

# ST. PATRICK'S DAY 1869

BY TIM FERRISS

On the morning of St. Patrick's Day, 17th March 1869, what was described as a 'drumming party', set off from Poyntzpass to march to Glen. The 'party' initially consisted of approximately sixty 'nationalists' but as the day progressed this number increased substantially. The march, to and from Glen, lasted most of the day and culminated in a shooting incident when one of the party, 29-year-old Hugh McNally, was seriously wounded. Various court cases arose from this parade and shooting, and it is on the evidence given at various trials, as documented in local newspapers, that the following account is largely based. It is important to emphasise that the witnesses were not always reliable. Some were obviously inconsistent and clearly biased and may not always have said the same thing twice. As well as that, often the reporters didn't get the stories straight and were inconsistent or biased too, so it's a matter of trying to see what the most likely story was.

This seems the most probable reconstruction of the events.

The 'drumming party' parade was certainly illegal for, following the events at Dolly's Brae in 1849, when some thirty Catholics had been killed, an **Act to Restrain Party Processions in Ireland** was passed in 1850. It begins:

*"Whereas numbers of persons have been in the practice of assembling and marching together in procession in Ireland in a manner calculated to create and perpetuate animosity between different classes of Her Majesty's subjects and to endanger the public peace..... all assemblies of persons in Ireland who shall meet and parade together or join in procession and who shall bear, wear or have amongst them or on any of them, any firearms or other offensive weapons or any banner, emblem, flag or symbol which may be calculated or tend to provoke animosity between different classes of Her Majesty's subjects or who shall be accompanied by any person or persons playing music or singing any song which may be calculated or tend to provoke animosity between different classes of Her Majesty's subjects, shall be unlawful assemblies and every person present shall be guilty of misdemeanour."*

Despite this Act, and the passing of a further 'Party Emblems Act' forbidding the display of party emblems, the 1860's was a period when sectarian tensions often resulted in violence and death. The various Acts of Parliament were largely ignored and while the governments of the day threatened to prosecute leaders, they invariably lost their nerve and withdrew charges.

The formation of The Fenian Brotherhood in 1858, marked the rise of a much more militant nationalism and confrontations occurred regularly following various parades. Other events also inflamed the situation. The first Liberal government, under William Gladstone was perceived as being soft on nationalists and this view was reinforced when a campaign calling for the release of Fenian prisoners, led to forty-nine being freed in February 1869. On top of this the introduction of a Bill on March 1, 1869 to disestablish the Church of Ireland led to the Irish Protestant community feeling embattled.

It was against this background of tension and strife that the events of the 17th of March, 1869 in Poyntzpass took place, but whether the 'drumming party' were members of the Fenian brotherhood or any other nationalist organisation is not clear.

Most, if not all of the drumming party attended Mass in Poyntzpass. The McNally brothers, Hugh and Peter who feature largely, said they were at Mass in Poyntzpass on that morning and that thereafter they adjourned to Rice's public house in the village and had two bottles of porter, before joining the drumming party at around 10.00 am. The party headed out the Old Road towards Glen.



**The Old Road**

Like many another St Patrick's Day, March 17th that year was, according to the records in Armagh, a fairly cold and wet day with the wind from the north east.

Constable William Adger, of the Royal Irish Constabulary, was on duty on the Newry Road about a half-mile from the village.



**Gordon's Lockhouse**

He said in evidence that he was there at 11.00 a.m. and that he heard a lot of drumming and shouting coming from the Old Road. He reckoned about 60 - 70 people were heading towards the Crack Bridge.

He obviously knew where the party was going for he said that he, *"ran as fast as possible to the Crack Bridge"* (Gamble's Bridge). The drumming party continued along the Old Road and turned down a lane known then as *'Geddis's Loanin'*, which joined the Canal Bank at Gordon's (later Waddell's) lockhouse. Constable Adger stated that when he got to the Crack Bridge he saw the drumming party coming from Gordon's Locks. The party came along and passed over the bridge where a small group of opponents had gathered. Constable Adger stated *"at that stage an opposing party called on me to stop them passing over the bridge. There were two drums and a fife; Thomas Connolly and Felix Cassidy played the drums and Joseph Burns played the fife."*

In his evidence to the Court, he identified a number of people whom he had seen at that time. He named Meredith McAlinden, Francis Blacker, Johnny Savage, John Burns, John McCarrison and John Cassidy as being part of the group and stated that he had great difficulty keeping the two opposing groups apart, *"but when I said to the small party that I would summons all those in the drumming party that I knew, this seemed to satisfy them"*.

Bernard Shields gave evidence that he was a member of the party. He said he went with the party from its origin in Poyntzpass heading toward Glen. The numbers grew as they went along and two more drums and a substantial body of men joined them when they got to Glen. They seemed to have gone on from Glen towards Barr. Patrick O'Hare who gave evidence said that he was leaving Barr Chapel after Mass on St Patrick's Day when he heard drums *"below the Chapel"* and he went down to join the party.

It is not absolutely clear where the party did go from Glen. The suggestion that they probably went up as far as Barr seems unlikely and, Bernard Shields in

evidence said, *"We returned* (and he used the word *"returned"* according to the newspaper reports) *at Mr. Innes' gate."* That would be the main gate to the Dromantine Estate at the Derrycraw entrance. So it appears that having gone from Glen Chapel the party marched as far as Dromantine gate, turned and retraced their steps back towards the Crack Bridge. From the Crack Bridge, Shields said, they went on by *"Colonel Close's wall"* and then along the main road back to Poyntzpass

Constable Adger was still on duty and he stated that at about 3.45 p.m. he saw the party coming along the present Newry Road toward Poyntzpass. He was accompanied on this occasion by two sub-constables, Scott and Anderson. He estimated that between four hundred and five hundred people were there, so the numbers had greatly increased. He counted six drums and four fifes and said that shots were fired from the drumming party. Bernard Shields in evidence said that he heard shots being fired *"from the Co Down side"* but not from the drumming party.

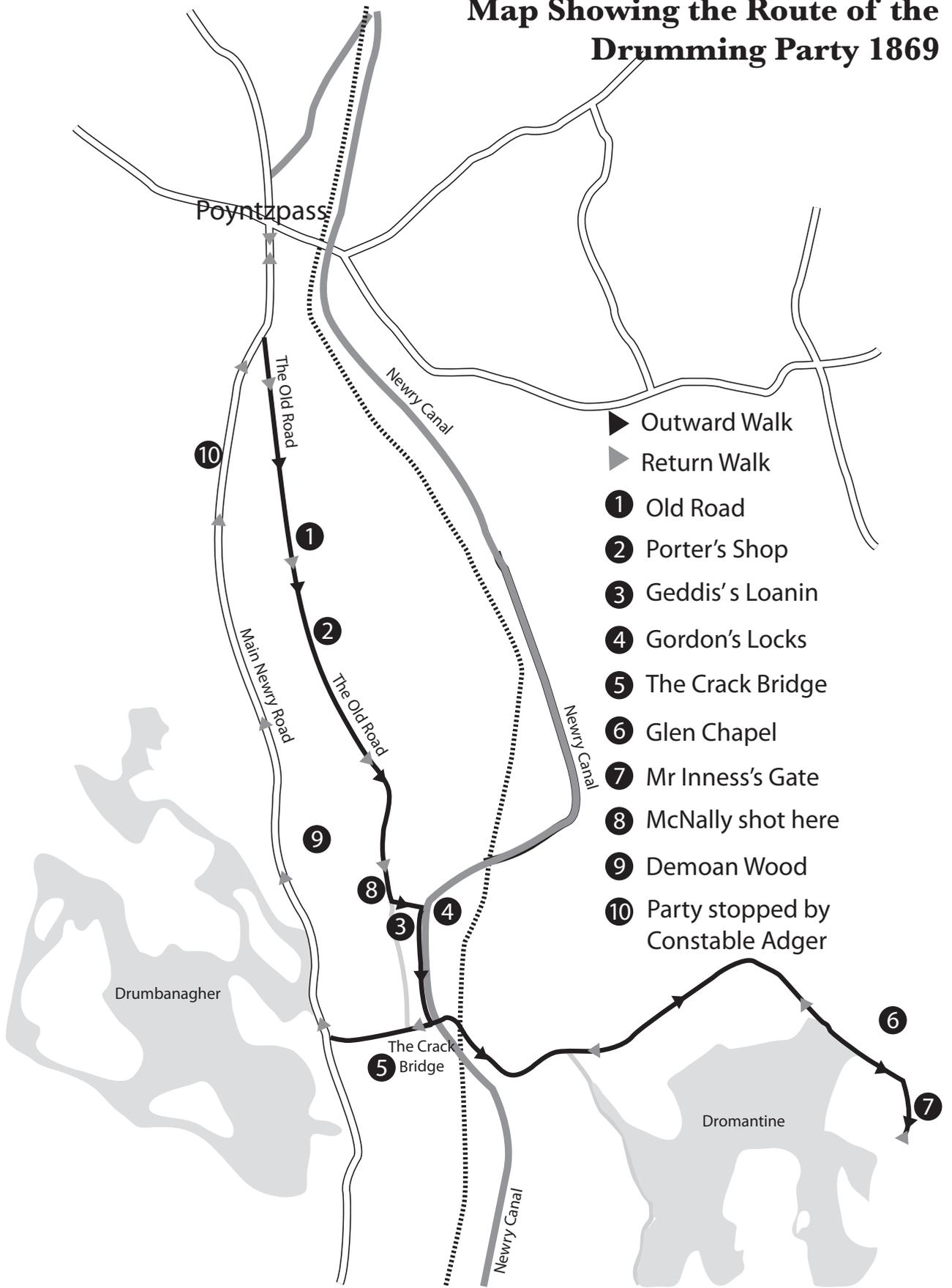
Constable Adger, who was obviously a brave and committed officer said, *"I came in front of the party, held up my hand and asked them to stop, which they did at once. I told them not to be coming into Poyntzpass but to turn down to Aughtantaraghan."* He said that John Burns and Bernard Shields, two of the men on the march, were among those who tried to get others to go that way, but Adger quoted John Cassidy who said, *"Come on, don't mind him"* and at those words, they struck up the music again and headed onwards down into Poyntzpass, with Cassidy beating the drum as they went.

Sub-Constable James Scott in evidence, named John Cassidy, Felix Cassidy, Daniel Bailey John Savage, James Handcock, William Handcock and William Boyle as being among the drumming party

Another witness, Patrick O'Hare, said, *"I was in Mrs. Rice's pub in the Pass with the drumming party and a great number of the party were also in at that time"*. He also made reference to shots being fired from Frazer Ford's premises and a Constable Scott said that the parties fired ten to twelve shots as the parade was leaving Poyntzpass. Frazer Ford's premises were in Bridge Street (Railway Street today).

A report of the incident, not of the Court case, in the Newry Commercial Telegraph, gives a rather more scathing account of the events of the afternoon: *"The body then proceeded toward the Crack Bridge, their numbers being about five hundred. They became bold and marched through Drumbanagher on the way to Poyntzpass. This was certainly a bold step as the residents of Drumbanagher and also of Poyntzpass are almost exclusively Protestant. Constable Adger, an officer of great experience, remarkable for his coolness, proceeded with a small party of Constabulary to meet the drumming party...."*(the writer then

### Map Showing the Route of the Drumming Party 1869



- ▶ Outward Walk
- ▶ Return Walk
- ① Old Road
- ② Porter's Shop
- ③ Geddis's Loanin
- ④ Gordon's Locks
- ⑤ The Crack Bridge
- ⑥ Glen Chapel
- ⑦ Mr Inness's Gate
- ⑧ McNally shot here
- ⑨ Demoan Wood
- ⑩ Party stopped by Constable Adger

Approx. 1 Mile

recounts the incident just described and continues):...” the party entered Poyntzpass and at intervals shouts of the most disloyal nature were used by some of those in the throng. The people of the town were very much alarmed, as never on any previous anniversary had such a demonstration been seen on the streets of Poyntzpass. They coolly halted at Mrs Rice’s Public House in the main street and refreshed themselves very liberally”



**The Lambeg Drums**

That is the Newry Commercial Telegraph’s account of activities as they came back into the town that afternoon. Having spent some time in Mrs Rice’s where they ‘refreshed themselves very liberally’, they set out once more along the Old Road, intending it seemed, to escort the Glen contingent back as far as the Crack Bridge. By the time they set out from Poyntzpass the second time, the original marchers who had set out over six hours earlier, had walked in excess of 10 miles.

The party proceeded along the Old Road without major incident until they again neared Geddis’s Loanin. It was at this point that a number of shots rang out and one of the party, Hugh McNally, was hit in the chest.

Patrick O’Hare, in evidence, gave the following account of what he saw. He said that he was coming along the Old Road from Poyntzpass and there were about one hundred in the drumming party. (Estimates of numbers in the drumming party vary enormously). He said he was at the front of the party, and opposite the Demoan Wood, when he heard two shots fired from the plantation. He didn’t see who fired them but he did see a man, wearing a white hat, fire a third shot. “A man three or four yards in front of me said he was shot and put his hand to his breast. That must have been Hugh McNally and he was seven or eight yards opposite Geddis’s Loanin’ - the shot had to have come from a gun because a pistol wouldn’t have carried that far”



**Site of Shooting**

Peter McNally, a brother of Hugh, described the shooting briefly. He said that he left Poyntzpass about 5 p.m. and that about three hundred people were in the party, that he heard two shots from beside the plantation and that his brother was hit in the chest. He said that his brother was able to walk by being ‘linked along’ but that he left Hugh at the “line side.” (the ‘line’ being the local name for the Canal Bank). The wounded man was then brought down the Canal Bank to Rice’s in Poyntzpass in a cart while his brother, Peter went off to get a clergyman.

Peter continued, “After the shooting I ran to the Pass and Thomas Connolly ran with me. We called at Monaghan’s, a farmer, for a horse but we didn’t get one. We called at Barney Conlon’s and I got my father’s horse. We had to go six Irish miles for the clergy and I went to Mullavilly, where I saw Father Irwin and I asked him to come and see my brother. I was half an hour there before the priest came. I was talking to the housekeeper but then we got the priest’s horse harnessed up to the car and went to Tandragee and in Grant’s Hotel there I hired a car to bring me to the Pass. We drank some whiskey in Grant’s and then came to Poyntzpass and Rice’s pub.”

Constable Adger, who was presumably the officer in charge and had been on duty around Poyntzpass most of the day, said he heard that a man had been shot. He proceeded out in the direction of the shooting. On the way he met the horse and cart carrying Hugh McNally. “I returned with the cart to Rice’s Public House. Dr MacDermott met us at the Canal Bridge and came with us into the town”. He described the wounded man as having a vest and two shirts on him; the bullet had gone through all three and also partly through his necktie.

Dr W.R. MacDermott said he examined Hugh McNally in Rice’s. He had a gunshot wound to the left of his breastbone and he judged that the man’s lung was wounded. Another medical man was there who helped Dr MacDermott and “together we probed but then decided not to probe any further. McNally’s life was in danger.” Dr. MacDermott told the Court later that

a large pistol, fired at a distance of ten to twelve feet could have fired the shot.

Constable Adger said that as a result of evidence he received, on the morning of the next day, the 18th of March, three men were arrested and charged with criminal offences with regard to the shooting; William Clarke charged with grievously wounding Hugh McNally, and Thomas Clements and Thomas Robinson charged with forming part of the party who fired the shots. He went with Sub-Inspector Black to the houses of the defendants and all parties were at home. He said that in Clarke's house he found a small loaded fowling piece which had no appearance of having been fired for three or four days; in Clements' house he found no firearms but in Robinson's house he found a loaded gun in the barn.

The first main witness to this part of the incident was Elizabeth White who said she was on the Newry Road approximately thirty minutes before she heard that McNally had been shot and she saw William Clarke come down Mrs Clements's field, go into the plantation with heavily loaded pockets (with what they were loaded she doesn't say according to the newspaper, but there may have been an inference that he was carrying ammunition in his pocket) Clarke said that he had nothing with him. Elizabeth White said that he was wearing a white hat and that Thomas Clements and Thomas Robinson, both carrying guns, were with him. *"I saw them loading them,"* she stated and that she heard two shots fired about 4 p.m.

Mary Davis, another witness, said that on the evening of 17th March she was in Mrs Porter's on the Old Road. *"While I was there the drumming party were coming from Poyntzpass going towards Geddis Loaning. I heard two shots fired and ran into David Henning's house, Going into Henning's house, the Old Road was on my left and the plantation on my right"*. As she finished her evidence she was asked, *"Did you say on the following day that four or five Orangemen had chased five hundred Papists?"* *"I did not, or anything like it"*, she replied.

Matthew Murphy, another witness, said, *"I was near O'Hanlon's field when I heard a "ball" pass over my head; it came from the direction of the drumming party"*. James Devlin was with the drumming party and he was at Geddis's Loanin when he heard shots fired, coming from the direction of Demoan Wood, where three or four men were in the planting there.

Patrick Magee said he was ploughing for David McCourt when he saw the drumming party coming along the Old Road. He heard shots but didn't know where they came from. He went with the party to the Crack Bridge where he saw the defendant, Clements, in Finch's field. Clements had a gun with him and Magee saw him fire two shots, one from Finch's field

and one from the Crack Bridge, but he heard in all maybe twenty other shots.

Going through the accounts here, a lot of people said they heard lots of shots but it is difficult to make much sense out of it save to say that many shots were fired in all sorts of directions from all sorts of places by the various groups!

Bernard Shields said that he was a few perches from Liggett's when he heard three shots from the plantation but didn't know which of them struck McNally.

This is all the evidence we have of the shooting itself.

### **What happened after the shooting?**

In the Court case some discussion arose as to whether Peter McNally was drunk or wasn't drunk. Patrick Magee said he saw Peter McNally about 8 pm getting off his horse at Rice's, with the priest coming up behind him. He stated, *"No, he didn't appear to be very drunk"* But Peter McNally himself said he left the priest in at Rice's and that, *"I drank two small bottles of porter and two glasses of whiskey at Rice's when I came in with the drumming party. I drank another glass before I went to the priest's and had a glass in Grants. I had two or three Johnnies after I came back with the priest"*

He was obviously asked some interesting questions at this stage because he stated *"When I got the horse at Conlon's, I was not drunk but hearty. I did not fall off the horse, it threw me."* Constable Adger said he saw Peter McNally that night in Poyntzpass and he had the impression he was strongly under the influence of drink.

What can be called a Magisterial Investigation was held at the Police Barracks in Poyntzpass on the Thursday evening after the march. This was a legal process whereby as soon as someone was arrested, with an allegation of a crime, a Magistrate would come, hold a brief enquiry at the barracks and decide whether the matter should be proceeded with. The Magistrate obviously decided the case should proceed. Robinson and Clements were allowed out on bail but Clarke was kept in custody.

Two court cases arose from the events of St Patrick's Day. The first was the trial of those accused of shooting Hugh McNally, the second was of around 30 men accused of taking part in an illegal procession. The newspaper says fears of a repeat demonstration of a large party of Roman Catholics marching from Glen to Poyntzpass led to the government drafting sixty police into the area; twenty stationed at Goragewood, twenty at Jerretzpass and twenty at other points in the area.

The hearing before the Magistrate started on Thursday 25th March, adjourned and started again on Wednesday 31st March. Hugh McNally was still in a dangerous condition and the defence were

focusing on how many shots were fired, and that they were fired in all sorts of directions.

Clarke, Clements and Robinson were all charged and witnesses were called to give evidence.

It would appear that the defence took various lines on behalf of the defendants when cross examining the witnesses.

Peter McNally said that he saw William Clarke firing a gun, and went on to say that *“about an hour before my brother was shot, I saw William Clarke behind Mrs Porter’s grocery house”*. McNally described the person behind Mrs Porter’s shop as having a little round hat and the person who fired the shot had a similar hat.

He was questioned by John Rea about why, when he said he saw William Clarke firing the shot from the plantation, he couldn’t say precisely if Clarke was actually in the plantation, whether he was standing or whether he was leaning on a ditch, whether he had a single or double-barrelled gun;. He was asked why he couldn’t answer any of these questions.

Further he was asked why, when he went off to get the priest, he didn’t tell anyone, not Barney Conlon the blacksmith, not the priest, not Dr. MacDermott that it was Clarke who had shot his brother.

Peter McNally seemed well able to hold his own in the witness box. He was asked why he didn’t go to the police on his way to get the priest; *“Wouldn’t it have been a simple thing to call into the police and tell them what had happened?”* He replied that he didn’t pass the barracks.

Mr Rea remarked that Poyntzpass *“was not such a large metropolis”* and went on to say *“I think I would have called on the police because I believe more in them than in the clergy. I don’t see the use of the clergy at all.”* Peter McNally’s reply was *“Well, you must be a curious Christian!”*



**John Rea**

At one stage of the questioning, McNally was asked to name who was with him on the parade. A voice from the public part of the courtroom shouted, *“Don’t tell him!”* and the cross examining lawyer, Mr

Rea, asked, *“Is that Irish patriot a friend of yours?”* Peter McNally replied, *“Well, they say, he is my father!”*

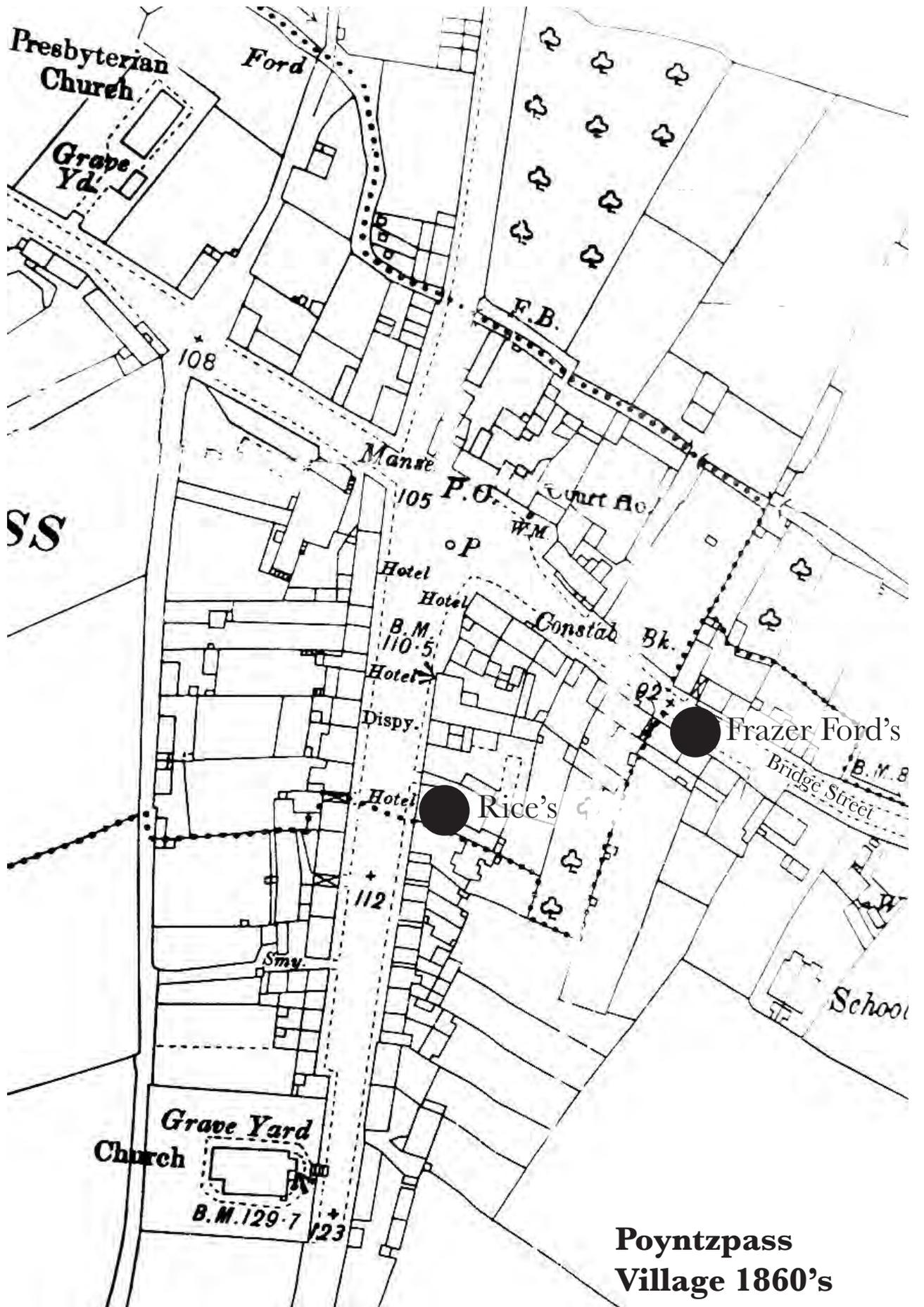
He was asked as to how he had noticed what William Clarke was wearing at Porter’s grocery (the white hat) but he wasn’t able to remember what anybody else was wearing? When asked about his relationship with Clarke, the defendant, McNally said, that it was true that he had had words with Clarke two years earlier over an incident when Clarke’s boy found a bayonet in McNally’s land and the police were informed about it. McNally said he believed that William Clarke had sent the boy to plant the bayonet on his land, that there was sort of bad blood between them for that reason, though Peter McNally said he had known Clarke from his childhood, being *“reared within ten perches of each other.”*

Peter McNally claimed that there had been between one hundred and two hundred shots fired from amongst the people at the drumming party. Mary Davis said she had heard shots from both sides of her and Patrick O’Hare gave similar evidence. Patrick Magee said he had heard over twenty shots and Constable Adger testified to twenty to thirty shots.

Constable Adger had carried out his own little scientific investigation as he described in his evidence *“I went to Aughtanaraghan which is the townland in the area where the incident occurred. A boy named Connolly showed me where the shooting was supposed to have occurred. I placed a bale of straw where Wm. Clarke was supposed to have been at the time of the shooting and I stood where McNally was supposed to have been when shot – at that distance I could not tell between the two men and I doubt if I could tell between a gun and spade shaft”*

Constable Adger painted the picture of the unreliability of the identification evidence. In addition he said that Clarke had given him *“every assistance”* and that he was known in the area to be a sportsman.

By the end of all this evidence, John Rea, the lawyer appearing for the defendants, submitted that there wasn’t a particle of evidence against Clarke, Robinson or Clements. Clarke at his worst, he said, was rash and could be faulted in having a gun in his possession that day. Rea said that a Roman Catholic assembly had come into Poyntzpass for the first time and had provoked the people to an extent that had never been experienced by the people of the village.



**Poyntzpass  
Village 1860's**



**McNally's House today**

Those charged were:

John Cassidy, Thomas Connolly, Joseph Byrne, John Byrne, Felix Cassidy, Francis Blacker, David Bailie, James Convery, Larry McGivern, John Heaney, Meredith McAlinden, Patrick Shields, James Handcock, William Handcock, Hugh Farnham, Peter Campbell, John Campbell, Denis Cullins, Thomas Mackle, Michael Corr, James Givrin, Michael Toal alias McCart, Patrick Hanlon, Arthur Lavery, James Doran, Nicholas Doran, Thomas Baylaw, William Boyle, John Savage and Peter McNally.

The defence was based on the assertion that it was a day of celebration. Bernard Shiels when questioned said that it was “... a day of amusement. We were never molested on the way nor did we offend anyone. Nothing objectionable was said by us or to us, till we returned to Poyntzpass...the first intimation we got that our presence was displeasing was the shot which was fired from Frazer Ford's premises”

The result of this hearing in Poyntzpass Petty Sessions Court was that of these thirty men, fourteen were acquitted and allowed to go home and sixteen were sent to Armagh Assizes for trial and charged with illegal assembly. All were released on bail.

The Assizes Book of Co. Armagh, now in the Armagh County Museum lists the Judges, the Sheriffs and the members of the Grand Jury all by name. At Entry No. 12 under the heading “*The Prosecutors*”, the witnesses against various people are named: John White, Constable William Adger, Patrick McGee and Elizabeth White. Thomas Clements was charged with intent to murder but the entry contains the initials “N.S.E.” which means that

in fact the Grand Jury, having looked at the case, decided there wasn't sufficient evidence to justify a charge of intent to murder and so he was acquitted without having to stand trial on that particular charge.

Thomas Robinson was charged with having arms in a proclaimed district; the Grand Jury said “*We think it is sufficient to go ahead on a trial*”. Next William Clarke charged with having fired a gun and again the Grand Jury decided that there was no need to go any further with him. Thomas Robinson and Thomas Clements were charged with having fired a gun and wounding Hugh McNally and Thomas Robinson was charged with aiding and abetting the above. The next entry set out the other twelve names of those charged with riot and unlawful assembly.

### **At the Assizes**

All the men were charged with unlawful assembly and a Mr Mulholland appeared for the defendants. He called no evidence. He said he hoped the Jury would protect the right to assemble to keep a holiday or to make a peaceful demonstration. The question the jury had to ask themselves was were these people simply commemorating St. Patrick, or whether by going into those districts where it did not appear there was a common understanding that the day would be celebrated, they had assembled in a defiant manner?

The jury found all the accused not guilty.

The three others, Clements, Robinson and Clarke were, at the end of the day, just fined. William Clarke was not guilty on the charge of having fired a gun; Thomas Robinson and Thomas Clements were both guilty of “*having arms in a proclaimed district*”.

Thomas Clements at first pleaded ‘not guilty’ to the charge but when the evidence was heard he changed his plea to ‘*guilty*’. Similarly Robinson changed his plea and both were allowed to stand out on their own recognizance, which means they were more or less given an absolute discharge.

This was the end and the outcome of the Court cases.

One question to think about with regard to the whole event is, Was this a sort of nasty sectarian riot or was it really just a bit of celebration?

Some points to look at, that would maybe help decide that are: firstly, there seems to have been no

doubt that a lot of drink was consumed and lots and lots of shots were fired but, out of all that only, one person was injured and he was not killed. It does seem that much of the firing of the guns was, as some witnesses described, just a celebration; secondly, the witness Bernard Shields talked about people of different persuasions being on the march and he said *"I know at least one of a different persuasion who beat our drums and came into the Pass with us"*. At another stage he said *"There were some Protestants with us who helped to play the drum"* mentioning in particular Thomas Clements, one of the defendants, and a Thomas McGivern, *"They were each beating the drum at Aughtarragan and these two are Protestants, who asked me to get them a tune and I did so."*

A witness, James Wright said, *"I am an Episcopalian, not an Orangeman. Some of the defendants are my neighbours and of good character. I am of a different persuasion to them. I passed across the road, through this crowd; no one molested me and I was not afraid of any of them. Those shots were fired as a sort of jubilee. Nothing in the conduct of the crowd would entitle anyone to shoot at them. I was not annoyed."*

Another illumination comes from Constable Adger when Mr Murphy cross examined him and asked, *"How long have you been in Poyntzpass?" "About a year."* *"During that time how many drumming parties have you seen?" "Seven or eight". "And is this the first you have prosecuted?" "Yes, but I never before saw so large a party or saw shots fired, but I had seen small drumming parties go through the streets. And every one of them I saw I reported so that if there was no prosecution it would not be my fault.....All the other processions were composed of persons of a different religious persuasion"*. He refers to the Orangemen in the Scarva neighbourhood who were in the habit of celebrating the Battle of the Boyne, *"but I have not heard of a prosecution"*.

The Newry Commercial Telegraph reported that on the Friday night, the day after St Patrick's Day, windows were broken in several houses in Poyntzpass but the *"offenders have managed to evade arrest"*. The next night, Saturday, drumming was carried on in the Catholic district of Glen *"but I have not heard any particulars as to the numbers of the party or whether any outrage was committed. The inhabitants feared the party would enter the town and until the drumming ceased the greatest excitement existed..."* The report then refers to the St Patrick's Day incident *"Mr McNally, one of the*

*drumming party who was shot near Poyntzpass on St. Patrick's Day is still alive and the medical gentlemen entertain hopes of his ultimate recovery. The bullet is, however, still lodged in the unfortunate man's breast"*

Hugh McNally did in fact recover, although the bullet remained lodged in his chest. He died at his home in Corcrum on December 29th 1910 aged, 70 years.

For at least 100 years, two ancient Lambeg drums lay neglected on a loft in an old hall in Church Street, Poyntzpass. A few years ago, through the efforts of the late Pat Turley and a few friends, these old drums were rescued and restored by Lambeg drum expert, Richard Sterritt of Markethill. It seems very probable that these were the drums which were played on St Patrick's Day 1869. As is traditional, all Lambeg drums were given names and these old instruments apparently went by the titles *'Patrick Sarsfield'* and *'The Bard of Armagh'*. A group of enthusiasts now play them from time to time.

It is interesting to note that John Rea, one of the lawyers who defended some of the men and with whom Peter McNally bandied words, was the most celebrated lawyer at that time and was involved in many famous cases. He was born in West Street, Belfast and qualified as a solicitor in 1847. He was prominent in the Young Ireland movement and served nine months in Kilmainham Jail in 1848. He defended John Mitchell, acted for the Catholics after Dolly's Brae and defended Michael Davitt in 1879 in the Sligo Courthouse.

In 2002, the Irish Times carried a column about the refurbishment of the Sligo Courthouse and quoted from a report of Michael Davitt's trial in 1879 that appeared in the *'Sligo Champion'*, *"The proceedings collapsed after a weeklong barrage of ridicule and scorn hurled at the presiding Magistrate, by an eccentric and brilliant solicitor, John Rea, whose Courtroom tactics had earned him the reputation of being Ireland's best criminal lawyer."* He called himself *'Her Orthodox Presbyterian Britannic Majesty's Orange Fenian Attorney-General for Ulster'* and Davitt reported gleefully to his friends, that Rea had *'a provocative manner that would drive a bench of Quakers into militant retaliation!'*. *'The Sligo Champion'* continued, *"By the time this larger than life lawyer had finished toying with them, the Sligo Magistrates were reduced to a state of cringing helplessness"*.