

The Postcards of W. J. Napier

In an earlier edition of 'Before I Forget . . .' in an article entitled 'Local postcard publishers and their cards,' Des Quail requested information regarding W. J. Napier of Scarva whose postcards of this area around the turn of the century are now much sought after 'collector's items.'

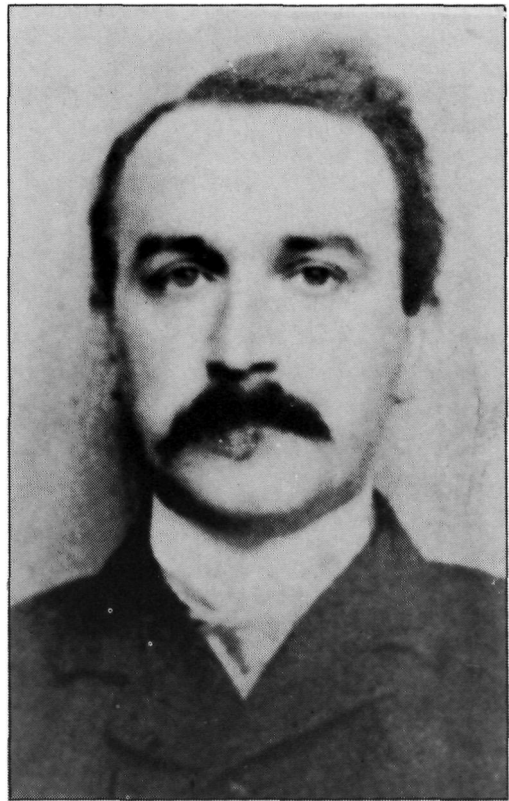
In response to that request we were contacted by Mrs. Nan Walker of Terryhoogan, Scarva (formerly of Mullaghglass, Scarva) who gave us the following account of her uncle, W. J. Napier.

'William John Napier was born around 1870 in the townland of Mullaghglass on the 'old coach road' from Acton to Tandragee over the Glebe Hill. He was the second son of Moses and Agnes (nee Dixon) Napier and was the eight generation of the Napier family to be born in the townland of Mullaghglass.'

'With his brothers James and Moses, and sisters Agnes, Margaret Anne and Rachel he attended Glebe Primary School which was under the control of The Church of Ireland. (This building is now Tullymacann Orange Hall). His teacher for most of his time there was a Mr. Johnston. William John was an exceptionally bright pupil and gained a scholarship to Portadown College where he studied chemistry. It was his ambition to become a chemist but his hopes were cruelly dashed when at the age of 19 he developed 'hip disease.' This unfortunately led to the amputation of his leg at the hip and effectively ended his hopes of becoming a chemist.'

'For the rest of his life he had to use crutches as the nature of his amputation made the use of an artificial limb impossible. He did not return to college after the operation but in his early twenties took up the hobby of photography and this led to a career as a postcard publisher.'

'Despite his severe handicap he travelled round the country in a pony and trap only requiring the help of his brother James to harness and unharness the



W. J. Napier.

pony. The pony's name was 'Kruger' and on his outings he was always accompanied by a faithful little terrier called 'Kitchener' — both pony and terrier being named after generals in the Boer War.'

'His knowledge of chemistry was to be of considerable value to him in his new career, for he was able to develop his photographs at home. His cards which are of excellent quality are of the district within a comfortable day's outing from his home in Mullaghglass.'

'However, his health was never robust, and in his forties he developed a kidney problem necessitating an operation. His sisters Margaret and Agnes had by

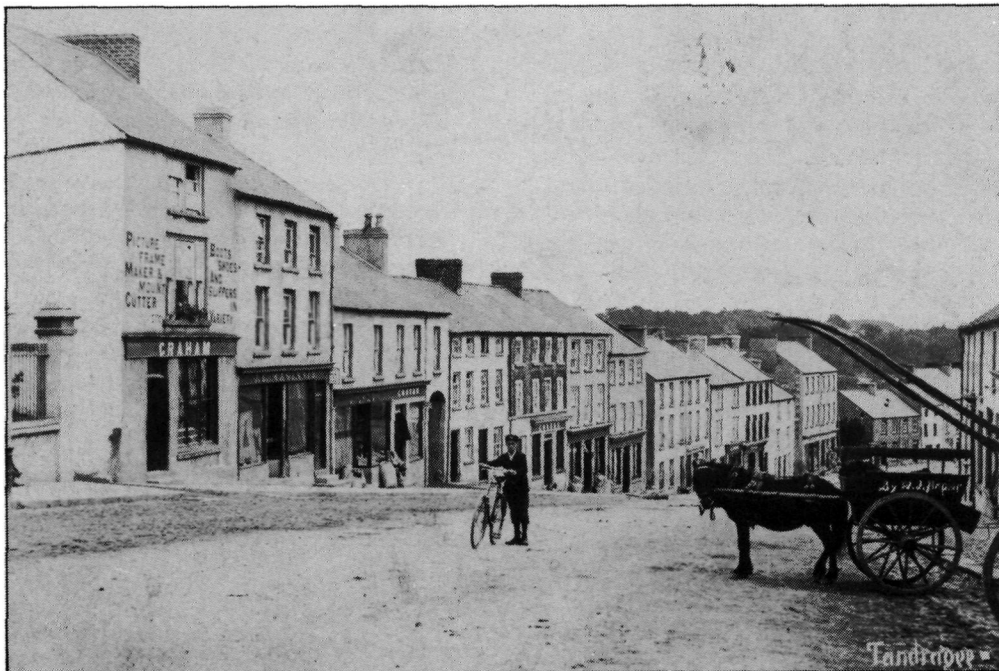
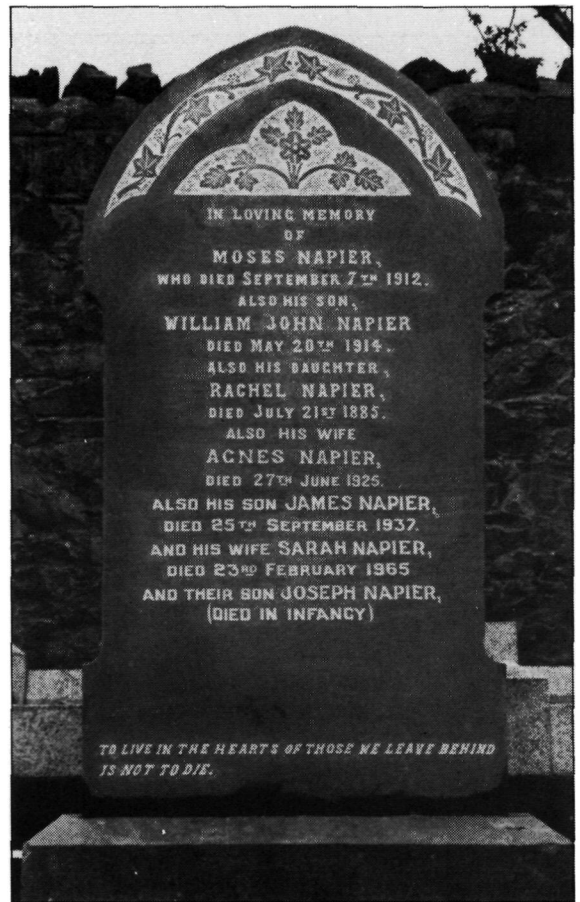


The house at Mullaghglass where W. J. Napier was born.

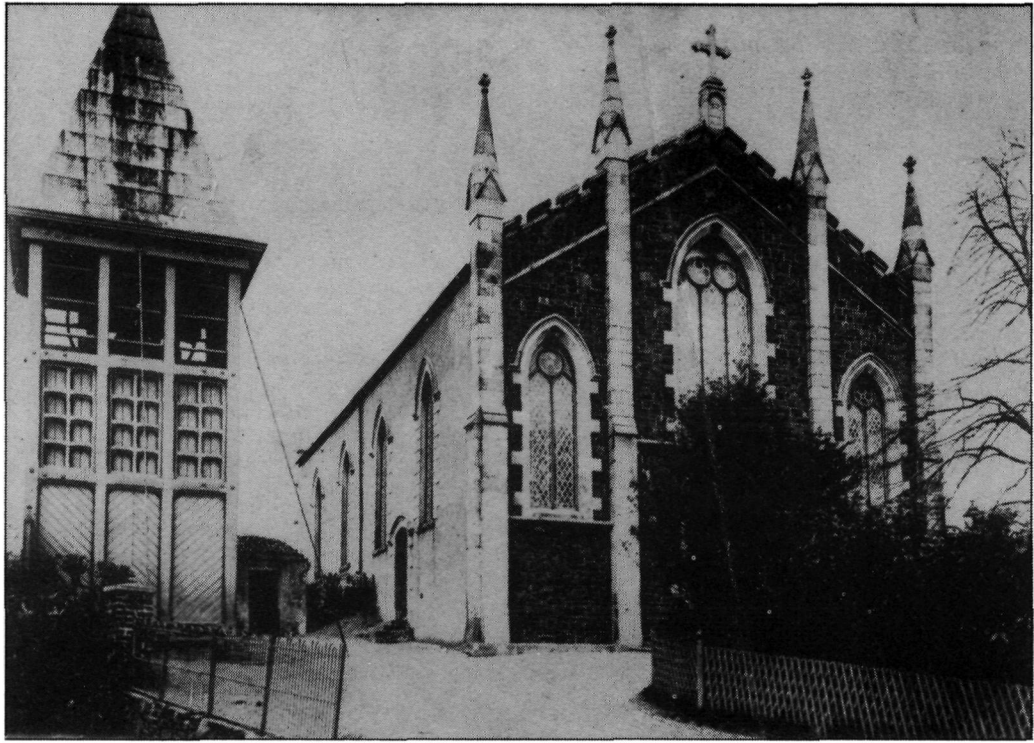
this time become nurses and had opened their own private nursing home at Lytham-St.-Anne's, Lancashire. During the Great War this nursing home had developed into a hospital and so in 1919 William John travelled to Lancashire so that the operation could be carried out in his sisters' hospital 'Parkgate Private Nursing Home.' Sadly the operation was unsuccessful and W. J. Napier died on the operating table at the age of 49.

'His remains were brought home and are interred in the Napier family plot at Tandragee Presbyterian Church.'

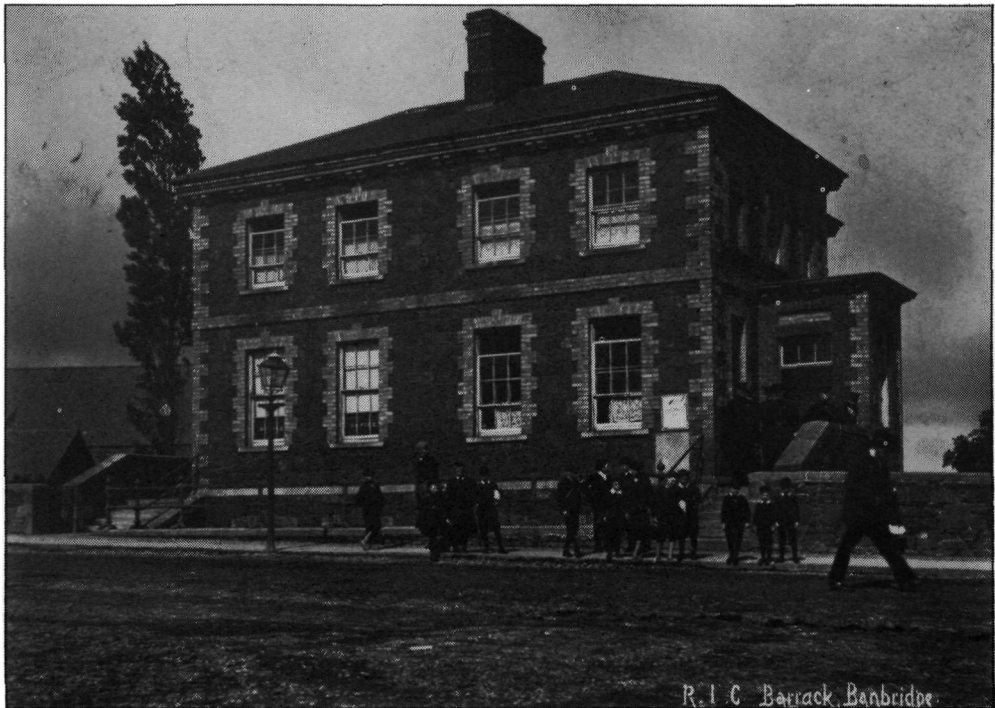
The Napier family plot at Tandragee Presbyterian Churchyard.



Tandragee—with W. J. Napier's pony 'Kruger' in the foreground.

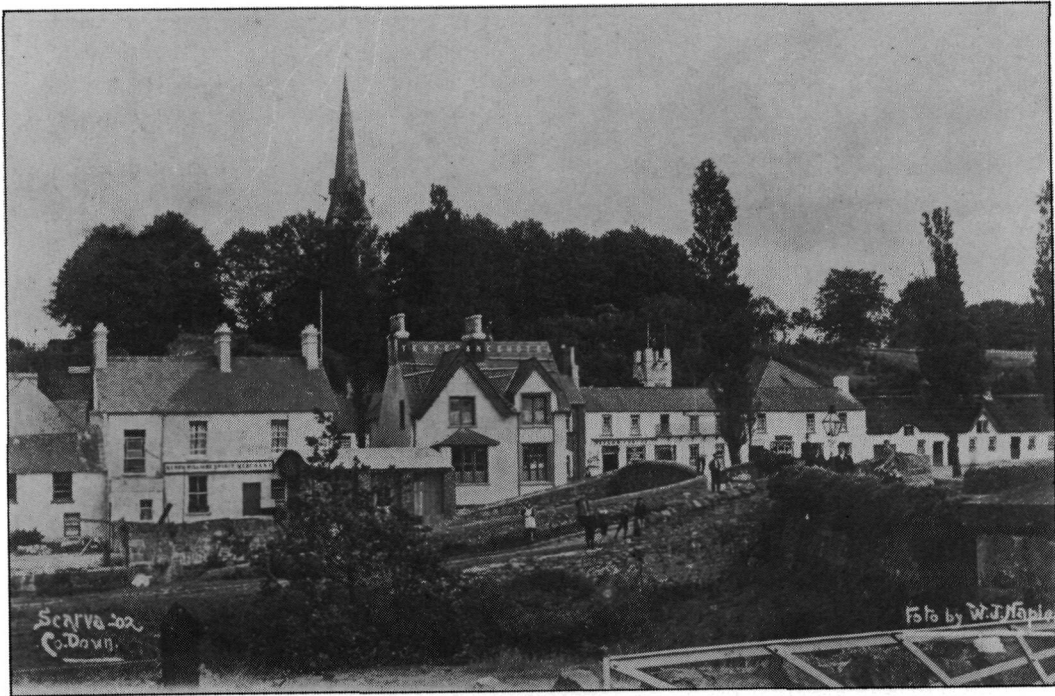


Banbridge R.C. Church.



R. I. C. Barrack Banbridge.

R.I.C. Barracks, Banbridge.



Scarva—'02, Co. Down.



Fourtowns Presbyterian Church.



Scarva.



Tandragee.



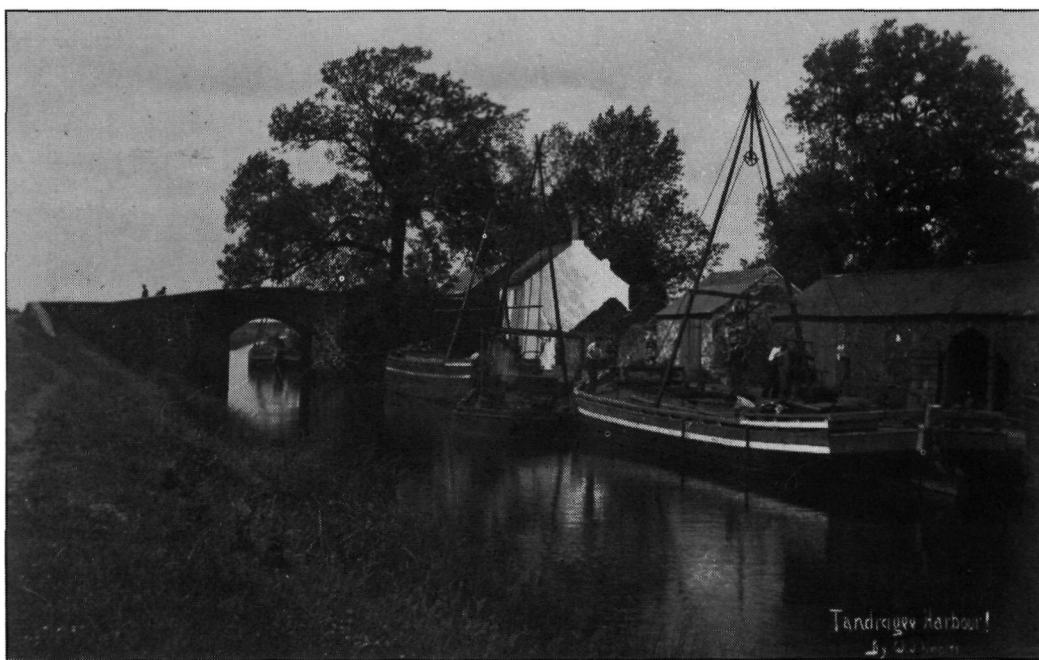
Gilford, Co. Down.



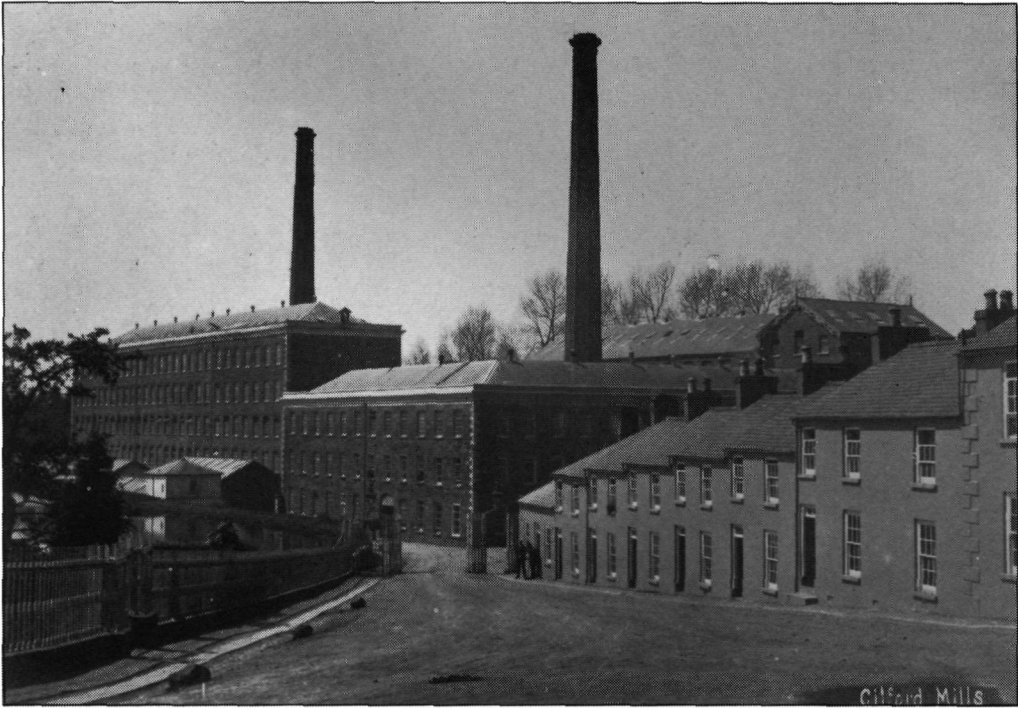
Port of Gilford.



Railway Street, Poyntzpass.



Tandragee Harbour!



Gilford Mills.



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