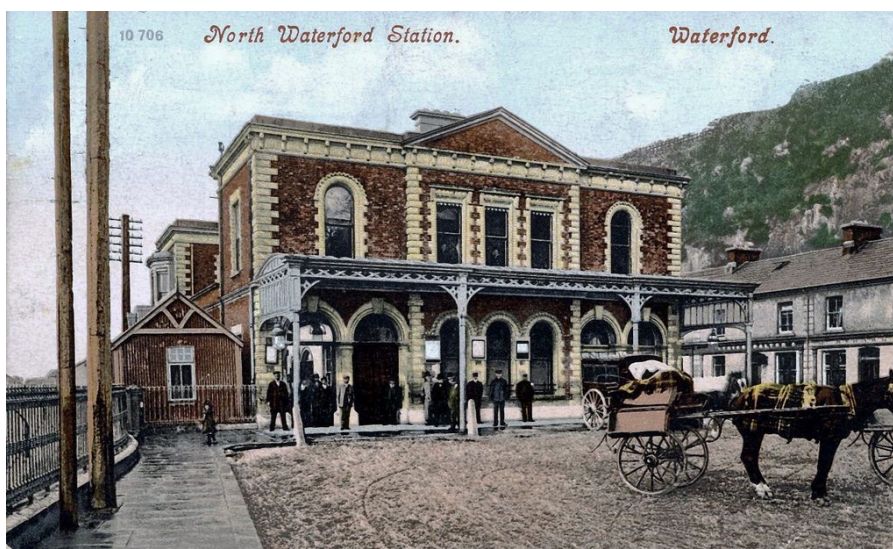


The Kilkenny Guerins

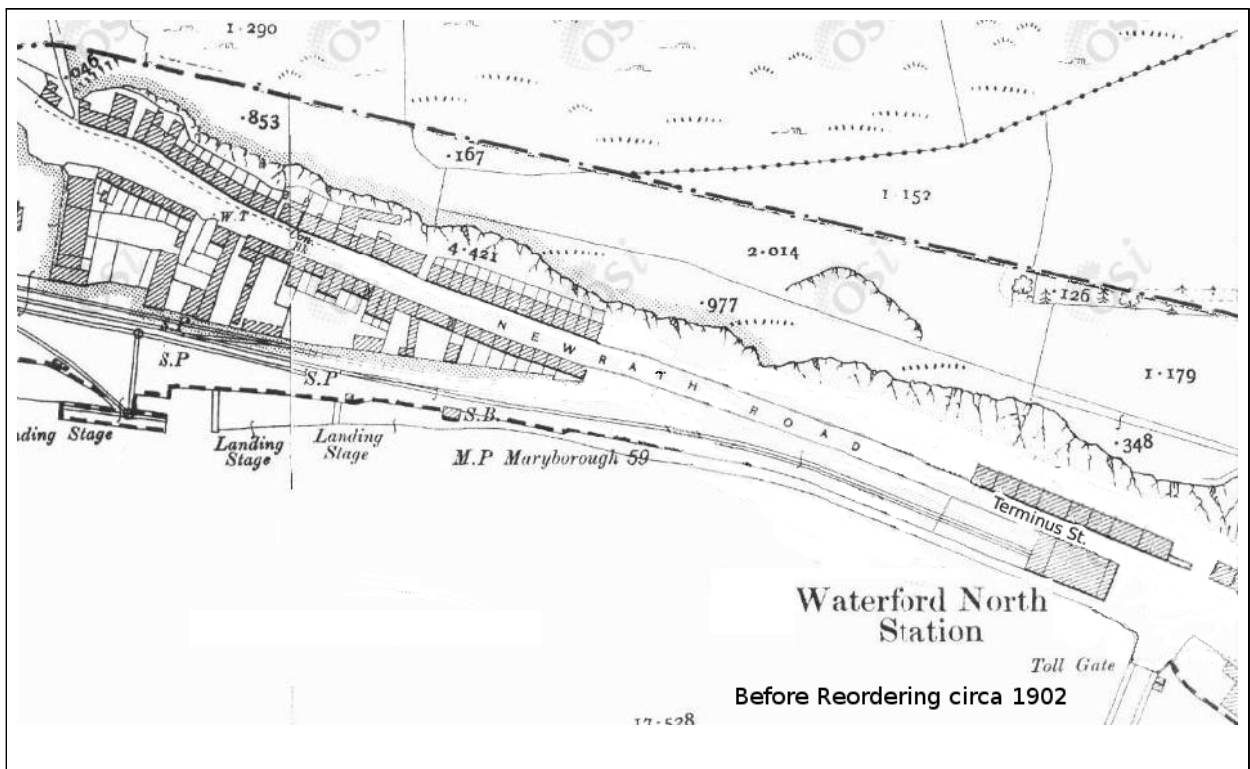


Waterford North Station 1900

In his letter of resignation to the Great Southern and Western Railway (GS&WR) in 1912, Michael Joseph declares he has given 43 years service to the Company and the Waterford, Limerick and Western Railway (WL&WR). Therefore the first positive date for him we have is his start of work. He must have taken up his position with the WL&WR in 1879, when 17 years old. There are no surviving records of the WL&WR so we have no documented evidence of him until his marriage. It seems that he was living in Waterford (Probably city) and was an Administrator of the Waterford and Limerick Railway (later WL & WR) when he married local girl Hanora Freeman (1855-1917) of Sallypark on the 22nd of February 1881. The newspaper announcement on the 5th of March 1881 was made in 'The Nation' newspaper. Hanora was the oldest of 9 children and the only surviving daughter of James and Catherine (nee Habberlin) Freeman.

Guerin and Freeman—February 22, 1881, at the Roman Catholic church, Slieverue, county Kilkenny, by the Rev J Coady, Administrator Michael J Guerin, Waterford and Limerick Railway, Waterford, to Honora, only surviving daughter of Mr James Freeman, Sally Park, Waterford.

The town of Sallypark where Hanora was living was built around the station of Waterford North. The original railway line from Limerick had terminated at Newrath station half a mile west of Sallypark. In 1867 the line was extended to nearer Waterford City to try and boost passenger numbers. The river Suir provided a formidable barrier to actually running the railway into the city itself so the new station of Waterford North was built at the north side of the road bridge over the Suir. This bridge was called “Timbertoes” and joined Waterford city on the south bank with Sallypark and Ferrybank on the north bank. The bridge had a lift section and allowed traffic across the river for a price, the toll booth was on the north bank by the station. The station was built right up to the north bank of the Suir on one side and the road on the other. Mount Misery towered above the road and station and was the reason the geography was very tight.



Piles were driven into the ground to provide a firm foundation for the station building. With the river on one side of the station and a space at the front of the station there was a street along the north side of the station, Terminus Street, that was part of the original Newrath Rd. Terminus st. contained just a few houses, a sweet shop and three pubs. Even in 1870, most of Terminus Street was officially part of Waterford City and the station too. The rest of Sallypark, in fact most of the town lay to the west along Newrath Rd. and was part of Co. Kilkenny. One of the houses in Terminus Street was, according to PJG, the home of the Freeman parents, James and Catherine. In the 1877 Trades directory James is shown living in Terminus St. and records himself as running a 'Posting Establishment'. The 1881 trade directory does not record him at all but he is shown in the marriage certificate as 'Carman'. A Carman is someone who transports from train wagons and Michael Joseph might well have met him at work on the railway. No 2 Terminus St. is most likely as the Freeman home as the uses of the other properties in the street are the same in the 1901 and 1911 census. No 2 is the house with the dark windows in the right hand picture below. This is also probably the house where all Michael Joseph's children were born.



Sallypark circa 1900

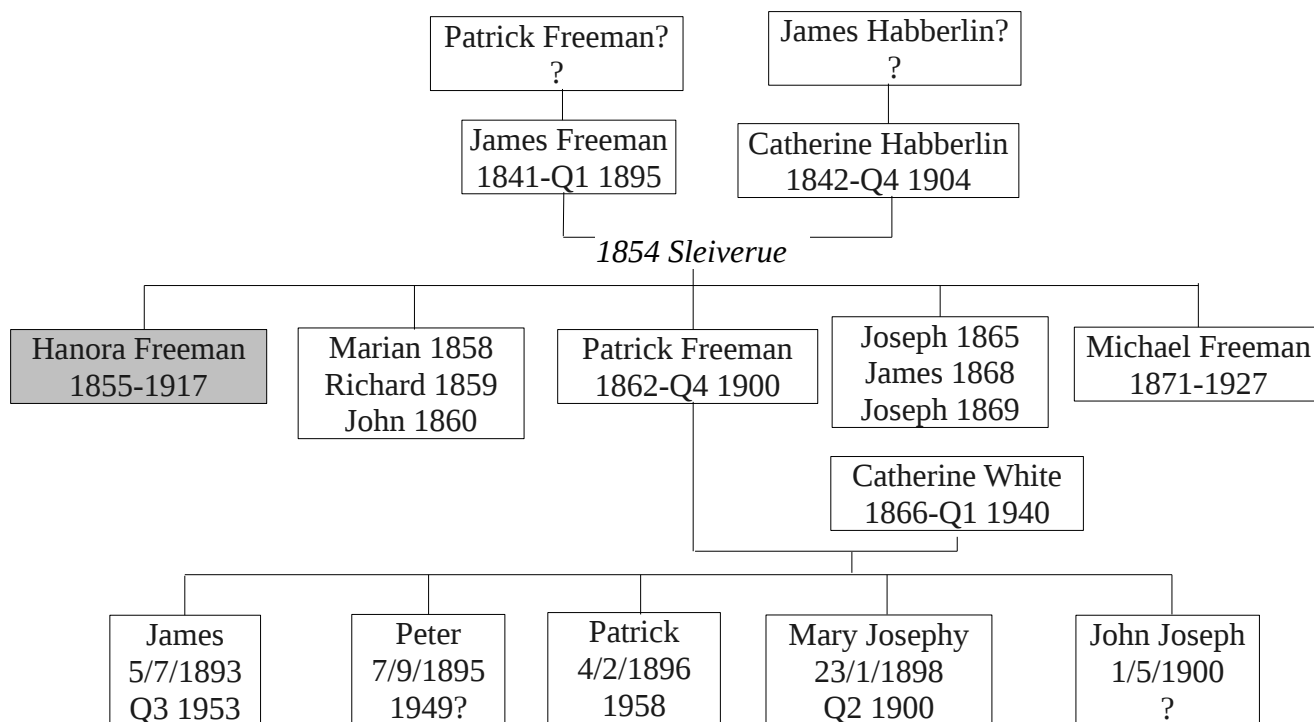
Michael and Hanora's marriage took place up the road past the end of the bridge, through the town of Ferrybank and north to the town of Sleibhrue on the road to New Ross. This was also where the Freeman parents had married in 1854. Below is a picture of the inside of the Sleiverue church.



James' spouse, Hanora's mother, was one Catherine Habberlin. It seems Habberlin was a local name. The 1901 census returns shows that there were various Habberlin families living on the north bank of the Suir in a just a handful of parishes not far from Waterford City. The older Habberlins, those in their 60's, all state that they are fluent in Irish and might explain the family tradition that there was someone in the family who was the last Gaelic speaker in his/her district. Catherine Freeman might have been that last Irish speaker. What is curious is that Catherine herself states no such thing in the

1901 census. Also that she can read and write. But the birth certificate for her Grandson, James Guerin (1/3/1882) shows her as the informant of the birth but she does not sign it but merely makes a X. While she could have learnt to read and write between 1882 and 1901 it seems unlikely. The age she gives in the 1901 census of 60 years would have made her too young to marry in 1854 so she must have been mistaken. The record of her death in 1904 gives an age that places her birth in 1842 which too would make her too young to have married in 1854. Forgetful or liberal with the truth?

Freeman Family Tree



Hanora had several brothers and a sister, Marian who was deceased by the time Hanora married in 1881. Two of the brothers figure in the family story and until recently were the only siblings of Hanora's we knew of.

Hanora's third brother ,Patrick, married Catherine (Kate) White the daughter of a Sea Captain, John White in 1891. Kate was sponsor at the baptism of Margaret in February 1888 so she was around at least three years before the marriage. She and Patrick had four boys, James (Jimmy) (1893), Peter (1895), Patrick (1896), John Joseph (1900). According to her 1911 census return there were two other children but both have died by 1901. One was a daughter Mary Joseph born in 1898 and like her older brothers, baptised in the Ferrybank church. There is no record of the sixth child in the baptismal register of the church at Ferrybank so perhaps the baby was stillborn.

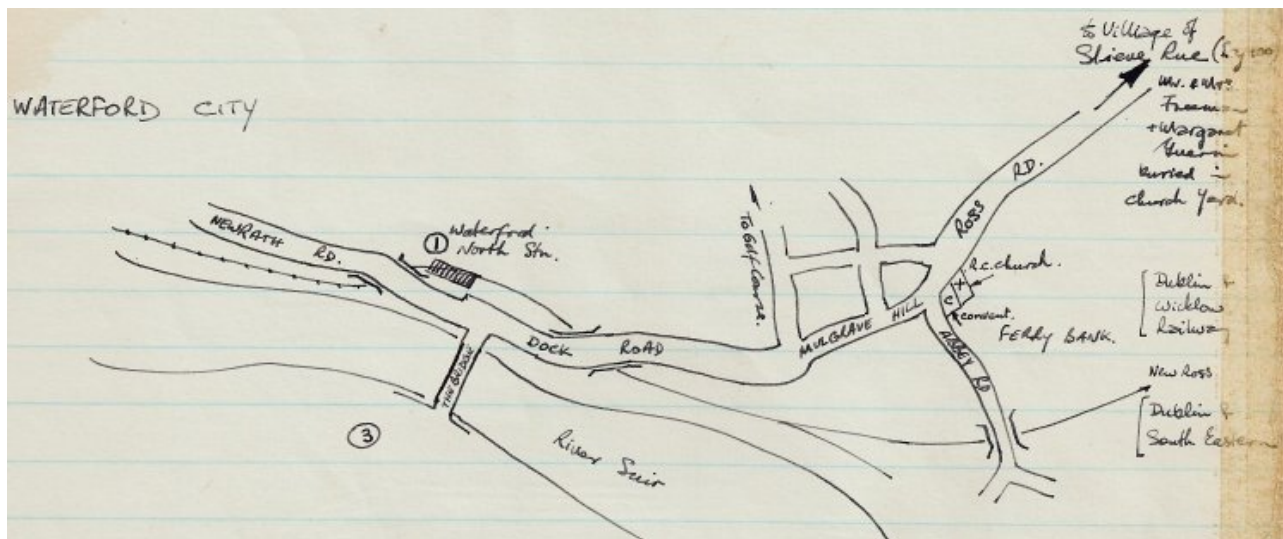
Catherine is shown as a widow by the time of the 1901 census, Patrick died within 11 months of John Joseph's birth in the last quarter of 1900. The eldest, James's, baptismal record shows their address as Sion Row which is on the Dock Rd. to the east of the bridge. Then the next two births give Terminus St. and the last two "Bridge" whatever that means. The 1901 census shows Catherine and her four sons living in Sallypark, in no 2 Terminus street (the house behind the toll booth in the picture on page 6). PJG said the Freeman parents, his grand parents, house was in this street and so I think that Patrick and Catherine moved into the house when James died in 1895. This would explain why the same house is passed on within the Freeman family. Terminus Street was demolished around 1902 to allow for the extension of the line east to Rosslare. So in the 1911 census Catherine and her four sons are in a nearby road; Mulgrave Rd. The eldest James married a Mary Hurley in 1923. She was known as Millie and he as Jimmy. Jimmy Freeman was remembered by Eugene, Maura and Joseph Liam Guerin. They used to visit him in Waterford even up to the 1960s.



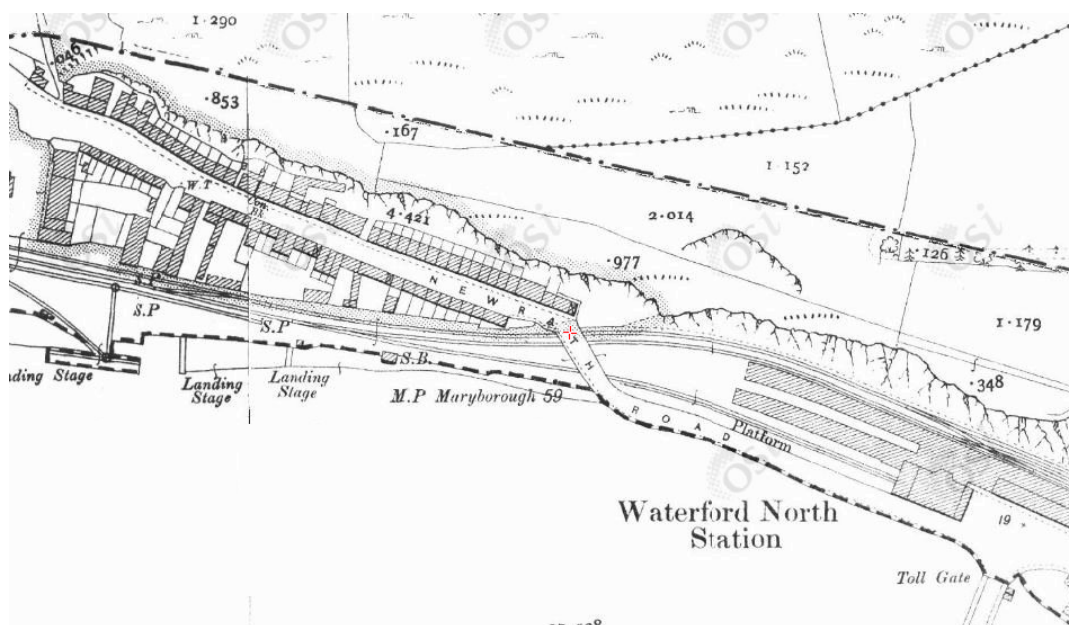
Newrath Rd. Looking West - Late 20th C

Nothing now remains of Sallypark. The view above was taken in the late 1990's when all the houses and buildings were being bought up. The whole town was demolished around the year 2000 and there is now a dual carriageway where once was a whole community. In the view above the houses on the right are the odd numbered houses but it not possible to work out which number house is which.

Hanora's youngest brother, Michael, appears to have been a Hansom cab driver. In 1901 he is shown living with his mother Catherine in Sallypark, 51 Newrath Rd. After his mother's death (1904) he is shown lodging at No. 65 Newrath Rd. in the 1911 census. Michael was clearly very much part of the extended Guerin/Freeman family as he was present at the Limerick funerals of Mollie and Michael Joseph (1911 and 1912). He died in Limerick in 1927 and is buried in Mount St. Laurence cemetery alongside his sister Hanora and Michael Joseph Guerin.

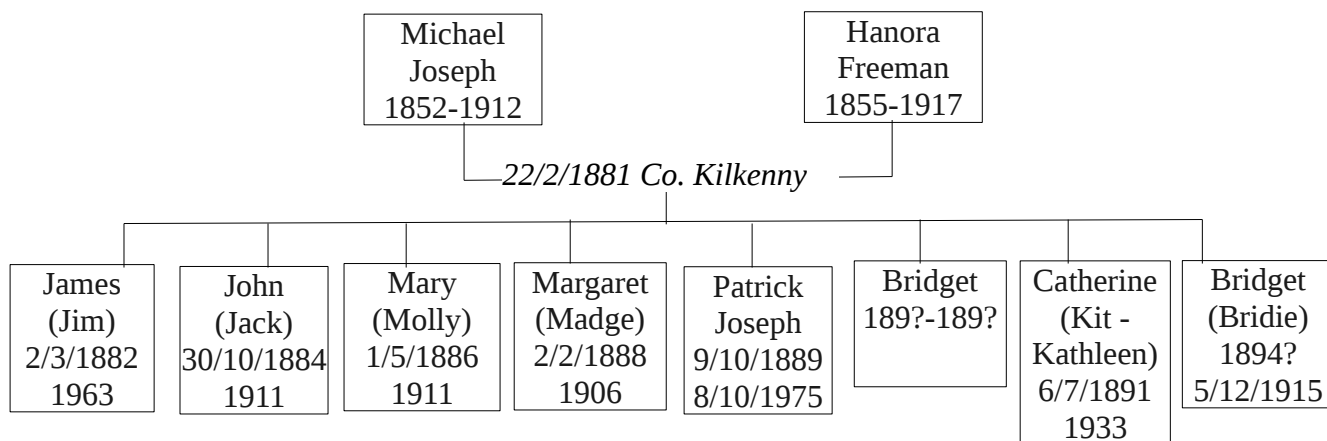


Map of Sallypark and Ferrybank drawn by Paul and Patrick Guerin



Sallypark 1906

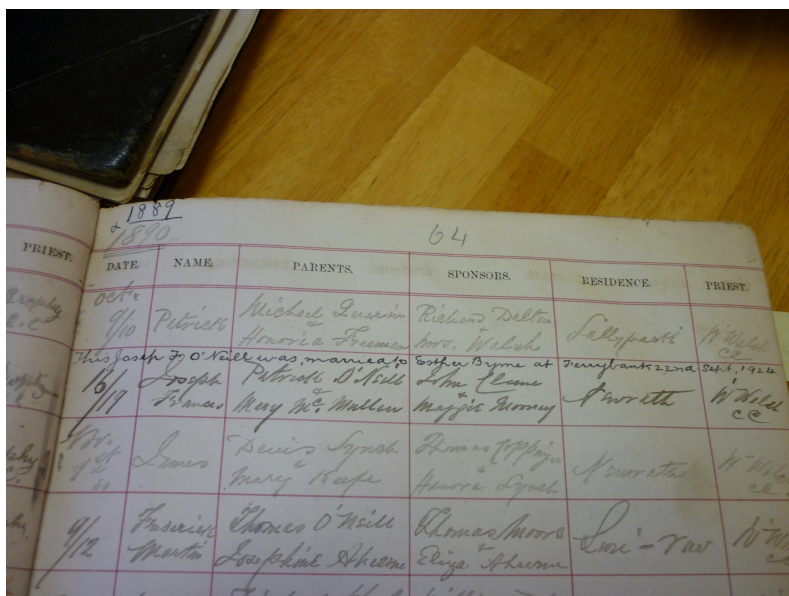
Just over twelve months after their marriage Michael Joseph and Hanora were blessed with a first son, James. He was named after Michael Joseph's father. Over the next 12 years they had seven more children. The PJG records for the eldest James and John was that they were born at home. James's birth certificate states that his grandmother Catherine Freeman was present at the birth. Perhaps for all of the births. The 6th child, Bridget, lived only a short time but we have no idea of how long exactly I can find no record of her birth or her death, perhaps stillborn.



PJG recalled that all the children were baptised at the R.C. Church at Ferrybank and this is born out by my examining and photographing the register entries. The church was a 'Chapel of Ease' until the 1970's for the mother church in Sleiverue. Patrick was baptised while the family were in Sallypark but the address given for Catherine's Baptism is Limerick. She was baptised on the 6th July 1891 and so the family had obviously left to live in Limerick by this time. What the register also shows is that she was baptised on the day after her birth so Hanora must have been in Sallypark during her confinement. Though there is no record for Bridget perhaps she too was born in Sallypark. I cannot currently find a positive birth date for the youngest, Bridget. Limerick is most likely. But there is also a registration entry for a Bridget Gearin in Waterford in Q3 1894. The 1894 entry would tally with her recorded age in both the 1901 and 1911 census. It is interesting to note that in both census returns the birthplaces of both Catherine and Bridget is given as Co. Kilkenny. But Bridget might have been born in Limerick.



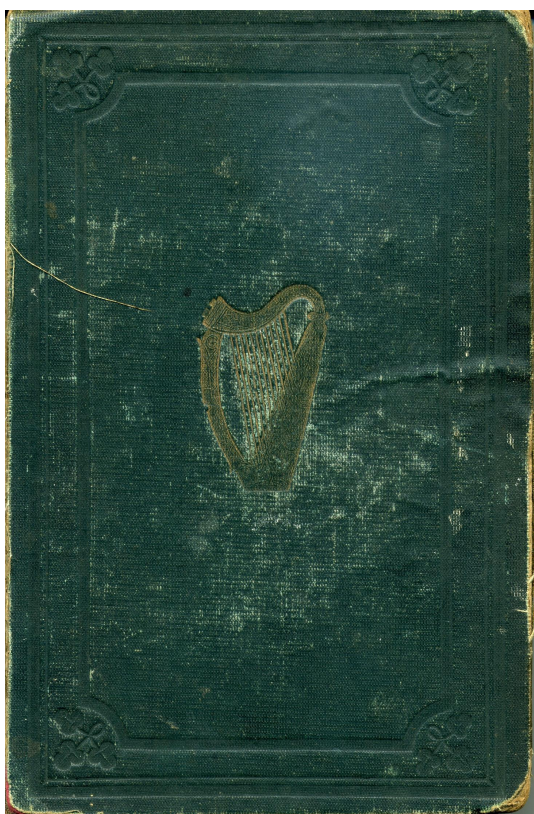
Ferrybank Church



Baptism entry for Patrick Joseph Guerin (top line)

Note the double entry for D.of.B and Baptism

An item that has come down to us from that time is a copy of a book, *Knocknagow* which Patrick Joseph has inscribed with the date 1889.



Knocknagow

Below is a description of this book and its political importance at the time.

“*Knocknagow* was published in 1879, and rapidly became the most popular of all Irish novels. Its influence derives mainly from its political importance rather than its literary quality, which is about average for a best-seller but not outstanding. In this it resembles *The Women's Room* and *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists*, two other polemical novels which were very important politically but marginal as works of literary art. It attacks the evils of the landlord system in Ireland, and indirectly the English rule which supported that system. Kickham himself was a leading nationalist, and was imprisoned for his opinions.

For many years *Knocknagow* was the book - along with a prayerbook and *Old Moore's Almanac* -- most likely to be found in any Irish home. Most Irish writers born between 1870 and 1950 would have read it as children. Yeats described it as "The most honest of Irish novels" and Con Houlihan as "The greatest Irish novel." For all its sentimentality and inept plotting, it gives a very accurate picture of rural Irish life in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, it is one of the few such novels which was written by one of the ordinary people. Almost all the other writers who dealt with the rural poor were either of the landlord class themselves (Lady Gregory, J.M. Synge, Somerville and Ross, Emily Lawless, Maria Edgeworth) or urban Protestant middle-class (George A. Birmingham, Charles Lever, Dion Boucicault, Samuel Lover). However sympathetic and well-written their accounts, they were written from the outside looking in. *Knocknagow* was written from the inside.”

