

## **Orange Parades and Policing and Justice.**

Please feel free to circulate this paper as you see fit.

This review of the history of Orange triumphalism and violence does not attempt to deny the need for, or people's right to practice rituals that celebrate and reinforce their religious convictions, cultural identity, or sense of belonging and community. Rather, I am posting it on the internet in the hope of undermining the DUP's attempt to link justice and policing to Orange parades. I hope that it will serve to inform readers as to the violent history and symbolic importance of Orange parades through Nationalist communities.

This research was part of a Residents' campaign to have Orange demonstrations barred from Nationalist areas of Portadown. It was partly inspired by Orange Order and RUC claims that the violence associated with Orange marches in the Obins Street ('Tunnel') area of Portadown was a recent phenomenon and that it was the result of a secretive Republican campaign, instigated and orchestrated by Sinn Féin.

The findings were issued in pamphlet form to journalists and other visitors attending the scene of the Drumcree 'Seige' of 1997. The findings appear subsequently to have been used selectively and without any acknowledgment by at least one journalist/author. They were also summarised as part of the Garvaghy Road Residents' Coalition submission to the *North Commission: Independent Review of Parades and Marches* (1996). And an edited and updated version was included in the book *Garvaghy: A Community Under Siege; Beyond The Pale*. 1999.

It should be remembered that the vast bulk of the material detailed below was gathered from Unionist and/or Orange owned publications and newspapers. It should be remembered because material emanating from those sources was not likely to tell the whole story of Orange violence and the corruption of policing and justice in Northern Ireland.

### **Introduction**

In its response to the "Drumcree Siege" of July 1995 the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland published a booklet aimed at justifying the routing of Orange demonstrations through areas where the majority of residents find them offensive. In his introduction to this booklet, *The Order on Parade*, Brian Kennaway argued that the debate about Orange Parades has been ill informed. He holds that: "If people were better informed as to the nature of the Orange Institution they would be in a much better position to understand the purpose of parades". Mr. Kennaway then proceeds to quote from the bible to support his self-righteous injunction to the victims of Orangeism not to "go out of their way to be offended" by Orangemen who, he noted: "should not give offence to anyone...". Without offering any insight into the 'nature of the Orange Institution', the Orange authors of that 'educational' publication move immediately to defend their Parades in a manner that suggests they are the *raison d'être* of the Orange Order. All and every Orange Parade is defended as being part of a colourful tradition that fulfils a common need to celebrate political and religious commitments and beliefs. They are described as: "... a celebration.... a display of pageantry... a demonstration of strength.... [providing] a sense of tradition.... a testimony and a statement of beliefs.... [and] the culmination of each lodge's activities".

For an argument as to why Orange Parades are better understood as attempts to deny the dignity and human rights of Nationalists in Northern Ireland see my 1999 paper 'Drumcree: A Struggle For Recognition' in the *Irish Journal Of Sociology*. Vol. 9.

## **Towards a History of Orange Parades, their Nature and Purpose**

In many parts of late 18th century Ireland there was an assortment of secret organisations and local militias who fought each other for a variety of reasons. J. Fulton, in his book "The Tragedy Of Belief", provides a detailed, if somewhat one-sided, historical background and discusses some current theories as to how and why the secret society of the 'Orange Boys' originated, and why it grew so strong among the Protestant peasants and weavers in North Armagh. In his book "The Red Hand", Steve Bruce, Professor of Sociology at the University of Aberdeen, offers a brief overview:

These were largely agrarian movements; Protestant and Catholic small farmers and peasants banded together against each other in such movements as the Defenders and the Peep O'Day Boys.... The Orange Order ... was founded after a battle at the Diamond in 1795 by Protestants who expected it to be the first of many skirmishes.... At first the Episcopalian gentry were ambivalent about the Order. It had the right religion, but there was always the danger that it might move from destroying and expropriating Catholic property to stealing from the aristocracy. It was only when the United Irishmen seemed an even greater threat that the gentry entered the Order. [The strength of Orangeism fluctuated as history moved on until] ...the Irish home-rule agitation of the late nineteenth century gave it a new salience. Now professional and urban Ulster Presbyterians joined the rural Anglican gentry and their peasants.

Many of the aristocrats, landed gentry, and landlord's agents treated the peasantry as assets to be exploited for all they were worth and rents, pensions and sinecures accounted for the major part of all capital transferred to England. With the majority of people almost completely dependent on agriculture the landlords and their agents, or 'middle men', had a great deal of power over their tenants and many were reduced to a state of impoverished serfdom and abject misery. In 1750 the Irish philosopher George Berkeley asked: "whether there be upon the earth any Christian or civilised people so beggarly wretched and destitute as the common Irish" People were driven from the land in such numbers that even the king of England became concerned. In 1772 King George the 3rd. wrote to his Viceroy in Ireland expressing his fear that, "the overgreediness and harshness of landlords may be a means of depriving the kingdom of a number of His Majesties most industrious and valuable subjects". By 1773 the Belfast Newsletter: "...computed that within forty years past, 400,000 people have left this Kingdom to go and settle in America".

Presbyterians in Antrim and Down were among the first to react to the ruthless extractions of the landlords. However, by the end of the 18th century the landlords had effectively countered the threat to their incomes and position by sacrificing the interests of their Catholic tenants to their Protestant neighbours. In the Portadown area Protestants from the Established Church formed secret societies for the purpose of persecuting Catholics and driving them from their homes and farmland so that a Protestant might take up the tenancy. These gangs came to be known as 'Peep O'Day' and 'Break O'Day Boys' because of their tactic of attacking Catholic homes in the early hours of the morning when they were at their most defenceless. Though they would sometimes burn their victim's homes the favoured method was to deprive the occupants of the means by which they could pay their rents. They did this by killing or injuring livestock, destroying crops, breaking farming tools and wrecking the contents of homes - particularly the spinning wheels and looms which were the only means by which many people could earn enough to pay their rents. This method of dispossessing Catholics of their homes and clearing them from the land was known as 'wrecking' and the various gangs which employed it were collectively known as 'Wreckers'. James Christie, a Co. Down Quaker, described the policy of 'wrecking' when giving evidence to a Parliamentary Select Committee investigation into the Orange Order on July 10th 1835:

it was termed "wrecking" when the parties broke open the door and smashed everything that was capable of being broken in the house ... they threw the furniture out of the house smashed; and in other cases they set fire to the house and burnt it"

Christie testified that the 'wrecking' actually began in 1794 on the estates administered by James Verner, a Justice of the Peace who lived at Church-hill, on the Dungannon Rd, but that the greatest depredations committed against the Catholics were in the Spring of 1795, and on a lesser scale in 1796 - 97. He told of twelve to fourteen Catholic houses being burned down in one night just a mile or so from Portadown, at Battle Hill, in the spring of 1795. He also told of Catholic churches being burned in various parts of North Armagh in those early years of ethnic cleansing by the founding fathers of the Orange Order.

### **The 'First Sunday' Parade in Portadown.**

At a Sunday service in Portadown in June 1795 Rev. George Maunsell called on his congregation: "to celebrate the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne in the true spirit of the institution" by attending a sermon to be given by a Rev. Devine of the Established Church at Drumcree on Sunday the 1st of July. This 'religious service' gave birth to the 200-year-old tradition of violent demonstrations of Orange supremacy in the parish of Drumcree. And that 1st first Sunday, like so many since, was celebrated with 'wrecking' and bloodletting in the parish of Drumcree. On page 17 of his "History of Ireland" (Vol. I), published in 1809, the historian Francis Plowden described the events that followed the Rev Devine's sermon:

This evangelical laborer in the vineyard of the Lord of peace so worked up the minds of his audience, that upon retiring from service, on the different roads leading to their respective homes, they gave full scope to the antipapistical zeal, with which he had inspired them, falling upon every Catholic they met, beating and bruising them without provocation or distinction, breaking the doors and windows of their houses, and actually murdering two unoffending Catholics in a bog. This unprovoked atrocity of the Protestants revived and redoubled religious rancour. The flame spread and threatened a contest of extermination...

Plowden tells of a similar assault on Catholics in Lurgan where influential Catholics and Protestants living east of the river Bann convened a meeting and succeeded in maintaining the peace in that area. But in Portadown the Catholic Defenders: "remained under arms for three days successively, challenging their opponents to fight it out fairly in the field rather than harass them with murderous nocturnal visits".

Seven weeks later, on the 21st of September a party of Defenders was routed by a smaller but better armed coalition of 'wreckers' at the Diamond, 4 miles from Drumcree. The 'wreckers' were under the command of a Captain Giffard from Dublin. William Blacker, a member of the landed gentry and commander of the Seagoe Yeomanry, was later attributed a role in the affray. He is said to have stripped lead from the roof of his house to make ammunition in preparation for the ambush of Catholic Defenders at the Diamond. However we could find nothing to support this and it may be no more than a piece of Orange legend that helped establish an affinity with the aristocracy in the minds of the Protestant peasantry. It was after the Diamond skirmish that the name 'Orange Boys' was adopted. This was changed to 'the Orange Order' as the 'wreckers' became more organized under the leadership of Blacker and James Verner, an attorney and agent for the Armagh estates of absentee landlord, Lord Charlemont.

In the months after the Rev. Devine's sermon at Drumcree the homes of Catholic peasants and workers were attacked with increasing violence and frequency. The violence reached such a pitch that troops were drafted in from other parts of the country and the Irish Parliament in Dublin debated a bill designed to prevent insurrections. In the course of that debate, on February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1796, a Colonel Craddock, who had been dispatched to take control of the Armagh militia, testified that if the magistrates of Co Armagh had acted as they should the: "...local petty warfare will cease in one fortnight". Colonel Craddock confirmed that, though the Catholic Defenders initiated the conflict at the Diamond, they had retaliated against the Orangemen out of sheer exasperation. He said that, 'the conduct of the Orangemen, or Protestants, was atrocious to the highest degree; and that their persecutions of the Defenders or Catholics should be resisted and punished with the whole force of the Government'.

The 'Battle' of the Diamond was first reported in Dublin in the *Freemans Journal* on September 24th. 1795. Letters had been received saying two parties of "rioters", armed with a few muskets and farming implements, had clashed at Loughgall and that several people were said to have been killed. In October 1795 In October 1795 the *Freemans Journal* published another letter from an officer of the 9th Dragoon Guards saying that on 21st September the 'Peep-O-Day boys and Defenders had a dreadful engagement in which 30 of the latter were killed'.

### **The Ethnic Cleansing of LOL District No. 1**

By the end of 1796 an estimated 700 Catholic families, about 4,000 people in all, had been forced out of their homes by the 'Orange Boys'. The clearances sometimes began with the painting of warnings such as "To Hell or Connaught" on selected Catholic houses. The notice to quit were sometimes signed with a foreboding *nom de guerre* - such as 'William Thresham', 'John Thrustout', 'Captain. Rackall', or 'Capt. Firebrand'. When the threats were ignored nocturnal attacks followed. The ethnic cleansing of the area became so intense that Governor of the County, Lord Gosford convened an emergency meeting of 30 of the county's magistrates on December 28th 1795. They issued the following statement:

Resolved, that it appears to this meeting, that the County of Armagh is at this moment in a state of uncommon disorder, that the Roman Catholic inhabitants are grievously oppressed by lawless persons

unknown, who attack and plunder their houses by night and threaten them with instant destruction, unless they abandon immediately their lands and habitations"

It is no secret, that a persecution, accompanied with all the circumstances of ferocious cruelty, which have in all ages distinguished that calamity is now raging in this County. Neither age nor sex, nor even acknowledged innocence, as to any guilt in the late disturbances, is sufficient to excite mercy or afford protection. The only crime, which the wretched objects of this ruthless persecution are charged with, is a crime indeed of easy proof: It is simply a profession of the Roman Catholic faith, or an intimate connection with a person professing that faith. A lawless banditry have constituted themselves judges of this new species of delinquency, and the sentence they have denounced is equally concise and terrible! It is nothing less than a confiscation of all property, and an immediate banishment.

It would be extremely painful, and surely unnecessary to detail the horrors, that attend the execution of so rude and tremendous a proscription. A proscription, that certainly exceeds, in the comparative number of those it consigns to ruin and misery, every example, that ancient and modern history can supply: for where have we read of more than half the inhabitants of a populous county deprived at one blow of the means, as well as of the fruits of their industry, and driven in the midst of an inclement season, to seek shelter for themselves and their families, where chance may guide them.

This is no exaggerated picture of the horrid scenes now acting in the county. Yet surely it is sufficient to awaken sentiments of indignation and compassion in the coldest bosoms.

These horrors are now acting with impunity. The spirit of impartial justice (without which law is nothing better than an instrument of tyranny) has for a time disappeared in the county, and the supineness of the magistracy of Armagh is become a common topic of conversation in every corner of the Kingdom.

The magistrates' resolution was referred to by Henry Grattan during a Parliamentary Debate on the "Insurrection Act" in February 1796. Grattan spoke of the "horrid persecution", "abominable barbarity" and "general extermination" being conducted against the Catholic population in Co. Armagh. One of the principal leaders of that 'general extermination' was founding member of the Orange Order. When questioned in the House of Commons on Nov. 7th. 1796 Verner, known locally as "Orange Jimmy", admitted the persecution of Catholics in Co. Armagh was the work of the "Orange boys".

### **The First Twelfth of July Parade**

In 1797 over 160 people were tried at the Spring Assizes in Armagh in relation to the ongoing 'disturbances'. Later that year the Orange society staged its first major 12<sup>th</sup> of July demonstration. It was a direct response to the efforts of Lord Gosford to put a stop to their outrages against the Catholics and it was staged to intimidate the magistrates and the Governor of the County. Gosford himself estimated 1,500 men in Orange regalia marched in military formation into the grounds of his estate on July 12<sup>th</sup> 1796.

### **Wealth, Respectability and Power**

As the Orangemen continued to organise they realised that Portadown was not a suitable base from which to influence the policies of the Dublin based administrators of British rule in Ireland. In 1798 a new headquarters for the Grand Orange Lodge was set up in Dublin in the Dawson St. residence of 'Orange Jimmy' Verner's student sons, where LOL 176 was already active (In the year 2000, Dublin Corporation was persuaded by some respectable sorts to grace the site of Verner's sectarian scheming with a commemorative plaque).

It was estimated that by 1798 the United Irishmen, which had formed in Belfast in 1791 under the leadership of a radical Protestant, Theobald Wolfe Tone, had 280,000 members. Their initial objective was to unite Protestants and Catholics in seeking Parliamentary reform, but under Tone's leadership and inspired by the French Revolution, the movement became more radical and sought the removal of British Rule and the establishment of an Irish Republic. When the United Irishmen rebelled in May 1798 nationalists in the county of Armagh would have been in no position to support as they were under constant harassment and attack by the Orangemen and Yeomanry. Blacker's yeomen, however, went to the assistance of Crown forces who succeeded in isolating the United Irishmen in Co. Antrim from their allies in Co. Down. William Blacker was later promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and this helped accelerate the rate at which the Orange Order grew and became a more sophisticated, sectarian organisation with representatives in positions of real power in the County of Armagh and at Government level.

### **For the Honour of the King and the Greater Glory of God**

Orange violence abated as the countryside was cleared of Catholics and the towns and villages were ghettoised, but they kept up their belligerent demonstrations of strength so as to intimidate and deter the possibility of organized resistance on the part of the dispossessed and repressed Catholic population. They did this, as they still do, under bogus banners of civil and religious liberty, the defence Protestantism, and loyalty to the crown. Speaking in the House of Commons in July 1805 Henry Grattan referred to their demonstrations saying:

... when the spirit of religious discord descends on the lower order of the people, and the holiday becomes a riot; and when the petty magistrate turns Chapman and dealer in politics, turns theologian and robber, makes for himself a situation in the country formed out of the monstrous lies he tells of his Catholic neighbours, fabricates false panics of insurrection and invasion, then walks forth the men of blood... and atrocities, which he dare not commit in his own name, perpetrates for the honour of his King, and in the name of his maker.

The Vicars of Seagoe and Drumcree supported the judiciary with their own peculiar interpretations of 'the word of the Lord'. In 1807 it was the turn of the rector of Drumcree, a Rev. Stuart Blacker (LOL 176), to excite the 'spirit of religious discord' among his 'brethren'. The fact that a member of the Blacker family was now the rector of Drumcree may be the reason Orange revisionists have identified 1807 as the year when the traditional 'church parade' was first established. The murder and mayhem that issued from the doors of Drumcree after that first call to, 'celebrate the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne in the true spirit of the institution', in 1795, would not have been a fitting anniversary for a 'traditional church parade'. The Governor and magistrates of Co. Armagh in 1795; by Parliamentarians in 1796 and 1805; and by the historian Francis Plowden had already denounced the hypocritical nature of which in 1809.

Some appreciation of the degree to which Orangeism had succeeded in subverting the rule of law in Co. Armagh in the early 1800s can be gained from the *Belfast News Letter* reportage at that time. On August 21<sup>st</sup> 1812 the *News Letter* reported that the entire Armagh Yeomanry was disbanded by the Lord Lieutenant because of "insubordination". The insubordination first came to light when, on the 2nd of July that year, a sergeant and nine privates were dismissed for having refused to serve under an officer who had signed a petition in favour of Catholic Emancipation. A Judge Fletcher was reported to have made the following observations on the ongoing disturbances in Northern Ireland in his address to the Grand Jury of Co. Wexford on August 18th:

Orange Societies have produced the most mischievous effects .... They poison the very foundation of justice; and even some magistrates, under their influence, have in too many instances, violated their duty and their oaths.

Fletcher went on to say that the self-styled "Orange Yeomen" carried arms under the pretence of self defence but, 'with the lurking view of inviting attacks from Ribbonmen... confident, that, armed as they are, they must overcome their defenceless opponents'. He said murderers were being set free and serious charges being reduced by Petty Juries under the influence of the Orange Society and that:

... with these Orange Associations I connect the Commemorations and Processions... producing embittering recollections... and I do emphatically state it as my settled opinion, that until these associations are effectively put down and the arms taken from their hands, in vain will the North of Ireland expect tranquillity or peace.

### **Orange Riots.**

Judge Fletcher's remarks were referred to in the House of Commons in July 1815 when Henry Parnell called for an inquiry into the Orange Lodges in Ireland. In the course of his address Parnell pointed out that 14 petitions had been presented to Parliament requesting the Orange Associations be investigated. He said these petitions alleged that:

... to the existence of Orange Lodges in Ireland, was mainly attributed the disturbances of public peace, particularly by the celebrations of processions with certain insignia etc.... [and that] besides the agitation which these necessarily produced they beget a counter spirit among the people, that led to animosities, which, in their consequences, produced riots.

That same month Portadown Orangemen marched to Drumcree. On the same day a party of Orangemen returning from Middletown attacked Catholic homes at Cruskeenan and murdered a Catholic man named Patrick Grimley. At the inquest on July 17th it was alleged the two sons of Rev. Nathaniel Smith, rector of Madden, and a man named Brown attacked Grimley with ceremonial swords and a pistol. The Rev. Smith

had previously stood bail for another man accused of wrecking Catholic owned houses. Samuel Smith was charged with the murder of Grimley. At his trial in March witnesses said Smith was leading the march on horseback and encouraging the Orangemen to attack Catholic bystanders; that when Grimley was attacked Smith charged in shouting, 'Cut down all Papists - men women and children', and struck him on the head with his sword. Grimley was able to walk away but Smith followed him and killed him. Witnesses for the defence claimed Smith simply dispersed Grimley's assailants. The verdict was 'not guilty'.

On July 17<sup>th</sup> of that year John Lawless, editor of a Belfast newspaper, *The Irishman*, had a petition presented to the House of Commons. In it he recounted instances of Orange violence at 12<sup>th</sup> of July demonstrations and asserted that these parades, 'tended naturally to disturb the peace'. Sir James Mackintosh, said the marches were an annual insult to the people of Ireland, that they were a libel upon the memory of King William. He said, 'This was the only instance in the history of nations where a minority of conquerors continued to insult the people of a country through a series of ages down to the present period'.

### **The Unlawful Oaths Act of 1823**

One Catholic man was shot dead and a number of others were wounded by Orange demonstrators at Killileagh, Co Armagh, in July 1823. Michael Campbell was returning from a fair at Caledon when he was shot. Four Orangemen were charged with the murder but were acquitted at the Spring Assizes. When discharging the Orangemen judge Johnson said:

They all knew the strong feeling that prevailed in the country respecting their silly processions.

Was it to triumph over the fallen - to exult in victory - to insult a large portion of their fellow subjects, that they made such mischievous exhibitions?

The persistence of the Orange Order in murdering and intimidating Catholics with militaristic demonstrations of their supremacy resulted in the passing of the *Unlawful Oaths Act* of 1823.

### **The Unlawful Associations Act of 1825**

The *Unlawful Oaths Act* was not sufficient to put a stop to Orange violence and subversion of the law and it continued to persecute Catholics and obstruct the movement for Catholic Emancipation. In 1825 the act was reinforced with the *Unlawful Associations Act*. This effectively outlawed the Orange Order and the Dublin based Grand Lodge of Ireland, LOL 176, went into voluntary dissolution. However, the Orange fanatics in Portadown were determined to persevere and when the town magistrates, who generally supported Orangeism, were obliged by the new law to prevent an illegal 12<sup>th</sup> July demonstration they claimed they had insufficient forces 'at their command' and the Orangemen demonstrated without hindrance. In July 1826 Portadown Orangemen joined up with their brethren from Lurgan in a mass demonstration. Meanwhile the mayor of Derry, Richard Young, and a number of magistrates and landlords of the county appealed in vain to the Orangemen there to abandon their demonstrations.

On July 29<sup>th</sup> 1826 Orangemen attacked and burned a small Catholic altar at Tartaraghan. Twenty-one men were charged with the crime but all were acquitted despite being identified by eyewitnesses. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of November two Catholics were shot dead and several others wounded when Orangemen marched into the predominantly Catholic village of Hilltown.

In 1827 Portadown magistrate, Curran Woodhouse, who had quit the Orange Order, attempted to persuade the Orangemen not to flout the law. He called their leaders to a last minute 12<sup>th</sup> meeting but his requests were rejected and the Orangemen marched to meet up with their Lurgan allies at the Red Cow Inn on the Portadown to Lurgan road. With the Lurgan Lodges for reinforcement the 5,000 Orangemen marched into Portadown where there were only 14 policemen on duty.

On May 14<sup>th</sup> 1828 Orangemen who marched into Blackwatertown murdered a Catholic. One of them was charged with murder and received 12 months for manslaughter. Five Catholics and two Orangemen were charged with rioting. Each Catholic got one month's hard labour. The Orangemen were fined sixpence each.

### **The Spread of Orange Violence**

In April 1829 Catholic Emancipation became law and in July the Grand Lodge of Armagh issued a letter to all lodges recommending that they abstain from marching. On July 14<sup>th</sup> the *Belfast News Letter* reported that Belfast magistrates met on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 'at the request of the Marquis of Donegall, in consequence of some information that the processions of Orangemen here would probably endanger the public peace'. The magistrates issued notices to dissuade people from supporting or participating in Orange marches. Portadown Orangemen ignored local magistrates and, accompanied by reinforcements from Richill, they

marched through the town on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July. While there were no reports of violence in the Portadown stronghold there were Orange riots and shootings in Armagh, Strabane, Newtonstewart, Stewartstown, Castlewellan, Eniskillen and Maghera. The *Belfast News Letter* reported 20 people killed and many more wounded. Orangemen at Macken in Eniskillen shot many of the casualties.

The District Master of Orangeism in Armagh was charged with having caused the Armagh riots of July 13<sup>th</sup> 1829. However, at his trial in Armagh on August 6<sup>th</sup>, the judge asserted that if it could not be proven that the Orangemen started the riot then District Master Tyrrell must be acquitted as he would have been shooting at the Catholics in self defence. Tyrrell was acquitted, as were 15 other Orangemen who were tried at the spring assizes in 1830 for riotous activities on the previous 13<sup>th</sup>.

The violence instigated by the Orangemen in July 1829 was so severe and so widespread that on July 18<sup>th</sup> the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland issued a proclamation banning all Orange gatherings and counter demonstrations. On July 21<sup>st</sup> the *Belfast News Letter* reported that between 25 and 30 *insurgents* and 8 Orangemen were killed in Armagh and Tyrone.

In July 1830 Portadown Orangemen marched to Lurgan where, 'A large assembly of Orange Lodges took place here, in opposition to the wishes of the Government and the Magistracy of the county. After a great deal of sill display they retired to their homes'. 4,000 Orangemen were reported to have taken part in the Lurgan demonstration. Five people were shot in Castlewellan and in Newry the Orangemen shot two people they alleged threw stones at them. Several Catholics were reported to have been shot when an Orange demonstration was stoned at Culladuff where the Orangemen burned down the home of a Catholic family. Arms were seized from the Orangemen and a dozen or so were arrested. When they appeared in court on July 25<sup>th</sup> the members of four Orange Lodges stormed the courthouse and freed the prisoners.

### **The Wrecking of Maghery**

On November 25<sup>th</sup> 1830 there was a riot in Maghery when locals opposed an Orange invasion of the village. Two days later an armed mob of Orangemen wrecked 29 houses. Some inhabitants fled before the attack but some were caught and beaten by the armed Orangemen. Seven Orangemen were charged with offences relating to the attack on Maghery, all were acquitted. However some of the victims submitted accounts of the attack to the Parliamentary Select Committee set up to investigate the Orange Societies in 1835. What follows is the account given by three of them.

#### **SELECT COMMITTEE ON ORANGE LODGES**

*Eleanor Campbell, sworn:* –Resides in Maghery and keeps a public house; it is near the Blackwater foot, near the quay; was there on Monday the 22<sup>nd</sup> November last, between 11 and 12 o'clock, as near as she can recollect; was out standing before the door; a great number of men came down across the fields and attacked the house; four men attacked the four windows; deponent then went into the house for fear of her life; the windows were smashed, sashes and all; they attacked deponent's two daughters in her house, to beat and abuse them; two young men of the party came in, and one of them fired a gun in the house up at the deponent's son, who was on the loft and had made a noise to come down when he saw the men going to abuse his sister; the skirts of the deponent's son's coat appeared as if they had been perforated with shot from the gun; it might have been done with slugs; four or five men then attacked the deponent herself with bayonets, and threatened to take her life if she would not give up a gun which they said she had; they swore deponent on her hand and by the five crosses to tell where it was, and deponent had to send out for it; they got it, and took it away. A lump of a boy, about 16 or 17 years of age, came forward with a bayonet fastened on a stick, and made a stab at deponent, which struck her; deponent was wounded on her forehead with the bayonet, she thinks by the boy who had it; was also knocked down by a blow of a stone, which she thinks he held in his hand, and which stunned her; all deponent's delf, glass, and furniture were broken; her spirits and beer spilled, and her clock broken; all the spirits and beer in the bar were spilled; thinks five or six gallons of spirits were spilled; they also robbed deponent of her money, notes, silver, and halfpence, destroyed her feather bed; they took away table linen, and sheets and shirts, and coats, and her children's clothes, and also a great deal of her own clothes, and left her very little behind; never saw any of the party before, to her knowledge; would not have known her child she was so much confused and put through other; thinks the party was disguised; the boy who struck deponent had his cap drawn down over his forehead; deponent was so frightened she could not tell any of the crowd; they cried out "We are Killyman boys," and would clear all before them; and to see what Lord Charlemont would do for her now; did not know any person by the name of Carner in that neighborhood; deponent thinks 14 or 15 of the party came into her house, as well as she can tell; it is not positive, they were all under arms, and had weapons of some kind or other; some guns, some bayonets, one man had a scyth, and another had a large sword, horseman's, or like one of the policemen's; they

came in in two or three parties; first, four at a time, then five, then three, and so on; they were in deponent's house very nearly an hour, more or less; deponent, after her house was wrecked (in about five or six minutes after) saw two policemen, Moneypenny and Crawford; thinks they were not under arms then, but they may have had their side arms; Did not see any other person that deponent knows; at that time they were doing no harm; she reflected on them for not coming down to save her. Sergeant Crawford came into deponent's house, and the others went down to his brother's boat; deponent is not just sure, can't say exactly, but has heard and thinks there were 26 houses wrecked and injured in the town; very few escaped; deponent's house is quite the opposite end of the town from where the row took place on Saturday; deponent saw no other person that she knew but the two policemen.

*Eleanor Campbell*

*Catherine Donnelly, sworn:* –Recollects the 22<sup>nd</sup> November last; was in Maghery on that day; is daughter of last witness, Eleanor Campbell; was at her mother's house when the party came there; her own house was locked up. When the party came into town, deponent ran with her children to a lighter to save them. She had locked her own house; when she went back to her own house she found it locked; the party must have got in by the window; the door was not forced but the windows were broken; she found her husband's and her own clothing burning; some of the furniture was injured, broken; whilst in her mother's house heard a gun fired therein; saw several men with guns and bayonets on them in the house. Deponent did not then, nor does she now, know any of the party concerned in the outrage, she was so much thunderstruck; saw no stranger in the town that day that she knew; she called on Stewart Moneypenny to go up the town with her; he refused, and said he could not do anything for her. Was in Maghery on the Saturday when the scrimmage took place; she was in her own house, and four of her children with her; there were men that had been saving her house that morning from the storm; swears positively that no men left her house that day to take part in the ruction.

*Catherine Donnelly*

*Sarah Campbell, sworn:* –Is daughter of the late Owen Campbell, her mother is living; was in Maghery on Monday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November last; was in her mother's (Mary Campbell's) house; saw the party, a number of men, coming through town; they were armed; they had all guns and bayonets; knew one of them, the boy who broker her mother's furniture, his name is John Catton; there were others with him; they did no5thing, he did the whole damage; he broke the windows and smashed a deal of other things; broke a clock and a wheel. Deponent lives in the Diamond of the town. John Catton had an old ----; he lives in Derry---, County Armagh,

### **The Party Processions Act 1832.**

On July 7<sup>th</sup> 1831 the Governor of Co. Antrim, the Marquis of Donegall, issued a letter to the county magistrates instructing them to: 'use your utmost endeavours to persuade such persons, in your neighbourhood as may intend to violate the law, by walking in procession on the 12th July, of the folly and illegality of such proceeding". In Portadown 27 Orange Lodges demonstrated before a crowd estimated at 10,000. In Rathfriland five Catholics were reported to have been shot dead and three or four drowned in the river Bann near Katesbridge, after a 12<sup>th</sup> demonstration. The increasing level and frequency of violence that accompanied the spread of Orange marches into parts of Northern Ireland other than those under the control of the Portadown Orangemen led to the *Party Processions Act* being given the Royal assent on August 10<sup>th</sup> 1832. This Act was to be enforced for 5 years, until August 1837. Though it banned all party processions it was specifically aimed at putting an end to Orange demonstrations. This is confirmed by an address to the Grand Jury of Armagh at the Summer Assizes of 1833 when a Judge Moore dealt with 10 Orangemen who had been charged under the Act. Commenting on the provisions of the Act he said:

its objective was to put an instant stop to parties marching in procession, with colours, badges, or other insignia, calculated to create a disturbance, or arouse religious and political animosity in his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects.

### **1833 Drumcree 'Church Parade' is Rerouted along the Garvaghy Road.**

On June 28<sup>th</sup> 1833 Sir William Gossett issued the following statement to all Chief Constables:

"Sir - The Lord Lieutenant entertains a confident hope that there will be no recurrence, on the 12th of July, of those assemblies which have proved so destructive of the peace of the country, and so inconsistent with its real interests. His Excellency directs me to say, that should he be disappointed in that hope, by the continuance of a custom, not only mischievous in its effects, but in violation of the law, the utmost aid of the Government will be afforded for the suppression of such assemblies. The Constabulary under your command should be directed to

be most vigilant on the day in question, and to note the persons taking part in such illegal assemblies, and what is said and done, with a view to the prosecution of the offenders. This caution applies not only to the 12th July, but to all other periods on which the demonstration of political or religious feelings may, by any party, be attempted"

With increasing attention being focused on the collusion between police, magistrates and Orangemen in Co. Armagh Orangemen had to be seen to be prosecuted in order to prevent the authorities in Dublin and London from upsetting the *status quo*. Twenty-five Orangemen were fined sixpence each for marching in July 1833 (the number rose to 60 in July 1834). In addition to this manoeuvre the Orange leadership were felt compelled to avoid drawing attention to the town and tried to moderate the aggressiveness and offensiveness of Orange demonstrations. Anxious lest the Orange cabal he presided over in Portadown might be investigated by the authorities in London and Dublin, Colonel Blacker JP, acquainted the Portadown and Lurgan brethren with a new strategy when they paraded to his estate at Carrickblacker on July 12<sup>th</sup> 1833. In his address to the Orangemen he warned them of the dangers of drawing unwanted attention by marching on Catholic areas and instigating violence that would be brought to the attention of the authorities. Despite his advice, however, some of the Orangemen could not constrain themselves and, on their return from Carrickblacker, two Lodges from the vicinity of the Diamond attacked the Catholic hamlet of Ballyhegan, four miles from Portadown.

Four months later, on November 5<sup>th</sup> Portadown Orangemen used the pretext of celebrating Guy Fawkes day to challenge the enforcement of the *Party Provisions Act*. They did so by changing the route of their march to Drumcree from its 'traditional' course through the Catholic Obins Street area and paraded to church by way of 'The Walk' – then a quiet country road and now better known as the Garvaghy Road. According to the Orange historian W.H. Wolsey, they marched, 'without flags or music' but '*in full uniform*' (meaning they wore their sashes). This is the earliest known record of an Orange march on the Garvaghy Road. It was a direct challenge to the *Party Processions Act* and happened at a time when the local judiciary and were coming under increasing pressure from their superiors in Dublin and London to enforce the law and restore peace in the area.

By moderating their displays and taking an uninhabited route to celebrate the 'Gunpowder Plot' the Orangemen could preserve the most important symbol of their supremacist culture, the militaristic demonstrations of supremacy. By timing it as they did they could make a fawning show of loyalty to the monarch and to the legislators in Parliament who were trying to control their violence. And by cloaking their paramilitary challenge to the authorities in the guise of a 'church parade' they could present themselves as defenders of the Protestant faith from the co-religionists of the Papist plotter, Guy Fawkes.

### **The Ballyhagan Petition**

The Garvaghy Road pretence came too late to prevent an inquiry into Orangeism and their inability to control their impulse to violence at Ballyhegan on the previous 12<sup>th</sup> was to have serious repercussions for both the Orange leadership and the practice of Orangeism. Following the attack on Ballyhagan a petition outlining the grievances of the victims and complaining of collusion between the police, magistrates and Orangemen was sent to Dublin Castle where there was an inquiry was already under way. That petition was an important part of the evidence of Orange subversion and violence that was gathered by John Hancock JP. The inquiry resulted in the Orange leader, Lieutenant Colonel William Blacker JP, losing his commission. His co-conspirator, Colonel William Verner JP, avoided the humiliation of dismissal by resigning his commission in protest and the Orange Order was forced to lower its profile on the roads and streets of Co. Armagh for the next few years - until it was heartened by Verner's election to Parliament.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ORANGE LODGES. [181

Affairs at Maghery, Portadown, Tanderagee, &c.

To his Excellency Henry William Marquis of *Anglesey*, Lord Lieutenant-General and  
General Governor of *Ireland*, &c. &c.

The Petition of the undersigned Inhabitants of the townland of Ballyhagan, near  
Portadown, in the county of Armagh.

Humbly Sheweth,

That Petitioners had fondly hoped that all party processions in Ireland, and the numerous evils arising therefrom, would have ceased on the enactment of a law prohibiting such processions; and that the declared determination of His Majesty's Government to establish internal peace, and promote concord among all classes of His Majesty's subjects, would have met with the approbation of every good and loyal subject, and of every friend of peace and good order:

That petitioners, with deep regret, are sorry to be obliged to approach your Excellency on the present occasion, for the purpose of representing to your Excellency, that notwithstanding the expressed sense of the Legislature and the Government, the law, in this part of the country, continues to be reviled and set at nought; and that party processions are not only allowed with impunity, but, as petitioners have every reason to believe, are encouraged and fomented by persons in authority, whose bounden duty, as magistrates and clergymen, ought as petitioners humbly submit, to cause them to act very differently:

That the townland of Ballyhagan, in which petitioners reside, is principally inhabited by Roman Catholics; and that on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of July last, two lodges of Orangemen bearing flags, and some of whom were armed with pistols, entered the said townland on their return from parading round the country. And attacked a number of people, among whom were petitioners, without having received any provocation whatever; and that a shot from a pistol was deliberately fired by one Robert Williamson, at a man named Michael Carron, who had a narrow escape, the ball from the pistol having entered his dress and grazed his belly; that several individuals were severely cut and wounded. That petitioners, with others, being enabled to identify twenty-one persons who walked in said procession, and who were concerned in said outrage, applied to Curran Woodhouse, esq., a magistrate of the county of Armagh, who at once granted summonses against the parties, to answer the charges on Saturday next, at the petty sessions of Portadown; and petitioners being afraid to serve said summonses themselves, same were placed in the hands of the police at Portadown for that purpose; but petitioners have reason to believe that said summonses have not yet been served:

That Lieutenant-Colonel Blacker, a deputy-lieutenant of the county of Armagh, and an Orangeman, is chairman of the petty sessions at Portadown; and that petitioners firmly believe this gentleman encourages Orange processions, as he permitted a large Orange procession with banners and music to enter his demesne at Carrick, on the last 12<sup>th</sup> July, when he received them very kindly; and he and his lady appeared with party colours on their persons, having caused their gates to be decorated with orange colours, and that he has since been very active in collecting subscriptions, and in arranging the defence of a number of men of the same procession, who were tried at last Armagh assizes, for unlawfully assembling and marching in procession at Lurgan, in said county:

That Joseph Atkinson, esquire, of Crowhill, another of the magistrates, who sits at said petty sessions, is an Orangeman, and a relative of one of the parties accused, and as petitioners believe, also encourages and approves of such processions:

That petitioners' lives have been threatened, in case they prosecute the offenders on this occasion; and they humbly represent, that before a tribunal, constituted as the petty sessions of Portadown is, they do not believe their cause would receive such an investigation as the ends of justice and the vindication of the laws require:

That petitioners further humbly beg leave to represent to your Excellency, that from the well-known principles of a large majority of the magistrates in Armagh, and the selection of the juries of that county, most of whom are composed of Orangemen, that there is little probability of petitioner's cause receiving a fair and impartial trial and judgement, particularly if same be tried in the court of quarter sessions; and petitioners, therefore, humbly hope, that your Excellency may be pleased to order a magistracy of the county to take informations against such persons as can be identified who composed the unlawful assembly and committed the outrage in question; and that such information may be returned to the assizes, and the parties accused dealt with in the mean time according to law.

(signed) <i>Barnard Halligan.</i>	<i>his</i>
<i>William McQuillan</i>	<i>Daniel X McKeeven.</i>
<i>Henry Dowley. (by order)</i>	<i>mark</i>
<i>his</i>	
<i>Arthur X McGeough.</i>	<i>Francis Hughs.</i>
<i>mark</i>	<i>Francis Hagan (by order)</i>
<i>John Laventry.</i>	<i>his</i>
	<i>Patrick X McCormack.</i>
	<i>mark</i>

24<sup>th</sup> July 1833.

When Verner returned to Armagh in triumph on January 15<sup>th</sup> 1835 he was chaired through the streets of by his supporters, who then went on a rampage of the Catholic districts. Over 150 Catholic houses were wrecked and one old man died of exposure after being carried out of his house and laid in the snow by an armed mob. The mob burned 10 Catholic homes near Charlemont. Eleven of Verner's supporters were charged in connection with the riots. All were acquitted.

On March 23<sup>rd</sup> a Parliamentary Select Committee was appointed to inquire into the nature and activities of the Orange institution in Ireland. Of the 27 who were appointed to the Committee 13 were Tories and 14 were Whigs and Liberals, and of these 14 only 3 favoured the repeal of the Union with England.

### **Murder in Drumcree, 1835**

While the Select Committee was taking evidence Hugh Donnelly, a Catholic from Drumcree, was killed by a blow to the head with a stone on Easter Monday 1835. Six of the seven Orangemen charged with the murder were found guilty on the reduced charge of manslaughter. At the same court an Orangeman named John England was found guilty of assaulting a Catholic on May 22<sup>nd</sup> when Orangemen marched in Knocknamuckley. On July 12<sup>th</sup> Portadown Orangemen erected an arch in Woodhouse Street before marching to Drumcree. In a letter submitted to the Parliamentary Select Committee investigating Orange Lodges W.J. Hancock, the County Magistrate who had drafted the Ballyhegan Petition, described the behaviour of the Orangemen and the events that followed from their demonstrations:

#### **SELECT COMMITTEE ON ORANGE LODGES.**

[The letter from Portadown put in and read.]

Dear Sir,

Portadown, 21 July 1835

For some time past the peaceable inhabitants of the parish of Drumcree have been insulted and outraged by large bodies of Orangemen parading the highways, playing party tunes, firing shots, and using the most opprobrious epithets they could invent. On the morning of the 1<sup>st</sup> instant, four small flags were placed on the steeple of the church, and the bell tolled occasionally during the day; a man named Kalter was on his death-bed quite contiguous to the church; his wife in suppliant manner requested a person, whom she met at the entrance of the church, to prevent the tolling of the bell; the reply she received was, that if all the priests in hell and out of hell were to make the request, it would not be acceded to; she said she would go to Mr. Woodhouse, J.P.; the person told her, she need not, as he left home on that day, lest she, or the like of her, should trouble him. In the evening the Orangemen flocked into town from the adjacent districts, lighted a bonfire, beat drums, played party tunes and fired shots the greater part of the night; bonfires blazed on almost all the surrounding hills; I observed a large one only a few perches from the hall door of Mr. Disney, the Protestant curate of Drumcree. Shortly after this, a few Catholics waited on Mr. Woodhouse, to know if he intended to be at home on the 12<sup>th</sup>; he told them he had written to the executive for instructions, and that he would strictly adhere to whatever orders would be sent. On the 11<sup>th</sup>, 16 or 18 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> dragoon guards, under the command of Coronet Knox, and 50 or 60 infantry, of the 33<sup>d</sup>, under the command of officer Reid, arrived in town, some of them wearing Orange lilies. On the night of the 11<sup>th</sup>, or morning of the 12<sup>th</sup>, the Orangemen placed an arch over Woodhouse-street, and two flags were exposed from public-houses, and shots were fired almost continually during this and the two succeeding days. A body of Orangemen, wearing Orange sashes, and about 50 in number, marched through town on the 12<sup>th</sup> without hindrance, and proceeded to Drumcree church, passing by the Catholic chapel (though it was a considerable distance out of their way). At half-past 1 o'clock P.M. the flags and arch were removed, but shortly after they were re-erected, and remained so until Tuesday morning. On Sunday night, Monday and Monday night, and a great part of Tuesday, the peaceable inhabitants of the town were alarmed and terrified by the frequent discharge of musketry, accompanied by the most menacing language. The Orangemen flocked into town on the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup>; the cavalry patrolled the streets, but did not attempt to arrest any of those persons who wore colours. Between 12 and 1 o'clock Mr. Joseph Atkinson, J.P. arrived in town, and I am informed by those in whom I can confide, that he addressed the Orangemen from his gig, in the back of which an Orange lily was stuck; he told them he had supported their cause for the last 50- years; wished to know if any of them remembered the Diamond fight: stated that he had been there; said they should support their arch, and that it should remain untouched, as the military had no business with it; after this he proceeded as far as the front of the church ( where a great number of the Orangemen were collected ); after consulting with a few of them for some time, he drove out of town by the Armagh road. Shortly after, a large body of Orangemen, wearing sashes, beating drums, and carrying no less than 10 banners, entered the town, Mr. Atkinson driving his gig close in the rear. Before this formidable body arrived at Woodhouse-street, Mr. Woodhouse and the cavalry stopped them, but did not arrest any of them, neither did they take their drums or colours; after this repulse, the Orangemen returned up the street, and deposited their flags in different public-houses, out of the windows of which they were exposed, and out of some of which several shots were fired. About half-past 2 o'clock P.M. a great many of them proceeded out of town by the Loughgall road, with unfurled banners; about 4 o'clock P.M. a portion of this body, decorated with the insignia of their order, and having with them seven flags, marched to the center of the town without meeting any obstruction from the magistrates, military or police. On the 14<sup>th</sup> a sham battle was fought at Blacker's-mill, convenient to the colonel's residence; a number of Orangemen, wearing sashes and

carrying two flags, marched through Portadown to the scene of action. A curtailed statement of these facts has been embodied in a memorial to Earl Musgrave, requesting him to institute an investigation, and to appoint a stipendiary magistrate, as the people do not place confidence in the local resident magistracy since your departure. George Blacker of Cosheny, a tenant of Mr. Brownlow's, was severely beaten by a body of Orangemen, armed with deadly weapons, hatchets, &c; the only provocation was, not shouting "Verner for ever," when demanded.

With best wishes for your welfare, I have the honour to remain, &c.

William John Hancock, Esq.

Five Orangemen were charged with the attack on George Blacker but all were acquitted. As part of their policy of intimidating delinquent magistrates and JPs the Portadown Orangemen burned effigies of Hancock on their 'traditional' bonfires for some years after this.

About three weeks after the events described in Hancock's letter, on August 4th 1835, five Catholic families were attacked by Orangemen at Tartaraghan. Windows and doors were smashed, animals killed, farm implements were taken or broken, and house were wrecked. Some of the victims had provided the evidence that led to the conviction of the six Orangemen who had killed Hugh Donnelly at Drumcree on Easter Monday. Seven men who had family connections with the convicted killers were charged with the attacks at Tartaraghan, one was convicted.

### **Report of the Commons Select Committee on Orange Institutions**

Despite lengthy submissions by the leaders of the Orange Order the report of the Select Committee confirmed that:

The obvious tendency and effect of the Orange society is to keep up an exclusive society in civil and military life, exciting one portion of the people against the other; to increase the rancour and animosity too often, unfortunately, existing between different religious persuasions... by processions on particular days, attended with insignia of the society, to excite to breaches of the peace and to bloodshed.

When the report was published a Cabinet council was held at the Foreign Office for the purpose of agreeing the terms of the resolutions which were to be submitted to the House of Commons by Lord John Russell, Secretary of State for the Home Department, on the 23rd of Feb. 1836. This resolution stated:

"That it is the opinion of this house that the existence of any political society in Ireland, consisting exclusively of persons preferring one religious faith, using secret signs and symbols, and acting by means of affiliated branches, tend to injure the peace of society - to derogate from the authority of the Crown, to weaken the supremacy of the law, and to impair the religious freedom of his majesty's subjects in that part of the United Kingdom. That an humble address be presented to his majesty, laying before him the foregoing resolution, and praying that his majesty will take such steps for the discouragement of all such societies as may seem to his majesty most desirable.

Russell read the King's reply to this resolution in the House of Commons on Thursday 25th of Feb. 1836:

William Rex - I willing assert to the prayer of my faithful Commons, that I will be pleased to take such measures as shall seem advisable for the effectual discouragement of Orange Lodges, and generally of all political societies excluding persons of a different religious persuasion using signs and symbols, and acting by means of associated lodges. It is my firm intention to discourage all such societies, and I rely with confidence upon the fidelity of my loyal subjects to support me in my determination.

Lord Russell read the response of the Grand Master of the Orange Order, the Duke of Cumberland, aloud to the House of Commons on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February.

I have received your Lordships letter, with the copy of the resolutions of the House of Commons on the Subject of Orange Lodges, together with his majesties gracious answer there to. Before I received your lordships communication, I had already taken steps, with several influential members, to recommend their immediate dissolution. In conformity with the wish expressed by his majesty, I shall take all legal steps to dissolve Orange Lodges.

### **Dissolution of the Orange Order, 1836**

A number of Orange Lodges in Ireland issued public statements in response to what had been said in the Commons. These resolutions generally bemoaned the specific references to Orange Lodges in the king's

statement. The Orangemen argued that the king had been ill advised by the Select Committee, the Foreign Office, and the Secretary of State for the Home Department. Despite their protestations the Grand Lodge of Ireland met in Dublin on April 13<sup>th</sup> 1836 and voted in favour of the dissolution of the Orange Order.

### **Portadown Orangemen Persist.**

Two months after the Grand Lodge dissolved, on June 13<sup>th</sup> 1836, as the time for demonstrating drew near, the fanatical leaders of Orangeism in Portadown met in secret and resolved to set up a provisional Grand Lodge in the town. 'Orange Jimmy' Verner MP refused the post of Grand Master. Such a position would have compromised his political career and so the honour fell to William Blacker. He had nothing to lose since he had been stripped of his commission for participating in the illegal Orange demonstration on his estate just three years before.

Upwards of 50 Orangemen were charged under the "Party Processions Act" for marching in Portadown on 1st of July 1836. In March of the following year 91 Orangemen were prosecuted, among them were a father and son who were tried for attacking a Catholic house in Aughnacloy on July 13<sup>th</sup> 1836. The father was acquitted while the son was sentenced to 6 months hard labour. The Orangemen's persistence in violent demonstrations threatened to expose the secretive machinations of the outlawed provisional Grand Lodge and when the leaders of Orangeism and their friends in the judiciary managed finally to discourage them the county of Armagh remained relatively free of sectarian violence for several years.

### **Orangemen Break the Peace**

The *Party Processions Act* was not enforced after May 1845 and the Orangemen prepared to stage the county demonstration in Portadown on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July. When the day arrived the town of Armagh erupted in violence. Ignoring the warnings of police and magistrates 150 Orangemen, some carrying firearms, marched into the Catholic part of town where residents stoned them. One Catholic was shot dead and a number of others wounded. Three Orangemen were later found guilty of manslaughter and received sentences of one to four months. Fifteen others and ten Catholics were found guilty of rioting and were bound to keep the peace for seven years. The Orange Order was warned that though the *Party Processions Act* had expired this did not mean they could stage armed processions.

### **THE PARTY PROCESSIONS ACT IS REVIVED.**

Orange leaders tried to moderate the aggressive nature of their demonstrations but could not control the impulse to violence and the next major outbreak of Orange violence, the 'Battle of Dolly's Brae' resulted in the revival of *Party Processions Act* in 1850.

The 12<sup>th</sup> July demonstrations in Belfast in 1857 sparked the most serious sectarian rioting there since the turn of the century. The riots lasted until September 6<sup>th</sup> and there was extensive damage to property. A Royal Commission appointed to investigate the riots said in their report:

The Orange system seems to us now to have no other practical result than as a means of keeping up the Orange festivals and celebrating them; leading as they do, to violence, outrage, religious animosities, hatred between the classes and too often bloodshed and loss of life.

In a letter published in the "Northern Whig" in October 1857 Lord Chancellor Brady said:

It is manifest that the existence of this orange society, and the conduct of many of those who belong to it, tend to keep up, through large districts of the North, a spirit of bitter and factious hostility among large classes of her Majesties subjects, and to provoke violent animosity and aggression.

### **Outrageous Attack on Orangemen**

The first edition of the *Portadown News* was circulated in 1859 and, being the local paper, it has been a primary source of information on violent Orange marches. In the early editions the editor declared his paper would advocate, 'the principle of pure enlightened Protestantism and sound progressive conservatism.... [and it would] pander to the bigotry of no party'. The hypocrisy of this pledge was soon to be proved. The very next year, on July 14<sup>th</sup> 1860, an incident a few miles from Portadown was reported under the sensational headline, *OUTRAGEOUS ATTACK ON ORANGEMEN AT DERRYMACHASH CHAPEL*. The subheading read *16 Roman Catholics Shot*. Under this puzzling headline it was reported that a riot had taken place at Derrymacash Chapel when a parade of 70 Orangemen was attacked by 300 Catholics armed with turf spades and billhooks etc. The *Portadown News* said:

The Catholics had blocked the road at Derrymacash Chapel and attacked the approaching Orangemen who in their defence, fired on the lawless mob, shooting down 16... of their cowardly assailants.... Seven Protestants have been arrested, but none of the attacking party.

In the following week Catholic witnesses to the shootings testified at a preliminary investigation. They said they didn't expect the Orangemen to pass by the chapel as they had taken a different road into Lurgan in the morning. They said the Orangemen were heard firing pistol shots as they approached the chapel on their return from Lurgan and that word quickly spread that, 'the Chapel was a wrecking'. They said that when the Catholics reached the chapel there was some stone throwing and that the Orangemen challenged them to fight. As more Catholics arrived at the chapel the Orangemen retreated, shooting 16 Catholics as they went. In its report of on the preliminary investigation the *Portadown News* said, 'there was an utter absence of all proof that the Orangemen were prepared for a fight. It was not shown that they had any weapons, except a harmless pistol or two, which they fired off harmlessly'.

One of the wounded Catholics, T Murphy, died a short while later. Another was paralysed, and a woman was shot in the eye by the Orangemen who, the *Portadown News* reported, 'luckily... escaped the Wolf dogs thirsting for their blood'. At Murphy's inquest a Mr. John Rea, acting on behalf of the deceased mans father, asked that no Orangemen be allowed to sit on the jury. He referred to the Lord Chancellor's instructions to the Lord Lieutenant not to recommend anyone connected with the Orange society for appointment to the bench. Rea indicated that the presence of Orangemen on the jury would render any verdict suspect. Justice Atkinson refused to exclude his brethren.

On March 9<sup>th</sup> 1861 an Orangeman by the name of Samuel Tait was sentenced to 15 month in prison for the manslaughter of Murphy; the sentence to be effective from the date of his committal some 9 months earlier. Three other Orangemen were sentenced to 6 months in prison for 'having fired off harmlessly', another twelve were sentenced to 3 months each for rioting and two others got six weeks for unlawful assembly.

Five years after the Derrymacash shootings seven Orangemen were injured by gunfire when an Orange 'drumming party' marched on a mid-summer's eve bonfire in the Catholic village of Annaghmore. Thomas Davison was sentenced to one year in prison and two other villagers were sentenced to 9 months each.

### ***The Party Emblems Act, 1860***

The 'outrageous attack on the Orangemen at Derrymacash' led to the passing of the *Party Emblems Act* in August 1860. This Act, which forbade the carrying of arms and the wearing of party colours in procession, had the effect of making every semblance of an Orange demonstration illegal. However, in Portadown, where Orangeism had already infiltrated or intimidated the judiciary, the police, the press, and the Protestant Church, the Orangemen persisted in staging illegal marches and assemblies in the town throughout the next decade. As the levels of violence associated with their demonstrations again attracted the attentions of the authorities Orange Grand Master, Lord Enniskillen, issued a public appeal to the 'lower orders' to keep the peace and to stop their illegal marching. His concern was not for the victims of Orange violence but for the Order's reputation, 'Our good and sacred cause is injured when you give your enemies occasion to speak ill of you as acting illegally or to triumph at your punishment'.

The following July extra police were drafted into Portadown where the Orangemen went ahead with an illegal demonstration on the 12<sup>th</sup>. In July 1866 some Orangemen were charged with parading in a manner, 'calculated to provoke animosity between different classes of Her Majesty's subjects'.

In 1867 local Orangemen assembled with a marching band outside St. Patrick's Catholic Church in William Street. They harassed people attending the annual 'mission', which was being conducted that year by the Passionist Fathers. Catholics were attacked on their way to and from the chapel and one of the Passionist Fathers was knocked unconscious. Police reinforcements were drafted in but they failed to control the Orangemen. The Sub Inspector of police claimed that, 'the men under his command were not sufficient to keep back the Orangemen'. The parish priest advised the men of the parish to band together for protection.

### **Orangemen Force Government Climb-down**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1869 a crowd of 3,000 people attended a bonfire in the Edenderry area of Portadown. Effigies of Prime Minister Gladstone, the Pope, and Lundy were ceremonially burned. The 'celebrations' came to an abrupt end when the crowd learned that a large majority in the House of Commons had affirmed a bill for the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland. These 'defenders of civil and religious liberty' attacked the police who retreated to their barracks for reinforcements and arms. The police fired shots over the heads of the rioters and then drove them back across the Bann Bridge. The *Portadown News* said the

rioters thought the police were firing blanks and counterattacked; a 17-year-old Protestant named Thomas Watson was shot dead. The Orange Order used Watson's funeral as a demonstration of strength and twenty-four Lodges marched through the town. Heartened by the success of this show they began to organise a challenge to the 1860 *Party Emblems Act*. In the run up to the 1870 marching season they posted notices around the town urging the brethren to disregard the law on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July. On June 30<sup>th</sup> 110 men of the Royal Irish Constabulary and 54 soldiers were drafted into the town but they did not attempt to stop the '1<sup>st</sup> Sunday' demonstration. On July 12<sup>th</sup> tens of thousands of Orangemen from all parts of the North gathered in town to march to Carrickblackler, the Party Emblems Act had been repealed.

A few days before the July demonstrations of 1871 Lurgan magistrates issued a public notice stating that they had received information to the effect that the demonstrations were, 'calculated to lead to a breach of the peace'. They banned all processions and drumming parties and threatened to prosecute anyone who took part in the planned marches. At a mass meeting in Lurgan on June 30<sup>th</sup> the Orangemen announced they would defy the ban. Over 100 extra police were drafted into the town to stop the Orangemen but they fled when the demonstrators attacked. The magistrates withdrew their ban before the 12th of July.

### **1873 and 'The Worst Riots in 20 Years'**

Residents of the Catholic enclave of Obins Street petitioned for police reinforcements to be sent to the town for the Orange demonstrations of July 1873. Though their petition was supported by a Justice of the Peace no extra police were made available and when the Orangemen returned from the county demonstration in Armagh they marched into the ghetto and started a riot. At the trial of those charged with rioting it was reported that as the 300 strong demonstration progressed along the street an Orangemen rushed at a girl who was waving 'something green'. This was said to have sparked what one RIC man described as the worst riot he had witnessed in 20 years. The Orangemen fired pistols, wrecked Brankin's pub and houses all along the street. Another RIC man reported having used his sword to protect a woman who was being attacked in her home. She was one of a number of women who received injuries to the head and face. In its defence of the Orange mob the *Portadown News* said, 'It chanced that the route... lay through the Tunnel', and went on to accuse the residents of Obins Street of having launched a 'sneakish attack' on the 300, 'peaceable men whose only crime was that they were Protestants and loyal subjects'.

### **The Home Rule Riots**

On December 18<sup>th</sup> 1873 around three thousand loyalists assembled at the Fair Green, close to Portadown town centre, to protest against the Home Rule Bill, which was being debated in Parliament. That evening the mob assembled at the Catholic Church in William Street. They fired shots and smashed windows in the church and the nearby parochial house. Then they headed for Obins Street but were stopped by the RIC in Woodhouse Street.

Lurgan Catholics petitioned the local magistrates to prevent an Orange demonstration passing through Edward Street in July 1887. The Orangemen were re-routed and the 12<sup>th</sup> passed without incident in Lurgan. However, the Orangemen resolved to stop a demonstration in support of Home Rule that was scheduled to take place in Edward Street on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, 'Lady Day'. Notices were posted calling on supporters to assemble in town on the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup>. Police reinforcements were drafted in but failed to prevent Orangemen staging a march into the exclusively Catholic Edward Street at 5am. Later that day Catholics paraded without incident. The *Portadown News* reported the events with an abusive attack on the Catholics and when local Catholics returned from Lurgan after attending Home Rule demonstrations the following year they had to be escorted from the railway station by the RIC. Catholic owned shops and homes in the town were attacked.

Orangemen were stoned as they marched through Obins Street on Easter Monday 1879 and there was fighting at the railway station as Orange demonstrators returned from Belfast. There was more fighting on July 23rd. When the Cockhill orange band marched into Obins Street. When police arrested one of the Orangemen they were followed to the RIC barracks in Woodhouse Street where the mob was dispersed and two more arrests were made. Later that night shots were fired and Catholic property and homes were attacked.

On August 15th 1880 around 300 rioters attacked the 'Tunnel'. They pulled down an arch in Curran Street and damaged houses in the area. The following day a number of Catholics were injured when St. Patrick's Band was attacked while on its way to the station. Houses in Marley Street and other parts of town were also attacked. There were similar incidents in August 1882 and 1883.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of August 1883 the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland was questioned in Parliament about attacks on a Catholic owned post office, a church and homes by Orangemen who were allowed by the Protestant town commissioners and magistrates to parade through the streets firing shots. The Chief Secretary refused to answer the questions.

Orangemen returning from Scarva in August 1884 attacked Catholic homes and property in Edward Street and the Shankill in Lurgan.

### **1885, Saint Patrick's Day**

With the approach of St. Patrick's Day 1885 two hundred police reinforcements were drafted into Portadown. The 'Tunnel Band' was restricted to a stretch of Obins Street while the Orange Order demonstrated without hindrance in the town centre. However, finding this an unfulfilling demonstration of their culture they determined to invade the Catholic enclave. They were forced back by the 'Tunnelites' who injured the County Deputy Grand Master, George Locke. RIC men, with bayonets fixed, then drove the Orangemen back into the town centre. Later that year this report on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July demonstration appeared in the *Portadown News*:

The line of the march included the Tunnel and some apprehension was experienced as to the safety of the Orangemen while in this vicinity. But the precaution taken by the magistrates in drafting in some seventy-five constabulary ensured the good behaviour of the Tunnelites and the procession passed through in perfect safety.

### ***'Storming the Tunnel'***

This was the headline to a report in the *Portadown News* on the trial of the leader of an Orange mob that marched into Obins Street and started a riot in celebration of the defeat of the Home Rule Bill in 1886. At the height of that year's marching season the local paper reported on a general election rally in Obins Street saying, 'the bulk of them would have been the better of a good turn in the wash tub.... And as for fighting power, if it went to that, we should be ashamed of the couple of Orange Lodges that would ask help of a single outsider to sweep them clean off their path'. Two days later, on the 12<sup>th</sup>, and again on the 13<sup>th</sup>, rioting in Obins Street resulted in twenty-seven Orangemen and locals appearing in court. Defence for both sides agreed to have all charges dismissed so as, 'to encourage better community relations'. The Orangemen returned to Obins Street the following St. Patrick's day and started another riot.

### **More Questions in the House of Commons**

The problem of Orange violence in Obins Street during July 1887 the subject of exchanges in the House of Commons again that year. The Chief Secretary was asked to respond to reports that a Catholic had been seriously injured on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July by stone-throwing Orangemen, while the police looked on. His dismissive reply was that the man had not been seriously injured.

### **Marching Band Suspends Parading.**

Nine members of the Catholic 'Tunnel Band' (also known as St. Patrick's Band) appeared in court on charges of riotous behaviour on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 1891. The band had turned out to protest at the actions of the police in allowing an Orange band to march though Obins Street on the day before, Sunday. Stones were thrown when the RIC and a hostile crowd at the Corcraine end of Obins Street blocked the Band's way. Police reinforcements were sent for and, with some of the Corcraine crowd, they went to the band-hall in Curran Street, just off Obins Street, where they attacked the bandsmen and local residents. In the course of the subsequent court hearing the chairman of the court said he thought the Orangemen should not have been allowed into Obins Street on the 27<sup>th</sup>. District Inspector Bonis opposed bail for the bandsmen but bail was granted when an assurance was given that they would not parade while on remand.

### **1892: "Ye Have Not Passed This Way Heretofore"**

On St. Patrick's day 1892 all police were concentrated in Obins Street while the Orange Order marched around the town, occasionally attacking Catholic owned shops and pubs.

'Strong drink', 'Home Rule', and 'Papists who wanted ascendancy' were the theme of Rev. Austin's address to the Orangemen at Drumcree on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July that year. The brethren heard the Reverend read from Joshua 11:4: 'Ye have not passed this way heretofore' before returning to town to prepare to pass through

Obins Street again on the 12<sup>th</sup>. On the 13<sup>th</sup> around 2,000 Orangemen followed Corcraine Orange band out of the town centre and into the Catholic enclave where they ran amok and smashed windows all along the street to Corcraine. They returned from Corcraine via Edgarstown and formed up in Woodhouse Street attempt another pass through the wrecked street. But by then the people of the area were ready and beat them back. When the Orange mob returned for a third assault on the Tunnel they came firing guns and, as locals retreated, they went ‘a wrecking’ once again. Only when they had broken into the street did the 12 or 13 RIC men stationed in the Obins Street RIC barracks arm themselves and succeed in forcing the Orangemen out of the street.

When the Blackmen marched on Obins Street on the 14<sup>th</sup> their way was barred by police reinforcements who had arrived overnight. The police dispersed them with fixed bayonets when they attacked. The *Portadown News* reported that the ‘blackguards’ in the Tunnel broke their own windows in another ‘dastardly’ attack on the Blackmen.

### **Might is Right**

Four weeks later, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August 1892 the Apprentice Boys were re-routed away from the Tunnel. Catholic property in the town and the home of a Catholic JP, James Grew, were attacked. There were similar attacks in September when Orangemen convicted of rioting in Obins Street on the 12<sup>th</sup> were released from prison. However, the Orange violence had the desired effect and on November 5<sup>th</sup> all RIC men from surrounding towns were drafted into the Tunnel to secure the way for the Orange Order, led by bands from the Birches. The Tunnel was swamped with police on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of July 1893 when the brethren initiated a new tradition which effectively doubled their opportunity intimidate the residents of the Tunnel. The *Portadown News* described the new tactic; ‘the Royal Black Preceptorics proceeded to Brankin's Hill [via Obins Streett.] and there joined their country brethren in order to secure their safe passage into town’. In later years there was such a large turnout for this new tradition that the ‘escort’ would still be entering the 1/2 mile long Tunnel on their way to Corcraine when the head of the demonstration had already completed the return trip to town.

On August 12<sup>th</sup> 1893 members of an Orange band beat up a Catholic man at Corcraine and attacked a Catholic family in their home at Drumcree. They broke in the windows and doors, wrecked furniture and beat the householder, John Furphy. Two of the Orangemen involved in the attack later claimed Furphy and his sons attacked them. The *Irish News* reported that a ‘barrow load of stones’ was removed from Furphy’s house. The attack was reported in the House of Commons on August 18<sup>th</sup>.

### **Nothing to Fear for 100 Years**

A Reverend Turner from Dundalk was guest preacher at Drumcree on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rev. Maunsell’s stirring sermon to the ‘Orange Boys’ in 1795. This ‘evangelical labourer in the vineyard of the Lord’ assured the assembled Orangemen that Catholics who took the Pope for their God had nothing to fear from the Protestant ascendancy. Fortified with this spiritual reassurance the Orangemen set out on a 12<sup>th</sup> of July pilgrimage to the historic site of the Diamond.

In July 1897 a Catholic man was fined 10 shillings for crossing Obins Streett. during the 12<sup>th</sup> July demonstration.

### **Boycott Catholics, Ostracise Protestants.**

At the opening of Derryhale Orange Hall in July 1899 the reverends Thacker and Austin made what the *Portadown News* described as ‘important speeches’. The reverends castigated Portadown Protestants who sold land to, employed, or consorted with ‘Papist rebels’. They accused one unnamed Protestant of making his factory ‘look like the Tunnel’ (employing too many Catholics). Another Protestant businessman was accused of helping to ‘plant Popery’ in Portadown by selling land to Catholics, ‘on which to build a nunnery’. These expressions of civil and religious hatred were chaired by W.J Locke, a Justice of the Peace and Worshipful District Master of the Portadown Orangemen. Locke owned property the Tunnel area where there had been a serious outbreak of fever a few years before. At the time of the outbreak the *Portadown News* urged landlords to do something for fear the fever would spread beyond the ghetto:

many of the private houses in the Tunnel are in an unhealthy and unsanitary condition.... many of the residents are wretchedly poor. They are destitute of food and clothing... household and personal cleanliness are almost unknown; filth and squalor abound.... [and called on the landlords, for the sake of humanity] and in the interest of every inhabitant of the town to do more for their tenants than collect rents.

On February 28<sup>th</sup> 1900 the good citizens of Portadown ‘celebrated the political and cultural links with mainland Britain which guarantees a pluralist society which can tolerate ethnic and religious diversity’. (Kennaway). They attacked St. Patrick's Hall, the parochial house, Catholic homes and businesses, and the home of James Grew, JP. Criminal charges against a number of them were dismissed in court when they claimed they had been enraged at the failure of the English to relieve the town of Ladysmith, in South Africa, which was under siege by the Boers.

### **The Canons Trip goes to Parliament**

After first mass on Sunday the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 1901 a crowd of around 200 Catholics, mostly women and children, left St. Patrick's Church in William Street to go to the railway station in Edenderry on an excursion to Warrenpoint. In the weeks before this ‘Canon’s trip’ a Protestant clergymen had been making inflammatory speeches and the organisers of the outing had received threatening letters. Five hundred RIC men were drafted into the town to protect the excursionists who, acting on the advice of Father F. Kerr C.C., carried no flags, emblems or Nationalist colours. When they returned in the evening they were assaulted and abused all the way from the station to the centre of town where the RIC baton charged the loyalist mob. In the House of Commons J.J. Clancy MP referred to the Protestant cleric’s speeches and asked the Chief Secretary to ensure that police reinforcements be retained in the town to protect the Catholic population.

A man was fined 40 shillings for throwing stones at Orangemen in Obins Street on July 14<sup>th</sup> 1903.

### **‘The Mad Month’**

The month of July has long been called ‘The Mad Month’. On Easter Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> April 1905 Paddy Faloon, a thirty-six year old father of four, was shot dead in Woodhouse Street. Woodhouse Street leads into the Catholic Obins Street area and the shooting happened as an Orange parade was blocked from entering that area. Faloon was standing alone at Magerrity's shop when Thomas Cordner shot him with a revolver. Faloon ran for cover but was shot in the back and died a short time later at his home in Curran Street. When Cordner was arrested a mob of 400 Orangemen tried to free him from the RIC barracks where he was being held. Several Orangemen and a bandsman from Keady were arrested. That evening the RIC blocked turned another Orange parade away from Obins Street.

The Faloon murder was raised in the House of Commons by MP for West Belfast, Joe Devlin. Devlin asked the Chief Secretary if he was aware that there were not sufficient police in Portadown on Easter Monday when the Orangemen, led by a band from Coalisland, attempted to return through the Catholic quarter of town. He said:

seeing that year after year crowds of Orangemen assembled in Portadown for the purpose of attacking the Roman Catholics there, and that there were alternative routes, namely by Montague St. and Charles St. or The Walk... and in view of the conduct of these mobs... would he issue an order prohibiting such assemblies from marching through the Catholic quarter...

The MP for Antrim South, C. Craig, said it was not true to say the Orangemen assembled with the intention of attacking Roman Catholics and begged to have that part of the question withdrawn. He was laughed at when Devlin pointed out that that was the principal part of the question. Chief Secretary Long defended the Orange Order saying there had been no trouble in the Tunnel when the Orangemen marched through the area with police protection. He said the route was a traditional one and that the murder of Faloon was not sectarian. Devlin noted that Orangemen had cheered the murderer on the day. The Orangemen cheered Cordner again and held celebrations on the streets when he was found guilty but insane and committed to a lunatic asylum.

### **The Men of Annaghmore**

On Easter Monday 1906 an estimated 300 Orangemen from the Portadown District assembled at Derryadd with the intention of marching through the exclusively Catholic village of Annaghmore to Cornagill where a foundation stone was to be laid for an Orange hall. When the people of Annaghmore arranged a counter demonstration the RIC asked the Orangemen to take an alternative route that would add only 400 yards to the length of the march. The Orangemen refused and marched on the 30 men who stood their ground on Annaghmore hill. They beat the men off the hill and damaged 12 Catholic owned houses. Six Orangemen and eight Catholics were charged with offences arising from the riot. All the Orangemen were acquitted; all the Catholics were sentenced to two months hard labour and bound to keep the peace for

a year. However, their stand on Annaghmore hill was rewarded later that year when 150 RIC men were drafted in to keep Orangemen from parading into the hamlet on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July (According to Parliamentary papers from the time, the Orange were barred from parading through Annaghmore again in 1908).

One Orangeman had his eye put out and 10 were arrested when police baton-charged rioters who attacked Catholic homes in Tandragee after the Sham Fight at Scarva on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 1906.

A man was arrested in Obins Street on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 1906.

There was more fighting in Obins Street in 1907 when Orangemen from Derrykevin marched into the area on Easter Monday and again on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July. There was more of the same in July 1908.

***‘A Perfect Reign of Terror Has Been Established in Portadown’***

In July 1909 an Orangeman appeared in court charged with breaking the windows of a house at . The Orangeman admitted to having been at the scene of the attack but claimed he was there to protect an Orange arch. When questioned further he admitted the arch had never been interfered with. He was acquitted.

Three Catholic women were prosecuted for rioting on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July.

Speaking in the Commons on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 1909 Joe Devlin condemned the police in Portadown for allowing a mob to harass a group of Catholics on their way by train to a temperance rally in Armagh on the previous day. He said the Catholics had been forced to detrain before reaching the station on their return and that the Orangemen of the town saw this as a great victory. He went on to say that, with the indulgence of the biased police force, ‘a perfect reign of terror has been established in Portadown against the Roman Catholics’. He asked the Chief Secretary if he was aware that every year the Orange Order marched, with police protection, through an exclusively Catholic part of Portadown - even though there was an alternative route open to them. He said this had happened again on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July when Orangemen, with a police escort, had marched in a provocative manner playing party tunes and cursing the Pope. Devlin said this behaviour resulted in fighting and injuries with shots being fired by the Orangemen. He called for a searching inquiry into the conduct of the police on June 27<sup>th</sup> and July 13<sup>th</sup> and asked why they had permitted the Orangemen to parade in an offensive manner and erect an Orange arch in front of the Catholic church in William Street. Chief Secretary Birrell said he did not have sufficient information to give a detailed reply to Devlin's questions.

***‘Strange Police’, in the Most Peaceful Town in the Country.***

There were 600 RIC reinforcements on standby in Portadown on Saturday, August 14<sup>th</sup> 1909 when the District Master of the Portadown Orange Order and Chairman of the Town Council, W.H. Wright, addressed a rally in the town centre. Wright urged the crowd to demonstrate against an excursion by the local branch of the Irish National Foresters that was due to take the train to Newry for the annual 'Lady Day' celebrations. After 8 o'clock mass at St. Patrick's church in William Street the Foresters were escorted through back streets by the police reinforcements. As they approached the railway station in Edenderry they were confronted by a loyalist crowd on the road-bridge over the river Bann. The police baton charged the mob and forced a way through to the station where the Foresters boarded a waiting train. While the Foresters were away the mob roamed the town in search of victims. They assaulted men and women on their way to mass in St. Patrick's' and stoned the church and the parochial house in William Street. They attacked Saint Patrick's Hall and the ‘nunnery’ in Thomas St., the homes of two Catholic JPs. And Catholic owned homes and shops all around the town were attacked and looted. When the train carrying the foresters returned in the evening it was heavily stoned and the Foresters were forced to walk back along the railway to Obins Street. That night and the next loyalist mobs made repeated attempts to storm the Tunnel but were beaten back by the RIC reinforcements and residents. The rioting spread to Lurgan when an Orange band led 1,000 supporters to the railway station in the predominantly Catholic end of town on the pretext of escorting two Protestants who were emigrating to America.

Over 30 men appeared in court charged with riot and assault. The police reinforcements who made the arrests were referred to in court as ‘strange police’, meaning they didn't know how things were done in Portadown, and their evidence was treated as being unreliable. In the House of Commons the member for South Antrim, Mr. Craig, was reminded that the town where the Forester's had been attacked was the town he had only recently described as ‘one of the most peaceful in the country’.

Three Catholic women were shot and wounded at Annaghmore on August 15<sup>th</sup> 1914. Thomas Benson from Teaguy was charged with the shooting but judge J.G. Waugh refused to hear the evidence against him and he was released.

Gunmen ambushed a group of Catholics on their way home to Annaghmore and the Moy after the 'Lady Day' celebrations in Lurgan on 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1920. The ambush took place at the Bann-Foot ferry. Francis McNeice was shot dead and another man was seriously wounded. No one was ever charged in connection with the shooting.

### **Portadown Curfew**

On Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1931 a bus carrying people back to Obins Street from the 'Lady Day' celebrations in Armagh was attacked in Woodhouse Street. The mobs then attacked Obins Street and when they were repulsed they roamed the town attacking Catholic homes and shops. The attacks continued late into the night and resumed after Protestant church services on Sunday evening. A horse and cart was used as a battering ram in an unsuccessful attempt to break down the gates to the convent in Thomas Street and a car was wrecked when the driver refused to give the mob some petrol. Catholic homes in Thomas Street and William Street were repeatedly attacked, many Catholic owned shops and every pub in the town was looted and wrecked. Extra RUC men and B Specials were drafted into the town on Monday and local magistrates called for a curfew. Pubs were closed at 7 o'clock and the RUC and B-Specials blocked the entrance to Obins Street and patrolled the town in armoured cars to enforce a dusk to dawn curfew.

### **1932 and The International Eucharistic Congress**

Thousands of Northern Catholics travelled by train to Dublin for the Eucharistic Congress of 1932. All trains servicing counties Armagh, Tyrone, North Down and South Derry had to pass through Portadown and it was here that the principles of civil and religious liberty, so carefully cultivated by the Orange Order, were enacted for the benefit of the pilgrims. As the special trains carrying the pilgrims drew into Portadown on Sunday the 26<sup>th</sup> and Monday the 27<sup>th</sup> of June they were met with a barrage of missiles. Many of the train's windows were smashed and an unrecorded number of men and women were injured. While they were waiting for more trains to arrive the mobs attacked the Tunnel and isolated Catholic homes and businesses.

Some of those who were injured or had property damaged in the attacks sought compensation through the courts. A woman who had received serious eye injuries when the trains were ambushed was told by a judge Green that he had known, 'many clever draughtsmen with one eye'. Then, sounding suspiciously like Lord Eniskillen in 1864 and William Blacker in 1833, judge Green warned the Orangemen that the attack on the trains, 'was the worst possible way to attempt to serve that cause'. The judge's warning was not lost on the Orange leadership and the Grand Orange Lodge, being based in Dublin, was compromised enough to issue a statement condemning the violence. Judge Green's contempt for the victims of Orange violence surfaced in another case when a Mrs. McConnell sought compensation for damages to her property. She told how 'a crowd assembled in the middle of the night at her house and threw petrol under the door, to which they set fire. The door was burned; also linoleum mats, pictures, frames etc. There was also a gent's hat that was hanging in the hall'. Judge Green interrupted her to sneer, 'You didn't use it to put out the flames'. The *Portadown News* said the attacks weren't serious.

### **RUC Riot and Murder in Obins Street.**

At the height of the 'mad month' in 1935 hundreds of loyalists converged on the railway station in Watson Street to harass parents and children returning from the 'Canon's Trip' on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July. When the day-trippers were allowed out of the station they were made to walk a gauntlet of abuse by mobs singing 'Derry's Walls' and shouting 'No surrender'. Catholic anger at this humiliation was aggravated by the indifference of RUC men at the scene. This anger erupted into rioting in Obins Street on the 17<sup>th</sup> when three RUC men assaulted a man near the Tunnel Bridge entrance to the street. When they were stoned the RUC men sent for reinforcements who baton charged the angry crowd and forced them back to the top of River Lane (where Parkside flats now stand). The RUC retreated under a hail of stones but charged again firing their revolvers and fatally wounding 56 year old Hugh Faloon who was standing by his second floor bedroom window. The crowd fled indoors when the shooting started but RUC men broke into houses and assaulted and arrested a number of them. Hugh Faloon died within two days of being shot. During the trial of those who were

arrested the RUC said they had fired only one shot and tried to suggest that Faloon was shot by one of the rioters. Nobody has ever been charged in connection with the murder of Hugh Faloon.

### **Sham fight, Sham Lies**

There were disturbances in Maghera when an 'Orange excursion party' from Belfast arrived in the Catholic village on Saturday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 1936. Brother David Watson provided the *Portadown News* with an account of how he bravely defended the innocent brethren during a planned attack by a huge mob armed with pitchforks and revolvers. An RUC man who said the disturbance lasted no more than 20 minutes and was started by Orangemen who assaulted a local man refuted his story of his heroism.

Three Orangemen were charged with making false statements to police concerning an incident at the Tunnel Bridge on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 1936. The three had thrown bottles into Obins Street when the train taking them home from the Sham Fight at Scarva stopped on the bridge. They claimed bottles thrown from Obins Street had smashed the windows of the train but the claims were proven false and the Orangemen were prosecuted. There were no reports of Orange violence during the years of World War II. The Orange Order did not parade during the war years.

### **Indecent Behaviour: 'She Ran Her Face Right onto my Knuckle'**

Eight residents of Obins Street were arrested for crossing the road as two Orange Lodges with a marching band from the Birches were being 'escorted' through Obins Street on July 13<sup>th</sup> 1950. Mr. H. McFarland, instructed by Senator J.G. Lennon of Armagh defended John Creaney, Michael Creaney, Michael Grimley, Mary Hughes, Thomas Kelly, Rory O'Connor and Patrick Shevlin.

McFarland informed the court that there were two alternative routes available to the Orangemen and that: 'if either of these routes were taken there would be no trouble in the future. His worship might even intimate that that was a reasonable suggestion on the part of the defendants'. The District Inspector of the RUC interrupted to inquire if McFarland was accusing the RUC of a dereliction of duty. McFarland replied saying the route through Obins Street was an abnormal one and that there was a suggestion of, 'trailing of coats' in the use of this route. When Head Constable Stansfield was questioned by McFarland he admitted the bands were playing 'party tunes' and that before Mrs Hughes had been arrested her daughter had been assaulted by an Orangeman and was bleeding from the mouth. When asked if, in the interest of peace, the Orangemen should not be confined to their own areas Stansfield replied, 'It is not given me to think... I am here to obey orders'. When asked what he thought about the alternative routes it Stansfield was given to think that Obins Street was the only suitable route as there was a narrow road bridge on one alternative, a steep hill on the other, and four to five hundred yards would be added to the length of the Orange march. All but one of the defendants was discharged.

The Head Constable's contempt for the residents of Obins Street was made public again in 1954 when a woman from the area appeared in court on a charge of 'indecent behaviour'. The insulting accusation was concocted after an incident in Obins Street on September 12<sup>th</sup> when a car was driven through St. Patrick's Accordion Band. Head Constable Stansfield told the court that, when he went to break up a crowd of people who were hammering on the car, he saw the defendant running towards the driver and he said, 'I put up my clenched fist with the gloves in it and she ran her face right onto my knuckle'. Council for the defence pointed out that the band parade was confined to just one street and suggested that the police had not made adequate traffic arrangements. He reminded the court of an incident in 1948 when a truck seriously injured four bandsmen and he referred to two more recent incidents of a similar nature when a bus forced the band off the road and a motorcyclist crashed into it. Stansfield's victimisation was not wholly unsuccessful and the woman was convicted of 'disorderly behaviour' - assaulting his fist with her face.

### **Civil Rights and the 'End of Protestant Supremacy'**

There were a few disturbances in connection with Orange demonstrations in Portadown during the 1950s and 60s. However Orange marches continued to provoke violence in other parts of the North. Although Portadown appeared to be relatively peaceful Orangemen and Unionist politicians continued to ferment sectarian divisions in speeches at annual demonstrations and in Orange halls. In 1954 T. Richardson warned the brethren at Corcraige Orange Hall that Catholics were boasting that a recent Roman Catholic Marian celebration in the town showed that, 'Portadown could no longer be classified as an Orange stronghold'. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 1968 Lieutenant Commander Jack Glendenning told the Corcraige Orangemen, PROTESTANTS ONLY ADMITTED, that Civil Rights campaigners were being schooled in Moscow and

warned the defenders of 'civil and religious liberty' that Civil Rights, 'means an end of Protestant supremacy'.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 1970 some 200 RUC men and 150 British soldiers stood guard over a handful of Civil Rights campaigners in the centre of Portadown. Joe Duffy, who was elected to the council in 1997, was among them. Some of the Civil Rights group were injured by stones thrown from a large crowd of loyalists and two of them were later prosecuted.

At a Loyal Order demonstration in the grounds of Killiyman castle on August 13<sup>th</sup> Joshua Bell, Imperial Grand Treasurer, advised the Blackmen not to make the job of the RUC a harder one for, 'When the chips are down they will know what side to look to'.

### **Three Strands, Two Classes, and Catholics.**

On July 4<sup>th</sup> 1971 members of the recently disbanded B-Specials led 1,000 Orangemen on the 'traditional church parade' to Drumcree. In the run up to this demonstration hundreds of Catholics fled their homes or sent their children away to the refugee camps in the south of Ireland. Later that month Stormont Prime Minister, Brian Faulkner, imposed a six-month ban on all parading. He renewed the ban on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 1972 and issued a statement saying that should circumstances permit a relaxation without risk to life he would review the situation. Faulkner was less concerned about the risk to life in 1956 when he marched in front of 15,000 Orangemen through the exclusively Catholic Longstone Road. The road had been cratered by bombs the day before the demonstration and 300 RUC men with armoured support were drafted in to secure the way for the Orangemen.

Corcraine Orange Hall was the venue chosen to announce a Vanguard rally in Portadown on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 1972. In his book *The Red Hand*, Steve Bruce gives this brief account of Vanguard rallies:

In the Vanguard rallies we have the coming together of all three strands of loyalism: dissident politicians, Protestant trade unionists, and the vigilantes in the UDA. The important novelty was that the second and third groups were not just on the field listening and applauding: they were on the platform with their social betters, making the speeches.

An estimated 10,000 loyalists attended the 11<sup>th</sup> of March Vanguard rally. Among the principal speakers were Rev. Martin Smith, Grand Master of the Orange Order, and the Lord Mayors of Portadown and Lurgan. David Trimble was Deputy Leader of the Vanguard alliance. After the rally the three strands of loyalism attacked the Tunnel. Vanguard called for a two-day strike starting on March 27<sup>th</sup> and loyalist mobs took control of the town. From Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday the 29<sup>th</sup> the whole of the Catholic quarter of Portadown was kept under siege. Night and day the mobs attacked from every angle and sometimes on a number of fronts simultaneously. Electricity supplies were cut off and the few corner shops in the area soon sold out of food. By Tuesday night the British army had moved into the area and set up sandbag defences at all entrances to the Tunnel. Loyalists blocked all the main roads into town with hijacked vehicles and the three strands of loyalism went 'a wrecking'. While they intimidated Catholics out of every area under their control the RUC followed them and used a loudhailer to appeal to them to live in peace with their neighbours. Many of the families who were driven out of their homes moved into the relative safety of the Catholic/nationalist enclave. Some moved into houses still under construction in Ballyoran. Others moved into houses vacated by Protestant families who fled in fear or were intimidated out to make room for the refugees. The policy of clearing Catholics from Protestant districts which was initiated by the founder of the Orange Order, 'Orange Jimmy' Verner in 1794, and which has been kept up by his successors in the Orange Order all through the 19th and 20th century, was now almost complete.

### **THE HOODS THEIR BROTHERS WORE**

Faulkner lifted the ban on demonstrations in time for the 'mad month'. This meant that the 'traditional Church Parade' to Drumcree would bring many of the organisers and perpetrators of the Vanguard violence right into the heart of the area they had laid siege to just a few months before. The 'Resistance Committee', which had organised the defence of the Catholic area during March, called a public meeting in Obins Street, on April 9<sup>th</sup>. After the meeting they issued a statement criticising those who were making facile statements about the need to encourage better community relations and called for all Orange demonstrations to be re-routed away from the area. Their call was ignored and on the Saturday before the 'church parade' IRA checkpoints at entrances to Obins Street were reinforced with barricades. There was an IRA/British truce at the time.

At 9 o'clock on Sunday morning British troops moved in to clear the way for the Orangemen. Scores of CS gas canisters and baton rounds were fired and the barricades were bulldozed off the road to make way for riot troops and RUC men in armoured personnel carriers. RUC men and British soldiers broke into the terraced houses fronting onto the street and beat and arrested dozens of men and women. When the area was fully secured the British army and RUC ushered a contingent of hooded UDA men in paramilitary garb into the street. The masked loyalists drilled in the street and lined up to form an honour guard to salute their 'social betters' in the Orange Order as they marched to divine worship at Drumcree. The UDA men then made their way to Drumcree from where, with the assistance of a heavy British army and RUC presence, they marched the brethren back to town along the Garvaghy Road. The District Master of the Orange Order later complained about the media having reported the spectacle.

The IRA warned the British Government that their invasion of Obins Street was a sever breach of the terms of the truce. The truce disintegrated later that evening in the Lenadoon area of Belfast.

In the early hours of the 12<sup>th</sup> of July Paul Beattie, a 19 year old Protestant was shot dead when he entered the Churchill Park estate. The 'Tunnel' and Garvaghy Road were saturated with 'security forces' on the 12<sup>th</sup> morning and the Orange Order demonstrated without hindrance. On the 13<sup>th</sup> the Orangemen were once again escorted through Obins Streett. by the British army and the RUC in order that they could escort their country brethren back through the street from Corcraine to the security of the town-centre where, a few hours after the previous day's demonstration, an off-duty RUC man shot dead a Catholic publican, Jack McCabe, and a Protestant customer, William Cochrane.

Four days after their march into Obins Street the UDA kidnapped a 47-year old Catholic man, Felix Hughes, as he walked across the town. The UDA gang took Hughes to Watson Street and, in what had come to be known as a 'Romper Room' murder they tortured and mutilated him before dumping his body in a drainage ditch.

In January 1973 the SDLP presented a dossier on the intimidation of Catholic families in Portadown to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, William Whitelaw. Orangemen reacted saying Protestants were being intimidated out of the Garvaghy Road so that Orange demonstrations would be banned from the area. In July the entire Catholic district of the town was swamped with British army paratroopers and RUC men. No opposition to the Orange demonstrations was allowed. The situation was much the same in July 1974 when the local Orange owned newspaper defended the Orange tradition with the jaded argument that:

Controversy has surrounded the Drumcree parade only in recent years, and it is a fact that for the previous 100 years prior to the serious outbreak of trouble in the town in 1972, this was a Church parade which gave offence to none and which few of the residents of the Obins Streett. area took exception

In the years ahead this type of misinformation was refined by Orange propagandists who argued that opposition to their demonstrations was being orchestrated by republicans intent on stirring up sectarian hatred and violence. In 1975 two small bombs were found in derelict houses in Obins Street on the day of the 1st. Sunday 'Church Parade'. Warnings had been given and the devices were defused in time to meet assurances given to Orange leaders that their demonstration would not be delayed. The local unionist newspaper carried the following report on the scale of the annual security operation needed to enforce the Orange demonstration of supremacy:

On Sunday morning a visitor to the town could have been excused if he had been under the impression that a fair proportion of the British Army stationed in Ulster had been drafted into the town for a church parade, and an equally large proportion of the strength of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Right from the moment the procession of 1,000 men, and three bands entered Woodhouse St. there was an atmosphere of a town under siege. Soldiers armed with rifles, and officers equipped with high-powered binoculars thronged the railway bridge. Scores of policemen flanked the entrance to the station itself, and the footpaths, and the military were preventing spectators from going through the underpass into Obins Streett.

As the parade sneaked through the underpass, a women bystander was heard to exclaim, "you would think it was the Berlin Wall." Inside Obins Streett. it was a case of troops and police all the way to Corcraine with Saracens and jeeps in profusion and soldiers also prowling around with fierce- looking Alsatian dogs.

As well as this, redcapped military policemen, green clad Women's Army, and of Course Women's RUC, were also to the fore, not to mention scores of plain clothes policemen and soldiers. All the time a helicopter whirred over head, swooping down at times to survey the scene. But the biggest contrast with pre-trouble days was evident on the return parade from Drumcree to the town centre. Until a few years

ago there wasn't a policeman to be seen on the return procession and any tension there might have been evaporated once the parade had passed Obins Street.

This year the security measures from the top of Garvaghy Park to Parkmount were just as stringent as those on the outward parade. Saracens and soldiers crowded grassy slopes of Ballyoran Park estate and the entrance to Garvaghy Park. It was the same at Churchill Park where scores of police watched the outer perimeter and troops were on patrol in the alleyways. Even in the "Walk" itself the troops were everywhere - an Army lorry blocked the entrance to the public park gates and soldiers were lined up along the walls in the park itself.

Unfortunately the reporter did not think it worth recording the views of the people behind the 'Berlin Wall'.

A few hours before the 12<sup>th</sup> of July demonstration in 1977, and as the usual massive 'security operation' got under way, two members of the Ulster Defence Regiment drove through Obins Street firing their army issue weapons into the terraced houses fronting onto the street. They were arrested when their speeding car crashed into a Saracen armoured car.

### **Blanket Men and Blackmen**

In 1981 the local H-Block committee staged a 'black-flag' protest in Obins Street as hundreds of Blackmen marched through the area four times in the space of 8 hours on July 13<sup>th</sup>. Plastic bullets and live rounds were fired during the several hours of rioting that followed. The RUC drafted hundreds more reinforcements into the area for another demonstration on the 14<sup>th</sup>. Orange supporters were allowed onto a railway bridge overlooking the street to wave loyalist flags and taunt while 1,500 Orangemen with blackthorn sticks, pikestaffs marched past about 100 peaceful protesters who were hemmed into side-streets by a wall of RUC men and armoured cars.

When a number of local men appeared in court on charges of rioting on the July 12<sup>th</sup> resident magistrate, Sara Creanor, sympathised with the defence argument that the riot was an inevitable consequence of the Orange demonstration and agreed the Orangemen should not be allowed into the area.

The local H-Block group issued a news sheet on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. In it they criticised the double standards of the RUC in banning a H-Block protest march from Obins Street to the Garvaghy Road whilst facilitating, 'blatantly triumphalist and often violent Orange marches' through the area 'at the behest of their Orange masters'. The newsheet noted that:

At this month's meeting of the 'Police Liaison Committee' a Chief Superintendent of the RUC gave assurances that next year's [Orange] parades would be given safe passage once again. Apparently the guarantees were extracted by... Bob Dodds who expressed concern at the impudence of the H-Block protestors who appeared in Obins Street during the Royal Black Institutions parade on July 13 last.' [Dodds was an ex RUC man and DUP councillor]

In 1983 a few Orangemen broke ranks as they passed a peaceful protest at the bottom of Obins Drive and injured a photographer with their swagger sticks. Local people identified a member of the UDR as being the ringleader of the attack and claimed the manner in which the attack happened suggested RUC complicity.

### **Prayer Meetings and Catholic Beatings**

In 1985 the Saint Patrick's Accordion Band ('the Tunnel Band) applied for permission to make a complete circuit of the Catholic district by returning from the Garvaghy Road to Obins Street via Park Road. This meant they would be passing by a small Protestant area at the junction of Park Road and Garvaghy Road; about 150 yards of the 2 mile route. Though this application was made at a time when local people were campaigning for the banning of Orange marches in the Catholic quarter of Portadown everyone was surprised when the RUC gave the go-ahead. However, Orangemen threatened to block the new section of the route and on the morning of March 17<sup>th</sup> the mayor of Craigavon, Arnold Hatch, led a small crowd of supporters carrying flags and hockey sticks in a 'prayer meeting' on Park Road. The RUC moved immediately to block the path of St. Patrick's Band and informed the organisers of the parade that they could not go ahead as previously agreed. When the band attempted to go in the opposite direction, back along Obins Street, their way was blocked with armoured cars and the bandsmen quietly boarded a bus for the big parade in Co. Tyrone.

When they returned in the evening there were no Orangemen 'praying' on the streets, but when the band made another attempt to march the agreed route the RUC drove their armoured cars through the parade and assaulted a number of supporters. The hypocrisy of Hatch's band of Orange bigots and the RUC's treatment of St. Patrick's Band had the effect of reinforcing peoples' determination to contest unwanted Orange

marches through the Catholic district. Local people disrupted a meeting of Craigavon Borough Council to protest at the actions of Mayor Hatch and his followers and Nationalist politicians on both sides of the border were encouraged to register their objections to contentious Orange marches with the Secretary of State, Douglas Hurd, and with the RUC. The increasing media attention on the provocative displays of Orangeism forced a decision and on July 5<sup>th</sup> 1985 the RUC announced that the 'First Sunday' Orange demonstration on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July would be put through Obins Street but all others would be re-routed. This was not seen as an acceptable compromise by the residents of the area who knew well that it took only one Orange march to deny their identity, undermine their self esteem, insult the whole community, destroy a street, and ruin many a future summer. Furthermore they knew that it was the Drumcree 'church parade' that took the salute from the paramilitary honour guard in 1972, without there ever having been any objection or apology from the Orange. Residents of the area held a meeting in Obins Street on the Saturday before the 'church parade'. They demanded that all Orange demonstrations be excluded from the area and announced their intention to hold a peaceful protest in Obins Street on the Sunday morning, 7<sup>th</sup> of July.

As the Orangemen approached Obins Street locals hoped the high level of media coverage and the presence prominent personalities such as Eunice Schriver, sister of US president J.F. Kennedy, would afford them some protection. However they were attacked by the RUC even as they moved onto the road. The RUC, 'waded into the protestors, battering them without provocation' wrote one journalist. One man was beaten unconscious and a score of others men and women were bruised by boots and batons and skinned from being dragged off the road. Those who resisted or tried to rescue family or friends were beaten and thrown into jeeps to face charges of riot and assault. The protestors were cleared off the road in time to allow Harold McCusker MP, Rev. Martin Smith MP, and George Seawright (a notoriously bigoted Belfast City councillor) to lead 2,000 Orangemen to divine worship at Drumcree. The entire length of the Garvaghy Road was sealed off by hundreds of RUC men with British Army back up and only those 'in full uniform' were allowed access to the road until after the spiritually fortified Orangemen had passed through.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> the Orangemen and their supporters attacked the RUC at the entrance to Woodhouse Street.

### **Midnight Marches and 'Mutiny'**

On Easter Sunday 1986 the Apprentice Boys were banned from staging an Easter Monday demonstration on the Garvaghy Road. Around 9 o'clock on Sunday evening the Garvaghy area was swamped with RUC men and British soldiers in preparation to enforce the ban. Later that evening cars with loudspeakers toured loyalist areas and summoned thousands of Orange supporters to assemble in the town centre to contest the ban. Just before midnight and without any explanation the security forces withdrew from the Garvaghy Road and Ian Paisley led a three to four thousand strong mob through the Catholic enclave. Eyewitnesses said some of the mob carried firearms and some were known to be members of the UDR and RUC. Several RUC jeeps escorted the illegal demonstration but no effort was made to control the mob when they attacked houses along the route. People who tried to defend their homes were attacked by the RUC. When the loyalist mob moved on locals fought RUC riot squads for several hours and barricaded roads in fear of a second attack.

When it was all over local community leaders and representatives asked why the minority community was suddenly left to the mercy of an armed mob of Orange sympathisers. A local priest said, 'The basic question raised by last night's display is who controls Portadown - local bully boys or a professional impartial force'. Gerry Adams said the fact that no action had been taken to prevent the illegal march was, 'more evidence of the untrustworthiness of the RUC'. Seamus Mallon asked if it was the Chief Constable or, 'sections within the RUC who are making the ultimate decisions'.

Nationalist opinion in Portadown was that the RUC had mutinied and refused to enforce the ban or to prevent the illegal march taking place. There has been no inquiry into what happened and none of the ringleaders has ever been charged with orchestrating or participating in the illegal parade, or with attacking people and property in the.

The supporters of Orangeism were not satisfied with their midnight demonstration and on Easter Monday they went 'a wrecking' and looting in the town centre. When the Orange supporters attacked the RUC at Woodhouse Street they proved their impartiality by fatally injuring a loyalist with a plastic bullet.

### **Peter Robinson and the Parade Action Committee.**

With the approach of July 1986 new organisations announced their support for Orangeism. The 'Parade Action Committee' and the 'Ulster Clubs', were fronted by Portadown Orangeman Alan Wright, Peter Robinson, and Noel Little (later arrested in Paris in for organising loyalist arms shipments from South Africa). Among their other activities these leaders organised a parade through Portadown by a shadowy loyalist paramilitary grouping, the 'Ulster Resistance Movement'. This group threatened major disruption if the Orange Order were denied access to Obins Street. They followed through with their threats and set in motion a month long campaign of intimidation and terror. Throughout the month of June all the traditional targets, vulnerable Catholic homes and Church property, were attacked on a regular basis. Shots were fired at people on the Garvaghy Road. Catholic owned businesses in the town were wrecked and Saint Patrick's Hall was burned to the ground after an Ulster Clubs march and rally on June 16<sup>th</sup>. A mob kept the Fire Brigade from tackling the blaze for one and a half-hours while the RUC declined to intervene. Many roads into town were blocked with hi-jacked vehicles and businesses were forced to close. There were more night-time demonstrations in the town on the 19<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> of June. The RUC kept a low profile while the minority community was under constant siege.

In an editorial on 5<sup>th</sup> of July the *Irish News* condemned the planned Orange marches through the nationalist areas of Portadown saying:

It is the simple and stark fact that, once again, members of the Nationalist community of Portadown are to be treated as second class citizens in their own town.

It is difficult for those fortunate enough to live in more sophisticated communities to understand and appreciate the deep sense of fear, outrage and humiliation that marks these annual incursions into the little streets of this little town...

It is no longer relevant to speak of traditional routes and traditional marches as if tradition validated terrorism and intimidation. There is no longer any reason for remaining fixed in a frozen bigotry that prides itself on ignoring change in demographic and geographic realities.

In preparation for the 'first Sunday church parade' a massive force of RUC and British Army, estimated at 4,000 in all, moved into the town. Also in town were a number of prominent civil liberties activists from Ireland and abroad who had been invited by local Sinn Fein councillor, Brian McCann, to monitor the situation.

A planned protest by residents of Obins Street was banned by the RUC and when approximately 300 nationalists assembled at Parkside the RUC moved to keep them off the route of the march. The RUC were determined to prevent any form of protest by residents of the nationalist enclave and another protest on the Garvaghy Road by a local People Against Injustice Group was forcibly broken up to make way for the Orangemen. The *Portadown Times* described 'clashes' between the RUC and Garvaghy residents as 'a pitched battle'.

The *Irish News* reported an attack on St. John's Catholic Church while mass was being said, and that Fr. P. Thornton, sustained cuts and a swollen eye when he was assaulted at the junction of Charles Street and Obins Street. The editorials in the North's two main newspapers expressed corresponding opinions regarding the staging of Orange marches through Catholic areas of Portadown. The *Belfast Telegraph* said, 'A better route must be found that will give loyalists the opportunity to parade their colours where they are welcome'; and the *Irish News* concluded that, 'In the long term, the best contribution police can make in the marching season is to make clear that, in future, parades will be confined to areas where they are not calculated to cause offence'.

### **Secret Deals**

After listening to the sectarian ranting of George Seawright at the 11th night bonfire in Montague Street a few hundred loyalists attacked nearby Catholic homes in Obins Drive. An English reporter described the sustained attack, 'Flames and smoke billow in the air. Petrol bombs, flares and bricks come flying over the fence hitting the roofs of pensioners houses. Many residents are out on the street'. Next morning the Orange Order held its first ever 12<sup>th</sup> demonstration on the Garvaghy Road. Having denied them their traditional right to demonstrate their contempt for the residents of Obins the British Government and RUC had perversely decided to reward Orangeism with a completely new opportunity to offend the majority of Catholics who now lived in Garvaghy. It is not known what, if any nationalist representatives colluded in this deal. No Garvaghy residents were consulted and the arrangement was imposed on them against their expressed wishes. As usual there were a number of assaults on locals as the demonstration went through. The minority community was incensed at the new arrangement and at the manner in which it had come

about. Many Orangemen gave the appearance that they too were incensed for, despite the underhand deal that allowed them to continue to offend even more Catholics, they rioted again in the town centre. Perhaps the deal had not yet been sold to the 'lower orders'.

### **The End of the Heritage Trail**

During the next twelve months residents and representatives of the minority community succeeded in drawing even more media attention to the intimidation and humiliation they were being subjected to. In July 1987 RUC Chief Constable John Hermon declared that the 'traditional church parade' would be banned from Obins Street, but not from Garvaghy. This supposed compromise was wholly unacceptable to the minority community and was seen as nothing more than another tactical manoeuvre aimed at deflecting criticism and perpetuating the most offensive of the Orange demonstrations. From early on the morning of the 'first Sunday' hundreds of locals gathered on the Garvaghy Road to take part in a sit-down protest. To their great surprise and relief (no beatings from the RUC) the Orangemen did not appear. The Orangemen seemed to have perceived, or wanted to present, the denial of their annual custom of humiliating the residents of Obins Street as a denial of their civil and religious liberty and they refused to march to Drumcree. Instead they assembled at Corcrain, as near to Obins Street as they possibly could, where they prayed for the deliverance of their Protestant heritage and traditions. There was little opposition to the 12<sup>th</sup> demonstration in Garvaghy. Many locals believed the Orangemen would not appear on that day either. The few who did show were hemmed into side roads and a 'Silent Protest' by women was not allowed to leave Churchill Park. Their placards were torn from them and they were insulted and bullied by members of the RUC, one woman was hospitalised.

### **Missplaced Faith?**

In 1988 the 'Drumcree Faith & Justice Group' planned a march to the town centre to highlight the double standards which were being employed by the RUC in dealing with nationalist and loyalist demonstrations. When requesting permission to hold the June protest march the 'Faith & Justice Group' informed the RUC that only 30 people would participate and they would carry no flags or banners. Their protest was banned. The group attempted to defuse the growing hostility towards the Orangemen and the RUC by staging a sit-down protest with a limited number of participants when the Orangemen were due to march through again in July 1988. The RUC manhandled them off the road and hemmed in the residents of Ballyoran, Garvaghy, and Churchill Park. 'Only a massive show of strength from the police and the army ensured the Drumcree parade passed off without major incident', said one report.

Similar 'massive shows of strength' were kept up over the next few years while the 'Faith & Justice Group' staged modest protests and local youths vented their feelings through attacking the RUC and British Army. By 1991 the 'Faith & Justice Group' were beginning to accept that their protests ('cross community tea-parties') were an inadequate means of expressing the community's grievances and were not able to defuse the frustration and tension which gave rise to the annual cycle of harassment, riots and vindictive prosecutions.

As David Trimble MP led 1,200 Orangemen with four marching bands down the Garvaghy Road in 1992 his brethren broke ranks to assault local people and a press photographer. The assaults took place in full view and in close proximity to RUC men. When no attempt was made to arrest or detain the assailants for identification there was fighting all along the length of the road, at Garvaghy Park, Ballyoran Park, Churchill Park and Woodside.

### **The Formation of the Garvaghey Road Residents Group (Coalition)**

A 1993 survey of the people living on the Garvaghy Road found that 95% of them were opposed to Orange marches in the area. There was no organised protest that year but there was more rioting and an empty factory building was set on fire. Though the anger that gave rise to this type of violent reaction was understandable it was obviously counterproductive. Concerned residents and community activists who understood the need for action realised that the cycle of violence could only be broken by an organised and peaceful campaign to deal with the causes of the violence. This led to the formation of the Garvaghy Road Residents Group. It was to act as an umbrella organisation for co-ordinating the efforts of the different groups opposed to the routing of Orange demonstrations through their streets. A public meeting was called for and representatives of the 'Lower Ormeau Concerned Community' in Belfast were invited to attend. At that meeting a committee was selected and objectives were discussed and agreed.

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