

Repository

Repository Name: Waterford County Archives

Identity Statement

Reference Code: IE WCA BG KILTHOM

Titles: Papers of Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians

Dates: 1851-1921

Level of Description: Fonds

Extent: 95 items

Creator

Creators: Kilmacthomas Poor Law Union, Board of Guardians

Administrative History: Kilmacthomas Poor Law Union was established under the Poor Law Union Act, 1838. Under this Act the country was divided into poor law unions each of which had a Workhouse run by elected and ex-officio guardians. These guardians were supervised by the Poor Law Commissioners and after 1872, the Local Government Board. The Poor law system has gained a dark reputation due to the fact that only the most destitute were granted 'indoor relief' and entry into the Workhouse was contingent on it being a last resort rather than a source of hope and comfort. The Workhouses were unable to cope with the fast flood of the destitute that was a result of the famine and they became overcrowded and contributed to the death toll due to the swift spread of disease through their packed wards. Over the years the Board of Guardians acquired further duties in relation to the poor. In the 1850s they accumulated duties in the area of public health, boarding out of children in the 1860s and rural housing from 1883. The Medical Charities Act of 1851 introduced the dispensary system which provided for the appointment of a medical doctor, the provision of a dispensary and the supply of medicines and medical appliances for a number of districts in each Union. The work of the dispensary was overseen by the Dispensary

Committee, which was composed of Guardians and local rate payers elected on an annual basis. In 1878 the Public Health (Ireland) Act established the Dungarvan Board of Guardians as a Rural Sanitary Authority adding further duties in relation to sanitation and public health to their workload. The work of the Board of Guardians was funded by the Poor Rate which the Guardians were empowered to levy in the Union. Under the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898 this power passed to Waterford County Council. The Guardians then applied to the Council for funds until they ceased to exist in 1923.

Archival History:

A number of the Kilmacthomas Poor Law Union Minute Books were rescued from destruction from the Workhouse by Sean Murphy, local historian who deposited them with Waterford County Library Service where they were looked after until the County Archives Service was established.

Acquisition:

Waterford County Library

Content and Structure

Scope and Content:

The archives of Kilmacthomas Poor Law Union provide a detailed account of the weekly running of the Workhouse and the out-door relief provided by the officers of the Union. They are a valuable social and economic record for the Union and for the county. These archives touch the lives of the ordinary people, people who would otherwise be unrecorded in the history of the county. They also provide a measure of political information for the period; for example, in BG/KILTHOM/46 a resolution was passed by the Guardians to hang a banner in honour of Charles Stewart Parnell (p18). Provides details the state of the Workhouse which refers to the total number of inmates and the

inmates grouped under the headings male, female, able bodied, aged & infirm, boys, girls, children 5-9 and infants under 2. States the number of inmates remaining from the previous week and those who were admitted discharged or died during the week. Contains a return of the sick and lunatics in the workhouse and a return of destitute persons relieved out of the workhouse. States the names of the members of the Board of Guardians present at each meeting and records reports from the Clerk on the accounts and the rates collected, the report from the Master and other officers such as the Matron, which detail the food consumed and the provisions, clothing and medicine required. Records the orders of the Poor Law Commissioners, the letters received from and sent to the Commissioners and the resolutions of the board. Applications for the relief are considered and any special business is detailed. A supplementary sheet regarding the Medical Charities Act details the Estimates of medicines requires by the Medical Officer, applications for supplies, the accounts of the dispensary and the orders and letters of the Poor Law Commissioners. The Minutes are signed by the Clerk of the Union. From 1874 the Board of Guardians is the rural sanitary authority and reports resolutions regarding the work of the Board in this area are recorded. After 1872 the orders and letters are received and recorded from the Local Government Board in place of the Poor Law Commissioners. From the 22 August 1899 financial minutes in form style are filled out (BG/KILTHOM/63) and statistical minutes are recorded either with or in place of financial minutes, these record relief and provisions provided, the average and an abstract of accounts from the relieving officers (BG/KILTHOM/78). The Medical Charities Act section is recorded as a form with information

regarding supplies to dispensary districts and the names and addresses of wardens appointed to each electoral division (BG/KILTHOM/71). The information in the Minute Books is typed from 1907 (BG/KILTHOM/78). index to resolutions is provided in many books particular those from the earlier years.

Collection Type: Health and Hospital Archives

Content keyw pers/inst: Workhouse

Content keyword: Famine (subject)

Content keyword: Health (subject)

Content keyword: Boarded Out Children (subject)

Arrangement: The collection has been arranged with the minute books for meetings of the board of guardians in date order.

Conditions of access and use

Access Conditions: Full Access

Language: English

Finding Aids: Descriptive List

Physical/Technical Reqs: Bound volumes cannot be copied.

Copies Information: Some documents have been digitised

Related Material: BG/LISM Lismore Board of Guardians
BG/DVN Dungarvan Board of Guardians
BG/WATFD Waterford Board of Guardians

Archivist's Note: Joanne Rothwell

Rules/Conventions: IGAD: *Irish Guidelines for Archival Description*,
Dublin, Society of Archivists, Ireland, 2009
ISAD (G): *General International Standard
Archival Description*, 2nd ed., Ottawa, International
Council on Archives, 2000
National Council on Archives: *Rules for the
Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate
Names*, Chippenham, National Council on
Archives, 1997

Date of Description: March 1999, Revised April 2010

Link to Website: <http://www.waterfordcoco.ie/en/services/archives/>

KILMACTHOMAS POOR LAW UNION

Until the nineteenth century in Ireland the poor were largely the concern of private charitable organisations and dependant on the kindness of individuals.

In 1771 – 1772 some legislation was enacted for the provision of houses of industry (Workhouses) in Ireland for maintaining the poor but this was not a uniform effort and little was accomplished.

In 1833 the Whatley Commission was established to examine the causes and extent of the problem of poverty in Ireland. The Commission recommended that a series of economic measures be introduced to combat poverty in Ireland and also suggested that institutions be established to provide “indoor relief” to the aged, infirm, deserted and orphaned children and widows. A system of public works for the able-bodied poor was also recommended.

These proposals were rejected and instead, a system of Poor Law Unions was introduced similar to the English Poor Law system. In common with the English system the Workhouses were designed as a place of last resort and efforts were made to ensure that they were far from inviting.

The poor law was introduced in Ireland in 1838 and operated until 1923. The county was divided into poor law unions each of which had a workhouse, run by elected and ex officio guardians under the supervision of the Poor Law Commissioners and after 1872, the Local Government Board.

In addition to providing directly for the poor, the poor law guardians accumulated other responsibilities in the areas of public health from the early 1850s, boarding out of children from the early 1860s and rural housing from 1883. Between 1874 – 1899 they were the rural sanitary authority.

In 1851 the Medical Charities Act was passed and this introduced the Dispensary system which provided for the appointment of a medical doctor, a dispensary and the supply of medicines and medical appliances for a number of Districts established in each Union. By law the medical officer of a dispensary district was obliged to attend and provide advice and medicine to the residents in the Dispensary District. The work of the dispensaries was overseen by the Dispensary Committee, which was composed of Guardians and local rate payers chosen on an annual basis.

In 1878 the Public Health (Ireland) Act established the Guardians as a Rural Sanitary Authority with sanitary and health functions for the Union added to their work.

The work of the Board of Guardians was funded by the Poor Rate the tax the Guardians were empowered to levy in the Union. In 1898 they lost this power to the County Council

and from 1899 until 1925 the Guardians were funded by the rate collected by the County Council.

The Minute Books of the meetings of the Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians provide a detailed account of the weekly running of the Workhouse and the out door relief provided by the officers of the Union. They are a valuable social and economic record for the Union and for the county. These archives touch the lives of the ordinary people, people who would otherwise be unrecorded in the history of the county. They also provide a measure of political information for the period; for example, in BG/KILTHOM/46 a resolution was passed by the Guardians to hang a banner in honour of Charles Stewart Parnell (p18).

A number of the Kilmacthomas Poor Law Union Minute Books were rescued from destruction by Sean Murphy who deposited them with Waterford County Library Service where they were looked after until the County Archives Service was established.

1 March 1999

Joanne Rothwell
Waterford County Archivist

BG/KILTHOM/

Minute Books for the meetings of the Board of Guardians of Kilmacthomas Poor Law Union. Details the state of the Workhouse which refers to the total number of inmates and the inmates grouped under the headings male, female, able bodied, aged & infirm, boys, girls, children 5-9 and infants under 2. States the number of inmates remaining from the previous week and those who were admitted discharged or died during the week. Contains a return of the sick and lunatics in the workhouse and a return of destitute persons relieved out of the workhouse. States the names of the members of the Board of Guardians present at each meetings and records reports from the Clerk on the accounts and the rates collected, the report from the Master and other officers such as the Matron which detail the food consumed and the provisions, clothing and medicine required. Records the orders of the Poor Law Commissioners, the letters received from and sent to the Commissioners and the resolutions of the board. Applications for the relief are considered and any special business is detailed. A supplementary sheet regarding the Medical Charities Act details the Estimates of medicines requires by the Medical Officer, applications for supplies, the accounts of the dispensary and the orders and letters of the Poor Law Commissioners. The Minutes are signed by the Clerk of the Union. From 1874 the Board of Guardians is the rural sanitary authority and reports and resolutions regarding the work of the Board in this area are recorded. After 1872 the orders and letters are received and recorded from the Local Government Board in place of the Poor Law Commissioners. From the 22 August 1899 financial minutes in form style are filled out (BG/KILTHOM/63) and statistical minutes are recorded either with or in place of financial minutes, these record relief and provisions provided, the average and an abstract of accounts from the relieving officers (BG/KILTHOM/78). The Medical Charities Act section is recorded as a form with information regarding supplies to dispensary districts and the names and addresses of wardens appointed to each electoral division (BG/KILTHOM/71). The information in the Minute Books is typed from 1907 (BG/KILTHOM/78). An index to resolutions is provided in many books particular those from the earlier years.

1	7 October 1851 – 29 June 1852	c. 490pp
2	13 July 1852 – 16 June 1853	c. 490pp
3	23 June 1853 – 10 January 1854	403pp

4 17 January 1854 – 18 July 1854 458pp

BG/KILTHOM/

5 25 July 1854 – 17 April 1855 Includes: a list of members of
the Committee of Management
of the dispensary district in
Kilmacthomas. 623pp

6 24 April 1855 – 8 January 1856 601pp

[7] January 1856 – October 1856

8 28 October 1856 – 28 July 1857 519pp

9 4 August 1857 – 4 May 1858 531pp

[10] 11 May 1858 – 31 May 1859

11 7 June 1859 – 26 June 1860 384pp

12 3 July 1860 – 8 January 1861 138pp

13 15 January 1861 – 23 July 1861 180pp

14 30 July 1861 – 4 February 1862 170pp

15 11 February 1862 – 19 August 1862 183pp

16 2 September 1862 – 14 February 1863 135pp

[17] 21 February 1863 – 22 March 1864

18 29 March 1864 – 21 March 1865 368pp

19 28 March 1865 – 28 March 1866 380pp

20 4 April 1866 – 2 April 1867 388pp

[21] 9 April 1867 – 6 October 1863

22 13 October 1868 – 30 March 1869 209pp

[23]	6 April 1869 – 5 October 1869	
24	12 October 1869 – 29 March 1870	145pp
25	5 April 1870 – 4 October 1870	193pp
BG/KILTHOM		
[26]	11 October 1870 – 28 March 1871	
27	4 April 1871 – 3 October 1871	<u>Includes:</u> Sanitary Officers Report for 31 March 1871 and a letter regarding defaulters under the Compulsory Vaccination Act from 'J. Mogeau', Chairman of Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians (p21-29).
		201pp
28	19 October 1871 – 25 March 1872	155pp
[29]	2 April 1872 – 8 October 1872	
30	15 October 1872 – 1 April 1873	184pp
31	8 April 1873 – 7 October 1873	211pp
[32]	14 October 1873 – 31 March 1874	
33	7 April 1874 – 6 October 1874	197pp
34	13 October 1874 – 3 April 1875	279pp
35	13 April 1875 – 12 October 1875	227pp
36	19 October 1875 – 4 April 1876	184pp
[37]	11 April 1876 – 1877	
[38]	1877 – 2 April 1878	
39	9 April 1878 – 1 April 1879	374pp
[40]	8 April 1879 – 30 March 1880	
41	6 April 1880 – 5 April 1881	397pp
42	12 April 1881 – 4 April 1882	375pp
43	11 April 1882 – 3 April 1883	322pp

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- 44 10 April 1883 – 25 March 1884 Includes: a schedule of resolutions with particulars, a summary of resolutions adopted with regard to new schemes as a result of the Labourers Ireland Act 1883, notice of the Act is included (p282). An application for sanction of the Local Government Board to a loan to execute an improvement scheme and details of a petition to Parliament to ‘...give the rack-rented Leaseholders of Ireland the benefit of the Land Bill..’ from the Poor Law Guardians in Ireland (p387). 423pp
- 45 1 April 1885 – 6 April 1886 Includes: a case for the opinion of Thomas Davin, solicitor, regarding the prevention of repairs to a well provided by the Board of Guardians by a ‘Laurence McGrath’ of ‘Parkewaglogh’ (p177). 361pp
- 46 7 April 1885 – 6 April 1886 Includes: a resolution that a banner be hung by Kilmacthomas Union stating ‘We’ll have no Prince but Charlie’ in honour of Charles Stewart Parnell (p18). A resolution from Limerick and Mountmellick Unions that the Clerk of the Union procure from Relieving Officers and notices of eviction which are to be hung in the board room so all Guardians and ratepayers can see who are responsible for driving people from their homes into the Workhouses (p931). 352pp
- [47] 13 April 1886 – 29 March 1887
- 48 5 April 1887 – 13 March 1888 Includes: a letter from H. Campbell, Secretary to Charles Stuart Parnell thanking the Union for sending a copy of their resolution stating their dissatisfaction at the Irish policy of the government and a resolution by the Guardians to place on record their sympathy for the ex constables who had resigned rather than remain ‘...the tools of a brutal, unscrupulous and tyrannical Ministry...’ (p38). 340pp
- 49 3 April 1888 – 19 March 1889 317pp

[50]	26 March 1889 – 25 March 1890	
51	1 April 1890 – 7 April 1891	348pp
BG/KILTHOM/		
52	14 April 1891 – 5 April 1892	332pp
[53]	12 April 1892 – 28 March 1893	
54	4 April 1893 – 26 September 1893	178pp
55	3 October 1893 – 27 March 1894	311pp
56	3 April 1894 – 2 October 1894	319pp
57	8 October 1894 – 2 April 1895	<u>Includes:</u> a copy of the Waterford Infirmary Bill sent to the board by 'P.J. Power' for their opinion (p296). 296pp
[58]	9 April 1895 – 8 October 1895	
59	15 October 1895 – 31 March 1896	<u>Includes:</u> printed particulars of the Payment of Jurors Bill sent by JJ Carter, Secretary of the Dublin Jurors Association to the Guardians requesting that the Bill be considered and any suggestions be sent to him (p261). 298pp
60	7 April 1896 – 30 March 1897	622pp
61	6 April 1897 – 29 March 1898	623pp
[62]	5 April 1898 – 15 August 1899	
63	22 August 1899 – 27 February 1900	448pp
64	6 March 1900 – 11 September 1900	448pp
65	18 September 1900 – 12 March 1901	570pp
66	19 March 1901 – 10 September 1901	570pp
67	17 September 1901 – 11 March 1902	570pp

68	18 March 1902 – 9 September 1902	570pp
69	16 September 1902 – 10 March 1903	570pp
[70]	17 March 1903 – 22 September 1903 BG/KILTHOM/	
71	29 September 1903 – 5 April 1904	655pp
72	12 April 1904 – 4 October 1904	640pp
73	11 October 1904 – 2 April 1905	625pp
74	11 April 1905 – 17 October 1905	672pp
75	24 October 1905 – 1 May 1906	672pp
76	8 May 1906 – 25 September 1906	504pp
[77]	2 October 1906 – 26 March 1907	
78	2 April 1907 – 24 September 1907	c. 400pp
79	1 October 1907 – 31 March 1908	c. 400pp
80	7 April 1908 – 29 September 1908	c. 400pp
81	6 October 1908 – 30 March 1909	c. 400pp
82	6 April 1909 – 28 September 1909	c. 400pp
83	5 October 1909 – 29 March 1910	c. 400pp
[84]	5 April 1910 – December 1910	
85	3 January 1911 – 26 September 1911	c. 450pp
86	3 October 1911 – 1 October 1912	c. 450pp
87	8 October 1912 – 19 August 1913	986pp
88	26 August 1913 – 18 August 1914	1014pp
[89]	25 August 1914 – 31 August 1915	
90	7 September 1915 – 29 August 1916	559pp

BG/KILTHOM/

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| 91 | 5 September 1916 – 26 June 1917 | <u>Includes:</u> resolution to reduce food consumption during the war as directed by the Local Government Board (p549). Resolution to vote against the Amalgamation of Kilmacthomas with Waterford and Dungarvan Unions (p10). | 914pp |
| 92 | 3 July 1917 – 26 March 1918 | | 812pp |
| 93 | 2 April 1918 – 1 April 1919 | <u>Includes:</u> resolutions regarding the abolition of the offices of Master, Schoolmistress, Assistant Schoolmistress and Tailor, the boarding out of inmates in Waterford and Dungarvan Workhouses and the closing of the Workhouse (p948). Resolution from Naas Union with regard to the inhuman conduct of jailors towards the political prisoners in Cork jail that was adopted by the Board (p948). | 1004pp |
| 94 | 8 April 1919 – 30 March 1920 | | 1089pp |
| 95 | (3) April 1920 – (12) February 1921 | <u>Includes:</u> a number of notes stating the Guardians failed to meet. A proposition to protest against the treatment of political prisoners on hunger strike in Mountjoy prison (p10). | c. 440pp |