

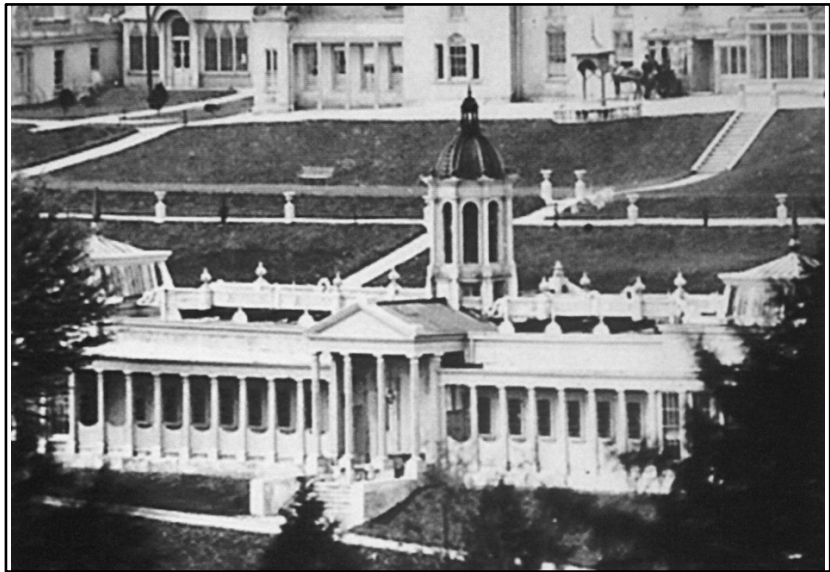
# St Ann's Hydro

by Dr Stephen O'Leary and Joe O'Leary

Perched on a hill overlooking Tower, about three kilometres from Blarney, the remains of what was once a thriving establishment can still be seen. St Ann's Hydropathic Establishment, first opened in 1843 at St Ann's Hill, Blarney, brought many visitors to the area and provided much-needed employment for local people.

Built by Dr Richard Barter, the Hydro was at its peak during the period from 1880 to 1920, with as many as 80 bedrooms, a farm where fresh food was produced, and a fish hatchery. There were Turkish baths, tennis courts, billiard rooms, reading rooms and a bowling alley and later a golf course. The Hydro remained open until 1952, but little remains now of what was a luxurious and thriving establishment.

The sheltered and wooded site, at an altitude of 250 feet, was considered therapeutically ideal. Initially it was a water-cure sanatorium but it was the "Improved Turkish Bath" which cemented the site's curative reputation. Developed as a franchise from 1859, Barter had considerable confidence in the design and was directly involved in its development and promotion outside of Blarney. In the period after the 1880s the site shifted in emphasis to wider hydrotherapies. During the First World War, the Hydro was transformed into an auxiliary military hospital for wounded British and Irish soldiers. Many of the casualties arrived with prosthetic injuries and, from this, the Hydro developed a genuine expertise in physiotherapy as well as new recuperative mental health treatments. Socially, the site was patronised by a mixture of classes. While the Anglo-Irish and interested foreign visitors were the main clientele, Barter also made sure that a proportion of the rooms were made available to less wealthy clients, though some of these had to "work their passage" to afford the relatively expensive cure. Facilities in the Hydro included tennis courts, reading rooms, billiard rooms and even an American bowling alley. The site was further enhanced with the construction of a railway station at the foot of the hill in 1888 while



the social facilities included extensive woodland walks, fishing, a new golf course (built in 1907) and the tourist attractions of Blarney and Cork.

The state of public health in Ireland throughout the nineteenth century was frightening. The cholera pandemics, which had begun in London slums in the early 1830's had, by 1832, spread to Ireland, where it thrived in a population which had rapidly over-inflated: from 4 million in 1788 to 8 million in 1841. This increase in population was mainly among the labouring classes and small tenant farmers, especially in the poorer districts of the south and west.

An overdependence on the single staple food - the potato, and British neglect, resulted in a peasant life lived at or below the hunger level, culminating in famine in 1847. By 1849 it had claimed between 1.0 and 1.1 million lives.

In the returns from the 1851 Census it was found that in the ten-year period (1841-1851) the number of deaths from consumption had increased to 153,098. The period also witnessed violent outbreaks of cholera, typhus, typhoid, smallpox, scarlatina and influenza. It was a sad reality that drugs had not yet come far enough to combat these different diseases. Antibiotics would not be introduced until 1940. Alternatives were drastically required.

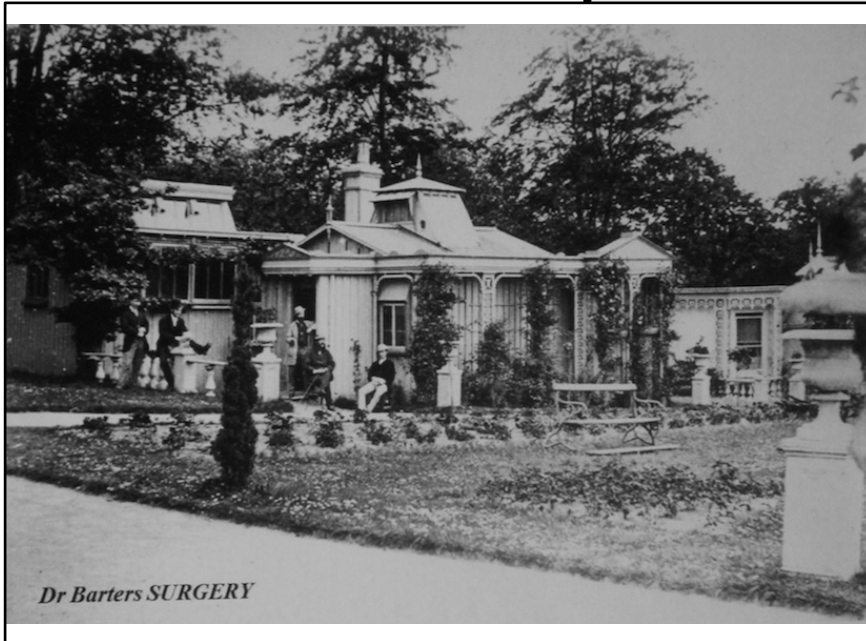
Prior to 1856, the vapour bath and the vapour chamber were the treatments used at St Ann's. The vapour bath was nothing more than a box in which the patient was subjected to vapour heat up

to the neck only. The vapour chamber was made after the Russian model that allowed the patient to endure higher temperatures. When news of the venture got abroad, it earned Dr. Barter the name of the “mad doctor.”

In 1856, upon reading the “Pillars of Hercules”, Dr. Barter invited David Urquhart to St. Ann’s to supervise the

#### THE ORIGINS OF HYDROPATHY

Hydropathy- the internal and external use of water for curative purposes - has its origins in the Roman Empire. The two great pioneers of hydropathic theory in the nineteenth century were Vincent Priessnitz and David Urquhart. Priessnitz, a farmer from Grafenberg, Sicily had applied a cold-water cure to farm animals with outstanding success throughout the 1830’s. Urquhart pioneered the cause of the Turkish Bath for political rather than medical reasons. Originally from Sheffield, he had served his country when the British intervened with France and Russia in the supporting the Greek War of Independence against Turkey (1827-1830). Eventually he developed a deep-rooted hatred for Russia, who launched a full-scale offensive on the Turks. Urquhart grew totally disillusioned by the hypocritical policies of the British and Russian governments. The Russians, far from being concerned about Greek National Liberation, were encouraging uprisings in the Turkish Balkan provinces simply to create a power vacuum which they themselves would fill and thus gain control over the Black Sea. Britain simply failed to recognise this, and, as far as Urquhart was concerned, the Turks were the victims. On a mission to Constantinople he



erection of a Turkish bath along the lines of what he had described in his book. The first bath, of beehive shape, proved to be a failure because the air in it was saturated with vapour, which the patient inhaled. Consequently Dr. Barter sent his nephew to Rome to study plans and details of the Roman thermae and hot-air baths. A bath built according to the Roman design was an improvement on Urquhart’s in that it eliminated vapour through ventilation, but it proved faulty in the sense that it was heated by flues underneath the floor which caused burns to patients whose clogs slipped off. Ultimately, it was Barter’s design of putting flues around the walls, thus eliminating floor heat that established him as the maker of the most successful hydrotherapeutical bath in modern history.

In order to understand the medical principle of Dr. Barter’s ‘Improved Turkish Bath’ it is necessary first to examine the structure of the bath.

It consisted of three apartments. The first was the Refridarium, a large, well-ventilated ‘dressing room’ where attendants held large sheets before patients who were attired in robes and wooden clogs. It was lit principally with stained glass to create a subdued lighting effect. The first

became so friendly with the Turkish officials, that Lord Palmerston, the British Foreign Minister, had him removed as a danger to the peace in Europe. Upon his return to England he turned his house at Rickmansworth into a Turkish palace. He installed a Turkish bath, a time-honoured symbol of Turkish culture, and pioneered their use in England, primarily as a propaganda tool against Russia. In 1850 he published his famous “Pillars of Hercules”, an account of the hot-air baths he had come across in the East. Immediately on the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854, Urquhart began a fresh campaign against Russia, organising local committees in the cities and founding the “Free Press” newspaper in Sheffield, later to become the “Diplomatic Review.” Significantly, one of the writers he recruited was Karl Marx, then a destitute refugee living in Soho

‘hot room’ was called the Tepidarium, usually heated to a temperature of 100 degrees, although parts of the room had different temperatures to allow patients to acclimatise at their own individual paces. The hottest room was called the Sudatorium, where the temperature ranged from 130 degrees to 150 degrees, but could be raised as high as 200 degrees, according to the wishes of the patients. The ‘hot rooms’ were themselves subdivided and attached to private dressing rooms, plunge baths and douche baths

“to suit the remedial requirements of the sick.

Screened off the Sudatorium was a washing room, furnished with a marble seat. Alongside the seat was a marble fountain, over which were placed two water cocks, one conveying hot, and the other conveying cold water. The water could be heated to the personal specifications of the patient and passed over him/her using a metallic bowl.

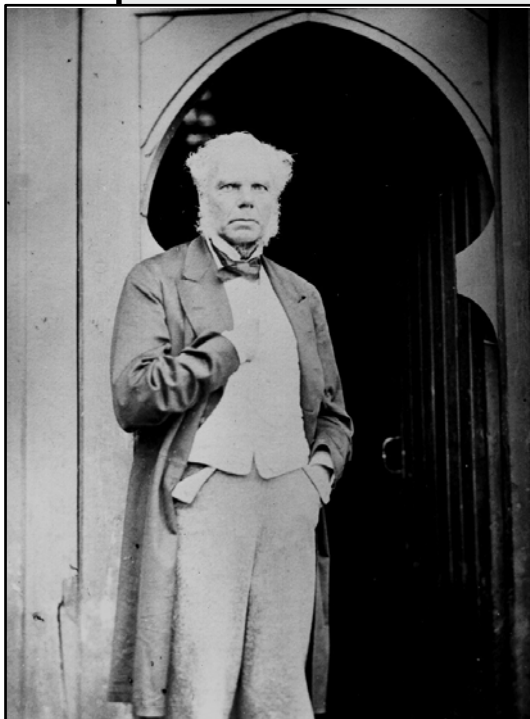
Dr. Barter explained that: “The application of various degrees of temperature to the human body is one of the great objects to accomplish. To that end the Turkish bath is all-important. We know of no other mode by which an increased temperature can be given to the body with comfort and increasing

benefit. You cannot use water at a higher temperature than 103 or 104 degrees; you cannot use steam at a higher temperature than 112 or 115 degrees; but in the Turkish bath you may be subjected to a temperature of 200 or 300 degrees without inconvenience for a far greater length of time.”

Thus, through perspiration, which was gradually enticed in the hot-rooms, disease could be carried through the pores away from internal organs, while by passing water over the skin in the washing room these pathogens would be removed from the body’s surface, and fresh water could re-enter the bloodstream. These procedures were carried out under full medical supervision to ensure that all patients consumed enough pure water to keep the body fully hydrated. Dr Barter was right. He claimed that “anything that tends to impede the action of the pores,

## DR. BARTER: THE EARLY YEARS

The first record of the Barter family in Ireland concerns a grant of land acquired by Thomas Barter, a Royalist captain, in 1640. Thomas acquired the grant at Cooldaniel, Kilmichael, Co. Cork, from ‘Black Tom’- The Earl of Strafford, who was the last commanding Viceroy to King Charles 1 in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> Five generations later, in 1802, Richard Berkeley



Barter was born into the Protestant, land-owning family of Cooldaniel. However he was far from representative of the average landowner. R.H Barter maintains that “*Richard had shocked the Barter family... by going into the professions – rather than idling as the rest of the family seems to have done since acquiring land in 1640. A man of considerable charity and something of a rebel, he as a young man aided the ‘White boys’ in their forays against the landlords of his own class.*”<sup>2</sup> The profession he chose was Medicine. His name appears in the matriculation register for the T.C.D. Medical School in 1824. He eventually qualified with the degree MRCS, at the College of Physicians, London. He was then appointed to the dispensary at Inniscarra, Co. Cork, where he worked for eight years. There he

built up a successful private practice among all classes of people. He first became inclined towards the practice of Hydrotherapeutics when he treated a woman who was brought to him in the advanced stages of cholera. Barter asked the man who brought her along in a cart what she had been doing since she left home. The man replied that she had been drinking water all the way. The woman was removed to hospital where treatment forbade the use of water. She died. Soon after the cholera epidemic of 1832, Dr. Barter resigned his post at Inniscarra for a new residence near Mallow. In 1836 he married a Miss Mary Newman<sup>3</sup> and in the same year he moved to St. Ann’s Hill. It was at this time that he negotiated a long lease for a large tract of land, including a 230Acre farm, from the Colthurst family, owners of the Blarney Castle Estate. Between the years 1836 and 1842 he established himself as a dairy farmer and a medical man. It was in 1843, having attended a lecture by a Captain Claridge, that Dr. Barter became aware that the geographical configuration of St. Ann’s Hill was ideally situated as a location for a hydro. As Dr. Barter recalled at Bradford: “*In 1843 I was led to investigate the Water Cure. I visited the various Hydropathic Institutions, and having become entirely convinced of the advantages of the system, as compared with that of the old drug, I formed an establishment for the purpose of carrying out it’s principles.*”

He realised that the Southerly aspect of his residence was surrounded by lofty hills, thus breaking the force of the wind and affecting a temperature free from extremes of heat and cold, regardless of season. Furthermore, the elevation of St. Ann’s Hill, 250ft. above sea level, ensured that the air was perfectly pure and free from contamination. Perhaps most importantly, the site was supplied with water from a never-failing spring of the St. Ann’s Hill Wells. Subsequent Hydro brochures would boast that “The sanitation and drainage are as perfect as modern science can make them.



thereby causing partial closure, forces the internal organs to do the work destined for the skin; and so lays the groundwork for Scrofula in all its fearful forms.

(Note: the term 'scrofula' is a collective term, incorporating Consumption and other bronchial complaints.) The vital function of the skin as an excretory organ is still stressed in modern medical textbooks.

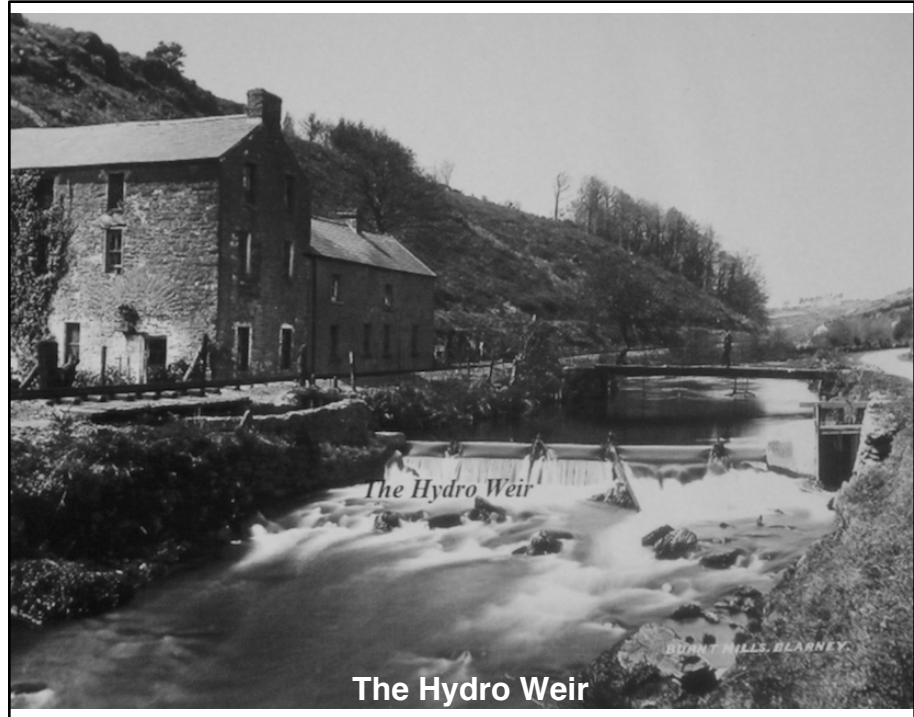
### Objections

Dr Spencer Wells stated, in his lecture delivered at Grosvenor Place School of Medicine, London that: "One of the most common objections raised to the bath is the feat that the transition from a heated room to the open air might give way to cold. But experience proves that this fear is groundless. The skin of the face, which we habitually leave uncovered and exposed to rapid alterations of heat and cold, receives no unpleasant impression from a current of cold air after leaving a hot room. But the rest of the body is kept covered up from light and air....and therefore loses its power of supporting changes of temperature.... the habitual use of the bath tends to restore the normal properties of the skin. When the body is thoroughly heated, it is enabled to resist cold." Another common objection was that raising the pulse was inherently dangerous. This view is still held by some down to the present day. Rev CB Gibson, in his "History of the County and City of Cork" maintains that "the Turkish Bath has great attractions for lazy and luxurious people, with whom the killing of time is an important consideration, but it would not be amiss for such people to inquire whether a temperature of 150° does not press both heart and pulse to a gallop that will carry them to the end of life's journey, sooner than they contemplated." It is quite amazing that "The Evening Echo" on Monday, 27th May 1974, in a review by Liam Milner on "The Shournagh's Many Features – Scenic and Historical" quotes exactly the same passage! How one defines "lazy" and "luxurious" is a matter of personal opinion. However, the second part of the argument is simply wrong. Due to the acclimatisation processes of the hot-rooms, a patient's heart rate

rarely rose above its normal standard. And nobody was ever harmed.

### Success

On 20th March 1863, John Francis Maguire, Mayor of Cork, addressed a meeting of citizens for the purpose of establishing a Turkish Bath for the poor of the city. He pointed out that: "Mr Urquhart may be properly said to be the apostle of the Turkish Bath, but Dr Barter was the first who realised the ideas and carried out the plans of that



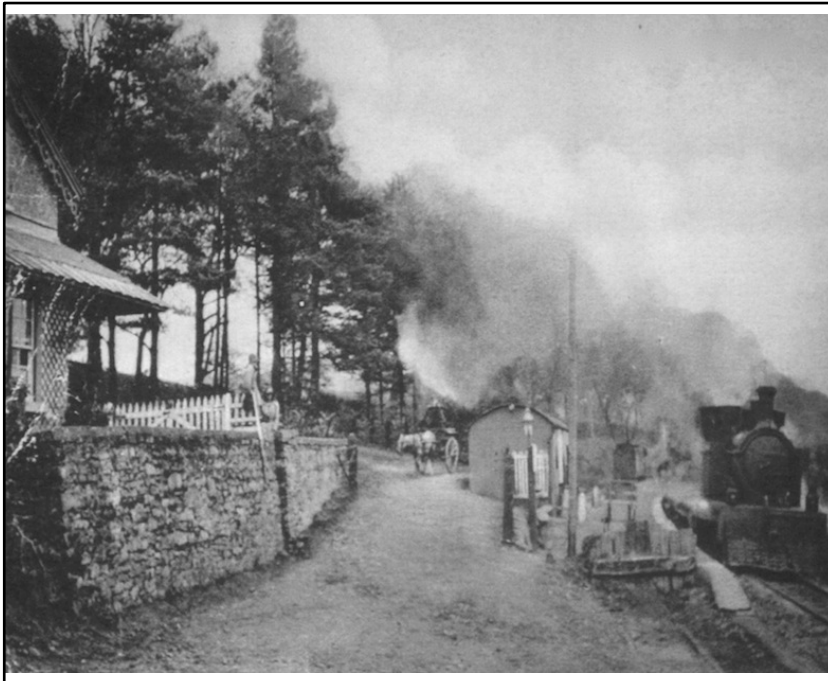
gentleman." A bath for the poor was indeed erected, available to the "industrious poor", at a very low cost, the money being raised through both voluntary contributions and a number of trustees, under the title of the "Barter Bath Charity Fund".

In 1870 the new Turkish Baths were built at St. Ann's. In the same year Dr Barter died at the age of 68. Yet the Hydro did not formally close until 1954.

In the years after 1870, the Hydro developed as a medical, agricultural and social institution through good management, a stable economy, employment prospects and common decency, religious and class divisions were overcome for the common good of the community at large.

The opening of the "Muskerry Tram" to Blarney took place on Monday 8th August, 1887. The line to Coachford was opened on Monday 19th March of the following year. It should be noted that the Great Southern and Western Railway had, since the mid-nineteenth century, served Blarney. Stanley C. Jenkins points out that Blarney had been a famous tourist destination since as early back as the 1820's but "the opening of the Great Southern and Western Railway on 18th October,

1849 turned the initial trickle of visitors into a flood". In 1853, the "London Journal" could write, that, "scarcely any part of Ireland has attained more celebrity than the far-farmed village of Blarney." The significance of the 'Muskerry Tram' was that it broke the centralised pattern of tourist traffic in Blarney Village and the Castle, making a visit to the area more of an all-encompassing type



trip. Upon leaving the Western Road terminus, the operational centre of the 'Cork and Muskerry Railway', the Blarney trains ran out the Carrigrohane Straight, turned right at Coachford junction and carried on to St. Ann's and Blarney respectively. Of particular significance is Stanley Jenkins assertion that St. Ann's Hydro brought "considerable first-class traffic."

Thus, the question arises; exactly which classes of people visited the Hydro, and what were their reasons for visiting: recreational or medical? While this issue is a crucial one to address, it is an equally difficult one to answer.

We do know that Ireland, before the famine, was predominantly a country of agricultural labourers and small farmers. However, this social balance was dramatically changed by the famine. The agricultural labouring sector would shrivel, while the catholic strong farmer, who did not face starvation, grew stronger in terms of social power. Social power was largely dependent upon land and, as Joseph Lee maintains: "the strong farmer benefited in being able to claw back conacre from cottiers when the potato crop failed". Thus, the strong farmer no longer had to protect himself from the small farmers to anything like the earlier extent. The strong farmers could now confront their protestant landlords as a unified force, which

is exactly what happened during the Land War years of 1879-1872. However, the 'Old Blarney' historical journals make it clear that there was no agrarian unrest in the area during these years. The reason for this is simple: the landlords were fair and therefore respected. Take the case of Dr Barter. By the time of his death in 1870, he had purchased most of the land he had leased from the Blarney Castle Estate. Yet to confine his memory to a preconception of the protestant land-owning class, is to do him a grave injustice. He never attempted to make money at the expense of the peasant community. His primary concern was the welfare of his patients. Dr Wade Barter points out that: "during this period [the latter half of the nineteenth century] accommodation for patients and their families was built around the main building in a somewhat haphazard fashion. If overbooking occurred during a busy period a few extra rooms were hastily erected". However, Dr Barter also points out that: "Public rooms were established, i.e. a large dining room, sun

lounge and sitting room and a handsome billiard room".

Essentially, both 'classes' of people were catered for. Indeed, the charges reflect this fact: the standard weekly charge was £2, 10 shillings, although less well-off patients had the option of sharing a room with a servant for 15 shillings per week. One must also consider the employment the Hydro provided for the local community in the areas of construction, farming and maintenance. It has been said that the Hydro was the greatest single employer outside the city of Cork for many years. This, however, is probably exaggerated, since Blarney's industrial base had already been developed as early as 1822 with the establishment of Mahoney's spinning-mills. A firmly established industrial base had largely been achieved through the establishment of the Mills.

Andy Bielenberg points out that "By 1837 Mahoney employed 120 people there; this number rose to 200 at the end of the 1840's by which time the mill at Blarney had 5638 spindles in operation." In 1852 the company purchased power looms at the great exhibition in London, upon which they began to manufacture the now world famous "Blarney tweed." "By 1892, 20,000 were being paid out to a workforce of 750 people,

rising to 800 people in 1896". This industrial base was vitally important to the general prosperity of the Blarney Region. 'The Cork Examiner' on 7th May 1881 could report that: "In this present period of depression and anxiety, it is a pleasure to be able to turn to one spot in our own neighbourhood where the evidence of a progressive spirit is to be seen in a great factory engaged in products which have attained a world-wide reputation, and which give remunerative employment and comfortable living to a large number." With such a well-established social and economic base, as well as a national monument - the Blarney Castle - towering above it, it is perhaps inevitable that the whole Blarney area, now connected by way of the Muskerry Tram, would evolve as one of the most popular tourist destinations in the country. The 'Old Blarney' journal of the Blarney and District Historical Society recounts that: "the traveller arriving in Blarney in 1892 would likely have arrived from Cork by train. By boarding the Muskerry tram at the Western Road terminus (now Jury's hotel), he would be brought to the Blarney Station at the Southern side of the Square and, if it was a Sunday or a fine afternoon in Summer, most would be heading to see one of



Ireland's most impressive ruined castles, built by Cormac Laidir McCarthy in 1446, and to climb the stairs and kiss the Blarney stone." The article continues; "The next station on that line to Blarney was St. Ann's Hill which was the halt for the Hydro. Here, invalids came from all over to take the celebrated water cure in the steam and Turkish baths. For their comfort, there was a library and reading rooms available, and often there were musical evenings with singing and recitals. For the more active, there were croquet lawns, billiard tables and also opportunities to hunt and fish. The class issue is complicated by a number of factors. One of the major problems in discussing social class is that individual societies, especially if considered on a local level, have a uniqueness all of their own. These individual societies are multi-dimensional whereas class designations are one-dimensional. Furthermore, while it is easy in retrospect, to divide societies into distinct classes, how are we to know if people even considered themselves to be part of that class? Yet it is still important to build up a picture of Dr Barter's 'class' and of the social changes that occurred during the

period in question. Perhaps, then, it is better to speak in terms of a 'social balance' rather than class distinctions.

The object of St. Ann's was both to restore good health and to promote cheerfulness and good temper." The "progressive spirit" was the spirit of the community at large. With a firmly established industrial base, a booming tourist trade and a wealth of employment, the social balance maintained perfect equilibrium. In fact, far from there being bitter class divisions, there existed a common fascination between the 'classes'. Basically, the visiting gentry gave the Blarney area

a touch of class that other localities simply did not have. P Sweeney, who visited the Hydro in 1869, recorded that: "the villages of Inniscarra, Carrigrohane, and Blarney, lie within a radius of a few miles, and afford delightful rambles, and interesting glimpses of peasant life". Upon first reading, the report I have referred to seems snobbish. Yet, as Finbarr O'Brien, the Honorary Secretary of the Blarney Historical Society, has suggested, the locals probably regarded these people with an equally strange curiosity. As far as the class issue goes, they probably never regarded themselves as peasants anyway! To illustrate this point further, just consider the public address made by Sir George Colthurst at St. Ann's on August 13th 1891. Walter McGrath, a well-established authority on the 'Muskerry Tram' recounts this event in "The Blarney Annual of Fact and Fancy." On this occasion, people from all parts of mid-Cork, gentry and working class alike, had converged at St. Ann's to witness the cutting of the first sod of the Donoughmore extension railway by Lady Colthurst. They were there, as Sir George said, representing all classes in an effort to



in accordance with approved modern practice. We believe that we are correct in stating that Mr Barter's experience supports the assertion that dairy farming will prove lucrative to all who conduct it carefully and intelligently, as directed by modern teaching." Richard had an average of 100 cows and 80 calves at any given time. The large majority were Shorthorn crosses. In addition, there were pure Shorthorns, Ayrshires, Dutch, Jersey, Gurensey, Kerry, and several crosses between these breeds. The dairy was equipped with all available modern

bring Donoughmore within reasonable distance of the city, because the nearer the city and county were brought together, the better it would be for all. This was a huge social occasion, which Sir George described as an example of "all parties, all religions, all classes, pulling together to promote the practical prosperity of the country."

#### **The Dairy Farm**

As we have already seen, in 1843, Dr Barter had established himself as a dairy farmer at St. Ann's. In this practice, he proved to be highly successful, yet as the 'Turkish Bath' phenomenon took off, farming took second place to medicine. After the death of Dr Barter in 1870 his eldest son, Richard (1837-1916) took over the management of St Ann's. The Hydro was very much a 'family business' and, as with all family businesses, its course would be decided by its individual owners, as well as social forces. Richard was educated at Flynn's College, Dublin, and subsequently devoted the rest of his life to modernising St Ann's dairy farm and gardens. During his period of

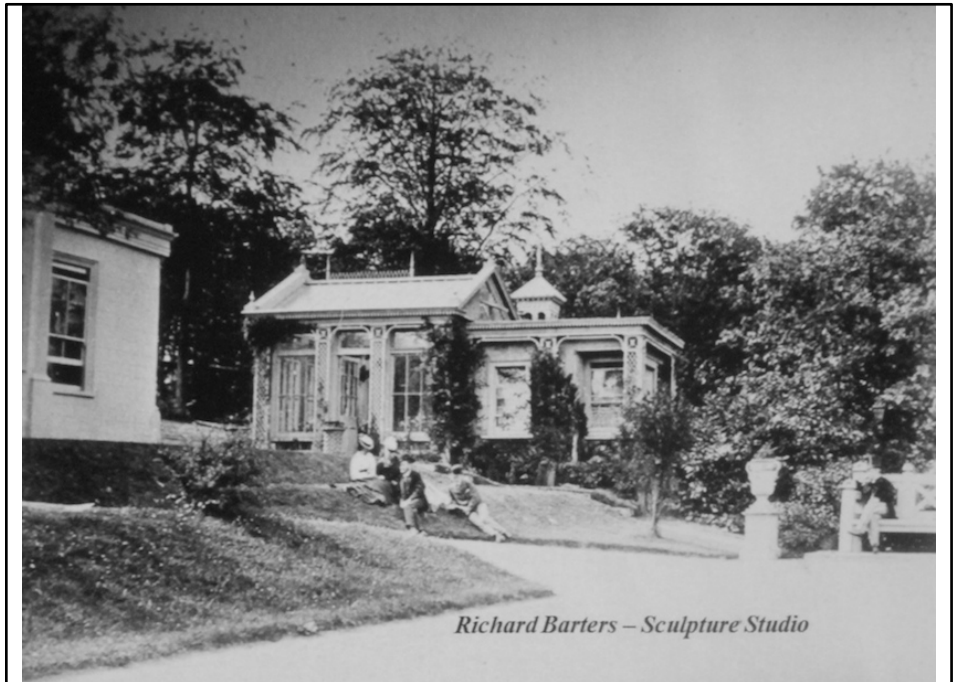
managing the Hydro, he employed a series of Resident Physicians to attend to the Hydro's Medical Department. Between 1870 and 1906 a series of seven Resident Physicians undertook the medical work of the Hydro. The 'Farmer's Gazette', in 1883 described Richard's dairy farm as: "one of the largest and successfully conducted in the country affording, as it does, ample evidence of the advantages to be gained by pursuing dairy farming

appliances. It was covered with a projecting roof and cove ceiled, so as to neutralise the variations of temperature. In the spring of 1883, it was fitted with a state-of-the-art, De Lavel cream separator, driven by a four-horsepower engine with a vertical boiler. However, it was found that separated milk had a tendency to go sour very soon. Richard solved this problem by introducing the concept of immediately scalding and chilling the separated milk to maintain its freshness for a longer period of time. By inserting a coil through which steam is first passed, the milk was raised to 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Subsequently, with cold water it was reduced to the normal temperature of skimmed milk. The cream was allowed to moderately ripen and churning was carried out four or five times a week. The 'Farmer's Gazette' applauded Richard on devising this "very useful corrective." The piggery was kept at a good distance from the locality of the churn. Used as an adjunct to the dairy, the pigs consumed, and turned to good account, a large amount of refuse about the farm

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and dairy that would have otherwise have been lost. Upon his death in 1916, Richard was described in the 'Cork Examiner' as "a man prominently identified in the development of dairying and agriculture in Ireland." He published several valuable papers on dairying, the most important being "Hints on Dairy Management" and notes on "Winter Dairying." He was one of the most enthusiastic promoters of the establishment of the "Munster Dairy School", which was inaugurated in 1881, and in which he filled the position of honorary secretary. It is worth noting that this was the first dairy school in Britain or Ireland to teach female pupils. He was instrumental in the organisation of Churning competitions at various agricultural shows throughout the country, organised to "promote and encourage the interests of the tenant farmer, and to instruct them in the means to use their land and stock to the best advantage / his own success in breeding stock – Kerry cattle and pedigree large York pigs – measured in his herd winning over 150 prizes since 1897 gave his introductory writings more than the force of a mere specialist." He was chairman of the Cork and



Muskerry Railway, chairman of the agricultural section of the Cork Exhibition 1902-1903, and a highly-respected member of the Munster Agricultural Society, filling the office of President for some years.

#### THE HYDRO IN THE ERA OF MODERN MEDICINE

Dr Barter's second son, Henry (1847-1875), was a captain in the Indian army. He died from yellow fever on the boat returning for leave in Ireland, leaving a widow and a new-born son, Richard Harry Barter (1875-1944). Sir Richard and his wife were childless and took a keen interest in their nephew. The boy was sent to Wimborne Grammar School and then to Wellington College. However, having spent most of his school days idling his time away, he failed the Oxford entrance examination. Sir Richard promptly withdrew all financial support for his nephew. From 1894 until 1904 he worked as a bank clerk at Coutts Bank in the Strand. His uncle finally relented and in 1904 he went to live in St Ann's to start a course in Medical School at the old Queens College Cork, qualifying in 1911. Subsequently he was appointed Resident

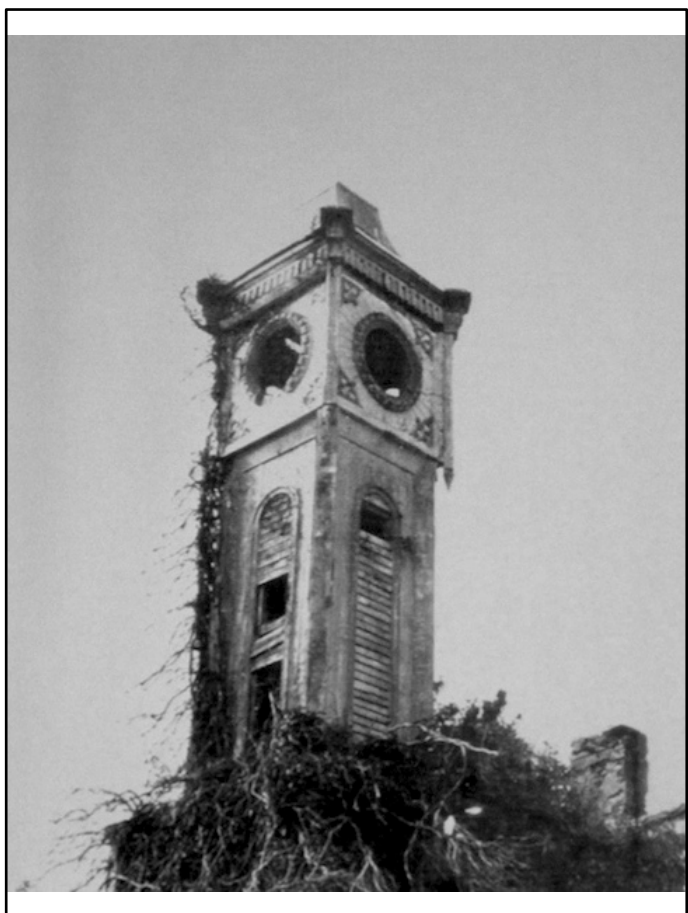
Physician at the Hydro. During the years of the Great War (1914-1918) Dr Harry Barter founded and ran an auxiliary military hospital at St Ann's for wounded soldiers, both Irish and British. An 'Old Blarney' journal mentions that, "Two Sisters of Charity were appointed to visit the Hydro every Wednesday. Miss Kelly, resident at the Hydro, arranged for collections to be taken up from time to time among the visitors." Dr Barter's management of the military hospital during the war years, for which he was awarded the OBE, was to shape the future of his medical career and management of the Hydro. Most of the casualties he treated during

this period would have arrived with prosthetic injuries. Consequently, it was in the area of physiotherapy that Dr Barter would excel. The Hydro prospectuses dating from the early 1920's, describe the main function of the Hydro as: "the treatment of rheumatism in any of its sub-acute or chronic forms, rheumatoid and osteoarthritis, sciatica, fibro-myositis, post-traumatic joint troubles, and all similar complaints, as well as for patients' convalescent from illness or operations and those needing careful and accurate dietetic care." The Turkish Baths had been closed during the war due to a lack of coal and were never again reopened. This fact has surprised many and indeed surprised myself at first. The 'Turkish Bath' was what made St Ann's famous. Why not reopen it? The answer is a simple one- Dr Barter was living in a totally different medical world from that of his Grandfather. The War demanded that the Western world of medicine develop means of treating horrific physical injuries. The Turkish Bath was designed to cleanse the body of disease. This is not to suggest that Irish Society had seen the last of deadly epidemics, rather that the personal



medical interests of both men, which were moulded by the reality which confronted them, were vital in the evolution of the Hydro's Medical department. Dr Barter would extend his Grandfather's principles of Hydropathy into the modern era and combine them with the principles of modern physiotherapy. Prospectuses issued around the year 1923 are careful to explain that "For more than 80 years these [hydropathic] methods of treatment have been carried out at St Ann's Hall, and, although the means have varied, for nowadays Electricity is used as a source of heat, the principles remain the same." The period witnessed a complete installation of modern hydrotherapeutic appliances in separate sets of bathrooms. Many members of the medical profession came to stay at the Hydro to bear witness to the installation of a vast array of appliances. Douches such as hot, cold, rapid control, steam and the 'Aix-Vichy' douche massage were available to patients as well as a range of medical baths, specifically Sulphur, Nauheim, Pine, Brine and Carbonated. An electrotherapeutic department was developed for the treatment of "neuro-muscular and arthritic diseases by the electric current, continuous, sinusoidal, faradism, and ionisation." Later the department was extended to include equipment for short-wave inductothermy, ultra-violet and infra-red irradiation; as well as the 'Bergonic faradic apparatus' for the treatment of obesity in patients for whom active muscular exertion was not advisable. More simply, the treatment concerned itself with "the proper employment of physical agencies, mechanical, thermal, and electrical, with or without internal medication", in order to treat "cases in which internal remedies have failed." Exceptional facilities were also available for the dietetic management of ailments such as dyspepsia, alimentary dyspepsia, peptic ulceration and colitis. Generally, all patients were assured of having their diets suited to their individual ailments. A chef with "extensive experience in invalid cookery" was on duty at all times. Much of the food, in particular, the fruit, milk and butter were self-supplied by the Hydro's gardens and home farm, an important legacy of Richard. A first cousin of Dr Barters, Major R.B Seigne, had undertaken the management of the gardens, farm, woods and all outdoor facilities. These formed the basis of Dr Barter's 'ergotherapy' practice. This was the employment of 'second-class patients', on the Hydro grounds, in return for which they received full medical care at a reduced rate. It is important to remember that this sort of medical treatment was far beyond what the average

Irishman could afford. At this time a single bedroom with board and attendance, cost between £4, 14 shillings & 6 pence, and £6, 6 shillings. (As compared with £2, 2 shillings in 1886). A double bedroom cost between £8, 15 shillings and £10! We must note that £3 in 1920 would have been, for the average worker, a decent weekly wage. We must remember that the Hydro, particularly, after the War, developed very much as both a 'hotel' and a medical institution. The wealthy were catered for - the Hydro was available to those who could afford it if only for leisure purposes. In conjunction with medical care, guests were offered drawing and reading rooms, a library, ladies and gents billiard rooms, recreation hall, as well as tennis and croquet lawns for the more 'active' element of the clientele. Private



sitting and dining rooms were available upon request, for an additional cost of £3, 3 shillings. As standard, guests/patients were treated to a full breakfast, a three-course lunch, afternoon tea in the lounge and a five-course dinner consisting of soup, fish, main course, sweet and savoury. Dress for dinner was formal: dinner jackets for men and evening dresses for ladies. However, the medical integrity of the establishment was never compromised. Efforts were always made to cater for the poorer sectors of society. Usually, 20 'second-class patients (out of a total of 60 to 80) were resident at the Hydro at a given time.

## Hydro

The Hydro performed remarkably well, both as a medical institution and 'hotel' right up to the advent of World War Two. By the time the last Muskerry train ran, on 29th December, 1934, the Hydro had already adapted to the advent of motor transport, a 1933 prospectus boasting that: "a number of commodious lock-up garages are at the disposal of motoring guests." Up to 1940, The Medical Department was directed by Dr Harry Barter and a Resident Physician: Dr McMahon. Sadly, Harry suffered a stroke in 1940 and died in 1944. As Dr Wade Barter reflects: "There was no-one in the family to take on the management and the land was sold." The Hydro was sold in 1944 to a Dr Quigley for £16,000. Dr Quigley purchased the land, largely for investment purposes. The whole establishment was in need of repair and huge investment in both the Medical Department and the hotel, and in 1956 the Hydro was closed.

### EPILOGUE

Take a walk up to St. Ann's Hill today, and the clock tower still stands. The rest is derelict. Yet the views are still spectacular, and it is a pleasure to sit and imagine that a century ago people travelled from all over the country to visit the "world renowned hotel and health centre". Here, as far back as 1856, the "mad doctor" built his first 'improved Turkish Bath', which would establish him as the pioneer of Hydropathy in the nineteenth century. Until 1940, the Barter family would carry on the family business and guide it through the many social changes of the era. Each owner would have his own individual talents and interests, and these

would also play an important role in its development. Mention the Barter name in the locality today and it will invariably be greeted with respect. The Barter's left the locality with a history, so unique and so fascinating, that it only takes a photograph to set the imagination racing. It is my sincere hope that the reader will venture to take a walk up to the beautiful hills between the villages of Tower and Blarney, photograph in hand, and remember the throngs of people who once gathered here to mix at the famous establishment known as St. Ann's Hill Hydro.

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