

**A LOCAL WAR-TIME FOOD SUPPLY INITIATIVE:
THE CLONTARF AND MARINO ALLOTMENTS OF 1917**

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BY NOEL CAROLAN

A LOCAL WAR-TIME FOOD SUPPLY INITIATIVE: THE CLONTARF AND MARINO ALLOTMENTS OF 1917

In their seminal history of cottage gardens and allotments, Bell and Watson (2012) charted gardening developments in Ireland during the two and a half centuries since 1750. They showed how movements as different as improvers, socialists, co-operators and environmentalists influenced the development of gardens and allotments. Around the same time, Forrest (2011) sharpened the focus considerably in terms of geography and time with her study of allotments in Dublin city during the first half of the 20th century. She examined in detail the changing motivations in the provision of allotments over that half century. Her use there, and elsewhere, of government, trade and newspaper reports to illustrate the changing numbers of allotments and their location is especially valuable: land for allotments was generally secured on a short-term basis; much of it was thereafter destined for house building; and record keeping was variable by the several local authorities and other organisations providing allotments across the city.

This dissertation narrows the geographic and time focus yet further still. It examines a 12-month period when allotments were first established at Clontarf and Marino in 1917. While the Vacant Land Cultivation Society (VLCS) had nearly 300 allotments in Dublin in September 1916, the situation was about to be transformed within months, with the rollout of the government's Food Production Scheme. Among its objectives were increased tillage and the promotion of motor tractors to plough Irish farmland. The Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland (DATI) became heavily involved in raising its estimation of the number of motor tractors in Ireland from 70 in March 1917 to 640 by September 1918.¹

In urban areas the Food Production Scheme promoted the use of allotments. For the second year running, the annual journal published by the DATI for the period October 1916 to July 1917 included photographs and articles about Belfast allotments: Belfast was seen as the pioneer of the allotment movement in Ireland. One of the photographs, displaying vegetables grown in Belfast is shown in figure (i) and its caption draws the attention of readers to the fact that they were 'grown by an amateur on a plot which had previously been a tipping

¹ *Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, Eighteenth Annual General Report of the Department 1917-18*, [Cd 106], H.C. 1919, ix, 83.

ground' [sic].² DATI enabled local authorities to acquire land for allotments and by the end of 1917 there were almost 5,500 allotments in Dublin - a 17-fold increase over the previous year. The c.800 allotments that were located on land at Marino and Clontarf and the vegetable growing communities in these two localities during 1917 are the subjects of this dissertation.

While it is possible to research both allotment locations down to the level of an individual field in some cases, it is extremely difficult to research the community of people associated



Fig (i) Vegetables grown by 'an amateur on a plot which had previously been a tipping ground', [*DATI Journal Vol XVII*, (Dublin, 1917), p. 428

with these allotments. Paucity of records is, of course, the primary difficulty. Moreover, living memory has little to offer in this case. The living memory of today's Marino community barely captures the origins of that community during the house building era of the 1920s: it includes nothing of the allotment holding community that formed in the area a few years earlier. A further complication arises in relation to living memory as a source.

² G. H. Oliver, 'Allotment gardens in Belfast' *Journal of The Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland*, xvii, 1917, p 428.

Allotment holders travelled considerable distances to grow their crops. Dublin Corporation was well ahead of other Dublin townships in securing land for allotments in 1917. Approximately 85% of such land then available in the city was on the north side of the city: the allotment land at Marino accounted for more than one third of the city total. As Yeates (2012) usefully notes, ‘such was the demand [in 1917] that Dubliners did not mind trekking across the city to work their allotments’.³ Clontarf and Marino were especially also especially well serviced the public transport systems of the day.

Where possible, this dissertation describes the circumstances of a small (but well short of being representative) number of allotments holders that can be identified from the available sources. The community of Clontarf and Marino allotment holders are not however beyond description. It seems that they were almost all male. The minimum annual cost of 16s.8d. per allotment ensured that holders were very likely to have been employed. Their occupations included policemen, brewery employees, teachers, labourers and working gardeners. Tram workers were also among the allotment community of Clontarf as we will see later.⁴

A second distinct community of approximately 60 people also began tending crops on the Marino estate alongside the allotment holders. In contrast to allotments holders, they were young, female and unemployed. Described in the newspapers of the day as girls, they were the students of the School of Market Gardening, established in Marino House in 1917.

SCHOOL OF MARKET GARDENING AT MARINO

Artist, advocate of workers’ rights and secretary of the VLCS, Sarah Harrison influenced the school on a number of different levels. In her VLCS role she had obtained for the society a small portion of reclaimed land at Fairview in 1914.⁵ She was also a member of the Local Representative Relief Committee of the National Relief Fund, which obtained other reclaimed land at Fairview to establish, in 1915, the Fairview Relief Farm Colony.⁶ (Such enterprises paid otherwise unemployed people to grow crops which were sold to fund its operation.) In January 1917, the Relief Committee was in the process of establishing a similar farm colony in Clontarf (Beechfield) and it was also setting up the school in Marino House. One of the earliest newspaper references to the school, appeared in the Freeman’s

³ Padraig Yeates, *A city in wartime, Dublin 1914-18*, (Dublin, 2012), p. 183.

⁴ Allotments at Clontarf, *Dublin Daily Express*, 26 Feb. 1917.

⁵ Vacant land cultivation society, *Irish Times*, 26 May 1914.

⁶ Interesting reclamation experiment, possible labour reservoir for farmers, *Irish Times*, 26 Mar. 1915.

Journal of 23 January 1917 in which readers were informed that ‘negotiations are now almost complete for the acquisition of Charlemont House, Marino, Clontarf and 8 acres [3.3 ha] of land surrounding the mansion are to be used as a School of Horticulture and Market Garden [sic] for unemployed women of the working-class in Dublin’.⁷

There is also a considerable amount of information about the proposed school in the newspaper coverage of the attendance of the lord-lieutenant at Marino and Clontarf, a few days later. He attended a motor ploughing exhibition at Beechfield, Clontarf and to open a new relief farm colony there. The Beechfield land was not used as a relief farm colony, (as we will see below). Newspaper reports of the speeches (delivered at the nearby Clontarf Cricket grounds) by the lord-lieutenant, and Alderman James Moran, (who is described as the chairman of the trustees of the relief training institute to be set up in Marino House), stated that 50 to 100 women would receive a few hours’ training every day for some months at the school. They would spend the remainder of each day as wage earners working on the adjoining farm colonies.⁸ The women also worked the 8 acres (3.3 ha) of land surrounding Marino House, and also at the nearby Fairview farm colony. Additional nearby farm colony work for the women did materialise, a year later at Killester Demesne. Additional nearby farm colony work for the women did materialise, a year later at Killester Demesne.

FORMATION OF LAND CULTIVATION COMMITTEE

In early January 1917, the Land Cultivation Committee of Dublin Corporation was established. The committee initially comprised the lord mayor, two councillors, an employers’ representative and a representative from the Trades Council. By the end of 1917 the committee was enlarged to accommodate two representatives of allotment holders. Marino allotment holders were to soon become very involved in representing allotment holders’ interests.

In one of its first actions, the Land Cultivation Committee (LCC) rented about 50 acres (20.3 ha) of land at the Marino Estate and it sub-leased Marino House (including 8 acres (3.3 ha) of land surrounding the house) to the Relief Committee to use it as the school described above.⁹ (Thereafter the LCC had no role in the operation of the school as it was developed and operated under the auspices of the National Relief Fund.) Around the same time the LCC

⁷ School for women, working class gardeners, *Freeman’s Journal*, 23 Jan. 1917.

⁸ Farm colony, demonstration of motor ploughing, *Freeman’s Journal*, 26 Jan. 1917.

⁹ Land cultivation committee, annual report, 1917, *Reports of Municipal Council of the City of Dublin 1917*, iv, p. 144.

took over the Beechfield land at Clontarf from the Relief Committee and from late January 1917 the LCC began preparations for the allocation of the land there to allotment holders.

OPENING OF THE CLONTARF ALLOTMENTS

If the recently established LCC element of local government was not very visible at the opening of the Clontarf relief farm colony at Beechfield on 25 Jan 1917, the welfare/relief element of local government was clearly evident. However, the involvement of central government on the occasion was more visible by far: the tillage initiative of the Food Production Scheme, in the form of a motor ploughing demonstration, was coupled with the opening of Clontarf relief farm colony.

Motor tractors were not only a rare sight in Clontarf: two of the then 70 or so tractors in the entire country were ploughing the glebe field in Clontarf on the afternoon of the last Thursday in January 1917.¹⁰ Advertisements in national newspapers, such as that shown in figure (ii) were used to publicise the



Fig (ii) Advertisement for motor ploughing demonstration at opening of Clontarf relief farm colony, Irish Times, 23 Jan. 1917.

event. Large numbers of farmers and land owners attended and their experience of motor tractors was referenced by the lord lieutenant when he 'said what he had seen that afternoon was quite new to him, indeed he believed it was quite new to all who were present'.¹¹ Newspaper reports of the ploughing were favourable with one exception.

There was extensive newspaper coverage of the Food Production Scheme agricultural initiatives about which the lord lieutenant and DATI officials spoke. An 'interested spectator', E. W. O'Maloney, from Chapelizod, wrote to the Irish Times of an importing agent with 100 motor tractors ready to import from New York but awaiting the assistance of the DATI.¹² His concerns stand in contrast to the general newspaper coverage, and it all

¹⁰ In the interest of Ireland, *Irish Independent*, 26 Jan. 1917.

¹¹ Food production in Ireland, *Irish Times*, 26 Jan. 1917.

¹² E. W. O'Maloney, letter to editor, *Irish Times*, 29 Jan. 1917.

illustrates the extent to which the efforts of the allotment holders at Clontarf were to be much more about food production than the relief of unemployed labour.

LOCATION OF CLONTARF AND MARINO ALLOTMENTS

The map of Clontarf shown in figure (iii) shows the location of the LCC allotments using green shading. The glebe field is the location where the motor ploughing demonstration took place and where the first allocation of allotments was made three weeks later. The field

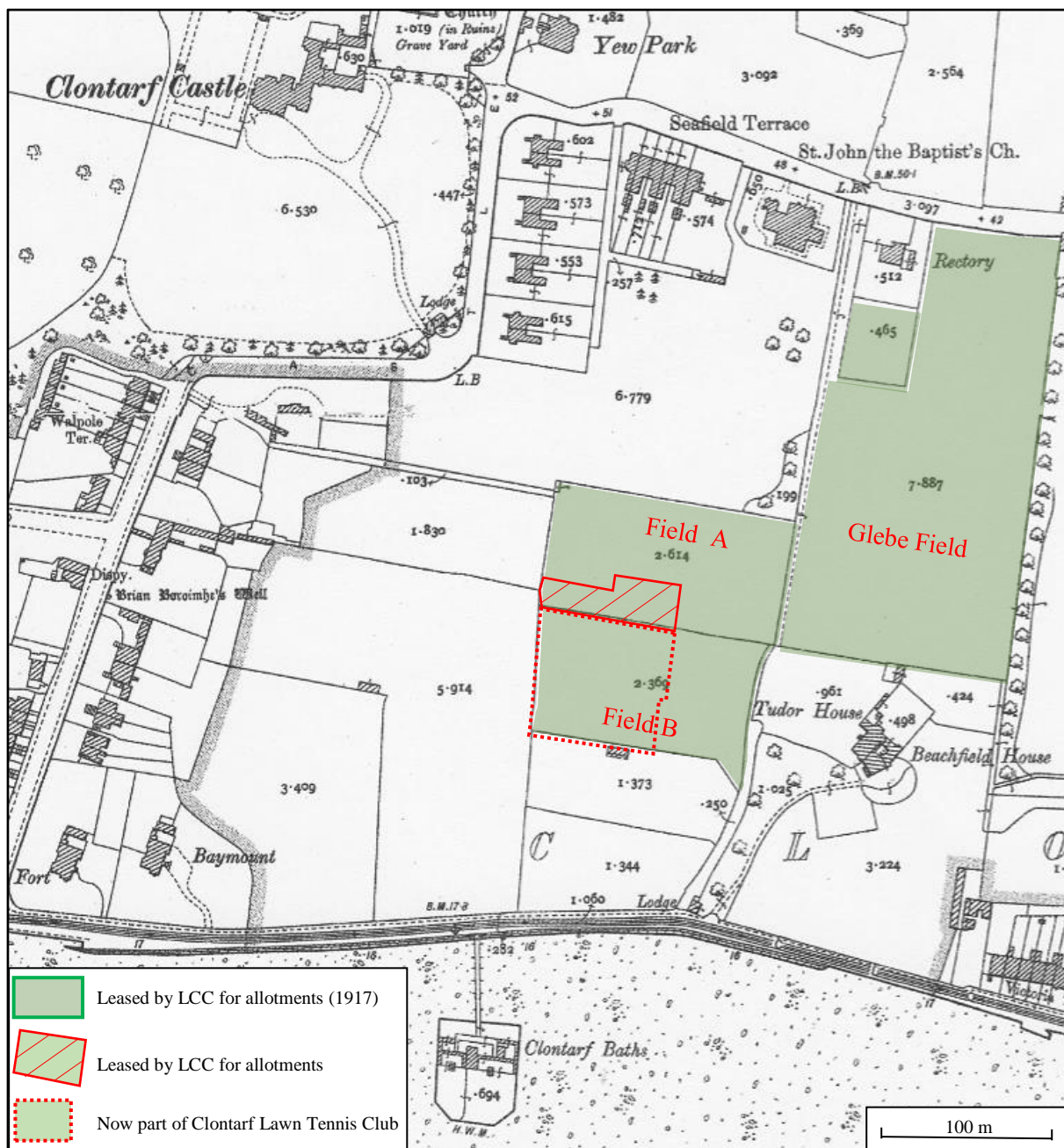


Fig (iii) Clontarf Map 1907, © Ordnance Survey Ireland, land leased by LCC in 1917 for allotments, red hatched marking shows where remnants of allotments were visible in the early 1980s.

marked A contains an area hatched in red in which the remnants of allotments were visible, many decades later in the 1980s.¹³ That hatched in red area is now part of Clontarf Lawn Tennis Club, along with the area enclosed by the broken red line in the field marked B. In all, the LCC leased about 13 acres (5.3 ha) in this part of Clontarf in 1917 for £7 per acre for a period of four years. The location of these allotments was variously described in the records of the LCC and newspaper articles as Seafield Road, Beechfield and the glebe field.

The history and geography of the land and buildings used for the Marino allotments of 1917 is already well researched and documented. A survey of the estate lands on which Donnycarney House was situated was made for John Foster, Recorder of Dublin, in 1704 and a copy is shown in Fig (iv). By 1753 the house had been demolished by Thomas Adderley. Adderley was the step-father of James Caulfeild (1728-1799), later 1st Earl of Charlemont,



Fig (iv) John Greene and Joseph Moland, (1704) Survey of Donnycarney, for John Foster, Recorder of Dublin, City Surveyors' Book, C1/ S1/ 103. Dublin City Archives.

and he replaced it by building Marino House nearby. Caulfeild developed a polygonal walled garden, maintained Marino House and set out a well wooded late 18th century demesne. The Casino at Marino, a neo-classical folly which he completed in 1775, is all that remains today

¹³ Interview with Trevor Lonergan, President of Clontarf Lawn Tennis Club, 19 Oct. 2016.

of the splendour that was the Charlemont Estate at Marino, although the outline of the polygonal garden is recognisable in the St. Vincent's GAA football grounds that occupy that space now.

Moving closer to the First World War era, the outline and detail of the polygonal garden (and its buildings) were recorded at a scale of 25-inch/mile in the Ordnance Survey map which was surveyed in 1907. The allotment gardens established in 1917 were a short distance south of the polygonal garden. Both gardens were close in location terms, but a century and a half apart in time and the contexts of the two gardens could hardly be further apart. The 18th century hot houses in the polygonal garden of the 1st Earl of Charlemont grew pineapples and other exotic plants: the 20th century allotments of working class Dubliners grew potatoes and other vegetables that were far from exotic. Fig (v) below shows in green shading the approximate location of the 42 acres (6.9ha) leased by the LCC for allotments in 1917. The area hatched in red shows the approximate location of the 8 acres (3.3 ha) leased, in turn, by the LCC to the School of Market Gardening established at Marino House in the spring of 1917.

ALLOCATING, ORGANISING AND PLANTING ALLOTMENTS

On a mid-February Sunday and Monday, two city councillors and a local government inspector met to distribute 60 allotments in the glebe field, Beechfield, Clontarf.¹⁴ The glebe field comprised about 7½ acres (3 ha) which was a little more than half of the 13 acres (5.3 ha) that the LCC leased in 1917 for four years at £7 per acre.¹⁵ On the last Sunday in the month, at the tennis pavilion at Beechfield, (where the lord lieutenant spoke a month earlier), lots were drawn for allotments and applications were reported to have been considerably in excess of 'the close on 60' allotments allocated.¹⁶

The newspaper report ended with a note of interest- 'among the lucky applicants were a number of tramway employees'. They were lucky on at least one front: the Clontarf Tram Shed at which some may have worked, or lived nearby, was little more than a kilometre from the glebe field. They may have been lucky on another front if they, like any other allotment holder, lived close to any part of the tram system. In what must have been one of its earliest meetings, the LCC is reported in newspaper coverage to have decided to approach the

¹⁴ City allotments, *Irish Independent*, 12 Feb. 1917.

¹⁵ Land cultivation committee, annual report, 1917, p. 145.

¹⁶ Allotments at Clontarf, *Dublin Daily Express*, 26 Feb. 1917.

tramway company to secure halfpenny fares for allotments holders.¹⁷ (Access to the LCC minute books, currently awaiting conservation, would be useful to determine what happened in this regard.) In any event, inexpensive tram fares would have benefited Clontarf allotments holders, but the benefits would have been much greater at Marino, which was the

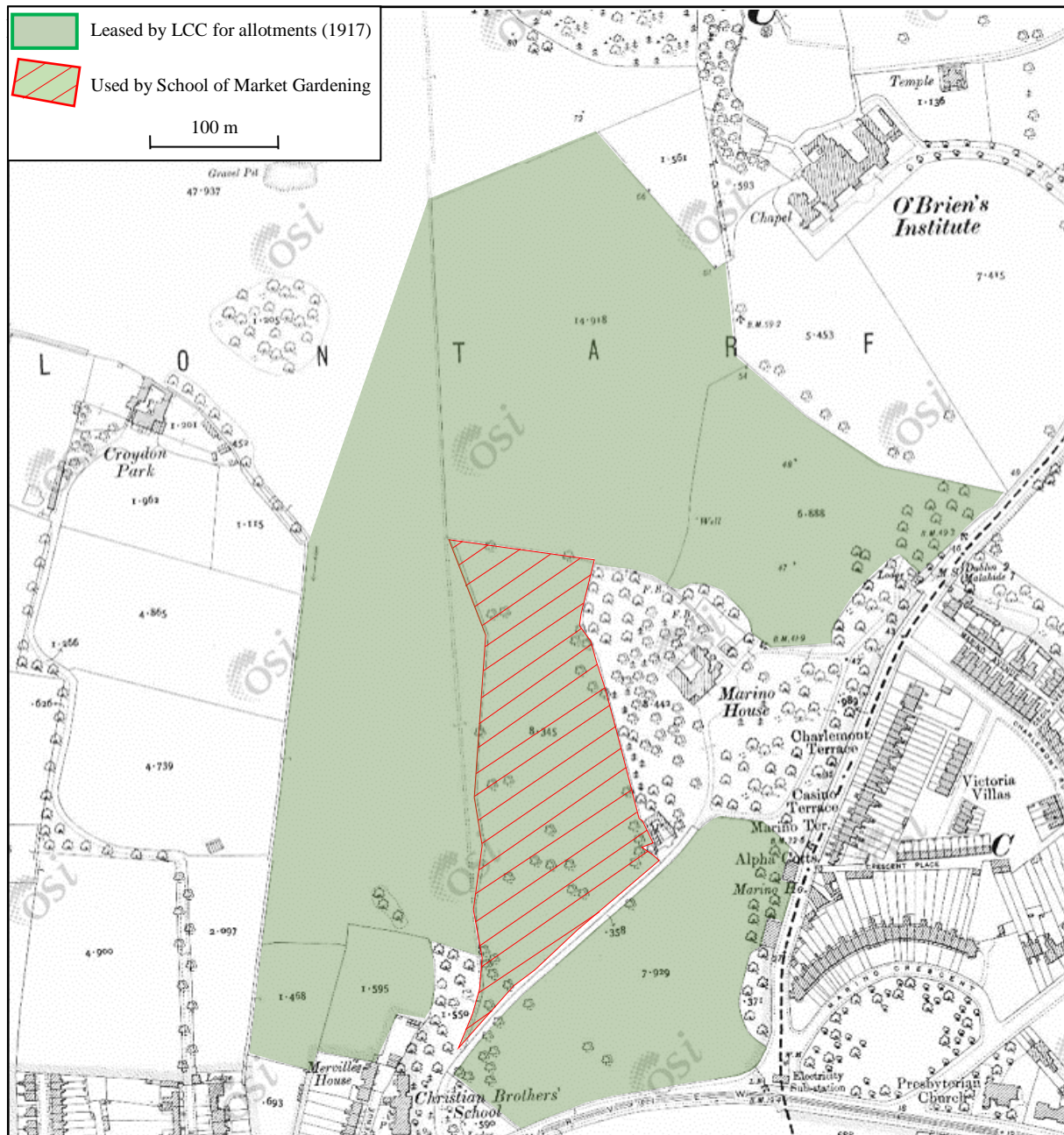


Fig (v) Clontarf Map 1907, © Ordnance Survey Ireland, Probable location of LCC allotments 1917 and land used by School of Market Gardening, located in Marino House.

The lord lieutenant had visited Marino in January and all was going well with the allotments in the spring of 1917. Other visitors came to witness the progress. Newspaper reports in April record Ald Byrne MP, and Dr Lorcan Sherlock (LCC Chairman) as ‘frequent visitors’.

¹⁷ Halfpenny fares for cultivators, *Freeman's Journal*, 13 Jan. 1917.

The Chief Secretary also came to the allotments in April although, not exclusively to inspect the capacity of the land to grow vegetables: his inspection was focused on housing plans.¹⁸ Nonetheless, by the end of the month, the *Evening Herald* informed its readers that the allotments at Marino ‘were looking well,’¹⁹ and in early May it advised readers that the allotments at ‘Marino, Drumcondra, and Glasnevin and other spots are worth visiting’.²⁰

By early April, more than 300 allotments were allocated at Marino.²¹ A horticulture instructor, Mr J Brady, attended the Marino allotments on Saturday evenings ‘to give advice and to work a demonstration plot, with hints as to method’. Demonstration plots were promoted by the DATI and used in a variety of ways: demonstration plots were used alongside allotments and the Commissioners of Public Works in St Stephen’s Green.²²

Towards the end of April the LCC was concerned about the efficient use of allotments. Edmund W. Eyre, secretary to the LCC, wrote to several Marino allotment holders stating that the progress of their cultivation was reported as unsatisfactory. He advised them that the LCC would reallocate their allotments to other persons, if more favourable reports were not available, in a week’s time. (Demand for allotments greatly exceeded supply.) Michael Mullen (Plot 86) received such a warning from the secretary of the LCC and he followed it with a letter of complaint which was published in the *Evening Herald*. He strongly disputed the progress of cultivation reported in his case, stating that ‘in it [his allotment] are planted one and a half cwts. [76 kg] of potatoes, several hundreds of cabbage plants, and other vegetables, leaving but a small area still open for cultivation’.²³ On the face of it, the amount of potatoes which Michael Mullen said he had planted was in the order of 90% of the DATI recommendation for allotments of typical size; the number of his cabbage plants vastly exceeded the needs of a family and they were possibly intended for sale.

POTATO SPRAYING OPERATIONS

Fears for about the potato supply and associated rising prices was an ongoing feature in newspapers in the days before Easter 1917. The significant proportion of Marino allotment holders living in what are now described as north inner-city locations must have been aware

¹⁸ Dublin housing plans, chief secretary makes tour of inspection, *Freeman’s Journal*, 12 Apr. 1917.

¹⁹ Have you a plot, *Evening Herald*, 28 Apr. 1917.

²⁰ Welcome rain, *Evening Herald*, 15 May 1917.

²¹ Dublin and district, Marino allotments, *Irish Independent*, 16 Apr. 1917.

²² Jonathan Bell and Mervyn Watson, *Rooted in the soil; a history of cottage gardens and allotments in Ireland since 1750*, (Dublin, 2012), p. 79.

²³ *Evening Herald*, 26 Apr. 1917.

of the developments on Amiens St on Good Friday (6 April). The Irish Times reported that ‘a somewhat startling method of dealing with the potato supply came into operation last Friday’ whereby the military authorities had opened their store of potatoes for sale at £11 per ton at an informal depot at Amien St, in an effort to combat profiteering by farmers.²⁴ By early 1917 a ban on potato exports from Ireland was brought into effect and potato prices were then double that before the war. People who had by that time secured allotments must have felt fortunate to have an opportunity to grow their own potatoes. The LCC supported them in this respect by purchasing about 80 tons of seed potatoes which were distributed to allotment holders in small quantities at rates calculated to cover cost and carriage.

Prevention of potato blight by spraying was a recurring theme in DATI publications, lectures to allotment holders, newspaper and Irish Gardening articles about allotments. The importance of potato spraying was emphasised in the general series of DATI leaflets and in a leaflet in a special series of leaflets which dealt exclusively with vegetable growing in allotments.²⁵ At the request of the allotment holders the LCC made arrangements to have the potatoes sprayed to prevent potato blight.²⁶ The committee purchased seven sprayers and several tonnes of copper sulphate and washing soda for that purpose. Allotment holders were charged three shillings per allotment sprayed. Spraying operations were overseen by Mr Hurley, a full-time instructor of horticulture made available to the committee by the DATI. (During the course of the 1917 six assistant temporary instructors were also employed for Saturday afternoons and bank holidays- times which suited allotment holders to avail of instruction.)

Michael Mullen had another letter published in the Evening Herald on 27 June.²⁷ While he mentioned nothing about the progress of the potatoes in his allotment on this occasion, he stated that the spraying operations had destroyed the potatoes in two of the most promising allotments (Nos 76&77) at Marino. A newspaper representative visited Marino and reported that the only plots then ‘looking really healthy are those where spraying operations have not been carried out, or where owners did the work themselves’. Richard Cahill also wrote to the newspaper about damage to his plot and those of his three neighbours having been reduced to

²⁴ Potato supply may be exhausted on first of June, new market opened at Dublin station, *Weekly Irish Times*, 7 Apr. 1917.

²⁵ Treatment of allotments for the growing of vegetables, Special leaflet no. 18, (rev.) 1917, DATI, Dublin, p. 7.

²⁶ Land cultivation committee, annual report, 1917, p. 148.

²⁷ Marino plots ruined by injudicious spraying, letter to editor, *Evening Herald*, 27 Jun. 1917.

‘burnt leaves and stalks, broken and withered, the result of gross carelessness and stupidity on the part of those responsible for the supervision of the spraying operations’.

The LCC moved quickly to defend their position in relation to the spraying at Marino. In a letter published in the *Sunday Independent* on 1 July, the LCC secretary Edmund W. Eyre stated that the spraying was not done under the supervision of the LCC expert but by ‘persons employed on behalf of the plot holders by their local committee of management’.²⁸ Despite the clarity in the newspaper reports confusion seems to have remained around Marino for the next few weeks at least.

Alice Elliott, principal teacher at the recently established school of market gardening at Marino House found it necessary to have a letter published in several newspapers on 10 July to protect the reputation of the school: teaching staff and pupils were ‘popularly believed to have been responsible for and to have carried out the spraying of the potato crops at Marino for the allotment holders’. She was proud of the work done on allotments attached to the school on which the girls worked but emphasised how the school’s allotments were ‘entirely self-contained and apart from, though surrounded by, the allotments held by individuals under the Dublin Corporation Land Cultivation Committee’.²⁹

The LCC annual report for 1917 praised the work the horticulture instructor, Mr Hurley, who had been provided by the DATI and had overseen the potato spraying operations.³⁰ A quite detailed summary of the annual report in *Irish Gardening*, a monthly publication has further praise of Mr Hurley.³¹ However, the unpublished financial accounts of the LCC has a very revealing entry relating to the payment of £2 to ‘William McEndoo, Spraying Marino Allotments, 24th-26th June, 1917’.³² In contrast with several similar payments to other persons, for cartage of seed potatoes, manure, water for spraying etc, the location of the allotments where they were employed is not provided.

It is possible to identify William McEndoo in the 1911 census (there are two Williams among the 16 McEndoo males recorded in Ireland in that census).³³ He was returned as a labourer, the son of a gardener and living on Merville Avenue, Fairview, within 500m of Marino

²⁸ Potato spaying at Marino, *Sunday Independent*, 1 Jul. 1917.

²⁹ Alice Elliott, letter to editor, *Dublin Daily Express*, 10 Jul. 1917.

³⁰ Land cultivation committee, annual report, 1917, p. 146.

³¹ Dublin corporation land cultivation committee, annual report, 1917, in *Irish Gardening*, viii, no. 144, p.26.

³² Land cultivation committee, annual report, 1917, p. 153.

³³ 1911 Census of Ireland, PLU North Dublin, DED Clontarf West, Merville Avenue, Form B no 5, (<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai000025612/>), (14 Apr. 2018).

House. (He was later recorded as a gardener on the occasion of his two marriages and, much later again as a retired gardener at the time of his death in 1962.)³⁴ The LCC were, in their record keeping, either intent on having McEndoo associated with the spraying problem or reckless as to whether he could be so associated. In any event, the problem lingered for the LCC far beyond the summer of 1917: a LCC breviae from the spring of 1919 records their allowance to an unnamed 'plotholder 77 at Marino a further 16s. 8d. for the damage done to his produce through spraying in the season 1917. The total amount of compensation allowed in this case was £2 6s.'. ³⁵ The LCC learned from their experience of 1917 and new spraying arrangements were put in place from 1918 onwards.

PRIZE FUNDS, WINNERS AND LOSERS

Little evidence survives of the success or failure of the scheme to award certificates of commendation to allotment holders introduced by the DATI in 1917.³⁶ More evidence survives, however, of the travails of the LCC when it set up a prize fund, having 'thought the interest in the work of the plotholders would be considerably stimulated if we [the committee] were able to establish a number of prizes to be competed for amongst them'.³⁷

The LCC raised a fund of £94 11s. 0d. from 25 subscribers: A. Guinness, Son & Co. subscribed £25; Dr. Walsh, Archbishop of Dublin, The Dublin United Tram Co. and the lord lieutenant, each subscribed £10; and the principal amounts in value thereafter were from three banks and W. & R. Jacob & Co. Subscriptions were motivated by various interests but the most local of interest must have been that of the three town councillors among the 25 subscribers. Ald. James Moran represented Clontarf and, like his two elected colleagues, he also contributed a guinea to the fund.

Allotments were judged in early August and 44 prizes were awarded to the c.500?? allotment holders at Clontarf and Marino. There were 7 first prizes of £1 1s. 0d. each, 14 second prizes of 10s. and 23 third prizes of 5s. each. A week or so later, an anonymous newspaper letter, signed 'An Fear Mór' was published in the Evening Herald, alleging that the awards 'at

³⁴ Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Records of General Register Office, IrishGenealogy.ie, (https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage_returns/marriages_1927/09104/5293271.pdf), (https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage_returns/marriages_1935/08949/5239430.pdf), (https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/deaths_1962/04305/4109931.pdf), (14 Apr. 2018).

³⁵ 'Land Cultivation Committee, Breviae for six Months ending 31st March 1919', *Reports of Municipal Council of the City of Dublin 1919*, ii, p. 68.

³⁶ DATI Journal 1917-1918, p. 523.

³⁷ Land Cultivation Committee Annual Report 1917, p. 149.

Marino last week, the first prize, the second prize, and the third prize, were awarded to three most estimable gentlemen; but strange to say, each of the three is an employee of Dublin Corporation'.³⁸ Michael Mullen, (Plot 86, Marino) felt it necessary within days to write his second letter to a newspaper within three months, to deny that he was 'An Fear Mór' despite this being 'freely stated' in the area.³⁹ It is reasonable to assume that there was some considerable speculation about the awards within the allotment holding community at Marino in 1917, given the publication of letters and the extent to which the LCC found it necessary in the following, and subsequent, years to amend the rules of the competition.

EMERGING TENSIONS

A national movement of allotment holders, the Irish Potholders' Union (IPU), emerged by the end of 1917. Marino holders were at the forefront of the movement and some important early meetings were held at Marino House. The IPU sought additional representation, a legislative basis for allotments and promoted the interests of allotment holders. Owners of land adjoining the Marino allotments defended their interests as the LCC sought to rent their land in late 1917 and a public inquiry, parliamentary questions, along with considerable newspaper coverage followed in the beginning of 1918.

CONCLUSION

Newspaper sources have been crucially important for the identification of the emerging tensions and wider experience of allotment holders in two local areas, featured in this dissertation. Although Marino and Clontarf were not served by a local newspaper in 1917, national newspapers emerged from the research as very important primary sources. Their value lies far beyond complementing other primary sources such as the records of the local or national government: there is, for example, very little reference to the School of Market Gardening in any records beyond the newspapers. Beyond a descriptive paragraph by Forrest, in her otherwise detailed treatment of women's horticultural colleges in Dublin in the early 20th century, almost nothing has been published about the School of Market Gardening at Marino.⁴⁰ The research for this dissertation has added significantly to the story of its establishment in 1917 (and its fortunes in the remaining two years of its life).

³⁸ 'An fear mór', letter to editor, *Evening Herald*, 11 Aug. 1917.

³⁹ Michael Mullen, letter to the editor, *Evening Herald*, 13 Aug. 1917.

⁴⁰ Mary Forrest, 'women's horticultural Colleges in Dublin in the early 20th century', in *Dublin Historical Record*, xvii, no. 1, (Spring 2005), pp 31-38.

Nothing has been published about the potato spraying problems and allocation of prizes in 1917. These issues are visible in the available records of Dublin City Council, more in terms of the new approaches taken by the LCC in subsequent years, than by way of any detailed descriptions of the difficulties. Newspaper sources were, in contrast, especially helpful in this regard. However, a currently unavailable source holds great promise: the minutes of the LCC are currently unavailable awaiting conservation. It is difficult to underestimate their potential given the nature of the challenges encountered by the LCC over the next five or so years. Serious tensions, for example, arose in the years after 1917 between the interests of land owners, allotment holders, local representatives, and a government department whose control moved from London to Dublin.

Unlike the 1st Earl of Charlemont, the allotment holders left no visible artefacts to testify to their existence. The fields in which they worked their allotments were consumed by housing within a decade. The absence of artefacts, and loss of living memory since 1917 places a great responsibility on local studies as a discipline. Local studies are very important in such a setting and offer the only opportunity to document the experience of a particular community, in a particular space and for given duration of time.

Returning to the story of the school, this research has taken place at an opportune time. The theme of Heritage Week events later this summer, is making a connection between communities and heritage through the sharing of stories. To this end, a talk based on this dissertation has been registered with the Heritage Council⁴¹. It will be delivered to the residents of Marino, on the land cultivated by the allotments holders of 1917.

⁴¹ Heritage Council website, Details of events registered to take place during National Heritage Week in 2018 (<https://www.heritageweek.ie/whats-on/event/the-marino-allotments-of-1917>) (25 May 2018).