High Street, Kilkenny

WEST SIDE, FROM WILLIAM STREET TO JAMES'S STREET

(Being a walk and talk given on October 31, 1966)

By MRS. MARGARET PHELAN

We are told that High Street was built in c. 1200 AD to facilitate the occupants of the Castle to get to St Canice's Cathedral. It was, as its name signifies the principal street—it mounted then, as it does now, on a gentle hill from the Parade to the Tholsel and descended as gently to the High Town gate where Dore's shop now stands at the steps at No. 1 Parliament Street.

The highest point is at the Tholsel and the great market cross was erected in 1335 and graced the summit here, and was a religious centre of Kilkenny for 436 years. The Tholsel was erected here in the 16th century. Here, too, is Guard Lane, where the guardians of the Tholsel and the Market Cross must have watched the civic pageant on many an important day. We are fortunate in having a picture of what this part of our old town looked like in 1771 just before the Market Cross was taken down.

The shape and style and fabric of those mediaeval houses are no more, and in most cases in my talk I cannot get back to the occupants of that date. Yet we know for certain one of the great mediaeval civic families—the Shees—lived on the West side of High Street, from William Street, to James's Street. On the opposite side of the street, the Langtons lived where Burkes shop and Lanigan's office are, (Nos 79, 80 and 81); The Rothes in the Sports Shop next to the Tholsel), on the North side (No 82 High Street).

A word here about the lanes that intersect High Street at this part we deal with today. There are 5, in this order from the Monster House (corner of William street) to James's St.

(1) Guard Lane is the first, and I surmise it got its name because the guard of the Tholsel and the Market Cross often sought its shelter.

(2) Next is Poyntz Lane—and this name of Poyntz is old and honourable in Kilkenny. The mother of the great Duke of
Ormonde was Elizabeth Poyntz. The name seems English and perhaps her relatives brought some of the family here. In 1850, the representatives of Luke Poyntz owned considerable property here and the Rev. Michael Gosseline was landlord. Luke Poyntz (a hozier) erected a monument to his father who died in 1793, still to be seen in old St Mary’s.

(3) **Collier’s Lane**, which now divides Sherwoods (No 30) from Molloy’s (No. 29) was so named from the family of Collier who got a free farm grant of the property here about 1695 from the Duke of Ormonde.—I am indebted to Mr. T. G. Lanigan, solr, for this information.

(4) **Chapel Lane** which divides No. 32 from No. 33, High Street i.e., London Newcastle from Mr. O’Neill’s chemist shop) seems to be so named from the church property it led to—in Norman or even pre-Norman times.—No pre-Norman stones have been found here but the old church of St. Brigid was situated where Tilbury now is—and Tilbury, of course, is Kilberry — I am indebted to Mr. Richard de Loughrey for this suggestion.

(5) **Red Lane** divides 38 High Street (now Imco) from the Cash Supply Shop (still numbered 45 High Street) this is now a cul-de-sac but originally opened into what is now the Presentation Convent. Why it is called “Red” is unknown to me. A wonderful view of the old stone houses and chimney stacks of High Street is to be had from it.

Now for the Street:

**Monster House.**—What this shop was before Henry Potter opened it as a general warehouse on November 5, 1853, is not certain. His advert on Opening Day announces the opening of the first division of his great Drapery establishment on Saturday, November 5. On the Day of Opening he proposes exhibiting a large and varied assortment of the choicest and most novel goods in the following departments:

1 French and Paisley Shawls—De lanes—prints, cloak- ing — gala plaids —wool shawls etc.

2 A rich and superb supply of glace and brocaded silks, ribbons, flowers, gloves.

3 A superior and extensive stock of cloths, trowserings and vesting—French silk, beaver and felt hats —Stocks of Irish linens, damasks, lawns—very extensive and select.”
(Also there is a Potter's new establishment at corner of Walkin Street with hundreds of items advertised in the Moderator for Nov. 5, 1853) Lady Elizabeth Harty was landlord in 1850 — today Sir Lionel Harty).

Henry Potter came from the merchant family of that name who had long been resident in Kilkenny and whose fine tomb stones are still seeable and readable in old St. Mary's and old St. John's and date back to 1788. He was Mayor of Kilkenny in 1847 and High Sheriff of the city in 1853.

This setting up of a new kind of store was a monument to his business genius and enterprise. He died in 1858 — his residence was Drakeland, and his grave in Old St John's.

In the early 1850's in Ireland a movement arose to bring under one roof the many kinds of clothing shops that had been in existence up to then, hosiers and glovers, haberdashers, linen drapers, woollen drapers, hatters, straw bonnet makers etc. and like the super markets a hundred years later, the movement met with much opposition.

I have in my possession a letter in the Tablet of January 4, 1851, from a woollen draper in Dublin, called Luke Dillon of 7, Parliament Street, wherein he describes and deprecates the growth of the Monster Houses on many counts. He says one stands where perhaps 300 shops stood and where 300 men made a livelihood, one now takes all. He appeals to the women who form the bulk of the shoppers not to support the Monster Houses — on two grounds.

(1) That they might marry the shop keepers if there were many to marry and (2) because of the indelicacy of buying ladies clothing in a public place and perhaps from men assistants.

As far as I know in Ireland, this is the only Monster House whose name survives and as such it remained in the Potters' possession until the 1880's when Robert McStay took over. McStay moved here from 10, High Street — later Boyles —now Fitzmaurices and Richard Duggan from 104 High Street (now Allens) in 1896. It is still in the possession of Richard Duggan's sons and grandson. The Monster House was burnt in 1906. It was rebuilt with the clock tower — and the filling in of the basement.

No. 25 High Street — Mooney's — In Bassett's guide, Kyran Murphy, uncle of M. F. Murphy, Coal and Provisions, occupied
this site at the end of the 19th century. Brett Bakery followed—who were also sugar-stick makers. This was made in a cellar down a flight of wooden steps. Two pulled and twisted this into a rope. Phelans of Newpark owned premises later, daughter Mrs. Hickey in 1920's opened Tholsel Stores Bacon Shop — Independent Newspapers — and Saunders haberdashery followed — Mooneys now have a fruit and sweet shop here and are members of Kilkenny Archaeological Society. Thomas Dunphy occupied these two shops in 1850 (as per Kilkenny Valuation of 1850) Mrs. Margaret McCreery and Lady Elizabeth Harty were the Lessors).

No. 26 High Street — O’Carrolls established paper hanging shop here in 1919 before Fortes Ice Cream Shop and were preceded by Markus Fitzpatrick, baker (Murt Tobin, Kilkenny drummer used bring furze for fuel in from Ballyfoyle). The Misses White, present occupiers (of the Ballycarron family), now call this house Maison Philomena and carry on a fruit and sweet shop. They are members of Kilkenny Archaeological Society. John Maher and James Nowlan were occupiers here in 1850. The landlords were Richard Sullivan and James Comerford.

No. 27, High Street — After Ponytz Lane, we meet the Ulster Bank which moved to this site in 1916, having bought it from Mr. John Birch in 1912. The bank had been in Parliament Street on the immediate North side of the market, in the premises now occupied by Messrs Crotty's solicitors, and which had once been Johnson's coffee shop. The site here of the Ulster Bank covers what was once two shops. Birch's (may have been Irish Linen shop) and “Powers the Painters”. Two brothers of the latter family functioned in this business in Kilkenny and were a firm of enterprise art and progress. They were connected with the Comerford family of Killeen and Coolgreany. — Mr. Thomas Perdue is now the manager of the Ulster Bank— and I am indebted to him for the above information.

No. 28 High Street, now the property of the O’Carroll (and formerly the premises of the Moderator) has been in the possession of the O’Carroll family since 1926. They moved here from 26 High Street in 1926 and carry on a fine and artistic business in china, glass, wall paper etc. The O’Carrolls are long settled in Kilkenny and an uncle of present proprietor,
Martin O'Carroll carried his deep love of the old city to the new country of his adoption, the USA. He was an old historian and we were proud to print his poem on the Lanes of Kilkenny in Old Kilkenny Review No. 7, 1954. This house by its dignity, and situation may well have been one of the old city mansions.

Now a word as to the history of the “MODERATOR”.

It was founded by Abraham Denroche in 1813 and its policy was very conservative. It continued for 113 years and during that time was printed every Wednesday and Saturday and cost 3d. It dealt with a great deal of overseas news and world affairs accompanied by some fragments of local items, probably the exact opposite of the way a local paper is run today. Its proprietor was its editor for the first 60 years. Abraham Denroche’s son in law, the second proprietor and editor, was John G. Augustine Prim and as he was Joint Hon. Secretary of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society founded in 1849, he is of special interest to us, his successors in that field. He was one of a literary and scientific circle, drawn together both by blood and mutual interests that lived in Dunbell in the early years of the 19th century, Prims, Andersons and Denroches. Abraham Denroche married Joanna Anderson. Their daughter married John George A. Prim.

Prim and Graves were Joint Hon Secretaries of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society and have established a name for themselves, their Society and their county that will be forever famous. Prim published the early papers of the K.A.S. in the Moderator before the K.A.S. had established its own Journal and gave advertisement and prominence to all the Society activities. He died at the comparatively early age of 54 in 1875, when his children were still at school and unable to take his place on the paper. The paper was sold to Mr. M. W. Lalor after some time and he it was who asked Standish O'Grady to edit it. In spite of a very Irish name Standish O'Grady came from Conservative stock, but most surprisingly when he reached Kilkenny he was very radical in his views and statements. This did not please either the owner of the paper or the readers and Standish O'Grady was rather “wrong” as editor of the Moderator and finally had to give up his post there. He then established his “All Ireland Review ” in 1900 and issued it from his office in High St.
but where this office was situated, I have not been able to find. This paper, issued every Saturday cost 1d and certainly it seems to have been as progressive, patriotic, original and entertaining as the Moderator was conservative and dull. Its first number of A.I.R. (January, 1900) printed a poem by A. E., a poem by Somers Payne and a poem by W. B. Yeats — and this last was, by all miracles "The Lake Isle of Inisfree".

So here in No. 28 High Street, the Moderator was published and printed and perhaps O'Grady's "All Ireland Review". Here John George Augustus Prim, its editor worked not merely as editor of the Moderator, but as Hon. Secretary of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society and that for 25 years and by his energy and enthusiasm for the Society kept it afloat in many difficulties. Here too later, Standish O'Grady edited it, and found trouble for himself and honour too. Here later Michael W. Lalor carried on the paper on till 1914 when he died aged 70 (he is buried in grounds of St Canice's Cathedral). The last proprietor was Mr MacGowan who appears to have been a connection of Mr. Lalor. The paper ended in 1926, the "Kilkenny People" buying its files and machinery. Kilkenny's three weekly papers had been reduced to two — 40 years later the number was reduced to one.

No. 5 is first number of Moderator in possession of the "Kilkenny People" who very kindly allowed me to make some excerpts.

Here are some extracts from the Moderator for January, 1814. There are very few advertisements in this first number. Perhaps six in all — Schools Feinaglian (on the Quay) and Mrs Packs — someone looking for a classical teacher etc. Mr. Grubb clears road of snow near Clonmel very bad weather.

Edmond Cronyn in the Coal Market is apparently an agent for Power O'Shea in selling of Sheestown.

January, 1814 Moderator — The Sheaf Inn is used for the dining of the Kilkenny Farming Society—

Jeremiah Kennedy establishes a cheap establishment opposite Post Office, High Street. He begs attention for his goods, viz. Linens, hosiery, cravating, Jackonel tambour, silk tabbinets, Welch and swanskin flannels, bombazetts and bombazeenes,
lambswool drawers, webbs etc.

Feinaglian Institute again is advertised.

John Smithwick is advertising in High Street, new Malaca fruits, box raisins and green grapes and is offering to let two new houses in King Street with a coach house and stable at rear which will be let with either. This may be behind whatever house J. Smithwick had in High Street. (Father of Edmund and Daniel of 36 High Street). Mod receives full copy of the American President's message to Congress — and its features are hostile to England.

A marriage: Sir Wheeler Cuffe to Elizabeth Browne of Browne's Hill, Carlow. Two deaths: Mrs. Richards who was only daughter of Archdeacon Hewetson of Thomastown — She left 72 descendants (immediate). Mrs Potter wife of Mathew Potter died February, 1814.

Mrs. Prim's house in Coalmarket for letting — extensive outoffices and large garden at rere. Much news of Bonaparte's difficulties and battle losses — and much rejoicing at them.

Thomas Wilkins died at advanced age of 102 — was with Wolfe at Quebec. His drink was at all times — filtered water. Mr. James Butler died at Lazybush, February 15.

Lady of Henry McCreery had a son.

Mr. Nolan of Green Street, tanner, died.

Charity Sermon is to be preached by Dr. Marum for Benevolent Society — this has been going for about 25 years — in St. James's chapel and is supported by both religions. William Lanigan, treasurer and William Clear is secretary.

Paper covers also provincial news from Athlone, Limerick, Tullamore, etc, as well as all the war news which apparently was eagerly awaited, for the paper presented a second edition when post came in.

Mrs. Purcell of Altamount is ready to let her house and offices in good condition March 1.

Prospect Hill is for furniture sale — furniture belonging to John Shearman — includes Northumberland, Pembroke, Card, Breakfast, sofa and dining tables. Every kind of bed — some old port and sherry in bottle and an uncommon handsome mule, only three years old and perfectly gentle — Bateman is auctioneer, March 5, 1814.

Ploughing match, sponsored by farming Society is off in con-
sequence of inclement weather, 5/3/1814.

Rev. Peter Roe is secretary of Kilkenny Bible Society which has bought 400 bibles.

The North West Passage is noted as to be nearly through from Cape North to Archangel — only 400 miles await cutting.

Poughing match is to be at Dunmore Park on 21st March.


This ends list of advts and news in the early numbers of the Moderator. I am deeply indebted to the Keane family for kindness in allowing me make use of the files, bought by late E. T. Keane, when the Moderator closed.

No. 29 — Fennessy’s nurseries and seed shop occupied the most northern part of the ground floor. John Fennessy was a very prominent businessman and we hear his son was a misogynist. He had a residence at Ardsradaun (now Marden Hill) and land and house at Ennisnag. The founder of the firm John and his wife Elizabeth are buried in St. Mary’s Cathedral, at N.W. door in 1874 and ‘75 and the stone records their benefactions to the poor of Kilkenny and the gift of the altar rails to the Cathedral. The McGraths, who are buried in St. Mary’s Protestant Church Yard may have preceded Fennessy here and his family may have married one of them.

Mr. William Molloy of the well known Flour and Bread merchant family, and whose sad recent death we deplore, purchased these premises through Mr. Lewis, auctioneer, John St. The previous proprietor, Mr James Morton, had a shoe shop, but there had been a move to make this premises and the whole of Mr Carroll’s, next door, into a cinema. The three interested in this were Patrick O’Carroll (father of present owner of No. 28), James Muldowney and Leo Dardis. The plan never came to fruition. The present owner Mr. P. O’Carroll has all the living part of the house. Mr. Molloy’s stock rooms going up Colliers Lane and underneath the entire premises.
Mr. Richard Fennessy the last Fennessy here established had a brother Edward who in 1891 took the long disused mills at Archer's Grove (where there is an Archer Coat of Arms). He intended to use the mill for bone crushing and linseed cake crushing and perhaps as a saw mill. How long the mill prospered is unknown to me. In Fennessy's seed shop the late Tom Drew, secretary of County Council started his career. One of Kilkenny's most brilliant sons, he served an equally brilliant master.

The estate here is Rev. Vernon Drapes — and was belonging to Rev. Michael Gosseline in 1850 as was the Poyntz property in Poyntz Lane.

Nos 30, 31, and 32 — The Scotch House, large and important drapery establishment occupied originally what is now Sherwoods and Hendys and the London and Newcastle Tea Co., i.e. the whole block from Collier's Lane to Chapel Lane. This house was of a Victorian dignity and appears to have been built at the same time as Boyles No. 10, High Street, Monster House and Murphy's China Hall, i.e., around 1853. We have the names of the owners but I am not quite sure if I have them in correct order. David Bruce and Co., Daniel Ferguson (in 1850 list) and Empson and Cotterril. In 1875 these last were in possession and 1884 David Davis, as we know from Basset's guide. In 1889 William Tallis, father of the late owners, Fred and Carrie, came to the Scotch House, but only occupied one-third of it, for at this time the premises were divided into three. Pownall's toy shop got another 3rd, and the London and Newcastle Tea Company the last third. On the pedimented roof were numerous classical urns. Two lozenge-shaped windows like that of Rothe House stood in rear of Tallis's till the recent alterations of George Sherwood. Three statues as we see them in the old photos adorned the pediment —Industry, Art and Commerce (Industry had a hive of bees, Art, a harp, and Commerce, a ship). In 1932 or so, the last of these statues was removed, being deemed unsafe. The late Florence Hackett said "the only shift she ever had was the one Fred Tallis gave her". The pedimented front was squared off at this time. The windows also had a pediment and the whole front was dignified and impressive.

Pownall's (toyshop, beloved Mecca of the old Kilkenny
children) was followed here by Brennan and O'Brien's Drapery and in about 1958 by the present owners Messrs Hendy. The Tallises retired in 1964 after more than 70 years occupation and running a splendid upholstery and house furnishing business. George Sherwood established his second shop, electrical and china goods here at that time.

"Punctuality is the hinge of business" is reputed to have been the slogan on every door in Scotch House. When Daniel Ferguson's assistants caught typhoid, he cured them with large doses of Irish whiskey.

Besides being a draper and house furnisher, William Tallis and Fred his son were also secretaries to the County Infirmary before 1922. In Fred Tallis's time Dr. Hackett and Dr. James were physician and surgeon. Former received £25 a quarter for his services and latter £23 14. Marquis of Ormonde presented the surgery and equipment to the County Infirmary and all the money (6d a head) from the visitors to the picture gallery went to its support. Marquis of Ormonde was on the Governing Committee of the hospital as also were James Poe, Sir James Lanigan and Dr. Bradley with John F. Smithwick and with Fr. Tobias Walsh. An annual subscription of £3 3 was necessary for this. I am indebted to the Tallis family for much of the lore of old Kilkenny and for the photo of High Street herewith.

One name I have for this third part of the Scotch House is Mathias Fogarty. In 1794 he respectfully informs the public that he has commenced business at the corner of Chapel Lane, High Street in the Linen and Woollen Drapery Line. This information comes from a note of Canon Carrigan supplied to me by our president Rev. T. J. Clohosey P.P., It is, of course, not certain which side of Chapel Lane Mathias Fogarty was. The L. & N. Tea Co. moved here from 45 High Street (what is now the Cash Supply) about 1890 to what is now 32 High Street.

The late M. F. Murphy told me, Barnaby Scott may have also occupied this part of the Scotch House which was David Davis's part, David Davis re-christened the place the Commercial House, but the old name was replaced by Tallis in 1889.

When we cross Chapel Lane, we meet No. 33 High Street, now Mr. O'Neill's chemist shop which before he acquired it
about four years ago was the home and business of Mr. Jimmy O'Connell, renowned hurler and nephew of Mr. Dan O'Connell, trainer of Kilkenny hurlers and brother of Ned O'Connell, Town Clerk. Jimmy O'Connell was a member of Dicksboro team, and Kilkenny goalie and a splendid handballer. He called the premises "The Irish House" and in it carried on his trade as publican and grocer.

Here in 1894 a very strange find took place (I am indebted greatly to P. M. Egan's article in K.A.S. in 1895 p. 72, for this information) and one of great interest to Kilkenny in particular and to historians and archaeologists in general. The house had been burned down in 1894 and on rebuilding in the summer of that year, the workmen raised a stone slab, quite close to the pathway and two feet or less below the surface. This proved to be a slab about two-thirds its original size, with date 1280 and an incised Norman-French inscription to Jose de Kettler. It was and is of an enormous interest and not merely because of the family name. It also is the earliest dated grave slab in Kilkenny and one only of three inscribed in Norman-French (the other two undated).

The shop belonged to Edmond Smithwick and the slab was brought to the Brewery and scholars argued about its inscription—and where it should be placed. Finally it was given to St. Mary's Parish Church and on the closing of the Church about 1954 was removed to North aisle St Canice's Cathedral where it is now. The slab, scholars think, commemorates the father of Dame Alice Kettler (our witch) and asks the passer-by to say a prayer for his soul. The name Kettler is derived from the occupation of this family, which consisted of getting fish out of the cradles or traps on the weirs—the saying "a pretty kettle of fish" is derived from this occupation. See note of Rev. James Graves in the Annuary of K.A.S. p 278, 1870.

The family of Mrs. Elizabeth Gray once owners of this house i.e. the first house on north side of Chapel Lane is interred in Old St. Mary's, the dates ranging from 1819—1862. "Elizabeth wife of Mr. John McCreery of Larch Hill".

When we come to 34 and 35 High Street I am able to reach farther back into antiquity than in much of the street. The gaps in history here have been bridged by finds and by tradition. All through the years the opening next this
These photographs, presented by Mr Phil O'Connell and Mr Patrick Murphy, show High Street as it looked 50 years ago. One of them is of an annual outing by the staff of Potters.

Miss Saunders, owner of the Grocery Hall at 51 High Street, has told Mrs Phelan that there is still there a powder closet in wood panelling in excellent condition.
block has been called Chapel Lane, and this long before there was an 18th century chapel "the old Cathedral" or the 19th century Cathedral which now dominates our town. Therefore here or around here, there must have been a chapel. All through the years again, old tombstones, dating back to 13th century (as evidence by their incised Norman crosses) have been found, and quantities of human bones upturned with every new warehouse.

End of 16th century: The Shee residence, the town house of Sir Richard Shee of Uppercourt was built on this site and its Tudor embellishments well remembered to this day. P. M. Egan says it resembled Rothe House (and of course was the exact date) and that the arches of the arcade rested on old tombstones, worked in the 13th century manner and re-used for the building of the great house. Therefore it is natural to suppose that besides there being a Chapel here there also was a graveyard, dating back perhaps to very early Norman days or earlier. Alas there is now no evidence in stone to tell us of all this. The two big fires of about 1903 and 1910 and the last one of 1946 finished everything. Yet all is well remembered and authenticated by people living still.

Cromwell's general, Axtell, the regicide is traditionally supposed to have lived in this house of the Shee's during the Cromwellian occupation of Kilkenny 1650—54. He was such a fiend that all about his activities may have caused a deep impression, and the tradition be true—Axtell was beheaded after the Restoration by Charles II. It is said his atrocities in Kilkenny worried him when he came to die.

We lose sight of this house, i.e., 34 and 35 High Street and its occupants for nearly 200 years and then sometime before 1839 it became the hardware warehouse and ironmongers of Thomas Power. A very fine detailed and lucrative business it was and provided three generations of Powers with a sound and even luxurious livelihood. Tom Power, the founder (who claimed kinship with the Powers of Kilfane) and who was Mayor of Kilkenny in 1861 and High Sheriff in 1862, his son Laurence J. Power J.P., and his grandsons, Henry and Thomas carried on the business until 1912 when E. J. Delehanty, became partner and in 1913 owner. The Powers were gay, clever, witty. Their charm led to their downfall. Fond of horse riding, acting,
and every form of sport, they were heart and soul of the life and entertainment of Kilkenny, but did not give their wonderful business the care and attention it needed. Henry Power who was a clever engineer, married Miss Anette McElroy of the Provincial Bank, and a Miss Power became Mrs. Lesmond. Their residences were Rosemount on the College Road, Rose Cottage in New Street and the Parade House. The Power family grave is in St. John’s Old Catholic Cemetery.

Tom Power’s (Mayor of 1861) wife was Jane Potter.

When 34 and 35 High Street became the property of E. J. Delehanty in 1913, he had been in this business and on the premises for 30 years before that date. Descended from a family long settled in Kilkenny, the Delehantys of Keatingstown, Mr. Delehanty was joined by his son James in this business in 1928. James has carried the literary name and fame of Kilkenny to all of Ireland and to many countries beyond the sea. Intensely interested in the world of letters, he founded the Kilkenny Literary Society in 1958 and started the Kilkenny Literary Magazine in 1960 of which he has ever since been editor. Long may he continue his worth-while work.

Like Standish O'Grady’s, this magazine has an all Ireland coverage.

The nature of the business carried on for more than 100 years in 34 and 35 High Street must have led to the three fires which the premises suffered during that time, for a forge, oils, paints and gunpowder form the real stuff for a conflagration. And indeed these fires were tremendous, frightening to death the neighbours and completely destroying the stocks. What is sad for the history of Kilkenny is that what they consumed was an irreparable loss to the old town. The old tomb stones and some of the fabric of the Norman church, the fine merchants home of Sir Richard Shee and lastly and perhaps worst of all, the library of James Delahanty which went up in the last fire of 1946.

After 1946 James Delahanty rebuilt half of this warehouse for his own use and about 1955, he sold the unused portion to Martin O'Carroll, auctioneer, and furnisher, whose father, Patrick and brother Patrick living at No. 28 we have already met in these notes. In 1964 Martin O'Carroll sold his premises to the “Kilkenny People” our local paper, who moved here
from James' Street and whose history I have already dealt with in No. 13 (1961) of Old Kilkenny Review. In 1965 James Delahanty sold his business here to James Lowry and Son, Hardware merchants of Rose Inn Street, and though the Delahanty name is still over the door, the latter firm is now the owner. The Delehantys, like the Powers, lived in Rosemount. It is now the residence of Mr. John Lowry.

Pierce Purcell of Carrigeen was manager of Power and Sons the night of fire in 1903 and performed great feats of heroism in extinguishing the conflagration.

Dr. Robert Power and Mrs. M. Watson owned this property in 1850. Now Kingsmill estate — Coffee House Lane (cobbled) entered the premises behind Mr. O'Neill's (No. 33) and came out between Smithwicks and Delehantys.

36 High Street — In 1844 the firm of D. Smithwick and Co Ltd. was established on this site by Daniel Smithwick, son of John whose advertisement we found in 1814 in Moderator. He was brother of Edmond, first Mayor of reformed Corporation in 1844, and friend of Daniel O'Connell. The premises had lately been occupied by Catherine Finn and John Prendergast, when acquired by Daniel Smithwick in 1844 and the lessor was Phanoel Cooke of Johnstown. The valuation of the premises in 1850 was £65, £10 higher than any other premises in the street.

On Daniel's death in 1869 (he was Mayor in 1857) at the age of 54, his two sons, John Francis Smithwick, M.P., and Daniel Smithwick, carried on the business, jointly.

Daniel died in 1903 (he was known as Fat Danny) and J. Francis continued as owner until his death in August, 1913. John Francis's two sons, Richard Hubert and James Arnold were then partners in the business. James died in 1915 of wounds received in action in France and Richard died in 1924 at Birchfield his home, and was succeeded by his cousin, Joseph Dominic Smithwick who was son of that Daniel who died in 1903. J. D. Smithwick's son, Daniel Joseph, is now owner of the business, great-grandson of the founder.

It is a very pleasant matter to see a business held solidly by a family for more than 100 years, growing old with the town and in its service to it. The Smithwick family has contributed greatly to the life of the City of Kilkenny. Edmond Smithwick, Daniel Smithwick and John Francis Smithwick were all
Mayors and Richard Smithwick (1846-47) and John Francis Smithwick were also M.P.'s (1880 - 86).

An account of the Smithwick family is given by Walter Smithwick K.M. in No 12 Old Kilkenny Review (1960). He places Edmond Smithwick very highly in the family — friend of O'Connell and three times Mayor of Kilkenny.

May I venture to couple the name of John Francis Smithwick with this important Smithwick, Edmond who was his uncle? John Francis enjoyed — and very properly enjoyed — enormous prestige in Kilkenny. A man of the utmost integrity, he was willing and anxious to help his fellow men in any way possible to him. His practical help and approachability endeared him greatly to the Kilkenny people. A wonderful obituary in the “Kilkenny People” makes very pleasant reading.

**MURPHY'S CHINA HALL**

**Numbers 37 and 38** — The house and shop immediately to the north of Smithwick's shop, now Imco, and before Imco, Goodwin of Limerick, and 1945—1950 John Forte's china and glass shop, and whose numbers under the old numbering were 43 and 44 High Street, was occupied by Michael Butler in the 1850 Valuation list and the lessor was Henry J. Loughnan. Of the former I have no information. The lessor was, of old Kilkenny stock, in the legal profession, whose ancestor Connell Loughnan had taken the chair at the pre-Union meetings in Kilkenny in 1799 and 1800. From his family descend the Harrisons of Crowhill and the Hylands of Clonmorran.

What we all remember about 43 and 44 High Street is that it was the home, the business, and in it was formed the nucleus of the collection of our great collector, M. F. Murphy who died at his residence at Rose Hill in January, 1962. He was a coal merchant, a butter and egg merchant, and a china merchant — and in this last activity his heart lay.

But above and beyond all these interests of his, he was truly a Kilkenny man; knew every man, woman and child in the town; knew our history back and forth; savoured our good spots and had a kindly indulgence for our foibles.

His father came from Christendom, Waterford, and his mother from Ballyragget. He never married was an only child and when he died (at the age of 86) the collection of a lifetime was dispersed and the moneys given in charity. What a
collection, too: china, silver, glass, furniture, pictures, ornaments, books. Everything was in superb condition — and a splendid auction, wonderfully organised by Messrs McCreery, dispersed the valuables.

The sale ran for a week and a lot of the customers were from overseas, even from California. A great many of our Society’s books, specially those of Kilkenny interest came from Rose Hill and from the collection of M. F. Murphy.

Next to Imco, but across Red Lane, comes Potters—the three next shops are still numbered 45, 46 and 47 as they were under the old numbering and they are not numbered as they should be under the numbering introduced in James Read’s mayoralty 1925-'28.

This old numbering does not go back to 1850 when the valuation list was made. Then these three shops were 68, 69 and 70. Yet whatever numbers (and indeed they are confusing) these shops have, Potters were the lessors in 1850, 45 was occupied then by the Potter family and today the three are still owned by their representative, Charles Mulcahy.

The Potters are one of three families from this portion of High street who had family vaults in St Mary’s cathedral. The Fennessys and the Cullens were the other two.

These were the only three families to be thus honoured. One may well believe they were well worthy of the honour and pillars of the Church.

How long ago Potters came to Kilkenny I have not been able to find out, but certainly they are here 200 years. Three of them were Mayors—Henry in 1847, John in 1853, and Michael in 1909 and 1910. John Potter was a doctor, John Isidore Potter was a dentist, Fr Henry Potter was a Jesuit.

Besides the business here in 45, 46 and 47, Henry owned and founded the Monster House as we have seen, and Dr John lived in 8 William street, where the dentist and Jesuit were born. Michael L’s parents (who are buried in St Mary’s cathedral) resided here in 47 and 48 High street, and Maggie Potter, the artist, was his sister as was Frances, who was matron in St Vincent’s Hospital for many years.

In the 1890’s, Mr. and Mrs. Michael L. Potter went to reside in Castleview, where they lived until M. L. Potter died in 1926. Mrs Potter was President of Ladies’ Association of Charity
for many years and well-known for her tremendous love and help for her less fortunate fellow humans. She survived her husband 21 years and both are buried in Foulkstown.

In pursuit and development of his business, Michael L. Potter established the Cash Supply Stores in 1897 as a select grocery, and, to manage it, he engaged Robert Duthie (of Athy) who came from Leverett and Frye’s to take up his duties.

A very clever, detailed grocer, Mr Duthie had a still cleverer son, Edward. The latter became a pathologist, student of Trinity College and later worked with Alexander Fleming in the epoch making discovery of penicillin. Dr Duthie died at the early age of 52, a lasting loss to medicine and mankind.

In 1910, William Monahan (our member) came from Co Galway to manage the grocery and Seed Store and remained with the firm until his retirement in 1963. We are indebted for the splendid photograph of the c.1912 annual outing of the firm to Mr Phil O’Connell (late Manager—Cash Supply). Mr Charlie Mulcahy, nephew of Mrs Mary Potter, is the present owner of 45, 46 and 47 High street.

Some of the old inhabitants of High street well remember the night when Michael J. Potter became Mayor (1909)—the bonfires were enormous! From an old billhead which has come into my possession since writing these notes, it can be seen that a W. Potter and a T. Potter were owners of the Monster House in 1873.

In 48 (now 42) High Street we remember Mr and Mrs Michael Ryan, victuallers — Miss Kitty Ryan married in 1924, Charles McCreery, auctioneer. The Ryans were followed by Stephen Keane, druggist, and now by Mrs Brigid McEneaney. In 1850 the house was vacant and Michael Sullivan was the lessor. The estate is the Archdekin one, is also what once was 50 High Street (now 44), residence and business of the Murphy family.

In 49 (now 43) High Street, J. P. Lynch had his very nice white and gold shop front. He had a very smart gentleman’s outfitting business and his advertisement was —

“Where did you get that hat, my boy,
Where did you get that tie?
In J. P. Lynch’s, sir, of course.
Where all the best folk buy.
A convert to Catholicism, Mr. Lynch had a son and daughter John and Christine. The shop was followed here by the Atlas Library, now Independent Newspapers.

The occupier in the 1850 Valuation was John Salmon and Richard Sullivan was lessor.

Number 44, High Street, now, and since 1905, the residence and shop of Pat Murphy's family, was occupied in 1850 by Michael Rafter and the lessor was Michael Sullivan.

Names here are Mr. Cummins who was step uncle or relative of John Cassin (proprietor) grandfather of our members Dr. P. and Fr J. Cassin P.P. and Mrs. T. Fitzgerald. The Cassins were here till 1905 when present owner's father moved in. Mrs Julia Cassin (nee Walshe-Hoban), Desart, who was the key pin or live wire of her establishment, had an advertisement:

"Good wine needs no bush, all good mortals know,
But if I don't announce the fact how can people know".

The Cassins did a big export business in turkeys every Christmas as well as their ordinary grocery and public house trade. They had a shed in the market, and with the Ayres, Shearmans, and the Slaters prepared the birds for home use and for export. The Cassins sent their birds to Sheffield — and uncle Andy Hoban of Desart took charge of this activity.

**WHITE HOUSE ARCHITECT**

His family was the same as James Hoban the architect of the White House. He had a brother too, who had fought for the Pope against Garibaldi in 1860 and was a source of great interest to the Cassins. The Cassin family well remember the Christmas presents given by their parents, the whiskey, Christmas cake etc. They remember too the coming of the chain shops. The London and Newcastle was the earliest and was situated where Cash Supply now is (45 High Street) early in the 1890's.

I have in my possession, given to me by the Carrigan family, a note book started in 1786 by Patrick Buckley on the occasion of his marriage to Catherine Cummins. He says their house was opposite the meat market and as the Scotts lived on the very corner of James's street in Patrick Buckley's time—and as there is a thread to connect the Cummins who was the Cassin's relative with this shop, we will place the Buckley's here.
The notebook is of great interest, and may be worth publishing. It gives minute details of hour and minute and second of the birth of his children, their God parents, the priest who baptised them etc. Strangely, he was married at the Garter Inn.

The eldest daughter of Patrick and Catherine married Patrick Scott in their Buckley's own home in 1813 and Barnaby Scott and Kenny Scott were sons of this marriage — Patrick Scott's house, states Patrick Buckley, was at left hand corner of James Street must be now "The Jug of Punch".

Elsey Buckley, 3rd daughter of Patrick Buckley, and Catherine Cummins married Thomas Shearman, printer, of 19 High Street, again in her father's house. The witnesses were Anne Hackett and brother Nicholas Buckley, November 22nd, 1823. No one featured in this notebook was married in a church.

From this union of Thomas Shearman and Elsie Buckley sprang the man who later became Fr. John Francis Shearman. Born in 19 High Street in 1830, he was educated at 2 Dame Schools, a Mistress Doyle and a Mistress Rothe and St. Kierans College and at Clongowes Wood College. He joined the Jesuit novitiate in Rome, but was eventually ordained in Maynooth on May 29th, 1860.

He became curate at Dunlavin and there became interested in Killeen Cormac and later in all the doings of St Patrick. O'Donovan and O'Curry were his friends, as also was Doctor Henthord Todd. Later as curate of Howth, he became a great friend of the fishermen and wrote down stories of their craft and the high seas.

Here he became acquainted with Sir Samuel Ferguson, Whitney and Margaret Stokes and William Hennessy and read many papers for the Royal Irish Academy. Later, Fr Shearman became PP of Moone and there he died in 1885. The altar rails there and a tablet on the wall still hold his name. He is buried there, too, but the slab was recently covered in.

His claim to fame rests on his "Loca Patriciana" which links up places and stones and areas with St Patrick and which appeared in 13 consecutive numbers of the Old Kilkenny Society Journal, from 1872 to 1878. He was, I think, the first serious Patricia scholar and I feel that he has not been given his proper place among the Patricians.
In 1961, the Patrician Year, he was not even mentioned. Could I recommend to some of our members a serious study of his life and writings. I feel it would repay the searcher and bring honour to our talented and reverend citizen. Our Bishop, The Most Rev Dr Birch, has told me that there are numerous papers of Father J. F. Shearman in Maynooth and he left many antiquities (mostly taken from the Bregach in 1846 when it was cleaned and deepened) to Clongowes where they may still be seen in the Museum.

Here in what was 50 High street, and is now 44, his mother was born. She is buried in St John’s old cemetery with her husband. The last two Shearmans to live in High street (the old Shearman home) were Mrs White, widow of Dr James White, and her brother. They died in the 1930’s.

In 45, High Street, there was a wonderful Waterford Glass chandelier in the Cassins’ time—reported to have fallen down later?

**OLDEST FAMILY**

The Murphy family here in 44 High Street (50 in old numbering) now over 60 years, must be the oldest resident family in High street and I am deeply indebted to them for help in these notes and for a photo of High street about 1912 which is of great interest. Pat Murphy, original owner and father of present Patrick, came from Three Castles and was a brother of John Murphy of the Woollen Hall.

**THE SCOTT FAMILY**

On the left corner of James’s street (now “Jug of Punch”), as you enter that street—No. 45, High street (in the old numbering 51) was, as we have seen, the residence of the Scott family at the end of 18th century. Of this old Kilkenny family I am truly ignorant and would wish for enlightenment.

I feel they owned Scott’s mill on the Canal. Barnaby Scott was a solicitor — Rev. Bernard Scott was P.P., Galmoy, and a cross is erected to him in old St. John’s by Margaret Buckley his cousin who lived next door. He died in 1876. Another (table) tomb in St. John’s records Scott deaths from 1795 to 1866 when Kenny Scott died.

The inhabitants remember Larry Saunders in this house and business premises. He came from Ballycallan and was per-
haps a relation of the Richard Saunders who had the business
in grocery hall across James's street. He was followed by
Patrick Kavanagh and then it was purchased by William Mon-
aghan (our member), manager of Potter's, who christened it
the Ossory House.

Later occupants were William Duggan who may have call-
ed it the Igo Inn and the Cleere family of Vicar street (who are
our members); John Delehunty contractor made a very smart
premises of this about 4 years ago and called it the Cellar
Lounge; 2 years ago the Clancy Brothers of ballad fame bought
the business re did it and it is now “The Jug of Punch”. Its
name changed more frequently than any other business house
in the street.

The Rev. James Graves in his article in the first number
of old K.A.S. (1849) on the ancient architecture of Kilkenny
streets mentions that this house and the one across the way
(now the Metropole Hotel) were both taken down recently —if
we take that word to mean 20 years we may get a date for
the building of “The Jug of Punch” (1829) Graves says they
were two ancient houses showing many well known ancient
Kilkenny features.

METROPOLE HOTEL

Crossing James's Street, we meet the Metropole Hotel which
has been in the hands of the Murphy family (of Freneystown)
for the past 44 years. The hotel was preceded here by the
Munster and Leinster Bank and this was the first premises of
the Munster and Leinster in Kilkenny, and the Working Men's
club which came in between the Metropole and Bank occupa-
tions.

Before the bank, it was a police barrack and is so remem-
bered by the old inhabitants — Mrs. James Kearney (nee
Frances Murphy) is now proprietor of the Metropole.

Richard Saunders was proprietor in “Grocery Hall” and had
a wholesale and retail grocery tea, wine and spirits store
in 1885 when Bassett made the guide. He describes it as one
door from James's Street but numbers it 51 High Street. A
tiled flag at the entrance says “Grocery Hall” 1909. Miss
Kitty Saunders had a vegetable shop here till 1965 when the
present proprietor Mr. Pratt took over.
The last house in High Street is now Tom Murphy's, brother of Mrs. Kearney of the Metropole but it was in 1885, Michael O'Neill's Indian Tea warehouse, a very select grocery, and direct importer of brandies and wines. Michael O'Neill was son of Mrs. O'Neill of the Imperial Hotel who was a daughter of Walter Hanlon who founded the hotel. Stephen Kehoe seems to have been the occupier in 1850 and Michael Sullivan the lessor.

Across here stretched the High Town or English Gate taken down about 200 years ago.

This article concludes the survey of High Street begun in No. 6 (1953) and carried through No. 7 (1954), No. 12 (1960) and No. 13 (1961).

James Stephens and the Fenian Rising

PROFESSOR D. R. GWYNN

I was invited at first to talk to you about James Stephens but I had to decline the invitation because I found it almost impossible to obtain enough information about Stephens to form any serious appreciation of him. So much bitter comment about him was written by some of his principal colleagues among the Fenians, and there is deplorably little evidence available to form any impartial judgment. So I suggested instead that I should talk about The Young Ireland Rising of 1848, in which Stephens as a young man took an active part, and to trace the connection between the two risings of 1848 and 1867, leading up to the Fenian inspired rising of 1916.

The problem that has often puzzled me is that, whereas the failure of 1848 rising was inevitable for many obvious reasons, the Fenian rising had been diligently prepared for years and had acknowledged leaders. They knew what they meant to do and had many special advantages for a successful insurrection. The Fenian rising was planned for 1865, when it would have had great chances of success with the backing of Irish American officers and soldiers who had recent experience in the American civil war. But the rising was deferred until