

# Tralee



*St Johns Tralee*

In 1901 the family moved to Tralee, 5 Greenview Terrace (PJ notes 1903 but he tied this to the year his brother Jack left the crescent and we can now be sure that this was 1901). Michael Joseph went to Tralee to help with the recent (1<sup>st</sup> January 1901) amalgamation of his employers (Waterford, Limerick and Western Railway ) into the Great Southern and Western Railway Co. It is recorded in the book on the WL&WR written by Ernie Shepherd that one of the first acts carried out by the new owners of the railway was the closure to traffic of the WL&WR station at Rock Street, Tralee and the transfer of its activities to the GS&WR station. This was effected in 1901. Might this be the work his obituary alludes to? See later for obituary.

I have no information of their time in Tralee but the younger children must have received some of their education there. Patrick, Margaret and Mary were 12, 13 and 15 respectively in 1901, Bridget was only 8 and Kathleen 10 so all were still in school.

While they were living in Tralee Margaret died. There is a death record for a Margaret Guerin in the first quarter 1907. This might fit well with the PJG date of 1906. He also recalled that she is buried beside her Freeman Grandparents in the graveyard at Sleibhrue church. Did she stay behind in Limerick until 1906? The Limerick City Rates Books show Michael as the rate payer at 75 Colooney St. up to 1905/6 – i.e. it changes in 1906. It



*Greenview Terrace*

seems unlikely that she might have stayed in Limerick as she was only 13 and why her and not Mary the eldest sister?

Perhaps she went to Sallypark to help her grandmother Catherine and her uncle Michael. As we have seen her grandmother died in 1904 (the last quarter). Margaret was 16 by this time. PJG recalled that she was buried with her Freeman parents in the graveyard at Slieverue. I contacted the parish priest in 2010 and also visited the graveyard but could find no grave.



*C.B.S 'The Green' Tralee Ca 1900*

It is most likely then that Patrick Joseph started at the Presentation Convent in Limerick and then aged 7 (1896) might have attended the Model School until they left for Tralee. He might have attended the Christian Brothers School in that town.

The Presentation Convent, Tralee was designed by J.J.McCarthy, known as the Irish Pugin. He designed it round two courtyards with polychromatic stonework to match adjoining Catholic church. It is likely Bridie and Kathleen were educated there.



The picture on the facing page has written on the back "Bridie Guerin 5 Green View Tralee". From examination of the clothing of the children and the adults a rough dating of 1905 was independently made. From this I conclude this is a picture of the Guerin's in Tralee on the occasion of Bridget Guerin's First holy communion. She is on the left in the picture in white and with a white ribbon in her hair as was the custom at the time. Children now make their First Holy Communion aged 7 or 8 but at this time 10 or 11 was more usual until Pope Pius IX suggested the change of age in 1910. As far as we can tell Bridget was born in 1894 so I put the date at 1903/4.

Therefore I conclude the following:

To her right is the only known image of Michael Joseph Guerin. To his right behind is Mary Guerin the eldest daughter. The seated woman is Hanora Guerin (Nee Freeman). On the far right is Kathleen Guerin (Baptised Catherine).

The other woman is, I believe Hanora's sister in law Catherine Freeman. She was married to Patrick Freeman one of Hanora's brothers and is some 10 years younger than Hanora. At this time she was recently widowed with four sons. The families were obviously close as the two families visited even in the 1930's and beyond. Maura Boland (Nee Guerin, Raymond's daughter) remembers visiting them into the 1960's. The very young boy is, I believe her youngest son, John Jos who would be around 3/4 years of age. This leaves the other boy. It could be one of the other Freeman boys.

The other possibility is that this is the earliest picture we have of Patrick Joseph Guerin. He would be 13/14 in this picture. His height relative to his sisters, both of whom are younger, (10 and 12) is not improbable, the author Mark Guerin looked up to his sister Siobhan for many years though he was 20 months older. Interesting to note that the clothes this young man is wearing matches PJG's description of what his brother Jim wore for his confirmation. Is this young man too celebrating his confirmation?

A collage of the faces helps to be more certain that he is Patrick Joseph. What do you think?



It seems that while in Tralee, Catherine (Kathleen) began to train as a Milliner. She remained there when the family returned to Limerick in 1909. She was living with an O'Sullivan family in the 1911 census.

One interesting railway that seems to have come under Michael Joseph's jurisdiction was the Listowel & Ballybunion monorail, The Lartigue.



*The Lartigue – World's first monorail train service*

An eccentric new railway opened in North Kerry 125 years ago, which was inspired by, of all things, a camel train. Opened to the public on March 1st 1888, this unique railway was the brainchild of a French engineer, **Charles Lartigue**, who had seen camels in Algeria walking tall and comfortably carrying heavy loads balanced in panniers on their backs. This inspired him to design a new type of railway. Instead of two parallel tracks on the ground, it had a single rail sitting out of harm's way above the sand and held at waist height on A-shaped trestles. Specially-made carriages would sit astride the trestles like panniers. In theory, a monorail system should be lighter, easier and cheaper to build than a railway with twin parallel tracks, so several European railway companies took an interest in Lartigue's novel idea. But only two Lartigues were ever built: one in France, but it was never used; and the other linked Listowel and Ballybunion, two rural towns in County Kerry in the South West of Ireland. When it opened on February 29th, 1888, it was the world's first passenger-carrying monorail. The future was looking bright, and possibly even camel-shaped!

Kerry's unique Lartigue Railway carried freight, cattle and passengers, bringing tourists to the seaside resort of Ballybunion and carting sand from the beaches. And it ran for 36 years, which was pretty amazing, because although Lartigue's design worked fine with mule trains in the African desert, it was less suited to locomotives pulling passengers and freight across North Kerry. The engines, for instance and all the carriages had to be specially made at considerable expense (each locomotive had two boilers and two cabs, balanced on either side of the rail, the driver riding in one cab and the fireman in the other). And because the elevated railway crossed the country like a fence, bridges were needed to carry roads over the line there could be no such thing as a 'level' at-grade crossing. Loads also had to be carefully balanced, a time-consuming process, especially where cattle were concerned. Even then, the Lartigue had a reputation for rolling sickeningly as it moved. It was also renowned for being noisy, unpunctual and slow, taking 40 minutes to travel the 15 kilometres between Ballybunion and Listowel.

There was never enough traffic to support the route, and after the line was damaged during the Irish Civil War, the railway was closed in 1924. A short section of track was salvaged, but everything else was scrapped.

However, a short stretch of approximately 500 meters of the Lartigue Railway opened to the public in Listowel in July of 2003. A new double-side locomotive and two carriages with capacity for 40 passengers were constructed. The re-creation includes three platforms, two turntables, three switches or points, an engine shed (which houses the engine, coaches & work shop), a temporary mobile ticket office, one locomotive (no.4) which is an exact reproduction of the originals on the outside but is fitted with a Perkins diesel engine, one third-class coach and one guard third-class coach with a crossover stairway on one end.

The author and his family enjoyed a trip on the reconstructed line in 2009.



*The author's son Tommy on lartigue 2009*

Michael Joseph was afforded a first class pass for the line and this has survived. Research seems to indicate that not very many such passes were issued and that his pass might be the only surviving example.

