

NAAS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP



DEVOY BARRACKS – ARCH AND CLOCK TOWER

In the grounds of Aras Cill Dara standing comfortably with its present surroundings is all that remains of an important link with the past military history of Naas. The barracks took its name from the fenian leader John Devoy who was himself born nearby in Kill. It was in its time an important barracks in the British Command in Ireland. Built in 1813 it was an infantry barracks and was to become home to many British regiments during its earlier years. Battalions like the Kildare Militia, the 6th. Garrison Battalion, the Forfar Militia and the 42nd. Highlanders (the Black Watch) were all stationed there.

In 1881 it became famous as the depot of the Dublin Fusiliers who remained there for almost forty years up to and during World War 11. The last battalion of Dublin Fusiliers moved out of the barracks on 7th. Feb. 1922. The last British troops were the Leicesters who handed over the barracks to the Free State Army forces. The flag pole had been sawn down and removed so that the tri-colour could not be hoisted. The new garrison erected a temporary one at the main gate.

The Irish Army occupied the barracks until 1928 when it was closed and handed over to the Office of Public Works. The intervening years saw it used for a variety of purposes including a slipper factory, a sausage factory and a printing works. In 1931 part of it was leased to Naas Cotton Mills and part also to the Kildare VEC. The married quarters were taken over in 1934 by Naas Town Council for local authority housing and named St. Patrick's Terrace. The last to occupy the barracks was the Army Apprentice School which was formed in 1956.

The barracks was finally decommissioned on Monday 21st. Sept. 1998 and it was a sad occasion for many people of the Town. It marked the end of an institution that had been part of the fabric of Naas for almost two hundred years. The remaining building with its fine arch and clock tower still stand as a fitting testimony to its illustrious past.