

Bengal Terrace its roots

SOME WEEKS ago, we told the story of a young rugby-playing historian, Justin Fitzgerald, who had researched further into the life of Michael Joyce, MP and Mayor, at the turn of the century.

We asked Justin to write something else — something which had never been printed before. And he came up with a splendid idea. He wrote about his own street, Bengal Terrace, which runs from the Pike, Blackboy Road, to Childers Road. And here is his report.

THE HOUSES were built in 1927, and were not occupied until March, 1928. Originally it was planned that they be built in twos, but this plan was changed.

Bengal Terrace is situated in the barony of Clanwilliam.

Due to the fact that the boundary of the city extended only to St Joseph's Hospital, at the time, Bengal Terrace was classified as County Limerick. (Editor's note: it was considered as part of a separate village, called Blackboy.) When the boundary was extended, the terrace was then in the city.

When the first residents occupied the houses—incidentally the houses were built by the Irish Soldiers' and Sailors' Land Trust for veterans of the First World War—there was an unmade (unsurfaced) road. In 1929, a concrete road was laid by Limerick County Council.

The men who were allocated the houses had served in the British Army or Royal Navy, during the 1914-18 war; some were disabled while others escaped with minor injuries.

Most lived to a ripe old age and, in spite of having suffered horrendous conditions, during the war, retained their sanity.

Pensions

Contrary to common belief, only those injured on active service received pensions.

Bengal Terrace was built on the Old Cork Road, which some people now call the Kilmallock road.

There was also a road built between Bengal Terrace and the Ballysimon Road called Sean Bán Boreen, which is now where the waste disposal site is situated.

On the graveyard side, the first house on the right, as one comes from the city, was a two-storied house owned by the Coffey family. The next dwelling was a cottage owned by Jack Harte, who also owned the land which is now the graveyard extension.

The next dwelling again was at the corner of O'Mara Avenue, which was occupied by the O'Mara family. Later, the O'Mara family built Emmet House (named in honour of Robert Emmet) and then Killeen House, now a local shop. O'Mara Avenue is, of course, called after that O'Mara family.

The Hanly family opened a shop opposite Nos 20 and 21, near Jack Harte's cottage to serve the new residents. In 1940/41, they built a two-storied house and shop nearer the entrance to the terrace. The shop remained open until 1985.

Purchase

In 1960, the land between Hanly's shop and Whitaker's bungalow (near the big tree in the centre of the terrace) was purchased by Limerick Corporation for use as an extension to Mount St Laurence Cemetery.

The original residents had allotments to grow vegetables, etc, in the field at the rear of their right-of-way, where now stands Woodlawn Park. It was the idea of the residents to buy this field (£250), but the idea was not put to work, and eventually it was sold for the building of what is now Woodlawn Park.

Here is a list of the first occupants (the nine original families left are marked *):

1. McGingans
2. O'Driscoll
3. Rochford
4. Hallissey
5. Adamson
6. Aberne*
7. Browne
8. Hannan
9. Byrnes
10. Casey
11. Costello
12. Dineen
13. O'Donovan
14. Dowds
15. O'Dwyer
16. Eaton
17. Fitzgerald
18. Griffin*
19. Kelleher*
20. King
21. Long*
22. McAuley
23. Meagher
24. Mulqueen
25. Murphy
26. McCarthy
27. O'Brien
28. McGrath*
29. O'Connor*
30. O'Farrell
31. O'Shea (my house)
32. Reynolds
33. Riordan
34. Hughes
35. Robinson*
36. Ryan*
37. Slattery
38. Whelan
39. Williams
40. Toomey
41. Fitzgerald
42. Eakins
43. McDonough
44. Nash*
45. O'Sullivan
46. Wade
47. Mulvihill
48. Soffe
49. Roche
50. O'Connor

I am grateful to Phil McGrath for all her help in supplying so much information.

I myself am a great-grandson of one of the original of the family which lived in number 44, the Nashs. My great-grandmother's name was Sarah and my great-grandfather was Timothy. He fought in World War One, and was captured by the Germans and interned in Germany. He died in 1943, aged 49. Prior to his death he worked at St Joseph's Hospital.

My great-grandmother died in 1985, aged 89, and I have very fond memories of her. She was a lovely, kind woman. She had nine children—Mary, Philly (who both still live in Bengal Terrace), Anne and Teresa (both in the USA), Tim, Sean, Michael, Gerard, and PJ, who live in various parts of England and come home to us regularly.

Breach of drink laws

Belisarius Ltd, 15 Patrick Street, was fined £400 on each of two counts of breaches of the licencing laws, at Limerick court.

The defendant company pleaded guilty to allowing persons on its licenced premises at 1.50am on March 10 and at 12.05am on March 8 last.

Mr Tom O'Donnell, solicitor, who appeared for the defendant company, told the court that the persons in question had been dining and were due to go upstairs, where there was a special exemption.