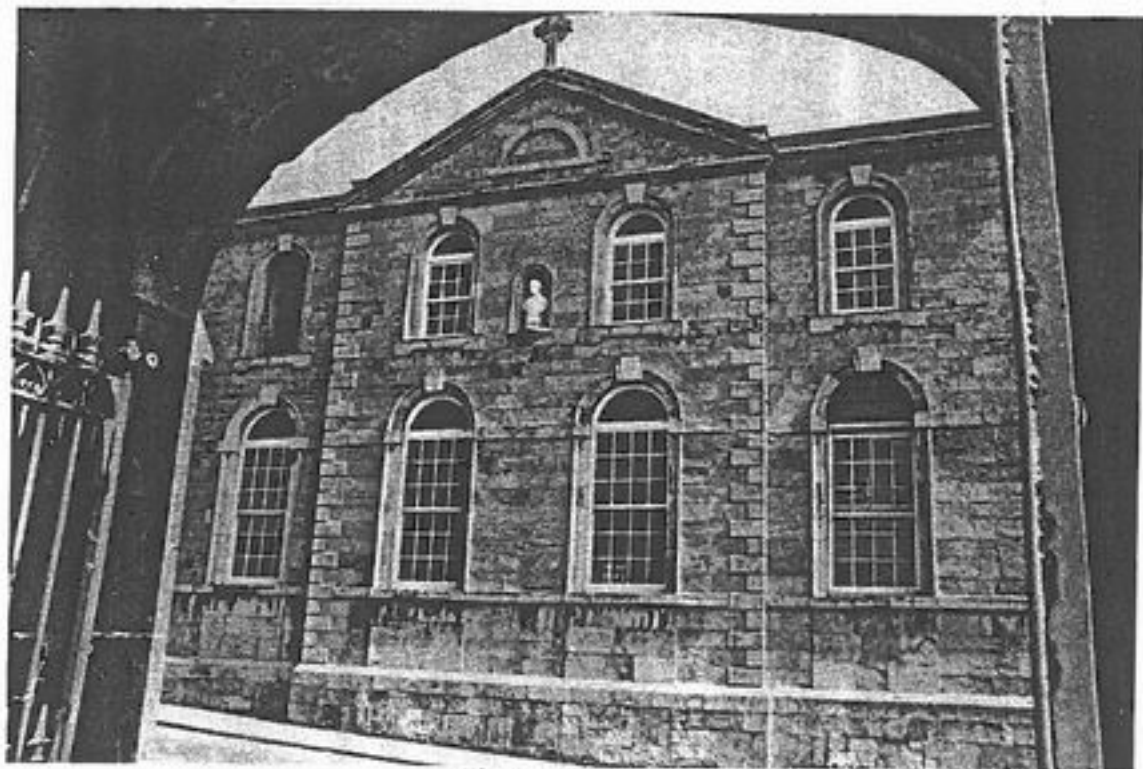


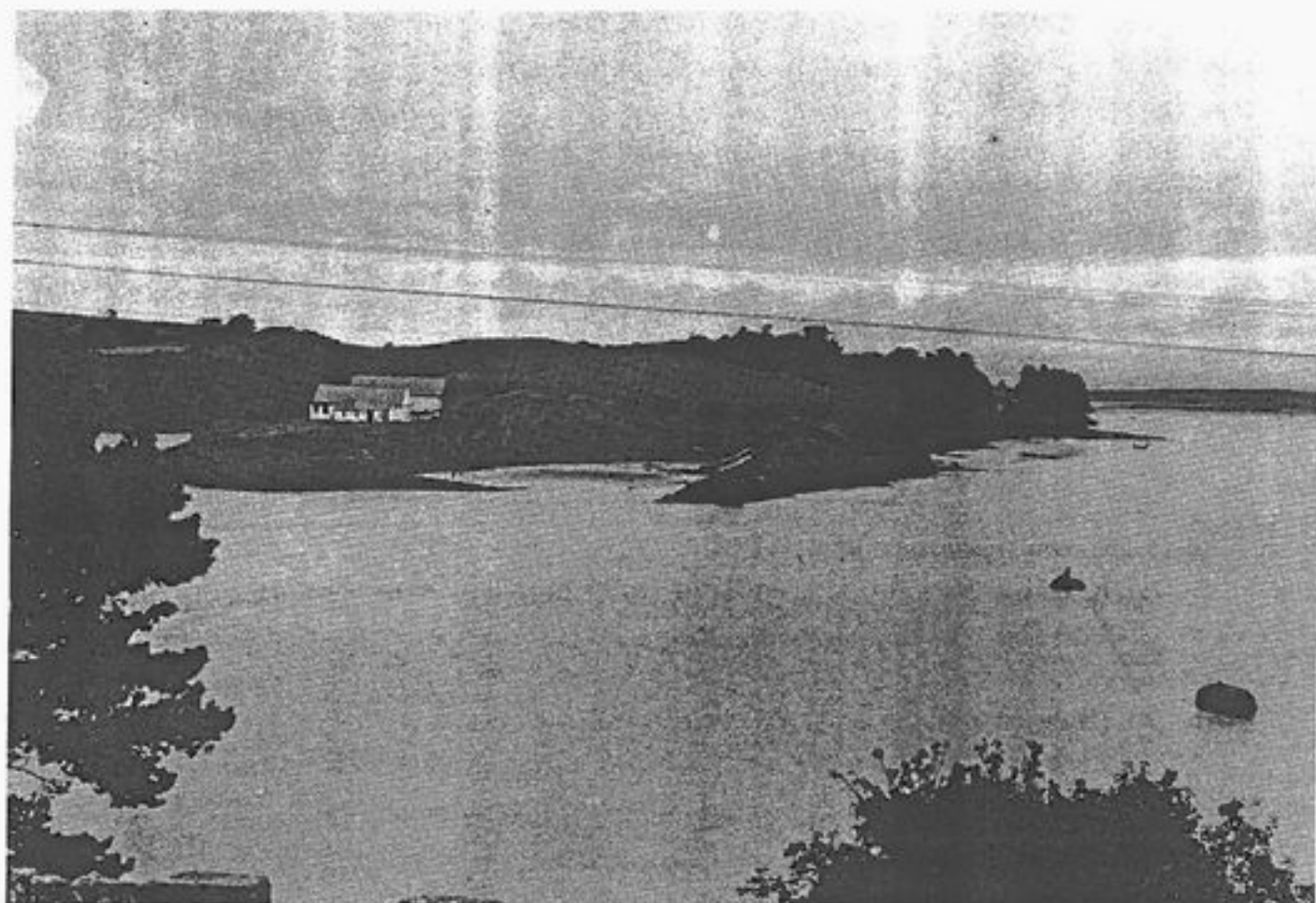
39.
impulse, glided into the little room, which, during the honeymoon, had been furnished up and decorated for her own use. She restrained her eyes from wandering as much as possible, and commenced with hurried and trembling hands her arrangements for departure. They were few and speedily effected. Her apparel was folded into her trunk, and for once she tied on her bonnet and cloak without referring to the glass. It was all over now! It was a happy dream, but it was ended. . .'

Not yet ended, thankfully, is the Shannon's happy dream, even if signs of departure are evident. The estuary narrows somewhat. Labasheeda beckons from a curvature of south Clare and across the water stands Foynes.

The Commissioners for the Improvement of the River Shannon had much to say of Foynes in their Second Report presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty in 1837. These 'humble servants', J. F. Burgoyne, Harry D. Jones and Richard Griffith, had just recommended that all timber used in their proposed piers should be Kyanised despite the fact that timber covered by Shannon's waters was never attacked by *Teredo Navalis* or other destructive marine insects. They added: 'The harbour of Foynes, on the south side of the river, is situated ten miles to the eastward of Tarbert. This place affords excellent shelter from all winds, being protected from the south and west by high lands adjoining the river bank, and from the north and north-east by Foynes Island. The harbour, in fact, consists of the



The Courthouse in which the Scanlan murder trial took place

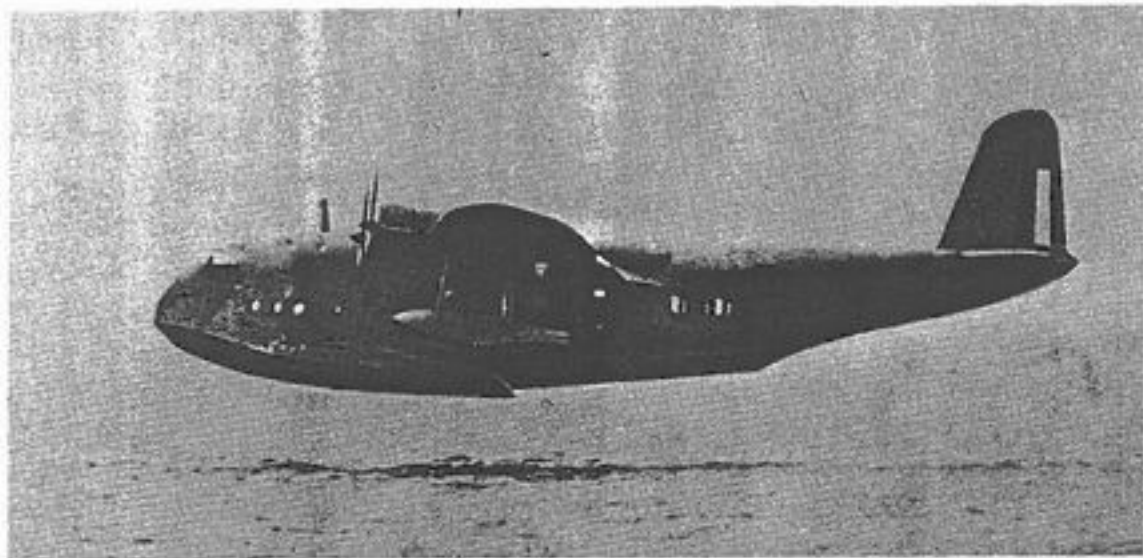


Foynes

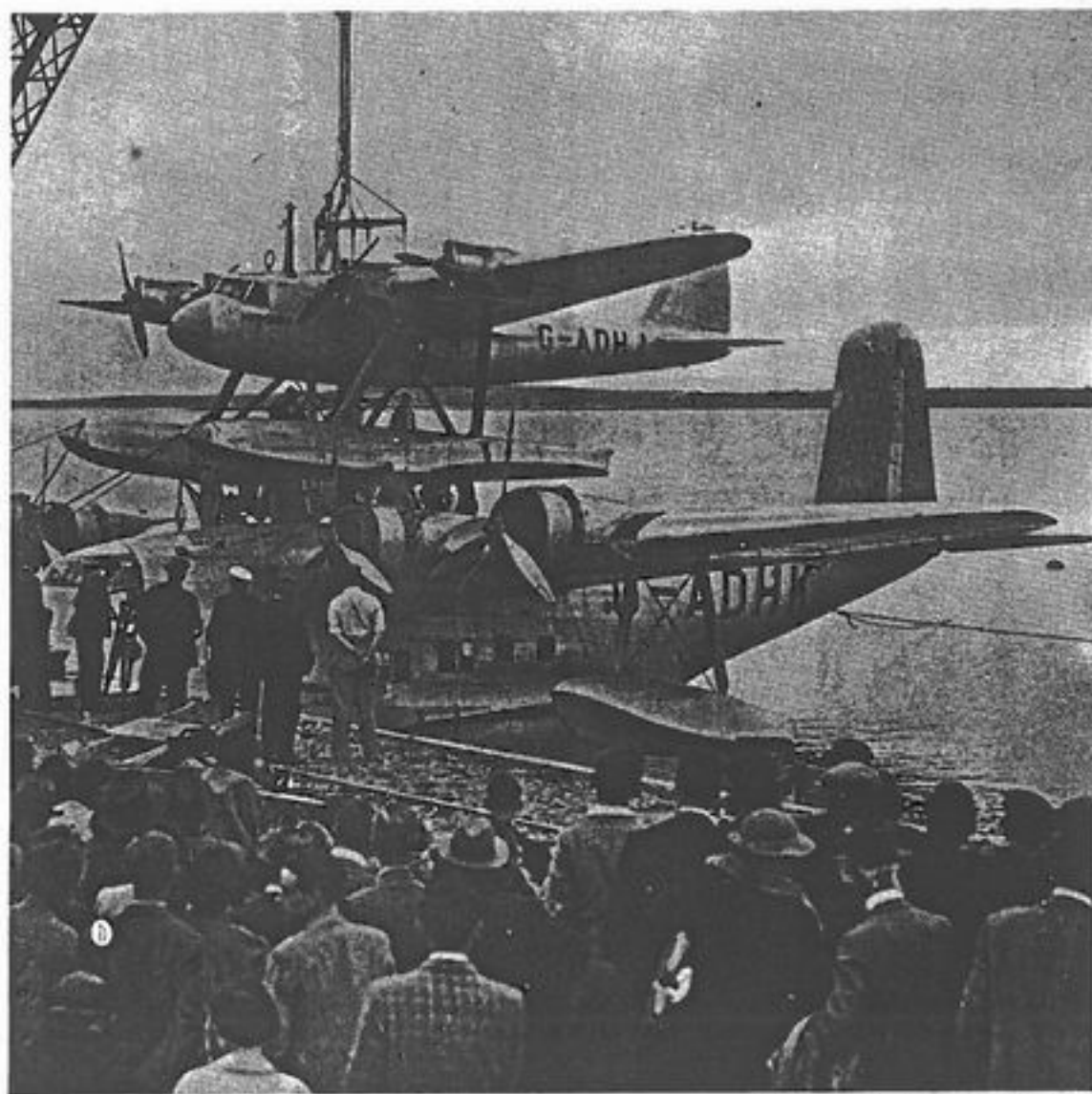
channel that separates Foynes Island and the mainland, in which there is an ample depth of water at all times of tide.

'Foynes is well situated as a converging point for the traffic of the north-western portion of the county of Limerick; an extensive district, not many years since the scene of lawless disturbance and agricultural inactivity, but now happily under rapid transition into one of peace, industry and prosperity. The new roads, made principally at the public expense, have tended in a great measure to this striking improvement, and a facility of export for the constantly increasing agricultural products of the country is much required; this can be effected most advantageously by the erection of a shipping wharf at Foynes, in a situation affording peculiar facilities for the purpose, where there is ample depth of water, a sheltered anchorage, an extensive platform in the rear of it, close to the high road between Limerick and Tarbert, and within 1,100 yards of one of the finest limestone quarries in the south of Ireland.'

The gentlemen then submitted plans and an estimate amounting to £8,500. The plans, 'shewing the Course of the Tide' and giving detailed soundings, cross sections of jetties and the like are works of art in themselves.



'The Clare' landing at Foynes

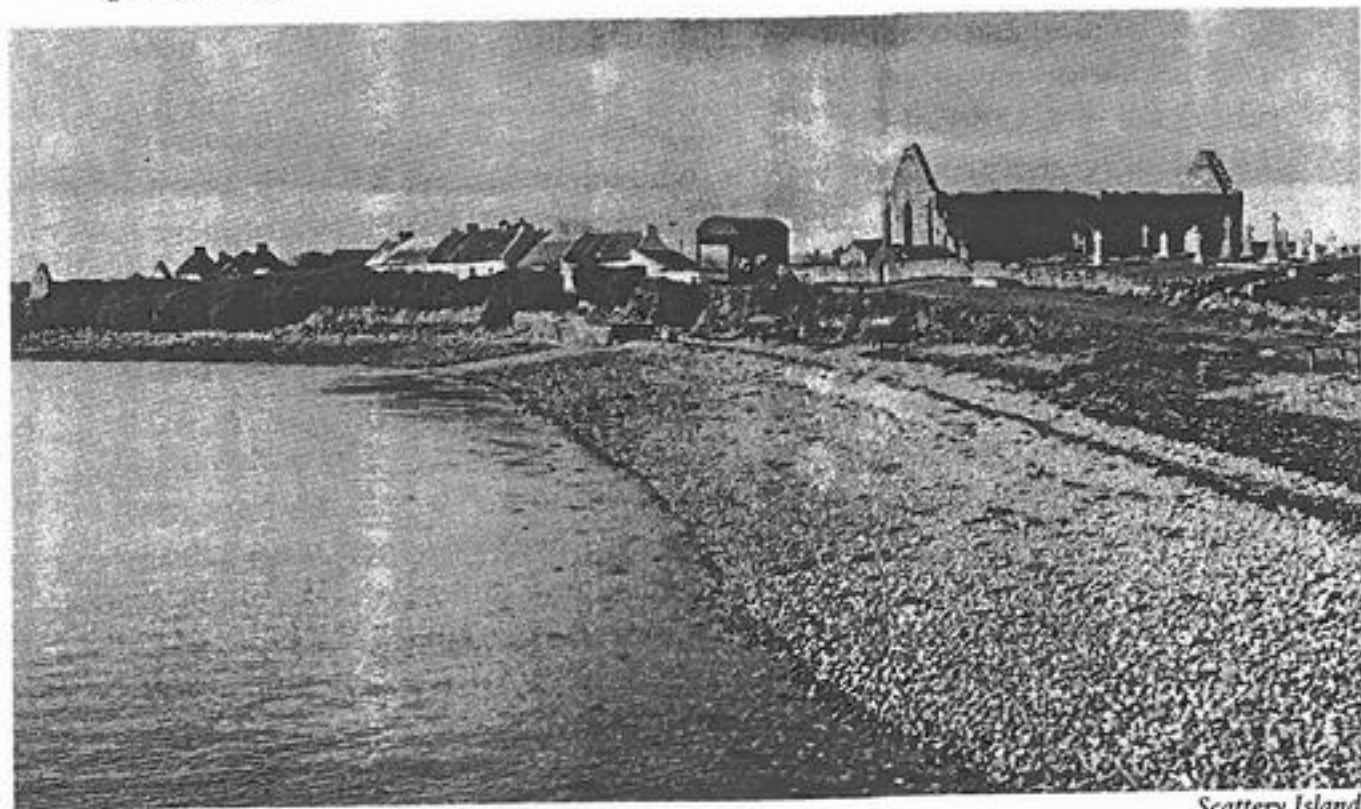


'Piggy-back' aircraft at Foynes

Aubrey de Vere's brother Stephen is buried in Foynes. With William Smith O'Brien's daughter Charlotte, he was prominent in denouncing the infamous coffin-ships that transported starving emigrants to America in the time of the famine. Foynes and nearby Glin were featured in the ferrying of IRA Volunteers across the Shannon when they were forced to go on the run during the War of Independence. And then, there came more plans and more reports as a native government kept pace with the times and established the nation's first commercial Trans-Atlantic air route from its seaplane base at Foynes. That was in 1939. These particular waters of Shannon have served the nation well.

Sacred Scatterry

During the sixth century, the misogynist St Senanus founded a monastery on Scatterry Island where he is said to have built eleven churches. The place was always regarded with some respect and a little awe. Estuary fishermen were reluctant to sail a craft that had not completed a round of Scatterry into a setting sun or put to sea without some pebbles from the island aboard. Its holy well was highly regarded by the faithful. People afraid to cross the water to make a pilgrimage there 'paid a Scatterry prayer'; that is, they paid another pilgrim to make their spiritual Odyssey for them. There was said to have been at least one professional pilgrim who worked full time at this proxy petitioning.



Scatterry Island