quarto

Shaped by Industry: Shared with Pride

Research report on the industrial heritage of Carnlough

for

Mid & East Antrim Borough Council Museums Services and Big Telly Theatre Company

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by quarto

Contents

Introduction

This research report forms part of the development of the 'Shaped by Industry: Shared with Pride' project, led by Mid & East Antrim Borough Council (M&EABC) Museums Service and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) as part of the European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH) 2018.

In the context of the recent development of Carnlough Industrial Heritage Hub, M&EABC are continuing to develop innovative new ways in which to engage the public with the history and legacy of industrial development in the Glens of Antrim. Through EYCH funding, the council were able to commission Big Telly Theatre Company to script and perform a series of immersive theatre experiences planned for Carnlough, Carrickfergus, Glenarm, and Whitehead. Carnlough was identified as the first location to be piloted, with performances to take place on 8th and 9th September 2018, as part of the European Open Heritage Days programme in Northern Ireland. The other three locations, as well as Carnlough, will host a second programme of performances in the spring of 2019.

Gemma Reid, from quarto, was commissioned to produce this research report into the industrial history of Carnlough, which is to inform the script development process for the EHOD 2018 performances by Big Telly Theatre Company and act as a basis for further research and script development as the project progresses.

Research Methodology

The key messages to be communicated through the immersive theatre experience are:

- the industrial heritage of the Glens of Antrim is more significant than most people know
- it is linked to the industrial revolution taking place in Great Britain at the same time
- the key driver for industrial development in Carnlough was the 3rd Marchioness of Londonderry, Frances Anne Vane
- as an absentee landlord, her plans were executed by her agents in Carnlough, who played a central role in the day-to-day management of her Antrim estate

The research was therefore to focus on the period between 1854, when the 3rd Marquis of Londonderry died and his wife took over management of her Antrim estate, and around 1865 by which time the major construction projects had been successfully completed. As well as information on the development of the harbour, the quarry, the limestone railway and the limekilns, the research should investigate the character and role of the 3rd Marchioness of Londonderry and her agents John Lanktree and Richard Wilson.

The performances will take place around Carnlough Harbour, and should show to participants the importance of the limestone quarrying, processing and export industry to the economic development of the village in the 19th century. The performance will be delivered by a single female actor, which may be loosely based on a real character from the period, but should during the performance refer to the principal characters named above.

To fulfil the requirements described above Gemma carried out three days of desktop and archival research including sources available in online newspaper and archival databases and the collections of Ballymena Local Studies Library. She was assisted by local historian Mary Watson, to whom she is indebted for identifying additional relevant articles in The Glynns (Journal of the Glens of Antrim Historical Society) and for visiting the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) to examine a selection of documents from the Londonderry Papers. A full list of consulted documents and sources is provided in the bibliography. Within the time available for the research, it was obviously not possible to investigate the full scope of available sources, particularly the substantial collection of communications between Lady Londonderry and her agents in PRONI, but it is hoped a sufficient amount of detail was gathered and documented to inform Big Telly's project team. Gemma's contact details have been provided at the end of this report should any further detail or clarification be required.

Research Findings

Pre-industrial Carnlough

A largely typical view of the people of the Glens of Antrim during the 19th century is described in William Boyle's Ordnance Survey Memoir of 1835.

> *"Potatoes, oats, milk and fish are the main food of the people. Turf is the only fuel and is in abundance. Their dress, though not very costly, is warm and comfortable, neat looking and is mostly of home manufacture … they are more cleanly in their persons than in their dwellings. The females are remarkably good looking, many extremely beautiful … They are industrious and very hospitable and obliging in their dispositions, very peaceful and well conducted, except that they are fond of whiskey drinking … Many neither speak nor understand the English language and all speak the Irish*[1]*."*

The village of Carnlough had a population of 213 in 1831, with 39 occupied and 8 vacant dwellings. There was a corn mill, a flax mill, 2 inns, 2 schools, a Methodist meeting house and a Roman Catholic chapel[2]. It's wide sweeping beach made it a popular summer residence for sea bathers, with the letting out of small cabins providing additional income for local residents.

Between 1834 and 1842 Scottish engineer William Bald extensively re-aligned and improved the Grand Military Coast Road. Before then the Glens were comparatively isolated as the old road that linked Carnlough, Glenarm and Larne was mainly muddy with exceedingly steep slopes, which made transport very difficult even in good weather[3].

By 1851, the population had risen to 368, in 72 dwellings with 11 more houses under construction[4]. No doubt this rise in population was in part due to improved road access, but much greater credit must be given to investments made by the 3rd Marquis of Londonderry, Charles Vane Stewart, and his wife Frances Anne.

Frances Anne Vane, 3rd Marchioness of Londonderry

Frances Anne Vane was the only child of Sir Henry Vane-Tempest, 2nd Baronet, and Anne MacDonnell, 2nd Countess of Antrim. When her father died in 1813 without a male heir she inherited extensive estates in northeast England. At only 13 years old she suddenly became 'mistress of all around [her]. The cuffed child whose mother grudged her dresses and pocket money was now an immense heiress'[5]. In 1834, her

1 Quoted in Irvine (1975) 'and Jones (1996)
2 Carnlough Heritage Trail, copy in Ballymena Local Studies Library indexed local history files.
3 Josephine Jones (1996) 'Carnlough history and how it has grown' in All Ireland Coastal Rowing Championships magazine pp27-29
4 Carnlough Heritage Trail, copy in Ballymena Local Studies Library indexed local history files.
5 Quoted in Marchioness of Londonderry (1958) p20

mother also died, leaving her an additional 10,000-acre estate between Glenarm and Glenariffe.in County Antrim[6].

At the age of 19 she married Charles William, Lord Stewart, the British Ambassador to Austria, afterwards the Third Marquis of Londonderry and sometimes known as 'Fighting Charlie'. He was 22 year her senior and already a widower, but it seems to have been a loving and successful marriage[7].

As the wealthiest heiress of her day in England she had a brilliant existence, and moved in the very highest social circles. Through her husband's diplomatic duties and connections she mixed with the emperors, rulers and statesmen of Europe, even becoming an object of affection for Tsar Alexander I of Russia[8]. Her principle guest of honour at the opening of Garron Tower was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and future Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli. He was unable to attend, but wrote to her instead 'What are you going to do with Ireland? They ought to make you Queen.'[9] Garron Tower, the extravagant mansion she built outside Carnlough, became a renowned centre of entertainment and lavish hospitality for the nobility of Ireland, England and beyond.

According to her biographer and descendent, Edith, she was an outstanding personality and if she had been a man she would have been a statesman. She was a woman of exceptional ability, with good business acumen, and a talented orator at a time when women barely, if ever, spoke in public. She was involved in every detail of her business interests and demanded high quality, exact accounting from her agents[10], who reported to her in writing on a daily basis[11]. She was a fair and sometimes indulgent employer, but she also seems to have been something of a terror, with a reputation of a caustic tongue. She was not prepared to let anyone take advantage of her because she happened to be a woman[12].

She is also regarded as a progressive landlord of her time, encouraging agricultural and educational improvements as well as industrial opportunities for her tenants, and supporting a number of charitable initiatives. In her own words during a speech to her Antrim tenants in 1860:

6 Though her aunt inherited the title of Countess of Antrim and a proportion of that estate (Jones, 1996)
7 Marchioness of Londonderry (1958) and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Vane,_3rd_Marquess_of_Londonderry
8 The Down Diamonds and the purure and cross now part of the Londonderry family jewels were gift to Frances from Tsar Alexander I. 'Historical Sketch' of the Londonderry Arms Hotel, Ballymena Local Studies Library; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Vane,_3rd_Marquess_of_Londonderry; Ulster Tatler (1992)
9 Ulster Tatler (1992) p23
10 Marchioness of Londonderry (1958) Preface pvii; Irvine (1975)
11 Pers. Comm. Mary Watson, meeting 21st August 2018
12 Marchioness of Londonderry (1958) pp268-269

> *'Whether I speak to you in a strain of praise or censure, I can have only one object, and that is an anxious desire to advance, as far as my humble abilities go, your prosperity and weal; and thus, I fearlessly and disinterestedly give you the best advice in my power.'* [13]

Much of her financial investments into her Antrim estates occurred during or shortly after the Famine. In response to the pleas of her agent at that time, John Lanktree, she reduced or waived rents, provided blankets and clothing, sold food at reduced priced, supplied seed free of charge and set up a soup kitchen[14]. She laid down and paid for a new road leading up to Ballyvaddy for the benefit of tenants there[15]. The Famine Stone she had erected and inscribed in memory of those that died still stands today.

As well as her investments in industry, Frances Anne wanted her farming tenants to improve their holdings, both in productivity and appearance, so that her whole estate might be enhanced. To this end, she encouraged diversification in crops, offered cash incentives for the building of pig sties (in the hope pigs would no longer be kept in the house) and for replacing thatch roofs with slates, and loaned brushes to encourage tenants to whitewash their houses[16]. In 1849 she established an agricultural training centre[17] and she made a point of visiting the most remote farms on the estate to check that the improvements she expected had been made[18]. She inaugurated a reading room and library, a clothing society, a temperance society and a savings bank. And she encouraged her tenants to ensure their children were properly educated at the newly established National Schools[19].

On 24th August 1854, on her first visit to Garron Tower since her husband's death, a large deputation of tenants led by Rev Hugh Waddell, Presbyterian Minister, which included one representative from each townland, met her and her son, Lord Adolphus Vane Tempest. They presented her with an address of condolence, supposedly signed by every tenant on the estate, which read as follows:

> *'We, the tenantry of your Ladyship's County of Antrim Estates, although unwilling to intrude upon you at a time of deep affliction, are desirous of respectfully expressing our sympathy at the irreparable loss which you have suffered, and our own deep and heartfelt sorrow at the death of our beloved landlord and benefactor, the late Marquis of Londonderry.*
>
> *Several centuries have elapsed during which we and our forefathers have lived under the Irish branch of your Ladyship's Illustrious House, and it is gratifying to think that the kindliest feelings have ever subsisted between our landlords and ourselves; and especially since your Ladyship succeeded to this portion of the estates of*

13 Newry Examiner and Louth Advertiser, Wednesday 26th September 1860
14 Irvine (1975)
15 The Irish Times, Saturday 28th September 1861
16 Irvine (1975)
17 Jones (1996)
18 Marchioness of Londonderry (1958) p266; The Weekly Freeman's Journal, Saturday 12th September 1857, quoting the Banner of Ulster
19 Newry Examiner and Lough Advertiser, Wednesday 26th September 1860

your ancestor, the late Marquis of Antrim, we learned to look upon your late revered husband and your Ladyship, not only with the respect due to kind and indulgent landlords, but with the affection and gratitude due to our best friends and benefactors.

The immense sums expended among us during the late years of great distress, in the erection of a princely mansion, and on substantial improvements on this estate, have conferred incalculable benefits upon this district; while the great works commenced by his Lordship, and now continued by your Ladyship, for the construction of a harbour and railway at Carnlough and the opening of extensive limeworks, for the development of the natural resources of the district, afford abundant and remunerative employment, and promise to stimulate the energies of our population in the exercise of honest industry, and to be the foundation of wealth and enterprise to generations yet unborn.

We earnestly pray, that God may sustain and comfort your Ladyship under your deep affliction, and spare you to us for many years, and enable you to carry out the plans projected by the master mind of our late benefactor and friends, and that every blessing may attend your Ladyship here and hereafter.'[20]

The address appeared to please the Marchioness her, as it warmly extolled her late husband' virtues as well as hers. Her reply is characteristic[21]:

'*Your attachment to me from my childhood, and the clanship which existed between our forefathers, create a bond of union between us stronger than the common relationship of landlord and tenant … I thank you, from my heart, for attempting to comfort me, and, in return, I promise you, while my health permits, to pay you an annual visit. To say any more would be presumptuous, but you cannot doubt that my feelings and affections would always bring me here some part of the year; and, when I am called hence, I trust you will ever find in one of my descendants, a successor who will have the same care for your welfare – the same interest about you which has, and ever will, occupy the grateful heart of your faithful friend.*[22]'

Industrial Improvements to Carnlough

It was through the suggestions of their first agent in Carnlough, John Lanktree, that Lord and Lady Londonderry began to develop her Antrim estates. Limestone had been quarried at Carnlough for some time; it was in order to expand this trade that Philip Gibbons had built the first pier, of loose stone, between 1795 and 1806. But the trade was small and declining and by the 1830s the pier was already in a dilapidated condition[23]. Lord Londonderry purchased the pier and adjacent lands in order to facilitate the development of new harbour facilities and a railway linking that to the existing lime quarry[24]. The Londonderrys also made plans to build an extravagant summerhouse, Garron Tower and the Londonderry Arms Hotel. This first phase of the development of the village also included the construction of two schools.

[20] Coleraine Chronicle, Saturday 2nd September 1854
[21] Ibid. pp262-263
[22] Dublin Evening Mail, Wednesday 30th August 1854
[23] Carnlough Heritage Trail, copy in Ballymena Local Studies Library indexed local history files
[24] Pers. Comm. Mary Watson, meeting 21st August 2018

After her husband's death, Lady Londonderry's interest in industrial development continued with 'indefatigable zeal'[25]. Under the guidance of her second agent, Richard Wilson, Carnlough harbour and the limestone railway were completed, lime kilns were built to maximise the market potential of the quarried stone, and the Town Hall and houses on High Street and Herbert Street were constructed. The dramatic changes to the village within a very short space of time are vividly captured in a number of contemporary newspaper reports and tour guides:

> *'The changes which have taken place during the last twelve months, in the Marchioness of Londonderry's marine village of Carnlough, are of the most surprising character. A harbour has been constructed, accessible during every kind of weather, and in which vessels drawing twelve feet of water will, at all times, obtain a secure haven. A railway, upwards of a mile in length, and a large portion of which is through a heavy cutting upwards of twenty-one feet deep, has been constructed from Lady Londonderry's limestone quarry to the harbour, and two handsome and solid limestone viaducts have been constructed over the main street of Carnlough, and the mail coach road. Large contracts have already, it is stated, been entered into with eminent Scotch houses for the sale of limestone, and the first cargo left Carnlough harbour last week. A patent slip, it is said, is forthwith to be constructed, to afford facilities for ship-building, and extensive mills are about to be erected for the manufacture of whitening, for which it is stated the limestone in these quarries is particularly applicable, and the great water-power in the vicinity of the quarries will thus be made available. A large and commodious house for the agent of the estate has also been erected in a beautiful situation before the bay; and we were informed that numerous applications had already been made for building leases, in contemplation of the increasing requirements of this district, and of the influx of bathers to this now fashionable watering place.'*[26]

It is evident from how often these reports are repeated in both across Irish and British papers, that Lady Londonderry and her agent were anxious to promote the new opportunities for trade and commerce that their developments offered to those with a similar entrepreneurial spirit.

John Lanktree

John Lanktree has been in the employment of Lord and Lady Londonderry for some years, assisting their principal agent in Ireland, John Andrews, before being given responsibility for their Antrim estate, and later their estates in Londonderry and Donegal. He was a skilled correspondent, kept meticulous records and accounts and was known for his complete honesty and attention to detail[27]. However, his employment came to an abrupt and acrimonious end in 1850.

At some stage in the late 1840s, Lanktree bought a house in Carnlough and a farm at Stoney Hill, therefore becoming both agent and tenant of the Marchioness. Thereafter his interests, perhaps inevitably, seem to have become divided. Though his surviving

[25] Saunders's News-letter Thursday 7th June 1855
[26] Dublin Evening Mail, Wednesday 30th August 1854, quoting the Belfast News-letter
[27] Casement (1998)

letters to Lord and Lady Londonderrys between 1845 and 1848 do not reveal any disloyalty or untrustworthiness, they are also a rare first-hand account of the impact of the Famine in County Antrim[28]. Letters detail many requests to assist the local tenantry and the Marchioness' instructions in response[29]. In December 1847, perhaps at Lanktree's request, the Londonderrys made their first visit to their Antrim estate and met tenants in Ballymacaldrick, Dunloy, after which a Relief Committee was established in Glencloy[30]. However, the Londonderrys' generosity was not arbitrary; they demanded exact accounting for its distribution, insisting it went to where the need was the greatest[31]. On one occasion, Lanktree's pleas for a reduction on rents received a scathing reply from Lady Londonderry:

> '*Lanktree's principle seems to be that the tenant should have the land as a free gift and pay no rent as we have not received 6d*[32]'

When Lanktree not only attended but actually organised tenants' rights meetings in Glenarm, he must have infuriated his employers[33]. But more than that, a note written by Lord Londonderry in 1847 reveals serious concerns about his competency:

> '*Lady L. having submitted to my inspection and for my judgement and opinion Mr L.'s Account for 1846 to 30 Sept. 1847 just recently I feel bound candidly to inform that her Ladyship feels very much disturbed and she feels that unless there is some direct reform and change of management, and infinitely a more economical management adopted, her Ladyship seems quite determined to look out for another agent*.'[34]

The dispute with Lanktree seems to have arisen over bills incurred by him for agricultural goods supplied to the tenants without Lord Londonderry's authorisation and rent arrears for his own farm at Stoney Hill[35]. These matters became the subject of arbitration and Lanktree was ordered to submit his accounts to the Londonderry's County Down agent, John Andrews, for audit. The audit, completed in September 1850, clearly showed the misappropriation of estate revenue, to the considerable amount of £950[36].

Lord and Lady Londonderry therefore brought a fraud case against Lanktree, for trial in the Four Courts in Dublin. An Order of Distrain empowered Hugh McKilop of Glenarm to seize Lanktree's farm until arrears were paid. On the evening prior to the trial, Lanktree withdrew his defence and his counsel offered pleas of compensation for the full amount. It appears that Lanktree had realised, in contradiction to the legal

28 Dallat (1997); Montgomery (2002)
29 Irvine (1975)
30 Dallat (1997)
31 Irvine (1975)
32 quoted in Dallat (1997) p50
33 Irvine (1980)
34 PRONI D2977/5/1/8/8/45 quoted in Irvine (1980) p52
35 Dallat (1997); Irvine (1980)
36 Casement (1998)

advice he had originally been given, that his defence was untenable[37]. Lanktree was forced to sell his properties in Carnlough and Newtownards to pay his debt and was left insolvent.

His former manager, John Andrews had some sympathy for his plight, writing to the Marchioness in September 1850:

> *'Lanktree's condition seems pitiable in the extreme. I find that he has ten children alive, only two of them, his two eldest sons, have any chance of being able to provide for themselves. One of them by Industry and talent has obtained a scholarship in Dublin College, and the other has gone to place himself under his brother's protection and assistance. The other eight children, including two grown up girls, are all dependent on their Father, and he states that he has formed no plan, and has no mode of procuring a support for himself and them.'*[38]

On 25th June 1851, the Marchioness' new agent, Richard Wilson wrote to her:

> *'Lanktree has not been down here [Carnlough] since 7th inst. I understand he is in Dublin having been obliged to go there to enter into security. And assignee is to be appointed to take charge of the insolvent's property. Mrs Lanktree still remains in the house but she is never seen out. All the furniture with the exception of two beds is taken away. I hear the son who is at college is dying of consumption and all the family are gone from this with the exception of one girl and the three younger children.'*[39]

John Lanktree, his wife and children subsequently left for Australia[40].

Richard Wilson

Much less is known about Lanktree's replacement, Richard Wilson, no doubt because he was never associated with similar controversy. He began in the service of the Marquis in 1850 and continued to work for the Marchioness until she died in 1865. He retained her confidence throughout, and by special provision in her will, continued as agent after her death[41].

The Marchioness was evidently very pleased with the standard of his service to her and of his commitment to improving her estate. She commented in her speech at her annual tenants' dinner in Carnlough Town Hall in 1861:

> *'You are very fortunate in having so excellent a man as Mr. Wilson to watch over you … I believe he fully enjoys your confidence, as he most deservedly does mine, and that he strictly and conscientiously fulfils his duties to both.'*[42]

The Harbour

37 Casement (1998), Irvine (1980)
38 quoted in Casement (1998) p21
39 PRONI D2977/90 quoted in Irvine (1975)
40 Irvine (1980)
41 Irvine (1977)
42 The Irish Times, Saturday 28th September 1861

In order to maximise return from the quarry, the harbour, and the railway and arches connecting them, were at the heart of the whole Carnlough development scheme[43]. Work on the harbour began in 1853 under the direction of Mr Hunt, an engineer from Seaham[44]. The building contractor responsible was Patrick Mahon; he also built the two limestone arches and the Town Hall, and his work was described as 'worthy of the highest praise'[45]. The improvements to the harbour were designed to allow ships to enter a basin for the first time, providing them shelter and allowing their cargo to be loaded directly from trucks. The trucks would travel from the quarry to the harbour by inclined plane, the heavy loaded wagons drawing up the empties by steel cable[46]. The bridges over High Street led to a high-level loading platform on the South Pier[47]. At the quay the trucks could be tilted manually and their contents sent tumbling into a waiting vessel. This process dispensed with the need for horses and lighters to transport the stone from quarry to ships, cutting costs and resulting in a sizeable profit[48].

Forty to fifty men were employed on the project, on a wage of around 7 shillings per week. They were organised into four work gangs charged with excavating the basin, constructing the piers and sea walls, erecting the Arches and laying the railway[49]. With the aid of a steam engine, brought from Seaham via Campbeltown, it was possible to dig out up to 250 tonnes of earth per day. But storms delayed progress in 1854, 1856 and 1857[50] and in February 1860 part of the South Pier carrying the railway and one of the shoots collapsed into water after the foundations gave way. With the help of divers, Wilson rebuilt the fallen masonry and cleared the debris.

In 1855 workers also struck a 'panel of solid rock' at the harbour entrance, which proved a major obstacle to accommodating and loading larger ships. Wilson did all he could to clear it, but by 1858 a sand bar had also developed, making the harbour next to useless. Eventually the Marchioness sent a dredger from Lough Neagh to resolve the problem. However, the harbour continued to be affected by a long shore drift carrying material northwards and constantly filling the basin.

The first cargo of limestone left for Scotland on 1st August 1854[51], while the harbour was still in construction. The first vessel to enter the harbour was the schooner 'Susan', of Carnlough, in early June 1855[52]. The crew were 'liberally treated' by Richard Wilson, in honour of the occasion[53]. It was reported at the time that the harbour could

43 Irvine '(1977)
44 Seaham, County Durham, was also part of the Londonderry's extensive estates, where they developed an extensive coal mining operation, that included a railroad and harbor.
45 Jones (1996)
46 Irvine (1977)
47 Jones (1996)
48 Irvine (1977)
49 Irvine (1977) and Jones (1996)
50 Jones (1996)
51 McGuigan (1954) and Jones (1996)
52 The Belfast Mercury, Thursday 7th June 1855
53 Saunders's News-letter Thursday 7th June 1855

accommodate ships 'with every attention to security and convenience', but also that the channel at harbour entrance was to be deepened in order to admit larger vessels.[54].

On Monday 20th August 1855, the Marchioness of Londonderry, her son Earl Vane, and their suite, sailed into the new harbour on the steamer 'Glow Worm', 'amidst the waving of handkerchiefs and loud plaudits from an immense concourse of ladies and gentlemen, and of the tenantry of her ladyship, who was hailed with loud and repeated cheers, which became enthusiastic as she landed on the quay'. It was reported that the residents of the neighbourhood intended to mark the spot where the Marchioness landed with an inscribed stone commemorating the event and the completion of the works, which 'in the course of a few years, have changed Carnlough from an insignificant fishing village into one of the most fashionable and prosperous localities on the northern coast.' [55]

In May 1856 Wilson reported that he had shipped more than 2,600 tonnes of limestone to Glasgow and that the harbour was full of vessels. 'At present there are a thousand tonnes of shipping in and around the harbour with unlimited demand for stone. I cannot procure labourers for quarrying it fast enough'[56]. It did not become fully operational until after the Marchioness' death in 1865[57].

The Limestone Railway

The original railway was of single track, running inland on a gradient of 1 in 25 from the harbour to Gortin Quarry. The line was still in use in the 1950s, except for the last 150 yards, which was abandoned when the quarry became worked out in the 1920s. The gauge was 4ft 8 ½ in, rather unusual in Ireland[58].

The line was designed to work by gravity alone but required the assistance of horses for a number of years after it was first constructed. By the original design trucks would travel the entire distance (¾ mile) from the quarry to the harbour by inclined plane[59], the heavy loaded wagons drawing up the empties by steel cable. But the loaded trucks were only able to pull up the empties on the upper part, so that horses were still needed on the lower part. In March 1856, the Marchioness sent over an engineer from Seaham and got it working properly in about 2 months[60].

As observed by J.H. McGuigan in the 1950s, when part of the original mechanism was still in operation, the single track had a passing loop in the middle. The haulage cable passed around a drum 8ft 6in in diameter in a pit at the top of the incline. The drum rotated about a roughly vertical axle and was provided with a hand-operated band-brake, by which the speed of the trucks can be controlled. To avoid the two portions

54 Ibid.
55 Saunders's News-letter, Saturday 25th August 1855, quoting the Belfast News-letter
56 Quoted Irvine (1977) p 25
57 Jones (1996)
58 McGuigan (1954)
59 In order to create a successful inclined plane, a cutting of 200 yards was excavated, involving the removal of approx. 25,000 cubic yards of earth and rock. Irvine (1977) p 24
60 Ibid

of the cable becoming crossed, the ascending rake of trucks had to travel on the same side of the passing loop that was used by the previous descending rake, and this entailed throwing the points at each end of the loop after every run. A man travelled on the rear truck of each rake, and as these approached the passing loop, the brakesman reduced speed. Each man then dismounted as his rake entered the loop, threw the points when the last truck of the entering rake had passed, and boarded the last vehicle of the emerging rake on which he returned to his base. When the rake of trucks, usually six vehicles, was ready to depart from one end of the incline, the operator there turned a signal[61] towards the other end. When the second signal was turned indicating both ends were ready, the brakeman or engine man, as the case may be, then released the brake and allowed the run to take place. The trucks had timber frames and steel bodies 7ft 8in long, 4ft wide and 2ft 10in deep. The wheelbase was 3ft 5in and the wheel diameter between 2ft and 2ft 6 in. They were designed for tipping, so that one end swung outwards on a hinge just about the top edge. The limestone was loaded in bags into the trucks and the track layout at the harbour led to turntables serving the chutes down which the bags were loaded into the holds of the waiting ships[62].

In September 1854, the engineer J. Hart prepared a special railway carriage for the Marchioness of Londonderry, so that we could make a thorough inspection of the works. She was conveyed from the pier to the lime-works and marked her approval of the satisfactory manner her wishes had been carried out by treating all the artisans and workmen, about 120 men in total, to a dinner at the Londonderry Arms Hotel[63]. By 1855 it was reported that the railway was carrying 200 tonnes a day from the quarries to the quays[64].

The Lime Kilns

Burnt lime was then in great demand as a fertiliser, and was another way for Wilson to diversify the Marchioness' industrial profits. Wilson had himself begun burning lime in a small kiln on Philip Gibbon's land. He kept careful accounts and soon saw he could make a profit. He urged the Marchioness to build limekilns as part of her development scheme, writing:

> *'At Glenarm I have this day been informed that they are delivering 500lbs of lime a day. Tis also true that Glenarm ships all the stone in boats, that if they depended on this alone the works would not pay; It is the limestone consumption that enables them to carry on the trade … picking out the good stone for shipment … and burning the refuse for lime.'*[65]

Wilson was also anxious to have supplies of lime on sale in time for the opening of the new road up Glencloy, which would open up much greater opportunities to sell lime

[61] Each signal consisted of a board of about 3ft 6in square, painted black with a white disc on one side, mounted on a wooden post arranged to turn on a vertical axis (McGuigan, 1950)
[62] Ibid
[63] Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent, Thursday 28th September 1854
[64] Belfast Mercury, Thursday 7th June 1855
[65] Irvine (1977) p27

to farmers inland[66]. The building of four limekilns off Waterfall Road was authorised in 1857[67]. Wilson devised a plan to hoist the trucks up to feed the kiln instead of running them on an incline, which saved £300 in the overall cost of the project. The kilns were fired by coal, which was in plentiful supply from the Marchioness' mines in Seaham, Durham. Soon the demand proved so great that a further two limekilns had to be built, making 5 in all[68].

The Town Hall

The Town Hall was central to Lady Londonderry's determination to improve her tenant's holdings. It was built by July 1856, just in time for her annual visit, with the Clock Tower being completed the following year. She envisaged a variety of functions being held in the hall in the upper floor, including lectures, competitions, flower and vegetable shows and an annual Tenant's Dinner. The ground floor consisted of two stores, one of which was leased to a man called McAlister, who was purchasing kelp for a customer in Glasgow. Wilson recommended him as he also had a vessel for exporting limestone[69].

The tenants' dinner, which took place annually at the end of September, provided for as many as 300 people and was widely reported on in both local and national newspapers. This newspaper extract from 1860, which describes a very festive scene in the village:

> *'The day was, as usual, observed as a holiday, and the beautiful weather contributed not a little to the enjoyment of the townspeople and the tenantry form adjoining districts. From an early hour, farmers, attired in their best, and evidently in comfortable circumstances, began to come into the town, and, as the day advanced, the streets assumed a crowded and animated appearance. The picturesque and most commodious harbour, in the improvement of which Lady Londonderry has expended a large sum of money, was crowded with ships, which in honour of the occasion, exhibited numerous flags of various colours, and from the Town-hall, the railway bridge and the jetty, others flaunted in the breeze.'*[70]

The upper hall of the Town Hall was about seventy feet long, lit by five large windows. For the occasion, the windows were hung with crimson merino and the walls and ceiling were festooned with arrangements of evergreen leaves and flowers, intermixed with banners and emblems[71]. A table was placed on a raised platform for the principal guests, who may have been members of the local aristocracy, of Parliament and of the clergy. The dinner was chaired by the Marchioness' agent, Richard Wilson, or occasionally by her son, Lord Adolphus Vane Tempest. Three rows of tables ran throughout the length of the hall to accommodate the tenants, who were arranged into groups designated by a flag naming each of the townlands of the

66 Ibid
67 Carnlough Heritage Trail, copy in Ballymena Local Studies Library indexed local history files.
68 Irvine (1977)
69 Ibid
70 The Newry Examiner and Louth Advertiser Wednesday 26th September 1860
71 The Coleraine Chronicle, Saturday 27th September 1856

estate[72]. Only male tenants sat at the tables; a gallery was set apart for the ladies[73]. In 1861, it was reported that at one end of the hall was a banner inscribed 'God Save the Queen', while over the chair was placed another saying 'Ceide mile failte'[74]. On another occasion, an array of vegetables produced on the estate was displayed behind the chair[75].

The Marchioness and her guest would arrive from Garron Tower at 2 o'clock. After dinner speeches were made extolling the virtues of the Marchioness as a caring and progressive landlord. For example, one of her tenants, Mr J. Killeen from Ballyvaddy, opened the speeches in 1861 by saying:

> *'I believe that nothing upon earth is calculated to give her ladyship more real happiness than the welfare in every respect of every tenant on her estate. By her ladyship's actions, she manifests that it is not her will that her tenantry should be serfs, but that they possess the means of meeting their just demands of educating their children and of maintaining a decent and respectable character. I consider the tenant undeserving of the name "Irishman" who would not wish long life and happiness to Lady Londonderry and her noble family.'*[76]

The Marchioness would make her own speech, commenting on agricultural improvements that had been made in the previous year, or on aspects of her advice that had not been heeded, and encouraging her tenants to educate their children. She also awarded prizes at the dinner for the neatest and best-kept holdings. For example, the following extract, from a report in the Coleraine Chronicle in 1856. We can only guess what her tenants made of such a combination of praise and disapproval:

> *'I am desirous to tell you how glad I am to see you again; and now that I have built a room in which I can receive you, I hope that while God spares me those meetings may be annual. (Lough cheers.) I have always had a strong conviction, which experience is daily confirming, that the employer and the employed should be brought together, and that good must result from the communion of interests and exchange of ideas when those parties meet … The works that have been undertaken here and in the neighbourhood, and the large sums of money spent both by Government and by individuals, have entirely changed the face of the country. Poverty has disappeared, and this poor little village is rapidly growing into a small thriving town. (Cheers.) I wish I could speak as strongly as to the advance of agriculture, but, alas, it is still in a very primitive state; and although I believe that many of you are making great exertions, much, very much, is still to be done. Mr Andrews[77], who is here today, and who has known this locality for above twenty years, will, I doubt not, kindly give you valuable*

[72] The Belfast News-Letter, Saturday 28th September 1861
[73] The Downpatrick Recorder, Saturday 27th September 1856
[74] The Belfast News-Letter, Saturday 28th September 1861
[75] The Downpatrick Recorder, Saturday 27th September 1856
[76] The Irish Times, Saturday 28th September 1861
[77] Mr Andrews may have been the agricultural expert employed by the Marchioness for a short time to advise her tenants; he seems to have been discouraged by the reluctance to accept his advice and to have left fairly quickly. Marchioness of Londonderry (1958) p266

advice on this head, and I recommend you treasure up whatever you may gather from his acknowledged experience. (Cheers.) … I regret to find that my attempt to get up a flower show has not been as successful as I could have hoped, and I am told I ought to look after pig styes [sic.] before gardens.(Laughter and cheers.) On the other hand, I am glad some emulation has been shown in competing for the premiums for the best farms … I think it is right to say, that on going over the townlands, the greatest improvement I have seen is in Drumcrow, where John McCarroll and John Watt are most energetic. (Cheers.) IN Legamorry, Alexander McMullan is a pattern of industry. The O'Neills in Ballymacaldrick, the O'Loons, George Hasty and Patrick O'Boyle, are all exerting themselves. It might be invidious to go on, but I think these few are deserving of the praise and notice given. In general, I found industrious people and contented spirits, and I can only hope they will improve their condition in the future as much as they have done in the past.'[78]

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***Shaped by Industry: Shared with Pride* - Notes for Glenarm**

The Antrim Coast Road (1832-1842)

- Before the coast road was built the glens were difficult to access by land. The Pathfoot towards Glenarm was muddy, treacherously steep, and in some parts unfenced. Horse riders often fell over the cliffs and perished, particularly if travelling by night. In winter, Glenarm may have been completely cut off for weeks due to the effect of rain on the steep mountain tracks.
- Ireland was peripheral to the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain and it was thought that improvements in transport and communications were the key to spreading industrial activity. The Earl of Antrim was aware of valuable iron and other mineral deposits on his land, which, if exploited would bring him higher rents.
- Before the road was built outlaws and smugglers were able to operate without fear of discovery, as were the largely Presbyterian supporters of the United Irish rebellion in 1798 (Glenarm was one of the earliest Presbyterian congregations to be established in Ireland). The building of the road was not only intended to improve trade and communication, but also the maintenance of law and order; the road was sometimes described as 'The Grand Military Road'.
- The Antrim Coast Road was designed by William Bald, a pioneering cartographer, surveyor and civil engineer, born in Burnt Island, Fife. Bald was an amazingly gifted outsider in the 'heroic age' of engineering. He did not attend university, but instead received a practical education 'on the job', starting in Scotland as an apprentice surveyor and cartographer, and eventually becoming one of the most highly-regarded civil engineers in Ireland. He had a creative passion balanced with a thorough knowledge of the latest technological advances. He had an almost mystical belief in the study of creatures of the sea as inspiration for solving the engineering challenges of marine construction.
- The Antrim Coast Road is recognised as William Bald's finest achievement. One of the principal reasons the Board of Works approved and funded the project was the spectacular and magnificent nature of Bald's scheme. The coast road was also the proving ground for innovative new techniques, such as the blasting of complete headlands (made safer by the Bickford safety fuse, invented in 1831) and the use of the blasted rock to create sea defences.
- Bald was appointed in 1832, and began producing detailed plans that October. It wasn't until March or April 1833 that serious construction began, when spring brought more favourable weather. The first part of the road was finished by the end of 1835. There was then a hiatus for about a year and a half, in order to bargain for an increased grant and more favourable terms for the government loan. After that Charles Lanyon began the second part and filled in all the gaps, the easier parts connecting the areas of major engineering works.
- During the construction of the road, Bald was leading several other major engineering projects in Ireland, so he was a regular visitor rather than in day-to-day control of the project. His principal ally and resident engineer was initially Richard Thomas.
- One of the most challenging sections of the road's construction was north of Glenarm, at Clooney Point, where banks of sliding blue clay brought a great risk of mudslides.
- The project also hit unexpected difficulties at Little Deer Park, south of Glenarm, where a new scheme had to be devised to successfully blast this extremely difficult section of limestone cliffs.

- The deficiencies of the existing roadways were perhaps greatly exaggerated by Bald and his supporters. Whether the road was in fact necessary, and the economic benefits it brought to the area, in relation to the cost, have since been questioned. The big, ambitious schemes of the age tended to exaggerate the deficiencies of existing communications and the potential benefits of improvements, as well as understate the costs. Today, the road remains one of Northern Ireland's principal attractions, being voted recently as one of the most spectacular driving routes in the world. But the residents of Glenarm complain that little of the potential economic benefits of tourism are felt in the village. Business activity has disappeared from the centre of the village and successive plans to regenerate the harbour area have not yet been realised.

The Night of the Big Wind (6th January 1839)

- The powerful storm that swept over Ireland on the night of 6th January 1839 caused severe damage to property and several hundred deaths. It was the worst storm to hit Ireland in at least 300 years with Ulster bearing some of the worst effects.
- The produce of the land was found in the rivers and that of the rivers in the fields; salt could be tasted on trees forty miles from the sea; seaweed was found on hilltops; herrings were found six miles inland; stormy petrels were found dead everywhere in the middle of the country. Boats were put out afterwards to gather the hay from the sea.
- Accounts from Antrim were 'deplorable':
    - Belfast: Looked as if it had been destroyed by artillery.
    - Ballymena: houses were unroofed and chimneys brought down; six people lost their lives when a factory chimney fell on them.
    - Carrickfergus: houses, slated or thatched, were unroofed, even to the bare timber; corn and hayricks were prostrated; many trees were broken or torn up by the roots; in the churchyard a large sycamore that had braved 140 winters was torn down, and falling upon two cabins exposed the terrified inhabitants to the pelting of the piteous storm; the tall chimney at Mr Barnett's distillery was seen rocking with each terrific blast.
    - Islandmagee: stacks of grain were blown down and scattered over the country and in various instances wholly swept into the sea; the houses, with few exceptions, are partially or entirely unroofed; the most distressing inconveniences and sufferings are prevailing amongst the families there.
    - Larne Lough: five small coasting vessels are run ashore, sunk and demisted; several small holders are destitute and suffering.
    - Clough: haystacks were driven against the hedges and blown through straw by straw, the hay sticking out like needles on the far side of the hedge.
    - Glenarm: The Diligence, a revenue cruiser, had stopped in Glenarm Bay on the evening of Sunday 5th and took on board the coast guard, his wife and family of young children before sailing on to Donegal. The entire crew of 41 men and her passengers were all lost. Some oars and other pieces of timber were washed ashore at Ballycastle a few days later.
- In the early 19th century, the accelerating pace of scientific and technological change was dazzling. Nothing seemed impossible; this was an exciting and confident age. Which is why the storm came as such a shock. In a moment of something close to primal chaos the fragility of human achievement had been exposed. Every indication that man was more than a brute beast – cities, churches, factories, mansions, shipping – was shaken and humbled.
- The timing of the storm was also significant. The 6th January is the Epiphany, a feast of revelation when Christ made his being known to the world and many saw the storm as a

visitation of God's wrath. In pre-Christian tradition the night of the 5th January is associated with death divination, 'a time when the living felt the dead very close'. Many people suspected that the fairies were to blame, that the storm was evidence of some great battle in the fairy realm or of the fairies' severe displeasure at the actions of humankind and sudden departure from Ireland as a result.

- Later storms were unable to cross the threshold into this rich land of magic. The body of belief that had carried it there had been too badly eroded by the Great Famine, the loss of the Irish language and the forces of industrialisation. The 20th century marked the beginning of the end of mass-belief in the old pre-Christian gods, making the tales of fairy departure during the Big Wind symbolically true.

Local fairylore

- May Day is also a significant pagan festival, known as Bealtaine, which marks the beginning of summer. Like all traditional seasonal festivals, this is a time when the veil between the human and supernatural worlds becomes thin. Various rituals were performed in order to please or appease the fairies:
    - On May's Eve, wild flowers were pinned on doors or placed on doorsteps to ward off the fairies.
    - In the Glens, were pounded together on May Eve and the juice used to wet cows' udders, as a charm against fairies for the next year.
    - The egg shells from Easter kept and hung on the May bush to counteract the effects of fair charms and witchcraft.
    - The rowan tree was believed to hold protective powers. Branches were placed over the byre door and the dunghill. A rowan churn staff prevented butter being taken off the milk.
    - Iron also held the same powers. A pair of iron tongs was placed over a baby's cradle to prevent the fairies from carrying it away.
    - On May Eve, when the bonfires were lit, bundles of reeds would be burned in a circle around the farm to protect it, or some during sticks from the bonfire were thrown into the crop fields. Cows were driven across the embers of bonfires, or brought between two bonfires to ward off bad luck.
    - It was unlucky to allow coal to go out of the house May Eve or the morning of May Day.
    - You could lose your 'milk-luck' by giving away milk on May Day.
    - The first dew of May morning was supposed to confer beauty and good luck, while at the same time hold the power to curse and steal by magic. A person could steal the profit from a neighbour's milk by pulling a rope or a piece of cloth through their grass on May morning chanting 'Come all to me, Come all to me.'
    - Many people thought it safer to spend the greater part of May Day morning in bed to avoid any danger.
- On May Day fairies were supposed to move from one living place to another and to be at their liveliest and most spiteful. 'If they are molested in their habitations, and they warn you about it, take the warning or be sure it will be worse for you'.
    - The 'gentry' don't like to live near churches, or 'ugly' meetinghouses, they like a 'scroggery', where there are lots of bushes, and to be about the walls of ancient castles.
    - Particular rocks or little streams are subject to fairy enchantment.
    - Several local stories tell of seeing fairies living underground beneath prominent hills, often also the location of prehistoric cairns.

- The Banshee, also known as Nein Roe, haunts all the old castles and ruins in Antrim and is heard lamenting and moaning before a death takes place.
- In Glenarm, a number of prehistoric sites have been destroyed by modern developments:
  - In the area of Castle Street stood a medieval fortification, the centre of a lordship ruled by the Bissets. The Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record places it close to the small stream flowing behind the old school house. Local people say it stood on the site of the old courthouse.
  - According to the Sites and Monuments Record an ancient church and graveyard stood on the corner of Toberwine and Vennel Streets, where the old bank building now stands. Local legend holds that a church stood on the site of the old schoolhouse on Castle Street and that the current walled garden was the graveyard; the mason who built the school was said to have used skulls to strengthen the walls of the schoolhouse.
  - A megalithic tomb stood close to the river within the walls of Glenarm Castle demesne.
  - These sites may have been destroyed in the late 18th century as part of a major redevelopment of Glenarm by the Earl of Antrim. The castle was remodelled in the Palladian style, the Gothic-style parish church and Presbyterian church were built, the course of the river was altered and trees were planted in the demesne. The village was moved from beside the castle to where it is today, on the other side of the river; much of the grander housing in the village dates from this time.

Other significant disasters:

- Outbreak of Cholera (1854)
  - The disease broke out in the village 'with great virulence', starting at the Bridge Tavern and quickly spreading from house to house.
  - Within a few days 15 cases were reported, with no less than 12 having proved fatal.
  - One of the dead was a young man from Ballymena called Weir, who died in the house he was lodging in at the time (he may have been responsible for bringing the disease to the village as other cases had already been reported in Ballymena). Another victim was Dr Bernard O'Neill, aged 35.
  - It was reported that the moment Lord Dungannon heard of the outbreak he gave orders that all the houses not in a clean condition should be whitewashed and every drain was to be filled with hot lime. This attention to purity and cleanliness was credited with the fact that the contagion soon disappeared.
  - The dead were buried in a mass grave near the back wall of the graveyard at St Patrick's Church.

- Severe storm (1894)
  - During the night of 21st December 1894, a terrible hurricane swept over Ireland causing immense damage and considerable loss of life.
  - Barns and houses were de-roofed or blown down completely. The contents of stackyards were scattered for miles around and many low-lying areas were completely flooded. Many roads were partially swept away and boats were destroyed against the rocks.
  - The streets of Glenarm were a confused heap of chimney pots, slates and bricks and farmers in the mountainous districts lost all their hay. A large number of trees were

uprooted and lay across several of the roads leading to the village. Mail cars and other transport were significantly delayed. Northwards, close to Carnlough, the road at the Black Rock was washed away. A number of boats in the bay slipped their moorings, including two steamers, the Naida and the Neptune, which were washed up on the beach, seriously damaged.

- One local casualty of the storm was an old woman known as Marina Jane (see below).

- Rumoured closure of the Lime Works (1934)
  - In the wake of the global economic crisis of 1933, a rumour spread in the papers in June 1934 that the Eglinton Lime Company had closed down. The company was the foremost business in the village, employing about 100 people in total, so such news would have been a severe blow to the community.
  - However, a few days later the report was refuted by the company, which was keen to stress that trade in coal, limestone and whiting was continuing as normal. A number of men had been paid off temporarily owing to an accumulation of stocks.

- Snow blizzard (1947)
  - The gloom of WW2 had barely faded when the country was faced by another crisis; the early weeks of 1947 brought a terrible snowstorm that left the country crippled for weeks. The destruction was said to be similar to that of 6th January 1939 and 21st December 1894.
  - The snow fell in drifts nearly 30 feet deep in places. Some people had to walk along rooftops and dig steps downwards in order to get into their houses. Country areas were isolated for weeks with no hope of getting food.
  - The mountain area of Capanagh was inaccessible by road from Glenarm for over a fortnight. One man, John McAlister, battled his way over the hard-packed snowdrifts to Larne to contact the Divisional Food Chief, stressing that the families in Capanagh could only hold out for a few more days. A 150-strong relief party of soldiers in a long convoy of lorries made its way up the coast road to Glenarm, and from there travelled up the Ballymena road until the depth of the snow forced them to abandon their vehicles. They walked a further three miles inland until they reached Deerpark Creamery, where they established a food distribution centre. The only way the Capanagh people could reach the creamery was to wade through the Skeagh River; over the next few days over 100 people made their way to the creamery and were supplied with rations. They spoke of heavy losses in livestock, the McAlister family lost hundreds of sheep.
  - Several attempts to reopen the roads were made but no sooner were the snowdrifts cleared than the wind blew them back and closed the roads again. All taps, pumps and small streams were frozen; people gathered water in creamery cans from rivers where the think ice was broken. When the snow finally melted it brought heavy flooding, which caused further damage.

- Rock fall closes the Coast Road (1967)
  - In February 1967 over 200 tonnes of rubble slipped from the cliffs onto the Coast Road at Glenarm. In May of the same year another fall completely blocked the road.
  - The council decided to build a new road 30m on the seaward side of the old one, using 255,000 tonnes of basalt and limestone quarried from White Bay.

- The new roadway was opened in June 1968, but on the night of 31st October that year, part of the new causeway was swept away in another storm.
- Jimmy Kelly, a roadworker from Glenarm, wrote a poem called 'Mistake' criticising the new roadway:

You men who read will you take heed what Jimmy has to say
You cannot stop the waves that roll along Glenarm Bay
What wall or fence that man can make the tide will soon destroy
What will stop it on its course of whom will they employ

Now their labour is not lost, their blasting and their boring,
That road of state washed out of date, and now they're left deploring.
Almost half a million pounds was thrown about quite free,
To rumble at the bottom of an ever restless sea.

Good counsel of them I did give, but that made little matter,
Wilful men will go their way, defying wind and water.
And now they musty retrace their steps to that road of days of yore,
That stood the pounding of the waves for a hundred years or more.

But hope is bright for us in that lesson they have learned,
They'll change their plan another way, those who are concerned.

- Following a protest meeting in the local courthouse over the closure of the Coast Road, an Improvements Committee was set up in Glenarm. It provided a power base for villagers to pressure local authorities to implement much needed changes. One of the first issues tackled was pollution by the Eglinton Limestone Company. It was the main employer in the village, but residents objected to the lime dust coming from the works and to the dumping of waste lime. The committee successfully curtailed the pollution after negotiations with the company.

Key Characters:

- Richard Thomas
  - Bald's principal ally and resident engineer on the Antrim Coast Road project.
  - He had previously been working on the construction of Kingstown Harbour in Dún Laoghaire.
  - He was nominated for the Antrim Coast Road by the Board of Works for his expertise in explosives and because it helped solve a problem for them in Dún Laoghaire. The board had taken over the construction of Kingstown Harbour in 1832 and needed to reduce staff and slow down the works temporarily.
  - Thomas was pressured into taking up the Antrim Coast Road project but remained disgruntled.
  - He lived in Glenarm while working on the project and was required to make fortnightly progress reports. He was responsible for supervising the men employed on the project close at hand.
  - There was constant tension between Thomas and the Board of Works over his approach to organising the teams of men, largely because the Board didn't understand the practical needs of the work on the ground.
  - Thomas returned to Dún Laoghaire after a year, and was replaced by John Geeky.

- Marina Jane
    - An old woman called Jean Parke lived in a stone hut on Ballygalley beach. She had little contact with local people as she was regarded as an eccentric. Her tanned craggy features, long grey hair, old soiled clothes and the fact she smoked a clay pipe led local children to call her a witch.
    - She had been found as a baby washed ashore in a small boat and lying in the arms of her dead mother. She was adopted by a local family and christened Jean.
    - She married a local farmer who, like many men in the area, spent long periods at sea to supplement the meagre income of his smallholding. During one of his spells away, she dreamed he had been involved in an accident and drowned. From that day onwards, she wandered down to the beach each day, spending hours staring out at sea watching for his return.
    - Months passed and her neglect of the farm led to her being evicted. She built a hut on the beach with walls made of large stones and a roof of driftwood and seaweed. She lived there for many years gathering shellfish from the rocks to feed herself.
    - On the night of 21st December 1894, a severe storm swept over the country. People pleaded with Jean to leave her hut, but she stubbornly refused insisting that her husband's boat might come in at any time. Sometime during the night, the storm waves swept Jean and her hut away. Her body was found the next day by James Blair, half a mile away along the shore.
    - A poem called Marina Jane, written by William Clarke Robinson, from Glenarm, is dedicated to her memory.

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***Shaped by Industry - Shared with Pride* - Notes for Whitehead Railway Museum**

The Dining Car

- built in 1950
- the only dining car built by the Ulster Transport Authority
- Operated as part of a train named 'The Festival' running between Belfast and Derry in 1951 - named after the Festival of Britain
- One of three catering vehicles in the Royal Train used to transport the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh on their tour of Northern Ireland in 1953, after her coronation
- Catering was withdrawn from local train services in the earl 1970s
- A sample dining car menu from the era includes cooked and continental breakfast, two course lunches and afternoon tea

Ambulance train (1941)

- Ambulance trains are essentially a hospital on wheels
- training exercises were carried out on an ambulance train at Whitehead in September 1941
- There were ten carriages in total, converted from passenger coaches
- Each coach could take up to 40-50 patients in stretchers, some ambulance trains could carry up to 500 patients
- A treatment coach included a dressing theatre which could be used for emergency operations
- There was also a pharmacy, a medical store and a utility room which could be used as an isolation ward or a padded cell – it was more often used for poker
- A kitchen car provided meals for 400 and a saloon coach was used as a dining car and recreation room
- The majority of staff were orderlies, responsible for fetching water changing dressings, feeding the passengers and cleaning the train
- There were also three medical officers and two or three nurses who gave skilled medical care
- Training was sometimes combined with local first aid units; casualties were planted with cards tied to their chests starting the nature of their supposed injury, the first aid team would write on the back what treatment should be given and then bring them back to the train, then the orderlies loaded them onto the train for the Medical Officer to check the treatment
- On one training session two elderly ladies dealt with a heavy scalp bleeding by choosing to apply a tourniquet around the patient's neck; they explained that they had released it every fifteen minutes as the training manual advised
- The Whitehead train was used for the intended purpose once, when it collected German casualties rescued from the Bismarck in Londonderry
    - The Bismarck was the first full-scale battleship constructed by the German navy since World War One; at the time it was the most formidable battleship every to have been built. The British navy were determined to destroy it.
    - The Bismarck was spotted in the North Atlantic while on a top-secret mission to attack the Allied convoys. Britain dispatched a fleet to track it down, approaching the enemy at full speed in the Demark Straight at dawn on the 24th May 1941. In the ensuing battle, the Bismarck successfully sank Britain's largest battlecruiser, HMS Hood; only 3 of the 1,421 crew members survived, making this the Royal Navy's largest loss of life from a single vessel. Seeking revenge, the navy called on all available ships to pursue the Bismarck, which had also suffered significant damage, before it reached the safety of Nazi-occupied France. Over 26th and 27th May bi-planes and warships attacked the Bismarck repeatedly, until eventually the Germans scuttled the already foundering ship. Over 110 German survivors were brought back to Britain as prisoners of war.
    - Some of these German navy prisoners were loaded onto the ambulance train in Londonderry, which set off mid-morning, to deliver them to Musgrave Park and other

Belfast hospitals. Lunch was served on the way, but not all the patients, some of whom were Norwegian, could speak English. One orderly charged with serving lunch decided to put a little of each choice of vegetables on a plate and ask the patients what they wanted through gestures and signs. One of the prisoners lying on a bottom stretcher poked his pal in the bunk above and said 'No wonder we're losing this bloody war – they've even got deaf mutes in the army!'

Station Robbery (1939)

- Two days of train and bus takings (amounting to £132 12s 11d) were stolen from the office at Whitehead Railway Station on the night of the 6th February 1939
- After locking up the Booking Office shortly after midnight, clerk Thomas Stewart was cycling home when he was set upon by three men. They dragged him into a field, bound his legs and hands, blindfolded him and took his keys to the office and safe
- One stayed to guard the hostage while the other headed to the station. About an hour later the man freed James' wrists and told him not to move for 20 minutes; James saw a car with lights move off, then he went to the house of another railway official and phone the police.
- Fingerprint experts made a close scrutiny of the safe and various other objects in the office – no useful clues were discovered as it was believed the robbers used gloves
- A boy named Boyd reported finding a bank note close to where Thomas Stewart was held up

Smuggling (1920s onwards)

- stories abound relating to smuggling on the Enterprise from partition up until we joined the EU single market in 1993
- In 1948 a Ballymena bookmaker was arrested when found wearing two pairs of trousers – he was trying to avoid duty and tax on them, as well as silk stockings, tobacco, braces and socks also found on his person
- The train crew would hide bottles of whiskey under the coal and dissuaded customs men from searching it by being sick all over it
- A cook described by customs officials as 'a cute one' smuggled a mattress in the rear guard's van, unloading it offside when the customs men were at the front of the train

Letters from the front (WW1)

- Letters exchanged to and from the front were the main form of communication and a vital boost to national morale during the First World War
- Receiving well wishes and gifts from home was one of the few comforts a soldier had on the Western Front. The majority of them spent more time fighting boredom than they did the enemy, and writing was one of the few hobbies available to them. For some, it was a welcome distraction from the horrors of the trenches.
- Letters from serving soldiers were censored to prevent bad news from reaching home. They kept families informed of the well-being of their loved ones; they also helped to sustain popular support for the war across the home front. Nothing could be allowed to jeopardise that.
- The British Army Postal Service delivered around 2 billion letters during the war. At its peak, 2,500 staff handle 12.5 million letters and a million parcels in a week.
- In 1917 alone, over 550,000 mail sacks were sent to France for Christmas.
- Souvenirs such as buttons and matchboxes often accompanied letters, and some even sent silk cards – embroidered motifs on strips of silk mesh, which were mounted on postcards.
- It took only two days for a letter to reach the front.
- A series was aired on Radio Ulster in 2016 on a collection of love letters in the Linen Hall Library which were exchanged between an English soldier Eric Appleby and his Irish sweetheart Phyllis Kelly https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03s3ns5?page=2

Excursions (c.1900)

- Berkeley Deane Wise was a civil engineer for the railway company who rebuilt the station and introduced tourism to Whitehead on a grand scale
- The railway was responsible for building the promenade, bandstands and a swimming pool, as well as pathways, footbridges, bathing boxes and picnic sites; they even transported sand by goods train from Portrush to create a beach
- The railway also organised firework displays, band concerts, puppet shows, Pierrots, bathing events and sailing regattas. A pavilion was created in the 1920s to host concerts, dances, roller-skating, badminton and boxing matches.
- On a bank holiday Monday in 1904 over 7,000 excursionists arrived in Whitehead for the day
- The trips were popular with factory workers, Sunday Schools and groups like the Belfast Naturalists Field Club

The Gobbins (opened 1902)

- Described as 'having no parallel in Europe as a marine cliff walk' the Gobbins Cliff Path was Berkeley Deane Wise's engineering masterpiece.
- It was designed, like his other developments at Whitehead, to attract tourists to the area on the railway.
- It was an immediate success and attracted millions of visitors before it closed in 1940; they became a bigger tourist attraction than the Giant's Causeway
- The first visitors to experience the cliff path where the British Association for the Advancement of Science.
- The 2¼-mile path incorporating tunnels and spectacular bridges provided access to a series of about 20 caves previously only accessible by sea. Some of the bridges were made using old railway track and sleepers. The tubular and suspension bridges were made in Belfast and floated out from Whitehead on barges before being lifted into position.
- The entrance hole, carved through solid rock, was known as Wise's Eye, where a local man called Sam Cuthbert collected an admission fee of 6d.
- At 'The Aquarium' visitors descended a flight of wooden steps and passed through a zig-zag tunnel below sea-level.
- The most spectacular section of caves is the 'Seven Sisters', the first of which was spanned by a 200ft steel suspension bridge.
- The last great cave is the 'Kraken', named after the legendary Norse sea monster, where a wide gap was spanned by a rope bridge similar to Carrick-a-rede.
- The caves were used in the past by local smugglers, particularly to hide stolen horses before transporting them to Scotland by boat.
- One of the caves (though it may not be part of the Gobbins Path) is known as the 'Devil's Hideout'. It disappears from the cliffs a mile underground
- Close to the path stands a large fairy tree. It remains in use today as a healing tree as the trunk has been embedded with coins, distinctive stones have been placed at its based and some people have also described scraps of fabric and token objects having been attached to the branches.
- In the days of the Whitehead excursions, ladies served picnic teas to people in the Sandy Cave and it was thought of as 'the correct thing' for well-to-do visitors from Belfast to picnic at the top of the cliffs.
- On 30th May 1911, the sea trials of The Olympic, sister ship to the Titanic, could be viewed from the cliffs. The Titanic was launched from Belfast the following day and sailed past the entrance of the lough on her way to Liverpool.

Fear of trains (c.1860)

- Trains enabled unprecedented speed and efficiency, but according to the more fearful Victorians, these technological achievements came at the considerable cost
- Mental health

- The jarring motion of the train was alleged to unhinge the mind and either drive sane people mad or trigger violent outbursts from a latent “lunatic.”
- In the 1860s and ‘70s, reports began emerging of bizarre passenger behavior on the railways. When seemingly sedate people boarded trains, they suddenly began behaving in socially unacceptable ways.
- One Scottish aristocrat was reported to have ditched his clothes aboard a train before “leaning out the window” ranting and raving. After he left the train, he suddenly recovered his composure.
- In January 1865 the peace on a regular English train journey to Liverpool is shattered by one man’s deranged laughter and erratic antics. Armed with a gun and attacking the windows to get to the other increasingly frightened passengers, he seems out of control. At the next train stop, the man suddenly becomes calm and serenity is returned. But as the train begins to roll again, his aggression returns. The motion of the train becomes the only means to gauge the man’s behaviour. His mood changes from one stop to the next, twisting and turning with the carriage.
- A story from 1864 story, starkly titled “A Madman in a Railway Carriage,” gleefully relates how a burly sailor became incensed, flailing around in an erratic manner first trying to climb out of the window , and then swearing and shouting at the other occupants of the carriage and struggling with everyone . A superhuman strength gripped this aggressor and four people were required to restrain him and he had to be bound to a seat.

- Reproductive health
  - Critics thought “that women’s bodies were not designed to go at 50 miles an hour,” and worried that “[female passengers’] uteruses would fly out of [their] bodies as they were accelerated to that speed
  - Others suspected that any human body might simply melt at high speeds.
- Death
  - Railway disasters loomed largest in the public imagination, and newspaper accounts circulated images of destruction.
  - A satiric poem in the 1851 issue of Punch darkly mocked: “I’m going by the Rail, my dears, where the engines puff and hiss; And ten to one the chances are that something goes amiss.”
  - But it wasn’t until the tragic Armagh rail crash of 1889 that Parliament finally legislated for rail safety. The brakes of a crowded Sunday School excursion train failed on an incline and collided with the following train, killing eighty people and injuring 260., about one third were children. It remains Ireland’s worst railway disaster and at the time was the worst in Europe. The Regulation of Railways Act was rushed through at exceptionally high speed; the accident occurred on 12th June 1889 and the act went *into force* on 30 August 1889.

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  - Letter from Pádraig [no surname given] to Kathleen O'Connell describing the impact of the Easter Rising on communications
  - Love letter from May to her fiancée James, 29th May 1916 [no surnames given]
  - Letter from Susan Fitzgerald to Michael Gorman, undated but from during the First World War
- Coleraine Museum collections, letters by James Henry describing active service on the French front during the First World War
- Material provided by Whitehead Railway Museum on the ambulance trains and smuggling

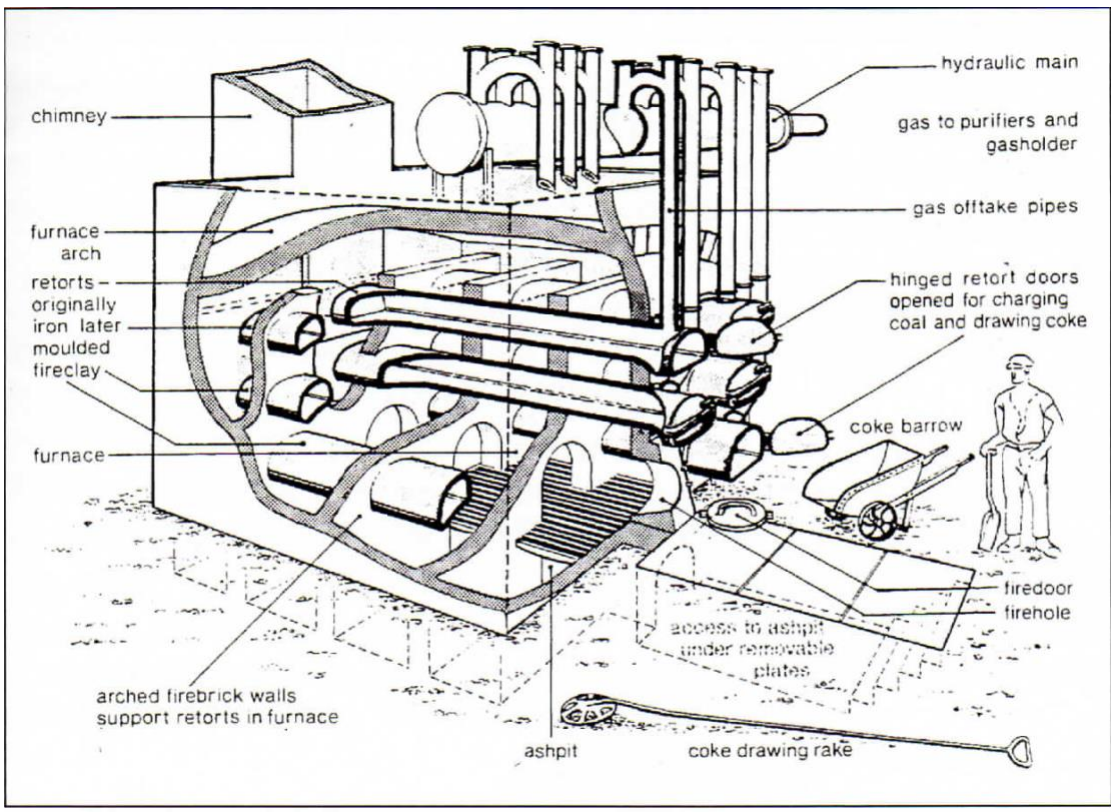
***Shaped by Industry - Shared with Pride* - Notes for Flame Gas Works**

Carrickfergus Gas Works began producing gas for the town on 17th September 1855. The event was celebrated as follows:

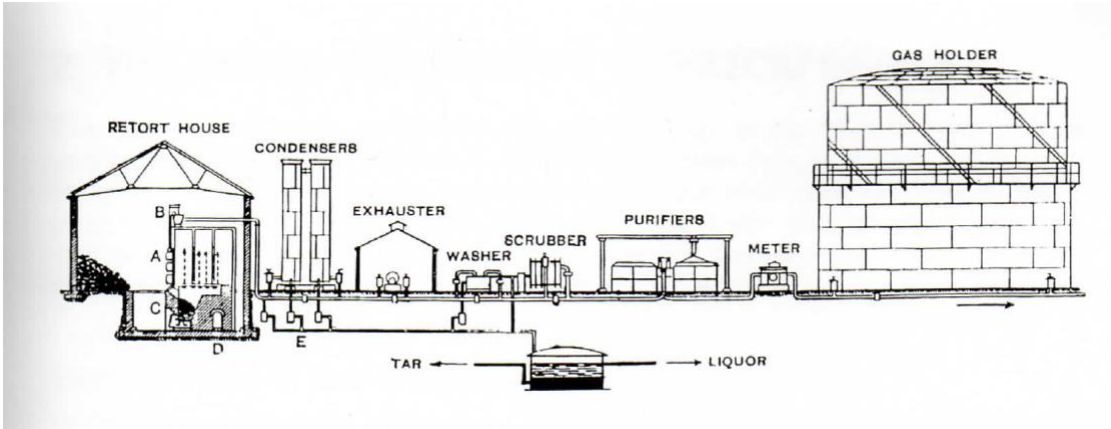
> *'On the front of the Market House* [now the town hall] *three jets of light, a crown in the centre, with the letters V and R at the sides were erected. The large square opposite was completely filled with persons, who, through the kindness of the directors of the Gas Company, were plentifully supplied with ale'*

How the gas was produced

Bituminous coal was placed in horizontal retorts - D-shaped fireclay tubes sealed with heavy cast-iron doors and arranged within a brick setting - and heating them to 1000 degrees centigrade from a furnace below (known as 'The Producer'). Each retort could hold about four hundred weight of coal. In the absence of air, the coal could not burn, but instead gave off its gas content. It took four or five hours until the coal was spent, producing high quality coke that could be taken out of the retorts and fed into the furnace below to heat more coal.



The gas generated was passed through condensers, a washer and a scrubber to remove the tar and ammonia impurities. Hydrogen sulphide (which smells like rotten eggs) was removed in iron-oxide beds. The passage of the gas through the pipes was assisted by an exhauster, which sucked it out of the retorts and pushed it towards the station meter, which measured the quantity of gas produced, to the gas holder, where it was stored before passing out of the works through the street mains and to consumers' houses. Its pressure was regulated by 'The Governor', and increased if necessary by a booster.



Coal gas was produced at Carrickfergus until the 1960s, when it was bought over by the Belfast gas works and reformed (oil-based) gas was brought directly from there to Carrickfergus through an underground pipeline.

Notable characters:

Marshall Waddell:

- Waddell was appointed manager and secretary in 1938 and presided over the gas works for 29 years until he retired in 1967
- Described as about 5'9 – 5'11 tall, very kind, always well-dressed, as befits a manager, in a suit with a collar and tie, and a soft hat.
- He spent much of his time as manager occupied with improving the gas works, renewing and updating the equipment.
- He was very dedicated to the job and never took any holidays. Instead he spent his holidays in the office watching Wimbledon on TV.
- He was a very strict manager; he didn't allow any nonsense. He would sneak up the stairs in the old manager's house and spy on the workers through the window. On several occasions he caught people taking coal
- When Belfast took over in 1962, he didn't want anything to do with them; he didn't want any interference and hated anyone from Belfast coming down to the gas works. He was in his 60s by that time and used to running his own works for the last quarter of a century. But between 1962-1967 he managed to maintain the full run of the works without Belfast bothering him.
- He was forced to retire in 1967; Belfast had a rule that you had to retire the month you turned 65. He ended up getting a job at another gasworks in Portadown
- Despite his dedication to the gas works, he was delighted that production was coming to an end. By the time the works closed the retorts were deteriorating very badly and he had an awful job keeping up gas. He even had to buy in bottled gas to eke out the retorts until the gas pipe came down from Belfast. He complained about the delay in getting that work completed because he was anxious that the retorts would pack in.
- But he was also worried about what would happen to the gas works after he left. Whenever they stopped producing gas in 1964, he had the labourers whitewash all the brickwork on the retorts and tar all the pipe work so that everything was clean and nice looking. When Sam Gault took over as manager, he told him, *'Sam, listen, this that you are looking at is a museum piece. And I would like you to try and preserve the equipment.'*

Marion Campbell:

- Marion is described as very small, very nice and polite, but someone who kept very much to herself.
- She was daughter of, Robert Campbell, who worked as manager and secretary of the gas works between 1895 and 1938. He was greatly respected, as throughout the coal shortages

of the First World War and the miners' strike of 1926, he ensured the works never ran out of coal completely and the town was never without a supply of gas.
- Marion was trained in book keeping, shorthand, typewriting, commercial arithmetic and commercial correspondence at Carrickfergus Technical School
- Her father got her a clerical job in the gasworks in the summer of 1909, aged 15. She remained with the company for 54 years, until she was forced to retire after the works was taken over by Belfast. By that time, she was almost 70.
- When she began work, she lived in the manager's house with her father and the rest of her family. She would come downstairs to the office each day and worked there by herself for most of the day.
- She is described as steadfast and efficient in her work, if somewhat formidable. she looked after all financial matters, counting and recording the money that came in from the meter inspectors, lodging taking in the bank, keeping the books and doling out the wages.

The stokers:
- It took two years to train a stoker; the work of stoking and monitoring the retorts was hot, heavy and dirty, but extremely skilled. Not everyone could stick it; several young guys left after working just one shift.
- The stokers worked in three eight-hour shifts in order to keep gas production going – 6am-2pm; 2pm-1pm; 10pm-6am.
- Sam Gault, relief plumber sent down from Belfast to Carrickfergus as extra cover in 1962

> *'I was amazed at the workings that went on in the gas works … every spare minute I had, I was in the retorts.*
>
> *There were only two men working in the retort at any particular time, and they just wore their trouser and their boots, and that was that they had on them, apart from a cap, usually, to keep their hair clean. They were as black as your boot*
>
> *… whenever they opened the doors of the retorts … it was just a red, red glow. But the men didn't wear any glasses [*or any safety equipment]
>
> *… Watching them* [recharge the retorts*] amazed me, because some of those retorts were quite high off the ground. And the men were able to throw the coal back about 12 feet, and they had to build it up gradually from the back to the front … It was an art, the way they threw in the coal and the way they twisted their hand to spread the coal.*
>
> *… when the coke came out it was red, red, red hot. And they put it on the ground and then threw buckets of water over it, and the steam that went up! And the dirt!*

- Leslie Waddell (Marshall's son):

> *They used to have coal-throwing competitions … they started at the edge of the old retort house, which had a 40 gallon drum, and they would throw a shovel of coal towards it, and if you missed, you were out. And then they moved gradually back, maybe another seven or eight paces back from the edge of the retort – a throw of a good thirty yards!*

- Letter from Marshall Waddell to the manager at Belfast Gas, 1966:

> *'Our shift workers have noted the main drawing near and have shown signs of restlessness – one assistant stoker has handed in his notice, but has withdrawn it to give me time to find out their position. We must make sure we retain our stokers*

whatever we do. Unless you have dangled a carrot, the men will naturally enough accept any offer of a good job … learning to hand-charge horizontal retorts takes time and is not learned quickly.'

- If any of the stokers fell out with one another, say one was finishing at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, he would heat one of the retorts too full with coal, and then the man that came after him to clear it out, he wouldn't be able to get the poker in.
- They were always pulling pranks on one another - one man put a pigeon in another's lunch
- Thomas Kearney started as a stoker in 1920; in 1938 he was rewarded with an extra month's wages for looking after the works between Robert Campbell's death and Marshall Waddell's appointment. His full name was Thomas Pius Kearney, '*he wouldn't have been marching at Drumcree'*. However, it was his job every year to erect the large and elaborate Orange arch in Albert Road each year; he acted as supervisor, because as an experienced plumber he could repair or make new pieces of piping as required. When he became ill with cancer he was distraught to be unable to do this job any more.
- Jimmy Creightson's Aunt Lizzie lived a few doors from the old gas works and sold potato and soda farls to the neighbours and gasworks staff. She had been used to cooking on a griddle over an open range, and couldn't manage it at all once she got a gas cooker. But Geordie McAuley found her a gas griddle going cheap and the lads in the gasworks got their sodas for tea break, hot and dripping with butter.
- In the 1960s, when Sam Gault first came to the works, Geordie McAuley and John Erdis were the two main stokers; there was Tommy Johnston, who was illiterate; a man called Jones, who was sacked because he stole some copper pipe; and Billy McKee, who was a reserve stoker and also the foreman of the gasworks
- It was a small team and everyone put their hands to whatever needed done. The stokers took responsibility for painting and maintenance of the works, as well as other jobs. Billy McKee was able to go out and fix the gas mains; Billy Holmes the meter inspector was also a plumber and was able to go out and fit appliances. But whenever Belfast took over that changed; the unions got involved and everyone had to have a set job to do.
- The stokers had six years working with Belfast gas works, they were got into the pension scheme, sickness benefits and other benefits they weren't entitled to previously, but they knew they were only working to end up losing their jobs
- As soon as gas production stopped, Erdis left the next day, he wasn't going to stay any longer. Geordie McAuley became a barman. The other men were kept on, they were needed to make sure holder was kept full, to answer the phone in the office etc.

'The Collector' - the meter man:

- responsible for both reading the meters every quarter before billing the customers, and for emptying the meters and giving customers their 'divi'.
- He used a special coin cart to bring home the heavy pile of pennies emptied from the meters.
- The Sunnylands Tenant's Association became dissatisfied with this method:

  'The man comes in – opens the meter – throws all the money into a bag – and that's the last you see and hear of it.' … [In England]the procedure was for the collector to place the money on the table, count it in full view of the householder, and then give a receipt for the amount collected. She then received an immediate rebate on the amount. … In Carrickfergus no such receipts were given; the householder had to redress or proof that the money was ever collected, and there were differences of opinion on when, if ever, rebate was forthcoming.'

  The association formed a group to canvas the estate and collect signatures on a petition refusing entry to money collectors unless they were prepared to give a signed receipt. Eventually the company 'completely capitulated' and put new payment systems in place.

- During the 1970s Sam Gault had to make sure the meter collectors were met at regular intervals, every couple of hours, in order to collect the cash they were carrying. As they could be carrying a substantial amount, they were regularly held up and robbed.

Sam Gault, the final manager (1967-1987):
- he was responsible for the safety of all the people in Carrickfergus; as there were 2,000 houses using gas at that time, it was a 24 hour job,
- The Belfast company put a phone into his house for free because they knew he could be called out at any time; any time a house went on fire he had to go out to make sure there wasn't gas involved; he also got called out by the police when people tried to commit suicide
- When he took over as manager the workers were sitting down in the tea room, the shower room, he came down to them and said, *'Now listen boys, I was a plumber in the gas works, and I know all the moves. Now if you're sitting on your backsides doing nothing, and I come down, don't start pretending to me that you're working, you don't have to, I'll let you sit where you are and I won't say boo to you. I want to remain friends with you people, I am depending on you people to keep me right, to keep my job right. Don't let me come down here and see you sitting on your backside if there's work to be done, but if there's no work to be done you can sit where youse are and you can do what you like.*'
- Sam was more in the town than in the gas works, in one month he could drive 240-50 miles just in and around Carrickfergus. Billy McKee was his foreman, he looked after the gas holder and helped get meters ready to send out to people's houses. Hazel Ferguson (later Mrs Lindon) worked in the showrooms, selling appliances and dealing with the bills. And there was also a lorry driver called Jimmy Mercer who delivered all the cookers.
- One wee man, Nicky O'Neill, he was a labourer who dug up the streets to lay or fix pipes. Every year he painted the top of the holder, he by the time he was in his 50s he had developed heart problems. Sam stopped him from going to the top of the holder and Nicky was with Sam for it; he enjoyed being in the sun up there. So, he lifted his cards and left, and got a job in the council as a bin man. He was the only one Sam had a problem with.
- Sam had to come in every Christmas day to boost the gas to a higher pressure so many people were using it. The gas holder when it was full only threw out 9 inches water gauge, on Christmas day Sam had to put it up to 13 inches water gauge, if he put it over 15 inches the houses would have been blown up. So, he had to stand by the gauge to make sure that it didn't rise above 15. He came in about 10.30am on Christmas morning and didn't get home until about 3.30pm, when he saw that people were stopping using gas. The family knew not to have Christmas dinner until 4 in the afternoon.

Potentially interesting events:

Cure for whooping cough
- during the C19th and early C20th it was believed that the hydrogen sulphide given off by the iron-oxide purifying beds, could cure whooping cough
- The iron oxide (known as bog ore) occasionally had to be shovelled out of the purifier beds when it became too dirty. It was laid out in the yard to release some of the gases and then when it was refreshed it was put back in to the beds again.
- When this was due to take place, the manager would notify local families and children were brought to breath in the noxious fumes

Robbery, 1894
- at a special meeting of the company directors on 18th August 1894, it was minuted that the manager, Andrew Todd, had fled the country with the company funds
- Just two months previously, he has been praised in an article in the Carrickfergus Tribute for being 'indefatigable in his exertions to give satisfaction alike to customers and directors.'
- no further details of what he took or what happened to him are documented!

Stoker's strike, 1919
- the stokers were requesting a pay rise and though a more modest pay rise was agreed between the union and the directors, they refused to accept it and downed tools at 6am on 9th September 1919
- local carters supported the men and also came out in sympathy
- A new settlement was made and the men returned to work at 10pm on 12th September
- This was only the second, and the last, time Carrickfergus was without gas

Fatal accident, 1946
- one of the trimmers, Harry McAuley, was wheeling his barrow across the yard; the barrow held about one hundredweight of hot coke and had a cast iron front wheel.
- Work was going on in the yard and heavy duty electrical cables were in use; they had not been covered
- Harry ran his wheelbarrow over an electrical cable he was killed instantly
- This was the one and only fatal accident at the works during its entire history, and ironically was not related to the production of gas

Blackouts during WW2
- towns lit by gas were exempted from the normal rules regarding blackouts at night; they were allowed to maintain 'star-lighting' instead. Through the use of valves, which reduced the pressure of the gas, an 'off-black' illumination was provided, giving the slightest lighting of the gloom.
- However, there is no mention of star-lighting in Carrickfergus, probably since many of its lamps were now lit by electricity.

Workers' strike, 1974
- During the province-wide strike, gas and electricity supplies were cut off for period of several weeks.
- Cars with loud hailers were sent round the streets, warning people to turn off their gas.
- As there was still gas in the mains if enough people disobeyed these, the pressure in the mains could have dropped to a level where the air could have got in – resulting in a truly explosive situation

Hidden race winnings:
- A man had won a horse racing bet and wanted to hide his £400 winnings from his wife
- He hid the money inside their gas oven, without realising that it was due to be removed by the gasworks for disposal
- The man came to see Sam Gault and could not believe his luck when Sam directed him to the old gas cooker and he found all the money safe inside.

The closure of the works, 1987
- Sam was the first person in Northern Ireland to manage the closure of a gas works: '*They used Carrickfergus as the guinea pig. And unfortunately, I was thrown into the middle.'* He was given just six months to complete the closure and he had to report weekly on any snags or problems. Every customer's house had to be converted to another fuel and all the meters taken out.
- Sam: '*I was amazed that the men worked overtime to get on with the closure; they worked overtime to lose their own jobs.'*
- The Belfast Telegraph wrote a very nostalgic article titled '*Saying Goodbye to an Old Flame'.* The title was adopted by the Belfast gas company for their booklet to consumers advising of the shutdown.
- It cost 85 million to close all the gas works in Northern Ireland; every customer got compensation for the work required to convert to bottle gas or electricity and for every piece new appliance they needed to buy.

- The day it closed Sam simply shut the gates, everyone was cleared out and the gates were locked and that was it.
- Sam was transferred into Belfast to help manage the closure of that gas works; he worked there for 18 months. Jimmy Mercer was also transferred to Belfast and worked there until it was closed. The rest of workers were all over 60 and they were able to get their pension; Sam lost track of them after the closure.
- Matt Maynes, production manager at the Sydenham works, *'It was an industry that had been there for 160 years and you were watching that industry dying … on the last day, to see it being closed off completely, to close the last valve, to watch the pressure dying in the town … it was sad. A very sad day.'*
- Sam resents that he didn't get any kind of thank you for the work he did. He managed the gas works for twenty years would have expected the council to give him some sort of acknowledgement but there was nothing. He was also the first to organise a closure of a gas works, and he did it within the 6-month deadline, but all he got from Belfast was his redundancy money. He wasn't sad to leave, there were nights he couldn't sleep over it his duties were so vast and he was relieved to be able to wind down. Afterwards, he got a job as a salesman for a printing company.

Haunting:
- the Gasworks have featured in many reports of ghostly activity since the complex's closure in 1987.
- The site is sad to be haunted by the spirit of a lady, who is often seen walking in the central yard. Poltergeist activity has also been reported.
- These claims were investigated several years ago by Ghost Searchers Ireland.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2IPE00ccyC4
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcu_9vA-rOQ

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