



FRAGMENTS FROM FRESCATI

CONAN KENNEDY



We know more about some others. Daughter Margarette Blanch married the Rev William Deey in Booterstown Church in May of 1828. Rev William, son of another William, of Dublin's Anglesea Street, is recorded as being an amateur artist, but, amateur or not, he did exhibit frequently in the Royal Hibernian Academy, in the Royal Academy and the British Institution. A graduate of TCD, he became vicar of St Thomas in Southwark.

This unidentified painting by Deey, entitled 'Childhood', was sold at Christie's some years ago. Bearing in mind the Victorian fondness for winsome girls on the cusp of puberty one cannot be quite sure who she was, but it is more than likely that the scantily clad lass was Margarette's daughter, and thus a 'descendant' of Frescati. And that's really all I can unearth about Margarette, but of her brother I know a lot more.

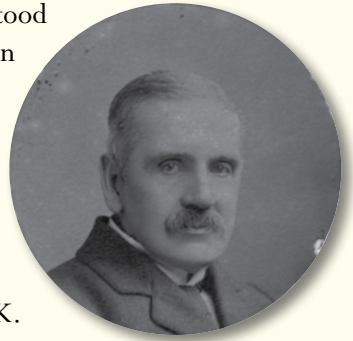


The thoughtful looking John Craig here was born in Frescati in 1805. Educated firstly in his father's 'scholastic institution', he went on to TCD and a career in the church, becoming a curate in Kilgeffin Parish in County Roscommon. Shortly after Catholic Emancipation the Rev John took exception to the whole thing and 'denounced the pope in emphatic terms'. This was not a good idea in the Roscommon of those times and some people took offence and tried to shoot him. They missed but, as the saying has it, they only had to get lucky once. So, sensibly enough, he removed himself to Cambridge and further studies. The death then of his young Irish wife, Anne Alley, in 1834, marked a distinct change in his lifestyle. He embarked on a career as itinerant preacher around various parishes. Then he met Miss Helena Johnstone. And married her. This was a good move. Helena had, in the equivalent of today's money, a personal fortune of some three million pounds.

The Rev John's career took a turn for the better. As indeed would the careers of many of us today if our wives were to have three million pounds. Taken up by the upper crust and establishment (as one tends to be when married to a very wealthy wife), he wangled himself the vicarage of Leamington. A peculiar mixture of entrepreneur and evangelist, he busied himself with the poor, reconstructing Leamington Church (to his own design) and founding schools. Active and opinionated and involved in all forms of human endeavour, he was the epitomy of the victorian gentleman.



The house that once stood behind this archway on Dublin's Merrion Road near Vincent's Hospital. Damn nice car, but of which make I have failed to identify, despite enquiries among car buffs in both Ireland and the UK. (No doubt some more erudite reader here will inform in due course.) We



saw George back on page 17 here, leaning on his bicycle. And here he is in sterner portrait mode. And here is his wife, Clara Jane Abercrombie. A Scottish woman, her lineage is recorded in family notes as going back to Robert Crombie, born 1617 in Aberdeen. Their house is gone, and they are too, but the memory of their grandson lives on into modern times. He was also a George O'Brien Kennedy, a distinguished naval architect, who designed



this class of boat for the Shannon, and this IDRA 14 sailing boat for Dublin Bay. Watery folks will know these things.

And in Dublin Bay a hundred years before?
Turn the page.



Fragments From Frescati





Frederick Hans, although a lawyer, did not practise, but worked in the theatrical field. He is recorded in the Gaiety and in Drury Lane. He too, as his sister Madeleine, had independent means from their mother Jeannette. In 1891 he bought a house at Laytown in north County Dublin. At Ninch West, and is recorded as having extended the house and built some of the outhouses and farm buildings there. These now house *Sonairte*, the National Ecology Centre. Frederick Hans sold up there in 1914. Never marrying, he died in 1924. And I have no photograph of him. But I do have photos of his house, here in 2009 undergoing reconstruction. He is recorded

as having built the redbrick extension structures facing the farmyards, now the coffee bar. Frederick Han's memorial, I suppose. So of those five children of the first marriage, only Pauline/Polly had descendants. We meet them in later pages.

Frederick married secondly a woman called Monimia Morgan Byrne. Daughter of a wealthy solicitor, James P Byrne, of *Brooklawn*, Chapelizod in County Dublin. (The house and lands are now the site of *King's Hospital School*.) Monimia, known as Nina, was to give birth to three children, or, three at least that survived. Here she is in wasp waisted fashion of the time, which looks uncomfortable enough, and top opposite with her daughter Violet, more relaxed. But not entirely so. She has...I don't know what she has...a quality...wan? Perhaps. But a woman one would want to meet anyway. But can't now. And one can't even visit her grave because, despite investigations, I have not managed to find out where it is.



A book like this takes several years to write. (So reader please desist from complaint about the cover price). This passage of time can cause the writer problems. He can turn the page of a couple of years and that young girl we saw overleaf, fourth from left in the group on page 66, emerges as this student of acting in London's Guildford School of Performing Arts, Jessica Hern.

It's a time travelling experience, for both writer and reader alike. For facing us here are two photographs that emerge from earlier times altogether. Above we have four people that we saw in later years in the group on page 66. Plus two that we saw in far earlier pages. Connie Hern(sitting) and her sister Evelyn Ball. We remember Connie on the stairs in Frescati (page 63) and we recall Evelyn on the deck of her father's yacht (page 28). This photo comes with a caption on the back, in the handwriting of Connie. Soon both she and her sister would be dead.

And below, the photo below?

At the summer/garden house of Frescati we see Arthur (Bunny) Kennedy. It's 1903, thereabouts. Turn this page now and we will see him (page 69) as a young soldier in the 1st WW. He survived gassing in the trenches, but lived on as an invalid to the 1940's. And beside him here is Connie again, she was born in 1900, and Evelyn. And the other boy is Bryan. We meet him again on the following page. The faded newspaper clipping here tells his short story.

