

Kilkenny Corporation Accounts in the 18th Century

BY W. J. PILSWORTH

AMONG the miscellaneous items in the Library of the R.S.A.I. in Dublin is a bundle of papers dealing generally with Kilkenny City. They include a packet of six loosely bound folio sheets entitled "Kilkenny Accounts, 1772; presented by Ven. Archdeacon Cotton to the Kilkenny Archaeological Society, 1860."

Archdeacon Cotton has, himself, described their contents, with copious extracts in an article in the *Journal* for April, 1861, but as this is not generally accessible to members the subject is, I trust, of sufficient interest to merit a further, and perhaps more analytical description.

Briefly, the papers contain: firstly, a detailed list of the property owned by the Kilkenny Corporation, showing the tenants' names, the annual rents, payable; the actual receipts for the years, 1770-2 and the arrears due, both in 1770 and in 1772; and secondly, a detailed list of expenditure under all heads in these years. In order to simplify matters I have ignored the slight variations in the receipts and the expenditure as between the two years and give average figures.

First of all, we will consider the receipts. These consisted of the rents received from the houses, lands and tithes owned by the Corporation and from the letting of the market tolls. The rents receivable amounted to £262 per annum, of which tithes amounted to £109. 87 different holdings are specified; the arrears at the start of the period amounted to £565 but were reduced to £463 or somewhat less than two years at the end. The market tolls brought in £310 per annum (not £165 as stated by Archdeacon Cotton); they were a year in arrears at the start but were

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fully cleared off during the period. In his *Antiquities of Ireland*, Ledwich gives a very detailed list of the Kilkenny Corporation Rental in 1628. It amounted to £232 so there was practically no increase in the century and a half.

Taking the expenses side, there were payments of Quit Rent, £54; Interest on money, advanced by a Mr. Matthews, £64; Judge's lodgings, £9; Newspapers, £7 and some smaller items making a total in all of £159.

Then there were the salaries. The Mayor (Anthony Blunt in 1770-1 and S. Percival, acting as deputy in 1771-2 for Lord Desart) received for salary and "Charity Money," £202. The Sheriffs (Keogh and Blake in 1770-1 and Keogh and Kingsmill in 1771-2) received £40. The Recorder, Eland Mossom, and the Treasurer each received a similar sum, but the Town Clerk, Godfrey Cookseye, only got £20. Ink and paper cost 17/6—making a total of £343.

The Swordbearer, William Hardy, and the Great Mace bearer, William Williamson, each got £12, while the two Small Mace bearers, Thomas Hunt and William Foster, each got £8 as did Roger Divey and Bryan McDonnell, the Mayor's Bailiffs. Francis Hutchinson, the Bellringer, got £6; George Brown, for attending to The Tholsel, £4; Bryan Connor, the bellman, £3 and John Somers, the whip-beggar, also £3. With another small item these wages amount to £73. Of those mentioned above, Roger Divey is stated by Archdeacon Cotton to have been the original of "Yellow Roger" in Banim's "The Mayor of Windgap."

There were 19 on the Pensions' List, headed by Robert Shervington, £20; Elizabeth Burgess, Rebecca Watters and Jane Van Treight, £10; William Hartley and John Ximenes, £8, while the others, who included a lady with the extraordinary name of Oriana Danbichan, received smaller sums ranging from £2 to £6 and making a total of £122.

Of the above persons, Robert Shervington had held the office of Sheriff from 1747-52 and from 1754-8. Several of the ladies were probably widows of former Sheriffs and John Ximenes was a musician, who had been, or was at the time, organist of St. Mary's Church.

Then, there were payments made by Mayor's orders. Clothes for the Bailiffs and other employees averaged £14 and there were small amounts for candles for the City Guard and for meats and bell-ropes for the Tholsel. There were some larger amounts paid out "by order of Assembly" Anthony Blunt, for securing the arch of St. John's Bridge, received £22 and also £24 for sundry works. In am afraid this may refer to the removal of the Market Cross. Matthew Keogh, "per order of Sir William Morris," got £90 and Chistopher Hewetson, a former Mayor, £32. The reasons for these latter payments is not stated, but, no doubt, they are recorded fully in the Corporation Books. The average annual cost of these miscellaneous payments came to £105. Annual Payments then came to Rents and Interest etc., £159; Salaries, £343; Wages, £73, Pensions, £122, Sundries, £105; Total £802.

Annual receipts from rents, £262, and tolls, £310—total, £572, fell far short of this but as arrears of rents, £51, and of tolls, £155, were received on an average each year, the total receipts averaged £778 but as the arrears recovered might be reckoned as non-recurring items, it is clear that the Corporation would soon, either have to call on the obliging Mr. Matthews for another loan or take steps to increase their permanent income.

It would thus appear that the City Finances were able to carry on without the imposition of rates on the householders—a truly enviable position. There is, however, a note in the accounts to say that "The Scavengership was received for the Mayors for the time being to pave the streets of the city." No further details are given but it seems reasonable to suppose that the Mayor exacted some kind of levy from the citizens to carry on this work; perhaps an inspection of the Corporation Books would throw some light on this matter.

In the same bundle of papers is a detailed Rent Roll of 1794. In the intervening 22 years, the rental had been advanced from £262 to £1,067. Comparing the two lists some of the items show no change; this applies principally to the house property and to a few of the tithe rents. On the other hand, some of the latter had been greatly in-

creased, for example, Kilmodum, Muckally and Clara, from £45 to £168 and the rental of the lands held had also advanced greatly. Thus, Troyswood, Chapel Lands and Magdalen's Lands were let to S. J. Waring for £200 and Drakeland to Sir J. Blunden for £100.

There is also a note that the tolls and customs averaged £500 making a total nominal revenue of £1,567. The arrears of rent amounted to £1,528 or nearly 18 months, which was about the same proportion as in 1772.

Among the most interesting items are:— Sconce near Walkin's Gate, William Davis, £3—15—0; Rampart in Tobin's Lane, T. Shervington, £4; two Cellars under Tholsel, A. Blunt, £6—10—0; One Cellar do., Miss Archdekin, £2—2—0; Turnpike Debenture, £5; Tilbury Tower, Rev. G. Evans, 3/4d.

This last item was in arrears to the extent of £7-6-8 or for 45 years and might well be considered as a somewhat doubtful asset.

There is no record of expenditure in this document but Tighe, in his account of Co. Kilkenny, summarises the expenditure as: Salaries, £700; Pensions and other items, £300 and paving the roads (which was but ill done), £300.

For purposes of comparison, I have looked through the Corporation Estimates for 1956-57.

Total expenditure is given as £119,700, composed as follows (to the nearest £100):—

	£
Interest on Loans	48,000
Wages, Salaries and Pensions	25,000
Co. Council Demand (Health etc.)	25,500
Employment Schemes	3,100
Public Lighting	1,850
Materials for Repairs and Maintenance ...	2,900
Collection of Rates	1,600
Unemployment and Local Works	2,450
Fuel Scheme	2,700
Sundry Items	6,600

The receipts include Government Grants, £22,000; Rents, £22,700; Corporation Estate, £2,000; Market Tolls,



£850; Sundry Items, £8,650; Total, £56,200. Leaving a balance to be raised by rate of £63,500, which on a net valuation of £29,000 calls for a rate of 43/10 in the £.

It will thus be seen that the annual budget is about 200 times what it was in 1770 and about 80 times what it was in the 1790's.

One item that has not increased proportionally is the Mayor's Salary—merely from £200 to £360 and the market tolls which once produced one third of the revenue now do little more than meet the cost of collection.

The Butlers of Co. Clare

By Sir H. W. Butler, Blackall

This is a reprint of articles in the North Munster Antiquarian Journal and has several points of interest for Kilkenny readers. The remarkable spread of the Butler families, junior branches of the great Ormonde family, is illustrated here for the counties of Clare and Galway. The connection between these latter families and that of Kilkenny is clearly brought out. The efforts of the Great Duke of Ormonde to restore the estates of the lesser Butlers after the Restoration is well shown.

There are some references to the Butlers of Kiltorcan and their neighbours the Walshs of Derrynahinch. The writer does not now accept the view that the Butlers of Castle Crine descend from the Mountgarret family through the 1st Viscount's son, James Butler of Kells, Co. Kilkenny. In fact the Clare branches descend principally from the barons of Dunboyne.

Each Clare family is dealt with in detail, the estates, the residences and burial places and the account is brought right up to date. Probably the most interesting figure is Sir Toby Butler, one of the signatories to the Treaty of Limerick. Here also is mentioned Mary Butler who is said to have suggested to Arthur Griffith that his new movement should be called Sinn Fein. To complete the family history is an appendix of original documents and a very detailed "chart showing the interrelationship of the several branches of the Butler Family treated in this memoir, and their descent from the Parent Stem."

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