

‘A Terror to Evil Doers’:

The NSPCC and Industrial Schools in Kilkenny 1927-1937

Jamie Mackey

Master of Arts

History

Mary Immaculate College

University of Limerick

Supervisor: Dr Maura Cronin

External Examiner: Dr Susannah Riordan

Internal Examiner: Dr Deirdre McMahon

Submitted: 22 January 2014

Contents

Introduction:	5
Chapter 1:	9
Chapter 2:	56
Chapter 3:	103
Conclusion:	141
Bibliography:	146

Authors Deceleration:

This Thesis is based on my own research. Any material deriving from the work of others has been duly acknowledged.

Signed:

Date:

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr Maura Cronin for her encouragement, time and patience over the last two years. Working under her supervision has been an enjoyable experience from start to finish.

I would like to thank my External Supervisor, Dr Susannah Riordan and my Internal Supervisor, Dr Deirdre McMahon.

I would also like to thank Dr. Liam Chambers, Head of History Department for taking the time to offer me advice and read over early drafts and ideas.

The ISPCC granted me access to the annual reports of the Kilkenny Branch of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and I would like to thank Caroline O' Sullivan and Aoife Kennedy for facilitating my research.

I would like to thank the archivists and staff in the reading room of the National Archives for their help in the early stages of my research. I would like to thank Mr. Damien Brett, Local Studies Kilkenny Library for all his assistance during the early stages of my research. I also want to thank Mr Joe Malone for taking the time to meet with me during the course of my research and providing me with insights in Kilkenny history.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, Ger and Geraldine, Sean and Kate for their support and patience over the duration of my study.

Introduction

This thesis examines the role of the Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County Branch of the National Society for Prevention of Cruelty in the committal of children to industrial schools during the period 1927- 1937. In addition, this study addresses the social landscape in Kilkenny and in this regard it documents the role of national and local Catholic social commentary on social issues within the Diocese of Ossory.

The period of investigation was chosen in order to coincide with available records of the Justice Minute Book of Kilkenny District Court and the available annual reports of the NSPCC. The surviving NSPCC reports for the Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County Branch date from 1933 up to the 1950s. The dates chosen for this study serve to place available NSPCC reports into the wider social context of the late 1920s and 1930s in Kilkenny. This thesis examines the findings of the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse regarding the NSPCC's role in committing children into industrial school through the prism of the Kilkenny District and local NSPCC inspector.

In 2011, I was granted access to the District Court Minute Books held the District Court Office in Wexford, for research on social conditions in New Ross, County Wexford. While researching these minute books, it became apparent that every court-ordered committal of a child to an industrial school was documented. Before I could go begin full research on the Wexford District Court Minute Books, I was contacted by the Court Services and informed that I could no longer access the books as they were not deposited within the National Archives of Ireland and were therefore not available to researchers. The District Court Minute Books of Kilkenny District Court, however, are not bound by this restriction since they are held in the National Archives and this allowed me to continue my study of the court records, though this meant that the geographical context of the study changed. The change in location allowed me to compare and contrast committal applications in Kilkenny District Court to the NSPCC's annual reports in order to assess the Society's use of committal applications.

A combination of the District Court record and annual reports of the NSPCC branch in Kilkenny allowed presented me with primary sources which were clearly establish the role of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in the committal of children to local industrial schools. Both St Joseph's and St Patrick's Industrial School's were run by the Sisters of Charity and were discussed at length in the report of the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse. In this regard, the influence of the industrial school on committal applications is examined.

The conclusion of the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse' on the role NSPCC in the committal of children to industrial schools was that the Society had an important role in committing children to

Industrial Schools. The Commission concluded that a lack of documentation prevented a clear understanding of the NSPCC/ISPCC's role in the committal process. This thesis will use the Justice Minute Book of Kilkenny District Court and the NSPCC's annual reports to provide a conclusive account of Society role in the committal process in County Kilkenny. Sarah Anne Buckley has done extensive pioneering research on the case files of the Wexford Branch of the NSPCC and the present study addresses in the Kilkenny context her assertion that the Society was heavily involved in the committal of children to industrial schools in the 1930s.

The District Court Minute Book for Kilkenny is a particularly valuable source for the present study, since it provides an exact record of who applied for the committal of children to industrial schools, likewise, the minute book shows the District Judge's perception of the role of the industrial school in dealing with Kilkenny City's social issues. The evidence of the Minute Books can be matched to the annual reports of the Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County branch of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which are currently held in the ISPCC's Limerick branch office. The ISPCC granted me access to the reports of the Kilkenny Branch subject to the terms of a confidentiality agreement which prevents this study from revealing any third party information held by the Society. This agreement does not, however, apply to the Society's annual reports as each branch report was published and made available to the public. The NSPCC's annual reports provide a social context to the work of the Society in Kilkenny and also give considerable insight into those involved in the work of the Society, since they provide the names of the Society's committee and District Representatives in Kilkenny.

This allows the present study to explore an issue that was not addressed by the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse. Despite having access to the NSPCC's annual reports, the Commission did not discuss the membership of the Society in its published report. The present study addresses, as far as the sources allow, the broad network of NSPCC personnel that the Society's inspector represented in Kilkenny during the 1920s and 1930s. The NSPCC's annual reports discuss the organisations work for each year and provide commentary and statistics on the work of the inspector in the community. The NSPCC's finances are recorded in each report and this allows for an understanding of the Society's expenditure and financial limitations. The microfilm of the *Kilkenny People* and *The Post* have been used for this period in order to assess the social narrative presented to the newspaper buying public in Kilkenny.

The work of the NSPCC in Kilkenny is a window into the social crisis faced by the labouring classes in Kilkenny during the formative years of Independent Ireland. The District Court Minute

Book provides context to the work of the Society in Kilkenny and allows for an insight into the relationship between crime and poverty in Kilkenny.

The role of Catholic philanthropy is examined in order to establish how society reacted to the social problems which affected poor families. Eamon Dunne has documented the role of the St Vincent De Paul Society in Dublin and argues that it existed to provide social cohesion at a time when the labouring classes and poor were becoming increasingly disengaged from Irish Society. Where applicable, the present study examines the role of Catholic philanthropy in the fight against social problems and poverty. Dunne addresses the lack of material assistance provided to the poor in the context of the 1930s and this study examines the manner in which material assistance was given to poor families in Kilkenny at the request of the NSPCC inspector.

Crime and Poverty are central issues which affected the working class in Kilkenny during the 1920s and 1930s and the District Court minute book is a measurement of the influence poverty had on crime in Kilkenny. This study shows that during the period 1927 to 1937, over five thousand court cases were heard and over one thousand individuals were brought before the court charged with larceny, drunk and disorderly behaviour, assault, abusive and threatening language and failing to send their children to school. To what extent did poverty influence these crimes and how did the District Justice treat offenders based on their addresses, past record and gender?

Poverty during the 1920s and 1930s was the primary issue facing philanthropic groups in Kilkenny City. St Anne's Clothing Guild, the Maternity Association, the Saint Vincent De Paul Society and Kilkenny Corporation's coal fund were consistently working to provide basic material assistance to families struggling to against a backdrop of long term mass unemployment. While Catholic philanthropy was a reactionary measure taken to deal with family crisis, the NSPCC, which was driven by women from the Protestant landed gentry, took preventative steps to combat child neglect. This thesis will examine the complicated relationship between the Protestant landed Gentry and Catholic working class families the NSPCC aimed to help. This thesis will address the philanthropic works by members of the NSPCC in Kilkenny and will examine how the declining financial wealth of the Protestant landed gentry impacted on the work of the NSPCC.

Finally, this study will address the NSPCC's role in the committal of children to industrial schools through Kilkenny District Court. The Society's published reports for 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936 and 1937 reveal that the NSPCC did not disclose to the public the number of children they placed into industrial schools each year. This study will ask why the NSPCC broke its core ethos of keeping families together and separated siblings as a result of committal requests. While this study focuses primarily on the role of the NSPCC in committing children to industrial schools, the role of the State

is equally important as the District Justice was ultimately the one person with the power to keep children and families together. In community were Catholic social commentary and political rhetoric documented the social problems facing the working classes in Kilkenny City, the committal of children to industrial schools asks questions of the broader communities perception of the poor in the decade 1927- 1937.

Chapter One

The Structure Membership and Role of the NSPCC in Co. Kilkenny

In 2009, the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse published its report on institutional abuse in Ireland. Within the published report, the role of the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, formerly the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was examined in the context of the committal of children to industrial schools. The Commission was unable to provide a conclusive account of the role of the Society in the committal process; likewise, the published report does not include a detailed account of the work the NSPCC did in Ireland to aid families living in poverty. The Commission was given access by the ISPCC to its archives and these included the NSPCC's annual reports for each of the fourteen branches in Ireland. The published report of the Commission made no reference to the membership, its financial statements or social commentary of the Society. This chapter addresses the elements of the NSPCC's work which were not documented by the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse, dealing specifically with the Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County Branch of the Society.

The Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse established that the general history of the Society in Ireland was as follows:

In 1875, the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was formed. It aimed to combat squalor, neglect and abuse in relation to children. An equivalent society, which was to become the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), was established in Britain in 1884 and within five years it had 31 branches. The first Irish branch of the NSPCC was formed in Dublin in 1889. For a period of 67 years, from 1889 to 1956, the Society within Ireland operated under the auspices of the NSPCC despite the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922. It was not until 1956 that the Irish branches ceded from the NSPCC and form independent Society known as, the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC).

The NSPCC was granted a Royal Charter in 1895, conferring on it the following duties: To prevent the public and private wrongs of children and the corruption of their morals, to take action for the enforcement of laws for their protection and to provide and maintain an organisation for the above objects. Excluding the Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County (Laois) Branch, the thirteen other branches were Clonmel and District Branch, Cork District, Dublin District and County, Kerry, Galway District, Limerick and Clare District, Mayo County, Meath District. North Louth, Monaghan and Cavan, Waterford and District, Westmeath, Kings Co., (Offaly) and Midland Counties, and

Wexford. The ISPCC's submission to the Commission to Enquire into Child abuse listed the function of the Society and its staff as follows:

By 1889, the NSPCC had become a national organisation and the first Irish branch was set up in Molesworth Street, Dublin in May 1889 with further branches in Belfast and Cork in 1891 and subsequently branches throughout the Ireland. They were staffed by a small group of salaried inspectors who were answerable to a local committee of interested person, who gave their service on a voluntary basis. Inspectors were provided with a house which doubled as the local office. They were a point of contact within the community for families in trouble and those who had concerns about children on a 24 hour basis 365 days a year. ¹

The ISPCC submission to the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse established that the NSPCC investigated families where children were in difficulties or in danger of falling into neglectful circumstances. In essence, the Society's inspectors were paid social workers working at a time when professional child care was nonexistent. In 1939, Sean MacEntee, Minister for Finance, addressed the NSPCC's Golden Jubilee Celebrations, and the Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County Branch paraphrased his speech as follows.

A government department can never be substitute for personal charity. He pointed out that bureaucracy must act according to rules and regulations, and cannot take the place of the woman heart (sic) and helping hand of voluntary efforts in relieving the sorrows and distress around us. It is the personal sympathy and human undertaking that makes the Society in the words of the minister 'indispensable and irreplaceable'²

The wide range of issues which the NSPCC dealt with were listed by the ISPCC in its submission as follows: poverty, neglect, violence towards children, situations where there was abuse of alcohol, mental or physical issue for parents, parents hospitalisation, the death of the main wage earner or the death of a mother and the father unable to cope. In addition, the NSPCC were responsible with investigating and finding reasonable solutions to overcrowded and squalid housing, desertion, illegitimacy, abandonment, infanticide. The ISPCC also outlined the issue of children's individual sense of morality and how surroundings influenced children as a problem which motivated its officers when dealing with social deprivation. The list of social problems identified by the ISPCC

¹ *The Role of the ISPCC in the placement of children in Industrial Schools*, p.4. This document was given to me by Caroline O' Sullivan, Director of Services, ISPCC in Limerick on 13 February 2013.

² *National Society for the Prevention of Children, Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County Branch, Twenty -Third Report (Kilkenny, 1939)*, p. 4.

shows that the Society's inspectors investigated a combination of intentional neglect and instances where unforeseen circumstances eroded the safety of children in their homes.

In the Kilkenny context, with the exception of infanticide, it is clear that the all of the above social problems were experienced by the Society's Inspector, Michael McDonagh. Kilkenny District Court records showed that infanticide was non-existent in Kilkenny during the ten years 1927- 1937. This does not prove that infanticide was not occurring; however, given the close working relationships the inspector had with the local community, it is highly unlikely that the infanticide was hidden from the NSPCC in Kilkenny City. The ISPCC stated that each inspector was responsible for the geographical area covered by each branch and in Kilkenny this meant that Inspector McDonagh was responsible for the welfare of children in Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County. The 1926 census reveals that the Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County inspector was responsible for the welfare of 45, 389 children.³ In comparison, the neighbouring Wexford District Branch inspector was responsible for 27,087 children⁴, while the Meath Branch of the Society was responsible for 18,192 children.⁵ The biggest obstacle facing the NSPCC in Kilkenny was the sheer numbers of children which one inspector was responsible for. In this regard, it is clear that the Society could not function without support from other agencies and individuals.

As an agency responsible for child welfare, it was essential the inspectors were familiar with the resources available to them in their respective communities. The ISPCC's submission to the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse dealt exclusively with the role of the Society in the committal of children to industrial schools. The submission by the ISPCC reveals that the inspectors were primarily engaged with industrial schools, the Gardai, the Department of Education other government departments and the courts. While the Society was not a state body or religious body, it served as a useful tool for State and Church in the fight against poverty, particularly in urban communities.

The relationship between an industrial school and an inspector was described by the ISPCC as an inevitable.⁶In Kilkenny City, the Religious Sisters of Charity operated St Patrick's Industrial School for boys and St Joseph's Industrial School for girls. Both of these institutions were within close proximity to Inspector McDonagh's office at Bishops Hill. The District Court records show that ninety per cent of Inspector McDonagh's committal applications saw children sent to local industrial

³ Census of Population 1926: Vol.5, *Ages, Orphanages and conjugal conditions*, (Dublin, 1930)

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *The Role of the ISPCC in the placement of children in Industrial Schools*, p.8.

schools. In addition court coverage in the local press indicates that NSPCC and the Sisters of Charity certainly had a working relationship.

Commenting on the history of the NSPCC in Ireland, Sarah Anne Buckley asserts that the history of the Society in Great Britain has been documented and challenged; however, the history of the Society in Ireland has not been investigated.⁷ With the exception of Sarah Anne Buckley's unpublished doctoral thesis, there is almost no reference to the NSPCC's influence on the history of Irish families.

Compiling a detailed history of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in Kilkenny is undermined by the loss of the case files of the Kilkenny branch which no longer exist. As a result, it is not possible to examine the reports of the inspector or offer insights from the viewpoint of the NSPCC inspector or committee members on individual cases. Likewise, it is not possible to utilise the records which show the positive work the NSPCC did to help children living in destitute circumstances.

The earliest surviving annual report of the NSPCC in Kilkenny is from the year 1933. Consequently, the membership and social commentary of the Society prior to this date cannot be accurately measured. The Society's annual report for 1933 indicates that the NSPCC's Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County Branch had ninety-seven members with eighty-eight of these being women. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in Kilkenny can trace its origins to Protestant landed gentry estates and families with a history of landlordism, service to the British Empire and local philanthropy. The 1901 and 1911 census have been used in order to provide background to the families which joined the Society and it is clear that the Society for the Prevention of Children was a philanthropic group which appealed predominantly to professional and land owning protestant families until 1936.

NSPCC committee member Agnes Bernice Poe was listed in the 1911 census as an 'income woman' and her husband, James Poe, was the NSPCC's solicitor. Florence Jackson Prior Wandesforde was the NSPCC's Vice - President and while she had no occupation in the 1901 census, her husband was listed as a landed proprietor. In addition, the Wandesforde family ran the Castlecomer Mines. The Wandesfordes were one of the largest employers in County Kilkenny and were the main employer in the town of Castlecomer. Ethel Knox, NSPCC committee member, was the wife of NSPCC Honorary Secretary Major Lindsay Knox.⁸ NSPCC committee member Fanny Norman Hewat was the daughter of Thomas Kouch who served no fewer than four Protestant bishops

⁷ Sarah Anne Buckley, 'Child Neglect, Poverty and Class: the NSPCC in Ireland, 1889 – 1939-a case study' in *Saothar: Journal of the Labour History Society*, no 33, 2008, p.2.

⁸ Major Lindsey Knox died in 1933 and Miss McCreery became honorary secretary.

as the Registrar of the Diocese of Ossory.⁹ Lala Purkis was the wife of a Church of Ireland vicar and lived in the village of Freshford. Susan Davis was the wife of an R.I.C pensioner. The Society's Honorary Secretary in 1933 and 1934, Ernestine McCreery, did not have an occupation listed in the 1901 or 1911 census. However, her family employed three servants.¹⁰ Committee member Isabella Lalor was the wife of Michael Wilton Lalor, owner and editor of the *Kilkenny Moderator*. Marguerite Solly Flood was a noted landscape artist while Mrs Charlotte Wheeler Cuff was an acclaimed botanist and painter. Charlotte Wheeler Cuffe designed the Burmese Botanical Gardens while living in Burma with her husband Sir Otway Wheeler Cuffe was employed as a civil engineer for the British Empire. Miss Anna Parr, committee member, was listed as a nurse in the 1911 census while Mrs Lowry was listed as farmer.¹¹ Colonel William Butler and his wife were members of the NSPCC committee and Colonel Butler also served as a county councillor and was the founding president of Callan Golf Club.¹² For his service to the British Army, Colonel Butler received the Distinguished Service Order medal. Gertrude Dobbs was the daughter of Joseph Dobbs, a justice of the peace and collier from Moneenroe. While the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was not exclusively a women's organisation promoting the betterment of women's rights, ninety per cent of the NSPCC's members in Kilkenny were female. The Society was constructed around a very close regional social network, and it is significant that many of the committee members lived within short distances of each other in rural Kilkenny. The geographical location of the fundraising districts indicates that the eight of the NSPCC's fundraising districts were in South Kilkenny. Turtle Banbury's vanishing Ireland project notes 'with its marvellous views and peaceful riverside setting, the countryside around Inistioge had long been an enclave of the Anglo-Irish gentry'.¹³

The NSPCC's annual reports show that the landed Gentry families of South Kilkenny formed the spine of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Honorary Secretary Mrs Anderson lived in Lavistown House, less than two kilometres from the Wheeler Cuffe estate, which was the home of committee member Lady Charlotte Wheeler Cuffe and her husband, Sir Ottway Wheeler Cuffe. Mrs Marguerite Solly Flood, committee member, lived in Coolemore House outside Thomastown, which was two hundred metres across the river from Lord and Lady Teignmouth who served respectively as treasurer and honorary secretary of the NSPCC Ladies Committee during the period under review.

⁹Inscription on the memorial to Thomas Kouch at St. Canices Cathedral, Kilkenny City.

¹⁰ Census of Population 1911: Household Returns, National Archives of Ireland, available at <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie> accessed on 10 September 2013.

¹¹Ibid.

¹² <http://www.callangolfclub.com/the-club> accessed on 10 September 2013.

¹³ Turtle Bunbury, Vanishing Ireland, Interviews, Edward Hayes http://www.turtlebunbury.com/interviews/interviews_ireland/vanishing_two/interviews_ireland_edward_hayes.html accessed on 13 September 2013.

The annual reports of the Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County branch indicate that the NSPCC had an extensive network of district committees which were located in towns across the three counties. In county Carlow, the NSPCC had district committees in Carlow Town, Tullow and Bagenalstown. District committees in Queen's County were located in Maryborough (Port Laoise), Portarlinton and Athy. There is no listing of any district committees in County Kilkenny; however, the report indicates that the Society ran fundraising collections in Kilkenny City, Callan, Castlecomer, Ballyragget, Freshford, Goresbridge, Gowran, Graiguenamanagh, Inistioge, Kells, Kilmurry, Knocktopher, Stoneyford and Thomastown.¹⁴ The NSPCC had committee members either living or fundraising in fourteen communities in County Kilkenny and this indicates that the Society's membership would have witnessed social conditions primarily in the south of the county. Collectors for the Kilkenny District in 1933 were listed in the annual report as follows:

Kilkenny City: Mrs MacFarlane, Miss Anne Poe

Callan: Mrs Butler

Castlecomer: Mrs Prior Wandesforde

Ballyragget: Mrs Brennan.

Freshford: Miss McCheane

Goresbridge: Mrs. J. Edwards

Graiguenamanagh: Miss Loftus

Inistioge: Mrs Newman

Kilmurry: Miss Butler

Knocktopher and Stoneyford: Mrs Hervey

Thomastown: Lady Teignmouth¹⁵

Of the fourteen collection districts, Miss Mary Brenan in Freshford was the only Catholic involved in fundraising and the 1911 census shows that the Brenan family were a farming family who employed three servants.¹⁶ In 1934, the number of female collectors peaked in Kilkenny City with the addition of Miss Iris Knox, Mrs, Dalby and Mrs. Thompson assisting Miss Poe. The addition of two extra collectors Kilkenny can be attributed to the financial difficulties experienced by the Society. In 1934,

¹⁴ *National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County Branch, Eighteenth Report* (Kilkenny, 1934), p.2. .

¹⁵ *National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County Branch, Seventeenth Report* (Kilkenny, 1933), p. 5.

¹⁶ Census of Population, 1911: Household Returns.

Johnstown District was listed as having a Mrs Seale as a collector. The 1911 census shows that the Seales were a large Church of Ireland family.

Considering that the NSPCC was comprised of upper class Anglo-Irish women from rural estates in Kilkenny and from professional families, it is difficult to ascertain if the Society's members encountered poor families living in destitute circumstances first hand. Likewise, it is equally difficult to discover if the middle and lower classes in Kilkenny gave donations to the NSPCC. Diarmaid Ferriter, commenting on the middle class membership of the Society of Saint Vincent De Paul at the turn of the twentieth century, suggests that 'the extent to which the truly destitute were visited is open to question'.¹⁷ The question of everyday class divisions being expressed in voluntary charity is important in understanding the context in which the NSPCC and Catholic Action groups undertook their respective missions. The NSPCC's work with Catholic families is an indication of the manner in which landowning families adapted to their increasingly marginalised position in Kilkenny's social, economic and political landscape following independence. The oversight and regulatory policies of the NSPCC in the 1930s allowed the declining landed gentry families an opportunity to exert their influence over Kilkenny's poorest families.

Did the Solly Flood, Teignmouth, Butler, Prior Wandesforde and Wheeler Cuffe families interact with the families the NSPCC was designed to assist? Kurt Bowen argues that rural land owning protestant families prior to the 1960s maintained polite but distant relations with most Catholics.¹⁸ Mary Healy, at 77 years of age, documented her childhood growing up in a working class family in Kilkenny City and while the commentary on members of the NSPCC is brief, it shows the cultural divide between the members of the NSPCC and the poor. Commenting on superstition amongst the poor, Healy noted that Leyrath House, home to the NSPCC committee member Charlotte Wheeler Cuffe, was a symbol of fear amongst the working class.

Nearly all the adults I knew when I was child firmly believed in ghosts, and we children did too. If we heard any unusual sound in the night thinking it was surely a ghost and it be only a cat bawling. Leyrath, about two miles outside the city always had the name of being haunted. My mother used to tell us about the night the man who was driving a wagonette, could not get the horses to go past the gate leading into Leyrath house; he got down off the wagonette and got an awful fright. It was not anything he saw that frightened him, he said but what he walked on. We

¹⁷ Diarmaid Ferriter, *A Nation of Extremes: The Pioneers in the Twentieth Century* (Dublin, 1999), p.34.

¹⁸ Kurt Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic State: Ireland's Privileged Minority* (Belfast, 1983), pp.166-167.

never knew what it was, but we children would go for a walk out the Dublin Road, but would never pass the leyrath gate.¹⁹

Beyond the economic relationship between Protestant and Catholics in rural areas, Bowen argues that the social and cultural isolation between the two communities was reinforced by the low intermarriage of 20 to 25 percent.²⁰ It is worth noting that Bettina Loftus was an NSPCC committee member and lived at Mount Loftus in Powerscourt. Bettina Loftus's mother was Church of Ireland and her father, John Edward Blake Loftus, was a Catholic and served in the British Army as a captain in the Royal Irish Regiment. Bettina Loftus was raised a Catholic and in June 1933 she married a Protestant named Thomas Henry Grattan-Bellew, second son of Sir Henry and Lady Sophie Grattan-Bellew, Tennehinch, Enniskerry, County Wicklow.²¹ The religious divide between NSPCC members was recalled by Mary Healy while she watched a wedding party arrive at St Canice's Cathedral:

I can well remember going over with my friends to see the guests arriving for the wedding of a member of the Poe family, a very grand affair. Looking back on this what remains in my memory most forcefully is, the members of the Loftus family, who were Catholics, walking up and down outside in their wedding finery waiting for the wedding party to come out, for they did not dare go into the church for the ceremony under pain of mortal sin, or maybe excommunication²²

The 1926 census establishes that Protestants were a clear minority in Kilkenny. In 1926, Kilkenny City's Protestant community numbered 374 of a population of 10,046.²³ Catholics constituted ninety-five per cent of the population of Kilkenny City and in Kilkenny County Catholics composed ninety-six per cent of the population. Amounting to four per cent of the population in Kilkenny, the numerical minority of Protestant families in Kilkenny placed the NSPCC's core families in a position of isolation. For example, the 1926 census reveals that in Callan, the home of Colonel Butler and his wife, there were only fourteen Protestants in a community of 1500 people.²⁴ In addition, the 1911 census shows that many of the NSPCC committee members were not originally from Kilkenny. For example, Mrs Poe and Miss McCreery were born in India, Mrs Purkis was born in the United States, Charlotte Wheeler Cuffe was born in London and Mrs Prior Wandesforde was born in West Indies.²⁵

¹⁹ Mary Healy, *For the Poor and the For the Gentry: Mary Healy remembers her life* (Dublin, 1989), p.17.

²⁰ Kurt Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic State*, p.166.

²¹ *Irish Times*, 2 June 1933.

²² Mary Healy, *For the Poor and Gentry*, p.19.

²³ Census of Population 1926, Vol.3, *Religion and Birthplaces*, (Dublin, 1929)

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Census of Population 1911, Household Returns.

Kurt Bowen asserts that ‘as early as 1926, Irish Anglicans clearly deserved to be described as a minority since they amounted to only seven per cent of the total population’.²⁶ One of the most revealing statistics identified by Bowen is that after 1926 the Church of Ireland community was undergoing a natural decline. Bowen asserts:

Clearly any community is in serious difficulty when it cannot compensate for the inevitable losses of mortality. The immediate cause of this extremely rare state of affairs was the minority’s abnormally low birth rate which was lower than that of all but one other European country until the 1960s.²⁷

The issue of mortality was relevant to the membership of the NSPCC in 1933 as Major Lindsay Knox, Hon. Secretary Cases and Lady Desart, Honorary Treasurer, both passed away. In both cases, the NSPCC lost established members of the Society. The average life expectancy for children born in 1926 was 57.4 years for men and 57.9 years of age for woman²⁸ and in this regard many of the Society’s committee were in old age by contemporary standards. The 1911 census reveals that many of the NSPCC’s female membership were entering the later stages of their lives in the late 1930s. In 1936, NSPCC Vice-President Florence Prior Wandesforde was sixty six years of age, Charlotte Wheeler Cuffe was entering her seventies, Ernestine McCreery was sixty years of age while holding the office of Honorary Secretary, Marguerite Solly Flood was fifty years of age in 1937, Anna Parr was fifty four years of age, Susan Davis was eighty- three in 1936, Isabella Lalor was eighty years of age in 1936, Mrs Lowry was eighty six years of age and Mrs Poe, wife of the NSPCC’s solicitor, was fifty-eight years of age.²⁹

When measuring the work of the NSPCC in Kilkenny City, the finances of the Society show that its philanthropy was heavily restricted by the lack of finance available to the inspector to assist families whose main complaint was poverty. It is ironic that the Society responsible with assisting the poor suffered throughout the 1930s with financial difficulties which undoubtedly undermined the inspector’s ability to assist. The NSPCC balanced its books as a result of contributions from other branches. These contributions covered the fact that the revenue generated by general subscriptions and fundraising was not sufficient enough to cover cost of expenditure.

²⁶ Kurt Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic State*, p. 27.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.29.

²⁸ Central Statistics Office, *Irish Life Tables No.15: 2005-2007*, (January 2009) available at <http://www.cso.ie/en/media/duplicatecsomedia/newmedia/releasespublications/documents/birthsdm/current/irishlife.pdf> accessed on 15 October 2013.

²⁹ Age is calculated from combination of 1901 and 1911 census.

The Financial Difficulties faced by the NSPCC

The expenditure and income of the NSPCC during the period 1933- 1937 indicates that the Society was heavily dependent on contributions from other branches and this dependency was due to two issues. Principally, the expense of running the NSPCC in Kilkenny remained far greater than the level of income recorded from its local membership and financial donors. Secondly, it is clear that the lady collectors and general contributions from members of the Society were not able to meet the expenditure requirements. Taking contributions from other branches away from the Society's income, the NSPCC's income was derived from the following income sources: subscriptions and general contributions from different branches, flower days, entertainments and kindred efforts.³⁰ It is clear from the financial statements of the Society that its primary expenditure was maintaining Inspector McDonagh's ability to carry out his operational and administration expenses. In 1933, the list of expenditure was as follows:

Inspector's wages: £202.2s.11d

Proportion of Inspector's Life insurance and Pension Premium paid by the Society: £18.2s

Inspector's travelling expenses: £29.14s.1d

Inspector's uniform: £7.17s.6d

Conveyance of Children: £11s.3s

Legal Expenses: £3.16s

Medical and Witnesses Fees: £2.13s

Printing and Stationary, etc: £8. 4s.5d

Postages, etc £2.10s.4d

Rent, Rates etc: £28

Fuel, light and heating: £7.16s

Temporary relief to families: 8s.6d

General expenditure on publicity and development: £ 68.18s 10d.³¹

³⁰ These forms of income remained the same in each of the five published reports.

³¹ *NSPCC annual report 1933*, p.10.

The Society's expenditure for 1933 amounted to £354.14s. 10d. its income from general subscriptions was £141. 8s.2d. The shortfall of £213.6s.8d was made up from contributions from an unspecified number of other branches.³²

The two most significant items of expenditure in Kilkenny were the inspector's wages and the contribution to the central fund for publicity and development. It should be noted that it was not in the Kilkenny branch's interest to become entirely self-financing as the annual contribution to the central fund for publicity and development amounted to a figure in the region of twenty per cent of their total expenditure for the year. Over the course of the five years 1933-1937, the Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County branch contributed £343 to publicity and development. The record of the *Kilkenny People* and *The Post* show that the NSPCC was not purchasing adverts in Kilkenny. In contrast to this, the NSPCC only provided £2 worth of material assistance to the two thousand children the Society engaged with during the period 1933- 1937. The administration charges placed upon the branch undermined the NSPCC's ability to provide financial assistance to families. The following shows the list of income from general subscriptions over the period 1933- 1937 in Kilkenny; in 1933, general subscriptions amounted to £83.1s 7d³³. In 1934, the amount raised from Kilkenny was £75. 9s. 9d.³⁴ In 1935, the amount raised was £69, 4s. 7d.³⁵ In 1936, the Kilkenny branch raised £75, 5s.7d³⁶. In 1937, general subscriptions amounted to £73, 11s. 10d.³⁷

The decline in subscription revenue in Kilkenny between 1933 and 1935 is illustrative of the decline in Ascendancy family's wealth. During this period, wealthy individuals such as Lady Desart and Major Lindsay Knox past away and this would have had a negative effect on the Society's income in Kilkenny. The 1920s and 1930s was a period when estate families were losing their wealth. Marilyn Silverman notes that the isolation of Protestant landed families in Kilkenny had a socio-economic impact which amounted to destruction of the landlord class. In essence, those families were most likely to donate to the NSPCC prior to the arrival of Catholics into the Society in 1936. Silverman notes that

after the Great War, several prominent gentry' families, such as the Lindsays, did not return. Others left during the Troubled times; still others had lost their male heirs in the war. In any case, their tenanted agricultural lands had been expropriated and many faced stringent financial

³² *Ibid.*, p.10.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.10.

³⁴ *NSPCC annual report 1934*, p.7.

³⁵ *National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Nineteenth Report* (Kilkenny, 1935), p. 7.

³⁶ *National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Twentieth Report* (Kilkenny, 1936), p. 7.

³⁷ *National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Twenty First Report* (Kilkenny, 1937), p. 7.

circumstances as a result. Only the newly arrived McCalmonts³⁸ maintained an aristocratic lifestyle. In the face of this economic and physical decline, gentry's charity altered.³⁹

Mark Bence-Jones notes that following the outbreak of war in 1939, Mrs Solly Food was anxious to help in the war effort and she gave a ball at her home in aid of the Red Cross.⁴⁰ While it is not possible to ascertain if similar charity balls were held for the NSPCC, it is an indication of the manner in which Anglo- Irish families raised money for charity.

Timothy Campbell and Stephen Royle, in their history of the demise of country houses in Carlow argue that 'the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was greatest amongst the largest estates, which shed an average of 45 hectares (66 per cent of their total demesne) between them over this time.'⁴¹ Mrs Eustace Duckett served on the Tullow committee of the NSPCC and Campbell and Roche assert that her home, Duckett's Grove, was completely derelict by the 1920s'.⁴² The NSPCC annual reports emphasised the necessity of public donations and this reflected the drained resources of the NSPCC members.

In 1934, Miss McCreery stated that 'it is regretted that there is still a deficit on the year's work, and it is hoped that next year the Branch will be self- supporting'⁴³. Likewise, in 1935, Mrs Anderson made the following remark about the role of collections.

To the lady collectors, not alone in Kilkenny, but also in the outlying districts, we owe a debt of gratitude for their persevering and effective work in collecting funds year after year. If it were not for their help the Society would be in dire straits.⁴⁴

The financial statements show of the Society for the period show that the primary purpose of fundraising was to cover expenditure which remained consistently in the region of £355 per annum.⁴⁵ In 1936, the membership of the committee expanded from sixteen members in 1935 to twenty five⁴⁶. This expansion raised the level of general subscriptions from £69 in 1935 to £75 in 1936.

The expansion in the number of committee members in 1936 saw the appointment of Canon Cavanagh to the Vice- President of the Society. In addition, members of the Catholic philanthropy,

³⁸ The McCalmonts never joined the NSPCC and there is no record to show that they donated to the Society.

³⁹ Marilyn Silverman, *An Irish Working Class: explorations in political economy and hegemony: 1800-1950* (Toronto, 2001), pp.323-224.

⁴⁰ Mark Bence Jones, *Twilight of the Ascendancy* (London, 1987), p.267.

⁴¹ Timothy Campbell and Stephen Royle, 'The Country House and its Demesne in County Carlow' in Thomas McGrath (ed.), *Carlow: History and Society* (Dublin, 2008) p. 747.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 747.

⁴³ *NSPCC annual report 1934*, p.4.

⁴⁴ *NSPCC annual report 1935*, p.5.

⁴⁵ This figure is obtained from the financial statements of each report.

⁴⁶ *NSPCC annual report 1936*, p.1.

the Ladies Association of Charity joined the NSPCC. Those members were Mrs. Lanigan, Mrs. Burden, Miss Monks and Mrs. Healy⁴⁷. It is significant that prior to 1936; the Kilkenny Branch of the NSPCC raised no income from flower days, Entertainments and Kindred effort, however, in 1936, the Kilkenny Branch raised £23.16s 8d from flower days. In this regard, the decline of contributions witnessed in 1933, 1934 and 1935 was stemmed by the influx of new members and new methods of finance. During the same period, an income was received from a gift by NSPCC committee member Mrs Hervey. In 1933, she donated £2.7d and each year after she donated £4.1s.2d. Mrs Hervey was the only committee member who gave a gift to the Society each year.

It is important to note that the presence of a Catholic Priest and members of a Catholic Charity allowed the NSPCC to transcend cultural divisions in terms of finance. The emergence of Catholics into the Society also opened up a greater pool of resource in terms of potential donors. Prior to 1936, there was no direct Catholic clergy link to the NSPCC; however, the emergence of Canon Cavanagh would have allowed him to appeal to St Canice's parishioners. The office of the NSPCC was located in St Canice's parish and was six hundred metres away from St Canices's parish church.

There is evidence in Kilkenny which shows that the clergy made requests when making appeals on the behalf of the St Vincent De Paul Society. On St Patrick's Day 1931, Fr Angelus, Parish Priest Graiguenamanagh, requested that his parishioners to be generous in their contributions to St Vincent De Paul Society for he was once a member of the Society

Those of you who have little give some out of that little 'tis the pennies of the poor that keep up our charities. Give today your alms for the love of God. ⁴⁸

The 1936 census shows that the 377 Protestants in Kilkenny City amounted to four per cent of the population of 10, 237 people. In ten years, the Protestant proportion of Kilkenny City's religious demographics dropped by two per cent. The emergence of Catholics into the NSPCC allowed the Society to reduce its dependency on contributions from the other district branches. This is evident in the financial statements which are evidence of this. In 1935, other branches contributed £214.10s 1d.⁴⁹ The following year, after the influx of new membership and financing methods, the amount obtained from other branches was reduced to £142.2s 2d.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.1

⁴⁸ *Kilkenny People*, 28 March 1931.

⁴⁹ *NSPCC annual report 1935*, p.7.

While commentary on finances is brief during the period, it is clear that the Kilkenny Branch was financially solvent and met its administrative costs. In a broader context, it is clear that Michael McDoagh was well paid. Each year, he received £4 per week as well as having his uniform and transport cost covered by the Society. David Gwyn Morgan, writing in the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse, stated

Writing in 1938 about the general population, Dr Fearon² estimated that a weekly income of 30 shillings per week would be needed to keep a person, and of this amount the expenditure on food would be 10 shillings for a diet which ‘is almost’ nutritionally adequate. Yet 50 percent of the population had a weekly income of 20 shillings or less and spent 8 shillings or less on food.³ In the same year, the Rotunda Hospital, in inner North Dublin, almoners carried out a dietary survey on a small sample of 50 families living in one-roomed tenements where the breadwinner was unemployed – in other words the families whose children were most likely to be committed. The almoners found that when rent, insurance, fuel and light were paid, the average weekly sum available for food and clothes, for each family member, was 3 shillings.⁵¹

While these figures are not indicative of life in Kilkenny, it is clear that McDonagh was better off in comparison to the people he was investigating. This thesis will show that the gap between rural estate and destitute family was bridged by the NSPCC’s inspector.

The Public Face of the Minority

The inspector allowed the work of the NSPCC in Kilkenny to transcend the religious and social barriers which would have existed if Protestant committee members from landed estates supervised the parenting of Catholic working class parents. Mary Healy notes that for Catholic children in Kilkenny City, Protestants were not seen as allies or friends: ‘we poor misguided children though there was no such person as a good neighbourly Protestant. Most of the time while I was growing up here was political unrest’.⁵²

Healy made reference to the Black and Tans and the R.I.C in Kilkenny and it is evident that the legacy of the way both groups treated the Catholics indirectly depicted Protestants in a negative fashion:

⁵⁰ NSPCC annual report, 1936, p. 7.

⁵¹ David Gwyn Morgan, ‘Society and the Schools’, in *The Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse*, Vol.IV (Dublin, 2009), p.202.

⁵² Mary Healy, *for the Poor and Gentry*, p. 20.

My stepfather used to say that the R.I.C men were more guilty than the Tans, for it was they who led the Tans to what were considered safe houses, they knew the lie of the land and the Tans did not, and they were able to stand aside and let the Tans murder and loot at will.⁵³

Healy also mentioned the outbreak of World War One and noted that conscription was a point of contention amongst the working class. Healy wrote:

I think I have said before now that we were not a patriotic family, but during the 1914 war and when the British spoke of bringing in conscription eventually a spark of patriotism emerged in my mother, and she was vociferous in her condemnation of it. Mrs. Keefe, our next door neighbour was equally so, and with more reason, for her only son was old enough to be conscripted, and she did not see why her dearly loved son should have to fight in a war which was none our making.⁵⁴

Mark Bence Jones's account of the landed estate families in Kilkenny and Marilyn Silverman's anthropological study of Thomastown also referred to class tensions regarding the Teignmouth and Solly Flood families.

Bence-Jones records that in April 1899, the Marquess of Ormonde of Kilkenny Castle was visited by the Duke and Duchess of York (the future George V and Queen Mary) who spent five nights in Kilkenny Castle. During the royal visit to Kilkenny the Duke and Duchess were taken on a fishing trip down river to Thomastown. As the party passed along the river, country people lined the river banks and Bence Jones records that as a child, Mrs Solly Flood was not afraid to confront local Catholics regarding issues of etiquette:

A youth from Coolmore farm stood stolidly, gazing at the royal party with his cap on. Colonel Connellan's fourteen- year-old daughter Marguerite (later Mrs Solly Flood) shouted furiously to him to take it off, but he replied: Them no Kings or Queens, they have no crowns on their heads.⁵⁵

Marilyn Silverman notes that following the Sinn Fein electoral victory in 1918, the owner of a small news agency and labour league secretary in Kilkenny put up a tricolour flag. Silverman notes that Mrs Solly Flood, (nee Connellan), strode inside to express her disgust. The owner Maher's wife retorted 'that she hoped to see the day when the tri- colour flew over the Connellan House'.⁵⁶

⁵³ Ibid., p.20.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.20.

⁵⁵ Mark Bence-Jones, *Twilight*, p.85.

⁵⁶ Marilyn Silverman, *An Irish Working Class*, p. 278.

While serving as honorary treasurer of the NSPCC in 1935, Lord Teignmouth testified to the Fisheries Commission. His testimony focused upon restricting illegal fishing by cot fishermen, principally, it was his wish that Cots be ‘padlocked to numbered posts during illegal hours’.⁵⁷ In her account of working class society in Thomastown, Marilyn Silverman asserts that Teignmouth had a fractious relationship with the cot fisherman over his alleged use of trickery in purchasing the fishing rights from the widows of several farmers.

They would accuse Teignmouth of trespass if he stepped on the wrong blade of grass along the right of way. They resented him doing their mothers and aunts out of fishing.’ Said a former cotman: ‘they not only had the fishing, but they would never let anyone fish. Not Teignmouth, not McCalmot, not Solly Flood.’⁵⁸

Ciaran Reilly notes that from the beginning of the War of Independence in January 1919 to the end of the Civil War in May 1923 almost 300 county homes, the homes of landlords were burned in the area of the twenty six counties.⁵⁹ In County Kilkenny, Desart Court, home of the Cuffe family, was burned by the republicans. Mark Bence-Jones notes that a month after the fire, the van and lorry taking the things rescued from the fire from Desart to Kilkenny Railway station were stopped on the road by armed men and set on fire, so that even the little that was saved out of Lord Desart’s family home was reduced to ashes.⁶⁰ While no other homes of NSPCC members were burned, it is worth noting that in 1919 Mrs Solly Food’s home was raided by twelve masked members of the IRA while she was alone with her children⁶¹. Such events would have accentuated any existing rural tension between landed gentry and republicans.

Taking into account that the NSPCC was made up of the wives of British Army and R.I.C officers, the role of the inspector insulated the NSPCC’s Protestant families from the religious and cultural tension which would have come with investigating complaints of cruelty against Catholic parents. In 1935, Honorary Secretary, Mrs Anderson explained the role of the inspector as follows:

The fact of an officer patrolling our streets, his uniform bearing the insignia-‘The Prevention of Cruelty to Children’ is an important factor in this work. It says in effect ‘Trespassers will be prosecuted’ and has a healthy influence. IT PREVENTS WHAT WOULD OTHERWISE TAKE

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.332.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.335.

⁵⁹ Ciaran J. Reilly, ‘The burning of country houses in Co. Offaly during the revolutionary period 1920-3’, in Terence Dooley & Christopher Ridgway (eds), *The Irish country house, its past, present and future* (Dublin, 2011), p. 110.

⁶⁰ Mark Bence Jones, *Twilight*, p. 233.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 188.

PLACE. This, perhaps, is our greatest triumph, and is a justification of our name. The same thing is seen in the figures relating to prosecutions. Thirty or forty years ago the average number of prosecutions each year was from ten to twelve. Last year we had only two, while the year before we had four. PARENTS HAVE LEARNED THAT THEIR CHILDREN HAVE RIGHTS⁶²

In Kilkenny City, the NSPCC was located at Bishop's Hill. From a central location in Kilkenny City, Inspector Michael McDonagh worked on behalf of the NSPCC for twenty-six years across counties Kilkenny, Carlow and Laois in the fight to protect children and families. Over twenty-six years of service to the NSPCC, Inspector McDonagh would have been in a position to establish working links with members of the clergy, the public, the Sisters of Charity, Kilkenny Corporation and the committee members across Kilkenny's fourteen districts.

Finola Kennedy argues that fortunes of family life during the formative years of the state were influenced by class and economic fortunes:

At the start of the twentieth century the factors that most differentiated families were economic and class factors. Family life was very different for the poor slum dwellers, the working class, the growing bourgeoisie in the towns and cities, as it was different also for the farm labourers, small tenant farmers, the larger farm properties and the substantial landed gentry in the rural areas. Class distinction was rife in rural Ireland and farming people would seldom mix with servants.⁶³

Did class based prejudice impact on the manner in which the upper class members of the NSPCC interacted with the poor? Commenting on the general membership of the NSPCC, Sarah Anne Buckley asserts that

while there were still a minority of reformers who became involved in the NSPCC and other comparable organisations out of some sentimental and romantic concern for children, or a more radical concern for the child as a citizen, most were motivated by a need to organise and regulate the lives of the poor, encouraging class based legislation as a means for inculcating 'a sense of responsibility' into people of the working class.⁶⁴

The NSPCC in Kilkenny embodied all of Buckley's listed characteristics. However, in Kilkenny it is clear the members of the Society were motivated by the betterment of the poor. On the memorial to committee member Fanny Norman Hewat in St Canice's Cathedral Kilkenny the inscription reads:

⁶² *NSPCC annual report 1935*, pp. 5-6.

⁶³ Finola Kennedy, *Cottage to Crèche*, p 57.

⁶⁴ Sarah Anne Buckley, 'NSPCC in Ireland', p.1.

‘she made the world less difficult for others’⁶⁵ and this reflects the good will which drove the NSPCC. The motivation of organised regulation of the lifestyle of the poor was a by-product of a concern for children who were totally dependent on the NSPCC for support. Likewise, Lady Desart was described by her contemporaries as devoted to caring for the poor in Kilkenny.

Philanthropy and Prosecution: the contrasting work of the NSPCC

Healy’s account of poverty in Kilkenny noted that it was widespread and the 1926 census revealed that almost one tenth of the children in County Kilkenny were living in families in which a parent was deceased. The census showed that there were 20,182 children in Kilkenny County, 10,742 boys and 10,070 girls.⁶⁶ In the context of child welfare, the Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen’s County Branch had fourteen district branches represented by twelve women: in this regard there was one committee member in Kilkenny for every 1,681 children.⁶⁷ Of the 10, 742 boys in rural County Kilkenny, 865 had a deceased father, 472 had a deceased mother and 130 were of orphan status with no surviving parent.⁶⁸ Of the 10, 070 girls in County Kilkenny in 1926, 838 girls had a deceased father, 410 had a deceased mother and 82 had no surviving parent.⁶⁹

These figures reveal that 212 children had no parental support and were in urgent need of support and intervention. Twelve per cent of all the boys in County Kilkenny in 1926 were missing a parent and in a similar fashion twelve percent of all the girls were without one parent. Ruth Barrington notes that Irish women faced increased dangers in childbirth because of the late age and the large size of families:

In 1915, 570 women died from disorders associated with childbirth, giving maternal mortality rate of six per thousand live births. One third of this number died from puerperal septicaemia, a condition associated with unskilled and unhygienic attendance at birth.⁷⁰

The 1936 census revealed that the NSPCC in Kilkenny was responsible for the welfare of 19,067 children:⁷¹ of the 9,786 boys in the County Kilkenny, 507 had a deceased father, 393 had a deceased mother and 87 were of complete orphan status.⁷² Similarly, of the 9,281 girls in rural Kilkenny, 456

⁶⁵ St Canices Cathedral, Kilkenny City.

⁶⁶ Census of Population 1926:Vol.5, *Ages, Orphanages and conjugal conditions*.

⁶⁷ This figure is obtained by dividing the number of District Representatives into number of children in the County.

⁶⁸ Census of Population 1926:Vol.5, *Ages, Orphanages and conjugal conditions*

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ruth Barrington, *Health, medicine and politics in Ireland 1900-1979* (Dublin, 1987), p. 75.

⁷¹ Census of Population 1936:Vol.5, *Ages, Orphanages and conjugal conditions*, (Dublin, 1941)

⁷² Ibid.

had no father, 355 had lost a mother and 40 were of orphan status.⁷³ In 1936, 3,479 or 18 per cent of children in County Kilkenny lived in towns.⁷⁴ Of the 1,783 boys, 111 had a deceased father, 65 had deceased mother and 16 boys had no living parent. Likewise, of the 1,484 girls living in towns, 115 had a deceased father, 78 had lost a mother and 20 had no living parent.⁷⁵

It is clear that nine per cent of the children in Kilkenny County needed support due to a deceased parent. The ISPCC alluded to this concern in their Submission to Enquire into Child Abuse, stating that

A common dilemma for both carer and the inspector was the conflict between the main and often only carer having to be out earning an income and being able to provide appropriate care for children. This was the case in families where one parent had died or had absconded and the mother had to work but had no one to take care of the children.⁷⁶

In 1934, the NSPCC's annual report reveals that the Society did interact with orphaned children and the following specimen case details how the Society aided four children with no surviving parent.

Specimen Case 5456: A widow, almost 70 years of age, had the custody of four children, aged 13, 12, 7 and 3 years of age. Their father had been dead for some time, but they had lost their mother only a few weeks before they came under Society's notice. The old woman was contrary, and would not listen to any suggestions regarding the children's future. She was in very bad health and was really unable to look after the children. When the inspector visited she was in bed. The officer reasoned with her and she eventually consented to the children being placed into schools. The inspector saw the Doctor and also the Parish Priest, and it was arranged that both would visit her, and, if possible, try to obtain for her hospital treatment. The Branch President said she would, if the woman were removed to hospital, arrange for the children's care, pending making of permanent provision for their future. All the children were eventually committed to Industrial Schools, and the old woman was removed to a home, where she is comfortable.⁷⁷

The specimen case presented indicates that a considerable effort was made by the NSPCC to achieve a suitable outcome to the case for orphaned children and their grandmother. This case clearly demonstrated that industrial schools were considered as the viable alternative to the care of an elderly sick woman. The committal of the four orphans was overseen by the branch President, the Countess

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Census of Population 1936: Vol.1, *Population, Area and Valuation of each DED and each larger unit of area* (Dublin, 1938)

⁷⁵ Census of Population 1936: Vol.5, *Ages, Orphanages and conjugal conditions*

⁷⁶ *The Role of the ISPCC in the Placement of Children in Industrial Schools*, p.4.

⁷⁷ *NSPCC annual report 1934*, p.6.

of Ossory, Daughter in law of the Marquess of Ormonde, the NSPCC's medical officer, Dr. John Mitchell, NSPCC Inspector Michael McDonagh and a local parish priest.

It is clear from the District Court Minute Book record that orphaned children were not being considered for industrial school committal and the following application is the only one of its kind brought before the court by the NSPCC:

application by Inspector Michael McDonagh N.S.P.C.C for committal of child named James Ryan of Wexford (who was born on the 10 April 1921 at Enniscorthy and committed to St Patrick's Industrial School, Kilkenny to be there detained until 9 April 1931) who was found destitute being an orphan at Review fields, Kilkenny.⁷⁸

Justice Molloy ordered that James Ryan be sent to St Joseph's Industrial School, Clonmel until 10 April 1937. The NSPCC's application indicates that twelve days after James Ryan's detention at St Patrick's Industrial School ended, he was again found destitute at the same address as St Patrick's and re-entered the industrial school system at the direct request of the Society. While industrial schools were considered benign institutions in the 1930s, the manner in which James Ryan was treated by the Sisters of Charity is difficult to defend by any standard. The Sisters of Charity released a child from their care, whom they would have known to be of orphan status, into the community with no means of support. In this case, the NSPCC were left with no option but to return James Ryan to an institution as a result of the Sisters of Charity releasing him back into the community with nobody to protect him. The relationship between the NSPCC and industrial school committals will be discussed at greater length in chapter three, however, it is clear that the committal applications were an exception when dealing with families rather than the rule.

In 1936, the NSPCC published a case file in its annual report which underlined the danger of single parent homes. Mrs. Anderson presented a case which she made reference to the dangers of fire and also inadvertently outlined the economic necessity that forced mothers to leave young children unattended:

The inspector learned that two children, a boy of ten years and a baby girl of eight months, were often left alone for hours at a time. He called at their home in the evening and found the boy doing his best to pacify the baby, who was crying. They were quite alone and were in some danger from the fire, on which was boiling a kettle of water. The inspector had the baby put to bed and then waited for the mother, who arrived about two hours later. She was a single woman, who went out daily to work, and said she arranged for a neighbour to look after the baby until the boy returned

⁷⁸ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 21 April 1931.

from school. The woman stated that she thought the boy quite able to look after the child. The inspector pointed out the dangers of such a practice, and arrangements were made for both children to be properly cared for in their mother's absence.⁷⁹

The NSPCC's annual report for 1936 indicates that in Kilkenny City, the Society investigated 82 cases of neglect which affected 115 boys and 130 girls.⁸⁰ In Callan, the Society investigated eight cases involving four boys and seven girls.⁸¹ In Thomastown, the NSPCC investigated four cases regarding eight boys and eight girls.⁸² In Gowran and Goresbridge, the society encountered seven cases affecting seven boys and six girls.⁸³ In the districts of Freshford, Johnstown and Urlingford the NSPCC dealt with five cases of neglect, encountering seven boys and twelve boys.⁸⁴ Finally, in the Castlecomer, the home of Mrs Prior Wandesforde, NSPCC Vice- President, and the Society only encountered one case of neglect involving one boy and one girl.⁸⁵ The NSPCC's annual report reveals that 306 new children were reported to Society for neglect in an urban population of 3479.⁸⁶

Buckley's assertion that the NSPCC was about exercising control over the working class should be considered in conjunction with these figures and the personal charitable works of the Society's members. The overwhelming number of children the NSPCC encountered in Kilkenny resigned the Society to reacting to family situations rather than controlling families. The reporting of one case of neglect in Castlecomer is significant as the Prior Wandesforde family were the largest employers in Castlecomer. As outlined, Mrs Prior Wandesforde served as a committee member and Vice-President of the NSPCC in the period 1933-1937. Pat Feeley, in his documentation of mining in Castlecomer, made the following observations about the company, the role of Captain Wandesforde, and conditions within the mines:

He was a paternal autocrat who looked on the miners not so much as his employees but as his people. In manner he was withdrawn and reserved, and regarded by the men as stern and hard. Most of the miners in the nineteen twenties saw him as their total lord and master, determining salaries and conditions. Normally the agent or his officials presented them with a contract and they accepted what they were offered. The family boasted of never having yielded to pressure or to strikes⁸⁷

⁷⁹ NSPCC annual report 1936, p.6.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.5

⁸¹ Ibid., p.5

⁸² Ibid., p.5

⁸³ Ibid., p.5

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.5

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.5

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.5

⁸⁷ Pat Feeley, 'The Castlecomer Mine and Quarry Union', in *The Old Limerick Journal*, Vol. 4, Spring 1981, p.34.

While this does not capture Mrs Prior Wandesforde's personality or philanthropic motivation, it sheds light on the concept of control of the poor as discussed by Buckley. In 1927 Mrs Prior Wandesforde, Vice -President of the NSPCC, Lady Teignmouth, Honorary Secretary of the Women's branch of the NSPCC and Mrs Hervey, NSPCC committee member, were founding members of the Ladies' Branch of the British Legion of Ex Servicemen in Kilkenny. In addition, NSPCC committee members Mrs Solly Flood, Mrs Anderson, Mrs Butler and Mrs Knox all came from families with a history of service to the British Empire. Mrs Prior Wandesforde lost her son in the First World War and she became involved in the women's branch of the Legion with the sole aim protecting the children of servicemen. The involvement of NSPCC members in the founding of the women's branch is an example of social betterment schemes promoted by Protestant landed gentry. Mrs. Deacon, in her role as a representative of the Legion's headquarters in London, stressed that

there are 285.000 fatherless children and 18.000 total orphans, children of men who made the great sacrifice. It is up to us to see that these children do not go down blind alley ways; that they are given a decent chance to start in life. We can leave no stone unturned to see that their future is secure in any way in our power.⁸⁸

Ruth Barrington has argued that the welfare of mothers and children benefited greatly following the First World War and she set the context in which the Woman's Branch of the British Legion was operating:

The deaths of thousands of soldiers at the front and the falling birth rate increased the need to protect future generations of young men and women. Advocates of better maternal and infant services had to content with the apathy of the public, long accustomed to the death of infants and mothers in childbirth.⁸⁹

In 1919, Lord Teignmouth and Major R.B Seigne, son of a former land agent, founded a Thomastown chapter of the Comrades of the Great War. It aimed 'to promote the interests of the discharged men' by affording 'members the means of social intercourse, mutual helpfulness, mental and moral improvement and rational recreation'⁹⁰

As the NSPCC in Kilkenny has not been studied prior to this thesis, there is no complete collection of the charitable works done by Protestant women in the Society. However, their efforts are captured by Marilyn Silverman in her anthropological study of Thomastown carried out in the 1980s. While Protestants were a minority in Kilkenny, it did not prevent them from influencing the social

⁸⁸ *Kilkenny People*, 11 September 1927.

⁸⁹ Ruth Barrington, *Health and Medicine*, p.75.

⁹⁰ Marilyn Silverman, *An Irish Working Class*, p.324.

landscape in Kilkenny. On 20 December 1934, Miss Murphy, a member of the NSPCC committee and of the Legion of Mary, read a paper in Desart Hall on 'Woman's Part in Catholic Action'. Murphy underscored the hidden role of women philanthropic groups in Kilkenny asserting

In spite of all we hear to the contrary, advertisement is the prerogative of the male and if there is no written history of women's work during this period that does not mean that they were wanting when called upon'⁹¹

The Teignmouth and Solly Flood families had a long history of involvement in local philanthropy, and were instrumental in setting up nursing programmes in Thomastown in South Kilkenny in order to provide working families with increased health care. Barrington notes that the Irish health services for the poor were chronically undeveloped, the only exception to this being the Jubilee nursing programmes which were set up following the celebration of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. Barrington stresses that the success of nursing programmes was determined by the prosperity of the regions in which they were established. In Kilkenny, it is clear that the same families who financed the NSPCC supported nursing programmes. The following was an example of the local projects NSPCC families were engaged in

Colonel F Shore (later Lord Teignmouth), an executive member of the Nursing Association, wrote to the rural district council to correct a recently published statement made by the guardians that the district nurse 'was a simply a midwife' and that she was paid for by the Woman's National Health Association. He reiterated that the guardians already knew: her salary and expenses were defrayed by the residents of Thomastown and the vicinity. He added that her services were appreciated by the poor of the neighbourhood, as evidenced in the number of visits which she paid.⁹²

In December 1931, Desart Hall staged a benefit concert in aid of the Ballyragget, Conahy and Castlecomer Nursing Association. The advertisement showed that NSPCC committee members Mrs Loftus (later Mrs Grattan Bellew) and Lord and Lady Teignmouth performed at the concert. Beyond being members of the NSPCC, it is clear that women who held senior positions within the Society were actively involved in promoting and financing health initiatives which improved the health of the poor. Ruth Barrington notes that the Woman's National Health League grew out of the same soil as the NSPCC's Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County Branch. Barrington notes that this was founded in 1907 by the 'energetic Lady Aberdeen, the wife of the formal head of British Rule in Ireland, [who] did much to educate people about preventing the disease (Tuberculosis)'.⁹³

⁹¹ *The Post*, 20 December 1934.

⁹² Marilyn Silverman, *An Irish Working Class*, p. 323.

⁹³ Ruth Barrington, *Health and Medicine*, p.13.

Mark Bence-Jones, in his chronicle of the decline of the landlord class families in Ireland, makes reference to Sir Otway Wheeler Cuffe and his efforts to help the poor upon his return from service to the British Empire in Burma in 1921:

Cuffe had hitherto lived outside Ireland, but he now returned to County Kilkenny having decided to devote his life to helping Irish people. To provide support for his cooperatives and other schemes, there was Ellen Lady Desart, the rich and philanthropic Jewess who was Cuffe's eldest brother's widow.⁹⁴

Declan Dunne, in his account of the life of Kilkenny politician Peter De Loughry, notes that Ellen Lady Desart was heavily involved in the Gaelic League with Sir Otway Wheeler Cuffe and that she used her personal fortune to help the sick and promote education and appreciation of the arts.⁹⁵ Lady Desart's philanthropic commitments in Kilkenny were detailed in 2010 when the *Kilkenny People* celebrated 100 years of Kilkenny Library and it is clear that she was the most prominent member of the NSPCC in Kilkenny. The *Kilkenny People* credited Lady Desart as follows:

When Lady Desart's father, banker Henry Bischoffsheim, died in 1908 and she inherited over 15 million pounds sterling, she invested the money in various projects in the city and abroad. Kilkenny Library was one of these projects. The others were the original Aut Even Hospital, the Woollen Mills, Kilkenny Woodworkers, Kilkenny Theatre, the Tobacco Growers Association, Desart Hall, Talbot's Inch and the Suspension Bridge.⁹⁶

Lady Desart died in June 1933 and the NSPCC's annual report of 1933 notes that she 'gave her valuable services on behalf of the suffering and neglected children, her death removes a very warm friend of the society'. In 1958, Kilkenny Archaeological Society published a booklet 'in the hope that the memory of Countess Desart and Captain Cuffe, sincere friends and benefactors of our lovely City will be preserved and honoured always in Kilkenny'.⁹⁷ Kilkenny Archaeological Society recorded that in 1910, two important events occurred in which Lady Desart figured prominently. On 3 November 1910, Lady Desart opened Kilkenny Library, a project which she financed from its inception, and addressed the hope

⁹⁴ Mark Bence-Jones, *Twilight*, p.82.

⁹⁵ Declan Dunne, *Peter's Key, Peter DeLoughry and the Fight for Irish Independence* (Cork, 2002), p. 25.

⁹⁶ *Kilkenny People*, 4 November 2010.

⁹⁷ J. McAdams, *Ellen, Countess of Desart and Captain the Hon Otway Cuffe* (Kilkenny, 1958), P.19.

that the library, since knowledge was a means and not an end, would prove an incentive and an inspiration to those whom it was destined to serve and that it might never be looked upon as a pleasant club to lounge in⁹⁸

That evening, the Freedom of the City of Kilkenny was conferred on Lady Desart by the Corporation. The *Kilkenny Moderator* recorded the following

The honour was being conferred on her Ladyship as a mark of sincere appreciation of Her Ladyship's great and continued munificence during the past ten years to our city and especially her liberality in purchasing and presenting to the city the site of the new public library, besides generously bearing all the expenses of its furnishing and in addition establishing at a large expenditure the Woodworkers and various other industries at Talbot's Inch, which affords much employment and the consequent circulation of many thousands of pounds annually in Kilkenny and also in warm recognition of the deep and practical interest unremittingly evinced by the Countess for many years past in the industrial revival movement which Lady Desart contributed large sums of aid of the teaching of the Irish language and presents many valuable prizes at each Feis, by all of which means as well as by building a residence in the immediate neighbourhood of Kilkenny, Lady Desart has undoubtedly proved herself one of the best and most generous citizens Kilkenny has ever had the opportunity of honouring. It also recorded that Lady Desart was the first woman recipient of the Honorary Freedom of the City⁹⁹

The NSPCC in Kilkenny was in essence a collective effort by the upper class to protect the children of the poor from cruelty which was a directly and indirectly linked to poverty. For example, On 26 February 1930, *The Post* received a letter from Lady Desart which detailed the first three subscribers to a fund for Nurse Parr at Aut Even Hospital and it indicates that Sir Otway Wheeler Cuffe and Dr Collier, Catholic Bishop of Ossory, donated one pound. Anna Parr, an NSPCC committee member, worked at a private hospital owned by the NSPCC's treasurer, and Sir Otway Wheeler Cuffe, the husband of NSPCC committee member Charlotte Wheeler Cuffe, donated a substantial amount of money to finance Mrs Parr's work as a nurse.¹⁰⁰

The NSPCC's annual reports establish that the Society was built around a framework of voluntary work, a full time inspector and public informants. In 1933, the position of NSPCC president

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.19.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.19-20.

¹⁰⁰ *The Post*, 26 February 1930.

was held by the Countess of Ossory and the position of Vice-President was held jointly by Nancy Lady Teignmouth and Mrs Day. Lady Teignmouth served as honorary secretary of the Ladies Committee and her husband Lord Teignmouth took the position of NSPCC treasurer after the death of Lady Desart. The position of Honorary Secretary was held by Miss McCreery and in this role she was the most powerful member of the NSPCC committee as the final decision taken by the Society on a case was in her control. The Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse established the role of the Honorary Secretary as follows:

The honorary secretary of each branch was the local representative of the Society who was entrusted with the responsibility for overseeing that the rules of the Society were complied with. The inspector was under the direct control of the local honorary secretary and, according to the Inspector's Directory, an inspector had to take instructions on cases and reports from the honorary secretary or from some person appointed by the local committee for that purpose. In particular, the inspector could not take action on a case without the consent of the honorary secretary.¹⁰¹

The NSPCC in Kilkenny relied on women to organising fundraising; women held the senior positions within the Society and the decision on all cases were taken by a female honorary secretary until 1940. Mary Daly's *The Condition of Women in Twentieth Century Ireland* addresses the issue of women's organisations and argues

The most sustained pressure for improvements in maternity and child health services, or for the provision of children's allowance, appears to have come from medical profession rather than from women's organisations. Article 41.2 of the 1937 Constitution, the article in which the State acknowledges the important role played by women within the home, does not appear to have been employed by any women's pressure group at the time to establish the case for mother's pensions, or for any other social services.¹⁰²

In terms of female involvement in philanthropy and women's groups, Finola Kennedy argues that 'two defining features of many women's organisations and initiatives until at least the 1960s was that they were voluntary and that they focused mainly on the home and children.'¹⁰³ Commenting on the nature of women's organisations, Kennedy notes

before the expansion of state social services which got under way in the 1960s the decades from the 1920s to the 1950s were years of extensive voluntary work. If the focus on activity of women's

¹⁰¹ *The Commission to Enquire into Child abuse, Vol. 5, p.3.*

¹⁰² Mary E. Daly, 'The Condition of Women in Twentieth-Century Ireland', in Anthony Bradley & Maryann Valiulis (eds.), *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Ireland* (1998), p.112.

¹⁰³ Finola Kennedy, *Cottage to Creche*, p.103.

organisations was the home and issues related to the home, the fruits of their labours spread into the wider community...The two most important woman's organisations – the Irish Country Women's Association and the Irish Housewives Association- were based around the home...the united Irish Women, as the Countrywomen were called from their foundation in 1910 until 1934, pursued practical patriotism, by trying to improve the conditions in which they and their families obtained their livelihoods.¹⁰⁴

Ruth Barrington notes that Woman's National Health Association was instrumental in advocating the need for improved infant health. Barrington states

A major objective of the Association was to raise the level of knowledge of nutrition and infant care. It opened baby clinics, held classes for mothers and provided milk depots in counties where it was difficult to obtain fresh milk all year round.¹⁰⁵

There is no indication in annual reports which suggests that the NSPCC in Kilkenny was applying pressure to government officials or local politicians in Kilkenny during the 1930s. Likewise, there is no evidence to show that the NSPCC was working with the Woman's National Health Association. Instead, the NSPCC applied pressure inwards on the family unit in order to make pragmatic changes which benefited parents and children.

The NSPCC had the power to initiate prosecution of parents, pursue absentee fathers and place children in industrial schools and it was instrumental in securing the welfare of Irish children from its inception 1889 until its inspectors were replaced by social workers in the 1970s. Kennedy's statement that woman's organisations encompassed communal improvement is relevant to the NSPCC and in 1933, Miss McCreery established in her annual report that Kilkenny city needed the NSPCC:

Anyone comparing the figures of this year's report with those of the twenty or thirty years ago, is apt to get the impression that the Society today is only doing half the work originally done. The explanation of this is the Society has gradually been establishing itself, and making its influence felt more and more in city and district. It has, indeed, become 'a terror to evil doers', and is accomplishing more and more the desired effectively the primary object of the Society- to prevent cruelty to children. There is very little doubt that if the Society ceased to exist and the inspector was withdrawn from this neighbourhood, the serious condition of thirty years ago would be revived today.¹⁰⁶

The term 'terror to evil doers' indicates that the NSPCC interpreted child neglect as a breach of moral principles of parenting, in essence, poverty and unemployment were not excuses for poor parenting.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp.103-104.

¹⁰⁵ Ruth Barrington, *Health and Medicine*, p.76.

¹⁰⁶ *NSPCC annual report 1933*, p.7.

Sarah Anne Buckley argues that the NSPCC accentuated the necessity of a domestic stability which encompassed proper morality, regulated parenting and classism:

Poverty, desertion, alcoholism, illegitimacy, mental illness and wife beating were all included under the umbrella of neglect, an expanding category that manifests fears about changed in family life. In Ireland, these fears are evident in the shift in focus from physical neglect to moral neglect in the 1930s, fuelled by both the Catholic Church and the state. Although the Society did undoubtedly help many families to acquire financial assistance from the state, the positive results were limited, and the focus on neglect only served to perpetuate class and gender inequality¹⁰⁷

The use of the term ‘evil doers’ is an indication that the class divisions of everyday life were being expressed in the work of the NSPCC. While the Society was committed to protecting children, its annual reports do not show any empathy to the people the Inspector was engaging with. The evidence in Kilkenny suggests that the NSPCC was motivated by maintaining social cohesion within the labouring classes; in essence, the NSPCC curtailed absenteeism, spousal desertion, spousal abuse and the exposure of children to unsanitary conditions and parental neglect. In the ISPCC’s statement to the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse, the activities and work of the Society was placed into the following context.

In considering the role of the ISPCC and its individual inspectors, it is important to bear in mind the context, resource limitations and standards of the time in which the Society and its individual staff members were operating. The 1930s through to the late 1960s was a period when great hardship, poverty, a shortage of adequate accommodation, limited economic opportunities and harsh legislation.¹⁰⁸

The Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen’s County Branch of the NSPCC made no statements which identified any particular class of children or families as the primary targets of their investigation. Despite this, all case files and newspaper reports of the Society, as well as court records indicate that the Society was targeting the children of the unemployed and those living in derelict housing or of no fixed abode. When addressing the context to the work of the NSPCC, its annual reports are an indication as to how the Society operated. It is clear that the NSPCC requested the general public to report cases to the Society. In the fight against child cruelty, the neighbours or parents of a child were encouraged to seek the support of the Protestant landed Gentry:

Anyone knowing of a child who has been assaulted, neglected or ill-treated in a manner likely to cause unnecessary suffering or injury to health; or of an ailing or crippled child who might be

¹⁰⁷ Sarah Anne Buckley, ‘NSPCC in Ireland’, pp.12-13.

¹⁰⁸ *The Role of the ISPCC in the Committal of Children to Industrial Schools*, p.1.

benefited by treatment; or knowing of a parent who is seeking advice on any matter concerning a child would be doing an act of great kindness by communicating at once with the Branch Hon. Secretary at the Local Office Bishop's Hill, Kilkenny, or with one of the Hon. District Correspondents whose names appear on page three. All further steps will be taken by the Society.¹⁰⁹

It is clear that initial contact with the NSPCC regarding child neglect required that a member of the public approach the Honorary Secretary or a district representative instead of the inspector. This policy centralised the power of the NSPCC into the office of Honorary Secretary as the direction taken on a case was at the discretion of Miss McCreery (1933, 1934) and Mrs Anderson (1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, and 1939). An indication of the contemporary attitude towards the work of the NSPCC was to be found at the end of the request for public informants with the Society stating that 'names of informants will be kept strictly private (except in cases where malice is proved)',¹¹⁰. The Society's annual report for 1934 presented a specimen case which shows that the reporting of a family to the NSPCC was not always appreciated and perhaps the NSPCC intervention added further to the difficulty experienced.

Specimen 5463: A motor driver with six children, aged from 9 years to 10 months, earned a precarious living doing hackney work. His wife, since the baby was born, had been an inmate of a mental institution. A complaint was made to the inspector that the man often left the children alone in the house, and sometimes would not return until a very late hour at night. When the inspector visited he found no one in the home. He located the children in the grandparent's house; they were comfortable, clean and decently clad. The father came on the scene while the inspector was there. He demanded to know who made the complaint and was aggressive.¹¹¹

In this particular example, Inspector McDonagh was not investigating allegations of direct cruelty and was essentially overseeing the employment patterns of a man who was caring for his children on his own. The specimen case concluded with a positive outcome for the six children and their father:

After a while he became more reasonable and the Inspector elicited the fact that his two boys, aged 9 and 8 years, slept with him at night. He got up early and sent them to grandmother for breakfast and to be washed and cleaned for school. He further admitted that he was called away late one night and had to leave the children alone some hours. He was warned, and the dangers to which the

¹⁰⁹ *NSPCC annual report 1936*, p. 6.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.6.

¹¹¹ *NSPCC annual report 1934*, p.6.

children were exposed whilst he was out were made plain to him. The children are now staying with their grandparents.¹¹²

The above case shows that the work of the inspector was a balancing act between securing the best interests of children with limited resources, predominantly a verbal lecture to a parent, and not interfering in the manner in which the breadwinner provided for the family.

As evident in the above case, the NSPCC did not seek out children on its own accord, in fact, it is clear that without the public, the Society would have had no clear direction. For example, 757 of the 840 cases reported to the Society in the period 1933 to 1937 were reported by the general public.¹¹³ Only eight cases of neglect were discovered by Inspector McDonagh. These figures indicate that Inspector McDonagh was not proactively assessing family situations independently of the Honorary Secretary or any other member of the committee. This fact contradicts the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuses claim that inspectors operated very much on an independent basis as there was no monitoring or supervision of them by the branch committee.¹¹⁴

For the vast majority of family circumstances investigated by the NSPCC in Kilkenny, the neighbours of the family be it for the betterment of the family or out of malice, tried to get the NSPCC to intervene in family affairs. Catriona Clear, commenting on the importance of neighbours for women of the house, notes that 'neighbours were extremely important for most women of the house throughout this period, but this does not mean they were universally loved, respected and appreciated.'¹¹⁵ While contemporary newspaper reports Kilkenny show that family tensions were commonplace, particularly on Walkin Street and Callan Road, Clear notes that

Personal relationships are notoriously difficult to research and to generalise about. It is very difficult to find any kind of hard statistical information on the distribution of power within a relationship, or a cluster of relationships.¹¹⁶

It is worth noting that the Society did not include the number of children it placed into industrial schools in its published reports. Consequently, a reader of the Society's annual reports would get the impression that committals by the Society did not occur. It is worth noting that in Kilkenny, the NSPCC placed an average of nine children every year into industrial schools. While

¹¹² Ibid., p.6

¹¹³ This figure is comprised from the five reports for the period.

¹¹⁴ *The Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse*, Vol.5, p.3.

¹¹⁵ Catriona Clear, *Women of the house: women's household work in Ireland, 1926-1961: discourses, experiences, memories* (Dublin, 2000), p.178.

these figures were not published, it is likely that families noticed the removal of children from communities and word spread as to the NSPCC's role in taking children out of the home. The following case from 1937 was an example of the good work done by the NSPCC for a family whose troubles were reported by a concerned neighbour:

Specimen 6089: Our inspector was informed that a labourer, his wife and eight children were living in deplorable conditions. The officer visited. He found the family living in a thatched cottage which originally had three rooms, but one of these had collapsed some time previously. The windows were all broken and the mother had stretched pieces of old canvas across them to keep out the cold. The home was very poorly furnished and the sleeping arrangements for the entire family were practically nil. The children were all in good health notwithstanding the shocking surroundings in which they were obliged to live. It was learned that the unsatisfactory state of affairs was due to poverty; the parents were doing their best to provide for the children but were handicapped with a large family and an insufficient income. They deserved of help and the Society decided to do what it could to assist them, and as a consequence of its action a more substantial house procured. An S.O.S was also sent out by the Inspector for help to give the family a fresh start in life. There was a generous response to the appeal and large quantity of clothing bedding, etc., was obtained also some money to put the new home into a good state of repair. The inspector has visited the home several times since, and we are glad to say the case is now very satisfactory.¹¹⁷

The beneficial work of the NSPCC in this particular case would raise questions as to why the prevalent contemporary attitude towards the Society was overtly negative. Additionally, the question is raised why the Society did not treat all cases in the comprehensive fashion as the specimen case. In this case, it is clear that the Society viewed the family to be deserving of charity.

The NSPCC in Kilkenny was clearly driven by a desire to provide women with an equitable relationship with their husbands and the issue of male absenteeism dominated the Society's annual reports in the 1930s. Catriona Clear states that the family model promoted by social commentators, advertisers, government commissions, churchmen and advice books during the 1930s and 1940s was that of a nuclear family with a breadwinner father and a home making mother.¹¹⁸ In May 1913, Lady Desart presided at the annual general meeting of The National League for Opposing Women Suffrage. Her comments on female suffrage were not indicative of the attitude of the NSPCC. However, they revealed the personal sentiments of the NSPCC's Honorary Treasurer on the role of women in

¹¹⁷ *NSPCC annual report 1937*, p. 6.

¹¹⁸ Catriona Clear, *Women of the House*, p.171.

society. The Countess described female suffrage as an injury to womanhood, prestige and honour and concluded her address by saying

Let us bring back to an apathetic world the old ideal that woman was the spirit of peace, of love, of all that makes for the pure and beautiful sides of life. If we do not succeed in doing so, social life must go back to the rude roughness of the so called Dark Ages.¹¹⁹

The following case file reveals the stern approach the Society took towards a woman who was neglecting her natural role as guardian of her children.

Case 5338: The wife (The mother of two children) of a farm labourer was addicted to betting, and in an attempt to break the gambling habit her husband obtained a situation in the country, where the temptation, resulting in neglect of the children, would be less. On the way to their new home, however, the parents quarrelled and the woman jumped out of the car in which they were travelling and made her way back to her mother, It appeared that for some time the man had been quarrelling with his wife and giving her none of his earnings, saying he was not going to provide the means for her 'to back horses and buy racing papers'. The children were placed in the County Home and the Society was informed. It was realised that both parents were acting foolishly, and that they required a sharp lesson to make them alter their ways. They were prosecuted and each sentenced to two months hard labour, the sentence, however, being postponed as long as the man and woman did their duty by their children. The inspector is keeping the family under supervision, and he reports that 'they are doing well'.¹²⁰

Absenteeism naturally shattered this concept and over the period 1933-1937 the moral obligation of parents to maintain a family unit was reverberated by the NSPCC. Catriona Clear noted the importance of a strong woman within the family unit and cited the following rhyme as a contemporary example of the expected role of women within the home:

When you get married

And your husband gets cross

Pick up the Poker

And say, I AM THE BOSS¹²¹

¹¹⁹ J. McAdams, *Ellen Lady Desart and Captain Cuffe*, p.27.

¹²⁰ *NSPCC annual report 1933*, p. 8.

¹²¹ Catriona Clear, *Women of the House*, p. 171.

In Kilkenny, there is evidence to suggest that Inspector McDonagh served to remind absentee and neglectful husbands that their wives had rights. In addition, it is clear that unemployment in the Kilkenny District was influenced cases the NSPCC investigated. In 1933, McCreery addressed the issue at length:

Yet another striking feature of latter years is our success in tracing deserting fathers. Failing to get work here, or for some other reason, the breadwinner frequently moves away to another town, leaving his family behind. Sometimes the sequel is creditable to the father but in many cases it is the reverse, with the result that we find the families here in a state of despair and starvation. It is then that the inspector steps in, secures from the wife or other relative any information that they can furnish or letters which often carry an address, and the machinery of the society is set in motion.¹²²

In 1934, McCreery noted

During the twelve months ended December 1934, a number of men left this district, presumably in search of employment. Later it transpired that they had succeeded in their quest, but some of them forgot the needs of the families on them at home.¹²³

The Society's pursuit of absenteeism was further illustrated by a case that occurred in April 1934, when the *Kilkenny People* covered in detail a court case which underscored the NSPCC's fight against absentee fathers. The following case shows how the machinery of the Society was utilized:

John Ryan, formally of Dunmore, whose current address was given as Iveagh House, Dublin, was prosecuted for failing to support his children. Ryan, an ex-serviceman, had left his seven children prior to the birth of his youngest child and was withholding all money from his wife. As an ex-serviceman, Ryan was in receipt of one pound four shillings a week from his pension and an additional seven shillings in National Health Insurance. Inspector McDonagh informed the court that upon investigation on April 1934, the children in question were in a wretched condition after returning from school. After receiving a series of letters from the defendant's wife, Inspector McDonagh used NSPCC inspectors in Dublin to apply pressure and force payments from Ryan. The facts reveal that a dispute between the defendant and his brother-in-law had forced him out of the home and Ryan told the court he was willing to pay towards the maintenance of his children.

¹²⁴

In 1935, honorary secretary Mrs Anderson commented upon the moral obligation of fathers

¹²² NSPCC annual report 1933, p.7.

¹²³ NSPCC annual report 1934, p.4.

¹²⁴ *The Post*, April 23 1934.

Forsaken, this is one word describes the heartless condition in which many families throughout this area have been left- forsaken by the bread winner, by the one morally and legally bound to support both wife and children. In such a case it has generally transpired that the man had gone in search, but when he found it had forgotten home claims, thus leaving his wife and children to be a charge on the Public Rates.¹²⁵

The issue of absenteeism was discussed in 1937 by Mrs Anderson, Honorary Secretary:

During the year, several men migrated from this district to other districts, making no provision for their families. In an effort to locate them, the Society casts its net very far afield. These efforts succeed in securing monies that otherwise would not have been forthcoming for needy families.¹²⁶

While the NSPCC's annual reports focused on unemployment as a cause of absenteeism, the following case from Kilkenny District Court shows that complex family situations lead to the Society taking charges against a father for abandoning his wife and children. In September 1927, *The Post* covered a desertion case involving the Shortall family of Callan Road. In this particular case, the wife of the defendant, Margaret Shortall, was a witness for the NSPCC¹²⁷. It is worth noting that five months prior, Margaret Shortall had testified against Claire Connolly for abandoning her four year old illegitimate daughter in a case which resulted in Claire Connolly's imprisonment and her daughters committal to St Joseph's Industrial School following an application by the NSPCC.¹²⁸ Thomas Shortall, a farm labourer and Ex Serviceman, was accused of deserting his wife and family. While the facts of the case show that Shortall took his pension book with and left no means of support to his wife who was thirty years his junior, it is evident that the desertion charge followed unwanted presence of an another man in the home.¹²⁹ In this particular case, it is evident that the defendant sought Inspector McDonagh to assist in his family troubles:

Mr Nolan (Defence Solicitor): Mrs. Shortall is satisfied to go back. He is not going to back to live with this woman if this man is to be in and out of the place. She won't give him any control of the children.

District Justice Molloy: He may have a grievance or he may not, but he is not entitled to go away and leave her. (To Defendant) – Why don't you go back to your wife and throw out this other man?

¹²⁵ NSPCC annual report, 1935, p. 4.

¹²⁶ NSPCC annual report 1937, p. 4.

¹²⁷ *The Post*, 26 September 1927.

¹²⁸ This case will be examined in Chapter three.

¹²⁹ *The Post*, 26 September 1927.

Defendant: I wouldn't be able. I went to the Guards and I went to Mr. McDonagh. When I would to my wife about him it is a blow of a mug I would get.

District Justice: Why cannot you be master in your own home?

Defendant- I would be not let.

Mr. Nolan: Are you satisfied to go back?

Defendant: Yes, if she is satisfied to stay right.

District Justice: (to Mrs Shortall) – You hear what your husband has said that is fellow, O' Shaughnessy, is hanging abet the house?

Mrs Shortall: My husband brought him there.¹³⁰

After an agreement to resolve the family dispute and bring 'happiness into the home', Inspector McDonagh took the opportunity to address the situation with *The Post* noting that McDonagh told the court that 'if they could get O' Shaughnessy of the Callan Road things would be all right'¹³¹. McDonagh then addressed the defendant, Mr. Shortall, and said "you are not a man at all".¹³² Considering that Margaret Shortall stood before Justice Molloy five months earlier providing evidence of Claire Connolly's neglect of her child, it is ironic that Molloy told the court that 'it was much more important for Mrs Shortall to mind her children instead of minding Shaughnessy'¹³³

In cases where the NSPCC did apply pressure to absentee fathers, the results did provide some relief to children. While most cases of abandonment involved men leaving for work in England or other parts of the country, one case from 1935 detailed in the Society's report indicates that at times the network in which the Society worked reached much further than Ireland or Britain. Inspector McDonagh corresponded with the Illinois Society for the Prevention of Cruelty Children in order to encourage a man to provide for family and annual report noted:

Specimen 5649: A man, the father of four children varying in age from 11 years down to 3, decided to try his fortunes in the U.S.A. He went and it was his intention to send for his wife and children if he was successful. For a little while he remitted for his wife some money. Then nothing came. His wife approached the Society and said she feared her husband was dead. Central office was communicated with, and from there an inquiry was sent to the Illinois Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The man was found. He was alive and had married again! The Society took further action and the man was told that he would have to do something to help his

¹³⁰ Ibid., 26 September 1927.

¹³¹ Ibid., 26 September 1927.

¹³² Ibid., 26 September 1927.

¹³³ Ibid., 26 September 1927.

wife or the consequences might be unpleasant for him. He agreed to send his wife two pounds monthly and this he has done. The wife is quite satisfied with the arrangement, and she says she doesn't want the man home again.¹³⁴

Susannah Riordan's research on the age of consent and the debate on gender and justice during the period 1922-1935 discuss the English Bastardy Acts and the lack of safeguards put in place by the Irish Free State to protect unmarried women and illegitimate children. The lack of legislative safeguards in place in Ireland during the 1920s and 1930s underscore the importance of the NSPCC's efforts to prevent absenteeism. Riordan notes that in Britain and Northern Ireland

legislation was intended to undermine the sexual double standard by obliging unmarried fathers to take some responsibility for their offspring. The English Bastardy Acts- which empowered a women to have the paternity of her child acknowledged, and obliged the father to pay maintenance- had not been applied to Ireland.¹³⁵

How, precisely, did the NSPCC help those families who had not been deserted and where referral to industrial schools was not sought? This aspect of the Society is difficult to accurately ascertain as the case files for the Kilkenny Branch no longer exist. As outlined, across Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County, the NSPCC encountered 840 cases of neglect during the period 1933-1937 and this reflected the situation of 840 individual families involving 2363 children¹³⁶.

The main way in which the NSPCC helped families who were not deserted or where committal to industrial schools was sought was through the form of supervisory visits. In 1922, the Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, Thomas Molony, read a paper entitled 'The Prevention and Punishment of Crime' to the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland and publicly linked the NSPCC with juvenile crime prevention. His assessment of the role of the Society and its inspectors revealed how the Society was viewed by its contemporaries as reformers of children and parents alike and that supervision was the essence of the Society's work.

There are two special agencies at work for the prevention of crime which deserve more than a passing notice. I refer to the work of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and the establishment of industrial schools. The casual observer, who only sees the result in the evening paper of a prosecution of a dissolute mother for neglect of her child, does not form any adequate idea of the immense good which is done by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

¹³⁴ NSPCC annual report 1935, p. 6.

¹³⁵ Susannah Riordan, 'Age of consent and the debate on gender and justice, 1922-1935', in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol.XXXVII No. 147, May 2011, p.430.

¹³⁶ These figures are comprised from the five annual reports for the period 1933-1937.

Its real work and its real utility does not consist in the occasional prosecutions which it is bound to undertake, but really consists in the careful investigations which it makes of every complaint submitted to it, and, if a warning becomes necessary, in the subsequent visits of its inspectors to see if the warning has had the desired effect.¹³⁷

In 1933, for example, the NSPCC's inspector made 1,855 supervisor visits in Kilkenny, 1303 visits of supervision were made in Kilkenny City.¹³⁸ The Honorary Secretary, Miss McCreery, stated in the annual report of that year that 'such visits form a very important part of the society's work; if they were not made there would be danger of parents relapsing into former habits'.¹³⁹ It is clear from the annual reports that in the period 1933-1937, the inspector made 8261 visits of supervision to families in need of intervention.¹⁴⁰

It is evident that Inspector McDonagh was heavily engaged with the local community. For example, 1,095 (46 per cent) of the neglected children were resident in Kilkenny City. Likewise, during the same period, 6,167 (74 per cent) of the supervisory visits were made in Kilkenny City.¹⁴¹ It is clear from the Society's annual reports that the NSPCC were heavily focused combating issues of neglect in Kilkenny City and this indicates that the fourteen district branches Kilkenny were primarily for fundraising purposes. This does not mean that Protestant landed gentry families in southern Kilkenny were not assisting the poor: however, it does establish the Solly Flood, Prior Wandesforde, Anderson, Butler, Wheeler Cuffe and Teignmouth families were not using the inspector they employed to deal with neglect or poverty in their own communities. Was neglect, spousal desertion and poverty an urban issue or does the low level of rural visits by the inspector support Bowen's argument that rural Protestants were isolated from their Catholic neighbours?

Mary Kelly grew up in South Kilkenny and her mother was a friend of NSPCC committee member Marguerite Solly Flood. Mary grew up as Mrs Solly Flood was of old age and would also have known the Teignmouth family. From discussing her experiences with Marguerite Solly Flood, Mary Kelly asserted that the Solly Floods and Teignmouths would have dealt with deprivation instead of bringing an Inspector from Kilkenny City to assist in cases which they could have been dealt with in a private and personal manner.¹⁴²

¹³⁷ Thomas Molony, 'The Prevention and Punishment of Crime', in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Enquiry Society of Ireland*, Vol. XIV No. 2, 1920-1923, p.121.

¹³⁸ NSPCC annual report 1933, p.7.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.7.

¹⁴⁰ This figure is obtained from adding the number children affected by cases of neglect displayed in each annual report.

¹⁴¹ This figure is obtained from adding the number children affected by cases of neglect displayed in each annual report

¹⁴² Interview with Mary Kelly, March 2013. This is not her real name.

The NSPCC's annual reports clearly indicate that that supervision was the primary method of protecting families. However, the 1933 annual report indicates that the Society was beginning to provide an advisory agency to parents in seek of guidance. Miss McCreery reported that

In earlier years, the work undertaken was of a much simpler character than that of today, since gradually as time passed other avenues of work opened up and were entered upon, adding greatly to the importance of our operations. For example, in addition to the name by which we are so well known, we might today be described as an advisory agency, since during the past year parents have come to the office of their own accord to consult the Inspector concerning misunderstandings and disputes in the home. Occasionally it may be the husband who makes certain allegations against the wife, but more frequently it is the wife who complains of her husband. In such cases the inspector gets both parents to come to the office, and in several cases has been able to smooth out the difficulties and effect reconciliation.¹⁴³

The following case file is an example of the advisory element of the NSPCC's work when dealing with parents.

Case5494: A labourer asked the Society to help him. His wife had gone away, taking their only child with her. The inspector wrote to the woman and asked her come back , and guaranteed her every protection. She presented herself and the child at the Local Office next morning. The Officer brought her to the house, where he found the husband and his mother. He at once ascertained the mother- in law was the cause of all the trouble, and told her that she must leave the young couple to themselves. He advised both man and wife. The inspector calls very frequently, and he is pleased to be able to report that the man and wife are now living happily together, much to the advantage of their child.¹⁴⁴

This aspect of the NSPCC's work cannot be measured as there are no statistics or case files to examine which would show the nature of advice or the number of couples who sought the Society for advice. If parents were approaching the NSPCC on their own free will, it suggests that the Society was seen as having a positive impact on family situations. It is not possible to ascertain if the advisory service was used by parents from the working class or by quarrelling couples from middle class background. Despite the fact that the NSPCC annual reports and Lord Chief Justice Molony both felt that the essence of the Society's work lay beyond prosecution, the evidence in Kilkenny shows that prosecutions of neglectful husbands benefited children and mothers alike.

¹⁴³ *NSPCC annual report 1933*, p.7.

¹⁴⁴ *NSPCC annual report 1934*, p.6.

The Kavanagh Family and the NSPCC

In January 1928, a charge of neglect taken against an ex-serviceman was given substantial coverage by *The Post*. This case is evidence that the County Home was used to protect children who were suffering longstanding hardship. Described in the banner headline as ‘a fraud and imposter’,¹⁴⁵ Edward Kavanagh of no fixed abode was brought before Kilkenny District Court charged on four counts, as follows: (1) Cruelty to his children, (2) being drunk on Saturday, 12 January, (3) resisting arrest on the same occasion and (4) assaulting a Civic Guard in the discharge of his duty. Inspector McDonagh’s evidence gives insight into the conditions experienced by Kavanagh’s children and the inspector’s method of operation:

He (McDonagh) went for a walk on the Freshford Road, and when he came to Troyswood Cross, on the green sward that intersects the two roads; he found camp fire lighting. Accused’s wife and four children were around the fire. The boy James O’Neil was lying on a damp sack of hay. The boy appeared to be ill, and on examination he found him to be suffering from rupture or hernia.¹⁴⁶

Upon discovering this scene, Inspector McDonagh moved the child to a nearby caravan where there was a bed consisting of old board, old blankets and some pillows. In the opinion of McDonagh, James O’ Neil required immediate medical assistance and called for the NSPCC’s medical officer. In the days that followed, McDonagh’s first encounter with James O’Neil, (Kavanagh’s step-son) he went to great lengths to secure the safety of the remaining children. McDonagh rented a car to take James O’Neil to the Central Hospital and after some debate about the necessity of an operation, Kavanagh consented to the procedure and James O’Neil was successfully treated.¹⁴⁷ In the days following 27 December, McDonagh secured food tickets and clothing from the St Vincent De Paul Society which he gave to the Kavanaghs and he contacted the Mayor and got coal for the family.¹⁴⁸ For reasons unknown, the Kavanagh family vacated Troyswood Cross for Castlecomer Road and *The Post’s* coverage of the case indicates that Edward Kavanagh tried to sell the clothes secured for him by the NSPCC. In addition, there was no fire in the van and the children were described as cold. In the days following, Kavanagh was found in a local public house where it was clear he was spending the money needed to protect his children. After lengthy debate in the District Court about the legitimacy of Kavanagh’s service in the First World War, Justice Molloy sentenced Kavanagh to six months in prison in respect of the four charges against him. Following the charge of neglect taken by

¹⁴⁵ *The Post*, 18 January 1928.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 18 January 1928.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 18 January 1928.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 18 January 1928.

the NSPCC, Inspector McDonagh brought James O'Neil before the court and had him committed to St Patrick's Industrial School for twenty days until 4 February 1929.¹⁴⁹ While there is no record to show if James O'Neil was released on the stated date, the committal order was the only one of its kind recorded between 1927 and 1937. *The Post* recorded Inspector McDonagh's remarks about the family following the committal of James O'Neil:

Mr McDonagh said he would that the 'simple child' was taken over by the Carlow Guardians and Mrs Kavanagh and the other children could go into Carlow County Home until the husband would come out of gaol. He wouldn't like her to lose the van and he would see if he could get a friend in Carlow to keep it for her.¹⁵⁰

The steps taken by the NSPCC in helping the Mrs Kavanagh and her children certainly exemplify the Society's ethos of keeping families together through intervention. This case shows that the Society's inspector made considerable efforts to provide food, clothing and coal supplies for the children as well as securing an operation for James O'Neil. While it is clear that the James O'Neil was placed into an industrial school, it appears that this was a temporary measure. The work of the NSPCC in assisting sick children is evident in this case.

This Kavanagh case offers insight into the relationship between the NSPCC and the St Vincent De Paul Society in Kilkenny. While it cannot be conclusively proved as the case files of the NSPCC no longer exist, it is reasonable to expect that the NSPCC and the St Vincent De Paul Society worked in unison to alleviate the hardship of poverty. As the NSPCC was not in a position to provide families with material assistance, the St Vincent De Paul Society would have been able to provide assistance to children at the request of Inspector McDonagh. The Mayor's Coal Fund was used by the NSPCC and this is an example of McDonagh liaising with resources in Kilkenny. In December 1934, *The Post* listed that names of subscriptions to the Mayor's Coal Fund and it is clear that the Coal fund was a well supported initiative in Kilkenny. Among the list of subscribers Dr. Collier, Bishop of Ossory, gave £5. Thomas Derrig, Minister for Education and TD for Kilkenny/ Carlow gave £3.3s, Major D. Mcalmont, Mount Juliet Estate gave £3.3s, Mrs Hervey, NSPCC committee member, gave £2.¹⁵¹ As outlined, Mrs Hervey gave the NSPCC a gift of £4.1s.2d in 1934 and both are examples of her commitment to aiding the poor in Kilkenny.

¹⁴⁹ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 15 January 1929.

¹⁵⁰ *The Post*, 18 January 1928.

¹⁵¹ *The Post*, 19 December 1934.

The Ladies Association of Charity and the Poyntz Lane Tragedy

In 1934 Mrs. John Duggan, Mrs. Burden, Miss Lalor and Miss McCreery were members of both the Ladies' Association of Charity and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The presence of Miss McCreery on the Ladies Association of Charity had a strategic advantage to the NSPCC. As Honorary Secretary of the NSPCC in 1934, Ernestine McCreery was the member of the Society whom Inspector McDoagh had to consult before taking action on a case. In her dual role as a member of the ladies Association of Charity and the NSPCC, she would have been able to secure resources for children. Likewise, the presence of Mrs Burden, Mrs Lalor and Mrs John Duggan in the Ladies Association of Charity would have allowed them to lobby for the children in need when offering assistance to people living in poverty. There is very little record of the work of the St Vincent De Paul Society or the ladies Association of Charity, however, the following press coverage details the material assistance provided.

In 1933, *The Post* recorded that the Ladies Association of Charity relieved 779 cases: 638 food tickets and 528 coal tickets were distributed as were large quantities of eggs and milk. In addition, The Maternity Association assisted in forty-three cases.¹⁵² St Anne's Clothing Guild was reported on following a meeting of the Ladies Association of Saint Vincent De Paul and it is clear that the clothing guild was focused on obtaining clothing for the poorer classes in Kilkenny:

The work of the Guild needs no recommendation. It should make a wide appeal to every lady in the city who can spare time during the course of the year to make at least one adult garment and two garments suitable for children. As will be seen from the reports, 583 garments were distributed, besides a quantity of boys clothing. These warm and well made garments are a great boon to the poor and needy who, were it not for the guild, would suffer.¹⁵³

The high level of material assistance provided by the Ladies Association of Charity complimented the work of the NSPCC. Despite the fact that it is not clear if the 779 cases were individuals or families, the material assistance provided shows that there was a large demand for assistance. The Ladies Association of Charity received full coverage in the *Post* in 1934 and it is clear that the Society was under some financial pressure. While the NSPCC's expenditure was dominated by wage requirements, the ladies Association of Charity's expenditure was centered on material assistance.

During the year under review the amount of relief was not as great as in recent years. The exceptionally good weather in 1933, coupled with the Penny Dinner Scheme and the Free Milk

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 18 April 1934.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 18 April 1934.

distribution lessened the number of applicants. This relief was welcomed by the committee, whose funds during the greater part of the year were at low ebb. During the winter months, however, with their financial position strengthened, the committee was pleased to be able to meet all the demands made on them, and food and fuel were dispensed in all necessary cases.¹⁵⁴

The St Vincent De Paul Society in Kilkenny played a leading role in alleviating the suffering of the families affected by the Poyntz Lane house collapse in 1934. In 1934, a derelict house on Poyntz lane in Kilkenny City collapsed and killed two children. Kilkenny Corporation established a fund to provide assistance to the families affected by the tragedy and it is clear that there concerns from the public as to how the collection fund would be used. Opposition to the manner in which the money would be allocated to the victims resulted in a meeting of the subscribers being called by Mayor McSweeney. Sixty-seven people from a population of ten thousand donated a total of £74.10s to the fund.¹⁵⁵ The small amount of contributors to the relief fund is an indication of the difficulty faced by philanthropic efforts in Kilkenny. The public caution regarding the capacity of the poor to handle money wisely was made clear when objections were raised by thirty-seven contributors on the grounds that the financial assistance was to be given directly to the families and not through the agency of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. The family of the deceased children was given £30 as each deceased child was compensated for £15. Two children with broken legs received £10 7s.6d respectively. Children with lacerations received £6. A member of the Ladies of Charity suggested that the money be put aside so that the surviving children who were making their communions and confirmations would have the means to purchase suitable dress. Objectors to unsupervised finance were in favor of a ticket system, as in the words of one contributor, it ‘prevented the money from being used for stupid purposes’¹⁵⁶.

The practical aid administered by the Ladies of Charity in Kilkenny, particularly in the response to the Poyntz Lane tragedy, as well as the good work done by the NSPCC in protecting children shows that charity in Kilkenny was not divided by religious orientation. That being said, the women of the Society of Saint Vincent De Paul and the Ladies Association of Charity were of a similar class to their counterparts in the NSPCC. The woman of the middle and upper classes in Kilkenny City, be it Catholic or Protestant, were the primary instigators of charitable acts. For example, the role of the NSPCC in the committal of children to industrial schools was evidence of Protestants and Catholics working together to secure children. While Catholic religious orders ran industrial schools, the children sent there from Kilkenny were committed at the request of a Society

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 18 April 1934.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

run by the Protestant Landed Gentry. The overlap of Protestants and Catholics in Kilkenny's philanthropic groups suggests that class, rather than religion influenced charity. George B. Mangold's study of the relationship between the church and philanthropic groups in North America is relevant to organized charity in Kilkenny City.

in considering the actual or attempted co-operation of Church and societies of organized charity, the personnel representing the latter group cannot be overlooked. They are quite uniformly affiliated with some denominational church. They are considered worthy, have good morals, profess high standards of life, and are laboring for a higher level of average citizenship, no less than for the general betterment of human kind.¹⁵⁷

Eamon Dunne argues that the role of Catholic Action groups such as the St Vincent De Paul Society sought to curb emerging threats to Catholicism in laboring and poor communities in Dublin:

The Society of Saint Vincent De Paul's primary aim was stated as being the sanctification of members through the performance of works of charity, particularly the visitation and assistance of poor in their homes.¹⁵⁸

In the same speech where Lord Chief Justice Molony credited the NSPCC with prevention of crime in 1922, he linked removal of children to industrial schools as a factor in the reduction of juvenile crime. Molony's paper was focused upon social threats to children, stating:

There can be no doubt that industrial schools, by removing children of tender years from temptation, have been an important agency in the prevention of crime. The children sent there are such as are found begging, or wandering, or destitute, or happen to be under the care of parents or guardians who, by reason of their criminal or drunken habits, are unfit to have the care of children. They also embrace the children of reputed thieves, or those who are lodging in dangerous or criminal surroundings. There are 64 such schools in Ireland, mostly under the management of religious orders, and, according to the report of the Inspector, they exhibit a high state of efficiency and the results obtained from them are most satisfactory.¹⁵⁹

When addressing philanthropy and charitable groups, Dunne emphasizes that the central ethos of Catholic philanthropy was spiritual assistance. While material aid was provided to families, the limitation of material resources available to contemporary groups prevented them from providing

¹⁵⁷ George B Mangold, 'The Church and Philanthropy, in, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol.30, Social Work of the Church, November 1907, p.97.

¹⁵⁸ Eamon Dunne, 'Action and Reaction: Catholic Lay Organisations in Dublin in the 1920s and 1930s', *Archivium Hibernicum*, Vol. 48, 1994, pp.112-113.

¹⁵⁹ Thomas Molony, 'Prevention and Punishment', p.122.

families with the necessary skills to progress from labouring to middle class. The situation in Kilkenny shows, however, that material assistance did not always prevent children from entering into industrial schools. In 1930, Sir Joseph Glynn, the President of the St Vincent de Paul Council of Ireland, declared that ‘the foundation of the Society(SVP) had nothing to do with bringing material relief...their object in visiting the poor was bringing these people back to active practice of the Catholic religion.’¹⁶⁰ On St Patrick’s Day in Graiguenamanagh, Fr Angelus underscored this concept:

It will do good to you who will support it by your alms. It will do good to the members by bringing them into contact with the poor in their homes if their work is ennobled and sanctified by the high motives of Christian charity. ¹⁶¹

In this regard, the relationship between St Vincent De Paul Society and the NSPCC is relevant when addressing the committal of children to industrial schools. Was the placement of children in industrial schools by the NSPCC an issue of religious necessity?

When addressing the committal of children to industrial schools by the Society, it is worth noting that these are cases where material assistance from the Saint Vincent de Paul Society was deemed as insufficient enough to keep a family in the home. Likewise, committal applications were in direct conflict with the NSPCC’s mission of keeping children in the home. Despite the obvious good work done by the NSPCC, the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse established that ‘the general public perception at the time was that the Society was heavily involved in committing children to Industrial Schools, hence the apprehension in the minds of the public associated with the ‘cruelty man’.’¹⁶²

The Ryan Commission’s assertion regarding contemporary perceptions of the NSPCC was clearly shown in 1930, when the NSPCC branch in Waterford City was deeply concerned that the image of the Society amongst the public was one of an intrusive organisation which was only engaged in taking children away from their parents. The Assistant Secretary of the Society was quoted in the *Waterford News and Star* as follows:

The society had formed a great bulwark against all things that were inimical to the welfare of child life, but they were still faced with one difficulty, the ignorance of, speaking generally, of the public as to what the society was and what it did. Lots of people had not the reported idea of the S.P.C.C

¹⁶⁰ Eamon Dunne, ‘Action and Reaction’, p.113.

¹⁶¹ *Kilkenny People*, 28March 1931.

¹⁶² *The Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse*, Vol.5, p. 5.

was. The average person seemed to think that it was a society for interfering, that it was an organisation for taking children away, that it was a general nuisance, governed by people who knew nothing about children.¹⁶³

While the statement by the NSPCC that the public were ignorant as to the work of the Society was made in neighbouring Waterford, it conflicted with the annual amount of £68 the Society in Kilkenny was paying to the central branch of the NSPCC for general advertising. The balancing act for the NSPCC extended beyond individual family circumstances and the NSPCC's annual reports suggest that the Society was concerned about the public perception of its work. The issue of class may have triggered the animosity towards the Waterford branch of the Society: NSPCC members had children of their own; however, the families of the NSPCC lived in large estate houses and were surrounded by wealth and comfort which were a far cry from the living conditions of the families the society aimed to help. For all the positive work the NSPCC did to protect families, its good work was undermined by the fact that neither the *Kilkenny People* nor *The Post* published case files with positive outcomes for children or their parents. A detailed examination of every copy of these newspapers in the period 1927-1937 shows that the NSPCC only appeared in articles where children were being committed to industrial schools or parents were being sent to prison for neglect. For the newspaper reading public in Kilkenny, the NSPCC and Inspector McDonagh would have been identified with the removal of children to industrial schools. The coverage of the Golden Jubilee of St Patrick's Industrial School by *The Post* reported that nine members of the NSPCC committee, Inspector McDonagh and four members of the Ladies Association of Charity were invited by the Sisters of charity to celebrate the role of the industrial school in Kilkenny.¹⁶⁴ While in attendance in the St Patrick's Industrial School, the NSPCC committee members and its inspector were treated to entertainment by the detained boys showcasing the instruction they received under the care of the Sisters of Charity. *The Post* described the boy's performance as follows:

The audience was treated to a splendid barbell drill display in which the boys brought to bear the very careful training they receive. The ease and precision with which they performed the various exercises reflected credit not only on the boys themselves, but on those who were responsible for bringing them to such a high pitch of perfection in this branch of industrial school life. Physical culture is an important factor in the upbringing of the youth and efficiency of the boys of St

¹⁶³ *Waterford News and Star*, 7 March 1930.

¹⁶⁴ *The Post*, 21 May 1930.

Patrick's in this respect was displayed in the successful manner in which they acquitted themselves in barbell and dumbbell display and figure marching.¹⁶⁵

The Post's coverage of the Golden Jubilee contained a contemporary endorsement of the industrial school in Kilkenny, asserting

at all times surrounded presenting a delightful scenery, the surroundings of St Patrick's look at their best donned in the rich garb of summer, when nature shows shines forth in all her magnificence. What a contrast is this charming convent home, where all is peace: where the very atmosphere breathes of holiness and happiness- what a contrast to the homes of squalor destined for countless poor children outside the walls.¹⁶⁶

In addition, *The Post* asserted that 'those who were present at the institution on Tuesday had an opportunity of best appreciating the work that is being performed by the nuns.' John Horgan, in his history of Irish newspapers observes that

The relationship between media and the communities they serve is a complex and subtle one, symbiotic and mutually revelatory. The media inform and social and political change, as well as reflecting it.¹⁶⁷

In this instance, *The Post* presented the industrial school as the saviour of poor children who lived on the fringes of society. Furthermore, from the list of those in attendance, it can be established that Justice Molloy was as a supporter of the Schools as the Catholic Bishop of Ossory, the Mayor of Kilkenny Corporation, the manager of Hibernia Bank, the Secretary of Kilkenny County Council and the Borough Treasurer.¹⁶⁸ For those reading *The Post* or the *Kilkenny People* in the decade 1927-1937, the only image of the NSPCC they were presented with was that of an organisation which took children to industrial schools and celebrated the success of committals. In addition, the negative description of the homes of the poor gave readers a perception that the industrial school was a better place for children than the family home.

The Post's coverage of the Golden Jubilee of St Patrick's Industrial School made no reference to the fact that the industrial school was the last resort of protection for children in Kilkenny. As

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 21 May 1930.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 21 May 1930.

¹⁶⁷ John Horgan, *The Irish Media: A Critical History* (London, 2001), p.2.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 21 May 1930.

result, listing Inspector McDonagh among the guests presented the NSPCC as a proponent of industrial school committal. The newspapers in Kilkenny did the NSPCC a disservice by only reporting the negative work done by the Society. For the poor in Kilkenny, those whom the NSPCC wished to help; the only image of the NSPCC depicted by the press was that of an organisation which had no interest in assisting families. The following chapter will address social conditions in Kilkenny City and County which the NSPCC worked in. The relationship between NSPCC members and working classes will be examined in order to provide context to the work of the Society in County Kilkenny.

Chapter Two

Social Conditions in Kilkenny City and its Environs

A study of the social conditions in Kilkenny City and county during the 1920s and 1930s presents multiple avenues of research which reveal how poverty impacted the livelihoods of the county's working classes. The issues of housing conditions, unemployment and crime can be viewed as themes which shaped working class communities. Marilyn Silverman's study of the hierarchical structure of the class system in Thomastown reveals how employment shaped class. Silverman notes that the 'class status' system is based on occupational differences and differentiates people according to standards of living, skills and life chances. While Silverman's study focuses primarily on Thomastown, the basic employment opportunities available in Thomastown would have mirrored the class system across the county. Silverman's class model accentuates the complicated class system which the NSPCC operated within across County Kilkenny. Silverman states that

The lowest class in the hierarchy is made up of labourers and their families-unskilled and semi skilled workers in regular or casual employment. Above them are the artisans and skilled tradesmen-those who have 'served their time' in apprenticeship but also some who have informally acquired skills-some in wage employment and a smaller number who are self employed. Their incomes tended to be larger than those of labourers. Higher in status again are two equal but separate 'classes:' farmers and shopkeepers. Above them again, in the nineteenth century, were the gentry-typically land-owners and landlords of the Ascendancy but for local purposes also including those with independent means, professionals and manufactures.¹⁶⁹

This chapter will examine the social conditions in Kilkenny City and its environs that primarily affected the working classes. In this regard, the work of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty and children and Catholic Action philanthropic groups can be placed in a local context of employment patterns, conceptions of class and debates on communism and alcohol in County Kilkenny. The role of Catholic clergy in shaping the social landscape of the county will be examined in order to provide an understanding of the clergy's attitude towards the working classes. It is equally important to address how the working classes viewed the clergy as it provides an understanding of the complex relationship which existed between the working and religious classes in Kilkenny. Likewise, contemporary social issues in towns and rural areas which involved NSPCC families will be discussed in order to provide for a greater context to the private domestic dealings of NSPCC members.

¹⁶⁹ Marilyn Silverman, 'Social Life and Meaning: The Case of Contemporary Thomastown', in William Nolan, Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Kilkenny: History and Society* (Dublin, 2001), p. 598.

In terms of population, County Kilkenny had a population of 70, 990 in 1926 with 17, 262 (24 per cent) of the population living in towns or villages. The urban population of Kilkenny in 1926 was as follows:;Kilkenny City, 10, 045, Callan, 1,500, Castlecomer, 829, Graiguenamanagh, 799, Thomastown, 746, Urulingford 558, Ballyraggot, 472, Freshford, 413, Gowran 364, Goresbridge, 305, Inistioge, 304, Mooncoin 204, Piltown 273, Johnstown 244 and Mulinavat had a population of 206 people.¹⁷⁰ It is worth considering that fifty- nine per cent of Kilkenny's urban population lived in Kilkenny City with the remaining 7,217 people living in fourteen towns, thirteen of which had a population of less than one thousand people. These fourteen towns and villages were focal points for a rural population of 53, 728 people. However, Kilkenny City was not the primary focus for the county's population in the southern parishes. The local economy of each of these towns was primarily small business, agriculture and fishing; however, as outlined, the 1926 census showed that the Prior Wandesforde family employed 432 men in Castlecomer mines.¹⁷¹

The Prior Wandesforde family, Fr. Cavanagh and Communism in Castlecomer

The day to day dealings of committee members of the NSPCC serve as a vehicle of enquiry into the manner in which the people who drove the work of the Society treated the working class outside the parameters of philanthropic work. Commenting on the relationship between rural Protestants and their Catholic neighbours, Kurt Bowen argues

It should not be assumed that rural Protestants were more isolated or cut off from their Catholic Neighbours than were their urban counterparts. In fact, in some respects, frequent and familiar contact with Catholics was a much more firmly established tradition in rural areas.¹⁷²

Bowen underscored this statement by placing the rural relationships between Protestant and Catholics into the local business structure and mutual dependency. Bowen states that

Due to the small size of their community, most Protestant shopkeepers, doctors, lawyers, and the like were forced to rely on Catholic customers; and as in any rural area, their business relations tended to be enduring and far from impersonal.¹⁷³

Anna Brennan and William Nolan have done extensive research on the subject of mining in Castlecomer and it is clear that mining was a precarious occupation throughout the 1930s. In addition,

¹⁷⁰ Census of Population 1926: Vol. 1, *Population. Area and Valuation.*

¹⁷¹ Census of Population 1926: Vol. 2, *Occupations* (Dublin, 1928)

¹⁷² Kurt Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic State*, p.166.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.166.

Pat Feeley and Brennan and Nolan's accounts of mining in Castlecomer provide evidence which highlights that the Prior Wandesforde family, as employers, did not enjoy a harmonious relationship with Catholics. The wages of a miner were not consistent and Brennan and Nolan state that

Wages in the early twentieth century were based on the 'sliding scale' or 'rise' system which had been negotiated between the management and the miners' intermediary Canon O' Halloran in settlement of the dispute of 1881. Production wages were linked to the selling price of coal and varied either up or down as the selling price fluctuated. In 1927, for example, the price of coal was 33s.4d. a ton and the colliers wages were seven shillings for every ton of coal.¹⁷⁴

In addition to the sliding scale of wage measurement, miners employed by the Wandesfordes were subject to weekly wage deductions to finance items such as candles, gelignite and detonators. Brennan and Nolan note that the Wandesfordes charged rent for miners who lived in company housing and in the late 1920s, the miners contributed six thousand pounds in weekly amounts of sixpence for the building of a new Catholic church in Moneenroe. In addition to inconsistent wages, Pat Feeley notes that working conditions were detrimental to the workers and their families:

The *Workers' Voice* paints a fairly gloomy picture of life in the Kilkenny coalfield in 1932 - the miners working a two day week and living in 'vile, unsanitary' huts under the threat of eviction ... Throughout the autumn of 1932 things were bad at the colliery, with the management claiming there was no sale for the tons of coal piled high in the yards and the miners continuing to work a two day week.¹⁷⁵

The economy of Castlecomer was dependant on the employment offered by the Prior Wandesforde family. Despite the high numbers employed in the coal fields, the miners were not satisfied with the conditions of their employment and the radical nature of the labour movement in Castlecomer was a consequence of the working and living conditions for mining families employed by the Wandesfordes. In addition, the emergence of Nicholas Boran as leader amongst the mining community was significant in creating a hostile attitude towards the Wandesfordes and Catholic clergy. Pat Feeley notes

In September the trammers threatened to strike unless there was a wage increase of 3d a ton and Boran handed in notice to this effect. Around this time also there was an increase in the union membership. The road workers of Ballyragget formed a branch, and confidence was high amongst the leadership. The company reacted by ignoring the strike threat and making no offer. Boran

¹⁷⁴ Anna Brennan and William Nolan, 'Nixie Boran and the Colliery Community of North Kilkenny' in William Nolan, Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Kilkenny: History and Society* (Dublin, 2001), p. 571.

¹⁷⁵ Pat Feeley, 'The Castlecomer Mine', p.32.

wrote that there was widespread discontent and that the trammers were particularly unhappy about their lot. He claimed that the rates in the Jarrow and Skehana seams fell well short of what the miners should be getting in accordance with the sliding scale. The company continued to ignore the union's threats and demands and on October 17 an all-out strike of the 400 miners, supported by the militant Mine and Quarry Union, took place.¹⁷⁶

The strike of 400 miners in Castlecomer lasted six weeks and Feeley argues that a lack of resources placed a heavy strain on the miners and their families. Feeley notes that the miners settled for small increase in their wages amidst the harsh reality of the strike:

Moves were made to bring the dispute to an end, and industrial peace was restored through the intervention of the local shopkeepers who asked the government to send in mediators. The Labour T.D. William Davin, and Sean Gibbons, a Fianna Fail T.D. for Kilkenny, both local men, were chosen as the go betweens. They met and had discussions with both sides and arising from these two resolutions were put to the strikers. The first, which was defeated, was that the men would return to work pending a conference. The second, which was carried, was that there would be no return to work without some agreed increase in tonnage rates. After further discussions the company offered two half pence increases in the tonnage rates. This offer was put to the men and accepted. The strike was over.¹⁷⁷

The strong leadership of self-professed communist, Nicholas Boran, brought Fr. Cavanagh to the aid of the Wandesfordes four years before he joined the NSPCC and shared the role of Vice-President of the Society with Mrs Prior Wandesforde. Nolan and Brennan argue that the class warfare which derived from the emergence of communists in Moneenroe was 'anathema to the Catholic Church which preached the harmonious interdependence of worker, employer and farmer.'¹⁷⁸ The Irish Mines and Quarry Workers Union formed in 1930 and Nicholas Boran was its first chairman. Nolan and Brennan argue that the movements aim was to organise road workers, quarrymen and miners throughout south Leinster. The emergence of Nicholas Boran and the Irish Mines and Quarry Workers Union was met with intense condemnation from Fr. Cavanagh and the Bishop of Ossory, Dr Collier. Nolan and Brennan framed the tension in Moneenroe as follows:

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p.32.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p.32.

¹⁷⁸ Anna Brennan and William Nolan, 'Nixie Boran', p.576

Fr. Cavanagh, scion of a strong farming family in west Kilkenny, denounced the union and its members publicly in his Sunday sermons and admonished them in their homes to renounce union membership.¹⁷⁹

Likewise, Pat Feeley's account of Nicholas Boran and the labour movement in Castelcomer provides an example of the provocative language used by Fr. Cavanagh towards the miners and Nicholas Boran:

Preaching at Sunday Mass Fr. Cavanagh said the Workers' Voice was the devil's voice, that Boran was little better than the gent with the cloven hoof and that communists were in receipt of Russian gold. He canvassed each member of the union committee separately to break with the union but without much success. When he visited the Walshes' home angry words were exchanged and Jimmy Walshe said he 'had a right to his opinion'. Fr. Cavanagh replied: "You are too ignorant to have an opinion".¹⁸⁰

While the *Kilkenny People* and *The Post* rarely gave a voice to the working class, the *Workers Voice* carried Nicholas Boran's attacks on Fr. Cavanagh and it is evident that Boran skilfully used the *Workers Voice* to condemn the manner in which the Wandesfordes treated their employees. The following is an example of one of Boran's attacks on the company and Fr. Cavanagh:

We are fighting a combination of the boss, the police and the priest. Father Cavanagh leads the attack from the pulpit each Sunday. The Workers Voice is the Devils voice and Comrade Boran is little better. He talks endlessly about Russian gold and then denies he means Comrade Boran. At present the Castlecomer miners are being organised as far as finance is concerned from the self same source as Father Cavanagh and the coal company receive their finances- from the contributions of the exploited miners.¹⁸¹

The issue of miner's housing was one which Boran used to criticize the Wandesforde family and Nolan and Brennan note that

in December 1930, he graphically described the ramshackle timber house which was home to miner Jack Brien, his wife and their ten children in Timber Row and denounced the Mining Company for forcing its employees to live in rural slums.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p.575.

¹⁸⁰ Pat Feeley, 'The Castlecomer Mine', p.36.

¹⁸¹ Anna Brenna and William Nolan, 'Nixie Boran', p. 575.

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 575.

Pat Feeley noted that contemporary voices in Castlecomer viewed bad housing as an issue which far outweighed the emergence of communist ideals amongst the workers:

a miner wrote that hunger and poverty were the real evils in Moneenroe and not communism. He suggested that a correspondent who had promised to supply the authorities with the names of all the communists in Moneenroe would be better employed making a list of families that were hungry and living in 'cowsheds'¹⁸³

Feeley notes that Boran used the Workers Voice to highlight dangerous living conditions which miners had to endure and the following is an example of the poor housing which motivated the labour movement: Boran wrote regularly in the Workers' Voice on the working and living conditions of the miners. Feeley's account of living conditions on Timber Row provides further details of the house Jack Brien's ten children lived in:

the house of Jack Brien of Timber Row was 'a wooden hut' with a corrugated iron roof full of holes, the walls of which consisted of two single boards and a four-inch mud cavity, with the rain coming in through the roof, broken windows and drains. He further stated that the houses were 50 years old and that no repairs had been carried out by the coal company since 1919. Brien paid 2s.3d. a fortnight rent and the house, which was a single apartment partitioned in two, was occupied by a family of fourteen¹⁸⁴

The housing conditions offered to Jack Brien and his children by the Prior Wandesfordes would have been a contradiction to the work of the NSPCC. During the five years 1933-1937, the NSPCC never raised the issue of housing in Kilkenny and this may be due to the fact the Wandesfordes provided minors with the type of house which would have been a red flag to the Society. Beyond the call for fairer working conditions and improved living conditions, Boran's leadership was seen as revolt against the class structure of rural Kilkenny. Feeley notes that

The Mine and Quarry Union had an important influence on the future of the mining community. The trammers' strike came to be regarded as the first serious blow struck against the power of the Prior Wandesfordes and the first step on the road towards improved conditions¹⁸⁵

In 1932, Fr Cavanagh was transferred from Clogh to St John's Parish and thus brought his disdain for communist philosophy with him to Kilkenny City. The miners in Castlecomer were the

¹⁸³ Pat Feeley, 'The Castlecomer Mine and Quarry Union', p.34.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p.36.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 35.

only group in Kilkenny who openly questioned the inequality of class structure and Cavanagh was vocal in his fears for the Diocese of Ossory had Boran and the labour movement been successful in their efforts:

Private property, (Cavanagh) said, was an indisputable natural right of man but the communists and socialists were opposed to it and would abolish it if they had their way. Communism was the greatest evil of the time and the faithful, he said, should know and understand Catholic teaching on it in order to effectively combat it. On the following Sunday he spoke again on the same subject. Communists, he said, were the avowed enemies of Catholicism and religion and guilty of sacrilege, desecration and sacerdotal murder. He advised the people to defeat them. Rhetorically he asked why should he speak of communism to the faithful and devoted Catholics of Kilkenny? Were there communists and anti- God men and women amongst them? Quite the opposite, he believed there was not one in the parish who would not die for the faith.¹⁸⁶

Nolan and Brennan present Nicholas Boran as a visionary whose primary motivation was to reveal the conditions of the mining world hidden in the hills beyond Castlecomer. In 1931, the *Kilkenny Journal* published a letter from Boran which accentuated the strain mining placed on families. It is not possible to determine if Boran was aware of Mrs Prior Wandesfordes involvement with the NSPCC, none the less, his commentary would certainly raise questions as to the dedication of Mrs Prior Wandesforde to the families of working men. Boran stated that wives

had to be up an hour before their husbands every morning getting ready their breakfast before they call them for work, which means five o'clock for those that have a distance to go. When they come in the evenings, oftentimes with wet cloths, along with preparing dinners, they have to wash and wait up to dry the cloths in order to mend them. Owing to the smallest of houses with no drying faculties, this takes a long time, for the clothing has to be continually turned.¹⁸⁷

While the Wandesforde family was the principal employer in Castelcomer, it is clear that it did little to provide its workers with adequate living conditions. While it can be argued that mining was a difficult occupation, Mrs Prior Wandesforde was the Vice- President of the NSPCC and to overlook the needs of her workers would have meant that they were more likely to come under supervision from Inspector McDonagh. During the period 1933-1937, inspector McDonagh investigated twenty-seven new cases of neglect in Castlecomer which affected sixty-five children. In addition, Inspector McDoangh made 213 supervisory visits to Castlecomer during the same five year period.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁸⁷ Nolan and Brennan, 'Nixie Boran', p. 576-577.

The hostile approach taken by Fr. Cavanagh towards Nicholas Boran and the so-called communists in Castlecomer was ultimately a hostile approach to improving the working and living conditions of the working classes in Kilkenny's third largest town. Nicholas Boran's aim to illuminate the conditions of working men in rural Kilkenny also served to highlight that the NSPCC's Vice-President's showed little interest to the living conditions of the working classes. Considering that the Wandesfordes deducted 6d weekly for the building of a new Catholic church in Moneenroe,¹⁸⁸ it is clear that there was a degree of cooperation between the landed protestant gentry and Catholic clergy.

The use of miners' wages to build a new church in Moneenroe is an example of the working class financing a building which was symbolic of class division. During the strike of 1932, the striking miners were barred from using the parish hall and new church by Dr. Collier in an attempt to isolate perceived communists.

In 1933, the year after the miners' strike, Bishop Collier attacked the communists who he felt were masquerading as Catholics in order to deceive the working classes. Commenting on the origin of Dr. Collier's pastoral on the dangers of communism, Feeley argues that the Wandesfordes had a role in the bishop's attack on their employees

A miner, C. Brennan Roe, writing in the *Workers' Voice* said that Wandesforde, the mine owner, having failed to defeat the miners in the strike had engineered the pastoral through his friendship with Fr. Grant the parish priest of Clogh. This friendship certainly existed and both were strongly opposed to the revolutionary miners and their activities. However, independent of this, the bishop and the clergy saw socialism as a threat to the faith, and a danger to the establishment, and were determined to crush it at every opportunity.¹⁸⁹

It is evident from Feely's research that Boran and the miners were not supported by all of the classes in Castlecomer. Dr. Collier's pastoral on the dangers of communism amongst the districts miners lead to a counter protest against the Boran and the Union. Feely notes that

after the pastoral had been read in the churches, a protest march was called for Moneenroe. The parishioners marched through the mining district to demonstrate their opposition to the Union and its members. A meeting was called and Boran and the others were invited to attend. The meeting was held in the old church and was chaired by Nicholas Roe, a big farmer... The hall was packed with big farmers. The parish priest, Fr. Grant, and Mr. Gill, the local organiser for the Transport

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.571.

¹⁸⁹ Pat Feeley, 'The Castlecomer Mine and Quarry', p.34.

Union were also on the platform. The purpose of the meeting was to get Boran and the others to repudiate communism and to agree to rejoin the I.T.G.W.U¹⁹⁰

The influence of Dr. Collier's pastoral on shaping local class attitudes towards the miners is evident as the speakers at the meeting accused Boran and his fellow miners of turning their backs on religion.¹⁹¹ Dr. Collier's comments underscored the importance of mass attendance in rural communities and commenting on the perceived deception of communists, he used faith and worship as an attempt to marginalise communist sympathizers:

They make it a point to be seen at Church, at Mass, at Devotions and then at the sacraments. In Ireland this is one of their most dangerous weapons, and I know it has deceived and worried a good number of real Catholic Workers. They say to the worker: I am a Communist, but I am also a Catholic. I go to church just as you do. Now to dispose of this subtle dishonesty for once and all, I authoritatively say: No Catholic can be a Communist, no Communist can be a Catholic. For the formal professed Communist, at any attendance at Church or Sacraments is a mockery, a sacrilege, a profanation of holy things and must not lead people astray.¹⁹²

Marilyn Silverman's study of the working classes in Kilkenny addressed the issue of religious worship and how Catholic churches were not immune to segregation based on wealth and status. Gerard Doyle, a clerk in Thomastown, noted that the divisive nature of congregation seating was not a result of any instructions given by the priests. Doyle was under the impression that class segregation was 'spontaneous in the sense that people go to the place where they consider they should be. It reflects the generally accepted class divisions of everyday life'.¹⁹³ Doyle stated that the church was strategically segregated to represent class and gender. Shopkeepers and wealthy farmers occupied the front rows with their spouses. The labouring class were to be found towards the rear of the church and outside in the porch. The right side of the church was for single working women and elderly widowed women. The design of congregational seating was in many ways a microcosm of society in Kilkenny. The church was inclusive in the sense that everybody was provided with the opportunity to worship, however, in terms of opportunity to engage in the celebration of mass, class distinction lead to discrimination with Doyle noting that

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p.34.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p.34.

¹⁹² Anna Brennan and William Nolan, 'Nixie Boran', p. 579.

¹⁹³ Silverman, *An Irish Working Class*, p. 360.

Religious processions and church collections are examples of what may be justly be called class discrimination...I have never known a single instance of a working man acting as a canopy bearer in a procession or as a collector at Christmas, Easter, or November offering.¹⁹⁴

In 1928, a new cemetery opened on the Dublin Road and Silverman records that the new graveyard was a platform for class divisions. A mill worker asserted that wealth and status were reflected in the pricing arrangement by the local priest. The most expensive graves were located at the rear of the cemetery, beside the central cross. The medium priced graves were situated in the middle of the graveyard and the plots for the labouring class were found beside the gate¹⁹⁵ Examples such as this reflect foundation of Irish society was based upon existence of hierarchal community which, in turn, was a constructed around a frame of wealth, social class and individual morality. Gerald Doyle's contemporary social commentary places the sentiments of Fr. Cavanagh towards communism in Castlecomer into the context of his farming background, Doyle states:

There is a deep seated conviction that many, if not most, of the priests incline unduly towards the wealthier section of the community. And I do not think that this opinion is far wrong. The ordinary, secular clergy are drawn almost exclusively from the merchant and farming classes and generally, they tend to form their friendships with members of these classes. ...the complaints of the working man are that he and his class are ignored by the priests...there is also a belief, sometimes erroneous, that the mere possessions of the wealth entitle one to violate the moral law with impunity. Still, it is unquestionable that that the wealthy wrong- doer is generally let off lightly as compared with his poorer brother.¹⁹⁶

Kevin Kearns's oral history of Dublin tenements draws a similar conclusion regarding the relationship between the poor and the clergy:

there was great respect for the clergy and the local priest was nearly as infallible as the Pope in the minds of parishioners. When approaching a priest along a pathway it was obligatory to reverently step aside and bow or curtsy with a "God Bless you, Father. Priests, however, were often viewed with as much fear as respect.¹⁹⁷

The 1926 census indicates that there were 123 Catholic clergymen in County Kilkenny¹⁹⁸ and this chapter will address how Fr. Cavanagh and his contemporaries shaped attitudes towards the

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 361.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 361.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p.363.

¹⁹⁷ Kevin C. Kearns, *Dublin Tenement Life: An Oral History* (Dublin, 1994), p.44.

¹⁹⁸ Census of Population 1926:Vol.2, *Occupations*.

working classes and social issues in the county. In the Kilkenny context, it is evident that Fr. Cavanagh (later Canon Cavanagh and Dean of Ossory) and Dr. Collier, Bishop of Ossory, were staunch opponents of men requesting an improvement in their living conditions in Castlecomer. While it is not possible to prove the accusation that Captain Wandesforde orchestrated Dr. Collier's pastoral on communism, the accusation indicates that Wandesforde family were viewed by the working classes in Castlecomer as friends of the clergy and opponents of the working families. The relationship between the Wandesfordes and Catholic clergy accentuates the claims by Gerard Doyle regarding class based friendships. In terms of the mission statement of the NSPCC, as outlined in the previous chapter, the Wandesforde family, as evident in their business dealings, was against the betterment of the living conditions of the working classes. Consequently, the company of the NSPCC Vice-President forced half the population of Castlecomer to live in dangerous conditions. Pat Feely notes that

Writing in *An Phoblacht* Peadar O'Donnell said that 400 Irish families had been flung on the scrap heap by a 'bullock - cow rancher - mine owner' and that the men, in the sixth week of their strike, were without food or money¹⁹⁹

While the NSPCC's annual reports show that the society worked for the improvement of working class families, the inspector's workload would have been reduced had Mrs Prior Wandesforde's company provided their workers with improved conditions of employment. It is worth noting that there is no record in Kilkenny District Court of children from Castlecomer being committed to industrial schools, however, such an action would have reflected poorly on the Wandesfordes and the NSPCC. While it can be argued that the Castlecomer miners' revolt was a radical industrial action, it revealed the Catholic Church in Kilkenny had no understanding of the social justice issues which were at the heart of the dispute.

The 1926 census indicates that Kilkenny was the largest town in the county, however, this differed greatly from neighbouring County Wexford which had four towns with populations over two thousand people. For rural communities in southern parishes of Inistioge, The Rower, Graiguenamanah and Mullinivat, the town of New Ross, Co, Wexford, with a population of 5, 543 people, was a closer urban centre than Kilkenny City. Fidelma Maddock's research on Cot Fishing on the river Nore indicates that the fishing communities in the south of Kilkenny relied heavily on the port of New Ross. Likewise, Maddock notes that fishing communities thrived in parishes within walking distance of New Ross.

¹⁹⁹ Pat Feeley, 'The Castlecomer Mine', p.32.

Cot fishermen, the Landed Gentry and the District Justice in Thomastown

The 1911 census reveals that there were 117 fishermen in County Kilkenny and 115 of Kilkenny's fishermen were Catholic.²⁰⁰ By 1926, the number of fishermen in the county had risen to 180.²⁰¹ In a similar fashion to the Prior Wandesfordes in Castlecomer, the relationship between NSPCC committee members Mrs Solly Flood and Lord and Lady Teignmouth with cot fisherman was a strained one and Maddock argues that fishing encompassed class divisions of rural Kilkenny:

A combination of oral history and census and other records reveal two distinct groups in the Nore valley involved in fishing- those with land and those without. The small farm/ fishing family is concentrated especially in the upper tidal reaches- Kileen, Ballyshane, Brownsford, Kilcross, Clewen, Oldcourt and Ballygub.- all adjoining or within walking distance of the river.²⁰²

Maddock states that a landless fisherman was dependant on the larger farmer for employment out of fishing seasons to support his family:

These families made a hard, bare, erratic living and survival depended on the ability to string together a series of off river temporary jobs. As fishing was seasonal employment, they relied on part time work from farmers-picking potatoes, turning manure, thinning turnips, haymaking, snagging beat. Some too, were employed part time in neighbouring towns. Because their working locations were determined by walking distance, those town lands furthest from the towns had fewest fishermen, as work opportunities simply did not exist.²⁰³

Kurt Bowen argues that rural employment was based upon the mutual cooperation between larger Protestant farmers and Catholics throughout the farming year. Bowen notes that

Protestant farmers often cooperated with their Catholic neighbours at busy times of the year, and they regularly encountered one another at cattle markets, the creamery, and the cooperative. Even in the border counties, Protestants "couldn't live without our Catholic neighbours," who were often a great help" when sickness or other crisis disrupted the daily round of farming.²⁰⁴

The 1911 census shows that fishing was equally predominant in the parishes of Piltown and Mooncoin with Waterford City being a closer urban environment in terms of employment opportunities. The District Court record shows that seventy-five cases of poaching were recorded in

²⁰⁰ Census of Population 1911: Household Returns.

²⁰¹ Census of Population 1926: Vol.2, *Occupations*.

²⁰² Fidelma Maddock, 'The Cot Fishermen of the River Nore' in William Nolan, Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Kilkenny: History and Society* (Dublin, 2001), p. 557.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.557

²⁰⁴ Kurt Bowen, *Protestants in a Minority State*, p. 167.

Kilkenny between 1927 and 1929. Marilyn Silverman's accounts of fishing tension in Thomastown underscore the class issues raised by Fidelma Maddock. Furthermore, Silverman's account documents the tension which arose from prosecutions taken against fishermen in Thomastown and the perceived relationship between Lord Teignmouth and District Justice McCabe. As outlined in chapter one, Silverman argues that tensions between the fisherman and the landed gentry in Thomastown originated from the latter preventing cotmen from fishing as they owned private fishing rights along stretches of the river adjoining their lands. Like the Prior Wandesfordes in Castlecomer, it is evident that the Solly Floods and Teignmouths did not enjoy a harmonious relationship with the working classes. Unlike the tension in Castlecomer, there was no apparent involvement by Catholic clergy in Thomastown. The landed Protestant gentry were a numerical minority in County Kilkenny: however, their friendships with Catholic clergy and judicial figures brought them into conflict in their home districts in the mid 1930s. Commenting on the legacy of cot fishing in Thomastown during the 1930s on the landed gentry, Silverman states:

Through all of this, and along with their changing agency in the political economy of the locality, the gentry as a status-class lost much of its lustre for working people. Their charity was now seen simply as the moral component of the employer-employee tie while their actions in the fishery were seen as reprehensible. Out of this came a renewed sense of locality which joined people together from other status-classes in common sentiment. For the cot fishers were still supported by local people- particularly in the face of what was seen as persecution from a district justice who had friends among non-local, wealthy anglers.²⁰⁵

The following recollection of a poaching case heard before District Justice McCabe illustrates how the local community stood behind convicted fisherman and how McCabe appeared to be an opponent of cot fishermen. In 1930, Councillor John O'Neil and three local cot fisherman faced Justice McCabe charged with netting in a weekly closed time:

The men maintained that they were not the fishers whom the two guards had seen. A report of McCabe's judgement said that 'he believed the defendants had perjured themselves'. He was often criticised for what he said on the bench, but he could not allow perjury to pass. He would fine the defendants £5 each and allow £1 cost against each. If a petition was sent to the minister he would go against it, and he sincerely hoped the defendants would get gaol. He would not give them time to pay the fines. 'I am never lenient with liars' added Mr. McCabe 'and the defence, in this case is a tissue of falsehoods. In fact, O'Neill had leapt into, and swam across, an icy river in February to escape. Both his heroism and the judge's comments caused forty-nine local people, including

²⁰⁵ Marilyn Silverman, *An Irish Working Class*, p.335.

miller Pilsworth, tanner Ryan, fifteen retailers, six farmers, the creamery manager, mill bookkeeper, postmaster, mill worker, and other labourers to contribute £5.15s to pay his fine.²⁰⁶

Silverman notes that the O'Neil case was not the first instance of McCabe taking overtly stern decisions against fisherman, nor was it the last time the local community would support fishermen who faced Justice McCabe. In addition, this case was an example of a fisherman working two jobs, as outlined by Maddock. The following cases are also examples of District Justice refuting evidence in an adversarial system.

In 1936, cotman Ned Ryan and two others were found guilty of netting too close to a weir. They were convicted on the evidence of two bailiffs who identified them from thirty yards away according to the clothes which the fishers wore. The cotmen said that the bailiffs had the wrong crew. Justice McCabe 'rejected completely the evidence of the defendant...as a pack of lies.' Ryan, fined £3 plus of guinea cost, did not pay Six months later he was arrested and conveyed to Mountjoy jail to serve a two month term. A day later, his employer, retailer, John Crennan, paid the fine and Ryan was released.²⁰⁷

In 1943, Pat and James Kelly, two labourers with families who were sent to Mountjoy for poaching, the residents of Thomastown rallied behind the fisherman by organising a dance to pay their respective fines. Silverman notes that

They had pleaded guilty to charges of night fishing and fishing too close to a weir. Their solicitor said that they had no previous convictions and had been unemployed. He therefore asked 'his worship to deal...leniently...with them.' McCabe fined each man £10 and forfeited their nets.²⁰⁸

As seen in Thomastown and Castlecomer, the issues associated with class dominated the towns and rural environs in County Kilkenny. Silverman's framing of the landed gentry's charity as the moral component of the employer-employee tie is not necessarily evident in the NSPCC annual reports as the landed gentry did not retreat from the Society during local disputes. Silverman's argument that the landed gentry in Thomastown were viewed as outsiders is further evidence of the isolation of NSPCC members in County Kilkenny.

Crime and Poverty in Kilkenny City and County

The figures released by the NSPCC in the 1930s and the District Court records show that the Society was working in the urban communities which had a higher concentration of social problems.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.335.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.336.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.336.

The NSPCC's annual reports offer no commentary on the poverty experienced within Kilkenny City and the Society's main function was to react to the family struggles which derived from realities of poverty. In addition to individual family circumstances, the NSPCC operated at a time when an average of 450 people appeared before the District Court every year.²⁰⁹ The following extract from the Combat Poverty Agency's policy submission in 2002 provides a framework for understanding the relationship between crime and poverty:

the links between crime and poverty go in both directions. Poverty and inequality may fuel crime, and crime may increase poverty, for victims who do not have insurance cover, for example, or for ex-offenders who have difficulty in accessing employment.... without a comprehensive system of support, people in marginalised communities will become more disengaged with the rest of society, leading to a further breakdown of community morale and continuation of the cycle of disaffection and disadvantage.²¹⁰

The overwhelming majority of individuals brought before the Kilkenny courts during this period seem to have engaged in criminality as a consequence of poverty. A study of the local press and the Justice Minute Book for Kilkenny District Court reveals that the following crimes stemmed directly from urban poverty; drunk and disorderly behaviour, begging, assault, abusive and threatening language, larceny, refusal to quit and malicious damage to property. While an industrial school committal was not evidence of crime, in all cases, in Kilkenny the committal of children to industrial schools by the NSPCC only impacted on working class families. The mentioned offences came predominantly from Kilkenny's urban areas and the Justice Minute Book indicates that the following offences typified poverty in rural Kilkenny: dog licensing, unlighted bicycles, wandering animals, non-attendance at school. When considering crime and Kilkenny District Court, the 1926 census shows that there were 197 members of the Civic Guard in County Kilkenny.²¹¹ There was one member of the Civic Guard for every 360 people in County Kilkenny and this would have naturally hindered the ability of the Civic Guard to detect offences, particularly in rural parishes across the county.

The issue of class resonates strongly in all discussions on poverty and crime during the 1920s and 1930s. This chapter will now address how class based perceptions of the working classes aided

²⁰⁹ This is an average figure based on a reading of the District Court Minute Books.

²¹⁰ Combat Poverty Agency, Submission to the National Crime Council on the consultation paper, *Tackling the Underlying Causes of Crime: A Partnership Approach*, December 2002, http://www.cpa.ie/publications/submissions/2002_Sub_Crime.pdf

²¹¹ Census of Population 1926: Vol.2, *Occupations*.

and undermined the ability of the philanthropic groups to assist the poor. While Fr. Cavanagh used the pulpit to denounce the emergence of communism in Castlecomer, the issue of crime and its consequences was only discussed at length once by a member of the clergy during the late 1920s and 1930s. In April 1927, Rev. James Downey, the coadjutor Bishop of Ossory, published the last pastoral of his life. Entitled *Pastoral on the vice of Injustice*, Downey's thirteen page document released through the office of the *Kilkenny People* provides a useful commentary on the perception of crime by a senior religious figure in the diocese.

Dr. Downey's pastoral was acutely aware of the proceedings within the courthouse throughout 1927. Likewise, this pastoral details Coadjutor Bishop Downey's sentiments regarding the nature, cause and impact of crime on the morality of the city. Downey states that

The vice of Injustice is one of the running sores of society. It is destroying peace, sowing discord, exciting hatred and revenge, and producing untold sorrow and misery. No rank or condition or state of life is free from it; it prevails everywhere and among all classes. Complaints of it re-echo on all sides. Masters complain of the dishonesty of their servants; servants complain of the injustice of their masters; neighbour complains of neighbour, and disputes and law suits, even among relatives, are of everyday occurrence – in fact, there is scarcely an individual who does not complain of some injury done to him in his property or his rights²¹²

The opening seven lines of Dr Downey's pastoral greatly help our understanding the direction the church took when addressing crime in Kilkenny. In the eyes of the coadjutor bishop, no particular class was to blame for the blemish criminality left on society. *Pastoral on the vice of injustice* acknowledged the real social effects of crime, inequality and discontent, but did not deal with the factors which influenced such behaviour in the first place.

In a thirteen page document, the coadjutor bishop made clear distinctions regarding class: however, he failed to mention the words 'poverty' or 'unemployment' once when addressing the issue of crime in Kilkenny. Instead, Downey made clear reference to the moral compass of the individual. In terms of the significance of this document to the issue of crime and poverty, the following extract from the pastoral is of interest.

There are two kinds of thieves, the thief that is brought to justice, and the thief that is not; and of the two kinds, the thief that is not brought to justice is in the majority. Of the thief that is brought to justice, this only need to be said, that he is shunned and despised; everyone rejoices at his

²¹² Rev. James Downey, Coadjutor Bishop of Ossory, *Pastoral letter on The Vice of Injustice* (Kilkenny , 1927), p.1.

capture and applauds the law that punishes him. On the other hand, the thief that is not brought to justice frequently carries his head high and passes as an honourable man.²¹³

While Downey's rhetoric made no clear class distinction, the stark perception of theft in the Diocese of Ossory presents thieves as individuals to be shunned and despised. Considering that the press in Kilkenny did not offer their readers insight into the origins of crime in Kilkenny, Dr Downey's remarks went unchallenged. In contrast to the coadjutor bishop, contemporary secular and judicial figures were assessing the influence of poverty on criminality. In April 1922, John Patrick Dunne, Honorary, Secretary of the Irish Mothers Pension Society, framed poverty as a social crisis which required a multifaceted approach from all the classes to resolve Ireland's 'poverty problem':

I do sincerely believe that, given the good will of all classes, an era may yet arrive when absolute destitution, whether affecting adult or child, shall be unknown, and employment for willing workers will be ever abundant...The removal of the plague of poverty, which is the fountain-source of much of our national ills, physical and moral, should be, to my mind, the primal work of an Irish administration²¹⁴

While Dunne argued for a united approach from all the classes to approach the poverty question, the reality in Kilkenny was a complete contrast to the Dunne's sentiment. The derogatory language often used to describe working class defendants was never applied to shopkeepers who failed to pay suppliers or loan recipients who failed to repay their lender. The record of the District Court indicates that while collar crime was evident in the following offences: breaches of the Licensing Acts, enforcement and examination orders and embezzlement.

The record in Kilkenny District Court and the annual reports for the NSPCC in Kilkenny indicate that defendants, when criticized by either the Gardaí or the Society, were seen as being 'lazy', 'spineless', 'backboneless', 'no good' and 'wasters'. Likewise, many individuals sentenced in court were described by the local press as being from the 'tramp classes'. Individuals described as being from the 'tramp class' were the only defendants whom the press attached a class distinction to in coverage of court proceedings.

The affairs of the 'tramp class' in the District Court serve as a window into conditions for families who were most likely to attract the attention of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to

²¹³ Ibid., p. 5.

²¹⁴ John Patrick Dunne, 'Poverty Problem for a Patriot Parliament', in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Enquiry Society of Ireland*, Vol. XIV No. 2, 1920-1923, p.190.

Children. Likewise, the coverage of social issues within the working classes is a reflection of the manner in which the middle classes perceived the poorest citizens in Kilkenny. This chapter will serve to provide a context to poverty which St Patrick's and St Joseph's Industrial Schools operated within. The use of the district court records in this chapter will reveal how poverty influenced crime and how decisions made by the District Justice further compounded the difficulties facing offenders from the working class. In terms of local newspaper ownership, Edward Thomas Keane was owner and editor of the *Kilkenny People* and vocal supporter of Charles Stewart Parnell and Home Rule. Declan Dunne notes that

the life of the city was much shaken up by E.T Keane and P.J O'Keeffe, who went into partnership to set up the *Kilkenny People*, which supported and encouraged both the GAA and the cause of Irish nationalism.²¹⁵

The *Kilkenny People* was circulated in County Kilkenny and across the south eastern region comprising Tipperary, Waterford, Carlow and Wexford. In addition, Keane published the *The Post*, a weekly publication which covered affairs in Kilkenny City. Throughout the period, *The Post* focused upon the affairs of the working class in Kilkenny City. For example, *The Post* covered the committal of city children to industrial schools while the *Kilkenny People* was sporadic in its coverage of court proceedings regarding industrial school committals. The earliest available circulation numbers for the *Kilkenny People* are from 1951 and the record shows that it had a circulation of roughly 10,000 copies per publication²¹⁶; however, it is not possible to determine if this figure included the circulation of *The Post* in Kilkenny City. While the circulation of the *Kilkenny People* or *The Post* cannot be measured for the 1930s, an estimate of 10,000 copies, including *The Post*, would indicate that in terms of population of County Kilkenny, just over ten per cent of the population were reading these publications. In addition to the *Kilkenny People* and *The Post*, *The Moderator* was also published during this timeframe; however, there are no available copies of the *The Moderator* available for this period of this study. *The Moderator* was owned and edited by Michael Wilton Lalor; as outlined, Mrs Lalor was in the NSPCC and this may explain why *The Moderator* covered the affairs of Lady Desart more prominently. If one looks at the census for 1926, it is clear journalism in the county was a profession comprised of eight men and three women and their respective work was aimed towards the middle and upper classes of the county.

²¹⁵ Declan Dunne, *Peter's Key*, p.15.

²¹⁶ This figure was given to me by the Editor of the *Kilkenny People* in response to a question about the paper's circulation numbers.

The record of the *Kilkenny People* and *The Post* shows that working class crime was covered at a greater rate than white collar crime. That being said, the local press displayed an inconsistency in regards to the cases which they covered and the record shows that the press simply covered cases which were of interest its readership. The coverage of court proceedings in Kilkenny rarely expanded beyond one column and instances of drunk and disorderly behaviour or lighting offences simply stated the name, address and offence committed by the defendant. In the six month period between January and June 1927, the *Kilkenny People* reported 29 of 166 cases heard in Kilkenny District Court.²¹⁷

The most extreme of these cases focused upon a destitute family and its dealings with the NSPCC inspector Michael McDonagh.²¹⁸ The remaining cases which were covered include eleven animals wandering from a farm, two men prosecuted for failing to pay for the trespass of their goats on the Earl of Ossory's private lands,²¹⁹ applications for licence transfers, lighting offences and the filling of examination orders. In the same six month period, the following offences passed before the court without mention from the *Kilkenny People*: six children were committed to industrial schools,²²⁰ while there was one attempted rape on Walkin Street²²¹, Inspector Michael McDonagh stood as witness when Claire Connolly was sent to prison for one month on 3 April for abandoning her daughter²²² and three days later he applied for the committal of the Claire Connolly's four year old daughter to an industrial school for eleven years on the grounds that her mother was imprisoned.²²³ On 26 April, a father was prosecuted for permitting his daughter to engage in prostitution on Lord Edward St. In addition, the man seeking carnal knowledge of the girl received a prison sentence.²²⁴ Three men were imprisoned for begging/ wandering in special court hearings within 24 hours of their arrest.²²⁵ These cases along with over one hundred others were not mentioned and they range from drunk and disorderly behaviour to assault and abusive and threatening language cases. When the press did report case in detail, offences involving the tramp class, ex- servicemen and women were presented as being an affront to the common good. In 1927, the *Kilkenny People* covered a case of quarrelling women with the headline 'Guerilla Warfare'. Likewise, a series of burglaries by three youths in Kilkenny City was described as an 'epidemic'. Press coverage of a fight between ex- servicemen and members of the civic guard in Callan received substantial coverage and

²¹⁷ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 18 January 1927, 15 March 1927, 5 April 1927.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4 January 1927.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2 April 1927.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 17 January, 1 February, 5 April 1927.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 1 March 1927.

²²² *Ibid.*, 3 April 1927.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 26 April 1927.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 7 May, 25 May 1927.

the *Kilkenny People* noted that District Justice McCann praised the civic guards for skilful use of their fists. McCann was paraphrased as follows

The art of boxing was a most important one for the Guards, especially when they met a cowardly hulk of a fellow like Sexton causing disturbance.²²⁶

The content of the local papers shows that advertising of local and national business formed the spine of the *Kilkenny People* and *The Post*. While it is not possible to ascertain if the working classes were purchasing either paper, it is clear that the majority of advertisements and reporting was not relevant to the lifestyle of the working classes. At a time of endemic poverty, the *Kilkenny People* printed pictures and accounts of E.T Keane on board the *RMS Laconia* with a detailed report of the luxuries and facilities on the ship which hundreds of families in Kilkenny City could not afford to have in their homes²²⁷. Advertising for education and schooling were also not relevant to the working classes. On 13 August 1927, the *Kilkenny People* placed the court coverage, which included a man fined for not sending his son to school, beside thirteen advertisements for private boarding schools and advertisements for gold watches and violin strings. The following schools were advertised in the *Kilkenny People*; Terenure College, Dublin, Rockwell College, Cashel, Capuchin Franciscan College, Cork, Blackrock College, Dublin and Mount Bellow Agricultural College, Galway.²²⁸ In contrast to this, the only schools mentioned for the working class in the *Kilkenny People* or *The Post* were St Patrick's Industrial School, Kilkenny, St Joseph's Industrial School, Kilkenny, St Dominick's Industrial School, Waterford and Artane Industrial School, Dublin.

Accounts of poverty in Kilkenny indicate that the labouring class in Kilkenny were conditioned to accept their circumstances and the local standards of employment and poor education essentially nullified the opportunity for upward social mobility for labouring men and woman. In 1922, John Patrick Dunne framed the perception of unemployment in Irish Society. Dunne asserted that

In order to treat the matter scientifically we would need to distinguish between *temporary* poverty and *permanent* destitution—temporary poverty being mainly the result of sickness or unemployment, while permanent destitution is chiefly due to infirmity, old age or widowhood....Temporary poverty, caused by unemployment, will first engage our attention, and no solution, no matter how divergent from present-day systems, should be ignored, in order to arrive

²²⁶ *Kilkenny People*, 13 August 1927.

²²⁷ *Kilkenny People*, 27 April 1927.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 13 August 1927.

at such a permanent organisation of industry as would enable, all workers to enter into those avenues of employment which would afford them a regular wage income sufficient to provide for themselves and their dependents, so as to enable them to live a life of at least simple happiness, due to all creatures made in the image of God.²²⁹

Long term unemployment in Kilkenny would have increased the potential for individuals and families to be reduced to destitute circumstances in Kilkenny and the 1926 census reveals that 17, 869 women and 4, 548 men were listed in the 1926 census as not having gainful employment.²³⁰ In this regard, 22,447 people (31 per cent) out of a population of 70, 990 had no income and were categorised as being temporarily poor. By year's end 1934, there were 6,229 unemployment insurance books in use in Kilkenny: in essence, these figures represent thousands of individuals and families suffering from unemployment notwithstanding the unknown number of men who emigrated in search of employment. While there are no statistics of individuals who were of no fixed abode, it is clear from Kilkenny District Court that men and woman who had no permanent residence were living in outright destitution. In addition to these figures, the primary occupation of working women in Kilkenny was domestic service with 1619 women employed as servants living in and 669 were employed as servants living out. Catriona Clear notes that

The largest single group of females gainfully occupied in the 1926 and 1936 were assisting relatives on farms, and these also made up the majority of women in agriculture.²³¹

In County Kilkenny, the 1926 census reveals that there were 1,282 farmers daughters assisting in farm work. Working class women were primarily occupied in by land owning families, middle class Protestants and large Catholic farming families. For example, five of the Prior Wandesfordes ten servants were Catholics and were all women. Likewise, Ernestine McCreery, the NSPCC's Honorary Secretary, employed three servants and two of these were Catholics. Mary Healy briefly worked as a servant for the Wheeler Cuffe family and her memories present an insight into life at an NSPCC family big house. Healy makes a passing reference to Mrs Price, one of the founding members of the Women's Branch of the legion of British Ex Servicemen. Commenting on how the big house culture shaped servitude, Healy notes that

²²⁹ John Patrick Dunne, 'Poverty Problems for a Patriot Parliament', p.190.

²³⁰ Census of Population 1926: Vol.2. *Occupations*.

²³¹ Catriona Clear, *Women of the house*, p.15.

The Cuffes did a lot of entertaining, especially during the summer when tennis was played on their own court. They always had the house full of guest for the hunt ball which involved a lot extra work, as fires had to be lit in all the bedrooms, as well as the dining room and drawing room. Domestic service in those days was nothing short of slavery. ‘Yes My lady, to Lady Cuffe, Yes or No as the case might be, Sir Otway. But I must say that Sir Otway was one of nature’s gentlemen because of his position. Lady Cuffe was every inch the lady, haughty and distant in her manner. Mrs. Price was brisk and businesslike, but more approachable than Lady Cuffe.’²³²

Mary Healy revealed a cautious attitude towards the landed gentry:

The gentry of Ireland have always lived aloof from the real Irish, with a few exceptions. James Fintan Lalor described their attitude to Ireland when he wrote ‘Slaves to England and tyrants to Ireland, owning none and owned by none’. England has always been their spiritual home, not many of them take part in the social life of the community in which they live. At Leyrath, we, the staff was always nervous, for we firmly believed that it was haunted²³³

Healy’s observation that the landed gentry were not invested in the affairs of their respective communities suggest that philanthropic efforts by the Wheeler Cuffes, through their involvement with the NSPCC, went unnoticed while Healy worked for them. In a similar fashion, Healy makes reference to the British legion assisting ex-servicemen but did not refer to this voluntary work by the landed gentry as a positive investment in the community. It is evident that employment offered by the Prior Wandesfordes and the Wheeler Cuffes to Catholics was a servant-master relationship.

With thirty-one per cent of Kilkenny’s population unemployed, it is clear that temporary poverty was the primary social concern for the poor in Kilkenny City. The main bi-product of temporary poverty which expressed the difficulties experienced by the unemployed was criminality. The relationship between crime and poverty was revealed in the District Court in cases where defendants were committing crimes of necessity. The record of individuals convicted of larceny offers an insight into the motivation of theft and in Kilkenny larceny was a product of poverty. Of the 326 individuals who were convicted of stealing from local shops and family homes, twenty-seven per cent committed the offence in the months of November and December.²³⁴ The record of items stolen in the city centres is an indication of the severe difficulties faced by the labouring classes. In Kilkenny, larceny was an offence which was prominent amongst those of no fixed abode. Individuals convicted

²³² Mary Healy, *For the Poor and Gentry*, p. 48.

²³³ *Ibid.*, p.49.

²³⁴ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 20 December 1927, 18 December 1934.

of theft in Kilkenny were stealing items which provided temporary relief from poverty. In his chronicling of Dublin tenement life in the 1930s, Kevin C. Kearns asserts that

Next to keeping a roof over her family's head a mother's chief concern was securing food and clothing. Most families had barely enough food for physical survival but an insufficient diet for full health. Many were seriously malnourished and real hunger was known.²³⁵

Kearns notes that 'the basic diet of Dublin's poor was deficient in essential nutrients and caloric levels. For breakfast it consisted, in some combination, of tea, cocoa, bread, margarine, jam and porridge'.²³⁶ There is evidence in Kilkenny which indicates that the poorest individuals in the city were stealing the basic dietary and clothing requirements. In a special sitting of Kilkenny District Court on 27 August 1927, the minute book recorded the following:

'Nora Murphy²³⁷, no fixed abode, defendant is charged that on the 26th August 1927 at Vicar St she did unlawfully steal, take and carry away 4lbs of sugar 4lbs of tea and six boxes of matches the property of John Larkin.²³⁸ Defendant is highly convicted and therefore ordered to be imprisoned in Waterford prison for one month with hard labour.²³⁹

The Justice Minute Book indicates that labouring men and woman stole umbrellas, coats and children's cloths to alleviate the harshness of poverty. In Kilkenny District Court, the following cases were recorded: on 10 June 1927, 'Sarah Malone²⁴⁰, no fixed abode, at High Street Kilkenny, the said defendant did unlawfully steal take and carry away one umbrella for about 1 pound the property of Kittie Feehan and received three months in Waterford Prison without hard labour'.²⁴¹ Likewise, 'Kate Dugan, no fixed abode, on the first day of August 1927 did unlawfully steal, take and carry away three shirts and one collar valued at 12 shillings 5 pence the property of Anne Hughes. Defendant is also charged that on the 1 August, she did unlawfully receive three shirts and one collar knowing them to be stolen.²⁴² The decision of the court was recorded as follows

²³⁵ Kevin C. Kearns, *Dublin Tenement Life*, pp 32-33.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p 33.

²³⁷ This is a pseudonym.

²³⁸ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 27 August 1927.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ This is a pseudonym.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 10 June 1927.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 2 August 1927.

In the charge of Larceny the court being of the opinion that the facts constitute a minor offence fit to be tried economically. The accused is heavily convicted and therefore ordered to be imprisoned in Waterford Prison for four calendar months with hard labour.²⁴³

Kearns notes that children held a place in securing food for tenement families noting that

Mothers had strategies for converting their few shillings into the maximum amount of food. Buying butchers scraps and inferior meat parings which were about to spoil was a common practice. And children were regularly sent down to the local bakery to buy stale bread. Most tenement neighbourhood also had a charitable stew house or soup kitchen to which the people could turn when food was especially scarce. To save their pride, mothers often dispatched their children on such missions.²⁴⁴

The record in Kilkenny shows that a small number of children were brought to court charged with stealing small amounts of money and food, while there is no reason given as to motivation of children to steal, it may have been the case that they were trying to provide for their families or simply providing for their own immediate needs. On 17 October 1927, Kathleen Lawlor stole a pig worth £1, the property of William Dunne.²⁴⁵ Likewise, on 17 May 1928, Michael O'Hara was charged with breaking and entering the dwelling place of Very Rev John Percy Phain, and did steal take and carry away £6 in cash and a number of other items including cigarettes and other personal items.²⁴⁶

As seen in the above examples, beyond the personal choice to engage in theft, poverty and homelessness would have been an underlying motivation for the defendants in question. During the period 1927-1930, fourteen homeless individuals were imprisoned for begging on the public street. The minute book records that begging offences became a rarity following 1930 and this may have been a result of a combination of stern sentencing and work by philanthropies in Kilkenny City. In 1921, the Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, Thomas Molony, made enlightened suggestions about the role poverty plays on the development of crime and how to best treat crime which grew out of poverty. Molony stated that

It will be found that four great methods of preventing crime are (<a) to provide the worker with a decent and comfortable home: (b) to encourage temperance: (V) to adopt means for securing regular work: (d) to provide reasonable opportunities for recreation.²⁴⁷

²⁴³ Ibid., 2 August 1927

²⁴⁴ Kevin Kearns, *Dublin Tenements*, p. 32.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 17 October 1927.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 17 May 1927.

²⁴⁷ Thomas Molony, 'The Prevention and Punishment of Crime', p.120.

Chief Justice Molony established that the crime was a symptom of the struggles of the working classes in Ireland and considering the high unemployment in Kilkenny, Molony's four points will be addressed in the Kilkenny context. On the issue of housing and its association with crime, Molony asserted:

The relation between bad housing and crime has perhaps not been sufficiently considered, but it is well known to every person who is engaged in the administration of the criminal law. Where, as in Dublin, 21,113 families occupy single room tenements, and 13,087 families occupy two room tenements, it is impossible to expect that there can be any real comfort or decency²⁴⁸

Housing in Kilkenny City

The 1926 census shows that in County Kilkenny 836 people living in private families lived in homes with one room,²⁴⁹ 7,499 persons in private families occupied homes with two rooms²⁵⁰, 13,135 persons in private families living in a house with three rooms²⁵¹. In this context, 21, 470 people, thirty per cent, of a population of 70, 990 were living in crowded housing. Those appearing before Kilkenny District Court from working class backgrounds lived in Kilkenny City and less frequently defendants resided in Callan and Thomastown. In this regard, it is important to consider housing conditions in Kilkenny's towns. The 1926 census indicates that in Kilkenny's urban districts, 806 people living in private families shared a room with another person, 803 people were living in a room with two people, 667 people were living in housing with three people per room and 357 people living in private families had four or more people living in one room.

Marilyn Silverman's account of labouring families and class divisions in Thomastown states that the physical appearance of a house was a reflection of the character of its occupants. Silverman notes that respect towards material items and property was a measure of appropriate class behaviour:

respectability in relation to goods generally means owning, and taking care of a house. However, because, objectively, this is not possible for all people, a concern with personal appearance, a garden in front of rental accommodation, tasty soda- bread combine as acceptable substitutes.²⁵²

²⁴⁸ Ibid., p.120.

²⁴⁹ Census of Population 1926: Vol.4, *Housing* (Dublin, 1929)

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Marilyn Silverman, 'A Labouring Man's daughter: Constructing responsibility in South Kilkenny', in Chris Curtin, Thomas M. Willison, (eds.), *Ireland From Below, Social Change and Local Communities*. (Galway, 1987), p.114.

The Post reported on a meeting of Kilkenny Corporation in the 1930s which supports Silverman's claim regarding the importance of a neatly kept garden. In April 1933, Mr Cole, a member of Kilkenny Corporation was walking to a corporation meeting when, as *The Post* noted, he was approached by 'one of the most influential clergyman in the city' who wished to raise a housing issue with him.²⁵³The issue at hand involved a single man who was living in a corporation house which he had obtained on the grounds that he would soon marry.²⁵⁴ *The Post* noted

The clergyman went the length of saying that the corporation was more or less responsible in the matter - in fact the word 'corruption' was used - for allowing a single man to be living in a house like that.²⁵⁵

The reporting of the issue noted that the clergyman noticed the house because 'one of the flower gardens in front of one of the corporation houses there being in a neglected condition and quite different from the other gardens'.²⁵⁶ The neglect of a garden was a sufficient reason for Kilkenny Corporation to debate the role of single men occupying corporation housing with the Mayor asserting 'it is unfair to have a house sublet by an unmarried man, while you have men with wives and families looking for houses'.²⁵⁷The corporation passed an ultimatum that the tenant 'get married or get out'.²⁵⁸ While it was an imperative that the corporation support families seeking proper housing, the record in this case establishes that a local priest influenced the corporation to remove a single man on the grounds that he delayed getting married. This incident is a rare example of a priest intervening in local authority affairs and is evidence that the clergy were involved in individual personal situations within the city.

In 1935, Kilkenny Borough had an infant mortality rate of 110 per thousand: this figure ranked Kilkenny Borough as having the second highest rate of infant mortality in the Free State in 1935. According to the Minister for Local Government and Public Health, Sean T.Ó Ceallaigh,

the greater mortality among infants was chiefly due to congenital defects and to outbreaks of diarrhoea... and enteritis and incidence of diarrhoea and enteritis which is difficult to control in hot, dry weather, especially in the tenement areas.²⁵⁹

²⁵³ *The Post*, 13 April 1933.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 13 April 1933.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 13 April 1933.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 13 April 1933.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 13 April 1933.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 13 April 1933.

²⁵⁹ Dáil Éireann Debate, Volume 66, Col. 335. 7 April 1937.

Mary Healy's account of her childhood in a working class family sheds light on infectious diseases in Kilkenny City: Healy noted that her family had a dry lavatory in a yard at the back of their house. She asserts that

at the end of the garden there was a sandpit, from which the Corporation drew sand. Leading down to the sandpit from our garden was an incline and down this incline the contents of the bucket from the lavatory was thrown. My Brother paddy always helped my mother to carry the bucket...This excrement was never covered, so it wasn't any wonder that infectious diseases were rampant, noticeably diphtheria and scarlet fever.²⁶⁰

Kevin Kearns, in the Dublin context, argues that sanitation and health were serious concerns for tenement families, and observed that

contagious diseases naturally spread like wildfire amid such congestion. Tuberculosis sometimes wiped out entire families. Sickness and premature death were an accepted part of life in the tenements. In fact, most families suffered the loss of one or more children before they reached the age of six. Many people simply lacked the strength to resist sickness.²⁶¹

This indication of poor sanitary conditions shows that housing was certainly an issue which was worthy of public debate. However, with the exception of occasional references to housing by Kilkenny Corporation, the public debate over housing was mute during the 1930s. In 1940, James Deeny read a paper to the Statistical and Social Enquiry Society which directly addressed how poverty was a cause of ill health. Four years prior to his appointment as Chief Medical Adviser to the Department of Local Government and Public Health, Deeny stated:

It is apparent that unemployment is largely responsible and that the amount received as unemployment pay is insufficient to provide for their needs. Among the poorer women the amounts spent on milk, meat and eggs considered in association with the symptoms of vitamin deficiency displayed, makes it plain that their diets do not contain sufficient protective foodstuffs. This leads to an increased incidence of sickness. Deficiency of iron in the diet and the loss of blood at frequent confinements is probably responsible for the anaemia. The most serious clinical condition found was the marked anaemia of the poorer woman. The greater prevalence of many conditions definitely due to malnutrition in the poorer groups and their improvement with

²⁶⁰ Mary Healy, *For the Poor and the Gentry*, p.3.

²⁶¹ Kevin Kearns, *Dublin Tenements*, p. 12.

increased income shows plainly that malnutrition caused by poverty is the cause of their ill health.²⁶²

James Patrick Dunne, when addressing temporary poverty, included ill-health as an issue affecting unemployment patterns amongst the working classes. Dunne stated that ‘the secondary cause of *temporary poverty* may be ascribed to illness, which deprives the bread-winner of his earning powers and leaves him and dependents destitute of the means of subsistence’²⁶³

The minute book of Kilkenny Corporation indicates that poor housing and sanitation issues were constant problems during the 1920s and 1930s with residents of Callan Road and Walkin Street seeking assistance from the county surveyor to repair their homes. Under the heading, ‘Ex-Servicemen’s Claims’, a resident of Lord Edward Street made reference to a motion brought before Kilkenny Corporation by Alderman Jackman to appoint a man to oversee the maintenance and upkeep of the city’s public lavatories. The author of the letter described these facilities as ‘a disgrace to any town or city in Ireland in the manner in which they are kept’. In terms of sanitation and health in Kilkenny City, such claims reveal that dereliction was a common problem for individuals reliant on public facilities. In addition, Kilkenny Corporation identified Chapel Lane as a site of consistent illegal dumping of waste by residents in the area. In April 1933, thirty four ratepayers from Walkin Street penned a letter to Kilkenny Corporation which highlighted that unsanitary conditions were a longstanding concern for families on Walkin Street:

we, the undersigned residents and ratepayers in Upper Walkin Street, desire to direct your attention to what we feel and what we know you will admit is a great grievance, and that is the want of sanitary accommodation in this district. We think the time is opportune to put this matter before you seeing that the laying down of a drain from New Street Corner to St Rioch’s graveyard is at present in hands. An extension of only about 150 or 200 yards, and it would serve roughly about 100 homes, the majority of which at the present time are without any sanitary convenience whatever, not even an earth closet.²⁶⁴

One of the most controversial housing issues in Kilkenny during the period under review was the 1934 Poyntz Lane housing collapse in which two children were killed. Such an incident brought the issue of working class housing to the fore in Kilkenny outside of election campaign rhetoric.

²⁶² James Deeny, ‘Poverty as a Cause of Ill-Health’ in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Enquiry Society of Ireland*, Vol. XVI No. 3, 1939/1940, p.84.

²⁶³ John Patrick Dunne, ‘Poverty Problems’, p.194.

²⁶⁴ *The Post*, 13 April 1933.

A letter to the editor of the *The Post* signed by ‘Condemned Shack’ regarding the nature of housing on a neighbouring lane, Garden Row, illuminated the detrimental conditions in which families were living in the city. The issue of structurally unsafe housing conditions was not unique to Kilkenny, nor was the issue of house collapses. Commenting on tenement housing in Dublin, Kevin Kearns notes:

The arthritic, brittle brick buildings could collapse without warning. In fact, many of the houses were so structurally feeble that it was feared that any efforts to make repairs or install water pipes might cause their downfall...several tragic tenement collapse occurred early in the century. In 1902, a three- story tenement house suddenly gave away and ‘buried two families’²⁶⁵

Given that Garden Row was characterised by a high crime rate, the assertions in the letter reveal a great deal about the context in which crimes such as larceny and assault were being committed. Principally, the author made reference to the fact that Kilkenny Corporation identified that in the period preceding the collapse, the housing conditions at Garden Row were dilapidated to the point where immediate demolition was necessary to prevent further suffering or loss of life.²⁶⁶ As the corporation passed a motion of sympathy to the families of the deceased and injured in Poyntz Lane, Labour Party Alderman, James Pattison, took the opportunity to speak about how poor housing had implications which extended beyond personal safety, Pattison argued that

many people had visited the grief stricken families and were surprised at the condition under which these people were forced to live. The Bishop Most Rev. Dr Collier and the clergy and people of all sections of community had gone to extend their sympathy. Could they expect young people or children living in under such circumstances to be imbued with any sense of citizenship or a decent moral outlook? It was only almighty God that was saving the morals of the people who were housed like the people living in the shacks in Garden Row²⁶⁷

Alderman Pattison asked if poor housing and cyclical poverty influenced disaffection in a similar fashion to Thomas Molony. Alderman Pattison questioned how citizenship could flourish in a neighbourhood which was home to such disaffection. The only noted case of brothel ownership before the District Court in Kilkenny concerned Garden Row. In 1928, Stephen Kelly²⁶⁸ was charged and

²⁶⁵ Kevin Kearns, *Dublin Tenements*, P. 9.

²⁶⁶ *The Post*, 13 April 1933.

²⁶⁷ *The Post*, 18 May 1934.

²⁶⁸ This is a pseudonym.

convicted for brothel ownership at his house in Garden Row and was charged and convicted or unlawfully obtaining for immoral purposes one girl aged over sixteen and under eighteen.²⁶⁹

One month after the Poyntz Lane tragedy, Bishop Collier issued his Lenten Pastoral entitled *The Catholic Home*. When one considers the concerns raised by Alderman Pattison regarding the detrimental impact housing had on the morality of citizens of Garden Row and Poyntz Lane, Dr Collier's pastoral on the Catholic home can be seen as spiritual guidance to the working classes in light of Alderman Pattison's concerns. Dr Collier's pastoral on spiritual and moral homes was the lead story in the *Kilkenny People* on 21 February 1934 but did not address the physical condition of housing or living conditions of the inhabitants. Like the *Pastoral on the Vice of Injustice*, Dr Collier underscored the need for a rigid sense in right and wrong. In this instance, the importance of pure and decent homes steeped in Catholic tradition and strong moral direction. Described as the 'last and strongest defence of faith and morality',²⁷⁰ the Catholic home was, in the bishop's view, the incubator of Irish morality and if it failed, the decay of society could be traced back to such a failing. In 1934, the Catholic Church identified broken homes and alcohol as the enemies of the working classes rather than derelict housing. These targets were selected without any examination of the circumstances which dissolved homes or caused alcohol abuse. In a similar fashion to Coadjutor Bishop Downey's *Pastoral on the Vice of Injustice*, Dr Collier never mentioned unemployment and poverty once in his pastoral. Rather than draw the links between poverty and disaffection, the Catholic Church held up the vulnerable as a target for public scrutiny. The only distinctions regarding class by the bishop focuses on the working and 'servant class', commenting on the vulnerable, Dr Collier asserted:

For some time the Bishops and Clergy have reason to be fearful for the morality and the good name of the part of the working and servant classes. They have great dangers and not always of their own making but I greatly fear their moral standards have been much lowered. I do not think they avail of the spiritual help of the Sodality and Sacraments as they should. The servants and working class should have a special share in the sanctification of the home. They are bound to make an effort to live as the family. And masters and mistresses are warned to see of this, and give them every opportunity for their religious duties.²⁷¹

Dr Collier referred to the other dangers impacting the poor but never expanded upon them and this was evidence that the Bishop of Ossory was not ignorant to the poverty problem in his diocese. Given the class terminology used, Dr. Collier's call for masters and mistresses to supervise the morality of the working classes reaffirms Silverman's claims of the employer-employee tie charity

²⁶⁹ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 6 April 1926.

²⁷⁰ *Kilkenny People*, 21 February 1934.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 21 February 1934.

model. Throughout the period of investigation, Catholic clergy in Kilkenny linked the decline of morality in the community to issues which predominantly affected the working classes. Commenting on the duties of parent in the home, Dr Collier stated:

It may be safely said that all important duties of parents are fulfilled in the earnest sanctification of the home. And the Catholic Home must be the willing and ready helper of the church in securing this ideal.²⁷²

Dr Collier countered Alderman Pattinson's claims about inhibited spirituality as follows:

It seems to me from long consideration and some experience that the Catholic home suffers from two grave defects owing to which all attempts at sanctification are gravely impeded, and work is gradually thrown up. The first need is a simple time table, or definite hours by the clock, to regulate the time for prayer in the home. The second rule is a simple plan for the home prayers.²⁷³

In 1934, Alderman Pattison and Dr Collier focused on housing conditions and the spiritual nature of the family home. While the Catholic Church in the diocese clearly outlined its stance on the family home, the accuracy of political rhetoric on housing is difficult to ascertain. When politicians did mention the issues of the working classes in public speeches, it is clear that an unquantifiable amount of people were living in conditions which placed their children at risk. On 21 May 1930, Fianna Fáil Senator Joseph Connolly (Belfast) addressed the electorate in the Town Hall with a speech entitled 'Common Wealth or Common Poverty'. Present at the event were future Minister for Education, Deputy Thomas Derrig, and Alderman P. Bryan. The discourse of all three men focussed on the impact of poverty in the country and indicated that the prevailing division between rich and poor was a point of discussion. Bryan was first to address the crowd and instantly discussed the issue of unemployment and its impact in Kilkenny City. Utilising the central theme of Senator Connolly's address, *The Post* reported the following insightful comments.

... Every day they read in the papers about those grand and fine ministers of the Free State Government: they saw these ministers going off with their nice cut coats and white gloves, indulging in luxuries at the expense of the ratepayers of the 26 counties. Certainly that was happiness and nobody could deny it. If they around the city, at the street corners, they saw every

²⁷² Ibid., 21 February 1934.

²⁷³ Ibid., 21 February 1934.

day unfortunate workers standing idle, and willing perhaps to work for very little in order to bring home money to support their poor dying children.²⁷⁴

The speech by Senator Connolly's embodied the issues of recreation and regular employment as raised by Chief Justice Thomas Molony nine years prior, Alderman Bryan noted that

at each house they visited during their canvas poor woman and partly naked people came to them asking if they could manage to get them a day's work. While they had such conditions prevailing they had men getting up on public boards and platforms telling people there was prosperity in the city'.²⁷⁵

Determining how influential physical housing was on the influence of the poor is hard to quantify, however, the District Court record indicates that during the period 1927-1934, 126 individuals were brought before the court charged with the refusing to vacate a dwelling where rent was in arrears. The following recording from 1927 shows the cost of rent and standard recording of the court in such a case:

Claire Malone²⁷⁶, 21 John Street. You, the said defendant neglected or refused to quit and deliver up to the complainant on the due termination of your tenancy, by legal notice to quit, the quiet and peaceable possession of all that and those a house and premises situate at 21 John Street. Owes monthly rent of thirty six shillings, decree for possession, warrant to be executed under theft, warrant not to be issued until 30 days expire.²⁷⁷

The rent in this case was nine shillings per week and for unknown reasons, the defendant was not in a position to pay her rent. The 1911 census shows that Claire Malone mother used 21 John Street as a boarding house and on the night of the census two boarders resided in their house.²⁷⁸ In 1927, Claire's mother would have been deceased and unless Mary married, it is likely that she was left to run the business by herself.

Bad Company as an influencing factor in crime

One of the major issues regarding poor housing and the working classes was that the grouping of poor families, particularly in Garden Row, Walkin Street and Callan Road, created the problem of

²⁷⁴ *The Post*, 21 May 1930.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 21 May 1930.

²⁷⁶ This is a pseudonym.

²⁷⁷ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 1 February 1927.

²⁷⁸ Census of Population 1911: Household Returns.

internal tension and habitual crime. Chief Justice Molony, in 1921, quoted Rev. H. Litsom Elliott, M.A, when he asserted that

bad company is the master-cause of crime, especially of that which is most serious in a social point of view. The great majority of professional thieves have been engaged in criminal career almost from infancy, and have originally fallen, not from the promptings of hunger, nor from any special dishonesty, nor from any peculiar moral obliquity, but simply from the influence of bad example, or it may be from direct instruction in crime at an age when they were scarcely capable of discerning between their right hand and their left.²⁷⁹

In addition, Molony argued that

While we thus see that bad company and drink and, in a much less degree, poverty are the great causes of crime, we should never lose sight of the fact that heredity is responsible for making many yield to the temptations of crime, who, if they were normally healthy in mind and body, would have the power and will to withstand temptation²⁸⁰

As this study is only focused on one decade, addressing habitual criminality is difficult to gauge, that being said, the origin of juvenile crime in Kilkenny can be addressed to provide a context to manner in which children broke the law. In Kilkenny, bad company presented itself in the form of family feuds, cases of assault of and abusive and threatening language. The issue of local tension found itself in the district court and the following case are an example working class families appearing before the court charged with offences which can be directly traced to class. In 1927, Kilkenny District Court heard thirty-seven cases of abusive and threatening behaviour. This figure represents nine per cent of the cases which appeared before Justice Molloy. Likewise, in 1928, the District Court heard thirty-eight cases of abusive and threatening language. During this two year period, two families on Walkin Street and Callan Road were engaged in a feud which primarily involved the woman of each family.

Temperance in Kilkenny

The point of discussion raised by Chief Justice Molony on the cause and prevention of crime was the promotion of temperance in society. Molony made the following remarks about temperance and linked the work of the clergy with the temperance cause

²⁷⁹ Thomas Molony, 'Prevention and Punishment', p.118.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*,p.119.

The subject of temperance presents a much brighter prospect. For over ten years the efforts of the clergy of all denominations, and other social reformers, to promote temperance have met with a very gratifying success. In 1907 there were in Ireland 76,860 convictions for drunkenness; in five years afterwards (1912) the convictions had fallen to 63,623, and in another five years (1917) they had fallen to 24,788. The reduction has been still greater since, but I do not lay stress upon this reduction, as" to some, and perhaps to a great extent it may be attributed to the increase in the price of alcoholic liquor.²⁸¹

Diarmaid Ferriter's study of the Pioneer Movement in Ireland presents a movement which was spearheaded by the religious and middle classes in an attempt to safeguard the spiritual and social ideals of Irish society. Following the same ethos as the NSPCC, the pioneers took preventive measures against alcohol in the hope of stemming the prevalence of alcohol consumption amongst the working classes. Ferriter's examination of the founding of the Temperance Movement by Fr. James Cullen addresses the issue of the social implications of drink on society:

Cullen referred to the drink issue in its class context. Many contemporary Jesuits tended to groom and educate a middle class in perpetration for future leadership roles, but Cullen was more intent on highlighting miserable slum conditions and the amount of money being spent on drink that could have been used so productively if spent on physical and moral improvement. He continually contended that that the majority of crime in Ireland was drink induced and he decried that there was no native industry in the country other than drink.²⁸²

In the Kilkenny context, drunk and disorderly offences amounted to an average of nine per cent of all crime heard before Justice Molloy in Kilkenny District Court during the 1920s and 1930s. It is worth noting that the Smithwick's brewery was located behind the courthouse on Parliament Street. During the period January 1927- December 1934, 297 individuals were brought before the District Court for being found drunk and disorderly on the public street.²⁸³ Fair days, in particular, were occasions when drink flowed freely and the rate of drunkenness increased, with a consequent increase in the number of breaches of the law. In order to place the number of said offenders into context in 1927, fifty-three publicans applied for, and were granted, an exemption from the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors Act 1927.²⁸⁴ This exemption allowed each applicant to open his or her public

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.120.

²⁸² Diarmaid Ferriter, *A Nation of Extremes*, p. 73.

²⁸³ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 1 February 1927, 19 June 1928, 28 June 1929, 16 May 1933.

²⁸⁴ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 26 September 1927.

house between the hours of 5am and 10am on days of fairs and markets. A reading of the Justice Minute Book indicates that drunk and disorderly crime peaked in September during market days. There was at least one pub for every two hundred people in Kilkenny City during the period of study. The 1926 census shows that there was 130 men and 66 women employed as publicans in County Kilkenny. Ferriter also makes reference to Fr. Cullen's perception of the implications the alcohol had on women and states that

women were deemed worthy of more specific targeting, because it was believed alcohol had the power to do them more damage, it being completely in conflict with their temperament, not to mention tarnishing their roles as mothers. Cullen, it seemed, found nothing more soul destroying than a hysterical drunken woman.²⁸⁵

In Kilkenny, female offenders came to twenty two per cent of all drink related offences heard before the District Court during the period. There is evidence to show those women who diverged from the domestic sphere and committed crime were treated more severely by the District Justice during the 1920s and 1930s. The standard fine issued to a man found drunk and disorderly in a public place was 2s. The fines imposed on women who were found drunk and disorderly were considerably higher than those imposed on their male counterparts. In cases of drunk and disorderly behaviour where the female had a permanent address, the fine she received tended to be at least one and up to six shillings more than that for the same offence if committed by a male. To accentuate this gender divide, only two individuals were imprisoned for drunk and disorderly crime in 1927 and both were women.²⁸⁶ In 1927, the record indicates that female drunkenness and homelessness seemed to go together, since out of the eight women who were found drunk and disorderly in Kilkenny City, all were of no fixed abode. In 1928, the *Kilkenny People* covered a case involving a breach of the licensing acts in by a publican from The Rower following a GAA match. The case was heard in New Ross District Court and the District Justice clearly displayed his disgust at the defendants for trading on a Sunday. When the defendant's solicitor asked Justice Fahy for leniency given that some of the defendants found on the premises were relatives of the publican, he was met with the reply 'It was Sunday night, and what right had they to be there at that hour, not even as bona fide travellers. This is a terrible case, I think.'²⁸⁷ Justice Fahy offered no sympathy to the accused and made the following comments which emphasised the overtly negative view of the role of alcohol in the community, particularly the association of alcohol with GAA fixtures:

²⁸⁵ Diarmaid Ferriter, *A Nation of Extremes*, p.71.

²⁸⁶ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 17 September 1927, 4 October 1927.

²⁸⁷ *Kilkenny People*, May 18 1928.

The further away hurling and football matches are kept from public houses the better the GAA like it. The GAA would be better pleased if there was no public house within miles of a match...The GAA especially are trying to educate young people out of the idea of drinking on Sundays on the occasion of matches.²⁸⁸

In the Kilkenny context, the Temperance Movement was spearheaded by Fr. Andrew O' Keeffe. In 1924, Senator Peter De Loughry, Mayor of Kilkenny, attended the civic guard ball in the courthouse and Declan Dunne recalls the tensions which followed:

As mayor, (De Loughry) he was the first mentioned in the long list of guest from financial, legal and local government sectors that was published in the press. General Eoin O'Duffy, the chief commissioner, and deputy commissioner, Ned Coogan were also present. The fact that there was a bar in operation at the event drew the ire of Rev. Andrew O' Keeffe, who denounced the dance from the pulpit of St Mary's Cathedral the following Sunday.²⁸⁹

Dunne states that Fr. O'Keeffe based his criticisms on what was an apparent contradiction on behalf of the Civic Guard.

He (O'Keeffe) told the congregation that the Civic Guards had objected to licenses being granted for dances at the Desart Hall because of the noise and riotous behaviour by patrons on the streets afterwards and it was difficult to reconcile the presence of a bar at the Civic Guards Ball with the views they had expressed about Desart Hall a year previously.²⁹⁰

Diarmaid Ferriter notes that Fr. James Cullen utilised the media, particularly the *Irish Catholic* to promote the Pioneer cause and in Kilkenny it is evident that Fr. Cavanagh used the local papers to criticise alcohol in the community. In the same year that Fr. Cavanagh attacked Nixie Boran and the miners in Castlecomer, he turned his attention to Lady Desart and her application for a liquor licence for Desart Hall. In January 1932, the question of alcohol and dance halls in Kilkenny became an issue of national media attention when Fr. Cavanagh objected to a liquor license application by Lady Desart for a dance at Desart Hall due to the 'evil results that followed from the provision of drink faculties at dances'. In this instance, the future Vice-President of the NSPCC grappled with the NSPCC's Honorary Treasurer over the presence of alcohol at a particular venue in Kilkenny.

Taking into account the lack of commentary by NSPCC members on alcohol and temperance, the reporting of the drink debate by the local press in Kilkenny gives an indication of the divergent

²⁸⁸ Ibid., May 18 1928.

²⁸⁹ Declan Dunne, *Peters Key*, pp.241-242.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., p.242.

viewpoints on issue of alcohol. The extensive coverage of the court case indicates that both Lady Desart and Justice Molloy emphasised that a regulated bar facility prevented unlimited drinking by patrons of the hall who brought their own drink with them. Justice Molloy asserted that drinking done in public was open to regulation and supervision and was a better alternative to ‘drinking done in the dark’²⁹¹. The most contested argument which was made by Justice Molloy was:

Dances at which there are no legal bars are far more drunken affairs than dances at which there was a properly supervised bar. Would you be surprised that lady friends of mine who go to dances refuse to go to dance where there is no bar.²⁹²

At 12 o’clock mass on Sunday 16 January 1932, the Bishop of Ossory, Dr Collier made an appeal to Catholics to boycott dances where drink was served and spoke about the court proceedings which he felt had damaged the reputation of Kilkenny. Dr Collier told the congregation at the Cathedral that Sunday morning that

Certain statements were made in court which, if not wholly untrue were certainly exaggerations, and a picture of Kilkenny dance halls has gone forth to the world that has caused deep pain to the citizens of our Catholic town. We are asked to believe that at any dance where there is no bar the bottle will be in the hip pocket and drunk at 4 o’ clock.²⁹³

Commenting on the Catholic Church’s opposition to alcohol in independent Ireland, Diarmaid Ferriter notes how

the Church was concerned with what it saw as declining morality. The issue of alcohol abuse and the criticism of licensing laws was one such example, but this was not just a question of the Church imposing its views on the government of the day, but practical action being taken to counteract what was regarded across the religious, political and cultural spectrum as a particularly significant problem.²⁹⁴

The debate gained considerable publicity in the local press. Both the *Kilkenny People* and *The Post* presented the alcohol debate of January 1932 as a battle between conservative and liberal Ireland. *The Post* ‘declared that the matter has aroused widespread attention and has been commented on in the Irish and English press.’²⁹⁵ A letter to the *Irish Independent* from a member of the public

²⁹¹ *The Post*, 20 January 1932.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 20 January 1932.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 20 January 1932.

²⁹⁴ Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland; 1900-2000* (Dublin, 2004), p. 335.

²⁹⁵ *The Post*, 20 January 1932.

concluded with the words: ‘I am not a Kilkenny priest or a Kilkenny man, but as one of the many who are deeply interested in the coming legislation, I protest against District Justice Molloy’s deliverance in his court in Kilkenny’²⁹⁶ The *Kilkenny People* quoted the secretary of the Irish Society for the Prevention of Intemperance on the decision as being that

too many young girls have gone wrong as a result of being produced to drink at dances. All the temperance societies have painful evidence to support this statement. I’m not much interested in District Justice Molloy’s reflections on whether it is better to grant legal facilities than not, so long as there is drinking all the damage will remain.²⁹⁷

In support of Justice Molloy, ‘the director of a leading Dublin restaurant ballroom’ said that he supports the judge and that comments by the clergy were grossly exaggerated.

As for reports of the prevalence of drinking among young women at dances, I have never seen any of the orgies which are talked about. My experience of the young woman of today is that she is remarkably temperate in her habits.²⁹⁸

When addressing the expansion of the Pioneer Movement in Ireland, Ferriter notes that that the Sisters of Charity played a role in growth of movement noting that the Sisters had enrolled 1,200 members into the movement while Fr. Cullen was on a year’s mission to South Africa in 1899. In terms of the relationship between voluntary charity in Kilkenny and the Sisters of Charity, the following insight from Ferriter on the founding strategy used by Fr. Cullen reveals how religious orders encouraged Temperance

Cullen also relied heavily on the convents (and female religious orders) , not only to inculcate a new generation of Irish women with temperance views, but also because of their influence on the wider drinking community. The Annals of the Sisters of Charity reveal for example, not just the work done by individual convents in instilling temperance through sodalities and retreats and Pioneer recruitment, but that also that many ‘many wives and mothers appeal to the Sisters to use their influence with husbands or sons.’²⁹⁹

There is no evidence to indicate that the Sisters of Charity were active promoters of temperance in Kilkenny City. However, Ferriter indicates that the Sisters of Charity, like the NSPCC, offered a personal service to mothers in need of supporting their homes on issues regarding alcohol. In Kilkenny City, the Sister of Charity managed both of the city’s industrial schools and it is clear that

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 20 January 1932.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 20 January 1932.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 20 January 1932.

²⁹⁹ Diarmaid Ferriter, *Nation of Extremes*, p.72.

the NSPCC sent children ninety per cent of the children then committed to St Patrick's and St Joseph's Industrial Schools. It is impossible to ascertain if the NSPCC, St Vincent De Paul Society and the Sisters of Charity were working in unison on alcohol abuse within the family, however, it is worth noting this role of the religious orders when addressing the committal of children to industrial schools in Kilkenny City.

The relationship between Unemployment and Crime

The third aspect of Chief Justice Molony's approach to curbing crime was securing employment for the working classes. Unemployment and crime were framed by Molony as a social crisis which derived from working class communities:

It is, however, clear that every period of depression and unemployment leaves its mark to some extent on the criminal calendar, and that consequently every effort should be made to provide regular and continuous employment for the working class population. So far as Ireland is concerned, it is, I think, due to the working classes to say that, as a rule, they go through periods of unemployment with a patience and resignation worthy of the highest praise, and it is only when goaded to desperation by suffering that they break through the restraints imposed by law.³⁰⁰

In Kilkenny City, with high unemployment and a lack of skilled workers, the opportunities for working class men and women to secure meaningful employment during the 1930s were scarce. The 1926 census gives an indication of the industries which employed high numbers of working class men. In 1926, 5,109 men were employed as farm labourers,³⁰¹ 329 men were employed in the manufacture of apparel and textiles,³⁰² 520 men were working in the wood and furniture manufacturing,³⁰³ 650 men were employed as metal workers,³⁰⁴ 137 men were employed as builder's labourers³⁰⁵. In addition, 613 men were employed by Kilkenny Corporation on construction projects.³⁰⁶ The census figures recording in 1926 indicate that 15,140 men and 3,303 women were employed in agriculture.³⁰⁷ In essence, the primary industry in Kilkenny was agriculture and the employment afforded to the working classes in this sector would have been general labourer's positions with low wages. The fragility of employment for the working classes in Kilkenny was

³⁰⁰ Thomas Molony, 'Prevention and Punishment of Crime', p.121.

³⁰¹ Census of Population 1926: Vol.2. *Occupations*.

³⁰² *Ibid.*

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

brought before the Dail twelve months after the 1926 census was recorded. Deputy Peter De Loughry, a former mayor of Kilkenny, asked question in the Dáil on 4 November 1927 which revealed the difficulties experienced in Kilkenny City:

Mr. De Loughry asked the Minister for Local Government and Public Health whether he is aware that the County Surveyor of Kilkenny County Council has reported to that Council that by December 1st next, 607 road workers will be dis-employed owing to the completion of a number of special works, and further, that a larger number of men in the city of Kilkenny who usually find employment in the city on the roads, have been unemployed for some time, and to ask that when the vote for relief schemes is being allocated the above facts are taken into consideration.³⁰⁸

Pat Feeley's work chronicling the labour movement in Castlecomer and the surrounding parishes of Clogh and Moneenroe provides social narrative on conditions for labourers in rural Kilkenny in the 1930s. Feeley argues that in August 1932

thirty road workers in the Castlecomer area approached one of the Council engineers and demanded work. After heated exchanges four of them were employed. A week later there was a meeting at Moneenroe to discuss favouritism whereby men with large families were denied work in favour of big farmers. It was decided to send a deputation to meet the county surveyor, Mr. Bowen. The county surveyor met them and said that married men with families were to get first preference, followed by single men with dependants, and that he was not in favour of farmers being given road work.³⁰⁹

A debate held by the Social and Statistical Enquiry Society in 1945 delved deeply into the subject of unemployment in Ireland and the first speaker, Mr P Lynch, framed the problem as follows:

Industrial fluctuations have affected us to some extent, but I would suggest that in a country which is so predominantly agricultural as this, it is not so much a matter of industrial fluctuations as of chronic underinvestment. In industry, and more so in agriculture, this country's unemployment has been due, not so much to fluctuations in the economy as to underinvestment.³¹⁰

³⁰⁸ Dáil Éireann Debate, Vol. 21 No. 94 November 1927.

³⁰⁹ Pat Feeley, 'The Castlecomer Mine', p.40.

³¹⁰ P. Lynch, T.K. Whitaker, et al. 'Discussion on the problem of full employment', in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, Vol. XVII, Part 3, 1945/1946, p. 438.

The above comments echoed a study done by Stanley Lyon on the statistical nature of unemployment evident in the 1936 census which was also read before the Social and Statistical Enquiry Society. Lyon stated that

half of the occupied population is engaged in agriculture, and two thirds of the employers, three-fourths of the persons working on their own account, nearly all the relatives assisting, but only one-fifth of the employees at work and the unemployed are agriculturists. In the average case unemployment is probably less severe for the agricultural labourer than for the town worker³¹¹

On 10 December 1930, questions were raised in the Dail which indicated that agricultural communities in Kilkenny in the smaller town and districts were experiencing difficulties similar to urban labours:

Mr. Davin (for Mr. E. Doyle) asked the Minister for Local Government and Public Health if he can state how the Relief Schemes Vote will be expended in towns and villages where no schemes are or are about to be put forward for the relief of unemployment, and whether, in view of the fact that most towns in the counties of Carlow and Kilkenny are not urbanised, and that depression in agricultural conditions are so evident, he can state how he intends to expedite matters with a view to relieving the unemployed problem in those districts.³¹²

When addressing industry in Kilkenny and the relevant employment opportunities for working class men, the work of Lady Desart and Captain Cuffe in revitalising Kilkenny's traditional industries at the beginning of the 20th century provides further evidence of NSPCC personnel providing employment in Kilkenny. Kilkenny Woollen Mills and Kilkenny Woodworkers were founded in 1904 and 1905 and both Lady Desart and Captain Cuffe and Kilkenny Archaeological Society note that

In the year 1904 lay the ruins of an old mill Lady Desart states that tradition had it that this old mill was once one of Ireland's best known woollen mills, but with the decay of the Irish Woollen Industry it had been turned into a wheaten starch mill. That industry too failed and now nothing remained of the structure but a few gaunt walls. She says it was the sight of this ruined mill that first gave Captain Cuffe the idea of restoring the woollen industry in Kilkenny.³¹³

³¹¹ Stanley Lyon, 'Symposium on Irish social services: unemployment—the statistical background', in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, Vol. XVII No. 1, 1942/1943, p.121.

³¹² Dáil Éireann, Vol. 36 No. 9, Col. 1053, 10 December 1930.

³¹³ J.McAdams, *Ellen, Countess of Desart and Captain Cuffe*, p.13.

The establishment of the Kilkenny Woodworkers Ltd was the result of Lady Desart and Captain Cuffe supporting newly graduated men of a woodworking class in a local Technical School who, despite their education and skills, lacked capital to support their woodworker's guild. Captain Cuffe's support saw the woodworkers move into a premises on Patrick Street and Kilkenny Archaeological Society note that a shop was also opened on Nassau St., Dublin in November 1906 for the sale of furniture from the factory.

When addressing unemployment amongst the labouring classes in Kilkenny, the struggle of ex-servicemen to adapt smoothly back into the workforce is further evidence of the barriers which faced those seeking employment. The struggle of ex-servicemen was evident in a letter to the editor of the *Kilkenny People* seventeen days after Deputy De Loughry voiced his concerns on unemployment in the Dail. The anonymous author expressed his resentment towards Protestant Bishops and the lack of support for ex servicemen following their service

Sir, - permit me to endorse the tribute paid to the Irish ex- servicemen by the right Rev. Dr Day, [Church of Ireland] Bishop of Ossory in his sermon as reported in your sermon of the 19th inst. At the same time on cannot help thinking that if the Protestant Bishops and clergy displayed anything like the same zeal, now, as they did in obtaining recruits for the cannon fodder during the great war, the interest of the survivors would be much better served. It is useless to think that a poor country like the Irish Free State, in its struggling infancy, can do much to alleviate the sufferings of these men. It is quite evident that the Irish ex-servicemen have the first claim on the British Government, and every effort should be made to bring that home to them, seeing that the greater number were volunteers, many of whom were wounded, patched up and sent back again to that *inferno* as *many* five times, chiefly owing to the fact that the supply of recruits form this country was cut off. A few parades and a few neatly turned phrases do not help the survivors very much in obtaining justice. The welfare of these men should be the first care of the British Government, seeing they, like the writer, helped so much to make the world safe for hypocrisy "One of the Disgruntled"³¹⁴

There is evidence which shows that ex-servicemen in Kilkenny felt betrayed by those who encouraged them to enlist and serve and those who represented their needs in the community. Given that ex-servicemen were consistently before the courts for larceny and drunk and disorderly crime, the criticism of Councillor Maher, a representative of Kilkenny ex- Servicemen, details the extent of the crisis faced by these families:

³¹⁴ *Kilkenny People*, 6 November 1927.

this is one of the men who represent the poorest class in Kilkenny, the ex- servicemen unemployed, and lends himself to a party of bread and butter snatchers to deprive a man of earning a living ... this is the man, one time secretary of the so called Legion Branch in Kilkenny who was to work wonders. He did, and I defy contradictions on that point, by performing the vanishing trick.³¹⁵

Recreation and the clergy in Kilkenny

The final point raised by Lord Chief Justice Molony regarding the reduction of crime was the implementation of recreational faculties for the working classes. Molony stated that

If, however, you arrange for a man's employment, it is no less a duty to provide for his recreation. In cities, no doubt, a man has many opportunities of amusement—some of which, perhaps, he might be just as well without—but in the country one cannot help noticing that the labouring man, when his day's work is over, has few opportunities of recreation or amusement...I would like to see in every parish in Ireland a village hall, conducted on sensible lines, which would give the working man reasonable opportunities of amusement, and, perhaps, of instruction.³¹⁶

Ascertaining the types of organised recreational faculties in Kilkenny City for the working classes is difficult. The obvious recreational facilities available to the working classes were the local public houses, betting and gambling, fair days and GAA matches. That said, the district court records can trace drunk and disorderly crime to the abundance of public houses and fair days which had extended drinking hours. Despite most drunken and disorderly crime taking place on Parliament Street, the only publican to have his license revoked at the request of the Civic Guard was located on Walkin Street. The coverage of lighting offences in the local press indicates that many working men were found cycling home from GAA matches without sufficient lighting on their bicycles. In terms of working class children appearing before the District Court, it is clear that street games were a cause of concern to the Civic Guard. In the period 1928- 1934, sixty-eight children from the Walkin Street area and their parents were brought before the court charged with playing handball in manner which was deemed to be dangerous to the public. In a similar fashion, Kilkenny Corporation made an appeal to children in the city to refrain from playing games on public roads in order to prevent damage or injury to persons or property. The *Kilkenny People* and *The Post* for the period show that organised recreation was for the middle classes and the landed gentry: golf, fox hunting, dances and balls were commonly reported. In particular, Lord and Lady McCalmont in Thomastown received considerable coverage of their exploits in the horse racing business. The depressing atmosphere in the courthouse

³¹⁵ *The Post*, 12 February 1930.

³¹⁶ Thomas Molony, 'Prevention and Punishment', p.121.

was noted by contemporaries when it was revamped for the Kilkenny Civic Guard Ball in 1927 and *The Kilkenny People* covered the preparation for the arrival of President Cosgrave as follows:

The work of transforming the large hall of the courthouse into an up to date ballroom has been in progress since Wednesday, and has so far, proceeded that the building has already shed most of its usual sombre appearance and taken on a new veneer of brightness... it is as certain as anything can be that Monday nights ball will be such a as to provide the maximum of enjoyment and pleasant memories for the large company that is expected to assemble there³¹⁷

The use of Kilkenny District Court for balls and civic occasions accentuated the inequality of the classes in Kilkenny as the working classes only found themselves inside the courthouse to be prosecuted, fined, and imprisoned or to watch their children be sent to industrial schools.

While recreational facilities for the working classes were limited and were conducive to drunkenness in Kilkenny, it is evident that Lady Desart and Captain Cuffe's legacy in Kilkenny extended to the cultural aspects of life in the city. McAdams argues that

Captain Cuffe was not long in establishing both personal and social contacts in the city and county. Lady Lubbock relates: what he did want to do and succeeded in doing was to get in touch with the local people, peasantry, farmers, and townsfolk.³¹⁸

Both Captain Cuffe and Lady Desart were instrumental in establishing Kilkenny Theatre and Kilkenny Archaeological Society recall how the idea came into fruition:

(Captain Cuffe) had already organised a Social Club in Sheestown and he now proceeded to start at somewhat similar club in Kilkenny for the use and benefit of the young men of the town. He secured a room, unearthed a retired drill sergeant and installed some equipment and christened the club "The Kilkenny Social and Gymnastic Club."³¹⁹

The Kilkenny Social and Gymnastic Club became so popular within the community Captain Cuffe made arrangements to expand the club and began making plans to renovate a site on Patrick Street. At some point during the expansion of the Social and Gymnastic Club, Cuffe envisioned a new recreational and cultural facility for the town.

³¹⁷. *Kilkenny People*, 18 January 1927.

³¹⁸ J. McAdams, *Ellen Countess of Desart and Captain Cuffe*, p. 11.

³¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 11.

The walls were in course of erection when the Captain was, we are told, struck with a more ambitious idea. Why not extend the walls and roof, add a stage and so provide Kilkenny not only with a building suitable for a social club, but also suitable for plays, concerts and dances- in fact a theatre.³²⁰

Lady Desart stated that the completion of the theatre, which she financed, provided the city with ‘a useful playhouse capable of seating between eight and nine hundred spectators.’ While Chief Justice Molony called for increased recreational facilities, it is clear in Kilkenny that the theatre was seen by some as an affront to Catholic values promoted by Catholic clergy. While the theatre was a useful addition to civic occasions in Kilkenny and the city’s cultural development, it was seen as corrupting agent by one particular member of the clergy. Declan Dunne notes that during a sermon at Black Abbey in 1925, Fr Coleman clearly outlined the moral dilemmas associated with social transformation:

Fr. Coleman condemned dances, the theatre and the cinema. He criticised ‘the scanty clothing of females’ and the ‘free use of intoxicants’. He said that divorce cases revealed to other classes of society a ‘world of hideous evil and shameful infamies. He complained that ‘never were theatres so widespread, never were actors and actresses so numerous’. He described the cinema as a moral danger to both adults and the young which ‘brought out the sex appeal, it gave disgraceful scenes from the orgies of the underworld, it placed a halo around daring crime and ungoverned passion.

³²¹

Fr. Coleman preceded Fr. Cavanagh in attacking Lady Desart’s role in the development of the social affairs in Kilkenny City. In addition to attacking the theatre, Fr. Coleman singled out Lady Desart for her contribution to the divorce debate in the Senate in 1925. While Lady Desart’s contributions were infrequent, her comments on divorce were an indication of her opinion on domestic affairs and the perceived importance of religious doctrine. Lady Desart contributed to the debate as follows

In the name of woman I protest against the idea that it is divorce that destroys the sanctity of the home. Surely, the law laid down 3,000 years ago by the greatest legislator, took the more sensible view of the matter. The Mosaic law, as can be read in the Bible, not only

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³²¹ Declan Dunne, *Peter’s key*, p.244.

permitted divorce but enjoined it. The law recognised that it was the seducer in the home or out of it, not the judge in court or Parliament, who breaks up the home.³²²

As the NSPCC did not offer social commentary on family disputes, the following comments by Lady Desart on divorce show that she had enlightened social views on the empowering of women:

It realised that it is the sanctity of the home far more than that of the contract that really matters; that to anchor the guilty man irremovably to the hearth he violates, or to cast the guilty woman on to the streets, cannot make for morality or for a high standard of virtue. It would be a hideous injustice to the women of this country, because, as Senator Mrs. Wyse-Power has stated, the man can go across the water and shake the dust of this country off his feet to a country where he can reacquire the freedom of which we would deprive him. The woman cannot go.³²³

Some two months after Fr. Coleman addressed the evils associated with the theatre and the cinema, he responded to Lady Desart's remarks about the necessity of divorce. Coleman responded:

The awful revelations of the divorce courts in England alone, not to speak of other countries, showed the utter absurdity of her contention. She even attempted to prove her point by quoting the sacred scriptures ... whatever the lady's private religious view might be, she certainly placed the mosaic legislation above that of Jesus Christ.³²⁴

Declan Dunne notes that the oblique reference to Lady Desart being of the Jewish faith was not the only one made by the priest and that Fr. Coleman told his congregation that 'it was inevitable that the very small minority in Ireland -neo pagan writers, Protestants of various denominations and Jews - should seek to introduce divorce into this country'.³²⁵

During the 1920s and 1930s, County Kilkenny experienced poverty, unemployment, underdeveloped housing and ill health amongst the working classes. The NSPCC operated within this community and it is clear that there was a conflicting public image of its membership in their respective private lives. The landed gentry families, the Prior Wandesfordes, the Solly Floods, the Teignmouths, and to a certain extent Lady Charlotte Wheeler Cuffe would have treated the working classes in manner which contradicted the principal ethos of the NSPCC. The 1930s saw the mining

³²² Ibid., p.244.

³²³ Seanad Éireann, Vol. 5 – 11, Col.464. June 1925.

³²⁴ Declan Dunne, *Peter's Key*, pp. 244-245.

³²⁵ Ibid., p.245.

and fishing communities in the county make contrasting claims for their individual rights. These claims questioned the class system in each community and brought them into conflict with members of the landed gentry who were also members of the NSPCC. While Lady Desart was financing projects for the betterment of all classes in Kilkenny, on two occasions in nine years she was heavily criticised from the pulpit.

When one addresses Lord Chief Justice Molony's remedies for crime, it is clear that in Kilkenny poor housing conditions, unemployment, intemperance and poor recreational facilities seriously affected the working classes. Throughout the period of the 1930s, there was no meaningful reduction in the number of offences which appeared before the District Justice. Considering the barriers facing the working classes in Kilkenny, it is unsurprising that offending remained constant across all types of offences. It was the opinion of Chief Justice Molony that regardless of social improvement, crime would remain an underlying factor determined by personal choice

I am satisfied that it would be a very great element in diminishing crime if we could once get the heart and mind and conscience of the people to approve, of and co-operate with the administration of the law. no matter how successful, however, the prevention of crime may be, there will always be left a considerable number, of persons who will have to be tried.³²⁶

Chief Justice Molony's concession that it was not possible to prevent all crime in society is important in the Kilkenny Context. Molony's paper on the cause and prevention of crime, as outlined in the previous chapter, identified the industrial school as a prevention of juvenile crime. Such a sentiment focuses on the moral component of a child and is at odds with the narrative that children were placed into industrial schools as a result of the poverty of their families. The following chapter will address the committal of children to industrial schools in Kilkenny through the District Court. In this regard, juvenile crime and committal orders can be placed into the context of the social issues in Kilkenny and the membership of the NSPCC. The following chapter will examine the committal of children to industrial schools and provide context to the work of the NSPCC which it did not publically admit it conducted during the 1930s.

³²⁶ Thomas Molony, 'Prevention and Punishment', p.123.

Chapter Three

The Role of the NSPCC in the Committal of Children to Industrial Schools

This chapter uses the Justice Minute Book of Kilkenny District Court and NSPCC's annual reports from the Kilkenny Branch office to document the role of the NSPCC in the committal of children to industrial schools through the District Court during the period 1927- 1937. Where applicable, newspaper coverage from the *Kilkenny People* and *The Post* are used to add context to court proceedings which involved the committal of children to industrial schools. As the NSPCC annual reports are not available prior to 1933, this chapter addresses committals from the period 1927-1932 in order to provide context to the work of the Society. For reasons that are unclear, the press in Kilkenny began to cover industrial school committals less frequently from 1935 onwards; therefore it is not possible to examine cases post 1935 in dept.

The report of the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse is the only publication which has examined the committal of children to industrial schools in Ireland. In this regard, the published report of the Ryan Commission will be used to place committals in Kilkenny into a national context. Both St Patrick's and St Joseph's Industrial Schools were examined by the Commission and this chapter will focus on the role of the NSPCC in placing children into both schools. The primary finding by the Commission regarding the role of the NSPCC in the committal of children to industrial schools was that

The Society had a role in committing children to Industrial Schools. The extent and significance of this role cannot be accurately ascertained as there are no definitive statistics in respect of the actual numbers of children who were committed by the Society³²⁷

This study of the District Court in Kilkenny City establishes that the NSPCC was the only organisation in Kilkenny applying for the committal of children to industrial schools between 1927 and 1937. In Kilkenny District Court, Inspector McDonagh filed for the committal of 112 children to industrial schools. A study of the District Court records for Carlow and Muine Bheag indicate that NSPCC filed committal applications for 155 children during the period of investigation.

On 14 August 1999, the director of the ISPCC received a letter from the Former Upton Residents' Group outlining the group's concerns about the lack of accountability on the part of the ISPCC in regards to their role in the committal of children to industrial schools. In the opinion of the

³²⁷ *The Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse*, Vol.5, p. 10.

Former Upton Residents, the NSPCC/ISPCCC's role in placing children into industrial schools should be documented in order to provide a sense of closure to those who suffered in industrial schools.³²⁸

This chapter will address the family circumstances which led to the committal of children to industrial schools through the district court. The annual reports of the Society in Kilkenny made it clear that the NSPCC and its inspector existed for the purpose of preventing children from suffering as a result of neglect caused by poverty, ill-health or improper parenting or guardianship:

Each brings its contingent of children who, suffering from serious deformities, look to us for relief, and no better work than helping them could be undertaken. What has thus been accomplished for these little ones will count for much in after life as they grow up to manhood and womanhood.³²⁹

Between 1933 and 1937, it is evident that the NSPCC was a preventative tool in the fight against child cruelty and a guardian of families living in dangerous circumstances. While the Society's annual reports indicated that the NSPCC in Kilkenny worked to protect families, the minute book of Kilkenny District Court shows that the organisation was the only party applying for the committal of children to industrial schools. This chapter will show how these committal applications resulted in punitive financial assistance orders being placed on parents and siblings separated from each other.

The NSPCC, committal applications and Justice Molloy

The Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County branch of the NSPCC placed 112 (four per cent) of the children its inspector encountered in County Kilkenny into industrial schools during the period 1927-1937. The NSPCC's founding charter explicitly emphasised the need to keep families together; therefore, it is clear that industrial school committals were not the first choice for children living in poor accommodation or poverty. The study of NSPCC committal applications for the Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County branch is greatly hindered by the fact that the inspector's case files no longer exist. Consequently, it is not possible to determine how children in Kilkenny were selected for committals.

Given that the District Justice in Kilkenny approved all 112 committals applications between 1927 and 1937, the State ultimately certified any decision taken by the NSPCC at committee level or by the Society's inspector. David Gwynn Morgan's contribution to the Ryan Commission discusses the role of the District Court as the primary gateway for children into institutions. In the present study,

³²⁸ Letter from Noel C. Barry, Former Upton Residents to Paul Gilligan, Director of Services ISPCCC, 14 August 1999. Available at

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=188278977968710&set=pb.100003598276887.-2207520000.1389372182.&type=3&theater> accessed on 4 September 2012.

³²⁹ *NSPCC annual report 1934*, p.4.

Morgan's analysis will be used to add context to the court proceedings in Kilkenny. Commenting on the length of a committal hearing, Morgan notes that

a hearing might last 5-15 minutes, though one should recall that for each application, even if ultimately unsuccessful, there would usually be more than one hearing.³³⁰

The Justice Minute Book for Kilkenny District Court shows that 114 of the 115 committed to schools through Kilkenny District Court received no second hearing. Commenting on how committal proceedings worked, Morgan observes how

The case in favour of committal was presented by the applicant. The applicant would be the ISPCC 'cruelty man' (or less often the Catholic Protection and Rescue Society) or SAO/Garda. It depended on which ground was being relied on. The child was also present, but the big factor shaping the procedure was that the child was almost always unrepresented.³³¹

The NSPCC applied for 112 committal orders between 1927 and 1937, the other three committals were decisions made by Justice Molloy after members of Gardaí brought children to court for wandering and having a parent or guardian unable to exercise proper guardianship.³³² In this regard, the District Court Minute Book shows that in the Kilkenny context, the Gardaí did not apply for committal orders.³³³ The record also shows that none of the children in Kilkenny had legal representation and none of the children were given an opportunity to contest the charges against them or their parents. One of the significant aspects of committal in Kilkenny is that the District Justice never refuted the evidence of the NSPCC inspector presented in court. Morgan comments that

a parent (or guardian) was also required by law to be present and the mother frequently was before the court. The parent was usually uneducated and, in an age of deference, they were unlikely to be able to make the best of any case against committal ... there was usually no reason to contest the evidence of the ISPCC Inspector or SAO. Sometimes the District Justice would ask sharp questions of the applicant. But in most cases, the only evidence was that of the applicant giving

³³⁰ David Gwynn Morgan, 'Gateways to the Institutions', in *The Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse*, Vol. 5 (Dublin, 2009) This chapter is not paginated.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Kilkenny District Court, 1 February 1927- John James Coffey, Rathdowney Co. Laois, found wandering without parental or guardian's care and application placed to commit him to industrial school. On the stand as witness was Inspector M. McDonagh; Arresting Officer Sgt. John Dunphy. Application granted, committed to St Patricks Industrial School until October 1937.

³³³ The Gardaí brought children to court for being found wandering or having a parent or guardian who was unable to exercise proper guardianship. In each case, they did not apply for the committal of the child to an industrial school. The decision to commit each child was made by the District Judge after reviewing the facts as presented by the Garda/ Inspector McDonagh.

sworn testimony who would explain to the court the circumstances of the case, including family background.³³⁴

The record of Kilkenny District Court shows that between 1927 and 1937, only one parent was listed as a witness called by the District Justice to be examined as a counterbalance to the evidence of the NSPCC and this, even on the one occasion on which it occurred, did not prevent a committal order. Morgan states that there was no reason for the evidence of the NSPCC inspector to be questioned and this may be credited to the fact that the Society's inspector was regarded as authority on child welfare both on a national and local setting. The following extract from a case of neglect heard in April 1931 indicates that in the Kilkenny context, Inspector McDonagh was considered to be an authority on child welfare by Justice Molloy:

District Justice - If I send him [the father] to Gaol the Children will starve.

Inspector McDonagh - I don't like to say too much regarding this man.

District Justice - He is no good?

Inspector McDonagh - He is not.

The defendant denied the truth of Mr McDonagh's statements, and said he would ask his wife to explain.

District Justice - You can take it from me that Inspector McDonagh has been appearing before me for nearly ten years, and I never knew him to mislead me yet. Go Down.³³⁵

While Inspector McDonagh was seen as a trustworthy figure, it is also worth noting that to question the evidence of McDonagh would have also placed the judgement of the NSPCC's Honorary Secretary into question. As outlined, Inspector McDonagh was the public facade of a Society which was financed by Kilkenny's most powerful individuals from the Protestant landed gentry and Protestant professional class.

Thomas Derrig was the Minister for Education from 1932-1939 and TD for the Kilkenny-Carlow constituency. Like Justice Molloy and Lord Chief Justice Molony before him, Derrig publicly endorsed the NSPCC as a vital tool in the fight against child poverty. While debating a proposed amendment to the Children's Act 1908 in 1940, Derrig complimented the NSPCC as follows when considering the placement of children into industrial schools:

It may be that for reasons for which the members of the family cannot be blamed, it is not fitting that the children should be left in their present environment. It may happen that parental control is insufficient or that the child is going with bad associates. The court has to take all these things into

³³⁴ Gwynn- Morgan, 'Gateways'

³³⁵ *The Post*, 22 April 1931.

consideration. The court has the advantage of having, as I have said, first-hand information from the representatives of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.³³⁶

Derrig framed the work of the NSPCC in the same manner as Chief Justice Molony: bad company and poor parenting were listed instead of poverty as the reasons for children being placed into industrial schools. Both Derrig and Molony viewed the committal of children to industrial schools in light of the ability of their parents to control them or the potential for children to engage with bad associates. Justice Molloy's defence of Inspector McDonagh in 1931 may have been from one individual case: however, it is clear that the district justice in Kilkenny supported the NSPCC when it filed committal applications for children. When one looks at the committal of children by the State in Kilkenny through the District Court and the views of Derrig and Molony, it is evident that the industrial school were used to remove children from society who were deemed at risk of failing into a lifestyle of crime.

The annual reports of the Inspector appointed to the Reformatory and Industrial Schools of Ireland 1920-1924 provide a contemporary insight into the workings of the schools as outlined by Inspector C.J MacCormack to the Minister for Education. From a reading of the reports, it is evident that criticism of industrial schools was at a level significant enough to prompt a response from Inspector MacCormack to negative perceptions of industrial schools. Despite defending the purpose of industrial schools from criticism, MacCormack did not outline the nature or source of the complaints made against any industrial schools. Commenting on critical reviews of the schools in 1923, MacCormack underscored the importance of the industrial school in improving citizenship of detained children:

there is nothing to show that the critics have ever investigated the workings of any of the schools they condemn, nor do they appear to have taken into account that there is a very small percentage rate of failures. A truer conception of the service to the community done by those schools would follow any thorough consideration that might be given. In the proportion of good citizens who have been among their pupils Industrial and Reformatory Schools have no reason to fear comparison with any other school.³³⁷

Inspector MacCormack commended the work done at the institutions and focused on the betterment of the child upon entry and singled out the NSPCC inspectors as proponents of the success of the industrial school:

³³⁶ Dáil Éireann Debate, Volume 81 – 11, Col .1144 December 1940.

³³⁷ Sixty-Second Report of the Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools of Ireland to the Minister for Education (Dublin, 1924), p.6.

Testimony of it is to be found in correspondence with past pupils, from letters of relatives and employees, from the demand for workers trained in the schools, from the records of those in domestic service, in clerical appointments at business, at different trades, from many who have been married and who have visited their schools, from statements made by several inspectors of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and from various other sources of information.³³⁸

The Department of Education's annual reports reveal that like the NSPCC, industrial schools were seen as a necessity in improving the employment opportunities for detainees following their release. The Department of Education's annual report 1933-1934 placed an emphasis on the positive industrial training received for boys and girls detained in industrial schools. The skill set offered to children detained in industrial schools was explained as follows:

Carpentry with, in some schools, manual instruction for all boys of an age to receive it, and in one school cabinet-making, tailoring, shoemaking, farming and gardening, and in certain schools weaving, baking, milling, boat building, etc., are the subjects in which training is given in the boys' schools. The work turned out is principally for the use of the schools and taken on the whole, a good knowledge of the various trades is acquired. Employment was found by the Managers for the great majority of the boys discharged, but increasing difficulty is being experienced in obtaining suitable openings for boys and more especially in obtaining trades openings. The training of girls in cookery, needlework, laundry work and housework continues to afford immediate employment at good wages and a useful preparation for various kinds of employment when the girls are more mature. The age at which these more responsible kinds of employment are obtained does not bring it within the limits of the report, but Managers have been able to give proof of the value of the education³³⁹

The annual report of the Inspector of the Reformatory and Industrial Schools of Ireland for 1923 includes seven letters from ex-pupils of the Industrial Schools and the following give an insight into the type of letter which the inspector forwarded to the Minister for Education as testimonies of the benefit of industrial school training for working class children:

you will be very pleased to hear that I have a beautiful home with a liberal salary, and the family are most kind. I am teaching the younger children, English, Music and French. Lessons are

³³⁸ Ibid., p.6.

³³⁹ Department of Education, *Annual Report 1933-1934* (Dublin, 1935), p. 101.

finished at 1-30 or 2 p.m. I can never be grateful enough for the careful training which i received in the School and which I fully appreciate now’³⁴⁰

I am house- parlour maid, and am earning 34 pounds a year, which is considered very good. I will close for the present as I have told you all the news, and please remember me all the nuns so very good to me while I was in the School. I appreciate all they have done for me and shall never forget it.’

I am sure you will be much pleased to learn that I have got the position of manager of the new Branch House opened here in C____. Imagine a boy of my age receiving 200 pounds per annum and commission on sales. I can never be grateful enough to the Brothers for all that was done for me during my stay in the School.³⁴¹

Sarah Anne Buckley’s study of the Wexford Branch case files indicates that NSPCC inspectors viewed themselves as protectors of the working classes, Buckley states that ‘the inspector’s personal writings project an aura of righteousness associated with their self-perception as saviours of the poor.’³⁴² Buckley’s use of case files indicates that the committal of children to industrial schools was in many cases based on the moral side of neglect. In this regard, the influence of the clergy and other figures within the community on the NSPCC becomes relevant to motivations of the Society’s inspector. Buckley states that

it was usually under the auspices of moral neglect that these families came to the Society’s attention, as single mothers and fathers in particular were deemed unfit to look after their children by the church, the state and the NSPCC. Following pressure from a local priest, a Garda in Wexford wrote to the NSPCC inspector in 1938 regarding a man who had recently been widowed and had a young daughter and son to look after. The letter states that ‘the man appears to be a type who will make good if given a chance. Fr. McCarthy seems to think the children would be better in schools. The Father is opposed to this... in so far as I am concerned, I cannot see my way in taking steps in this connection and i am just reporting the facts to you to satisfy Fr. McCarthy. I think his idea is the moral side of the question, which in my mind does not presently arise.’³⁴³

In terms of the relationship between the clergy and the NSPCC in Kilkenny, the appointment of Canon Cavanagh as Vice President of the Society would have given him significant influence on the manner in which the Society assessed cases. Prior to Canon Cavanagh’s membership of the

³⁴⁰ Sixty - Second Report of the Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools, p. 7.

³⁴¹ Ibid., p.7.

³⁴² Sarah Anne Buckley, NSPCC in Ireland, p.3.

³⁴³ Ibid., pp.10-11.

NSPCC, it is clear that he was a vocal critic of social issues in Kilkenny and worked with Bishop Collier in fighting the Castlecomer miners and the abuse of alcohol in society. As documented, Dr. Collier was a supporter of the work of St Patrick's and St Joseph's Industrial Schools in Kilkenny.

While it would be erroneous to assume that Canon Cavanagh was a proponent of industrial school committals, given his friendship with Prior Wandesfordes, obtaining the position of Vice President of the NSPCC upon joining the Society and close proximity of his parochial house to Inspector McDonagh's residence on Bishops hill, it is unlikely that he did not engage with the Society prior to 1936 regarding impoverished families. However, the relationship between the NSPCC and the Sisters of Charity is more difficult to ascertain; the Reverend Mother of St Patrick's Industrial School sent invitations to attend the school's Golden Jubilee to fourteen women who were either members or future members of the NSPCC, including Miss McCreery, the Society's Honorary Secretary for 1933 and 1934. The Ladies' Branch of the St Vincent de Paul Society was represented by Mrs Lanigan, Mrs Healy, Mrs John Duggan and Mrs Coyne. Mrs Healy and Mrs Lanigan both joined the NSPCC in 1936 along with Canon Cavanagh and it is evident that the Sisters of Charity valued the work of these women. With the exception of Mrs Butler, the landed gentry' families of the NSPCC did not attend the Golden Jubilee at St Patrick's Industrial School.

Criticism and Support of the NSPCC and industrial Schools

The legislation governing this period was the 1908 Children's Act. The NSPCC in ninety per cent of their committal applications in Kilkenny brought children to court on the grounds that he or she was found wandering and having no parent or guardian or a parent or guardian who did not exercise proper guardianship. In comparison to the other six provisions in the act³⁴⁴ wandering and or being subject to unsuitable parenting was a ground for committal which was entirely subjective. The ISPCC, in its submission to the Ryan Commission, described the Children's Act 1908 as having a strong emphasis on parental responsibility.³⁴⁵ The other provision used by the NSPCC in Kilkenny was that of a child being orphaned: however, this was only used on two occasions in the court. If the committal of children to industrial schools was based upon the poverty of children and their parents, the NSPCC in Kilkenny should have frequently invoked the other provisions of the Children's Act throughout the period of investigation.

³⁴⁴ (A) is found begging or receiving alms, (B) is found not having any home, or visible means of subsistence, or is [found] having no parent or guardian, or a parent or guardian who does not exercise proper guardianship; or (C) is found destitute, not being an orphan and having both parents or his surviving parent, or in the case of an illegitimate child, his mother, undergoing penal servitude or imprisonment; or (d) is under the care of a parent or guardian who, by reason of reputed criminal or drunken habits, is unfit to have the care of the child; or (e) is the daughter...of a father who has been convicted of an offence of [sexually abusing his daughters]; or (f) is lodging or residing in a house used for prostitution. –David Gwyn Morgan, 'Gateways'

³⁴⁵ *The Role of the ISPCC in the Placement of Children in Industrial Schools*, p. 13.

In 1940, during second stage debate on the Children's Bill 1940, the inclusion of the term 'wandering' in committal applications was debated as there was no legal definition of what it meant to be found 'wandering' in the 1908 Children's Act. The Minister for Education, Thomas Derrig, called for an amendment to the Children Act in order to make the committal process watertight.

it is proposed to delete the two words "wandering and" in both places where these words occur. The position is that there is no legal definition of the word "wandering" in the Principal Act, and I am advised that in actual practice the provisions of clause (b) of Section 58 are interpreted as if the word had no material effect in the context. It is therefore proposed that the other circumstances mentioned in the clause, apart from wandering, should be regarded as sufficient for the court to commit a child to an industrial school.³⁴⁶

The debate on this amendment is of interest considering that ninety seven per cent of the children committed to industrial schools in Derrig's own constituency of Kilkenny/ Carlow while he was Minister for Education were found wandering and having a parent or guardian unable to exercise proper guardianship. Professor O'Sullivan, Cumann Na NGaedheal TD for Kerry North and former Minister for Education, voiced his concern about such an amendment out of respect for the rights of the parent:

I do not think I am incorrect in saying that this Bill is an attempt to tighten up the law, and, so far, we might approve of it without any hesitation, but it seems to me an attempt to tighten up the law, almost in every case, against the rights of parents, and that is what I do not like about certain provisions in this Bill ... when it is a question of taking a child out of the control of the parents, its natural guardians, I think the onus is altogether on the shoulders of those who try to do that, and I think no such vague and general words should appear in a Bill of this kind as appear in Section 9 (c) "for any reason". In other words, what you are doing is taking discretion away from the parents and putting it in the power of a district justice—I do not care whether he is a district justice or the Chief Justice—for a reason that he thinks fit—not that this House thinks fit, but that he thinks fit—to deprive the natural guardians of the child of their rights and their duties.³⁴⁷

Professor O'Sullivan's comments were enlightened for the period and are a reflection that there was a concern for the rights of parents in regards to the committal process.

The Ryan Commission established that the national average age of detained children was eight years of age and the average age of children committed through Kilkenny District Court was

³⁴⁶ Dáil Éireann Debate, Volume 81 , Col. 1110, 11 December 1940.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

also eight years. The NSPCC's annual reports are not available prior to 1933, despite this the District Court Minute Book and the local press supplement the missing reports and this in turn confirms the age profile of the children committed.

In contrast to Professor O Sullivan's opinion, the Department of Education's annual report for 1925-26-1927, framed industrial schools as an alternative to insufficient parenting or family support:

The purpose of these schools is somewhat different from that of other educational institutions. Before children are admitted and payment of grants sanctioned the State must be satisfied that investigation by a Justice shows that the home cannot or does not give the children sufficient protection and care, and that it will be for the advantage of the children in later years that it should delegate to Managers of Schools under its supervision a trust almost equal to parental responsibility.³⁴⁸

In Kilkenny, it was the evidence of Inspector McDonagh that resulted in children from the city and county being committed to industrial schools by the state. In her account of the life of Frank Duff,

Finola Kennedy refers to Duff's heavy criticism of one NSPCC inspector to Archbishop John Charles McQuaid following McQuaid's request for Duff to review the Dublin Branch's annual report for 1939/1940. Kennedy refers to the claim of the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse that Duff was one of the few contemporary critics of the NSPCC and the committal of children to industrial schools.³⁴⁹The Commission noted that Duff was heavily critical of the manner in which NSPCC annual reports presented cases and the power that the Society's inspectors had:

I have read the Specimen Cases set out in the 1939/40 Report. The details given seem bad enough; but they might be made to prove too much. The culling of six special cases from a poor city like Dublin could easily create a false impression. Moreover, I would not be satisfied that there is no exaggeration at work. I profoundly distrust every word and action of one of the Society's Inspectors, Mrs XX. I go further and I say that I regard her as a danger. She is quite capable (by which I mean that she has already done it) of distorting facts to suit any point of view she is trying to make. She exercised an ascendancy over ex-Justice YY, and between them they simply shovelled children into Industrial Schools. I consider that no proper attempt is made by the Society to restore a home or keep a home together. This was the view held by Fr. Tom Ryan, SJ who

³⁴⁸ Department of Education, *Annual Report for the school years 1925-26-27 and the Financial and Administrative year 1926-1927* (Dublin, 1928), p. 83.

³⁴⁹ Finola Kennedy, *Frank Duff* (Dublin, 2001) p. 148.

before his transfer to Hong Kong took a keen interest in juvenile delinquency and practically lived in the Courts. He gave it to me as his considered judgment based on his long and detailed observation that the Charter of the Society for the PCC should be withdrawn, that the Society constituted a public menace.³⁵⁰

Sibling Separation and Financial Burdens following committal

During the period 1927 to 1934 in Kilkenny, the District Justice committed thirty boys and thirty-three girls brought before the court by the NSPCC.³⁵¹ Of these sixty-three children, twenty-five were six years of age or younger while twenty-four children were aged between seven and ten years of age. These applications were recorded in the District Minute Book in the following form:

Application by Inspector Michael McDonagh N.S.P.C.C for the Committal of X , Greenhill born 4 February 1923 to an Industrial School on the grounds that he was found wandering or not receiving proper guardianship³⁵²

A former resident of St Patrick's Industrial School commenting on the issue of sibling separation noted 'Yes, I have contact. My family are like strangers to me. I mean I know them all, I know where they are, but they are just like strangers. I don't know them as brothers and sisters'.³⁵³ The following committal is an indication of the separation of large families.

On 2 January 1930, the NSPCC selected the second family of six for committal to an industrial school. The reason stated was that all six children were orphaned with the remaining parent having no means to support the family. In this instance, no maintenance order was made by the Judge. The record shows that the remaining parent was not given the opportunity to contest such a charge, in a similar fashion, none of the six children were provided with an opportunity to be examined. The District Justice agreed with the evidence of the NSPCC. The family chosen were listed as living on Parnell Street in Kilkenny City.³⁵⁴ The NSPCC was aware that when it selected the Carroll family, a significant degree of separation would be imposed upon them. The District Justice had the opportunity

³⁵⁰ *The Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse*, Vol.5, p.5.

³⁵¹ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 20 January 1931, 23, February 1932, 5 September 1933.

³⁵² This is a fictitious entry.

³⁵³ 'St Patrick's Industrial School, Kilkenny: 1879-1966', in, *The Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse*, Vol.II (Dublin, 2009), p.489.

³⁵⁴ Philip Carroll, 7 years of age, committed to St Patricks Industrial School, Kilkenny until 30 October 1939, Clare Carroll, 7 years of age, committed to St Josephs Industrial School, Kilkenny until 30 October 1939, Michelle Carroll, 5 years of age, committed to St Josephs Industrial School, Kilkenny until 15 March 1941, John Carroll, 13 years of age, committed to Dun Laoghaire Industrial School until 10 August 1932, Tomas Carroll, 11 years of age, committed to Dun Laoghaire Industrial School until 4 April 1935 and Olivia Carroll, 9 years of age, committed to St Josephs Industrial School, Kilkenny until 23 November 1937

to prevent the twins from being separated by seeking foster care; however, he chose to place them into industrial care, thus, guaranteeing that they would not see each other for nine years. The fact that St Patrick's Industrial School only cared for boys until ten resulted in Tomas and John Carroll being separated from Philip upon committal to Dun Laoghaire. At seven years of Age, Philip Carroll lost a parent through bereavement, at a time when he needed his family most; the NSPCC took him to court knowing that he would be sent to St Patrick's Industrial School alone. Commenting on the selection process used when deciding on which schools were chosen, the Ryan Commission established:

By section 62(1) of the 1908 Act the Manager's permission was necessary before a child could be sent to his or her school. Thus a suitable school, or if necessary, schools would be phoned or written to (in advance of the hearing) to inquire whether, if the child were committed, they had room for, and would accept, the child. Practice seemed to vary as to whether it was the District Court Clerk or Gardaí/ISPCC man/SAO that actually made communication. Equally, we know very little about the extent to which a Justice might favour one school over another. For instance would a Justice prefer a local school? What level of knowledge of the school had they? Were efforts made to keep children of the same family together?³⁵⁵

An answer to the three questions posed by David Gwynn Morgan can be found in the Minute Book of Kilkenny District Court and the local press. There is no record in the District Court Minute Book or the NSPCC annual reports as to who contacted the Sisters of Charity when applying for committals. Despite this, there is evidence to suggest that the NSPCC inspector had some contact with the schools when it was necessary to secure a committal and the following case will illustrate this contact.

Edward McCormick first appeared before the court in 1929 charged with a breach of the School Attendance Act. Two years later, on 7 July 1931, Edward was brought before the court charged with another breach in the school attendance act, drunk and disorderly behaviour and the neglect of his six children.³⁵⁶ On 7 July 1931, Edward McCormick appeared before Kilkenny City District Court for the breach of a notice served upon him under the terms of the School Attendance Act in respect of his son, Joseph McCormick. On the same date, McCormick was charged with drunk and disorderly behaviour on 20 June 1931 and with subjecting his children to unnecessary suffering which was detrimental to their well being and health.³⁵⁷ Two weeks after Edward McCormick was

³⁵⁵ Gwynn-Morgan, 'Gateways'

³⁵⁶ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 7 July 1931.

³⁵⁷ Joseph McCormick, aged 13 years, Christine McCormick, aged 11 years, Mary B McCormick aged 9 years, Elizabeth McCormick aged 7 years, Rose McCormick aged 4 years and Eddie McCormick aged 6 months.

sentenced to prison, Inspector McDonagh brought his four daughters before Justice Molloy, seeking their committal to an industrial school.³⁵⁸ The *Kilkenny Post* reported on the case and revealed that the NSPCC's inspector was able influence the Sisters of Charity in making available space at St Joseph's Industrial School. In terms of the level of destitution experienced by these girls, Inspector McDonagh noted that children suffered untold hardship over a number of years.³⁵⁹ The inspector's evidence noted that the children lived in 'an old disused tool house at the Black Quarry'.³⁶⁰ Inspector McDonagh asserted that the children's mother was satisfied to have her daughters placed into residential care as it was the best thing for them.

... (Mrs. McCormick) was anxious to have them put into St Joseph's Industrial School so that she would have access to them occasionally. There were no vacancies in St Joseph's but when (Inspector McDonagh) approached the Reverend Mother about the matter she very kindly arranged to have four other children transferred to Waterford to make room for the McCormick children.³⁶¹

The committal of the McCormick girls to St Joseph's Industrial School is the only record which indicates the level of input Inspector McDonagh had in selecting schools. Despite the fact that McDonagh was prosecuting for neglect, it is evident that the inspector was willing to assist the girl's mother and have her daughters placed into a local industrial school. When one considers that all NSPCC committals through Kilkenny District Court had to have a school's prior permission, it is possible that an NSPCC committee member or the inspector may have made contact with the schools.³⁶² Considering that ninety per cent of District Judge's 112 committal orders were to the Sisters of Charity, and considering that he was an invited guest of the Sisters of Charity at St Patrick's Jubilee, it can be established that Justice Molloy was familiar with that particular school and the work of the Sisters.

The final question posed by David Gywnn Morgan asks what effort was made by the District Justice to keep siblings together and the answer to this in the context of Kilkenny is that Justice Molloy was ineffective in keeping siblings together.³⁶³ When addressing this issue of sibling separation in Kilkenny, there was a shared responsibility between Inspector McDoangh and the State.

³⁵⁸Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 21 July 1931.

³⁵⁹*The Post*, 22 July 1931.

³⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 22 July 1931.

³⁶¹*Ibid.*, 22 July 1931.

³⁶² In terms of practicality, it is worth noting that Inspector McDonagh lived 1.3 miles from St Joseph's Industrial School and 2 miles from St Patrick's Industrial School and could have walked to both schools in less than an hour.

³⁶³ The record in Kilkenny shows that he approved every committal application filed by the NSPCC.

Inspector McDonagh had to negotiate two key factors which influenced his committals. The capacity of St Patrick's Industrial School was 186 boys up to ten years of age while the capacity of St Joseph's Industrial School was 126 girls up to sixteen years of age.³⁶⁴ Given that Kilkenny's industrial schools were segregated by age and gender, it was inevitable that brothers and sisters would be separated from each other upon committal. The District Court Minute Book shows that many committals resulted in brothers and sisters being left in each school without family members: for example a boy turning ten a year after committal would mean his three year old brother would spend seven years by himself in St Patrick's Industrial School. The Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse ascertained that there were contemporary concerns regarding the separation of siblings and the danger of losing contact with each other:

It is the settled policy of this Department (of Local Government) to do everything possible to maintain and encourage family ties where it is in the children's interest to do so. The selection of a school is a matter for the committing justice in the first instance but the Department subsequently does all in its power to arrange transfers, as far as possible, to schools near the children's homes, and to have members of the same family detained in the same school. Unfortunately, these post-committal adjustments are not always possible and, in any case, only touch the fringe of the problem.³⁶⁵

The issue of one sibling being left behind by the release of another is underlined in the following committal application. In 1929 Marie Lynch was fourteen years of age when she and her nine year old sister were committed to St Joseph's Industrial School. Two years later on 14 July, 1931 Marie would have been released and her sister Niamh would have remained in St Joseph's until 11 February 1936.³⁶⁶ Between January 1927 and February 1932, fifteen sets of siblings were brought before Justice Molloy by the NSPCC for committal to industrial schools.³⁶⁷ In total, fifty-nine children were committed by the State and ten of the sets of siblings out of fifteen brought before the court by the NSPCC were separated. Out of the fifty siblings committed to industrial schools in the five years between January 1927 and February 1932, thirty-eight (seventy-eight per cent) of the children were separated from their siblings.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁴ David Gwynn Morgan, 'Society and the Schools', in *The Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse*, Vol. IV (Dublin, 2009). This chapter is not paginated.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Kilkenny District Court, 3 March 1929.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 16 October 1928, 17 July 1928, 17 September 1929, 20 January 1931.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 20 June 1933, 5 September 1933.

The geographical distribution of industrial schools in the South East resulted in a number of children being sent out of the county for detention. Commenting on the selection of out of county detention, David Gwynn Morgan states that

the fact that so many of the Schools were located a long way from the homes of their residents made contact with families almost non-existent, except for such limited holidays at home as were permitted. In practice, sending a Dublin boy to Letterfrack could sunder the family almost completely. In very occasional cases, family circumstances were thought to be so bad that children were deliberately sent to Schools at a distance from their homes in order to remove them from their parents.³⁶⁹

During this period, seven industrial schools were selected for the fifty nine children, they were; Co Dublin Industrial School: one boy;³⁷⁰ St Patrick's Industrial School, Kilkenny, twenty boys;³⁷¹ St Joseph's Industrial School, Kilkenny;³⁷² twenty-eight girls, Lakelands Industrial School, Sandymount: four girls; St Joseph's Industrial School, Ferryhouse, two boys;³⁷³ Dun Laoghaire Industrial School: two boys;³⁷⁴ and St Dominick's Industrial School, Waterford: two girls.³⁷⁵ The Sisters of Charity received forty eight children (eighty-one per cent) of the children during this period. Over the period, 1927, the NSPCC selected three families for committal through Gowran District Court and all three sets of siblings were separated by the Judge.³⁷⁶ While this study does not deal with the NSPCC in Carlow, the Justice Minute Book for Carlow District Court indicates that the NSPCC committed eight sets of siblings with seven sets of siblings separated.³⁷⁷ Committals through Carlow District Court show that the NSPCC did not secure as many committals in Kilkenny's industrial schools and this imposed a large degree of separation of families. The following committal was an example:

John Dunphy committed to Artane Industrial School until 14 April 1938, Stephen Dunphy committed to Artane Industrial School until 13 November 1936, Eileen Dunphy to St Joseph's

³⁶⁹ Gwynn Morgan, 'Gateways'

³⁷⁰ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 18 January 1927.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1 February 1927, 17 July 1928, 20 January 1931.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 15 September 1931, 5 January 1932.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 1 December 1931.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 2 January 1930.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 28 May 1930.

³⁷⁶ Justice Minute Book, Gowran District Court, 12 July 1934.

³⁷⁷ Justice Minute Book, Carlow District Court, 30 January 1928.

Industrial School until 18 March 1938 and James Dunphy, committed to St Patricks Industrial School until 2 August 1940.³⁷⁸

Of the committed sets of siblings in Kilkenny, eight of the fifteen involved less than four children and the following committal order was an example of a brother and sister being committed. On 20 January 1931 the NSPCC applied for the committal of a boy and girl on the grounds that they were found destitute with the surviving parent consenting to their committal as he or she was unable to support them. The following was recorded:

Patrick Campbell, 6 years of age, committed to St Patrick's Industrial School, Kilkenny until 29 March 1941;

Louise Campbell, 4 years of age, committed to St Joseph's Industrial School, Kilkenny until 20 November 1943.³⁷⁹

The case is the first recorded case of parental approval in the committal process. Louise Campbell was taken to St Joseph's Industrial School which was a distance of 0.5 miles from her house. In a similar fashion, St Patrick's Industrial School was located just two kilometres from Parnell Street. When addressing detention and the selection in Kilkenny, it is worth considering the role that the industrial schools played in the committal process. David Gwynn Moran

It is simply that, in general, the Orders encouraged the sending of children to the schools. It perhaps could be said that this was natural: over more than a century, the Orders and, in particular, Managers had invested a good deal of labour and idealism – as well as capital – in the schools. They wished to keep the schools going, mainly because they considered them a force of good, at any rate compared with the alternative fate to which a child would have been left. The inevitable result was that, irrespective of individual circumstances that might have seemed to tell in the opposite direction, the Orders exercised their influence in favour of sending children to schools and for a lengthy period.³⁸⁰

In addition, the reports of the Inspector to the Reformatory and Industrial Schools indicated that schools were dependant on committal levels; the report of inspector to the Industrial and Reformatory Schools as early as 1923 clearly established that the survival of the institutions was determined by the continuous committal of children. Inspector MacCormick states that

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 4 September 1933.

³⁷⁹ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 20 January 1931.

³⁸⁰ Gwynn Morgan, 'Gateways'

it is expected that in time increased committals will bring the schools their full complement of children, and thereby relieve, to some extent, the present financial burthen.³⁸¹

The District Court Minute Book reveals that for many parents there was a financial burden placed upon them in form of maintenance orders for children detained at industrial schools. The longer a child was in custody of the Sisters of Charity the longer the Sisters of Charity received an income for each child. Out of the fifteen sets of siblings brought before the court, nine sets of parents were ordered to pay for the maintenance of their children in industrial schools.³⁸² An order for payment was recorded in the Justice Minute Book as follows:

In addition, the court orders that Parent X pays the sum of x to the Inspector of the Reformatory Schools of Ireland with the first payment due on X.³⁸³

The District Court Minute Book shows that in the five years January 1927- 1932- the NSPCC selected children of parents who were able to contribute to upkeep of their children in the schools.³⁸⁴ In five years, the minimum sum of £447 was ordered to be paid by the nine sets of parents. The Sisters of Charity received twenty-two children of the twenty- four children who had parents paying maintenance orders.

On a number of occasions, parents were brought before the Distract Court charged with failing to pay for the maintenance of their children in St Patrick's and St Joseph's Industrial Schools. In July 1927, Brendan Murphy, the father of the three boys committed to industrial schools in January 1927, was brought to court charged with failing to pay for the upkeep of one of his sons.³⁸⁵ Neither the name of the boy or of the school was stated in the record. However, the record shows that in January 1927 two his children were committed to St Patrick's Industrial School while the eldest boy was committed to a school in Dublin,

Patrick Murphy, eleven years of age, committed to Co. Dublin Industrial School from 18 Januar1927 until 27 October 1932, Philip Murphy, 9 years of age, committed to St Patrick's Industrial School, Kilkenny from 18 January 1927 to 9 November 1934 and Paul Murphy, 6 years

³⁸¹ Sixty - Second Report of the Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools, p. 8.

³⁸² Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 18 June 1928, 22 October 1929, 5 January 1932.

³⁸³ This is a fictitious example.

³⁸⁴ This does not mean that they were able to maintain payments.

³⁸⁵ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 28 July 1927.

of age, committed to St Patricks Industrial School, Kilkenny from 18 January 1927 to 11 March 1937.³⁸⁶

The sum owed to the Inspector of the Reformatory and Industrial Schools of Ireland was fifteen shillings. In other cases, the parents of committed children were ordered to pay one shilling and a variable amount of pence per week for the one child. This court cases indicates that the financial burden that resulted in providing for the upkeep of one of his sons was so great that he defaulted payment fifteen times since January. Murphy paid a minimum of £47 for the maintenance of his three children: the Sisters of Charity received £44 (ninety-three per cent) of the total money paid by Brendan Murphy. The financial stability of industrial schools is discussed at length in the Ryan Commission and it is clear that each industrial school relied upon the committal of children for it to remain viable. The Cussen Report on Reformatory and Industrial Schools established in 1936 stated that

it is difficult to arrive at a figure which would reasonably represent the average yearly cost of maintenance per child in the schools.... According to figures furnished to us for the year 1933, the cost per head per annum for food varied in the Senior Boys' Industrial Schools from £7 1s 2d to £20; for wearing apparel from £2 6s. 4d to £6 1s., and for medical expenses from 11s 7d to £2. In the Junior Boys' Industrial Schools; food varied from £10 10s. to £15 4s 2d. per head per annum; wearing apparel from £2 8s. 7d to £4 11s 9d., and medical expenses from 3s. 5d to £1 8s. In the Girls' Industrial Schools food varied from £9 8s. to £26 per head per annum, wearing apparel from £1 2s. 3d. to £11, and medical expenses from 3s. 11d. to £7.³⁸⁷

One particular case in Kilkenny indicates that the Sisters of Charity were eager to keep children under their care and the financial benefit to the Sisters of Charity is evident. There are no corresponding press reports or case files to indicate the level of suffering experienced by these children, however, it is clear from all cases of committal that the Society only committed children where it was considered that the children's future was safest in an industrial school. On 16 October 1928, the NSPCC selected the four children from a family in the village of Gowran for committal to industrial schools. The reasons given in the application were that the children were 'found wandering or of parents who were unable to exercise proper guardianship'.³⁸⁸ The four children, two boys and two girls, were committed to St Patrick's and St Joseph's Industrial Schools for one year, a measure which can be viewed as a temporary measure to give the children's father the opportunity to improve condition in the family

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 18 January 1927.

³⁸⁷ 'Finance', in, *The Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse*, Vol, IV (Dublin, 2009), p.46.

³⁸⁸ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 16 October 1928.

home.³⁸⁹ On 22 October 1929, six days after the four children of Kennedy family were discharged from their one year committal to St Patrick's and St Joseph's Industrial Schools, Inspector McDonagh, who took all four to court 372 days prior for being found wandering or without proper guardianship, filed for another application for committal for the same reason. In a case of history repeating itself, the District Court Justice had all four children returned to the Industrial Schools from which they had only just been released. Each child was sentenced to the maximum length of stay permitted.³⁹⁰ In addition, it was ordered that the children's father pay the sum one shilling a week to maintain their upkeep within the respective schools. The children's father was ordered to pay the Sisters of Charity a total of £91.³⁹¹ While there is no record to establish the exact circumstances the Kennedy children were exposed to upon return to their family home, the record shows that on 23 February 1932 John Kennedy appeared before Kilkenny District Court charged with failing to pay for the maintenance of his two daughters at St Joseph's Industrial School.³⁹²

In recognition of the heavy financial burthen placed upon Kennedy, Justice Molloy reduced the maintenance rate to six shillings a week for each of his two daughters. In consideration of the alternative options to committal for the District Justice and the NSPCC, there is evidence which indicates that the charges against John Kennedy compelled Justice Molloy to grant maintenance orders which matched the financial position of the parent. Directly after John Kennedy left court, the NSPCC filed an application for the committal of two boys to industrial schools on the grounds that they were found wandering and having a parent or guardian who was unable to exercise proper guardianship. Justice Molloy committed both children to the care of the Sisters of Charity and ordered that the children's father pay six shillings per week for their maintenance at St Patricks Industrial School, Kilkenny.

John Malone, eight years of age and Thomas Malone, 8 years of age, committed to St Patricks Industrial School, Kilkenny until 15 April 1940.³⁹³

The maintenance fee incurred by Patrick Malone for the removal of his twin sons to St Patrick's Industrial School was £20.³⁹⁴ In comparison, John Kennedy paid the Sisters of Charity £52 for the maintenance of his children in the same school. Despite the financial incentive to commit large

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 16 October 1928.

³⁹⁰ Louise Kennedy, 9 years of age, committed to St Josephs Industrial School, Kilkenny until 30 August 1936, Margaret Kennedy, 8 years of age, committed to St Josephs Industrial School, Kilkenny until 1 December 1937, Tomas Kennedy, 7 years of age, committed to St Patricks Industrial School, Kilkenny until June 1939 and Michael Kennedy, 4 years of age, committed to St Patricks Industrial School, Kilkenny until 18 August 1940.

³⁹¹ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 16 October 1928.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 23 February 1932.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 23 February 1932.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 23 February 1932.

families to institutions, it is worth noting that of the ten sets of siblings separated by the State, the NSPCC only brought two families with more than four children before the court. Committing large families was not an easy task: it required numerous spaces to become available at a number of schools in order to commit all children of that family. Likewise, a large family with no means of support would result in Kilkenny Corporation supplementing the capitation grant. Commenting on this issue, the Ryan Commission established the following:

Local authorities were obliged under the 1908 Children Act to provide for the maintenance and reception of offenders in Reformatory and Industrial Schools. They did not have to pay for children who were admitted on the application of their parents or guardians or for children whose parents were unable to look after them. Also they were exempt if the parents had committed an offence punishable by imprisonment that resulted in their children being detained.³⁹⁵

There is evidence in Kilkenny to suggest that the ratepayers in Kilkenny were opposed to covering the cost of children whose parents were simply unable to provide for their children in industrial schools. On 11 June 1931, *The Post* covered the committal of a traveller child to Artane Industrial School in Dublin. This committal was the only one involving members of the travelling community and it is a window into the marginalised role of traveller children during the 1920s and 1930s. Jane Helleiner, in her comments on traveller children and industrial schools, states:

Local authorities who were lobbying the central government for more powers to deal with the traveller problem, were ‘stoutly opposed’ to the committal of traveller children to industrial schools because this would serve to relieve parents of their responsibility and allow the maintenance of children to become a burden on the ratepayers³⁹⁶

The reporting of the committal of Michael Power supports Helleiner’s claims and may indicate why no children from travelling communities were committed to industrial schools in Kilkenny. *The Post*’s coverage of court proceedings shows that the Michael Power was not wanted at home and was a victim of neglect. Press coverage of the case indicated that a ten year old ‘itinerant tramp’ was found on Maudlin Street stating that he had lost his parents and had no food or residence in Kilkenny.³⁹⁷ Inspector McDonagh was informed of the child’s arrival in Kilkenny by Sergeant Murphy. The record shows that the child’s mother and stepfather did not want to care for him. On this date, Kilkenny County Council was represented in Court in the District Court by solicitor James Harte. It is clear

³⁹⁵ ‘Finance’, p. 48.

³⁹⁶ Jane Helleiner, ‘For the Protection of the Children’, in ‘For the Protection of Children: The Politics of Minority Childhood’, in *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 71, No.2, April, 1988, p.54.

³⁹⁷ *The Post*, 11 June 1931.

from the reporting by *The Post* that Mr Harte was in court to prevent the rate payers in Kilkenny having to contribute to the maintenance of a traveller child born in Athy Workhouse.³⁹⁸ In a response to the claim of the defendants' parents that they 'belong to every county in Ireland'³⁹⁹, Mr Harte told the court 'it is a shocking thing that these people can come into Kilkenny and plank this boy on the rates here.'⁴⁰⁰ Justice Molloy committed Michael Power to Artane Industrial School until his sixteenth birthday.⁴⁰¹ The ISPCC's submission to the Ryan Commission underscores the idea that large families were not always suitable for committal applications:

In one case example of a family with eleven children living in appalling, deprived and overcrowded conditions with children undernourished and in poor physical states, the inspector advised the parents that some of the children would be better off in certified schools.⁴⁰²

When one looks at the two committal applications where six children were committed, the displacement of children is significant. At Kilkenny District Court on 17 September 1929 the NSPCC selected six children from the village of Freshford for committal. The NSPCC annual reports show that Freshford was home to NSPCC committee member Mrs Purkis, wife of Reverend Charles Purkis, and it is most likely that reports of this family would have been passed to the Society's inspector by Mrs Purkis. Inspector McDonagh's application stated that all six children were found wandering or without parents who were in a position to exercise proper guardianship. In addition, it was ordered that the father of the children pay eight pence a week for the upkeep of his children at the schools to which they were committed. John Delany paid £90.34s to the Sisters of Charity for the maintenance of his children in their respective schools for a total of fifty-two years.⁴⁰³ Given the length of each individual's stay, and the fact that separate schools were used, the Delany's experienced long-term separation. When asked if siblings in St Joseph's and St Patrick's Industrial Schools were provided with time to visit each other, the Sisters of Charity replied with the following:

St Patrick's and St Joseph's Industrial School, Kilkenny holidays for the children in general began in 1941. Where children did not have suitable homes to return to, holidays were arranged with

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 11 June 1931.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 11 June 1931.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 11 June 1931.

⁴⁰¹ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 6 June 1931.

⁴⁰² *The Role of the ISPCC in the placement of Children in industrial schools*, p.2.

⁴⁰³ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 17 September 1929.

other families. With regard to siblings – they met on social occasions, for example, at concerts in school, on days’ outings, and at occasional films.⁴⁰⁴

In this regard, any of the children detained in Kilkenny during the period 1927-1937 were only granted holidays in exceptional circumstances. It is worth noting that the coverage of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations at St Patrick’s Industrial School made no reference to the girls of St Joseph’s being in attendance. Considering that all of the children were deemed to be living in unsuitable homes upon committal, it is unlikely that any were given an opportunity to holiday in their homes unless considerable improvements were made. Testimony from former inmates of the industrial schools to the Ryan Commission indicates that the opportunity for social interaction between siblings detained at separate industrial schools was limited at best. Given that Mary Delany was two years of age when she was committed to St Joseph’s, she would have had a very limited knowledge of her brother as a child. When addressing the separation of this family and alternative options, one could argue that the alternative to committal was to offer some form of family support. Based upon the maintenance order placed upon him by Justice Molloy, it would appear John Delany was not suffering from abject poverty, therefore the District Justice, who was bound to impartiality, could have instructed the NSPCC to guarantee that he use £90 to improve conditions for his six children. This method is exactly how the NSPCC curtailed absentee fathers who refused to provide financial assistance to their spouses throughout the 1920s and 30s.⁴⁰⁵ The NSPCC’s annual reports indicate that the ninety- six cent of the children the Society encountered were not brought before the courts for industrial school committal.⁴⁰⁶ While the Society’s statistics establish that most children received support from the Society, the following case of neglect show that there were alternatives to industrial school committal for poor children, in particular, the children of ex- servicemen. As outlined in this study, three members of the NSPCC’s executive committee were founding members of the Women’s Branch of the Legion of Ex-Servicemen; the following cases illuminate the ethos of Protestant philanthropy protecting Catholic children of ex servicemen. The Burke case is an example of the NSPCC overlooking industrial school committal despite the poverty of the family and neglect of the children. It is not possible to determine if the Society kept this family together because of their father’s service to the British Empire, however, it should be considered when addressing this case.

⁴⁰⁴ Reply from the Sisters of Charity on 16 May 2013 in response to question about sibling contact.

⁴⁰⁵ *NSPCC annual report 1933*, p. 8.

⁴⁰⁶ Outlined in Chapter Two.

Coverage of committal orders by the local Press

William Burke, ex-servicemen, was the most frequent offender before Kilkenny District Court between 1927 and 1930. If all industrial school committals were the end result of family poverty, Burke's children should have been ideal candidates for committal in order to secure their safety. His three children were found homeless on the streets of Kilkenny after periods of begging with their mother. As homeless children, suffering from parental neglect, it would be difficult to argue against industrial school committal. Yet the record shows that the NSPCC never considered William Burke's children for industrial school committal. If the County Home could be used to help homeless children it should also have been an option for children who lived in houses with parents who were able to pay maintenance orders to the schools. The Carroll children were orphaned and the remaining parent was deemed unable to support them and the same standards could be applied to the Burke family. William Burke was sentenced to prison five times between 1927 and 1929: consequently, his children were essentially fatherless due to his revolving door relationship with prison. In December 1927, Burke stole an overcoat and was sentenced to hard labour; as a result he was no longer in receipt of his pension and could no longer provide assistance to his children. If the Carroll children's surviving parent was unable to exercise proper guardianship, it can be considered to be no worse than the inability of Elizabeth Burke who had resorted to begging to support her children. The following provisions of the Children's Act 1908 could have been used by the NSPCC to place the Burke children into industrial schools: 'is found begging or receiving alms, is found not having any home, or visible means of subsistence, or is [found] having no parent or guardian, or a parent or guardian who does not exercise proper guardianship; or is found destitute, not being an orphan and having both parents or his surviving parent, is under the care of a parent or guardian who, by reason of reputed criminal or drunken habits, is unfit to have the care of the child.' Inspector McDonagh characterized Elizabeth Burke as follows:

I would not say much in her favour, The Rev Mother at the Co. Home does not speak very highly as to her habits of cleanliness. She states that she could not be kept clean although she had every facility. There is one thing that has to be said - she has no facilities from her husband to keep her.⁴⁰⁷

The Carroll and Delany siblings were separated by the State while the Burkes were sent to the County Home together, despite evidence which showed they were living in dangerous circumstances.

⁴⁰⁷ *Kilkenny People*, 8 January 1927.

Diarmaid Ferriter, in his submission to the published Ryan Report asserts that the failure of parents to safeguard their children or the absence of both parents, were two important reasons children ended up in schools'.⁴⁰⁸ Poverty amongst labouring families undoubtedly undermined the ability of parents to provide sufficient support for their children and as outlined in chapter one, many cases the poverty of children demanded that the NSPCC take necessary steps to protect children.

The following case illuminates family circumstances where despite the best intentions of the father, it was impossible for him to provide adequate care for his children. In December 1927, in a sitting at Callan District Court, Jim Murphy was brought to court by Garda Hogan, School Attendance Officer, for failing to send his daughters to school.⁴⁰⁹ It became apparent to Justice Molloy that Jim Murphy was not aware that he had a duty to send his children to school in accordance with the School Attendance Act which only came into force the previous year. Garda Hogan, according to Justice Molloy, had taken a very generous view of each parent and a strict order was made for strong attendance in the future. School attendance is a window into poverty and the record in Kilkenny shows that there was high non- attendance rate in the City and surrounding parishes. The District Minute Book shows that an average of twenty- five sets of parents were prosecuted every year by the School Attendance officer for failing to send their children to school. During the period 1927- 1937, School attendance was at its lowest during the months of November, October and December and prosecutions for non attendance took place in January and February.⁴¹⁰

The district court minute book shows that non-attendance was curtailed by a fine of two shillings. Helleiner asserts that school attendance was a hallmark of a safe childhood and in Kilkenny City there was evidence to suggest that school attendance was used to keep children out of harm. In 1927, the District Court heard the case of Timothy Murphy who was charged with seeking carnal knowledge of a girl aged between thirteen and sixteen years. The father of the girl was charged with allowing his daughter to engage in prostitution and the minute book reveals that he was bound to peace for two years. In addition, it was ordered that his daughter must attend school every day until she was eighteen, and must present a certificate of attendance every three months to the School Attendance Officer.⁴¹¹ If any of the terms or bail were breached the court would impose a six month sentence with hard labour on her father. In the Murphy case, Guard Hogan, according to Justice Molloy, had taken a very generous view of each parent and a strict order was made for strong attendance in the future. School attendance is a window into poverty and the involvement of the

⁴⁰⁸ Diarmaid Ferriter, 'Ferriter Report' in *The Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse*, Vol.6, (Dublin, 2009), p.8.

⁴⁰⁹ Justice Minute Book, Callan District Court, 2 December 1927.

⁴¹⁰ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 21 February 1928, 24 January 1931, 5 February 1935.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 26 April 1927.

NSPCC with the Murphy family is an example of the poverty experienced in Kilkenny. The *Kilkenny People* relayed the facts as follows

Inspector McDonagh, NSPCC, applied to have Laura Murphy and Sinead Murphy committed to an industrial school. The father of the children, Jim Murphy, was in court and consented to have the children committed. Inspector McDonagh stated that about 12 months ago Murphy's house fell and he had to take refuge in a stable. In this stable Murphy's wife died. There was no fire gate in the stable. A fire was lighted on the floor but there was no exit for the smoke. Murphy worked in a place a good distance away and only came back on Saturday night when he gave his wages to the children for the coming week.⁴¹²

It is not possible to establish for how long a period the NSPCC were engaged with this family, however, it is likely that the school attendance officer brought this case to the attention of the Society. Commenting on the role of the School Attendance Officer in the committal of children to industrial schools, David Gwynn Morgan established that

The school attendance officer was often the first State agent to get a glimpse of a family situation that later could involve the other support agencies. He (and it usually was a male) might find: a working mother who had to leave the children to get themselves off to school; a widow struggling on welfare pittance who was driven to putting a 13-year-old boy out to work; or a large family which was forced to keep the oldest girl at home to help with the babies – or any other of the multiplicity of problems disruptive of family life.⁴¹³

Inspector McDonagh travelled by bicycle and it is unlikely that he made the sixteen mile round trip from his house to Callan frequently enough to provide the type of assistance needed for a family living in such conditions. It is apparent that the Society and the State did not always commit the poorest children to industrial schools. This case underscores the housing problems in Kilkenny and this committal was an example of poor housing leading to the committal of children to local industrial schools.

The Justice Minute Book records that on 28 May 1930, Eileen Kelly was sentenced to St Dominick's Industrial School, Waterford in response to her alleged theft of a bicycle valued at four pounds and ten shillings. The child was prosecuted by An Garda Síochána. However, the following newspaper report would suggest that St Dominick's Industrial School had an agent in the court.

⁴¹² *Kilkenny People*, 10 December 1927.

⁴¹³ Gwynn- Morgan, 'Gateways'

Before Mr J.J Molloy, D.J., at Kilkenny District Court, on Tuesday last, a young girl aged 12 years, named Eileen Kelly, Burnchurch, was charged with the larceny of a lady's bicycle, the property of Martin Murphy, Desart. Her father, Tomas, was also charged in connection with the case. Martin Murphy stated that on March 24 he left Desart farmyard and went to look at some heifers. He put his bicycle against a tree and when he returned for it after about 15 minutes absence it was gone. It was valued at about 4pounds. He later identified the bicycle at the Guards Barracks. Guard Sheehan, Cuffesgrage, gave evidence of locating the bicycle abandoned on the roadside about 4/5 miles from Desart. He made enquiries around Kilmanagh where the defendant's step sister lived, and later he found Eileen Kelly on the road to Tullaroan. He understood that she went from house to house looking for work and also begging. The girl's father said his daughter was unable to ride a bicycle. The guard said she rode the bicycle from where he found her to Cuffesgrange, a distance of six miles. Inspector Tobin said it was a case for an Industrial School. Mr Molloy (to father) – Would you be satisfied to have the little girl go to an Industrial School? (Father)- I would not. The girl's mother was called and she said her daughter was going to her sister in law who worked in Kilmanagh with some underclothing. Mr. Molloy made an order that the child be committed to an Industrial School until she reached the age of 16 years. If the house was looked after in a proper manner the mother could send a petition to have the child let out and if he was satisfied that the home was properly kept, he would support the petition. In the meantime he would adjourn the case for a fortnight.⁴¹⁴

The details of this case, as reported in *The Post*, indicate that Inspector Tobin interjected and requested that Eileen Kelly be sent to an industrial school. The Justice Minute Book recorded all individuals who gave evidence in a case: the recording of this case in the Justice Minute Book does not list Inspector Tobin as an individual who gave evidence before the court. The committal of this girl appears to have been an orchestrated effort to remove this girl to an industrial school. On 20 May, Eileen Kelly was officially committed to St Dominick's Industrial School, Waterford until 10 May 1934.⁴¹⁵ Commenting on the committal of young offenders and the alternatives to committal orders, David Gywnn Morgan comments that the primary option was to 'dismiss the charge: this option was commonly adopted for first, second or third offenders. However as the offences committed by a particular offender built up, this was usually regarded as not practicable'.⁴¹⁶ It is evident that in this particular case, Eileen Kelly was not afforded any of the leniencies outlined by Morgan.

⁴¹⁴ *The Post*, 7 May 1930.

⁴¹⁵ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 20 May 1930.

⁴¹⁶ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 6 December 1937.

On 2 June 1930, the facts of the case become clouded. Eileen Kelly was brought before the court by An Garda Síochána for being found wandering on 25 May 1930 at Desart and having a parent or guardian who was not unable to exercise proper guardianship. Two weeks after the initial order for committal was made by the District Justice and five days after Eileen Kelly's committal was officially recorded in the minute book, the Gardaí brought her to court for offences committed after she was committed to an industrial school. The committal of this girl to an industrial school is one which appears to have been done without substantial grounds for committal or evidence of family poverty.

Throughout the period of investigation, Justice Molloy was faced with young offenders who were convicted of multiple incidents of theft yet never chose industrial school committal as a method of curbing young offenders. The following cases against three boys in Kilkenny show that Eileen Kelly was severely punished in comparison to other young offenders.

Epidemic of thefts was the heading to an extensive report of court proceedings featured in the 10 December issue of the *Kilkenny People* in 1927. The exchange between Superintendent Glynn, defence solicitors and Justice Molloy reveals orchestrated and widespread instances of theft by three youths from Abbey Street, Dean Street and Black Mill Street. James McGrath, Liam Kelly and John Murphy were charged with house breaking and larceny across the city over a period of weeks which Justice Molloy characterised as a terror on the local community. The District Court record of this wave of theft is reads as follows:

Case 375: that on the 25 October 1927, said defendants did unlawfully break and enter the corn mill the property of one John Dalton and did unlawfully steal take and carry away six corn sacks, six eggs and two pencils. That on the 27 November, they did break and enter the said premises and did steal seven eggs and a number of keys.⁴¹⁷

Case376: on the 16 November 1927, said defendants did break and enter St Canices Boys National School and did steal 6in Coppers. That on the 17 November, said defendants did break and enter the chemist at high st, property of James Ryan and steel 16 shillings silver, 2 in coppers and one torch and two mirrors. Patrick Murphy discharged; charges against other two are adjourned to 19 January.⁴¹⁸

Case 377: that on 6 November, they did break and enter the home of eligible and steal one ball. That on the 13 November, they did break and enter the forgoing home and steal half pound of

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 6 December 1927.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 6 December 1927.

sweets. That on 15 November, at abbey St, the defendants did break and enter the forgoing house and steal one penknife, on pliers, one key and six pence in coppers. That on 14 November, they did break and enter the corn mill of John Dalton and steal one dozen eggs. That on the 14 November, they did break and enter the dwelling of Kate Broaderick and steal six pence in coppers. That on the 24 November, they did at Abby St, break and enter the bottling stores of Thomas Grace and steal two large bottles of stout. Adjourned to 20 December against Patrick Costello, charges against Patrick Murphy Dismissed.⁴¹⁹

The 10 December issue of the *Kilkenny People* recorded that despite the extensive list of items missing and considered stolen by the boys, there was no actual evidence to convict the boys. The positive outcome of the case for Costello, Delany and Murphy can be accredited to the work of their respective legal aid solicitors Mr Healy and Mr. Nolan. Nolan and Healy's cross-examination of the Inspector O'Sullivan is both a window in the way the Gardaí dealt with suspects and the precarious situation defendants found themselves in if they did not have legal counsel.

Inspector O'Sullivan stated that on Dec.1 he arrested James McGrath and charged and cautioned him.

Mr.Nolan-What caution did you give him?

Inspector O' Sullivan- I said "You are not obliged to say anything, but anything you do say shall be taken down in writing and may be used in evidence.

Mr Nolan- You cannot use a statement against a youngster at all.

Supt. Glynn- In strict law there is no obligation to caution anyone.

Mr. Molloy- In strict law there is no necessity to caution anyone.

Mr Healy-You charged him with breaking into Ryan's?

O' Sullivan- I charged him with several offences.

Where did you arrest him?- "in the barracks"

How did he get to the barracks? – We brought him down.

In further reply to Mr. Healy witness said that statements made by Costelloe, who was over 15 years of age were voluntary.⁴²⁰

Mr Healy submitted that the boy was charged with a criminal offence and he made a statement with nobody present but a police officer. It remained to his worship's discretion whether he would admit the

⁴¹⁹ *ibid*, 6 December 1927.

⁴²⁰ *Kilkenny People*, 10 December 1927.

statement or not. Having regard to the boys age and to the position he was in at the time with nobody near him only those who arrested him, he would ask that the statements not be admitted.⁴²¹

Justice Molloy decided to admit the statements to which he and Mr Healy both agreed that if either was in Inspector O'Sullivan's position neither would accept a statement from Costelloe. As the case continued it became apparent that the Gardaí, over the duration of the thefts, were arresting and obtaining statements from Murphy and Delany. Both statements were objected to by defence counsel and Justice Molly conceded that sweeping confessions of guilt seemed unlikely to be so easily obtained from each defendant.⁴²² Following debate about the validity of circumstantial evidence from witnesses called and statements obtained, Mr Healy addressed Justice Molloy asking for charges to be dismissed due to a lack of convictable evidence and the circumstances in which each individual statement had been obtained. Mr Healy argued that the Gardaí had pressured each of the defendants to confess as 'the game was up'.⁴²³ As a result of legal representation, the Judge ruled that the charges against Murphy be dropped and charges against Patrick Costello adjourned. Patrick Delany was discharged conditionally on his entering into recognition of the peace and be of good behaviour and to offer for conviction and sentence when called on during a period of three years with bail at ten pounds.⁴²⁴ Justice Molloy orders that he be sent to his aunt's house in Piltown where he is to be sent to school and a report of his progress to be sent to District Court judge every six months.

While it is clear that Eileen Kelly did not have legal representation, her crimes were considerably less than the three boys and this accentuates the idea that she was chosen for committal in order to remove her from the community. The following case is an example of how a troublesome child was removed from the community at the request of the NSPCC and the Gardaí. During the period 1927- 1937, only one child was committed to a reformatory school in the District Court. In June 1931, the District Court heard the case of James Kelly who was charged with housebreaking and larceny in the city. Inspector McDonagh told the court that he had prosecuted the boy's parents in November 1930 and recommended that the children be placed in an industrial school. The boy's parents were fined; however, it was the opinion of Inspector McDonagh that James Kelly's parents were unable to exercise guardianship over the child. Speaking on the character of the accused boy's family, Supt Glynn told the court that

⁴²¹ Ibid., 10 December 1927.

⁴²² Ibid., 10 December 1927.

⁴²³ Ibid., 10 December 1927.

⁴²⁴ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 6 December 1927.

All the people in the street are nervous of this family- their property is not safe. I say the father and mother are absolute wasters - they are no good, especially so the mother. The father is a spineless and backboneless.⁴²⁵

Inspector McDonough's comments indicate that the Kelly family was a threat to family security and standards of decency. The coverage of this case indicates that the family in question was under the impression that they were being singled out unfairly and the boy's mother told the court that Superintendent Glynn and Inspector McDongah were acting in spite against the child.⁴²⁶ Mrs. Kelly's claims do hold weight as it is clear that the Gardaí in Kilkenny were knowledgeable of the ways in which the family broke the law. Sergeant Murphy made reference to James Kelly's low attendance at school and told the court that this was a reason for his failure in the confirmation exam the previous week.⁴²⁷ Superintendent Glynn told the court that the boy's mother was interested in gambling and backing horses; Sergeant Murphy also had evidence that she took a pair of boots provided to her by the Saint Vincent de Paul Society to the local pawn shop⁴²⁸. In comparative terms, there was a social stigma attached to this case that is not present in the case of Elizabeth Burke. Elizabeth Burke may have been a beggar but the District Justice noted that her problems were not of her making and she was making an effort to provide for her children. In the eyes of NSPCC, she was a neglectful parent to her children but her character was not considered to be the cause of the neglect. In contrast, Margaret Murray was similarly poor but all evidence provided by the Gardaí and the NSPCC depicted a woman who diverged from acceptable standards of motherhood, domesticity and decency. In August 1930, *The Post* published a piece entitled 'A Good Mother' and the content is a contemporary indication of what was expected from a woman in her role as mother.

A good Christian mother is one of the noblest works of God. She moulds the character and shapes the eternal destiny of her children...no statesman in the council of his country, no mariner of the chartless seas, no master in academy, or college, no warrior of the battlefield merits a richer need of praise, a larger tribute of honour than the good Christian mother.⁴²⁹

The Gardaí in this case were anxious to have James Kelly sent to a Borstal or Reformatory. However, Justice Molloy was reluctant to follow such actions without taking time to consider all available options. This is the only documented case where the District Justice showed reservations regarding the request to have a boy placed into care. Molloy noted that such a move would be the 'end

⁴²⁵ *The Post*, 23 June 1931.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 23 June 1931.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 23 June 1931.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, 23 June 1931.

⁴²⁹ *The Post*, 19 February 1930.

of the boy'.⁴³⁰ The case was adjourned for one week and the record shows that the final piece of advice given to the Judge was by Inspector McDonagh. James Kelly was fifteen years of age; therefore he was not eligible for committal to an industrial school. On 23 June, James Kelly was sentenced to a reformatory school for five years despite the desperate pleas of his father. In a first for the editor of *The Post*, the report of the District Court for this date on the front page of their 24 June edition. The press coverage of this committal indicates that the District Justice laughed at the pleas of a father to spare his son. James Kelly was found guilty of stealing one chocolate bar, eggs and rashers.

The issue of illegitimacy only appeared once before the courts in Kilkenny in regard to committal applications. Commenting on an issue which fuelled the work of the NSPCC, Sarah Anne Buckley asserts that

Poverty, Desertion, alcoholism, illegitimacy, mental illness and wife beating were all included under the umbrella heading of neglect, an expanding category that manifested fears about changes in family life.⁴³¹

Maria Luddy focuses on the role of single mothers in independent Ireland and she that

Both the State and the Church emphatically presented the women's place as being in the home and the ideal role of the Irish woman was a mother. Throughout the 1920s, and later, conflicting representations of unmarried mothers abounded. They were seen as innocent victims or corrupting agents, they were 'poor girls' or potential blackmailers. They brought shame to the nation and their families, Uneasiness about the apparent rise in the number of unmarried mothers forced the state and the Catholic Church to implement policies to stem illegitimacy'⁴³²

The following two cases will be used to contrast how the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children dealt with the only case of illegitimacy leading to industrial school committal in Kilkenny. On 2 April 1927, a woman named Claire Connolly, no fixed abode, was taken to court by Superintendent Glynn charged with the abandonment of her four year old daughter at Callan Road. For the prosecution, Margaret Shortall, a twenty-six year old female resident of Callan Road and Inspector McDonagh were called to be examined. After hearing the evidence, Claire Connolly was imprisoned for a period of one month in Waterford Gaol. Three days later, Inspector Michael

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 23 June 1931.

⁴³¹ Sarah Anne Buckley, NSPCC in Ireland, p.12.

⁴³² Maria Luddy, 'Sex and the Single Girl in the 1920s and 1930s Ireland', *The Irish Review*, no 35, Irish Feminisms, Summer 2007, p.81.

McDonagh stood before Justice Molly again. On this occasion, Inspector McDonagh applied for, and was successful in the committal application of Claire Connolly's four year old daughter to an Industrial School on the grounds that her mother was imprisoned and that she was illegitimate. Rose Connolly was committed to St Joseph's Industrial School, Kilkenny for just over eleven years – from 5 April 1927 to 1 September 1938. In comparative terms, Rose Connolly spent 135 months in St Joseph's Industrial School for an offence committed by her mother who only spent one month in prison.

The Ryan Report indicates that industrial schools were established in principle to deal with the endemic crisis of poverty: in this instance, the industrial school was used to remove an illegitimate child who was abandoned at no cost to the ratepayers in Kilkenny. While it is clear that Rose Connolly was abandoned and her mother was of no fixed abode, the following case undermined the necessity of Rose Connolly's committal. On 17 September 1927, Mary O'Brien was brought before a special sitting of Kilkenny District Court charged with being drunk in a public place and exposing a child less than seven years of age to conditions likely to cause unnecessary suffering⁴³³. *The Post* relayed the facts as follows:

On Friday evening last a woman of the tramp class, who appeared to be drunk and was carrying a baby in her arms, was using filthy language in Parliament Street, Kilkenny. Guard Gallagher arrested her and had her removed to Parliament Street station where she was detained. She gave her name as Mary O'Brien and said she came from Nenagh, Co. Tipperary. On Saturday Morning, at Special Court before Mr. J. J. Molloy, she was brought up and charged with being drunk and disorderly while in charge of a child under seven years of age. Mr. Molloy, after hearing the evidence of Guard Gallagher, sentenced her to one month's imprisonment without hard labour, the child to remain in her custody.⁴³⁴

In addition to this incident, on 19 January 1928, Mary O'Brien was brought before another special sitting of Kilkenny District Court on similar charges, the main difference being that Inspector McDonagh was present in the courtroom for this hearing. As with the previous case, the *Kilkenny Post* reported the proceedings:

Guard Halpin Parliament Street barracks, found a woman of the tramp class named Mary O'Brien, drunk and disorderly on the street, with a child, Eoin O'Brien, aged 18 months, under her charge. The child was exposed to the cold and the rain. The Guard arrested her and had her detained for

⁴³³ Justice Minute Book, Kilkenny District Court, 17 September 1927.

⁴³⁴ *The Post*, 21 September 1927.

the night. On Thursday she was brought before Mr J. J Molloy D.J., at a special court, in the courthouse Kilkenny charged with being drunk and disorderly and with exposing a child in such a manner as to cause it unnecessary suffering, Guard Halpin gave evidence of finding the defendant exposing the child and being drunk and disorderly. Mr. Molloy sentenced the defendant to a month's imprisonment on each of the two charges, the sentences to run concurrently. Inspector McDonagh, who watched the proceedings on behalf of the N.S.P.C.C, had the child removed to the Co. Home, Thomastown, until the mother's release. The defendant was sentenced to imprisonment last September for a similar offence.⁴³⁵

If one compared the cases involving Rose Connolly and Eoin O'Brien, the inconsistency of Justice Molloy and the NSPCC in the committal process is clear. The press reports of this case indicated that Edward O'Brien was subject to serious neglect. Over the space of four months, Mary O'Brien was found destitute and drunk twice on the streets of Kilkenny fifty five miles from her stated home in Nenagh. It is clear from the newspaper's account that the NSPCC allowed Edward O'Brien to be allowed back into the care of his mother after she was released from her second term of imprisonment. There is no record that Edward was an illegitimate child; however, the facts indicate that on both occasions his mother was not accompanied by a husband or father figure. The neglect charges against Rose Connolly's mother are the only case where the NSPCC brought a member of the public to court in order to testify against the defendant. While there is no conclusive evidence to show that Rose Connolly was placed into St Joseph's because she was illegitimate, the record in Kilkenny shows that children who were destitute were sent to the County Home. Luddy asserts that the State and the Church aimed to manage the issue of illegitimate children and the Connolly committal is evidence of such a policy in practice in Kilkenny.

Over a period of ten years, the Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County Branch of the NSPCC made the decision to place 112 children from County Kilkenny into industrial schools. In their respective histories of County Kilkenny, Marilyn Silverman, Fedelma Maddock, William Brennan and Anna Nolan present members of the NSPCC, in their private capacity, as people who did not enjoy good relations with the working classes. The motivation of women from the landed gentry and professional Protestant classes to join the NSPCC appears to have been a product of class and tradition. While it is difficult to ascertain how dedicated the NSPCC's membership was to the people the Society aimed to protect, membership of the NSPCC in Kilkenny was partly an expression of status and wealth. Turtle Banburry's vanishing Ireland Project refers to Lord Teignmouth and Mrs

⁴³⁵ *ibid.*, 25 January 1928.

Solly Flood and it is evident from Edward Hayes's recollection of working at Coolmore that Mrs Solly Flood was a compassionate woman:

during one Sunday lunch, he recalls how the General's wife sat herself beside the Bishop and then berated the local Vicar for being so consistently useless and failing to visit the sick and needy of the parish. One of the other diners that day was the 6th Lord Teignmouth, who lived at nearby Brown's Barn. Edward recalls Lord Teignmouth looking anxiously at the clock while Mrs Solly Flood continued her tirade. An enthusiastic supporter of the GAA, his Lordship was longing to slip off into Thomastown to watch a hurling match. Some years later, Edward came across Lord Teignmouth's diary and found a reference that brought back the memory. 'Lunch Marguerite. Never so bored in all my life. She did nothing but ridicule the Vicar for the entire meal with the houseboy listening'.⁴³⁶

While the local and economic landscapes changed dramatically for the landed gentry in County Kilkenny following independence and the Great War, the NSPCC allowed the landed gentry and Protestants from professional backgrounds to exercise some of their former power over the working classes. Silverman describes the charity of the gentry in Thomastown during the 1930s as moral component of the employer-employee tie and the NSPCC's annual reports underscore the sense of responsibility the Society's members had towards the working classes. As the case files of the Kilkenny Branch of the NSPCC no longer exist, it is not possible to determine how active the Prior Wandesfordes, Solly Floods, Teignmouths, Wheeler Cuffes and Lady Desart and other committee members were in the committal of children to industrial schools. That being said, committee members would have been aware of committal applications which remained constant throughout the 1920s and 1930s. It is difficult to determine why the NSPCC in Kilkenny did not acknowledge the committal of children to industrial schools. As the reports were published, it may have been a way to reduce the negative aspect of the Society's work in an attempt to increase donations. The annual reports for the period 1933-1937 are undoubtedly promotional pieces aimed at furthering the influence of the society. Detailed reporting of the committal of children by the Society may have further isolated the position of committee members and also alienated other members of landed gentry who may have donated to the Society. In Thomastown, for example, the McCalmont family who lived at Mount Juliet estate was the wealthiest in the district yet there is no record of them joining or donating money to the NSPCC despite evidence that Major McCalmont donated to the Mayor's Coal Fund.

The NSPCC did positive work in Kilkenny during the 1920s and 1930s: the society's annual reports reflect the work of the inspector which was done out of concern for children. The

⁴³⁶ Turtle Bunburry, *Vanishing Ireland*, Interviews, Edward Hayes.

financial shortcomings of the Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's branch of the Society undermined its ability to give material assistance to needy families. The value of family supervision by Inspector McDonagh is not possible to ascertain and it is most likely that warnings did little to alleviate the poverty experienced by families the NSPCC engaged with. Commenting on the outcome of work done by the Society, Sarah Anne Buckley states that

Although the Society did undoubtedly help many families to acquire financial assistance from the state, the positive results were limited, and the focus on neglect only served to perpetuate class and gender inequalities.⁴³⁷

While the predominant view of women in the 1920s and 1930s was that of mothers and housewives, the NSPCC reaffirmed this perception by protecting women within the home out of regards for their children's welfare. The negative connotation attached to the NSPCC, beyond the committal of children to industrial schools, during the timeframe can be traced to the fact that Inspector McDonagh's work came at an expense to the parents of children. Whether it was improving relations between parents, securing medical treatment for children, obtaining financial assistance for deserted mothers or encouraging temperance, McDonagh's work would have been seen as interference in family affairs. In regards to the NSPCC's role in committal applications, the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse stated that

the general public perception at the time was that the Society was heavily involved in committing children to Industrial Schools, hence the apprehension in the minds of the public associated with the 'cruelty man'.⁴³⁸

For the 112 children who were sent to industrial schools on the request of the NSPCC's inspector during the 1920s and 30s, the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse has established that they suffered physical and psychological abuse. In its conclusions on St Joseph's Industrial School, the commission established that

children were severely physically punished and treated unsympathetically by some of the care staff, which continued into later years. Even when complaints were made, no action was taken by management to protect the children.⁴³⁹

David Gwynn Morgan, when commenting on the local perception of industrial schools, noted that the schools were used as a threat by parents, Morgan states that:

⁴³⁷ Sarah Anne Buckley. 'NSPCC in Ireland', p.13.

⁴³⁸ *The Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse* Vol. 5, p.5.

⁴³⁹ St Joseph's Industrial School, 1873-1999, in, *The Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse*, Vol. II, (Dublin, 2009) , p. 545.

It seems that the general public living in the locality of a School had some broad idea of the conditions. It was not uncommon for parents to threaten children who were misbehaving with some such formula as: 'Stop it or you'll be sent to Artane / Upton / Letterfrack...' Both sides knew what was meant.⁴⁴⁰

In Kilkenny, there is evidence which shows that the industrial school was used as threat towards children to improve their attendance at school. The local press in Kilkenny in 1928 reported the mysterious disappearance of a boy from his home on Chapel Lane.

It appears that during the past couple of weeks the attendance of the boy at school had not been satisfactory, and on Wednesday last Guard Gallagher, school attendance office, called to the house to serve a warning notice. The boy's father was unaware of his son's absence from school as he had been sent every day. On return home from work that evening the father was surprised to get the following note written by his son...Dear Father- By the time you will read this I will be far away. I did not go to school today because I was fed up. I don't know what happened me. I would not go to Clonmel at any rate as I would be ashamed. Good-bye for now, you might never see me again.⁴⁴¹

Considering that the NSPCC sometimes used intimidation to obtain results and the fact that the boy was too old to be committed to St Patrick's Industrial School, the reference to Clonmel and the boy's sense of shame would lead one to conclude that the boy was running away from a threat of committal to Ferryhouse Industrial School. One week after the mysterious disappearance of a boy out of fear of Clonmel, the NSPCC committed four children from neighbouring Stephen Street to industrial schools and eldest boy in that family was committed to Ferryhouse Industrial School. Given the close proximity of the families, the age of the runaway boy and the impending committal of a child to Ferryhouse, it is highly likely that Inspector McDonagh threatened the child with committal in order to improve his attendance at school.

While the NSPCC in Kilkenny repeatedly separated siblings the District Justice approved every application made by the Society. Consequently, without the approval of the District Justice, the committals by the NSPCC could not have occurred. When addressing the alternative solutions to industrial school committal available to the NSPCC in Kilkenny, the record shows that the industrial school committals were a direct conflict with the central ethos of the Society. Evidence shows that Inspector McDonagh worked in cooperation with the Sisters of Charity and, given the close proximity of his office to both industrial schools; it is likely that he was communicating with the institutions

⁴⁴⁰ David Gwyn Morgan, 'Society and the Schools', p. 235.

⁴⁴¹ *The Post*, 10 July 1928.

which cared for ninety per cent of his committal applications. There is no record to show that he was committing children on the request of the Sisters of Charity. However, the Wexford case files held by the ISPCC show that an industrial school in Wexford was seeking committals in order to fill vacancies and relieve financial difficulties during the same timeframe. In a community where the clergy exercised control over alcohol, communism, dance halls and housing, it is probable that Catholic clergy in Kilkenny city and county were proponents of committing children to industrial schools on the grounds that industrial schools were seen as positive institutions run by the Sisters of Charity. Both schools had a strong Catholic tradition with St Patrick's Industrial School being founded in 1879 by Bishop of Ossory, Dr. Moran. Likewise, St Joseph's Industrial School was founded by Bishop Moran in 1872. The Ryan Commission established that the Sisters of Charity had been a presence in Kilkenny since 1861, caring for the sick in fever and work house hospitals and prisons.⁴⁴² Canon Cavanagh enjoyed a decade of self-promotion during the 1930s and his entry to the NSPCC at the position of Vice President is an indication of his influence over social issues in the City.

The record in Kilkenny shows that Society was the only organisation bringing children to court seeking committal and this would lead labouring families from areas of where multiple children were committed from to fear the NSPCC. Measuring the role of the NSPCC in the community on the statistics available indicates that if the NSPCC was not taking children to industrial schools, the Society was supervising the livelihoods of hundreds of parents. The NSPCC's annual reports indicate that the inspector served the community by policing the lifestyle of poor men and women in order to prevent them from neglecting their children. Considering the context of widespread poverty and unemployment in which the NSPCC was operating during the 1920s and 1930s, the 112 committal applications brought before Kilkenny District Court numbered four per cent of the total number of children the Society's inspector investigated. While it is evident that the committal rate was a small percentage of the work the Society did, it is worth noting that committals were dictated by the availability of places within each school. For example, if St Patrick's and St Joseph's Industrial schools had a larger capacity, would the number of committals by the NSPCC for this period been greater? In total, there was 312 available spaces in Kilkenny's industrial schools and the figures released by the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse indicates that in the year 1946-1947, forty per cent (125) of the 312 spaces in Kilkenny were held by children from the County.⁴⁴³ In St Joseph's Industrial School, 61 of the 126 spaces in the school were held by girls from Kilkenny. Likewise, in St Patrick's Industrial School, 64 of 186 of the places within the school were held by boys from the

⁴⁴² 'St Joseph's Industrial School, Kilkenny, 1873-1999', p.497.

⁴⁴³ David Gwynn Morgan, 'Society and the Schools'

County.⁴⁴⁴ When one considers that the NSPCC investigated 2363 children in Kilkenny, it is worth noting that there was only room for five per cent of these children in Kilkenny's industrial schools.

In September 1937, Michael McDonagh retired from his position as the NSPCC's Inspector after twenty-six years of service. On 22 September 1937, *The Post*, writing under the heading, 'Retirement of Popular official', noted that

the committee of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County Branch, are anxious that the resignation of Mr. Michael J. McDonagh, inspector of the Society for more than 26 years, should be marked by some presentation to him expressive of his great services and of the sympathy and understanding with which they were carried out. ⁴⁴⁵

The Post noted that contributions to his retirement fund could be sent to any committee member of the Society, however, 'the committee decided that individual subscriptions should not be acknowledged in the Press but at the closing of the fund a statement will be made of the total amount subscribed'. ⁴⁴⁶ Six days prior to *The Post's* advertisement of the anonymous subscription fund, the *Kilkenny People* received a letter from NSPCC committee member Colonel Butler detailing that the first subscribers to McDonagh's retirement fund.⁴⁴⁷ From the list of early subscribers, it is clear that committee members of the Society were appreciative of his work. Canon Cavanagh, NSPCC Vice-President, gave £2 while fellow Vice-President Mrs Prior Wandesforde donated £1 to his retirement fund. Former Honorary Secretary Miss McCreery gave £1 as did the Honorary Secretary of the Society in 1937, Mrs Anderson. When addressing the people who drove the mission of the NSPCC in Kilkenny, the record shows that Inspector McDonagh received £11 as a parting gift for his services to the Society. In contrast to this, the NSPCC only provided £2 worth of material assistance to the 2363 children the Society interacted with during the period 1933- 1937.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ *The Post*, 22 September 1937.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., 22 September 1937.

⁴⁴⁷ *Kilkenny People*, 16 September 1937.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this thesis establishes that in County Kilkenny, the NSPCC was the only organisation which was applying for the committal of children to industrial schools through the District Court. In terms of the number of children the Society had committed to industrial schools, the 112 children brought before Kilkenny District Court in the ten years, 1927-1937, represented four per cent of the total number of children the NSPCC engaged with in the period. The District Court Minute Books held in the National Archives and the regional courthouses which were consulted for this contains the number of applications the NSPCC/ISPCC filed throughout Ireland.

In 2009, the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse presented the inspector of the Society as a paid official acting independently to the committee except for instances where industrial school committal or prosecution was necessary. A reading of Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County Branch annual reports show that the NSPCC was a rigidly structured philanthropic organisation whose members were proud of the work the Society conducted in Kilkenny. The history of the NSPCC also adds a new chapter to the history of County Kilkenny's Protestant landed gentry and in particular Ellen Lady Desart.

The 1920s and 1930s were described as a period when the Protestant landed gentry were in a financial and numerical decline. However, in Kilkenny, the NSPCC was an expression of the dwindling power of the Protestant landlord class. The financial decline of the Protestant community in Kilkenny is expressed within the financial statements of the Society's annual reports between 1933 and 1937. Considering that the Kilkenny's Protestant communities contributed financially to Inspector McDonagh's wages for twenty-six years, it is unlikely that he operated independently of the lady collectors or branch representatives. Likewise, considering that that the inspector's wage was more than half of the Branch's expenditure, it would have been counterproductive to the financial and operational needs of the NSPCC for committee members not to engage with the inspector. The NSPCC's request for members of the public to contact district members if they wished to report a family or children to the Society is further evidence that the inspector and the committee members were dependant on each other if the Society was to function effectively across fourteen districts representing 20,182 children. It is clear that the NSPCC in Kilkenny could not have functioned without the public reporting cases to the Society's district representatives.

The NSPCC annual reports show that throughout the period 1933-1937, Inspector McDonagh focused his work primarily in Kilkenny City and visits to the south of the County were not frequent enough to mention in the Society's annual reports. In discussion with Bernadette Murphy on her

childhood in Clodagh in South Kilkenny, Bernadette stated that it was her opinion that the ‘cruelty man’ did not exist and that he was simply a story used to scare children.⁴⁴⁸

The high concentration of social problems and poor housing in Kilkenny City naturally focused the work of the inspector within the City. Likewise, Kilkenny City was home to other charitable organisations such as the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Maternity Association and St Anne’s Clothing Guild. The support network offered by these organisations allowed the NSPCC to provide practical aid to families at a time when the inspector travelled by bicycle and would not have been able to transport large quantities of clothing or bed cloths to a family in the southern parishes of the county. Paul Gilligan, then Chief Executive Officer of the ISPCC, in his testimony before the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse in 2006, stated that the NSPCC focused on practical support for families:

I think it is best to say that the Inspectors appeared to focus on practical support. It was about providing counselling or social work, as we understand it today. It would be very much about trying to organise clothes, perhaps in some cases organise a job, certainly medical care for children, in some cases housing. But it is clearly practical support and also providing the parents with clear indication of what would be expected.⁴⁴⁹

The NSPCC during the timeframe studied in this thesis showed little respect to parents who through deference or bad habits placed their children into dangerous or destitute circumstances. While the welfare of children dominated the work of the Society, it is evident from prosecutions taken against parents that Inspector McDonagh did not entertain parents whom he felt were responsible for the neglect of their children. When one looks at newspaper coverage of cases of neglect in Kilkenny, it is evident that defendants felt that Inspector McDonagh was either out to get them or unsympathetic to their circumstances. It is worth noting that the actions of the inspector were approved by the Branch Honorary Secretary and in this regard the stern attitude was also indicative of how the Society viewed a defendant.

This study establishes that NSPCC Vice-President, Mrs Prior Wandesforde, Honorary Treasurer, Lord Teignmouth, Honorary Secretary of the Ladies Branch, Lady Teignmouth, committee members Mrs Solly Flood and Lady Charlotte Wheeler Cuffe had a distant relationship with the

⁴⁴⁸ Interview with Bernadette Murphy

⁴⁴⁹ Evidence of Mr. Paul Gilligan Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse, Public Hearings, 20 June 2006 www.childabusecommission.ie/about/documents/public_transcript_day228_gilligan_june202006.txt accessed on 17 November 2013.

working classes. The emergence of Nicholas Boran and the labour movement in Castlecomer during the early 1930s revealed that the Wandesforde family had little regard for families the NSPCC was designed to support. The 1930s was a decade when the Wandesforde Family, Fr. Cavanagh and Bishop Collier took a stance against communism and the betterment of working and living conditions for the families of Kilkenny's third largest town. Nicholas Boran's attacks on the Wandesfordes and Fr. Cavanagh revealed that the sympathies of the leading members of the clergy in the Diocese of Ossory lay with the farming and landlord classes at the expense of the poor. In Thomastown, the 1930s saw the fishing community and the Teignmouth and Solly Flood families enter a period of tension as result of the dispute over fishing rights and the perceived bias of Justice McCabe towards the gentry.

It is probable that Inspector McDonagh faced little opposition from within the Society if he made the request to place children into one or more industrial schools. McDonagh retired in 1937 after twenty-six years of service to the NSPCC and the donations made to McDonagh's retirement fund are a reflection of the high esteem he was held in throughout his tenure. Of the seven provisions of the Children's Act 1908 outlining the legal grounds for the committal of children, the wandering section was the most subjective and heavily used in Kilkenny. It is not possible to determine if children were found wandering alone on the streets or were simply playing on the local street near their homes. Likewise, defining if parents or guardians were unable to care for their children was based on the decision of the Honorary Secretary and was open to interpretation.

While the NSPCC had over eighty committee members across three counties, the Honorary Secretary essentially held all of the power over the direction Inspector McDonagh took when dealing with families. In her last year as NSPCC Honorary Secretary in 1934, Miss McCreery approved the committal of just two children to an industrial school. While it is not possible to explain why this was the case, it is evidence that the committal of children was inconsistent and open to variables such as capacity levels at schools, family size and whether there was sufficient grounds to commit children. From the sources available, there is no evidence to show that the landed gentry families which financed the NSPCC in Kilkenny had a relationship with the Sisters of Charity or were supporters of St Patrick's or St Joseph's Industrial Schools. *The Post's* coverage of the Golden Jubilee at St Patrick's Industrial School shows that Inspector McDonagh was an invited guest of the Reverend Mother; however, it is clear from the list of apologies that none of the NSPCC's members from Protestant landed gentry families were invited to the celebration.

During the period of this study, the NSPCC faced no criticism in Kilkenny. Nobody from the press or the political, religious and legal profession questioned the work of the Society or Inspector

McDonagh. As is evident from the statements made by Justice Molloy in Kilkenny District Court, Lord Chief Justice Molony, Minister for Finance Sean McEntee, and Minister for Education Thomas Derrig and the Inspector of the Reformatory and Industrial Schools of Ireland, the NSPCC was seen as necessary tool in the reformation of young working class children.

In Kilkenny, evidence indicates that Justice Molloy believed that Inspector McDonagh's judgement was sufficient to place children into industrial schools and the record in Kilkenny shows that he never denied committal applications made by the NSPCC. The Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's County Branch of the NSPCC did not acknowledge that Inspector McDonagh applied for committal orders. In this regard, the figures released every year in the NSPCC's annual reports distorted the public's impression of the Society by not disclosing how many children the Society committed to industrial schools. The published reports for 1933-1937 did not reveal to the public that forty-one children from Kilkenny were brought before Justice Molloy and placed into industrial schools at the request of Inspector McDonagh.

Given the widespread poverty experienced in Kilkenny during this period, the NSPCC's committee members and inspector were ultimately faced with problems with which they were ill-equipped to deal with. With regard to the role of the NSPCC within the broader community, the Society described itself as a 'terror to evil doers' and such inflammatory language indicates a disconnection between the Society and the people it aimed to help. This study has shown that it is not possible generalise about the work of Inspector McDonagh as it is evident that he was engaged in prosecution and charity work at a time when he was the only child welfare officer in County Kilkenny. The 2363 children the NSPCC encountered during the five years 1933-1937 is evidence of the scale of the workload which Inspector McDonagh faced.

The portrayal of the NSPCC by the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse in the committal of children to industrial schools did not address the NSPCC's membership or the unique work of each branch of the Society. Consequently, the Commission did not recognise the role of the NSPCC in the lives of working class children and their parents throughout the formative years of the Irish state. While the work of the NSPCC in Kilkenny has undoubtedly had a negative impact on the hundreds of children placed into industrial schools, the measures taken by the NSPCC were done in a context of limited financial and human resources. These limitations will offer no comfort to the men and women who spent their childhoods detained in industrial schools and were the victims of physical, psychological and sexual abuse while in these institutions. Both St Patrick's and St Joseph's Industrial Schools were examined by the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse in dept for instances of abuse

and while it is clear that there was no indication that the public were aware of such abuses taking place during the 1920s and 30s, both schools were seen as a positive influence on the lives of children by the State and the NSPCC.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Official Sources:

Justice Minute Books, Callan District Court 1927-1937 (National Archives Dublin)

Justice Minute Books, Kilkenny District Court, 1927-1937 (National Archives Dublin)

Justice Minute Books, Gowran District Court, 1927-1937 (National Archives Dublin)

Justice Minutes Books, Carlow District Court, 1927- 1937 (National Archives Dublin)

Minute Books, Kilkenny Borough Council, (Kilkenny Municipal Offices)

The Role of the ISPCC in the placement of children in Industrial Schools (ISPCC Submission to Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse)

Online Sources

The Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse, (Dublin, 2009)

<http://www.childabusecommission.ie/>

Dáil Debates, available at <http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/>

1901 and 1911 Census (National Archives Dublin)

1926 and 1936 Census Reports (Central Statistics Office) available at: <http://www.cso.ie>

Turtle Bunburry, Vanishing Ireland, Interviews, Edward Hayes available at

http://www.turtlebunbury.com/interviews/interviews_ireland/vanishing_two/interviews_ireland_ward_hayes.html

Published Reports:

Combat Poverty Agency, Submission to National Crime Council on the consultation paper, *Tackling the Underlying Causes of Crime: A Partnership Approach*, December 2002 (Dublin, 2002)

Department of Education, *Annual Report for the school years 1925-26-27 and the Financial and Administrative year 1926-1927* (Dublin, 1928),

Department of Education, *Annual Report 1933-1934* (Dublin, 1935)

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Kilkenny and Queen's County Branch, Annual Reports 1933-1939

Sixty-Second Report of the Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools of Ireland to the Minister for Education (Dublin, 1924)

Printed Primary Sources

Pastorals:

Downey, Rev. James, Coadjutor Bishop of Ossory, *Pastoral on the Vice of Injustice* (Kilkenny, 1927)

Newspapers:

The Post

Kilkenny People

Waterford News and Star

Irish Times

Journals

Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science

Anthropological Quarterly

Archivium Hibernicum

Gender and Sexuality in Modern Ireland

Journal of the Statistical and Social Enquiry Society of Ireland

Law and Human Behaviour

Saothar: Journal of the Labour History Society

The Old Limerick Journal

Oral Interviews: *

Mary Kelly

Bernadette Murphy

*The original names have been changed here to protect individuals' privacy.

Secondary Sources:

Books

Barnes, Jane, *Irish Industrial Schools: 1868-1908* (Dublin 1989)

Barrington, Ruth, *Health, medicine and politics in Ireland 1900-1979* (Dublin, 1987)

Bence- Jones, Mark, *Twilight of the Ascendancy* (London 1987)

Bowen, Kurt, *Protestants in a Catholic State: Ireland's Privileged Minority* (Belfast, 1983).

Breatnach, Aoife, 'Planning and Philanthropy: Travellers and Class Boundaries in Urban Ireland, 1930- 1975' In Fintan Lane (ed.), *Politics, Society and the Middle Class in Modern Ireland* (Hampshire, 2010)

Brennan, Anna, Nolan, William, 'Nixie Boran and the Colliery Community of North Kilkenny' in William Nolan, Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Kilkenny: History and Society* (Dublin, 2001)

Clear, Catriona, *Women of the house: women's household work in Ireland, 1926-1961: discourses, experiences, memories* (Dublin, 2000)

Daly, Mary E. "The Condition of Women in Twentieth-Century Ireland", in Anthony Bradley & Maryann Valiulis (eds.), *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Ireland* (1998)

Dunne, Declan, *Peter's Key, Peter DeLoughry and the Fight for Irish Independence* (Cork, 2002)

Ferriter, Diarmaid, *Lovers of Liberty: local government in twentieth century Ireland* (Dublin, 2001)

Ferriter, Diarmaid, *A Nation of Extremes: The Pioneers in the Twentieth Century* (Dublin, 1999)

Ferriter, Diarmuid, *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2012)

Ferriter, Diarmuid, *The Transformation of Ireland: 1900-2000* (Dublin, 2004)

Flanagan, Francis, *Poverty and Prejudice: a Study of Irish Immigrants in York, 1840-1875* (Cork, 1982)

Healy, Mary, *For the Poor and the For the Gentry: Mary Healy remembers her life* (Dublin, 1989)

Horgan, John *The Irish Media: A Critical History* (London, 2004)

- Kearns, Kevin C., *Dublin Tenement Life: An Oral History* (Dublin, 1994)
- Kennedy, Finola *Cottage to creche: family change in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001)
- Kennedy Finola , *Frank Duff* (Dublin, 2011)
- Maddock, Fidelma ‘The Cot Fishermen of the River Nore’, in William Nolan, Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Kilkenny: History and Society* (Dublin, 2001)
- McAdams, J. Ellen, Countess of Desart and Captain the Hon Otway Cuffe (Kilkenny, 1958)
- O hOgartaigh, Margaret and Preston, Margaret (eds), *Gender and Medicine in Ireland, 1700 - 1950* (New York, 2012)
- Reilly, Ciaran J. ‘The burning of country houses in Co. Offaly during the revolutionary period 1920-3’, in Terence Dooley & Christopher Ridgway (eds), *The Irish country house, its past, present and future* (Dublin, 2011)
- Silverman, Marilyn, *An Irish Working Class: explorations in political economy and hegemony: 1800-1950* (Toronto, 2001)
- Silverman, Marilyn, ‘A labouring Man’s daughter: Constructing respectability in South Kilkenny’, in Chris Curtin, Thomas M. Willison, (eds.), *Ireland From Below, Social Change and Local Communities*. (Galway, 1987)
- Silverman, Marilyn, ‘Social Life and Meaning: The Case of Contemporary Thomastown’, in William Nolan, Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Kilkenny: History and Society* (Dublin, 2001)
- White, John, *Church and State in Modern Ireland 1923-1979* (Dublin, 1988)
- Journal Articles:**
- Buckley, Sarah Anne, ‘Child Neglect, Poverty and Class: the NSPCC in Ireland, 1889 – 1939-a case study’ *Saothar: Journal of the Labour History Society*, No 33, 2008, pp 57-70.
- Deeny, James, ‘Poverty as a Cause of Ill-Health’ in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Enquiry Society of Ireland*, ,Vol. XVI No. 3, 1939/1940, pp75-89.
- Dunne, Eamon, ‘Action and Reaction: Catholic Lay Organisations in Dublin in the 1920s and 1930s’, *Archivium Hibernicum*, Vol. 48, 1994, pp. 107-118.
- Dnnne, John Patrick, ‘Poverty Problem for a Patriot Parliament’, in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Enquiry Society of Ireland*, Vol. XIV No. 2, 1920-1923, pp189-198.
- Feeley, Pat, ‘The Castlecomer Mine and Quarry Union’, *The Old Limerick Journal*, Vol. 4, Spring 1981.
- Fuchs, Rachel Ginnis, ‘Crimes against Children in Nineteenth –Century France: Child Abuse’ in *Law and Human Behaviour*, in 1982, Vol.6, No.3-4 (Historical Lessons for Contemporary Problems) pp237-259

Luddy, Maria, 'Sex and the Single Girl in the 1920s and 1930s Ireland', *The Irish Review*, no 35, Irish Feminisms, Summer 2007, pp 94-110.

Lynch, P., Whitaker, T.K. et al. 'Discussion on the problem of full employment', in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, Vol. XVII, Part 3, 1945/1946, pp438-459.

Lyon, Stanley. 'Symposium on Irish social services: unemployment—the statistical background', in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, Vol. XVII No. 1, 1942/1943, pp120-125

Mangold, George B., 'The Church and Philanthropy, in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 30, *Social Work of the Church*, November 1907, pp 94-110.

McKenna, Yvonne , 'Embodied Ideals and Realities: Irish Nuns and Irish Womanhood 1930s-1960' in *Eire-Ireland*, olume 41, Nos.1 &2, Spring/Summer 2006 , pp 40-63.

Molony, Thomas F. 'The Prevention and Punishment of Crime', in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Enquiry Society of Ireland*, Vol. XIV No. 2, 1920-1923, pp117-132.

Riordan, Susannah 'Age of consent and the debate on gender and justice, 1922-1935', in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. XXXVII No. 147, May 2011, p.430.