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| Title | Galway Grammar School, c. 1673-1958: A Foundation Institution of the Erasmus Smith Trust |
| Author(s) | Kavanagh, Michael |
| Publication Date | 2019-05-02 |
| Publisher | NUI Galway |
| Item record | http://hdl.handle.net/10379/15150 |

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Galway Grammar School, c. 1673-1958: A Foundation Institution of the Erasmus Smith Trust

Volume 1 (of two)

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

Supervisor

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May 2019

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Volume 2

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this is entirely my own work and that it has not been submitted as an exercise for the award of a degree at this or at any other University.

Signed: _____
Michael Kavanagh

Date: 2 May 2019

Abstract

This thesis is concerned with Galway Grammar School, from its opening about 1673 to its closure in 1958. It provides a broader understanding of Protestant grammar school education, particularly as it operated on the periphery of the Protestant community. The School was one of three grammar schools, the others being at Drogheda and Tipperary, which were at the core of the Erasmus Smith Trust, established by royal charter in 1669. The history of the School is entwined with that of the Trust, with its fortunes being impacted by the policies and priorities of its Board. Consequently, a particular perspective on the administration of the Trust over almost three centuries is gained.

The study allows for consideration of the issue of social class as manifested by the manner in which the Board of the Trust, with an elite, and predominately Dublin-based, Anglican membership, and the headmasters of the School, viewed and applied the provisions of the Trust for the education of sons of tenants and of poor children. Some insight is gained into developments over time in the quality of care deemed appropriate for middle-class boys. Meanwhile, a perspective on the interrelationship between the School and the predominately Catholic Galway town is provided.

Galway Grammar School is put in comparative perspective by reference to the other grammar schools of the Trust, to reports on the endowed school sector generally, and to developments in other schools. A local perspective is provided through an overview of the second-level provision available to and availed of by Protestants in Co. Galway, within and outside of the county, during the period under review.

The composition of the pupil body, including the domiciliary origin and socio-economic background of pupils, together with their subsequent education, careers and domicile, is considered by reference to the School Roll Book, 1895-1952, thereby contributing towards an understanding of patterns of geographical, educational and social mobility amongst middle-class Protestants. The participation of former pupils in World War I is discussed, and a profile of pupils identified as participants in the War is included as an appendix.

Acknowledgements

My particular thanks are due to Dr John Cunningham, my supervisor, whose interest, expertise, direction and professional input were invaluable at all stages of the research. I should also like to acknowledge the positivity of and advice provided by the members of my Graduate Research Committee, Dr Gearóid Barry, Dr Niall Ó Ciosáin, Dr Kevin O’Sullivan and Dr Tomás Finn.

The research would not have been possible without the availability of primary material on Galway Grammar School and the Erasmus Smith Trust in the archives of the Trust at The High School, Dublin. I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Alan Phelan, archivist, for his generous assistance, unfailing courtesy, willingness to accommodate my visits, and responsiveness to my requests for access to the material of the archive. The James Hardiman Library, NUI Galway, was a valuable source of material, access to which was facilitated by, especially, the staff of the Special Collections section with unfailing courtesy and friendliness. The National Archives of Ireland and National Library of Ireland were, also, sources of useful material.

I was fortunate at an early stage of the research to meet with a number of former pupils of Galway Grammar School and to receive information, orally and in writing, from them and a number of other pupils. They had attended the School in the 1940s and 1950s and provided a sense of the School and of their experience there as pupils. I should like, in particular, to acknowledge the assistance of Charles Ruttle, who arranged for and coordinated contact with former pupils, and of Ken Henderson and George Copeland, both of whom were enthusiastic in providing information and photographs.

Four generations of family were party to the research. It was the culmination of the interest in and commitment of my parents, Pat and Kathleen, to my education. Mairéad, Conor and Aileen were always interested and supportive, and indulgent of my retirement plan, while advancing, meanwhile, their own education, expertise and interests. During the research I shared Tommy’s journey and, especially, his homework from first to fifth class. It served to put my research in perspective, while bringing my journey full circle.

Abbreviations

| | |
|-----------|--|
| <i>CT</i> | <i>Connacht Tribune</i> |
| ESA | Erasmus Smith Archives |
| NAI | National Archives of Ireland |
| NLI | National Library of Ireland |
| PRONI | Public Record Office of Northern Ireland |
| QCG | Queen's College, Galway |
| TCD | Trinity College Dublin |
| <i>TH</i> | <i>Tuam Herald</i> |
| UCG | University College, Galway |

Introduction

The focus of this thesis is Galway Grammar School, which was established under the terms of a major educational Trust, provision for which was made in a Royal Charter granted in 1669.¹ It was endowed by Erasmus Smith with over 7,200 acres of land and, although such trusts were relatively common in England, it was unique in Ireland at that time. The Trust was entitled, 'The Governors of the Schools founded by Erasmus Smith, Esq.' and it was provided with a seal bearing the motto 'We are faithful to our Trust'. Its Board consisted of 32 members who were, in the main, bishops, holders of major state offices in Ireland, peers and aldermen, together with the Provost of TCD.²

Galway Grammar School was, with grammar schools at Drogheda and Tipperary, central to the provisions of the Charter and its fortunes would be inextricably tied to decisions taken by the Board of the Trust regarding the allocation of its funds and its support for the School. The *raison d'être* of the grammar schools was the provision of free education to the children of the tenants of '...Erasmus Smith, his heirs, executors or assigns' and to a maximum of 20 poor children living within two miles of each school. In addition to the provision made for the grammar schools, Christ's Hospital, London was to receive £100 per annum and £30 per annum was allocated to fund a lectureship in Hebrew at TCD. Surplus revenues from future land leases were to be used to apprentice children, towards admitting further pupils to the schools, and to cloth poor pupils. Erasmus Smith had the power to decide on the use of remaining funds.³

Consideration of Galway Grammar School, which operated from about 1673 to 1958, allows for the study of a Protestant educational institution located in the predominantly Catholic west of Ireland,

¹ *The CHARTER of King Charles II. empowering Erasmus Smith, Esq. to erect Grammar Schools in the Kingdom of Ireland and to endow the same with convenient Maintenance for Schoolmasters and to make further provision for Education of Children at the University; and for several other Charitable Uses* included in *Ninth report from the Commissioners of the Board of Education, in Ireland. Schools founded by Erasmus Smith, Esq.* Appendix 1, pp. 8-16, H.C. 1810 (194), x, 315 (henceforth cited as *Erasmus Smith Charter*, 1669).

² W.J.R. Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust: A History of the Erasmus Smith Trust and the High School, Dublin* (Dublin, 2004), pp. 28, 29; T.C. Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland: English Government and Reform in Ireland, 1649-1660* (London, 1975), p. 190.

Note: The value and importance of the endowment is evident from the 2015 median value of agricultural land being €6,615 per acre, giving a value, in 2015, of the order of €48,000,000 for 7,200 acres.

Central Statistics Office, Ireland, Agricultural Land Prices, 2015:
<http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-alp/alp2015/>
Accessed 3 July 2017.

³ *Erasmus Smith Charter*, 1669.

over nearly three centuries. Related, however, to it being an institution of the Erasmus Smith Trust, it also allows of consideration of the interrelationship and interaction between the Board of the Trust, with an elite and predominately Dublin-based Church of Ireland membership, and an institution at the periphery intended to provide education to children of the middle-class and of the poor.

On its establishment Galway Grammar School became part of a Protestant educational system which had its origins in the late 1530s when, subsequent to the Irish Parliament declaring Henry VIII to be the Supreme Head of the Church in Ireland in 1536, it passed, in 1537, 'An Act for the English order, habit and language' (28 Henry VIII, c. 15) requiring the reformed clergy to establish parish schools to teach English. Thereafter, the role of education in the scheme of reform continued to be advanced and Sir Anthony St Leger, lord-deputy for much of the period 1540 to 1556, and his Anglo-Irish supporters promoted the establishment of grammar schools.⁴

The genesis of the second-level system is to be found in 'An Act for the erection of free Schools' (12 Elizabeth, c. 1), 1570, which provided for a free grammar school in each diocese and for the schoolmaster to be an Englishman or of English birth. The costs of the schools were levied on the clergy of the respective dioceses. The purpose of the schools was the improved upbringing of the youth of the country so that they would avoid the 'lothsome and horrible' errors of their ways and appreciate that they owed 'a due and humble obedience ... to their princes and rulers'.⁵ The establishment of a university, Trinity College Dublin, in 1592 provided for a three-tier educational system.

A further second-level education initiative occurred when James I provided land to endow royal free grammar schools in the Ulster plantation counties for 'the education of youths in learning and religion'. Another royal grammar school was subsequently provided for by Charles I at Banagher. The thrust towards provision of free grammar school education continued with the establishment in

⁴ Áine Hyland and Kenneth Milne, (eds), *Irish Educational Documents Volume I: A selection of extracts from documents relating to the history of Irish education from the earliest times to 1922* (Dublin, 1987), i, pp. 38, 39; Brendan Bradshaw, *The Dissolution of the Religious Orders in Ireland under Henry VIII* (London, 1974), p 224.

⁵ Michael Quane, 'The Diocesan Schools: 1570 – 1870' in *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, 2 ser., lxvi (Jan. – June, 1961), pp. 26-29; Hyland & Milne, *Irish Educational Documents*, i, pp. 38, 39.

1669 of 'The Hospital and Free School of King Charles the Second' in Dublin.⁶ A tradition of individuals endowing schools also developed and 24 such schools were listed in the 1791 *Report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry*.⁷

Consequently, over a period of two hundred years, through parliamentary enactment and endowment by the Crown and individuals, provision, variously viewed as defensive or as an *instrumentum regni*, was made for a network of grammar schools towards fostering a population loyal to the Crown and government, to the Established Church, and to the use of the English language. In the case of many of the schools there was provision for some or all of the pupils to be educated free of charge.⁸ A network of private second-level schools also developed and in 1861 there were 729 such schools, primarily attended by Protestants.⁹

This educational provision operated against a background of political, social and economic events which successively saw the attempted Tudor reform of society and religion, threats to the Protestant community in the mid- and late-seventeenth century with the Confederate and Williamite wars, followed, respectively, by the Cromwellian land settlement and over a century of Protestant ascendancy. While seemingly secured by the Act of Union, the grant of Catholic Emancipation undermined the principle of Protestant privilege and, thereafter, Protestant ascendancy came to be diluted as the Church of Ireland was disestablished, Land Acts introduced, and the franchise widened at parliamentary and local levels. The establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922 saw a small and ever-diminishing Protestant minority without political power, although maintaining an economic influence exceeding its share of the population.

A number of key surveys dealing with the history of the period from the Reformation, when the educational system was initiated, to the mid-twentieth century, when Galway Grammar School closed, were found informative. They included Colm Lennon's *Sixteenth-Century Ireland: The*

⁶ Hyland & Milne, *Irish Educational Documents*, i, pp. 42-45; Jack White, *Minority Report: The Protestant Community in the Irish Republic* (Dublin, 1975), p. 147.

⁷ *Report of Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1791*, [2336-III], H.C. 1857-58, iii, xxii (I), pp. 374, 375 (henceforth referred to as *Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1791*. The page number given will be as in volume iii of the 1857-58 report).

⁸ D.H. Akenson, 'Pre-university education, 1782-1870' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland v: Ireland under the Union, I, 1801-70* (Oxford, 1989), p. 255; John Coolahan, *Irish Education: its History and Culture* (Dublin, 1981), p. 52; Hyland & Milne, *Irish Educational Documents*, i, pp. 9, 10.

⁹ *Census 1871, General Report*, Section IX, Religious Profession and Education, p. 170.

Incomplete Conquest; Steven Ellis's, *Ireland in the Age of the Tudors: 1447-1603*; David Dickson's *New Foundations: Ireland, 1660-1800*; Ian McBride's *Eighteenth Century Ireland: The Isle of Slaves*; George D. Boyce's *Nineteenth Century Ireland: the Search for Stability*; Theodore K. Hoppen's *Ireland since 1800: Conflict and Conformity*; R. F. Foster's *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* and Diarmaid Ferriter's *The Transformation of Ireland, 1900-2000*.¹⁰

The particularity of the Protestant experience in Ireland from the mid-seventeenth century was considered by reference to a number of publications, none of which have education as a particular focus. T. C. Barnard's *A New Anatomy of Ireland: the Irish Protestants, 1649-1770* addresses the social stratification of Protestant Ireland from peers to the 'lower people'. His perspective is from the provinces and the chapter on 'The Middle Station' provides an insight into the social grouping most likely to have attended Galway Grammar School.¹¹ In contrast, the concern of S.J. Connolly's *Religion, Law and Power: The Making of Protestant Ireland, 1660-1760* is with the Protestant elite. While its focus is on the centre, it provides insights into the periphery with, in Galway, in 1707, trade being 'wholly' in Catholic hands. This, together with there being, in the archdiocese of Tuam in 1717, just 14 resident clergymen and ten churches, speaks to the low numbers of Protestants then likely to have been available to attend Galway Grammar School.¹²

J.C. Beckett's *The Anglo-Irish Tradition* considers that group which had its heyday in the eighteenth century, when Ireland was a Protestant kingdom. Beckett outlines the process whereby, during the nineteenth century, Protestants came to see their position as depending on the union with Britain. He points to the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland as the first clear step towards the British government's abandonment of the Anglo-Irish and successively documents the events and processes which led to the establishment of the Irish Free State.¹³

¹⁰ Colm Lennon, *Sixteenth-Century Ireland: The Incomplete Conquest* (Dublin, 1994); Steven Ellis, *Ireland in the Age of the Tudors: 1447-1603* (London, 1998); David Dickson, *New Foundations: Ireland, 1660-1800* (Dublin, 1987); Ian McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland: The Isle of Slaves* (Dublin, 2009); D. George Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland: the Search for Stability* (Dublin, 1990); K. Theodore Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800: Conflict and Conformity* (Harlow, 1999); R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London, 1989); Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland, 1900-2000* (London, 2005).

¹¹ Toby Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland: The Irish Protestants, 1649-1770* (Yale, 2003), pp. 239-278.

¹² S.J. Connolly, *Religion, Law and Power: the making of Protestant Ireland, 1660-1760* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 148, 182.

¹³ J.C. Beckett, *The Anglo-Irish Tradition*, (Belfast, 1976).

Alan Acheson's *A History of the Church of Ireland, 1691-1996* provides a comprehensive and empathetic overview of the Church of Ireland over three centuries. He treats, *inter alia*, of the Evangelical movement of the nineteenth century which transformed the Church and gave it a new sense of unity and purpose. That sense of purpose led to the 'Second Reformation'. Acheson considers that modern assessments stress that movement's disruption of pre-existing inter-church relationships but suggests that the Established Church was obliged to 'banish strange doctrine', with the objective that the people would compare, judge and decide for themselves. That such would lead to the conversion of Catholics resulted in a clash of opposing imperatives. Acheson posits that loyalty to the Crown was a unifying factor in the Church of Ireland until the mid-twentieth century.¹⁴

That 'Second Reformation' is the subject of Desmond Bowen's *The Protestant Crusade in Ireland: A Study of Protestant-Catholic Relations between the Act of Union and Disestablishment*.¹⁵ Bowen traces inter-denominational relations in Ireland from the Evangelical revival to the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, treating of the ideological debates sparked by William Magee, Archbishop of Dublin, of Archbishop Power le Poer Trench waging religious war on Catholics in Connacht, and of the efforts of Robert Dallas and the Society for Irish Church Missions to convert Catholics. The reaction of Catholics, particularly Archbishop Cullen, who had 'an almost paranoiac obsession' with the Evangelicals, is set out. The 1861 census showed that the Church of Ireland had failed to win popular support, with the result that the value of that Church to the state came to be questioned.¹⁶

Bowen's concern in *History and the Shaping of Irish Protestantism* is on the 'historical pressure of the Roman authority on Irish affairs' which, he suggests, engendered a siege mentality in Protestants.¹⁷ He points to a definition of Irish nationality as excluding 'anything not Catholic and everything English' and the perception that social legislation would bring Protestants under 'Roman domination and Catholic ascendancy'. Protestants became convinced that under Home Rule they would be discriminated against, a fear they considered to be confirmed by the *Ne Temere* decree of 1912. The great majority of Protestants were then in agreement with the general synod of the

¹⁴ Alan Acheson, *A History of the Church of Ireland, 1691-1996* (Dublin, 1997), pp. 136, 164, 224.

¹⁵ Desmond Bowen, *The Protestant Crusade in Ireland: A Study of Protestant-Catholic Relations between the Act of Union and Disestablishment* (Dublin, 1978).

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 72, 83, 218, 267, 299, 301.

¹⁷ Desmond Bowen, *History and the Shaping of Irish Protestantism* (New York, 1995), pp. xix, xx.

Church of Ireland which affirmed its commitment to the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland.¹⁸

The position of Protestants in post-independent Ireland is considered in Jack White's *Minority Report: The Anatomy of the Southern Irish Protestant*. White considers that, in the area of education, Protestants and their institutions received parity of treatment from the new state, with the exception of all children being required to study Irish at school. He points to Protestant concerns in the area of social legislation, with the *Irish Times* in 1952 opining that the philosophy underlying Irish jurisprudence was informed by the principles of the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, he considers that between 1937 and 1973 great change occurred in public opinion with barriers between the churches and citizens of different denominations breaking down.¹⁹

Kurt Bowen's *Protestants in a Catholic State: Ireland's Privileged Minority* is concerned with the fortunes of the members of the Church of Ireland in post-independence Ireland. It traces the experience of Irish Anglicans between 1922 and the late 1970s in politics, education, religion, social life, and in the economy. Bowen suggests that Irish Anglicans developed a sense of marginality during the nineteenth century which was increased by events leading up to 1922. He considers that, with the advent of the Irish Free State, many Protestants believed that their right to remain in the country was in jeopardy, that their heritage did not endear them to the Catholic majority, and that they might suffer because of their wealth, as Protestants were overrepresented in some high status occupations. Protestant alienation was, in addition, strengthened by legislation which affirmed the Gaelic and Catholic character of the state. He concludes, however, that, after World War II, communal boundaries began to crumble.²⁰

Alan Megahey's *The Irish Protestant Churches in the Twentieth Century* suggests that Protestants were 'not entirely out of sympathy' with some 'confessional' aspects of the Irish Free State, including film censorship. Neither did the Protestant churches object to the Censorship of Publications Act, 1929, nor to legislation prohibiting divorce or the sale of contraceptive devices, with legislation of this nature not being, in the pre-war years, a case of Catholic versus Protestant but, rather, matters

¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 324,342, 372, 373.

¹⁹ White, *Minority Report*, pp. 3, 92, 127, 139, 140.

²⁰ Kurt Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic State: Ireland's Privileged Minority* (Quebec, 1983), pp. 4, 79, 80, 195, 196.

to which liberals of whatever denominational hue objected. Protestants did have concerns with constitutional changes, including the ending of the right of appeal to the Privy Council and the removal of the Oath of Allegiance in 1933 and removal of references to the king in 1936. In the 1950s the Catholic Church seemed to be at the height of its powers but, at the 1951 election, Protestants were considered to have voted for Fianna Fáil on the basis that, in the wake of the 'Mother-and-Child' controversy of 1950-51, De Valera '...could be trusted to stand up to the bishops'. While difficulties for Protestants would continue to arise, Archbishop Simms, in 1957, declared that Anglicans would not hinder but would, instead, contribute in any way they could in public service, in the field of education, and in matters cultural and communal. Megahey considers that, by 1961, change was in the air.²¹

Neither is education a priority in publications concerned with Protestant communities at a local level, many of which have the revolutionary period as their focus. They include Terence Dooley's *The plight of Monaghan Protestants, 1912-26* and Michael Farry's three books *The Irish Revolution, 1912-23*; *Sligo 1914-1921: a chronicle of conflict* and *The aftermath of revolution: Sligo 1921-23*. Conor McNamara's *War and Revolution in the west of Ireland* does provide a relevant overview of the Protestant community in Co. Galway and the impact of conflict on it. David Fitzpatrick's *Politics and Irish Life, 1913-1921* considers, *inter alia*, the political behaviour of Protestants in Co. Clare during the years addressed but is silent on educational matters. Somewhat longer timescales and broader canvasses are dealt with in Ian d'Alton's *Protestant Society and Politics in Cork, 1812-1844* and Patrick Deignan's *The Protestant Community in Sligo, 1914-1949*. They are both informative on educational provision for Protestants.²²

Educational provision in Galway was addressed by James Hardiman in 1820 in his *The History of the Town and County of the Town of Galway*. Hardiman considered Galway Grammar School to be the principal educational establishment in the town. He noted that the Erasmus Smith Trust was well-endowed, that the School had generally been well-conducted but that, as the great majority of the

²¹ Alan Megahey, *The Irish Protestant Churches in the Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke, 2000), pp. 111-120.

²² Terence Dooley, *The plight of Monaghan Protestants, 1912-26* (Dublin; Portland OR, 2000); Michael Farry, *The aftermath of revolution: Sligo 1921-23* (Dublin, 2000); Michael Farry, *Sligo 1914-1921: a chronicle of conflict* (Trim, 2005); Michael Farry, *The Irish Revolution, 1912-23: Sligo* (Dublin, 2012); Conor McNamara, *War and Revolution in the west of Ireland: Galway 1913-1922* (Newbridge, 2018); David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life, 1913-1921: provincial experience of war and revolution* (Cork, 1998); Ian d'Alton, *Protestant Society and Politics in Cork, 1812-1844* (Cork, 1980); Pádraig Deignan, *The Protestant Community in Sligo, 1914-1949* (Dublin, 2010).

Trust's tenants were Catholic, they seldom sent their children to the School and, consequently, the town had not benefited from it to the extent which might have been expected.²³

A number of modern publications on Galway, which address the broader political, social and economic conditions which obtained in the town at various times, make reference to second-level education. John Cunningham's *A town tormented by the sea: Galway, 1790-1914* considers the provision of education for the middle-class, including at Galway Grammar School and at private schools, for boys and girls, attended by Catholics and Protestants, during the first half of the nineteenth century. It also addresses the development of second-level education for Catholics from the mid-nineteenth century. Reference to educational provision is also to be found in Nicholas Canny's 'Galway: From Reformation to the Penal Laws' and in Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh's "...the air of a place of importance' Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Galway'. My own study 'The Protestant Community in Galway, 1900-1926: A Town not theirs?' considers, *inter alia*, the educational provision for Protestants and their participation at the various levels over the period addressed. It may be noted that the significant collection, *Galway history & society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county*, edited by Gerard Moran and Raymond Gillespie, does not include an essay on education at any level or in respect of any denomination.²⁴

There are relatively few survey publications on the history of education in Ireland with only T. J. McElligott's *Secondary Education in Ireland, 1870-1921* having second-level education as its particular focus. That study is informative on the introduction and operation of the Intermediate Education Act, 1878 and the work of the various government commissions over the period addressed. Its concern is with a defined period and with general issues at a national level. Donald Akenson's 'Pre-university education, 1782-1870' provides a short, although informative, overview of a particular period. There are several publications which treat of the development of second-level education as part of a general consideration of the overall educational system. These include John Coolahan's *Irish Education: Its History and Culture*, a particularly succinct and concise overview, and

²³ James Hardiman, *The History of the Town and County of the Town of Galway. From the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (Dublin, 1820).

²⁴ John Cunningham, *A town tormented by the sea: Galway, 1790-1914* (Dublin, 2004); Nicholas Canny, 'Galway: From Reformation to the Penal Laws' in Diarmuid Ó Cearbhaill (ed.), *Galway: Town and Gown, 1484-1984* (Dublin, 1984), pp. 10-28; Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, "...the air of a place of importance' Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Galway' in Ó Cearbhaill (ed.), *Galway Town & Gown*, pp. 129-147; Michael Kavanagh, 'The Protestant Community in Galway, 1900-1926: A Town not theirs?', MA thesis, NUI Galway, 2004; Gerard Moran and Raymond Gillespie (eds), *Galway history & society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1996).

Séamas Ó Buachalla's *Education Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland* which addresses, *inter alia*, the interaction between the Protestant churches and the education system in the twentieth century.²⁵

The legacy of various government commissions is considered by Christopher McCormack in 'Superior Schooling: The Legacy of the Endowed Schools Commissions (1791-1894) to Irish Education'. Over time, however, as shown in Brian Tittley's *Church, State, and the Control of Schooling in Ireland, 1900-1944*, the effective control of schooling at primary and second-level passed to the Catholic Church. White's *Minority Report* includes a chapter on the educational provision for Protestants within that predominately Catholic educational environment, as does Bowen's *Protestants in a Catholic State*. In both instances second-level education is accorded part of a chapter and the emphasis is on the years from 1960.²⁶ An overview of educational developments over the period considered in this study is provided within the relevant chapters.

Ciaran O'Neill's *Catholics of Consequence: Transnational Education, Social Mobility, and the Irish Catholic Elite, 1850-1900* is concerned with a group at some remove from the focus of this study. Nevertheless, his general proposition that the decision of parents as to where to send a child to school is a revealing social process is one that is generally applicable. Again O'Neill's statement that his book is 'about people who thought of advancing their ambitions slowly and in generational terms' might be held to apply to any group which sought, as argued by R.V. Comerford, and quoted by O'Neill, to manoeuvre 'for survival and advancement of self and family through access to material resources and socio-political advantage'. O'Neill argues that one of the most effective methods of doing this is through the 'provision of an education that is exclusive, expansive, and expensive', but it might be held that the degree of exclusivity, expansiveness and expense is relative as is the advantage to be gained and thus, again, the principle may be generally applicable.²⁷

²⁵ T.J. McElligott, *Secondary Education in Ireland* (Dublin, 1981); Akenson, 'Pre-university education, 1782-1870'; Coolahan, *Irish Education*; Séamas Ó Buachalla, *Education Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland* (Dublin, 1988).

²⁶ Christopher McCormack, 'Superior Schooling: The Legacy of the Endowed Schools Commissions (1791-1894) to Irish Education' in Deirdre Raftery and Karin Fischer (eds), *Educating Ireland: Schooling and Social Change, 1700-2000* (Sallins, 2014), pp. 22-41; E.B. Tittley, *Church, State and the Control of Schooling in Ireland 1900 – 44* (New York, 1983); White, *Minority Report*; Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic State*.

²⁷ Ciaran O'Neill, *Catholics of Consequence: Transnational Education, Social Mobility, and the Irish Catholic Elite, 1850-1900* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 1-17.

With the establishment of the Irish Free State it was envisaged that the education system would have a major role in the gaelicisation process and the Irish language become a required subject in the primary and secondary school systems, with a pass in Irish becoming a requirement for the award of the second-level Intermediate and Leaving Certificates. Valerie Jones, in the course of her *A Gaelic Experiment: The Preparatory System 1926-1961 and Coláiste Moibhí*, outlines Protestant attitudes to the Irish language as encapsulating those who had an interest in the language, mainly because of its antiquarian value; those who sought to use Irish, mainly in the early to mid-nineteenth century, in the effort to proselytise Catholics; and those who studied the language in search of a national identity. The latter group included Protestants who were involved in organisations such as the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language and the Gaelic Union, the forerunner of the Gaelic League. There were, however, others who viewed Irish as a peasant language and they helped form a general perception that Protestants were against the language. In the education sector reaction to compulsory language ranged from that expressed in the *Irish Times*, ‘...not only... a denial of intellectual freedom but a material menace to the Church of Ireland’s youth’ to more pragmatic views.²⁸

Martina Relihan in ‘The Irish Educational System and Irish Language and History’ considers that the loyalty of management bodies of Protestant schools to the newly established Irish Free State was ‘at best equivocal’ and that the situation was exacerbated by the state’s Irish language policy. She suggests that, while school managements were slow to introduce Irish, it became incumbent on them to act when Irish became a compulsory requirement for success at state examinations and when state *per capita* grants became contingent on pupils studying Irish.²⁹ Ó Buachalla, in *Education Policy*, considers that the Irish language issue and the suitability of school textbooks were the curricular issues of particular concern to the Protestant churches into the 1950s. He refers to a survey conducted by the Church of Ireland in 1939 which reported that, in the case of secondary schools, the Irish language policy resulted in lower standards having been observed in mathematics, general intelligence and knowledge, in association with an increased interest in and command of oral Irish. In 1950 a Department of Education report on the position of Irish in Protestant schools records that attitudes ranged from hostility to realism, with the middle ground being neutral detachment. In 1941, however, Dora Casserly, a member of the Church of Ireland’s Cumann Gaelach

²⁸ Valerie Jones, *A Gaelic Experiment: The Preparatory System 1926-1961 and Coláiste Moibhí* (Dublin, 2006), pp. xxiv, 181-185.

²⁹ Martina Relihan, ‘The Irish Educational System and Irish Language and History’ in Raftery and Fischer (eds), *Educating Ireland*, pp. 147-172.

na hEaglaise, had published *A History of Ireland* which helped Protestant children develop an appreciation of the contribution of their co-religionists to the national struggle for freedom. In 1948 the Department of Education approved the book for inclusion on its official list.³⁰

Individual Protestant schools have also been the focus of publications, including of articles written, mainly between 1950 and 1970, by Michael Quane. All four Erasmus Smith grammar schools are individually considered. The articles are informative but have an emphasis on the establishment and early development of the schools. They are 'stand-alone' in nature and do not set the schools within the societal framework within which they operated.³¹

Meanwhile, recent decades have seen a range of publications, mainly written by alumni, treating of particular Protestant secondary schools, with the publications frequently being aligned to major institutional anniversaries. The schools considered are those still in operation, with their longevity and success otherwise being a cause for celebration. The majority are located in areas which had relatively large numbers of Protestants but many had low pupil numbers well into the twentieth century and had to cope with a variety of vicissitudes throughout their history.³² W.H.R. Wallace's *Faithful to our Trust: A History of the Erasmus Smith Trust and The High School, Dublin* is of particular interest for its overview of the Erasmus Smith Trust from its establishment. Wallace, not surprisingly perhaps, given that he links his history of the Trust with that of The High School, offers a sympathetic view of the Trust's development over the centuries and of its establishment and support of The High School, which was not provided for in the Trust's charter or subsequent legislation. His perspective on the support provided by the Trust to TCD, The King's Hospital, Dublin, a charitable school for the

³⁰ Megahey, *The Irish Protestant Churches*, p. 111.

³¹ Michael Quane, 'Galway Grammar School' in *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, Vol. XXXI (1964/5), pp. 39-70; Michael Quane, 'Drogheda Grammar School' in *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society*, 1 January 1963, Vol.15 (3), pp. 207-248; Michael Quane, 'Ennis Grammar School' in *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, Vol. X, No. 1 (1966), pp. 27-46; Michael Quane, 'The Abbey School, Tipperary' in *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, Vol. LXV (1960), pp. 40-75.

³² Books on Protestant secondary schools include: Richard Lee Cole, *Wesley College Dublin: an historical summary: 1845-1962* (Dublin, 1963); Georgina Fitzpatrick, *St Andrew's College: 1894-1994: ardens sed virens* (Dublin, 1994); Patrick Wyse Jackson and Ninian Faulkner, *A Portrait of St Columba's College, 1843-1974* (Dublin, 1993); Adrian Oughton, *Wilson's Hospital School: Church of Ireland Centre of Education, 1761-2011* (Multyfarnham, 2011); Alicia St Leger, *A history of Ashton School: Rochelle School, Cork High School, Cork Grammar School* (Cork, 2016); Trevor West, *Middleton College, 1696-1996: A Tercentenary History* (Cork, 1996); Lesley Whiteside, *A history of King's Hospital* (Dublin, 1975); Lesley Whiteside, *Where Swift and Berkeley Learnt: a history of Kilkenny College* (Dublin, 2009); Gregory K. White, *A history of St Columba's College, 1843-1974* (Dublin, 1981); Maurice J. Wigham, *Newtown School, Waterford, 1798-1998* (Waterford, 1998); W.R. Wilkinson, *Our good school on the hill: Monaghan Collegiate School, formerly Monaghan Diocesan School* (Monaghan, 1982).

sons of poor families established as the 'Hospitable and Free School of King Charles II' in 1671 and also known as the Blue Coat School because of its pupils military style blue uniform, and to 'English' schools which provided primary level education, is, in like manner, broadly favourable.³³

Middle-class children of secondary school age in Ireland, from which most pupils of Galway Grammar School and secondary schools in general came until 50 years ago, have attracted little scholarly attention with such focus as there has been on children being, in the main, on the children of the poorer classes, particularly from the late nineteenth century.³⁴ Mary O'Dowd's article, 'Early modern Ireland and the history of the Child', which has a focus on the Tudor and early Stuart periods, is an exception.³⁵ O'Dowd suggests that the rearing and education of the sons of the Gaelic aristocracy was central to the Tudor reform programme but that legislation in 1537 and 1570, providing for the establishment of parish and diocesan schools respectively, was also intended to extend the anglicization process to other boys. Little progress was, however, made during the sixteenth century. The importance of children in the reform of society was stressed in 1622 by the commissioners appointed to report on the state of the public revenues in Ireland and an emphasis was then placed on Catholic youth. Thereafter, from the 1640s conflict, the focus of urban and ecclesiastical authorities came to be the welfare of orphaned and abandoned children.³⁶

Second-level education developed in a generally uncontroversial manner, along denominational lines, and was available to a minority of the relevant age cohort until the late 1960s. These factors combine to account for it attracting less scholarly attention than either the primary or university systems, even though a significant number of archives are available as a basis for research.³⁷ Its funding base until 1878 comprised of endowments, in the case of Protestant schools, and pupils' fees. State funding to schools, when it came to be provided, was allocated on the basis of examination results and, subsequently, on a capitation basis and neither the denominational nature of the schools or their ownership was disturbed. When Protestant second-level education has been

³³ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*.

³⁴ Maria Luddy and James M. Smith (eds), *Children, Childhood and Irish Society* (Dublin, 2014), p. 16 and n.1-4.

³⁵ Mary O'Dowd, 'Early modern Ireland and the history of the child' in Luddy and Smith (eds), *Children, Childhood and Irish Society*, pp. 29-45.

³⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 30, 35, 36, 43.

Note: The 1537 legislation was concerned with parish schools, not with diocesan schools as stated in the article, while the 1570 legislation, not 1569, was concerned with diocesan schools, which were grammar schools, rather than grammar schools in a general sense.

³⁷ Ciaran O'Neill, 'Literacy and Education' in Eugenio F. Biagini and Mary E. Daly (eds), *The Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 251, 255.

considered, it has generally been as part of an overall consideration of the educational system. Books on individual schools tend to have the school as their particular focus and not to be overly concerned with the broader societal context within which they operated.

In addition, Protestants and Protestant institutions in the predominately Catholic West of Ireland have attracted little attention from historians. There is an opportunity, therefore, for research on the operation over almost three hundred years of a Protestant second-level school located in Galway using a major archive. This thesis explores a number of themes commencing with a comprehensive study of the operation of Galway Grammar School, thereby providing a broader understanding of Protestant education, those who provided it and those who availed of it. Consideration will be given to the extent to which the School and its staff contributed to and interacted with Galway town and of the extent to which the people of Galway availed of its educational and physical facilities. Related to this will be a consideration, from the perspective of the School, of Catholic/Protestant relationships and interactions in Galway. There will be a focus on the pupils of the School towards understanding, in particular, their geographical origin and socio-economic background, together with their subsequent education, careers and domicile. Consideration will be given to the mobility of pupils before, during and after their school days. Other Protestant schools in Co. Galway will be considered, as will other means by which Protestants from the county accessed second-level education towards placing Galway Grammar School in comparative perspective.

There is also a national dimension to the research in that it considers the Erasmus Smith Trust from the perspective of one of its foundation institutions. An opportunity is therefore afforded to evaluate the discharge by the Board of the terms of the Trust and its responsibilities to Galway Grammar School. In this respect the attitude of Board members, leading members of the Anglican community, to the intended beneficiaries of the endowment, the children of the middle-class and poor, is explored as are attitudes of headmasters of Galway Grammar School to applicants and pupils from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

The research is primarily based on material in the archives of the Erasmus Smith Trust at The High School, Dublin.³⁸ The material extends from about 1650 and consists of a complete set of minute

³⁸ The High School, Dublin (Archive): <http://www.highschoolublin.com/Academic/Archive/>

books for meetings of the Trust's Board from 1674, together with minutes of the Board's Standing Committee, 1803-1961. There is documentation on the Trust's estates and finances and on its dealings with the grammar schools, Trinity College Dublin, the Blue Coat School, English schools supported by it, and The High School, Dublin. The archive contains material related to Galway Grammar School in respect of pupils, headmasters and other staff, the provision and maintenance of school buildings, together with correspondence, particularly between headmasters, the Board and its Registrars. Events leading to the School's closure are documented.

The archive includes a School Roll Book, initiated in 1895 by Alexander Eraut and continued by headmasters Edward Coursey, 1932-1948, and George Coghlan, 1948-1958, with the last entries being made at Easter 1952.³⁹ The information contained in the Roll Book, although not complete, provides an insight into the pupils of Galway Grammar School over more than half a century in respect of annual intake numbers, duration of attendance, pupil numbers, gender, age at entry, domiciliary origin, socio-economic status, religion, residential status, incidence of siblings and of children of former pupils attending the School. It also provides information on the further education, occupations, and country of residence of some pupils after they left the School, and on their participation in World War I and, to a lesser extent, in World War II.

There are, however, periods when there is scant reference to the grammar schools in the archival material, with the Board being occupied with property-related matters and business related to its endowment of other institutions. This lack of attention to the grammar schools is, in itself, part of the story. The body of correspondence related to Galway Grammar School from 1875 is, understandably, larger than for the previous two centuries but, altogether, a rich vein of material is available.

The information in the Archive was supplemented by various parliamentary reports from 1791, with those of the *Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1791*; the *Board of Education in Ireland, 1810*; the *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*; and the *Endowed Schools Commission, 1881*, proving particularly useful.⁴⁰ Collectively the various reports provide a comprehensive overview of the

³⁹ ESA/GS/1431, Galway Grammar School Roll Book, 1895-1952.

⁴⁰ *Report of Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1791*, [2336-III], H.C. 1857-58, iii, xxii (I), pp. 341-379; *Ninth report from the Commissioners of the Board of Education, in Ireland. Schools founded by Erasmus Smith, Esq.* H.C. 1810 (194), x, 315 (henceforth cited as *Board of Education in Ireland, 1810, Ninth Report*); *Endowed Schools, Ireland, Commission. Report of Her Majesty's commissioners appointed to inquire into the*

second-level education system, comment on the manner in which endowments were being used, and make recommendations for improvements to the system. In utilising the reports from the perspective of the Erasmus Smith Trust and its schools one must, however, be mindful in the case of the *Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1791* that its chairman was John Hely-Hutchinson, then Treasurer of the Trust, while the body which produced the various *Board of Education* reports, c.1810, included, amongst its six members, two who were members of the Board of Governors of the Trust.⁴¹ Conversely, the *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, may not, at its outset, have been well disposed towards the Trust as its Board had argued that its schools did not come within the Commission's remit and an act of Parliament was required to remove any doubt in this respect. In addition, that Commission heard and recorded copious evidence from individuals, not all of which may have been entirely accurate.

Census reports also proved useful in providing relevant demographic information at national and local level, together with information on pupil numbers in various schools.⁴² The Admission Records of Trinity College Dublin, 1637-1910 and of QCG/UCG from 1860 were informative towards gauging the extent to which pupils of Galway Grammar School proceeded to university, although the non-availability of TCD records after 1910 impacted on this aspect of the research.⁴³ Statistical reports of the Department of Education and Skills from 1923 were a source of useful comparative data, while the *Report of the Advisory Committee on Secondary Education in the Republic of Ireland (to the General Synod of the Church of Ireland, 1965)*, although published after the closure of Galway Grammar School, provided an overview of Protestant education, including of the condition of school buildings, working conditions of staff, and living conditions of pupils, which would not have differed particularly from that which obtained during the preceding decades.⁴⁴

endowments, funds, and actual condition of all schools endowed for the purpose of education in Ireland; accompanied by Minutes of evidence, documents, and tables of schools and endowments. [2336-I-IV], H.C. 1857-58, xxii (I) (henceforth cited as *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*); *Endowed Schools, Ireland, Commission. Report of the commissioners appointed by His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, to inquire into the endowments, funds, and actual condition of all schools endowed for the purpose of education in Ireland; accompanied by minutes of evidence, documents, and tables of schools and endowments. Containing report and appendices, and tables of schools and endowments.* [C.2831, C.2831-I], H.C. 1881, xxxv, I, 539 (henceforth cited as *Endowed Schools Commission, 1881*).

⁴¹ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 105, 271.

⁴² Census of Ireland Reports, 1821-1961: <http://www.cso.ie/en/index.html> and www.histpop.org

⁴³ QCG/UCG Registers of New Entrants; Trinity College Dublin: Admissions Records, 1637-1910.

Note: The source for TCD Admissions Records in all instances is: <http://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/home/>

⁴⁴ *Reports of the Department of Education, 1923-1958*; *Report of the Advisory Committee on Secondary Education in the Republic of Ireland (to the) General Synod of the Church of Ireland, 1965* (Dublin, 1965).

The number of provincial newspapers, and their circulation, grew during the 1850s with many affording pride of place in their coverage to issues such as religion, communications and education.⁴⁵ In this context the *modus operandi* of the *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, of taking evidence from interested parties at locations throughout the country made it inevitable that those aspects of its proceedings which were of local interest would attract the attention of newspapers. So it was that the Erasmus Smith Trust, the manner in which its endowment was being used, and the extent to which Galway was benefitting from it, came to enter the public domain. For the most part newspaper reports mirrored material in the report of the Commission but they do, occasionally, provide a perspective on the developing determination of Catholics and nationalists to gain access to the funds of the Trust, while offering a critique of the School. While the *Galway Express* sought to support the Protestant cause, coverage in such as the *Galway Vindicator*, *Galway Mercury*, and *Tuam Herald* ensured that Catholic claims for access to the benefits of the endowment were aired.⁴⁶ *The Freeman's Journal*, strongly nationalist in its outlook, provided scrutiny of the Trust at national level.⁴⁷

Coverage of the Trust was, understandably, not consistent over the decades but enduring interest in it is evident in reporting from 1929 on the efforts of its Board to maintain control of the endowment. Newspaper reports, especially in the *Tuam Herald* and the *Connacht Tribune*, were important in arriving at a sense of sporting activity in Galway Grammar School. Ralph O'Gorman's *Rugby in Connacht* also proved to be informative in the sporting sphere. The *Tuam Herald* and the *Connacht Tribune* proved useful in arriving at a sense of the involvement of the headmasters of Galway Grammar School in activities external to the School and of other interactions between the School and the town.

I was fortunate at an early stage of the research to meet with a number of former pupils of Galway Grammar School and to receive information, orally and in writing, from them and a number of others. They had attended the School in the 1940s and 1950s and provided a sense of their experience as pupils, including their reasons for attending the School, living conditions there, and their social, sporting and educational experiences. Not surprisingly, they were unaware of the broader context in which the School was operating and, in particular, of the threat of closure which

⁴⁵ Marie-Louise Legg, *Newspapers and Nationalism: The Irish Provincial Press, 1850-1892* (Dublin, 1999), p. 21.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 195, 196, 216.

⁴⁷ Irish Newspaper Archives: <https://www.irishnewsarchive.com/freemans-journal-newspaper-archive>

hung over the School while they were pupils. While some recounted experiences which were not totally positive, collectively the former pupils conveyed a sense of enduring loyalty and commitment to the School and its traditions as evidenced by 76 former pupils being present at a reunion function and the dedication of a plaque of remembrance in 2006, almost half a century after the School's closure.

A variety of sources were accessed towards providing an overview of other Protestant schools which operated in Co. Galway. Despite Tuam Diocesan School's existence over three hundred years, little primary material particular to the School, other than scant holdings in the Dr Michael Quane papers at the National Library of Ireland, was identified.⁴⁸ The reports of government commissions, referred to above, proved useful in this and other instances. There was, also, an informative essay, 'The Tuam Diocesan School', written by John A. Claffey, which treats mainly of the years from the Famine to the closure of the School, c. 1881.⁴⁹ There is, on the other hand, a significant body of manuscript material related to Eyrecourt Endowed School in the Quane papers.⁵⁰

The particular source of material on the Irish Missionary School, Ballinasloe is its annual report for 1853, also held at the National Library.⁵¹ The School was then at, or approaching, the high-point of its operation and the report provides information on its *raison d'être*, its development to that date and its aspirations for the future. The availability of a later report, which would have provided information on the School in decline, would have been useful. It may be, however, that reports ceased to be published once that decline set in. Galway Model School operated from 1852 and, while not a second-level school, it did offer, consistently, education to pupils of second-level schooling age and, occasionally, to pre-university entry level. Information contained in census reports and in QCG/UCG Entrant registers combine to provide a perspective on the extent to which the latter occurred.

⁴⁸ Letters and papers of Commissioners of Education in Ireland relating to endowed schools in the diocese of Tuam, 1854-93 (N.L.I., Quane papers, MS 17,963) (henceforth referred to as Tuam Diocesan School papers).

⁴⁹ John A. Claffey, 'The Tuam Diocesan School' in John A. Claffey (ed.) *Glimpses of Tuam since the Famine* (Tuam, 1997), pp. 89-97.

⁵⁰ Letters and papers of Commissioners of Education in Ireland relating to Eyrecourt Endowed School, Co. Galway (N.L.I., Quane papers, MS 17,936) (henceforth referred to as Eyrecourt School papers).

⁵¹ *The Seventh Annual Report of the Irish Missionary School, Ballinasloe, for the year ending December 31, 1853* (Dublin, 1854) (henceforth referred to as *Irish Missionary School Report, 1853*).

There is, not surprisingly given their essentially transitory nature, little primary material available on private schools which operated in Co. Galway. It proved possible, nevertheless, to arrive at a sense of this sector by reference to a number of sources, including newspapers, census reports and QCG entrant registers. Education by private tutor was relatively commonplace in the mid-nineteenth century and, while it declined in popularity thereafter, it remained a factor until the early twentieth century. Information on particular providers of this type of education is lacking. However, an appreciation of the extent to which pupils were educated to pre-university entry level in this manner, its tapering off over time, and some information on those from Co. Galway who were educated by private tutor, was gained by reference to the TCD and QCG/UCG Entrant registers.⁵²

During the nineteenth century a large number of pupils born in Co. Galway attended second-level schools elsewhere in Ireland. An attempt has been made to quantify the numbers involved by reference to G.D. Burtchaell and T.U. Sadleir's *Alumni Dublinenses* which lists, *inter alia*, entrants to TCD over the period 1593-1860.⁵³ In addition, a considerable number of Irish pupils went to England for their second-level education. This trend is considered by reference to a number of works of reference and secondary sources.⁵⁴

The approach taken in presenting the research is chronological. Chapter one includes biographical information on Erasmus Smith, charts his acquisition of significant lands in Ireland and outlines events leading to the establishment of the Trust. The chapter addresses the development of Galway Grammar School and the Trust up to the end of the eighteenth century. Chapter two considers the School, and relevant developments in the Trust, over the period 1800 to 1875. Both chapters set the School and the Trust in the context of the main political, economic and educational developments of the respective periods.

⁵² QCG/UCG Registers of New Entrants; TCD Admissions Records, 1637-1910.

⁵³ G.D. Burtchaell and T.U. Sadleir, *Alumni Dublinenses* (Dublin, 1935).

Note: The approach taken was to consider a sample of about 20 per cent of entrants to TCD, those with surnames A-C, identify those born in Co. Galway, residence at entry to TCD is not given, and extrapolate approximate overall entrance numbers from Co. Galway on this basis. It was considered that the sample size, 20 per cent, was reasonably robust and, in the absence of pupil names, there was no basis for selecting any particular sample group.

⁵⁴ d'Alton, *Protestant Society*; John Bateman, *Great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1879); Maurice C. Hime, *Efficiency of Irish Schools – Proved and Explained* (London, 1889); Maurice C. Hime, *Home Education; or, Irish versus English grammar schools for Irish boys* (London, 1887).

Chapter three places Galway Grammar School in comparative local perspective. It is concerned with other Protestant schools which operated in Co. Galway over the period from 1570 and with other aspects of the second-level educational provision available to Protestants from Co. Galway. The time span involved presents a difficulty in that the chapter cannot easily be accommodated within a structure which is primarily chronological. The decision to locate it at this juncture was made on the basis that the schools and other provisions considered were all operational during the nineteenth century, with those which continued into the twentieth century ceasing to operate early in that century.

Chapter four treats of Galway Grammar School over the period 1875 to 1932 and mirrors the structure of chapter two. This period also saw the Erasmus Smith Trust, and the purposes for which the endowment was being used, come under critical appraisal leading to a series of events which ultimately led to the reconstitution of the Trust in 1938. In addition, organised sport was introduced into the School about 1875. It is dealt with in this chapter and in chapter six. Sport helped define the School and played a major part in the life of pupils and, indeed, of the teaching staff. The School espoused the games of cricket, hockey and rugby, yet was geographically distant from other Protestant schools playing those games.

Chapter five is based on information contained in the School Roll Book, 1895-1952.⁵⁵ Consideration is given to the pupils who attended the School during this period in respect of, *inter alia*, sex, age at entry, duration of attendance, domicile, religion, transfers to and from other schools, further education and employment, and domicile in adulthood. The Roll Book also provides information on the involvement of pupils in World War I. This information is augmented from other sources and, in addition to being discussed in the text, is used to compile a profile of participants which is included as an appendix.

Galway Grammar School in the period 1932 to 1958 is addressed in chapter six. While the chapter is concerned with similar considerations to those of chapter four, in particular, it has a particular focus on the process, interactions and decision-making leading to its closure. At appropriate junctures throughout the study, reference is made to the demography of the Protestant population,

⁵⁵ ESA/GS/1431, Galway Grammar School Roll Book, 1895-1952: School Roll Book begun by Headmaster Alex Erout, listed by pupil number, name, date of birth, entry date, leaving date, relative at School, address, father's profession (not complete) (henceforth cited as Galway Grammar School Roll Book).

particularly in Co. Galway and in Galway town, but, also, in a number of counties and towns, outside of the metropolitan area, where Protestant second-level schools continue to operate. Some comparisons are drawn between the experiences and practices of those schools and Galway Grammar School.

The concerns of this thesis are, at the titular level, with two institutions, Galway Grammar School and the Erasmus Smith Trust, with the policies of the Trust consistently impacting on the School from establishment to closure. The directions taken, or not taken, by the Trust resulted from the decisions made, or not made, by its governors, frequently a minority of them. Options existed throughout for the governors to have taken different decisions which would have resulted in an alternative resource allocation pattern emerging, with potentially different consequences for Galway Grammar School. The decision as to the appointment of headmaster was also one for the Board. The appointee was, thereafter, a major factor in the success or otherwise of the School, with his professional expertise and level of commitment to and engagement with the School frequently being the key determinant. Ultimately, the *raison d'être* of the Trust and the School was the education of pupils who, although almost entirely anonymous, were those on whom the policies adopted and decisions taken by the Trust, the engagement or non-engagement of governors and headmasters, most impacted. Even more anonymous were the parents of the pupils who made the decision to send their sons and, from the 1920s, their daughters to Galway Grammar School. Consequently, in undertaking the research I was mindful at all times of the people behind the institutions and, especially, of the pupils.

Chapter 1

Galway Grammar School, 1673-1799

Erasmus Smith received large grants of land in Ireland arising from the Cromwellian land settlement. He resolved about 1657 to establish an educational trust but twelve years would elapse, encompassing a number of iterations of the proposal, before the grant of a Charter establishing the Trust in 1669. This chapter considers the background to the establishment of the Trust and the operation of Galway Grammar School from its opening about 1673 to 1799, in the context of the development of the Trust over that time, and of the major political, economic and educational events of the period.

Erasmus Smith and the Establishment of his Trust

Erasmus Smith was born in 1611, probably at Husbands Bosworth, Leicestershire. His main business became supplying the armies of Parliament in suppressing the 1641 Rebellion in Ireland. Parliament raised loans to fund the quelling of the rebellion under The Adventurers' Act, 1642, which provided for repayment of the loans by grant of confiscated land. The Doubling Act, 1643, provided that an investor who increased his loan by 25 per cent would receive double the amount of land due to him under the original loan. Smith's father, Sir Roger, invested a total of £450 and transferred ownership of £375 of the loans to Erasmus in 1653.¹

A 'futures' market developed in the selling and buying of the confiscated land following the suppression of the rebellion. Under the Act of Settlement, 1653, which began the allocation process, Erasmus Smith was allocated almost 17,000 statute acres, in various locations, on claims of £2,995. Smith subsequently invested additional funds such that the total of his claims came to over £13,000.² Following the restoration of Charles II to the throne in May 1660 a process was put in

¹ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 13-15.

² *Ibid*, pp. 17, 18; Myles V. Ronan, *Erasmus Smith Endowment: A Romance of Irish Confiscation* (Dublin, 1937), p. 12.

place to determine land ownership in Ireland. When the process culminated Smith had title to over 46,000 statute acres.³

Smith initiated a process, by indenture, in 1657 of establishing an educational foundation. The indenture proposed to support five grammar schools, including at Galway, which would provide free education to the children of poor tenants of the Trust's lands and to those of poor labourers, with pupils being catechised according to the Presbyterian catechism of the Assembly of Divines. Such children of Smith's tenants as proceeded to university were to be paid £10 per year towards their maintenance for a maximum of four years. Surplus income was, when the foundation's income exceeded £300, to be used to support five English schools. The trustees appointed had decidedly Presbyterian sympathies.⁴

These arrangements were not provided for in statute and revised provisions for the foundation were proposed in a bill introduced in the Irish House of Commons in 1662. The bill was not then formally enacted as, having been approved in London, the Irish Parliament had been dissolved when it was returned. The bill came to be known as the 'Transmitted' Bill as, having been passed in London and transmitted to Dublin, it was not passed there. Its provisions were subsequently embodied in the Act of Explanation, 1665.⁵

The bill provided for three grammar schools, at Galway and two other places to be decided, with poor children of the Trust's tenants and of Smith's tenants, living within two miles of the grammar schools, to receive free education. Four or five English schools were to be established and maintained and surplus revenues were to be used to apprentice children to Protestant masters, giving preference to children of Smith's tenants. Schoolmasters were to be licensed by the bishop of the relevant diocese and were required to subscribe to the first two canons of the Church of Ireland. The bill was not acted on but came to assume particular importance in the early 1720s as it was then held that the Board of the Trust should give primacy to its provisions, rather than to those of the Charter, in the allocation of its surplus income.⁶

³ *Educational Endowments (Ireland) Commission. 48 & 49 Vic., ch. 78. Annual report of the commissioners, for the year 1891-92, Appendix B, p. 165, [C.6783], H.C. 1892, xxix, 89 (henceforth referred to as Educational Endowments Commission: Report, 1891-92).*

⁴ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 18-21.

⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 25, 26.

⁶ *Ibid*; ESA/Registry Book 1, mtg. 24 May 1721.

A Royal Charter, granted in 1669, is usually regarded as the foundation of the Trust. The Board of the Trust now consisted of 32 members, six of whom were *ex officio* members: the Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin, the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, two judges and the Provost of Trinity College Dublin. Governors could serve for life but provision was made for their removal if they did not attend a meeting for two years. Vacancies were to be filled by co-option. Lands were allocated to the Trust in counties Galway, Tipperary, Sligo, and Limerick.⁷

The Charter provided for grammar schools at Galway, Drogheda and Tipperary and specified that schoolmasters should catechise their pupils every Sunday using Bishop Ussher's catechism. Schoolmasters were to be paid £66 13s. 4d. per annum and ushers could be appointed when the income of the Trust exceeded £300. Christ's Hospital, London was to receive £100 per annum and £30 per annum was allocated to fund a lectureship in Hebrew at TCD. Provision was made for the free education of the children of Smith's tenants and of 20 poor children living within two miles of each school. Surplus revenue under existing leases was to be used to admit additional pupils to the schools, in repairing them, and in apprenticing children to Protestant masters. Surpluses under future leases were to be used to apprentice children, to cloth poor scholars in the grammar schools, with Smith having the right to decide on the use of remaining funds. In 1682 Smith provided rules for the grammar schools, the schoolmasters and ushers, and the pupils, which were a detailed working out of the provisions of the Charter. Also in 1682 Smith wrote to the Board of the Trust stating 'My end in founding these schools was to propagate the Protestant faith according to the Scriptures, avoiding all superstition'.⁸

The composition of the Board of Trustees resulted in control of the Trust being secured by the Established Church and the political establishment. The provision that vacancies be filled by co-option ensured that that control would continue. Established Church control, combined with most Board members being resident in Dublin and the provosts of TCD being active members of the Board throughout the eighteenth century, with several filling the influential role of Treasurer, resulted in institutions favoured by the Protestant establishment and located in Dublin, the Blue Coat School and TCD, being particular beneficiaries of the Trust. An initiative to convert children to English ways

⁷ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 28, 29.

⁸ *Erasmus Smith Charter*, 1669; Robert E. Ward, *An Encyclopedia of Irish Schools, 1500-1800* (Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter, 1995), p. 48.

and the Protestant religion through the funding of English schools commenced in 1776. In the 1870s a further significant initiative was taken with the establishment of The High School, Dublin.⁹

Relations between Smith and the Board of the Trust became strained during the 1670s and 1680s with Smith endeavouring to increase the endowment to Christ's Hospital, London, of which he became a governor in 1658. The proposal was resisted by the Board which sought to ensure that the greater part of the Trust's surplus income would be used to support apprenticeships at the Blue Coat School, the equivalent of Christ's Hospital in Dublin.¹⁰

The Educational Environment, 1673-1799

Educational provision in Ireland in 1673 existed at primary, secondary and university level. Doubtless other schools, in addition to the official parish schools, operated at primary level. When, in the late seventeenth century, penal laws forbade Catholics from establishing schools they developed, in response, a wide-ranging network of hedge schools and in 1731 the *Report on the State of Popery* contrasted the weak state of the Established Church with the vitality of the Catholic Church and its numerous churches, priests and schools.¹¹

The most significant official response to that situation in the educational sphere was the grant of a royal charter in 1733-34 establishing 'The Incorporated Society in Dublin for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland'. The Society subsequently founded about 60 schools with the objective of instructing pupils in labour, industry, English and religion. Over a million pounds in public funds was allocated to the Society between 1747 and 1824.¹² The report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1791, listed seven causes of 'great evils' in the charter schools and the century ended with the Catholic Church protesting against what it considered to be the virulent anti-catholicism of the Society.¹³ The decades subsequent to the repeal of the penal laws saw increased activity by Catholic religious orders, and by a number of Protestant societies, in establishing schools, some of the latter being avowedly anti-catholic and in receipt of public funds.¹⁴

⁹ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 53, 62, 81, 82, 98-104, 128.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 30-35.

¹¹ Coolahan, *Irish Education*, p. 9; Kenneth Milne, *The Irish Charter Schools, 1730-1830* (Dublin, 1997), p. 15.

¹² Milne, *The Irish Charter Schools*, pp. 23-32, 168, 195 and Appendix C, pp. 347, 348.

¹³ *Ibid*, pp. 177-226.

¹⁴ Coolahan, *Irish Education*, p. 9.

A sense of the overall second-level educational provision from 167 to 1799 is gained by reference to entrant numbers to TCD in both years. In 1673 there were 53 entrants from the system to TCD, with the entrants having been taught by of the order 32 schoolmasters. About half of the entrants had been taught in Dublin, Kilkenny, Charleville, and Trim. The number of entrants to TCD in 1799 was 117 and, again, their education had been provided across a large number of establishments.¹⁵ The endowed schools of the second-level sector came under scrutiny from the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1791, and the findings of the Commissioners are outlined later in this chapter.¹⁶ Second-level education for Catholics had been severely impacted by the penal laws, although some hedge schools provided education which included the classics, while wealthier Catholics went to the continent to pursue their education. The repeal of the penal laws resulted in religious orders establishing second-level schools from 1793.¹⁷

At university level, scholarship in TCD, over the half-century following its establishment in 1592, was confined, in the main, to theological and biblical studies. The College was primarily seen as a training ground for Protestant ministers and student numbers were ‘pitifully small’. The restoration of the monarchy in 1660 saw the College become staunchly Anglican. Academic output during the first half of the eighteenth century was particularly low, earning the College the sobriquet of the ‘Silent Sister’. The last decade of the century saw 1,470 students enter the College, which compared favourably with the 1,530 entrants to Cambridge over those years.¹⁸

The Early Decades of the Trust and Galway Grammar School to 1729

The Erasmus Smith Trust was established at a time of relative calm following two decades which encompassed the 1641 Rebellion, its suppression by the Cromwellian Army, confiscation of much of the lands in Catholic ownership, and the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Major land acts, the Act of Settlement, 1662, and the Act of Explanation, 1665, resulted in the land question becoming largely dormant. While there was a growth in the numbers of Presbyterians and those of other Protestant sects, the Act of Uniformity, 1666, restored the Church of Ireland to its former position. Commerce and trade improved, resulting in economic growth, underpinned by overseas trade, good

¹⁵ TCD Admission Records, 1673 and 1799.

¹⁶ *Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1791*.

¹⁷ Coolahan, *Irish Education*, pp. 57, 58.

¹⁸ McDowell & Webb, *Trinity College Dublin*, p. 3.

harvests, and population growth. Nevertheless, tensions, generated, in particular, by the secret Treaty of Dover, 1670, under which Charles II undertook to become Catholic, remained. The situation was exacerbated by James, Duke of York and heir to the throne, becoming a Catholic, with knowledge of this entering the public domain about 1672.¹⁹

Little attention had been paid initially in Galway town to religious reform. By the late 1570s, however, Galway had become a Protestant town but, by the 1590s, as a result of the efforts of Counter-Reformation clergy, it reverted to being Catholic and remained so up to 1652. The religious leanings of the third and fourth Earls of Clanrickarde, who held the earldom from 1582 to 1637 and who were the owners of large estates in Co. Galway, also tended towards Catholicism. The first half of the seventeenth century saw a growth in landownership in the county, and elsewhere in Connacht, by Galway merchants such that a large proportion of land in the county, and control of the tenants occupying it, remained in Catholic hands. Land in Connacht was confiscated under the Cromwellian settlement but, apart from areas deemed to be of strategic importance, it was reallocated, in smaller holdings, to Catholic landowners from Connacht and elsewhere. Galway town was identified as being of strategic importance and Catholics were effectively removed from it, and replaced by Protestants, after 1652, with the Commissioners who ruled Ireland for Parliament requesting the government, in 1657, to encourage merchants from London to occupy Galway and revive the town. Improved economic conditions in the late 1660s and the 1670s saw a new group of Protestants arrive.²⁰ The prospect of further inflows was, however, impacted adversely by the decline in trade at Galway port from the late seventeenth century. Catholics were permitted to return to the town from the late 1660s and, while the town's corporation was dominated by the Protestant families during the eighteenth century, the relationship between the old Catholic and the new Protestant families was reasonably amicable.²¹ The demographic outcome of the seventeenth century upheavals was that Co. Galway, about 1732, had the lowest proportion of Protestants, at 5 per cent, of all counties. The proportion of Protestants in the population of Galway town was then about 13 per cent.²²

¹⁹ Dickson, *New Foundations*, pp. 4-21.

²⁰ Canny, 'Galway: From Reformation to the Penal Laws', pp. 14-27; Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, p. 18.

²¹ L.M. Cullen, 'Tráchtáil is baincéarachta i nGaillimh san 18ú céad' in *Galvia*, Vol. V, 1958, p. 43; Canny, 'Galway: From Reformation to the Penal Laws', p. 27.

²² Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland*, pp. xvii, 3.

The Erasmus Smith Trust became operative in 1673 when its lands were leased, with its Board meeting for the first time in April 1674. The salary provided to the masters of its grammar schools was comparatively attractive and positioned the Trust to attract high-calibre individuals. Schoolmasters were appointed to Drogheda and Tipperary Grammar Schools from about 1673 but a letter from Erasmus Smith, written about 1674, stated that he would not make an appointment to the Galway School until he was satisfied with the number of pupils there. In the event, temporary accommodation was secured for the School and Alexander Davidson was appointed as usher pending the appointment of a master. Davidson proved to be incompetent and the Board dismissed him in May 1678.²³

Drogheda Grammar School appears to have had a reasonably auspicious beginning. Its initial two masters, Joseph Scott and John Morris, served for eight and twelve years respectively, while an usher was appointed in 1682, suggesting a reasonable cohort of pupils. A number of houses, which included a playground for the pupils, were bought to accommodate the School. Tipperary Grammar School experienced difficulties and its first master, James Wood, may not have brought the School into operation to any great extent. John Shaw was appointed to the post in 1681, a schoolhouse having been built, but the building was damaged during the Williamite War. Rebuilding proceeded slowly and it may not have reopened until about 1703.²⁴

Elisha Coles was appointed headmaster of Galway Grammar School from 1 November 1678. He was the son of a schoolmaster at Wolverhampton and became a chorister at Magdalen College, Oxford in 1658. Coles matriculated in 1659 but left the university without taking a degree. He went to London about 1663 and was employed at Merchant Taylors' School when he was appointed to Galway. He had published a work on shorthand in 1674, *An English Dictionary explaining difficult terms that are used in divinity, husbandry, physic, law, navigation, mathematics, and other arts and sciences in* 1676 and, in 1677, *A Dictionary English-Latin and Latin-English containing all things necessary for the translating of either language into the other.*²⁵

²³ Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland*, p. 102; Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 29, 41, 46, 48; ESA/Registry Book 1, p. 2 and mtg. 6 May 1678.

²⁴ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 46-52.

²⁵ ESA/Registry Book 1, mtg. 14 December 1678; Quane, 'Galway Grammar School', pp. 45, 46.

The Board decided that Coles should locate the School in the Sessions House and advise it as to whether it would be more appropriate to build a schoolhouse outside the town walls or buy a house within the walls. The Board had concerns at the time of Coles' appointment regarding the prospect for success of the schools at Drogheda and Galway and a committee reported in May 1679 that other schools were permitted in both towns and that Catholics would not allow their children attend those of Erasmus Smith. The endowment was, in consequence, being rendered ineffectual and the Board sought to find a way to prevent the operation of other schools in Drogheda, Galway and Tipperary. Having regard to the committee's report, it requested the Archbishop of Tuam to be 'tender of him (Coles) lest he feel any discouragement in his employment'.²⁶

Coles, having opened the School in the Sessions House, rented a house to serve as a residence and school. A larger house was subsequently rented by the Board. Coles died on 20 December 1680, having been just two years in post.²⁷ The Board subsequently stated that he 'had filled his place very well and brought the school into a very good reputation'.²⁸

Representations were made by the Mayor, Aldermen and 'persons of quality' in Galway for the appointment of a headmaster so that their children would not be at a loss. Smith was requested to send another master or, alternatively, to appoint Arthur Brenan who was considered by the Board to be suitable for appointment.²⁹ A Mr Nolan was appointed by the Chief Justice to provide continuity during the vacancy. Smith recommended the appointment of John Carre to the post but specified that, should the Board find him not suitable, it should examine Brenan. Provost Marsh reported that Carre was 'unskilful' in Hebrew but deemed Brenan to be appointable. The Board appointed him and determined that he should have with him, on taking up duty, a copy of the rules of the schools which were to be put on display, and that he should subscribe to the first two canons of the Church of Ireland. This latter requirement was a standard one for headmasters appointed during the following century. The Board directed that the masters of the schools not refuse to accept 'the children of the

²⁶ ESA/Registry Book 1, mtgs. 14 December 1678, 3 May 1679 and pp. 18-20; Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 49, 51.

²⁷ Quane, 'Galway Grammar School', p. 47; Jim Higgins and Susanne Heringklee, (eds), *Monuments of St. Nicholas' Collegiate Church, Galway: A Historical, Genealogical and Archaeological Record* (Galway, 1992), p. 271.

²⁸ ESA/Registry Book 1, p. 26, Letter from Governors to Erasmus Smith, 4 March 1681.

²⁹ Ibid.

founder's tenants though their parents be papists, soe that they conforme unto the rules of the schoole'.³⁰

Brenan had graduated with a BA, 1677, and an MA, 1680, from TCD. Galway Grammar School appears to have enjoyed success under him but was not without controversy as the Board informed Smith that the usher there had run away for 'some wilde practises among the boyes' and that a replacement was required.³¹ The School then had about 80 pupils with that number projected to increase. John Crery, BA, schoolmaster at Finglas, was subsequently appointed as usher. Soon after his appointment Brenan expressed concern regarding the School's accommodation and the Board sought the advice of the Mayor of Galway and Mr Mayne, collector of customs. Brenan died soon afterwards and was subsequently described by the Board as 'a deserving person and whose losse is much lamented by all the people of that place'.³²

Brenan was succeeded by Fielding Shaw, BA. Shaw subsequently obtained the degrees of MA, 1684, and BD and DD, both in 1701. The Board requested the Archbishop of Tuam to suggest a site, within or without the walls, for a school building and to advise as to the cost. It also requested a report on Crery's behaviour and his management of the School during the vacancy. Crery left his post soon afterwards and Robert Lowrain was appointed to replace him. A house was purchased to accommodate the School at a cost of £380.³³

James, Duke of York, became king in February 1685 and Ireland was transformed from Protestant-led stability to a 'rumour ridden condition' in which Protestants were frightened and Catholics were in a state of expectation. By mid-1688 James's position in England had been weakened as a result of his pro-Catholic policy and the birth of a male heir, which potentially heralded a Catholic dynasty. In November a Dutch army landed in England and James fled to France. William and Mary assumed the throne in February 1689. From then until the Treaty of Limerick in October 1691 Ireland was the location of a war which resulted in of the order of 25,000 deaths.³⁴

³⁰ ESA/Registry Book 1, mtgs. 4 June, 7 July and 3 November 1681.

³¹ Burtchaell and Sadlier, *Alumni Dublinenses*, p. 95; ESA/Registry Book 1, Letter to Smith, 3 December 1681.

³² ESA/Registry Book 1, mtgs. 26 January and 23 May 1682; Governors to Smith, 7 September 1682.

³³ Burtchaell and Sadlier, *Alumni Dublinenses*, p. 745; ESA/Registry Book I, mtgs. 22 December 1682, 28 January 1683, 22 January 1684 and p. 52.

³⁴ Dickson, *New Foundations*, pp. 22-40.

The war impacted on the Trust's income with John Nicholas, Treasurer, reporting in 1691 that no revenues had been received since 1688. Payments to masters of the schools were uncertain and in 1695 Shaw was paid £50 and provided with an order on a tenant in Co. Galway for rent. In 1699 he was required to appear before the Board to explain why he was not willing to forego three and a half years' salary as others had done. Shaw clearly made a convincing case and several months later the Board agreed to pay him £40 towards arrears of salary and to consider paying him a gratuity for his care of the School during the troubles.³⁵ In 1700, however, the Board, noting that Shaw had 'other preferment', deemed him not qualified to continue in his post. That observation was somewhat of an understatement as Shaw then held seven clerical offices. It agreed to grant him a gratuity of £100 and in 1702 he was paid a further £100 in settlement of all his demands.³⁶ It appears likely that the School, given the political turbulence of the period, Shaw's wide-ranging commitments, and the uncertainty regarding payment of his salary, had little more than nominal existence throughout the 1690s, although John Price, Shaw's successor as headmaster, entered TCD from the School in 1692.³⁷

Galway was, at this time, despite being subject to particular provisions under the penal laws, almost entirely Catholic and would remain so. In 1708, when there was a threat of a French and Jacobite invasion, Catholics were expelled from the town but were, within weeks, allowed return. The School had to rely heavily on Galway for pupils as the transport network west of the Shannon was such that, while coach travel was available from Dublin to Athlone, the remainder of the journey to Galway had to be completed on horseback.³⁸

The outlook for the School was, therefore, not encouraging when John Price was appointed headmaster in 1700. Price is not recorded as graduating from TCD but was ordained in 1701 and subsequently held the office of Chancellor of Kilfenora, 1701-19, and became a curate of Galway in 1712. In 1702 the Board requested the Archbishop of Tuam to ascertain if the number of pupils was

³⁵ ESA/Registry Book 1, mtgs. 7 November 1691, 18 September 1695, 24 March and 27 July 1699.

³⁶ Canon J.B. Leslie, *Clergy of Tuam, Killala and Achonry: Biographical Succession Lists* (Belfast, 2008), p. 615; ESA/Registry Book 1, mtgs. 17 August 1700 and 2 July 1702.

³⁷ TCD Admissions Records, 1637-1725.

³⁸ William Lecky, *A History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* (Chicago and London, 1972), p. 98, 99; Connolly, *Religion, Law and Power*, pp. 252, 253; Canny, 'Galway: From Reformation to the Penal Laws', p. 11.

at the level prescribed for the payment of an usher. The Archbishop was called on again in 1705 to inspect the schoolhouse with a maximum of £100 being sanctioned for repairs.³⁹

In 1712 the Board, in the context of penal laws related to education then in operation, drew up rules 'to prevent youths educated in their schools from turning or continuing Papists'. The rules, which made Established Church control of the Trust explicit, provided for prayers to be read to pupils, morning and evening, 'out of the Liturgy by Law established'; for pupils to be instructed and examined in the church catechism; for their attendance at the parish church every Sunday; and for their confirmation by the bishop when 'sufficiently instructed in the aforesaid Catechism'.⁴⁰

Application of the rules caused difficulties for Price and he expelled 85 Catholics who would not comply with them, 70 of whom were fee-paying. His income had, he represented, been considerably reduced. The number of free pupils expelled, 15, suggests that relatively few of the Trust's tenants in Galway, on 1,637 Irish acres, were availing of their right to free education in the School. An explanation may be that, until the nineteenth century, lands of the Trust were leased, for the most part, to middlemen and in the early eighteenth century there were only eight tenants in Galway leasing land directly from the Board.⁴¹ As a result their right to free education may have escaped the notice of the majority of tenants. It may have been, however, that the Board choose to ignore or was reluctant to activate the provisions for the admission of free pupils.

Price requested that he be allowed accept such Catholic pupils as he considered not to be intended for the priesthood or that his salary be increased. The Board sought advice from the Archbishop of Tuam. The *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, considered that some compromise was reached and that Catholics subsequently attended the School.⁴² As the difficulty re-emerged in 1729 it may have been that a formal dispensation was not granted. Price's request to be allowed admit Catholic pupils was, over 150 years later, described by F. Hugh O'Donnell, a Catholic who had attended the School, in the following terms:

³⁹ Leslie, *Clergy of Tuam, Killala and Achonry*, p. 595; ESA/Registry Book 1, mtgs. 24 October 1700; 2 July 1702 and 14 December 1705.

⁴⁰ An Act to restrain foreign education (7 Will. c. 4 (1695)); An Act to prevent the further growth of popery (2 Anne c. 6 (1703)); An act for explaining and emending an act entitled An act to prevent the further growth of popery (8 Anne c.3 (1709)); ESA/Registry Book I, mtg. 12 July 1712.

⁴¹ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 28, 42.

⁴² ESA/Registry Book 1, mtg. 1 December 1714; *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, i, p. 69.

In the very height of the Georgian persecution we find an ordained Head Master of the Galway Grammar School uplifting an earnest supplication to the Governors against some recent putting on of the penal screw. In doleful terms the holy man represents how not less than eighty-five solvent Romish Papishes, rather than drink in the healing waters of the catechism appointed by the rules, had withdrawn themselves elsewhere from his reverence's tuition, to the manifest detriment of his reverence's revenues, and he beseeches their Honours not to have him endure this loss.⁴³

In 1715 Price requested the Board to provide funds for repairs to the School, stating that no Protestant family would board their children there but that, if it were repaired to accommodate 20 pupils, the reputation of the School would be enhanced and the number of Protestant pupils increase. The Mayor, Deputy Recorder, Aldermen and Burgesses of Galway wrote in support of the request, considering that repair of the schoolhouse would enhance the School's reputation and encourage Protestants 'in remote parts of that Country' to send their children there. The refurbishment included 'A new handsome Lodging Room fit for Lodging Boys on the second storey where there never was a Room before'.⁴⁴ The School had 42 pupils in 1725, including five boys 'sent to College', compared to 40 pupils in Drogheda in 1724 and 32 in Tipperary in 1725.⁴⁵

Price died in 1729 and the usher, Mr Corner, took charge of the School pending the appointment of a new master.⁴⁶ Galway Grammar School appears to have been relatively successful under Price with pupil numbers, from a low base, possibly exceeding one hundred when Price expelled the Catholic pupils in 1712. They were of a similar order to those at Drogheda and Tipperary in the mid-1720s. There is also evidence that the School provided a good quality education under Price as consideration of a sample of about 20 per cent of entrants to TCD, those with surnames A-C, shows ten entrants born in Co. Galway being admitted between 1704 and 1729, having been educated by a

⁴³ F. Hugh O'Donnell, *Mixed Education in Ireland: The Confessions of a Queen's Collegian*, (2 vols, London, 1870), i, p. 90.

⁴⁴ ESA/Registry Book 1, mtg. 6 April 1715; ESA/GS/83, Memorial re maintenance of School, 1715; ESA/GS/85, Certificate of magistrates of the town of Galway of the repairs done to Galway Grammar School and adjoining schoolmaster's residence.

⁴⁵ ESA/Registry Book 1, mtgs. 10 June 1724, 7 June 1725, and p. 311.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, mtg. 16 May 1729.

Mr/Rev. Price. This would suggest that, pro rata, of the order of 50 pupils from the School entered TCD having been educated under Price.⁴⁷ This is further discussed below.

The Political and Economic Environment, 1720-1799

The period 1720-60 was notable for a lack of major political events but the sacramental test, introduced in 1704, which effectively debarred Presbyterians from holding crown or municipal office, brought about divisions within Protestantism and introduced potential for fluidity into Irish politics. Some Protestants sent their sons to England for their grammar school education, which served to emphasise differences, while that process also emphasised, by virtue of the distinctive accent of the Irish pupils, differences between Irish Protestants and their counterparts in England.⁴⁸ The general view of contemporaries was that Anglicanism in Ireland was at a low ebb with its bishops being more concerned with political than religious affairs. John Wesley, a regular visitor to Ireland from the middle of the century, considered that there was little but the form of religion remaining. The archdiocese of Tuam had, in 1791, just 17 churches in a good state of repair and a lapsed church population.⁴⁹

Disputes between the Irish parliament and the English government arose with the English view of Ireland as a subordinate kingdom being rejected by most Irish Protestants who saw Ireland as a 'sister' or 'brother' kingdom. The 'Irish' case was stated particularly by William Molyneux and Jonathan Swift and they argued it on historical and 'natural rights' grounds, with their confidence to do so being based, *inter alia*, on Irish Protestants perceiving themselves as the 'Irish nation' and considering that, as far as the government of Ireland was concerned, they knew best. Over time the Protestant establishment in Ireland espoused an Irish identity which was, however, full of contradictions which would be exploited by the English government, Protestant dissidents and Irish Catholics. Nevertheless, between the 1720s and the 1770s, no sustained attempt was made to govern Ireland in a manner at variance with the fundamental interests of the Protestant elite. Moreover, despite occasional threats, no danger to the security of the country arose over the first 60 years of the century. The period was one of political stability.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Burtchaell and Sadleir, *Alumni Dublinenses*.

⁴⁸ T.C. Barnard, 'Protestantism, ethnicity and Irish identities, 1660-1760' in Tony Clayton and Ian McBride, (eds), *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c. 1650-1850* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 216.

⁴⁹ Acheson, *A History of the Church of Ireland*, pp. 66-68, 100.

⁵⁰ Thomas Bartlett, *The Fall and Rise of the Irish Nation: The Catholic Question, 1690-1830* (Dublin, 1992), pp. 30-38; McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland*, p. 286; Dickson, *New Foundations*, pp. 63, 85, 86.

Increased fluidity was introduced into the political system from the late 1760s resulting from such as the Octennial Act, 1768; the introduction of direct parliamentary management by the Lord Lieutenant; and the abolition of the Test Act, 1780. Nevertheless, while it has been suggested that the attitude of Protestants towards Catholics changed from the 1760s and that there was a decline in religious fanaticism, Protestants remained acutely aware of their minority status and there was opposition to the granting of political concessions to Catholics. Protestant concerns were raised by outbreaks of agrarian violence, carried out by the Whiteboys, with a particular grievance being the requirement on all to pay tithes to the Established Church. The agrarian unrest exposed the vulnerabilities of the Protestant Ascendancy class and brought to mind the rebellions of the 1640s and the Williamite War. The external environment was also less stable as a result of the Seven Years War, 1756-63, and the American War of Independence, 1775-83.⁵¹

The 1720s began and ended with bad harvests and a severe potato famine in 1740, exacerbated by interruption to trade caused by the outbreak of war between Britain and Spain, resulted in the death of between 12.5 and 16 per cent of the population. Strong economic growth followed, particularly from 1747 to 1752. The economy grew rapidly in the 1760s and, although growth ceased in the 1770s, there was further growth in the late 1780s and early 1790s. The rate of population increase was unprecedented and this, combined with rising prices, contributed to social and political unrest in the late 1790s.⁵² A complex intermix of conquest and colonisation, improvement in the economic situation of the Catholic population, anxiety regarding the abandonment of the penal code from the 1770s, sectarian, millenarian and agrarian factors, together with the ideology of the French Revolution and complex political divisions, have all been advanced as factors leading to the 1798 Rebellion. The century had, however, for the most part been one of political, social and economic stability and land values rose by a factor of ten or more, between the 1660s and the 1790s.⁵³ The Rebellion scotched the notion, however, that the country had settled into a set of tolerable, if not yet tolerant, relationships and that Catholics and Protestants were moving towards a state of shared common interests.⁵⁴

⁵¹ McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland*, pp. 285, 289, 304, 317, 322, 338, 339; Bartlett, *The Fall and Rise of the Irish Nation*, pp. 66-68; Dickson, *New Foundations*, pp. 131, 141.

⁵² Dickson, 'The Other Great Irish Famine' in Cathal Póirtéir (ed.), *The Great Irish Famine* (Cork, 1995), pp. 52-55; Dickson, *New Foundations*, pp. 102-106.

⁵³ McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland*, pp. 410, 422; Dickson, *New Foundations*, pp. 102-106.

⁵⁴ Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland*, p. 10.

The Development of the Trust, 1720-1799

A favourable economic environment from 1696 resulted in the Trust having surplus funds during the 1700s. The Board settled its dispute with Christ's Hospital in 1718, involving payment of £3,000 over three years, and established a committee in 1721 to recommend on the allocation of the surplus. Following consultation with the Provost and Senior Fellows of TCD and the governors of the Blue Coat School, the committee, which included Marmaduke Coghill, Treasurer of the Trust and MP for TCD, Provost Baldwin and Dr Claudius Gilbert, Regius Professor of Divinity, TCD, presented three reports. In the first it set out that, while its recommendations were framed as closely as possible to the provisions of the Charter and the Transmitted Bill, there were some differences between the two documents and it advised that the Board should be guided by the Bill in such cases. The Board accepted all of the committee's recommendations, not surprisingly, as, of the nine governors present when the third report was adopted, eight were signatories to one or more of the reports or had otherwise been involved in related meetings.⁵⁵

A private act, *An Act for further application of the Rents and Profits of the lands and tenements formerly given by Erasmus Smith, Esq., Deceased, to Charitable uses, 1723*, gave effect to the recommendations. It provided that the Trust's surplus income be used to increase the value of 20 exhibitions at TCD from £6 per annum to £8, to establish 15 additional exhibitions, each valued at £6 per annum, and to fund two new lectureships, three new fellowships, and new buildings at the College, the provisions were considered to be '...greatly for the service of the Public, and the particular benefit and advantage of those who shall be educated in the said College.' Provision was also made for the grant of £300 towards a new building at the Blue Coat School and towards funding 20 apprenticeships at that institution. The relationship between the Board and the School was copper-fastened through an agreement that each would have representation on the Board of the other. Future surplus income was to be allocated to TCD, to the Blue Coat School and in establishing English Schools. The Act did not provide for any of the surplus to be allocated to the grammar schools, which had primacy in all three versions of the endowment, despite the Charter providing that such funds be allocated towards the maintenance of more pupils or increasing the allowances

⁵⁵ Dickson, *New Foundations*, p. 46; Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 58-67; ESA/Registry Book I, mtgs. 1 April and 24 May 1721.

of pupils in the schools, towards clothing the pupils, and towards repairing and 'beautifying' the schools and school-houses.⁵⁶

In the decade following the passing of the act the Board provided £1,643 to TCD for buildings and two further lectureships were funded. New buildings were provided for Drogheda Grammar School at a cost of the order of £1,300. A recurrent expenditure pattern emerged which, in 1728, saw the grammar schools receive £260 (25%); TCD receive £450 (44%); Christ's Hospital receive £111 (11%); the Blue Coat School receive £100 (10%); with miscellaneous expenditure of £150 (15%), to a total of £1,021.⁵⁷ Despite surplus funds the Board had concerns regarding the maintenance of the grammar school buildings and, in 1755, agreed to enforce its decision of 1730 requiring the masters to make all repairs to them, not in a 'slight and superficial manner but in the most substantial and efficient manner'. It required annual certification as to the state of the buildings and, in the context of the requirement, increased the headmasters' salaries from £66 13s. 4d. to £100, but with half of the salary being retained until certification was forthcoming and any neglect rectified.⁵⁸

Drogheda Grammar School enjoyed success subsequent to the appointment of Richard Norris as headmaster in 1753, with pupil numbers growing to 130 in the mid-1760s. The schoolhouse was rebuilt and enlarged in the mid-1750s, and the master's house was extended in 1761 to accommodate boarders. Several years later the schoolroom was extended and Norris was provided with £100 for extra ushers, all suggesting that the Board was then willing to support successful schools, although mainly through capital support. Tipperary Grammar School was granted £500 to provide a house for the usher and ten acres of land was made available to him. The usher in Drogheda was provided with access to 16 acres in 1773.⁵⁹

In the context of its strong financial position the Board decided in the 1750s to support the proposal of Edward Synge, Bishop of Elphin and Treasurer of the Trust, for a charter school in Sligo. A contribution of £500 was made towards the building and £250 per annum provided to the

⁵⁶ *An act for further application of the rents and profits of the lands and tenements formerly given by Erasmus Smith, Esq. deceased to charitable uses* included in *Ninth report from the Commissioners of the Board of Education, in Ireland. Schools founded by Erasmus Smith, Esq.* Appendix 1, pp. 16-23, H.C. 1810 (194), x, 315 (henceforth cited as *Erasmus Smith Act, 1723*).

⁵⁷ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 67-69; ESA/Registry Book 1, p. 355.

⁵⁸ ESA/Registry Book 2, mtg. 20 May 1755.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, mtgs. 17 April 1753, 14 May 1755, 7 January 1761, 5 May 1764, 6 February 1768 and 27 May 1773.

Incorporated Society which managed the charter schools.⁶⁰ In 1762 available funds amounted to £13,205 and the Board's munificence to TCD continued under the guidance of Treasurers Francis Andrews, 1762-74, and John Hely Hutchinson, 1774-94, both of whom were Provosts of TCD. Additional recurrent funding of £425 was granted to fund professorships and related assistantships, bringing the annual recurrent allocation to the College to £940. The Board was now funding five professorships, six related assistantships, three fellowships and 35 exhibitions at the College.⁶¹ In 1774, on the initiative of Hely Hutchinson, a further £200 was granted to fund premiums for composition and elocution and £2,500 was provided towards a Public Theatre. The latter two allocations occasioned anxiety on the part of some governors, and resulted in a majority of governors attending a meeting of the Board in 1776 when there was concern regarding the additional allocations related to the totality of the Trust's commitments, and, while the building grant was confirmed, it was decided that the premiums should cease.⁶²

The concerns of the governors related, in part, to the decision to purchase the house of Sydenham Singleton, a governor since 1776, towards alleviating accommodation pressures at Drogheda Grammar School, at a cost of £1,050.⁶³ The pattern of governors, or institutions they favoured, being party to transactions of the Trust continued when two estates in which governors had interests were purchased. Nathaniel Clements, a governor and former Treasurer, held a mortgage on an estate at Kilpatrick, Co. Westmeath, which was purchased for £6,900, while another estate, at Ballywilliam, Co. Offaly, purchased for £500, was owned Dr Henry Mercier, also a governor. In 1773 the Board decided, at the instigation of governors Lord Chief Justice Paterson and Sir Lucius O'Brien, both of whom had Co. Clare connections and interests, to establish a grammar school at Ennis. It has been stated that the decision was contrary to both the Charter of 1669 and the 1723 Act but that, in the Ireland of 1773, the Erasmus Smith governors were a law unto themselves. In 1776 a grant of £500 was made to the Blue Coat School towards a new school building. An application from the Bishop of Limerick in 1785 for assistance towards the establishment of a diocesan school was, however, refused as not being provided for in the Charter.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Ibid, mtgs. 12 February 1750, 26 March 1756.

⁶¹ Wallace, p. 271; ESA/Registry Book 2, mtgs. 1 October and 1 November 1762, 5 February 1763.

⁶² ESA/Registry Book 2, mtgs. 23 July and 10 December 1774, 29 March 1776 and 2 August 1780; J.V. Luce, *Trinity College Dublin: The First 400 Years* (Dublin, 1992), p. 55.

⁶³ ESA/Registry Book 2, mtgs. 19 June 1776, 28 May 1778, 10 February and 5 May 1780.

⁶⁴ Ibid, mtgs. 26 March 1776, 29 March 1778, 5 July 1773, 3 April 1776 and 22 August 1785; Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 70, 73; Quane, 'Ennis Grammar School', p. 31.

Note: The *Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1791*, p. 354 recorded that the Kilpatrick estate had been purchased for £9,600 and was being let for £335 10s. 3d. per annum. The yield was, therefore, 3.5 per cent.

Galway Grammar School, 1729-99

Galway Grammar School attracted little attention from the Board over the period 1729-99, its business, as it related to the School, being confined to the appointment of masters and ushers and the occasional sanctioning of repairs to the school building. There were five applications for the post of headmaster in 1729, including Mr Corner, the usher. In the event, John Garnett, who had taught in Athy for twelve years, enjoying success and having a good reputation, was appointed. He had been recommended by the late Archbishop of Dublin and the Provost and Vice-Provost of Trinity College 'as a person of learning and very well qualified for such an employment'.⁶⁵ Garnett was requested to advise as to repairs required to the schoolhouse. The Mayor of Galway certified that the building was 'much decayed and out of repair' and the Board, satisfied that the repairs would contribute to the School's reputation and increase pupil numbers, agreed that they be carried out so as to effect lasting improvements, at a cost not to exceed £300.⁶⁶

There were 16 pupils in the School when Garnett took up his appointment. That pupil numbers had fallen from 40 in February 1729 to 16 in June of that year indicates the transitory nature of school attendance, although some pupils might have returned with Garnett's appointment.⁶⁷ The School attracted some of the sons of Galway's leading families at this time, including future mayors, Thomas, 1743; John, 1755; and Croasdaile Shaw, 1746 and 1759; together with James O'Hara, mayor in 1747.⁶⁸ An analysis conducted of the surnames of pupils in 1725 and 1729 points to the majority being the sons of Galway Protestants and it has been suggested that the appearance of surnames which do not appear on any freeman lists for Galway indicates the presence of boarders.⁶⁹ Garnett, nevertheless, found it necessary to request that a way be found to admit some Catholics to augment his income. The Board decided to act as in 1714 and

Ordered that Mr Dexter (Registrar) do write to his Grace the Lord Archbishop of Tuam and desire his Grace give such directions to Mr Garnett as his Grace shall from time to time think

⁶⁵ ESA/Registry Book 1, mtg. 16 May 1729.

⁶⁶ Ibid, mtgs. 16 May and 26 June 1729.

⁶⁷ Ibid, mtg. 26 June 1729; Quane, 'Galway Grammar School', p. 54.

⁶⁸ Quane, 'Galway Grammar School', p. 55; Hardiman, *History of the Town and County of Galway*, pp. 225, 226.

⁶⁹ Raymond Hughes, 'Galway town, 1692-1750: a study in local administration and society', MA thesis, University College Galway, 1985, p. 146.

fit in relation to the admittance of children of Popish parents to be educated in the Free School of Gallway.⁷⁰

Garnett also invoked the anti-popery laws in an effort to secure the closure of classical schools catering for Catholics, and Walter Taylor, Mayor of Galway, reported that, on foot of information provided to him by Garnett, he had issued a warrant against Gregory French, alleged to be a Catholic schoolmaster, who kept a classical school, and that French had subsequently desisted.⁷¹

An overview of the general state of education in the archdiocese of Tuam at this time is provided in a report by its Archbishop which stated:

I have an account of thirty two schools taught by Papists in the several parts of this Diocese; Diverse of whom teach Latin and Philosophy, and some of the Divinity, in order to qualifie young men for their Priesthood.

And many Papists keep Tutors in their houses, who privately teach not only the youth of the family, but others of the Neighbourhood who report to them. There being scarce a Papist who will send his child to a Protestant School even to learn his Grammar or so much as to read.⁷²

Pupil numbers at Galway Grammar School, whether as a result of the closure of schools taught by Catholics or for other reasons, apparently increased such that the Rev. Sumner Wilkins was appointed usher in June 1730. He left after two years and was replaced by Anthony Thomas.⁷³

In May 1735 Garnett wrote to the Board stating that he had increased the number of pupils to 62 and attended diligently to his duties. He added, however, that he was in poor health resulting from

⁷⁰ ESA/Registry Book 1, mtg. 26 June 1729.

⁷¹ Quane, 'Galway Grammar School', p. 54; *Journals of the House of Lords, 1727-1752*, iii, pp. 169-71, cited in Quane, 'Galway Grammar School', p. 56.

⁷² 'Report on the State of Popery in Ireland, 1731: Diocese of Tuam' in *Archivium Hibernicum*, Vol. 3 (1914), pp. 124-159 (Catholic Historical Society of Ireland Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25485473>). Accessed 23 July 2017.

⁷³ ESA/Registry Book 1, mtg. 22 January 1732.

fatigue from his duties and was concerned that the School would be adversely impacted. He requested an exchange with Mr Lyttle, headmaster of Tipperary Grammar School. Lyttle agreed to the exchange, which was approved by the Board. The exchange did not particularly benefit Garnett as he died in Tipperary a year later. Lyttle died in 1740 with his term as headmaster at Galway having been, apparently, uneventful.⁷⁴

The School under Garnett continued to have pupil numbers as under Price and the 62 pupils reported by him in 1735 compares favourably with the 60 pupils at Drogheda in 1741. It may be, however, that few, if any pupils of the School proceeded to TCD while Garnett was headmaster as consideration of a sample of about 20 per cent of entrants to TCD, those with surnames A-C, shows no entrants born in Co. Galway being admitted between 1729 and 1735, having been educated by a Mr. Garnett. A similar situation obtained under Garnett's successor Lyttle.⁷⁵ In contrast to the lack of a custom-built school building at Galway at this time, a new house for the master and boarders was completed at Drogheda in 1733 at a cost of £881 10s. 0d. It was then decided to build a new house for the usher to cost £403 14s. 9d. and this before the mid-century investment programme in that School, referred to above, commenced.⁷⁶

Henry Vesey was appointed to succeed Lyttle. He was the son of the Rev. John Vesey, archdeacon of Kilfenora, and grandson of John Vesey, Archbishop of Tuam, 1678 – 1716. His mother was a daughter of Fielding Shaw. Henry was educated at Kilkenny College and TCD from which he graduated with the degrees of BA, 1736, and MA, 1739.⁷⁷ On appointment as headmaster he was provided with, in addition to his salary, a lease on 33 acres of the Trust's lands at a rent of £17 per annum. In February 1742 there were 50 pupils at the School and the Board appointed Frederick Grier as usher. Richard Kirwan, a Catholic who later became a member of the Established Church and who was one of the most eminent scientists of the eighteenth century, attended the School in the late 1740s.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ ESA/Registry Book 2, mtgs. 27 June 1735, 24 September 1736, 22 May 1740; Quane, 'The Abbey School, Tipperary', p. 61.

⁷⁵ Burtchaell and Sadleir, *Alumni Dublinenses*.

⁷⁶ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, p. 69.

⁷⁷ ESA/Registry Book 2, mtg. 22 May 1740; John Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage of the British Empire* (London, 1839), p. 409; Burtchaell and Sadler, *Alumni Dublinenses*, p. 839.

⁷⁸ ESA/Registry Book 2, mtg. 24 March 1746; Eva M. Philbin, 'Richard Kirwan, a Galway Scientist, 1733-1812' in Ó Cearbhaill (ed.), *Galway: Town and Gown*, pp. 110-112.

An opportunity to put the School into comparative perspective from its opening to 1750 is provided by reference to David Hannigan's 'The University of Dublin, 1685-1750: a study of matriculation records'.⁷⁹ Hannigan calculates that there were 5,068 registered matriculations at TCD over the period. While the domiciliary origin at date of entry is not available, the place of birth of 4,346 entrants is, including that of 3,955 entrants born in Ireland. Entrants born in Connacht constituted just 229 of that cohort but the ratio of entrants, having regard to their place of birth, to the number of Protestant households for Connacht (1:19) is not dissimilar to that for Leinster (1:13) and Munster (1:15), and overall for the three provinces of 1:14. Hannigan concludes that 'except in Ulster, the geographic origin of students seems not to have exercised much discernible influence on the pattern of indigenous matriculations' and that there was an even geographic spread of interest in university education among the Anglican population.⁸⁰

Hannigan calculated the number of matriculations from seven schools, including those of the Erasmus Smith Trust, over the period 1685-1750. The information is set out in table 1:

⁷⁹ David Hannigan, 'The University of Dublin, 1685-1750: a study of matriculation records', MA thesis, NUI Maynooth, 1995.

⁸⁰ Ibid, Table 2.1, pp. 11, 12; pp. 21, 57; Figure 2.2, pp. 99-101; Table 2.2, p. 102.

Table 1

Number of matriculations in TCD from particular schools, 1685-1750

| School | No. of matriculations |
|--|-----------------------|
| Viscount Weymouth School, Carrickmacross | 61 |
| Charleville Endowed School | 24 |
| Drogheda Grammar School | 129 |
| Galway Grammar School | 61 |
| Kilkenny College | 153 |
| Middleton College | 92 |
| Tipperary Grammar School | 35 |

Galway Grammar School is ranked joint fourth of the schools listed and, while it has just half the entrants of Drogheda Grammar School, it has almost double that of Tipperary Grammar School. Hannigan considers that, while Kilkenny College and Carrickmacross maintained a steady flow of students to TCD, the three Erasmus Smith schools showed a tendency to provide fewer as the period progressed.⁸¹ Numbers adduced above suggesting that about 50 entrants to TCD born in Co. Galway had been educated under Price, with few, if any of those educated under Garnett and Lyttle entering the College, would support this view. In addition, the sample of entrants to TCD, those with surnames A-C, shows no entrants born in Co. Galway being admitted having been educated by Vesey, although Edmund French, who subsequently became an usher at the School, had been a pupil of the School under Vesey and was a graduate of TCD.⁸²

⁸¹ Ibid, pp. 13, 34, p. 34, fn. 34, figure 2.4 and p. 92.

⁸² Burtchaell and Sadleir, *Alumni Dublinenses*; Quane, 'Galway Grammar School', p. 58.

Whether or not as a result of this the Board does appear to have had concerns in the mid-1750s regarding Galway Grammar School as it requested the Archbishop of Tuam to inspect it and report on Vesey's conduct of it.⁸³ The concern may have related to Vesey having been appointed Warden of Galway in 1752, an office which he held until his death in 1774. The wardenship, instituted in 1484, was an arrangement whereby a college of a warden and eight vicars was appointed by the mayor and corporation to administer the parish of St Nicholas, independent of episcopal control. In 1820 James Hardiman estimated the annual income of the warden at £1,000.⁸⁴ Whatever the outcome of the Archbishop's investigation Vesey continued as headmaster.

An analysis of the surnames of pupils attending the School in 1762 suggests that a majority were Catholic. Their admission may have related to a lack of Protestant pupils, to the penal laws being then sporadically invoked, and to a sense that by then the laws had succeeded in curbing the public expression of Catholicism.⁸⁵ As Catholics were then prevented from entering TCD this would have contributed to a low entry rate of pupils from Galway Grammar School to that College. Pupil numbers ranged from 28 to 47, and averaged 38, for five of the years 1761 to 1768, compared to 84 in Drogheda and 38 in Tipperary in 1762. In 1763 Grier, who had then been 20 years in post, was replaced by the Rev. Edmund French as usher. In February 1768 Vesey represented to the Board that he was suffering from rheumatism and not capable of attending to his duties. The Board accepted his resignation and awarded him a gratuity of £60.⁸⁶

Vesey served as headmaster for 28 years. Pupil numbers during the period were of the same order as they had been under Price and Garnett. Entrants to TCD were, however, low. It may be that the composition of the pupil body became predominately Catholic and day, as a result of low Protestant numbers and inadequate facilities for boarders. The School may not have received Vesey's full attention once he had been appointed to the wardenship of Galway, related to the prestige and remuneration attached to that post, and that it was, consequently, effectively operated by the usher. Vesey's family and marital connections also point to it being unlikely that he devoted himself to the post of headmaster. He married Mary Gerry, daughter of Alderman George Gerry, Galway.

⁸³ ESA/Registry Book 2, mtg. 14 May 1755.

⁸⁴ Leslie, *Clergy of Tuam, Killala and Achonry*, p. 654; Hardiman, *History of the Town and County of Galway*, p. 250, fn. g.

⁸⁵ Quane, 'Galway Grammar School', p. 58; Hughes, 'Galway town, 1692-1750', p. 147; McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland*, p. 217.

⁸⁶ ESA/GS/968 (1 – 10), lists of pupils; ESA/Registry Book 2, mtgs. 1 May 1762 and 15 February 1768.

Their second daughter, Catherine, married the Right Hon. James Fitzgerald and was herself elevated to the peerage of Ireland as Baroness Fitzgerald and Vesci in 1826.⁸⁷

Galway Grammar School attracted favourable comment under Vesey's successor, the Rev. Drelincourt Young Campbell. Campbell was the son of Dr John Campbell, vicar-general of Tuam. He graduated with a BA from TCD in 1767. In 1768, on the recommendation of his cousin, the Rev. James Drought, FTCD, who testified as to his 'unexceptional morals and distinguished merit', he was appointed master of the School. Sometime before 1792 he was made a vicar of St. Nicholas's Church, Galway.⁸⁸

Pupil numbers averaged 42 for 21 returns for the years 1768 to 1797.⁸⁹ In 1770 Robert Wills was appointed as usher. He was formally succeeded by Thomas Dunlevy in 1776, who had then already been employed by Campbell for two years. In 1781 a Mr Gardiner was appointed to the post.⁹⁰

Philanthropist John Howard visited the School during the 1780s and deemed it to be well conducted with an able master. He wrote that:

With this most worthy master I had much conversation relative to a more general and liberal mode of education in that country. Mr Campbell testified to the readiness of many of the Catholics to send their children to Protestant schools, and he is of the opinion that many would by these means be brought over, were the most promising of them enabled, by moderate aids, to pursue their further education in the university.⁹¹

Campbell's viewpoint did not go unchallenged as James Hardiman observed:

⁸⁷ Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage*, p. 409.

⁸⁸ ESA/Registry Book 2, mtg. 15 February 1768; Brigid Clesham (ed.), *Register of the Parish of St Nicholas, Galway* (Dublin, 2004), pp. 145,146.

⁸⁹ ESA/GS/968 (1 – 10), lists of pupils.

Note: There are 21 returns for the 30 years 1768-1797 with not more than one return for any one year. It appears that, at least for some returns, only the names of pupils taking Latin were returned.

⁹⁰ ESA/Registry Book 2, mtgs. 1 May 1770, 19 June 1776 and 29 October 1781.

⁹¹ Hardiman, *History of the Town and County of Galway*, p. 311, fn.z.

That such was the testimony and opinion of Mr Campbell is very probable, but he did not produce a single instance to strengthen the one; and as to the other, it does not appear that they who ought to furnish the 'moderate' aids have ever since thought such proselytes worth pursuing.⁹²

Despite Campbell's optimism, Protestantism was considered to be in retreat in Galway in 1795 by Adam Averill, a Methodist minister, related to the efforts of the Catholic clergy and to 'that vile sloth' which characterized the clergy of the Established Church.⁹³

The Archbishop of Tuam considered Campbell to be a person of learning and ability and was of the view that the School would become one of consequence if it were better located. He reported that pupil numbers were increasing and recommended that the Board adopt Campbell's nomination of the Rev. Henry Young, Campbell's cousin, as usher. The Board made the appointment in 1784, conditional on pupil numbers being at a level required for the employment of an usher at the next return. Some years later the Board decided that posts as headmaster and usher would, in future, be advertised.⁹⁴

There is evidence that, in addition to strong pupil numbers, the School provided a good quality education under Campbell as consideration of a sample of about 20 per cent of entrants to TCD, those with surnames A-C, shows ten entrants born in Co. Galway being admitted between 1770 and 1799, having been educated by a Mr/Rev. Campbell. This would suggest that, pro rata, of the order of 50 pupils from the School entered TCD over the 30 years of Campbell's headmastership.⁹⁵ None of those identified were Catholic, although their admission to TCD was allowed from 1793, suggesting that a cohort of Protestants, who could afford to attend TCD, availed of Campbell's policy of not charging fees.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Acheson, *A History of the Church of Ireland*, p. 108.

⁹⁴ ESA/Registry Book 2, mtgs. 3 May 1784 and 18 February 1790.

⁹⁵ Burtchaell and Sadleir, *Alumni Dublinenses*.

The Trust and Galway Grammar School in the 1790s

Government interest in education resurfaced in the 1780s sparked by a suggestion from John Hely-Hutchinson, at various times Provost of TCD, MP for Cork City, Secretary of State, and Treasurer of the Erasmus Smith Trust, for the creation of two or more schools similar to Westminster and Eton. Thomas Orde, Chief Secretary for Ireland, urged a programme of reform for all levels of education.⁹⁶ A commission was established in 1788, with Hely Hutchinson as chairman, to enquire into the funds, public and private, provided for education in Ireland and to report on the state and condition of schools in receipt of those funds. The report of the commission provides an overview of endowed grammar schools and puts the Erasmus Smith Trust and its schools in comparative perspective.⁹⁷

The Commissioners found, in respect of the diocesan schools, that there were schoolmasters in post in just 20 of the 34 dioceses, and that six of the masters did not actually maintain a school. Many of the schoolhouses were in a ruinous condition. They had a total of 324 pupils, including just 25 free pupils, despite having been established as free schools.⁹⁸

Five Royal Free Schools had aggregate annual endowed income of £3,696. They had a total of 171 pupils, including 38 free pupils. There was a pattern of the lands attaching to the various schools being leased so as to maximise the benefit to an individual, sometimes, but not always, the schoolmaster, rather than the school. At Cavan, for example, the lands were rented by the headmaster and produced an income of £451 per annum. There was no schoolhouse and the usher rented a house from the schoolmaster in which he provided tuition to 46 pupils. There was, also, a lively market in buying and selling the post of headmaster of that school. The endowment of Banagher Royal School produced annual income of £163, but the schoolmaster, the Rev. Warburton, rector of Banagher, had neither schoolhouse nor pupils.⁹⁹

A total of 24 privately endowed grammar schools were listed by the Commissioners. Four had no pupils while the remaining 20 had a total of 485 pupils, an average of 24 each. The Commissioners focused on those with larger endowments. The use of the endowment for the Clonmel School

⁹⁶ Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment: The National System of Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 2012), pp. 60-70.

⁹⁷ *Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1791*, pp. 341-379.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 344, 345, 367, 368.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 345-347 and 369.

involved misappropriation of rental income, sale of the post of headmaster, and sub-contracting of the duties of that post, which had a salary of £80 from rental income of £370. The school had 31 pupils. The lands of the Midleton endowment had been leased at an annual rent of £200, although their rental value was calculated at £700. The headmaster, who had a residence and a schoolhouse which could accommodate 50 boarders, received £200. There were just 18 pupils. Kilkenny School was, in comparison, successful with Dr Ellison, its headmaster, receiving £140 annually and the school having 65 pupils. Ellison had persuaded the House of Commons to provide £5,064 for a new school building. A school in Waterford, supported by the Corporation which provided the headmaster with a house and a salary of £50, had 30 pupils.¹⁰⁰

The Commissioners were complimentary of the manner in which the Erasmus Smith Trust was being managed recording that it had been ‘executed with fidelity to the designs of the founder, and that great care has been taken in managing the funds and estates of the charity’. They considered that, while originally private, the endowment could now be considered to be public related to the ‘repeated interpositions of the Legislature and of the Crown’. The Commissioners did note, however, that, while accounts had been prepared each year, they had not been approved by the Board from 1770 to 1788, related to a difficulty in procuring a quorum for meetings. The Trust’s financial position was strong with annual income of £4,249 and expenditure of £2,819. In this context the Commission recommended the establishment of a professional academy, at an annual cost of about £2,100. It suggested that, should the Erasmus Smith Trust agree to fund the academy from its surplus funds, governance of the academy should rest with its Board.¹⁰¹

The grammar schools collectively received £701, a quarter of the Trust’s recurrent expenditure as had been the case in 1728, and equivalent to the average annual income of each of the five royal schools. Drogheda received £311, Ennis received £150, with Galway and Tipperary each receiving £120. The Commissioners commented that the charter school in Sligo, which received £250 annually from the Trust, more than the average grammar school allocation, was in ‘very great disrepute’. TCD received £940, an amount greater than the aggregate amount provided to the grammar schools. The schools of the Trust were comparatively successful in terms of pupil numbers with Drogheda, Galway and Tipperary having aggregate pupil numbers of 194, with 123 in Drogheda, of whom 25

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, pp. 361, 362, 373, 374.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, pp. 351-355.

were free pupils; 53 in Galway, all of whom were free pupils; and 18 in Tipperary, 11 of whom were free pupils. Pupil numbers were not recorded for Ennis Grammar School.¹⁰²

The Commissioners considered that Tipperary Grammar School, although well-provided for in terms of accommodation and having masters of ability, had not lived up to the expectations or investments of the Erasmus Smith Board. It was suggested that the weakness of the School pointed to a need for a system of regular inspections. Ennis Grammar School was deemed to be well attended to and to have a good reputation. The Commissioners were high in its praise for Drogheda Grammar School, considering that, subject to the appointment of a master trained in composition, it had the potential to become a great classical school. The School then had 'over one hundred young gentlemen many of them Families of the first consequence'.¹⁰³

The report on Galway Grammar School stated that:

it differs materially from the other schools on this establishment (Erasmus Smith Foundation), inasmuch as the scholars are all day scholars, and all receive a gratuitous education: the Master, the Rev. D. Y. Campbell, having, for these twenty years past, voluntarily relinquished all idea of advantage from his scholars, for the purpose, as he stated to us, of extinguishing jealousies which sometimes took place between the scholars for whose education he was paid and the free scholars.

The yearly expense of the school, exclusive of the money expended on the buildings, appeared to be £198.4s. so that the education of each boy in this grammar school did not amount to £3.15s. per annum. If, therefore, the duty of instruction is, as has been represented to us, properly performed by the present master, and the children properly taught, the expense was certainly well disposed, and the establishment of much use to the town of Galway. The schoolhouse being badly situated, and in other respects inconvenient, the Governors have resolved to build a new schoolhouse near the town, on a better site.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Ibid, pp. 351-354, 367-374.

¹⁰³ Ibid, pp. 351, 352; Letter from Alleyn FitzHerbert, Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, 5 February 1789, cited in Quane, 'Drogheda Grammar School', p. 231.

¹⁰⁴ *Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1791*, p. 352.

The School, with 53 pupils, had pupil numbers in excess of overall average pupil numbers for the schools considered by the Commission. The Trust's subvention consisted of £100 to the headmaster, £20 to the usher, and the headmaster also received £78 in rental from shops adjoining the schoolhouse and from rental of Trust land.¹⁰⁵ The absence of fee-paying pupils meant that there was no income, other than that provided by the Trust, which could be used to enhance the salary of the usher, or employ additional ushers. The effective absence of a boarding facility is likely to have been a factor in boys from the county being sent to schools which had such facilities, as was the case with Tommy Trench, from Loughrea, Co. Galway, a pupil at Drogheda Grammar School in 1774.¹⁰⁶

Conclusion

The Erasmus Smith Board took control of the Trust early in the eighteenth century confirming its Anglican ethos and securing the authority to allocate its funds to institutions it favoured. It gave primacy to the Transmitted Bill in deliberations leading up to the 1723 Act but did not subsequently reference it preferring, rather, to advert to the limitations imposed on it by the terms of the Charter in justifying decisions not to respond positively to funding requests. The Board met its statutory obligations to the grammar schools but they were not otherwise, despite their centrality to the Charter, favoured except that Drogheda Grammar School received generous capital funding, possibly related to it being attended by sons of the gentry. The business of the Trust was generally conducted by a minority of its members and meetings of its Board were not infrequently inquorate. Many governors were, it appears, neglectful of their office. In transacting the business of the Trust active governors, with the Treasurer having particular influence, acted as a law unto themselves. There is the impression that, in the allocation of the funds of the Trust, they perceived the Protestant nation in a narrow sense.

While the Erasmus Smith Board appropriated the funds of the endowment for use by institutions favoured by it, the 1791 Commissioners reported that educational endowments were, in the case of many schools, appropriated for personal gain. The Erasmus Smith Schools escaped this finding but one can only conjecture as to whether the Erasmus Smith Endowment would have suffered a similar

Note: A footnote explained that the sum of £198.4s. included £120, the salaries of the master and usher, together with £30.1s., the amount of rents received by the master for some shops and cellars adjoining the schoolhouse, and £48.3s., the profit rent on 33 acres of land which Campbell held from the Governors.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Quane, 'Drogheda Grammar School', p. 227.

fate at the hands of their headmasters had substantial funds been allocated to the individual schools. The headmasters of Galway Grammar School were, with few exceptions, Church of Ireland clergymen who held clerical office in addition to their school posts. A number were sons or grandsons of senior Anglican clergymen, speaking to the importance of family and professional connections in securing appointments, while the Provost of TCD had, on several occasions, a role in appointments. The headmasters, with the exception of Shaw, distracted, perhaps, by the turmoil of the late seventeenth century and multiple offices, and Vesey, whose priority was, in all likelihood, the wardenship of Galway, appear to have been committed to the School with it being their main source of income. The School, under Campbell, was unique in providing free education to all its pupils, thereby meeting the purpose for which it was established. This was, however, a function of Campbell rather of policy at Board-level.

Galway quickly came to value the Grammar School as a resource and, given the likely absence, for the most part, of boarders, was attended by reasonable numbers of pupils from the town, including the sons of its leading families. The School was located in the centre of Galway proximate to the main-stream of the town's life and activities. In addition, the holding of clerical office by many of its headmasters and some, at least, of its ushers would have acted to integrate them and the School into local church affairs and society. Nevertheless, that its governing board was in Dublin with its only involvement, other than appointments and repairs, with the School being an occasional intervention on its behalf by the Archbishop of Tuam, may have given a sense of it being in but not of the town, with the local civic and clerical authorities having little input into its affairs.

Penal laws, in operation throughout much of the eighteenth century, resulted in Catholics having a complex relationship with Galway Grammar School. Catholic schools were forbidden but John Garnett, c.1729, had to invoke the anti-popery laws to induce the mayor to close a classical Catholic school. It seems unlikely that officials were unaware of the existence of the school but it was not until Garnett complained that action was taken suggesting a tolerant attitude on the part of Protestant officials in Galway to Catholic schools. The stance of the Erasmus Smith Board to the education of Catholics in the School was to remind headmasters in 1712 of their obligations to instruct pupils in the catechism of the Established Church and to refer complaints from headmasters regarding the policy's impact on their income to the Archbishop of Tuam. This intervention seems to have been still a factor in 1729, but its effect seems to have dissipated sometime after this and there was no further intervention from the Board. It appears that Catholic parents generally preferred to

send their sons to schools operated by Catholics but that, in the absence of this option, sent them to Galway Grammar School. Headmasters evidently saw Catholic pupils as a source of income and had no intention of endangering that income by proselytising them. Only Campbell, in the latter decades of the century, seemed sensitive to and interested in the opportunity of converting Catholics.

The pupils of Galway Grammar School over this period are almost entirely anonymous. Some of the pupils who proceeded to TCD almost certainly became clergymen, as was the case with John Price and Edmund French who returned to the School as headmaster and usher respectively. The sons of some of Galway's leading families attended the School and subsequently held municipal office in Galway. Richard Kirwan, son of a prominent Catholic, also attended the School. While institutional concern for the School's capacity to attract pupils manifested itself occasionally, no particular concern is shown on respect of the inadequate facilities and inappropriate environment endured by pupils over the century. The Board's parsimony in the provision of facilities for its Galway school contrasted with its generous provision for the Drogheda and, to a lesser extent, for the Tipperary schools, while Ennis Grammar School was well catered for on its establishment. It seems likely that Galway's relative lack of social and political connections, together with it being rarely visited by the governors, contributed to the lack of investment. There may also have been a reluctance on the Board's part to invest in a school located in a Catholic area and availed of by Catholics.

The Trust was in a strong position, politically, educationally and financially, at the end of the century and could look forward with confidence to the future. In contrast, Galway Grammar School laboured under significant structural disadvantages when Campbell died in August 1799. Nevertheless, its free tuition policy under Campbell made the School unique amongst endowed schools and an opportunity existed to develop a specific identity for the School which would have accorded with the provisions of the Charter. Furthermore, a committee had been established in 1792 to recommend on a site and plans for a school building.¹⁰⁷

The track record of the Board in respect of the School did not, however, inspire confidence that the opportunity would be taken. It had shown little interest in the School and seemed content to allow it operate with the minimum of investment. In contrast the Board decided in 1797, in an act of

¹⁰⁷ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, p. 107.

'imaginative generosity', to support the purchase of the Fagel Library by TCD and a grant of £10,000 for this purpose was approved in 1802.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ R.B. McDowell and D.A. Webb, *Trinity College Dublin, 1592-1952: an academic history* (Dublin, 2004), p. 146; Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 76, 77.

Chapter 2

Galway Grammar School, 1800-1875

This chapter sets out the political, social and economic context within which the Trust and Galway Grammar School operated during the period 1800-1875. In the educational sphere it focuses on the work of the *Endowed Schools Commission 1857-58* which subjected the sector to a detailed and critical examination, including hearing evidence from interested members of the public. It discusses the priorities adopted by the Trust during the period, and considers the operation of Galway Grammar School in the context of those events and priorities.

Overview

A consequence of the 1798 Rebellion was that Prime Minister Pitt and many Irish conservatives became convinced that a parliamentary union of Ireland with Britain was required to provide security to Protestants. While there was opposition to the proposal, a majority for the Union was secured. Despite their fears the Protestant gentry had enhanced access to patronage and local power in the early post-Union decades.¹ However, when, in 1829, Prime Minister Wellington and his government conceded Catholic Emancipation, seen by most Protestants as ‘a desolation’, the Union no longer rested on the principle of Protestant privilege.²

The years between 1830 and 1845, while encompassing the ultimate failure of the Repeal movement, saw the British Parliament introduce reforming legislation and Catholics were appointed as judges, stipendiary magistrates, police inspectors and legal officials. Institutions, from Parliament to the new Poor Law Boards of Guardians, were no longer the preserve of Protestants. By 1844 Prime Minister Peel had concluded that a continuation of a system of governance which gave Protestants a monopoly of power was unjust, dangerous and impracticable. Protestants were no longer the political nation of Ireland.³

¹ Dickson, *New Foundations*, p. 197.

² Boyce, *Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, p. 56; Acheson, *A History of the Church of Ireland*, p. 141.

³ Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland*, pp. 58-74, 88 and 93.

The period 1845-49 was dominated by the Famine, with the Young Ireland insurrection in 1848 coming to be regarded by later generations of revolutionaries as an inspiration. While some changes in land ownership occurred under the Encumbered Estates Act, 1849, possession remained in the hands of the old landed families. The 1861 census, however, confirmed what had long been known to be broadly true, that, despite the impact of the Famine, Catholics accounted for just over three-quarters of the population and far outnumbered Protestants, except in parts of Ulster.⁴

Reform continued with William Gladstone, who became Prime Minister in 1868, identifying the Church of Ireland, the land question and the education question, as issues which had to be addressed. He compared the Protestant ascendancy to the upas, a tree which was considered to destroy all life in its vicinity, and stated that the time had come to take an axe to that ascendancy. The Irish Church Act, 1869, disestablishing the Church of Ireland, was seen by defenders of that Church as a betrayal of and an assault on the Union and, while Gladstone's first Land Act in 1870 was considered disappointing to all classes of tenant farmers, landlords deemed it daring and over-ambitious.⁵

Galway Town entered the nineteenth century in poor condition with it being stated in 1812 that it '...had become almost proverbial for uncleanness and inconvenience, without either trade, manufactories, or business of any description'.⁶ The great expansion in trade which had occurred during the eighteenth century had passed Galway by due, in large part, to other ports being better positioned to conduct trade with Europe and Britain. Meanwhile, in Galway, persistent neglect and an unwillingness to adapt to the changing nature of maritime trade had resulted in the docks becoming 'a filthy and mischievous ruin'. The streets of the town were neglected and the quality of housing was inferior to that in Limerick, Waterford and Sligo. Improvements did take place including the development of Newtownsmith, on the Erasmus Smith estate, in the late eighteenth century, and of Dominick Street. New fish and meat markets, and new town and county court-houses, were constructed early in the century. There were, however, many failed enterprises, together with a rapid turnover in the nature and ownership of industries. There is no evidence of population

⁴ Ibid, pp. 118, 121, 138; F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine* (London, 1971), p. 18.

⁵ Richard Aldous, *The Lion and the Unicorn: Gladstone vs Disraeli* (London, 2007), p. 199; Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland*, pp. 149-155.

⁶ Hardiman, *History of the Town and County of Galway*, p. 193.

increase during the first forty years of the century so that the population of 17,232, recorded for the town in 1841, probably accurately reflects its population for the years 1800 to 1840.⁷

The 1830s saw improvements with a Board of Harbour Commissioners charged with improving and maintaining the docks and with developing a navigation way between Lough Corrib and the port. The development programme met, however, with many obstacles. A Board of Town Commissioners, established in 1836, began a programme of paving the streets, while a Board of Poor Law Guardians was established in 1839.⁸ Visitors saw the town in varying lights with Henry Inglis, in 1834, considering that:

There are many good streets in Galway, and excellent if not splendid houses; and with the exception of Cork and Limerick, it had more the air of a place of importance than any other town I have seen; though less of bustle than Clonmel or perhaps even that of Tralee.⁹

Meanwhile John Barrow, who visited in 1835, recounted that he drove ‘though narrow and dirty streets...extremely ill-paved’. He did consider that, while there was ‘little of the bustle of a mercantile town...the people I should say are generally of easy circumstances’. When the Municipal Corporations Act (Ireland) was enacted in 1840 Galway was not one of the ten towns granted corporation status. This was seen to diminish Galway’s status and it would, for almost a century, be classified as a town and not as a city.¹⁰

Developments in Education, 1800-1875

Numerous primary schools, calculated in 1824 at about 11,000 and to be attended by of the order of 500,000 children, were in operation in Ireland in the early nineteenth century. The schools were provided by individuals and voluntary societies. Only a minority of children were, nevertheless, catered for and, while a number of government commissions reported and made recommendations on the system between 1791 and 1827, the reports were not acted on. The government did provide

⁷ Cunningham, ‘A town tormented by the sea’, pp. 15-19; Kieran Woodman, ‘safe and commodious’: *The annals of the Galway Harbour Commissioners, 1830-1997* (Galway, 2000), p. 6.

⁸ Cunningham, ‘A town tormented by the sea’, pp. 36, 37.

⁹ H.D. Inglis, *A Tour of Ireland, during Spring, Summer and Autumn 1834* (2 vols, London, 1835) cited in Ó Tuathaigh, ‘...the air of a place of importance’, pp. 135, 136.

¹⁰ J. Barrow, *Tour of Ireland in Autumn 1835* (London, 1836), cited in Ó Tuathaigh, ‘...the air of a place of importance’, p. 138; Cunningham, ‘A town tormented by the sea’, p. 39.

support for voluntary societies but Catholics were generally suspicious of them. The Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland (Kildare Place Society) was the most successful of the societies but Catholics became uneasy with it from about 1820 related to a majority of its committee members being Protestant and considering its policy of bible reading without commentary as discriminating against Catholics.¹¹

In 1831, at the instigation of Lord Stanley, Chief Secretary of Ireland, acting on foot of the reports of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1826-27, and a report from the Select Committee on Education in Ireland, 1828, the government established the Irish national school system. The main feature of the system was a government-appointed mixed denominational board and there was a particular aim that children of different denominations would be educated together. Presbyterians quickly came to oppose the plan, as did the Church of Ireland which considered that it had a special prerogative in the area of education. As a result, therefore, of suspicion and hostility between the churches and fears of proselytism, the system had, by the middle of the century, become increasingly denominational. A more self-confident Catholic Church pronounced at the Synod of Thurles, 1850 that 'the separate education of Catholic youth is... to be preferred...' By 1866 there were indications that the government was prepared to make concessions to Catholics and the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Powis) was established in 1868. The recommendations of the Commission involved significant changes to the system, tending to endorse the denominational trend and recommending that a payment-by-results scheme, in addition to a fixed salary, be introduced for teachers.¹²

Over the years from 1800 to 1875 second-level education remained the concern of a small minority and the state was slow to assume responsibility for its provision. Nevertheless, in 1813 it established the Board of Commissioners of Irish Education in an effort to improve the management of endowed schools, although the Erasmus Smith grammar schools did not come within its remit. The Board did little to remedy defects in the range or quality of education provided by the schools under its jurisdiction. Neither the recommendations of the Select Committee on Foundation Schools, 1838 nor those of the Commissioners on the condition of endowed schools, 1857-58 were acted on.¹³

¹¹ Coolahan, *Irish Education*, pp. 8-12.

¹² *Ibid*, pp. 12-26.

¹³ *Ibid*, pp. 57-59.

The establishment of Catholic secondary schools by religious orders continued throughout this period and there were 117 such schools in existence in 1871, compared to 69 Protestant endowed schools. In addition, the schools of the Christian Brothers provided education of a secondary nature to advanced pupils. In 1871 the majority of secondary schools were private and they catered for 50 per cent of pupils. Meanwhile, wealthier Catholics and Protestants sent children to school in England. There was a general realisation by the 1870s that there was a need to put the system, which catered for small numbers of pupils, was inadequately financed and provided a standard of education which was uneven and generally low, on a better footing.¹⁴

Trinity College Dublin remained the only university in Ireland until the mid-nineteenth century. However, although Catholics and dissenters had been admitted from 1793, professorships, fellowships and scholarships of the College were confined to members of the Church of Ireland until 1873, and its Church of Ireland ethos and traditions made it repugnant to the Catholic authorities. The 1852 report of the Commission of Inquiry on the College found its general state to be satisfactory and that changes had been introduced to the curriculum to adapt it 'to the requirements of the age'.¹⁵

The establishment of the Queen's Colleges at Belfast, Cork and Galway, under the Colleges (Ireland) Act 1845, was a response to demands for university education for Catholics and dissenters. Anti-Catholic political opinion in England at that time, exacerbated by the Maynooth College Act, 1845, which provided a capital grant to that College, while increasing and making permanent its annual grant, made it politically impossible for Prime Minister Peel, even should he have been minded to do so, to establish and endow an explicitly Catholic university.¹⁶

Prospects for the success of the Cork and Galway Colleges received a significant set-back in 1850 when they were condemned by the Catholic bishops at the Synod of Thurles.¹⁷ Nevertheless, *The Queen's College Commission*, 1857-58, presented a generally optimistic view recording that it was

¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 57-61; O'Neill, *Catholics of Consequence*, p. 75.

¹⁵ Coolahan, *Irish Education*, pp. 105-112.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 105; Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, 'The Establishment of the Queen's Colleges: Ideological and Political Background' in Tadhg Foley (ed.), *From Queen's College to National University: Essays on the academic history of QCG/UCG/NUI Galway* (Dublin, 1999), pp. 8, 9.

¹⁷ James Mitchell, 'Scandalous almost beyond Endurance': Bishop Laurence O'Donnell and his advocacy of Queen's College, Galway' in *JGAHS*, Vol. 52 (2000), pp. 56, 57.

‘...able to report with unqualified satisfaction of the Educational Progress of the Colleges.’ Student numbers were, however, low and, while the commissioners expressed their ‘anxious’ hope that the opposition of the Catholic bishops to the Colleges would change over time, grounds for optimism were dashed in 1859 when Archbishop Cullen of Dublin pronounced that they had been ‘a complete failure’, considering that they should be reconstituted or suppressed.¹⁸ In 1873 Prime Minister Gladstone introduced an Irish University Bill attempting to open the University of Dublin as a federal university with affiliated colleges and to abolish Queen’s College Galway.¹⁹ The failure of the bill left the university question unresolved.

The Erasmus Smith Trust, 1800-c.1850

The Act of Union had no discernible effect on the operation of the Trust or on its grammar schools. It had, at the beginning of the century, a significant excess of income over expenditure resulting in the accrual of a large surplus. Total annual income to 1 May 1809 was £8,396, with expenditure of £3,398, and the Board held £35,000 in government stock. Its Registrar informed the Commissioners of the Board of Education that, from its surplus funds, the Board had decided to establish additional English schools, to provide a new building for Galway Grammar School, and to grant a ‘considerable sum’ to the Blue Coat School towards the repair of existing buildings and the construction of new ones.²⁰

The establishment of English schools was to be the Trust’s major initiative over the period to 1870. While provision had been made under the 1723 Act for such schools, the first one, at Xelva (Valentia), was not established until 1776 and just six other schools were established up to 1807. A major programme was then embarked on with 68 schools being established between 1808 and 1812. The schools were intended for ‘...the instruction of the lower orders in reading, writing, arithmetic and scriptural knowledge...’ and the conversion of children to English ways and to the Protestant religion.

¹⁸ *The Queen’s College Commission. Report of Her Majesty’s commissioners appointed to inquire into the progress and condition of the Queen’s Colleges at Belfast, Cork, and Galway; with minutes of evidence, documents, and tables and returns.* H.C. 1857-58 [2413], xxi, pp. 34-36; Emmet Larkin, *The making of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1850-1860* (London, c. 1990), p. 465, cited in John A. Murphy, *The College: A History of Queen’s/University College Cork, 1845-1995* (Cork, 1995), p. 75.

¹⁹ Coolahan, *Irish Education*, p. 106.

²⁰ *Board of Education in Ireland, 1810, Ninth Report*, p. 4, Appendix No. 2, p. 27 and Appendix No. 4, p. 28. Note: Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, p. 105, records that two of the six Commissioners, George Hall, Provost of TCD, and James Verschoyle, Dean of St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin, were governors of the Erasmus Smith Trust, while the Rev. James Whitelaw was catechist and supervisor of the Board’s Coombe school which was in his parish.

The rules for the schools included that Protestant doctrines were to feature prominently in the education provided, that teachers, and pupils with the ability to do so, were to read a portion of the scriptures each day, and that the education provided was to be adapted to Protestants but to be such that Catholics would not be precluded from availing of it if they wished. As the Evangelical movement of the first part of the nineteenth century gained momentum the number of schools supported by the Trust increased. The total number of schools supported to 1911 was 232 and the termination of funding for the school at Collon, Co Louth in 1949 marked the end of the scheme.²¹

A particular context for the initiative from 1839 was the establishment by the Church of Ireland of the Church Education Society, in opposition to the national school system, to provide primary school education to its members. The Erasmus Smith Trust established 62 English schools over the years 1840 and 1841. By the 1850s some of the Society's schools were experiencing difficulties and by 1880 Church of Ireland children were attending national schools in significant numbers. As a consequence, the number of the Society's schools halved, as did the number of pupils attending them, between 1870 and 1880.²² The Erasmus Smith Trust's funding of English schools, which essentially supported the Church of Ireland effort, tapered off at about the same time.

The Trust, over the period November 1844 to May 1855, allocated 50 per cent of its expenditure to English schools, compared to 15 per cent to its grammar schools. Expenditure on English schools in 1877-78 amounted to one-third of total expenditure.²³ One can only conjecture as to the impact expenditure of a similar order to that on the English schools would have had, over a long period, on the potential, development and academic standing of the grammar schools. Given the priority accorded to TCD and the Blue Coat School in the eighteenth century and the decision to establish a new second-level school, The High School, later in the nineteenth century, there is the impression that the grammar schools would not have particularly benefitted had the English Schools not been supported but, rather, that the Board would have further invested in TCD and the Blue Coat School or found other projects to support.

²¹ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 81, 87, 88 and 98-104.

²² Coolahan, *Irish Education*, pp. 15-17.

²³ ESA/Registry Book 5, mtg. 11 May 1854, Copy of Returns, etc. made by the Governors to the House of Commons; *Endowed Schools Commission, 1881*, i, p. 73.

In 1833 the Trust secured revisions to its charter which have been described as ‘mainly technical’ and arising from concerns regarding procedures around the election of the Treasurer. Provision was made that the Treasurer, while elected annually, could hold office for any number of years and for the quorum for meetings of the Board to be five rather than seven, as heretofore. Provision was also made for the Board to appoint ushers in the grammar schools as it considered necessary and to pay them as it deemed appropriate. This formalised practices which had been current for some decades as when Dr Norris, headmaster of Drogheda Grammar School, was provided with £100 in 1762, increased to £150 in 1773, for additional ushers.²⁴

Galway Grammar School, 1800-1815: a New Schoolhouse

More than a year elapsed from the death of Campbell in 1799 to the appointment of the Rev. Thomas Canham Wade, master of Limerick Diocesan School, as headmaster of Galway Grammar School in December 1800.²⁵ There had been no meeting of the Board between April 1799, before Campbell’s death, and December 1800.²⁶ This may have related to members of the Board being occupied with matters leading to the Act of Union, 1800.

Given the Board’s decision to advertise grammar school posts openly, it is not clear why Wade, who was, apparently, not a graduate, and was headmaster of a school with no particular reputation, was appointed. The total value of the remuneration package provided to him, £329 per annum, was such that it should have been possible to attract well-qualified and experienced candidates. The package consisted of a salary of £100 per annum and access to 33 acres, which Wade let at an annual rent of £132. He also retained the rent of £97 paid for leases on shops at the schoolhouse in High Street. The Board provided a salary of £40 per annum for an usher.²⁷

On appointment Wade represented that the Master’s house was ‘much out of repair’ and the Board provided £109 for its refurbishment. Wade subsequently described the accommodation as being in as ‘complete order as a building so long erected can be’. Twenty boarders could be accommodated. In 1803, however, there had been only one boarder since Wade’s appointment, which he ascribed to the gentlemen of the county sending their children to other schools since boarders had not been

²⁴ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 74, 110, 111.

²⁵ ESA/Registry Book 3, mtg. 26 December 1800.

²⁶ ESA/Registry Book 3.

²⁷ *Board of Education in Ireland, 1810, Ninth Report*, p. 4.

accommodated by his predecessor. Wade read prayers to the pupils every morning and catechised the Protestant pupils every Saturday. There were then 23 pupils in the School, 14 of whom, ranging in age from ten to 16 years, took classics, while the remaining pupils, aged from six to 15 years, did not. The boarder lodged with Mr O'Brien, the usher. Boarders were charged 30 guineas and five guineas entrance, while day pupils were charged four guineas and one guinea entrance. There were three free classical pupils and one free non-classical pupil, a significant change from the Campbell era. Pupil numbers averaged 37 for the years 1801 to 1814.²⁸ The standard of education provided does not appear to have been high as a sample of about 20 per cent of entrants to TCD, those with surnames A-C, shows no entrants born in Co. Galway being admitted between 1800 and 1815, having been educated by a Mr. Wade.²⁹

The Commissioners of the Board of Education confirmed in 1807 that Wade never had more than one boarder, although 15 could be accommodated. There were then 31 pupils, of whom 14 were instructed in classics by the usher. The usher also taught the 'English' pupils, except that Wade taught them writing and accounts, and received the fees paid by the pupils. The usher resigned subsequent to the visit of the Commissioners and Wade assumed greater responsibility for the teaching of classics with the number taking the subject increasing. Overall pupil numbers also increased and numbered 44 in May 1809.³⁰ The Rev. John Campbell, son of Drelincourt and vicar of St Nicholas's Church from 1799 to 1818, replaced O'Brien as usher. He was succeeded by Michael Halpin in 1810.³¹

The Commissioners considered that Drogheda Grammar School, which had 98 pupils, was likely to flourish and reported that Ennis Grammar School, with 70 pupils, was a success. Tipperary Grammar School, with 64 pupils, was enjoined with Galway as being less successful than might have been anticipated, with this being ascribed to 'the want of exertion in the Masters, or their not being as highly qualified in other respects as it were to be wished'. The Commission suggested that, were the governors to exercise their right of visitation and carefully assess the qualifications of applicants for

²⁸ ESA/Registry Book 3, mtg. 6 August 1801; ESA/GS/89, 26 February 1803, letter from Wade re 'The School House'; ESA/GS/968 (1 – 10), lists of pupils.

Note: There were 21 returns for the 14 years 1801-1814, with some years having two returns, May and November. Where there are two returns for a particular school year, the May return has been accepted in alignment with the majority of returns.

²⁹ Burtchaell and Sadleir, *Alumni Dublinenses*.

³⁰ *Board of Education in Ireland, 1810, Ninth Report*, pp. 5, 6 and Appendix 5.

³¹ ESA/Registry Book 3, mtgs. 28 February 1809 and 12 March 1810; Clesham, *Register of the Parish of St Nicholas*, p. 147.

the posts of headmaster, the difficulties identified could be overcome. They considered that the allowance paid to the masters of the schools was less than what the Trust could afford and of 'the reasonable claims and expectations of persons duly qualified for such appointments'. The Erasmus Smith schools were not, subsequently, brought within the remit of the Commissioners of Education.³²

The matter of a custom-built schoolhouse for Galway Grammar School had become an issue in 1789 but little progress had been made and the Commissioners reported that the situation of the School 'in one of the closest and most thronged streets, surrounded by shops, and without any Play-ground' was unsuitable for boarders.³³ Coincidentally, perhaps, a month after the Commissioners had examined Wade in January 1807, the Board decided that a schoolhouse be built at Fort Hill capable of accommodating 50 boarders. A decision in 1811 that a new building for Tipperary Grammar School should accommodate 100 pupils, 'the Sons of Gentlemen together with Apartments for the Master and two Ushers', points to the relative level of ambition of the Board for the respective schools.³⁴

The Board in 1808 accepted plans for a school building for Galway drawn up by Richard Morrison, with those plans subsequently being revised by Francis Johnston. In 1809, however, it was 'not deemed prudent to enter into any agreement for building the school at Galway on account of the great price of foreign timber'.³⁵ Early in 1812 Thomas Colbourne was sent to Galway to ascertain the best site for the building and it may have been at this time that the decision was taken to build the school at College Road, rather than at Fort Hill. Colthorne was contracted to undertake the work and the building was completed in 1815, 26 years after the Board had undertaken to consider the matter. The Board did show an interest in the physical well-being of its pupils, long before the advent of team sports, by making provision for a ball court at a cost of over £50.³⁶

³² *Board of Education in Ireland, 1810, Ninth Report*, pp. 4-7 and Appendix 5; *An act for the appointment of commissioners for the regulation of the several endowed schools of public and private foundation in Ireland* (53. Geo. III. c.107 (1813)).

³³ *Board of Education in Ireland, 1810, Ninth Report*, pp. 5, 6.

³⁴ ESA/Registry Book 3, mtgs. 24 February 1807 and 28 May 1811.

³⁵ Quane, 'Galway Grammar School', p. 62; ESA/Registry Book 3, mtgs. 23 February 1808, 24 February 1809.

³⁶ ESA/Registry Book 3, mtgs. 21 February 1812, 18 June 1812 and 18 August 1815.

The School had, meanwhile, relocated to temporary premises as the schoolhouse was reported by Wade in 1810 to be in a precarious state. Wade was clearly concerned that the move would result in loss of income and in 1811 the Board rejected a memorial from him 'praying remuneration for the rent of the shops and cellars under the old school which produced him one hundred pounds a year'.³⁷ Having interviewed Wade it decided that 'under the present arrangements the School... does not answer the expectations of the Board'. It requested its Standing Committee to enquire into the causes of the malaise and to recommend on arrangements which would make the School 'more likely to be useful to the Public and answer the expectations of this Board'.³⁸ In April 1814 the Board informed Wade that it was its intention to appoint a new headmaster and directed that advertisements be placed for a 'proper master'. Wade, supported by leading citizens of Galway and the parents of pupils, protested but to no avail.³⁹

There is a sense that Wade's fate as headmaster was determined once the Commissioners suggested that the School's lack of success related to the failure of the headmaster to exert himself and/or to his lack of qualifications. Wade's remuneration was generous but he apparently involved himself only to a marginal extent in teaching until after the Commissioners' visit. Although pupil numbers were not out of line with numbers during the previous century, they were lower than in the other grammar schools of the Trust and there were few boarders, despite some investment in the school building. The extent and impact of that investment may be queried given that premises to house the School had to be rented less than ten years later. Wade's concern at this point was to maintain his income. This, given the state of the School, obviously did not endear him to the Board which appeared to have decided, as early as 1811, that he would not lead the School into its new building. Wade's apparent lethargy cannot be explained on the grounds that he had clerical duties in Galway as there is no record of him holding a post in the Parish of St Nicholas.⁴⁰

Galway Grammar School, 1815 to 1838

The Erasmus Smith Board cast its net wide in seeking to identify a headmaster to replace Wade and the post was advertised in, *inter alia*, *The Courier*, London. The advertisement specified that there would be at least 60 boarders at the School and that the appointee would receive £100 per annum

³⁷ Ibid, mtgs. 29 November 1810, 28 February 1811.

³⁸ Ibid, 3, mtg. 30 April 1811.

³⁹ Ibid, 10 April 1814; Foster Papers, PRONI 207/25/15(a), cited in Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, p.107.

⁴⁰ Clesham, *Register of the Parish of St Nicholas*.

and 16 acres of land rent free.⁴¹ The remuneration provided was a reduction on that provided to Wade and appears to be inconsistent with the investment in a new school building and the ambition that the School attract 60 boarders. There were 16 applicants and the Rev. John Whitley was appointed 'in the room of Rev. Thomas Canham Wade, removed from the mastership of said school, the said school having declined in reputation and utility in his hands'. Whitley was required to attend the Standing Committee to discuss the system of education to be employed at the School.⁴²

Whitley, born about 1786, had obtained the degrees of BA, 1805, MA, 1810, and BD, 1815, from TCD. He was awarded the degree of DD in 1822.⁴³ Prior to his appointment he had been an unsuccessful applicant for a fellowship at TCD. In 1819 he ascribed his appointment to Galway Grammar School as having been 'at the instance of the Provost and the joint support and recommendation of the Body of Fellows' of TCD.⁴⁴ While headmaster he was active in St Nicholas's Church, Galway, officiating at baptisms and marriages between 1819 and 1838. He also served as chaplain to the garrison in Galway between 1819 and 1837.⁴⁵

The Board provided additional funding for ushers, in the context of a decision that the establishment and salaries at Galway, Ennis and Tipperary should be as at Drogheda, and set the salary of the head usher at £100 per annum, with an English usher receiving £80. Daniel Foley, assistant usher at Drogheda Grammar School, was appointed head usher.⁴⁶ Foley was also involved in church affairs, conducting a number of marriages from 1820 to 1836 and, on occasion, acting in clerical matters for Whitley. Maxwell Murphy was appointed English usher from August 1815 and was succeeded by Henry Suffield in February of the following year.⁴⁷

The opening of the new school building prompted the Trust's tenants to petition for free education for their children as provided for in the Charter and the Board in December 1815 decided:

⁴¹ John C. Murphy, 'The Erasmus Smith School Endowment', Master's thesis, University College, Cork, 1963, p. 25.

⁴² ESA/Registry Book 3, mtg. 24 February 1815.

⁴³ Burtchaell and Sadlier, *Alumni Dublinenses*, p. 876.

⁴⁴ NAI/CSO/RP/1819/350/27, Letter of Alexander Knox in support of John Whitley's application for the post of headmaster of Enniskillen Royal School, 1819; CSO/RP/1819/350/26, Letter of application of John Whitley for the post of headmaster of Enniskillen Royal School, 20 August 1819.

⁴⁵ Clesham, *Register of the Parish of St Nicholas*, pp. 51-119, 148.

⁴⁶ ESA/Registry Book 3, mtgs. 10 May 1815 and 2 December 1815.

⁴⁷ Clesham, *Register of the Parish of St Nicholas*, p. 56, et al; ESA/Standing Committee Reports, 1 May 1815 and 6 March 1816.

...that the terms of the Charter being imperative and leaving no discretion to this Board in this respect, the Registrar be directed to inform the Master that, on the application of parents or friends of any child entitled as above mentioned to free education in the said school, the schoolmaster be directed to acquaint such persons so applying, with the course of education established by the Charter and the regulations of the Board for scholars on the foundation of the said school.⁴⁸

Whitley was also told to accept 20 free pupils nominated by the Board.⁴⁹

Whitley's response to the direction clearly did not satisfy the citizens of Galway and in 1821 the Board considered a petition from James Morris, Secretary to the Committee for the Improvement of Galway, requesting that the Board reinforce the 1815 resolution as:

While every enlightened mind in the Empire has education on its lips...will the Governors of Erasmus Smith turn their backs on a population of 50,000 souls, several thousand of whom are tenants and inhabitants on the lands of Erasmus Smith in the town of Galway, and who this day know less of the English language than the Indians in the Pacific Islands?⁵⁰

The Board decided that a copy of the December 1815 decision be sent to Morris and that he be informed that, having examined Whitley in the matter, it was satisfied that the resolution was being strictly complied with.⁵¹

Early difficulties emerged with the school building as Whitley, soon after its opening, repeatedly complained of dampness and the inability of the building to resist wet weather. An architect's report was requested by the Board.⁵² Despite this the School, and its schoolhouse, was described in the following terms c.1820:

⁴⁸ ESA/Registry Book 3, mtg. 2 December 1816.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Foster papers, PRONI D207/25/15a, cited in Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, p. 108.

⁵¹ ESA/ Registry Book 3, mtg. 12 January 1821.

⁵² Ibid, mtg. 7 December 1815.

In 1813, a spacious and elegant school-house, with several apartments and offices, was erected, at an expense of between five and six thousand pounds. It stands on an elevated situation, towards the east of the town, and commands a fine prospect of the bay, the Clare mountains and the islands of Arran. It was opened on the 1st of August, 1815; and several of the most respectable youth of the town and province have since been educated here, under the care of the reverend Mr Whitley, the present master, a gentleman who appears to have given general satisfaction.⁵³

The programme offered by the School then comprised 'English, Latin, Greek and Hebrew languages, composition in prose and verse, history, geography, the use of the globes, algebra, astronomy, and the more useful branches of the mathematics'. The hope was expressed that, as religious prejudice had recently declined, the benefits of the School would become more generally available to the upcoming generation in Galway.⁵⁴

There are mixed messages regarding the School in Whitley's early years with the Standing Committee receiving a report in 1816 that there were few pupils and that Whitley had threshed corn in the schoolroom. It expressed its 'strongest displeasure at any use being made of any part of their buildings so different from the purpose intended by the Board'.⁵⁵ Yet, a second classical usher, B.C. Tuomy, was appointed in 1818, it having been specified previously that such a post would be filled only when pupil numbers reached 60.⁵⁶ Success, if there was such, was evidently short-lived as, when Whitley unsuccessfully applied for the post of headmaster of Enniskillen Royal School in 1819, the letter of support provided by James Daly of Dunsandle, then MP for Co. Galway, stated:

With regard to numbers he has had much difficulty to encounter as the Catholics naturally prefer an instructor of their own religion to a Protestant and yet his good conduct has in

⁵³ Hardiman, *History of the Town and County of Galway*, pp. 311, 312.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 312, n. a.

⁵⁵ ESA/Standing Committee, mtg. 29 April 1816.

⁵⁶ ESA/Registry Book 3, mtgs. 13 January 1817 and 2 March 1818.

numerous instances overcome this very natural and as I think proper feeling. Had not this difficulty been in his way I am convinced he would have been eminently successful.⁵⁷

Whitley applied unsuccessfully, later that year, for the post of headmaster at Drogheda Grammar School.⁵⁸ His particular involvement in clerical duties dates from 1819 suggesting a loss of interest in Galway Grammar School around this time. Nevertheless, consideration of a sample of about 20 per cent of entrants to TCD, those with surnames A-C, shows six entrants born in Co. Galway being admitted between 1819 and 1831, having been educated by a Mr/Rev. Whitley. This would suggest that, pro rata, of the order of 30 pupils from the School entered TCD while Whitley was headmaster.⁵⁹

There was a rapid turnover of ushers at the School from the late 1810s with Francis Howard appointed English usher in 1819, and Benjamin Lane replacing him in 1820. Lane was dismissed the following year, Whitley having represented that he was unfit to hold the post. Joseph O'Reilly replaced Lane but in 1824 Whitley wrote to the Board regarding misconduct by O'Reilly.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the School was described by one commentator as being 'preeminent' and admirably conducted by Whitley that same year.⁶¹ The turnover of ushers was referred to over 20 years later when Thomas Killeen stated that, when he was appointed usher in 1832, he had heard that previously every assistant had been dismissed. Killeen was, however, of the opinion that the ushers were to blame as he considered that anyone could agree with Whitley who was a very quiet man.⁶²

The *Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1826-27*, reported that there were 20 pupils in the School in autumn 1824, 15 Church of Ireland and five Catholic. One of the Commissioners, James Glassford, visited the School, in a private capacity, in September 1826. He recorded that Whitley 'represented his situation as very unpleasant', that there were no boarders and few day pupils. The School was considered 'inefficient' and very few of the tenants availed of their right of attendance, not surprisingly given that the correspondence referred to above suggests that they were not

⁵⁷ NAI/CSO/RP/1819/350/29, Letter of James Daly, Dunsandle, 12 September 1819, in support of John Whitley's application for post of headmaster of Enniskillen Royal School.

⁵⁸ ESA/Standing Committee, mtg. 22 November 1819.

⁵⁹ Burtchaell and Sadleir, *Alumni Dublinenses*.

⁶⁰ ESA/Registry Book 3, mtgs. 26 April 1819, 22 May 1820, 12 January and 30 April 1821.

⁶¹ Hely Dutton, *Statistical Survey of County Galway*, p. 405.

⁶² *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, ii, p. 272.

welcomed. Glassford considered that there must be either 'gross mismanagement or neglect', but it is not clear whether the remark was aimed at the Board or the School or both. He considered that, like other free schools in Ireland, it was only nominally such, that it did nothing itself but prevented the development of other schools, like 'a rank and lazy weed'.⁶³

An alternative perspective on the School in the 1820s was provided to the *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1857-58, by John Blakeney, Secretary to the Grand Jury of the town of Galway. Blakeney had been educated at Galway Grammar School nearly 30 years previously under Whitley. There were then, he said, about 40 boarders and 40 – 50 day boys attending the School, taught by six or seven tutors. According to Blakeney the School was profitable under Whitley who had become a wealthy man making £1,000 from it. It is difficult to give credence to Blakeney's statement given evidence of low pupil numbers from an early stage. Blakeney also recalled that, when he attended the School, the great majority of pupils were Catholic and that there was a Catholic assistant-teacher who instructed them in their catechism. The accuracy of Blakeney's recollection must again be doubted, given the recommendation of the Trust's Standing Committee in 1820 that headmasters be reminded that they were prohibited from employing Catholic ushers or facilitating the teaching of the Catholic catechism under pain of instant dismissal.⁶⁴ In 1836 complaints were made by Catholic pupils against Daniel Foley for insulting their clergy by comparing them to pagan priests. No action was taken despite further complaints.⁶⁵

In 1830 the Board decided that, as a result of the very small number of pupils in Galway and Ennis, the salaries of the ushers be discontinued. It agreed that the causes of the decline of Galway, Ennis and Tipperary Schools be investigated. Some improvement appears to have occurred as the Board appointed Conway Francis Whittle as usher in classics in 1831, when there were 24 pupils, with, in Whitley's view, every prospect of further increases in pupil numbers. Subsequently, Whitley's request that he be transferred to the vacant headship of Ennis Grammar School was refused.⁶⁶ When Whittle resigned as usher the Board declined, in March 1833, to sanction the appointment of Thomas Killeen and stated that it would not make an appointment until there were 40 pupils.

⁶³ *Second report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry*, Appendix 22, pp. 1226, 1227, H. C. 1826-27 (12), xii, 1; James Glassford, *Notes of Three Tours in Ireland in 1824 and 1826* (Bristol, 1832), pp. 287 and 288.

⁶⁴ *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, ii, pp. 289, 290; ESA/Standing Committee Report, 22 May 1820.

⁶⁵ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, p. 108.

⁶⁶ ESA/Registry Book 4, mtgs. 22 February and 2 March 1830, 28 November and 28 December 1831, 24 February 1832.

Killeen was formally appointed in October 1833 having been, according to his own testimony, in post since the previous year. It was reported that the School was not then open to free pupils.⁶⁷

Several years later, in 1837, the Board enquired of Whitley as to when it would be convenient for him to resign as it noted that he had been appointed to a benefice. Whitley initially requested that the matter not be pressed but subsequently submitted his resignation. He proved reluctant to vacate the school building and legal action was taken by the Board to secure possession.⁶⁸

Whitley evidently enjoyed some popularity in Galway and, at a meeting of 'the Catholic Clergy, Gentry and other Inhabitants of Galway', it was unanimously agreed that 'a valedictory address be voted to the Rev. Doctor Whitely on the occasion of his departure from Galway, and that this meeting express its regret at the loss of the rev. gentleman's presence and society which such an event must cause'. Whitley, on leaving Galway, became rector of Ballinamacky, Co Tipperary.⁶⁹

There must have been hope that the School, with its new building, could be a success under Whitley. He was young, well educated, selected from a large pool of applicants, but inexperienced as regards the operation of a school. Some limited success may have attended the School in his early years. It was, however, encountering difficulties in attracting pupils when, in 1819, Whitley applied for the Enniskillen and Drogheda posts and there was little improvement thereafter. The Board provided a doctrinaire response to the request of the Trust's tenants for access to the School and Whitley appears to have been less than welcoming, with the tenants having to plead their case on a second occasion. There may have been a reluctance on Whitley's part to admit free pupils lest this make the School less attractive to potential fee-paying pupils. The Board was, by 1830, reluctant to appoint ushers related to low pupil numbers.

Hardiman, Killeen and the signatories to the valedictory address were fulsome in their praise of Whitley but, with the exception of Daniel Foley, there was a rapid turn-over of ushers. Given Whitley's clerical duties, and his evident wish to move to a post elsewhere, it may have been that he left much of the day to day running of the School to Foley and that the difficulties with the ushers

⁶⁷ Ibid, 1 March and 31 October 1833; *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, i, p. 69; ii, p. 272.

⁶⁸ ESA/Registry Book 4, mtgs. 22 February, 1 May and 7 November 1837 and 15 August 1838.

⁶⁹ *The Galway Patriot*, 19 December 1838.

Note: Ballinamackey may be Ballymackey, near Nenagh, Co Tipperary.

were occasioned by Foley's personality. Whitley appears not to have been fully committed to Galway or the School and his involvement with the School may have become so marginal that, in asking the Board not to press for his resignation, he was suggesting that he could continue the dual role of headmaster and clergyman, with one of the posts being discharged at a distance. The School was then in a poor state having had just three boarders and 19 day pupils in 1835.⁷⁰

Whitley's period as headmaster coincided with the early years of the 'Protestant Crusade', a movement initiated about 1822 and which was an attempt by evangelicals within the Church of Ireland to 'bring the blessings of British civilisation', including Anglicanism, to Irish Catholics. Militant evangelicals were preoccupied with mystical concepts based on biblical prophecy which led to millenarian speculation on the imminent Second Coming of Christ and the need to save Catholics.⁷¹ Whitley contributed to the debate through his *The Scheme and Completion of Prophecy*, published in 1830, which ran to 456 pages. The treatise sought to explain the design and proof of prophecy 'together with its sense and application as the Grand Fundamental Proof of Religion'.⁷² It appears from the attitude of the Catholic clergy to Whitley when he was leaving Galway that they did not view the publication with any particular concern with it being, perhaps, considered a theoretical rather than an aggressive treatise.

Galway Grammar School, 1838-48

Rev. Matthew Eaton, master of the Diocesan School, Mullingar, was appointed to replace Whitley in 1838. Eaton had graduated BA, 1800, and MA, 1818, from TCD. He was then about 59 years of age.⁷³ A measure of success attended the School in the following years with a second usher being appointed and three of its pupils being awarded Erasmus Smith exhibitions to TCD.⁷⁴ In 1842 the School was advertised in ambitious terms:

The Course of Instruction in this Establishment comprises a Classical, Mercantile, and Scientific Education, including Military and civil Engineering – together with French and English in all its branches.

⁷⁰ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, p. 108.

⁷¹ Bowen, *The Protestant Crusade in Ireland*, p. 66.

⁷² John Whitley, *The Scheme and Completion of Prophecy* (London, 1830).

⁷³ ESA/Registry Book 4, mtg. 26 June 1838; Burtchaell and Sadlier, *Alumni Dublinenses*, p. 256.

⁷⁴ ESA/Standing Committee Report, 7 May 1839; *Galway Vindicator*, 1 January 1842.

The strictest attention is given to the health, morals and manners of the Pupils. Religious Instruction, with the reading of the Scriptures, precedes the business of each day. A Superintendent Master is always with the Boys during their hours of recreation, and sleeps in their room; and the general system unites a Liberal treatment with due attention to Discipline, with candid and kindly intercourse between Master and Pupils.⁷⁵

The advertisement added that there were six assistant masters, with two classics' masters being paid £100 each per annum and the English master being paid £60. Eaton had previously promised to introduce gymnastics to the School.⁷⁶

Eaton regularly advertised prize winning pupils at term examinations and 26 pupils shared a total of 77 prizes at the School's December 1842 examinations. The same advertisement announced an additional four days' vacation related to the success of former pupils at TCD examinations. In 1845 the School had 53 pupils, 22 boarders and 31 day pupils, compared to 107 pupils in Drogheda and 68 in Ennis.⁷⁷

By 1846 a James Mecredy was featuring in advertisements with it being stated that:

Four private pupils can be accommodated whom Mr Mecredy will prepare for entrance and (if they are found competent) for the scholarships on the foundation and those who have entered College will be prepared for term examinations in the advanced course for honours and prizes in TCD. Mr Mecredy can produce testimonials from the Provost and 14 of the Fellows of TCD as to capability, experience and success of his pupils who have obtained honours and prizes in TCD and the scholarships in Erasmus Smith's Foundation.⁷⁸

Two years later the Board, having 'received the most unfavourable reports of the School', ordered that Eaton be called upon to resign. Eaton cited the impact of the Famine as a reason for the

⁷⁵ *Galway Vindicator*, 1 January 1842.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 16 January 1839 and 1 January 1842.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 14 January 1843; ESA/Standing Committee Report, 18 December 1845.

⁷⁸ *Galway Vindicator*, 12 August 1846.

School's decline (see below), made the case that he was now in his seventieth year, with a large family, and requested that the Board act generously.⁷⁹

The Board accepted Eaton's resignation, granted him a pension of £50 per annum and agreed to leave him the crops from the land attached to the School in the expectation that he would vacate the schoolhouse so that necessary repairs might be completed. In July the Board advised Eaton that, as over £200 would have to be spent on repairs to the house, it was unable to pay the half-year's salary retained by it against the eventuality of having to undertake such repairs. The Board expressed its surprise that the playground had been broken up and set in concrete and required that it be re-laid properly at Eaton's expense.⁸⁰

Galway Grammar School appears to have performed reasonably well for much of Eaton's time as headmaster. Pupil numbers were at a consistent level and entrance awards to and subsequent awards at TCD were obtained. The latter might, given Eaton's tendency to promote the successes of pupils, be somewhat exaggerated as a sample of about 20 per cent of entrants to TCD, those with surnames A-C, shows just one entrant born in Co. Galway being admitted between 1838 and 1848, having been educated by a Mr/Rev Eaton.⁸¹ Eaton's health may have been failing about 1846 when he appeared to be reliant on Mecredy. Mecredy's departure and the onset of the Famine impacted adversely on the School. The circumstances of Eaton's departure, his age, the likelihood that his health was failing, the state of the school building and its playground, testify to the lack of oversight by the Trust of Galway Grammar School and of the grammar schools generally. This failing would come to be heavily criticised by a government commission less than ten years later.

Famine

In autumn 1845 one-third of the potato crop, on which a large proportion of the population of 8.5 million was then dependent, was destroyed by blight. Blight and failure to sow the crop led to the yield being lower by three-quarters in 1846 and 1847, and by one-third in 1848. One million people died and two million emigrated over the following two decades.⁸²

⁷⁹ ESA/Registry Book 5, mtgs. 22 May and 8 June 1848.

⁸⁰ ESA/Registry Book 5, mtgs. 8 June and 31 July 1848.

⁸¹ Burtchaell and Sadleir, *Alumni Dublinenses*.

⁸² Kevin Whelan, 'Pre and Post-Famine Landscape Change' in Cathal Póirtéir (ed.), *The Great Irish Famine* (Cork, 1995), pp. 19-28.

Government policy in response to the Famine underwent constant change and involved a succession of initiatives including relief works, importation of maize, food depots, soup kitchens, and outdoor relief, in addition to the existing workhouses. There was an emphasis on relief being funded and administered locally and bureaucratic delay was a feature of most schemes. There were threats in Galway to ships taking corn out of the country, to food leaving the town, and fears that corn stores would be raided. Rioting occurred in October 1846. Demand for access to relief and food schemes steadily increased, people were turned away from the workhouse, the mortality rate increased, as did the number of beggars in the town as people flowed in from outlying regions, and there were outbreaks of fever and cholera. Yet, for some, life continued as normal with assize balls, race meetings and theatre, while in 1849, shortly after the end of the Famine, all bathing lodges in Salthill were occupied during July and there was a large attendance at the Galway Races.⁸³

In the context of the Famine, the Erasmus Smith Board advised its land agents in 1846 that it was essential that rents be collected as they were used for charitable purposes, but that they could exercise discretion in their collection as appropriate. It made subscriptions to relief committees and provided some direct assistance to its tenants. In 1847 reductions in rent of up to 50 per cent were agreed by the Board's Standing Committee. The impact of reduced rental income resulted in the Board, in 1847, selling £2,500 of investments and agreeing an overdraft facility of £4,000 with the Bank of Ireland. It pursued a policy of amalgamating land holdings, offering financial incentives to those evicted, although rent arrears were remitted in cases where tenants were considered capable of successfully farming their holdings.⁸⁴

The impact of the Famine on the Board's income was such that in 1849 it received income of £4,258 from rents due of over £9,000.⁸⁵ Salaries of grammar school masters and ushers, of English school masters and mistresses, and of TCD professors funded by the Trust had all been reduced in December 1847. Overall reductions were of the order of 31 per cent, but were 40 per cent in the case of the grammar schools. The reduction in the case of Galway Grammar School was 51 per cent,

⁸³ Cunningham, *'A town tormented by the sea'*, pp. 125-150.

⁸⁴ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 113-117.

⁸⁵ ESA/Registry Book 5, mtg. 1 March 1854: Return to House of Commons of Gross Rental of the Real Estates and of Annual Income from other sources of the Governors of Erasmus Smith Schools, Ireland for past 5 years.

and involved the abolition of the second usher's post and reductions of the order of one-third in the salaries of the headmaster and remaining usher.⁸⁶

Galway Grammar School had 53 pupils, including 22 boarders in December 1845.⁸⁷ The School's situation had deteriorated dramatically by 1848 when the Board '...having received the most unfavourable Reports on the Galway Grammar School' called on Eaton to resign.⁸⁸ Eaton cited the 'universally prevailing distress' as being the cause of a substantial decrease in the number of boarders. Pupil numbers had, he said, remained respectable until the usher James Mecredy obtained a church appointment. Mecredy's departure resulted from the withdrawal of support by the Board for the second usher's post referred to above. The impact of the Famine on parental income is evidenced from Eaton claiming to be owed £300 in school fees.⁸⁹

Eaton's successor, John Hallowell, informed the *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, that when he became headmaster the classes were empty, and that there had been no boarders for some years and very few day pupils.⁹⁰ The significant decline in pupil numbers between late 1845 and 1848 was, in all probability, related to the impact of the Famine on parental income, with Eaton's incapacity also being a factor, and that situation being exacerbated by the loss of Mecredy, an indirect consequence of the Famine. The report of the *Commission* recorded that the School had declined considerably under Eaton, who was incapacitated by age, but did not reference the Famine as a reason.⁹¹ It seems likely that the other grammar schools of the Trust were similarly impacted by the Famine given that fees for boarders are not recorded in a report to the House of Commons in 1854. The Trust's income improved in the early 1850s and funding levels to institutions supported by it were, in the main, restored to previous levels in the mid- to late-1850s, although the second usher's post at Galway was not then provided for.⁹²

⁸⁶ Ibid, mtg. 6 December 1847.

⁸⁷ ESA/Standing Committee, mtg. 18 December 1845.

⁸⁸ ESA/Registry Book 5, mtg. 22 May 1848.

⁸⁹ Ibid, mtgs. 8 June 1848.

⁹⁰ *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, iii, pp. 42-52.

⁹¹ Ibid, i, p. 69, ii, p. 270.

⁹² ESA/Registry Book 5, mtg. 5 June 1854.

The Trust in the mid-nineteenth century

The Trust's Income improved to £7,763 in 1852/53, and averaged £5,958 per annum over the five-year period 1848/49 to 1852/53. The Board's return to the House of Commons for the five years to 1 March 1854 showed average annual expenditure of £5,045, with the main expenditure headings being English Schools, 50 per cent; Grammar Schools, 15 per cent; the Blue Coat School, 12 per cent; TCD 12 per cent; Office and establishment, 8 per cent; and Christ's Hospital, London, 2 per cent. The return does not record fees for boarders at any of the grammar schools, pointing to there being few, if any. Just 14 pupils of the schools had been awarded exhibitions to TCD over the ten-year period 1844-1853, suggesting that pupil numbers, the standard of education and the level of ambition in the schools was low. The exhibitions were now more beneficial to pupils of other schools and were essentially a College scholarship fund. Most governors were infrequent attenders at Board meetings as, from a membership of 36, attendances at 15 meetings between April 1853 and April 1854 ranged from three to nine, with the average attendance being six.⁹³ An anonymous mid-nineteenth century commentator did not see why the administration of the Erasmus Smith grammar schools was entrusted to a distinct and unwieldy board.⁹⁴

In November 1854 the government established a Commission to inquire into the condition of endowed schools in Ireland. The Erasmus Smith Board held, initially, that its schools did not come within the remit of the Commission but legislation was enacted to provide that the Commission did have the necessary authority.⁹⁵ Its report recorded that:

The most remarkable circumstance to be observed about these (Erasmus Smith) schools is the extent to which the Governors have neglected the grammar schools, which were the original object of the endowment, and departed from the intention of the founder in their management.⁹⁶

⁹³ Ibid, mtg. 1 March 1854, Return to House of Commons of Gross Rental of the Real Estates and of Annual Income from other sources of the Governors of Erasmus Smith Schools, Ireland for past 5 years; mtg. 11 May 1854, Copy of Returns, etc. made by the Governors to the House of Commons.

⁹⁴ Anonymous, 'The Endowed Schools of Ireland' in *The Irish Quarterly Review*, No. XV, September 1854, (Dublin), pp. 499, 500.

⁹⁵ *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, i, pp. x, xi, 1, 2.

⁹⁶ Ibid, i, p. 78.

The Commission reported that the Schools had a total of 160 pupils. It considered that the provisions of the Charter in respect of the admission of free pupils had not been adhered to with a total of 26 free pupils of whom just five were sons of tenants. There were five free pupils attending Galway Grammar School, three of them sons of tenants. The headmaster at Drogheda was not aware that he was required to receive free pupils and only in 1854 had he been presented with five free pupils by the Erasmus Smith Board. Neither had he seen the Charter nor received any rules or regulations and the School never been inspected. A similar situation obtained in Ennis, where free pupils had been nominated on only one occasion, and in Tipperary.⁹⁷

The Commission considered the management of the estates of the Trust to be generally well conducted, but found that the accounts had not been properly kept until they intervened. It recorded that there was lack of clarity regarding the duties and responsibilities of the Trust's executive/management. The Commission recommended, *inter alia*, that the grammar schools be placed on an efficient footing; that the instructions of Erasmus Smith regarding the provision of religious instruction to pupils be adhered to; that the value of the Trust-funded exhibitions to TCD be increased; that instructions be provided to headmasters in respect of free places, the course of instruction, and fees for boarders and day pupils; that an inspector be appointed to visit the schools, and that the governors occasionally visit the schools themselves to confirm that the purposes of the Trust and their own instructions were being carried out. It also recommended that the salaries of masters be increased, through local contributions, if possible, or, otherwise, through decreased support for English schools, and that the grammar schools be suitably refurbished.⁹⁸

The Commission took exception to the statement of Mr Barlow, Treasurer of the Board, that the governors left the operation of the grammar schools to the masters on the basis that their interest in the schools should be greater than that of the governors and pronounced:

This view, of the interest of the master of an endowed school being the same as the interest of the public, is entirely inconsistent with the Charter of the foundation, which intrusted the Governors with large powers to control the masters, to prevent their refusing free pupils or boarders, or to violate the trusts of the founder, by adopting a practice with regard to

⁹⁷ Ibid, i, pp. 67-71.

⁹⁸ Ibid, i, pp. 80-83, 237, 238, 279, 280.

religious instruction contrary to his intentions, though that violation should be for the interest of the master.⁹⁹

The low level of remuneration provided to headmasters of grammar schools, in general, was, in the view of the Commission, the reason for their inefficiency as high-calibre persons were dissuaded from the posts by the low remuneration. Those in post were tempted to undertake additional employment inconsistent with the duties of headmaster, including as clergymen, or to augment their income by increasing school fees and excluding those for whom the endowment was intended. It specifically referred to the practice of the Erasmus Smith Board of putting schoolhouses into good order on the appointment of a headmaster and, thereafter, requiring him to keep it in good repair, considering that this imposed an unreasonable burden on the headmasters given their insufficient salaries. The Commission was of the opinion that the Board had not recognised its primary function under the Charter and that the grammar school buildings compared unfavourably with those of the Royal Schools and, even, some of the English schools supported by the Trust. The Erasmus Smith Board sought to excuse its parsimony by reference to the urgency of other claims on its funds but the Commission considered that the grammar schools would have had more pupils and be more efficient if the Board had followed the example of the Royal Schools.¹⁰⁰

The Commissioners were of the view that 'Most of the errors' had arisen from the multitude of English schools supported by the Trust which, while not illegal, were not contemplated by Erasmus Smith and had left the governors without the means to properly execute the primary function of the Trust. They stated that:

...many of the objectionable arrangements which we have noticed, seem to have naturally grown up, and be attributable to a system of routine, resting on the authority of persons of dignity and influence, who had been active Governors in past times, and whose acquaintance with the affairs of the charity and the trusts of the foundation was supposed to be extensive and accurate.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Ibid, i, pp. 79, 80.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, i, pp. 250-254.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, i, pp. 83-85.

The Board attended to most of the Commission's administrative and management recommendations. An Inspector of grammar schools was not, however, appointed until 1875, although the Board had resolved in 1856 that the schools should be visited by three governors, or by an inspector on its behalf, half-yearly, with reports being made to it on their state and condition.¹⁰²

Despite the criticisms of the *Endowed School Commission*, the Board's policy towards the grammar schools did not change and, instead, in the context of its favourable financial position, it decided in 1862 to establish 'a first class school (in Dublin) for the instruction of the middle classes' to prepare them 'for mercantile situations, competitive examinations, etc.'¹⁰³ The High School (Harcourt Street School) opened in 1870 with £7,300 being spent on buying and converting the building and a further £450 spent on furniture and fittings. The headmaster was provided with an annual salary of £400 and there were, by March 1871, five other teaching staff in post at an aggregate salary of £670, giving a total salary provision of £1,070.¹⁰⁴

The initiative was difficult to reconcile with the Charter and the 1723 Act and some of the arrangements arrived at in respect of it were described in the report of *Endowed Schools Commission* 1881 as evading rather than meeting the difficulty.¹⁰⁵

Galway Grammar School, 1848-1875

Significant infrastructural development occurred in Galway in the immediate post-famine years. Queen's College Galway (QCG) opened in 1849, a railway link with Dublin was established in 1851, the Railway Hotel opened in 1852, and the impressive Colonial and Eglinton Buildings were constructed. In 1852 the Eglinton Canal, linking Galway port with Lough Corrib, was completed and the Royal Irish Agricultural Society held its prestigious cattle show in Galway at the Grammar School grounds. The developments resulted in an increase in the number of visitors to the town.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² *Endowed Schools, Ireland, Commission. Report of the commissioners appointed by His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, to inquire into the endowments, funds, and actual condition of all schools endowed for the purpose of education in Ireland; accompanied by minutes of evidence, documents, and tables of schools and endowments. Volume I. Containing report and appendices, and tables of schools and endowments.* [C.2831, C.2831-1], i, p.72, H.C. 1881, xxxv, I, 539 (henceforth referred to as *Endowed Schools Commission, 1881*); ESA/Registry Book 5, mtg. 29 October 1856.

¹⁰³ ESA/Registry Book 5, mtg. 12 April 1862.

¹⁰⁴ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 124-127.

¹⁰⁵ *Endowed Schools Commission, 1881*, i, p. 82.

¹⁰⁶ Cunningham, 'A town tormented by the sea', pp. 165-171.

Despite the improvements, an English visitor in the early 1850s commented on the town's 'commingled barbarism and civilisation' adding that, while there were preparations for the future in place; telegraph, railway, hotel, docks, and canal, there were 'no manufactures yet, no traffic, no shipping, and the people asleep'.¹⁰⁷ There was optimism that a shipping link could be developed between Galway and America but, while a number of initiatives occurred between 1850 and 1864, the attempt ended in failure. The milling industry had been severely impacted by the Famine, while the local fishing community had been affected by emigration, with others joining the Navy. Marble, wool, stockings, hides, brushes and whiskey were identified as having potential for export. A number of enterprises emerged but generated little employment. One such enterprise was the Bag Factory, which opened in 1866 and finally closed in 1893. All of its skilled workers came from Scotland with its owner, Colonel O'Hara, ascribing the difficulty in finding suitable local workers to the neglect of technical education, with school-leavers having a preference for 'headwork'.¹⁰⁸

The 1861 Census provided information on actual Protestant numbers by county and, whereas Co. Galway had had, at 5 per cent, the lowest proportion of Protestants of any county about 1732, it now emerged that, while the proportion of Protestants in the county was just 3.4 per cent, the actual number, 9,288, placed it mid-rank, 10th, of the 23 counties outside of Ulster. The counties of Kilkenny and Waterford, where schools of Protestant origin continue to operate, then had Protestant populations of 5,953 and 5,962 respectively, 4.8 per cent and 4.4 per cent of their respective populations. Galway town had 1,078 Protestants in its population of 16,786, Kilkenny city had 1,200 Protestants in its population of 14,081, and Waterford city had 2,413 in its population of 23,220.¹⁰⁹ The demographic picture, and its related capacity to support Protestant second-level schools, was not markedly dissimilar across the three counties at this juncture.

The Rev. John Hallowell, second master at Drogheda Grammar School, was appointed, from 17 applicants, as headmaster of Galway Grammar School in 1848. Hallowell had graduated with a BA from TCD in 1838.¹¹⁰ On appointment Hallowell entered into a bond of £200, undertaking to keep the School in good repair and indemnifying the Board against all costs and damages resulting from negligence on his part. The Board provided him with a salary of £66 13s. 4d. per annum. He was

¹⁰⁷ *Galway Packet*, 8 September 1852, cited in Cunningham, 'A town tormented by the sea', p. 171.

¹⁰⁸ Cunningham, 'A town tormented by the sea', pp. 171-182.

¹⁰⁹ Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland*, pp. xvii, 3; Census 1861, Enumeration abstracts, Table II, pp. 10, 11.

¹¹⁰ ESA/Registry Book 5, mtg. 3 July 1848; Burtchaell and Sadlier, *Alumni Dublinenses*, p. 358.

subsequently allowed 20 guineas in lieu of 4.5 acres of land reserved from him and his salary was increased to £100 in 1854.¹¹¹ Hallowell held clerical posts while headmaster being a curate for Rahoon parish, 1864-70, and for St Nicholas's Parish, 1868-1875.¹¹²

The assistant master, Thomas Killeen, A.B. (TCD), continued in post until 1859 when he was appointed master of the English School in Galway and provided with an annual pension of £60.¹¹³ Hermann Dacus, modern languages' teacher, was in post from 1851. From 1854, and perhaps prior to this, a scholar of QCG was employed to teach science. Teaching of science and English became the responsibility of John Howse, ex-scholar, QCG, who was appointed in 1859. Howse was paid £100 per annum and Dacus was paid £50.¹¹⁴

In 1852 the Board considered the state of the grammar schools to be unsatisfactory and the headmasters were requested to report on the reasons for the small number of day pupils and for the very few and, in some cases, the total lack of boarders. Pupil numbers at Galway Grammar School for the years 1849 to 1855 averaged 35, including an average of seven free pupils and eleven Catholics. The numbers compared favourably with those in the other grammar schools with there being 40 pupils in Ennis, 34 in Drogheda, and 24 in Tipperary in 1854.¹¹⁵ The Board decided in 1852 that the President of QCG, Mr Berwick, be written to inviting him to suggest how improvements to Galway Grammar School could be effected. It was subsequently agreed that pupils of the School would attend lectures in QCG in modern languages and Chemistry.¹¹⁶ In the event funding was provided to put in place an arrangement for modern languages only which ultimately did not succeed.¹¹⁷

Hallowell was on the continent related to his wife's ill-health when evidence was taken by the *Endowed School Commission* in Galway in September 1855. She died the following year. Thomas Killeen, usher, stated that there were then ten pupils in the School, six of whom were free pupils,

¹¹¹ ESA/GS/747, 28 September 1848, 'Bond'; ESA/Registry Book 5, mtgs. 3 July and 11 August 1848, 5 July 1854.

¹¹² Leslie, *Clergy of Tuam, Killala and Achonry*, p. 381.

¹¹³ ESA/Standing Committee, report 19 August 1859.

¹¹⁴ ESA/GS/71, Testimonials of Hermann Dacus; *Thom's Directory* 1854, p. 416, et al; ESA/GS/730 (5), John Howse to Governors, undated but c.1891; ESA/GS/76, Salaries of staff at Galway Grammar School, undated.

¹¹⁵ *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, iii, Document IX, pp. 306, 307; ESA/Registry Book 5, mtg. 11 May 1854, copy of the Returns, etc. made by the Governors to the House of Commons.

¹¹⁶ ESA/Registry Book 5, mtgs. 28 April 1852 and 9 November 1853.

¹¹⁷ *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, iii, p. 47.

with another paying a trifling fee. Three of the pupils were Killeen's children. Killeen could recall only three boarders since 1848, although he did state that there had been 35 to 40 boarders when Hallowell arrived. This latter statement is difficult to reconcile with the circumstances under which Eaton had been dismissed and Hallowell's subsequent evidence to the Commission. Killeen considered the fees charged to day pupils, six guineas per annum, to be too high. Catholics were, he said, reluctant to attend the School as their catechism would not be taught. He was of the view that the Trust's exhibitions to TCD were not attractive related to their value, £8 per annum, meeting only half the fees. Killeen suggested that the School would be more attractive to pupils if more teachers were paid by the Board. He was the only one receiving such payment at that time.¹¹⁸

Hallowell appeared before the Commission in December. He informed it that the School had never, since his appointment, been in a flourishing state. When he became headmaster the classes were empty, there had been no boarders for some years and very few day pupils. His ambition had been to attract and educate the sons of gentlemen and he had set low charges for boarders and day pupils but found that those charges were objected to, even by people of respectable rank. Related to the Famine there was indifference towards education and a lack of money generally. The School had, Hallowell considered, been adversely impacted by the opening of QCG as the College had set low entry standards in its early years in an effort to attract students and 13 pupils of Galway Grammar School had obtained scholarships to the College between October 1849 and October 1850. Thereafter, from October 1851 to October 1855, pupils of the School had obtained nine scholarships and two exhibitions. Hallowell accepted that the latter number had not been sufficient to affect pupil numbers at the School. No pupil of the School had gone to TCD since his appointment. The Erasmus Smith Board, whose income had been impacted by the Famine, had, Hallowell said, declined to provide assistance until it was satisfied with pupil numbers.¹¹⁹

Hallowell considered that a major difficulty for the School was the predominately Catholic population of the area stating that, while he had had a fair number of Catholic pupils initially, the number declined from 1850 when the Synod of Thurles had condemned mixed education. Actual numbers do not particularly support this statement as Catholic pupils averaged twelve for the years 1848 and 1849, and ten for the years 1850 to 1854. Hallowell referred also to competition from the

¹¹⁸ Ibid, ii, pp. 268-270; *The Galway Express* 2 and 5 April 1856, cited in Higgins and Heringklee, *Monuments of St. Nicholas' Collegiate Church*, p. 123.

¹¹⁹ *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, iii, pp. 42-52.

Model School, opened in 1852 to train teachers for the national school system. Responding to a question from the Commissioners, Hallowell suggested that improvements to the School might be brought about through the appointment of masters to teach science, modern languages, English and drawing, with a view to providing an 'English' education for pupils who did not wish to take classics. He recommended an increase in the value of exhibitions to TCD, as pupils from the School were not in a position to avail of them at their present value of £6-£8, proposed that an efficient system of inspection be introduced, and that a laboratory be established.¹²⁰

John Barlow, Treasurer of the Trust, did not respond positively to Hallowell's suggestion that the Trust invest in the School stating that, while the Board approved of Hallowell, the School could be looked upon as an utter failure and, consequently, the Board did not consider that any more should be done for it. Barlow added that change was required as the School would not be allowed continue as it was and considered that to act on Hallowell's suggestion that a laboratory be provided and equipped would be a great waste of money. The Board did not, in his opinion, have the means to grapple with the difficulties being experienced by the grammar schools. Barlow considered that some action had to be taken but lamented that the situation in Galway was so different to what it had been some years before when the Trust's schools flourished.¹²¹

The relationship of the Trust's tenants with the School surfaced in evidence provided by John Barrett. Barrett had made application for free pupil status for his son. He was told that the Board could only remit fees at the day pupil rate but that he could, if he accepted this concession, send his son to board with Hallowell, or elsewhere in the town. Hallowell had, however, said that he was not in a position to accept boarders but was willing to facilitate the boy as a 'parlour boarder' at £50 per annum. Barrett stated that he had subsequently heard that the School was 'very bad' and sent his son to the Royal School, Banagher where he paid fees of about £40 and where the boy's education was improving.¹²²

George Whitely Abraham, Assistant Commissioner to the *Endowed Schools Commission*, considered that the teaching provided at Galway Grammar School was 'limited in amount and imperfect in

¹²⁰ Ibid, iii, pp. 42-52 and Document IX, p. 306, 307; Cunningham, 'A town tormented by the sea', p. 345.

¹²¹ *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, iii, pp. 209, 212.

¹²² Ibid, ii, pp. 275-277.

quality' and attributed this, in part, to the low morale of the masters caused by low pupil numbers. Abraham commented that:

Had this school been inspected as required by the Charter, it is scarcely possible the intentions of the founder should have been so completely frustrated both as regards the admission of free pupils and the state of religious instruction, and this too entirely unknown to the Governors.¹²³

Overall Abraham considered instruction in the School to be 'Not Satisfactory'.¹²⁴

The Commissioners were of the view that the Board should not allow the headmaster refuse to take boarders on moderate terms where there was a suitable building erected at a cost of nearly £9,000 and where QCG, with its large endowments, was an encouragement to grammar school education in Galway.¹²⁵

Hallowell was dissatisfied with Abraham's report and invoked the support of QCG staff. The Professor of Greek, William Nesbitt, considered that the School 'exhibited careful teaching'. He referred to the number of free pupils at the School and said that this was a very embarrassing situation for Hallowell as it lowered the character of the School and it was difficult to educate the sons of the rich alongside free pupils. He considered the School's endowment to be insufficient. Joseph O'Leary, Vice-President, was of the opinion that the status of the School was diminishing, although Hallowell and Killeen were excellent. He suggested that their salaries be increased and that one of the masters should be a Catholic.¹²⁶

The Commission's criticism of the Trust was taken up by others, including by the Presbyterian General Assembly with its Committee on Intermediate Education adopting the following resolution:

¹²³ Ibid, iv, pp. 692, 693 and Tables, pp. 682,683.

¹²⁴ Ibid, iv, pp. 682, 683.

¹²⁵ Ibid, i, pp. 69, 70.

¹²⁶ Ibid, ii, pp. 290-292 and iii, pp. 220-223.

...earnestly direct the attention of the Government, the Legislature, and an enlightened public, to the gross abuse and misappropriation of endowments for educational purposes in Ireland, as clearly brought to light in the 'Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into the Endowed Schools of Ireland;' and in particular, they cannot help cherishing the confident hope that Parliament will no longer permit the princely endowments of Erasmus Smith's foundation to be culpably squandered on objects alien alike to the known will of the founder and the pressing educational wants of the Irish people.¹²⁷

Meanwhile, the Rev. William Gibson argued that the tone of the 1657 Indenture was unmistakably Cromwellian, that the nominated trustees were true Cromwellians, and that the governors of the Trust had 'systematically violated' the requirement of the Charter that all pupils be indoctrinated in the catechism of Archbishop Usher.¹²⁸

Neither was the Commission's report ignored in Galway. Fr Peter Daly had, in evidence to the Commission, stated that the people of Galway had a right to see that the income from the Trust's Galway estates, £3,400 per annum, was applied for educational purposes, adding that the money was sufficient to provide education for all the children of Galway.¹²⁹ The *Galway Vindicator* took up this point and contrasted the Trust's income from its Galway estates with the provision of an indifferent education to ten pupils. The newspaper subsequently expressed the hope that Michael Morris, M.P. for Galway and a former pupil of Galway Grammar School, would succeed in 'bringing the Erasmus Smith board to book, and reforming that antiquated nuisance'.¹³⁰

The *Galway Mercury* accused Hollowell, in his evidence to the Commission, of making 'a terrible onslaught ...on the people of Galway, upon the Model School, upon Dr Bensbach (Professor of Modern Languages, QCG) and the Queen's College, against Mr Killeen (his own Assistant) and, of course, against Ourselves'. The latter reference, in all probability, relating to Michael Winter being proprietor of the newspaper from 1858 and to there being a classical school, 'Winter's', in Galway at that time.¹³¹

¹²⁷ Rev. William Gibson, *Erasmus Smith Schools: Their History and Objects* (Belfast, 1858), Prefatory Note.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 15, 19, 32, 33.

¹²⁹ *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, ii, pp. 286-288.

¹³⁰ *Galway Vindicator*, 2 November 1856 and 23 November 1867.

¹³¹ *Galway Mercury*, 22 December 1855.

Although religious orders had established second-level schools throughout the country from the late eighteenth century, it was not until 1843, when Fr John O'Toole opened a school, St Mary's, which Bishop Laurence O'Donnell declared to be the diocesan college, that a formal Catholic alternative in Galway to the Grammar School emerged. The St Mary's school closed when O'Toole was appointed Vice-President of QCG in 1850. A hardening of attitude towards mixed education in Galway occurred with the appointment of John MacEvilly as bishop in 1857. An intermediate school for girls was opened by the Dominican nuns in 1858 and the Jesuits opened a school, described by MacEvilly as being for 'boys of the upper classes'.¹³²

The opening of the Jesuit College had an immediate impact on Galway Grammar School as can be seen from the case of F. Hugh O'Donnell, a Catholic, who attended Galway Grammar School from 1858 to 1860, thereafter transferring to the newly opened Jesuit College. O'Donnell, elected as Member of Parliament for Galway in 1874, but unseated on petition, and who served as MP for Dungarvan, Co. Waterford from 1877 to 1885, described the Grammar School as 'a cheery place, with lofty windows lighting roomy halls... and pleasantly builded amid grassy fields...'. He considered that the School had previously had 'a very respectable reputation as a preparatory school for Trinity College' and that it took its tone from that university. By 1858, however, the proximity of QCG and the scholarships offered by it were so attractive that no pupil considered attending TCD and the teaching programme of the School was adapted to the requirements of QCG, such that 24 of 26 entrants from the School to QCG had been awarded scholarships on entry. O'Donnell's perspective is borne out by a sample of about 20 per cent of entrants to TCD, those with surnames A-C, showing no entrants born in Co. Galway being admitted between 1848 and 1860, having been educated by a Mr/Rev. Hallowell.¹³³

Success in obtaining scholarships to QCG had resulted, in O'Donnell's opinion, in a decline in the School's reputation with it being described as 'one of the most depressed and backward schools in Ireland' related to a perception that the standards of the Queen's Colleges were low. O'Donnell did not consider that the School made any explicit attempt to proselytise Catholics but suggested that secular knowledge was transmitted by teachers and through books with a particular bias. He wrote

¹³² Coolahan, *Irish Education*, pp. 57, 58; Cunningham, 'A town tormented by the sea', pp. 342-346.

¹³³ O'Donnell, *Mixed Education in Ireland*, pp. 94-112; J.I. McGuire, et al, *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2009); Burtchaell and Sadleir, *Alumni Dublinenses*.

that, like every other pupil in Galway Grammar School, 'there was affection in the respect in which I held...the white-haired, kindly Second Master' (Thomas Killeen). O'Donnell said that when the Jesuit College of St Ignatius opened in 1860 Catholic pupils immediately withdrew from Galway Grammar School.¹³⁴

The criticisms of the Commission and the withdrawal of Catholic pupils may have prompted the publication of a prospectus for the School in 1861. It stated that the programme of study included all subjects required for admission to English and Irish universities, for military and civil examinations, as well as for commercial and mercantile pursuits. It added that pupils who were members of the Established Church were examined daily in the Holy Scriptures, Church Catechism and Sacred History. Reference was made to the masters being of the highest character and ability and to the School offering exhibitions to TCD. The prospectus claimed that more than one hundred honours and prizes had been achieved by pupils of the School since Hallowell's appointment and added that the schoolroom, dormitories, dining room, infirmary and offices were 'very capacious, lofty and well ventilated' and that they were 'fitted up with every requisite of modern comfort and convenience', with every boarder having a separate bed.¹³⁵

Pupil numbers at the School in 1859 and 1860 averaged 53, and were comprised of a single boarder, 34 fee paying day pupils and 18 free pupils. While overall pupil numbers compared favourably with those in Drogheda, Ennis and Tipperary grammar schools, the composition of the pupil body in those schools was very different, averaging 36 boarders, eleven fee paying day pupils and seven free pupils. A request to the Board by Hallowell for a drawing master was refused on the basis that there were too few pupils. His request in 1862 that gas be installed was rejected on the same grounds. Hallowell consistently reported on the achievements of his pupils, but the Standing Committee was clearly unimpressed and in 1864 Hallowell was summoned to report on the state of the School and, specifically, on the number of boarders. Later that year the Committee failed to find grounds to uphold Hallowell's complaint against advertisements placed by Ennis Grammar School.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ O'Donnell, *Mixed Education in Ireland*, pp. 94-112.

¹³⁵ ESA/GS/67, Galway Grammar School Prospectus, 1861.

¹³⁶ ESA/Standing Committee Reports (various), 30 April 1859 to 5 May 1865.

Pupil numbers were maintained during the 1860s, a decade in which the number of Anglicans attending intermediate schools fell by 15 per cent.¹³⁷ Peter Freyer, who subsequently gained fame as an urologist and was knighted, attended the School in the late 1860s.¹³⁸ In 1871 there were 51 pupils, all but five of whom were day-pupils. Twenty one of the day-pupils had free pupil status. The presence amongst the day pupils of boys from London, Limerick, Roscommon, Mayo and Spiddal, Co. Galway was evidently not a new phenomenon as Hallowell had written to the Registrar in 1869 regarding boys from outside of Galway who, rather than board at the School, availed of the fee of six guineas for day boys and stayed in lodgings in Galway which could be obtained for 2s. 6d. per week. Hallowell doubted that such a situation obtained at any other school in the country.¹³⁹ The umbrage taken by Hallowell at the situation should, however, be seen in the context of his earlier evident reluctance to accommodate boarders.

In October 1874 the Board considered a letter from the Rev. J. Kydd, Congregational Minister, on the state of Galway Grammar School. The letter was referred to the Schools' Committee requesting that it enquire into the condition of the School and recommend on action to be taken. In April 1875 the Board considered a number of reports from the Committee, several letters and statements from Hallowell, medical certificates submitted on his behalf, and letters from Judges Morris and Keogh. It informed Hallowell that it would accept his resignation, if submitted immediately, and allow him a pension of £100 per annum. Hallowell resigned and was, subsequently, Perpetual Curate of Ballinacourty and Oranmore until 1880 when he died aged 64.¹⁴⁰

A critical appraisal of Hallowell's period as headmaster came from John Howse, his second master from 1859 to 1875. Howse, when he retired c.1891, referred to his own 32 years' service in the School, 17 of which he said had been as virtual headmaster, with the nominal head having been dismissed for neglect of the School but allowed retire on full salary.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Kieran Flanagan, 'The shaping of Irish Anglican secondary schools, 1854-1878' in *History of Education*, 1984, Vol.13, No. 1, p. 32.

¹³⁸ Sir Peter Freyer Surgical Symposium: <http://www.freyer.ie/index.php/about>
Accessed 27 July 2017.

¹³⁹ ESA/GS/897 (2), Pupils to half year 1 May 1871; ESA/GS/78, Hallowell to Registrar, 3 May 1869.

¹⁴⁰ ESA/Registry Book 6, mtgs. 30 October 1874 and 16 April 1875; Leslie, *Clergy of Tuam, Killala and Achonry*, p. 381.

¹⁴¹ ESA/GS/730 (5), John Howse to Governors, undated but c.1891.

Hallowell can be considered unfortunate in that his appointment and early years in post occurred in circumstances which might be deemed a perfect storm. The School had few pupils following the difficulties of Eaton's last years in post, the Famine impacted adversely on both interest in and funds for education, and the opening of QCG, at least initially, attracted pupils away from Galway Grammar School at an earlier age than might otherwise have been the case. The opening of the Model School provided an alternative option for some from 1852, while the advent of the Jesuit College gave Catholic pupils, who constituted about 30 per cent of pupil numbers in the 1850s, the option of attending a school favoured by their ecclesiastical authorities.

It appears, however, that, even having regard to those factors, there was a lack of commitment to the School on Hallowell's part. He was reluctant to accept boarders and their absence, together with the proportion of free pupils, resulted in the School generating little income and it was, consequently, heavily reliant on the Trust for support, which it was reluctant to provide. QCG, with its generous scholarship schemes, could, potentially, have been a major advantage to the School in terms of attracting pupils but was not utilised. Instead, the relatively easy availability of the scholarships acted as a disincentive to quality and pupils no longer aspired to attend TCD.

Conclusion

The nineteenth century began on a promising note for Galway Grammar School with the provision of a custom-built schoolhouse. However, despite initial support, the Erasmus Smith Board showed little interest in the School thereafter, over and above the appointment and termination of employment of headmasters and ushers. By mid-century the Board despaired of the School. All four headmasters, Wade, Whitley, Eaton and Hallowell, were called on to resign, although Eaton was unfortunate in that the Famine resulted in a precipitous decline in pupil numbers between 1845 and 1848. The School was not alone in having ineffective headmasters as the Endowed Schools Commission, 1881, considered that 'The fortunes of many and important Schools have been exposed to injurious fluctuations from the absence of any provision for the removal or retirement of masters who have proved inefficient, or have become incapable of further service...'¹⁴² If the contention that the health of a school then depended almost entirely on the energy and ability of the headmaster and that his appointment was the most important duty of the board of governors is accepted, then

¹⁴² *Endowed Schools Commission, 1881*, i, p. 229.

the Erasmus Smith Board had, with the exception, perhaps, of Eaton, failed in its duty to Galway Grammar School.¹⁴³

In terms of pupil numbers Galway Grammar School compared favourably over the period with average pupil numbers in other schools of the Trust. It had, however, a consistently higher number of free pupils and the Board considered this a weakness, being of the view that the number of boarders, of which the School had few, rather than conformity with the purpose for which the grammar schools had been established, was the criterion of success. The Board did not compensate the School for the impact the composition of the pupil body had on the School's earning capacity, either in terms of the headmaster's capacity to generate personal income or to employ staff and otherwise resource the School. Instead, the total remuneration provided to the headmaster decreased and, paradoxically, the School suffered for complying with the principles of the Trust, suggesting that the Board was not committed to those principles. The evidence points to the standard of education provided at the School being of a low standard over most of the period.

Headmasters for their part showed a lack of commitment to the School with some holding clerical benefices concurrently with their school roles, and others being concerned to exploit leases and maximise the benefit from land falling within their remit. There is little evidence that they contributed significantly to the teaching programme, delegating this to ushers, many of whom stayed only briefly, and for the most part they made little apparent effort to attract boarders even when, with the advent of the new school building, a significant facility was available. The 1871 Census, while differing somewhat from the Board's record for 1 May 1871, records that Galway Grammar School had 45 pupils, two of whom were boarders. Eighteen were aged 16 years or above pointing, perhaps, to an intention on their part to proceed to university. Interestingly, in spite of the Jesuit College, which had 48 pupils, being in operation since 1860, there were then 16 Catholic pupils attending Galway Grammar School, suggesting, perhaps, that, in some instances, their parents may have had an entitlement to free education at the School and opted to avail of it rather than pay for their sons to be educated at the Jesuit College.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ West, *Middleton College*, p. 6.

¹⁴⁴ Census 1871, Vol. IV, Table XXXVIII, p. 193; ESA/GS/897 (2), Pupils to half year 1 May 1871.

Galway Grammar School would have then appeared to fit well with the general description of Protestant schools in Ireland provided by J. Chartres Molony, who entered Ennis Grammar School about 1888 and subsequently attended Portora Royal School, when he later wrote:

Our Irish schools were small, and the existence of many of them was precarious....The schools of my early days established no tradition, no fellowship in after years, among those who had gone forth from them.

It may be that our Protestant schools, as the schools of a small religious minority, were not assimilable into the general life of the Irish people, that they were as branches artificially fastened to, not normally growing from, a parent trunk.¹⁴⁵

The great majority of Erasmus Smith Board members were inactive throughout the period. Those who were prioritised the development of the English schools and The High School as their predecessors had prioritised investment in TCD and the Blue Coat School. While the Board's financial position remained strong, the environment in which the Trust operated had changed radically over the years from 1800 and in 1875 the political future of Ireland depended on the direction the aspirations of Catholics would take.¹⁴⁶ In addition, the *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1857-58, had brought the Erasmus Smith Endowment under public scrutiny and, thereafter, the nature and purpose of the endowment, together with the extent to which its funds were being used as set out in the Charter and towards the educational provisions specified therein, were in the public domain.

In 1875 the post of headmaster of Galway Grammar School was again vacant. The School's academic standing was low, as was its pupil base. It was not well regarded by the Board under which it operated and from which it derived its funding. Grammar schools in Ireland around this time have been described as operating within a '...shell of administrative accountability, that supplied neither administration nor capital...'.¹⁴⁷ This description appears to be an entirely appropriate one for the relationship which existed between Galway Grammar School and the Erasmus Smith Board. The School's future, without new vibrant leadership and a broader pupil base, was uncertain.

¹⁴⁵ J. Chartres Molony, *The Riddle of the Irish* (London, 1927), p. 42.

¹⁴⁶ Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland*, p. 153.

¹⁴⁷ Flanagan, 'The shaping of Irish Anglican secondary schools', p. 33.

Chapter 3

An overview of other second-level educational provision available to Protestants from Co. Galway

There were, in addition to Galway Grammar School, other institutions in Co. Galway which offered second-level education to Protestants. These institutions operated for various periods from 1570 and this chapter will provide an overview of that provision towards achieving a sense of the totality of the second-level Protestant educational provision in Co. Galway. It will also consider the extent to which those schools potentially impacted on and/or related to Galway Grammar School. Education at privately-run establishments in the county and by private tutor will also be considered, as will the incidence of pupils from the county availing of education outside of the county.

Tuam Diocesan School

In 1570, when *An Act for the Erection of Free Schools* was passed, there were three dioceses primarily located in Co. Galway, viz. the dioceses of Tuam, with which Annaghdown had been united c.1555, of Clonfert, and of Kilmacduagh. Clonfert was granted, *in commendam*, to the Bishop of Kilmacduagh in 1602 and, after his death in 1625, Kilmacduagh was held by Clonfert until 1834, when both were united with Killaloe.¹ Consequently, while the *Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry*, 1791, reported in respect of four dioceses, a more realistic expectation would have been that there would be two schools in operation, one in Tuam and the other in Kilmacduagh and Clonfert.² Successive educational commissions reported, however, that no school operated in either Clonfert or Kilmacduagh. The *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1857-58 refers to a diocesan school having been established at Loughrea in 1824 but having never operated.³ The absence of a diocesan school in Clonfert is noteworthy as there is consistent evidence of some demand for classical education in the diocese as is discussed in the section on private schools, below.

¹ E.B. Fryde, et. al. (eds), *Handbook of British Chronology* (3rd ed., Cambridge, 1986), pp. 378, 383.

² *Irish Education Inquiry*, 1791, pp. 367, 368.

³ *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1857-58, i, p. 38.

Provision of funding for diocesan schools was, under the Diocesan Schools Act, the responsibility of the clergy of the Church of Ireland. They came to be established, however, at a time when the resources and income of that Church had declined substantially. In all areas, and especially where the power of government was weakest, local lords and landlords preyed on church land and property. The income of the Bishop of Clonfert fell from £100 in 1584 to £24 in 1615. By 1615, 86 per cent of rectories in the ecclesiastical province of Tuam were held by lay farmers.⁴ Sir Oliver St John provided the following description of the state of the church in Tuam in 1611:

There is indeed no ministry at all, nor churches standing, and very few places where those that are well affected in religion can assemble; and which is the worst of all, the livings left so small as scarcely in the province, out of the chief towns, any other benefice can be found worth ten pounds per annum; and no possible means, as the country now stands, to make them better.⁵

Failure to establish a school in Clonfert or Kilmacduagh is likely to have been as a result, in part at least, of the impoverished state of the clergy.

Tuam Diocesan School is, however, held to have been established in 1570.⁶ It may be that evidence of its existence, c. 1615, is contained in a text which states that there was a school in Galway, under a headmaster named Lynch, which had a large number of pupils. Lynch was advised to conform to the established religion and, when he would not do so, to close the school. The master at Tuam, named Isaac Lally, whose father had been Archbishop of Tuam and whose school was located at Tullinadaly Castle, was ordered to move his school to Galway which was considered a better location.⁷ There is reference to the School being in operation in 1626, at which time Lally was prebend of Balla in the diocese of Tuam. The Rev. John Lawler was appointed headmaster of the School in 1682 and in 1728 it was located on the Dublin Road.⁸ The School appears not to have been

⁴ Alan Ford, 'The Protestant Reformation in Ireland' in Ciaran Brady and Raymond Gillespie, (eds), *Natives and Newcomers: Essays on the Making of Irish Colonial Society 1534-1641* (Dublin, 1986), pp. 52-53.

⁵ Public Records Office (London), State Papers 63/231/31, cited in Ford, 'The Protestant Reformation in Ireland', p. 53.

⁶ *Thom's Official Directory, 1863*, p. 847; NLI/MS 17,963, Tuam Diocesan School papers.

⁷ Timothy Corcoran, *State Policy in Irish Education, A.D. 1536 to 1816 exemplified in documents collected for lectures to postgraduate classes* (Dublin, 1916), p. 65.

⁸ J.A Claffey, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas, No. 20, Tuam* (Dublin, 2009), p. 16; Leslie, *Clergy of Tuam, Killala and Achonry*, pp. 426, 430.

in operation in 1763 as the Erasmus Smith Board rejected an application from Archbishop Ryder for a grant towards a schoolhouse, considering that there was no precedent for doing so.⁹ It seems, therefore, that, even if the School was not in continuous operation, Archbishops of Tuam were mindful of their obligation to provide one.

The *Commission of Irish Education Inquiry*, 1791, concluded that the public received little benefit from the diocesan schools and that few schools were of a standard to meet the purpose for which they were established. The Commissioners described the schoolhouse in Tuam as not being habitable. A schoolmaster, the Rev. E. Burton, was in post, having been appointed in 1781. Burton had a salary of £28 10s. 3d. approximately midway in the salary range of diocesan schoolmasters, viz. £20 12s. 4d. to £40. The School was attended by 19 paying day pupils and ten free pupils.¹⁰ In 1810 the Commissioners of the Board of Education reported that the School had a house and a rood of ground, and that the master, the Rev. J. Lawless, had a salary of £28 4s. 9d. There were no free pupils, six day pupils and 18 boarders. The presence of boarders suggests that the School had been relocated or rebuilt since 1791.¹¹ In 1813 the diocesan schools were brought within the remit of a Board of Commissioners.¹²

In 1824 the School was described as 'long celebrated', with several Catholics having been educated there, but, despite this, the *Commission of Irish Education Inquiry 1826-27* stated that the schoolhouse in Tuam had been ruined during occupations by troops and police. The Commissioners added that Archbishop Trench had declined to provide a site for a schoolhouse and that the sale of the existing site was being prevented by the churchwardens pursuing a case for part of the garden. They reported that the master of the suppressed diocesan school in Ardagh, the Rev. George Irwin, had been appointed master of the Tuam School in 1825 and was residing for part of the year in the schoolhouse, despite its condition, but that there had been no pupils in March 1826. The salary for the master at Tuam was then £70.¹³

⁹ ESA/ Registry Book 1, mtg. 5 February 1763.

¹⁰ *Irish Education Inquiry, 1791*, pp. 344, 345, 368.

¹¹ *Fourth report from the Commissioners of the Board of Education, in Ireland. Diocesan free schools*, pp. 4, 5, H.C. 1810 (174), x, 209.

¹² *An Act for the Appointment of Commissioners for the Regulation of the several Endowed Schools of Public and Private Foundation in Ireland* (53. Geo. III. C.107); *Endowed Schools Report, 1857-58*, i, p. 28.

¹³ Hely Dutton, *Statistical Survey of County Galway*, p. 409; *Fifth report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry (Diocesan schools)*, pp. 7, 10, 17, 24, H.C. 1826-27 (441), xiii, 359.

James Glassford, one of the Commissioners, visited the School in 1826 in a private capacity and recorded:

Went to the old Diocesan School; large house, but nearly in ruins; roof on one side quite open, and exposed by the weather. No repairs upon it for a very long period, and now scarcely inhabitable. It was at one time used as a temporary *barracks for troops*. Informed by the master... that he has no boarders, and very few day scholars; that no measures have been taken for a county assessment, nor any assessment made.¹⁴

Archbishop Trench did provide a site for the school in 1830 and a report in 1833 described the schoolhouse as a handsome building.¹⁵ It does not appear, however, that the School was in operation in the years 1830-35 as Tuam is not listed in a table showing aggregate pupil numbers in diocesan schools for those years nor is there a salary listed for a master at Tuam. Irwin had died in 1833.¹⁶

Grand juries were again authorised to provide funding for school buildings in 1836.¹⁷ In 1838, however, the diocesan schools were in a bureaucratic tangle with it being stated that:

The Lord Lieutenant will not appoint masters, unless a salary is secured; the salary is refused by the clergy unless the school is built by the grand jury; the grand jury refuses to build the school, unless the master stipulates to receive a certain number of *free scholars*; the master refuses to receive free scholars on the compulsion of the grand jury, and the Commissioners will not, or cannot, enforce the right either on the part of the grand jury or their own.¹⁸

Tuam Diocesan School was, at best, sporadically in operation in the period to 1845, and not at all in the years 1842-44 when the post of master was vacant. In 1845 the Lord Lieutenant, responding to

¹⁴ Glassford, *Notes of Three Tours in Ireland*, pp. 290, 291.

¹⁵ *Abstract of the Patent and Miscellaneous Rolls of Chancery inrolled during the reign of William IV, 1830-37*, p. 6, cited in Claffey, 'The Tuam Diocesan School', p.89; John G. Gorton, *A topographical dictionary of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol.3 (1833) sub 'Tuam', cited in Claffey, 'The Tuam Diocesan School', p. 89.

¹⁶ *Select Committee on Foundation Schools, 1837-38*, pp. 46, 48; *Galway Weekly Advertiser*, 23 November 1833.

¹⁷ *Grand juries (Ireland). A bill for consolidating and amending laws relating to the presentment of public money by grand juries in Ireland, 1836* (6 & 7 Will. 4 c.116).

¹⁸ *Select Committee on Foundation Schools, 1837-38*, p. 48.

representations made to him regarding the School's suspension, appointed a master of 'character as a scholar and Teacher, and familiar with the improvements of Modern Education' in the person of the Rev. W. Thynne.¹⁹ Despite Thynne's purported qualities the School had, on 1 May 1849, only three pupils and the number of free boys over the years 1845 to 1848 totalled six.²⁰ Thynne was required to appear before the Commissioners of Education in 1849 or 1850 related to his conduct not having met with their expectations. They subsequently recorded that their visitation had resulted in Thynne resuming duty.²¹ The School had five pupils in 1853 and the *Tuam Herald* was of the view that the post of schoolmaster was a sinecure. Thynne died in 1855 and the *Tuam Herald* took a more kindly view of him in death describing him as one who was possessed of talents of a very high order, an urbanity of manner which rendered him much esteemed, and as someone who always deported himself in a manner deserving of general estimation.²²

The *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58* reported that the schoolhouse in Tuam had been pulled down and the site sold. The funds, £558 in government stock, were vested in the Commissioners of Education for the purpose of building a new schoolhouse. Dean Plunket informed the Commissioners that there was a schoolmaster at Tuam who was paid by an annual tax on all beneficed clergymen who did not derive the slightest benefit from the School. He requested the Commissioners, should it be in their power, to remove this grievance. The Rev. B. J. Clarke advised the Commissioners that 'a diocesan school would, to a certain extent, have met with support, were it conducted on proper principles, and the terms such as the middle class of people (Protestants) in the town and neighbourhood of Tuam could give.' Clarke did not consider that the clergy were likely to avail themselves of the School. Edward Berwick, President of QCG, in giving evidence to the Commission, stated that Tuam had had a diocesan school but that he thought it no longer existed.²³

¹⁹ *Education (Ireland). The annual report of the Commissioners of Education in Ireland, to His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, for the year ending the 25th March 1850*, p. 3, H.C. 1850 (312), xxv, 51 (henceforth referred to as *Annual report of the Commissioners of Education for the year ending the 25th March 1850*).

²⁰ *Education (Ireland). Return of the total number of properties vested in the Commissioners of Education in Ireland, under act 53 Geo. 3; the names of the schools in immediate connexion with the commissioners, and where situated, with the number of boys in each on the 1st day of May last, and the number of boys taught in each school gratis, in each year for the last seven years, ending on 31st December 1848*, p. 5, H.C. 1849 (607), xlii, 645 (henceforth referred to as *Return of the total number of properties vested in the Commissioners of Education in Ireland, 1849*).

²¹ *T H*, 24 May 1850; Claffey, 'The Tuam Diocesan School', p. 89; *Annual report of the Commissioners of Education for the year ending the 25th March 1850*, pp. 2, 3.

²² NLI/MS 17,963, Tuam Diocesan Papers; *T H*, 2 July 1853, 6 October 1855.

²³ *Endowed Schools Commission 1857-58*, i, p. 41; ii, p. 219; iv, p. 694.

Thynne did not attend before the Commissioners and his death prevented the inspection of the School. The master subsequently appointed resigned having been appointed to a foreign chaplaincy and the Commissioners were unable to ascertain if he had ever brought the School into operation. Mr Abraham, Assistant Commissioner, reported that, in their present state, the diocesan schools at Mullingar, Monaghan, Tuam and Elphin were 'absolutely useless'. Just six of 20 diocesan schools were considered to provide a satisfactory level of education. The findings were not, perhaps, unexpected given that salary levels for schoolmasters had remained unchanged from 1570 until 1824 and that the schools were considered to have been neglected by the Commissioners of Education and by some Grand Juries. A picture of divided responsibilities for the operation of the schools was painted with the recommendations of previous commissions not having been acted on.²⁴ In 1854 one commentator noted the 'extremely irregular' attendance of the Commissioners of Education at meetings, related to the pressure of their other duties, the majority of members were *ex officio* members, with the Board, *de facto*, consisting of a single individual who was constant in his attendance.²⁵

The Lord Lieutenant united the dioceses of Killala and Achonry with Tuam for diocesan school purposes in 1857 and Henry Murphy was appointed master at a salary of £120. He had obtained a BA from TCD in 1856 and was subsequently awarded the degrees of LLB (1861) and LLD (1873).²⁶ John A. Claffey's article 'The Tuam Diocesan School' treats of the School from Thynne's appointment and, more particularly, from the appointment of Murphy. Claffey records that under Murphy the School was initially located in a residential house, or perhaps two, at Eastland Row, on the Dublin Road. Fees were six guineas for day pupils and £36 for boarders, which compared to fees at the nearby St. Jarlath's Diocesan Seminary of £24 for lay pupils and £16 to £20 for those intended for the priesthood. There were never more than about 20 boarders and the teaching staff was said to consist of Murphy and an assistant. In 1860 the School moved to Grove House, described as spacious and newly built, on a site of fourteen and a half acres.²⁷

Murphy introduced physical activity and sport to the School and in 1866 the *Tuam Herald* carried a report of photographs taken of pupils engaged in gymnastic exercises. The following year it reported on two cricket games between Tuam Diocesan School and Tuam Cricket Club, with there being a

²⁴ Ibid, i, pp. 41, 43, 57, 58.

²⁵ Anon., 'The Endowed Schools of Ireland' in *The Irish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 4, Issue 15 (1854), pp. 482, 483.

²⁶ *Endowed Schools Commission 1857-58*, i, p. 41; Burtchaell and Sadleir, *Alumni Dublinenses*, p. 86 (of list of matriculations, 1846-1860).

²⁷ Claffey, 'The Tuam Diocesan School', p. 89.

'large attendance of the elite' at the first game. Cricket continued to be played at the School and in October 1873 it was heavily defeated by Tuam C.C., with the day getting so dark towards the end of the game 'as to suggest the lighting of the gas'.²⁸

The Irish Church Act, 1869 came into operation on 1 January 1871. It preserved the life interest of masters of diocesan schools while they continued in post, but made no provision for the schools thereafter. An amending Act in 1872 provided that masters could commute their interest, receive two-thirds of the capitalised value, and be released from their duties. The acts were considered to have signalled the closure of the schools. Murphy compounded his annuity but continued to maintain the School.²⁹ In 1871 there were 27 pupils, 26 of whom were boarders, the number of boarders being in marked contrast to the two boarders then attending Galway Grammar School.³⁰

Claffey records that from 1877 to 1879 there were two assistants at the School including, in each of those years, a German assistant, suggesting that German was a core element of the curriculum, with reminiscences of the School 50 years later recalling that it 'was conducted on the best principles, had trained German teachers and its pupils always got the highest places in Trinity College'. Four of the School's pupils were successful at the first Intermediate Examinations in 1879, with nine being successful in 1880, including Mary Murphy, possibly a daughter of the headmaster.³¹ Twenty entrants to TCD over the period 1867-1880 can be identified with the School, with that College being clearly the preferred choice of pupils as, from 1861 to 1881, just five former pupils of the School entered QCG. One of the five was a Catholic.³²

In 1875 Murphy applied for the post of headmaster of Galway Grammar School. He stated in his application that the Diocesan School was closed when he was appointed, that there was no school-house, little material for a day school and that parents had a prejudice against sending their sons as boarders. Some of his friends had congratulated him on his appointment to a sinecure. He recounted how he had secured premises for the School, adding that there were now 34 boarders and he expected

²⁸ Ibid, p. 92; *T H*, 14 September 1866, 21 June 1867, 10 October 1873, 29 January 1887.

²⁹ *The Irish Church Act 1869 (32 & 33 Vict. c. 42); Irish Church Act Amendment, 1872 (284)*.

³⁰ Census 1871, Vol. IV, Tables XXXVIII and XXXVIII (a).

³¹ Claffey, 'The Tuam Diocesan School', pp. 93, 94; J.A. Claffey, 'The Intermediate Examination of 1879-80' in John Claffey, (ed.), *Glimpses of Tuam since the Famine* (Offaly, 1997), pp. 100-105.

³² TCD Admissions Records, 1847-1876 and 1877-1910; QCG/UCG Register of Entrants, 1861/62-1909/10.

to have 30 boarders for the following year, all of whom would, he considered, enrol at Galway Grammar School should he be successful in his application.³³

Murphy was unsuccessful in his application but continued, thereafter, to operate the Diocesan School. When Mr Mahaffy, inspector for the *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1881, visited the School, he reported that there were two resident assistants, one visiting assistant, 19 boarders, and one day boy there. He said that the School was in better condition than the one at Sligo, not in its teaching but through Murphy and his wife devoting their life and energy to it. He considered that it would disappear, at least as a boarding-school, when Murphy resigned or left. He found the pupils well looked after but was not impressed by either the standard of the teaching or answering. Mahaffy considered the School to be in decline and was of the view that the increased reputation of Galway Grammar School had impacted adversely on it. It is difficult to see how the School could have operated as a day school as the Protestant population of Tuam in 1881 was 288 and would have included few boys in the second-level age group.³⁴

Murphy was appointed rector of Monivea in 1880.³⁵ Memory of him in Tuam was positive with the *Tuam Herald* recording, after his death, that he had been well-known and liked as headmaster of the 'efficient' Diocesan School and had been a highly-educated and well-meaning gentleman. An article in 1918 described Murphy as a well-known and popular personality with a striking appearance, portly and tall, and with an agreeable manner. It added that he was broad-minded, amiable, a kindly disposed scholar and a gentleman.³⁶

Following Murphy's retirement Tuam Diocesan School continued to operate under William Hechler in 1880 and, in 1881, under the Rev. Horace Townshend.³⁷ An infectious disease subsequently broke out in the School and, even though pupils and staff were moved to another location, Bermingham House, it ceased to operate. The closure of the School was, at least in retrospect, regretted with it being described as a 'great landmark' for over fifty years and at its best in Murphy's day with its pupils having

³³ ESA/GS/898 (1), Henry Murphy's application for post of headmaster of Galway Grammar School, 28 April 1875.

³⁴ *Endowed Schools Commission, 1881*, i, pp. 53, 244; Census 1881, Vol. IV, Tables XXXV (a) and XXIX.

³⁵ Leslie, *Clergy of Tuam, Killala and Achonry*, p. 86.

³⁶ *T H*, 17 January 1902, 23 February 1918.

³⁷ Leslie, *Clergy of Tuam, Killala and Achonry*, pp. 393, 644.

obtained the highest places and prizes in TCD. The *Tuam Herald* had previously linked Murphy's departure from the School with it languishing and ultimately closing.³⁸

Memory of the School is preserved in 'a two-light window' in St Mary's Cathedral, Tuam, presented by the School in 1871 and 1875. Claffey records that one depicts St. Paul at the feet of Gamaliel, with the other showing Timothy learning from Lois and Eunice. An alternative interpretation is offered by Jim Higgins and Eunice Parsons who suggest that one of the lights shows a woman teaching a child, perhaps the child Jesus, while the other shows an enthroned king (Solomon) imparting wisdom.³⁹

The Church of Ireland clergy were given responsibility for establishing and maintaining diocesan schools. They were, for the most part, resentful of the obligation with the result that many of the schools, including Tuam, were only sporadically in operation and had poor facilities. The Lord Lieutenant was, for his part, neglectful of his obligation to appoint headmasters and when, in the nineteenth century, the Commissioners of Education and grand juries were enjoined in the responsibility to provide the schools a bureaucratic tangle frequently ensued with no person or body accepting responsibility. The combined forces of the Established Church and state failed to bring a school in each diocese into continuous and effective operation. Schools did not, even when headmasters were in post, always operate, and appointments were, on occasion, regarded as sinecures. There was a failure, in many instances, to provide adequate schoolhouses. There is little sense that such education as was provided was of a good standard. In the case of Tuam diocesan school, it appears that the clergy sent their sons elsewhere for their education, considering that, even in their relatively impoverished condition, the School was beneath them.

Had the School closed in the 1850s it would have done so with the epitaph 'absolutely useless'.⁴⁰ It was rescued from that fate by Henry Murphy who showed that a school with a committed master in an appropriate facility had potential for success. Pupils were rarely, it would appear, foremost in the minds of those with responsibility for the School until the appointment of Murphy who, with his wife, devoted his full attention to it. Thereafter, the experience of pupils would have been greatly enhanced by the School operating out of a good facility in spacious grounds, while their physical well-being was

³⁸ *TH*, 17 January 1902, 26 May 1923.

³⁹ Claffey, 'The Tuam Diocesan School', pp. 95, 96; Jim Higgins and Aisling Parsons (eds), *St Mary's Cathedral, Church of Ireland, Tuam: Restoration and History* (Tuam, 1995), p. 137.

⁴⁰ *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, i, p. 43.

catered for with gymnastics and cricket. The standard of education provided under Murphy, even if not meeting with the approval of the Endowed Schools Commission's inspector, resulted in a regular flow of pupils to TCD and QCG and in success at the intermediate examinations. The town of Tuam seemingly warmed to the School under Murphy but, while it appears that a small number of Catholics attended it, the availability of St Jarlath's College as the diocesan seminary for the Tuam Archdiocese from 1801 negated that need.

Tuam Diocesan School and Galway Grammar School co-existed within 30 kilometres of each other for 200 years. Successive Archbishops/bishops of Tuam, who had responsibility for the Diocesan School, were also members of the Board of the Erasmus Smith Trust and were called on by its Board, on occasion, to recommend and report on matters relating to Galway Grammar School. There is no sense that they ever envisaged that the purposes for which the schools had been established might be advanced through cooperation or amalgamation. In the absence of cooperation the schools could, conceivably, have competed with each other for pupils, particularly boarders. The Diocesan School's sporadic operation and poor facilities, with it rarely hosting boarders prior to the late 1850s, would, however, appear to have negated any threat to Galway Grammar School. The Grammar School, for its part, attracted few boarders over much of the period, even when it had the facilities to do so. Only in 1875, when Murphy applied unsuccessfully for the post of headmaster of the Grammar School with the intention of bringing the Diocesan School boarders with him, is there a sense of an awareness of one school by the other. In the event, Richard Biggs' appointment to the post of headmaster and the subsequent success of the Grammar School contributed to the closure of the Diocesan School.

Eyrecourt Endowed School

Eyrecourt Endowed School owed its existence to the Rev. Richard Banks who, in 1730, provided that the interest on £700 should, after the death of his sister, be used to found a charity school for the maintenance and education of poor children of the parish of Donanaughta (Eyrecourt), of which he had been minister. The School opened around 1771 with the Rev. Thomas Hackett as its first master. A schoolhouse, with an acre of land attached, was built at a cost of £600, funded mainly from the interest on the bequest and partly by Hackett. The *Irish Education Inquiry*, 1791 classified the School

as a grammar school. It reported that the schoolhouse was in good condition and that there were five day pupils.⁴¹

The Rev. John Hackett, son of Thomas, was master in 1812, at a salary of £42 per annum, having been appointed in 1796. He never discharged the duties of master and paid four guineas a year to a convert from Catholicism to teach about twelve Protestant children. The School was now considered to be an 'English' school in which children 'of the lower orders of the people' received instruction.⁴² Isham Baggs was appointed master in 1814. He had difficulty in gaining access to the schoolhouse and claimed that it had been ransacked. In 1821 the Bishop of Clonfert and Kilmacduagh, Christopher Butson, one of the School's trustees, wrote to the Commissioners of Education stating that Baggs had not taught any pupils for years, had conducted himself improperly, allowed the buildings sink into disrepair, placed persons of loose character in the house, and let the land attached to the School to various tenants such that the title to it was encumbered. He requested the Board of Education to institute legal proceedings should Baggs not vacate the house and land. Butson subsequently claimed that Baggs had promised to give Hackett £30 in return for Hackett's resignation. Baggs subsequently resigned.⁴³

Laurence Quinlan succeeded Baggs as master and, evidently in the context of suggestions for the establishment of a diocesan school at Loughrea for the dioceses of Clonfert and Kilmacduagh, manoeuvred to have the Eyrecourt School enjoined with the diocesan school and to have members of the laity, 'a person in my circumstances', as well as members of the clergy, deemed eligible to hold the post of headmaster.⁴⁴ Quinlan was still in post in 1835 when the *Commissioners of Public Instruction* recorded an average daily attendance of 20. The School had a total of 108 pupils over the period 1830-35.⁴⁵

⁴¹ *Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act: Copy of scheme for the management of the Banks endowment, Eyrecourt*, p. 5, H.C. 1895 (205), lxxvii, 587; *Irish Education Inquiry, 1791*, p. 373.

⁴² *Thirteenth report of the Commissioners of the Board of Education, in Ireland. Appendix: - schools of the association*, pp. 1, 18, 19, H.C. 1812 (219), v, 563.

⁴³ NLI/MS 17,936 (1), Eyrecourt School papers, Baggs to Corneille, 25 March 1814; NLI/MS 17,936 (2), Eyrecourt School papers, Butson to C. Wm. Walker, Secretary to the Board of Education, 23 May 1821; Butson to Walker, 5 June 1821; Eyre to Walker, 23 September 1821.

⁴⁴ NLI/MS 17,936 (2) and (3), Eyrecourt School papers, Eyre to Walker, 13 February 1822; Quinlan to Walker, 4 July 1822, 24 May 1823.

⁴⁵ *First report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction, 1835*, p. 11d; *Select Committee on Foundation Schools, 1837-38*, p. 57.

In 1844 John Coen was appointed master. He set out to provide instruction in Greek and Latin, together with a range of other subjects and reported that he had created a sort of gymnasium. The School appears to have enjoyed success under Coen who reported in 1844 that he had 27 pupils, two of whom were boarders. Fourteen of the pupils were Protestant and the bible was read every day.⁴⁶ Coen moved to Clonakilty in 1846 and was succeeded by James Weir. In 1848 Weir enquired as to whether persons of the lowest grade in society, such as tradesmen and police, were entitled to claim free education for their children as, if this were the case, the few respectable pupils would leave. In 1853 Weir reported that there had been 14 day pupils in the School in 1852, with a total of eleven free pupils over the years 1849 to 1852. The post of master was again vacant in July 1853 although Mr Eyre, a trustee, said that the schoolhouse continued to be occupied by Weir's family and was in poor repair, with Weir having stored an acre of potatoes in the bedrooms.⁴⁷

Robert Reddy was appointed headmaster later in 1853. He ambitiously set out to provide the classical and science courses for TCD, as well as the various branches of a practical English education such as would prepare and qualify for a merchant's office or the engineering profession. His terms were six guineas per annum for English pupils, eight guineas for classical pupils and he planned to accommodate a limited number of boarders.⁴⁸

The Rev. George Wilson was in post when George Abraham, assistant commissioner to the *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1857-58, visited the School. Abraham was of the view that the use being made of the endowment did not correspond with the intention of the donor and considered that neither the trustees nor the Commissioners of Education had acted towards this end. He reported that the salary of the master was £13 1s. 4d. and that the house and land was worth about £19 per annum. There were then ten day pupils and Abraham considered the state of instruction to be 'very unsatisfactory'. It was now, he recorded, a 'reputed classical school' where nothing was actually learned. Appointments to the post of master were achieved through a species of 'tenant-right custom' with each master purchasing the good will of his predecessor.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ NLI/MS 17,936 (5), Eyrecourt School papers, Killaloe to Eyre, 16 January 1844; Coen to Kyle, 2 July 1844.

⁴⁷ NLI/MS 17,936 (5), Eyrecourt School papers, Eyre to Kyle, 10 February 1846; Weir to Kyle, 2 May 1846; Weir to Kyle, 29 November 1848, 6 April 1853; Eyre to Kyle, 27 July 1853; Eyre to Kyle, 10 January 1854.

⁴⁸ NLI/MS 17,936 (5), Eyrecourt School papers, Eyre to Kyle, 23 November 1853; NLI/MS 17,936 (7), printed statement from Robert Reddy, 28 November 1853, soliciting the support of the gentry of Eyrecourt and its vicinity.

⁴⁹ NLI/MS 17,936 (5), Eyrecourt School papers, Wilson to Kyle, 5 January 1858; *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1857-58, i, pp. 111, 112, iv, pp. 682, 683, 691,692.

Isaac Matthews took up duty in December 1861 but, for the initial months, had very few pupils as Catholic children of the town were forbidden by their clergy to attend. Matters were subsequently considered to have righted themselves and there was deemed to be a 'fair prospect of a good school'. In February 1869 Matthews was master of a school in Bandon but had let the field attached to the School and the tenant was refusing to vacate the property. George McKay was appointed master in 1870 and resigned in 1875. In the 1871 Census the School was classified as a primary school with 14 pupils.⁵⁰

The report of the Commissioners of Education for 1880-81 stated that they were making every effort to utilise the endowment and the schoolhouse through amalgamation of the endowed School with Eyrecourt National School, but that the manager of that school had refused to accept the terms of the endowment. The School, consequently, remained closed. Meanwhile, the Endowed School Commissioners, 1881, reported that there had been no pupils at the School for the previous five years.⁵¹

The Commissioners of Education reported in 1885-86 that, under the terms of the Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act, 1885, the School would be discontinued, with provision being made for Eyrecourt children in lieu of the School. Ultimately, the endowment came to be utilised within the national school system, initially in schools under Catholic management and, subsequently, for a few years, in a school under Protestant management, towards developing practical skills in pupils.⁵² In 1932-33, the Department of Education advised that, as the Trustees of the endowment had not submitted a scheme for the application of the funds, the Minister would apply them towards enabling poor children from Donanaughta take a summer course in Irish at Spiddal, Co. Galway, a use of his endowment unlikely to have been envisaged by the Rev. Banks.⁵³

⁵⁰ NLI/MS 17,936 (6), Eyrecourt School papers, Cross to Kyle, 28 April 1862; Matthews to Kyle, 1 February 1869; Cross to Kyle, 17 February 1869, 17 November 1870; McKay to Kyle, 27 January 1875; Census 1871, Vol. IV, Table XXXIX.

⁵¹ *Education (Ireland). Annual report of the Commissioners of Education in Ireland, for the year 1881-82*, p. 7 [C.3242], H.C. 1882, xxiv, 1 (henceforth referred to as *Annual report of the Commissioners of Education, 1881-82*); *Endowed Schools Commission, 1881*, i, p. 59.

⁵² *Education (Ireland). Annual reports of the Commissioners of Education, for the years 1885-86, 1902, 1914, 1916*, appendix, p.17 [C.4799], H.C. 1886, xxvi.1; p. 5 [Cd. 1576] H.C.1903, xxi, 693; p. 7 [Cd. 7913] H.C.1914-16, xx, 211; p. 4 [Cd. 8557] H.C.1917-18, xi, 609.

⁵³ Report of the Department of Education, 1932-33, p. 107.

Eyrecourt School followed in a tradition, established by 1630, whereby educational endowments were embezzled 'contrary to all conscience and the excellent purpose of the founders'.⁵⁴ Little had changed by the 1850s with the Endowed School Commissioners finding that the intentions of donors regarding the admission of free pupils were generally evaded, that the Commissioners of Education neglected to oversee the endowments, and that the level of instruction in the majority of schools was not satisfactory.⁵⁵ Masters of the Eyrecourt School were focussed on securing the salary and schoolhouse and on maximising the value of the land, to the neglect of any pupils, before moving on when a better opportunity presented itself. Not surprisingly, given the low-level of salary attaching to the post, headmasters were willing to accommodate Catholic and Protestant pupils with a view to maximising fee-income, although difficulties occasionally presented themselves in the form of opposition from Catholic clergy. There was, however, on at least one occasion, an unwillingness to accommodate 'persons of the lowest grade in society' as free pupils would deter fee-paying pupils. One headmaster, John Coen in 1844, was mindful of pupil welfare in proposing to provide a gymnasium. Given that he left the School within two years, it is unlikely that the facility materialised. While the endowment was small, Eyrecourt School provides an insight into practices which led to general and consistent criticism of the uses to which private educational endowments were put.

The Barony of Longford, in which Eyrecourt was situated, had just 740 Protestants in an overall population of 16,893 in 1861.⁵⁶ Eyrecourt School did not, as a result, have a population base in its immediate area to enable it function as a viable Protestant grammar school. Only very occasionally did it cater for boarders and then only for a few. Consequently, it did not impact on schools outside of its immediate area. While Galway Grammar School did, certainly from 1815, have the facilities to accommodate boarders, its headmasters, for the most part, chose not to accept them. The Galway and Eyrecourt Schools did not, consequently, relate to or impact on each other. Neither was Galway Grammar School an option for parents from the Eyrecourt area who wished their sons to acquire a grammar school education.

⁵⁴ William Knowler (ed.), *The Earl of Strafford's Letters and Dispatches* (2 vols, London, 1799), vol. I, p. 188, cited in Raymond Gillespie, 'Church, State and Education in Early Modern Ireland' in Maurice R. O'Connell, (ed.), *O'Connell: Education, Church and State* (Dublin, 1992), p. 45.

⁵⁵ *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, i, p. 121.

⁵⁶ Census 1861, Vol. II, Co. Galway, Barony of Longford, pp. 506-508.

The Irish Missionary School, Ballinasloe

Thomas Andrews, Vice-President of the then Queen's College, Belfast, speaking in 1867 of the interrelationship between the British government's educational, religious and linguistic policy in Ireland, identified three major phases. He considered that there had been an explicit policy of anglicization under the Tudors and Stuarts, followed in the eighteenth century by a concern with the eradication of Catholicism. Andrews posited that only in the early nineteenth century, following the publication of the final report of the Commissioners of the Board of Education in 1812, had training the young emerged as the aim of education.⁵⁷

Protestant attitudes to the Irish language in the early seventeenth century has, consequently, been characterised as 'at best ambiguous and at worst hostile', arising from English concepts of civility and the Calvinist tendencies which developed within the Church of Ireland which equated Protestants with the elect and decreed that the Catholic Irish could, with their language, be ignored. It is possible, nevertheless, to discern some concession to the use of Irish in the religious sphere with, in the 1650s, 1680s and the 1700s, the need for Irish-speaking Protestant clergy being admitted.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, outside of those time frames, William Bedell, provost of TCD, 1627-29, sought to provide ordinands with the ability to preach to the native Irish in their own language and, in 1715, Archbishop King sent the Rt. Hon. William Connolly a list of 45 ordinands who had been taught to read Irish in TCD.⁵⁹

The establishment of the Incorporated Society for the Promotion of Protestant Schools in Ireland in 1733, dedicated to providing Protestant education to Catholics through English, signalled the abandonment of the efforts of the Established Church to reach the native population through the Irish language. From then until the end of the century neither the state nor the Church recognised Irish as a living language and by the early nineteenth century there was an increasing view that it was becoming extinct. A change occurred then with a recognition that the number of Irish speakers had increased, with the state becoming increasingly interested in education, and with the Established Church being concerned to maintain its claim to represent the Irish nation. Evangelical

⁵⁷ Nicholas M. Wolf, *An Irish-Speaking Island: State, Religion, Community, and the Linguistic Landscape in Ireland, 1770-1870* (Wisconsin, 2014), p. 112.

⁵⁸ T.C. Barnard, 'Protestants and the Irish Language, c. 1675-1725' in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 44, Issue 2, April 1993, p. 243.

⁵⁹ Trinity College Dublin: Former Provosts: William Bedell: https://www.tcd.ie/provost/history/former-provosts/w_bedell.php, accessed 2 April 2018; Acheson, *A History of the Church of Ireland*, p. 62.

organisations, supported by evangelical clergymen, were to the forefront in establishing schools to impart scriptural literacy in Irish using native Irish speakers.⁶⁰

By the early 1820s the evangelical movement had achieved significant momentum among the aristocracy and upper echelons of the Church of Ireland, including in the Trench family of east Galway. Amongst those who embraced the movement was Power le Poer Trench, son of the Earl of Clancarty, who was, successively, Bishop of Waterford and Lismore, of Elphin, and Archbishop of Tuam, 1819–39. By 1829, however, with the granting of Catholic Emancipation, hopes of a national reformation were at an end and the evangelical movement was confined to the Irish-speaking west and the poorer areas of Dublin.⁶¹

Trench remained committed to the movement and announced that he would not accept as a minister in the archdiocese of Tuam anyone not able to read and speak Irish. He had to withdraw that condition as suitably qualified candidates were not available. From 1830 Trench urged the establishment of a professorship of Irish at TCD to assist in the education of Irish-speaking clergymen. The delay in creating that post led the Rev. James Lancaster, secretary to 'The Connaught Home Mission Society', to propose that an institution be established in Tuam under Trench's direction in which divinity students would pursue studies in Irish. The proposal was, for the most part, met with silence from his fellow bishops.⁶² Thomas De Vere Coneys, a member of the Home Mission Society, who had a reputation for delivering powerful sermons through Irish and as a proselytiser of Irish-speaking Catholics, was involved in that unsuccessful effort. Coneys had been educated at Galway Grammar School when John Whitley was headmaster.⁶³

In 1838 Trench recommended the appointment of Coneys to the proposed professorship of Irish and, while Trench died in 1839, Coneys was appointed to the chair in November 1840. He continued his proselytising activities and in 1846 established the Irish Missionary School, Ballinasloe.⁶⁴ Coneys

⁶⁰ Wolf, *An Irish-Speaking Island*, pp. 125-135.

⁶¹ Irene Whelan, 'The Bible Gentry: Evangelical Religion, Aristocracy, and the New Moral Order in the Early Nineteenth Century' in Crawford Gribben and Andrew Holmes, (eds), *Protestant Millennialism, Evangelicalism and Irish Society, 1790-2005* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp. 52, 62, 68, 74-76.

⁶² P. K. Egan, *The Parish of Ballinasloe* (Dublin, 1960), p. 253; Joseph D'Arcy Sirr, *A Memoir of the Honorable and Most Reverend Power le Poer Trench, Last Archbishop of Tuam* (Dublin, 1845), pp. 587-596.

⁶³ Catherine Jennings, 'Thomas Coneys: First Professor of Irish in TCD' in *Connemara: Journal of the Clifden & Connemara Heritage Group*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1995, p. 89; *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2009).

⁶⁴ Sirr, *A Memoir of the Honorable and Most Reverend Power le Poer Trench*, pp. 590, 591; Jennings, 'Thomas Coneys: First Professor of Irish in TCD' p. 87; *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2009).

has been described as a 'hard-hitting controversialist of an extreme Protestant type'. He died in 1851 at which time he was rector of Ballinakill, Connemara, with the Church of St. Thomas there being named for him.⁶⁵

The concept underlying the Missionary School drew on Trench's desire for an institution which would educate clergymen capable of discharging their duties through Irish. A similar objective was one of the purposes underlying the establishment of St. Columba's College, which opened in 1843 at Stackallen House, Co. Meath.⁶⁶ The missionary rationale for the St. Columba's initiative provides an insight into the thinking behind the almost contemporaneous establishment of the Irish Missionary School. It was set out as:

In the instruction of the Irish peasantry their native language is a most important requisite, and indispensable in the case of at least half a million, who speak or understand no other; it is therefore proposed to found a Classical Collegiate School, in which, beside the usual preparation for the University, boys may be taught to speak with facility. By these means it may be possible to accomplish an object long since earnestly recommended by Bishop Bedell, Robert Boyle, Archbishop Marsh, Archbishop King, and other eminent men, - that of raising up within the Irish Church a body of Irish-speaking Clergy.⁶⁷

By the mid-1850s, however, the teaching of Irish at and the missionary purpose of St Columba's had been abandoned.⁶⁸

The Irish Missionary School became operative with Robert Maguire as its vice-principal. It may have been originally located at Lancaster House, Creagh. The patrons of the School were the bishops of Killaloe and of Tuam and its President was the Earl of Clancarty, who had asserted that the reformation had originally failed as a result of Elizabeth I not using the vernacular effectively.⁶⁹ The School's motto was taken from the gospel of Matthew ix. 37, 38, viz.:

⁶⁵ R.B. McDowell and D.A. Webb, *Trinity College Dublin, 1592-1952: An academic history* (Dublin, 2004), p. 191; Tully Cross ICA Guild, *Portrait of a Parish: Ballynakill, Connemara* (Galway, 1985), p. 73.

⁶⁶ Gregory K. White, *A history of St. Columba's College, 1843-1974* (Dublin, 1981), pp. 17-19.

⁶⁷ Patrick Wyse Jackson and Ninian Falkiner, *A Portrait of St. Columba's College, 1843-1993* (Dublin, 1993), p. 5.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 5-8; Acheson, *A History of the Church of Ireland*, p. 180.

⁶⁹ Egan, 'The Parish of Ballinasloe', p. 254; *Irish Missionary School Report, 1853*, p. 3; Brian Casey, *Class and community in Provincial Ireland, 1851-1914* (Cham, Switzerland, 2018), p. 74.

Go deimhin is mór an fógmhar, & is beag an luchd oibre; Uime sin guídidh Tighearna an fhogmhair, luchd oibre do chur amach chum a fhogmhair féin

The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.⁷⁰

The 'rules' of the School were:

- That this institution be denominated "The Irish Missionary School"
- That the primary object of this Institution be the training of eligible persons for Missionary work amongst the Roman Catholic populations of Ireland
- That the Holy Scripture do form the basis of the education of the Students without any exception, and that the evangelical principles of the Reformation, as set forth in the Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies of the United Church of England and Ireland, be recognised and maintained as the standard of religious instruction in the School
- That ample provision be made for the instruction of the Missionary Students in the Irish language, so as to secure a sound practical knowledge of this medium of intercourse with the Roman Catholic population
- That the training of the Missionary Students, after entering the University of Dublin, be continued in this Institution, until they shall have completed the Under-Graduate and Divinity Courses, and be fully prepared for the work of the ministry
- That the secondary object of this Institution be the providing of a suitable education for Pupils intended for other professions, affording them at the same time the privilege of gratuitous instruction in the Irish language.⁷¹

The School authorities were also mindful of the dictum *mens sana in corpore sane*, stating that:

The physical power of the boys (so intimately connected with their mental powers) are (sic) not neglected. At a certain hour the whole School, from the Vice-Principal downwards, assemble in the playground, and engage unitedly in athletic games and exercises. An open

⁷⁰ *Irish Missionary School Report, 1853*, p. 1.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 2.

air Gymnasium has, to a certain extent, been fitted up, and is highly prized by the junior boys.⁷²

The Rev. Robert Holmes Orr, A.M., Ex-Irish Scholar and Moderator, TCD, became principal of the Irish Mission School in 1849 and there were 17 pupils at the School in 1850, eleven of whom were boarders.⁷³ The School's report for 1853, when Orr was still the principal, congratulated its supporters on the encouraging state of the School, which, the report considered, was now assuming a position of such importance as to deserve the attention of Christians in these countries. Its success was such that it was filled to its capacity of 20 boarders and applications for admission were being turned away. An appeal for funds for a new building, with capacity for 50 boarders, was launched. The Earl of Clancarty had offered six acres of land, rent free, as a site for the new building and subscribed £100 towards its cost. A building, costing £2,900, was subsequently opened at a location known as 'The Pines'.⁷⁴

The report set out that the main purpose of the School was the preparation of pupils for entrance to TCD and that it was a select institution with pupils being admitted as a favour and being expelled as a matter of course for conduct deemed inappropriate. A strong moral influence was exercised and pupils were constantly reminded that they must devote themselves to their education. Preference in admitting pupils was given to boys with a knowledge of Irish so that they would be in a position to read and preach through Irish from the beginning of their ministry. Irish was taught by a Mr Murphy, a sizar at TCD. Scriptural instruction was especially attended to with the entire School being catechetically examined by Orr in the portion of scripture read at daily prayer. Orr's work was particularly acknowledged with the success of the School attributed to 'his unwearied and faithful exertions'. The 'aesthetic' was attended to by a drawing-master and some of the boys were making considerable progress as draughtsmen. A music master visited twice weekly and a psalm or hymn was sung at morning worship. The School had a library of nearly a thousand volumes and reading was encouraged. In addition, arrangements had been made for a series of lectures connected with the natural sciences. All in all the tone of the education provided was essentially religious.⁷⁵

⁷² Ibid, p. 7.

⁷³ YOUWHO? Robert Holmes Orr of Woodview House: <http://www.youwho.ie/orr.html>; accessed 5 July 2018; John Gregg, *A missionary visit to Connemara and other parts of the county of Galway* (Dublin, 1850), p. 5.

⁷⁴ *Irish Missionary School Report, 1853*, pp. 3-6 and 10, 11; National Inventory of Architectural Heritage: <http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=record&county=GA®no=30334015> Accessed 30 January 2018.

⁷⁵ *Irish Missionary School Report, 1853*, pp. 6, 7.

Twelve pupils from the School had, according to the report, entered TCD, six being missionary pupils, and one of the remainder had also been ordained. A further six missionary pupils were expected to enter in 1854. Supporters of the School were considered to be indirectly supporting the clergy as their sons were generally the most suitable candidates for admission and many of them, who could not otherwise afford it, received an excellent education. A millenarian note was struck with the comment that the present era was one of great events and called for the most serious reflection and exertion. The School's accounts showed income and expenditure of £768 1s. 0d., with the principal source of income being pupils' fees at £436 5s. 0d., and the principal items of expenditure being household expenses, £341 13s. 4d., and the salaries of the headmaster and assistant masters, £258 3s. 4d. Subscriptions, donations and collections, mainly from England, totalled £74.⁷⁶

Orr was still at the School in October 1855. From 1858 to 1863 Henry Carr was principal and he was succeeded by Albert James in 1863. James was still at the School in 1865 when he was also a curate in Aughrim. He was admitted to the benefice of Clabby, Co Fermanagh in 1866. Listing of the School in the *Irish Church Directory* appears to have been problematic as, rather than appearing with the list of schools under Church of Ireland patronage, it is given a separate entry, under the heading 'Societies', in the 1862 edition. In the *Directories* of 1863 and 1865 reference to the School is under benefices of the diocese of Clonfert.⁷⁷ There is no mention of the School in the *Directory* from 1866.

George Abraham, assistant commissioner, *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1857-58, visited the School shortly after it had moved to its new premises. He found considerable deficiencies in some aspects of the pupils' answering in Greek and Latin. Abraham considered that their knowledge of algebra and arithmetic was poor, and reported that they had no practice of writing from dictation. While pupils he examined in French translated text adequately, he found their accent, pronunciation and knowledge of grammar to be poor. The *Commission* recorded that the schoolroom could accommodate 61 pupils and that the dormitories accommodated 20 pupils, this appearing to be at variance with the aim of the building project to accommodate 50 boarders. There were 37 pupils enrolled, all 'United Church'. Pupil numbers suggest that the School's ambition to increase intake

⁷⁶ Ibid, pp. 7-9, 12.

⁷⁷ *Anglo-Celt*, 4 October 1855; *Irish Church Directory* (Dublin), 1862, p. 136; 1863, p. 94; 1865, p. 94; 1867, p. 37.

had not been realised. The Commissioners categorised the state of instruction as 'Not quite satisfactory'.⁷⁸

Thirty one entrants to TCD, likely to have been former pupils of the Irish Missionary School, over the period 1848–1865, were identified. Information available in the 'TCD Admission Records' shows that the fathers of eleven of the entrants identified were clergyman, with those of another eight described as gentleman/private/no occupation. The domiciliary origin of the entrants is not provided but their place of birth is and this may indicate their domiciliary origin. In this respect Cork, Roscommon and Tipperary were each the place of birth of five of the entrants, and Galway was the birthplace of four. Twelve of the entrants were aged 20 – 30 years suggesting a relatively mature cohort of pupils having attended the School or delayed entry to TCD.⁷⁹

The demise of the School can be traced to about 1863 when, in response to the proposal of the Rev. Mr Bell, headmaster of the Royal School, Banagher, that his school be relocated to Ballinasloe, the committee of the School passed the following resolution, conveyed in a letter dated 24 June 1863:

That the Committee of the Irish Missionary College at Ballinasloe, understanding that Banagher has been considered an unsuitable locality for a Royal School, are willing to offer to the Commissioners of Education a lease of this School Premises built for the Missionary College, rent free for a period of twelve years, resumable by the Committee at the expiration every three years, due notice being given to the Commissioners. The Committee undertaking to keep the premises in repair during the existence of the lease....⁸⁰

The offer was not availed of as the Commissioners of Education considered that the patent establishing the Royal School did not, in their opinion, allow of a change of its location.⁸¹

⁷⁸ *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, iv, pp. 716-721.

⁷⁹ TCD Admissions Records, 1847-1876 and 1877-1910.

⁸⁰ NLI/MS 17915 (8), Dr Michael Quane Papers, Letters and papers of Commissioners of Education in Ireland related to Banagher Royal School.

⁸¹ *Education (Ireland). Annual report of the Commissioners of Education in Ireland, for the year 1863-64*, p. 2, H.C. 1864 (461).

The Irish Missionary School was consistently advertised in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette* during the early 1860s but the last advertisement appeared in December 1864.⁸² This, together with the pattern of entrants to TCD, the offer of the premises to the Royal School, Banagher in 1863, the cessation of entries for the School in the *Irish Church Directory* from 1866, and the admission of Albert James to the benefice of Clabby in 1867, all point to the School having had most success from its establishment to about 1860, to its decline thereafter and to its closure by the mid-1860s. There was a postscript in that an advertisement appeared in the *Gazette* in November 1865 seeking a principal for the Irish Missionary School. There is no subsequent reference to the School but, over the months April to August 1866, but not subsequently, advertisements appear for 'Ballinasloe College', stated to have been founded in 1846, with the Rev. R. J. MacNamara as its headmaster. A Church of Ireland entrant to TCD in 1869, Michael Cleary, is recorded as having been educated at Ballinasloe College.⁸³

The School had a particular connection with Ballinakill parish, north Connemara. The first rector of the parish was Thomas de Vere Coneys, founder of the School. Thomas Fleming, a pupil of the School who entered TCD in 1853, was subsequently incumbent of the parish from 1871 to 1892.⁸⁴ The School's connection with Ballinakill continued when Benjamin Irwin succeeded Fleming as rector there in 1892, holding the post until 1920. Irwin, son of the Archdeacon of Elphin, had entered TCD from the Missionary School in 1860. While at TCD he had been a Bedell Scholar, fittingly, perhaps, given the purpose of the Missionary School and that Bedell had sought to provide ordinands with the ability to preach through Irish.⁸⁵

The Irish Missionary School, Ballinasloe was a final manifestation of a strand, extending from Tudor times, with an interruption only in the period c.1733 to c.1800, which sought to use the Irish language in the effort to convert Catholics. The School was directly linked in terms of its location, founders and purpose to that part of the reformation movement which survived longest. Its failure related to the demise of that movement, which included a levelling off from 1854 in support provided by Evangelicals to the Irish Church Missions Society's programme and to millenarian

⁸² *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette*, 1860 to 1865.

⁸³ *Ibid*, November 1865 and April 1866 – December 1866; TCD Admissions Records, 1847-1876.

⁸⁴ Omev Group of Parishes: <http://omevgroup.ie/st-thomas-moyard-ballinakill/> accessed 1 December 2015; TCD Admissions Records, 1847-1876.

⁸⁵ Omev Group of Parishes: <http://omevgroup.ie/st-thomas-moyard-ballinakill/> accessed 1 December 2015; Leslie, *Clergy of Tuam, Killala and Achonry*, pp. 405, 406; Trinity College Dublin: Former Provosts: William Bedell: https://www.tcd.ie/provost/history/former-provosts/w_bedell.php Accessed 13 January 2018.

speculation and fever going out of fashion by the 1860s. The Crimean War, 1853-56 deflected public opinion in Britain from Ireland, as did the Indian Mutiny, 1857. By 1858 the attention of English Evangelicals was focused on the challenge of Christianising India and the Irish missionary effort was eclipsed.⁸⁶

The School building reverted to the Clancarty estate from which it was purchased in 1901 by the trustees of the Catholic diocese of Clonfert becoming, thereafter, St Joseph's College, the Catholic seminary for the diocese.⁸⁷ That School moved to its present location at Garbally, the former residence of the Earls of Clancarty, in 1922. In 1924 the building of the former Irish Missionary School was acquired and became part of St Brigid's Mental Hospital. It was converted into apartments in the 1990s.⁸⁸

The purpose and nature of the Missionary School were particular to the movement from which it originated. It operated for about twenty years and drew its pupils from a wide geographical area. While its President, the Earl of Clancarty, was committed to the School, there is no evidence of a similar level of commitment from its patrons, the Bishops of Killaloe and of Tuam, or from other senior clergy. There is, again, evidence of a concern for the physical well-being of the pupils, before the advent of the era of organised games. Clergymen, in contrast to the picture which emerges in the case of Tuam Diocesan School at the same time, are portrayed as requiring assistance in educating their sons. Given the particular ethos of the School, and as Galway Grammar School, under Hallowell, was, during this period, only reluctantly accepting boarders, it appears unlikely that the Irish Mission School impacted on the Grammar School in any way. There was, however, a personal connection between the Schools as Margaret O'Rorke, grandniece of Archbishop Le Poer Trench, married Alexander Eraut, headmaster of Galway Grammar School, 1895-1932, in 1905.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Bowen, *The Protestant Crusade in Ireland*, pp. 243, 248.

⁸⁷ Egan, 'The Parish of Ballinasloe', pp. 255.

⁸⁸ Landed Estates Database, NUI Galway: <http://landedestates.nuigalway.ie/LandedEstates/jsp/property-show.jsp?id=640>

Accessed 2 April 2018.

National Inventory of Archaeological Heritage:

<http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=record&county=GA®no=30334015>

Accessed 30 March 2018.

⁸⁹ Anon., 'The O'Rorke's' in Carol O'Regan and John Jones, (eds), *Moylough: A People's Heritage* (Moylough, c. 1993), p. 49; Ancestry.co.uk.

Private Schools

Numerous private schools operated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as evidenced by there being an estimated 348 such establishments in Ireland in 1788. It has been suggested that the schools 'reflected opportunism or desperation' on the part of their owners who hoped to cash in on the demand for education. Classical education was, however, deemed 'not so much attended to' in Galway c.1820 with most parents being content if their children received an 'English' education. An exception was the classical academy of David Kearns which was considered to have produced some excellent scholars.⁹⁰

Kearns' school accommodated 50 boys, eight of whom were Protestant, c.1826. Girls were then catered for by Mr and Mrs Nicolais, whose school had of the order of 67 pupils, including 30 Protestants, while Mrs Donnellan had 65 pupils, 15 to 21 of whom were Protestant.⁹¹ Protestant girls constituted about one-third of total attendance at those establishments, a level significantly greater than their likely proportion of the relevant age cohort in Galway.

There were a number of private schools in Tuam during the first half of the nineteenth century offering a curriculum which included classics. These included, in 1824, those of Charles O'Callaghan and of Beech Sandford.⁹² In May 1837 the *Tuam Herald* advertised the opening of a classical academy by Messrs. O'Cavanagh and McNamara.⁹³ In July of the following year a Mr McAllister advertised that he had opened a 'Classical and Mathematical Academy' in the following terms:

Respectfully apprises the Gentlemen of Tuam and its vicinity that he has under the patronage of several respectable individuals opened this Academy on the 26th of April, 1836, in a Commodious and Splendid apartment, adjacent to the Mall, where he continues to teach a select class of boys, the course of Greek and Latin Classics requisite for admission in any University. In this Seminary will be also taught English, Grammar, History, Writing, Arithmetic, Geometry, Mensuration, Bookkeeping, Algebra, Geography, Use of Globes etc.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Toby Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland: The Irish Protestants, 1649-1770* (New Haven, 2003), p. 102; Hardiman, *History of the Town and County of Galway*, p. 312.

⁹¹ *Second report of the commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry*, pp. 1226, 1227, H. C. 1826-27 (12), xii, 1.

⁹² Jarlath O'Connell, 'Tuam Schools in the Nineteenth Century': an extract from the *Galway Reader*, Vol. 2, Nos. 3 and 4, pp. 171-179.

⁹³ *T H*, 27 May 1837.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 14 July 1838.

It is likely that some Protestants attended the several Tuam 'academies' given the infrequent operation of Tuam Diocesan School around this time.

A number of private schools operated in Galway town in the mid-nineteenth century with Edward Berwick, President of QCG, in evidence to the *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1857-58, stating that classical schools in Galway included those of Winters and McGrath and that there was a school in Loughrea which had very few pupils.⁹⁵ In 1846 the *Galway Vindicator* reported the opening of a seminary by T.J. Wallace which proposed to prepare pupils for TCD, or any ecclesiastical college, and for professional and mercantile business. In 1860 it reported on the success at college examinations of Mr Ryan's academy, with two pupils having presented for matriculation and achieved a 'successful scrutiny'. Provision for girls included 'The Misses Goldings' Boarding and Day School for Young Ladies'.⁹⁶ The overall impression is of a certain demand for the schools with, as a result of the demand not being sufficient and/or the quality of education provided being considered inadequate, the schools being transient in nature.

There was, apparently, a significant decline in the demand for and provision of education at private schools in the mid-nineteenth century, related, in all probability, to the increasing number of schools operated by religious orders and catering for Catholics. The extent of the decline may be seen by reference to the TCD entrant registers for the years 1847 and 1876. While accepting that there had been a pattern of identifying a school by its headmaster, rather than its formal name, 68 per cent of entrants in 1847 are recorded as having been educated by a named schoolmaster, compared to 5 per cent in 1876.⁹⁷ The decline is further evidenced by the number of intermediate schools falling from 729 in 1861 to 574 in 1871, with the likelihood being that many of the schools which closed were private establishments. Nevertheless, private schools continued at this time to be the main provider of second-level education to Protestants with 7,113 Protestant pupils, from a total of 10,383, attending private schools in 1871.⁹⁸

The pattern of private education provision in Co. Galway for Protestants is discernible from the Census reports, 1871 to 1911, which record that 186 Protestants were attending private institutions

⁹⁵ *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1857-58, iii, pp. 218-220.

⁹⁶ *Galway Vindicator*, 2 January 1846 and 27 October 1860; *Galway Mercury*, 22 June 1849.

⁹⁷ TCD Admission Records, 1847-1876.

⁹⁸ Census 1871, General Report, p. 170.

considered to provide 'superior' education, an average of 37 per census report. It may be noted that information on the age of the pupils indicates that not all of them were receiving, or of an age to receive, second-level education. The cohort consisted of 79 males and 107 females. The majority of females may be accounted for, in part, by boys having the option of attending Galway Grammar School throughout the period, while Tuam Diocesan School was in operation in 1871 and 1881. Schools were located, in the main, in Galway town and in the Ballinasloe area. A majority, 97, of the pupils were Church of Ireland. While this represents a lower proportion than the proportion of Church of Ireland religionists in the overall population, it may be understood by reference to the great majority of pupils in Galway Grammar School and Tuam Diocesan School being Church of Ireland. The relatively small majority of females, 60 of 107, who were Church of Ireland suggests an underrepresentation of that group or a tendency on the part of Church of Ireland parents to send their daughters to schools outside of the county. A small number of Protestants, 19, of whom 15 were female, are recorded as attending Catholic schools over the four censuses.⁹⁹

A private school attended by Protestants is recorded as being in operation in Galway town at each of the censuses from 1881 to 1911 and it may be that there was continuity of operation. The school catered primarily for girls with just seven of 73 pupils being male. Presbyterian sisters Agnes and Isabella Chestnut appear to have taken over operation of the school, or established a school which displaced it, in the 1890s.¹⁰⁰ Their school, generally known as the High School, may have been located at their house in Mill Street, with entrants to QCG in 1902 recorded as having attended Millbrook House.¹⁰¹

The High School was relatively successful between 1895 and 1902 when it received aggregate payments of £800 18s. 4d. from the Intermediate Education Board, compared to payments of £697 8s. 0d. to Galway Grammar School.¹⁰² It was considered to cater well for pupils intent on a university education and 13 of its pupils entered QCG between 1899 and 1904.¹⁰³ They included Janet Perry,

⁹⁹ Census 1871, Vol. IV, Co. Galway, Tables XXXVIII and XXXVIII (a); Census 1881, Vol. IV, Co. Galway, Tables XXXV and XXXV (a); Census 1891, Vol. IV, Co. Galway, Tables XXXV and XXXV (a); Census 1901, Vol. IV, Co. Galway, Table XXXIII; Census 1911, Connacht, Co. Galway, Table XXXVIII.

¹⁰⁰ Census 1901:

http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1901/Galway/Galway_West_Urban/Mill_Street/1375737/

¹⁰¹ QCG/UCG Register of Entrants, 1861-1909.

¹⁰² *Reports of the Intermediate Education Board for Ireland for the years 1895-1902* [C.8034], H.C. 1896, xxviii, 373...to [Cd. 1670], H.C. 1903, xxi, 729.

¹⁰³ Frances Moffett, *I also am of Ireland* (London, 1985), p. 39; QCG/UCG Register of Entrants, 1861/62-1909/10.

subsequently a lecturer in Spanish Studies at King's College, London, and Rosalind Clarke, who was an Assistant in Chemistry at UCG from 1910 to 1942. She was awarded a D. Sc. based on her research in 1914. Alice Perry, BE, 1906, is considered to have been the first engineering graduate in Britain and Ireland.¹⁰⁴

The Chestnuts may have left Galway about 1902 and no payments were made to the School by the Intermediate Education Board over the years 1903 to 1906. In 1907, when there were nine pupils, it was paid £9 18s. 0d. It was then located in premises provided by the Presbyterian Church in Nuns' Island. There were clearly concerns as to its viability and Alexander Eraut, headmaster of Galway Grammar School, who had acted as secretary to a meeting convened by the Protestant clergy of Galway with the purpose of arriving at a scheme for a secondary school for girls, wrote to the Erasmus Smith Board requesting financial assistance for the project. The Board regretted that it did not have funds available for that purpose.¹⁰⁵

The School was less successful in the post-Chestnut era due, in part at least, to the decline in Galway's Protestant population from 1,081 in 1901 to 777 in 1911 and to 370 in 1926. It had 14 pupils in 1911, just seven of whom were receiving second-level education.¹⁰⁶ In 1915 it was again on the verge of closure but Eraut requested the Erasmus Smith Board to defer consideration of his case for a girls' school as Miss Clarke had been persuaded to maintain the High School for a further year.¹⁰⁷ Just six pupils of the School entered QCG/UCG between 1907 and 1925. This is likely to have been related, in addition to lower pupil numbers, to Irish, which had become a matriculation requirement for entry to the College from 1913, not being taught in the School. Frances Moffett, a pupil of the School, passed the Senior Grade Examination in 1919, giving her an exemption from the entrance examination of TCD, but had to learn Irish privately to meet the Irish requirement for entry to UCG.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Rosaleen O'Neill, 'Modern Languages', p. 372; R.N. Butler, 'Chemistry' pp. 224, 225; Paul Duffy, 'Engineering', p. 139 in Tadhg Foley (ed.), *From Queen's College to National University: essays on the academic history of QCG/UCG/NUI Galway* (Dublin, 1999).

Note: Janet Perry dedicated her *The Harrap Anthology of Spanish Poetry* (London, 1953) to 'Miss Bel Chestnut of the High School Galway who guided my first steps in Spanish.'

¹⁰⁵ *Reports of the Intermediate Education Board for Ireland for the years 1902-1906* [Cd.2113], H.C. 1904, xx, 847...to [Cd. 4047], H.C. 1908, xxvii, 299; ESA/Registry Book 7, mtg. 17 May 1907.

¹⁰⁶ Census 1901 and 1911, Vol. IV, Co. Galway, Tables XXXIII; Census 1926, Vol. III, Part 1, Table 7.

¹⁰⁷ ESA/GS/749, Eraut to Registrar, Erasmus Smith Board, 30 September 1913.

¹⁰⁸ QCG/UCG Registers of Entrants, 1861/2-1909/10, 1910/11-1944/45; Moffett, *I also am of Ireland*, p. 97.

In 1922/23, when a Miss Richardson gave notice of her intention to resign as headmistress, Frances Moffett, then aged 22 and having recently completed the Higher Diploma in Education, was asked to assume the post as, otherwise, the School would close. She did so but ill-health forced her to resign within months. Miss Richardson resumed the post but the School closed in 1925 and pupils transferred to Galway Grammar School.¹⁰⁹

Private schools operated consistently in the Ballinasloe area with the *Commission of Public Instruction, 1835* recording such schools at Kilcloony, operated by John O'Farrell and John McGrath, catering for a total of about 35 pupils, predominately male. Both schools provided tuition in, *inter alia*, Latin and Greek and in the Catholic and Protestant catechisms. A school in Loughrea had 38 male pupils and offered an English and Classical education.¹¹⁰

Censuses, from 1871 to 1891, record private schools catering for Protestants operating in Kilcloony, and the 1911 census records a private school in operation in Ballinasloe.¹¹¹ The Kilcloony school(s) catered for a total of 57 pupils, ranging from 26 in 1881 to seven in 1891. The pupils were predominately male, with just seven being female. It may be that the school is that which operated at Sarsfield Road, Cleaghmore, Ballinasloe from about 1865. That school is stated to have been built by the third Earl of Clancarty for Mr Breakey, an eminent teacher in the town.¹¹² It may have been advertised, under the heading 'Ballinasloe Academy', in 1887 in terms which included:

The Education...is thorough preparing for the Universities, Constabulary, Civil Service, Commercial Pursuits and Professional Colleges.

The situation is most healthful, no case of illness having been in the School during the past twenty-three years since its erection.

¹⁰⁹ Moffett, *I also am of Ireland*, pp. 140-142; The Report of the Department of Education, School Years 1925-26-27 and the Financial and Administrative Year 1926-27, p. 152.

Note: The Report states that a capitation grant for nine pupils at Galway High School was paid for 1925 and that the School had been amalgamated with Galway Grammar School. The formal amalgamation of the schools is not reflected in the Registry Book of the Board of Governors which records, Registry Book 9, mtg. 22 October 1925, sanction for the admission of girls, which had, *de facto*, taken place the previous month.

¹¹⁰ *First report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction, 1835*, Appendix, pp. 3d-15d.

¹¹¹ Census 1871, Vol. IV, Co. Galway, Tables XXXVIII; Census 1881, Vol. IV, Co. Galway, Tables XXXV; Census 1891, Vol. IV, Co. Galway, Tables XXXV; Census 1911, Connacht, Co. Galway, Table XXXVIII.

¹¹² National Inventory of Architectural Heritage:

<http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=record&county=GA®no=30333007>

Accessed 14 June 2017.

The Resident Pupils live with the Head Master's family, and the domestic arrangements are most comfortably provided for.¹¹³

It also announced that it possessed 'Most spacious grounds for playing cricket and other games'.¹¹⁴

There is no record of any of its pupils entering QCG. However, John Breakey and James Breakey, recorded as having been educated in Ballinasloe, entered TCD in 1874 and 1879 respectively. The School closed about 1905 due to low attendance.¹¹⁵

Another private school, the Mount Pleasant Ladies Boarding and Day School, attended by Protestants, mainly girls, operated in Ballinasloe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century with, in August 1891, the *Tuam Herald* announcing that:

The Mount Pleasant Ladies Boarding and Day School, which in the past has done great service to the Protestant denominations of Ballinasloe, is reopened. Miss Davison, daughter of the Rev. Mr Davidson, Dungiven, County Kerry, takes the place so ably filled by Miss Irwin.¹¹⁶

There is no private school recorded for Ballinasloe in the 1901 Census but the 1911 Census records that there was a private 'superior' school in Ballinasloe with 25 female and eleven male pupils. It seems likely that eleven of the pupils were receiving primary level education.¹¹⁷ It may be that it was operating from Mount Pleasant, Cleaghmore, Ballinasloe and that the principal was Clementina Garrett, aged 29, a Presbyterian, assisted by Mary Watson, aged 19, also a Presbyterian and

¹¹³ *T H*, 29 January 1887.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁵ Tadhg Mac Lochlainn, *Ballinasloe, inniu agus inné: A story of a Community over the past 300 years* (Galway, 1971), p. 63; TCD Admissions Records: 1847-1876 and 1877-1910.

¹¹⁶ *T H*, 15 August 1891.

¹¹⁷ Census 1911, Vol. IV, Co. Galway, Table XXXVIII.

Note: The assumptions are made that the male private school referred to is St Joseph's College, Ballinasloe/Garbally College and that the 4 male and 7 female pupils recorded as receiving primary education were attending the 'mixed school', that they were Protestants, on the basis that female Protestant pupils would not have attended St Joseph's College/ Garbally, a Catholic Diocesan College, and that males of primary school age would have been unlikely to have attended it. Consequently, the eleven pupils receiving primary education have been attributed to the Protestant private school.

described as a 'Music Mistress'.¹¹⁸ The transition from Miss Irwin to Miss Davidson to Miss Garrett points to a market in or a series of successions in the school's ownership. There is also a pattern, in the case of the Mount Pleasant School, Galway High School, and Breakey's School, discernible by reference to 1901 and 1911 census records, of these schools being operated by Presbyterians.

Demand for second-level schools catering for Protestants in the Ballinasloe area is not surprising given the relatively large number of Protestants resident there. The 1861 census records that there were 1,153 Protestants in the barony of Clonmacnwen, which included the town of Ballinasloe, the same as the Protestant population of Galway Town at that census. The Ballinasloe area had, at that time, the potential to maintain a Protestant school.¹¹⁹ That potential speaks to the absence of a diocesan school in the diocese of Clonfert and Kilmacduagh, previously noted.

The success of private schools was highly dependent on the calibre of the principal and, while a number of the schools referred to here had reasonable pupil numbers, there is little evidence of continuity of provision over time. Many schools were attended by both Catholics and Protestants suggesting a level of toleration by all parties involved. It seems that pupils were children of parents who could afford to pay a relatively small amount towards their children's education but who were not sufficiently well-off to send them to boarding schools elsewhere, or else they went to the private school for a period of time before progressing to a boarding school. There is some evidence of a consciousness that the experience of pupils, over and above the educational, needed to be attended to.

It is most likely that the majority of the private schools discussed here accorded with a school type described by Dale and Stephens in their 1905 report on intermediate education in Ireland. The great majority were day schools owned by the principal, were located in dwelling houses, with no provision for playgrounds, and catered for Protestants. Lighting, ventilation and sanitary arrangements were generally inadequate and school equipment was frequently limited to a few maps and a piano. Dale and Stephens considered that the schools were not, in any real sense, 'intermediate' as only a small number of the pupils were taking the lower level intermediate

¹¹⁸ Census 1911:

http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Galway/Ballinasloe_Urban/Cleaghmore/448112/

I am grateful to Damian Mac Con Uladh for several useful suggestions related to the Mount Pleasant School.

¹¹⁹ Census 1861, Vol. II, pp. 487, 495.

courses. They urged the amalgamation of such schools. In the case of those in the Ballinasloe area there were no other schools to amalgamate with and they faded away, no doubt related to the decline in the Protestant population of Ballinasloe, which, in 1926, was just 184.¹²⁰

The boys, Catholic and Protestant, who attended private schools in Galway town could have added relatively significantly to pupil numbers at Galway Grammar School and, as pupil numbers at the High School declined from the early 1900s, Alexander Eraut was aware of the opportunity presented by its potential closure to admit girls to the School, with that occurring in 1925. It appears unlikely, however, that pupils who attended private schools elsewhere in the county would have attended Galway Grammar School, even had it been accommodating boarders, as, if minded to do so, their parents could have opted to send their children to schools elsewhere which did cater for boarders, rather than to private schools nearby.

Private Tuition

Education by private tutor to pre-university entrance level was an important part of the overall second-level educational landscape up to the mid-nineteenth century with 71 of 346 entrants to TCD in 1847 being educated privately. In 1876, however, just 21 of 296 entrants were educated in this fashion.¹²¹

Private education continued to be availed of in Co. Galway during the second half of the nineteenth century and into the early years of the twentieth century with 20 of 182 Protestant entrants to QCG from Co. Galway between 1861 and 1909 being educated privately. There were privately educated entrants throughout the period but the majority, 14, entered in the 1860s and 1870s. Sixteen of the entrants were male, with the four female entrants, 1896-1906, being the last entrants to be privately educated. They may have been the product of the predominately Protestant governess system

¹²⁰ *Intermediate Education (Ireland). Report of Messrs. F.H. Dale and T.A. Stephens, His Majesty's inspectors of schools, Board of Education, on intermediate education in Ireland*, pp. 41, 42 [Cd. 2546], H.C. 1905, xxviii, 709; Census 1926, Vol. 3, Part 1, Religion, Table 7.

¹²¹ TCD Admission Records, 1847-1876.

which formed a significant part of the teaching provision in Ireland for much of the nineteenth century.¹²²

Twelve of the QCG entrants were Church of Ireland, seven were Presbyterian and one was a Methodist. The entrants came from Galway (8), Athenry (5), Portumna (3), with one from each of Ballinasloe, Clifden, Moylough and Woodlawn. Only the paternal occupations of the nine entrants from 1879 is known and they were clergyman (2); medical doctor (2); University President (2); and farmer, merchant, and RIC Chief Constable. Private second-level educational provision did survive into the twentieth century as evidenced by David Thomson's account of his experiences as a tutor to the daughters of the Protestant Kirkwood family at Woodbrook, Co. Roscommon in the 1930s.¹²³

It is not considered likely that those from Co. Galway who were educated privately were potential pupils of Galway Grammar School. Some came from Galway town and would have had the option of attending the School should they have wished. In addition, it seems highly probable that families from elsewhere in the county who opted for this method of education for their children were relatively well-off and that their choice in opting not to send their children to a formal school was a deliberate one.

Galway Model School

In 1834, three years after the establishment of the national school system, the first Model School was opened in Dublin. In all 30 Model Schools were established and they served to train teachers for the national schools. The schools were so called as they were also intended to serve as 'models' for other national schools in their area. A model school was established in Galway in 1852.¹²⁴

¹²² QCG/UCG Register of Entrants, 1861/2-1909/10; Deirdre Raftery, 'The Nineteenth-Century Governess and Education in Ireland' in Deirdre Raftery and Karin Fischer (eds), *Educating Ireland: Schooling and Social Change, 1700-2000* (Kildare, 2014), pp. 110, 119, 120.

¹²³ QCG/UCG Registers of Entrants, 1861/2-1909/10, 1910/11-1944/45; David Thomson, *Woodbrook*, (Middlesex, 1976).

¹²⁴ Thomas Mangione, 'The Establishment of the Model School System in Ireland, 1834-1854' in *New Hibernia Review*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (Winter, 2003), (University of St. Thomas), p. 103; Nicholas Canny, 'The Parochial School of St. Nicholas: the Historical Background' in Leslie Lyons, *St. Nicholas's Parochial School, 1926-2001: History and Memories* (Galway, 2001), p. 3.

The Catholic hierarchy did not, initially, oppose the Model School system but, after Archbishop Paul Cullen condemned a proposed school at Drogheda in 1851, other bishops joined him. John MacEvilly, appointed bishop of Galway in 1857, determined to have Catholic pupils, of which there were then about 200, withdrawn from the Model School and arranged for the opening of new schools by the Patrician Brothers and Sisters of Mercy to cater 'for the middle class of society'. In 1864 he made attendance at the Model School a reserved sin.¹²⁵ Consequently, over time, the School became a state school catering for the 'non-Catholic' children of Galway.¹²⁶

The Model School quickly became a cause for concern for Galway Grammar School with Thomas Killeen informing the *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1857-58, that Latin was taught at the Model School and considering that this was intended to impact on the Grammar School. Several pupils had, Killeen said, left the Grammar School when the Model School opened and there were others who had been expected to attend the Grammar School but, instead, went to the Model School. He added that some respectable people sent their sons there, with low fees being charged and a good standard of education being provided. The headmaster of the Grammar School, the Rev. J.W. Hallowell, considered that the Model School had interfered with the English Department of the Grammar School as it had applied itself to the education of the most respectable classes at the same rate, 2s. 6d. per quarter, as charged to the poorer classes. He stated that Mr Moylan, headmaster of the School, had advertised that a classics master was employed there.¹²⁷ Moylan was subsequently informed by the Commissioners for National Education, adverting to a report from the inspectorate on his conduct towards 'local parties', that he should not have introduced instruction in classics without their sanction.¹²⁸ The level and standard of education provided at the School was such that seven of its pupils entered QCG between 1862 and 1873 and a further pupil entered TCD in 1871.¹²⁹

The 1870 *Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland)* considered the age of children attending the model schools to be generally high and 44 per cent of boys and 36 per cent of girls then attending Galway Model School were aged over twelve years. The School was, consequently, providing education to children at an age when their enrolment in a second-level

¹²⁵ Liam Bane, *The Bishop in Politics: Life and Career of John MacEvilly* (Westport, 1993), p. 87; Cunningham, *A town tormented by the sea*, p. 345.

¹²⁶ Canny, 'The Parochial School of St. Nicholas', p. 4.

¹²⁷ *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1857-58, ii, pp. 268-275, iii, pp. 42-52.

¹²⁸ NAI/ED/3/2, Commissioners of National Education in Ireland: registers of summaries of documents relating to administration of model national schools and model agricultural schools, 1853-57, folio 65.

¹²⁹ QCG/UCG Register of Entrants, 1861/2-1909/10; TCD Admissions Records, 1847-1876.

school might have been expected. While appreciating that this was not unusual at the time, it would have had an adverse impact on the number of day pupils attending Galway Grammar School. Their prolonged stay at the Model School would, in the case of many pupils, have mitigated entirely their need to transfer to a second-level school.¹³⁰ The capacity of Model Schools to impact on grammar schools is shown in the case of Monaghan Collegiate School where, in November 1897, there were eleven pupils. That School closed in 1903, leaving Monaghan town without a Protestant secondary school until 1951. The 1901 Census recorded that there were 80 Protestant pupils receiving 'superior' education at Monaghan Model School.¹³¹

Galway Model School was, in 1901, providing 'superior' education to nine pupils and there were 14 pupils aged 14 years or over attending the School. The practice of providing education to pre-university level had been revived and seven pupils, four boys and three girls, from the School entered QCG between 1895 and 1909. This was almost certainly a function of the headmaster, Richard Smith, whose knowledge was described by a former pupil as 'vast', and three of the seven QCG entrants were his children. The 1911 Census does not record any pupils at the Model School receiving 'superior' education and there were then just five pupils aged 14 or over. Two of Richard Smith's daughters, Amy and Sarah, entered UCG, in 1912 and 1916 respectively, having attended Galway High School.¹³²

The Model School closed in 1926 and the Church of Ireland, St. Nicholas Parochial School opened in the Buckland Building. It became a feeder school for Galway Grammar School and provided primary education to pupils from outside of Galway who boarded at the Grammar School.¹³³ The capacity for competition between the Schools which existed for half a century became a partnership.

¹³⁰ *Royal Commission of Inquiry into primary education (Ireland). Vol. 1. – Part II. Containing appendix to the report and also special reports by Royal Commissioners on Model Schools (district and minor), the Central Training Institution, etc., Dublin and on agricultural schools*, pp. 756, 757, [C. 6 a] H.C. 1870.

¹³¹ Wilkinson, *Our good school on the hill*, pp. 55, 56, 67; Census 1901, Vol. III, (Part 2), Table XXXIX.

¹³² Census 1901 and 1911, Vol. IV, Co. Galway, Table XXXIX; QCG/UCG Registers of Entrants, 1861/2-1909/10, 1910/11-1944/45; Moffett, *I also am of Ireland*, pp. 51-54 (Note: Moffett refers to the Headmaster as Mr Brown).

¹³³ Leslie Lyons, 'St Nicholas' Parochial School, Galway: A Brief History' in Lyons, *St. Nicholas's Parochial School*, p. 9; information provided by M. Connolly, former pupil of Galway Grammar School and St Nicholas' Parochial School.

Education in England and across Ireland

Ian d'Alton has observed that the great majority of indigenous Cork landowners listed in John Bateman's *Great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* attended a first rank English public school and that most went on to Oxford or Cambridge. The majority of those listed underwent their formal education before 1850. D'Alton further considers that, while the typical pattern of education in Cork for the sons of minor landed families up to the early nineteenth century was attendance at the local school and, afterwards, attendance at a school, such as those at Midleton, Youghal or Lismore, and then to TCD, an increasing proportion of all classes were educated in England as the century progressed. He suggests that there were a number of reasons for this trend, including the shifting of social and political emphasis to London, easier travel, and a wish for a more cosmopolitan education.¹³⁴

The 'ease and regularity' with which the Irish aristocracy, gentry and professionals fitted into England, its society and culture, in the mid-eighteenth century has been commented on by Toby Barnard in his essay on Robert French of Monivea, Co Galway. Robert was educated at TCD and the Middle Temple, London. His brother Digby also studied at TCD, followed by Christ Church, Oxford, and London. The pattern observed by d'Alton in relation to Cork also applied to larger landowners in Co. Galway. Twenty six landowners with an address in Co. Galway are listed in *Great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland*. The school attended by nine is listed with all attending schools in England, at Oscott (4), Ushaw (2), Eton, Harrow and Rugby.¹³⁵ It is clear that major landowners in Co. Galway did not attend schools in the county and probably, for the most part, did not attend schools in Ireland. In the case of Co. Galway it is noteworthy that the evidence appears to apply in the main to Catholics with both Oscott and Ushaw being Catholic schools.

The trend was evidently maintained and when the Vice-Chancellor of Ireland and Treasurer of the Erasmus Smith Trust, Hedges Eyre Chatterton, gave evidence to the *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1881 he ascribed the lack of success of the Trust's grammar schools to 'the great tendency that exists in Ireland amongst the better classes to send their sons over to English schools for education'.¹³⁶ The number involved was estimated at between 1,500 and 1,600 by Maurice Hime in 1889 and he contended that the number had been at that level for many years. Hime considered

¹³⁴ Bateman, *Great landowners*; d'Alton, *Protestant Society and Politics in Cork*, pp. 27, 28.

¹³⁵ T.C. Barnard, 'The Worlds of a Galway Squire: Robert French of Monivea, 1716-79' in Moran and Gillespie (eds), *Galway: History and Society*, pp. 274, 284; Bateman, *Great landowners*.

¹³⁶ *Endowed Schools Commission 1881*, ii, p. 101.

that the Irish nobility, bishops, judges, and leading doctors, lawyers, shopkeepers and merchants sent their sons to schools in England and that the few boarders in schools in Ireland were the sons of the country gentry and professional and business men whose means were small and who were too sensible to send their sons to the schools in England which they could afford. Hime was of the opinion that there were less than 700 boarders in the twenty best known boarding schools in Ireland.¹³⁷ Assuming Hime's estimates to be reasonably accurate, then the loss of those who went to schools in England would have had a significant impact on the Protestant male boarding school sector in Ireland in terms of it having viable pupil numbers, while there would have been the loss of an income stream which could have been used to increase teacher numbers, improve the quality of the education provided and the physical infrastructure.

Protestant numbers in Co. Galway would not suggest that many boys went to England. However, it does appear that the practice of boys from Co. Galway attending schools elsewhere was well-established by the late-eighteenth century as Thomas Canham Wade ascribed, in 1803, the lack of boarders attending Galway Grammar School to the practice which had developed during the latter decades of the previous century when boarders were not being accommodated at the School.¹³⁸ Dublin had become the preferred location for pupils from the west of Ireland by the mid-nineteenth century and when Dr King, headmaster of Ennis Grammar School, gave evidence before the *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, he stated that:

...and although an absurd objection to men of sense, the strongest thing I know of against our schools is the danger of the boys becoming inoculated with the Clare or Galway brogue. The very people of this town, if they can contrive it, send their children to get a Dublin accent.¹³⁹

These statements are supported by *prima facie* evidence from *Alumni Dublinenses*. Reference has been made to a sample of approximately 20 per cent of entries in that publication with regard to the place of birth of the graduates as a potential indicator of place of family domicile, as domicile is not recorded in the publication. There are 165 entries of persons born in Co. Galway over the period 1685 to 1860, with 57, approximately one-third, entering in the 115 year period 1685-1799 and 108

¹³⁷ Hime, *Efficiency of Irish Schools*, pp. 1-4.

¹³⁸ ESA/GS/89, 26 February 1803, letter from Wade re 'The School House'.

¹³⁹ *Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58*, ii, p. 187.

entering in the 60 year period 1800-1860. This suggests a fourfold increase in university attendance for this group over time. Of the order of 24 of the cohort can be associated with Galway Grammar School, a further nine can be associated with other institutions in Co. Galway, while 28 received private tuition or were educated by their father. The remaining 104 were educated across approximately 74 institutions, a small number of which were in England. The great majority of those institutions were almost certainly located outside of Co. Galway. No institution was attended by more than four of the cohort, suggesting that many attended schools which were short-lived and transitory, failing to sustain an existence from one generation to the next.¹⁴⁰

This pattern of pupils from Co. Galway being educated outside of the county is consistent with Galway Grammar School, in the main, not catering for boarders until c. 1875, with Tuam Diocesan School being only intermittently in operation and having poor, if any, facilities for boarders until about 1860; with Eyrecourt Endowed School rarely operating at a functional level and lacking boarding facilities; with the Irish Missionary School operating only at the latter end of the period and having a particular purpose and aim; and with private schools having, at most, capacity for a small number of boarders. In effect, unless a potential pupil lived close to a second-level school, there was no option until 1875 but to attend a school with boarding facilities outside of the county. This is also likely also to have been the choice of some who lived near available schools in the county.

It seems that patterns observed elsewhere of sending children to schools, in England or elsewhere in Ireland, considered more prestigious than local schools and located in areas perceived to have greater educational, economic and social opportunities, also obtained in Co. Galway. The rationale of Captain Otho Travers, who took his sons away from Lismore School to send them to school in England on the basis that 'schools in England taught better manners and gave their pupils more *éclat...*' appears to have applied.¹⁴¹ There is no doubt but that this tendency impacted adversely on Galway Grammar School. Since the trend in Co. Galway became more pronounced in the nineteenth century, it raises the question as to the extent to which it was influenced by the failure of Galway Grammar School to utilise its capacity to accommodate boarders from 1815 and by the apparently low standards which applied to the educational provision at the School in years from 1800 to 1875.

¹⁴⁰ Burtchaell and Sadleir, *Alumni Dublinenses*; Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland*, p. 102.

Note: The sample from *Alumni Dublinenses* is of those whose surnames begin A-C.

¹⁴¹ d'Alton, *Protestant Society and Politics in Cork*, pp. 27, 28.

Conclusion

Collectively, the schools considered here are representative of the range of institutions which provided second-level education to Protestants from the Reformation to the early twentieth century. While pupils were, on occasion, attracted, retained and educated to a reasonable standard under a committed headmaster, Henry Murphy in Tuam being a particular example, the story of the schools is, in the main, one of inadequate school buildings, of lack of boarding facilities, and of a low level of commitment on the part of their masters. Endowments were inadequate to meet their purpose. Masters focussed on extracting maximum personal benefit from available funds and associated lands. The poor facilities and quality of education made it difficult to attract fee-paying pupils and, consequently, funds were not available to employ staff and provide facilities. The schools failed to establish either continuity of operation or a reputation for providing good quality education.

Eyre Chatterton, Treasurer of the Erasmus Smith Trust, and Maurice Hime commented from a Protestant perspective on the tendency of the better-off to send their sons to England for their education. Ciaran O'Neill has observed that the wealthiest Catholic and Protestant families opted for a transnational education for their children and that a boarding-school education in Britain or the Continent was 'an important signifier of elite status' in nineteenth century Ireland.¹⁴² Not all families could afford to send their children abroad but an alternative was to educate them in a Dublin institution where they would lose their own local accent. The 'free-market' economy approach applied to second-level education in Ireland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries resulted in families purchasing education at the level they could afford, most often at a location removed from their home, with a view to improving the life-chances of their children. The implication of this practice in the case of Protestants in Co. Galway was that children of higher socio-economic status acquired their education elsewhere leaving those of lower socio-economic status to attend Co. Galway schools. Education was operating as a 'pull' factor in drawing well-off Protestants from Galway. Inevitably many would not return.

The poor-standard and inadequate facilities of schools in the county presented an opportunity for Galway Grammar School to attract pupils. The practice of pupils travelling to England and Dublin, in particular, to acquire education presented a threat. The opportunity was missed as a result of the

¹⁴² O'Neill, *Catholics of Consequence*, pp. 2, 4, 6.

Erasmus Smith Board being slow to provide the School with an adequate building, tolerating the underuse of the boarding facility when it was provided, and appointing headmasters in the nineteenth century who it would eventually dismiss, but only after they had been many years in post. Rather than availing of the opportunity presented by the lack of competition from other educational institutions in the county and in the west of Ireland generally, the School became part of the problem and would have been a factor, in terms of not accommodating boarders and in provide a low standard of education, in parents seeking to have their children educated elsewhere.

Chapter 4

Galway Grammar School, 1875-1932

The political, social, demographic and educational environment within which Galway Grammar School operated changed radically during the years in which Richard Biggs, 1875-1894, and Alexander Eraut, 1895-1932, oversaw the fortunes of the School. The transformation was presaged by the Irish Church Act, 1869, and the Irish Land Act, 1870, which loosened the Protestant Ascendancy's hold on power and privilege and left Protestants confused and apprehensive. The Union with England, which had imbued them with a sense of security, now seemed less permanent.¹ The position of Protestants continued to be systematically and consistently weakened over the half century to 1922 when the Union ended with the establishment of the 26 county Irish Free State which had an overwhelming Catholic and nationalist majority.

Developments during the period will be identified and discussed generally within the term of office of each headmaster with, in the case of the years 1895 to 1932, two distinct periods being considered, from 1895 to the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, and from then until 1932.

Overview 1875-1894

The political landscape in Ireland underwent significant change between the 1868 and 1874 general elections. The Ballot Act, 1872, provided for a secret ballot, while the Catholic hierarchy became disenchanted with the Liberal Party arising from its dissatisfaction with the University Bill, 1873, and with Gladstone's campaign against the decrees of the first Vatican Council, 1869-70. Following the 1874 election the number of seats held by the Liberals in Ireland had fallen from 65 to twelve. MPs who were at least nominally in favour of Home Rule held 59 seats, while there were 32 Conservative MPs.²

¹ F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine* (London, 1987), p. 146.

² *Ibid*, p. 152; Lawrence J. McCaffrey, 'Home Rule and the General Election of 1874 in Ireland' in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 34 (Sep., 1954), pp. 205,206.

Impetus for further political change came with the election of Charles Stewart Parnell as MP for Meath in 1875. He became leader of the Home Rule League in 1880, following the death of Isaac Butt. In 1879 the Irish National Land League was established by Michael Davitt, with Parnell becoming its President, against a background of failure of the potato crop, evictions and agrarian violence. It sought to prevent tenants from being rack-rented and unjustly evicted in the short-term and to make them owners of their farms in the longer term. The League 'reinforced the politicization of rural Catholic nationalist Ireland, partly by defining that identity against urbanization, landlordism, Englishness and-implicitly-Protestantism'.³

The process of change continued with the Corrupt Practices Act, 1883, and the Franchise and Redistribution Acts, 1884-85, adding over 500,000 voters to the electorate and resulting in most Irish boroughs being absorbed into the new county constituencies. The 1885 general election saw the return of 85 Home Rule MPs from Ireland, the demise of Irish Liberals, and Irish Conservatives being confined, practically, to the north-east. Between 1868 and 1885 representation from Ireland in the British House of Commons had been transformed from a Liberal/Conservative duopoly, with MPs coming mainly from the landlord class, into, predominately, an Irish Parliamentary Party committed to Home Rule, with increased lower middle class representation.⁴

Political change was accompanied by what amounted to social revolution with a series of Land Acts from 1870, culminating in the Wyndham and Birrell Acts of 1903 and 1909 respectively, resulting in 64 per cent of rural dwellers owning their holdings in 1916, compared to 3 per cent in 1870. Landlords were also impacted by the agricultural crisis of the late 1870s and, in the 1880s, by a fall in agricultural prices and profits, resulting in a decline in, or non-payment of, rent.⁵ For many of them the only recourse was sale of their land and 9,410 estates were sold by 1921 and land to the value of over £83 million changed hands.⁶

While the population of Galway Town fell from 15,597 in 1871 to 13,426 in 1901, its Protestant population remained stable at 1,105 in 1871 and 1,081 in 1901.⁷ Business was generally stagnant

³ Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine*, pp. 156-158 and 164-167; Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p. 415.

⁴ Foster, *Modern Ireland*, pp. 416, 417; Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine*, pp. 148, 179.

⁵ Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland*, pp. 62, 63; Foster, *Modern Ireland*, pp. 396, 397, 414.

⁶ Patrick Cosgrove, 'Irish Landlords and the Wyndham Land Act, 1903' in Terence Dooley and Christopher Ridgway (eds), *The Irish Big House: Its Past, Present and Future* (Dublin, 2011), p. 108.

⁷ Census 1871, Vol. IV, Table V and Census 1901, Vol. IV, Table XXXIII.

related to the town's distance from major population centres and the lack of natural resources. A description in 1887/88 pointed to it having streets two inches deep in whitish mud, with multiple markets, and with such industries as existed having small workforces and primitive working methods. Only the administrative/public sector expanded with almost 15 per cent of adult males being employees, or pensioners, of local or central government in 1881.⁸

Developments in Education, 1875-1894

Following on the introduction of the payments by results system in 1872, the primary school system came to comprise precise programmes and regular examinations which combined to encourage a mechanistic approach to teaching. There was an emphasis on reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic. From a statistical perspective significant improvements were brought about with increased success rates in obligatory subjects and in transition rates from the junior to the senior cycle. Illiteracy levels declined and rates of attendance at school increased. The system had qualitative weaknesses and came to be out of line with developments on the European mainland where countries were aligning their curricula with developing educational thought. The undeveloped primary school system probably benefitted initially from the structured payments-by-results system, but it was persisted with for too long a period and caused serious defects in the primary school system. In 1883, following a period of considerable pressure from the churches, seven denominational teacher training colleges with state support were established.⁹

A number of proposals had been made during the 1860s for the introduction of a payments-by-results system towards channelling public funding into the second-level system, while avoiding the direct funding of schools operating on denominational lines. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Chief Secretary for Ireland, requested Patrick Keenan, who had been involved in introducing such a system in Trinidad, to devise such a scheme. Hicks-Beach accepted nearly all of Keenan's proposals and the likely reaction of interested parties was ascertained.¹⁰

The Intermediate Education Act was passed in 1878. It established an unpaid Board, assisted by two full-time assistant commissioners, 'to promote intermediate secular education in Ireland'.¹¹ This was

⁸ Cunningham, *'A town tormented by the sea'*, pp. 183-186.

⁹ Coolahan, *Irish Education*, pp. 28-33.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 61, 62.

¹¹ *An Act to Promote Intermediate Education in Ireland*, 41 & 42 Vic., Section 5.

to be effected by a system of public examinations, by providing prizes, exhibitions and certificates to pupils, and by payments to school managers based on the examination results of their pupils. The Act resulted in the continuation of the pre-existing denominational system through its provision of funding to schools based only on examination results. By 1885 nearly all intermediate schools associated with the Church of Ireland were receiving funding from the Intermediate Board.¹²

The Act had many limitations, not least the inadequate funding provided to the Board, the interest on £1,000,000 allocated from the funds of the disestablished church. This amounted to about £32,000 per annum, of which £12,000 was spent on administration and £8,000 on pupils' prizes, leaving about £12,000 for allocation to school managers. Additional financial provision from excise duties was made in 1890. The Board's functions were limited to determining programmes, administering examinations and allocating funds. No provision was made for supporting, equipping or establishing schools. The financial constraints were such that the funding available became a determinant of examination success rates, which were generally in the 60 per cent range. The vast majority of pupils examined presented at the junior grades, and weaker pupils were not presented for examination related, *inter alia*, to success rates being in the public domain and poor performance impacting on school reputations.¹³

The Act did not specify minimum qualifications for teachers, thereby delaying the emergence of a professionally-qualified cadre. Teachers had no contract, no set salary and were at the mercy of an examination-based funding system on which their continued employment could depend.¹⁴ The Rev. J.P. Mahaffy, inspector to the Endowed Schools Commission, 1881, recorded that 'the profession of assistant master presents so few attractions, it has so little social status, and such small chance of preferment, that able and gentlemanly men cannot be expected to embrace it'.¹⁵ The number of establishments providing intermediate education decreased from 574 in 1871 to 474 in 1891, despite an increase in pupil numbers from 21,225 to 24,271. This increase of 14 per cent occurred almost entirely amongst Catholic pupils, with just a 2 per cent increase, from 10,257 to 10,499, in pupils of other religions.¹⁶

¹² Coolahan, *Irish Education*, p. 63; Timothy F. Kelly, 'Education' in Michael J. Hurley (ed.), *Irish Anglicanism 1869-1969* (Dublin, 1970), p. 55.

¹³ Coolahan, *Irish Education*, pp. 61-65.

¹⁴ Ó Buachalla, *Education in Twentieth Century Ireland*, p. 33.

¹⁵ *Endowed Schools, Commission, 1881*, i, Appendix A, p. 255.

¹⁶ Census 1871, General Report, Table LXXIV; Census 1891, General Report, p. 64.

Pupil numbers at individual schools fluctuated significantly and were particularly dependent on the reputation of their headmasters. Kilkenny College was reported to have had 45 boarders by the *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1857-58, but had only one pupil in 1886. Midleton College, which had 15 boarders and eight day pupils when visited by the *Commission*, had 65 boarders following the appointment of a new headmaster in 1869, but only eight in 1892 as a result of agricultural disturbances.¹⁷

The Erasmus Smith Trust 1875-1894

The Trust was, at this time, run by a minority of its 36 governors with an average attendance of nine members at the 45 meetings of its Board held from 1874 to 1879. Ten governors had combined attendances which constituted 68 per cent of all attendances during those years. *Ex officio* members were not regular attendees.¹⁸ The Trust's financial position was strong and it assumed responsibility for the external maintenance of the grammar school buildings, spent £3,000 on Drogheda Grammar School and refurbished Galway Grammar School. Nevertheless, recurrent expenditure on the grammar schools amounted to just £1,609 in 1877/78, 18% of total recurrent expenditure.¹⁹

In June 1878, as the Intermediate Education Act was making its way through Parliament, Lord Randolph Churchill proposed the establishment of a commission to enquire into the state of endowed schools in Ireland. In support of his motion he stated, *inter alia*, that the school endowments '...were in such a state of inefficiency as to demand the attention of the Legislature....'. Several months before he had stated that 'waste, mismanagement, and general misapprehension of duties' characterised the administration of educational endowments, with far too few pupils receiving a secondary education.²⁰ The *Freeman's Journal* brought the question of the endowed schools into the public arena when it pronounced that they were sectarian and that their funds belonged, for the most part, to the nation. It also referred to the Erasmus Smith endowment, which

¹⁷ Flanagan, 'The shaping of Irish Anglican secondary schools', pp. 33-37.

¹⁸ *Endowed Schools Commission, 1881*, i, p. 72, ii, Appendix V, p. 591.

¹⁹ ESA/Registry Book 6, mtgs. 28 May 1875; 21 December 1877; Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, p. 169.

²⁰ *Hansard*, 3, ccxl, 1164-1240, 4 June, 1878; Lord Randolph Churchill, *Intermediate Education in Ireland: a letter to Sir J. Bernard Burke* (Dublin, 1878), cited in R.B. McDowell, 'Administration and the public services, 1870-1921' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland: Ireland under the Union, II 1870-1921* (Oxford, 1996), p. 579.

was intended to fund intermediate education, being disproportionately used for primary education.²¹

The Commission to inquire into Endowments, Funds and Conditions of Schools Endowed for Education in Ireland considered that the administrative defects of the Erasmus Smith Trust identified by the 1857-58 Commission had, to a great extent, been rectified.²² The Board's policy towards its grammar schools was elucidated to the Commission by its Treasurer, Vice-Chancellor Hedges Eyre Chatterton, when, in reply to a question from Lord Randolph Churchill asking as to whether he considered that the Board had 'totally altered' the bequest of the Trust's founder, he replied that:

In some respects I do. There are several matters connected with the original constitution of the schools, which show that Erasmus Smith intended the grant to be applied to necessities arising out of the then state of the country. By degrees those necessities altered, therefore the reason for applying the funds altered too; and by imperceptible degrees the schools became altered, in some respects, from the original directions of the will. For instance, I think there was no intention, originally, that there should be any boarding schools. I think also the schools were originally intended for persons of a poorer class than those attending our grammar schools, but that has grown up gradually and imperceptibly for a couple of centuries from the changes in the circumstances of the country; and this Board has gone on suiting itself to the requirements of the age, without any actual step that can be called a wilful violation of the wishes of the founder.²³

In the course of the Commission's hearings the Rev. W. Todd Martin, a Presbyterian clergyman, held that Presbyterians had been unfairly excluded from the benefits of the Trust. The issue of the use of the Trust's funds was subsequently taken up by Cardinal Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin, who expressed the hope that the 'unjust' allocation of public money to the Royal Schools, Diocesan Schools, Erasmus Smith Schools, and the Schools of the Incorporated Society be rectified.²⁴

²¹ *Freeman's Journal*, 22 March and 18 June 1879.

²² *Endowed Schools, Ireland, Commission. Report of the commissioners appointed by His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, to inquire into the endowments, funds, and actual condition of all schools endowed for the purpose of education in Ireland; accompanied by minutes of evidence, documents, and tables of schools and endowments. Volume I. Containing report and appendices, and tables of schools and endowments*, pp. 72-77 [C.2831, C2831-1], H.C. 1881, xxxv. i, 539 (henceforth referred to as *Endowed Schools Commission 1881*).

²³ *Endowed Schools Commission, 1881*, ii, p. 111.

²⁴ *Ibid*, i, pp. 72-77; *Freeman's Journal*, 6 October 1883.

An outcome of the Commission's report was the establishment of the *Educational Endowments (Ireland) Commission* in 1885. Its commissioners were authorised to draft schemes altering the conditions and provisions of endowments and they brought about a significant degree of administrative rationalisation to them.²⁵ The Erasmus Smith Board, having initially claimed exemption from the remit of the Commission as a private trust, submitted a draft scheme to it which was designed to effect as little change as possible to the Trust, except to emphasise its Anglican character.²⁶ A majority of the commissioners then published their own draft, although recording varying degrees of dissatisfaction with it. This draft attracted 18 objections and amendments from various individuals and bodies. The Erasmus Smith Board objected on six grounds, including that no religious qualification was prescribed for the governors of the amended Trust and that the educational provisions were not in conformity with the intentions of Erasmus Smith. In the absence of agreement among the commissioners it fell to the Judicial Commissioners, the Right Hon. Lord Justice Fitzgibbon and the Right Hon. Mr Justice O'Brien, to agree a scheme for submission to the Lord Lieutenant. They, however, when they delivered their judgements in October 1892, were unable to reach agreement and the endowment, consequently, continued to be administered as before.²⁷

Lord Justice Fitzgibbon considered that the primary intention of Erasmus Smith was the establishment of Protestant grammar schools and suggested that the English schools might be discontinued as they no longer served a useful purpose. Mr Justice O'Brien was of the view that the Trust had, over centuries, 'Lavished, wasted, cut up and carved upon mistaken projects, given away to one institution or another without, or in abuse of or excess of legal authority;...'.²⁸ *The Law Times* later recorded that Fitzgibbon and O'Brien had 'differed upon every material issue as widely as the poles....' The judgement of O'Brien was said to have been 'a philippic of rare eloquence and power'.²⁹

²⁵ *Educational endowments (Ireland)*. [H.L.] A bill intituled an act to reorganize the educational endowments of Ireland, section 5, H.C. 1884-85, i, 445, (176); McDowell, 'Administration and the public services', p. 579.

²⁶ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 180, 181.

²⁷ *Educational Endowments (Ireland) Commission. Annual report of the commissioners, for the year 1891-92, with abstract of the minutes of the commission, minutes of evidence, and appendices*, Appendix B, p. 175, [C.6783], H.C. 1892, xxix, 81 (henceforth referred to as *Educational Endowments Commission 1891-92*); *Intermediate Education (Ireland) Commission. Final report of the commissioners*, p. 235, [C.9511, C.9512, C.9513], H.C., 1899, xxii. 629, xxiii. 1, xxiv. 1.

²⁸ *Educational Endowments Commission, 1891-92*, p. iv; Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 181, 182.

Note: Wallace considered that O'Brien's finding was more 'like a political speech than a judicial summary'.

²⁹ *The Law Times*, 5 December 1914.

In the course of the deliberations of the *Educational Endowments Commission*, Fr. David Humphreys, parish priest of Killenaule, Co. Tipperary, commenced a campaign to open its benefits to the children of Catholic tenants of the Erasmus Smith lands. He objected to the draft scheme of the Educational Endowments commissioners proposing instead that:

That a Draft scheme be prepared on the basis of a neutral or mixed body to manage the Endowments and of the benefits of the Endowments being available for *all of the children of the tenants on all the estates formerly held by Erasmus Smith, and for the other children for whom he intended his Endowments*, of all denominations without any religious test.³⁰

Humphreys would continue his struggle against the Trust until his death in 1930, including through publication of a number of pamphlets.³¹

Meanwhile the public in Galway became exercised regarding the use of the Trust's funds and, at a public meeting in 1894, tenants were urged to act 'to break down the odious system' which precluded their children securing access to the educational endowments to which they were entitled. It was resolved:

That a deputation of tenants from the Erasmus Smith estates in Galway be selected to wait upon the Chief Secretary to represent the tenants' claims to an equitable portion of the Erasmus Smith Educational Endowment.³²

In the event it was 1901 before a deputation, led by the Bishop of Galway, met with Chief Secretary Wyndham who refused to act.³³

³⁰ *Educational Endowments Commission, 1891-92*, Appendix B, p. 178.

³¹ David Humphreys, *Evidence submitted to the Commissioners of the Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act (1889)*; *How the Trustees of Erasmus Smith have abused their Trust (1889)*; *The Erasmus Smith Endowment (1895)*; *Law in Ireland in connection with Erasmus Smith's endowment (1913)*; Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 184-185.

³² *T H*, 10 November 1894.

³³ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, p. 184.

The Trust also came under financial pressure during this period being, as a major landowner, impacted by the turmoil of the late 1870s and 1880s. Rent boycotts were in force and evictions occurred. Loss of rental income curtailed expenditure with the result that the Board resolved, in December 1880, that no expenditure be incurred over and above what was absolutely necessary. It authorised its Standing Committee to sell up to £3,000 of its stock to service its debt and to meet necessary outgoings. The Board declined, in 1883, to adopt the recommendation of its Standing Committee that headmasters be relieved of a portion of the costs of internal repairs, but authorised the Committee to exercise discretion. Ennis Grammar School became a casualty of the Trust's straitened circumstances and was closed in 1891. Support for of the order of 60 English schools was discontinued between 1875 and 1894.³⁴ As the century drew to a close the Trust was the focus of scrutiny by the public, the Catholic and Presbyterian churches, and politicians, while its financial position had weakened appreciably within two decades.

Galway Grammar School, 1875-1894

Richard Biggs, MA, LL.D., was appointed headmaster of Galway Grammar School from 1 August 1875. He had been born in England and was then about 28 years of age. Biggs was a graduate of TCD and, when appointed, was headmaster of a private school at Parsonstown (Birr), Co. Offaly which he had established c.1870. He set out, in his application, his success as a teacher and manager of a school which had an enrolment of 48 boarders and nearly 20 day pupils. Biggs referred to the 'scholastic profession' being his choice of career and to distinctions obtained by former pupils.³⁵

The School was in a weak position on Biggs' appointment with just 16 day pupils, compared to an average of 62 pupils, including 47 boarders, in the Drogheda, Ennis and Tipperary schools. He was authorised to postpone the School's opening to January 1876 to allow for necessary repairs. The assistant master, John Howse, continued to teach day pupils under Biggs' supervision. Biggs was quickly successful in attracting pupils, including many from his Parsonstown School, and in June 1877 there were 72 pupils at the School. Thereafter, he maintained pupil numbers at an average of 67 over the decade 1877/78 – 1886/87, above the average for the four grammar schools, although the

³⁴ Ibid, pp. 98-104 and 170-177; ESA/Registry Book 6, mtgs. 17 December 1880 and 6 November 1883.

³⁵ ESA/Registry Book 6, mtg. 28 May 1875; ESA/GS/898 (1), Application of Richard Biggs for the post of headmaster of Tipperary Grammar School. (This is the application on file in the Erasmus Smith Archives in respect of Biggs' application for the Galway Grammar School post).

School still lagged behind Tipperary Grammar School, in particular, in terms of numbers of boarders.³⁶

The *Endowed Schools, Ireland, Commission 1881* was advised that a salary of £100 per annum was provided to the headmaster of each of the Erasmus Smith grammar schools, together with £100 for assistants, but with Galway allowed £150 for assistants. Galway Grammar School then had 68 pupils, 28 of whom were boarders. Seven of the pupils were Catholic and seven were free pupils. Average pupil numbers at the other three Erasmus Smith grammar schools was 59, including 37 boarders. Pupil numbers at the six Royal schools averaged 54, including 27 boarders.³⁷

The Rev. J.P. Mahaffy, F.T.C.D., the Commission's inspector, provided a succinct and comprehensive statement on the School, and a view of Galway, when he reported that:

This school is situated in a place eminently unsuited for a boarding school, but for the same reason eminently requiring a good day school.... No advantage is offered by Galway except good sea bathing. The town is full of decay and pauperism.... It does not command, by means of railways, a populous or thriving country. Nevertheless, the conditions of Erasmus Smith's property, which compel the Governors to keep a school there, are not to be regretted. Nowhere have I seen day boys of so respectable a class; even some of the free boys were particularly remarkable for their gentlemanly appearance and manners.... I found the school buildings commodious, though unfortunately in the suburbs of the town, and surrounded by wretched cabins. They were not in perfect repair, but I was told that whitewashing and other improvements by the Governors were *impending*. Meanwhile neither were the school-room floors nor the boys well kept, and both wanting brushing and cleaning. A small close yard inside the house was in a very bad condition – in fact the air of Galway seemed to have exercised an unconscious influence on the keeping of the school. For, otherwise, the head master is a very able and thoughtful man, full of new ideas, and exceedingly attentive to his school. He is stricter about sending reports, and these even weekly, than other Irish schoolmasters.... His discipline is also strict, and he has devised the excellent punishment for idleness, of making the offender get up an hour earlier next day to

³⁶ ESA/Registry Book 6, mtgs. 17 December 1875 and 15 June 1877 and various meetings, 1877-1887.

³⁷ *Endowed Schools Commission 1881*, i, p. 80 and Appendix A, pp. 234-237, 241-243.

prepare his work. Games and sport are carefully encouraged. In examining the boys, I found their Latin and Greek on the whole good and their mathematics very good – as might be expected from the head master’s antecedents – but their English, both writing and spelling, as shown in dictation, was deficient, and their French indifferent. There were weekly lectures in natural science; and a small library merely of boys’ books of amusement. This might be improved. I consider the staff of masters at the school peculiarly good in this respect, that they are all experienced teachers who have made this their profession, and are not hurrying or hoping to attain some other way of living.³⁸

The basis for Mahaffy’s opinion that Galway was unsuitable for a boarding school but required a day-school is not clear given the size of the town’s Protestant population and the report smacks of the idiosyncratic and elitist characteristics which have been ascribed to him.³⁹ In any event the School continued to attract boarders and for five of the six years from 1888 to 1893 pupil numbers averaged 84, including 47 boarders. Fee income, including subvention from the Board, was of the order of £2,800 in 1885/86 when the standard fee for boarders was £54. This level of income compares with the income of over £9,000 which the elite Catholic institution Tullabeg College, Co. Offaly enjoyed about 1880, when its average fee for boarders was £55.⁴⁰ Galway Grammar School attracted pupils from across the country with analysis of three cohorts of boarders, consisting of 126 pupils, for the years 1882/83, 1885/86 and 1889/90, showing that they came from 22 counties and four countries. Co. Galway was the domiciliary origin of 24 per cent of the pupils; 6 per cent came from other Connacht counties; 19 per cent from Munster; 40 per cent from Leinster, primarily Dublin, Offaly and Westmeath; 4 per cent came from Ulster, and 6 per cent from overseas.⁴¹ Mahaffy’s concerns regarding the School premises and surrounds were, however, borne out in 1884 when the Board was required to deal with a public notice requiring ‘abatement of a nuisance’, namely ‘The overflow of the cesspools’.⁴² In the same year Biggs wrote to the Registrar requesting that a shed be erected as the boys had no place to play in wet weather, adding that he was willing to contribute to the cost. Biggs subsequently reported that the ceiling of the west dormitory was coming down. The architects, however, deemed the School to be in ‘very fair order’ in 1889. Weeks

³⁸ Ibid, i, Appendix A, p. 242.

³⁹ J.I. McGuire, James Quinn and Royal Irish Academy, *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, (Cambridge, 2009).

⁴⁰ ESA/GS/729 (4), (5); 730 (3), (7), (8), Pupil numbers; *Educational Endowments (Ireland) Commission. 48 & 49 Vic., ch. 78. Annual report of the Commissioners for the year 1885-86, together with abstract of the minutes of the commission, minutes of evidence, and appendices*, Appendix B, p. 432, [C.4903], H.C. 1886, xxvi, 89; O’Neill, *Catholics of Consequence*, p. 62.

⁴¹ ESA/GS/728 (1), (3) and (4), Pupil numbers.

⁴² ESA/GS/728 (3), ‘Notice Requiring Abatement of Nuisance’, 21 October 1884.

later Biggs wrote that the floor of the ball-alley, laid down when he was appointed, was breaking up.⁴³

Success in attracting pupils did not protect Biggs from criticism and in 1877 the Board requested that the attention of the headmasters of Galway, Tipperary and Ennis schools be drawn to the report of its inspector, Mr Gray, on the unsatisfactory state of classical education in their schools. A year later the attention of Biggs was drawn to a report of inferior answering in classics and in Euclid. In 1889, Biggs apologised for shortcomings identified which he ascribed, not to any change on the part of the School, but to variation in the average ability of pupils.⁴⁴ The Board was now, also, showing an interest in the provision of religious education to pupils and Biggs was informed that no change could be allowed in the instruction provided without the Board's sanction.⁴⁵

In 1889, Biggs, addressing criticism on the low number examined in Greek and Algebra, said that very few pupils from the School went to TCD and that those who went to the Royal University and into business could hardly be expected to learn Greek. His statement regarding the number entering TCD is not borne out by actual numbers with 83 pupils from the School being admitted over the period 1876-1895. There were 37 entrants to QCG over the same period, giving an average of six university entrants per year.⁴⁶ A sense of the School's standing amongst schools sending pupils to TCD may be gained from the number of exhibitions achieved with, in the 14 years 1885 to 1898, pupils of the School being awarded six exhibitions to that University, placing it joint 14th of 42 Irish schools awarded exhibitions. Drogheda secured eleven, Tipperary, 15, and The High School, with 37, obtained more than double that of the next highest school, Enniskillen Royal School (Portora). Galway Grammar School pupils achieved two Royal University of Ireland exhibitions over the same period.⁴⁷

⁴³ ESA/GS/728 (3), Biggs to Brennan, 1 January 1884; ESA/GS/729 (3), Biggs to Brennan, 1 August 1888; ESA/GS/729 (3), statement of architects relative to the condition of Galway Grammar School and premises on 20 June 1889; ESA/GS/728 (4), Letter from Biggs, 9 July 1889.

⁴⁴ ESA/Registry Book 6, mtgs. 15 June 1877 and 12 July 1878; ESA/GS/730 (6), Letter from Biggs, 9 July 1889.

⁴⁵ ESA/Standing Committee, mtg. 19 January 1883.

⁴⁶ ESA/GS/730 (6), Letter from Biggs, 9 July 1889; TCD Admissions Records, 1847-1876 and 1877-1910; QCG/UCG Register of Entrants, 1861/2-1909/10.

⁴⁷ *Intermediate Education (Ireland) Commission. Final report of the commissioners*, Appendix, pp. 14-27, [C. 9511, C.9512, C. 9513], H.C., 1899, xxii. 629, xxiii. 1, xxiv. 1.

The admission of free pupils was the subject of considerable correspondence between Biggs and the Board. The Board's policy in this respect was set out by its Treasurer to the *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1881. He informed the Commission that the Board did not consider itself bound to nominate 20 free pupils to each school, as provided for in the Charter, as, resulting from changes in educational provision, the poor now had opportunities for more suitable education. The general policy was not to reject an eligible applicant, but not to admit as a free pupil any boy whose parents could afford to pay and not to admit applicants whose class was such that it would not be appropriate for them to mix with the other pupils. The Treasurer further informed the Commission that the Board had never received an application from any of its tenants for admission of their sons to the grammar schools as the education provided there was not acceptable to them as Catholics.⁴⁸

The income and socio-economic status of applicants for free pupil status varied greatly. Applicants, and parental occupation and income, over the period September-December 1892, included John Clarke, son of the Presbyterian minister, who had income of £223 per annum; and the sons of James McConnell, book-keeper, income of £200; Samuel Platt, Inland Revenue officer, £242; Robert Brash, cooper, £130; John Carroll, gardener, £72; John Hynes and William McNally, RIC pensioners, each of whom had annual income of £62.⁴⁹ An application for free pupil status for his son was made by R.B. Tivy, a bank-manager, who had annual income of £365. Tivy stated that he was 'at present exercising economy to meet the expenses of a very large family'. The application was supported by Biggs who described Tivy as an excellent man who was 'with difficulty able to make both ends meet with growing-up daughters and eleven children in all on a limited income'. The application was granted.⁵⁰ Given the background of some of the free pupils Mahaffy's comment that 'even some of the free boys were particularly remarkable for their gentlemanly appearance and manners' is not surprising.⁵¹

Not all free pupils were committed to their studies and in 1889 Biggs wrote regarding four pupils on whom the 'advantage of free education in the higher subjects...is quite thrown away'. While the conduct of the four pupils had been deemed by Biggs to have ranged from 'generally good' to 'excellent', their diligence and progress ranged from 'very bad' to 'getting worse' to 'no

⁴⁸ *Endowed Schools, Commission*, 1881, i, p. 79.

⁴⁹ ESA/GS/730 (4), Applications for admission as free pupils September-December 1892.

⁵⁰ ESA/GS/730 (3), Application from R.B. Tivy for free pupil status for his son; ESA/GS/730 (3), Report on Free Pupils, 31 December 1894.

⁵¹ *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1881, i, Appendix A, p. 242.

improvement'. He subsequently thanked the Board for taking action, adding that he had no doubt but that a 'salutary effect will be produced'.⁵² The general attitude of Biggs towards free pupils was positive and he wrote to the Registrar in 1892 stating that:

...the School has – in the matter of boarders – suffered in past times from the presence of boys of a low class; we have prospered notwithstanding...As to day boys I know of none deterred by the presence of free boys. Some free boys of inferior social position have by a right use of their opportunities become popular with their companions and successful students turning out a credit to the School in every way.

Those who have done badly have not done so because they were of a lower class...but because they have abused their privileges.⁵³

Continuing, he asked the Board to reconsider the cases of two boys who, he considered, would prove acceptable schoolfellows and satisfactory pupils and who would reflect honour on the School.⁵⁴

In 1892, when the Board proposed to reduce the allowance for assistants from £150 to £100, Biggs requested that the reduction not be proceeded with, stating that the additional allocation, made in 1879, related to 'Galway being in the poorest, most backward, and in many ways most disadvantaged part of the country, the tendency in matters educational being distinctly eastward and northward'.⁵⁵

There is no evidence of organised sport being played at Galway Grammar School prior to the appointment of Biggs as, while the School grounds were the venue for a cricket game between Co. Galway and Co. Clare in 1860, pupil pastimes, between 1858 and 1860, consisted of 'marbles, burnball, football and pegtop'.⁵⁶ Organised games had been introduced to English public schools

⁵² ESA/GS/729 (4), Report on Free Pupils for Quarter ending 31 December 1888; ESA/GS/729 (4), Letters from Biggs, 9, 23 and 29 January 1889; ESA/GS/728 (3), Biggs to Registrar, 2 and 9 March 1885.

⁵³ ESA/GS/730 (6), Biggs to Registrar, 31 March 1892.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 1 August 1892.

⁵⁶ *Galway Vindicator*, 18 July 1860; O'Donnell, *Mixed Education in Ireland*, i, p. 95.

from the mid-century and a perception of the importance of games for the development of character quickly developed, with it being considered that team games encouraged unselfishness.⁵⁷ An impetus for the development of team sports in schools in Ireland was provided by upper class Protestants and Catholics sending their sons to elite schools in England or to schools in Ireland which adopted many of the philosophies of British elite schools. A desire to emulate the great British public schools was of importance for the premier Catholic and Protestant schools and from the mid-1860s the prospectuses of Rathmines School and St. Columba's College include references to their facilities for playing football. Clongowes College played its first cricket match in 1861.⁵⁸

Biggs wasted no time in introducing sport to the School with, in June 1876, the 'inclemency of the weather' proving to be the deciding factor when a cricket game between the Grammar School and Tuam Diocesan School was drawn. In 1880 it was recorded that games and sport were 'carefully encouraged' at the School.⁵⁹ In 1891 the School participated in the Connacht Union Cricket Championship and a year later, led by its 'popular and genial head' and being 'in fine fighting fettle', it 'gave a precious good licking' to Co. Galway C.C. on a day when there were not many spectators 'owing probably to the keen-cutting winds that blew piping and whistling over the land'. A victory over Co. Galway in 1894 was considered proof that in cricket, as in other games, the School could hold its own. Biggs's last season was 1894 when, after a game against Co. Galway, in which he was dismissed by Lord Ashtown, he entertained the County team with his well-known hospitality.⁶⁰

By 1880 rugby was well embedded in schools throughout the country and there were 30 schools amongst 88 clubs then recorded. Biggs was Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer of the Galway Grammar School club and H.S.M. Harpur was captain. During the 1879/80 season the School played games against Ballinasloe F.C., QCG, Ranelagh School, Athlone, and a past pupils' team. In 1885 the Connacht Branch of the IRFU was established and the Grammar School was one of six founding clubs. Biggs became the first President of the Branch. His appointment as President of the IRFU in

⁵⁷ J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (London, 2000), pp. 48, 55, 56.

⁵⁸ Jeffrey Dann, 'British Sports in Ireland: muscular Christianity, amateurism, and the imperial sporting ethos c. 1860 – 1940', PhD thesis, NUI Galway, 2007, p. 75; Paul Rouse, *Sport and Ireland: A History* (Oxford, 2015), p. 131; O'Neill, *Catholics of Consequence*, p. 52.

⁵⁹ *T H*, 16 June 1876; *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1881, Appendix A, p. 242.

⁶⁰ *T H*, 21 August 1891, 23 September 1892, 4 May and 8 June 1894.

1888/89 was testimony to his contribution to the game, despite operating in a province which was peripheral to the game's sporting and administrative mainstream.⁶¹

The Grammar School ranged far and wide in search of competition and, before 1885, there are reports of games against Chesterfield School, Birr; Ballinasloe; Ranelagh School, Athlone; the Royal School, Armagh and QCG.⁶² In 1886/87, the School reached the final of the Ulster Senior Schools' Cup, being defeated 11-0 by Coleraine Academical Institute.⁶³ In 1888/89 it was granted permission to participate in the Leinster Senior Schools Cup. A team described as 'formidable' and comprised of 'men' was defeated by Blackrock College in the semi-final. Galway Grammar School was subsequently awarded the game as one of the Blackrock players was overage. The School was defeated by Corrig School, Kingstown in the final. When the School played in the inaugural Connacht Senior Schools Cup in 1912 it completed a unique triple of competing in the Schools' Cup competitions of three provinces.⁶⁴

In October 1894 Biggs, having been appointed headmaster of Portora Royal School, tendered his resignation 'with great and unfeigned regret increased by most grateful senses of the courtesy, assistance and support which I have so constantly experienced from the Board since my appointment in 1875'.⁶⁵ The School then had 81 pupils, 42 boarders, 24 fee-paying day pupils and 15 free pupils. In 1893 there had been a staff of seven assistant teachers, besides the music masters.⁶⁶ In contrast, Kilkenny College was, over the period 1864-1890, described as being in 'almost remitting decline'. The Endowed Schools Commission 1881 found that school to be 'in a melancholy state' and concluded that 'the present master is...unfit to raise a school'. Middleton College, impacted by the loss of Catholic pupils subsequent to the opening of Middleton CBS in 1867, had of the order of 30 pupils from the late 1880s to the late 1890s. Pupil numbers at Newtown School, Waterford were between 40 and 63 over the years 1897-1900.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Richard M. Peter, *The Origins and Development of Football in Ireland being a reprint of R.M. Peter's Irish Football Annual of 1880 with an introduction by Neal Garnham* (Belfast, 1990) pp. 68-125; O'Gorman, *Rugby in Connacht*, p. 12.

⁶² O'Gorman, *Rugby in Connacht*, p. 13.

⁶³Project Gutenberg Self-Publishing Press: Ulster Schools Senior Cup: http://www.gutenberg.us/articles/ulster_schools_senior_cup#1870s Accessed 12 July 2016.

⁶⁴ Seán P. Farragher, *The French College, Blackrock, 1860-1896* (Dublin, 2011), p. 370; *C T*, 2 and 9 March 1912.

⁶⁵ ESA/GS/730 (1), Biggs to Registrar, 24 October 1894.

⁶⁶ Ibid, Biggs to Registrar, 27 December 1894; ESA/GS/730 (3), Biggs to Registrar, 14 August 1893.

⁶⁷ Whiteside, *A History of Kilkenny College*, pp. 68, 71; West, *Middleton College*, pp. 27, 28; Wigham, *Newtown School, Waterford, 1798-1998*, pp. 93, 94.

Portora had obvious attractions for Biggs. It was described by a pupil of the early 1890s as ‘the chief of the Royal Schools’ occupying ‘a stately building’ and that, as a school with a hundred pupils, it ‘loomed colossal’ in Irish eyes. In 1894 there were 102 pupils at the school, including 71 boarders. Its record at the examinations of the Intermediate Board and at entrance examinations to TCD was impressive.⁶⁸ Biggs’ predecessor at Portora was the Rev. W.B. Lindesay. Lindesay had been headmaster of Tipperary Grammar School and had, initially, gone to Portora as an assistant master, with many of the boarders at Tipperary following him to Portora.⁶⁹ In like manner many of the Galway boarders and two of his assistant masters, J.E.R. Allen and R. McKew, followed Biggs.⁷⁰

Portora maintained its success under Biggs with pupil numbers of 110 in 1902/03 and a subvention of £1,179 towards staff salaries, a sum which was in marked contrast to the £250 then provided to Galway Grammar School.⁷¹ Biggs died by drowning in 1904 leaving a personal estate of £21,970, suggesting that the occupation of headmaster could, for the successful ones, be profitable. The Biggs Memorial Prize was established at TCD in his memory but the Erasmus Smith Board, on being asked to contribute towards it, decided that it had no funds available for that purpose.⁷²

Biggs took an interest in educational matters generally and was, for a time, Secretary to the Schoolmasters’ Association.⁷³ In addition to his involvement in sport, Biggs contributed to other aspects of life in Galway. He was one of a quartet which performed at a concert in 1885, with its contribution being described as one of the gems of the evening. His popularity was deemed to be well-merited with the public being indebted to him and ‘the cultured Professors in his College for the invariable supper they give to every concert in our Old Citie’. He was active in church affairs being a supplemental lay member of the Diocesan Council. Biggs was clearly well-liked and an article in the *Tuam Herald*, which was critical in its general tone of the Erasmus Smith Trust, described him as ‘an

⁶⁸ Molony, *The Riddle of the Irish*, p. 39; *Education (Ireland). Annual report of the Commissioners of Education in Ireland for the year 1894*, p. 5 and Appendix C, p. 22, [C.7717], H.C. 1894, xxviii.379, 28.

⁶⁹ *Education (Ireland). Annual report of the Commissioners of Education in Ireland for the year 1890-91*, p. 4, [C.6363], H.C. 1890-91, xxxviii, 1.

⁷⁰ Quane, ‘Galway Grammar School’, p. 69.

⁷¹ *Education (Ireland). Annual report of the Commissioners of Education in Ireland for the year 1903*, pp. 21, 36, [Cd.2078], H.C. 1894, xx.807, 20; ESA/GS/730(1), Post of Headmaster, 26 October 1894.

⁷² *Derry Journal*, 27 June and 14 September 1904; ESA/Registry Book 7, mtg. 11 November 1904.

⁷³ ESA/GS/728 (4), Letter from Biggs, 8 January 1883, refers to himself as Secretary to the Schoolmasters’ Association.

able and erudite teacher'. A 'well-deserved' testimonial was prepared for him when he was leaving Galway.⁷⁴

Biggs was undoubtedly Galway Grammar School's most successful headmaster. The School was in a weak position when he was appointed but consistently had strong pupil numbers during his period in post. Academic success attended it at a time when the Intermediate examinations enabled employers compare the ability of prospective employees and the success rates of schools. In 1892 the School was awarded £175.17s.6d. in results premiums, compared to £1.17s.6d. awarded to St. Ignatius College, Galway, and £111.8s.6d. to St Jarlath's College, Tuam. In 1886 the elite Catholic schools Tullabeg and Castleknock had earned £158 and £126 respectively pointing to Galway Grammar School's competitiveness in this sphere under Biggs.⁷⁵ There was a regular flow of pupils from the School to university and it was competitive with other schools in terms of its pupils securing exhibitions. The School's success was, however, dependent on Biggs and, just as it had benefited on his appointment from an influx of boarders, it suffered the loss of its boarders on his departure. Biggs, despite the School thriving under his direction, left no lasting legacy. It now faced the challenge of retaining the standing it had enjoyed under him.

Conclusion

The winds of change foreshadowed by the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and the first Land Act came to have a degree of realisation during the years in which Richard Biggs was headmaster of Galway Grammar School. Protestants in the south of Ireland were effectively disenfranchised at parliamentary level, while the political agenda was dominated by Home Rule and the land question. Rental income from land came under pressure as a result of a fall in agricultural prices and the withholding of rents related to land agitation. Protestants came to be in defensive and reactionary mode as a result of the changing environment.

The 1878 Intermediate Education Act resulted in second-level education being provided with public funds through a payments-by-results system, but without changing the denominational nature of the system. The advent of the Intermediate examinations brought school performance into the public domain but the funds provided were not, of themselves, sufficient to effect significant

⁷⁴ *TH*, 2 May 1885; 20 August 1892; 3 November and 15 December 1894.

⁷⁵ Cunningham, *A town tormented by the sea*, p. 346; O'Neill, *Catholics of Consequence*, p. 63.

change. Galway Grammar school was, under Biggs, comfortable and competitive in this environment. There was a decrease in the number of private schools, mainly frequented by Protestants, even though overall pupil numbers increased, with the increase being mainly in the number of Catholic pupils. Average school size increased but remained small, with second-level education remaining the concern of only a small minority of the population. Protestant schools came under pressure in the new environment and such assumptions and presumptions as there might have been that they offered a better standard of education were now open to scrutiny. In addition, parents now had the quantitative yardstick of examination performance when taking decisions on their children's education. There continued to be a lack of continuity in quality of provision in Protestant schools with the calibre of the individual headmaster being the major determinant of success. In this respect the almost 'pied piper' like attraction of a good headmaster is evident in many of the boarders from his Parsonstown School following Biggs to Galway and almost all of the Galway boarders following him to Portora. In like manner many of W.B. Lindesay's boarders at Tipperary Grammar School followed him to Portora. The facility of Protestant boarders for almost instant mobility and relocation is noteworthy.

The Erasmus Smith Trust, which continued to be directed by a minority of board members, came under pressure from a variety of sources from 1875, including the *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1881, the Presbyterian and Catholic churches, the *Educational Endowments Commission*, and its tenants. The Trust's financial position deteriorated as a result of pressure on rental income from its lands and it began to reduce its commitments. The Board of the Trust sought, as it had since its establishment, to maintain control over the funds and the nature of the Trust. In doing so it exercised considerable dexterity with, on the one hand, its treasurer Eyre Chatterton advising the *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1881, that the Board had adapted itself to the requirements of the ages since its establishment, while it subsequently objected to the draft scheme of the *Educational Endowments Commission* on the basis that its provisions did not conform with the intentions of Erasmus Smith. Evidence of the challenge facing it was provided by the strength of Justice O'Brien's 1892 judgement.

There is little sense of individual pupils at Galway Grammar School over this period, however a collective sense may be gained by reference to the School's sporting activities which brought a particular dynamic to the operation of the School, as it did to other schools. Sport brought teachers and pupils into contact outside of the classroom and the other formalities of school life. In addition

to coaching teams, teachers played with pupils on school teams. This mitigated the authority structure of the School, with team performance requiring an equally valued input from both teachers and pupils. Meanwhile, travel to games would, inevitably, have added a further dimension and fluidity to the relationship. In playing a Co. Galway cricket team, which included a member of the peerage, the ability of a pupil with bat and ball was more important than social status or academic excellence. Schools became defined by their participation in sport and success in schools cup competitions, particularly in rugby, served, with the Intermediate Examinations, to establish the status of the school.⁷⁶ Mahaffy's comments in 1880 that the pupils required 'brushing and cleaning' points to the absence of professional and nuanced care, as opposed to teaching, accommodating and feeding pupils. This may have been a feature of boarding schools generally at this time.

A recurrent theme throughout the period is of the admission of pupils to the Grammar School without payment of a fee. The *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1857-58, had decreed that the Board provide instructions to headmasters in respect of free places. The Board did not consider itself bound by the terms of the Charter in respect of the number of free pupils admitted nor did it particularly direct free places towards its tenants. It appeared determined to minimise the number of free pupils and to ensure that those admitted were of an appropriate class. While seemingly anxious to ensure that only those who could not afford to pay were admitted, it appears that an appropriate background was sufficient to mitigate this policy with the sons of reasonably well-off personages, including of a Presbyterian minister, a bank manager and an internal revenue officer, all with reasonable incomes, being granted free pupil status. The selective nature of the Board's admission policy in this respect was such as to lead the inspector of the *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1881, to comment on the 'gentlemanly appearance and manners' of some of the free pupils. The attitude of Biggs to free pupils was positive and extended to pleading the case of two applicants rejected by the Board and, in reporting on free pupils not performing well academically, he commented positively on their conduct.

The relationship between Galway Grammar School and the town of Galway was undoubtedly constrained by the opening of the Jesuit College in 1860, although seven Catholics were in attendance at the School about 1881. The Board's Treasurer informed the *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1881, that Catholic tenants had never applied for the admission of their sons to the School, as the education there was not acceptable to them. In this respect it is noteworthy that the

⁷⁶ O'Neill, *Catholics of Consequence*, p. 53.

Trust's tenants in Galway sought access to the funds of the endowment rather than to the School. The School effectively became a boarding school during this period which would have served to distance it from the town. Nevertheless, a majority of the School's pupils about 1881, 40 of 68, were day pupils and day pupils continued to constitute almost half of pupil numbers thereafter pointing to a continued connection with the Protestant community in Galway. Sport, particularly cricket at this time, would also have acted as a 'bridge' to the wider community, while Biggs's involvement in sporting and cultural activities, together with his hospitality, all served to ensure that there was a good level of interaction between the School and the town.

Overview, 1895-1922

A split in the Irish Parliamentary Party occurred late in 1890, related to Parnell's relationship with Mrs Katherine O'Shea. Parnell died during the following year. A Second Home Rule Bill passed the House of Commons in 1893 but was defeated in the House of Lords. Thereafter, ten years of Conservative and Unionist government resulted in the effective removal of Home Rule from the political agenda, with Unionist/Conservative governments attempting to kill it by a series of initiatives, including Land Acts, the establishment of a Congested Districts Board, and a Department of Agriculture.⁷⁷ The demise of Protestant and unionist political representation in much of Ireland was confirmed when local elections in 1899, held under the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, which provided that county councils be elected under a wider franchise, resulted in nationalists taking 806 of 952 seats, with 115 of the 130 unionists elected being in Ulster. The outcome of the election has been described as 'not far short of revolutionary' in that power was moved away from the landlord ascendancy class towards farmers, shopkeepers and publicans.⁷⁸

Despite this, and encouraged by the success of the Land Conference, 1902, and the Wyndham Land Act, 1903, which emerged from it, a group of landlords established the Irish Reform Association and brought forward proposals for the creation of financial and legislative councils for Ireland which, while stopping short of Home Rule, would devolve considerable powers to Ireland. The proposals failed. They were, in any event, supported only by a small group of landlords who realised that political change, together with change in land ownership, had effectively ended the era of their dominance and that, if they were to have a future role in Ireland, it would require the development

⁷⁷ Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine*, pp. 195, 202; Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800*, p. 140.

⁷⁸ Patrick Buckland (ed.), *Irish Unionism, 1885-1923: a documentary history* (Belfast, 1973), pp. 50, 51; Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine*, p. 212.

of institutions and of a governmental structure which would allow them participate. The great majority of Unionists committed themselves to preserving the Union and to opposing anything which weakened it. Two forces, one nationalist, the other unionist, were set on a collision course.⁷⁹

Against this political background there was an upsurge in cultural activity encompassing organisations such as the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Celtic Literary Society, and the Gaelic League. Two strands, Gaelic and Anglo-Irish, emerged. Hopes that cultural revival would bring about common ground between the various elements of Irish society were dealt a blow by the Boer War, 1899-1902, which acted to mobilise anti-imperial sentiment. Pronouncements from the Gaelic League became increasingly chauvinistic, identifying Gaelic culture and patriotism with Catholicism, literature in English was considered Protestant and anti-national, and anti-materialism was promoted, frequently as a proxy for anti-Englishness. The GAA forbade its members to play English games.⁸⁰

The pace of political life quickened from 1910 when the Liberal Party became dependent on the Irish Parliamentary Party, which held the balance of power in the House of Commons. The Parliament Act, 1911, reduced the House of Lord's veto to a delaying one and, in 1912, a Home Rule Bill was introduced which was passed in May 1914. The Home Rule movement had been opposed by a Unionist movement which sought to maintain the constitutional connection between Britain and Ireland. That movement has been defined, in social terms, as an amalgam of the Irish landed interest with the northern Presbyterian bourgeoisie, with its strength being in the consensus between landlordism and northern business, and, in institutional terms, as an amalgam of Irish Toryism, Orangeism and the Church of Ireland.⁸¹

There was, however, within the movement, a tendency towards a more localized Unionism with, *inter alia*, the balance between Ulster and southern Unionism, between landed and middle-class power, and between the militant and parliamentary traditions changing over time. The landed influence in Unionism declined after 1900 and the balance shifted towards the Belfast middle class. Unionism in the south came to be largely confined to Dublin but, in its totality, embodied diversity

⁷⁹ Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine* pp. 217-223.

⁸⁰ Foster, *Modern Ireland*, pp.446- 449; Joseph Lee, *The Modernisation of Irish Society, 1848-1918* (Dublin, 1973), p. 138.

⁸¹ Foster, *Modern Ireland*, pp. 462, 470; Alvin Jackson, *Ireland, 1798-1998*, (Oxford, 1999), pp. 215,216.

and differences which resulted in divisions. This fragmentation tended to minimise its credibility and importance, while the decline of the landlord class deprived it of its natural leadership. Unionism, by the time the third Home Rule bill was introduced in 1912, was almost entirely an Ulster phenomenon, with southern Unionism being characterised by outspoken opposition, concern about the likely repercussions of its action, and rapid collapse. By 1914, when Ulster Unionist demands solidified around the permanent exclusion of the six counties from the Home Rule provision, southern Unionists were effectively reduced to the role of bystanders.⁸²

The Church of Ireland had been constant in its opposition to Home Rule driven by a fear that Protestantism would be endangered under it. A special session of the General Synod of the Church in 1886 declared its 'unswerving attachment' to the Union and determined to resist Home Rule '...as tending to impoverish, if not extirpate' Protestants. A protest against the second Home Rule bill, 1893, was endorsed by 1,203 of 1,229 parishes and Primate Knox considered that 'it would be better to call it a Bill to suppress the Protestant faith – a Bill to subjugate this country to Papal dictation'. A special session of the General Synod in 1912 reaffirmed the Church's opposition to Home Rule with it being considered that 'a truly religious conviction animated the opposition to Home Rule'. The Protestant population declined by 13 per cent between 1891 and 1911 and the emigration of Protestants to Canada was considered in 1911 as being motivated by the opportunity presented to live in a freer environment.⁸³

The Unionist movement acquired a physical force dimension when, Ulster Protestants, having pledged themselves, in 1912, to resist any parliament imposed on them, established, in 1913, the Ulster Volunteer Force, with that force being armed in 1914. The Curragh 'mutiny' of March 1914 put paid to any prospect that the army would coerce Ulster Protestants into a Home Rule Ireland. In November 1913 the nationalist Irish Volunteers were founded with the great majority of its members committed to securing Home Rule, but with the more separatist Irish Republican Brotherhood exerting some influence in the background. The outbreak of World War I, and John Redmond's support for it, resulted in a split in the Volunteers with over 90 per cent joining Redmond's National Volunteers and the remainder joining Eoin MacNeill's Irish Volunteers. The IRB members quickly secured control over the latter group.⁸⁴

⁸² Jackson, *Ireland, 1798-1998*, pp. 223-232.

⁸³ Acheson, *History of the Church of Ireland*, pp. 225-229; Census 1926, Vol. 3, Table 1A.

⁸⁴ J. J. Lee, *Ireland, 1912-1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 1-23.

The Easter Rising of April 1916 was quickly suppressed. However, a sequence of events thereafter, including the execution of the leaders of the Rising, the eclipse of the Irish Parliamentary Party by Sinn Féin at the 1918 General Election, the establishment of the First Dáil in 1919, the War of Independence, and a truce from July 1921, led to the signing of the Treaty of December 1921. The Treaty, which conferred dominion status on Saorstát Éireann, 26 counties, was approved by the Dáil in January 1922.⁸⁵

Against this background southern Unionism was, from 1914 to 1921, characterised by division, anger, and demoralisation. Led by Lord Midleton, southern Unionists attempted to reach an agreement with John Redmond around Home Rule at the 1917 Irish Convention but attempts at rapprochement were overshadowed by the conscription crisis of 1918 and Sinn Féin's growing strength. By 1919 southern Unionism was dead in an institutional sense. Internal differences resulted in division and weakness and there was a tendency to adopt untenable positions. While Lord Midleton, leader of the Anti-Partition League, which was formed as a result of Midleton's departure from the Irish Unionist Alliance in 1919, and his followers had some minor input into events leading to the truce of July 1921 and into the Irish Free State Constitution Act, 1922, southern Unionists and Protestants were effectively reduced to the role of bystanders at those events.⁸⁶

Meanwhile the position of Galway had not, in the new century, changed for the better with Robert Lynd in 1912 providing the following description of the town:

No one who has not seen Galway from a height like this can realise to the full what an air the place has of a town awaiting a blessed resurrection. Little of the grand life has been left here. Emptiness sits in the places of abundance. Tall and smokeless chimneys rise everywhere, giving the town at noonday the appearance that other cities have at dawn. So hollow of joy and vigour does this grey town look from the tower of St Nicholas that it has been likened fitly enough to a scooped-out egg-shell. Flour-mills, factories – how many were there even thirty years ago that are now silent behind cobwebs and broken windows.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Ibid, pp. 29-54.

⁸⁶ Jackson, *Ireland, 1798-1998*, (Oxford, 1999), pp. 232, 233.

⁸⁷ Robert Lynd, 'Galway of the Races', pp. 58-87, in Seán McMahon (ed.), *Galway of the Races* (Dublin, 1990), p. 64.

The Protestant population of Co. Galway was, at the turn of the century, concentrated in the towns of Galway, Ballinasloe, to a lesser extent in Tuam, and in the hinterland between Ballinasloe and Portumna. The largely Church of Ireland community in Galway town was long-established and well integrated with the town's civil and social establishment, whereas Protestants in Ballinasloe, a mix of Church of Ireland and Presbyterians, was of more recent, mainly northern, origin and tended to be involved in the mercantile sector and the professions. The rural community was comprised of large landowners of long standing, their employees and those who leased land from them.⁸⁸

Galway Grammar School was not comparatively advantaged or disadvantaged in terms of the Protestant population of Galway, county and town, at the turn of the century. Co. Galway then had a Protestant population of 5,205, mid-way, eleventh, of 21 of the 26 counties which came to make up the Republic of Ireland. The Protestant population of the 21 counties ranged from 12,424 to 2,203 and averaged 5,897. The excepted counties, the three Ulster counties, Dublin and Cork, together accounted for 62 per cent of the Protestant population of the 26 counties. The Protestant population of Co. Galway then exceeded that of Westmeath, 4,828, Kilkenny, 4,187, and Waterford, 4,171, counties in which other Protestant schools, Wilson's Hospital, Kilkenny College and Newtown School respectively, operated. Galway Town had a Protestant population of 1,081 compared to 1,111 in Kilkenny and 1,881 in Waterford.⁸⁹

Developments in Education, 1895-1922

Dissatisfaction with the primary school system grew towards the end of the nineteenth century and pressure increased for the abolition of the payment-by-results system. The *Revised Programme for National Schools*, which became operational in 1900, saw the system abolished, the adoption of a broader and more practical curriculum, a recognition of the importance of infant education, and a recognition that learning should be adapted to the local environment. There were, however, significant problems in implementing the revised curriculum, including amongst inspectors and teachers. A report by F.H. Dale, an English inspector, in 1904 confirmed that many schools were not in good condition and that teaching supports were insufficient, with an underlying problem being the lack of adequate funding. Some changes in the school programme did occur in 1904 and

⁸⁸ McNamara, *War and Revolution in the west of Ireland*, pp. 162, 163.

⁸⁹ Census 1901, Preliminary Report, Table II; Vol. I, Part 1, Co. Kilkenny Table XXIXA; Vol. II, Part 2, Co. Waterford, Table XXX111A; Vol. IV, Co. Galway, Table XXXIII.

significant progress was made in some aspects of it. Subjects such as singing, drawing and physical education were taught in almost all schools and school life for pupils became more varied.⁹⁰

Funding of the system continued to be a problem but proposals by Chief Secretary Wyndham in 1904 to introduce a local rate towards the cost of education and to establish management boards for primary schools were successfully resisted by the Catholic Church, which then saw the system as being as denominational as it could wish, and Irish MPs. Both groups were suspicious of involvement by the state in the control of education and the state, in turn, was parsimonious in its support of schools. The recommendations of the Vice-Regal (Killanin) Committee, 1919, revived the Wyndham proposals but, while the recommendations were included in the MacPherson Education Bill of 1919, that bill was withdrawn following sustained attack by the Catholic Church. The Irish primary school system entered the Free State era underfunded and organised on denominational lines.⁹¹

Despite considerable activity and debate between 1895 and 1922 few of the major problems at the secondary level were resolved. The recommendations of the *Commission on Intermediate Education*, 1898, were confined to modifications of the existing system. Nevertheless, agriculture and technical subjects benefitted from grants from the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, while the Intermediate Board made grants for laboratory equipment from 1902.⁹²

In 1904 Messrs Dale and Stephens, English inspectors, were appointed to review and make recommendations on the system. Their report condemned payments by results, found that there was no proper differentiation of curricula, that the distribution of schools was uneven, that their condition impacted adversely on the quality of their work, that there was no system of formally training teachers, that there were few graduate teachers and that only a small number of pupils progressed to senior level. They recommended the establishment of a central authority to coordinate education and the introduction of an inspectorate which would report on staff and the condition, standards and fees of schools. Dale and Stephens proposed that a grant be provided to recognised schools, the abolition of fees based on examination results, and the replacement of the four-tier examination system with junior and senior certificate examinations. They also suggested that schools develop their own curricula, subject to guidance and approval from the central

⁹⁰ Coolahan, *Irish Education*, pp. 33-36.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, pp. 36-38, 72-73.

⁹² *Ibid*, pp. 65-67.

authority, and that a teacher registration council be established. The recommendations were not adopted related, *inter alia*, to a reluctance on the part of school authorities to allow state involvement in intermediate education.⁹³

A number of changes did occur in the years to 1918. A permanent inspectorate was introduced in 1909 and greater funding certainty was provided to the Intermediate Board when the funds provided to it from local taxation were set at £45,565 from 1911. The preparatory examination was discontinued from 1913, with capitation payments to pupils at this level being made on the basis of the reports of inspectors. There were modifications to the various courses and a greater emphasis on commercial subjects. Formal teacher training courses were introduced in TCD from 1905, with the colleges of the National University of Ireland (NUI) following some years later. Some state funding for teachers was provided from 1914 and a registration council was established in 1916, with its regulations coming into effect from 1918. Further funding was provided in 1918 but proposals for an incremental salary scale lapsed when the MacPherson Education Bill was withdrawn. That bill had arisen, in part, from the recommendations of the 1919 Vice-Regal Committee on teachers in intermediate schools. As noted above the Catholic hierarchy opposed the bill, which was supported by the Protestant churches and Schoolmasters' Consequently, secondary education entered the new political era in a chronic condition with the Intermediate Education Board, in its report for 1919, considering that the system faced a breakdown unless remedial steps were immediately taken.⁹⁴

Evidence of the continuing unsatisfactory nature of arrangements for university education emerged in 1901 when the Royal University passed a resolution calling on the government to establish a commission to inquire into the competence of the University as an educational body. The recommendations of the ensuing Robinson Commission in 1903 were undermined by each of the signatories to the report expressing reservations and its report was not acted on. Neither did proposals from Chief Secretary Wyndham and Under-Secretary Sir Antony MacDonnell in 1904 or recommendations from a royal commission (Fry) in 1907 meet with success. The issue was subsequently taken up by Chief Secretary Bryce in 1907 and the main elements of a scheme devised

⁹³ *Intermediate Education (Ireland). Report of Messrs. F.H. Dale and T.A. Stephens, His Majesty's inspectors of schools, Board of Education, on intermediate education in Ireland.* [Cd. 2546], H.C. 1905, xxviii, 709; Coolahan, *Irish Education*, pp. 67-68.

⁹⁴ Coolahan, *Irish Education*, pp. 68-73.

by him were adopted by the relevant cabinet committee and the Standing Committee of the Catholic Bishops in January 1908.⁹⁵

The Irish Universities Act became law in August 1908 and the Royal University was dissolved on 31 October 1909. Leaving TCD untouched, the act provided for two new universities, one in Belfast, Queen's University Belfast, and one in Dublin, the National University of Ireland. Provision was made for the NUI to have three constituent colleges: Cork, Galway and Dublin, the latter being a reconstituted University College Dublin, formerly the Catholic University. The act allowed for recognised colleges, to include Maynooth College and the Royal College of Surgeons. Following over 60 years of debate and a number of initiatives, the structure of Irish universities had been settled.⁹⁶

The Erasmus Smith Trust, 1895-1922

The Trust came under renewed pressure in 1896 when there were reports that the Chief Secretary was considering a Bill to amend its provisions. The Board argued that there were no grounds for legislation as the endowment was a private one and pointed to its administration over a period of 200 years 'by people of the highest rank, sanctioned by statute and Royal Charter'.⁹⁷ In February 1897 T.M. Healy, MP introduced a private bill in the House of Commons seeking to authorise the Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice to appoint a commission to act in cases where a revised scheme for an endowment had not been agreed by the *Educational Endowments Commission*. The Board lobbied Irish Unionist MPs and others against the bill which was dropped in June.⁹⁸

Fr. Humphreys continued to pursue his argument that the primary aim of the Trust was the education of the children of Erasmus Smith's tenants and that the religious aim was secondary and only imposed so as to comply with the laws in force in the seventeenth century. In 1909 he sought to advance his case through the courts but, although it was ruled that it was wrongly constituted, it was 1913 before the case was terminated. Meanwhile the Board, while initially reluctant, decided in November 1906 to negotiate the sale of the Trust's lands resulting in erosion of its income base. It subsequently sought to organise its affairs so that they complied with the foundation documents

⁹⁵ John Coolahan, 'From Royal University to National University, 1879-1908' in Tom Dunne (ed.), *The National University of Ireland, 1908-2008: Centenary Essays* (Dublin, 2008), pp. 10-14.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 15-18.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 183.

⁹⁸ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 183.

and subsequent legislation. Its financial situation was becoming increasingly difficult as evidenced by a bank overdraft of £4,438 in 1911. Support was withdrawn from a further 48 English schools. War time inflation eroded the value of the Trust's funds.⁹⁹

The Erasmus Smith Board had not, *per se*, involved itself in political matters over the more than two centuries of its existence and neither is there any record of it doing so during the events leading to the establishment of Saorstát Éireann. The Board's reluctance to involve itself in political matters is evident from the editorial of *The Erasmian*, February 1920, which states 'We would not like to enter into a discussion on the unrest and discontent prevalent in our isles...'. In November 1921 it commented that 'The memorable visit of the King to the Northern Capital in June gave rise to the armistice, to which we have now become thoroughly accustomed, just as we became accustomed to what preceded it...yet much is hoped for from the Conference at present sitting in London.' A year later, in the midst of the Civil War, the editorial expressed the view that '...if peace is to be gained, it will be won, not by dwelling on the events of the past...'¹⁰⁰ There is a sense that the editor is powerless to influence events and of resignation which is indicative of the attitude of the Board to the political events of the decade from 1910. It, and its members, were like most southern Unionists, passive observers.

Galway Grammar School, 1895-1922

Information provided in 1894 in respect of the vacant post of headmaster of Galway Grammar School stated that the school lands were comprised of 10.5 acres, that the school buildings were kept in repair by the Board, which also supplied the furniture for the schoolrooms and dormitories, and paid the rates and taxes on the buildings. The salary attaching to the post was £100 per annum, with the headmaster receiving, in addition, all school payments and pupils' fees. The Board provided £150 per annum towards the salaries of assistant masters, with the headmaster having the right to appoint and dismiss them.¹⁰¹

There were 13 applications, including from A.E.M. Carleton, first Assistant Master at the School, and the headmasters of the Endowed School, Bangor; the Diocesan School, Waterford; the Royal School, Cavan; Parsonstown School, Birr; Bandon Grammar School; and Monaghan Collegiate School. In the

⁹⁹ Ibid, pp. 98-104, 177, 181-187 and 189.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, *Faithful to our Trust*, p. 188.

¹⁰¹ ESA/GS/730(1), Post of Headmaster, 26 October 1894.

event, Alexander Eraut was appointed to the post in November 1894. He was then 27 years of age and had been educated at Whitgift School, Croydon and Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Eraut had been briefly employed at a number of schools in England before taking up, in August 1891, a post at St. Columba's College, Rathfarnham.¹⁰² The warden there, wrote that Eraut '...had won the affection and respect of his pupils, into whose athletic and social interests he always enters with great enthusiasm. Mr Eraut thoroughly understands the working and system of a large public school'.¹⁰³

Subsequent to Eraut's appointment the School was advertised in terms of 'having a magnificent situation...furnished with spacious dormitories, surrounded by large play-grounds and within easy reach of good sea-bathing'. The Bishop of Killaloe visited the School in 1896 and was shown its 'spacious school-room, classroom, dining-hall, and dormitories'. It had previously been announced that there had been a 'thorough reconstruction of the Sanitary System in keeping with the latest science on the subject'.¹⁰⁴

Thirty three pupils continued in the School, all but one of whom were day pupils. Eraut enjoyed initial success and there were 24 new entrants during 1895, eleven of whom were boarders. Thereafter, however, entrant numbers tapered off averaging 15 per year between 1896 and 1900.¹⁰⁵ There were 37 pupils, including 17 boarders, in 1901, less than half of the 81 pupils recorded in 1891. Intake numbers averaged eleven over the decade 1901-10 and, in 1911, pupil numbers were 33, including 21 boarders.¹⁰⁶ The decline in the number of day boys, from 20 to twelve, between 1901 and 1911, occurred in the context of the Protestant population of Galway town declining from 1,081 in 1901 to 777 in 1911.¹⁰⁷ The number of entrants, an average of twelve, remained static for the years 1911 to 1921. Overall numbers from 1895 to 1921 were in the mid-30s and free pupils made up about 20 per cent of the pupil body up to c. 1910.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² ESA/GS/731(1), Applications for post of headmaster, 26 October 1894; ESA/Registry Book 7, mtg. 10 November 1894; ESA/GS/749, Application of Alexander Eraut for post of headmaster.

¹⁰³ ESA/GS/731 (2), Testimonial of Percy Scott Whelan, Warden of St. Columba's College, Rathfarnham for Alexander Eraut.

¹⁰⁴ *TH*, 12 April 1895, 30 October and 28 August 1896.

¹⁰⁵ ESA/GS/1431, Galway Grammar School Roll Book, 1895-1952.

¹⁰⁶ Census 1891, Vol. IV, Table XXXVIA, p. 194; Census 1901, Vol. IV, Table XXXVIII, p. 250; Census 1911, Co. Galway, Table XXXVIII.

¹⁰⁷ Census 1901, Co. Galway, Table XXXIII; Census 1911, Co. Galway, Table XXXIII.

¹⁰⁸ ESA/GS/ 732 (1) – (7), School Rolls and Reports on free pupils; ESA/GS/749, Galway Grammar School: Particulars for the Year 1909.

Eraut's difficulties in attracting pupils in the immediate post-Biggs era were appreciated locally and Archdeacon Daly, at a prize-giving ceremony in 1898, said that the School under Biggs had not only been the best in the province but, possibly, the best in the country. He alluded to pupils having followed Biggs to Portora leaving Eraut with the difficulty of 'raising up the school from nothing' in which he was proving successful.¹⁰⁹ The Board took a less generous view and, in 1899, Eraut explained that the decline in numbers resulted from the 'crusade that has been preached in the district ...for the past 2 or 3 years by the Roman Catholic Priesthood'. Only two Catholic pupils were then attending the School, compared to twelve in 1895, and two Catholics had recently been removed from the School, within ten days of entering, as a result of the 'crusade'. He also pointed to the adverse impact on pupil numbers of a Protestant regiment previously stationed in Galway being replaced by an Irish one. In 1907, when there were 26 pupils at the School, Eraut explained that the low numbers related to there being an excellent Model School in the town.¹¹⁰

Galway Grammar School was not then unique in having difficulty in attracting pupils with just 16 pupils attending Kilkenny College in 1901. That College amalgamated with Pococke School in 1903 and a four-year cycle was introduced after which pupils transferred to Mountjoy School, Dublin for the senior cycle. Newtown School, Waterford, having had 22 pupils in 1901, had 46 in 1907 and its prospects were considered to be better. Middleton College had 28 pupils in 1912-13.¹¹¹

The lack of job security for assistant masters became evident when Eraut decided not to continue Hermann Dacus, who had taught modern languages at the School since 1856, in post. In like manner, when A.E.M. Carleton requested that it be a condition of the appointment of a new headmaster that he, Carleton, be retained, the Board decided that it could not interfere with the headmaster in his choice of assistant masters. A boost to the School's potential to attract good assistant masters occurred in 1895 when the Board increased the allowance for assistant masters at each of the grammar schools to £300 per annum. Eraut suggested that £200 of the allocation be used during 1896 to pay assistant masters but that, pending the appointment of a third assistant, the remaining

¹⁰⁹ *Dublin Daily Express*, 27 December 1898.

¹¹⁰ ESA/GS/732(1), Eraut to Governors, 12 December 1899; ESA/GS/861, Report of visit to Galway Grammar School, 27 June 1907.

¹¹¹ Whiteside, *A History of Kilkenny College*, pp. 79-81; Wigham, *Newtown School, Waterford*, pp. 98, 100; West, *Middleton College*, p. 34.

£100 be used on a 'very important sanitary improvement'. The allocation was further increased to £350 in 1903.¹¹²

Eraut showed a decided preference for appointing graduates of British universities with 16 of 22 assistant masters identified over the period c.1897 – c.1910 being such.¹¹³ This tendency had been commented on by the Rev. J.P. Mahaffy in 1880 when he stated in respect of grammar schools that:

There is also a desire of having English assistants, however incompetent, on account of their accent. Of course the accent of a master has little effect on his boys, so that it must be chiefly intended to impress the outside world. It is based, too, on the very reasonable desire of many parents, that their children shall not be marked in after life as provincials by their speech. But to this feeling far more important objects are often sacrificed.¹¹⁴

Clarity was, at least on one occasion, sacrificed to accent as when Eraut responded to a report on the poor standard of dictation by attributing it, in part, to the dictation being read by a teacher with a 'strong English brogue, the result of which was startling'. Nevertheless, that the great majority, if not all, of the assistant masters over this period were graduates was, in itself, noteworthy as, in 1904, just 12 per cent of Catholic and 56 per cent of Protestant male teachers were graduates.¹¹⁵

By 1919, however, probably related to the political situation, the staff had a more Irish hue and was comprised of two qualified teachers, Mary Stuart and Harold Thornton, BA, TCD, together with three unqualified part-time teachers.¹¹⁶ Thornton was appointed in 1917 and remained at the School until 1958. Eraut's preference for employing graduates of British universities continued as shown in the list of assistant masters recorded in school roll forms for the years 1922 to 1933.¹¹⁷ In his final year

¹¹² ESA/Registry Book 7, mtgs. 14 December 1894, 13 December 1895, 3 April 1903; ESA/GS/726 (6), Letter from Eraut, 23 January 1896.

¹¹³ *Thom's Directories*, 1897-1910. Nine were graduates of Cambridge, two of Oxford, with one each from Durham, Lampeter, Lancaster, Leeds and London. Three of the graduates of Irish universities were from TCD, with the other three being RUI graduates.

¹¹⁴ *Endowed Schools Commission*, 1881, pp. 254, 255.

¹¹⁵ ESA/GS/732(1), Eraut to Governors, 4 May 1898; J.J. Auchmuty, *Irish Education: A Historical Survey* (Dublin, 1937), p. 155.

¹¹⁶ *Report of the Intermediate Education Board for Ireland under the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act, 1914, as to the application of the teachers' salaries grant, 1919*, p. 34 [Cd. 417], H.C. 1919, xxi, 605.

¹¹⁷ ESA/BG/998, Galway Grammar School Roll Forms, 1922-1933.

as headmaster the core staff member, in addition to Thornton, was Thomas Kirkman, a graduate of Manchester University.¹¹⁸

Eraut had to defend himself against unfavourable reports from the inspector of the Erasmus Smith Board and, in December 1896, he wrote undertaking to correct the shortcomings identified. Considering himself to be 'under an imputation of negligence', he set out some circumstances he considered relevant, including the pupils now being younger than when he was appointed and changes in the teaching staff. In 1899 he confessed that he was unable to explain the deficiencies of the History examination at the last inspection.¹¹⁹

Eraut evidently came in for criticism also in the matter of religious instruction as there is reference in the Board's minutes to correspondence from him replying to the Board's query regarding all pupils not being in attendance at the teaching of Holy Scripture. The provision of religious instruction to pupils where there were lay headmasters became a cause for concern for the Board and in 1906 it decided that a catechist should be appointed to each school where the headmaster was not in Holy Orders, with the catechist, who would be paid a small stipend, providing instruction in scripture and the Church formularies.¹²⁰

In the academic sphere fee claim forms for the years 1910 to 1917 show that 55 Galway Grammar School pupils were successful at the examinations of the Intermediate Board. Two-thirds of the pupils presented at either the preparatory, discontinued after 1912, or junior level. It would appear, as ten pupils passed at middle level and nine at senior level, that those who remained at school to take the middle-level examination tended to complete the second-level cycle. Average examination fees paid to the School over seven of the years 1910 to 1917 was £57, sufficient only to employ some part-time teachers and significantly less than payments received under Biggs.¹²¹

The number of pupils from the School entering TCD decreased significantly under Eraut with 18 former pupils being admitted between 1895 and 1910, an average of one per year, compared to an

¹¹⁸ CT, 16 July 1932.

¹¹⁹ ESA/GS/732(2), Eraut to Governors, 9 December 1896; ESA/GS/732(1), Eraut to Governors, 12 December 1899.

¹²⁰ ESA/Registry Book 7, mtgs. 13 December 1901, 18 May 1906.

¹²¹ NAI/ED/CIE/3/11-232, Intermediate Education Board, Forms of Claim for School Grants, 1910-17.

average of four per year under Biggs. Moreover, eight of those who entered between 1895 and 1898 are not listed in the School Roll Book as pupils under Eraut and were, apparently, pupils of Biggs.¹²² There were 23 entrants to QCG/UCG over the same period, which compares relatively favourably with entrant numbers under Biggs.¹²³ Again, five of the entrants do not appear in the School Roll Book as being pupils under Eraut and relate, in all probability, to the Biggs era. The clear preference for TCD exhibited during the Biggs era had been reversed.

Galway Grammar School fared better under the inspectorate of the Intermediate Education Board than it had under that of the Erasmus Smith Board. In 1911/12 its report found that the 'staff are adequate in number and well-qualified... A general satisfactory standard is attained in the various subjects of the curriculum' and 'The relations between the masters and the pupils seemed to be most harmonious, and the tone of the school is excellent'. By 1914/15, the report, while generally satisfactory at the subject level, considered that it would be an advantage if an additional teacher were employed. Criticism at the subject level was most often targeted at French with it being recorded in 1919/20 that, 'In the Middle French class the standard reached on both the theoretical and the practical side is low. In fact the boys do not seem to take their work in this subject very seriously'. The report for 1920/21 stated that the 'organisation of the school is difficult owing to the shortage of staff'.¹²⁴

The 1911 Census showed that none of the Board's grammar schools were in a particularly strong position with 39 pupils at Drogheda, 43 at Tipperary and 33 at Galway.¹²⁵ The primary concern of the Board at this time appears, however, to have been to arrange the affairs of the Trust so as to protect it from legal proceedings regarding the nature and purpose of the endowment and to maintain control over it. Towards strengthening the basis of its allocations to the various institutions to which it provided funding, it organised its funds into four accounts, with the Endowment revenue account being established to administer all payments made in accordance with the Charter and the 1723 Act. In 1911 there was income of £5,857 to this account. When charges on the account had been met there was a surplus of £1,599 which was transferred to an account to provide for additional

¹²² ESA/GS/1431, Galway Grammar School Roll Book, 1895-1952; TCD Admissions Records, 1877-1910. Note: Digitised TCD Admission Records are available to 1910 only.

¹²³ QCG/UCG Register of Entrants, 1861/2-1909/10.

¹²⁴ ESA/GS/749, Report of Inspectors, 1911/12; 1914/15; 1919/20 and 1920/21.

¹²⁵ Census 1911, Co. Louth, Table XXXVIII, p. 73; Co. Tipperary, Table XXXVIII, p. 211; Co. Galway, Table XXXVIII, p. 229.

payments to TCD and to meet the costs of the English schools.¹²⁶ The Board was, apparently, continuing a tradition of frugality towards the grammar schools and of using available funds elsewhere.

Nevertheless, proposals were brought forward with a view to enhancing the level of support for the grammar schools. Initial proposals came from the Rev. Robert Miller, Secretary of the Incorporated Society for Promoting Protestant Schools. The context for the document was stated to be the observation of Lord Justice Fitzgibbon in 1892 on 'the smallness of the amount spent by the Governors out of their large Endowment in maintaining Grammar School Education, the primary object of the Founder....'. The proposals, in summary, were:

- (a) To send three Foundation scholars each year for five years at £30 each to Galway Grammar School.
- (b) To send three Foundation scholars of good social position to Tipperary Grammar School, at a rate of £30 per annum.
- (c) To amalgamate Dundalk Educational Institute (a school of the Incorporated Society for Promoting Protestant Schools) and Drogheda Grammar School.
- (d) To reduce the number of Erasmus Smith scholars at King's Hospital (the Blue Coat School) to ten.
- (e) To place as many as possible of the English Schools under the control of the National Education Board.

The arrangements in respect of Galway Grammar School were proposed on the basis that 'neither the number of pupils nor the educational results (there) are satisfactory', with the foundation scholars being intended to 'introduce a more intellectual class of boy and a better educational atmosphere into the School than exists there at present'. It was considered that the scholars would be an advertisement for the School and would probably act to attract more fee-paying boarders. The scheme was envisaged as replacing the existing grant scheme, presumably either a fee reduction scheme or the free pupil scheme or both. The section of the document dealing with Galway

¹²⁶ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 185, 186.

concluded by saying that the scheme would bring home to the headmaster the necessity of attracting pupils to the School.¹²⁷

In 1911 the Board adopted the report of a sub-committee, essentially embodying the recommendations of Miller, with discussion on the amalgamation of the Dundalk and Drogheda schools to be initiated. The benefits of the arrangements agreed for Galway Grammar School were, from Eraut's perspective, at best doubtful as, while he would be paid, in steady state, £450 in respect of the scholars, and presumably receive their results' fees, the Board's grant of £350 per annum towards the salaries of assistant masters would be withdrawn and he would have to meet the costs of maintaining the scholars. In this respect Eraut stated in a report on the year 1909 that he estimated the nett cost of boarders at £25 per annum. The adverse impact Miller's proposal would have had on the ability of the School to employ assistant masters appears to have been part of a deliberate strategy as the Board had agreed in 1909 to ask Eraut if it would be possible to reduce the expense associated with them which was considered to be disproportionate to the number of pupils.¹²⁸

It does not appear, however, that the recommendations as regards the grammar schools were implemented, related, no doubt, to the report noting that, before implementing them, it would be necessary to achieve savings of a minimum of £1,000 per annum to meet the Board's annual deficit and towards paying off its bank debt. The report is of interest, however, in that it provides an insight into the Board's perspective on its grammar schools. Galway was clearly viewed in a poor light and, while the Board was minded to support more pupils at the School, it appeared determined to deprive it of the resources to educate them. It wished to amalgamate the Educational Institute, Dundalk with Drogheda Grammar School, the pupils of the Institute moving to Drogheda, with a substantial saving for the Trust being foreseen but, also, a likely strengthening of Drogheda Grammar School. In the case of Tipperary there was 'a strong and unanimous opinion' that nothing should be done to lower the social status of the School or which would not accord with the wishes of Dr Flynn, the headmaster, who had expressed his willingness to accept as scholars the sons of clergymen, bank officials, gentlemen farmers, and of professional men. It was considered that there

¹²⁷ ESA/GS/749, 'The Endowments of Erasmus Smith: suggestions for consideration', undated but apparently early 1909 as an alternative scheme prepared by the Rev. Kingsmill Moore, considered by the Board, mtg. 11 June 1909, makes reference to it and to Mr Miller, Secretary of the Incorporated Society, as its author. Note: The Rev. Miller was subsequently Bishop of Cashel, Emly, Waterford and Lismore and served as Chair and Treasurer of the Erasmus Smith Board.

¹²⁸ ESA/Registry Book 8, mtg. 16 April 1909.

should be no difficulty in meeting Flynn's wishes and selecting three boys per year 'of good social position'. The tone of the Tipperary proposals was altogether softer than those for Galway with it being suggested that it was unlikely that Flynn would object to a reduction in the grant for assistant masters 'provided he was guaranteed a fixed number of clever boys per year who would earn increased Result Fees'.¹²⁹

A scholarship scheme was introduced about 1914. In discussions leading to its establishment the headmasters stated that they were most anxious that the social standing of the schools be maintained. The scheme comprised six full and six assisted scholarships tenable at any of the grammar schools. The economic benefit of the scholarship scheme for the schools was short-lived as Eraut wrote in 1915 that the amount paid in respect of scholars, £30, which he had considered to be inadequate before 1914, was now resulting in a serious loss related to the cost of food, coal, etc.¹³⁰ Eraut also had concerns regarding the social standing of the pupils and wrote that 'The Scholars entering here under the present system are not, from the social point of view, of any advantage to the School, but at the same time there is not enough evidence for me to state that they are a disadvantage'.¹³¹ Economic considerations continued to dominate the scheme as, from 1917, while the value of full and part-scholarships was increased, parents were required to contribute £10 in the case of full scholarships and £20 in the case of part scholarships with a view to the Board not having to absorb the additional costs. It was considered that these revised arrangements, with other minor provisions, would place the annual income of the headmasters on a satisfactory footing.¹³²

World War I brought with it inflationary pressures and the heads of the three grammar schools were awarded a war bonus of £50 from 1915.¹³³ The assistant masters were clearly dissatisfied with their salaries and in 1919 Eraut submitted a memorial to the Board on their behalf. The memorial was referred back to Eraut on the basis that he was responsible for their salaries. In May 1920, however, the annual grant towards the payment of assistants was increased to £525. Some of the increase was clawed back when, in 1925, the government introduced rules requiring that a minimum of one teacher in a school with less than 50 pupils be paid £200. The Board put in place a temporary

¹²⁹ Ibid, mtg. 17 February 1911.

¹³⁰ Ibid, mtg. 12 December 1913; ESA/Registry Book 8, mtg. 19 November 1915: copy of scholarship scheme 1916.

¹³¹ ESA/GS/749, letter from Eraut, 4 October 1915.

¹³² ESA/Registry Book 8, mtg. 12 April 1916, 'Proposed new Scheme of Payments for the Grammar Schools'.

¹³³ Ibid, mtg. 19 November 1915.

arrangement whereby Eraut would be paid £200, rather than £150, with a commensurate reduction in the provision for assistants.¹³⁴

The 1916 Rising in Co. Galway produced, it has been suggested, ‘the largest but arguably most militarily pointless mobilization in the country’.¹³⁵ Eraut appears to have considered the events of the week to have ranked alongside school-related and personal matters in terms of relative importance as he wrote two weeks after the Rising:

I fear I am dreadfully late with these papers. We have had rather a severe time for the past month: - masters changing in April, the death of my mother-in-law here and the heavy work of winding up the estate and the rebellion: all of this has dislocated our life here, but I hope it will not delay payment for too long. I expected to send these certificates on Easter Monday when I posted the vouchers, but going into the Country for Easter I could not get back: - 8 days without post or paper. Things are nearly straight here again, but very few boys are back. Beyond pulling up the line twice no damage to property occurred in this district tho. it was touch and go on the 25th ult.¹³⁶

While Connacht was not overly involved in the War of Independence, 1919-21, there were acts of violence, including the burning of three ‘big houses’ in Co. Galway.¹³⁷ The Volunteers received little active support in Galway town. Sustained violence was, however, visited on the town from September to November 1920, following the killing of a member of the Crown forces, with a number of Volunteers and Fr Michael Griffin being killed. As a result, the town’s pride in its connection with the Connacht Rangers was shattered and questions were raised regarding its traditional political allegiances.¹³⁸

Interdenominational relations do not appear to have been particularly impacted by Fr Griffin’s death with the *Connacht Tribune* recording that amongst ‘...the vast crowd that awaited the funeral’ were

¹³⁴ ESA/Registry Book 9, mtgs. 16 May and 20 June 1919, and 18 June 1925.

¹³⁵ Feargal McGarry, *The Rising: Ireland-Easter 1916* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 230-234.

¹³⁶ ESA/GS/753 (2), Eraut to Registrar, 7 May 1916.

¹³⁷ Terence Dooley, *The Decline of the Big House in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), p. 185.

¹³⁸ Conor Mac Namara, ‘War of Independence: Regional Perspectives – Galway’ in John Crowley, et al, (eds), *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* (Cork, 2017), p. 618; McNamara, *War and Revolution in the west of Ireland*, pp. 162, 163.

‘the Protestant Rector, his curate, and practically every member of his congregation; Presbyterians and Methodists...’. The Protestant experience in Co. Galway during the revolutionary period was certainly negative and contributed to the high level of emigration. Violence was perpetrated on Protestants but it did not amount to ethnic cleansing.¹³⁹

The revolutionary period does not appear to have impacted directly on Galway Grammar School subsequent to the delay in pupils returning after the 1916 Rising and there are no references in correspondence to the overall political situation, to local developments in Galway or to events impinging on the School, its teachers or its pupils. This evident absence of impact has been referred to by R.B. McDowell who considers that, over the years of disturbance, life continued as normal, or almost normal, for most of the time in many places, with there being areas where little untoward occurred and that many members of the Church of Ireland remained on good terms with their neighbours.¹⁴⁰ In this respect it is notable that Eraut would remark in 1925 on the difficulty of securing teaching staff during World War I, (Chapter 5) but that there is no reference to difficulties caused by events of the revolutionary period, even at the time.

The pattern of some initial success followed by a general malaise which manifested itself in the School during this period was also evident in the sporting sphere. The School was involved when the Connacht Rugby Branch was revived in 1895/96 and was one of four participating teams when the Connacht Senior Cup was first competed for in that year. In 1897/98 the School won the Cup defeating QCG in the final, 3-0. The victory was not without controversy as the match was ‘obstructed by spectators’ and QCG withdrew a subsequent objection. Nevertheless, the School team left the field ‘amid the most popular and deafening applause’. It was customary at the time for staff to play on the School team and the value of that input is testified to by Eraut representing Connacht at rugby on three occasions.¹⁴¹

There is little information on rugby in the School over the years from 1898 to 1912 when a Connacht Senior Schools Cup competition was initiated. The Grammar School’s interest in the first competition was short-lived as it was defeated by St. Ignatius College on the score one goal and seven tries to nil. Success did, however, attend the School when it won the first Connacht Junior Schools Cup in

¹³⁹ C T, 27 November 1920; McNamara, *War and Revolution in the west of Ireland*, p.181.

¹⁴⁰ R. B. McDowell, *The Church of Ireland, 1869-1969* (London, 1975), p. 110.

¹⁴¹ T H, 22 November 1895, O’Gorman, *Rugby in Connacht*, pp. 29-31 and 43.

1914/15. Thereafter, defeat was the School's usual lot and in some years, at least, it participated only in the Junior Cup.¹⁴²

Cricket continued to be played at the School and during the summer of 1914 a team, including teachers W. H. Lewis and J.C. Banks, and pupils R.W. Satchwell, R.W. Topp and J.F.C. Fogerty, all of whom would die in the War, drew with a Galway Town team. After the War reports of cricket games involving the School are rare, related, in all probability, to the decline of the game, particularly in the west of Ireland.¹⁴³ The first recorded hockey game involving the School appears to have been in 1913 when it defeated a UCG team comprised of men and women. Hockey was, however, in a weak state in Connacht and many of the games played by the School were against teams comprised of men and women or women only.¹⁴⁴

By 1921 Galway Grammar School was operating at the limits of viability in terms of pupil numbers and income. From 1918 to 1920 an average of eleven pupils from the School presented for the examinations of the Intermediate Education Board, with an average of seven passing, 64 per cent. In the same years an average of 25 pupils from Drogheda, Tipperary and Sligo Grammar Schools and Ranelagh School, Athlone presented for the examinations, with an average of 19 passing, 76 per cent.¹⁴⁵ Pupil numbers, academic standards, and the level of the School's ambition had not recovered following the departure of Biggs, while sporting activity had tapered off. The fortunes of the Erasmus Smith Trust declined over the period with its estates, in the main, having been disposed of and inflation, reckoned at 300 per cent over the period June 1914 to December 1918, eroding the value of its funds.¹⁴⁶ The Board was now struggling to meet its commitments and was not well-disposed towards supporting Galway Grammar School, which had low pupil numbers, was located in the area most impacted by Protestant population decline, and in whose headmaster it appeared to have lost confidence.

¹⁴² O'Gorman, *Rugby in Connacht*, pp. 14, 143; *C T*, 2 and 9 March 1912.

¹⁴³ *T H*, 11 June 1897, et al ; *C T*, 12 July 1914, 15 September 1923.

¹⁴⁴ There were games v a mixed Town team and UCG in 1915 (*C T*, 13, 20 and 27 February 1915), a UCG team comprised of five women and four men and, also, a 'military' team in 1919 (*C T*, 15 and 29 November 1919) and, in 1923, games against a City of Galway girls' team and Galway Town Ladies (*C T*, 3 and 17 March 1923).

¹⁴⁵ *Report of the Intermediate Education Board for Ireland*, 1918, 1919 and 1920, Appendix A, (Cmd. 323), H.C. 1919, xxi, 521; (Cmd. 904), H.C. 1920, XV, 731; (Cmd. 1398), H.C. 1921, xi, 397.

¹⁴⁶ Central Statistics Office: <http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-1916/1916irl/economy/ie/> Accessed 8 May 2018.

Overview, 1922-1932

The establishment of the Irish Free State has been described as the final 'break (for Protestants) with all the traditions that were dear to them'.¹⁴⁷ They now found themselves living in a state where the overwhelming Catholic nationalist majority could 'express its social and cultural will unimpeded by significant opposition from powerful minorities'.¹⁴⁸ The uncertainty of Protestants regarding their future was evident when a Church of Ireland delegation enquired of Michael Collins, Chairman of the Provisional Government, 'if they were permitted to live in Ireland or if it was desired that they should leave the country'.¹⁴⁹ Despite Collins' assurance that they were welcome to remain and would be protected, the leadership of the Protestant community, which had once constituted a powerful elite, considered themselves to be rejected by the newly-established state. Deprived of the possibility of a leadership role, and with their fears inevitably exacerbated by a sense of apprehension at the upheaval which attended the transition to independence, together with the impact of the Civil War of 1922-23, during which 192 big houses, the great majority the property of their co-religionists, were burnt, many left the country.¹⁵⁰ The Protestant population declined by a further one-third between 1911 and 1926 and many of those young enough and confident enough to begin again were amongst those who left. In 1926, just 7 per cent of the population was Protestant and it was, despite pockets of concentration, fragmented. The Protestant population of Galway town underwent a precipitous decline of 73 per cent between 1891 and 1926 and then numbered just 370.¹⁵¹

Nine Protestant TDs, from a total of 153, were elected to Dáil Éireann in 1922. Their number averaged twelve in the elections from 1923-1932, reasonably in line with the Protestant share of the population. Twenty four of the 60 members of the first Seanad Éireann were non-Catholic, but political power lay in the Dáil and there was no attempt to form a grouping there representing

¹⁴⁷ *Church of Ireland Gazette*, 6 January 1922, cited in Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic State*, p. 47.

¹⁴⁸ Terence Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922-1985* (London, 1985), p. 18.

¹⁴⁹ Patrick Buckland, *Irish Unionism I: The Anglo-Irish and the New Ireland 1886-1922* (Dublin, 1973), pp. 279, 288, cited in Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History*, p. 109.

¹⁵⁰ Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History*, pp. 107-116; Olwen Purdue, 'Ascendancy's ...last big jamboree': big house society in Northern Ireland, 1921-69' in Dooley and Ridgway (eds), *The Irish Big House: Its Past, Present and Future*, pp. 134, 135.

¹⁵¹ J.J. Sexton and Richard O'Leary, 'Factors Affecting Population Decline in Minority Religious Communities in the Republic' in *Building Trust in Ireland* (Belfast, 1966), p. 263; Census 1926, Vol. 3, Table 1A and Table VII.

Protestants.¹⁵² Despite this, there remained a sense amongst the Catholic population that Protestants retained a hold over industrial and commercial life and continued to maintain an ascendancy in social life. Protestants constituted 28 per cent of farmers with over 200 acres and 18 per cent of the professional class in 1926. In 1936 they constituted 20-25 per cent of employers and business executives, 53 per cent of bank officials, 39 per cent of commercial representatives and 38 per cent of lawyers. What has been described as a 'modest' form of ascendancy continued.¹⁵³

While the 1922 Free State constitution did not accord Catholicism the official status of a national church, the Free State government was careful to ensure the support of the Catholic hierarchy. That Church, for its part, made its social policy clear. Economic difficulty attended the early years of the new state with, by 1920, the boom in agricultural prices of the war years having ended. The economy was stagnant, with few native industries of any size. In consequence, unemployment began to increase rapidly from 1920 and emigration resumed.¹⁵⁴

Despite the fears expressed by the Church of Ireland over the decades from 1886, relations between the newly established state and the Church of Ireland were undramatic, with there being few issues which greatly exercised Church of Ireland opinion. In 1925, members of the Church expressed varying views on divorce in the context of the stated determination of the Oireachtas to prevent the granting of divorce by means of private bills, with the archbishop of Dublin emphasising that the Church favoured the indissolubility of marriage, although recognising that individuals might feel aggrieved at being debarred from a facility which appeared to have been envisaged in the Bible. A divergence of views again emerged in relation to the censorship act of 1929 which, *inter alia*, forbade the sale or distribution of literature 'advocating the unnatural prevention of conception', with there being a view amongst Church members that public opinion in the matter was changing and that a complete ban on literature related to the topic was, perhaps, inappropriate.¹⁵⁵ There is a sense that, for many Protestants, it was the absoluteness of the teaching of the Catholic Church, and the embodiment of that teaching in legislation, which presented the difficulty, rather than the

¹⁵² White, *Minority Report*, p. 95; Proinsias Mac Aonghusa, 'Proportional Representation in Ireland', http://proinsias.net/publications/pr_in_ireland/2006/08/minorities.html Accessed 9 February 2017.

¹⁵³ 'The Catholic Truth Society and Emancipation', *Catholic Truth Society Report*, 1927, p. 13, cited in Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History*, p. 127; Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p. 534.

¹⁵⁴ Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p. 534; Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History*, pp. 14, 15; Lee, *Ireland, 1912-1985*, p. 126.

¹⁵⁵ McDowell, *The Church of Ireland*, pp. 111-114.

individual pieces of legislation in themselves. A sense that, for the most part, Protestants were too small a minority to be listened to.

Developments in Education, 1922-1932

While there had been proposals for administrative and structural reform of primary education in the years prior to independence, there had also been pressure for curricular reform. Following the establishment of Saorstát Éireann the emphasis was placed on the curriculum and the teaching of the Irish language, as well as being given a particular prominence in the curriculum, was also to be the teaching medium to the extent possible. The History curriculum was to be exclusively concerned with the history of Ireland. The curricular programme arrived at set the general pattern of Irish primary education for almost half a century. The Primary Certificate Examination, taken on completion of primary school, was introduced on an optional basis in 1929 and became compulsory in 1943.¹⁵⁶

The infrastructure of primary schools was in a poor state and of the order of 80 per cent of 5,700 primary schools were one- or two-teacher schools. While about 350 new schools were built between 1922 and 1933, over three hundred new schools were still required and a further 750 required reconstruction. The Catholic hierarchy resisted the amalgamation of schools, considering that mixed education was undesirable, especially in older children. The church authorities also opposed the state and local authorities being given responsibility for the cost, respectively, of building and maintaining schools. Legislation was introduced making it compulsory for children aged from six to fourteen years to attend school, resulting in an improvement in attendance rates.¹⁵⁷

Teacher training came to be carried out in six denominational boarding colleges with an adequate supply of teachers with a competent knowledge of Irish being the particular object of the colleges. Teachers' salaries were reduced in 1923, in line with public service spending reductions, and teachers were unhappy with the inspectorial system which, in addition to good performance in Irish being a major determinant of grading, was considered to put particular emphasis on discipline, control and assessment.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Coolahan, *Irish Education*, pp. 38-43.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 45-48.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 47-49.

The Protestant churches were concerned at the central role accorded to the Irish language in the curriculum, at the denominational suitability of school textbooks, and the problem of small schools, with there being more such schools serving the Protestant community than the average. Protestants initially felt distanced from the new administration but actively participated in the Second Programme Conference, on the programme to be followed in primary schools, and by the end of the decade Church of Ireland publications were showing a growing accommodation with the new administration and its processes.¹⁵⁹

The Irish Free State inherited 'a rickety and run-down' system of intermediate education and there was little changed over the years 1922 to 1932. Secondary education continued to be a middle-class concern, with access limited to about 10 per cent of the 14 to 16 age cohort. Only two per cent of pupils held county council scholarships, although in many cases the fees charged by schools were low and some less well-off pupils of ability were admitted free of charge. The Department of Education's role was a limited one and while, in the mid-1920s, it inspected secondary schools and made grants informed by those inspections, it did not establish or build schools, appoint teachers or managers, or have any power or veto over their appointment or dismissal. The *Intermediate Education (Amendment) Act, 1924*, substituted the Intermediate and Leaving Certificate examinations for the previous three-tier examination system and introduced changes in curriculum. Capitation payments replaced the 'payment-by-results' system. A pass in Irish became a requirement for the award of the Intermediate Certificate from 1928 and for the award of the Leaving Certificate from 1934. That requirement was regarded by many Protestants as discriminatory and it continued to be of concern to the Protestant churches up to the late 1950s with the Department of Education, c. 1950, reporting a wide range of attitudes to the teaching of Irish in Protestant secondary schools, ranging from hostility to neutral detachment to a positive realism.¹⁶⁰

Other aspects of the curriculum were also potentially unsympathetic to the Protestant culture and ethos with teachers being informed that, in the teaching of history, there was a wish 'to establish a legitimate continuity for Irish separatism' and to imbue students 'with the ideals and aspirations of

¹⁵⁹ Ó Buachalla, *Education Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland*, pp. 241-243.

¹⁶⁰ Coolahan, *Irish Education*, pp. 47, 73-76; Ó Buachalla, *Education Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland*, pp. 62, 78; and pp. 244-247, Table 3.2.

Irish revolutionaries of the past'. Conversely, there was a neglect, on the English curriculum, of Anglo-Irish writers, with their omission being defended on the grounds that their work was 'strongly influenced by a Protestant ethos and materialist values'.¹⁶¹

The universities applied themselves to academic affairs during this decade and no significant structural changes followed the establishment of Saorstát Éireann. In 1926 the Royal College of Science was transferred to UCD and a faculty of general agriculture was established there. A faculty of dairy science was established at UCC. In 1929 UCG was provided with an additional annual grant related to it undertaking 'special work' in connection with the Irish language. During these years TCD remained aloof from the mainstream of Irish political and social life, catering almost entirely for Protestants, and, unlike the other university institutions, was not provided with an annual state grant. A sizeable proportion of its students came from outside of the state.¹⁶²

The Erasmus Smith Trust, 1922-1932

The Trust entered the Irish Free State era in a position of uncertainty with its position and the use of its funds under scrutiny, its income in decline, pupil numbers in its schools stagnant and its Board, which had once been constituted from the Protestant ascendancy, now part of a small and uncertain Protestant minority. In 1927 the Board established a committee to recommend on the future of Tipperary Grammar School, which had been occupied by Free State forces during the Civil War and had not been reopened, although compensation for damage to the building had been provided, and to recommend on the future educational policy of the Trust. The committee consisted of leading members of the Anglican community, the Bishops of Cashel and of Tuam, Professors Alton and Thrift, together with E.J. Gwynne of TCD, the Rev H. Kingsmill Moore, Principal of the Church of Ireland Training College, and Lord Holmpatrick.¹⁶³ There is a sense of unreality about its assessment that 'The official classes who supported the Grammar Schools have to a very large degree left the country and the children of the gentry are being sent to England', the latter having been the case for over a century, while recommending, *inter alia*, that consideration be given to establishing a school

¹⁶¹ Tom O'Donoghue, and Judith Harford, *Secondary School Education in Ireland: History, Memories and Life Stories, 1922-1967* (Basingstoke, 2016), pp. 18, 19.

¹⁶² Coolahan, *Irish Education*, pp. 124, 125; Séamus Mac Mathúna, 'National University of Ireland, Galway', in Dunne, *The National University of Ireland, 1908-2008*, pp. 73-74.

¹⁶³ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, p. 195.

to meet the educational requirements of the children of the gentry.¹⁶⁴ The recommendation was not proceeded with.

Towards allowing it close Tipperary Grammar School and using the funds released for other purposes, the Board, in 1928, brought forward a private bill to the Free State legislature. In July a second reading of the draft-bill was objected to in Seanad Éireann.¹⁶⁵ The Trust became the subject of debate during the ensuing months, with it being argued 'that the forms of the Charter...are not only repugnant to modern ideas but are in fact inconsistent with the spirit and actual terms of the Free State Constitution in the matter of religious tests and religious freedom'.¹⁶⁶ Tipperary U.D.C. called on local authorities in the nine counties of the Erasmus Smith estates to cooperate towards securing a just share of the Trust's funds for the education of persons of all denominations. A meeting of representatives of the nine counties was held and an organisation, 'The Erasmus Smith Endowment Association', was formed to oppose the Bill and 'to see that the Trust shall be properly administered in the future'. Letters from such as Dean Innocent Ryan, Dean of Cashel, and Fr David Humphreys served to keep the issue in the public domain and the Board withdrew the bill.¹⁶⁷

The controversy entered a new phase in 1930 when the Board sought a declaration from the High Court that the purpose of Erasmus Smith in establishing the endowment was 'to propagate the Protestant Faith according to the Scriptures, and to provide for the education, advancement and assistance of Protestants' and that, accordingly, the Board was obliged to act towards this purpose and to ensure that the teaching of Protestant doctrine was an essential element of the education provided in the schools.¹⁶⁸ The Erasmus Smith Endowment Association was admitted as a special defendant in the matter of the declaration sought as representative of 'the class of parents of poor children who were Catholics, within a radius of two miles of the Erasmus Smith Schools and Catholic owners of parts of the lands which formerly were included in the Erasmus Smith estates'.¹⁶⁹ The Presbyterian congregation of Dundalk was also admitted as a special defendant, their claim being that

¹⁶⁴ ESA/Registry Book 9, mtg. 17 February 1927.

¹⁶⁵ *An Act to enable the Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests for Ireland to alter the Charters and Statute regulating the application of the endowments belonging to the Governors of the Schools founded by Erasmus Smith* - Seanad Éireann Debates: <http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/debates%20authoring/debateswebpack.nsf/yearlist?readform&chamber=seanad>
Accessed 13 April 2018.

¹⁶⁶ *Irish Independent*, 30 July 1928.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 6, 8, 20, 21 September, 5, 25 October 1928, 18 March 1929.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 3 January 1930.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 14 January 1930.

the Trust was Protestant in nature, that it could not be touched, but should benefit the Protestant community as a whole and not just the Church of Ireland community. The Catholic 'Special Defendants' submitted that the Trust was a grammar school foundation, that its primary object was the tenants of the estates and the poor, and that the Charter was self-contained.¹⁷⁰

The High Court decision was delivered on 12 October 1931. Justice Meredith in his judgement stated that:

I consider it plain to demonstration that the paramount intention must be sought in the stated general object, and that, therefore, the endowment was, as regards the paramount intention, an endowment for conferring the benefit of a secondary education on a specified class, and, therefore, an educational, and not a religious endowment.¹⁷¹

Noting that the costs of the case would be substantial, he expressed the hope that it would be possible for the parties to agree the terms of a Bill to be introduced in the Dáil to settle the entire matter.¹⁷²

Galway Grammar School, 1922-1932

The policy of the Irish Free State regarding the teaching of Irish in primary and secondary schools presented Galway Grammar School, and other Protestant schools, with a particular challenge. The Erasmus Smith Board agreed in 1922 that headmasters should consult parents of pupils to ascertain their wishes with regard to the teaching of Irish in their schools.¹⁷³ The issue does not arise again in the Board's minutes but was evidently one of continuing concern as, in 1926, the Chair of the Board, Robert Miller, Bishop of Waterford, at the prizes' day ceremony in The High School, suggested that 'The present policy (of the government in relation to the teaching of Irish) must result in the degradation of the Irish people in the eyes of an educated world' and urged that an education not be imposed on Protestant children 'which would make them less able to take their place in any part of the British empire where they might be called upon to live'. He concluded by stating that 'the

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 5 May, 24, 30 July 1931.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 13 October 1931.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ ESA/Registry Book 9, mtg. 23 June 1922.

educational ideals of the Government are opposed to reason, to justice, and to educational efficiency'.¹⁷⁴ Despite these sentiments, The High School accommodated itself within a number of years to the requirements in respect of Irish, with the subject becoming a component of its entrance examination from 1932 and a fulltime qualified teacher being appointed in 1933. Nevertheless, many years would pass before the subject was accepted as similar to all others and a Department of Education memorandum in 1950 showed that, of 47 Protestant secondary schools, just 24 prepared pupils for the Leaving Certificate Examination.¹⁷⁵

Galway Grammar School's involvement with the Irish language extended back to Richard Biggs being a signatory in 1878 to a memorial from the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language supporting the inclusion of that language on the national schools' programme.¹⁷⁶ The Intermediate Examination results for 1925, however, showed that no male pupils of Protestant schools presented for Irish.¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, seven pupils of Galway Grammar School entered UCG in the years from 1913, when Irish became a matriculation requirement for entry, and 1931, when there is evidence of Irish being taught in the School. They evidently had access to external tuition in the subject.¹⁷⁸

Aileen Naughton, a Higher Diploma in Education student, was paid £2.5s.0d. per week for 23 hours of teaching, which included 16 hours of Irish, at Galway Grammar School in 1931. David Kee, a graduate of the Church of Ireland Training College, was teaching Irish in 1933. He had a salary of £80. Kee was lauded by the inspectors of the Department of Education as a result of which Edward Coursey, then headmaster, recommended that he be given an increase in salary. An increase to £100 was agreed with further increases to be dependent on Kee acquiring a degree.¹⁷⁹ He remained in post until Easter 1947 when Coursey referred to the difficulties of securing the services of a teacher of Irish, particularly a Protestant. Kee had by then presented 112 candidates for Intermediate and Leaving Certificate examinations in Irish with just nine failing. In the course of the term subsequent

¹⁷⁴ *The Erasmian*, December 1926, pp. 496-8.

¹⁷⁵ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 191, 192; Jones, *A Gaelic Experiment*, p. 247.

¹⁷⁶ *Memorial to Board of National Education in Ireland by Council of Society for Preservation of Irish language in favour of placing teaching of Irish Language on Results Programme of National Schools*, H.C. 1878 (324), lx, 495.

¹⁷⁷ Martina Relihan, 'The Church of Ireland, the State and Education in Irish Language and Irish History, 1920s-1950s' in Deirdre Raftery and Karin Fischer (eds), *Educating Ireland: Schooling and Social Change, 1700-2000* (Kildare, 2014), p. 163.

¹⁷⁸ UCG Register of Entrants, 1910/11-1944/45.

¹⁷⁹ ESA/GS/754 (4), Annual staff returns for Galway Grammar School, 1 December 1931; ESA/GS/736(9), Report of Coursey for 1932/33 and to March 1934; ESA/Registry Book 10, mtg. 14 December 1934.

to Kee's departure the School had three temporary Irish teachers.¹⁸⁰ Coursey's own attitude to the language was less sympathetic and at a dinner of the 'Old Boys Union' in 1939 he said that he considered the State's policy in respect of Irish to be an unwise one which would not achieve the results aimed at. He added that it was, nevertheless, his duty as a citizen and headmaster to see that it was carried out. Despite his evident lack of enthusiasm Coursey recommended in 1945 that Irish be a compulsory subject for the School's scholarship examination with the recommendation being adopted by the Board.¹⁸¹

The place of Irish in the School was copper-fastened with the appointment of George Coghlan as headmaster in 1948. Coghlan had been a successful teacher of Irish at the Masonic School prior to his appointment to Galway with, since 1939, under his tuition, over 100 boys taking and passing the Intermediate Certificate Examination in Irish and only one, of more than 50 Leaving Certificate candidates since 1932, having failed.¹⁸² When appointed to the post he had already arranged to spend the month of August in Spiddal, in the Connemara Gaeltacht. His appointment provided the School with the expertise to provide a two-week summer course in Irish in 1956 attended by 24 second-level Protestant boys which was deemed to have been very successful. The advertisement for the course began 'Bearing in mind that a knowledge of the Irish Language is becoming more essential for a successful career in this country...' The course was held again in 1957 with 13 boys attending.¹⁸³ All in all the teaching of Irish appears to have been incorporated seamlessly and successfully into the curriculum of Galway Grammar School with Kee and Coghlan combining an expertise in the teaching of the language with a keen interest in cricket.

Concern at Board level regarding Galway Grammar School emerged again in 1924 when the Rev. G. P. White, Archdeacon of Cashel, and L. Purser, visiting governors, were unable to recommend further improvements to the School related to continuing low pupil numbers. The visitors were of the view that there was little immediate prospect of numbers increasing given the state of the country, especially in Connacht. They reported that the 'tone' of the School was satisfactory, with the pupils

¹⁸⁰ ESA/BG/310, Report to Local Committee, 24 March 1947; ESA/Registry Book 11, mtg. 19 June 1947.

¹⁸¹ CT, 23 December 1939; ESA/Registry Book 11, mtg. 22 June 1945.

¹⁸² ESA/GS/9, Coghlan to Governors, 10 July 1948.

¹⁸³ ESA/GS/9, Letter from the Registrar to Very Revd. Provost Nash, 19 July 1948; ESA/GS/2, Coghlan to Bell, 2 August 1956; ESA/BG/2, appendix to letter from Registrar to Ralph Walker, of the *Irish Times*, 2 May 1956; ESA/GS/8 (2), Coghlan to Bell, 21 July 1957.

well cared for and giving 'evidence of good training and education'. They considered the relationship between pupils and the headmaster and assistant masters to be satisfactory.¹⁸⁴

In this context the admission of female pupils provided a welcome boost to pupil numbers. Girls first came to attend the School in 1922 when Eraut's daughters, Linda and Margaret, were admitted. Thirteen girls were admitted in 1925, nine of whom came from Galway High School.¹⁸⁵ Harold Thornton, teacher, later wrote that he 'remembered well the first term the girls came, and the excitement it caused...'¹⁸⁶ The Erasmus Smith Board agreed that an architect's report be obtained regarding accommodation for girls and necessary bathroom alterations. However, the Archbishop of Cashel, having inspected the School in April 1926, recommended that a large sum should not be spent as the School's future was uncertain.¹⁸⁷ One female pupil who attended the School in the 1950s recalled that the sole particular facility provided for girls was a cold, spartan hut which they shared with spiders.¹⁸⁸

There were 81 female entrants over the 35 years, 1922-1957. Seven of them subsequently attended UCG. The School Roll Book records that two attended TCD, that one attended Cambridge (she also attended UCG) and that one went to Oxford.¹⁸⁹ There may have been others who attended university as the Roll Book is clearly incomplete in this respect in that it records that only one girl attended UCG.

Given that there were a total of 370 Protestants in Galway town in 1926 and that the Grammar School did not have boarding facilities, the low number of female entrants per annum is understandable.¹⁹⁰ Nevertheless, girls from Galway evidently attended schools elsewhere in relatively large numbers as a Galway Schoolgirls hockey team in 1932 was comprised of six players attending Dublin schools, two attending schools in England and two, most probably three, attending Galway schools. It is

¹⁸⁴ ESA/GS/749, Report of Visiting Governors, date stamped 18 December 1924.

¹⁸⁵ ESA/GS/1431, Galway Grammar School Roll Book, 1895-1952; The Report of the Department of Education, School Years 1925-26-27 and the Financial and Administrative Year 1926-27, p. 152.

¹⁸⁶ Letter from Mr Thornton to Olive Fleming (nee Clinton), former pupil, 28 January 1959.

I am grateful to Mrs Fleming for providing me with a copy of the letter.

¹⁸⁷ ESA/Registry Book 9, mtg.17 December 1925; ESA/GS/749, Archbishop of Cashel to Governors, 29 April 1926.

¹⁸⁸ Information provided by O. Fleming (nee Clinton), former pupil.

¹⁸⁹ UCG Register of Entrants, 1910/11-1944/45; ESA/GS/1431, Galway Grammar School Roll Book, 1895-1952.

¹⁹⁰ Census 1926, Vol. 3, Part 1, Table 7.

appreciated that not all team members would have been Protestants.¹⁹¹ While one former female pupil of Galway Grammar School had no sense of segregation, she was conscious of the extent to which the School was, even 30 years after the admission of its first female pupils and having always accommodated day boys, oriented towards boarders. Another recalls the School as consisting of groups of boys and of being somewhat on the periphery of those groups. Girls did take part in school plays and one at least played hockey with the boys against UCG and Greenfields Ladies.¹⁹²

The decline in the Protestant population during the revolutionary years and in the early years of the Irish Free State also presented a particular challenge for Galway Grammar School and Protestant schools in general. The Protestant population of Galway, which had declined from 1,365 in 1891 to 370 in 1926, clearly presented a particular challenge for Galway Grammar School. The relative position of the School in 1926 compared to a number of other schools and the demographic context within which those schools operated is set out in table 2:

¹⁹¹ *CT*, 2 January 1932.

¹⁹² Information provided by O. Fleming (nee Clinton) and C. Ellis (nee Cooke), former pupils.

Table 2

Pupil numbers in selected schools and the populations, total and Protestant, of their respective counties and towns/cities in 1926¹⁹³

| School | Pupils | Co. population | City/town population | Protestant population of county | Protestant population of city/town |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Galway GS | 41 | 169,336 | 14,227 | 1,938 | 370 |
| Sligo GS | 69 | 71,388 | 11,437 | 4,861 | 1,076 |
| Sligo High | 42 | 71,388 | 11,437 | 4,861 | 1,076 |
| Kilkenny Cge. | 69 | 70,990 | 10,046 | 2,511 | 403 |
| Newtown, Waterford | 38 | 78,562 | 26,647 | 2,497 | 1,055 |

The comparative strength of Protestant secondary school education in Sligo is evident and it was supported by a relatively strong population base. The correlation between pupil numbers in Kilkenny and Waterford and the Protestant populations in their respective counties and cities is not as strong suggesting that factors other than demographic went to make up a successful school. In the case of Sligo Grammar School its headmaster, John Bennett, had reported in 1923 that the School 'spends its endowments on the boys, so that every pupil gets back much more than the value of his fees'.¹⁹⁴ Kilkenny College had had, from 1907 to 1917, the best period in its history since 1842 under headmasters Harden and Seale. Seale was succeeded by C.G. Shankey, who was headmaster until 1953. He has been described as 'an awe-inspiring figure, strict and quick-tempered' and, in an appreciation in the *Irish Times*, as 'a brilliant teacher and educationalist'.¹⁹⁵ Newtown School enjoyed a successful period from the beginning of the century to 1914. It was occupied by Free State forces during the Civil War and, although compensation was provided, pupil numbers declined and a

¹⁹³ Census 1926, Vol. 3, Table 11; Report of the Department of Education for the School Years 1925-26-27, Appendix 3 (a).

¹⁹⁴ Pdraig Deignan, *The Protestant Community in Sligo, 1914-1949* (Dublin, 2010), p. 295.

¹⁹⁵ Whiteside, *A History of Kilkenny College* (Dublin, 2009), pp. 92-104.

decision was taken in 1925 to close the School. It was rescued from that fate by the intervention of Arnold Marsh, a Quaker from Ulster, who sought and obtained permission to operate the School.¹⁹⁶

The situation in Galway Grammar School appears to have deteriorated by May 1929 when the Board, having considered the report of Dr Luce and Mr Miller, visiting governors, agreed that Eraut be requested to remedy deficits and 'to make the boys' lives as happy as possible'.¹⁹⁷ Eraut was required to attend the January 1930 meeting of the Board. After his departure the Board agreed that the Registrar convey to him the wish of the governors that he discontinue the use of margarine and, in future, use butter only. In May 1931 the Board returned to the butter question and resolved that Eraut be informed that it was not satisfied with the amount being provided to the pupils and that he be asked to increase it immediately and inform the Board how much he intended to provide per week to each boy. There was a satisfactory outcome to the matter in October when the Board deemed letters of 28 May and 6 June to be satisfactory.¹⁹⁸ The Board comprised senior members of the lay and clerical Church of Ireland community. Its focus on the use of butter in the School was a very inadequate intervention given the particularly difficult situation in which the School found itself and is suggestive of a general air of helplessness.

Throughout this period sport in the School was at a low ebb and in 1926/27 all eight rugby matches played in a schools' league were lost, with aggregate scores of nine points for and 89 against.¹⁹⁹ Despite having little or no contact in other spheres, the Grammar School and The High School, Dublin did occasionally meet on the rugby field and in February 1925 a game between the two Schools was won by The High School by 12 points to nil. The schools met again in November 1926 with The High School report expressing pleasure at the fixture being revived.²⁰⁰ In 1930 Galway Grammar School was not represented on a Connacht Schools team which played Leinster, while in 1930/31 it did not participate in either the Senior or Junior Schools' cup competitions.²⁰¹

There is little evidence of cricket being played during this period although in 1923, a School side, 'reinforced by some outside elements' and Mr Thornton, a teacher who scored 20 runs, defeated a

¹⁹⁶ Wigham, *Newtown School, Waterford*, pp. 102-114.

¹⁹⁷ ESA/ Registry Book 10, mtgs. 17 May 1929.

¹⁹⁸ ESA/ Registry Book 10, mtgs. 16 January 1930, 22 May and 23 October 1931.

¹⁹⁹ C T, 19 February 1927.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 28 February 1925. *The Erasmian*, December 1926, pp. 499, 500.

²⁰¹ C T, 5 April 1930 and 7 February 1931.

scratch XI representing the 'Gentlemen of Galway'.²⁰² Ladies hockey made some impact following the general admission of girls in 1925 and in 1927/28 the School was fielding a team in the Connacht Ladies Cup.²⁰³ The capacity of the School to field a girls' team diminished once the initial cohort of 13 girls had passed through.

Ladies hockey did provide one of the School's few internationals when former pupil, and daughter of the headmaster, Linda Eaut was selected to play against Scotland in 1932. Ireland lost the game, 3-2. Linda was not selected for the following game against England and any possibility of further caps disappeared when the Eaut family moved to England later that year.²⁰⁴ Another former pupil, Noel Galway Holmes, whose professional career is considered in chapter 5, represented Ireland against Italy at tennis in the Davis Cup in 1929, playing in the doubles game, partnered by George Littleton-Rodgers. The pair lost in three sets, 4 – 6, 5 – 7, 5 – 7.²⁰⁵ Again, it does not appear that he subsequently played for Ireland.

The School's games, with the exception of rugby, set it apart from other schools in Co. Galway. This distinctiveness became almost total isolation from 1931 when Galway County Council decided that scholarships funded by it could not be held at schools which encouraged the playing of 'foreign' games, defined as rugby, soccer, hockey and cricket, the four games banned by the GAA. Only St Joseph's College, Ballinasloe (Garbally), which did not respond to the Council's query as to whether it played 'foreign' games, remained, with Galway Grammar School, to which the Council's query was not sent, as rugby playing schools in Co. Galway. The link which sport provided between the Grammar School and other schools in Galway town would remain severed for much of the following two decades.²⁰⁶

In February 1932 the Board decided that notice of termination of appointment be provided to Eaut in view of his approaching pension age. The Registrar wrote to Eaut informing him, in a short letter lacking the niceties which might have been expected given the message being conveyed, that it had been decided to terminate his appointment from 31 July. Eaut replied stating that 'If I had been a convicted felon the decision could hardly have been more harsh (sic)' and enquiring as to what he

²⁰² Ibid, 15 September 1923.

²⁰³ Ibid, 30 June 1928.

²⁰⁴ C T, 5 March 1932; *Irish Independent* 8 March 1932.

²⁰⁵ *Irish Independent*, 18 May 1929.

²⁰⁶ C T, 15 August 1931.

had done to be treated in such a manner after nearly 40 years of service. He said that the 'curt dismissal' put him under a cloud of dishonour and acted as a bar to his future employment. Erait concluded by saying that any person in his position would be given the option of resigning or retiring.²⁰⁷

The Registrar subsequently wrote to Erait stating that the Board had directed that he be informed that there was no question of dismissal in disgrace and that the termination of his appointment related to him approaching pension age. He indicated that should Erait tender his resignation the Board would accept it. Erait did so on 15 March and, in contrast to his attitude towards the assistant teachers in the School on his appointment, requested that the services of teachers Thornton and Kirkman and of Michael Joyce, caretaker, be retained.²⁰⁸

Erait's final formal function as headmaster took place at the School's annual prize-giving ceremony. He expressed his regret at leaving the School after 38 years and hoped that pupils would write to him. A Mr Boland, on behalf of the staff and pupils, made a presentation to Erait and expressed regret at his retirement. The final act of Erait's period as headmaster occurred when Thomas Kirkman, assistant master, aged 25, from Oldham, who had taught in the School over the previous three years, died on 14 July from blood-poisoning.²⁰⁹

Alexander Erait contributed to many aspects of Galway life during his years as headmaster, including to the Church of Ireland. He was amongst the first members of The Galway Archaeological and Historical Society when it was founded in 1900, became a member of the Executive Committee in 1905, was editor from 1915–16 and Honorary Secretary from 1924 until leaving Galway. He was a member of the first Governing Body of University College Galway and the first president of the Galway Chamber of Commerce when it was constituted in 1923.²¹⁰ Erait was also a member of the City of Galway Technical Education Committee for 27 years and of the Vocational Committee, which replaced the Technical Committee. He was involved with the Galway Branch of the Society for the

²⁰⁷ ESA/ Registry Book 10, mtg. 19 February 1932; ESA/GS/754(4), Registrar to Erait, 24 February 1932; ESA/GS/754(4), Erait to Chairman, Board of Governors, 24 February 1932.

²⁰⁸ ESA/GS/754(4), Registrar to Erait, 14 March 1932; ESA/GS/754(4), Erait to Governors, 15 March 1932.

²⁰⁹ CT, 2 and 16 July 1932.

²¹⁰ *Reports of Tuam Diocesan Council* referred to in Kavanagh, 'Protestants in Galway, 1901-1926', Tables 11 (d) and (e), p. 149; JGAHS, Vol. 1, 1900, p.59; Vol. 9, 1905-06, introductory pages; Vol. 12, 1922-23, p.130; Vol. 15, 1931-33, nos. 5, iii & iv, p.163; University College Galway Calendar, 1911-12, p. 44; CT, 24 November 1923.

Prevention of Cruelty to Children and the west of Ireland Tourist Development Association. In the sporting sphere Eraut served as President of the Connacht Branch of the Irish Rugby Football Union and his contribution to Connacht rugby was marked by a presentation made to him at the annual dinner of the Connacht Branch in 1929.²¹¹

The *Connacht Tribune* recorded that Eraut's many friends would learn with regret of his departure from Galway, adding that he was popular and a successful teacher. The Galway Archaeological and Historical Society, the Galway City Vocational Committee, and the Galway Branch of the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children all marked his departure.²¹² The Erauts moved to Cambridge where, in 1935, Alexander was elected to Cambridge City Council for the Conservative Party. In November 1945 he lost his seat to a Labour candidate. Eraut died on 9 March 1947, aged 80.²¹³

Alexander Eraut was appointed headmaster of Galway Grammar School at a young age and with little experience. He became headmaster when the School had been 'hollowed out' by the departure of its boarders and, in all likelihood, best teachers to Portora with Richard Biggs. Unlike Biggs, he would not, on appointment, have had a reputation of success in his own right or been in a position to bring a cohort of boarders with him. His relationship with the Board appears to have been tetchy from early in his appointment. While he did succeed in building up the number of boarders over time, this was counter-balanced by declining day pupil numbers, and, overall, the School's capacity to generate income from pupils' fees diminished in the face of a declining Protestant population which had reduced wealth.

Conclusion, 1895-1932

The demise of Protestants as a political force, in the 26 counties which became Saorstát Éireann, was confirmed at the local elections in 1899, while the land acts of the 1900s brought an end to their base as major land owners. Effectively, therefore, even before Home Rule returned to the political agenda in 1910, Protestants had become but spectators to the developing political events.

Interventions by their representatives at such as the Irish Convention, 1917, came to nought. The advent of Saorstát Éireann merely confirmed the end of a process which had been decades in the

²¹¹ *CT*, 10 January 1925, 6 April 1929 and 12 July 1932.

²¹² *CT*, 12 July 1932 and JGAHS, Vol. 15, 1931-33, nos. iii & iv, pp. 143, 144.

²¹³ Cambridge City Election Results since 1935: <http://www.cambridgeelections.org.uk/>; *Cambridge Daily News*, 10 March 1947.

making. A grouping which had constituted the 'Irish nation' had, powerless, looked-on as their former authority was removed from them and as immigration removed the possibility of their constituting a significant minority with political influence in the new state. Nevertheless, Protestants retained a degree of economic influence and social status within the newly constituted state which significantly exceeded their share of political and demographic representation. The state was, however, overwhelmingly Catholic and, while the apocalyptic image they had formed of their situation in such a state did not materialise, a view advanced by Archbishop Gregg in 1946 was that Protestants were '...outside the close-knit entity which the majority...' constituted, that the two communities repelled one another, and that Protestants would, as the smaller community, suffer.²¹⁴

The members of the Erasmus Smith Board, in contrast to the general passivity of their peers in accepting the political changes of the period, were resolute in their determination to resist pressure for changes to the Trust. They consistently held that the Trust was a private body, was Anglican in nature, that its primary purpose was religious, and that its funds were to provide for the education of Protestants. Ultimately, however, in 1931, the High Court ruled against it. By this time the financial position of the Trust was in a greatly weakened state as a result of its lands being sold in the 1900s, the effect of hyperinflation during World War I on its investments, and the costs associated with the High Court case. An air of unreality attaches to the assessment of the Board's sub-committee that the Trust's ills resulted from the departure of the 'official classes' from the country with the children of the gentry being sent to England for their education. There is, indeed, little to suggest that the children of governors of the Trust frequented its schools.

In contrast to its resoluteness in maintaining control of the Trust, the Board was indecisive in dealing with the problems posed by its grammar schools and the absence of practical initiatives, be they ultimately effective or ineffective, is notable. Following a respite in the last decades of the nineteenth century as a result of the quality of the headmasters, difficulties re-emerged and Tipperary Grammar School was effectively closed from 1922, while pupil numbers at Drogheda and Galway were consistently low. The Board was reluctant to invest in the schools being, seemingly, overwhelmed by the problems they presented. It had evidently lost confidence in Eraut as headmaster of Galway Grammar School at a relatively early stage and, while the pupils were

²¹⁴ *Journal of General Synod*, 1946, p. lxxxiv, cited in Acheson, *History of the Church of Ireland*, p. 229.

considered to be well looked after in the mid-1920s, the situation deteriorated later in the decade. The Board's only response was to require Eraft to provide butter to pupils.

Second-level education continued to be availed of by only a small minority and few of the problems facing the system were resolved. Nevertheless, the number of pupils grew from 22,897 in 1924-25 to 28,994 in 1930-31 and, even though there was an increase in the number of schools over those years from 278 to 300, average pupil numbers per school increased from 82 to 97, an increase of 18 percent.²¹⁵ The position of Galway Grammar School, with stagnant pupil numbers of the order of 40, was parlous. Its plight was similar to that of many other Protestant secondary schools with over half of the 55 schools in operation when the Free State was established having less than 40 pupils.²¹⁶ In contrast to Tipperary Grammar School and Newtown School, it does not, however, appear to have been impacted in any way, particular to itself, by the events of the revolutionary years.

Galway Grammar School's relationship with Galway is likely to have become, over the course of this period, a function of Eraft's significant involvement with a multitude of corporate, cultural, sporting and ecclesiastical bodies. His prominence across the spectrum of committees in the town points to there being then no difficulty in the conduct of inter-denominational, inter-personal relationships amongst the more prominent citizens, lay and clerical, of Galway. The School's sporting prowess, relatively significant in the early years, declined over time and the opportunity to play games against local teams all but disappeared. The number of day boys declined significantly. The Protestant population of Galway was 370 in 1926, amounting to 2.6 per cent of the town's population. Galway Grammar School was then an isolated institution on its outskirts. That isolation was, on the one hand, akin to that of the Anglo-Irish 'Big House' as portrayed in *The Last September*, but, more mundanely, an isolation shared, also, with boarding schools, Catholic and Protestant, at that time and for decades to come.²¹⁷

The School's sense of separation from Galway is likely to have been reinforced by Eraft's policy, particularly in the pre-War period, of appointing graduates of English universities as assistant

²¹⁵ Coolahan, *Irish Education*, p. 79, Table 2.

²¹⁶ A. Bell and N.D. Emerson (eds), *The Church of Ireland, A.D. 432-1932* (Dublin, 1932), p. 224, cited in Relihan, 'The Church of Ireland, the State and Education in Irish Language and Irish History', p. 162.

²¹⁷ Elizabeth Bowen, *The Last September*, (London, 1998), p. 66.

masters. They appear to have only briefly remained in post and were appointed, presumably, with a view to their accent impressing the wider Protestant community, while ‘enhancing’ that of their pupils. His efforts appear to have made little impression on the Board which, in 1910, sought to fund scholars at the School towards attracting a ‘more intellectual class’ of pupil. In contrast, the Board was then concerned not to lower the social status of Tipperary Grammar School. The concerns of the Board regarding social status were then shared by all three headmasters.

The School Roll Book, the information contained in which is considered in detail in Chapter 5, provides an insight into the background of and subsequent careers of pupils over the period 1895 to 1952. It does not, however, provide any information on their school-life. Nevertheless, a picture emerges of a small cohort of pupils, comprised increasingly of boarders, inhabiting a century-old building which had attracted little infrastructural investment since 1875. In the absence of a matron their care was, presumably, in the hands of teachers and domestic staff, with the possible involvement of Mrs Eraut. The opportunities for pupils to participate in sport decreased over time related to the effective demise of cricket in the west of Ireland and the decision of neighbouring schools to cease playing rugby. The low number of pupils attending the School impacted on its capacity to make an impact in the sporting sphere and would also have adversely affected intra-mural sporting activity. There is no evidence of any attempt to develop alternative extra-curricular activity. The admission of girls in the 1920s provided a boost to numbers and saw, temporarily, the establishment of a girls’ hockey team, but no particular initiative was taken to cater for or attract girls. By the late 1920s the situation in which the boarders found themselves had deteriorated such that the Board found it necessary to request Eraut to make their lives ‘as happy as possible’. The attitude of parents in leaving their sons in this environment may be wondered at.

A succinct statement on the state of Galway Grammar School, together with a judgement on the Board, is provided by one of its members, Canon Luce, in 1932, when he writes in respect of the School buildings, ‘A parent....could not fail to be repelled by the general air of neglect’. He continued:

A visit to Galway gives rise to serious doubts about the Board’s general policy. The pivot of the Trust is the grammar schools. Yet Drogheda does us little credit, and Galway is a dead failure. We spend thousands of pounds on them annually, and succeed in educating about

60 pupils, only a small percentage is up to university standard. The results are disproportionate to the expenditure, almost scandalously so.

The root cause is, I suggest, that the Board neither discharges its duty of governing the Grammar Schools nor delegates it. For about three hours per annum we take a desultory interest in details of school management. We deliberate about our property, we guard our funds and dispense grants; but we give no proof of a sustained intention to make our schools a success. We are a Board of Patronage. Are we a Board of Governors?²¹⁸

Galway Grammar School would clearly face a battle for survival under a new headmaster. Reference to Midleton College would, however, have provided some grounds for optimism. Its headmaster, Dr A. E. Layng, had resigned in 1928 to take up an appointment at Foyle College, taking some of the staff and a number of pupils with him. The new headmaster, Timothy West, had just seven pupils on being appointed but, by 1931, had 72 pupils, including 20 girls, and was operating a junior school which had 21 pupils aged between six and eleven years. The School received generous support, £600, towards defraying the School's overdraft from Louis Claude Purser, a former pupil, who was Vice-Provost of TCD and a member of the Erasmus Smith Board.²¹⁹

²¹⁸ ESA/GS/754 (4), Report to Governors on Galway Grammar School, 25 March 1932. Marked 'Private: Not to be circulated'.

²¹⁹ West, *Midleton College*, pp. 35-39.

Chapter 5

The Pupils of Galway Grammar School, 1895-1958

Information in the Erasmus Smith Archive on pupils who attended Galway Grammar School up to 1895 generally does not consist of more than lists of names, together with, occasionally, information on their domiciliary origin and as to whether they were boarders, day pupils or free pupils. In 1895, Alexander Eraut initiated a School Roll Book.¹ It was continued by headmasters Edward Coursey, 1932-1948, and George Coghlan, 1948-1958, with the last entries being made at Easter 1952. The information contained in the Roll Book, although not complete for all pupils, and significantly lacking in the case of some, provides an insight into the School and its pupils over more than half a century in respect of annual intake numbers, duration of attendance, pupil numbers, gender, age at entry, domiciliary origin, socio-economic status, religion, residential status, incidence of siblings and of children of former pupils attending the School.

The Roll Book also provides information on some pupils after they left the School regarding their further education, occupations, and country of residence. Participation by pupils in World War I and, to a lesser extent, in World War II is noted in the Roll Book. A profile of 68 Galway Grammar School pupils who participated in World War I has been compiled and is included as an appendix.

For the present purpose 33 pupils listed in the Roll Book, and who were already pupils when Eraut became headmaster, have been excluded as they were a subset of the 81 pupils in the School when Richard Biggs tendered his resignation in 1894.² When a small number of duplicate entries is also excluded, 716 entries remain. Two pupils who entered at Easter 1952 have also been excluded as they do not constitute the entire 1952 cohort of entrants, leaving 714 pupils to be considered. A further 69 pupils, entrants in the 1950s, were identified from other sources.³ It was decided not to include them

¹ ESA/GS/1431, Galway Grammar School Roll Book, 1895-1952.

Note: The source of the information in this chapter is, unless otherwise referenced, the School Roll Book.

² ESA/GS/730 (1), Biggs to Browne, 27 December 1894.

³ Mainly from a list, inserted in the School Roll Book, drawn up by Charles Ruttle when a 2006 School Reunion was being organised, but, also, from ESA/GS/51, Galway Grammar School Address Book, 1951-53.

in the analysis to maintain the integrity of it being based on the Roll Book. A brief overview of this cohort is included at '*Entrants 1952-57*'.

Profile of Pupils⁴

Entrant Numbers

There were 714 entrants to the School over the 57 year period 1895 to 1951, an average of 12.5 per annum. Entrant numbers ranged from two in 1913 to 29 in 1925. The median number was eleven.

While there were significant variations in individual years, Table 3 shows that the average per year, in each decade, did not vary greatly, ranging from 10.9 to 14.2.

Table 3

Number of entrants per decade and average number of entrants per year in each decade

| Decade | No. of entrants | Average no. of entrants per year |
|-----------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| 1895-1904 | 142 | 14.2 |
| 1905-1914 | 119 | 11.9 |
| 1915-1924 | 114 | 11.4 |
| 1925-1934 | 141 | 14.1 |
| 1935-1944 | 108 | 10.8 |
| 1945-1951 | 90 | 12.9 |

⁴ Where a pupil is listed as sibling of another pupil, details regarding home address, parental occupation, religion, etc., if not set out in the Roll Book, have generally been taken as the same as those of the sibling, unless information to the contrary was provided or there was reason to doubt the appropriateness of utilising the information.

Entrant numbers received occasional once-off boosts as in 1932, when five boys were transferred by the Erasmus Smith Board from Bishop Foy's School, Waterford, and in 1938, when 16 boys were transferred when Drogheda Grammar School closed. Linda and Margaret Eraut, daughters of the headmaster, entered in 1922 and the effective entry of girls occurred from 1925 when 13 girls entered related, in large part, to the closure of Galway High School. A total of 68 girls entered the School between 1925 and 1951, an average of 2.5 per year. The underlying trend in entrant numbers, excluding the transfers and the female entrants, was downwards from an average of 12.5 entrants per annum for the period 1895-1924 to 9.2 for the period 1925-51.

The advent of a new headmaster served to boost entrant numbers with an average of 19 enrolments per year in the three years following Eraut's appointment, an average of 18 in the three years following Coursey's appointment in 1932, and an average of 15 in the three years following the appointment of Coghlan in 1948. Conversely, numbers were lower than average in the years prior to the departure of a headmaster with an average of eight entrants per year from 1929 to 1931, prior to the departure of Eraut, and ten per year from 1945 to 1947, prior to Coursey's departure.

Duration of Attendance of Pupils, 1895-1924⁵

The Roll Book records the entry and departure dates of 344 pupils, 48 per cent of entrants. This enables the duration of their attendance be calculated. The information is available in respect of just 86 of the 375 pupils who entered over the period 1895-1924. The average duration of their attendance was 1.9 years. There was an average of 12.5 entrants per annum during this period. Applying the average duration of attendance, 1.9 years, to the average number of entrants, 12.5, gives an average annual pupil population of 24 pupils. This is, however, an underestimation as the average number of pupils for 27 of the 30 years from 1895 to 1924 was 36, giving an average duration of attendance of 2.9 years.⁶ As entrant numbers were declining over the period and as the average annual number of pupils for 1915-24, at 41, was higher than the average for the decades 1895-1904 and 1915-24, at 38 and 31 respectively, it appears that duration of attendance increased over time.

⁵ In calculating attendance, periods of attendance up to, but not including, 6 months have been rounded down and periods of attendance of 6 months or more have been rounded up. Consequently, 23 pupils were reckoned to have attended for zero years.

⁶ ESA/GS/754 (3), Pupil numbers 1896-1930.

In 1925, at the end of this period, the School had 32 pupils recognised by the Department of Education, nine of whom, 28 per cent, were senior pupils.⁷ The average number of pupils then attending the country's 283 secondary schools was 70, of whom an average of 10, 14 per cent, were at senior level. Galway Grammar School was, consequently, a smaller than average school at that time, with the proportion of its pupils at senior level being above average in proportional terms, although slightly below average in actual terms. Galway Grammar School ranked 5th in terms of the number of pupils attending eight Protestant schools in Connacht and some neighbouring counties in 1925. The schools had an average of 40 pupils.⁸

Meanwhile, 51 pupils were reported to the Erasmus Smith Board as attending Galway Grammar School in each of 1925 and 1926. However, the Department of Education recognised just 32 and 41 pupils as attending the School for those years respectively, indicating that 28 per cent of the School's pupils were not recognised by the Department. This was a recurring feature as will be seen when the age of pupils at entry is discussed.⁹

Pupil Numbers and Duration of Attendance, 1925-51

The Roll Book provides entry and departure dates for 258 of 339 pupils, 76 per cent, for the period 1925 to 1951. The duration of attendance for those pupils is summarised in Table 4.

⁷ The *Report of the Department of Education: School Year 1924-25*, p. 52 defines recognised pupils as those between the ages of 12 and 20 years, who were following an approved course of study and who were in attendance for a minimum of 130 days during the school year.

⁸ *Report of the Department of Education: School Years 1925-26-27 and the Financial and Administrative Year 1926-27*, Appendix 3, (A), (1) and (3), pp. 133, 134, Table K: Showing Number of Recognised Pupils, Certificate Examination Results and Amounts of Grants (by school), pp. 140-168.

Note: The schools are: Cavan Royal School; Lifford Prior School; Raphoe Royal School; Galway Grammar School; Bishop Hodson's School, Elphin; Sligo Grammar School; Sligo High School; Ranelagh School, Athlone.

⁹ ESA/GS/754 (3), Pupil numbers 1896-1930; *Report of the Department of Education: School Years 1925-26-27*, pp. 140-168.

Table 4

Duration of Attendance of Pupils Admitted to Galway Grammar School, 1925-1951

| Duration of attendance | Male | Female | Total |
|------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| 0-2 years | 61 (29%) | 15 (32%) | 76 (29%) |
| 3-4 years | 70 (33%) | 13 (28%) | 83 (32%) |
| 5-6 years | 58 (27%) | 17 (36%) | 75 (29%) |
| 7-8 years | 22 (10%) | 2 (4%) | 24 (9%) |
| Total | 211 (100%) | 47 (100%) | 258 (100%) |

That 29 per cent of the pupils discontinued their education within two years is not surprising given that, nationally, 21 per cent, 25 per cent and 27 per cent of male entrants to secondary schools in 1932, 1943 and 1955 respectively left school within one year.¹⁰ The average duration of attendance at the School increased to 3.8 years, with 70 per cent of pupils attending for 3 years or more, suggesting an increased emphasis on pupils taking the Intermediate Certificate Examination. The duration of attendance of males and females was broadly similar. A perspective on total pupil numbers over the years 1925 to 1951 can be gained by taking the annual average number of new entrants, as per Table 3, and the average duration of attendance of 3.8 years. This is shown in Table 5.

¹⁰ O'Donoghue and Harford, *Secondary School Education in Ireland*, p. 14.

Table 5

Estimate of Pupil Numbers at Galway Grammar School, 1925-1951, based on Numbers Entering and Duration of Attendance

| Years | Average no. of entrants per year | Estimated duration of attendance | Estimated no. of pupils |
|---------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1925-34 | 14.0 | 3.8 years | 53 |
| 1935-44 | 10.9 | 3.8 years | 41 |
| 1945-51 | 12.9 | 3.8 years | 49 |

There is a reasonable correlation between the numbers as estimated in the table and average pupil numbers of 54 reported to the Erasmus Smith Board for 17 of the 21 years 1925 to 1945.¹¹ A significant proportion of entrants would not have been 'recognised' by the Department of Education as the Roll Book records 87 pupils aged 11 or under being admitted between 1925 and 1951, an average of three per year, or about one-quarter of entrants.

At the end of the period under consideration, 1951/52, there were 434 secondary schools in the country with an average of 116 pupils. In that year Galway Grammar School had 45 pupils. The School was then clearly falling further behind many other schools in terms of critical mass. Galway Grammar School then ranked 3rd of six Protestant schools in Connacht and some Protestant schools in neighbouring counties. Its 45 pupils compared to an average of 62 across the group of schools. Its pupil numbers were significantly below those of Cavan Royal School, 73 pupils, and of the then amalgamated Sligo Grammar and High School, 144 pupils. Just two of Galway Grammar School's 45 pupils were female, compared to an average of 32, 52 per cent of all pupils, in the six Protestant schools considered.¹²

¹¹ ESA/GS/754 (3), Pupil numbers 1896-1930; ESA/BG/775 Coursey to Darley, 7 June 1945, No. on Roll at Galway; ESA/GS/736 (1), (2), (4), (8), (9), Reports of Coursey.

¹² *Report of the Department of Education: School Year 1951-52*, Appendix III, Tables I and XIX, pp. 107-116. Note: The schools were: Cavan Royal School, Lifford Prior School, Raphoe Royal School, Galway Grammar School, Bishop Hodson's School, Elphin, Sligo Grammar and High School (by then amalgamated). Ranelagh School, Athlone had ceased to operate.

*Domiciliary Origin*¹³

The domiciliary origin of 653 of the 714 pupils has been identified and is summarised in Table 6.

Table 6

Domiciliary Origin of Pupils of Galway Grammar School, 1895-1951 (summary)

| Domiciliary Origin | No. |
|--------------------|------------|
| Galway | 370 (57%) |
| Rest of Connacht | 84 (13%) |
| Leinster | 73 (11%) |
| Munster | 94 (14%) |
| Ulster | 15 (2%) |
| Overseas | 17 (3%) |
| Total | 653 (100%) |

The School was open to girls from Galway Town and its immediate environs from 1922 but, except in a small number of cases where they made particular arrangements, not to girls from further afield as it did not cater for female boarders. Sixty six of the 70 female pupils were from Galway.

The domiciliary origin of the 584 male pupils whose domiciliary origin is known is set out in Table 7, differentiated as between Galway, town and county, and elsewhere. The table shows that 304 (52 per cent) were from Galway but that the number and proportion from Galway consistently declined between 1895-1904 and 1935-44, followed by a small actual and proportional increase from 1945 to

¹³ Where address is not shown in the Roll Book but status is shown as day then county of domicile has been extrapolated as Galway.

1951. There was an average of 5.3 entrants per annum from Galway over the period, ranging from 9.3 per annum in 1895-1904 to 2.4 per annum in 1935-44, with three per annum during the period 1945-1951. Conversely, the average annual number of entrants from outside of Galway increased from 1895-1904 to 1925-34 and, following a slight decrease from 1935 to 1944, increased again over the years 1945-51.

Table 7

Male Students from Galway (county and town) as a proportion of all Male Students whose domiciliary origin is known

| Domiciliary Origin | 1895-1904 | 1905-14 | 1915-24 | 1925-34 | 1935-44 | 1945-51 | Total |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Galway | 93 | 74 | 55 | 37 | 24 | 21 | 304 |
| Other | 27 | 29 | 40 | 68 | 64 | 52 | 280 |
| Total | 120 | 103 | 95 | 105 | 88 | 73 | 584 |
| Galway as percentage of total | 78% | 72% | 58% | 35% | 27% | 29% | 52% |
| Average annual no. of Galway entrants | 9.3 | 7.4 | 5.5 | 3.7 | 2.4 | 3.0 | 5.3 |

The intake of male pupils from Galway in 1935-44 was just 26 per cent of its 1895-1904 level, while overall male pupils numbers were then at 73 per cent of their 1895-1904 level. The decline in male pupils from Galway corresponds with the decline in the Protestant population of Galway (town and county) which, in 1961, was at 23 per cent of its 1891 level. The pattern in respect of male entrants from outside of Co. Galway contrasts with the decrease in the overall Protestant population which, in

1961, was at 36 per cent of its 1891 level.¹⁴ The decline in male entrants from Galway predominately resulted from a decline in day pupils as is shown in the section '*Residential Status of Pupils*'.

Galway Grammar School had enrolments from 29 of the 32 counties, the exceptions being Derry, Longford and Wicklow, between 1895 and 1951. Seventeen entrants had addresses outside of Ireland, 13 in England, including three who were evacuated to Galway during World War II. There was an international dimension to the pupil cohort in the early 1950s with Marcel and Daniel Leredde, with an address in Limerick, being French in origin; while it is likely that Bjorn and Ulf Rehnfeldt, recorded as Swedish Lutherans and with an address in Galway, came from Sweden. Walter Wille Weiss, ward of Miss R.K. Ffrench, Mount Talbot, Roscommon, was a pupil from 1949 to 1951. Given Miss Ffrench's involvement with the Red Cross, Weiss is likely to have been a war refugee.¹⁵ A number of other pupils from outside of Ireland appear to have been enrolled related to a relative residing relatively near to the School.

While the transport infrastructure made Dublin more accessible than Galway for pupils who were resident a distance from both, Galway Grammar School became more attractive to pupils from outside of Galway over the period, with, for example, from 1945 to 1951, there being four entrants from Wexford, five from Westmeath, six from Monaghan, as well as entrants from Cavan, Dublin, Kerry and Tipperary. Schools in Dublin would have been options for those pupils, while Wilson's Hospital School, Multyfarnham would have been more proximate for those from Monaghan, Cavan and Westmeath. The attractiveness of Galway Grammar School may well have been the fee structure, with its liberal scholarship and fee concession schemes. This is further discussed below under '*Parental circumstances: School Fees*'.

Residential Status of Pupils

The residential status, boarder/day, of 662 pupils was identified.¹⁶ There were 378 boarders, 57 per cent of the cohort, and 284 day pupils, 43 per cent. It is evident, therefore, that, while the School was essentially organised as a boarding school, day pupils constituted a significant proportion of its

¹⁴ Census of Ireland, 1961, Vol. 7, Table 3, Persons of each religion in each Province and County at each census from 1881 to 1961.

¹⁵ It is likely that this was Rosamund French referred to in Beara Breifne Way: <http://www.bearatourism.com/bearabrefneway/houses/bushypark.html> Accessed 19 July 2018.

¹⁶ Three pupils identified as having had both boarder and day status have not been included.

population. All 70 girls were day-pupils. Boarders constituted 64 per cent of the 592 males whose residential status is known. The ratio of male boarders to male day pupils consistently increased over the period as is shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Male Entrants to Galway Grammar School, Boarders and Day Pupils, by Decade Showing the Ratio of Boarders to Day Pupils

| Decade | Boarders | Day Pupils | Ratio |
|----------------------|----------|------------|-------|
| 1895-1904 | 50 | 74 | 0.68 |
| 1905-1914 | 59 | 55 | 1.07 |
| 1915-1924 | 58 | 29 | 2.00 |
| 1925-1934 | 75 | 29 | 2.59 |
| 1935-1944 | 73 | 16 | 4.56 |
| 1945-1951 | 63 | 11 | 5.73 |
| All years: 1895-1951 | 378 | 214 | 1.73 |

A perspective on the number of day pupils, essentially pupils from Galway town, likely to enter Galway Grammar School in the years subsequent to the School closing is gained by reference to the number of pupils who entered St Nicholas' Parochial School, the Protestant primary school in Galway, over the years from 1926 to 1955. There were a total of 246 entrants, an average of 8.3 per year. A total of 80 pupils entered the School between 1930 and 1939, of whom 28, 35 per cent, subsequently entered Galway Grammar School, nine male and 19 female. Using St Nicholas's School as a proxy for Galway town, it can be estimated that Galway Grammar School could expect three entrants from the town each year, two female and one male. Since the number of entrants to St Nicholas' School between 1946 and 1955 was 90, an average of nine per year, no particular increase in the number of entrants from Galway town to Galway Grammar School could have been expected

into the late 1950s and early 1960s had the School remained open.¹⁷ The number of day pupils, essentially pupils from Galway town, entering Galway Grammar School declined from an average of 7.4 per year over the decade 1895 to 1904 to 1.6 per year over the years from 1935 to 1951. The School's link with the town through its pupils was progressively weakened over the years from 1895 to 1951.

The low ratio of males to females entering Galway Grammar School from St Nicholas' School suggests that there may have been a tendency for Protestant boys from Galway town to attend second-level schools elsewhere in the country, or in England. A similar tendency has been noted in the case of girls in chapter 4. Consequently, while the potential of Galway to provide pupils to Galway Grammar School was low, related to the number of Protestants in the town, that potential may have been under-realised.

Age at Entry

Age of pupils at entry has been calculated based on date of birth and date of entry to the School for 670 pupils. The information is summarised in Table 9.

Table 9
Age of Pupils at Entry

| Age band | No. | Percentage |
|-------------|-----|------------|
| 8-11 | 191 | 29% |
| 12-13 | 296 | 44% |
| 14 | 94 | 14% |
| 15 and over | 89 | 13% |
| Total | 670 | 100% |

¹⁷ Lyons, *St. Nicholas's Parochial School*, pp. 30-32.

It is noteworthy that 29 per cent of pupils were admitted when aged eight to eleven years. Just over one-half, 100, of this group were aged eleven on admission. Pupils aged eleven or under were admitted throughout the period, with 104 being admitted between 1895 and 1924, and 87 being admitted between 1925 and 1951. Some boys boarded at the School while attending St Nicholas' Parochial School, related, *inter alia*, to the lack of a Protestant primary school near their homes.¹⁸ The number of entrants aged eleven or under from Galway was 111, some of whom were from Galway town, and it is not clear why parents would have sent children, male and female, at a young age, to a second-level school when the Galway Model School, essentially a primary school for Protestants, and, subsequently, St Nicholas' Parochial School, were available.

Entrants aged 14 years and over comprised 27 per cent of the intake to Galway Grammar School, suggesting that some pupils had remained at primary schools beyond the standard age and that there were transfers from other secondary schools, potentially over and above the number identified and discussed in the section on '*Inter-School Transfers*' below. The pattern of late entry to secondary schools was referred to by the Intermediate Education Board which was concerned that it related to the lack of a transfer facility, resulting in pupils not entering secondary schools at a sufficiently young age to fit in with the school programme. The practice of pupils remaining at national schools beyond the standard age survived into the Irish Free State era and there were more pupils aged fourteen to sixteen in primary schools than in secondary schools as late as 1944.¹⁹ It is not considered that education by private tutor was a factor in delayed entry as information on the socio-economic background of the pupils suggest that few, if any, entrants would have come via this route.

There is, in addition, a pattern of pupils entering and leaving the School at times other than the beginning and end of the school year. Over a third, 39 per cent, of all pupils entered the School in a month other than August/September, while 32 per cent of 333 pupils for whom the information is available left the School other than in the months of May to July. The non-standard leaving dates may relate to decisions on the part of parents to withdraw their children from the School for academic or personal reasons, including financial difficulties, or to pupils acquiring employment. It may also relate

¹⁸ Information provided by M. Connolly, former pupil.

¹⁹ Coolahan, *Irish Education*, p. 56.

to change of parental employment location and/or residence. It is likely that the relatively late entry of a proportion of entrants aged 14 and above was due to change of parental residence.

Religion of pupils

The religion of 364, 51 per cent, of the pupils can be ascertained from the Roll Book and from information contained in the School's 1901 and 1911 Census returns, together with reasonable imputations, including assigning the recorded religion of a pupil to her/his siblings and assigning Church of Ireland as the religion of pupils whose father was recorded as a rector, or in respect of pupils who became rectors. The information is summarised in table 10.

Table 10
Religion of Pupils

| Religion | Male | Female | Total |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Church of Ireland/England | 259 (84%) | 36 (64%) | 295 (81%) |
| Presbyterian | 27 (9%) | 9 (16%) | 36 (10%) |
| Methodist | 11 (4%) | 8 (14%) | 19 (5%) |
| Catholic | 4 (1%) | 3 (5%) | 7 (2%) |
| Other | 7 (2%) | 0 (0%) | 7 (2%) |
| Total | 308 (100%) | 56 (100%) | 364 (100%) |

The main Protestant churches were represented in the School's population in the proportions 84:10:5, while their proportional representation in the overall population in the 1926 Census was 79:16:5.²⁰ It

²⁰ Census 1926, Vol. 3, Table 1 A.

is not considered that the variance is significant given the Anglican ethos of the School and the relatively low numbers involved.

Table 10 also shows that there is a lower representation of Church of Ireland girls than might have been expected given the proportion of Church of Ireland members in the overall Protestant population. Again, having regard to the numbers involved and that the School lacked boarding facilities for girls, no particular significance is attached to the variance.

The presence of a small number of Catholics, male and female, is noteworthy given that there were a number of Catholic schools, boarding and day, operating in the town over the period and suggests, perhaps, a preference on the part of their parents for the ethos of the Grammar School.

Siblings and other relationships

The Roll Book references pupils who had siblings in the School, although the information is not entirely comprehensive, and it was also possible to identify with a high degree of certainty other sibling relationships based on, in particular, surnames, home addresses, and related information. A number of potential sibling relationships were not, without firm evidence, categorised as such. Table 11 shows that of the order of 50 per cent of pupils who attended the School had one or more siblings also attend it, but this may understate the actual position.

Table 11

No. (approx.) of instances of siblings attending Galway Grammar School

| No. of pupils | No of instances | Total pupils |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 2 | 88 | 176 |
| 3 | 29 | 87 |
| 4 | 13 | 52 |
| 5 | 3 | 15 |
| 6 | 2 | 12 |
| 7 | 1 | 7 |
| Total | 136 | 349 (49% of pupils) |

While it is clear that families living outside of Galway who sent sons to Galway Grammar School would not have had the option of sending daughters, it may be that decisions as to where to send boys were taken in the particular circumstances of each child and the opportunities, including scholarship and fee concession opportunities, which presented.

The Cooke family, which resided at Corrib House, Galway, sent seven children to the School between 1923 and 1932. The Wallace family, from Pallas Green, Limerick, had six children enter the School between 1929 and 1937, while the McLean family, from Rockbarton, Galway, also had six children attend the School between 1934 and 1948.

Four children of Henry Anderson, a pupil of the School from 1893-1899, attended Galway Grammar School, while three children of Albert Simmons, who entered the School in 1899, were pupils of the School. There are just four other known instances of the children of former pupils attending the School, one child in each case.

It is posited that a pupil who entered the School between 1895 and 1920 could have been of an age to send a child to the School before 1951. There were 331 entrants in this period. Excluding Henry Anderson, a pre-1895 entrant, it appears that just five of the cohort sent a total of seven pupils to the School. A potentially important source of pupils, the children of former pupils, did not therefore materialise. A particular reason for this would have been the geographical dispersal of pupils on leaving the School, discussed in the section '*Country of residence of pupils having left school*' below.

Inter-School Transfers

The Roll Book records that 44 pupils left Galway Grammar School to attend other schools, six per cent of the pupil cohort. The actual number may have been higher as pupils who left the School at a relatively young age may, subsequently, have been enrolled elsewhere without the information being recorded. Ten pupils transferred to a total of nine schools in England, while eleven transfers were to schools in Northern Ireland, with seven pupils moving to Portora. The remaining 23 transfers were to schools in the Republic of Ireland, with six pupils moving to St Columba's College, Dublin and three to each of The High School, Dublin and Tipperary Grammar School.²¹ The transferees were male with the exception of two girls, one of whom transferred to Alexandra Secretarial College, Dublin and the other to Our Lady's Bower, Athlone. Twenty one of the transferees were aged eleven years or younger at entry to Galway Grammar School, suggesting that some pupils attended the School for initial second-level or even pre-second-level, education, before transferring to other schools, perhaps more distant or considered to be more prestigious. Twenty of the 40 transferees whose domiciliary origin is known came from Co. Galway, which accords with the 57 per cent of all pupils who came from the county. The peak recorded period of movement was 1915-34, a period of political change, when 27 pupils moved to other schools. The parents of those pupils who transferred, in particular those who transferred to schools in England, are likely to have been of a socio-economic status approximating those, Catholic and Protestant, who sent their children to England in pursuance of an elite education during the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries.²²

²¹ The transfers were to (i) England: Bedford Grammar School (2), Bradfield, Gillingham, Harrow, Malvern, Radley, St Edmunds, Trent College, and Warminster (ii) Northern Ireland: Portora (7), Campbell College (2), Royal Belfast Academical Institution, and Methodist College, Belfast (iii) Republic of Ireland: St Columba's College, Dublin (6), The High School, Dublin (3), Tipperary Grammar School (3), Sligo Grammar School (2); and one to each of Alexandra Secretarial College; Drogheda Grammar School; Bishop Foy's School, Waterford; Kilkenny College; Our Lady's Bower, Athlone; Ranelagh School, Athlone; St Andrew's College; and Dublin Technical School. The school to which one pupil transferred is not known.

²² O'Neill, *Catholics of Consequence*, p. 4.

A total of 36 transfers to the School are recorded with 18 being transfers from Drogheda Grammar School, including 16 transferred by the Board on its closure in 1938, and five from Bishop Fry's School, Waterford, transferred by the Board in 1932.²³ The number of known transfers from the School exceeded known transfers to the School, other than Board of Governors' related transfers, by 44 to 15. The transfers from and to the School recorded above include five instances of pupils transferring from Galway Grammar School and subsequently returning.²⁴

Profile of Parents

*Parental Occupations*²⁵

Information is available on the paternal occupation of 500 pupils, 70 per cent of total pupils.²⁶ It has been summarised in Table 12.

²³ The remaining thirteen transfers were from Appuldurcombe and Banstead; Blackrock and Isle of Wight College; Campbell College; Our Lady's Bower, Athlone; Portora (2); Ranelagh School, Athlone; St. Edmund's, Ware; The High School; Tipperary Grammar School (3); and St Andrew's College, Dublin.

²⁴ To and from Our Lady's Bower, Athlone; St. Edmund's, Ware; Portora; Ranelagh School, Athlone; and St Andrew's College, Dublin.

²⁵ It was not always possible to be certain as to whether an occupation entered in the Roll Book was that of a parent or pupil. Reasonable judgement has been exercised in making the assignment.

²⁶ Only in three cases does the Roll Book make reference to the mother's occupation with one being a former National School teacher, one a farmer and the other associated with the Irish Church Missions.

Table 12

Paternal Occupations of Galway Grammar School Pupils

| Occupation | No. of pupils |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| Farmer/Landowner | 79 |
| Professional | 60 |
| Civil Servant | 49 |
| Agent | 44 |
| Clergyman/Scripture Reader/ICM Worker | 42 |
| Army/Navy/Merchant Navy | 40 |
| Businessman/Shopkeeper | 33 |
| Other skilled | 33 |
| Bank employee | 27 |
| Managerial | 22 |
| Police | 21 |
| Estate worker | 13 |
| Teacher | 11 |
| Clerk | 8 |
| Shop assistant | 4 |
| University Professor | 4 |
| Miscellaneous | 10 |
| Total | 500 |

While some granularity will have been lost in the exercise, it is considered that the groupings are sufficiently robust to provide an informative overview of the socio-economic background of the pupils.

An analysis of the parental occupations of 138 pupils at St. Jarlath’s College, Tuam for the period 1887-1891, before the period of this analysis, grouped parental occupations in four broad areas, agricultural, commercial, professional and official, and artisanal.²⁷ This analysis did not set out to mirror that classification, and its time-scale is significantly longer, but a grouping of occupations, other than the miscellaneous grouping, towards the classification used in the St. Jarlath’s College analysis is set out in Table 13.²⁸ It compares the percentage in each category in each school.

Table 13

Parental occupations of pupils in Galway Grammar School, 1895-1951, and St. Jarlath’s College, Tuam, Co. Galway, 1887-91.

| Occupation | Galway Grammar School (N=490) | St. Jarlath’s College (N=138) |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Agricultural | 19% | 68% |
| Commercial | 28% | 19% |
| Professional and Official | 46% | 12% |
| Artisanal | 7% | 2% |

A distinct difference between the patterns in the two schools emerges, with 68 per cent of parents of pupils at St Jarlath’s College having an agricultural occupation, while 74 per cent of parents of pupils at Galway Grammar School had a professional/official/commercial occupation. The rural background

²⁷ John Cunningham, *St. Jarlath’s College, Tuam: 1800-2000* (Tuam, 1999), Table 7.1, p. 154.

²⁸ The categories in Table 10 were assigned as follows: Agricultural -1,12; Commercial – 4,7,9,10,15,16; Professional and Official – 2,3,5,6,11,13,17; Artisanal – 8. The miscellaneous category, 14, was not assigned to any category.

of pupils in St. Jarlath's contrasts with the almost certainly more urban, even if small town, background of the Grammar School pupils.

The parental occupations of 13 of the Grammar School pupils was 'Estate Worker'. In all but one case they worked on landed estates, the owners of which included Lord Clonbrock, Lord Strathern, Lord Ashtown, Lord Westmeath and Sir Horace Plunkett. The sons of the estate owners clearly went elsewhere for their education as none have been identified as attending Galway Grammar School.

Socio-economic Status of Farmers/Landowners

The fathers of 79 Grammar School pupils were farmers or landowners. The census forms for 16 pupils, from eleven families, in respect of either the 1901 or 1911 Census, were identified and an exercise was conducted using column 11, 'Class of House', of Form B.1 of the census form, viz. 'House and Building Return'. The census form classifies houses in four categories, 1 to 4, with 1 having the highest status. As well as having regard to the class of house of the eleven families, consideration was also given to the class of house of 67 other families who appeared on the same B.1 forms as the families of Grammar School pupils. Buildings other than private residences were excluded. The outcome of the exercise may be summarised as follows:

Average class of all houses in exercise (N = 78): 2.2.

Average class of house of families other than those of Galway Grammar School pupils (N = 67): 2.3.

Average class of house of families of Galway Grammar School pupils (N = 11, 16 pupils): 1.5.²⁹

The 1901 Census shows that 94.1 per cent of families in rural areas in Co. Galway lived in Class 2 or Class 3 houses, with 3.7 per cent living in Class 1 and 2.2 per cent in Class 4 houses.³⁰ While the sample available here is small, and not all of the sample resided in Co. Galway, it appears that the sons of farmers who attended Galway Grammar School in the early years of the century came from families

²⁹ Seven families lived in class 1 houses, three lived in class 2 houses and one lived in a class 3 house.

³⁰ Census of Ireland 1901, Vol. IV, County of Galway, Table VIII.

whose houses were towards the upper end of the housing classification spectrum and that their houses were higher in that classification than the average of neighbouring houses and of the generality of rural houses.

A similar exercise carried out utilising the 1901 Census in respect of eleven farm families whose sons attended St Jarlath's College, Tuam during the period 1887-91 showed that seven of the eleven families occupied first class houses, with the remainder occupying second class houses, an average classification of 1.4.³¹ The average house classification in the case of both schools is similar suggesting, while the samples are small, that pupils from farming backgrounds who attended both schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came from comparatively prosperous backgrounds. From a socio-economic perspective the parents of pupils who attended Galway Grammar School and St Jarlath's College would appear to have had more in common with each other than with members of their respective denominations who sent their children to elite schools in England or Ireland.

Parental circumstances: School Fees

That apparent relative prosperity of Galway Grammar School parents did not extend to those of all pupils and there was a cohort of day pupils whose parental circumstances were considered such that they were admitted as free pupils, with 15 pupils designated as 'free' on a list of 40 pupils in June 1897. A scholarship system was introduced from 1896, available to boarders and day pupils, and the 'free' pupil system was phased out.³²

The issue of fee concessions emerged about 1910 and became more common from 1917, suggesting a deterioration in the circumstances of the families of pupils and/or that pupils from a less well-off socio-economic class were now attending the School.³³ From 1922 the sons of clergymen particularly feature with the Rev. Robert Doupe, the Rev. A. Harris and the Rev. R.B. Bryan all benefiting from concessions.³⁴ Parents of pupils appear to have been generally in poor financial circumstances by the early 1930s, not surprisingly given the impact of the Great Depression and the economic war with Britain. In July 1932 the total fee income of the School was £664, of which parents paid £291 (44%)

³¹ Cunningham, *St. Jarlath's College, Tuam*, p. 155.

³² ESA/GS/732 (3), List of pupils, 28 June 1897; ESA/ Registry Book 7, mtg. 14 December 1894.

³³ ESA/ Registry Book 8, mtg. 18 February 1910; Registry Book 9, mtgs. 19 October 1917, 23 November 1917, and 22 February 1918.

³⁴ ESA/ Registry Book 9, mtgs. 17 February 1922, 18 June 1925 and 15 June 1926.

and the Board paid £373 (56%). No boarder paid the full fee. The scale of fees was subsequently set at £60 for boarders aged 12 and over but, in 1939, the average fee paid over the previous six years did not exceed £22.³⁵

Applications for reduced fees were made on a form which requested information on the occupation of the father of the intended pupil, number of children in the family, and a suggestion as to the amount of fee which could be paid. The local rector was required to certify that the case was worthy of favourable consideration.³⁶ Extracts from applications included 'We are passing through very strange times, especially in this part of the country'; 'Times are so difficult now for farmers'; and 'Owing to the great depression in farming and having a large young family (8)'.³⁷

On one occasion the combination of reduced fees, £60 for three boys, the offer of an uncle in India to pay for one of the boys, and an agreement by the Board to keep the eldest boy in the School to the end of the school-year without fees, proved not to be sufficient and legal proceedings were issued for fees owed to the amount of £158 3s. 1d. Judgement was secured for that amount, together with costs of £8 4s. 0d, but the Under-Sheriff of Co. Mayo, having been ordered to seize goods of the defendant to this value, reported that the defendant did not have any goods or chattels which he could take.³⁸

Life after School

Attendance at university/third-level institutions

The Roll Book includes information on pupils who entered university/third-level institutions, with the last such entry being in respect of a 1939 entrant who left the School in 1945. In addition to those recorded in the Roll Book as having attended a university/third-level institution, it has been accepted that former pupils recorded as dentists, doctors, teachers and clergymen, as well as two pupils,

³⁵ ESA/GS/754 (3), 1 July 1932; ESA/GS/157 (2), Galway Grammar School Prospectus; ESA/Registry Book 10, mtg. 21 April 1939.

³⁶ ESA/GS/754 (2), Form of Application for Grant in Aid.

³⁷ ESA/GS/754 (1), from Aideen Cotton, 2 December 1932; ESA/GS/735 (2), from Mrs English, 2 February, 1933; ESA/GS/736 (9), recommendation of Canon Pike that an application be granted, c. March 1934.

³⁸ ESA/GS/735 (2), letter from Registrar to W.M. Boland, Killala, 2 September 1933; ESA/GS/736 (7), B. St. J. Boulton to Registrar, 30 October 1934; ESA/Registry Book 10, mtg. 17 January 1936; ESA/BG/534, High Court Summons, Erasmus Smith Governors v Wm. Boland, 13 December 1935; subsequent report of Sheriff.

recorded as possessing degrees, also attended a university/third-level institution to a total of 94 pupils.³⁹ Table 14 sets out the institutions attended by the pupils.

³⁹ Such a deduction has not been made in respect of pupils who were solicitors, accountants and engineers as there were other routes available towards qualification as an accountant or solicitor, while the term engineer could cover a variety of professions, not all requiring a third-level qualification.

Table 14

Institution attended by School entrants, 1895-1939, who subsequently attended a university/third-level college

| Institution | Male | Female | Total |
|--|------|--------|-------|
| TCD | 49 | 2 | 51 |
| QCG/UCG | 15 | 1 | 16 |
| RCSI | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Cambridge | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Church of Ireland T. C. | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Queen's University, Belfast | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Oxford | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Veterinary College | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Not known | 13 | 0 | 13 |
| Total | 89 | 5 | 94 |
| Total pupils 1895- 1939 | 533 | 43 | 576 |
| Percentage attended university/third-level college | 17% | 12% | 16% |

TCD was by far the most popular institution with 63 per cent of those whose institution is known studying there. QCG/UCG comes next with 16 attendees, ten of the instances occurring prior to QCG being reconstituted as UCG in 1909. A perspective on the admission rate of Galway Grammar School

pupils to university/third-level institutions may be gained by reference to the participation rate in university education which has been estimated at about 3.5 per cent of the relevant age cohort for 1948/49.⁴⁰ The number of pupils who proceeded to university may be understated as has been noted in chapter 4 in the case of female pupils entering UCG.

A comparative perspective on Galway Grammar School's standing vis à vis a number of other schools for the period 1895-1910 was sought by reference to TCD Admission Records, 1877-1910 (records are not accessible after 1910).⁴¹ They were consulted for Galway Grammar School; Bishop Hodson's School, Elphin; Sligo Grammar School; all Protestant schools in Connacht, and Tipperary Grammar School, a sister Erasmus Smith School. Entrant numbers were Galway Grammar School (18), Tipperary Grammar School (39), Sligo Grammar School (7), and Bishop Hodson's School (11). The information suggests that at this time Galway Grammar School had claims to be the premier Protestant school in Connacht but that it lagged behind Tipperary Grammar School. That primacy is, however, largely a legacy of the Biggs era, as has been noted in chapter 4, as just ten of the entrants were educated under Eraut. Without the pupils from the Biggs era, the School had entrant numbers to TCD, ten, which were of the same order as entrant numbers from Sligo and Elphin.

*Occupations*⁴²

Information on the occupations of 206 pupils after they had left the School is available and is summarised in Table 15.

⁴⁰ The estimated participation rate has been derived by taking the number of new entrants to fulltime degree programmes in the four universities, *Commission on Higher Education, 1960-67*, Vol. I, (Dublin, 1967), p. 28, Table 9, as a proportion of one-fifth, viz. 50,297, of the population aged 15-19, viz. 251,487, as reported in Census 1946, Vol. 5, Table 1.

⁴¹ TCD Admissions Records, 1877-1910.

⁴² It was not always possible to be certain as to whether an occupation listed in the Roll Book was that of the parent or pupil. Reasonable judgement has been exercised in assigning the occupation in such cases.

Table 15
Occupations of Pupils

| Occupation | No. |
|---|-----|
| Professional (Accountant, Barrister, Dentist, Doctor, Engineer, Solicitor, Teacher) | 46 |
| Military/Police and related | 32 |
| Agricultural | 30 |
| Banking | 25 |
| Clergyman | 12 |
| Commercial agent/Shop assistant | 12 |
| Civil Service | 11 |
| Clerical/Secretarial | 11 |
| Business | 7 |
| Miscellaneous | 20 |
| Total | 206 |

The miscellaneous category includes diverse occupations including Deputy-Chair, South Wales Electricity Board; Advertising Manager, Independent Newspapers; 'In Service'; Tea Taster; Mechanic (2); etc.

While it is appreciated that the occupations of the more successful pupils were more likely to have been known by the School and recorded and that the occupations of those who had been pupils for a short time was less likely to have been known, the overall impression is of former pupils finding employment in higher level occupations. This, coupled with the rate of participation in third-level

education, allowing for a high degree of overlap, points to pupils of the School, for whom information is available, being professionally successful. Some of the categories identified above correspond with those with those identified by Ciaran O'Neill in considering the occupations of Catholics who attended elite schools in the nineteenth century. It is not intended to force a level of comparison between the two groups but to note that the pattern of caution and social conservatism identified by O'Neill may also be applied in the case of former pupils of Galway Grammar School. O'Neill refers to the cautious mentalité of middle-class and elite Irish Catholic families from the late seventeenth century onwards identified by Tom Bartlett and Kevin Whelan, with the caution being inspired by centuries of insecure tenure and the threat of destruction of their social status. It appears that a similar trait was present in the children of middle-class twentieth century Protestant families.⁴³

Country of residence of pupils having left school

Information on the country of residence of 178 pupils subsequent to they leaving the School is available. Some may, of course, have had multiple domiciles. In a small number of instances two countries are listed and the first mentioned has been taken. The information is summarised in Table 16.

⁴³ O'Neill, *Catholics of Consequence*, pp. 156, 157.

Table 16

Country of residence (summary) of pupils having left school

| Country | No. |
|--|-----|
| Republic of Ireland/Irish Free State | 73 |
| United Kingdom (other than Northern Ireland) | 51 |
| Northern Ireland | 17 |
| North America | 21 |
| Australia/New Zealand | 7 |
| Asia | 3 |
| Africa | 3 |
| South America | 2 |
| Europe (Other) | 1 |
| Total | 178 |

The Republic of Ireland was the country where most, 41 per cent, resided. Almost as many, 38 per cent, resided in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. More former pupils, 94, are recorded as residing in Commonwealth countries than in the Republic of Ireland. The information available is heavily weighted towards Protestants born when Ireland was still part of the United Kingdom as 126 of the 178 pupils entered the School prior to 1922 and a further 32 entered in the years from 1922 to 1930.

The pattern of participation in third-level education, membership of the professions and higher-level occupations, and residence abroad accords with a pattern identified by Bowen where, in a stagnant Irish economy, more professionals were produced than could be absorbed, with the Church of

Ireland members of those professions being inclined to look to careers in Britain and the Commonwealth.⁴⁴

Entrants 1952-57.

The sum of several lists available suggests that there were of the order of 71 entrants over the six years 1952 to 1957, an average of twelve per year, pointing to annual enrolments being in line with average entrant numbers over the period 1895-1951. That level of intake, given information on duration of attendance for the period 1925-51 previously considered, suggests total pupil numbers of the order of 45 per annum, again in line with enrolment patterns in previous years. This cohort comprised 55 males and eleven females, with the gender of five pupils not known. Female numbers and their proportion of overall numbers were, therefore, in line with those of preceding decades. Galway Grammar School continued to have, actually and proportionately, low numbers of female pupils.⁴⁵

The domiciliary origin of 63 of the cohort is known, with ten counties represented and two pupils having an address in England. Pupils from Galway numbered 31 and there were twelve pupils from Tipperary, with four from each of Mayo and Westmeath. Pupils from Galway constituted about half of all pupils, the highest proportion since 1915-24. Given the domiciliary origin and gender composition of the pupils, it is estimated that the ratio of boarders to day pupils was 1.4:1 compared to a ratio of 1.7:1 for the period 1925-51. There were 13 sibling groupings in this particular cohort amounting to 27 pupils, and there were several who had a sibling who had previously entered the School.

The information available for the years 1952 to 1958 suggests that pupil numbers continued at previous levels. There is an indication that the decline in the actual and proportion of pupils who came from Galway had halted. The numbers involved are, however, small and the demographic basis of any improvement in the School's fortunes based on greater enrolments from Galway lay on weak foundations as the Protestant population of the county and town, at 1,279 and 316 respectively in

⁴⁴ Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic State*, p. 38.

⁴⁵ ESA/GS/1431, Galway Grammar School Roll Book, 1895-1952: list compiled by Charles Ruttle, dated 16 October 2007, of names of pupils of Galway Grammar School who attended the School in the 1950s and who were not recorded in the hand-written Roll Book; ESA/GS/51, Galway Grammar School Address Book, 1951-53.

1961, continued an apparently remorseless decline.⁴⁶ The enrolment pattern for the years 1952 to 1957 gave no grounds for hope that a significant increase in the number of pupils attending the School would occur.

World War I

Participation in World War 1 was an important aspect of the post-school experience for some former pupils of Galway Grammar School. A number died in the War, while it influenced the subsequent occupations and place of residence of others. The School Roll Book records the participation of individual pupils. The entries are succinct and in some cases do not extend beyond the word 'War'. Individual profiles, with varying degrees of completeness, of 61 pupils identified as war participants in the Roll Book, and seven others whose participation in the War has been identified, have been compiled.⁴⁷ The profiles are included in an appendix entitled 'Former Galway Grammar School Pupils in World War I'.

Pupils who had left the School prior to 1895, when the Roll Book commenced, would, in all probability, have been in their thirties, at least, when the War commenced and have been less likely to have enlisted. Consequently, it is not considered likely that a significant number of the pupils who had left the School prior to 1895 participated in the War.⁴⁸ Four members of the Jones family, associated in other publications with the School, have been excluded as their association is considered uncertain.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Census 1961, Vol. 7, Tables 3 and 8.

⁴⁷ Windham Brady-Browne; Corbett Cradock; Isaac Flack; James Flack; Beaufoy Heron; Richard Kinkead and Robert Sullivan.

⁴⁸ Two pupils who left the School before the commencement of the Roll Book in 1895 and who participated in the War, James Flack and Richard Kinkead, were identified. The *Military Services Act*, H.C. Bill 41, 1916 (6 Geo. 5.), which was not applied to Ireland, provided for an upper age limit for conscription purposes of not having reached the age of 41 on 2 March 1916. It does serve to indicate that only a limited number of pupils who had left the School prior to 1895 are likely to have participated in the War.

⁴⁹ The death of Lance-Corporal George Edward Jones, killed in German East Africa, was recorded in the *Tuam Herald* in 1916. Jones was serving in the South African Infantry and it was reported that he was a former pupil of Galway Grammar School, as had been his brothers, Harry, serving with the Royal Engineers; Percy, A.S.C.; and Fred, wounded and invalided out of the Irish Guards. His connection, and that of his brothers, with the Grammar School is similarly recorded by William Henry in *Forgotten Heroes*, p. 144. George was aged 39 when he died and he would have been aged 18 when the Grammar School Roll Book was initiated in 1895 and might have been expected to have by then left the School. Harry, Fred and Percy were aged 10, 8 and 6 when the 1901 Census was taken and, accordingly, it would be expected that they would have been recorded in the Roll Book had they attended the School. Only Percy was recorded as living at home when the 1911 Census was taken and he was then, aged 16, an apprentice carpenter. The only Joneses recorded in the Roll Book are Hubert and Ernest, both of whom entered in February 1914 as day pupils and whose father was working as an excise man. In the absence of corroboration from the Roll Book that George, Harry, Fred and Percy attended the School they have not been included in this analysis.

It may be, however, that the participation in the War of all pupils who entered from 1895 was not recorded and was not otherwise identified. Such an under-recording would, as well as having an impact on the participation rate, have had an impact on the death rate as it is more likely that the participation of those who were killed would have been known and recorded in the Roll Book.

Institutionally Galway Grammar School, through Alexander Eraut, its headmaster, was involved in the war effort with the Erauts hosting thirteen wounded soldiers, then in hospital in Renmore, at the School in 1915, with tea served and the men entertained. Eraut was, subsequently, one of the stewards, 'who had no light task, and who discharged their duties capably', when the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Wimborne, John Redmond and Augustine Birrell, Chief Secretary for Ireland, came to Galway Town Hall in January 1916 on the occasion of a Recruiting Conference. In 1917 the School grounds were the location for a fête in aid of the local War Supply Depot.⁵⁰

Participation Rate of Galway Grammar School Pupils and Rank of Participants

A participation rate in World War I for Galway Grammar School pupils known to have taken part in the War has been estimated based on 288 entrants to the School from 1895 up to and including the entrants of September 1916, which included Edward Alexander McRobie, the final entrant recorded as a participant, and the 62 known participants from this cohort. Four participants who were attending the School when the Roll Book was commenced in 1895 have been excluded as have two participants who had left the School when the Roll Book commenced. The estimated participation rate is, therefore, 22 per cent. The participation rate for Ireland has been estimated at 10.7 per cent.⁵¹ A participation rate of 32.8 per cent has been calculated for St. Andrew's College, Dublin, while a rate of 44 per cent has been calculated for St Columba's College, Dublin, based on 385 participants from 880 entrants to the School between 1870 and 1919.⁵² The realistic participation rate in that latter case would be higher when regard is had to the age of some of the cohort at the outbreak of War making them unlikely participants.

⁵⁰ CT, 16 July 1915, 4 January 1916, 21 July 1917.

⁵¹ J. M. Winter, 'Britain's "lost generation" of the First World War', *Population Studies*, 31, 3 (1976), p. 451, cited in Lee, *Ireland 1912 – 1918*, p. 23.

⁵² Fitzpatrick, *St. Andrew's College*, p. 54; Jackson and Falkiner, *A Portrait of St Columba's College*, p. 51.

Former pupils of Galway Grammar School served predominately as officers with 47, 84 per cent, of 56 participants whose rank has been identified, holding a commissioned rank.⁵³ It has been calculated that 79 per cent of a sample of TCD students served as officers and that 71 per cent of those who served from St. Andrews College, Dublin were officers.⁵⁴ A plaque commemorating 39 former pupils of Tipperary Grammar School who died in the War records that 35 were officers.⁵⁵

Domicile at Outbreak of War

It was possible to identify, with a high degree of certainty, the country of domicile of 40 of the Galway Grammar School participants when the War commenced. They resided in Ireland (14), England/Wales (20), Canada (3), India (2), and South Africa (1).⁵⁶ Their participation is likely to have been influenced by place of residence with those residing in England, where conscription under the Military Services Act applied from March 1916, and where it has been calculated that 24.2 per cent of the relevant age cohort served in the forces, more likely to have participated.⁵⁷ In addition, eight of the participants were in the armed forces at the outbreak of war, while Thomas Brady-Browne, Tulla, Co. Clare, had been a Captain in the Royal Field Artillery Reserve to 1913. His brother Windham, resident in Canada in 1914, held a commission until 1908.⁵⁸

Five of those who enlisted from Ireland were students of TCD at or immediately prior to the War. A further two were students of UCG and two others were pupils at Galway Grammar School when they enlisted. Nine of the 14 who enlisted from Ireland were, therefore, university students or secondary school pupils. The TCD group, in particular, would have been operating in an environment, including the TCD OTC, which would have been conducive to and encouraging of enlistment. Trinity College was an integral part of the Protestant Ascendancy and its response to the call to enlist was disproportionate to that of the rest of Ireland but similar to that of the University of Oxford. It is clear, therefore, that a significant number of the identified Galway Grammar School participants were

⁵³ Including two chaplains and a cadet.

⁵⁴ Laura Dooney, 'Trinity College and the War' in David Fitzpatrick, (ed.), *Ireland and the First World War* (Dublin, 1986), p.45; Fitzpatrick, *St. Andrew's College*, p. 54.

⁵⁵ The Fame of Tipperary Group: War Memorial, St Mary's Church of Ireland Church, Tipperary town: <http://homepage.tinet.ie/~tipperaryfame/abeyboys.htm>
Accessed 24 September 2017.

⁵⁶ Included in the number allocated to England/Wales are six former pupils who had joined the army or navy prior to the War and whose location is not otherwise known. The two based in India were serving in the army.

⁵⁷ Winter, 'Britain's "lost generation"' in Lee, *Ireland 1912 – 1918*, p. 23.

⁵⁸ Clare Peace Park Initiative: <http://www.clarepeaceparkinitiative.com/#!where-they-livedcame-from-l---z/c1vwq>
Accessed 7 April 2018.

operating, prior to enlistment, in an environment more conducive to enlistment than would have been the norm in Ireland. Indeed, the low number of those identified as enlisting who were not operating in such an environment is striking.⁵⁹ It has been suggested that the lower rate of service from Ireland, less than half of recorded for Scotland and England/Wales, reveals a relatively weak sense of identity with the war effort, and this appears to apply also to Galway Grammar School former pupils who were resident in Ireland and not operating in an environment conducive to enlistment.⁶⁰

Mortalities

Twenty one of the 68 participants, 31 per cent, were killed. This compares with an overall military mortality rate of about 14 per cent for Irish participants, which is about the same as for the British army as a whole.⁶¹ It has been suggested that the death rate for officers in the British Army was higher at 17 per cent and, given that the majority of former Galway Grammar School pupils were officers, this may account, to some extent, for the higher mortality rate.⁶² Over one-quarter of war participants from Irish landed families were killed, a figure, it has been posited, which was higher than for any other social group in Ireland.⁶³ It may well be, therefore, that other former pupils of Galway Grammar School, who were not identified, participated in the War with the consequence that the mortality rate, given that those who died were more likely to have been identified, is overstated. The number of mortalities identified here corresponds with the number of mortalities referred to by Alexander Eraut in 1919.⁶⁴

In the case of Portora Royal School, Enniskillen, where 346 former pupils participated in the War, 70, 20 per cent, died.⁶⁵ A mortality rate of 17 per cent has been calculated for St Columba's College, Dublin. A participation rate of almost 1,000 is ascribed to The High School, Dublin, with 69 deaths, while the mortality rate for St. Andrew's College has been estimated at 13 per cent.⁶⁶ Forty former

⁵⁹ Dooney, 'Trinity College and the War', pp. 39, 40.

⁶⁰ Lee, *Ireland 1912 – 1918*, p. 23.

⁶¹ David Fitzpatrick, 'Militarism in Ireland, 1900 – 1922' in T. Bartlett and K. Jeffreys (eds), *A Military History of Ireland* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 392.

⁶² A death rate for officers of 17 per cent has been suggested by Dan Snow, BBC News: <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-25776836> Accessed 7 September 2016.

⁶³ Nicholas Perry, 'The Irish Landed Class and the British Army, 1850-1950' in *War in History*, July 2011, Vol. 18 (3), p. 328.

⁶⁴ C T, 14 June 1919.

⁶⁵ Irish War Memorials: <http://www.irishwarmemorials.ie/Memorials-Detail?memold=816> Accessed 5 April 2018.

⁶⁶ Jackson and Falkiner, *A Portrait of St Columba's College*, p. 51; Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, p. 165; Fitzpatrick, *St. Andrew's College, 1894-1994*, p. 59.

pupils of Tipperary Grammar School died suggesting a higher participation and/or mortality rate, than for Galway Grammar School as both schools had pupil numbers which were not dissimilar during the decade 1901-11.⁶⁷

Six of the eight former Galway Grammar School pupils who were members of the armed forces at the outbreak of the War were killed. They included Captain Dudley Persse who was killed in France in February 1915.⁶⁸ A collection of seven poems written by him was published privately after his death. They include 'To Oblivion', 'The British Sailor', 'A Son of Mars'.⁶⁹ Another casualty was Lieutenant James Hay who had interrupted his Engineering programme at UCG to take part in the War. He was killed in France in 1916.⁷⁰

The death of Captain Edward Milne, Canadian Expeditionary Force, killed when the *RMS Leinster* was torpedoed off the coast of Dublin with the loss of 500 lives on 10 October 1918, made, perhaps, most impact on Galway. A capacity attendance was present at Milne's funeral service, which was shared with Claire McNally, daughter of Major McNally of the Connaught Rangers, another victim of the sinking. The streets of Galway were crowded as the funeral corteges made their way to the New Cemetery, Bohernmore, with the pupils of the Grammar School marching in military formation. Milne had been recuperating in Galway and was returning to a London hospital when the *Leinster* was torpedoed.⁷¹

One former pupil of the School, William Chadwick, although not in the Armed Forces, was a war-related casualty. He was one of 109 killed on 2 April 1916 as a result of an explosion at a munitions factory near Faversham, Kent.⁷² Chadwick's mother, Ellen, wrote to Erant saying that her son had not

⁶⁷ Irish War Memorials: <http://www.irishwarmemorials.ie/Memorials-Detail?memoid=556>
Accessed 5 April 2018; ESA/GS/880(2), ESA/GS/967 and ESA/GS/243(5) show that pupil numbers in the two schools did not differ greatly in the period 1901-1911. Pupil numbers averaged 38 in Tipperary and 31 in Galway for the years 1901, 1905, 1908 and 1911.

⁶⁸ Commonwealth War Graves Commission: <https://www.cwgc.org/find/find-war-dead>
Accessed 6 April 2018.

⁶⁹ National Library of Ireland, Catalogue: <http://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtIs000134590>
Accessed 6 April 2018.

⁷⁰ Commonwealth War Graves Commission: <https://www.cwgc.org/find/find-war-dead>
Accessed 6 April 2018.

⁷¹ *C T*, 19 October 1918.

⁷² Roll of Honour: Lest We Forget, Faversham Great Explosion Memorial: <http://www.roll-of-honour.com/Kent/FavershamExplosion.html>
Accessed 6 April 2018.

been accepted by the army as he had defective eye-sight and had gone to work in the munitions factory. He had died, she wrote, doing his 'bit' for his country and his duty to his comrades.⁷³

Two former teachers of Galway Grammar School were killed in the War. The death of Walter Lewis was reported by the *Tuam Herald* in June 1917. Lewis had been Classics master at the Grammar School until July 1914 when he left to go to a School at Windermere, subsequently joining the Honourable Artillery Company. He had been home with septic poisoning following a flesh wound and had returned to the front where he was killed. The same report recorded the death of John Banks, also a former teacher at the School. The impact of the War on the availability of teachers was adverted to by Alexander Eraut in 1925 when he said that the School had only elderly men from which to select its staff during the War. He added that they had been very fortunate in securing the services of good masters who had helped keep up the fine traditions of the School.⁷⁴

Some Survivors

A number of former pupils evidently found life in the services to their liking and remained on after the War. They included Noel Galway Holmes, brother of Cecil and Edmond who died in the War. Noel joined the Royal Irish Regiment in 1912 and served in India from 1912 to 1914. Thereafter, he served in France from 1914 to 1918, where he was wounded, mentioned in despatches on four occasions and awarded the Military Cross. Following a number of promotions, and having been stationed in Britain and India, he was promoted to the rank of Major-General in 1943, was Director of Movements at the War Office from 1939 to 1943, and Deputy-Quarter Master General, 1943-46. Holmes was awarded the Croix d'Officier of the Legion d'Honneur and Croix de Guerre with Palme in 1945, and the American Legion of Merit (Commander) 1946.⁷⁵ He was present at the Berlin - Potsdam Conference, convened to agree terms on the ending of World War II, as an advisor to the British government.⁷⁶ Holmes was invested as a Knight Commander, Order of the British Empire (K.B.E.), and as a Companion, Order of

⁷³ ESA/GS/1431, Galway Grammar School Roll Book, 1895-1952, includes a letter from Mrs Ellen Chadwick to A. Eraut, 14 April 1916, and related press cutting.

⁷⁴ *T H*, 16 June 1917; *C T*, 27 June 1925.

⁷⁵ Ipernity: <http://www.ipernity.com/doc/286273/24475877>
Accessed 6 April 2018.

⁷⁶ University of Wisconsin Library: List of Principal Persons (in attendance at Berlin - Potsdam Conference, convened to agree terms on the ending of World War II):
<http://images.library.wisc.edu/FRUS/EFacs/1945Berlinv02/reference/frus.frus1945berlinv02.i0008.pdf>
Accessed 6 April 2018.

the Bath (C.B.).⁷⁷ He died on 24 December 1982, aged 90.⁷⁸ Aubrey Buchanan Massy Hewson, a chaplain during the War, continued in that role and in 1946 was appointed an Honorary Chaplain to King George VI.⁷⁹ Herbert Needham Morrison, who had been an instructor in the Royal Navy during World War I, continued his relationship with the Navy in civilian life and, as Under-Secretary at the Admiralty, was admitted to the Order of the Bath in 1947.⁸⁰

There was an on-going pattern of relocation involving almost all of the war participants, with the great majority of survivors residing overseas after the War. The pattern emerges initially in that, of 59 of the cohort of 68 whose place of birth was identified, 15 were born outside of Ireland. The sense of movement is confirmed when, in the intercensal period 1901 – 1911, the families of six pupils resident in Ireland in 1901 relocated to England. Further movement occurred with three pupils transferring to schools in England.⁸¹

Twenty six of 40 former pupils who participated in the War, and whose pre-War location has been identified, were located overseas in 1914. This pattern became even more pronounced after the War as only four of 37 survivors resided in the Republic of Ireland.⁸² Thirty of the remainder resided in England, with one in each of Canada, South Africa, and South Rhodesia.⁸³ There was a clear predisposition amongst the war participants, even before its commencement, to relocate overseas, particularly in Britain, which suggests that the political situation in Ireland after the War was not a major factor in that decision.

⁷⁷ The Peerage: <http://www.thepeerage.com/p7610.htm#c76095.1>
Accessed 6 April 2018.

⁷⁸ Ancestry (UK): https://search.ancestry.co.uk/cgi-bin/sse.dll?_phsrc=oTV17&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true&gss=angs-c&new=1&rank=1&msT=1&gsfn=Noel%20Galway%20&gsfn_x=1&
Accessed 6 April 2018.

⁷⁹ The London Gazette: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/37707/page/4360/data.pdf>
Accessed 6 April 2018.

⁸⁰ The London Gazette: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/37835/supplement/4/data.pdf>
Accessed 6 April 2018.

⁸¹ For this and the following paragraph, see Appendix.

⁸² W. Anderson, a dentist, lived in Galway; T. Brady-Browne, a land-owner, lived in Clare; H Hartigan, a race horse trainer, lived in Kildare; R. Sullivan lived in Sligo, following post-War army service in India.

⁸³ Including one identified as residing in England, Canada and the USA.

School War Memorial

In June 1919 a meeting was held at the School to consider means of perpetuating the memory of twenty-one 'Old Boys' who had lost their lives in the War. Several schemes involving additional buildings were mentioned but a decision was postponed until funds would be forthcoming. A number of honorary secretaries and an honorary treasurer were appointed and subscriptions to the fund to a total of £14 7s. 0d. were announced.⁸⁴

A memorial tablet to former pupils killed in the War was unveiled by the Bishop of Tuam in the School lecture hall in June 1925.⁸⁵ The matter of the memorial fund did not end there and in 1935 Edward Coursey, then headmaster, referred to the availability of £100 in the fund, adding that a Committee had been formed and that it was proposed to purchase a bookcase and books. It would appear that no action was taken as, in June 1947, Coursey stressed the lack of amenities at the School and recommended that an adequate library be provided and, also, a tennis court. He explained that there was £110 in the memorial fund and suggested that this be used to start a library. The suggestion was approved and the Local Committee was given authority to proceed.⁸⁶

Once more, however, no action was taken as the existence of the fund was mentioned in November 1948 in the context of efforts to improve the School following the appointment of George Coghlan as headmaster. It was agreed that £100 be used towards the development of a library. In June 1949 Coghlan reported that the bookcase had been completed, was gradually being filled with 'attractive reading material' and that, through the kindness of friends of the School, the reading room had been well stocked with the best types of magazines which the boys appreciated.⁸⁷ The memorial bookcase does not appear to have impacted on pupils as George Copeland, who held the role of librarian during some of his time as a pupil in the 1950s, does not associate a bookcase with the War but does recall the library holdings as mainly consisting of novels by Leslie Charteris, featuring a character named Simon Templar, also known as 'The Saint'.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ C T, 14 June 1919.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 27 June 1925.

⁸⁶ ESA/GS/736 (5), Coursey's report to Local Committee for March 1934 - February 1935; ESA/Registry Book 11, 19 June 1947.

⁸⁷ ESA/ Registry Book 11, mtg. 3 November 1948 and Report of Headmaster to Board of Governors, 16 June 1949.

⁸⁸ Information provided by G. Copeland, former pupil.

The saga of the War Memorial speaks to the cumbersome decision-making process of the Board and the School management, even in small matters and where funding was available and there was agreement on how to proceed. It also points to an inability to take action even when a decision was taken. In contrast, by March 1920, in the case of The High School, Dublin, £450 had been collected towards the erection of a war memorial. The Erasmus Smith Board added a contribution and a stained-glass window was unveiled on 21 November 1921.⁸⁹

World War II

The Irish Free State continued to be an important source of recruits to the British Army and during World War II no impediment was placed on Irish men and women enlisting in the British armed forces. In 1946 the Dominions Office calculated that over 43,000 people born in the Irish Free State had served during the War.⁹⁰

Edward Coursey stated that of the order of 25 male and four female pupils who had left the School since he had become headmaster had served during the War.⁹¹ The Roll Book records 153 pupils leaving the School over the period July 1932, when Coursey became headmaster, and May 1945, 128 male and 25 female. Coursey's statement suggests, therefore, that 19 per cent of that cohort, 20 per cent of the males and 16 per cent of the females, participated in the War. Six participants in World War I have also been identified as participating in World War II. In addition, four other pupils who left the School before Coursey's arrival have been identified from entries in the School Roll Book as likely participants. It therefore appears that of the order of 39 former pupils of the School participated in World War II. Participation would have been influenced by place of residence and, in that respect, the pattern identified above for significant numbers of former pupils to take up residence in Great Britain and Northern Ireland and in other Commonwealth countries would have positively impacted on the participation rate.

For comparative purposes it may be noted that St. Andrew's College, Dublin, which had 141 pupils in 1937, of the order of three times that of Galway Grammar School, had 240 participants in the War, 27 of whom were killed, and it has been calculated that 13.6 per cent of those who left St. Andrew's in

⁸⁹ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, p. 165.

⁹⁰ Jeffrey, 'The Irish military tradition and the British Empire', pp. 101,102.

⁹¹ ESA/Registry Book 11, Report of Headmaster to Board of Governors for 1944 – 45.

the inter-war period enlisted. Wilson's Hospital School had 110 participants of whom 22 were killed.⁹² Similar mortality numbers were recorded in the case of Wesley College, Dublin, 25, and St Columba's College, Dublin, 32, suggesting participant numbers in line with those at St. Andrew's. It is evident that there was significant participation in World War II by former pupils of Protestant secondary schools. The deaths of 13 former pupils of Belvedere Jesuit College in the War points also to significant levels of participation by former pupils of at least some Catholic secondary schools.⁹³

When the War had ended Coursey reported that two former pupils of the School and one ex-master, Mr Watts, had returned from prisoner-of-war camps, adding that the story of Mr Watts read like a thriller.⁹⁴ Ex-servicemen returning to Ireland after World War II experienced difficulties in being absorbed into the workforce, related to the poor state of the Irish economy. In addition, they were disadvantaged by not having Irish unemployment insurance cover. In addition, ex-members of the Irish Defence Forces were afforded advantages in the job-market. Given the domiciliary patterns of former Galway Grammar School pupils previously discussed, it is likely that some of those who did participate in the War were resident abroad at its commencement or opted to remain abroad on its completion. While some of those who returned to Ireland may have experienced difficulties in finding employment, they did have the advantage that Protestant employers, in areas including distilling and insurance, were minded to employ ex-servicemen.⁹⁵

Conclusion

Even by the standards of the time Galway Grammar School was a small school at the beginning of the twentieth century. As the century progressed the numbers availing of secondary education in the country increased, as did the duration of attendance. The Grammar School did not benefit, to any appreciable extent, from this development of the system and by mid-century its relative position *vis à vis* other schools had weakened considerably. A particular factor in its lack of development would have been the decline in the Protestant population generally, with that decline being particularly severe in Galway. In addition, of the order of one-quarter of its pupils were, regularly, of pre-secondary school age.

⁹² Fitzpatrick, *St. Andrew's College*, pp. 121 and 125; Oughton, *Wilson's Hospital School*, p. 110.

⁹³ Irish War Memorials: <http://www.irishwarmemorials.ie/>
Accessed 28 December 2017.

⁹⁴ ESA/BG/310, Report of Headmaster to Local Committee, 7 June 1945.

⁹⁵ Bernard Kelly, 'Prisoners of History: Irish ex-servicemen, the De Valera government and Irish Society, 1945-48', PhD dissertation, NUI Galway, 2010, pp. 69, 82.

Consideration of the socio-economic status of the parents of pupils suggests that, with a majority engaged in the professions and business, they should have been in a position to pay reasonable school fees. Despite this, in the earlier part of the period under review, the School's income was constrained by a significant number of free pupils and of day pupils who contributed little to the School's income. Those categories of pupils declined over time but the capacity of parents to pay full fees was, by then, apparently limited and fee-reductions and scholarships became the norm. An inevitable consequence of low pupil numbers and low fee income was a small number of teachers, a narrow curriculum and lack of investment in infrastructure.

In attracting pupils the School came to rely heavily on the support provided by the Erasmus Smith Board, in the form of scholarships and reduced fees. While this support enabled the School attract pupils from outside of its natural catchment area, those areas had no particular or lasting affinity with the School. The advantages which might have accrued from the broad geographical base of pupils were negated by the high proportion of former pupils who subsequently resided overseas. In addition, those who remained in Ireland are likely to have been widely dispersed throughout the country in line with their own domiciliary origins and employment opportunities. Former pupils were not, as a consequence, generally domiciled in places from which their children might attend the School.

The Galway Grammar School Roll Book, 1895-1952 points to the School being stagnant in terms of pupil numbers throughout the period, with, on occasion, few pupils in senior classes. Its situation was not unique and there were school closures during the period, including, in 1936, that of Ranelagh School, Athlone.⁹⁶ There had also been relative success stories, as at Sligo Grammar School, then comprised of the amalgamated Sligo Grammar and High Schools, which had 144 pupils in 1951, of whom 88 were girls.⁹⁷ Galway's Protestant population was, however, less than half that of Sligo's, 338 compared to 833, in 1946.⁹⁸ In addition, the amalgamation strategy which had helped provide Sligo Grammar School with the significant improvement in its fortunes, had been availed of by Galway Grammar School in 1925. Little effort was made, however, to accommodate girls, either as day pupils or boarders, and the integration of Galway High School had little lasting impact. The School had not achieved a meaningful increase in its pupil base over the period 1895-1952 and it was, by 1952,

⁹⁶ Harman Murtagh, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas*, No. 6, *Athlone* (Dublin, 1994), p. 5.

⁹⁷ *Report of the Department of Education: School Year 1951-52*, pp. 110, 114.

⁹⁸ Census 1946, Vol. 3, Table 7.

difficult to see where the injection of pupils, related fee-income, and associated infrastructural development necessary for its survival would come from.

Chapter 6

Galway Grammar School, 1932-58: Towards Closure

Developments in Ireland between the years 1932 and 1958 were less dramatic than in the previous half-century. Nevertheless, the accession of Fianna Fáil to political power in 1932, the economic war with Britain in the 1930s, World War II/‘The Emergency’, the successive loosening of the constitutional ties with Britain, culminating in the Republic of Ireland Act coming into effect in 1949, all impacted on a Protestant community which declined by over one-third between 1926 and 1961, at which time it amounted to less than 5 per cent of the population.¹ As the 1950s drew to a close, following a decade to which the epithets ‘Stagnation and Crisis’ and ‘Malaise’ have been ascribed, many Protestants must have empathised with the sentiments of Viscount Powerscourt, expressed during the Second World War: ‘Here I am marooned – the last of the aristocracy with no one to speak to’.² That sense of isolation may have been particularly felt in Galway where the Protestant population, at 306, constituted just 1.4 per cent of the town’s population in 1961.³

Major developments, political and educational, over the period will, initially, be identified and discussed, as will developments relating to the Erasmus Smith Trust, including the amendment of the provisions of its Charter under *An Act to amend the Letters Patent and Statutes relating to the Schools founded by Erasmus Smith, Esq.* 1938.⁴ Thereafter, developments in the School will be treated of within the terms of the two headmasters who held office during this period, Edward Coursey, 1932-48, and George Coghlan, 1948-58. Events leading to the closure of the School, and arrangements made related to the closure, will be dealt with under Coghlan’s term of office.

¹ Census 1961, Vol. 7, Table 1A.

² Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922-1985*, pp. 211-238; Lee, *Ireland, 1912-1985*, pp. 271-328; Harold Nicolson, *Diaries and Letters, 1939-1945* (London, 1967), p. 217, cited in Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History*, p. 174.

³ Census 1961, Vol. 7, Table 8.

⁴ electronic Irish Statute Book (eISB): Erasmus Smith Schools Act 1938, <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1938/prv/1/enacted/en/html> Accessed 24 February 2017.

Overview

Fianna Fáil came to political power in 1932 and would be the party of government for much of the period to 1958. Political representation of Protestants all but disappeared over those years, with the number of Protestant TDs falling from nine in 1933 to four in 1959 as a result of the decline in the Protestant population and electoral acts in 1935 and 1947 which provided for a greater number of constituencies and a reduction in the number of TDs per constituency.⁵ The *Irish Times* encouraged Protestants to vote against Fianna Fáil in 1932 citing a 'duty of self-preservation' and a 'duty of loyalty to Ireland and to the Empire'.⁶ Edward Coursey, then recently appointed as headmaster of Galway Grammar School, evidently shared the newspaper's concerns when he wrote in January 1933: 'Blue outlook in the election results so far. Do you know of a job for a promising young schoolmaster, outside of the I.F.S.?'⁷ Protestant concerns would not have been allayed by the tenor of the Eucharistic Congress, held in June 1932, which has been described as '... not simply a religious celebration. It was a manifestation of Irish Catholic nationalism'.⁸ Yet, in 1938, the *Irish Times* found the results of the 1938 general election, when Fianna Fáil won a clear majority, to be 'eminently satisfactory', adding that 'We are glad that he (Mr de Valera) has been returned to power', with de Valera having established himself as 'the guarantor of social and political stability'.⁹

The *volte face* was achieved despite the events, referred to above, which might have been expected to cause concern to Protestants. In addition, a new constitution in 1937 attempted to provide for the very different concepts of 'the liberal and secular tradition of parliamentary democracy *and* the concept of a state grounded upon Catholic social teaching'. It has been considered that the great majority of Protestants voted against it.¹⁰

There was a near-complete consensus in Ireland that the country's stance of neutrality during the Second World War was the correct and practical one given the lack of defences, a fear of a return to internal hostilities, if there was to be an alliance with Britain, and the need to ensure survival of the

⁵ Proinsias Mac Aonghusa, 'Proportional Representation in Ireland': http://proinsias.net/publications/pr_in_ireland/2006/08/minorities.html Accessed 12 February 2017.

⁶ *Irish Times*, 13 February 1932, cited in White, *Minority Report*, pp. 103, 104.

⁷ ESA/GS/735 (5), Coursey to Registrar, 27 January 1933.

⁸ Dermot Keogh, *Twentieth-Century Ireland: Nation and State* (Dublin, 1994), p. 70.

⁹ *Irish Times*, 23 June 1938, cited in Lee, *Ireland, 1912-1985*, pp. 215, 216.

¹⁰ John A. Murphy, *Ireland in the Twentieth Century* (Dublin, 1975), p. 90; Lee, *Ireland, 1912-1985: Politics and Society*, pp. 210, 211.

state and the welfare of its citizens.¹¹ Nevertheless, an estimated 50,000 Irish citizens enlisted in the British armed forces and, while it has been suggested that the dominant motivation may have been a wish for adventure and excitement, doubtless many were members of the Protestant community linked by family ties and sentiment to Britain.¹² The war years saw a softening of the traditional prejudices of Irish Protestants, with a general acceptance that neutrality was the correct course, and some Protestants volunteered for the Irish army or part-time defence forces. It would appear, however, that sentiment strongly favoured the British war effort with 226 former pupils of The High School, Dublin enlisting in the British Forces, while just ten served in the Irish Army.¹³

Unemployment remained high after the War with government anti-inflationary policy discouraging investment in industry and inhibiting export development. Emigration between 1946 and 1956 exceeded 300,000. By the mid-1950s there were signs of a changing intellectual and cultural climate but, for the majority of the population, they were 'irrelevancies set against the daily struggle for survival in years of economic despair'.¹⁴

In the post-War period younger Church of Ireland members were more positive in their support of the state and became more confident as its citizens. A factor in assisting the cultural integration of Church of Ireland youth was the graduates of Coláiste Móibhí, the preparatory college which trained Church of Ireland primary school teachers and ensured a supply of teachers to Church of Ireland managed schools.¹⁵

Evidence that the hierarchies of the Catholic Church and of the Church of Ireland were not out of sympathy with one another on issues affecting family life emerged when an alliance of the Catholic Church and the medical profession successfully opposed the proposal of Dr Noel Browne, Minister for Health, to introduce, during 1950 and 1951, free ante- and post-natal care for mothers and free medical care for children aged under 16 years. The Catholic Church made clear its objections to the scheme and the Taoiseach, John A. Costello, informed the Dáil that 'I am an Irishman second, a

¹¹ Clair Wills, *That Neutral Island: A Cultural History of Ireland during the Second World War* (London, 2007), p. 7.

¹² Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922-1985*, pp. 172, 173; Kelly, 'Prisoners of History', p. 22;

¹³ White, *Minority Report*, pp. 109, 110; Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, p. 218.

¹⁴ *Ireland, 1912-1985: Politics and Society*, pp. 288, 325; Census 1956, Table 1; Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922-1985*, p. 236.

¹⁵ Acheson, *A History of the Church of Ireland*, p. 233.

Catholic first'.¹⁶ The Church of Ireland did not involve itself directly in the controversy but an article in the *Church of Ireland Gazette*, reprinted in the *Irish Times*, pointed out that some of the doctors who rejoiced over the defeat of Browne's proposals were Protestant, while the majority of those who regretted the withdrawal of the proposed legislation were Catholic. The letter adds that fault was not found with the Church of Ireland hierarchy when they expressed an opinion on the Education Bill of the Northern Ireland government and queried as to why there should be an outcry when the Catholic bishops expressed their views on the mother- and child-proposals in a 'dignified' letter to the Taoiseach. Seán McBride, Minister for External Affairs during the controversy, subsequently stated that the Church of Ireland had endorsed the stance taken by the Catholic hierarchy.¹⁷

At the end of the period under review the Protestant population of the Republic of Ireland numbered just 130, 000, 4.6 per cent of the population. It was comparatively strong in Dublin where one-third of Protestants were domiciled, but just 7,376 resided in Connacht.¹⁸ The occupations of Church of Ireland members continued to reflect its historic social status, but in a diminishing way, and the leadership of that Church was, to a great extent, comprised of people connected through the Church and also by family ties, social contacts and, frequently, by educational background. Many of the leading laymen belonged to the families of the landed gentry or to professional and business families.¹⁹

The ascription of the title 'The Doldrums' to the period treating of the years 1933 to 1946 in Kieran Woodman's account of the Galway Chamber of Commerce, *Tribes to Tigers*, speaks to the lack of economic vibrancy in Galway town during that period. The Chamber itself was described by the *Connacht Tribune*, in commenting on Galway's lack of attraction to both entrepreneurs and visitors, as 'if not moribund, at least quiescent'. Proposals for hat, linoleum, wall-paper and cement factories failed to come to fruition, related primarily to a lack of venture capital. While a number of enterprises were performing satisfactorily, more industries were required if unemployment numbers were not to significantly increase and there was no evidence that such enterprises would materialise. In 1937 Galway was, however, restored to the status of a city which it had lost in 1840.²⁰

¹⁶ Keogh, *Twentieth-Century Ireland*, pp. 208-213.

¹⁷ *Irish Times*, 23 April 1951; *Irish Press*, 15 September 1951.

¹⁸ Census 1961, Vol. 7, Table 3.

¹⁹ McDowell, *The Church of Ireland*, pp. 121, 131.

²⁰ Kieran Woodman, *Tribes to Tigers* (Galway, 2000), pp. 212-223.

Neither was Galway imbued with energy in the early 1950s with the *Connacht Tribune* describing it, in 1951, as having returned 'to its normal placid impotency' following a visit by Jack Lynch, then parliamentary secretary to the Taoiseach and to the Minister for Lands. By the end of the decade, while unemployment remained high, there were perceived to be grounds for optimism with J.M. Lydon, President of the Chamber of Commerce from 1958 to 1960, stating, in his presidential address to the Chamber, that 'In the sphere of industry, the past year has been one which will long be remembered in Galway'.²¹

The Educational Environment, 1932-1958

It has been posited that there was little difference between the four ministers for Education who held office between 1932 and 1957, with their cautious political stance being reinforced by the innate conservatism of their Department.²² It has also been suggested that educational policies during this period 'were subject to one qualification: that they could not interfere with those prerogatives of power which had accrued to the Church in the school system'.²³ Within this overall context it was government policy to strengthen the national ethos by putting the Irish language, history, music and tradition at the centre of the school curriculum and Thomas Derrig, Minister for Education, 1932-1939 and 1940-1948, stated at an early stage that he was committed to such a programme with a view to a patriotic and Gaelic outlook being fostered. He stressed that schools had the major responsibility for the revival of the language.²⁴

Government policy also sought to secure accountability for investment of public funds in education and the Primary Certificate Examination became compulsory for all pupils in 1943, with it being argued by Eamon de Valera, while Minister for Education, 1939-1940, that it would make teachers responsible for the results achieved by their pupils. The Examination was narrowed to three subjects, Irish, English and arithmetic, and conducted entirely in writing, resulting in the focus being on written, rather than oral, competence in Irish. A number of reports during the 1940s recommended reform of the primary school curriculum but little change resulted.²⁵

²¹ Ibid, pp. 238, 253.

²² Ó Buachalla, *Education Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland*, p. 278.

²³ Tittley, *Church, State and the Control of Schooling*, p. 139.

²⁴ Coolahan, *Irish Education*, p. 42.

²⁵ Ibid, pp. 43-45.

Teachers' salaries were again reduced in 1933 and 1934 and were later only partly restored. Inflationary pressures during World War II added to teachers' dissatisfaction and in 1946 the INTO withdrew teachers from Dublin schools. The government refused to meet the Union's demands and teachers resumed work after seven months, at the request of the Archbishop of Dublin. An oversupply of teachers in the 1930s and 1940s saw student numbers in the training colleges reduced, while, in 1933, a ban on the continued employment of married women in the public sector was introduced. It was removed in the case of teachers in 1958.²⁶

Prospects for the second-level system seemed promising when the Minister for Education, Thomas Derrig, committed in 1937 'to the fullest possible development of post-primary education and to some extent to a policy of post-primary education for all young persons up to the age of 16 years'.²⁷ However this policy was never seriously implemented. The recommendations of a departmental committee established in 1945 to advise on reforms to the educational system at primary and secondary level stated, in respect of the ownership of proposed schools to cater for the 12-16 age cohort, that 'The general education process is essentially religious and the new system, however organised, should be subject to ecclesiastical sanction'.²⁸ That report, which was not published, did identify some of the issues faced by second-level education and recommended the raising of the school-leaving age to 16, the provision of free education, the transfer of pupils from primary to secondary at age 12, the provision of state loans for the construction of new school buildings, and an increase in the number and value of scholarships. The recommendations were not then acted on.²⁹

Promotion of the Irish language continued to be central to government policy and additional funding was provided to Grade A schools, which taught all subjects, other than English, through the medium of Irish, and, at a lower rate, to Grade B schools, which taught some subjects through Irish. Grade C schools, which would have numbered Protestant schools in their midst, received the standard capitation grant only. The Intermediate and Leaving Certificate Examinations exerted a major influence on the system. There was differentiation between subjects with regard to the number of marks allocated with, for example, Irish being awarded greater marks than English and modern languages and science attracting lower marks than other subjects. This differentiation drove

²⁶ Ibid, pp. 47-50.

²⁷ Ó Buachalla, *Education Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland*, p. 262.

²⁸ Ibid, pp. 264, 265.

²⁹ Coolahan, *Irish Education*, pp. 78, 79.

behaviour as the total marks achieved determined the award of state scholarships and were a major informing factor in recruitment to posts. No development of the curriculum occurred over the period and most schools offered a narrow classical grammar school programme.³⁰

Despite the evident lack of initiative at governmental level, the number of pupils attending secondary schools more than tripled, from 22,897 to 76,483, between 1925/26 and 1960/61. Nevertheless, secondary school pupils still constituted just 16 per cent of pupil numbers in primary schools and there was a continuing difficulty in pupils transitioning from primary level to secondary level, with there being more pupils aged 14-16 in the primary system in 1944 than in the secondary system. The number of secondary schools almost doubled between 1925/26 and 1960/61, from 283 to 526, and the average number of pupils per school increased from 90 to 146. Most schools were small and in 1961-62 about two-thirds of them had less than 150 pupils. This impacted on the range of subjects offered, facilities available and staff numbers. Secondary education remained the preserve of the middle-class with just three per cent of pupils in 1960-61 holding means-tested county council scholarships.³¹ The description of Catholic boarding schools as being ‘...isolated from the life of the wider community, with routines of schoolroom, study, prayer and recreation plotted with the order of an enclosed community...’ would also have been applicable in most respects to Protestant boarding schools.³²

The university sector saw little structural change between 1932 and 1958 allowing the institutions to focus on academic affairs. Student number growth averaged less than 3 per cent per annum between 1938/39 and 1959/60, when there were 8,653 students in the system. Females constituted slightly more than a quarter of all students. Of the order of three-quarters of all students attended UCD and TCD. University education continued to be predominately the concern of the middle-class, with the number of scholarships to university remaining low. A particular development was the provision of recurrent state funding to TCD from 1947, but the continued ban on Catholics attending that College, more strictly enforced by Archbishop McQuaid, impacted on the size and composition of its student body and, in 1958, 39 per cent of its students were British.³³

³⁰ Ibid, pp. 76-78.

³¹ Ibid, pp. 47, 77-80.

³² Ibid, pp. 79, 80.

³³ Ibid, p. 125-126.

The Erasmus Smith Trust: 1932 to 1958

Solicitors to the Erasmus Smith Trust advised in July 1932 that there were grounds for appeal, to the Supreme Court, of the High Court's judgement, in favour of the 'Special Defendants' and against the Board, that the nature of the Trust was educational rather than religious (see Chapter 4). They considered that the judgement left the three grammar schools in a state of uncertainty regarding their future with the 'entire administration of the schools, as carried on for nearly three centuries' liable to be upset. An appeal was lodged but it was March 1936, by which time the Chief Justice had died, before the remaining two judges announced that they were unable to agree and, consequently, no judgement was being made. The Board decided not to pursue the case further. The case had already cost the Trust £38,308 in legal fees. A settlement was agreed in June 1937. It provided that funds, amounting to £43,580, required for the Trust to meet its commitments to TCD, King's Hospital, the English Schools, which included The High School, and other expenses, including pensions, were set aside.³⁴ The allocation of the remaining resources of the Trust was formally provided for in the *Erasmus Smith Schools Act 1938 (An Act to amend the Letters Patent and Statutes relating to the Schools founded by Erasmus Smith, Esq)*. The funds of the Trust were divided equally between the Trust and the Minister for Education, with each receiving £65,165. The Trust retained Galway and Drogheda Grammar Schools and The High School, while the Minister was assigned Tipperary Grammar School.³⁵

The Act provided that the Erasmus Smith Board could apply its funds

...to or for all or any of the purposes to which the endowments have heretofore at any time been applied by the Governors, or to or for education (including in Protestant doctrine) in such manner and in such place or places in Éire, as the Governors in their absolute discretion shall think fit...³⁶

³⁴ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 205-207.

³⁵ electronic Irish Statute Book (eISB): Erasmus Smith Schools Act 1938: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1938/prv/1/enacted/en/print.html> Accessed 24 February 2017.

³⁶ Ibid.

There was, consequently, no longer an obligation on the Board to maintain and support the grammar schools.

Subsequent to the passing of the Act discussions between representatives of the Erasmus Smith Board and other Protestant educational bodies took place. There was agreement that a reduction in the number of Protestant schools was appropriate and that Drogheda Grammar School was the most suitable for closure. The Board agreed the closure in June 1938. Drogheda then had 32 pupils compared to 52 at Galway Grammar School. The availability of other Protestant schools proximate to Drogheda is likely to have also been a factor in the decision. The pupils at Drogheda were given the choice of transferring to Wilson's Hospital School, Multyfarnham or Galway Grammar School. Eleven opted for the former and 18 for the latter.³⁷ Galway Grammar School became the last of the grammar schools established under the Charter to remain open.

There was a postscript to the closure of Drogheda Grammar School when, at the prize-giving ceremony of the newly constituted entity of the same name in 1943, the headmaster, Mr W. Fleming Thompson, referred to a new agreement with the Erasmus Smith Board by which the School was prohibited from representing itself as being established by Erasmus Smith. Thompson considered that the School was Smith's 'moral trustees, carrying out his intention, while his legal trustees spend most of his money on a school which was not part of the Erasmus Smith Foundation'. He stated that the Board was 'attempting to strangle this school' but that it would go from strength to strength in spite of the Board. The School now has of the order of 240 pupils.³⁸

Edward Coursey, 1932-48

Galway Grammar School, with just 17 pupils, was in a particularly weak position in 1931/32. It had the lowest number of pupils of eight Protestant schools in Connacht and adjoining counties, with the average number of pupils in the other seven schools being 54. Just 50 of the 392 pupils in those schools were at senior level and these pupils were concentrated in Sligo High School, 33, and Cavan

³⁷ *Report of the Department of Education, 1937-38*, Table XVIII; Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 208,209.

Note: Wallace states that there were 44 pupils enrolled at Drogheda Grammar School when it closed. It may have been that some were not recognised as eligible pupils by the Department of Education related, *inter alia*, to their age.

³⁸ *Irish Times*, 22 October 1943; Drogheda Grammar School: <http://www.droghedagrammarschool.ie/school-history/>

Accessed 16 December 2017.

Royal School, 13. Galway Grammar School had one pupil at senior level.³⁹ That pupil, Rosalie Griffith, presented for the Leaving Certificate Examination in 1932, achieving honours in five subjects and passes in three, deemed to be 'a fine result'. Four students had presented for the Intermediate Certificate Examination, with 2 achieving honours and 2 failing.⁴⁰

The Board revised its operational strategy for the School when Eraut resigned. It decided, based on the premise of an annual subvention of £1,750, that the headmaster be paid on a salary basis, that boarders' fees be returned to the Board, that the cost of upkeep of the School be paid by it, and that it would assume responsibility for the School's management. The Board subsequently agreed that other teaching staff be paid directly by the Board and that a matron be appointed.⁴¹ Five pupils supported by it at Bishop Foy School, Waterford were withdrawn and transferred to Galway.⁴² Canon Nash, Rector, Galway, became a member of the Board providing for, with the Bishop of Tuam and Colonel Cross already being members, increased local representation. Over £2,000 was invested in refurbishment of the School between May and October 1932.⁴³

Edward Coursey, aged 38, was appointed to the post of headmaster. He had entered TCD in 1912 and obtained the degrees of BA, BAI, and a Special Certificate in Engineering, all in 1921, and a First Class Diploma in Education, 1927. Coursey had interrupted his studies to teach at Sligo Grammar School in 1914/15 but had resigned that post to enter the Dublin University O.T.C. from which he received a commission in the Royal Garrison Artillery. He had served for two years in France, been wounded twice and had been awarded the Military Cross, the Belgian *Ordre de la Couronne* and the Belgian *Croix de Guerre*. Coursey had held the post of lecturer in the teaching of Mathematics in the School of Education, TCD in 1928. His teaching career encompassed Portora Royal School, 1922–23,

³⁹ *Report of the Department of Education, 1931-32*, Table K, Table Showing Numbers of Recognised Pupils, Certificate Examination Results and Amounts of Grants, pp. 124-152.

Note: The schools were Galway Grammar School; Bishop Hodson's School, Elphin; Sligo Grammar School; Sligo High School; Prior School, Lifford; Royal School, Raphoe; Cavan Royal School; Ranelagh School, Athlone.

⁴⁰ ESA/GS/754 (3), Coursey to Registrar, 30 August 1932.

Note: The School Roll Book, 1895-1952, ESA/GS/1431, shows that Rosalie's siblings, Margaret and Thomas, also attended the School. Margaret subsequently attended Somerville College, Oxford, while Thomas moved to Bradfield College, Berkshire.

⁴¹ ESA/GS/754 (4), Calculations of Registrar on cost of annual subvention to Galway Grammar School; ESA/Registry Book 10, mtgs. 22 April and 20 May 1932.

⁴² Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 187 and 195.

Note: Pupils at Tipperary Grammar School were sent to Bishop Foy School, Waterford when Tipperary Grammar School was occupied by Free State troops. The Board subsequently supported a number of scholarship pupils at Bishop Foy's School in the context of Tipperary Grammar School not being reopened.

⁴³ ESA/Registry Book 10, mtg. 22 May 1932; ESA/GS/754 (3), Galway Grammar School: Refurbishment costs, 20 October 1932.

and The King's Hospital, 1923–28, where he acted as headmaster for a term.⁴⁴ Coursey became senior resident master at Kilkenny College in 1928 and has been described as a brilliant teacher of Mathematics.⁴⁵ His conditions of appointment at Galway Grammar School provided for a salary of £350, rising to £600 in ten annual increments, and possession of the school house and premises.⁴⁶

An advertisement for the School stated that it had undergone complete reorganisation and renovation, that health and catering was under the care of a Matron and that there was electric light in all parts of the building. A prospectus set out that the aims of the School included 'formation of character and of habits of organisation and initiative', and that the curriculum prepared pupils for state, university and scholarship examinations. It also stated that there was a growing library of fiction and works of reference, that a debating society held meetings during the winter months, and that bathing was encouraged in summer with all boarders being taught to swim.⁴⁷

A Local Committee was established to promote the welfare of the School and to provide the Board with information on all matters relating to it. Membership of the committee comprised the local governors and two visiting governors, with meetings once a term. Provision was made for the headmaster to bring requests and suggestions before the committee and to attend its meetings, if required. It was specified that the committee would not interfere with the administration or management of the School and that it would have no executive power. The visiting governors appointed were Dr Luce and Mr H. Thrift.⁴⁸ Any concerns the Board had that the committee would usurp its powers must have been allayed when Nash and Cross wrote to the Registrar stating:

After full consideration we do not feel that we have sufficient experience to recommend a scheme (viz. terms of reference for the Local Committee) to the Governors, and we think

⁴⁴ ESA/Registry Book 10, mtg. 5 July 1932; ESA/GS/756 (1), Application of E.B. Coursey for post of headmaster of Galway Grammar School, 21 June 1932.

⁴⁵ Whiteside, *Where Swift and Berkeley Learnt: A History of Kilkenny College*, p. 88.

⁴⁶ ESA/GS/673, Agreement of Edward B Coursey with the Governors of the Schools founded by Erasmus Smith Esq., 18 November 1932.

⁴⁷ ESA/GS/157 (2), 'The Grammar School, Galway: Prospectus', not dated, but issued soon after Coursey's appointment in 1932.

⁴⁸ ESA/GS/94, Galway Grammar School Local Committees: Rules, 9 December 1932; ESA/GS/754 (1), Registrar to Colonel Cross, 24 October 1932; ESA/Registry Book 10, mtg. 18 November 1932.

that it would be better to leave the drawing up of a Scheme to those Governors who are experts in Educational and other matters connected with the management of a school.⁴⁹

Coursey reported that the teachers were H. V. Thornton, at a salary of £200 per annum, teaching Classics, History and Geography; Miss P. Sullivan, £140 per annum, Science; J. S. Connolly, £100 per annum, Modern Languages/English and French; and David Kee, £80 per annum, Irish. All resided in the School. Coursey taught Mathematics. A visiting teacher from the Technical School took drawing classes.⁵⁰ A fifth assistant post was approved in 1933 at a salary of £80-£100. Coursey was generally satisfied with the quality of teaching. There was a high degree of continuity in teaching staff from 1932 to 1948 with Coursey, Thornton, and Sullivan in post throughout and Kee in post until Easter 1947. Other posts were held by university students/non-graduates at a low salary and experienced rapid turn-over. Related to difficulties in finding teachers of French, Mrs Coursey was constantly called on to teach the subject and was paid from £10 to £35 per term.⁵¹ A statement of 'Rules' for pupils was compiled in respect of which Coursey stated that 'The idea is to get control over pupils on some points that cause trouble. Of course, with pupils who are paying full fees one can't do much except protest, but the others can be more firmly handled.'⁵²

There was an air of satisfaction in the early years following Coursey's appointment. The Board's Registrar was of the opinion that Coursey had 'done splendidly' and was sure that he would have 'the reward of complete success'.⁵³ Coursey reported in March 1933 that discipline was good with staff having a good relationship with pupils and that he had not caned a pupil since his arrival. He ended his report by stating 'Now we are a corporate body, ready to grow and, I hope, prosper'.⁵⁴ Parents also were happy with comments such as 'the child is happy and contented at Galway' and 'my sons tell me the food is better and the new matron very nice'. The Local Committee inspected the School, chiefly for the benefit of General Franks, a visiting governor. Franks was loud in his praise and Nash observed wryly that he wished Franks had seen the School two years previously.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ ESA/GS/754, Canon Nash and Colonel Cross to Registrar, 11 November 1932.

⁵⁰ ESA/GS/754 (3), Coursey to Registrar, 30 August 1932.

⁵¹ ESA/GS/735 (1), Coursey to Registrar, 15 November 1933; ESA/GS/736 (9), Report of Coursey for 1932/33 and to March 1934; ESA/Registry Book 10, mtgs. 16 June 1933, 14 December 1934, 23 June 1939.

⁵² ESA/GS/94, 'The Grammar School, Galway: Rules'; ESA/GS/735 (3), Coursey to Registrar, 26 April 1933.

⁵³ ESA/GS/754 (2), Registrar to Coursey, 19 September 1932.

⁵⁴ ESA/GS/735 (5), Report of Coursey to Local Committee, March 1933.

⁵⁵ ESA/GS/754 (2), letter from Madeline Scott, Ballina, 27 September 1932, letter from Constance Scargill, Rathgar, Dublin, 27 September 1932; ESA/GS/736 (3), Nash to Registrar, 10 September 1934.

Pupil numbers rose to 59 during 1934/35 but eleven pupils were ineligible for Departmental grants. Coursey considered that the general standard of the pupils was low with many being in classes below that appropriate to their age group, which he attributed, in part, to pupils entering the School at about age 14, when they should already have completed at least a year of secondary schooling.⁵⁶ In June 1933 he was of the view that it would be some time before the School attracted boarders paying full fees as there were many schools of established reputation for prospective pupils to choose from, while Galway Grammar School had obstacles to overcome. By March 1934 he reported that the standard of work being done was slowly improving and that there was a demand in the west of Ireland for a satisfactory secondary school which he hoped the School could meet.⁵⁷

The reports of Inspectors from the Department of Education contributed to the positive air. The 1932/33 inspection found Latin, Greek, French and English to be admirably taught. It commented on the buildings having been repainted and many fine wall maps having been secured. History and Geography were making progress and the work of pupils at the practical examinations in Science showed distinct improvement. Mathematics was well taught and the teaching of Drawing was considered satisfactory. The report for 1934/35 was again positive with one Inspector stating that the school authorities were to be congratulated both for what had been achieved, and for what was likely to be achieved in the near future.⁵⁸

Intermediate Certificate results for nine of the 16 years, 1933-48, show that 69 pupils presented, an average of eight per year, with a success rate of 80 per cent. Over the same period 13 pupils presented for the Leaving Certificate and there was an 85 per cent success rate. Only in 1933/4, three entrants, and 1943/4, four entrants, were there more than one entrant for the Leaving Certificate Examination.⁵⁹ The Board considered examination results to be very satisfactory in October 1935, highly satisfactory in October 1943, and directed the Registrar to congratulate Coursey on the results in November 1938. Pupils may, on occasion, have taken the TCD or NUI

⁵⁶ ESA/GS/736 (5), Report of Coursey to Local Committee, March 1934 - February 1935; ESA/GS/735 (5), Report of Coursey to Local Committee, March 1933.

⁵⁷ ESA/GS/735 (3), Report of Coursey to Local Committee, June 1933; ESA/GS/736 (9), Report of Coursey for 1932-33 and report to 23 March 1934.

⁵⁸ ESA/GS/736 (9), Report for Headmaster on classes inspected, 26 October 1932 and 25 May 1933; ESA/GS/736 (5), Report for Headmaster on classes inspected, 12 November 1934.

⁵⁹ ESA/GS/754(3), ESA/GS/739 (1, 2, 3, 5, 9), ESA/BG/310, Certificate Results; ESA/BG/310, Report of Coursey to Local Committee, 6 October 1944.

Matriculation Examinations, rather than the Leaving Certificate, as, in 1943, three pupils entered TCD but only one pupil took the Leaving Certificate Examination.⁶⁰

Success was short-lived and pupil numbers declined from 60 in 1935 to 37 in 1944/45.⁶¹ The number of boarders, having peaked at 39 in 1933/34, fell to 23 in 1944/45. Coursey explained that the School had, in 1938, received transfers from Drogheda Grammar School on that school's closure but that, as they left, the number of boarders had fallen back into the twenties. In 1945/46 there were 32 pupils eligible for a capitation grant, six as senior pupils.⁶²

Coursey's appointment must have given hope that the position of sport in the School would improve as he was, when he applied for the post, responsible for cricket and hockey at Kilkenny College.⁶³ With his appointment there is evidence of some support from the Board for games and it agreed to Coursey's request that he employ a physical instructor for an hour each week. Subsequently, £5 for cricket necessities was approved, as was an annual grant of £10 for sport. Up to £75 was sanctioned for repairs to changing rooms.⁶⁴ The sporting environment within which the School operated remained difficult, however, but, despite this, Coursey reported in 1934 that games were prospering.⁶⁵ The School won the Connacht Men's Hockey Cup in 1934/35, with two masters on the team. The success was described as popular and deserved as the School had always played a big part in keeping the game alive in the West.⁶⁶ Although no other school in the area played cricket, the School did play games with reasonable regularity in Coursey's early years. Thereafter, there is little mention of the game, although Mr Kee, teacher of Irish, kept interest in the game alive.⁶⁷

Success rarely attended the School's efforts on the rugby field during the 1930s. In 1934 a team travelled by bus to Sligo for a Connacht Junior Schools Cup game. Coursey reported that four hours

⁶⁰ ESA/Registry Book 10, mtgs. 18 October 1935 and 18 November 1938; ESA/Registry Book 11, mtg. 21 October 1943.

⁶¹ ESA/GS/736 (4), Report of Coursey to Local Committee, 31 May 1935; ESA/BG/775, Coursey to Darley, 7 June 1945.

⁶² ESA/GS/736 (8), Minutes of Local Committee, 8 August 1934; ESA/BG/775, Coursey to Darley, 7 June 1945; ESA/BG/774 (1), Report of Coursey for 1944/45.

⁶³ ESA/GS/756, Application of E.B. Coursey for post of headmaster of Galway Grammar School.

⁶⁴ ESA/GS/735 (5) and ESA/Registry Book 10, mtgs. 17 February, 2 April, 16 June 1933 and 15 June 1934.

⁶⁵ ESA/GS/736(9), Report of Coursey to Local Committee, 27 March 1934.

⁶⁶ ESA/GS/736 (2) Headmaster's report, 19 March 1936, for the period February 1935 to March 1936; C T, 4 May 1935.

⁶⁷ ESA/GS/735 (3) and (5), ESA/GS/736 (1), (2), (7), and (9), various reports from Coursey, 1933-36; ESA/BG/310, Report of Coursey to Local Committee, 7 October 1946.

of travel was hard for young boys, that two of the team were under 13, with an age limit of 16 for the competition, and that the team lost by 20 points.⁶⁸ In 1935 there was a defeat of similar proportions by Sligo Grammar School in the first round of the Senior Cup. Coursey explained that he had not expected the team to win but had entered the competition in order to keep it alive. His sporting spirit was considered to be highly commendable.⁶⁹ Improvement did follow and history was made in 1941 when the School defeated Garbally College, Ballinasloe by 14 points to 6 to win the Senior Schools Cup for the first and only time.⁷⁰

The improvement was short-lived and, while the non-holding of Connacht Schools' competitions from 1942/43 to 1947/48 would, in large part, have been related to war-time transport difficulties, the absence of Grammar School pupils from a Connacht Schools team in 1944 suggests that the game was then in a weak state in the School.⁷¹ By 1947 matters had improved with the School fielding a junior team which defeated Garbally, while five pupils of the School were selected to play for Connacht Schools against Leinster.⁷²

Coursey introduced new sports to the School and in 1933 tennis and swimming were filling in the time not given to cricket. In 1934 Coursey advised that there were now enough pupils to make a School Sports Day worth organising. The event became a feature of most school years thereafter.⁷³ A difficult situation was exacerbated by the War but efforts were made with, in 1944, in return for allowing the Local Defence Force use the School grounds, the officer in charge coaching the boys in basket-ball. Coursey reported this to be a success giving pupils a fresh interest in difficult times. The pupils also learned baseball, while Mr Lowe provided life-saving classes.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Coursey's frustration is obvious when he writes:

It is perhaps difficult in Dublin to feel how much the failure of transport has isolated us here in Galway. No school in Galway except our own plays cricket or rugby.... Travelling is

⁶⁸ ESA/GS/736(9), Report of Coursey to Local Committee for 1932/3 and to March 23 1934.

⁶⁹ *Connacht Sentinel*, 12 February 1935.

Note: O'Gorman's *Rugby in Connacht*, p. 143 records that there was no Senior Schools Cup competition in 1934/35.

⁷⁰ C T, 29 March 1941.

⁷¹ O'Gorman, *Rugby in Connacht*, p. 143; C T, 9 April 1944.

⁷² ESA/BG/310, Reports of Coursey to Local Committee, 24 March and 21 May 1947.

⁷³ ESA/GS/735 (3), Report of Coursey to Local Committee, 16 March 1933; ESA/GS/736 (9), Report of Coursey to Local Committee for 1932/3 and to March 23 1934.

⁷⁴ ESA/BG/310, Report of Coursey to Local Committee, 5 June 1944.

impossible. We have no matches with other schools, and our numbers do not allow of much variety amongst ourselves. For the present we have stopped cricket; with the kind assistance of Captain Quinn, of the National Army, we have played basketball and a mild form of baseball. A hard tennis court could be of value; in the climate of Galway a grass court may not be fit to use before the end of the summer term...⁷⁵

The lack of games available to pupils of the School was clearly an issue and it was noted that the transfer of a pupil to The King's Hospital School related not only to a reduced fee but that he might obtain adequate games. Despite this a decision on the suggestion that a hard tennis court be installed was deferred by the Board due to the expense involved.⁷⁶ Sporting activity increased with the ending of the War and a hockey match was arranged with Villiers School, Limerick for November 1945, the first occasion in three years that the School had travelled for a match, and cricket was revived. In 1946/47 a junior rugby team defeated St. Joseph's College, an athletics team was in training for the Connacht Schools' sports, but the vagaries of the weather prevented cricket being played.⁷⁷

Coursey had concerns regarding the employment prospects of pupils, despite Protestants continuing, around this time, to be significantly over-represented in the professions and the higher reaches of commerce, related to them being overwhelmingly, though not exclusively, a middle- and upper-class group.⁷⁸ It appears that Galway Grammar School pupils were not, for the most part, of or connected to this cadre with Coursey considering that boys were being educated who had 'little capital' for a start in life and for whom the question of employment was difficult. He asked the Board to put pupils in contact with potential employers in the hope that he could be assisted in advising boys as to where employment opportunities existed.⁷⁹ At a dinner of the 'Old Boys Union', established in 1939, in December of that year, Coursey said that it was a sad commentary on the educational system that boys were leaving the School without knowing where they would get a position and hoped that the Union would help the boys in this respect.⁸⁰ The number of pupils who

⁷⁵ ESA/Registry Book 11, mtg. 22 June 1945, Report of Coursey to the Board of Governors for the year 1944-45.

⁷⁶ ESA/Registry Book 11, mtg. 22 June 1945.

⁷⁷ ESA/BG/310, Reports of Coursey to Local Committee, 16 November 1945, 7 October 1946 and 21 May 1947.

⁷⁸ Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800*, p. 276.

⁷⁹ ESA/GS/736(2), Report of Headmaster, 19 March 1936.

⁸⁰ *Ballina Herald*, 15 July 1939; *CT*, 23 December 1939.

proceeded to university and who entered the professions, discussed in chapter 5, suggests that Coursey's concerns were somewhat overstated.

Religious education proved to be an unlikely cause of early difference between Coursey, the Local Committee, and the Board of Governors. Coursey had stated in his application that he would prefer to conduct religious education without the incentive of examinations as he believed that study of the Bible could be made sufficiently attractive in itself.⁸¹ In 1934 he reported that he had not entered the pupils for the religious instruction examination of the Church of Ireland, but that he intended to teach the programme. The Local Committee was unhappy at the decision and recommended that the Board instruct him to enter the pupils for the Synod Examination as heretofore. It subsequently did so.⁸²

Potential for more lasting difficulties emerged soon afterwards with evidence of deficiencies in Coursey's administrative skills and of health-related difficulties. In November 1934 the Registrar wrote to Coursey referring to accounts and lists being late, pointing to the requirement that all documents for Board meetings be received on time, and emphasising the necessity of fee-bills being provided to parents shortly after the start of term. He regretted, he added, that the delay had been caused by Coursey's ill-health. Rev. C. J. Algernon Harris wrote to the Registrar in 1935 complaining that, although he had written to Coursey on five occasions regarding his son's fees, he had not had a reply. He asked as to the rules and regulations dealing with access to the headmaster as he did not consider it in the best interests of the School that the headmaster not attend to correspondence from a parent.⁸³ Coursey's health related difficulties continued and in 1936 he wrote apologising for the delay in forwarding accounts, adding that he had not been well during the winter, although there was no definite illness and the doctor was of the view that he was 'run down'. In November of that year he again proffered his apologies, having been unable to find several receipts and undertaking to make up the loss of what was missing.⁸⁴ The difficulties continued and in April 1946 the Board of Governors noted a letter from Coursey intimating that he was entering a nursing home. In October a report on Coursey's health was considered satisfactory. That same month, in his report

⁸¹ ESA/GS/756 (1), Application of E.B. Coursey for post of headmaster of Galway Grammar School, 21 June 1932.

⁸² ESA/GS/736 (9), Report of Coursey for 1932 – 33 and to 23 March 1934; ESA/GS/736 (9), Report of Local Committee, 27 March 1934; ESA/Registry Book 10, mtg. 20 April 1934.

⁸³ ESA/GS/736 (6), Registrar to Coursey, 17 November 1934; ESA/GS/736 (3), C.J. Algernon Harris to Registrar, 29 November 1935.

⁸⁴ ESA/GS/736 (2), Coursey to Registrar, 19 March and 19 November 1936.

to the Local Committee, Coursey expressed his regret for the trouble which his condition had caused. He had, he said, good grounds for believing that the causes of his failure to carry out his duties would not reoccur.⁸⁵

At its meeting in June 1948 the Board interviewed Coursey in connection with his report for the year. Afterwards, Coursey asked that his resignation, and that of Mrs Coursey, as French teacher, be accepted. They were, he said, both unable for health reasons to continue. Coursey added that Miss Sullivan had resigned to take up a post in England, that Mr Gibson would be leaving after the summer vacation and, consequently, only Thornton and Eaton of the teaching staff would remain. The Board accepted Coursey's resignation with regret and agreed to hold a special meeting to discuss the position. Coursey subsequently accepted payment of £300 in settlement of all claims and expressed the hope that the School would recover from 'its present rather depressed state', suggesting that a younger man might be better suited to 'running this type of small school'.⁸⁶ The payment to Coursey was in contrast with that made to Dr Bennett who retired as Head of The High School in 1951. Bennett's letter of resignation was read to the Board by the Chair 'with extreme emotion' and he was granted a pension of £500 per annum and a lump sum payment of £2,500.

Overview of Coursey Era

While having a much lower profile than Eraut, Coursey did make a contribution locally. In the sporting sphere tribute was paid to him in 1935, with it being said that he was always ready to do anything which would further the game of hockey, with his readiness to make the Grammar School grounds and facilities available for the annual Cross Cup competition being just one of many helpful actions. Later that year he is recorded as one of two Vice-Presidents of the Connacht Branch of the IRFU.⁸⁷ He was, despite his initial difficulties with the Fianna Fáil government and his antipathy to the Irish language, an Assistant Group Leader in the Local Defence Forces during World War II and presented a trophy for drill which was competed for at the 'Parade Ground of the Grammar School'. He was Deputy County Divisional Director of the Red Cross and was involved with the St. Joseph's Nursing Society and with the Galway Branch of the NSPCC.⁸⁸ In difficult circumstances Coursey kept the School's sporting tradition alive, including through the introduction of new sports. In August

⁸⁵ ESA/Registry Book 11, mtgs. 11 April and 17 October 1946; ESA/BG/310, Report of Headmaster to Local Committee, 7 October 1946.

⁸⁶ ESA/Registry Book 11, mtgs. 17 June 1948; ESA/BG/776 (1), Coursey to Chair of Board, 21 July 1948.

⁸⁷ C T, 4 May and 28 September 1935.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 31 May 1941, 5 May 1945, 19 March 1946, and 1 February 1947.

1948 a 'largely attended and representative' gathering was held to make a presentation to Coursey. Speakers stressed his outstanding qualities as a teacher, his work in Galway was recognised, and good wishes were conveyed for a happy retirement.⁸⁹

The Board, for the first time, took a direct interest in the operation of Galway Grammar School in 1932. Its membership was then, as before, primarily Dublin-based and was, to a great extent, connected through social and professional contacts and educational background. It constituted a Local Committee for Galway Grammar School but was careful to specify that it should not usurp the Board's authority.

Edward Coursey's experience gave promise that he would make a successful headmaster and a combination of investment by the Board and enthusiasm on Coursey's part brought success in the short-term, leading to a general sense of positivity. The standard of education provided met with approval. Pupil numbers increased, were maintained at a reasonable level for a number of years, but then underwent significant decline. Coursey's health emerged as an issue in 1934 and surfaced with some regularity thereafter. The Board ignored the gravity of the situation and, despite the evident difficulties, resolved in 1944 that 'In view of the high standard being maintained in the School...that a letter of appreciation from the Governors should be sent to Dr Coursey and his staff'.⁹⁰ The situation might have continued had Coursey not resigned.

Protestant schools operated in difficult circumstances during the 1930s and 1940s as a result of population decline, financial constraints on parents, the ever-decreasing value of endowments and the inevitable difficulties caused by World War II. While their pupil numbers remained comparatively low, some schools achieved a measure of success through strategies which might have been replicated. Sligo Grammar School had pupil numbers of the order of seventy during the War years. Nevertheless, there were concerns in 1947 that the School would close. Cross-party political support for the School emerged and Sligo Corporation called on the government for funding. Supporters of the School argued that it was an asset to Sligo as a whole, not just the Protestant community. Financial assistance from the government and the Church of Ireland contributed to the School remaining open, as did its amalgamation with The High School, a local girls' school, in 1947.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Ibid, 28 August 1948.

⁹⁰ ESA/Registry Book 11, mtg. 20 April 1944.

⁹¹ Report of the Department of Education, 1947/48; Deignan, *The Protestant Community in Sligo*, pp. 294-298.

Wilson's Hospital School, Multyfarnham, Co. Westmeath, established in 1762, became a secondary school only in 1932. In 1936 the School expanded its facilities towards attracting boys from Ranelagh School, Athlone, then on the verge of closure. In 1947/48 it had 59 pupils and appointed two new assistant masters. The School provided only the junior cycle of the secondary school programme until the late 1950s.⁹² Kilkenny College, which had 59 pupils in 1947/48, similarly offered the junior cycle programme only and continued to operate as a 'feeder' school to Mountjoy School until the 1960s.⁹³ In Waterford, Bishop Foy's School had 54 pupils and Newtown had 71 pupils, with girls constituting 50 per cent of the pupils. Waterford had a Protestant population of 727, similar to that of Sligo, while the Protestant population of Kilkenny, 303, was of the same order as that in Galway.⁹⁴

Meanwhile, Midleton College continued to prosper under headmaster Timothy West and a 'committed Board of Governors'. It became possible to fill the School with boys, who numbered 56 in 1947/48. Local support raised £643 to pay off the School's overdraft. It is noteworthy that Drogheda Grammar School, which was closed by the Erasmus Smith Board, was reopened successfully under different management and with local involvement.⁹⁵

The Erasmus Smith Board, in 1932, gave a new priority to the welfare of pupils in appointing a matron and parents expressed their satisfaction with the new regime. A sports programme was put in place but, while some success was enjoyed, games with other schools became almost impossible over time as none of the local schools played the School's games and travel proved difficult during the War. Coursey introduced new games towards improving the experience of the pupils but was clearly frustrated by the difficulties encountered. He considered the School to be in a 'rather depressed state' in 1948, with this likely to have impacted on the experience of the pupils.

The School appears to have had a particularly low level of interaction with Galway town over this period. That other schools in Galway did not play the games played by the School, together with the

⁹² Oughton, *Wilson's Hospital School*, pp. 87-121 and 133; Report of the Department of Education, 1947/48.

⁹³ Report of the Department of Education, 1947/48; Whiteside, *A History of Kilkenny College*, p. 108.

⁹⁴ Report of the Department of Education, 1947/48; Census, 1946, Vol. 3, Table 7.

⁹⁵ West, *Midleton College, 1691-1996*, pp. 40-43; Drogheda Grammar School:

<http://www.droghedagrammarschool.ie/school-history/>

Accessed 16 December 2017.

weakness of its sports programme, impacting on its capacity to interact with the town, while the number of day pupils declined consistently. Coursey did not have a high profile locally and there is no evidence of the assistant teachers being involved in local activities. The school grounds were a resource for hockey games and tournaments, and they were used by the Local Defence Forces during the War, which must have acted to bridge gaps between Protestants, with an attachment to the Crown, and Catholic nationalists. Overall there is a sense of the School and its pupils being isolated from the town but the same was almost certainly then true of other boarding schools. There is, in contrast to the situation which obtained in Sligo and Midleton, no evidence of support from the local community for the School.

Galway was at a remove from Dublin, the main centre of Protestant population and its professional and social influence. The Erasmus Smith Board, in involving local governors in the affairs of the School, was at pains to retain control and the local governors were seemingly content to adopt a passive role. The pupils of the School were not connected to the professional and business world, with Coursey having concerns for their employment prospects. Should they have been, and been in a position to pay full fees, it appears that the full rigour of the school rules would not have been applied to them.

The School under Threat

Despite the closure of Drogheda Grammar School the Trust's financial difficulties continued with, in 1940, an annual deficit of £1,040. It was decided to impress on Coursey 'the necessity for economy with efficiency'. Increasing fees was identified as the principal means of closing the deficit and it was agreed that fee concessions would have to be considerably curtailed.⁹⁶ In 1941 the Board invited representatives of the Incorporated Society for the Promotion of Protestant Schools to meet with its representatives to discuss cooperation as regards fees and the possibility of a working arrangement between Galway Grammar School and Sligo Grammar School. Nothing appears to have come of the initiative.⁹⁷ The following year G.B. Butler proposed that consideration be given to closing the Galway Grammar School, given that it required a subvention of £1,916 in 1940/41, from available funds of £2,377. He considered that pupils displaced by the closure could be accommodated in other schools and that it should be possible to finance a day school from funds released through closure of the School. The motion was defeated by 14 votes to one. Viability of Protestant secondary schools

⁹⁶ ESA/Registry Book 10, mtg. 21 June 1940.

⁹⁷ ESA/Registry Book 11, mtgs. 16 October 1941 and 16 April 1942.

was not particular to Galway Grammar School and in 1945 a meeting of representatives of 21 schools suggested their rationalisation in the interests of the Protestant community and the preservation of endowments.⁹⁸

C.H. Darley, Treasurer of the Trust, proposed in 1948 that the future of Galway Grammar School be considered. He said that there were too many Protestant boarding schools, that fees were reduced in an effort to attract pupils, resulting in secondary education being provided to some boys of 'below normal ability'. Darley stated that, whatever about the quality of teaching in Galway, the School was not, in other respects, a good one as the number of pupils made team games impracticable and there was no library. He suggested that funds freed up by the closure could be used for scholarships which would help other Protestant schools and provide secondary education 'for many more boys (and more promising ones)'. Expenditure at the School had exceeded income by £1,569, £1,927 and £2,017 in 1945, 1946 and 1947 respectively, while pupil numbers averaged 23 boarders and 14 day boys. Darley proposed that Galway Parochial (Primary) School receive an annual grant to provide for an additional teacher or that other plans be put in place for educating Protestants in the Galway city area.⁹⁹

The Local Committee responded by stating that a community could not survive without its institutions, that a scheme for co-ordinating primary and secondary education in the area was being developed, and that the Trust's funds, with the exception of those provided to The King's Hospital, were not intended for concentration in Dublin.¹⁰⁰

The dispute prompted E. H. Alton, Provost of TCD and a member of the Board of Governors, to write to Darley saying that he had received the Local Committee's statement and Darley's 'counter-blast' and that he was distressed by both. He considered that Galway Grammar School should be maintained as long as the Trust had funds and did not understand how some of the expenditure on The High School could be justified while the last institution of the Erasmus Smith Foundation was

⁹⁸ ESA/BG/767, memorandum from Geo. Butler, 16 February 1942; ESA/BG/310, letter from Archbishop of Cashel to the Secretary, Governing Body, The High School, Dublin, March 1945.

⁹⁹ ESA/BG/776 (1), Registrar to members of the Board of Governors, 9 June 1948, enclosing memorandum from Darley re Galway Grammar School, undated.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, Statement of Galway Local Committee, 28 May 1948.

being allowed perish. The position of Galway was unique and should be the last to be sacrificed.¹⁰¹
Alton subsequently wrote to Darley stating:

...legally speaking, I think that Galway has a prior claim to the funds of Erasmus Smith. I hate to say so and make a case against my old school, but I cannot help thinking of the motto that 'We are faithful to our trust'; in flinging Galway out of the nest we certainly do not seem faithful. I think our interest in the High School has blinded us to the just claims of Galway ...'¹⁰²

L. V. Bishop differed and commented that 'to keep up the prestige of our outpost in the West, we are playing into the hands of those parents who like to economise in the education of their children, but who have really no right, on a means test, to be benefitting from our endowment at all'. He added that the 'animus' of the Galway governors against The High School was so remarkable that he had grave doubts as to the Board as at present constituted being suitable to handle the business of both schools.¹⁰³

At an 'Emergency Meeting' of the Board Darley said that, while he did not want to depart from the terms of the Trust, conditions had changed and the Erasmus Smith Act now gave the Board complete discretion over its funds.¹⁰⁴ The Rev. A. J. Gailey, a Presbyterian minister and a member of the Galway local committee, proposed:

That the Board, being convinced that a useful future is possible for Galway Grammar School, appoint a Committee to determine a positive policy for the immediate re-organisation and re-equipment of Galway Grammar School as an efficient educational unit and to that end to examine the earning capacity of both The High School and Galway Grammar School in respect of Fees and Government Grants, and to review along with this the expenditure of Trust Funds on both Schools.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Ibid, Alton to Darley, 11 June 1948.

¹⁰² Ibid, Alton to Darley, 14 June 1948.

¹⁰³ Ibid, Bishop to Darley, 20 June 1948.

¹⁰⁴ ESA/Registry Book 11, Minutes of the Emergency Meeting of the Board of Governors, 18 June 1948.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Gailey said that the issue affected the structure of the Protestant community and that the options were a radical reorganisation of the School, or its closure and the establishment of a scholarship scheme. Archdeacon Nash stated that regard must be had to the original terms of the Trust and suggested that The High School be asked to carry on with minimum assistance. He added that considerable re-equipping of Galway Grammar School was required and that the governors must realise that it was impossible to operate the School without Trust funds. It was agreed, by nine votes to eight, to proceed as recommended by Gailey. Advertising for a headmaster was delegated to a sub-committee.¹⁰⁶

The sub-committee noted that there had been 28 pupils attending the School in 1947/48, 22 of whom were recognised by the Department of Education for grant purposes. Five pupils were expected to leave but there was an expectation of eight new pupils.¹⁰⁷ It was suggested that teachers' salaries be made more comparable to those in Northern Ireland, that the School be advertised in a number of publications and that its premises be made more attractive. The sub-committee noted there was no library, no workshop, and no proper accommodation for recreational activities, with it being suggested that an army hut be acquired and converted into a play room. Richard Biggs had, in 1884, identified the absence of a facility in which the pupils could play in wet weather as an issue. It was also pointed out that much exterior and some interior decoration was required, with the outside walls being 'dingy and extremely dirty'.¹⁰⁸

The sub-committee noted that the suggested actions would be costly and that the expenditure might be hazardous having regard to pupil numbers. It was considered, however, that if a headmaster with progressive ideas were appointed there would be a reasonable chance of success,

¹⁰⁶ Ibid; ESA/BG/338, 'Analytical Breakdown re annual income and expenditure of Trust via H.S.D. and Galway Grammar School, 1945-8'.

Note (1): The analysis showed that for the years 1945-48 the average subvention from the Trust for High School (day) pupils was £7, while for Galway Grammar School (boarder and day) pupils it was £57. The subvention for Galway Grammar School was 1.4 times income, while for The High School it was 0.4 times income.

Note (2): The sub-committee consisted of C. H. Darley, in the chair, the Rev. Mr Coulter, the Very Rev. Provost Nash, Colonel Cross and the Rev. Mr Gailey.

¹⁰⁷ ESA/GS/9, Coursey to Registrar, 3 July 1948.

Note: *The Report of the Department of Education, 1947/48*, records that there were 27 pupils attending Galway Grammar School.

¹⁰⁸ ESA/BG/776(1), Report of the Committee of Governors held in Galway on 22/23 June 1948; ESA/GS/728 (3), Biggs to Brennan, 1 January 1884.

though the School could not be expected to pay its way in full. It was agreed that an appointment as headmaster should, in the first instance, be for three years, with the School's position being explained to the appointee. In addition, the headmaster should himself teach towards achieving a reduction of one in the teaching staff. The sub-committee recommended that part of the School grounds be sold to raise funds and that consideration be given to identifying parents with the capacity to pay larger school-fees. It was agreed not to increase the standard fee as this might impact adversely on pupil numbers.¹⁰⁹

George Coghlan, 1948-58

George Coghlan, then aged 37, was appointed headmaster of Galway Grammar School in July 1948. He had, following two years at the Church of Ireland Training College, been appointed, in 1930, to a resident post at the Masonic Boys School, Clonskeagh, where he taught Irish. Coghlan had subsequently obtained a BA, Higher Diploma in Education and a Master's Degree from TCD. He was considered to have been one of the Masonic School's outstanding teachers making many important contributions to the School, including making Irish acceptable there and ending prejudices previously attaching to it. Coghlan has been described as a 'consummate artist' in encouraging activities outside of the classroom and in bringing variety to school life.¹¹⁰

Coghlan quickly made a favourable impression on the Erasmus Smith Board with his November 1948 report being 'unanimously approved as very satisfactory' and that of June 1949 being accepted as very satisfactory. He was congratulated on progress made.¹¹¹ The Board continued to be satisfied with Coghlan's work and his contract in September 1951 made provision for a salary of £500, rather than the £400 which he had been paid since his appointment.¹¹² His salary was still less than that provided to Coursey and contrasted with the salary of £900 agreed for Dr Reynolds when he was appointed headmaster of The High School in 1951. Reynold's salary came with the proviso that, as he would be eligible for increments from the government, it should not exceed £1,400 in any year.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ ESA/BG/776(1), Report of the Committee of Governors held in Galway on 22/23 June 1948.

¹¹⁰ ESA/GS/9, Registrar to Nash, 19 July 1948 and Coghlan to Governors, 10 July 1948; J.F. Burns, *Shop Window to the World: Masonic Boys School, 1867-1967* (Dublin, 1967), pp. 109, 111.

¹¹¹ ESA/Registry Book 11, mtgs. 3 November 1948, 16 June 1949.

¹¹² ESA/GS/674, Agreement between the Governors of the Schools Founded by Erasmus Smith and George W. Coghlan, 20 September 1951.

¹¹³ ESA/GS/673, Agreement of Edward B. Coursey with the Governors of the Schools founded by Erasmus Smith Esq., 18 November 1932; ESA/Registry Book 11, mtg. 12 April 1951.

The teaching staff from 1948 consisted of four graduate and two undergraduate masters. There was a level of continuity until 1955 with Coghlan, Harold Thornton and Alex Eaton, appointed in 1949, in post.¹¹⁴ Salaries were £200-£250 for senior teachers, with the lower level apparently applying to women. Undergraduate teachers were paid £85 - £100.¹¹⁵ The salaries referred to here are, presumably, those provided by the Board, rather than the incremental element paid by the Department of Education to 'recognised teachers'. The School had just sufficient pupils for three of its staff to receive the Department of Education incremental element when Eaton was appointed in 1949.¹¹⁶ Minimum salaries for the school portion had been set at £200 for men and £180 for women in 1925. Efforts to have salaries increased in the Catholic school sector met with little sympathy and it seems probable that, given the financial constraints under which the Erasmus Smith Trust was operating, little or no increase had occurred in the case of that element of Galway Grammar School salaries either. Neither is there evidence of representations for an increase.¹¹⁷ The core non-teaching staff of the School consisted of Agnes Mitchell, matron, who tendered her resignation in April 1957 on medical grounds, Mrs Madden, cook, and Michael Joyce, who lived at the gate-lodge.¹¹⁸

While there was an increase in pupil numbers in the years following Coghlan's appointment, information on actual numbers differ. A report provided to the Board in 1954 records an average of 58 pupils, including 42 boarders, for the years 1948/49 to 1952/53. The *Reports of the Department of Education* for the same years give average pupil numbers of 39, a difference of 33 per cent, pointing to the continued attendance at the School of a significant number of pupils not recognised by the Department.¹¹⁹

The full fee for boarders in 1955/56 was £100 and the average paid by 26 pupils, following application of fee reductions and scholarship allowances, was £70. The full fee for day pupils was £20 and the average paid by 9 pupils, following application of fee reductions and scholarship

¹¹⁴ ESA/GS/670, Coghlan to Bell, 14 February 1955; ESA/Registry Book 11, Report of Headmaster to Governors, 22 June 1950; ESA/GS/8(1), Coghlan to Registrar, 6 August 1955.

¹¹⁵ ESA/GS/670, Coghlan to Bell, 14 February 1955.

¹¹⁶ ESA/Registry Book 11, Report of Headmaster to Governors, 22 June 1950.

¹¹⁷ John Cunningham, *Unlikely Radicals: Irish Post-Primary Teachers and the ASTI, 1909-2009* (Cork, 2009), pp. 67, 90.

¹¹⁸ ESA/GS/9, Coursey to Registrar, 3 July 1948; ESA/GS/8(2), Agnes Mitchell to Board of Governors, 6 April 1957.

¹¹⁹ ESA/GS/670, Report of Sub-Committee appointed by the Standing Committee, 21 October 1954; *Reports of the Department of Education, 1948/49 to 1952/53*, Appendix III, Table XIX.

allowances, was £17. Total fee income for 35 pupils was, therefore, £1,969.¹²⁰ Despite the fee reductions the circumstances of pupils' families would appear to have improved since the 1930s when parents were paying, on average, less than half of the fees (chapter 5).¹²¹ At least one mother considered the fees to be 'very high', even with her son being awarded a scholarship, and he went to Wilson's Hospital, Multyfarnham instead.¹²² The headline fees for boarders would appear to have been in the mid-range of fees being charged around that time with, in 1961/62, 39 per cent of boarders at secondary schools paying £20 to £75, 24 per cent paying £75 to £100, and 37 per cent paying fees of £100 or more.¹²³

Governors apparently kept a close watch on fees charged and Coghlan was required to respond to a query as to why a girl was being charged £15 when the rate for day pupils over 12 years was £20. Coghlan explained that some years previously the Local Committee had been authorised to accept a day girl over twelve years in 'necessitous circumstances' at a fee of £15 so as 'to prevent the girl being sent to one of the convent schools in the town where the fees were £10 per annum'. He added that the School received a capitation fee of £11 for the pupil, making the concession seem worthwhile, and emphasised that the reduction would be available only to a girl.¹²⁴

The problems of operating in a building over a century old became clear when, in November 1950, a wing of the School was gutted by fire. Coghlan said that there had been no danger of loss of life. Four months later a dormitory ceiling collapsed. Coghlan, on this occasion, said that the collapse was caused by a 24 foot wooden beam having been charred through by a chimney fire. The beam brought down two other beams and half the ceiling, leaving the dormitory resembling 'a bombed structure'. He described the boys' escape as miraculous and added that the cause of the collapse was 'an old story' as in many old buildings beams went into chimney flues and successive chimney fires charred them until they eventually came down.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ ESA/GS/8(1), Registrar to Coghlan, 23 June 1955; ESA/GS/2, Summary of pupil numbers and fees paid in Galway Grammar School, October 1955.

¹²¹ ESA/GS/754 (3), 1 July 1932; ESA/GS/157 (2), Galway Grammar School Prospectus; ESA/Registry Book 10, mtg. 21 April 1939.

¹²² ESA/GS/8(1), Coghlan to Registrar, 15 September 1955.

¹²³ *Investment in Education* (Dublin, 1962), Table 5.5, p. 86.

¹²⁴ ESA/GS/8(1), Coghlan to Registrar, 9 June 1956.

¹²⁵ CT, 18 November 1950 and 10 March 1951.

While neither fire occasioned an interruption in the school routine, Coghlan wrote to the Chair of the Board stating:

I think you will agree that there may be some difficulty in convincing the Insurance Company that the School is a reasonable fire risk. Our hand would be greatly strengthened if we could tell them that we have abandoned for all time, all the original flues. It would help me greatly if I could tell the parents this. Already letters are beginning to reach me in which the parents (and who can blame them?) are expressing concern for the safety of their children in the School.¹²⁶

The cost of remedying damage caused by the fires was of the order of £6,000.¹²⁷

A sense of the condition of the School, apart altogether from the fire and ceiling collapse, may be gained from various references over the period, including, in 1949, Coghlan reporting that heavy rain was almost invariably followed by a leak in some part of the roof. In 1953 he referred to the rotting of a portion of the wooden roof over the ball alley, while in 1955 he reported that the dining room, last painted about 20 years previously, was very shabby.¹²⁸

The condition of Galway Grammar School was not atypical of Protestant schools across the country, especially those outside of Dublin. Their condition is encapsulated in the *Report of the Advisory Committee on Secondary Education in the Republic of Ireland (to the) General Synod of the Church of Ireland, 1965*. It refers to schools operating with inadequate buildings and finance and to endowments which were of little value. The Report considered that many school buildings were so unsuitable that any substantial expenditure on them would be a waste of money and that, if nothing was done, many would be forced to close. Working and living conditions, described as deplorable, were deemed a particular concern given that boarding schools required some resident staff. There were references to dingy bedrooms, dilapidated classrooms, which doubled as living rooms for

¹²⁶ ESA/Registry Book 11, Coghlan to Darley, 11 March 1951.

¹²⁷ ESA/GS/1225, Reconstruction Work at the Grammar School, Galway, H.G. O'Connor to Archdeacon Nash, 7 February 1953.

¹²⁸ ESA/Registry Book 11, Report of Headmaster to Board of Governors, 16 June 1949 and 18 June, 1953; ESA/GS/8 (1), Report of Headmaster to Local Committee, 31 May 1955.

boarders, and a general lack of money for equipment.¹²⁹ The poor conditions were not, however, sufficiently off-putting to deter groups including Birmingham University and QUB students, a party of 40 school children and staff from Essex, a group of beekeepers, and the Bachad Fellowship from availing of the facilities. Meanwhile, the School continued as a cultural, social and sporting resource for Galway during this decade.¹³⁰

School Life

Information provided by former pupils points to a combination of factors, including proximity, scholarships, facility to complete primary school, recommendations, and family connections as being reasons for attending the School. Their recollections as to the quality of education provided differ with one former pupil being of the opinion that core subjects were taught boringly, another considered that he received a good sound education, a third considered that there was a good balance between the academic and sport, while another considered the curriculum to have been very basic, with the teachers being well qualified but very regimented.¹³¹ A parental view is available from a letter written by Mrs Brewster, whose son John attended the School from 1950 to 1956. She expressed her 'appreciation and gratitude for the care and training' provided by the staff of the School to John.¹³²

Male boarders were provided with a list of clothing and related requisites. It had altered little from the Coursey era except that, for Sunday wear, a dark suit was substituted for a 'Black coat and waistcoat, long grey striped trousers, black tie, black socks, black boots or shoes, four stiff white collars (Eton shape for boys under 14)'.¹³³ The uniform for girls consisted of a navy gym tunic with a red belt, white shirt, the school tie, navy/blue cardigan, navy blazer with school crest, and a navy raincoat. School life was, for some, a culture shock with one former pupil referring to his time there as 'a life changing experience' with home sickness, the 'Spartan' discipline and the 'grammar school culture' having a lasting impact. Another looked forward to returning to school and considered that it set him up for the confined living quarters and male lifestyle of the years he subsequently spent in

¹²⁹ *Report of the Advisory Committee on Secondary Education in the Republic of Ireland (to the) General Synod of the Church of Ireland, 1965* (Dublin, 1965), pp. 18-22.

¹³⁰ Registry Books 11 and 12, various references; ESA/GS/8(2), Registrar to Coghlan, 14 May 1957, and Coghlan to Registrar, 17 October 1957; CT, 13 July 1957.

¹³¹ Information provided by former pupils M. Connolly, K. Henderson, C. Cuffe, J. Kennedy, C. Ruttle, D. Ferris, R. Ferris, N. Guest, J. Langrell and G. Copeland.

¹³² ESA/GS/8(2), letter from Mrs Brewster, Carrigallen, 3 October 1956.

¹³³ ESA/GS/574, List of Clothing and Requisites.

the merchant navy. There remains a sense amongst former pupils that, despite the generally friendly tenor of the School, some had a tough time, with those who did not participate in sport most likely to suffer.¹³⁴ In this respect the School was probably no different from other boarding schools of the period.

One pupil who attended Galway Grammar School from 1946 to 1951 listed religious instruction as one of the subjects taken. Those who attended the School in the 1950s had, however, no particular memory in this respect, although some recall being confirmed while attending the School and, at the same time, being admitted to Holy Communion. Nevertheless, pupils presented for the Church of Ireland examinations in religious knowledge. Attendance at religious services was a core part of school-life and was required, for Protestant boarders, on Sunday mornings and evenings, with pupils being inspected by Mr Thornton before proceeding to their respective churches. In addition, all Protestant pupils attended St Nicholas's for Church of Ireland Sunday evening service.¹³⁵ The apparent lack of institutional stress on religious instruction appears to have been relatively common in Protestant schools about this time with it being suggested that, while practice varied, only two or three classes per week were usually set aside for religious instruction, with the focus being 'on the moral and social superiority of the Protestant way of life, rather than on matters of personal faith and salvation'.¹³⁶

Meals were taken by junior and senior pupils at adjoining tables. Residential teachers and the matron sat at a separate table. Girls taking lunch at the School were accommodated at a further table and enjoined not to converse with the boys. There was a junior dormitory and a senior dormitory, each sleeping about 20 in beds 3-4 feet apart. A partitioned-off corner alcove accommodated a teacher, while a somewhat less partitioned-off area was provided for a prefect. The quality of the beds was such as to require pupils to decide as to whether to return early from holidays, with a view to securing a good one, or stay at home to the end of the holidays and take whatever was left.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Information provided by former pupils O. Clinton, K. Henderson, J. Kennedy and M. Connolly.

¹³⁵ Information provided by former pupils D. Ferris, K. Henderson, J. Langrell; *Church of Ireland: Journal of the General Synod*, 1957 and 1958, appendix C, pp. 148, 149 and pp. 158, 159 respectively (Dublin, 1957 and 1958).

¹³⁶ Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic State*, p. 162.

¹³⁷ Information provided by former pupils C. Ruttle, O. Clinton, K. Henderson and M. Connolly.

Morning ablutions were undertaken, in the main, with cold water. Toilet facilities were limited as were bathing facilities, with boys bathing, during study time, in order of seniority. Open fires provided heating in large, high-ceilinged rooms and pupils had to cope with the severe cold of the dormitories in winter. A 'fag' system operated with senior students 'adopting' first years to be their 'servants', which required, *inter alia*, the cleaning of rugby boots. Prefects had responsibilities which included keeping a general sense of discipline. Compensating somewhat for the various discomforts was the food which was perceived to be good in terms of both quality and quantity.¹³⁸

School facilities, other than outdoor sports facilities, consisted of a small billiard table, some library books, a piano and an 'ancient' radio. The radio was replaced in 1956 with Coghlan adverting to the 'only unusual item' in a petty cash statement as being a payment of £7 for a wireless, adding that he had supplied the original set in 1948 but that it now had to be replaced. Pupils were afforded the opportunity to take piano lessons from external teachers and practice was facilitated on a piano in the School dining-room. There is a recollection of the School matron, Miss Mitchell, teaching music, training a choir and being involved in the production of a musical. A concert, consisting of a play and recitals from pupils, was held at Christmas.¹³⁹

Outings from the school, apart from church- and sports-related outings, were limited to once a month in winter, Sunday afternoons in summer, and occasional outings to Church of Ireland functions. There was a requirement, in respect of Sunday afternoon outings, that pupils turn left on exiting the School, away from town. Some, however, contrived to find their way to the harbour area where the attraction was the *Dún Aengus* ferry, which connected with the Aran Islands. A particular early memory was the arrival of a Japanese liner in 1940 to transport 185 Japanese, evacuated from London, to Tokyo. On occasion, the Sunday outing would involve going no further than the nearby Sportsground, at that time the location for hurling as well as rugby matches.¹⁴⁰

In contrast to the sense of isolation and adversity which pervaded much of the School's sporting activities during the Coursey period, an air of vibrancy is evident from the appointment of George Coghlan. This related, no doubt, to the easing of war-time travel restrictions and the return to the

¹³⁸ Information provided by former pupils C. Cuffe, K. Henderson, and M. Connolly.

¹³⁹ ESA/GS/8/(2), Coghlan to Registrar, 9 January 1957; Information provided by former pupils J.A. Barr, O. Clinton and J. Langrell.

¹⁴⁰ Information provided by former pupils K. Henderson, C. Ruttle, J Langrell, N. Williamson and M. Connolly.; C T, 9 November 1940.

playing of rugby of the Grammar School's nearest neighbour, St. Joseph's College, Galway (The Bish). Coghlan, who had been a successful games' master at the Masonic Boys School, Clonskeagh prior to his appointment to Galway Grammar School, would have added to that positivity. Other teachers, also, had an interest in sport and former pupils recall Bill Stephens, David Jones, Noel Scott and H. J. Tilson being involved in rugby. Coghlan trained the rugby team on Tuesdays, Tilson coached hockey, while Alex. Eaton played handball. J.P. McMahon was interested in boxing. The physical well-being of pupils was attended to by an army man who took the pupils for P. E., while David Doonan, who had enrolled in the School in 1950, was employed by Coghlan in January 1956 as 'organiser and supervisor of School games'.¹⁴¹

Subsequent to his appointment Coghlan reported that cricket had recommenced and that the first matches seen in Galway for many years had taken place. The School subsequently played the revived Co. Galway C.C. and several visiting sides, with Coghlan recording that the game was played with 'great enthusiasm'.¹⁴² School hockey teams played in Leinster Schools hockey competitions in 1948/49 and, although well beaten, Coghlan considered that the experience gained would result in better performances in future years. There are, however, no reports of the initiative being repeated.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, games were played against Villiers School, Limerick, and local men's and women's teams.¹⁴⁴

Coghlan's initial assessment of rugby in the School was that, while it was the most popular game, no team 'possessed the weight necessary to take part in competitive football'. Competitive rugby was, however, resumed in 1949/50 with participation in the Connacht Senior Schools Cup.¹⁴⁵ The School was frequently on the losing side and comments such as 'The losers (Galway Grammar School) had little to offer except courage and pluck of a high order' were typically found in reports of its games.¹⁴⁶ There was relief in the mid-50s when the School had victories over Cavan Royal School and Sligo Grammar School, while in 1956 there was victory over a High School, Dublin, 2nd XV with it

¹⁴¹ ESA/GS/9, Coghlan to Governors, 10 July 1948; information provided by C. Ruttle, K. Henderson, R. Ferris, J. Langrell, N. Guest and other former pupils; ESA/GS/8(1), Coghlan to Registrar, 11 January 1956.

¹⁴² ESA/Registry Book 11, mtgs. 16 June 1949 and 22 June 1950; Registry Book 12, mtg. 18 June 1956, Reports of Headmaster to Board of Governors; ESA/GS/8(2), Report of Headmaster to Board of Governors, 17 June 1957.

¹⁴³ ESA/Registry Book 11, mtg. 16 June 1949: Report of Headmaster to Board of Governors, 16 June 1949.

¹⁴⁴ C T, 16 October 1954; ESA/Registry Book 12, mtg. 18 June 1956, Report of Headmaster to Board of Governors, 18 June 1956; information provided by K. Henderson and N. Guest, former pupils.

¹⁴⁵ ESA/Registry Book 11, mtg. 16 June 1949, Report of Headmaster to Board of Governors, 16 June 1949; C T, 21 March 1950.

¹⁴⁶ C T, 24 March 1956.

being recorded that it was The High School's first visit to Galway in 20 years.¹⁴⁷ The lack of institutional support for sport in the School is evident in connection with travel arrangements for the Sligo and Cavan games, with Coghlan writing that some of his friends had driven the boys in their cars and that he would reimburse them their petrol expenses and charge the cost to the boys on the next fee sheet.¹⁴⁸ A decade of heavy defeats for the School came to an end in 1958 with victory over Garbally, 8 – 0, to win the Connacht Junior Schools Cup for the first time since 1915. The victory was described as 'the shock of the season'. The Grammar School team had an advantage in that Garbally and the Connacht Branch allowed the School play some over-age players in the context of its low pupil numbers. Low pupil numbers meant that all were required or at least had the opportunity to play.¹⁴⁹

The School Sports were revived in 1950 and boys took part in the Connacht Schools championships. Parents of pupils attended the Sports Day. Success was enjoyed in local table tennis competitions, with home games having the advantage of providing in-house entertainment, while away games afforded team members an outing from School.¹⁵⁰ Handball, indoor and outdoor, was played, with the ball-alley also being used for informal soccer games.¹⁵¹ The School tennis court was brought into use again after a lapse of 15 years with much of the work carried out on a voluntary basis by members of Corinthians Rugby Club. Coghlan reported that the value of the court as an amenity could not be estimated.¹⁵²

Closure

The School in the 1950s was faced with the difficulties of low pupil numbers, continuing demographic decline, a school building which required significant investment, and a Board reluctant to invest in it, either on a recurrent or capital basis. That Board had given ample evidence in the years prior to Coghlan's appointment that it saw closure of the School as a means towards resolving its financial difficulties. It returned to that option within several years of his appointment.

¹⁴⁷ ESA/GS/8(1), Report of Headmaster to Local Committee, 21 March 1955 and ESA/GS/8(2), Report of Headmaster to Board of Governors, 17 June 1957; *C T*, 13 November 1956.

¹⁴⁸ ESA/GS/8(1), Coghlan to Registrar, date stamped 3 March 1955.

¹⁴⁹ *C T*, 15 March 1958; information provided by M. Connolly and K. Henderson, former pupils.

¹⁵⁰ ESA/Registry Book 12, mtgs. 16 June 1949, 22 June 1950, 16 October 1950 and 16 October 1952: Reports of Headmaster to Board of Governors.

¹⁵¹ Information provided by former pupils R. Ferris, K. Henderson, N. Guest and M. Connolly.

¹⁵² ESA/Registry Book 11, mtg. 16 June 1949: Report of Headmaster to Board of Governors, 16 June 1949.

The Trust had an overdraft of £21,000 in 1949. The following year its Standing Committee asked the Galway Local Committee for proposals towards reducing the School's annual deficit. None were forthcoming.¹⁵³ Despite this, and in the context of the fire at the School in November 1950, the chairman observed that the Board was fortunate to have such a competent committee in Galway. In November 1953 the Local Committee did recommend that fees for boarders be increased by £30 per annum with a view to the subvention from the Trust being reduced. The recommendation was adopted.¹⁵⁴

The future of Galway Grammar School came to be impacted by the success of The High School where pupil numbers exceeded 300 in 1949. In June 1953 the Board considered the purchase of Danum in Rathgar as a new site for the School and its Treasurer, M.H.G. Ellis, advised that this would inevitably result in the closure of Galway Grammar School.¹⁵⁵ Subsequently, Major R. R. Wilson proposed that the School be closed and re-opened, under the style of Galway House, as a constituent house of The High School. The Trust's future income was estimated, around this time, at £2,000 per annum. Meanwhile, excess of expenditure over income at Galway in 1954 was £2,924 and the Trust's excess of expenditure over income that year was £1,124.¹⁵⁶

A sub-committee appointed to consider the situation at the Grammar School reported that the fabric of the school building was reasonably sound but identified a requirement for renewal and replacement of furniture and equipment, together with extensive redecoration. Its report stated that, in the period 1933-47, expenditure on Galway Grammar School had exceeded income by £26,456, while excess expenditure on The High School amounted to £15,918. From 1948 the Trust's subvention to Galway had totalled £18,395, and £7,552 to The High School. The Trust's capital had been reduced by almost £20,000 between 1933 and 1954. The sub-committee concluded that it was not possible to estimate the impact increased fees at Galway would have but that, for two terms of the accounting year to 30 April 1955, the increase in income had been £26.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, p. 210; ESA/ Registry Book 11, Meeting of Standing Committee, 21 September 1950; Meeting of Board, 19 October 1950.

¹⁵⁴ ESA/ Registry Book 11, Meeting of Standing Committee, 14 December 1950; ESA/ Registry Book 12, mtg. 19 November 1953.

¹⁵⁵ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, pp. 211, 222.

¹⁵⁶ ESA/GS/669/670, notice of motion from Major R.R. Wilson, 21 October 1954 and Preliminary and subsequent notes of Major Wilson in reference to his notice of motion.

¹⁵⁷ ESA/GS/670, Report of Sub-Committee, 27 May 1955.

A Special Meeting of the Board was held in June 1955 to consider a motion that Galway Grammar School be closed, together with an amendment from the Local Committee that closure be postponed for five years. The Local Committee pointed out that the School was the only one remaining of those established under the Trust and that, as Galway and the Grammar School were outposts of Protestantism in the West, closure of the School would be a mortal blow to that community. It suggested that, should the amendment be carried and it be found necessary subsequently to close the School, any additional loss of capital would be more than recovered from the sale of the property. Mr L. V. Bishop submitted a further amendment suggesting that discussions be held with the Board of Morgan's School, Castleknock to arrange the temporary housing of Galway Grammar School there pending a decision regarding its re-opening as part of The High School. The outcome of the meeting was the appointment of another sub-committee. Coghlan was assured that he had the Board's confidence and informed that the suggested closure of the School was not a reflection on him.¹⁵⁸ The appointment of the sub-committee resulted in relations between the Board and the Local Committee becoming strained with the Bishop of Tuam suggesting that there was an amount of overlap between the functions of the sub-committee and the Local Committee. The Chair of the Board assured governors that it was not intended that the sub-committee would usurp the powers of the Local Committee but, rather, assist it.¹⁵⁹ Tensions at Board level were high as evidenced by one governor, Professor Purser, resigning in protest at the use of the Trust's income '...to keep a moribund school alive for a few years longer.'¹⁶⁰

The sub-committee recommended advertising of the School, production of a prospectus, reciprocal transfer arrangements and increased sporting ties with The High School. It further recommended that the Galway Grammar School Exhibition to TCD be extended to UCG, that summer courses in Irish be held, that school furniture be replaced, and that the curriculum be widened to include horticulture and/or agriculture. A programme of repair of the school building was considered necessary but it was agreed that this not be undertaken, at least until pupil numbers increased. It was also agreed that consideration be given to building a hall for use as a gymnasium but that no immediate action be taken.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ ESA/GS/3, Minutes of Special Meeting of Board of Governors, 6 June 1955.

¹⁵⁹ ESA/Registry Book 12, mtgs. 13 June 1955 and 6 February 1956.

¹⁶⁰ Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, p. 211.

¹⁶¹ ESA/GS/669, Recommendations of Sub-Committee appointed on 13 June 1955.

The recommendations were adopted by the Board and a report on their progress provided in December. In the course of decorating the schoolroom it was noted that the record of distinguished 'Old Boys' would be obliterated but that it was, in any event, out of date as no names appeared after about 1910. Rumours of the School's possible closure were in circulation with a Galway auctioneering company enquiring as to whether there was truth in the rumour that the Board was about to dispose of the School in its entirety.¹⁶²

The new prospectus/ brochure was, apparently, not produced until August 1956, too late for it to have any impact for the 1956/57 school year. The Registrar wrote to Coghlan conveying to him the Board's agreement that copies be sent to former pupils of the School, particularly rectors and other clerical gentlemen. There was considered to be merit in circulating the prospectuses in Northern Ireland as there were considered to be cases of children who, although worthy of a secondary education, were unsuccessful in passing the '11 Plus' Examination and who were, consequently, denied the opportunity. The Registrar also wrote to Professor Sandford, TCD, to ascertain if some brochures could be placed in that College where they might be seen by people who might influence pupils towards Galway Grammar School. The record of discussions around the circulation of the prospectus and related advertising of the School smacks of gentlemanly inertia captured by the suggestion that the 'brochures' be 'introduced' into the Great Southern Hotel, Galway, Ballinahinch Hotel and the Zetland Arms Hotel, Clifden.¹⁶³

In February 1957 the Registrar enquired of Coghlan as to the outcome of the advertising as the Board was concerned at the continued heavy losses. Coghlan was unable to identify grounds for optimism. At the October Board meeting, arising from consideration of the Annual Accounts to 31 July 1957, the Chair said that it was imperative that the losses be stopped as the capital of the Trust would be eroded in the foreseeable future. Yet another sub-committee was appointed with the brief, on this occasion, to investigate the most workable scheme for the promotion of Protestant education in Galway. Coghlan's report, considered at the meeting, set out potential recurrent savings of £250 and it suggested that, if the gap between income and expenditure was not

¹⁶² ESA/Registry Book 12, mtg. 17 December 1955; Registry Book 12, Meeting of Standing Committee, 12 December 1955; ESA/GS/8(1), Joyce, Mackie & Loughed, Auctioneers, to Registrar, 4 January 1956.

¹⁶³ ESA/GS/2, Registrar to Coghlan, 24 August 1956; Registrar to Professor Stanford, 24 August 1956.

sufficiently closed, the Board consider the sale of the school building and grounds and the purchase of alternative premises more in keeping with the number of pupils likely to attend the School.¹⁶⁴

The sub-committee met in Galway in January 1958. M. H. G. Ellis, chair of the Board, said that the Board was not prepared to allow the present situation continue as it was obliged to administer its funds to the best educational advantage, rather than to champion Protestantism in the West. It was accepted, he added, that the Board had a responsibility to the Protestant population in the Galway area but that, as the number of potential pupils was small, it had been suggested that a 'secondary top' be added to the national school. The members visited St Nicholas's primary school. It was deemed adequate in terms of size but accepted that expenditure on repairs would be necessary.¹⁶⁵ That school then had of the order of 26 pupils. There were also national schools associated with the Church of Ireland at Aughrim and Creagh in east Galway, which had of the order of 15 and 14 pupils respectively. The Tuam Mall School had closed since 1950 when pupil numbers in schools associated with the Church of Ireland had previously been recorded.¹⁶⁶ The prospective number of entrants to Galway Grammar School from Co. Galway was clearly limited.

Disappointment was expressed at the apparent lack of initiative on the part of the Local Committee. The members of that committee requested that no decision be taken until the outcome of the circular sent by Coghlan to 345 primary schools regarding the education and scholarships available at the School was known. The options, should the response to the circular be deemed inadequate, were discussed and the secondary-top proposal was not received with enthusiasm, rather was it suggested that some incentive be provided towards expanding primary school education with a view to educating children who might be worthy of a secondary education elsewhere. In this latter respect it was noted that a scholarship fund of £1,000, for example, would benefit few pupils when regard was had to the duration of the second-level cycle. It was not envisaged that the Board would set aside a larger sum.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ ESA/GS/8 (2), Coghlan to Registrar, 25 February 1957; Report of Headmaster to Board of Governors, 10 October 1957.

¹⁶⁵ ESA/GS/2, Report from Mr Ellis and Major Reid on visit to Galway Grammar School, 10, 11 January 1958.

¹⁶⁶ *Church of Ireland: Journal of the General Synod*, 1959 (Dublin, 1959): Statistics of Schools in Éire in connection with the Church of Ireland.

¹⁶⁷ ESA/GS/2, Report from Mr Ellis and Major Reid following their visit to Galway Grammar School, 10/11 January 1958.

Coghlan subsequently reported that he had no indication that any new pupils would enrol in September 1958 and was of the view that there was no alternative but to close the School. Although no formal recommendation was arrived at, the sub-committee identified issues which would have to be addressed in the event of closure.¹⁶⁸

The Board in March 1958 unanimously resolved that:

On the understanding that the Board will formulate a Scholarship Scheme for pupils in Schools preferably outside Dublin on as generous terms as the funds permit, the Board resolves, with great regret, that Galway Grammar School should be closed as from the end of the Summer Term 1958, and that parents be advised accordingly. In awarding Scholarships, preference to be given to boys from Galway city and surrounding areas.¹⁶⁹

There was general support for a scholarship scheme with Professors Crawford and Sandford supporting the concept 'of generosity in giving scholarships to country boys'. Enthusiasm was tempered by the financial position of the Trust which had a market value of £68,000, an overdraft of £52,000, and annual income of £1,700. It was decided to write to parents and staff informing them of the decision to close the School. Thereafter, notice of closure would be inserted in the press. There were 19 members of the Board, slightly more than half, present when the decision was taken. Although relatively low there is a sense that attendance at Board meetings had improved somewhat during the twentieth century although rarely were more than half of the members present.¹⁷⁰

The sub-committee was requested to recommend on arrangements for closing the School. It considered that the Board had no obligation to boarders not in receipt of scholarships as they could obtain education at other institutions at similar fees, that obligations to existing scholarship holders must be honoured, and that the Board had an obligation to day pupils whose education would be impacted by the closure. In this latter respect it decided to offer scholarships of 1–2 years' duration to ten pupils. The cost of the scholarship arrangements was estimated at £830 in 1958/59, decreasing to £35 in 1961/62. The sub-committee considered that, in respect of a new scholarship

¹⁶⁸ ESA/GS/2, Notes of meeting, 5 March 1958, of Sub-Committee appointed by the Board.

¹⁶⁹ ESA/Registry Book 12, mtg. 10 March 1958.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

scheme, the primary obligation of the Board was towards residents of the Galway City area, with a secondary obligation to those from the 'Erasmus Smith Counties' of Galway, Mayo and Clare. A scholarship scheme, which continues in modified form, was established consisting of two scholarships annually, tenable usually for four years, and with an annual value of £70-£80, if the pupil came from Galway city or its suburbs, and of annual value £40-£50 if the holder was resident elsewhere in Co. Galway or in Clare or Mayo. The higher value was applicable if the school attended was outside of Dublin.¹⁷¹

Conclusion

The financial difficulties of the Erasmus Smith Board continued subsequent to the closure of Drogheda Grammar School and it became apparent that it could not continue to support both Galway Grammar School and The High School at the levels required by each. The Board, freed by the 1938 act of its obligations to maintain the grammar schools, focussed on the costs associated with Galway Grammar School and in 1958 arrived at a decision, which had been 20 years in the making, to close the School. While references were made at various times to an obligation to maintain the School as the one remaining grammar school provided for under the Charter, consideration was never given to withdrawing support from The High School but, rather, was additional expenditure incurred in acquiring a new location for that School in the knowledge that this would inevitably result in the closure of Galway Grammar School. In discussions leading towards that decision comments by individual governors were, on occasion, disparaging of the type of pupil at Galway Grammar School, their geographical origin, 'country', and the rationale of their parents in sending them to the School. No alternatives to closure were actively pursued. From the perspective of the Protestant community in Galway, it is noteworthy that the Rev. A. J. Gailey, a Presbyterian minister, was more vociferous in his opposition to the closure than his fellow local Church of Ireland governors. In contrast to experience elsewhere, there is no sense of positive commitment from the local Protestant community towards the School. No fundraising activities were undertaken nor were donations made towards easing the School's financial plight.

While the numbers receiving second-level education remained low in the 1950s, there had been an increase over the preceding decades in overall pupil numbers and in average school size. Pupil

¹⁷¹ ESA/GS/2, Report and recommendations from Sub-Committee, mtg. 20 March 2019, appointed to consider matters related to closure of Galway Grammar School.

Note: I am grateful to Mr. John Davis, former Registrar at The High School, for bringing the continuation of the scholarship scheme to my attention.

numbers in Galway Grammar School had, however, remained stagnant from 1895 and, over time, the School fell further below average school size overall and in other Protestant schools. Galway Grammar School would, as a result, have been particularly constrained in its number of teachers and, also, in terms of subject offerings. The school building, 140 years old, clearly posed challenges in terms of safety, upkeep, and the cost of refurbishment. While parents evidently expressed concern subsequent to parts of the building going on fire, there is no evidence of pupils being withdrawn related to the inadequacy of the School's infrastructure or its facilities generally. School buildings would, in any event, have been, generally, at this time in a poor state given that there was no state support for new school buildings or the refurbishment of existing buildings.

Despite evident hardship in living conditions, which were unlikely to have been exceptional at that time, there is a distinctly more positive sense of the pupils' experience during this decade than in the preceding one. Not surprisingly, however, some pupils found boarding-school life difficult. Regular games, some involving travel, were played and there was involvement from the teachers which, again, would have mitigated the formal pupil-teacher relationship. While participation in sport would have added to a pupil's experience and status within the School, there is a suggestion that lack of sporting ability or non-participation might have resulted in a negative experience. Opportunities to take music lessons externally were provided and school-plays were staged. Sundays involved a number of outings which would have further lessened the sense of isolation. At least one parent wrote in appreciation of the care and education provided to her son.

Contact with Galway did increase during these years through, in particular, sporting events. Coghlan was active across a spectrum of sporting activity and would have served as a bridge between the town and the School, involving friends in driving pupils to games and in restoring the tennis court. In like manner, many of the assistant teachers had an interest in sport and contributed within the School, while some participated externally. Meanwhile the School continued as a cultural, social and sporting resource for Galway during the decade. However, pupil numbers from Galway remained low and there is no sense of involvement by the local Protestant community with the School, other than that of the local governors and Church services.

George Coghlan, on appointment to Galway Grammar School, had an excellent reputation as a teacher who contributed fully and effectively to the extra-curricular life of the Masonic School. While he appears to have imbued the School with a greater sense of vibrancy, he could not

overcome the difficulties occasioned by low pupil numbers and fee income; of location in a town with a small and shrinking Protestant population; of annual financial losses; and of a Board which had almost always been reluctant to invest in it. The Board, on closure of the School, agreed that Coghlan's skills-set as a teacher of Irish, together with his sporting ability and associations, could usefully be employed at The High School and it was agreed that he be transferred there at a salary of £335 per annum, together with free residence. This amounted to a significant reduction on the £500 per annum he had as headmaster.¹⁷²

Pension arrangements were put in place for Josephine Madden, cook at the School for over 50 years, and Michael Joyce, who had been employed for 35 years and resided at the Gate Lodge. Joyce continued as caretaker and was subsequently employed by UCG. Harold Thornton, who had over 40 years' service, was offered a pension of £150 per annum or, alternatively, an annual pension of £100, with a minimum of £50 for part-time teaching of classics at The High School.¹⁷³ Thornton subsequently recorded his feelings regarding the School's closure when he wrote of how 'those governors certainly scattered all our pupils over the country... and a lot of good may it do them, after having upset a loyal school.'¹⁷⁴ The School building and property was quickly disposed of with the highest of eight tenders received, £20,000 from University College Galway, being accepted in July.¹⁷⁵

Postscript

When the *Advisory Committee on Secondary Education of the Church of Ireland* reported in 1965 it recorded that there were 40 Protestant schools, with 5,520 pupils, an average of 138 pupils per school. The average number of pupils in 22 Dublin schools was 171, while the average for the 18 schools outside of Dublin was 98, 52 boarders and 46 day pupils. Only three of the latter schools, with pupil numbers in the range 161-184, had pupil cohorts above the overall average number. The number of non-Catholic 12-16 year olds in 1961 was 11,129. The number of non-Catholics in the age cohorts 7-11 years and 2-6 years, at 9,756 and 9,435 respectively, was then lower than in the 12-16 age cohort. The Committee was of the view that the requirements of the Protestant community could be met by a total of 22 co-educational schools, including nine outside of Co. Dublin. It

¹⁷² ESA/GS/2, Report (undated) and recommendations from sub-committee appointed to consider matters related to closure of Galway Grammar School.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Harold Thornton to Olive Fleming (nee Clinton), former pupil, 28 January 1959. I am grateful to Mrs Fleming for providing me with a copy of this and another letter to her from Harold Thornton.

¹⁷⁵ Registry Book 12, ESA/BG/1001 (2), mtg. 7 July 1958.

considered that the needs of the Limerick/Tipperary/Clare/Galway region, where there were then 1,459 non-Catholics in the three age cohorts combined, could be met by one school. Villiers School, Limerick, which had 122 pupils, was in place.¹⁷⁶

Contemporaneously with the publication of the report radical change in second-level education in Ireland was initiated with the introduction of 'free secondary education' in 1966. In addition, capital grants were made available from 1964, which provided for the construction of new school buildings and the renovation of older ones. They were intended, however, to drive an agenda of larger schools with a broader curriculum which could provide economies of scale. Over a period of two decades, through a process of amalgamations, closures and relocations, the landscape of second-level Protestant educational provision was transformed such that by the late 1980s there were 28 Protestant schools, mainly co-educational.¹⁷⁷

Not surprisingly, given its relatively large Protestant population base, Sligo Grammar School survived into the new era. Co. Westmeath, in which Wilson's Hospital continued to operate, had a Protestant population of 1,343 in 1961, compared to 1,279 in Co. Galway. Neither was the population of Co. Galway significantly less than that of counties Kilkenny and Waterford at 1,571 and 1,537 respectively. Kilkenny and Waterford cities then had Protestant populations of 213 and 561 respectively, compared to 316 in Galway.¹⁷⁸ The report of the *Advisory Committee* considered that one school would be sufficient to meet the needs of the South Midlands and South-East region, including Waterford and Kilkenny. A school for Waterford was secured through the amalgamation of Newtown School and Bishop Foy School in 1967. The future of Kilkenny College was secured with the active support of the Bishop of Ossory, Henry McAdoo, who considered that the school could be a success if it became co-educational and improved its facilities. The former was secured through an amalgamation with Celbridge College, with both colleges being schools of the Incorporated Society for the Promotion of Protestant Schools. That amalgamated entity moved to a new location and building in 1985.¹⁷⁹ It appears, therefore, that, while availability of a proximate cohort of pupils was an important requirement for a school, it was not the sole criterion for survival and success.

¹⁷⁶ *Advisory Committee of the Church of Ireland on Secondary Education*, pp. 18-22.

¹⁷⁷ Whiteside, *A History of Kilkenny College*, pp. 109, 110.

¹⁷⁸ Census 1961, Vol. 7, Tables 7A and 8.

¹⁷⁹ *Advisory Committee of the Church of Ireland on Secondary Education*, pp. 18-22; Whiteside, *A History of Kilkenny College*, pp. 111, 116.

In the years following the closure of Galway Grammar School the Erasmus Smith Board occasionally had pension and scholarship matters related to the School to consider. The provision to be made for Protestant education in the Galway region also arose, including, in March 1959, when the Board considered a motion from the Galway Local Committee requesting that it consider the needs of Protestant primary education in Galway City. The Dean of Tuam and Dean Harris of Galway asked if the Board would be prepared to provide a grant for necessary repairs to and decoration of the primary school and make an annual grant towards the teacher's salary. The Board decided that the School Committee should explore vesting the school in the state and thereby obtain a grant towards repairs and decoration. It indicated that it would, in the event that the application was successful, be sympathetic towards making a contribution towards refurbishment of the school and agreed to make a grant of £50 per annum for five years towards the salary of a primary school teacher. This provision was subsequently extended for a further five years.¹⁸⁰

In 2006 a Galway Grammar School reunion function, attended by 76 former pupils, a former teacher, family members, friends, and the Rev. Patrick Towers, Rector of St. Nicholas' Church, Galway, was held in the Great Southern Hotel, Galway. The following day, on Sunday, 1 October, at a Remembrance Service of Past Times, a plaque was dedicated to the School in St. Nicholas's Church, with the Mayor of Galway, Councillor Niall Ó Brolcháin, present. Included in the music for the service was *Onward Christian Soldiers* which was regarded by pupils as the School Anthem.¹⁸¹ The wording of the Church Plaque reads:

TO THE GLORY OF GOD
DEDICATED ON THE OCCASION OF A SCHOOL REUNION
ON 1 OCTOBER 2006
IN MEMORY OF ERASMUS SMITH ESQUIRE, FOUNDER,
AND TEACHERS, STAFF AND PUPILS OF
GALWAY GRAMMAR SCHOOL
1657-1958

¹⁸⁰ ESA/BG/1001 (2), Meeting of Board of Governors, 2 March 1959; ESA/BG/841 (2), Registrar to Canon Harris, 22 May 1964.

¹⁸¹ Information provided by Charles Ruttle, former pupil, principal organiser of the Reunion.

Conclusion

This dissertation, through its consideration of Galway Grammar School, provides a broader understanding of Protestant grammar school education, particularly as it operated over almost three centuries on the periphery of the Protestant community. Other Protestant grammar schools in Co. Galway are also considered, together with other educational options available to Protestants in the county, towards identifying the totality of the educational provision available to them. Galway Grammar School attracted pupils from across the country during the twentieth century and their domiciliary origin and socio-economic background, together with their subsequent education, careers and domicile are considered, contributing towards an understanding of patterns of domiciliary, educational and social mobility amongst middle-class Protestants. The relationship between the School and the predominately Catholic town of Galway, and the factors which impacted on and modified that relationship over time, is addressed. Meanwhile, some insight is gained into the facilities considered appropriate for pupils of Galway Grammar School, pointing to general expectations with regard to the quality of care for middle-class boys.

From a national perspective, Galway Grammar School was a primary focus of the richly-endowed Erasmus Smith Trust which was administered by mainly Dublin-based members of the elite Anglican community. Consideration of the fortunes of the School, which were largely influenced by the policies, strategies and directions of the Board of the Trust, elucidates the manner in which the Board administered the endowment, in general, and in respect of Galway Grammar School, in particular. The manner in which the Board moulded the terms of the endowment and managed it, provides an insight into the mind-set of the elite Anglican community over several centuries. The dissertation also addresses the issue of social class as manifested by the manner in which the Board, and the headmasters of the School, viewed and applied the provisions of the Trust for the education of sons of tenants and of poor children.

The Board of the Erasmus Smith Trust, The Governors of the Schools Founded by Erasmus Smith, Esq., was comprised on its constitution of leading members of the ecclesiastical, official, legal and educational Anglican elite in Ireland. The authority given to the Board to co-opt members to fill vacancies ensured that its composition remained essentially unchanged over time and it continued to be a microcosm of the elite Anglican community. The Board secured total control of the Trust

through resisting Smith's efforts to alter its terms and through successfully contesting the claims of Christ's Hospital, London, to a greater share of the Trust's income. Its Anglican ethos was confirmed when the Board provided that religious instruction in the grammar schools be carried out in accordance with the teaching of the Established Church, rather than in accordance with Smith's instructions. Its control over the Trust mirrored that of the Anglican elite over the nation in the eighteenth century.

The Board succeeding in aligning, through the 1723 act, the purposes for which the surplus funds of the endowment would be used with the interests and priorities of its class. In redirecting the funds of the Trust towards institutions favoured by that class, and away from the grammar schools, the Board enterprisingly based its case on the provisions of the 'Transmitted Bill', rather than on those of the Charter. The opportunism shown in utilising the Bill is evidenced by little, if any, reference being subsequently made to it by the Board, with resort being had, rather, to the provisions of the Charter when there was a requirement to state the exclusive nature of the Trust and to reject requests for funding which did not find favour with it.

Despite Protestant hegemony being weakened by reforming legislation from the granting of Catholic Emancipation onwards, the Erasmus Smith Board allocated considerable funds towards the establishment of English schools in support the Church of Ireland's claim to primacy in the area of education and of the efforts of the evangelical movement of that Church to convert Catholics. The Board's income recovered quickly from the impact of the Great Famine and it arrived at mid-century in absolute control of the Trust and certain of its right to direct its funds where it wished.

In this certainty, the Board sought to exempt itself from the remit of the Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58, mirroring the reluctance of the broader Anglican community to accept change which would adversely impact on its authority and status. Having failed in this, the Board implemented some of the Commission's recommendations, on occasion with no particular haste, and chose to disregard others. It ignored representations from the public, and the Catholic and Presbyterian Churches, for access to the funds of the Trust and, acting out of a sense of its own authority and on tenuous statutory grounds, embarked on a new venture, the establishment of The High School, Dublin.

The Board was deemed by the 1857-58 Commission, to have consistently neglected its responsibilities towards the grammar schools. This neglect mirrored that of the Church of Ireland clergy, of Lord Lieutenants and of grand juries in relation to the diocesan schools. The Commissioners of Education displayed a similar lack of interest in, practically, the entire endowed school sector. This collective neglect of grammar school education also manifested itself in the majority of members of educational boards being irregular in their attendance at board meetings. Membership was accepted but related responsibilities were frequently not discharged.

The Erasmus Smith Board continued to assert its control of the Trust during the Home Rule years, from 1912 to 1914, and the revolutionary years which followed. It was ultimately required, in an attempt to retain that control, to resort to the High Court and to the Oireachtas to seek changes to the Charter which would allow it close Tipperary Grammar School. Paradoxically, despite the primacy accorded by it to the 'Transmitted Bill' in the 1720s and its prioritisation of other institutions over the intervening years, the Board ultimately had to acknowledge the authority of the Charter and the primacy accorded therein to the grammar schools.

The Erasmus Smith Board was opportunistic in the manner in which it secured control of the Trust and many of its members were, at best, casual in their attendance at meetings and in the exercise of their responsibilities. The Board, as an entity, was confident and assured in its retention of control of the Trust long after the political authority of its class had faded. It consistently directed the Trust to support the interests of that class, and succeeded in preserving it, over the course of three centuries, in a totally changed environment. While appreciating that there might, inevitably, have been changes to the nature of the Trust over time, it is difficult to argue, given the alacrity and extent to which the Board moved it away from the terms of the Charter and its consistency in maintaining the direction chosen thereafter, that it had complied with its motto: *We are faithful to our Trust*. Whether the Board might have preserved the Trust in a stronger condition had it compromised on the use of its funds at an earlier stage is a moot question.

The Board of the Trust operated over three centuries during which major events, from the Williamite wars to the establishment of the Republic of Ireland, occurred. The composition of the Board suggests that individual governors would have had the opportunity to contribute to and comment on developments in other fora into the second-half of the nineteenth century when the pattern of political representation changed. Doubtless some governors, by virtue of their office and/or social

standing and business connections, were in a position to comment on and, possibly, influence events thereafter. Major political and social events, including the Famine, the Land War, the Land Acts and events arising from the occupation of Tipperary Grammar School during the Civil War, required the attention of the Board as they directly impacted on its operation. Otherwise, there is no reference at Board meetings to such events and the governors apparently never saw the Erasmus Smith Board as a forum at which such events might be discussed or commented on.

It appears that the members of the Board had a homogeneity and a consistency of purpose such that little debate was required regarding the direction of the Trust even in the face of social, economic and political upheaval. There is a sense that governors were, as regards the Trust and, perhaps, other aspects of their lives, impervious to change and they remained resolute in their determination to retain total control of the Trust in the certainty that it had been administered for over 200 years 'by people of the highest rank, sanctioned by statute and Royal Charter'.¹⁸² The Board's unwillingness to amend the Trust, or admit others to a share of its benefits, suggests that, as a class, the Anglican elite would have been reluctant, of its own volition, to make the political, educational, religious and land related legislative changes in relation to Ireland enacted by the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland during the nineteenth and into the twentieth century.

The provisions of the Charter that sons of tenants and of twenty poor children living within two miles of each grammar school be educated free of charge provided potential for the Board to promote the education of the middle- and lower-classes. There is little evidence that it availed of the opportunity up to the mid-nineteenth century with, in 1715, relatively few of the pupils attending Galway Grammar School having free status, the Board's directive of 1815 in the matter having little practical impact, and headmasters claiming ignorance of the provision in the mid-nineteenth century.

Despite this, and particularly as a result of Drelincourt Campbell's policy of not charging fees to pupils of Galway Grammar School, almost half the pupils attending the schools had free status c.1790. Of interest in this respect is that, most likely at the behest of its headmaster, Richard Norris, as was the case in Galway, of the order of 20 per cent of pupils at Drogheda then had such status and, as there were no Erasmus Smith estates in the vicinity of the School, the free pupils must,

¹⁸² Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust*, p. 183.

therefore, have come under the category of 'poor', however defined. No objection appears to have been raised to their presence by other pupils or their parents even though the School was then attended, in the main, by upper-class pupils. The comment of Drelincourt Campbell that his free-pupil policy was aimed at avoiding jealousies between fee-paying and free pupils points to such sentiments occurring but, also, to it being possible to ameliorate them and create an environment where pupils of different backgrounds worked together.

The Board was sensitive to class differences at the institutional level and, early in the nineteenth century, it instructed that a new building for Tipperary Grammar School should cater for the sons of gentlemen, with no similar instruction being given for the building then planned for Galway. A century later a similar view as to the relative social status of those schools was taken by the Board when it decreed that nothing should be done to lower the social standing of Tipperary Grammar School, with no concerns of a similar nature being expressed in respect of the Galway school.

The provision regarding the admission of free pupils was activated by the Board in the context of the constitution of the Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58. Social acceptability became a key criterion of eligibility, with the Board stating in 1880 that it would not admit as a free pupil a boy whose class was such that it would not be appropriate for him to mix with the other pupils. The attitude of headmasters varied with Richard Biggs being supportive of free pupils, on occasion taking a view at variance with that of the Board. In contrast all three headmasters appealed in 1914 that the introduction of a scholarship scheme not endanger the social status of their schools, and this at a time when Galway Grammar School was experiencing difficulties. The issue of class also manifested itself in the widespread tendency to appoint teachers from England with a view to their accent being assimilated by pupils, and they subsequently impressing the outside world.

Scholarships and fee reductions came to replace the free-fee provision in the early twentieth century and, as the Trust's funding situation worsened, capacity to pay fees became a proxy for social status, with Coursey noting that, as regards disciplinary matters, little could be done except protest in the case of pupils who paid full fees. The admission of pupils on reduced fees and their capacity to benefit from second-level education came to be linked in 1948 when a governor commented that secondary education was being provided to some boys who were below normal ability. The Dublin-centric focus of the Board emerged when support is recorded, in the context of closure of Galway Grammar School, for a scholarship scheme for 'country boys'.

The Board, when it did come to apply the provisions of the Charter regarding the admission of the sons of tenants and of poor pupils, was consistently sensitive to the issue of social class. A similar sensitivity was evident at the institutional level. Those concerns suggests that the concept of a Church of Ireland/Anglican community should be addressed with care, with the pupils of Galway Grammar School, as is suggested in Chapter 5, having more in common in some aspects of their lives with their Catholic socio-economic peers than with their elite co-religionists.

The Erasmus Smith Board's neglect of the provisions of the Charter extended, during the eighteenth century, to a lack of support for Galway Grammar School, even in comparison with the support provided to the other grammar schools, and this despite the Galway estates contributing significantly to the Trust's income. The School was not provided with a custom-built school building and received only infrequent funding to effect repairs to a building which, when it came to be vacated, was over one hundred years old. It was funded at the minimum level required by the Charter, apart from some headmasters being provided with access to rental income from shops and land.

The Board's interest in its grammar schools declined further during the first half of the nineteenth century, possibly related to upper-class children then attending schools in England. It despaired of the schools in the mid-century but did, subsequent to the criticisms visited on it by the 1857-58 Commission, involve itself to a greater extent in their affairs. However, its parsimony towards them continued. Headmasters Biggs and Lindesay left Galway and Tipperary, respectively, for Portora, where the salary subvention was a factor of four times greater than that provided to Galway. In this context the salary provided to the headmasters of the Erasmus Smith grammar schools essentially remained unchanged from the eighteenth century into the twentieth century. The provision of an enhanced salary, and enhanced support generally for the schools, with appropriate controls, might have attract better qualified and more committed headmasters.

The Board's involvement in Galway Grammar School increased as the twentieth century progressed and it assumed direct responsibility for its management in 1932. Having had a tradition of patronage, rather than governance, it was ill-prepared for the task and adopted a micromanagement approach to the School's affairs and finances, while taking no action to restructure the programme

provided by the School, despite there being ready examples in the case of other schools, which might have improved its fortunes. All in all the governors, leading members of the Protestant community, showed a lack of capacity to take actions proportionate to the difficulties in which the School found itself.

Consideration of Galway Grammar School provides some insight into the treatment of grammar school pupils over several centuries and, thereby, into the expectations of middle-class parents as to how their sons would be catered for within the grammar school system. It is not surprising that, during the eighteenth century, references to pupils, over and above the most basic of information, are not to be found in the Erasmus Smith Archive. Neither is it surprising that there should, institutionally, have been an emphasis, in the first instance, on the quality of accommodation, with the Board providing generous capital funding to Drogheda Grammar School during the second half of that century. The inadequacy of the accommodation in which Galway Grammar School was then operating was referred to by the Archbishop of Tuam and the *Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry*, 1791, with the commissioners also referring to the lack of a play-ground, pointing to a recognition of the need to cater for the recreational needs of pupils.

That recognition developed, during the first half of the nineteenth century, into an enhanced awareness of the need to cater for the physical well-being of pupils, as evidenced by the provision of a ball-court at the newly-constructed Galway Grammar School in 1815. The provision of a gymnasium at Eyrecourt School was proposed in 1844, while, at the Ballinasloe School, in 1853, the entire school engaged in games and exercises. There was also recognition of pupils' higher order needs with an advertisement in 1842 stating that the 'health, morals and manners' of pupils at Galway Grammar School were attended to. Care was then being taken, also, to ensure the quality of communication between staff and pupils.¹⁸³

It appears, therefore, that by the mid-nineteenth century there was an appreciation that pupils had a range of needs which should be catered for and reference by the Rev. Mahaffy, inspector to the Endowed Schools Commission, 1881, to Henry Murphy and his wife devoting their life to Tuam Diocesan School suggests that the spouses of headmasters played a large role in providing for the health and well-being of pupils and in the domestic management of schools. The quality of care was

¹⁸³ *Galway Vindicator*, 1 January 1842.

evidently not of the same quality in all schools and Mahaffy linked the pupils of Galway Grammar School with the floors of the School in deeming that neither were well-kept with 'both wanting brushing and cleaning'.¹⁸⁴ The introduction of sport to schools about this time would have enhanced the level of interaction between teachers and pupils, thereby mitigating the inevitable formalities of the teacher/pupil relationship. The availability of games became a measure of the quality of the pupil experience and difficulty in providing them came, over time, to attract criticism.

The apparently upward trajectory of the pupil experience came under pressure in the post-World War I years in Galway Grammar School and, in all likelihood, in other schools as a result of declining fee-income and of the value of endowments. The general air of neglect surrounding Galway Grammar School was then commented on, the quality of food provided to pupils became an issue, and living conditions in a building now one hundred years old, and in which there had been little investment since 1875, would have been poor. Efforts were made to address the situation, including the appointment of a matron, and, indicative of harmonious relations between teachers and pupils and, perhaps, of a certain restraint in this area in Protestant schools, corporal punishment was, apparently, little resorted to.

Apart from F. Hugh O'Donnell's references c.1860, a perspective from the view point of pupils on their experiences while attending Galway Grammar School is not available until the last decade of the School's existence. Information from former pupils testifies to facilities which were sub-optimal, but which were not atypical of other Protestant boarding schools at the time. While accounts provided were generally positive, some pupils had negative recollections but these related more to the general nature of the boarding school experience, rather than to Galway Grammar School, in particular. The interest of teachers in sport and their involvement with pupils in its pursuit, together with a greater opportunity, post-World War II, to engage in games with other schools, mitigated the boarding-school experience. The range of extra-curricular activities available to pupils was expanded through provision being made for them to engage in cultural activities.

Following on from a recognition in the eighteenth century of the accommodation needs and general physical environment of pupils, their requirements, other than those which were formally curricular, came to be increasingly recognised. They encompassed the provision of physical exercise outlets

¹⁸⁴ *Endowed Schools Commission 1881*, i, Appendix A, p. 242.

and, in time, of sporting opportunities; the development of a positive atmosphere and relationship between staff and pupils; the general care of pupils, ultimately by a professional; and some access to cultural activities. The extent to which schools addressed those needs would have varied but the Galway Grammar School experience points to a basic template being developed over time and being recognised.

It is likely that the profile of pupils who attended Galway Grammar School during the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries was not dissimilar to that of those who attended many, not entirely or consistently successful, endowed schools over this period. Pupils were, predominately, day pupils; they were from a wide age-spectrum; remained in school for periods of varying duration, short in many cases; only some studied classics; a number proceeded to university; their parents had the capacity to pay fees, but were not sufficiently wealthy to send their sons to elite schools in England or elsewhere in Ireland; and parents sought to secure some educational and/or social advantage for their children. It seems likely that only a minority derived real benefit from the experience.

The educational environment within which the School operated changed significantly over the decades from 1858. Endowed schools came under greater scrutiny; the endowments of many were rationalised; diocesan schools were closed; and a standard curriculum and a system of public examinations was introduced. Galway Grammar School was, from 1875, transformed by a first-class headmaster and a committed teaching staff and pupils were educated to a high standard. It attracted pupils from across the country and competed successfully at the Intermediate examinations and in obtaining university exhibitions. For this parents would, against the well-established movement of pupils to schools in the east and in the north of the country, send their sons to Galway.

Success was, however, the function of an individual, not of the Board or of the School's structures. Subsequent to the departure of Biggs, and in an increasingly unfavourable demographic environment, the School became one of many Protestant boarding schools which, with stagnant pupil numbers, parents who had difficulty in paying full fees, inadequate buildings and endowments of ever decreasing value, continually faced the threat of closure. The story of Galway Grammar School in the twentieth century provides an insight into those schools and a contrast with the schools which survived. Many of the latter had one or more of a governing board with educational expertise, local support, and benefitted from initiatives, educational and other, being taken. Galway

Grammar School lacked such supports and advantages and its situation was exacerbated by an inexorable decline in the Protestant population of Galway. Nevertheless, despite the difficulties experienced by the School in the twentieth century, it did provide an education which enabled a significant proportion of its pupils proceed to university and enter the professions.

Despite it not being an elite school, Galway Grammar School attracted pupils from across the country. The willingness of its pupils to travel distances for their education accords with general patterns of mobility observed amongst Protestant pupils, and amongst elite Catholic pupils. It is not clear that similar levels of mobility occurred amongst middle-class Catholic pupils. The mobility manifested itself on an institutional scale when many of Richard Biggs' pupils in Parsonstown followed him to Galway in 1875 and when the great majority of the Galway Grammar School boarders moved to Portora when Biggs was appointed headmaster there. A similar institutional-level movement occurred at Tipperary Grammar School when the Rev Lindesay moved from that School to Portora. Other incidences of pupil mobility include transfers to and from the School, the late arrival and early departure of pupils from the School during the academic year, likely to have been related to parental mobility, while some Galway parents sent their children elsewhere for their education. In addition, a high proportion of the 1895 to 1952 cohort of pupils resided outside of Ireland in adulthood. The mobility of pupils was both an opportunity and a threat for schools and is, all in all, indicative of a pattern of significant mobility amongst Protestants generally.

Galway Grammar School was located in a predominately Catholic town and a number of phases can be identified in the relationship between the town and the School mirroring, in a general sense, developments in the broader political and denominational environment. The relationship was broadly positive during the eighteenth century with local officials being supportive of requests to the Board for funding to effect repairs to the school house and was, no doubt, facilitated by the Protestant hegemony which then operated in the town. In addition, the School's location in the centre of the town would have given it a particular presence, while most of its headmasters were involved in the broader life of the town as clergymen. The School had an effective monopoly of grammar school education in Galway related to the Penal Laws then being in force and a pattern developed whereby Catholics were content to attend the School, provided their religion was not interfered with. The education of all pupils free gratis from 1768 to 1799 must have commended the School to the people of Galway. A mutually beneficial relationship between the School and the town

appears, therefore, to have existed which mirrored the reasonably amicable inter-denominational relations which obtained generally in the town during the eighteenth century.

The accommodation between Galway and the School came to be disturbed in the early decades of the nineteenth century with religious tensions raising the spectre of Catholic pupils being catechised in the Church of Ireland liturgy. Meanwhile, the Board and the School appear to have been unresponsive to requests from townspeople for free access for their children to the School. In addition, the relocation of the School to Galway's suburbs appears to have somewhat distanced it from Galway, while the advent of a number of private schools, and Galway Model School from 1852, provided alternatives to the Grammar School.

The relationship between School and town deteriorated in the context of the report of the Endowed Schools Commission, 1857-58, with the School and Trust being targeted for criticism in the local press and by Catholic clergy. There was now a greater awareness of the disjoint between the Trust's income from its Galway estates, the funding allocated to the School, and the lack of benefit to the children of townspeople. The School faced increased competition with the opening of the Jesuit College, while its headmaster, John Hallowell, does not appear to have contributed to Galway in any particular way.

The relationship between town and School was, effectively, redefined over the period 1875 to 1894. Pupils of the School were now, predominately, Protestant and, although day pupils made up almost 50 per cent of its pupils, it became, *de facto*, a boarding school. These factors combined to distance the School from the town, as evident in calls from the townspeople for the 'odious system' which prevented the children of tenants from acquiring access to the endowment to be broken down.

There were, however, a number of factors at work which served to counteract that distancing. The free pupil provisions of the Charter were activated and availed of by local Protestant families, thereby providing the School with a particular link to the Protestant community in Galway. The introduction of sport to the School facilitated its interaction with the broader community in a particular and less formal way. Furthermore, the playing facilities of the School were a resource availed of by external clubs. The contribution of headmaster Biggs to sport and his involvement otherwise in Galway acted to mitigate the distancing of the School from the town.

The School's links with Galway weakened further in the twentieth century. Catholics, for all intents and purposes, no longer attended the School and the free pupil facility was replaced by a scholarship scheme open to both day pupils and boarders. The local Protestant community underwent substantial demographic decline and the number of day pupils, essentially entrants from the town, declined correspondingly. The School became isolated in its games. Although Alexander Eraut had significant involvement in the corporate and community life of Galway, Edward Coursey made much less impact. The School's presence in the town was reduced to its physical facilities being availed of for hockey games and, during World War II, as a parade ground by the Local Defence Forces. During the last decade of the School's existence there was a greater degree of contact with Galway as a result of George Coghlan's sporting contacts and of his involving those contacts in aspects of the School's sporting life. Sporting contacts with other schools resumed and use of the School grounds for hockey games and tournaments continued, while the use of the School's facilities by visiting groups provided some little boost to the local economy.

The Erasmus Smith Board persisted with an exclusive model, a full second-level programme, for Galway Grammar School, at a time when different strategies were being employed by other school boards. This effectively reduced the Board's options to keeping the School open or closing it. While it was staved off for several decades, closure became inevitable in the absence of the employment of strategies which might have reduced costs and of practical and committed support from the Board, from the local community, and from the wider Protestant community. Notably, a Local Committee to assist in the operation of the School was not appointed until 1932 and, ultimately, disappointment was expressed at its lack of initiative. No local fund-raising events were held and neither is there evidence of local cross-party, cross-community interest in the School. The wider Church of Ireland establishment was noticeably silent regarding to the School's closure, despite it being held that it would be the death knell of that community in the West. Surprisingly, there is no evidence of protest by parents at the closure.

The Protestant population of Ireland was concentrated in a small number of counties and was, otherwise, dispersed across the remainder of the country. Galway Grammar School was attended by children of that dispersed community who were largely 'unremarkable' in terms of their social status. Nevertheless, the School was connected to the elite Anglican community, members of which constituted the Board of the Erasmus Smith Trust. That Board showed little interest, over nearly

three centuries, in Galway Grammar School, the community it served or the children who were the intended beneficiaries of the endowment. Rather was the Board's focus on institutions favoured by its own class and which were, to a great extent, located in Dublin. The experience of Galway Grammar School points to two distinct Protestant communities at work, with the elite community showing little empathy with, interest in, or commitment to the non-elite dispersed community. In the twentieth century, in the context of demographic decline and the Trust's worsening financial situation, the Board successively closed three provincial grammar schools and implemented a policy of withdrawal and consolidation in directing the funds of the endowment, almost entirely, to a school, The High School, located in a city well-served by Protestant schools. Not only was a Protestant institution lost when Galway Grammar School was closed in 1958, but it then appeared that the Protestant community in Galway, and in much of the west of Ireland, could well disappear. The predicament of that community was of an entirely different order to that of the mainly Dublin-based elite community which had succeeded in preserving a degree of social and economic ascendancy and its institutions.

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(c) Charters and statutes

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Malcolm Connolly: email, 8 February 2015; meeting, 25 February 2015

George Copeland: meetings, 15 January and 17 May 2015; emails, 29 September and 11 November 2015

Cyril Cuffe: meeting, 25 February 2015

Tom Davis: meeting, 15 January 2015

Coralie Ellis (nee Cooke): phone conversation, 11 September 2015

Desmond Ferris: email, 30 January 2015

Roy Ferris; email, 26 February 2015

Olive Fleming (nee Clinton): meeting, 4 June 2015

Noel Guest: meeting, 15 January 2015; email, 10 March 2015

Ken Henderson: meetings and written material, 15 January and 23 February 2015

John Kennedy: email, 10 April 2015

James Langrell: email, 23 March 2015

Charles Rowan: email, 13 February 2015

Charles Ruttle: meeting, 15 January 2015; email, 14 March 2015

John Thompson: email, 31 March 2015

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