INTRODUCTION

In 2004 Mary O’Riordan carried out a photographic survey for Limerick Civic Trust of creamery buildings in County Limerick that were still, at that time, standing. Due to the closure of all the rural creameries in Limerick because of the change from small, community based operations to large centralized industries a number of these buildings were being demolished or were under threat, especially those located on prime development sites on the outskirts of towns and villages. It was therefore important that a photographic archive of the remaining structures be compiled before any more were lost to time and memory.

Like the school, the church, the post office and the forge, the creamery was one of the linchpins of rural communities and an important part of the social network. The creamery was a place where farmers met regularly on a daily basis and kept abreast of local events and happenings within the community. Indeed, for the dairying lands of East Limerick creameries are as much a part of the region’s social history as they are of its economic history.

Mary is to be highly commended on her project, for creamery buildings are an integral part of a community’s architectural heritage as is the local church or medieval tower house and they should be cared for. Throughout the county many creamery buildings still stand, the majority having been established in the period from the mid-1880s to the early decades of the twentieth century. They are hugely interesting in their wide variety of styles and materials, such as stone, brick, block and corrugated iron. Unfortunately, some have been demolished with little or no photographs remaining. Of those that do still stand they are a reminder of a vanished local industry that link us with the lives of previous generations who worked the land and maintained the soul of rural societies.

Mary’s article Butter - The Cream of County Limerick, is drawn from various secondary sources and provides background information on the origins of creameries in Limerick (both co-operative and propriety). It features a representative selection of photographs from her archive, particularly those taken of creameries that played an important pioneering role in the early days of the creamery movement or are of some architectural interest. Mary’s selection of historical photographs are highly evocative of an era that is now no more.

David Lee, Project Coordinator
Note:

*Central Creamery* – a creamery where butter was made.

*Auxiliary or Branch Creamery* - creamery where milk was separated and the cream sent to a Central Creamery for churning.

### Butter - The Cream of County Limerick

*A lovely, homely sight, rich, ivory milk, golden cream.*

(1) Carbery, Mary *The Farm By Lough Gur*,

Going to the creamery; Paddy Farrell, Meanus, Co. Limerick, delivers the cream.

*(Our Place Meanus & Our People* Camogue Rovers, 2003, p. 80.)*

The production of butter originated in the home. Initially the keeping of cows was to supply the needs of the family for milk and butter, but as cities developed butter-making on farms became more and more important to the economy at large. The lands of County Limerick being of the finest grassland, meant that it was very suitable for dairying and before the days of creameries and factory production butter was made on almost every farm in the county.
The craft of producing ‘country butter’ developed into an important rural home industry, and butter became a much sought after food commodity. The dairy being associated with the house, as opposed to the land, meant that generally women were responsible for all dairy work. The duties of the dairy included the milking of the cows and the making of butter, cream and cheese. To produce butter, milk had to be separated and traditionally this was achieved by pouring the freshly milked milk into large earthenware pans, allowing the milk to stand until the cream had risen to the top. Once the cream had surfaced, which could take up to twenty-four hours, it was then skimmed off and put in large crocks until churning day. Skim milk is what was left after the cream has separated. The separator, an appliance for separating cream from milk, was introduced in 1879 and as a result skim milk was fresh. Formerly, when the milk was set in pans, the residue was soured into a sort of jelly, called ‘thick milk’ or bainne reamhar.²


Cows were hand milked into a can held between the knees. The tune produced by the spurts of milk varied in pitch as the can filled. Those used to it didn’t have to look at what they were doing at all; they milked away by ear.³

(³ Linehan, Paddy Yesterday’s Ireland David & Charles, UK, 2003, p. 26.)

God Bless the Work
The churning of butter was indeed very hard work and butter making was fraught with difficulties. Predictably, the fairies were blamed when anything went wrong such as butter that wouldn’t ‘break’, which was actually caused by milk not separating properly.
due to ‘heavy weather’. A neighbour who called during the butter-making was always expected to say “God Bless the work” on arrival, and then work the dash or crank handle (depending on the type of churn) before leaving so as not to ‘take the luck’. Butter milk was the residue left in the churn after the butter was made, and considered to be the best drink of all. (Sharkey, Olive Ways of Old Traditional Life in Ireland O’Brien Press, Dublin, 2004, p. 82.)

Churns were made by local coopers and varied in shape regionally, their size being made to measure, depending on the number of cows kept on the farm. The average herd size of about eight cows could produce eight pounds of butter a day, thus it would take eight or nine days to fill a firkin. In the butter trade a firkin was a wooden cask, varying in size, holding anything from 56lbs to 100lbs of butter. A major drawback with this procedure was that the quality of the farm butter had often deteriorated considerably by the time the firkin was full. There were the big farmers who made a business of selling butter, and the poorer families who did without or combined their butter with the butter of other farmers in order to fill a firkin for the market. (A lecture on ‘Creameries of the County’ by Michael O’Sullivan, Hospital, County, Limerick, March 2004.)
Dash Churn, stave built wooden vessel, eight staves held by three split-branch hoops. (Courtesy: Limerick City Museum.)

Butter Firkin.

There were butter-markets in all the major Munster ports, the Cork market having being established in 1769. Butter-buying companies in England employed agents in Ireland to travel around the country to purchase butter for export. Increased prosperity within the manufacturing districts in Great Britain such as Manchester created a large demand for
butter as an article of food and Manchester was the base for two of Ireland’s largest butter
The CWS was established in England in 1864 as a federation of consumer associations to
act as wholesalers to the co-operative shops there. Its policy was geared towards helping
consumers acquire the best quality goods at the lowest possible price.  

(`Bolger, Patrick The Irish Co-operative Movement, Its History and
Development Institute of Public Administration, Dublin, 1977, op. cit. p. 196.)

The CWS opened its first butter-buying depot in Ireland in 1866 in Tipperary Town,
followed in 1868 by Kilmallock in County limerick. Early in 1870 the steady growth of
the large CWS trade in salt Irish butter led to the establishment of a further depot and
new headquarters in Limerick City.  

(`Jenkins, William Tipp Co-op Origin and Development Geography
Publications, Dublin, p. 9.)

Limerick Depot, Co-operative Wholesale Society.

The following is an account of the weekly schedule of agents from the Limerick CWS
depot who were buying directly from farmer producers in markets in both Limerick
County and City,

‘On Monday … we start for a small village called Bruff … we generally arrive
there at 11.35am. A bell is rung at 12 o’clock, being the hour appointed for
buying to commence … Along each side of the street … are lined cars, which
contain the butter offered for sale. Of course it must be understood there is no
such thing as price being fixed or butter qualified in any of the markets in this
district. We have to do both ourselves. We go up to a farmer and examine his
butter and ask him his price; if we agree, his butter is marked with chalk, each
buyer having a different mark. The butter, when all sold, is then taken to a weigh-
house, where we have to examine it for fraud, such as bad butter in sides, water,
over heavy tares, all of which some years ago used to be of frequent occurrence,
but are happy to say are rarely met with now. This being done, each buyer gets
his turn at the scales and weighs his butter, which he then hands over to a carrier,
who takes charge of it and carts it to Limerick for 4d. per firkin.

‘Our next performance is to get the butter paid for and then … Start on our
road home, the butter purchased following us, being carted during the night,
and reaching our (Limerick) store at six o’clock on Tuesday morning. Our work
then on Tuesday commences by inspecting and qualifying butter bought in
Bruff, the coopers stripping every firkin to ascertain the exact weight of the
empty firkin, which is scribed at the time on the side of every firkin. We have two
markets to attend on Tuesday - ShanaGolden and Rathkeal … The butter bought
in these markets comes to us by rail, and is delivered the following morning when
the same routine is again gone through.

‘The principal market days we have in Limerick […] Wednesday, Friday and
Saturday, the butter brought in on other days being practically nothing. Buying
begins each day at eleven o’clock. The buying in Limerick markets differs
considerably from that in the country markets; one of the first differences is that
the butter is all weighed and tarred before we buy it, each farmer getting a ticket
of the weight and tares of his butter, which he hands to his broker, through whom
nearly all the butter in Limerick is sold.” 8

(8 Published in O’Sullivan, Michael ‘Co-Operative Wholesale
Society Creameries in Ireland’, Lough Gur and District
Historical Society Journal No. 14, 2006, p. 8.)

The importance of the Limerick butter trade is indicated by the number of butter buying
merchants operating in the city about 1886,

Heywood & Son, 12 Sexton Street;
P. Hickey & Co., Windmill Street;
Patrick Hogan, 24 William Street Upper;
John Longbottom, 10-12 Cornwallis Street; Upper;
W & C Mc Donnell, Thomas Street;
D. Ryan, Cathedral Place;
William Shea, Clare Street;
Duncan & Pratt Manchester;
William Henry Swan, 20 William Street, Upper. 9

(9 Lecture on ‘Creameries of the County’ by
Michael O’Sullivan, March 2004.)
O’Connell Street, Limerick c.1900.
Seen exiting from Thomas Street is a horse drawn milk dray.

Irish Butter Exports Hit by European Competition

The export of butter from Ireland began in the seventeenth century and in 1641 butter was described as being the third most important export item. Up until the second half of the nineteenth century heavily salted Irish butter maintained a dominant position in the British market. In 1823, 54,473 firkins of butter were exported through Limerick and by 1835 this figure had risen to 72,360 firkins. In 1848 the share of the Irish butter on the London market was almost 40%. The export of farm produced butter contributed greatly to the economy of the Irish people and particularly to the dairying farming families of Co. Limerick.

However, by 1884 the share of the Irish butter on the London market was not even 1%. Many factors contributed to this very drastic fall in demand for the product. Poor harvests did not help, but the main problem Irish farmers had to face was competition on the British market from countries such as Denmark. The Danes were already well advanced in co-operative organisations and by 1890 had some 600 co-operative creameries. They were thus enabled to place a mild-cured uniform product on the British market all the year around. Countries such as France, Holland and Sweden followed Denmark in the adoption of the new methods. Even through Ireland had a
remarkable natural advantage with it’s long tradition of making butter, in terms of
scientific innovation, education and business organisation the Irish farmers had fallen far
behind their Continental counterparts.12 A firkin of Irish home made butter arriving on the
British market frequently contained layers of butter of varying ages, flavours, colours and
textures, not to mention aromas.13 The farming families of County Limerick were very
adversely affected by Continental competition and it was in their best interests to rectify
the situation by abandoning traditional methods of producing butter and adopting the
latest techniques.

\( ^{10} \text{Bolger, Patrick} \textit{The Irish Co-operative Movement, Its History and}
\textit{Development Institute of Public Administration, Dublin, 1977, p. 64.} \)
\( ^{11} \text{Newman, Rev. J. ‘The Coming of the Creameries’,} \textit{Limerick Rural Survey}
\textit{p. 150.} \)
\( ^{12} \text{Fruits of a Century: Irish Co-operative Organisation Society 1894 -1994}
\textit{Irish Co-operative Organisation Society, Dublin, 1994, p. 8.)} \)
\( ^{13} \text{Bolger op. cit. p. 65.)} \)

The introduction of the separator (an appliance for separating cream from milk) in 1879
and the establishment of dairies in Ireland from the mid 1880s onwards quickly rendered
farm production methods economically obsolete.14 In order to compete with Europe,
Ireland had to produce butter, uniform in package, colour and salt content and reaching
the London market within twenty-four hours of manufacture. The factory system was the
only way forward.

\( ^{14} \text{Newman op. cit. p. 150.)} \)

In 1879, an International Dairy Show was held in Dublin at which a Laval Cream
Separator worked by steam power was demonstrated.15 With the intention of encouraging
farmers to engage with the new technology, Kildare clergyman Canon Richard Baggot,
who had a keen interest in dairying, fitted out a travelling creamery. He travelled around
the country and demonstrated the new method of butter-making to the farmers. He
believed that unless Irish farmers worked through a factory system they could never
compete with European producers.

\( ^{15} \text{ibid. p. 150.)} \)

Two separators were in use in County Limerick as early 1881, one of them by a Mr. H.
Croker, a well know racehorse owner who also had an extensive dairy herd.16

\( ^{16} \text{Bolger op. cit. p. 65.)} \)

\[ \text{Gustaf de Laval was born in Sweden in 1845.} \]
\[ \text{He invented the centrifugal separator in 1879.} \]
A charming lithograph of a young lady and her horse advertising De Laval Cream Separators.
The ‘Alpha’ hand-Powered separator.

Cream Separator
Hospital, Co. Limerick - The First Farmer-Built Creamery

It was the farmers of County Limerick who were to lead the way in the development of the creamery system as they had been hugely affected by the decline in the Irish butter export trade. The first major development took place in 1884 when the farmers of Hospital along with their local curate, Fr. M Power, approached Canon Baggot and asked him to address a meeting. This was held in Hospital on 22 January 1884 and Canon Baggot’s theme was a quotation taken from a current periodical, Irish butter of every class nearly un-saleable. He pointed out that not only had Irish butter been graded lower than foreign butters on the British market, but some Irish butter was being graded lower than ‘Butterine’ (an American margarine type product) and that in winter time foreign butter was making a higher price than the Irish product on the Dublin market. The clergyman proposed to the assembled farmers that they should form a limited liability company, build a butter factory at Hospital and keep management in their own hands. He also exhibited a model of De Laval’s new separator to the meeting.

A follow-up meeting was held at the Courthouse in Hospital in early February to make further arrangements for the establishment of the enterprise and Canon Baggot pointed out that comparatively little money was required as start-up capital; £600 would suffice which could readily be raised by issuing 200 shares @ £5 with £3 paid up. These shares were quickly taken up and local shopkeepers contributed a further £125. A site was acquired and a new building erected, using Irish materials, and a well sunk. Total costs came to £1,200, but it was a small sacrifice to make in order to revitalise a vitally important local trade. ‘Better Farming, Better Business, Better Living’ would best sum up the approach of the Hospital farming community.

Opened on 17 April 1884 the business was called the Munster Dairy Company and it had the distinction of being the first farmer-built factory in the United Kingdom or Ireland. Such was the interest in the creamery at Hospital that the Great Southern and Western Railways offered special rates to the neighbouring village of Knocklong Station for groups visiting the factory; Tuesdays and Thursdays being set aside as visiting days. During the same year Canon Baggot also assisted in the establishment of a joint-stock venture at Galbally Co. Limerick.
The first farmer-built creamery, Hospital, Co. Limerick, at the junction of Main Street and Knockainey Road.

Opened 17 April 1884, the first creamery to be established in Hospital no longer stands, but a plaque on the stone wall marks the site.
Dromcolloher - Ireland’s First Co-operative Creamery

‘Whenever we work together or aid or facilitate each other, even at the most trivial task, we are co-operating’.22

(22 Bolger op. cit. p. 1.)

After 1887 progress accelerated with proprietary creameries being established in many parts of Munster by urban traders, British butter retailing companies and other entrepreneurs.23 Parallel with this development in the proprietary sector there was also a significant growth in co-operatively owned creameries. A co-operative creamery is one that is owned by the farmers who supply the milk and who share in the profits. In 1889 Horace Plunkett, an Irish landlord, set about promoting the idea of co-operation to improve farming practice. The essence of Plunkett’s teaching was that the problem of Irish rural life was social and economical rather than political; that it should be approached without regard to political differences, and that it could be tackled at once on a basis of self-help without waiting for government direction or constitutional change. Plunkett’s doctrine was strongly criticised by many nationalist leaders.24 However, the first co-operative creamery was established at Dromcolloher in West Limerick in 1889. The building now houses the National Dairy Cooperative Centre museum.

(23 Jenkins op. cit. p. 17.)

The National Co-Operative Dairy Centre is located in Dromcolloher Co. Limerick, housed in what was Ireland’s first co-operative creamery. It has been faithfully restored to preserve the atmosphere and character of a co-operative dairy. It contains a working steam engine, boiler and milk vats. This museum is dedicated to the founder of the co-operative movement in Ireland, Horace Plunkett.

The next breakthrough was at Ballyhahill near Lord Monteagle’s house at Mount Trenchard, Foynes, County Limerick, and by the end of 1891 fifteen more creamery societies were established. Amongst the earliest ones were Glin, Shanagolden, Bulgaden,
Castlemahon, Ardagh, Glenwilliam, Clouncagh, Granagh and Feenagh, all in County Limerick.  

(25 Bolger op. cit. p. 67.)

One of the earliest co-operative creameries in Co. Limerick, Clouncagh was founded in 1890. Butter production ceased there in 1973 and its platform closed as a milk collecting point in August 1988.

The Irish Agricultural Organisation Society (IAOS) was founded in April 1894, to carry on the work of the co-operative movement. The objects of the movement were stated in the Rules of the Society to be,

‘to improve the condition of the agricultural population of Ireland by teaching the principles and methods of co-operation as applicable to farming and the allied industries; to promote industrial organisation for any purpose which may appear to be beneficial; and generally to counsel and advise those engaged in agricultural pursuits.’  

(26 Ireland Industrial and Agricultural, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, Brown & Nolan Ltd., 1902, p. 218.)

By the early years of the twentieth century the development of the creamery industry was well and truly under way in Ireland. A move very much welcomed by women as it brought with it the transfer of butter-making from the home to the factory, thereby removing a lot of drudgery from their lives. The concerted effort by all concerned to improve the quality of the butter product paid off dividends and the fact that Irish co-operatives could make an excellent butter was amply demonstrated at the London Dairy Show in 1904, when Irish co-operatives swept the board in all four commercial classes.  

Over the thirty year period from 1891 to 1921 the Co-operative movement in Ireland
witnessed an extraordinary rate of growth, going from just twenty co-operatives to 1,115 during that time.\(^{28}\)

\(^{27}\) Bolger, op. cit. p. 190.


Bruree Co-operative Creamery Ltd., established at Lotterna in 1912. The town-land of Lotteragh is about a mile from the village of Bruree.

(Photo was taken about the mid 1920s).
Bulgaden, Co. Limerick. One of the earliest co-operative creameries to be established in Co. Limerick.

Broadford Dairy Society was established in 1889. The creamery as it appears today.

Typical early creamery buildings consisted of an exterior platform, the height of a horse drawn cart, where the milk churns were unloaded. The rural creamery was generally a modest sized building housing a steam boiler, processing machinery, manager’s office and storeroom. When delivered, the milk was poured into stainless steel containers, tested for quality and weighed. Large stainless steel pipes took the milk to the separator.
unit where the cream was extracted and sent to the dairy section to be made into butter. The skim milk was given back to the farmer for the feeding of his calves and pigs.\(^{29}\)


![Image of Hospital Co-operative Creamery](image)

Hospital Co-operative Creamery. This creamery, located on . . .?, was a different building from that built in 1884 on Main Street.

**The Co-Operative Wholesale Society (CWS)**

In 1895 the English-based Co-Operative Wholesale Society embarked on a creamery-building programme in the south of Ireland. This was vigorously opposed to by the IAOS (Irish Agricultural Organisation Society), who argued that it was their responsibility and not that of the CWS to introduce co-operation to the Irish farmers. However, the wealth and resources of the CWS proved persuasive to rural communities in Munster. By 1899 ninety creameries in Munster were owned by the CWS, with headquarters in Limerick City, as opposed to sixty-four farmer co-operatives.\(^{30}\) Among the CWS Creameries in Co. Limerick at that time were: Abington, Ballinlough, Ballybricken, Bilboa, Bunkey Bridge, Devon Road, Feale Bridge, Greybridge, Morning Star (Gormanstown), Mount Collins, Oola, Effin, Castlemahon and Glenmore.


However, the difficulties for CWS of managing such a huge organisation from outside of Ireland soon became evident. Their buildings and machinery proved less than suitable
for Irish conditions and other defects became evident. The real test, however, was the milk price and in this the CWS creameries could not compete with the co-operatives. In 1903 CWS began to sell out to the co-operatives. The process continued for years. In many areas where farmers failed to establish co-op’s to take over the local CWS branch, Cleeves of Limerick bought them. Among Cleeves’ purchases were Ballybricken, Fedamore, Gormanstown, Knockainey, Athlacca, Caherconlish, Dromkeen, Bilboa.

**Cleeves’ Creameries**

Cleeves was a family run business that played an important role in the dairying history of East Munster from the 1880s until 1923. The Cleeve brothers first began manufacturing condensed milk, butter and other dairy products on a relatively small scale at their plant in Limerick City in 1885; then in 1889 formed the Condensed Milk Company of Ireland. It quickly grew in scale and developed a network of some 100 creameries, separation stations, condensed milk factories and flour mills in counties Limerick, Tipperary and at Mallow in Cork. At its height about 3,000 people were employed by the company, processing the milk of some 5,000 farmers and producing cream, butter, cheese, caramel toffee as well as condensed milk. Their main manufacturing centre was Limerick City where the Condensed Milk Company operated a large manufacturing plant employing 600 workers at Lansdowne. Today this factory building is one of Limerick’s best know industrial landmarks and its architectural style is typically nineteenth century. Its chimney, which is the tallest remaining one in the city, stands 36.5 metres high and is made of red brick. In the early twentieth century the Lansdowne factory was described as one of the finest dairying facilities in the world.  

Among the creameries and factories associated with Cleeves in County Limerick were Annagh, Athlacca, Ballingaddy, Ballyneety, Ballysimon, Bruff, Bruree, Caherconlish, Dromkeen, Dromin, Kilmallock, Knocklong, Monaster, Pallas and Tankardstown. The Condensed Milk Company collapsed and went into liquidation in November 1923 and was bought by an Irish business syndicate, but ultimately the former Cleeves factories and creameries were taken over in 1927 by the Dairy Disposal Company, a state-sponsored body established to guarantee dairy farmers a stable outlet for their produce. 32

32 (Lee op. cit.)


The Condensed Milk Company of Ireland Ltd., Lansdowne, Limerick. (Courtesy Limerick City Museum.)
Cleeves Creamery, Bruff, June 1921

Knocklong Creamery- as it appeared in 2004.
It was once part of the extensive Cleeves dairying business.
Knockainey Creamery

This corrugated iron building which stands in Knockainey, Co. Limerick is one of the finest remaining examples of a corrugated iron creamery in County Limerick. Knockainey was owned by the Co-Operative Wholesale Society before it was taken over by Cleeves.
Athlacca was established in 1890 by the CWS, was taken over by Cleeves, and was known as the ‘The Tall Chimney’. The enterprise closed its doors in December 1997 and only its lofty chimney remains today.
The Maypole Dairy Company
During the late 1880’s the Maypole Dairy Company established a chain of creameries in County Limerick. Their chairman was Sir George Watson who started the Anglo-Irish Condensed Milk Company as an associated company with Maypole, and in 1887 it had branches at Knocklong, Co. Limerick and Midelton, County Cork. Maypole sold a number of its Co. Limerick creameries to co-operatives in 1902: Castletown (renamed Toher Creamery), Effin, Templebredan and Cappamore. 33

The Maypole Dairy built Knocklong Creamery around 1894-95. In 1908 Cleeves purchased the creamery from Maypole. The local creamery was one of the gathering places of rural communities helping to foster community awareness, solidarity and cohesion. The carts were drawn by donkeys, ponies or horses; a few by jennets.

Cappamore Creamery was originally owned by the Maypole Company until it was taken over by a co-operative in 1902.
Toher Creamery was built by the Maypole Dairy Company in 1891. Under the ownership of the Maypole Dairy Company it was known as Castletown Creamery. In 1902 it became a farmers’ co-operative having being purchased from Maypole for the sum of £1,152; from then on it was know as Toher Co-operative Agricultural & Dairy Society.

On Friday 26 September 2003 Toher closed its doors for the last time bringing a whole era in the local community to an end.
Of great interest is the fact that the old church in Templebraden (the village is located on the Co. Tipperary border) also once housed the Sarsfield Co-operative Agricultural & Dairy Society. The church was built in 1834 and deconsecrated in 1884 when a new church of cut stone was erected on another site close to Sarsfield’s Rock, the scene of the famous cavalry attack led by Patrick Sarsfield on a Williamite artillery convoy in 1690.

Before the old church closed its doors it hit the news headlines in 1881. The following is taken from *The Graphic* dated 24 December 1881,

‘A scandalous outrage was committed on Sunday at the Chapel of Templebraden, County Limerick. The family of Mr. Heffeman Considine of Derk, had proceeded in their carriage to the chapel, and on their leaving after mass, a large crowd collected, pelted the coachman with mud and stones, and afterwards Mrs. and Miss Considine and Mr. Considine junior. Mrs. Considine was struck on the chest with a stone. Mr. Considine himself was not present. It is stated as a reason for this outrage that Mr. Considine had taken proceedings against some of his tenants for rent. Not the least singular part of the scene was that no clergyman or other person of influence appeared to have interfered to prevent such an occurrence within the shadow of a house of worship’

Three years after this incident the church was closed and in 1891 the Maypole Dairy Company purchased the building for £125 and converted it into a creamery; the premises once again becoming a gathering place for the people of Templebraden. In 1902 the local farmers established their own co-operative and took over the building. From then on it became known as Sarsfield Co-Operative Agricultural & Dairy Society.
Sketch from *The Graphic* 1891, superimposed on photograph taken in 2004 of what remained of the building.

**Memory**

Today the small rural creamery is now no more and what was once an integral part of the economy of local farming communities has vanished due to economic and technological changes and the demands of the market. The co-operative creameries have been transformed from small, community based operations into large centralized industries and now large container lorries collect the milk directly from the farmers and transport it to large processing plants. The days of butter-making on the farm and butter-making at the local creamery have pasted. In 2004 I undertook to compile a photographic archive of the surviving creamery buildings in Co. Limerick to promote interest in preserving what still remained and to keep alive the memory of an important local industry that served well the economic and social needs of rural communities.
The Committee of
Bruree Co-operative Creamery
Limited
Bruree, Co. Limerick

decided at a meeting held on September 9th in the
year of Our Lord 1947 to provide an Illuminated
Scroll and Frame containing the names of the FIRST
COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT of this Society, to
be hung in the office as a mark of respect to their
memory - who by their initiative and courage laid
the sound foundations of this Co-operative Society
which is so beneficial to the farming community of
our district.

Names of First Committee appointed at
Rockhill Schoolhouse at first Ordinary General
Meeting held on 15th March 1912

Richard P. O'Carroll, B.L.  James McAuliffe
Timothy B. Lyons        Batt O'Callaghan
Martin J. Hartigan      Michael Cahill
Denis O'Rourke          Timothy O'Shea
James Mortell          John O'Brien
Timothy Murphy          John O'Regan
Cornelius Carroll      Michael C. White
Michael Walsh          Chairman
Patrick O'Shea          Secretary
The Bojanter Car

‘Bojanter’ car passing through Blossom Gate, Kilmallock.  The year is 1903 (postcard).

Limerick historian Mainchin Seoighe recalls that, ‘In our part of Limerick the milk cans were sometimes called tankards or bojanters.  Nobody, to my knowledge, has ever traced the etymology of that strange-sounding word, ‘bojanter’.  Very often one heard the milk carts referred to as ‘bojanter cars’.  The cans, or tankards, or bojanters, would be tied securely on the cart with ropes.  … No more do the ‘bojanter cars’ clatter along the road; no more do their drivers, on their leisurely return journey from the creamery, sit on the riders of their carts, their backs propped up against the warm milk cans as they read the morning’s newspaper’. 34 (Seoighe, Mainchin From Bruree To Corcomohide, Litho Press Co., Midleton, Co. Cork, 2000, p. 244-5.)
IMAGES FROM THE ARCHIVES

Limerick Dairies

Askeaton Railway Station in 1960 (postcard).
It’s surprising who you might happen to meet on the road. Adare in the early 1960s: Nuala Shire/Fitzgerald (left) on her way home from the creamery and driving past Fr. John Casey, Princess Grace of Monaco and Prince Ranier.
(Photo: Our Place Meanus & Our People Camogue Rovers, 2003, p. 506.)
East Square and Desmond Castle, Askeaton