

## **The White Quadrangle : Fin & Vicky Background**

### ***St. Finbarre***

"It was then spring-time; nevertheless, ripe nuts fell from the hazel tree above them, filling their laps with nuts." (p. 67)

"Eolang placed Barra's hand in the hand of the Lord himself on the site of Eolang's tomb in the presence of angels and archangels, and said: 'O Lord, receive this just man.' Whereupon the Lord raised Barra's hand to himself in heaven. However, Eolang then said: 'O Lord do not take Barra away from me until it is time for his body to be released.' The Lord then released Barra's hand, and from that day on no one could look at the hand because of its brightness. That is why he always covered it with a glove." (p. 81)

from:

Ó Riain, Pádraig. *Bheatha Bharra, Saint Finbarr of Cork: The Complete Life*. (London: Irish Texts Society. 1994)

### ***The Queen Victoria Statue***

"The replacement of the Queen Victoria statue in 1934 by one of St Finbarr, on the eastern pinnacle of the Aula Maxima, took place in the strongly nationalist atmosphere of the 1930s but the motivation was religious as well. There had been a general feeling for years that the alien symbol of an alien institution should be replaced by the patron saint of the diocese and the college." . . . "Standing seven feet high and weighing one and a half tons, [the statue of St Finbarr] is carved in durable Irish limestone to harmonise with the general architectural tone of the college. Interestingly, the saint is depicted austerely as a cowled monk rather than the conventional Episcopal figure, and his right hand is raised in blessing. The contemporary report noted that the lines of the hair and beard looked white in the light (Cork Examiner 5 June 1934).

The Victoria statue meanwhile was not destroyed but placed in an office in the East Wing where eventually its considerable weight proved too much for the floorboards. Accordingly, it was removed in 1946 and spared for the second time. On this occasion it was buried in the president's garden whence it was exhumed in late 1994 and displayed at the UCC 150 Universitas exhibition in the old council room. This college decision provoked some protests, but not, significantly, from students. The simply designed, medieval style depiction of the young Victoria (executed by Cork sculptor Paddy Scannell, and presented in 1849 as a gift to the college by the architect, Sir Thomas Deane) attracted much public attention."

*For more on the burial of the Queen Victoria statue see:*

H. Glavin, 'A Half-Century of Memories at UCC', *University College Cork Record*, no. 43, 1968, pp. 53 - 4

Larry O'Leary, 'A Royal Burial at UCC', *University College Cork Record*, no. 49, 1974, pp. 68 - 80

Ralph Sutton, 'Significant Details of the College Buildings', *Cork University Record*, no. 12, Easter 1948, p. 25

from:

Murphy, John A. *The College: A History of Queen's /University College Cork*. (Cork: Cork University Press. 1995): 233 – 5

### ***The Smashing of the Royal Crest***

“Republicanism in the college was a much more formidable and threatening movement than Blueshirtism, as was the case nationwide. Discoveries of explosives in the chemistry department indicated bomb-making there during the Civil War. At the end of January 1939, republican activists left their destructive mark on the college for all to see this day. Their escapade was widely reported and commented on, and led to a lively exchange of letters between the (more or less) anonymous perpetrators and Registrar O’Rahilly, President Merriman as usual remaining discreetly silent.

Between 2 and 4am, on the morning of 31 January 1939, armed men broke into the room of the night porter, Denis O’Callaghan, near the Arch, marched him to an adjacent boiler room and there bound and gagged him. They then proceeded to place a ladder against the northern wall of the Arch and one of their number defaced the royal crest, smashing a large part of the crown and chipping the nose off the unicorn. They made good their escape, apparently exiting (as they had entered) over the College Road wall. The Barrack Street gardai (the porter had freed himself and raised the alarm) searched the college grounds in vain. The Irish Times (4 Feb 1939) condemned the UCC defacement as the ‘infantile’ counterpart of IRA explosives at London tube stations. Asking rhetorically what offence had the ‘inanimate unicorn’ given, The Irish Times suggested that the mythical beast may have become in some way associated with the ‘dream symbolism of callow youth’. The Council of the Guild of Students issued a fence-sitting motion which condemned the mutilation of college property and expressed a reluctance to believe it was the work of students but also asserted that crests and insignia on college premises ‘ought to have an Irish or religious significance’.

In the press, O’Rahilly lambasted the ‘petty vandalism’ of ‘some of our junior patriots’, piling on heavy sarcasm and perhaps in the end indulging in overkill. Would they, he wondered, next start ‘defacing numerous small symbols of Lancaster and York in the College stonework’ or were they prepared to start a subscription fund for replacing the carving? Why had not ‘our young generalissimos’ petitioned the Governing Body or discussed the matter with the college authorities before acting like ‘bumptious self-opinionated anarchists’? The Governing Body, he implied, would have acceded to a request to remove the crest.

Unabashed, ‘some of our junior patriots’ adopted the sarcastic description of themselves and returned O’Rahilly’s fire. The National University must be given a ‘National’ appearance, they proclaimed. They admitted they were in a minority but all students would come around to their view one day. They recalled comically that ‘on the night of the dark deed, the Professor’s contented snoring was clearly audible in the Quad . . .’ The episode of the ‘superpatriots’ caused O’Rahilly to reflect paternalistically that undergraduates, being ‘mostly immature’ and not ‘overstudious’, needed to be guided by the college authorities how to learn and equip themselves professionally. And there must be the college discipline to deal with ‘flagrant violation’ of the rules as in the case of a meeting held without the president’s consent by the so-called Cork University Republican Club which had not been given college recognition. Obviously, the defacement episode rankled with O’Rahilly.

The Queen Victoria statue had figured in the exchanges between the ‘superpatriot’ students and O’Rahilly. Citing an example of peaceful nationalist action, O’Rahilly

claimed that five years before, believing the statue to be inappropriate, 'we' had subscribed money for replacing it by one of St. Finbarr. The students retorted that 'the dear old lady is still tucked away intact!' In fact, Professor Fleischmann maintained that what really led to Victoria's removal in 1934 was the threat of 'republican' students that they would blow her up unless she was taken down."

from:

Murphy, John A. *The College: A History of Queen's /University College Cork*. (Cork: Cork University Press. 1995): 243 – 4

### **Boole**

"Opposite the window of the room in which I write is a field, liable to be overflowed from two causes, distinct but capable of being combined, *viz.* floods from the upper sources of the River Lee, and tides from the ocean. Suppose that observations made on N separate occasions have yielded the following results: on A occasions the river was swollen by freshets and on P occasions it was inundated whether from this cause or not. On B occasions the river was swollen by the tide, and on Q occasions it was inundated, whether from this cause or not. Supposing then, that the field cannot be inundated in the absence of *both* these causes, let it be required to determine the total probability of inundation."

Quoted in: MacHale, Desmond. *George Boole: His Life and Work*. (Dublin: Boole Press. 1985): 129

"The mathematician's patterns, like the painter's or the poet's, must be beautiful; the ideas, like the colours or the words, must fit together in a harmonious way. There is no permanent place in the world for ugly mathematics."

Quoted from G.H. Hardy in *A Mathematician's Apology* in:

MacHale, Desmond. *George Boole: His Life and Work*. (Dublin: Boole Press. 1985): 171

"An operator is something that does something to something when it is applied to that something."

Barry, Patrick D. (ed.) *George Boole: A Miscellany*. (Cork: Cork University Press. 1964): 11

### **Dancing**

"Early 1955, the new president of UCC, Henry Atkins, inquired through Canon Bastible about Bishop Lucey's regulations covering dancing in the diocese. Bastible replied on 22 February:

1. Those in charge of halls are requested to hold no public dances of any kind in Lent. If such dances are held, Catholics are requested not to patronise them. (The holding of dances on St. Patrick's day may be tolerated but is not encouraged.)
2. It is requested that there be no dances on Saturday nights or eves of holidays. If dances are held on these nights, it is requested that on no account should they be extended after midnight.
3. Long dances, that is dances after midnight, should be very infrequent – not more than once a month normally. (Frequent attendance at dances by young

people tends to soften their moral fibre. In addition frequent long dances mean that they will be unfit for work next day. Frequent dancing too is even the origin of TB in young people.)

4. Teen-age dances are forbidden even when held under the pretext of classes. (It is to be noted that the law forbids people under eighteen to be present at public dances. In addition it is only by artificial stimulation that teen-agers are attracted to dancing at all. It is not a normal mode of recreation for them.)
5. His Lordship has ordered that no money derived from long dances may be used for the building of churches or for helping foreign missions.

from:

Keogh, Dermot. 'The Catholic Church and the "Godless Colleges", 1845 - 1995.'

Pádraig

Corkery & Fiachra Long (eds.) *Theology in the University: The Irish Context*. (Dublin: Dominican Publications. 1997): 54 - 102