

Gazette is proud to be part of Northern Ireland's largest locally owned media group

THE Alpha Media Group is the largest locally owned weekly newspaper group in Northern Ireland with an audited circulation of over 44,569 across 13 titles and has a greater penetration in the areas they operate than any other weekly or daily title across the province.

The Group also publishes two titles in County Offaly with a further 5,500 copies.

The Alpha portfolio are ideally placed to reach audiences across most council areas outside Belfast. This is of significance when 63% of Northern Ireland's population live outside the Greater Belfast area.

The Group offers unrivalled opportunities to reach target audiences with advertising and promotional campaigns.

The papers have offices with local journalists and other staff based at the heart of the communities they serve. The role of local newspapers in their communities is important and in a fast-changing world, local journalism is at the heart of readers' communities and journalists are able to really understand what is important – to celebrate and mourn, champion and, sometimes, criticise with a true understanding of the area they serve.

The titles are passionate about their local towns and districts bringing news, local council news, court coverage, village notes, schools, church news, births, marriages and deaths, sport, leisure and entertainment from all sections of the community. Significant resources are given in terms of staff, photographic coverage and as a result value for money for the local reader and the community is a paramount focus.

Local newspapers are the most trus-



ABOVE: The Ulster Gazette's landmark building in Scotch Street, Armagh. Did you know it is painted black and white to represent newsprint? **RIGHT:** The Alpha Media Group's new headquarters at the Linen Green, Moygashel.

ted source for local news and information (74%); more than three times more trusted than social media.

Local newspapers in print continue to command public confidence, while trust in social networks remains very low (Research from YouGov commissioned by Local Media Works).

Advertising and circulation revenues are the lifeblood of the news media industry, funding investment in the provision of local news and information. Because they reflect the views, passions and interests of their readers in a way that no other media does.

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Local businesses operate in market niches that reach out to specific types of consumers located within a particular area. Print ads are effective in targeting ads in localised areas – remember 90% of all purchases are made within 20 miles of where we live.

People don't trust online ads in the same way they do newspaper ads, and online media consumers don't take the time to read the whole webpage/ad before moving on to the next thing that is trying to catch their eye. This gives the customer no time to connect with the ad.

The newspaper is an investment in time, effort, and money, so the reader tends to read the whole thing to get value for their money. Everything from news content to an ad in a newspaper is taken seriously compared to the same online.



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We are proud to be entrusted with the printing of all Alpha Media Group's Newspapers and wish them continued success.

We are proud to play a vital part in the community, 175 years since we first started bringing you the news

IT is my unique privilege and pleasure to welcome our readers to this supplement celebrating 175 years of County Armagh's biggest selling newspaper.

The Ulster Gazette has been coming into the homes of families in the Armagh borough and beyond for generations, and that is something we intend to keep on doing for years to come.

In putting together this supplement, we have been fortunate enough to find a copy of the very first edition of the Gazette, the front page of which we have reproduced inside this supplement. In it, the publishers hoped "that their exertions and performance may also be so far successful as to enable the judges to give the Ulster Gazette, at least, 'a good place in the running' for public patronage".

One hundred and seventy five years on, reporting on local news and events, business, farming and sport remain at the forefront of what we do.

We have covered hardships, famines, wars, births, deaths, disasters and, of course, the 'Troubles'.

But there also have been heartwarming tales of great acts of courage and selflessness, and of resilience in the face of adversity.

All of these have been recorded by our journalists who are based at the heart of the community it proudly serves.

My thanks go to our Deputy Editor, Richard Burden, senior journalists Hazel Hammond and Niall Crozier and our photographers, Katie Taggart and Naomi Drury for their hard work in piecing this special edition, and every other edition, of the Ulster Gazette.

Thanks too to our advertisers and correspondents who support us every week and also to those who work behind the scenes here too – our advertising

team of Pat Woods, Kenny Williamson and Kathryn Henley led by our Regional Manager, Robbie Abraham; Geoffrey Glenny, Heather Maxwell and Audrey McGuffin on our front desk; our typist Joan Cassidy and Andrew Agnew in our circulation department.

The role of local newspapers in their communities is important and in a fast-changing world, local journalism is at the heart of readers' communities. Our journalists are able to really understand what is important – to celebrate and mourn, champion and, sometimes, criticise with a true understanding of the area they serve. This is at the heart of the Ulster Gazette's ethos.

These are difficult times for the newspaper industry. Statistics have shown that some 198 local newspapers have closed in the UK since 2005. Others have moved online, been merged, or are now produced by relocated teams, who are sometimes miles from the location printed on the masthead.

This has not been the Ulster Gazette's strategy. We believe that there is still a place in the market for a quality newspaper, bringing you the best local coverage. We are also moving forward with our regularly updated websites and social media platforms, giving us an extended reach and meaning that our readers can catch up with their favourite local newspaper twenty four hours a day, seven days a week.

In 175 years we have come a long way – and I believe we have a long way to go yet.

I hope you enjoy flicking through this feature and it brings back some memories.

Michael Scott
Editor, Ulster Gazette



LEFT: Michael Scott, Editor of the Ulster Gazette, started in the post in May. KT192525



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"Proud Partner of The Ulster Gazette for many years"

From a Small start to becoming County Armagh's biggest selling newspaper

A FIRST ever edition of the Ulster Gazette has been found in the British Newspaper Archive.

Published on Monday, October 7, 1844, issue number one of The Ulster Gazette, Agricultural and Sporting Chronicle was described under its masthead as "a stamped newspaper (non-political), published in the city of Armagh, every Monday evening, in time for post".

It cost 2½d., or if you wished to subscribe, 2s. 8d per quarter.

The exact history of the Gazette is a little vague, but we know that it grew from 'Small's Circular', which was launched by Mr Matthew Small, a Ne-wry vet, in the 1840s.

Mr Small had an office in Armagh's Scotch Street and produced the circular to advertise his business, particularly the sale of horses and vehicles.

In those days each advertisement was taxed and newspaper proprietors had to give a bond to the crown, backed by three guarantors, so that if illegal matters were published a heavy fine would be levied.

Mr Small evaded the guarantee and the tax by not issuing a newspaper as legally defined, but a small sheet printed only upon one side with no news.

It states that the publication is "Published in the city of Armagh every Monday at the horse bazaar in Scotch Street". The subscription was 1/6 per quarter delivered in Armagh, Newry, Dundalk, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Monaghan, Dungannon and Lurgan. When sent by post it was 2/6 per quarter.

It contained lists of horses which were for sale and small ads.

As Mr Small's name is attached to this it is presumed he was the agent for the lender whose address was given as 63 St



Compositors and printers pictured in the Gazette works, Scotch Street, in the 1930s. Included is James Crawford, William O'Reilly, William Houston, Edward Cummings, James Huston, Vincent Cahill, William Cummings (Foreman), Pat McKernan and John Daly.

Vincent Street, Glasgow. He was a cautious money-lender as he only lent on 'Heritable Security'.

Two veterinary answers to correspondents and some paragraphs of reading made up the rest of the printed matter.

Several other sheets were published and he was able to develop two pages of print on a fly sheet.

Some notice seems to have been taken of the circular in Armagh, for in the issue of April 15, James Wiltshire announces that he intends to open the Beresford Arms, having taken over this Inn and posting establishment from Mr William Rogers.

Soon after 'Small's Circular' ceased to exist, Mr Small issued the 'Irish Sporting Chronicle' on Saturdays.

The first edition of the Ulster Gazette, Agricultural and Sporting Chronicle was published on Monday, October 7, 1844. Its present title, the Ulster Gazette and Armagh Standard originated on June 12,

1909 when the two newspapers merged.

It is important to realise the difference between early newspapers and those of today. The early papers were written for a small readership - the literate members of the community, and at a time when wages were low, for the wealthier section of the community.

Nineteenth century editors assumed that parliamentary debates were of prime importance, and devoted large percentages of their columns to detailed reports.

The Church of Ireland Synod got extensive coverage and almost every paper gave detailed reports of the meetings of the Presbyterian Synod of Ulster and later the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Very few Ulster newspapers were independent in either religion or politics. In George Bassett's Book of County Armagh in 1888 it is stated that the

Ulster Gazette advocates sound Evangelical Protestantism, and supports The Church of Ireland. However, in another publication, it states, The Gazette "advocates sound Protestant Principles, coupled with progress and supports The Church of Ireland".

In Bassett's Armagh, he reveals that the Ulster Gazette had been published every Saturday and cost 1 1/2d. It was described as conservative, circulating extensively in the city and County of Armagh and the North of Ireland generally.

He continues: "The Ulster Gazette has been 44 years established and circulates extensively through the city and County of Armagh, the counties of Antrim, Monaghan, Fermanagh, Tyrone, Cavan, Down and Louth, among the clergy, landed gentry, and farmers and also in the Irish Metropolis.

"It is the best advantaged medium for the County of Armagh and is acknow-

ledged to be one of the best weekly papers in Ireland," said Bassett.

The Ulster Gazette had changed dramatically over the years and has emerged as one of the most widely read weekly newspapers in the Province.

Today, the Ulster Gazette and Armagh Standard is the biggest selling newspaper in the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon borough, with a readership of 22,555 each week.

The role of a journalist has changed since 1844 – indeed it has evolved since we marked 150 years in 1994.

Now as well as filing stories, journalists design the pages which you see in the paper, send stories to our websites and, every now and again, take photographs.

But their core role remains the same – to keep the local people fully aware of what is happening. We do so with the help of many people, including members of the public and local representatives who tell us what is happening on their doorstep, as well as our correspondents in the community.

Once the pages have been built in our state-of-the-art content system and approved by the Editor, they go to our production team, who are based across the road from the Gazette's office, who prepare them for print.

We attend many meetings, including those held by the local council, while our court coverage remains a big part of the editorial content of the Gazette.

We have constant contact with many organisations and various churches, community groups, clubs and societies of all descriptions.

There is also full coverage of all sporting events in the district, from the newest like ladies football through to gaelic football, rugby, cricket, golf, soccer, etc.

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Boost for Balmoral as Ulster Bank announces significant new sponsorship deal

Ulster Bank has announced a new deal to continue its sponsorship of Northern Ireland's largest agricultural event, The Balmoral Show.

The announcement, which was made at Cloughbane Farm, one of Ulster Bank's leading agri-food customers, will see the partnership extended until 2022, with the Show continuing to be referred to as The Balmoral Show in partnership with Ulster Bank.

As principal sponsor of the event since 2009, Ulster Bank has raised The Balmoral Show's profile and helped it grow from strength to strength throughout the last decade.

Making the announcement, Ulster Bank's Head of NI, Mark Crimmins, said he was looking forward to continuing the bank's close and long-standing association with the Show. "The Balmoral Show is one of Northern Ireland's leading events, both in terms of economic importance and popularity and we are proud to be so closely associated with the event. Renewing the sponsorship of the Balmoral Show underpins Ulster Bank's commitment to the local agri-food sector and we look forward to strengthening this relationship as

we move into the next phase of our sponsorship.

"Of course, these are challenging times for many farmers, and we see our sponsorship as further reassurance to our agri-customers that we are here to support them through the good times and the more difficult times. Such challenges only reinforce the significance of the Show to the wider industry as it provides a place for farmers and producers to meet, share experiences and seek the support they need for the year ahead."

Show organisers the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society were also in attendance at the event and welcomed the extension of the sponsorship agreement.

Alan Crowe, Chief Executive, RUAS said "The Balmoral Show has undergone many major and positive changes in the last 10 years and Ulster Bank has been a firm partner through that journey. We relocated the Show out of Belfast city to Balmoral Park in 2014 and reintroduced the 4 day format in 2017 with the addition of a Saturday to the schedule for the first time ever, allowing us to attract over 120,000 visitors throughout the 4 days and to attract a new audience to the Show.

Going forward our aim is to continue to grow and widen the Show's appeal, and to do so we rely increasingly on the support and strategic guidance from our principal sponsor, Ulster Bank."

Also at the event were members of the Guild of Agricultural Journalists who spent the morning touring Cloughbane Farm and hearing about the growth of the company and how this has been supported by Ulster Bank.

Mark continued, "Our activity at the Show over the last number of years has focused on positioning Ulster Bank as an ingredient in our customers' success so it's fitting that we have gathered at Cloughbane Farm today as a further extension of this pledge." The 2020 Balmoral Show in partnership with Ulster Bank takes place from 13th - 16th May. More information can be found at www.balmoralshow.co.uk.

Please contact Ulster Bank's Senior Agricultural Manager Cormac McKeyver if you wish to discuss your banking requirements for 2020: cormac.mckeyver@ulsterbank.com or on 07766071008;



Announcing the new sponsorship deal were Nigel Walsh, Director, Commercial Banking, Ulster Bank, Mark Crimmins, Head of Ulster Bank in Northern Ireland, Rhonda Garry, Operations Director at the RUAS, Alan Crowe, Chief Executive of the RUAS, and Billy Martin, President of the RUAS.



MAIN PICTURE: Scotch Street in Armagh, pictured in the 1870s, when it was commonly known as Main Street.

LEFT: Mr Thomas White - former owner of the Ulster Gazette, pictured apparently in full Masonic regalia.

Armagh papers date back to the 1700s

WHILE tax regulations in the 1840s opened the way for dozens of weekly newspapers in Ireland, papers in Armagh date back to much earlier.

Surprisingly there was one published in 1774 by 'Dickie, the Printer', who according to 'Stuart's History of Armagh' had been in business since 1740. Later there was the 'Armagh Mirror' which first appeared in 1804.

A few copies of the Mirror are held in the Public Library. It was printed by 'G Stevenson, the Mirror Printing Office, Scotch Street, Armagh'.

The price was three and a half pence which was high in those days. In today's terms that would be around £1.60 - making a 2019 Gazette a pretty good buy in comparison.

The Mirror, however, did not last long and after 14 issues appears to have folded.

Twenty years later came 'The Armagh Volunteer and Impartial Reporter' published by George

Busted at Market Street. It too had a short reign, ceasing in 1825.

Another short-lived newspaper was 'The Armagh Recorder', published by Daniel McAleese at Dobbin Street. A 1944 report in the Armagh Guardian relates that Major A D Irwin of Carnagh had one copy of the paper dated 1879.

When the Gazette was founded by Matthew Small in 1844 it was quickly followed in the same year by the establishment of the aforementioned 'Armagh Guardian', which closed in 1981. Jacob Heatley succeeded the founder Mr Small, as proprietor and then came Mr Thomas White, who is pictured here, in what appears to be full Masonic regalia. It is the earliest known photograph connected with the paper. The ownership of the paper later passed to Mr James McClelland and Mr T G Peel before passing to Mr W J Greer early in the early 1900s.

175 years
of telling
the news
and
raising a
smile

WHILE the Ulster Gazette is always at the forefront of serious, hard news, we haven't been afraid to not take ourselves too seriously.

In fact, even going back as far as our first edition, we were making fun of ourselves.

On the back page, buried right down in the bottom corner, the writer asks: "Why is the Ulster Gazette like the blood of a healthy man?"

"Because it very much depends on its circulation..."



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Meet the team behind the Gazette

WEEK in, week out, the Ulster Gazette has striven to bring the best local news stories to the people of Armagh and its wider district.

But who are the people behind the paper?

The editorial team is headed up by Michael Scott, who, while relatively new to the Gazette, is no stranger to the area.

One of the youngest newspaper editors in the UK, Michael lives in Tandragee with his family.

A graduate of the journalism course at Upper Bann Institute, Michael served his time on the Banbridge Chronicle before freelancing briefly with the Portadown Times.

In December 2006 he was appointed Sports Editor of the Banbridge and Dromore Leader, later working on its sister paper, the Ulster Star and covering Glenavon games for the Lurgan Mail and News Letter.

After becoming a Senior Journalist at the Leader, Michael was appointed Deputy Editor of the Gazette's sister paper, the Tyrone Courier, in October 2013.

Three years later Michael was promoted to become the Editor of another of the Alpha Media Group's titles, the Newry Democrat, and in May he moved to Armagh to become the Editor of the Gazette.

Our Deputy Editor, Richard Burden, is currently in his 30th year working with the Alpha Newspaper Group, joining the team at the Ulster Gazette as a junior reporter.

During that time, he twice worked at the Tyrone Courier in Dungannon, in 1994 and 2000 - for a year on each occasion - returning in 2001 to Armagh as Deputy Editor, where he has been based for the past 18 years. Richard also worked on an occasional capacity with the Carrickfergus Advertiser when it came under the Alpha Newspaper umbrella.

During the early part of his career, he had worked for a time as a staff reporter with the Daily Sentinel-Review newspaper in Ontario, Canada, and contributed to other titles across the Canadian Province, including the Guelph Mercury, the Port Colborne Leader and the London Free Press.

Over the course of his career, Richard has also freelanced extensively - both news and sport - for countless daily and Sunday newspapers, TV and radio stations across Northern Ireland and the Republic, as well as other parts of the UK.

In 2014, he was nominated in the category of 'Production Journalist of the Year' at the CIPR Press and Media Awards. It came after a headline play on Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody went viral and was lauded by BuzzFeed as "possibly one of the greatest headlines ever written" and described by top fashion magazine Esquire as "nothing short of perfection". It still continues to feature on 'best of' lists and collections, has been shared many millions of times on social media - including by the band - and has been given the 'meme' treatment.

In more recent years, Richard also has worked in a sub capacity with the Irish Sunday Mirror, and remains a full-time member of staff of the Ulster Gazette.



The Ulster Gazette's editorial team. Back from left, Richard Burden (Deputy Editor), Hazel Hammond and Niall Crozier (Senior Journalists). Seated, Michael Scott (Editor).

Gazette reporter Hazel Hammond is a senior staff member with 17 years of experience covering all aspects of journalism.

While she has been a part of the editorial team in Armagh for almost nine years, it was in 2002 that she actually took her first steps along the journalistic pathway, when she signed up as a trainee reporter with the Down Democrat newspaper in Downpatrick.

Hazel had actually freelanced for the title for a time, before taking up a full-time position in March 2006.

Since being appointed to the Ulster Gazette in 2010, she has and continues to cover all aspects of news, from features to courts and councils, as well as stories relating to health and education.

Her exceptional abilities and flair for writing shone through and led to Hazel, in June 2014, being nominated for the Weekly Newspaper Journalist of the Year category at the CIPR Press and Media Awards in Belfast.

Aside from her extensive background in print journalism, Hazel also has enjoyed great experience in broadcast media, including reporting of community news and features on radio.

Having joined The Ulster Gazette in July 2019, Niall Crozier is the most recent addition to our editorial team.

However, in terms of years served and experience accumulated within the industry, he is also its most senior member, having worked in a variety of roles on a number of titles.

In 2001 - at which stage he was working for the Portadown Times where he spent much of his career - he won Northern Ireland's Weekly Newspaper Journalist of the Year award.

Over the years his roles on weekly titles have included those of Editor, Deputy Editor and Sports Editor, in each case on publications owned by the formerly-dominant Morton Newspapers group.

His longest periods of service were with the Portadown Times and the Ulster Star (Lisburn), the

two titles which boasted the biggest circulations and highest levels of profitability within the company.

At daily newspaper-level, his experience includes having been a staff member on both the News Letter and the Belfast Telegraph where, in the case of the latter, he spent over five years. Within months of joining the Tele, he won then-Editor Mike Gilson's Journalist of the Month award (February 2010).

Equally at home working on news, sport or features, Niall recalls that when, as a 23-year-old, he entered the world of weekly newspapers, his first Editor told him, "Two things sell provincial weeklies - names and faces." That was advice he has never forgotten.

Of course, every newspaper needs pictures to help tell that week's stories, and to capture the events going on across the district. Here at the Ulster Gazette we have two ace snappers, Katie Taggart and Naomi Drury, who cover everything from sporting events to cheque presentations.

A professional team behind the adverts

ADVERTISING is the lifeblood of local newspapers and the Ulster Gazette is no different.

Our expert team is on hand to help you get value for money from the Gazette – as the saying goes, 'It pays to advertise'.

Robert Abraham is the regional advertising manager of the Ulster Gazette as well as our sister newspapers, the Newry Democrat and County Down Outlook, all of which belong to the Alpha Media Group.

Alpha are the largest weekly newspaper group in Northern Ireland and the Irish Midlands with a readership of over 185,000 for paid-for newspapers. They also have a greater circulation than the Belfast Telegraph, Irish News or News Letter.

Robbie started his advertising career back in 1986 with Johnston Publishing (then known as Morton Newspapers), managing all 10 of its weekly titles at various stages, as well as the Belfast News Letter and Derry Journal.

He joined Alpha Media in 2017 and is highly experienced in all areas of advertising platforms, such as digital, mobile apps, and all forms of social media.

Robbie has a degree in Business Management and was an account handler at Ulster Bank for five years before beginning a career in advertising. He also volunteered in a managerial role for Lisburn Business in the Community, where he was Chairman for a number of years, working with various local charities.

Pat Woods, who joined the Gazette in May 2017,

is the advertising department's team leader. He has extensive experience in selling advertising in the Armagh area. Pat became Team Leader in July of this year.

The longest serving member of the advertising team is Kenny Williamson, who has been working for the Ulster Gazette for the past 20 years and has a background in newspaper and radio advertising.

Meanwhile, the newest member of the team only started at the Gazette in August. Kathryn Henley has previously managed a magazine in England, while she worked in local newspapers here, selling advertising for the then-Morton Group.

If any of our staff need to know anything, office manager, Geoffrey Glenny, is the man to turn to. Nicknamed 'the Mayor of Newtownhamilton', Geoffrey has been with the Gazette since 1987 and was previously the Gazette's Shop Manager.

He is ably assisted by Audrey McGuffin, who started here in 2018, and Heather Maxwell who started towards the end of the 2000s.

Keeping a keen eye on the Gazette's circulation, as well as the other titles within the Alpha Group, is Andrew Agnew. Andrew is widely known and respected for his diligence by all the local newspaper agents.

Last but not least, Joan Cassidy plays a key role here at the Gazette. She is our typist and looks after any 'hard copy' which comes into the office, whether it's for the news or advertising section.



The team behind the ads in the Gazette. Standing are Kathryn Henley and Kenny Williamson while seated is Pat Woods (Team Leader). Inset is Robbie Abraham, Regional Advertising Manager.



Some of the staff at the Gazette. Back row from left, Joan Cassidy (typist), Andrew Agnew (Circulation Manager), Audrey McGuffin (reception). Front row: Heather Maxwell (reception) and Geoffrey Glenny (Office Manager).



Gazette photographers Katie Taggart (left) and Naomi Drury.

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Hartford Place as it would have looked in the 1880s.

What was Armagh like 175 years ago?

In an interview with the Gazette historian Roger Weatherup recalls the Armagh of 1844.

OVER the years the pages of the Ulster Gazette have been open to the impressions which travellers have had of Armagh.

Among the most detailed accounts came from the pen of an American, who in 1909 was struck by the contrast between the grinding poverty and the glorious architecture of town houses and cathedrals.

Such a contrast might have struck a visitor to here even more forcefully in 1844.

For while Armagh was a prosperous city, it was, like all the towns in Ireland, hiding widespread poverty behind the substantial merchants houses, in the alleyways and courts where the artisans and the impoverished lived, unless they were already reduced to dependence on the workhouse.

Still, for the 1844 traveller there would probably have been much to admire even though Armagh was then on a much small scale.

The first point of interest would have been the dominating presence of the Church of Ireland Cathedral newly restored by Archbishop John George Beresford, overlooking, on Cathedral Hill, the City Hospital, Vicar's Hill and the Public Library, although the library was much more compact then.

Across from it, where Church House now stands would have been a fine stone house beside which was Precentor Allott's houses, later demolished to build the present See House.

The city itself was bounded on the road to the west by Drelincourt School, the Mall to the east, and there was only a long terrace of houses at the foot of Newry Road. 'Victoria Street' had only one house while St Mark's had not yet got the Chancel extended. Tower Hill with the workhouse would have been newly built but Sheils Institute had not been established. The Observatory was practically outside the town.

To get to the Loughgall or Moy direction the traveller would have had to traverse the steep Banbrook Hill - it would be another four or five years before Railway Street was laid to serve the station that the Ulster Railway Company built in 1848. The streets of the town itself would have been of loose stone for the horse drawn traffic.

In the city centre the two storey market house, with its assembly rooms on the upper levels and below open arches to the market place, was then about 30 years old, replacing an earlier one built due to the munificence of Archbishop Stewart.

Many of the 1844 shop keepers would have been living over their premises and the long yards out the back were stores, stables and gardens.

English Street and Scotch Street were even then the principal shopping thoroughfares, while Thomas Street and Ogle Street had been established for 100 years to enable the steep central hill to be bypassed.

Some 25 years earlier Leonard Dobbin had built the street around his market and erected the fine town house in Scotch Street which was his residence and office as agent for the Bank of Ireland.

The Courthouse would have been only 30 years old with its two central doors opening into separate court rooms. It faced out onto a Mall devoid of railings or memorials.

On the west side of the Mall terraces of stone houses were built and on the east the magnificent Beresford Row, Charlemont Place and St Mark's Place had been built in the past 20 years. The present Orange Hall site was a Church of Ireland school and there was no development beyond that.

As the county administrative centre and market town it would have been bustling with activity centred around many small manufacturers and retail outlets, and would have been particularly busy during the assizes as the circuit judges were here for court sittings.

As a garrison town the red-coated troopers would have added to the colour of a town where the



COLLEGE STREET, ARMAUGH.

A picture postcard scene of College Street, Armagh at the turn of the 20th century.

sovereign and burgesses were in charge. But above all Armagh was the Ecclesiastical capital of Ireland and the Catholic Cathedral was being built under the direction of Archbishop Crolly on Knockadrain

Hill - an edifice which now dominates the Armagh skyline.

*This article first appeared in the Gazette's 150th anniversary supplement, printed in 1994.

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Thomas Street pictured in 1909.

Whole families found dead or dying as famine years grip city

THE story of Armagh's famine years has perhaps been overshadowed by the sheer brutality with which it struck Ireland in general.

For the district did not escape unscathed and in 1847 the horrors being endured came through strongly in the newspaper's reports. These convey a sense of growing panic from the failure of the potato crop of 1845 to the worst winter of 1847.

Covering the deaths in detail was simply beyond the scope of the Gazette so only the most shocking were published to convey the effects of the starvation and subsequent plague.

Stories like the mother found dying with her four dead children huddled around her. Fearing the fever which had struck down 400 of the 1200 occupants the Armagh workhouse, she had fled, only to see her children starve to death in "a small hut at Killycoply".

Many people had "arrived at the extremity of endeavouring to support themselves on seaweed, bran and turnips ..." ran one inspector's report.

By the end of 1846 a special relief programme was set up.

Town committees decided on running 'soup kitchens' as one of the main forms of relief. Soup tickets, which buyers ex-

changed for soup, could be bought in Armagh city.

The hardest hit areas in the county, reported the Gazette, were Newtownhamilton and Crossmaglen.

And in 1846, Lieutenant Griffith of the Armagh Relief Commission reporting on the "starvation..." and "absolute destitution", wrote: "The poorer classes of farmers and cottiers... are likely to perish if not immediately provided with the means to procure food".

His call for soup kitchens to be extended was heeded and by the end of that year 29 were in place in the county, although the starving poor still had to pay for soup tickets.

With bands of famished men roaming the countryside the authorities simply could not cope. In one incident at Newtown a band of 400 spade-carrying men marched on the town to demand "employment, money and bread".

And in Armagh a bread riot just before Christmas only ended when the bakers turned over their stock to the starving men.

By this stage Armagh workhouse was deluged with applications for admission and starvation was no longer the biggest killer. Fever and disease through over-

crowding was spreading.

Built to accommodate 1,000 paupers, by 1846 it had its full quota. By January 1847 there were more than 1,200 inmates.

The Board of Guardians in appeals for aid stressed that "fever appeared in every part of the house", with young children dying in "great numbers weekly".

The medical officer of the workhouse was given an assistant but, by the beginning of March, both were ill of fever, so too were the workhouse master and both school teachers. The medical officer died before the end of the month.

In order to ease the pressure in the house, the Armagh Old Cholera Hospital, which housed 80, was taken over and temporary dormitories to sleep a further 100 were erected for those convalescing from fever.

By May 1847, the epidemic hit its peak, with 400 fever cases in the house. As a result temporary fever hospitals were opened in Armagh city, Keady, Loughgall, Markethill and Middletown - providing about 250 extra beds.

However, considerable numbers were turned away each week by the workhouse, presumably to die, since to enter the workhouse was to choose death itself.

The winter of 1846-47 had increased the hardship and relief committees were only

able to supply about 15 per cent of the Armagh population.

It appears that Armagh didn't begin

to recover until the spring of 1848, and it wasn't until 1850 that the return to normality was completed.

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Democratic Unionist Party local representatives William Irwin MLA and Alderman Gareth Wilson send best wishes to all at the Ulster Gazette as they mark the 175th anniversary of this cherished local publication.



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ARMAGH, MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1845.

One of the blackest days in the history of railways

WEDNESDAY, June 12, 1889 - the day of the Armagh Railway Disaster - is still regarded as one of the blackest days in the history of railways.

Eighty-eight people died in the tragic event which, at the time, was the worst accident of its kind in Britain.

Even today, 130 years later, it still stands fourth in the league table of carnage in the rail history of these islands.

The accident at Killuney included injuries, of varying degrees, to some 400 people.

Following the tragedy, railway law and practices were changed to prevent such carnage re-occurring.

The disaster was the result of a collision between the runaway rear portion of the train hired by Abbey Street Methodist Church, which was bound for Warrenpoint, and the oncoming regular passenger train on route to Newry.

The tragedy was not due, in the first instance, to any failure of the braking system. It was, in fact, an example of how once an operator made an initial blunder, a chain of events made such a disastrous conclusion inevitable.

The planning of the 1889 excursion for that fateful day was carried out with military precision, not surprisingly as one of the organisers was Major J M Lynn, a retired army medical officer who acted as Sunday School organizer, Mr Robert Gillespie, a Justice of the Peace, and local solicitor, J E Peel.

It was estimated that 800 passengers would travel to Warrenpoint and, apparently, before the excursion a row developed between the organizers and the Great Northern Railways Board over the proposed charge of the one shilling (5p) ticket.

The locals threatened to cancel the excursion and the price was duly lowered to 10d (about 4p).

It was noted at the time that the decision to drop the cost of the tickets had a great bearing in the numbers which eventually decided to travel.

Then came one of the key elements to the tragedy!

As Armagh was in the Southern division of the GNR it was up to the Dundalk Yard to provide the engine and carriages for the excursion.

On Tuesday, June 11, 1889, when the request was made, it was a works holiday in Dundalk.

As a result, both the Locomotive Superintendent and his assistant were absent.

The duty of assembling the train fell to William Fenton, the station yard foreman.

After being advised by the Traffic Manager on the train make-up, he provided 11 carriages and two brake vans.

He, personally, chose engine number 86, a light passenger engine and appointed Thomas McGrath, a spare driver with two years experience and seven as a fireman.

In allocating the engine it is doubtful whether Fenton knew about the steep gradient on the line on which the train had to work. Nor did he take into account the fact that McGrath had never driven over it, although he had been a fireman on a number of goods and excursion trains going over the line just three years before.

There is no doubt, given the size of the proposed excursion, and the inevitable increase in numbers by last minute 'extras', no-one could have said with certainty that No 86 engine was powerful enough to haul the excursion train over the steep gradients on the line.

On the morning of the tragedy, just before 11am,

the driver of the Newry-bound 10.35 passenger train, Patrick Murphy was alerted by his fireman, a Mr Herd, that a number of coaches from the excursion train were careering towards them.

Murphy, although terrified by the sight of the runaways, managed to slow his train to about five mph by applying back steam, reversing the engine and applying the vacuum brake hard.

Herd jumped onto the embankment but Murphy stayed on the tender.

The collision occurred on the steeply-graded embankment, to the right of the Portadown Road, as you travel out of Armagh.

The impact caused a tremendous, fearful noise, clearly audible to the despairing people running down from the front portion of the excursion train.

The No 9 engine on the 10.35 train stopped dead, quivered, and rolled over on her side on top of the

embankment.

The guard's van and the last three flimsy wooden coaches of the runaway disintegrated completely, pieces being flung like matchwood in every direction.

The bodies of the trapped occupants suffered a similar fate.

The other carriages remained upright, but some were derailed, injuring many of the passengers inside.

The disaster could even have been greater. For the 10.35 broke into two sections, and each began to run backwards towards Armagh Station.

Sixteen lucky passengers were saved by the actions of driver Murphy and his guard Graham who, by the use of hand-brakes on the tender and in the guard's van, succeeded in bringing each section to a halt a quarter of a mile back. Murphy was seriously injured and subsequently died in January 1890.

At 11.10, news of the disaster was confirmed in Armagh and telegraph messages were sent to all the local railway towns, urgently seeking medical help.

A message was also sent to Gough Military Barracks, at Barrack Hill, Armagh, and the Royal Irish Constabulary station.

The Army, in particular, came in large numbers bringing much-needed ambulance equipment.

All available conveyances in Armagh were requisitioned to convey the dead and injured from the scene.

At 1.30pm a group of doctors arrived by rail from Belfast and many other towns also answered the call by sending relief workers.

The scene which met them on that fateful day was horrendous but this did not stop the volunteers from carrying out a tremendous job in the face of great adversity.



The scene of the crash at Killuney, Armagh.

Cart-load of tiny clothing moves watching reporter

A HEART-BREAKING scene in the wake of the disaster was described by the Gazette on June 15, 1889.

The piece managed to convey, quite powerfully, the effect the tragedy must have had on Armagh citizens.

As the report watched the rescuers return from the scene he noted: "...a cart-load of children's

hats, umbrellas, parasols, small bags, caps, pocket-hankies etc., brought into the Tontine Room, for none of which an owner could be found."

Perhaps such observations helped fuel the myth that many children had died, but who could fault his eye for telling detail.

And details were being scrutinised to an un-

precedented degree in the weeks after the crash.

Signed anonymously as 'Civis', one reader's letter - revealing considerable knowledge of railway technology - posed dozens of questions to be considered by the jury examining "the greatest railway disaster that ever occurred in the United Kingdom."

Gazette's 'God-like' figure recognised by James Joyce

THE novelist James Joyce gathered the colourful characters for 'Ulysses' from the streets of Dublin. And one who caught his attention was the Armagh-born William Brayden, who had by then become a well known and influential figure in the cultural life of Dublin.

William J.H. Brayden, whose journalistic career began in the Gazette, eventually ended up in Dublin where he became Editor of 'The Freeman's Journal' - then Ireland's best known paper.

It was there Joyce spotted the impressive Brayden - and, as one writer describes it - portrayed him as "lofty giant among a host of babbling journalists and literary hangers-on" in an episode of the book.

The description comes from Mr Donal O'Lunaigh, the keeper of collections, at the National Library in Dublin, who drew the Gazette's attention to this famous Armachian.

He recalls producing an article about Brayden for the 'Dublin Historical Record', entitled 'A Gentleman of the Press; William J.H. Brayden, O.B.E. (1865-1933)'.

Mr O'Lunaigh's 1933 article focuses on Brayden's importance to the National Library of Ireland where, during its 116 years existence, he was the only journalist among the men and women distinguished in literature and the sciences, to give their services on a voluntary basis, as members of the Council of

Trustees. He served from 1923 until his death, as an appointee of the Royal Dublin Society.

Joyce, writes Mr O'Lunaigh, had given Brayden a non-speaking role in 'Ulysses' when he is spotted as the "god-like figure of the Editor arriving at his office in the venerable 'Freeman's Journal' building in Prince's Street".

William John Henry Brayden was born in Armagh and educated at the Royal School and University College Dublin where he studied law and was called to the Irish Bar. An entry in an old Royal School year book in the Irish Studies Library at Woodford, Armagh, lists him as the son of William Henry Brayden, auctioneer and as having been called to

the Irish Bar in 1894. It also attributes to him a Governorship of the Royal Irish Academy of Music.

Brayden however did not pursue a legal career and instead joined the Gazette. He later arrived in Dublin via the Leinster Leader in Naas, and became the Westminster parliamentary correspondent for "The Freeman" during the exciting Parnell era.

Later he became editor and was there until 1916 when the Easter Rebellion destroyed the Prince's Street offices.

"Indeed it might be said that the Rebellion also brought about the destruction of the constitutional nationalist movement in which Brayden had played an important part", says Mr O'Lunaigh.

inaigh.

After 'The Freeman' William Brayden became the Dublin correspondent for top American and British papers.

During the First World War, in which he lost a son, killed in Palestine, he was awarded the O.B.E. for his services.

His latter years were devoted to Irish cultural affairs and he was a Vice President of the RDS, and acquired a reading knowledge of Irish.

It is clear, writes Mr O'Lunaigh that along with Irish writers and thinkers, Brayden was one of those giants who helped found and develop much of the cultural life now enjoyed in Dublin.

Partition dominates the 1920s

PARTITION dominated politics in the 1920's as Ireland was divided into the 26 county Free State and the six county Northern Ireland.

The Ulster Gazette in 1921 reported the King's statement setting up two parliaments and a Council of Ireland giving self government to the whole of Ireland.

However the upheaval caused civil war. Statistics for 1920 show that 532 RIC barracks were destroyed and 173 damaged; 176 policemen were killed and 251 injured; 54 military killed and 118 wounded; 831 raids on the mail vans and 69 courthouses destroyed.

Fear stalked the land as murders and ambushes became commonplace.

Local Nationalist MP, Joe Devlin said; "There was no liberty in the country now".

While most of the Civil War was waged in the Free State, it was also prevalent in the border county of Armagh where policemen and civilians were targets.

In one incident in January 15, 1921, Letitia Forsythe, a telegraph messenger at Newtownhamilton post office was attacked by armed men and had her hair cut off because her brothers were in the Ulster Special Constabulary.

An RIC Sergeant John T Kemp died after a Sinn Fein bomb went off at the Market House in Market Street, Armagh.

One of the worst atrocities in County Armagh, reported by the Gazette, was the murder of six Protestants in south Armagh.

In an article headlined: "Cold blooded murder of south Armagh Protestants" the Gazette accused Sinn Fein "savages" of carrying out the attack, which had left houses bombed and burned. Catholic Primate Cardinal Michael Logue in a pastoral letter in 1921 said there was never "deeper feelings of anxiety" about Ireland's future. He slammed the Northern Ireland government saying the "present trials come from a malice of man, and at the root of the evil lies obvious unjust and persistent misgovernment".

He also slammed the security forces for "acts of wanton oppression and injustice". And he criticised extremists saying "patriotism is mistaken, such acts being the greatest obstacles to settlement".

MP Joe Devlin during the opening of the NI Parliament in February 1921 said it was "abhorrent" that the minority was now asked to cooperate with those who for centuries had trampled upon them.

In the June elections following partition, Michael Collins, Sinn Fein leader and Minister of Finance in Dail Eireann was elected as an MP for Armagh. He came second in the polls behind Unionist Richard

Best. Also elected were Major D Graham Shillington, Unionist and John Dillon Nugent, Nationalist.

He declined to take his seat and visited Armagh once in September 1921. According to the Gazette a number of people following Collins to a special meeting were shot.

Following the election, Cardinal Logue predicted a future of fear and anxiety. "If we are to judge by the public utterances of those into whose hands power has fallen in this quarter of Ireland, we have times of persecution ahead of us".

With partition and the establishment of the parliament came the debate as to its location, and in the early days Armagh put up a valiant fight to have the building in the primatial city.

However, in an editorial, the Ulster Gazette finally conceded that: "The request to house the claims of Armagh seems to have been" treated with scant courtesy. The sum and substance is that Armagh has been snuffed out so far as the Parliament Buildings are concerned."

A deputation from Armagh, led by the Chairman of Armagh County Council, went to see Eamon De Valera in the Mansion House, Dublin in September "on behalf of 45 per cent of the county who refuse to accept the Partition Act".

There was a boycott of unionist shops in Armagh by Nationalists and likewise a boycott of Nationalist shops by Unionists. In Keady practically all trading ceased between the two communities. Indeed black-list notices were pasted to churches outlining who should not be traded with.

But there was more than just sectarian politics behind the boycotts. Complaints about the high price of food were rife in Armagh and fish was reputed to be more than double the price in London. An Anti-Profiteering Committee was set up requesting the reduction in prices of gas, milk, coal, bread and meat.

The Armagh Workers' Union said the only thing cheap in Armagh was the labour.

As the murders of civilians and B Specials continued, Cardinal Logue was asked to intervene.

Of the Republican bloodbath, he said: "God help us now, the plague of bloodshed destruction, pillage, rapine, robbery and even sordid theft, has invaded, at least part of the archdiocese, with a virulence which leaves in the shade even the most outrageous excess of the Black and Tans."

Courts were packed each month as countless civilians faced charges of breaking curfew. Only few farmers were given special concessions during the lambing season.

In February 1922 in a historic speech reported by

the Gazette, Sir James Craig praised Michael Collins after the pair had signed an agreement which he said: "was an admission by the Free State that Ulster was a separate entity".

The sincerity of Mr Collins, he said had been shown by the sweeping away of the Belfast boycott and, in reference to the border.

But five months later the Ulster Gazette reported, in August 1922, that Armagh MP Collins had been killed by Republicans in an ambush in County Cork "rifle in hand". The Gazette said the circumstances were "precisely similar to those in which many of His Majesty's forces lost their lives in Southern Ireland within the past few years".

Even when De Valera called a ceasefire in 1923 there was still sporadic fighting.

In June of that year, Armagh farmer and De Valera's Chief of Staff, Frank Aiken urged republicans to keep arms until "they see an honourable way of reaching their objective without arms".

In August Northern Ireland Premier James Craig toured the South Armagh border to reassure border citizens that there was no change in government or preserving territory given to them under the 1920 Act.

In November the Cardinal called for peace and an end to hunger strikes, referring to the men imprisoned in the "hulks" at Belfast Lough. He described these as "ruinous to health and brimful of suffering". The men had been interned and the Cardinal said "their only crime was opposition to the partition of Ireland".

Massive anti-internment meetings were held throughout County Armagh.

In response during October 1924, South Armagh loyalists held a meeting in Bessbrook "to resist even until death any attempt to drive them from under the Union Jack. The democracy of Ulster must prepare for any eventualities that might occur within the next few weeks. Even if the Boundary Commission were to function and propose to take large slices of Ulster territory, they would resist to the shedding of blood."

In a reference to the Ulster Volunteer Force, Armagh MP Robert McBride said in the hour of the Empire's danger the young manhood of Ulster had nobly responded to the call.

In the general election of 1924, Armagh became one constituency and Unionist Sir William Allen beat the interned Republican candidate DR James T McKee.

During a visit to Armagh by the Boundary Commission, one of the areas to put forward a strong deputation was Ballymacnab. The group insisted they wanted to be part of the Free State.

The Northern Ireland MP for Armagh Eamon Donnelly, Sinn Fein Director of elections was arrested.

Westminster MP Rt Hon Richard Best KC, Attorney General for NI was appointed Lord Justice of Appeal, and Mr J C Davison BL Official Unionists beat Mr W R Todd JP who was standing on behalf of the Unbought Tenants and Farmers and Ratepayers Union.

With the border established, by 1925 politics was less about partition than about money.

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Storm fans blaze that destroyed city centre

GENERAL VIEW OF THE DESTRUCTION FROM MARKET ST.
SHOWING SCOTCH ST. ON EXTREME RIGHT



LEFT: An artist's impression of the fire which destroyed Armagh.

A DRAMATIC prose style, supported by ink sketches, were features of the Gazette's handling of perhaps the major local story of the early 1900's.

Over 35,000 pounds worth of damage was caused as the blaze, fanned by the winds of a January storm, in 1903, swept through Market Street and Scotch Street gutting up to 20 shops and offices and threatening to spread across the city.

It took firefighters and soldiers from Armagh and Belfast 10 hours to bring it under control.

To appreciate the shock of the blaze it should be remembered that in those days shop owners and their staff lived in the houses and attics above the premises. And several lengthy stories gave details of daring rescues and people jumping for their lives from burning buildings.

The seat of the fire had been in W.R. Todd's shop, which with the family and assistants living above it was later to be described as a "veritable match box". Mr

Todd was not there at the time but the family and servants, with one exception, escaped down a burning staircase.

Left behind was a Mr Phillips who had waited to get dressed. The staircase was too far gone when he got there and he was forced back up onto the roof through a skylight. From there he faced a jump to a lower roof to catch the ridge tile.

Rescuers watched as he missed the ridge and as he fell was saved by a "slight parapet" which "stopped his fatal fall".

The Fullerton family who owned a drapery shop had also jumped onto a cart below. First David Fullerton had made the jump before standing on the cart to catch his wife and children as they made the leap to safety.

In the event the only fatality on the night was a Jersey cow which Mr Todd kept on his premises, and which in the confusion was forgotten about.

One of a number of the heroes of the night was a soldier called Parkinson from

the Military Fire Brigade, who was credited with single-handedly stopping the flames from reaching English Street. With a fire hose under each arm he climbed through two shops and hacked himself up against a wall in McCrum's Court. From that position he held the blaze until more firemen arrived to continue the fight.

With walls collapsing at regular intervals and powder and cartridges going off in Whitsitt Brothers shop, the drama continued through the night, watched by a huge crowd.

What had astonished the eye-witnesses - many of whom spent the night outdoors after being evacuated from houses in English Street and lower Scotch Street - had been the speed with which the fire ripped through the streets.

In the end, it seems, all the firefighters could do was contain the blaze until it had burned itself out around 12 noon over 10 hours after it had started.

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AGRICULTURAL AND SPORING CHRONICLE.

A STAMPED NEWSPAPER (NON-POLITICAL), PUBLISHED IN THE CITY OF ARMAGH, EVERY MONDAY EVENING, IN TIME FOR POST.

No. 1. }

ARMAGH, MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1844.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

There is no very marked feature in the Foreign or Home intelligence of the week. It is no slight matter, however, to know that commerce, trade, and manufactures are still advancing in prosperity; and that the weather continues most favourable for gathering in the abundant harvest which Providence has graciously given us.

The Earl of CHARLEMONT arrived at his seat, at Moy, on Saturday afternoon. After a severe contest, Alderman GIBBS was duly elected Lord Mayor of the city of London, for the ensuing year.

the Danish bark *Sara Johanna*, arrived off this port last night, from the river Plata. The letter is dated July 26, and the vessel sailed the following day:—

“ By the packet, which sailed a few days since, we sent you a newspaper of this city, which contained a kind of declaration of the causes of complaint which this Government has against that of Brazil. The publication is not in an official form; but everybody here knows that nothing political can be published without the express consent of the Governor, and that almost all political articles are published by his order. This declaration will, however, be of no importance, if General Paz, and the officers who embarked at Monte Video with him, do not commence fresh hostilities against this Government, either by attacking Oribe from the Brazilian frontier, or by passing through the Brazilian territory to the province of Corrientes, and there joining the enemies of General Rosas.

Summary.—Foreign and Domestic.

By the Overland India Mail letters and papers have arrived from Bombay, to the

7th August, from Calcutta to the 15th August, and from China to the 21st of June.

The chief point of interest is news from Calcutta relating to the arrival of Sir Henry Hardinge, the new Governor-General, and the departure of Lord Ellenborough. Sir H. Hardinge reached Calcutta in the evening of the 23rd of July, and was immediately worn into his high office. His first act was to continue Mr. Bird as Governor of Bengal.

On the next and subsequent days he held levees and durbars, and has thus far gained holden opinions from all parties, although there are some who appear to doubt his further proceedings, as being nearly connected with Lord Ellenborough. The latter noble lord embarked on the 1st of August, on board the steamer Tenasserim, and immediately started for Suez.

The arrival in Bombay of Sir Henry Pottinger from China has been the signal of great rejoicing. He was welcomed with addresses, and with dinners, balls, &c. The Chamber of Commerce presented an address

{ Single Paper, 2½d.;

{ or 2s. 8d. per Quarter.

FEARFUL COLLIERY EXPLOSION, AND LOSS OF 95 LIVES.—An awful explosion took place at Haswell Colliery, near Sunderland, last Saturday evening, by which melancholy event nearly 100 lives have been sacrificed. Haswell Colliery is situated in the very centre of the great Durham coal field, about seven miles from the city of Durham, and nine from Sunderland. It is the property of Messrs Clark, Taylor Plumer, and other wealthy coal owners connected with the district. It is 150 fathoms deep, and the workings are in the well-known Hutton Seam. The character of the mine in respect of ventilation has always stood high. During the pitmen's strike a few off-hand men were employed as hewer's, and a few new men introduced; but since the termination of the strike none but experienced workmen have been employed under ground, the others being employed at bank. Not a soul has been left to tell the mournful tale of how the accident occurred, the whole of the men employed in the working having been swept into eternity without a moment's warning. Four men, who were at the bottom of the shaft, escaped, by the fire having burned itself out before it reached them.

IMPORTANT FROM MONTE VIDEO—LIVERPOOL, FRIDAY, SEPT. 20.—The following very important intelligence, part of a letter to a commercial house here, was posted in the rooms of the Underwriters' Association, this afternoon:—

“*Bahia, July 30.*—The latest dates from Rio are to the 17th inst.; the packet had been detained,

in consequence of a new treaty, the ratification of which is to be sent on by her. It is also re-

ported that Monte Video is again to be a Province

of the

Brazils, she having solicited the protection

of the empire, under the guarantee of Great Britain and France. It is evident, that there are preparations made for sending troops to the River Plate.”—[This news requires confirmation.—See “THE LATE ROBBERY AT THE BANK OF ENGLAND.”—We understand that Burgess, the clerk in the Bank of England who lately absconded with £5,000 in gold, obtained by

Ir has been matter of surprise to many, that whilst all neighbouring counties had respectively their local Newspaper, and in some instances, more, the Metropolitan City of ARMAGH, the “Nucleus” of a great agricultural County, never afforded to its population a similar advantage!

In entering the GAZETTE for the ULSTER Stake of *Public favour*, the Proprietors entertain sanguine hopes of success for *their Hobby-horse*, which will start under the above name. Not, however, unmixed with feelings of anxiety and solicitude lest “a break down in training,” might turn the “odds” against them; yet they are still induced to hope that their exertions and performance may be so far successful as to enable the judges to give the ULSTER

GAZETTE, at least, “a good place in the running,” for public patronage.

The Public are

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The public are proverbialey indulgent judges in every case where good intentions are manifested; and to the Public, therefore, the Proprietors respectfully appeal, and beg leave to offer for their consideration (and to which they hope to add, their approbation) the following short "Prospectus" of the **ULSTER GAZETTE**, which will, in the first place, contain a Summary of the Foreign and Local News of the day, unaccompanied by any political remark or opinions; and it is intended, so far as its limited power may enable it, to be a medium for useful knowledge, combined with amusement; embracing all those topics, which the reader, on reference to the headings of the different columns, will there find enumerated —and excluding all subjects which the good taste and feeling of the Subscribers would turn from with disgust. No admirer, therefore,—if such there be,—of those revolting exhibitions referred to in the note at foot,* need expect to be gratified by the perusal of this Journal. Our Sporting friends, however, may anticipate a treat upon all other topics connected with the sporting world at large, and Ireland in particular; and, upon that ground, we further look for their support, inasmuch as the **ULSTER GAZETTE** is the *only Chronicle* of field sports published in *Ireland*.

The approval of all classes of our Agricultural friends we will endeavour to secure, by reporting all Agricultural meetings, proceedings, and dinners of farming societies, &c., the useful and practical matter whereof shall be carefully culled and condensed.

In conclusion, the Proprietors beg to assure their Friends and Supporters that they are actuated less from the "desire of gain," than from motives of public utility; in proof whereof they may point out, that the cost of the **ULSTER GAZETTE** is barely remunerative for its attendant expenses, and, should the returns "increase and multiply" through the kind support of subscribers and by more extensive circulation, any additional profit arising therefrom will be appropriated to the improvement of the publication from time to time, and without any extra cost over the present rate of subscription.

* The barbarities alluded to, comprise the (so called) "Pastimes" of Pugilism—Buck, Bear, Ass, and Badger Baiting—Dog battles, and Cock fights.

HER MAJESTY'S DEPARTURE FROM SCOTLAND.—On Tuesday morning, Her Most Gracious Majesty left Blair Athol. Tickets of admission to the ground having been given out on the previous evening, a large number of the inhabitants of the district, and of strangers, assembled, to witness the departure, as also the planting of trees which,—as at Tamworth,—Her Majesty had kindly agreed to plant. The morning was fair, but rather cold—a strong breeze blowing from the south-east. At half-past eight o'clock, her Majesty came out from the Castle, leaning on the arm of Prince Albert, and at once proceeded to plant two trees near the castle. Prince Albert and the Princess also planted two each, after which the party then returned to the Castle. In a few minutes, however, her Majesty and the Prince again appeared, and after standing for a second or two, entered the travelling carriage, which was drawn up before the gate, and drove slowly off. The Highland Guard, which was drawn up in a line, immediately lowered their arms, and the pipers striking up the Prince's salute, her Majesty ordered the carriage to stop till it was finished, and then, bowing repeatedly to the Highlanders, they again drove slowly off, the assemblage on the grounds lining the way—and the carriages being guarded by a detachment of Highland runners. As they drove down the grounds, the whole body of Highlanders burst out into shouts of acclamation, which were repeated and re-repeated till the carriage disappeared. The guns also boomed from a neighbouring height. At the outer gate the Queen was received by a concourse of people, who, renewing the shouts which had just died upon her Majesty's ear, followed the carriage for some time in their enthusiasm.

MALTA, Sept. 25.
There was no commercial news of interest. The Calcutta money market is said to be in an unusually quiet state, and capital is abundant, with considerably difficulty of employment in safe channels.

THE AFFRAY AT TAHITI.
A letter from Tahiti, dated April 24, gives some interesting particulars of the affray between the French and the natives, of which but an imperfect account has hitherto appeared. The letter says:—

"The French war-steamer Phaeton, and the frigate Uranie, 64 guns, came to anchor in the harbour of Papeeti, the former, having the greater part of the wounded on board, last night, and the latter this day, bringing intelligence of a desperate engagement between 800 marines, soldiers, and artillery, of the French forces in the Pacific, and about 1,000 Tahitians. Both parties suffered severely, but the Tahitians remained masters of field of battle.

If France still clings to Tahiti, notwithstanding less than ten thousand lives will be the price of it, as it may be observed that all the inhabitants of the Leeward Islands have one feeling in common with those of Tahiti—detestation of the French; and now late events have increased it tenfold."

THE BRAZILS.—FALMOUTH, SEPT. 28.
We received the following very late and direct intelligence from Buenos Ayres, by

which his Excellency returned a most remarkable answer, in which the late proceedings and negotiations in China are reviewed.

Sir Henry Pottinger embarked at Bombay on the 27th of August, on his return to Europe.

The popularity of Sir Henry Hardinge with the military is likely to be increased. It had been rumoured in India, and it was said on good authority, that he was empowered to raise new regiments, to add one captain to each of the actual corps, and to re-introduce, the punishment of flogging into the native army. This last measure appears to be considered imperative by the generality of the officers, especially since the occurrence of the several mutinies which have lately disgraced the troops of Madras and Bengal.

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Soldiers paid with their lives as the world went off to war

TENS of thousands of Irish troops made the supreme sacrifice during six years of bloody battles across Europe and in Japan.

The government of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland had signed an agreement with the Polish Government vowing support and assistance should one of the countries become engaged in hostilities with a European Power.

Throughout August 1939, the world sat on the brink of war. The Prime Minister Sir Neville Chamberlain's attempt to secure peace throughout the world had failed. The response to the call for volunteers numbered 45,000 and the actual enlistment in the ordinary forces of the Crown had more than doubled.

On Sunday, September 3, Mr Chamberlain's voice was broadcast to homes all over Great Britain, as he spoke from 10 Downing Street.

Addressing the nation, he said: "This morning the British Ambassador in Berlin handed the German Government a final note stating that unless we heard from them by 11 o'clock that they were prepared at once to withdraw from Poland, a state of war would exist between us. I have to tell you now that no such undertaking has been received, and that consequently this country is at war with Germany."

"Up to the very last it would have been quite possible to have arranged a peaceful and honourable settlement between Germany and Poland but Hitler would not have it.

"We have done all that any country could do to establish peace. The situation, in which no word given by Germany's ruler could be trusted and no people or country could feel themselves safe, has become intolerable. And now that we have resolved to finish it I know that you will all play your part with calmness and courage."

The war was only days old when Mr Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty and later Prime Minister, informed the House of Commons that the great ship, the *Athenia*, had been torpedoed and sunk. Among its crew were the first of many local casualties, including two men from Armagh, one from Tandragee and another young lad from Ulster.

MISSION SANTA

AN IMMERSIVE CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE

EVERY SATURDAY & SUNDAY
30 NOVEMBER - 22 DECEMBER

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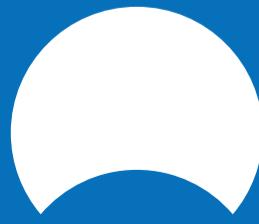
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Post-war regeneration brings back local pride

WITH the war over towns, villages and cities all over Europe began regenerating.

Housing, schools and new businesses sprang up as a war weary population, steadily being set free from rationing, demanded a better standard of living.

In Armagh the Gazette reported faithfully the developments which produced new urban estates like Alexander and the Folly, replacing the two up and two down terraced houses.

Among the new developments was one at Navan Street, Armagh, which in 1959 the Gazette described as, "a pleasing contrast to the white washed condemned houses on the other side of the street, from where the tenants moved."

Other house building carried out at this time included Woodview Park, Tandragee, and an experimental 'Build-it Yourself' housing scheme initiated by Rev Fr Mackle, on a site opposite Gillis Factory, Loughgall Road.

Financed by the Catholic Church, tenants were guaranteed a lower rent than Council homes, with the option of buying the house in a lump sum.

New schools were also being built in Armagh and

surrounding areas. Armagh Girls' High School was officially opened in October 1954, at a cost of £100,000. The school, which then occupied a 10 acre site, had 232 pupils enrolled.

The previous girls grammar school had been on The Mall, but was considered unsuitable and in disrepair: "At last," said Mr R S Brownell, permanent secretary of the Ministry of Education, "Armagh has a girls grammar school which was worthy of this city".

When the girls joined the Royal School, Armagh, in the late eighties the building lay vacant until 1994 when Armagh High School moved onto its site to become the new City of Armagh High School.

In September 1958, the Gazette predicted that "in the next couple of years nearly all of Co Armagh's 20,000 schoolchildren would be studying in bright modern buildings."

In the same month it reported the opening of the new Ahorey Primary School which cost £9,000, and mentioned the imminent opening of Lisnabill Primary School.

During the 1950's Co Armagh Education Com-

mittee opened three new intermediate schools, eight primary schools as well as Armagh Girls HS.

In 1958 a further five intermediate schools were under construction including Tandragee, Markehill and Keady, which showed the commitment to provide the children with better educational facilities and hopes for the future. This coincided with the Government raising the school leaving age to 15.

Other public buildings which were built during this decade included the Armagh Health Clinic, 1954 and the Fire Station at The Shambles in July 1958, amongst many others.

Council road improvements for the increase in volume and size of modern cars, lorries and buses meant a lot of road widening and resurfacing, which was more often than not undertaken as part of the Unemployment Relief Schemes which attracted Ministry grants aimed at reducing the high number of unemployed in the country.

Construction work on the huge Seaghan Reservoir was also well underway.

UFO fever hits local night sky

THE down to earth folk of Armagh and district are not easily 'turned' by fanciful stories of strange happenings.

The people of the district read, with almost detached interest of the strange objects such as flying saucers which seemed to be appearing all over the world at the time when people in the 1950's were gripped with an obsessive interest in space and space beings.

However, on one Sunday night in August, 1954, as reported by the Gazette, a strange sighting was witnessed by two men, in the skies above Keady.

In an interview with a Gazette reporter one of them had this story to tell: "We saw a large pear shaped object which was about four feet in size and attached to the thick end of it was a round ball, to the eye, about the size of a football.

"Both these objects were brilliantly lighted, as if from the inside. I saw the ball part break away. They were not more than 200 feet above and they were not falling they seemed to be floating down.

"Both were highly coloured like the rainbow. When I climbed to the top of the ditch for a better view both of the ball and the pear shaped object had disappeared."

This 'eye-witness' said the things appeared in the South and his companion corroborated his story. A number of other people also claimed they had seen something strange in the skies, including a Gazette reporter on his way home that night.

Apparently it was a very bright object, the size of a cricket ball, sailing slowly across the sky over the Demesne, and leaving a trail behind it until it disappeared behind some trees.

Dr E J Opik, in charge of Armagh Observatory at the time, was, however, less excited about the possibility of visitors from outer space, instead he explained the sight as one of a low flying meteor.

However, this did not put off the amateur space detectives. A month later reports of strange objects in the sky came in from people from over Derryhubart and Belfast and an Aer Lingus pilot as he flew over Holyhead on route to Dublin. In fact UFO fever seemed to have hit the whole of Ireland!



ABOVE: As the 1960s ended, civil rights marches became common place. This one started on the Killylea Road where it formed before parading into Thomas Street, where police barricades prevented a clash with loyalists who had taken over the town centre.

RIGHT: The Golden Teapot - a fifties landmark in Scotch Street.



Fight to bring a university to Armagh fails... again

SINCE 1583, learned men of Armagh have proposed that the City was the perfect site for a university.

The proposals have come and gone since then, always going to some other corner of the island of Ireland.

In 1964, there was yet another proposal. This time for the new University of Ulster.

In Armagh there was a real belief that the new university would come to the city this time. The proposal was strongly backed and publicised by the Gazette.

The belief was so strong that Armagh District Council published a substantial booklet describing the attributes and suitability of housing the second university in the city.

The subsequent decision by the government to build the campus in Coleraine was seen as a bitter betrayal by many in the district.

In the preface to the report, Mr A D Gibson, then chairman of the council,

said, "Two years ago my council and its education committee welcomed the new policy of the Northern Ireland government that all students qualified for university admission should be awarded scholarships from public funds.

"We realised that this change would soon lead to a very great increase in the number of university places needed for Northern Ireland students and that the provision of the extra facilities could not be deferred for long without disastrous results."

A site of 210 acres at the Palace Demesne was proposed as the new site, with the representative church body and Armagh Diocesan Council who owned the site offering to negotiate for sale, such was the strong conviction that Armagh should have that university.

The Gazette published the report in full, covering two pages which went into the history of the previous unsuccessful bids to attract a university.

"From the fifth century to the fifteenth century Armagh was a centre of learning, occupying a very prominent place in European enlightenment in the eighth century when it is said to have had 7,000 students.

"It was proposed in 1583 to establish a university in Armagh, but Ireland did not have one until 1592 when Trinity College was founded in Dublin. In 1845, when the foundation of Queen's Colleges in Ireland were being planned, the choice of location for the college in the North lay between Belfast and Armagh, but despite the strength of Armagh's claims the college went to Belfast.

"On different occasions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries men of eminence and scholarship advocated the establishment of a university at Armagh, thereby indicating that it possessed the desirable environment for such an institution.

"Expecting the founding of the uni-

versity, Lord Rokeby in 1771 built the public library. The City observatory, also established with a university in mind, gained a high reputation for its scientific studies in the past."

"Sadly, however, it was not to be. In the February 11, 1965 edition of the Gazette, it reported that the university would be going to Coleraine.

In response to the outcome the leader of the Armagh committee, Captain H Armstrong, told a Gazette reporter that the Lockwood Committee (which had examined the proposals from Londonderry, Armagh and Coleraine for the university site), that there were six requirements which were met in full by Armagh, with one exception. It was pointed out that lodgings should be available. This was considered as a short term policy.

Capt Armstrong considered it was shortsighted that for the sake of temporary financial saving that they should

prejudice the future development of the university as a residential one.

The result would be a second rate university.

He went on to list the shortcomings of the Coleraine proposal.

"Coleraine has no particular site. Most of the ground between the town and the resorts is taken up by small farms. This would be extremely difficult to acquire quickly. A site in the middle of that triangle would be removed from existing public services, sanitation and shops... None of these drawbacks arose in Armagh where 200 acres are immediately available a few hundred yards away from the city centre and expansion as the need arises."

So the 1960's attempt to bring a centre of learning to the City of Saints and Scholars fails. A further bid in the 1990s also failed, and so Armagh's wait for a university campus goes on.

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1970s were a time of chaos - but fun filtered through

THE 1970s were a paradox - murder and mayhem prevailed but throughout this testing decade people were determined to enjoy themselves despite the adversity.

The pages of the Gazette recorded countless killings of people of both religions, policemen, soldiers, as well as terrorist activists.

But, throughout this litany of tragedy, the local community showed a tremendous willingness to 'get on with life' and have a good time.

The Armagh Apple Blossom Festival was at its peak, with countless cross-community events held during a two-week summer period. In the shadow of the bombers and gunmen, young people, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, could be seen enjoying themselves in activities such as 'It's a Knock-Out'.

Weekend dances and carnivals were being held all over the County and, in a number of cases, their popularity was reflected not only by huge attendances but by the choosing of local beauty queens or princesses.

During the early 1970s political street marches were the order of the day but this often led to rioting between the two religious factions, with the police often caught in the middle.

As the decade progressed, so did the savagery of the terrorists, with many innocents dying and their loved ones left to bear the pain. And when death stalked it did not discriminate between man or woman, young or old, Protestant or Catholic.

The Kingsnills mini-bus massacre and many other murders, on both sides, made worldwide news.

In 1974 a bomb attack at Traynor's

Cup history for Royal School

IN 1977 Armagh Royal School broke a 92-year hoodoo and won the coveted Schools' Cup in rugby.

On St Patrick's Day final in Ravenhill they played out a dramatic match with Regent House, eventually winning 12-9 with a last gasp drop goal.

Weeks of celebration followed, culminating Armagh District Council

Public House on the main Armagh/Moy Road killed two men - one a Protestant, another a Catholic.

Those who died were friends, 50-year-old father-of-six, Mr Patrick Malloy of Drumcullen and 45-year-old Mr Jack Wylie, a married man with a grown-up family.

At the time the Ulster Gazette took the decision to show front page photographs of the men as they lay dead among the debris of the blown up pub.

This was not done for shock value but to show the horror and senselessness of the atrocity.

The list of those killed, maimed, and those only slightly injured or who had witnessed terrorist crimes, is endless. It is suffice to say that the innocent deceased will all be fondly remembered by their loved ones, while the survivors have their families and friends to help them overcome the horror.

The 1970s also reflected a new, more independent era, especially for women. Following the easy-going swinging 60s many female teenagers mapped out their life to enter the professions in a determined way, something which occurred more rarely in bygone times.

Ladies fashions at the time were dictated by this new, almost revolutionary, period. Mini-skirts, hot-pants, midi frocks, cossack-style coats and boots of all styles and colours were worn by the 'Modern Miss'.

Despite the 'Troubles', social and sporting events went on throughout Armagh City and district almost unhindered. There was a determination not to be swamped by 'the bad' in society but to strive to bring about 'the good'.

Community strength and resolve evident through the decade

DURING the 1980s, when The Troubles' were at their blackest community resolve and spirit blossomed in the face of tremendous adversity.

In a decade dominated by terrorist violence, efforts were being made at both local and provincial level to bring about a lasting peace.

The Mountain Lodge at Darkley, Tynan Abbey, South Armagh, and the City itself, became synonymous with murder and mayhem.

The late Wilfred McIlveen met a horrible death in the village of Milford when a bomb exploded underneath his car and a chairman of Armagh District Council, Cllr Charles Armstrong, also met a similar fate at the hands of the terrorists.

All these events received widespread condemnation but the atrocities, on both sides, went on unabated.

Loughgall RUC station was the scene of the shooting of eight IRA activists who were killed as they carried out a bombing and bullet attack.

Special troops had been lying in wait for the terrorists as they moved in on the station. A bomb laden digger was used by the gang to rip through security gates and during the ensuing gun battle part of the

barracks was blown asunder.

An innocent man also died in the attack and three members of the security forces were injured.

In 1982 the Army bade farewell to Castledillon and the complex was handed back to the Department of Agriculture. It later became an Old Peoples' Home.

But during the 1980s the paper was also full of familiar faces, each going about their everyday lives in a peaceful and meaningful manner.

Mr Soccer, Selwyn Tarleton, featured regularly in the sports pages, and Mr T G Rafferty of Derby's Bridge, Richhill, was a regular contributor to the Ulster Gazette.

The late Winston McConville would often photograph Mr Rafferty with giant vegetable produce, all home grown on an allotment surrounding his bungalow.

Among leading stories carried in the paper during the decade was the campaign to free the UDR Four. Winston Allen, James Hagan and Noel Bell were released after spending eight years in prison. But Neil Latimer still remained 'inside' while his former colleagues, family and leading loyalist politicians continued to fight his cause.

The arrests and subsequent trial of the

Paris Three, Jim King, Killylea, Noel Little, Markethill, and Samuel Quinn from Newtownards, was also recorded in depth by the paper.

The Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh, Dr George Otto Simms, retired early in 1980, to be succeeded by the Rt Rev John Armstrong. The present head of the church is Archbishop Richard Clarke.

The decade, from a news point of view, was one of the busiest in the history of the Gazette. Apart from stories which appeared with regularity, such as sheep worrying in the locality, there were many new items uncovered for our readership.

Armagh Prison came into private ownership, glue sniffing was identified in the area, the Armagh Development proposals were released, Wellworth's superstore arrived in the City, there were rumours that the Pope would visit Armagh in 1987 and Bairnswear was gutted in 1984 later to be redeveloped at Hamiltonsbawn Road.

Many thousands of events were chronicled and photographs taken to record the events of the 1980s - one of the most trying periods in the history of Armagh and district.

A tale of city's two troubled cinemas

IN 1984 there was a great deal of misfortune for two local cinemas - each had a harrowing tale to tell.

In its January 7 issue the paper recorded that the Ritz Cinema, which had just been reopened for six days, had been destroyed in a fire, along with ICR Cash Registers.

The alert was raised by the then Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh, Dr John Armstrong, who was awakened by the blaze, around 4am.

The buildings were completely gutted and only an empty, smouldering shell remained the following day.

Manager of the newly-opened cinema, which only held nine performances before the fire, was Mr Jerome Mallon from Keady. His family had been in the cinema business in the border town for many years.

In September 1984, a Cert X film, 'Virgins on the Run', was being shown at the Scala Cinema, Keady.

Police swooped on the premises and three 15-year-olds were found in the audience. There was no person over 21 in a supervisory capacity, the cinema attendant and projectionist also being underage.

The matter was reported to Armagh District Council who took a very dim matter of what was described as 'porn.'

The Scala showing was stopped and the building cleared, even though an alternative film was available!



A scene which was all too familiar in the 1980s. In this case the Ulster Gazette's offices in Scotch Street were badly damaged following a bomb. Despite these attacks the Ulster Gazette always made it onto the shop shelves.

Prince Charles and 'Iron Lady' pay visit

HRH Prince Charles and Maggie 'The Iron Lady' Thatcher both visited Armagh during 1979.

During November Prince Charles was welcomed to Gough Barracks in his capacity as Colonel-in-Chief of the Gordon Highlanders.

He spent time talking to troops and then travelled into South Armagh where he visited Bessbrook, Forkhill and Crossmaglen.

A month earlier the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, also visited the barracks in Armagh. This followed, as the Gazette reported at the time, "a particularly vicious period of local killing".

Her visit was described as a "moral booster" and she spent a great deal of time "talking to soldiers 'on the ground'".

Around the same time the new military/UDR barracks was opened at Hamiltonsbawn Road, Armagh, and

Gough, which was built in 1814 passed out of military hands, to be taken over by the Police Authority.

In the early 1970s a bomb attached to a civilian worker's car was driven into Gough. It exploded and miraculously no one was hurt in the incident, although several cars were wrecked inside the complex and many windows were broken in the Barrack Hill and Victoria Street areas.

It was stated emphatically at the time that the civilian worker was completely unaware that the 50lb device had been attached to his vehicle.

The UDR section of the new camp was opened by the late Lord Lieutenant for County Armagh, Sir Norman Strong. The premises had been built on lands which had traditionally been the 'Twelfth Field' in Armagh.

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Looking to a future without bombs or bullets

IN September 1994, after 25 years of indiscriminate slaughter, the IRA announced that they were calling a ceasefire. And some weeks later the loyalist paramilitaries also called an end to their campaign of violence.

This is how the Ulster Gazette marked the occasion in our 150th anniversary supplement.

WITH both the IRA and loyalist paramilitaries calling an end to violence in the latter half of 1994, the communities within Armagh City and District have been looking forward to a new era where peace will be the keyword and harmony can bring the 'two sides' together.

But the situation has been a long time in arriving and the 1990s have seen some of the worst atrocities carried out in the names of loyalism and nationalism.

They have left children orphaned, wives without husbands, parents robbed of their sons and daughters. The catalogue of terrorist crimes seems endless and here we take a look at just some of those that made the headlines locally.

The first month of the decade had not ended when IRA killers struck, when RUC Inspector Derek Monteith was gunned down as he made a cup of coffee in the kitchen of his family home at Kilburn Park.

RUC Reserve Constable George Starrett also died in a hail of bullets at his Newry Road home less than three months later.

In April 1990, IPLO man Martin Anthony Corrigan was shot dead by security forces near the home of a part-time RUC Reservist, about five miles from Armagh. Police believed he had been on his way to kill the RUC man when he was shot.

One of the worst atrocities of the 1990s happened in July 1990 when three policemen and a nun were killed in a 1,000lb land mine explosion on the Killylea Road, about three miles from Armagh. The victims were Constable Joshua Cyril Willis, 35, of Castle Drive, Caledon; Constable David Sterritt, 34, from Newry Street, Markethill; and Constable William James Brown Hanson, 37, from Killycopple Road, Armagh.

Sister Catherine Dunne, 37, a member of the St Louis Order, was assistant deputy director of St Joseph's Training School in Middletown. The nun was travelling with an Armagh social worker when the IRA device exploded.

Several policemen were injured in a 1500lb bomb attack on the village of Loughgall during the late summer of 1990. A van had been driven through the perimeter of the unmanned RUC station and widespread damage was caused to homes, church and school buildings.

In October 1990 two IRA men were shot dead at a disused farm at Lislasley Road close to Loughgall, in an incident bearing all the hallmarks of an undercover army operation. They were Desmond Grew, 37, of Main Street, Charlemont, and Martin Gerard McCaughey, 23, of Aughnagar Road, Galbally.

In March of 1991, two UDR soldiers lost their lives in an IRA rocket attack on

the Killylea Road on the outskirts of Armagh. Private Paul Sutcliffe, 32, from Lancashire, was killed instantly in the blast. Twenty-year-old Private Roger James Love from Sleepy Valley, Richhill, died three days after the attack.

It was in May 1991 that Robert Orr was killed when a booby-trap bomb exploded under his car at Gaol Square. Mr Orr, 56, had lived at Ashley Park in Armagh and was a former RUC Reserve and a leading member of the Orange Order.

The Glenanne UDR Barracks was never rebuilt after the IRA loaded a tipper lorry with 2,000lb of explosives and rolled it down a hill into the base, killing three soldiers in May 1991. Those who died were Private Paul Blakely, 30, from Blenheim Drive, Richhill; Lance Corporal Robert Crozier, 46, from Ashlea Bend, Markethill; and Private Sydney Hamilton, 44, of Latt Crescent, Jerretspass.

Fifteen other people were injured in the blast late on that Friday night. At that time it was the largest bomb used against members of the security forces since the start of the Troubles.

It was a 1,000lb bomb that ripped the commercial heart out of the town of Markethill three months later. The bomb had been detonated at around lunchtime on August 28, having been left in a van outside the town's RUC station.

Extensive damage was caused to the RUC base and surrounding buildings, including the Spence Bryson factory, shops, small businesses and some 500 homes, some of which had to be demolished in the wake of the attack.

It was a grim end to 1991 as university student Robin Farmer was murdered by gunmen in his father's Field and Stream store at Moy. The 19-year-old, who was on a break home for Christmas, threw

himself between the killer and his father.

The year 1992 was a particularly bleak one with both loyalist and nationalist terror squads active throughout the Armagh area.

The first victim of 1992 was gunned down by the UVF in his butchers shop at The Square in Moy. Kevin McKearney, 32, died instantly. His 70-year-old uncle, Jack McKearney, later died from his injuries.

The body of city woman Anne Marie Smyth, 26, was found in the Ravenhill Road area of East Belfast in February. The Drumsill Park woman had been in The Northern Bar and it is known she had also been in a Glentoran Supporters Club in Belfast.

In March 1992, Mr James Gray, 32, was travelling along the Cornascrie Road when at least two loyalist gunmen opened fire from their hiding place in the bushes of an elderly couple's garden.

IRA gunmen shot dead a 50-year-old Catholic man as he answered a knock at the door of his Nialls Crescent home in April. Mr Brendan McWilliams was found by his 83-year-old aunt after some 18 shots were fired.

In September, a loyalist gang murdered 63-year-old Charles Fox and his wife Teresa, 55, at their isolated cottage home at Listamlet Road, outside Moy. The couple were found by their daughters Bernie and Teresa.

RIR soldier Iain Warnock was shot dead by the IRA in front of his three-year-old son Mark in November. The twenty-seven-year-old Lance Corporal had been waiting for his wife to finish work at the Moy Park factory in Portadown.

In January 1993, Lance Corporal Michael Beswick from Lancashire died after

being caught up in a triple bomb trap at Armagh's Cathedral Road. The 21-year-old had only been on his first day of duty in Armagh.

UVF gunmen shot dead builder Mr Tommy Molloy, 32, in front of his wife and four young children at Derrymagowan Road, Moy. The killers fired through the living room window.

RUC Reserve Constable Reggie Williamson, 46, was killed when a booby-trap bomb exploded under his car just off the Lislasley Road, near Moy, in March. Ms Jennifer Hill, the policeman's girlfriend, had been driving behind when the device went off.

In the same month, a civilian construction worker, Nigel McCollum, 25, was killed when the IRA launched a triple mortar attack on the security base in Keady. Homes in Bessbrook were damaged in a mortar attack on the RUC station in March, and Caledon homes were also damaged in an attack in May and again in November.

The historic Mall in Armagh was devastated in an early morning van bomb attack in August. Schools, homes, churches and museums were among those damaged when the 1,000lb device exploded outside the Courthouse. Court proceedings were moved to Craigavon while the area was rebuilt.

The IRA attack added Armagh to the list of bombed towns in the Province, including Portadown, Lurgan, Newtownards, Belfast and Magherafelt. The Gosford House Hotel suffered severe damage in a car bomb attack exactly one week later.

The cries of peace from the people were heard once again as over 1000 people held a vigil in Keady following another terrorist killing. Twenty-three-year-old Lance Bombardier Paul Andrew Garrett

died when he was hit by a single bullet from a sniper's gun in the South Armagh town in December.

In April 1994, IRA gunmen lay in wait behind a hedge before shooting 40-year-old Eric Smyth as he returned to his home at Salters Grange. Mr Smyth was a former UDR soldier.

Mid-way through May of this year, the Armagh district suffered one of its blackest weeks as a result of terrorism. Loyalist gunmen walked into a taxi depot at English Street, Armagh, and opened fire on two students from Armagh College of Further Education as they played a video game. Keady teenager Gavin McShane died at the scene while friend Shane McArdle died the next day in hospital.

Lurgan bandsman Fred Anthony died in the County Armagh town when a bomb exploded under his car. The photographs of his seriously injured three-year-old daughter Emma touched the hearts of the entire community.

That same week, Maghery men Eamon Fox, 41, and Gary Convie, 24, were shot dead as they sat taking their lunch in a van at a building site in Belfast.

Lance Corporal David Wilson, 27, died in a bomb attack close to the security base in Keady. The brother of civilian worker Nigel McCollum, killed in a rocket attack in Keady, was tortured by terrorists in Armagh.

The body of Private Reginald McCollum, 19, from Sandholes near Cookstown, was found dumped in a field near an Armagh housing estate.

However, the killing did not stop. Then there was Drumcree when violence and disruption returned to our streets with many towns and villages blocked, either completely or for considerable periods.

And in February 1996, a bomb which devastated London's Docklands and killed two people ended the IRA cessation.

The return to violence repulsed the people of Armagh and just one week later over 1,000 people stood in Market Street to pray for its end.

The IRA shot dead British soldier Stephen Restorick at an Army checkpoint in Bessbrook in February 1997. He was the last soldier to be killed in Northern Ireland, until March 7, 2009 when two soldiers were killed by the Real IRA at Masserene Barracks.

Weeks after his death an IRA mortar was found by the RUC near Caledon following a car chase during which the driver escaped, and later the same terrorist organisation carried out a 'punishment' style attack on a 16 year old girl in Armagh.

In April 1997 a Catholic chapel in Mullavilly was destroyed by arsonists and in May of that year LVF gunmen tried to kill a taxi driver in Milford. The attempt failed when the gun jammed.

The IRA declared a new ceasefire in July 1997. Negotiations and sporadic violence by loyalist and republican splinter groups continued until the Good Friday Agreement was signed in May 1998.



Some of the crowd who attended the peace vigil in Market Square in 1996.

Agreement brings a mixed reaction from politicians

IN 1998 hopes were high that Northern Ireland's Troubles were at an end following the signing of the Good Friday Agreement.

There was a mixed reaction to the Agreement, which had been thrashed out during an intensive session of the all party talks. Seventeen hours after the midnight deadline had passed, the deal was hailed as a 'breakthrough' by some and a 'farce' by others.

In the wake of it being signed the Gazette spoke to representatives of the four parties on Armagh City and District Council to seek their own views on the deal.

The then SDLP Mayor of Armagh, Pat Branigan, described it as a "compromise" between the political parties represented at the talks, and could not be seen as a victory or defeat for one side or the other.

Instead, he said, it was a set of ground rules for political and economic progress.

"Based on toleration, trust and consent, it is a way forward to a lasting peace," he said.

"There are parts of it which will please one side and displease the other side – there is nothing to be gained by focusing on the negatives to the exclusion

of everything else."

The then-Mayor accepted that the section relating to the release of prisoners would cause pain to those who had lost loved ones and to the thousands who were injured, physically or mentally. It should, he said, be handled sensitively.

Cllr Jim Speers, the head of the Ulster Unionist bloc on the council, gave his backing to the decision of the then Party Leader, David Trimble.

He said that policing justice and equality which were part of the Secretary of State, Mo Mowlam's "ongoing so-called confidence building measures" presented difficulties for Unionists.

Sinn Fein's Sean McGirr said the party's Ard Comhairle would assess the document and a decision would be taken about whether or not they would back it – something which they went on to do.

The DUP played no part in the all-party talks, although the party said they would take their place in the assembly. Councillor Brian Hutchinson slammed the process which, he said, had been set up "to please terrorists".

Meanwhile the Gazette received correspondence from Prime Minister, Tony Blair, seeking to re-

assure unionists about the deal.

He had sent two letters to UUP leader David Trimble on Good Friday to address concerns within the party's senior ranks.

The first letter confirmed that the Anglo-Irish Agreement was to be scrapped and replaced with the new British-Irish Agreement.

The Prime Minister confirmed in the second letter that he understood the UUP's problem with paragraph 25 of Strand 1 of the document, requiring that decision on those who should be excluded or removed from office in the Northern Ireland Executive to be taken on a cross-community basis.

After numerous rallies and debates for and against the deal, the district went to the polls on Friday, May 22 to have their say on the historic document.

The electorate came out in force, with the main polling station in Armagh, Armstrong Primary School, described as being "choc-a-bloc from early morning" by the Gazette.

However, in the village of Killylea, just three people voted in a 20 minute period with one local stating, "We never get too excited out here".

Asked how he thought the vote would go he replied, "Sure it hardly matters, you still have to get up for work in the morning."

In the end over 71% of voters across Northern Ireland gave their support to the deal.

That paved the way for the first elections to the new Assembly, and in the Newry and Armagh constituency on June 25, 1998 – although the district was given a stark reminder of Northern Ireland's dark days when a car bomb ripped through Newtownhamilton the day before the vote took place.

The Gazette reported that the device, which exploded in mid-afternoon, left a trail of destruction with homes and shops close to the scene suffering extensive damage. Initial reports stated that there had been "two civilian casualties".

In the end over 77% of Newry and Armagh's electorate – some 54,136 voters – had their say and the constituency's first elected MLAs were the SDLP's Seamus Mallon, who topped the poll, and John Fee; second placed DUP candidate Paul Berry; Danny Kennedy of the UUP and Sinn Fein's Conor Murphy and Patrick McNamee.

Locals tell Ulster Gazette how they were caught up in world's deadliest terror attack

ONE of the biggest news stories that the Ulster Gazette has ever covered was the terrorist attacks on America on September 11, 2011.

The attacks killed 2,977 people (not counting the 19 hijackers who also died), injured over 6,000 others, and caused at least \$10 billion in infrastructure and property damage.

Four passenger airliners operated by two major U.S. passenger air carriers, which were bound for San Francisco and Los Angeles, were hijacked by 19 al-Qaeda terrorists.

Two of the planes, American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175, were crashed into the North and South towers, respectively, of the World Trade Center complex in Lower Manhattan.

Within an hour and 42 minutes, both 110-storey towers collapsed. Debris and the resulting fires caused a partial or complete collapse of all other buildings in the World Trade Center complex, including the 47-story 7 World Trade Center tower.

A third plane, American Airlines Flight 77, was crashed into the Pentagon. The fourth plane, United Airlines Flight 93, was initially flown toward Washington, D.C., but crashed into a field in Pennsylvania, after its passengers thwarted the hijackers.

As the world watched events unfold it was clear that families across the world would be affected – and families in Armagh were among those who had relatives and friends working in or in the vicinity of the World Trade Center.

Louise Woods, from Derrynoose, began work in the World Trade Center in February of 2011. Her family heard of the disaster and shortly afterwards received a phone call from Louise's friend saying she had escaped and was alive and well.

As she sat at her desk on the 101st floor, Louise felt the impact of the plane on the first tower as the building shook.

She immediately assumed it was a bomb and said to her co-workers: "This is a bomb, we need to get out now. I want to leave." Her colleagues assured her that they were inside a secure

building and her best course of action would be to sit at her desk.

Luckily, Louise trusted her gut instinct and, with two co-workers, made her way down the fire escape to the 78th floor where an announcement was made that everyone should return to their desks as the building was secure. Louise was uncomfortable with this and decided to proceed out of the building.

Louise, speaking from New York, told the Ulster Gazette: "People just turned and walked calmly back to their desks. Many of my colleagues were just sitting around drinking coffee."

Louise carried on down the escalators and made her way to ground zero. As she stepped onto the pavement she heard a horrendous noise and turned to look up.

She continued: "As I came out of Twin Tower 2 I heard a massive noise; it was as if I was standing on a runway.

"I looked up and saw the wing of the plane crash into the tower I had just left.

"People have described the site as a war zone and that's exactly what it looked like. There was fire everywhere, debris crashing to the ground and people landing on the pavement around us.

"I was completely terrified and just knew that I had to run so that's what I did."

Louise ran and hid under a truck before realising she was beside the petrol tank. She got out and ran again until she reached 42nd Street.

Once Louise was in a safer area she contacted a friend to phone home and let her know she was safe.

However, her family had to wait for several hours before they received a phone call from Louise herself to be convinced that she was alright.

Nicola McConnan, Louise's sister, told the Gazette: "We have suffered tragedy in our family before and my mother was convinced it would happen again. It was after 7pm before Louise could get through to us and it was just a terrific relief.

"Louise was understandably traumatised and



tearful but she was one of the lucky ones and grateful to be alive."

Another local person who was affected by the al-Qaeda attack was Theresa Kelly, whose mother lived in Milford at the time, who was the Private Secretary of the Governor of New York.

Theresa was working in a skyscraper within the World Trade Center complex and told the Gazette of how she watched with horror before running for her life.

Having travelled by train from her home 50 miles away, she had just arrived at her office when terrorists attacked at 9.02am.

"Someone said to me 'did you hear?' and I said 'no?'. They said a plane went into the World Trade Center. I looked out of my office window and I could see there a gaping hole across one of the two towers."

Initially, Theresa and her colleagues thought a helicopter had crashed into the side of the building, as they often fly overhead.

But as the flames and smoke billowed out of the North Tower it became clear that something much more horrific was taking place.

"At that moment we saw a plane on the other side of the two buildings. Someone said 'that plane's too close'. The next thing there was a big explosion and fireball coming out of the second building.

"We knew then that we were under attack."

Amidst the confusion, a hasty evacuation plan was thrown into action. New York Governor George E Pataki was ushered into the ground floor, quickly followed by other staff in the building.

Theresa continues: "We were standing outside wondering 'What do we do now?'. We all knew that the trains were closed and we were wondering how we were going to get away.

"We went up on the street and then you heard like a rumbling and everybody turned to look at where the noise was coming from. At that moment the first tower started coming down. The firefighters there were saying 'run, run'. You could see this cloud of smoke and you don't think it is going to reach you.

"Everyone was in shock, we just stood there, then everyone just turned and ran.

"You were running along and we saw kids crying and shoes being left behind. There were a lot of people hugging each other. Even when we were running away from the smoke you saw them stopping for people who had fallen and picking them up."

"The smoke was everywhere. We just kept running and running, all these people, and then we just walked out of the city."



ABOVE: The second plane hits the World Trade Center.

LEFT: Louise Woods from Derrynoose, who was working in the World Trade Center at the time of the attack.

BELOW: Rescue workers sift through the rubble of the Twin Towers.



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Gazette's relationship with Armagh Show goes back to day one

THE Ulster Gazette and Armagh Show hold a long established relationship, going right back to our very first edition.

On the back page, the Ulster Gazette reported of the Armagh Agricultural Society and Cattle Show, "The public are already aware that a Society, bearing this name, has been recently established in the County of Armagh.

"We hail with satisfaction the formation of such societies, and rejoice in their growth, as we believe them eminently calculated to develop our agricultural resources – to promote an improved mode of foliage; and fur-

ther, to ameliorate the condition of the farming and labouring classes; and, by the united exertions of all for the common good, to confer the lasting benefits on our common country.

"We, therefore, take this early opportunity of tendering our best services, as public Journalists, in furtherance of those important and patriotic objects which such societies are designed to accomplish.

"Every communication, calculated to promote the interests of agriculture, will find a welcome reception in the columns of the Ulster Gazette; and we shall feel both pleasure

and pride in recording the progressive advancement and increasing usefulness to the one which has been established in Armagh."

The report added that the first Cattle Show had already been carried in some newspapers of the time, "but, in the published reports there were several omissions, which we take leave to fill up as alike necessary to a complete report of the show, and worthy the attention of all who feel an interest in the subject".

In for particular praise were His Grace the Lord Primate's Durham Stock (the pure short horns), "seven in number, namely six

heifers, of different ages, and a three year old bull of enormous dimensions, a perfect specimen of symmetry and early maturity".

Under the heading of 'Green Crops – Turnips', the Gazette felt "it our duty to call public attention" to His Grace the

Lord Primate's land steward, Mr Allen's Green-top Yellow Bullocks, described as "enormous specimens... they were nine in number and weighed, collectively, twenty-four stone, six pounds; a curiosity, in their way quite unparalleled."



Irish Street's flax market pictured in 1913.

From farm yards to farm yields

WHEN the Ulster Gazette was founded in 1844 its masthead included the description "Agricultural and Sporting Chronicle".

In today's world of specialisation, this combination and emphasis on farming and sport may seem strange. But 175 years ago sports reporting had a decidedly agricultural flavour, with horses common to both fields, as it were.

For the only sports covered in those days centred on the "big houses" and on those who controlled the land needed for such things as fox-hunting, steeple-chasing and hare-coursing. Reports and results from such events regularly appeared in the papers, along with column after column of advice for farmers on the latest products.

Since then, of course, farming in itself has also become specialised. The specialist farm business of today were not part of the agricultural scene in County Armagh 175 years ago. All farms had a number of enterprises, from cows, young stock, beef cattle, ewes, pigs, hens, ducks, geese, to potatoes, oats and possibly apples.

The potato, of course, was the central crop and while production figures for 175 years ago were not collated, a survey taken by the County Armagh Committee of Ag-

riculture (the forerunner of the Department of Agriculture in Co Armagh) at Mullaghbawn, South Armagh, in the early part of this century shows just how successful yields could be per acre.

Top varieties like Kerr's pink could yield 18 tonnes of saleable product per acre.

Around the same time poultry was big business and 200 would have been considered a large enterprise.

The county had its own instructor in poultry keeping and a 1920 report indicates just how important his role was. At places like Aghavilly and Lissummon audiences of up to 80 poultry keepers would attend his lectures. He also travelled to farms and agricultural shows to give demonstrations.

Lectures were illustrated by lantern views which aroused great interest among the farmers. Obviously these were found to be entertaining as well as instructive.

Among responsibilities taken on by the County Committee of Agriculture was the promotion of Armagh as the Orchard County. The question here is just how much the County's reputation as Ireland's Orchard owes to early work done on field trials on such things as "scab".

Reports of one test carried out then suggests the com-

mittee's work - if you'll excuse the pun - bore fruit. The methodology, although sounding as crude as the television dandruff advert, produced impressive results.

In a small private garden of six Bramley seedling trees one half was sprayed and the other untouched. The first application of Bordeaux mixture was applied just before the flowers opened and a second when the fruit had set and a third three weeks later. When the fruit was pulled all the apples that showed a trace of "scab" were separated from the clean fruit and each lot weighed.

The sprayed trees produced 88 lbs of scab free fruit, compared to just 13 lbs from unsprayed trees. It was such a successful test that the committee went on to produce a "Spraying Calendar" copies of which they sent out free to growers.

But while farming today would be unrecognizable to those earlier generations, details from the syllabus of winter classes in Kilmore and Mullaghbawn, at the turn of the century, reveal one striking consistency. Book-keeping was so strongly emphasized that it suggests young farmers of the early 1900s, like their counterparts today, tried to avoid "book-work".

Blue skies as Prince confirmed what everyone already knew

BLUE skies greeted Prince Charles on his first ever visit to Armagh in 1994 to confer officially what everyone already knew - that Armagh is a city.

The Ulster Gazette of Thursday, July 14 that year said the announcement was received with up-roarious applause from the VIP audience at Armagh Royal School. It ended years of lobbying for various quarters, and prior to the announcement there had been in an intense drive by the Armagh District Council.

"The great worry that the Prince may not come was swept away by the breeze from the Prince's Wessex helicopter as it landed at the Royal School's playing fields," the Gazette report stated.

"There had been misapprehension that the security leak of the Royal visit could mean cancellation.

"And there was disappointment at the Navan Centre which was scheduled to receive the Prince at the launch of the Armagh Passport.

"Amid frantic security the venue was changed to the Armagh Royal School.

"And finally there was touch-down with the Prince greeted at the helicopter by the Queen's Lord Lieutenant of Armagh, the Earl of Caledon, who in turn introduced His Grace, Archbishop Dr Robert Eames, Chairman of the school's board of governors.

"Dr Eames in turn introduced Mrs Esther Hamilton, deputy principal and Mr Jack Moore, bursar of the school.

"The party then walked the short distance to the school buildings where the Lord Lieutenant introduced Mr James Lamb, sheriff of County Armagh, Councillor Jim Nicholson MEP, Chairman of the Armagh City Council, and Mr Desmond Mitchell, clerk to the council.

"Inside the school, the Prince was given a briefing on the archaeological and mythological story of Navan by Brian Musgrave of the Navan Centre and Dr Ann Hamilton, Principal Inspector of Historic Monuments, using a splendid display of photographs."



Prince Charles in discussion with Lord Caledon and Archbishop Eames during his visit to the Armagh Royal School. SG2788

How Armagh lost and won its city status

ARMAGH has been known as a city for centuries, and even in ancient times it was the capital of the King of Ulster.

However it lost its status in 1840.

The earliest known reference to Armagh as a city is in notes complied by Muirchu on St Patrick's foundation of the church in Armagh.

The notes date back to 7th Century from around the year 660AD, and are in the book of Armagh which is housed with the famous book of Kells in Trinity College, Dublin.

At the bottom of the page in Armagh is the sentence (translated): "and that is the city which I know called Armagh".

In the book of the angel, which is also contained within the book of Armagh and is usually taken to

date from the eighth century but was composed at least before 808 AD, Armagh is usually called an Urbs which also means city.

In the famous inscription written into the book of Armagh when Brian Boru, High king of Ireland, visited Armagh in 1004, there is reference to the "Apoltolae urbique scotice nominatur ardmachu" or the apostolic city which in Irish is called Ard Machu.

Armagh had always believed that it is a city by prescriptive right, or by traditional usage, for Armagh is so described as early reign of Henry III when in 1226 or 1227 he requested the then Archbishop to give him a site for a castle for the better security for the city, and it was frequently referred by that title in the medieval registers of the

Archbishops of Armagh which start about 1350.

Armagh had been governed by Charter over a long period. In 1840, however, all the boroughs were dissolved and Armagh was governed a city commissioners instead of the sovereign and burgesses.

An act of 1840 empowered the Queen to re-incorporate towns in Ireland with a population of over 3,500 by which Armagh could have restored its city status, but only Wexford availed itself of this chance.

In 1994, when Armagh was officially given its city status, the district council area took in the surrounding towns such as Tandragee, Markethill, Richhill, Keady and various villages.

At that time, local people and particularly Armagh council had been campaigning for many

years for the formal recognition of Armagh. They had always referred to Armagh as a city through traditional usages, not least because of its important position as the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland with two cathedrals and the seats of the catholic Cardinal of all Ireland and the Church of Ireland Primate of all Ireland.

The story of Armagh's city status took another twist when the former Armagh City and District Council merged with its neighbours in Craigavon and Banbridge in 2015 during the reforms of local government, with the new council becoming known as Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council. The word 'city' was reinstated to that title in February 2016.

The changing face of local government

Councillor Gareth Wilson gives us an overview into the changing face of councils.

LOCAL government has changed dramatically in the last decade with the old Armagh City & District Council merging with Craigavon and Banbridge Councils to form what was termed a new 'super council'.

This process was authorised via the Review of Public Administration and reduced what was originally 26 local Councils to 11 under the new arrangements.

This was a significant change and presented many challenges, not only for Councillors adjusting to larger District Electoral Areas, but for lots of staff too who faced new challenges and bigger work loads across a large new rural Borough.

The new Council has completed its first full term of operation and in May past entered a second term after electing 41 Councillors. Many of the new structures have bedded in well and the

role of a Councillor in these new arrangements is certainly busier than ever before.

I chaired the first year of the Planning Committee back in 2015 which was a great and also challenging experience. The new 11 Councils were handed the planning portfolio from central government and whilst it was a steep learning curve with lots of training, I feel it has bedded in excellently. A facility where the public has the opportunity to come before the committee - either to support their own application or object to an application and be listened to by a multi party committee is an important step forward.

ABC Council has many exciting projects underway at present such as the new South Lakes Leisure Centre, ambitious programs to support and develop the local economy and many other important works. Local Council has a vital part to play in democracy and I look forward to the term ahead and to the opportunities and challenges that will be presented.



Mr Jim Nicholson, then chairman of Armagh District Council, eagerly awaits the opportunity to meet Prince Charles as the Prince is greeted by Mr Des Mitchell, clerk of Armagh District Council, at the steps of Armagh Royal School.

Villagers and City boys fly the flag

LOUGHGALL FC occupy pride of place in the annals of football history in this area.

In view of their trophy achievements, how could it be otherwise? They have, after all, played in the Irish League's Premiership and currently they play one rung down from that.

They have also won three NIFL Championships, four Irish League 'B' Division titles, two Mid-Ulster Cups, a brace Intermediate Cups, a dozen Bob Radcliffe Cups and have been Mid-Ulster League Division 1 winners on five occasions.

And currently they are vying with neighbouring Portadown FC for leadership of the Bluefin Sport Championship in the hope of gaining automatic promotion back to the top flight.

But competitive soccer in the Armagh area can be traced all the way back to the early years of the 'Association' version of football – and here another local club comes right to the fore; Milford, Milford Everton or Armagh City – take your pick.

In November 1880, five Belfast clubs – Avoneil, Cliftonville, Distillery, Knock, and Oldpark – were joined by Alexander of Limavady and Moyola Park from Castledawson to form the IFA which would organise, govern and oversee the then-new game throughout Ireland.

Hereabouts, with one William McCrum having decided to form a club named Milford, they emerged as standard-bearers. They emerged as a force, too, winning the inaugural Mid-Ulster Cup in 1887/88 and retaining it the following season.

And when, in 1890, the Irish League came into being, Milford took their place alongside seven other clubs – Linfield, Glentoran, Distillery,

Cliftonville, Oldpark, Clarence and Ulster.

However, the locals' place in such company was soon called into question, for in addition to the fact that they were based 40 miles from Belfast, results did nothing to suggest that they were good enough to hold their own: Glentoran beat them 8-0, Linfield won 6-1 and Distillery were 9-1 victors – all in Milford.

With a record of played 18, lost 18, the locals left the Irish League with their tails between their legs, although they did continue to participate in the Irish Cup and Intermediate Cup, they never returned to those loftier league heights. Instead they lined out in the Lonsdale League. Their home pitch

was Railway Park, which many believe went on to become re-named Holm Park.

The two World Wars wrought havoc with sport, of course, and few records of Milford's affairs survive. But what is known is that in 1964/65 – the days of The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, Matt Busby's Manchester United winning the First Division and Bill Shankly's Liverpool winning their first-ever FA Cup – Milford reappeared – with the name 'Everton' attached for the first time.

In '75 they were elected to play in the Irish League B Division's South Section. And today, in the club's current disposition as Armagh City FC, they compete in the Premier Intermediate League, the Irish

Cup and the Intermediate Cup. And Holm Park definitely is 'home'.

Other Armagh-based teams have been – and still are – plentiful, with a two of them, Armagh Blues and Armagh Celtic, retaining the Primatial City's name.

Others Mid-Ulster clubs from this locality include Laurelvale, Richhill AFC, Tandragee Rovers, Markethill Swifts, Tullyvallen, Caledon Rovers, Keady Celtic and United LT, in addition to whom Rectory Rangers – despite originating in Portadown – play in Armagh.

As well as that, the Lonsdale League caters for a number of teams from the Armagh area.



Milford FC pictured in the 1913-14 season. It was in this era that R G McCrum solved the problem of foul play preventing goals being scored, with his invention of the penalty kick.

A time to reflect on GAA's past successes

WHEN the Gazette was born all those 175 years ago, Ireland was in the grip of the Famine, a harrowing time for many, from whom many valuable lessons have been passed on about the values of life.

But amidst the hardship and pain of the Famine, gaelic games of a sort were played, pledging activities which spawned Ireland's most participated-in sport today.

Fr. Dan Gallogly in his book on the Cavan Football Story, wrote of the times, pre-GAA: "It was a hay ball that was kicked. The hay ball, when wet, was very heavy and men were often injured when they got a good blow of the ball. The ball was about the size of a size six ball. A pig's bladder was used, smoked in the chimney for three days."

Philip Smith from the Cavan/Meath border, gave the description of the game as: "It was all goals that counted. There was no referee, no fouls, frees or penalties. You could not lift the ball or run with it. You could be lifted with a hand and foot and no remarks passed."

According to Mickey Brennan, a Tullywinney Sarsfield (Whitecross) veteran: "There were no spectators and the oldest and most bearded man there was the maddest to get a crack at the ball".

Brother O'Cathnna in his epic, the Story of Hurling, wrote of hurling traditions in South Armagh: "They used to play commons (hurling) with an old whin root and a wooden ball. That would be around 1865.

"The only sticks they ever used were those they pulled out of a hedge with crooked roots on them."

But ultimately out of

the despair of the time came hope for tomorrow and the GAA was founded on November 1884, in Hayes' Hotel, Thurles, for the preservation and cultivation of National pastimes.

The use of the word Blanes is derived from Alexander Blane, an Armagh City tailor, who was a Parwellite MP and president of Armagh Harps in 1889.

Co Armagh did not take part in the first All-Ireland senior football final but finalists, Dundalk Young Ireland, had James Campbell from Milltown, Lurgan, in their team, who thus became the first Ulsterman to play in an All-Ireland final. It is reputed, although no newspaper record exists, that Crossmaglen Red Hands won the first Co Armagh senior championship in 1887, receiving a walk over from Keady's John Dillons.

After a decline, due to political turmoil, the first County Board was set up in 1889 with nine clubs present, including Clady Healy's, Ballymacarrett Davitts, Dorsey Red Hughs, Tullysaran O'Connells, Keady Dillons, Bessbrook Dillons, Tullywinney Sarsfields and Armagh Harps.

Armagh Harps recorded Armagh's first Ul-

ster Senior Championship, beating Cookstown 2-8 to 1-2 in the final, before losing to Cork in the All-Ireland final.

By 1904 new clubs like Armagh Shamrocks, Armagh Tir Na Nog, Madden Crieve Rua, and Mullaghbawn Wolfe Tones had joined the Association. In 1906 William McKillop, Glasgow, Nationalist M.P. for South Armagh, presented his famous cup as new clubs Silverbridge Harps, Tullyvallen Emmets and Keady Dwyers joined the rank.

After more than a decade of confusion and little activity on the playing fields, Armagh Junior footballers brought the first All-Ireland title of any grade into Ulster in 1926.

Local men on that team were John Vallely, Joe Harney, Jack Corrigan, Frank McAvinchey, John Donaghy, John McCusker, Hugh Arthurs, and Gerry Arthurs. Architects of this great victory were Jim Cooney, John McGerrigan (Armagh)

and Gene Hanratty (Crossmaglen).

History was made in 2002 when Sam Maguire finally made it to Armagh. A stunning second-half display saw a resilient Armagh side come from four points down to beat pre-match favourites Kerry by 1-12 to 0-14 in a thrilling Bank of Ireland All-Ireland football final at Croke Park.

If ever there was a game of two halves this was it, with The Kingdom completely dominating the opening 35.

But, at half time, Kerry were kept waiting on the pitch for almost five minutes as Armagh manager Kernan delivered his half-time speech, and he must have been very wise with his choice of words as the Orchard County returned for the second-half a different side.

Indeed Armagh overwhelmed the Kingdom with a powerful second-half display that turned with Oisin McConville's 55th minute goal.

Since the 1930s, it is true to say that gaelic in

Armagh has flourished. County Armagh represents one of the premier counties in Ireland in the promotion of football, hurling, camogie, handball, dance and traditional music, with thriving clubs in each of these spheres of Irish culture.

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Howzat for a history? Cricket club is 160 years old

WITH a history almost as long as the Ulster Gazette's, Armagh Cricket Club's successes and otherwise have been covered in great detail within the pages of this publication.

Unlike many clubs which have played on more than one ground, Armagh CC is unusual in that the ground pre-dated the club by 14 years. The Mall was first used for cricket in 1845 while the club itself was formed in 1859.

The club mostly played friendly games until they played their first competitive game in 1889 in the NCU Senior Cup, in which they were amongst the first entrants.

A year later they reached their first Senior Cup final, making the decider again in 1892.

The club entered the Senior League from 1899 to 1902 and the County Armagh League in 1903 before reverting to a programme of friendly games and occasionally a Senior Cup match. Since 1912 Armagh CC has played in an NCU League in every season apart from the War years. 1952 was a milestone year for the club as they reached the NCU Senior Cup Final for the last time and were relegated from the Senior League for the first time.

Every club has their legends and Armagh is no different. In 1958 Leslie Spearman scored 140 not out in a senior

league game against Milford, the highest score of all time by an Armagh player. The club's best bowling figures were achieved by Hampton Ewart in 1972, when he took nine wickets for 10 runs against Portadown.

In 2009 Reggie Stinson announced his retirement after scoring 7754 runs and taking 1169 wickets (71 in his best season) in 597 NCU games.

The club has produced a number of internationals as well, starting in 1926 when Charles Raynor became the first Armagh player to play for Ireland. In 1930 Wilfred McDonough and Bobby Barnes were capped in an Ireland side which also included ex-Armagh player Tom Ward, and in 1937 Jackie Barnes won an Ireland cap.

Then, in 1968, Ivan Anderson was selected as captain of Ireland while playing for the club.

Billy Irwin, Lloyd Armstrong, Wesley Ferris and Paul McCrum joined Armagh after being capped by Ireland while playing for Waringstown; Armstrong and McCrum gained further caps while with Armagh.

Lawrie Millar played for New Zealand after playing for Armagh, while Armagh professionals Ashok Malhotra, Ashok Mankad, Azhar Khan, Yash Pal Sharma and Zahid Ahmed played for their respective countries before playing for Armagh.



The Mall has been the home of cricket in Armagh since 1845.

Rugby club proud to be part of community

CITY of Armagh Rugby Club is one of the oldest clubs in Ireland with the accepted date of the club's foundation being recognised as 1875.

A shortage of players led to a break in activities in the late 1890s but the club re-emerged after a couple of years and went on to a rare double in 1910 winning the Town's and Junior Cups in the same season.

In 1920, after five years inactivity during the war years, Armagh entered the Senior League for two seasons but returned to junior ranks and had a great period of success with five cups being won between 1928 and 1939 and three sides being put out on the field.

Armagh player, Bobby Barnes, then at Trinity College Dublin achieved a rare double, when in 1933 he played for Armagh in the Town's Cup in January and for Ireland against Wales in March, being on the winning side on both occasions.

After the wartime break, Armagh went on to win the Town's Cup in 1947. Other cup victories include the Town's cup in 1951 and 1971, Junior Cup 1965 and Past Player's Cup in 1958 and 1965.

By 1961 the necessity to acquire new playing facilities was more and more apparent. A new pavilion was built on The Mall to accommodate both the Cricket and Rugby clubs in 1964 but the pitch remained a problem due to poor drainage.

Following major fundraising by club members over several years, a brand new clubhouse was built at the Palace Grounds with the first game played at the new venue on September 8, 1973.

Three Prunty sand-based pitches were laid and training lights installed. Originally The Mall was to be used as a spare pitch but inevitably everything was centralised at The Palace Grounds.

With six teams turning out (and an occasional seventh side), all the new pitches were fully occupied and thoughts turned to promotion to senior status. Not until 1981 was that goal achieved. The club maintained senior status until 1997 when the First XV returned to junior ranks.

In recent years success continued at junior level on and off the pitch with City of Armagh winning promotion back into senior rugby in 2011.

That season saw the start of massive progress from senior sides, youth sides, minis and ladies' teams resulting in the club being awarded Ulster Club of the Year. This award was won again in season 2017-18.

The club's hard working volunteers were rewarded with the much valued Club Excellence Award from the IRFU. The club has also achieved Sport NI's Clubmark status.

Since 2011, the Club's First XV has won three promotions in the All Ireland League and is currently playing at the highest level ever in the club's history in Division 1B. This has all been achieved by having strong foundations in youth rugby and the vast majority of Armagh players are local boys with many coming from the Royal School but also from right across the community.

Overall, last season was a great success both on and off the field with the First XV retaining the Senior Cup, reaching the Bateman Cup Final and securing their place in All-Ireland League 1B.

The Second XV won both their leagues, while the Thirds and Fourths fulfilled all their fixtures, having recorded some great results along the way.

The Mini and Youth sections continue to flourish. The Under 14s won their league and achieved the double by lifting the Ulster Carpets Cup at the Kingspan Stadium.

The Under 18s finished runners-up in their league and then lifted the Nutty Krust Trophy for the third year in succession.

The ladies section continues to grow with teams at all underage levels. Several of the girls received representative honours with Ulster and we had Jenna Corkey in the Ireland's 7s squad.

Off-field progress has seen the club's development plans progress as full planning approval has now been obtained. This plan will provide a state of the art clubhouse and re-modelled pitches and the club is currently undertaking a major Development Draw to raise funds for the project.

City of Armagh Rugby Club continues to be at the heart of the local community and will mark its 150th anniversary in 2025.



A photograph by Allison Studio of the victorious Armagh double-winning side in 1910, as it appeared in the Gazette. The team was: WA Burges, PA Watson, JB Whitsitt, JI Lee, RVE Deacon, AR Nunns, WE Andrews, CE Watson, JWilton, W Sproule, R Whitsitt (captain), PD Huston, SC Walsh and G Binns (Secretary).



City of Armagh Rugby Club lift the Senior Cup, one half of their double-winning season in 2017-18, after beating Ballymena at the Kingspan Stadium. The squad also won the Towns Cup in that campaign.