

Eblana Forum is an ad hoc discussion, debating and literary society at the Eblana Lodge, Dun Laoghaire. While every effort is made to provide accurate information on coming events, any views or opinions expressed either on this website or at events is not necessarily the view of any other person or organisation. By remaining an independent group, participants are free to express whatever opinions on any subject they wish without any form of censorship from anyone. This encourages the exchange of opinions, on any and every topic, while remaining within the law.

ALL AT THE EBLANA LODGE

The premises known always as “The Eblana Lodge” at 3 Eblana Avenue, Dun Laoghaire, was built in the early years of the 19th century, circa *1830. (*Reference Peter Pearson).

SWITZER WAS THE FIRST KNOWN OWNER

The first known owner was John Wright Switzer, who was the principal of the famous Grafton Street Department Stores SWITZERS. He had come from Limerick where his family had been Protestant refugees from Germany -Palatine in the Rhineland- fleeing French persecution in 1709. Going back further the Switzer family had originated in Switzerland -Switzer meaning Switzerland. Switzers Department Store also traded as Cash’s in Cork and Moons in Galway and Todds in Limerick. The business was taken over in 1991 by Brown Thomas. We know that John Switzer was 32 years old in 1773, which means he was 77 in 1850. In 1855 he moved from Eblana Lodge to Moyvalley House in County Kildare.

THEN CAME JOHN AND JAMES VANCE.

John Vance and James Vance lived in Eblana Lodge form 1855 to 1877. They were members of a leading medical family and also owned 3 Merrion Square, Dublin from where they ran their medical practice. They were very prominent in the College of Surgeons and Professors at Trinity College Dublin.

FOLLOWED BY A WAR MONGER

Lt. General Henry Hall is listed as the owner of Eblana Lodge in 1878. Born in County Galway, in to a rich Anglo-Irish family he went to India, at an early age, as an officer in the British Army, and joined the Bengal Native Infantry. He rapidly rose through the ranks but was not appointed to the rank of

“Captain” until 1821, because he was “rushing around Bengal capturing an absolutely amazing number of forts”. He was in India during some of the worst years of the British occupation. When the British first arrived in India, the country’s “share of the world’s total economy was as large as the whole of Europe. By 1947, after two centuries of British rule, it had decreased six fold and was a basket case. During their rule the British blew rebels from cannon, massacred unarmed protesters, entrenched institutionalized racism and caused millions to die from starvation.” -*Inglorious EMPIRE by Shashi Tharoor*. Lt. General Hall was very much part of that “inglorious” history. In the seventy years following Indian Independence, the country has reclaimed much of its share of the world’s economy and has in 2022 surpassed the British economy.

The area he operated stretched from present day Bangladesh in the East, all the way to Afghanistan in the North West and half way down India. Hall went on to serve in the Guide and Intelligence division and as part of his role he was entrusted by the Governor General of India with fighting the much feared Mhairs. During his time in India he won 50 publicly expressed commendations culminating in his investiture as Companion Order of the Bath in 1838. (A British honour).

Among his other activities in India was an unsuccessful attempt to conform the country’s agriculture to a more Western orientated system.

He retired as a Lt. General after 32 years in India and purchased a house MERVILLE on Foster’s Avenue, - it is now UCD’s Innovation and Technology Centre NovaUCD.

When departing for India he was rich and he greatly added to that wealth from his war mongering throughout India.

In his final years he acted as a Magistrate in Counties Dublin and Galway where his family owned land. He is buried in Deansgrange.

The 5 Lamps standard at Amiens Street, Dublin City, was erected in his memory with money he left for the purpose. The monument was originally a watering trough for animals.

AND THEN A UNIONIST CARDINAL

In 1879, the Archdiocese of Dublin purchased Eblana Lodge for their Dun Laoghaire Parish Priest, Edward McCabe. In due course he was elected Archbishop of Dublin by the clergy of the diocese.

In those days the clergy elected their bishops but they were disenfranchised by Rome in the 1930s when Rome Rule was imposed. The future Pope Pius 12th, also known as “Hitler’s Pope”, introduced appointments of bishops by Rome in consultation with the various governments.

It has been claimed that Fr. McCabe came from a very poor family in Dublin’s Liberties, but on closer examination it has been established that his family had a shop. It was essential for candidates for the priesthood to have sufficient resources to study at Maynooth. Members of poor families were therefore excluded from the priesthood, as were sons of families carrying on certain trades.

In due course McCabe was created a Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church becoming the second ever Irish Cardinal. When he returned from Rome, after being created Cardinal, his arrival home was boycotted, including by Dublin Corporation, because he was seen as a staunch unionist. He had campaigned strongly against Michael Davitt’s Land League and all other popular movements which might be seen to support unrest or even revolution.

While Cardinal he continued to live at the Eblana Lodge on the grounds that his health demanded a seaside residence.

He died in Eblana Lodge on 1st February 1885 following a long illness.

A few years prior to his death, the Times of London reported his death “due to a heart attack” but in fact when he died it was reported that he had died of an irritable bowel.

PARISH PRIESTS & OTHERS ALSO AT THE LODGE

From 1885, the local Parish Priest, Nicholas Walsh – a native of County Wicklow- lived in Eblana Lodge with 2 housekeepers (1901 census).

In 1903, Nicholas Walsh’s successor as Parish Priest, Fr. William J. Murphy took up residence in the Lodge.

In 1905, a Mrs. McCabe is listed as the occupant. She appears to have had no family and no known connection with Cardinal McCabe. In 1910 a Mr. Mallon described as a tailor was in occupation and in 1911 the Clarke family were in residence. Members of the Clarke family visited Eblana Lodge in more recent years, including one family member who was born in the Lodge.

ENTER: THE EBLANA CLUB

Around 1910 plans were afoot to establish a club where people of “all faiths and none” could socialise together. In those years sectarianism and bigotry was rife around Kingstown, as Dun Laoghaire was officially titled from 1821 to 1921. Gentlemen’s clubs were common place with approximately fifteen clubs flourishing throughout the town area. Unfortunately it was essential to be a member of a religion other than Catholic to join or frequent any of the clubs. The majority of local people were Catholics. Strict opening hours of all licensed premises based on religious fundamentalism prevailed with the clubs restricting their opening times and closed on Sundays. Public houses were also forced to surtail their opening hours.

With the support of the then local Town Council a small number of local business/trades people tried to come together to set up a club where people of all faiths and none could socialise together. A gentleman’s club was duly formed for social inclusion in 1910. In 1911 the club acquired the Eblana Lodge and this is still its premises to the present day.

More liberal opening times were introduced by the Eblana Club resulting in a thriving business involving people of all faiths and none.

The club was known at different times as the Catholic Club and then The Kingstown Club and from 1929 the club was officially known as The Dun Laoghaire Club. Throughout all the years the club was always known locally as “The Eblana Club”, which is now its official title. – Eblana Club CLG.

The Victorian era “men only” rule, was relaxed in the mid 20th century when ladies were allowed to be served in a parlour at the front of the club. Nevertheless they were admitted to club membership. They were served through a hatch, which is still in existence, in the room where the club bar is now

located. In the 1990s ladies were admitted to full membership for the first time adding greatly to the club.

TO-DAY'S EBLANA CLUB INVITES YOU TO JOIN

The Eblana Club is now the centre of cultural and social activity in the community. The club's offerings include: Regular Talks, Debates, an intimate venue for musical and poetry events of all sorts, Comhrá, informal Continental language evenings, (casual conversation and not classes), art classes on Wednesdays (lunch time). Competitive Darts on Tuesday evenings, Chess every Wednesday evening from 8.00p.m., the club members enjoy one of the finest snooker rooms in the country and a garden with BBQ catering facilities. There is, of course, a small bar where discussions take pace following events and especially on Friday evenings from circa 8.00p.m. Local family functions often take place on Saturdays and Sundays.

The legal entity of the Eblana Club is a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) without a share capital and is a "not for personal profit" organisation.

The property is vested in the company and should ever the company be dissolved the proceeds remaining would be donated to a similar body or charity. This, of course, is entirely in line with the club's ethos as the club premises were handed down from generation to generation without current members having ever had to purchase the club premises.

Every member has one vote at Annual General Meetings which traditionally held in the month of December. There can also be general members' meetings known as Extraordinary General Meetings. A Board of Directors comprising a maximum of 12 people is elected at AGMs, with one-third of the board having to stand for re-election by rotation.

Membership is open to all who complete an official application form. The form is then displayed for one month on the club's members' notice board and provided there is no objection from any existing members. Members, once accepted into membership, are expected to pay an annual subscription which at present is €200 for those under 65 years old and €125 for those over 65.

The current board members of the club are; Tom Byrne, Robin Furlong, Lori Kelly, Chris Payne, John Toner, Larry , Bernard Fitzpatrick, Noel Golden, Dermot Fennel, `

---Breasal O Caollai -past President, Eblana Club/ Dun Laoghaire Club.

EBLANA CLUB MEMBERS SUBSCRIPTIONS RATES

For persons under 65 years of age at the commencement of the club year (1st July) is €150 plus €50 bar vouchers. (Redeemable by purchases in the bar). For persons over 65 years of age at the commencement of the club's financial year (1st July): €75 plus €50 bar voucher. There is also a special rate of €25 plus €50 bar vouchers for spouses and partners of members. Application form for Membership of The Eblana Club. The above rates are applicable at present (2022/23)

APPLICATION FORM FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE EBLANA CLUB

To: The Membership Coordinator.

I wish to apply for membership of the Eblana Club CLG. Should I be elected, I undertake to abide by the Constitution, Rules and Regulations of the club. I also agree to the Eblana Club CLG keeping my Name, Address and other contact details, as given below, in the club database for the purpose of club administration. I understand that this application form will be displayed on the members' notice board for one month before a decision is taken on this application.

NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS _____

Tick here is over 65 years of age (to avail of lower annual subscription rate) _____

ADDRESS _____

Email address _____

Telephone (mobile) _____

Have you previously applied for membership of this club ? _____

Usual Signature _____

Member of club members Proposing – BLOCK CAPITALS

Signature of proposer _____

Member of club seconding -BLOCK CAPITALS _____

Signature of member seconding _____

Office use:

Elected _____ --

President/Chairperson _____

Replied by Membership Co-ordinator _____ (date).

Initial annual subscription paid and New members pack supplied
on: _____ (date)

*Payment of initial membership subscription is not due until an application is successful, when the applicant will be advised of the amount due.

