Letters of Rev. James Graves

Edited by J. S. Gibb

The following letters were given to me by the late John Prim. They belong to the year 1861 and were written by Rev. James Graves to J. G. A. Prim in reference to an article Mr. Prim was preparing for the Archaeological Journal on the Inns and Taverns of Kilkenny. This was later published in the Journal of the Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archæological Society, 1861, and reproduced in the Old Kilkenny Review, 1950. In the letters Rev. J. Graves discusses two points principally—the inscription at the Bull Inn and the name of Rose Inn Street. Rev. Mr. Graves' handwriting is not always easy to follow and the reading in a few places is uncertain.

April 22nd, 1862.

My Dear John,—Burke's General Armoury gives no arms for the name “Joise or Joice or Jose,” but for Joceys it gives a cast which agrees with that on the Bull Inn—“argent an eagle displayed sable over all a bend gules,” and for Jocoys—“argent an eagle displayed sable a bend gules.”

I can find no mention of the passage about “good bedding” in Kilkenny in Stanihurst, Campion, Camden, Dymoke or any of the Chronicles I have. Have you no reference to it? Hanmer does not come down so late in time.

In the Kyteler narrative there are frequent mentions of Hospitiums, which must have been Inns. Don’t forget the Sheaf in the trip to Kilkenny! Was there mention of Kilkenny Inns to be found in the little town which was lost?

Since writing the within I got yours with the photographs, they are very good indeed. Of course we will show them at the July meeting too. I understand by yours of the 23rd that the back part was thrown down before the dimensions of the room where the conveners were supposed to have met were taken but it can be recovered from the ground plan. Remember that the thickness of the walls will be
necessary to be drawn. The chimney pieces are of the plainest then in use, it was provoking that you found no new plan in the one you and Humphrey made out.

Rain in torrents again. I was fortunate in the week I had with you. Mrs. Graves and my aunt write in kind regards to you and Mrs. Prim. Yours ever truly—J. Graves.

My Dear John,—There is a Latin word “fœdi” genitive case of fœdus, foul adjective, but this does not help us. Whereas aedis, the genitive case of ædus, a house or mansion, does. So I hold for the reading ædis—fœdi in fact with the long “s” in use at the time the sculptor had only to put it at the beginning instead of the end and convert it into an “f” and the mistake (likely for an ignorant sculptor) is made.

The January part has been delayed by being a double number and by the printing of the List of Members—it will be out next week. I fear it would neither be safe to take Hospitia for Inns as now understood, or even Inn as in Kytellers Inn. Inn in old time meant a dwelling or the inns of Court. It is only modernly (comparatively speaking) that taverns were called inns. Of course my theory about the Rose Inn is only a theory, but it is as good as taking Rossin St. to mean something else than Rose Inn. Why, I often heard people who never heard of the old usage call the present street Rozzen St.

I don’t know an early reference to the name Castle Street; it means no doubt the present Parade. I will look out for the reference about licences to key Taverns and send them to you if they are in the rolls of James I.

May 27th, ’62.

My Dear John.—I enclose you the result of my researches for your June paper; tomorrow you shall have the poem of the “Breakfast.” The inscription under the sign of the Bull Inn is evidently by the mason; I think Jose intended it to read:

Butler Inne
Nomen hujus ædis decitur.

Butler’s Inne the name of this house is called.
This only requires "fœdi" to be altered to ædis. This is more likely than what we supposed to be the correction. "Nomen domus fœdi decitur." The house is called the name of the beast, which, however, is not good Latin.

I looked over my transcript of the first part of the Liber Primus and found the extract I send you about Bracioteres or alewives who no doubt kept taverns, what do you think, were the "Hospitia" at which Arnold le Poer and his friends stopped in Kilkenny at the time of the witch business, were they Inns?

Rose Inn St., I am certain, took its name from a Rose Inn probably established there when the Lord of the Castle took such an active part for the Lancastrian or Red Rose side. Rozzen St. is evidently a corruption of that name. I don't know any other mention of it than the date you give.

I send you back Father Green's letters having read them. I was near forgetting the anecdotes. They will come in very well as notes, it is well to preserve them. I will look over Millins Calendar of the Patent Rolls of Elizabeth and Edward VI and see if there are any notices of Inns. Did not James I give some licences for Inns in Kilkenny.

Sorry to hear that Humphrey is laid up. These late dinners are very bad when one is at all used to a rational hour. I hope you are well for this time of your cold. We are quite well here. Yours very truly—J. Graves.

I wish the Catholic Young Men would pay their subn. Lord preserve us from Campion. I will write P. Copley but Dr. Delanys must stand out.

June 1st, '62.

My Dear John,—I send the "Breakfast" today to you and have marked out what I think should be omitted. There is no need to bring in about our own people and the picture of a breakfast at the Hole in the Wall is quite perfect without them. I have looked over the Burgage roll for the Collectanea (by Ledwich) to which you allude. There is nothing bearing on what you want and as to Rothe's M.S., I send you a translation of the passage about Croker's Cross. It is plain that the street leading to John's Bridge was not called Rose Inn St. then as he called it, merely the way to
St. John(s). I feel that my White Rose theory won't hold water. Low Street is more likely—glad you got the notice about the drowning (?), though it does not bear much on the History of the Kilkenny Inns. If you can compress it into a short note. Glad you got the casks from the Dean. I suppose some Australian gold has come to hand. Mrs. Cane says that Anne’s intended is a rich miller—“only he don’t work the mill himself;” His name is Morran and he lives in the Vale of Avoca. It’s as good a match as Anne could expect. W. F. Hort won’t pay his subn. and this is worse than not visiting the Museum. The Col. seems to be a different man as you say.

Mrs. Graves is very thankful . . . If Humphrey still holds on in the . . . he’s right not to refuse the offer of Col. Tighe, it will keep him in notice and give him a chance of the Paymastership. All this is supposing that the pay will cover the expenses which I suppose it will do.

You may as well tell Father Greene that we will take the trip to Corranaduffe in July. I hope you will go to him on Wednesday. The weather seems settled now. I brought back the Anthologia Cambrensis with the Cromleac affair in it last April, you will find it near the top of the heap of that publication in the store (book) closet at the Museum. I don’t envy you your job for the young men. Yours ever truly—J. Graves.

No Date (probably May or June, 1861)

My Dear John,—I hope “ Rozzen Street” has let you alone by this time in your dreams. I think you will never make more of it than this. Viz.: (1) It is known as Rossin St. time of Charles II; (2) It seems to have been called “the way to St. John’s in Rothe’s time. (3) It may have been “Low Street” as Lombard’s Chamber is in Rose Inn St., and we find Lombard holding several tenements in Low St. (4) Rossin St. is a corruption (still common) of Rose Inn St., but we know of the original Rose Inn.

I think the passage in the grant to Duke of Ormonde will fix Low Lane thus: All ye east side of Low Lane. In ye West from Thos. Coakley’s house in Rossin St. in ye south
to ye end of St. Mary's Churchyard in ye north.

There is not any mention of Croker's Street in the Burgage Roll of Henry V. I don't think that Croker St. was the old name of Rose Inn St., but I am inclined to agree with Hogan that the lower part of Parliament St. was called Croker's Street at one time.

The Burgage Roll of Henry V mentions "John Lombard's Chamber" in St. Mary's Churchyard you may recollect so that my former argument that John Lombard's holdings in Low Street might have included it falls to the ground.

I like your plan of the paper very well but don't spend too much time and space over that engrossing speculation as to whether the Inn took its name from the street or the street from the Inn. Compress the gossip as much as possible at least for the Journal; you might give it more in extenso for the meeting and the Mod. The files of the "Leinster Journal" are so covered up with other matters in the evidence (temporary) room that I fear that I could not ask Lady O (rmond) to get them out for the present. You might give the portion of the "Breakfast" which relates to the members of the Club in the Mod., but in the Journal I would certainly confine it to the picture it gives of a breakfast at the Hole in the Wall and leave out the personal part because it is of no interest to the general reader.

I think the weather will be fine enough for the excursion to Athy. I hope your headache is better. Yours ever truly—J. Graves.