

THE FOYLE
CIVIC TRUST

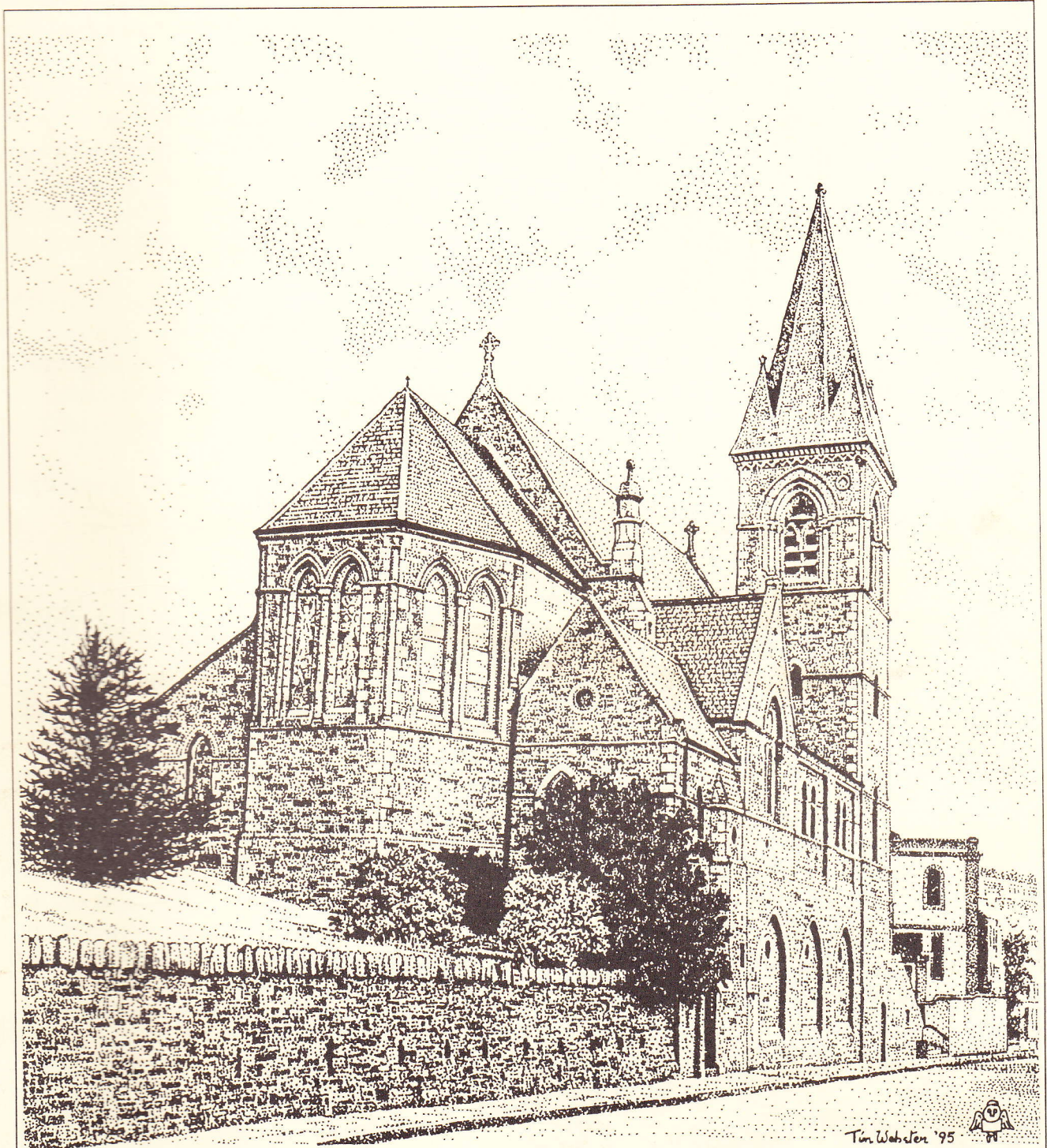


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REVIEW

The Magazine of the Foyle Civic Trust

ISSUE 6 ————— 1995

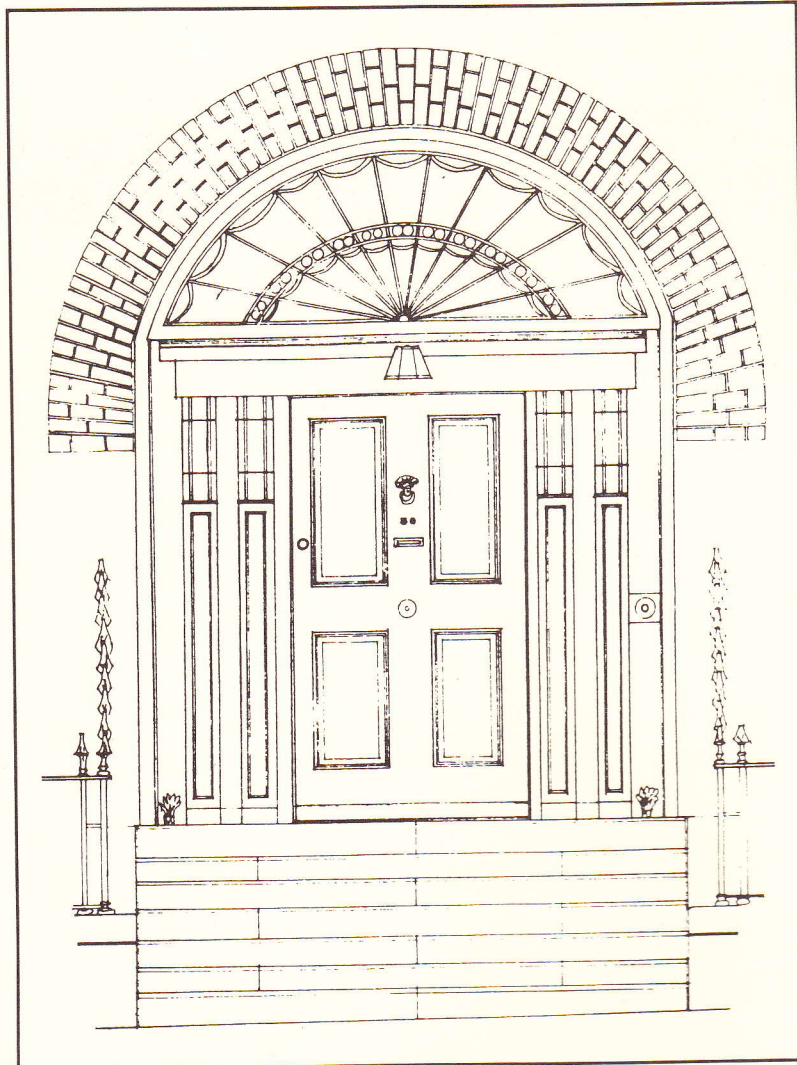


Tim Webster '95



All Saints, Clooney

Church of Ireland · Built 1864-7 · Architects: Lanyon, Lynn & Lanyon



The Deanery Door

(Illustration courtesy of "If Stones Could Speak" - Dept. of Architecture, Q.U.B.
Third Year Students 1988/89 and 1989/90. Edited by D. Fitzgerald)



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The opinions expressed in the following articles are those of the respective contributors and not necessarily those of the Foyle Civic Trust

FOREWORD

Welcome to the Sixth Edition of the *Foyle Civic Trust Review*. The articles range from ideas for new proposals in the city to conservation of existing buildings, from environmental awareness to community participation. The *Review* reflects the lively and ever-changing life of Derry as we approach the Millennium.

The purpose of good development is to create an environment in which people can flourish. It is our collective responsibility to promote high standards in architecture, planning, landscape and urban design. The challenge for Foyle Civic Trust is to bring the pious hope to reality by encouraging citizen participation. The quality of Derry as a city will depend on how the opinion of the ordinary citizen influences developers and bureaucrats. Now is the time to become involved, not when it's too late, the damage done!

We encourage you to become involved in the development of the city. With the help of Derry City Council, we have set up an office at 16B The Diamond - please call in and meet our Development Officer, Elaine Gray, or telephone us with your views on (01504) 372665. You can join Foyle Civic Trust by simply completing the membership application form at the end of this review.

I commend the *Review* to you and hope that you enjoy reading it.

– James Sammon
Chairman

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Conservation Today

By Laurence Manogue and Edited by Joan Pyne

The original version of this article was given as a speech by Laurence Manogue, Principal Conservation Architect, Department of the Environment, in the Tower Museum.

The Environmental Services of the Department of the Environment has completed its first survey of Northern Ireland's built heritage, which began twenty five years ago. No fewer than 8,500 buildings have been listed and 43 conservation areas have been designated. Each year a large number of repair and maintenance grants are dealt with at a cost of £2.2 million. It is estimated that this level of grant aid attracts nearly £10 million of private sector finance. In the region of 800 planning applications in relation to listed buildings are processed annually. Nevertheless, the destruction of our built heritage continues apace. Ten years ago there were over 400 thatched houses in Northern Ireland while today just over 100 survive, and many of those are in poor condition.

The events of the past twenty five years in Northern Ireland have taken their toll both in terms of the loss of human life and in the loss of buildings. Towns and cities have suffered. While few listed buildings have been lost as a result of the havoc, the effect on High Streets has been substantial. The impact of the ceasefire may, ironically, pose a further threat to our buildings. Buildings are a reminder, on a daily basis, of what happened in the past. They belong to history and history is sometimes unpleasant to remember. It may be the case that people want to forget what has happened and do not want to be reminded of unpleasant experiences which are sometimes associated with older buildings and streetscapes. It is important that buildings should not be included in this process of communal amnesia, and short term pressures to demolish them should be resisted for the benefit of future generations who may see our past in a more positive light.

There is, in our society, a limited respect for the built tradition. The desire to see things built anew and a wish to abandon the past will add to the pressure to tear down the old fabric of our towns, cities, and villages, and to make a new start. That fragile balance between the old and the new must be maintained. New development must not only contribute to the economy but it must provide quality that matches the example of history and allows old buildings to be reborn.

Contrary to popular belief, which implies that listed buildings in Northern Ireland are in some way substandard and a liability, we have found that 70 percent of them are in good condition. Approximately 15 per cent are categorised as being "at risk" and a further 15 per cent are considered vulnerable. If these figures are to be improved, imaginative ways will have to be found to encourage their retention.

While interest in the natural environment is expanding, and is to be welcomed, care must be taken to ensure a balance between our built heritage and the natural environment. There is a growing interest, among a very large and vociferous sector of society, in the importance of the rural landscape, while our urban landscape engenders little of that enthusiasm. It is possible to maintain animal or bird life by breeding, but, alas, this does not apply to buildings! An important building, once lost, is gone forever. Furthermore, a considerable amount of energy is locked into old buildings. They took energy and resources to build and rather than waste those precious assets through demolition, they should be preserved. The recent decision by the Western Area Education and Library Board to acquire the former Tillie and Henderson shirt factory in Derry and to convert it for educational purposes deserves huge praise. We should also remember that it is important to get young people interested in conservation of buildings. Interest and involvement with the natural environment has begun among the young, but the same cannot be said for our built heritage.

For too long the protection of the built heritage has been considered to be the responsibility of government. In a world of shrinking resources, that may become more difficult to continue in the future. Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries. More people will be coming, especially in the short term, to Northern Ireland. Tourists do not want to visit badly designed modern buildings. Good architectural conservation which enhances the beauty of the buildings of our cities, towns, and countryside is good for business and has the ability to create jobs in the future.

Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland



Photograph courtesy of Clive Hambler - "Tree News" magazine

Founded in 1983, Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland is a charitable organisation which protects the environment through practical conservation work.

We have six offices throughout Northern Ireland, and co-ordinate weekday conservation groups, weekend groups, working holidays and natural breaks. We also support schools, local and community groups through the B.T.C.V. (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) affiliation scheme and work with many organisations.

C.V.N.I. is an equal opportunities organisation and tries to involve the local community in task work as much as possible. The Department of the Environment's Action for Community Employment (A.C.E.) scheme provides us with a large proportion of our staff, and many more people are given access to proper quality training; we have over 110 courses, covering everything from an introduction to conservation to woodland management.

Unemployed members of our mid-week and weekend groups have the opportunity to do something meaningful with their time and have a chance to make a positive contribution to their surroundings. New skills are learnt, thereby building confidence and a feeling of purpose. This also equips volunteers with the skills required to take advantage of the growing

number of jobs which are becoming available in the environmental sector. In fact, many of our unemployed volunteers have gone on to take up employment in this field.

Over the summer, C.V.N.I. Derry were involved in many activities such as habitat creation, woodland management, and dry stone walling. One of our long-term projects is the management of the Foyle Bridge woodland. C.V.N.I.'s work at this site includes tree planting, removal of dead material, habitat creation, litter lifting and tree thinning. This project has received tremendous support from local school children and the general public, as well as our regular volunteers.

C.V.N.I. brings together people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to carry out practical conservation activities, and our work continues throughout the year. You do not need to be a member to participate, and need little or no training as there is always someone on site to show you what to do.

If you would like further information, contact:

John Magowan
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Londonderry
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Traffic in Historic Towns

Historic towns are fragile entities. As we have seen all too often in the last fifty years, it is very easy to destroy them by building more roads and car parks to cater for a seemingly insatiable desire for bringing private cars right into the middle of our towns.

Although the fashion for road building and comprehensive redevelopment has thankfully been recognised as only adding to the problems and not solving them, there remain acute transport dilemmas and paradoxes in historic towns. In particular there is a growing tension between the desire for increased car ownership and the evils of pollution and congestion.

With increasing public awareness of environmental issues and the need for sustainable action stemming from the Rio summit, Local Agenda 21 and European directives, traffic in towns has once again become a major political and social issue.

Attempting to solve traffic problems by further major road building in town centres would be expensive and self-defeating. Expanding the capacity for motor vehicles would only lead to greater destruction of the historic fabric and encourage an even greater reliance on car travel, leading to increased demand for road space.

It is clear that new strategies are needed to deal with the problems. There is probably no one single solution and what we are now looking at is a package of measures which are versatile and flexible. Because there are no longer the large blocks of public money which were available thirty years ago, it is essential to consider schemes which are not capital intensive, and we should ideally be looking at measures which can be reversed if necessary.

Many historic towns are now adopting transport strategies which aim to provide a balanced system which conserves the environment, character and heritage of the town, whilst allowing for travel necessary for its economic health. The key word is 'management'. The strategies involve managing car travel and providing attractive alternatives including cycling, walking, public transport and a comprehensive Park and Ride system. Traffic management measures are essential,

including car parking pricing policies, and the whole strategy needs to be integrated with planning and land use policies aimed at reducing the need for private car travel into our centres.

Walled towns have their own special character. In the past many towns pulled down their walls and gates to open up the centre for increased traffic. Where they survive, as they do remarkably intact in Londonderry, they need to be considered a positive asset and used to the full in defining traffic management strategies for the town.

In England we have an English Historic Towns Forum, with 52 member cities and towns. We meet to discuss and exchange best practice on all matters relating to historic towns including, of course, traffic and transport. Canterbury is a leading member of the Forum and is generally regarded as being well advanced in its transport and traffic management strategies.

Before going into detail, it will be necessary to provide a little background on the city itself, and the problems it faces. First of all, Canterbury has many roles:

- * it is an ancient and historic city, with 1500 listed buildings, walls, a castle, and the cathedral.
- * it receives 2.5 million tourists (rising by 50,000 each year), with the majority visiting the cathedral.
- * it is a major shopping area (1 million + sq. feet shopping floorspace in the city centre.
- * university city - 24,000 students
- * moreover, it is a small city, with only 40,000 residents (2000 living within the city walls)

All this means that the city is extremely busy. It also means that we have to try and cope with very large numbers of people wanting to come into the city every day in very large numbers of vehicles.

The planning strategy for the city is to enable it to prosper while safeguarding its heritage, and to continue to bring about improvements in environmental quality for the benefit of people who live in Canterbury, together with the large number of people who come into the city every day to work, study, shop or to experience the cultural and

leisure opportunities which the city offers. Because Canterbury has such a special character, it will continue to be under pressure for new development and, although there is still the capacity for change in the city, it has long been recognised that neither the city centre nor the city as a whole has the capacity to provide for all activities and new development which might, in other circumstances be considered desirable.

The principles of development restraint have been firmly established in Canterbury, through the Kent Structure Plan and the Canterbury City Local Plan, for over a decade, and can be summarised as follows:

- (1) protection and conservation
- (2) geographical containment
- (3) control of land use in city
- (4) control of traffic within the city

In balancing the demands for growth in activities, the Canterbury District Local Plan (1994) puts forward the following priorities:

- (1) residential use
- (2) community, cultural and leisure facilities
- (3) comparison and specialist shopping
- (4) managing tourism for the city's greater benefit
- (5) education and health care provision

All these have the advantage of spreading trip generation throughout the day, making the best use of car parking and highway capacity, public transport, cycling and walking, and reducing pressure for the new housing and commercial development outside Canterbury.

Transport Policies

In 1990, the Government produced a White Paper outlining its environmental strategy entitled 'This Common Inheritance'. The Government's aim is to civilise urban traffic, easing congestion, helping to improve the local environment and reducing air and noise pollution. The importance of good traffic management and promotion of effective alternatives to the car was recognised.

Amongst the types of measure favoured by the Government are:

- road improvements and extra public transport capacity, to take traffic out of residential areas
- bus priority measures

- * improved traffic control systems (for example, linked traffic lights)
- * improved signing
- * using parking controls to influence traffic demand
- * better parking management and enforcement

These measures are already being promoted in Canterbury.

A Balanced Strategy

Between 1980 and 1990, traffic in Canterbury grew by 67% (over 5% a year). At peak hours most of the trafficked roads are congested. Outside peak hours spare capacity is being reduced all the time. Continued growth of this order simply cannot be contemplated, with all the consequences for deterioration of the quality of life enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

What we now have in Canterbury is a comprehensive balanced strategy, which encompasses several modes of transport. It aims to try to 'match' the needs for transport with the urban fabric and functions of the different parts of the city.

Parking

The biggest challenge is how to persuade people to change their habits and leave their cars at home or on the outskirts of town and cycle, walk or come in by bus or train? The key to achieving this is car parking - how much there is, where it is and what it costs. If car parking continues to be available in the city centre then it will be used and continue to attract large numbers of vehicles leading only to increased congestion, air pollution and frustration all round.

Each town is different and no single solution is likely to be appropriate in every case, but it will be interesting to see what ideas and solutions might be useful in Londonderry.

Last year I visited Londonderry with the European Walled Towns Friendship Circle and I know that the Foyle Civic Trust has a keen appreciation of its role in safeguarding the heritage of this fine city. You may already have ideas of your own (I'm sure you will) on what to do about traffic in Londonderry and I'm sure there will be a stimulating discussion and debate.

- J Mansell Jagger

Director of Planning, Canterbury City Council

Daily Life in a Conservation Area

Each member of the Northern Ireland Historic Buildings undertook to visit several conservation areas during the summer of 1995 and to write a report of their findings. The following article is based on my account of the Clarendon Street conservation area, Londonderry, submitted to the Historic Buildings Council.

Having had the experience of living and raising my family in the Clarendon Street conservation area for seventeen years, I would like to relate some of my observations. During this time my husband and I have restored an unlisted victorian house. We are now in the process of restoring a large, listed, georgian-style house which was built in 1867. Both of these buildings are sited within the designated conservation area.

The buildings within the Clarendon Street conservation area were laid out in the nineteenth century. The houses were built for the merchant classes where they lived with their families. This older framework of substantial terrace houses, side by side with smaller ones, co-existed with a variety of victorian commercial and industrial edifices.

The area contains those special architectural and historical features which justify designation. It possesses that functional and harmonious whole which is, in many cases, more important than glorious individual houses.

The built fabric of the area remained relatively unchanged until the late 1960's. Within the last twenty five years the majority of the larger family houses have been converted from residential to commercial/professional use. Almost all the families who once lived in the larger houses in the area have left. As a result, a large part of the locality becomes dead in the evening and at the week-end. Very few people live above the offices. However, many of the houses which have been converted to commercial usage have been improved with the help of urban development grants. New roofs, new railings, repointing, and other improvements have certainly enhanced the appearance of the outside of the buildings. Regrettably, the

same cannot be said for some of the interiors. Many original features have been destroyed to meet fire authority standards, and damage has been caused by owners who are insensitive to the value and beauty of the original fixtures.

Most of the smaller houses continue to be occupied by families. Many of the people who live in them are unemployed. Until now these smaller properties have been seen as starter homes. In some cases, these families move out to bigger houses on the outskirts of the city, as their size increases.

In my experience, very few people who either live or work in the conservation area are aware of the significance of this designation. Most owners realise that there are certain things that they cannot do to the front of their property if they are applying for a grant. However, some owners have carried out unsympathetic alterations to the exterior of their properties at their own expense. The cachet associated with living inside a conservation area, which applies in other parts of these islands, is certainly not the case in Londonderry. If anything, the opposite is true.

Information for property owners is not readily available. There is no full-time conservation officer based in Derry who will advise owners on the correct aspects of restoration. The local planning office and the city council fail to provide information to property owners in the conservation area on aspects of management, traffic control and the overall future plans for the area. "To be effective, leaflets should be distributed to all those living and working in the conservation area or with an interest in its built fabric. Detailed character analysis especially should be suitable for distribution to every address in the area concerned, in order to raise public awareness of why it has been designated". (*English Heritage, Conservation Area Practice*). It has been my experience that few people are aware of the factors constituting that special architectural or historical quality which warrants designation.

There are no markers or information points on any street or building inside the designated

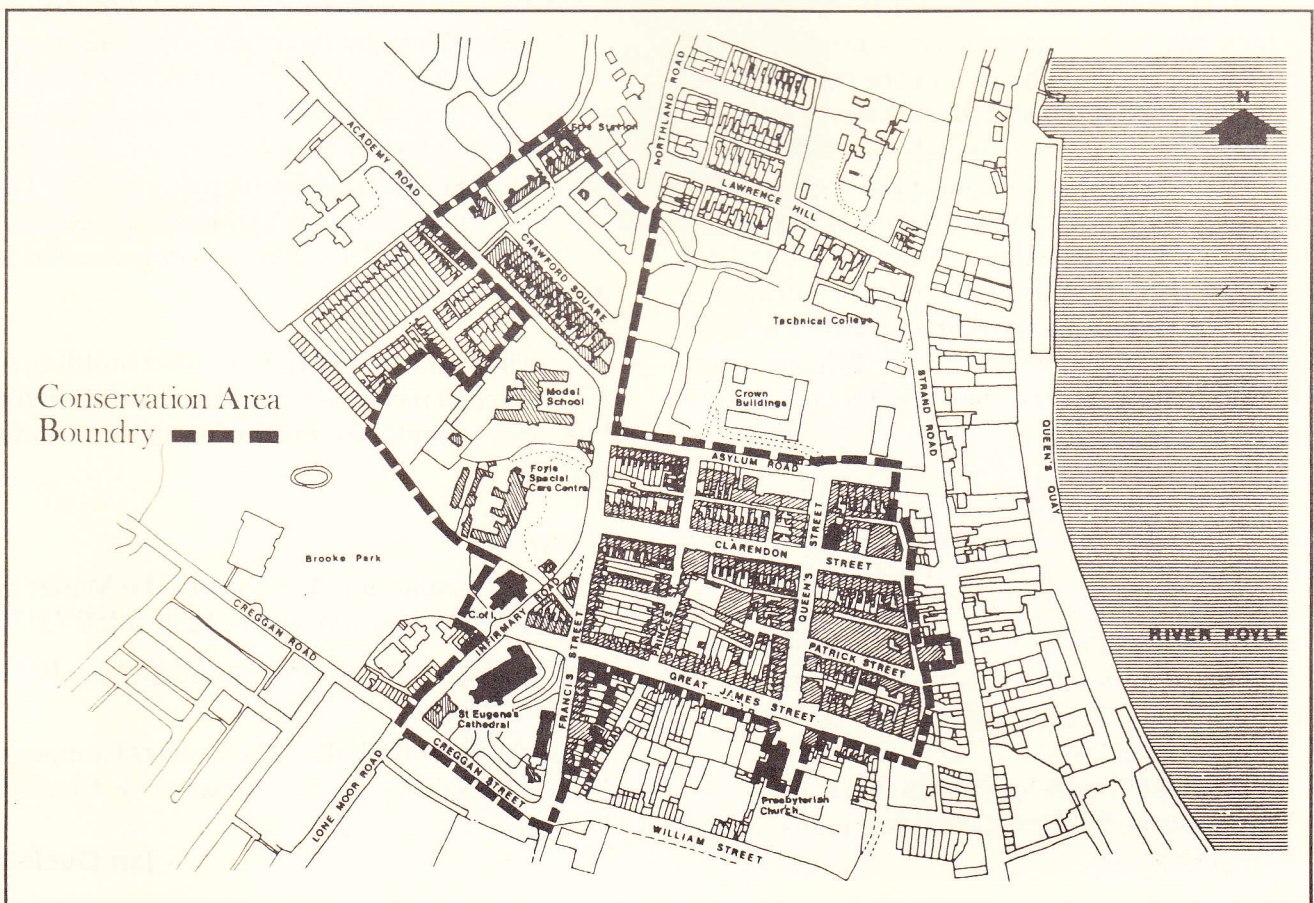
area to indicate that the Clarendon Street conservation area exists. The buildings themselves, even those with architectural or historical significance, do not display even brief descriptions of their history. On contacting the local tourist office I was told that no information exists on either of the two conservation areas in the city, although both of them are mentioned, in passing, in the booklet produced for the Foyle Civic Trust bus tour of the city. There is no building, in the Clarendon Street conservation area which is open to the public, where they could see and admire the elegant interiors that exist in some of the houses and which could serve as inspiration and guidance to others.

When the area was designated, only one side of Great James Street was included. This

seems to me to be nonsensical as the other side of the street is, in my opinion, worthy of inclusion. It contains many good examples of solid three storey former family houses. No. 39 is a particularly fine three-bay, three storey, over basement, building which might even be worthy of listing.

The ultimate function of a conservation area is to protect the historical and architectural bequest which has been passed on by previous generations. I remain to be convinced that this objective has been satisfactorily attained in the case of the Clarendon Street conservation area. Will our successors, a century from now, be happy with our guardianship of the buildings and streets whose care we have been entrusted with?

— Joan Pyne



The Old Post Office, Eglinton

– A Listed Building At Risk –

The 'Flight of the Earls' in 1607 left Ulster leaderless and cleared the way for the Plantation with Protestants, in an attempt to weaken resistance to English rule. The Grocers' Company of the City of London was granted the townland of Muff, and the village came into being. It was renamed Eglinton after a visit by Lord Eglinton in 1858. The Company granted the lease to a number of leasees, but by 1821 they were dissatisfied with the returns on their investment and decided to retake possession. The result was the rebuilding of Muff in the 1820's and 1830's, as reported by John Wiggins, the Company's agent, in 1836.

It was during this period that many attractive buildings were constructed along the Main Street. Some remain in an excellent state of preservation. An example is the Northern Bank which was built as the Sessions House and Market. However, the same cannot be said of the old Post Office, which is situated on Main Street on the corner with Cottage Row. The building is now derelict, apart from one wing which has been repaired and is now occupied by Village Video. The roof of the other wing is in a state of collapse and the two storey building joining the two wings, which was left open to the public for some time, has now been boarded up. The result is, of course, that it has been badly vandalised and used as a dumping ground for rubbish. However the shell and roof still appear intact and the space above the windows where a plaque must have been can still be seen. Unfortunately, no-one can recall ever seeing a plaque there.

This building has been listed as 'of special architectural and historical importance'. In 1973, before the enlargement of the village had commenced, the Londonderry Development Committee designated the village as Category A and the Post Office as Category B. It was described by John Wiggins in 1836 as:

"a plain building, [which] is yet so contrived as to be very ornamental to the village"

J S Curl described it in 1986 as a:

"charming 2 storey pedimental building with 2 single wings in a reticent late neo-classical manner with incongruous Tudor chimneys"

Today it could only be described as an eyesore, detrimental to the village because of the dereliction. To quote from John Wiggins' Summary and Remarks in the 1836 report:

"3rd - The Carpenters House Shop and Store in Muff. This building is newly erected in lieu of the miserable shed before used and calculated to carry on the business of the state to advantage and besides be a place of security for many articles of company property which require protection".

It was still the Company's carpenter's yard and dwelling house in 1877, listed as such in the sale brochure. Subsequently it was acquired by the Quinn family and became a general shop and post office. By the 1960's it had become a post office, dwelling house and chemist. Finally, it housed the Department of Agriculture office and the post office until the death of Miss Quinn. The building remained in the Quinn family but was no longer occupied and has now degenerated to its present state.

The Old Post Office is a 'listed building at risk' which, if reclaimed, could still 'carry on the business. . . [and] be a place of security' in some capacity.

References:

1. "Survey Valuation & Report of the Manor of the Grocers" by John Wiggins, 1836 (MSS 7317).
2. J. S. Curl, *The Londonderry Plantation*, 1609-1914.
3. Brochure for the Sale of the Grocers Company Estate, on sale by Messrs Stewarts & Kincaid, Dublin.

– Jan Ducker

**The Old Post Office,
Main Street, Eglinton.**

*Photograph taken ca.
15 years ago.*

*Compare with similar photograph
taken June 1995.*



**The Old Post Office,
June 1995**

**Rear View,
June 1995**



The Ballyarnett Racecourse

Once described as the 'Ascot' of Ireland, there is now little to convince the modern visitor that the old 'Ballyarnett Racecourse' was in its time indeed a fitting place for the 'sport of Kings'.

Straddling the townlands of Shantallow and Ballyarnett, the racecourse was in use in the early 1700's, the first recorded meeting being held in 1715 when the main event had a prize of 20 guineas. The history of horse-racing in the area goes as far back as 1603 when King James I granted a charter to the then military governor, Sir Henry Dowcra, where provision was made for the holding of a fair, "on the vigil, day and morrow of St Lawrence (9th, 10th, 11th August), and the three days following at Derrie every year with horse races'.

These early meetings were held on the strand, now the Strand Road, and were occasionally interrupted by the tide. It was not, however, until the late 18th century that the Derry races were publicly mentioned. The races flourished alongside the fairs and markets, producing much excitement, although perhaps credit for a significant portion of their attraction should be given to a sport no longer tolerated, namely that of cock-fighting. Cock-fighting appeared to form a regular ingredient of the amusements to the extent that the advertisements ran thus;

"Derry Races: Monday, 3rd July 1780
A main of cocks will be fought during
the week"

and.....

"March 18th 1783, Royal Sport of Cock
Fighting, Tuesday the 25th and three
following days, a main of 31 Cocks and
10 Byes, between 16 Gentlemen of the
City of Derry and County of Donegal -
100 guineas a battle; shake bag battle the
last day for 50 guineas each side."

1775 saw the introduction of steeple-chasing at Ballyarnett, and by 1777 a purpose built racecourse had been completed. One, Alexander Brown, was fatally wounded when thrown from his mount in early September 1789.

Ballyarnett's reputation grew and the success of the course was highlighted when, in 1812, Sir Arthur Wellesley, (who was later to become the Duke of Wellington), bestowed upon the races a King's Plate worth 100 guineas.

In 1814, under George III, measures were taken to formalise matters and an act was subsequently passed to improve the track and regulate meetings. The City Corporation were appointed 'Trustees and Commissioners' of the racecourse. The political calm of early 19th century Ireland encouraged the wealthier city dwellers to acquire primary residences in the country close to the land-owning gentry. This trend, together with the newly acquired regulatory powers of the city fathers under the 1814 Act, augured well for the Ballyarnett Racecourse. Sir George F. Hill acquired land from the Marquess of Donegal and the original course was extended to over 2 miles.

While the Ballyarnett course may have been built on 'a certain piece of waste ground', the neighbouring countryside was populated by the gentry. The maps and census of 1851 reveal a population of landlords and great country estates, eg, Belmont, Ballyarnett House, Boom Hall, Brook Hall, Troy Hall, Hampstead Hall, Thornhill, etc. (Incidentally, the owners of Thornhill at the time were the Watt family, Mr A. A. Watt being the chairman of the 'United Distilleries Ltd.' - the locals affectionately nicknamed Thornhill, now a convent of the Sisters of Mercy, 'alco-hall'). The large estates not only contributed to the social and economic history of the Derry region but were found to be social contributors to the races at Ballyarnett.

Local 'society' hosted the meetings. The popularity and fame of the Ballyarnett course was such that visitors came from all over Ireland and further afield to view the spectacle. A contemporary newspaper article reports a gathering of some 10,000 people at a two day meeting held in September 1861.

Race meetings at Ballyarnett, like so many sporting events in Derry, failed to run strictly according to plan. The meetings quite



Local Gentry at the Races

— *Artist's Impression* —

understandably attracted the many guises of the 19th century 'black market'. Although 'society' hosted the meetings, shibeens and illicit book-making thrived among the locals. They provided 'make-shift' booths and tents, creating all the atmosphere of a fair with hawkers, traders, bookmakers and frequently the unavoidable 'Donnybrook'.

The carnival atmosphere, however, degenerated over time and the meetings became notorious as a focal point for public calamity. The races were suspended in 1834, owing to the exertions of a number of the clergy and resident gentry, who considered them 'injurious to morality'. Nevertheless they were revived in 1835 and the King's Plate of 1834, also known as the 'Londonderry Hundred', was run for in addition to that of the current year.

By 1840, the races were again abandoned on account of the 'machinations of the devil' and the 'Londonderry Hundred' was transferred to the Maze Racecourse, Co. Down. Factions within the city corporation referred to Ballyarnett as a 'den of iniquity', making specific reference to 1823 when several of the gentry were beaten to death by organized gangs - 'it was the blight of Derry'. The 'Londonderry Hundred' (now the Queen's Plate) was returned from the Maze in 1860. Meetings continued at Ballyarnett, but, for some reason, official racing 'under the rules of the Irish Turf Board' ceased in 1879. The Queen's Plate was lost to Derry, and on this occasion was transferred to Galway (where rumour has it that it became the 'Galway Plate', now one of Ireland's most prestigious races).

Ballyarnett was on the wane. The local gentry attempted to keep horse-racing alive by organising the 'Derry and Strabane Steeplechases', although further decline is apparent by the entry of the same horse in more than one race at a meeting. The steeplechases under the 'Irish National Hunt Steeple Rules' continued until 1893, when they were replaced by 'flapping' or 'point to point'. In 1879, fears were expressed concerning the future of the Ballyarnett Racecourse in light of its seemingly inevitable decline. The Corporation set up a 'Special Racecourse Committee' to investigate alleged encroachments and to supervise the interests of the course.

Races ran uninterrupted until Easter Monday, 1926, when the death knell finally sounded on the race meetings.

Horse-racing may have ceased but the course refused to accept any suggestion of a gracious retirement. It remained popular as a country walk and was used by locals for exercising their horses. Cross-country runners found its peat surface ideal and, in the late 1950's and early 1960's, the course hosted the Ulster cross-country championships, an event scarcely envisaged by its gentry founders.

The racecourse is not without its folklore. It must surely be the only racecourse in Ireland boasting a church still in use at its centre. This church, together with the now abandoned national school, dates back to 1848. Some say that the original church stood on the site of the old stand house. Tradition has it that the old starting bell was offered to the minister for use in his church, but he refused on account of its unsavoury and inappropriate past. And, of course, what historical site is complete without its ghost, said to walk the course near Moss Edge cottage, perhaps close to the spot where young Alexander Brown was so tragically thrown from his mount perhaps!

Of all the fatal blows parried at the Ballyarnett Racecourse, perhaps the most potentially lethal was that of so-called progress when in 1978, while constructing access roads to the new Foyle bridge, approximately one sixth of the course and environs was vested to become the modern Ballyarnett roundabout. Consequently, the course was in effect cut in two.

The course now rests partially within the Ballyarnett Country Park, and is currently being restored as a countryside walk. It has recently won several awards including a Shell Best of Better Britain Award. Scarred by the march of 'time' and impending 'progress', the old Ballyarnett Racecourse has survived over three centuries, yet still holds precious memories for those fortunate to have known her in better times. She remains a veiled beauty for those who have come to reminisce and those who stayed to love her.

— **Ballyarnett Racecourse Society**

The Ulster History Circle

By Annesley Malley

It has been the practice in England and Scotland to put up a blue circular plaque to mark where famous people were born or had worked or lived. In the Republic of Ireland the plaque is brown. In Northern Ireland the Ulster Historical Foundation was formed in 1956 in order to promote an awareness of historical figures and the erection of blue plaques. A further number of plaques were also erected by the Ulster Tourist Development organisation based in the Ballymoney area.

At present the Ulster Historical Foundation has given way to the Ulster History Circle which was founded by Dr James Hawthorne, former Controller of the B.B.C.

In the North West, blue plaques have recently been erected to the famous hymn writer and poet, Mrs Cecil Frances Alexander (1818 - 1895). The plaque was unveiled in the spring of 1995 on the former Bishop's Palace in the city, where she had lived as wife of Bishop William Alexander for twenty-eight years. In the autumn two further plaques were unveiled to the writers Arthur Joyce Lunel Cary (1888 - 1957) and Kathleen Coyle (1883 - 1952). Joyce Cary, whose family had lived in the Inishowen area for 300 years, was born in the former Belfast Bank, at the foot of Shipquay Street which is now occupied by Bewley's Restaurant. Kathleen Coyle's plaque is at 16 Bishop Street where her father had owned a shop.

Before these plaques were erected there were only two other plaques in the city, one to Thomas Gallagher (1840 - 1927) in Sackville Street, which is now gone, and one to Sir Robert Montgomery (1809 - 1887) in London Street. Thomas Gallagher was born at Templemoyle Mill, Eglinton, where his father had been the miller. He learnt his trade in tobacco and wines in Derry and he opened his first business at Sackville Street. He later moved his tobacco business to Belfast in 1896.

Sir Robert Montgomery was the son of the late Rev. Samuel Law Montgomery from Moville, but it appears that Robert was born in a house, now gone, at the entrance gates to St. Columb's Cathedral. He was educated at Foyle College and

in 1827 joined the Bengal Civil Service and became a Commissioner at Lahore in 1849, later becoming Governor of the Punjab. He is buried in Londonderry in St. Augustine's Graveyard.

Outside the city there are blue plaques to Jane Ross (1810 - 1879) at Main Street, Limavady. It was she who first wrote down from a local musician, the well known tune which became known as Danny Boy or the Londonderry Air. The words were later penned by F.E. Weatherby in 1910. The music was first published by George Petrie in 1855 in *The Petrie Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland. Volume I.* The tune has been called "the most perfect melody in the world".

In the town of Strabane there are two blue plaques, one to Mrs Cecil Frances Alexander at Milltown House which is now Strabane Grammar School, where she had lived before she married the Rev. William Alexander, later to become Bishop of Derry and Raphoe and Archbishop of Armagh. Her father, Major John Humphreys was the agent for the Duke of Abercorn and lived at Milltown House. The other plaque is at 17 Bowling Green where the writer Flann O'Brien (1911- 1966) lived. He was born Brian O'Nolan and used many pseudonyms, including Myles na Gopaleen. He studied at UCD and began his writing career there with *At Swim Two Birds*. He was perhaps best known for his humorous column in *The Irish Times*. His most famous novel *The Third Policeman* was published posthumously.



Jane Ross plaque (Main Street, Limavady)

The New Harbour Museum

On 18th May 1995, Derry City Council made its contribution to International Museums Day by formally opening the Harbour Museum in the former offices of the Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners beside the Guildhall. There was a small ceremony attended by some of the people who had donated items to the museum, and the outgoing Mayor, Mr Jim Guy, unveiled a small commemorative plaque to mark the occasion. The museum has been developed along the same lines set out in an article in the Spring 1993 (Issue 4) edition of this Review. There are basically two main display areas: the former Boardroom on the first floor, and another large room on the ground floor. Other areas of the building such as the hallways, corridors and stairway are also in use for the display of contemporary pictures, maps, etc.

The general concept of the museum is that it should, as closely as possible, reflect the period of the building in which it is housed. The Harbour Commissioners Office was built in 1882 and we have attempted to retain the victorian atmosphere of the building and carry it over into our display designs. The Harbour Museum will be very different, and have a totally different appearance, to its sister institution, the Tower Museum, which employs all the latest audio-visual gadgetry and modern display techniques of the late 20th century. There will be none of that in the Harbour Museum. Ideally we would like people to think that the building had always been a museum. Someone suggested that instead of cleaning the glass cases, we should spray dust on them in order to achieve the correct historical effect. Another big difference with the Tower Museum is that admission to the Harbour Museum is free.

The principal purpose of the museum is to focus on the city's maritime, port and river connections. We have made a good start in collecting and displaying items related to this theme, thanks to the generosity of a number of local donors (some of whose families have played significant roles in the maritime history of the city). We have also been trying to identify items in other museums which have a bearing on the maritime history of Derry. Already the Science Museum in London have loaned us some

items and we are currently following up a few others.

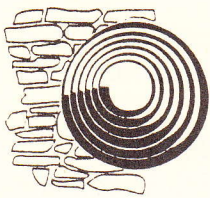
In addition to the maritime objects, we have put on display a selection of items from two private collections which, to some extent, parallel each other. The museum assemblage of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Derry, which was formerly housed in St Columb's College in Bishop Street, contains a varied collection made over the last two hundred years. Weapons and ritual objects from the Pacific, antiquities from Ireland and the Mediterranean, objects from the Orient, objects of historical interest, and strange natural specimens, all coexist in the collection along with ecclesiastical items which belonged to former bishops and clergy of the diocese.

The personal collection of the late Mabel Colhoun is similarly eclectic and reflects Mabel's wonderful range of interests, as well as her seeming inability to throw anything away. This is also a link with the former city museum at Gwyn's Institute in Brooke Park as some of the items were originally collected by Mabel's uncle, C.W. Gordon, for that museum which flourished from about 1908 until the outbreak of the Second World War.

The Harbour Museum also has a small space for temporary exhibitions, and will continue to be the venue for appropriate meetings and talks. The building, like its neighbour the Guildhall, has been floodlit and will, hopefully, continue to make a useful contribution to the cultural life of the city as well as to its built environment.

— Brian Lacey

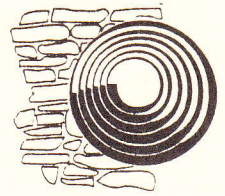




Community Participation

in the design of

The Ráth Mór Centre



The Ráth Mór Centre in Creggan is a fine example of "social inclusion". Creggan Enterprises Limited have placed great emphasis on a good consultative relationship with the people of the Creggan and of the Bogside. The Ráth Mór Centre is the first step towards the development of an integrated approach to the involvement of communities in designing for their future. It brings together professionals and the community in a self-help model aimed at building for the new century and taking responsibility for a community owned development. The building accommodates retail outlets, postal and banking facilities, education and conference space, office and community services as well as free parking.

How did it get its name "Ráth Mór"?

Creggan Enterprises Limited wanted a name people could relate to, be proud of, and that would signify quality and excellence. To this end they involved the children of the local schools. A competition was organized and all the children at primary and secondary level were invited to take part. The task was to come up with a novel name for the centre and to write a slogan identifying the benefits of a community owned development. The winning entries were from Christopher Kerr of St Peter's Secondary School and Jason McLaughlin of St John's Primary School. 'Ráth Mór' was the winning entry and comes from the Irish meaning Great Ring-Fort. In this case, it takes its name from the nearby Creggan Rath and the circular stone fort at Grainain which is visible from Creggan.

Partnerships

This centre is the product of a partnership between the International Fund for Ireland, the Department of the Environment (NI) and the local community. The building was designed by HMD Architects, a local firm.

The Ráth Mór Centre's lead architect was Michael Doherty who, in partnership with local groups, has created an impressive modern structure embracing the culture and heritage of the area. O'Neill Brothers Limited, also a local firm, built the centre, which has already become an architectural landmark in the area and an enterprise that the people of the Creggan and Bogside can justly be proud of.

Buildings and Education

This building is already so much part of the community that St John's School proposes to use it as a resource for their students. The environment is now such an important part of the curriculum that to have a centre like Ráth Mór on the doorstep of the school is an asset. It can be used as a science laboratory for examining the uses of different materials incorporated in the building, for example, stone, glass, sand, mirrors, timber, etc. It can be a resource for language classes examining the use of language in areas such as advertizing and marketing. Surveys, market research and business are other potential areas of study. The building will also be useful for studying the abstract concepts in technical drawing, photography and art, and there could even be projects in in-door and out-door horticulture.

The centre has on-going community and adult education projects which have been very well catered for in the design. The best test of whether or not a building is of good design is if it works. If you have not been to see or use this centre, I recommend that you give yourself a treat. I have used this building for shopping, meetings and seminars on community education and I can say categorically, THIS BUILDING WORKS and is a credit to all concerned.

- Helena Schlindwein.

Making A Start

By Michael Hegarty

The aims of the Bogside and Brandywell Development Association were agreed at a series of public meetings in the area this year, and in pursuit of these aims, the Association has established a Partnership Structure. The aims are:

- * To become a full-time permanent agency for co-ordinating, advising, assisting and encouraging a broad strategy of economic, social, cultural and environmental development, adopting a self-help ethos.
- * To encourage the democratic participation of the people of the area in the development, planning and decision making processes which affect their lives.
- * To encourage, facilitate and co-ordinate a comprehensive community-based development plan for the area of Derry's inner city between Foyle Road, Lone Moor Road and William Street.

The members of the partnership are the various community organizations, tenants' groups, residents' committees, and sporting, youth, women's and cultural groups which operate within these neighbourhoods. Each member organization has a representative on the Community Partnership Council, and there are also up to 5 Partnership Council members elected by residents of the areas at the AGM.

The Community Partnership Council has been established to generally pursue the aims of the association and in particular to achieve the goals set out in the 'Making a Start' document (launched in August 1995).

Liz MacManus, the Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal in the Irish Republic, is an architect who worked in Derry during the late 1960's and early 1970's with Liam McCormick & Partners. She was therefore delighted to have the opportunity to revisit the city and contribute positively to urban regeneration by launching the B.B.D.A.'s 'Making A Start' strategy.

Among the existing development strategies which are being pursued by the Association are the Gasyard Development of Integrated Parkland with cultural and community resources, the new Boiler House Resource Centre proposals of the Long Tower Trust, and the Development Proposals for the Pilots Row Centre and Dove House.

Added to these are the ten critical new development proposals which are aimed at creating employment, addressing health and environmental problems and alleviating the poor housing stock and lack of childcare.

The projects are:

- * Recycling Initiative, which aims to create up to 30 jobs in the medium term, through the recycling of electrical and domestic goods, in consultation with the local authorities and through a transnational partnership with the German environmental group, Zentrum, Arbeit und Umwelt Geissen (ZAUG).
- * Housing Maintenance Initiative - based on a similar scheme which already operates in Strathfoyle for Housing Executive properties.
- * Information Technology/North Project - a joint initiative by the B.B.D.A. and the Nerve Centre which will allow Youth Management of a new training resource.
- * Health research programme - an on-going initiative aimed at identifying the most pressing problems and targeting means of addressing these.
- * Construction Design team - employment creation through manufacture and maintenance work in the community.
- * Enviromental Initiative - a series of landscape programmes which will create a 'peace' walk from the city centre through the Fountain and the cultural and historic murals of this long established community, along the Foyle Road to

Creggan, and back to the city centre through the Bogside, passing the cultural murals, etc, of these neighbourhoods.

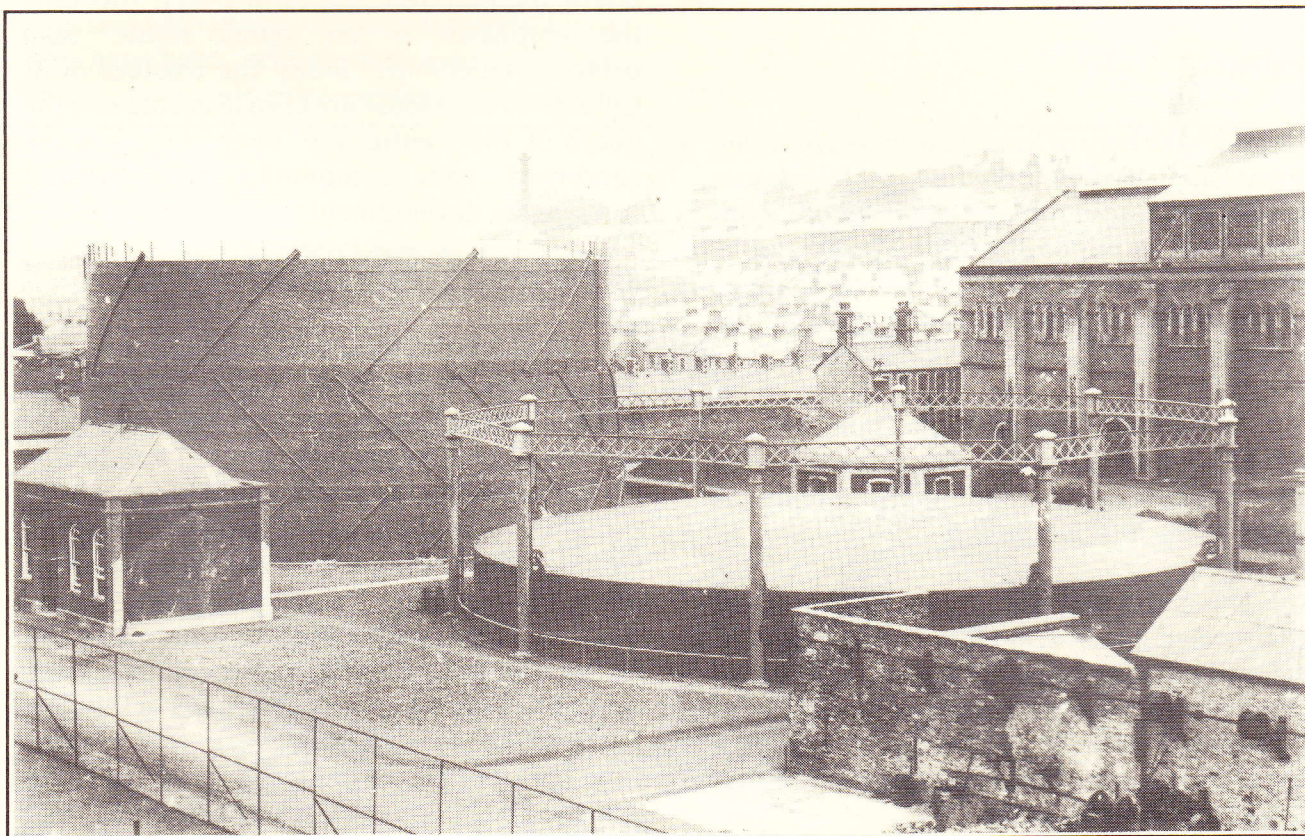
- * Feile Programme - the establishment of a year round festival programme of cultural events.
- * Childcare/Naiscoil - to be located at the Gasyard.
- * Derry Archive of local history - to be located at a new exhibition centre at the Gasyard.
- * Youth Sports Provision, in association with local athletic and boxing clubs.

Of course, none of these projects in isolation will begin to address the lack of facilities or serious social and health problems of the Bogside or Brandywell. However, when taken together, the intention is to instill an ethos of self-help which allows the community to begin to lift its sights above the drudgery of the dependency trap culture and substance abuse which has become endemic in a community where unemployment

is generational and sits at 50% of the population.

The publicity of 'Making a Start' is only a catalyst which requires the injection of support, cash and expertise to begin to address social need. The support so far from the local political parties, the Development Office, the City Council and the Irish Government is welcome and it is now up to the Association to translate this good will into reality. The B.B.D.A. believes that if it continues in the pro-active, dynamic way it has adopted in the past few years, then all of these initiatives are realizable.

Liz MacManus said at the launch of 'Making a Start' that "it is not just a wish list but a carefully thought-out strategy which systematically draws together the various strands of community initiatives. The proposals are indicative of the strength and vibrancy of the Association and the local community. The publication of the 'Making a Start' document is timely and will benefit from the financial investment likely to flow from the peace dividend . . . We now have a golden opportunity to recover ground lost over the last 25 years."



The Londonderry Gaslight Company

St. Columb's Park House

INTRODUCTION

Those visitors to St Columb's Park House who can remember the derelict building of a decade ago are delighted with the obvious imagination and care which went into the renovations of what was a derelict and badly vandalised ruin. Not only has the building been dramatically altered but so has the essential purpose of the dwelling itself.

Originally a private house, St Columb's Park House is today a residential and conference centre run by St Columb's Reconciliation Trust. It is a public building set in the heart of a public park and administered by a community trust, partly funded out of the public purse.

The listed building stands proudly in the park, its livery of olive green and cream paint contrasting with the darker greens of the beech, elm, oak and rowan trees surrounding it. One wonders what the original owner, were he able to travel in time, would think of both the buildings and our plans for it today.

HISTORY

With the help of local historians, Annesley Malley and Betty Boyle, the history of the house has been well researched and documented. From sources such as public appeals for photographs and archival material, we have collected a range of memorabilia and photographs covering the history of both the house and its occupants.

An exhibition commissioned for our recent open day, which places the house firmly in the social, political life of the city, is currently on display in the local libraries.

The house was built by an English naval captain called John Rea in 1788. Not surprisingly, he named his new house Chatham House. The estate covered 60 acres which is now largely incorporated into St Columb's Park. Rea planted thousands of trees, the splendid results of which can be seen today.

In the early 1820's, Rea's eldest daughter married into the Hill family and the building then became known as St Columb's. Generations of Hills lived in the house until the mid 1930's, when various tenants lived in it until just shortly after the second world war.

A recent reminiscence workshop involving some members of the tenant families still alive today brought out many happy memories of that period. During the war, the British and American armies were billeted in the building and Colonel Hill, the last of the line, died in India. In 1949 the building was leased by the Londonderry Corporation (having been vested prior to the war in 1937) to the Health Service. Used as a nurses' home until 1985, the building lay derelict for a decade before being taken over by St Columb's Reconciliation Trust.

Seeing it as it is today, after extensive renovation, I can't help but feel that the house and the surrounding parkland have at last become reunited into what must have been one of the grandest estates in Derry; this time the emphasis is on public rather than private ownership. Today the trustees of St Columb's Park House are keen to ensure that the doors of the centre are open to everyone concerned with community relations and community development.

ST COLUMB'S PARK HOUSE TODAY

St Columb's Park House is now a neutral venue or an 'open' space where groups and individuals can come together to work on a range of cross-community programmes. Identified as a possible residential centre several years ago by the chief executive of Maydown Ebrington Group, it soon became the focus for a concerted drive for funding. The St Columb's Reconciliation Trust was created to administer the project and soon attracted representatives from the main churches and communities in the City. Funding for the building work was secured from the Central Communities Relations Unity and the DOE's urban development grant, and,

following the signing of a lease with Derry City Council, the renovation work was completed at the end of 1993.

The centre can accommodate up to 50 people residentially in fine dormitories, one of which is furnished with assisted showers and toilets for disabled users. En-suite facilities are available for group leaders, as are workshop facilities. The centre is ideal for day and residential activities such as group training, workshops, annual general meetings and conferences.

WHO CAN USE IT?

St Columb's Park House is open to groups and individuals who are committed to both community relations and community development in Derry and beyond. The Trustees and staff are keen to promote an ethos where people can either come to a neutral space for a range of activities of their own choice, or to engage in the wide variety of community relations/development programmes and events sponsored by the centre.

In the last year alone, some 180 groups have used both the day and residential facilities. Users have been school and youth groups, church and community groups, trade unions

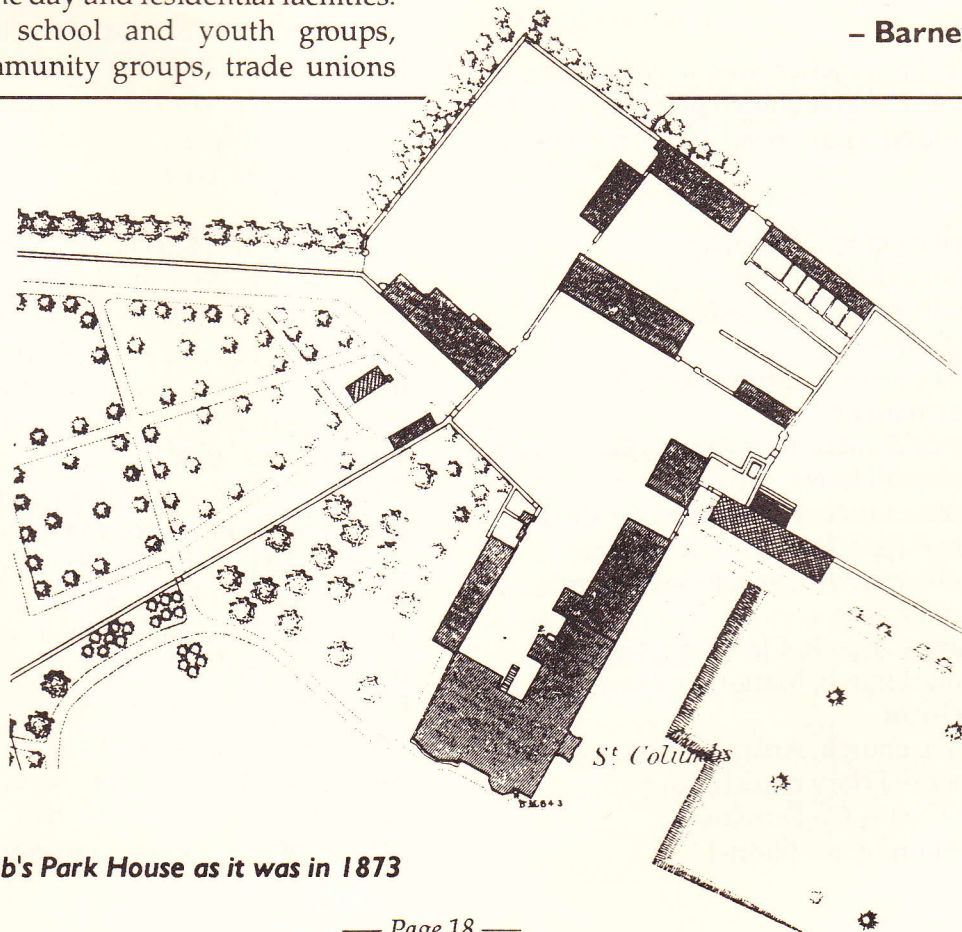
and statutory and private sector agencies coming from the Western Board area to province-wide and cross border. However, no matter how grand the plans may be to market the centre to a broad constituency, we are acutely aware that St Columb's Park House must confer ownership of the centre and its activities to the Waterside and Cityside communities.

The growth of a centre like St Columb's Park House in the community is a slow process - it will take time for roots to take hold, although the announcement of the two ceasefires, the lifting of access restrictions to the park and the current peace process may encourage people to use the space to start exploring their own perceptions in order to more readily listen to the experiences of others.

If the current evidence of centre usage is anything to go by then it is fair to say that St Columb's Park House, in its new public role, will indeed contribute to the debate on the social, political and cultural issues affecting the future of the city. Whatever would Captain Rea say?

For further information on the centre, please telephone (01504) 43080.

— Barney Devine



Plan of St. Columb's Park House as it was in 1873

William Hague fl. 1860-1899

Architect

William Hague's architectural practice flourished in the second half of the nineteenth century between 1860 and 1899. The son of a Co. Cavan building contractor he established himself in Dublin securing commissions from both sides of the religious divide. His enterprising early endeavours greatly enhanced his reputation, and he won three architectural competitions in the early 1860's, namely Sligo Town Hall, 1865, Presbyterian church in Derry, 1863-7, and catholic episcopal residence in Mullingar. He likely began his career as a pupil of J.J. McCarthy, whose practise extended all over Ireland from 1840 to his death in 1882 and became McCarthy's chief assistant taking over a number of important commissions which included Maynooth College Chapel, 1895-1905 and Monaghan cathedral, 1881-92. He had his assistant, T. F. McNamara who went on to complete a number of his commissions on Hague's death in 1899 one of which was St Eunan's cathedral, 1890-1901 in Letterkenny where the architect is comm-emorated by a stained glass window.

While his practice was a varied one he enjoyed a considerable church patronage and his works included apart from those referred to above:

- 1859- Catholic church, Ballybay,
- 1862 Co Monaghan
- 1860 Catholic church, Killieshandra,
Co Leitrim
- 1863 Catholic church, Butlersbridge,
Co Fermanagh
- 1866 Catholic church, Templeport, Co Leitrim
- 1868 Dromkeen House, Cavan
- 1869 Catholic church, Kingscourt, Co Cavan
- 1874 Hilton Park, Clones, Co Monaghan
- 1879 Catholic church, Carrick-on-Shannon,
Co Longford
- 1878 St Mary's church, Claddagh, Galway
- 1879 Catholic church, Manorhamilton,
Co Leitrim
- 1881 Catholic church, Ardragh, Co Longford
- 1884 Carmelite Friary church, Kildare
- 1890 Crom Castle, Co Fermanagh
(alterations & additions)

- 1891 Catholic church, Clones
- 1891-1902 Catholic church, Trim Co Meath
- 1893-1896 Catholic church, Stradbelly,
Co Offaly
- 1895 Catholic church, Abbeyleix, Co Offaly
- 1898 Catholic church, Tullamore, Co Offaly
(destroyed by fire, rebuilt 1893)

Hague's architectural style followed that of his teacher J. J. McCarthy, varied Gothic interpretations which included early English and French 13th century Gothic for his church work while he adopted a brand of Venetian Gothic for some of his secular work, the latter being exemplified in Sligo town hall. The quality of his architectural style varied too from robust vigorous handling of form and detail to a hesitant thinness in proportions. Yet in his roof scapes he exercises an adventurousness, a liveliness, which enhanced the townscapes his spires punctuated. This is most evident in Monaghan, Letterkenny, Trim and Omagh where he indulged in a Chartreusian whimsically yet cleverly formed lively threesome with the spire of the Church of Ireland's St Columbs which had been completed some thirty years earlier in the 1860's. No doubt in these displays of oneupmanship he received every encouragement from his patrons.

The four projects which Hague carried out in the North West of Ireland represent a good cross section of his church designs though there was a time difference of some twenty seven years in their execution. The first of these was in Derry, in the Waterside, at the junction of Clooney Terrace and Bond's Hill. The Presbyterian congregation there held a competition in 1863, to find an architect for their contemplated new church and to their surprise a young man called William Hague from Dublin secured first prize. To assure themselves that the edifice was properly supervised they appointed John Guy Ferguson, a local architect, to oversee the work. The building occupies a prominent sloping site with a fall towards the River Foyle. Hague produced a voluminous hall cloaked in an Early English Gothic envelope with rooms

contained in the underbuilding at the pulpit end where a shallow apsidal arrangement defined the preacher's position. An archway under the robing room allows access to the rear of the site - a clever solution, adding a sense of anticipation to the exploration of the exterior. The main interest in the building is its gable entrance front flanked by a four stage tower crowned by a simple unadorned diminutive broached spire. The principle pointed portal centred on the gable, with a large plate traceried window above combined with the tower and the rubble schist walls trimmed with Scottish sandstone make a fine vista to the Dungiven Road, formerly the principal approach to the city from Belfast.

Almost thirty years later the parish priest of Strabane commissioned Hague to design a new church for the parish of Camus Juxta Mourne and Clonleigh to replace the old church of St John's in Townsend Street. Bishop O'Doherty laid the foundation stone on the 9th November 1890 and Messrs Collen Bros of Portadown built the church for £17,749. At the opening the Bishop declared, "The new church in Strabane will be a monument for all time not only to the zeal of Monsignor O'Hagan, for the glory of God, but also of his good taste in selecting the design, and carrying out the most minute details connected with it. Few provincial towns can show a church more beautiful, more solid, or better adapted to the Divine Service than the new church of Mary Immaculate in Strabane". Indeed its tall spire dominated the parish then and still does today.

On a flat site in Barrack Street, set back from the road frontage, Hague created an impressive large cruciform church with wide aisles, centrally placed tower with spire, flanked on either side by two high gables, containing the stairways to the organ gallery and side entrances and so contrived to balance the tower for beyond the side entrance the roofs become lean-to over the aisles. The main portal occupies a central position at the base of the tower, decorated with recessed orders and pointed hood moulding and in the tympanum a low relief sandstone sculpture of the Virgin Mary. Above this a large three light traceried window which lights the space behind the organ and silhouettes it through the pointed arch opening to the west of the nave.

At the octagonal belfry level each alternate face is punctuated with boldly proportioned louvred pointed openings and above, at the springing of the octagonal spire, gabled lucarnes adorn alternate facets while pinnacles terminate the clasping cramping buttresses all forming a flowery corona from which soars a crotchet tipped spire. Bands of blank arcading, grotesque gargoyles add further enrichment. The flanking gables to the tower have fenestration of pairs of two light traceried windows and above in the pediments grouped triple lancets unified by a pointed hood moulding. The aisle walls are articulated with ashlar buttresses in rigid Pugin fashion and between each a two light cusped pointed window with each hood tipped with a contemplative monkish head while the nave clerestory walls, in contrast, have triple-light Gothic fenestration. Each transept gable has further fenestration with paired twin light pointed windows and a flurry of cusping trefoils and cinquefoils. Over the altar reredos in the square ended chancel a large dominating figurative stained glass five light decorated style Gothic window provides a powerful eastern vista to the nave. The interior has absorbing interest created by deep moulded pointed arcades with arches supported on polished circular red granite columns.

There is not a stone chancel arch but two great arches, springing from half octagonal granite responds, framing the transepts. The patterned wood sheeted nave ceiling supported on decorative timber trusses with extended wall columnettes resting on corbelled heads and bunches of stiff leaf ornament, delight the eye, while over the sanctuary the timbered work becomes a panelled wagon shape.

Externally the walls are of blue grey local limestone trimmed with Dungiven and Dungannon freestone, some of which has not weathered very well. Parallel to the south transept is a two storey sacristry with a large meeting room on the first floor. Good stained glass, by Meyer of Munich, fills the windows of the sanctuary and transepts and also the large window of the tower. During the pastorate of Father McHugh, later to become bishop, the walls and floors of the sanctuary and adjoining side chapels received a decorative covering of fine mosaic.

The whole edifice indeed, as Bishop O'Doherty exclaimed, makes a bold impression in a thirteenth century gothic style.

Hague, having successfully impressed the diocese with the design for Strabane, now accepted appointment for the new church in Omagh. Monsignor Bernard McNamee as parish priest gave him his instructions in 1892 and the foundation stone was laid in August 1893 by Cardinal Logue. J. Colhoun of Derry constructed the edifice and including fittings the total cost came to £40,000, almost 3 times the price of the Strabane job and took much longer to build. However the dedication ceremony took place on 28th May 1899, Bishop O'Doherty officiating when he said 'the church occupies a central and prominent position in the town and with its two towers and spires an attractive object to the visitor'.

It did indeed occupy a prominent position set on the summit of the hill that is Omagh where it slopes quickly down to the north near a former mediaeval abbey site. Here Hague had a similar problem to his Presbyterian project, a site falling so quickly that he was able to provide crypt-like accommodation under the chancel end. The church has a rectangular plan at right angles to and close to the road with these western porches, a long nave, separated from single aisles by colonaded pointed arches with a square ended sanctuary containing the high altar with minor altars on either side. The lofty nave roof rises above the lean-to aisle roofs to form a clerestory. The ridge of the sanctuary drops below that of the nave showing Hague observing Pugin principles. The crowning glory of the church is its 'west' front where the nave gable has a great decorated window, below which, the gabled central portal recesses deeply with five orders. On either side, square five stage towers with clasping shallow buttresses, punctuated and decorated with pointed moulded arched doorways, elaborate niches, bands of blank wall arcading, cusped openings and quatrefoil and each crowned with four crotched pinnacles. Rising from each tower unequal spires, after the fashion of Chartres cathedral, make a fascinating feature in the Omagh skyline, and each spire banded and crotched in a flurry of decoration and enhanced

by delightful airy lucarnes.

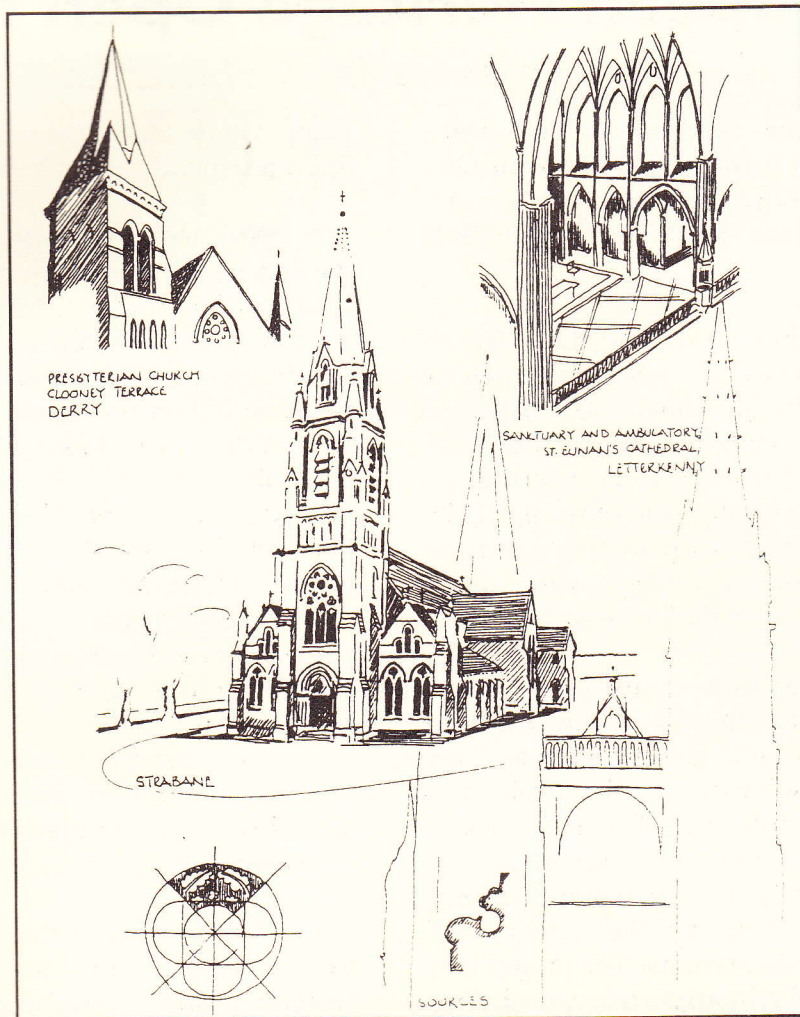
The Derry Journal of the 29th May 1899 described its Gothic architecture as 'A Poem in Stone' and goes on

There are mounds of sculpture rare and fine,
Flower and fruit and trailing vine,
And lovely angels with folden wings,
Cut from stone from living things,
And pure Madonnas and Saints at prayer,
With reverent heads and flowing hair,
Colossal figures, by height diminished,
With every lineament finely finished.

The columns of the arcade have polished red granite with capitals of sculptured Portland stone. Two light lancets light the nave from the clerestorey and the pointed aisle windows have gracefully detailed sandstone tracery. The interior and exterior are full of interest with carved heads, well proportioned mouldings and crisply wrought woodwork. Over the main entrance, in bold relief, Italian craftsmen have depicted Our Lady, the Infant Christ and St Joseph and over the tower entrances the figures of Saints Columba and Eugene. Carved heads of saints and angels with musical instruments adorn the walls of the nave, plant forms such as lily, full-eared wheat, vine and passion flower are depicted, carved by craftsmen from Exeter. Windows in St Joseph and Blessed Virgin Mary chapels have Meyer stained glass. Perhaps the best piece of work is the frontispiece to the high altar, a pieta carved by the Irish sculptor J. Hogan, which was transferred from the former church in Brooke Street.

The building, constructed of rockfaced sandstone, has slated roofs and a fine panelled ceiling.

While the churches in Strabane and Omagh display strong English Gothic characteristics, particularly in plan form, in the design of St Eunan's Cathedral in Letterkenny, Hague followed a French Gothic mode in an assured confident manner. The idea of the cathedral to replace a former church on the site was conceived by Bishop D. McGettigan, (1861-1870) who envisaged the tower being built first which may have accounted for the tower's location in the



angle of the south transept and the chancel and overlooking the town where it could easily be seen across the valley. The building was not begun until Patrick O'Donnell became bishop in 1888 and the foundation laid in September 1891. The plan is cruciform but the orientation is the reverse of normal, ie, the 'west' front facing east. Its chancel displays strong French antecedents with polygonal apse, ambulatory and small lady chapel beyond. Narrow stained glass filled lancets high above the ambulatory arcade light the sanctuary with slender engaged shafts rising up to an elaborate painted vaulted ceiling. The lofty ceilings of the nave, transepts and aisles are also vaulted with stone ribs and plaster infill with fan vaulting over the side chapels. The clustered shafts of the nave arcades echo the detail of thirteenth century mediaeval French Gothic. The whole, completed in a period of one decade, has great totality, being complete in every detail with a crispness and

precision that impresses. Externally, the walls are built of Mountcharles sandstone in squared rubble. Within, craftsmanship and artistry of Irish skill adorns the walls, windows and fittings. The low relief sculpture work on the great nave arch was executed by Purdy & Millard of Belfast, the pulpit by Pearse of Dublin. Later in the twentieth century stained glass was added by Michael Healy and Harry Clarke, both excellent exponents in figurative glass.

The whole edifice dominates the hillside of Letterkenny and greatly overshadows the Church of Ireland parish church of Conwall. It makes a fitting climax to Hague's career. He did not live to see the cathedral completed, its completion being overseen by his partner, T.F. McNamara.

- J. J. Tracey

European Heritage Open Days

— a visit to some local churches —

Following the success of last year's Heritage Days visit to the City Shirt Factory, the Foyle Civic Trust organised tours of the city's churches to celebrate the theme of 'Religious Monuments'.

The idea behind the Heritage Days was to offer everyone the chance to explore, free of charge, the buildings which are important elements in our cultural and architectural heritage, and, in particular, those buildings which are not normally, or only partially, accessible. Churches, of course, come under the 'partially accessible' heading, with many remaining shut for most of the week.

The Heritage Days weekend offered a chance to explore the churches that many of us pass by every day and yet have never been inside. Well in advance of the designated weekend, children from local schools were asked to participate. The response was very good, and many children spent part of their summer term visiting churches, meeting the clergy, and working on their presentations. The project lent itself to several different approaches, including architecture, religious education, art and history. All these different elements were brought together in the excellent exhibitions displayed in the churches on the day. Without labouring the 'cross-community' aspect, it was a fascinating opportunity for the children to visit churches of other denominations. More than one clergyman found himself plied with questions on the differences and similarities between the various denominations.

On 9th & 10th September (dates which, incidentally, we shared with countries as far flung as Denmark, Slovakia and Estonia), the churches opened their doors to the public. The visits took the form of walking tours, the first being a Saturday afternoon tour of the Waterside churches. Although numbers were small, our company was distinguished by the presence of the Mayor, Cllr John Kerr, and Mrs Kerr, who took time out of their busy schedule to join us. The itinerary represented the four major denominations, beginning at Ebrington Presbyterian Church, then followed by All Saints

Church of Ireland, Clooney Hall Methodist, and ending with St Columb's RC, Chapel Road.

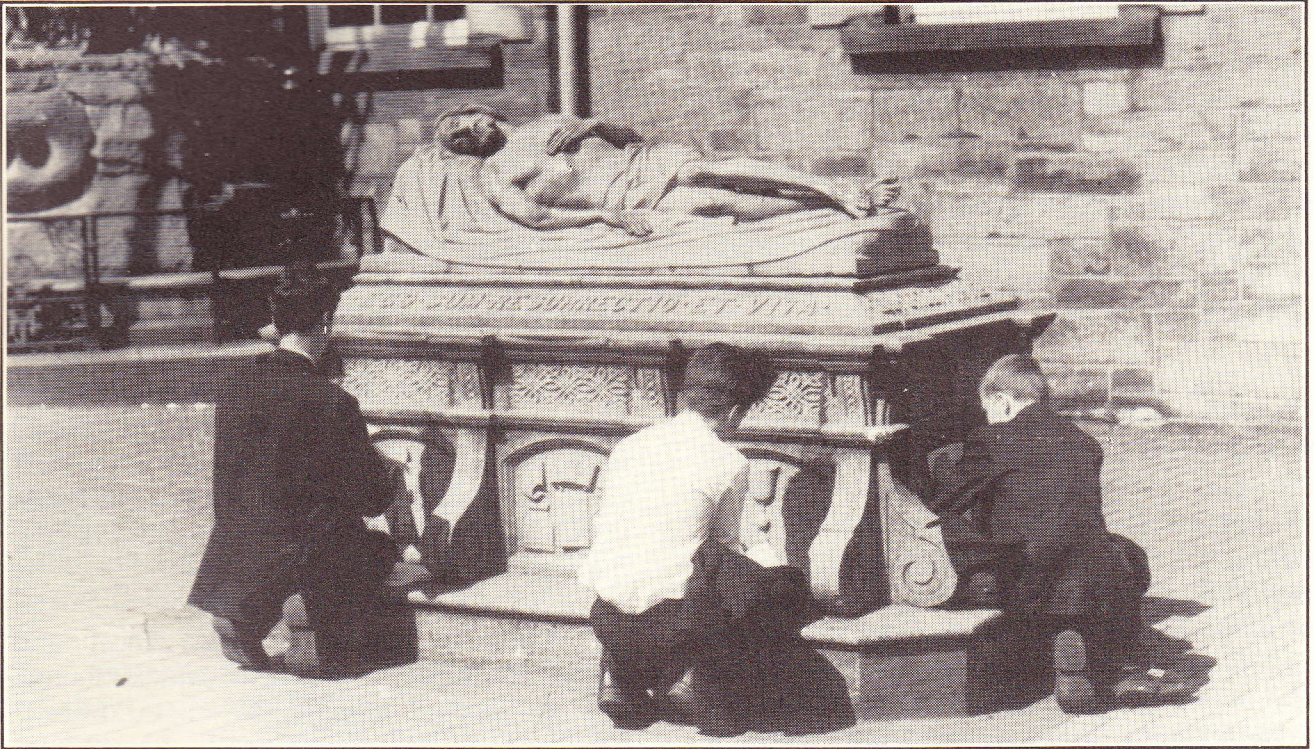
With so many Cityside churches to be packed in, there were two itineraries to choose from on the Sunday afternoon. The common starting point was Carlisle Road Methodist, a flamboyant building that provided a striking contrast to the very simple Clooney Hall on the Waterside. From there, it was a choice of St Columb's Cathedral, St Augustine's Church of Ireland, and the Long Tower, or 1st Derry Presbyterian, 2nd Derry Presbyterian, Christ Church, Church of Ireland, and St Eugene's Cathedral. The guides for each church were variously the clergymen and congregation members, the school-children and Foyle Civic Trust members.

Many people were able to visit churches they had never been inside before, and many beautiful and impressive interiors were 'discovered'.

The down side is that these buildings may be at risk in the future. The effect of twenty five years of violence and the polarization of protestant and catholic communities in the city has led to a severe decline in the congregations on the cityside, putting the future of the church buildings left behind in doubt. The population drift may prove extremely difficult to reverse, making it necessary to find new uses for the buildings. Churches are not always easy to adapt, as is clear in the case of the former Great James Street Presbyterian Church. A more successful re-use has been the architects' office now housed in the former Reformed Church on Queen St. We also learned that the Clooney Hall Methodist church, approaching its centenary next year, may be demolished to make way for a new building.

The Foyle Civic Trust would like to thank Ms June Neill, WELB, for her valuable help in arranging the involvement of the schools, Ms Maureen Hetherington, Community Relations Officer (Derry City Council), and the Trust members who helped to put the whole weekend together.

— Elaine Gray



Children from Templemore Secondary School visiting the Long Tower church for the European Heritage Open Days 1995



Historic Buildings Council for NI

The first Historic Buildings Council for Northern Ireland was launched in 1974 following the passing of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1972. Similar councils in England, Scotland and Wales were established twenty years earlier. Charles Kinahan, who died earlier this year, was the first chairman; he was succeeded by Denis Haslam and subsequently by Philip Robinson.

The present Council was formed in November 1994 under the chairmanship of Primrose Wilson. It operates under the terms of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991. Council advises the Department of the Environment (NI) on the listing of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, the designation of conservation areas; it keeps under review and reports to the Department on the general state of preservation of listed buildings and advises on such other matters as are referred to it. The main change in remit of councils prior to 1991 is that it no longer advises on grant applications. The completion of the initial listing survey for Northern Ireland means that the present council focusses its attentions more specifically on policy issues. During the past year the council has advised on 62 listing and 4 de-listing recommendations.

During its first year in office this council has commented on preliminary proposals and Area Plans for Derry, Larne and Craigavon; amongst the consultation papers were 'Delivering Coastal Zone Management in Northern Ireland', Environment Service Corporate Plan 1995-8 and a report on Historic Buildings Policy Evaluation. In responding to these documents council was fulfilling a reactive role but it became clear from the start that members wished to be more proactive and undertake other initiatives. So, earlier this summer a subcommittee of the council produced an Education Policy Report. This reflects our concerns that the loss of much of our architectural heritage is due to lack of appreciation and knowledge about the subject.

Currently there are 45 Conservation Areas in Northern Ireland (Ballymoney, Northland (Dungannon) and Merville Garden Village were designated during the life of this Council) and during the summer some members undertook to visit them. Members expressed concern about the lack of survival of original details and the hard landscaping which altered local identity. Though the most recent conservation area booklets are well produced and attractive brochures, they appear oriented towards development purposes rather than local awareness and education. At present council is preparing a report for Planning Service based on the conservation area visits carried out during the summer.

Council decided to visit local and district councils to make them aware of its role and to initiate discussions about historic buildings and conservation areas in their area. To date, Council has visited Craigavon, Omagh, Belfast and North Down. On each occasion the ESHB architect responsible for the area gave presentations to those present and the following discussions were lively!

The full membership complement of the Historic Buildings Council is fourteen; unfortunately two members resigned during the year and they have not been replaced. It is interesting to note that many members of the Foyle Civic Trust have served with distinction on councils over the years (Joan Pyne is a member of the current council). It remains to be seen how the departmental changes to agency status will affect the Historic Buildings Council but its members will continue to advise in a positive and constructive manner as its predecessors have in the past.

- Primrose Wilson

Seamus Roddy, Architect

1937-95

Died in Altnagelvin Hospital - Saturday 18 February 1995

Seamus Roddy became an architect in 1972, an ambition he had fostered from an early age. That he achieved it was remarkable since he had a constant struggle with ill-health, which limited his capacity for complete enjoyment of all aspects and facets of life. Yet he had a determination, a resilience, a courage, a tenacity which enabled him to overcome his disadvantages with great success. Remarkable too, in spite of his disability, was the gentle nature he cultivated in his relations with others, with his family circle, with his colleagues and the myriads of people he met in his work and social circle.

Seamus was born in 1937, the youngest of four boys and a younger sister. In the early 1960's he appeared in the office of Corr and McCormick enquiring as to what educational qualifications were required to become an architect. On being informed that he must have 2 A-levels to gain entrance to university, he left and two years later presented himself again having obtained his A-levels. He spent a short time in the office before going to Queen's University School of Architecture and eventually completing the five year academic course with an MSc degree. He was justly proud. He joined the new formed Derry office of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive where he remained throughout the greater part of his architect's career. His enthusiasm for architecture was unbounded and his enquiring mind explored all aspects of it. In spite of his physical setbacks he took part in all the architectural activities of the North-West and visited many places abroad.

Indeed he made a pleasant and entertaining companion on these jaunts and particularly on one Irish architects' tour to Scandinavia when Seamus greatly enjoyed the pleasures of a Helsinki sauna and the accompanying treatment.

He became chairman of the North-West Architects Association for the period 1986-88 and to it he brought rejuvenation and a breath

of much wanted life to an almost moribund group at that time. He organised lectures, exhibitions and functions with energy, cajoled others with enthusiasm and injected the North-West Architectural Association with a much needed fresh sparkling impetus.

His interests extended well beyond architecture. He entertained an avid interest in classical and Irish music and built up a fine collection of recorded works. He loved the theatre and greatly enjoyed visits to London where he soaked up the theatrical atmosphere. These visits he planned sedulously, critically to obtain and savour the most rewarding satisfaction. Fervently he supported the cause of local theatre and gave active and sustained support for a new theatre building for his native city.

However, he will be most remembered for his taciturn, cryptic, humorous conversation. He much observed the passing scene with relish, and with a twinkle in his eye recalled his relation - that renowned editor of the Derry Journal, Willie Roddy. He enjoyed too the local pub scene savouring that atmosphere, its clientele and its liquid with sobriety.

Seamus will be greatly missed in architectural circles in the North-West but more particularly in his closely knit family circle. Our sympathies go to his brothers Joe, Hugh and Matt and especially his sister Anne who was his constant companion since their mother's death in 1982.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

- J. J. Tracey



Membership Form

"The Foyle Civic Trust" belongs to you!

Please become a member and have a say in the future of the Derry area.

The minimum **MEMBERSHIP RATES** per annum are:

Full	£5.00
Concessionary (Unwaged/Students/OAPs)	£2.50
Community groups	£10.00
Corporate	£100.00

Just complete the simple form below and return to:-

THE FOYLE CIVIC TRUST
16 THE DIAMOND
LONDONDERRY BT48 6HW.
Tel. (01504) 372665

Name:

Address:

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Home Tel.

Work Tel.

Membership Type:

Sum Enclosed £

*(Cheque/Postal Order if posted made out to:
THE FOYLE CIVIC TRUST)*

Civic Trust Interests:

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**ANY FURTHER DONATIONS TO
THE FOYLE CIVIC TRUST
WOULD BE GRATEFULLY WELCOME.**

Congratulations!

Congratulations are due to all at St Columb's Park House for producing the winning entry in this year's Civic Trusts Ireland Environmental Awards, which were presented in Galway. The award was for a small multi-purpose amphitheatre created in the grounds of the recently renovated St Columb's Park House.

'The process of building the amphitheatre was as important as the finished product,' said Barney Devine, director of St Columb's Park House. 'The work was done as part of an international workcamp, with young adult trainees (aged 18+) from East and West Berlin joining forces with local trainees from the Maydown Ebrington group. Together, they put in some very hard work over a two week period.' Further help came from the staff at Maydown Ebrington, and another workcamp from France, organised by Holiday Projects West. Spring planting was carried out by 8 local primary schools.

Thanks must also go to Mary Kerrigan, a local architect, for designing the plans for the award-winning amphitheatre.

The structure itself is in a woodland dell adjacent to the house, and seats about 100 people on 3 tiers cut into the ground. It consists of two 'stages' and also incorporates two barbecue pits. It will be used by organisations wishing to put on plays and performing arts/music events. The award was given, the winners were told, because of the imaginative transformation of an unused space into a functional structure which blended extremely well into its landscape and environment.

The Chairman and committee members of the Foyle Civic Trust would like to thank the following for the help and assistance they have given in the past year:

Brian Lacey and Derry City Council
Paul Hipsley and the Guildhall Press
Manus Martin ACE
Londonderry Development Office
Tim Webster

Foyle Civic Trust Activities

— The following is a summary of our activities for 1994-1995 —

Since the last edition of Review, we have at last found a permanent home. The Foyle Civic Trust is now based in spacious accommodation right in the heart of the city, overlooking the Diamond. This office space will be used as exhibition space, a resource centre, and a venue for various meetings and lectures. The office was officially opened by Mr John Hume, MP, MEP, on the 8th March 1995, an event which was well attended by a wide cross-section of the community.

Another change-over of staff came about, and the Foyle Civic Trust would like to thank Ruby McNaught for her contribution to the work of the Trust, and to wish her every success in the future.

Following the success of last year's European Heritage Open Days event, the Trust organized visits to various historical churches throughout the city on 9th & 10th September 1995. Local school children were invited to participate, and their exhibition work added a special dimension to the weekend. A report of this event is included in the Review.

With the considerable upsurge of tourism in the city this summer, Foyle Civic Trust had the opportunity to play its part in promoting the city. The Southern Cross cruise liner, the first such ship to visit the North West in forty years, brought a horde of holiday makers eager to enjoy the Derry experience. Trust members acted as guides for the day taking groups round the main sights of the city, including St Columb's Cathedral, the Tower museum, and the Craft Village. The day was very successful, and many of the visitors expressed a wish to come back and enjoy the city at a more leisurely pace. More cruise companies are planning to come to the area next year, and we look forward to welcoming more visitors to the city.

We are also glad to report that the Foyle Civic Bus Tour, initiated by the Trust and taken over by Derry City Council is still going strong, and we hope it will continue to do so.

The Trust would like to pay tribute to Mr Harry Bryson, who passed away suddenly during the summer. Harry was a familiar figure

around the city, guiding many visitors around the sights. His knowledge of the city was extensive, and he always brought great humour to his work. He will be sadly missed.

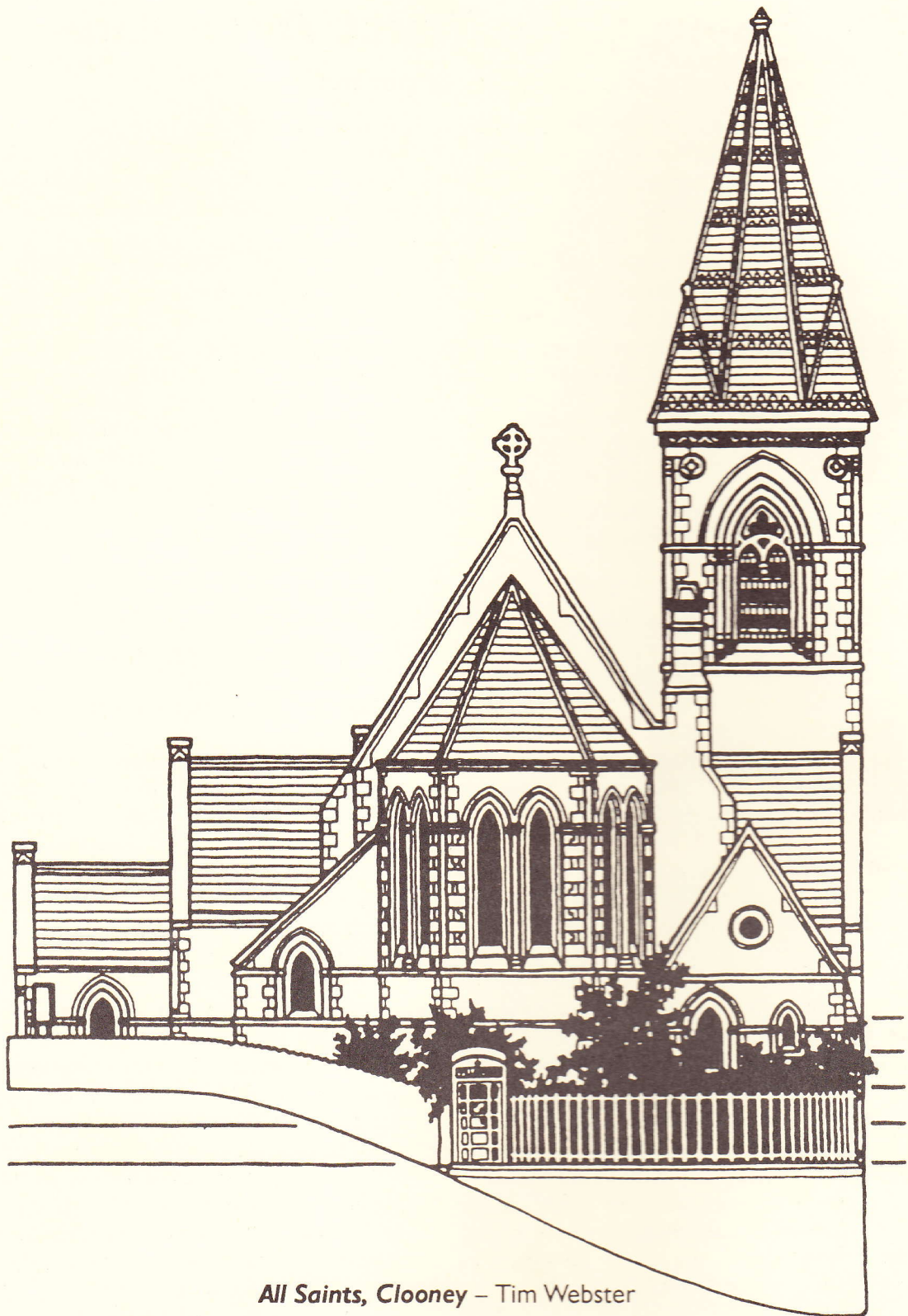
On the conservation front, the Trust continued its campaign to save Whitehall Chambers, Hawkin Street, a 19th century building designed by John Guy Ferguson. Following a recent decision by the Planning Office to refuse permission to demolish the building, an appeal was held, and was attended by Civic Trust members. We are awaiting the decision of the Planning Appeal Commission.

On a positive note, we are glad to report that the Rosemount Shirt Factory has had a stay of execution, with the lapse of the time limit on permission for its demolition. We hope that an imaginative developer will be able to preserve the building, and put it to good use.

This year's annual outing, on 30th September, was a trip not too far from home to Moville and Greencastle. Unfortunately, the weather was not kind, but the day was very much enjoyed by those who braved the elements. Once again, many thanks to Annesley Malley for organising another enjoyable outing.

In May, following the AGM, a lecture on the life and times of Captain William Coppin was given by Annesley Malley. The venue was, appropriately, the Harbour Museum, and the talk was very much enjoyed by all present. The autumn and winter season of lectures began with Mr Mansell Jagger's talk on Traffic in Historic Cities, a summary of which is included in the Review. This was followed by a talk on the works of Scottish architect, Robert Adam, given by Prof. Alistair Rowan. The next lecture, entitled 'Aesthetics versus ethics in planning', by Mr Ken Warpole will be held on 15th January 1996.

Throughout the year, committee members attended seminars and conferences relevant to the work of the Trust, and will continue to do so in the coming year.



All Saints, Clooney – Tim Webster

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