

# Carleton Summer School 1993

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**William Carleton**  
1794 -1869

## **CARLETON SUMMER SCHOOL PATRONS**

**The Most Rev Joseph Duffy**  
D.D. (Bishop of Clogher)

**The Rt Rev**  
**Brian D.A. Hannon M.A.**  
(Bishop of Clogher)

**Dr Benedict Kiely (Dublin)**

**Dr Eileen A. Sullivan**  
(Tallahassee, Florida)

**Mr John Montague**  
(Author & Poet)



## **DUNGANNON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We wish to acknowledge the contributions made by the following organisations:

Community Relations Council  
Northern Ireland Tourist Board



# FAMINE

**“fa’mine** *n.* extreme scarcity of food in a district etc.; dearth of something specified”

(The Concise Oxford Dictionary)

In his youth Carleton moved freely throughout the Clogher Valley, and his knowledge of both the Roman Catholic and Protestant faiths placed him in a unique position to write on 19th Century Irish famines.

Carleton’s journalistic and literary works such as ‘The Very Genius of Famine’ from *The Black Prophet* (1846) and ‘The Agent of Doom’ from *Valentine M’Clutchy* (1845) portrays more vividly than most the effects of the failure of the potato upon ‘the Peasantry’ through his vivid descriptions and characterisation.

His works portray not only political and social insight into the period, but a literary genius, exemplified by his use of pivotal figures. Carleton bridges both the local and national communities to reinforce his arguments.

Many obvious parallels can be drawn between famine in Carleton’s time and the modern plight of many hunger stricken countries of the Third World.





## SPEAKERS PROFILE

### Dr Sophia Hillan King

Dr Sophia Hillan King is a Research Fellow at the Queen's University Institute of Irish Studies. An authority on the writings of Michael McLaverty, she has published two books on his work: *In Quiet Places* (1989) and *The Silken Twine* (1992).

### Anthony Cronin

Anthony Cronin has written a wide range of genres: poetry, literary biography, criticism, short stories, novels. His edition of *The Courtship of Phelim O'Toole* (and five other stories by Carleton) was published in 1962 and amongst his other work is *Dead as Doornails: Bohemian Dublin in the Fifties and Sixties* (1976) and a biography of Flann O'Brien (1991).

### Jack Johnston

Jack Johnston is a founder member of the Carleton Society, W.E.A. tutor, sheep farmer and ex-schoolmaster. His publications include a history of the Church of Ireland parish of Fivemiletown and *In the Days of the Clogher Valley* (1987).

### Dr Tess Hurson

Dr Tess Hurson works with the Rural Development Council and has wide experience in community work and as a journalist. She is an authority on the novels of Flann O'Brien and published *Inside the Margins: a Carleton Reader* in 1992.

### Sally O'Neill

Sally O'Neill is a native of Clonoe, Co. Tyrone and in recent years has been involved closely with Famine Relief agencies in the Third World.

### Reverend Ian McDowell

The Reverend Ian McDowell is a former minister of Molesworth Presbyterian Church in Cookstown and, since 1973, the Regional Organiser for Christian Aid.

### Cormac O Grada

Cormac O Grada is Associate Professor of Political Economy of University College, Dublin. He is a contributor to *The Irish Review* and other learned journals and published *The Great Irish Famine* in 1989.

### Luke Dodds

Luke Dodds is Curator of the Famine Museum at Stokestown Park, Co. Roscommon.

### James Simmons

James Simmons is a former Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Ulster. He has published many volumes of verse. His latest being his collection *Poems 1956-86* appearing in 1986. He and his wife, Janice, now run a school of creative writing at Islandmagee.

### Eugene McCabe

Eugene McCabe farms in County Monaghan. His published work includes *Heritage and Other Stories* (1985) and *Death and Nightingales* (1992), and his play, *King of the Castle* (1964) won the Irish Life award.

### Benedict Kiely

Benedict Kiely, a patron of the Carleton Summer School, is author of *Poor Scholar: A Study of the Works and Days of William Carleton* (1947). Other work includes criticism, novels, short stories and the autobiographical *Drink to the Bird* (1991).



## PROGRAMME

### Wednesday 11th August 1993 - Valley Hotel, Fivemiletown

- 12.00 Noon Registration at the Valley Hotel  
12.30 p.m. LUNCH  
2.30 p.m. Welcome and Introduction by Chairman  
3.00 p.m. Address by Dr. Sophia Hillan King  
"To awake those who legislate for us: William Carleton's interpretation of the experience of famine".  
4.00 p.m. AFTERNOON COFFEE  
4.30 p.m. Address by Anthony Cronin  
"Carleton, The Man & The Writer".  
5.30 p.m. Return to Accommodation  
8.00 p.m. Supper & Entertainment in The Valley Hotel with P. O'Donnell

### Thursday 12th August 1993 - Clogher Valley Centre & Tour

- 11.00 a.m. Tour of Carleton Country with Lunch along the way  
4.00 p.m. Seminar by Dr. Tess Hurson  
5.00 p.m. TEA  
6.30 p.m. Address by Sally Sanchez O'Neill  
7.30 p.m. Spóilín Fair & Pub Entertainment

### Friday 13th August 1993 - Clogher Valley Centre

- 10.30 a.m. Address by Ian McDowell - "Famine, Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow?"  
11.30 a.m. MORNING COFFEE  
12.00 p.m. Address by Cormac O'Grada - "The Great Famine in Dublin and in Song".  
1.00 p.m. LUNCH  
2.30 p.m. Luke Dodd - Presentation on The Famine Museum, Strokestown Park, Co. Roscommon  
3.30 p.m. AFTERNOON TEA  
4.00 p.m. Musical item with Brenda Barron & Seamus McDevitt  
5.30 p.m. TEA  
7.00 p.m. James Simmons - Poet  
9.00 p.m. "The Changing Moon," by E. Feely

### Saturday 14th August 1993 - Clogher Valley Centre

- 11.00 a.m. Eugene McCabe - "Wild Goose Lodge & Relevance".  
12.30 p.m. Benedict Kiely  
1.30 p.m. LUNCH



# The Carleton Summer School

## A Review by Malcolm Duffey

### William Carleton ... ...story teller or social reformer?

This was one of the main topics heatedly debated at the inaugural Carleton Summer School which was held last August in the Clogher Valley. The Summer School brought together a rich mixture of people from a wide variety of interests and backgrounds. All were keen to extend their knowledge of Carleton's writings and Carleton's country.

#### ***Birth of the Summer School***

The Summer School was born from an idea suggested by members of Dungannon District Council at an informal gathering. The idea was adopted by the Recreation Department and under the direction of Mr Iain Frazer and his team the plan gathered momentum.

Over the year various committees met at regular intervals to prepare the programme and sort out a host of details in order to ensure that the first year of the Summer School would be a success.

#### ***The Summer School Programme***

The outcome of these deliberations has been a feast of literature, culture, poetry, music, local history and downright good crack! As if this wasn't enough to choose from, the committee had arranged a Community Festival which went on at the same time. It complemented the Summer School theme and most importantly of all, involved the local people of the Clogher Valley, who after all were the subject of the Carleton's writings of a century and a half ago.

#### ***Setting***

The Summer School opened in the Valley Hotel where Tuesday's programme was presented. Thereafter the venue was Corrick House, seat of the Storey family. A more ideal setting could not be found, creating the right atmosphere for Carleton's writings and providing a link with the past as Carleton's family were tenant's on the Storey estate.

This magnificent country house with its splendid views over the Clogher Valley, its secluded walled garden and woodlands, allowed those attending to savour the unique quality of the Clogher Valley and to appreciate how much the world of Carleton lives on through the characters, the music and traditions of the Valley and above all the Seanachie.

#### ***Tuesday's Programme***

The programme began with a welcome from the Chairman of Dungannon District Council, Mr Vincent Currie, who acknowledged the generous sponsorship of the Central Community Relations Unit, the Community Relations Council, the Ulster Bank, Clogher, and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

The Most Rev. Joseph Duffy DD, Bishop of Clogher, one of the patrons, formally declared the Summer School open and congratulated all those involved in preparing such an excellent programme.

Mr Robin Marsh, Vice-chairman, then introduced John Montague, best known as "the Poet from Garvaghey". Mr Marsh welcomed Mr Montague as one who knows and loves these parts, who described Garvaghey as being on the edge of the Clogher Valley where the stories of William Carleton were not fiction but fact. Clamping turf on an upland bog one can see the double wooded swell or swaddle of Knockmany, the mountain which haunted all of Carleton's works.

#### ***Genius***

In his keynote address Montague took as his theme "From Prose to Poetry". He began by explaining why William Carleton was a writer of genius. He was the first important Irish writer in the nineteenth century. His subject matter was the people of the Clogher Valley in the pre-Famine times. (Continued ...)



Montague drew out the energy of the people as described by Carleton, despite the poverty which they experienced. Carleton witnessed the effects of the Famine on the people and recalled what things were like before the Famine, in the Valley he knew as a youth.

Montague submitted that Carleton was best at the short story but not as a novelist. Carleton's language in his stories is a stirabout of tongues, a mixture of Irish, bog-Latin, English and Ulster dialect. His stories portray the energy, colour and honour of rural Ireland in the early nineteenth century. Montague drew comparisons between his own poetry and Carleton's writings and the similarities in background and subject matter.

The next speaker was Dr Eileen Sullivan, one of the Summer School's five patrons and recognised by scholars of Carleton as the leading expert on his works. She gave a wide ranging and erudite address on Carleton's writings. Throughout the Summer School the proceedings were under the direction of Jack Johnston, a man who made the journey to Dublin, like Carleton, but who returned to the Clogher Valley and is now acknowledged as the foremost authority on its history. He gave a comprehensive social history of life in Carleton's Clogher which put in context many of the references in Carleton's writings.

This was followed by a tour of the Carleton Country in the afternoon. In the evening the committed journeyed to Dergina to see the films "Willie Reilly" and "Garvaghey, the Rough Field".

### **Workshops**

Sam Burnside in his workshop session examined the question - "What makes a writer?" In Carleton's case he kept going back to his experiences as a young man. He retained the innocence and wonder of his childhood and through wonder and exaggeration graphically described the things he saw. This theme was developed through the Language and Dialect Workshop by Seamus MacAnnaidh.

Len Graham and his wife Pdraigin Ni Uallachain took a musical journey through the 18th and 19th centuries as they traced the history of the folk song in Ulster as a living, vibrant tradition which has come about by the fusion of different cultures. They illustrated the development of the ballad from both the Irish and English collections against the background of political change and unrest of the time.

In the evening session those present enjoyed a poetry reading by the poet Frank Ormsby, originally from Irvinestown. It included some of his unpublished works. This was followed by an address entitled "A Prospect of the Mind" by Polly Devlin.

The last day featured two distinguished writers. Owen Dudley-Edwards gave a quite theatrical talk entitled "Carleton and Religion". The Summer School was closed by another of its patrons, Dr. Benedict Kiely. His subject was "Poor Scholar" and was an account of how he came to write his own important study of Carleton and his life - written as long ago as 1947. The text of both these lectures will it is hoped be published in further issues of this periodical.

### **A Feast in Every Way**

The Summer School banquet in the Valley Hotel brought together a wide cross-section of people - varying from university professors to the local traders. The 'feast' provided was not just what the menu offered but included a concert programme of traditional music organised by Mrs Nuala Morris.

Dr. Tess Hurson's 'Carleton Reader' was launched at the dinner. It was a selection from Carleton's writings and was warmly commended by John Montague who performed the launch. During the Summer School there was a comprehensive display of works of Irish authors available.



