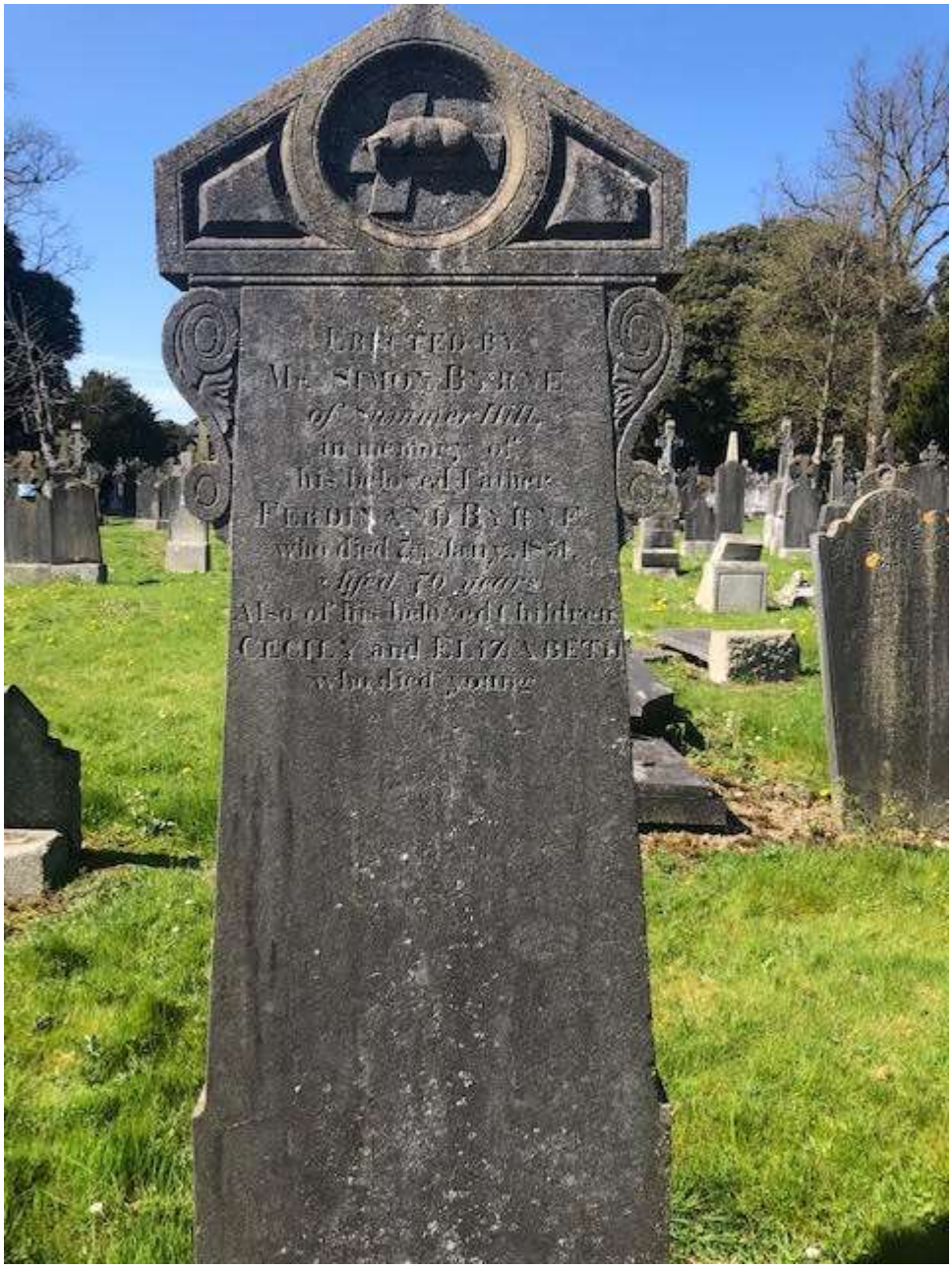
The Byrne Identity: The Wicklow Background of Joyce's Cranly

"Up in his Hat", an article in the 2020 edition of this journal outlined the strange life and career of John Francis Byrne (1880-1960), a second-generation Wicklow man and a contemporary of James Joyce at Belvedere College, Dublin, and UCD. He became one of Joyce's closest friends and the model for the character Cranly in Joyce's novels. His residence during 1908-1910, at No. 7 Eccles Street, Dublin, became the fictional residence of Leopold and Molly Bloom in Joyce's *Ulysses*. Interest in Byrne over the years has tended to focus on his friendship with Joyce and in his portrayal as a character in Joyce's novels, but in recent decades his reputation has spread internationally among a very different constituency. For most of his adult life, Byrne was fascinated by the science of cryptography. He invented a system of encryption, using a device called the Chaocipher which he had invented and which he believed would make his fortune and establish his fame. These hopes were unrealised in his own lifetime. Since his death, however, and in a digital age, Byrne and his Chaocipher have attracted the attention of cryptologists. "Up In His Hat" dealt extensively with Byrne's account of the summers he spent in the Fogarty household at Carrigmore, between Wicklow and Glenealy, from the age of six until just before he emigrated to the United States in 1910, and the question of whether Joyce spent time with him there. Byrne's account of his time in Wicklow occupies a full chapter in his autobiography, *Silent Years,* and is a fascinating record of life in Wicklow in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. "Up in His Hat" also dealt with Byrne's more recent and remarkable posthumous rediscovery as the inventor of the Chaocipher. The present article delves more deeply into Byrne's family background in Wicklow and Dublin, and the family background of his first wife, Mary Alice Headen (1882-1961). Byrne is a fascinating character in his own right but the circumstances of his family's move from Wicklow to Dublin mirror the experiences of many thousands of Wicklow families during a period of massive migration between the two neighbouring counties.

According to his autobiography, Byrne was the youngest child of Brigid and Matthew Byrne and was born on 12 February 1880 at 25 East Essex Street, Dublin. The autobiography states that Matthew Byrne had farmed three properties in Co. Wicklow, at Knockfadda and Knockadreith, both near Roundwood, and at Cronroe, near Ashford, until around the year 1875, when the family moved to Dublin following a fire at one of these properties. Matthew's older brother, Simon, had moved to Dublin some years previously and had been very successful in the provisioning trade. The trade directories and valuation lists show Simon Byrne operating a dairy in the Summerhill area of Dublin and holding grazing lands in North County Dublin. His name appears frequently in the newspapers of the day as representing dairying interests, and in subscription lists, supporting various charitable endeavours. In fact, the extended Byrne families, like many families of Wicklow origin, seem to have been present in both Wicklow and Dublin over much of the 19th century, both in the city of Dublin and in rural Wicklow.

Matthew's and Simon's father, Ferdinand Byrne, who was known as "Fari" to his friends, seems to have been farming in the area between Kilquade and Roundwood in the early to mid-19th century. The Tithe Applotment Book for the area in 1837 records a Widow Byrne occupying 18 acres in Knockfadda. This may have been Ferdinand's mother. A police report of 1 October 1839 records that an outhouse belonging to Ferdinand Byrne of "Knockfodder", Parish of Newcastle, was maliciously burned by persons unknown. The report states that Byrne had taken land from which another man had been evicted. [1] Byrne's name also appears in Bray Petty Sessions Court books in August 1841 among those who, at the Petty Sessions held at Newtownmountkennedy, were deemed to have defaulted on their County Cess.[2] However, at the time of his death in January 1851, Ferdinand Byrne was living in East Essex Street, Dublin, and it seems that his Dublin connections

had existed over the course of his life. He had apparently been a friend of Robert Emmet, and had witnessed Emmet's trial and execution in Dublin in 1803. According to Byrne family lore, just prior to his death, Emmet had entrusted to Fari Byrne an item of sentimental significance to be delivered to his beloved, Sarah Curran, and Byrne had succeeded in delivering this. When John Francis Byrne was introduced to Emmet's grand-nephew, Thomas Addis Emmet, in New York in 1913 and told him about this family tradition, Emmet confirmed that he had heard this story as a child: "Some young man brought Sarah a package from Robert just before his murder, and my recollection is that the name of the young man was Fari Byrne". [3]



Headstone erected by Simon Byrne in Glasnevin Cemetery, 1851, in memory of his father, "Fari" Byrne. The inscription reads "Erected by Mr. Simon Byrne of Summerhill in loving memory of his beloved father Ferdinand Byrne who died 7th January 1851 aged 70 years, also his daughters, Cecily and Elizabeth who died young" . Photo taken in 2022 by Lynn Brady, Dublin Cemeteries Trust. Thanks also to Jacinta Byrne who helped to locate this memorial from photos taken by her late husband,

Declan Byrne. Cecily and Elizabeth were Simon Byrne's daughters who died in infancy. The grave number is MG122.5, Garden Section. There are approximately 25,000 Byrnes buried in Glasnevin Cemetery! (information from Lynn Brady, Dublin Cemeteries Trust)

According to the headstone over his grave in Glasnevin Cemetery erected by his son, Simon, Ferdinand Byrne was aged 70 when he died in 1851 . The registers of Wicklow Catholic parish record his marriage to Cecily Meath on 10 September 1804. According to Declan Byrne, who was distantly related to these families and wrote about them in *Wicklow Roots*, Cecily was the daughter of Matthew Meade, or Meath, of Rossanagh and Brigid Turner of Killiskey who married in 1778. Cecily's sister, Brigid, married Michael Fogarty of Carrigmore, thus establishing the link between the Fogarty and Byrne families, which was the reason that John Francis Byrne spent his summers as a child and young man on the Fogarty farm. Matthew Meade was the son of Bryan Meade of Rossanagh. Brigid was the daughter of Loughlin and Judy Turner of Killiskey and was born in 1779. Ferdinand and Cecilia Byrne seem to have settled at Knockfadda, just outside Roundwood, and to have had at least four children: Simon, who became a successful dairyman and provision merchant based in Summerhill in Dublin, Matthew, who was born ca. 1819-1820 and died in 1883, Peter, who died at 25 East Essex Street in Dublin in 1864 aged 40 or 45 and was buried in the same plot in Glasnevin as Fari, and Mary, born ca. 1809 who married Andrew Fleming in Wicklow in June 1844 and had two daughters, Cecily who was born in Wicklow August 1845, and baptised in Wicklow Parish, and Mary who was born in Dublin in 1847, after Andrew's death, and was baptised in St. Andrew's Church, Westland Row. Mary's daughters, Cecily and Mary, were the Fleming cousins who raised John Francis Byrne and followed him to America in 1912. (Byrne always referred to Cecily as "Cicely", but the orthodox spelling is used throughout here). Another child of Ferdinand and Cecilia Byrne who moved to Dublin may have been the Thomas Byrne who married an Anne Loughlin and whose own child, Ferdinand, was baptised in St. Michan's Parish, Dublin, on 10 August 1856, one of the sponsors being the young Cecily Fleming. There may also have been another daughter, Margaret. A person of this name married a Patrick Donnelly in Kilquade on 24 November 1846. A Patrick Donnelly of 25 East Essex Street died in 1864 and was buried in one of the Byrne family plots in Glasnevin. The informant of Matthew's death in December 1883 was described as his niece "Anne McDonald" but she signed with a mark so it is possible that McDonald was recorded in error for Donnelly. For half a century, therefore, from at least as early as 1851, East Essex Street was home to several generations of the Byrne family of Knockfadda, and it is likely that there were family connections with this street from much earlier in the century. The three addresses associated with the family in this street were number 25, where Ferdinand died in 1851, and where Matthew and Bridget Byrne lived from the late 1860s until after Matthew's death in 1883, number 20, directly across the street on the North side, where Cecily and Mary Fleming lived until 1903, and number 27 where Peter Byrne, Matthew's son by his first marriage, died in 1895 at the age of 35, and where Brigid Byrne, Matthew's widow, died in 1893.

Brigid Byrne, born in Carrigeenduff, Co. Wicklow, 1841, died Dublin 1893. Photo courtesy of family of J.F. Byrne

Silent Years states that of Matthew Byrne's three farms in Wicklow, at Knockfadda, Knockadreet and Cronroe, the farm at Cronroe was said to be the best, but had been completely wiped out by fire around 1875, at which point he moved his family to Dublin. In fact, the Primary Valuation (Griffith's Valuation) for these areas (1854) seems to indicate that Matthew farmed mainly at Knockfadda, where his father had also farmed, and indicates that the property at Cronroe comprised only a house and less than an acre. However, it may be that Matthew had moved his farming activities nearer to Cronroe when work was in progress on the construction of the Vartry Reservoir. [4] Byrne mentions that when he was sent away as a child from the unhealthy conditions of Dublin to spend his summers in the open air, two of the farms where he was always welcome were the Bryan farm at Ticlash and the Neale farm at Bonalee (Bonalea). Bonalea, just outside Ashford, adjoins Cronroe. Byrne is quite specific in stating that the origin of the fire was the same as the reputed origin of the Great Fire of Chicago (a cow kicking over an oil lamp). [5] The date of 1875 for the family's move to Dublin not correct, as Civil Registration records show Matthew and Brigid living at 25 Essex Street from as early as 1869.

Matthew Byrne, who was born around 1820, married twice. His first marriage, to Mary Cunniam, was recorded in the Wicklow Catholic parish registers in 1848. The first marriage produced at least

four children; three sons, including John (born ca. 1858, died 1877), Peter (born ca. 1860, died 1895) and a daughter, Cecily, who was born in 1852. Matthew's first wife died shortly after the birth of their third son, Peter, in 1860, and he married again the following year. Matthew's second marriage, to Brigid Byrne, is recorded in the registers of Kilquade as having taken place on 16 November 1861.

Byrne stated in *Silent Years* that Glendalough was his mother's birthplace. Although Brigid Byrne was indeed born in the parish of Glendalough, this was a sprawling parish that covered a wide mountainous area, and Brigid's parents lived in a remote part of it at Carrigeenduff, in one of six cottages that formed a cluster, or clachan, close to lough Dan. It was an isolated settlement, the ruins of which can be reached today only by means of a lengthy trek along a mountain path, and was to become the scene of a tragic, but rare event in an Irish context, in March 1867, when an avalanche resulted in the deaths of a young woman, Maria Smith, nee Somers, and her two infant children, Michael and James, occupants of one of the cottages which was buried during the snows of that winter. [6] The cottagers who lived in Carrigeenduff seem to have operated a communal system of farming, strips of land which were occupied jointly being allocated among the joint tenants to grow their crops, mostly potatoes. [7] The vast expanse of mountain heath on which their sheep grazed was also rented in common from the Hugos, several generations of whom had lived in what became Glendalough House at Drumeen near Annamoe. This part of the estate was sold to Thomas Johnston Barton in 1838, beginning its long association with the Barton/Childers family, but the Hugos continued as landlords of vast tracts of land for many years to come. Their holdings amounted to over 20,000 acres, placing them among the ten biggest landowners in Co. Wicklow. [8] One of them, Thomas Hugo, who died in 1809, had been the nemesis of the rebel "General" Joseph Holt during the 1798 Rebellion and its aftermath and had a reputation as an oppressive landlord and a tyrant of the counter-insurgency Although he was denounced in Holt's Memoir, his name was suppressed by Thomas Crofton Croker, the editor of the only version of the memoir published in the 19th Century It is evident from narratives of the rebellion in Wicklow noted down from local accounts by the Carmelite friar, Luke Cullen, a native of Little Bray, that Hugo's reputation in Wicklow was one of cruelty. The Bartons and the Childers recounted stories told to them by locals later in the century concerning Hugo's reputation for taking advantage of the wives and daughters of his tenantry . It is likely that these accounts received some considerable embellishment over the years. [9]

Brigid Byrne, Matthew's second wife, whose baptism is recorded in the Glendalough registers as taking place on 31 May 1841 at Carrigeenduff, was one of at least seven children born to John Byrne and Brigid Mason. She was twenty-one years younger than Mathew when they married in 1861. Living in such an isolated place, she received no formal schooling and remained illiterate all her life, signing her name with a mark on all official documents. She may have been a servant on one of the many large estates or farms in the Roundwood/Newtownmountkennedy area before marrying the recently widowed Matthew Byrne of Knockfadda. They went on to add many more children to the family that Matthew had started with his first wife.

The Kilquade parish registers record the baptism of a Mark Byrne, child of Matthew and Brigid Byrne of Knockfadda, on 5 November 1863. Although the register has been checked and the name Mark confirmed, it is possible that this was an erroneous entry for Mary as there is no memory of a Mark Byrne and there is a memory of a Mary or Polly. Anne Byrne's name appears in the Kilquade register as having been baptised on 13 or 17 April 1865. She seems to have been the last of the children to have been born at Knockfadda. James was born at Brockagh on 13 August 1867. It is significant

that on this registration Matthew's occupation is described for the first time as a labourer rather than as a farmer. The first of the children to be born in Dublin was Catherine, who was born on 25 February 1869 at 25 East Essex Street. Patrick Bernard Byrne was born at the same address on 23 March 1876 and John Francis was recorded as being born there on 12 February 1880. What is extraordinary is how many of these children died at an early age and also that this extraordinary incidence of mortality in his family was not mentioned in Byrne's autobiography. Patrick died from measles aged only 15 months in 1877. Anne died from phthisis, aged 15, in July 1880, just months after John was born. Mary died in her early twenties (or perhaps even younger) from pericarditis caused by rheumatism, in November 1881. Catherine died from endocarditis brought on by rheumatism, in March 1888 before she was 19. It has not been discovered if James survived beyond infancy or childhood but he is not mentioned by Byrne. Byrne's half-brother, Peter, died aged 35 from a cerebral haemorrhage caused by epilepsy in October 1895 (the only sibling death that is recorded in *Silent Years*). The John Byrne who died of consumption on 3 May 1877, aged 19, at 20 East Essex Street, and who was buried in the family plot in Glasnevin was probably another half-brother. Many of these diseases were associated with poverty and were probably a consequence of the damp, crowded, and insanitary living conditions that many families like the Byrnes endured in the Dublin of the time. Matthew died suddenly in December 1883 when John was only three, the cause of death recorded as heart disease . Brigid Byrne herself died of bronchitis at the age of fifty-two in 1893 when John was only thirteen. Byrne mentions in his autobiography that he himself fell victim to typhoid fever twice while he lived with Mary and Cecily at 20 East Essex Street in the 1890s, and that Mary had also been stricken with typhoid. The tenants who shared number 20 also shared an outside toilet with the occupants of two other houses. Death at an early age was not unusual at this time, however, even among more affluent people in Dublin. John's uncle, Simon Byrne, who seems to have been a moderately wealthy man, himself lost two infant children aged only 9 months and 5 months in 1851 and 1852.

Matthew's move to Dublin had not proved as successful as that of his older brother and he seems to have struggled to make a living there. In official documents created following the move, Matthew is usually described as a labourer. One notable exception to this is John's own amended birth registration on which Matthew's occupation was first recorded in 1880 as a labourer but then amended in 1892 to "shopkeeper", following a sworn declaration made to the Registrar by Brigid Byrne. At the time, John was about to enter Belvedere College and it is likely that Mary Fleming had persuaded Brigid to make the sworn statement in order to have the cert amended. Brigid was within months of her own death at the time. Elaine Byrne in her article on J.F. Byrne in *Wicklow Roots* suggests that this was done because the son of a labourer would not have been admitted to Belvedere College. [10] For whatever reason, it seems that before Brigid's death it became very important to have this and other details of the registration amended. On his own death record in 1883, Mathew was described by his niece as an engine man, probably indicating that he was a machine operator. On the death cert of his daughter, Anne, in 1880 for which the informant was his daughter, Catherine, he is described as a flour porter It is interesting that in official documents signed by his wife, Brigid (always with a mark), Matthew is usually described as a labourer. On the many official documents signed by Mary Fleming, Matthew is usually described as a provision dealer. On Brigid's own death certificate for which Mary Fleming was the informant, Brigid was also described as a provision dealer. When Matthew's son, Patrick died in 1877, Matthew was described by his wife on the death record as a labourer, but when the burial was recorded in the Glasnevin

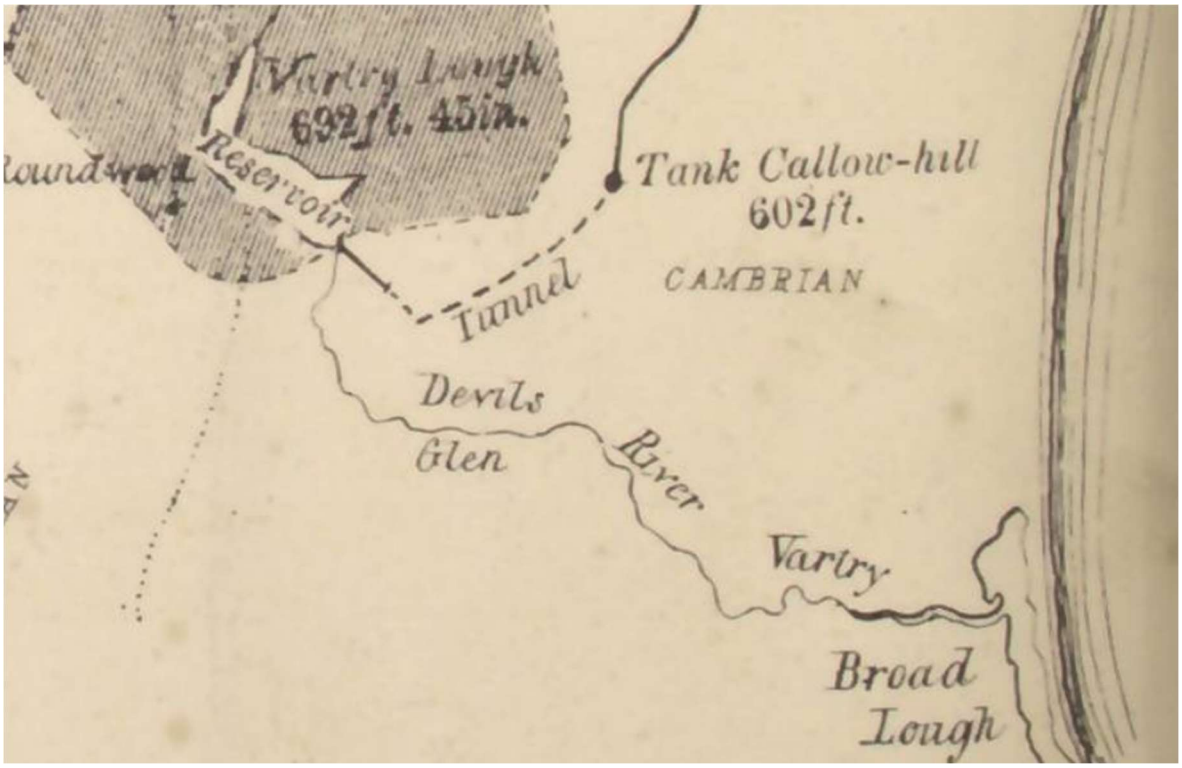
records by Mary Fleming, Matthew was described as a provision dealer. It seems that Mary Fleming, who had a sharp business sense and was ambitious, was also conscious of social status and the role it might play in the future career of the young boy whose upbringing and education became her obsession.

Byrne believed that Matthew's move to Dublin had come about because of a fire, but while a fire may have been the immediate cause of the move, other factors were probably present. Most of Matthew's farming endeavours seem to have been based on the nineteen acres he leased at Knockfadda. The lands were let by the Gun Cuninghames of Newtownmountkennedy who owned much of the lands around Roundwood. When Matthew quit the farm, it was taken over by his neighbour, Samuel Edge, another tenant of the Gun Cuninghames. [11]

In the 1860s, Roundwood became the location of one of the most massive engineering projects carried out in these islands during the entire nineteenth century. This was the construction of the Vartry Reservoir which was to supply much of Dublin's water for the next one and a half centuries. The Vartry project was possibly the greatest engineering project in Ireland in these years. Hundreds, if not thousands, of workers were involved in its construction and drafted in from all over Ireland and Britain. As described in Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary* of the 1830s, Roundwood was a quiet village of nineteen houses, a popular stopping off point for visitors exploring its scenic surroundings and heading for The Seven Churches, or Glendalough. It was surrounded by farms and a population that had been in the area for generations, or who had come from neighbouring localities. As late as mid-century there was a hedge school in the townland of Knockfadda. [12] All this changed with the beginning of the Vartry project in the early 1860s. The area became a boom town, with all the attendant benefits and less-beneficial features of a gold rush. Vast armies of nomadic workers followed the public works. Their boisterous, and occasionally riotous, lifestyles were very different from those of the indigenous population, with ale-houses and other sources of entertainment springing up to cater for their needs. Contemporary accounts tell of tensions between locals and those who had come from outside the area. There were even religious tensions involving workers who had come from the North or from Britain. [13] The influx changed the economy of the area during the 1860s. What previously had largely been a subsistence economy was transformed. Many farming families were displaced by the flooding of their lands of course, but others from miles around were employed in carting the massive amounts of materials that had to be moved in and out. As a result of the economic changes in the Roundwood area, people from a farming background acquired the means to re-locate away from the area and some did so. It is interesting that two of Matthew's sons from his first marriage seem to have become house painters in Dublin, a craft to which entry was controlled by a trade society. Peter Byrne, John's half-brother was admitted to the painters ' union in September 1892 when he was already in his thirties, indicating that he had been credited as having been properly trained. [14] Both in the 1860s and later, when the upper reservoir was constructed, many whose lands had been affected left the area to farm elsewhere or, like Matthew, to leave farming altogether. Margaret Connolly in her book on Aghowle tells of how her grandfather moved from Knockraheen near Roundwood to Aghowle near Moneystown after the creation of the upper lake at the turn of the century. [15] It seems that the families who moved from the Roundwood area maintained a close network of contact into the next generation. The Owens family of Heronford, near Carrickmines in South County Dublin, where J.F.Byrne spent his summers

when he was four and five years old in 1884 and 1885, seem to have been a part of the Owens family who were neighbours of the Byrnes in Knockfadda and fellow tenants of the Gunn Cunninghams in the 1850s

Apart from the lands actually flooded by the reservoir, for which generous compensation seems to have been paid both to landlords and tenants, south of the reservoir, near the Byrnes' farm, there were massive excavations to create the filter beds which were fed from the waters of the reservoir. There were seven filter beds initially, each one excavated from the rock and measuring 230 feet by 150 feet and occupying about 50 acres in total. Today, a person travelling the road from Roundwood to Killiskey and Ashford will probably be struck by the huge drop in height between the reservoir on the northern side of the road and the filter beds on the southern side. This is due partly to the level of the artificial lake, retained by the dam of which the road is a part, but also to the massive works of excavation which created the filter beds. Much of the excavated material was used to create the dam. [16] A massive tunnel was constructed under Callow Hill, from the filter beds to the other side of the hill, connecting with the 17 mile long conduit which carries the water to the Stillorgan Reservoir.



Detail from a sketch map showing the Callow Hill Tunnel which ran beneath the land that had been occupied by Matthew Byrne at Knockfadda in the 1860s, from Parke Neville, A Description of the Dublin Corporation Water Works, Dublin 1875.

The Callow Hill tunnel was planned to be five feet high by four feet wide, was almost four miles long and took almost four years to construct, with vast teams of men working eight-hour shifts around the clock. In the end it had to be higher and wider than planned. The start of the tunnel seems to have passed directly under Matthew Byrne's holding. Many shafts had to be sunk from the surface down to the level of the tunnel. It seems impossible that farming could have continued on the Byrne holding while this was taking place. [17] It is probably a coincidence, but a curious one all the same,

that in the Ithaca episode of *Ulysses* in which Joyce describes the flow of water from the Vartry Reservoir, "the bathtub of Roundwood", as he terms it in *Finnegans Wake*, to Bloom's house in Eccles Street, he is linking the traditional homestead of the Byrne family in Co. Wicklow to J.F.Byrne's final residence in Ireland.[18]

The total population of Dublin City and County in 1881, the year following Byrne's birth, was 418,910. Of these, 21,707 had been born in Co. Wicklow, a far higher number than came to Dublin from any other county in Ireland. The scale of this migration is brought home when it is remembered that the population of Wicklow itself in 1881 was 70,386 of whom only 59,370 were Wicklow-born. For every three Wicklow-born people in Co. Wicklow in 1881, therefore, there was one Wicklow-born person in Dublin. More than half of these migrants, amounting to 11, 376, were concentrated in the South City area.[19] Traditionally, Wicklow people moving to Dublin tended to concentrate in that part of the city south of the Liffey and west of a line running from Harcourt Street, Stephen's Green, Grafton Street and Westmoreland Street, and especially in the streets around, Aungier Street, Bride Street, Cuffe Street, Kevin Street and York Street. Prior to the southward expansion of the city along the coast, and especially the development of the Dublin and Wexford railway in the second half ot the 19th century, the main approaches to the city from Wicklow had been over the foothills of the Dublin Mountains, through the villages of Dundrum, Rathfarnham and Tallaght, and it is logical that those moving to the city from Co. Wicklow would have tended to settle in the area where these routes converged. Even around the turn of the century, when Byrne was walking or cycling to stay in the Fogarty farmstead, he would travel to Wicklow over the hills rather than along the coast. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the pubs and inns in this part of the south city had become the focus for meetings of radical societies which drew heavily on those of Wicklow origin living there. Around the time of the 1798 and Emmet rebellions, those who had been involved were able to slip in and out of the city, mixing with families who had earlier settled there, the crowded nature of the area affording some degree of anonymity. According to the memoirs of the Wexford rebel, Miles Byrne, Billy Byrne of Ballymanus had felt confident enough to walk openly about the streets of Dublin almost daily for months after the Rebellion until the decision was suddenly made to arrest him and bring him for trial in Wicklow. [20] For several years after the rebellions, the authorities in Dublin Castle worried about the potential threat to the capital from its mountainous hinterland, and they kept a wary eye on movement between the two. The police and magistrates reports from Co. Wicklow in the early years of the 19th century are replete with reports of suspicious characters being detained on the roads between Dublin and Wicklow. As the century progressed, this part of the South City continued to be populated by large numbers of Wicklow families, and the Byrne family of Knockfadda was typical of many, maintaining links between their new homeplace Dublin and their traditional homeplaces.

This part of Dublin was also a strong focus of activity by the Carmelite orders of friars and nuns, and it is, perhaps, not surprising that the Byrne and Fleming families should have had close associations with them. The Carmelites had been active in Ireland from Medieval times, and Byrne was anxious to associate the Character Cranly that Joyce created to represent him in *A Portrait* with the thirteenth century Carmelite Archbishop Cranly, known as "The White Bishop", in Dublin. Joyce's brother, Stanislaus, was dismissive of this association and insisted that the name Cranly had been chosen by Joyce because he knew of it as a Wicklow name from his childhood in Bray. [21] Joyce, however, did not choose lightly when it came to the use of language and it is likely that he would have been aware of multiple associations with this name. Byrne claimed that Joyce was also thinking

of his prowess at chess and that there were also associations with the bishop as a chess piece and "The White Bishop".

The Calced Carmelites of the Ancient Observance had run a church and schools in Ash Street near the Coombe in Dublin from 1731 and had moved to French Street (now Upper Mercer Street, between Aungier Street and Stephen's Green) in 1813. In 1827 they set about constructing a church and a friary in what is now Whitefriar Street. This church became the hub of a parish ministering to a congregation in an area stretching from the Coombe to Clarendon Street, where the separate reformed order of Discalced Carmelites had constructed a church in 1793 and operated a convent school which was attended by Byrne in his early years. [22] It was situated in the part of Dublin that contained its highest concentration of Wicklow-born residents. Fr. Joseph Hall (1831-1897) who was appointed Prior of Whitefriar Street in 1871, and Prior Provincial of the Carmelites in Ireland in 1891, and who seems to have played an important role in Byrne's early life, had been raised on his father's farm in Tomriland, not far from Knockfadda. He had been a boyhood friend of Matthew Byrne and seems to have taken a keen interest In Byrne's development. [23]

Byrne was enrolled in the nuns' school attached to St. Teresa's Carmelite church in Clarendon Street when he reached the age of four in February 1884. At the same time, while still a very young boy, he became an altar boy in the Carmelite Church in Whitefriar Street. He mentions that he was taken under the wing of Father Tom Doyle there and for many years he served early morning Mass every day for Fr. Doyle. It was Fr. Doyle who heard his first confession and gave him his first communion in 1888. Doyle also gave him lessons on the harmonium. It was a Carmelite novice in Terenure who taught him to play chess, something in which he later excelled. [24] His online reputation today as a cryptographer is matched by his reputation as a chess-master. Even as an adult, and despite his own lack of faith, he maintained his contacts with the Carmelites. When he landed in New York from the "SS Baltic" in May 1910, he was met on the pier by a Carmelite, Fr. Paddy Wade, whom he had known as a fellow altar boy in Whitefriar Street. Wade was the only person he knew in the United States and was the person who found him a place to stay, close to his church in Manhattan

All through Byrne's childhood it seems that the Carmelites were active in his formation. When he was eventually transferred from the nuns' school in Clarendon Street to continue his schooling in 1888, he was admitted to the Carmelite Seminary on Lower Dominick Street where Doyle was principal, and he attended this school until he entered Belvedere College in September 1892. When he broke his ankle at the age of eight and was laid up for six weeks, he was visited at home by many of the Carmelite priests, including Frs. Hall and Doyle. The house in which he lived with the Fleming sisters and Emily Pentland was connected to a building that faced on to Wellington Quay and housed a business office and showrooms of Kane Brothers, who were church decorators and house painters. The ground floor of 20 Essex Street was Kanes' workshop. It is not clear what, if anything, was the connection between the Byrne and Flemings families and the Kanes, but it may be significant that two of the Byrnes who lived in Essex Street, John and Peter, were house painters. Above the Kane Brothers' shop on Wellington Quay were the premises in which Mary Fleming and Emily Pentland carried on their vestment-making business and also sold all kinds of church ornaments, statues and appurtenances. Both their business premises and their home seem to have been well-accustomed to priestly visitations and, given Mary's own many religious affiliations, it is

perhaps not surprising that John would have been regarded as a future candidate for the priesthood. Both the Carmelites in Whitefriar Street and the Jesuits in UCD approached him to join their orders. When Byrne was being encouraged to join the Jesuits in 1895 and gave as one of the reasons for his reluctance that he felt responsible for the Fleming sisters who had raised him, he was assured that should he join the order, Cecily and Mary would be provided for. Byrne's autobiography is reminiscent of Dickens's *Great Expectations* in ways. The child of a mother who remained illiterate throughout her life, and the child of a family of whom so many died at an early age, he was educated in a fairly exclusive school alongside the sons of many influential and wealthy families, and then given a university education, something that was rare in the Ireland of his time, and particularly so for a child from such humble origins. It seems at times, as with Pip in *Great Expectations*, there was a mysterious guiding influence operating somewhere in the background.

There were strong Wicklow associations also among the diocesan clergy of Dublin during Byrne's childhood. In the Church of SS Michael and John in Lower Exchange Street, for instance, where Byrne was baptised in 1880, and where he was brought every Friday evening by Mary Fleming for the Stations of the Cross, the curate was the long-serving Fr. Charles Meehan, who had once served in Rathdrum in the 1830s before being transferred to SS Michael's and John's, just around the corner from East Essex Street Here he served as curate for 45 years until his death in 1890. . Although Fr. Meehan died when John was just ten, he would have been a familiar figure to him, dressed in his tall hat, and sporting his distinctive monocle. He was a noted antiquarian and an advanced nationalist who published in learned journals and wrote a history of the Clan O'Toole of Wicklow. [25] It was to Meehan, at the presbytery in Lower Exchange Street, that the young Edward Colclough Byrne called in the summer of 1867 when he was attempting to establish his connection to the Byrnes of Ballymanus and his entitlement to the Byrne ancestral properties. [26] Meehan was one of the few priests who had sided with the Young Irelanders when they broke with Daniel O'Connell, and he remained attracted to the more radical strains of Irish nationalism for the remainder of his life, something that probably ensured he remained a humble curate.

Byrne was not slow to admit to his Wicklow connections, although not, perhaps, as anxious to portray himself as a Wicklow man as Joyce was to describe him as one. Although he took himself very seriously, he may also have played up his Wicklow influences for the benefit of his friends. In *Stephen Hero*, Joyce's first draft of the work that would become *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Cranly is described hamming it up a little:

> *Cranly wore a very dirty yellow straw hat in the shape of an inverted bucket in the shelter of which his face was composed to a glaucous calm…*
>
> *…Stephen looked up under the bucket-shaped hat but could read no expression on his neighbour's face. His eyes wandered up to the dinged vertex of the hat.*
>
> - *In the name of God what do you wear that hat for? It's not so terribly hot, is it? He asked.*
>
> *Cranly took off the hat slowly and gazed into its depths. After a little pause he pointed into it and said :*
>
> - *Vigianti-uno-denarios*

- *Where? Said Stephen*

  I bought it, said Cranly very impressively and very flatly, last summer in Wickla.

  He looked back into the hat and said 'smiling with a sour affection' :

- *It's not … too bloody bad …of a hat … d'ye know.*

And he replaced it on his head slowly, murmuring to himself, from force of habit 'Vigianti-uno-dinarios'.

- *Sicut bucketus est, said Stephen*

The subject was not discussed further. [27]

(*Stephen Hero* pp.114-115).

Elsewhere in *Stephen Hero*, Joyce describes Cranly extolling the qualities of Wicklow bacon and also interjecting when Stephen is reciting lines from Shelley to a mutual acquaintance, Glynn, in their company:

I will watch from dawn to gloom

The lake-reflected sun illume

The yellow bees in the ivy bloom…

…D'ye know what they call them yellow bees in Wickla? Asked Cranly suddenly, turning to Glynn

No? what?

Red-arsed bees.

The lake-surrounded sun illume

The red-arsed bees in the ivy bloom

-It's every bit as good bloody poetry as Shelley's, said Cranly to Glynn. [28]

In *A Portrait* Stephen thinks about Cranly's accent:

Cranly's speech, unlike that of Davin, had neither rare phrases of Elizabethan English nor quaintly turned versions of Irish idioms. Its drawl was an echo of the quays of Dublin given back by a bleak decaying seaport, its energy an echo of the sacred eloquence of Dublin given back flatly by a Wicklow pulpit. [29]

In *Ulysses*, Joyce refers to "The Tinahely twelve":

- *Cranly's eleven true Wicklowmen to free their sireland… The Tinahely twelve. In the shadow of the glen he cooees for them. My soul's youth I gave him, night by night…* [30]

When he was researching his biography of Joyce, Richard Ellmann wrote to Byrne seeking explanations for some passages in the writings which he puzzled over, and in a letter dated 25 Dec. 1953, asked: "Can you clarify the line from *Ulysses* 'Cranly's eleven true Wicklowmen to free their sireland… The Tinahely Twelve".[31] Ellmann later wrote, presumably on the basis of Byrne's reply, that it referred to a remark Byrne had made to George Clancy, another of their college contemporaries and the model for Davin in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, when they agreed that twelve men with resolution could save Ireland, and Byrne said that he thought he could find twelve such men in Wicklow. [32] Why the Tinahely Twelve? Probably Joyce was just attracted by the alliterative properties of the term and also, perhaps, by the phonetic similarity of the name Tinahely with the name of Parnell's arch-nemesis, his fellow parliamentarian, Tim Healy, who became the subject of Joyce's first published poem, *Et Tu, Healy* (published by his father for circulation to family and friends) when he was just nine years old. [33] Joyce probably had only a vague knowledge of the geography of South Wicklow and may have thought that Tinahely was where Byrne spent his summers. In *Stephen Hero*, Stephen and Cranly stand on the platform of Harcourt Street Station watching a locomotive shunting, and Cranly says that the engine driver is from his part of the country and the son of a cobbler from Tinahely [34] Byrne noted that Ellmann had written that Tinahely was the railway station where he himself would leave the train on his visits to Wicklow, and he had corrected him on this, telling him that although there was indeed a station named Tinahely on the Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford railway network (the Woodenbridge to Shillelagh spur), the station at which he would disembark was not Tinahely, but Glenealy. [35]

Byrne was somewhat put out by some aspects of Joyce's characterisation of him. The incident in the National Library in which Stephen comes upon Cranly reading a book entitled *Diseases of the Ox* and which features in both *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait*, is described in both as though Cranly's choice of book is somehow eccentric or frivolous. The incident is expounded upon in some detail by Byrne in *Silent Years*. He explains that he had been trying to discover what had caused the distressing death of a cow on the Fogarty farm and had asked the Librarian, Lyster, if he could suggest a book that might offer an explanation. When Joyce found him reading the book, he became convulsed with laughter resulting in his expulsion from the Reading Room. [36]

In *Stephen Hero*, Stephen's brother Maurice, a character based on Stanislaus, does not share his brother's high opinion of Cranly …

- *It was not from jealousy but rather from an over-estimate of Cranly's rusticity that Maurice allowed himself this prejudice. To be rustic, in his eyes, was to be a mass of cunning and stupid and cowardly habits… Cranly's undue scepticism and his heavy feet moved Maurice to hit the rustic in him with a name. He called him Thomas Squaretoes and he would not even admit that he had to a certain extent the grand manner. Cranly, in his opinion, went to Wicklow because it was necessary for him to "play the god to an audience"…* [37]

Most of this was based on Stanislaus's personal diary which Joyce had read. The diary was published after Stanislaus's death in an effort to raise funds for his widow. In it he gives an equally unflattering physical description of Byrne:

- *J. F. Byrne is a man who never thinks until someone begins to speak to him. Then he deliberates behind an impenetrable mask like a Cistercian bishop's face, and one is given to understand great mental activity. Having spoken, he pretends to infallibility. The more subtle the conversation becomes, the more brutally he speaks. He is fond of the words "bloody" and "flamin". My latest name for him is " Thomas Square-toes"!*

Later in the Diary, Stanislaus states:

- *The thing about Byrne, according to Jim, is that he is daringly commonplace. He can speak like a pint.* [38]

Joyce was obviously pleased with this, his own observation recorded in his brother's diary, and quoted it back in *Stephen Hero*. Byrne was later mystified as to how Stanislaus claimed to have such knowledge of him. In a letter to Ellmann, written on 24 August 1954, Byrne claimed that he did not know Stanislaus and that he did not recall ever speaking to him. [39] In his book, *My Brother's Keeper* which was unfinished when he died in 1955, and was later edited by Ellmann and published by Stanislaus's widow, he wrote that when Joyce was in Paris in 1902 he had written to Stanislaus enclosing a pound note which he had asked him to give to Byrne. It was the repayment of a small loan. Stanislaus had called to Byrne who was then still living in Essex Street and he wrote that Byrne had seemed to be considerably put out by this. Joyce was not usually prompt in settling his debts. Stanislaus claimed that when he told Joyce's and Byrne's mutual acquaintance, Vincent Cosgrave, about the incident, Cosgrave was highly amused and told him that Byrne had been upset to discover that Joyce had sent Cosgrave a photo of himself taken in Paris that was identical to one which he had sent to Byrne, who had believed he was the sole recipient. [40] The cards were identical except that on the reverse of Byrne's, Joyce had written a poem, and on the reverse of Cosgrave's he had written a ribald account of more sordid aspects of Parisien life. When Ellmann sent Byrne a copy of Stanislaus's book, Byrne claimed that the book seemed to him to be the output of a bitter, frustrated, confused and inaccurate man. He said that the account of Stanislaus Joyce coming to him with a pound was not merely untrue but absurd. Clearly much of what Stanislaus knew of Byrne came from Joyce himself. In quoting it back in *Stephen Hero*, Joyce was able to voice these descriptions while at the same time distancing himself from them, implying that the Joyce character, Stephen, had a more measured opinion of Cranly than did his brother, Maurice. Stanislaus had written in his Diary:

- *Byrne has the features of the Middle Ages. A pale, square, large-boned face; an aquiline nose with large nostrils, rather low on his face; a tight, short lipless mouth, full of prejudice, brown eyes set wide apart under short thick eyebrows; and a long, narrow forehead surmounted by short, coarse hair brushed up off it like an iron crown. His forehead is lined, and he has a steady look. He is low-sized, square, and powerful looking, and has a strong walk. He dresses in light grey and wears square-toed boots. Jim calls him the Grand Byrne; he has the grand manner, the manner of a Grand Inquisitor. He was born in Wicklow and goes there every summer. My name for him is Thomas Square-toes. He is overly sceptical as a sign of great wisdom – a doubting Thomas*. [41]
-

When Joyce's early biographer, Herbert Gorman, repeated some of this description, Byrne unleased a tirade ridiculing the claim that he had an aquiline nose!

Stanislaus was wrong, of course, about Byrne being born in Wicklow and of the three of them, Byrne and the two Joyce brothers, Byrne had perhaps a stronger claim to being a Dubliner than had the other two. He had been born and raised within yards of the Liffey Quays. All three were first-generation Dubliners, at least one of whose parents were not Dubliners, Joyce's father having been born and raised in Cork, Byrne's parents having been born and raised in Wicklow.

The knowledge Stanislaus Joyce presumed of his brother's friends dated from his early life. Like Joyce himself, Stanislaus focused in his diary and his memoir on his years in Dublin. Constantine P. Curran who was a contemporary of both Byrne and Joyce in Belvedere and University College Dublin, and remained friendly with both throughout their lives, believed that the harsh opinions expressed by Stanislaus about his brother's friends, Byrne included, were undeserved:

- *His critical discernment however, and the admiration in which he held his brother's early work do not exclude a great deal of prejudice, some bitterness and much misconception of the Ireland to which from 1905 until his death he was an utter stranger. His elder brother watched Irish affairs from abroad with interest . He maintained many contacts with his homeland; Stanislaus had none outside his family, and in his later years he had comparatively little communication with his elder brother. At all times he gave heated expression to his opinions on Irish contemporaries and these boutades whether his own or shared between them, I take with some reserve. They were the habitual rhetorical exercises in the vernacular 'contraps', in Joyce's phrase, 'of fermented words'.* [42]

There is some mystery about the break between Byrne and Joyce in 1902. Ellmann believed Stanislaus's story about the photocards sent to Byrne and Cosgrave by Joyce and how Byrne had taken umbrage at what he perceived as a betrayal. In this, as in so much else, Ellmann had accepted Stanislaus's version of events. Other writers on Joyce have in turn accepted this story, along with much else that Ellmann wrote based on what Stanislaus had told him. When Ellmann's magisterial biography of Joyce was published in 1959, Byrne was furious to discover that he had accepted so much of what Stanislaus had told him over his own version of events.

Could Byrne's upset over a photocard have explained the depth of fury that would cause such a breach or was there a deeper cause? Had there been a more serious betrayal? Byrne was altogether more coy about the reasons for his breach with Joyce. In *Silent Years* he wrote:

> *During Joyce's absence in Paris something had occurred which hurt me deeply. I cannot go into detail about this, but I felt so badly about it that I wanted to break with him. In long rambles about Dublin during the week after Easter, I talked the matter over with him exhaustively, but it seemed to me that his explanation explained nothing, and I would not agree to a continuation of our friendship.*

Joyce wrote to him and they agreed to meet again, and they walked about Dublin over the course of an afternoon, evening and night:

> *As we walked we talked and gradually James Joyce won, in substantial part, his battle for a continued friendship.*

Without disclosing what precisely had caused him to attempt to end their friendship, Byrne maintained that Joyce had been contrite.

> *Indeed, Joyce's mind was at one with mine in apprehending the cause of my grievance. He knew and admitted that he was at fault; he tried to explain, and he told me he was sorry. His explanation I did not accept – at that time; but he did succeed in convincing me of the earnestness of his sorrow. Looking back on this incident in the light of maturity, I now think that I was wrong – I should have realised more clearly his difficulty in formulating an explanation, and if I had realised this I would have been able more adequately to interpret the one he gave me.* [43]

Joyce put a different complexion on this affair when he wrote to Nora Barnacle at the start of their relationship two years later, reversing the roles that he and Byrne had played:

- *When I was younger I had a friend to whom I gave myself freely -in a way more than I give to you and in a way less. He was Irish, that is to say he was false to me.* [44]

In *A Portrait* there is a passage which indicates the intensity of the relationship between Stephen Dedalus and Cranly. They have been walking and arguing at length about various matters Stephen says:

- *…I do not fear to be alone or to be spurned for another or to leave whatever I have to leave. And I am not afraid to make a mistake , even a great mistake, a lifelong mistake , and perhaps as long as eternity too.*
- *Cranly, now grave again, slowed his pace and said:*
- *Alone, quite alone. You have no fear of that. And you know what that word means? Not only to be separate from all others but to have not even one friend.*
- *I will take that risk, said Stephen.*
- *And not to have any one person, Cranly said, who would be more than a friend, even more than the noblest and truest friend a man ever had.*

  The words seemed to have struck some deep chord in his own nature. Had he spoken of himself, of himself as he was or wished to be? Stephen watched his face for some moments in silence. A sad coldness was there. He had spoken of himself, of his own loneliness which he feared.
- *Of whom are you speaking? Stephen asked at length.*
- *Cranly did not answer.* [45]

Also in *A Portrait* there is an enigmatic passage in which Stephen recalls a dream about Cranly's aged parents

> *March 20. Long talk with Cranly on the subject of my revolt.*
>
> *He had his grand manner on. I supple and suave. Attacked me on the score of love for one's mother. Tried to imagine his mother: cannot. Told me once, in a moment of thoughtlessness, his father was sixty-one when he was born. Can see him. Strong farmer type. Pepper and salt suit. Square feet. Unkempt, grizzled beard. Probably attends coursing matches. Pays his dues regularly but not plentifully to Father Dwyer of Larras . Sometimes talks to girls after nightfall. But his mother? Very young or very old? Hardly the first. If so, Cranly would not*

have spoken as he did. Old then. Probably, and neglected. Hence Cranly's despair of soul: the child of exhausted loins.

March 21, morning. Thought this in bed last night but was too lazy and free to add to it. The exhausted loins are those of Elizabeth and Zacchary. Then he is the precursor. [46]

This comes after Stephen has told Cranly about his refusal to comply with his dying mother's wishes to perform his Easter duty and Cranly urges him:

- *Do as she wishes you to do. What is it for you? You disbelieve in it. It is a form: nothing else. And you will set her mind at rest…*
- *Whatever else is unsure in this stinking dunghill of a world, a mother's love is not…*

According to *The Gospel of St. Luke*, Elizabeth and Zachariah were elderly and childless and believed themselves to be beyond the age when they could have conceived a child. The Angel Gabriel appeared to Zachariah and told him that his wife Elizabeth would bear him a son and that they were to call him John and that he would be great in the sight of the Lord and filled with the Holy Spirit. Zachariah doubted the angel's word because he and Elizabeth were too old, and for this the angel struck him dumb until his wife would bring forth the child. That child was John the Baptist. Clearly the implication in Stephen's thoughts was that Cranly was Stephen's precursor. Byrne himself must have been aware of these associations, however unflattering it might have seemed to him to be regarded as Joyce's precursor. In his letter to Joyce from Carrigmore in August 1904 he must have had in mind "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" when he signed himself "St. John" and referred to himself as living naked in the country. [47]

Did Joyce and Byrne, as opposed to Stephen and Cranly, have these exchanges? *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* was first published in 1916 and Byrne must surely have read it soon after it appeared in print. He must have been taken aback to discover the very precise references to his father's age at the time of his own birth as reflected in the portrayal of Cranly.

Byrne married Mary Alice Headen, known as "Sissie" in that same year, 1916, and returned from the United States to do so. They had known each other since they were students. Like much in *Silent Years*, there is some mystery about Byrne's references or lack of them to Sissie. He didn't refer to her by her own name in the book. In fact he seems not have referred to her at all. He mentions a childhood sweetheart whom he named as "Norah Hogan" and whom he would meet every morning at the corner of York Street and Aungier Street. They would walk in St. Stephen's Green before he attended classes in UCD. Several of Byrne's former college acquaintances who wrote to him after the publication of the book were puzzled by the references to "Norah" and asked about them. Byrne addressed this issue himself in his 1959 Cornell Address, and said that "Norah"' and Mary Alice Headen were the same person. **[48]**

In *Silent Years*, Byrne writes that "Norah" and her two younger brothers were wards of a Fr. Ward who was Prior of the Carmelite Order in Whitefriar Street and that they had been placed in residence with a Miss Noonan who owned a house in Whitefriar Street which also housed her shop selling religious appurtenances near what was then the front of Whitefriar Street church (the

entrance to the church was later reversed so that it fronted onto Aungier Street) and who ran another shop selling similar merchandise in York Row nearby.[49] As mentioned above, there was indeed a Fr. Ward in Whitefriar Street at this time. He was one of the longest-serving members of the community, having been there since joining the Carmelites in 1853 until his death at the age of 89 in 1916, and having been Prior there in 1891 -1895 and 1906-1909. He was also President of the Carmelite Academy on Dominick Street where Byrne attended school. [50] Mrs. Noonan appears in the 1901 and 1911 Censuses, along with several boarders, servants and assistants, but not including a Norah Hogan. If Norah existed, and she probably did, she had probably left Mrs. Noonan's establishment by 1901. Byrne mentions seeing "Norah" and falling in love with her in 1894. He would have been 14 then, and if this girl was Mary Alice Headen, she would only have been 11 or 12. He mentions meeting "Norah" again in May 1895 "a few days before her fifteenth birthday" but Mary Alice Headen would have been only twelve then, and her birthday was in September, not in May. Her relatives are absolutely certain that no members of the family were ever wards of anyone. It seems clear that if "Norah Hogan" existed as described in *Silent Years* she was not Mary Alice Headen.

Mary Alice Headen had lived with her parents in the Cabra/Phibsboro area from about 1896. Her parents were both alive and well at the time and in fairly comfortable circumstances. She was recorded on the 1901 Census as living with her parents at 69 Cabra Road, Dublin, and she was described as a university student, studying for the degree course of the Royal University. Women were not allowed to attend UCD until 1908, so she would have attended St. Mary's University College which trained women for the Royal University examinations. This had opened in 1893 at 28 Merrion Square, run by the Dominican nuns in Eccles Street where Sissie had received her secondary education. St. Mary's moved in 1900 to Muckross Park and was transferred to Eccles Street a few years later. [51] While a studying the Royal University course, Sissie boarded at the Dominican Hall, a hostel for female students on Stephen's Green also run by the Dominican Sisters. Her family had acquired a second residence, Rose Court, in Portarlington in June 1901. They would later purchase the more substantial house, La Bergerie, there in 1911. Byrne's contemporaries remembered Mary Alice Headen as being the person with whom he walked every morning in Stephen's Green when he was in UCD. Dr. Sarsfield Kerrigan, writing to him from Lifford, Co. Donegal in January 1956, expressed puzzlement at his use of the name "Norah" and said "I had an idea – I don't know why – that your wife was Miss Alice Headen". [52] Of course it is quite likely that Byrne walked out with Norah and Alice at different times while studying for his BA degree in UCD, as his college education seems to have been a prolonged and sporadic process between matriculating in 1895 and the awarding of his degree in 1903. In *Silent Years*, he recalls one of the priests during his first year in UCD saying to him "But you are very young; you are only fifteen", and later in the same conversation, referring to Norah; "Well, you are young and she is younger".[53]

Writing to Joyce in 1905, Vincent Cosgrave claimed

- *Rumour engages Byrne to a Miss Heyden* [54]

It is clear, therefore, that Sissie and Byrne had been a couple for some time before this. That being the case, they had an extremely long courtship before eventually marrying in 1916.

In marrying into the Headen family, Byrne was marrying into a family with a proud record of academic achievement, several of whom had joined religious orders. Mary Alice and her five siblings were the children of William Patrick Headon (1846 - 1922) and Mary Louisa Paddle (1848-1933). William P. Headen had been born in Tullow, Co. Carlow in 1846, but a year or two after his birth, his parents and the rest of the family had left for Liverpool where his father was a shipping agent. William was reared in Tullow by his grandmother, Jane O' Callaghan (nee Hanlon), who was herself a

native of Tullow (and believed in the Headen family to have descended from the Duke of Wellington through a clandestine affair). He was sent to St. Kieran's College, Kilkenny, where he trained as a priest, but left the order before being ordained. He then taught for a time in St. Kieran's. He married Mary Louisa Paddle in St. Mary's RC church, Kilkenny, on 9 February 1875. The civil registration of the event describes him as a professor of languages. His occupation is also described as a "professor" on the birth record of his son, Michael, 10 month later. Mary Paddle's age is recorded as 23, but according to her baptismal record she was 26 at the time of her marriage. She came from a farming background in Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny, but was working in Duggan's "The Monster House" a large and long-established retail clothing concern in Kilkenny City before her marriage. [55]

Mary Alice Headen, known in the family as "Sissie" was born at Ardnaree on the outskirts of Ballina on 7 September 1882. William Patrick Headen was by then a National Schools Inspector, being assigned to different districts for several years at a time, so the family moved around a great deal during Sissie's childhood. Although Ballina is in Co. Mayo, its outskirts extend over parts of both Mayo and Sligo and her birth is recorded as taking place in Co. Sligo. Her later career is outlined below.

The Headens had five other children. They were:

Michael Arthur, born 18 December 1875, Kilkenny. He studied for the priesthood, joined the Jesuits and died in New Zealand in 1902.

Jane Frances, born 5 March 1877, Kilkenny. She joined the Loreto order in 1901 and took the name Ligouri, in honour of the 18th century Italian saint, Alphonsus Ligouri. She was professed in 1904 and taught in Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham, from 1901 to 1941, with the exception of one term teaching in Loreto Convent Wexford in 1911 and would, therefore, have been a contemporary of Mother Teresa during her brief time in Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham, in 1928. She became a mother superior and was later placed in charge of Loreto Hall, Stephen's Green, and Loreto College, Stephen Green, before returning To Loreto Abbey in Rathfarnham where she lived out her days She died in her late nineties in 1975, the last of that generation of Headens.

Patrick Jeremiah, born 25 September 1878, Kilkenny. He was a student in Belvedere College at the same time as Joyce and Byrne, although older than both, and later attended UCD for a short time but was not academically inclined. He remained unmarried throughout his life, living with his parents and working on the farm at La Bergerie where he seemed most comfortable in the shelter of his home, but required care and support in later years. He died in 1956

William Ignatius, born 17 August 1881, Ballina. Like Patrick, he lived at home in La Bergerie, helping as best he could on the farm. He died following an accident in Portarlington on 7 April 1912 when his bicycle collided with a motor car driven by the local doctor.

James Joseph, born September 1884, Monaghan. He too attended Belvedere College and subsequently studied for the priesthood in the Jesuit novitiate in Tullabeg, but left before he was ordained. He had a stellar academic career and in 1911 was a junior inspector of National Schools in Tralee. He retired as a Senior Schools Inspector and died in Dublin in 1960, in the same year as John F.Byrne and a year before Sissie.

Byrne was remembered in both the wider Byrne and Headen families as a failed medical student and while it is true that he, like Joyce, did not proceed with his medical studies, this description focuses on one small chapter of a full and varied life. No more than Joyce, Byrne gives the impression of

never seriously planning a career in medicine. Three of their group, Byrne, Cosgrave and Joyce, enrolled for lectures in St. Cecilia's Medical School as they neared the end of their time in UCD, but none of them progressed very far with the course. Uncharacteristically, Byrne humorously entitled the chapter in Silent Years dealing with their time there "Prodigal Medical Stew-Gents". The story in the Headen family was that Byrne had asked Sissie's father to fund a repeat of his first year medical course and that Sissie's father had refused to do so. Byrne was always a very proud man and it seems out of character for him to make such a request. The story may stem from a request or a series of requests by Byrne for Sissie's father to support his applications for a post as a National Schools Inspector and as a librarian in UCD., both of which he applied for in 1908 and 1909 respectively. On the other hand, however, he had certainly made no secret to his friends about his impecunious state. When Joyce wrote to him in August 1904 asking to borrow a pound, Byrne wrote back from Carrigmore to say he "wept" that "I have no money".[56] Writing to Ellmann in 1955, Byrne claimed "I earned no money at all at that small Fogarty farm". [57] In January 1907 he wrote to Francis Sheehy Skeffington asking him if he had any money for which he had no immediate use. If so, he would like to borrow ten or fifteen pounds . He reminded Sheehy Skeffington that he had asked for a loan once before and was put out when Sheehy Skeffington said he would get the money for him (presumably by approaching other friends on his behalf). On this occasion, his friend told him that he was unable to lend him the money as his own funds had been drained in attempting to launch a number of publications. Byrne must have been at a very low ebb at this stage. Predicting that Sheehy Skeffington would never be a rich man, he said he would nevertheless be a happy one "for you find your happiness, at least as much happiness as you can hope for, in pursuing your ideals, and you will sacrifice everything for them. I wish I had ideals to pursue". [58]

Byrne had failed to secure a good job in Ireland and was still giving grinds to support himself while he lived with Cecily and Mary in Eccles Street from 1908 to 1910. He had previously taught for a time in Belvedere College and had been full-time tutor to two boys in a family in Castleknock. He was still spending his summers with his relatives, the Fogartys, in Carrigmore, near Glenealy, when Joyce called to his residence in Eccles Street in 1909, and Byrne had to hurry back from Wicklow to renew his friendship with his old friend. He told Joyce then that he was thinking of emigrating to the US, but seems to have taken the decision to do so only in February 1910. [59] This was when he reached the milestone age of 30. All around him, his contemporaries were beginning to make their mark, and seemed destined to play prominent roles in the new Ireland that seemed likely to emerge, especially now that Home Rule for Ireland in some form seemed to be coming back onto the agenda. Even Joyce, despite the brief trauma brought on by Cosgrave's allegations about Nora's infidelity, was presenting an impressive figure around Dublin, acting as the representative of a group of Triestine businessmen in acquiring premises to fit out as the city's first cinema, and seemed to be on the cusp of having his collection of short stories, *Dubliners*, published. Byrne probably believed that his degree from UCD would open doors for him in the US. He later argued that it was no surprise to him that Joyce's degree from UCD was not recognised in Italy as The Board of Education in New York, would also have considered it inadequate. [60] Presumably this was based on his own experience and was why he sought to make a living from freelance journalism. He must have been sorely disappointed when his career failed to take off in New York. By November 1911 he was already thinking of coming back to Ireland. [61] Instead, he started making plans to have his nearest relatives, Cecily and Mary Fleming, join him in New York. When they succumbed to his entreaties and set out to join him in the US in 1912, they were detained on Ellis Island and threatened with deportation. Byrne was furious when news of this emerged in the *Irish Independent* newspaper and the news item revealed that his earnings of £5 (or $5?) per week were deemed by an immigration commissioner to be insufficient to support two elderly dependent relatives. Whoever was

responsible for the local appearance of the news item, it must have been terribly embarrassing for him.

The report read:

- *Is £5 a week sufficient to support a family of three adults in New York? According to the Immigration Commissioner, Mr. Uhl, the answer to this question is "No." Mr. Uhl a week ago detained, The Quarantine Station, Ellis Island, Mary Fleming, aged 56, and her sister Cecilie, aged 58* [they were actually much older]*, who (says the New York correspondent of "The Daily Mail") came here from Dublin to live with their nephew, Mr. John Francis Byrne. The women had only £23 between them, and though Mr. Byrne begged that they might be allowed to land to take up their dwelling with him, basing his request on the sentimental ground that the two maiden aunts had been the same as parents to him, and that he is anxious to support them, Mr. Uhl withheld his permission until he could consult the Washington authorities. Mr. Uhl reported to the Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Nagel, that in his opinion it is impossible for Byrne, on a salary of £5 a week, to keep his maiden aunts from want. After careful consideration Mr. Nagel has ruled that £5 a week is adequate, and has ordered Mr. Uhl to admit the two women to the United States.* [62]

The report must have been seen by some, at least, of Byrne's former friends and acquaintances in Ireland and the knowledge of this must have mortified him. In *Silent Years* he writes about the incident, but steers clear of any mention of his own modest income, and instead writes of it in a way that shows how he was able to use his influence to persuade several wealthy and important Irish-American businessmen and politicians to act as guarantors on behalf of his relatives. At the time, the incident led to a cooling of his friendship with Francis Sheehy Skeffington, who, he seems to have implied, had not done enough to ensure that Mary and Cecily would be well-prepared to enter the United States.

His displeasure seems to have been reported back to his friend by Mary Sheehy. Mary was Frank's sister-in-law and had at one time been the object of James Joyce's unrequited passions, and apparently the model for Emma Cleary in *A Portrait*. In 1909 she married Thomas Kettle who had been elected a Nationalist MP in 1906, but who had resigned in 1910 to devote himself to the role of first Professor of National Economics at UCD. [63] At this time, in 1912, the Kettles and the Sheehy Skeffingtons were at odds over a family dispute. The Kettles were also out of sympathy with Frank and Hanna's suffragist activities and especially at the activities that had led to Hanna's imprisonment. News of Byrne's annoyance was probably grist to Mary Kettle's mill. It had been at his request that Sheehy Skeffington, despite being under great pressure himself, had tried to assist Cecily and Mary Fleming with their preparations to join Byrne in the United States. His wife, Hanna, was in gaol because of her protests, and he was trying to run the household and care for their son while at the same time attempting to edit the suffragist newspaper, *The Irish Citizen*. He felt that Mary Fleming had not wished to accept any assistance from him, perhaps because she disliked him, as she disliked Joyce. He was a free-thinker and she was deeply religious. She would have worried about his influence over Byrne who she also felt was trying to "rush" her and Cecily's decision to emigrate. They were now both in their sixties and were contemplating this arduous Atlantic crossing just two months after the sinking of the *Titanic*. Mary was trying to sell some stocks in order to fund the enterprise, and her foresight on this matter was to prove only too well-merited when the sisters eventually arrived at Ellis Island. Nevertheless, Sheehy Skeffington had unselfishly persisted in his thankless task of trying to help Mary and her sister, and, by his own admission, tried to "hustle her a

little", as he believed that this was Byrne's wish. Byrne seems to have expected him to accompany the sisters as far as Liverpool, but this was expecting a lot of a man who was under so much strain in his own life. Sheehy Skeffington did, however, book their passage for them. He claimed to have been "vexed and indignant" when he learned of Byrne's reaction. He reminded him that Hanna had been in prison at the time and that she had subsequently been dismissed from her teaching post in the College of Commerce in Rathmines. He himself had forfeited a source of much needed income from the *Freeman's Journal* because of his criticism of Redmond's Irish Party. Byrne had obviously been furious at the humiliating publication of the piece in the *Independent* about the detention of his relatives and the details of his own modest circumstances. He must have assumed that Sissie's family would see the report. In fact Sheehy Skeffington was remarkably forbearing in his reaction. He tried to reassure Byrne that the news item in the *Independent* had not been seen by his friends in Ireland and had apparently escaped notice, which was most unlikely. He claimed that he had heard no-one remark on it, and that he himself had spoken of it to no-one. [64]

The piece had almost certainly been seen by Sissie's family in Portarlington, who already frowned on her relationship with Byrne, not least because of what they saw as his poor prospects When Sissie called on Sheehy Skeffington following his return from staying with Byrne in the United States three years later and he passed on to her Byrne's message urging her to come out and join him in the United States, Sissie told him that her parents would not allow her to do so. She said that if she were independent she would go, but she had no means of doing so. She said that if Byrne came back and brought her out, she would go, but that she thought he would never have enough money to come back. [65] She herself had graduated from college with a B.A. in Psychology, Ethics and Logic and had then gone to the Ursuline Convent in Waterford to study for the Cambridge Teachers' Diploma and subsequently taught in several convent schools in Ireland before moving to Anlaby College in Hull where she taught teaching methods. Byrne had visited her there on his way to the US in 1910, a visit that Sheehy Skeffington described as affording "sweet sorrow". Sissie afterwards taught for a time in Abbeyleix. Her father had hopes that she might marry into a local farming family. [66]

By the time Byrne made the trip back to Ireland the following year, Sissie's father seems to have reconciled himself to the idea of their marrying. They were both, after all, in their mid-thirties at that stage. The event was even announced with some fanfare in the local newspapers where it was noted that the nuptial mass would be concelebrated by Sissie's cousin and three other priests. Byrne had been an unbeliever since the age of ten and was later loud in declaring this. In *Silent Years* he claimed "There is not a line long enough to plumb the profundity of my unbelief". [67] He had not hesitated to admit his lack of faith both to the Carmelites in Whitefriar Street and to the Jesuits in UCD when they had both tried to persuade him to join their orders, nor had he hidden it from Mary and Cecily Fleming who must have found it distressing, so it is unlikely that he would have tried very hard to hide it from his in-laws. In a family with so many church connections, it cannot have added to his popularity. It may be significant that his baptismal record for 1880 in the church of SS Michael and John in Dublin was later annotated to record his marriage. It was not unknown, but unusual, for a baptismal record to carry such a note. Proof of baptism would have been required for a church marriage, but it usually did not result in the baptismal register being annotated. Certainly Such annotation seems to be rare in the baptismal records of the parish of SS Michael and John. Perhaps it was because the wedding was taking place in Portarlington, some distance from Dublin, necessitating written communication between the two parishes, or perhaps it indicates that some concern had been voiced in Portarlington about Byrne's exact religious status. [68]

The couple left for the US in the months after the wedding. The Easter Rising had taken place in the interim, and Byrne's friend, Sheehy Skeffington had been murdered in Portobello Barracks. He himself had been involved on the periphery of events, attempting to smuggle out to influential people in London copies of a document purporting to reveal plans of imminent action by the authorities in Dublin to arrest and incarcerate prominent nationalists. He had also been taken past armed guards in Liberty Hall where he met several of those who would lead the Rising and who were subsequently executed. Once back in the States, Byrne published a number of articles in newspapers there documenting the events in Dublin, including the murder of his friend. His and Sissie's daughter, Mary Philomena (Phila), was born on 3 July 1917. The family made a return visit to La Bergerie in 1920 for what would be the first of many such visits home by Sissie. She is reputed to have crossed the Atlantic 36 times, probably with help from her family. [69]

Mary Alice Byrne and her Daughter, Phila, with her father, W.P.Headen and her mother, Mary Louisa Paddle, and Snowy the pony, at La Bergerie, Portarlington, 1920. Detail from a photograph in possession of John F. Headen, Co. Laois

Mostly she was not accompanied by Byrne who had by now begun a number of friendships with other women. Bizarrely, two of them became part of the Byrne household in New York, and one of them, Gertrude Rodman, a much younger woman, bore him a child in 1929. Their son who was also called John (Jack or Jackie) was raised by Sissie as her own child, something that surprised her family in Ireland, as she was by then 46 years old. Some of them doubted that she was the boy's mother and suspected that he had been adopted, but did not guess the full story. There were even rumours about Jack's identity. There had been a number of notorious kidnappings and abductions of male children in the United States in the previous few years, including that of the Lindbergh Baby and Walter Collins, and rumours circulated that the boy was one of these children! [70] Sissie's father had died in 1922, and with the death of her mother in 1933, La Bergerie was left jointly to Sissie and her brother, James. She purchased her brother's share, having also inherited another family property in Dublin, and she and Byrne spent the following year living there. It was at this time that Byrne suggested to Joyce that his daughter Lucia, who had begun to manifest psychological problems, might spend time with his family in La Bergerie, but he had already returned to the United States in 1934 when Lucia wrote to accept his offer. [71] Sissie finally sold La Bergerie in 1936. [72] She and the children remained in Ireland for years, the children boarding in schools there, Phila in Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham where her Aunt Jennie, Mother Ligouri, was Principal, and Jack in Thurles. Byrne and Sissie were said to have tried running a post office in West Wicklow for a brief period in the 1930s without much success and quickly tired of it, Byrne returning to the United States. If indeed he lived in West Wicklow for a time, it would have been his last residence in the county. Sissie and the children remained in Ireland after the death of her mother in 1933 and returned to the United States only towards the end of the thirties when Sissie attempted to repair her relationship with Byrne. Their daughter, Phila, who had gone to work in the United States Consulate in Lisbon shortly afterwards, met an American Naval Officer there and married him, returning to live in Alameda in Northern California. Sissie soon moved to be with Phila and her young family in Alameda and lived

there until she died in 1961. When he wrote to his former college friend, Constantine Curran, in 1947 to tell him that he was preparing his memoir, Byrne admitted that Sissie was living apart from him, but did not reveal that he was in a new relationship. [73] Jack also lived in Alameda, but also spent time with his father and Gertrude in New York. Despite Byrne's difficult manner at times, he and Jack seem to have had a loving relationship, and Jack also seems to have been held in great affection by Sissie's family in Ireland. [74] The Joyce Scholar, Adaline Glasheen, met him in 1957 at the home of Helen Joyce, Joyce's daughter-in-law, and Jack told her that his father hated anyone who liked Joyce. He said that he himself had never read Joyce and that he was more interested in science fiction and in the Sputnik which had just been launched by the Russians! [75]

J.F. Byrne in New York, 1924. Irish Virtual Research Library and Archive. C.P. Curran collection.

Byrne's dislike of Joyce scholars and some of Joyce's friends was something which puzzled others. Sylvia Beech, Joyce's friend in Paris and the first publisher of *Ulysses*, was aware of Joyce's affection for his old school and college friend. Following Byrne's visit to him in Paris in 1927, Joyce had asked her to send Byrne at Portarlington three photographs which had been taken during his visit. He wanted Byrne to have a surprise on his return. [76] Beech was later puzzled as to why Byrne refused to speak about Joyce. When she stayed in Dublin in the early 1960s (probably to participate in the opening of the Joyce Museum in Sandycove in 1962) she made a special visit to Timahoe to speak with William Headen, Byrne's and Sissie's nephew, the son of Sissie's brother, James. Byrne and Sissie and James Headen were all dead by then. Beech wanted to know why Byrne had been reluctant to talk about his friendship with Joyce, but William Headen had been unable to enlighten her on the matter. [77] Rather than there being some deep mystery about this, it is likely that Byrne had simply been furious at some unkind comments that Joyce had written about him in private correspondence which was subsequently published after Joyce's death and read by Byrne. In fact, Joyce had simultaneously been writing letters of introduction on Byrne's behalf to Kingsley Martin, the Editor of the New Statesman, and J.P. Dulanty, the Irish High Commissioner in London, claiming him as a friend and a schoolmate, and as late as 1939 was asking his US publisher to call on Byrne in New York and remember him to him. [78] It seems that the unkind comments were flippant and careless and did not reflect Joyce's true regard for his friend.

The writing of Byrne's memoir, like his university career and his betrothal to Sissie, was a prolonged affair. Joyce had been told in 1940 that Byrne was working on a book. The book was finally published in 1953. The full title was *Silent Years: An Autobiography with Memoirs of James Joyce and Our Ireland.* Joyce, who had died in 1941, had already in his own lifetime become a figure of international renown, and by the early 1950s it was clear that Joyce studies had become a major focus of research internationally. By emphasising the Joyce connections, Byrne probably assumed that he would bring his book to the attention of a wider readership which would then learn about his Chaocipher. Writing to Constantine Curran in 1947, he admitted that his main purpose in writing the book was to make one last effort to "put over" his cipher system which he had invented twenty-eight years earlier. [79] With the book published, Jack, his son, entered into discussions on his behalf with businessmen in California who displayed initial interest in the commercial possibilities of the encryption system. [80] In fact, and to his great dismay, insofar as the book was noticed at all, it was noticed because of his association with Joyce. Many reviewers wondered why he had devoted so much of the book to a description of the Chaocipher and had not written more about Joyce. The title *Silent Years* may have been intended to apply to the years he had spent developing his encryption system, but could equally apply to other parts of his past. His account of Sheehy Skeffington's stay with him in the United States in 1915 and the real reason for his visit are tantalising in their coyness, despite being written almost forty years after the event. Sissie's brother, who read the book, was astonished that Byrne could purport to write an autobiography and omit mention of his marriage. Were other aspects of his past also enveloped by the silence?

Byrne seems to have spent his entire childhood in the care of the Fleming sisters who lived in no. 20 East Essex Street, directly across the road from no. 25 East Essex Street where Matthew and Brigid Byrne lived. This seems to have been the case long before Brigid died in 1893. Cecily and Mary Fleming were the daughters of Mary Byrne, Matthew's sister, the daughter of Ferdinand Byrne, and was born around 1809. She married Andrew Fleming in Wicklow in June 1844 and had two daughters, Cecily (always called Cicely) who was born in Wicklow in August 1845, and baptised in

Wicklow Parish, and Mary who was born in Dublin in 1847, after Andrew's death, and was baptised in St. Andrew's Church, Westland Row. Mary Fleming (Senior) seems to have moved to join other members of her family in Dublin after her husband's death and subsequently earned her living as a dressmaker. It may be significant, however, that Shaw's Dublin Directory of 1850 lists a Mrs. Fleming running a dairy at 21 East Essex Street in that year. [81] Her last residence was at 15 Eustace Street also in the Temple Bar area of Dublin where she died in 1874. Eustace Street was at the centre of the tailoring and millinery trades in Dublin. Cecily, the eldest daughter, followed her mother into the dressmaking trade, but Mary became adept in the more intricate skill of vestment making.

Given Byrne's extraordinarily close relationship with Mary Fleming from his early childhood until her death in 1925, it is not surprising that some, including members of the Headen family, assumed that she was actually his mother. It is clear from his own account that he grew up in the home that Mary and Cecily Fleming shared with Emily Pentland, at 20 East Essex Street, rather than in the home of Matthew and Brigid Byrne on the other side of the street. At number 20, which connected directly to a premises on Wellington Quay, Mary Fleming carried on her trade as a vestment maker along with the mysterious Emily Pentland, a former postulant who had left her convent in France and had been caught up in the siege of Paris during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, and, later, with Mary's niece, Mary Byrne. It may be that No. 20 provided better conditions in which to raise a young child than did no 25, or it may have been that Matthew and Brigid, who were both to die while John was a child, were already ailing. Brigid's and Matthew's infant son, Patrick, had died of measles in 1877 and their daughter, Anne died from phthisis, aged 15, in July 1880, just months after John was born. Despite the poor sanitary arrangements shared by houses in the area, as described by Byrne, and occasional flooding by the Liffey during high tides, it seems also from his description that the Fleming household enjoyed a modicum of comfort. He mentions the existence in the household of two musical instruments;

- *one a piano forte, and the other a very beautiful piece of work, an eighteenth century "Clementi" piano, on which from the time I was six years old Cousin Mary used to have me finger some of her favourites…* [82]

It seems to have been Mary Fleming who made all the important decisions governing Byrne's early life. It was Mary who arranged his schooling in Clarendon Street and who insisted on his being kept there for several years beyond when he should have transferred to a boys' school, as well as having later been instrumental in having him enrolled in UCD. In her dealings with clergy and other religious, she seems to have conducted herself with great confidence. When she found the young Byrne reading Ivanhoe by Sir Walter Scott, she had no hesitation in storming up to Belvedere to complain to the Principal about the English teacher, both Jesuits, about pupils being recommended to read novels. Of the two sisters, she had the better business head and although she was the younger sister, she signed herself as head of household on their 1901 Census return. It was Mary who brought John Francis as a young child to St. Vincent's Hospital on Stephen's Green and then to two different specialists on Merrion Square to have his eyes treated, and then to the legendary healing priest, Fr. Charles, in Mount Argus. It was to Mary Fleming, and not to Brigid Byrne, that Byrne was brought when he was accidentally peppered with buckshot at Heronford during one of his summer sojourns there as a very young child. When Mary fell victim to typhoid, she refused to let

anyone other than Byrne come near her. It is clear that Byrne spent more of his childhood with Mary than with his legal mother. Bridget is scarcely mentioned in his autobiography, whereas Mary is ever-present. [83]

There are indeed some anomalies surrounding the registration of John Francis Byrne's birth in 1880. The birth was registered twice on successive days. The first registration on 2nd March recorded the birth as having taken place on 15th February at 20 Temple Bar. The second registration on 3 March recorded the birth as having taken place on 12 February at 25 East Essex Street. The first was registered by a Deputy Registrar; the second by the Registrar. The informant of the first registration was a Bridget Scott of 14 Fownes Street, just around the corner from Temple Bar; the informant of the second was a Mary Magann of 38 Temple Bar. Both claimed to have been present at the birth (at different addresses) and both signed with a mark. Both entries appear on the same page of the register, but the first is at the top of the page and would have been the first to be spotted by anyone searching the registrar to issue a birth certificate. Presumably it was the issuing of such a cert in 1892, as Byrne was about to enter Belvedere, that led to the sworn declaration by Brigid Byrne, causing the registration to be amended. Why had the birth been registered twice on successive days? A glance at the registers shows that this was a most unusual phenomenon, probably made possible by the fact that the registrations were recorded by two different officials. Perhaps it was just an oversight, or perhaps the second registration was an attempt to negate the first. Another unusual aspect of these registrations is that the informant was not Brigid Byrne. In the case of other births officially registered to Brigid and Matthew Byrne – Anne in 1865, Catherine in 1869, Patrick in 1876 – the mother, Brigid was the informant. The only exception to this was the birth of James in Brockagh in August 1867. Then, the informant was a Catherine Byrne, possibly Brigid's sister. Both the registration and the baptism were performed within a few days of the birth, perhaps indicating that there was some urgency about this, the registration taking place in Rathdrum, a considerable distance from Brockagh. It is not known if the child survived beyond infancy. In the case of John Francis Byrne's registration, it seems strange that Brigid did not act as informant, as she usually did for her children or, if she was unable to do this, that it was not done by Mary Fleming, who usually handled official business for the family, or by another member of the family. It may indicate that there were reasons why neither Brigid nor Mary wished to be involved in the registration on this occasion. It is strange that the birth was first recorded as having taken place at no. 20 Temple Bar. East Essex Street is the continuation of Temple Bar and no. 20 is where the Fleming sisters lived. It is also where Brigid and Matthew Byrne's older daughter, Mary lived and where she died aged 20 the following year. It may be that the registration was amended in 1892 because the son of a labourer would not have been admitted to Belvedere. It is certainly the case that a candidate for the priesthood would not have been admitted if there had been suggestions of irregularities surrounding his birth, as Eamon DeValera was to discover, and Byrne always seemed destined for the priesthood throughout his boyhood. It adds to the mystery of Byrne's silent years and may suggest some grounds for sensitivity in his relationship with Joyce. It must be stressed that there is no evidence that John Francis Byrne was not, as he claimed, the youngest child of Brigid and Matthew Byrne. Despite Joyce's musings on exhausted loins, there seems no reason why Brigid and Matthew could not have had a child in 1880. Matthew was still only 61 and Brigid was less than 40. There is nothing in Byrne's writings or in his correspondence, or in the writings of Joyce or other contemporaries, to suggest that he was not their child. What is extraordinary in his young life is how he was plucked from a background of relative poverty and infant mortality to become the first child in the Byrne and Fleming families to be given a privileged secondary and university education at the hands of the Jesuits.

The Fleming Sisters, Mary and Cecily, at Coney Island, circa 1920 (on the right) and Sissie, J.F. Byrne and Phila, their daughter on the left. Photo courtesy of family of J.F. Byrne

Mary Fleming died in Byrne's arms in 1925. He recounted the scene in Silent Years:

> *In the early afternoon of Oct. 15, 1925, when she was in her eightieth year, she became faint and weak, and told me she was sure she was about to die. I telephoned for a priest and a doctor; and when I came back to tell her I had done this she asked me to take her on my lap and to put my arms around her because she was feeling cold. While she was sitting in my arms, I tried to comfort her by the assurance that the priest and the doctor would soon arrive, but she said, "When the doctor comes I will be gone, and as for the priest I don't care. All my life I have tried to do my best, and I have never neglected my prayers, and I am very glad and grateful for this because now that I am dying I don't feel like praying."*
>
> *For a little while she said nothing more, but then she whispered, "Ever since you were a little boy, John, I have prayed that you would regain your faith; and I always hoped my prayers would be answered, as they were, after long years, to Monica, mother of Augustine. And my last wish now is that this prayer of mine may some day be granted."*
>
> *I whispered back, "Mary, you may take it that your wish has been granted." She raised her eyes to look at me and there was in them a real glow of happiness.; and almost immediately she passed away in my arms.* [84]

Unlike St. Augustine, and despite his assurances to Mary, Byrne never reconciled himself with Christian belief. In contrast with his touching description of Mary's death, he writes merely of her sister Cicely:

> *Cicely Fleming remained here (New York) till 1928, when she returned to Ireland, where she died two years later in La Bergerie, Leix.*

It is a curiously terse statement and suggests a certain cooling in the relationship. Cicely had never really settled in New York. She seems to have been emotionally dependent on her younger sister, despite a sometimes quarrelsome relationship, and must have been bereft when she died. The two sisters had slept in the same room all their lives. By the time of Mary's death, it must have been obvious that there were strains in Byrne's and Sissie's marriage. They and Phila were Cicely's only family in the United States, and when they began to travel back to spend more time with Sissie's family at La Bergerie, the option of returning to Ireland must have been very tempting. Cicely was 83 by then. Sissie's widowed mother was 80. It was probably felt that they would provide company for each other. Cicely's death at La Bergerie in 1930 ended a journey that had begun in Wicklow in 1845, had taken her to Dublin for the greater part of her life and to the unlikely setting of New York from her late sixties to her eighties.

Ken Hannigan

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[1] Outrage Report, 1 October 1839, available on findmypast.ie. Thanks to Margaret Connolly who spotted this reference.

[2] Bray Petty Sessions Order Books (Miscellaneous), CSPS 3/026, August 1841 available on findmypast.ie. Thanks to Margaret Connolly for this reference)

[3] J.F.Byrne, *Silent Years: an Autobiography with Memoirs of James Joyce and Our Ireland*, New York, 1953, p. 171. See also Declan Byrne, "Fari's Story", in *Wicklow Roots, No. 8*, 2003, pp. 2-4.

[4] Griffith's Valuation records and associated maps available online at irishgenealogy.ie

[5] This might be the appropriate place to place on record the fact that the renowned US genealogist, Harry Hollingsworth, once told me that the Mrs. O'Leary whose cow overturned the lantern that started the Great Fire of Chicago, was originally a Hannigan from Co. Tipperary!

[6] John Murphy, "The Late Floods in the County of Wicklow", *Roundwood and District Historical and Folklore Journal,* No. 14, 2003, pp. 56-58. The three deaths are recorded in the RGO Civil Registration Records for the 2nd quarter of 1867 available online at irishgenealogy.ie

[7] Chris Corlett, "The Ruined Farmhouses of the Cloghoe and Inchavore Valleys", *Roundwood and District Historical and Folklore Journal, No 21*, 2010, pp. 55-63).

[8] William Nolan, "Land and Landscape in County Wicklow c.1840" in Ken Hannigan and William Nolan (eds.), *Wicklow History and Society*, Dublin 1994, pp.649 -69.
[9] Imelda Duffy, "Glendalough House", *Roundwood and District History and Folklore Journal, No. 2*, 1989, pp. 7-11, Ian Cantwell, "Glendalough Estate and the Hugos", *Roundwood and District History and Folklore Journal, No. 4*, 1991, pp. 32-34, Peter O'Shaugnessy, *Rebellion in Wicklow: General Joseph Holt's Personal Account of 1798*, Dublin, 1998 (see especially Appendix 7, pp. 166-168: "A Note by the Editor on Holt's Enemy Thomas Hugo").

[10] Elaine Byrne, "The 'So-Called' Real Person who Lived at No. 7 Eccles Street: J.F.Byrne and James A. Joyce" *Wicklow Roots No. 9*, 2004, pp.6-22
[11] Thanks to Ned Byrne for this information.
[12] "Joe Malone Remembers", *Roundwood and District History and Folklore Journal No. 3, 1990*, pp.15-18
[13] James Scannell "A Roundwood Public Disorder Incident 1863", *Roundwood and District History and Folklore Journal No. 10*, 1998, pp. 55-57. See also Martin Timmons, "The Vartry Reservoir – A Concise History", *Roundwood and District History and Folklore Journal No. 4*, 1991, pp. 39-42 and Jim Doyle (Seamus O Dubhghaill), "Vartry Waterworks" *Roundwood and District History and Folklore Journal No. 16*, 2005, pp. 16-20
[14] I am grateful to Charles Callan for this information.
[15] Margaret Connolly, *Aghowle: Where the Divil Ate the Tinker*, Dublin 2017, p.107
[16] "Joe Malone Remembers"
[17] The most comprehensive account of the building of the Callow Hill Tunnel is contained in Parke Neville, *A Description of the Dublin Corporation Water Works*, Dublin, 1875. I am grateful to my former colleague, Frances McGee for her assistance in interpreting the Valuation Office records and maps (available on askaboutireland.ie) and in determining from them the precise location of the Byrne holding in Knockfadda, and to John Byrne of Roundwood for guiding me to the site of the Byrne homestead.
[18] James Joyce, *Ulysses*, (1960 edition), London, pp. 782-783, *Finnegans Wake* (reprinted), London, 1992, p. 542.
[19] Census of Ireland, 1881, published reports.
[20] *Memoirs of Miles Byrne*, Irish University Press reprint, Shannon, 1972, Vol. 1, pp. 323-324
[21] Elaine Byrne, *op cit*.

[22] For a comprehensive account of the Carmelite Orders in Dublin see Fergus A. D'Arcy, *Raising Dublin, Raising Ireland: a Friar's Campaigns. Father John Spratt, O.Carm. (1796-1871*), Dublin, 2018.
[23] I am grateful to Ruth Long, Librarian, in the Library and Archives of the Irish Province of Carmelites, Gort Mhuire, Dublin 16, and to Fergus A. D'Arcy for information on Fr. Joseph John Hall and Fr. Mary Peter Ward.
[24] *Silent Years* p2-3 and p.5. Unless otherwise referenced, all information on J.F. Byrne, the Flemings and Emily Pentland based on *Silent Years.*
[25] Entry on Charles Patrick Meehan contributed by James Quinn and Linde Lunney in Dictionary of Irish Biography (www.dib.ie).
[26] Conor O'Brien, "Extracts from the Diary of Edward Joseph Colclough Byrne", *Wicklow Roots No. 1*, 1996, pp. 3-17, and *Wicklow Roots No. 2*, 1997, pp. 6 – 16.
[27] James Joyce, *Stephen Hero: Part of the first draft of 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man'*, Edited with an Introduction by Theodore Spencer, London, 1966, pp. 114-115.
[28] *Stephen Hero*, pp. 119-120, 131-132.

[29] James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Penguin Edition, London, 1960, p.195.

[30] *Ulysse*s, p.236.
[31] Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, University of Texas, Austin, Joyce Collection (hereafter referred to as HRC), Byrne, John Francis, incoming correspondence, letter from Richard Ellmann 25 December 1953.
[32] Richard Ellmann, James Joyce (new and revised edition), New York, 1982, pp. 366-367
[33] Ellmann, op cit, p.33
[34] *Stephen Hero* p. 140
[35] HRC Byrne to Ellmann, 19 Jan 1957.
[36] *Silent Years*, pp.58-59, *Stephen Hero*, p.126, *Portrait*, p.227

[37] *Stephen Hero*, p.147.
[38] The Complete Dublin Diary of Stanislaus Joyce edited by George H. Healy, Cornell, 1971, reprinted, Dublin 1994, pp.34 and 38.
[39] HRC, letter to Richard Ellmann, 24 August 1954
[40] Stanislaus Joyce, *My Brother's Keeper: James Joyce's Early Years*, Cambridge MA., 1958, pp.210 -211.
[41] *The Complete Dublin Diary of Stanislaus Joyce*, p.96
[42] C.P. Curran, *James Joyce Remembered Edition 2022,* Dublin 2022, p.76.
[43] *Silent Years*, pp 84-85
[44] Richard Ellmann (Ed.), *Selected Letters of James Joyce*, London, 1975, p.27.
[45] *Portrait*, pp 247-248.
[46] *Portrait*, P.248. I am grateful to Luca Crispi for bringing this passage to my attention.

[47] Ellmann, *Joyce,* p. 162

[48] HRC typescript of J.F. Byrne's Cornell address, 14 April 1959.
[49] Silent years, pp. 25-26
[50] Information from Ruth Long and Fergus A. D'Arcy (see endnote 23 above)
[51] John M. Cunningham, "The Written Memory of St. Mary's University College, Dublin (1893–1912) The Pioneer College for the Higher Education of Catholic Women in Ireland", *Archivaria, The Journal of the Association of Canadian Archivists, No. 89, Spring 2019*, pp. 88-103.

[52] HRC, letter from Dr. Sarsfield Kerrigan, 16 January 1956.
[53] *Silent Years*, pp.32-32

[54] Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce,* p. 205.

[55] Information on the Headen family has come mostly from Dymphna Mayne Headen and John F. Headen, Sissie's niece and grand-nephew respectively, and from Civil Registration records and parish registers. *The Rathellen Haydens*, a pamphlet which seems to have been printed for limited circulation, includes notes on her immediate family compiled by Jane Frances Headen, Mother Ligouri, a Loreto nun and Sissie's older sister. I am grateful to Dymphna Headen for providing extracts from this pamphlet.
[56] Ellmann, *James Joyce*, p.162.
[57] HRC, letter to Richard Ellmann, 14 November 1955.
[58] Leah Levenson, *With Wooden Sword: A Portrait of Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, Militant Pacifist,* p. 72.
[59] Silent Years, p. 154.
[60] Ibid, p. 151.
[61] HRC, Letter from Francis Sheehy Skeffington, 10 November 1911.
[62] *Irish Independent*, Friday 16 August 1912. I am grateful to John F. Headen for bringing this report to my attention.
[63] Dictionary of National Biography (www.dib.ie) entry on Tom Kettle compiled by Donal Lowry.
[64] HRC, letter from Francis Sheehy Skeffington, 19 December 1912.
[65] HRC, letter from Francis Sheehy Skeffington, 24 December 1915
[66] *The Rathellen Haydens*, Information from Dymphna Mayne Headen and John F. Headen. *Silent Years*, p. 91.
[67] *Silent Years*, p. 150
[68] Evidence which both supports and contradicts this statement is provided by my own grandfather who married in Rathmines in the same year as Byrne, 1916, and who was baptised in Terenure in 1879. When I sought a record of his baptism, the sacristan in Terenure startled me by declaring "That man never married"! When I explained that I was his grandson, she told me that a note of the marriage would always be made on the baptismal register and there was no such note in the Terenure register. In fact both the baptism and the marriage are recorded in the relevant church registers, but in this case the baptismal register was not annotated, nor was it, as far as I can ascertain a universal practice at this time, despite this sacristan's traducing of my grandfather's reputation!
[69] Information from Dymphna Mayne Headen
[70] Information from Dymphna Mayne Headen

[71] HRC, J.F. Byrne's Cornell address, 14 April 1959
[72] P.J. Tynan, "La Bergerie: a house and its memories", *Laois Heritage Society Journal, No.1*, 2003, pp. 25-28
[73] Elaine Byrne, *op cit*
[74] See for instance Jack's letter to his father, 12 January 1954, available on the Chaocipher Clearing House website (http://chaocipher.com/byrne-correspondences/19540112_JByrne_to_JFByrne.pdf). Information on Jackie's affectionate regard within the Headen family provided by Dymphna Mayne Headen
[75] Edward M. Burns with Joshua A. Gaylord (eds.), *A Tour of the Darkling Plain: The Finnegans Wake Letters of Thornton Wilder and Adeline Glasheen*, Dublin 2001, p. 658.
[76] Melissa Banta and Oscar A. Silverman, *James Joyce's Letters to Sylvia Beech 1921-19*, Indianapolis, 1987.
[77] Information from John F. Headen
[78] National Library of Ireland, James Joyce and Paul Leon Papers 1930 -40, Letter from Joyce to Paul Leon 10 August 1939 and draft letter in hand of Paul Leon to Kingsley Martin, 6 June 1933.
[79] Letter to Constantine P. Curran 21 January 1947, quoted in Elaine Byrne *op. cit.*
[80] Letter from Jack Byrne to John F. Byrne, 12 January 1954 available on the Chaocipher Clearing House website (http://chaocipher.com/byrne-correspondences/19540112_JByrne_to_JFByrne.pdf).
[81] Henry Shaw, *The Dublin Pictorial Guide and Directory of 1850*, (reprinted) Belfast, 1988.
[82] *Silent Years*, p. 10
[83] All information on Mary and Cicely Fleming taken from *Silent Years*
[84] Silent Years, p.91