



## FOREWORD



Welcome to the seventh issue of the Foyle Civic Trust Review. This issue comes at the beginning of the year which marks the anniversary of the death of St. Columba fourteen hundred years ago. We look forward to participating in celebrating the memory of St. Columba over the coming year.

1996 has been a busy year for Foyle Civic Trust – a presentation was made to the Sainsbury Inquiry, articles and letters were written concerning the conservation of important old buildings in the city. We note with sadness the demolition of the former hospital buildings at Infirmary Road and partial demolition of the Hogg and Mitchell factory at Little James Street. We look forward with a keen interest to see that the replacement buildings are designed and built in such a way as to enhance the city. We contributed to the strategy for the development of the River Foyle. We promoted the idea of a Town Centre Manager for the city. A changeover in staff came about this year and Foyle Civic Trust would like to thank Elaine Gray for her contribution to the work of the Trust and to wish her every success in her studies. We welcome Paul McCool as our new and enthusiastic Development Officer. In the autumn, we hosted the All Ireland Civic Trust Awards. The restoration of one of the finest georgian buildings in the city, 16 Queen Street was completed to a very high standard by Joan and Peter Pyne, congratulations to them both.

The work load of the Trust continues to increase. Application has been made to increase funding: our objective is to have a full time director. Paul McCool has begun an initiative to renew contact with all friends and members of Foyle Civic Trust and this shows great promise. A growth in our membership is a priority for 1997 and so we appeal for new members. If you are already a member, try to encourage a friend to join; if you are not a member, please consider joining simply by completing the application form at the back of the Review.

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

**JAMES SAMMON**  
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Eleanor Risnor

*Staff Member:* Paul McCool  
with assistance from Kirsty Anderson

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



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# Colmcille

Genuine historical sources for the sixth century in Ireland are very hard to come by. However, we can be certain of one date at least, Colm Cille died on 9 June 597. Consequently June 9 1997 will be his 1400th anniversary. There are very few persons of that period in European history, never mind that of Ireland, of whom we can be so precise. Of the three patron saints of Ireland, Colm Cille was in some ways the most significant. For instance, Patrick was not Irish at all (he was almost certainly a Romanised Briton, ie he belonged to the ancestors of the people we would not call Welsh), Brigid probably did not live in the sense that she is represented - her character is really that of a Christianised pagan goddess, but Colm Cille was a genuine local, historical figure, in effect the first real Irish personality.

He was born in Donegal, probably in the year 521 and possibly on 7 December, into the important ruling dynasty, the Cenel Conaill. He was educated into both the (pagan) Gaelic and Christian religious traditions. He lived in a world coming to grips with those two religions and two cultures. He straddles both and was a leading figure in the process of integration between the two which gave us the marvellous "civilisation" of early Christian Ireland. His cultural significance in his own time and subsequently could hardly be exaggerated.

So charismatic a figure was he that he generated a great deal of legend and mythology. Unfortunately many of the best-loved stories about him are just that, stories. They reflect little historical reality but demonstrate the continuous affection in which his memory was held. The literary and musical works written about him are spread over every period of Irish history, and buildings, statues, stained-glass and even institutions have been created in his honour.



Saint Columba (Colmcille) in the oakgrove of Derry. Stained glass window, Guildhall, Derry).

He founded several monasteries of which Durrow in Ireland and Iona in Scotland are the most important. He also founded a monastic tradition, with his "disciples" going on to found

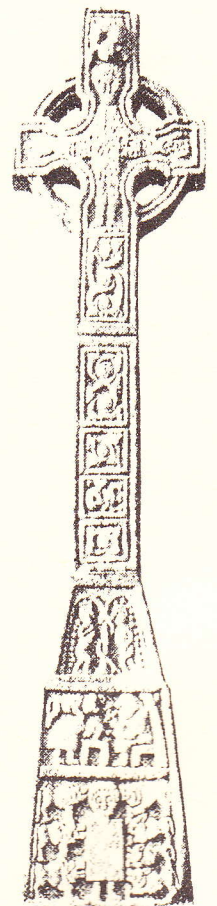
many more monasteries in Ireland, Scotland and Northern England. In Ireland places such as Derry, Tory, Glencolumbkille, Drumcliff, Kells Co. Meath, Swords Co. Dublin, Moone Co. Kildare and many more belonged to the confederation of Colm Cille. Lindisfarne and Ripon in England were places where his name was revered. Many places throughout the mainland and islands of Scotland belonged to or were attached to his cult.

Learning and art became established in the Columban monasteries from the time of Colm Cille himself. He was said to be a poet and a scribe. Traditionally the oldest Irish manuscript, the Cathach, is said to have been made by him. The oldest poem in the Irish language, the Amra Colm Chille, was written about him. Illuminated manuscripts such as the Books of Durrow, Lindisfarne and Kells were made in a Columban milieu. Marvellous high crosses such as those at Iona, Durrow, Kells and Moone continue and expand that artistic tradition. The annals, the earliest forms of recording Irish history, were begun in the Columban monasteries.

Traditionally Colm Cille is said to have founded the monastery of Derry in the year 546, one thousand four hundred and fifty years ago. In fact there is no historical evidence to back up this claim. What we can say with certainty is that there was a church here in Derry before Colm Cille died in 597, that it was part of the confederation of churches associated with the saint. In the year 1150 Derry became the headquarters of that confederation, taking over from Kells in County Meath which had in turn succeeded Iona in the early 10th century.

In terms of our contemporary situation the figure of Colm Cille crosses all the relevant divides. Both religious traditions here, Britain and Ireland, Scotland and Ulster, cross border etc. His name, meaning "dove of the church", is itself a symbol of "peace". Commemorations of this anniversary will be an ideal way of celebrating non-controversial and non-threatening cultural interaction between Britain and Ireland.

One of the saints nicknames in Irish is Colm Cille na feile - Colm Cille of the festivals. A happy, festive and peaceful 1997.



Saint Colmcille's Cross, Moone, County Kildare. Moone was one of the principal monasteries associated with Colmcille.

BRIAN LACEY

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# THE BROIGHTER GOLD HOARD

BY JIM HUNTER

"One February evening in 1896 my father Tom Nicholl and another ploughman, by the name of James Morrow, were ploughing in a field at Broighter, near Limavady." recalled Sammy Nicholl, who had fond memories of his father, who died in 1964. "In order to turn over an increased depth of soil the two ploughs followed each other along the same furrow. My father, on the second plough, struck a hard object, like a stone, at a place where the field had formerly been divided into two by a ditch. When he investigated he saw a small metal dish wedged on the sock of his plough and a number of other ornaments encased in a large clod of sticky clay."

"Sensing that it might be something of value the two men took their find back to the farmyard of their employer, Joseph Gibson, where the clay was washed away in an open sink by a maid called Maggie McLaughlin, who later married my father. To everyone's surprise several gold objects were revealed including a richly ornamented collar, a little boat with oars, a bowl, two bracelets and two necklace." "My father handed them over to his employer who in turn sold them for £200 to a jeweller in Derry." continued Sammy. "They were then bought by Robert Day, an active collector from Cork. After he had the boat repaired in Dublin, for it had been slightly damaged by the plough, he sold the collection to the British Museum for £600."

"My mother once told me." said Sammy, "that it was quite possible that some of the smaller objects could have been washed down the drain, for she did not know that they were made of gold and she took no great care in cleaning them"

Robert Day discovered, shortly after he had acquired the collection, that part of the gold collar and one of the seats of the boats were missing. He travelled all the way to Broighter to see if he could find them but even though he had all the drains lifted the missing pieces eluded him.

"It is said that Robert Day had no chance of finding the seat," added Jack Nicholl, a grandson of

Tom. "A few days after the find James Morrow was walking over the field, where the objects were discovered, and to his surprise found the missing portion of the boat. By that time the ornaments had been sold so he gave it to his sister, who sold it to a jeweller in Limavady."

"News of the find came to the knowledge of the public the following year, when Arthur Evans published an article on the Broighter gold discovery," explained Jack. "Hundreds of people swarmed to the area in the hope of finding more gold ornaments but their efforts were all in vain."

The article also aroused the interest of members of the Royal Irish Academy, who promptly demanded that the hoard should be declared treasure trove and handed over by the British Museum.

The law of treasure trove is a complex subject but roughly speaking, if precious objects are found under circumstances which point to their having been lost or abandoned, then it is a case of finders keepers. However if there is evidence that they were concealed or deposited with the intention of recovery at a later date, then the Crown can claim them, on behalf of the unknown next-of-kin, as treasure trove.

"The Trustees of the British Museum refused to deliver up the objects claiming that the waters of Lough Foyle flowed over the land at Broighter at the time when the articles were deposited," added Jack. "They further claimed that the ornaments were cast overboard from a vessel as a votive offering to a sea god, Manannan. The Trustees argued that the hoard had never been deposited with a view to recovery and could not be regarded as treasure trove."

At this stage Robert Lloyd Praeger, one of the most gifted individuals of his day, was called in by the Academy to investigate the situation. Praeger, who had carried out a considerable amount of work on the geology of raised beaches, was adamant that the field in question, was about 16 feet above sea level, had been uplifted in Neolithic times and was therefore dry land

when the gold ornaments were deposited two thousand years previously.

The case dragged on until June 1903, when it was brought to the Royal Courts of Justice in London. "It must have been a very terrifying situation for my grandfather," said Maureen Boyd, another grandchild of Tom Nicholl. "My grandfather, who was 28 at the time, was brought to London as one of the principal witnesses for the Academy. However his north Derry accent proved too much for the court officials. I believe another witness, Professor Myers, an Ulster-born lecturer in Classical Archaeology at Oxford University, had to act as his interpreter."

The case was heard by one of the most eminent judges of the day, Mr Justice Farwell, and there was an imposing array of counsel including Sir Edward Carson, who acted on behalf of the Royal Irish Academy.

During the lengthy trial much of the argument centred on whether the field at Broighter had been under the sea, when the hoard was deposited. Some of the witnesses argued that the area was covered by the waters of Lough Foyle, when it was deposited between 300 BC and 100 AD whereas others, such as Praegar, declared that the area, where the ornaments were ploughed up, was dry land.

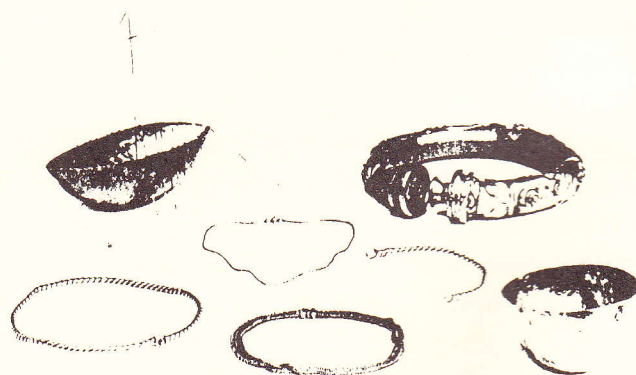
After four days of legal submission Mr Justice Farwell pronounced that the hoard had been concealed with a view to recovery. He therefore, declared that the hoard was treasure trove and belonged to the Crown. To the delight of the Royal Irish Academy he ruled that it should be handed over to the National Museum in Dublin.

After all the media attention he received during his appearance at the Royal Courts of Justice, Tom Nicholl returned to Broighter to carry on, where he had left off, as a ploughman. "His court expenses, said to have been £10, helped to defray the cost of his wedding," laughed Maureen.

Alfie Nicholl, a great nephew of Tom took me to the field where the objects were found. "The field is usually referred to as the Church Field," he added. "The adjoining field is known as the Graveyard Field and

bones have been ploughed up there. By all accounts a monastery once stood there and the gold ornaments would have been part of its treasury."

Local tradition suggests that the gold ornaments may have been presented to the monastery in 575AD after the Convention at Drumceatt, which is only a short distance from Broighter. Margaret Cowan, a local historian, told me that St Colmcille travelled by curragh from Iona to attend the Convention and he was accompanied by several monks and King Aidan of Dalriada. "Their boat was shipwrecked at the mouth of the Foyle," explained Margaret, "and by a miracle they were brought up the River Roe to Drumceatt. Aidan is said to have shown his gratitude by presenting his gold chain to the nearby monastery at Broighter. Here it was fashioned into a boat by one of the monks, who had accompanied Colmcille from Iona. By all accounts the monk fell in love with the Roe Valley and decided to remain at Broighter, when his colleagues returned home. The boat he created was rich in symbolism: the sixteen oars represented the crew of the curragh, the mast the cross and the main support Colmcille's staff. During one of the 10th century raids by the Vikings the boat and other church treasures were buried for protection in the grounds of the monastery. The monks were slaughtered during the raid but their treasures remained undetected and lay undisturbed, until they were uncovered by Tom Nicholl."



Over forty years after the discovery a story began to circulate which cast doubts about the integrity of the hoard. A young man by the name of Joseph Hamill and a close friend of the Gibson family, upon whose land the discovery was made, claimed that the ornaments were of recent origin and were found inside an old umbrella lying in a ditch. Mrs Gibson, his informant, was of the opinion they were part of a

consignment of goods stolen by two robbers from a family, who lived at a nearby house called Oatlands. She believed that the ornaments had been inherited from an earlier generation of the family, who had acquired them during their travels in India. After the robbery the spoils were divided between the robbers one of whom, perhaps because he was being followed, dropped his portion into the ditch at Broighter intending to recover it at a later date.

However, there is no factual basis for the umbrella story and in recent years the debate has changed from doubts about the authenticity of the hoard to questions concerning its origins. Latest research would tend to suggest that the hoard was indeed a votive offering rather than treasure trove.

Although the Royal Courts of Justice had accepted Praegar's evidence, that Broighter had been dry land for over 4,000 years, the whole area is only 16 feet above sea level or one foot above the normal high water spring tide, the area would, therefore, have been liable to flooding from Lough Foyle and there was also a threat of flooding from the River Roe.

It is difficult to believe that someone would have wished to bury a gold hoard for future recovery in a salt marsh threatened by the claims of Lough Foyle and subjected to frequent flooding from the River Roe. It seems more likely that the ornaments were indeed a votive offering intentionally buried there in a bag or carried to the area in a wooden container or boat during flooding from Lough Foyle or the River Roe. Tom Nicholl always maintained that there was a greasy material around the ornaments and this might have been caused by the decomposition of the bag or the container in which they were placed.

The presence of a sea god in Lough Foyle and the widespread practice of making votive offerings to deities in Celtic times were not fully recognised some 100 years ago. Had the Courts of Justice known that Lough Foyle was the abode of Manannan Mac Lir, who was regarded as the Irish Neptune, then the case might have had a different outcome.

Local people believe that his spirit is released during fierce storms. Some elderly folk in the area are

still heard to remark "Manannan is angry today," when the Foyle is rough. They also refer to the angry waves as "Manannan's seahorses." The eminent archaeologist R B Warner states that, according to mythology, "Manannan was the possessor of a horse that could travel over land and sea." More interestingly he indicates that "Manannan was also the owner of a metal boat, which obeyed the thoughts of its sailors."

The very nature of the Broighter hoard - a gold collar decorated with seahorses and a gold boat complete with oars - gives strong support for the argument, that it was a votive offering to a sea god and was either buried at Broighter or washed there during a flood.

There appears to be little doubt, given present day knowledge about votive offerings, that Mr Justice Farwell would have looked more sympathetically on the British Museum's case and the Broighter gold hoard would still be in London rather than in Dublin.

According to his granddaughter, Maureen, "It was one of Tom Nicholl's great regrets that he never saw the Broighter hoard displayed in the National Museum. Right up to his death in 1964 he was still keen to talk about that evening in February 1896, when he unearthed Ireland's greatest collection of gold ornaments."

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# WELCOME TO DERRY!

The year is 2025, We're walking across the newly opened pedestrian bridge over the river Foyle which links Guildhall Park and St Columb's Park.

A real feat of engineering, this bridge has been designed by the world famous Spanish-born architect and engineer, Santiago Calatrava. Innovative both technically and aesthetically it is a major tourist attraction for the city.

The bridge which caters for pedestrians, cyclists, skate-boarders and rollerblading is a car free zone. Shops and restaurants have been built along its length on both sides.

The location at mid span of the popular "Sandwich Co." breakfast and lunch bar combined with its evening Mexican Restaurant ensures that it is busy day and night.

As we approach the Waterside, Calatrava's imaginative glass tower rises out of the trees, It's hard to believe that the entire bridge has been hung from this delicate structure and balanced to hang lightly just above ground level on the west bank of the River Foyle.

The Tower gives superb views over the city and surrounding counties. I can just make out the old unapproved roads which are designated as cycle lanes. These are part of an extensive network of cycle routes throughout the city much used by those travelling to work and shops, and for recreational purposes.

Opportunities to surf the net on state of the art computer technology make the tower's top floor Cyber Cafe a mecca for techno whizz-kids of all ages.

Continuing along the recently completed riverside walk we pass through the eco-Village which has been developed on the lands previously occupied by Ebrington Barracks. These highly sought after houses are sold or rented to non-car users only and have been constructed using natural, low energy materials. This approach is in line with Derry City Council's policy of sustainable development.

The Council's 3 bin collection waste management system is also proving very successful; and indications are that a further landfill site will not be required for the city's waste. Derry is also noticeably cleaner and brighter in recent years since the introduction of the effective anti-litter and graffiti education policies.

A permaculture ecosystem has been established linking the eco-village and the well established St Columb's Park nature reserve. This operates as a community farm which is supported throughout the city and its organic produce is sold at the Calatrava Bridge market stalls each morning.

Further along the riverside walk we come to the attractive Water's Edge Hotel. This has been up and running for several years and provides a wide range of facilities for tourists and citizens alike. It's five storey facade rises directly out of the Foyle with the riverside walk maintained along its frontage.

A realisation by the government in the late 1990s that the rapidly increasing rate of car ownership could not be accommodated "ad infinitum" by our roads and car parks led to an adoption by the D.O.E of an enlightened transport policy which aimed to reduce cars in built up areas.

In Derry this policy was implanted by the construction at the turn of the 20th century, of a widespread tram network, powered by electricity generated by the Sheriffs Mountain Wind Farm, The trams are clean, efficient, and extremely popular with residents from all areas of the city.

An effective Flexi-bus park and ride system operates throughout the year to facilitate long distance commuters and day-trippers. In association with the new ring road, the heavy through traffic in the city centre has been dramatically reduced.

The lower traffic volumes have permitted the reduction in the width of the Foyle embankment and Duke Street dual carriageways to two lane roadways, land released by this has been used to meet the demand for new riverside residential development both public and private.

Several attractive riverside residential apartments have been built between the Waters Edge hotel and Waterside House, These are well served by the Duke Street tram stop. This transportation policy has been a great success and has brought several benefits. These include a saving in travel time for commuters, reduction in traffic jams and avoidance in Derry of the "Road Rage" syndrome which became widespread in the UK in the 1990s.



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Combined with Derry City Council's clean air policy a further benefit is a reduction in atmospheric pollution particularly good news for the asthmatic population.

Close to the city centre and overlooking the river the new medium density, well designed residential developments are quickly snapped up. Many incorporate a variety of facilities at ground level cafes, small shops, restaurants, artists studios and workshops, carparking has been carefully located underground.

Other new residential neighbourhoods have also been developed on the outskirts of the city, These are small scale, compact and well catered for with their own schools, shops, pubs, libraries, churches and community resource centres.

The large public housing estates of the latter half of the 20th century have been transformed by the insertion of badly needed community and neighbourhood facility. Their often bleak areas of common ground have been redesigned to create well landscaped city parks and squares. These are much used and loved by the residents.

Within the walled city vacant space above shops and offices has been converted to flats for rent through the successful implementation of the Living Over The Shop Scheme, Otherwise known as LOTS, The inner city is now as alive and vibrant in the evening as it always has been during the day

Taking a tram from Duke Street we leave the Waterside and cross the lower deck of the Craigavon Bridge to the cityside, the old shirt factories are sitting serene on the river front secure after extensive repair work has ensured their future. North West College is in full swing at Tillie and Henderson's while the Star Factory provides excellent views from its highly sought after loft apartments.

Derry respects its legacy of old buildings, The repair work adheres to Derry City Council's policy on sustainable redevelopment and makes good use of the energy contained within these old walls.

Turning onto the Foyle Embankment the new 4 and 5 storey apartments provide a well proportioned facade to the river and give an excellent impression of the city to the visitor, not unlike the promenade sea fronts created by the Victorians.

Reduced demand for parking in Foyleside's multi-story car park has resulted in the upper floors being converted to student housing. A central atrium has been installed to ensure adequate light in the flats.

As we pass the City Hotel we catch a glimpse of the Shipquay Street Funicular railway which links the Foyle and Bishop Street tram lines. This railway also operates on Simpsons Brae, Creggan Hill and Lawrence Hill. It is a welcome improvement in the accessibility for the disabled amongst others.

Imaginative alliances between the cities developers, architects, and building owners are resulting in the successful completion of several innovative projects, not least the award winning mixed use development at Meadowbank.

This has cleverly accommodated retail development with expansion of Magee College to provide a school for the Performing Arts, student housing and student facilities.

These buildings relate well to the river and Strand Road and have been arranged around a new University quadrangle which has become the focus of all Thespian student activities in the city.

Time to leave the tram again and enjoy the morning sun dancing on the dramatic water displays on the Guildhall Park sculpture garden. This new park extends above Foyle embankment to the river by sinking a short length of the two lane roadway. It is a link in a chain of new city parks throughout Derry and forms a fitting entrance to the Calatrava Bridge from Shipquay Street and Guildhall Square.

The Derry of 2025 is a result of the dynamic City Vision Initiative spearheaded by the city Partnership in the late 1990's. The successful implementation of the vision statement was assured by.

- (1) *Its adoption by D.O.E as a statutory document.*
- (2) *An enlightened and positive attitude by statutory bodies and Derry City Council*
- (3) *A desire by the people of Derry to realise their vision of their city.*

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MARY KERRIGAN

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# Derry

## The Doughnut City

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JOAN PYNE

This article came about as a response to an item published in the Derry Journal, March 15 1996. The writer of the article, Kathleen McCormick-Kelly, formerly from Derry but now living in Sligo, lamented the fact that her attempts to return to live in Derry had been unsuccessful for a variety of reasons. A programme on BBC Radio 4, about Londonderry, prompted Ms McCormick-Kelly to write to the newspaper and express her views of the city.

Sir Roy Strong's excellent broadcast, entitled "Strong Impressions", of January 1996, certainly gave anyone who was fortunate enough to hear it food for thought. Sir Roy focused on Derry in one of a series of programmes on six cities in the British Isles. The programme took a highly critical view of the destruction of Derry's historic buildings and the commentator came down strongly against the development of any large-scale supermarkets on the edge of the city centre, among other things. Sir Roy expressed the opinion that to allow any large retail development on the outskirts of the city would be disastrous.

Anyone who returns to Londonderry, even on an infrequent basis, cannot help but notice the remarkable turnabout in the economic fortunes of the city, especially as far as new developments and inward investments are concerned. We are now in a similar situation to many other towns and cities in the United Kingdom with our stock of multi-storied car-parks, large supermarkets, leading

chain stores, nightclubs, pubs and discos. However, unlike cities of comparable size elsewhere on these islands, it is impossible to enjoy in gracious surroundings the delight of a cup of good coffee, a glass of wine or an ice-cream after a night at the cinema, a play or a concert. There was nowhere within walking distance of the centre of this city of 100,000 people where one can have a drink in an atmosphere of elegance or comfort. Until the recent opening of the New Trinity hotel on the Strand road.

Having lived in Derry for over twenty years, I have witnessed an exodus of people, from both traditions, not only from my neighbourhood, but from the city centre area in general. Most of the people have either gone to live in the Waterside, the growing suburbs, or they have left the city altogether. The result of the drift has meant that those people who remain in the central part of the city are of a broadly similar religious, political, economic and class background. People from the professional classes have abandoned the city centre as a place to live. Imposing town houses, especially in the Clarendon Street Conservation Area, which once housed families, display none of the signs of domestic occupancy. Many of these houses are crying out for owners to restore them to their former beauty and to be again used for the purpose for which they were built - mainly as family homes. Due to this fragmentation the city has suffered hugely. The centre of Derry lacks the diversity and pluralism in its population make-up which are the

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necessary ingredients that constitute a healthy integrated society. Parts of the city die in the evenings when offices close and the steel shutters come down. The centre of the city resembles a doughnut with its hollow lifeless centre.

However, life returns to the streets in the early hours of Friday, Saturday and Sunday mornings when thousands of young people, mostly males, leave the bars and nightclubs at the same time. One's sleep is frequently disrupted by the banging of steel shutters, the breaking of glass, the roars of the revellers and, at times, physical force is used to settle disagreements. There are other characteristics associated with the late night revellers, but let's leave something to the imagination!

Not only did people leave the city over the past two decades, but the legal and illegal forces of destruction and demolition during that period have been, directly or indirectly, responsible for the loss of many fine and beautiful buildings, even allowing for the fact that some of them were badly neglected. Some of these demolished buildings were listed as being of special architectural or historical significance. Among our major losses have been Derry Jail in Bishop Street, Brooke Park Library and Museum, Dill House in the Magee College grounds, McCorkell's Mill, the Burns and Laird shipping office, both along the quays, Ivy House in the Strand Road, listed buildings in Foyle Street and, in the very recent past, Whitehall Chambers in Hawkin Street, formerly known as "The Londonderry and North West of Ulster Female Penitentiary". This list does not include terraces of houses in Great James Street, Orchard Street and the Strand Road. planning permission has been given by the Department of the Environment to demolish the Old City and County Infirmary of 1810 which is sited inside the Clarendon Street Conservation Area. Although the above list is by no means complete, it gives one an

idea of the losses in terms of our buildings in the recent past and conveys the impression that our built heritage is treated with scorn and contempt.

Londonderry is the most important historical city in Northern Ireland and is of considerable historical importance when compared to other large cities on the island of Ireland. In Derry, as in many other beautifully located cities, while "the hand of God achieved a masterpiece of scenic splendour, the hand of man has not always been similarly inspired." For cities to be truly exciting places in which to live and work there must be an appreciation and an understanding of what makes them work as urban centres. A desire among the citizens to cherish and protect their older buildings, not as museum pieces or offices, but as places where people spend their lives, is an important ingredient if a city is to function properly. However, the key to a successful city is undoubtedly the vibrancy of a large and diverse residential population in its centre.

I suggest that the people who make decisions about the city cast their eyes southwards, to Dublin, and observe the remarkable turnabout in the fate of that city. Large numbers of middle class and professional people are now returning to live in the older, central districts of Dublin, something which has not been the case for well over a hundred years.

Until government departments, planners, local councillors and others concerned with the welfare of our city, come forward with imaginative ideas to encourage more people to live in the centre of Derry, nothing will change, and the doughnut will expand. We need to redress the imbalance that now exists in the population mix in central areas and make Derry a truly vibrant city that welcomes and accommodates all who want to live here.

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# First Derry National School Building

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ELAINE GRAY

## The National School system:

In 1828, following a series of inquiries into the state of education in Ireland, a select committee of the House of Commons brought into being a new system of education for the country. It would be a system 'in which no attempt should be made to influence or disturb the peculiar tenets of any sect or denomination of Christians'. Catholics and Protestants would be educated side by side, with provision for separate religious instruction according to their denomination within the system. In this way, the catholic population, which had been greatly discriminated against under the Penal Laws, would now have access to education. One of the main aims of the system was to suppress the unregulated hedge-schools that had grown up as the catholic population sought to educate itself.

In 1831, the government granted £30,000 for primary education under the National School system, to be distributed by a Board of Commissioners. The original Board represented the main denominations, including 3 established Church members, 2 Catholics, 1 Presbyterian and 1 unitarian. The Resident Commissioner, who was the salaried administrator of the system, was a Presbyterian.

There was strong initial opposition to the proposal from all denominations, but the system went ahead, with various refinements being made along the way.

The Board of Commissioners retained a strong degree of control. They prescribed the textbooks used, which carefully avoided any hint of Irish nationalism. Theoretically, other books could be used, but exams were set on the prescribed text, both for pupils and trainee teachers, so it did not work out in practice. The Board retained control over school books until 1900.

The Board also undertook to inspect the schools

regularly, and oversaw the training of teachers through the Model School system. Although teachers were appointed by managers, who were the local clergymen, the Board retained the power to fine, suspend or remove teachers where it saw fit. The Marlborough Street Training College was set up in 1838 to assist training, and began to admit women in 1845.

Despite the restrictions of the system, and the initial objections made, the national school proposal was, in its self successful. A good national school education was desirable even for those who could afford private education.

## First Derry National School

Education has been a part of the history of First Derry Presbyterian Church for a considerable time. The earliest recorded school, founded in 1773, was known as the 'Bluecoat' school, the name being taken from the pupils' distinctive blue uniforms. The boys led the singing in church, in return for which they were clothed and educated.

The school was held in the Primary Sunday School building, and by 1820 it had become too small to accommodate its pupils. The building was enlarged, but in 1849 it was once again too small. A piece of ground was acquired, close to the church, and by 1854 a new building was complete. It housed the girls of First Derry School.

Nonetheless, the same problem was looming once again within half a century. The present site occupied by the National School building was acquired at the cost of £850, and the design for the building was put out to competition. The minister, James Cargin, sent out a plea

to his congregation for funds for the new school, who eventually raised roughly a third of the total cost.

Fourteen architects entered the competition, under various noms-de-plume ('Roaring Meg', 'Derry', etc), and the winning design was submitted by 'Mitchelburn', alias Mr W.E. Pinkerton. The contractor was Joseph Ballintine. The final cost of the work was around £3,600 and all debt was cleared by 1898.

The First Derry National School building was formally opened on 1st November 1894. Mr Cargin was present, and was presented with 'a very handsome study table' in recognition of his involvement in the work.

The morning edition of the Derry Journal, 2nd November 1894, reported the architectural details of the building in very close detail. The building housed three distinct schools: the ground floor of the building accommodated the infant schoolroom and the boy's and girl's rooms were on the first floor, with separate entrance porches. The building also had a basement, and an apartment for a caretaker to live on the premises.

The Derry Journal reports that 'The style adopted, and now for the first time introduced into this city, is an adaptation of the Dutch domestic architecture of the seventeenth century. The materials used for the exterior are Bridgewater facing brick, with mullions, transoms, string courses, cornices, finials, and minor architectural features of Portland cement concrete'.

The building's design won high praise, being both aesthetically pleasing and well suited to its purpose:

*the buildings have been finished and fitted up in the very best style, as well from an artistic as a utilitarian point of view, and nothing has been left undone to make them a success architecturally.*

The building remained in constant use as a school until its 101st year, when the school transferred to the Fountain area, along with the Carlisle Road and Derry Cathedral schools.

During its life, the school saw various changes. In 1922, the three separate schools were amalgamated into a single unit under the principalship of William Crawford. Mr Crawford was keen to develop the senior end of the school, introducing subjects like shorthand, typewriting and bookkeeping, and a course enabling

young men to study for the ministry at Magee College. Considerable alterations were also made to the interior layout, incorporating the caretaker's accommodation into the classroom structure. Caretaking duties were taken over by the church sexton.

In 1929, its name was changed from First Derry National School to First Derry Public Elementary School, and it was transferred to a 'Four and Two' committee (comprising 4 church and 2 corporation representatives). This format continued until 1988, when a Board of Governors was appointed.

Mr F W Logan succeeded Mr Crawford in 1945. Two years later, the 1947 Education Act established the new Secondary intermediate schools, bringing to an end the school's involvement with the education of more senior children. The school then became First Derry Primary School, catering only for children up to 12 years of age.

The school celebrated its centenary in 1994, before transferring to the new Fountain school in the following year.

## 1996 Onwards

The building was purchased by the Verbal Arts centre in the autumn of 1995; at this time the centre commissioned a feasibility study that examined the building's fabric and looked at its design potential in relation to the centre's administrative, arts and educational needs; following legal searches, the school was formally transferred into the centre's ownership early in 1996. Discussions were held with a number of individuals and bodies, including the Historic Monuments Branch of the DOE and the Royal Society of Ulster Architects; these led to a competitive interview process being established and publicised. Twenty-two architectural practices expressed an interest; a short list of five was drawn up and of this a practice was chosen to set up a design team and to take forward the external and internal renovation and conversion of the building.

The Verbal Arts Centre's purpose of this important building means that it will be safeguarded against dilapidation. A tradition of educational activity on the site (that goes back over a hundred years) will be maintained.

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# THE NEW VERBAL ARTS CENTRE AT MALL WALL AND STABLE LANE:

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SAM BURNSIDE

**The Background:** The Verbal Arts Centre is dedicated to promoting intellectual and creative access to our common cultural heritage and to stimulating endeavour, ownership and participation in our imaginative future. It founds its work on the basic assumption that readers and listeners are also creators and that creators are also learners and scholars.

The Verbal Arts Centre's purpose is twofold: firstly, it is to increase awareness of the nature and richness of our literary heritage in both the spoken and written word and to awaken and develop appreciation of the extent and complexity of our verbal cultural heritage. Secondly, it is concerned to stimulate and nurture contemporary good practice in the verbal arts by supporting and encouraging professional and amateur practitioners, and through the development of audiences for the best work by established and new writers.

Towards the end of 1995 the Verbal Arts Centre purchased First Derry Primary School. This month (September, 1996) the Centre announced a major initiative that will take the form of the refurbishment and sympathetic development of the building to a cost of some £1.5m. This is the result of successful lobbying for investment to be made in support of cultural endeavour.

Built in 1894 on the corner of Stable Lane and Mall Wall, just off Bishop Street Within, First Derry School is a listed building of considerable merit and some importance to the City's landscape. It was designed by the architect William Pinkerton in 1892, and its form is unusual in Londonderry inasmuch as it is influenced by Dutch architecture of the 19th century, itself influenced in turn by the Queen Anne style. The style is imbued with a lightness of touch, reflecting, and appropriately so for a building designed to house learning, an underlying desire for freedom of movement and of thought.

Because of the building's importance, early advice was taken from the Historic Buildings Section of the Department of the Environment and the Royal Society of Ulster Architects. Under their guidance the Verbal Arts Centre publicly invited expressions of interest from suitably experienced architects and, using the Brooks method of selection, short-listed and interviewed five of the twenty-three practices who indicated an interest. Given the centrality of the building in the inner city

landscape we felt it important to respect community interest and invited onto our selection committee an external observer; the observer, who played a full part in our discussions, is a former chairperson of the Foyle Civic Trust and a member of the Historic Buildings Council Of Northern Ireland.

As a result of this process the firm of Hall Black and Douglas (who recently undertook the design of the awardwinning Linen Centre in Lisburn) has been appointed to establish and lead a design team in the refurbishment of the building.

**The Future:** This development will enable the Verbal Arts Centre to expand its cultural and literature development work in a number of important ways. We will be able to provide a permanent **exhibition space** with a **childrens' theatre, and educational resource studio** with state of the art **information technology**, a coffee house as an amenity for the Centre's users as well as tourists and others visiting the walls, a **writer's studio** for visiting artists-in-residence and a library/reading room. The new centre will be fully fitted out to provide information systems facilities capable of connecting the building and its activities to the wider world via broad and communication networks. Despite the use of modern technology considerable attention will be given to consolidating the existing fabric of the building. In addition, a budget has been set aside to commission new work by artists and craftspeople and their contributions will be incorporated into the design from the earliest stages.

**Discovering Connections** The new Verbal Arts Centre will stand at the corner of Mall Wall and Stable Lane, abutting onto the city walls at the point where the Double Bastion joins the two. The Double Bastion overlooks the site of St Columba's Church; it is popularly believed that it was here that St Columba founded his monastery in 546, a monastery that was to become famous as Dubh-Regles (Dubh = black, Regles = Church). It is almost certain that this would have been the site of an older religious settlement, just as, in turn, Columba's church was superseded by that of the Augustinian Bishop Flaithbheartagh O'Brolchain who built the Templemore (large church) here in the twelfth century.

St Columba, by tradition, was a visionary and a poet, a supporter of poets and a defender of the creative imagination. He returned from Scotland in the last

decade of the sixth century to attend that great gathering of Ireland's kings and chieftains known as the *convention of Druim Ceatt* (held about sixteen miles to the east of Derry, near Limavady). Here he spoke for the poets of Ireland and against the proposition that they be sent into exile. From the Double Bastion one can look down to where his church stood; slightly to the left can be seen the green spire of St Columb's School, where Seamus Heaney was educated and a few hundred yards to the right, under the green spire of the Apprentice Boys' Hall, is the site of the Free Derry School where George Farquhar the Restoration dramatist was educated.

The walls on which the Verbal Arts Centre stands were built between 1614 and 1618, under Charter from James 1; construction work was started two years before, and completed two years after, the death of Shakespeare and over sixty years after the first printing press was set up in Ireland (established by Humphrey Powell in 1550 at Dublin).

These linkages are important, we should be aware of them and we should honour the essence of each. The medieval city from which Columba championed the poetic principle and defended its place in society; the walled city, whose stone defences were begun a year after Shakespeare completed his last great play: a play (*The Tempest*) that deals with that most important of themes, that of liberty (a theme expressed in the design of the old school); the city walls themselves, built during a time when the new humanist culture was maturing, and arising directly out of a period of history that is notable for its change, excitement and vigour of thought and action.

**Fostering Educational Values:** In establishing a new home for the Verbal Arts Centre, we are aware that creativity is not about, or dependent upon, bricks and mortar, nor is it about the ownership of material things. Yet, we are conscious that education and arts buildings have both a practical use (they provide shelter, they assist in the provision of up to date resources and technical facilities) and a symbolic importance (they make a statement to be read by the general public and by those active in the art form). Not least, they can contribute to a wider sense of civic pride; in addition their physical presence can constructively link the present to the past and to the best of the achievements of our ancestors, while providing the stimuli to imagine a better future.

In its new home at Mall Wall the Verbal Arts Centre will build upon and carry forward a tradition of educational activity and a nurturing among all age groups of an interest in the arts of the spoken and written word that goes back, through this building and the nearby one it replaced, to the Presbyterian Blue School established on the walls in 1773. The name derived from the boys' dress of blue coats and yellow

stockings; pupils attending the school "were booted, hatted, clothed and trained" as 'singing boys' (choir boys); like the Verbal Arts Centre, the school was concerned with rather more than just the spoken word and it is recorded that, in the middle of the 19th century, half of the printers in the city had been educated in this school.

**The Arts and Regeneration:** We see the regeneration of this building and of this part of the walls as an important enhancement to the inner city environment. In the light of its own mission, the Verbal Arts Centre formally welcomed the Department of the Environment's recent review of its urban regeneration strategy for the city, including an (albeit) small cultural development element. Cultural activity, working at its best, brings with it a considerable range of benefits, including the associated physical regeneration and increased financial activity that cultural development often entails. This fits well with the overall aims of the perhaps better known of social and economic regeneration and, indeed, strongly compliments those processes.

There is now wide and undisputed recognition of the need for the introduction of measures designed to lead to the physical, social and economic regeneration of those (urban and rural) communities which demonstrate the effects of geographical isolation, low incomes, high unemployment and poor supply of such essential resources as adequate housing, education and health care facilities. In addition, in Northern Ireland (and in the north west and surrounding border counties), the effects and consequences of more than a quarter of a century of social strife has led to additional and unique factors - ranging from damage to the physical environment right through to damage to the emotional life of individuals and to the self-image of individuals and communities. Arising out of our own experience in arts and educational work we believe that the issues of self-image, (alongside the more often discussed image abroad) self-confidence and a securely-based sense of personal and community identity should be addressed urgently.

If the efficacy of targeted economic and other forms of regenerative intervention has been generally accepted there is now a growing awareness that arts and culture can be seen as legitimate and powerful tools in community revitalisation. Increasingly, local authorities and others in the UK, Europe and North America have recognised and begun to exploit the potential of cultural intervention as an additional and potent element in wider development and renewal strategies. The practices and experiences of the cities of Birmingham and Glasgow are perhaps the best known in this context.

Well organised, planned and coordinated arts and cultural activity can lead to improved civic experience,

and through that to both a more coherent and an enriched civic life. We believe that the new Centre will have a part to play in this regard. On a general level, I would argue that cultural action and development of an arts and education nature can bring some or all of the following benefits:

- Improved access to high quality social and civic, expressive and creative experience for individuals and groups.
- Help in improving the structure and fabric of civic and social life, especially in run-down areas, and can integrate across barriers, such as class, gender, age etc.
- It can help enliven and enrich the social and public environment in the cityscape through promotion of festivals, street life, and so on, particularly at weekends and in the evenings.
- It can support and encourage more and more meaningful meetings, exchanges and dialogue at inter and intra community levels and do so in unique ways in contexts of focused creativity, imagination and communication.
- It can encourage enrichment of local area by attracting in, for short or long stays, creative individuals (writers, artists in residence) as well as visitors (local, regional, and longer-haul tourists)
- It can encourage and stimulate wider outlook and creativity in the community, and encourage creative thinking and expression.
- It can assist in the initial and continuing economic regeneration of urban areas (through physical rebuilding, visitor attraction, job creation, etc.)
- It can stimulate positive and creative leadership.
- It can provoke a return to residential use of related buildings and area by 'normalising' otherwise empty neighbourhoods.

### **Culture and the City:**

We should also remember that investment in cultural development is investment in people and in their potential.

The benefits that can accrue from a planned approach include:

- Social and civic and individual pride and self awareness.

- Increased confidence across all three spheres.
- Increased sense of identity; a secure confidence in a sense of own identity.
- Cultural familiarity and ease. A growing sense of the nature and importance of ones own culture and its relationship to that of others.

There is a need to strengthen cultural foundations and to engage in awareness raising programmes in inner city areas, and to promote activities designed to attract visitors and residents and to foster confidence and develop creative, imaginative, social and civic skills. The Verbal Arts Centre, through this development, hopes to promote at least some of these. Yet, the opportunities are immense and we look forward to being joined by others. One outcome of such a cultural development strategy could be the effective use of buildings that might otherwise fall into disuse, or worse.

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# The Village of Claudy

Parish of Upper Cumber

Co. Derry

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J. J. TRACEY

**MANY'S A VILLAGE OUTGROWS ITS ORIGINAL LOCATION TO THE DETRIMENT OF ITS COSY INTIMATE SITE AND EVENTUALLY BECOMES A VISUAL ABHORRENT.**

*If you but seen this lovely place all in the summer time  
Each bush and tree they looked so gay and meadows in their  
prime;  
The blackbird and the golden thrush they tune their notes so  
gay.*

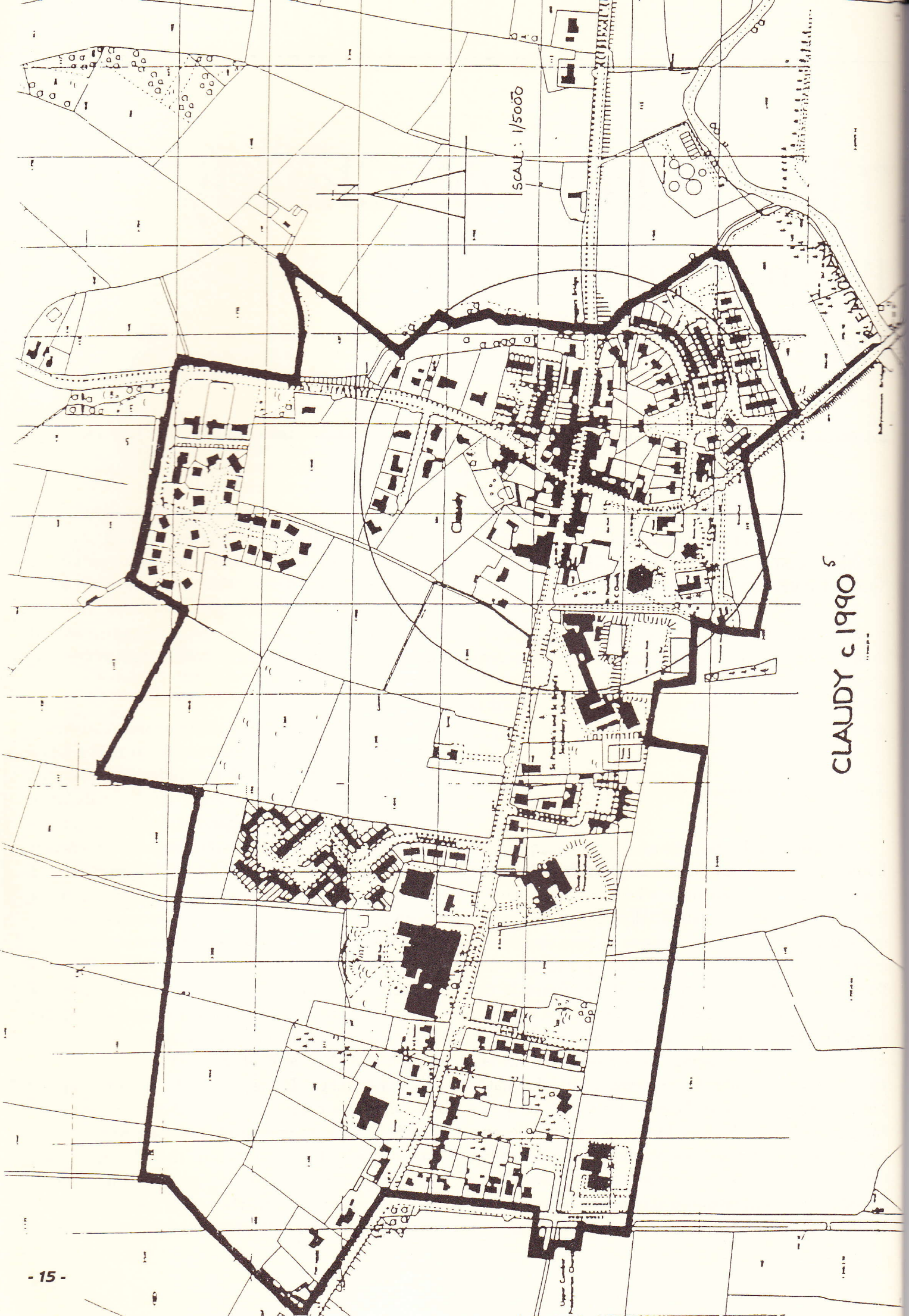
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William Bratton<sup>1</sup>

Claudy village clings to the slopes of Boultibracken<sup>2</sup> hill just before they dip quickly to the banks of the Faughan river where it gurgles gently through the elliptical arches of Ballynameen bridge. The structure of the village consists of two roads, one connecting Donemana with Limavady and the other Feeny with Derry and around the crossroads the landlord Browne established the village on land formally set aside as 'church lands' under the Plantation of Ulster. Lewis' Topographical Dictionary describes the village as a small place containing 180 inhabitants but Lieutenant Edward Vicars in his statistical report for the Ordnance Survey Memoirs cryptically and disparagingly refers to it as 'the only place deserving the rank of a village.....not any trade carried on in Claudy. It is chiefly composed of public houses which derive their prosperity from the number of fairs held

in the village'. It held eight fairs annually and had eight publicans and its 180 inhabitants resided in '25 indifferent houses, of which some are so low as to have their signboards fixed on the roof' The fairgreen, behind and to the south of the crossroads, was overlooked by the combined Petty Sessions and police barracks and the cruciform Catholic church of 1820, which at this time did not have a tower.

Claudy village has grown considerably since Lieutenant Vicars and Samuel Lewis observed it. In 1973 it had a recorded population of 540 and today the extended village numbers approximately 1,100 inhabitants. The original nucleus had expanded initially by gaining a cluster of dwellings below the fairgreen and later it acquired a large redbrick flatted clothing factory sited halfway up the steep Main Street and around it further housing groups gathered. A large secondary school appeared in the early 1960's serving an area vastly greater than the immediate parish and in the next decade a central primary school, across the road from the factory, superseded the country national schools of Upper Cumber like Altahoney, Claudy, Gortilea and Kilgort and the children bussed their way to an expanding village. In the present decade a similar fate befell the rural county primary schools like Alla and Brackfield<sup>3</sup>, their replacement found a location on Cregg Brae, opposite the Presbyterian church and there a redbrick pile, now becoming an increasingly used material, enjoys a southerly aspect overlooking the Faughan river in the valley below and beyond the crisp



CLAUDY c 1990<sup>s</sup>



CLAUDY c 1830<sup>s</sup>

silhouette of Sawel mountain. Much earlier, around the turn of the century, the crossroad village improved its appearance with two storey slated buildings, a couple of small inns and general stores. In 1898 the settlement achieved its best piece of architecture when the Northern Bank Company erected a handsome Arts and Craft style edifice to the designs of G.W.Ferguson. Before the second world war the police barracks had climbed to the top of Main Street to a standard design of the time. An extended sewage treatment works near Dungorthin bridge at the south eastern extremity of the village was unfortunately, and without foresight, sited where it has stymied development to the east.

A consequence of all this growth has meant that, apart from the housing group at Irwin Crescent, the village has extended up Main Street as far as Cregg Brae and up the Baranailt Road towards the main Derry/Belfast road. The advent of the factory and schools brought a demand for much private housing recently expanding the speculative housing enterprises. The village expansion has dwarfed the original tightly knit nucleus and set off a rash of untidy development of disparate elements creeping uphill, leaving most of the village exposed to view from a southerly aspect and the persistent prevailing winds. Landscaping is much needed but there's a dearth of tree planting except for some recent efforts around the new primary school on Cregg Brae.

Judicious broad leaved tree planting in large banks and screens would help improve the village character from within and without.

The village, of course, is much divorced from the river Faughan, that meandering water romanticised in song and writing and broadcasting by Olly Mc Gilloway. However, a belated attempt has been made to link the lower end of the village to the river with a half hearted recreational space. Much better is the wooded stretch between Ballynamee and Cumber bridges with its enticing paths and containing the ruins of the former Church of Ireland, and a medieval foundation too, which stands on a bluff of high ground nearby, encompassed by a serene soft green meadow and across the Glenrandel river from it, the late Georgian residence known as Cumber House<sup>6</sup> and now the club rooms of the local G.A.A. The symmetrical

five bay three storey stuccoed house placidly gazes on the confluence of the Faughan and Glenrandel rivers from which Cumber<sup>4</sup> townland takes its name. The football club generously leased the grounds of the house to the District Council and the whole ensemble makes a pleasant retreat for villagers and visitors alike.

Claudy village suffered a calamitous tragedy in 1972 when much of its core around the Fairgreen was devastated by wanton bombs. In the rebuilding an opportunity was lost to create a pleasant rejuvenated Fairgreen. Instead a sea of bitumen macadam, a redundant church, a partly used fine bank and much under used open space and buildings greet the beholder. The gothic windowed petty sessions structure still survives, a relic of bygone days and the 'whiskey fairs'. Perhaps the new century will spark a visual renaissance and Claudy will regain its past charm and repose.

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*Along The Faughan Side. Appendix V1*
2. See Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland -  
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*referred to as Boltabracken called Buailte*  
*Bhreacain 'St. Breacan's bolies or dririe*  
*places'. Bracken could be Breacan a desciple*  
*of Colmcille.*
3. *Brackfield is in the parish of Lower Cumber.*
4. *Cumber: comar means confluence, the place*  
*at which two rivers join, see D + L Flanagan*  
*Irish Place Names*
5. *Reproduced from O.S.S.*
6. *Listed buildings*

# Fahan Old Graveyard

LIZ ERSKINE

The village of Fahan ( a sheltered place ) occupies an early ecclesiastical site, the Abbey of St Mura, in the 6th century the Columban Monastery at Derry decided to establish a new foundation at INIS EOGHAN on land donated by King Aodah, Mura, a member of the ruling O'Neill clan of Inis Eoghan, was appointed its first ruling abbot. The wealth and privileges of this family may have helped in making the settlement a centre of learning and culture for several centuries.

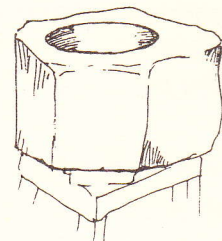
Later famous abbots were Fothard, who was instrumental in having the clergy exempted from military service, and Maelmura, known as "*a king of poet's and a historian without superior* ". The area of the abbey would have been considerably larger than the present graveyard. A Holy Well dedicated to St Mura, is to be found on the shoreline nearby.

The original building of wattle and plaster would have been replaced by an abbey, which in turn was abandoned or destroyed in the 12th century, possibly as a result of Viking raids.

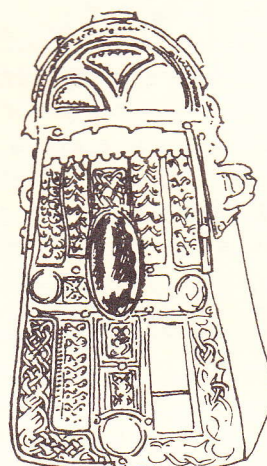
Another abbey was built on the site and it, too, was destroyed at the time of the reformation. The church lands were eventually given to the protestant Bishop of Derry and, in 1622, the ruins were "*well and sufficiently repaired* " and the church continued in use until the present Church of Ireland was built nearby in 1820. Only part of the gable wall of the rubble built earlier church remains; its three-light round headed window is probably 17th century.

The people of Inis Eoghan had, since the 7th century, been buried in Fahan. Brian Lacey suggests that the boundary of the present graveyard would seem to be dictated by the bend in the road. Built into the stone

wall on one side of the gate we find a carved wheel cross, and on the other side a stone with a large hole in the middle, which may well have been a water stoup. There is, however, a modern superstition that if you put your hand into the hole and make a wish, your wish will come true.



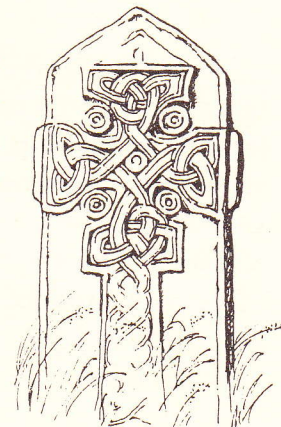
Some priceless relics from that golden age have been preserved, An exquisitely made 7th century bronze



bell and shrine, with later 9th century decorations of silver, crystal, amber and other stones, was retained in Inis Eoghan for many years, The bell was bought by the Wallace Museum in London in 1897. Mysterious powers to alleviate human suffering, especially in childbirth, were attributed to it.

Another relic was the Bachall-Mura or Crozier, the pastoral staff of St Mura. This was repaired in 1622 and used until the present church was built, it is now in the National Museum in Dublin. A hexagonal granite baptismal font is now by the doorway of Lag Catholic Church near Malin; it was taken there in penal times.

The most interesting object here however, is St Mura's Cross-Slab. It probably dates from around the 18th century and is said to mark the grave of St Mura himself. It is seven feet in height and on both faces is a Greek cross unusual in Ireland at this period. On the north side is an inscription in Greek characters which has been interpreted as "*Glory and honour to the father, son, and holy spirit*".



Nearby there are graves of eminent churchmen,

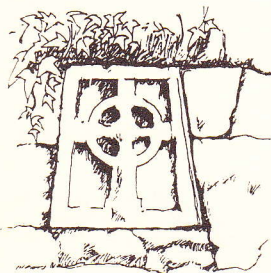
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men who were drowned at sea, local farmers, and members of families who have lived in the area for several generations. In the nearby Church of Ireland a poem by Sam Burnside reads:

*A tablet nourishes and composes in memory  
This companion to the lady of the lamp;  
They have walked in aisles between the dead long  
enough  
Furnishing the succour of attendant ministry*

*Where drafts blew the candle  
widely, grown men  
Crying out, knowing nothing but  
the need to be  
cherished.*

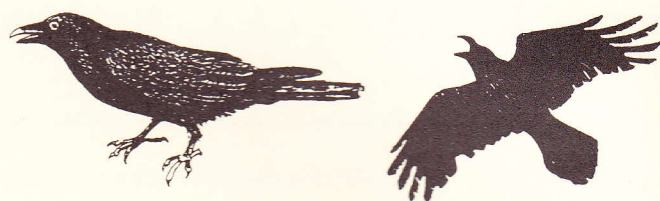
*They should be resting in a place  
of lichen and fern,  
In a garden of herb-beds, rosemary  
and thyme,  
Where the running, frenzied, cloud-blinded moon  
Is mere scullion to the rising sun  
Where modest gardeners, tilling and sowing and reaping,  
Husband all the quickening, reigning things about them.*



In 1968, a centenary service was held at the graveside and was attended by the leaders of all the main denominations, by the staff of Altnagelvin Hospital where a training school is named after her, by representatives of Donegal Co. Council, and by a large number of local people. Also buried here is her brother in law, the Rev. Robert Higinbottom, whose ministry to the sick was highly appreciated.

Another grave is that of Horatio Nelson, a young midshipman who died at Fahan House whilst on sick leave from his ship. It was thought that, because he came from the same parish of Burnham Thorp as did Lord Nelson, he was in fact the nephew of the famous admiral. But research done by the Fahan branch of the I.C.A., who produced an award winning project on the graveyard in 1979, established that the two families were not related.

Fahan Mura is a quiet little place beneath old trees full of chattering crows, perhaps descendants of the crows that, legend says, swooped down on Mura, directing him until he finally settled in the valley. Were



it not for its relics of an ancient heritage and its graves of interesting historical figures, it could rest undisturbed and remain indistinguishable from hundreds of rural graveyards around the country. It is, in fact, a well-known historical site and is mentioned in all the guide books, in archaeological surveys, and in Bord Failte literature. Many tourists come to visit it each year, from Germany, Italy, America, from Ireland of course, and from elsewhere. They come not just in the summer but throughout the year. They are invariably surprised to see it so overgrown, with many of the grave slabs broken or concealed with lichen, and the sign post vandalised.



Foyle Civic Trust has recently approached Donegal Co. Council, the owners of the site, with regard to its neglected appearance. The County librarian has inspected the area and recommended an upgrading. The County Council has given it a preliminary clean-up this summer. Inishowen Rural Development has also expressed an interest in the possibility of including Fahan Old Graveyard in one of its projected environmental schemes.

More frequent cutting of the grass, repair or repositioning of the older grave slabs which have slipped, and, possibly, a path indicating the paths and positions of graves of interest, would go a long way towards facilitating tourists and conserving what remains of the history and the mystery of Fahan Mura.

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*Drawings by Marilyn McLaughlin*

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# A School Whose Name has Vanished

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***Londonderry Academical Institution  
'The Academy', 1868-1896***

***by Alan Roberts and the late W.S. Ferguson***

**JOHN Young, headmaster of the Mathematical and Commercial School of the Londonderry Academical Institution 1873 - 1891, said some years after the amalgamation of Foyle College and 'The Academy' that it was bad enough to be a graduate of an extinct university (the Royal University), but to find himself the ex-Headmaster of a public school whose name had vanished was the last straw. It is perhaps not appropriate to focus on the story of the Academy in 1996, exactly one hundred years after the amalgamation of the two Derry schools in 1896.**

The Rev. W.P. Robinson Headmaster of Foyle College was a follower of Dr. Arnold of Rugby and a strong believer in the classical traditions of the grammar schools. In 1866 after his appointment he refused to admit to Foyle College boys who sought a commercial education. This classical emphasis alienated many in the community, notably the business and merchant classes. So these same citizens took steps to establish a rival school - one in which they would have some say and some control - and a public meeting held in January 1868 carried resolutions to put this into effect. The non-conformist element, amongst whom the Presbyterians were the majority party, were acquiring much more social and financial prestige in the town at this stage - one thinks for instance of the Scottish influence in the shirt trade, in which William Tillie was possibly the most prominent figure.

The Proposed school was to be called the Londonderry Academical Institution: its object to afford a sound classical, mathematical and commercial education, and to secure careful moral and religious training on non-sectarian lines. Another factor entered into this equation. Foyle College as the diocesan school sent nearly all pupils desirous of university training to Trinity College, Dublin. This new school would perhaps act as a 'feeder' for Magee College whose doors had opened in 1865, three years before the Academy began to operate in a private house, No 6 East Wall.

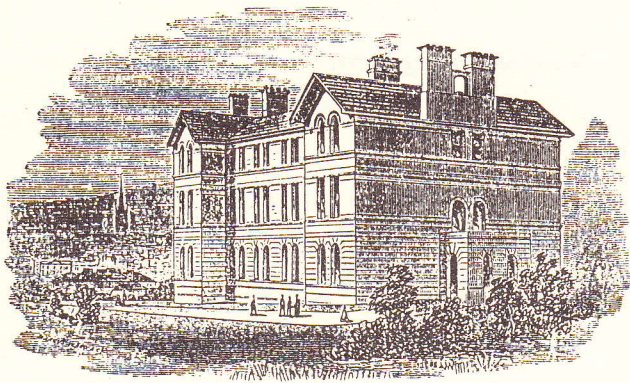
The Londonderry Standard of 19 October 1870 reported on the laying of the first stone of a new building which the Academy would occupy in Haw Lane later styled Academy Road. This ceremony was performed by Colonel Sir W.A. Rose, Governor of the Honourable the Irish Society. The style of architecture was said to be Italian: it was imposing and austere with an almost total absence of ornamental features. Initially the Academy had two schools - one English and Classical, the second Mathematical and Commercial. In theory they were distinct from one another, and each had its own

headmaster. In time a Modern Languages department was added and a further addition was a Preparatory department for boys under 12. To the latter there came in 1873 Miss Jane McKillop who was later along with her sisters to found the Ladies' Collegiate School, 'the parent and original' of the Londonderry High School.

In 1881 there were 153 pupils at the schools. Though non-sectarian in that it accepted pupils of all denomination it is estimated that 70 per cent of those attending were Presbyterian, the remaining 30 per cent coming from the Anglican, Methodist, Baptist and Roman Catholic traditions. Non-sectarian principles applied also in Foyle College and though Foyle was the Diocesan School, Presbyterians were always to be found on its rolls. In the first half of the nineteenth century not a few Roman Catholics attended Foyle which can claim among its alumni a Senior Dean at Maynooth and Professors of the Irish College in Paris. As to buildings the first addition to the Academy was a sanatorium erected in 1884. By June 1890 two ball courts and the swimming pool were available for use. A grand Bazaar was held to provide funds for this building programme and yielded c.£2,000, but the Irish Society had to provide the balance of funds to liquidate the debt.

The Academy was fortunate in the teaching staff attracted to it. Amongst those who taught there were Robert Chambers who moved on to become a Rector of Perth Academy, W.M.B. Allison who became a housemaster at Campell College and R.M. Jones, later the famous principal of R.B.A.I. (1897-1925). John Young left the school to become the editor and proprietor of *The Portadown and Lurgan News* after seventeen years of teaching Mathematics and Science with splendid results. Walter Bland and Alexander Larmour came from St John's College and Clare College respectively - after Cambridge Bland was to stay in Derry until 1933, teaching in the 'new' Foyle College after amalgamation while Larmour moved on to lecture at Magee College after an impressive stay at the Academy. J.C. Dick, an accomplished scholar and athlete, had been teaching at 'Inst.' and was to become headmaster of the 'new' Foyle College. As one would expect, these men got results and the standard of their work as adjudged by the Intermediate Education Board for Ireland was high.

Yet another measure of their success is reflected in the careers of many of their pupils. They sent forth Moderators of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, two Moderators of the Presbyterian Church in South Africa, a goodly number of university professors and



headmasters, surgeons with international reputations in S.T. (later Sir Samuel) Irwin and Professor C.G. Lowry. James Alexander Mitchell, M.D., Chief Health Officer of the Union of South Africa 1919-1932, completely reorganised the health services of that country. Two brothers to achieve eminence were W.A. Goligher who became Vice-Provost of Trinity College Dublin and Brigadier-General H.G. Goligher, C.B.E., LL.D., Financial Advisor to the C.-in-c., British Armies in France 1915-1919. The Orient beckoned Samuel Marcus Russell who became Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy in the Imperial College Peking in 1879 and Sir Samuel Smyth, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., I.C.S. represented the government of Burma at international conferences. Major J. Sproule Myles of Ballyshannon - businessman, championship swimmer, yachtsman, fisherman, member of the first ever Irish rugby touring team to Canada in 1899, holder of the Military Cross for gallantry in France, T.D. representing East Donegal in Dail Eireann from 1922 to 1943 - this career with echoes of Somerville and Ross could be said to display something of the zest and vibrancy which the Academy as a school evinced during its short lifetime.

With the arrival of J.C. Dick in 1878 games became a part of life at the school which in turn led to a much better corporate spirit. Dick had come from 'Inst.' where rugby was being played even before the formation of the I.R.F.U. The Academy entered for the Schools' Cup in 1879-80, and two years later appeared in the final. They reached the final for the second time in 1895-96; in both finals they were defeated by Methody, though in 1896 Methody only won at the third attempt. On 5 February 1887 Ireland beat England for the first time, the game taking place at Lansdowne Road. J.S. Dick, J.H. McLaughlin and C.R. Tillie were in the Irish team, with Thomas Taggart as substitute. We can imagine the rejoicing at the school when the news of this win filtered through - not only had four Old Boys been involved, but Charlie Tillie, then a student at Dublin University had scored one of the tries. J.C. Dick sought to encourage the cricketers, but the short summer term militated against the game assuming the importance of rugby. Nevertheless the school walls still boast a number of photographs of 1st XIs in the 1880s and 1890s: it is of interest to note that J.C. Dick and R.M. Jones both appear in the 1887 photograph. Lacrosse was also treated as an official school

game for a time - interest had been generated by touring Canadian teams who played an exhibition match on the Academy ground in July 1883. An athletics sports meeting was first held in 1882. When Alexander Larmour joined the staff he introduced gymnastics and dancing, and he also took charge of swimming at the school.

The Academy by 1896 had proved itself a vigorous and thriving school. The Rev. Wm. McClure speaking at the stone laying ceremony in 1870 said 'the middle classes of society are every day becoming more powerful in politics, in commerce, in manufacturing, and in agriculture. We are bound to provide for these classes facilities at least equal to those possessed by foreign powers and rival nations.'

William Tillie writing in the *Londonderry Sentinel* of 29 December 1892 said that the school had for its object to show that a classical and commercial education of the best kind could be offered at the same school as had been done at the Belfast Academical Institution, and in the high schools of Edinburgh and Glasgow. At Foyle Robinson had realised that he must compromise, and a reorganisation of Foyle College in 1868 provided for a separate commercial department. This one was left with two schools performing very much the same tasks. A healthy rivalry developed between them which covered pupil numbers, examination results, prizes and scholarships and fierce sporting conflicts. However the Academy had an advantage over Foyle College in that it was an essentially local school with strong local support and when amalgamation became a reality in 1896, it had much to give to the united school, which inherited the traditions of both foundations.

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*Information and assistance from Mr. L. Childs and Mrs. A.J. Ward is acknowledged with thanks*

*Pen drawing reproduced courtesy of Yvonne Huey.*



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# Vanishing Derry

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In many ways 1996 has not been a good year for Derry's historic buildings. As the city undergoes fundamental changes in its economic fortunes, pressure on its older building stock becomes more acute. Much of the beauty that is inherent in the buildings and streets of the city is disappearing before our eyes. Economic factors rather than aesthetic standards are dictating how



Photo: Courtesy of 'Derry Journal'

the city develops. Buildings can be seen as documents in stone and brick that tell us of the values and aspirations of the designers, architects, owners and inhabitants of previous generations and these documents are being annihilated. We are currently undergoing changes that are radically altering the appearance of the city and establishing a pattern for future generations.

Over a period of twelve months we have witnessed the demise of six listed buildings, namely the Women's Penitentiary, Hawkin Street; the Strand Bar, Strand Road; three terraced houses in Bonds Hill; and "The Parks", close to the Templemore Sports Complex. The decision by the planners to refuse permission to demolish Whitehall Chambers/The Women's Penitentiary was brought to the Planning

Appeals Commission by the owner of the property who was successful in his application to demolish. The owners of the imposing City and County Infirmary of 1810 (parts of which may have been even earlier), which was not listed but was situated in a prominent location in the Clarendon Street Conservation Area, were granted permission for demolition very recently. There was little evidence of any public regret, debate or discussion over the demise of the Old Infirmary which was associated with the lives of generations of Derry families.

At the moment a planning application to demolish a sizeable chunk of the Hogg and Mitchell shirt factory, Little James Street, which was damaged during the rioting in July, is being considered. We know very little about the history of many of these lost buildings and important information about them may come to light when proper research is carried out in the future. Question marks stand over a number of other older buildings and their survival remains in doubt. A considerable amount of damage was caused to the early nineteenth-century Christ Church, Infirmary Road, as a result of the church being deliberately set on fire in the recent past. Plans to restore the church are currently being discussed. Claremont Church, Northland road, is now vacant. The congregation of Claremont has moved to worship in First Derry Presbyterian Church. The survival of the Claremont building will very much depend upon it being acquired for long-term suitable use. The obvious solution would be for it to be used by Magee College, with which it has historic connections.

What is happening in the city now is reminiscent of what happened in Dublin about twenty years ago. At that time there was great eagerness and enthusiasm to pull down the older buildings and whole terraces of georgian houses and to eradicate much of Dublin's historical and architectural past. The situation has, to some extent, changed in the sense that those previously involved in campaigning for the retention of older buildings in the South are now advising the government to pursue a policy of conservation.

If the present trend in Derry continues with more buildings being demolished our claim that we are a historic city would, in the future, no longer be true. Inaccurate descriptions of Derry as a "historic city" in tourist literature may well lead visitors and tourists to feel that they are somewhere else.

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JOAN PYNE,

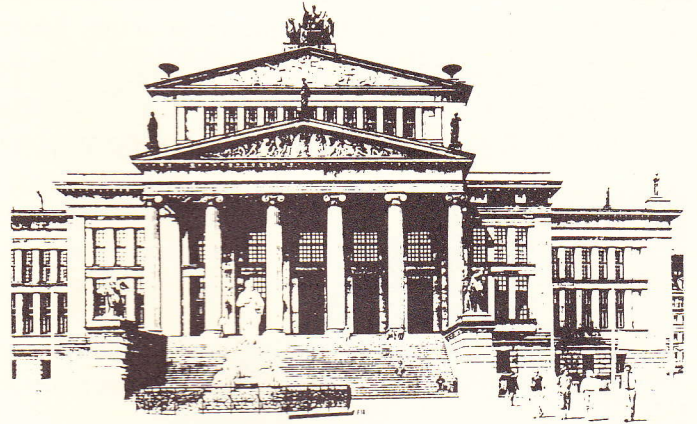
# Impressions of Berlin

AN ARCHITECTURAL VISIT NOV 1996.

The journey began at 3 o' clock in the morning and driving through the dark countryside, towns and villages at that time gives a great exhilaration of freedom. The only interruption a word with a garda siochana south of the river Blackwater, more to relieve his boredom than to see if there was a calf with BSE in the boot! The Air 2000 jet cleared the runway at 160 mph, so the series of screens above the gangway proclaimed and touched down at Tegel International airport at 9.45 am having gained an hour on the time change. Unfortunately Irish weather pursued us and first impressions were of a dull misty scene, the cloud ceiling almost down to roof level. Outside the hexagonal airport terminal, into handsome Berlin tourist buses, little traffic movement, and beyond, neatly secluded at a lower level, serried rows of yellow cream Mercedes Benz taxis awaited customers.

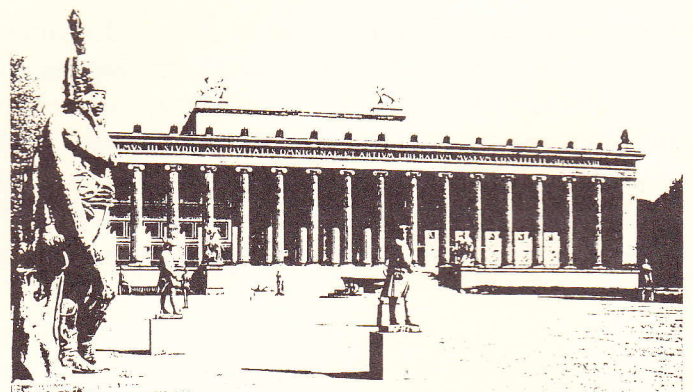
In Berlin the topography is flat, broken only by low hills formed from the debris of ruined buildings of the Second World War. A general building height restriction of 22 metres creates a monotonous roofscape and so it was on the inward journey to the Steigenberger hotel, almost in the heart of West Berlin, very adjacent to where the great shopping street, Kurfurstendamn ends at the Breitscheidplatz. Close by the zoological gardens provides a great mass of greenery and the botanical gardens expanding into the Tiergarten creating a marvellous and necessary foil to the overwhelming facades of straight line contemporary building littered all over their fronts with brash illuminated nameplates, signs and advertisements. This is a great proclamation for European Union commercialisation.

In the middle of the Breitscheidplatz towers the ruins of the tower of the Kaiser Wilhelm memorial church (1895) almost the only remains of buildings pre-Second World War in this area. Replacing the demolished nave a contemporary octagonal chapel of meditation opened in 1961 while an elegant hexagonal campanile containing a clarillion of bells on the other. The magnificent glory of these memorials is the beautiful inspiring decorative glass which fills the walls of chapel and campanile; superb work carried out by Gabriel Loire whose studio is adjacent to Chartres cathedral. In daylight, from within, the glasswork produces an evocative, emotional awe-inspiring atmosphere with its honeycomb of myriad squares of blue light tinged with sparkles of reds, yellows and greens. At night the chapel and bell tower gleams like jewelled tiaras.



THE SCHAUSPIELHAUS BERLIN 1819-20  
ARCHT KARL F SCHINKELL

Though so much of Berlin was devastated between 1940-45 miraculously there survives a sprinkling of c18 and c19 buildings, many, of course, much restored. Among these are several by the great Prussian architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781-1841). Schinkel revelled in the Greek Revival style and was to Berlin what Greek Thomson (1817-75) was to Glasgow. Buildings like the Schauspielhaus at the Gendarmenmarkt, the Palace bridge over the River Spree near the great loved Berlin cathedral built in the high Renaissance style, the Alte museum and the Lustgarten. Schinkel's talents extended beyond architecture, he distinguished himself as a townplanner, a painter and stage designer. His flowering as an architect did not emerge until after the Napoleonic wars when he was appointed Geheimer Okerbaureth (Berlin State architect) in 1815.



ALTES MUSEUM BERLIN 1824-28  
ARCHT KARL F SCHINKELL

Since 1989 and the demise of the 'Wall' great changes have taken place in Berlin. The Unification of West and East has relocated the heart of Berlin to the historic centre in the Mitte district where St. Hedwig's cathedral dominates the skyline beside the river Spree though not far away the soaring

column of the television tower complete with restaurant thrusts upwards into the clouds. The G.D.R. regime seemed to have little sympathy for building relationships and historic buildings are frequently spoiled by modern geometry. At the base of the television tower, sometimes called 'Tele Asparagus' sits the historic Marienkirche, its original foundation dates from 1294.

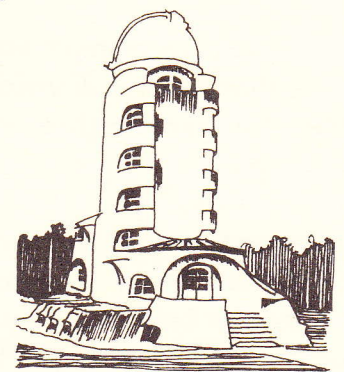
The seat of government at Bonn is to be transferred to Berlin and a huge building complex springs from the ground near Potsdamer Platz a short distance from the Brandenburg Gate. Spindly tower cranes litter the area, the hustle and bustle of sophisticated construction goes on apace to achieve a completion date for the entire complex of 1999 when 50,000 people will populate it. Because of the flat topography, the general building height restriction of 22 metres, two groups of buildings will be allowed to go higher forming mini-Manhattans - the government complex and another at Alexander Platz on the other side of the old city centre. Many German architects are involved, likewise many international architects. Strolling through the site of former Checkpoint Charlie (last time there was a delay of 45 minutes) numerous commercial projects meet the eye, a building by I.M. Pei (b.1917), author of the glass pyramid in the Louvre and the towering Bank of China, Hong Kong, next a huge poster depicting a larger than life portrait of Philip Johnson (b.1906) further on a department store named Lafayette designed by Jean Nouvel (b.1945) with its glazed cones "decomposing and recomposing light and geometry in the office spaces: a new Art Nouveau". An enlightened piece of planning legislation in Berlin insists that each new development has 20% of its floor area devoted to residential accommodation so that animation is maintained in the surrounding environment after business hours. Two modern yet contrasting edifices catch the eye not far from Potsdamer Platz and close to the Teirgarten, these are Mies Van der Rohe's (1886-1969) Neue National galerie and Hans Scheroun's (1893-1966) Philharmonic and Chamber Music Halls. One absolute simplicity, like the Egyptian pyramid, in steel, glass and granite with a delightful outdoor sunken sculptured garden, the other a complex intricate geometry of exteriors and interiors with a vast array of materials. Jewish horrors are being commemorated in an extension to the Berlin museum, designed by Daniel Libeskind (b.1946), an intriguing character who speaks with conviction and he's produced a contorted evocative interpretation.

Berlin has many museums however one of the smaller ones made a refreshing impression. A private collector Karl H. Bröhan gave his collection of works of the Fin de Seicle to the city of Berlin and these are, since 1993, shown to the public in the Bröhan museum adjacent to the Schloss Charlottenburg. The collection of furniture, porcelain, paintings and metalwork is a treat for admirers of the Art Nouveau with works by Hector Guimard, Jean Lambert-Rucki, Hans Baluschek and Karl Hagemeister. Bröhan's

motto, taken from Goethe, was 'Taste is formed by the most excellent, not the mediocre'.

Greater Berlin's population tops the 6 million and absorbs many contiguous regional development centres within its periphery. One of these is Brandenburg to the south west with its capital Potsdam. Here resided the Hohenzollern family and the beginnings of the German Empire. Today Potsdam has 144000 inhabitants and a mixture of Prussian palaces and G.D.R. precast functional slab blocks of offices and flats sitting cheek by jowl. Fortunately the summer palace, better known as Sanssoucci palace erected by Frederick the Great (1712-86) between 1745 and 1747, it rests on a low hill amidst a great park of some 290 hectares. A delightful long low (now too many rooms) yellow ochre painted masterpiece of Rococo architecture with pompously carved luscious ladies and gentlemen in voluptuous curves, all gazing down on a series of stepped parterres covered with mignon vines and ending in a large elliptical pond from which gushes skywards a great plume of white water. Below in the town are the c17 gabled terrace houses of Dutch craftsman brought to Potsdam to resolve foundation problems created by the high water table of the Berlin Plain. In contrast are the isolated 2 storey log houses of Russian workers of the early c19 set in large plots of ground. Another contrast in palace building is the Cecilienhof palace built 1913-17 for Crown Prince William who lived there until 1945 and gained fame as the only unruined building in which the Potsdam Conference could take place and attended by Attlee, Stalin and Truman. It is now an hotel.

Albert Einstein frequented Potsdam and the Astrophysics Institute there. He commissioned the Einstein Tower and his architect Erid Mendelsohn (1887-1953) designed a sculptural piece of early modern architecture to house his telescope and completed in 1920. Einstein wanted a functional solution suitably made pleasing and Mendelsohn gave him a tower of vigorous curves and muscular energy, (looks like concrete but in reality is mostly plastered brickwork). What Einstein thought of it is not recorded but it is now a preserved and listed building.



THE EINSTEIN TOWER POTSDAM 1920-1  
ARCHT ERICH MENDELSON

It was a wet misty day in Potsdam, we left it as twilight set in and slipped across the Havel river by the steel framed Glienicke bridge almost lost in the mist as depicted in Hollywood spy films for it was here that the great powers exchanged their secret agents.

J.J. TRACEY

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# Inner City Regeneration

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KEN ROONEY

The city of Londonderry can rightly lay claim to being a Historic Walled City, however, unless more action is taken to halt the advancement of recent commercial developments, and instead, redirect more effort into preserving the rich tapestry of buildings which are the basis of this historic city, then such a claim will be dissipated in the very near future, leaving only the "bare four walls".

The Fountain area partnership was formed in February 1992 with the remit of co-ordinating the regeneration of the Fountain area of the city. This means we are attempting to act in partnership with a myriad of public, private and voluntary agencies and groups with the result of ensuring that the area is regenerated socially, economically, culturally and just as importantly, environmentally.

The partnership's strategic vision (1996-2000) states that the overall vision for the area should be "that the partnership play a key role in the development of the city both as a residential centre and as a focal point for visitors interested in the protestant heritage and culture of the city" Therefore it is a primary aim of the partnership to ensure that the historic buildings contained within the area are preserved and utilised to their maximum potential, thus enabling the city's inhabitants and visitors to enjoy these buildings in the future, the way many of us enjoyed them down through the ages.

The map attached shows that the area crosses into Society Street and Bishop Street within, included in the area are some of the finest historic examples of the built environment. Included among the impressive list are, the Apprentice Boys Memorial Hall, The Former First Derry Presbyterian School, Cathedral School, Carlisle Road School, St Mary's School, and St Joseph's School (Play House); the

former Baptist Church; the old Fire Station; St Columb's Cathedral and Deanery; the former Bishop's Palace (Masonic Hall) and the Northern Counties Club. Also included in the area are the fine examples of the city's manufacturing past; the factories of Welch Margetson, Ben Sherman and McCandless. One must also remember that the area itself is encircled and adjacent to the famous walls for the greater part of its area.

Unfortunately, due to the need for social redevelopment, the area has also lost a significant proportion of its historic past. Gone forever are the Gaol in the Fountain; the former Womens Penitentiary in the Whitehall Chambers; the vast array of the terraced housing, shops and businesses which formed the heart of the Fountain area - the loss of which is still mourned in the area.

The loss of ecclesiastical land in the Bishop Street area within, has also meant that the area has lost the solitude once associated with it. One result of these losses has been the effect on the aesthetic appearance of the area. Attempts are being made to restore the area to its former glory but much still needs to be done.

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## The Future

The Fountain area partnership has put together a comprehensive range of regeneration proposals, as outlined in its strategic vision 1996-2000, some of the partners on the board of directors also have a policy of restoring historic buildings for use in modern society.

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## Baptist Church and Mission Hall

The former Church and Mission Hall, situated in the lower Fountain Street, is to be developed as a centre for social advancement and development, by the partnership for the benefit of the residents of the area. It will provide an upgraded community centre with performance/exhibition space and training facilities.

## First Derry School

This fine building will be developed by the Verbal Arts Centre to create Northern Ireland's first ever purpose designed centre devoted to verbal arts, both literature and oral narrative. The famous building is situated at the corner of Mall Wall and Stable Lane just off Bishop Street, overlooking the Bogside area.

## Cathedral School

Plans are being considered of how best to utilise this building in London Street, it is hoped that the end use will enhance the tourist potential of the area and exploit its position in relation to the walls.

## Old Fire Station

This fine building, situated in Hawkin Street is currently being used by the partnership and conservation volunteers as an administrative centre, hopefully plans will be realised which will give the building a more secure future. At present remedial work is being carried out by Derry City Council to ensure that the building does not fall into further disrepair.

## Old Shirt Factories

The partnership is currently investigating how best to convert these historic buildings into other community uses.

## St. Marys & St. Josephs

These buildings in Artillery Street, are presently occupied by the PLAYHOUSE. The management of the Playhouse has put together an exciting plan to develop the sites as a community theatre complex. These plans will greatly enhance and improve the aesthetic appearance of the area.

Hopefully these plans and those currently in operation in London Street and the surrounding areas by groups such as the Inner City Trust, will bring the area back to its former glory.

This type of work shows that preservation and restoration of historic buildings can regenerate an area and lead to an increase in tourist potential and add to the overall impact on the appearance of the city.

The private developers and planners have tended to ignore the historic fabric of this city in the past. Hopefully, these people can now see the benefits of the work carried out by the groups mentioned, and will rethink their planning control/development policies in the future.

*For further information on the regeneration plans of the Fountain area partnership please contact:*

**MR. K ROONEY**  
Projects Co-ordinator,

The Old Fire Station,  
1a Hawkin Street,  
Londonderry, BT48 6RD.

TEL (01504) 263346  
FAX (01504) 262113.

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# Restoration of an Inner City Family House

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Number 69 Great James Street is over a hundred years old and like many other buildings in the neighbourhood it is Georgian in style. The house, although not actually sited within the Clarendon Street Conservation Area, borders on it.

Over a number of years many of the house's original features had been removed or had fallen into a state of disrepair. The original sash windows had been replaced by inappropriate storm ones. One large window at ground floor level, and a dormer window, which stretched the width of the house, totally distorted the balance of the facade. The red brick front had been covered with a rough cast pebble dash. The original fanlight and the pillars at the front door were the only remaining external features still intact.

A planning application to carry out work to the property was lodged with the Planning Office of the D.O.E. The application was brought to the attention of personnel responsible for the conservation area who suggested to the owners that they might consider restoring the property in a sympathetic manner. With the help of grant aid, and in consultation with the Historic Buildings section of the D.O.E., the owners agreed to go ahead with work which would restore the front of the house to its former glory.

In order to compensate for the loss of space and light, which the dormer window had provided, the height of the building was raised. This gave more ceiling height inside the house. As specified, natural slates were used. New six pane over six sliding sash windows were installed in the front of the building. These new windows proved unacceptable to both the owners and to the planning office as the glazing bars were too thick. After some discussion it was agreed to replace the windows with new windows which had finer glazing bars. Joiners in Derry are frequently unaware of the importance of attention to detail when they are making sash windows for older houses. The large single-paned glass window at ground level was replaced by a modified Venetian-type window.



Repairs were carried out to the fanlight and pillars. The plastic rainwater goods were replaced by cast iron gutters and down spouts. When the rough cast was removed from the front of the building, the brick was found to be damaged and porous. A rendering, with decorative bands around the windows, was applied to the front of the building to replace the rough cast.

This project, which has had a very positive effect on the upper part of Great James Street, owes much to the help and advice given to the owners by the Department of the Environment, and especially by Mr. Pat Quinn, senior planner in the Derry office. Furthermore, this restoration may encourage other owners in the locality to consider restoring their property in a sympathetic and appropriate manner.

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PHILOMENA FRIEL

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# Hogg & Mitchell Factory

Anyone in the Great James Street or William Street area of the city in recent days will have noticed that part of Little James Street is cordoned off to traffic. A wire barrier preventing people from using a section of the footpath, outside the Hogg and Mitchell Factory, in little James Street, has been in place since July last. Slates have been removed from the roof of the factory and the roof timbers are exposed for all to see.

The Hogg and Mitchell shirt factory was built in 1896. It was designed by W.A. Barker who was a Derry architect. An extension to the original building was added a few years later. This impressive five storey red brick building dominates the lower end of Great James Street and Little James Street. This building is one of the many shirt factories built at the beginning of the twentieth century. Other factories built around the same time include the Star Factory (1899), and Rosemount Factory (1904). The Hogg and Mitchell factory is a very fine example of nineteenth century industrial architecture.

Work has commenced on the building to demolish that part of the factory that was damaged by fire during the rioting in July last. In fact, the extension to the original building, fronting on to Little James Street, is to be demolished. Severe structural damage was caused to the interior of the building as a result of the fire.

Foyle Civic Trust, having objected to partial demolition of the structure, wishes to express its regret at the fact that yet another part of Derry's architectural fabric will soon disappear. The sad loss of a piece of architecture that reflects aspects of our culture and identity demeans the city. Like so many of the other shirt factories in the city, this large imposing building has had a profound influence on the everyday life of many people living here and on the fabric of the city itself.

The Hogg and Mitchell building is situated in a very important central location adjacent to the Strand Road and the Clarendon Street Conservation Area. Considering its location, serious thought must be given to the design of whatever replaces the portion of the factory that will be demolished.



Foyle Civic Trust believes it is essential that the height of the replacement structure is the same as that of the remaining part of the factory. Continuity of the roof line is of great visual importance. In fact, the Trust suggests that the site should be developed as a single unit extended along Little James Street into Sackville Street and around to the east by the lane that separates the site from the back of the properties on the Strand Road.

With its potential to promote quality standards, any building on this site must be distinguished by incorporating good design and superior materials. The trust suggests that an architectural competition be initiated to encourage innovative design. In a city which has been blighted by a large number of undistinguished buildings since the late sixties, there is a responsibility on those who make planning decisions to redress the balance. Large new buildings, while respecting our existing built heritage, should at the same time express themselves in a confident fashion befitting the approach of the new millennium. We hope that in twenty years time, the citizens of this city will be proud of whatever takes the place of the demolished portion of the Hogg and Mitchell factory.

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# 1997

## Colm Cille

### Anniversary Year Programme

Preparations are currently being finalised to plant 1400 oak trees in and around the city of Derry over the winter season. This will include special ceremonial plantings on December 7th 1996 - the 1475th anniversary of Colm Cille's birth and exchanges of oak trees between other places in Ireland and Britain with Columban associations. A celebratory debate, organised with the Colm Cille Debating Society and the Derry Journal will take place on December 7.

In addition, the Council's Heritage and Museum Service is working with local multimedia group the Nerve Centre to produce an interactive CD Rom - The Virtual Museum of Colm Cille. The CD Rom format will enable all the objects associated with Colm Cille to be gathered into one exhibition space, providing an opportunity to study them close at hand.

It is anticipated that a public work of art on a Columban theme will be completed during the year and appropriate art and history projects in schools will be encouraged.

The precise anniversary of Colm Cille's death, 9th June 1997, and the weekend before it, will see major celebrations and ceremonies organised by a number of different bodies.

Among the events programmed by the churches will be a series of ecumenical services held in Gartan. Co. Donegal (the saints birthplace) and Derry.

Besides the religious services, it is hoped to have street entertainment culminating in a firework display, reflecting the miraculous lights said to have been seen in the sky on the night Colm Cille died.

Meanwhile the Council will be hosting a special meeting of the Royal Irish Academy in June as well as putting together a lecture and exhibition programme.

It is also understood that a major international pilgrimage involving Christians of all denominations will be converging on Derry for 9th June. The pilgrimage is entitled "Pilgrims Way" and is being organised by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs and his Secretary for Anglican Communion Affairs.

Furthermore, the Council, in association with the University of Ulster and a group of Dublin-based academics, will be organising a major conference at Magee college next July called "Colm Cille and his Churches." As well as lecturers and tours, it is hoped that a number of associated public events will also be run.

Finally a tourist initiative, the Colm Cille Tourist Trail is being progressed through the North West Region Cross Border Group. Members of the Cross Border Group hope that the Trail will encourage regional tourism by linking together sites associated with Colm Cille.

For further information contact:

**MUSEUM AND HERITAGE SERVICE**  
**Telephone: (01504) 377331**



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# Obituary

## Liam McCormick

b. 24 October 1916  
d. 28 August 1996

Liam McCormick had a huge enthusiasm for architecture which never diminished throughout his life. He perceived architecture as an occasion, something he enjoyed and admired and his own contribution greatly enhanced that perception. He possessed a marvellous attribute in sensitively siting his buildings, to have an empathy with their surroundings and to delight the eye in graceful forms, curves and textures. His placing in the landscape of churches like St Aenghus, Burt, St Michael's, Creeslough and St Mary's Fossa illustrates this ingenious capacity, relating man made edifices to a wonderful Irish landscape which he passionately loved. Hugh Dixon, in his book 'Ulster Architecture', made an apt comment on St Michael's Creeslough with its magnificent massive backcloth of Muckish mountain - 'topographical sculptural'.

Born in Derry, William Henry Dunlevy McCormick, son of a dentist, he spent most of his life living in Greencastle, Co Donegal, in a house built by his great grandfather, Michael McLaughlin, a sea captain on the Derry, Sligo, Liverpool route. His early education took place at St Columb's College, Derry and later in the school of architecture of Liverpool University, being a contemporary there of Frank Corr, later to become his partner in architectural practice. After Liverpool he with Frank Corr spent a short time in the Surveyor's Department of Derry Corporation before accepting a post in Ballymena as architect planner. It was there, after two years, he fell ill and during a long period of convalescence in Greencastle

he and Frank Corr entered a submission: for a church competition in Ennistymon, Co Clare in the diocese of Galway, where the renowned Dr Michael Browne was bishop. Their entry was uncompromisingly modern much influenced by contemporary Swiss church architecture and this at a time when there was scant modern influence in religious works in Ireland. The winning of the competition encouraged Liam to embark in private practice in August 1948, which he did at No. 7 Ferryquay Street, Derry on the second floor; the ground floor being occupied by his uncle's chemist shop. The bishop of Derry, Dr Neil Farren, gave him every support and commissioned him to design a large primary school at Pennyburn, Derry. Frank Corr joined him as partner in March 1949. The practice got off to a busy start with Ennistymon church, Lahinch church, also in the Galway diocese, another church in Limerick, brought back by Frank Corr, who had been architect/planner in Limerick City, Pennyburn school and many other educational, industrial and housing projects. The office rapidly expanded.

Liam McCormick bought his first car - a Morris Minor; Frank Corr never drove nor wore a watch. In this car Liam travelled to Clare and Limerick and found time to visit Dublin to give talks on modern architecture, in particular church architecture which now was becoming a fascination with him. He had great capacity for recall and out of the many architectural magazines, *Werk*, *Domus*, *Architectural Review*, *Bauw* he developed a keen penetrating sense for the germs of ideas in plan forms adapted to make moving and

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sympathetic solutions. He was of an emotional nature which completely absorbed his energy in the problems before him. Not alone did he make a significant contribution to the development of church architecture in Ireland he gave great encouragement to the rise of liturgical art in the country. He gave opportunities to artists like Oisín Kelly, Patrick and Nell Pollen, Helen Moloney, Ray Carroll, Michael Biggs, Imogen Stuart, Paddy McElroy and Ruth Brandt to record a few. He persuaded clients and parishioners to consider the immense possibilities the contribution good art can make to the atmosphere and spiritual quality of religious buildings.

Churches followed at Milford, Southampton and of course, Burt, Co Donegal, which represented an apogee in Liam's architectural career when St Aenghus was awarded the Triennial Gold Medal for Ireland in 1970 and I remember the great joy and pleasure he displayed when he received the medal from President DeValera at Aras An Uachtaran. Many schools, primary and secondary, were designed and constructed during the late fifties and sixties. Notable among these were two secondary schools in Strabane and an infants school in Creggan Derry. Individual houses, also emerged from the office and indeed the first one, a small subsidy house at Creevagh, outside Derry, received acclaim and was published in F R S Yorke's book, 'The Modern House'. Interestingly F R S Yorke and his partners Rosenberg and Mardall were actively engaged in the fifties on the design of the first post-war hospital in these islands at Altnagelvin. The structural engineers, Clark Nicholl and Marcel, worked on the hospital and contributed greatly to several of the secondary schools and factories of Corr & McCormick.

The firm of Corr and McCormick terminated in November 1968 and Liam McCormick formed a new partnership. Churches continued to pour into the office and after St Michael's Creeslough, St Conall's Glenties, St Patrick's Clogher, St Nicholas Carrickfergus, Sacred Heart Bettystown Co Louth, Donaghmore Presbyterian church, Ascension of the Lord Balally, Dublin and Wayside church of Peace at Fossa, Co. Kerry. In all, Liam was involved in some twenty six new churches and chapels throughout his career. Two other buildings

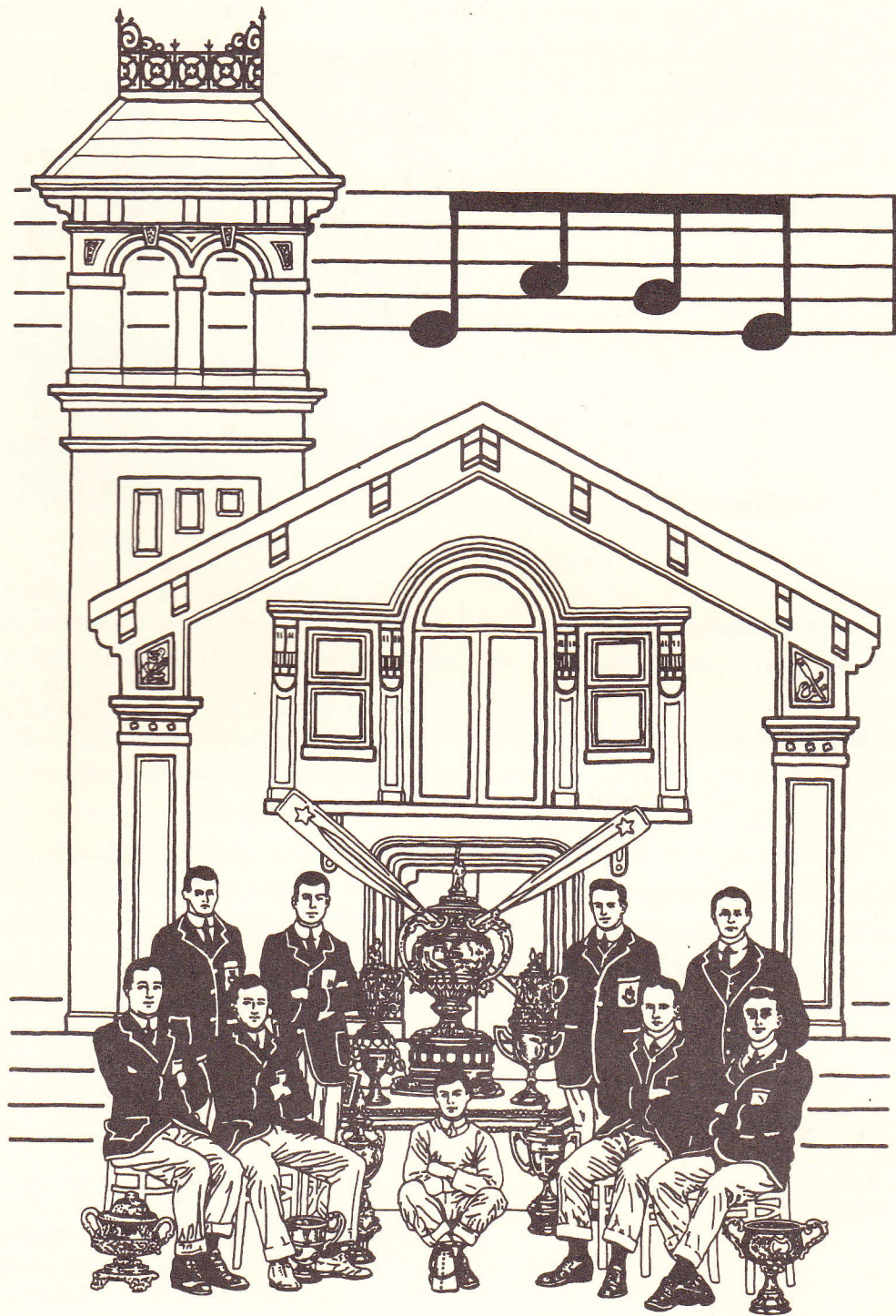
should be mentioned in which he put a great effort of imagination and energy namely the Meteorological offices, Dublin and the glass tent to house Tim Severin's boat in the theme park at Craigaunann, Co Clare. Both buildings illustrate his sense of the dramatic and his appreciation of the urban setting. The former makes a magnificent powerful icon for a national institution.

Liam could not reside on the shores of Lough Foyle where it poured its waters out onto the north Atlantic without being infatuated with a love of the sea. He enjoyed sailing, he commissioned a sailing boat from McDonald of Moville and in it he sailed with John Stevenson, a naval architect friend, to Scandinavia. He was a member of the Irish Cruising Club. When his energy abated somewhat he delighted in cruising the canals and rivers of Western Europe in a boat named Manannan Mac Lir. On these trips his wife Joy and two children accompanied him. He found time, too, to give service to the community. He was founder member of the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, founder member of the North West Architectural Association, sometime committee member of Royal Society of Ulster Architects the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, sometime Trustee of the Ulster Museum. In 1972 he was appointed chairman of the Northern Ireland European Architectural Heritage Year 1975. He was for many years a member of the Derry Rotary Club and in 1971 he became High Sheriff for the city of Derry a post which had been held by his grandfather Breslin in 1901. In 1978 the Ulster University awarded him an honorary doctorate of science and later he received a papal knighthood for his contribution to church architecture.

Liam retired from active practice in 1983 but he continued to act as design consultant on three projects namely churches at Dartford, Kent, Redhill, Surrey, Galway and a house in South West Donegal. He will be missed by many in architectural and sailing circles. He will be greatly missed by his wife Joy and children, Finn and Aisling. He remained a great supporter of things Irish and never ceased to remind us of the anomaly that he drove north every working day to his home in the South of Ireland.

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J.J. TRACEY



*This edition of the Review has been sponsored by  
The Londonderry Development Office D.O.E. (N.I.)*