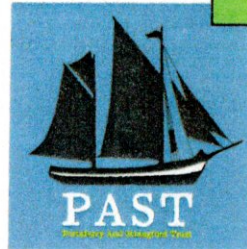


A wee bit of maritime history... 16

FREE



A school in a seafaring town!

'A teacher for the New Male National School of Ballyphilip (Portaferry) is wanted. It is required that he shall have trained in the Model School, Dublin, and in first class of Teachers. It is also required that he be qualified to teach Navigation as a great many in this locality take to a seafaring life: and farther it would be a great desideratum if he gave assistance in the Chapel choir. Application to be made to the Patron Rev. J. Killen P.P., of Portaferry.'

The Ulsterman, 11th February 1854.

Mr. Patrick Doyle got the job. He was the was principal until 1890 and the parish history states that *'it was to Mr. Doyle that many sea-captains and mates could pay tribute on the knowledge they got in navigation and scientific subjects.'*



REGISTER OF INFANTS IN *Ballyphilip Male* NAT

Date of Entrance, 188 <i>8</i>	Register Number.	PUPIL'S NAME.	Age of Pupil last Birth Day.	Religious Denomination.	RESIDENCE	Occupation or Means of Living of Parents.
<i>March</i>	<i>510</i>	<i>Lennon, Patrick.</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>R.C.</i>	<i>Craigarodda</i>	<i>Farmer</i>
"	<i>526</i>	<i>Orr, Edward.</i>	<i>6</i>	"	<i>Shore.</i>	<i>Orphan</i>
"	<i>528.</i>	<i>Bynes, John.</i>	<i>7</i>	"	<i>Carroston.</i>	<i>Labourer.</i>
"	<i>529</i>	<i>McLee, Daniel.</i>	<i>6</i>	"	<i>Shore</i>	<i>Orphan</i>
"	<i>531</i>	<i>Gavin, W.</i>	<i>5</i>	"	<i>High St.</i>	"
"	<i>534</i>	<i>Convey, James.</i>	<i>4</i>	"	<i>Shore.</i>	<i>Sailor.</i>
"	<i>536</i>	<i>Barnes, Patrick.</i>	<i>4</i>	"	<i>Shore.</i>	<i>Fisherman.</i>
"	<i>537</i>	<i>Lowey, Robert.</i>	<i>4</i>	"	<i>High St.</i>	<i>Ferryman.</i>
"	<i>539</i>	<i>McKeating, John.</i>	<i>4</i>	"	<i>Shore</i>	<i>Labourer</i>
"	<i>540</i>	<i>Hannigan, Thomas John.</i>	<i>4</i>	"	<i>Shore.</i>	<i>Publican</i>
"	<i>541</i>	<i>Traynor, William.</i>	<i>3</i>	"	<i>Shore.</i>	<i>Sailor</i>
"	<i>544</i>	<i>McCormick, John.</i>	<i>4</i>	"	<i>Craigarodda</i>	<i>Blacksmith</i>
"	<i>545.</i>	<i>McLellan, William.</i>	"	"	<i>Shore</i>	<i>Stone mason</i>
"	<i>546</i>	<i>Smith, John.</i>	<i>4</i>	"	<i>Shore</i>	<i>Sailor.</i>
"	<i>547</i>	<i>Barnes, John.</i>	"	"	<i>Shore</i>	<i>Fisherman</i>
"	<i>548</i>	<i>Kerr, Bernard.</i>	"	"	<i>Shore</i>	<i>Sewing.</i>
"	<i>549</i>	<i>Donnan, W. Henry.</i>	"	"	<i>High St.</i>	<i>Stone mason</i>
"	<i>550</i>	<i>Daly, Arthur.</i>	"	"	<i>Thomastown.</i>	<i>Labourer</i>
"	<i>554</i>	<i>Turney, Henry.</i>	"	"	<i>High St.</i>	<i>Publican.</i>
" <i>12</i>	<i>555</i>	<i>Edmunds, William.</i>	"	"	<i>Ballypuckl.</i>	<i>Labourer.</i>
"	<i>556</i>	<i>McNamee, Neill.</i>	"	"	<i>High St.</i>	<i>Sailor.</i>
<i>Apr. 9</i>	<i>557</i>	<i>McBreath, John.</i>	"	"	<i>Quay.</i>	<i>Sailor.</i>

Many children with seafaring fathers can be found in this excerpt from the 1888 school register.

The school in the townland of Tullyboard was originally Ballyphilip Male National School and was completed, using local funds, in 1853. The school was 88 feet long and 18 feet high and built from stone and lime with a slated roof.

'A fine stone building with buttressed corners and decorative porch, with bell tower and inscription of dedication. Probably when built, it was one of the finest in the country.'

Within the school were two classrooms, one 30 feet by 20 feet, and one 20 feet by 10 feet. This was considered sufficient space for 140 children. There were 6 desks, 12 forms and a rostrum and desk for the teacher.

On 1st June 1854 the District Inspector of National Schools, Mr. A.T.Osbourne, paid a visit to see if the school qualified as a National School. He reported that there were 112 pupils in attendance on that day with an average attendance during May of 91. School hours were from 10 - 3 with Religious Instruction on a Saturday, as well as 2.30 to 3 each day. He said that the teacher, Mr. Patrick Doyle was well qualified and the school was very much wanted. Mr. Osbourne had one reservation.

'The schoolhouse is a new substantial and beautiful building but being surmounted with a cross over each gable and one over the pediment of the portico, these ornaments though in character with the design and style of the building may be considered objectionable as giving the school a denominational character.'

'As a result of this objection the crosses were removed, the school was taken into connexion by the Board and awarded £20 a year salary for Mr. Doyle and books for 150 pupils.'

(Above quotations from the 1962 souvenir magazine of the bicentenary of St. Patrick's Church, Ballyphilip.)

The same building also provided two schoolrooms to accommodate Ballyphilip Female National School which had 83 girls on the roll by May 1860.

By the late 1920s attendance figures had risen to 134 in the Boys' school and 164 in the Girls' School.

The school closed in December 1983.

Acknowledgements: Gerard Lennon and the Upper Ards Historical Society Journal #13 (1989).



In 2018 the derelict building, with trees growing internally, was purchased and plans were drawn up to develop the total ruin into a business. This is well underway and open for business with six fabulous self-contained chalets. All the chalets have stunning views over the countryside and are fast becoming a popular holiday destination.

The owners then plan to develop the remaining ruins into a space for learning. For further details and information google The Schoolhouse, Portaferry.



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www.portaferryandstrangfordtrust.org