

# CLONDALKIN

CLONDALKIN. BOUND TOWER.



## POSTAL VIEWS

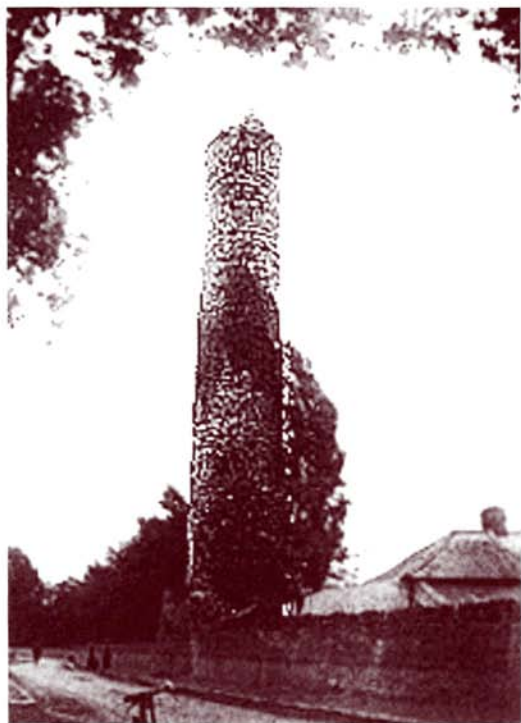
by joe  
williams

an artsquad clondalkin publication



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## Postal Views



A post card history of  
Clondalkin



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Joe Williams



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The author welcomes feedback about this publication, in particular he would appreciate any information on the existence of any additional post cards of the area which may be included in future publications.

Artsquad Clondalkin which was set up to promote the arts in the Clondalkin, Palmerstown and Lucan areas would like to acknowledge the support of FÁS and the Community Department of South Dublin County Council.

*This publication was made possible by a grant from  
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History Society*

# Clondalkin

Clondalkin, a parish in the Barony of Uppercross, west of Dublin City is situated on the banks of the river Camac, between the slopes of the Wicklow mountains to the south and the deep divide of the Liffey Valley to the north.

While Dolcan's Meadow is the accepted translation of the village name Cluain Dolcáin, there is also the possibility that Dolcáin may be derived from the Danish word for thorn Dalk. So as Dalkey means Thorn Island then Clondalkin could mean the Meadow of the Thorn Tree or the Meadow of Thorns.

Originally a monastic site founded by St Cronan in the seventh century, the village of Clondalkin remained in rural obscurity until the arrival of William Caldbeck, a barrister who built Moyle Park House in 1780. The Caldbeck family's industrial influence and benevolence played a major role in the development of Clondalkin to what it is today.

The post cards included in this book feature areas around and in Clondalkin. While many show the most prominent feature in the village– the Round Tower, others illustrate less obvious sites and record important developments that occurred in the vicinity. These cards therefore serve as an illustrated historical guide to our village.



## Post Cards

For over a hundred years post cards have provided a pictorial reminder of places visited. For many families they were also a cheap way of keeping in touch with their emigrant relatives.

The major publishers, such as Lawrence and Valentine, are well known. However there were also travelling photographers who toured the countryside selecting suitable views. They then produced cards and returned to sell them to shops in the locality. One such was a Johnny Winkles who cycled around the villages of Dublin and Wicklow. Perhaps it is his bicycle we see beside the Round Tower in the anonymous card inside the front cover.

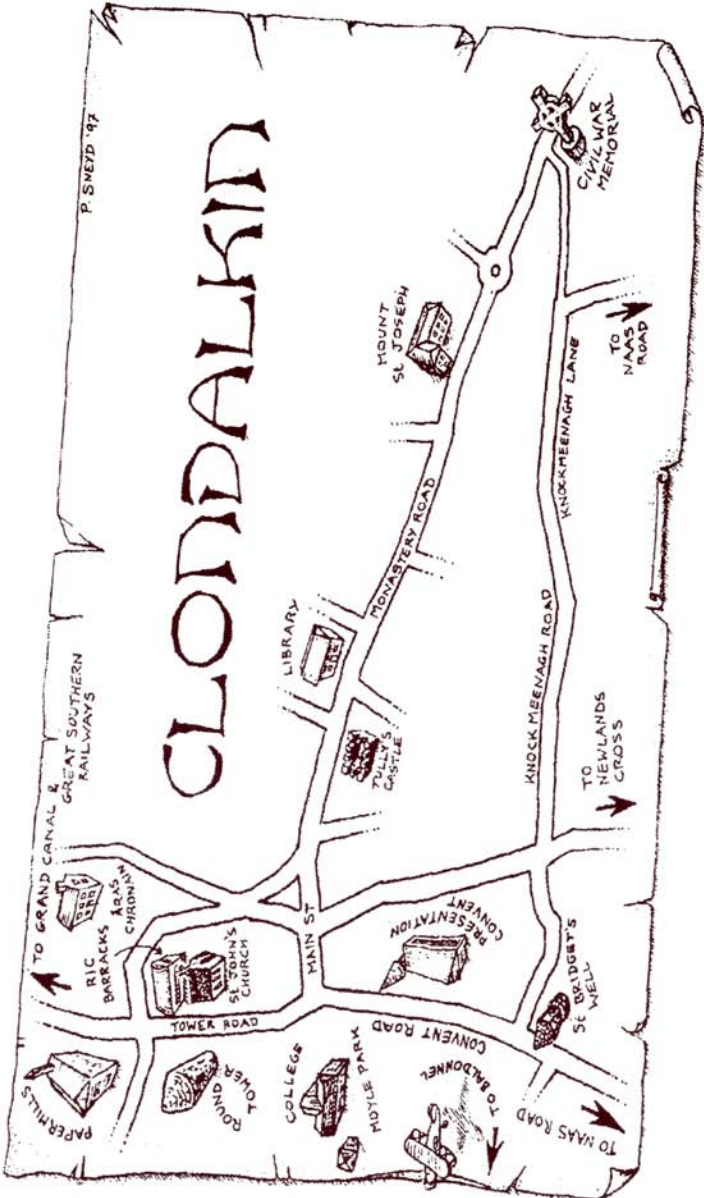
During the early 1900s it was popular to have family photographs reprinted as post cards. These became a valuable personalised memento as well as a record of local features which were incorporated in the photograph. The card on page 24 of the Grand Canal is a good example of this type.

Post cards give us a unique view of our neighbourhood over the years. They represent an invaluable record of local buildings, personages and streetscapes which may have altered or even disappeared altogether from our village of Clondalkin.

**Joe Williams**  
**January 1997**

P. SNEYD '97

# CLONDALKIN



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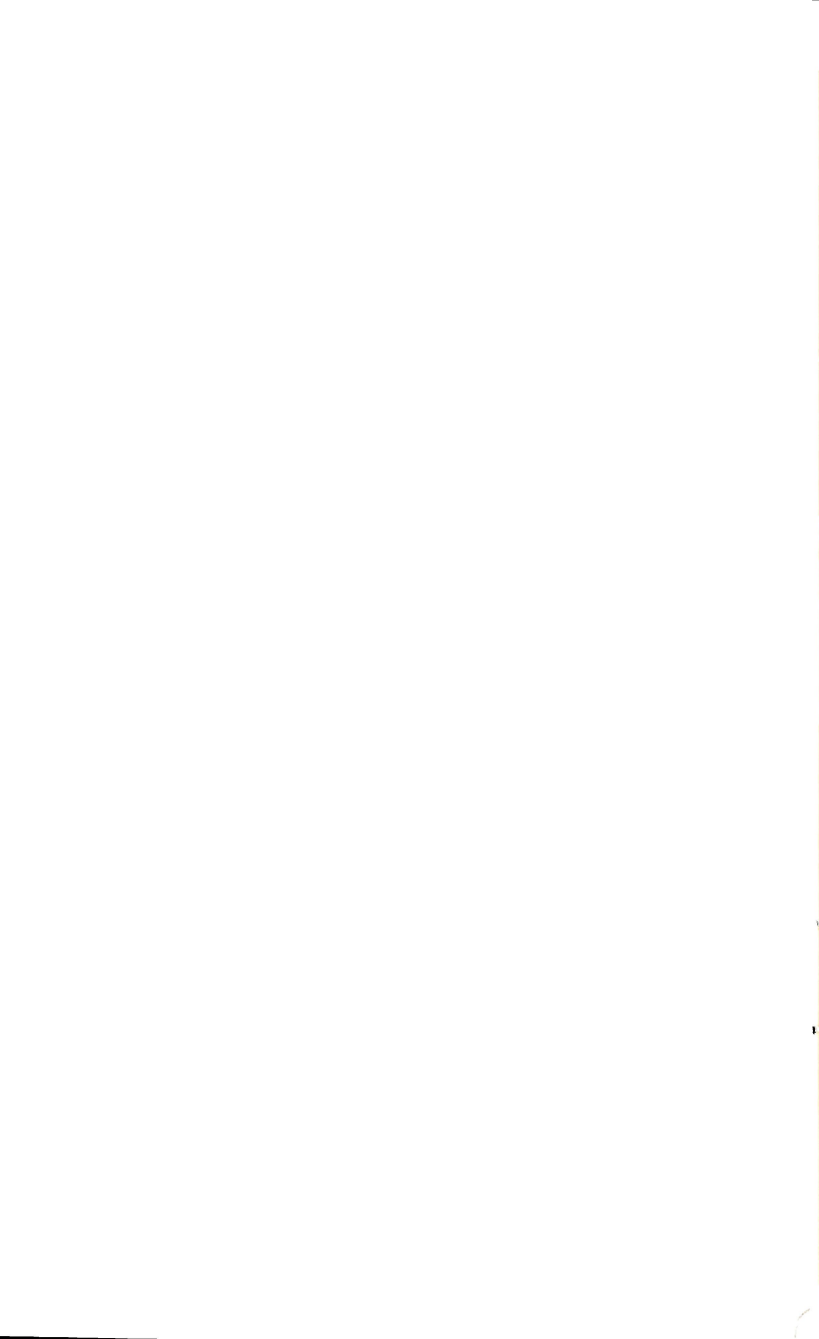
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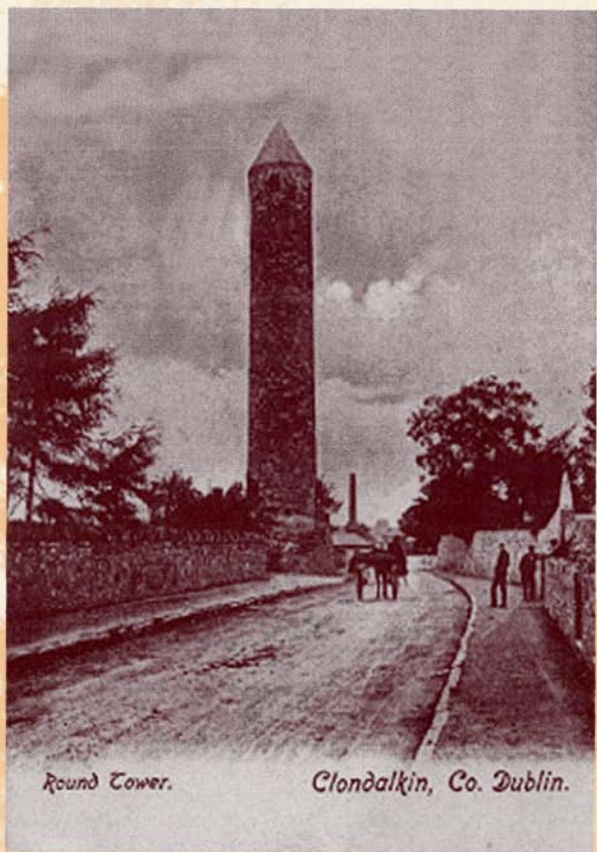
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# Church Life



*Round Tower.*

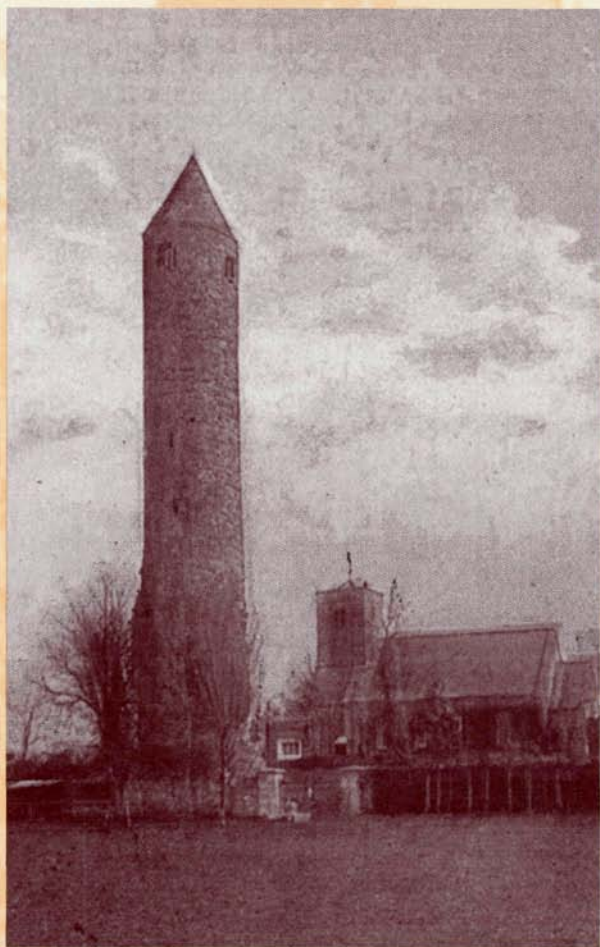
*Clondalkin, Co. Dublin.*

*Published by Lawrence of Dublin. Printed in  
Germany, 1905.*

## Round Tower

The first historian to concentrate on round towers was a Dr Thomas Molyneux in 1725. He argued that they were of Danish origin. However, George Petrie, in his essay for the Royal Irish Academy in 1833, refuted these suggestions and stated that the towers were the symbolic central feature of the early Celtic Church. It has been argued that they were used as places of retreat by monks to escape foraging Vikings, however it is noted that there are hardly any windows directly above the entrance which would be vital to protect this most vulnerable part of the structure from attack. It is now accepted that a round tower – cloig theach– was used to house the monastery's most valued possession– the bell of its founder.

The Clondalkin Tower built around 700 AD is situated in the centre of the village and is of a very early style. This is indicated by the rough stones used in its construction with no sign of shaping or being worked by a mason. It is built from the local calp limestone, with the door frames being formed by Leinster granite erratics. The unusual bulge around the base is rubble work of small stones, no other tower has anything similar. The height of the tower is calculated at 90' 6" – 27.5m., the circumference is 41' 8" – 12.7m, which makes it the most slender of all round towers.



*Emerald Series. Printed in Ireland , 1905*



## St John's Church

The present St John's Church situated close to the Round Tower was opened in 1790. It had an open belfry and 12 seats (pews). Restoration, which started in 1834, gave us the Church of Ireland structure we see today.

The mediaeval church which stood on this site was demolished in 1785 to allow work to start on a new church. All that remains of this earlier church is a column of stonework in the churchyard, it is estimated that its dimensions were thirty yards long by eighteen yards wide. It was dedicated to St Mochua and had three altars honouring the Blessed Virgin, St Bridget and St Thomas.

Two old crosses and a baptismal font in the surrounding graveyard are all of Leinster granite. The base of the smaller cross is shaped to fit into a socket and may have been part of the earlier church.



*Published by Helys Ltd, Dublin, 1906.*

## St Bridget's Well

Legend has it that St Bridget came to the site of the monastery at Cluain and baptised pagans at the well on Boot Road. The structure around it dates from 1761.

There is a tradition that there was a burial place for unbaptised infants adjoining the well. This is borne out by a lease of lands in this area from Mr Caldbeck dated 1843 having an item showing "Burial Ground 4 Perches".

The well is believed to have curative powers. A piece of rag dipped in the water and used to wipe the face, particularly of young girls, was said to cure eye complaints. After use the rag would be hung on the adjoining tree.

The well was refurbished by South Dublin County Council in 1995.



*Published by Tourists Association, Turnham Green, London. 1912.*

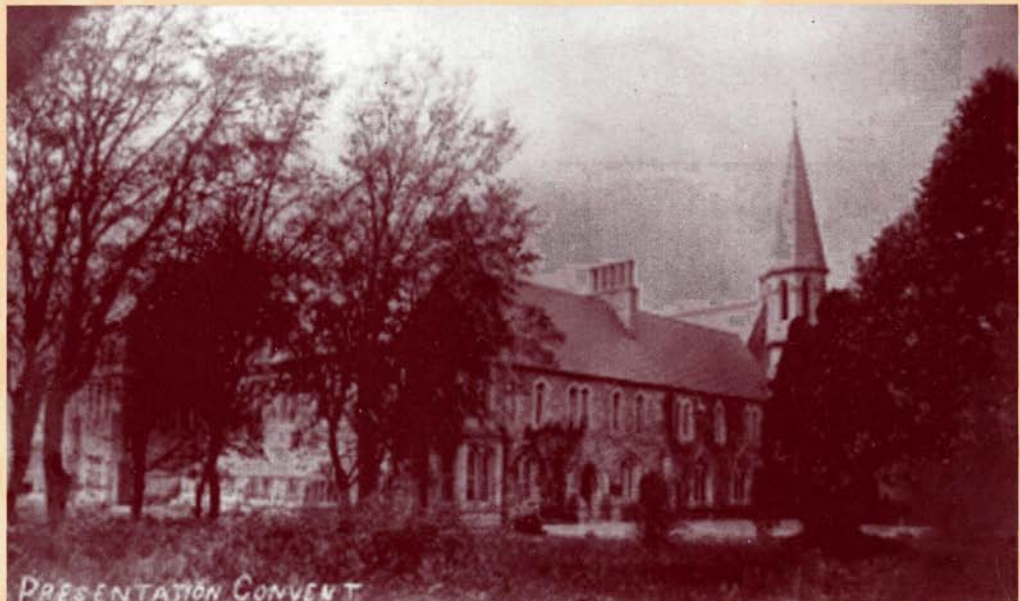
## Mount St Joseph

In 1813 the Brothers of the Third Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel founded the monastery of Mount St Joseph at Knockmitten, Clondalkin. Daniel O'Connell was vice president of the fund-raising committee and laid the foundation stone. It opened the same year with a "Poor" or "Free" school having over 100 boys on the rolls.

The Brothers vacated the premises in 1939 and for the duration of the Emergency (1939-45) the buildings were occupied by the Defence Forces.

On the Feast of the Little Flower, 3rd October 1945, the Little Sisters of the Assumption acquired and ran Mount St Joseph as the Novitiate for the Order in Ireland.

They leased the buildings to the Eastern Health Board in 1981 who set up a residential clinic in conjunction with the Rutland Centre. In early 1984 the buildings became vacant and were demolished in April 1988.



PRESENTATION CONVENT

*Printed by Kodak.1904*

## Presentation Convent

William Caldbeck, a barrister, came to Moyle Park in 1780. His son Frederick married a Miss Parson of Clonburriss who opened a school for girls in 1810.

Their daughter, Ann Frances, continued her mother's work at the school and in her will bequeathed the sum of £2,000 for the establishment of a religious community or order of nuns for the education of youth.

The curate – Reverend John Moore – with this money built a convent in the Gothic style. He then invited the Presentation Order in Carlow to Clondalkin. The first nuns officially took possession of the building on 8th December 1857, these were:

Mother M. Joseph Gonzage Coslett

Mother M. Regis Coslett

Mother M. Stanislaus Mulcahy

After High Mass the school was opened with 200 pupils registered. The first local postulant – a Miss Dowling – joined the Order within a week of their arrival.





# Public Transport



*Grand Canal Lock. Printed by Kodak 1940. Photograph by Michael Muldowney.*

## Grand Canal

In 1751 the British Government set up a *Corporation for Promotion and Carrying on an Inland Navigation in Ireland*. It proposed that a canal should be constructed to link Dublin to the rivers Barrow and Shannon. After much discussion on possible routes a line south of the Liffey was agreed and named the Grand Route.

Work commenced in 1756 at the 11th Lock in Clondalkin and progressed westwards. By 1763 twelve miles of canal was completed, the work included three locks, six bridges and four lockhouses at a cost of £157,000. The remains of one of these distinctive lockhouses can be seen at the 11th Lock.

The canal was officially opened to traffic on the 2nd February 1779.

The first passenger boat service commenced in August 1780 between Dublin and Robertstown.

In 1960 all commercial traffic ceased. The Office of Public Works now operate the canal system as a leisure amenity.

G.S.R. No.800 'MAEVE' Bl a Class 4-6-0 1939



Great Southern Railway  
**THEATRICAL**  
 SCALE ACTION COLLECTION  
 CORRIGLION  
 DUBLIN (Coughlinville) to  
**CORK**  
 BY NIGHT SERVICE  
 TROOP CLASS 1939 - 4  
 FOR INFORMATION OF RAILWAY MEN SEE  
 1939-1940

G.S.&W.R. 'Rosslare Express' 1st/3rd Brake No.861 1906



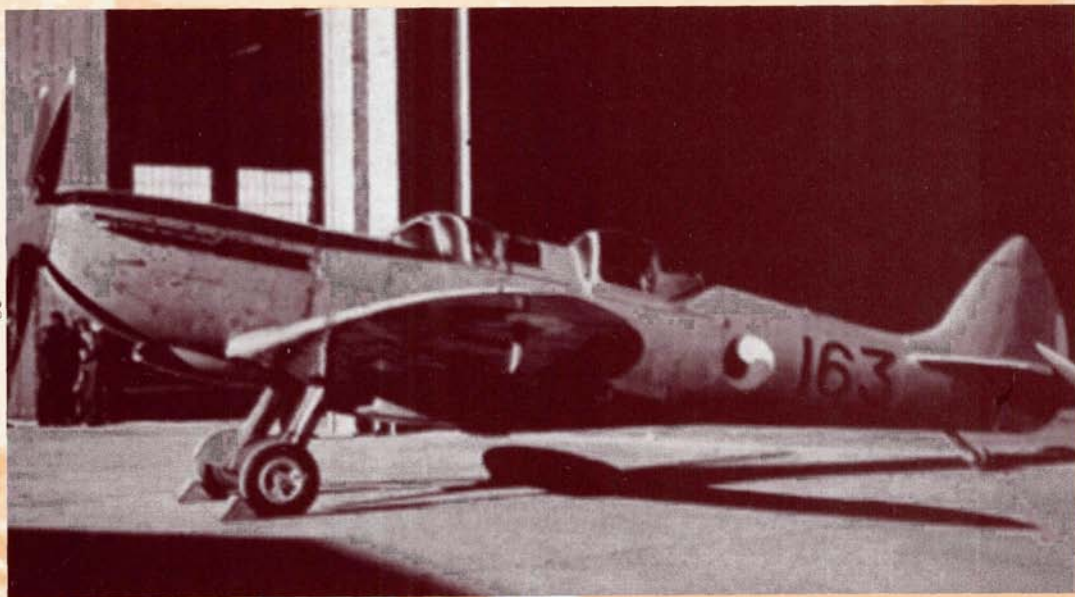
Artwork by Dudley Farrar, Comber 874343. Printed by Graham & Sons, 1980.

## Great Southern Railway

In 1842 the Great Southern and Western Railway was set up by an Act of Parliament. The object was to build a main railway line from Dublin to Cashel. A contract was signed with a William McCormac and William Dargan for the first section from Dublin to Hazlehatch near Lucan, County Dublin. The first sod was cut by the Duke of Leinster on John Rourke's farm at Adamstown between Clondalkin and Lucan.

Work concentrated on the line to Carlow which was opened to traffic on 4th August 1846. There were two trains daily which were advertised as taking two hours twenty nine minutes for the 56 mile journey. The railway reached Portlaoise in June 1847 and Cork on 29th October 1849. This stretch of line – Dublin to Cork – measured 165 miles and was at that time the longest continuous rail line in the British Isles.

Closed to passenger traffic in 1947, Clondalkin railway station was reopened on the 16th May 1994 with the inaugural run of the Arrow commuter service.



*Spitfire Mark IX, Irish Air Corps. Printed by Irish Lithoprint Ltd.  
Photograph copyright George Flood/Irish Aviator*

# Baldonnell

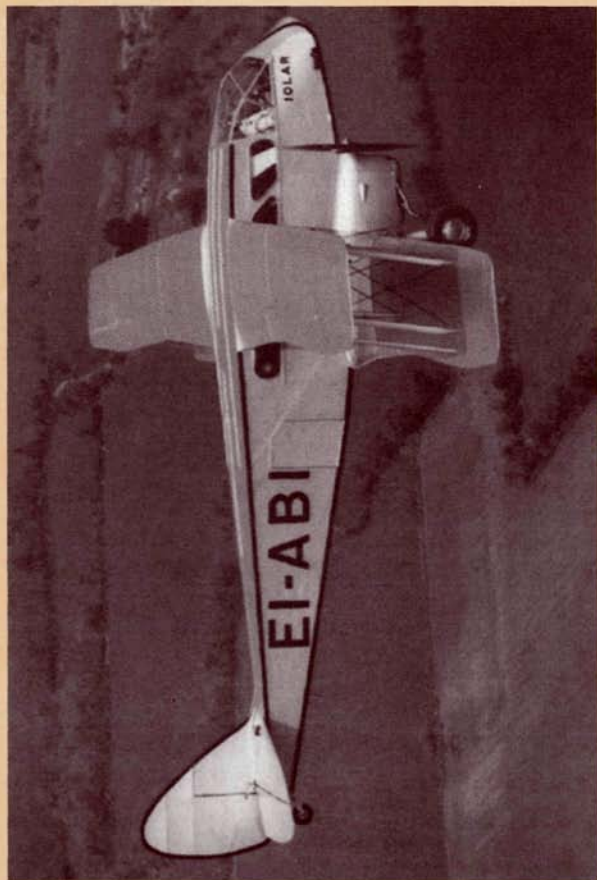
In 1917, during the First World War, air-raids on the South of England by German Zeppelins caused the British to disperse their flight training stations. One of the new sites chosen was Baldonnell, West of Clondalkin. This soon became the headquarters of the Irish wing of the Royal Flying Corps, a precursor to the Royal Air Force.

On the 14th February 1922 after the signing of the Treaty, the last British aircraft flew out and Baldonnell was formally handed over to the Irish Army and later the newly formed Irish Air Corps.

On the 12th April 1928 Baldonnell became part of aviation history when a Junkers W.33 aircraft *The Bremen* took off for Canada to complete the first East/West aerial crossing of the Atlantic. The crew were Baron Gunther Von Hunefeld, Captain Hermann Koehl and Commandant James C. Fitzmaurice Irish Air Corps.

While Baldonnell remains to this day a military aerodrome, it doubled as a civilian airport for a time.

On the 24th October 1932, a Fokker aircraft of the Dutch airline KLM landed from Berlin. This was intended to be the start of a regular mail and passenger service between Ireland and Germany but Government help was not forthcoming and no further flights were made.



*Young Flyers Aer Lingus. Printed by Magill Print. Dublin 17.*



# Aer Lingus

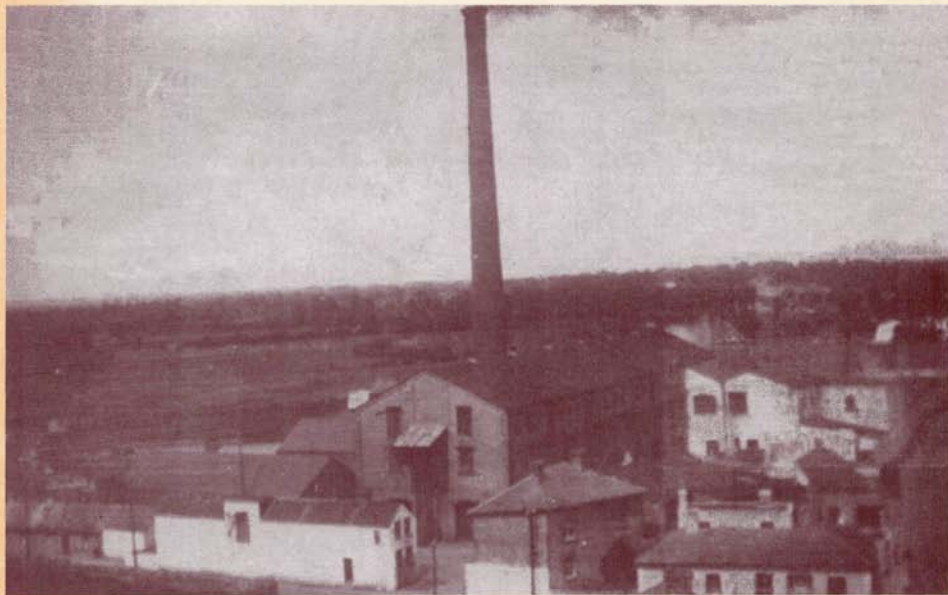
Aer Lingus was formed in 1936 and with the help of Blackpool and West Coast Air Services routes were operated under the name Irish Sea Airways.

On the 27th May 1936 at 9 am an Aer Lingus de Havilland 84 Dragon aircraft named *Iolar* (Eagle) took off from Baldonnell on the inaugural flight to Bristol. Later a Blackpool and West Coast aircraft, having flown from Liverpool via the Isle of Man landed at the aerodrome. The day culminated with the return flight of the *Iolar*.

With the outbreak of war in 1939 all services were halted, however after discussions a daily Dublin/Liverpool service recommenced in October 1939. The operation transferred to Collinstown Airport (now Dublin Airport) in January 1940.



# Village Life



*Paper Mills Printed by Kodak, 1940. Photograph by Michael Muldowney.*

# Paper Mills

In 1837, Thomas Seary leased land from the Caldbecks at Sally Park and started to produce hand-made paper. In 1869 Thomas Fegan bought out Seary and mechanised the process. However the Government taxation on production was too high and in 1875 the mill closed. It reopened in 1880 and was more or less in constant use until 1987 when it closed for the last time. The site was redeveloped and is now the location of the new Mill Shopping Centre.

Over the last 100 years the owners and titles of the paper mill has changed on many occasions

	<b>Proprietor</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>1880 :</b>	W. Bertram	Dublin Paper Co.
<b>1899 :</b>	Mr Hacking	Leinster Paper Co.
<b>1907 :</b>	Kynock Ltd	Irish Paper Co.
<b>1913 :</b>	Becker Coy	Irish/Leinster Paper Co.
<b>1922–36 :</b>	<i>Mill Closed</i>	
<b>1936 :</b>	J.J. Walsh, M.W. O'Reilly & J.J. O'Toole	Clondalkin Paper Mills
<b>1983 :</b>	<i>Mill taken over by the Government</i>	

OLONDALKIN. ROUND TOWER.



*Published by Helys Ltd, Dublin. Printed in Bavaria. 1920.*

# RIC Barracks and Village Pumps

Situated at the junctions of Nangor Road, Tower Road, Ninth Lock Road and Orchard Road the two storied building on the left was the local barracks of the Royal Irish Constabulary. The building was burned down during the War of Independence after it had been vacated.

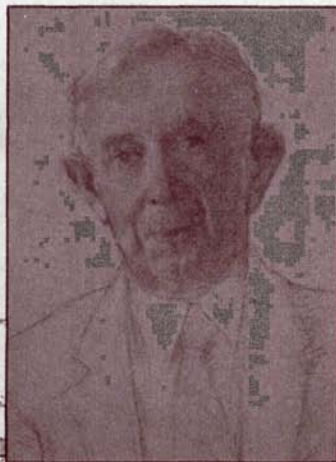
The water pump in the foreground was one of two which supplied the village. The other was beyond the Round Tower at the junction of Main Street and Tower Road.

The original water supply was piped from St Bridget's Well though this was later superseded by a connection to the larger municipal supply.

The pumps themselves were replaced by the more common Vartry Pumps (named after the Vartry reservoir) which can still be seen around the village today.



# An t-Oireachtas, 1991 le Conradh na Gaeilge



Cluain Dolcáin, Áth Cliath  
18-27 Deireadh Fomhair

Tomás de Bhaldraithe  
Éarlamb an Oireachtais

*Dearadh le D. de Grás, Portráid Le T.Ó Riain. Copyright An Post, 1991*



## Muintir Chrónáin

Muintir Chrónáin was founded in 1972 to further the use of the Irish Language through educational, social and cultural activities

For many years Muintir Chrónáin operated from members houses and various halls around the village. In May 1989 they purchased Orchard House in the centre of Clondalkin village and after renaming it Áras Chrónáin opened it as a cultural and heritage centre.

The first Irish Primary School– Scoil Chrónáin was opened in Rathcoole in 1975, a Kindergarten Naionra was founded in the Round Towers GAA Club in 1980 and a Secondary School Colaíste Chilliam followed in 1981. An additional Secondary School Colaíste de hÍde was opened in Tallaght in 1993. There are now over 2000 children attending eight all Irish schools throughout South County Dublin.

Muintir Chrónáin was awarded the Glór na nGael National Trophy in recognition of its efforts to promote the Irish Language in 1975 and again in 1988. In 1991 they were chosen to host An t-Oireachtas– the National Cultural Festival.

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FOR OVER A HUNDRED YEARS post cards have provided a pictorial record of local persons, changing streetscapes and areas of historical interest. One such place, Clondalkin in common with many other modern Irish villages is a blend of the old and the new and can trace its origins back to the Celtic twilight and beyond. As a typical Irish village it was touched by the emergence of the national canal network, it featured on the route of the Great Southern Railway, it boasts its round tower, its Irish language speakers, its former RIC barracks, its convents and of course its churches.

Clondalkin in addition has its own particular claims to fame: The local aerodrome was where the first East/West Trans-Atlantic Crossing by air began; Baldonnel was where the Irish Air Corps and the fledgling Aer Lingus first saw the light of day; Daniel O'Connell was the vice-president of the fund-raising committee for the local monastery...

For the first time, cards dealing with the Clondalkin area have been gathered together in a collection by historian Joe Williams. These cards accompanied by a brief history of the pictures depicted grant us a valuable insight into this very unusual form of communication and into the life of a typical small Irish village.

Clondalkin Postal Views will be of interest to anyone interested in the post card medium, Irish and Irish village history and of course the residents and workers of the historic village of Clondalkin.

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