



31 December 2017

## A SAIL-LESS WINDMILL ON THOMAS STREET



More than 150 years ago, the sails of a giant windmill that powered the local whiskey industry dominated the scenery on Thomas Street in the Liberties. The brick body of the windmill - colloquially known as St Patrick's Tower - still stands, set back from the main road with cars parked around its foot. But its sails have long-vanished. And, in fact, there don't even seem to be any images of them, which is a curious thing. "I'd be very interested in seeing the St Patrick's Windmill on Thomas Street with vanes. I've never found a pic," Shane Waring, co-founder of Dublin City Council Beta, said on Twitter, a while back. Years before the Guinness company bought the site in 1949, St Patrick's Tower formed part of George Roe & Co.'s whiskey distillery. Guinness archivist Fergus Brady says that, by 1887, Roe's distillery was one of the largest distilleries in Ireland, with an annual output of 2 million gallons of whiskey. "Although Roe's whiskey had a good presence in the home market, it enjoyed a life of its own beyond Irish shores," said Brady, by email. Most of Roe's efforts were focused on exports, with large batches shipped to Canada, the USA, Australia and England, he said. There's no doubt that the windmill was the most prominent feature of the distillery, and, according to the Guinness archives at least, was built in 1757, the same year Peter Roe bought the site and the business began, said Brady. Because of the sign reading "1805" above the windmill's main entrance, there's some confusion over the exact date it was built. But according to architectural historian Christine Casey's book Dublin, the windmill was actually rebuilt in 1805. And, according to Douglas Bennett's Encyclopedia of Dublin, it had ceased to turn by 1860. Technology and modernisation quite likely sealed the windmill's fate, says Dublin City Council's Heritage Officer Charles Duggan. Though that's guesswork, said Duggan, it ties in with what Guinness archivist Brady recently discovered: an old archival fact sheet stating that the windmill's sails were removed in the mid-19th-century when wind was replaced by steam in powering the mill. It is believed to be the oldest smock windmill, or what remains of one, in Europe, says Brady. But smock mills are generally sloped in shape and built with wood. St Patrick's Tower, in contrast, is more cylindrical in shape and is built of brick. Perhaps the original 1757 windmill was a proper smock mill and, when it was rebuilt in 1805, George Roe & Co. redesigned it a bit. The brick body of the windmill - colloquially known as St Patrick's Tower - still stands, set back from the main road with cars parked around its foot. But its sails have long-vanished. Years before the Guinness company bought the site in 1949, St Patrick's Tower formed part of George Roe & Co.'s whiskey distillery. Guinness archivist Fergus Brady says that, by 1887, Roe's distillery was one of the largest distilleries in Ireland, with an annual output of 2 million gallons of whiskey. "Although Roe's whiskey had a good presence in the home market, it enjoyed a life of its own beyond Irish shores," said Brady. Most of Roe's efforts were focused on exports, with large batches shipped to Canada, the USA, Australia and England, he said. There's no doubt that the windmill was the most prominent feature of the distillery, and, according to the Guinness archives at least, was built in 1757, the same year Peter Roe bought the site and the business began, said Brady. Because of the sign reading "1805" above the windmill's main entrance, there's some confusion over the exact date it was built. But according to architectural historian Christine Casey's book Dublin, the windmill was actually rebuilt in 1805. And, according to Douglas Bennett's Encyclopedia of Dublin, it had ceased to turn by 1860. Technology and modernisation quite likely sealed the windmill's fate, says Dublin City Council's Heritage Officer Charles Duggan. Though that's guesswork, said Duggan, it ties in with what Guinness archivist Brady recently discovered: an old archival fact sheet stating that the windmill's sails were removed in the mid-19th-century when wind was replaced by steam in powering the mill. It is believed to be the oldest smock windmill, or what remains of one, in Europe, says Brady. But smock mills are generally sloped in shape and built with wood. St Patrick's Tower, in contrast, is more cylindrical in shape and is built of brick. Perhaps the original 1757 windmill was a proper smock mill and, when it was rebuilt in 1805, George Roe & Co. redesigned it a bit. In any case, as industry ramped up into the late 19th century, the windmill as a means of power generation gradually became redundant. St Patrick's Tower remains the last prominent structure of the old Roe's distillery. Seventy-feet wide at its base, it rises to a height of 150 feet. It is capped

## NOTICES

### Money Matters

Weekend 23/24 December 2017

1st Collection: p220  
2nd Collection: p245  
Share: p20

### Christmas Collections

1st Collection: p830  
2nd Collection: p909



### Remembered at Mass

Recently Deceased: Peter Finn,  
Kathleen Curran  
Funeral Tues 10am

Sat 6pm: Elizabeth, James &  
Margaret Taylor

Sun 11.30am: Josephine & John  
Boylan, Julie & Denis Hyland

With a vast copper-clad cupota, which in turn supports a four-foot figure of St Patrick bearing a mitre and a crozier. A pear tree was planted at the base of the old windmill in 1850, according to Guinness archivist Brady, and still bears fruit today. "[The tower] remains an iconic reminder of the industrial heritage of the area, particularly its extensive associations with the distilling and brewing industries," he says. It is strange, considering its size and prominence in the city's landscape that archivists can't find any photographs or paintings of the windmill as it was. That might be because of the nature of early photography, says Justin Carville, photographic historian at the Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT). Photography only really became an artistic pursuit in the early 1840s, so there was only a short period in which to capture Roe's windmill before it was dismantled in 1860, he says. In Florence in Italy, and in Paris in France, there were early attempts to capture changing streetscapes with the advent of photography, says Carville. But there wasn't the same movement in Dublin. "There's no evidence of that really in Ireland," he says. "There wasn't as much

commercial photography. For tourists there was a little bit but the earliest photographic book of Dublin is from 1865.” Although industrial photography later gained popularity it’s perhaps unlikely early photographers felt the need to capture one of Dublin’s numerous industrial structures of the mid 19th century. That might explain why neither the National Photographic Archive, the Irish Architectural Archive nor the Guinness Archive hold any photos of Roe’s windmill with its sails. It is possible there was a photograph at one point. “But it might not have survived,” says Carville. An article for The Harp - appearing in March 1958 - states that the windmill appears in early etchings of Dublin. But these drawings are hard to come by. The earliest known drawing dates from 1888, according to Guinness archivist Brady. Carol Quinn, archivist with the company Irish Distillers, agrees with Carville. “The tower was still a landmark. They might have used it for storage but it might have stopped being a windmill before photography,” says Quinn. “[Back then] you generally only had people taking photographs of people who paid them to do it.” Still, the structure impressed British distilling historian Alfred Barnard. In his 1887 book *The Whisky Distilleries of the United Kingdom*, he remarked that the sail-less windmill stands “as a distinguishing feature, relic of the past, a landmark for many miles around”.

Courtesy Conal Thomas, Dublin Inquirer

## **FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY**

### **A reading from the Book of Genesis**

It happened some time later that the word of the Lord was spoken to Abram in a vision, ‘Have no fear, Abram, I am your shield; your reward will be very great.’ ‘My Lord,’ Abram replied ‘what do you intend to give me? I go childless...’ Then Abram said, ‘See, you have given me no descendants; some man of my household will be my heir’. And then this word of the Lord was spoken to him, ‘He shall not be your heir; your heir shall be of your own flesh and blood’. Then taking him outside he said, ‘Look up to heaven and count the stars if you can. Such will be your descendants’ he told him. Abram put his faith in the Lord, who counted this as making him justified. The Lord dealt kindly with Sarah as he had said, and did what he had promised her. So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the time God had promised.

**This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God**

### **Psalm 104**

**He, the Lord, is our God: his judgments prevail in all the earth.**

Give thanks to the Lord, tell his name,  
make known his deeds among the peoples.  
O sing to him, sing his praise;  
tell all his wonderful works! R/

Be proud of his holy name,  
let the hearts that seek the Lord rejoice.  
Consider the Lord and his strength;  
constantly seek his face. R/

Remember the wonders he has done,  
his miracles, the judgments he spoke.  
O children of Abraham, his servant,  
O sons of the Jacob he chose. R/

He remembers his covenant for ever,  
his promise for a thousand generations,

the covenant he made with Abraham,  
the oath he swore to Isaac. R/

### **A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Colossians**

You are God’s chosen race, his saints; he loves you, and you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body. Always be thankful. Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom. With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God; and never say or do anything except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him

**This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God**

### **Gospel Acclamation**

Alleluia, alleluia!  
May the peace of Christ reign in your hearts;  
let the message of Christ find a home in you.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

### **Gospel**

#### **A reading from the Gospel of Luke**

When the day came for them to be purified as laid down by the Law of Moses, the parents of Jesus took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord – observing what stands written in the Law of the Lord: Every first-born male must be consecrated to the Lord – and also to offer in sacrifice, in accordance with what is said in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. Now in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was an upright and devout man; he looked forward to Israel’s comforting and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord. Prompted by the Spirit he came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the Law required, he took him into his arms and blessed God; and he said: ‘Now, Master, you can let your servant go in peace, just as you promised; because my eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all the nations to see, a light to enlighten the pagans and the glory of your people Israel.’ As the child’s father and mother stood there wondering at the things that were being said about him, Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, ‘You see this child: he is destined for the fall and for the rising of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is rejected – and a sword will pierce your own soul too – so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare.’ There was a prophetess also, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well on in years. Her days of girlhood over, she had been married for seven years before becoming a widow. She was now eighty-four years old and never left the Temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayer. She came by just at that moment and began to praise God; and she spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem. When they had done everything the Law of the Lord required, they went back to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. Meanwhile the child grew to maturity, and he was filled with wisdom; and God’s favour was with him.

**This is the Gospel of the Lord: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**