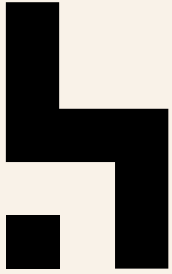




Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council



History on your Doorstep

Volume 6

Six stories of Dublin history

by Dublin City Council's Historians in Residence James Curry, Cormac Moore, Mary Muldowney and Catherine Scuffil, Historian in Residence for Children Dervilia Roche and Dublin City Council Culture Company Tour Guide Alvean E. Jones

Edited by Mary Muldowney and Catherine Scuffil



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Réamhtra / Foreword

I am very pleased to introduce the sixth volume of the *History on your Doorstep* series from Dublin City Libraries. As has been the case for several of the previous volumes, this one is not devoted to a particular theme, other than the study of diverse aspects of the history of our city. In addition to chapters from the Dublin City Council Historians in Residence and the Historian in Residence for Children, there is one from Dublin City Council Culture Company tour guide Alvean Jones.

The chapters are presented chronologically, in terms of their subject matter, beginning with Alvean Jones's chapter on the foundation and development of specialist education for deaf children in Dublin, especially those from poor families. In the nineteenth century such teaching was initially provided by Church of Ireland bodies but after the mid-century Catholic clerics began to promote the delivery of deaf education for Catholic children.

Catherine Scuffil writes an account of the 'rise and fall' of the Dolphin's Barn Brick Company, which was Dublin's most famous brick manufacturer from its establishment in 1896 to its eventual closure in 1945. The bricks produced in those years can be found in housing estates and public buildings but the expansion of the city in the course of the first half of the twentieth century was ironically the cause of the company's termination.

Mary Muldowney writes about responses to the housing crisis in Dublin in the final decades of the nineteenth century, a time when Dublin Corporation became more closely involved in trying to solve the problem of the terrible conditions in the city's slum areas. There were also various charitable initiatives to help the poor of the city, which operated with more or less success.

Cormac Moore's chapter also deals with house building, in this case the post World War I scheme to provide homes for British forces veterans who were promised 'Houses for Heroes' on their return from the conflict. Cormac's piece outlines the problems associated with the initiative, some of them a result of its coming from the British government, as the struggle for independence was ongoing.

There is a complete change of pace in James Curry’s chapter on the 1923 FAI Cup Final, which was won by a Belfast team, against the background of the Civil War and the aftermath of the Partition of the country. Junior club Alton United beat Shelbourne FC against all expectations but were never able to defend their title, as the FAI notified Northern Irish clubs in the following year that they would be unable to play in the competition.

Finally, Dervilia Roche devotes her chapter to the *Hidden Histories Hunt*, which she devised for children and families, to introduce them to the fascination of history. Designed as a self-guided ‘treasure hunt’ in the city with clues to historical artefacts and sites, the instruction sheets are available from the city’s libraries. They are appealingly illustrated by children’s author John Farrelly.

Just like the previous *History on your Doorstep* volumes, this one will be available free from Dublin City Library branches and will be accessible as an e-book on BorrowBox. Each chapter finishes with a short list of further reading relevant to the subject matter. The recommended books are also available through local library branches.

Enjoy your reading.



DAITHÍ DE RÓISTE
Lord Mayor of Dublin

About the authors

ALVEAN E. JONES is a member of the Deaf Community with a deep passion for preserving their rich heritage. She studied history as one of her subjects for her primary degree at UCD. Her connection to the Deaf Heritage Centre Ireland has allowed her to contribute meaningfully to this endeavour. In 2016, she had the privilege of co-editing *Through the Arch*, a book that honoured the 170th anniversary of St Mary's School for Deaf Girls. Currently, she is immersed in crafting an *Anthology of Irish Deaf History*, which she hopes to publish in winter 2023. Translating historical articles into Irish Sign Language is a way Alvean tries to bridge the past with the present, and she is honoured to also serve as a tour guide at 14 Henrietta Street.

JAMES CURRY received his PhD in History & Digital Humanities from NUI Galway in 2017, having previously graduated with BA and MPhil history degrees from Trinity College Dublin. He is the creator of a "Stories of Dublin" channel on YouTube and has published widely on twentieth century Irish history, including a book about Dublin radical cartoonist Ernest Kavanagh. James is a former committee member of the Irish Labour History Society and is the Historian in Residence for the Dublin North West Area.

CORMAC MOORE has a PhD in History from De Montfort University in Leicester and an MA in Modern Irish History from UCD. He is Historian in Residence for Dublin North Central and is author of *Laois: The Irish Revolution, 1912-23* (due to be published in early 2024), *Birth of the Border: The Impact of Partition in Ireland*, *The Irish Soccer Split*, and *The GAA V Douglas Hyde: The Removal of Ireland's First President as GAA Patron*. He is a columnist with the Irish News as well as editor of its daily 'On This Day' segment.

MARY MULDOWNEY holds a PhD in History from Trinity College Dublin and a postgraduate qualification in Adult Continuing Education and Training from the National University of Ireland at Maynooth. She is the Historian in Residence for the Dublin Central Area. Mary is the author of books and journal articles with a particular interest in labour and women's history. She is a member of the Grangegorman Histories Expert Working Group, the committee of the Irish Labour History Society (ILHS) and she is co-editor of *Saothar*, the journal of the ILHS. She was a founding member of the Oral History Network of Ireland and is a frequent consultant on other history projects.

DERVILIA ROCHE is Education Manager and Historian in Residence for Children at Dublin City Council Culture Company. She has been working in heritage and public history for over sixteen years. She has a BA in History of Art and Architecture and Music from Trinity College Dublin, and an MSc in Tourism Management from Dublin Institute of Technology. She has undertaken and published research on how children engage with heritage sites, and has worked across the city in education roles at historic sites and museums. She was appointed as Dublin's first Historian in Residence for Children, as part of Dublin City Council Culture Company's Creative Residency programme. The Historian in Residence for Children Creative Residency @ Richmond Barracks is a partnership with Dublin City Council Culture Company and Dublin City Libraries.

CATHERINE SCUFFIL is Dublin born and reared. Catherine's interest in local history was formed at an early age encouraged by parents who also shared a love of Dublin. She was honorary secretary/founder member of the Dolphin's Barn Historical Society (1986) compiling and editing their publication *By the Sign of the Dolphin* (1993). In addition to an honours Business and Management degree, Catherine also holds both a Certificate and a Masters in Local History from NUI Maynooth. Her master's thesis research was published by Four Courts Press as *The South Circular Road Dublin on the Eve of the First World War* and an abridged version was awarded the silver medal by the Old Dublin Society (2018). Catherine was actively involved in a wide range of community events during the 1916 Rising centenary commemorations, researching the Rialto/Kilmainham 1916 Commemoration photographic exhibition and publication 1916 in the South Dublin Union for St. James's Hospital. Catherine is currently working as Historian in Residence with Dublin City Council for the Dublin South East and South Central Areas and is a consultant historian for other projects.

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Breaking Barriers: The Development of Deaf Education in Dublin

Alvean E. Jones, Tour Guide for Dublin City Council
Culture Company

During the nineteenth century in Dublin, two prominent educational establishments emerged to meet the educational needs of deaf children. The Claremont Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and The Catholic Institution for the Deaf and Dumb played pivotal roles in shaping the landscape of deaf education in Ireland. In this chapter, we delve into the background and development of deaf education in Dublin during the nineteenth century, shedding light on the transformative impact of these institutions.

Before proceeding, it is essential to address the usage of terminology. While the terms 'deaf and dumb', 'deaf mute', and similar expressions are now recognised as offensive by the deaf community, they are employed in this chapter for historical accuracy and contextual understanding. It is crucial to acknowledge that language evolves, and contemporary discourse emphasises the importance of respectful and inclusive language when referring to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

With this awareness, we explore the historical context and significance of deaf education in Dublin, recognising the evolving perspectives on terminology within the broader framework of deaf education history.

The National Institution for Education of the Deaf and Dumb Poor in Ireland (Claremont)

The National Institution for Education of the Deaf and Dumb Poor in Ireland, founded by Dr. Charles Edward Herbert Orpen (1791-1856), emerged as a beacon of hope for deaf individuals in Ireland. Established in 1816, this institution aimed to provide comprehensive education and support to deaf children often marginalised by society. Situated near Glasnevin, Dublin, Claremont offered a nurturing environment where deaf students could learn, communicate, and develop vital skills.

Dr. Orpen's vision for the Claremont Institution stemmed from his encounter with a group of deaf children at the Workhouse of the House of Industry in Dublin. Witnessing their challenges and recognising the urgent need for their education and empowerment, he dedicated himself to their cause. Under his guidance, Claremont adopted a manual method of communication, influenced by the teachings of Charles-Michel de l'Épée. In the eighteenth century, Charles-Michel de l'Épée, a trailblazer in Deaf education, revolutionised teaching methods by championing the first free school for the Deaf in Paris, where he codified French Sign Language and developed pedagogical techniques. His dedication to inclusivity and linguistic recognition transformed perceptions of Deaf individuals. De l'Épée's legacy resonates today, as his principles remain integral to Deaf education worldwide. His profound impact on language acquisition and community empowerment underscores the enduring significance of embracing and fostering sign languages as a vital aspect of cultural and educational landscapes. This approach emphasised sign language, finger spelling, and visual communication, enabling effective student learning and communication.

The Claremont Institution became a centre of excellence for deaf education, offering a range of subjects such as language development, mathematics, and vocational skills. The dedicated faculty focused on individualised instruction, catering to the unique needs of each student. Additionally, the institution embraced a Church of Ireland ethos, teaching the Anglican faith to all its students, regardless of their family backgrounds.



Charles Edward Herbert Orpen
Wikimedia Commons

During the mid-1840s, a notable absence could be observed in Irish schools, where no facilities were available for deaf children to receive religious instruction in the Catholic faith. Recognising this deficiency, concerned parents and clergy approached Claremont, the largest school for deaf children in Ireland at the time, requesting Catholic deaf children to be taught their Catholic catechisms. Unfortunately, their appeals were met with disappointment as the school was unable to fulfil this need. Consequently, Catholic parents who sent their deaf children to Claremont for education witnessed their children's conversion to the Church of Ireland.



Claremont (Protestant Deaf school)
Wikimedia Commons

The Catholic Institution for the Deaf and Dumb

Recognising the relative absence of facilities for deaf children to receive Catholic religious instruction, Fr. Thomas McNamara (1808-1892), a Vincentian parish priest of Phibsboro, sought support from Monsignor William Yore (1781-1864), a revered figure known as the Vincent de Paul of Ireland. Together, they took the first steps toward establishing the Catholic Institution for the Deaf and Dumb in Ireland. The preliminary meeting held at the White Cross on December 22, 1845, brought them together along with other influential individuals, including Rev. Dr. Dowley, C.M., Redmond P. O'Carroll, Esq., James O'Ferrall, Esq., William Nugent Skelly, Esq., Richard A. O'Reilly, Esq., and Thomas Willis, Esq.



Father McNamara as an older man in 1868

Monsignor Yore's leadership and the commitment of Thomas McNamara and the assembled committee members set the foundation for the Schools for the deaf in Cabra. Their collective efforts included securing patronage from the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland, reaching out to the Catholic gentry, and promoting the project through various channels, including leading journals. Despite the challenges posed by the Great Famine, their determination and dedication led to the realisation of a significant but inadequate amount of funds. Additionally, the involvement of a Ladies' Committee and a Juvenile Association further contributed to the fundraising initiatives.



**Monument to Monsignor Yore
in Glasnevin Cemetery** (National
Inventory of Architectural Heritage)

The collaboration between Thomas McNamara and Monsignor Yore is a testament to their shared vision and unwavering commitment to addressing the educational needs of deaf children within the Catholic faith. Together, they laid the groundwork for the Catholic Schools for the deaf in Cabra, leaving a lasting impact on the lives of deaf individuals and their access to religious instruction and educational opportunities.

Dublin's two major educational institutions played instrumental roles in advancing deaf education during the 19th century. Their commitment to inclusive education, comprehensive curriculum, and nurturing environments provided deaf children with opportunities for growth and development. The dedication of their founders, educators, and staff contributed significantly to the progress of deaf education in Ireland.

Fee-paying schools:

Regrettably, establishing schools for the deaf in Cabra was not without financial implications. Fees were imposed on the students to sustain the operations of the schools and provide the necessary resources. This meant families had to bear the financial burden of educating their deaf children. The requirement of fees posed a significant challenge for many families, particularly those already facing economic difficulties during that period.

Despite the commendable efforts to provide education and support to deaf children, the need for fees limited accessibility to the schools. This financial constraint further emphasised the socio-economic disparities within the deaf community, as families with limited means found it challenging to afford the fees required for their children's education. The inability to attend the schools due to financial constraints resulted in many deaf children being unable to benefit from the educational opportunities provided by the various schools for deaf children.

The imposition of fees underscores the complex reality of establishing and maintaining educational institutions for marginalised groups during this time. While the schools for the deaf aimed to address a pressing

need, the requirement of fees created a barrier for many individuals and families, hindering their access to formal education and support services. It highlights the importance of considering the financial implications and ensuring equitable access when establishing educational initiatives for marginalised communities.

The fees led to a two-tier system within the schools for the deaf, which distinguished between public and private pupils. Private pupils had their school fees covered by their parents or wealthy benefactors, whereas public pupils had fees covered by the State.

State provision for the education of deaf children:

In 1854, the provision of state-sponsored education for deaf children was limited to a specific circumstance: those residing in workhouses. This provision was established under the Poor Relief (Ireland) Act 1843, Section 14. The Act granted the guardians of the workhouse the authority to send destitute poor children who were deaf, dumb, or blind, and under the age of 18, to approved institutions for their maintenance and education. This arrangement was contingent upon the consent of the parents or guardians of the child, with the associated costs of their education being covered by taxes collected under the Poor Law Act.

The decision by the authorities in Ireland to assume responsibility for the costly education of deaf and blind children within workhouses at this particular time was motivated by the realisation that without education, these individuals would remain perpetually reliant on workhouse assistance. By providing them with education, the State aimed to offer them the opportunity to improve their social standing and attain independence from the workhouse.

Furthermore, the State acknowledged that workhouses were ill-equipped to provide a comprehensive education to deaf and blind children. Hence, it was deemed necessary to send them to specialised institutions, such as deaf schools, where they could receive proper instruction in literacy, numeracy, and vocational training. Although this approach incurred

significant short-term expenses, it was anticipated that the long-term benefits, including savings to the State and increased productivity of the educated individuals, would outweigh the initial investment.

When these policies were implemented, there was a considerable population of deaf individuals residing in workhouses. Specific criteria were established to ensure fairness in the allocation of free education opportunities. These criteria included focusing on mute individuals aged between 8 and 18 and free from mental disabilities. Preference was given to those who were congenitally deaf rather than those who acquired deafness later in life.

The implementation of the Poor Law Act and its implications, as outlined above, had profound effects on the educational prospects of deaf individuals in Ireland and exerted a significant impact on their overall lives.

Despite these policies, the ultimate decision regarding the education of deaf children rested entirely with the board of guardians overseeing each workhouse. It was their discretion to determine whether a deaf child would be sent to school. Certain board members expressed concerns about the financial burden associated with education, leading them to prematurely withdraw children from schooling before they could complete their education. In some cases, even after completing their education, deaf children were promptly returned to the workhouse, thus negating the potential benefits of their educational endeavours.

Although there were instances where deaf children had caring families, it was mandated by policy that the child be placed under the guardianship of the workhouse, even if only for a brief period, to activate the policy's provisions. This requirement reflected the prevailing approach, ensuring that the workhouse maintained authority over the child's welfare, regardless of the familial support available.

These complexities in implementing the policies underscore the multifaceted nature of the educational experiences of deaf children within the workhouse system. The decisions made by the board of guardians profoundly impacted the trajectory of these children's lives, shaping their educational opportunities and, consequently, their future prospects.

Vocational opportunities:

The overwhelming majority of deaf children in Ireland during the mid-1850s had no access to formal education. A notable case highlighting the dire circumstances faced by deaf individuals who were educated is that of Mary Kenaly, a deaf woman who received her education at St. Mary's in Cabra. She was sent back to the workhouse after completing her education. Kenaly observed the painful reality that a significant number of older deaf individuals were entirely reliant on the compassion of others and lacked any form of independence. In response to this plight, she composed a letter on May 25, 1864, addressed to the board of the Catholic Institution of the Deaf and Dumb (CIDD) from Mallow Union Workhouse, as recorded in the CIDD Reports. In her letter, Kenaly advocated for the establishment of a vocational department within St. Mary's, Cabra, intending to enrol older deaf individuals and provide them with the opportunity to acquire various trades. These trades included embroidery, lacemaking, tailoring, shoemaking, farming, carpentry, saddle-making, and other similar occupations. Through her eloquent correspondence, Kenaly effectively underscored the necessity of such vocational training, emphasising the potential benefits it could offer to older members of the deaf community.



St. Mary's Vocational Department (1902)
(Courtesy of Deaf Heritage Centre)

This excerpt from Kenaly's letter poignantly highlights how societal attitudes, particularly those held by family members, hindered deaf individuals, particularly women, from attaining complete independence.

"I am glad to tell you that my little deaf and dumb sister, Honora, is to go to school in Cabra in a few days. I hope she will be diligent at her studies, and that when she has completed her education she will get a trade, in order that she may not be obliged to come to the Poor-house like me. My mother is here too; she has the care of the sick men in the hospital, and she is esteemed by everyone because she is so good. She wishes to get a situation in a respectable family and to leave me here in the care of the matron, who is very kind to me. I am very contented now, thank God, yet I would be glad to get a trade or to go to service, but my mother will not allow me; she says that I am better off where I am, that the world is very wicked, and that she does not know of any place near this to which she would let me go. I am sorry that so many of my dear companions are in the Poor-house. I wish that trades would be given at St. Mary's as St. Joseph's; then the girls would be able to support themselves as well as the boys..."

During the 1860s, the Vocational Department was established at St. Mary's, coinciding with a significant development. Older girls and women, ranging from 18 to their 40s, and even one woman in her 60s, were directed to the workroom to learn various trades. This initiative proved highly successful, particularly in lacework, where the deaf girls and women at St. Mary's gained a strong reputation for their exceptional Point Lace. Their work became well-known for its quality, leading to a high demand and a busy workload for the lace workers. Notably, Lady Aberdeen, wife of the former viceroy of Ireland and founder of the Irish Industries Association, recognised the importance of their craftsmanship. In 1893, she brought a delegation of deaf lace workers from St. Mary's to the Chicago World Fair, where they received great acclaim.



Lady Ishbel Aberdeen 1899
Wikimedia Commons

The impact of the changeover to the Irish Free State on deaf education:

Education of deaf people continued until the formation of the Irish Free State in the early 1920s, bringing about significant changes in various aspects of Irish society, including education. The impact of the Famine, economic difficulties and Irish Free State formation on admissions to Cabra schools during this period is evident. It highlighted the challenges faced by deaf schools in providing education and support to deaf children, the response of local authorities to their needs, and the financial constraints experienced by the institutions.

In the 1920s, the Catholic Institution of the Deaf and Dumb faced difficulties obtaining contributions from County Boards of Health to care for deaf children. Local authorities displayed hesitancy in providing financial support unless cases involved extreme destitution. This reluctance resulted in a lack of accessible education and training for deaf children, exacerbating their social and educational challenges.

To address this issue, a contingent from the Catholic Institution of the Deaf and Dumb and the Claremont Institution met with the Minister for Local Government and Public Health. During the meeting, the Minister explained the provisions of County schemes, which empowered local authorities to offer relief and support to impoverished individuals in institutions for deaf people. Recognising the importance of education and training for deaf children, the Minister entrusted the decision of granting relief or assistance to the discretion of local authorities.

Statistical data revealed a significant number of deaf people in Ireland, underscoring the critical role played by the Cabra Institute in educating and supporting these individuals. The institute was renowned for its commitment to providing quality education and care for deaf children. However, its financial challenges hindered its ability to fulfil its mission effectively.

The financial difficulties encountered by the deaf schools were compounded by some County Councils' refusal to sanction payments when parents could not contribute financially. This situation placed an additional burden on the schools, making it harder to maintain the quality of education and support they offered their students.

To address disputes arising from payment issues, an appeals process was established. This process allowed parties to challenge surcharges imposed by auditors, ensuring a fair evaluation of the situation. The introduction of this mechanism aimed to protect the interests of the institution and the well-being of the deaf children it served.

The formation of the Irish Free State, with the consequent economic difficulties and famine, significantly impacted admissions to deaf schools in the 1920s. The deaf schools faced challenges securing contributions from local authorities, resulting in limited access to education and training for deaf children. However, government efforts to provide relief and support through County schemes offered some respite.



St. Joseph's in 1929. W.T. Cosgrave visiting the tailoring department
(Courtesy of Deaf Heritage Centre)

The deaf schools' role in educating and supporting deaf individuals was crucial, but financial challenges and payment disputes with County Councils posed obstacles. The appeals process helped ensure fair evaluations of financial matters. Despite these challenges, the Department recognised the importance of deaf schools and remained committed to their successes as an invaluable asset to the nation.

Afterwards:

After overcoming initial funding challenges, the deaf schools in Dublin demonstrated adaptability in response to the changing landscape. One notable development was the introduction of oralism as a policy, wherein deaf children learned to lipread and speak. This approach aimed to provide students with additional means of communication and enhance their integration into the wider society.



The early school at St. Joseph's, Cabra
(Courtesy of Deaf Heritage Centre)

The Claremont school, one of the deaf schools in Dublin, faced the need for relocation before eventually closing its doors in 1979. Despite these challenges, the two Cabra schools, operated by the Catholic Institute for the Deaf (CID), continued their mission of educating deaf students and offering State examinations.

As the years went by, the number of students attending these schools began to decline. In 2016, in response to this trend and to optimise resources, the two schools merged, giving rise to the Holy Family School for the Deaf. This consolidation aimed to create a more efficient and sustainable institution while maintaining the schools' commitment to empowering deaf individuals through education.



St. Mary's Dominican Convent, Cabra
(Courtesy of Deaf Heritage Centre)

The evolution of these schools highlights their resilience in providing quality education amidst changing circumstances. By embracing oralism and other innovative approaches, the schools sought to ensure their students had the tools to succeed in a hearing-dominated world. Despite the challenges they faced, the schools in Dublin remained dedicated to empowering deaf individuals and adapting to the needs of their students.

Further reading:

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- Josephine O'Leary and Alvean E. Jones (Eds.) *Through the Arch: St. Mary's School for Deaf Girls : remembering 170 years, 1846-2016*. St. Mary's Deaf Heritage (2017).
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Mount Argus Brick
(Courtesy of John Buckley)

Dolphin's Barn Brickworks

**Catherine Scuffil, Historian in Residence
for Dublin South City areas**

The fortunes of the Dolphin's Barn Brick Company (DBBC) were indelibly linked to Dublin's building improvements in the late 1800s and the expansion of the city at that time. In an ultimate ironic twist, the demanding market forces underpinning the construction business were also to hold elements of the eventual demise and downfall of this company.

In the late 1800s a new emphasis was placed on building, residential and otherwise, especially as the Dublin townships competed to raise their communities' living standards. A number of small, independent brick manufacturers emerged on the city outskirts, with several located in the Dolphin's Barn and Harold's Cross areas. In 1892, the Domville Estate auctioned some lands in these areas, noting that they 'were believed to have an inexhaustible supply of brick clay, which, from its proximity to Dublin City is of great value'.

Dolphin's Barn, at this time, was on the city outskirts, uniquely linking the urban and rural county. The brickworks in the area quickly became local landmarks. In 1905, newspapers reported on the Donore Harriers individual cross-country run, which met at Dolphin's Barn, took to the brickwork's fields, crossed to the Naas Road, Lansdowne Valley, and Drimnagh Castle, halting at Conway's Halfway House before returning to Dolphin's Barn Bridge. Within five years of its existence, the Mount Argus Brickworks changed its name to the Dublin Brick and Tile Company and was noted for producing a grey/yellow coloured brick, each stamped 'Mount Argus'.

By 1902, six million bricks were produced annually with the company regarded as “a business of big proportions”. A former local resident described the scene in the 1930s:

“Further in the Dark Lanes [today Sundrive Road] were galvanised huts on the right-hand side going towards Kimmage in which two families lived. The huts faced the ramparts at Mount Argus which was hilly terrain. An old brickworks quarry with obsolete machinery was sited here”.

The landmark chimney was demolished by Davey Frame and Company Ringsend when the brickworks in the area consolidated their business in the 1930s.

The most famous brickworks in the area were the Dolphin’s Barn Brick Company (DBBC) situated on the Crumlin Road, with operations conducted on the site of a former cattle farm known as Grovefield Farm, Dolphin’s Barn. Established in 1896, business continued until 1945 with mixed fortunes through some of the most challenging times for commercial activity in Ireland. Directors included John Good, building contractor; Alex Ward, former director of Aston Hall brick/coal company in the UK; WJA Fox and J. Budd Doyle, both directors of the Central Hotel; the latter also being a director of Todd Burns Ltd. Peter Cassidy, the brickworks manager lived at Grovefield Villa nearby.

Initially DBBC performed exceptionally well, stock remained firm with generous dividends being paid to shareholders, a trend that continued for a number of years. Trading profits were regularly reported as ‘up’, causing the Chairman to describe the company as a ‘perfect marvel’. The business initially grew rapidly as production matched the accelerating construction activity in Victorian/Edwardian Dublin. Newspapers reported that “progress has been such as to necessitate, some time back, the duplication of the original plant with a corresponding increase in the number of hands employed ... any brickmaking demand made will be met”.

DBBC had a great business reputation and was renowned for producing good quality bricks. They were of a distinctive colour (biscuit yellow) with a 'frog' in the centre, on which the words 'Dolphin's Barn' or later, 'DBC' – representing a name change to Dublin Brick Company - were impressed.

Dolphin's Barn Brick
(Courtesy of
John Buckley)



**DBC Brick Wall,
Crumlin Road**
(Courtesy of
John Buckley)

The bricks were considered an ordinary building style, similar to old County Dublin stock used for houses in areas like Leeson Street and Fitzwilliam Square. When the Jesuit residence on Gardiner Street was being enlarged in 1904, the brick made at Dolphin's Barn was selected as an appropriate match.

The brickworks' extensive lands were located at the present-day Crumlin Shopping Centre and eventually extended to the first lock, Grand Canal at Suir Bridge. A light railway traversed the works carrying clay and bricks for onward transportation to the country by barge. Located about a mile from the then rural Crumlin and Inchicore villages where many employees lived, there was the additional advantage of cheap labour from the nearby Liberties. Sites were often acquired and resold as clay extraction continued and as business fluctuated. In 1903 the company spent £230 acquiring additional land and advertised the sale of 35 acres of 'superior grassland, well watered and fenced' two years later, during a strike and continuing depression in the building trade. The extensive clay pits extended from the Crumlin Road to the Iveagh Grounds and were still in active use as late as 1944.

The Brickworks was a hugely important and valuable industrial asset to Dolphin's Barn with nearly all its employees living locally. Many families were represented on the workforce by more than one member. A local tale related that there were so many workers, when bricks were required for buildings on the Curragh, Kildare, employees simply lined the route, passing bricks to one another. Following a fire at Todd Burns store in 1902 DBBC employees subscribed over £5.00 towards the staff benefit fund - the two companies shared a director in Mr. J. Budd-Doyle. In 1904, a DBBC trade float took part in the Gaelic League Irish language procession through Dublin and the same year, expenditure on labour amounted to over £7,000. The majority of employees were adult males, with some females also employed, all earning between £1.00 to £2.00 weekly. Working clothes consisted of sack-aprons and wooden clogs. As the various processes of brickmaking called for no special technical skill and the trade was an easy acquirement, pay was considered fair, girls earned 9s-10s per week and boys 9s-12s. In addition, about 120

independent carters were engaged all year round to transport finished bricks; of these, at least 90 were men, the remainder primarily being boys.

The work could be hazardous. In 1906 it was reported that Patrick O'Connor, brickworks employee, of Tenter's Lane, Cork Street, suffered a fractured skull when he was stooping under belting to scrape out ashes when the heavy machinery collapsed. On another occasion Thomas Kirwan, of Marrowbone Lane was taken to hospital with head and hip injuries acquired when, owing to heavy rains, there was a fall of sodden clay.

An article in the *Irish Builder & Engineer* reported (1903) that the Leinster Paper Mills, Clondalkin, St. Peter's Church, Phibsborough and O'Connell Schools, Richmond Road - to name a few - were constructed of Dolphin's Barn brick. By 1904 the output of eight million bricks were all used in Dublin and environs with Guinness Trust Buildings and the Blackrock cottage development scheme taking a large share. Parkview Cottages, James Street were described as being 'built with the best Dolphin's Barn bricks'. The Blackrock township post office was also built with Dolphin's Barn stock.

After rapid growth in the early years, outside economic forces eventually affected the company. In 1912 it was proposed to amalgamate the works at Mount Argus and Dolphin's Barn and combine with the Rathnew Brick Company. The new entity was called the Dublin Brick Company Limited with the brand name 'Dolphin's Barn' retained. The Directors now also included Wallace brothers, Jackson, Hugh and Norman, established coal and builders merchants from Blackrock. The general Dolphin's Barn area also showed evidence of decline. Letters to *The Irish Times* (1914) reported that the road from the brickworks to tramlines at Dolphin's Barn was in a deplorable state. Despite a few stones being put in the larger holes at Christmas, a Lt. Col. St Lawrence-Moore (Naas) expected his vehicles' springs to give way when travelling the road.

The brickworks featured regularly in witness statements of those involved in the 1916 Rising. It served as a training ground, arms dump and on occasions, stationery and other office facilities were made available to the Irish Volunteers. One event, key to the events of the Rising is worth noting. On 19 June, 1916, James Connolly left Liberty Hall around lunchtime. He

did not say where he was going, and it would be three full days before he was seen again. His absence was a cause of great concern to his colleagues, who feared he had been kidnapped. Whilst Connolly never accounted for what actually occurred during this time, it is now generally believed that he had been collected by two IRB members, possibly Sean MacDiarmada and Eamonn Ceannt and brought to a premises in the Dolphin's Barn Brickworks to meet with other members of the Military Council. Some sources suggest that the premises used was the home of Peter Cassidy, the brickworks' manager who was sympathetic to the Irish cause. The objective of the meeting was to get Connolly to agree to the Irish Citizen's Army joining with the volunteers for the Easter Rising.

The troubled times of 1920's Dublin extended to the brickworks. There were reports of Fianna Boys drilling and exercising in the grounds with company parades taking place on many occasions. The brickworks were regularly raided by Crown Forces looking for men and arms. In December 1922, four armed men in a Ford motor car arrived at the brickworks and "at the point of a revolver stole a sum of about £200.00 intended to pay the wages of the workmen", presumably the Christmas bonuses and salaries. The works closed for eight months in 1921 due to slack trade with 300-500 workmen 'thrown out of employment'. Advertisements encouraged people to support local industry by using Dolphin's Barn bricks, described as 'goods equal to the best anywhere'. The unemployment situation was raised with the city council who were asked to purchase one million bricks for houses already approved at planning, thus allowing DBBC 'open up furnaces and keep them going'. DBBC provided bricks for the construction of 357 houses at the Fairbrothers' Fields, the Tenters, the following year.

The year 1927 proved a difficult one, despite a contract for the out-patients department at St. Ultan's hospital. Concrete as a building material was emerging as a source of competition, prompting DBBC to advertise bricks 'as reduced in cost' and make an application to reduce share value from £1 to 15s. At this time, the Mount Argus brickworks was disposed of and the second kiln at Dolphin's Barn was closed down. The following year, the company was marginally in profit and paid 1 percent dividend. Another

important State contract was obtained in 1929 with the construction of the new Radio Éireann Studios at the GPO Henry Street.

A young nun at the then 'new' Loreto Convent (1930) gives an insight into the significant impact of DBBC on the local landscape. "Beyond Herberton Lane, an extensive area was occupied by the buildings and lands of the Dolphin's Barn Brick Company. At night, the eerie glow from the kilns would light up the sky for miles around". The geography of the brickworks provided a wonderland for local children. Eamonn MacThomais in *Me Jewel and Darlin' Dublin* illustrates this when describing his boyhood planning of an unscheduled school day off, writing "Where are we going to hide our schoolbags? What about the Robbers Den or the tunnels in the brickworks? No, the last time we hid them there we couldn't remember which tunnel we put them in." Much of the area was still rural farmland with DBBC advertising the letting of grazing land for eleven months in February 1930.

In July 1933, a strike involving 90 workers took place at the Brickworks with the works only reopening the following October after intensive union meetings at the Connolly Hall in Thomas Street. DBBC anticipated business expansion and increasing its workforce at this time, as the Free State proposed a number of large-scale housing schemes. It was also in dispute regarding brick costs with Dublin Corporation who were building flats at Cook Street using a combination of Dolphin's Barn and Courtown brick. At a resulting Commission of Inquiry, it emerged that DBBC charged 57s 6d per 1,000 but offered no reduction on the order of two million bricks. When contacted about the discount, DBBC advised that it was more likely to be a rise in brick costs of 5s per 1,000!

At this time, DBBC employed 140 workers, manufactured 9 million bricks annually, and had recently acquired an additional 28 acres of land for £250 with the life of the works estimated at about 40 years. However, owing to a lack of demand, the works were later closed for several months and up to 100 workers were regularly out of work with no immediate improvement expected.



Cook Street Flats

(Courtesy of John Buckley)



**Advertisement for
Concrete Products of
Ireland**

(Courtesy Irish
Newspaper Archives)

DBBC also diversified into concrete production, advertising – ‘Concrete Products of Ireland – with its headquarters at Dolphin’s Barn - specialises in the manufacture of concrete bricks and tiles. Those using this material are more than satisfied with the results’.

Bricks continued to be used for significant building schemes with houses at St. Mobhi Road, Glasnevin advertised as containing Dolphin’s Barn stock. The Regal Ballroom at Hawkins Street used Dolphin’s Barn bricks together with some (presumably the old county stock) bricks that had been saved from the Theatre Royal. A new Dublin United Tramway Company transformer at Hatch Street, together with partition walls in Fry’s and Company premises, Mullingar Cathedral and the extension to Whitefriar Street School all used Dolphin’s Barn brick in construction.

However, in an ironic twist, the large-scale building development around Dublin, the source of the proposed DBBC expansion, together with its proximity to Dublin City, was also to sow the seeds of the company’s ultimate demise. For the first time in its existence, DBBC objected to large scale building development. Dublin Corporation’s proposed £895,000 Drimnagh housing scheme would compulsorily acquire much of DBBC’s 112 acres of land holding. If the scheme went ahead, nothing would be left of the brickworks except one kiln and a few offices. It would cost £40,000 to relocate the works. The Company asked Dublin Corporation to guarantee that they did not intend to take over the remainder of the lands and ultimately exterminate their business.

Within five years of the announcement of the death of long-time Chairman of the brickworks, Mr. Good (1941), Hamilton and Hamilton Auctioneers advertised that the Dublin Brick Company, having ceased production, wished to auction its entire equipment including its kiln flues and rail sleepers. As a finale, the last buildings to be built of Dolphin’s Barn brick are a mid-terrace of about twenty residences on Mourne Road, Drimnagh, near Brickfields Park. The rest of the Drimnagh housing scheme ultimately covered much of the former brickworks lands.



**Moracrete
Paving Slab**
(Courtesy John
Buckley)

Moracrete Limited who manufactured concrete blocks, paving slabs and pipes continued operations at part of the site until the 1970s and also constructed Moracrete cottages, (1936 & 1950) for their operatives on part of the old works. The final link with brickworks ceased when Moracrete closed, the site cleared, and the Crumlin Shopping Centre was constructed, opening for business in 1975.

Examples of significant buildings constructed using Dolphin's Barn brick include the fire stations at Dorset Street and Buckingham Street, Trinity College Graduates' Memorial Building, nurses' homes in the Mater, Dr. Steevens', Adelaide and Cork Street hospitals, National Gallery of Ireland, Masonic Hall, Molesworth Street and Masonic Boys School in Clonskeagh. The best example of local Dolphin's Barn buildings is the John Player & Sons building on the South Circular Road. St. Mary's Church of Ireland in Crumlin Village (1942) is reputed to be the last public building constructed with this material. With the demolition of Seezers' shop in Dolphin's Barn Street (1980) locals saw the distinctive impressed bricks in the rubble, which raised many memories. Today, Dolphin's Barn bricks are advertised as salvage on the internet; and are often retrieved from skips for use as garden/house features and on occasion as ornaments and candle holders!

Dolphin's Barn Brick Company's legacy is undoubtedly the buildings in Dublin and beyond as well as the placenames of Brickfield Drive/Park and Moracrete Cottages Crumlin Rd., to quote its chairman (1904): 'it was a perfect marvel'.

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**Nineteenth century map of Dublin from
the Ordnance Survey Office**
(Courtesy of Dublin City Library and Archive)

Responses to the housing crisis in late nineteenth century Dublin

Mary Muldowney, Historian in Residence
for Dublin Central

It is well known that Dublin at the end of the nineteenth century was home to some of the worst slums in Europe, alongside some of the wealthiest areas. The city was expanding and developing suburbs and transport systems that carried large numbers of the better off members of the population out of the overcrowded city centre areas. Late nineteenth century Dublin also experienced a certain amount of economic stagnation. The occupational statistics in the Census population reports show steadily falling employment in the manufacturing industry. The port of Dublin had grown rapidly in the middle decades of the century, reflecting the boost to trade provided by the railways, which connected parts of the country to Dublin in ways that had not previously been possible. However, from the late 1870s the expansion had slowed down significantly and employment prospects for the city's working class were poor, being concentrated in the unskilled casual sectors rather than in the skilled manufacturing industry. This chapter will outline some of the organisations who worked in the final decades of the nineteenth century to remedy the housing situation for the poor of the city.

The Royal Commission upon the Sewerage and Drainage of Dublin enquired into the condition of the city's tenement houses in 1879. They reported that 9,760 houses were occupied as dwellings let in tenements and that of these, 2,300, occupied by about 30,000 persons, were in a condition unfit for habitation. The Commission recommended the gradual closing of the worst houses and the supervision and daily regulation of the others. A

further Royal Commission on the Houses of the Working Classes, which was convened in 1885, confirmed the earlier findings. The Registrar-General, Dr. Grimshaw, published a report in the *Dublin Journal of Medical Science* in July 1885. He focussed on the city's byelaws and condemned the Corporation for lowering the standards for housing so as to give the approval of the Sanitary Authority to unsanitary conditions. The Census of 1891 showed that the number of families occupying fourth class accommodation (the worst sort) was 37.3 per cent of the total, representing 90,000 people.

Under the pressure of poverty throughout Dublin, the areas in which poor people were concentrated had been going steadily downhill in the course of the nineteenth century. Many of the previously fine houses that had been built during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were gradually turned into tenements. Following the Act of Union in 1801, some of the wealthy left their houses to be run by agents, who frequently became profiteering landlords and converted the once large rooms of the houses into many small rooms, where they packed in as many poor families as they could. Large numbers of these families had arrived in the city seeking refuge from the Great Hunger, the famine which devastated parts of Ireland between 1845 and 1849. Such people had no choice but to deal with slum landlords when they were seeking shelter.



Letter to the Editor, *Evening Herald*, 12 February 1897, p. 3
(Courtesy of Irish Newspaper Archive Online)

Some of the destitute were forced into begging or stealing to survive. Some women resorted to prostitution to feed their children and to pay the high rents. The alternative was to risk ending up in the Workhouse, which was a fear that haunted many low income people, especially those nearing destitution. This was a fear that resonated widely, because the fear of the workhouse was not confined to Ireland. Dublin may have had the worst slums in Europe but the major cities of Victorian Britain had their share of extreme poverty, overcrowded tenements and associated mortality rates. Businessman, politician and social reformer Charles Dawson wrote several papers on the issue in the later decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, before his death in 1917. His research showed that while Dublin's need for healthy buildings exceeded that of British cities with similar populations, such as Bradford in England and Glasgow in Scotland, the cost of replacing them was over forty per cent higher in Dublin. Since the tenement buildings were in such poor condition, however, it would be pointless buying them up in order to refurbish them; slum clearance was the best solution with new buildings being erected on reclaimed land.

The connection between housing conditions and public health had begun to be recognised as early as the middle of the nineteenth century. There were advances being made in so-called 'sanitary science' which focussed on clearing human and other waste and arranging for a supply of fresh, clean water to be available to most citizens, especially those living in the overcrowded urban areas. Public health in Dublin had long been a source of concern, not least because of the rate of fatalities caused by frequent epidemics in the course of the nineteenth century. Ignorance of the causes of most of these diseases increased the fears of the population and did nothing to reduce the horrific outcomes.

In 1867, Dr. Charles Cameron, the City Analyst and Chief Medical Officer, wrote a report on the dangerous state of the many unregulated abattoirs in the city area, which he identified as contributing to the causes of high mortality in the city:

The vital statistics collected by the Registrar General show that the average duration of human life is much longer in rural districts than in large towns. ... This high mortality in towns as compared with the country is not the result of any marked difference in the quality of the food used by the urban and rural populations; it is due chiefly to the following causes. 1. Imperfect sewerage; 2. Vitiating air—the result of deficient ventilation and of great density of population; 3. Partial exclusion of direct sunlight; 4. Impure water; 5. Noxious gases, vapours, and other volatile matters emitted from gasworks, manufactories, bone boiling places, tan-yards, slaughterhouses, &c.

There are certain sanitary improvements which, if effected, would not eventually prove pecuniary losses, but, on the contrary, most probably would afford very profitable results. In this latter class of sanitary improvements may be placed the plan of providing healthful and decent domestic accommodation for the poorer classes now being carried out by the Dublin Industrial Tenements Company. Another of these paying improvements, as we may term them, would be the establishment of public abattoirs in lieu of the numerous ill-kept slaughterhouses which stud the city.

Dr. Cameron and the Dublin Sanitary Authority were responsible for many public health measures in the final years of the nineteenth century that significantly improved the survival rates of residents of the city's poorer areas.

The reassurance in Dr. Cameron's report on the value of improved sanitation is a reminder that the primary concern of the city's local authorities at the time tended to be about cost but Dublin Corporation was beginning to recognise that it would be cheaper and more effective to build new homes for those who could not afford the rents of the private owners than to try to persuade landlords to refurbish them. However, progress was inconsistent and initially insufficient attention was paid to housing quality to make any significant change in the housing conditions. The Census reports in the second half of the nineteenth century (1851 to 1891) show that there was very little improvement in housing quality in the intercensal periods.



Thomas Fitzpatrick cartoon for *The Lepraean*
 (Courtesy of Dublin City Library and Archives)

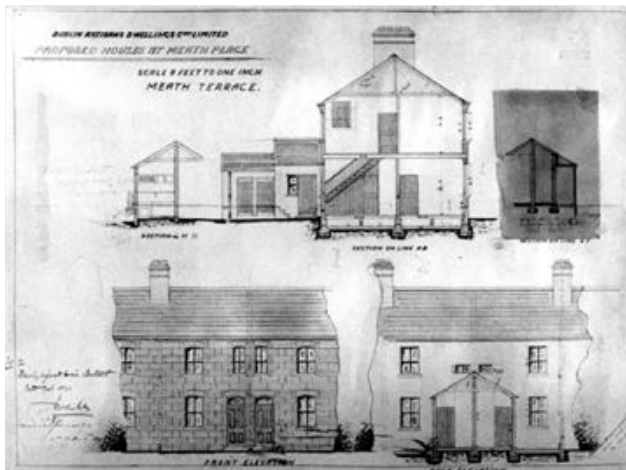
The first piece of housing legislation relating specifically to Ireland was the Labouring Classes (Lodging Houses and Dwellings) Act of 1866. The Act made loans available to private companies through the Board of Works and led to the creation in 1867 of the short-lived Dublin Industrial Tenements Company (ITC). The ITC provided new model dwellings of fifty apartments, a laundry and other facilities at South Earl Street, Dublin. However, even the smallest of the houses were too expensive for low paid workers, and the houses were rented to the better-paid artisans. These new model dwellings were a poor start to the working class housing movement, as many degenerated into slums. Only £190,000 was advanced by the Board of Works over a period of twenty years, meaning the Act had only minimal impact on the housing problem.

Dublin was a city of contrasts. For all the terrible conditions in the slums, there was also prosperity, and not just in the wealthiest districts. As Dublin's city centre became more and more overcrowded and squalid, the upper classes abandoned their Georgian townhouses for country retreats while the middle classes headed for homes in the newer Victorian suburbs of Ballsbridge, Rathgar, Rathmines and Dún Laoghaire on the south side of the River Liffey. The Drumcondra, Clonliffe, and Glasnevin Township Act 1878 was a local act of the Westminster Parliament sponsored by businessmen in Drumcondra to create a township called Drumcondra, Clonliffe, and Glasnevin, governed by town commissioners.

In 1875 the Artisans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement Act, known as the Cross Act, was extended to Ireland from Britain. This legislation permitted urban authorities to clear unhealthy areas within towns by means of government loans. The theory was that once cleared, the land would then be leased to private companies for the construction of new dwellings. The overall impact was as ineffectual as the 1866 legislation, as only £81,000 was borrowed under its terms and no schemes were initiated after 1885. For instance, under the Cross Act, Dublin Corporation's duty was confined to the acquisition of the property, removing the buildings and creating the infrastructure by forming the streets, paving them and installing sewers. It needed the consent of the Local Government Board to undertake its own building schemes and they would be subject to the requirement to sell off the dwellings within three years.

A number of philanthropic efforts to provide housing took place in the late nineteenth century in Dublin. Their innovative schemes paved the way for a wider provision of urban social housing. While there were some charitable institutions housing homeless people, the provision of housing for low income households attracted greater public and private financial backing towards the end of the century. Charitable trusts attempted to show that private enterprise could provide affordable and good quality housing for the working classes.

The Dublin Artisans Dwellings Company (DADC) was set up in 1876 by the city's business elite, and was run as an enterprise, paying a dividend of four to five per cent to shareholders. The DADC included some members of the Dublin Sanitary Association. The Company also received State assistance in terms of subsidised sites and public loans at good rates. Sites that were already cleared by Dublin Corporation under the Public Health Acts and the Artisans and Labourers Act of 1875 were then leased to the company and red brick one-story cottages and two-story houses were built. The DADC built 3,600 dwellings and some shops, and was the major provider of new working-class dwellings. Two references were required before a tenant could occupy a building; the tenant also had to be in steady employment. Rents ranged from three shillings and sixpence to seven shillings and sixpence and the company's first report states that it was working on thoroughly sound commercial principles and not as a charitable undertaking. By 1907 there were 2,961 dwellings housing 2,884 families (the number of individuals housed being 13,330) with a rental income for the year of £40,450. Each house had a water supply, a yard and water closet.



**House design for
the Dublin Artisans
Dwellings Company
Limited**

(Courtesy of Dublin City
Library and Archives)

In July 1876 Dublin's first medical officer for public health Dr. Edward Mapother carried out a detailed survey of the area extending from Queen's Street to West Liffey Street. He found that without exception the back premises of all of these houses were in a 'rotten state' and 'utterly incapable of repair'. His report concluded that there was no district in the city more deserving of working-class accommodation but it also mentioned that the inclusion of new shops in the development would provide 'a highly remunerative outlay'. The economic viability of the project was clearly a major priority for the members of the Corporation. As we know from the 1913 *Report of the Departmental Committee into the Housing Conditions of the Working Classes in the City of Dublin* some decades later, following the collapse of the Church Street tenements, a significant number of the Councillors were themselves owners of tenement buildings and slum landlords.



John Cooke's photograph of Magenniss's Court, off Townsend Street for the Dublin Corporation Inquiry, 1914

(Courtesy of Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland. Accessible through Dublin City Library and Archives)

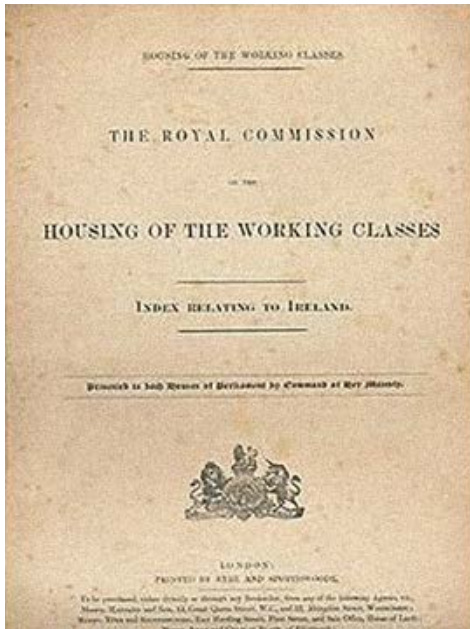
Historian Frank Cullen linked the high death rates in Dublin's central areas to the fall in population numbers in the second half of the nineteenth century. Table 1 shows the demographic changes in those decades, as recorded by the Census. Cullen pointed out that including the suburbs did not make much difference to the population figures. There was a larger rise between 1891 and 1901 which may have been because of the improved availability of housing and work as a result of the reforms that were beginning to take hold.

Table 1: Population of Dublin in each Census year from 1851 to 1901

Year	Males	Females	Total	Percentage change from previous decade
1851	199,181	139,188	258,369	
1861	118,283	136,525	254,808	-3,561 (-1.4 %)
1871	115,618	130,708	246,326	-8,8382 (-3.3%)
1881	119,806	129,796	249,602	+3,276 (+1.3%)
1891	117,503	127,498	245,001	-4,601 (-1.8%)
1901	140,388	150,250	290,638	+45,637 (+18.6%)

Source: General Reports of the Census of Ireland 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901

In a paper read to the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society in March 1901, Charles Dawson outlined the conditions in which the 'Weekly Wage Classes' were forced to live. He reviewed some of the efforts that had been made in the previous decades, quoted the recommendations of various committees set up to solve the problems. Dawson referred to the recommendation of the Vice-Regal Committee in 1900 'that in tenement houses water should be laid on each floor, and separate sanitary accommodation be provided for at least every two families'.



The Royal Commission of the Housing of the Working Classes, Index Relating to Ireland, 1885
(Courtesy of ABE Books)

Dawson was a member of the Dublin Artisans Dwellings Company (DADC) and had also been a member of the Dublin Sanitary Authority. He pointed out that providing such services would be extremely costly and referred to the 1885 Report of the Royal Commission in London which suggested that the Treasury might lend the deposits in the Post Office Savings Bank for the purpose of erecting labourers' dwellings at a rate of interest little above what was paid on the deposits. Dawson drew attention to the status of different social classes in Dublin, where the 'artisan, general service class and Workhouse inmates' (252,546) outnumbered the 'professional, independent and middle class' (97,048) by 160 per cent. This meant that the rates paid to Dublin Corporation by homeowners would be insufficient to cover the building of what is now known as 'social housing', which was Dawson's solution to the appalling housing conditions in parts of the city.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a succession of major philanthropic trusts were set up in Britain and Ireland with large benefactions from wealthy industrialists. In Dublin, the Iveagh Trust



Cabinet card of Charles Dawson
(Courtesy of Digital Repository of Ireland)

purchased significant areas of slums in the centre of the city, and provided a large-scale housing project in the Liberties, which still exists today. The Trust also developed the famous Iveagh Hostel, Baths and Market. Although established by Church of Ireland trustees, the Trust did not discriminate in its allocations of housing and targeted its housing at the poorest classes, setting an upper income limit for residents. The management principles of the Iveagh Trust reflect many of those developed by the early pioneers of social housing, with its system of resident caretakers, tenant involvement and consultation, personal contact between managers and tenants and weekly personal rent payments.

Dublin Corporation had also begun to provide housing, using the Labouring Classes Act of 1866 as the basis for clearing derelict buildings in the city centre areas, such as Benburb Street, Dorset Street and Blessington Street. The Corporation was also beginning to acknowledge the importance of suburbanisation as a solution to the housing problems of the city centre. The outward movement to the suburbs was assisted by the growth in public transport, linking the centre city areas with the new developments of buses, trams and trains. The horse-drawn omnibus began to appear on Dublin's streets in the mid-century. They made it possible for people with lower incomes not to have to live within walking distance of their employment, as they were a cheap form of transport.

According to transport historian Michael Barry, it was not until February 1872 before the first Dublin horse tram appeared, running between College Green and Garville Avenue in Rathgar. They ran on steel wheels and were pulled by two horses along the rail lines in the street. They provided a much smoother ride than the buses and because they were run by private companies, they aimed their business at a mainly middle-class clientele, who could afford to pay higher fares. Eventually, the tram network spread northwards as well as south, contributing to the development of Drumcondra and Clontarf in particular.



Bull Alley in the 21st century

(Courtesy of Iveagh Trust and Dublin City Council Film Office)

The early decades of the twentieth century witnessed the building of innovative new housing schemes by Dublin Corporation. The problem of Dublin's slums took many more years to resolve, and there were tenement collapses as late as 1963, but there were also lessons learned from earlier successes and failures which contributed to the development of affordable social housing in many areas of the city.

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Women working on a farm colony in Killester during the First World War on land that had been leased to Sir Henry McLaughlin and on which the houses for First World War veterans were subsequently built
(Courtesy of Killester Garden Village Committee)

'Homes for Heroes' – The Killester Housing Scheme for First World War Veterans

Cormac Moore, Historian in Residence
for Dublin North Central

In 1923, First World War veterans and their families moved into a new housing scheme just completed in Killester in County Dublin. It was the largest such development in Ireland, devised by the British government to provide 'Homes for Heroes' and was completed after independence was realised for twenty-six counties in 1922. This chapter looks at how the scheme came about in Killester and the challenges faced by the people who moved there.

Up to 200,000 men from Ireland fought during the First World War, with estimations that anywhere between 40,000 and 50,000 of those lost their lives during the four-year-long conflict. People were motivated to enlist for political reasons; for nationalists, to help in the cause for Home Rule; and for unionists, to show their loyalty to the Empire. Others joined to help because of Belgium's plight and others were convinced by their colleagues and peers to join the colours. Many joined for economic reasons. High pay and strong financial security offered to their families were large incentives for many, many of whom had been struggling to provide housing for themselves and their families before the war began.

As there is today, there was a large housing crisis in Ireland at the start of the twentieth century. The First World War made matters worse by causing the cancellation of both public and private housing schemes then underway as well as reducing drastically the availability of labour and materials, with people and goods then becoming the almost total preserve of the war economy.

The Ireland to which ex-servicemen returned after Armistice Day in November 1918 was drastically changed from the Ireland many of them left in late 1914, with the Sinn Féin party seeking total independence from Britain. Its ascendancy was illustrated through its spectacular breakthrough election of 1918, winning 73 of the 105 Irish seats in Westminster.

Sinn Féin was partly successful in the 1918 General Election due to its opposition to conscription in the spring of 1918, even though most strains of Irish life were opposed to conscription, including the Irish Parliamentary Party, the labour movement and the Catholic Church. Thwarted in its efforts to introduce conscription into Ireland and still needing thousands of Irish volunteers to help push back the German offensive on the western front, the British government attempted to enlist people through attractive offers of housing. The newly appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord John French made such an offer in June 1918, stating, 'We recognize that men who come forward and fight for their motherland are entitled to share in all that their motherland can offer. Steps are, therefore, being taken to ensure, as far as possible, that land shall be available for men who have fought for their country, and the necessary legislative measure is now under consideration'.

With thousands of demobilised soldiers returning, in times of fervent revolutionary feelings, not just in Ireland, but throughout Europe and beyond, David Lloyd George's British government felt it was prudent to 'return soldiers as quickly as possible to stable civilian life'. One way of providing such stability was through the provision of housing for ex-servicemen, 'Homes for Heroes'. Schemes were introduced in England and Wales, Scotland and in Ireland. In 1919, the Irish Land (Provision for Sailors and Soldiers) Bill made its way through Westminster, receiving the royal assent on 23 December 1919.

Dáil Éireann and Sinn Féin's counter-government was vehemently opposed to the compulsory purchase of land for ex-servicemen as were many local authorities, the majority being controlled by Sinn Féin following local elections in 1920. This was illustrated in efforts by Dublin Corporation to prevent the use of land in Killester to house ex-servicemen.

Central to the decision to grant the land in Killester for the housing of ex-servicemen was Antrim-born, Sir Henry McLaughlin. McLaughlin was chairman of Messrs. McLaughlin and Harvey, one of the largest building contractors in Ireland at the time, responsible for the building of the Gresham Hotel and Clery's on O'Connell Street. He was a keen sports enthusiast involved in sports such as motor racing and football. He played for Belfast-based club Cliftonville in his youth. Shortly after the formation of the Football Association of Ireland (the FAI) in 1921, McLaughlin was elected as president. He was involved in the campaign seeking clemency for IRA member Kevin Barry, who was ultimately executed for his part in an ambush on British troops in November 1920.

McLaughlin was rewarded with a knighthood for his services during the First World War, serving as honorary Director of Recruiting in Ireland for 1915 and 1916. He also served as Chairman of the Works Relief Committee. In this capacity, he personally took on a five-year lease on agricultural land in Killester, used during the war to train women in agricultural methods. He offered to hand over his interest in the lease to the British-administered Local Government Board as a site for the housing of ex-servicemen.

There was confusion about who was responsible for leasing the land in Killester – McLaughlin or Dublin Corporation – which was discussed at a special meeting of Dublin Corporation convened in the Mansion House in January 1921. At the meeting – Dublin Corporation being a Sinn Féin controlled body at this stage – some opinions were expressed opposing the use of land for the housing of ex-servicemen. Referring to returning ex-soldiers, one councillor did not know why houses had to be built for 'the return of the Prodigal'. Another councillor claimed, 'They had many of their own people in slums, who had not gone out to fight, but who were at home concerned for their own country', while another asked if the houses 'were to be given to Irish ex-soldiers or whether there was to be another English plantation'. Even though the Lord Mayor Laurence O'Neill claimed that the Corporation had more right to the lands than McLaughlin, Dublin Corporation could only really delay the house building, as under the Irish Land (Provision for Sailors and Soldiers) Act, the Local Government Board

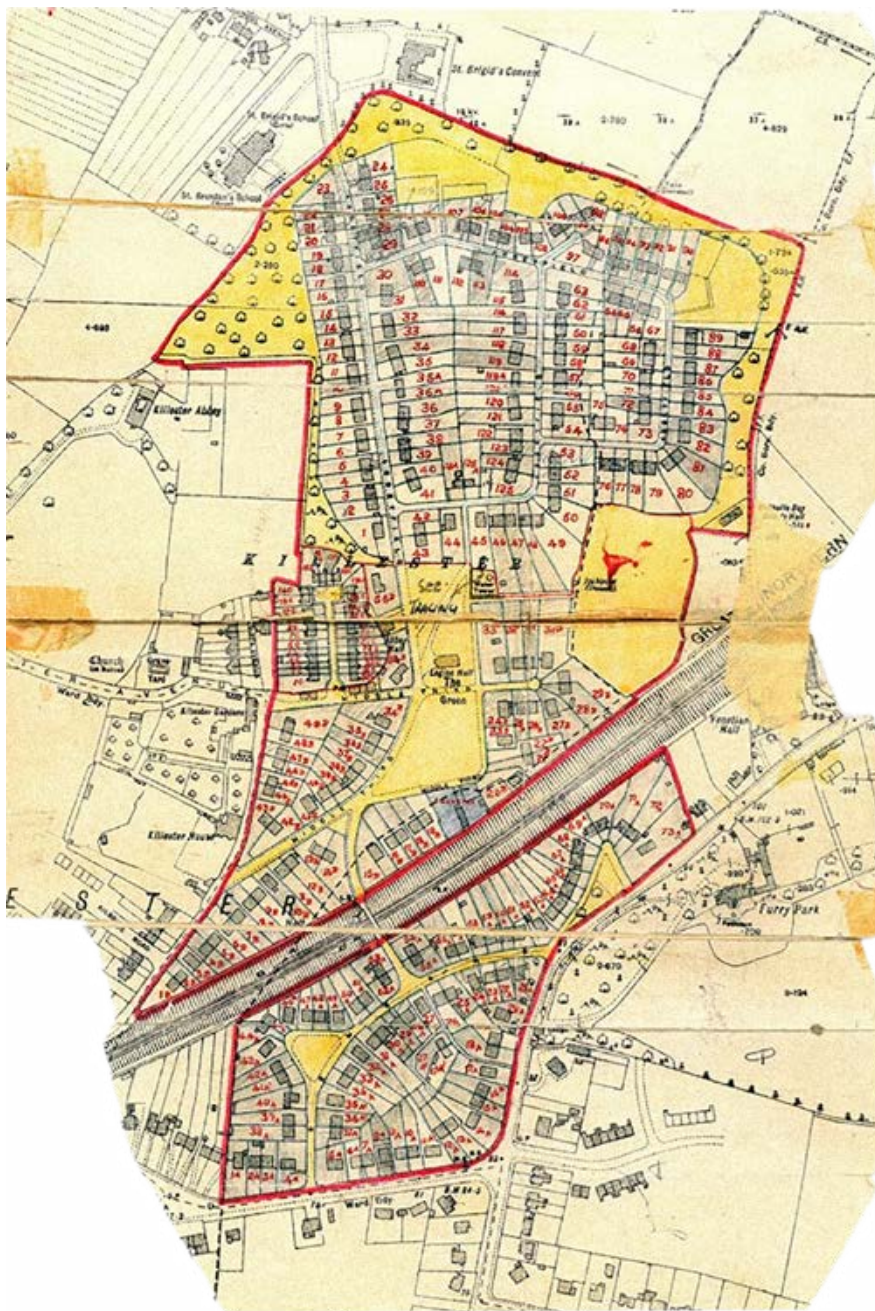
was able to compulsorily buy the land, which it duly did, and the building of houses for ex-servicemen was able to commence in Killester.



The Mansion House in Dublin where a special meeting was held by Dublin Corporation in January 1921 to discuss the use of land in Killester for First World War veterans

(Courtesy of Dublin City Library and Archives, available at Digital Repository of Ireland, www.dri.ie)

According to Murray Fraser, the Killester housing scheme “was the only scheme actually built by the ILGB [Irish Local Government Board], and was intended to be a paradigm of the post-war policies promoted by Lord French and the [Dublin] Castle Unionists. In the Killester scheme the ideological conjunction of loyalty to Empire, special provision for ex-servicemen, technical standardisation, and garden suburb planning, all reached their



Map showing the layout of the Killester housing scheme of 247 houses
(The National Archives of the UK, AP 7/173)

apotheosis". Initial plans were for 247 bungalows with large gardens, recreational spaces and transport facilities. Houses were designed to very high standards. Existing features such as roads and woodlands were retained. According to F.H.A. Aalen, dividing the estate into three separate parts, reflecting military hierarchical structures, the larger Demesne houses at 1,007 square feet were allocated to officers, Middle Third houses to the middle ranks and Abbeyfield houses at 675 square feet to the privates. Of the 247 houses, the Demesne had 73 bungalows, the Middle Third had 49 bungalows and Abbeyfield had 125 bungalows. The larger bungalows had a parlour, living room, scullery, three bedrooms, larder and coal store; the bulk of the remaining houses possessed similar accommodation, but lacked the parlour or had only two bedrooms. Gardens were provided at front and rear; recreational space was available around the houses, and belts of trees associated with the old demesne were preserved. Orchard, a compact development of small, two-storeyed houses between Abbeyfield and Middle Third built in 1928, was not part of the original conception.

Work on the Killester housing scheme commenced in late 1920 / early 1921 with foundations and drains laid down by late February 1921. Unusually, instead of using contractors to build the houses, ex-servicemen were hired directly as labourers to build them instead. When a contractor was needed for skilled work, the contractor selected, Hugh Charles McNally was asked to use only soldiers and sailors nominated by the Local Government Board, which he did and for which he charged 10 per cent on time and materials. This decision came in for criticism in 1924 with the British parliament's Select Committee of Public Accounts, who felt it drove up the costs unnecessarily to an average cost per house at around £1,300. Justifying the decision to hire ex-servicemen as labourers, Sir Henry Robinson from the Local Government Board claimed, "The circumstances... were exceptional. A lot of soldiers back from the war were absolutely ostracised. No one would let them houses and numbers of them found themselves treated as traitors'. The *Irish Independent* published a report from the British Ministry of Labour in Ireland in September 1921, stating that '19,793 ex-soldiers and sailors were registered for the whole of Ireland as looking for work, and of these 7,000 were in receipt of unemployment benefit. It is stated that in Dublin alone 8,000 ex-servicemen are idle. Large

numbers of these have been seeking employment at the building of the garden city of Killester, and their condition is described as pitiable. Some are in extreme want.' Numbers vary widely on how many ex-servicemen were hired to build the houses in Killester, some claiming 150 were hired, others that almost 1,000 workers were used.

As well as providing employment to ex-servicemen, Henry Robinson and Dublin Castle under-secretary John Anderson also believed the hiring of ex-servicemen as labourers prevented them from falling into the hands of Sinn Féin and the IRA, as many ex-servicemen ultimately did.

For the duration of the construction of the Killester Garden suburb from late 1920 to 1923, Ireland was gripped with conflict and uncertainty, from the late brutal stages of the War of Independence, the lawlessness and state of flux that accompanied the Truce, followed by the terrible civil war that came to an end as the Killester housing scheme was reaching completion. Killester was not immune to the conflicts while construction was in progress. During the Truce period, as a demonstration of the sense of lawlessness that prevailed at the time, the contractor Hugh McNally was robbed of £1,000 by armed men. He was on his way to pay the labourers in Killester. During the civil war, as part of a wider campaign to attack communication, transport and infrastructure networks, anti-Treaty IRA members regularly targeted the Great Northern Railway line at Killester.

In a brutal attack in September 1922, believed to be carried out by members of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in Oriel House on Westland Row in Dublin, anti-Treaty IRA member Michael Neville, aged 19, was taken from his place of work on Eden Quay, with his body subsequently discovered at a disused graveyard in Killester, riddled with bullets.

Following the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921, as the twenty-six counties that went on to form the Irish Free State transitioned from British rule to independence, the confusion and uncertainty this caused directly impacted on the Killester Housing Scheme, offering a good example of the complexities involved in changing from one administration to another, one with a high degree of independence from Britain. For people reliant on schemes or projects that were incomplete before the handover of power,



View of the inside of the old church at Killester, close to where Michael Neville's body was found after being killed in September 1922

(Courtesy of Royal Irish Academy, available at Digital Repository of Ireland, www.dri.ie)

there was much trepidation on whether their schemes or projects would be halted or cancelled altogether. While not cancelled, the Killester Housing Scheme was halted in 1922.

McNally successfully took the Local Government Board to court in May 1922, seeking 'damages for loss of profit, materials delivered, pleat, wages, etc., amounting to' over £47,000 spent on the Killester Housing Scheme. Nurseryman William Bradshaw also took the Local Government Board to court in June 1922, also successfully, over non-payment for 35,000 thorns and privet quicks for the Killester Housing Scheme amounting to over £350.

According to Joseph Brady and Patrick Lynch, the Free State provisional government was in “a dilemma about what to do with the ex-servicemen. It did not know what it wanted to do but it was certain that it did not want the then present circumstances to continue...However, the political sensitivities required action...There must have been a moment when the specific provision for ex-servicemen stood in the balance. The State was not yet in a position to provide for its own ex-servicemen and the visible contrast with provision for British veterans must have been troublesome.” Due to a commitment to stick to its pledges to veterans, on top of providing the necessary funding, the British government was responsible for driving the housing schemes for ex-servicemen forward. It was able to be centrally involved in the different schemes in the Irish Free State beyond independence through the enactment of the Irish Free State (Consequential Provisions) Act, 1922, and its provision to create a “corporate body to carry on the work of reinstatement under the direction of the Treasury, throughout the whole of Ireland.” This led to the establishment of the all-Ireland body the Irish Sailors’ and Soldiers’ Land Trust (see below).

Meanwhile, the housing scheme in Killester re-commenced following the cessation earlier in 1922. By August 1923, 247 houses were finally completed, with a further 42 houses added later in the 1920s. While the houses were complete and Killester was in an advantageous location, being close to Dublin City centre and on the main road connecting the city centre to Howth and on the Great Northern Railway line from Dublin to Belfast, it needed amenities and enhancements to its infrastructure. Shortly after the houses were complete, in December 1923 the Great Northern Railway opened a halt for passenger traffic at Killester between Raheny and Clontarf. A new road for Killester was confirmed by North Dublin Rural District Council in 1926. Regular bus services to and from the city centre were also introduced. The foundation stone for a Catholic Church in Killester was laid down by the Archbishop of Dublin Edward Byrne in June 1925. The first school for the area was completed by 1928. Beforehand, as pointed out by TD Bryan Cooper, himself a veteran, who regularly lobbied on behalf of the tenants in Killester in the Dáil, the 500 plus children in Killester had to travel over 2 miles to the nearest school.



Resident outside her house in Abbeyfield in Killester
(Courtesy of the Killester Garden Village Committee)

The veterans who moved with their families to Killester held a variety of roles, if they could find work, after being demobilised following the ending of the First World War. By 1924, and by then tenants in Killester, 57 were employed as civil servants or postmen; 39 as mechanics or artisans; 22 worked in the Guinness brewery; 14 worked as clerks; 12 as watchmen or warehousemen; 9 were railway or tram workers; 9 were stewards or managers; 5 worked as tailors or shoemakers; 5 were carters; 4 were commercial travellers; 3 were gardaí; while there were journalists, watchmakers and chemists living there too. Six were pensioners and 15 were unemployed. The remainder served as soldiers in the Free State army, were labourers or worked in other trade roles.

The main common connection they had was of course their previous military experience during the First World War, something that permeated the Killester Garden Suburb from the start. The superintendent of Killester estate was Captain James de Lacey, who was elected to Dublin City Council in 1936 as a Fine Gael candidate. Other agents included Captains Hunt, English and Burke.

The ex-servicemen in Killester served with many different regiments during the Great War, including the Royal Garrison Artillery, the South Irish Horse, the Army Service Corps, the Royal Army Medical Corps, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the Royal Irish Fusiliers, the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, the Royal Irish Rifles, the Royal Navy and the Royal Flying Corps/Royal Air Force. Some were awarded with military crosses, distinguished conduct medals and distinguished service medals for gallantry during the conflict. Ex-servicemen formed a branch of the British Legion and a hut was erected in a green in the Killester Garden Suburb as a meeting place.

On Armistice Day each year, as tenants of Ireland's largest colony built for ex-servicemen, Killester veterans came out in force to commemorate fallen comrades from the war. They took part in local and national events. A large gathering addressed by TD Bryan Cooper in November 1923 witnessed

several of the men on parade, including the two buglers, wearing the uniform of the Irish National Army. Each year on Armistice Day, Killester ex-servicemen also travelled to Amiens Street station (now Connolly Station) to place a wreath on its First World War memorial.



The brick hall built for the Killester ex-servicemen branch of the British Legion in 1932 after the original hall was destroyed by fire in an arson attack in 1928

(Courtesy of the Killester Garden Village Committee)

While there were few disturbances for the most part on Armistice Days, shots were fired into the ex-servicemen's hall in Killester in 1928. That same year the hall was destroyed by fire in an arson attack. A brick hall was subsequently built in 1932. The tenants of Killester had far more disputes, though, with the body who was responsible for building and managing the houses built for ex-servicemen in Ireland, the Irish Sailors' and Soldiers' Land Trust.

The Trust came into being in 1924. It was an Imperial-run all-Ireland body controlled by the British treasury. It consisted of five members, three appointed by the British government, one by the government of Northern Ireland and one by the Irish Free State government. The Trust took responsibility for the houses already constructed, like Killester, and was provided with a money grant of £1.5 million by the British government to build and manage properties for ex-servicemen under its remit. By 1935, 2,700 houses for ex-servicemen had been built in the Free State and 1,217 built in Northern Ireland. The largest cluster by far was the one in Killester, followed by 146 cottages in Cregagh near Belfast.

Tenants from Killester had major issues with the Trust from its inception, believing the rents the Trust was charging were too high, particularly with no option to buy the properties, as was the case with other public housing schemes at the time in Dublin. Brady and Lynch claim that the rents in Killester 'were not set on the basis of an ability to pay but on a much vaguer relationship between cost and rent. Killester was destined to be perceived as an expensive tenancy from the very beginning'. As Paul Taylor has shown, as can be seen in Table 1, pressure from Killester tenants resulted in rents being reduced in May 1924 and January 1926. They were reduced again in March 1928.

Agreement.
(COTTAGE.)

IRISH SAILORS' AND SOLDIERS' LAND TRUST.

..... District. Postal Address of Cottage :—
.....
.....

The Irish Sailors' and Soldiers' Land Trust (hereinafter called "the Trust")
having agreed to accept me as an ex-Service man for whom, subject to my
acceptance of the conditions of this Agreement, accommodation may be provided
within the powers of the Trust, I hereby agree, as a condition of entering into
occupation of the cottage and garden attached thereto situate in the townland of
.....
.....
in the Electoral Division of.....
in the Rural District of.....
Barony of..... and County.....
to perform and observe the undermentioned conditions of occupancy.

CONDITIONS.

1. Occupation under this Agreement is a privilege personal to the occupier and does not create any interest capable of assignment.
2. THE OCCUPIER SHALL NOT :—
 - (a) Assign this Agreement either in whole or in part.
 - (b) Sub-let the premises or any part thereof, or part with the possession of the cottage or plot.
3. THE OCCUPIER SHALL NOT without the previous written permission of the Trust :—
 - (a) Accommodate lodgers.
 - (b) Affix or exhibit on the premises any notice, name-plate or advertisement.
 - (c) Keep on the premises or any part thereof any animals or poultry.
 - (d) Erect or permit to be erected any shed, out-office or structure in the garden or plot of the premises.
 - (e) Cut down or damage any trees growing on the premises.
 - (f) Use the premises as a shop or workshop.
 - (g) Expose in the premises or any part thereof any goods or materials for sale or hire.

Copy of an Irish Sailors' and Soldiers' Land Trust Agreement (The National Archives of the UK, AP 1/9)

Table 1: Killester rent reductions (per week rents) *

House Category	Large			Medium			Small		
	£	Sh.	d.	£	Sh.	d.	£	Sh.	d.
Pre May 1924	1	0	0	16	0	0	12	6	0
May 1924		1	6	0	12	0	8	6	
January 1926		12	6	10	6		8	6	

*Source: Taylor, Paul. *Heroes or Traitors? Experiences of Returning Irish Soldiers from World War One*. PhD Thesis. Pembroke College, University of Oxford, 2012.

Even though the Lavery Report suggested that ex-servicemen were not treated more unfairly than other sections of Irish society, the Killester tenants believed they were and that rents were far higher than elsewhere. With the Trust insisting on payment or seeking to evict for non-payment, a collision course was set for the Killester tenants against the Trust. There also was a backlash by the Trust for evicting widows and children of deceased veterans. Tenants also complained that the Trust was not even doing its job of maintaining the properties under its remit.

When the Trust attempted to evict Killester tenant Robert G. Butler, who had significant arrears, matters came to a head. Ultimately, a case was taken by nine Killester tenants, which became known as the 'Leggett case,' named after one of the tenants, Robert Leggett who lived in Abbeyfield. The case wound its way to the Supreme Court which ruled in 1933 that the Trust did not have the right to charge rents. The same case was fought in Northern Ireland. However, it was ruled there that the Trust did have the capacity to charge rents.

While it was a victory of sorts for the tenants of Killester and elsewhere who no longer had to pay rents, the Trust stopped maintaining houses under its remit in the Free State as well as paying for repairs and decorations as it previously had. The Trust built no more houses in the Free State and eventually wound down its operations. By the 1950s, through legislation

in Westminster, the Trust was able to sell Trust houses to tenants which resulted in another long-drawn out process that saw ex-servicemen and their families, in many instances, buying the properties they had lived in for decades, much of that time rent-free. Many of those properties have been handed down to later generations of the families that moved here for the first time 100 years ago, ensuring that their legacy and their memories will live on for future generations.

Thanks to Aaron Crampton, Chairperson of the Killester Garden Village Committee, for his assistance in researching this article.

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Dublin City Council plaque at Slattery's Public House, Beggars Bush, commemorating the founding of Shelbourne FC
(Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons/Paddy Cahill)



Shelbourne FC Team 1923

The 1923 FAI Cup Final

James Curry, Historian in Residence,
Dublin North West Area

2023 marks the centenary of one of the most famous early FAI Cup finals, when a junior club from Belfast named Alton United upset a 'star-studded Shelbourne' team at Dalymount Park. This chapter focuses on that historic match, as well as detailing how both sides reached the decider of a football competition then known as the Free State Challenge Cup.

On 6 January 1923, Shelbourne FC began their FAI Cup campaign with an emphatic win. Their opponents at Ringsend's Shelbourne Park were Bray Unknowns, 'Leinster survivors of the Qualifying Competition', who although facing a difficult task were expected by the *Evening Herald* to run 'the home side to a close finish'. Instead, Shelbourne scored nine goals without reply, a result which remains a club record one hundred years later. Shelbourne's inside-forward Stephen Doyle scored five of the goals, an individual feat which also remains a competition club record, with centre-forward Ralph Ardiffe netting twice and the other goals coming from left-winger Sammy Wilson and right-half Dan Delaney.

A fortnight later, on 20 January, Shelbourne travelled to Dolphins Barn for 'a splendid exhibition and an exciting tussle' against St. James's Gate. Although the Ringsend club had been knocked out of the FAI Cup at the semi-final stage of the previous season by the home side, who went on to claim the inaugural trophy, the *Irish Independent* tipped Shelbourne to gain revenge, a prediction fulfilled as St. James's Gate were beaten 2-1. A sizeable crowd witnessed the second-round cup match, which saw Shelbourne forced 'to play into the strong sun' during the first half after losing the coin toss.



Michael Foley

The game's first goal came after 12 minutes as 'the Gate backs, who were not too quick or sharp ... [and] slack in tackling', allowed Sammy Wilson to receive the ball inside the box. The pacey left-winger 'steadied the sphere for the shot, and it went off [Patrick] Coleman's hands on to the post, and then into the net for the first goal'. After both sides missed chances, Shelbourne scored a second goal before the interval when 'Wilson was allowed plenty of room once more' and hit a 'deliberate and successful' shot past Coleman who, 'in diving for the ball, judged it badly, and ... assisted in his own downfall'. The home side worked hard to get back into the game

and 'for a period before the interval the Gate held the initiative, but frittered some chances by lack of steadiness in shooting'.

Shelbourne should have increased their lead during the second half and almost paid for how their forwards 'generally did not possess a keen capacity for goal getting'. The home side pulled a goal back five minutes from the end through Jack Kelly, 'the best of the Gate forwards', who received the ball 18 yards out and put such 'propelling power ... behind the sphere' that the Shelbourne goalkeeper Paddy Walsh was rooted to the spot as the ball 'swished into the net'. However, the visitors held on to ensure qualification for the semi-finals with 'a success that was more easily attained than the score, 2-1, would suggest', as their attacking play at times left St. James's Gate's defence 'at sixes and sevens'.

Shelbourne's semi-final opposition at Dalymount Park on 3 March 1923 was Jacobs, who held 'the honour of being the only team to beat the Ringsend Club and bag three League points from them' that season, and yet the *Evening Herald* correctly predicted a hard-fought Shelbourne victory. Before



Val Harris

a large crowd in blustery conditions, Shelbourne claimed a 2-0 win in a match that was unfortunately marred by a serious injury to Jacobs 'junior international forward' Paddy Smith, whose 'leg was fractured in two places' above the ankle. Smith had spent 'his whole career with the Biscuit team, and scored goals galore', with his teammates 'upset sentimentally and otherwise' by the incident, which occurred after 51 minutes when he collided with Val Harris during 'an attack on the Shels goal'. Substitutions were not allowed at the time, meaning that Jacobs were forced to compete for almost half the match with only ten men.

Playing with a 'strong breeze behind them in the first half and the advantage of the hill, Shelbourne did nearly all the pressing' before the interval. They went ahead in the 18th minute when centre-forward Hugh J. Harvey, 'who led the Shelbourne line in fine style', fired home 'a clever left foot shot'. After Smith's injury, Jacobs surprisingly 'held the upper hand' for a period and 'on a couple of occasions came within an ace of levelling the score' before Shelbourne gradually took back over, scoring a second goal five minutes from the end through 'a great shot' by Ardiffe following an assist from Harvey.

A *Freeman's Journal* journalist evaluated the performance of Shelbourne's players at the time as follows:

The winners were best served by Kavanagh and Connolly in the rear line and by Harris as pivot. Harvey was a clever centre forward. Brierley was their best winger. Wilson has played many better games for the Reds ... For once Foley was rarely conspicuous, but his duty was to hold the more dangerous Jacobs'

wing. Delaney is a much-improved half-back and got through a lot of work. Doyle, Harvey and Ardiffe did not operate, or probably were not permitted to operate, with a good understanding. They are distinctly a dangerous trio, but they frequently got bunched in the shooting line, or appeared to work too closely.

Two weeks later, Shelbourne's surprise opposition in the FAI Cup final was Alton United, 'one of the stalwarts in the Falls Road League', who were 'formed when the Irish League became re-organised because of the conditions of the time'. The Belfast club's first premises was a kitchen house at Park Street, but after moving to rooms above the Alton Bar they acquired the name Alton United (having previously been simply called 'United') and relocated to bigger premises at Kent Street. Like other Falls Road League clubs, Alton benefitted from being able to recruit players from Belfast Celtic who 'were out of Irish League football' at the time, and were more formidable opposition than might be expected for a junior team.



Alton United Team

(Courtesy of Hugh Russell)

After winning 'the Belfast & District competition to qualify for the Cup proper', Alton United faced Dublin club Midland Athletic in their FAI Cup first-round match on 6 January 1923. Regrettably, this Shaun's Park fixture was abandoned with seventeen minutes remaining 'owing to darkness'. At the time, the home side were leading by four goals to nil, with outside-right Andy McSherry, a former Belfast Celtic player, netting an early goal, before centre-forward Sammy Ward scored a hat-trick on a heavy pitch which 'the Midland players moved slowly on'. As well as having issues with the 'very sodden' surface, the Midland Athletic players were further inconvenienced by a lengthy train journey which was made longer by 'a terrible train smash' at Killester Stone Bridge that morning, 'when a loose engine, sent careering along the line by armed men who had held up a goods train, collided with a passenger train proceeding from Howth to the city'.

Following the abandonment of their first-round match, Alton United again 'emphasised their superiority' when the fixture was rearranged for the following week at the same venue. On 13 January, Alton eased to a 5-0 victory against Midland Athletic, who in vain 'protested before the match against the state of the ground'. Sammy Ward once more scored three goals, with inside-forward Billy Duffy also getting on the scoresheet, along with centre-half Michael Brennan, who converted a penalty.

In the second round Alton United travelled to Dalymount Park to take on Shelbourne United, a Dublin side with Ringsend origins not to be confused with Shelbourne FC. The game took place in front of around 3,000 spectators on 20 January, and ended in a 1-1 draw, with inside-forward Billy Duffy netting for the Belfast outfit after twenty three minutes before Shelbourne United, who had a man sent off shortly before the interval, equalised early in the second half. The replay took place one week later at Belfast Celtic's home ground, the first football match played at Celtic Park for several years, with Alton United winning 2-0 before 'a crowd of old time supporters of the game'. Alton's Sammy Ward scored after 25 minutes, and Andy McSherry added a second ten minutes later as 'Shelbourne United cut up badly'. Although Alton had their inside-forward Jack Russell sent off before the interval, the Dublin club failed to capitalise during the second half and gave 'the reverse of their home form'.

On 17 February Alton United then took on Cork side Fordsons FC at Dalymount Park, in an ‘undoubted novelty of a Munster and Ulster team in opposition in the semi-final of an Irish blue riband’. The match attracted ‘a great attendance’ and saw Alton claim a 4-2 victory, with Michael Brennan opening the scoring and Sammy Ward netting a hat-trick. Fordsons demonstrated ‘what a fine sporting crowd’ they were by giving their opposition ‘three rousing cheers in the pavilion’ after the match, having also ‘welcomed Alton at Amiens Street on their arrival from Belfast’. In a reminder that Ireland was still at civil war during the period, the train which the Fordsons team travelled on to Dublin briefly came under attack near Blarney.

One month later, Alton United – a team primarily made up of ‘labourers working on the Belfast docks’ who required financial assistance ‘from their own local League to subsidise their travel to Dublin for the final’ – returned to Dalymount Park to contest the FAI Cup final on St. Patrick’s Day, as per the early tradition of the competition. A crowd of around 14,000 witnessed a memorable upset as the Belfast club, dramatically ‘escorted from Amiens Street station to Dalymount by an armed guard’, won 1-0 via a fortunate second-half goal. The high attendance testified ‘to the popularity of the competition under the auspices of the new Association’ and was an improvement by 4,000 on the previous year’s inaugural FAI Cup final, which saw St. James’s Gate defeat Shamrock Rovers in a bad-tempered replay.

‘Despite rumours and alarms, everything passed off peacefully and enjoyably’ on 17 March 1923, it was noted by the *Freeman’s Journal*, with ‘the crowd acting in a most sportsmanlike manner’. One match report declared that the ‘Dublin heroes of many a final under the old regime’ were defeated due ‘more to their own ineptness than to the superiority of the opposition, this being especially the case in the first half’, when they dominated the action. Aided by the wind, Shelbourne missed a penalty when Hugh J. Harvey ‘fired point blank’ at the Alton goalkeeper James Magennis, while the same player and his teammates Ralph Ardiffe and Stephen Doyle also squandered some other ‘glorious chances’.



Michael Brennan's
cup medal (front)

Michael Brennan's
cup medal (back)





Andy McSherry

During the second half, the 'determined and methodical' Alton United improved and scored 'a most extraordinarily obtained goal' after 57 minutes, following a high cross by outside-right Andy McSherry which 'rolled into the net' following a collision between the Shelbourne goalkeeper Paddy Walsh and right-back Paddy "Yoddie" Kavanagh. As the two players lay 'sprawled on the pitch', Alton's centre-forward Sammy Ward nipped in to make 'doubly sure' that the ball was over the line.

Although the circumstances surrounding the decisive goal were fortunate, Alton showed resolve to hold on to their lead and proved themselves 'a dashing eleven of triers' and worthy winners, 'more especially as they were denied a penalty kick which in the opinion of numbers present they were entitled to'. Alton's centre-half Michael Brennan later spoke of how 'it was possible to see the clock on the Phibsboro church from the pitch and ... they watched it anxiously as they defended their lead towards the end of the game'.

Several national newspapers praised the surprise winners following the match, while the *Belfast Newsletter* sent the club 'hearty congratulations' and enjoyed the 'irony that a Dublin cup should come to Belfast, of all places!'

Although the Alton United players received winners' medals, they were prevented from taking 'the Cup back to Belfast because of the troubles in the North at that time', and the following season reluctantly affiliated to the IFA and were unable to defend their trophy after the FAI 'notified clubs outside the twenty-six counties' they could no longer be members. With Belfast Celtic re-entering the Irish Football League for the 1924-25 season, the Falls Road League and clubs like Alton United – the only Belfast team to win the FAI Cup – soon faded from view.



Michael Brennan

As for Shelbourne FC, the Dublin club endured ‘a hoodoo in the Cup that they did not dispel till they captured the trophy’ in 1939. Shelbourne’s coach at that time was the legendary Val Harris, who during the 1923 final against Alton United had been ‘induced to assist his side’ despite suffering from a bad injury. Since their initial triumph in 1939, Shelbourne have, to date, won the FAI Cup a further six times: in 1960, 1963, 1993, 1996, 1997, and 2000.

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Children's history tour. Exploring places can be a great way for children to learn about history
(Courtesy of Dublin City Council Culture Company)

Following the *Hidden Histories Hunt*

**Dervilia Roche, Historian in Residence
for Children**

Exploring the city can be a great way for children to learn about Dublin's history. There are stories behind all of our buildings, streets, statues, bridges, and more. We can begin to piece together some of these stories just by taking a walk and looking around. We may start to notice plaques and other information panels that explain the history of a place, or there may be more subtle clues in building features or street names that hint at some of the stories associated with the place. No matter our age, places that we have walked past many times, in the city centre or elsewhere, can take on a new meaning once we take the time to look around for the clues that are there.

The *Hidden Histories Hunt* was created to encourage these explorations for families. It's a three kilometre treasure hunt route through the city centre. As children and grown-ups follow the route, they search their surroundings for answers to questions, on things like statues, plaques, signs, sculptures, and more, with each clue giving them some of the historical background to what they're looking at. Accompanying illustrations by children's history author and illustrator John Farrelly also help them along the way to find the right features. The route links two Dublin City Library branches, starting at the Central Library and finishing at Kevin Street Library.

Why create a history trail for children?

The trail was developed as part of my work as Historian in Residence for Children. This role is based at Richmond Barracks, as part of Dublin City Council Culture Company's Creative Residency programme. The programme is made in partnership with Dublin City Libraries, and involves working with children aged 9 to 12 across the city, through history workshops, projects, summer camps, and more. These activities aim to bring history to life for children, to help them uncover their own local and social history, and to further their curiosity and explorations of Dublin and history in general.



**Illustration from the
Hidden Histories Hunt
of a dragon statue on
Moore Street**
(Illustrated by
John Farrelly)

The *Hidden Histories Hunt* was developed for several reasons. From working with and listening to children, it became clear that exploring places is often an important way for children to engage with history, particularly local history. Children often express an interest in finding details and discovering new things, which makes treasure hunts a really good option for interacting with places. Like adults, children can easily pass by a place without noticing or understanding its history and the ways it came to be today. The trail encourages them to stop and engage with those stories through what they find, and through the extra information that's woven into the treasure hunt clues. It can help them to appreciate the city in a new way, and to feel more connected to their surroundings. As a resource that's designed to be used by children with accompanying grown-ups, it also encourages discussion. Children often find out about local history through conversations with older family members or neighbours about their memories of the area, and the *Hidden Histories* trail can act as a prompt for some of these conversations.



Children's Section, Central Library
(Courtesy Dublin City Council)

The trail was developed with the principles of co-creation in mind. The design of the route and style of clues were all based on ideas gathered from listening to children throughout various projects and activities. From chatting to children about treasure hunts and trails in general, some of the things they've told me they enjoy are 'at the end, when you put all the clues together' or 'to know about the history and culture of Ireland' or that 'you learn new things'. I heard from some children that a previous treasure hunt they had done was fun when it involved 'finding hidden plaques and stuff'. From this it was clear that the trail should be fun, educational, and foster a new sense of wonder and discovery about the particular places involved. An initial draft of the trail was tested by some families with children, whose feedback was incorporated into the final version. In this way, the process of creating the trail involved collaboration and engagement with children, and the result is now a resource that can be used by many families.

As a self-guided resource, it's something that families can access at a day and time that suits them. This provides an alternative for children and families who cannot or would prefer not to attend history workshops or other interactive activities, but would still like to explore history in a fun way. Locating the route in the city centre means it is relatively easy to get to and from for most people. *Hidden Histories Hunt* is available in paper form at any Dublin City public library and can also be viewed and downloaded online, which again is intended to make it as accessible as possible for everyone.

Following the trail:

There are 15 stops along the *Hidden Histories Hunt* route, which relate to a variety of periods in Dublin's history, from its earliest settlements to medieval structures, Georgian buildings, and stories of people from the 20th century.

The route begins at the Central Library in the Ilac Centre. One of the earliest stops on the trail is on Henry Street, at a plaque that could be easily missed among the bright and busy shopfronts. As well as referring to the signing of the 1916 proclamation, the plaque remembers Jennie Wyse Power, a nationalist and suffragist. In the early 1900s she ran a shop and restaurant at this site on Henry Street called the 'Irish Farm and Produce Company'. Over the years it was an important meeting place for the cultural and political organisations she was part of. This stop on the trail informs or reminds children and families about the suffrage movement and the major role that women played in revolutionary Ireland in general.



Volta cinema on Mary Street c.1913. Today the ground floor facade is completely different
(Wikimedia Commons)

Similarly, the next stop is another easily missed plaque at a busy shop on Mary Street. This one marks the site of the Volta Electric Theatre, Ireland's first cinema. The Volta was opened in 1909 by James Joyce, who is said to have been inspired by seeing the popularity of cinemas elsewhere in Europe. He remained involved with the Volta for a short time, and the cinema went on to later become the Lyceum Picture Theatre, before eventually closing in 1948. It marked the beginning of what would be a huge part of Dublin cultural life. By the 1950s, cinemas were built across many parts of the city and suburbs, and the remains of many of them can still be seen today. Children who talk to older family members or neighbours in Dublin about their memories of growing up in the city will nearly always hear stories about going to the cinema. It provides a relatable link to the past for children, and an opportunity to compare it to their own experiences nowadays.

One of the oldest surviving buildings in this part of Dublin is St. Mary's Church, now a restaurant. It was built around 1700 in the classical style, typical of that period, but now very much in contrast with the later Victorian buildings that surround it. It was the site of some notable occasions throughout history, such as the wedding of Arthur Guinness in 1761 and the baptism of Wolfe Tone, founder of the United Irishmen. As one of the stops on the *Hidden History* trail, it perhaps provides an opportunity for children to consider that many Dublin buildings had different original functions to what they have nowadays, and that sometimes there are clues to be found about this on the buildings themselves.

Further along the *Hidden Histories Hunt* route, the trail stops at the remains of Isolde's Tower in Temple Bar. It is visible through a metal gate at the ground floor of an apartment building. This round stone tower is one of several reminders of medieval Dublin that can be found around the city. It was built in the 13th century and formed part of the city walls. In medieval times, it would have been the northeastern corner of the city, surrounded on one side by the meeting of the rivers Poddle and Liffey. The remains of the tower were found in the 1990s when houses on the street were being demolished. During excavations at the site, archaeologists found pottery, glass, leather, and even human bones. Several skulls were found at the base

of the wall, probably having been originally part of the medieval practice of displaying severed heads. From looking through the gate at Isolde's tower, you can see that the walls were around four metres thick. Similar towers can be seen nearby at Dublin Castle.



Isolde's Tower during excavations in 1993. Today the remains of the tower are partially hidden under a modern building
(Courtesy of Dublin City Libraries)

For children, ruins like this can be a great source of intrigue and can encourage imagination about how the place might have looked in the past. Seeing the location of the tower under the modern building can also encourage us to think about the many more structures that might still be under the city today.

St. Werburgh's Church
(Courtesy of National Inventory of Architectural Heritage)



Later, the *Hidden Histories* trail stops outside St. Werburgh's Church on Werburgh Street, where there are some stone carvings. The carvings show skulls and crossbones, as well as hourglasses. Children often enjoy finding these spooky symbols, and sometimes compare these carvings to a pirate's flag. In fact, these carvings were all common features of 18th century churches and headstones, and acted as 'memento mori', or reminders of mortality and death. With children we can sensitively discuss the meanings behind the symbols and the way that they were once commonplace designs, using this as a way of thinking about changing historical contexts. St. Werburgh's Church was rebuilt on several occasions. The version that still stands today is only one part of what was a much bigger structure with an upper floor, and a tower with a spire. This replaced an even earlier church that had a tower with a domed roof. So it's likely that St. Werburgh's Church was previously a much more visible feature of this part of the city, but the facade and carvings that remain are still well worth a look today.



The Dubh Linn Gardens. The site of the 'black pool' and origin of the word Dublin
(Wikimedia Commons)

The trail then enters the grounds of Dublin Castle and stops at the Dubh Linn gardens. The River Poddle, now underground, used to form a natural moat for the castle here. The gardens are roughly located on the site of what was a dark-coloured pool along the river. The placename ‘dubh linn’, Irish for ‘black pool’, comes from this, and led to our city name ‘Dublin’. It’s also believed that the earliest settlements in Dublin, before even the arrival of the Vikings, were near this area, along the Poddle. For both of these reasons, the Dubh Linn gardens are a hugely significant part of Dublin’s history. The pool was gradually transformed into the gardens from the 17th century onwards, and the river was rerouted into an underground culvert, still flowing below the castle grounds.

Towards the end of the *Hidden Histories Hunt*, the trail stops outside the entrance to Marsh’s Library. The doorway looks like something from a fairytale and is immediately enticing to a lot of children. Marsh’s Library is associated with many ghost stories, and stories like these can sometimes intrigue children enough to want to find out more about the history of the people and places involved. This was the first public library in Ireland. It was built by Archbishop Marsh in the early 18th century, who wanted to create a place of learning that could be used by anyone, as opposed to earlier libraries that were linked to churches or colleges. Over the years Marsh’s Library was used by famous Irish writers like Bram Stoker and James Joyce. It is one of the only 18th century buildings in Dublin that’s still used for its original function.

These are just a handful of the 15 stops along the *Hidden Histories Hunt*, which finishes at Kevin Street library. Once children have reached the end of the trail, they can use all of their answers to work out what the ‘treasure’ is, and then collect a sticker from Kevin Street Library. Some families may feel inspired to go back and further investigate places along the route that they find interesting, or other similar places around the city. By beginning and ending at Dublin City library branches, there are also opportunities to become library members, and to use the libraries as a resource for further exploring the history of the city. Some of the other resources listed below can also help with this.

Children's responses and ways to further explore:

Feedback from children and families who have already completed the *Hidden Histories Hunt* has been positive, with children saying they found it fun, interesting, easy to follow and that 'it makes our history seem exciting'. Some people noted that they were already familiar with the places along the route, but began to notice new details on them or to recognise similar features elsewhere in the city. Although it was created for families with children, there has also been interest from teachers in using it as a method to inform and engage both primary and secondary school groups. This all suggests the potential to create more resources like this, in other parts of the city, in collaboration with children through families or schools.



Children in Kevin Street Library



The Hidden Histories Hunt can be collected at any Dublin City Library branch or accessed online

For children who might like to read up on the history of the city in general, or about their local neighbourhood in Dublin, librarians in their local library branches can point them towards local history books, including publications with historical maps. There are also lots of free and easy online resources, included in the list below, that grown-ups can use to help children explore local history. These include a database of buildings of architectural significance, an online animation showing the medieval city walls, and a dictionary of biographies to find out more about people mentioned on plaques around the city. Some children might even like to have a go at making their own local history trail or other creation inspired by what they find out.

The *Hidden Histories Hunt* is free and available in paper form at any Dublin City public library, including the Central Library, where the trail begins. It can also be accessed online and either printed at home or viewed on a mobile device. It is available in English and Irish.

To download *Hidden Histories*, or to find out more about children's history workshops with family and school groups, visit richmondbarracks.ie

Further reading and resources

- Casey, Christine, *Buildings of Ireland: Dublin*, Yale University Press, 2005
- Clarke, H.B., *Dublin, part I, to 1610 (Irish Historic Town Atlas)*, Royal Irish Academy, 2003
- Dictionary of Irish Biography, dib.ie
- Dublinia Online Learning: Medieval Dublin, dublinia.ie/online-learning
- Goodbody, Rob, *Dublin, part III, 1756 to 1847 (Irish Historic Towns Atlas)*, Royal Irish Academy, 2014
- Lennon, Colm, *Dublin, part II, 1610 to 1756 (Irish Historic Towns Atlas)*, Royal Irish Academy, 2008
- National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, buildingsofireland.ie

About Historians in Residence

Since 2017, Dublin City Council's Historians in Residence have worked in neighbourhoods across Dublin City to encourage local people to engage with history, and to promote its sources and discussion, especially the historical collections in Dublin City Library and Archive.

The historians work in the five administrative areas of Dublin City Council to make history and historical sources accessible and enjoyable for all.

In 2020, the Creative Residency @ Richmond Barracks, made by Dublin City Council Culture Company, appointed Dublin's first Historian in Residence for Children. The project seeks to provide space, opportunity and resources to help children uncover the stories of our city and its people.

The Historians in Residence are:

- JAMES CURRY – Dublin North West Area
- CORMAC MOORE – Dublin North Central Area
- MARY MULDOWNEY – Dublin Central Area
- CATHERINE SCUFFIL – Dublin South City Areas
- DERVILIA ROCHE – Historian in Residence for Children

Dublin City Council's Historian in Residence programme is created by Dublin City Libraries, and is delivered in partnership with Dublin City Council Culture Company.

The Historian in Residence for Children Creative Residency @ Richmond Barracks is a partnership between Dublin City Council Culture Company and Dublin City Libraries.



**Nineteenth century map of Dublin
from the Ordnance Survey Office**
(Courtesy of Dublin City Library and Archive)

**Cover image:
Dolphin's Barn Brick**
(Courtesy of John Buckley)

For more pictures like this go to dublincitylibraries.ie and search the Dublin City Council Digital Repository where you can see free images including photos, postcards, letters, maps and cartoons.

www.dublincity.ie



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