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The military in Kilkenny 1800-1870

by

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Abbreviations

BL	British Library
CLAS	<i>Cinnlae Amhlaoibh Uí Shúileabháin</i> (The diary of Humphrey O'Sullivan)
CRF	Criminal Record Files, N.A.I.
CSO	Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle. N.A.I.
CSOOP	Chief Secretary's Office, Official Papers. N.A.I.
CSORP	Chief Secretary's Office, Registered Papers. N.A.I.
DDA	Dublin Diocesan Archives
FLJ	Finn's Leinster Journal
HC	House of Commons (Papers)
IWM	Imperial War Museum (London)
KJ	Kilkenny Journal
KM	Kilkenny Moderator
KP	Kilkenny People
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
NAM	National Army Museum, London
NLI	National Library of Ireland
OP	Official Papers, N.A.I.
SOC	State of the Country Papers, N.A.I.
TCD	Trinity College, Dublin
TNA	The National Archives, Kew

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Introduction

The year now in its last hours has had more events of vast moment, more strange and startling episodes crowded into its allocated days than any year in our generation. What a wonderful time it has been for supply matter for the future historian.

Editorial (*Kilkenny Moderator*, 31 December 1870).

This thesis aims to portray the origin, growth and decline of the military in Kilkenny during the tumultuous period 1800-70. This study will chart Kilkenny's cyclical military significance from its prominence in the early nineteenth century as a strategic centre in the fight against threatened invasion to its post-Crimean insignificance in army terms. From its Norman foundation in the late twelfth century the town of Kilkenny was both a military and commercial and market centre. As a city, post 1609, it dispatched its soldiers to the great battlefields of Europe: Fontenoy, Waterloo, Alma, Balaclava and Inkerman. Kilkenny's military experiences cannot be regarded solely as a microcosm of the national experience but a blend of international, national and local themes. Neither can Kilkenny's locus on Europe's geographical periphery be taken as evidence of marginality or the inevitable condition of local places. Dominated by its impressive Ormonde Castle, Kilkenny was the home of a distinguished lineage of famous soldiers and therefore pre-eminently an appropriate focus for such a study as this. For much of their lives, James, the first Duke of Ormonde, 1610-88, and James, the second Duke of Ormonde, 1666-1745, were pivotal power-brokers in this country and commanded armies both at home and in Europe. Soldiering enthusiastically with William of Orange during the 1670s, the second Duke became a general in the allied armies campaigning in the low countries. 'Wild geese' soldiers from Kilkenny's satellite gentry families – Archers, Rothes and Hewetsons – accompanied Ormonde into exile and established a tradition of overseas military service.¹

Both of Kilkenny's eighteenth century barracks, cavalry and infantry, had by the time of the Act of Union, fallen into a state of decline and disrepair. One outcome of this amalgamation of the two parliaments was a large-scale barrack building programme throughout Ireland. The commander of the forces in Ireland in January 1807

¹ Nathalie Genet Rauffiac, 'The Irish Jacobite exile in France 1692-1715' in Toby Barnard and Jane Fenlon (eds.), *The Dukes of Ormonde, 1610-1745* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 195-210.

proposed that ‘the worst of these ruinous habitations which at present [are] appropriated as barracks, to the injury of the health as well as the comfort of the soldiers’ should be replaced by permanent barracks.² The siting of Kilkenny’s new military barracks in 1803 on the city’s north-east perimeter conformed with military thinking of that time that sought to transfer stations from crowded unhealthy city-centre sites to larger, healthier self-contained locations on the outskirts of towns. Thus isolated, undue intrusion from the general public onto these establishments was minimised. The security rationale surrounding the buildings and maintenance of this magnificent and costly barracks will be outlined. Over the period of this study a number of major architectural additions to the barracks were undertaken and from mid-century onwards health and sanitation conditions were addressed on an on-going basis. Their significant impact on soldiers’ living conditions will be explored. Known for a time as Victoria Barracks, in honour of the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India, the Kilkenny barracks represented a bulwark of continuity to local loyalists, provided a guarantee of their personal security, and bolstered their claims to political and social supremacy.

The establishment of an equally expansive and costly barracks at Castlecomer, at the same time as that of Kilkenny, dually acknowledges the power and influence with government of the Butler/Wandesforde family and the fraught security position within the county at that time when Ribbonite violence threatened to overthrow the civil law. Recurring fears regarding the pacification of this densely-populated coal-mining district experiencing Chartist-inspired unrest led to the re-occupation of the barracks in the 1840s. The levels of barrack occupation 1800-70 will be outlined in this study. As well as erecting new barracks, the Barrack Master’s Office acquired mills, warehouses and barns for conversion to military use. These were mostly on short-term leases and aimed at counteracting localised unrest. These existed at Callan (1830-3), Ballyragget (1833-4), Johnstown (1833-4), Kilmoganny (1832) and Thomastown (1834-5). Large tented encampments were also established such as at Piltown (1848).

² MS draft of a history of Devoy Barracks, Naas, quoted in Cornelius Costello, ‘The British army on the Curragh of Kildare 1855-1922: environment, social and economic aspects of the making and occupation of the camp’ (Ph.D. thesis Department of History, NUI Maynooth, 1995), p. 21.

In the streets adjacent to the military barracks at Kilkenny, there were fundamental changes in the nature and concentration of businesses established subsequent to its erection. These changes included the preponderance of the city's public houses within this general area, a phenomenon that exists to the present day. The military presence (post 1803) also affected population growth within this area, characterised by a large increase in the Protestant community of the parish within which the barracks is situated. The pattern, extent and timescale of these changes will be outlined in this study.

With the notable exception of A. R. Skelley's work the world of Britain's Victorian rank and file soldier has been very much neglected and misunderstood.³ This thesis will throw new light on the experiences of a small section of this army, focusing on some of those who served or were recruited in county Kilkenny. Who was the typical recruit? Did taking the Queen's shilling automatically denote loyalism or was his decision to join based largely on social and economic circumstances? The origin, social background, age profile and the length of service of these men will be closely examined. Cyclical local recruiting patterns will be explored in the light of changing economic, social and political factors. The nature of military service changed little over the period 1800-70. Discipline was severe, food insufficient and monotonous, and recreational facilities hopelessly inadequate for off-duty soldiers. It was little wonder then, that the rank and file soldier, unable to influence the conditions under which he served, sought to express his objections in widespread practices of desertion, insubordination, drunkenness and damage to military property. The Irishman was commonly stereotyped in the nineteenth century in martial terms: pugnacious, undisciplined and fighting solely out of love for the fight, especially after having partaken of excessive amounts of drink. Were these the marked attributes of the generality of Kilkenny soldiers?

The validity of Percy Bysshe Shelley's contention that the quartering of a regiment in any Irish town would 'soon destroy its innocence and happiness of its inhabitants'

³ A. R. Skelley, *The Victorian army at home: the recruitment and terms and conditions of the British regular 1859-99* (Montreal, 1977).

will be explored in the context of the Kilkenny experience.⁴ It would appear from the frequency of newspaper reports dealing with prostitution, throughout the period of this study, that this problem was extensive within the area. At different times the intrusion of local magistrates and police in the raiding and closing down of Kilkenny's back-lane brothels was considered necessary. Subsequent court cases disclosed that these prostitutes or 'unfortunates' as they were termed, in many instances had origins outside the county of Kilkenny. For most soldiers, however, their stay in Kilkenny was of short duration thus restricting their opportunities to establish long-term relationships with the opposite sex. The frequency of military/civilian marriages, as recorded in the incomplete records of a number of Kilkenny city parishes 1813-1870, will be assessed. So too will the age and social profile of the participants of these unions, the regularity of local Catholic girls marrying soldiers in other denominational churches, and the incidence of English soldiers crossing the religious divide when marrying locally. While individual experiences are highlighted, a framework within which to review relations in general is offered.

The steps taken by the British army to try and ameliorate the most serious abuses attendant on its presence will be examined and assessed. It will be argued that the impact was primarily negative and consequently relations with the indigenous inhabitants were often strained. The conduct or misconduct of the military based in Kilkenny varied from time to time and from regiment to regiment. The *Kilkenny Moderator*, the local establishment newspaper, constantly lavished each departing group with profuse praise for their endeavours whilst stationed in Kilkenny. In September 1854 on the departure of the 46th Regiment to a posting in Windsor similar sentiments were expressed with the *Kilkenny Moderator* vouching for 'the universal good character' of these men whilst stationed locally.⁵ However shortly after leaving Kilkenny a number of officers of this regiment were charged with the murder of one of their colleagues at Windsor. Captain Helsham, spokesperson for the local military and the editor of the *Kilkenny Moderator*, forced into a retraction of their earlier laudatory remarks, stated that 'any compliment which we paid that corps

⁴ Paul O'Brien, *Shelley and revolutionary Ireland* (London and Dublin, 2002), p. 274.

⁵ *Kilkenny Moderator*, 16 Sept. 1854.

whilst quartered in this garrison, we feel called upon to withdraw, so far as the officers who figured at the recent Windsor courts martial are concerned'.⁶ The administration of military discipline, briefly discussed in Chapter I, is seen as the weak link in the maintenance of good relations between soldiers and civilians.

The duties and obligations placed upon the military in Ireland varied over the course of the nineteenth century. With the establishment of an effective all-Ireland police force in 1836, the military's policing role of earlier decades gave way to dealing with mass public protest: Connellite and anti-tithe demonstrations. These duties posed serious problems for army commanders of how to deploy the force effectively without threatening its security. The Famine of 1845-9 tested the army's logistical support of the civil authorities. The army's neutrality in the business of overseeing elections in county Kilkenny and allegations tarring soldiers with sectarian politics will be investigated. Certainly Sir Edward Blakeney, the commander of the forces in Ireland 1835-55, warned soldiers not to mix in local politics at any time.⁷

It is only in recent years that the experience of the Crimean War and its impact on society has been addressed within the Irish historical tradition, with significant studies by David Murphy and Brian Griffin.⁸ This interest has been generated by an acknowledgement that this conflict had significant political, social and cultural effects on this country. Because of the widespread dispersal of Irish soldiers across many regiments it is not possible to accurately quantify Irish participation in this conflict. Within infantry regiments especially and to a lesser extent within the cavalry there was a considerable Irish presence. The ambiguous responses of Irish and Kilkenny newspapers, in the pro-war and anti-war camps, will be observed. Local 'loyalist' endorsement will be contrasted with 'nationalist' opposition to any Irish involvement in this war. An element within the local Roman Catholic laity and clergy canvassed against enlistment and boycotted official agencies set up to relieve the financial needs of widows and orphans of soldiers killed in the war. This study

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Virginia Crossman, 'Preserving the peace in Ireland: the role of the military forces, 1815-45' in *The Irish Sword*, p. 271

⁸ David Murphy, *Ireland and the Crimean War* (Dublin, 2002); Brian Griffin, 'Ireland and the Crimean War' in *The Irish Sword*, xxii, no. 89 (Summer 2001), pp. 281-313.

will examine the positive and negative aspects of this war on Kilkenny's economy. The boost to the post-famine local economy of the panic buying of almost everything at the commencement of this conflict was negated by the massive increase in violent crime because of militia embodiment. The huge legacies of this conflict will be noted. Wounded soldiers, dismissed with minimum payment, were forced to beg on the city streets, and there was a significant increase in admissions to the local lunatic asylum of the battle scarred. David Murphy's contention that the rapturous enthusiasm of crowds seeing soldiers departing for the front signified massive approval for the war will be disputed. In the jam-packed casual-labour-filled Irish cities of that time, crowds gathered for anything that provided spectacle or music or a combination of both. The authorities had more trouble in preventing crowds than collecting them. In Kilkenny huge crowds regularly gathered for faction fights, fairs and even hangings. Crowds of over 25,000 people were reported attending public hangings in Kilkenny city during the 1820s and 1830s.⁹

The contribution of a group of Irish Sisters of Mercy caring for the casualties of this conflict behind the British battle lines will also be ascertained. Using the unedited reminiscences in a journal written by Mother M. Joseph Croke the efforts of these pioneering medics in eliminating the dirty and fetid facilities operative before their arrival will be noted.¹⁰ Equally substantive were the myriad ways in which the wives and girlfriends of Kilkenny soldiers endeavoured to provide a semblance of comfort to their menfolk. Braving the dangers of war and the severities of the Crimean winter a number of them paid their own fare to travel to the war-front.

The military transport revolution, initiated by the Crimean War, marked the eclipse of the horse as a major element in the conduct of warfare. The Anglo-Irish landowner, typically stereotyped as 'a Protestant on a horse' was thereby marginalised. His once privileged position within the military was undermined. Within the army the infantry brigades replaced the cavalry as the most glamorous units. Increasingly the younger sons of Ireland's landed gentry saw their best

⁹ *KM*, 28 Aug. 1824: *Ibid.*, 6 Apr. 1831.

¹⁰ Mother M. Joseph Croke, 'Journal of Crimean Reminiscences, Oct. 1854-May 1856' (Convent of Mercy Archives, Baggot Street, Dublin).

financial interests lay in overseas military service. The nature and ethos of this commitment will be ascertained. Anne Chambers questions whether this tradition of service was 'born not merely out of loyalty to the British Empire and monarchy', but 'also out of a profound sense of continuity and homage to their ancestors'.¹¹ 'Irish support for empire' as Thomas Bartlett notes 'reflected perspectives that were varied and that were often quite different from English perspectives'.¹²

Conflict in Ireland throughout the nineteenth century has been portrayed as one of inter-denominational confrontation. Efforts to convert Irish non-Protestants to 'Christianity' and infuse 'evangelical life' into Protestantism known as the 'Second Reformation' reached its height in the late 1820s. This proselytising campaign soured inter-communal relations, which continued throughout the period of this study. Renewed Protestant militancy during the mid-1850s led to a fracas between these bible-readers and elements from Kilkenny's poorer classes which necessitated the intervention of the police and army. Claims of multiple conversions and subsequent retractions were advanced by Catholic and Protestant spokesmen alike. Protestantism, L. M. Cullen observed, never took root in county Kilkenny, 'the most monolithically Catholic county of all'. This he states was primarily due to the benevolent lordship of the partly Catholic caste of the Butlers.¹³ The Protestant population at Piltown, the estate town of the Ponsonbys, was in the early nineteenth century less than significant and was minute in such landlord strongholds as Knocktopher, Inistioge and Gowran. Untypically there was a concentration of Protestant families in the parishes of Mothel and Castlecomer on the bleak limestone plateau of Fassadinin. A significantly large portion of the land in county Kilkenny remained in Catholic hands.¹⁴ The diminution of Kilkenny's Protestant community, evident from the late eighteenth century, decreased Protestant hegemony within the county and curtailed Protestant recruitment to the army post 1815. It is no coincidence that the halcyon years of Kilkenny's gentry contribution to the British army was inclusive of the Penninsular and Napoleonic wars.

¹¹ Anne Chambers, *At arms length: aristocrats in the Republic of Ireland* (Dublin, 2004), p. 166.

¹² Thomas Bartlett, 'Irish Empire and Union 1690-1801' in Peter Gray (ed.), *Victoria's Ireland? Irishness and Britishness* (Dublin, 2004), p. 88.

¹³ L. M. Cullen, *The emergence of modern Ireland, 1600-1900* (New York, 1981), p. 122.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

The nature of Protestant advantage and Catholic exclusion in the Irish world of vocational opportunities will be explored. Catholic exclusion from the early sports movement in Kilkenny by a social hierarchy that included military officers, business people and people from the top echelons of an expanding civil service will be highlighted. Whilst the soldier had a prominent place in Kilkenny, which would probably have not prospered without him it was the merchants that created the city. The relationship between the two communities was at times strained, even hostile, though economically, socially and culturally the fortunes of both were interlinked. The way both groups reacted to ongoing military developments at home and abroad will be examined.

The importance of pre-famine ballads in the dissemination and inculcation of a national ethos on a predominantly non-literary society will be explored. Gary Owens ranks songs as equal in importance with histories, poems, novels and monuments in the construction and formulation of an Irish identity.¹⁵ These memories from below, from the *cosmhuintir*, were in the main inaccessible to both contemporaries and historians by reason of social status or difference in language. Bilingual in the beginning, these ballads were increasingly composed in English as Irish as a living language moved towards near extinction. As part of a larger European movement for the collection of folksongs the Young Irelanders in the 1840s promoted the popularity of balladry. Another by-product of this era of European nationalism and romanticism was the antiquarian and revivalist activities of local middle class, mainly Protestant, intellectuals which initiated the establishment of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society in 1849. From the outset this organisation was apolitical, declaring in its rules that all matters ‘connected with religious and political differences which exist in our country are not only foreign to the objects of the society’ but also ‘calculated to disturb the harmony which is essential to its success’.¹⁶

¹⁵ Gary Owens, ‘Nationalist movements in Ireland c. 1870-1914: symbolism and ritual’ in Raymond Gillespie and Brian Kennedy (eds.), *Ireland: art into history* (Dublin, 1994), p. 117.

¹⁶ First prospectus enclosed with the bound copies of the Royal Antiquarian Society of Ireland Journals (N.L.I.).

Another important element in the formulation or otherwise, of an Irish nationalist ethos was the influence of the Roman Catholic clergy. The neglect of the Irish language in the Roman Catholic liturgy hastened its decline as a vernacular. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century a host of Gaelic-speaking Methodist evangelists (including female preachers) travelled across the country. Dr. Hempton notes that 'their conversionist message brought a new competitiveness to religion in Ireland and the itinerant Gaelic preachers were better conservators of the Gaelic language and culture than the more Europeanised Catholic priesthood'.¹⁷ Ireland lost its native tongue more rapidly than any other group in Western Europe including sister societies in Scotland, Wales and Brittany.¹⁸ The numbers of Catholics embracing Protestantism as a result of these campaigns was small. More thorough instruction given to Catholics from the 1820s onwards in the tenets of their religion gave them a greater understanding of the ideological differences separating them from Protestants. The establishment of the Catholic Book Society, publishing Catholic literature from 1827 'as cheaply as possible', further strengthened religious belief.¹⁹ These class, religious and language differences between competing cultures and the conflict between Protestant hegemony and Catholic permeation of the local civic and business infrastructure provides the basis for differing interpretations of nineteenth century Irish social reality.

Urbanisation was a major factor in colonial expansion throughout Ireland. Irish cities and towns were perceived as centres of military and colonial power. Edward Spenser in *A view of the present state of Ireland (1596)* visualised the 'plantation' Irish town as a centre 'of culture and civility', economically stimulating its agricultural hinterland and functioning as a regenerative force by which the rural lawless would, in time, become 'subject to English customs and law'.²⁰ The English government's aim was to integrate Ireland's economy with that of Britain. Dublin 'the gateway to England' and the hub on which Ireland's transport networks revolved was seen as central to this process. So too was the rational allocation of scarce military resources

¹⁷ Dr. D. N. Hempton of Queen's University, Belfast quoted in a leaflet issued on the occasion of the celebration of two hundred and fifty years of Methodism in Kilkenny (June 2000).

¹⁸ Cullen, *The emergence of modern Ireland, 1600-1900*, p. 135.

¹⁹ Patrick J. Corish, 'The waning of Old Ireland' in P.J. Corish, *The Irish Catholic experience, a historical survey* (Dublin, 1985), p. 172.

²⁰ Quoted in Jacinta Prunty, *Maps and map-making in local history* (Dublin, 2004), p. 48.

and the accommodation of troops in a small number of major depots. This thesis will discuss the effects of this modernisation on Kilkenny's military establishment. The facilities afforded by improved communication systems by rail and canal in the 1840s relative to the military will also be outlined.

Other issues considered in this study are the extent to which British policies in Ireland served as a testing ground for social, administrative and constitutional policies which having succeeded here were subsequently adopted elsewhere in the Empire. Also the vexed question of a nationality, whether Kilkenny soldiers, after long service abroad, retained their allegiances to their local origins or had become hybridised Britons will be addressed.

Sources

Much of the copious 'supply matter' of use 'to future historians' heralded at the commencement of this chapter has since been lost in the crevices of time. A great corpus of information relative to the period of this study was consumed in the civil-war destruction of the Irish Public Records Office in 1922. Similarly there are gaps in the information stored at the National Archives at Kew (London). To enumerate one such instance this study sought to ascertain the economic effects on the fortunes of Kilkenny ascendancy families of paying very large sums to purchase a commission in the army. However as Anthony P. C. Bruce points out those 'looking for detailed information on how much was paid for commissions in different regiments during different periods will be sorely disappointed'.²¹ Such records no longer exist. Memoirs, letters and biographies relative to the vast majority of the participants in the events of this study are also unavailable. This is not surprising noting the lack of literacy amongst Irish rank and file soldiers pre 1860. Thankfully there is still a wide variety of contemporary newspapers and periodicals of differing political and religious hue.

The exposition and development of the theme of this study is dependent on the production and survival of primary material. However, statistical information,

²¹ Anthony P. C. Bruce, *The purchase system in the British army 1660-1871* (London, 1980), p. 5.

especially for the early decades of the nineteenth century, must be approached with caution. Early census returns as Richard Lawton, Ian Dalton, Jacinta Prunty and E. Margaret Crawford state are subject to varying degrees of inaccuracy.²² The 1841 census returns shows that in the decade 1831-41, 34,090 Irish recruits joined the army and 5,089 joined the East India Company.²³ However there is no follow-up in subsequent enumerations of recruiting trends. The 1861 census provides the first official enumeration of religious affiliation. This report facilitates the identification of the levels and area concentration of county Kilkenny Protestants post-famine.

External defence and internal order represented ‘not only a prime political concern’ to the Westminster parliament but was ‘also the single largest element in central public expenditure of which it absorbed 25.8 percent in 1841-5, and 28.9 percent in 1846-50.’²⁴ Between 1835 and 1852 the War Office workload had increased enormously dealing with 34,528 letters in 1836 and 1,069,371 in 1852.²⁵ Attempts to consolidate military departments and to sort out the administrative jungle in which the Horse Guards, the War Office, the Ordnance and Commissariat exercised various levels of autonomy were introduced following the Crimean War and were further advanced with the implementation of Edward Cardwell’s reforms in 1870. They were however, only partially effective.

The administration of the local barracks finances rested with the Barrack Master whose recording of the minutiae of everyday spending at Kilkenny barracks in 1838 (Ref. 113485, WO 48/352) portrays the Victorian obsession with strict financial control. These local returns were duly forwarded to London where in early November each year the financial secretary produced a draft estimate based on the establishment’s expenditure of the previous year. Thereafter the secretary of state and

²² See Richard Lawton, *An interpretive guide to nineteenth century censuses in England and Wales* (London, 1978), p. 182; Ian Dalton, *Protestant society and politics in Cork, 1812-44* (Cork, 1980), p. 5; Jacinta Prunty, ‘The textile industry in nineteenth century Dublin, its geography, structure and demise’ in Herman Diederiks and Marjan Balkestein (eds.) in *Occupational titles and their classification: the case of the textile trade in past times* (Leiden, 1995), p. 205; E. Margaret Crawford, *Counting the people: a survey of Irish censuses 1813-1911* (Dublin, 2003), p. 15.

²³ General Introduction, *Report of the Census Commissioners* (Ireland), 1841, i: Reports and tables, p. viii.

²⁴ K. T. Hoppen, *The mid-Victorian generation 1846-1886* (Oxford, 1998), p. 113.

²⁵ Hew Strachan, *Wellington’s legacy: the reform of the British army 1830-54* (Manchester, 1984), p. 235.

the chancellor of the exchequer became involved. This process generated massive paper work as did the constant upheavals in the re-ordering of the military's spatial requirements. Barrack refurbishment, extension, disposal or the renewal of leases generated the production of reports and numerous large-scale maps covering every military station in the U.K., no matter how small in size or inconsequential militarily. It was, as Jacinta Prunty points out, 'within this ordered and clearly-defined administrative world that barracks were planned, mapped, managed, defended, complained of, furnished, occupied, vacated and sold off'.²⁶

A rich literature of autobiographies, diaries, letters and correspondence relating to military matters deposited in a number of miscellaneous repositories allow the researcher to reflect on the social and cultural changes in nineteenth century society. A series of miscellaneous letters from a Scottish army officer, based in Kilkenny to his mother in Edinburgh, 1833-36, portrays the privileged life-style of an officer based in Ireland (N.L.I., MS 13527). His condescending remarks about the cultural and social deficiencies of the local gentry and bourgeois, with whom he mixed, are broadly typical of the views held by the British officer class in regard to the inferiority of everything Irish. Conversely the daybook of the 10th troop of the 23rd Dragoons 1800-02, outlining the day-to-day incomes and expenses of the rank and file members of that force, depicts a scenario of subsistence living and the constant indebtedness of these soldiers to the 'company store' (N.L.I., MS 3142). Various military catechisms, training manuals and drill instruction books were also beneficial to this study. The Kilmainham Papers, also sourced at the N.L.I., are 380 manuscripts containing the residue of the British commander-in-chief, Ireland, papers found in Government Headquarters after the British handover of power in 1922. Within the constraints of time, it was possible to examine only a limited number of these large manuscripts. Of those investigated the volumes dealing with the infantry were most beneficial to this thesis as Kilkenny, 1800-70, was primarily an infantry barracks.

The lord lieutenant as principal agent of the English government in Ireland had many

²⁶ Jacinta Prunty, 'Military barracks and mapping in the nineteenth century: sources and issues for Irish urban history' in Howard B. Clarke, Jacinta Prunty and Mark Hennessy (eds.), *Surveying Ireland's past: multidisciplinary essays in honour of Anngret Simms* (Dublin, 2004), p. 489.

political and administrative duties to fulfil. His was the prerogative of mercy to pardon all crime with the exception of treason. Immediately subordinate to him was the chief secretary who acted as head of the lord lieutenant's secretariat. The chief secretary's Office Registered Papers (CSORP) consist of 337 bound volumes (to be found only at N.A.I.) which are used as finding aids to incoming letters, reports, returns and memoranda from a wide plethora of individuals, institutions and government departments. The number of registered papers varied from year to year rising dramatically during the period of the Famine (1845-47) and the Fenian Rising (1867). These papers give a valuable insight into the government's response to rebellion and political unrest, famine, cholera epidemics and cattle plagues. These papers also deal with more mundane matters like army promotions and court martials, army pensions and army involvement in curtailing the illicit manufacture of spirits. Unfortunately a great proportion of these papers were lost in the Four Courts fire of 1922. The papers now extant in the N.A.I. are those which had not been handed over to the P.R.O.I. at that time.

In Victorian Britain 'it seems clear that at least one-half of the people who might have been expected to go to church or chapel in 1851 did not do so'.²⁷ Most of these non-attenders came from the working class. The position within the army was different where Sunday church attendance was obligatory. However stratagems for measuring religiosity amongst soldiers could not be devised in this study for want of available evidence. Records of the numbers of communicants, if they still remained extant, would be similarly of little value when 'the general opinion of the morals of the army at that time was so low that it was considered neither fitting nor desirable for a soldier in uniform to approach the communion table with the rest of the congregation'.²⁸ Parish records of all religious denominations within county Kilkenny are of uneven consistency. However, the parish marriage records of St. John's Roman Catholic Church (1813-41), St. John's (1845-70) and St. Mary's (1822-70) Protestant churches and Kilkenny Presbyterian Church (1845-59) proved invaluable in formulating marriage patterns involving military. Those records which

²⁷ Asa Briggs, *The age of improvement 1783-1867* (Harlow, 1998), p. 465.

²⁸ Olive Anderson, 'The growth of Christian militarism in Mid-Victorian Britain' in *English Historical Review*, no. 86 (Jan. 1971), p. 49.

provide the occupation of the bride's father reveal the social strata from which officers and soldiers chose their partners. Collections of private manuscripts for the period such as the Tighe Papers (N.L.I., MS 8259) and Gabbett Papers (N.L.I., N2653) contain little of military or security significance. These papers are primarily concerned with estate management and local social events.

Cinnlae Amhlaoihb Uí Shúileabháin (Dublin, 1931-37) an Irish language diary written in the period 1827-35 by Humphrey O'Súileabháin, a school teacher from Callan, county Kilkenny, when such record-keeping was the preserve of the gentry, affords a unique perspective in the field of historical analysis and anthropological ethnography. O'Súileabháin was a sensitive and well-informed interpreter of the conflict between his Gaelic Munster cultural inheritance and the prevailing hegemonic culture of the period. The inter-denominational feuding of Callan's two communities is graphically recorded in this diary notably in O'Súileabháin's efforts in persuading O'Connell's followers 'not to walk in green clothes nor with O'Connell's image and music. The Protestants pretend they are very much afraid but it would delight their hearts to be spilling Catholic blood' (CLAS ii, p. 31). The author's description of the difficulties created by billeting of members of the Royal Blue Dragoons is graphic. 'I have billeted on me two of them, and a woman and four children. I am not bound to keep the woman and her children' (CLAS i, p. 149).

Contemporary and local newspapers provide the historian with a valuable insight into the political, cultural and social milieu of the area over the period of this study. The political sympathies of the proprietors of Kilkenny's two newspapers before 1850 varied from the conservative Abraham Denroche of the *Kilkenny Moderator* to the repeal politics of Cornelius Maxwell at the *Kilkenny Journal*. During the Crimean War (1854-6) the *Kilkenny Moderator* adopted a strong pro-establishment position constantly criticising its rival for not matching their enthusiastic support. Letters home from soldiers serving on the battlefield, in all instances anonymous, regularly featured in the columns of the *Kilkenny Moderator* and invariably reflected prevailing ascendancy values. It would seem that these letters were sanitised at military command level and scrutinised by newspaper editorial staff to reflect dominant ideology interests.

The archives of the Kilkenny Circulating Library Society (1820-1910) deposited at Rothe House, Kilkenny contain detailed information about the book titles taken by their newsroom. Because of an apparent lack of funds the purchase of newspapers rather than books on a regular basis seems to have been the preferred management policy. This source charts the evolution of political allegiances in a provincial city over the period of this study. Business directories portray the increasing commercialisation of Irish society during the nineteenth century. However, in general, they are not consistent or comprehensive. The listing of the number of people involved in various trades at any particular time probably reflected the proficiency of those selling advertising space rather than an accurate enumeration of those involved in that business. Graphic sources such as photographs and artefacts evoke a more potent sense of the past than their textual counterpart. The barrack photographs used in this study are part of the National Trust Archive and were sourced at the Irish Architectural Archive in Dublin. The etching of a detachment of the 3rd Buffs, 85th Light Infantry, Demi Battalion Artillery encamped in the Earl of Bessborough's Park in 1848 magnificently complements the textual account given by a serving soldier of that corps while stationed there (see Figure 2.2, p. 107). However the interpretation of these visual sources can be problematic. These drawings were commissioned by the gentry, and artists pandered to reflect ascendancy values. In this particular etching the stately mansion overlooking a wooded landscape is highlighted. The linear array of army tents portrays order and decorum. The leisurely sauntering of soldiers and their female partners suggest the attractiveness of military life. The painting of Alfred Munnings of Kilkenny horse fair (see Figure 4.10, p. 195) is similarly weighted with ascendancy values.

Literature Review

The volume of published material available to the military historian has greatly increased over recent years. This, to a degree, compensates for a general unavailability of much that was written in previous decades and is now out of print. Because of the multidisciplinary approach to this study other complementary disciplines - social anthropology, economics, religion, politics and sport - provided material of much value. The use of a wide variety of sources meant that the

identification of bias was more consistently addressed, while exposure to studies produced in other disciplines extended the range of possible approaches and insights. Because of the restricted corpus of Irish military history published to date much of the material used in this research emanates from English studies. However much of this research concentrates, almost exclusively on the wider-world military experience and was therefore of only tangential interest to a regional study.

The recent upsurge in what might be termed the 'new' military history has given rise to a number of guides aimed at practitioners and enthusiasts in this field. J. L. Butler and Anthony Guest's (eds.), *Modern British history: a guide to study and research* (London, 1997) is a useful introduction to the concept of military history and in distinguishing varying 'schools' of military historiography. It also lists an extensive range of U.K. based military history repositories which were of great benefit to this study. Disappointingly many of the extensive list of books recommended by Ian Beckett in this study are now out of print. Contrastingly Brian Hanly's more recent publication is disappointingly inadequate on all fronts. *A guide to Irish military heritage* (Dublin, 2004) is little more than a light-weight enumeration of the country's castles, battlefields, museums, heritage centres and tour operators aimed to appeal to day-trippers rather than the serious student of military history. The book's eleven-page bibliography lists no new titles or themes that would have advanced this study. A useful guide to the exploration of the coded world of Irish cartography is Jacinta Prunty's *Maps and map-making in local history* (Dublin, 2004), which includes an invaluable section dealing with military map-making. The need to procure established boundaries, necessitating detailed maps, noted by Prunty as a recurring problem relevant to Irish barracks was also a concern to Kilkenny's military authorities throughout the period 1800-70. This study also proved valuable in pinpointing the existence of maps of Kilkenny Barracks, 22 September 1830 (WO 55/2609) Castlecomer Barracks, 1 May 1840 (WO 55/2787) and Kilkenny Barracks, 10 January 1851 (WO 55/2971). Anngret Simms, H. B. Clarke and Raymond Gillespie (eds.), *Irish Historic Towns Atlas*, No. 10, Kilkenny (Dublin, 2000) helps situate Kilkenny's military heritage as evidenced in the townscape and on maps. The author of this work John Bradley also positions public institutions such as infirmary, fever hospital, workhouse and gaol established on the urban periphery in the early

nineteenth century. As the city's principal barracks was located on its eastern perimeter it is regrettably not shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1841 (scale 1:1056). However the coloured reconstruction map of Kilkenny c.1842 (scale 1:2500) includes the barracks and surrounding area. The mapping of military institutions was regarded as a matter of great sensitivity. Surprisingly it was not until 1878 that legislation was introduced copper-fastening security measures that had long been common practice within the army.²⁹ In Ordnance Survey maps of Kilkenny city the area occupied by the barracks is left blank.

The threat of a Fenian Rising in Cork, Dublin and Kerry throughout the first quarter of 1867 necessitated vigorous military activity. Military on duty guarding Fenian prisoners in the country's gaols and the security of army instalments were constantly being monitored by nationalist activists. The threat posed by Fenian activities is best sourced by reference to Fenian Police Reports, 12 September 1865-27 December 1865 (N.A.I. MS 3/714). A. J. Semple's review of seventy courts-martial of Fenian suspects tried between May 1865 and November 1867 is another useful adjunct.³⁰

Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffrey's *A military history of Ireland* (Cambridge, 1996) is a compilation of eighteen essays by Irish and English historians, organised chronologically. The preface notes that in these studies the emphasis is on the social aspects of soldiering and warfare as part of the so-called 'new military history'. This 'new' methodology could be characterised as a transition from the traditional 'drum and fife' concept of military history and its concentration on battles, campaigns and generalship, to an expanded historical understanding of the effects of war on individuals and society. Any historical study that attempts to cover a period of a thousand years must of necessity curtail the space allotted to particular periods. The time-span of Bartlett and Jeffrey's *A military history of Ireland* extends from Cúchulainn to the signing of the Belfast Agreement (Belfast, 10 April 1998). Just two chapters in this volume relate to the period of this study. E. M. Spiers

²⁹ 'All impressions on the one inch, 6 inch or other scales showing Forts, Towers or batteries, now in the Map Store, are to be kept by themselves under lock and key and are only to be issued when demanded for War Department purposes', internal circulating, 6 Apr. 1878 (N.A.I., OS 13/1878/25).

³⁰ A. J. Semple, 'The Fenian infiltration of the British army' in *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, lii, no. 211 (1974), p. 133.

contribution, 'Army organisation and society in the nineteenth century', notes that Irish military participation in the early decades of the century was particularly prominent. Ireland was distinctive as a recruiting area within Britain because of a burgeoning population and considerable poverty. The Irish ascendancy was over represented in the officer class. Soldiering was regarded as a socially acceptable outlet for the younger sons of ascendancy families and viewed even as a noble calling. Virginia Crossman's paper titled 'The army and law and order in the nineteenth century' examines the relationship between the civil and military authorities and the changing nature, post 1836 police reform, of the line between the respective duties of the police and military. Crossman contends that even after these changes the army retained a vital role in law enforcement acting 'not so much as an arm of government, that function being performed by the police, but as a staff to be grasped when occasion demanded' (p. 358). As an overall exposé of the national peacekeeping role of the military this article is excellent. When integrated with Michael O'Hanrahan's more localised study of Kilkenny agrarian revolt ('The tithe war in county Kilkenny' in William Nolan and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Kilkenny: history and society*, Dublin, 1990, pp. 481-506) a fuller understanding of the key events of the period emerges. The central question addressed to the eighteen contributors to *A military history of Ireland* was whether 'an alleged' Irish military tradition could be verified. The far from definitive conclusion reached by Bartlett and Jeffrey was 'that the so-called classic Irish fighting qualities were in fact to be found in most colonial formations' including Australian, Canadian and New Zealand units.

Con Costello's study of the British army on the Curragh 1855-1922 *A most delightful station* (Cork, 1999) is a fine example of the application of this 'new-military' type history to the study of an Irish army base and in many ways has inspired this thesis. It records the changing profile and role of a colonial army – officer's men and their families. It outlines the importance of the camp to the area's economic, social, cultural and sporting life. Its position as the British Empire's most important training camp meant large-scale summer camps of up to 12,000 men. Their presence created a boom for local shops and hostleries and even increased payments for the local clergy. However this presence also attracted large-scale prostitution to the precincts of the camp. Costello describes the unhealthy sordid lives of these prostitutes

encamped in the 'Wrens nests' in the furze bushes on the plain. Costello's study embraces a wide use of parliamentary papers to quantify the gross sums expended on the construction of the camp at the Curragh, to establish the numerous measures taken over time for the prevention of contagious diseases, and to quantify the number of soldiers flogged annually in Ireland. The wide expanse of national and local newspapers consulted demonstrate the thoroughness with which the author approached this study. If at times this study gives the impression that the author is heaping up all the facts that a lifetime's research could discover, it is nevertheless a very readable work of order, art and method. Critics might argue that the criterion for distinguishing the trivial from the significant is at times breached as in the case of Costello's retelling of the fable known as the 'prophesies of St. Colmcille' which foretold that the Curragh camp would be burned down in 1867 or his description of an unidentified raw recruit sitting on an ammunition-box with a lighted pipe in his mouth. Costello's description of the military training period spent by the young Prince of Wales at the Curragh is over-lengthy and patronising; his account of the sexual exploits of the prince while at the camp mere titillating sensationalism.

Comparisons of Costello's study with other military histories are somewhat misleading. The erection of a permanent barracks at a distance from an urban setting made the Curragh dissimilar to Kilkenny and other Irish garrison towns. Geographically the Curragh was situated in an isolated place similar to Salisbury Plains in England which experienced a throughput of thousands of English and Irish soldiers yearly for summer training. The Curragh was a town created by the army; Kilkenny a city where the barracks was an integral component of the area's political, social and cultural experience and where military practices and mores influenced the daily lives of all its citizens inclusive of non-military personnel. The Curragh authorities exercised monolithic control over all aspects of government within the camp; at Kilkenny the military was obliged to reach accommodation with the municipal authorities and the local community. As the country's pre-eminent centre for military activity the Curragh made available to Costello an unrivalled source of primary research material. The fact that the establishment of the Curragh camp occurred, in 1855, half a century later than the barracks at Kilkenny meant that it came at a time of improved record-keeping. The meticulous footnoting of sources

utilised by Costello is sadly missing from many contemporary Irish military history studies.

Dan Harvey and Gerry White's *The Barracks, a history of Victoria/Collins Barracks, Cork* (Cork, 1997) is a populist study of an Irish barracks. The focus of this book is primarily the post-1922 Irish Republican army with little in-depth analysis of the army under British control. The Famine period, Queen Victoria's visit to Cork 3 August 1849, the Crimean War and the Fenian Rising of 1867 are summarily commented upon whilst the Young Ireland Rising of 1848 is completely ignored. There are a number of interesting quotes included in this study which would add to any military study but in the absence of footnotes are of little value to the historian.

Another military history of an Irish barracks is Joseph Gavin and Harold O'Sullivan's *Dundalk: a military history* (Dundalk, 1987), which similarly over-compresses the local military experience for this period. Dundalk Barracks in 1811 was capable of accommodating 739 infantry soldiers and 240 cavalymen and their horses, making it a very important and strategic military post. This study, however, fails to transmit the notion of its then significance. There have also been a number of pocket-guide histories of Irish military barracks published in recent years. These include Eamon Kiely's, *A short history of McKee Barracks* (Dublin, 2000), Walter S. O'Shea's, *A short history of Tipperary military barracks (Infantry) 1874-1922* (Cashel, 1998) and L. Condon's, *History of James Stephens Barracks, Kilkenny* (Kilkenny, 1987). These too are predominantly concerned with independent Ireland and make no great pretensions to any in-depth studies of the institutions researched. W. G. Neely's *Kilkenny an urban history, 1391-1843* (Antrim, 1989) is bereft of significant local military matter with a single paragraph account of the city's early militia groups. Any mention of military matters in John Bradley's *Discover Kilkenny* (Dublin, 2000) is *en-passant*. Articles submitted to the *Old Kilkenny Review* over the last fifty-five years similarly demonstrates, with a handful of exceptions, a lack of coverage and possibly interest in military history.

Matthew O'Conner's and G. A. Hayes-McCoy's early studies of the Irish military experience are essentially about campaigns, battles, generalship, victories and

defeats.³¹ Best described as belonging to ‘a drum and trumpet era’, these works when published ‘reflected the conventional view of the proper province of military history’.³² McCoy’s study ignoring, as it does, any involvement of Irishmen in the British army, also fails to acknowledge any military activity in Ireland throughout the nineteenth century. It was of little value to this study. This genre of historical study contains no element of social history: the masses of combatants involved ignored in the glorification of the exploits of a small core of leaders and generals. The transition to a more sympathetic study of the rank and file soldier is best epitomised in Alan Ramsey Skelley’s study of *The Victorian army at home*.³³ In this very comprehensive study every element of the soldier’s experience is enumerated, classified and compared with the general civilian position. Other studies pale in significance when compared with Skelley’s contribution to military historiography.

A. E. C. Bredin’s *A history of the Irish soldier* lacks the scholarship and comprehensiveness of Skelley’s study.³⁴ Although using many of the same primary sources as Skelley the tone of Bredin’s work is in the nature of the author honouring a long personal and family involvement with the army. These old-boy ties hinder the author in giving an unbiased analysis of the contribution of the Irish soldier to the British army. Instead we are given sweeping condescending generalisations, some of which do not conform to the findings of this study. His assertion that Irish soldiers were *perhaps* ‘the best fighting men the world has ever seen’ and that the ‘Irish soldier profoundly affected the later history of Western civilisation’ is grossly overstating their role (p. xi). Bredin’s depiction of the typical Irish soldier as ‘a decent country lad, well behaved and kindly person who looks on life with gaiety, even a degree of hilarity which contrasted with the more stolid outlook of the British’ (p. ix) conforms to the British stereotype of the period. This characterisation of the Irish soldier as a happy-go-lucky individual discounts the experiences of many Kilkenny soldiers who failing to come to terms with army strictures sought relief

³¹ Matthew O’Conner, *Military history of the Irish nation* (Dublin, 1845); G. A. Hayes-McCoy, *Irish battles: a military history of Ireland* (London, 1969).

³² Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffrey, ‘An Irish military tradition’ in *A military history of Ireland* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 5.

³³ Alan Ramsey Skelley, *The Victorian army at home* (London and Montreal, 1977).

³⁴ A. E. C. Bredin, *A history of the Irish soldier* (Belfast, 1987).

from their problems in excessive drinking. Bredin's contention that 'the men did not seem to regard it [flogging] as degrading' (p. 283) can be similarly dismissed as incorrect on the evidence of Joseph Donaldson quoted in my study. The absence of footnotes and bibliography in Bredin's study further limits its usefulness to the military historian.

David Murphy's *Ireland and the Crimean War* (Dublin, 2002) offers an enlightening perspective on the service of Irish men and women to the allied war effort in the Crimean peninsula in the years 1854-56. Described as the first 'modern' war this conflict is best remembered for the Charge of the Light Brigade, the 93rd Highlanders 'Thin Red Line', and Florence Nightingale with her lamp. Murphy's study encompasses a much wider spectrum – the nuns from the Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of Charity whose medical and spiritual aid to the wounded and dying has largely been overlooked, as have the heroics of the soldiers and civilians laying a rail track between the harbour at Balaclava and the allied siege works at Sevastopol which was completed in three weeks. There is also mention of Kilkenny Crimean soldiers, surgeons and policemen. The latter, a small group recruited in rural Kilkenny, were drafted to the Crimea to undertake provost duties. Murphy relates stories of great bravery and poignant tragedy. The case of Private John Byrne of the 68th Foot and native of Castlecomer, county Kilkenny is illustrative of the mental scars afflicting many of the participants of that conflict subsequent to their discharge. Byrne, awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery at the battle of Inkerman (1854) never acclimatised to civilian life, suffered from depression and took his own life in 1879. A minor criticism of Murphy's research is his underscoring of the levels of opposition to Irish participation in the war by sections of the nationalist population. The most vocal opponent of this opposition was Archbishop McHale of Tuam and to a lesser extent some members of Kilkenny clergy and borough council.

A great volume of literature has been written about the Fenian movement of which Leon Ó'Broin's *Fenian Fever* (New York, 1971) is an early classic. However the book's fine descriptive text lacks any analytical examination of the opaque nature of the movement's achievements. In contrast R. V. Comerford's *The Fenians in context: Irish politics 1848-1882* (Dublin, 1985) is a cogent study of the

organisation's evolution. The author in an impartial manner explores the strengths and deficiencies within that movement, including a totally inadequate command structure and lack of arms. The author notes that 'the Irish authorities never doubted the capacity of the crown forces to deal effectively with any threat fenianism might pose' (p. 128). The movement's success was in recruiting the enthusiasm of thousands of Irish young men into the organisation and the transmission of a legacy of violent opposition to English rule, the long term result of which was 1916. This study identifies Callan as the hub of the movement in Kilkenny and notes the effective strangulation of the activities of this 'centre' with the arrest and deportation of its leading activists.

The use of sport in the politics of communal division is the theme of John Sugden and Alan Bairner's book *Sport, sectarianism and society in a divided Ireland* (London, 1995). This study argues that the state increasingly sought to project its influence on to an aspect of popular culture which is closely related to the politics of social control and social division. The connection between organised sport and nationalism, Sugden and Bairner argue, 'was a product of British imperialist expansion, through which political and economic subjugation was supplemented by cultural and ideological forces, among which sports and recreation were central features'. A core theme of this thesis argues that the army locally increasingly sought to project its influence into aspects of popular culture in a policy of social control and social division. The origins and early development of anglophile sports such as cricket, hockey association and rugby union in Kilkenny were the direct results of British military influence.

Thesis structure and methodology

This thesis is the first major examination of the multifaceted nature of the military presence in Kilkenny, 1800-1870. To make sense of that presence it was necessary to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach. This study is thematic rather than strictly chronological and is set against a background of dynamic class, ideological, political, educational, cultural and gender discourses. This research will explore the significance of the military in a local, national and empirical context. Because of the

socio-cultural differences between the occupying army and the native population, issues of sectarianism, ethnicity, nationalism and social class will be addressed. This involves the investigation of the army's role locally in imposing a British cultural and ideological domination on the local population, the extent of Orangeism within the army locally, and gender discrimination within the Victorian army. Whilst the focus of this study is Kilkenny, many of the experiences related will be applicable to other Irish garrison towns and will contribute to the store of Irish military knowledge generally.

The diverse and varied contribution of the army presence in Kilkenny in economic, social and cultural terms in the years 1800-70 will be examined. In financial terms this contribution varied from year to year with the numbers garrisoned in the local barracks. At times of conflict these numbers increased dramatically boosting the monetary gains of suppliers of goods and services. Increased prices for these items was a common occurrence when large numbers of military were billeted locally. Socially the lives of many of the city's population were intertwined with the residents of the barracks. Soldier and civilian met socially. Conjugal relationships were established with networks of extended families being formulated. This wider circle of relatives and acquaintances shared the sadness of soldier departures to foreign postings, the gladness of triumphant returns, and the desolation of receiving the brown-enveloped War Office communication notifying the death of a dear one.

The spatial legacies bequeathed by the army presence, influencing city planning and street alignment, and determining the nature of the businesses established in the streets adjacent to the barracks will be identified using maps and city directories. The huge economic pre-famine development of the district adjacent to the barracks will be noted. Prior to the building of the barracks this area was hugely underdeveloped. The high standards of health, hygiene and cleanliness, associated with the military, when carried home by the individual soldier had beneficial effects for the wider community. The nature of these influences will be discussed. Local ascendancy efforts to promote good housekeeping practices, especially the tasty upkeep of the allotments and cottages of ex-soldiers, will be outlined.

Overlapping themes, chronologies and events complicated the design of structure. In the opening chapter Kilkenny's strategic military importance throughout the period 1800-1870 is noted. The nature of the buildings to house this military presence is outlined as are recruiting patterns, over time, aimed at keeping a full complement of soldiers at Kilkenny barracks. Living conditions within these institutions were particularly severe where food was both frugal and monotonous as were the punishments inflicted on those who stepped out of line.

The nature of the challenges facing the army and their response to local widespread agrarian and tithe unrest (1800-1833) are discussed in Chapter II. Subsequently the focus of Irish protest, under O'Connell's leadership was in obtaining, through political means, the granting of Catholic emancipation (1828-29) and the repeal of the Union (1829-47). These changed circumstances involved different levels of peace containment by the army which will be outlined. In 1848 repercussions from events in France encouraged the most militant of the Young Irelanders into open rebellion. This revolt primarily occurring in relative proximity to the city of Kilkenny had widespread repercussions including a massive deployment of troops in the general area. The question as to whether this huge influx of military manpower was justified in security terms will be addressed. Community tension based on opposing ascendancy and national viewpoints on the enlistment of Kilkenny men during the Crimean War (1854-6) is also discussed. So too are the events preceding the Fenian Rising (1867) and the levels of Fenian infiltration of regiments based in Kilkenny.

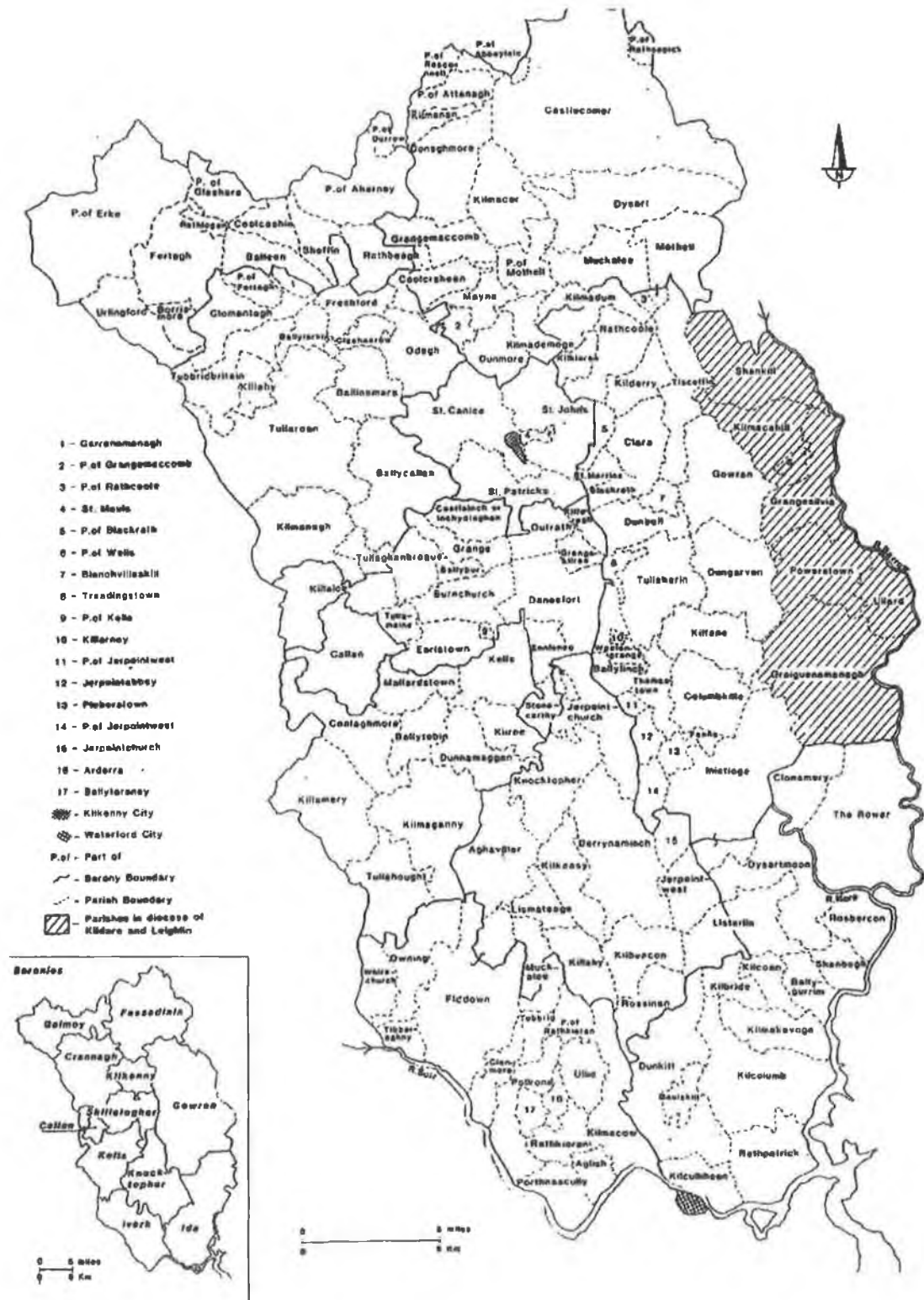
The tenor of military service remained essentially unchanged throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. However glaring inadequacies highlighted during the Crimean War in the appalling lack of an efficient supply corps, hopeless medical facilities for front-line soldiers, and a less than adequate command structure propelled the urgent need for radical change. British military reformers of the late 1860s viewing the proficiency and successes of the French and Prussian armies in continental warfare endeavoured to embody some of their best practices into the British army. The nature and extent of these influences, many of them incorporated in the Cardwell Reforms of 1869-70 will be scrutinised in Chapter III.

In recent years there has been an increasing acknowledgement of the rich architectural legacy of nineteenth century military buildings scattered throughout Ireland. The significance of Kilkenny's military architectural inheritance will be addressed in Chapter IV. Other aspects of the army's benign influence, including its huge contribution to the city's financial stability, especially during the Famine period 1845-49 will be clarified.

The Kilkenny militia 1800-16 and 1854-70 and the Kilkenny yeomanry 1800-34, could be described as Kilkenny's forgotten armies. The militia's peacekeeping role during the period of the Napoleonic war will be analysed in Chapter V. Reactivated again on the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854 the militia's main role thereafter was in providing half-trained recruits to the regular army. The yeomanry, an additional force in support of the militia, also contributed to local peacekeeping. Though the yeomanry was not originally dominated by Orangemen, it increasingly became so after March 1798 until the order's formal dissolution was ordered in 1835. This study will examine the extent of orangeism within county Kilkenny during the yeomanry's operative years.

The thesis concludes with an attempt to assess the significance locally of the military to Kilkenny society over the tumultuous years 1800-1870.

Figure 1.1: Civil parishes and baronies of county Kilkenny in the mid nineteenth century.



Source: William Nolan and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Kilkenny: history and society* (Dublin, 1990).

Chapter I

A soldier's life, not a happy one:

conditions, recruitment and troop numbers, Kilkenny, 1800-1870

The rank and file soldier of the early nineteenth century was the subject of a brutal, savage and inhumane enforcement of a strict disciplinary code. To the young recruit, his initial induction to military life, in hindsight, must have appeared as though he had entered a living hell. Dubious methods of recruitment had been used to enlist him. In the thirty-six hour period between his enlistment and his acceptance as a soldier he had been in a virtual state of detention which allowed him no chance to change his mind. Thereafter, tall perimeter barrack walls prevented him from returning to the civilian world through desertion. The experiences of a number of Kilkenny soldiers in dealing with this brutality will be related. Methods and levels of recruitment and the social background from which these recruits were enlisted within county Kilkenny, in the period 1800-1870, will be outlined. It will be shown that recruitment in the years 1800-1815 blossomed because of the large and very poor population that characterised pre-famine Ireland. In the 1830s the Irish presence within the British army was disproportionately large comprising forty-two percent of troop numbers.¹ Reasons for the collapse of recruit numbers, evident in Ireland during the 1840s, will be discussed. The numbers of army personnel based in Kilkenny throughout the period of this study will be charted and suggestions advanced for fluctuating occupancy levels locally. The history of county Kilkenny's two permanent barracks, in the city and at Castlecomer, will be outlined from their construction in the early 1800s to their post Crimea sidelining. The role of these institutions in inculcating a military ethos to those who passed through their portals will also be noted.

The internal threat of a widespread agrarian revolt and the external danger of a French invasion led to a boom in barrack building during the Napoleonic War. By the end of that war in 1815 only five of Ireland's thirty-two counties were still

¹ Alvin Jackson, 'Ireland, the union and the empire' in Peter Gray (ed.), *Victoria's Ireland? Irishness and Britishness* (Dublin, 2004), p. 141.

without a barracks. A listing of the permanent barrack stations in Ireland, 20 December 1824 shows that the highest concentration of barracks was in King's county (Offaly), Kilkenny, Tipperary, Cork, Galway, Mayo, Donegal and Down (see Appendix No. 1, p. 250). The positioning of a sizeable standing army in Ireland suited both the British government and the Irish ruling class. The establishment of a barracks locally offered the prospect of security to the ascendancy landlord; 'at all times the Irish gentleman was anxious to have barracks for troops established, each in his own neighbourhood and they would sell land for the accommodation of that object'.² It was also beneficial to shopkeepers and lodging house owners who welcomed a detachment of the army based locally for the financial advantages their stay generated. This position was in marked contrast to that prevailing in England, post 1814, where 'the great majority of inland English counties still had no permanent barracks'.³ In 1825 it was noted that the barracks estimate for Ireland was nearly double that of England and larger than at any time since the peace of 1815 at £96,294.⁴ Soldiers were indifferently housed in ill-constructed, badly arranged barracks which generally lacked sufficient ancillary buildings such as adequate laundries, drying rooms, married quarters and drained latrines. In September 1823 Wellington, then master general of the Ordnance, wrote to the commander of the forces in Ireland, Lord Cobermere, concerning the shameful state of Irish barracks.⁵ Within the barrack system, as Spiers observed, the army maintained its cohesiveness by enforced discipline, communal living and a sacrifice of individual liberty.⁶ In general, barrack plans sought to exclude the influence of the outer world. Instructions issued in Dublin in 1843 in relation to the 'putting of barracks and other buildings into a state to resist any sudden attack' recommended that such 'premises should be detached, and the greater and more exposed the open space around them the better'.⁷ Only a small number of soldier's wives were allowed to dwell within the barracks from fears of the cost this would involve and the subsequent detrimental effects on martial ardour and discipline. The building of barracks enabled the military

² Lord John Russell to Duke of Wellington, 1 Dec. 1849 (T.N.A., WO 30/113).

³ S. H. Palmer, *Police and protest in England and Ireland, 1780-1850* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 160.

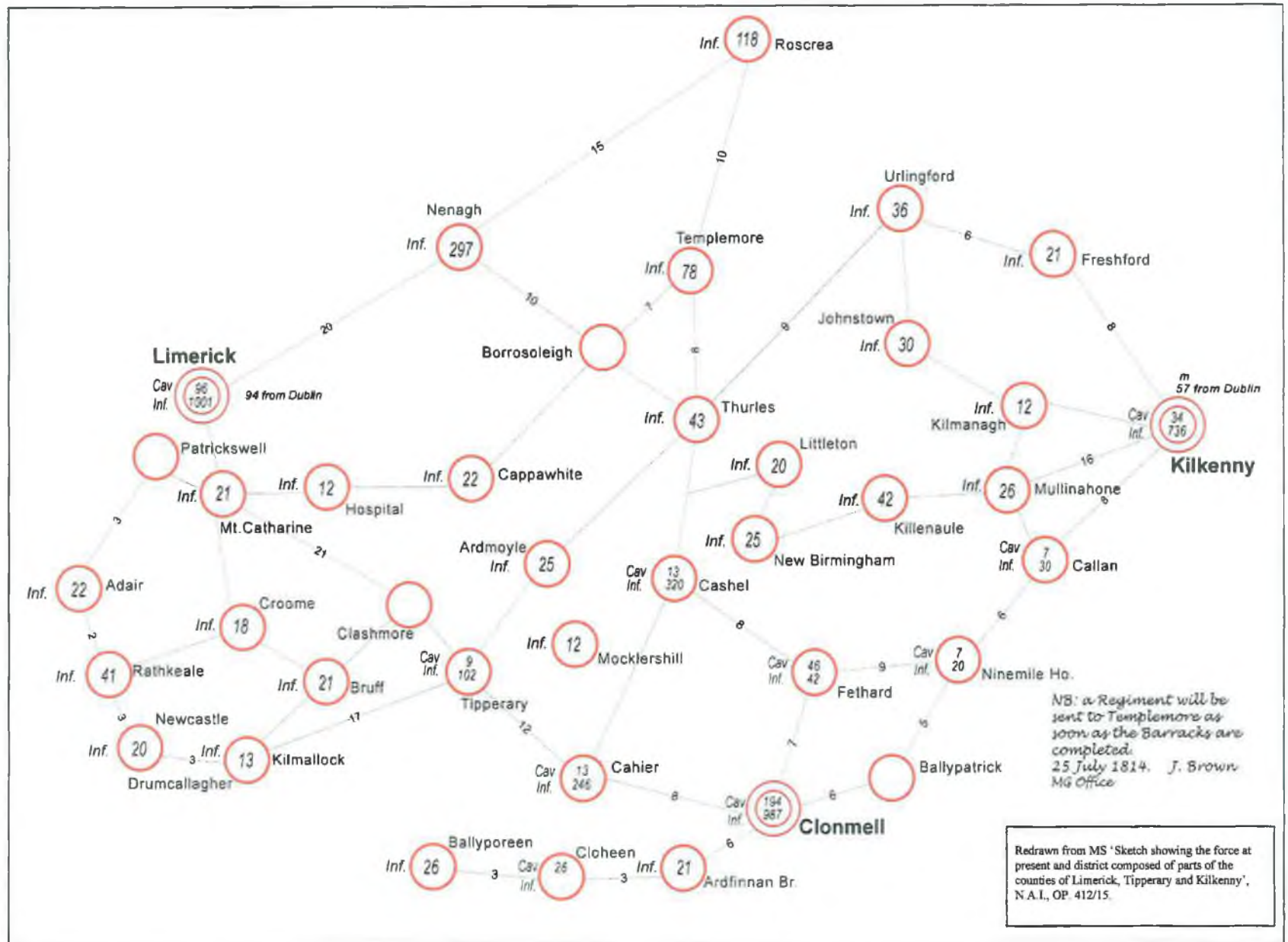
⁴ Virginia Crossman, 'Irish barracks in the 1820s and 1830s: a political perspective' in *Irish Sword*, xvii, no. 68 (1989), p. 211.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Edward M. Spiers, *The late Victorian army 1868-1902* (Manchester, 1992), p. 147.

⁷ W. Booth, *Instructions for the defence of buildings* (Dublin, 1843).

Figure 1.2: Map of Southern army district, 25 July 1814.



establishment to separate soldiers from the seditious influence that billeting among the general public exposed them to. The deficiencies of billeting were numerous. Prior to the building of permanent barracks, troops were billeted on the local inhabitants or 'stationed in a collection of mud cabins dignified by the name of a barracks'.⁸ The army was not supplied with tents until the closing campaign of the Napoleonic War. 'At this time, the blue canopy of heaven was all our covering, the earth our bed, and a single blanket our bedclothes' Joseph Donaldson observed.⁹

Existing street names such as Barrack Lane and Horsebarrack Lane denote the location of two Kilkenny military barracks of the early 1700s. Both were situated within the walls of what were pre-reformation monastic settlements. Both these barracks had fallen into disrepair by the end of the eighteenth century. The cavalry barracks had not been occupied for many years due 'to the nature of this building and its situation in the centre of a miserable and narrow street'.¹⁰ Kilkenny's military significance was greatly increased, post the Act of Union, with the building of a new infantry barrack. Throughout 1801 the garrison at Kilkenny averaged 850 personnel. However this number did not reflect the number of effective soldiers as the numbers reporting sick constituted a significant element of the total. In Kilkenny, 1 August 1801, 64 soldiers were sick in hospital whilst another 66 were sick in their quarters.¹¹ Sustained efforts were made to have a new cavalry barracks located in Kilkenny, throughout the period 1811-12. A succession of letters from Lord Desart dated 28 May, 19 July, 15 August and 20 September 1811 addressed to Major General Freeman regarding the proposed enlargement of barrack accommodation at Kilkenny failed to obtain a positive response.¹² A map outlining the military strength of the army, cavalry and infantry and the numbers occupying each post in the southern army district, dated 25 July 1814 is composed of returns from parts of counties Limerick, Tipperary and Kilkenny (see Figure 1.2, p.30). The barracks at Limerick and Clonmel contain a force a third larger than that at Kilkenny. In reports received,

⁸ D. A. Chart, *Ireland from the Union to Catholic emancipation, a study of social economic and administrative conditions 1800-29* (London, 1910), p. 229.

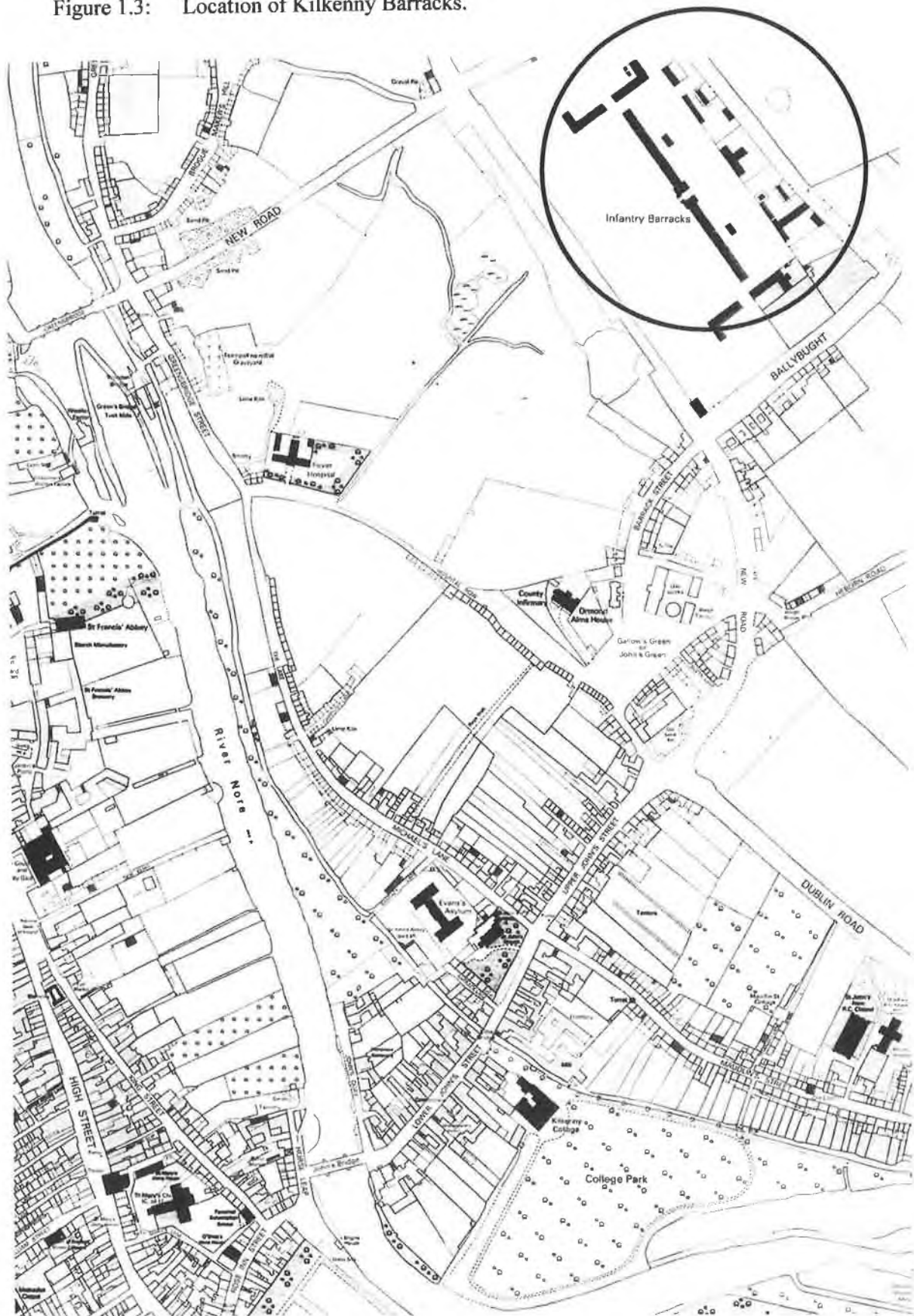
⁹ Joseph Donaldson, *Recollections of the eventful life of a soldier* (Staplehurst, Kent, 2000), p. 95.

¹⁰ Correspondence enclosed with plan of the old barrack premises at Kilkenny, 1824-5 (T.N.A., WO 44/574).

¹¹ Monthly return of the army in Ireland, 1 Aug. 1801 (T.N.A., WO 17/1072).

¹² Memorandum on Lord Desart's inquiry respecting the barracks at Kilkenny (N.A.I., OP 342/19).

Figure 1.3: Location of Kilkenny Barracks.



Source: Irish Historic Towns Atlas, No. 10, Kilkenny: Reconstruction map 1842.

22 June 1815, by his Royal Highness, the Duke of Cambridge, the army commander-in-chief relative to the defence of the United Kingdom it was reported that Kilkenny, 'the central point and headquarters of the south east military district' had but 515 rank and file allocated to it, 246 of whom were dispersed in twelve different quarters for the maintenance of peace.¹³ This report further noted that the force could if needed be assembled in New Ross, county Wexford, within three days to come in support of Waterford. A meeting of the mayor and citizens of Kilkenny held at the Tholsel, 9 May 1829, approved the purchase of the old disused cavalry barracks from the military at a cost of £200, a sum considered 'a reasonable and eligible purchase'.¹⁴ Using the return of barracks in Ireland for 28 December 1837 Jacinta Prunty has constructed a table outlining the numbers they were built to accommodate and the occupancy levels achieved on that date.¹⁵ Dublin's two largest barracks the Richmond and Royal Dublin had each an occupancy of over a thousand men as did Cork and Templemore. Fermoy and Parsonstown had in excess of five hundred soldiers whilst Kilkenny had sixteen officers and three hundred and thirty-two rank and file men (see Appendix No. 2, p.251). Kilkenny's military importance was highlighted by General Blakeney, the army commander-in-chief on 30 April 1846 when advancing the need for the erection of a cavalry barracks at Kilkenny capable of accommodating one squadron:

At present there is no cavalry barrack at this post, and dragoons when stationed there, have always been placed in half-billet premises, and at such a distance from the infantry barrack as to be, to a certain extent, unsupported in the event of popular commotion - on this account the cavalry has always withdrawn from Kilkenny whenever the immediate pressure ceased.¹⁶

He further noted that the addition of this cavalry squadron to the infantry regiment at Kilkenny could be accommodated within the existing complex, as there was ample space in the present barrack square. A notice for the submission of tenders for the building of cavalry officers' and soldiers' quarters, stables, cooking house, farrier's shop, shoeing shed, granary and forage shed at Kilkenny barracks was advertised

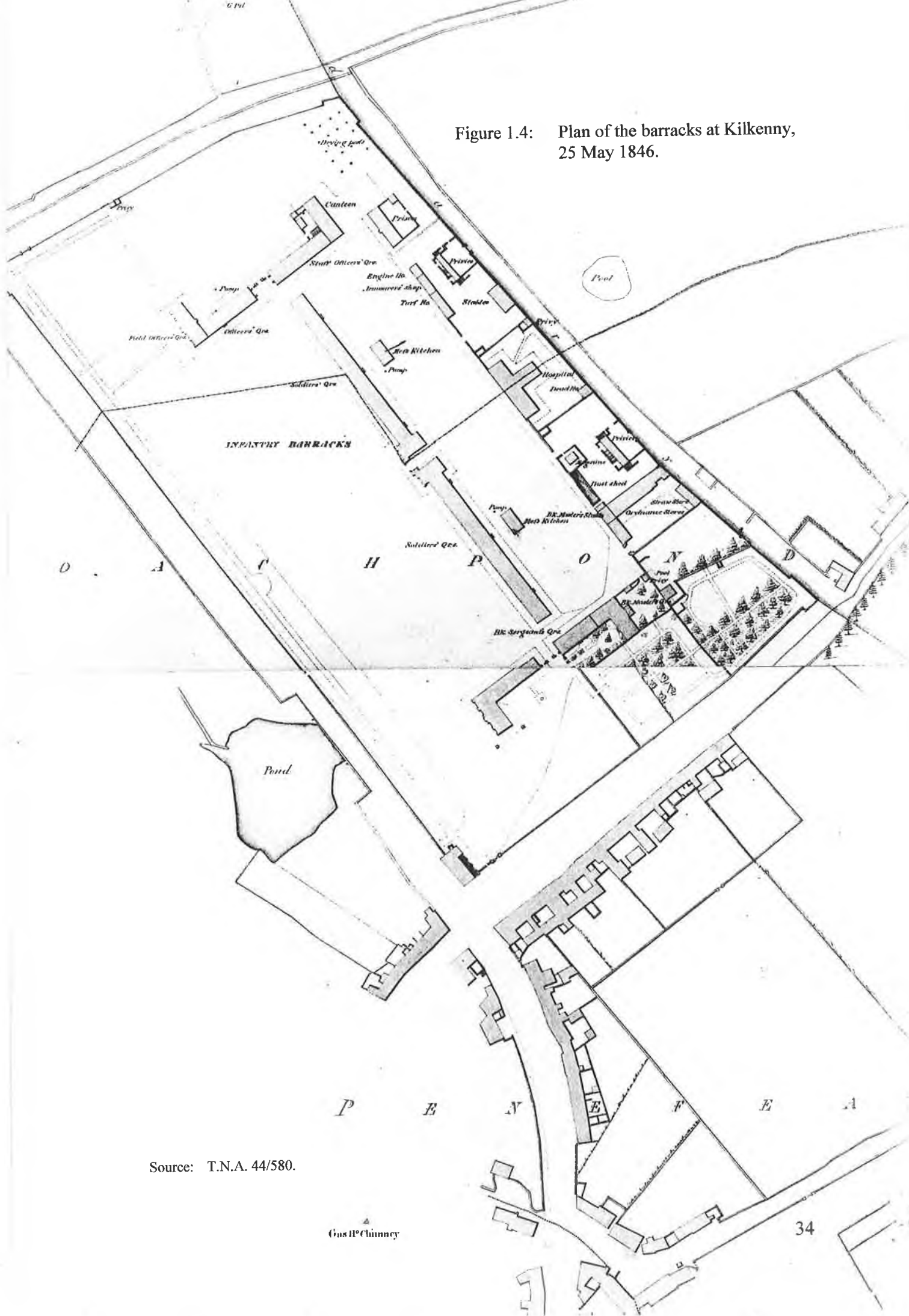
¹³ Report received by his Royal Highness the commander-in-chief relative to the defence of the United Kingdom, 22 June 1815 (T.N.A., WO 30/79).

¹⁴ Kilkenny Borough minute book, ix, 1826-43 (Kilkenny Borough Archives), p. 93.

¹⁵ Jacinta Prunty, 'Military barracks and mapping in the nineteenth century: sources and issues for Irish urban history' in Howard B. Clarke, Jacinta Prunty and Mark Hennessy (eds.) in *Surveying Ireland's past; multidisciplinary essays in honour of Anngret Simms* (Dublin, 2004), pp. 527-8.

¹⁶ Blakeney to Ordnance Office, Dublin, 30 Apr. 1846 (T.N.A., WO 44/580).

Figure 1.4: Plan of the barracks at Kilkenny, 25 May 1846.



Source: T.N.A. 44/580.

Gas H^o Chimney

with the closing date set for 9 September 1847.¹⁷ At that time the cavalry was still seen as a significant factor in the military fighting machine. The extent of this barrack enlargement and the uses proposed for these new buildings are outlined in Figure 1.4.

A possible deficiency of barrack accommodation was heralded by Sir Henry Hardinge in two letters from Kilkenny dated 7 August and 21 August 1848. 'In the event of it being necessary to concentrate during the next winter a large force in the southern district, because of the spirit of disaffection shown in that part of Ireland' and especially in some of the great towns – Kilkenny, Clonmel, Cahir, Fethard, Templemore and Fermoy,¹⁸ he urged the expediency of being prepared 'for such an augmentation of force by measures of a temporary character which may involve the least expense and at the same time keep the troops together in the most efficient state for active operations'. Wellington was also an advocate of Kilkenny's strategic military importance. Writing to Lord John Russell, 12 December 1849, he noted:

That certain corps placed at Kilkenny would be in the near of any insurrection in the county of Kildare. It would command the passages of all the rivers running through the counties of Kilkenny, Wexford and Waterford. Thus a reserve at Kilkenny would connect and give strength and support to all the troops stationed in the south and west of Dublin and be at hand to suppress rebellion in those counties in which disturbances have prevailed in modern times.¹⁹

Wellington's acquaintance with Kilkenny dates from his time in the 58th Regiment when that corps was garrisoned in the local barracks. Appointed to the rank of captain, 30 June 1791, he was transferred from the 58th to the 10th Light Dragoons.²⁰ Kilkenny freemasons, associating themselves with the renowned general, believed 'that the lessons inculcated under its aegis tended to make the brethren better soldiers and better fitted to live up the charge of the greatest Irish captain of our time'.²¹ Sir G. Hewett, in a memorandum outlining establishment policy in regard to any new proposed barrack building, noted that in the current improved conditions in public affairs no permanent barracks should be erected in Ireland except 'where troops

¹⁷ 'It said in the papers 1847' in *Old Kilkenny Review*, no. 55 (2003), p. 56.

¹⁸ Lord Hardinge to Lord John Russell, 7, 21 Aug. 1848 (T.N.A., WO 30/113, N1112).

¹⁹ Wellington to Lord John Russell, 12 Dec. 1849 (T.N.A., WO 30/113, N1112).

²⁰ *The Kilkenny Moderator*, 2 Apr. 1856.

²¹ R. E. Parkinson, *History of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Ireland*, i (Dublin, 1957), p. 86.

might be stationed in times of peace as well as war'.²² On the question of additional capital costs Lord Russell was even more uncompromising. In a letter to the Department of War, dated 1 December 1849, he noted that in current conditions 'the best positions in which barracks can be placed' are not a question of 'military expediency' but one of 'financial prudence'. He further noted that there was ample accommodation for troops in Britain and suggested that 2,000 to 4,000 men might be brought over there without compromising the security situation in Ireland.²³ Quicker crossing times across the Irish Sea, facilitated by the introduction of steam and the establishment of rail transportation in Ireland, had altered the logistics of a scattered military presence. Plans to consider the construction of a railway line between Dublin and Kilkenny were initiated by a Parliamentary Committee, sitting 6-8 June 1837. The planned construction of this railway, the committee noted, was being well received by the owners, lessees and occupiers of land along the proposed route, many of whom in fact had donated tracts of land for nothing.²⁴

Any diminution of the numbers of army personnel based in Kilkenny was looked upon locally as a catastrophe. Reporting Peel's proposal in Parliament to cap the number of troops in the Home Establishment to 50,000 men, the *Kilkenny Moderator* suggested that the greater portion of this force should be stationed in Ireland. This would be of great benefit to the local economy as 'the greater the number sent the greater will be the consumption of our staple commodities, for which at present there is no foreign markets'.²⁵

In most instances pre the 1870 reforms, there was insufficient space within Irish barracks to accommodate all assigned to their appointed quarters. The half-billet system originally introduced into Ireland, and intended as a temporary expedient then, was an accommodation substitute for barracks when troops were based in a disturbed part of the country. Houses were hired at a rent equivalent to 3d per man per week and a higher rent was paid where officers were accommodated. In March

²² Memorandum reflecting barracks in contemplation issued by Sir G. Hewett, 9 May, 1814 (N.A.I., OP 412/6).

²³ Lord John Russell to Department of War, 1 Dec. 1849 (T.N.A., WO 30/N1112).

²⁴ Brendan Hall, 'The proposed Dublin to Kilkenny Railway 1837' in the *Genealogical Society of Ireland Journal*, iv, no. 1 (Spring 2003), p. 18.

²⁵ *KM*, 7 Mar. 1816.

Figure 1.5: Kilkenny military barracks c.1985.



Source: Eamon Kiely, Kilkenny

1843, the system was introduced into England.²⁶ Soldiers were lodged and fed in inns and public houses where the terms of the license obliged the licensee to take them at a price fixed by the state.²⁷ The complaint of two soldiers of the 7th Hussars ‘against an innkeeper named Murphy’ for having refused to procure their billet accommodation when on their march through Thomastown resulted in a fine of two

²⁶ Charles Clode, *The military forces of the crown, their administration and government*, i (London, 1869), p. 239.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

pounds on the county Kilkenny business man.²⁸ Similarly the arrival in Thomastown of a detachment of the 24th Regiment consisting of 180 men in September 1844 created billeting problems. Having consigned numbers to all the publicans and victuallers of the town, Major Doyle complained that several soldiers of the unit were 'obliged to remain for several hours in the streets drenched with rain till another place could be provided for them'.²⁹ Prosecuted for refusal to accommodate soldiers on this occasion, Mr. McEnery, a local gentleman, stated that he had 'no dislike of the army' and was 'as loyal as any one'. However he was of the opinion that while 'billeting might be allowable in the time of war; in peaceful times the houses of private individuals should be exempted'.³⁰ Similarly prosecuted Mary Manning of Thomastown was fined £2 for 'refusing to admit soldiers billeted on her'.³¹

Irish barracks of the period, 1792-1815, were quite distinctive from their British counterparts. For instance Dublin's two largest barracks, Richmond and Royal, consist of 'a single long range block with a ceremonial archway through the centre and officers quarters at right angles to each side'.³² This design is also evident at the barracks at Mullingar, Naas, Parsonstown and Templemore. With the barrack extensions of 1847 accomplished, a similar layout was achieved at Kilkenny. This 'new' permanent barracks, the building of which was commenced in 1800 and completed by 1803, was designed to avoid billeting on the public.³³ Skirting the main Kilkenny-Castlecomer road it was situated in the townland of Roachpond 'on an elevated plain east of the city'.³⁴ Containing sixteen and a half acres the site was provided by the sixth Earl of Ormonde, William Butler. A field adjoining the barracks which was used by the army as an 'exercise' area was subject to a yearly lease of £127-6-2 payable to Joseph Green.³⁵ The builder was a local ex-militia officer named James Switzer, a Quaker and charitable philanthropist, who from the

²⁸ *The Kilkenny Journal*, 25 July 1849.

²⁹ *KJ*, 21 Sept. 1844.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *KJ*, 9 Aug. 1848.

³² Comdt. E. Kiely, *Aspects of the history of Stephens military barracks*, unpublished essay in author's possession, 27 Jan. 1987.

³³ Captain M. Mullagh and Lieutenant L. Condon, 'History of Stephens barracks Kilkenny' in *Old Kilkenny Review* (Kilkenny, 1986), p. 256.

³⁴ P. M. Egan, *The illustrated guide to the city and county of Kilkenny* (Dublin, 1884), p. 163.

³⁵ Statement of lands and buildings leased by the Ordnance Kilkenny and Castlecomer, 1841 (T.N.A., WO 55/2787).

profits of this contract in 1803 constructed and subsequently funded an almshouse in Kilkenny, providing for twenty females, twelve Protestant and eight Catholic, who had found themselves in reduced circumstances.³⁶ The building of barracks was obviously a profitable commercial venture. Costing £4,900 to build it is clear from figures prepared for army estimates and presented to Parliament that a debt of £3,900 still remained outstanding in 1816 on this contract.³⁷ *Pigot's Directory* of 1824 notes 'There is a newly erected barracks for four companies of foot soldiers: this has a light and elegant appearance, possessing an extensive area and enclosed by a good stone wall'.³⁸

Whilst the military routine of drill and training and the daily necessity of eating and washing were obvious factors in the design of barracks, James Douet suggests these influences 'were overlain by concepts of the integrity of the unit, of the relationship between the military and civilian worlds'.³⁹ As a social system, the primary characteristics of military barracks are gender, class and hierarchy. With a single gender population, structured hierarchical systems and rigid disciplinary codes the life of the rank and file soldier was well nigh monastic. The hierarchy of rank within barracks and the difference between soldier and officer is highlighted in the spatial layout of Kilkenny barracks (see Figure 1.4, p.34). Linking officer's quarters are symmetrically situated about a major axis in apartments around three sides of a courtyard. In contrast to the pivotal and privileged siting of the officer's quarters, the apartments occupied by non-commissioned officers and soldiers were situated on a minor axis and faced the least desirable aspects of the complex: the privies, stables, hospital, engine house, magazine and provost cells. The differing spatial allotment in living accommodation allocated to officers and to rank and file soldiers was similarly discriminatory. The square footage allocated to the housing of fifteen officers totalling 7,280 square feet is extremely generous when compared to the 11,770 square feet which 558 non-commissioned officers and privates were obliged to share.⁴⁰ This amounted to restricting the area occupied by the lower ranks to 21

³⁶ Kiely, *Stephens military barracks*.

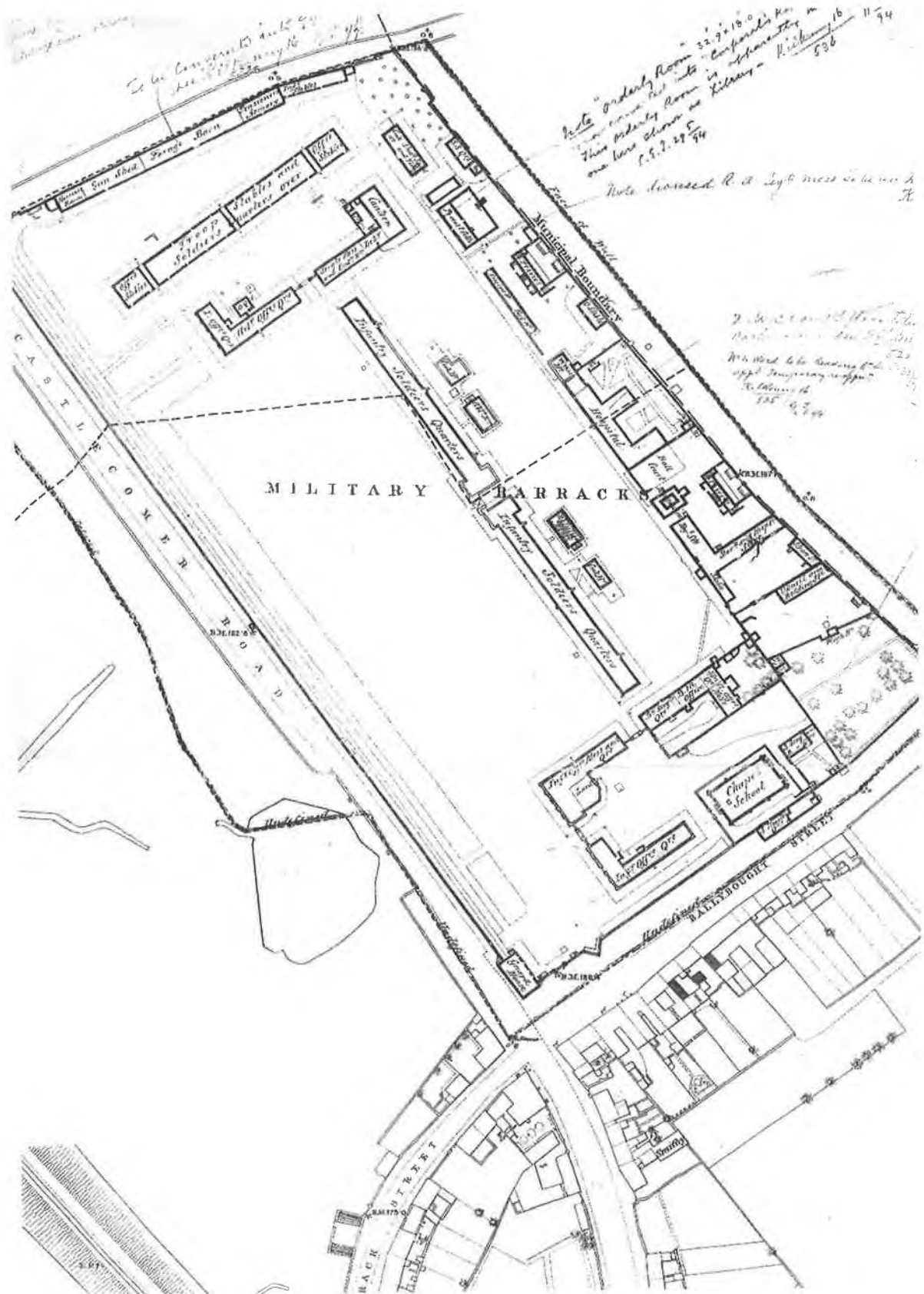
³⁷ Memorandum on military barracks for 1816 (N.A.I., OP 456/2).

³⁸ *Pigot's Directory* (Dublin, 1824).

³⁹ James Douet, *British barracks, 1600-1914, their architecture and role in society* (London, 1998), p. xiv.

⁴⁰ Returns attached to the plan of Kilkenny barracks, 10 Oct. 1830 (T.N.A., WO 55/2609).

Figure 1.6: Plan of Kilkenny barracks, 4 September 1874.



Source: T.N.A., MPH H 355.

square feet per person, while each officer's quarters averaged 485 square feet. The huge size of the bedding stores, the coal yard, turf house and lumber store betell of a time when straw was the main bedding component and when a large amount of coal, turf and timber were required to heat the barracks. A 'fowl' [sic] bedding store must have created a major health hazard (see Appendix No. 8, p.260). A garrison church to cater for the spiritual needs of the garrison's established church congregation was completed in 1852 at a cost of £1,502. The contractors were Petty and Higgins and the engineer was Major Marlowe.⁴¹ This building exists to this day and displays a high standard of stone masonry. The emblem of the fleur-de-lys in this church is interesting. 'It is of course the emblem of the Bourbons and probably reflects a temporary solidarity between deposed French kings and the British crown against the usurper Napoleon'.⁴² Officers' married quarters consisted of one house, for this purpose, within the barrack. The provision of married quarters for the lower ranks did not take place within the period of this study.

Barracks were more than mere housing for soldiers. Huge amounts of money were spent 'accommodating, equipping and training recruits who would otherwise have remained unskilled and uneducated'.⁴³ Discipline, collective action, the transmission of unit tradition, physical conditioning and the acquisition of specific military skills were inculcated into the mind sets of these new recruits.⁴⁴ The barrack square was in the area where the whole community could be assembled 'for instruction, or the dissemination of information, training, drill and manoeuvres' or the ceremonial assembly point for the mustering of troops being despatched on foreign service. It was also 'the scene of disciplinary actions, exemplary floggings or other punishments'.⁴⁵

Within the barracks there existed a rigid hierarchical regime based on class. Commanding officers were obliged 'to take particular care that no rooms appointed

⁴¹ Michael Mullagh and Liam Condon, 'Stephens barracks, a military installation with a long history' in *Kilkenny People*, 5 Aug. 1988.

⁴² Kiely, *Stephens military barracks*.

⁴³ Thomas P. Dooley, *Irishmen or English soldiers* (Liverpool, 1995), p. 213.

⁴⁴ Peter Karsten, *The training and socialising of military personnel* (New York and London, 1998), p. 19.

⁴⁵ Douet, *British barracks, 1600-1914*, p. xvi.

for officers be made use of by non-commissioned officers, soldiers or others'. The commanding officer was further required:

Not on any pretence whatsoever permit or suffer any women or children to inhabit or be within any of the said barracks without previous notice being given in writing to the Barrack Board by the commanding officer of the regiment.⁴⁶

The exclusion of women from the precincts of the barracks was strictly enforced with only five to six soldiers per regiment given permission to marry in any one year. This concession, however, was to be only in the nature of 'an occasional indulgence', which would tend to promote cleanliness and the convenience of the soldier. Army culture also distinguished between 'officers and their ladies', 'sergeants and their wives', and 'soldiers and their women'.⁴⁷ When it came to doing the regimental laundry work, officer's washing was reserved for sergeant's wives.⁴⁸

Living conditions within the barracks also encapsulated the same structured hierarchy. Officers slept in pillared bedsteads dressed with cords and curtains, costing fourteen shillings.⁴⁹ This bed was furnished with a mattress, a feather bolster, a quilt, two blankets and a pair of sheets. Officer's sheets were changed fortnightly, those of the lower ranks monthly. Soldiers, on the other hand, were supplied with single bedsteads with boarded bottom, top and end of a very basic type costing nine shillings. The mattresses and bolsters of these beds were stuffed with straw, which was changed quarterly. Besides their own bedchamber, with a closet, each officer had a parlour, with table and chairs and a fire grate costing eight shillings and four pence to provide heat. Soldiers slept in dormitory-type accommodation, where they also dined and shared a fire together. 'However both men and officers had equal access to the outside pump which supplied water for the garrison'.⁵⁰

The basic uniform of the 1858 rank and file soldier consisted of 'tight fitting and uncomfortable tunics and trousers, heavy ungainly helmets, high choking stocks and

⁴⁶ Barrack regulations 1814 (T.N.A., WO 44/732).

⁴⁷ Douet, *British barracks, 1600-1914*, p. 29.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ An estimate of the charge of building two barracks at Castlecomer, c. 1730s (MS in the possession of Mr. Phonsie Mealy, Castlecomer, County Kilkenny).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

cumbersome ill-designed accoutrements'.⁵¹ The army greatcoat was next to useless against the cold and rain, readily imbibing and retaining the wet. It was in the financial interests of the regimental colonel, who was responsible for clothing his men, and whose salary was so structured to allow him profit from this activity, to furnish the cheapest materials. In contrast the officer class shopped at Kilkenny's finest stores. The *Kilkenny Moderator*, 20 December 1828 noted 'the expensive tawdry trappings which so heavily press upon officers in the army transforming them into something scarcely resembling human beings'.⁵² Urging the abolition of these trappings the report further noted that local men 'of moderate fortune were unwilling to place their sons in the army knowing their pay as subalterns will be quite unequal' to the cost of this equipment and the constant changes initiated by the establishment. Patrick Lawless of 2 Walkin Street, Kilkenny offered to accommodate officers' fashion tastes from 'a knowledge of the best methods of tailoring acquired in that business in Dublin and New York'.⁵³ An unnamed officer writing home to Kilkenny from Balaklava [sic] could luxuriate in the comfort of his Blucher boots made by Labarte of Kilkenny, while the rank and file soldier was obliged to discard his worthless service-issue boots in the liquid-mud Crimean battle field.⁵⁴

'The early nineteenth century British army embodied splendid images of disciplined latent violence, with a resplendent display of brilliant trappings and precision drill'.⁵⁵ Ostentatious dressing was an essential element in military parades, reviews and inspections and with the added element of martial music, these events exerted a powerful and compelling influence on all who viewed them. 'Impressing civilians with an attractive uniform also dovetailed with regimental management: the more public admiration that a unit could win, the better for recruiting this volunteer force'.⁵⁶ The most exotic expression of this symbolic dress was the fur bearskin headgear worn by the army's five regiments of Foot Guards - the Scots, Welsh, Irish,

⁵¹ A. R. Skelley, *The Victorian army at home: the recruitment and terms and conditions of the British regular 1859-99* (Montreal, 1977), p. 61.

⁵² *KM*, 20 Dec. 1828.

⁵³ *KM*, 9 Jan. 1856.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 6 Jan. 1855.

⁵⁵ Scott Hughes Myerly, 'Political aesthetics: British army fashion, 1815-55' in Michael H. Shirely and Tood E.A. Larson (eds.), *Splendidly Victorian, essays in nineteenth and twentieth century British history in honour of Walter L. Arnstein* (Ashgate, 2001), p. 45.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

Grenadier and Coldstream. These bearskins up to sixteen inches tall and weighing two pounds date from the Battle of Waterloo, in 1815, when they were captured from Napoleon's imperial guard.⁵⁷ Michael Barthorp commenting on cavalry uniforms of the 1820-28 period notes that they 'reached heights of costliness ... never seen before or since'.⁵⁸

Officers bought their commissions under the purchase system. Under this scheme men of wealth, though of limited talent, could purchase an officership to the exclusion of those without sufficient cash. From 1849 onwards the successful candidate who graduated from the military college at Sandhurst was eligible for a commission. 'If he then applied for a commission by purchase, he would be appointed to the first vacancy which occurred from a regiment by sale. If he applied for a commission without purchase, he waited until a vacancy occurred by death, when his application was considered along with applications from other applicants'.⁵⁹ Whilst the purchase of a commission of the lowest officer rank (ensign) in an unfashionable regiment of the line infantry cost £450, that of a lieutenant colonel in a regiment of more esteem like that of the Royal Horse Guards cost £7,250 (see Appendix No. 5, p. 255). As Martin Ryan points out these official figures were often grossly exceeded in a seller's market.⁶⁰ Sales of these commissions were to an officer of the next lowest rank while purchase was from an officer directly above. Young men unable to afford purchase and whose kin had held commissions could be gazetted as ensigns, but without cash they could go no higher except in cases of outstanding service. The price of commissions of corps returned from abroad were invariably high because of the likelihood that several officers would leave the army due to ill health. It was also likely that these regiments would enjoy a number of years home service. Contrastingly if a regiment was ordered abroad to some unhealthy posting, such as the West Indies, the likely price of such commissions would be significantly lower. This was the experience of William Sinclair Weyms of Danesfort, county Kilkenny who bought his commission for £17

⁵⁷ Sam Greenhill, 'The changing of the guards barracks', *Daily Mail*, 11 May 2005.

⁵⁸ Myerly, 'Political aesthetics', p. 53.

⁵⁹ An historical sketch of the Purchase System, 'Official Prices' of purchased commissions and general pay scale of the British army, circa 1854, available at <http://www.cureenactors.com/~crimean/purchsys.htm> (24 Oct. 2004), p. 2.

⁶⁰ Martin Ryan, *William Francis Butler: a life 1839-1910* (Dublin, 2003), p. 9.

on 19 July 1803. Attached to the First West India Regiment his military career is blighted by lengthy absences from his posting. He retired in September 1809.⁶¹ In wartime over-regulation payments were a rare occurrence as officers were unwilling to pay large sums for promotions that might be won on the battlefield anyway without purchase. This system of purchase facilitated the entry, rapid promotion and early retirement of officers, mainly from the Irish ascendancy class, who did not plan to make the army a permanent career. It also meant that poorer officers, generally, undertook a disproportionate amount of service abroad.

India was the principal area of activity for the British army. The maintenance and extension of an English influence in this area involved the participation of large numbers of Irish men and women. The East India Company in 1813, established four recruiting offices in Ireland. Between then and 1857 almost half of its 14,000 soldiers were from Ireland. In the regular Indian army forty percent of its 26,000 force were Irish.⁶² The sons of the Irish ascendancy were sent to the East India Company school at Addiscombe where 'they acquired the manners, outlook and accent of an English gentleman'.⁶³ Their commissions were constantly bought and sold and procured by patronage or contacts. A commission in the Bengal army was regarded by its recipients as a place to accumulate easy money followed by an early retirement. Fitting the profile was Lieutenant Robert Clifford of Thomastown, county Kilkenny, who whilst serving with the 3rd Punjab Infantry in the Ensofzai Hill campaign of October 1863 was mortally wounded.⁶⁴ Some years earlier describing his pampered life-style he noted 'I am leading the live [sic] you would like, nothing to do. I have a fellow to dress me. He comes to wake me every morning at five o' clock, as I have to go to drill at that hour. First I put out one foot and he puts the stocking on that, and then the other, and so by the time I am dressed I am awake'.⁶⁵

For the rank and file Irish peasant soldier serving in India enlistment promised the

⁶¹ Commission List 1803 (T.N.A., WO 25/32/58/59/60).

⁶² Kevin Kenny, 'The Irish in the Empire' in Kevin Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford, 2004), p. 104

⁶³ Eileen Hewson, *The forgotten Irish; memorials of the Raj* (Oxford, 2004), p. 1.

⁶⁴ Robert Clifford letters 22 Feb. 1854; 15 May 1854 (in the possession of Dr. Nicholas Greene, Trinity College, Dublin).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Robert Clifford to George Innes, Jullundur, 15 May 1854.

prospect of adventure, the benefits of a warm climate, the likelihood of sampling ample and unaccustomed food and drink. 'However there were many dangers: the heat sent men mad and the odds of dying from disease was greater than being killed in battle'.⁶⁶ The significant mortality rates of Kilkenny soldiers dying from disease in the mid 1850s, at Cawnpore and Delhi, encountered in this study replicate this experience. Another Kilkenny/India connection was the appointment of Sir Hugh Rose to take command of the Central India Force in December 1857 and over the next six months defeat the rebellion in the most southerly region of its activity.⁶⁷ This was despite having no previous Indian experience. He had learned his trade well, while an area commander of the army in Ireland in the suppression of the Kilkenny Whiteboys in the early 1830s. John Grattan Anderson, also of Kilkenny, after selling his army commission secured appointments as a civil engineer in Ceylon and India, 1851-57. He and his wife were murdered at Cawnpore, 27 June 1857 'in one of the most terrible massacres of the Indian mutiny'.⁶⁸

However it was disease, not battle, that in 1844, wreaked havoc amongst the ranks of the 78th Regiment based at Sukkur Sind on the Indus river. Cholera ran rampant through the ranks which 'officially' listed the deaths of 535 soldiers and more than 200 members of their families.⁶⁹ The figures for women and children are hugely understated, as many soldiers weren't married to their partners and Victorian morality prohibited the listing of such 'loose women' and their illegitimate children. There was probably also an element of racism with Indian-born wives and children ignored. The 78th Regiment had been based in Kilkenny in the period 1822-24.⁷⁰

Bringing up a young family whilst on the move was a difficult task. Pregnancy frequently implied a sentence of death on the young mother because of the primitive nature of health care. The journeys undertaken by women to join their husbands on the battle-lines were so arduous that thousands died in the attempt. 'In the bitter winter of 1808-09, whilst retreating from Corunna during the Peninsular War,

⁶⁶ Hewson, *The forgotten Irish*, p. 1.

⁶⁷ Hoppen, *The mid-Victorian generation 1846-1886*, p. 193.

⁶⁸ L. G. Abbot Anderson, *The Andersons of Kilkenny, 1680-1910* (London, 1910), p. 27.

⁶⁹ Bob Cubitt, 'Don't mention the wives', *The Daily Mail*, 13 May 2005.

⁷⁰ Office of the commander-in-chief, monthly returns to the adjutant general (T.N.A. WO 17/1099, 17/1100, 17/1101).

thousands of women and children perished in conditions of indescribable misery as they marched with the baggage train at the end of the column'.⁷¹ Carrying young babies and dragging young children, crying with fatigue and hunger, with food scarce and clean water seldom available, their position was dire. 'Unable to keep up with the pace many simply collapsed by the wayside and did not rise again'.⁷² Throughout the period of this study army stipulations ruled that soldiers had to be thirty years of age before permission was given for them to marry whilst no similar regulation existed for their womenfolk. 'In India especially, with its strong army presence, it was quite usual for soldier's daughters to marry men in their father's regiment and not uncommon for a grizzled bombardier of forty to unite himself to a girl as young as twelve'.⁷³ Wives washed, cooked and sewed for their menfolk, tended them when sick and even performed the unwholesome task of identifying their dead bodies on the battlefield. On the death of their husbands, little if any provision was made for surviving wives and children. Rather than face destitution many quickly found new husbands.

The precarious position of the bereaved wives and partners of soldiers can be illustrated in the case of 'Ally Kenny, alias Furlong' of Kilkenny who hoped that she would quickly benefit from the distribution of the assets of the deceased soldier John Bolger but were rapidly dashed in a reply to her enquiry to the court of directors of the East India Company, dated 19 July 1848, which stated:

That by the terms of the Mutiny Act and the regulations of the service, the effects of the deceased when realised remain in the Treasury for twelve months to meet any demand that may be made by parties in India, after which period the undisposed effects (if any) are transmitted to England.⁷⁴

Army pensions were meagre and difficult to obtain. However the soldier's position was superior to that of the civilian working man who received no compensation whatsoever for any illness he might experience in his employment. The case studies of numbers of Kilkenny soldiers, both officers and privates, shows that on being demobbed their chances of re-employment in the civilian world was extremely

⁷¹ Katie Hickman, 'Wives at war with the army', *Daily Mail*, 13 May 2005.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Company secretary, East India House to Robert Eaton, 19 July 1848 (N.L.I., Kilmainham Papers, MS 13686).

unlikely. Many were unsuitable for entry into any other profession. Even the literate and talented Donaldson was, on leaving the army, unable to procure alternative employment:

They considered an individual who had been in the army the very worst person they could employ. They were all lazy good-for-nothing fellows, in short there exists an insurmountable objection to such men, the moral character of the individual is nothing.⁷⁵

The army authorities in Kilkenny had, at various times, difficulties in establishing and maintaining the boundaries and extent of barrack property from incursions by neighbouring tenants and by the local public authority. Boundary mapping was a major military preoccupation. Land tenants adjoining the barracks complained of constant trespass on their property. John Newport Greene complained, 5 October 1850, that as the barrack at Kilkenny adjoined the principal thoroughfare from the Collieries to Kilkenny the fence he made was constantly being broken down. He offered to pay half the cost of erecting a wall 'which would be the only suitable fence'. He also promised that he and the other tenants of the Board of Ordnance would assist in the opening of a drain 'to carry off the greater portion of a large pond of stagnant water, which is most objectionable and offensive to the inmates of the barracks'.⁷⁶ The cost of erecting a new boundary wall on the reserve ground adjoining the lands of the 'litigious' Daniel McCarthy on the barrack north-east perimeter, costing £180, could not be undertaken as 'at present no funds to cover the cost' existed.⁷⁷ Andrew McArdell threatened law upon the Board of Ordnance, 26 March 1851, unless they erected a wall 'at their grounds'.⁷⁸ He complained that although paying a high rent, his land was being destroyed by the trespass of pigs, cows and asses! The encroachment of Kilkenny Corporation upon barrack property, to the extent of a 'few feet', when widening the road from Green's Bridge to Johnswell, was referred to the inspector general of fortifications in London.⁷⁹ His view was that this incursion was 'trifling' and no further action should be taken.

That employment provided by military construction work was of great benefit to the

⁷⁵ Donaldson, *Recollections of the eventful life of a soldier*, p. 213.

⁷⁶ Greene to the secretary of the Board of Ordnance, 5 Oct. 1850 (T.N.A., WO 44/582).

⁷⁷ J. W. Gosset to inspector general of fortifications, 10 Sept. 1855 (T.N.A., WO 44/585).

⁷⁸ Andrew McArdle to Board of Ordnance, 26 Mar. 1851 (T.N.A., WO 583).

⁷⁹ R. H. Eaton to the Board of Ordnance, London, 7 July 1846 (T.N.A., WO 44/582).

local economy is evidenced by a report in the *Kilkenny Journal*, 4 July 1843, when announcing that 'loopholing' and other fortification works had been in progress at Kilkenny barracks for the last ten days. 'We are glad the people are thus getting what they much wanted, employment'.⁸⁰ However just a fortnight later the *Kilkenny Journal* had to announce that the military had discontinued employing locals and that 'soldiers are now equipped as labourers, and paid eight pence a day, additional pay', for doing the work which should have been done by the people of Kilkenny.⁸¹ Kilkenny's large military barracks and the existence of a significant military presence in the city during the Great Famine was, the *Kilkenny Moderator* stated, the reason Kilkenny had not degenerated into 'a second rate village'.⁸² This report added that 'Kilkenny was obviously enabled in a great degree to weather the storm by the large disbursement made amongst her traders by the staff and garrison concentrated here'. This contrasted greatly with other provincial towns in adjoining counties, where commercial enterprises were going under 'engulfed in a vortex of bankruptcy' the report writer noted.⁸³ Such a calamity threatened Kilkenny this report further noted with the proposed 'breaking-up' of the Kilkenny military district and the transfer to another posting of the officers and men garrisoned locally as part of government retrenchment policies and the off-loading of surplus barracks, post Crimea. Urging local opinion to be 'up and stirring' to avert this disaster the report noted 'that such a blow to the locality would be nothing short of a public calamity'.⁸⁴ Instead of having the army scattered all through the country, military districts would be re-arranged, resulting in a maximum of six 'concentrated military depots' being established at convenient places within Ireland. The order 'for throwing the Kilkenny district into that of the Curragh' was reported 5 September 1856.⁸⁵ The widespread regret expressed on the departure from Kilkenny of General Eden and his fellow officers was noted a month later.⁸⁶ Recriminations were uttered that a short time previously the government wished to purchase some land adjoining the barracks, in order to extend the buildings, but gave up the idea from the exorbitant price demanded by the

⁸⁰ *KJ*, 4 July 1843.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 19 July 1843.

⁸² *KM*, 19 July 1856.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 5 Sept. 1856.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 8 Oct. 1856.

proprietor.⁸⁷ The abandonment of Kilkenny as a significant military centre was further illustrated in a letter from R. B. Woods of 14 September 1857, to Lieutenant Colonel Morris, adjutant general at the Curragh, seeking additional guards at Kilkenny barracks then occupied by 'pensioners'. Dismissing this request Morris replied 'They must make the best fight they can' he insisted adding 'we have no more troops to give them. The barrack gate will be locked and the sentry on duty should patrol round the barracks during the night'.⁸⁸ Kilkenny as a military centre had descended in significance to a new low. Subsequently the in and out nature of occupancy at Kilkenny's military barracks is highlighted in a report of the *Kilkenny Moderator*, 4 October 1862:

Nine detachments were given to different garrisons, one of which, consisting of two companies came to occupy our barracks which had always previously accommodated the headquarters of a corps, but was now left in charge of this small detachment for a short space, giving the necessity of sending a larger military force to quell the insurrectionary spirit exhibited by the peasantry in Limerick and some of the surrounding counties.⁸⁹

The maintenance and repairs to Kilkenny barracks was an ongoing and costly drain on establishment coffers as the barrack account book of 1838 demonstrates. During the period 20 April to 20 November, Joseph Wright received six payments totalling £200-11-2 for repairs at the barracks. Other payments of a less costly nature were £10-15-10 to Samuel Bradly for lighting lamps and £19-6-4 to C. McDonald for washing bedding (see Appendix 11, p. 266).⁹⁰ That on occasions false claims and misappropriation of funds took place locally is evidenced by a War Office report of 1828 stating that there was 'every reason to suspect that the barrack master (at Kilkenny) participated in the profit arising from nefarious pursuits'.⁹¹ To each barracks a barrack master was appointed. He was responsible for keeping his barracks fit for reception and quartering of such soldiers as should be ordered to quarter or reside therein. That this position required skills of a high magnitude is evidenced in a *Kilkenny Moderator* report of March, 1816. Over 3,000 troops during this month passed through Kilkenny who were billeted on the local inhabitants. This

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 5 Sept. 1856.

⁸⁸ R. B. Wood to Lieutenant Colonel Morris (The Curragh), 14 Sept. 1857 (T.N.A., WO 35/29).

⁸⁹ *KM*, 4 Oct. 1862.

⁹⁰ Cash Book, Kilkenny Barracks, 1 Apr. 1838-31 Mar. 1839 (T.N.A., WO 48/352).

⁹¹ T.N.A., WO 44/111, Paper no. 2.

arduous task the barrack master achieved displaying qualities of assiduity and impartiality:

That notwithstanding this immense number of troops compared with the limited population of the city, we have not heard a single complaint on the part of the inhabitants against this meritorious public officer, a fact probably without a parallel in the annals of billeting.⁹²

The importance of establishing a military barracks at Castlecomer was recognised in a letter of E. B. Littlehales (under secretary for military affairs 1800-19) to Lord Tyrawley, 31 July 1800 urging the selection of 'a proper situation' for the erection of a permanent barrack at Castlecomer capable of accommodating 'seventy or eighty rank and file with a proportion of apartments for officers and non-commissioned officers'.⁹³ This barracks was necessary as the area was the centre of a coal mining industry, was densely populated, and was the scene of much agrarian revolt during the early decades of the nineteenth century. The first site surveyed was church land and could therefore not be procured. In further correspondence between these parties, 7 October 1800, the stated wishes of the lord lieutenant were that:

You will forthwith proceed for the building of the barrack at Castlecomer at a cost of £3,500, as soon as your Lordship can obtain a clear and satisfactory title for the ground on which said barrack is to be erected.⁹⁴

The legalities of transferring this site, a gift from the Countess of Ormonde, remained uncompleted for another twenty-eight years. In a letter to the Office of Ordnance, Dublin dated 21 May 1828 permission was sought to have 'the necessary deeds prepared for the execution of the Honourable Board and the Countess of Ormonde'.⁹⁵ The barracks complex enclosed an area of three acres and twenty-seven perches. Situated on an elevated site on the northern perimeter of the town-square the buildings at Castlecomer display the same hierarchical structure as those at Kilkenny with eight officers allocated an average of 177 square feet while ninety four rank and file were restricted to twenty seven square feet each (see Appendix No. 9, p. 261). Although no women are acknowledged as inhabiting the barracks the space provided

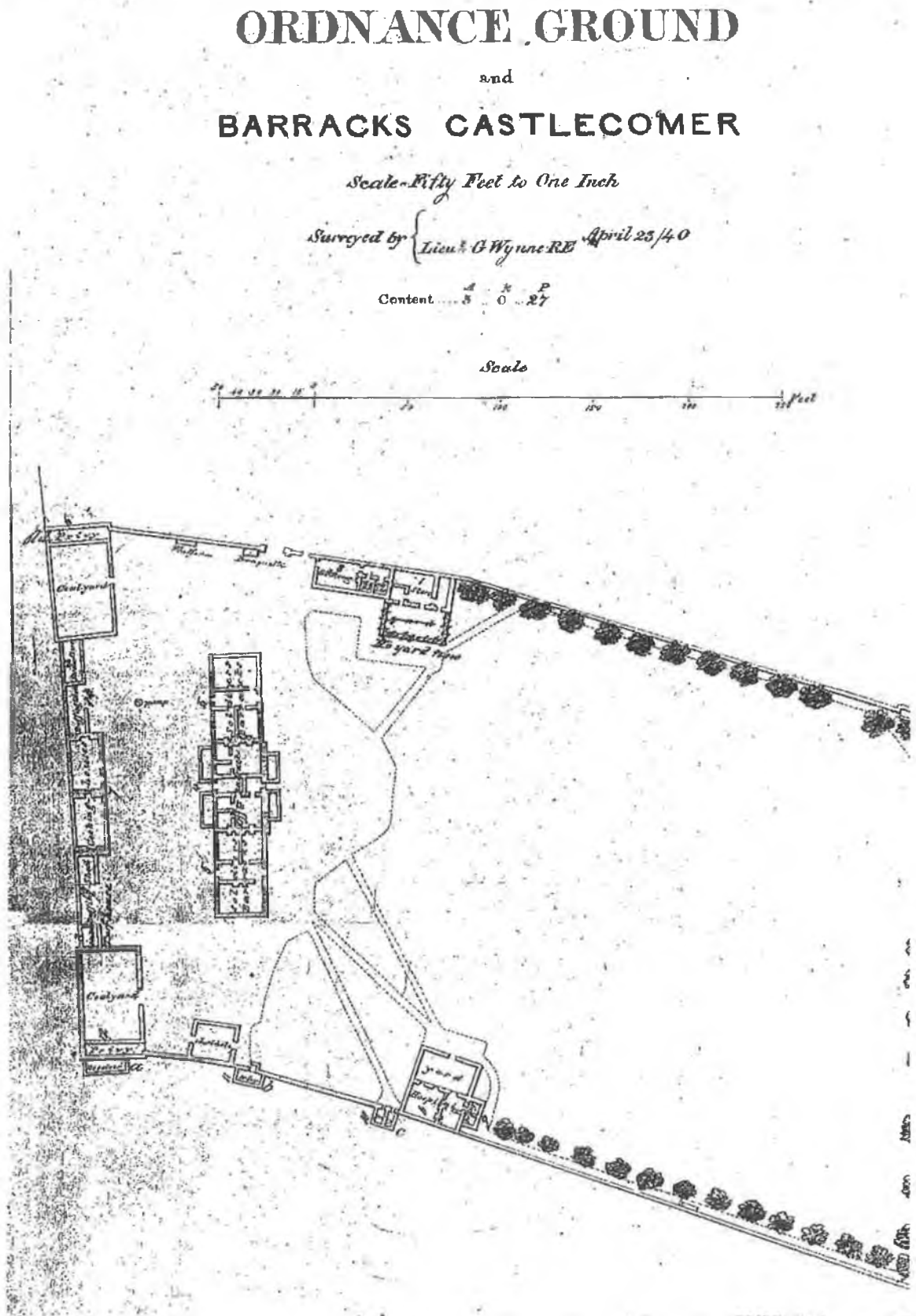
⁹² *KM*, 26 Mar. 1816.

⁹³ Littlehales to Tyrawley, 31 July 1800 (N.L.I., Kilmainham Papers, MS 1121).

⁹⁴ Littlehales to Tyrawley, 7 Oct. 1800 (N.L.I., Kilmainham Papers, MS 1121).

⁹⁵ W. M. Tyers, R. Smith, M. Butcher, W. Booth, J. Thomas to the Office of Ordnance, 21 May 1828 (T.N.A., WO 44/575).

Figure 1.7: Site plan Barracks at Castlecomer, 23 April 1840.



Source: T.N.A., WO 55/2787.

for the women's privy is larger than the privies of the soldiers, officers or hospital. The large space provided for the storage of coal is not surprising in this coal mining area.

The perceived military importance of Castlecomer barracks and the number of troops occupying its buildings fluctuated widely during the first half of the nineteenth century. Abandoned by the army in the period 1817-25 the barrack was occupied by the Kilkenny militia at that time. A letter from Dublin Castle to Lord Castlecomer, 18 January 1831, noted that while the military detachment stationed at Castlecomer would remain, permanent military quarters would not be established.⁹⁶ E. G. Stanley further stated that 'such a measure appears to be susceptible of much objection when however it is considered that military aid can be readily derived from the garrison of Kilkenny'. Outlining the importance of Castlecomer 'in a military point of view', it being the colliery district, he acknowledged that on several occasions in the past the accommodation available at Castlecomer was inadequate for the large forces seeking same.⁹⁷ He advised that some of the officer's quarters be converted into accommodation for rank and file soldiers. He also ordered that the new regulations governing space between bedsteads be implemented. In 1833 the 91st Argyleshire Highlanders were based at Castlecomer. These were replaced by the Monmouthshire Light Infantry in 1834 (see Appendix No. 7, p. 258). Barrack repairs of £115-7-11 in March 1837 and of £97-6-4 in March 1838 were required before the arrival of the 7th Royal Fusiliers in 1839.⁹⁸

The supply of provisions, clothing, bedding and services to the military was a huge logistical exercise. The supply of blankets to the army in the period 1810-14, by Kilkenny manufacturers, was also of immense economic significance to the faltering local woollen industry of the period. A bond of £500 entered into 25 August 1810 bound manufacturers Daniel Marum and Martin Brown to supply Charles Handfield, the commissioner general, 4,000 single blankets:

⁹⁶ E. G. Stanley to Lord Castlecomer, 18 Jan. 1831 (N.L.I., MS 3567411).

⁹⁷ R. C. Mansel, deputy quarter master general to the commanding royal engineer, Dublin, 23 Dec. 1850 (T.N.A., WO 44/582).

⁹⁸ Ireland, barrack ledgers 1837-8 (T.N.A., WO 48/351).

Six feet four and half inches in length, five foot six inches in breadth, in weight four pounds ... to be paid at the rate of nine shillings and four pence half penny sterling for each and every single blanket so delivered.⁹⁹

A similar type of agreement between the commissioner general with Martin Brown and Martin Davis, 25 October 1814, contracted the Kilkenny manufacturers to supply 10,000 pairs of blankets to the commissariat stores at Montpelier Hill, Dublin at a price of twenty-five shillings and six pence per pair. A further 3,000 pairs were to be supplied to the army depot at Cork at a cost of twenty-six shillings per pair. All these blankets were for the use of privates and soldiers in hospital.¹⁰⁰ In 1800 a blanket manufacturing industry existed in Kilkenny affording employment to 3,000 operatives; however, the industry locally was in serious decline by the 1830s. Addressing the Kilkenny weavers in 1834 William Cobbett, the English journalist, reformer and M.P., lay blame for their current distress on the burgeoning cult of British militarism evident since the passing of the Act of Union:

In the first happy period the existence of a soldier in time of peace had never been heard of; in the second phase the army amounted to an average of less than 10,000 men and there were only three barracks in England; now there are in time of peace more than a 100,000 standing soldiers, and more than a hundred barracks; while the miserable operatives, whom they are intended to keep in order, have frequently for their Sunday clothes the cast-off habiliments of these very soldiers, and who have not each a third part of the food of one of these soldiers.¹⁰¹

By 1841 the number of operatives employed in Kilkenny had been reduced to 925.¹⁰² Soldier's blankets were vastly inferior to those used by officers, and of the cheapest quality. Ticks, bolsters and sheets were chiefly supplied by Dublin's House of Industry, which employed female convicts from Smithfield Penitentiary.¹⁰³

Throughout the first decades of the nineteenth century it was the policy of the army corn store at Tooley Street, in London, to have the greatest proportion of oats bought in to be supplied from Ireland. This was because Irish oats 'came to the market kiln-dried, which gives a turn in favour of Irish oats in the price'.¹⁰⁴ The supply of

⁹⁹ Daniel Marum and Martin Brennan to Colonel Chas. Handfield, 25 Aug. 1810 (T.N.A., WO 60/55).

¹⁰⁰ Martin Brown and Martin Davis to Colonel Chas. Handfield, 25 Oct. 1814 (T.N.A., WO 60/56).

¹⁰¹ *Political Register*, 11 Oct. 1834.

¹⁰² P. M. Egan, *Egan's guide to Kilkenny* (Kilkenny, 1884), pp. 152-3.

¹⁰³ Joseph Houghton to E. B. Littlehales, 2 Feb. 1810 (N.A.I., OP 342/4).

¹⁰⁴ Report from the select committee on the establishment of the garrisons and on the pay and emblems of army and naval officers with minutes of evidence and appendix HC 1833 (650) vii, p. 107.

15,000 quarters of oats 21 December 1808¹⁰⁵ and the purchase in Ireland of 300 horses for the use of the army in Spain on 10 April 1809 must have been hugely significant to the agricultural economy of the area.¹⁰⁶ Thomas Maher contracted to supply the foraging needs of the cavalry at Kilkenny barracks, 24 December 1805. He agreed to supply oats at twenty shillings and nine pence per barrel, hay at eighty shillings per ton, and straw at sixty shillings per ton.¹⁰⁷ Again awarded the contract in 1806 the price of oats had fallen to twelve shillings a ton and straw to fifty shillings a ton.¹⁰⁸

Soldiering in Ireland, especially for the lower ranks, was an unpleasant experience with, at times, only minimal compensations. Army pay in the early decades of the nineteenth century was deliberately kept low so as not to unduly interfere with the availability of agricultural labourers who in Ireland were estimated to earn £18-9-0 per annum.¹⁰⁹ Soldiers earned one shilling per day plus an allowance of one penny a day 'beer money'. From this sum regimental deductions for lost kit and barrack damage often further reduced the soldier's net income. The profession only attracted those who could not find other forms of employment. The dietary menu available to lower-rank soldiers was equally parsimonious. Each man was allowed a daily ration of three-quarters of a pound of meat and one pound of bread. The fact that boiling was the only culinary method available to the soldier meant that this basic diet of meat, bread and potatoes was exceedingly monotonous.¹¹⁰

Equally monotonous was the soldier's daily routine. Rising at six o' clock he firstly made up his bed and cleaned up his things. Breakfast was taken at seven followed by drill lasting a half an hour. The men who were on guard duty were paraded at ten o' clock. There was an evening parade which lasted about half an hour and after that a soldier's time was his own until tattoo which in winter was at nine o' clock and in

¹⁰⁵ George Harrison to lord lieutenant, 12 Nov. 1808 (N.A.I., OP 261/14).

¹⁰⁶ J. Bukett to E. B. Littlehales, 20 Dec. 1808, Home Office: Ireland: general letter books Sept. 1808-Oct. 1811 (T.N.A., HO 122/9).

¹⁰⁷ List of stations where contracts have been entered into for foraging the cavalry for the year ending 24 Dec. 1805 with the names of the contractors (T.N.A., WO 60/50).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Skelley, *The Victorian army at home*, p. 193.

¹¹⁰ Trevor May, *Military barracks* (Princes Risborough, 2002), p. 23.

summer at ten.¹¹¹ At times of agitation or unrest a soldier's life could involve much privation. Night patrols in midwinter were often bitterly cold and the peat fires in large and draughty barracks were very ineffective in propagating heat.

The harsh lifestyle of the rank and file soldier contrasted sharply with that of the officer class. The latter's liberal off-duty time was divided between hunting, shooting and boating while the theatre, balls and parties 'sporting away our evenings'.¹¹² The attitude of many of these British officers based in Ireland towards the local population was patronising and imperialistic. Typical of this class was Lieutenant Mackenzie who was stationed in Kilkenny with the Perthshire Light Infantry. Writing to his mother, 22 August 1834, in Edinburgh he describes his busy lifestyle consisting of spending three days a week hunting which with his army duties left little other spare time. He also describes a hectic social merry-go-round. On the previous Thursday he attended a party given by a fellow-officer where the supper was not nice, the wine excusable and the company 'a bad set'. On the following night he was a guest at a party given by the barrack master noting that the host's daughter was pretty but 'very stupid and inanimate'. Kilkenny's mayor Mr. Collis and his wife he described as decent people but 'not very genteel'.¹¹³ He also warned his mother to consider well her plans to come and settle in Ireland noting that she would be disappointed in 'the style of people she would have to mix with in any county town', very different to the generality of people she met on a previous visit to Dublin.¹¹⁴ As he wrote the letter the regimental band was playing quite close to his window. They were quite good he admitted but too fond of playing Italian music.

Pay for officers fixed in 1806 at a relatively low level and maintained at these rates by successive governments for over a century was 'obviously inadequate by early Victorian times' and was 'ridiculously so by the 1860s'.¹¹⁵ This situation was compounded by the fact that no officer in the British army had the security of

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹¹² T. A. Ogle, *The Irish militia officer* (Dublin, 1873), p. 69.

¹¹³ Letter of J. Mackenzie, a soldier serving in Ireland 1833-6, 22 Aug. 1834 (N.L.I., MS 13,527).

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 19 July 1834.

¹¹⁵ D. B. M. Huffer, 'The infantry officers of the line of the British army 1815-1868': University of Birmingham, Ph.D. thesis, 1995, p. 36.

permanence of employment and long periods of half-pay occurred in peacetime. 'By 1817 more than half of the officers in the cavalry and infantry were on half-pay'.¹¹⁶ Following the battle of Waterloo, and for the next thirty years, a government policy of retrenchment existed within the army which meant that for many officers a progressive system of promotion was lacking. Increasingly India provided the career opportunities they were seeking. 'There was a constant shortage of European troops in India, which successive governments chose to ignore until the outbreak of the mutiny'.¹¹⁷

'A major part of the summary jurisdiction of commanding officers was the authority to inflict fines for drunkenness'.¹¹⁸ On being refused permission to leave the barracks after tattoo, Private Hugh Jackson struck his commanding officer Lieutenant-Colonel Sir J. G. Le Marchant for which he was sentenced to be transported 'for the period of his natural life'.¹¹⁹ For habitual drunkenness and striking a sergeant, Private William Haughton was at a regional court-martial sentenced to twelve months' solitary confinement in a military prison, to be deprived of beer money for two years, and to forfeit all claim to pay or pension on discharge.¹²⁰ 'For scandalous and infamous conduct unbecoming the character of a gentleman and an officer, in passing a woman living with him as his wife, and introducing her as such into society, particularly amongst the married ladies of the 84th Regiment' Lieutenant John Cooper on admitting that he had a wife 'and that the woman so introduced by him was not her' was ordered to be dismissed from the service.¹²¹ Any involvement by Kilkenny military personnel in breaches of discipline leading to their conviction by court-martial was regarded by the local establishment newspaper, the *Kilkenny Moderator* as a breach of the moral order. When on 29 March 1856, Private Michael Byrne was sentenced to eight years' penal servitude for flinging his cap at his commanding officer, Major Hickey, the report was sorry to note that 'the delinquent was a native of our county'.¹²²

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 40.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 376.

¹¹⁸ Skelley, *The Victorian army at home*, p. 128.

¹¹⁹ *KM*, 27 June 1840.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ *KM*, 21 Aug. 1815.

¹²² Ibid., 29 Mar. 1856.

Anti-establishment political views were judged particularly harshly. In attempting to strike his superior officer, while in a state of intoxication, a soldier of the 43rd Regiment was heard to cheer for repeal. This act of patriotism probably accounts for the severity of his court martial sentence of fourteen years transportation. The handing over of this prisoner to the civil authorities, in order that this sentence might be carried out, was criticised by the *Kilkenny Journal*, 25 July 1849, who felt that 'the government should provide military convict depots and keep their judicial affairs entirely to themselves'.¹²³ The report further noted 'that it is a great hardship on the civil authorities to be under the necessity of supporting, for a single day, military convicts of this class'.

The reluctance of the military authorities to make greater use of the civil courts in prosecuting army crime is highlighted in a letter from G. E. Hillier to Lieutenant General James Chatterton stating 'that it was not the usual practice to hand these cases to the civil power - this course has been adopted with the view to avoiding publicity'.¹²⁴ Cases involving confrontations between the military and the local population however were brought before the local mayoral court. The riotous behaviour and the forced entry into a number of Kilkenny houses by a number of soldiers of the 2nd Queen's Bays led to their appearance before this court in April 1847.¹²⁵ The sergeant of this brigade stated in his evidence that 'the barracks were in such a bad condition they could not secure the men in at night'.¹²⁶

The harsh regime in place during Joseph Donaldson's military service in Kilkenny (1814-15) is graphically described by the author. Men were known to receive up to a thousand lashes before they were taken down from the halberts. He further noted that 'on occasions where nature could not bear the punishment they have been brought out again and again to have their half-healed backs torn open again'.¹²⁷ This revolting procedure carried out on the barrack square before the gaze of the whole regiment happened in Wexford and Kilkenny with such monotonous regularity that

¹²³ *KJ*, 25 July 1849.

¹²⁴ G. E. Hillier to Lieutenant General James Chatterton, 1 Feb. 1858 (T.N.A., WO 35/30).

¹²⁵ *KJ*, 7 Apr. 1847.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Donaldson, *Recollections of the eventful life of a soldier*, p. 339.

Donaldson doubted the impartiality of this system. People who once viewed this spectacle never wished to see it again and the process had little effect in reforming the character of the errant:

That flogging is notoriously useless in reclaiming men where they are bad, must be evident to everyone who knows anything of the service, and surely it is not politic to disgrace an individual, and break his heart for a casual error.¹²⁸

Punished men were ordered to be placed in a separate ward of the infirmary and the barrack master was obliged to take great care to prevent the victim's sores from infecting the beds and bedding 'which always produces an offensive smell and often generates putrid and highly infectious fevers'.¹²⁹

Violence against women, a feature of this period, is reflected in the many instances reported in the local newspapers. A soldier of the 16th Lancers named William Gregory attacked Mary Kelly, 'a female of profligate habits', near Kilkenny railway station, 6 December 1856. Kicking her in the head he tore 'her forehead in a shocking manner with the rowel of his spur'. The report further noted that 'the parties had been drinking together previously and were under the influence of liquor'.¹³⁰ Donaldson makes the point that within military establishments 'women were assailed by every temptation which could be thrown in their way by those who had rank and money. Every scheme imaginable was embarked on to rob them of their virtue'. Their 'starving condition was taken advantage of by those who had it in their power to supply them'.¹³¹ Wellington observed in 1829 that his army was composed of the 'scum' of the earth: misfits, rascals, adulterers, bigamists, debtors (all debts under £30 were remitted on enlistment) and men escaping the consequences of having begot bastard children.¹³² Recruiting officers concentrated their attention on the beer house and the brothel to maximise the numbers recruited and their income. Recruiting sergeants received a fee for every man attested.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

¹²⁹ Instructions from the Army Medical Board of Ireland to regimental surgeons in that establishment, 1803 quoted in *Irish Sword*, iv (1959-60).

¹³⁰ *KM*, 6 Dec. 1856.

¹³¹ Donaldson, *Recollections of the eventful life of a soldier*, p. 219.

¹³² Peter Burroughs, 'Crime and punishment in the British army, 1815-70' in *English Historical Review*, no. 100 (1985), p. 548.

Irishmen readily volunteered for military service. In the early decades of the nineteenth century hungry unemployed men were easily tempted. At a stroke they gained the security of a regular wage and a permanent home and an assured if sparse diet. The great majority of recruits were enlisted from the labouring or artisan classes. These were people without any definite trade, predominantly illiterate 'ready for anything' and hoping that some unexpected force might provide escape from their social and economic deprivation.¹³³ The results of a survey conducted in 1846 'revealed that two-thirds of army recruits enlisted because they were destitute, a fifth foolishly imagined they would be paid for loafing and a twelfth took the Queen's shilling because they were bored or wished to spite their parents'.¹³⁴ Some parents did not get to know that their sons had enlisted until it was too late and they were already on their way to the front line. Many of these boy soldiers went to great lengths to ensure entry into the army. They lied about their age. Although declared War Office policy was that no underage enlistment take place this edict was largely ignored. There was little requirement for paperwork to substantiate a boy's age. Young teenagers were preferred by the army because they felt immortal. Private William Farrell, a native of the Butts parish, Kilkenny, had not reached the age of sixteen when joining Captain Johnson's regiment in Kilkenny in 1801.¹³⁵ His army career was principally based in the West Indies with the 18th Dragoons. Discharged, 24 July 1817, he was declared unfit for further service being blind from ophthalmia. Over and over again the gaols were ransacked for recruits for the army. It was a regular practice to grant a free pardon to criminals on condition of enlisting and this was especially the case when the guilt of the prisoners, though strongly suspected, could not be proved to the satisfaction of a jury.¹³⁶

The circumstances influencing a man's decision to enlist varied between individuals and localities. This study in chapter II will show the spatial nature of Kilkenny's enlistment pattern with over-representation in the poorer areas and a sparse recruiting response in certain rural neighbourhoods. The relative prosperity of Kilkenny's agricultural community during the Napoleonic War and the opportunities to make a

¹³³ Dooley, *Irishmen or English soldiers*, p. 20.

¹³⁴ Laurence James, *Warrior race: a history of the British at war* (London, 2001), p. 292.

¹³⁵ William Farrell: Record of army service (T.N.A., WO 97/46).

¹³⁶ Chart, *Ireland from the Union to Catholic emancipation*, p. 229.

Figure 1.8: Recruiting and the Irish language 1806.

October 11, 1924.

AN t-ÓGLÁC.

7

THE BRITISH ARMY AND THE IRISH LANGUAGE.

Remarkable Proclamation issued in Ireland over One Hundred Years ago.

Do cuireadh amach an Fogra atá annsa thíos sa bhliadhain 1806, i gcóir na tGaerdhileoirí a bhí i n-Arm Shasana an uair sin. Tá an t-Ordú bunadhasach i gcló. Clódoirí oifigiúla an Rialtais a bhí ann an uair sin, a dheim é chlóbhuail. Síllean Mr. E. R. McC. Dix, an duine gur leis an chóip, atá i gcóir agam-sa, ná fuil anois ann acht nua chéip amháin eile de'n bhFógra seo, agus bhíodh an ceann san i seilbh an Lord Chief Justice Gibson. Dubhairt an t-Athair Stiobhan de Brún, C.I., hom gur cuimhin le duine, go bhfuil aithne air, agus a bhíodh i n-Arm Shasana, Fograí agus Orduighthe de'n tsórd san bheith i n-áirde i mBearyaisí i n-Iarthar na h-Eireann.

Is an Athair Stiobhan de Brún, C.I., a fuaras sa nu macmhuil de'n Ordú atá curtha i gcló annsa. Is minn liam no bhuidhechas ar a shon san do chur i n-áir do annsa agus do'n duine gur leis an t-Ordú bunadhasach, i.e., Mr. E. R. McC. Dix.

Tá aistriú déanta again ar an bhFógra a chabhrochaidh, b'fhéidir le lucht foghluma na Gaedhile. Is maith is ól dom amhlánach nach aistriú ró-chruinn é. Foillseofar an chuid eile de'n Ordú sa chéad uimhir eile.

BARRA Ó BRIAIN, Maor.

Oifig an Chogaidh
na mBaile Átha Cliath
An Id La do Nobhember
an 1806

(TRANSLATION.)

War Office
Dublin
1st Day of November
1806

Riaghlacha agus Orduighthe.

REGULATIONS AND ORDERS.

Le h-Arm an Ríogh chur an ordughadh níos fearr agus leis na Saighdiurnaigh bheith a slioghe níos fearr, mar ta a bharrantas an Ríogh don 7a la do October, 1806, agus an Actaibh airighthe do deineanna na Siosa deireanach don Pharlaimint.

For better regulating The King's Army and for the betterment of the troops, according to the Proclamation of the 7th October and according to certain Acts passed at the last session of Parliament.

Am agus Tearma Liostala.

An sna Cosighthé
(Infantry) 7 mbliaghna
Marcaluagh
(Cavalry) 10 mbliaghna
Ordonas
(Artillery) 12 mbliaghna

Ni luafar do Mhaor na do Shaighdiur, níg dul na an tSeirbhís amháin, a Seirbhís eile, mar ta an na Cosighthé san Marcaluagh, as an Marcaluagh san Ordonas acht cheadna, dul asteach Tearma Bliaghna ionsa agus an chead Tearma Seirbhíse don tSeirbhís air a tteighinn se asteach.

Period and Terms for Enlistment.

In the Infantry ... 7 years
Cavalry ... 10 years
Artillery ... 12 years

No serjeant or soldier may leave one branch for another—for example, pass from the Infantry to the Cavalry or from the Cavalry to the Artillery, but rejoin his own branch for the period of a year.

Fir ar mhian leo dul air aigheadh leis an Dara Tearma seirbhíse liostalfar airis iad:

D'fhair oga aig liostail roimh nois acht mbliaghna deag, caithefar an t-am do chriochnoachadh ocht mbliaghna deag do chur leis na Seacht, no Deich, no na Dath-eag Bliaghna.

Those who wish to continue for a second term of service may be enlisted again:

In the Infantry ... 7 years
Cavalry ... 7 years
Artillery ... 5 years

Youths under eighteen years of age who enlist must add the time up to the completion of the eighteenth year to the Seven, Ten or Twelve.

An sna Cosighthé,
7 mbliaghna
Marcaluagh 7 mbliaghna
Ordonas 5 mbliaghna

As feidir Tearmaigh Seirbhíse do bhudughadh leis an Oifigeach ata a Ceomhlacht an nGubherment Ceomhlannaidhe, no Oileann, no Staan, comhlhad agus bhaineas le tMaoir no le Saighdiuraighe a Seirbhís a Muith, go ceann se mhí; agus leis an Ríogh, mar bhaintos le Maor no le Saighdiuraighe a Seirbhís a Muith no aig Baile, go ceann se mhí do Shiothcham gan buairt, tar eis chriochnaithe an Tearma Seirbhíse do bhíodar do thabhairt, acht amháin a ccomhlaidhe, nach raghadh an Fadughadh Seirbhíse sin an son chas, tar thri Bliaghna.

Those who wish to enter for a third term of service may be enlisted again:

In the Infantry ... 7 years
Cavalry ... 7 years
Artillery ... 5 years

Periods of service can be lengthened for six months by the Officer empowered by the Government of the Colony, Island or Station if the sergeants or soldiers concerned happen to be on foreign service. And by the King, sergeants and soldiers at home or abroad may be retained for a period of six months after peace has been restored, even if they have completed their term of service. However, it is to be always understood that the additional period of service shall not exceed three years.

Fir ar mhian leo dul asteach ar an Triughadh Tearma Seirbhíse liostalfar airis iad:

An sna Cosighthé,
7 mbliaghna
Marcaluagh, 7 mbliaghna
Ordonas, 5 mbliaghna

Aon Mhaor no non tsaighdiur do liostail air agus ata aig tabhairt a Thearma Deanaigh Seirbhíse, ni cuirfeair air bheith a Seirbhís fa'an Ffadughadh Seirbhíse sin, acht air feadh se mhí tar eis chriochnaithe an Tearma Deanaigh sin.

No serjeant or soldier may re-enlist for a second period of service, except within one year from the end of the first period, nor for a third period except within two years from the end of the second period; and the new period is not considered to have begun in any case until the previous one has been completed.

No serjeant or soldier may re-enlist nor promise to enlist in any other regiment except his own until he is fully discharged.

Any serjeant or soldier who is serving for the third period shall not be kept for additional service, but for a period of six months after the completion of that third term.

Source: T.N.A., WO 35/212.

living at home retarded rural enlistment. There was also in rural Kilkenny a long tradition of agrarian unrest, and hostility to authority which was another significant factor. As Ireland had the highest illiteracy rates in the United Kingdom educated people could readily find employment and thus were unlikely to find army life attractive.¹³⁷ So desperate were the needs of the British army in 1806 to increase the number of recruits enlisting that they issued a remarkable proclamation in the Irish language (see Figure 1.8, p 61). This document set out the rates of pay and conditions, the periods of service and the extra pay available to soldiers serving in the East and West Indies.¹³⁸

The acceptance of 'the King's shilling', pressed upon the new recruit by some sweet-talking recruiting sergeant, was considered proof of enlistment. From this point to his attestation before a magistrate, within twenty-four to ninety-six hours, the recruiting party kept a close watch on their victim in case he might abscond. Joseph Donaldson, a private in the 94th Regiment based in Kilkenny in 1814, noted in admiration the recruiting skills of one of his fellow Scottish countrymen. This recruiting officer, he claimed, knew the minds of young fellows better than they did themselves. To the ploughboy he falsely talked of the many recruits who shortly after enlistment were made sergeants. To the young discontented weavers he asked what 'clever handsome looking fellows' like them were doing in damp and unwholesome factories when they could be joining the army and experiencing the sun and easy living of some tropical posting.¹³⁹ It seems there was no place sacred from the wiles of these recruiting parties. An order issued from the adjutant general's office in Dublin, 22 November 1810, urged commanding officers to send recruiting parties to 'any fair, wake, or place of public resort', within twenty miles of their base to enlist recruits.¹⁴⁰ The army got its men by paying bounties to recruits, after making them too drunk to know what they were doing. Regardless of the recruiting methods employed, whether he enlisted by choice or by coercion, the new soldier found himself ensconced in a world utterly different from the one he left. This according to Donaldson was a strict

¹³⁷ Dooley, *Irishmen or English soldiers*, p. 8.

¹³⁸ Regulations and orders, 1 Nov. 1806 (T.N.A., WO 35/212).

¹³⁹ Donaldson, *Recollections of the eventful life of a soldier*, p. 85.

¹⁴⁰ Memorandum issued by Henry Calvert, Recruiting Department, adjutant general's office, Dublin, 22 Nov. 1810 quoted in M. F. Cunliffe 'The army 1815-45 as an institution', Oxford University B. Litt. thesis 1935, pp. 162-3.

Figure 1.9: Recruit Weighing Machine c.1860



Source: Comdt. K. Milner, Columb Barracks, Mullingar.

and disciplined world where 'terror seems to be the only engine of rule' employed.¹⁴¹ You did what you were ordered right or wrong. As Donaldson ruefully observed the recruit was drawn into a 'vortex of abject slavishness and dissipation, the latter a reaction to the constraints of the former'.¹⁴²

The abject debasement of privates under this reign of terror is exemplified in the melancholy suicide of a soldier named Quinn of the 65th Regiment as reported by the *Morning Register*, 5 September 1826.¹⁴³ The colonel of this regiment was in the habit of bringing out a portion of his regiment for target practice at half four in the morning. Notice of those participating were issued on the previous evening. No notice whatever was given to Quinn who was ordered to leave his pallet and the barracks 'without either shirt, stockings, or shoes and being constantly goaded by the corporal with his bayonet to proceed in double quick time'. This 'unmanly and unsoldier like treatment by this military petty tyrant' and the thought of being 'forced to return about eight o' clock in the morning into the populous city of Kilkenny' in this naked condition was too much for this tormented man who first shot the corporal with his musket and then himself.¹⁴⁴

The polluted atmosphere of overcrowded, unventilated barrack rooms, the monotony of army life and the paltry provision of activities to employ his spare time quickly disenchanted the new recruit. The highest rate of desertion was amongst those who had recently enlisted. The enforcement of a disciplinarian regime with hard punishments for offenders meant there was little difference between army life and being in prison. According to the *United Services Journal* of 1837 'At present the jails and bridewells are far beyond them (barracks): and they rank only with asylums for the insane or some of the new poorhouses'.¹⁴⁵ Major Jebb, the surveyor general of civil prisons, estimated that over five percent of the army were confined in the district prisons each year.¹⁴⁶ This when added to the men held in barrack cells meant a sizeable minority of soldiers were rendered ineffective. An effective system

¹⁴¹ Donaldson, *Recollections of the eventful life of a soldier*, p. 98.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 233.

¹⁴³ *The Morning Register*, 5 Sept. 1826.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *United Services Journal*, 1837, iii, p. 324.

¹⁴⁶ Burroughs, *Crime and punishment in the British army*, p. 567.

Figure 1.10: View of Kilkenny city taken from a vantage point in ‘The Butts’ (St. Canice’s parish). It was from this area and from cabins like this that the army recruited numerous.



Source: Irish Architectural Archives.

of tagging was also in operation. The practice of branding the letter D on the left side of the chest of a deserter and in extreme cases BC (bad character) was a quick method of identifying unmanageable rogues. This abhorrent practice was abandoned in 1869.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 570.

War Office policy dictated that infantry regiments, generally, should not be stationed for more than a year in any particular barracks. Thus the frequent transfer of military at little notice. Short periods of service in Britain were inevitably followed by lengthy postings abroad where health conditions varied greatly. In the East Indies the lack of tropical clothing and the ready availability of a cheap poisonous drink contributed to high mortality rates. In a report of 14 May 1845, the *Kilkenny Journal* noted the arrival in Bombay of the 78th Highlanders their ranks decimated by dysentery and the sandre fever. The report speculated ‘what will be done with the remains of the late splendid corps of Highlanders does not appear but their fate is a miserable one to think on’.¹⁴⁸ The widespread presence of ophthalmia amongst the army in Ireland was noted in the 1832 edition of Standing Orders. The establishment surmised that a compensation culture existed among men in ‘several regiments’. The report noted ‘that the disease has been designedly brought on, and the cure of it resisted for the obvious purpose of producing loss of sight, in the hope of obtaining thereby a high rate of pension’.¹⁴⁹ This cynical government judgement was unmerited. The typical soldier, noted in this study, returning to civilian life was broken in health, prematurely aged and embittered because of the difficulties in obtaining employment. Post 1856, there were great improvements in the area of military health with a significant reduction in the yearly mortality rates of soldiers stationed both at home and abroad. This was ‘brought about largely by better barracks, medical facilities, physical training and to an extent, better food and clothing as well’.¹⁵⁰

The control of venereal disease within the army preyed on many contemporary minds in the mid-Victorian period, most notably in the columns of the *Times* and the *Lancet*. In the mid 1850s this contagious disease was responsible for nearly one-third of the hospital cases in the army.¹⁵¹ For Parliament drafting effective legislation to curb the disease had complex medical, legal and moral aspects. The enactment of the Contagious Disease Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869 was responsible for a slight decline

¹⁴⁸ *KJ*, 14 May 1845.

¹⁴⁹ Orders and regulations for the army serving in Ireland 1832 quoted in *The Irish Sword*, xxi, no. 84, Winter 1998.

¹⁵⁰ Skelley, *The Victorian army at home*, p. 302.

¹⁵¹ Richard L. Blanco, ‘The attempted control of venereal disease in the army of mid-Victorian England’ in the *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, xlv, no. 184 (1967), p. 236.

in the annual venereal disease rate compared with previous years. However the struggle against this plague proved to be a protracted contest resulting only 'in the partial control of a nuisance that had plagued armies for centuries'.¹⁵² Prostitution, long associated with military stations, was one of the less welcome aspects of having large numbers of soldiers based locally. Kilkenny newspapers frequently highlighted this problem. In an editorial addressed specifically to the local military authorities the *Kilkenny Moderator*, 27 October 1856 demands that note be taken of:

Exhibitions of a very disgraceful nature made by soldiers and women of infamous character on the Hebron Road, where public decency is greatly outraged in the open day, and respectable females, as well as the more humble but no less modest and sensitive wives and daughters of the farmers frequenting our markets cannot pass without having their feelings shocked.¹⁵³

The robbery of jewellery and wearing apparel from Captain Rice of Kilkenny barracks led the police to a public house in High Street, 'the known resort of dissipated soldiers and their female associates'.¹⁵⁴ Here two women were identified as having offered a vest of Captain Rice at a local pawn office and were arrested. That Kilkenny had serious after-dark social problems is evidenced by Borough bye-laws introduced by the civic authorities, 7 March 1844. It was ordered 'that females of ill fame, night walkers and other idlers be prevented from loitering or standing before any door or upon any footway from sunset to sunrise'.¹⁵⁵ Following a visit to Ireland in 1845 William Logan estimated that Cork had eighty-five regular brothels and 356 public prostitutes which were supplemented by 'one hundred privateers who operated from houses not designated as brothels'.¹⁵⁶ The typical practitioner of that trade he states usually came from the lower classes; 'low dressmakers and servants, and manure collectors who are sent very young to the streets for that purpose'.¹⁵⁷

The majority of them were aged in their twenties to thirties who subsequently gave up this profession by the time they reached their forties. Many by that stage had contracted illness or died, others had married, while some few had acquired enough money to keep themselves. A husband's inability to secure paid employment was in

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 241.

¹⁵³ *KM*, 27 Oct. 1856.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 6 June 1855.

¹⁵⁵ Kilkenny Borough minute book, x, 1843-55 (Kilkenny Borough Archives), p. 69.

¹⁵⁶ William Logan, *The great social evil: its causes, results and remedies* (London, 1871), pp. 49-50.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

many instances the cause of forcing wives to become the sole breadwinner. Soldier's wives stationed in Kilkenny, with little if any contact with their husbands soldiering abroad, often for protracted periods, were another group who sometimes engaged, on a temporary basis, in this occupation. Such was Susanna Price, married to Private William Watters serving overseas in 1840, whom the judge, William Martin on sentencing her to seven year transportation described as a 'woman of abandoned life and larceny'.¹⁵⁸ Whether soldier's wives and children were allowed to accompany their husbands in their transfer from one station to another was vested in the discretionary power of the commanding officer. Wives of bad character who 'do not conduct themselves with propriety' or such as had married without the consent of the commanding officer were denied this privilege.¹⁵⁹

The correlation between drink, prostitution and larceny are all evidenced in the above reports. An institution that structured soldier's wages to include a daily allowance for the purchase of beer was sure to cultivate a culture of drink within the ranks. The army's attitude to the abuse of alcohol was always severe, often ambivalent and sometimes contradictory. The latter was signalled on the one hand by paying soldiers on a daily basis to minimise any over indulgence and on the other hand the selling of 'discounted' drink in army canteens. The lieutenant general commander, following a tour of inspection of the army in Ireland, expressed his mortification at the disgraceful state of intoxication he encountered amongst soldiers 'on duty'.¹⁶⁰ In this memorandum, 29 September 1834, issued to major generals commanding districts for communication to officers commanding regiments and depots he urges that 'the articles of war in regard to the punishments that are to be inflicted on the drunken soldier may be most strictly attended to'. It might be expected that any efforts to diminish drunkenness would be welcomed. However army discipline and the maintenance of distinctions of rank over-rode even this most beneficial objective. The formation of a Temperance Society within the 64th Regiment certainly raised establishment hackles. Lord Hill expressed his utmost surprise that Lieutenant Colonel Dickson 'should have taken upon himself the establishment of any, even a

¹⁵⁸ Criminal Record Files 1840, Susanna Price (N.A.I., CRF 1840, p. 15).

¹⁵⁹ Barrack regulations approved, 5 Nov. 1828 (Printed 1829), (T.N.A., WO 44/732).

¹⁶⁰ Circular to major generals commanding districts, Dublin 29 Sept. 1834 (N.L.I., MS 22/338).

temperance society, within the regiment without the authority of his superiors'.¹⁶¹ This 'novel' institution 'of a mixture of all classes including officers and women' Hill declared was 'repugnant to every principle of military discipline'. Its formation was needless and unnecessary where no society of any description should exist. While respecting the motives of the well-intentioned officer, Hill expressed surprise that Dickson should wish to persevere in holding a command, in which he is now so unlikely to prosper. Dickson, Hill concluded, was 'more fitted for a private life' than the furtherance of military objectives.

From the perspective of the local commanders of the army it was the 'total abstinence' character of the pledge and appeal to religion that created the problem. Addressing fellow officers at Eden, Major Russell explained that the 'moderate' pledge had been tried three times within the 84th Regiment, once at Kilkenny, once at Jamaica and once in India and in all instances failed.¹⁶² The major advised the men of his company that when next in Dublin they should take the pledge from Father Mathew, 'and those who did so had no cause for regret'. 'The sudden upsurge of systematic temperance agitations of a middle and working class character in England, Ireland and Germany about 1840', as Eric Hobsbawm points out was crowned with short-lived success.¹⁶³ However there remained throughout the rest of the century a hostility to the abuse of hard liquor in society.

The military career of Private John Boulger, formerly a saddler, of St. Mary's parish, Kilkenny would seem to encapsulate all the vices the army wished to eradicate. Attested for service, aged 21 in the 11th Regiment of Dragoons in London in 1815, his service included three years in France and nearly twelve years in the East Indies. In this latter posting he was constantly in and out of hospital suffering from 'fever, hepatic disease, dysentery and incontinence of urine'. That his constitution was 'completely broken down' was in the view of his superiors due to his own 'intemperate habits'. They recommended that he be permanently disqualified for

¹⁶¹ John McDonald A. G. to Lieutenant General Sir Hussey Vivian, 20 Feb. 1832 (T.N.A., WO 3/128), pp. 91-4.

¹⁶² *KJ*, 10 Sept. 1845.

¹⁶³ Eric Hobsbawm, *The age of revolution 1789-1848* (London, 2003), p. 248.

military duty as 'in every aspect' he was 'irreconcilably useless as a soldier'.¹⁶⁴ Aged 37, he was discharged and fired upon the employment scrap heap with all rights to pension forfeited.

The army career of Private John McEvoy, a labourer of Galmoy, county Kilkenny followed similar lines. His long military service of almost twenty-four years included over nine years in the East Indies where on ten occasions he was confined to hospital. On two different occasions he was tried by court-martial for habitual drunkenness and sentenced to periods of twenty days solitary confinement. Promoted corporal on 11 January 1840, for bad conduct he was demoted to private again 26 June 1840. 'Old and unfirm' he was discharged, 28 August 1849 aged forty-three as 'unfit for the duties of a hussar'.¹⁶⁵ On 1 January 1849 the *Kilkenny Journal* announced that the recent regulations prohibiting the sale of spirits in barrack canteens had 'brought no real benefit, either as regards health or habits of the soldiers'.¹⁶⁶ Crimes resulting from drunkenness had not decreased and the medical officers had found no difference in the health of the men. Further, this legislation had tended to induce soldiers to resort to public houses in the neighbourhood where the men were thrown into the society of civilians.

That this mixture of civilian and military personnel drinking together could be an explosive mixture is reported in the *Kilkenny Moderator*, 12 March 1828.¹⁶⁷ Two 'unlicensed' public houses (síbíns) at the Black Quarry on the outskirts of Kilkenny were the venue where soldiers of the 53rd Regiment 'would collect every Sabbath day for the purpose of dancing and drinking'. In this instance the soldiers, in a state of intoxication, bayoneted the civilian customers and badly thrashed the public house. On regrouping their opponents assailed the soldiers 'on all sides with vollies of stones which compelled them to retreat'. This account noted that a number of previous reports to the newspaper relative to the improper behaviour of certain individuals in the 53rd Regiment had been withheld from publication 'in the hope

¹⁶⁴ John Boulger: Record of army service (T.N.A., WO 97/21/17).

¹⁶⁵ John McEvoy: Record of army service (T.N.A., WO 97/86/34).

¹⁶⁶ *KJ*, 1 Jan. 1849.

¹⁶⁷ *KM*, 12 Mar. 1828.

that the irregularities complained of would ere this have terminated'. In a previous incident two soldiers of this regiment were attacked by a mob outside Kilkenny barracks.¹⁶⁸ The inactivity of their commander was noted, 'Captain Elmhurst had displayed great want of energy and knowledge of his duty, and that if he had acted as he ought to have done he might have saved a soldier from a brutal attack which may prove fatal to him and have secured and brought to justice the cowardly and treasonable assailants'.¹⁶⁹ Following this incident the advisability of moving this regiment from Kilkenny was discussed by senior military commanders. Although expressing 'every confidence in his men' Colonel Harene, commander of the 53rd Regiment, urged that the best tactical option would be the transfer of this corps to another posting.¹⁷⁰

Incidents of friction and enmity involving rank and file soldiers and elements of the local population are frequently reported in the columns of both local newspapers during the period of this study. Taking a pro-army stance the *Kilkenny Moderator* 19 October 1811 describing a vicious attack on Whitfield Hopper, corporal, 76th Regiment of Foot, maintained that this cruel beating and ill treatment occurred 'for no reason but being clothed as a soldier'.¹⁷¹ Even where there was no outward violence an atmosphere of hostility prevailed. Joseph Donaldson, in his memoirs, notes that on being posted to Kilkenny in 1812, there existed in that city a hostility towards the regiment significantly different from that experienced by them in their previous posting. This was despite the best possible disposition amongst these men to be on friendly terms with the inhabitants of the city:

The swears and oblique hints, the evident wish to quarrel which they evinced when any of our men came in contact with them in the public houses, convinced us that we could never expect to be on the same terms with them as we had been with the inhabitants of Wexford.¹⁷²

Despite the delivery of a flattering address of welcome to the regiment by the magistrates and the principal inhabitants of the county, Donaldson noted that 'the

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Littlehales to Colonel Harene, 12 Feb. 1827 (T.N.A., WO 35/31), p. 414.

¹⁷⁰ Littlehales to Major General Bates reporting conversation of Colonel Harene with Sir Hugh Rose, 13 Feb. 1827 (T.N.A. WO 35/31, p. 414).

¹⁷¹ *KM*, 19 Oct. 1811.

¹⁷² Donaldson, *Recollections of the eventful life of a soldier*, p. 291.

people of Kilkenny, on the other hand execrated us as savages who cared nothing for human life'.¹⁷³

The army was a focus of very sharp denominational divisions. Under army regulations all officers and soldiers were required to regularly attend divine services. In the early 1800s a tacit concession operated in regards Catholic soldiers being allowed to attend their own churches. Representations made to the army commander-in-chief by the Catholic soldiers of the 45th Regiment elicited a discreet solution. Major General Assleck suggested that after attending the regulatory service, which at this time of the year, 4 June 1805, 'may be very conveniently chosen in the barrack yard or regimental parade', men clear of duty could then be 'tacitly' permitted to go to any other place of worship.¹⁷⁴

The need for such subterfuge had disappeared when General Blakeney, 9 January 1843 confirmed that army policy was that every individual, soldier, soldier's wife or child belonging to the service shall be at liberty to attend divine worship according to his or her own religion.¹⁷⁵ Calling upon all children, without distinction, to attend the regimental school, the general stated the right to every soldier 'to consent or not as he pleases' to the attendance of his child at the regimental school. However, one might ask whether instructions issued by the commissariat on 1 November 1848 were mischievous in religious terms. It was ordered that a ration of salt meat and biscuit be 'issued to the troops every Friday, in those barracks where provisions are stored in Ireland'.¹⁷⁶ By choosing Friday, a day when Catholics were obliged to abstain from eating meat, the measure posed questions of principle for conscientious soldiers of that religious denomination. These isolated incidents of discrimination were, however, the exception in an ongoing process of mitigating the disadvantages to Catholic and Presbyterian soldiers within the army. George D'Aguilar writing to Colonel Evans of the 70th Regiment in Kilkenny, 3 June 1826 ordered that 'every facility for the attendance of Presbyterians at their own place of worship' should be

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 295.

¹⁷⁴ Instructions issued to commanding officers from Major General Assleck, 4 June 1805 (T.N.A., WO 35/24).

¹⁷⁵ Colonel T. Wade to Major General D'Aguilar (Belfast), 9 Jan. 1843 (T.N.A., WO 35/28).

¹⁷⁶ *Clonmel Chronicle*, 13 Oct. 1848.

provided, adding 'let them march with a sergeant if you have no officer'.¹⁷⁷ Regulations in force allowed Roman Catholic and Presbyterian soldiers, numbering over twenty, to be regularly marched to and from their respective places of worship under the command of an officer. Presbyterians as a group were under-represented amongst commissioned officers in the army.

Lieutenant Mackenzie writing to his mother in Edinburgh from Kilkenny barracks, 22 August 1834, noted that he was at chapel with the 'Catholics' [sic] on Sunday 'and was talking to the bishop all the time in his own house'; an experience that made the task of accompanying the soldiers 'pleasanter than it generally is'.¹⁷⁸ Officers, the *Kilkenny Journal* noted, were strictly enjoined to march their men from the church 'should the sermon or exhortation of the clergyman make what the officer should conceive to be the slightest allusion to politics'.¹⁷⁹ Branding this rule as 'a despotic interference with Catholic soldiers', this report castigates the practice of soldiers carrying 'loaded muskets and fixed bayonets' within the church.¹⁸⁰ It was customary, General Blakeney noted, for Roman Catholic clergymen 'to exhort or remark on other topics foreign to and not connected with these religious services' i.e. – repeal, repeal rent, O'Connell's rent, etc. at the conclusion of mass.¹⁸¹ The general believed there was misconception amongst the general public regarding this order as his intention was not the withdrawal of soldiers from the religious part of the ceremony. His most particular wishes were 'that neither on this, nor on any other occasions may a copy of any military order or instruction be communicated to, or be discussed with, any Roman Catholic clergyman, or other person unconnected with the army'.¹⁸² In response to the question of whether soldiers should attend mass on the occasion of the recital of prayers throughout Ireland for Mr O'Connell's health it was decided not advisable to withdraw from the chapel 'provided the priest in each respective case confines himself to the prescribed prayer'.¹⁸³ 'The refusal of emancipation for so long by the state had politicised the majority population in

¹⁷⁷ George D'Aguilar to Colonel Evans, 27 Sept. 1826 (T.N.A., WO 35/26), p. 117.

¹⁷⁸ Letter of J. Mackenzie, a soldier serving in Ireland 1833-6, 22 Aug. 1834 (N.L.I., MS 13,527).

¹⁷⁹ *KJ*, 21 June 1843.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ T. Wade to Lieutenant General Campbell, Dublin, 14 Dec. 1843 (T.N.A., WO 35/28).

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ Circular to general officers commanding districts, Dublin, 17 July 1844 (T.N.A., WO 35/28).

Ireland into an essentially Catholic nation'.¹⁸⁴

The rise and fall of the Second Reformation, 1826-8, marked the resurgence of sectarianism among regiments based in Ireland.¹⁸⁵ The authorities were mindful of the dangers of such an occurrence. The case of Lieutenant Colonel Fuller serving with the 59th Regiment in Kilkenny, 22 March 1831, illustrates this point. Fuller's criticism and lack of trust in the Catholic troops of his regiment forwarded to Sir Henry Vivian was much regretted by the army's commander-in-chief. Fuller was lectured on the importance of not exhibiting his distrust in any way but to make it only a motive for increased vigilance.¹⁸⁶

Fairs and markets were also seen as places of subversion. Soldiers were cautioned against mixing with crowds listening to ballad singers 'who usually sing repeal, party and other obnoxious songs'. The lieutenant general ordered that any soldier accused of giving party tunes or shouting for repeal shall be 'immediately reported to the general officer commanding the district'.¹⁸⁷ Officer leave was restricted on Fair days and soldier's passes were issued 'to those men upon whom discretion and propriety he (the officer) can rely upon and for whom he shall be responsible'.¹⁸⁸ The accusation that a military party was guilty of playing 'party tunes' at the Fair of Thomastown was strongly denied in an affidavit of Sergeant Major Wade. Party tunes were not played, he stated, noting 'that anything so hostile to the peace of the country, the wish of the chief governor of Ireland and the paternal admonition of his Majesty shall not be suffered to disgrace the county of Kilkenny'.¹⁸⁹ The *Kilkenny Moderator* stoking the sectarian flames reported the intentions of some inebriated colliers in Castlecomer 'to wade in orange blood' while others shouted 'down with Protestants - five pounds for the head of an Orangeman'.¹⁹⁰ The *Kilkenny Journal*, on

¹⁸⁴ James. H. Murphy, *Ireland, a social, cultural and literary history 1791-1891* (Dublin, 2003), p. 25.

¹⁸⁵ E. M. Spiers, 'Army organisation and society in the nineteenth century' in Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffrey (eds.), *A military history of Ireland* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 346-7.

¹⁸⁶ George D'Aguilar to Major General Arbuthnot, 22 Mar. 1826 (T.N.A., WO 35/26), p. 179.

¹⁸⁷ Circular to general officers commanding districts, adjutant general's office, Dublin, 27 Feb. 1844 (T.N.A., WO 35/28), p. 326-7.

¹⁸⁸ Standard orders and regulations for the army in Ireland (Dublin, 1794), p. 147. Sourced at Trinity College Library.

¹⁸⁹ *KJ*, 25 Mar. 1823.

¹⁹⁰ *KM*, 18 June 1828.

the opposite side of the religious divide was equally partisan reporting that the saintly Father Mulligan of the local Capuchin friary had reason to state 'that no man was so persecuted from the time of the apostles because of the vile persecution of the orange faction of this city, which is using all its little energies to put me down'.¹⁹¹

Bartlett expounds the theory that the experience of military service by the huge numbers of Irish Catholics recruited during the French wars significantly influenced the politicisation of these soldiers.¹⁹² This study found no evidence that the experience of military service was a potent instrument of politicisation. Kilkenny's soldiers were as a unit very apolitical. When the weavers and shoe makers of Kilkenny confronted their employers for an increase in wages doubts were expressed at the possible loyalty of the regiment based at the barracks who were 'almost entirely Catholic'. This had led the strikers, 'these unfortunate people', into the idea that the soldiers would not move against them Major Ormsby observed. They were mistaken. The regiment had conducted themselves with propriety since their arrival in Kilkenny he further noted.¹⁹³

The origins of the Methodist movement in Kilkenny can be traced to a meeting of locals and soldiers in the army barracks in 1756. John Wesley met with them and preached to them in an officer's room. 'Throughout those early years, the army barracks provided great support to the Methodist congregation'.¹⁹⁴ Subsequently Wesley returned on several occasions to meet with and preach to Kilkenny Methodists during the 1760s. The present church was built in 1802 and is situated in William Street in the centre of the city. Prior to 1862 Wesleyans were given no official recognition whatsoever in the army as only three denominations were officially recognised - Anglican, Presbyterian and Catholic. In July 1862 a fourth category was added, that of 'Other Protestants' and 'soldiers who returned themselves as Wesleyans received only Wesleyan ministrations'.¹⁹⁵ However there

¹⁹¹ *KJ*, 13 Aug. 1828.

¹⁹² Thomas Bartlett, *The fall and rise of the Irish nation; The Catholic question, 1690-1830* (Dublin, 1992), p. 326.

¹⁹³ James Ormsby to chief secretary, 25 Nov. 1813 (N.A.I., State of the Country Papers, 1531/17).

¹⁹⁴ Anonymous article in leaflet distributed on the occasion of celebrating 250 years of the Methodist church in Kilkenny (June, 2000).

¹⁹⁵ Olive Anderson, 'The growth of Christian militarism in mid-Victorian Britain' in *English Historical Review*, no. 86, Jan. 1971, p. 56.

was no provision for ‘appointing Wesleyan ministers as chaplains and no official payment of any kind made for these services’ which were entirely financed from within the Methodist community itself.¹⁹⁶

The foundation of the first Presbyterian church in Kilkenny has a similar military origin with the arrival in the city of the 79th Queen’s Own Cameron Highlanders in 1825. On leaving Kilkenny in 1840 the regiment of the Scots Greys handed to the Rev. Mr Collins, the local pastor ‘each a day’s pay towards the expenses of building the Presbyterian meeting house in the city’.¹⁹⁷ This was to express their thanks for the attention he devoted to them during their stay. The opening of this church was the subject of widespread news coverage. The *Londonderry Standard* rejoiced in the success of this undertaking ‘in the midst of many discouragements ... in a town overshadowed by God’s darkness’.¹⁹⁸ This comment was bitterly denounced by the *Kilkenny Journal* who called into question ‘the vile bigotry and the horrible blasphemy of its author’.¹⁹⁹ It appears from newspaper reports of this famine period that one of the persons most involved in obtaining relief for Kilkenny’s poor was the Rev. Peter Roe, the Protestant rector of St. Mary’s and chaplain to the troops, whose ‘charity sermons’ readily attracted donations. Donaldson observed that in the indefatigable discharge of his duty he exhibited ‘the purest benevolence’, possessed a liberal mind and in his sermons displayed an eloquence that caught the attention of the most illiterate and careless of soldiers. ‘His preaching had a very visible effect on the conduct of our men We had not been long in Kilkenny when the greater part of the regiment voluntarily attended his Sunday evening sermons’ Donaldson noted.²⁰⁰ Another element of the establishment’s efforts to inculcate a Protestant ethos amongst the military was the Royal Hibernian military school. Originally founded in 1764 at Oxmantown (Dublin) its exclusively Protestant character was again asserted by the charter of 5 December 1818 which obliged the children to learn the catechism of the Church of England and attend its services.²⁰¹ This charter authorised the commissioners to appoint ‘fit and able artificers to teach the children

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ *KM*, 22 Apr. 1840.

¹⁹⁸ *KJ*, 19 Apr. 1843.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Donaldson, *Recollections of the eventful life of a soldier*, p. 347.

²⁰¹ Clode, *The military forces of the crown*, p. 556.

such trades as the society might see fit'.²⁰² The school buildings were designed originally to accommodate 600 children. However in 1829 the select committee on the Irish estimates decided to limit future admissions to 300 children. Lieutenant General Byng in a memorial of 18 December 1829 noted the correlation between the great increase in the number of troops based in Ireland subsequent to the ending of the Napoleonic War and the increasing numbers of their children applying for entry into the Hibernian school.²⁰³ Fifty of these applicants could not be admitted for the want of accommodation. Between the years 1815 and 1830 there were 550 recruits from this school who joined the army.²⁰⁴ Of the 767 students discharged from this institution, in the year 1842-49, 514 enlisted in the army and 253 entered into civil life.²⁰⁵ It was further noted that a great proportion of the boys who have left the school apprenticed to trades and otherwise disposed of had ultimately entered the service.²⁰⁶ James Fogarty of Clara, Kilkenny was admitted to this school on 3 June 1815, aged six where he was trained as a musician. He was discharged 23 February 1823 aged fourteen.²⁰⁷ This study was unable to establish his subsequent career. The religious composition of army personnel, based at Kilkenny, could vary from company to company. Lieutenant Colonel Irving, Royal Artillery, commanded 149 men at Kilkenny, 1 May 1856. Of these 93 were Episcopalian, 16 Presbyterian and 36 Roman Catholics. However the make-up of the four companies commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Bridge, 58th Depot company, also sharing the same base, was less Episcopalian dominated with 290 adherents, 213 Roman Catholic and 19 Presbyterians.²⁰⁸

During the Napoleonic War the levels of occupancy at the city barracks fluctuated between 650 and 750 soldiers. These troop numbers were maintained throughout the 1840s except during the period of the Young Ireland Rising, i.e. July-December 1848, when the city of Kilkenny and a number of the county's towns and villages were saturated with a military presence. Troop numbers recorded at Kilkenny's city

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ John Byng to Lord Francis Leveson, 18 Dec. 1829 (N.A.I., OP 702).

²⁰⁴ M. F. Cunliffe 'The army 1815-45 as an institution', Oxford University B. Litt. thesis 1935, p. 93.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ G. H. O'Reilly, The Royal Hibernian military school in *Genealogical Society of Ireland Journal*, (Winter 2002), p. 250.

²⁰⁸ Monthly return of the army in Ireland, 1 May 1856 (T.N.A., WO 17/1121).

barracks 1 December 1848 included 1,109 rank and file soldiers and 39 officers supplemented by 550 'extra troops' (infantry), 176 cavalry men and 50 artillery.²⁰⁹ Figures for the period August-September 1848 were also especially high in the county's rural stations. Piltown (population 495) was garrisoned by 48 officers, 16 drummers and 1,324 rank and file soldiers. At Callan, also in close proximity to the scene of the Rising, there were five companies of the 75th Regiment, consisting of 10 officers and 311 privates. Even Castlecomer in the extreme north of the county had double its normal complement of personnel with 5 officers and 112 men, should the miners display any anti-government sympathies. Not since 1798 had such military firepower been amassed to quench the embers of rebellion in county Kilkenny. The social effects of such a display of militarism on the people of Kilkenny is impossible to define. It obviously affected the numbers of young men wishing to join the army. Whilst recruiting figures at the local barracks averaged 15 per month throughout 1847 and early 1848, there were 69 recruits enlisted in October 1848 and 79 recruits in the following month.²¹⁰ In the second half of 1854 troop numbers at Kilkenny were more than halved as the exodus of the military to the Crimea built up. Kilkenny's garrison, 1 May 1854, included 47 sergeants, 16 drummers and 756 rank and file. These numbers had fallen to 20 sergeants, 8 drummers and 311 rank and file by 1 December, 1854.²¹¹ This reduction of troops based locally did not signify a loss of status in Kilkenny's strategic military position. Following a meeting between Lord Hardinge, inspector general of fortifications and the Board of Ordnance, 8 September 1854 a 'general agreement' on troop numbers was agreed:

That Dublin [7,500] be considered as the chief central point, and that Cork with Fermoy [5,500], Limerick [2,350] and Belfast [2,000], be considered the great stations in advance, that other barracks situated on the great lines of communications or railways should be maintained and support these great stations.²¹²

The 'other barracks' listed, and mapped, were Waterford, Kilkenny, Templemore, Athlone and Dundalk with Newry (see Figure 1.11, p. 80). Notably excluded from this list was the barracks at Birr, which in the 1830s had over 1,100 men and was now sidelined because of its position outside the rail network. The low levels of

²⁰⁹ Monthly return of the army in Ireland, 1 Dec. 1848 (T.N.A., WO 17/1117).

²¹⁰ Monthly return of the army in Ireland, 10 Oct. 1848 (T.N.A., WO 17-114,115,116).

²¹¹ Monthly return of the army in Ireland, 1 Dec. 1854 (T.N.A., WO 17/1121).

²¹² T.N.A., WO 33/2A(1) (8 Sept. 1854).

troops stationed at Kilkenny barracks throughout the height of the Fenian conspiracy, October 1864 to March 1867 exemplifies the low-level security concerns of government to this threat. Confident of the ability of the constabulary to control the situation the number of soldiers at Kilkenny's city barracks varied from a low of 277 in January 1865 to a high of 627 in January 1867 (see Table 1.12, p. 81). This was in line with the national trend where between 1 October 1866 and 1 March 1867 the total number of officers and men increased from approximately 20,600 to approximately 24,000.²¹³ This concentration of troops stationed in barracks away from England Skelley maintains was because 'popular sentiment had never attached itself to the army to the same degree and in the same way as the navy'.²¹⁴ This caused, in his opinion, an army reaction of 'attempting to remain as uncontroversial and invisible as possible which led to the Wellingtonian policy, only reversed by Cardwell, of hiding British troops from the British public in garrisons around the globe'.²¹⁵ It was also cheaper to garrison soldiers in Ireland rather than England and less expensive again to keep troops in Kilkenny rather than Dublin. This huge build up of soldiers in Kilkenny during the 1840s was part of a more general increase occurring throughout Ireland. The total number of troops based in Ireland 1843 was 15,046. By March 1849 this figure had grown to 29,500.²¹⁶ In comparison with Ireland, English barracks were under-utilised accommodating 36,000 soldiers in institutions that had capacity to hold 57,500.

Conclusion

A soldier's life, in the period 1800-1870, was certainly not a happy one as related in this chapter. This experience was common to soldiers stationed throughout the United Kingdom and was even more severe if stationed abroad. Poor pay, insufficient and monotonous food, inferior and inadequate clothing, unhealthy and unsanitary housing were the lot of the soldier at home or abroad. Most of the soldier's career was served abroad, often in territories where fatal diseases such as cholera and yellow-fever persisted. A soldier's life in India frequently alternated

²¹³ Government memo, June 1867 (N.L.I., Larcom Papers, MS 7697).

²¹⁴ Skelley, *The Victorian army at home*, p. 244.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

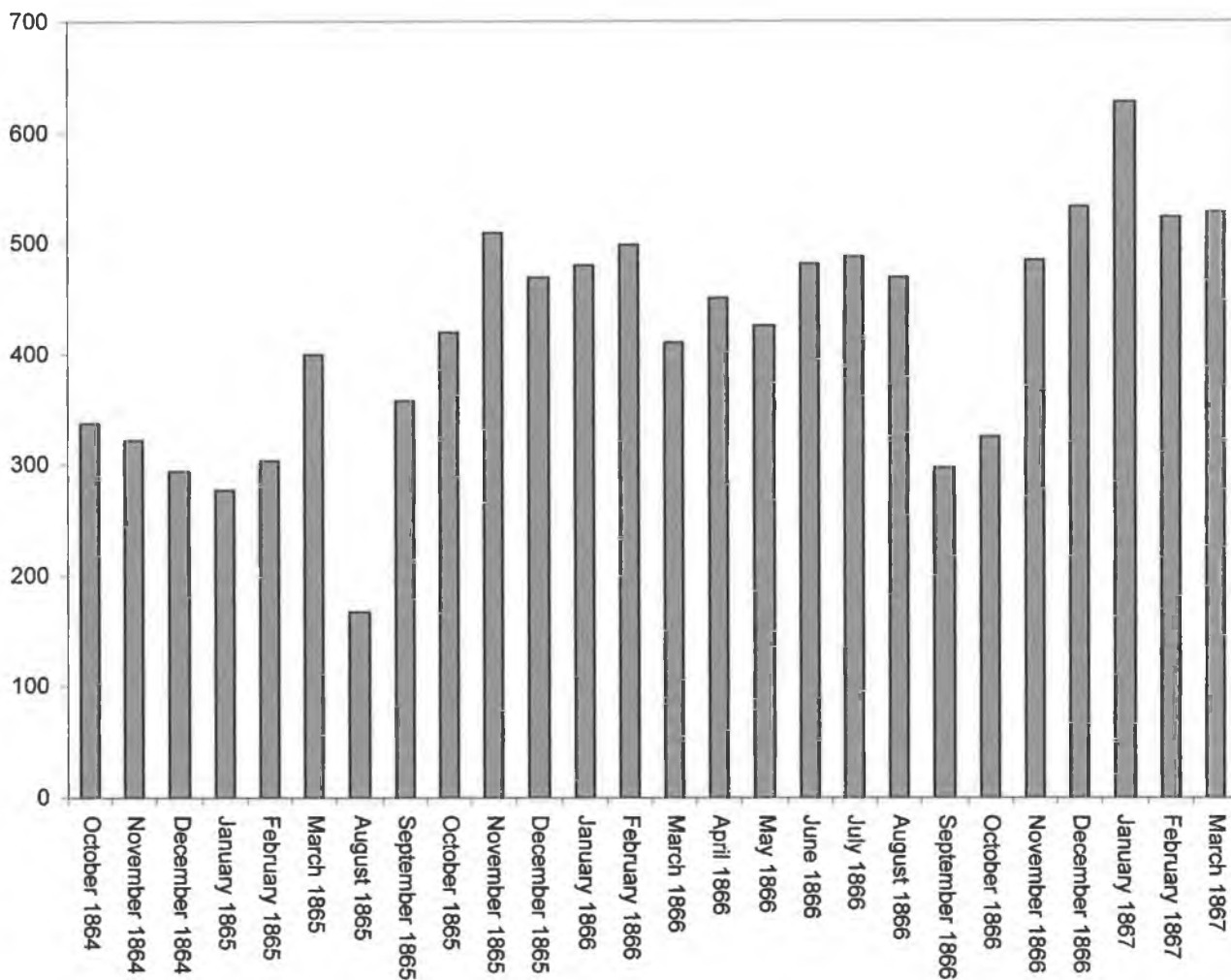
²¹⁶ T.N.A., WO 33/2A(1) (Mar. 1849).

Figure 1.11: Ireland, Barrack stations, 8 March 1856.



Source: Topographical and Statistical Depôt. War Department, 8 March 1856, PRO, MF Q/1/549.

Table 1.12 Number of soldiers occupying Kilkenny military barracks, October 1864 to March 1867.



Source: Distribution of the army in Ireland, monthly returns, October 1864 to March 1867 (T.N.A., WO 73/5, 73/6, 73/7, 73/8).

between that of monotonous cantonment duties and long periods of hard campaigning. Pitted against an inhospitable climate and a native population that often proved intractable, personal weaknesses came to the fore amongst officers and men. Often they drank themselves to death in the over-consumption of brandy and arrack respectively. Similarly for many Kilkenny-based soldiers, the attraction of the alehouse and the brothel was greater than any moral or religious obligations and these nefarious establishments were greatly favoured over regimental canteen and library.

Women's history, within empire, as Kevin Kenny points out, was 'by definition peripheral to one of the central themes of imperial history: war, conquest and the exercise of military, administrative or political power'.²¹⁷ Active involvement in any of these roles would have violated prevailing norms of femininity. In this overwhelming male military world, women were seen as a liability adversely interfering with the discipline, mobility and efficiency of the army. The small number of women officially allowed to live within the barracks, about five percent of the total, were those whose husbands had secured the permission of their commanding officer to marry. The army accepted the need for some wives to wash and sew for their men and to adopt the role of nurse or midwife on occasions. In return they were permitted to feed on half-rations and have their children enrolled in the regimental school. Women over this number officially did not exist and are invisible in the formal returns. The granting or withholding of permission to marry was another factor, used by those in command, to ensure the good conduct of the rank and file soldier. Under reforms only gradually introduced, from the mid 1850s onwards, a soldier's wife was seen as a morally steadying influence and the creation of a stable family perceived as enhancing the making of a better soldier.

The focus of Chapter II will be to ascertain whether this 'better' soldier evolved over the period of this study. Faced with mass political agitation associated with the struggle for Catholic emancipation and the campaign for reductions in tithe payments, the performance of the army, in a Kilkenny context, in dealing with endemic revolt will be scrutinised.

²¹⁷ Kevin Kenny, *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford, 2004), p. 16.

Chapter II

The army in the field: Kilkenny 1800-1870: the politics of dissent

The early years of the nineteenth century in Ireland have been catalogued 'as an unbroken decade of disturbance and state reaction'.¹ The widespread discontent of the populace dormant since the 1790s erupted into open rebellion once again in Kilkenny during the winter of 1813. Agrarian secret societies, often operating with community consent, sought to regulate competition for land and the terms on which it was leased. The rebels were also intent on the expulsion of transitory labourers who had come into the Kilkenny area seeking employment. Attacks on soldiers and police became more prevalent. Most of these agrarian outbreaks, as Hoppen points out, 'took place at times of distress and many were focused upon the economic tensions between comfortable farmers and those lower down the scale of rural life'.²

This chapter will examine the role of the army in containing this uprising in county Kilkenny and enumerate some of the difficulties it encountered in dealing with this problem. The expansion of this revolt in 1831 which involved a wider section of Kilkenny's farming community and their refusal to pay tithes will also be explored. To expedite the speedy solution of this tithe revolt General Blakeney, fresh from his success in crushing Luddite revolt in northern England, was appointed commander of Ireland's south-east military district. His lengthy posting in Kilkenny illustrates the intractability of the problems encountered. The granting of Catholic emancipation in 1829 and the visit of Father Mathew to Kilkenny in January 1840 were viewed by local unionists as threats to Protestant hegemony. The army's role in holding the peace will be outlined. The benevolence of army personnel to the poor of Kilkenny, as individuals and as groups, during the Famine will also be noted. The outbreak of the Young Ireland Rising of 1848 caused the army to greatly increase its military resources in the Kilkenny area. The unprecedented nature of this reinforcement will

¹ Galen Broeker, *Rural disorder and police reform in Ireland* (London, 1970), p. 30.

² K. T. Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800: conflict and conformity* (Harlow, 1999), p. 50.

be clarified. Kilkenny's response, both negative and positive, to Britain's involvement in the Crimean War 1854-6 will also be outlined.

Quinlivan and Rose in their study of Fenianism state that the origins of this movement sprung 'from deep social discontents, the famine, the landholding system, the disadvantages of Catholics' and a hatred of an alien governing regime.³ Unlike all previous national movements, it not only embraced the Irish at home but also the wider Irish diaspora abroad. Its activists were almost entirely drawn from amongst the poorer classes 'small farmers and labourers, soldiers, schoolmasters, clerks, shop assistants, etc'.⁴ This chapter will examine the social composition of those engaged in the movement locally and the number of Kilkenny people convicted of Fenian membership in the period 1855-70. The impact of this conspiracy locally, the response of the army to this threat, and the level of Fenian infiltration within the regiments based in Kilkenny will also be examined. The role of the Catholic church in condemning and retarding Fenianism will be investigated. Was this physical-force movement's vital conquests confined to the realm of the spirit? In his study of that organisation Martin Mansergh claims that the political and intellectual leadership of the Fenians made more of a mark than the limited small rebellion for which circumstances were never really rife in their time.⁵ Was involvement in the movement the result of a 'misdirected enthusiasm' as the *Kilkenny Journal* stated, the availability of increased leisure time generally, or the recruiting of soldiers who had an eye to free drinks?⁶ The role of the army locally at elections in this pre-secret ballot period will also be examined.

Despite huge increases in the size of the armed forces during the Napoleonic War the establishment in Ireland was increasingly stretched in providing military manpower to preserve the peace at home and supply troops for commitments abroad. Whitehall's strategic needs took precedence forcing the authorities in Dublin to make the best use of the forces at their disposal. It is clear from the unsettled conditions

³ Patrick Quinlivan and Paul Rose, *The Fenians in England 1865-1872* (London, 1982), p. 162.

⁴ T. W. Moody, *The Fenian movement* (Cork, 1985), p. 106.

⁵ Martin Mansergh, *The legacy of history* (Cork, 2003), p. 206.

⁶ *Kilkenny Journal*, 20 Sept. 1865.

prevailing in county Kilkenny, the cockpit of this unrest during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, that these resources were completely inadequate. A prominent Kilkenny magistrate warned the government that the disaffected were 'in possession of every musket, fowling piece, pistol, etc. that were held by farmers, poachers and servants' and Peel was cautioned that if 'something is not speedily done, you will have the country completely undisciplined – the law as it now stands is not equal to the evil'.⁷ The arrangement in place where magistrates and constables reinforced by the military preserved the peace was obviously failing as the public order crisis of 1812-13 indicated:

From 1814, Peel as chief secretary was drafting plans for a new 'Peace Preservation Force' involving a resident chief magistrate with an 'extraordinary establishment' of police for proclaimed districts – a system that was later developed into an all-Ireland county constabulary.⁸

The use of the army in a police capacity had certain limitations. Its effectiveness, in this role, had been hampered by the regulation that its duties had to be carried out under the supervision of a magistrate. Another factor in the military's difficulties was the rebels' preference for nocturnal outrage. Little success in intercepting the activities of these midnight 'banditti' was reported despite numerous and regular patrols conducted by the military. A lack of knowledge of the local countryside hampered their efforts. So too did the facts 'of the troops being confined to roads which the natives could avoid and their approach notified by numerous scouts using whistle signals'.⁹ The brutality of Whiteboy retribution ensured the co-operation and fear of the local populace amongst whom these bandits lived and moved. This made it extremely difficult for magistrates to gather accurate intelligence on the composition or movements of these groups. An unorthodox method of troop deployment whereby, for the most part, small detachments were spread thinly all over the country was another restricting factor. Besides being deficient in numbers the establishment found 'the quality of its component parts was not of the standard that the administration would have wished for'.¹⁰ In the period between 1806 and

⁷ Gustavus Rochfort to Gregory, 7 Nov. 1813 (T.N.A., HO 100/174).

⁸ R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London, 1988), p. 294.

⁹ Lieutenant Colonel Sorrell to chief secretary, 3 Apr. 1822 (N.A.I., CSO 2369/20).

¹⁰ C. W. C. Oman, *Wellington's Army 1809-14* (London, 1912), p. 181.

1813 the number of second battalions in Ireland exceeded the number of first battalions. These second battalions, denuded of their most efficient personnel, would remain in the United Kingdom and were little more than a recruiting and training cadre providing replacements for the first battalions overseas.¹¹

The deficiencies of Kilkenny magistrates impaired the effectiveness of the military response to this agrarian revolt. In a number of districts there was no magistrate residing within the area. A number were unsure of the extent of their power. Edward Cullen writing from Castlecomer begged 'to be informed what powers a magistrate possesses to apprehend these nightly armed parties and search for and deprive any person of arms'. He further wished to know whether he would 'be justified in ordering the military to fire upon them should [the rebels] be in too great strength to apprehend them'.¹² Although a small detachment of troops was stationed in the village of Kilmoganny the absence of a magistrate living in the area hindered progress in the struggle against the banditti.¹³ From all over county Kilkenny requests for troops to be stationed in particular locations demanded the lord lieutenant's attention. Although a small troop was stationed in Kilmanagh an additional force of fourteen men was requested.¹⁴ A detachment was sent to the house of William Marum of Eirke to protect him and his herdsman.¹⁵ At the request of a number of north Kilkenny magistrates a subaltern and twenty men were ordered to the Freshford area, there to take up residence in rented accommodation. The decision to send a detachment of troops under the command of Colonel Butler to Windgap, hitherto a no-go area for the military, was to the great displeasure of the local caravats 'who are not pleased at their coming'.¹⁶ Similarly W. N. Thompson, a magistrate from Urlingford, felt threatened by 'nightly armed meetings, the administering of unlawful oaths, the denouncing of those who have the spirit to oppose their proceedings and in many instances putting these threats into execution'. It was his opinion which also had the support 'of many gentlemen in the

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Edward Cullen to E. B. Littlehales, 18 Dec. 1810 (N.A.I., SOC 1275/18).

¹³ R. H. Willcocks to Charles Saxton, 14 Dec. 1810 (N.A.I., SOC 1275/16).

¹⁴ Hans Caulfield to chief secretary, 16 Dec. 1810 (N.A.I., SOC 1277/79).

¹⁵ G. Neville to Charles Grant, Dublin Castle, 9 Oct. 1820 (N.A.I., SOC 1277/79).

¹⁶ James Strangways to chief secretary, 3 Dec. 1811 (N.A.I., SOC 1381/68).

neighbourhood that the country would be more in awe of English troops' if introduced into county Kilkenny.¹⁷ Three weeks later a group of Ribbonmen lying in wait to ambush the mail coach at Longford Pass were surrounded by two detachments of military – the north Down militia stationed in Littleton and the Northumberlands garrisoned in Glengoole. In the ensuing confrontation two of the banditti were killed and another, a publican from Ballingarry, was captured whilst two soldiers were wounded.¹⁸

A recent study of rural unrest in the barony of Galmoy, 1819-24, encapsulates the story of the struggle between some of the impoverished lower class small farmers, cottiers and labourers, and the landed class of farmers and gentlemen.¹⁹ For much of this period murders, beatings, intimidation and raids for arms continued unabated and the authorities were in most instances unable to prosecute because of the withholding of evidence by the general public. An anonymous report to the government details the extent of the problem: 'in most cases the parties that have been robbed of arms or money are sworn to secrecy with such horrid imprecations' that those crimes were never reported, 'neither the magistrates or government are aware of the extent of these deprecations'.²⁰ This report also warns of the consequences of 'a letter forgot or an incautious word spoken before servants [which] would be the signal for assassination'. In the wake of the killing of John Marum, a substantial Catholic landowner, Lieutenant Colonel Martin Lindsay of the 78th Highland Regiment stationed in Kilkenny consulted local magistracy on the need to petition the lord lieutenant for the imposition of the Insurrection Act in the barony of Galmoy. Following the receipt of this request from the magistrates of Kilkenny the lord lieutenant issued a proclamation on 30 April 1824 placing the barony under this Act.²¹ Appointed to preside over the sessions implementing these measures, Sergeant

¹⁷ W. N. Thompson to lord lieutenant, 4 Jan. 1814 (N.A.I., SOC 1554/1).

¹⁸ Colonel McDonald to E. B. Littlehales, enclosing report from General Drummond, 29 Jan. 1813 (N.A.I., SOC 153/1).

¹⁹ Pádraig Ó Macháin, *Six years in Galmoy: rural unrest in county Kilkenny 1819-1824* (Dublin, 2004).

²⁰ Anonymous report of the disturbed state of the barony of Galmoy, 4 Apr. 1814 (N.A.I., SOC 1554/9).

²¹ Magistrates' meeting re. Insurrection Act (N.A.I., SOC 2606/31-2, 36). Original proclamation of 30 Apr. 1824 survives N.A.I., Proclamation 322.

Goold declared on his arrival that his native county of Cork was in a state of paradise as compared with some parts of county Kilkenny. He also announced that 'under the provisions of the Act, wakes were considered to be unlawful assemblages'.²² At the Kilkenny Spring Assizes held in late March 1824 Judge Bushe expressed disappointment 'that the steps hitherto taken to bring the murderers of Mr. Marum to justice have proved ineffectual, but he hoped by the next assizes, that justice would overtake them'. Responding to the judge's admonition Lindsay and the local police made every effort, including the bribing of informers, to make a case against six local men whom he had arrested. Put on trial at the August 1824 Assizes they were found guilty and sentenced to be hanged on the desolate slopes of Knockshinraw where the murder of Marum had occurred. This sentence was carried out on the 26th August before a crowd of 20,000 people and a huge military presence brought in from Kilkenny, Cahir and Templemore.²³ On the scaffold five of the six declared their innocence of the crime. Regardless of the innocence or guilt of the condemned these hangings ended the reign of terror which had disturbed Galmoy for years and which had resulted in fourteen murders within the area in the three year period 1822-1824.²⁴ Eight years later, as the tithe war raged throughout north Kilkenny, Galmoy was relatively quiet. The murder of Marum had subtle religious undertones. He was a brother of the Catholic bishop of Ossory. The 'immediate cause' of his murder was his ejection of the Steele family, Protestants, who had held the land for generations. Regarded as 'kind and indulgent', the Steeles had the widespread support of the local Catholic community and when two months later they regained their farm there was universal rejoicing. The *Kilkenny Journal* noted that this incident provided 'another decisive proof' that 'a belief in Pastorini's prophecies and a union for the destruction of Protestants' was not prevalent in county Kilkenny.²⁵ Similarly placed straddling a county boundary line, the baronies of Kells and Knocktopher were equally difficult to police. Local landlords Robert Langrishe and John Flood felt equally threatened and sought military help from Gregory.²⁶ In their letter to the chief secretary they

²² *Waterford Mirror*, 15 May 1824.

²³ *Kilkenny Moderator*, 28 Aug. 1824; *KJ*, 26 Aug. 1824.

²⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Mar. 1824; *WM*, 12 June 1824.

²⁵ Quoted in *Dublin Evening Post*, 10 June 1824.

²⁶ Robert Langrishe and John Flood to William Gregory, 24 Mar. 1822 (N.A.I., SOC 2369/15).

note that this populous area was at present 'totally exposed' being surrounded on three sides by 'a wild and undefended country' which was subject to the constant incursions of insurgents from the disturbed areas of neighbouring county Tipperary. The letter further stated that in the absence of an efficient police force and with no military presence within ten to twenty miles in different directions, there was little defence against 'the lawless persons who had lately visited and threatened them and who had promised to visit them again soon'.

That any military measures taken against these rebels were temporary, short-term solutions is highlighted in the response of Lieutenant Colonel Lindsay to a request for more troops to be stationed at Callan where there was already a subaltern, sergeant and eighteen rank and file of the 78th Regiment based:

If Callan had a whole regiment in the barrack there it would not be effectual as far as regards patrolling unless in concert with some other posts. The barracks and the magistrate's house are so closely watched it is known, if not beforehand, at least the moment a party leaves it. At Kilmoganny it is possible to conceal a movement but at Callan I do not think so.²⁷

Lindsay rejecting this request made a vague promise that at some future unspecified time 'we may make a complete sweep of that part of the country which is now considered almost under the Whiteboy dominion'. To facilitate this manoeuvre he intimated the recent acquisition of a new resource; 'I have now got a correct sketch of the roads and bye-roads of the disturbed baronies'.²⁸ The cartographic resources available to the military in the early decades of the nineteenth century were extremely limited. The military survey of Colonel Charles Vallancey (1776-82), resulted in excellent, but unpublished maps. It was also limited geographically, as primarily concerned with the fortification and defence of large harbours around the coast of the southern half of Ireland from Dublin to Galway. In the hinterlands of these ports prominence is given to the 'big house' because of its military, social and economic importance. 'Here soldiers could be billeted in outbuildings, horses put to graze on the lawns, the woods would provide some cover, while the house itself

²⁷ William Morris Reade and Rev. Benjamin Morris to chief secretary, 12 Feb. 1822 (N.A.I., CSORP 2369/8).

²⁸ Ibid.

could be expected to act as a focus of loyalty and co-operation.²⁹ Arrowsmith's map of Ireland incorporating the new mail coach and bog surveys was printed in 1811. However it is unlikely the military had access to these as 'hardly any of them had yet been finished'.³⁰ Other improved editions were issued in 1821, 1840 and 1846. For Richard Griffith, in 1818, Arrowsmith's map was the best of a bad lot, noting that 'there is no map of Ireland at least none deserving the name'.³¹ John Andrews in his analysis of the cartographic achievements of David Aher and Hill Clements in producing barony maps of county Kilkenny, 1812-24, concludes that their efforts in recording 'the early nineteenth century Kilkenny landscape is seriously defective'.³² Each barony map was separately commissioned and reflected the styles and deficiencies of individual draughtsmen. The Grand Juries commissioned county maps which were the most up-to-date available. Similar to barony maps their coverage was uneven. 'As for the features of the country the delineation was for the most part extremely incorrect, often purely fanciful'.³³ Another limitation in the usefulness of these county maps was that there was no working co-ordination between map-makers in adjoining counties and therefore these individual maps tended to be useless across county boundaries. There was also no uniformity in the dates these maps were produced with some counties not having Grand Jury maps until well into the 1820s. What the military urgently required was high quality regional surveys which were unavailable in 1837.

When again reporting on the security situation, 13 April 1822, Lindsay noted that 'the disposition of the lower classes are very bad indeed and the consequent intimidation of all the respectable people is very great. They are in constant dread even while walking their own grounds'.³⁴ He urged the speedy introduction of the Insurrection Act and noted that in future patrolling parties would consist of at least sixteen rank and file soldiers. That these patrols were generally unproductive of

²⁹ Jacinta Prunty, *Maps and map-making in local history* (Dublin, 2004), p. 87.

³⁰ J. H. Andrews, *Shapes of Ireland, maps and their makers 1564-1839* (Dublin, 1997), p. 272.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² J. H. Andrews, 'David Aher and Hill Clement's map of county Kilkenny 1812-14' in William Nolan and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Kilkenny history and society* (Dublin, 1990), p. 449.

³³ J. H. Andrews, *Shapes of Ireland*, p. 272.

³⁴ M. Lindsay to Lord Greenock, 13 Apr. 1822 (N.A.I., SOC 2369/32).

substantial security results is evidenced by the account of Second Lieutenant D. MacLachlan of the Rifle Brigade who was called upon 'by the magistrate here [Callan] to furnish a troop to pursue an armed party who had attacked several houses in the neighbourhood'.³⁵ He reported that after patrolling for the greater part of the night the party traced the rebels 'to the bounds of county Tipperary when we thought it was useless to continue our pursuit any further'. The objective behind the deployment of military force in Ireland in the face of popular unrest as Virginia Crossman points out 'was to achieve maximum effort at minimum risk to the troops'. The easiest way to do this was to overawe the country by force of numbers, but where this was impossible the authorities fell back on tactics such as patrols, large-scale searches and movable columns.³⁶

The opportunities to mount large-scale searches was hindered by the widespread dispersal of the army divided into small often-isolated detachments. This division is graphically illustrated in the location of detachments of the 21st Fusiliers as noted by the *Kilkenny Moderator* 20 July 1831.³⁷ No fewer than seven companies were detached from their Kilkenny headquarters. Three companies were in county Wexford while the assizes were taking place there, one at Castlecomer, one at Durrow, one at Maryboro and one at Mountrath. This left only 150 men, including recruits, stationed at Kilkenny, a fact the report notes which was considerably injurious to local traders and the cause of a great loss of 'ready money expenditure'.³⁸

The long protracted rural disorder of the early 1830s coincided with a vigorous campaign against the payment of tithes, which had the support of both peasantry and the more prosperous element of the farming community. Whereas the methods of the former's agitation was violence O'Connell introduced the idea of mass pressure towards constitutional ends. In 1831-2 meetings were held throughout county Kilkenny to petition parliament for the amelioration or the abandonment of tithes.

³⁵ D. MacLachlan to Colonel Norcott, 6 Feb. 1822 (N.A.I., SOC 2369/7).

³⁶ Virginia Crossman, 'Preserving the peace in Ireland: the role of military forces' in *The Irish Sword*, xvii, no. 69 (1990), p. 264.

³⁷ *KM*, 20 July 1831.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

An incident that was to utterly change the levying and collection of tithes occurred in the small south Kilkenny hamlet of Carrickshock on December 1831 in which a dozen police officers were ambushed and killed by the peasantry. A tithe proctor and a further six policemen subsequently died of their wounds. This outrage initiated an instant military response. Sir Henry Vivian, commander-in-chief of the forces in Ireland noted that 'all agree in apprehending a crisis is at hand. They to a man seem to think that cannot end without it coming to blows. Certainly not if by any measures tithes are enforced'.³⁹ At the beginning of 1832 additional troops were brought into the country from England and a number of regiments based in the north of Ireland, which was 'perfectly uninfected' with this lawlessness, were moved southwards.⁴⁰ Barracks within a day's march of Kilkenny such as Carlow, Clonmel, New Ross and Waterford were allotted additional troops.⁴¹ In county Kilkenny the colliery district was reported as being 'now studded with troops', the posts there having lately been increased in number.⁴² The report also notes that this large police and military force 'now being concentrated in this county will shortly amount to 3,000 men'. The military force within the city was also strengthened with the arrival of an additional troop of dragoons and a company of infantry on the previous day. The restoration of public confidence was the object of this massive display of strength, which was daily paraded on the streets of Kilkenny:

The formidable military display of such a number of troops, bands playing, colours flying, Lord Anglesey at their head – in the very heart of the city seemed to sadly puzzle the gossips and quidnuncs, who were unaware of a recent order for all troops in garrison to march some miles, at least twice a week, fully equipped, in the neighbourhood of their quarters.⁴³

In the immediate aftermath of Carrickshock a troop of the 6th Carbineers was on the morning following the affray sent to the area where they were joined by a company of the 70th Regiment. With the assistance of the police they scoured the countryside and arrested twenty-four local subjects.⁴⁴ Brought to trial community solidarity

³⁹ Sir Hussey Vivian to Lord Anglesey, 13 Jan. 1832 (T.N.A., HO 100/241).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² *Sunday Observer*, 1 Jan. 1832, p. 47.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Michael O'Hanrahan, 'The tithe war in county Kilkenny 1830-34' in William Nolan and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Kilkenny: history and society* (Dublin, 1990), p. 499.

ensured that the evidence collected was insufficient to procure a conviction and all were found not guilty.

Having obtained a large increase of money and personnel from the military establishment Anglesey set out in early August 1832 to collect the tithe arrears for 1831. Over the next eight months a sum in excess of £12,000 was collected. This amount was far less than the amount of tithe withheld and this despite the enormous effort of magistrates, military and police to collect it.⁴⁵ It was a pretty demoralising task having to send detachments of military and police around the countryside to capture a few tithe defaulters who as soon as they were sent to prison paid up and were released. At the end of November 1832 Colonel Harvey noted that the Whiteboy combination and outrage prevailed to an alarming extent in county Kilkenny. He intimated his intention to introduce strong measures to counteract these dangers which would come into force in early December 1832.⁴⁶ Included in this legislation were the proclamation of the city and county of Kilkenny, the banning of all meetings, gatherings and processions, and a night-time curfew enforced upon the population. Major Blakeney was empowered to summon court martials and twelve field officers were appointed to sit as 'presidents' of these court martials. To form these courts Blakeney was instructed to draw officers from the regiments even though this might 'occasion great inconvenience to regiments to lose their oldest and best officers and that at a time when they were most wanted'.⁴⁷ Blakeney was urged to act with the utmost temper and forbearance towards the people 'whilst they are taught to know that we shall most determinedly and most zealously discharge our duty – to put a stop to the present system of outrage and to protect persons and property'.⁴⁸ Further military aid was promised:

I shall at once move into Kilkenny and immediately place around that county an additional force of one squadron of cavalry, two guns, one regiment of infantry (the 43rd) and two companies of the 60th Riflemen. These will be distributed into these lands of the county where the worst disposition is found to exist.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Inspector general's observation on Leinster outrages, Nov. 1832 (N.A.I., OP 1832).

⁴⁷ Lieutenant General George D'Aguilar to General Blakeney, Dublin 11 Apr. 1833 (N.L.I., Vivian Papers, MS 22, 388).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

These measures and the heralding of legislation reforming the levying of tithes restored calm to Kilkenny and by the end of August 1833 the withdrawal of troops from Ballyragget, Durrow, Johnstown, Graiguenamanagh and Kilmoganny was reported.⁵⁰ As a consequence of the tithe war, army regulations were redrawn clarifying the manner and the occasions in which troops should be deployed. Anglesey left Ireland in 1832, as did his second-in-command Stanley. The new Irish administration adopted a less hardline approach to the collection of tithe payments. The policy of employing troops to enforce tithe payments had been the subject of much military criticism. Vivian writing to Anglesey strongly expressed his concern on this matter lamenting that:

Our soldiers should be kicked and knocked about from pillar to post through the mud and mire and sleeping in hovels and pigsties for what is worse than no purpose, for it is to be made fools of themselves and to bring the law into contempt.⁵¹

Major Brown in his evidence before the 1832 Select Committee on disturbances in Ireland was equally critical of the army's involvement in tithe collection believing that 'under the present system no force, either military or police would be sufficient to secure the regular payment of the clergy' of the Established Church.⁵² The strain of this involvement took its toll on military personnel. General Blakeney giving evidence to a Parliamentary Commission in 1833 believed this task impaired the health of his fellow officers. He quoted the experiences of General Bingham who for many years commanded the 'southern district' and was forced to retire 'his illness to be attributed to the excessive anxiety and fatigue which he underwent in that command'.⁵³ General Blakeney, personally, experienced similar pressure:

During the disturbances, in consequence of tithes, in the last winter I should say that the army in Ireland required even a greater degree of attention and were placed in a situation more difficult, almost, to command than ever I knew an army in the field.⁵⁴

Speaking before the same enquiry Blakeney in reply to a question from Sir R. H.

⁵⁰ *KJ*, 25 Sept. 1832; *KM*, 28 Sept. 1832.

⁵¹ Vivian to Blakeney, 25 October 1832 (N.A.M. MS 7709/6/11, f. 368). Vivian served as commander of the forces in Ireland, 1831-5.

⁵² *First report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons appointed to inquire into the collection and payment of tithes in Ireland*, H.C. 1831-2, xxi, q.1, 198, 1,200, 1,208.

⁵³ *Report from the Select Committee on the establishment of the garrisons and on the pay and emoluments of army and naval officers with minutes and appendix*, H.C. 1833 (650), vii, p. 237.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Vivian as to why he had spent such a considerable time in Kilkenny during 1833 replied that the pressure of duties there had usurped all his time.⁵⁵

Troops were extensively employed in Ireland during elections throughout the nineteenth century, primarily as a riot control force and secondly as escorts for voters and poll books. This involvement was often contentious since the nature of the tasks involved was seen by the bulk of the community as a reinforcement of landlord power and privilege. The scarcity of polling stations, the absence of the secret ballot, and the conflicting interests of the Catholic clergy and landlords were factors that often led to violent confrontation. This duty was a costly and expensive exercise for the army, which necessitated a widespread and complicated dispersal of forces. The role of the army during the 1831 Kilkenny election was the subject of profuse praise from city magistrates. In their address to Major Blakeney 'the discipline and good temper of the several cavalry detachments' involved 'in this most excited period' is noted.⁵⁶ Their participation had guaranteed 'the most important of our constitutional privileges by affording personal protection to every voter'. In a letter of George D'Aguilar to General Blakeney dated 5 August 1837, officers having local votes or influence were exhorted to exercise a strict neutrality. 'To vote on one side or the other' he pointed out was a direct breach of military principles.⁵⁷ These principles, as far as Kilkenny barracks was concerned, would seem to have been ignored a decade later. Advocating the candidacy of Captain Greene in his efforts to be returned as a member of parliament for county Kilkenny, the *Kilkenny Journal* claimed that Greene had always asserted his country's rights in private manfully and above board, even at the 'mess table' with his brother officers of the 7th Dragoons.⁵⁸ The contradictory nationalist stance adopted by the *Kilkenny Journal*, occasionally, is evidenced by its support of Greene, the scion of one of Kilkenny's important ascendancy families in this instance and heralding two weeks earlier the election of John O'Connell, the son of the liberator, as the city parliamentary representative as portent of a not-so-far distant day when the people of Kilkenny would 'cease to be

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *KM*, 12 Mar. 1831.

⁵⁷ George D'Aguilar to Edward Blakeney, 5 Aug. 1837 (T.N.A., WO 35/27).

⁵⁸ *KJ*, 17 Aug. 1847.

provincial slaves by becoming free and independent citizens of a powerful nation united to England by the golden link of the crown'.⁵⁹

The preservation of the peace at Kilkenny's polling booths was the army's principal concern in April 1857. W. M. McCreery, sub-sheriff, city of Kilkenny writing to the chief secretary and fearing trouble urged that 'the troops now in barracks here (16th Lancers) should be suffered to remain until the election should have terminated. He further requested that an additional four or five companies of infantry would be 'a very useful and necessary force'.⁶⁰ Another magistrate, John A. Kirwan, with similar security worries noted that elections at Castlecomer were frequently troublesome because of the large presence of colliers within the area.⁶¹ He complained of the inadequacy of the fifty infantry soldiers who had hitherto arrived in town. He and his fellow magistrates had considered that at least two companies of infantry were what was 'absolutely required here'. He further pointed out the divisive nature of the campaign being fought within the locality, noting that the parish priest of Castlecomer the Rev. Aylward was, engaged in canvassing in violent opposition to Captain A. Ellis.⁶² 'Till this election', Aylward according to Kirwan 'imagined that he had the key of the representation of the county in his pocket and that all Roman Catholicks [sic] in the district would vote for his nominees and dare not do otherwise'.⁶³ Kirwan prophesised victory for Ellis, a surmise that was fulfilled. Following the conclusion of this election Kirwan gloated that owing to the precautions he had taken including the closing of the public houses, etc., 'the election in this important district, had been conducted in as peaceable a manner as anywhere in Ireland'.⁶⁴ The election in Urlingford, another potential trouble spot, Major Dillon reported 'passed off quietly with the exception of a trifling riot, which was put down by the police'.⁶⁵ The practice of employing the army in a leading role at elections, was as Haire points out 'in direct contrast' to that prevailing in the rest of the British

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 7 Aug. 1847.

⁶⁰ W. M. McCreery to chief under secretary, 25 Mar. 1857 (N.A.I., CSORP 1857/2450).

⁶¹ J. A. Kirwan to Colonel Larcom, 1 Apr. 1857 (N.A.I., CSORP 1857/3186).

⁶² J. A. Kirwan to Colonel Larcom, 11 Apr. 1857 (N.A.I., CSORP 1857/3371).

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ J. A. Kirwan to Colonel Larcom, 14 Apr. 1857 (N.A.I., CSORP 1857/3446).

⁶⁵ Thomas A. Dillon to chief secretary, 9 Apr. 1857 (N.A.I., CSORP 3201).

Isles, creating as it did the dangers of undue military influence on the outcome of results.⁶⁶ The practice of the military escorting voters to the polls, favouring as it did the 'ascendancy candidate' was not discontinued until the late 1860s. 'The general election of 1868 was the last such election held in Ireland under the old system of the open ballot and a restricted number of polling places'.⁶⁷ Election duties for the army were costly and expensive involving a widespread and complicated dispersal of personnel. Other duties which were equally taxing on the military were the provision of escorts for prisoners, protecting witnesses and informers, and escorting the mail. Another military duty outside the realm of every day experience was the accompanying of excise officers in the capture of illicit distilling operations and operatives. On 8 August 1806 a team from the Surveyors of Excise Office and a party of the 18th Light Dragoons raided an 'extensive private distillery' seventeen miles from the city. Over 1,600 gallons of pot ale, a quantity of low wines and a great number of utensils for distilling were lodged in the king's store.⁶⁸ In April 1822 a party of the 78th Regiment 'consisting of a subaltern, sergeant and fifteen rank and file' in destroying a still at Milltown, eleven miles from the city were 'attacked by a body of at least 100 men who made several attempts to rescue the prisoners and assailed the military with stones'.⁶⁹ This report further noted that one of the locals was killed on the spot and 'some country people who have just come in state that two men are dying and that several are wounded'. Distillers and their sympathisers were, at times, prepared to violently resist the interference of troops with their activities. This duty involved extra payments for soldiers.

H. C. G. Matthews notes that O'Connell's campaigns from the 1820s to the 1840s 'educated both the Irish in democratic protest and campaigning and the British in how to fight a withdrawing campaign against a nationalist movement'.⁷⁰ Kevin

⁶⁶ David N. Haire, 'In aid of the civil power, 1868-90' in F. S. L. Lyons and R. A. J. Hawkins (eds.), *Ireland under the Union: varieties of tension, essays in honour of T. W. Moody* (Oxford, 1980), p. 119.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁶⁸ *KJ*, 9 Aug. 1806.

⁶⁹ Lieutenant McManus to chief secretary, 19 Apr. 1822 (N.A.I., CSO 2369/34).

⁷⁰ H. C. G. Matthews, 'Gladstone, O'Connell and Home Rule' in R. V. Comerford and Enda Delaney (eds.) in *National questions; Reflections on Daniel O'Connell and contemporary Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), p. 13.

Kenny in his study of Ireland and the British Empire discusses the ways in which British policies in Ireland 'served as a laboratory for social, administrative, and constitutional policies subsequently adopted elsewhere in the empire and how Irish nationalism provided inspiration for independence movements in other colonies'.⁷¹ However there were negative aspects to Ireland's relationship with empire, described by Hiram Morgan as 'an unwelcome heritage' who further argues that 'the Irish whatever their experience at home were as brutal as any other white colonisers'.⁷² Similarly Denis and Michael Holmes criticise Ireland's role in empire during the years of British rule in India accusing Irish missionaries of being guilty of proselytising and setting up schools and hospitals catering for British soldiers and administrators and some of the local elite to the exclusion of the vast majority of the population.⁷³ Meanwhile the *Kilkenny Journal* speculatively wondered whether in 1857 England confronted with a mutiny in India and a war with China would be able to cope militarily and promised 'to observe England's double *embraglio* with curious interest'.⁷⁴

Post emancipation, as Catholics became more confident and Protestants more defensive, the divisions between the two grew sharper. The Catholic clergy who had rallied to O'Connell's cause having tasted political influence, were reluctant to see that influence diminished. The arrival of the temperance campaigner Father Theobald Mathew in Kilkenny in January 1840 presented the army with large-scale security concerns. It also raised the levels of religious tension and intolerance. Marching Catholic masses, led by their clergy through the city bedecked 'with flags, banners and tricoloured ribbons and all the insignia of party processions' enkindled memories of 1798 and 1831 amongst sections of Kilkenny's Protestant community.⁷⁵ 'We have not forgotten' the *Kilkenny Moderator* observed 'the sanction which *the hurlers* received until their numbers amounted to a force which beat down the law,

⁷¹ Kevin Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British Empire*, p. xii.

⁷² Hiram Morgan, 'An unwelcome heritage: Ireland's role in British empire-building' in *History of Europe Ideas*, xix, Nos. 4-6 (1994), p. 619.

⁷³ Denis and Michael Holmes, 'Ireland and India: a distant relationship' in D. & M. Holmes (eds.), *Ireland and India: connections, comparisons, contrasts* (Dublin, 1997), p. 5.

⁷⁴ *KJ*, 1 July 1857.

⁷⁵ *KM*, 21 Mar. 1840.

and trampled on the property of the clergy of the established church'.⁷⁶ This 'temperance humbug was likely to do more mischief than people imagine' the report continued. The editor strongly condemned the necessity of having to call-out the whole garrison supported by large bodies of police brought in from outside, to protect the peace. The priests, in the editor's view, were converting society into 'a politico religious confederacy'. 'If the object of Father Mathew's disciples be nothing more than the promotion of the public morals and the suppression of intemperance surely such displays are injudicious'.⁷⁷

The 1840s throughout Europe marked a period of underground revolutionaries contesting power with the armies of reactionary and alien governments. In the early nineteenth century there existed in Ireland the combustive elements likely to topple the established order. These included a combination of a discontented peasantry, a radical clergy and a dissident middle class. It took O'Connell's constitutional genius to keep a lid on this potentially explosive cauldron. Throughout 1843 Daniel O'Connell held numerous 'monster meetings' countrywide seeking repeal of the union between England and Ireland. In early June the *Kilkenny Journal* reported an attendance of 500,000 at the Kilkenny repeal demonstration.⁷⁸ The army's role at this meeting was low-key and unobtrusive. At the close of this meeting O'Connell led the concourse in three cheers for the soldiers. Evidence of government concern at the gathering momentum of repeal agitation was evidenced in the report of the *Kilkenny Journal*, 16 September 1843, noting that the barracks of the country were being fortified 'as though the people were expected to attack or carry them by storm'.⁷⁹

These huge repeal meetings happening throughout 1843 were increasingly seen by government as a threat to the constitutional stability of the United Kingdom. The suppression of the monster meeting planned for Clontarf by government proclamation (7 October 1843) was generally accepted as a crushing defeat for O'Connell. Oliver MacDonagh depicts 'O'Connell's spiritless submission' to the

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ *KM*, 2 Apr. 1840.

⁷⁸ *KJ*, 10 June 1843.

⁷⁹ *KJ*, 16 Sept. 1843.

calling-off of this meeting as the actions of an old man who no longer had 'the physical strength for mastery which the game demanded'.⁸⁰ In contrast to the vilification of O'Connell by English-based caricaturists the Dublin artist John Doyle depicts O'Connell's stance as a moral victory (see Figure 2.1, p. 101). In this sketch English soldiers stranded on the deserted strand at Clontarf are wryly lampooned and 'humiliating submission to state diktat is turned into triumph – bloodshed is avoided by O'Connell's wisdom'.⁸¹ The Clontarf proclamation marked a turning point in the course of Irish nationalism and in the political career of O'Connell which could be portrayed as in free-fall mode thereafter until his death on 15 May 1847. Post Clontarf the sidelining of O'Connell's political influence and the employment of significant military force were the twin methods used by the government to pacify Ireland. The *Kilkenny Journal*, 18 October 1843 quoting from an article in the *United Services Magazine* noted that 'the enormous force now assembled in Ireland is utterly disproportioned to the entire amount of our standing army. Indeed it is manifestly impossible, with reference to the exigencies of foreign reliefs, that such an arrangement can be permanent'⁸² and still this build-up of military resources continued:

The barracks in every part of this kingdom are put into a state of military defence and provisioned for twelve months, armed steamers are day after day landing their fighting freight upon the shores of Ireland, and the troops are ready at a moment's notice to turn out, and do the sanguinary behests of their masters upon the Irish people.⁸³

Kilkenny's garrison strength was increased by the arrival of the First Royal Dragoons at the end of October and a portion of the 11th Regiment some weeks later. These soldiers set about fortifying the barrack walls 'with spike holes and heaps of sandbags' and making provisions against any possible long-term siege with the storing of 'lots of rum and biscuit'.⁸⁴ The arrival of 1,800 iron bedsteads, from London, for the army was further noted.⁸⁵ Military training was intensified with

⁸⁰ Oliver MacDonagh, *The emancipist: Daniel O'Connell 1830-47* (London, 1989), p. 243.

⁸¹ 'Hints and hits' caricatures by John Doyle (Bodleian Library, Oxford). See Peter Gray *History Ireland*, xii, no. 4 (Winter 2004), p. 48.

⁸² *KJ*, 18 Oct. 1843.

⁸³ *KJ*, 1 Nov. 1843.

⁸⁴ *KJ*, 28 Oct. 1843.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Figure 2.1: 'A standing army – stranded at Clontarf' 1843



Source: Peter Gray, *History Ireland*, xii, No. 4 (Winter 2004), p. 48.

soldiers complaining of excessive drill. This exercise was exacerbated by the enforced burden of having to carry a knapsack containing sixty rounds of ball cartridge, etc., for a period of twenty-four hours while on guard duty.⁸⁶ The conduct of the soldiers of these regiments whilst in Kilkenny received favourable mention from the *Kilkenny Journal* 'despite their marching and counter-marching in battle array through our streets and appearing armed, even, in their respective places of worship'.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ *KJ*, 11 Sept. 1844.

⁸⁷ *KJ*, 2 Mar. 1844.

Noting the continuing fortification of the country's barracks and the positioning of armed vessels off the coast and upon the navigable rivers of the country, the *Kilkenny Journal*, 14 August 1844 suggested that the 'deep-seated and wide-spread discontent prevailing in Ireland would not be removed until the causes of this unrest were firstly tackled'.⁸⁸ However it was the appearance of blight and the subsequent failure of the potato crop that altered irrevocably the economic conditions of Irish peasants as they grappled with personal rather than communal survival. On the 22 October 1845 the *Kilkenny Journal* reported that 'the rot in potatoes prevails to a very considerable extent in county Kilkenny. One-third part of the crop appears to be affected'.⁸⁹ The crop of 1846 completely failed, as fields all over the country produced nothing but the rotting stench of the blight. These severe conditions exacerbated landlord and tenant relationships. Outrages in the countryside forced the army to station troops in small detachments in outlying posts. The famine also had a profound effect on the youth of that period when increasingly emigration rather than enlistment became the attractive option. The *Kilkenny Journal* reprinting an article from the *Birmingham Pilot* recounts the unsuccessful efforts of a recruiting officer lately returned from Ireland 'It's no use trying it any more in Ireland: we can't get a single recruit there: if the unfortunate half-starved Irish won't enlist who will?' were his emphatic comments.⁹⁰

'Black '47' saw the troops increasingly being put in situations of confrontation with the general public as the magistrates and police attempted to involve the military in rent collection. As the burden of Poor Law taxation increased this work became more difficult and unpleasant. 'It is really melancholy', the *Kilkenny Journal* proclaimed, 'to see a fine body of men who endured all the fatigues of war, now compelled to bivouac in this unclement season, in quest of pigs and asses, to satisfy the cravings of the Poor Law, a duty which we are fully aware is as repugnant to their feelings as it is harrowing to the high character of a British soldier'.⁹¹

⁸⁸ *KJ*, 14 Aug. 1844.

⁸⁹ *KJ*, 22 Oct. 1845.

⁹⁰ *KJ*, 31 Jan. 1846.

⁹¹ *KJ*, 7 Jan. 1849.

Also degrading to the common soldier was the suspension of the evening meal on the ground that 'the price of provisions will not admit of it without exceeding the sum established by regulation'. Major General Blakeney, an advocate of the theory that an army marches on its stomach, complained to Lord Somerset:

There is no country in time of peace where the duties of soldiers are more harassing, severe, and constant than in Ireland. It is a cold wet climate, and nowhere is it more necessary that the men should be well fed and taken care of, particularly young soldiers, of whom we always have a great proportion in this army, at this moment we have upwards of 3,000 recruits at drill.⁹²

In early January 1847 there were widespread food riots in the streets of Kilkenny which were quashed by the local police.⁹³ Also reflecting the general scarcity of all descriptions of grain the *Kilkenny Journal*, 20 February notes the issuing of a regulation to all colonels of cavalry regiments in Ireland to reduce the quantity of ten pounds of oats, heretofore fed to each horse, to seven pounds. This was 'in consequence of the present extraordinary high price of oats'.⁹⁴ Kilkenny soldiers' concern for those in distress because of the Famine was expressed in a collection of £150 gathered from officers and privates of the local garrison.⁹⁵ Other instances of army munificence in helping the local poor and hungry are recorded in the *Kilkenny Journal* 28 March 1849 which noted 'that in order that work might continue' in the reconstruction of Kilkenny's capuchin friary and 'to aid the distressed artisans and mechanics' of the city 'a handsome collection' was made amongst officers and men of the 75th Regiment 'without distinction of creed or country'.⁹⁶ This was followed two months later by a subscription for £11-8-0 for the same purpose donated by local army pensioners. In response Fr. Mulligan expressed his gratitude to these 'old warriors who from scanty means have so liberally contributed'.⁹⁷

Throughout Europe in 1848-49, a spirit of revolution and wars of national liberation erupted. These winds of change also reached Ireland as a number of former followers of O'Connell, weary of their failure in securing repeal of the Union by constitutional

⁹² General Blakeney to Lord Somerset, 25 Mar. 1847, p. 62 (N.L.I., Kilmainham Papers, MS 1238).

⁹³ *KJ*, 6 Jan. 1847.

⁹⁴ *KJ*, 20 Feb. 1847.

⁹⁵ *KJ*, 10 Mar. 1847.

⁹⁶ *KJ*, 28 Mar. 1849.

⁹⁷ *KJ*, 16 June 1849.

methods, adopted revolutionary nationalism. Tactical military considerations influenced Thomas Francis Meagher to select Kilkenny as the base from which this revolt would be launched. The railway line from Dublin still lay uncompleted fourteen miles east of the city, a factor that would impede the transport of troops by rail. 'The undulating landscape and twisting roads flanked by high walls made it suitable territory in which to confront regular troops with spirited irregulars'.⁹⁸ And the annual local agricultural show taking place at the same time offered opportunities to hold as hostages some of the province's highest dignitaries who were expected to attend. It was an unwise choice on many levels. Kilkenny's military strength was immense as the *Kilkenny Journal* announced the recent arrival in the city of two companies of the 89th Regiment where there was already 500 soldiers encamped on the square of the military barracks in addition to the normal garrison.⁹⁹ The early morning arrival, at 3.00 a.m., in the city of two divisions of the 8th Hussars, on 31 July 1848 further increased combat strength.¹⁰⁰ Overnight Kilkenny's leading Young Irelanders were arrested. Those gaoled included Dr. Cane, the city's mayor and leading repealer. The nationalist *Kilkenny Journal* boasted that the authorities 'did not proceed to his arrest until they had a garrison in town of above 2,000 men'.¹⁰¹

As the Young Ireland leaders William Smith O'Brien and Thomas Francis Meagher endeavoured to muster revolutionary support in west Kilkenny and south Tipperary they were met everywhere with vigorous clerical opposition. Hungry peasants viewing improved harvest prospects were easily dissuaded from rebellion. O'Brien's misreading of the martial spirit of the Irish people and the miserable supply of arms held by the rebels meant that when confrontation took place at the Widow McCormack's cottage at Ballingarry on the 29th July it was distinctly feeble and was easily suppressed by a small detachment of police unaided by the military. The editor of the *Kilkenny Journal* portrayed this skirmish as of little significance and questioned 'the partisans of government in magnifying a petty squabble between a few peasants and the police into a formidable rebellion'.¹⁰² Similarly Smith O'Brien's

⁹⁸ Robert Kee, *The most distressful country* (London, 1976), p. 277.

⁹⁹ *KJ*, 29 July 1848.

¹⁰⁰ *KJ*, 2 Aug. 1848.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *KJ*, 20 Sept. 1848.

vacillating stance prior to the rising was the subject of scathing comment by the local balladeers:

A letter from brave Mitchell, boys.
As we are told to Smith O'Brien.
To say he has proved himself a traitor.
Much as King James did at the Boyne.¹⁰³

A soldier serving in this campaign also noted the ineffectiveness of this revolt. Military duties consisted in supporting the constabulary in their search for arms together with occasional day and night marches throughout the surrounding country in search for the 'so called rebel camp'. This search 'on the side of Slievenamon' failed to locate any rebels who 'like the will of the wisp always disappeared when approached'.¹⁰⁴

Subsequent to the confrontation at Ballingarry, 29 July 1848, the military rapidly moved into the area in an exercise encircling Slievenamon Mountain, to quench the embers of rebellion. With a force of 2,000 men General MacDonald proceeded from Kilkenny barracks to Nine Mile House where they camped. Another division of 300 men of the 75th Regiment was positioned at Callan and another 1,500 men at Carrick on Suir within a short distance of the affected area.¹⁰⁵ This saturation of military force and the effects of the famine eventually broke all expression of discontent. William Reynolds, a soldier of the 75th Regiment aptly describes the situation existing in county Kilkenny in 1849:

At length the 'rebellion', or as the old women used to call it 'the war' was pronounced to be at an end. The principal chiefs had been captured, tried, and convicted: their followers had buried their pikes under the dunghill, or concealed them in the thatched roof and had returned with looks of the most fearless innocence to their usual peaceful avocations of guiding the plough or driving the pig: the police returned to the detached and exposed stations which it had been thought prudent to evacuate: and country gentlemen began to remove the feather beds from the drawing room windows where they had been doing the duty of sandbags.¹⁰⁶

One by one the military camps within the area of south Kilkenny were broken up.

¹⁰³ James N. Healy (ed.), *Old Irish street ballads* (Cork, 1969), p. 107.

¹⁰⁴ William Reynolds and Thomas Hunter, *Tales of military life* (London, 1849-52), p. 58.

¹⁰⁵ *KJ*, 23 Sept. 1848.

¹⁰⁶ Reynolds and Hunter, *Tales of military life*, p. 62.

Reynold's camp at Piltown 'was continued somewhat longer than the rest, on account of the notorious disaffection of the neighbourhood; but after a while and when the season was so far advanced as to render it inadvisable to keep troops under canvas, it too was broken up'.¹⁰⁷ For an artist's impression of this camp see Figure 2.2, p. 107. This illustration in the accuracy of its drawing, exact draughtsmanship, and its handling of light and distances suggests the influence of the work of George Petrie (1790-1860) on the artist. An antiquary, artist, scholar and musician Petrie has been described as the last of the great polymaths whose antiquarian drawing set new standards of accuracy and whose work 'stands out as a giant head and shoulders above the rest'.¹⁰⁸ On 28 March 1849 the *Kilkenny Journal* announced the departure of two companies of the 75th Regiment, en route for Cork to embark there for duty in India.¹⁰⁹ One of the consequences of the failure of the 1848 rising was a move away from attempts to enlist mass popular support to secret conspiratorial plotting which later was to give rise to the Fenian movement.

Rationalisation of the number of barracks in the 1850s and the concentration of troops at key positions rather than having them spread thinly all over the country led to a diminution in Kilkenny's military importance, as already noted in Chapter I. The reasoning behind this approach was explained to cabinet by Sir Henry Hardinge, master-general of the Ordnance, early in 1856:

My lords believe that the highest authorities concur in recommending a concentrated state of the military force, as that which is most conducive to the discipline and efficiency of an army, and best adapted to the exigencies both of national defence, and the suppression of internal commotions. Concentration of force is also extremely favourable to economy – the dispersion of the military force has hitherto been carried to excess in Ireland.¹¹⁰

As R. V. Comerford points out there was, in Ireland, during the 1850s a marked absence of political agitation and a lack of interest in self-government.¹¹¹ This in part was caused by legislative measures adopted by the government prohibiting

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Maire de Paor, 'Irish antiquarian artists' in Adele M. Dalsimer (ed.), *Visualising Ireland: national identity and the pictorial tradition* (Winchester, MA, 1993), p. 125.

¹⁰⁹ *KJ*, 28 Mar. 1849.

¹¹⁰ Memoranda on the state of defence home and abroad (T.N.A., WO 33/3/5516).

¹¹¹ R. V. Comerford, *The Fenians in context: Irish politics and society 1848-82* (Dublin, 1981), pp. 23-4.

Figure 2.2: Artists impression of military camp at Piltown, county Kilkenny 1848



Source: Collection of John Ryan, Piltown, Co. Kilkenny.

processions and assemblies. There was also in this period and in the ensuing decade a tightening of control by the hierarchy on the political conduct of its clergy. The agent of this change, Paul Cullen, appointed archbishop of Dublin in 1852, brought with him from Rome a specific mandate to enforce stricter ecclesiastical discipline in the Catholic Church in Ireland. Under his influence the Irish hierarchy adopted a negative attitude towards the political machinations of the Catholic Defence Association and Tenant League in 1853. Perceiving the latter movement as a reincarnation of Young Ireland he warned the priesthood to stay out of politics.¹¹² Low grain prices existing pre 1853 dramatically increased with the advent of the

¹¹² Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800* (Harlow, 1990), pp. 112-113.

Crimean War which brought a sixty percent increase in wheat prices and a forty percent rise in barley prices.¹¹³ This effectively undermined agricultural agitation in grain growing Kilkenny.

The outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854 solidified nationalist opinion in Kilkenny. This is evidenced in a vigorous anti-enlistment campaign which the *Kilkenny Moderator* of 15 February 1854 details. On Sunday last 'the Roman Catholic priests generally throughout this county, after celebration of mass called on the young men and warned them in the most emphatic language not to allow themselves to be lured away by the acceptance of the Saxon shilling'.¹¹⁴ Allowing for the bias of this organ the widespread nature of this clerical interference is probably exaggerated. However some months later Edward Walsh, bishop of Ossory, writing to his mentor, Paul Cullen, in Dublin had reason to lament the rebellion of a number of his priests against his and Cullen's pro-establishment stance.¹¹⁵ A fortnight later placards were posted throughout the city calling 'on the people to arm themselves and to abstain from enlisting in the Queen's service'.¹¹⁶ A subsequent posting of placards by the authorities offering a reward of £30 for the arrest of those who firstly posted the nationalist bills 'were everywhere torn down'.¹¹⁷ The *Kilkenny Moderator* of 25 February reported that everywhere in the city soldiers were obstructed in the discharge of their duties, 'even shopkeepers who ought from their position be men of respectability' were indulged 'in personal abuse and denunciations towards any aspirant for military glory whom they might observe in conversation near their establishments with *Sergeant Kite*'.¹¹⁸ 'Notwithstanding all that was done in certain quarters of more than doubtful loyalty to prevent our young men from joining the army', the *Kilkenny Moderator* 19 April exulted that the 46th Regiment 'within the three months previous to their leaving Kilkenny picked up more than 100 efficient recruits'.¹¹⁹

¹¹³ Joseph Lee, *The modernisation of Irish society, 1848-1918* (Dublin, 1973), pp. 36-40.

¹¹⁴ *KM*, 15 Feb. 1854.

¹¹⁵ Edward Walsh to Paul Cullen, 26 Dec. 1854, AB4/332/1/211, (DDA).

¹¹⁶ *KM*, 1 Mar. 1854.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Kilkenny Moderator*, 25 February 1854.

¹¹⁹ *KM*, 19 Apr. 1854.

The Patriotic Fund set up in 1854 for the relief of wives and children of Crimean wounded and dead was also regarded as divisive. The statement of the *Evening Post* copied in the *Kilkenny Journal* had little doubt of its sectarian bias. This fund it alleged 'is altogether in Protestant possession, Protestant peers and parsons on the committee, and the relief doled out through Protestant hands in which Catholics have no voice or representation'.¹²⁰ Thousands of widows and orphans, most of whom were Catholic, the *Kilkenny Moderator* claimed, were starving because of Kilkenny's lukewarm response to this fund.¹²¹ Observing that the great majority of the recipients of this relief in Kilkenny were Catholic (only four of the twenty-five receiving aid were Protestant) the editor castigated the mentality of those who rather than subscribe one groat to this fund displayed 'their undying hostility to whatever may contribute to the honor and glory of England'.¹²² This fund granted weekly allowances to the widows of drummers, trumpeters and privates of 3s 6p; those with one child 4s 6p; with two 5s 6d; three 6s; four 6s 6d, and five 7s.¹²³ Payments to other ranks were in proportion to these figures.

The severe conditions prevailing following the allied landing in the Crimea, 14 September 1854 are graphically described by a participant in that campaign:

The wind blew in cold gusts and the rain fell incessantly, increasing in violence as the night proceeded, no tents had been landed, no fires could be lit and the soldiers had to wrap themselves in their blankets and sleep on the soddened earth as best they might.¹²⁴

This was in contrast to the French who landed 'their tents on the first day of disembarkation and even the sluggish Turks did the same'.¹²⁵ For British troops this night of suffering resulted in a great increase of illness. The hardships of the officers and men serving abroad were regularly chronicled in Kilkenny newspapers. Private M. Byrne writing from Constantinople, 26 August 1854, complained of the wretched

¹²⁰ *KJ*, 13 Oct. 1857.

¹²¹ *KM*, 2 Dec. 1854.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Brendan Hall, 'The patriotic fund for county Louth' in *Journal of the Genealogical Society of Ireland*, ii, no. 3 (Autumn 2001), pp. 146-162.

¹²⁴ Henry Tyrrell, *The history of the war with Russia: giving full details of the operations of the allied armies*, i (London and New York, n.d.).

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

Figure 2.3: Two views of Kilkenny Military Barracks c.1895



Source: The National Trust Archive (R. 2108 and R. 2109).

diet available:

The meat is nothing but skin and bone, and the bread is most wretched; it is as black as my shoes and quite sawer [sic]. There is no such thing as getting a pint of ale or porter but what you must pay dear for it. Porter is 2/= a bottle, ale 2/6d and Rum 3/=, cheese 1/8d a lb. And butter 2/= and small things such as soap and starch and such like they are most wretched dear.¹²⁶

Letters written by officers from ‘the lines before Sebastopol’ [sic] to their friends in Kilkenny showed that ‘these gallant fellows are enduring fearful privations – there is not a man or officer amongst them who is not covered with vermin of the most disgusting kinds, and they find it impossible to get rid of them whilst they are unsupplied with a change of raiment’.¹²⁷ An anonymous soldier serving in Crimea noted:

You little know the hardships that we go through here. If you did you would often say ‘God help the poor fellows’. But never mind, it is a poor heart that never rejoices and with the help of God I shall see Walkin Street once more, and if God spares me I shall wear a couple of medals on my breast.¹²⁸

In contrast to their allies the British soldier was poorly equipped. ‘Our soldiers and horses form a sad contrast to those of the French. Our fellows are like scarecrows and the horses much the same’ an officer in the Crimea noted.¹²⁹ Sub Constable Bradshaw serving with the Mounted Staff Corps writing to a former police colleague in Kilkenny, 7 December 1854, and published in *The Times* uttered similar sentiments.¹³⁰ ‘You could not believe’ he noted ‘that the fine army of England is reduced to what it is out here. The few horses that are left are scarcely able to carry their hides, and the poor men from the cold and hardship they are going through are scarcely able to walk’.¹³¹ Thomas B. Carr, also previously attached to the Callan police force, writing home to Chief Inspector Curtis of the R.I.C. noted:

I just drop you a line to say that I am still living, which is a good deal for a man to be able to say in this place. The cholera has broken out with much virulence and the different regiments in this division have suffered a good deal particularly those lately arrived. The 46th in the 4th division has lost 150 men, and they are not long landed.¹³²

¹²⁶ *KM*, 26 Aug. 1854.

¹²⁷ *KM*, 8 Nov. 1854.

¹²⁸ *KM*, 27 Jan. 1855.

¹²⁹ *KM*, 13 Jan. 1855.

¹³⁰ *Constabulary List and Directory*, no. 27 (Dublin, 1855), p. 150.

¹³¹ David Murphy, *Ireland and the Crimean War* (Dublin, 2002), p. 149.

¹³² *KM*, 3 Jan. 1855.

At this time of an acute shipping shortage the re-supply of materials was extremely difficult. The commissariat department was notoriously inefficient and supplies of footwear and clothing impossible to obtain. Even after almost a year of the conflict an unnamed Kilkenny soldier writing home complained of only receiving a portion of his allotted winter clothing ration. 'So my love, if it be in your power send me some socks, as many as you can, along with the other things mentioned in my last letter' he urged.¹³³

Replacing the thousands of horses lost in the Crimea proved equally difficult. In the early days of the campaign hundreds of horses were lost in transit to the east. Horses need room to stretch, which was not available in the cramped unsuitable storage conditions in the vessels employed. In Ireland, where a great proportion of these animals were purchased, the army had to contend with rising prices in a tight market. The declaration of war in March 1854 had created an economic upturn. Horse prices increased at fairs throughout the country. By the mid nineteenth century the availability of Irish horses suitable for the army had declined at a rapid rate. This is amply demonstrated in a well-advertised purchase sale organised by the army in Kilkenny in January 1855 at which Colonel Dyson and the veterinary surgeon of the 3rd Dragoons attended. Though the numbers of the various kinds of horses for sale were high, the report notes 'that some were wretched-looking beasts and would form no great addition even to the starved commissariat horses at Balaklava'. However there was on offer 'many smart serviceable looking animals which would have answered admirably for a light cavalry regiment'. Only six horses were purchased at prices ranging from £35 to £45. This latter price 'was paid for a fine mare belonging to Mr. DeMontmorency of Orchardton'.¹³⁴ The Irish hunter was found to be the ideal cavalry horse and were generally produced by comparatively large farmers. Hervey DeMontmorency owned over 4,500 acres in county Kilkenny at this time.¹³⁵ The entry of middle class farmers into the horse industry, post famine, generally ignorant of management skills and with an incapacity to obtain or pay for the service of a

¹³³ *KM*, 17 Feb. 1855.

¹³⁴ *KM*, 6 Jan. 1855.

¹³⁵ Author's conversation with Jane DeMontmorency, Bennetsbridge, county Kilkenny, 18 Jan. 2004.

suitable stallion, led to the production of mostly weedy foals.¹³⁶ The mating of a strong thoroughbred sire with a suitable mare, producing a half-bred horse, was generally accepted as the ideal combination. The country in general was not sufficiently supplied with the proper stallions. Hunters were classified as heavyweight, middleweight and lightweight. The heavier horse was used to charge the enemy in line: a role that was to become increasingly anachronistic during and after the Crimean War, due to fundamental changes in the art of warfare. With the advent of the rifle and quick-firing artillery the large-scale involvement of cavalry in direct frontal attacks became anomalous as the mounted horse presented such a large target. As the war horse's attacking potential decreased the role of the fast lightweight horse increased in duties such as reconnaissance, outpost duties, transporting supplies, mail and artillery and removing serious casualties from the battle zone. The romantic twentieth century portrayal of Lord Lucan merrily leading the 'Charge of the Light Brigade' was far from the Crimean reality of mud, chaos, shells and more mud. This reckless charge had little to do with military competence but everything to do with his family's position and their gift of £25,000 to the War Office.¹³⁷ During this campaign horses were poorly fed, had to remain out in the open for twenty-four hours a day enduring temperatures which in June exceeded over one hundred degrees and in mid-winter were constantly the other extreme. Only horses of Arab breeding survived the Crimean winter of 1854-5.¹³⁸

The general portrayal of scenes on the quay at Balaklava is of horses struggling, axle deep, through a sludge of liquid mud and dropping exhausted on the road where they succumbed and died. Their loads being removed and placed as an extra burden on the struggling surviving horses resulted in similar losses. Mules were drafted into the Crimea to replace some of these losses with no reported improvement in efficiency.

A diary entry of Thomas Butler, 21 August 1855 describes the situation:

The stores are taken up to the front by mule carts, drawn by Turks who make one trip each day. For this they receive five shillings and rations. They positively do nothing as they will not even load their own animals and yet the brutes receive

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Trevor Royle, *Crimea: The great Crimean War, 1854-6* (London, 1999), p. 130.

¹³⁸ Murphy, *Ireland and the Crimean War*, p. 38.

nearly four times as much as the hardworking British soldier.¹³⁹

The Crimean War was the first industrialised conflict and was the testing ground for many new innovations previously unused in battle. It was the first to use railways, steamships, the telegraph, the first to have both war correspondents and war artists, as well as a primitive nursing and medical establishment.¹⁴⁰ The most prominent of these 'special correspondents' attached to the English daily newspapers was William Howard Russell, an Irishman, whose reports of gross inefficiency and mismanagement within the army and of the barbaric hospital conditions existing on the Crimean battlefield forced the authorities to take note.

An estimated 30,000 Irishmen saw service in the Crimea and of those there were 18,058 fatalities. Only 2,000 of those who died were actually killed in battle. The rest died from disease or from wounds, many of which given medical attention need not have been fatal. Cholera became particularly prevalent during the severe winter of 1854-5. Dysentery also took its toll. In some units mortality approached sixty percent.¹⁴¹ This terrible toll often from disease prompted Florence Nightingale, an establishment figure in England, to volunteer her nursing skills on the Crimean battlefields. In such a situation it was inevitable that her heroic front-line efforts would be overstated while the contribution of a group of twenty-five Irish nuns (Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of Charity) also serving at the front was largely ignored. The remit of these nuns dating from their arrival at the hospitals at Scutari, 4 November 1854, was the subject of much debate as the army authorities strove to limit their spiritual influence solely to that of Catholic soldiers.¹⁴² From the pinnacle of its Protestant prejudice the *Kilkenny Moderator* sought to influence this debate declaring 'if a troop of female Jesuits are forced upon the Protestant sick and wounded by attendants, the sooner the government is called upon to account for its conduct the better'.¹⁴³ Reporting on their first four months of ministering to the

¹³⁹ Extracts from the Crimean Journal of Thomas Butler in *Journal of the Butler Society*, iii, no. 1, 1986-7, p. 57.

¹⁴⁰ Martin J. Lynch, 'Did he or didn't he' in *Carloviana*, 2003, p. 44.

¹⁴¹ Muriel E. Chamberlain, *Lord Palmerston* (Washington D.C., 1957), p. 96.

¹⁴² Murphy, *Ireland and the Crimean War*, p. 125.

¹⁴³ *KM*, 8 Nov. 1854.

Crimean wounded and dying, Mother M. Joseph Croke noted her group of Mercy nuns had been 'kept on our feet from morning until night, but our consolations were many; not a single Catholic soldier died without the sacraments and many of other creeds were received into the Church'.¹⁴⁴ Sister Aloysius Doyle describing her experiences of the severe winter of 1854-5 recalled that soldiers 'when they were carried in on stretchers, their clothes had to be cut off. In most cases the flesh and clothes were frozen together, and as for the feet, the boots had to be cut off bit by bit, the flesh coming off with them. Many pieces of flesh I have seen remaining in the boots'.¹⁴⁵ 'The intelligence, delivery and conscientiousness' with which the Mercy nuns discharged their duties in the hospital at Balaclava merited the unqualified acclaim of the army purveyor appointed to cost the expenses incurred by the nuns. These outgoings he stated were considerably less than those of a group of secular nurses previously employed.¹⁴⁶

The typical Kilkenny recruit was predominantly urban, with a majority of recruits coming from the twenty to twenty-four age group who enlisted for long-term service. A study of 293 Kilkenny-born soldiers serving for varying periods, 1791-1854, and subsequently discharged is the basis for this claim.¹⁴⁷ Almost half of this total, numbering 127 soldiers, were natives of the city, followed in numerical order by Castlecomer (24), Freshford (17), Callan (14), Thomastown (13), Gowran (12), Durrow (9) and Graiguenamanagh (9). Twenty-five other Kilkenny parishes supplied from one to seven recruits each. The periods of service completed by these soldiers were those with five years or under (8.77%), from six to twelve years (19.48%), those from thirteen to twenty years (37.25%) and those with over twenty-one years' service (34.5%). Those who joined aged seventeen or under numbered 56 (20.05%), those aged eighteen to nineteen 75 (27.40%), in the twenty to twenty-four age group 123 (45.05%) and those aged twenty-five and over 19 (6.95%).

¹⁴⁴ Mother M. Joseph Croke MS diary, 'Crimean Reminiscences', in 29 Jan. 1855 (Sister of Mercy Archives, Baggot Street, Dublin), p. 20.

¹⁴⁵ Reverend J. J. W. Murphy, 'An Irish Sister of Mercy in the Crimean War' in *Irish Sword*, v, no. 21 (Winter 1962), p. 258.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 24 Dec. 1855, p. 51.

¹⁴⁷ T.N.A., WO 176/50, WO 25/3252.

A listing of ninety Kilkenny N.C.O.s, trumpeters, and privates missing, invalided or killed, 10 May-13 September 1842¹⁴⁸ and 1 July-20 September 1855¹⁴⁹ confirms the above Kilkenny recruiting patterns with those having city affiliations constituting 50% and Castlecomer 11% of the total. Of the ninety enlisted, seventy of these described their employment prior to enlistment as labourers, four as shoemakers, three as tailors, two as butchers, a single mason, carpenter, servant, cabinet maker, groom, weaver, pump borer, gardener, brush maker and paper maker. The only exception to this low level employment strata was a single miller who left assets of £12-19-3 on his death. Of the others who left assets these rarely exceeded ten shillings. It is interesting to note that not a single farmer was included although these records show that farmer enlistment was not uncommon in counties Cavan and Monaghan. David Murphy's contention that men of substance began joining the army at the commencement of the Crimean War was certainly not the Kilkenny experience evidenced in this information.¹⁵⁰ A caveat relative to the poor recruiting figures in a number of south Kilkenny parishes in proximity to Waterford and Carrick-on-Suir - Kilmacow, Mullinavat, Owing, Piltown etc., is that a recent study of enlistment patterns during the first world war show numbers from these parishes enlisting in their nearest market town rather than in Kilkenny.¹⁵¹

The existence of a number of revolutionary cells in the Kilkenny-Tipperary area in the late 1840s mirrored a similar position in France where radicals were active in clubs and secret political fraternalism. These Irish cells were to provide 'the nucleus of the Fenian organisation almost a decade later'.¹⁵² Disaffection survived after the 1848 rising. By mid 1849 'a loose but impressive' network of revolutionary organisations extended from Dublin to Cork taking in the principal towns of county Kilkenny.¹⁵³ Within the county of Kilkenny this activity was centred in the Callan area where a club modelled on the Phoenix Society existed in 1856. A satellite

¹⁴⁸ Examination of invalid soldiers 10 May, 13 Sept. and 25 Oct. 1842 (T.N.A., WO 116/50).

¹⁴⁹ N.C.O.s, trumpeters, drummers and privates of the 24th Regiment invalided, or become missing during the three months 1 July to 20 Sept. 1855 (T.N.A., WO 25/3252).

¹⁵⁰ Murphy, *Ireland and the Crimean War*, p. 8.

¹⁵¹ Jim Stacey, et al, 'List of county Waterford soldiers who died in World War I' in *Decies*, no. 55 (1999), pp. 79-115.

¹⁵² Comerford, *The Fenians in context*, p. 18.

¹⁵³ Marcus Burke, *John O'Leary, a study in Irish separatism* (Tralee, 1967), p. 22.

grouping with similar revolutionary aims also existed in Mullinavat, the last village in county Kilkenny before Waterford city. In the city of Kilkenny there was little evidence of any expression of revolutionary aspirations despite the presence of James Stephens and John Haltigan there. The Kilkenny county inspector of constabulary, reporting to his superiors, 21 February 1856, 'was not aware of any secret societies existing in Kilkenny'.¹⁵⁴ This sanguine picture of the absence of disaffection was not shared by a clergyman at Thomastown writing to Lord Desart, 11 February 1856.¹⁵⁵ He noted that revolutionary influences were being imported from America with the return of numerous immigrants to the area who were busy organising 'a conspiracy here'. Each recruit was obliged to take an oath stating 'I shall use my best endeavours to form a brotherhood amongst Irishmen of all persuasions to uproot and overthrow the English government in Ireland', and to observe secrecy. The clergyman perceptively noted that local farmers were fearful at the language of these immigrants. In general Kilkenny farmers of the mid-nineteenth century having been disproportionately the victims of agrarian violence perpetrated by secret oath-bound societies in previous decades had little sympathy with revolutionary and secret Fenian society.

Kilkenny in the 1850s was a place of bitter denominational rivalry, more divisive and sectarian in nature than in Enniskillen, a correspondent to the *Kilkenny Journal* claimed.¹⁵⁶ The targeting of Kilkenny as a location for the high profile activities of agents of the Irish Church Missions Society exacerbated community tensions. This group a component of the larger British evangelical movement 'embraced a strong biblical faith with an emphasis on emotive preaching, the conversion experience, the doctrine of the atonement, serious conversation and regular bible reading'.¹⁵⁷ Conducting an aggressive, illegal and unjustifiable campaign, in the view of the *Kilkenny Moderator*, their insistence on 'preaching before the doors of the people'

¹⁵⁴ History of Fenianism to 1868 (N.L.I., Larcom Papers, MS 7517), pp 71-2.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹⁵⁶ *KJ*, 31 July 1858.

¹⁵⁷ Stewart J. Brown, 'The new Reformation movement in the Church of Ireland, 1801-29' in Stewart J. Brown and David W. Miller (eds.), *Piety and power, 1760-1960, essays in honour of Emmet Larkin* (Belfast and Notre Dame, 2000), p. 188.

and 'in the public thoroughfares' was to be condemned.¹⁵⁸ Reviewing their activities in Kilkenny for 1853 this group reported 'an extensive leavening of the public mind' taking place.¹⁵⁹ The violent opposition they encountered locally was in their view attributable to the school they established to educate poor children. 'We had at one time sixty-seven on the books, and this, although little for other places is considered astonishing for Kilkenny'. This report further notes that 'about twenty children who were coming to school at the time were beaten back and dare not enter – the number on the role then fell to about forty; but since it has been again rising, and there are now forty-five really *bona fide* scholars and they are exposed to the most barbarous persecution'.¹⁶⁰ This religious antagonism attracted the widespread attention of the British press and caused a debate in the House of Commons.¹⁶¹ Because of the unseemly riots, uproar and confrontation occurring daily between these bible-readers and elements opposed to their preaching, extra troops had to be drafted into Kilkenny.¹⁶² Foremost in the promotion of this crusade was James Thomas O'Brien, Protestant bishop of Ossory, Ferns and Leighlin (1842-74) who filled his diocese 'with Evangelical clergy', many of whom 'were severely criticised for causing religious tension in the countryside'.¹⁶³ Amongst the local Anglican clergy the Rev. Peter Roe and the Rev. M. Drapes, alternatively chaplains to the local military barracks, were deeply involved in the advancement of this movement.

R. V. Comerford has identified the strength that 'was the instinctive reaction of the priests against Fenianism at their first sighting of it in the guise of the Pheonix Society in 1858'.¹⁶⁴ Throughout the 1860s Cullen constantly warned against the threat of revolutionary republicanism imported from America. Clergy were ordered to inform their flocks that joining a secret society risked the instant penalty of excommunication. In Kilkenny men were questioned in the confessional whether they were readers of the *Irish People* and if the answer was positive they had to

¹⁵⁸ *KM*, 28 Apr. 1858.

¹⁵⁹ *The banner of the truth in Ireland*, iii, Jan. – Dec. 1853, p. 14.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹⁶¹ T.N.A., WO 30/29/23/14.

¹⁶² *KM*, 31 July 1858.

¹⁶³ Desmond Bowen, *The Protestant crusade in Ireland 1800-1870* (Dublin, 1978), p. 70.

¹⁶⁴ Comerford, *The Fenians in context*, p. 113.

promise to refrain from reading this Fenian organ to secure absolution.¹⁶⁵ Loyalty to the crown throughout Cullen's reign 'remained part of the Irish Catholic church's official lexicon'.¹⁶⁶ Cullen's absolute belief was that the imperial parliament was the proper forum for resolving Catholic grievances. The abortive Fenian rising of February 1867 confirmed Cullen's worst fears of the wicked irresponsibility of these 'false patriots'. Those who acted with the avowed object of making war on the Queen of England and of upsetting the British empire 'resisted the ordinance of God and by doing so purchased for themselves damnation', his fellow bishop Dr. Moriarty proclaimed.¹⁶⁷ Cullen's praise for the conduct of the defence forces during the attempted 1867 Rebellion was profuse: 'We cannot but be grateful to the public authorities for the humanity they have displayed ... when suppressing the movements of those by whom they were recklessly assailed'.¹⁶⁸

Whilst the army adopted a wait-and-see policy to the Fenian threat throughout 1858 the police were actively involved in accumulating sufficient information to enable the authorities to make a swoop on the organisation's principal activists. At work within the movement were several informers in the pay of the government. On 2 January 1859 six 'Fenians' were arrested in Callan. This arrest was facilitated by information supplied by an informer Patrick O'Callaghan, an act which threatened his future safe return to his native place.¹⁶⁹ After a brief period of confinement the six were freed without the ordeal of court appearances. The *Kilkenny Moderator*, 8 January 1859, ever-ready to inflate any security threats to the establishment, commenting on the events in Callan warned 'there cannot now be much if any doubt, that secret and illegal societies having a directing power or body in some particular place, and activated by a community, ramify throughout the country'.¹⁷⁰

Class conflict of another type demanded the attention of Kilkenny's security forces

¹⁶⁵ Burke, *John O'Leary, a study in Irish separatism*, p. 73.

¹⁶⁶ Marcus Tanner, *Ireland's Holy Wars* (Yale, 2003), p. 252.

¹⁶⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Feb. 1867.

¹⁶⁸ 'Letters to the clergy and laity on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, 24 Nov. 1869' in Patrick Moran (ed.), *Pastoral letters of Cardinal Paul Cullen and his contemporaries*, iii (Naas, 1961-77), p. 279.

¹⁶⁹ *KJ*, 19 Jan. 1859.

¹⁷⁰ *KM*, 8 Jan. 1859.

on the introduction of reaping machines into the locality at harvest time in 1858. There was serious rioting at Callan and Thomastown in which many of these machines were damaged and their operatives assaulted. An attack on Kilkenny looked imminent as 'an *emeute* of agricultural labourers, most sudden and unexpected took place'.¹⁷¹ The *Kilkenny Moderator* used the pretext of these riots to stoke up highly alarmist security concerns:

The band of rebel reapers had threatened to break into the provision shops to supply themselves with food. Had they taken that step, the next doubtless would be the sacking of the various spirit stores, and then maddened by potations, what more likely than a rush to the barracks for arms to protect themselves from the vengeance of the law which they had already outraged?¹⁷²

This newspaper report berated the local military authorities for their lack of readiness on this occasion and the government for its utter foolishness in employing such a small token force at Kilkenny barracks:

There were amongst them disbanded militiamen who knew the use of arms – perhaps they may have been some who even knew where the arms are stored in the barracks of Kilkenny, and had they sought to supply themselves with those arms on Monday last what was there to prevent them? A sergeant and twelve men of the 1st Royal Regiment. Had they gone a few days earlier, they would have found a corporal of the permanent staff of the Kilkenny Militia in charge of the gate, and not another soul but the Barrack Sergeant and his family on the premises.¹⁷³

The community 'had had a great escape' the *Kilkenny Moderator* claimed and urged that the Government should profit by this experience and take note of the underused military facilities at Kilkenny:

The barracks in Waterford was surrounded by a network of slums and lanes and squalid residences of the poor, and sickness was so rife in the regiment, that the hospital was crowded with patients. In Kilkenny the barracks are situated in an open elevated airy locality, and have always been so healthy, that when the strongest garrisons were located here, the average number of men in hospital was perhaps less than any military station in Ireland.¹⁷⁴

Complaints about the downgrading of Kilkenny military barracks during the late 1850s were constantly rehearsed in the columns of the *Kilkenny Moderator*. The barrack accommodation at Kilkenny was for 20 officers, 671 rank and file and 109

¹⁷¹ *KM*, 25 Aug. 1858.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ *KM*, 25 Aug. 1858.

horses whilst Waterford's capacity was for 14 officers, 450 rank and file and 50 horses. The barrack square in Kilkenny is 'four times that of Waterford there being ten acres under the barrack precincts of which more than half are free from buildings and suitable for the purposes of drill, etc.'¹⁷⁵ It was also pointed out that markets for provisions and fodder were much superior in Kilkenny. The siting of the military H.Q. for the region at Waterford was flawed logic according to the newspaper. The arrival in the city of a division of the 36th Regiment, 9 October 1861, was warmly greeted by the *Kilkenny Moderator*:

A picturesque effect which was not to be observed in our thoroughfares for a considerable time previously. The Barracks, so long wearing a most dismal and deserted aspect, now exhibits an inhabited air, and we trust our military visitors will find their location an agreeable one, and that they shall not be called on for a considerable period to leave us.¹⁷⁶

The decision to disinter the remains of Terence Bellew McManus, who had gone to America after the 1848 Rebellion, and transfer them to Ireland for re-burial was taken by the Fenian Brotherhood as a huge propaganda exercise. The circuitous journey of the funeral cortege from disembarkation at Cobh to interment at Glasnevin, 10 November 1861, was an orchestrated demonstration of republican support which led to a large increase in Fenian membership nationally. Kilkenny's minuscule representation at this funeral in Dublin belied this trend. The legitimacy and unrepresentative nature of the three Callan representatives who greeted the American funeral delegates was questioned by the *Kilkenny Moderator* 16 November 1861:

When we look back to the O'Connell gatherings or even the Young Ireland 'Confederation' assemblies and remember the array of names of Borough Magistrates, Aldermen, Town Councillors, professional men and traders accustomed to be put forward as representing Kilkenny on such an occasion we cannot but view in the most ludicrous light this miserable farce of 'an imposing demonstration'. Who in Kilkenny deputed to represent them on Sunday? Verily a more outrageous imposture was never attempted.¹⁷⁷

It is clear from these expressed sentiments that the *Kilkenny Moderator* believed that the Fenian element was a minority group within Kilkenny society and that republican

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ *KM*, 9 Oct. 1861.

¹⁷⁷ *KM*, 16 Nov. 1861.

support was garnered from elements in the lower strata of society. This newspaper's best interests lay in serving its largely loyalist readership and to a lesser extent an influential moderate nationalist public led by a Catholic clergy who strongly opposed Fenianism. Declaring Kilkenny society to be 'too massive and made up of too many influential interests to be shaken or much disturbed by any vulgar or mindless faction'¹⁷⁸ the *Kilkenny Moderator* reassured its readers that the authorities had 'long known every member of the society men in Kilkenny' and could at any moment put their hand upon them but contented themselves presently keeping a watch upon their movements.¹⁷⁹

The foundation in Dublin of the Fenian newspaper the *Irish People* in late 1863 provided republicans with an opportunity to promote the principles of that movement and to counteract clerical anti-Fenian criticism. R. V. Comerford claims that this paper was no mere adjunct to separatist declamation but an organ 'largely responsible for transforming Stephen's movement into a major phenomenon in Irish public life in the mid-1860s'.¹⁸⁰ In Kilkenny the distribution of this newspaper was monitored by the authorities to establish where pockets of Fenianism existed and to subsequently arrest and charge those involved in its dissemination. In his study of Kilkenny Fenianism, Patrick Brennan establishes from correspondence appearing in the *Irish People* over its two year life-span that clerical opposition to the Fenian movement manifested itself principally in five districts i.e., Kilkenny city, Callan and the neighbouring parishes of Ballycallan and Dunamaggin, Thomastown, Graiguenamanagh and Castlecomer.¹⁸¹

The levels of disloyalty existing within the military, 1862-1870, in Kilkenny are unknown. Only a handful of such cases are recorded in local newspapers of the period. Patrick Mansfield Delaney, described as the 'centre' for Kilkenny city, was arraigned for administering an illegal oath to John McEvoy, a private of the Kilkenny

¹⁷⁸ *KM*, 18 Jan. 1862.

¹⁷⁹ *KM*, 10 Aug. 1862.

¹⁸⁰ Comerford, *The Fenians in context*, p. 109.

¹⁸¹ Patrick A. Brennan, 'Aspects of the Fenian movement in Kilkenny, 1858-1870' (M.A. thesis, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, 1979), p. 89.

militia at Murphy's public house. There was much sympathy for the prisoner locally. While Delaney was under arrest 'early at four o'clock on the first Sunday in September 1862 a body of 700 to 800 men carrying reaping hooks marched into our city from the direction of Callan headed by an extemporised band'.¹⁸² Within this assemblage, the report noted, were a large number of south Tipperary reapers from the Mullinahone/Ballingarry area. Passing through the city they marched to Delaney's farm adjoining its northern suburbs where they completed the reaping and stacking of his corn within a couple of hours.¹⁸³ At the conclusion of his subsequent trial Delaney having been found not guilty and 'the prisoner having then been discharged was greeted with loud and prolonged cheering outside the court, and the witnesses for the crown were hooted by a mob as they were escorted from the court by the police'.¹⁸⁴ This active Fenian cell based in the Callan/Ballingarry area held a meeting at Callan's town hall, 25 February 1864 at which there was an attendance of 150 people.¹⁸⁵ A group of Dublin Fenian excursionists visiting Kilkenny were reportedly involved in incidents 'reviling the honour of Her Gracious Majesty' when about to board the returning train.¹⁸⁶ It would seem that Kilkenny's revolutionary embers required outside stoking to continue to glow.

As the perceived threat of rebellion became implanted in establishment circles the authorities eventually did 'what every sensible person knew it would do' in the arrest of thirty-eight Fenian leaders in Dublin and Cork.¹⁸⁷ On 14 December 1865 Daniel Darcy, a young Kilkenny cabinet maker, was charged with attempting to enlist Thomas Lyons, a gunner in the K. Battery of the Royal Artillery into the Fenian movement telling him he was 'to get a commission and be supplied with money'.¹⁸⁸ He was further told that 'there would be a great rising before New Year's day and that they would surely win Ireland'. It was common for Fenians at that time to meet soldiers in public houses, one of the few places they could do so without attracting

¹⁸² *KM*, 10 Sept. 1862.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *KM*, 11 Mar. 1863.

¹⁸⁵ *KM*, 27 Feb. 1864.

¹⁸⁶ *KM*, 25 May 1864.

¹⁸⁷ *KJ*, 20 Sept. 1865.

¹⁸⁸ Constabulary Report, 14 Dec. 1865 (N.A.I., Fenian police reports 1864-5).

undue attention. On 19 February 1866 the sub inspector of police at Castlecomer reported that John Butler 'who has for nearly two years been the recognised agent of the Fenian conspiracy in that place' had been arrested. At the prisoner's lodgings 'a pistol, some seditious ballads and documents connecting him with the Fenian society' were found.¹⁸⁹ The prisoner was described 'as the son of a man in very humble circumstances' and who 'could not honestly be in possession of any means of support yet is well dressed, lives well, and spends money nightly in treating persons who are thoroughly suspected of being most active in the Fenian conspiracy'. It was further noted that 'he sometimes employs cars to drive about the country'.¹⁹⁰

James Holland, a Kilkenny militiaman, was similarly guileless. The police report noted that the prisoner:

Who has hitherto been depending upon his daily labour has been for a long time almost totally without employment and from the liberal manner in which he has been spending money especially amongst the soldiers, as well as assorting continually with reputed Fenians and manifesting the greatest interest and anxiety on the occasion of Fenian investigation, there is no doubt he is a paid agent of the society.¹⁹¹

Darcy was discharged on bail on 4 September 1866 on condition he would go to America. Similarly James Cody of Callan was discharged on 1 August 1866 and escorted to Queenstown and banishment to America.¹⁹² It is clear from government and newspaper reports that Fenian efforts to enlist Irish soldiers into the organisation failed to produce any serious disaffection except in limited individual cases. It must also be remembered that disaffection within the army in many instances was due to the wretched living conditions soldiers had to endure. In 1865 an infantry private of the line earned one shilling a day plus an extra penny for beer money. From this sum 8½d was deducted for groceries and provisions. Left with a balance of 3½d he had to provide for the renewal of his clothes – jacket, shirts and forage-cap. These conditions led to widespread disillusionment among rank and file soldiers. A police report from Cork, 13 December 1856 highlights the problem:

¹⁸⁹ Abstracts of cases of persons arrested under Habeas Corpus Suspension Act (N.A.I., CSO, ICR 10-12), pp. 89, 207.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 543.

¹⁹² *KJ*, 28 Feb. 1866.

I have heard many intelligent men say that soldiers frequently express much dissatisfaction at the smallness of their pay compared with that of the working classes in this country and elsewhere. They complain that they are now only in receipt of the same amount of pay the soldiers received over thirty years hence, when one shilling would buy them more of the common necessaries of life than three shillings at present.¹⁹³

In midsummer 1865 the constabulary were receiving reports that Fenianism was spreading rapidly. 'In Kilkenny the police reported that half the male population were Fenians and fully bent on having a rising'.¹⁹⁴ An officer on special duty in Kilkenny in September 1865 also expressed the view that a great number of men in the city, were Fenians and 'they had a lot of swagger about them'.¹⁹⁵ Rumour and counter-rumour and exaggeration impossible to quantify coloured accounts of Fenian activities. It was reported 'that farmers in the south were drawing their money out of the banks in gold and in every direction there was the expectation of an outbreak' before the end of September.¹⁹⁶ The army was busy involved in the guarding of Fenian prisoners appearing before the special commissioners sitting in Dublin and Cork and also the guarding of county gaols countrywide where Fenians were held. This was because of the constant rumours of imminent attempts to rescue the Fenian prisoners.

Regiments and detachments were constantly being despatched to places of Fenian activity. Although transport by rail was allowed in cases of emergency, travel was usually by foot especially amongst Infantry regiments. Typical of such deployment was a report appearing in the *Kilkenny Moderator*, 10 October 1870, which noted that:

A troop of the 14th Hussars under the command of Captain Embert with Lieutenant Ward marched into this city on Saturday last en route from Athlone to Waterford, and were billeted here for the night. Next morning they set out for Thomastown and lay there on Monday night; yesterday morning they resumed their march to Waterford.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ Quoted in Brennan 'Fenian movement in Kilkenny', p. 25 (N.A.I., police reports 3/386). For an insight into Fenian infiltration of the military, see D. N. Haire 'The British army in Ireland 1869-90' (M. Litt. Thesis in History Trinity College, Dublin, 1973).

¹⁹⁴ History of Fenianism to 1868 (N.A.I., Larcom Papers, MS 7517), p. 129.

¹⁹⁵ Constabulary Report, 21 Sept. 1865 (N.A.I., Fenian police reports 1864-5).

¹⁹⁶ History of Fenianism to 1868 (N.L.I., Larcom Papers, MS 7517), p. 141.

¹⁹⁷ *KM*, 10 Oct. 1870.

Whether troops were on the move to or from Cork, Waterford or Wexford they invariably passed through county Kilkenny. The overnight accommodation of these transitory groups is constantly chronicled in the local newspapers. Troops returning to Dublin from election duties in Cork in December 1868, the *Kilkenny Moderator* reports, were billeted at Urlingford and Johnstown.¹⁹⁸

The absence of a strong military or constabulary force within Ireland at the beginning of 1866 was the concern of the *Kilkenny Moderator*, which noted a shortage of about 2,000 men in its full complement.¹⁹⁹ Whilst criticising the government of complacency in dealing with Fenianism, the newspaper stressed the futility of any insurrection noting that 'no one possessed of common sense expects that any outbreak could remain two days unquenched by the troops of the government'.²⁰⁰ Any notions of government inactivity were dispelled when parliament legislated for the suspension of *habeas corpus* in a bill rushed through parliament, 17 February 1866. This legislation allowed the indefinite imprisonment of any person in Ireland on the warrant of the lord lieutenant. All over the country Fenian leaders were arrested leaving the organisation in great disarray. In Kilkenny the number of people arrested under these powers was twenty-six. These included Edmond Coyne of Callan, a leading activist and John Lynch, also of Callan, the respectable son of a miller.²⁰¹ Also arrested was John Kavanagh, relieving officer to the Poor Law Guardian of the city of Kilkenny²⁰² and Thomas Phelan, a master tailor to the Kilkenny militia.²⁰³ John Fitzgerald, the owner of 150 statute acres of a 'good tillage and grass land' was similarly detained.²⁰⁴ Several of these minor suspects were released subsequently on 7 April 1866.²⁰⁵

The bizarre nature of a number of these arrests is highlighted in the detention of Marcus Keane J. P., the noted archaeologist and agent of the Marquis of

¹⁹⁸ *KM*, 16 Dec. 1868.

¹⁹⁹ *KM*, 6 Jan. 1866.

²⁰⁰ *KM*, 31 Jan. 1866.

²⁰¹ *KM*, 28 Feb. 1866.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ *KM*, 7 Apr. 1866.

Conyngham's Clare estate. Engaged at Kilmoganny recording the area's historical monuments 'his portfolio of drawings immediately prompted the idea of fortifications which looked decidedly Fenian'.²⁰⁶ Similarly the arrival 'in this secluded village' of an English commercial traveller, Mr. Thomas Kennedy, excited security concerns. The *Kilkenny Moderator* reported that 'the appearance of a real Manchester man was quite enough to excite the vigilance of the watchful constables'.²⁰⁷ Both suspects having established their *bone-fide* credentials were released, their arrests being much to the embarrassment of the local magistrate.

This over-reaction by the local security authorities would seem to have been out-of-line with local general feeling as expressed by the *Kilkenny Journal* at the end of 1866 when stating:

We will not disguise that there is deep discontent in Kilkenny and considering the culpable indifference of successive governments to the interests of Ireland, the wonder would be if it were otherwise; not that the people have the slightest idea of violating the law, much less of rising in armed insurrection, we do not believe; and every man we have spoken to on this subject, not only takes this view, but smiles amusingly at the absurdity of the idea.²⁰⁸

There is little evidence of widespread Fenian infiltration of army personnel at Kilkenny. John Devoy in his *Recollections of an Irish rebel* fails to mention any recruiting success at Kilkenny.²⁰⁹ It would seem that soldiers convicted of Fenian membership in Kilkenny were recruited elsewhere before arriving here. R. V. Comerford's study of Fenianism expresses major reservations about Devoy's statement that during his period in charge of recruiting '8,000 of the regular soldiers in Ireland were Fenians'.²¹⁰ The military authorities in Ireland were equally sceptical of Fenian exaggeration. A police report, 27 January 1866 from Superintendent Ryan to the Duke of Cambridge was subsequently forwarded to General Rose. This report stated that 'almost all the Royals (1st Regiment), 2nd Queens and the 8th Regiment are Fenians'.²¹¹ Dismissing this report as grossly incorrect Rose replied:

²⁰⁶ *KM*, 3 Mar. 1866.

²⁰⁷ *KM*, 28 Feb. 1866.

²⁰⁸ *KJ*, 8 Dec. 1866.

²⁰⁹ John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel* (Shannon, 1969).

²¹⁰ Comerford, *The Fenians in context*, p. 125.

²¹¹ Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 27 Jan. 1866 (B.L., Rose Papers, MS 42825, f. 283).

That the estimate to the extent of Fenianism in the troops of this army is a gross exaggeration and an intended one. As a policy, the Fenian conspirators, purposely exaggerate and invent the amount of Fenians in regiments in order to encourage and mislead the credulous and disaffected in or out of the army into joining their treasonable association.²¹²

In Kilkenny Patrick Manning of the 14th Regiment was charged before a court martial of aiding a number of civilians in seriously assaulting two drivers, Davis and Walworth of the Royal Artillery who were based at the local barracks. He was further charged with using disrespectful language towards the Queen. When arrested he was heard to shout 'Although I wear the bloody Queen's uniform I am a bloody Fenian'.²¹³ Martin Hayes for uttering similar Fenian sentiments, insubordination and desertion was summoned at a District court martial. Convicted he was ordered to be flogged, drummed out of the regiment, branded with the letters B.C. and to receive 84 days imprisonment:

The sentence of flogging having been carried into effect, in the barrack square he was marched to prison to undergo the remainder of his sentence. This is the third artilleryman that has undergone the degrading punishment of being dismissed from the service with ignominy since their arrival in Kilkenny.²¹⁴

Throughout the following year the authorities noted no cause for concern regarding army disloyalty. Rose submitting his annual security report to the Duke of Cambridge in June 1867 noted:

There is no present danger to be apprehended from disaffection in the army. Very bad and far too many cases of individual, but not collective, treason have occurred amongst the Irish Roman Catholic soldiers: but discipline has been vindicated as much as it could be without a capital punishment of the worst cases of military treason.²¹⁵

The role of suppressing Fenianism within the army was carried out to the last letter of the law. This often involved soldiers arresting comrades in their own regiment. No instances of dissent were reported.

Whilst the loyalty of the army was not in question, the levels of Fenian infiltration

²¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 294-6.

²¹³ *KM*, 4 Apr. 1866.

²¹⁴ *KJ*, 8 Dec. 1866.

²¹⁵ Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 2 June 1867 (B.L., Rose Papers, MS 42825, f. 283).

within the Irish militia caused serious concern to the authorities. By 1865 the arms of the various militia regiments were removed from local control to storage in well-guarded central arsenals in Pigeon House Fort, Enniskillen, Athlone and Haulbowline Fort in Cork harbour.²¹⁶ In 1866 and 1867 the government decided not to call out the militia for their annual period of training because of fears of widespread disaffection among the ranks of the militia.²¹⁷ The *Irish Times*, 1 May 1866 noted that one hundred members of the Carlow Rifles had been charged with Fenian sympathies.²¹⁸ The reasons for the suspension of these training exercises were given by the chief secretary in answer to a question asked in the House of Commons by General Dunne, an opposition M.P:

The house would readily believe that the members of the Irish militia must be more or less animated by a spirit of Fenianism. The class from which they were taken was more or less so tainted, and without meaning to cast the slightest imputation on the loyalty of the militia as a body, it would be quite impossible for them altogether, to escape from the infection, and the Government thought it better to be on the safe side.²¹⁹

Subsequent to this Fenian scare, the militia's role in garrisoning Ireland ceased to be a significant one. The *Kilkenny Moderator*, 9 March 1867, noted with joy the absence of any Fenian uprising within the confines of the city or county:

Whilst in various directions around us the Fenians have been 'out' in arms and have had several encounters with the constabulary and military – all ending in their signal discomfiture – our city and the surrounding district have maintained the utmost tranquillity and freedom from any manifestation of a lawless character or disaffected spirit.²²⁰

Subsequent to the failure of the 1867 Rising more stringent security measures were introduced. City dealers selling gunpowder were obliged to surrender their stocks which were then removed by the constabulary to the magazine at the military barracks.²²¹ Extra troops were drafted into the area. A 'flying column of the 10th Hussars', under Colonel Baker left Thurles on 22 March, and dividing into several parties and taking different approach roads, to more effectively scour the countryside,

²¹⁶ *KM*, 3 Mar. 1866.

²¹⁷ Con Costello, *A most delightful station* (Cork, 1999), p. 109.

²¹⁸ *Irish Times*, 1 May 1866.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ *KM*, 9 Mar. 1867.

²²¹ *KM*, 13 Mar. 1867.

arrived in Kilkenny in the mid-afternoon. This unit consisted of 106 men and 64 horses and were billeted throughout the city for two days.²²² The party scouring the Callan area were reported to have closely questioned 'all the young men with flowing beards whom they met on the road'. However no arrests were made in this instance.²²³ The Urlingford correspondent of the *Kilkenny Moderator* noted that the arrival of the 'flying column in the Kilcooley district caused some sensation because of their sudden unannounced arrival'. However on their departure it was noted that some individuals of the force had practised a kind of foraging not recognised as 'legitimate'. The report further noted that:

In fact it is averred that some of the poultry of those residing by the roadside were found to have disappeared immediately after the column had passed. Miss Hanlon of Killahy had to complain of a duck being navigated by someone, off a pool of water by the road and Kitty Guilfoyle moaned over the loss of four hens.²²⁴

The execution of the Fenian Manchester martyrs 23 November 1867 raised tension levels all over the Irish diaspora. Kilkenny politicians with nationalist sympathies vociferously protested at these deaths. An intended commemorative procession, in memory of the Manchester three, at which 50,000 people were expected to attend at Kilkenny was proscribed by the lord lieutenant.²²⁵ Confrontation was averted. As the year closed the *Kilkenny Journal* could comment on the peaceful security situation locally. 'The citizens of Kilkenny, of all shades of opinion' it claimed 'may be said to be almost totally ignorant of such a thing as Fenianism'.²²⁶ This report further stated that never was the city more tranquil, never was there so much union among all classes and creeds, never was there such a total absence of crime even in this generally crimeless district, as at present.

The number of troops in Ireland during the period of significant Fenian activities fluctuated with the authorities' perception of the security situation. The highest level of troop allotment was in March 1866, just after the introduction of the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act when there were 25,876 stationed in the country. Between

²²² *KJ*, 23 Mar. 1867.

²²³ *KJ*, 20 Mar. 1867.

²²⁴ *KM*, 30 Mar. 1867.

²²⁵ *KJ*, 14 Dec. 1867.

²²⁶ *KJ*, 8 Dec. 1867.

1 October 1866 and 1 March 1867 the total number of officers and men serving 'increased from approximately 20,600 to approximately 24,000'.²²⁷ In Kilkenny the number of troops in garrison varied from a low of 168 in August 1865 to a high of 627 in January 1867 (see Figure 1.12, p. 81).

In September 1869 a well-attended amnesty meeting was held in Kilkenny to show solidarity with the Fenian prisoners in custody. However five weeks later the attendance at a Kilkenny tenant-right meeting was estimated to have been four times larger than the earlier meeting.²²⁸ Political agitation rather than revolutionary subversion was taking precedence once again. In Parliament, Butt's Irish party was providing an alternative to Fenian republicanism and the Repeal movement alike. Lord Strathnairn (formerly General Rose) on his retirement as army-commander-in-chief left Ireland for good in May 1870. In his wake he left behind him a larger distribution of troops than he had countenanced in 1867.²²⁹ General Cunyngham writing to Lord Mayo, 16 June 1870, boasted that 'there were now an immense number of detachments all over Ireland as during the last year our commander of the forces has even sent out more than the government requested'.²³⁰

Fenianism at the peak of its strength, as R. V. Comerford points out, provided no formidable military threat to British power in Ireland.²³¹ It was more a 'loose undisciplined social organisation rather than a military one, it had a totally inadequate command structure, and it was very poorly armed'. The Fenian movement attracted tens of thousands of young Irish men to its ranks not because of their desire to take up arms but because this organisation provided opportunities for these recruits to participate in a wide variety of sports and activities. Realising that the church was not providing these facilities, the Catholic Young Men's Society was founded in the early 1860s to combat this Fenian threat. Dudley Edward's questioning of the numbers joining the Fenian organisation because they were drunk

²²⁷ Comerford, *The Fenians in context*, p. 134.

²²⁸ Lord Spencer to Gladstone, 18 Sept. 1869 (B.L., Gladstone Papers, MS 44306).

²²⁹ Leon Ó Broin, *Fenian fever* (New York, 1971), p. 248.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

²³¹ Comerford, *The Fenians in context*, p. 127.

has little practical relevance. There is no evidence that Edmond Coyne, the Kilkenny Fenian recruiting agent with a public house in Callan, had thus any marked success in attracting new recruits.

The small number of twenty-six Kilkenny Fenian activists arrested under the *Habeas Corpus* Suspension Act and the scattered nature of local pockets of republican activity portray little local community involvement. The *Kilkenny Moderator* newspaper, as this study shows, was strongly of the opinion that Kilkenny Fenians were people of little consequence. The social composition of the twenty-six Kilkenny Fenians arrested is broadly similar to the pattern of Fenian recruitment throughout Ireland with the involvement of those enlisted being from 'a class above the mass' – labourers, shop assistants, shoe-maker, cabinet maker, butcher, mason, etc. The low-key garrisoning of the local military barracks during the Fenian period also substantiates the view that Fenianism provided no great security threat. A feature of the government reaction to the Fenian menace was a judicious restraint in the use of force. This minimal use of force was in contrast to the administration's handling of disturbance throughout the famine period. The low level of Fenian activity within the city of Kilkenny meant that disaffection amongst the military at Kilkenny was equally scarce. James Stephens was abjectly dependent on Irish-American aid which was irregular and always less than that required. Nobody in Ireland in the 1860s imagined an Irish insurrection to be possible without an international crisis. In the absence of such a war Fenian militarism was a charade.²³² After 1870 a more politicised Irish populace developed a bias against revolution, conspiracy, violence and extremism.

Conclusion

In the early decades of the nineteenth century parts of county Kilkenny became synonymous with civil unrest and outrage. It was as Pádraig Ó Macháin points out as if these areas were 'outside civilisation, or, at best on its periphery'.²³³ This latent antagonism to the forces of authority was especially militant with on occasions large

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 127.

²³³ Ó Macháin, *Six years in Galmoy*, p. xi.

groups of poorly-armed peasants attacking establishment targets. Much of this unrest may be attributed to the disruption and restructuring associated with 'modernisation'. The nature of the army's involvement in maintaining peace in Ireland was complex. The stipulation in army regulations that officers should only act in aid of the civil power under the direction of a magistrate meant that the implementation of security objectives depended on the presence and competency of this local official. This study notes that this official was frequently absent and in many instances incompetent. The nature of these duties required that the army be divided, often into small isolated detachments, a situation detrimental to the enforcement of discipline and security. Mass political activities such as the campaigns for Catholic emancipation in the late 1820s, and for the removal of tithes in the early 1830s presented new security challenges for the army which were ultimately defused by legislative reforms.

The development of a professional police force, post 1834, allowed the army adopt a back-up role rather than functioning in front-line confrontation with elements of discontent. This is evident in the suppression of both the Young Ireland and Fenian Risings of 1848 and 1867. Letters, diaries and newspaper reports offer a perspective on the service of Kilkenny men and women involved in the Crimean War. Saddled with a poor command structure (a topic to be developed in the next chapter), an inhospitable climate, irregularities in the supply of armaments and major deficiencies in the provision of food, clothes and medical attention, the contribution of the rank and file soldier to the war effort was immense. Community division, evident in a less than generous financial support locally of the Patriotic Fund set up to support the widows of soldiers injured and killed in this conflict, had its origins and sustenance in the ongoing battle deciding religious hegemony between Protestant and Catholic in Kilkenny. The intrusion of a pro-active Anglican proselytising group into Kilkenny, at this particular time, is shown to have strengthened these divisions. Throughout the period 1856 to 1870 one of the biggest problems facing the regular army was the recruitment of sufficient numbers to meet their needs. This study relates the post-famine decline in recruitment numbers throughout county Kilkenny, when increasingly the preferred option for young men of military age was emigration to America, or to Britain and her colonies.

English public opinion shocked by the privations of its Crimean army decimated by cholera and dysentery during the winter of 1854-5 agitated for changes subsequent to the conclusion of this conflict in 1856. The sanitary and accommodation reforms introduced in Kilkenny barracks in the period 1860-61 were too little, too late, and were in fact the closing of the door of an empty stable. However, the search, within the British army for 'the better class recruit' continued with a further raft of wide-ranging reforms initiated by Edward Cardwell in 1868. The nature, extent and implementation of these reforms will be the main focus of the next chapter.

Chapter III

Army reform, 1800-1870

The army by its very nature is a conservative institution, inhibited by discipline, deferent to authority, respectful of tradition and slow to introduce reforms. The implementation of reform was problematic. Despite the urgent need for modernisation and reform within Wellington's peninsular army (1808-14) and Napoleonic War army (1800-15) these concepts of change were rarely discussed, let alone addressed. Wellington's notorious views on the lowly origins and the nefarious reasons why men enlisted meant that any improvement in the quality of that unpromising material was unlikely to be even contemplated. Traditionalists, like Wellington, believed the rank and file soldier to be irredeemably bad and was only controllable by violence. However within the army and society there were reformers who believed that the morality of the soldier could be greatly influenced by improving his living conditions. A greater emphasis on providing better educational, recreational and sporting opportunities would, they argued, contribute to his moral regeneration.

Living conditions within barracks were appalling and changed little over the period 1800-1870. Even barrack accommodation which met minimum army standards in the 1850s and 1860s was scandalously poor. The mortality rates of soldiers within barracks was significantly higher than amongst the general public. Intolerable living conditions in the typical Irish barracks led to an embryonic revolt within the army in Dublin in 1808 which the lord lieutenant, the Duke of Richmond quelled with rigorous disciplinary measures.¹ The pressure to improve conditions, throughout the period of this study, was reinforced by the army's continuing recruitment problems and exacerbated by England's expanding imperial commitments. As a result barracks became more comfortable, barrack life became less severe and 'even barrack architecture became more attractive'.² The administration of Irish barracks was united with that of the United Kingdom in 1827 and centralised at Horse Guards

¹ Edward Brynn, *Crown and castle: British rule in Ireland 1800-1830* (Dublin, 1978).

² Trevor May, *Military barracks* (Princes Risborough, 2002), p. 19.

Parade, London.

This chapter will note the nature of changes occurring within the army, 1800-70, affecting Kilkenny soldiers' lives. The ongoing reductions in the severity of punishments inflicted on the errant rank and file soldier of the period will be noted. Similarly regulations aimed at improving health and sanitation conditions within Irish barracks, post 1856, will be examined. Post Crimea there was an urgent need for change within the command structure and organisation of the army. There was also a great need for the improved tactical training of all ranks, especially in the familiarisation of the soldier with more technological and efficient weaponry being introduced. The way in which these challenges were addressed will be outlined. The question as to whether changes in conditions attracted a higher quality of recruit will be posed. Did the army offer a useful purpose to society's dregs and scum? Did the army as an institution perform the role of prison school or reformatory? During periods of expanding employment opportunities and the attractiveness of emigration, what was the response of Kilkenny youth to recurring recruiting problems? What were the effects locally of the completely inadequate payment of Kilkenny's military?

In a critique published in 1804 by Lieutenant Robert Wilson the main obstacles to recruitment were identified as the system of recruiting for life and the frequency of corporal punishment.³ Enlistment for non-commissioned officers and soldiers in the early decades of the century was for life. The introduction of the 1847 limited enlistment act shortened the term of service to twelve years: six years on active service and six years on the reserve. This legislation, it was hoped, would reduce desertion, attract a better class of recruit into the army, and if the soldier took his discharge at the expiry of his contract, would relieve the government of its obligation to provide a pension. This measure was also an effort to create a reserve force at home and abroad and consequently be continuously young and active. However these hopes were not realised. In the period 1847-54 there was little uptake of the short-term enlistment period, re-engagements were few and thus the tough professional

³ J. R. Dunwiddy, 'The early nineteenth century campaign against flogging in the army' in *The English Historical Review*, xxxiii, no. 131 (1982), p. 310.

soldier harder to forge. The 'better class' of recruit was not forthcoming as profound structural factors occurred in both society and the army. The failure of measures in 1847, 1857 and 1870 to attract this 'better class' recruit proved the lesson that the army's attention would have been better served by endeavouring to make good soldiers from the proliferate material already at its disposal. Cardwell's 1870 short-service act stipulated a seven year period and subsequent service in the reserve.⁴

This study has already noted Kilkenny's poor recruiting numbers during the famine as emigration and works connected with the construction of a railway line through the county provided alternative employment. Commenting on the recruiting figures for 1867 the *Kilkenny Journal* lamented that 'Ireland which used to be the greatest recruiting ground for the army, and whose people beyond those of any country possess a taste for military life' were not enlisting with the same frequency as in former years.⁵ A total for Ireland in 1867 was 4, 599 recruits, with the Dublin district alone supplying 1,157 recruits. This was despite:

The condition of the soldier, if well conducted, is so greatly improved as to be far more comfortable than that of any farmer's labourer. But the young men who used 'to follow the drum' yearly pass away to the States or Canada, and those who remain behind obtain regular employment at considerably enhanced wages.⁶

A curious feature observed in these recruiting figures is the great number of rejections recorded 'in the class of mechanics employed in occupations favourable to health such as masons, smiths, carpenters, etc.'. Out of every 1,000 rejected 432 were mechanics. This the *Kilkenny Journal* surmised was because 'probably the poor artisan out of employment, half nourished and sick at heart did not think of recruiting until he had no other resource and then on examination was unfit for service'.⁷ As recruitment numbers faltered the physical requirements for soldiers joining the army became less demanding (see Table 3.1, p. 138). The minimum height required in 1861 was 5' 8", in 1869 was 5' 7", and in 1870 was lowered to 5' 4 ½". This successive lowering of the required minimum height was due primarily to the army's reliance on recruits enlisted from urban areas. Artisans were an exception to the

⁴ Hew Strachan, *Wellington's legacy: the reform of the British army 1830-54* (Manchester, 1984), p. 75, hereafter referred to as 'Reform of the British army'.

⁵ *Kilkenny Journal*, 22 Sept. 1869.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

minimum thirty-three inch chest measurement required. The minimum weight requirement for all recruits was 115lbs (eight stone and three pounds).⁸ In terms of physical stature the recruit of 1870 was certainly smaller than he had been in previous decades.

The Cardwell Reforms of 1870 proved to be a watershed in the history of the British army in Queen Victoria's reign. One of the main provisions was the linking of infantry battalions: one serving in Britain the other abroad. This was intended to allow a more frequent change around of battalions between the two roles. The territorial localisation of the army with the regimental depot at the county town was introduced to eliminate the chaotic inter-regiment competition for scarce recruits under the old system and to boost recruitment. Henceforth each regiment would be assigned one of sixty-nine districts to serve as its home base and recruiting territory. The paying of bounties to recruits on enlistment was also abolished. This eliminated the abuse of soldiers re-enlisting in a different regiment in order to claim this sum.

All Arms

Year	Age	Minimum Height	Minimum Weight	Chest Measurement
1861	17 – 25	5'-8"	N/A	34"-36"
1868	17 – 25	5'-5"	N/A	34"-36"
1869	17 – 25	5'-7"	N/A	34"-36"
1870	17 – 25	5'-4½"	N/A	34"-36"
1871	18 – 25	5'-5½"	N/A	34"-36"

Note: Minimum chest measurements depended on the arm of service.

Corps of Royal Engineers, 1861-71

Trade	Maximum Height	Minimum Height	Chest Measurement	Age
Sappers	5'-10"	5'-6"	34"	18 – 25
Pontoon-men	5'-10"	5'-7"	35"	18 – 25
Boatmen	5'-10"	5'-4"	34"	18 – 25
Artisans	5'-10"	5'-5"	33"	18 – 25
Drivers	5'-10"	5'-4"	34"	18 – 25

Notes: (1) Artisans were an exception to the minimum 33" chest measurement.
(2) The minimum weight requirement for all arms was 115 pounds.

Source: A. R. Skelley, *The Victorian army at home: The recruitment and terms and conditions of the British Regular, 1859-1899* (Montreal, 1977), pp. 237-8 and J. M. Grierson, *Scarlet into Khaki: The British army on the eve of the Boer War* (London, 1988), p. 21.

Table 3.1 Age and physical requirements for British Army recruits, 1861-71.

⁸ A. R. Skelley, *The Victorian army at home: The recruitment and terms and conditions of the British Regular, 1859-1899* (Montreal, 1977), p. 237-8 and J. M. Grierson, *Scarlet into Khaki: The British army on the eve of the Boer War* (London, 1988), p. 21.

From the outset the soldier's pay was abysmally low and on par with low-earning farm labourers. Most of a soldier's seven shillings a week was spent on messing and other necessities. In August 1801, a general earned £5 a day in peacetime and £6 in wartime whilst a major was paid £1 and £2.⁹ Recruiting sergeants received additional payments for each recruit enlisted. Major Richard Alcock recruiting in Kilkenny, September 1800, was paid £21-2-6 for the month, Lieutenant Charles Naughton £8-10-0 and Ensign J. Hindes £7.¹⁰ Involvement on revenue duties also meant increased payments: each soldier earned 1/8d a day, sergeants 2/6d and each officer 10/6d while 'still hunting'.¹¹ In 1837 extra payments for good conduct and the awarding of merit badges were recommended. A corporal in 1847 was paid 1/4d a day in the infantry and 1/7½d a day in the cavalry.¹² 'A great amount of discontent and dissatisfaction' was expressed by rank and file soldiers in Ireland, at a delay in implementing new pay scales due on 1 April 1867.¹³ This parliamentary legislation granting soldiers an extra 2d and 3d a day was implemented in mid-July.

On joining the army each recruit was the recipient of 'bounty money' meant to cover the cost of equipment not provided by the colonel of the regiment. This sum was totally inadequate and the young soldier 'found himself with a debt that with care would take six months to liquidate'. In the cavalry the bounty fell approximately £1-12-0 short of the sum required, and in the infantry it was twelve shillings too little.¹⁴ Reformers strove for years to have this injustice rectified. Finally, in February 1855 new increased bounty payments to men enlisting for active service were announced. The cavalryman's bounty rose from £5-15-6 to £10 whilst that of the infantry man doubled to £8.¹⁵ This reform had been refused a decade previously but the onset of the Crimean War and the urgent need of recruits forced a rethink.

Another element of benefit to recruitment was the granting of an army pension, a perk then unavailable to the general working population who received no

⁹ Clinton papers, 1 Aug. 1801 (N.L.I., MS 10,215).

¹⁰ Militia and volunteers muster books and pay lists, Sept. 1800 (T.N.A., WO 13/2944).

¹¹ M. F. Cunliffe, 'The army, 1815-54, as an institution', Oxford University, B. Litt. thesis, 1947, p. 195.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 160.

¹³ *KJ*, 10 July 1867.

¹⁴ Strachan, *Reform of the British army*, p. 55.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 56-7.

compensation for any illness contracted during their employment. Army pensions were meagre and difficult to obtain. However post Waterloo the number of army pensioners equalled the number of serving soldiers. In an effort to control this huge outlay Hardinge, the Secretary of War, established in 1829 a board to study the pension situation. Its recommendation was that, in future, length of service rather than the nature of the disability would be the criterion for granting benefits. A pensioner who had completed twenty-one years service received 1/= per day, or 10d a day if discharged at his own request.¹⁶ A soldier wishing to leave the army without serving the full period of his contract could either desert or buy himself out. This latter option was encouraged by the authorities as it meant the forfeiture of pension rights. The difficulty of acquiring an army pension even when well deserved after years of loyal service or being wounded in active service was enormous. On his return to Kilkenny after completing twenty years of army service in Calabria, Sicily, Portugal and Spain, R. G. Butler sought the granting of a full pension or an appointment as a barrackmaster in Ireland from his former commander Wellington. Wounded severely in the Pyrenees in 1813 and reduced to poverty he was obliged 'to crawl about in the quiet execution of his duty'. Despite conducting a protracted fourteen year correspondence with the authorities he failed to get a satisfactory outcome.¹⁷ By 1817 more than half the officers in the cavalry and infantry were on half-pay. Soldiers like Butler on half-pay were in dire circumstances. The *Kilkenny Journal*, 25 July 1827, summarised their position:

Since the conclusion of the war, the country has swarmed with half-pay officers, two-thirds of whom have remained inactive, simply from inability to get re-appointment. Many of these men, though they have seen years of arduous service, had barely arrived at manhood when they were thus prematurely 'laid on the shelf'.¹⁸

This report further noted that forced to choose between living at home on a pittance or serving as soldiers 'in the thankless service of the lately revolutionised states of South America', an 'innumerable number' chose the latter. In periods of peacetime, with a large over-supply of officers, prospects for full-time employment were remote.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹⁷ R. G. Butler to General Sir H. Taylor, 7 June 1827 (T.N.A., WO 54/756).

¹⁸ *KJ*, 25 July 1827.

An officer on half-pay was not expected to perform any military services but was expected to be on call for active service if required. Prior to 1830 an officer could opt to transfer to the half-pay list without reference to the number of years of service. After 1830 the period stipulated for qualification was fixed at three years service. After 1840 eighteen years service was required while in 1852 there was a further lengthening of the period to twenty-one years.¹⁹ Commissions and promotions in the army mid-century were largely obtained by purchase. Every rank up to that of lieutenant general could be bought. Above that rank further promotion was a long drawn out process. In practice junior officers purchased from a grade of officer above them. This system was constantly criticised by reformers who depicted its outcome as the promotion of wealthy dunces to the detriment of younger and more competent soldiers. A commission on army promotions was established in February 1854 to investigate the problem. One of its main recommendations was that officer selection henceforth should be on a much wider scale and the ablest rather than the most senior officers should be promoted. At the outbreak of the Crimean War the age profile of officers 'in the field ranks and above' gave grounds for 'grave disquiet' in contrast to junior officers who were described as 'relatively young and healthy'.²⁰ Even post Crimea the prospects of candidates who were unable to purchase commissions were quite hopeless. A memorandum of April 1856 to would-be officers who had successfully passed their examinations at the Royal Military College at Sandhurst signed by C. Yorke warned that 'no hope can be given you to a commission unless you are prepared to purchase'. He further noted that upwards of 250 gentlemen who have passed still remain unprovided for.²¹ The purchase system was not abolished until 1871.²² Because of the purchasing of commissions and their unpredictable sale value many officers were out of pocket because of their military activities. Their often flamboyant lifestyles were self financed rather than by the army.

Evidence of a more restricted access for the sons and relatives of Kilkenny's gentry

¹⁹ Strachan, *Reform of the British army*, p. 113.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

²¹ *Kilkenny Moderator*, 26 Apr. 1856.

²² E. M. Spiers, 'Army organisation and society in the nineteenth century' in Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery, *A military history of Ireland* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 342.

in obtaining entry to the military life is provided in the case of one of the county's largest landowners William Fownes Tighe. Tighe wrote to Lord Clarendon urging him to use his influence to advance the claims of his nephew to be granted an army cadetship. Clarendon in his reply to Tighe, 8 October 1849, stated that in this instance 'I cannot hope to be successful because I asked Sir I. Hobhouse last year for two cadetships which he did not give me. I would therefore recommend you to bring some other influence besides mine to bear upon him in favour of your nephew'.²³

Entry to care in the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham was also for the privileged few. Founded in 1684, it had accommodation for 300 men. Subsequently, 'for over 240 years successive generations of old soldiers were provided for here in comfortable surroundings unaffected by the social deprivation outside'.²⁴ Dietary provision for these pensioners, 9 November 1801 was superior to that available to the general rank and file soldier of the time:

A loaf of bread every day, weight 16 oz and two quarts of small beer every day. Sundays and Tuesdays 18 oz of mutton and ¼lb. of cheese, quart of broth. Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays 18 oz of beef and ¼lb. of cheese, quart of broth. Wednesdays and Fridays, gruel, ½lb. of cheese and 1 oz butter. And on the King's birthday and Saint Patrick's Day, double allowance, and two quarts of ale instead of beer.²⁵

Should however the pensioner be tempted to marry, these benefits were terminated. 'Ordered: that it be an established rule that if any soldier of the hospital presume to marry he be immediately turned out of the house and the hospital clothes taken from him'.²⁶

Efforts to improve the sufficient but monotonous diet of soldiers throughout the nineteenth century were patchy. In the 1830s separate cooking areas were provided within barracks in an effort to improve culinary competence. At this time also many regiments introduced a third meal in the day to supplement breakfast and lunch. This provision it was hoped, would placate soldier's afternoon hunger, provide an

²³ Lord Clarendon to William Fownes Tighe, 8 Oct. 1849 (N.L.I., MS 8259/13).

²⁴ Seosamh Ó Broin, *Inchicore, Kilmainham and district* (Dublin, 2005), p. 46.

²⁵ 'Abstract of the by-laws, rules and orders of King Charles II, of the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, near Dublin' by Thomas Disney, Dublin, 1805, reprinted in the *Irish Sword*, ii (1954), p. 94.

²⁶ Quoted in Ó Broin, *Inchicore, Kilmainham and district*, p. 47.

alternative occupation in the evening and thus reduce drunkenness. Even when posted abroad the stereotyped nature of army regulations meant that adequate supplies of local fruits, fish and vegetables were rarely integrated into his diet. From 1857 an extra allowance was made for the purchase of vegetables and condiments but it was claimed in 1876 that army food was as coarse, tasteless and monotonous as that supplied to convicts in prison.²⁷ The meat issued in the West Indies was heavily salted. This encouraged scurvy and caused soldiers to be inordinately thirsty and thus seek relief in the consumption of the local demonic brew. The principal reason for this establishment penny-pinching was due to the efforts of the army authorities to keep costs at the level of stoppage for rations deducted from soldier's pay. This varied throughout the period of study from 4½d to 6d per day.

Punishments during the period of this study were severe but progressively diminished in severity. The method used to enforce this discipline was the court-martial. Two thirds of all court martials concerned the Irish.²⁸ The frequency of court-martials in Kilkenny in the period 1814-15 has already been noted in Chapter II, but Kilkenny was not unique in this respect. An incomplete set of records of the Kerry militia regiment for the period 1808-11 records the trial of eighty-eight prisoners.²⁹ As a substantial number of the folios for this period are missing, the total number so charged must have been quite large. Various motions to abolish or limit this punishment were introduced in the House of Commons in 1824, 1827, 1828 and 1829. The 1829 Mutiny Act limited the maximum number of lashes that could be awarded by a district or garrison court-martial to 300 and in 1832 regimental court-martials were restricted to 200 lashes.³⁰ A War Office return shows that in the period 12 April to 31 December 1867 there were but seventeen cases of flogging in the army.³¹ In 1868 flogging in peacetime was abolished for soldiers. As the number of floggings decreased alternative punishments increased. The commonest punishment then employed was imprisonment with hard labour and solitary confinement. For serious offences the likely sentence was transportation to Australia for life. For minor

²⁷ May, *Military barracks*, p. 23.

²⁸ Strachan, *Reform of the British army*, p. 52.

²⁹ Jane Spring and Valerie McK. Barry, 'Kerry militia courts martial of the Kerry militia' in *Journal of the Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society*, Series II, i, 2001, pp. 30-31.

³⁰ Strachan, *Reform of the British army*, p. 80.

³¹ *KM*, 4 Mar. 1868.

crimes the soldier could be given extra drills, some of them of extreme severity. Alternatively his pay might be withheld. The sentence of flogging was never inflicted on members of the officer class. This was because he was a gentleman and a man of honour and sensibility, and it was felt that the application of even a few strokes would cause irreparable injury to his honour and render him unfit for the society of a gentleman. 'By contrast his lowly inferior, the common soldier having neither honour nor sensibility, could suffer a public whipping with no more hurt than the physical pain; presumably there would be no social stigma'.³²

'Education was an important aspect of the army's transition from an early uncaring, fiercely disciplined body to a more humane organisation with greater provision for the welfare of its men'.³³ Following the establishment in Ireland of a government national education system in 1831 the number of those able to read and write progressively increased. In Ireland as a whole the percentage of children attending school rose from under twenty-five percent in 1841 to almost sixty percent forty years later.³⁴ However teacher training was haphazard 'and poverty excluded ninety percent of Irish children from obtaining any secondary education'.³⁵ Bereft of sufficient funds to seriously tackle the huge illiteracy problem within the army, Colonel J. H. Lefroy appointed inspector general of army schools in 1857 portrayed an equally pessimistic picture 'the instruction given in our regimental schools rarely proceeds beyond the most elementary stage, and instances are numerous of non-commissioned officers and men who have profited little by years of nominal attendance'.³⁶ Whilst some critics doubted the wisdom or desirability of giving the soldier anything but a basic level of education Lord Strathnairn, commanding the army in Ireland in 1870, felt that instruction should be compulsory for the off-duty soldier.³⁷

To provide a more gainful occupation of soldier's time the need for the provision of

³² John Williamson, *Elements of military arrangement and the discipline of war, adapted to the practice of the British Infantry*, 3rd edn. (London, 1791), ii, p. 164.

³³ Skelley, *The Victorian army at home*, p. 117.

³⁴ Jim McLaughlin, *Reimagining the nation state, the contested terrains of nation building* (London, 2001), p. 207.

³⁵ Skelley, *The Victorian army at home*, p. 88.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

libraries within every barracks was acknowledged. However there were numerous difficulties. A report of a Committee on Reading Rooms and Libraries of 1861 in army barracks noted that:

It has been shown by experience that books alone are not sufficient to withdraw men from places of evil resort. A large proportion of the troops cannot read at all, many soldiers read but imperfectly, and many more have little relish for literary amusement or instruction.³⁸

The same report noted that the library at Kilkenny Barracks was housed in a comfortable single room lit by an oil lamp which provided an insufficient light for the average daily attendance of ten soldiers. Under the management of barrackmaster Green both newspapers and games were provided. The lack of literacy pre-famine amongst soldiers must seriously question the effectiveness of the promotion of bible reading amongst the soldiers. During the period 1780-1840 the naval and military bible society distributed 356,300 bibles.³⁹ On 21 September 1825 the 79th Regiment of Foot at Kilkenny received 98 bibles and 516 prayer books.⁴⁰ As the bibles cost 3/6d and prayer books 2/= each, an enormous sum of money in soldier's terms, one must ask was their sale subsidised. Because of this widespread illiteracy one must also question the relevance of contemporary military manuals which were often couched in obtruse technical language, and billboard posters listing barrack regulations which were posted in barrack rooms, to the general body of soldiers. This lack of literacy amongst Irish soldiers meant that in comparison with their English and Scottish colleagues, a lower proportion of them, pre-famine, became N.C.O.s in the army.

Parallel with the great changes occurring within the civil administration the same devices used in social reform operated within military affairs. 'The accumulation of statistics until their weight presented an unanswerable argument for reform, so much a feature of Chadwick's assault on urban sanitary conditions, is also to be found in the army'.⁴¹ After Waterloo, Sir James McGregor, director general of the army

³⁸ Report of a committee on libraries, reading rooms, and day rooms for soldiers, 1861 (T.N.A., WO 33/10/149).

³⁹ *KM*, 9 May 1840.

⁴⁰ Report of society for the promotion of Christian knowledge, 21 Sept., 1825 (T.N.A., WO 30/94).

⁴¹ Hew Strachan, 'The early Victorian army and the nineteenth century revolution in government' in *The English Historical Review*, xcvi (1980), p. 784.

medical department, started compiling a system of half-yearly returns on the sickness of troops based at home and abroad. At this time Dr. Henry Marshall was similarly engaged in the collection of statistics. In 1835 the secretary at war commissioned Marshall and Lieutenant A. M. Tulloch to collate all the information gathered since 1817. Their report published between 1837 and 1840 initiated changes in army diet, barrack construction and the more frequent rotation of battalions engaged in service abroad.⁴² In 1856 alone it was conditions associated with the living conditions of soldiers which contributed to the extraordinary amount of sickness within the army. Diseases such as tuberculosis, respiratory ailments and fever all connected with poor living conditions were accountable for hospitalising thirty-seven percent of rank and file soldiers.⁴³ A royal commission on the sanitary conditions of barracks which reported its findings in 1861 noted that 'whilst the mortality rate of male civilians aged twenty to forty was 9.8 per thousand, that of soldiers within barracks was almost double at 17.11 per thousand.'⁴⁴ This was despite the army's rigorous weeding-out of unfit candidates at the point of recruitment. The commission noted that of the barracks they inspected 162 were overcrowded by a third with little provision for privacy or decency.⁴⁵ Rheumatism contracted during protracted spells of guard patrol duty under wet and freezing conditions was the commonest reported ailment amongst soldiers of the 41st Regiment, followed by colds and accidents, venereal diseases and diarrhoea.⁴⁶ Following the recommendations of this commission improved ventilation and sanitary conditions with better bathhouses and privies were introduced into army barracks, as were new minimum space requirements of 17 cubic metres of airspace and 5.6 square metres of floor space per soldier in accommodation areas.⁴⁷

During the period 1832-4 a cholera epidemic struck Ireland, creating fear and panic throughout the entire country. Because it was water-borne its effects were indiscriminate striking at rich and poor. It was most prevalent in urban areas where

⁴² Strachan, *Reform of the British army*, p. 185.

⁴³ Skelley, *The Victorian army at home*, p. 27.

⁴⁴ May, *Military barracks*, p. 19.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Muriel Philips Joslyn, 'The youth and Irish military service of Patrick Cleburne (1828-1864)' in *The Irish Sword*, xxiii, no. 91, 2002, p. 95.

⁴⁷ May, *Military barracks*, p. 19.

large numbers of people used the same contaminated water supplies. In Kilkenny its most disastrous effects were experienced in the squalid teeming areas of the city - affecting principally the neighbourhoods of Broguemakers Hill, The Lake and Greenshill. 'The cabins were densely crowded, and of the most miserable description filled to overflowing with potato beggars and a class of wretched cottiers, who were drawn in from the rural districts to seek the means of life'.⁴⁸ The city and county of Kilkenny were amongst the hardest-hit urban and county areas of the country struck by this epidemic with mortality rates totalling 296 deaths out of 431 cases.⁴⁹ Towards the end of 1848, with Ireland's population weakened and wretched from the effects of the famine, another cholera epidemic hit the country. 'Statistics showed that Kilkenny had had the highest percentage of disease in Ireland with sixty-eight cases reported'.⁵⁰ In an effort to curtail the spread of disease throughout the city the sale of intoxicating liquor was banned.⁵¹ An epidemic, less severe, in 1854 was responsible for fifty-five cases. The authorities had little scientific knowledge of the origins of these diseases, how they were propagated or remedies to effect the patient's cure. The answers to these problems remained unsolved until the end of the century when scientific medicine discovered germs and the extent to which cleanliness inhibited the propagation of germs in the first place.⁵²

Within Irish barracks, pre 1860, sanitary conditions were not conducive to healthy living. In the absence of adequate underground drainage systems surface water covered large outdoor areas on many barrack complexes, making them unsuitable and dangerous for drill and exercise, during inclement weather. The water supply primarily derived from 'shallow wells' within the precincts of the barracks were apt to fail in dry weather. Compared to advances made in the civilian world 'all country barracks', in the view of a parliamentary enquiry of 1861 had 'not kept pace with the improvements which had been carried out in water supplies for towns, and in the means of collecting, conveying, and distributing water for use'.⁵³ There was also

⁴⁸ *KJ*, 25 Jan. 1834.

⁴⁹ Joseph Robins, *The miasma; epidemic and panic in nineteenth century Ireland* (Dublin, 1995), p. 108.

⁵⁰ Robert Wyse Jackson, *The story of Kilkenny* (Cork, 1974), p. 94.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Robins, *The miasma*, p. 225.

⁵³ General report of the commission appointed for improving the sanitary condition of barracks and hospitals, H.C. 1861, xvi, p. 42.

within barracks 'a total want of any proper systematic method of ventilation except from the occasional opening of doors and windows'.⁵⁴ Neither was there any day rooms in any of the barracks with men obliged to live, eat and sleep in the same room. As regards the provision of cooking facilities the situation was equally primitive with no 'other available means of cooking except boiling'.⁵⁵

In 1861 only 384 men inhabited Kilkenny barracks. Allocating the regulatory 600 cubic feet room space per man would have allowed an occupancy of 586 men, thus creating a deficiency of 200 men in accommodation terms. It was claimed 'that these barracks appear to have been occupied but partially during the year allowing the troops a liberal cubic space in their quarters and hospital no incidents of overcrowding had taken place'.⁵⁶ However there was in the report a criticism of the medical facilities available at the barracks. The hospital accommodation consisted of 'three wards, en suite, the innermost ward being devoted to sick prisoners over whom a soldier on guard is placed, and the sick in the other two wards have to be disturbed at every change of guard by the men passing and repassing by day and night'.⁵⁷ The report concluded that 'this hospital is ill adapted for sick both from its structure, position and neighbourhood. It would be better to build another'. The hospital site though in a 'tolerably good part of the barrack enclosure' was compromised by the magazine being placed beside it 'with the constant disturbance by the placing of sentries and their half-hourly calls, especially at night when quietness for sick men is most necessary'.⁵⁸ Other negative factors were that:

Immediately behind the magazine, and much too close to the hospital, are the barrack privies, and on the opposite side of the hospital is the wash-house where the barrack washing is done, neither of which buildings ought to have been placed there at all. More recently a ball court has been provided for the barrack, a most laudable and necessary adjunct to all barracks, but in this case the court has been placed against the end wall of the hospital, so that the noise proceeding from the game is heard in all the wards on that side.⁵⁹

The shallow barrack well at Kilkenny dug into the substrata of the barrack yard was in proximity to stables, privies, cesspits, ash pits and dung heaps. These were

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 39.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 48.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 281.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 124.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 124.

constantly emitting impurities into a porous soil and seeping into the well and were a potent cause of disease and mortality.⁶⁰ As a result of this report the hospital wards were ventilated by shafts and inlets and a properly drained latrine installed. However the recommendation that the privy, ash pit and cesspit be removed from the yard at a cost of £9 was long-fingered.⁶¹ With regard to the provision of quarters for the families of 'legally' married soldiers this report noted that this problem was 'one of the greatest difficulties at the present time'.⁶²

Similar to some other contagious sicknesses, venereal disease could be checked. However complex medical, legal and moral issues were entangled with the implementation of reforms. There were the costs of hospitalisation and the difficulties of enforcement with 'no overall regulation of these wandering females who could easily roam from city to city'.⁶³ Nearly one-third of the hospital cases in the army was caused by venereal disease, with 422 admissions to every 1,000 men.⁶⁴ The problem could not be ignored indefinitely. In 1863 the *Lancet* noted 'the country will not hold the authorities free from blame if they continue to disregard the diffusion of these diseases which so fatally sap the strength of our costly army'.⁶⁵ The government introduced the first of three Contagious Diseases Acts in 1864, which were subsequently amended in 1866 and again in 1869. This act permitted the compulsory inspection of prostitutes in certain military camps in both England and Ireland. 'A woman could also be arrested by a policeman on suspicion of being a prostitute and taken before a magistrate, who had the power to certify her as a common prostitute and order her to submit to a fortnightly internal examination'.⁶⁶ Despite the wide variations in the enforcement of the acts, the army medical report for 1866 indicated a small decrease in the annual rates of venereal disease compared with previous years.⁶⁷ In 1864 the rate declined to 29 percent and in 1867 to 20 percent.⁶⁸ The military by applying the principles of these public health measures

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 166.

⁶³ *Lancet*, i (1865), p. 235.

⁶⁴ *Lancet*, i (1862), p. 465.

⁶⁵ *Lancet*, ii (1863), p. 517.

⁶⁶ Maria Luddy, 'Women and the Contagious Diseases Acts 1864-86' in *History Ireland*, i, no. 1 (Spring 1993), p. 32.

⁶⁷ Army medical report for 1866, H.C., xxxiv (1868), p. 279.

⁶⁸ Army medical report for 1867, H.C., xlv (1869), p. 19.

succeeded in the partial remedying of a problem that had plagued armies for centuries.

Drunkenness amongst rank and file soldiers, as evidenced in Chapter I, was similarly a disgraceful blot on the military character and was connected with the vast majority of crimes tried by court-martial. However this malady was not solely confined to the lower ranks. Non-commissioned officers, even those with a proven record of sobriety and dependability, on being accused of a charge of drunkenness were brought before a court-martial and a reduction in the ranks inevitably followed conviction. Undue familiarity, on the part of the non-commissioned officers with the rank and file soldier by 'drinking or joking or associating with them as companions could lead to the same fate'.⁶⁹ Thus the military authorities had a firm hold on the personal and professional conduct of individual officers. As Sir John Fortescue noted 'every officer was practically bound over to good behaviour in the price of his commission which was forfeited if he were cashiered'.⁷⁰ On the other hand officers could regularly get drunk, and did, as their memoirs recall, without the fear of punishment. Similarly the over-indulgence in fine wines by many officers in regimental messes 'often leading to mindless horse play such as the ritual breaking of chairs' attracted no official retribution.⁷¹

Living conditions for married soldiers and their families which were morally acceptable did not exist within Irish barracks in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Married couples and single soldiers shared common dormitories. The only concession to privacy afforded to married couples was a blanket suspended on a cord dividing their space from the others. However the condition of families accommodated within the barracks was vastly superior to those residing outside the complex. Soldiers who married without obtaining the approval of the commanding officer were seriously discriminated against. This permission was conditional on the applicant having completed a long period of exemplary service. Those who married without permission were denied the indulgences granted to married men:

⁶⁹ D. B. M. Huffer, 'The infantry officers of the line of the British army 1815-1868': University of Birmingham, Ph.D. thesis, 1995, p. 187.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, quoting from Sir John Fortescue, *The last post* (Edinburgh, 1934), p. 287.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

A discretionary power is vested in the commanding officer of withholding these advantages which by the regulations and the custom of the service are extended to married soldiers from such as are not of good character or whose wives do not conduct themselves with propriety, or from such as have married without the consent of the commanding officer.⁷²

The soldier who married without permission was obliged to live within the barracks whilst his wife lived outside. He was also denied any chance of future promotion.

The reluctance of the army to provide married quarters for soldiers and their families, during the first half of the nineteenth century, stemmed from an establishment view that the provision of such accommodation would provide the soldier with a greater inducement to marry. A policy of allowing all soldiers to marry would have hindered the army's essential mobility. It was also felt that such housing was beyond the reach of men who were paid only a shilling a day and could ill afford to support a wife and family. Only twenty out of 251 stations in Britain in 1857 had married quarters. The failure to provide separate married accommodation offended all sanitary and moral principles. Several cases, a government report noted in 1861, were found where the daughters of soldiers up to the age of fourteen or fifteen mixed in with troops.⁷³ Young boys were similarly morally challenged by being frequently in the company of hard drinking soldiers with a propensity to curse, swear, speak immodestly and overimbibe strong drink. Plans for Ireland's first married quarters at Beggars Bush barracks, Dublin, were drawn up in the summer of 1860.⁷⁴ Kilkenny's married quarters was of much later origin and therefore outside the scope of this study. Equally there was no accommodation provided for married officers.

When the regiment was ordered overseas the wife's position became even more acute. Only six women could go with each company. The common practice was to draw six names by lot from the 'legally married'. For those left at home the prospect of ever seeing their menfolk again was remote. This was especially true of those with

⁷² Regulations of officers, N.C.O.s and men and their families of the Ordnance military corps approved by the master general and board, 5 Nov. 1828 (printed 1829), (T.N.A., WO 44/732).

⁷³ Interim reports on barracks (T.N.A. WO. 33/6a) quoted in Skelley, *The Victorian army at home*, p. 36.

⁷⁴ Jacinta Prunty, *Military barracks and mapping in the nineteenth century: sources and issues for Irish urban history* in Howard B. Clarke, Jacinta Prunty and Mark Hennessy (eds.), *Surveying Ireland's past: multidisciplinary essays in honour of Annagret Simms* (Dublin, 2004), p. 522.

attachments to soldiers serving fifteen to twenty-five year periods of enlistment. The desperation of one such Kilkenny victim is graphically illustrated in the case of Bridget Pendergast. Writing to her father from Limerick, 6 September 1834, she earnestly implores him to ask their landlord Mr. James Wansford [sic] to contact Major Tighe to obtain permission for her to go with her husband 'wherever in the world he is sent'. Her husband's regiment, based in Limerick, had volunteered to go to Maltagh [sic].⁷⁵ The instability of a number of these marriages where husbands were serving abroad for long periods is highlighted in 'the mournful history of the chequered and criminal career of the notorious Catherine Hoyne'. Thus Rev. E. Rice of St. John's parish in Kilkenny writing to Rev. W. P. Mulcahy in Dublin, 8 November 1855, describes how Hoyne was married to Reilly in Kilkenny about twenty years ago but he separated from her in a wayward manner a few years later. Unable to prove whether Reilly was living or dead as 'she neither knew or cared' she subsequently married Holohan and later Nolan in the church of St. Nicholas in Dublin, 'fearing that no priest in Kilkenny could be procured to perform either ceremony'.⁷⁶

During the Crimean War (1854-6) there was a dramatic change in attitude by the authorities in relation to the evangelistic and pastoral care of the expeditionary army. Over sixty Anglican chaplains were dispatched to the war front together with a small number of Presbyterian and Roman Catholic chaplains. The Catholic chaplains were paid at a lower rate than the others because it was claimed they were accustomed to a lower standard of living.⁷⁷ This was much to the annoyance of *The Tablet*.⁷⁸ Pre 1850 the policy had been to reduce acting chaplains to a base minimum and 'rely on the parochial clergy to provide divine worship on Sundays and the rites of passage'.⁷⁹ During this era troops were often stationed in centres, such as Kilkenny, where church accommodation was not adequate or clerical manpower sufficient to meet this influx. 'Moreover the clergy were paid a discouragingly small standard fee, which

⁷⁵ Bridget Pendergast to her father, 6 Sept. 1834 (N.L.I., MS 3567513).

⁷⁶ Rev. E. Rice to Rev. W. P. Mulcahy, 8 Nov. 1855 (D.D.A., File 1, Secular Priests, 1855, 332/7).

⁷⁷ Hansard, 3rd set, cxxxvii, 9.

⁷⁸ *The Tablet*, 14 Oct. 1854.

⁷⁹ Olive Anderson, 'The growth of Christian militarism in mid-Victorian Britain' in *English Historical Review*, no. 86, Jan. 1971, p. 61.

until 1845 bore no relation to the numbers of men who received their ministrations'.⁸⁰ In 1858 it was decided that chaplains would be engaged according to the proportions of men of each religion in the forces.⁸¹ This was reflected in Kilkenny in returns dated 14 March 1859 relating to 'divine service' and the payment of £60 to the Episcopalian minister, £50 to the Catholic and £40 to the Presbyterian clergymen.⁸² 'By the mid-1860s there was more provision being made for the spiritual welfare of the army than for either the town or country population in general'.⁸³

The role of the 'Crimean women' whether 'official' or unofficial has until recently been sparsely acknowledged. Over 10,000 official wives served in the Crimea.⁸⁴ The plight of these women arriving at Balaklava quay is poignantly related by 'a voice from the ranks'. He notes these travellers as woe begone, forlorn, miserable and wretchedly clothed. A number of them were in an advanced state of pregnancy trailing their bundles after them along the quay.⁸⁵ These wretched conditions, the writer observed, arose within him feelings of great pity for these women and a sense of scorn for a government and a 'twaddling economy which won't pay for their subsistence at home'. Serving as cooks, laundresses or nursing-aids close to the battlefield their service was indispensable as there was so little spare capacity in the army Crimean services. It is pertinent to ask, in hindsight, whether the army could have survived without them. Whether as wives or widows, seamstresses or sutlers these women won respect under difficult circumstances.

Posted abroad accommodation was never adequate for the numbers of soldiers or their wives. Joseph Donaldson describing his experiences on the Iberian peninsula during the Napoleonic War complained 'in what remained there was not shelter for the half of our men; and by a rule of division, often practiced in the army, that little

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Skelley, *The Victorian army at home*, p. 165.

⁸² Account "in detail, of the expenditure of £19,732, Commissioned Chaplains, distinguishing Protestants and Roman Catholics:", "Similar account of £17,640, Officiating clergymen at home and abroad.", p. 361, H.C. 1859, i, (135), xv, 345.

⁸³ Skelley, *The Victorian army at home*, p. 166.

⁸⁴ David Murphy, Ireland and the Crimean War, lecture to Department of Modern History, seminar series NUI Maynooth, 19 Feb. 2004.

⁸⁵ Anonymous, *The war or voices from the ranks* (London, 1855), p. 15 (N.L.I., MS J 3550947).

was made less by the officers appropriating half of it to themselves'.⁸⁶ This scarcity of accommodation meant that the families of married soldiers had to live among single men, a situation which often led to jealousies, disputes and hatred amongst the parties. This was the case at Rawalpindi in 1856 when 'a Connaughtman named Costello' murdered his partner Mary Walsh from the Butts in Kilkenny because of a perceived notion of an over-familiarity of Mary with a number of his soldier room-mates.⁸⁷

Post Crimea, the position of the soldier's wife improved with the realisation of the correlation between marriage and good conduct. Another element of this ethos was that the provision of improved and wider opportunities for exercise and education would deliver a fitter, better informed and healthier soldier. From at least 1841 purpose-built gymnasia, racket courts and cricket pitches were provided at military barracks throughout Britain.⁸⁸ Throughout the 1860s and 1870s cricket teams from the local barracks competed with teams drawn from the local gentry and other visiting regimental teams. The *Kilkenny Moderator*, 6 July 1864 gives details of a match between a county Kilkenny gentry team and an eleven drawn from the 5th Dragoon Guards representing county Tipperary.⁸⁹ Similarly a team drawn from the officers of the 68th Light Infantry competed against a county Kilkenny team as reported by the *Kilkenny Moderator*, 10 August 1870.⁹⁰ The annual regimental athletic sports day was Kilkenny's most important sporting and social event. The Sports Day of 1869 arranged by the officers of the 44th Regiment had an attendance 'large and fashionable, many of our leading citizens, with the gentry from the surrounding district being present'. Tents were erected in the barrack square 'for the accommodation of the fashionables'. This report also notes that 'one of the most interesting features in the day's proceedings was a race between two of the officers of the regiment on velocipedes, driving four times around the barrack square, the speed at which they travelled astonishing the spectators'.⁹¹ This regimental display of

⁸⁶ Joseph Donaldson, *Recollections of the eventful life of a soldier* (Staplehurst, Kent, 2000), p. 62.

⁸⁷ *KM*, 23 Aug. 1854.

⁸⁸ Fives courts: Estimates for installation at military stations 1838-40 (T.N.A., WO 43/595).

⁸⁹ *KM*, 6 July 1864.

⁹⁰ *KM*, 10 Aug. 1870.

⁹¹ *KJ*, 19 June 1869.

its social and sporting life was primarily aimed at Kilkenny's successful rising merchant class to portray the attractions of military service. For the successful merchant, the acquisition of a commission for his son would bestow the imprimatur of arrival.

The expenditure of £450 for his son's commission he considered to be a sound investment. In this changing scenario the incursion of new wealth into the officer corps was resented by officers, clergymen and professional men who for many years provided a large part of officer intake and increasingly were unable to afford the cost of commissions for their sons.

Efforts to expand the constituency from which officers were generally drawn had been ongoing for a number of years. In 1835 Sir Hussey Vivian in an effort to break the near-monopoly of sons of gentry within the officer corps set up a committee to ensure that examinations would be tougher and held in open competition:

For the officers examinations for first commissions in 1849 were followed in 1850 by those for promotion to captain. The current of promotion itself which had virtually dried up with peacetime contraction was revived by the recommendation in 1854 of promotion by merit.⁹²

The syllabus at Sandhurst, Britain's officer training school, was in comparison to its French and Prussian counterparts narrow and conservative. The entrance examination in arithmetic and English were regarded by Sir George Scovell as ridiculously simple.⁹³ Geography and algebra were added in 1851 whilst Latin, French and German became optional in 1853. 'The theory of war might be a suitable topic for the French to study at St. Cyr but not for the British army'.⁹⁴ The compulsory core element of the five year German syllabus in the Kriegssademie included tactics, military history, science of arms, field and permanent fortifications, military and political administration, economics, mathematics, artillery, geography, geology, staff duties and military jurisprudence.⁹⁵ The key concept in the training of

⁹² Strachan, *Reform of the British army*, p. 110.

⁹³ Strachan, *Reform of the British army*, p. 126.

⁹⁴ D. B. M. Huffer, 'The infantry officers of the line of the British army 1815-1868': University of Birmingham, Ph.D. thesis, 1995, p. 172.

⁹⁵ Coleman Goggin, 'The military officer, his education, training and development', M.A. thesis, University College, Dublin, 1998, p. 71.

German cadets was the rejection of 'the dependence on the great man' and that reliance would have to be placed on average men succeeding by superior education, organisation and experience. Judgement and innovative flexible thinking were encouraged as was the granting of 'the greatest autonomy possible for the subordinate commander consonant with action which was apposite in the context of the overall plan of the commander-in-chief.'⁹⁶ The exemplar of British military indecision and lack of expansive vision was Lord Cardigan who:

When presented with the chance of a lifetime to exploit the Heavy Brigade success at Balaklava sat on his horse and did nothing. Had he acted as he was being urged by his subordinates not only would he have brought off a great coup, but the ill-fated charge of the Light Brigade would not have taken place.⁹⁷

N. Dixon in his study, *The psychology of military incompetence* (London, 1976) 'identifies the authoritarian personality as a very important contributory factor to the likelihood of military incompetence'.⁹⁸ He further suggests that military organisations in general particularly attract people with these tendencies. Such a person was the aforementioned Lord Cardigan. Major L. Morse-Cooper when asked why he left the regiment in which he had spent twenty-one years replied:

I left it on the account of the overbearing conduct and unendurable insolence of its commanding officer, which rendered the tenure of my commission insecure; and from experience I hold the opinion that no captain or subaltern of ordinary spirit and gentlemanly feeling is safe under the command of Lieutenant Colonel the Earl of Cardigan.⁹⁹

Similar sentiments were expressed by Captain Shakespeare of the Royal Horse Artillery who served in the Crimea who described Cardigan as 'the most impractical and most inefficient cavalry officer in the service' who needlessly imposed excessive hardships on both men and horses.¹⁰⁰ Another example of this *genre* was Colonel Neill whose involvement in the suppression of the Indian Mutiny, in May 1857, was described as 'busily wielding the sword of Christian righteousness on the march from Calcutta to the centres of revolt further to the west and north'. 'Like some latter day Cromwell, Neill sought biblical justification for what he was about'.¹⁰¹ Even the

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁹⁷ John Strawson, *If by chance, military turning points that changed history* (London, 2003), p. 3.

⁹⁸ Quoted in Goggin, 'The military officer, his education, training and development', p. 122.

⁹⁹ *KM*, 21 Nov. 1840.

¹⁰⁰ David Murphy, *Ireland and the Crimean War* (Dublin, 2002), p. 41.

¹⁰¹ K. T. Hoppen, *The mid-Victorian generation 1846-1886* (Oxford, 1998), p. 191.

conservative Duke of Cambridge as commander-in-chief thought many officers guilty of 'treating the men especially the native officers, with contempt, in fact looking down upon them, calling them niggers etc.'. ¹⁰² It is evident from the above and other examples quoted in this study that many of the army's commanding officers were sorely lacking in the skills of man management and were incapable of establishing personal relationships with their fellow soldiers.

Revised regulations introduced by General Sir Henry Torrens in 1824 governed the nature of drilling until the 1870s 'when parade drill and battle drill came to be separated'. ¹⁰³ During the 1840s the *Kilkenny Journal* frequently reported the widespread complaint amongst Kilkenny soldiers of being subjected to periods of excessive and pointless drilling. A report published, 30 August 1843 noted that in order for soldiers to do their duty well 'it was important their spirits be kept free from petty annoyances and their bodies from superfluous fatigue'. ¹⁰⁴ A year later the same newspaper complained that the carrying of sixty rounds of ball cartridge together with his knapsack and accoutrements on the soldier's back 'for four and twenty hours while on guard [duty] is almost an intolerable load'. ¹⁰⁵ In 1865 a War Office committee set up to examine the relationship between the occurrence of heart and lung disease and the uniform and the equipment of the soldier concluded that military drill was not excessive but that uniforms 'tight fitting and uncomfortable' and 'cumbersome ill-designed accoutrements' were especially harmful to the younger soldier. ¹⁰⁶

The introduction of the breach-loading rifle during the Napoleonic War allowed soldiers to load quicker and to load whilst lying down. Soldiers of the earlier muzzle-loading rifle were obliged to remain in a standing position and were thus an easier target for enemy fire. Another important invention of the period was smokeless gunpowder which greatly improved visibility on the battlefield. With the onset of the Industrial Revolution the mass production of arms led to the greater availability of

¹⁰² E. M. Spiers, *The army and society 1815-1914* (London, 1980), p. 122.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *KJ*, 30 Aug. 1843.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 11 Sept. 1844.

¹⁰⁶ Skelley, *The Victorian army at home*, p. 61.

more powerful and more accurate weaponry. Generally this technological progress in the development of new weapons was left to private firms, with the army only expressing an interest when this weaponry had been successfully tested. The adoption by the army of the minié rifle in 1851, followed by the enfield in 1853 provided the soldier with a weapon effective at 800 yards in contrast to the 150 yard range of the old percussion musket. Besides being more accurate and convenient the enfield rifle was quicker to load, was not subject to misfiring, had interchangeable parts and was cheap to repair.¹⁰⁷ Tactical battle formation throughout the nineteenth century was greatly influenced by repercussions from the Napoleonic experiment with mass warfare. Employing mixed-armed units with military structures of divisions and corps, the development of all-purpose infantry and the massing of firepower were seen as the way forward for all modern armies.¹⁰⁸ The successes of Prussian military organisation in the wars of 1866 and 1870-1 had a profound impact upon those concerned with military reform in Britain; these standards were seen to portray the art of war in its perfection.

Evidence of a greater professionalism in preparing troops for battle conditions extending to Kilkenny is provided in a *Kilkenny Moderator* report of 30 July 1870. This account notes the return of Major Warburton and the Kilkenny regiment of militia from Templemore after attending their usual annual course of rifle practice. This report further noted that this year's training 'showed a considerable advance as compared with that of any preceding year'.¹⁰⁹

The army's command structure could, pre Cardwell, also be described as dysfunctional in many respects. Britain after 1815 had a less than cohesive headquarters staff based at the Horse Guards in London. There was an overlapping of regimental and administrative loyalties. An officer with a staff position in London retained his regimental rank and seniority, thereby loading extra work on his officer colleagues while retaining his promotional options within the regiment. The long delay in 1827-1855, in the appointment of a chief of staff, was to prove disastrous on

¹⁰⁷ Terry McLaughlin, 'The changing face of war' in *An Cosantóir*, July-Aug. 1996, lvi, no. 6, p. 10.

¹⁰⁸ David Gates, *The Napoleonic Wars 1803-15* (London, 2003), p. 275.

¹⁰⁹ *KM*, 30 July 1870.

the outbreak of the Crimean War. Because it was never made clear who was actually in overall charge of the allied forces, and because of the feeble leadership of various senior commanders, chaos reigned. Lord Raglan, the sixty-six year old commander in the Crimea, had not seen active service since the Napoleonic War. There were far too few British troops: 27,000 against 30,000 French. 'Whereas the French could expand their army in the Crimea four-fold British casualties went largely unreplaced'.¹¹⁰ Troops besieging Sevastopol, although situated only nineteen miles from their supply-port at Balaklava, were cut off from these supplies by a sea of mud and an inadequate land transportation system. Ships left the Crimea with their cargoes unloaded.¹¹¹

Throughout the nineteenth century the army in Ireland though nominally under the command of the lord lieutenant was in practical terms under the control of the commander-in-chief. His offices and staff were based at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham as were the offices of the auxiliary and reserve forces. The military, artillery, engineering, medical and commissariat departments were based at Dublin Castle. The adjutant general was the chief staff officer of the commander-in-chief. His duties in 1809 comprised all matters concerning the discipline, clothing, arming and recruitment of troops. The commissariat department was responsible for the purchase and supply of food, fuel and forage.¹¹²

The Ordnance, a separate department from the army, combined a strange amalgam of civil and military functions. It was responsible for the provision, safe custody and supply of everything of a warlike nature: everything an army in the field might require. In 1823 control of Ireland's barracks was transferred to His Majesty's Ordnance in England, and subsequently, post 1855, the Ordnance Office was abolished and its functions integrated into the War Office in 1857.¹¹³ The Ordnance was also responsible for the survey of the United Kingdom for the purposes of providing adequate maps for defence purposes. Because of the difficulties of

¹¹⁰ Alastair Massie, 'Crisis in the Crimea' in *Living History*, no. 8, Nov. 2003, p. 25.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Michael Roper, *The records of the War Office and related departments 1660-1964* (Kew, 1998), p. 139.

¹¹³ Prunty, 'Military barracks and mapping in the nineteenth century', in *Surveying Ireland's past* (Dublin, 2004), p. 478.

establishing and retaining barrack boundaries, and the upgrading of living conditions in line with health and sanitary requirements, maps were required on a continuing basis. Jacinta Prunty points out that military barracks in Ireland 'are arguably the town plan element which has been mapped to the highest standards and most often over time'.¹¹⁴ This study also notes that these Ordnance surveys throughout the nineteenth century, which resulted in the production of large scale barrack maps, gives an insight into how the military interacted with the larger urban structure.

In an effort to reduce costs generally and rationalise Ireland's barrack holdings the Board of Ordnance in 1836 called for a report of barracks surplus to requirement. In November 1849, Lord John Russell ordered that this question be again urgently revisited. However it was not until 1853 that John Burgoyne's plan for 'an integrated all-Ireland system based on a small number of major depots' with good rail links was adopted by Parliament.¹¹⁵ Post Crimea Kilkenny's military barracks were placed in what can only be described as a caretaker situation, and the area's military headquarters established in Waterford. This move ignored Kilkenny's greater military amenities, its much bigger barrack site, and the superior health records of its occupants over many years. However it would seem that the hands on the levers of power in Kilkenny at this time were otherwise engaged. John, 2nd Marquess of Ormonde, was drowned in a bathing accident in Duncannon in 1854 leaving a wife and young children.¹¹⁶ His wife Frances Jane Paget lost her uncle Field Marshall Paget in the same year. These factors deprived Kilkenny of two strong advocates. The Crimean War, however, had demonstrated the advantages, in Waterford's favour, of having a barracks situated close to a deep-water harbour when transporting regiments and their vast amounts of stores abroad.

This lack of a strong military presence in Kilkenny in the mid 1850s further worsened locally a deepening recruitment crisis general to all parts of the country. In the 1830s and 1840s the majority of Kilkenny recruits came from the agricultural labouring class. However, post famine, with the shift of population to the large

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 499.

¹¹⁶ John Bradley, *Discover Kilkenny* (Dublin, 2000), p. 29.

towns, recruitment increasingly was from the slum areas of these towns. Achieving the enlistment of a 'better-class' recruit, the object of the authorities, throughout the period of this study, was never achieved. Population decline, increased emigration and the more widespread literacy of the population, post famine, had diminished the recruitment pool. Whilst there continued to be a dribble of recruits from occupations in distress such as tailors, cobblers, masons and millers, a gentleman's son or clerk usually enlisted only when he was in trouble. Because of Kilkenny's lack of industrialisation it is difficult to see where mechanics and skilled labourers, the army's greatest need in the 1850s, would be recruited from.

Wellington claimed that the army acting like 'a huge and extravagant reformatory' provided a valuable service to the nation by withdrawing society's most undesirable elements and corralling them in the armed forces where they could be watched and disciplined.¹¹⁷ However, evidence of ill discipline and insubordination within the Victorian army litter this study while incidents of character reformation are few. Joseph Donaldson, already mentioned in Chapter I, attributed his moral regeneration to the influence of both his army captain and army chaplain whilst serving in Kilkenny. Many soldiers' memoirs, like Donaldson's, mention a favourite officer whose small acts of kindness towards them and solicitude for their welfare and the sharing of all the danger and exposure of battle endeared them to the men under their command.¹¹⁸ Such charismatic figures were scarce amongst army officers. In contrast other officers were renowned for their sadism and bullying of men under their command.

The need for wide-ranging reforms addressing sanitary conditions at Balaklava was expressed by Doctor Sutherland, chief sanitary commissioner, 10 July 1855.¹¹⁹ Noting that efforts to prevent cholera had failed, nevertheless the commissioners 'had succeeded in doing about all that was possible, but not all that was desirable'.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Peter Burroughs, 'Crime and punishment in the British army 1815-70' in *English Historical Review*, no. 100 (1985), p. 550.

¹¹⁸ Donaldson, *Recollections of a soldier*, p. 260.

¹¹⁹ Doctor Sutherland to Lord Shaftesbury and Sir James Clarke, 10 July 1855 quoted in the *Cork Examiner*, 24 Aug. 1855.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

These 'great difficulties' were because 'Balaklava was in a filthy state from the nature of its position, and the accumulation of filth, together with a graveyard containing thousands of carcasses of men and animals buried, mostly in water and hardly covered with earth'.¹²¹ The impetus of the administrative reforms initiated following the Crimean War was not maintained. 'Even if it had been, the changes would not have given Britain an army sufficient to intervene on the continent'.¹²² This inability to mobilise more than 30,000 of its own troops in the Crimea was perceived in Europe as a weakening of Britain's once military prowess.

Conclusion

Regarded as the costly plaything of the crown the army, distrusted by a parsimonious Parliament who favoured the navy, was allowed to fall into decline in the period between the ending of the Napoleonic War (1815) and the outbreak of the Crimean War (1854). Whilst Britain's leaders were busily involved in reforming other state institutions in the 'Age of Reform' the army was deliberately ignored. 'It became the stronghold of an aristocracy that resisted change and that attempted to maintain a code of out-moded privileges regardless of the pressures of an industrial age'.¹²³ Though well-intentioned the measures aimed at precluding the officer corps becoming the preserve of the landed gentry introduced post 1856, did not in practice achieve the desired aim of a more balanced class representation. The army's requirement that its officers should have 'the education of a gentleman' carried connotations as to behaviour and deportment, which prevented it becoming the other ranks passport to a commission.¹²⁴

The pace of army reform, 1800-1870, was as this chapter illustrates painfully slow. Measures to improve the conditions under which soldiers served were usually belatedly and grudgingly implemented. The disasters of the Crimean War graphically highlighted the need for 'root and branch' reform. As Secretary of State for War Edward T. Cardwell (1868-74) introduced much-needed reform into the organisation

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Massie, 'Crisis in the Crimea' in *Living History*, no. 8 (Nov. 2003), p. 29.

¹²³ Richard L. Blanco, 'The attempted control of venereal disease in the army of mid-Victorian England' in the *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, xlv, no. 184 (1967), p. 234.

¹²⁴ Strachan, *Reform of the British army*, p. 141.

and administration of the British army. These measures, as David N. Haire points out, meant that 'the army changed from one of long-service veterans, all inclined to heavy drinking, slacking and indiscipline, to an army of youths, less excessive in their habits'.¹²⁵ However the shortcomings of many of these reforms became apparent over the next two decades. 'The strains imposed by the failure to preserve a parity of battalions at home and abroad, coupled with the persistence of the recruiting problem and the burden of repeatedly despatching expeditionary forces to small colonial conflicts proved considerable'.¹²⁶

The plight of the common soldier and the impetus for reform, of necessity, had to come from the higher ranks within the army or from outside the service. The unswerving obedience demanded from the rank and file prevented any form of agitation whether in support of a political movement or a campaign for better conditions. Unlike his civilian counterpart he could not readily leave his profession other than deserting or completing his term of service. The less than significant changes implemented following the Cardwell reforms had little effect on the majority of young Kilkenny males of military age. Increasingly, post famine, they rejected the profession for more attractive life-styles in Canada and America. The plummeting cost of ocean transport after mid-century and a rising demand for manual labour in Great Britain and North America were factors that facilitated mass-emigration. The question as to the extent that reforms in pay and living conditions influenced army recruitment cannot be assessed. In many incidents the perception of Kilkenny people towards the military presence changed yearly with the departure and arrival of new regiments. It would seem that there was a policy to send Scottish troops into Kilkenny at times of greatest unrest, setting Celt against Celt (see Appendix No. 7, p. 258). The arrival of Scottish soldiers in town seemed to attract bitter resentment as was the case with Donaldson's regiment. Chapter IV will examine the benign and malevolent aspects of the military presence in Kilkenny.

¹²⁵ David N. Haire, 'In aid of the civil power 1868-90' in Lyons F.S.L. and Hawkins, R.A.J. (eds.) *Ireland under the Union: varieties of tension. Essays in honour of T.W. Moody* (Oxford, 1980), p. 117.

¹²⁶ E. M. Spiers, *The late Victorian army 1868-1902* (Manchester, 1992), p. 24.

Chapter IV

The military presence in Kilkenny, 1800-1870: curse or blessing?

During the nineteenth century the differences separating the communities of Britain and Ireland were the subject of intensifying focus. Inhabited by populations with different language, religion, patterns of living and cultures there was, nevertheless the presence of both identity and difference, of continuity and separation.¹ The complex dialectic of identity and difference as experienced in county Kilkenny, 1800-1870, is the core theme of this chapter. In particular the role of the military locally will be examined in the context of being a progressive 'civilising' force, or as an 'influence for evil' as local Catholic church leaders asserted at various times. The contribution of the garrison to the development of local social, cultural and sporting activities was considerable. The nature of these influences will be investigated. The siting of the barracks on the then underdeveloped eastern outskirts of Kilkenny had huge spatial and social consequences for this area; their significance is probed. The consolidation of a native awareness of Irish nationalism, particularly evident in Kilkenny during the Crimean War, will be outlined.

The local impact of colonisation will be surveyed. Did the 'culture of empire' as Said asserted become 'solidly rooted in the Irish psyche, impacting on our entire mode of expression'?² What was the importance of empire in the construction of Irish Protestant identity? Did empire provide a vehicle of upward mobility to impoverished Irish ascendancy personnel on their retirement from the army? This study will also show that there was a section of Kilkenny Catholic opinion who viewed empire in positive terms and availed of the career opportunities that empire provided. Ex-military men, who might otherwise have been constrained or unemployable after their military service had ended, stayed on in the colonies to assume positions as governors, administrators, police officers, etc. The question of

¹ Andrew Murphy, *But the Irish Sea betwixt us: Ireland, colonialism and renaissance literature* (Lexington, Kentucky, 1999), p. 13.

² Edward Said, *Culture and imperialism* (London, 1993), p. 93.

identity and whether Catholic soldiers considered themselves as victims or partners in the expansion of British global imperium will be questioned. Did a long service with the army blunt their sense of Irishness and obliterate their Kilkenny affiliations? Kevin Kenny asserts that Irish soldiers both Protestant and Catholic 'did not forget their local origins or allegiances during their military career but seldom permitted such loyalties to hinder their commitment to being exemplary officers of the crown'.³ A number of case studies will be explored.

The attitude of British military men to native soldiers serving alongside them in India was one of superiority, dismissive of native culture, social and religious practices. It was this lack of sensitivity that set the continent in revolt in 1857. Cartridges supplied for use with the new Lee-Enfield rifle, the Indians believed, were greased with both pork and beef-fat to keep the powder dry; 'the former deeply repugnant to Muslims and the latter to Hindus'.⁴ The failure to quickly supply replacement cartridges initiated a widespread sepoy and peasant war. This revolt, as Jill C. Bender points out, provided the Irish nationalist press with the ammunition to draw parallels between what was happening in Ireland and India.⁵ In this country the case for Indian rights was most notably advanced by the *Nation* newspaper, whilst the unionist press took the British side. The *Kilkenny Journal* unashamedly nailing its colours to the nationalist mast stated that 'despite the sneers of party and faction our sympathies must ever lie with a people who contend with a bold front, for the greatest blessings life contains - freedom of thought, of action, of country'.⁶ The *Kilkenny Journal* contended that this revolt was 'punishment for long years of misrule and plunder'.⁷ 'The maxim of "divide and govern" which had been found so effective in Ireland was adopted with similar success' in India.⁸ Such anti-establishment opinions caused the *London Spectator* to denounce the Kilkenny newspaper as 'a sepoy journal' adding that there are 'few such brutal journalists in Ireland'.⁹ As R. K. Webb points

³ Kevin Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British empire*, p. xii.

⁴ K. T. Hoppen, *The mid-Victorian generation 1846-1886* (Oxford, 1998), p. 188.

⁵ Jill C. Bender, 'Mutiny or freedom fight? The 1857 Indian mutiny and the Irish press' in Simon J. Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and empire in Ireland and Britain: reporting the British empire c. 1857-1921* (Dublin, 2004).

⁶ *Kilkenny Journal*, 26 Aug. 1857.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 22 July 1857.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1 July 1857.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 9 Sept. 1857.

out 'confident Victorian self-righteousness' and a belief 'that their civilisation was the most advanced in the world, Englishmen tried increasingly to impose their values and procedures on the old often decadent, utterly alien cultures of India'.¹⁰ Imbued with a similar conviction 'of the truth of Christianity' Queen Victoria identified herself with the spread of the Anglican Church on the Indian continent throughout her reign. In the mid 1840s 'some 360 different missionary bodies maintained 12,000 Christian missionaries in the field' who 'claimed to have converted more than ten million people to Christianity'.¹¹ Cardinal Cullen throughout the 1850s fought a long protracted campaign for the provision of proper religious care for Irish Catholic soldiers in India, who were without chaplains and whose children in the garrison schools were exposed 'to anti-Catholic teaching and lesson-books'.¹² The urgent demand for Irish recruits between 1854 and 1860 due to the Crimean War, the Indian mutiny and the second China War, forced a hitherto reluctant anti-Irish, anti-Catholic, Lord Palmerston, leader of Britain's government, to 'concede on the ground of expediency rather than principle' the rights of soldiers to have their own pastors.¹³ By 1858 the army had Catholic chaplains employed on the same terms as those of the established church. The influence that religion exerted on the lifestyle of the British soldier in India in the mid nineteenth century will be briefly summarised in this chapter.

The role of Kilkenny novelists of the period in the formulation of an Irish identity will be explored, as will be their observations in regard to the presence of the military locally. Of less literary merit, but of no less importance, the role of the ballad in expressing national sentiment will be assessed. As the composers of these ballads, and those listening to their recital, struggled with the use of a new language in the transition from Irish to English, their message was always couched in simple terms the populace would understand. Their portrayal of the military and the activities of recruiting officers in particular are gems of humorous parody.

¹⁰ R. K. Webb, *Modern England from the eighteenth century to the present* (London, 1980), p. 313.

¹¹ Jan Morris, *Pax Britannica: the climax of an empire* (London, 1998), p. 500

¹² E. D. Steele, 'Cardinal Cullen and Irish nationality' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xix (1975), pp. 252-3.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Kilkenny's nineteenth century magistrates did not doubt the cultural threat to England's interests that ballad singers and the peddlers of ballad broadsheets constituted and vigorously prosecuted those engaged in these activities. This chapter will discuss Kilkenny's contribution to this folklore, in both Irish and English languages, and in James Cahalan's terms 'piece together from a thousand scattered sources' a more explicit study of their influence.¹⁴

The decision in the late eighteenth century to erect a military barracks in the townland of Roachpond, on the eastern perimeter of Kilkenny city had huge spatial repercussions for the surrounding area. Because of the siting of the barracks in this previously underdeveloped district a huge regeneration and building boom was initiated. During the early decades of the nineteenth century the construction of a fever hospital (1803), Kilkenny union workhouse (1834), Kilkenny gas works (1838) and the Ormonde old folks home (1834) transformed the area.¹⁵ The railway station which opened on 11 May 1848 was also built in close proximity to the barracks.¹⁶ This is not surprising as John Burgoyne, appointed director of fortifications in 1845, was a strong advocate of transporting troops by rail to where they were wanted.¹⁷ There was also a realignment of roads within the area to allow more commodious access to the barracks. In 1817 a presentment made before the Kilkenny Lent Assizes was approved allowing the coach road from Kilkenny to Castlecomer to run parallel with the wall of the military barracks.¹⁸ To facilitate the military to have easier access to the turnpike road to Carlow, a new road linking John's Green to Windgap Hill was constructed in the early 1820s.¹⁹ This eliminated the necessity for horse-drawn vehicles to negotiate the tortuous steep incline of Magdalen Street.

While population figures available for 1800 and for 1821 may not be directly comparable, nevertheless they do highlight major increases in St. John's parish

¹⁴ James N. Cahalan, *Great hatred, little room: the Irish historical novel* (Syracuse, New York, 1983), p. 18.

¹⁵ John Bradley, *Irish historic towns atlas* (Dublin, 2000), no. 10, Kilkenny, Map 8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁷ Jacinta Prunty, 'Military barracks and mapping in the nineteenth century: sources and issues for Irish urban history' in Howard B. Clarke, Jacinta Prunty and Mark Hennessy (eds.), *Surveying Ireland's past: multidisciplinary essays in honour of Anngret Simms* (Dublin, 2004), p. 26.

¹⁸ John Doyle, *An historical survey of St. John's, Kilkenny* (Kilkenny, 1990), p. 48.

¹⁹ Katherine M. Lanigan and Gerard Tyler (eds.), *Kilkenny, its architecture and history* (Kilkenny, 1997), p. 101.

where the barracks (opened 1803) was sited. While the increase in St. John's, at 168.9%, was the largest of the four city parishes, St. Patrick's also experienced major growth, albeit from a smaller starting population. Whilst much of this massive increase is due to the opening of the barracks, an influx of migrants as part of a county-wide massive urban immigration following a major typhoid epidemic of 1817-18 may also have played a role. Whilst these population figures emanating from two different bodies may not be directly comparable, in the absence of any other alternative they do highlight Kilkenny city population trends for that period.

Parish	1800 ^(a)	1821 ^(b)	% Increase from 1800
St. Mary's	2,861	5,081	77.6
St. Canice's	5,446	10,126	85.9
St. Patrick's	907	2,419	166.7
St. John's	2,084	5,604	168.9
Total	13,098	25,051	91.3

Source: (a) William Tighe, *Statistical observations relative to the county of Kilkenny made in the years 1800 and 1801*, 11 (facsimile reprint), (Dublin, 1998), p. 454.
(b) Census of Ireland, *Abstract of answers and returns*, 1821.

Table 4.1 Population 1800 and 1821, Kilkenny city parishes.

Streetscapes near the barracks also experienced major change with a marked increase, over time, in the variety of trades and professions listed. Thirteen business premises are listed for John Street in 1788 (see Table 4.2). Included are three grocers and liquor dealers, one distiller, one brewer and one wine merchant. However when

Street	Business	Occupation	Owner	
John Street	Grocer	Liquor dealer	Bateman	James
John Street	Grocer	Liquor dealer	Bergin	John
John Street	Attorney		Constable	John
John Street	Baker		Dempsey	Hugh
John Street	Grocer	Liquor dealer	Deneeffee	Peter
John Street	Merchant	Bleacher	Kinchella	John
John Street	Barrister		Laffan	James
John Street	Wine Merchant		Laffan	Joseph
John Street	Distillers	Brewers	McCreery and Kinchella	
John Street	Coach Maker		McCreery	John
John Street	Merchant		Shenehan	William
John Street	Attorney		Waters	William
John Street	Physician	Surgeon	Butler	Thomas

Source: Richard Lucas, 'Directory of Province of Leinster, 1788', reprinted in *Irish Genealogist*, iii, No. 10 (Dublin, 1945), pp. 395-399.

Table 4.2 List of occupations in John Street, Kilkenny 1788.

Pigot's Directory of 1824 was published there were twenty-four different businesses listed for John Street and Barrack Street (see Table 4.3). All the businesses in Barrack Street were listed as public houses. Of the total of fifty-six public houses advertised for Kilkenny city, fourteen of them were situated in the John Street/Barrack Street area. Kilkenny city's population in the 1821 census is recorded as 25,051 and that of St. John's parish is 5,604.²⁰ The disproportionate number of public houses per head of population in this area can only be logically explained by the district's proximity to the barracks. The nomenclature of these public houses

Street	Business	Occupation	Owner	
John Street	Ladies academy		Anderson	Louis
Johns Quay	Agent	Albion, London	Macartney	John
Johns Bridge	Apothecary		Gregory	Joseph
John Street	Attorney		Walshe	John
John Street	Baker		Grace	Edmund
John Street	Barrister		Kinsella	John
John Street	Blanket manufacturer		Davis	Martin
John Street	Carpenter	Builder	Bergin	John
John Street	Cooper		Brennan	Denis
John Street	Confectioner		Lang	John
John Street	Dyer		Looby	Judith
John Street	Grocer		Byrne	Daniel
John Street	Grocer		Byrne	Simon
John Street	Grocer		Clancy	Mary
John Street	Gun-maker		Rothe	Abraham
John Street	Hotel	'Kings Arms'	Magennis	Patrick
Johns Quay	Physician		Shanahan	William
John Street	Provision dealer		Bryan	Michael
John Street	Provision dealer		Connor	Mary
John Street	Sporting tackle	Wholesale - retail	Banim	Michael
John Street	Surgeon	Medical doctor	Borthwick	George
John Street	Tin-plate worker	Brazier	Byrne	James
Johns Bridge	Watchmaker	Clockmaker	Colles	Nicholas
John Street	Blanket manufacturer		Davis	Martin

Source: Pigot, *Leinster Directory* (Dublin, 1824) pp. 161-63.

Table 4.3 List of occupations in John Street and Barrack Street, Kilkenny, 1824.

shows a decidedly royal flavour - two named 'George IV', another 'George III', 'Wellington' and 'Highland' reflecting the belief of their owners that displaying loyalist affiliations was good for business (see Table 4.4, p. 170). Other traders listed

²⁰ Census of Ireland, *Abstract of answers and returns*, 1821.

and likely to benefit from proximity to the barracks were a gun-maker and a sporting-tackle dealer.

The changes to Kilkenny's streetscape during the early nineteenth century can be seen as part of a process of landlord-inspired urban improvements, throughout Ireland, which were more or less completed by 1840. This process was closely linked

Street	Business	Name	Owner	
Barrack Street	Publican	'Still'	Barrett	John
Barrack Street	Publican		Drennan	Patrick
John Street	Publican		Fitzgerald	Thomas
Barrack Street	Publican		Fitzpatrick	Martin
Barrack Street	Publican	'King George III'	Gowran	James
John Street	Publican		Hart	Thomas
John Street	Publican		Haws	James
John Street	Publican		Magrath	John
John Street	Publican	'George IV'	Murphy	James
John Street	Publican		Murphy	Philip
Barrack Street	Publican	'King George IV'	Reade	Lawrence
Barrack Street	Publican	'Wellington'	Ryan	Michael
John Street	Publican		Shee	Patrick
John Street	Publican	'Highlander'	White	William

Source: Pigot and Company, *Leinster Directory* (Dublin, 1824) pp. 161-3.

Table 4.4 List of publicans in John Street and Barrack Street 1824.

to the wider economic, political and social changes occurring in Irish society at this time. These improvements primarily initiated by a 'largely Anglican and *arriviste* land-owning *élite* sought to claim Irish space for itself by literally rebuilding the island's human geography'.²¹ Ironically the modernisation of these towns, Kilkenny included, led to the rise of an urban middle-class, in most instances predominantly Catholic, which helped to replace the landed elite and to diminish landlord power over their tenantry.

Many soldiers brought their families with them and settled permanently in Kilkenny, while others married local women, thus establishing roots here with their descendants still living in the area. Families with English surnames are still

²¹ B. J. Graham and L. J. Proudfoot, *Urban improvement in provincial Ireland 1700-1840* (Athlone, 1994), p. 59.

prominent in the general environs of the barracks. The places of birth of the residents of Ballybough Street, Barrack Street and John Street gives an indication of the concentration of military personnel in this area. In extracts from the 1881 census and the 1891 census this trend is demonstrated (see Table 4.5). This figure tabulates people who were born outside Ireland. The figures are for the Kilkenny Poor Law Union. In 1881 the population of the parliamentary borough of Kilkenny was 15,278. These varied places of birth derive from the scattered stations world-wide where British soldiers served.

People born in	1881 census	1891 census
England and Wales	640	575
Scotland	73	32
British colonies	45	46
Indian empire	60	49
Foreign parts	64	50

Source: Census of Ireland. *Abstract of answers and returns* 1881, 1891.

Table 4.5 Places of birth of residents of Kilkenny Poor Law Union 1881 and 1891.

That the military in Kilkenny, post 1800, consistently showed their allegiance to the royal family is amply demonstrated by resort to contemporary newspapers. The *Kilkenny Journal*, 3 January 1801, joyfully reports the local celebrations following the enactment of the Act of Union. 'The act of legislative union being Thursday last an operative law, the imperial united standard was hoisted at the castle and a royal salute fired by the artillery in garrison'.²² The occasions of the birthdays, marriages and coronations of British monarchs were each celebrated by the garrison in residence in Kilkenny. The *Kilkenny Journal* of 21 January 1801 noted that Her Majesty's birthday was celebrated by discharges of artillery and 'feu de joy' was fired by the Dutch troops quartered here, on the Parade.²³ The reading of the proclamation of William IV at Kilkenny's Tholsel, in 1830, was attended by the mayor, alderman, officers of the town and a large cheering crowd. The regimental military band also attended and according to the editor of the *Kilkenny Journal* gave a magnificent rendition of 'God save the King'.²⁴ Celebrations for the coronation of George IV

²² *KJ*, 3 Jan. 1801.

²³ *Ibid.*, 21 Jan. 1801.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3 Sept. 1830.

were equally joyous with the ringing of the bells of St. Canice's cathedral, and a night of celebration concluding with a ball at the Tholsel. Windows were decorated with roses, rockets and pistol-shot were released and John Kelly, a city publican, provided barrels of strong beer for all comers.²⁵ Victoria was even more popular, usually rather romantically referred to as 'our young queen'.²⁶ To celebrate the Queen's birthday of 1870, the artillery, infantry and regimental band assembled on the drill ground at Brownstown, near the city, and 'as soon as twelve o'clock began to strike, an immediate bustle was observed, when the guns were unlimbered, and, as the last stroke of the hour tolled, they sent forth their noisy welcome to the day'.²⁷

Throughout the period of this study the military locally was seen as a bulwark for loyalism. This spirit was embodied in the person of Rev. Peter Roe, rector of St. Mary's in Kilkenny (1799-1842) and chaplain to the local military barracks. 'His principles were strongly and decidedly loyal: and being honestly and soundly convinced that popery must ever be a fruitful source of disloyalty to Protestant government'.²⁸ He was deeply involved in the early 1800s in the Protestant evangelical crusade being pursued throughout southern Ireland. Known as the Second Reformation this movement involved the Hibernian Bible Society (1806), The Sunday School Society (1809) and the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the native Irish through the medium of their own language (1818). The latter society recruited native Irish speakers to convert Irish speakers and to distribute elementary level reading aids in that language subsequently known among the peasantry as the *leabhar breac*. 'The drive to convert Catholics was fuelled by the belief that, properly communicated, God's word would triumph over the ignorance and superstition of Catholicism'.²⁹ This campaign of mass proselytism failed to attract many converts to Anglican ranks but was responsible for the heightening of sectarian animosity locally. Roe's refusal to allow a Roman Catholic soldier named Meekan to be interred in St. Mary's churchyard in May 1833 raised Catholic hackles.³⁰ The right of access to graveyards became an area of inter-communal

²⁵ Ibid., 21 July 1821.

²⁶ W. G. Neely, *Kilkenny: an urban history, 1391-1843* (Belfast, 1989), p. 249.

²⁷ *Kilkenny Moderator*, 1 June 1870.

²⁸ Samuel Madden, *Memoir of the life of the late Rev. Peter Roe A.M.* (Dublin, 1842), p. 227.

²⁹ Joseph Byrne, *Byrne's dictionary of Irish local history* (Blackrock, Co. Dublin, 2004), p. 280.

³⁰ *KJ*, 8 May 1833.

dispute following the introduction in 1823 of a law (5 George IV c.25) which obliged Catholic clergymen to obtain the written permission of the Protestant minister before they could attend and proceed with the burial of a parishioner.³¹ In practice few priests sought this permission, refusing to acknowledge in any way the right of the Protestant church to jurisdiction in Catholic affairs. The *Kilkenny Journal* proposed henceforward paying particular attention to the movements of this Protestant 'minister of mercy and bring him to his senses'. Public opinion prevailed and the decision was later rescinded. Roe's stance was consistent with his anger at the loss of the family home at Gorey, county Wexford during the Rebellion of 1798 and boasting in his memoirs of having personally, during the same period, bayoneted a 'suspected croppy' in the streets of Dublin whilst a theological student in Trinity College.³²

In the early decades of the nineteenth century Irish newspapers were burdened with a crippling government imposed tax and were relatively expensive. Local newspapers competing for the support of a relatively small readership core endeavoured to mould and reflect the ideological environment of the communities they served. The role of local newspapers in sponsoring sectarianism cannot be overlooked as editors found it in their interest to promote sharp and partisan arguments. By mid-century with the abolishment of the tax on newspapers and wider developments in print capitalism and mass education penetrated a wider area of the Irish countryside and influenced a larger section of the community, a new Irish press emerged to develop around nationalist and religious interests. As a mouthpiece for the establishment in general and the army in particular, the *Kilkenny Moderator* usually adopted a pro-government stance. Its rival the nationalist *Kilkenny Journal* depicted the *Kilkenny Moderator* as 'an Orange Tory paper, having no circulation among the bulk of the people' and 'mainly read by ministers, brunswickers and policemen'.³³ The *Kilkenny Journal*, answering a charge of the *Kilkenny Moderator* of printing false and prejudicial reports critical to the character of the army and police, replied that 'on the contrary we have ever been most anxious to applaud and defend when necessary the

³¹ See Anthony Kinsella, 'Church attendance and the burial of Roman Catholic soldiers, 1839' in *The Irish Sword*, xxiii, no. 94, pp. 473-4.

³² Rev. Samuel Madden, *Memoir of the life of the late Rev. Peter Roe* (Dublin, 1842), p. 22.

³³ *KJ*, 16 June 1832.

conduct and character of the army which we have ever found to be uniformly exemplary and correct'.³⁴ Such was the interdenominational rivalry in Ireland that Goulburn writing to Peel noted that 'a neutral paper here is impossible to maintain and if such existed it would not be saleable'.³⁵

Amongst county Kilkenny's Protestant community there were differing levels of toleration towards Catholicism. Amongst Kilkenny's aristocratic families such as the Ormonde Butlers and Piltown Ponsonbys there was support for Catholic emancipation in the early decades of the nineteenth century. It was such support for Catholic rights that modified local alienation and sectarianism much in evidence in neighbouring counties. Many of them were educated in England, chose permanent or semi-permanent settlement in Britain and in many instances married monied and titled English heiresses. Such was Leopold, the 5th Lord Clifden and 3rd Baron Dover, of Gowran, county Kilkenny, a graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, a solicitor, a Justice of the Peace, a major in the Kilkenny militia in the 1850s and M.P. for Kilkenny for almost twenty years. He was married to Lady Harriet Camoys.³⁶ A number of these aristocratic young men were absent from Kilkenny during the 1850s fighting Britain's wars. Henry Edward Butler of Mount Juliet, county Kilkenny, and three of his four sons were distinguished army officers, the other son being in Holy Orders. All three sons died in 1854, fighting in the Crimean War.³⁷ Thus they had no involvement in the controversy surrounding the sectarian clashes between Protestant proselytisers and their opponents being fought out on the streets of Kilkenny in the mid 1850s. On the other hand Protestants engaged at the coalface of Kilkenny's religious inter-faith confrontation were much less tolerant. Rev. Luke Gardiner MacDonnell, Protestant curate of Graiguenamanagh, whose actions provoked county Kilkenny's first 'tithe incident', was described in an official memorandum of October 1833 as 'a hot headed and violent man'.³⁸ 'His membership of Lord Farnham's ultra-Protestant association for promoting the Second Reformation marks

³⁴ Ibid., 2 June 1832.

³⁵ Goulburn to Peel, 9 Jan. 1827 quoted in Arthur Aspinall *Politics and the Press c.1780-1850* (London, 1949), p. 143.

³⁶ Art Kavanagh, *The landed gentry and aristocracy of Kilkenny* (Dublin and Bunclody, 2004), i, p. 13.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 44.

³⁸ Memo from E. L. Littleton to the Lord Lieutenant, 9 Aug. 1833 (T.N.A., HO 100/200/557-60).

him as a religious zealot'.³⁹ MacDonnell was also a local magistrate whose courtroom excesses caused the suspension of the local petty sessions of Graiguenamanagh.⁴⁰ Many of these Kilkenny Protestant clerics had served in the army, many others had sons serving in the military or navy. Charles Butler Stevenson, rector of Callan, an inveterate correspondent to Kilkenny newspapers demanding Protestant 'rights', had served as a cornet in the 1st Royal Dragoons and fought at Waterloo.⁴¹ Rev. Jeremiah McCheane, rector of Kilmoganny, had a son William 'who died 8 May, 1867, aged 27 years of yellow fever contracted in the fearless and self-sacrificing discharge of his duty as chaplain to the Royal Naval Hospital, Jamaica'.⁴² Major General Sir Denis Pack whose illustrious military career covered the years 1791-1823 was second son of the Rev. Thomas Pack, dean of Ossory.⁴³ Choosing to serve God in religion or the military were professions highly regarded by adult males of Kilkenny's second tier Protestant gentry families. Their contribution to the British army was especially significant. The Doyle family of Bramblestown, county Kilkenny, supplied six generals to the British army, 1756-1856.⁴⁴ In the early nineteenth century the Anderson family of Prospect, Kilkenny, used to boast that every rank in the British army, from private to colonel, was occupied by an Anderson. They had good grounds for their assertion and there cannot be many families that show a better military record as regards the number who have donned a uniform.⁴⁵

Enlisting in this most British of institutions, the rank and file Catholic soldier must at times have been confused as to the nature of his national identity. Despite huge efforts to spread English values and education he remained the product of peculiar Irish conditions whose mental outlook was shaped by an Irish world.⁴⁶ Many, perhaps the majority, were apolitical. Writing home from the Crimean battlefields an

³⁹ P. O'Donoghue, 'Causes of opposition to tithes' in *Studia Hibernica*, v (1965), p. 11.

⁴⁰ J. Harvey to W. Gregory, 23 Dec. 1830, quoted by Michael O'Hanrahan, 'The tithe war in county Kilkenny' in William Nolan and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Kilkenny: History and society* (Dublin, 1990), p. 486.

⁴¹ Rev. James B. Leslie, *Ossory clergy and parishes* (Enniskillen, 1983), p. 215.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 310.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁴⁴ David Murphy, *Ireland and the Crimean War* (Dublin, 2002), p. 28.

⁴⁵ Abbot Anderson, *The Andersons of Kilkenny, 1680-1910*, p. 19.

⁴⁶ Thomas P. Dooley, *Irishmen or English soldiers* (Liverpool, 1995), p. 216.

anonymous ex-policeman addressing his former superior wishes that he 'was peeling again under you in old Ireland'.⁴⁷ Equally parochial in outlook and ambition was another anonymous Kilkenny Crimean soldier writing home wishing to 'see Walkin Street once more and if God spares me I shall wear a couple of medals on my breast'.⁴⁸ This fissiparous dichotomy between a sense of Britishness or forsaking an Irish identity is best typified in the case of Doctor Robert Cane, Kilkenny Catholic nationalist, who was married to a Protestant and whose patients were the Protestant gentry. Cane's political make-up was eclectic who 'as a repealer remained on good terms with Young Ireland'.⁴⁹ He was imprisoned in Kilkenny in 1848 for his nationalist activities and during that time lost a son through illness. Another son was wounded while serving as an army officer during the Crimean War. The government in 1846, in the person of the lord lieutenant, the Earl of Bessborough, refused to sanction Cane's appointment as a local peace commissioner whereas Kilkenny Corporation unanimously elected him mayor on 1 December 1848.

In its coverage of the Crimean War the Dublin newspaper *The Nation* displays a similar dichotomy of approach. Its weekly military column is given the title 'Our army' and there are frequent references to 'our colonies' and 'our empire on which the sun never sets'. However at the conclusion of this conflict *The Nation's* response to Irish soldiers returning home was less than magnanimous noting that 'when they fight for Ireland, Ireland, never ungrateful will clasp them to her breast'.⁵⁰ The editor's opinion was that Ireland's glory was not at stake in this conflict and a 'truly Irish welcome' for its returning 'hired heroes' should be suspended in this instance.

A legacy of Irish involvement in the Crimean War, with significant implications for the Kilkenny tax-payer, was the number of broken men who returned home on the conclusion of this conflict. Many of these carried mental scars. The *Kilkenny Moderator*, 31 May 1862, reported that crowding at Kilkenny lunatic asylum necessitated 'the removal of some of the more harmless inmates to the workhouse'.⁵¹

⁴⁷ *KM*, 6 Jan. 1855.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 27 Jan. 1855.

⁴⁹ Marie-Louise Legg, *Newspapers and nationalism: the Irish provincial press 1850-1892* (Dublin, 1999), p. 67.

⁵⁰ *The Nation*, 16 Aug. 1856.

⁵¹ *KM*, 31 May 1862.

The asylum's population which had 152 beds when opened in 1852 had 290 thirty years later.⁵² Because of militia embodiment there was, in 1855, a massive increase in violent crime. There was repeated criticism of the sexual misbehaviour of the local military by clergy and magistrates throughout the period of this study. Trying to establish the veracity of these claims is difficult because of the lack of statistical information before the beginning of civil registration in 1864. S. J. Connolly in his study of the baptismal records of nine Irish Catholic parishes, pre-registration, concludes that illegitimacy in Ireland was low, lower than that in England or on the continent.⁵³ In the three Kilkenny parishes recorded, one in the city and two rural, the illegitimacy rate for the period 1751-1865 varied between 1.1 and 4.9 percent. Connolly, however, warns that these records may be distorted by the concealment of such births in the Irish figures. He further notes that 'the proportion of children in a society born or conceived outside marriage is not by itself sufficient to define the characteristics of that society's sexual life'.⁵⁴ A similar study by Liam Kennedy concluded that 'it is clear that in the majority of the communities traced here the number of births outside wedlock fell during the famine'.⁵⁵ This study suggests a correlation between the instances of famine and the collapse in illegitimacy rates. This is reflected in the low levels of illegitimacy recorded for St. Mary's in the period 1844-48 (see Figure 4.6, p. 178). 'Moreover hunger had a dulling effect on sexual appetite reducing the frequency of coition and hence reducing fertility within and without marriage'.⁵⁶ Nationally the peak in Irish birth rates occurred in 1846, with a dramatic fall in numbers thereafter. Catholic births in St. Mary's parish in Kilkenny city averaged 150 or thereabouts during the period 1830-45. In the ten year period after the famine, the corresponding average was about 100 births annually: a dramatic decline of one third.⁵⁷ This was because of the rise of market capitalism, soaring food prices and collapsing employment, all of which increased the vulnerability of women. Overall these illegitimacy figures are very small, too small

⁵² T. K. McKeogh, 'Dr. Joseph Lalor, 1811-1886, a credit to Ireland' in *Old Kilkenny Review*, no. 48 (1996), p. 17.

⁵³ S. J. Connolly, 'Illegitimacy and pre-nuptial pregnancy in Ireland before 1864: The evidence of some Catholic parish registers' in *Irish Economic and Social History*, vi (1979), p. 5.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵⁵ Liam Kennedy, 'Bastardy and the great famine: Ireland, 1845-50' in Carla King (ed.), *Famine, land and culture in Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), p. 21.

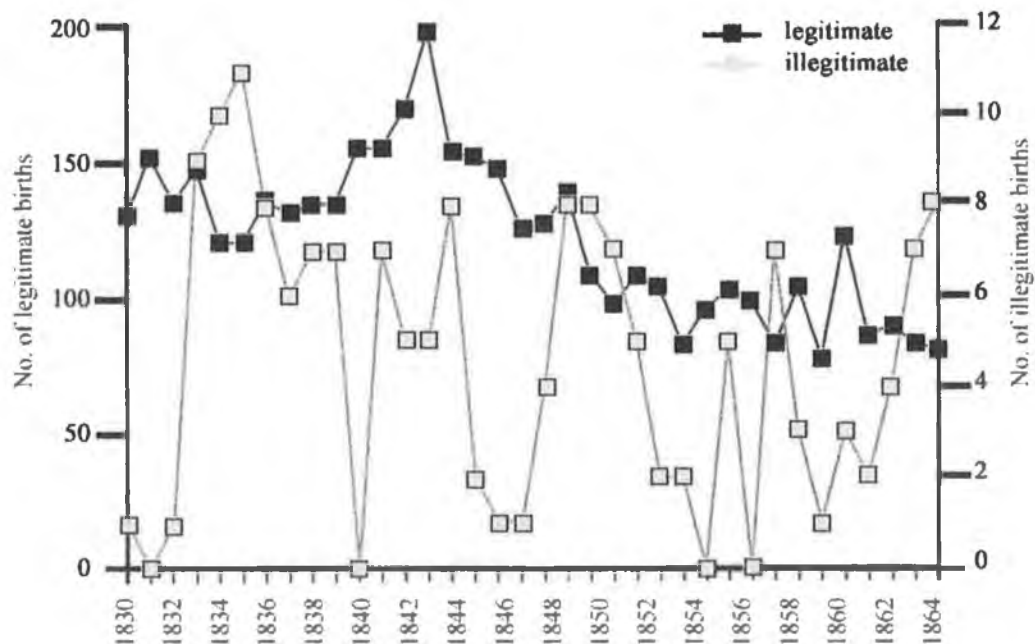
⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

really for the surveys to be statistically significant.

Efforts to define the religious or moral characteristics of the typical English or Scotch Protestant or Presbyterian soldier serving in Kilkenny, during the period of this study, is equally difficult. No church attendance figures for local Presbyterian or Church of Ireland communities remain extant; no Protestant vestry minute books, preacher's books or files are available having been lost in the 1922 Four Courts fire. However a register of marriages for the period 1845-68 is of interest and consolidates some of the trends already noted in this study.⁵⁸ From this record details of sixty-six soldiers marriages celebrated in St. John's Church of Ireland parish church in the period 16 June 1845 to 6 June 1859 was extrapolated. The levels of illiteracy amongst 'the lower orders', already noted in this study, is graphically illustrated in

Figure 4.6 St. Mary's parish, Kilkenny, fertility inside and outside marriage, 1830-65.



Source: Liam Kennedy, 'Bastardy and the great famine 1845-50' in Carla King (ed.), *Famine, land and culture in Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), p. 21.

the numbers unable to sign their names to the marriage certificate. This was especially true of the bride as a total of forty-three (65.1%) indicated a mark rather

⁵⁸ St. John's Church of Ireland parish marriage records, 1845-59. Church Representative Body Library, Dublin.

than a signature. The non-Irish groom however was more literate and only sixteen of these were unable to sign their names. Another significant feature is the number of brides listed as underage (under eighteen years) numbering nineteen (28.8%) of the total. Also of note is that of the total number of brides only five have surnames which would suggest origins of birth outside Kilkenny. The fact that these presumably 'Catholic' girls wed in a Protestant church must cast doubts on the solidarity of Catholic practice amongst the proletariat at this time. Patrick Corish in his study of Irish Catholicism notes that great masses of the very poor in Irish cities during the first decades of the nineteenth century were neither affiliated nor assimilated into the organisational church and surmised that 'a disproportionate element in the third of the population that did not go to mass'.⁵⁹ It was not unusual for a girl to follow her soldier sweetheart to another military station with the purpose of getting married. 'The marriage could be performed by license or law, but in either case the prospective bride had to reside within the boundaries of the parish in which the ceremony was to take place for eight clear days'. John Street is the address given by the majority of Kilkenny military brides as their pre-marriage abode. There is no way of evaluating the number of these who were run-away brides avoiding the censure of parents or guardians who disapproved of the choice of soldier as a suitable marriage partner. Rank and file soldiers 'were kept as far as possible at arm's length by every social class or group capable of considering itself superior'.⁶⁰ The solidarity of the Kilkenny class structure is illustrated in the church records of the period stating the occupations of the groom's and the bride's fathers. There was little breaking of class ranks: labourers' sons married labourers' daughters; sons and daughters of soldiers intermarried.

Comparing the number of marriages involving soldiers, celebrated in St. John's Catholic church and its Protestant counterpart in the period 1845-59, there were twenty-six weddings in the Catholic church and sixty-six in the other.⁶¹ Of those celebrated in the Catholic church, in almost every instance, both parties have recognisable Irish surnames. When the marriage records of the Kilkenny Presbyterian

⁵⁹ Patrick Corish, *The Irish Catholic experience, a historical survey* (Dublin, 1985), p. 169.

⁶⁰ Geoffrey Best, *War and society in revolutionary Europe 1770-1870* (Guernsey, 1998), p. 34.

⁶¹ St. John's Roman Catholic parish marriage records, 1845-59 (St. John's presbytery, Kilkenny).

community for the period 8 July 1847 to 14 May 1860 are added in the situation becomes more complex. During that time forty-two soldier marriages are recorded.⁶² As might be expected almost all the grooms had distinctly Scottish surnames, which was also the case for twelve of these brides. In the other thirty instances the brides had Irish surnames. It is evident from these records that there was a greater tendency amongst the Scottish and Irish soldiers to marry people of their own nationality than is evidenced by the marriage patterns of English soldiers based in Kilkenny. These Kilkenny marriage figures confirm the general ethnic composition of the army of this period with the greatest number of military marriages amongst those of English Protestant origin. Post 1830, 'the Scots were progressively more reluctant to join the army'.⁶³ There was a significant falling away of Highland recruits. Major railway construction works provided more remunerative employment opportunities. The Irish too increasingly rejected military service when other employment options presented themselves as shown in Chapter I of this study.

The contribution of the garrison to the development of local sporting activities was immense. Alan Barnier argues that the threat of British sporting hegemony in Ireland in the later part of the nineteenth century was very real.⁶⁴ In Kilkenny, 1800-1870, all athletic sports meetings were organised by the military and constabulary and participation was confined to members of these institutions. Cricket, archery, and hunting were similarly controlled by a combination of local gentry and military. The army officer whose duties did not usually take up much of his time spent many days in the hunting field. Indeed, for cavalry officers this activity was considered an extension of their profession. While stationed in Kilkenny in 1870 the 20th Regiment maintained its own pack of beagles.⁶⁵ The *Kilkenny Moderator*, 15 January 1870, estimated that the expenditure of fifty hunting men, keeping an average of two horses each, amounted to £3,600 per annum. Thus one hundred hunters would employ fifty grooms, recruited from the local agricultural population, and consume 'about 20,000

⁶² Marriage record-book of Kilkenny Presbyterian church, 8 July 1847-14 May 1860 (Presbyterian library, New Road, Kilkenny).

⁶³ Hew Strachan, *Wellington's legacy: the reform of the British army 1830-54* (Manchester, 1984), p. 51.

⁶⁴ Alan Barnier, 'Ireland, sport and empire' in Keith Jeffrey (ed.), *An Irish empire: aspects of Ireland and the British empire* (London, 1996), p. 64.

⁶⁵ Caroline Corballis, *Hunting in county Kilkenny* (Gowran, 1999), p. 42.

barrels of oats, 100 tons of hay and beans [sic] in proportion' all bought locally. 'Every tradesman, professional man and trader is benefited by hunting men - tailors, bootmakers, blacksmiths, saddlers, brewers, druggists, surgeons, veterinary surgeons, etc.' the report also noted.⁶⁶ It seems that this officer interest in 'the sport of kings' extended to the rank and file soldier. The day-book of the 10th troop of the 23rd Dragoons, 1800-2, is sprinkled with cash advances of 1/1*d* to soldiers attending local race meetings.⁶⁷ The English practice of cricket being played on the village green during summertime, prevalent in Ireland in the 1860s and 1870s wherever an army presence was significant, declined subsequently as the army numbers decreased to be overtaken by parish hurling and football clubs.

The first recorded theatrical presentation staged in Kilkenny took place on 20 August 1553 at the Market Cross and was presented as a celebration for Queen Mary's accession to the throne. The author of the play *God's Promises* was John Bayle, Church of Ireland, bishop of Ossory 1553/54 'and is claimed by some as the first play in the English language to have been performed in Ireland'.⁶⁸ The greatest legacy of the military presence in Kilkenny was in the cultural sphere where cross-community co-operation led to the foundation, in the early nineteenth century, of a strong theatre culture which persists to this day. The involvement of military officer personnel with the gentry as actors was one of the features of the Kilkenny theatre season in the early 1800s. This event was one of the highlights of the Irish social calendar, rivalling that of Bath in England. The ideal of gentlemanliness, the predominant theme of the plays performed in Kilkenny, had an influence in shaping a culture shared across ranks and across the military-civilian divide. These plays performed at the city theatre acted as a viaduct for a range of information, ideas and attitudes to enter the regiment from civilian society and so fostered a shared outlook. This engagement by the military in the arts was not restrictive or single channeled. 'By desire of General Wynard and the officers of the garrison', and of 'Mrs Kearney, the lady of Right Rev. Dr. Kearney, lord bishop of Ossory', a number of artists from

⁶⁶ *KM*, 15 Jan. 1870.

⁶⁷ Day-book of the 10th troop of the 23rd Dragoons, 1800-2 (N.L.I., MS 3142).

⁶⁸ Peter V. Farrelly, *600 years of theatre in Kilkenny, 1366-1966* (Kilkenny, 1994), p. 16.

the Lyceum in London were brought to Kilkenny in August 1811.⁶⁹ These included Mr Inglesby ‘the emperor of conjurers’ and Miss Young and Master Inglesby, slack-wire performers. This lively example of London artists performing in Irish provincial centres, shows that cultural influences were a two-way exchange. However, these influences upon theatre-goers seems to have been heavily loaded in advancing the ascendancy imperial view of the world. An 1803 report of audience reactions to Dublin theatre performances, would I suggest, be equally applicable to Kilkenny theatre-goers:

The audience [is] peaceable and zealously loyal in their plaudits on every occasion that offers, and indeed every sentiment in favour of the British constitution, the British Navy, British bravery, etc. is received and marked with the most zealous approbation.⁷⁰

A number of theatre performances given by the sergeants of the 53rd Regiment, in early August 1865, attracted a crowded, fashionable and appreciative audience. The editor of the *Kilkenny Journal*, was cognisant of its educational value to the military:

It speaks well for the success of the recent efforts made by the military authorities to promote schemes for the rational amusement and educational progress of the British soldier, that performances so perfect in every detail should be given by a number of young men who like the non commissioned officers of the 53rd, were but the other day serving in the ranks.⁷¹

Hunt balls were also popular social occasions attracting exclusively the attendance of the upper crust of local society. The Kilkenny Hunt Ball of February 1845 was held in the Tholsel, tickets costing 7/6d for gentlemen and 5/= for ladies.⁷² The band of the 24th Regiment provided the music for the attendance of 110. Regimental bands provided weekly outdoor recitals for the citizens of Kilkenny. Every suspension of this facility was lamented by the local press. Invariably the bandmaster of these regimental bands was of German origin. Musical influences recognised no territorial boundaries. The march ‘Garryowen’ was adopted by British military bands and its strains were heard at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.⁷³ The sound of war pipes with

⁶⁹ *KM*, 10 Aug. 1811.

⁷⁰ J. W. [Leonard MacNally] to Alexander Marsden, 3 Dec. 1803, in Michael MacDonagh, *The Viceroy's Post Bag* (London, 1904), pp. 441-3.

⁷¹ *KJ*, 5 Aug. 1865.

⁷² *KJ*, 12 Feb. 1845.

⁷³ Dr. Grattan Flood ‘Irish Marches as familiarised by the regimental bands in England’ in *Journal of the Irish Folk Song Society*, ii, 15, (1967), p. 14.

their open and stirring music, bespeaking of a free and fearless people, led the Irish soldiers into battle during the Crimean War. Today's musical inheritance in Kilkenny owes much of its origins to the tutorship obtained in these army bands.

The importance of the Irish ballad in transmitting a sense of national identity to a mainly non-literate society cannot be overstated. The panoply of verse, song, and music written and composed to mark the United Irishmen Rebellion of 1803, the career of Napoleon Bonaparte and the Fenian Rising of 1867 is extensive in both the orange and nationalist traditions. Much of these items are contemporary with the events they recorded. Such a ballad is *Arthur McBride* written during the Napoleonic Wars in which the tactics of a British recruiting officer are humorously ridiculed:

He said 'my young fellows if you enlist a guinea you quickly will have in your fist
and besides a whole crown for to kick up the dust: and drink the King's health to the
morning'.
Had we been such fools to take the advance: with the will but of money we'd have
to run chance.
For you think it no scruples to send us to France: where we would be killed in the
morning.⁷⁴

Uttering similar sentiments and equally popular all over Ireland was the ballad *Mrs McGrath* written during the Peninsular War in which an Irish mother tries to come to terms with the return of her legless son from the battle-front: one of the most potent anti-recruiting ballads ever written:

Oh then, Teddy my boy, the widow cried
Them two fine legs were your mammy's pride
Them stumps of a tree won't do at all
Why didn't you run from the big cannon ball.⁷⁵

In the recently published first edition of *Cultural and Social History* Gary Owens describes how the battle of Carrickshock (1831) has become a *cause célèbre* within the local community.⁷⁶ This battle was the subject of an epic poem written by Richard Lahert as late as the 1980s:

On that very evening
The cavalry did ride

⁷⁴ Robert Gogan (ed.), *130 Great Irish ballads* (Dublin, 2002), p. 65.

⁷⁵ Terry Moylan (ed.), *The age of revolution in the Irish song tradition 1776 to 1815* (Dublin, 2000), p. 137.

⁷⁶ Gary Owen, 'The Carrickshock incident 1831: social memory and an Irish cause célèbre' in *Cultural and Social History*, i, (2004), p. 3.

From out Kilkenny barrack
To scour the countryside

The Majors Browne and Tuckey,
Officers of the Crown,
Mustered all their forces
To track the felons down.⁷⁷

The folklore of this 'battle' is recalled to this day within the local community. Tony O'Malley, the Kilkenny artist who died in 2003, recalled attending a local hurling fixture in which Carrickshock were playing where he heard an old man shouting with a tremor in his voice 'Come on the men that bate [*sic*] the tithe bearers'.⁷⁸ Ballads in the Irish language were equally celebratory of the outcome of the battle of Carrickshock:

Beidh parlaimint feasta aige Ó Conaill in Éirinn
Caithfeas na tréanphaic seo géilleadh á ghlór!
Leagfaidh sé fearannta fairsinge ar Ghaelaibh,
Is cuirfeas sliocht Éibhir ón réal go dtí an choroín.⁷⁹

The principal social, political and cultural events occurring in the small town of Callan are recorded in *Cinnlae Amhlaoibh Uí Shúileabháin* (the diary of Humphrey O'Sullivan) 1827-1835, written in the Irish language.⁸⁰ The predominant impression conveyed in the diary's many references to the military based in Callan was the overwhelming imposition of the occupation on a small community including the billeting of soldiers, wives and their children in already crowded accommodation. Ó Súileabháin also notes the aggressive behaviour of members of this force in the town's hostelries leading to confrontation with a number of the local community. Describing the arrival of 'fifty artillery men together with trumpeters and hornblowers' the author notes that their duties entailed:

waiting for the collection of tithes, although the new tithe law has not yet been enacted, that is the law enabling a process to be served on a person by putting his name up on the Protestant church door. The presence of these soldiers is like *Cró roimh na hairc* - building a sty before you have piglets.⁸¹

The writings of the two Kilkenny brothers Michael (1796-1874) and John Banim

⁷⁷ Richard Lahert, *Hurrah for Carrickshock* (Dublin, 1986), pp. 9-10.

⁷⁸ Gary Owen, 'The Carrickshock incident', p. 63.

⁷⁹ Dáithí Ó hOgáin, *Duanaire Osraíoch* (Dublin, 1980), p. 42.

⁸⁰ Rev. Michael McGrath (ed.), *Cinnlae Amhlaoibh Uí Shúileabháin*, 4 vols. (London, 1928-37).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 141.

(1798-1842) are also relevant commentaries on the Kilkenny social and cultural scene in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The Banim brothers in their novels and short stories were pioneering voices in the development of a truly native Irish literature in the English language. Their expression of a strong sense of nationality was a direct response to the misrepresentation and the hideous caricature of the Irish peasantry by establishment authors like Maria Edgeworth, who had little knowledge of the perceptions and values of lower or middle-class Irish Catholics. Unlike Ó Súilleabháin, the Banim brothers had no desire to revitalise a declining Gaelic language and perceived their economic and social advancement through the use of the English language. In this emerging new reality John saw his economic future in pursuing a journalistic career in London. Michael remained in Kilkenny and continued to supply his brother with drafts of written material depicting Kilkenny's political and cultural life. To hold faith with an English readership John was obliged to compromise his sense of nationalism. In his novel *John Doe* (1865) the character Father O'Clery confronts the 'shanavests' and condemns their activities. They are 'sinful' to oppose the 'chosen soldiers whose power is from him that hath rule from above'.⁸² 'It is difficult to see how Banim could expose an iniquitous system of political economy derived from British colonialism while maintaining through this fictional characters that this system had divine sanction'.⁸³ 'Flux and inconsistency' as R. V. Comerford points out 'are the hallmarks of all definitions of nationality and the Irish case is no exception'.⁸⁴ An embodiment of this ambiguity was James Warren Doyle, Catholic bishop of Kildare and Leighlin (1819-1834). Although an austere and ultramontane prelate of the church he was decidedly pro-union, was a personal friend of the Duke of Wellington, and acted as a British agent during the Peninsular War. Nevertheless Doyle could be extremely radical and threatened separation. Doyle warned the government in a public letter of May 1824 that 'if a rebellion was raging from Carrickfergus to Cape Clear no sentence of excommunication would ever be fulminated by a Catholic prelate'.⁸⁵ This dichotomy

⁸² D. W. Gilligan, 'The Banim brothers and regency Ireland; the life and work of John and Michael Banim, Ireland's first national novelists 1796-1874' undated essay accessed at Rothe House, Kilkenny, p. 256.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ R. V. Comerford, *Ireland: Inventing the nation* (London, 2003), back cover.

⁸⁵ R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London, 1988), pp. 297-8.

of an Irish identity is satirically explored in Banim's *The Anglo-Irish of the nineteenth century* (1828).⁸⁶ The hero of this novel is the Honorable Gerald Blount, younger son of Lord Clangare, an Irish peer. He is asked to declare his identity 'not yet English - quite nor Irish - quite what?'. He is also asked whether he has 'a country at all' or 'is ashamed of it, as a youngster might of a humble parent'.⁸⁷ Throughout the period of this study 'rival perceptions of Ireland jostled and overlapped; sister kingdom and colony, integral part of the polity and alien, inferior incomprehensible place apart, victim of and partner in the expansion and consolidation of British global imperium'.⁸⁸ Throughout the nineteenth century the British army was constantly employed in imperial service. There is ample evidence to show that Irishmen, especially after mid-century, whether as military men, missionaries or traders, benefited from their Indian experience. Tom Bartlett notes the rampant growth of Britain's empire in the first half of the nineteenth century 'would scarcely have been possible without the involvement of Irishmen'.⁸⁹ Both Kilkenny newspapers, the *Kilkenny Moderator* and the *Kilkenny Journal*, reiterated on a constant basis the city's dependence on the army's financial input into the local economy. The distress of 300 unemployed local operatives of the blanket trade and their families in May 1834 when the army discontinued placing orders with Kilkenny manufacturers, is described by the *Kilkenny Journal* as a calamity.⁹⁰ Local saddlers and blacksmiths were especially dependent on military custom. In line with the army's increasing numerical presence in Kilkenny in the period 1831-41, the number of saddlers increased from 5 to 16, and blacksmiths from 33 to 59.⁹¹ There was growth of a similar magnitude amongst the city's tailors, shoemakers and brogue makers. Kilkenny's growth in shoemaking was spectacular from 139 listed in 1831 to 414 in 1841; a number in excess of either Dublin or Wexford.⁹² Amongst their number was Thomas Labarte of King Street who as noted in Chapter I supplied shoes to a Kilkenny soldier in the Crimea that proved indestructible, even under atrocious

⁸⁶ John Banim, *The Anglo-Irish of the nineteenth century*, (Dublin, 1838).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, ii, p.23.

⁸⁸ Stephen Howe, *Ireland and empire: colonial legacies in Irish history and culture* (New York, 2000), p. 231.

⁸⁹ Thomas Bartlett, 'The Irish soldier in India' in Michael and Denis Holmes (eds.), *Ireland and India; Connections, comparisons, contrasts* (Dublin, 1997), p. 105.

⁹⁰ *KJ*, 14 May 1834.

⁹¹ Neely, *Kilkenny: an urban history, 1391-1843*, p. 197.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 196.

conditions. That the needs of fashionable living amongst army officer's wives could be accommodated is evident from the census of 1841 enumerating Kilkenny's varied trades - hatters, perfumers, music teachers, cabinet makers, carvers, gilders, upholsterers, watchmakers, etc.⁹³

The influences that their stay in Kilkenny exerted on some of the great military men of the period 1800-70 is at this point impossible to evaluate. There is no mention in any of the books consulted of Wellington's period at Kilkenny's military barracks. On the other hand the ostentatious bravado of Lord Cardigan, who on his daily trip from residence to barrack rode his horse down the steep steps leading to St. Canice's Cathedral, earned him notoriety in local folklore. These traits were also to the fore in all his actions before, during and after his involvement in the Crimean War. It would seem that for a number of Kilkenny officers a subsequent acquaintance with London had a greater influence on their lifestyles and obligations. This was certainly the case with Lord Bessborough who in 1816 when confronted with the massive gambling debt of £32,700 incurred by his wife and sister-in-law, in London, was horrified to find that there was twelve gardeners, costing a half a guinea each every week working on his county Kilkenny estate. This expense was only a drop in the ocean when compared to the expenditure of these two Cavendish women, 'the most notorious gamblers of their generation'.⁹⁴

Kilkenny owes a huge architectural debt to the presence of the military locally. This is particularly evident in the number of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century buildings, associated with the military, still extant throughout the city. Morphological features such as wide linear streets, large public squares, and dominating public buildings owe, in many instances, their origin to an ascendancy ethos of accommodating and fully supporting the military. The Parade, a street almost as wide as it is long was created by the first Duke of Ormonde to provide space in the front of the castle that could be used for military parades and assemblies.⁹⁵ It was here the old soldier of the Confederate campaign of 1642-48, the

⁹³ Abstract census of Ireland 1841, Kilkenny Report, p. 64.

⁹⁴ Venetia Murray, *High society in the Regency period 1788-1830* (London, 1998), pp. 63-64.

⁹⁵ Lanigan and Tyler (eds.), *Kilkenny its architecture and history*, p. 47.

first Duke, trained his grandson in the art of war.⁹⁶ Hence the name which has survived to the present day.

Directly opposite the castle entrance gate on the Parade is a magnificent curved stable block fronting a semicircular courtyard which was erected in 1780. 'The stalls for the horses were spacious and located on the ground floor. In contrast the accommodation for the grooms was more restricted: their rooms were upstairs'.⁹⁷ These first-floor windows, looking out on the courtyard are circular with timber frames resembling coach wheels, a motif copied by Bianconi in all his mail-coach posting stations some decades later (see Figure 4.7, p. 189). Adjoining these stable buildings is a brick-fronted Georgian terrace built around 1791. Some of these houses are three bay across, others four bay; some are three stories high, others four. All are punctuated by archways which led to stables and yards behind them. Despite the irregularity of house sizes 'the overall picture portrays a coherence which is uniquely Irish'.⁹⁸ In number eleven, 'Sir Hudson Low (in charge of Napoleon at St. Helena) is reputed to have lived at the beginning of his military career'.⁹⁹

Douet in his appraisal of nineteenth century military barracks in Britain and Ireland notes that the construction of these buildings generated 'a paucity of architectural display to the surrounding community' and further observed that this 'tended to confirm the perception of barracks as functional utilitarian habitations'.¹⁰⁰

Kilkenny's military barracks still performs the utilitarian function it was designed to perform over two hundred years ago. The image of self-containment and independence inherent in barrack construction of that time is emphasised by the long linear alignment of the barracks main buildings and impressive barrack squares. The architectural differentiation of the officers' accommodation from that of the rank and file, a general characteristic of nineteenth century barracks, is emphasised in the

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 48.

⁹⁸ Susan Hood, 'The urban heritage of Ireland: past, present and future' in M. D. Evans (ed.), *Aspects of Irish genealogy*, ii (Dublin, 1996), p. 141.

⁹⁹ Lanigan and Tyler (eds.), *Kilkenny its architecture and history*, p. 47.

¹⁰⁰ James Douet, *British barracks, 1600-1914, their architecture and role in society* (London, 1998), p. xvi.

Figure 4.7: The courtyard at Kilkenny Castle (1977).



Source: Kathleen M. Lanigan and Gerald Tyler (eds.), *Kilkenny, its architecture and history* (Kilkenny, 1977), p. 48.

decorative elaboration provided at Kilkenny. The ancillary structures of the barracks, one storey high, ground-hugging in appearance, and situated on the peripheries of the complex magnify the pre-eminence of the three-storey central block, with clocktower and archway. The intelligence and workmanship employed in the construction of the barracks is evident from a cursory examination of its fabric: an architectural 'gem' of its period. Regretfully, in recent years many of the original features of the building - doors, windows, barrack-well, etc., have been lost in order to comply with government 'health and safety' regulations (see Appendix No. 10, p. 263). A major formative influence in the education of British military architects in the period 1812-55 was Charles William Pasley, British soldier and military engineer. On 23 April 1812 a Royal Warrant established a new military educational institution at Chatham with Pasley appointed director.¹⁰¹ A novel feature of this school was a teach-yourself system of training in which non-commissioned officers led the lessons. Pasley believed in the link between architecture and morality and between the design of space and behaviour of individuals in these institutions. His influence is discernible in the extension of Kilkenny military barracks in 1847.

War heroes of the nineteenth century were the beneficiaries of massive public acclaim. The cult of Nelson popularised by Robert Sotheby's successful *Life of Nelson* (1813) also impacted on Ireland with a monument to him on Dublin's principal thoroughfare. Similarly, adulation of Wellington led to the commissioning of Daniel Maclise to execute a painting of Wellington and Blucher at Waterloo 'for the houses of Parliament: an appropriate inspiration and backdrop for the empire's legislators'.¹⁰² In Kilkenny the city legislators named a new city-centre terrace, Wellington Square, in his honour. This development of two blocks of houses was built in the early 1820s to accommodate seven cavalry officers. An interesting security aspect to these houses is an internal upstairs passage connecting houses numbers 1 to 4 and another linking numbers 5 to 7. A cut limestone arched entrance, which led to a yard and stables at the rear, still exists to-day adjoining No. 1.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ C. W. Pasley, 'New introduction to the 2001 edition of practical architecture' available at <http://www.donhead.com/intro%20practical%20architecture.htm> (28 May 2005), pp. 1-6.

¹⁰² Jeremy Black, *Rethinking military history* (Abingdon, 2004), p. 190.

¹⁰³ Conversation of author with local historian and writer, Sean Kenny of 1 Wellington Square, Kilkenny, 1 June 2005.

Another component of Kilkenny's rich military architectural legacy is the eighteenth century 'garrison house' built adjacent to the barracks. Predating the barracks it marks the earliest housing development at that side of Kilkenny. It was here, in the 1840s, that Mary Elizabeth Butler was born and spent her formative years. Later as Mrs. Townsend she founded the Girls Friendly Society.¹⁰⁴

The place of the pictorial tradition is an important element in the construction of 'Irishness' as an ideological concept. Because of the imperial sources of post-conquest art contemporary cultural historians generally ignore this source as 'material essential to the understanding of the intertwined national identities of the two Irelands in their colonial and post-colonial incarnations'.¹⁰⁵ The interpretation of a number of specific paintings featured in this study reveal the tensions of a divided society. The influence of Daniel Maclise's *The marriage of Strongbow and Aoife*, painted immediately after the social catastrophe of the famine is portrayed in *Visualizing Ireland* as transforming Ireland's first great defeat by the English into a celebration of the moral ascendancy of the conquered Irish.¹⁰⁶ Similarly Lady Butler's painting *Listed for the Connaught Rangers* (see Figure 4.8, p. 192) executed in the early 1870s and dealing with the then vexed question of Irish recruitment into the army portrays the establishment notion, that despite hardships, Ireland could still provide young men of fine physique willing to take the Queen's shilling. The traditional sombre coloured civilian dress of the recruits is strikingly in contrast with the bright brass buttons on the flamboyant uniforms of the sergeant, private and two drummer boys of the 88th Regiment of Connaught Rangers.

The attractiveness of military uniforms as a recruiting ploy in the early decades of the nineteenth century, discussed in Chapter I, in an era when the Irish peasant was bereft of any worthwhile clothing must have exerted an influence even greater than the possession of a replica English football team jersey of to-day. Lady Butler, an English woman married to a scion of the aristocratic Kilkenny Butler family,

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Adele M. Dalsimer and Veira Kreilkamp; 'Introduction' in A. Dalsimer (ed.), *Visualising Ireland, national identity and the pictorial tradition* (Winchester, MA, 1993), p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ Pamela Berger, 'The historical, the sacred, the romantic; medieval texts into Irish watercolors' in Dalsimer, *Visualising Ireland*, p. 75.

Figure 4.8: 'Listed for the Connaught Rangers', by Lady Butler c.1875



Source: Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery (eds.), *A military history of Ireland* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 338.

achieved fame in the creation of a genre of military painting concentrating on the plight of the rank and file soldier in the Crimean War. Her picture, *The roll-call at Balaclava* achieved great popularity in Britain and was displayed widely in a tour of the country. So enamoured was Queen Victoria with this painting that she acquired it at the conclusion of its tour. 'No Crimean War scene could have been more compelling than *The Roll Call's*, exhausted gaurdsmen standing in the snow. It epitomised the appalling and often unnecessary hardships'.¹⁰⁷ There is a gilding of the lily in William Heath's 1833 painting of the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons *Marching from the Watergate with invalids* (see Figure 4.9, p. 194). This cavalry barracks

¹⁰⁷ Paul Usherwood and Jenny Spencer-Smith, *Lady Butler, battle artist 1846-1933* (London, 1987), p. 34.

abandoned in the early years of the nineteenth century due to military concerns 'because of its situation in the centre of a miserable and narrow street' (see Chapter I) has been architecturally enhanced by the imagination of the artist. The painting of Alfred Munnings of Kilkenny horse fair (see Figure 4.10, p 195) is similarly weighted with ascendancy values. Prancing horses mounted by feckless Irish peasants in a display of reckless daring is typical of the characterisation of the half-savage Irish portrayed in periodicals of the period, like *Punch*. Nonchalantly surveying this scene of disorder in the forefront of the painting is a well-dressed gentleman of the ascendancy class.

The Crimean War led to Britain becoming increasingly militarised. One of the manifestations of this trend was that 'the techniques used to discipline men within military contexts were applied to civilian workers'.¹⁰⁸ Military and civilian disciplines became firmly fused in the effective control of workers. Whereas in the desperate hunger-stricken 1830s any 'combination' seeking workers rights were regarded as a direct threat to the innermost citadels of the established order, by 1856 these organisations had acquired self-confidence. An illustration of this worker/employer conflict, influenced by pay rates operative within the army, was a dispute between Brennan and Carrol (master tailors) and members of the 'Kilkenny Operative Tailors Association' which was heard at the Kilkenny Petty Sessions 4 November, 1856.¹⁰⁹ This dispute centered on the tailors endeavouring to maintain a rate of fifteen shillings per week and the employers seeking to have the tailors paid on a daily basis instead. The ideal of uniformity in industrial production was born from the need to supply a battlefield with spare parts. The strict interchangeability of parts was enforced throughout armouries as by the 1840s 'the contract for arms production began to be awarded to outside firms on the basis of participation in the uniformity system'.¹¹⁰ 'By the late 1850s, the basic components of the American system could be found in organisations producing everything from sewing machines,

¹⁰⁸ Joanna Burke, *Dismembering the male; men's bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London, 1999), p. 252.

¹⁰⁹ *KJ*, 8 Nov. 1856.

¹¹⁰ Manuel Delanda, 'Beyond the problematic of legitimacy: military influences on civilian society' in *Boundary 2, an international journal of literature and culture*, xxx, no. 1 (Spring 2005), p. 123.

Figure 4.9: 'Marching from the Watergate with invalids' by William Heath (1833). Original at Regimental Museum, Enniskillen.



Source: John Kirwan, Thomastown, county Kilkenny.

Figure 4.10: 'Kilkenny Horse Fair' by A. J. Munnings 1922



Source: Christies auction catalogue, 21 May 2004.

pocket watches and railroad equipment.¹¹¹

Although the army's presence in Kilkenny was in many respects positive there were a number of negative aspects also. The fact that a regiment could be one day based in Kilkenny and the next heading for India often caught out local shopkeepers who had

¹¹¹ Ibid.

extended credit to these soldiers. The chance of recovering these debts was in almost all instances slim as the soldier concerned had left the army before the law caught up with him. In reply to a letter of Patrick Holden of Collier's Lane seeking the settlement of a debt incurred by a Mr. Matthews while based in Kilkenny, John McDonald replying from the Royal Hospital stated 'Mr. Matthews and all other persons employed in the extra recruiting service having been long since discontinued they are subject to no military authority and that it is not in Sir John Hope's power to afford your redress upon the present occasion'.¹¹² Many instances of local traders and innkeepers seeking payment of unpaid debts from the military authorities incurred by soldiers whilst serving in Kilkenny proliferate throughout the volumes of the Kilmainham Papers. In practically all instances their pleas for payment were unsuccessful. That the low standards of morality attributed to certain army regiments, when based in Kilkenny, were not the invention or the exaggeration of a prurient Irish press is substantiated by a piece copied from the *Leeds Times* and reprinted in the *Nation*.¹¹³ Commenting on the withdrawal of the 32nd Regiment from Huddersfield the Yorkshire newspaper reported 'they are a low blackguard corps and had become very obnoxious to the inhabitants'. Consequently a great crowd congregated to witness their departure and shouted them out of town. This regiment had served in Kilkenny in 1828.

Provincial newspapers catered for the perceived differences between regional priorities and national perspectives. For over two hundred years Kilkenny's oldest newspaper fulfilled this role, lasting longer than its contemporaries in provincial Ireland. The lifespan of this newspaper can be divided into three periods. Founded by Edward Finn in 1765 and known as *Finn's Leinster Journal* it remained in the control of that family until the early 1800s when it passed into the ownership of Patrick Kearney and later Andrew Henderson and was known as the *Leinster Journal*. 'During the third and longest period from 1830 on it was owned by the Maxwell and later the Kenealy families and was known as the *Kilkenny Journal*'.¹¹⁴ Provincial newspapers of the early 1800s offered few opinions of their own but were

¹¹² John McDonald to Patrick Holden, 17 Aug. 1813, Kilmainham Papers (N.L.I., MS 1214), p. 155.

¹¹³ *The Nation*, 11 Nov. 1843.

¹¹⁴ Mary Kenealy, 'Finn's Leinster Journal' in *Old Kilkenny Review*, i, no. 5 (1978), p. 332.

content to publish long extracts from London and foreign papers with very few items of local news. Dr. M. M. Madden, the nineteenth century historian, was scathing in his criticism of this paper when under the control of Catherine Finn. 'Despite the fact that the widow Finn described it as a monument of literature and taste in the city of Kilkenny I have not been able to discover in it from first to last any evidence of or acquaintance with literature nor any indication of taste liberal or political or any interest in any cause which was humane or patriotic'.¹¹⁵ In 1814 the *Kilkenny Moderator*, a Protestant paper appealing to the landlord and Protestant gentry was established in Kilkenny. Its more pro-establishment stance than that of the 'neutral' *Leinster Journal* reaped greater financial rewards from the military authorities. This was demonstrated in the first quarter of 1818 when a sum of £75-11-7½ was paid to the *Kilkenny Moderator* whilst on the other hand the out-of-favour *Kilkenny Journal* received £14-3-6½.¹¹⁶ Such selectivity would seem unjustified if based on the sales of both newspapers. 'Up to 1855, all newspaper publishers in Ireland were obliged to print on stamped paper which was bought in advance from the Stamp Office in Dublin'.¹¹⁷ A comparison of the number of stamps sold in 1850 to the *Kilkenny Journal* (20,000) and the *Kilkenny Moderator* (25,000) would indicate there was no great gap in circulation terms.¹¹⁸ The sum paid by the military to the *Kilkenny Moderator* for advertising in 1818 was only exceeded amongst other Irish newspapers in the case of the *Dublin Evening Post* and *Carrick's Morning Post*.¹¹⁹ A new era of pro-nationalist sympathies evolved in the stance of the *Kilkenny Journal* on the paper being purchased by Cornelius Maxwell in 1830, a friend and staunch supporter of Daniel O'Connell. William Kenealy before being appointed editor of the *Kilkenny Journal* stated in January 1855 that the mission of the paper, henceforth, would be 'to rescue this noble country from the disgrace of political corruption in its representatives'.¹²⁰ This newspaper's anti-recruitment drive during the Crimean War

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 335.

¹¹⁶ A return of the several sums paid by the barrack department in Ireland to different newspapers for advertisements and notices of every kind from Jan. 1816 to Apr. 1822 distinguishing the amount paid to each newspaper in each quarter, H.C. 1822 (588), xviii, 465.

¹¹⁷ Legg, *Newspapers and nationalism*, p. 30.

¹¹⁸ Source HC 1866 (491), xl, 113.

¹¹⁹ A return of the several sums paid by the barrack department in Ireland to different newspapers for advertisements and notices of every kind from Jan. 1816 to Apr. 1822 distinguishing the amount paid to each newspaper in each quarter, p. 2, H.C. 1822 (588), xviii, 465.

¹²⁰ Legg, *Newspapers and nationalism*, p. 52.

has been outlined in this study. In 1899 the *Kilkenny Journal* advocated a more radical anti-British position 'by offering prayers for a Boer victory'.¹²¹

Hoppen identifies Ireland's overwhelming rural character as manifesting itself 'in mental and cultural as well as in economic and political ways'.¹²² The typical portrayal of Ireland's rural gentry, as free-spending, debt-ridden absentee landlords were not true of a number of big houses in Kilkenny. This was due to the remarkable people who lived in them. Born out of their intellectual commitments they were uncomfortable witnessing the traditions of rural cultural life being submerged by the centripetal pull of metropolitan civilisation. John George Augustus Prim of Dunbell (1821-75) possessed such a vision, and as an archaeologist, collector of county Kilkenny folk-song and folklore in the Irish language and founder-member of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society in 1849, contributed greatly to a sense of a distinct Irish identity. Another of these county Kilkenny rural polymaths was William Tighe, landlord of Woodstock, whose work *A statistical survey of county Kilkenny* (1802) is indispensable to research into nineteenth century Kilkenny social and economic history. A classical scholar 'he knew the names of all the flowers and of all the fish' in the valleys of the Nore and Barrow in English, Irish and Latin.¹²³ As a politician he was an outspoken opponent of the Act of Union. 'He was a humane man and soberly recalls how melons and pineapples could be bought in Kilkenny while the poor children of Iverk went to school almost naked'.¹²⁴ Parallel with his advanced views regarding the value of preserving a sense of Irish culture Prim's loyalty to his ascendancy roots remained unchanged as Prims and Anderson and Denroche relatives served Queen and country as soldiers and administrators of empire throughout the period of this study. These two case studies would tend to confirm Stephen Howe's contention that there existed amongst the Anglo-Irish 'a sense of ambiguity, tension, transition and hybridity between national and imperial spheres'.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Donal P. McCracken, *MacBride's Brigade: Irish commandos in the Anglo-Boer War* (Dublin, 1999), p. 51.

¹²² Hoppen, *The mid-Victorian generation 1846-1886*, p. 580.

¹²³ Robert Tobin, 'Butler and the churches' in Chris Agee (ed.), *Unfinished Ireland: essays on Hubert Butler* (Belfast, 2003), p. 91.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Howe, *Ireland and empire*, p. 68.

Whilst Kilkenny Protestants were apt to quibble with the hyphenated identification 'Anglo-Irish' and reject the term 'ascendancy', there was little doubt but that religious faith remained the key marker of difference separating communities.¹²⁶ However, though the infusion of English evangelical proselytism into the city's religious mix in the mid-1820s and the mid-1850s raised tensions there was invariably a contrary voice urging moderation and accommodation. These personality differences were embodied into the lifestyles of Robert Fowler, Protestant bishop of Ossory (died 1843) and the city curate of the same faith Rev. Peter Roe (1799-1842). Fowler, licentious, was generous in his views towards the Catholic majority and a supporter of their emancipation. Roe, ascetic and austere, had little tolerance for the tenets of the Catholic religion.¹²⁷

The extent to which British culture so comprehensively infiltrated the deepest levels of Kilkenny society on artistic, linguistic and ideological levels has been explored in this chapter. Ireland's close geographical proximity to Britain, then the greatest empire on earth, ensured that this country was constantly the subject of colonial domination 'Our language and discourse, the avenues through which all people exercise the gift of thought was occupied with no less consequence than the occupation of the soil from which we earned our bread'.¹²⁸ Joseph Lee theorised that in 'the manner which the language was lost has damaged Irish potential for self-respect, with all the psychological consequences for behaviour patterns that flow from that, even in the purely material sphere'.¹²⁹ Imitativeness, dependency and low self-esteem are symptoms of this residuum of centuries of colonialism. The ethnocentric notions of English cultural superiority and the classification of the Irish people as dense and stupid, led to the production, during the O'Connellite, Young Ireland and Fenian agitations of a huge supply of Irish ape cartoons mainly in the London magazine *Punch*, as noted in Chapter II.

¹²⁶ Roy Foster, 'Hubert Butler and his century' in *Unfinished Ireland*, p. 41.

¹²⁷ For a description of Robert Fowler's character see Robert Tobin 'Butler and the churches' in Chris Agee (ed.), *Unfinished Ireland*, p. 89.

¹²⁸ Ella O'Dwyer, *The rising of the moon; the language of power* (London, 2003), p. 79.

¹²⁹ Tomás Mac Siomóin, 'The colonised mind: Irish language and society' in Daltún Ó Ceallaigh (ed.), *Reconsideration of Irish history and culture* (Dublin, 1994), p. 44.

Conclusion

In general the focus of regional Irish fiction of the early nineteenth century was directed towards an exoteric readership, an English clientele to whom Ireland a strange and foreign country had to be explained. English novelists of the era were basically preoccupied with social choice and personal morality whilst Irish writers were primarily concerned with questions of race, creed and nationality. The two main characters in John Banim's, *The Anglo-Irish of the nineteenth century* portray an allegory of romance between two former enemies, English and Irish. However there is no convincing plot of reconciliation but a scenario of the collapse of Union and ultimate independence for Ireland in which Ireland's 'real people' will wrest control from the 'sojourning strangers'.¹³⁰

The military presence in Kilkenny, 1800-70, had influences both malevolent and benevolent affecting the lives of its citizens to the present day. This benevolence includes the inheritance of a significant aesthetic military architectural legacy outlined in this chapter. The rapid decline of Irish language, though not primarily attributable to the military presence was certainly accelerated because of Kilkenny being a garrison town. The question as to whether the army's presence, influenced a decline in moral values and standards within the city remains unproven for the lack of statistical evidence. The class, religious and social affinities of the officer class with English institutions produced a considerable degree of openness to social ideas being brought into Kilkenny from England. These liberal influences helped to mould a more tolerant and on-the-whole a non-sectarian society. Conflict did arise from time to time as the progressive permeation by Catholic nationalists of the political and social infrastructure threatened Protestant and ascendancy interests. However the basic acceptance by Kilkenny Catholic nationalists of the political and economic institutions of the Anglo-Irish, while seeking to give them a particularly Irish context, helped to maintain Kilkenny as a centre of colonial settlement and economic growth. Kilkenny to this day has sustained a tradition of military service. A great number of its citizens have benefited financially from either serving or supplying goods and services to the barracks. To thousands of young Kilkenny recruits it provided

¹³⁰ John Banim, *The Anglo-Irish of the nineteenth century* (Dublin, 1838), pp. 120-21.

employment and the chance to escape from urban poverty and boredom to a life of travel and new experiences. The new recruit joined from a possible compound of motives, patriotic or economic reasons, the urging of his parish priest or landlord or the drive to emulate the actions of relatives and friends. To those who benefited from cheques in the post it was a great blessing and for the majority who lost husband and bread-winner an almighty curse. Throughout this study the army's impartiality in dealing with Ireland's divided communities on an equal basis has been questioned. However, there were two other auxiliary forces operative in the maintenance of security in Ireland in the period 1800-70 namely the militia and the yeomanry. Both were perceived as lacking in leadership, training and discipline. In the case of the yeomanry this force was seen as the military arm of Orangeism and therefore regarded as anything but impartial. Chapter V will examine these contentions in the light of the Kilkenny experience.

Chapter V

Kilkenny's forgotten armies:

the yeomanry 1830-1834 and the militia 1800-1870

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Irish authorities had, in addition to the regular army, a variety of auxiliary military forces available which included the yeomanry and militia. Mainstream Irish historical research has, over recent years, given little attention to the military role pursued by these two forces in the preservation of law and order. The religious composition of the rank and file militia was predominantly Catholic whilst the yeomanry countrywide were perceived as overwhelmingly Protestant. This chapter will explore accusations of 'orangeism' levelled against the Kilkenny yeomanry in the context of a significant decline of the Protestant population of the county in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Recruitment patterns, the age profile and social background of those joining the Kilkenny militia will be scrutinised, as will the scale of enlistment of Kilkenny militiamen into the regular army. Disembodiment of this force in 1816 until its re-establishment, 1 February 1855, caused severe hardship for Kilkenny militiamen, many of whom had served long years in uniform. The nature of these difficulties will be outlined. The indebtedness of Kilkenny's musical heritage to the magnificent band of the local militia unit, maintained by the Ormonde Butlers, will also be acknowledged.

The Irish militia, on its formation in 1715, was restricted to Protestants aged between sixteen and sixty years who were men of property. A subsequent act of parliament, which received royal assent on 9 April 1793, amended many of the provisions of the earlier legislation and allowed Catholics to join the militia. Nevertheless the force retained much of its earlier format whereby militia officers were predominantly Protestant and the rank and file was composed mainly of Catholic soldiers. This act proposed an enlistment of 16,000 men. Under these regulations the city and county of Kilkenny were united for the purpose of providing a combined force to be known as the 'Kilkenny militia'. The number of men to be supplied was 420, a figure that was to be increased a number of years later to 754. The city's contribution was to be

72 men. Viscount Thurles, afterwards first Marquis of Ormonde, was appointed its colonel commandant.¹ On 10 August 1793 the Kilkenny militia was embodied. To guard against recruits leaving the force after collecting their bounty there was a timely warning printed in *Finn's Leinster Journal* offering a reward of £5 for the apprehension of the first deserter from the corps.² As happened elsewhere all over the south of Ireland, Kilkenny also experienced considerable social disruption, marked by widespread opposition to the establishment of the militia. This was particularly true of rural communities 'who having had no experience of militia system, harboured fears that this was a plan, on the part of government, to force them to become soldiers fighting England's continental wars abroad'.³ The consequence was that tumultuous assemblies and riotous demonstrations took place in several districts of the county, and it was openly declared that anything like laws introducing conscription would be resisted by mob violence.⁴ Despite these disturbances the governor and deputy governor of the county proceeded with arrangements for arraying the militia. It was decided that each of Kilkenny's 96 parishes, in the county and city, should each supply five men, a strategy guaranteed to bring in more men than required. On Monday 30 June 1793 a ballot for the city contingent was conducted at the local court house and passed off without incident. 'The townspeople understanding the principle of the service much better than their rural neighbours, and such persons whom the lot fell for enrolment, as were not willing to serve, easily finding most suitable substitutes for a trifling gratuity'.⁵ Meanwhile recruitment for the militia throughout the county continued against a background of diminishing opposition with the *Leinster Journal* reporting on 19 July that 'several very fine willing fellows were enrolled'.⁶

The act of 1793 stipulated that officers of the militia were required to possess property which in the case of a colonel generated an income of £2,000 a year, £1,200 for a lieutenant, £300 for a major, and £200 for a captain.⁷ These conditions effectively

¹ *Kilkenny Moderator*, 16 July 1859 (commencing on this date a history of the Kilkenny militia appeared in consecutive issues of the *Kilkenny Moderator*).

² *Finn's Leinster Journal*, 10 Aug. 1793.

³ *KM*, 20 July 1859.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *KM*, 20 July 1859.

⁶ *FLJ*, 19 July 1793.

⁷ Henry McAnally, *The Irish militia, 1793-1816* (Cambridge, 1949), p. 22.

eliminated Catholic procurement of these positions. Half the property of the top two ranking officers had to be situated within the county where they operated. Militiamen must not be confused with a volunteer corps. Refusal to serve was treated as an act of mutiny and the offender was liable to a fine of £10.⁸ Enrolment was for a period of four years with the age of volunteers usually between sixteen and thirty-five years. Each new recruit on joining was entitled to a bounty of £6, payable in instalments of £1 at the end of each annual training period. Whether this compulsory twenty-eight day get-together was of much military benefit to recruits who, on enlistment had no previous experience of regular army training, exercises, or drill is debatable. 'When a training course had been completed the general officer reviewed the men in marching, line formation, firing by companies, firing by wings, etc.'⁹ The laudatory remarks concerning the standard of excellence achieved by these men and attributed to successive commanding officers and quoted in the local establishment *Kilkenny Moderator* newspaper ring hollow in the light of subsequent events. This study will highlight a number of serious breaches of discipline recorded against the Kilkenny militia at Limerick, Harwich and Nottingham in the period 1800-16. Another feature of the *Kilkenny Moderator's* partisan reporting of local military happenings is the constant chronicling of lists of officers taking leave of absence, thereby leaving the garrison in the command of junior officers.¹⁰ The fact that many militia officers were also busy magistrates, with limited time available for military service, aggravated this perennial source of trouble. Severe disciplinary action taken against officers absent, with or without leave, had little effect. This deficiency of committed officers adversely affected militia *esprit de corps*. Thomas Pelham on a tour of inspection of the militia in 1797 when reporting to the lord lieutenant stated that the force's rank and file showed a 'determined opposition to the introduction of any kind of discipline or system'.¹¹ Another factor aggravating officer absenteeism was that militia units were obliged to serve at some distance from the county of their origin. This study will outline the movements of the Kilkenny militia around Ireland and England in the period 1793-1816. The only occasions when an Irish militia unit visited its home base was when embodiment or disembodiment occurred.

⁸ Desmond and Jean Bowen, *Heroic option: the Irish in the British army* (Barnsley, 2005), p. 23.

⁹ Breda Maher, 'The Carlow militia 1715-1908' in *Carlow now and then* (Carlow, n.d.).

¹⁰ *KM*, 21 Aug. 1815, et al.

¹¹ McAnally, *The Irish militia*, p. 108.

Recruits to the Irish militia in 1800 were paid an initial sum of ten shillings on volunteering and thereafter a shilling per day. There was also an initial grant of £1 for clothing. However, as pertained in the regular army there were considerable deductions to the militiaman's income in purchasing his kit, having his hair cut, barrack damage, etc. Subaltern officers earned two shillings per day whilst captains were appointed from a class whose wealth made them independent of military pay. The wife of a militiaman, whether with or without children was entitled to an allowance of two shillings per week. For each child born in wedlock under the age of ten an extra shilling per week to the maximum of four shillings per week was allowed.¹² Most militia wives and children followed the regiment in their travels thus creating, at times, an army of followers more numerous than the militiamen themselves. The small number of militia families who did not travel is reflected in the sums provided for 'militia families' by the Kilkenny grand jury at their annual spring and summer assizes. For the year 1800 the sum of £478 was voted, whilst for 1801 the amount allocated was £26.¹³ There are no surviving records that clarify the discrepancy of payments between these two years. Exchequer returns for the year ending 5 January 1802 attribute the cost of running the militia in Ireland at £769,411-11-6, a sum in excess of army expenditure at £661,569-11-8 and that of the fencibles costing £591,484-3-11.¹⁴ On 13 September 1801 the Kilkenny militia marched from Cork to Kinsale to take up a posting there.¹⁵ This same report also mentions the death of George Collis, at Kinsale, formerly of the Kilkenny militia and lately inspector general of the barracks of Munster.

Around 1800 a volunteer military force, the Kilkenny Legion, was formed. Its captains included the Hon. James Butler, Sir John Blunden, James Weyms and William Wilkinson. A payroll/muster roll of the Earl of Ormonde colonel's company of the Kilkenny regiment for March 1800 lists twelve officers, all with surnames

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 272.

¹³ *Sums raised by Grand Juries of the several counties in Ireland, 1793-1802*, p. 23, H.C. 1803-04 (8), vii, 7.

¹⁴ *An account of payments made by the exchequer in Ireland, in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1802, under such heads as are chargeable on the contribution fund of the United Kingdom*, p. 655, H.C. 1803-04 (146), viii, 655.

¹⁵ *Ansell's monthly military companion*, 2 vols., Dublin 1801-2, I, 13 Sept. 1801 (N.L.I., MS J. 3550942), p. 166.

strongly suggestive of English and Protestant pedigree. However the sergeants, corporals, drummers and thirty-five privates predominantly had Irish surnames and were presumably Catholic. The pay of the officers for the month amounted to £102-16-9 whilst the total for the other ranks was £74-7-0.¹⁶ This ethnic/religious ratio was broadly similar in the seven other companies of the regiment. Another company had Martin Cormick and John Purcell Mulhallen as lieutenants. A third volunteer group within the city was commanded by Captain Hamilton, the son of the then bishop of Ossory. Another troop of militia, of this period, based in Gowran and Graigue (county Kilkenny) lists James Agar and Thomas Green as captains, six junior officers and a complement of thirty-eight rank and file men. Their store of arms numbered twenty-four muskets and the number of horses at their disposal nil.¹⁷

A temporary cessation of the conflict between England and France in 1802 led to the standing down of the Irish militia. The Kilkenny militia was disbanded on 14 May 1802.¹⁸ The interval of disembodiment was very short. Soon the fallacious hope that a lengthy period of tranquillity had dawned upon Europe was shattered by the recommencement of hostilities between England and France. The Kilkenny militia was once more established on 15 March 1803.¹⁹ In contrast to the 1793 call-up when volunteer numbers in Kilkenny were satisfactory, recruitment on this occasion was rather lukewarm. A meeting of the county's deputy governor and magistrates on 9 June 1803 for the purpose of adopting the most speedy mode of completing the Kilkenny regiment of militia recorded that this corps was 260 men deficient of the complement required and that a bounty of four guineas had not proved a sufficient inducement to men to enlist as volunteers. It was resolved:

That the 260 men be appointed to the several baronies and parishes in proportion to the population there of; and that we will, at our next meeting, proceed to a ballot for such parishes, as shall not, within 21 days from the date hereof raise and pay into the office of the treasurer of the county, the sum of 3 guineas for each man so appointed, to enable the commanding officer to increase the bounty to volunteers to 7 guineas per man, and thus prevent the necessity of proceeding to ballot – by order Francis Wheeler.²⁰

¹⁶ Muster roll of the Kilkenny regiment of militia, Mar. 1800 (T.N.A., WO 13/2945).

¹⁷ Two documents concerning a troop of militia quartered at Gowran, n.d., Flower papers (N.L.I., MS 13015).

¹⁸ *KM*, 3 Aug. 1859.

¹⁹ Collection of military documents titled 'Militarium', (N.A.I., MS M464).

²⁰ *FLJ*, 15 June 1803.

Table 5.1 illustrates the numbers of men levied in the city of Kilkenny and its liberties, as well as the baronies of the county. Failure to supply the number of recruits allotted resulted in a cash fine on the particular district guilty of default.²¹

District	Number of men required	Fine in guineas for non-participation
Kilkenny city and its liberties	46	138
Gowran	53	159
Fassadinan	33	99
Ida	24	72
Iverk	22	66
Granagh	20	60
Kells	12	36
Shillelogher	9	27
Galmoy	23	69
Callan	6	18

Source: Kilkenny Moderator, 3 August 1859.

Table 5.1 Number of recruits levied for militia service in Kilkenny city and within the baronies of the county and fines payable in lieu of absence.

The plan for tempting volunteers with a bounty increased by voluntary taxation, to seven guineas per man failed spectacularly. Volunteers hung back in the hopes of a more tempting sum being offered. The deficiency in the number of men required by the regiment had, in the interim, increased for some unexplained reason from 260 to 280 men.²² Though the regiment was nearly one-third deficient in its complement arrangements continued to complete the corps. Meanwhile training continued of those enlisted. Orders were received that the regiment should proceed to Ennis. The regiment marched from Kilkenny in two divisions, the first on 29 June and the second on 1 July 1803. They were replaced by the north Cork militia who were quartered in Kilkenny barracks for a lengthy period thereafter.²³ Following their initial posting to Ennis where they were quartered for some months, the Kilkenny militia were ordered northwards to Cavan. In the summer of 1805 they were moved further north to Strabane, county Tyrone. After a lengthy assignment there their next posting was to Cahir, county Tipperary, following which they garrisoned at Limerick, where the head-quarters company was again re-joined with a company that had been stationed in Tipperary. From Limerick detachments of the regiment were posted at

²¹ *KM*, 3 Aug. 1859.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

Askeaton, Tarbert and Newcastle.²⁴ At Limerick their strength was diminished because of recruiting parties looking for volunteers to join the regular army overseas:

Thursday morning, the order for volunteering having been read to the Kilkenny militia on their parade in Limerick, they most spiritually accepted the offer, and instantly the entire quota, 120 men, entered for general service, their orderly conduct in these quarters since receiving the bounty is highly commendable. The majority of them volunteered into the 88th or Connaught Rangers and the remainder to the 53rd, 84th and 93rd regiments.²⁵

This denuding of Irish militia regiments for troops to serve abroad, had been facilitated by measures passed by the English parliament on 20 January 1800 which allowed for an extra 10,041 militia men 'to be recruited in Ireland' to serve in His Majesty's forces in Europe.²⁶ Britain's armed forces increased dramatically from 86 line battalions in 1793 to 210 battalions in 1813.²⁷ Demands by Whitehall on Dublin Castle to provide increasingly larger troop numbers for duties overseas had to be accommodated against a background, at home, of distress calls from disturbed areas for extra military to deal with Whiteboy disorder and agrarian outrage. The Irish militia proved a rich recruitment base. The intensity of these recruitment efforts is highlighted in the following Kilkenny newspaper report:

No less than thirty recruiting parties, all from regiments remarkable for their character, have arrived in this city, to receive drafts from the militia. Amongst these is one from that very distinguished regiment of the 5th Foot, said to be one of the finest in the service. An extraordinary instance of gallantry and bravery signalled this regiment in the last war in the West Indies.²⁸

The effective strength of the Kilkenny militia, 1 July 1807 comprised in addition to the officers, not enumerated, 44 sergeants, 18 drummers, 40 corporals and 560 privates.²⁹ The Kilkenny militia were stationed at Wexford during 1809. While there, in January 1810, the commanding officer of the regiment, Major Izod, was requested to provide volunteers for the line! One hundred and sixty men volunteered. In the summer of 1810 the regiment was transferred to Cork. The influx of a regiment into a provincial town usually created a rise in the prices of food, services and

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ *FLJ*, 1-4 June 1808.

²⁶ McAnally, *The Irish militia*, p. 150.

²⁷ G. E. Rothenberg, *The art of war in the age of Napoleon* (London, 1977), p. 182.

²⁸ *FLJ*, 16-19 July 1806.

²⁹ *Return of the effective strength of regiments of Irish Militia, 1807-08*, p. 255, H.C. 1808 (266), vii, 235.

accommodation. Such were the experiences of the Kilkenny militia in Bandon. It was May and provisions were scarce and dear. Major Wemys commanding the garrison was forced to apply to the lord lieutenant for an increased allowance for bread, potatoes and oatmeal. After some procrastination by Dublin Castle increases were allowed provided the price of bread did not exceed 4d per lb., potatoes 10½d per stone and oatmeal 31s 6d per cwt.³⁰

Irish militia units, prior to 1811, actively sought opportunities to serve in Britain and thus replicate the services provided by the English militia in Ireland during the 1798 Rebellion. An act of parliament of 1811 provided for the interchange of English, Irish and Scottish groups. This legislation allowing interchangeability introduced major changes in the composition of that force in Ireland. Militia numbers in Ireland for the years 1806-10 amounted to 30,000 men, all of whom were Irish. However for the years 1811-13 over half the number of militia serving in Ireland were English units. In 1814 English militia units in Ireland numbered 15,719 men, almost double the number of Irish militia at 8,872.³¹ This interchange of regiments also introduced great cultural changes locally. It provided Kilkenny girls with a wider selection of prospective marriage partners. That this occurred is evident from the parish records of St. John's Roman Catholic church adjacent to the Kilkenny military barracks. In February, April and July of 1814 soldiers of the Meath militia, based in the barracks, married girls from that parish (see Appendix No. 6, p. 256).

The Kilkenny militia repeatedly interceded with Dublin Castle for a chance to serve in any part of Britain. Finally their wishes were granted, all except a few old men volunteering to travel. This offer was graciously acknowledged by E. B. Littlehales in his reply to Major Izod, 12 July 1811, which commended 'the motives by which the regiment under your command have been actuated in making so prompt and disinterested an offer'.³² Almost a year later on 29 May 1812 the regiment was ordered to proceed to Dublin, preparatory to a move to Britain. Leaving on 1 June they marched in four divisions of two companies each. Their route was via Fermoy,

³⁰ *KM*, 3 Aug. 1859.

³¹ McAnally, *The Irish militia*, p. 150.

³² E. B. Littlehales to Major Izod, 12 July 1811 quoted in *KM*, 3 Aug. 1859.

Clogheen, Clonmel, Kilkenny, Athy and Naas, arriving in Dublin on 12 June 1812. Here they encountered prices even higher than those in Bandon and further increased allowances had to be sought. These granted allowed the rate for bread not to exceed 4½d per lb., potatoes 13d per lb. and oatmeal 34s 9d per cwt.³³ All officers on leave from the Kilkenny militia were ordered to return to barracks as an order of readiness was issued to the Kilkenny militia on 23 March 1813.

The Kilkenny militia finally embarked for England in late March 1813. After short stays in Liverpool and Preston they were ordered to Nottingham. *The Star* quoting reports from that town prior to the arrival of the 'Kilkennies' states:

It appears the practice of frame breaking continues on as great an extent as ever in the vicinity of that town and adjoining counties. In the meantime the trade is endeavouring to bring the men to a compromise. They have come to a resolution generally to advance the price of labour and lists of their terms have been printed and distributed amongst the workmen; but whether they are such as will satisfy their demands remains to be seen. The military force is daily increasing in the neighbourhood.³⁴

The introduction of new technologies and the factory system of production challenged artisans and unskilled workers alike, who responded to their economic deprivations by machine breaking, known ever after as 'luddism'. Such a transition from policing rural Ireland, usually in small detachments, presented Kilkenny militia with difficulties for which they had no previous training and for which they were wholly unsuitable. Utter chaos greeted their arrival:

What remained of the whole square of Nottingham was then in possession of the tumultuous luddites. The mayor of Nottingham in a terrible fright – he was a John Bull of the first magnitude – ordered the regiment to fire; which order, however, was refused until the riot act should be read. No riot act was to be found for sometime, and when it was found the mayor was in such a fright that he could scarcely read a word of it. The colonel, however heard enough. He fired but not with deadly aim, some tasted the bayonet and the rest took to their heels. We were of course ordered to march next day. We were replaced by the Scotch Greys who got into a worse scrape than we did, with the luddites, and soon got the route in a similar manner.
Militicus.³⁵

After Nottingham the next posting was to Harwich, where both men and officers

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ *The Star*, 19 Dec. 1811.

³⁵ *KM*, 6 Aug. 1859.

were housed. Once again volunteers were requested to extend their services to the 'line'. Volunteering days were fixed for 4-6 April 1814, 'and sixteen guineas per man was held out to those offering without limitation as to time or twelve guineas for a limited period'.³⁶ Major General Wilder of the 35th Regiment urged the men to volunteer for service in the Ionian Islands, having previously served there himself and particularly recommending the island of Zante where the headquarters of the corps was then situated and:

Where meat of every description is only 2½d per lb., chickens 6d, and the pick of a large drove of turkeys, for 9d or one shilling each, and very capital wine for 2½d a bottle ... the soldier is allowed 1 lb. of meat, 1 lb. of bread, a pint of wine and 3 lbs. of wood and very little duty ... and not only the soldier's wife but all the children (not exceeding a score) are in like manner provided with rations.³⁷

There was no lack of volunteers to test the validity of the promises held out. In late April 1814 the Kilkenny militia were ordered to march from Harwich to Gosport to take part in the great Portsmouth Review before the allied sovereigns of Europe. The naval review was held on 23 June and the military review on the following day. Thus before the Prince Regent of England, the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, the Duke of Sax Weimar, the Prince of Sax Coburg, Wellington and the Russian General Cherachef, the Kilkenny militia were amongst the 10,000 troops in the great march-past. The commander-in-chief of the forces, the Duke of York, was so impressed with the appearance of the 'Kilkennies' and with the melody of the band that he sent an orderly at full speed to enquire the name of the regiment. Being informed he took the band under his special care for the remainder of this military exhibition; they played wherever he was in attendance, under their bandmaster Logier. Reportedly the best military band in the service, the Marquis of Ormonde spent £1,500 per annum in rendering it perfect.³⁸

The large-scale practice of employing black soldier musicians in regimental and militia bands common in England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was also prevalent in Ireland. Afro-Black and Asian people were perceived to have an innate musical ability. Figure 5.4 illustrates a collar and two armlets worn by a

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *KM*, 10 Aug. 1859.

negro in the band of the Kilkenny militia c.1793. Mainstream Irish history, according to Denman, regards the arrival here of coloured people as ‘a relative recent twentieth century occurrence’, when in fact Ireland of this period was ‘far more racially diverse than was previously thought’.³⁹ *Finn’s Leinster Journal*, 8-11 July, 1767 carries an advertisement offering a guinea reward for information leading to the capture of Jonathan Rose, ‘a tall black man, about twenty-two years of age’ who left his master’s service, Captain Kearney of Blanchville, near Gowran ‘and took up money in his master’s name’.⁴⁰ The advertisement further noted that Rose was proficient in playing the French horn and violin.

Figure 5.4: ‘Collar and two armlets worn by a negro in the band of the Kilkenny Militia, c. 1793. Sheffield plate with gilt ornaments: the three object imperfect. On each side of the collar are the entwined gilt letters KR (Kilkenny Regiment). On the collar is an outline of the crest, indicating a maid of Erin harp with a trophy of arms surmounted by a crown.’



COLLAR AND TWO ARMLETS WORN BY A NEGRO IN THE BAND OF THE KILKENNY MILITIA. c. 1793.

Sheffield plate with gilt ornaments: the three objects imperfect. On each side of the collar are the entwined gilt letters KR (Kilkenny Regiment). On the collar is an outline of the crest, including a Maid of Erin harp within a trophy of arms, surmounted by a crown. See below, pp. 409-424. John D. Ellis, ‘The Black, the Red and the Green: Black red-coats and Ireland during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries’. [Text: F. Glenn Thompson. Photo: National Museum of Ireland]

[The Irish Sword, vol. XXIII (no. 94), facing page 361]

Source: *The Irish Sword*, xxiii, no. 94, p. 361.

³⁹ T. Denman, ‘The Catholic Irish soldier in the First World War’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxvii (Nov. 1991), pp. 325-365.

⁴⁰ *FLJ*, 8-11 July, 1767.

From its inception in 1793 the uniforms worn by the Kilkenny militia were red coats with yellow facings. 'Facings were the colours used to distinguish one regiment from another'.⁴¹ The figure depicted in Figure 5.5 is that of an ensign or second lieutenant of the Kilkenny militia c.1878 wearing the regiment's distinctive fusilier cap. Constructed from racoon skin, and authorised in 1865, this cap was common to all fusilier regiments. The regimental badge depicted a fused grenade and was also embroidered on the collar. 'Collar and cuffs were yellow, both had silver lace and white piping and the rank insignia was worn behind the grenade badge of the former'.⁴² The accoutrements of the staff officers of the militia's light cavalry companies were equally ostentatious:

A housing, or saddle cloth made in shape and size similar to that ordered for the general staff of the army, of the colour of the facing of the regiment, with a double row of regimental lace round the edge, the holsters to be covered with black bear-skin and the fronting of the bridle with ribbon the colour of the housing.⁴³

However, a return to Ireland and disembodiment was soon to follow and on 3 September 1814 the regiment arrived safely in Queenstown, having sailed from Portsmouth. After short spells in Cork, Fermoy, Cashel and Cahir they arrived back in Kilkenny in early October:

Yesterday morning that division of the Kilkenny militia which has been recently quartered in Cashel marched into this city under the command of the Hon. Pierce Butler, amid the cheering gratulations of a vast concourse of people, who assembled to receive, with becoming eclat, a regiment distinguished by every military attribute, and which has ever done honour to the city and county whose name it bears.⁴⁴

Disembodiment took place on 14 October 1814:

The ceremony took place on the Parade at one o' clock, when the whole corps with an enthusiasm we have seldom witnessed placed Lieutenant Colonel the Hon. Pierce Butler in a neat chair finely decorated with blue and pink silk and carried him through the different streets, cheering him with the loudest acclamations during the whole ceremony. Lieutenant Colonel Loftus and the other officers were also cheered by the soldiers.⁴⁵

The contribution of the colonel of the regiment, Walter Earl of Ormonde, was also acknowledged. He was presented with an elegant sword by the officers 'for his

⁴¹ F. Glenn Thompson, 'The lineage of the Kilkenny militia' in *Old Kilkenny Review*, no. 46 (1994), p. 51.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁴³ *FLJ*, 29 Jan. 1806.

⁴⁴ *KM*, 10 Aug. 1859.

⁴⁵ *KM*, 15 Oct. 1814.

kindness at all times but particularly for his great liberality in keeping-up the regimental band of music, in the most splendid style, entirely at his own expense'.⁴⁶ With the ending of the Napoleonic wars in Europe and the regular army once again stationed in Ireland there was no further use for the militia.

Questions as to the possible loyalties of the Irish militia to the crown remained a constant undercurrent in establishment circles throughout the early nineteenth century. The *Kilkenny Moderator* strongly felt that the loyalty demonstrated by the force was undervalued:

The Irish militias, from the fatuous want of confidence in Irish loyalty, were not enrolled till awful gaps were made in the regular army. They were the last enrolled; they gave the most volunteers for the battlefield and they are first to be disbanded.⁴⁷

J. Wheeler Cuffe, the commander of a company in the city of Kilkenny, had no doubts about the loyalties of his men:

That corps was composed of Protestant and Catholic: and I can venture to assert, no corps in the kingdom discharged its duty with more integrity and zeal for the government and public safety. My knowledge of the conduct of the Catholics of that corps, and my observation of the Catholics in this country in those perilous days, influenced my feelings powerfully and prompted me to sign the Protestant petition for Catholic emancipation.⁴⁸

McAnally quoting a report of the Irish Medical Army Board portrays the typical Irish militia volunteer as being 'stout men in the prime of life, drawn almost entirely from the Irish peasantry, inured by labour in the fields to every vicissitude of climate and season'.⁴⁹ This would also seem to be true of the local regiment. The *Kilkenny Moderator* describes the grenadiers of this force as all of great stature, and nearly all Brennans from the Castlecomer colliery district.⁵⁰ Of the 26 men listed as deserting from the Kilkenny militia between 29 August and 20 December 1803, 16 were natives of rural parishes. Of those whose previous working experience is listed 15 were described as labourers, one a mason, while those who previously practised a more sedentary life-style included a shoemaker, weaver, hatter, servant and tailor (see Table 5.2). Twelve of these deserters were aged between 21-27 years. Sixteen

⁴⁶ *KM*, 10 Aug. 1859.

⁴⁷ *KM*, 10 May 1856.

⁴⁸ *FLJ*, 30 Nov. 1812.

⁴⁹ McAnally, *The Irish militia*, p. 57.

⁵⁰ *KM*, 30 July 1859.

were between 5' 2" and 5' 6" in height, while ten measured between 5' 6¼" to 6'. Surprisingly only two of those listed are natives of county Kilkenny.⁵¹ A possible explanation is that the Irish militia, over the period 1803-14 lost the character of a non-professional army as the practice of raising recruits by county effort declined with the exception of the year 1807-08 and again in 1809-10 when there was a reversion to ballot.

Name	Address	Age	Height	Trade
James Kean	Mullinahone, Co. Tipperary		5'-5½"	Shoemaker
Patrick Ryan	Ardree, Co. Galway		5'-4"	Labourer
John Flanagan	Tynagh, Co. Galway		5'-6"	Labourer
Patrick MacCullach	Annaghmore, Co. Antrim		5'-4½"	Weaver
William Harris	Dysart, Co. Kilkenny		5'-8"	Labourer
John Nowlan	Ballon, Co. Carlow		5'-5"	
Patrick Nowlan	Ferns, Co. Wexford		5'-2¾"	Formerly attached to Cork Militia
Michael Walsh	Davidstown, Co. Wexford		5'-3¼"	
James Hackett	Clogher, Co. Tipperary		5'-6¼"	Labourer
Timothy Walsh	St. Johns Parish, city of Kilkenny		5'-3¼"	Labourer
John Ryan	Killander, Co. Tipperary		5'-5½"	Labourer
James Byrne	Dunkitt, Co. Kilkenny		5'-7¾"	
Patrick Younge	Tullogh Street, Carlow		5'-7"	
James Keefe	Glanmire, Cork	23	5'-4½"	Labourer
John Roach	Toarneen, Co. Waterford	23	5'-10¾"	Labourer
Patrick Farrell	Rosegreen, Co. Tipperary	27	5'-4¼"	Labourer
John MacDonald	Kells, Co. Kilkenny	21	5'-7¾"	Labourer
John MacKenrick	Lifford, Co. Donegal	29	5'-6¾"	Labourer
John Bryan	Clonmel, Co. Tipperary	23	5'-7"	Labourer
James Connell	Ballingarry, Co. Tipperary	25	5'-4¼"	Labourer
Alexander Graham	Town of Carlow	26	5'-6"	Hatter
Peter Mooney	Borris, Carlow	23	5'-4¼"	Appearance of a servant
Thomas Callaghan	Galbally, Co. Tipperary	25	5'-10"	Labourer
John O'Bryan	Leighlinbridge, Co. Carlow	23	5'-5"	Tailor
John McMahon	Thurles, Co. Tipperary	21	5'-7¼"	Labourer
Darby Power	Clarnwood, Co. Galway		5'-5"	Labourer

Source: *Leinster Journal*, December 21-24, 1803.

Table 5.2 Deserters from the county Kilkenny Royal Army of Reserve, December 1803.

It is difficult to analyse the role the Kilkenny militia played in the suppression of disorder during the period of its embodiment, 1793-1816. The regiment was distantly garrisoned from Kilkenny during that time. Evidence from this study would suggest

⁵¹ *FLJ*, 11-14 Dec. 1811.

that, at a time prior to the establishment of an effective Irish police force, the regiment's failures greatly outnumbered their successes. Service in England in 1813 was undertaken with the grand design that memories of the regiment's cowardice at the 'Races of Castlebar' in 1798, where they fled the field of battle when confronted by a numerically smaller detachment of French troops, would be gloriously redeemed when presented with this new challenge. Such was not the case. Lack of discipline, perfunctory training and the propensity of its soldiers to over-indulge in drinking and brawling amply revealed the regiment's deficiencies. Relieving the King's Own Stafford Regiment at Harwich in 1813, the Kilkenny militia to their wonderment found 'these men were tee-totalers, rare birds indeed'.⁵² No such charge could be attributed to the 'Kilkennies'. Shortly afterwards at a dinner given to Lord Ormonde by the regiment's officers at Brentford it was noted 'all claret in the town had been drunk already we had to finish the night with port wine' and the glasses all being broken we 'poured it into soup plates which we lapped up with avidity by the aid of table spoons'.⁵³

Militia accounts generally were carelessly kept. Those in charge of the books neglected their duties while 'some had corrupt relations with contractors for repairs and supplies'.⁵⁴ The military account office in Dublin had reason to question Kilkenny militia account practices in a letter of 19 February 1818:

We beg leave to state for the information of the lord lieutenant that the paymaster of the Kilkenny militia has not furnished the payroll of the disembodied staff of that corps ended 24 December 1817. Although nearly a month has elapsed since the expiration of the period fixed by the regulations for its surrender. We have frequently had occasion to address the paymaster of the regiment and question the irregular manner in which his accounts have been transmitted for previous quarters and on the 2nd instant we addressed a letter to him on the subject of his payroll now wanting to which we have not received any reply.

Signed Thos Brownrigg, Robert Barry, Dugold Campell.⁵⁵

When the Irish and British militia were amalgamated in 1833, the number 127 was allocated to the Kilkenny regiment in the order of precedence on the United

⁵² *KM*, 6 Aug. 1859.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ 'R. B. McDowell, 'Administration and the public services 1800-70' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v, (New York, 1998), p. 540.

⁵⁵ Thomas Brownrigg, *et al*, to lord lieutenant, 19 Feb. 1818 (N.A.I., OP 998).

Kingdom militia lists.⁵⁶ The first steps in the re-embodiment of this militia commenced on 1 February 1854. Kilkenny newspaper reports of the period spotlight army recruitment rather than young men joining the militia. The army, ill prepared and undermanned at the outbreak of the Crimean War, needed immediate troop reinforcement. On 30 December 1854 the Kilkenny regiment was raised with the arrival of Brevet Major Maunsell in the city.⁵⁷ A seasoned military campaigner, he had prior to this appointment been attached to the 94th Regiment serving in India, Africa and the West Indies. A feature of the officership structure of the Kilkenny militia of 1854 is the nepotism practiced amongst Kilkenny's Protestant landed families (see Table 5.3, p. 218). There is little surname change between those in command pre-1816 and those of 1855. The disbandment of the Kilkenny militia following the ending of the Crimean War in 1856 was described by the *Kilkenny Moderator* as likely to have a disastrous effect on the local economy. Men returning home, 'few of them with any homes to return to', were unlikely to procure a livelihood and would, the author predicted, turn to destitution and crime. The editor further noted that these unfortunates were likely to 'crowd the poorhouses and the gaols to the heavy loss and injury of the already overburdened rate-payers'.⁵⁸ It was pointed out that this break-up of the regiment showed little gratitude to the Irish militia 'which was more liberal of volunteers to the line during the war than either the English or Scotch militia'.⁵⁹ The voluntary retirement of great numbers of militiamen over the summer months led to the break-up of the regimental band with the announcement that because 'so many of the bandsmen had taken their discharge' that Herr Bergmann, the band leader, found it impossible to fulfil any further musical engagements. The loss of this twice-weekly concert performed by the band on the local college green the *Kilkenny Moderator* noted 'will be much felt here henceforth'.⁶⁰ In 1856 there was a change of nomenclature for the militia. The regiment was converted to fusiliers and became the 127th Kilkenny Fusiliers and continued under that title until 1881.⁶¹

⁵⁶ *KM*, 6 Aug. 1859.

⁵⁷ *KM*, 30 Dec. 1854.

⁵⁸ *KM*, 16 Apr. 1856.

⁵⁹ *KM*, 19 Apr. 1856.

⁶⁰ *KM*, 2 Aug. 1856.

⁶¹ F. Glenn Thompson, 'The lineage of the Kilkenny militia' in *Old Kilkenny Review*, no. 46 (1994), p. 51.

Rank	Name	Date of Commissions
Colonel	The Marquis of Ormonde	14 November, 1848
Lieutenant Colonel	Henry Weemyss	20 September, 1846
Major	Arthur Helsham	20 September, 1846
Captains 1	John Waring	9 November, 1808
Captains 2	Thomas John O'Flaherty	29 March, 1816
Captains 3	George Paul Helsham	31 May, 1824
Captains 4	Pierce S. Butler	6 November, 1838
Captains 5	Walter Butler	4 February, 1846
Captains 6	William H. Candlar	4 February, 1846
Captains 7	Lord Walter Butler	2 April, 1852
Captains 8	Joseph Greene, Junior	12 April, 1852
Lieutenants 1	Paris Anderson	24 April, 1809
Lieutenants 2	William Bell	23 January, 1811
Lieutenants 3	John Payne	22 February, 1811
Lieutenants 4	B. A. Chambers	6 November, 1812
Lieutenants 5	Alexander Bell	10 October, 1814
Lieutenants 6	Richard Wheeler	4 February, 1846
Lieutenants 7	Hon. Leopold Ager Ellis	20 March, 1852
Lieutenants 8	Edward Lewis Warren	5 April, 1852
Lieutenants 9	William Hartford	5 April, 1852
Lieutenants 10	James Langrishe	24 January, 1853
Ensigns 1	Samuel Waring	19 March, 1814
Ensigns 2	Edward Briscoe	2 August, 1820
Ensigns 3	John Lentiagne	3 July, 1840
Ensigns 4	Michael Aylmer	21 December, 1840
Ensigns 5	Kingston Reade Waring	12 April, 1852
Ensigns 6	Paul Helsham Hunt	13 April, 1852
Adjutant	James McIntyre	21 January, 1846
Quarter Master	Timothy Murray	3 January, 1846

Source: Captain J. McIntyre to the Under Secretary, Dublin Castle, 18 February 1854 (N.A.I., CSO 12602).

Table 5.3 Officers of Kilkenny militia 1854

It seems the change in name from militia to fusiliers heralded no great improvement in the efficiency of the Kilkenny regiment. The storage deficiencies of this force are highlighted in a letter of Major G. Maunsell of the Kilkenny militia to Hastings Doyle, inspector general of militia, 20 January 1859, in which he outlined the precautions he had taken in response to 'private information' he received warning of a proposed raid on the militia stores for 'the purpose of obtaining possession of the arms of the permanent staff, and the ammunition lodged there for the defence of the building'.⁶²

He ordered that an around-the-clock guard of four sergeants and six men be mounted to protect the stores 'until they can be with safety withdrawn, as the building is in a

⁶² Major G. Maunsell to Colonel H. Doyle, 20 Jan. 1859 (N.A.I., CSORP 784).

very dilapidated and defenceless state'. He further added that he had removed the arms and ammunition, packed them into an armchest and placed them in a room where two sergeants slept. Maunsell further indicated to Lord Naas that in consequence of the large quantity of stores received during the summer training period of 1858 he had to open another room for the purpose of accommodating the clothes of the disembodied militia. Maunsell asked for an extra allowance to protect the clothes from the damp and was granted 1/3d a week during the winter months.⁶³ Though disbanded, the fusiliers assembled annually for twenty-one days training. Amongst those previously enrolled who returned to the 1858 training camp was John Ward 'from beyond Scariff, county of Clare, from whence he had walked here, a distance of 93 miles, in four days, to join the corps.' The poor man was so footsore that he was obliged to go at once into hospital.⁶⁴ The *Kilkenny Moderator*, 16 July 1859, noted that 'a stream of fusiliers began to flow into our city from all parts of the county' and from 'Limerick, Nenagh and other distant places' amounting to 310 men.⁶⁵

As this study shows Whitehall's primary conviction throughout the period was that strategic necessity took primacy over the security concerns of the Irish gentry and magistracy. Britain's 'solution to the problem of tapping effectively the manpower of Ireland lay ultimately in utilising the Irish militia as a nursery for the regulars'.⁶⁶ Kilkenny was to the fore in this respect and its contribution to army manpower in the year to August 1858 was 600 men who joined the army, 278 of whom were militiamen. This the *Kilkenny Moderator* exclaimed was noteworthy:

If every county in Great Britain and Ireland gave as many soldiers to the Queen, in proportion to their respective populations, in the same period, Her Majesty would have had her army increased in one year by 111,000 men.⁶⁷

The government's suspicion of the loyalty of the Irish militia and concerns that there had been widespread Fenian infiltration of that corps led to the suspension of militia training 1867-8. The role of auxiliary forces was seen as superfluous. According to a

⁶³ War Office to Lord Naas, 10 Jan. 1859 (N.A.I., CSORP 332).

⁶⁴ *KM*, 28 July 1858.

⁶⁵ *KM*, 16 July 1859.

⁶⁶ Thomas Bartlett, 'Defence, counter-insurgency and rebellion: Ireland 1793-1803' in Bartlett and Jeffery's *A military history of Ireland*, p. 257.

⁶⁷ *KM*, 28 July 1858.

spokesman for the chief secretary 'Her Majesty's troops are perfectly capable of maintaining public peace and protecting the lives and properties of the loyal in this country'.⁶⁸ W. H. R. Dolling was urged to dissuade loyalists from any precipitous actions:

I think it would be most undesirable that any body of men not in the service of the government, should commence anything like a system of patrolling or moving about in armed bodies. This would be immediately taken advantage of by a large portion of the press in this country, and described as a political or sectarian demonstration.⁶⁹

Subsequent to the defeat of the 1867 Fenian Rising the newest military element in the pacification of Ireland, the army's flying columns, were the beneficiaries of the most eloquent praise. These columns had to make long marches, sometimes forty miles a day, in very inclement weather, often in deep snow, and the worst ground.⁷⁰

The Kilkenny Yeomanry

The name yeoman to this day, for many Irish people, conjures up scenes of unbridled butchery perpetrated on a defenceless Irish peasantry, during the 1798 Rebellion, by this sectarian Protestant quasi-army. Having its origins within the Protestant loyal associations in Ulster, in 1796, this force quickly spread throughout Ireland. According to G. A. Hayes-McCoy the reason that yeomen displayed so much zeal and ferocity, when compared to the conduct of the army or militia, was that they 'entered the struggle primarily the defenders of their own interests, grimly conscious that these interests would be the first to be attacked'.⁷¹ During the early nineteenth century the strains imposed by mounting political, sectarian and economic tensions had stretched the traditional system of peacekeeping past breaking point. This study will chart the levels of these tensions locally and Kilkenny's yeomanry response to peasant revolt.

Against a background of Britain's continuing war with France and a depleted and thinly dispersed regular army in Ireland it was intended that the yeomanry would assume the task of domestic peacekeeping and thus allow the regular army and

⁶⁸ Chief secretary to W. R. H. Dolling, 3 Dec. 1866 (N.L.I., MS 24,895).

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ General Order no. 467, adjutant generals office, 9 May 1867 (N.L.I., MS 24,895).

⁷¹ G. A. Hayes-McCoy, 'Castletown Yeomanry' in *Carloviana*, i, no. 3 (Jan. 1949).

Figure 5.5: Second Lieutenant, Kilkenny Militia c.1875.



127th Kilkenny Fusiliers c. 1875

F. Glenn Thompson
1993.

Source: F. Glenn Thompson, *Old Kilkenny Review*, No. 46 (1994), p. 51.

militia to concentrate on the defence of the country at large. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the task of policing was still largely under the control of the military and local ascendancy. Corps of yeomanry were organised throughout the country under commissions issued to local magistrates. Each yeoman swore the 'yeomanry oath' in front of a magistrate when joining. These recruits were officered by the local gentry, but were paid, clothed, armed and controlled by the government. The cavalry regiments were the most numerous and usually had small infantry corps attached to them. Cavalry units supplied their own horses, which in most instances were of a better quality than those supplied to the regular army.⁷² These units 'from their knowledge of the country served as guides to the army, and familiar with the passes of the mountains and morass, they sometimes surprised small scattered detachments of the people whom the regular forces had not the same facility of approaching'.⁷³ However James Grove White, in his study of Irish yeomanry, admits that there was an over concentration of cavalry units during the forces formative years. This mistake was subsequently remedied following experiences gained from the 1798 Rebellion. The fact that cavalry troops did 'not dismount and engage on foot with carbines' against the rebels, White states 'was so little efficacious for the end proposed'.⁷⁴

In December 1803 the yeomen in Ireland numbered 10,277 cavalry and 64,756 infantry.⁷⁵ From the outset the greatest concentration of the force was in Ulster where their services were least required. In August 1828 there were 19,853 yeomen in Ireland: 13,440 in Ulster, 3,513 in Leinster, 1,507 in Munster, and 1,393 in Connaught.⁷⁶ These figures denote that yeomanry was weakest in Leinster and Munster where their services were perceived to be most needed. Their effectiveness was thus compromised against opponents who had local depth of numbers and the support of their neighbours. This sharp decrease in the numbers of yeomen was as Gordon notes due to the reluctance of government to seek the support of 'such a military establishment who might become a dangerous engine of popular demands

⁷² G. A. Hayes-McCoy, 'Castletown Yeomanry' in *Carloviana*, i, no. 3 (Jan. 1949).

⁷³ James Grove White, *An account of the yeomanry of Ireland 1796-1834* (Cork, 1893), p. 9.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

under the influence of designing men'.⁷⁷

The average strength of the cavalry and separate infantry corps was three officers and fifty men. Permanent pay was issued as illustrated in Table 5.6.

Cavalry		Infantry	
Captain, per diem.	14/6d	Captain, per diem.	9/4d
First Lieutenant, per diem.	9/=	First Lieutenant, per diem.	5/8d
Sub Lieutenant, per diem.	8/=	Sub Lieutenant, per diem.	4/8d
Private, per diem.	2/=	Private, per diem.	1/=

Source: James Grove White, *An account of the yeomanry of Ireland 1796-1834* (Cork, 1893), p. 4.

Table 5.6 Daily payment rates of Irish yeoman: cavalry and infantry, 1800.

Arms for the cavalry were a sword of the then current light cavalry pattern, pistols and carbines. 'Usually only one pistol was carried by each trooper, the second pistol holder being used to hold ammunition, provisions or spare shoes for the horse'.⁷⁸ Yeomanry service was part-time, members being expected to attend two 'exercise days' per week, except during emergencies when they were placed on 'permanent duty'. These weekly exercise parades were a continual reminder of their presence and potential. The yeomanry provided local security in a more effective way than the army or militia. An additional benefit was that this force could be activated or discontinued locally for as long as the authorities wished. The barony was the local territorial unit around which the force was organised, which also meant there was no need for billeting, a practice which caused widespread resentment and disorder. Control of the yeomanry by the establishment was exercised through the general officers commanding districts who were responsible for the deployment of local corps. These in turn were responsible to the yeomanry brigade major, of whom there was one in each county. In turn the brigade major reported to the military under secretary of the chief secretary's office who reported directly to the War Office.⁷⁹ The overseeing role of a county brigade major enabled him to discern what was happening locally and transmit this information to government. George Warburton who served as a brigade major in Kilkenny was one of the country's most effective

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

⁷⁸ Alan Blackstock, *An ascendancy army: the Irish yeomanry 1796-1834* (Dublin, 1998), pp. 104-5.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 190.

stipendary magistrates.⁸⁰ The non-commissioned yeomanry officers were sergeants and corporals. Every corps had a permanent sergeant who was responsible for the distribution of arms, ammunition and pay. This latter responsibility involved the keeping of pay and attendance registers and the deduction of money for non-attendance or indiscipline. Other full-time officers included a drummer for infantry and trumpeter for cavalry.⁸¹ It was also the sergeant's duty to drill and inculcate discipline into the yeomen. Michael Banim, the Kilkenny novelist mocked the nature of this drilling by a local corps which paraded in the churchyard and earned immortality as the Toombstone Rangers.⁸² Those in command of Kilkenny's ten yeomanry corps of 1804 included the county's most prominent magistrates and landowners – Henry Viscount Ashbrook (Durrow cavalry), Hon. James Butler (Fassagadinen cavalry), Henry Viscount Clifden (Gowran cavalry), William Tighe (Innistioige), William N. Izod (Kells) and Richard Alcock (Kilmurry).⁸³ During the period 1801-15 *Finn's Leinster Journal* frequently reported that the Thomastown yeomanry were active in the pursuit of those involved locally in agrarian protest and banditry.⁸⁴ However, as this newspaper only records six such incidents within the area during this period and no subsequent arrests or convictions mentioned for these activities the involvement of the yeomanry must be considered as haphazard. The 'Thomastown cavalry' was commanded by the Earl of Carrick and the 'Kilfane infantry' by John Power, the local landlord.⁸⁵ Though deficient in peace preservation techniques this body excelled in the display of military pomp. In 1811, when Carrick's son was getting married the 'Thomastown cavalry and infantry fired a *fieu de joye* for their noble commander'.⁸⁶ Control of the yeomanry provided an opportunity for the local landlord to enhance his standing with his tenantry by awarding them patronage in the form of yeomanry pay. It also enabled him to exercise greater military discipline over men of military age. Membership also conveyed social status and the opportunity to parade in ostentatious and flamboyant

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

⁸¹ Blackstock, *An ascendancy army*, p. 104.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 244. Also quoted in the introduction to Michael Banim's novel *The Croppy* (Dublin, 1828).

⁸³ The spelling of these barony names is the same as that used in local newspaper reports of the period.

⁸⁴ P. H. Gulliver and Marilyn Silverman, *Merchants and Shopkeepers: A historical anthropology of an Irish market town, 1200-1991* (Toronto, Buffalo, London, 1995), pp. 115-16.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *FLJ*, 7-11 Sept. 1811.

uniforms. After 1815 the gentry became less involved in the activities of the yeomanry. With the decline in the cavalry and the rise in infantry the social mix of the force altered. Increasingly many captains handed over much of the responsibilities of their corps to junior officers.

An influential factor in the attractiveness of yeomanry membership was a regulation of the 1802 Yeomanry Act allowing members of the force to retain their arms at home; these were usually a musket and a bayonet. Despite frequent requests for yeomen to lodge their arms at central depots, and the lack of any legislation compelling them to do so, mutely testifies to the government's unwillingness to force the issue and to the reluctance of yeomen to part with their guns:

To the extent that guns were seen as a status symbol by the yeomen, they were viewed as a symbolic prize as well as an asset by arms raiders. At local level the capture of a yeomanry musket could mark a symbolic victory over government and its laws, or a defeat for the ascendancy.⁸⁷

Each yeomanry corps was supplied with ammunition of twenty rounds per man for the infantry and ten for the cavalry.⁸⁸ This compliment was to be kept up at the expense of the corps. The utmost care was counselled in the prevention of a waste of ammunition and 'gunpowder or blank cartridge for practice can upon no account be allowed by government'.⁸⁹ It was also proscribed that every corps was 'to keep their arms, accoutrements and horse furniture in repair at their own expense'.

The sum invariably granted for clothing the yeomanry ever since their formation was two guineas per man. However, as each unit of yeomanry, regardless of its military strength 'was to all intensive purposes a law unto itself as to what uniform and equipment was to be used' there was a great differentiation in dress and accoutrements worn.⁹⁰ 'Many yeomen, particularly cavalrymen saw their uniform more as a means of distinguishing themselves than distinguishing them from an enemy'.⁹¹ No example of Kilkenny yeomanry dress has been found but the standard

⁸⁷ Blackstock, *An ascendancy army*, p. 249.

⁸⁸ Yeomanry standing orders for the year 1800 (N.A.I., OP 849/1).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Major G. Tylder, *Horses and saddlery, an account of the animals used by the British Commonwealth armies from the seventeenth century to the present day with a description of their equipment* (London, 1965), p. 162.

⁹¹ Blackstock, *An ascendancy army*, p. 108.

infantry uniform was a plain red jacket with blue collars and cuffs and white breeches, while cavalry coats were either dark blue or red.⁹² Standard uniforms were supplied by Taites of Limerick whilst local tailors serviced flamboyant officer tastes that the government concession of freedom of choice allowed.⁹³ The annual camp, not always held, and the few days drill in the year did not lead to undue wear, so saddlery would last a yeomanry unit considerably longer than a regular (army) unit.⁹⁴ During the war with France, a number of regiments from Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Germany and French loyalists offered military service to Britain.⁹⁵ One of these was the German Hompesch Mounted Rifles who served in the Kilkenny area following the 1798 Rebellion. Their colourful uniforms and accoutrements, illustrated in Thompson's study would, to this day, adorn the most lavish of Hollywood extravaganzas.⁹⁶

The involvement of just one Protestant clergyman from the diocese of Ossory in the activities of the 1798 and 1803 uprisings noted by Patrick Comerford marks a certain level of tolerance not evident elsewhere in the province.⁹⁷ While forty churches and chapels were burned in counties Wexford and Wicklow in the years 1799 and 1800 only four chapels were burned in county Kilkenny.⁹⁸ Nevertheless local Catholic clergy had to tread a wary line in the avoidance of charges of guilt by association. Fall-out from Robert Emmet's failed rising of July 1803 had Sir Richard Musgrave, ever-ready to voice the spectre of Catholic disloyalty, cast aspersions on the 'real' character of John Troy, archbishop of Dublin and that of the bishop of Ossory, James Lanigan. It was alleged that the two bishops accompanied by two priests named Ryan and Dunne had dined with 'a noted rebel' Bernard Coile in Lucan on 21 July 1803.⁹⁹ Lord Hardwicke declined to act on Musgrave's information refusing to condemn either bishop. It would seem that this confidence was justified as the *Kilkenny Journal* of 6-10 August noted 'on Saturday last an exhortation was read at every

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Conversation of author with F. Glenn Thompson, 30 Dec. 2004.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ F. Glenn Thompson, *The uniforms of 1798-1803* (Dublin, 1998), p. 40.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 41.

⁹⁷ Patrick Comerford, 'The Church of Ireland in county Kilkenny and the diocese of Ossory during the 1798 Rising' in *Old Kilkenny Review* (1998), pp. 160-7.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 167.

⁹⁹ Ruán O'Donnell, *Robert Emmet and the Rising of 1803* (Dublin, 2003), p. 144.

mass in the chapels of this city on the horrors of the rebellion and in the most forcible manner'. Further 'it was requested of the people to do everything in their power to prevent a repetition of these horrors'.¹⁰⁰ Initially the yeomanry was a surprisingly diverse force given its reputation subsequently. The *Waterford Mirror*, 15 August, 1803 records the eagerness of Kilkenny Catholics to enlist:

The Roman Catholics of the neighbourhood of Kilkenny under the Earl of Ormonde, offered their service to government as a corps of yeomanry, which was accepted. Their ranks have been since joined by several of their Protestant neighbours and at the election of officers of the corps, previous to this junction, such officers were elected as must show that a sectarian principle did not inflame them.¹⁰¹

Though there was no national policy to exclude Catholic or Presbyterian participation in the yeomanry of the early 1800s, subjecting the selection process to the approval of local landowners meant that there was religious and ideological filtering of candidates. This was exacerbated by the fact that applications exceeded the number of vacancies. In some areas only Protestants enlisted, in other districts the Catholic committee hindered Catholic enlistment. Occasionally landowners attempted to include a proportion of Catholics in the force. The yeomanry's bias towards the propertied classes, the involvement of many Anglican clergy, and the use of the established church parish for loyal associations and offers of service all mitigated against Catholic involvement. There was also, in Kilkenny, Catholic intimidation of those with connections to yeomanry. Kilkenny's acting brigade major general reported following a visit to the Gowran-Goresbridge area that '£30 worth of corn belonging to one Keiff, a farmer had been burned two nights before – the reason supposed is his having got a promise of the reversion of a lease from Mr. Ballie, who is I hear a captain in the Gowran yeomanry'.¹⁰²

The first ten years of the yeomanry's existence were according to Blackstock 'the period of its greatest actual and practical significance' which thereafter 'was more symbolic than factual'.¹⁰³ Whilst England was at war with France their 'peacekeeping by presence' proved a crucial factor in maintaining law and order

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 15 Aug. 1803.

¹⁰² Vivian Comerford to William Gregory, 8 Mar. 1816 (N.A.I., SOC 1761/31).

¹⁰³ Blackstock, *An ascendancy army*, p. 19.

during invasion threats.¹⁰⁴ That these threats, internal and external, to the preservation of peace were regarded with concern is evidenced by a report of James Ormsby, yeomanry brigade major for the Kilkenny area to the under secretary, 27 June 1805, noting 'foreign pedlars of sedition, emissaries from Dublin' had been in different parts of the land, 'tho [sic] I have not been able to find out anything more than suspicion'.¹⁰⁵ Again in May 1808, Ormsby reporting to Wellesley, spoke of few nights free of large gatherings of Whiteboys intent on committing outrages, 'but so secret are their proceedings as to evade the vigilance of either civil or military power'.¹⁰⁶ The threat of foreign intervention could not be ruled out. Ormsby writing to the chief secretary, 7 November 1811, noted 'I have little doubt that there is every indication to a general insurrection, if aided by the French making any landing in this country'. He further stated that from his different conversations with a number of respectable Catholics 'the country people are only waiting until the potatoes are out of the ground to become very troublesome'.¹⁰⁷ General Wynyard military commander of the south east district re-echoed similar sentiments, in October 1811 when describing 'the licentious and turbulent spirit which prevails amongst the lower classes, particularly on the border of Kilkenny and Tipperary'.¹⁰⁸ The validity of much of this alarm Wellesley questioned noting that 'it frequently happens that disturbances exist only in a very small degree, and probably only partially, and that the civil power is fully adequate to get the better of them'. Local economic concerns however Wellesley stated influenced these appeals to government. The increased security provided by the military activity influenced a rise in value and rent of land within the county and 'the desire to have the yeomanry called out on permanent duty occasions a representation that the disturbances are much more serious than the facts would warrant' he claimed.¹⁰⁹ This exaggeration was often initiated in efforts to bolster the employment of yeomen as Ormsby, 20 July 1812, suspected:

There has been some very extraordinary appearances in the conduct of many of the lower order of inhabitants of this town which made one to suppose some serious

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

¹⁰⁵ Ormsby to under secretary, military department, 27 June 1805 (N.A.I., SOC 1032/108).

¹⁰⁶ Ormsby to Wellesley, 1 May 1808 (T.N.A., H.O. 100/147/f. 168).

¹⁰⁷ Ormsby to chief secretary, 7 Nov. 1811 (N.A.I., SOC 1389/31).

¹⁰⁸ Abstract of general officers and brigade majors of yeomanry in Ireland on the state of their respective districts and counties, Oct. 1811 (N.A.I., SOC 1389/25).

¹⁰⁹ Sir A. Wellesley to Brigadier-General Lee, 7 July 1808, Supplementary Despatches, v [483], pp. 467-8 quoted in J. N. Johnson, 'The armed forces and the suppression of agrarian disorder during the Wellesley administration, 1807-09' (M.A. thesis, U.C.D., 1993), p. 84.

object in view. Numbers of persons quit the town every night and sleep in neighbouring fields as they state under the apprehension of being murdered by Orangemen. This report is spread for the purpose of inflaming the minds of the people.¹¹⁰

Blackstock's study of yeomanry notes increasing sectarianism against Protestants, as evident from 1809 onwards when 'there was a worrying tendency that growing awareness of the Catholic question, albeit crudely conceived locally, meant that traditional agrarian grievances were entangling with political and sectarian jealousies'.¹¹¹ Hans Hamilton, Protestant rector of Knocktopher, had reason to accuse the 'banditti' of sectarianism when reporting, 22 October 1811, of instances of arson in the village of Kilmoganny, noting it remarkable that the only houses attacked were those of Protestants.¹¹² Ormsby reporting to the chief secretary, 25 October 1813, noted that the windows of Protestants who signed the anti-Catholic petition in Freshford were maliciously broken.¹¹³ W. N. Thompson of Urlingford writing to the lord lieutenant, 4 January 1814, noted 'the conspiracy entered into by the Catholic inhabitants of the village not to employ or hold communications with the Protestants'.¹¹⁴ He also catalogued the occurrence within his area of a litany of nightly armed raids, the administering of unlawful oaths and of reprisals inflicted on those who opposed the 'banditti'. It was reported 1 March 1814 that 'a universal combination exists among the middling and lower orders in opposition to the laws' in the area of Freshford. Here James Sutcliffe, steward to Robert St. George, was murdered in his bed and St. George himself was the subject of a general boycott.¹¹⁵ A former soldier of the 70th Regiment, Patrick Phelan encapsulates the feeling of terror experienced by isolated loyalists in county Kilkenny when writing from Callan, 4 January 1814. He warned that the least hint of his collaboration with the authorities becoming known to the 'barbarous banditti infesting this place, that my life and little property will shortly be no more'. Concluding he warned 'know I have but one life to lose and if lost in the defence of my king and country it should be an honourable death'.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ Ormsby to chief secretary, 20 July 1812 (N.A.I., SOC 1409/33).

¹¹¹ Blackstock, *An ascendancy army*, p. 246.

¹¹² Hamilton to chief secretary, 22 Oct. 1811 (N.A.I., SOC 1381/67).

¹¹³ Ormsby to chief secretary, 25 Oct. 1813 (N.A.I., SOC 1531/15).

¹¹⁴ W. N. Thompson to lord lieutenant, 4 Jan. (N.A.I., SOC 1554/1).

¹¹⁵ Ormsby to chief secretary, 1 Mar. 1814 (N.A.I., SOC 1560/28).

¹¹⁶ Phelan to chief secretary, 4 Jan. 1814 (N.A.I., SOC 1554/8).

Payment for intelligence reports was a matter fraught with difficulties. It would seem that 'from the weak state of our funds in the county that we cannot hold out large and encouraging rewards for private information' W. Izod, high sheriff, reported 2 September, 1810. He stated that in a recent instance, the county had given him £100, 'an inadequate compensation for such an important and timely discovery'.¹¹⁷ James Strangway of Callan had similar difficulties stating that 'little can be done without money to pay for information. At present I give upwards of thirty guineas on that score, which I can badly afford to pay'.¹¹⁸ The victims of 'banditti' intimidation were loathe to admit to being the subject of incidents of assault and robbery. It was with great difficulty that Ormsby persuaded any of the victims of intimidation and beatings to acknowledge such happenings took place. Understanding the consequences of such disclosure he noted 'I understand it is a customary thing of the marauding party to swear them not to discover or prosecute and to make use of the most violent threats of assassination, burning houses and haggards in case they do not adhere most strictly to that oath'.¹¹⁹ The most savage destruction was committed without the slightest possibility of apprehending the criminals concerned. 'The reluctance of the sufferers to give information against them and even when the facts are disposed to, a total ignorance of the names of the offenders is generally affected'.¹²⁰ In 1813 the universal answer of the 'common people' of Kilkenny when asked to assist the authorities in preserving the peace was 'how can we venture to do anything when we live in a lonely thatched house'.¹²¹ Even when the parkhouse of Lord Ormonde was robbed of a blunder-buss, rifle, ram-rod sabre and brace of pistols, Ormsby reported the surprising reluctance of Ormonde to prosecute. 'Certainly the particular friends of Lord Ormonde seem much inclined to hush up the business than to take an active part to discover the perpetrators of so daring an outrage'.¹²²

The intensity of early nineteenth century arms raids on yeomen should not, according to Blackstaff, be underestimated.¹²³ Reading the Kilkenny newspapers of the period

¹¹⁷ Izod to chief secretary, 2 Sept. 1810 (N.A.I., SOC 1275/8).

¹¹⁸ Strangway to chief secretary, 7 Feb. 1811 (N.A.I., SOC 1381/53).

¹¹⁹ Ormsby to chief secretary, 1 Jan. 1814 (N.A.I., SOC 1560/1).

¹²⁰ Lord lieutenant to home secretary, Jan.-Mar. 1814 (N.A.I., SOC 1567/1).

¹²¹ R. B. McDowell, *Public opinion and government policy in Ireland 1801-46* (London, 1952), p. 60.

¹²² Ormsby to chief secretary, 26 Feb. 1813 (N.A.I., SOC 1531/3).

¹²³ Blackstock, *An ascendancy army*, p. 248.

the *Kilkenny Moderator* and *Kilkenny Journal*, the overwhelming impression given is that of an extensive and systematic gathering of arms that repeatedly targeted magistrates, clergy, military and farmers and which in most instances was quite successful. The problem of yeomanry arms was ever present. Instead of providing security for the isolated yeomen these weapons were seen as an achievable prize by arms raiders. These yeomanry guns falling into the hands of the disaffected and subsequently used against the forces of the crown further exacerbated the county's security problem. William Despard writing from Killaghy Castle, 28 November 1810, reported 'there are not many in this vicinity who have not been robbed of their arms, except those in strong situations'.¹²⁴ He also complained of the necessity of remaining almost constantly at home to stand guard over these guns.¹²⁵ Similarly, Hans Caulfield, the rector of Kilmanagh, stated that the 'banditti' had taken almost all the fire-arms in that neighbourhood.¹²⁶ On 9 November 1810, Lieutenant General Henry Wynard reporting to William Saurin noted that eight houses of the Knocktopher yeomanry were attacked. The 'banditti' managed to disarm six of the yeomen which led the captain of the corps, Richard Langrishe, to call in all the arms of that force.¹²⁷ Two members of the Crannagh yeomanry were 'deposed' of their arms on 15 January 1811, a loss which prompted Rev. Dr. St. George to have a guard of six men permanently mounted on the force's arms now 'collected and lodged in the captain's house'.¹²⁸ It is difficult to apportion culpability in the above cases and to define where sympathy with the arms raiders ended and fear began. The quietness with which the yeomanry suffer themselves to be robbed of their arms and their readiness to provide horses to the 'banditti' 'when demanded and instantly given at all hours of the night' was condemned by Ormsby.¹²⁹ Similarly John Flood of Knocktopher, a magistrate had 'strong reasons to believe that too many who hold land do not regard unfavourably the proceedings of these midnight legislators'.¹³⁰

Robert Peel, chief secretary of Ireland (1812-18), on his appointment reviewed all the

¹²⁴ Despard to chief secretary, 28 Nov. 1810 (N.A.I., SOC 1275/13).

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Caulfield to chief secretary, 16 Dec. 1810 (N.A.I., SOC 1277/9).

¹²⁷ Wynyard to Saurin, 9 Nov. 1810 (N.A.I., SOC 1275/10).

¹²⁸ Ormsby to chief secretary, 1 Mar. 1814 (N.A.I., SOC 1560/28).

¹²⁹ Ormsby to chief secretary, 4 Apr. 1814 (N.A.I., SOC 1554/9).

¹³⁰ Flood to chief secretary, 12 Apr. 1822 (N.A.I., SOC 2369/27).

country's civil and military resources including the yeomanry in an effort to obtain greater efficiency and savings from the vast amount of money being expended on the voluntary forces. As Blackstock points out 'it is obvious from Peel's private correspondence that he would have been happy to abolish the yeomanry'.¹³¹ Two years earlier in 1810 a circular issued from Dublin Castle acknowledged weakness within the force noting that 'permanent sergeants of the yeomanry corps having been in general reported to be so deficient in their knowledge of drill and exercise as to be unequal to the duties of their situations'.¹³² They were ordered to immediately report to their nearest garrison town to undertake a month's intensive instruction in drill, military exercises and field manoeuvres. With officers of such little military competence it is not surprising that the efficiency of those under their command was equally minimal. It would also seem from a report of 22 January 1806 that the commitment of a number of Kilkenny yeomen to upholding law and order was less than adequate. Francis Kilfoyle of Ballyragget, acting policeman, Bryan Lacey of Crutenclough, yeoman and Charles Radwell of Coon, yeoman, were committed to the county gaol, 'charged with burglariously and feloniously entering the house of Michael Kennedy of Crutenclough, farmer, on the night of the 1st inst. and with having robbed the same of £39 in cash together with several valuable articles'.¹³³

The poor discipline of the Irish yeomanry as Douet points out 'and the tendency for Protestants to view them as protagonists rather than arbiters in local disputes meant that magistrates preferred to deploy regular army units when possible'.¹³⁴ The government also shared credibility doubts concerning the effectiveness and impartiality of this force. Peel in 1814 introduced a new element to Irish peacekeeping known as the Peace Preservation Force, subsequently more commonly known as 'Peelers'. This force involved a resident chief magistrate with an extraordinary establishment of police for proclaimed districts and was later developed into an all-Ireland county constabulary. This new force was to prove relatively successful when provided with sufficient back-up support from the army.

¹³¹ Blackstock, *An ascendancy army*, p. 262.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 166.

¹³³ *FLJ*, 22 Jan. 1806.

¹³⁴ James Douet, *British barracks, 1600-1914, their architecture and role in society* (London, 1998), p. 110.

However, throughout 1814 'yeomanry corps in disturbed southern areas were again drawn into the struggle with the secret societies, often merely as a holding measure in default of regulars and peelers'.¹³⁵ Guns proliferated amongst the peasantry. Fran Despard, a magistrate and landowner whose estate straddled the Kilkenny-Tipperary border, 20 April 1815, expressed alarm stating that the quantity of arms 'possessed by the lower orders is incalculable'. These arms were 'principally kept in corn stacks' and 'in summer generally deposited in the body of a dry ditch'. Acting on information, he found arms at a place of that description where 'the entrance was through a pig-stye at the side of a ditch' where they had been 'perfectly secured from enquiries'.¹³⁶ Yeomen and magistrates continuously complained of the great store of arms held by the 'banditti' and the paucity and condition of their own armoury. William Izod who with 'twelve to fourteen solid men' patrolled several nights in the Kells area reported that the only guns he held were those sent in the by the country people, which were in a very bad state and generally had 'bad locks, loose priming and with no bayonets'.¹³⁷

As early as 1815, following the ending of England's war with France and faced with the need for stringent pruning of expenditure, Peel considered the disbandment of the Irish yeomanry. Even though the peace-time usefulness of this force was questionable he decided its abolition would create political difficulties which would outweigh any positive consideration. In 1818 an army spokesman questioned the wisdom of continuing the yeomanry at the immense expense noting their inability to deal with serious crime and succinctly offering solutions:

Such lawless proceedings can never be completely counteracted and repressed, but by a vigorous internal police. The true policy in a country in a crisis like that of Ireland seems to be to have a sufficient military force to interpose with effect when the civil power is overpowered, but not sufficient to take upon itself the whole internal police.¹³⁸

Whilst outraged Protestant expression was in other areas of Ireland manifest in orangeism which was closely linked with yeomanry the influence of either locally during the nineteenth century was minimal. Orangeism was never a significant factor

¹³⁵ Blackstock, *An ascendancy army*, p. 249.

¹³⁶ Despard to chief secretary, 20 Apr. 1815 (N.A.I., SOC 1712/21).

¹³⁷ Izod to lord chief justice, 4 June 1822 (N.A.I., SOC 2369/59).

¹³⁸ General circular, Anonymous, 1818 (N.A.I., OP 507/25).

in Kilkenny politics. Over the years 1798-1856 three Kilkenny warrants were issued but there were never enough members to form a district lodge, let alone a county grand lodge.¹³⁹ Reports of the robbery of thirteen stands of arms in Kilkenny, 10 February 1822 were vehemently declared to be false by the local *Kilkenny Journal* of that date. Declaring that no such robbery had taken place in Kilkenny, within the last three months, the newspaper blamed persons desirous of having a yeomanry corps embodied locally for initiating these rumours.¹⁴⁰ Again the *Kilkenny Journal*, 14 September 1822, exhorts magistrates to co-operate with the government in detecting and arresting all 'such agents of disaffection and discord and all propagators of false alarm' adding that 'from our experience we know that riots and outrages have been produced by artful fabrications industriously addressed to the fears, prejudices and the passions of an ignorant peasantry'.¹⁴¹

The establishment of a denominationally inclusive county constabulary in 1822 assumed many of the functions hitherto performed by the yeomanry. The levels of religious tension, intolerance and sectarianism evident in the neighbouring counties of Carlow and Wexford were never attained in county Kilkenny. Noting the absence of such religious public divide and controversy within the county Patrick Comerford describes as 'a most astonishing feature'.¹⁴² Cullen advances the theory that the emergence of the Ormonde Butlers, in the early 1800s in the political life of the county and their support for Catholic emancipation ameliorated religious division locally.¹⁴³ There did exist, however, at least two bastions of orangeism straddling the northern and southern extremities of the county – the Ponsonbys at Kilcooley, county Tipperary and the Beresfords at Curraghmore, county Waterford: their sphere of influence extended into county Kilkenny. Daniel O'Connell, throughout 1831, campaigned to have the yeomanry disbanded and replaced by regular British troops stating that it was an 'Orange force, ill-led, ill conducted, cruel and vindictive'.¹⁴⁴ The typicality of this vindictiveness as noted by James Grove White existing within

¹³⁹ Cecil Kilpatrick, archivist, Grand Lodge of Ireland, Belfast, letter to author, 8 Apr. 2003.

¹⁴⁰ *KJ*, 10 Feb. 1822.

¹⁴¹ *KJ*, 14 Sept. 1822.

¹⁴² Patrick Comerford, 'The Church of Ireland in county Kilkenny and the diocese of Ossory during the 1798 Rising' in *Old Kilkenny Review* (1998), p. 148.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Oliver McDonagh, *The emancipist: Daniel O'Connell 1830-47* (London, 1989), p. 63.

the ranks of Irish yeomanry was 'being acquainted with the political sentiments of their neighbours, they had frequent opportunities of singling out such as they either feared or disliked'.¹⁴⁵

'There was a correlation between the density of yeomen in an area and their ability to resist let alone tackle combinations' Blackstock argues.¹⁴⁶ This is evidenced by William Morris Reade, a south Kilkenny magistrate and landowner, when reporting that 'armed bands patrol a large part of the barony every night, notices are posted and bailiffs to estates are severely beaten'. He further noted that this sorry situation 'had chiefly arisen from the want of power in the magistrates to preserve tranquillity on account of the insufficiency of the existing laws and of the baronial police and of the inadequacy of the military force'.¹⁴⁷ Broeker's portrayal of early nineteenth century Ireland as 'the despair of the governing and the governed, threatening, gloomy, stubborn, too disturbed to respond effectively to civil government, not disturbed enough to justify full-scale military occupation' would seem to be particularly apt for county Kilkenny.¹⁴⁸ In Kilkenny the yeomanry's limited numbers, scattered location and static nature compared with the ability of localised combinations to assemble large numbers of men quickly and at will highlighted yeomanry's structural and manpower weaknesses. As policemen the yeomanry were never very successful when confronting agrarian secret societies. Nothing in their training equipped them to undertake general police duty, to confront crowds, or to deal with the tensions created at these confrontations.¹⁴⁹ Competing financial and security interests tended to cast yeomanry as an equivocal tool in the ascendancy's law enforcement efforts. In Kilkenny their numbers were so small that they made little impact on internal disorder. In fighting this agrarian revolt the yeomanry were hampered by the fact that they were civilian residents with families and occupations. As small tenant farmers they experienced similar economic pressures as their Catholic neighbours. The difficulties of the Protestant yeoman class of 1827 is expressed by a contemporary:

The Protestant yeoman who looked for something more than a bare animal existence from the sweat of his brow, who wished to clothe and educate his family,

¹⁴⁵ James Grove White, *An account of the yeomanry of Ireland 1796-1834*, p. 9.

¹⁴⁶ Blackstock, *An ascendancy army*, p. 245.

¹⁴⁷ Reade to Gregory, 12 Feb. 1822 (N.A.I., SOC 2369/8).

¹⁴⁸ Galen Broeker, *Rural disorder and police reform in Ireland* (London, 1970), pp. 1, 6.

¹⁴⁹ Blackstock, *An ascendancy army*, p. 251.

to rear his children in cleanliness and decency, the poor 'proud Protestant' who could not live in such a hovel and on such a diet as an English farmer would scorn to give his pigs seeing the rewards of labour in a distant clime, has found the competency denied him at home.¹⁵⁰

In his study of Irish migrants to Canada, Bruce Elliot maintains that 'a major part of the explanation for both the emigration of Protestant farmers and tradesmen from north Tipperary and the spread of endemic violence amongst the Catholic labouring poor of the region lies in the deterioration of the economic condition of both groups in the early nineteenth century'.¹⁵¹ These conditions encouraged early emigration by those with financial means to undertake the journey. This was especially true of Protestant tradesmen and middling farmers who were 'increasingly at odds with a disgruntled and assertive Catholic majority'.¹⁵² Similar economic pressures and large scale Protestant emigration to Canada is also evident in parts of rural Kilkenny at this time. Máire Downey in her genealogical study of numbers of Castlecomer settlers in North America found a similar Protestant emigration exodus from this area.¹⁵³ William Nolan in his historical study of the Fassadinin/Castlecomer area, 1600-1850, is however unaware of this large-scale Protestant emigration from this area when stating emphatically that 'there is no evidence that emigration was a feature of rural life in the first half of the nineteenth century'.¹⁵⁴ In the years after Waterloo voluminous petitions to government for free passage to the colonies were disproportionately from Protestants.¹⁵⁵ In July 1834 the *Dublin University Magazine* noted that Protestants were emigrating from Ireland in such large numbers that the country could not afford such an exhausting drain much longer.¹⁵⁶ Certainly the yeomanry corps of county Kilkenny were affected by this haemorrhaging of young Protestant men of military age. In November 1821 only three yeomanry units survived in county Kilkenny - the Fassadinan, the Inistioge and the Durrow and Crannagh corps. The first two groups are described as being composed of Protestants

¹⁵⁰ *Waterford Mail*, 28 Sept. 1828.

¹⁵¹ Bruce S. Elliot, *Irish migrants in the Canadas: a new approach* (Belfast, 1988), p. 36.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁵³ Author's conversation with Máire Downey of Castlecomer, 5 Sept. 2004.

¹⁵⁴ William Nolan, *Fassadinin: land, settlement and society in south east Ireland* (Dublin, 1979), p. 204.

¹⁵⁵ Eugene Broderick, *Waterford's Anglicans: Religion and politics 1819-72* (PhD thesis, NUI Cork, 2000), p. 23.

¹⁵⁶ *Dublin University Magazine*, July 1834.

and Catholics 'the former predominant and I think may be depended on'. The Durrow and Crannagh corps were 'all Protestants to be relied on'. Each corps had two captains, two lieutenants, three sergeants and sixty-nine to seventy-six privates. It was pointed out that these corps were 'well armed and appointed' despite reservations being expressed that they had only four rounds of ammunition per man and 'their discipline cannot be expected to be very good, only meeting three times in the year'.¹⁵⁷ By 1830 the number of units had declined further, reflecting the pattern in England where large-scale disarmament occurred following Wellington's victory at Waterloo. At times of public discontent the *Kilkenny Moderator*, the organ of Kilkenny orangeism, continued to promote the recall of the yeomanry. 'There is, as we said before, but one way of stemming the torrent of revolution, and that is by calling out the yeomanry of Ireland'. Such a resolution was dismissed out of hand by its local rival, the *Kilkenny Journal*.¹⁵⁸

In 1831, Protestants in county Kilkenny constituted a distinct and definite minority and were concentrated in certain areas of the county and were entirely absent in large parts of the county. Only in two parishes did their number constitute more than ten percent of the Catholic population – St. Mary's in the centre of Kilkenny city with fifteen percent, and the colliery district of Castlecomer with over eleven percent.¹⁵⁹ However, while relatively scarce on the ground, members of the Protestant community possessed a disproportionate share of wealth and social prestige. The Protestant population experienced dramatic decline as the century progressed, due to significant levels of emigration and also as part of a national, post-famine, trend of population movement to urban centres. Table 5.7 highlights the decimation, and in the case of Stonecarthy the extinction, of Protestant habitation in a number of county Kilkenny rural parishes. The numbers of Protestants relative to Catholics improved in Kilkenny city parishes with St. John's parish recording a nine percent improvement. Another feature of the 1861 census figures, similarly influenced by the siting of the barracks in that parish, is the listing of 209 male Protestants, compared to only 86 females of the same faith living in the parish. These 1831 figures are from

¹⁵⁷ Report to the character and efficiency of yeomanry corps, 30 Nov. 1821 (N.A.I., OP 559/22).

¹⁵⁸ *KJ*, 21 June 1843.

¹⁵⁹ *First Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction, Ireland*, MF 38.272, H.C. 1835, xxxiii, 1665.

a survey by the Commissioners of Public Instruction of 1834 which included religious affiliation. According to Blackstock this ‘was done reasonably accurately, and the findings correspond with the 1861 census in relative proportions’ when the first official census of religious affiliation was carried out.¹⁶⁰ This decline in the Protestant population of rural Kilkenny and the decimation of Anglican clergymen affected Kilkenny’s military response throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. This section of society provided a disproportionate number of the British army’s renowned military

Parish	1831	1861
Ballytobin	44	36
Callan	181	91
Castlecomer	1,377	647
Fertagh	63	42
Fiddown	548	178
Johnstown	146	41
Kilfane	26	26
Kilmanagh	148	95
Kilmoganny	182	69
Kells	118	74
Knocktopher	88	30
Stonecarthy	80	NIL
Thomastown	152	83

Source: First Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction Ireland, H.C. 1835, xxxiii, 1665 MF 38.272 (abstract, census of Ireland county of Kilkenny 1861).

Table 5.7 Numbers of Protestants residing in thirteen county Kilkenny rural parishes 1831:1861.

personnel during the Penninsular and Napoleonic wars. Akenson in his study of the differences separating Irish Catholics and Protestants, 1815-1922, states that after 1870 and the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, with that organisation cast upon its own resources, the emotional commitment of the laity to their religious practices became stronger.¹⁶¹ ‘All the outward empirical measures of spiritual devotion – money given, sittings at services, number of communicants rose’.

In the years 1823-31 not a single yeomanry corps in Ireland was put on duty.¹⁶² The Kilkenny yeomanry disbanded in November 1828 when a notice was issued from

¹⁶⁰ Blackstock, *An ascendancy army*, p. 19.

¹⁶¹ Donald Harman Akenson, *Small differences: Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants, 1815-1922, an international perspective* (Kingston and Montreal, 1988), pp. 142-3.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 266.

army headquarters in Dublin requesting Captain Eaton the commander of the Fassadinan corps of yeomanry to submit their arms. A receipt would be issued on their surrender.¹⁶³ However the yeomanry was disastrously reactivated in 1831 when agrarian revolt in the form of non-payment of tithes erupted. Anglesey and Stanley faced with this widespread discontent and tactically restricted by the smallness of army numbers, then 16,701 men, in Ireland sought yeomanry help.¹⁶⁴ Their involvement in a tithe incident in Newtownbarry in 1831, in which fourteen of the protestors were killed highlighted their lack of discipline and portrayed their religious prejudices. This precipitated a gradual run-down of yeomanry which was completed in March 1834. However despite this official foreclosure the yeomanry's 'last rusty muskets were not removed from their stores till the early 1840s when with unintentional but obvious symbolism they were escorted to the ordnance stores by members of the new constabulary'.¹⁶⁵

Conclusion

During the period 1801-1815, Ireland's armed forces (army, yeomanry and militia) were, before the establishment of an effective police force, the government's main resource in the preservation of public order. During this period Britain's military campaigns in Hanover (1805), Copenhagen and South America (1807), the United States (1812) and the Peninsular War (1808-14) had placed unprecedented demands upon the regular army and militia to provide ever-increasing numbers of troops for overseas service. The nature of widespread agrarian conflict, engaged in by secret oath-bound Whiteboy units, particularly prevalent throughout county Kilkenny, during this period, meant that an era of intimidation and fear prevailed. Because so little information was being passed on to the authorities regarding the composition or movements of these 'banditti' local magistrates found it extremely difficult to convict the offenders. Gentry division locally and nationally, based on electoral politics and personal rivalries meant that there was never the co-ordinated approach necessary to tackle combinations. These auxiliary forces, obliged to operate under the control of the local magistracy were further hampered in their efforts to eliminate

¹⁶³ Montgomery to Eaton, 1 Nov. 1828 (N.L.I., MS 35, 674).

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

¹⁶⁵ Alan Blackstock, 'A forgotten army the Irish yeomanry' in *History Ireland* (Winter 1996), p. 32.

terrorism by the inherent faults and shortcomings of these officials.

Irish yeomanry reached the peak of its usefulness in the years 1797-1805. This was also true of Kilkenny yeomanry. This was a time when the military were 'predominantly officered by men of the landed class'.¹⁶⁶ An examination of the composition of the Kilkenny yeomanry shows that there can have been few prominent local Protestant families who did not have participant membership during this period. The military life was the aristocratic profession *par excellence* for Kilkenny's titled peers. Subsequently the involvement of the gentry in this role declined both in Britain and Ireland. Whilst the expression of naked sectarian prejudices were rarely expressed in the columns of either of Kilkenny's two newspapers a reading of these organs for the period 1800-70 suggests that such feelings persisted, bubbling under the surface within both communities. In general the embodiment of the Irish yeomanry as an adjunct to the regular army must be considered an expensive and wasteful extravagance: an indulgent aggrandisement of Protestant militancy.

¹⁶⁶ David Cannadine, *Aspects of aristocracy* (London, 1995), p. 22.

Conclusion

Kilkenny's military importance was most significant in the early nineteenth century when French intrusion seemed likely. In the suppression of agrarian revolt throughout the county, the army had an essential part to play. In assisting the county authorities to control this indigenous discontent Peel noted that without the army 'the whole framework of civilised society would be threatened with dissolution'.¹ However the army at local level was largely ineffective against the Kilkenny 'banditti' in the first decades of the nineteenth century. A myriad of convoluted regulations made it difficult to define when the army could be called out to assist the civil power. High visibility involvement on the ground did not mean that military measures to contain this revolt were effective. It was only with the streamlining of military administration with the transfer of control from Dublin Castle to the War Office in London in 1823 that the mechanisms for the activating of the army in Ireland at times of disturbance were clarified. In the 1830s laws were introduced stipulating the circumstances in which civil authorities could call on the military for assistance.

This study portrays the typical Kilkenny recruit of the early nineteenth century as predominantly rural and Catholic and of low income who because of lack of alternative employment opportunities joined the militia or army. Regarded with contempt by the officer class and the general public, the status of the rank and file soldier in society was abysmally low. The strict disciplinarian regime, the severe punishments and the frequent personal degradation and humiliation inflicted on the soldier were manifestations of his inferior standing. The ongoing hostility encountered by Joseph Donaldson and his fellow soldiers on the streets and in the hostleries of the city, in the period 1812-14 is also indicative of this lack of respect. His attendance at church, dressed in uniform, was similarly frowned upon. Throughout the period of this study the rank and file British soldier stationed in Kilkenny, was frequently the subject of community ostracisation. This is evidenced in the anti-recruitment campaign initiated in Kilkenny at the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854 and subsequently the boycott of the Patriotic Fund, set up to support the

¹ *Hansard*, xxxii (22 February 1816), p. 928.

widows and families of those injured or killed in that conflict, by the majority of Kilkenny's citizenry. The low esteem in which the ordinary soldier based locally was held is also reflected in the pattern of marriages recorded in a number of city parishes, Protestant, Presbyterian and Catholic, the subject of scrutiny in this study. A feature revealed in these marriage records is the small number of cases that clearly transgressed the ideology of endogamy in nineteenth century Kilkenny. Cases of deviant marriages outside clearly defined kinship and social divisions were scarce. Rare is the occurrence of the daughter of a shopkeeper or publican marrying soldiers, as retailers endeavoured to separate themselves from people of an inferior class whom they were in regular contact through their businesses in town. It would also seem from these records that young bridegrooms who were clearly soldiers and their brides gave a John Street rather than a barrack address most probably to gloss over their military connections. The army's reaction to hostility from the general public in England was according to Skelley, the adoption of a policy to remain as 'incontroversial and invisible as possible' and in 'hiding troops from the British public in garrisons around the globe'.² The huge concentration of troops in the Kilkenny area in 1848 was a consequence of this policy. The position of the rank and file soldier would have been further advanced if more encouragement had been given to his education. In retrospect it is disappointing that the soldier did not take more advantage of the facilities available as the under-utilisation of the regimental library at Kilkenny barracks evidences.

In contrast the young officer stationed in Kilkenny quickly became integrated into the life-style of the local Anglo-Irish gentry amongst whom he circulated. The recreational amusements of Kilkenny's Protestant landowners – hunting, the theatre and a buoyant social scene – were hugely compatible with the leisure expectations of the army's officer class. The local gentry were keen followers of current fashions whether set in Dublin, London or Paris. As marriage partners the young officer based locally was considered an eminently suitable choice and parents of young girls of Kilkenny's ascendancy class promoted such unions. The fact that, in many instances,

² A. R. Skelley, *The Victorian army at home: the recruitment and terms and conditions of the British regular 1859-99* (Montreal, 1977), p. 244.

the father and brothers of these girls had experienced or continued to serve in the army facilitated such fraternisation.

Soldiering in Kilkenny was not solely a microcosm of the national experience. Despite difficulties crowding around religious and political issues Kilkenny continued to remain a very tolerant and civilised place in which to live. There was remarkable compatibility between Protestant and Catholic. There were Protestant and Catholic Butler bishops, clergy and laity living in harmony independent of their religious differences. This study has provided much evidence that the primary concern of Kilkenny people was to find a *modus vivendi* to overcome the political and religious disputes which beset both communities. At local level there was a softening effect. Despite its strongly nationalist ethos the *Kilkenny Journal* rarely criticised locally-based soldiers or regiments, directing its frustration frequently instead against army and government bureaucracy. Kilkenny as a city, was large enough and diverse enough to cope with a big inflow of troops. Its huge concentration of public houses, many in close proximity to the barracks, adequately served the soldiers in their leisure hours. In summer-time the nearby River Nore provided soldiers the opportunity to select suitable bathing locations. Demesne lands at Kilkenny Castle, Mount Juliet and Jenkinstown, all riverside locations, provided picturesque and beautifully appointed cricket grounds serving Kilkenny's officer class.

The Great Famine of the 1840s initiated huge economic and social change in Ireland. Elements within the evangelical movement, the government and press regarded its advent as an opportunity to remodel Ireland politically and morally. This 'providential' disaster and the distress that followed in its wake, they hoped, would force the Irish peasantry and their landlords to adopt modernising and more enlightened practices and economic models in operation amongst their more advanced neighbour. The famine's near-elimination of a hitherto huge pool of unemployed and hungry peasantry had huge repercussions in the collapse of the number of Irish recruits joining the army. Thereafter, emigration and improving economic conditions, post-famine, further restricted the attractiveness of army life for men of military age. Similarly harsh economic factors affecting Ireland's

ascendancy classes greatly reduced army recruitment within officer ranks. The financial solvency of many of the country's landlords was destroyed as a result of the famine. The high cost of purchasing an officer's commission and supporting a son upon joining the army was out of reach for many parents. This allowed a greater influx of officer recruits from influential middle class families with professional and commercial backgrounds into the service.

Garrison towns in Ireland, throughout the period 1800-70, became important centres for cultural transformation. The War Office, in its direction of the movements and garrisoning of huge numbers of soldiers, influenced the economic and cultural environment of the towns in which troops were placed. Unattached and free-spending young men greatly added to a town's economy. The attendance of large groups of soldiers at hitherto poorly-attended Church of Ireland Sunday morning services infused vibrancy into these communities. Their marching to and forth from barracks to church, accompanied by the regimental band, a favour not granted to Catholic soldiers, further enhanced the status of the Established church. Parish finances were also boosted with increased revenue from baptism and marriage stipends where soldiers were based.

The British army in Kilkenny, as an institution, was a major agent for cultural change. As the people with power locally, army officers, police, landlords and magistrates exercised hegemonic control of organised sports – archery, athletics, cricket, horse-racing, hunting, rifle-shooting, etc. With the exception of sporting events organised specifically for the military and police, there is in the decades after the famine, a dearth in the columns of local newspapers of any mention of general community participation in organised sport. This embargo R. V. Comerford states was taken in the interest of peace and order.³ Referring to the period 1850-70 the same author asserts, that notwithstanding Fenianism, 'English culture with its attendant values was being absorbed in Ireland on a wider scale than ever before and with less reservation than ever after'.⁴ The abolition of the tax on newspapers and

³ R. V. Comerford, 'Patriotism as pastime: the appeal of fenianism in the mid 1860s' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxii, no. 87 (1981), p. 248.

⁴ R. V. Comerford, 'Ireland 1850-70: post Famine' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland under the Union 1801-70*, v, (Oxford, 1988), p. 373.

their wider dispersal helped by an expanding rail system in the 1840s and 1850s greatly influenced cultural change.

The need for the greater concentration of barracks in Ireland advanced by John Burgoyne was accepted by parliament in 1853. Improved modes of travel by sea, road, rail and canal had greatly increased the capacity of the army to quickly respond to circumstances occurring further from their control centres. In this reordering of the military's spatial hierarchy Kilkenny became a victim of its geographical location. Largely used as a pit-stop between the large military centres of the Curragh and Fermoy, and lacking the port facilities of Waterford, its closure following the ending of the Crimean War in 1856 became inevitable. An argument could be made that the Crimean War was the virtual turning point of the nineteenth century. It initiated the modern world of technological warfare and professionalised the greatest of growth industries, violent death. For the many Kilkenny people involved in this war, the incompetence of the generals in command, the difficulties in obtaining supplies, the unavailability of adequate medical facilities to reduce the huge number of deaths from preventable disease made this conflict extremely traumatic. Ornate commemorative memorial plaques to a number of Crimean fallen adorning the walls of local Protestant churches are to-day a visible expression of the grief their passing caused. This conflict illustrated the need for a major reform of the British army. The Cardwell reform measures initiated in 1868 were to prove too little, too late.

The arrival of proselytising English evangelical missionaries in Kilkenny in the early 1820s and mid 1850s initiated periods of public debate between Catholic and Protestant controversialists. It also influenced members of both communities into acquiring a deeper understanding of their church's teachings and influenced soldier and civilian alike in adopting more moral life-styles. Throughout the period of this study the army, in general, failed to acknowledge the existence of women within the military system. If anything their economic position was more precarious than that of the male soldier. Whether unmarried, widowed or deserted partners of serving soldiers their role as sole providers of childcare was fraught with difficulties. The paucity of female work opportunities locally compounded the situation. In such circumstances it is not surprising that a number of these women turned to

prostitution. It was only in 1864 when statistics revealed the enormous extent of venereal disease within the army, seriously depleting the numbers of serving soldiers, that parliament introduced remedial legislation. Evidence produced in this study suggests that local Catholic clergy while condemning prostitution and vehemently distancing themselves from those engaged in the practice, initiated few practical measures to address the problem.

In the stationing of imperial military forces in any country there is an on-going destruction and construction of each other's culture taking place. There were positive and negative aspects to the presence of the military in Kilkenny during the period 1800-1870. The participation jointly of army officers and members of the local gentry, as actors, in a series of yearly theatre seasons (1802-19) represents an example of this two-way cultural exchange. These plays attracted large and influential audiences from all over Ireland and England. The theme of these plays extolling virtue, morality and gentility were aimed at the betterment of military and civilian life alike. To-day in Kilkenny there are a number of bandsmen whose ancestors perfected their musicianship within the ranks of the British army and transmitted this inheritance to subsequent generations. An interest in Kilkenny's rich archaeological heritage was similarly fostered under the aegis of a number of Kilkenny's gentry families with military backgrounds – Graves, Prim and Tighe. This led to the founding of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society in 1849. The base from which Kilkenny's thriving bloodstock industry of to-day developed was established, post-Crimea, with the strict quality standards required of horses bought in Ireland by the agents of the British army.

The architectural heritage of Kilkenny owes much to the Georgian buildings erected between the mid eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This thesis has assessed the relative merits of buildings connected with the military during the same period. Commonplace architectural details of the past have been highlighted in the knowledge that many of these features are presently being lost to the forces of modernisation. Their loss is an impoverishment for the city at large. Kilkenny's streetscape in the vicinity of the city's two eighteenth century military barracks – Irishtown and John Street – is still dominated by the preponderance of licensed

premises. The large number of public houses in these areas was as a direct result of the drinking habits of military men.

St. John's parish, especially, after the erection of the 'new' barracks in the early 1800s experienced a huge population increase which contained a significant Protestant element. In many instances the birth-place of these new residents was outside county Kilkenny and Ireland: a reflection of the army's travels to various places around the world. English surnames survive to this day amongst the descendants of soldiers who once served in Kilkenny and whose offspring still reside in close proximity to the barracks.

The influence of the Roman Catholic clergy over rank and file soldiers of the early nineteenth century would appear to be minimal. There was a great shortage of priests and attendance at religious church ceremonies were mainly confined to the middle-classes. In his Kilkenny ministry to the poor and to the military Rev. Peter Roe, the Protestant pastor of St. Mary's parish was indefatigable. With the advent of Catholic emancipation in 1829 there was a full-scale triumphal transformation in Catholic practice. Thereafter, as the nineteenth century progressed, the leadership function that the clergy had assumed in the 1830s and 1840s was increasingly abrogated by Kilkenny's merchant class. The question as to whether the military's presence in Kilkenny, 1800-70, created a lowering of community mores remains unanswered for want of statistical evidence. However, the huge incidence of venereal disease amongst soldiers of all regiments, during this period, indicates that for many a less than righteous lifestyle was the norm.

The writing of history is a circuitory journey. The occurrence of change is the constant element peculiar to each generation. The editor of the *Kilkenny Moderator* in 1870, as indicated in the opening lines of this thesis, was conscious of fundamental change operative in Kilkenny's economic, social and political life. In the intervening one hundred and thirty years since there have been major changes and transformations in Kilkenny's social and military worlds. To-day eighty-three years after the last British soldier marched out of Kilkenny's Victoria Barracks the Irish tricolour occupies prime position beside the main entrance gates. The name of the

establishment has also been changed to James Stephens Barracks, thus commemorating the Kilkenny-born founder of the Fenian movements. Long accepted hierarchies and empires have been replaced. The period 1800-1870 was remarkable for the occurrence of 'events of vast moment': the period that has since elapsed has provided ample 'matter for the future historian' to carry this story forward.

Appendices

- No. 1 Permanent barrack stations in Ireland 1824-5
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Appendix No. 1

Permanent barracks stations in Ireland 1824-5

From T.N.A., WO 44/110, 'A list of the permanent barrack stations in Ireland, shewing to whom the rents are payable and to the amount thereof, John Butcher, 20 December 1824, copy. Additions (in italics) from L. Thomas, 'List of the several rents paid by the Ordnance Department in Ireland', 3 August 1825. Place-names are spelt as in the original.

1. Altmore	51. Cloghan	101. Kinsale
2. Ard Castle alias Gling Castle	52. Clogheen	102. Knockalla Fort
3. Arklow	53. Clonakilty	103. Laragh
4. Armagh	54. Clonmell	104. Leitrim
5. Armagh: Fews Barracks	55. Cork	105. Lifford
6. Athlone	56. Cork Harbour Fort	106. Limerick
7. Athy	57. Cork Harbour: Spike Island	107. Londonderry
8. Aughavanagh	58. Cork Harbour: Carlisle Fort	108. Longford
9. Ballaghadireen Co. Mayo, west of Boyle	59. Cork Harbour: Camden Fort	109. Loughrea
10. Ballinamult, Co. Waterford, south of Clonmel	60. Dingle	110. Loughrea
11. Ballinasloe	61. Donaghadee	111. Loughswilly
12. Ballincollig	62. Downpatrick	112. Macanish
13. Ballinrobe	63. Drogheda	113. Magilligan
14. Ballyragget	64. Dublin: Westmorland Bridge	114. Man of War
15. Ballyshannon	65. Dublin: Coombe	115. Maryboro'
16. Banagher	66. Dublin: George's Street	116. Meelick
17. Bandon	67. Dublin: Phoenix Park	117. Milford
18. Bantry Bay: Blue Hill	68. Dublin: Pigeon House	118. Mill Street
19. Bantry Bay: Bere Island	69. Dublin: Recruiting Depot	119. Monaghan
20. Bantry Bay: Whiddy Island	70. Dublin: Richmond	120. Mullingar
21. Bantry Bay: Garnish Island	71. Dublin: Royal Barracks	121. Naas
22. Belfast	72. Dublin: Portobello	122. Navan
23. Beleek	73. Duncannon Fort	123. Nenagh
24. Belturbet	74. Dundalk	124. New Bridge
25. Bere Island	75. Dungarvan	125. New Inn
26. Blackbank	76. "Dunmore, Co. Galway, east of Ballinasloe"	126. New Market
27. Boyle	77. Dunree Fort	127. New Ross
28. Bray	78. Dunshaughlin	128. Newry
29. Bryan's Bridge	79. Enniskillen	129. Omagh
30. Buncrana	80. Fermoy	130. Oughterarde
31. Buttevant	81. Fethard	131. Parsonstown
32. Caher	82. Finea	132. Philipstown
33. Cappoquin	83. Foxford	133. Portumna
34. Carlingford	84. Galway	134. Roscommon
35. Carlow	85. Glancree	135. Roscrea
36. Carn	86. Glenmalur	136. "Rutland, north-west of Donegal"
37. Carrick-on-Shannon	87. Gort	137. Saltpan Hill
38. Carrick-on-Suir	88. Granard	138. Shannon Bridge
39. Carrickfergus	89. Green Castle	139. Sligo
40. Cashel	90. Inchgeela	140. Talagh
41. Castlebar	91. Island Bridge	141. Tarbert
42. Castlecomer	92. (Ballincollig): Island of Inch	142. Templemore
43. Castledawson	93. Island Sharkey	143. Tralee
44. Castlereagh	94. Jamestown	144. Tullamore
45. Cavan	95. Jonesboro	145. Waterford
46. Chapelizod	96. Keelogue	146. Westport
47. Charlemont	97. Kenmare or Neddeen	147. Wexford
48. Charles Fort	98. Kilkenny	148. Wexford: Baginbun
49. Charleville	99. Killough	149. Whiddy Island
50. Clare Castle	100. Kilworth	150. Youghal

Appendix No. 2

General [MS] return of barracks in Ireland, with the numbers they are severally constructed to contain and their occupation, Board of Ordnance, 28 December 1837

(T.N.A., WO 44/120). Place-names are spelt as in the original.

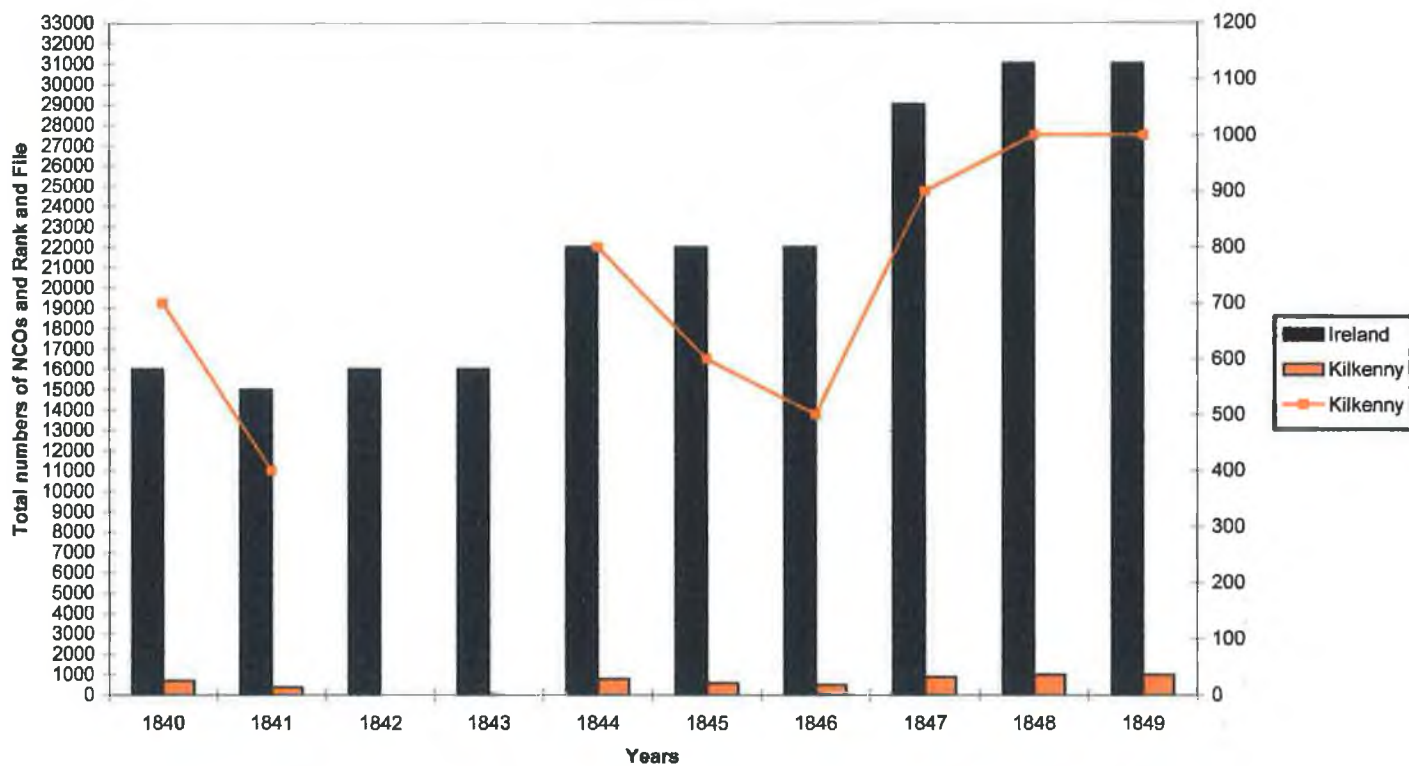
Station	Cavalry, Infantry, Artillery	Constructed for				Occupied by			
		Field Officers	Officers	NCOs & Privates	Horses	Field Officers	Officers	NCOs & Privates	Horses
Armagh	Inf.	1	10	186	5	1	5	121	3
Monaghan	Inf.	0	3	54	0	0	0	0	0
Monaghan	Cav.	0	0	46	44	0	2	32	38
Athlone	Cav.	2	13	250	187	1	2	95	62
Athlone	Inf.	3	22	566	0	2	20	460	5
Ballinacollig	Cav.	3	21	500	316	2	13	227	217
Belfast	Cav.	1	3	56	59	0	1	30	45
Belfast	Inf.	3	11	960	0	1	11	262	0
Carrickfergus	Inf.	0	4	86	0	0	0	13	0
Belturbet	Cav.	1	6	156	101	0	3	40	41
Cavan	Inf.	1	5	130	2	0	6	103	0
Boyle	Inf.	1	11	260	5	1	7	114	2
Buttevant	Inf.	2	36	1090	32	2	16	304	10
Mallow	Inf.	0	7	103	2	2	2	45	2
Mill Street	Inf.	0	6	112	4	0	3	43	1
Caher	Cav.	2	21	346	292	1	10	158	164
Carlow	Cav.	1	7	112	90	0	4	96	0
Athy	Cav.	0	3	50	34	0	2	32	0
Cashel	Inf.	1	6	146	3	0	7	124	3
Fethard	Cav.	1	5	54	96	occupied but retain			
Tipperary	Inf.	0	2	74	3	0	2	55	1
Castlebar	Inf.	2	22	563	6	1	7	167	1
Charlemont	Art.	1	4	151	74	1	2	58	40
Clare Castle & 4 towers	Inf.	3	14	294	4	0	8	155	2
Clonmel	Cav. & Inf.	3	21	417	135	1	11	221	88
Carrick-on-Suir	Cav.	0	8	148	52	0	3	55	0
Cork	Cav. & Inf.	11	96	2336	232	5	43	1030	130
Cork harbour	Inf.	2	96	636	10	2	23	390	0
Derry & 8 towers	Inf.	0	23	599	3	0	8	186	2
Omagh	Cav.	1	7	110	60	0	6	110	2
Lifford	Inf.	0	3	54	0	0	3	52	0
Drogheda & 5 towers	Inf.	2	12	357	4	1	8	173	2
Duncannon Fort	Inf.	0	9	164	2	0	1	38	1
Dundalk	Cav.	4	21	503	320	2	13	224	257
Fermoy	Cav.	1	23	120	112	0	0	0	0
Fermoy	Inf.	13	140	2696	40	2	34	516	3
Mitchelstown	Inf.	0	3	72	0	0	3	45	0
Gort & 2 towers	Cav. & Inf.	1	7	186	110	0	3	39	0
Galway	Inf.	2	19	414	6	1	11	120	0
Cashly Tower	Inf.	0	0	25	0	0	0	1	0
Kilkenny	Inf.	1	14	552	6	1	16	332	3
Castlecomer	Inf.	0	8	126	0	0	2	50	0

Appendix No. 2 (cont'd)

Station	Cavalry, Infantry, Artillery	Constructed for				Occupied by			
		Field Officers	Officers	NCOs & Privates	Horses	Field Officers	Officers	NCOs & Privates	Horses
Kinsale	Inf.	2	23	550	8	1	7	87	2
Charles Fort	Inf.	1	15	332	4	0	1	36	0
Bandon	Cav.	1	6	119	61	0	2	33	0
Limerick	Cav.	2	12	300	152	1	7	116	137
Limerick	Inf.	4	46	985	10	2	26	248	5
Carrickfort (sic)	Inf.	0	1	20	0	0	0	2	0
Tarbert	Inf.	0	1	20	0	0	0	3	0
Longford	Cav.	1	8	222	147	0	6	74	87
Longford	Ordnance	0	4	136	55	unoccupied but retain			
Granard	Inf.	0	2	33	0	occupied by constabulary			
Roscommon	Inf.	0	3	97	2	0	2	46	0
Mullingar	Inf.	4	8	990	21	1	9	125	5
Naas	Inf.	2	15	412	4	1	8	144	2
Nenagh	Inf.	1	12	208	4	1	8	174	4
Newbridge	Cav.	4	53	1005	680	2	18	260	165
Newcastle	Inf.	1	6	110	2	0	4	87	0
Newry	Inf.	3	38	670	18	1	7	259	1
Downpatrick	Inf.	0	3	72	0	0	2	53	0
Enniskillen	Cav. & Inf.	2	19	547	90	2	19	406	4
Parsonstown and 4 towers	Inf.	4	48	1190	15	3	22	590	6
Shannon Bridge	Inf.	0	2	148	0	0	2	44	0
Banagher	Inf.	0	3	63	0	0	3	45	0
Portobello	Cav.	3	28	530	542	1	19	346	297
Beggars Bush	Inf.	1	19	328	4	1	8	282	4
Pigeon House fort	Inf.	2	17	210	6	1	10	140	2
Dublin Bay towers 23	Inf.	0	0	276	0	0	0	17	0
Richmond Dublin	Inf.	6	70	1602	25	4	48	1123	11
Islandbridge	Inf. & Art.	1	22	546	185	1	13	208	146
Royal Magazine	Art.	1	0	18	0	1	0	14	0
Roscrea	Inf.	1	7	106	2	0	2	48	0
Maryborough	Inf.	0	3	82	0	0	2	43	0
Portumna	Inf.	0	3	68	28	0	1	27	0
Royal Barracks Dublin	Cav.	2	14	379	422	1	14	253	300
Royal Barracks Dublin	Inf.	8	69	1429	26	3	47	1119	8
Georges Street Dublin	Cav. & Inf.	1	16	324	3	1	11	227	2
Sligo	Cav.	1	6	96	60	1	6	83	23
Templemore	Inf.	4	50	1461	30	4	39	972	16
Tralee	Inf.	2	15	456	6	0	7	157	3
Tullamore	Inf.	0	3	85	4	0	2	48	1
Waterford	Inf.	2	15	534	9	0	7	108	2
Waterford	Art.	1	4	124	78	1	1	4	1
New Ross	Cav.	0	3	52	46	0	2	33	1
Wexford	Inf.	0	7	172	0	0	7	125	0
Youghal	Inf.	1	5	175	4	0	7	138	2
Dungarvan	Inf.	0	3	60	0	0	2	34	0

Appendix No. 3

Troops in Kilkenny City and Ireland, 1840-49



	1840		1841		1844		1845		1846		1847		1848		1849	
	O	R	O	R	O	R	O	R	O	R	O	R	O	R	O	R
January	39	865	14	240	39	855	39	843	17	394	32	851	39	890	39	1089
February	39	869	15	247	38	854	40	868	18	303	32	851	39	893	39	1091
March	39	868	15	257	N.A.	N.A.	42	861	18	317	32	868	39	885	39	1082
April	40	835	16	275	39	847	40	859	18	345	28	870	39	869	39	818
May	39	848	16	284	39	842	49	852	39	871	31	861	39	872	39	811
June	N.A.	N.A.	16	298	39	857	39	830	39	864	31	855	39	883	39	809
July	39	829	14	260	39	849	17	315	37	N.A.	31	897	38	825	39	805
August	38	841	38	844	39	847	17	323	N.A.	N.A.	29	841	39	879	34	808
September	N.A.	N.A.	19	267	39	842	18	332	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	39	882	39	807
October	13	230	18	289	39	861	28	336	N.A.	N.A.	29	866	39	1011	39	810
November	13	226	18	289	39	869	20	341	N.A.	N.A.	36	874	39	1105	39	810
December	14	232	18	293	38	886	20	338	N.A.	N.A.	32	881	39	1109	39	800

Source: Monthly returns to the adjutant general (T.N.A., WO 17/1114, 17/1115, 17/1116, 17/1117).

Note: O = Officer (Field Officers, Captains, Subalterns, Staff), R = Ranks (Sergeants, Drummers, Rank, File)

Occupancy numbers for Kilkenny barracks for the years 1842 and 1843 are not available

Appendix No. 4

Troops in Kilkenny, 1840-49

Appendix No. 5
What Price Purchase? c.1854

Royal Horse Guards

Commission	Price	Difference	Annual Pay
Cornet	£1,200		£71
Lieutenant	£1,600	£400	£94
Captain	£3,500	£1,900	£206
Major	£5,350	£1,850	£350
Lt. Colonel	£7,250	£1,900	£427

Life Guards

Commission	Price	Difference	Annual Pay
Cornet	£1,260		£74
Lieutenant	£1,785	£525	£105
Captain	£3,500	£1,715	£206
Major	£5,350	£1,850	£315
Lt. Colonel	£7,250	£1,900	£427

Dragoon Guards and Dragoons

Commission	Price	Difference	Annual Pay
Cornet	£840		£50
Lieutenant	£1,190	£350	£70
Captain	£3,225	£2,035	£190
Major	£4,575	£1,350	£270
Lt. Colonel	£6,175	£1,600	£364

Foot Guards

Commission	Price	Difference	Annual Pay
Ensign & Lieutenant	£1,200		£71
Lieutenant & Captain	£2,050	£850	£121
Captain & Lt. Colonel	£4,800	£2,750	£283
Major	£8,300	£3,500	£489
Lt. Colonel	£9,000	£700	£531

Regiments of Line Infantry

Commission	Price	Difference	Annual Pay
Ensign	£450		£27
Lieutenant	£700	£250	£41
Captain	£1,800	£1,100	£106
Major	£3,200	£1,400	£189
Lt. Colonel	£4,500	£1,300	£265

Source: Anthony P. C. Bruce, *The purchase system in the British army, 1660-1871* (London, 1980), p. 6.

Appendix No. 6

St. John's Roman Catholic parish: marriages of soldiers 1813-1858, reproduced with the kind permission of the parish priest

Groom/Bride	Address	Date	Groom/Bride	Address	Date
Bermingham/Smyth	Barracks	Nov. 1813	Steward/Murphy	42nd Regiment	June 1821
McDonagh/Connell	Meath Militia	Feb. 1814	McDonald/Macacy	42nd "	Sept. 1821
Caffrey/Clarke	" "	April 1814	Hays/Durney	86th Regiment	Nov. 1821
Quigley/Beck	" "	July 1814	Blake/Connors	26th Regiment	Nov. 1821
Rutlage/Williams	42nd Regiment	Jan. 1815	Connolly/Ward	Barracks	June 1822
Smyth/Williams	Soldier	Feb. 1815	Storie/Bermingham	"	Aug. 1825
Johnson/Doyle	Barracks	April 1818	Maxwell/Callaghan	24th Regiment	June 1826
Corry/Beard	"	May 1818	Lawlys/Devereux	Barracks	Feb. 1826
White/Walsh	"	May 1818	Courtney/Darcy	24th Regiment	April 1826
McDonnell/Dunny	"	June 1818	Farrell/Dooley	24th "	April 1826
Finn/Foley	"	June 1818	Gannan/Curran	Regiment	Oct. 1826
Malvin/Kavanagh	16th Regiment	July 1818	Mulvy/Molloy	65th Regiment	Nov. 1826
Conway/Roe	44th Regiment	July 1818	Coughlan/Whelan	65th "	Feb. 1827
Naughtan/Phelan	Barracks	July 1818	Kelly/Lawler	Barracks	Feb. 1827
McAverty/McGarvey	44th Regiment	Aug. 1818	Cottrell/Phelan	73rd Regiment	Feb. 1827
Haughney/Dunne	Barracks	Oct. 1818	Downs/Dwyer	73rd "	April 1827
Reilly/Nugent	"	Oct. 1818	Whiskely/Morgan	73rd "	April 1827
Foley/McGrath	"	Oct. 1818	Mulloy/Nary	73rd "	May 1827
Colgan/Duggan	44th Regiment	Oct. 1818	Guckin/McGahan	73rd "	June 1827
Bergin/Calihan	Barracks	Oct. 1818	Young/Dunne	58th Regiment	Aug. 1827
Summers/McGrath	"	Nov. 1818	Hough/Keegan	87th Regiment	Sept. 1827
Hughes/Moore	"	Nov. 1818	Wait/McEvoy	53rd Regiment	April 1828
Garner/McGrath	77th Regiment	Feb. 1819	Fitzpatrick/Barret	Barracks	Sept. 1828
Fitzpatrick/Holden	44th Regiment	Feb. 1819	Holohan/Power	47th Regiment	Jan. 1830
McElvin/Chambers	44th "	Feb. 1819	McEvoy/Whelan	92nd Regiment	Jan. 1830
Wilcocks/Conway	44th "	Feb. 1819	Reardan/Shortall	21st Regiment	Sept. 1830
Brady/Lonergan	57 th Regiment	Aug. 1819	Bryan/Murphy	Regiment	Feb. 1831
?/Nowlan	57 th "	Oct. 1819	Flynn/Dowd	21st Regiment	April 1831
Sweeney/Shea	57th "	July 1820	Jones/Dunne	21st "	April 1831
McCarthy/Sweeney	57th "	July 1820	Lamb/Hanaway	21st "	May 1831
Connors/Smith	Barracks	Feb. 1821	Gold/Monk	21st "	May 1831
Bead/James	"	June 1821	McLeyland/McGarry	24th Regiment	June 1831

Appendix No. 6 (cont'd)

Groom/Bride	Address	Date	Groom/Bride	Address	Date	
Power/Byrne	21st Regiment	June 1831	Darmody/Byrne	Regiment	Feb.	1842
Walsh/Mara	21st "	July 1831	Neill/Carthy	Barracks	Feb.	1842
Burke/Culleton	24th Regiment	July 1831	Staunton/Davis	31st Regiment	Sept.	1842
O'Neill/Bryan	21st Regiment	July 1831	O'Hara/Quinn	89th Regiment	May	1843
Ward/Towers	70th Regiment	Nov. 1832	O'Connor/Ryan	11th Regiment	Jan.	1844
O'Neill/Pack	27th Regiment	Aug. 1833	Hayes/Hennessy	11th "	Jan.	1844
Reade/Rourke	90th Regiment	Nov. 1833	Lacey/Ferguson	Barracks	Feb.	1844
Brett/Fitzpatrick	90th "	Nov. 1833	Reynolds/Carroll	60th Rifles	July	1844
Little/Divine	60th Regiment	Jan. 1835	Chapply/Moore	56th Regiment	Aug.	1844
Duffy/McDonnell	51st Regiment	May 1835	Brown/Thomas	48th Regiment	Aug.	1845
Costigan/Culbert	Barracks	July 1835	Reilly/Galahan	Barracks	Feb.	1846
Reilly/Ryan	"	July 1835	Maher/Barton	48th Regiment	Feb.	1846
Farrell/Dowling	"	July 1835	O'Dea/Bolger	64th Regiment	July	1846
Dodd/Connell	51st Regiment	Oct. 1835	Kennedy/O'Connell	64th "	Aug.	1846
Kealy/Nary	51st "	Oct. 1835	Gallivan/Murphy	64th "	Nov.	1846
Meighan/Doherty	82nd Regiment	May 1836	Manahan/Sullivan	64th "	Jan.	1847
Hughes/Bradley	82nd "	May 1836	Gavin/Rutter	31st Regiment	Feb.	1847
Ryan/Strong	82nd "	May 1836	Smyth/Keenan	83rd Regiment	Jan.	1848
Ring/Keane	82nd "	May 1836	Keenon/Brien	83rd "	March	1848
Porter/Kelly	82nd "	May 1836	Duddy/Crowe	83rd "	March	1848
Garvin/Ryan	82nd "	June 1836	Boland/Porter	Barracks	Aug.	1848
Salen/Hayden	19th Regiment	Sept. 1838	Comerford/Connell	83rd Regiment	Aug.	1848
Hearn/Rowe	88th Regiment	Oct. 1838	Roony/Bryan	83rd "	Aug.	1848
Conroy/Delaney	19th Regiment	Oct. 1838	Hegarty/Wedlock	83rd "	Nov.	1848
Reilly/Keeffe	19th "	Oct. 1838	Larkin/Flynn	75th Regiment	Nov.	1848
Noonan/Rowe	19th "	Dec. 1838	Mahony/Blanch	8th Hussars	Jan.	1850
Notley/Smyth	19th "	Feb. 1839	Lewis/Brennan	87th Regiment	Jan.	1850
Nelligan/Connolly	Barracks	April 1840	Williams/Grace	Royal Artillery	Aug.	1853
Ratigan/Martin	84th Regiment	May 1840	Lindy/Brown	Soldier	Oct.	1854
Morrissey/Dowling	84th "	May 1840	Taylor/Carrol	Carlow Rifles	Nov.	1855
Walsh/Foley	Barracks	Oct. 1840	Quaid/Slattery	69th Regiment	Nov.	1855
Delaney/Collins	"	Nov. 1840	Ward/Kelly	Carlow Militia	Nov.	1856
Heffernan/Doyle	"	Nov. 1840	Grinsel/Loughlin	56th Regiment	Nov.	1856
Boyle/Mansfield	24th Regiment	Feb. 1841	Doran/Keating	Militia	July	1858
Curry/Hegarty	81st Regiment	Oct. 1841	Hogan/Funcheon	Kilkenny Fusiliers	July	1858

N.B. This list of 134 soldier marriages contracted in St. John's Roman Catholic church, 1813-58, is necessarily considerably short of the actual number which took place when one takes the following into account:-

- (1) Addresses were not registered until c. 1813, so it is not possible to identify soldiers' marriages up to that time.
- (2) Even after 1813 addresses were occasionally omitted.
- (3) The addresses entered for the marriages listed were the names of the regiments or barracks, but I suspect that there were other marriages of soldiers where the address entered was that of the bride, again concealing the fact that the grooms were soldiers.

Appendix No. 7

Regiments stationed in Kilkenny city and county with date and regimental number

Date	Regimental Number	Name
1800	56 th	West Essex Regiment
1804	9 th	Royal Norfolk Regiment
1805	47 th	Lancashire Regiment
1811	76 th	2 nd Bn. West Riding Regiment
1811	84 th	York & Lancaster Regiment
1815, 1848	83 rd	County of Dublin Regiment
1818	16 th	Bedfordshire + Hertfordshire Regiment
1819	18 th	Royal Irish Regiment
1819-20, 1851-52	57 th	West Middlesex Regiment
1821	42 nd	The Black Watch
1822		The Rifle Brigade
1822-4	78 th	Ross-shire Buffs
1825	79 th	Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders
1825, 1840-1, 1844	24 th	South Wales Borderers
1826	73 rd	Pertshire Regiment
1827	53 rd	Shropshire Regiment
1828	32 nd	Cornwall Light Infantry
1828	76 th	2 nd Bn. West Riding Regiment
1830, 1850	92 nd	Gordon Highlanders
1831	21 st	Royal Scots Fusiliers
1832	70 th	Surrey Regiment
1832	74 th	Highlanders
1832-3, 1852	5 th	Dragoon Guards
1833-4	43 rd	Monmouthshire Light Infantry
1834	90 th	Pertshire Light Infantry
1834-35	60 th	Kings Royal Rifle Corps
1836	81 st	Loyal Lincoln Volunteers
1837	23 rd	Royal Welsh Fusiliers
1837, 1852	71 st	Highland Light Infantry
1839	7 th	Royal Fusiliers
1839	19 th	1 st Yorkshire (North Riding) Regiment
1840	84 th	York and Lancaster Regiment
1840-41	99 th	Duke of Edinburgh's Regiment
1842	56 th	West Essex Regiment
1843	1 st	Royal Dragoons
1844	11 th	North Devonshire Regiment
1847	64 th	2 nd Staffordshire Regiment
1848	75 th	Stirlingshire Regiment
1850-54	62 nd	Wiltshire Regiment
1854	46 th	South Devonshire Regiment
1857	18 th	Royal Irish Regiment
1857	16 th	Queen's Lancers
1860	76 th	2 nd Bn. West Riding Regiment
1862	36 th	Herefordshire Regiment
1864	10 th	Royal Lincolnshire Regiment
1865	53 rd /85 th	King's Shropshire Light Infantry
1867	31 st	Huntingdonshire Regiment
1868	17 th	Royal Leicestershire Regiment

Appendix No. 7 (cont'd)

Regiments stationed in Kilkenny city and county with date and regimental number

Date	Regimental Number	Name
1868	44 th	East Sussex Regiment
1869	30 th	Cambridgeshire Regiment
1870	20 th	Lancashire [East Devon] Fusiliers
1870	68 th	Durham Light Infantry

County Kilkenny
Castlecomer

Date	Regimental Number	Name
1833-34	91 st	Argyleshire Highlanders
1833-34	43 rd	Monmouthshire Light Infantry

Ballyragget

Date	Regimental Number	Name
1833-4	43 rd	Monmouthshire Light Infantry

Kilmoganny

Date	Regimental Number	Name
1832	52 nd	Oxfordshire Light Infantry

Piltown

Date	Regimental Number	Name
1848	85 th	Bucks Volunteers

Thomastown

Date	Regimental Number	Name
1834-35	91 st	Argyleshire Highlanders

Source: John M. Kitzmiller, *In search of the forlorn hope, 1690-1960* (Salt Lake City, Utah, 1988).

Appendix No. 8

Kilkenny Barracks, 10 January 1851: storehouses, magazines and workshops; dimensions

N^o. 8. A Statement of the Storehouses, Magazines, Workshops, &c. the Property of the Ordnance at Kilkenny shewing their dimensions, the materials with which they are constructed & the purposes to which they are applied -

	Dimensions	Purpose
Magazine. Built of stone	17 1/2 x 8 1/2	Magazine
Engine House, f. do	16 x 8 1/2	Engine House
Dimensions Shop - do	25 1/2 x 8 1/2	Dimensions Shop
Turf House - do	38 x 8 1/2	Turf House
Coal yard - do	120 x 70	Coal Yard
Bedding Store (lower) - do	35 1/2 x 16	Bedding Store
7 Veto - (upper) - do	61 1/2 x 16 1/2	Bedding Store
Store for Sundries - do	20 1/2 x 16	Sundries
Fuel Bedding Store - do	11 1/2 x 10 1/2	Fuel Bedding Store
Lumber Store - do	22 1/2 x 10 1/2	Lumber Store
Straw Store N ^o . 1. - do	28 x 14	Straw Store
do - N ^o . 2. - do	34 1/2 x 10 1/2	Straw Store
Cook Houses N ^{os} . 1. 2. 3. 4. - do	each 14 x 13	Cook Houses
Soldiers Washing Houses 1 + 2. - do	do - 36 1/2 x 18 1/2	Soldiers Washing Houses
Womens Wash House - do	24 1/2 x 17 1/2	Womens Wash House
Guards House - do	41 x 22 1/2	Guards House
Chapel School - do	70 x 40	School
School Master's Store - do	33 1/2 x 14	School Master's Store
Quarters Master's Store - do	54 1/2 x 8	Quarters Master's Store
Barrack Master's Wash - do	14 x 12	Barrack Master's Wash
Infantry Officers' Stable - do	42 x 15	Infantry Officers' Stable
Officers' & Soldiers' Privies N ^{os} . 1 + 2. - do	each 40 x 10	Privies
Stables - do	18 x 15	Stables
Shaving Shop - do	18 x 18	Shaving Shop
Family Cook House - do	18 x 17 1/2	Family Cook House

W. Rowan St. K. E.

John Newport
per J. J. J.

Appendix No. 9

Kilkenny and Castlecomer Barracks, room dimensions, 1 October 1830

No. 9. A STATEMENT of the Barracks at *Kilkenny and Castlecomer* shewing the number of Field Officers, Captains, Subalterns, Non-commissioned Officers, and Private Men, they are calculated to contain.

No.	Description	Dimensions		Field Officers	Captains	Subalterns	N.C.O.s	Private Men	Remarks	Material of which constructed
		Length	Breadth							
14	Officers Houses including the kitchen	140. 4	22. 11							
15	Officers Houses (long) being occupied as Mess Rooms and Mess kitchen	140. 6	22. 0	1	6	8	"	"	"	
16	Officers Houses (short) being occupied as Mess Room and Mess kitchen	58. 2	22. 0							
17	Coff House containing Mess Room, Kitchen, Office, Wash room, and Bath	89. 10	22. 0							
18	Private Barracks	55. 0	22. 0	"	"	"	436			
19	Hospital	84. 0	22. 0	"	"	"	"		50	
19	Private Barracks (short)	92. 0	22. 0							
20	Stable House	13. 7	4. 8							
21	Hospital (wing)	7. 0	7. 0							
22	Cooking House	31. 5	17. 1							
22	Do. Do.	31. 5	17. 1							
23	Guard House	28. 0	24. 6							
24	Officers Mess	16. 6	9. 0							
25	Do. Do.									
26	Private Barracks	55. 3	11. 0							
27	Private Barracks									
28	Supper shed	53. 6	12. 0							
28	Prison House	58. 0	18. 0							

The Building are of Redd. Masonry with White Plaster.

Appendix No. 9 (cont'd)

Castlecomer Barracks

Item No. in Column above	Description	Extent		F. Office	C. Office	Stables	P. O. and Post	Stores	Pottery	Material to be used
		Sq. Ft.	Cu. Yds.							
Castlecomer		50. 3	28. 6		2	6				
4	Office House	50. 3	28. 6		2	6				
5	Provision Store	16. 9	27. 1				94			
5	Do	46. 9	27. 6						10	
6	Hospital	35. 6	20. 4							
7	Soldier's Houses	65. 10	18. 2							
8	Guard House and Blacksmith	39. 6	18. 0							
9	Hospital Privy	7. 0	5. 0							
10	Office S-	13. 6	11. 6							
11	Women S-	17. 6	11. 6							
12	Soldier S-	15. 6	10. 0							
13	Buffing Shed	37. 10	10. 8							
14	Do — D-	25. 3	10. 8							
15	Shed	16. 0	9. 0							
	Paymen Office									
	Kitchen									

Source: T.N.A., WO 55/2787.

A. Paton

Appendix No. 10

James Stephens Military Barracks (9 June 2005) – an architectural appraisal.

This barracks represents two periods of development, 1803 and 1847. While the many separate structures within the complex retain original features recent updating and modernisation, in particular to the soldiers and officers quarters, has resulted in re-roofing, re-building of chimneys and replacement of original windows with P.V.C. units. The use to which many of the buildings have been put has changed over the course of time. The main entrance to the south is as originally designed but the lock-up and guardhouse to the left now accommodate the sentry on duty. The mechanically operated clock a two-train movement has been restored in recent times following years of inactivity, and is original as is the 'Clock House' which is of dressed limestone and a lowered cupola above the roof.

On the north side is the harness room, gun shed, forge, canteen and infantry stable built in squared random joint limestone and arched entrance to the internal stone stairs. Here all upper windows have been replaced with P.V.C. units. The original ground floor windows, smaller in size, remain intact as also are the cast iron wall vents, some of which are hinged. An external feature here is the full length water channel of kiln-fired sets, while an area between the channel and the building generally referred to as an 'apron' now overlaid with concrete may also have been paved. Nearby and now known as No. 1 Security Headquarters this building is finished externally in nap plaster with an 'apron' of random cobbling.

The cavalry cook house to the east and also the forge now house the barrack carpenter and barrack tailor. This building is built of 'coursed' or 'lined' squared limestone with projecting dressed limestone gable barges and random cobbelled apron and original slated roof. The prison now serves as a little used detention house and is finished externally in whipdash plaster. Its original timber windows, 1" x 1" square window bars and slate roof are intact.

Appendix No. 10 (cont'd)

Nearby is the Ordnance building which now serves as a workshop. It still has its original slated roof, original timber windows with 1" diameter protecting iron bars and is finished externally in whipdash plaster. In this part of the complex is the magazine with its original slated roof, original doorways with cut stone jambs and keystone lintels and inserted window with brick surround. The barrack well is nearby but is now covered over. The water tower still standing is similarly idle and obsolete. It is built of squared, lined, limestone with its water containers atop.

A most interesting building is the ablution house built of random rubble limestone with squared corner quoins, up-and-down original timber windows, brick window jambs, and slightly arched brick window heads. Some of the original washing facilities remain including the communal washing trough. The present barrack store is an enclosed area with cobbelled courtyard which originally served as the engine house, armourers shop, turf house and privies and has arched double entrance doors, original timber windows with 1" diameter iron bars and flagged floors.

The original barrack chapel which now serves as a badminton court is built of squared dressed limestone with gothic arched window opes and cast iron diamond sashes. There are buttressed wall and corner antes while above the entrance door in the gable is a belfry but without a bell. The roof of natural slate over steel trusses has pine-ceiling boards. The single storey sergeant majors' house is built of squared lined masonry , hipped roof and two cut stone limestone chimneys. The original windows have been replaced with P.V.C. units.

Appendix No. 10

**James Stephens military barracks, Kilkenny,
an architectural appraisal, 9 June 2005.**



**Washroom, with
slate wash stands**



Cut stone window sill



**Cobbled entrance
to stables**

Appendix No. 11 (cont'd)

Date in Cash Book or Journal	Folio in Cash Book or Journal	Corresponding Ledger Entry		Names	Description of Service	Amount	
		Title	Folio			£	s. d.
1836		By					
March 31		Salaries to Blmadist	9	Henry Perceval	Mr. Perceval 21 Oct. to 21 Dec. 1835	18	
		Transfer District	25		By S. J. Mearns 15. 16. 18	223	6 5
		Expenses of Blmadist	15		Repair of Buildings Feb. 21 Monthly	32	19 3
		Repairing District	18	C. H. Knight	Transfer Oct. 1 to 21 Dec. 1835	7	2 11
					Whitewashing		1 6
					Purchase of Furnishings		18 4
					Repairs of do		8 9
					Books		10 18 5
					Lighting Exp. do		19 2 6
					Washing & Bedding		11 6 1
					Shipping Charges		1 9 1
					Advertisements		12
					Occas'l. Labor		6
					Mr. Case of Contributions to		7 17 3
					Books of Mr. Mearns		9 14
					Postage of do		35 10 10
					Attorney		
							243 11 7

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