord power, surfaced in the region. The deference enjoyed by the elite in Dunlavin was irrecoverable in the wake of 1798, despite the Tyntes becoming resident in the 1830s. They contrived, like many landlords in the early nineteenth century, to restore the paternalistic model of landlordism that had prevailed in the eighteenth century, but with limited success. Changes in leasing practices and agricultural techniques were part of the culture of improvement, but the rapid population growth of the era, and the resulting intensified competition for agricultural land, produced a patchwork of smallholders, increasingly dependant on the potato crop for survival, which acted as an obstacle and prevented agricultural restructuring. Suspicion and unrest generated by the Tithe War was compounded, both by the increasing politicisation of the tenantry, and the greater economic instability of the kingdom, and criminality increased among the ever-expanding pre-Famine population. The elite faced new threats, but the dependence of the poor on the potato crop meant that the peasantry was still more vulnerable to the threat of famine.

This chapter contains six sections, the first of which examines the Dunlavin region's recovery from the turmoil of the 1798-1803 period. Section two focuses on the social and agricultural situation, using two surveys of county Wicklow, undertaken in the first decade of the century, to illuminate landlord-tenant relations. Section three evaluates population growth in the region. The availability of Roman Catholic parish records from 1815 permits the partial reconstruction of the demography of the village before the first major census of Ireland was taken in 1821. This was followed by further censuses in 1831 and 1841, from which a picture of steady population growth can be traced. Section four analyses the impact of the introduction of a new tithe-paying system, which engendered resentment within the locality, and encouraged resistance, which principally manifested itself in agrarian protest, and a hill near Dunlavin village was the scene of a significant anti-tithe demonstration in 1832. The Tithe War created deep divisions in a region where land and landholding was central not only to material success, but also, for smallholders, to their very survival. Section five analyses social developments, focussing on education, health and religion. The final section examines the area in the immediate pre-famine years, using sources such as Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary*, the Devon Commission report and the *Parliamentary Gazetteer*, to provide a snapshot of the Dunlavin area on the eve of the Great Famine.

### **1. The impact of 1798: Dunlavin and its upland environs, 1801-1805.**

Michael Dwyer's campaign ensured that west Wicklow remained volatile in 1801. Though much has been written about Dwyer's activities, the impact of his military campaign on the economy of west Wicklow has been largely ignored, as studies to date have concentrated on the political and military ramifications of his resistance. This is understandable, as many commentators perceived Dwyer's campaign as an extension of the 1798 rebellion, and many sources, such as the rebellion papers and the state of the country papers, are almost solely military and political in character. They do not reflect well the fact that Dwyer's campaign was highly disruptive and had important negative economic consequences. The proprietors and landowners of the region remained extremely concerned by lawlessness and its economic effects.<sup>1</sup> The Saundersgrove and Dunlavin yeomanry continued on high alert during the early years of the nineteenth century. The wintry conditions early in 1801 increased the level of hardship for the mountain rebels,<sup>2</sup> operating in an area devastated by the persistence of rebellion. Attacks on elite properties, including the 'big houses' at Blessington, Ballymore Eustace, Boystown, Russborough, Tulfarris, Tober and Rathsallagh may have been aimed at landlords, but they also adversely affected the tenantry and poorer sections of the population, as these properties and their estates formed a key element of the local agrarian economy. Additionally, private dwellings of loyal farmers had to be fortified as 'precautions were necessary due to the late disturbances'.<sup>3</sup> The necessity of such measures was driven home by rebel attacks, such as that experienced by 'a good subject and loyal inhabitant of Merginstown', about three miles from Dunlavin, whose house was torched and completely destroyed in 1799. Cattle were also lost in the attack, underlining the impact of Dwyer's

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Fewer, *The Wicklow military road* (Dublin, 2007), p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Ruán O'Donnell, *Aftermath: post-rebellion insurgency in Wicklow 1799-1803* (Dublin, 2000), p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Sep 1799.

continuing activities on the agrarian economy of the district.<sup>4</sup>

Loyal inhabitants of west Wicklow looked to the military to protect their livelihoods.

In March 1799, it was reported that 'county Wicklow is much indebted to the indefatigable exertions of Mr. [William] Ryves, who risked his life as a soldier in defence of his country and friends'.<sup>5</sup> In October of the same year, 'a numerous meeting of loyalists unanimously voted their thanks to Lieutenant Morrice of the Clare militia, and to the party under his command at Davidstown (in the Glen of Imaal) for the protection which they afforded to loyal subjects'.<sup>6</sup>

In 1800, Robert Fraser, the author of agricultural reports on Devon and Cornwall, surveyed county Wicklow. His findings were published at the behest of the Dublin Society in 1801. Fraser's enquiry noted the impact of the 'much to be lamented disturbances of this country' on the upland section of Dunlavin parish. Fraser estimated that the Glen of Imaal contained 'not much less than ten thousand acres of rich land', but noted that the region was 'scarcely anything but a naked desolate wild', because of generations of underdevelopment, a situation worsened by the protracted violence in the region:

The total want of regular inclosures, even the want of the remains of buildings, except some long in ruins, the want of trees and plantations, evince that the neglect of the natural advantages of this country must be traced to far more distant times than the beginning of the late disasters. And I am afraid it will require more attention from the proprietors to recover it from this state, than the restoration alone of tranquillity is likely to induce them to afford.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Sep 1799.

<sup>5</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Mar 1799. Ryves apprehended sixteen rebels at Redgap and was scouring the Ballymore Eustace area for more insurgent stragglers.

<sup>6</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 19 Oct 1799.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Fraser, *General view of the agriculture and mineralogy, present state and circumstances of the County Wicklow* (Dublin, 1801), pp 86-7. Hereafter cited as Fraser, *General view... of the County Wicklow*.

The lack of enclosure in Imaal was identified as a symptom of the primitive farming that was a feature of this area. This was gradually remedied as the nineteenth century advanced and the glen was divided into regular orderly fields,<sup>8</sup> though this did not begin until after the conclusion of Dwyer's military campaign.

Rebel raids on properties in west Wicklow accentuated the impact of the national food shortage in early 1801, when the failure of the potato crop inflated the prices of locally produced comestibles. This was compounded by hoarding as General Eustace confirmed in February, when he reported that its farmers 'do not thresh in expectation of higher prices'.<sup>9</sup> This situation was exacerbated by continuing rebel activity, and in April it was reported that rebel unrest in the mountainous parts of west Wicklow was 'kept up with great assiduity by some leading persons in Dublin, who frequently send messages to Dwyer'.<sup>10</sup>

The durability of the rebels in the uplands adjoining Dunlavin continued even after the Peace of Amiens confirmed that French aid would not be forthcoming.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, work continued on the building of the Military Road through the mountains, and new barracks were erected along the route.<sup>12</sup> This measure had military value, but was it also a positive infrastructural addition to west Wicklow, diminishing the isolation of remote parts of the county, although it had only a marginal effect on the inhabitants of Dunlavin, who had a more convenient route to

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<sup>8</sup> F. H. A. Aalen, 'The origin of enclosures in eastern Ireland' in N. Stephens and R. E. Glasscock (eds), *Irish geographical studies in honour of E. Estyn Evans* (Belfast, 1970), p. 218.

<sup>9</sup> Lieut. General Eustace to Colonel Edward Littlehales, 3 Feb 1801 (T.N.A., HO 100/103/39). See also *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, 13 Feb 1801.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas King to ?, 8 Apl 1801 (N.A.I., Rebellion papers, 620/49/99)

<sup>11</sup> This treaty was signed on 27 Mar 1802, ending hostilities between France and Britain.

<sup>12</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Mar 1803.

east Wicklow via Hollywood and over the Wicklow Gap. Despite the new road and its associated strongholds, rebel attacks continued in the Imaal through 1802 and 1803, and in June 1803 the unguarded Leitrim barracks was damaged in an attack perpetrated by two members of Dwyer's faction, John Mernagh and Laurence O'Keefe.<sup>13</sup> The economy of Imaal and upland west Wicklow remained stultified by rebel violence and the region stagnated economically, as activities such as sheep farming and cutting peat remained dangerous until Dwyer ended his resistance in December 1803. Moreover, disquiet continued to manifest itself among the populace of west Wicklow during Dwyer's captivity in Kilmainham Gaol,<sup>14</sup> and the economic and social wounds of the long period of sporadic violence only began to heal after Dwyer's departure for Australia in August 1805.

## **2. Landholding and landlord-tenant relationships: Dunlavin, 1801-1815.**

Robert Fraser's report on county Wicklow was wide-ranging and the first significant attempt to survey the county's geography, economy, demography, climate, soils and minerals. Appropriately, much of the work focussed on arable and pastoral agriculture, and farms and farming methods in the county came under Fraser's scrutiny.

Fraser divided county Wicklow into four districts, locating Dunlavin and its environs in 'the western alluvial district'.<sup>15</sup> Starting with geomorphology, he clearly elucidated how economic activity in the region was determined by its environment. He identified strata of limestone, suitable for the extraction of gravel, through the whole district,

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<sup>13</sup> Cullen Papers (N.L.I., MS 8339, f. 66)

<sup>14</sup> Chris Lawlor, *The longest rebellion* (Dublin, 2007), p. 106. Also William Hoare Hume to 'My Dear Sir', 12 May 1805 (N.A.I., Rebellion papers, 620/14/186/7)

<sup>15</sup> Fraser, *General view... of the County Wicklow*, p. 79.

though the fact that he did not specify gravel pits suggests that the small pits a mile or so from Dunlavin in the townlands of Milltown and Knockandort used during the mid-nineteenth century were not then in operation.<sup>16</sup> Since the landscape around Dunlavin was composed of ‘low hills, long and flat, with hollows intervening’,<sup>17</sup> covered in heath and furze and with a hard upper layer of soil, the land was difficult to work, though if this layer was removed the land could be drained and cultivated, even for arable crops. The most unimproved lands comprised a ‘vast extent on the tract of country around Dunlavin and extending to the Tallagh[t] hills in county Dublin’.<sup>18</sup> The altitude of these hills made improvement difficult, but the area around Dunlavin was lower, at about six hundred feet above sea level,<sup>19</sup> and Fraser pointedly identified ‘unimproved wastes’ in this locality. His comments on the lack of improvement around Dunlavin were an indictment of the Tynte estate and its absentee owners.

The indictment is still more striking because Fraser praised the improvements carried out around other the principal urban centres in west Wicklow, Blessington and Baltinglass. He also lauded the improvements made on the estates of William Hume of Humewood, Richard Greene of Kilranelagh, and Morley Saunders of Saundersgrove, whose daughter, Lady Hannah Tynte Caldwell, was the owner of the Dunlavin Tynte estate.<sup>20</sup> She was the widow of Sir James Stratford Tynte, and subsequently the wife of Fitzmaurice Caldwell of county Fermanagh. The couple divided their time between Cheltenham, where Fitzmaurice died in 1830,<sup>21</sup> and

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<sup>16</sup> I am indebted to the late Mr. Joseph Deering of Milltown for this information.

<sup>17</sup> Fraser, *General view... of the County Wicklow*, p. 79.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, pp 80-1.

<sup>19</sup> The six hundred foot contour line runs through Dunlavin village.

<sup>20</sup> Fraser, *General view... of the County Wicklow*, pp 90-2.

<sup>21</sup> Sylvanus Urban, *The gentleman's magazine and historical chronicle from Jan to Jun 1830*, C, i (London, 1830), p. 379.



Dublin, where Hannah died in 1840.<sup>22</sup> Fraser found no attempt to improve their Dunlavin holding, even though the Dublin Society offered premiums for the growing of potatoes and, when treated with limestone, similar land produced a potato crop that was 'much more luxuriant than the crops' he examined in Dunlavin.<sup>23</sup>

Fraser also addressed field size in his survey. He found that fields in pastoral areas averaged between five and eight acres in size, but fields in arable regions were larger, averaging between ten and fifteen acres. Fraser noted that bigger fields were the norm on large farms and on demesnes.<sup>24</sup> It is difficult to draw conclusions regarding the Dunlavin region, as Fraser's figures referred to the county as a whole. However, most of Dunlavin civil parish was a fertile lowland area, free of bog and close to the lime-rich lands of county Kildare. It contained much arable land, as evidenced by Nevill's map of 1760, and was on the edge of the midland cattle-fattening belt. William Nolan identified Dunlavin, and the contiguous civil parishes of Tober, Crehelp, Rathsallagh and Ballynure, as having the second-highest rents in pre-Famine county Wicklow.<sup>25</sup> Middlemen also contributed to high rents in the region. Lady Tynte Caldwell, through her land agent John J. Creamer of Cork, rented land at ten shillings per acre to the Bookeys of Derrybawn,<sup>26</sup> who in turn rented 251 acres to Anthony Allen of Logatrina at 30s. per acre. Allen was a progressive farmer who tilled about twenty acres and had his own threshing machine, worked by three horses. He also sowed five

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<sup>22</sup> Sylvanus Urban, *The gentleman's magazine from Jan to Jun 1840*, xiii (London, 1840), p. 558.

<sup>23</sup> Fraser, *General view... of the County Wicklow*, pp 81 and 85.

<sup>24</sup> Fraser, *General view... of the County Wicklow*, p. 225.

<sup>25</sup> William Nolan, 'Land and landscape in County Wicklow c.1840' in Ken Hannigan and William Nolan (eds), *Wicklow: History and Society* (Dublin, 1994), p. 675. The highest rents were in northeast Wicklow, where quality of land and proximity to Dublin's urban market contributed to increasing land values.

<sup>26</sup> Derrybawn, the seat of the Bookey family, is near Glendalough. William Truelove Bookey lived in a 'neat modern edifice, which stands in a thicket of trees and connects to extensive plantations on the mountainside'. James Fraser, *A handbook for travellers in Ireland, descriptive of scenery, towns, seats, antiquities etc., with various statistical tables. Also an outline of its mineral structure, a brief view of its botany and information for anglers* (Dublin, 1844), p. 111.

acres of turnips and grew a large quantity of clover, while grazing sheep, cattle and horses on the remainder of the land.<sup>27</sup>

Allen's farm was mixed, pastoral and arable. Fraser reported on both types of agriculture, but his remarks are not specific to Dunlavin. He found that the areas around the valleys of the Liffey (near Blessington) and the Slaney (near Baltinglass) contained 'many meadows of excellent pasture'.<sup>28</sup> Dunlavin lies between the two river valleys, but an upland ridge to the eastern side of the village ensures that Dunlavin and the area drained by the River Griese and its tributaries is in the basin of the River Barrow.<sup>29</sup> Conditions, however, were very similar to the Liffey and Slaney valleys, and it is likely that the pasture around the Dunlavin lowlands would be of similar quality.

Fraser also reported that 'excellent crops of potatoes' were produced in west Wicklow.<sup>30</sup> He thought that both the quality of the land and the size of the yields could be improved and advocated a new system of crop rotation to include wheat, barley, tares (vetches), clover and oats, but he noted that:

The great obstacle to the general adoption of a proper course of crops arises from the precarious nature of the tenant's interest in the ground, which impels him to draw as much from the land as he can during his lease, which can only be done by cropping in a way, which the land can not sustain in perpetuity.

The landed estate system was central to rural society in county Wicklow, and leases were an integral part of that system. Moreover, as competition for land increased due

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<sup>27</sup> Nolan, 'Land and landscape in County Wicklow c.1840', p. 675.

<sup>28</sup> Fraser, *General view... of the County Wicklow*, p. 179.

<sup>29</sup> For an excellent appraisal of the effect of the Griese on the Dunlavin area see Joseph Whittle SBD, 'Tober, Grangebeg and the Griese', *Dunlavin festival of arts brochure*, xxiii (Naas, 2005), pp 126-30.

<sup>30</sup> Fraser, *General view... of the County Wicklow*, p. 134.

to the rise in population, better prices and inflation, rents rose. In 1796, the earl of Clonmel observed that ‘in the county Wicklow and other places, grounds that had been set for 5s. an acre, were now three guineas’.<sup>31</sup> William Nolan has suggested that in the late eighteenth century, leases in county Wicklow were for three named lives.<sup>32</sup> The absence of Tynte estate records makes it difficult to confirm if this was the case in the environs of Dunlavin, but the records of Lord Wicklow’s estate in the nearby Glen of Imaal suggest that most leases in this area of west Wicklow were for longer rather than shorter terms. Of 67 extant leases, dating from between 1709 and 1826, ten, or 15 per cent, were leases for three named lives, but a further twenty, or 31 per cent, were for a period of 31 years or three lives.<sup>33</sup> The length of six leases was unspecified, and the longest single lease covered a period of 61 years.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, a further six, or 9 per cent, were for a period of 26 years and twenty-one others, or 32 per cent, were 21-year agreements. There was one ten-year lease, one for one life but only one for one year (figure 9). This system of long leases was operable in a stable economic climate, but the protracted impact of the 1798 rebellion and the recession following the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 depressed commodity prices and created problems for tenants, who found it difficult to meet the terms of leases made in better times. To compound matters, landlords now deemed long leases disadvantageous electorally as well as economically; thus county Wicklow saw the implementation of shorter, fixed-term leases during the early nineteenth century.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> James Kelly (ed), *Proceedings of the Irish House of Lords 1771-1800* (3 vols, Dublin, 2008), iii, 99.

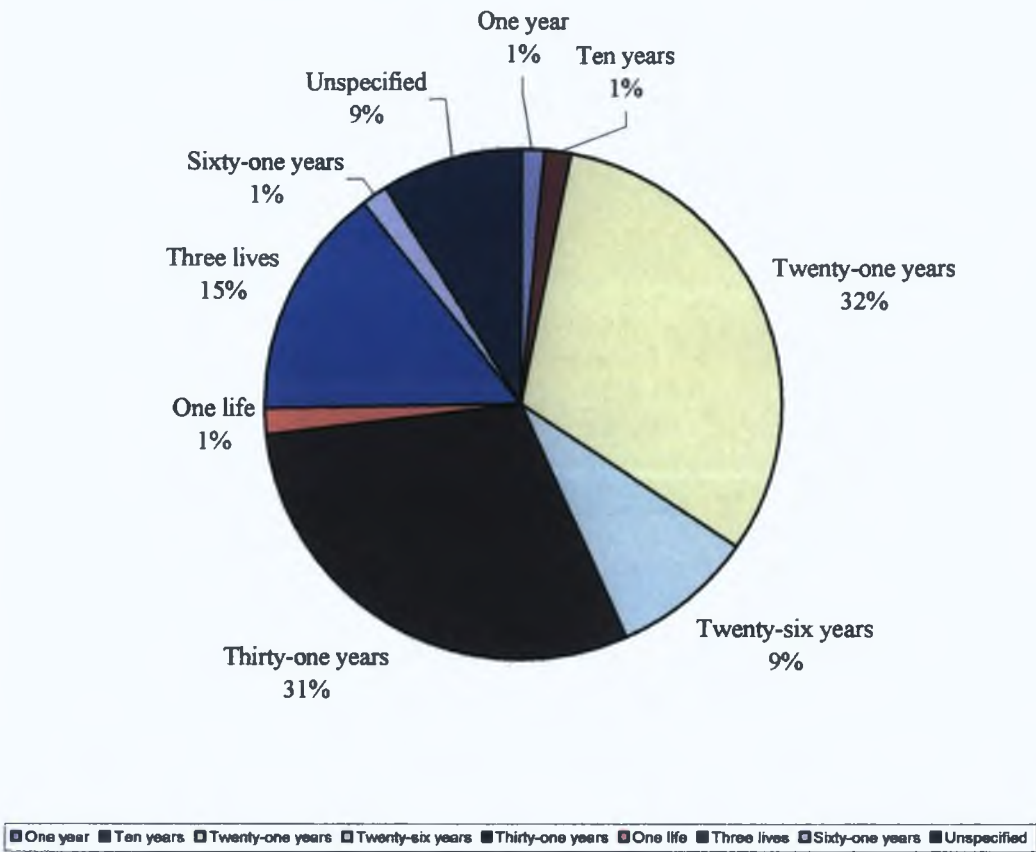
<sup>32</sup> Nolan, ‘Land and landscape in County Wicklow c.1840’, p. 665.

<sup>33</sup> Leases for various townlands in the barony of Talbotstown, 1709 to 1826 (N.L.I., Wicklow papers, MSS 38,579/1(1) to 38,579/47 inclusive)

<sup>34</sup> Lease of lands at Whitestown, Upper Talbotstown, County Wicklow between William Ryves and Thomas Cleary of Denmark Street, Dublin, 2 Nov 1826 (N.L.I., Wicklow papers, MS 38,579/47)

<sup>35</sup> Nolan, ‘Land and landscape in County Wicklow c.1840’, p. 665.

**Figure 9: Length of leases on Lord Wicklow's estate in the Glen of Imaal 1709-1826**



**Source:** Wicklow papers, Mss 38,579/1(1) to 38,579/47.

The Marquess of Downshire endorsed this change in leasing policy, which was encouraged by political considerations, in relation to his lands at Blessington, when he wrote to his agent in west Wicklow, Thomas Murray: <sup>36</sup>

It appears that lives are no longer indispensable to confer an elective franchise on a tenant in Ireland and therefore that years only are required, say fourteen or twenty-one. As to the size of holdings to be leased I shall prefer forty to fifty acres in order gradually to accustom to enlarge their bounds and keep them so.

The elective franchise of tenants on shorter leases was also a cause of concern to

<sup>36</sup> W. A. Maguire (ed), *Letters of a great Irish landlord, a selection from the estate correspondence of the third marquess of Downshire, 1809-1845* (Belfast, 1974), p. 145.

Robert Saunders of Saundersgrove (Morley Saunders' successor) who observed in the 1840s:

When the 40s Freehold Act was passed, landlords wishing to create for themselves a political interest in the county recognised and encouraged it without considering the results. This was the case I'm sorry to say on my own property, and to this I trace most of the misery of the peasantry of this district.

Saunders identified elections where the newly enfranchised and politicised tenants voted independently rather than at landlords' direction as 'destroying the relation' between landlords and tenants in the early part of the nineteenth century.<sup>37</sup> Landlords in west Wicklow enjoyed a tolerable relationship with their tenants in the better years of the latter half of the eighteenth century. The relative peace in the region and the dearth of reports of agrarian unrest, at a time when the Whiteboys, Rightboys and Defenders were active in other parts of the country, bear testament to this relationship. The 1798 rebellion fractured relationships between landlords and tenants in the Dunlavin area, and mass-politicisation in the early nineteenth century introduced a troubling new dynamic into the landlord-tenant relationship. As a result, this relationship disimproved further in west Wicklow in the early nineteenth century, as population growth, and the impoverishment of estates as landlords contrived to extract rents in economically difficult times, increased mutual suspicion. Yet the gentry remained a highly visible force in Wicklow, and the fact that some of its members, such as Lady Tynte Caldwell were absentees, did not diminish their authority or autonomy.<sup>38</sup> The absence of a Tynte residence on the Dunlavin estate and the decision of the Powell family not to rebuild Tober House, which had been burned out in 1798 meant that the nearest big house to Dunlavin was Rathsallagh, the seat of the

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<sup>37</sup> *Report of the Commission of inquiry into the state of the law and practice in respect of the occupation of land in Ireland*, iii [616], H.C. 1845, xxi, p. 555. Hereafter cited as *Devon Commission*

<sup>38</sup> Nolan, 'Land and landscape in County Wicklow c.1840', pp 664-5.

Ryves family, about a mile from the village.

Rathsallagh featured in another survey of county Wicklow published in 1812, this time prepared by Thomas Radcliff under the direction of the Farming Society of Ireland.<sup>39</sup> Radcliff's work covered much the same ground as Fraser's 1801 survey, which allows one to trace changes in land utilisation and farming practices in the region. Like Fraser, Radcliff addressed agricultural topics such as climate, soil, arable crops, potatoes, haymaking, livestock breeding, wool and textile manufacture, but he also published accounts of farming practices on a number of west Wicklow estates, including Rathsallagh, the residence of William Ryves (son of William Ryves who was involved in the executions of 1798 in Dunlavin), and at the hub of an estate of about 1,200 acres.<sup>40</sup> Unlike his father, William Ryves was an absentee landlord in 1812 and most of his estate was set to a Mr. Allen. This was probably the same Anthony Allen of Logatrina who rented 251 acres of Tynte land through the middlemen, the Bookeys of Derrybawn, making Allen a major figure in Dunlavin farming circles. Anthony Allen was 'a progressive farmer' and the evidence suggests that this Mr. Allen had a similar *modus operandi*, as he was reported to be a:

Skilful and industrious farmer, who had upon it [the land at Rathsallagh], in 1810, one hundred acres of choice oats, perhaps seven barrels to the acre... Some of the old fashioned farmers in his neighbourhood endeavoured to dissuade him from what they conceived an enterprise of insanity – but they were ignorant of the implements which produced his success – the society's Scotch ploughs and harrows – without which, his efforts, upon such a scale, would indeed have been in vain.<sup>41</sup>

The 'Scots plough', was an improved, lighter swing-plough, developed by the

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<sup>39</sup> Thomas Radcliff, *A report of the agriculture and livestock of the County of Wicklow prepared under the directions of the Farming Society of Ireland* (Dublin, 1812).

<sup>40</sup> Radcliff, *A report of the agriculture and livestock of the County of Wicklow*, pp 356-7.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, p. 356.

Berwickshire ploughwright James Small, from the larger, heavier old Scots plough in the 1770s.<sup>42</sup> Allen's recourse to modern farming methods, illustrated by his use of the Scotch plough, is indicative of good farming practice at Rathsallagh. Radcliff observed that the estate was well managed and that 'the land, in general very good, was set at a fair and moderate rent'.<sup>43</sup> This was at a time when tenants were experiencing difficulty in paying rents, as they experienced a decrease in real incomes during the 1798-1803 period, and a further decrease post-1815.

The upward trend in rents established in the late eighteenth century continued into the early years of the nineteenth. In 1809, for example, when an eighty-year lease expired, the annual rent on 280 acres at Kilwarlin on Downshire's Blessington estate increased twelvefold from £31 12s. to £361. In 1810, the annual rent on 730 acres on the same estate leaped from £327 to £850, an increase of 160 per cent. The increased rents demanded too much of many tenants in the difficult, post-war economic environment, and some, such as William Walsh and William Eager, relinquished their tenancies.<sup>44</sup> The early nineteenth century witnessed many evictions in west Wicklow, due first to rising rents and later to a decrease in real incomes, and the politicisation of tenants at this time accentuated the negative social consequences of the trend, since landlords were more likely to evict politically-active tenants who were perceived as a threat to the political positions held by those landlords.

Rathsallagh tenants with older leases were fortunate to pay a 'fair and moderate rent'

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<sup>42</sup> Alexander Fenton, 'The light and improved Scots plough and its team', in Caoimhin O Danachair (ed), *Folk and farm: Essays in honour of A. T. Lucas* (Dublin, 1976), p. 40. Fenton's essay outlines the huge differences made by the introduction of this plough to Scottish agriculture in the late eighteenth century.

<sup>43</sup> Radcliff, *A report of the agriculture and livestock of the County of Wicklow* p. 357.

<sup>44</sup> Trant, *The Blessington estate 1667-1908*, pp 110-1. The Downshire estate at Blessington is very well documented. See W. A. Maguire, *The Downshire estates in Ireland 1801-1845* (Oxford, 1972).

at this time. Most of them had large holdings as the estate was 'let in farms, of nearly a hundred acres each, on leases of twenty-one years or one life'.<sup>45</sup> Like Downshire, Ryves encouraged larger holdings. Tenants were also fortunate regarding their dwellings. Radcliff observed:

Their habitations are comfortable, respectable and uniform, being well-built, slated houses, two stories high, of a pretty elevation, with suitable offices annexed... the tenants are bound to the building of this particular plan of house, the landlord paying half the expense. The appearance of regularity and affluence, which this property exhibits, from the foregoing circumstances, holds out an example for imitation, by which, if generally followed, the face of the country would be embellished, the happiness of the tenantry promoted, and the interests of the proprietor, eventually enhanced.<sup>46</sup>

Ryves's willingness to shoulder half the expense of building these houses is indicative of good estate management at Rathsallogh. However, the tenants at Rathsallogh were almost exclusively Protestant. In the wake of the 1798 rebellion, William Ryves systematically removed his Catholic tenants, leading to Catholic depopulation on the estate.<sup>47</sup> Rathsallogh's moderate rents were an inducement to Protestant tenants, who, in the difficult post-rebellion atmosphere, were more likely to support the landed elite, and less likely to be radical in their politics. Hence one of the social legacies of 1798 was greater religious polarisation in the Dunlavin region.

Leasing policies in county Wicklow were firmly rooted in political and religious considerations.<sup>48</sup> Rathsallogh's policy of favouring Protestant tenants was replicated on Lord Wicklow's estate in Imaal, where:

Since [1798] the systematic persecutions and evictions of hostile

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<sup>45</sup> Radcliff, *A report of the agriculture and livestock of the County of Wicklow* p. 357.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, p. 357.

<sup>47</sup> A statistical memoir of Dunlavin parish (N.U.I. Maynooth, Shearman papers, xvii, f. 168). In 1862, only one Catholic, John Norton, held land on Rathsallogh estate.

<sup>48</sup> Nolan, 'Land and landscape in County Wicklow c.1840', p. 666.



proprietors and Orange agents have depopulated Imaile [Imaal] and introduced Protestants from the obscure nooks and corners of neighbouring counties to usurp the places of the Irish Catholics who were themselves, a little more than a century before, the proprietors in fee, while the few who were tolerated were driven up the mountainsides.<sup>49</sup>

The writer of this account, Fr. John Shearman, observed that Dunlavin was ‘scarcely more fortunate’ regarding evictions and Catholic depopulation after 1798.<sup>50</sup> This contributed to a rise in the Protestant population of Dunlavin in the early nineteenth century. As the Dunlavin congregation expanded, the building of a new church became necessary. The situation was clearly spelled out in 1816:<sup>51</sup>

The present parish church is in such a ruinous state as to be in danger of falling and situate on a piece of ground so small as not to admit the enlargement requisite for the accommodation of the parishioners in their attendance on Divine Worship and it is therefore proposed to erect a new church on a different site close to the town of Dunlavin.

The reference to the new church being close ‘to the town of Dunlavin’ is misleading. The site is within the village, on the northwestern side of the cross stroke of the village’s T-shape. Nevill’s 1760 map shows buildings on this site, so some houses were demolished to make way for the new Church of St. Nicholas. The deed of conveyance for the new church and churchyard was signed on 21 July 1815 by the rector Rev. W. Moore Morgan and the churchwardens James Critchley and J. Virtue. The new church was officially consecrated by the Archbishop of Cashel on 24 October 1817.<sup>52</sup> In 1823 the rectory had an adjoining glebe of three acres, two roods

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<sup>49</sup> A statistical memoir of Dunlavin parish (N.U.I. Maynooth, Shearman papers, xvii, f. 167)

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, f. 168.

<sup>51</sup> Act of Collation for changing the site of the church of Dunlavin, 9 Jul 1816, cited in R. A. Warke, *St. Nicholas’s church and parish Dunlavin 1817-1967* (Naas, 1967), p. 3.

<sup>52</sup> Warke, *St. Nicholas’s church and parish*, pp 3, 8. One of the highlights of the ceremony was the unveiling of a memorial wall plaque to Lady Tynte Caldwell’s daughter by James Stratford Tynte, Elizabeth (Eliza). Eliza died on 3 Aug 1816. Part of the plaque reads ‘Thy actions will outlast this

and thirty perches. Evidently a new glebe house was built at this time, or the old one remodelled, as an estimate for the not insignificant sum of £927 7s. 1d. for Dunlavin glebe house and offices is preserved in the parish tithe applotment book.<sup>53</sup>

The ground for the Dunlavin's new Protestant church was donated by Lady Hannah Tynte Caldwell, who simultaneously donated ground for a new Catholic chapel to be built in the village in 1815. The site of the old Catholic mass house, at the southeastern extremity of the fairgreen, was given by the Tyntes for the erection of a permanent chapel. This was a stimulus for a thaw in relations between the principal religious communities in the village as the memory of the 1798-1803 period began to ease. The new Catholic church of St. Nicholas of Myra commemorated the Tynte's gesture of donating land for their building on a mural slab, which suggested better denominational relations; it read:<sup>54</sup>

The Catholics of this parish in grateful acknowledgement to Lady Tynte Caldwell and Miss Eliza H. Tynte for their liberal donation of this chapel ground and that of its precincts, have erected this stone as a perpetual monument to their munificence. Anno Domini, 1815.

The building of the two churches represented the first major investment in village furniture since the days of James Worth Tynte, and the beginning of a pattern that would continue during the lifetime of Lady Tynte Caldwell. Her actions demonstrated that gender was no barrier to proprietorial intervention, such as the provision of

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story's stone, Thy gift the lands on which this sacred dome, Erected stands this consecrated ground, Devoted by thy zeal a church to found'.

<sup>53</sup> Estimate for Dunlavin glebe house and offices, undated, Dunlavin tithe applotment (N.A.I., Microfilm 112, MS 32/8/3). Expenses included £10 for excavation; £144 17s 9d for the mason; £29 7s 9d for the stone cutter; £445 10s 6d for the carpenter and glazier (this sum included hinges, pulling weights and cord); £72 19s 1d for the plasterer; £43 4s 2d for the slater; £30 for the painter and £150 19s 10d for the out offices and boundary walls.

<sup>54</sup> Fitzgerald, 'Dunlavin, Tornant and Tober', p. 222. This mural slab is no longer in existence.

village furniture, but the fact that such interventions only became a reality in Dunlavin following her marriage to Fitzmaurice Caldwell, rather than during her period of widowhood from her marriage to James Stratford Tynte, suggests that the improving ethos of the Caldwell family <sup>55</sup> was the prime motivating factor in Lady Hannah's decision to invest in the village.

### **3. Population growth in the Dunlavin area, 1813-1841.**

There is no record of the official opening of the new Catholic church, but the inception of a new parish register in 1815 suggests a new beginning at this time. Three infants, Michael Brien, Hannah Healy and Michael Magarr were baptised on 1 October of that year. <sup>56</sup> There are 21 baptisms recorded for October 1815, but a total of 100 for the year 1815. This latter figure is strange, as there are only 59 entries from October to December for 1815. It is possible that the figure is estimated, as baptisms before 1 October were not recorded. If this is so, the estimation seems low, as the following years consistently registered figures in excess of 200. <sup>57</sup> The parish register does not indicate the Catholic population, but suggests a high Catholic birth rate immediately prior to the first major census of Ireland in 1821. The number of Catholic baptisms per annum for these pre-census years averages nearly two every three days in Dunlavin (fig 10). These figures are high for a rural parish, but they evidently include infants from both the Donard and Davidstown/Glen of Imaal areas, neither of which had a Catholic church at this time, though both would see separate churches

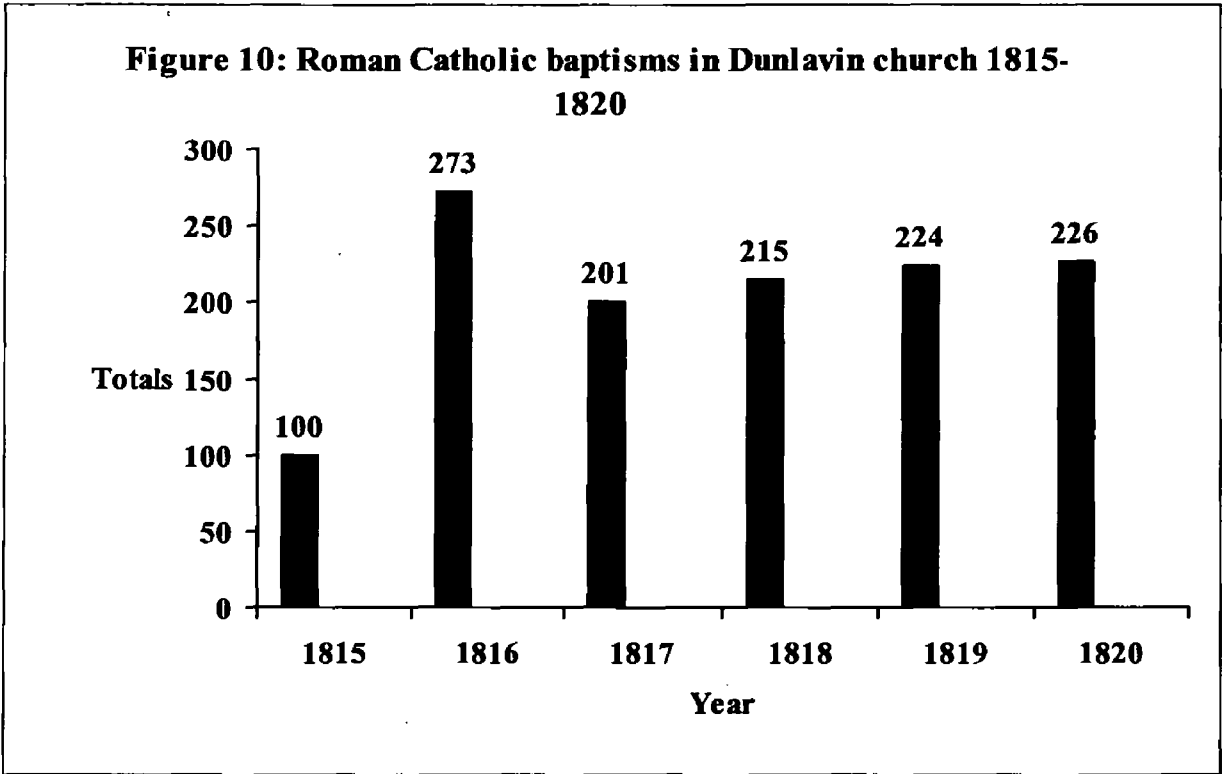
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<sup>55</sup> This improving spirit was evident throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and is addressed in Mervyn Busteed, *Castle Caldwell, County Fermanagh* (Dublin, 2006).

<sup>56</sup> Recorded baptisms, 1 Oct 1815 (St. Nicholas of Myra church, Dunlavin, Catholic parish register, i, unpaginated). The entries are in chronological order, so dates are hereinafter used to identify entries in the register. A full list of registered surnames from 1815 to 1820 is transcribed in appendix six.

<sup>57</sup> Dunlavin Catholic parish register, i, unpaginated, passim 1816-1820.

built later in the century.<sup>58</sup> Even so, the baptismal rate of two hundred plus per year attests to vigorous population growth.



**Source: Dunlavin Roman Catholic parish register.**

While the parish register totals in figure 10 above are not substitutes for census returns, they do have one advantage over the later census figures. They fully cover this five-year period and provide a detailed picture of the Catholic parish families that had children to baptise. The register does not include Church of Ireland families or those Catholics who were old or childless. Moreover, the accuracy of townland boundaries is questionable: for example, areas such as Tubber appear very often, while others such as Sandyhills are absent. Thus the term ‘Tubber’ probably refers to

<sup>58</sup> Donard Catholic church dates from 1835. Chris Lawlor, ‘Dunlavin green revisited’, *Dunlavin-Donard-Davidstown Parish Link magazine*, iv, 3 (Naas, Nov 1998), p. 7. Davidstown Catholic church dates from 1875. Chris Lawlor, *Canon Frederick Donovan’s Dunlavin, 1884-1896: A west Wicklow village in the late nineteenth century* (Dublin, 2000), p. 27.

all the townlands in the old civil parish of Tubber.<sup>59</sup> Some family names were common, occurring in many townlands and spelled differently in some cases. The old Wicklow names of 'Toole' and 'Byrne' are widespread, while 'Kavanah', very prevalent in south Wicklow, is also a common name. In certain townlands, many families with the same surname were recorded. For example here were four families of Rogers in Merginstown and Nowlans in Tubber, indicating sub-division of family holdings, a practice that landlords such as Downshire and Ryves endeavoured to eradicate. Despite such anomalies regarding townland boundaries, and allowing for the fact that due to erratic spelling, the same family may have been recorded twice in certain townlands,<sup>60</sup> it is evident that certain areas had concentrations of young families and young parents, while other areas recorded low totals. Milltown townland was populous,<sup>61</sup> but recorded only eleven families between 1815 and 1820. These low baptismal numbers suggest that the area had a low birth rate, and a low number of young parents of childbearing age. Possibly Milltown, which was settled well before the establishment of Dunlavin village,<sup>62</sup> had many older families and presented a mature population pyramid.

The population of the village and its hinterland increased rapidly between 1815 and 1820. Many parents returned during this five-year period with three, four and even five children to be baptised. Families such as the Finns of Eadestown, the Balfes of

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<sup>59</sup> The civil parish of Tober lies adjacent to the civil parish of Dunlavin and due north of it. Nolan, 'Land and landscape in County Wicklow c.1840', p. 659. The parish of Tober contained the following townlands: Tober Upper (305 acres), Tober Lower (133 acres), Tober Demesne (260 acres), Wards of Tober (165 acres), Friarhill (229 acres), Man of War (100 acres) and Sandyhills (229 acres). The parish no longer exists as a separate unit as it was incorporated into Dunlavin parish before the census of 1821. Lynott, 'The parish of Tober', pp 60 and 73.

<sup>60</sup> In Ballinabarny, for example, both 'Connel' and 'Connell' are recorded.

<sup>61</sup> There were seven hundred and twelve people in Milltown in 1831. *Second report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction, Ireland*, H.C. 1835 [45], xxxiii, p. 104b. Hereafter cited as *Second report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction*.

<sup>62</sup> Price, *Place names*, p. 199 refers to Milltown being settled as 'Milltown de Dunlowen' or the 'Milltown of Donlovan' from 1618 and 1621 respectively.

Dunlavin and the Ryders of Loughmogue regularly returned to the baptismal font. There was also evidence of poverty. For example the Mallen family, who had a baby christened in 1816, are recorded as 'vagabonds'. Itinerant beggars were not uncommon in the parish in the early nineteenth century; in the years between 1818 and 1820 one observer commented in relation to Donard and the Glen of Imaal that 'there were many people who went about the country from door to door begging, of whom Katty Burns was one'.<sup>63</sup>

A more complete picture of population was presented in 1821, when the first modern census of Ireland was taken. An earlier census had been attempted between 1813 and 1815, but it failed to enumerate the entire country.<sup>64</sup> William Shaw Mason, the commissioner for the enumeration, published barony figures in *A statistical account or parochial survey of Ireland*, but the figures for both Upper and Lower Talbotstown are unreliable due to the 'incorrectness in the original return'.<sup>65</sup> The 1821 census, on the other hand, presented a greater quantity of data, such as the number of houses (inhabited, uninhabited and under construction), the number of families, males and females, the number of people employed in various categories of work and the number of male and female pupils in school, all of which were published to parish level, but compiled on a townland basis.<sup>66</sup> Joseph Lee and others have questioned the accuracy of the 1821 census,<sup>67</sup> but it was more accurate than its predecessor, and is of

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<sup>63</sup> Hanbidge and Hanbidge, *Memories of West Wicklow*, p. 38. According to William Hanbidge, Katty Burns 'went by the name of Katty the shed because she lived in a most miserable hut on the side of Kaudeen [Keadeen] Mountain'.

<sup>64</sup> Brian Gurrin, 'No country for young men: the 1813-5 census returns for County Meath', *Riocht na Midhe*, xvii (2006), pp 173-7 passim.

<sup>65</sup> William Shaw Mason, *A statistical account or parochial survey of Ireland*, iii (3 vols, Dublin 1814-19), pp xxxii-xxxiv. See also pp xlii and xlv.

<sup>66</sup> *Abstract of answers and returns, pursuant to act 55 Geo 3, for taking an account of the population of Ireland in 1821*, H.C. 1824 [577], xxii, 411, p. xix. Hereafter cited as *Census of Ireland 1821*.

<sup>67</sup> Joseph Lee, 'On the accuracy of pre-Famine Irish censuses', in J. M. Goldstrom and L. A. Clarkson (eds), *Irish population, economy and society* (Oxford, 1981), pp 37-56. See also K. H. Connell, *The*

considerable use in reconstructing the population of the area.<sup>68</sup>

Brian Gurrin has used the county Wicklow barony figures from the censuses of 1813 and 1821 to calculate the average rate of increase in their populations during that period.

**Table 7. 1821 Wicklow barony returns and rate of change since 1813.**

Barony	Area total	Area habitable	Houses	Families	Families per house	Population	Mean Household size	Population per family	Population per 1000 acres	Population per 1000 habitable acres	Average % increase 1813-21
Arklow	67,281	64,000	3,085	3,549	1.15	20,420	6.62	5.75	304	319	1.4
Ballinacor	152,426	53,000	3,475	3,635	1.05	21,383	6.15	5.88	140	403	1.8
Newcastle	52,088	44,000	2,112	2,214	1.05	13,298	6.3	6.01	255	302	2
Half Rathdown	34,382	21,000	1,450	1,664	1.15	9,290	6.41	5.58	270	442	3.1
Shillelagh	44,349	42,000	2,248	2,438	1.08	13,876	6.17	5.69	313	330	1.7
Lower Talbotstown	86,858	40,500	2,067	2,202	1.07	13,703	6.63	6.22	158	338	2.5
Upper Talbotstown	62,510	38,500	2,852	3,345	1.17	18,797	6.59	5.62	301	488	2.2
County Wicklow	499,894	303,000	17,289	19,047	1.1	110,767	6.41	5.82	222	366	2

**Source: Brian Gurrin, 'Population, economy, religion and society in Wicklow 1660-1800'.**

Lower Talbotstown experienced Wicklow's second highest annual rate of growth of 2.5 per cent during these years. Upper Talbotstown, including many townlands in Dunlavin's immediate hinterland, experienced an annual growth rate of 2.2 per cent, which was also in excess of the county average of 2 per cent. Despite this, Lower Talbotstown was thinly populated in proportion to area, recording the second lowest

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*population of Ireland, 1750-1845* (Oxford, 1950) pp 5-10. Both Connell and Lee have suggested that the national total of 6,801,827 is a serious underestimation of the true population. (Connell, p. 5 and Lee, p. 46). Lee suggests that the national figure could be deficient by as much as 400,000. However, there is no way to ascertain how many of these lived in west Wicklow.

<sup>68</sup> Brian Gurrin, 'Population, economy, religion and society in Wicklow 1660-1800' (PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2006), p. 113.

figure in the county with just 158 people per 1,000 acres. However, Gurrin's calculation of physiologic density shows that Lower Talbotstown actually had 338 people per habitable acre and Upper Talbotstown had the highest percentage of people in this category, with 488 per habitable acre residing in the barony,<sup>69</sup> which confirms other evidence of increased pressure on available land resources.<sup>70</sup> This was reflected in the proportionate size of the barony's urban and rural mean household sizes, with households of 7.21 in urban areas and 6.51 in rural areas, where habitable rural land was at a premium.<sup>70</sup>

In 1821 the population of Dunlavin village was 897, residing in 137 houses.<sup>71</sup> The mean household size in the village was 6.55, slightly smaller than the overall barony figure of 7.21 calculated by Gurrin. The village contained 183 families, representing a mean family size of 4.9. There were more families than inhabited houses, so two or more families shared some of the dwellings, and the mean ratio of 1.34 families per house, suggests overcrowding. The gender breakdown in 1821 was almost equal with 450 males and 447 females in the village. There were also nine uninhabited dwellings and three houses under construction. This attests to the fluid nature of village housing and population, with some dereliction evident within an otherwise healthy situation of growth.

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<sup>69</sup> Gurrin, 'Population, economy, religion and society in Wicklow 1660-1800', p. 79.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, p. 84.

<sup>71</sup> This information is taken from the *Census of Ireland 1821* (I. M. microfiche edition, fiche 2), pp 128-31.



Map 15: Civil parishes of west Wicklow.



Sources: William Nolan, 'Land and landscape in county Wicklow c.1840', in Ken Hannigan and William Nolan (eds), *Wicklow history and society* and Patrick J. Duffy, 'The territorial identity of Kildare's landscapes', in William Nolan and Thomas McGrath (eds), *Kildare history and society*.

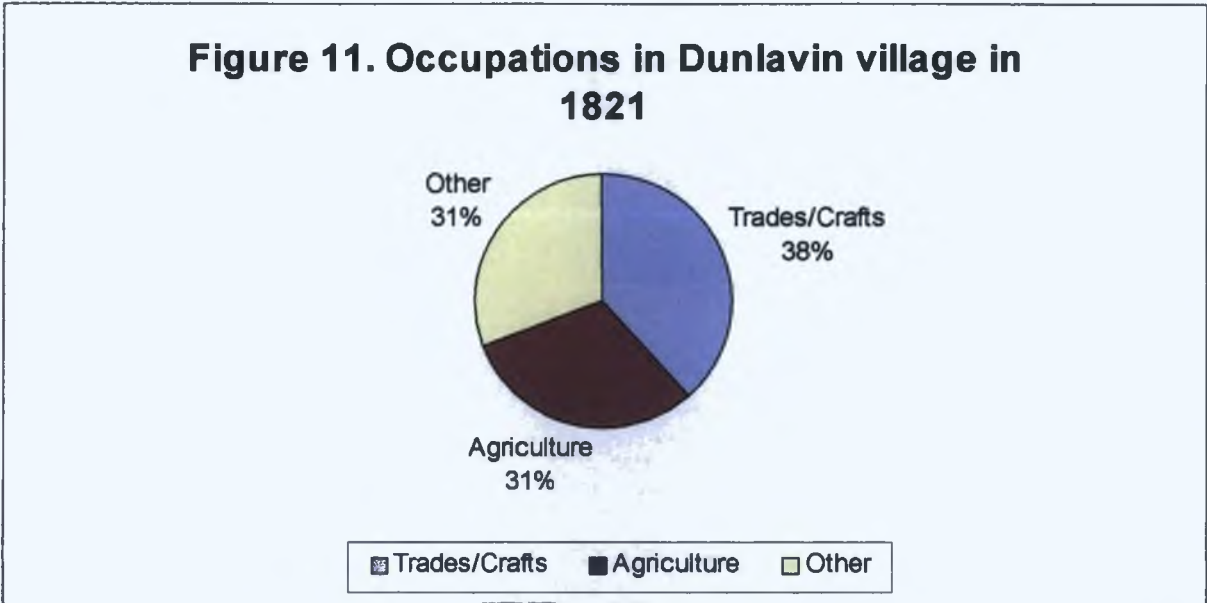
The rural area around Dunlavin was also thriving in 1821. The civil parish of Dunlavin was 6,565 acres in extent <sup>72</sup> and contained two portions separated by the parish of Rathallagh, one in each half of the barony of Talbotstown (map 14). <sup>73</sup> The parish population was given as 1,557, of whom 62 resided in Upper Talbotstown, and the remainder in Lower Talbotstown. <sup>74</sup> There were 183 families in the village (referred to as the 'town') and 260 families in the rural part of the parish. The population density in the parish was 4.21 per acre, but some areas, notably uplands and marsh could not support habitation, so the population was concentrated in the

<sup>72</sup> Samuel Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland*, 2 vols (London, 1837) i, p. 583.

<sup>73</sup> Nolan, 'Land and landscape in County Wicklow c.1840', p. 653.

<sup>74</sup> The information in this section is taken from the *Census of Ireland 1821* (I. M. microfiche edition, fiche 2), pp 128-31.

more fertile rural areas adjacent to the village. The breakdown of occupations in 1821 (fig. 11) shows that Dunlavin village provided the rural parish with tradesmen and craftsmen, while the rural parish concentrated on agriculture and supplied its market town with produce.<sup>75</sup> Of a total of 268 people occupied in the village, 103 were engaged in ‘trades and crafts’ and 82 were employed in agriculture, while 83 had ‘other’ occupations.



**Source: Census of 1821.**

In the rural parish, of 318 people occupied, 233 were engaged in agriculture and 37 employed in trades and crafts, while 48 had other occupations. Dunlavin evidently had no girls’ school in 1821 as there were no female schoolgoers recorded, but 75 males attended school, probably in Dunlavin village, though the location is not given. The 1821 census returns indicate that Dunlavin village and parish had prospered since its foundation a century and a half before, and the community in the area was increasing in the early nineteenth century.

<sup>75</sup> Chris Lawlor, ‘The making of a local landscape: Dunlavin D.E.D.’, (B.A. thesis, NUI Maynooth, 1981), p. 6.

The vibrancy of the area is borne out by the continuing increase in the population of the Dunlavin region registered in the census of 1831.<sup>76</sup> The national figure was given as 7.78 million, but Joseph Lee has adjusted this to 7.9 million.<sup>77</sup> In the case of county Wicklow, it has been concluded that the rates of population growth and the mean household sizes in the county's baronies and their general positive correlation with population trends in neighbouring areas, suggest that this census provides a 'tolerable snapshot estimate of the county's population'.<sup>78</sup> At baronial level, the population of Dunlavin's barony, Lower Talbotstown, rose from 13,703 in 1821 to 14,784 in 1831. This represented an increase of 7.98 per cent and a mean annual rate of increase of 0.75 per cent for every year during the decade 1821 to 1831. While this increase was not as large as those recorded in some other Wicklow baronies (notably Newcastle and half Rathdown which registered increases of 18.58 and 25.42 respectively),<sup>79</sup> it represented a continuous pattern of increase during the 1820s, putting pressure on available resources, particularly land. The population of Upper Talbotstown actually showed a slight decrease, but at 1.51 per cent this decrease was insignificant in an already crowded area.

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<sup>76</sup> As with the census of 1821, the accuracy of this census has been questioned, with the first and perhaps the most influential criticism coming from Thomas Larcom, the 1841 census commissioner, who commented that the 1831 enumerators 'considered that they would be paid – and in many cases were paid – in proportion to the numbers they enumerated'. [*Report of the commissioners appointed to take the census of Ireland for the year 1841*, H.C. 1843 [504], xxiv, 1, p. viii. Hereafter cited as *Census of Ireland 1821*].

<sup>77</sup> *Return of the population of the several counties in Ireland, as enumerated in 1831*, H.C., 1833 [254], xxxix, 1, p. v. Hereafter cited as *Census of Ireland 1831*. The adjustment appears in Lee, 'On the accuracy of pre-Famine Irish censuses', p. 54. While substantial numbers are involved the adjustment is not by any means massive, and the census of 1831 was probably more accurate than the returns of any other pre-Famine census. Phelim Boyle and Cormac Ó Grada, 'Fertility trends, excess mortality and the Great Irish Famine', *Demography*, xxii, 4 (Nov 1986), p. 56.

<sup>78</sup> Gurrin, 'Population, economy, religion and society in Wicklow 1660-1800', p. 97.

<sup>79</sup> Two factors may explain the extremely high growth rates in Newcastle and Half Rathdown. Firstly the delayed impact of the new free-trade status following the Act of Union increased the importance of the eastern coastal ports such as Bray and Wicklow and secondly the continued growth of Dublin city and improvements in travel meant that the baronies closest to the metropolis experienced the highest growth. Gurrin, 'Population, economy, religion and society in Wicklow 1660-1800', pp 86-7.

**Table 8. 1831 Wicklow barony returns and rate of change since 1821.**

Barony	Area	Houses in 1821	Houses in 1831	Population in 1821	Population in 1831 and % increase	Mean Household Size in 1821	Mean Household Size in 1831	Population per 1000 habitable acres 1821	Population per 1000 habitable acres 1831 and % increase	Average % rate of population increase 1821-31
Arklow	67,281	3,085	3,434	20,420	22,796 (+11.63%)	6.62	6.64	319	356 (+11.59%)	1.1
Ballinacor	152,426	3,475	3,691	21,383	23,839 (+11.48%)	6.15	6.46	403	450 (+11.66%)	1.1
Newcastle	52,088	2,112	2,382	13,298	15,770 (+18.58%)	6.3	6.62	302	358 (+18.54%)	1.7
Half Rathdown	34,382	1,450	1,756	9,290	11,652 (+25.42%)	6.41	6.64	442	555 (+25.56%)	2.3
Shillelagh	44,349	2,248	2,186	13,876	14,204 (+2.36%)	6.17	6.5	330	338 (+2.42%)	0.2
Lower Talbotstown	86,858	2,067	2,196	13,703	14,784 (+7.88%)	6.63	6.73	338	365 (+7.98%)	0.75
Upper Talbotstown	62,510	2,852	2,767	18,797	18,512 (-1.51%)	6.59	6.69	488	481 (-1.43%)	-0.15
County Wicklow	499,894	17,289	18,412	110,767	121,557 (+9.74%)	6.41	6.6	366	401 (+9.56%)	0.9

**Source: Brian Gurrin, 'Population, economy, religion and society in Wicklow 1660-1800'.**

Significantly, by 1831 the Talbotstown baronies had emerged as the areas with the largest mean household size in the county. In addition, 1,478 of Lower Talbotstown's total population of 14,784 were agricultural labourers, while Upper Talbotstown had 1,422 agricultural labourers in its total of 18,512.<sup>80</sup> Thus 10 and 7.7 seven per cent of the baronies' total population (and proportionately higher percentages of their productive populations) respectively had little or no access to land, and so were susceptible to any economic or food crisis, should such an event occur.

Dunlavin is categorised as a town in the 1831 census, but villages and hamlets were also recorded. The criteria used to categorise urban areas is unclear as the smallest village was smaller in both house and population numbers than the largest hamlets

<sup>80</sup> *Census of Ireland 1831*, pp 117-8.

and towns included all urban settlements from Tinahely with 94 houses to Arklow's 692.<sup>81</sup> Hence, though classed as a town, Dunlavin was really a village in west Wicklow, albeit a rapidly growing one. The population of Dunlavin village increased from 897 in 1821 to 1,068 in 1831, which represented an increase of 19.06 per cent. Dunlavin effectively housed one fifth more people in 1831 than it had done a decade before. The population of the rural area of Dunlavin civil parish on the other hand decreased by 6.19 per cent from 1,557 to 1,461.<sup>82</sup> In 1821 only 36.52 per cent of the total population of the civil parish lived in the village but in 1831 the percentage of urban dwellers in the parish had risen to 42.11 per cent. This suggests that west Wicklow was becoming increasingly urbanised by 1831;<sup>83</sup> Dunlavin and its hinterland was certainly becoming more urbanised as the village grew in importance in relation to its immediate hinterland. The total population of the civil parish rose from 2,454 in 1821 to 2,529 in 1831, but the increase in the village was at the expense of the rural civil parish, where the occupation of land was already at saturation point.

The decrease in the rural population of the civil parish was not due to falling birth rates. The consistently high numbers of baptisms recorded in the Catholic parish baptismal register bear ample testimony to the continuance of high fertility rates in the 1820s.<sup>84</sup>

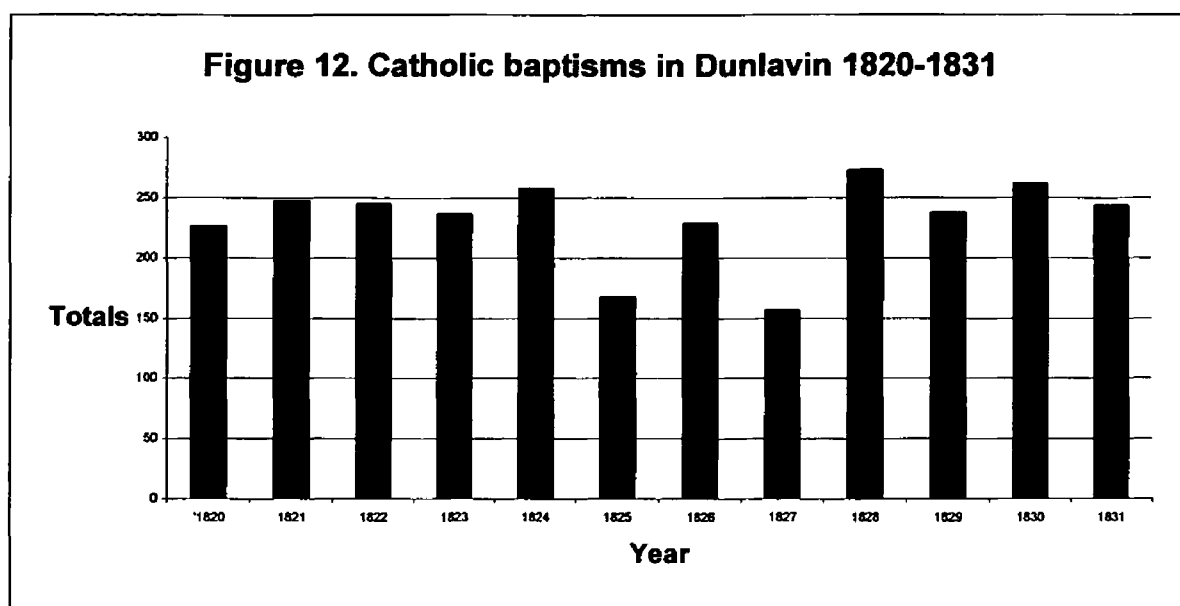
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<sup>81</sup> Gurrin, 'Population, economy, religion and society in Wicklow 1660-1800', p. 87.

<sup>82</sup> *Census of Ireland 1831*, p. 18.

<sup>83</sup> Gurrin, 'Population, economy, religion and society in Wicklow 1660-1800', p. 87.

<sup>84</sup> The baptismal figures for the 1820s are as follows: 1820, 226; 1821, 247; 1822, 244; 1823, 236; 1824, 257; 1825, 167; 1826, 228; 1827, 156; 1828, 272; 1829, 237; 1830, 261 and census year 1831, 243. (St. Nicholas of Myra church, Dunlavin, Catholic parish register, i, unpaginated, *passim*)



**Source: Dunlavin Roman Catholic parish register.**

There were less people occupying the rural civil parish in 1831 than in 1821, suggesting that the efforts of landlords such as Downshire and Ryves to discourage subdivision and to encourage larger holdings were succeeding. There is no evidence that the Tyntes engaged in this practice, but it is not unlikely that they followed the example set by neighbouring landlords. The Tyntes were not resident in Dunlavin in 1827,<sup>85</sup> but there is evidence of renewed Tynte interest and investment in the area shortly after this, attested to by the building of Tynte Park house, just outside Dunlavin village, probably in the early 1830s.<sup>86</sup>

A smaller number of people occupying the rural civil parish in 1831 also suggests that smallholders were victims of the continuance of the policy of subdivision. The 1820s and 1830s were decades of rising rents and other costs associated with land occupancy, including tithe. The experience of smaller occupiers such as the tenants in

<sup>85</sup> G. N. Wright, *A guide to the County of Wicklow illustrated by engravings, with a large map of the county from actual survey* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London, 1827), p. 173.

<sup>86</sup> Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland*, i, p. 583.

Ballylow and other parts of west Wicklow meant that life on smallholdings was a constant struggle for survival. Agrarian unrest and threatening notices regarding the occupancy of land found in Dunlavin during the 1820s and 1830s suggest a pattern in which smaller occupiers were forced off the land and larger occupiers took over their holdings, thereby consolidating the position of those larger occupiers. For example, in 1837 Robert Molyneux took over four small plots of land in addition to Murdock's farm at Friarhill (see next section). None of the holdings taken over by Molyneux was in excess of four acres, but his assumption of possession meant four less occupier families on Dunlavin's agricultural land. Other larger farmers who consolidated their position in the early nineteenth century included the Metcalfes of Crehelp and the Moores of Tober.<sup>87</sup> The resulting drift of smallholders off the land created population decline in rural Dunlavin. Some displaced smallholders may have moved into Dunlavin village, creating an underclass in the village in the 1820s and 1830s.

In 1831 there were 542 males and 526 females divided between 165 families occupying 155 houses in Dunlavin village. There were also three uninhabited houses and three in the process of construction at the time of the census. There was a relatively even division between the number of families employed in handicrafts, trade and manufacturing (sixty-nine) and those employed in agriculture (sixty-six). This suggests that almost half the families who lived in the village either leased land nearby or worked for the occupiers of such land. Seven occupiers who resided in the village employed labourers, but sixteen did not, suggesting that many holdings were small, as only the occupying family worked them. The importance of agricultural labour to the village economy may be gauged by the fact that within the category of

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<sup>87</sup> Chris Lawlor, 'Townland ghosts and some reflections', *Dunlavin-Donard-Davidstown Parish Link magazine*, iv, 1 (Naas, Mar 1998), p. 6.

males over twenty years there were twenty-three agricultural labourers and no non-agricultural labourers. This is consistent with the hypothesis of smallholders' involvement in a flight from the land. There were 112 males over twenty in the village working in trades and crafts, but a sizeable 35 males also fell into this category in the rural civil parish, where the dependence on agriculture was even more striking, with 123 males over twenty working as agricultural labourers and only one labourer not engaged in agriculture. However, only nine occupiers employed labourers in the civil parish, while 130 did not, underlining the pervasiveness of subsistence agriculture on small farms, despite landlords' best efforts to enlarge the holdings of their tenants. In addition to farmers, labourers and tradesmen, there were four men classed as 'capitalists, bankers and professional' in the rural civil parish and six men in this category, such as Rev. W. Moore Morgan and Dr. J. Hatch, residing in the urban space of the growing village.<sup>88</sup>

The census of 1841 was more detailed than its predecessors. In addition to returns from the urban area of the village and totals from the rural parish, townland figures were recorded.<sup>89</sup> County Wicklow's population was 126,143, an increase of 3.77 per cent in the 1831 total of 121,557. In 1841 the recorded population of Lower Talbotstown was 14,638, a slight but insignificant decrease on the 1831 figure of 14,784. In Upper Talbotstown the 1841 figure of 18,631 represented a slight but insignificant increase on the 1831 figure of 18,512. The baronial and county figures are graphed in figure 13. Upper Talbotstown in particular had reached saturation point, and the stagnant population totals, which remained almost unchanged at just

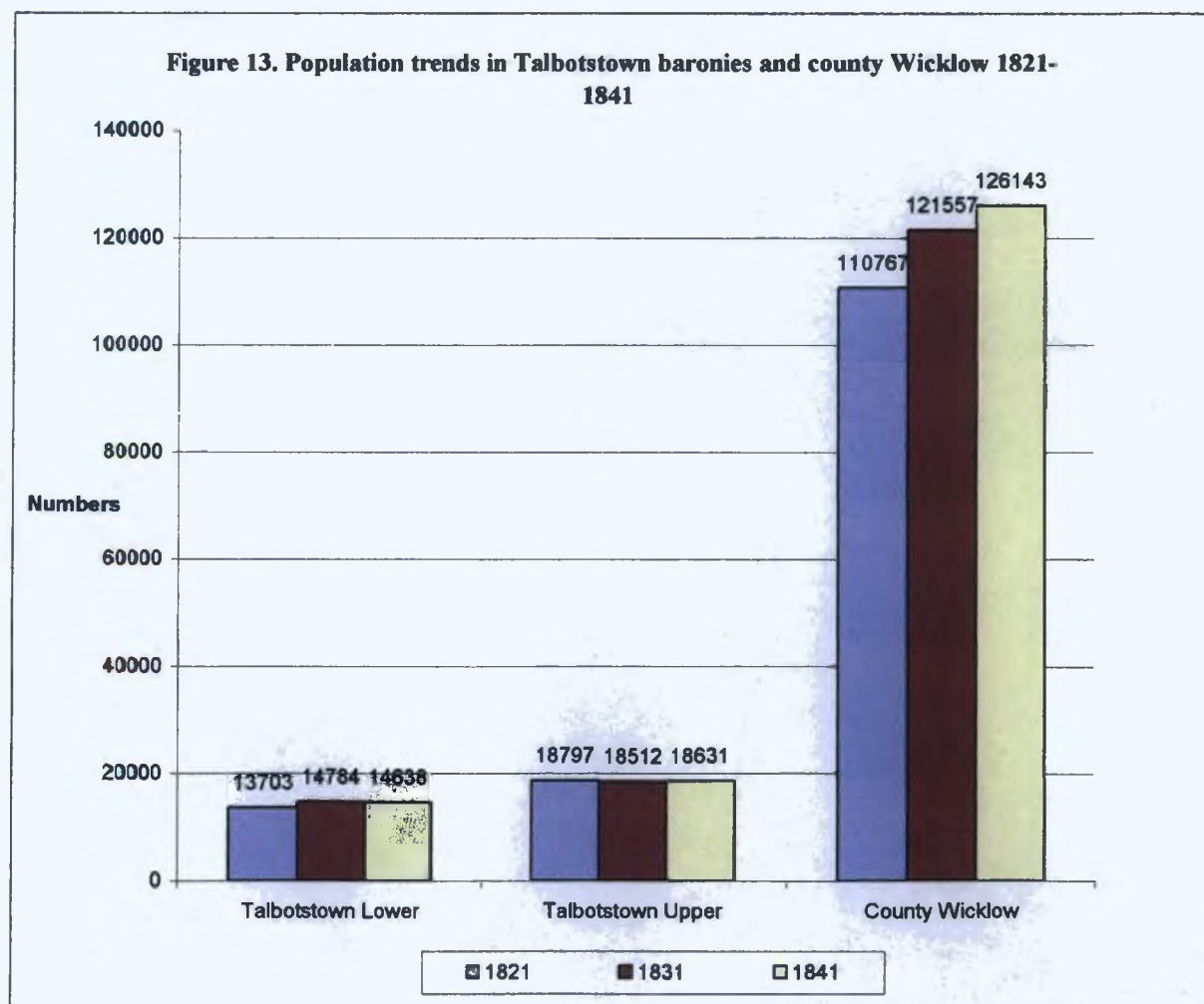
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<sup>88</sup> *Census of Ireland 1831*, p. 116.

<sup>89</sup> *Addenda to the census of Ireland for the year 1841; showing the number of families, houses and persons in the several townlands and towns of Ireland* (Dublin, 1844). Though these were published in 1844, they are best taken from the 1851 census, where townland by townland comparisons are possible, as both the 1841 and 1851 figures appear together in the latter census



over 18,500 in the three censuses of 1821, 1831 and 1841, testifies that the barony was demographically saturated. However, Lower Talbotstown was home to nearly 1,000 more people in 1841 than in 1821. This represented about 4 per cent of total population growth in the county, as county Wicklow contained just over 25,000 more people in 1841 than had been the case in 1821. The low percentage increase in Lower Talbotstown in relation to the overall county increase suggests that this barony was also nearing its demographic carrying capacity. When taken together, the two half-baronies that formed west Wicklow showed a virtually static population between 1831 and 1841, with a modest twenty-seven less people living there in 1841.



**Source: Censuses of 1821, 1831 and 1841.**

Birth rates remained high throughout the 1830s, so the lack of growth must be

attributed to high mortality rates, out migration and, possibly, to the over-estimation of the population in the 1831 census.

The 1841 figures shown in table 9 show the population of the Dunlavin area almost at its demographic peak.

**Table 9. Census returns for Dunlavin village and rural parish in 1841**

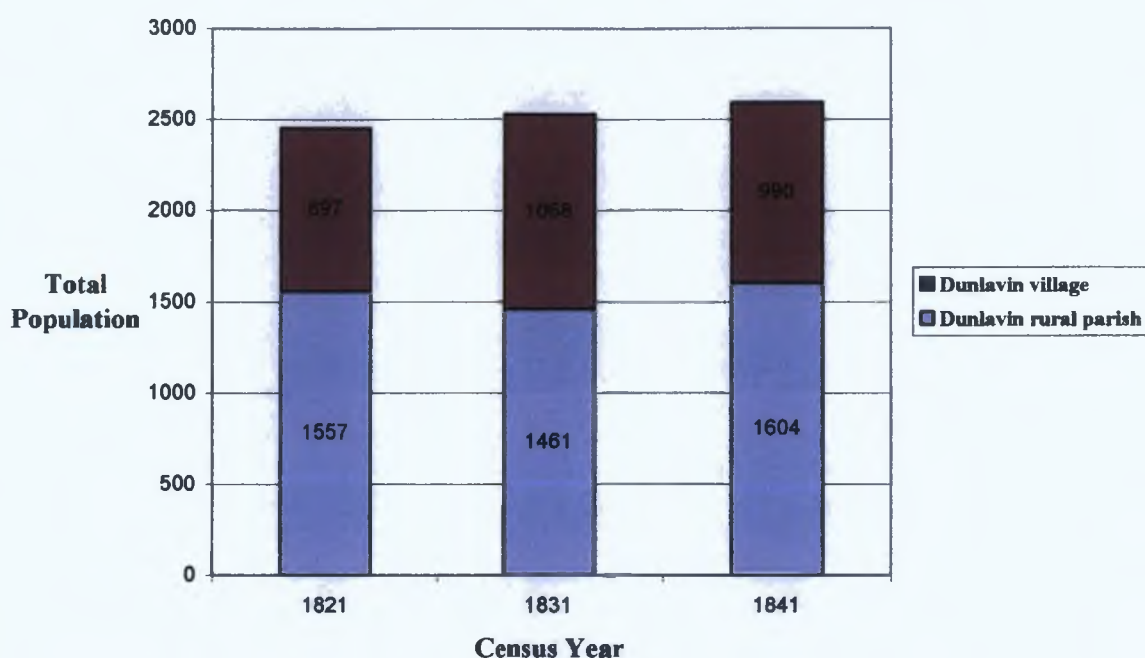
Area	Inhabited Houses	Uninhabited Houses	Building Houses	Families	Population	Males	Females
Dunlavin village	143	6	0	197	990	486	504
Dunlavin rural parish	229	2	0	274	1,604	817	787

**Source: Census of 1841.**

The village population had stabilised at about 1,000 people, confirming the lack of physical expansion of the urban space noted below on the 1838 valuation map.

However, the rural civil parish continued to accommodate more people and the overall population trend in the parish and village, when taken together, was upward (fig. 14). Despite the shifting primacy of the village within its parish, there was a constant increase in population in the whole area from 1821, through to 1841.

**Figure 14. Population of Dunlavin village and rural parish 1821-1841**



**Source: Censuses of 1821, 1831 and 1841.**

Despite the small decrease in the village population during the 1830s, the Dunlavin area had registered a steady growth in population in both the urban space and surrounding area since 1821. A sample of six townlands near Dunlavin confirms that the rural area around Dunlavin had a very high population density in 1841. The chosen townlands are Cowpasture, Dunlavin Lower, Logatrina, Loughmogue Upper, Milltown and Tournant Upper. Cowpasture is a fertile townland of 229 acres about two miles east of the village. Milltown (257 acres) and Tournant Upper (366 acres), about a mile and a mile and a half from the village respectively are also fertile and well-drained, and both were sites of a medieval settlement, though Tournant Upper is an exposed area and lies at an elevated altitude. Loughmogue Upper, comprising 302 acres, is the townland where the recently erected Tynte Park house and demesne stood

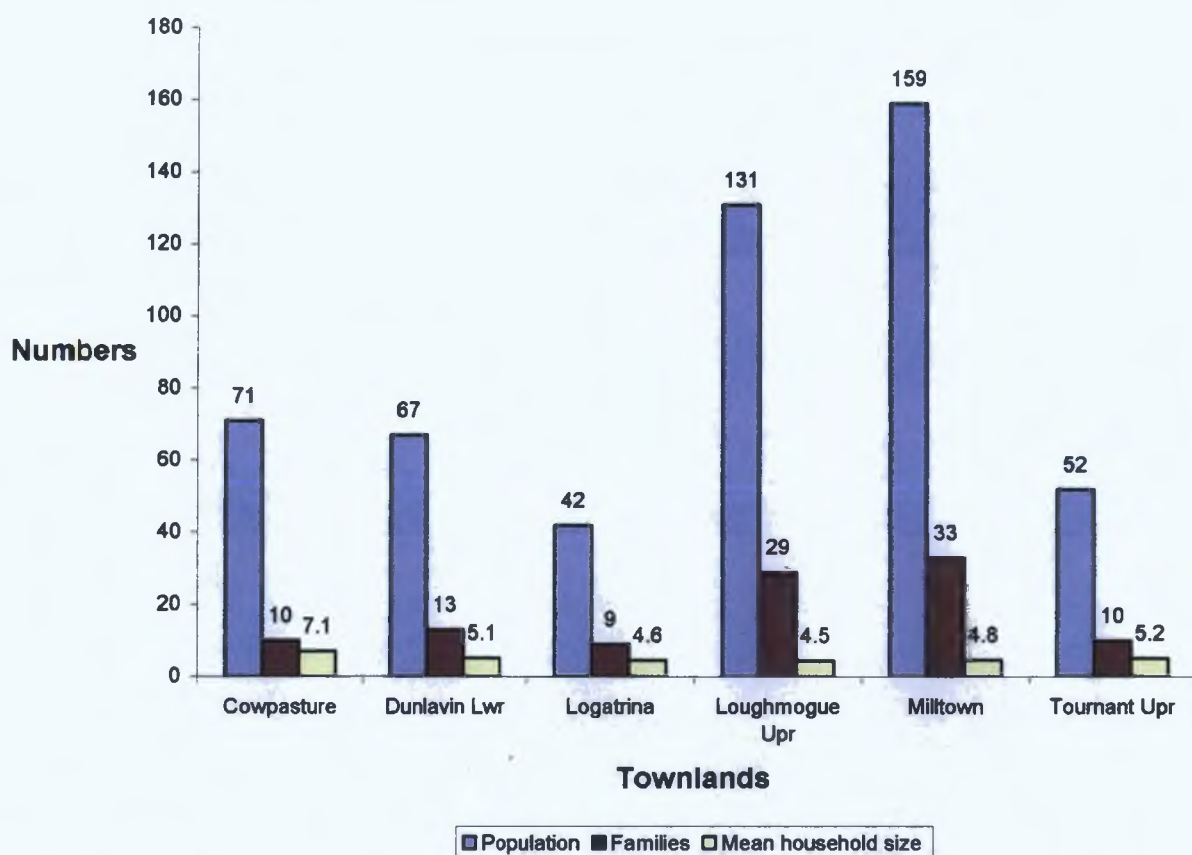
in 1841. Dunlavin Lower is a less fertile townland, 392 acres in extent, and is immediately adjacent to the village. Logatrina is a hilly, boggy townland, about a mile northwest of the village, occupying 252 acres, and is one of the areas of poorest soil in the generally fertile area of Dunlavin's immediate hinterland.<sup>90</sup>

Figure 15 shows the number of inhabitants, the number of families and the mean household size in the six townlands. Townland populations varied from 159 people in fertile Milltown, which had a long history of settlement, attracted there by the presence of a medieval mill, to 42 in infertile Logatrina. These two townlands also had the highest and lowest numbers of families living within them, at 33 and 9 respectively. The density of settlement per household was universally high in all six townlands, with mean household sizes ranging from four and a half in Loughmogue Upper to just over seven in Cowpasture. This is indicative of the predominance of large families in Dunlavin's rural hinterland.

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<sup>90</sup> Townland acreages are taken from <http://www.seanruad.com/cgi-bin/iresrch> visited on 23/10/2008.

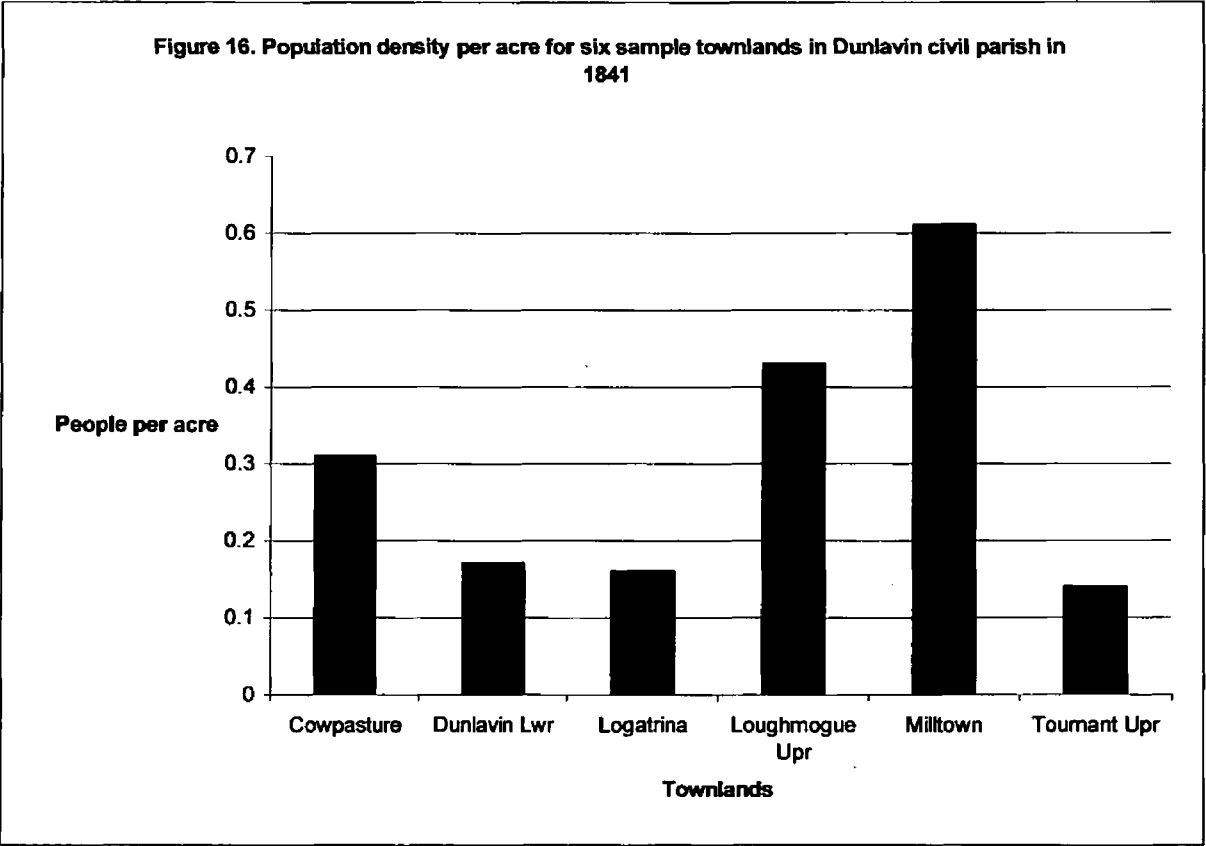
**Figure 15. Population, families and mean household size of six selected townlands in Dunlavin civil parish in 1841**



**Source: Census of 1841.**

The density of population per acre for the six sample townlands is shown in figure 16. Tournant Upper had the lowest population density at 0.14 persons per acre, closely followed by Logatrina (0.16) and Dunlavin Lower (0.17). It must be stressed that these densities use the gross acreages of each townland; no adjustment has been made to allow for wasteland. Both Logatrina and Dunlavin Lower were poorly drained townlands, and Tournant Upper is at a higher altitude than the nearby village and its immediately adjacent townlands. Evidently the former medieval settlement at Tournant left no legacy of high population density in the area. In contrast, Milltown,

also settled in medieval times, had a very high population density, 0.61 persons per acre, and the other townlands, Loughmogue Upper and Cowpasture had densities of 0.43 and 0.31 respectively. In other words, three of the six sample townlands had less than one person per five acres, but Cowpasture had almost one person to every three acres, Loughmogue Upper had a ratio of nearly one person per two acres and Milltown was the most densely populated townland of the six with a proportion of more than one person per two acres.<sup>91</sup>



**Source: Census of 1841.**

Though showing significant variations, these six townlands, and others like them within Dunlavin parish and throughout west Wicklow, were all relatively densely populated, and the relentlessly increasing population increased these densities in the

<sup>91</sup> Tournant Upper had seven acres per person, Logatrina six acres per person, Dunlavin Lower five point nine acres per person, Cowpasture three point two acres per person, Loughmogue Upper two point three acres per person and Milltown one point six acres per person.

early 1840s. The available land bank remained constant, however, and the rising population exerted more pressure on resources, with the landless and the smallholders squeezed out in the constant struggle for survival. Landholding retained its central place in pre-Famine Dunlavin, and land was life in the region's community in 1841. Costs associated with land occupancy were fiercely resisted, and competition for this vital resource manifested itself in increased crime and agrarian unrest in the Dunlavin region in the pre-Famine decades, most notably during the Tithe War.

#### **4. Tithe, protest and criminality: Dunlavin, 1823 to 1841.**

Individual returns of nineteenth-century censuses have been lost, but the tithe applotment books of the 1820s are a partial substitute, as they list the occupiers of agricultural land. Tithes were a tax on agricultural produce and were payable by occupiers to the Church of Ireland authorities. Although the Henrician Act of 1542 gave statutory force to the Irish tithe system, it was by not enshrined in statute law.<sup>92</sup> In the 1760s William Blackstone defined tithe as 'the tenth part of the increase yearly arising and renewing from the profits of lands, the stock upon the land and the personal industry of the inhabitants'.<sup>93</sup> However, the levy and collection of tithe in Ireland was confirmed in 1788 as uncertain, since tithe was 'subject to be controuled by the customs of particular places'.<sup>94</sup> The tithe system was a product of both historical and local circumstances, and from the mid-eighteenth century, a rising population and the expansion of markets for agricultural produce ensured that there was a new awareness of the intrinsic value of tithe.<sup>95</sup> This led to calls for reform of a system of tithes that, by the early nineteenth century, were difficult to collect and

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<sup>92</sup> Maurice Bric, 'The tithe system in eighteenth-century Ireland', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, lxxxvi, c, 7, (1986), p. 271.

<sup>93</sup> Blackstone is cited in John Finlay, *A treatise on the law of tithes in Ireland* (Dublin, 1828), p. 1.

<sup>94</sup> Authenticus, *A defence of the Protestant clergy in the south of Ireland* (Dublin, 1788), p. 84.

<sup>95</sup> Bric, 'The tithe system in eighteenth-century Ireland', p. 274.

uneven in their levy, as different items were tithable from county to county.<sup>96</sup> An 1823 act of parliament, the 4 George IV, chapter 99,<sup>97</sup> provided for the conversion of tithes into a fixed charge on land, and specified the average price of wheat or oats in the parish in the seven years before 1821 as the basis on which the tithes would be calculated.<sup>98</sup> Two parochial commissioners calculated the amounts. They also reported on the quality of land, as tithable land was classified by quality, with lower rates for poorer land. The areas given in the Tithe Applotment Books are in Irish acres, 1.62 times larger than statute measure. Only occupiers of agricultural land at the time of the tithe composition are recorded, so not all heads of households are included.<sup>99</sup>

Dunlavin's tithe applotment book is dated 16 March 1823. Thomas Cannon and George Fisher were commissioners.<sup>100</sup> Cannon may not have been local, as he is not listed in the tithe applotment book and no record of the surname appears in any Dunlavin source from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. Fisher, baptised in Dunlavin on 17 October 1782, was the son of Richard Fisher of Merginstown, and a member of a substantial farming Church of Ireland family.<sup>101</sup> The commissioners recorded 138 occupiers of land in the parish. In contrast, the 1821 census recorded

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<sup>96</sup> Edward Brynn, *Crown and Castle, British rule in Ireland 1800-1830* (Dublin, 1978), p. 137.

<sup>97</sup> Anthony Allen to the Archbishop of Dublin, 16 Dec 1823, Rathallagh tithe applotment (N.A.I., Microfilm 112, MS 32/8/1)

<sup>98</sup> The act also extended the application of tithes to pasture, where previously they had been levied only on tillage. This change in the law resulted in the valuation of individual holdings in order to assess the portion of the tithes for which each occupier of land would be liable. The apportionment was recorded for each Church of Ireland parish in a tithe applotment book.

<sup>99</sup> Class introductions (Tithe Applotment), *Counties in time* (CD ROM, Dublin: Eneclann Publications, no date).

<sup>100</sup> Thomas Cannon and George Fisher to [Archbishop of Dublin?], 5 Oct 1824, Dunlavin tithe applotment (N.A.I., Microfilm 112, MS 32/8/2)

<sup>101</sup> <http://www.avendano.org/genealogy/fisher.html#4> visited on 23 Jun 2008. This website also states that the Fishers arrived in Dunlavin in the early eighteenth century. The first member of the family recorded was Edward Fisher of Merginstown, who married Eleanor Bacon (buried in Dunlavin on 1 Aug 1739). Edward Fisher was buried on 8 Mar 1735 at Dunlavin, and his will proved in Dublin in that year also.



443 families in the parish, so only 32 per cent of families held tithable land in 1823.

This suggests that the occupation of agricultural land was concentrated in the hands of a minority of the population, though it is also possible that the tithe applotment book does not contain a full return. The returns certainly indicate male dominance in landholding and leasing. There are only ten female occupancies, representing 7.3 per cent of the total. Moreover, of these females, only five separate surnames appear, as some occupied more than one parcel of land. Five of the ten females are listed as widows. Widows (and spinsters) evidently had to attend to landholding issues themselves, but the females listed in the return are the exception, as land occupancy matters were overwhelmingly the preserve of men in Dunlavin in 1823.<sup>102</sup>

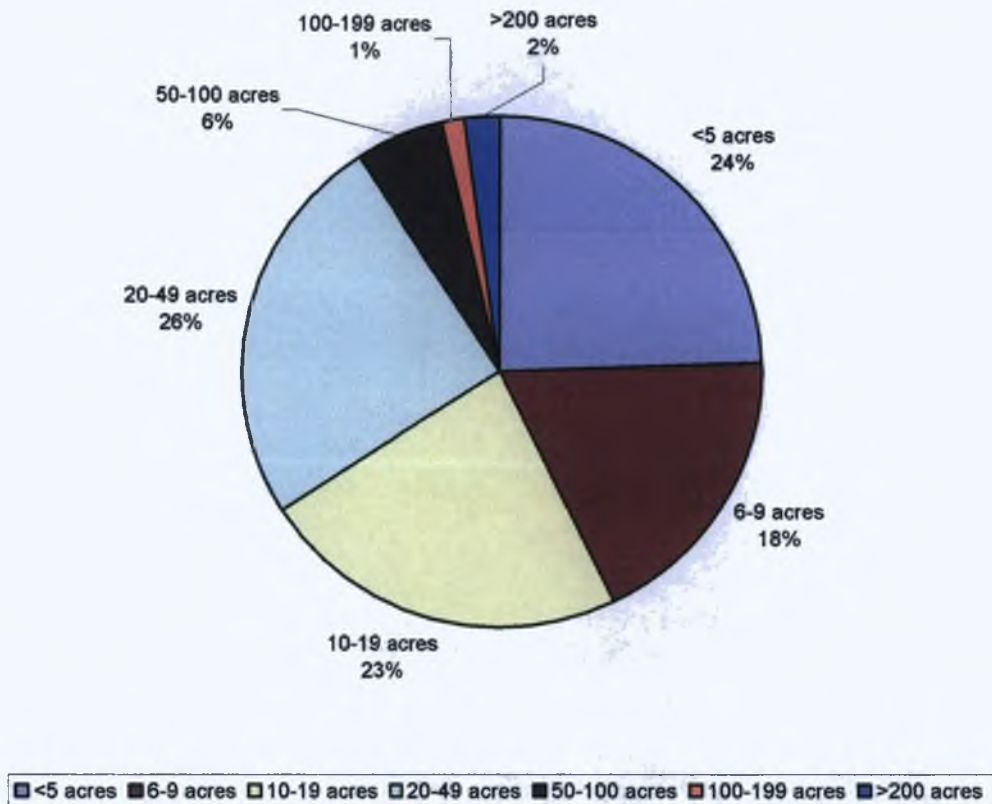
For tithe applotment purposes, Dunlavin parish was divided into fifteen classifications based on land quality. The largest holdings, three of which were in excess of 200 acres, were all either class fourteen or fifteen and paid tithe at a low rate. However, these holdings were in the fertile townlands of Brewershill and Loughmogue, free of marsh and scrub.<sup>103</sup> In contrast to these larger holdings, 35 occupiers, or 24 per cent of the total, held five acres or less, with one holding of less than one acre, and 61 per cent of all occupiers held less than 20 acres (figure 17).

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<sup>102</sup> A full list of the tithe applotment returns for the civil parish of Dunlavin appears in appendix seven.

<sup>103</sup> William Copeland occupied three hundred and thirty class fourteen acres in Brewershill, while William and Thomas Molyneux occupied two hundred and twenty-one and two hundred and ten class fifteen acres respectively in Loughmogue. Dunlavin tithe applotment (N.A.I., Microfilm 112, MS 32/8 passim)

**Figure 17. Number and size of holdings in Dunlavin tithe applotment book 1823.**



**Source: Dunlavin tithe applotment book, 1823.**

The smallest tenant farmers were almost as vulnerable as the landless labourers.<sup>104</sup>

Smallholdings were not viable in times of subsistence crises, and were indicative of the pressure of expanding population on the land bank in the region, which was to have tragic repercussions in the Famine of the 1840s.<sup>105</sup> West Wicklow in the early nineteenth century experienced intermittent crises, as in 1818 'the wettest year there

<sup>104</sup> Stephen Randolph Gibbons, *Captain Rock, night errant: the threatening letters of pre-famine Ireland* (Dublin, 2004), p. 19.

<sup>105</sup> It is not possible to gauge the effects of such subsistence crises on mortality in Dunlavin, as there are no Roman Catholic burial records. These are absent for the whole period 1650-1900. Church of Ireland burial records do not show an increase in mortality between 1818 and 1824, but Protestant tenants are less likely to have been so severely affected, as they generally held better and larger tenancies and were not numerous among the cottier class.

had been... which ruined nearly all the crops'.<sup>106</sup> The full effect of this crop failure was felt in 1819, a year that saw a punishing economic crisis and a catastrophic collapse in grain prices.<sup>107</sup> In 1822, worsening economic conditions ensured that the fair at Castledermot, county Kildare 'presented such a picture of misery of our country as never before met our eyes; stock of every description in great abundance, yet no demand for anything'.<sup>108</sup> Economic distress in county Kildare also affected west Wicklow, and in Dunlavin the discrepancy between the number of occupiers in the tithe applotment and the number of families in the 1821 census suggests that there was a substantial number of landless families, which were vulnerable in the event of a subsistence crisis.

Though landless families were not recorded and even some recorded occupiers are difficult to locate because their holdings are referred to by surname rather than by place,<sup>109</sup> the tithe applotment book is still useful in analysing the size of farms in the Dunlavin area. Nearly a quarter of all farms were less than five acres in extent, and their cottier occupiers were only marginally above the landless on the social ladder. Almost a fifth of the total number of holdings were between five and ten acres in area, and were small enough to ensure a precarious existence in the event of distress. Nearly another quarter of the total number of occupiers farmed between ten and twenty acres of land and, while they were marginally better off than the smaller

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<sup>106</sup> Hanbidge and Hanbidge, *Memories of West Wicklow*, p. 35.

<sup>107</sup> James S. Donnelly Jr., 'Captain Rock: The origins of the Irish agrarian rebellion of 1821-24', *New Hibernia Review* (Dublin, Winter, 2007), p. 66.

<sup>108</sup> *Dublin Evening Post*, 3 Oct 1822.

<sup>109</sup> Examples include 'Wright's Farm', 'Cullen's Farm' and 'Reagan's Farm'. In fact, the entries in the townland column of the returns are very inconsistent, with twenty-one holdings simply located in 'Dunlavin'. These occupiers may have lived in the village and had agricultural land elsewhere, but the large number of urban dwellers listed suggests that at least some of them may have lived in Dunlavin's adjacent townlands. Some townlands are located specifically, but the column also contains entries such as 'near Tubber', 'house and farm' or 'below road'. This hampers attempts to locate specific holdings from the returns.

occupiers below them, they were by no means substantial farmers, and were also vulnerable in times of economic hardship. Two-thirds of all holdings were less than twenty acres. At the other end of the social scale five occupiers, William Cooke of Ballylea, Anthony Allen of Logatrina, Thomas and William Molyneux, both of Loughmogue and J. Copeland of Brewershill held between 120 and 330 acres. Allen also occupied land in Rathsallagh. These were elite tenants, the strong farmers and middlemen, who moved in higher social circles than the smaller occupiers, though they were still considerably less wealthy than the landlord elite, whose estates covered thousands rather than hundreds of acres. The tithe applotment book reveals a social pyramid with a broad base and a narrow apex in the civil parish of Dunlavin in the 1820s.

Agricultural land was vital to survival in early nineteenth-century rural Ireland, and life featured a constant struggle to obtain it, to retain it and to restrict the costs involved on it. Visitors to the country were appalled with the desperate land-hunger in the rural areas of early nineteenth-century Ireland. One wrote:

It is not enough to say that land is desired in Ireland; it is envied and coveted; it is torn to pieces and the fragments are fiercely contested: when it cannot be occupied by fair means it is occupied by crime... [Irish people] risk their own lives and take those of others to become tenants of half an acre of ground.<sup>110</sup>

The rapidly rising population, the emergence of graziers at the expense of tillage farmers and the cumulative effect of continuous subdivision contributed to the tensions involving the small farmers and peasants of rural Ireland. In Leinster, population density was at its highest on the poorest agricultural land.<sup>111</sup> These

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<sup>110</sup> G. de Beaumont, *Ireland, social, political and religious*, ii (London, 1839), p. 237.

<sup>111</sup> T. Jones Hughes, 'East Leinster in the mid-nineteenth century', *Irish Geography*, iii, 5 (Dublin?, 1958), p. 235.

conditions encouraged the setting of often impossibly high rents and many farmers with five acres or less paid rent in arrears, a situation known as the 'hanging gale', which kept a large section of the population close to the margin of existence, and constituted a permanent threat should these rents be demanded in bad times.<sup>112</sup> In county Kildare, farms of five acres and under formed over 40 per cent of the total.<sup>113</sup> In west Wicklow such holdings were also common, and the tenants at Ballylow on the Blessington estate were constantly in arrears throughout the 1820s, though the middleman, John Fynamore, from whom they leased the land, collected the rent 'in small instalments and at such remote periods' as was convenient for them.<sup>114</sup> This situation was probably replicated for the 35 occupiers who held five acres or less in Dunlavin parish.

The importance of land was underlined by the nationwide phenomenon of issuing or posting of threatening letters in cases where disputes over occupancy arose. These letters claimed that right was on the side of the occupier, not the landlord. The letters attest to the existence of a customary code of conduct, separate to that represented by government, magistrates or the newly-founded police, and applied by Irish countrymen. Threatening letters came from those loyal to the King and from those with nationalist tendencies, with no preponderance either way.<sup>115</sup> Landholding affected both Catholic and Protestant; loyalist and nationalist, and the letters concentrated on specific perceived wrongs and disputes over occupancy. One such

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<sup>112</sup> Gibbons, *Captain Rock, night errant*, p. 19.

<sup>113</sup> Jones Hughes, 'East Leinster in the mid-nineteenth century', p. 230.

<sup>114</sup> Kathy Trant, 'The eviction of the Ballylow tenants on the Blessington estate in 1852', *Journal of the West Wicklow Historical Society*, iv (Naas, 2007), p. 46. Trant informs us 'All changed when Fynamore died in 1833... the Ballylow tenants came directly under the rule of the Downshires... they were now expected to pay their rent twice yearly... by 1849 most of them were in arrears... in 1852... over eighty people... were evicted from the townland'.

<sup>115</sup> Gibbons, *Captain Rock, night errant*, pp 22-3 and 36.

dispute which occurred in Dunlavin in 1825, centred on the occupancy of land at Brewershill, a townland about two miles east of the village. On 24 July 1825 Major James Tandy of Grangebeg wrote to Dublin Castle, enclosing a threatening notice that had been posted on the door of Dunlavin chapel on that day.<sup>116</sup> The notice was found an hour after a notice of the sale of land in Brewershill, known as Powell's Meadows, had been put up in the village. The threatening notice read:

Take notice,  
Any person or persons has anything to do with Powels meadows on  
Brewarshill in eather mowing or meaking his hay or having  
anything to do with it whatsoever he will be sorry. What does not  
exampel teach you and be aware of what will insue for you shurely  
see the deanger perhaps when you least expect it in eather life or  
property so mark the consequence.

The Powell family, who owned Tober House prior to its incineration in 1798, left the Dunlavin region about this time, perhaps prompting the sale. Powell lands at Tober were also advertised for sale at this time and another threatening notice was posted in Dunlavin village in December 1825.<sup>117</sup> This one read:

Let the great Jones and Harrington take care of themselves or we  
will serve them as we served Mr Powel. Let no person send them  
any cattle to Tubber land or we will serve them as we did Bollards  
sheep and worse. Let them take a caution by this or they will be  
sorry. Let no one pull this down. [Signed] Martin Rock.

There is no Jones listed in the Dunlavin tithe applotment book, but James Harrington was a multiple occupier of land totalling forty-three and a half acres at Mrs. William Morgans, Wrights Farm and Cullens Farm, while John Harrington also farmed thirty-one acres. The Harringtons were a substantial Dunlavin Catholic family in the mid-nineteenth century,<sup>118</sup> and they were improving their substance in 1825 as one of them evidently bought, or was thinking of buying, Powells' lands in Tober at this time

<sup>116</sup> Major James Tandy to 'Sir', 24 Jul 1825 (N.A.I., State of the Country Papers, S.O.C. 2722/38)

<sup>117</sup> Major James Tandy to 'Sir', 10 Dec 1825 (N.A.I., State of the Country Papers, S.O.C. 2722/46)

<sup>118</sup> A statistical memoir of Dunlavin [1862] (N.U.I.M., Shearman Papers, xvii, f. 174)

– a move that engendered resentment and sympathy for the occupiers. This notice, with its reference to the fate of Bollard’s sheep, also provides evidence of agrarian crime around Dunlavin in 1825, and the appending of ‘Martin Rock’ as the signature is indicative of some measure of organisation to this agrarian unrest, as ‘Rock’ or ‘Captain Rock’ was a *nom-de-plume* commonly used by secret societies, collectively known as ‘Rockites’,<sup>119</sup> who spread agrarian unrest principally in southern Irish counties.<sup>120</sup>

A similar notice was posted on the chapel gate of Dunlavin the following month, on 1 January 1826.<sup>121</sup> The notice, which this time stressed loyalty to the King, referred to the Brewershill lands of Powell, who ‘ingratiated himself so artfully with the Reverend Father Germain that his meadows were allowed to be mowed last harvest’, so the previous threatening notice evidently did not have the desired effect.<sup>122</sup> On 12 March another notice was posted up in Dunlavin, threatening Thomas Fisher of the substantial Protestant landholding family at Merginstown and [Thomas?] Whittle.<sup>123</sup> Thomas Fisher was the occupier of forty-eight acres at Merginstown and sixteen acres at Harrington’s farm. The Whittles were a Catholic family, and Thomas Whittle occupied forty-nine acres at Merginstown, probably leased from the Fisher family, the dominant landowners in that townland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth

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<sup>119</sup> Joseph Lee, ‘The Ribbonmen’ in T. Desmond Williams (ed), *Secret societies in Ireland* (Dublin, 1973), p. 27. See also Gibbons, *Captain Rock, night errant*, p. 19 and A. MacLochlainn, ‘Social life in County Clare 1800–1850’, *University Review*, ii, 1 (Spring 1972), p. 63. MacLochlainn writes: ‘Outrages... were inflicted for the breaking of what the papers freely called the Rockite laws... A sign of Rockite displeasure was the cutting of a coffin shape in the sod outside the offender’s door’.

<sup>120</sup> James S. Donnelly Jr., ‘Captain Rock: The origins of the Irish agrarian rebellion of 1821–24’, *New Hibernia Review* (Dublin, Winter, 2007), p. 47. Also James S. Donnelly Jr., ‘Captain Rock: Ideology and organization in the Irish agrarian rebellion of 1821–24’, *Eire – Ireland* (Dublin, Winter, 2007), pp 62–3. Donnelly has identified counties Limerick, Cork, Kerry, Clare, Tipperary, Waterford and Kilkenny as the principal Rockite areas of activity.

<sup>121</sup> Major James Tandy to Henry Goulburn [Chief Secretary of Ireland], 2 Jan 1826 (N.A.I., State of the Country Papers series ii, S.O.C. II 173 [1826–27], 101)

<sup>122</sup> This notice is reproduced in full in appendix eight.

<sup>123</sup> Major James Tandy to William Gregory, 12 Mar 1826 (N.A.I., State of the Country Papers series ii, S.O.C. II 173 [1826–27]).

centuries.<sup>124</sup>

These threatening letters, targeted at substantial farmers, reflect the emergence of peasant agrarian agitation around Dunlavin in the mid-1820s. Such letters peaked nationally between 1821 and 1825. Joseph Lee has attributed this peak to the poor potato crops in 1821-22, compounded by the effects of the notorious evictions on the Courtney estate in county Limerick,<sup>125</sup> but the Constabulary Act of 1822, which inaugurated a whole new era in policing, and the introduction of the new tithe system in 1823 may also have been factors. One observer noted the effects of the Constabulary Act when he wrote about 'what in my memory were simple police being now metamorphosed into half-soldiers'.<sup>126</sup>

After 1823, tithe became a major topic of threatening letters nationally.<sup>127</sup> Tithe represented another cost on land, and was unpopular. In addition to the new system of tithes, the parish cess (also known as vestry money) was levied until 1833 on both Catholics and Protestants to enable the parishes of the established church to pay a parish clerk, or to meet incidental expenses involved in the running of the church.<sup>128</sup> One observer noted that 'the poor peasants are, as usual, the principal victims, as the cess is levied from the occupants exclusively'.<sup>129</sup> In Kildare, the resentment engendered by the parish cess was evident as Rev. James Doyle, the bishop of Kildare and Leighlin noted:

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<sup>124</sup> Edward Fisher of Merginstown claimed over £870 for losses during the 1798 rebellion (see chapter three). This notice is also reproduced in full in appendix eight.

<sup>125</sup> Joseph Lee, 'The Ribbonmen' in T. Desmond Williams (ed), *Secret societies in Ireland* (Dublin, 1973), p. 27.

<sup>126</sup> Isaac Butt, *Irish life; in the Castle, the Courts and the Country*, i (London, 1840), p. 273.

<sup>127</sup> Gibbons, *Captain Rock, night errant*, p. 28.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, p. 31.

<sup>129</sup> Hibernicus, *Practical views and suggestions on the present condition and permanent improvement of Ireland* (Dublin, 1823), p. 155.



They still have to attend the bailiff when he calls with the warrant of the churchwardens to collect their last shilling (if one should happen to remain) that the empty church may have a stove, the clerk a surplice, the communion table elements to be sanctified.  
130

Catholic resistance to these developments, and a more general desire for Catholic emancipation began to manifest themselves nationally after the imposition of the new tithe system in 1823. The Catholic Association was founded, comprising mainly Catholic merchants, professional men and land occupiers.<sup>131</sup> The association's inaugural meeting, with Lord Killeen in the chair, was held in Dublin on 12 May 1823.<sup>132</sup> In 1824, the association became a mass movement, when Daniel O'Connell introduced a new category of member, paying a penny a month. This created a nationwide network of local agents and committees.<sup>133</sup> By the end of the first phase of Catholic rent collection in March 1825, county Wicklow contributed the modest sum of £175, the second-lowest total in Leinster. By contrast, county Kildare contributed £567.<sup>134</sup> The collection of Catholic rent depended on local political activists, often including the Catholic clergy, responding to the association's policy of publicising local grievances.<sup>135</sup> One supportive priest was Rev. Gerald Doyle of Naas.<sup>136</sup> From 1825 onwards, the formation of local political machines known as Liberal Clubs aided the cause of the Catholic Association. One such club was formed in Naas in 1828.<sup>137</sup> In 1832, at a meeting held in Naas to protest against tithes,<sup>138</sup> Fr.

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<sup>130</sup> J.K.L. [James Doyle, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin], *Letters on the state of Ireland, to a friend in England* (Dublin, 1825), p. 60.

<sup>131</sup> Connolly (ed), *The Oxford companion to Irish history*, p. 74.

<sup>132</sup> *The Freeman's Journal*, 13 May 1823.

<sup>133</sup> Connolly (ed), *The Oxford companion to Irish history*, p. 78.

<sup>134</sup> *Dublin Evening Post*, 27 Apr 1826. In Leinster, only Longford, with £168, contributed less than Wicklow.

<sup>135</sup> Fergus O'Ferrall, *Catholic emancipation: Daniel O'Connell and the birth of Irish democracy 1820-30* (Dublin, 1825), p. 66.

<sup>136</sup> Stan Hickey and Liam Kenny (eds), *Nas na Riogh: from Poorhouse Road to the Fairy Flax... an illustrated history of Naas* (Naas, 1990), p. 14.

<sup>137</sup> O'Ferrall, *Catholic emancipation*, pp 216-7.

Doyle addressed the audience thus:

If I were a poor man obliged to earn my bread, I would not put a scythe into the grass, nor a hook into the corn, nor lay out a farthing in the shop of any man that paid tithe. Now boys, I do not desire you to do this, but I tell you that if I was a poor man, it is that I would do – and now let me see how many will act as I would act.<sup>139</sup>

Naas was close enough to influence developments in Dunlavin, and there was unrest in the village in April 1832, as the churchwardens sought military assistance to enforce the payment of the parish cess.<sup>140</sup> Troops were stationed in Dunlavin, and a decision made to maintain a military presence the village.<sup>141</sup> The decision not to withdraw the military from Dunlavin may have been influenced by a tithe-related incident that occurred locally in May 1832. On 21 May 1832 at least 1,000 people, many armed with spades, forks and other weapons, congregated on Kelsha hill.<sup>142</sup> The gathering was part of an ongoing series of anti-tithe protests in the region. Their conduct and language was threatening and they exhibited intentions of ‘violence and force’. On that day also a party of police and cavalry led by a Mr Hatton<sup>143</sup> ‘prostrated several [similar] mounds near Dunlavin’. Hatton and the police, reinforced by four more constables from Donard then ‘proceeded to Kilshe and saw thirty or forty persons who seemed disposed to resist’. When the police reached the level of the mound, they found about 1,000 people ‘armed with pitchforks, long poles, scythes and other weapons’. The military reinforced Hatton’s men, totalling about forty armed men, but the crowd on the hill also grew, reaching about 1,500 in strength. A standoff

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<sup>138</sup> Police report, undated but 1832 (N.A.I., CSORP papers index, 1832/T374, paper not extant)

<sup>139</sup> *Leinster Express*, 14 Jul 1832.

<sup>140</sup> Application of Dunlavin churchwardens regarding parish cess, Apl 1832 (N.A.I., CSORP papers index, 1832/D1570, paper not extant)

<sup>141</sup> Recommendation that troops be continued at Dunlavin, undated but 1832 (N.A.I., CSORP papers index, 1832/D3270, paper not extant)

<sup>142</sup> Rendered Kilshe in contemporary accounts; it is Kelsha, a hill nearer to Donard than Dunlavin.

<sup>143</sup> This surname does not appear in the Dunlavin tithe applotment book. Hatton was not an occupier of agricultural land within the parish, but may have been Dunlavin’s chief constable.

ensued, but nobody was injured.<sup>144</sup>

Following this incident, an enquiry lasting six days was held in Dunlavin,<sup>145</sup> and multiple arrests were made. During the trial at Wicklow of those arrested, the prosecution (personally undertaken by the attorney general) alleged that tithe defaulters were engaged in a 'widespread, illegal and dangerous confederacy'. The prosecution stated that tenants who do not pay tithe 'break their agreement with the landlord and are thus robbing'. The 'sudden congregation of large masses' was part of the plan to 'achieve the objects of these illegal confederacies'. Mass meeting locations were chosen in advance and mounds were quickly erected from which signals (flags during the day and fires at night) could be sent to call people to the gathering. The prosecution alleged these mounds were 'emblems and instruments of insurrection'. Judge Torrens concurred with this interpretation and stressed the criminality of those 'who excite the people to assemblies such as that out of which the present case arose'. Before sentencing, one of the defendants exclaimed: 'We'll fight the battle of '41 over again and then we'll live in a free country'. In his summation, Judge Torrens commented 'I trust that the wretch who made use of these expressions was not aware of the import of that which they were calculated to convey'. While it is possible that the accused man was merely venting his frustration, both his invocation of 1641 and the judge's reaction to his utterance suggest that the events of the rebellion, or at least its perceived and imagined events, were indelibly imprinted in west Wicklow folk-

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<sup>144</sup> *Leinster Express*, 21 Jul 1832.

<sup>145</sup> Henry [Cashen?] to Thomas Taylor, claim for expenses relating to the Dunlavin enquiry of 1832 (N.A.I., CSORP/1834/914). Cashen's expenses included five nights stay at an inn in Kilcullen, 'there being no convenient accommodation... at Dunlavin'. Evidently, the inn built by James Worth Tynte had ceased taking guests at this time.

memory.<sup>146</sup> Twenty-two men were sentenced to terms of between six months and two years in prison and five were additionally fined sums of between £20 and £50, while another nine were discharged on bail on grounds of their youth.<sup>147</sup> This case was headline news in the *Leinster Express* and placed Dunlavin at the centre of the anti-tithe movement, locally and regionally.<sup>148</sup>

Despite this high-profile case and its successful prosecutions, the Dunlavin area remained troubled. The situation was sufficiently disturbing to persuade at least one Protestant Dunlavin couple, James and Martha Fenton, to emigrate to Australia on board the *Othello* due to the 'bloody tithe riots of 1832'.<sup>149</sup> The Fentons migrated with their children, because they 'feared a recurrence of the 1798 rebellion which would still haunt their minds as an atrocious conflict'.<sup>150</sup> There were numerous violent incidents in Dunlavin, with agrarian unrest taking many forms, but it is difficult to determine how many of these disturbances were directly attributable to tithe-related protest. Subversives in the region were known as Whitefeet, and in November 1833 magistrates offered a £50 reward for information about a fatal attack

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<sup>146</sup> The references to the 1641 rebellion, an event that happened almost two centuries before this trial, are revealing. The author observed similar reactions by some people, involving popular perception rather than historical fact, during the bicentennial commemoration of the 1798 massacre in Dunlavin in 1998. In 1822 Charles Grant pointed out that there were 'vivid recollections of past history' among the Irish people, and it was 'astonishing indeed to observe the force and intensity of those mental associations'. *The parliamentary debates published under the superintendence of T. C. Hansard*, new series, 2, vi, (London, 1820-29), 2 Apr 1822, col. 1504. (Hereinafter cited as Hansard 2, vi etc.) R. F. Foster suggests 'In Ireland, the idea of self-validation through received [historical] memory has grown apace'. R. F. Foster, *The Irish story: telling tales and making it up in Ireland* (London, 2002), p. 29.

<sup>147</sup> *Leinster Express*, 21 Jul 1832. Those sentenced were Patrick Mackay, two years and fined £50; Edward Magrath, eighteen months and fined £30; John Geoghan, Philip Brady, James Sheridan and Daniel Cavanagh, twelve months and fined £20 each; Thomas Robinson, Michael Lennon, Patrick Brien, James Dunn, Matthew Murphy, Tobias Toole, Thomas Nugent, Hugh Reilly, John Carroll and Timothy Byrne, twelve months each; James French, nine months and Patrick Dunn, Patrick Deegan, Denis Deegan, Laurence Toole and Hugh Lennon, six months each.

<sup>148</sup> The Attorney General's personal involvement may also suggest national significance.

<sup>149</sup> C. M. and N. B. Abbot, *Voyage of the Othello, taking 117 passengers from Liverpool to Australia in 1833 returning by Indonesia, journal kept by Surgeon Thomas Mitchell and a story of an emigrant family* (York, 1988), pp 80-3.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*, p. 80. The children were Eliza, Charles, Ann, Michael, James and Martha, *ibid*, p ix. Their father, James, died of cholera on board the *Othello* on 30 Aug 1833, but the family settled in Australia and prospered.

on a Mr. Litchfield of Usk. On the same night, a group of armed men entered the house of a Mr. Kennedy of Ballyshannon and nearly beat him to death with their rifle butts because he had collected rent due by one Mackay.<sup>151</sup> This was probably the Patrick Mackay who had been sentenced to two years imprisonment for his part as a ringleader in obstructing the police in the Dunlavin anti-tithe protest the previous year. The Whitefeet remained active in the region in the early 1830s. In 1833 the Dunlavin churchwardens requested armed support once more. Still, the village remained troubled, and there was an anti-tithe meeting held there and a threatening notice was posted up later in that year.<sup>152</sup>

Though their number declined in the mid-1830s, threatening notices continued to appear in Dunlavin during the following decade, with tithe continuing to feature. On 12 March 1836 Chief Constable Hawkeshaw of Dunlavin reported that a notice threatening the local rector, Rev. Moore Morgan, had been found in the village, 'as I have arrested different persons here last week to protect the tithe commissioners, which is the cause of their notice'.<sup>153</sup> The notice contained a vitriolic attack on Moore Morgan, warning 'we watch this bastard till we take him down', before threatening 'blind Toney [Anthony Wright, a tithe commissioner for the area? <sup>154</sup>], Andrew Divine and McCarmel', and finally stating that the writers can 'take them [the police] down any time we like'.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> *Leinster Express*, 9 Nov 1833. The report stated 'Kennedy was saved from death by his daughter lying on top of him and the agrarian vigilantes left with a stand of arms'.

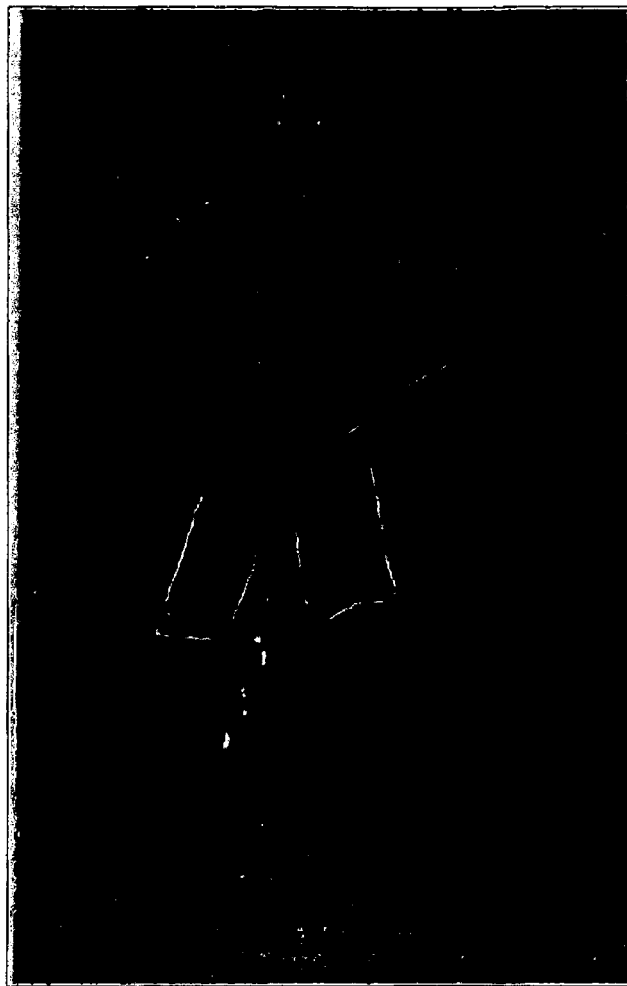
<sup>152</sup> The CSORP papers index for 1833, contains the following undated entries: Letter from Dunlavin Churchwardens (N.A.I., CSO, CR18, B205), Reports on Dunlavin meeting (N.A.I., CSO, CR18, J952, M1030, H950, H1034 and C1042), Dunlavin threatening notice (N.A.I., CSO, CR18, H1160). None of these papers are extant.

<sup>153</sup> Police report and threatening notice, 12 Mar 1836 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 24/32)

<sup>154</sup> Police report and threatening notice, 25 Sep 1836 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 136/32)

<sup>155</sup> This letter is reproduced in full in appendix eight.

**Illustration 5. Rev. W. Moore Morgan, rector of Dunlavin 1814-1858.**



**Source: R. A. Warke, *St. Nicholas's church and parish, Dunlavin 1817-1967*.**

Recourse to threatening notices was repeated on 25 September 1836, when the police removed one at Slatequarries [Plezica], a townland about a mile east of Dunlavin. This threatened leading Catholic families in the area, including the Harringtons and Whittles, who had both been targeted in 1826, and Anthony Wright, the tithe commissioner. James Wall was also threatened. The surname Wall does not appear in the tithe applotment book, but Walls had been a prominent family in Grangecon since

the late eighteenth century.<sup>156</sup> This notice also possessed a politicised message that read 'Hark the consequences, Ireland as she aught and must be great and free'.<sup>157</sup> On the same day Hawkeshaw reported that another letter threatening the 'bloodsucking tithe payers of Dunlavin', included the Harringtons, Whittles and Walls. The notice stated that these men had been among the first to organise an anti-tithe meeting in Dunlavin.<sup>158</sup> Anti-tithe meetings were also held in the chapel in Donard on 11 December 1836 and in Baltinglass on 24 January 1837.<sup>159</sup>

The threats contained in the notices posted in and around Dunlavin were not idle ones. People targeted by the letter-writers suffered attacks on their property. On 15 August 1836 John Harrington's house in Dunlavin was torched, and the following month his turf stack was also burned.<sup>160</sup> James Wall's house and sheds were burned down on 17 March 1838. Wall's servant, Thomas Bryan, was suspected of complicity, as he was 'connected with a number of Whitefeet'.<sup>161</sup> On 16 November 1838 James Wall's barn in Dunlavin was also incinerated.<sup>162</sup> Other Whitefeet targets in the late 1830s included the landowner, George Fisher of Merginstown, and Richard Fowler, an Orange sympathiser prominent on the Crown side in 1798. On 5 March 1838 Fisher's

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<sup>156</sup> Christopher Robinson to Edward Cooke, 14 May 1798 (N.A.I. Rebellion papers, 620/3/32/5). A man named Wall also occupied a house in Dunlavin village in 1839. Christiaan Corlett and John Medleycott (eds), *The Ordnance Survey letters: Wicklow, from the original letters of John O'Donovan, Eugene Curry and Thomas O'Connor 1838-40* (Wicklow, 2001), p. 104.

<sup>157</sup> Police report and threatening notice, 25 Sep 1836 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 136/32)

<sup>158</sup> This was possibly the meeting mentioned in the CSORP papers index for 1833. Reports on Dunlavin meeting (N.A.I., CSO, CR18, J952, M1030, H950, H1034 and C1042). There had also been anti-tithe meetings in Naas and Kilcullen in 1832 (N.A.I., CSORP 1832, T374 and T922). None of these papers is extant.

<sup>159</sup> Police reports on anti-tithe meetings, 5 Dec 1836 and 24 Jan 1837 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MSS 177/32 and 27/32 respectively). These letters are also reproduced in full in appendix eight.

<sup>160</sup> Police reports on arson, 16 Aug and 17 Sep 1836 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MSS 106/32 and 117/32 respectively). In the latter report Chief Constable Hawkeshaw stated that John Harrington had recently paid his tithes to Rev. Moore Morgan.

<sup>161</sup> Police report on arson, 17 Mar 1838 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 33/32)

<sup>162</sup> Police report on arson, 16 Nov 1838 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 90/32)

house was robbed and on 19 March that year Fowler's outhouses were torched.<sup>163</sup> Arson was a common form of Whitefeet intimidation and fires were frequent in the more disturbed areas of the country.<sup>164</sup> There were thirteen instances of arson reported from Dunlavin police station in the three-year period from 1836 to 1838 alone.<sup>165</sup>

The Whitefeet also vented their displeasure on authority figures such as Lieutenant General John Stratford Saunders (younger brother of Morley Saunders)<sup>166</sup> and Edward Pennefather of Rathsallagh. The previous Rathsallagh landlord, William Ryves, died in debt on 6 June 1834. A Tipperary lawyer, Edward Pennefather, covered Ryves's debts, securing Rathsallagh House and demesne in repayment.<sup>167</sup> Both Saunders and Pennefather had sheep stolen in April and December 1836 respectively.<sup>168</sup> People in the employment of such figures were also attacked. In February 1836 at Three Castles near Blessington, the dwelling house and sheds of George Begley, gamekeeper to the marquis of Downshire, were torched.<sup>169</sup> A more serious incident occurred in November 1837, when about twenty people attacked Thomas Powell, who worked for Pennefather, in broad daylight outside Murray's liquor store in Dunlavin. The politicised nature of the attack was underlined when the mob shouted 'Kill the Orange thief' throughout the attack. Powell was seriously

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<sup>163</sup> Police reports on arson, 5 Mar and 19 Mar 1838 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MSS 28/32 and 36/32 respectively).

<sup>164</sup> Gibbons, *Captain Rock, night errant*, p. 38.

<sup>165</sup> Police reports on arson, 1836 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MSS 13/32, 48/32, 68/32, 106/32, 117/32 and 118/32 respectively). Police reports on arson, 1837 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 225/32). Police reports on arson, 5 Mar and 19 Mar 1838 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MSS 17/32, 33/32, 36/32, 56/32, 84/32 and 90/32 respectively).

<sup>166</sup> John Burke, *A genealogical and heraldic history of the commoners of Great Britain and Ireland, enjoying territorial possessions or high official rank; but uninvested with heritable honours*, iv (Four vols, London, 1838), p. 375.

<sup>167</sup> [http://www.turtlebunbury.com/history/history\\_houses/hist\\_hse\\_rathsallagh.htm#penne](http://www.turtlebunbury.com/history/history_houses/hist_hse_rathsallagh.htm#penne) visited on 1/7/2008.

<sup>168</sup> Police reports on sheep stealing, 1836 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MSS 44/32 and 199/32 respectively).

<sup>169</sup> Police report on arson, 1836 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 13/32)



injured and was only saved by the intervention of John Horner, who managed to disperse the assailants.<sup>170</sup> Though not directly tithe-related, the nature of many of these attacks perpetrated on both people and property in and around Dunlavin, indicates that societal polarisation had intensified and Orange sympathisers, landlords and their employees, loyalists and Protestants were targeted as well as tithe-payers, and the Whitefeet in the region were following a political agenda.

However, even ordinary criminality in the Dunlavin region was not without its social dimension, and much of it centred on the struggle for land, which was crucial to survival. There are numerous instances of larceny in the reports of the Dunlavin chief constables, which date from 1836. A typical case was the arrest of Farrel Murphy for stealing apples on 12 September 1836.<sup>171</sup> Farrel Murphy was not listed in the Dunlavin tithe applotment book, but an Edward Murphy occupied one acre of poor quality (class 13) land at Tubberbeg. Whether Farrel Murphy was landless, or whether he belonged to the family of smallholder Edward Murphy, the theft of food was unsurprising. There were twenty-four instances of such theft reported at Dunlavin police station in 1836.<sup>172</sup> None was large, but the range of goods involved was wide. Money, clothing, timber, apples, potatoes, pigs, sheep and cows were all stolen. Many of the thefts were not from landlords or loyalists, but were simply cases of neighbours stealing from each other, indicative of breakdown in social cohesion and economic strain causing greater need. Pressure on resources increased as the population expanded and these small-scale thefts, often targeting the necessities of life, suggest

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<sup>170</sup> Police report on assault, 1837 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 219/32). Patrick Croake, John McLoughlin, Patrick McLoughlin and one Mageer, all of Brewel near Usk and John Connolly of Milltown, Dunlavin were identified as being among Powell's attackers.

<sup>171</sup> Police report on theft, 14 Sep 1836 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 124/32)

<sup>172</sup> Police reports on theft, various dates 1836 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MSS 5/32, 20/32, 22/32, 23/32, 41/32, 44/32, 45/32, 50/32, 55/32, 67/32, 84/32, 99/32, 116/32, 124/32, 125/32, 132/32, 133/32, 140/32, 142/32, 176/32, 186/32, 187/32, 196/32 and 199/32)

that some people in the Dunlavin region resorted to robbery to survive.

The penalties for such misdemeanours were high. Those convicted of such thefts faced trial, from 1835 onwards in the new courthouse in Dunlavin. In 1835 Lady Hannah Tynte Caldwell had Dunlavin market house ‘thoroughly repaired, and one end of it fitted up as a courthouse’ (illustration 6).<sup>173</sup> Offenders were sent to gaols at Naas or Wicklow, and many were transported to Australia or other destinations for a minimum of seven years. The reaction to theft, particularly the theft of animals, was revealing. The landlord-tenant system valued land, and the animals on that land represented wealth and status. In many instances animal theft was dealt with more severely than violent crime.<sup>174</sup> The register of Wicklow gaol includes many cases involving such agrarian thefts that resulted in transportation. Despite severe penalties, however, agrarian theft continued in the Dunlavin region throughout the 1830s.<sup>175</sup> The area covered by Dunlavin police station was geographically large, including both Baltiboys and Blessington and uplands as far as Kippure.<sup>176</sup> This reflected Dunlavin’s status as the leading urban settlement in northwest Wicklow, although, after the decision in 1822 to bypass Ballymore Eustace and build a Liffey bridge at

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<sup>173</sup> Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland*, i, p. 583.

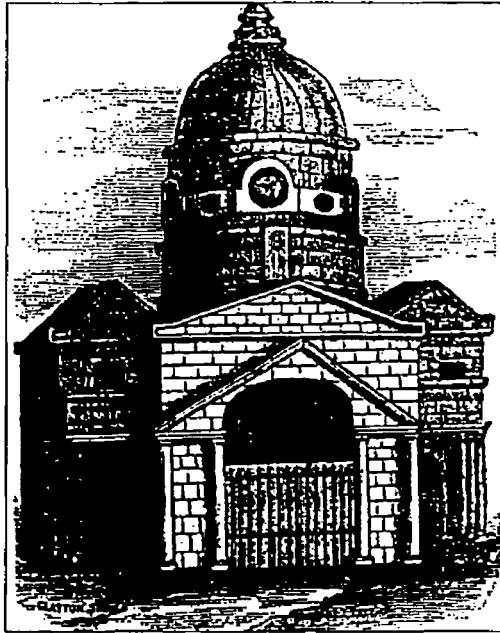
<sup>174</sup> Chris Lawlor, ‘From Wicklow to Woomera – Wicklow’s criminal Australian connections’, Dunlavin Festival of Arts brochure (Naas, 1998), p. 23. In 1837 Hugh Fitzpatrick, John Power, William Cuddy, Patrick Byrne, Michael Byrne, James Sharp and James Hetherington were all tried before Captain James Dogherty and transported for life for animal theft, but James Mahoney only received a seven-year sentence for violent assault. Convicts in the gaol of the county of Wicklow 1837 (N.A.I., Wicklow Gaol register, f. 178)

<sup>175</sup> See, for example, Police reports on theft, various dates 1837-38 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MSS 33/32, 42/32 and 181/32, [1837] and 28/32, 96/32 and 108/32, [1838])

<sup>176</sup> For example, on 25 May 1836 Chief Constable Hawkeshaw reported the theft of a Dutch cow at Baltiboys, Police report on theft, 25 May 1836 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 84/32); on 17 Apr 1836 James Kelly of Blessington was robbed of £12 3s, Police report on theft, 17 Apr 1836 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 55/32); and on 3 Jul 1837 one John Fay was apprehended by Sub-Constable John Richardson for stealing an ass, which was the property of one John Brennan of Woolpack (near Naas), Police report on theft, 3 Jul 1837 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 139/32). The Dunlavin police reports also included incidents from Manor Kilbride, Tynnode, Hollywood and many other locations in west Wicklow.

Poulaphuca,<sup>177</sup> Blessington outstripped Dunlavin in size and regional significance, and from 1839 onwards police reports from Blessington were signed by a chief constable, and Dunlavin was relegated to the charge of a sub-constable.

**Illustration 6. Dunlavin courthouse in 1835.**



**Source: *Dublin Penny Journal*, 26 December 1835.**

In addition to political and agrarian crimes, Dunlavin police reports included various other incidents suggesting that society in the region was disorderly in the 1830s.

These included riots in the streets of both Dunlavin and Blessington. On 10 February 1836, police intervened to quell a full-scale riot in Dunlavin but were attacked with stones and beaten back.<sup>178</sup> Fair days were often marked by such riots,<sup>179</sup> and on 12 May 1837 Chief Constable Wright reported that fifteen people were arrested

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<sup>177</sup> Memorial of John and Hugh Tassie to Richard Colley, Marquis Wellesley, 10 Jun 1822 (N.A.I., CSORP papers, 1822, MS W2593)

<sup>178</sup> Police report on riot, 11 Feb 1836 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 11/32)

<sup>179</sup> Seamas Ó Maitiu, *The humours of Donnybrook: Dublin's famous fair and its suppression* (Dublin, 1995), pp 7-17 passim.

following disturbances at the fair in Blessington.<sup>180</sup> Disturbances were not confined to fair days moreover, and a possible faction fight occurred at Lemonstown crossroads, about two miles from Dunlavin on 18 December 1836. Factional motivated disorder was commonplace in the Irish countryside during the nineteenth century<sup>181</sup> and on that day a 'serious riot took place between two families named Kenna and Coogan, who had been on bad terms for some time past', and fighting recurred that night, after both families and their supporters had been drinking.<sup>182</sup> Fighting was also associated with the annual pattern to Dunlavin's holy well at Tornant, which differed from most holy wells because both Catholics and Protestants dipped their children in the waters.<sup>183</sup> It was later noted that:

This well at Tornant was the scene of one of the most famed mid-Leinster patterns. St. John's eve was the day on which the pattern began and it lasted for three days. Tents and booths were erected and the crowds came from Carlow, Athy and from the farthest parts of the King's County. It was one of the leading patterns in the whole country, but owing to the great abuses and riots consequent on these gatherings, the owner of the land, Mr. Ennis, and the parish priest, Fr. John Hyland, ultimately abolished it in the 1830s'.<sup>184</sup>

In 1837 Chief Constable Wright had 'much satisfaction' in reporting that the pattern 'passed off in this district without the slightest observance of any of those practices

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<sup>180</sup> Police report on riot, 14 May 1837 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 105/32). The report stated: 'On 12 inst at the fair of Blessinton the peace of the town was much disturbed... by a number of drunken, disorderly persons of whom I apprehended fifteen'. Those arrested were: John Kirwan, Brockey, Co. Wicklow; Bryan Drake, Ballymore Eustace, Co. Dublin; James Braddick, Hempstown, Co. Kildare; John McDaniel, Carricknacus, Co. Wicklow; Peter Norton, Ballinagee, Co. Wicklow; Michael Kelly, Red Bog, Co. Kildare; George Atty, Baltiboys, Co. Wicklow; Michael Donagh, Kilbride, Co. Wicklow; John Wright, Dunlavin, Co. Wicklow; Lawrence Hely, Sandy Banks, Co. Wicklow; John Dallen, Blessinton, Co. Wicklow; William Byrne, Lacken, Co. Wicklow; John Monks, Ballynocken, Co. Wicklow; John Magrath, Tubber, Co. Wicklow and John Farrel, Blackditches, Co. Wicklow.

<sup>181</sup> James Kelly, *The Liberty and Ormond Boys: factional riot in eighteenth-century Dublin* (Dublin, 2005), p. 7.

<sup>182</sup> Police reports on riots, 21 Dec 1836 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MSS 190 and 191/32).

<sup>183</sup> Chris Lawlor, 'A pattern in time', *Dunlavin festival of arts brochure*, xiv (Naas, 1996), p. 52.

<sup>184</sup> Tornant (N.U.I. Maynooth, Shearman papers, vii, f. 51). Hyland, a native of Athy, was parish priest of Dunlavin from 1815 to 1862. Patrick Finn, 'Parish clergy down the years', *Dunlavin-Donard-Davidstown Parish Link*, iii, 2 (Naas, 1997), p. 2.

customary on the celebration of that day'.<sup>185</sup> No crime was reported during the pattern that year.

A recurring crime 'associated with the Whitefeet was the attacking and maiming or killing of animals and livestock. There were five such crimes reported by Dunlavin police in 1836 alone.<sup>186</sup> In addition to tithepayers, farmers who broke the code of the Whitefeet in other ways, such as by giving information to the authorities or by occupying land that had to be vacated by previous occupiers, were targeted. On 27 March 1838 Patrick Judge took down a threatening notice that warned farmers, particularly 'John Judge and William Kelly, to have no meddling [sic] or making in the taking of the orphan land at Friarhill'.<sup>187</sup> Wright's report confirmed that 'John Judge and others were about to take land in the possession of persons in the neighbourhood of Dunlavin'. Other occupiers were targeted personally. On 24 November 1837 a shot was fired into the house of Robert Molyneux of Dunlavin.<sup>188</sup> The ball missed Molyneux, but the intent was clear. Molyneux 'had lately taken a farm from Mr. Murdock at Fryars Hill', and 'four acres in the possession of Mr. James Wall of Dunlavin, one acre in the possession of William and James Gives and a half acre held

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<sup>185</sup> Police report on state of Dunlavin, 3 Jul 1837 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 142/32)

<sup>186</sup> Police reports on attacks on animals 1836 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MSS 5/ 32 [21 Jan: sheep, property of John Germain, killed], 50/32 [9 Apl: sheep, property of Thomas Valentine, maliciously injured], 55/32 [17 Apl: horse, property of Patrick Deegan, killed], 57/32 [29 Apl: goat, property of David Lawler, killed], 140/32 [2 Oct: sheep, property of Darby Cullen, killed]). These attacks may not all have been perpetrated by Whitefeet, but such outrages were perpetrated by agrarian secret societies to 'redress local grievances', O'Ferrall, *Catholic emancipation*, p. 38. Also Gibbons, *Captain Rock, night errant*, p. 23 states that 'those who took the name Rockite, Whitefoot and the like, though acting contrary to the law administered from castle and courtroom, were but executing their own unimpeachable justice... that the normal legal system was frequently defied and set at naught by much of the peasantry can scarcely be doubted'. The police reports do not specify how the targeted farmers had been involved in local grievances, but Valentine had prosecuted a man named Farrel in 1832 for shooting at him, Police report on arson [on outhouses of Thomas Valentine] 10 May 1836 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 62/32)

<sup>187</sup> Police report on threatening notice, 27 Mar 1838 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 40/32). This notice is transcribed in full in appendix eight.

<sup>188</sup> Police report on shooting, 24 Nov 1837 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 227/32)

by John McEvoy... and four acres in the possession of Patrick Mahon'. Two months later Henry Wilson, who had taken the land of John Doyle in the face of 'opposition at the time', was fired at from behind a ditch on his way home to Rathsallagh.<sup>189</sup> Again, the intention was clear. The evidence of the police reports points to the activities of the Whitefeet, tithe protest and criminality all contributing to a situation where low-level violence, theft and intimidation were common occurrences.

Chief constables' reports from Dunlavin ceased in 1839, as regional chief constables were now stationed in Blessington, though some cases were also dealt with from Baltinglass. The nature of the reports remained unchanged though, with sheep stealing occurring in Blackymore (near Donard), Kelshamore, Fryanstown, Toolestown and Grangecon in the first quarter of 1839.<sup>190</sup> The progressive Anthony Allen was another victim of sheep stealing on 7 January 1842. Cattle were also stolen, as in the cases of Pierce Burke, who had a Dutch cow taken from Castleruddery later that year, and a McDonald of Lemonstown, who was the victim of such theft in July 1840.<sup>191</sup> Other victims of this type of theft included Denis Kerry of Uppertown, James Dunne of Brewershill and John Keon of Oldcourt, all within two miles of Dunlavin.<sup>192</sup>

Intimidation also continued in the form of arson and attacks on livestock. On 28 May 1838 the cowshed of John Roche, tollmaster at Merginstown turnpike, was burned.<sup>193</sup>

The barn of John Harrington, 'a respectable gamekeeper', was set alight at 1 a.m. on

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<sup>189</sup> Police report on shooting, 14 Jan 1838 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 3/32)

<sup>190</sup> Police reports on sheep stealing, 22 Jan 1839, 25 Jan 1839, 13 Feb 1839, 14 Feb 1839 and 29 Mar 1839 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MSS 32/204, 32/205, 32/772, 32/789 and 32/2202 respectively)

<sup>191</sup> Police reports on cattle stealing, 18 Nov 1839 and 22 Jul 1840 (N.A.I., Outrage papers 1839, County Wicklow, MS 32/9814 and Outrage papers 1840, County Wicklow, MS 32/13363)

<sup>192</sup> Police reports on cattle stealing, 20 Oct 1841, 7 May 1842 and 11 May 1842 (N.A.I., Outrage papers 1841, County Wicklow, MS 32/16599 and Outrage papers 1842, County Wicklow, MSS 32/8293 and 32/8739)

<sup>193</sup> Police report on arson, 28 May 1839 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 32/3896)

27 July 1839 in Dunlavin. The alarm was raised by Gregory Byrne, who was coming through the village from a fair in county Kildare, but the barn was destroyed, though rescuers managed to save seven calves. Harrington had 'taken some land and a house in Dunlavin from its previous occupier, a man named Power'.<sup>194</sup> On 10 August 1840 a rick of hay worth £30 was burned in Dunlavin. Its owner was Martin Winder, 'a wealthy man [who] had been warned off from taking land over the neighbours' heads' by means of a threatening letter.<sup>195</sup> In December 1841 Thomas Finlay, who had also dispossessed a former tenant, found his corn burned at Rathbawn.<sup>196</sup> Joseph Pratt Tynte was targeted by a sustained campaign of threats and arson for evicting tenants between 1842 and 1845.<sup>197</sup> Other members of the elite and people perceived to have dispossessed former occupiers in and around Dunlavin were also threatened and experienced attacks on their livestock, and sometimes on their person. In September 1839, calves belonging to George Fisher of Merginstown were maimed due to the 'bad feeling' that existed toward him, 'the consequence of his having, to the inconvenience of some persons living in the neighbourhood, blocked up a road near his residence'.<sup>198</sup> In 1843 Fisher's hay was burned at Crehelp, as he had 'dispossessed a former tenant'.<sup>199</sup> Robert Saunders requested 'a few stands of arms to be made available to me' because 'in consequence of my opposition to the repeal meeting held at Baltinglass and of my late father's stand against the rebels of 1798, I am become very obnoxious to the persons engaged in the present agitation'.<sup>200</sup> Lord

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<sup>194</sup> Police report on arson, 31 Jul 1839 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 32/6626)

<sup>195</sup> Police report on arson, 10 Aug 1840 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 32/6626)

<sup>196</sup> Police report on arson, 5 Dec 1841 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 32/18077)

<sup>197</sup> This campaign is dealt with in section six of this chapter, in conjunction with evidence given to the Devon Commission and in the context of farm enlargement.

<sup>198</sup> Police report on animal maiming, 18 Sep 1839 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 32/18077)

<sup>199</sup> Police report on arson, 27 Aug 1843 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 32/17540)

<sup>200</sup> Saunders to the Lord Lieutenant, 16 Aug 1843 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 32/16599)

Beresford's agent received a threatening notice at Hollywood in July 1842,<sup>201</sup> as did William Armstrong of Kippure in February 1845.<sup>202</sup>

More violent intimidation and attacks on people also continued in the late 1830s and 1840s. In September 1839 about twenty men attacked three Kelly brothers and left them for dead on the road at Ballynure. The Kellys were 'respectable farmers who had taken land from which the late occupiers had been evicted for non-payment of rent'.<sup>203</sup> Three men attacked Patrick Dunne of Coldwells in his house on 12 January 1841.<sup>204</sup> In July 1842 Patrick Doyle was attacked at Woodenboley.<sup>205</sup> Later that year J. Byrne of Decoy and William Kavanagh were lucky to escape with their lives when they were assaulted by six or seven people.<sup>206</sup> The low level violence and intimidation occasionally threatened to erupt. Bartholomew Warburton described one instance of this in 1845:

I attended the large fair of Rathsallagh yesterday. All was perfectly quiet until about five o'clock when there was a disposition to rioting. I ordered the police out, and when proceeding to where they were rioting, a respectable man ran up to me and begged of me to 'hurry down as fast as I could as it was the commencement of a fight between Protestants and Papists'. I lost not a moment and found the parties under considerable excitement, when I succeeded in separating them... I felt it prudent to read the riot act and ordered the tents down... I remained until all the tents were removed and the people dispersed.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Police report on threatening notice, 24 Jul 1842 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 32/16269)

<sup>202</sup> Police report on threatening notice, 13 Feb 1845 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 32/1763). Also Bartholomew Warburton to Edward Lucas, 13 Feb 1845 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 32/2935).

<sup>203</sup> Police report on assault, 4 Sep 1839 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 32/7932)

<sup>204</sup> Police report on assault, 12 Jan 1841 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 32/203)

<sup>205</sup> Police report on assault, 13 Jul 1842 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 32/3007)

<sup>206</sup> Police report on assault, 1 Dec 1842 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, 1843, County Wicklow, MS 32/943).

There is an enclosure with this report to the effect that one person was convicted and sentenced to seven years transportation. The enclosure is dated 18 Jan 1843, which explains why this incident, which happened in 1842, is included in the 1843 outrage records.

<sup>207</sup> Warburton to Sir Thomas Freemantel, 6 Sep 1845 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 32/18857)



Evidently, in the mid-1840s, there was a sectarian undercurrent at work in the Dunlavin region, which caused occasional flashpoints such as the incident at Rathallagh. The allusions to Morley Saunders' role in 1798, in the threats received by his son confirm that the memory of the Dunlavin massacre was still vivid in the locality. Religious and ideological cleavages were accentuated by the rebellion, but such feelings were usually submerged and subsumed within the overarching, burning issue of land and landholding. Agrarian rather than sectarian unrest was the norm during the 1830s and 1840s, and this unrest occurred at a time when land was becoming proportionately scarcer at a time of increasing population.

#### **5. Social developments – education, religion and health.**

Parallel with the social problems generated by population and increased economic tension, there were also important developments that exerted a profound change on the region in the longer term in education, health and religion. Hedge-schools, such as Peter Burr's in Imaal, existed in the early nineteenth century. Catholic children attended this and similar institutions, but there was no national system of education. The existence of hedge schools was noted in 1823, when there were 'several schools throughout the union of Dunlavin'. There was also a parish school in Dunlavin, which catered for between 18 and 37 boys and between 11 and 23 girls. Two Protestant schools were established in the village during the previous summer.<sup>208</sup> The parish school was grant aided, as sums of £10 and £30 5s. 7d. were paid to M. Ryves of Rathallagh in 1823 and 1824 respectively.<sup>209</sup> Within two years, the educational

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<sup>208</sup> *Accounts relating to diocesan and parish schools in Ireland*, H.C. 1823 [229], xvi, p. 62.

<sup>209</sup> *Accounts and papers relative to schools and education in Ireland*, H.C. 1824 [179], xxi, p. 35. The surname is given as 'Rynes' in 1824, but this is an obvious misprint, as M. Ryves had received a grant of £10 toward the school the previous year. *Ibid.*, p. 33. The increase in the size of this grant suggests

situation in Dunlavin was transformed from that recorded in the 1821 census (75 male but no female schoolgoers). The opening of two new Protestant schools may have had a proselytising motivation, but may also have been a response to the demand for private education. Speculation regarding an increase in proselytising is difficult in the absence of more data, but it is clear that there were more opportunities for the education of Protestants in Dunlavin at this time. Despite this, only two schools of the ‘several’ recorded had ‘Protestant superintendents’, indicating that the majority of schools in the region catered for Catholics, and suggesting that the schools were denominational in character.<sup>210</sup> The *First Report of the Commissioners on Education in Ireland* was published the following year,<sup>211</sup> but this confined itself to general observations on the state of education, and Dunlavin was not specifically mentioned.

The growth of state education in Ireland, culminating in 1831 with the establishment of a national board of education by Chief Secretary Stanley to administer a centralised system of undenominational elementary education, has been identified as the best example of the growing collectivist role of the state in Irish social life in the early nineteenth century.<sup>212</sup> Following Stanley’s education act, the Commissioners of Public Instruction were appointed on 15 August 1834 to ascertain the circumstances of all schools existing in Ireland.<sup>213</sup> They were required to determine:

the state of each Parish, with reference to the means of Education, the number and description of Schools, the kind of Instruction afforded therein, the Average attendance at each, and the Sources from which they are supported; and to state

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increasing numbers at the parish school, but the new Protestant schools caused a very recent decrease in the numbers attending. *Accounts relating to diocesan and parish schools in Ireland*, H.C. 1823 [229], xvi, p. 62.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid*, p. 62.

<sup>211</sup> *First Report of the Commissioners on Education in Ireland*, H.C. 1825 [400], xii.

<sup>212</sup> Gearoid Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the famine 1798-1848* (Dublin, 1972), pp 98-101 passim.

<sup>213</sup> Class introductions (Commissioners of Public Instruction), *Counties in time* (CD ROM, Dublin: Eneclann Publications, no date).

generally, whether the numbers attending the same for the last five years have been increasing, stationary or diminishing.<sup>214</sup>

The *Second Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction* was published in 1835, when there were two public and six private schools and a Sunday school in Dunlavin and another school in Usk. The report sets out particulars of the 'sources of support' for each establishment. In Dunlavin, six schools were supported wholly or almost wholly by payments, varying from 1s. 1d. to 4s. per quarter, from the students.

Since six of the schools had been established for two years or less, the mushrooming of educational institutions in Dunlavin was a recent phenomenon. The Catholic parish register testified to the high birth rate throughout the 1820s and these infants were of school age in 1835. The Catholic response to the new system was initially one of support (though this would change in the late 1830s),<sup>215</sup> and the new schools in Dunlavin were flourishing by 1835. Attendances at the parochial school and Marly's school were increasing, and most of the others were so new that the commissioners could not judge whether numbers were increasing or not, and so the year of foundation was entered in the report. The schools kept by James Byrne, Mary Freeman, Miss Nuttall and one 'supported by Mrs. Pennefather' of Rathsallagh House were all founded in 1834 and those of Elizabeth Woodman and Laurence Connell dated from 1833, as both were operational for 'less than two years'.

Only one school in the Dunlavin area, Henry Nowlan's in Uske [Usk], was in decline. Its peripheral location may have ensured it lost pupils to Dunlavin's new schools.

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<sup>214</sup> *Second report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction*, p. iii.

<sup>215</sup> Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the famine*, p. 104. The number of new Catholic schools indicated a growing assurance within the Catholic establishment, which manifested itself in larger numbers of Catholics receiving education. *Ibid*, p. 100.

Dunlavin parochial school was run 'in connection with the London Hibernian Society', <sup>216</sup> and there were six daily schools, kept by Connell, Woodman, Marly, Byrne, Freeman and the Pennefather-supported one, in addition to a school for females 'of a higher station in life', run by Nuttall.<sup>217</sup> If the denominational nature of education in the locality during the 1820s continued into the 1830s, the higher fees charged by Nuttall may indicate that her establishment catered mainly for Protestant girls, and the Pennefather landlord-funded school may have been Protestant also, though the paternalistic nature of landlordism at this time meant that many landlord schools were open to all denominations. While it may be inaccurate to assume rigid denominationalism in the 1830s, the 1823 *Accounts relating to diocesan and parish schools in Ireland* provides evidence that it existed during the previous decade. Nowlan's institution was described as a 'cabin school' and was probably Catholic. The other daily schools were probably also denominational; the report does not categorise them as either Catholic or Protestant, though the surname of the teachers may provide a clue to their religious composition. Woodman, for instance, is an English name and her school may also have been Protestant, while both Byrne and Connell are predominantly Irish and Catholic names. However, most Catholic children attended the parochial school in the village.

The parochial school, which received an annual donation of 12s. or 15s. from the London Hibernian Society, <sup>218</sup> was by far the largest with 117 children, (56 males and 61 females). The presence of the society suggests proselytism, and, during the 1830s,

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<sup>216</sup> A proselytising organisation, the 'Hibernian society for the diffusion of religious knowledge in Ireland'.

<sup>217</sup> *Second report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction*, p. 94b.

<sup>218</sup> In addition to monetary donations, the society also distributed bibles to the children, but by the late 1830s its work was opposed 'by the continuing hostility of the Romanish priests to the circulation of the Holy Scriptures'. 'Intelligence from the London Hibernian Society' in *The Christian Guardian and Church of England Magazine* (London, 1839), p. 194.

the ostensibly non-denominational elementary education system was heavily tainted nationally by accusations of proselytism.<sup>219</sup> The accusation that education would be used by a Protestant government as a means of proselytisation was not without foundation.<sup>220</sup> Despite this, at local level in Dunlavin, Nowlan's cabin school at Usk, which one would expect to be predominately Catholic, was only half the size of the parish school with 63 pupils, but its numbers were decreasing, and both Marly's and Byrne's schools catered for 40 pupils. The smallest school was Nuttall's exclusive institution, which catered for 8 girls.

Most of the schools taught the three Rs of reading, writing and arithmetic (though neither Woodman's nor Freeman's institutions listed arithmetic among their subjects) and there was needlework for the females in four of them. Attendances varied by season, with almost all schools catering for more students during the summer terms, probably because the children were not needed to work on the land during the growing season, unlike the busy spring sowing and autumn harvesting seasons. Average daily attendances in all the daily schools totalled 334 (171 girls and 163 boys) in 1835.<sup>221</sup>

The Sunday school at Dunlavin, held in the Protestant church was devoted to 'scriptural instruction with gratuitous teaching'. Up to 90 children, 30 males and 60 females, two thirds of whom also attended one or other of the daily schools, came to Sunday school. While the Sunday school system may have aspired to proselytise the young, the number of students suggests that they were drawn principally, if not

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<sup>219</sup> R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London, 1988), p. 304.

<sup>220</sup> F. S. L. Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine* (Glasgow, 1973), p. 82.

<sup>221</sup> *Second report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction*, p. 95b. The commission's findings regarding Dunlavin appear in appendix nine.

exclusively, from the region's Protestant community. According to the commissioners' report, the civil parish of Dunlavin was at the head of a union with the sub-parishes of Milltown, Uske, Rathsallagh, Friendstown [Fryanstown] and Tubber. The 748 Protestants comprised approximately one-sixth of the union's total population of 4,858 in 1831, with about five-sixths being Catholics; but it was a declining proportion of the total, and by 1834 the Protestant population of 595 had dropped to approximately one-seventh of the total of 4,800.<sup>222</sup> While this decrease of 153, or just over 20 per cent, may indicate an over-estimation of Protestant numbers by the 1831 census, the continued high rate of baptisms in the Catholic parish suggests that Catholic numbers were increasing throughout the 1830s, thereby reducing the proportionate number of Protestants in the area.<sup>223</sup> Out migration of Protestants such as the Fentons may have accounted for some of this decline, as some Protestant families emigrated, principally to Van Dieman's land and North America, because they thought their interests neglected by those who should protect them.<sup>224</sup> This was an indictment on the passivity of landlords, including the Tyntes, who were still absentees in 1836, and a reflection on the bitter nature of the Tithe War in the region. In these circumstances, some Dunlavin Protestants voted with their feet.

In 1835 Dunlavin contained both a Protestant and a Catholic church while there was also a Catholic church in Donard, which was 'lately built by the present parish priest (Fr. John Hyland). It is very small and has not been open to the public'. There was

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid, p. 104b.

<sup>223</sup> The baptismal figures for the 1830s are as follows: 1831, 243; 1832, 298; 1833, 294; 1834, 294; 1835, 302; 1836, 243; 1837, 255; 1838, 258; 1839, 239; 1840, 203. The fall in baptismal numbers from 1836 onwards may be explained by the opening of a new Catholic chapel in Donard in 1835. This new centre served Donard and the upland areas of the parish, causing a proportionate decrease in the number of baptisms in Dunlavin's church of St. Nicholas of Myra. (St. Nicholas of Myra church, Dunlavin, Catholic parish register, i and ii, unpaginated, passim)

<sup>224</sup> *First report from his majesty's commissioners for inquiring into the condition of the poorer classes in Ireland, Appendix F and supplement*, [38], H.C. 1836 xxxiii, p. 153. Hereafter cited as *The poor inquiry*.

one Anglican minister in Dunlavin (Rev. Moore Morgan) in 1835 and two Catholic priests (Fr. Hyland and Fr. A. Reynolds),<sup>225</sup> but another priest is to 'be shortly appointed', probably to serve in the new church in Donard. Services and masses in Dunlavin were held 'on Sundays and holidays'. The Church of Ireland service was attended by between 250 and 300 people The Catholic first mass was attended by between 700 and 1,000 worshippers, with nearly 2,000 in attendance at the second mass.<sup>226</sup> As the Catholic church was not large enough to accommodate such numbers, many mass-goers gathered outside the church, making the occasion a social gathering as well as a religious one. Despite this, the large congregations indicate that both the Dunlavin Anglican and Catholic communities were devotional in 1835. There was a large majority of Catholics, who were beginning to assume a more distinct religious identity following Catholic emancipation. Education for their children was one benefit, as was attendance at mass in the relatively new Catholic church, which stood at the southeastern extremity of urban Dunlavin on the site of the old mass house, with the equally new Protestant church at the opposite (northwestern) end of the village, both serving sizeable congregations as population increased.

The size of Dunlavin's population meant that the village merited a centre dedicated to the health of its inhabitants. Dr John Hatch was resident in Dunlavin in 1824, when he subscribed to a fund to erect a stove in the Church of Ireland church.<sup>227</sup> By August 1834 Lady Hannah Tynte Caldwell had left him a site in Dunlavin on condition that he build a house there.<sup>228</sup> This was below the market house in the northeastern

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<sup>225</sup> Finn, 'Parish clergy down the years', p. 2.

<sup>226</sup> *Second report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction*, p. 105b.

<sup>227</sup> Subscription list 1824, (R.C.B., Dunlavin vestry book, MS P. 251.5.1)

<sup>228</sup> W. J. McCormack, *The silence of Barbara Synge* (Manchester, 2003), p. 188.

quarter of the village, beside the dispensary, which stood on an adjacent site.<sup>229</sup>

Dunlavin dispensary first appears in records in 1821, when it received £58, raised by Grand Jury presentments. The dispensary received further sums of £58 in both 1822 and 1823, rising to £60 in 1824.<sup>230</sup> Like education, health was another area that attested to the increasing tendency on the part of the central government to assume control at local level, and Dunlavin's state-aided public dispensary was one of one of over 600 such institutions in existence nationally on the eve of the famine.<sup>231</sup> The dispensary was in receipt of sums of £65 13s., £70 18s. and £63 9s. from the county presentments in 1835, 1836 and 1837 respectively. However, dispensary salaries were larger than these figures, so private donations and subscriptions were used to augment the inadequate sums provided by the presentments. During the three years in question, this extra income amounted to £70 18s., £63 9s. and £50 18s. 6d. respectively.<sup>232</sup> This money was necessary, as numbers attending the dispensary were large. A sizeable 1,440 patients attended in 1835, and this figure rose to 2,189 in 1836, while 2,680 patients presented at the dispensary in 1837.<sup>233</sup> The upward trend was consistent with the population increase in the region. Dunlavin's dispensary was in Baltinglass poor law union, and it served an extensive rural hinterland of 33,688 acres. The dispensary expended £109 12s. 10d. in 1839-1840 administering to 2,318 patients, a figure that suggests a degree of levelling off in the population growth curve as the area reached saturation levels.<sup>234</sup> Dr John Hatch remained in Dunlavin until 1845,<sup>235</sup> before

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<sup>229</sup> I am indebted to the late Mrs. Breda Lawler of Dunlavin for this information.

<sup>230</sup> *Return of Money raised by Grand Jury Presentments in Ireland for Houses of Industry, Fever Hospitals, Lunatic Asylums and Dispensaries, 1821-26*, H.C. 1827 [324], xx, p. 36.

<sup>231</sup> O Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the famine*, p. 94.

<sup>232</sup> *Abstract Return of Infirmeries, Fever Hospitals and Dispensaries in Ireland*, H.C. 1840 [59], xxxviii, p. 106. The physician's salary at Dunlavin dispensary was £100 in both 1835 and 1836, and £93 6s 8d in 1837.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid*, p. 59.

<sup>234</sup> *The parliamentary gazetteer of Ireland, adapted to the new poor-law, franchise, municipal and ecclesiastical arrangements, and compiled with a special reference to the lines of railroad and canal communication, as existing in 1844-45; illustrated by a series of maps and other plates and presenting*



moving to reside in Laragh and practice at Annamoe dispensary in central county Wicklow.<sup>236</sup> Within a short time his successor at Dunlavin would see many more patients seeking help in the dispensary as the village faced into the Great Famine, with all its associated health problems.

## 6. Descriptions of Dunlavin and its environs, 1835-1846.

Samuel Lewis's *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* provides a revealing insight on the state of Dunlavin on the eve of the Great Famine.<sup>237</sup> Unlike the west Wicklow settlements of Baltinglass and Blessington, Dunlavin was not included in *Pigot's Commercial Directory of Ireland*, the first edition of which was published in 1824.<sup>238</sup> This was possibly because the village was not on any principal road, and so commercial travellers were unlikely to pass through it. The *Topographical Dictionary's* inclusion of Dunlavin goes some way to rectify this omission.

Lewis began his description of Dunlavan (Dunlavin) by stating that it was both a market and post-town, seven and a half miles north of Baltinglass, and twenty-one miles southwest of Dublin, on the old road from Blessington to Timolin. 'It contains

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*the results, in detail, of the census of 1841, compared with that of 1831*, ii, (3 vols, Dublin, 1846) p. 146. Hereafter cited as *Parliamentary gazetteer*.

<sup>235</sup> *Index to reports of Irish Poor Law Commissioners, 1835-39*, H.C. 1845 [40], xxxxxiii, p. 254.

<sup>236</sup> McCormack, *The silence of Barbara Syngé*, p. 189.

<sup>237</sup> Compiled by Lewis and published in London in 1837 in two volumes, this work marked a new and significantly higher standard in such accounts of Ireland. The *Topographical Dictionary*, which did not confine itself to main road settlements, provided an account of the history, geography, economy, churches and architecture of many of the cities, towns, parishes and villages of Ireland. The aim of the *Dictionary* was to give in 'a condensed form, a faithful and impartial description of each place'. Local contributors (usually the clergy, landlords or other educated individuals within each community) were given the proof sheets for final comment and revision, but local returns still varied in quality. Distances are given in Irish miles. Lewis's *Dictionary* was greatly assisted by the British Parliamentary Papers series that was just then beginning to make an impact in terms of the data available for the study of Ireland. The census of 1831 was used, as were the Reports of the Commissioners of Public Instruction.

<sup>238</sup> *Pigot and Co.'s city of Dublin and Hibernian provincial directory, containing a classification of the nobility, gentry, clergy, professional gentlemen, merchants and manufacturers of Dublin and upwards of two hundred and twenty of the principal cities, seaports and towns of Ireland, alphabetically arranged in provinces* (Manchester, 1824). Baltinglass is included on p. 132 and Blessington on p. 135.

about 180 houses, of which several are well built, is amply supplied with water from springs and is considered a healthy place of residence'.<sup>239</sup> Lewis describes a prosperous rural settlement, which, despite the existence of smallholding and landless underclassés, was flourishing. The weekly market and the six annual fairs in the village indicated economic prosperity.<sup>240</sup> The market, chiefly for corn and potatoes, was held on Wednesdays and fairs for cattle are held on 1 March, 19 May, the second Friday in July, 21 August, the third Tuesday in October, and 1 December. In 1835 a courtroom was provided in the market-house. In addition to its status as a market town, Dunlavin's role as a regional centre of some significance was underlined by its role in relation to law and order as 'a chief constabulary police force has been stationed in the town, and petty sessions are held on alternate Wednesdays'. Lewis also noted the dispensary, on the site bequeathed by Tynte Caldwell to Dr Hatch in 1834.<sup>241</sup>

Lewis's *Dictionary* also provided information on the civil parish of Dunlavin, where 'the soil is fertile, and the system of agriculture is improving. There is very little wasteland, and scarcely any bog. Some quarries of stone and slate are worked chiefly for building, but both are of inferior quality'.<sup>242</sup> The lack of wasteland contrasts with the situation described by Fraser in 1801, and points to the available land being cultivated by the rapidly-rising population. One probable reason for the improvement in agriculture was the fact that the Tyntes were now resident landlords, for as Lewis

<sup>239</sup> Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland*, i, p. 583. Lewis stated that Dunlavin parish was still 'partly in the barony of Uppercross, County Dublin, but chiefly in the lower half-barony of Talbotstown, County Wicklow'. It was situated on 'the confines of the counties of Wicklow, Dublin, and Kildare'. Lewis continued: 'The town, which is the property of the Tynte family, is built on an eminence surrounded by higher grounds, and consists of two streets, one of which branches off at right angles from the centre of the other.'

<sup>240</sup> There were five fairs in Dunlavin in 1795, so the extra fair mentioned by Lewis underlined the village's prosperity.

<sup>241</sup> Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland*, i, p. 583.

<sup>242</sup> The shale and slate quarries were at Plezica, a townland also known as 'Slatequarries'.

commented, 'A splendid mansion and out-offices have been lately built at a very great expense by Lady Tynte, on part of the estate called Loughmogue, now Tynte Park; and her grandson and heir, Mr. [Joseph] Tynte, who resides with her, has considerably improved the grounds by planting and fencing'.<sup>243</sup> Dunlavin, a settlement that for so long had all the trappings of a landlord village, now had a resident landlord, living at Tynte Park, about two miles southeast of the village. The presence of the Tyntes in the area meant that they could keep a closer eye on the developments and interests of the village and the Loughmogue demesne.

**Illustration 7. Tynte Park House.**



**Source:** <http://www.shane-ross.ie/archives/292/>.

Lewis also reported on the state of both the Anglican and Roman Catholic parishes of Dunlavin.

The living is a rectory and vicarage, in the diocese of Dublin and Glendalough, united episcopally and by act of council to the rectory and vicarage of Uske and the vicarages of Rathsallagh and Friendstown, and, in 1833, by act of council, to the curacy of Tubber, together constituting the union and the corps of the

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<sup>243</sup> Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland*, i, p. 583.

prebend of Dunlavin in the cathedral church of St. Patrick, in the patronage of the Archbishop... The tithes amount to £340.9.10½, and of the whole benefice to £472.0.9½.<sup>244</sup> The glebe-house was built by a gift of £100, and a loan of £900 from the late Board of First Fruits, in 1812; the glebe comprises 18 acres.<sup>245</sup> The church, a neat edifice in the later English style, was erected in 1816, by a loan of £1300 from the same Board, and enlarged in 1835, by a grant of £460 from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. In the R. C. divisions the parish is the head of a union, comprising also the parishes of Donard and Donaghmore; the chapel is a neat cruciform edifice, erected on a site presented by Lady Tynte Caldwell, and her daughter Elizabeth, as appears from a tablet over the entrance; there are chapels also at Donard and Donaghmore<sup>246</sup> ... Mr. Powell, of Tubber, about 40 years since, bequeathed £200, directing the interest to be appropriated to the apprenticing of one Protestant child of this parish, and one of the parish of Tubber; but payment has of late been withheld.<sup>247</sup>

In addition to devotional religiosity, Lewis also provided evidence of popular religiosity at St Nicholas's holy well, and there is no mention of the suppression of the pattern, which must have happened later in the decade.

On the townland of Tornant... is a well, supposed to be efficacious in various disorders, but probably owes its celebrity to its being only a fine cold spring.

Lewis's description of Dunlavin is complemented by the work of the Ordnance

Survey [O.S.].<sup>248</sup> On 23 January 1839, Thomas O'Connor wrote to John O'Donovan

<sup>244</sup> In 1823 the tithe applotment book reported that the tithe amounted to £369 3s 6¾d, so the smaller figure given by Lewis may be indicative of a measure of success on the part of the anti-tithe campaigners.

<sup>245</sup> The figure of £927 7s 1d for Dunlavin glebe house and offices enclosed with the parish applotment book in 1823 probably referred to the work done in 1812.

<sup>246</sup> The 'chapel' at Donaghmore in the Glen of Imaal was probably a mass house at this time, as Davidstown Roman Catholic church was not opened until 1875.

<sup>247</sup> The withholding of the payment may have been because the Powells left the region in the 1830s.

<sup>248</sup> The mapping of Ireland by this new department from 1824 onwards is by far the most important cartographic undertaking in the island's history, and ranks as the earliest large-scale mapping of any single country. The published maps were the principal results of this work, but a rich store of related materials such as field and boundary books, parish name books and correspondence generally known as the Ordnance Survey letters was also generated by the project. Jacinta Prunty, *Maps and map-making in local history* (Dublin, 2004), p. 111. From 1834 to 1843 John O'Donovan and some fellow workers travelled throughout Ireland, corresponding regularly with O.S. headquarters regarding placenames, local features of interest and topography. The material was then forwarded to O'Donovan; hence these letters are also known as the O'Donovan letters. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

from Blessington regarding Dunlavin and Tubber parishes. This letter confirms 'at Mr. Wall's house in the village of Dunlavin, an old churchyard wherein a Protestant church stood previously to the erection of the parish church. It was entirely pulled down'.<sup>249</sup> This reference is especially interesting, as the manuscript map of the village produced by the O. S. for the valuation office in 1838,<sup>250</sup> shows the old Protestant church in Market Square and shows houses and gardens, demolished by 1817, on the site of the new church. The valuation map refers to the market house as the 'sessions house', and the court was only operational there from 1835. Perhaps surveyors worked from an old Tynte estate map; hence the older church's inclusion. This is the first large-scale map of Dunlavin and is much more detailed than previous cartographic records of the village, such as Nevill's 1760 map. It is difficult to compare this map with earlier ones, though some conclusions may be drawn.

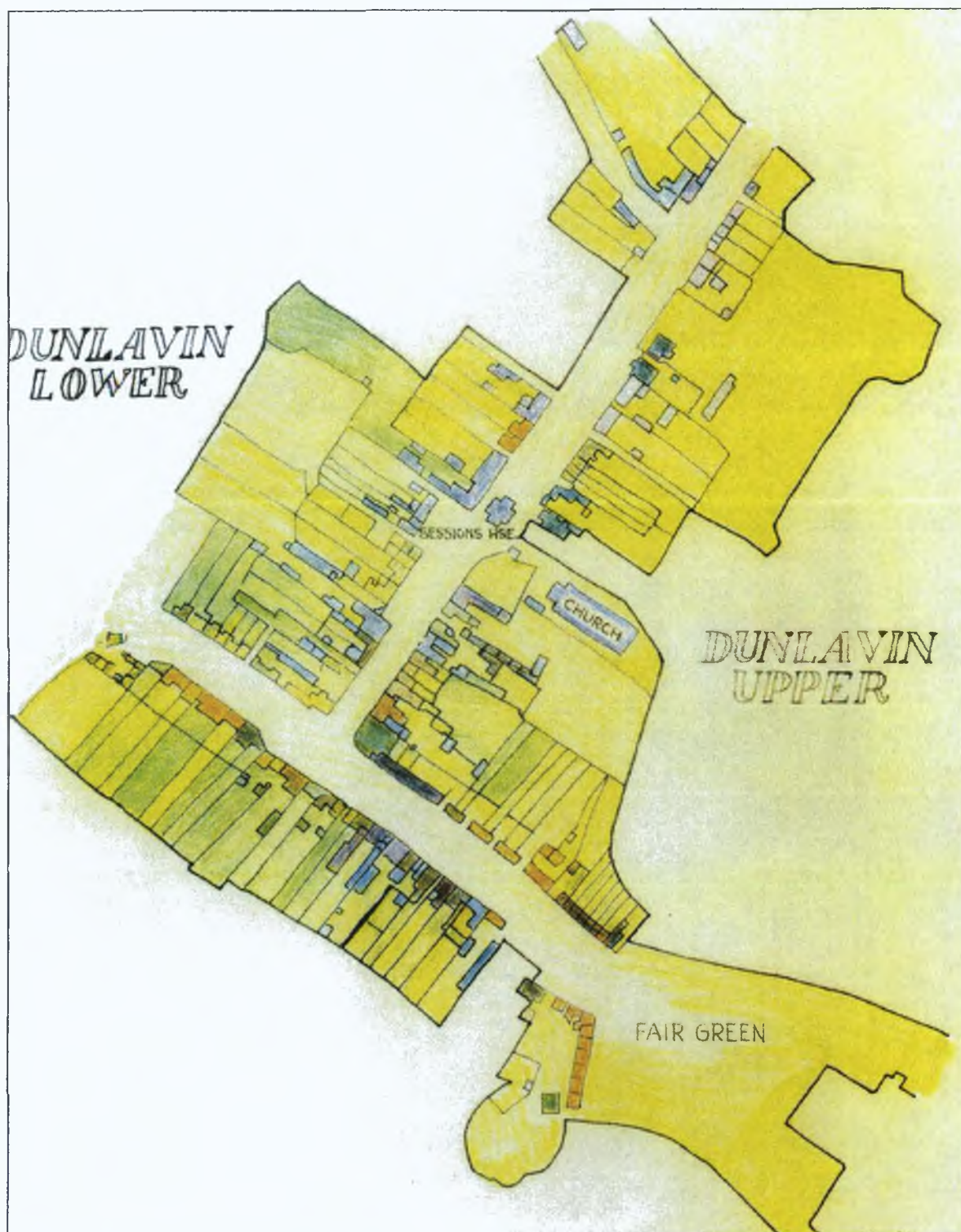
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<sup>249</sup> Corlett and Medleycott (eds), *The Ordnance Survey letters: Wicklow*, p. 104.

<sup>250</sup> These maps were supplied by the O. S. but annotated by the Valuation office. Prunty, *Maps and map-making*, p. 145.



**Map 16. Dunlavin in the early nineteenth century (tracing).**



**No street names appear on the map. Darker coloured properties [purple/blue] have higher valuations, while orange is the lowest valuation.**

**Source: Valuation Office map of Dunlavin, dated 1838 (but drawn pre-1815).**

Despite the anomaly of the older Protestant church appearing on the map, and no building shown on the site of the Catholic church,<sup>251</sup> the basic shape of the village was the same in 1838 as it was a century earlier during the landlordship of James Worth Tynte, which is indicative of the failure of the village to outgrow its market function. The T-shape, the wide streets and even wider market square, the market-cum-courthouse and the fairgreen are all clearly visible on this detailed map.<sup>252</sup> Physically, the village had not expanded much in a century, but there is evidence of a new 'cabin suburb' (low valuation properties marked in orange on the map) at the western end of the fair green.<sup>253</sup> Such cabin suburbs, together with Catholic chapels and their attendant buildings, were frequently erected on the outskirts of existing towns and villages, often in association with the fairgreen in the early nineteenth century.<sup>254</sup> The other principal area of the village marked in orange on the map, consisting of four houses located at the west-northwestern end of the cross-stroke of the T, was demolished to facilitate the building of the new Protestant church.<sup>255</sup> Their gardens were merged to form the new churchyard. The map depicts these as large houses with large long, narrow gardens, so one would not expect them to have low valuations. This might be explained if the sites were earmarked for demolition to make way for the new church when the original map was drawn.

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<sup>251</sup> The absence of the Catholic church is another indication that this map was drawn from an earlier original, perhaps a Tynte estate document, showing their properties in the village.

<sup>252</sup> There is no scale stated on the map, but most of these maps were drawn at scales of c.1:500. Prunty, *Maps and map-making*, p. 145.

<sup>253</sup> The term 'cabin suburbs' is used in Graham and Proudfoot, *Urban improvement*, p. 56.

<sup>254</sup> T. Jones Hughes, 'Village and town in mid-nineteenth century Ireland', *Irish Geography*, 14 (Dublin, 1981), pp 99-106 passim.

<sup>255</sup> The presence of these houses is yet another indication that this map was drawn from an earlier original.

In addition to mapping the village, the O. S. also recorded much topographical and mensural information about the Dunlavin area.<sup>256</sup> Using the O. S. material, William Nolan has mapped the estates of county Wicklow circa 1838. There were 50 Wicklow estates between 1,000 and 5,000 acres in extent. Among these was the Tynte estate of 2,868 acres, which was the 27<sup>th</sup> largest property among 67 estates of over a 1,000 acres listed in the county in 1838.<sup>257</sup> Smaller to medium-sized estates dominated both Talbotstown baronies and were prevalent around Donard and Dunlavin.<sup>258</sup> Nolan suggests that the break-up of Church lands probably accounted for the cluster of relatively small properties in the Baltinglass-Donard-Dunlavin region, where landlords such as Bookey, Hornidge and Smith occupied the former lands of the See of Dublin.<sup>259</sup> It is noteworthy that Tynte's Dunlavin estate originally belonged to the ecclesiastical Bulkeley family, and was purchased by Launcelot Bulkeley when he was still archbishop of Dublin.

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<sup>256</sup> This technical information is contained in a variety of O. S. related sources such as the content field books, the levelling registers and the boundary remark books. The following sources contain information relating to Dunlavin. Much of it refers to specific plots of land, individual boundaries or is mathematical in nature. Boundary remark books (N.A.I., OS 55A/207 1-2), Content field books (N.A.I., OS 58A/207 1-19), Road field book (N.A.I., OS 59A/207), Content registers duplicate (N.A.I., OS 63A/207), Levelling register original (N.A.I., OS 65A/207), Levelling register duplicate (N.A.I., OS 66A/207), Common plots collection (N.A.I., OS 103 MSS 13/39 [Davidstown, Usk, Dunlavin and Rathallsallagh], 32/17 [Donaghmore, Freynestown, Dunlavin and Donard], 32/18 [Dunlavin, Rathallsallagh, Freynestown, Donaghmore, Rathbran and Ballynure]). These documents include tracings from fair plans), Content plot collection (N.A.I., OS 104A/207.2), Fair plans (N.A.I., OS 105A/207.1 and 207.2). The boundary remark books were carefully indexed, cross-referenced and dated. Prunty, *Maps and map-making*, p. 131. The boundary workers had to rely on their own sketch maps and the willingness of local proprietors to allow them 'to make traces of the boundaries from the [existing] maps of their estates'. Richard Griffith, *Statement of the progress in the perambulation of the boundaries of baronies, parishes and townlands in Ireland, under the 6 Geo. 4. c. 99, 28 May 1828*, H.C. 1828 [420] v, pp 347-50. The reference to existing estate maps may explain the outdated valuation map of Dunlavin village produced in 1838, as speculated upon above.

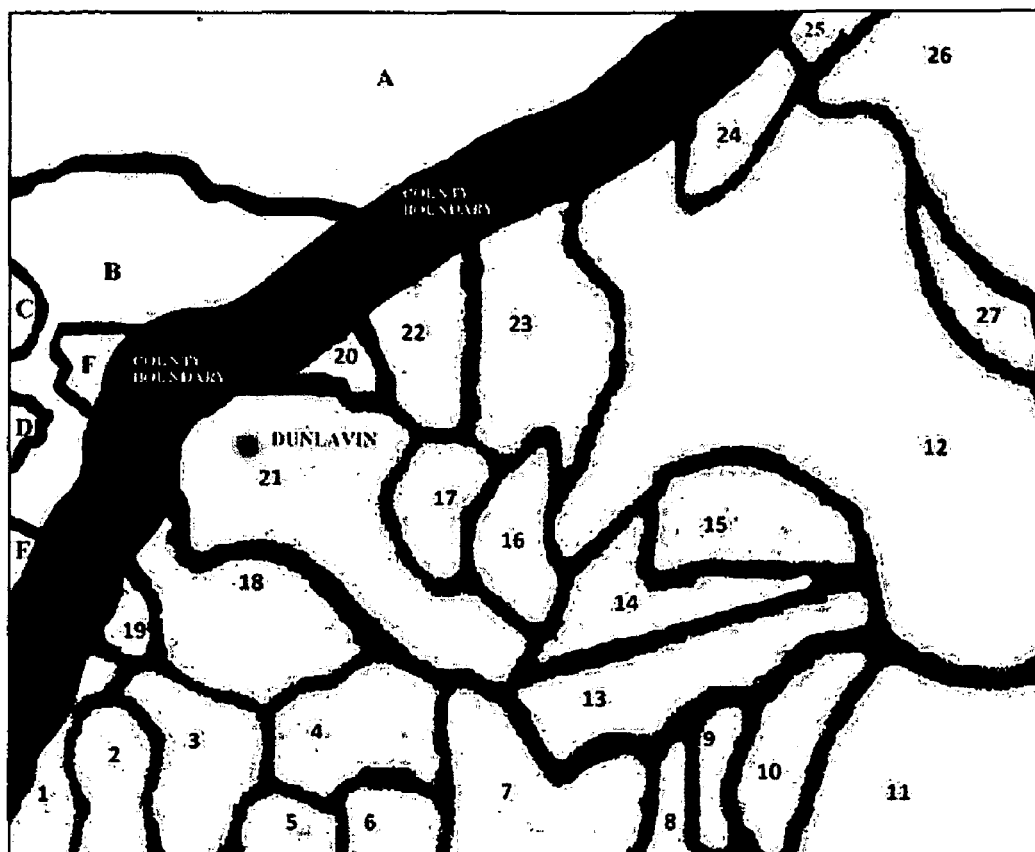
<sup>257</sup> OS name books, Wicklow (N.L.I., 3 vols) cited in Nolan, 'Land and landscape in County Wicklow c. 1840', p. 658.

<sup>258</sup> Nolan, 'Land and landscape in County Wicklow c. 1840', p. 662.

<sup>259</sup> Nolan, 'Land and landscape in County Wicklow c. 1840', p. 663.



**Map 17. The landed estates of the Dunlavin region c.1838.**



**Sources:** Nolan, 'Land and landscape in County Wicklow c.1840', *Wicklow history and society* and 'A townland survey of the county of Kildare' (Kildare County Archive). Estate boundaries in county Kildare are based on landholders in each townland, inserted by hand on the original maps, signed and dated 1839.

### Key

#### County Wicklow

1. Carroll
2. Mahony
3. Saunders
4. Grogan
5. Wingfield
6. Aldborough
7. Wicklow
8. Hutchinson
9. Various
10. Cooper
11. Wicklow
12. Beresford
13. Heighington
14. McMahon
15. Bookey
16. Maney
17. Copeland

18. Pennefather
19. Various
20. Bookey
21. Tynte
22. Leslie
23. De Robeck
24. Various
25. Hornidge
26. Various
27. Radcliffe

#### County Kildare

- A. Borrowes
- B. Roberts
- C. Law
- D. La Touche
- E. Archbold
- F. Cheney

This patchwork of small and medium sized estates formed the bedrock of the landholding system in west Wicklow as the 1840s dawned. This estate system, with its emphasis on landholding, encompassed a complex society, containing many layers. Pre-famine rural Wicklow had the lowest population density of any Leinster county, but the mountainous central section of the county distorted the figures. There was a much higher density of population on the 51.6 per cent of the county that constituted arable land, propelling Wicklow into the top four counties in Leinster when these adjustments were made.<sup>260</sup> Topographical considerations also applied within estates and parishes and aggregating parish rents according to townlands was often misleading, as intra-parish differences were often more crucial for understanding the landscape and the communities it supported.<sup>261</sup> As the 1840s began, west Wicklow supported considerably more people than it had at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and people in Dunlavin and its environs jockeyed for position and struggled to survive on that most limited of resources, agricultural land.

The centrality of land and landholding was underlined when Sir Robert Peel established the Devon Commission in 1843 to inquire into the occupation of land in Ireland.<sup>262</sup> Though the commission did not report until 1845, the answers given by witnesses to the commissioners shed considerable light on farming practices and conditions around Dunlavin during the early 1840s. West Wicklow deponents included Robert Saunders

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<sup>260</sup> Ken Hannigan, 'Wicklow before and after the Famine' in Ken Hannigan and William Nolan (eds), *Wicklow: History and Society* (Dublin, 1994), p. 791.

<sup>261</sup> Nolan, 'Land and landscape in County Wicklow c.1840', pp 668-72 *passim*.

<sup>262</sup> O Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the Famine*, p. 192. Twenty one witnesses from County Wicklow gave evidence to the Devon Commission and they are listed in *Appendix to minutes of evidence taken before Her Majesty's Commissioners of inquiry into the state of the law and practice in respect of the occupation of land in Ireland*, part iv (Dublin, 1845), pp xxx-xxxi. The evidence of the Wicklow deponents was published in part iii of the *Devon Commission*.

(Saundersgrove)<sup>263</sup> and Thomas de Renzy (Baltinglass)<sup>264</sup> and, crucially from a Dunlavin perspective, John Norton of Rathsallagh, who was 'acquainted with the country for several miles around Dunlavin', also gave evidence.<sup>265</sup> Norton was described as a farmer, but he was actually a middleman, holding a not insignificant 'near 500 acres', some of which he 'had set'. In addition to land at Rathsallagh, he had a farm 22 miles away and another 7 miles from Dublin. His Rathsallagh holding consisted of 102 acres of cattle-fattening land, nearly 87 acres of grass for sheep and cattle and 'a trifle' of tillage. He thought that the state of agriculture around Dunlavin was improving.<sup>266</sup> The principal crops were oats and potatoes, though there was also 'a trifle' of wheat and barley. Most farms in the region were between 10-30 acres in extent, though there were also 'some small farms and some of 100 acres'. Land around Dunlavin was generally good quality, supporting good potato crops, with rents of between 25s. and 30s. being the norm. However, the 'usual mode to recover [unpaid] rent was ejectment'.<sup>267</sup>

Norton stated that tenants in the area occupied land both from proprietors and middlemen, but 'occupying tenants under the head landlord are the best off, for in general the middlemen will press for the rent'.<sup>268</sup> Tenants with leases were better occupiers, Norton believed, and recommended that tenants should have leases for three lives or 31 years.<sup>269</sup>

<sup>263</sup> Paul Gorry, *Baltinglass Chronicles 1851-2001* (Dublin, 2006), p. 20.

<sup>264</sup> Paul Gorry, 'O'Brien's Baltinglass origins' in Chris Lawlor and Donal McDonnell (eds), *General O'Brien: West Wicklow to South America* (Naas, 2006), p. 152.

<sup>265</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 562.

<sup>266</sup> The residency of the Tynte family in the area may have contributed to agricultural improvement.

<sup>267</sup> This confirms the information relating to evictions in Rathsallagh given in A statistical memoir of Dunlavin parish (N.U.I. Maynooth, Shearman papers, xvii, f. 168).

<sup>268</sup> By implication, landlords accommodated tenants better than middlemen regarding rent in lean years.

<sup>269</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 562. Norton stated: 'Nothing like a lease. If they had leases they would improve the country. When a man has a lease he would lay out money on it [the farm], and if he is a tenant-at-will he takes what he can out of it... Suppose a man having a farm of land and he wanted an outhouse upon his farm.'

This conflicted with Saunders's opinion, who believed that such leases undermined the landlords' authority, so the commission had to take into account the vested interests of deponents.<sup>270</sup> Norton told the commissioners that 'poor people have no leases generally' and, although Pennefather supplied building materials to his tenants to make improvements at Rathallagh, other landlords in the region were vilified by Norton when he stated that 'in general the gentlemen do not give anything; they do not give as much as a slate. If the landlord has timber on the farm you must buy it and pay for it'.<sup>271</sup> Despite Pennefather's benevolence toward tenant improvements, Norton revealed that not many of Pennefather's tenants held leases.<sup>272</sup>

According to Norton, no local landlord made any allowances, financial or otherwise, for land drainage or any other improvements by the tenant. Norton's evidence portrays landlords around Dunlavin as passive, failing to take charge and provide a lead in improving their estates. This contrasts with Radcliff's picture of Ryves's well-managed estate at Rathallagh in 1812. Pennefather evidently did not continue Ryves's policies of improvement. The Tyntes had been absent from the Dunlavin region for many years, and their arrival in the 1830s was too recent for them to make a major improving impact in the locality. Moreover, Tynte met with resistance from some of his tenants; Robert Saunders told the commissioners that though there were 'very few agrarian outrages committed' in west Wicklow, but 'there was one with respect to my brother-in-law, Mr. Tynte'. Saunders

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I apprehend he would build a mud wall and with bad timber, and thatch it with potato stalks; but if he was sure of his farm [with a lengthy lease] he would put up a good slated house'.

<sup>270</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 556.

<sup>271</sup> The latter category of landlords probably included the Tyntes. Elizabeth Smith, the mistress of Baltiboys House, referred to the landlords of Dunlavin as 'thoughtless' in her diary. Dermot James and Seamas O Maitiu, *The Wicklow world of Elizabeth Smith 1840-1850* (Dublin, 1996), p. 88.

<sup>272</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 563.

was referring to Joseph Pratt-Tynte, born in 1815, who married Geraldine Northey of Cheltenham in 1840.<sup>273</sup> Saunders stated: 'We could never ascertain the cause of it... we could only attribute it to the system of ribbonism'. Tynte was a victim of arson, and his 'farm was on fire in four different places at the same time'. Tynte's 'hounds were burned' and the kennels where they were kept were pulled down'. Tynte's corn was also torched. The scale of arson involved suggests a well-orchestrated attack on Tynte's property in an area experiencing continuing agrarian unrest in the 1840s. It also suggests that the activities of agrarian secret societies continued unchecked, and that there was a high level of organisation within those societies in the region. Saunders maintained that the only possible cause for this arson was the fact that Tynte 'gave a smaller farm to a tenant who told him that his farm was too large'.<sup>274</sup> This may have been part of a process of farm consolidation, as John Norton stated that landlords encouraged enlargement of farm holdings; generally this was achieved by evicting small tenant farmers, who were given 'something for the roof and thatch', usually between £2 and £3, and setting the land to other people.<sup>275</sup> Tynte received a threatening notice for turning tenants off his estate in 1842.<sup>276</sup> Just over a year later, Tynte was the victim of a series of sustained arson attacks. The first of these was in February 1844 when Tynte's hay ricks were set alight,<sup>277</sup> and in June his kennels were burned out, with Patrick Bryan, John Miley and Andy Miley being suspected.<sup>278</sup> An

<sup>273</sup> John Bateman, *The great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (4th ed. 1883, Reprinted New York 1970) p. 452.

<sup>274</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 556.

<sup>275</sup> Norton stated: 'There is a good deal on Lord Wicklow's [Imaal] estate of that done'. This confirms the information about evictions in the Glen of Imaal given in A statistical memoir of Dunlavin parish (N.U.I. Maynooth, Shearman papers, xvii, f. 167)

<sup>276</sup> Police report on threatening notice, 15 Dec 1842 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 32/22811). A reward of £40 was offered for information regarding the crime.

<sup>277</sup> Police report on arson, 20 Feb 1844 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MS 32/3297)

<sup>278</sup> Bartholomew Warburton to Edward Lucas, 20 Jun 1844 and Warburton to [Lucas?], 6 Jul 1844 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MSS 32/11383 and 11859)

informer named Stephen Dunne of Brewershill gave information against Bryan and the Mileys.<sup>279</sup> The following month, Tynte's oats and hay were burned again. Despite Saunders' protestations to the commissioners on his behalf, Tynte evidently made enemies by his policy of evicting tenants to enlarge farms, a policy which the tenants were resolved to resist.<sup>280</sup>

The policy of enlarging farms notwithstanding, subletting continued in the region. According to Norton, there was 'not a great deal' of it. Larger farmers were 'turning their land to grass', but Norton stated that they were not wealthy 'owing to their own bad management and wasteful ways' and the high cost of the county cess – 'a terrible affair'. The change in land use from tillage to grazing, so prevalent in the post-Famine period, evidently began before the catastrophe struck, so the Famine was a catalyst to a process that was already underway in the Dunlavin region. Norton then expostulated the novel view that smaller tenants were 'doing better than the large ones [because] they have not so much to do', but he conceded that the plight of the labourers was 'growing worse [as] half of them are not employed generally'. Norton had three resident labourers that he did not allow into the house, but he often employed extra workmen. He admitted that labour was cheap, with labourers working 'for 6*d.* per day and their food or 10*d.* per day unfed' at busy times, but at other times of the year 'for a great deal less'. Labourers around Dunlavin rented their meagre holdings under the conacre system, which 'still prevailed in the district', with rents of '£10 per acre for potato ground and £8 for grass potato land', though payment was often made in the form of labour rather than money. Norton set 'a good deal' of conacre land

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<sup>279</sup> Warburton to Lucas, 24 Jul 1844 (N.A.I., Outrage papers, County Wicklow, MSS 32/11383 and 11859)

<sup>280</sup> *Poor Inquiry, Appendix F and supplement*, [38], H.C. 1836 xxxiii, p. 153.

himself.<sup>281</sup>

Norton told the commission that in some places, such as the land of the marquess of Waterford and Lord William Beresford's estate, within five miles of Rathsallagh, land agents charged fees when granting leases or collecting rent.<sup>282</sup> Norton told of a recent lease where a fee of 6*d.* in the pound had been paid. Agents also received gratuities, often in the form of the tenant paying more than the legal stamp duty on the lease. If the stamp duty was £3, Norton stated that the tenant would have to pay £11 or £12, and he knew of one case where £19 was paid to cover only £6 stamp duty. Bailiffs also charged fees of 2*s.* 6*d.* per day when they were employed 'to seize on people' who had defaulted on rent. These defaulters were often cottiers. According to the *Devon Commission* there were 143 holdings of less than one acre, and a further 710 of less than five in Baltinglass Poor Law Union in 1845, while Naas Poor Law Union had 3,051 holdings of less than one acre and 1,463 of less than five.<sup>283</sup> The small farm size and the number of cottiers in Dunlavin parish was underlined by the 97 fourth class houses (mud cabins) housing 117 families recorded in 1841, including 26 in Dunlavin village.<sup>284</sup> Despite this evidence of poverty, the picture of the Dunlavin area given by Norton to the commissioners was relatively positive, demonstrating that many people above the underclass made a good living in this buoyant agricultural region.

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<sup>281</sup> 'Lest any suggestion should arise that the labourer should acquire even a shadow of title to the land he rented, he often got it on conacre, or possession for eleven months only, which made its reversion clear beyond doubt'. Mitchell, *The Irish landscape*, p. 206.

<sup>282</sup> The Beresfords held two separate estates in Wicklow, one of which was about five miles northeast of Rathsallagh and Dunlavin (see figure twenty-three). John de la Poer Beresford gained the title of Fourth Marquess of Waterford in 1826 (<http://www.thepeerage.com/p10595.htm#i105947> visited on 14/7/08).

<sup>283</sup> *Devon Commission*, xxii, pp 280-1.

<sup>284</sup> *Census of Ireland 1841*, p. 366.

The inclusion of Dunlavin in the *Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland*, compiled in 1844 and 1845, reflected its status as a not insignificant settlement in a populous and prosperous region.<sup>285</sup> Dunlavin was prospering, and Tynte investment was improving the village.

## Conclusion

This chapter focused on the Dunlavin region during the early nineteenth century. A picture of substantial economic progress emerges, but this did not extend to the landless underclass and smallholders, who found themselves particularly vulnerable in 1845. The arrival of the Tyntes as resident landlords coincided with a number of landlord actions that improved the physical fabric of both Dunlavin's urban space and rural hinterland. A paternalistic model of landlordism was the aim, but the effects of improvement were not beneficial to everyone, and farm enlargement drove some smallholders off the land. Resistance to these actions, coupled with resistance to tithe, agrarian and political (and sometimes sectarian) unrest, and general criminality ensured that Dunlavin and its environs housed a crowded and disorderly society, and that the changes required to meet profitably the new economic order were not made. This failure of paternalism engendered resentment towards landlordism in some quarters of society. It was also a society in which the gap between the rich and the potato-dependant poor was widening, and this was reflected in the evidence

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<sup>285</sup> *Parliamentary gazetteer*, ii, pp 155-6. The principal new and different information is summarised below. Dunlavin village, 41 acres in extent, was precisely located as standing on 'the watershed between the Liffey, the Slaney and an affluent of the Barrow [the Griese] and lies near the sources of all three; yet though considerably temulated [?], and placed on a comparatively high basis, it lifts no summit to a greater altitude... than 622 feet, and consists in the aggregate of good land'. Much of the information replicated that given in Lewis's *Dictionary*, but there were some additional entries. The principal residences were given as Tynte Park, Merginstown, Brewershill and Doughmogue [The families dwelling in these residences were the Tyntes, the Fishers and the Copelands. 'Doughmogue' appears to be a misprint for 'Loughmogue', the townland on which Tynte Park stood]. The Tynte family were 'proprietors of... a large circumjacent estate... and they have of late years very much improved the town'. One of these improvements was the restoration, in 1835-1836, of the market house 'at a cost of £500, under the superintendence of Mr. Cross of Athy'.



given before the Devon Commissioners. This gap would become painfully evident when, in 1845, the potato crop failed, and the area was plunged into the Great Famine.