

## *Clock Tower Romance*

JOHN WALL PP

In the summer of 1932 two Belfast-born girls, Angela and Molly, had recently moved to Dublin. Their new friends wanted to show them the beauty of the surrounding countryside – so, naturally, they took them on an outing to Enniskerry.

Sure enough, the young women were entranced by the beauty of the place and now in the sunshine of that Sunday afternoon, while waiting for the return bus, they sat looking up at the clock tower in the centre of the village and wondered what the letters MDCCCXLIII might mean. Their query was overheard by two young men who were standing behind them, Michael and Myles who, in the fashion of the day, were dressed to the nines in plus-fours and cloth caps. Both were young detectives from Dublin Castle and they too were on the outing with some friends.

Michael spoke up in his Cork accent “The M is a thousand” he said “and the D is five hundred. Then, the three Cs make three hundred. So we add all that up: one thousand plus five hundred plus three hundred – that makes 1,800. Now the XL is a bit tricky – because, you see, X means ten and L is 50 but you subtract the ten from 50, so XL is 40, OK? Good. Now III is three, as you’ll see on a clock. So the entire number is  $1000 + 500 + 300 + 40 + 3$  which equals 1843—the year the clock tower was built”

“Smart fella!” exclaimed Angela admiringly. Michael blushed. He was smitten. By a happy, planned coincidence they got sitting close to each other on the bus back to Dublin. And so began a life-long romance. Three years later Michael Wall and Angela Casey were married in Dublin—their best man was Myles Saul and the bridesmaid was Molly Parkes Keenan.

My sister and brothers are very familiar with this story because we heard it frequently as young children when were taken on Sunday drives to the hills—usually via the clock tower in beautiful Enniskerry—by the lovers themselves, our parents, Angela and Michael Wall.

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