

Looking back to 1911

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1911 was an exciting time in Enniskerry. The Census had just been taken that showed some 200 souls living in the village and its hinterland. Lord Powerscourt designed a Tower in the grounds of his estate based on pepper pot used on his dining table. The two room Library was built in 1911 and funded by the Carnegie Trust. The built in the Arts and Crafts style, it was opened to the public on 22nd February 1912 by Lord Powerscourt. The building was designed by Rudolf Maximillian Butler and constructed by Messrs Archer Bros.

My father, Peter White, was born in Dublin in July of 1911 but within a few years, he and his brother Christopher were living in the village. His two sisters Bridget was born in 1907 and Gretta (Margaret) in 1909. Shortly after Christopher was born, their father died. The two boys were sent to live with Mr John Smyth his wife Anne and their two children Annie and Joseph. John Smyth was a labourer, and after he died, he was buried up in Curtlestown graveyard. Each July my father would tidy the grave before the Blessings of the Graves ceremony at Curtlestown Church and Graveyard. Peter and Christopher both were educated in the library building, where Mr O'Rourke was the schoolmaster. In 1939 the new national school was built in the grounds of St. Mary and Gerards' Church.

My father got a job as telegram messenger boy with the Department of Post and Telegraphs (P&T) at Enniskerry Post Office. He delivered Telegrams to the landed gentry and to the various hotels in the district. He also delivered telegrams that went under the address of "Enniskerry 6 Miles". This was the telegram address of Glenree Reformatory. My father would say they forgot the other 6 miles the return journey to Enniskerry even if it was all downhill. The road to Glenree was not surfaced with tarmac until 1942 and punctures to his bicycle were common-place. My father got

married in 1952 and moved to work in the Bray Post office but kept his close links with Enniskerry. Just before he retired in the early 1970s, he delivered parcels and mail to the Glenree valley.

Christopher White began working for the Wicklow Hills Bus Company as a conductor from 28/5/1930 to 5/12/1931 and 4/6/1932 to 1/11/1933. His starting pay was £1 per week and on 6/4/1931 he got a raise and the new rate was £2 per week. The foreman mechanic, Duke Stephenson, was earning £4 per week. A driver on the bus was earning £3-10s-0d per week. Drivers from Enniskerry included James Rafferty, Laurence Byrne, Charles Olley, Patrick Nolan. Other conductors along with Christopher White from Enniskerry was Michael Windsor and Patrick Mooney.

In March 1927 cyclist named Peter Young from Rathfarnham was killed in an accident with a Wicklow Hills Bus at Dundrum, Co. Dublin. In July 1928 District Justice Reddin at Dundrum accused the Wicklow Hills Bus Company and the Robin Bus Company of Bus "relay Racing on the Enniskerry Road near Ballally."



When the Wicklow Hills Bus company ceased operation at Easter 1936, my uncle went to work for the Lucan Dairy, delivering milk in the Greystones area, first using a horse drawn float and then a motorised vehicle. My uncle's spare time was taken up with the Red Cross and St. Mary's GAA Club. He would ferry players to various parts of the county as well as the country. Lady Powerscourt in 1939 was appointed to the first council of the Irish Red Cross. Christopher was a driver of the Red Cross Ambulance and the ambulance was used to take invalids to Dublin Airport for the

annual Dublin diocese's pilgrimage to Lourdes. The Red Cross assisted when many of the films were made in Enniskerry "Irish Destiny", "McKenizes Break", "Henry V", and "The Blue Max " at Calary. The rescue of 10 climbers at Powerscourt Waterfall in 1953 involved the Red Cross, Civil Defence , Gardai and some inhabitants of the village.

In 2011 Prince Albert the son of Princess Grace and Prince Rainier of Monaco paid an official visit to Ireland. Forty years earlier, Princess Grace and Prince Rainier visited to Dublin. Their visit to Powerscourt is still recalled in the village and is regarded as one of the highlights of the social life in Enniskerry was when Princess Grace and Prince Rainier of Monaco attended the ball of the Petits Lits Blancs, the French Hospital charity, at Powerscourt on 8th July 1965. This was only the second time the ball was held outside France. Footage of the Ball can be seen on the British Pathe website, in addition to coverage of two motor car rallies at Enniskerry on 21/4/1932 and 27/4/1950. The Car Rally in April 1959 had over 50 entries. In 1964 a car went out of control coming down Kilgarran Hill and crashed into the front door of my uncle's house. The front door was never locked.

The ultimate event in Enniskerry was held in 1964 for home-coming of Charlie Keegan as world ploughing champion. Four years later in 1968 in Denmark, Christopher was a World Ploughing Judge. My uncle was a member of the Powerscourt Ploughing Society along with families with long association with Enniskerry and the hinterland, Williams, Keegan, Sutton, Smith, Fenlon, Leeson, and many more.

In 1969 my uncle contested the County Council elections for Wicklow, but failed to be elected, within a year he was co-opted to replace a councillor who died. He remained a councillor until his death in February 1971. When he died we had to search for the key of the front door of the house as it was the first time the door was locked in over 60 years. In the house was a clock bought at the auction of the artefacts of Tinahinch House, the former home of Henry Grattan.

My aunt decided to erect a seat at the clock tower in honour of the brother Christopher (Parkie) White, which is there to this day.

Brian White is a local historian and is Secretary to the Bray Cualann Historical Society.