



Newsletter

The Official Newsletter of The Friends of Sloan's House

MAYOR'S RECEPTION



The Sloan's House Management Committee members and their partners were welcomed to a Mayor's Reception, hosted by Councillor and Mrs Jim Speers in the Armagh City and District Council Offices, on Tuesday evening, 22 March 2011. The Mayor is a member of the "Friends of Sloan's House" and has taken an active interest in the development of the project.

After speeches by the Mayor and the Management Committee Chairperson, Denis Watson, all present were entertained to refreshments and a tour of the magnificent Council building which of course was previously the home of the Church of Ireland Archbishop.

PROJECT UPDATE

At the time of going to print, we are still awaiting confirmation of the outcome of the submission for funding of the joint Sloan's House and Schomberg House project. We remain confident of success, but until such times as a Letter of Offer is received, we cannot proceed further. The Management Committee is determined however, that should the application fail, we will proceed with some work to the Museum in order to extend and renovate the building, albeit on a lesser scale.

Welcome to the Spring edition of the "Friends of Sloan's House" Newsletter. We trust you will find the articles informative as we have included updates on the Museum Project and the "Friends", as well as items of historical interest. Many thanks to those who have taken the time to submit articles and if anyone has something for future publication, please let any of the Management Committee members have it.

Friends Update

Recruitment of additional members has been very slow over recent months, with the total now being 167 "Friends". In line with the Aims of the "Friends", we would encourage existing members to recruit additional members. If each member could only recruit one more, we could double our membership!! As always, a Membership Application Form is printed in this Newsletter.



FLAGSHIP "12th"



Loughgall District was one of the first Host Districts to achieve "flagship" status for the "12th" celebrations in 2007; that was followed in 2008 by Tandragee District achieving similar status. At an event recently to launch the "Flagship12th" competition for 2011, Loughgall and Tandragee Districts were presented with commemorative glassware to mark their previous involvement.



Photo: (left to right): Howard Hastings, Chairman Northern Ireland Tourist Board; Niall Gibbons, Chief Executive, Tourism Ireland; Kyle Ellison, PDM Tandragee; Roger Gardiner, Co Grand Sec (collected on behalf of Loughgall); Edward Stevenson, Grand Master GOLI

The 1641 Massacre

This year marks the 370th anniversary of the 1641 Massacre of Protestants in the Bann River at Portadown.

The Portadown Massacre took place in November 1641. Up to 100 mostly English Protestants were killed in the River Bann by a group of armed Irishmen. This was the biggest massacre of Protestant colonists during the 1641–42 uprising.

The rebellion had broken out in October 1641 and was marked by attacks on the English and Scottish Protestant settlers who had arrived in Ulster in the Ulster Plantation. At first, there were beatings and robbing of local settlers, then house burnings and expulsions and finally killings. By November 1641, armed parties of Ulstermen were rounding up British Protestant settlers and marching them to the coast, from which they were forced to board ships to Britain. History suggests that the violence escalated after a failed rebel assault on Lisnagarvey in November 1641, after which the settlers killed several hundred captured insurgents.

One such a group of Protestants were imprisoned in a church in Loughgall. They had been informed that they were going to be marched eastwards where they were to be expelled to England. The Irish soldiers were said by to be led by either Captain Manus O'Cane or Toole McCann - later accounts of the event differed on this point. After some time, the English civilians were taken out of the Church and marched to a bridge over the River Bann. Once on the bridge, the group was stopped. At this point the civilians, threatened by pikes and swords, were forcibly stripped of their clothes. They were then herded off the bridge into the icy cold river waters at sword-point. Most drowned or died of exposure, although some were said to have been shot by musket-fire as they struggled to stay afloat.

Estimates of the number of those killed varied from less than 100 to over 300. William Clark, a survivor



of the massacre, said during the 1642 depositions that as many as 100 were killed at the bridge. As Clark was a witness of the massacre his figure is taken as being the most credible.

The total of Protestant civilians killed in Ulster in the early months of the rebellion was about 4,000. In County Armagh, recent research has shown that about 1,250 Protestants were killed or about a quarter of the planter population there. In County Tyrone, modern research has identified three blackspots for the killing of settlers, with the worst being near Kinard, 'where most of the British families planted... were ultimately murdered'.

The Portadown massacre was used to support the view that the Irish Uprising was a papal conspiracy to massacre all of the Protestant inhabitants of Ireland, though in truth large scale massacres such as this were mostly confined to Ulster. The atrocity featured prominently in Parliamentary propaganda works in the 1640s, most famously by John Temple's *The Irish Rebellion of 1646*. The immediate goal of these propagandists was to isolate King Charles, who many prominent English Protestants such as John Pym viewed as being sympathetic to Irish Catholics. In the longer term, accounts of the massacre strengthened the resolve of many Parliamentarians to launch a reconquest of Ireland, which they did in 1649.

A depiction of the scene is portrayed on the banner of Rising Sons of Portadown LOL No 273 and an account of the events from survivors of that time, are now available online from TCD website. *Abridged from Irish History*



Portadown District LOL No 1 Memorial Stone at Bann River

Lieutenant Colonel William Blacker

— Part 2 *(by Roger Gill)*

Lieut.-Col. William Blacker From The Dublin University Magazine, Volume 17, Number 101, May 1841

On the Diamond field Colonel Blacker became one of the original members of that noble though maligned brotherhood. Of the necessity which forced that combination on the Protestant loyalists of the north, of the value of their association in times of peril to the British throne, of the purity of the principles of Orangeism, their ill-requited services, and their misrepresented objects, we have spoken elsewhere.

Enough for the purpose of this memoir to say, that Colonel Blacker never deserted the banner under which amid such circumstances he had been enrolled. Through evil report and good report, when Orangeism was encouraged and fostered by the government, and when it was discountenanced and oppressed, he remained steady to its constituted principles; and as he had the honor of being one of the earliest members of the institution, he can boast of the melancholy pride of being among the last.

On the 14th of April, 1836, the Orange Institution, after forty years' existence, during which it had consolidated, strengthened, and united the elements of Protestant loyalty in this country, was by the vote of the Grand Lodge of Ireland dissolved. The circumstances which led to that vote are now matters of history; its effects may not be felt for years to come. In the debate upon the question of dissolution, we have heard that Colonel Blacker took a conspicuous part.

He was, we have been informed, the mover of a resolution that the society should still continue to exist with such alterations as the king's message to the House of Commons might render necessary. A majority of the Grand Lodge determined on a contrary course, and the brotherhood, which had for forty years bound together the Protestants of Ireland, ceased to exist. The relative wisdom of the two courses cannot be decided upon until the time comes when perils such as those the Orange Institution warded off, shall try again the strength of the British throne.

During Colonel Blacker's undergraduate career an incident occurred which many of our readers we are sure will readily recollect. In the year 1798 it became necessary for the heads of the university to hold a special visitation to inquire into and punish the spread of the principles of the United Irishmen within the walls of the university itself. It was found that secret branches of that society had been formed within the college, and several expulsions resulted from the inquiry which was held. Among those whose conduct then became the subject of investigation, was one justly respected for his great talents, and beloved for his social virtues, but at the time of the rebellion more than suspected in his principles--Dr. Whitley Stokes, the present professor of natural history, then a fellow of the college.

Dr. Stokes was asked if he knew of any secret societies among the young men, or of any students connected with them. He replied, that he had heard of a Mr. Blacker, who was one of the leaders of a secret society called Orange in the north. To the astonishment of the grave and learned conclave, our young student, who was present, thus individually alluded to, sprung from his seat, and mounting the railing which separated the visitors and fellows from the place allotted to the students, respectfully but boldly avowed his connection with that loyal society.

The scene was a remarkable one. Many whose eyes these pages will meet were present at that celebrated visitation; they will readily recall that scene, and the personages in the picture, many of them long since passed away--the excited but subdued energy of the young student, the genuine delight of Paddy Duigenan, the dignified but not displeased astonishment of Lord Clare, the evident annoyance of Dr. Stokes, and the tremendous peal of applause which burst from the assembled undergraduates, forgetful of the restraints of academic discipline, and even of the awful presence of the chancellor and visitors, shaking the vast hall, and for some minutes disturbing

the gravity and suspending the proceedings of the grave and reverend conclave.

Soon after taking his degree, Colonel Blacker obtained a commission in the 60th regiment, then serving in the West Indies. His health was unequal to the trying ordeal of one of the most unhealthy of the tropical islands, and parental fondness and authority forced him reluctantly to relinquish his military predilections. He soon afterwards accepted a company in the regiment of his native county, one at all times distinguished for its appearance, discipline, and efficiency. In 1806 he was promoted to its majority, and in 1812 rose to his present rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

Sloans Museum

Sloan's House was purchased by County Armagh Grand Orange Lodge in 1954 from the Jackson Family and was opened on 12th July 1961, at 2.00 pm, by Rt Wor Bro R J Magowan, County Grand Master; the address was given by Wor Bro Canon Kinch, County Grand Chaplain. Our readers will be interested in some of the items currently on display in the Museum:-

Pike alleged to have been carried at the Battle of the Diamond by Lieutenant Sinclair

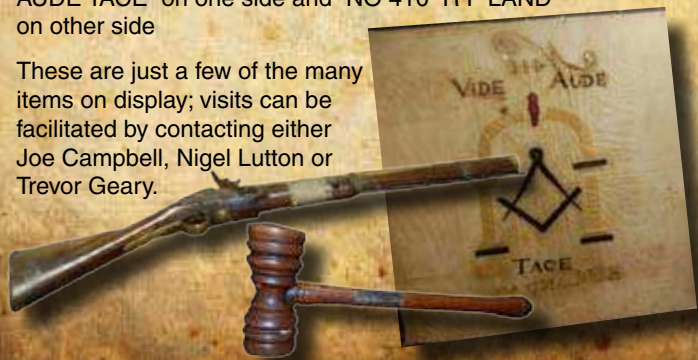
Quigley's Gun (Blunderbuss) taken from Captain Quigley at the Battle of the Diamond

Gavel with inscription "Master's gavel of first Orange Lodge founded by James Sloan after Battle of the Diamond 1795"

Drop-leaf table with plaque reading "At this table, the property of the late Bro James Sloan of Loughgall, the first Orange Warrants were signed and issued after the Battle of the Diamond, 21 September 1795"

Flag carried at the Battle of Dolly's Brae, with Motto "VIDE AUDE TACE" on one side and "NO 410 R F LAND" on other side

These are just a few of the many items on display; visits can be facilitated by contacting either Joe Campbell, Nigel Lutton or Trevor Geary.



MEMORIAL TO MURDERED BRETHREN

The Sloan's House Management Committee is pleased to be able to report that a Memorial Stone to the 66 brethren who were murdered during the Troubles will be erected at the rear of the refurbished Museum. It will have the inscription: "In fraternal remembrance of those brethren from Co Armagh Grand Orange Lodge who paid the supreme sacrifice in the cause of freedom. Lest We Forget". The Stone has already been obtained and will be dedicated when the work to the Museum is completed. Of this total, 25 were civilians; 21 were members or ex-members of the Ulster Defence Regiment; 18 were members or ex-members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (full-time and reserve); 1 was a member of the Territorial Army; and 1 was a member of the Prison Service. 5 were murdered at Tullyvallen Orange Hall on 1 September 1975 and 3 in the Kingsmill Massacre on 5 January 1976



CONGRATULATIONS

The Management Committee would wish to convey their congratulations to a member of the "Friends", David McCullough from Markethill, who received a Certificate of Commendation in the recent Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland Community Awards. David is a highly respected member of the Loyal Orders in Markethill and he was nominated by Roger Gardiner, Management Committee Secretary.

EASTER - Easter is the oldest and the most important Christian Festival, the celebration of the death and coming to life again of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. For Christians, the dawn of Easter Sunday, with its message of new life is the high point of the Christian year. A Happy Easter to all members of the "Friends of Sloan's House" and their families.

Obituary:

The Management Committee is saddened to hear of the passing of one of the senior members of the "Friends of Sloan's House", Harry Frizelle. He was a very enthusiastic supporter of the project and we would wish to convey our condolences to his family.

Friends of Sloan's House Membership Application



Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode / Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Mobile: _____

Email: _____

For office use only:
Member Number

Valid From

Please make cheques payable to : Co Armagh Dev Ctte Ltd
Post to: Friends of Sloan's House, Orchard Credit Union Ltd,
The Old Savings Bank, 1 Victoria Street, Armagh. BT60 3SL

Thanks Since the last edition of this Newsletter, the following items have been donated to the Museum:-

Roger Gill, Ballyleaney Purple Star LOL 11, Richhill: Selection of badges, plate, etc

John Richardson, Rising Sons of Killegar LOL 404, Co Leitrim: 2 old Lodge seals and 1880's quilt

Jeffrey Lawson, Aghavilly LOL 619, Armagh: Portraits of William Johnston of Ballykillbeg and front of funeral service sheet for John A Peel, Past District Master of Armagh and Armagh County Grand Master 1948 49.

We would extend our thanks and appreciation to these brethren for their generosity and assure them that when the items are put on display in the refurbished museum, their gifts will be suitably acknowledged.

If anyone wishes to donate or loan items for display, please make contact with any of the Management Committee members.