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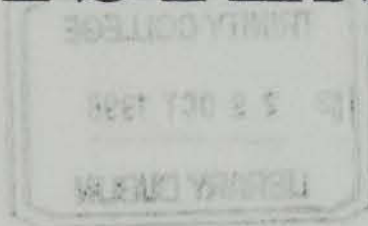




**TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN**

**Department of Modern History**

**THE IRISH  
TURNPIKE ROAD  
SYSTEM**



**A Thesis submitted for the Ph.D. degree**

**By David Broderick**

**APRIL 1998**



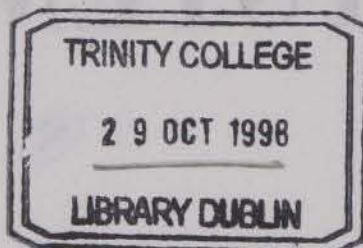
TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

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*Thesis*

*4573*

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APRIL 1998



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Signature *D. Broderick* Date *31<sup>st</sup> August 1998*

## Preface

It is proposed in this thesis to expand the state of knowledge of the Irish turnpike road system. Its aim is to fill a void in Irish history and to show how the turnpike road system came into existence, how it operated and how it ended. Such a comprehensive history is necessary, as the history of these roads has never been documented. The present state of knowledge of the history of the turnpike roads is scant, fragmented and scattered, as apart from the fact that there is no overall history, the complete history of only one such road, that from Dublin to Dunleer, written by myself, has been published to date. In order to enable the subject to be studied in sufficient depth, it was necessary to confine the study to the general principles underlying the turnpike roads and to avoid getting involved in the history of individual roads except where it was essential to illustrate a particular type of operation. Such a generalised history of the Irish turnpike roads is especially difficult as each road was operated as a separate entity and almost no evidence of cooperation between individual road trusts was found. As the purpose of turnpike roads and indeed of all roads was and is to facilitate the passage of traffic, a study of the amount and type of vehicles and especially goods vehicles using these roads was also made.

A turnpike road was basically one, which was maintained by the users. The various traffic units paid specified tolls in order to use a length of road and the money collected from these tolls was used to finance the improvement and maintenance of the length of road for which the payment was made. In general, the existing system of local control and responsibility for maintaining the roads did not cater for the major through-roads as the local people did not appreciate that they should repair and pay for roads used by strangers to further their businesses. All major or arterial or trunk roads were not made into turnpike ones and conversely all the roads made into turnpike ones were not major or arterial routes. The Irish turnpike road system consisted at its peak of approximately 1,300 miles for the entire country while the present National Primary (arterial or trunk) road system for the Republic of Ireland is 1,500 miles in total length. Turnpike roads were first adopted in England in 1663 and became more widespread early in the eighteenth century. In Ireland where road maintenance was even more difficult than in England at that time because of the wars and disturbances of the seventeenth century, almost all roads and especially the major trunk roads were in a very poor condition in the early years of the eighteenth century. It was soon realised by the major landowners that the lands they had fought for and been given in return for military service would never be profitable unless these lands were worked and the produce exported. In 1729 it was decided to introduce the English system of turnpike roads initially on the main feeder roads to Dublin city and the system rapidly spread throughout the portion of the country south and east of a line from approximately Coleraine to



Ennis. This left the north-western half of the country without turnpike roads. The turnpike system lasted for a period of 129 years until 1858.

The turnpike roads were lengths of road for which an act of parliament was passed authorising a group of local individuals to form a trust to charge traffic units specified tolls for the use of the road and to use the collected toll money to maintain and improve it. Here the variation in the turnpike roads and trusts becomes apparent. The lengths of road varied from seven miles to over 80 miles with an average length of thirty miles. The numbers of trustees also varied from as few as 15 to as high as 237. The rates of toll levied on various units or classes of traffic also showed differences of 100 % in some cases. Powers were given in the acts to trustees to borrow by way of debentures on the strength of the incoming tolls in order to fund major road improvements and this power was used in different ways by the various trusts. This thesis shows how the different trusts generally operated and the ways in which they adapted to meet changing environments and challenges until they were finally overwhelmed. The thesis also finds that though generally the turnpike roads were beneficial in providing the basic framework for a national trunk road system, these roads were poorly managed and this affected their effectiveness and popularity.

It is appropriate to point out the lack of sources for writing a history of the Irish turnpike road system. The main reason for this lack of source material was the almost complete destruction of the then Public Record office in 1922 in the course of the Civil War. Most local authorities had sent in their turnpike road records to this office prior to its destruction. Fortunately one such authority, namely, Dublin county council had not done so and so these records are now available in the Fingal county council archives. (Note - Fingal county council now administers the northern portion of county Dublin, as a result of the abolition of Dublin county council at the end of 1993). Some material is also available in the Public Record Office Northern Ireland and in the National Archives and National Library in Dublin. Even in the case of the material in the Fingal county council archives some of the material is fragmentary and is mainly nineteenth century. On account of the lack of actual records of the turnpike roads and trusts, material had to be sought from alternative sources. The statutes, parliamentary journals and registers were useful as were contemporary newspaper and magazine articles and advertisements. Estate papers were also useful and indeed the original first minute books of the Navan, Nobber and Kells turnpike roads were found listed amongst the Taylor (Marquis of Headfort) papers in the National Library.

The only published works dealing exclusively with the Irish turnpike roads, apart from the *History of the Dublin-Dunleer turnpike road 1731-1855* already mentioned above, are the following four articles: E. O'Leary's 'Turnpike roads of Kildare, Queen's county etc in the eighteenth century', J. Leckey's 'The end of the road: the Kilcullen turnpike 1844-1848 compared with 1787-1792', P. J. Meghen's 'Turnpike roads in county Limerick' and J. Colgan's 'Abstracts from Dublin to Mullingar commissioners/trustees minute books'. O'Leary's article, which was published in 1914 was especially useful as it contained some material transcribed from the original records before their destruction, while Leckey's and Meghen's articles were also of great



assistance. Because of my access to the original minute books of the Dublin-Mullingar road in Fingal county council archives, I did not need to use Colgan's excellent article in the Kildare Archaeological Society journal of 1994-95, which contains excerpts from these minute books referring to the Lucan/Leixlip/Maynooth areas. A comprehensive list of the sources used is set out in the Bibliography.



## Acknowledgments

In the compilation of this thesis there are many people I wish to thank most sincerely. These include my supervisor, Professor L. M. Cullen who was most helpful at all times and Dr. T. Barnard of Hertford College, Oxford for his help and advice with sources. The library staff of T. C. D. and especially Anne Walsh, the staffs of the N. L. I., National Archives and R. I. A. all deserve my gratitude. My special thanks are due to Ms Tina Hynes, archivist of Fingal County Council and to Mr. John Calnan, archivist of The Inst. of Engineers, for their assistance. I am also indebted to Mr. Diarmuid O Grada for information on sources. I also wish to acknowledge the assistance given by the staffs of the P. R. O. N. I., the House of Lords record office, the W. Y. A. S., Leeds, Sheffield City Archives and the library staff of the University of London.

Lastly but by no means least, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my wife, Loretto and my daughter, Annemarie and her husband Cormac and my son, David Joseph who helped so much with the computer work.

## CONTENTS

Preface.....	iii
Acknowledgments.....	vi
CHAPTER 1 ECONOMIC NEED FOR ROADS AND DEVELOPMENT OF IRISH ROADS PRIOR TO TURNPIKE ERA .....	17
1.1 Economic necessity for efficient means of transportation.....	17
1.2 Early roads in Ireland .....	20
1.3 Road administration from 1615 to 1729.....	25
1.4 Roads and state of country from 1690-1729 .....	38
1.5 Turnpike concept.....	46
1.6 Early bridge and road tolls in Ireland.....	46
1.7 Turnpike roads in England .....	47
CHAPTER 2 DEVELOPMENT OF TURNPIKE ROADS IN FIRST THIRTY YEARS.....	53
2.1 State of Ireland from 1730 - 1760 .....	53
2.2 Origin and progress of Turnpike road legislation.....	54
2.3 Planning .....	57
2.4 Examination of legislation .....	61
2.5 Operation of turnpike trusts and roads .....	69
2.6 Finances .....	81
2.7 Traffic.....	86
2.8 Sharp practices, abuses and frauds .....	99
2.9 Alternative transportation links.....	103
2.10 Major parliamentary report on turnpike roads in 1758.....	108
CHAPTER 3 PERIOD OF DEVELOPMENT AND RE-ORGANISATION FROM 1759 TO 1788 .....	117
3.1 Abolition of six-day labour system and associated disturbances .....	117
3.2 Corn bounties .....	124
3.3 Early criticism .....	126
3.4 Turnpike road legislation [1759 - 1789].....	127
3.5 Frequency of turnpike gates on major routes .....	133
3.6 Arthur Young's visit and his observations.....	134
3.7 Progress on non-turnpike roads.....	140
3.8 Traffic.....	143
3.9 Further financial difficulties.....	147
3.10 More turnpikes round the city of Dublin? .....	151
3.11 Concluding remarks on period .....	153
CHAPTER 4 INNOVATIONS AND CHANGES IN PERIOD FROM 1789 TO 1819 .....	156
4.1 Introduction of mail coaches and their effect on the turnpike road system .....	156
4.2 New turnpike legislation .....	165
4.3 Administration of new 'director' type turnpike road.....	168



4.4	Difficulties of achieving major road improvements towards the end of the eighteenth and early in the nineteenth century .....	173
4.5	Road construction.....	179
4.6	Traffic.....	187
4.7	Turnpike roads as part of the Mail coach road network .....	193
4.8	River navigations and canals become significant in transport system.....	196
CHAPTER 5 LAST PERIOD FOR TURNPIKE ROADS - 1820 TO 1858 .....		201
5.1	New turnpike road legislation .....	201
5.2	Introduction of railways and steam carriages.....	205
5.3	Parliamentary inquiry of 1831/32.....	208
5.4	Strengthening and reform of Grand Jury road administration system and its effect on the turnpikes.....	214
5.5	Maintenance of some turnpike roads by Board of Works .....	223
5.6	Select Committee on Turnpike roads in Ireland of 1837.....	231
5.7	Traffic.....	233
5.8	Effect of the 'Great Famine' on turnpike roads.....	241
5.9	Effects of the railways on the turnpike roads .....	242
5.10	Rates of development of turnpike roads, canals and railways.....	246
CHAPTER 6 EFFECTS OF SYSTEM ON SURROUNDING AREAS AND TERMINATION OF TURNPIKE ROADS .....		251
6.1	Evasion of tolls.....	251
6.2	Effect on rural areas and provincial towns and cities.....	254
6.3	Effect on Dublin area .....	258
6.4	Effect on Belfast and north eastern area.....	262
6.5	Termination of turnpike status of roads .....	263
6.6	Initial steps to have tolls legally abolished in the Dublin area .....	266
6.7	Abolition of remaining turnpike trusts and of toll taking on all roads .....	272
CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS.....		277
7.1	General.....	277
7.2	Benefits of the turnpike system .....	279
7.3	Deficiencies in turnpike system .....	280
7.4	Legislation.....	281
7.5	Final overview of turnpike system .....	281
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....		283



## TABLES

Table 1.1 Overall value of exports and imports from 1695 to 1698 in pounds .....	38
Table 1.2 Overall value of exports and imports from 1700 to 1816 in pounds .....	38
Table 1.3 English Turnpike Toll Rates for road in London area.....	48
Table 1.4 English Turnpike Toll Rates for roads in the Lichfield and Stone areas.....	49
Table 2.1 Enabling turnpike acts from 1729 to 1758 .....	55
Table 2.2 Percentages of the total tonnage handled by the principal Irish ports in 1723 .....	57
Table 2.3 Original tolls on Dublin to Kilcullen-Bridge turnpike road .....	64
Table 2.4 Indicates provision for use of Statute labour in principal enabling acts from 1729 - 1757 .....	67
Table 2.5 Chairmen of meetings of Navan road turnpike trustees from 16 April 1730 to 20 March 1734 .....	71
Table 2.6 Borrowings of early turnpike trusts and amending acts .....	75
Table 2.7 Interest paid by Dublin-Dunleer turnpike on debentures held by Sir Thomas Taylor from 1735 to 1741.....	83
Table 2.8 Traffic and toll-receipts for one week in June 1742 at Blackboy gate on Limerick-Cork turnpike .....	96
Table 2.9 Claim for travelling expenses for journey from Dublin to Cork in 1758 .....	98
Table 2.10 Names and lengths of roads listed in Dr. Cooper's report for which debentures were issued.....	108
Table 3.1 Rates of bounty payable on inland carriage of corn from 1 June 1758 .....	124
Table 3.2 New road lengths added to turnpike system between 1759 and 1789.....	127
Table 3.3 Turnpike gates, trusts and divisions on Dublin-Belfast route in 1783 .....	134
Table 3.4 Amounts of money in pounds presented for roads from 1766 to 1773 .....	141
Table 3.5 Accounts of the sums of money in pounds presented for roads from 1775 to 1800 by those grand juries which sent in the requisite returns to the authorities.....	142
Table 3.6 Costs of licenses for collection of municipal tolls in 1763 on access roads to Dublin city .....	145
Table 3.7 Percentages of total municipal toll-receipts collected in 1763 on the Dublin city access routes.....	146
Table 3.8 Estimated traffic on turnpike roads feeding in to above city access routes.....	146
Table 3.9 Financial state of turnpike roads from Dublin to Dunleer, Kinnegad, Kilcullen and Navan in 1767 (All money expressed in pounds) .....	148
Table 3.10 Table of revenue and expenses on Dublin-Kilcullen (Naas) road in 1787.....	149
Table 4.1 New road lengths added to turnpike system between 1790 and 1819.....	165
Table 4.2 Results of 'public cants' for toll collection on Knocksedan turnpike road from 1802 to 1843 .....	170
Table 4.3 Toll receipts on Dublin-Knocksedan turnpike road from 1 July 1843 to 31 October 1846 .....	171



Table 4.4 Details of toll income and method of collection on Knocksedan turnpike road from 1846 to 1856 .....	172
Table 4.5 Development of canals and river navigation from 1720 to 1929 .....	196
Table 5.1 New road lengths added to turnpike system between 1820 and 1837 .....	201
Table 5.2 Rapid extension of rail system between 1844 and 1910 .....	205
Table 5.3 Position of the four privately operated turnpike roads in 1832 .....	211
Table 5.4 Fraud in turnpike trusts .....	212
Table 5.5 Miles of road under maintenance in each county in 1841 with details of Engineering staff. ....	218
Table 5.6 Involvement of Board of Works in turnpike road maintenance in 1837/8.....	228
Table 5.7 Financial affairs of Navan road turnpike trust from 1849 to 1853 .....	230
Table 5.8 Land carriage costs in and from county Roscommon in 1832 .....	235
Table 5.9 Value of trade through the major ports in 1835 .....	236
Table 5.10 Tonnage of exports through the major ports in 1835 .....	237
Table 5.11 Daily traffic on the Dublin-Carlow turnpike road from 1 July to 31 December 1855 .....	240
Table 5.12 Toll-rates on Dublin-Carlow turnpike road in 1855.....	241
Table 5.13 Traffic on original turnpike roads directly affected by parallel railways .....	242
Table 5.14 Revenue in pounds in final four years of operation of Dublin-Kilcullen (Naas) turnpike road .....	245
Table 5.15 Expenditure in pounds in final four years of operation of Dublin-Kilcullen (Naas) turnpike road .....	245
Table 6.1 Numbers of houses built in the Dublin Districts from 1848 to 1854. ....	259
Table 6.2 Public coach services to and from Newry in October 1836 .....	262
Table 6.3 Turnpike roads leading from Dublin in 1854.....	268
Table 6.4 Apportionment of cost to the grand jury of county Dublin, of the abolition of the turnpike roads in 1855-6 .....	271
Table 6.5 List of last existing turnpike roads which legally lost turnpike status on 5 April 1858 .....	273



## FIGURES

Figure 1	Overall value of exports from 1700 to 1811 .....	39
Figure 2	Overall values of imports from 1700 to 1811 .....	40
Figure 3	Toll receipts and expenditure on Navan-Kells turnpike road 1738 – 1758 .....	84
Figure 4	Amounts paid in corn bounties (land carriage) .....	126
Figure 5'	Toll income per year on Dublin-Knocksedan turnpike road 1802 - 1842 .....	171
Figure 6	Decline of toll receipts on Dublin-Navan turnpike road .....	231
Figure 7	Comparison of rates of development of turnpike roads, canals and railways .....	246

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration 1	Truckle car (type made in Northern Ireland in 1947).....	23
Illustration 2	Slide cars and common cars, circa 1800. ....	87
Illustration 3	Wheel cars from the journal of George Edward Pakenham 1737 - 1739. ....	88
Illustration 4	Type of wheel car used mainly in Northern Ireland (It should be noted that the wheels are inside the shafts).....	89
Illustration 5	Drawing of An Irish cart on Cork - Dublin road in 1796. ....	90
Illustration 6	The Ringsend carr or coach, as seen in 1681. ....	95
Illustration 7	Cross-section showing construction of road as designed by P. Tresaguet. ....	180
Illustration 8	Cross-section showing construction of road as designed by T. Telford. ....	183
Illustration 9	Cross-section showing construction of road as designed by J. L. McAdam. ..	185
Illustration 10	Cross-section showing construction of 18 <sup>th</sup> century Irish turnpike road .....	187
Illustration 11	Scottish cart brought into Ireland circa 1800.....	189



## MAPS

- Map 1** The location of Whiteboy disturbances from 1760 - 80 in county Tipperary and parts of adjoining counties in relation to the turnpike roads ..... 121
- Map 2** Turnpike roads in Ireland at end of eighteenth century..... 166
- Map 3** Coach routes operated by Bianconi..... 192
- Map 4** The Post roads of Ireland by W. Larkin, 1803. .... 195

## Notes

### 1- Note on Measurement of Distance

It may now be considered appropriate that distances should be expressed in metric measurements. However as this thesis is concerned with a period when two separate mileage systems, namely Irish miles and English or statute miles were concurrently in use, it has been decided that the general use of the statute mile as the unit of distance would be less confusing to the reader. The relationships between these units of length are as set out below:

English or statute mile = 1760 yards = 0.7857142 Irish miles = 1.6093 kilometres.

Irish mile = 2240 yards = 1.2727273 statute miles = 2.04826 kilometres

The yard was sub-divided into 3 feet or 36 inches. (One inch = 2.54 centimetres)

The relationship between the statute and Irish mile may be more easily understood by the fact that 11 Irish miles is almost exactly equal to 14 statute miles. In this thesis, English or statute miles will be referred to as miles and Irish miles will be referred to as Irish miles.

### 2- Note on Currency

As toll rates and all transactions were in the old currency, where the pound (£) was divided into 240 pence (d.) and a coin of 12 pence was called a shilling (s.), it was necessary to use this old system generally throughout the thesis. In appropriate cases such as in Tables etc, the fractions of a pound are given in decimal form.

### 3- Note on Weights

The system of weights in use in Ireland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was based on the pound (lb.). There were 14 lbs. in one stone and 112 lbs. or 8 stone in one hundredweight (cwt.). There were 20 cwt. or 2240 lb. in one ton. In the eighteenth century, flour, wheat and corn were measured in Irish barrels and the Irish barrel was equal to a weight of 20 stone. The equivalent metric weights are: 1 kilogram = 2.2046 lb. and 1 tonne or 1,000 kilograms = 0.9842 tons.

### 4- Note on Dating

Prior to the adoption of the Gregorian calendar in Britain and Ireland in 1752, the new year began on 25 March. In addition, the adoption of the new style calendar involved advancing the date by eleven days. In this thesis, dating prior to September 1752, is according to the old style for the day and the month but according to the new style for the year.





## Abbreviations

Annalecta Hibernica.	<i>Anal. Hib.</i>
Belfast News Letter (Belfast, 1737 - ).	<i>B. N. L.</i>
Calendar of Ancient Records of Dublin.	<i>C. A. R. D.</i>
Calendar of State Papers, (Ireland).	<i>Cal. S. P. Ire.</i>
Dublin Historical Record	<i>D. H. R.</i>
Fingal County Council Archives.	<i>F. C. C. Archives.</i>
Freeman's Journal (Dublin, 1763-1924).	<i>F. J.</i>
Historical Manuscripts Commission.	<i>H. M. C.</i>
Irish Historical Studies.	<i>I. H. S.</i>
Journals of Cork Historical and Archaeological Society.	<i>J. C. H. A. S.</i>
Journals of the house of commons of the kingdom of Ireland	<i>Commons jn. Ire.</i>
Journals of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.	<i>J. R. S. A. I.</i>
North Munster Antiquarian Journal	<i>N. Mun. Antiq. Jn.</i>
National Library of Ireland.	<i>N. L. I.</i>
National Archives, Dublin.	<i>Nat. Arch.</i>
The parliamentary register, or history of the debates of the house of commons of Ireland	<i>Parl. reg. Ire.</i>
Public Record Office Northern Ireland.	<i>P. R. O. N. I.</i>
Queen's University Belfast.	<i>Q. U. B.</i>
Royal Irish Academy library [Haliday Collection volume number]	<i>H. C. - number</i>
Representative Church Body library.	<i>R. C. B. library.</i>
Reprint	<i>repr.</i>
Sheffield City Archives.	<i>S. C. A.</i>
Studia Hibernica	<i>Studia. Hib.</i>
Transactions of the Institution of Engineers of Ireland.	<i>Trans. I. E. I.</i>
Trinity College, Dublin.	<i>T. C. D.</i>
Ulster Journal of Archaeology.	<i>U. J. A.</i>
West Yorkshire Archives Service, Leeds.	<i>W. Y. A. S.</i>



# CHAPTER 1 ECONOMIC NEED FOR ROADS AND DEVELOPMENT OF IRISH ROADS PRIOR TO TURNPIKE ERA

The vital part played by efficient transportation in the economic lives of communities is outlined in this Chapter, as is the emergence of the road system to fulfil this need. The development of road legislation and administration prior to the eighteenth century is traced. The inadequacies of the legal and administrative system to cater for the new century's increased traffic and especially for long-distance traffic and how these difficulties led to the emergence of the turnpike road concept are also set out.

## **1.1 *Economic necessity for efficient means of transportation***

The basis of the economic existence of any community is its ability to trade. In order to trade means of communication have to exist, that is, goods and people must be capable of being moved from one location to another. There are only three means of transferring goods; by land, water or air. As communication by air is, in historic terms only a recent innovation, communication and transport by land and water has for countless centuries been the means by which trade between individuals, communities and nations was carried on. Transport by water includes transport by sea, river, lake and man-made canals. Where no suitable water transport was available, land carriage was used. The original land transport was, no doubt, the packhorse or other animal, which used the most accessible pathways from one location to another. When one particular pathway was found to be the most suitable one between two locations, it was used over and over again and so became the first primitive road between those points. As time progressed and the size and weight of the loads to be transported increased, vehicles of various types were introduced to speed up the rate of transport of the goods and so lower the cost. Because of this, the pathways or primitive roads had to be widened and strengthened in order to carry the new vehicles and the increased loads.

The cost of transport is an all-important factor in trade. This can be shown by taking the simple example of a city (A) which can be supplied with foodstuffs by two towns (B & C), where town B is twenty miles due west of A and town C is twenty miles due east of A. Assuming that the food from both towns is equally wholesome and that each town can separately supply the full requirements of A, city A will buy its food from the cheaper source. Assuming that towns B & C are both responsible for transport costs and that production costs are approximately similar, the town with the cheapest transport costs will sell its produce to city A while the other will lose this market. Assuming that the transportation between towns B & C and city A is by road, the cost of transportation is influenced by several factors such as: (1) the nature and condition of the roads, (2) the nature and condition of the vehicles used and (3) the organisation or management of the transport system, which includes the methods of loading and unloading the vehicles, the maintenance of the roads and vehicles, the training of drivers etc. All these factors can be improved so as to reduce transport costs and the benefit accrues not only to one of the towns B or



C but to city A as well. To carry this example further, let it be assumed that city A is a major port through which surplus food from towns B & C can be exported to a foreign country (D). Now it is in the interests of A, B and C to ensure that the transport costs between A and B and between A and C are as low as possible, in order that country D will buy its food from A, instead of from some other port in another country where the same type of food may be purchased more cheaply. This highlights the importance for any country and especially an island one like Ireland to ensure that the transport element of the cost of goods arriving on the dockside for export should be as low as possible and lower than that of competing countries. The above concept may be expressed in more graphical form by the formula; selling cost = cost of production + transport cost. Transport cost is inversely proportional to condition of the way (W) on which the transport takes place, to the vehicle or mode (M) of conveyance and to the management (M) or:

$$\text{Transport cost} = \frac{1}{W \times M \times M}$$

It can be seen from this formula that the better the condition of the road or canal the lower will be the cost of the goods transported. Similarly the more suitable the mode of conveyance or vehicle, for example better springing of vehicles, or streamlining of boats, the cheaper the transport cost will be. In the case of better management the same result is produced. Charles Bianconi gave an example of how good management can reduce transport costs in the operation of his famous 'long cars' in the early nineteenth century. At that time Bianconi's transport costs were lower than those of his competitors even though his cars ran on the same roads because the management of his transport business was far superior to that of his rivals (See page 190). The importance of low transport cost cannot, therefore, be over-emphasised and this applies not only to roads but also to water transport. However where water transport is either impossible or impractical, a good road system is of paramount importance for the well-being of any country or nation. As stated by Thomas Rice in *An inquiry into the effects of the Irish grand jury laws (1815)*:

There are few points in domestic economy, which more powerfully effect, and more exactly measure the improvement of a nation, than the state of the roads and highways. By them the extent of inland trade, and the augmentation of public wealth, may be computed. All the first produce of the soil is by such means brought into the general stock and the price of every article to the consumer is affected by the ease or difficulty of the internal communications.<sup>1</sup>

It must be understood of course, that all roads were not solely built for trading purposes. The bulk of the Roman roads were originally constructed for military purposes but were later used for trade and commerce. Similarly in Ireland, the military road in county Wicklow was primarily built to give the army ready access to the rebel strongholds after 1798. Alexander Gordon, a nineteenth century civil engineer engaged on railways and turnpike roads more forthrightly expressed the case for economic transport, when he stated:



It is now generally admitted,-that the capital annually expended in the mere transport of commodities is not only a loss to the seller, as an unproductive outlay, but is the occasion of the increased price being demanded from the purchaser; -that it is in the interest of the producer to have access to distant markets, and of the labourer to have a choice of a market for his industry;- and that the results of all improvement in inland communication show an increase of profits, an encouragement of industry, and an enlarged demand for labour. Diminution of the cost and time of transport are therefore eagerly sought for.<sup>2</sup>

The need for adequate and reasonably priced transport was especially felt in Ireland, as it was an agricultural country. This need was clearly enunciated by Mr. J. W. Rogers in 1841, when he wrote: 'The establishment of the best means to facilitate conveyance and render communication cheap, should be one of the leading objects of all nations; but in agriculture countries the obligation is paramount'<sup>3</sup>. He gave as reasons for this, the transport of bulky materials such as manure and the produce of the land together with the need to make labour marketable. Mr. Rogers continued:

There is no country to which those observations more fully apply than to Ireland; blest with the most luxuriant soil, thousands of those who attempt its cultivation, struggle for a bare existence, for want of facility of carriage. Broad tracts of its richest acres lie untilled, because produce would be valueless for want of roads to carry it away, and many of the inhabitants eke out a miserable life, surrounded by the ignorance and prejudices of centuries, without a gleam of encouragement or hope, because the main avenues towards civilisation and comfort - namely, good roads and cheap conveyances have been, and still are, unsupplied. To this cause many of the evils of Ireland may be traced. Where roads are few and bad, and the means of conveyance scarce and expensive, the labourer receives a pittance scarcely equal to preserve his existence; his commonest wants are unsupplied, though, perhaps, within a day's journey (if communication were as it should be), of adequate employment.<sup>4</sup>

Not alone in Ireland and Britain have people commented on the necessity of providing good roads but also in France. M. Storch stated that 'after giving protection to property and person, a government can bestow on a nation no greater benefit than the improvement of its harbours, canals, and roads.'<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that in France it was acknowledged at an early date, because of the serious implications for the welfare of the nation of poor and costly transport that the improvement of the principal harbours, canals and roads, was a matter for the government. It was not something to be side-lined to local bodies with limited and in many cases, entirely inadequate resources.



A final extract on the value of good transport and road communication is that from Edmund Leahy, the first qualified county surveyor of the western portion of county Cork, who wrote in 1844:

In whatever country a well arranged system of communication has been established, it has invariably been found to be productive of the greatest advantages commercial and agricultural: almost every branch of industry may be traced to this as its source; and it were needless to add that some of the most obvious natural advantages would be wholly valueless without good roads as a means of intercommunication.<sup>6</sup>

## **1.2 Early roads in Ireland**

It is almost certain that the first Stone Age settlers in Ireland found the land covered in trees and vegetation. These early settlers had to cut and hack pathways and tracks through these primeval forests in order to gain entry to the interior where rivers did not facilitate such access. With the advance of time and the establishment of settlements, the most convenient pathways were widened and gradually developed into primitive roads. Very little is known either about these roads or about the condition or development of the road system after the coming of Christianity in fifth century. Between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, Norse, Norman and English invaders and settlers arrived. These founded and later built up and fortified towns mainly around the coast at first but later at inland locations. Some of the coastal towns for example, Dublin, Cork and Waterford developed into major ports and cities. Dublin, in particular, because of its location close to England and Wales, quickly became the capital and chief port. The urban and port development dictated the road network as the goods for export had to be transported to the ports while imported goods had to be carried to where they were required. The Norse invaders, being primarily seafarers did not have any need to carry out a great deal of road-building but the later Norman / English invaders took possession of the whole country and were determined to settle and exploit it as much as possible. Commencing in 1210 in the reign of king John, it was decided to divide the country into local administrative units, which were originally called shires as in England and later counties. Local government in the cities was separately organised. In the case of the remainder of the country, the process of forming all parts of Ireland into counties was a slow one and the last county to be so formed was Wicklow in 1610. In each county or shire a king's officer was appointed to carry out certain duties in the shire or county. This officer was called the sheriff. The duties of sheriffs is best described by P. J. Meghen:

Under the feudal system the Norman knights were given estates on the conquered lands and in return, they were to give services to the king in times of war. They were also bound to pay the king certain dues. A king's officer was appointed in each shire or county to collect these contributions and to call on the armies when needed.....The sheriff was to visit his county twice each year and he



also summoned the feudal tenants to meet the king's visiting judges twice a year at the county town. From this gathering, he selected twenty three of the chief landowners and this body was known as the grand jury.<sup>7</sup>

The reason for the twice-yearly visits of the judges was to hold trials called assizes. At these assizes the grand juries decided on questions of fact for the judges. P. J. Meghen added:

**From the evidence that survives, it appears that this body (grand jury) as well as advising the judges on law cases also dealt with financial matters and questions of general information. This was the body entrusted with the care of roads and bridges.<sup>8</sup>**

It should be mentioned here that the word 'sheriff' was derived from shire-reeve, reeve being a Norman-French word for a local chief officer and is an office which still exists today, though with modified duties. It should also be noted that these grand juries, which were later to be given major powers in the administration of roads, were completely undemocratic bodies because they were selected and not elected. They normally met only twice each year and had no permanent staff.

During the period from around 1200 to around 1600 one of the most important items of work carried out on the road system was the building of bridges to replace fords which were then the most common method of crossing rivers. In their book on *'Irish stone bridges'*, P. O' Keeffe and T. Simington<sup>9</sup> give details of the bridges built during this period. These bridges were built not **only** in the 'Pale' (a small area around Dublin where English rule was almost universally accepted), but also at various locations throughout the country such as: Coleraine, Lifford, Ballyshannon, Dundalk and Mallow. The maintenance of roads during these times was carried out on an intermittent and unplanned basis by the native Irish clans as required in areas where they held sway and by the Anglo-Irish lords and military authorities in furtherance of their conquests. Mediaeval acts, such as the one of 1297 (25 Edward 1)<sup>10</sup> laid down procedures for keeping the roads open and safe for travellers. Section 10 of this act provided for the clearing of growth at the sides of roads 'so that a road of sufficient width may be opened' by the local lord and his tenants and if this was beyond their resources, the Chief Justiciar had powers to cause them 'to have aid from the whole adjacent country.' Section 10 also made the first legal provision for the maintenance of bridges and causeways<sup>1</sup>:

That bridges also and causeways be repaired in their places as they ought and used to be, and where either bridges or causeways shall be broken and demolished, and he who is bound to repair them is not sufficient for such great expense, that the districts for whose benefit they shall be raised shall find means in common to rebuild them.....<sup>11</sup>



Thus it is seen that from the outset, the maintenance of roads and bridges was made a local responsibility.

In the period between 1200 and 1600 the major road network must have achieved the general basic form, which, with some variations, still serves us today. This is shown by an anonymous and undated map<sup>12</sup> which is believed from internal evidence 'to have been drawn before 1538.'<sup>13</sup> It shows some of the roads leading to Dublin. This map is described in the British Museum catalogue as: "A coloured map of Ireland, which is represented as of quadrangular form, very rudely drawn on vellum, with buildings to mark the site of the principal places; executed temp Henry VIII."<sup>14</sup> In the words of Michael Andrews:

The map is a very early example of a class which became popular in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries - the road map. On it three main routes from Dublin are plainly indicated:-

- (1) The north road to Drogheda, through Swords and Balbriggan.
- (2) A road to the west crossing the Boyne and proceeding through Trim and Athboy to Delvin.
- (3) The south road through Naas, crossing the Liffey at Kilcullen, and proceeding through Castledermot and Carlow to Leighlinbridge, where it crosses the Barrow.<sup>15</sup>

All these roads later became turnpike roads, though by the middle of the eighteenth century the road from Dublin to Athboy via Trim was losing its importance as a main route (See page 57).

The sixteenth century was a particularly troubled one because of the Reformation and the subsequent suppression and confiscation of the monasteries and their lands. The condition of the roads as a result of the unsettled state of the country must have been very poor indeed. It is generally accepted that the transport of goods in the rural areas at this time was normally only by packhorse or crude slide cars (For a description of the slide car, see Illustration 2). The primitive nature of the road network and the use of packhorses are shown by the following quotation from McCutcheon:

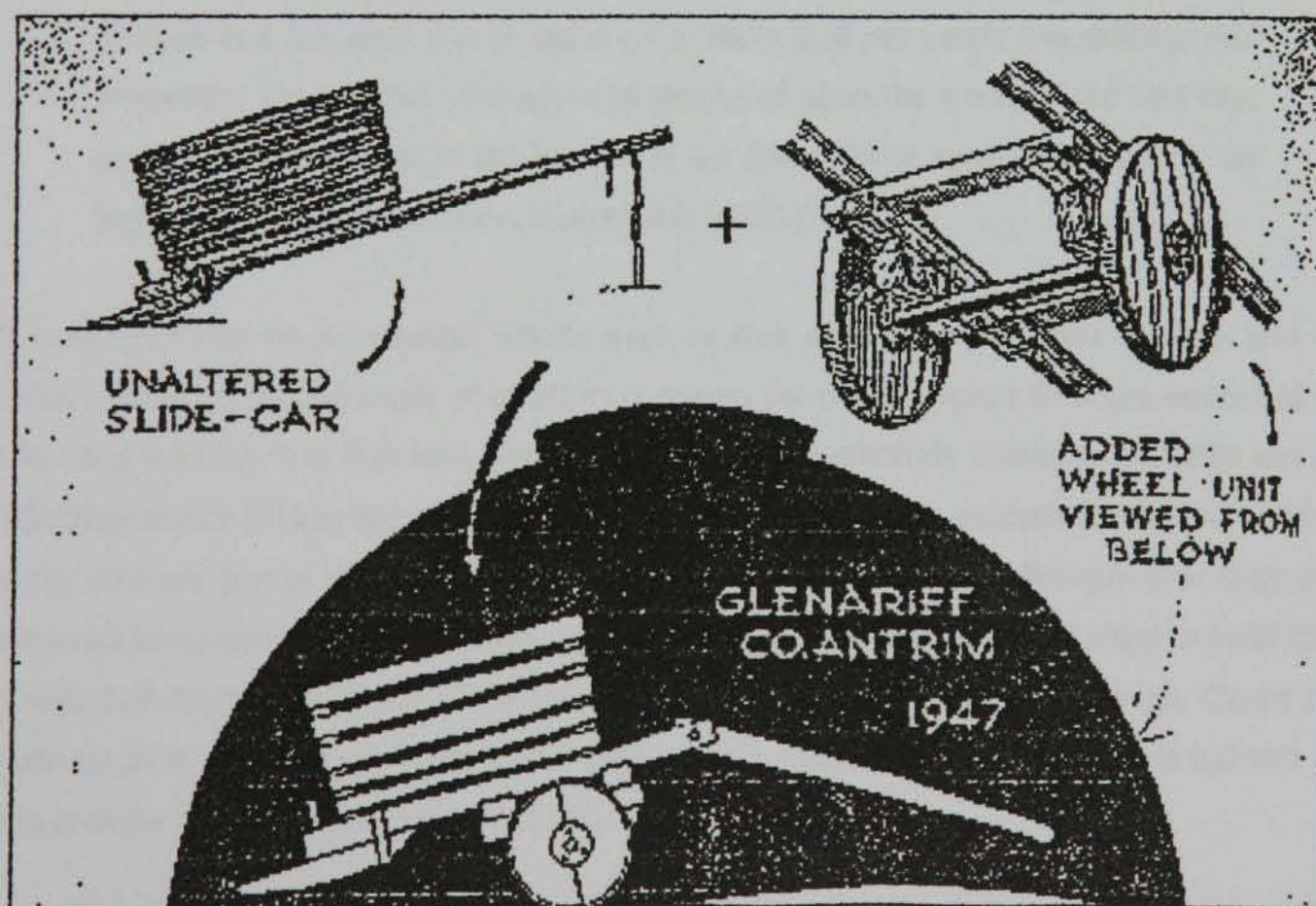
It would appear that in Ireland in the seventeenth century and indeed the early years of the eighteenth were characterised by a general absence of wheeled vehicles, on a fairly primitive road network. Those people who did have occasion to move about the country walked or rode on horseback, whilst goods were conveyed by packhorse. At this time travelling was not to be undertaken lightly; a military gentleman going from Newry to Downpatrick in 1602 recounts that before he had ridden three miles 'we had lost our way and were compelled to go on foot, leading our horses through bogs and marshes'.<sup>16</sup>



There is evidence of the use of carts in 1549 as the following extract from the *Calendar of state papers* shows:

[Letter from Thomas Alen to Lord Deputy Ballynham complaining that the number of carriages and labourers for the works of Even had not been duly answered] Prays that there may be appointed 30 carts and 60 labourers for the 6 weeks to come, besides the 120 labourers and 15 carts granted by the county of Kildare. The five "clarances" these twenty days past have brought more wood for the limekilns than forty of their carts; they bear the name of carts, but good cars would bring as much.<sup>17</sup>

It surprising to find such a great number of carts in the county Kildare area at that time, but there is no description of them apart from the fact that the letter writer found their carrying capacity little better than that of 'good cars'. There is no way of ascertaining the exact nature of the carts or cars in the 1549 letter. It must be realised that the word 'car' at that time and indeed up to the middle of the nineteenth century always meant a goods vehicle and not a passenger one. The description 'good car' most probably referred to either a truckle car, a more modern type of which is shown in Illustration 1, or to a wheel or common car as shown in Illustrations 2, 3, 4 and 5 (See Chapter 2.7, page 86) for details of all these vehicles). Illustration 1 also shows a side view of a slide car and so it is easy to compare it with the side view of the truckle car.



*Illustration 1 Truckle car (type made in Northern Ireland in 1947)*

(From G. B. Thompson, *Primitive land transport of Ulster* (Transport Handbook, No. 2), (Belfast, 1958), unpaginated.)



Despite the large number of carts in Kildare, it is most probable that in general, only a very small number of vehicles made occasional use of the roads apart from military gun-carriages, such as the occasional cart, wheel-less slide cars on the remote unpaved roads or the low-backed block-wheel cars, though these latter were mainly used in urban areas<sup>18</sup>. In and near Dublin, the position as regard the use of vehicles was different. There are many references in the ancient records of Dublin concerning the use of carts and one in 1455 indicates where tolls were payable by all loaded carts passing over a bridge in the city:

[All] should pay a certain tollage for these carts going over the bridge of the city of Dublin, that is to say, for a millstone, four pence, for a tun of wine, twopence, for a pipe, one penny, for a hogshead, a halfpenny and for every other cart of hay and wood, a halfpenny, ..... [Note that spelling has been modernised and numbers expressed in words.]<sup>19</sup>

There is no description of the above carts, but in 1480, some of the carts must have had iron bound wheels as in that year:

It is ordained by the authority of the assembly that all such persons as had iron bound carts going upon the pavements of the city of Dublin, whether he be a denizen or a foreigner, that he and every of them shall pay yearly two shillings and twopence. The said two shillings to be employed upon the works of the said city; and the said twopence to the keepers of the gates. [Note again that spelling has been modernised and numbers expressed in words]<sup>20</sup>

It is obvious that the iron bound wheels were causing damage to the street surfaces and the extract shows an early example of an effort to recoup the cost of repairs from the owners of the offending vehicles. It is thus seen that the use of carts was relatively common in Dublin and the adjoining county Kildare but not in the more remote areas. The only exception to this was mainly in the northern part of the country where the English plantation settlers brought over their own carts and horse teams in order to draw materials such as stone and timber in order to build their houses and castles. Evidence of the use of these carts in the counties of Armagh, Cavan and Fermanagh in 1611 is given in the Carew papers, from which the following extracts indicate the extent of the haulage in progress at that time:

Two English teams of horse, with English carts continually employed in drawing materials, oaks felled and carpenters employed in the woods of Fermanagh felling more.' [In respect of building a residence in county Cavan].



'Great part of the freestone for the coynes and windows are prepared four or five miles beyond Armagh. Two English carts and teams with horses and oxen attend the drawing of materials.....The way for carriage of timber of timber is made passable, and so is the way to the freestone, which is eight miles from the place. [In respect of a castle in county Armagh].<sup>21</sup>

It is noted in *'Irish stone bridges'* that the average width of bridges (exclusive of parapet width) built up to the end of the fifteenth century, was 10 ft.- 6 in. This increased to 11 ft. during the sixteenth century<sup>22</sup>. Some of the more important main roads must have been widened to similar widths.

### **1.3 Road administration from 1615 to 1729**

After the Battle of Kinsale in 1601, which essentially broke the power of most of the old Irish chieftains, the English authorities began to exert their influence more widely and in 1615 the parliament in Dublin passed the first act (11-13 James I, c.7) dealing exclusively with road maintenance. This may have been influenced by the publishing in England of the first book on roadworks in the 1607 to 1610 period. It was written by Thomas Proctor and entitled '*A profitable work to this whole kingdom concerning the mending of all highways, as also for waters and ironworks.*'<sup>23</sup> However there is no evidence available to show that the authorities were swayed by this publication. The basic ideas on road construction and repair put forward by Proctor were summarised by William Albert:

He observed that the main cause of bad roads was that water was allowed to stand on the road surface. To remedy this he suggested that the ditches near the road be cleansed and the centre of the road made higher than the sides so that the water could drain away. The roads should be constructed on a foundation of rammed-down soil bound with timber and stones and then covered with gravel, sand or rubbish<sup>i</sup>.<sup>24</sup>

The basic principles enunciated by Proctor about the provision of camber, proper drainage, compacted foundations and the use of gravel for surfacing set headlines or ground-rules which if universally and intelligently applied, would have resulted in much improved road networks.

The 1615 act was headed 'An act for repairing and amending of highways and cashes' and was based on a similar act (2 & 3 Philip and Mary, c.8) in England of 1555 and as later amended. The 1615 act was a very important one for Irish roads. The act was adopted because as its preamble asserts, the roads were 'in many places very noysom and tedious to travel in and

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<sup>i</sup> The word rubbish used in this context means 'quarry fines' or fine blast furnace slag.



dangerous to all passengers and carriages.’ The following excellent summary of the provisions of this act is taken from J. T. Fulton’s thesis on ‘The roads of county Down, 1600-1900’:

This [act] required the constables and churchwardens of every parish annually, on the Tuesday and Wednesday of Easter week, to elect “two honest persons of the parish” to be surveyors and directors of the amendment of highways, cashes and paces in their parish leading to any market town. They also fixed six days for the work to be carried out, before the feast of St. John the Baptist (Midsummer Day). The selected days were announced in the church on the first Sunday after Easter. The occupier of a plowland, or anyone else in the parish who kept a plough was required to provide a cart, with horses or other draught animals, and two men, and also two men furnished with tools. Each householder, cottier or labourer (servants hired by the year excepted) had to attend in person or provide a deputy. Eight hours work was expected on each of the six days, unless otherwise licensed by the supervisors, who also had discretion to order two additional men in lieu of the cart, should a surplus of carts be available. The supervisors were permitted to obtain material for the work within the parish.....and payment to the owners had to be made by the parish.....The act ended with provision for persons with interests in several parishes, and for the enforcement of the measures described.<sup>25</sup>

The enforcement measures mentioned in the last line of the above extract were severe in that the unpaid surveyors were liable to forfeit the sum of ten pounds for any default and those required to furnish carts were liable to fines of twenty shillings, while those placed on a roster for labouring work, who absented themselves without a replacement, had to pay a fine of two shillings per day. This act established that Irish roads were to be managed completely on a local and not on a national basis. The thinking was that locals should cater for their own roads because it was they who used them. However, the fact that some roads were also used by traffic other than local traffic i.e. ‘through-traffic’, was overlooked. It will be seen that this oversight was the main reason for the introduction of ‘turnpike<sup>i</sup> roads’ both in Britain and in Ireland. The act had other defects such as copying the English act’s requirement about provision of ‘waynes or carts’ in a country where few if any such vehicles existed over the greater portion of the country and placing the roadwork under the control of unskilled and unpaid surveyors. Other major defects of the act were that the act did not cater for the construction of new roads nor did it make any provision for the repair or construction of bridges, which are essential components of any road system. Indeed

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<sup>i</sup> The origin of this word is obscure. S. and B. Webb in *The story of the king’s highway*, p.147, indicated that the word turnpike originated from the adoption in earlier times ‘of horizontal tapering bands of iron or wood suspended upon a rigid pillar, around which as an axle, they revolved as a means of admitting outsiders to enclosed areas’. Whatever the origin of the word turnpike, it became in practice a lockable gate or barrier, which could shut off access to a length of road unless a payment or toll was paid for passage over it. The term **turnpike road** or even **turnpike** came to mean a public toll-road.



in the parliamentary session of 1615, a bill<sup>26</sup>: making provision for the repair of roads and bridges was voted down. The 1615 highway act became known as the statute labour act and the system of the six days unpaid labour on the roads became known as the 'statute labour' system. The 1615 act was intended to apply only to the rural areas but the Dublin city authorities had already adopted their own version in 1612:

Whereas the commons made humble suite, requiring some course to be settled for repairing the defects of the pavements of this city; it is therefore ordered and agreed ..... that the pavior shall have three halfpence sterling, for every yard, and that so much of the whole streets shall be paved in uniform order as the Mayor shall appoint, and every man shall pay for the paving so far as his house or ground extends from his house to the channel, and shall also provide stones, sand, and labourers without delay, that the works be not hindered by their negligence; and if any shall be negligent in providing of stones and sand, or in paying their due, they shall be compelled by the Mayor, and it is agreed that every carman shall give one day's labour every month with his carr and garron towards the doing of this work. [Note that spelling has been modernised.]<sup>27</sup>

The early part of the seventeenth century up to 1641 was a period of trade expansion. However, the 'statute labour' system did not bring about an immediate improvement in the condition of the roads, as the evidence of a contemporary quoted in *'Country and town in Ireland under the Georges'* shows:

William Lithgow, a Scotsman, who toured Ireland in the years 1619 and 1620, experienced many difficulties. Travelling in winter, his horse constantly sank to its girths on the boggy roads, and his saddle and saddlebags were destroyed. Often he had to cross streams by swimming his horse, a dangerous proceeding, for, as he tells us, in five months he had foundered six horses.<sup>28</sup>

As this testimony shows, one of the biggest defects in the road system was the lack of bridges. To remedy this, the parliament passed 'an act concerning the repaying and amending of bridges, causeyes, and toghers<sup>i</sup> in the high-ways' in 1634 (10 Chas.1, c.26). This act gave power to grand juries to levy a tax on the people within their functional areas or any portion of them, to build or repair any bridges, causeways and toghers within their areas of jurisdiction. This act is an important one in that for the first time it gave power to a local body to levy taxes for local purposes. It also introduced the 'presentment system' for the carrying out of these works. The presentment system involved obtaining prior sanction of the grand jury to a road-improvement or bridge building or bridge-repair scheme for which a realistic estimate had been made. When the

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<sup>i</sup> Ancient words for lengths of roads or passageways on raised ground in low-lying terrain.



work was completed satisfactorily, the grand jury paid the person who sought the presentment the amount sanctioned, having collected it by way of 'cess' or local tax from the inhabitants. The presentment system, with variations, lasted until 1898.

After 1634, there were two distinct bodies dealing with roads, namely, the parish vestries and the county grand juries. The parish vestries had a legal obligation to repair the roads in the parish by the use of the unpaid 'statute labour', while the grand juries had discretionary power to construct or repair bridges and roads and they could make the local inhabitants pay the cost by way of a local tax or levy. These local taxes were known as county or baronial cesses or rates depending on whether they were levied on entire counties or on individual baronies. As the grand juries were the larger and more powerful bodies with the ability to raise the necessary funds, there was a natural tendency among politicians to transfer control of all roads to them. This transfer was done in a gradual manner. This change took place over 131 years and it was not until 1765 that the parish system ended for the country generally, while a modified version of it continued in Ulster until 1796. As stated by J. T. Fulton in his unpublished Ph.D. thesis:

From 1634 to 1765 the six-day labour and presentment systems had existed side by side, in a rather unstable balance, which frequent acts of parliament tried to maintain. The six-day labour was unable to complete the work required, but the temptation of having an alternative available made even more difficult the task of operating it effectively.<sup>29</sup>

It is perhaps appropriate at this stage to attempt to show how the systems of parish and grand jury administration developed, even though these developments took place so gradually over such a long time-span. It will be recalled how under the act of 1615 (11-13 James I, c.7), the main work was placed in the hands of the parish surveyors. However under the same act (Section 8) the grand jury could inquire into any matter concerning the carrying out of the road works and the surveyors had to report yearly to the quarter sessions and give details of any funds received in lieu of the statute labour or carts. Because of this, the county grand juries had from the outset a supervisory role over the parish road system. The 1634 act (10 Chas.1, c.26), in addition to giving powers to fund the building or repair of 'bridges, toghers or causeyes' by means of local taxes or cesses also provided in the case of works on the borders of counties, that the costs be apportioned between the relevant counties. Due to the absence of grand jury records and the scarcity of parish records for the seventeenth century it is not possible to ascertain exactly how the grand juries operated during the century. Consequently regard has to be taken of any available occasional material referring to works or decisions involving these authorities.

The parliament and regional government gave a lead in the building and repair of roads and bridges. An early indication of the application of the 1634 act was in one complaint in a



series of complaints made by Henry Dillon in May 1641 against Roger, Lord Viscount Ranelagh, President of Connaught. This complaint was that:

his Lordship having slates, &c., to come through Loughy [Lough Ree] "there being a great moor between the said Lough and the passage of the town of Roscommon, did give out warrants for raising 6s.- 8d. for every quarter<sup>i</sup> in the five adjoining parishes together with many horses." This was done in the heat of the harvest and to make a "great togher or causey" [causeway] which was useless except for the conveyance of those materials.<sup>30</sup>

Lord Ranelagh's reply to this written in the period before 1645 was:

No one but the petitioner ever imagined that the defendant had any object other than a public one in arranging for the construction and repair of the highways in all parts of Connaught. He has assigned the work to justices of the peace, who may raise money amongst themselves with the consent of the parishioners.<sup>31</sup>

In 1661, the house of commons resolved that a recommendation be sent to the lord justice of county Meath and the justices for the peace of county Westmeath to erect a substantial bridge over the Kinnegad river. John Temple, the Speaker of the house of commons wrote on 24 March 1661 to the individuals concerned:

The house of commons having received information of the great want of a bridge over the river of Kinnegad between the counties of Meath and Westmeath, so that neither carriages, horse or other passengers can safely pass that way without hazard and loss, recommend to the lord justices of assize for the county of Meath and the justices of the peace for the county of Westmeath to take effectual course, according to the laws that a substantial bridge be erected over the said river, .....<sup>32</sup>

As stated in *'Irish stone bridges'* the above letter was in effect 'a direction to implement the 1634 act'<sup>33</sup> and it may be of interest to note<sup>34</sup> that three arches and three upstream cutwaters<sup>ii</sup> of this bridge are still in existence today. In 1665 an act (17 & 18 Chas.II, c.16) was passed for the construction of a bridge across the Blackwater at Cappoquin in the county of Waterford. This act declared that as this bridge would be of benefit to the counties of Waterford, Cork, Kerry and Tipperary as well as to the cities of Cork and Waterford, the necessary funds should be contributed by the inhabitants of all the foregoing cities and counties. This was an example of a wider application of the 1634 act which obliged the grand juries to impose charges on the local

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<sup>i</sup> Unit of land area in mediaeval Ireland.

<sup>ii</sup> A cutwater is pointed end to the dividing wall between the arches of a bridge in order to help the flow of water.



inhabitants for the repair or construction of bridges, toghers and causeways which while outside their areas, were of indirect benefit to those areas. Under the provisions of the 1665 act the apportionment of the costs between the two city and four county authorities would be made by the Lord Lieutenant and council of Ireland.

From 1641 to 1660 Ireland suffered from prolonged wars and their aftermath. Even though hostilities ceased in 1652, the country only recovered slowly with much difficulty and distress in the period up to 1660. Some of the measures taken at this time actually benefited roads, as for example when an order dated 2 November 1654 on the council-book of Waterford commissioned General Reynolds 'to fell and carry away as many trees as would enlarge the road to twenty yards on either side as it was a dangerous shelter for rogues.'<sup>35</sup> In 1647, the first Irish road book was published<sup>36</sup>. For the first time a description of the principal roads is given. The publication did not contain a map, which would have been very useful. The description of the roads only gave their geographical location and made no mention of their condition. Implementation of the 1634 act was however slow, as was shown by the experience of a Quaker preacher named William Edmundson (W. E.) on his travels in the north-western part of the country in 1656 in the following extract from an account of his hardships by Thomas Wight:

Of these sufferings W. E. in particular met with a large share, besides the many hard and dangerous travels and exercises he went thro' when he was alone in the times when Tories and robbers, after the war, were abroad, being some[times]s put under the necessity of passing deep waters in the winter season, where bridges were not built; and one [time] particularly he was put into prison in Strabane, in his clothes after travelling and swimming, by which he grew ill.<sup>37</sup>

After the ending of the war and especially from 1660 the country was peaceful for a period of thirty years until 1690. During these years, trade increased and a greater effort was made to repair the roads and bridges, which had been destroyed and neglected during the hostilities. The shortage of public roads and bridges must have led to some landowners building their own, as the petition of Tobias Points and his tenants as recorded in the Hastings manuscripts in 1662/3 shows. In this petition Points and his people were looking to the Lord Lieutenant for permission to impose a toll on their road and bridge in order to keep both in repair. The petition also gives a picture of the type of transport problems at that time:

Petition of Tobias Points Esq. and his under tenants living upon the lands belonging to the territory of Moynterheny; County Armagh to the Duke of Ormonde, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and the Council.

[1662 or 1663] - Showing that " the highway leading from the County of Armagh to the County of Down upon the river of the Gline commonly known by the name of Staroagh and Points, his pass is a madeway of a causeway and timber bridge, and every year out of repair by reason of several droves of cattle, which every



summer are driven over there to the great prejudice of the petitioner and the said tenants both in destroying their pastures and breaking down the said bridge and causeway” and therefore humbly praying for an order empowering them to demand and receive moderate customs for every herd of cattle passing that way towards the repair of the said bridge and causeway, the petitioners obliging themselves to keep them in good repair.

Endorsed “ The humble petition [sic] of Tobias Points Esq. and his undertenants in the Territory of Moynster - Henny [Note difference in spelling] in the County of Armagh.<sup>38</sup>

The grand juries continued to raise funds for road repair as shown by the following:

1676, July 27.- Presentment made at the general Assizes held for the County of Cork that the great highway and common ancient road leading from the market town of Clonturke, on the lands of ‘Curknenagh’ to Tralee and Killarney, in the County of Kerry, are out of repair, and ought to be repaired at the charge of the Barony of Duhallow.<sup>39</sup>

In May 1664, the duke of Ormonde issued instructions to the Council of Trade, which had been set up to promote Irish trade. Among these instructions were two (No. 10 and 11), the first of which was: ‘You are to consider what means sturdy vagrants and beggars may be compelled to earn their living by some lawful calling.’ and the second (No. 11) was: ‘You are to consider by what ways and means commerce may be promoted by the employment of some persons in the mending of highways and bridges and making rivers navigable, and in draining boggs and loghs and recovering land from the same.’<sup>40</sup> The report of the Council of Trade made on March 25 1673 to the Lord Lieutenant and Council of Ireland did not, however, make any reference to above instructions or to roads.<sup>41</sup>

Authorities also took precautions against abuses by grand juries of using their powers for raising and spending taxes for uses other than roads and bridges, as is shown by a footnote in Smith's ‘History of Cork:

Lord Orrery in a letter to the Duke of Ormond dated at Charleville, the third April 1666, takes notice that there was but one bridge over the Blackwater which,(he says) is forty miles navigable for boats. This is at Mallow, where there is a castle of good strength, if it had a little reparation, and is one of the greatest passes and thoroughfares in this province, and if seized by an enemy, would in effect divide the county into two parts. The repair of this castle was presented by the grand jury of the county but the judge reserved himself from answering, till he spoke with Lord Orrery then Lord-President and again deferred the affair till he spoke with the



Lord Lieutenant, the law only allowing presentments for bridges, causeways, highways etc.<sup>42</sup>

The roads in county Kerry were also in poor condition at this time as was stated by Lord Herbert and others in a 'Report on the State of Kerry, dated 27 May 1673. In this report it was stated that one of the causes for the failure to impose the laws of the new regime on the locals in some baronies was the fact ' that the remotest parts of these baronies are one hundred and eighty English miles from Dublin, and near forty miles from the places where Assizes and Sessions are held; and the waies for the last thirty or forty miles are the worst of all in Ireland, impassable in the winter time, and requiring an hour's riding, with much trouble and danger, for each mile.....'<sup>43</sup> Matters did not improve very much by the early years of the next century as is shown in Cusack's '*History of the kingdom of Kerry,*' where it was stated: 'The judges in the eighteenth century at least travelled direct from Limerick to Tralee, and were particular about the state of the roads, for they fined the county Kerry one hundred pounds for not keeping the 'the great circuit road' in proper repair.'<sup>44</sup>

The state of the law concerning roads at this stage continued to be that the local parish vestries were legally obliged to repair the parish roads while the grand juries were permitted but not required by law to repair and construct bridges and highways, However, as the following draft notice from the mayor of Kilkenny shows, not all parishes were operating the 1615 act or, at least, not operating it in full:

whereas several of the highways leading to this city are much out of repair and the controllers, churchwardens and parishioners of the several parishes within the liberties of the same have neglected to elect new overseers of the highways in Easter week last according to the Statute, by reason whereof you the undernamed persons are continued in your former employments of the survey of the highways in your parish of (blank) and the said parish for the said neglect is fined (blank). These are therefore to require you according to the duty of your said office that at such times and places as you shall find necessary you do summon and give warning to so many of the inhabitants in your said parish as you shall in your discretion find convenient and necessary to assemble and be with their carriages shovels spades mattocks and other necessary instruments for to so amend the defects of the several roads and high ways in your said parish according to the Statute, and of your proceedings therein to give an account to His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for this city at the next General Sessions of the Peace to be held for the same and hereof fail not as you will answer the contrary at your peril.

Dated the 29th day of April 1676.<sup>45</sup>

Despite the making of new roads and bridges at certain locations, the condition of existing ones may even have deteriorated, because of the increasing traffic and lack of



maintenance. Even in the smaller and more remote towns and villages this was becoming apparent. In the records of the borough of Clonakilty in the western part of county Cork, the following are examples of the type of entry found in the minutes of the council for the early years of the eighteenth century:

( 5 February 1700 )

We find and present that three pounds sterl. to be levied on the town and liberties of Cloughnakilty for the repair of the great bridge leading from Cloughnakilty to Ross westwards, is sufficient to repair the said bridge, and that Mr. Thomas Warner, Mr. John Field, Mr. James Spiller, or the major part of the above, to be fitt persons to applott the same, and that the said applottment be made within one week after the date hereof, and that Mr. John Field and Mr. James Spiller are fitt persons to be overseers of the same.<sup>46</sup>

(31 March 1704)

We find and present that the road leading from Cloughnakilty to Timoleague, between the lands of Cahirgall, Gullanes, and Dorrory, is out of reparaire, and ought to be repair'd; and three men out of each ploughland within this corporation will reparaire the same. We therefore think fitt that the constable of the said corporation doe summon the said men to appear at the said worke, with spades and shovels to effect the same, and that within the space of one month, and that Mr. Herbert Baldwin and Capt. Richard Hungerford are fitt persons to oversee the same; and for every man that shall refuse to come when summon'd shall pay one shilling, to be levy'd by the said constable.<sup>47</sup>

It is clear from these two extracts that the borough authorities in Clonakilty were acting both as assize judges or quarter sessions with grand jury approval under the 1634 act and as a parish authority under the 1615 act. Such a situation must have created confusion.

In the opening years of the eighteenth century parliament must have been very dissatisfied with both the operation of the grand jury and parochial systems of road works because in 1705 it passed an act (4 Anne, c.4) to make improvements in the procedures of both systems. The preamble of this act opens as follows:

Whereas it hath been of late years the practice of evil persons, who have regard more to their own private advantage than to the benefit of the publick, to procure presentments to be made by grand juries at assizes and general quarter sessions of the peace, for raising money for such uses as by the laws of this kingdom are not warrantable: and whereas others, to cover such their evil intent, have in like manner procured large presentments to be made for such uses, as by the laws of this land



were warrantable, yet have applied to the said uses but a small part of the money, and have diverted the remainder to other uses no way warranted by law:.....

The act made provisions to resolve these abuses and set a maximum figure of twenty pounds to be raised at any quarter sessions for public works. Section 6 of the act dealt separately with the six day labour parish system, which as can be seen from the following extract from the act, was regarded as not of much use at that time:

And whereas a good law in force in this kingdom, for mending of the high ways by the six days labour, is for the most part ineffectual, by reason [of] the penalty for neglecting the same, which is very small, cannot be imposed but after conviction upon presentment or indictment; which being so very chargeable, such offenders do for the most part escape prosecution, and the publick high ways continue neglected;.....

To resolve the problems with the six day labour system this act made provision for appointment of overseers of the highways by the justices at their sessions, in default of the respective parishes naming them. This act also made provision for two justices from the same or adjacent baronies to determine offences against the statute labour act and to impose penalties with powers of recovery by distress and sale.

The 1705 act did not however fully resolve all the problems with the roads and the dual system of administration and so it was necessary to pass another act in 1710 (9 Anne, c.9) 'for the amending of the high ways and roads in this kingdom, and for the application of the six day labour.' The original statute labour act (11-13 James 1, c.7) provided, as previously stated, that the parish vestry was to meet at Easter and fix a week before the feast-day of St., John the Baptist for the repair of the roads in the parish. Such an arrangement made no provision for emergency repairs throughout the remainder of the year. The new act (9 Anne, c.9) provided that the six-day labour could be divided into two three-day periods or into three two-day periods at the discretion of the parish authorities. This act also made provision for a measure of co-operation between the six day labour system and the grand jury presentment system, whereby on a large road building project, the manual labour could be supplied by the parish six day labour, while the materials for the road could be supplied under a grand jury presentment. The act made various other provisions such as: people in a parish with no roads in their parish could be made to work in an adjacent parish within two miles of theirs, the surveyor was authorised to purchase tools for use on the roads while the overseer was authorised to have emergency repairs done at any time and to recoup the cost later from the grand jury. The act also provided all new roads had to have a minimum carriageway width of nine feet. In 1720 another act (6 Geo.I, c.10) was passed requiring that all presentments for high roads and bridges be accompanied by an affidavit made by two credible persons who lived locally, who had inspected the proposed work and who satisfied themselves that the proposed work was necessary.



In the following years there is evidence of much road and bridge building in progress. From the minutes of the grand jury of county Cork for the year 1712 it can be seen that 73% of the total expenditure was on roads and bridges and 91% of this was on bridges.<sup>48</sup> In these same grand jury minutes, there is an example of how the 1710 act operated to supplement the resources of the parish labour with publicly raised funds so as to have large-scale road works carried out. At a meeting of the grand jury on 1 March 1711(1712) a presentment was passed to give funds to:

John Wrixon and John Foulke, gents, overseers for making 2,500 yards of causeway in the high road leading from Mallow through Ballyclogh to Ballygiblin in the way to Kerry, the earth being thrown up already by the day labour.....<sup>49</sup>

A major new highways act was passed in 1727 (1 Geo.II, c.13) entitled 'An act for explaining and amending several laws made for amending the highways and roads in this kingdom; and for the application of the six -days labour'. This act made provision for: the appointment of able, knowing and skillful persons as surveyors to supervise road works at a salary not to exceed two shillings and sixpence per working day; all landowners to bring to the site of the road works as part of the six day labour either one cart with two horses and two men, or two carrs with wheels and two men, or in places where wheel-cars are not used, three slide-cars and two men, or three horses with 'creels or cleeves' and two men and that all roads be paved to a width of twelve feet in a right-of-way of twenty one feet for existing roads and thirty feet for all new roads. It should be noted that in Section 4 of this act the reason given for allowing landowners to use wheel-cars, slide-cars and horses with panniers, was 'and whereas carts and wains are very rarely used in this kingdom'. It should also be noted that the act recognised that there were places in Ireland where wheel-cars were not used. This new highways act was soon implemented, as the following excerpt from the 1728 vestry minute book of Santry parish in county Dublin shows:

Whereas a late act of parliament has been made for amending the laws made for amending the highways for more open application of the six day labour. Mr. Hercules Humphrey and Matthew Fox appointed overseers of the six-day labour. It is likewise in pursuance of the P[arliamentary] law that Mr. Isaac Humphrey be appointed Director of the amendment of the highways and of application of the six days labour and agreed that 2s. - 6d. per day be payed [sic] by the churchwarden for every day employed by him in pursuance of his office, not to exceed 40s. in total.<sup>50</sup>

Perhaps it would also be helpful at this stage to look at an example of the implementation of the 1727 highways act in the case of one of the then existing trunk roads prior to the introduction of the turnpike system. The road in question was part of the principal road from Dublin to Belfast at Killineer, four miles north of Drogheda and the method of repair of this



road in March 1730 (1731) before it formed part of the Dublin-Dunleer turnpike road later in 1731, can be seen from the Louth grand jury presentment book:

Whereas it appears that one hundred perches of the great road from Dunleer to Drogheda on the lands of Killineer to the lands of Manimore through Danerath and [Illegible word] are out of repair and that the sum of eleven pounds thirteen shillings and four pence will be necessary to repair the same at two shillings and four pence per perch twelve feet wide. We therefore present the sum of eleven pounds thirteen shillings and four pence be raised of the inhabitants of this county and paid to Francis Leigh Esq. for repairing the said road pursuant to the annexed affidavit and we appoint Henry [Illegible word] Esq. and Henry Ackland, overseers and Francis Leigh Esq., supervisor.<sup>51</sup>

The condition of the roads in the last quarter of the seventeenth century was that, while some were good, most were in a poor state. This lack of uniformity was the result of the size of the units responsible for their maintenance, e.g. parishes, with occasional interventions by grand juries. It is perhaps best to look at reports on roads in different locations to see the overall position. In August 1679 Mrs. E. Freke landed at Cove (now Cobh), County Cork and travelled via Kinsale, Ballinascorthy and Clonakilty to Rathbarry. This journey was described as being on horseback over 'indescribably bad roads' while the Bandon river was crossed by ford.<sup>52</sup> Richard Dobbs in his description of the County Antrim highways in 1683, showed that some were good and others poor. In the case of the roads in the Lisburn area he observed:

All the highways within 8 or 10 miles of Lisburn are very good and not from the nature of the soils, which generally afford gravel or sand, but from Sir Geo. Rawden's care who is, I believe the best highway man in the kingdom and the industry of the inhabitants.<sup>53</sup>

This showed that the quality of the roads depended very much on the interest taken by the local landlord as well as on the local parish. In a reference to part of the road from Cushendun to Ballycastle over the mountains of Cary, Dobbs said that a guide was necessary because 'the mountain seems a continuous bog where a man is in danger of sinking with his horse'<sup>54</sup>. This writer also described a number of roads as being good in summer and bad in winter. Captain John Stevens, who fought in the army of king James II at the battle of the Boyne, in a reference to some of the roads in the Drogheda area on 4 October 1689, again echoed this description:

The great rain has made the ways almost impassable, the horse road which is most old causeway being broken up and quite out of repair and the footway in the fields very boggy with abundance of ditches at that time full of water.<sup>55</sup>



The journey of Captain Stevens in 1689<sup>56</sup> from his landing in Bantry in West Cork to Dublin and later to Drogheda gives a picture of the state of the country at that time and of the route he travelled. This is especially appropriate in view of the fact that the greater part of this route, that is, the portion from Bandon via Cork city, Kilworth, Clonmel, Kilkenny and Dublin through to Drogheda later formed part of the turnpike road system. He described Bantry as 'a miserable poor place, not worthy the name of a town, having not above seven or eight little houses, the rest very mean cottages.'<sup>57</sup> He left Bantry on 4 September 1689 after locating a horse with difficulty and noted in his diary:

having loaded our horse [with his clothes in two portmanteaus] marched afoot driving him before us twelve miles to Dunmanway, a place consisting of one gentleman's house and some scattering cabins. The road is all mountains very high, steep and rough, with few or scarce any houses near the way.<sup>58</sup>

On Sunday 5 September, Captain Stevens marched six miles to Enniskeane, the first three of which were similar to the road from Bantry to Dunmanway and the last three miles he described as being 'much plainer'. He described Enniskeane and Bandon as being superior to the previous places. In the course of his march to Cork city on Monday 6 September, he recorded in his diary: 'in all this way there is not so much as a village unless such as consist of ten or twelve poor cots or cabins, inhabited by the miserable country people, who live only upon their potatoes and sour milk. The road is all rough mountain rocky way.'<sup>59</sup> Captain Stevens rested two days in Cork and set out on 9 September for Dublin, marching the first day to Rathcormack. He described the way as being 'hilly,' The following day Stevens marched four miles to Kilworth which he described as a small market town and he described the road to it as good. It should be noted that there was no mention of Fermoy which scarcely existed at that time. The traveller then marched across Kilworth Mountain and reached Clogheen on the Friday evening of 10 September. Captain Stevens described Clogheen as a little town with good houses and went on to Clonmel partly by horse because of his tiredness in the warm weather. Of Clonmel he recorded in his diary 'this is one of the prettiest towns I have seen, though small.'<sup>60</sup> On Sunday Stevens marched to Nine Mile House and described the road in the following terms: 'the first five miles are plain good way, the other four hilly and very rough.'<sup>61</sup> He then went on to Kilkenny via Callan but did not describe the roads. From Kilkenny Captain Stevens proceeded to Leighlinbridge, 'where is only a large stone bridge over the Barrow, two good houses of entertainment and a few small cabins.'<sup>62</sup> He then set out for Dublin travelling via Carlow, Castledermot, Timolin, Naas and Rathcool without describing the road condition and arrived in the capital on Friday 17 September 1689.

Captain Stevens took part in the battle of the Boyne in 1690 and in the remainder of the Williamite war. His comments on the roads are important because he was a trained observer who had much experience of roads under various weather and climatic conditions. On his march to the Boyne on 20 May 1690 he also commented on the road from Dublin to Drogheda, which he



described as: 'excessive dusty' and 'in summer very good, but in winter extreme deep unless helped by an old broken causeway full of holes.'<sup>63</sup>

#### **1.4 Roads and state of country from 1690-1729**

After 1691 the country settled into a period of internal peace, which was to last for over one hundred years until 1798. The estimated population of Ireland in 1700 was approximately 2.5 million and it is reckoned that it rose to 5.3 million in 1800<sup>64</sup>. In the period following 1691 there was an initial brisk increase in the overall trade figures from 1695 to 1698 followed by a slowing down of this rate of increase during the first decade with fluctuations during the next two or three decades of the eighteenth century. After 1730 in the case of exports and 1740 in the case of imports, trade increased fairly steadily up to 1811 except for occasional minor 'blips' in the case of exports. These trends are shown by the overall monetary values of the yearly exports and imports given in Tables 1.1<sup>65</sup> and 1.2<sup>66</sup>

**Table 1.1 Overall value of exports and imports from 1695 to 1698 in pounds**

Years	Exports	Imports	Balance	Contra-Balance
1695	295,592	391,524	-	95,932
1696	398,237	334,963	62,274	-
1697	525,004	423,182	101,822	-
1698	996,305	576,863	419,442	-

note: years ending 25th December.

**Table 1.2 Overall value of exports and imports from 1700 to 1816 in pounds**

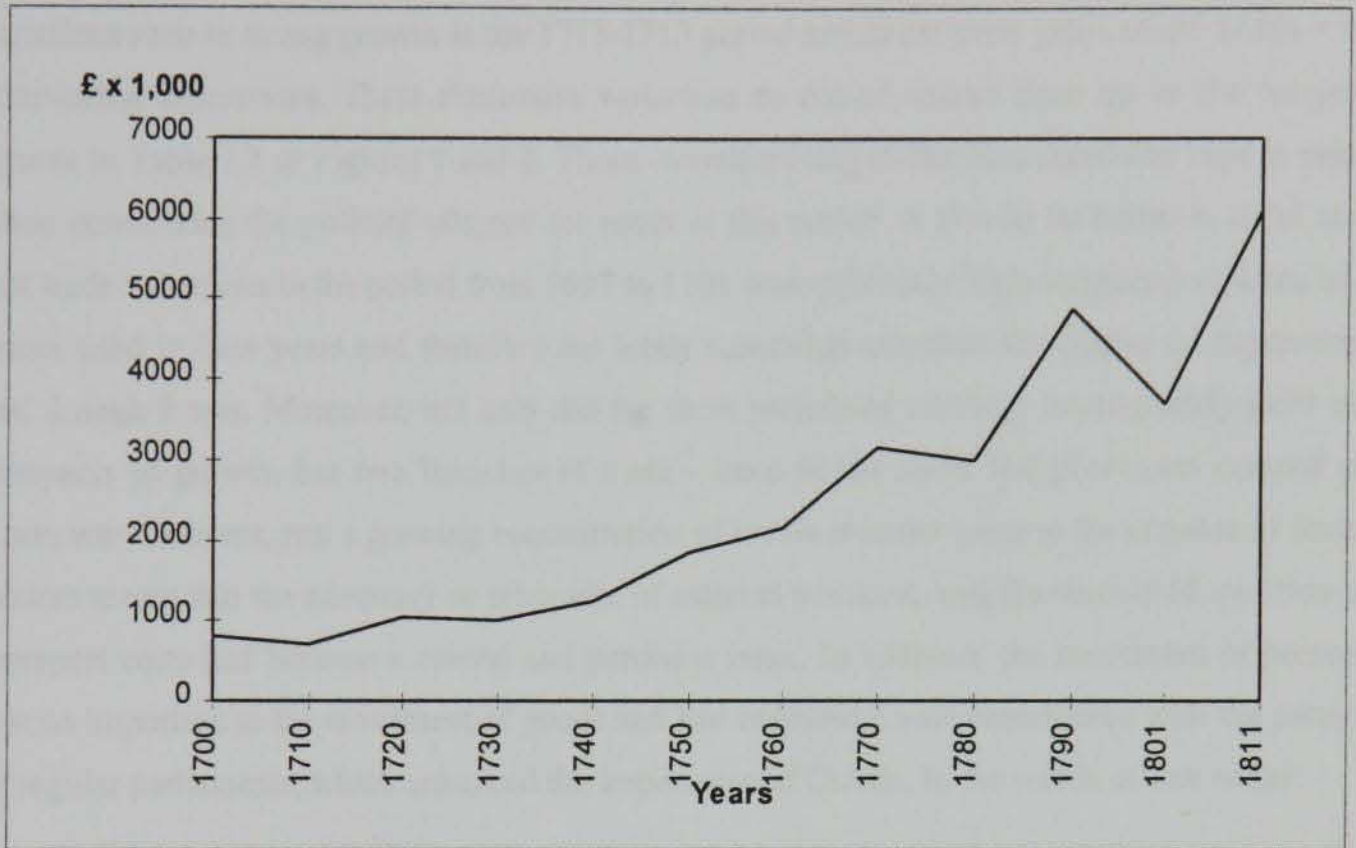
Years	Exports	Imports
1700	814,716	792,473
1710	712,497	554,248
1720	1,038,382	891,678
1730	992,832	929,897
1740	1,259,853	849,678
1750	1,862,834	1,531,654
1760	2,139,388	1,647,592
1770	3,159,587	1,647,592
1780	3,012,179	2,127,579
1790	4,855,319	3,829,914
1801	3,714,779	5,584,599
1811	6,099,337	6,564,578



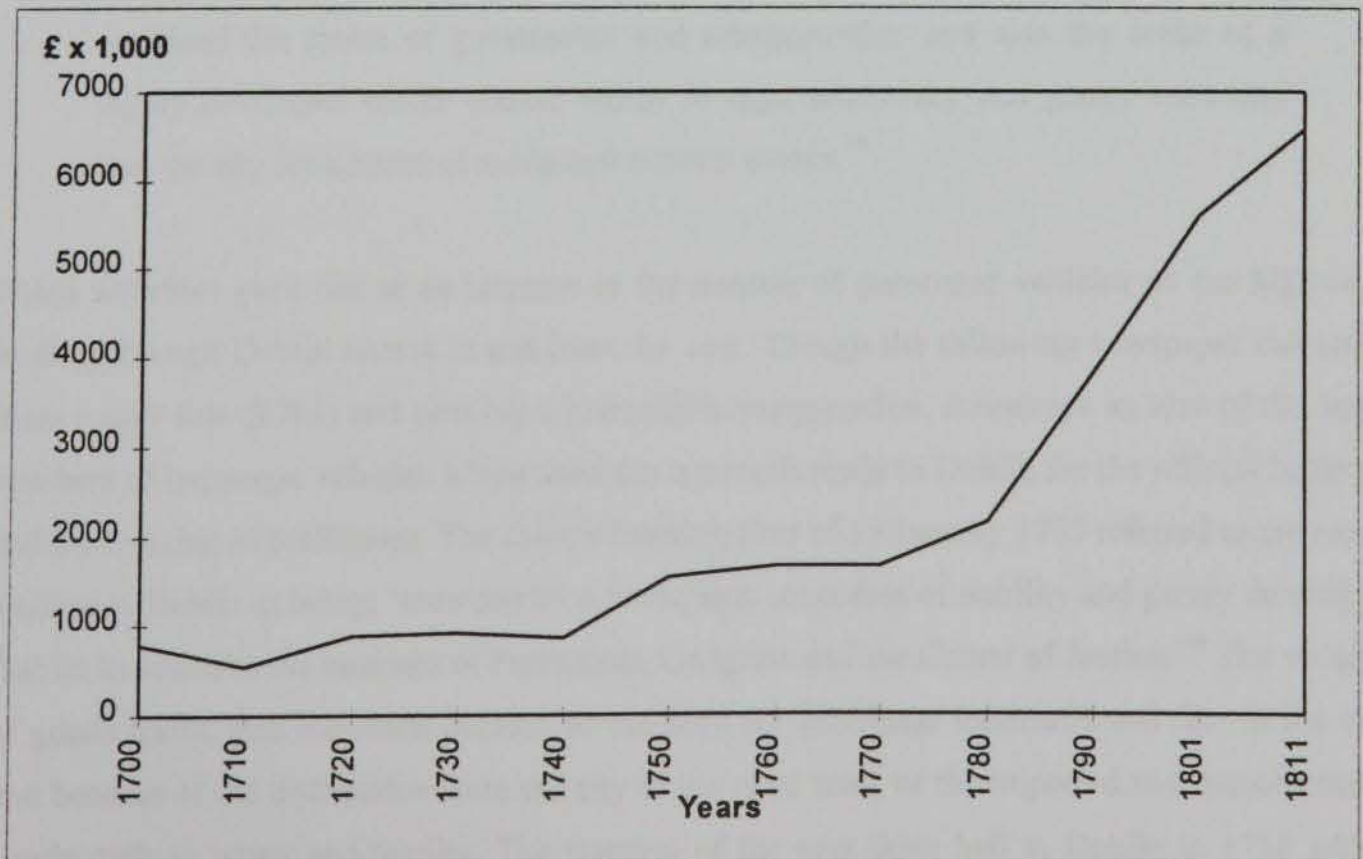
1816	7,076,123	6,106,878
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**Note** : years 1700-1790 ending 25 December and years 1801-1816 beginning 5 January

Figures 1 and 2 show the changes in the overall value of exports and imports from 1700 to 1811 based on the data given in Table 1.2.



**Figure 1** Overall value of exports from 1700 to 1811





## Figure 2 Overall values of imports from 1700 to 1811

The yearly values in Table 1.2 together with Figure 1 show that the overall increase in the value of exports in the period from 1700-1730 was less than in any thirty-year period for the remainder of the century. The position is similar in the case of imports in that in the period from 1700 to 1740, the rate of increase is considerably less than in the period from 1740 to 1811, as is very clearly shown in Figure 2. However within this thirty-year period there were shorter-term variations such as strong growth in the 1713-1715 period and in the early years of the 1720s with intervening depressions. These short-term variations do not of course show up on the ten-year figures in Table 1.2 or Figures 1 and 2. These overall trading difficulties should be kept in mind when considering the policies adopted for roads at this period. It should be borne in mind also that trade valuations in the period from 1697 to 1701 were relatively high compared with the unit prices used in later years and therefore the totals somewhat overstate the degree of depression, real though it was. Moreover, not only did the short periods of recovery intermittently hold out prospects of growth, but two branches of trade - linen in the north and provisions centred on Cork, were buoyant, and a growing concentration of traffic at major ports at the expense of lesser centres meant that the adequacy or otherwise of internal transport, and the associated question of transport costs had become a central and pertinent issue. In addition, the movement of persons was as important as the movement of goods and had acquired a new prominence with the pattern of regular parliaments, which enhanced the importance of Dublin. In the words of one writer:

After 1692, meetings of the Irish parliament became much more frequent, eventually settling down to a regular session of five to eight months' duration every second year. The necessary residence of the lord lieutenant added a social dimension to those occasions. Even when parliament was not sitting, Dublin remained the centre of government and administration and also the scene of a highly developed winter season, which brought aristocracy and gentry crowding into the city for a round of social and cultural events.<sup>67</sup>

These activities gave rise to an increase in the number of passenger vehicles on the highways leading through Dublin county to and from the city. Though the following newspaper extract is from a later date (1785) and possibly a journalistic exaggeration, it conveys an idea of the large numbers of passenger vehicles which used the approach roads to Dublin for the official business and the opening of parliament. The *Dublin Evening Post* of 15 January 1785 referred to the roads leading to Dublin as being: 'crowded by a prodigious concourse of nobility and gentry coming to Dublin to attend to the business of Parliament, Congress and the Courts of Justice.'<sup>68</sup> The volume of goods traffic also increased because of the need for additional foodstuffs and fuel in the city and because of the distribution from the city to the rural areas of the imported and manufactured goods such as wines and textiles. The opening of the new linen hall in Dublin in 1728 added



further to the growth of traffic. The increased traffic caused further wear and tear on the highways and so added to the demand for the introduction of better roads.

In the case of traffic there is evidence that wheeled vehicles for the conveyance of people were becoming more common. In 1685 Sir William Petty and William Molyneux were among a group of people who tested a newly invented calash which, it was claimed could travel across uneven farmland as well as on level ground.<sup>69</sup> In an account of his travels in Ireland in 1698, John Dunton referred to the Drogheda stagecoach setting in regularly at an inn at Ballough in north county Dublin. He also observed that previous to that time, travellers between Dublin and Drogheda 'usually refreshed themselves in a very good inn' at Balrothery.<sup>70</sup> For the transport of goods there is no evidence of the use of any wagons at the end of the seventeenth century or in the early part of the eighteenth century. It should be noted that in this thesis the word wagon (formerly spelled waggon and now spelled in both ways) should always be taken to mean a four wheeled goods vehicle, even though it is sometimes used in literature to describe a heavy two-wheeled vehicle. The most likely use of wagons would be as part of military supply trains. However in an act passed in 1707 (6 Anne, c.14) 'To prevent the disorders that may happen by the marching of soldiers and for providing carriages for the baggage of soldiers on their march', the hire of transport was limited to three 'wheel cars' or six 'slide cars' per troop or company. The act further stipulated that 'no such wheel car or carriage shall be loaded with above 400 pounds weight nor any slide car with above 200 pounds weight' and that the hire rates were to be 'two pence per mile for every wheel car and one penny per mile for every slide car.'

With regard to roads, a very good picture of the principal roads in Ireland is given in the Thorpe papers. This is an '*Exact Description of the roads of Ireland*' dated 1690 and it includes 'the most passable roads for the army to march to the siege of any place'<sup>71</sup>. It was intended to be used, only for those wishing to follow the progress of the war in the newspapers but it gives an insight into the routes of the roads at that time. A further description of the locations of the principal roads is given in the map prepared by J. H. Andrews in '*A new history of Ireland*' based on a map by C. Browne of 1691<sup>72</sup>. In late 1691, Lord Talbot reported on the defences of Ireland and in a reference to the passes leading to towns, observed that 'neither would it be worth while to fortify them as passes because there are several new bridges made, and new ways across the bogs are being daily made for the benefit of the counties bordering on one another.'<sup>73</sup>

It is possible to get a picture of the state of some of the roads throughout Ireland from the tours made by Dr. Thomas Molyneux in 1708 and 1709.<sup>74</sup> In a reference to a journey carried out during the month of August 1708 from Coleraine to Newtownlimavady on his northern tour, he stated that the journey was along:

a most excellent new artificially-made causey, in dismal wild boggy mountains; it runs for some miles in an exact straight line and it makes a pretty figure to see a work so perfectly owing to art and industry in so wild a place; 'twill cost 600 pounds.'<sup>75</sup>



and in a description of the city of Derry, this traveller recorded his disappointment that there was no bridge over the river Foyle at this location.<sup>76</sup>

In April 1709 Dr. Molyneux travelled to Connaught and recorded the roads from Beggar's Bridge (now Rochfort Bridge) to Moate as 'mighty bad coach roads' whilst he described the roads from Moate to Athlone as 'indifferent coach roads'<sup>77</sup>. When he crossed the river Shannon into county Galway, this traveller observed that the 'Irish mile' was not then a standard length throughout the country: 'The miles here are very long as they generally increase in bad country and distant parts from Dublin.'<sup>78</sup> In general the writer described the roads of county Galway as being good,<sup>79</sup> with the roads from Galway to Ballinasloe 'very good,' whilst the roads around Kilconnel were described as 'pretty good'. It is perhaps best at this stage to show how the eighteenth century roads and indeed all unbound stone or gravel roads up to the introduction of binders such as tar and bitumen in the first half of the present century, were affected by the weather. Contrary to popular belief, a long warm dry spell accompanied or followed by a windy spell was not good for the unbound roads. The following quotation, though written at a much later time by R. H. Dorman, county surveyor of Armagh in 1891, makes clear the influence of weather on these unbound roads:

The weather is an important factor in connection with road maintenance. We have too much sun in summer and too little in winter. In continuous dry weather the wind as a dust carrier creates a nuisance, while during and after rain it is beneficial. During long continued dry weather occurring at any period of the year, a high wind is most injurious to roads; the author has known roads break up just as badly in March as during any period in the summer owing to the wind blowing all the fine particles off the surface and from between the broken stone. The effects of rain and frost are too well known to need discussion, but whereas occasional rain is beneficial to a road, frost appears to be at all times injurious, and further during alternations of rain and frost it is almost impossible to keep a badly bottomed road in order.<sup>80</sup>

Even on turnpike roads, the dust arising from the surface was a nuisance to travellers and they appreciated the improvement brought by rain. This is shown by an excerpt from one of Bishop Synge's letters of 19 May 1752 about a journey on the turnpike road from Dublin to Kinnegad:

Yesterday there was something arising on the road - Till we came to Kilcock all firmly wetted. From there to Clonard, all dust. Not a drop of rain the day before. As we advanced, the road was very wet and for that reason very pleasant.<sup>81</sup>:

It should of course be made clear that the above weather effect on the carriageway surfaces only applies to well drained and well-maintained roads. If the drainage is poor and streams of surface water are allowed to flow across or along the carriageways in heavy rain, or if standing water is



allowed to freeze in very cold weather, it is an entirely different scenario, and such roads may be impassable even in summer weather or in some cases only barely passable for short periods of the year. The months of March and April are usually regarded as the worst months for potholes in road surfaces. The potholes occur as a result of a wet or cold winter or early spring and so repairs are often done during these two months. There is no indication of whether repairs had been carried out on the Galway roads immediately prior to Molyneux's visit, but it is plain that the road between Rochfort Bridge and Moate was unrepaired. Molyneux undertook another journey to Kerry from Dublin in July of the same year, but did not describe the condition of any roads. However he gave a good indication of the state of the first stage of the journey by recording the time taken to travel specific distances in identifiable means of conveyance, as is shown by the opening sentence:

Left Dublin about 10 a clock in my Lord Shelburn's chaise, came to Naas by 3 and from thence across the Curragh in two hours and a half; from Kildare to Monasterevan in two hours more.<sup>82</sup>

In 1714, Moll's new map of Ireland<sup>83</sup> was published showing the principal roads as surveyed by Henry Pratt and this showed that the road network was fairly extensive throughout the country. However it was another form of transport which occupied the minds of the legislators when parliament passed the first act (2 Geo.I, c.12) dealing with the improvement of the inland waterways for the carriage of goods. This act was passed in 1715 and its full title was 'An act to encourage the draining and improving of the bogs and unprofitable low grounds and for the easing and dispatching of the inland carriage and conveyance of goods from one part to another within this kingdom.' Unfortunately, this act did not provide any funds to promoters of such schemes and so very little work was undertaken as a result of it.

In one of the short-term growth periods already mentioned, that is prior to 1715, the increase of trade was such that in the five years from 1710 to 1715 the value of exports more than doubled from<sup>84</sup> £712,427 to £1,529,766. This growth in exports was helped by the expansion of the linen industry, which was assisted by the establishment of the Irish Linen Board in 1711. As approximately 50% of all Irish external trade passed through the port of Dublin, the volume of through-traffic on the principal roads in county Dublin also increased. This increased traffic resulted in an increased amount of wear and tear on the roads, which appeared to be beyond the capacity of the parish and grand jury system to make good. Even though the boom receded after 1715, the condition of the main through-roads in county Dublin must have remained a problem in 1719, because in that year a petition was submitted to parliament:

The lord lieutenant, high sheriff, justices of the peace and grand jury of the county of Dublin, setting forth that the great roads through the county cannot be kept in repair without great charge upon the poor inhabitants and praying relief.<sup>85</sup>



This petition was presented on 16 July 1719 and on 18 July 1719, it was sent to a committee 'to consider of a proper method for making the six days labour in repairing the high roads of the kingdom more used.'<sup>86</sup> The petition obviously had no effect as a somewhat similar petition was drawn up at a meeting of the county Dublin grand jury held at Kilmainham on 10 October 1723. This second petition was presented to parliament on 17 October 1723 and it was again referred to committee.<sup>87</sup>

These petitions hint that the roads were on the political agenda. This was also borne out by the fact that the pamphleteers in the 1720s dealt specifically with the subject of roads. A pamphleteer in 1723, suggested imposing tolls on road-users in order to provide extra funds for road maintenance and improvement:

However I must observe that as it is cars that most generally impair the roads in the country and both cars and coaches that destroy the pavements in towns, so I think it is just that some reasonable tax be laid on both to contribute to repairs of them: this with the six-days labour well apply'd would in a few years mend all the roads, which at present are most shamefully neglected.<sup>88</sup>

Another pamphleteer writing at about the same time indicated that some of the farmers, hauliers and even large landowners were responsible for some of the defects of the road system:

Farmers or their under cottagers are very apt nowadays to take in, and enclose all the broad high-ways on each side of the paved causeys adjoining to their farms to the great disease of travellers, who otherwise might (in summer-time especially) avoid the rugged pavement, which is sometimes so narrow, that scarce two carts can pass by each other with safety ..... There are a set of people called carrmen, who hold not an acre of land, but keep these filthy half-starved tets [small horses], either by nightly stealing their neighbour's grass and hay or by what they can pick up on the highways or the bare commons; these fellows cut and destroy quick-sett hedges, and young woods, for wyths, gads and other for their carrs, &c and therefore ought to be suppressed ..... One hindrance to the convenience of farmers (especially of late since the revolution) is that very many of the common roads cross the country leading from village to village, to mill, church sea and market, have been stopped up by gentlemen for the convenience of their own estates and improvements; these have taken advantage of the unsettled state of late times, and of the fearfulness of popish tenants who dare not contest with them, and have really spoiled that intercourse which is so necessary between neighbours for the benefit of the public.<sup>89</sup>

In 1729 John Browne, a county Mayo landowner and prominent writer of tracts and pamphlets, wrote one such pamphlet on *The benefits which arise to a trading people from*



*navigable rivers*. In it, he described the poor condition of the Irish roads and of the road transport system of that time. It is true that Browne had to make the road transport system look bad in order to make his proposal for river navigation look more attractive. Nevertheless his description is worth quoting:

Our whole inland carriage is at present by small feeble cattle either in high loads which scarcely exceed two hundredweight; or on truckle carts, of which a horse and car in summer-time, when the roads are dry and the cattle strong, may one with another carry about four hundredweight; but in other seasons of the year, there is no land carriage for those little machines are swallowed up in bad roads. The cattle (which are themselves very small) are for want of proper food and care unable to encounter the road, and the wet and uncertainty of the seasons make it unsafe to send on choice goods by carriage so ill defended; so that the whole, or at least, the most considerable part of the land carriage must be hurried on in one quarter of the year and the consequence is, that on the one hand, the price of carrying to market, by being so greatly enhanced, becomes a burthen upon all our exports and imports; and on the other hand, the want of carriages in the other three quarters, confining all the produce of art and labour, for so long a time, to the respective places of their growth and production, must necessarily be a great discouragement to the industry of the inland counties and a great clog upon our trade in general.<sup>90</sup>

This author's description of the Irish roads is, however, corroborated by Dean Swift, who travelled extensively and who also wrote in 1729 that: 'Generally speaking all over the kingdom, the roads are deplorable.'<sup>91</sup> In the same tract or pamphlet, John Browne observed:

We see great fortunes some of our neighbours made by turnpikes, where water carriages are wanting and how fond they are of undertaking the repair for the toll which they are entitled to, tho' such are but for limited terms.<sup>92</sup>

It should be noted that John Browne spent some time in England prior to 1729. In another tract or pamphlet written in 1729 entitled '*Considerations on the act for encouraging inland navigation in Ireland*', it is stated that 'carriage in all trading nations and more especially in Ireland, is the very life and soul of trade; nay is the very thing so called.'<sup>93</sup> In this same pamphlet, the need to maintain our roads and waterways is emphasised in an extract with a strangely prophetic undertone:

That this carriage of ours (severe and unequal as it thus appears in its expence) is, however, on all accounts utterly indispensable; and must at all times and in all events, be inevitably be maintained and submitted to; and being thus indispensable, must ('till we shall have learned to fly) be maintained either by land or by water.<sup>94</sup>



From the foregoing, it can be seen that the parliament and those in authority in Ireland were being made aware in no uncertain terms that the existing road system was grossly inadequate and a barrier to an increase in exports. In short, the message was that bad roads were a luxury that no country could ever afford. Faced with such pressure to improve the transportation system, it was no surprise that parliament passed not alone the first turnpike road acts in 1729 but also the first act, which allocated funds for the construction of canals.

### **1.5 Turnpike concept**

The original idea of the turnpike road was to compel traffic to pay for the damage done by it to the road. Little thought was given to the original condition of the road or of its susceptibility to damage. A presumption was made that the condition of the road was adequate provided that it carried only the local traffic, as the locals would repair any damage caused to the road by this traffic. Damage to a road can be caused by traffic mainly in two ways; firstly by a heavier than usual load on the road, which distorts or ruptures the structure of the road and secondly by an increased volume of normal traffic which increases wear and tear on the road surface. A desire to make through-traffic pay for damage over and above the normal was what first prompted people and authorities to erect barriers or gates at both ends of stretches of roads so affected, at which tolls were collected to make good the expected damage. Similar reasoning, of course, applies and was applied to bridges with the addition that the money **from tolls** was often used to recoup the cost of the construction of the bridge.

### **1.6 Early bridge and road tolls in Ireland**

In Ireland the payment of customs by those passing along the public highways apparently often occurred in the first half of the fifteenth century. This is shown by the need to pass an act in the parliament in 1447 (25 Hen.VI, c.3) to outlaw the taking of tolls or customs on the public road. An excerpt from this act will show what the situation was:

Also at the request of the Commons, for that, that many people of this land of Ireland do take and levy sundry customs of merchants, passing and going with their merchandise through the King's high-way, against right and reason: It is ordained and agreed by the authority of this present Parliament, That no man be so hardy henceforward to take or levy, or cause to be taken or levied, any such custom of merchants or of other people in the King's highway or elsewhere, but within cities, boroughs or other merchant towns, where the said merchandise be bought or sold, or brought to be sold there, as they have power and sufficient authority to take and levy such customs.

There is of course no indication in the act as to what the money received from the custom or toll was used for. In the taking of tolls from carts with iron bound wheels travelling on the streets of



Dublin in 1480 (See page 24) the greater part of the charge was for public works in the city, including presumably repairs to the streets.

The practice of collecting illegal tolls must have been widespread, because in 1705 parliament had to pass another act (4 Anne, c.8) 'to regulate the taking and exacting of tolls throughout this kingdom'. This act stated that:

Whereas the exacting and receiving toll for any sort of goods, or cattle droven or carried through any city, corporation, market-town or other place within this realm, where city, corporate or market town at their own cost or charges do not keep up and repair some public bridge or bridges, over which such goods or cattle shall be droven or carried is greatly prejudicial to the subjects of this realm and a discouragement to trade in general.

This act however allowed that where such goods or cattle were carried over any bridge 'reasonable toll may be taken, as before, by a person obliged at his own cost to keep it in repair.' This act thus set a precedent of the 'charge for use' principle in the case of bridges. However, the collecting of illegal tolls did not stop as a result of this act but continued into the nineteenth century as is shown by the following excerpt from John Cantwell barrister-at-law, in 1817:

The abuses in the different fairs throughout Ireland are incredible. The annual cost of the extortions exceeding the proper and just toll is said by many to be upwards of £700,000.<sup>95</sup>

This writer made clear that some of these illegal exactions arose from charges for goods passing over bridges and cited<sup>96</sup> the payments collected for the use of the bridge of Derry in 1817 as an example of the contravention of another act in 1763 (3 Geo.III, c.34), which forbade all such tolls except at turnpike gates.

## **1.7 Turnpike roads in England**

The trouble associated with through-traffic on the roads in Ireland occurred in England at a much earlier date, because of the greater industrialisation and trade in that country and the increased urbanisation especially in the London area. Shortly after the restoration of the monarchy in the seventeenth century an act {14 Chas.II, c.6 (Eng.)} was passed in 1662 'for enlarging and repairing of the common highways' which among other provisions empowered surveyors to levy extra assessments for road repairs when the six- day labour was found to be inadequate. It was soon obvious that a more radical change was urgently needed. In 1663 the first turnpike road act {15 Chas.II, c.1 (Eng.)} was passed to assist three of the local roads authorities on the main northern road from London to Scotland. This act was not very successful in its operation and in fact it was only at one turnpike gate in Hertfordshire that tolls were actually collected.



However this act dictated or set the pattern for future turnpike road acts. It set out the main features of these acts which were: that a defined length of road was placed under the control of a board of trustees; this board could appoint their own surveyor or surveyors and erect gates and collect at these gates the tolls specified in the act; all toll-money received was to be used to repair and improve the road and the board of trustees had power to borrow money on the strength of future toll receipts. In addition the toll receipts were only intended to supplement and not replace the six-day labour on the road and lastly it was laid down that the act was only a temporary measure for a specified time period (eleven years). The 'trustees' under this first turnpike act were all justices of the peace thus making it a quasi-official body. The second turnpike act was not passed until 1695, possibly because of opposition to the 1663 act. Progress over the next nineteen years is best summed up by William Albert in his book *'The turnpike road system in England'*:

The turnpike acts passed between 1695 and 1706 were all similar in that the justices were given the power to erect gates, collect tolls, appoint officials and supervise repair. But in 1706 a radically new concept was introduced. By an act of that year the road from Fornhill to Stony Stratford was placed under the control of a group of thirty-two trustees, whose powers for repair, toll collection, etc., were generally the same as those enjoyed by the justices under previous acts. By 1714 the 'turnpike trust' had completely replaced the older 'justice trusts'.<sup>97</sup>

Generally from 1706 onwards a very large number of turnpike trust acts were passed by the parliament. Many of these were of a similar nature and even wording and it was on this almost standard form of turnpike road act that the first Irish act was based. The turnpike road from the town of Fulham to the great road near Hammersmith in the county of Middlesex may be taken as an example of the opening statement and of the toll rates in use at that time (1731) in England. The English enabling act for this turnpike is listed as 4 Geo.II, c.24, as the parliament began at Westminster on 23 January 1727. The first part of the preamble to this act read as follows:

Whereas the highway or road leading from the town of Fulham in the county of Middlesex through Fulham fields to the great road near the pound at Hammersmith in the said county being the direct road from Fulham to Hammersmith and so to the western part of this kingdom is become so ruinous and bad in the winter season and the same cannot by the ordinary course appointed by the laws and state of this Realm, be sufficiently repaired and amended.....

The toll rates specified in this act were as set out in Table 1.3.

**Table 1.3 English Turnpike Toll Rates for road in London area**

Description of traffic unit	Rate
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A	For every coach, berlin, chariot, chaise or calash drawn by six horses	6d.
B	Ditto	four horses
	Ditto	two horses
	Ditto	one horse
C	For every waggon, cart or carriage laden with hay, straw or wood	3d.
D	For every other waggon, dray, cart or carriage drawn by four or more horses	6d.
	Ditto	three horses
	Ditto	two horses
E	Ditto	one horse
F	For every horse, mule or ass laden or unladen and not drawing	1d.
G	-----	-----
H	For every drove of calves, hogs, sheep or lambs <i>price per score and pro rata</i>	5d.

In other acts, the rates for wagons, wains, carts or other goods carriages were larger as shown in Table 1.4 by the rates specified in the turnpike road act of 1729 {2 Geo.II, c.5 (Eng.)} in respect of a group of roads in the Lichfield and Stone areas.

**Table 1.4 English Turnpike Toll Rates for roads in the Lichfield and Stone areas**

	Description of traffic unit	Rate
A	For every coach, berlin, chariot, calash, chaise, or chair, drawn by six horses or more	12d.
B	Ditto	drawn by less than six horses
C	For every waggon, wain, cart or carriage with four wheels	12d.
D	Ditto	two wheels
F	For every horse, mule, or ass, laden or unladen, and not drawing	1d.
G	For every drove of oxen or neat cattle, <i>price per score (other numbers -pro rata)</i>	10d.
H	Ditto of calves, hogs, sheep, or lambs, --- <i>price per score (other numbers- pro rata)</i>	5d.

Generally the English turnpike rates for the various units of traffic changed in a progressive and orderly fashion and did not show the sharp change in rates for wagons which as will be seen occurred in Ireland in 1733 (See page 65). This is shown by a number of examples. In the case of the act setting up the turnpike trust for the roads in Berkshire, from Saint John's Bridge to Fyfield {6 Geo.II, c.16 (Eng.)} of 1733, the rates for wagons and other goods vehicles were: 'For every waggon, wain, cart, or carriage, drawn by four or more horses, mares, or oxen, the sum of one shilling, and drawn by three horses, mares or oxen, six pence, and drawn by one horse or mare,



two pence.' Again in 1738, the general toll-rates show little change. The rates for goods vehicles in the act of that year for the turnpike trust for the Loughborough to Hartington in Derbyshire {11 Geo.II, c 33 (Eng.)} were: 'For every waggon, wain, cart, or carriage, drawn by six horses or oxen, the sum of one shilling; and drawn by four or five horses or oxen, the sum of nine pence; and drawn by three horses or oxen, or two oxen and one horse, the sum of three pence; and drawn by two horses or oxen, the sum of three halfpence; and drawn by one horse, the sum of one penny.'

Another matter, which was obviously copied in the Irish turnpike acts, was the large number of trustees appointed in some cases to administer the acts. An example of this is the case of the 1729 act for the group of roads in the Lichfield and Stone areas mentioned above, where a total number of 169 trustees were appointed. Despite the great number of trustees the quorum needed to erect gates was only five. It may be generally said that the English acts at this time had almost all the framework on which the subsequent Irish turnpike acts were based.

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<sup>1</sup> T. Rice, *An inquiry into the effects of the Irish grand jury laws* (London, 1815), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Gordon, *Observation addressed to those interested in either railways or turnpike roads* (London, 1837), p. 3

<sup>3</sup> Jasper W. Rogers, *Plan for road and steam communication* (Dublin, 1841), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> M. Storch, *Cours d'Economie Politique*, i, p. 188, quoted in *A treatise on roads* by Sir Henry Parnell, (London, 1833), p. 2

<sup>6</sup> Edmund Leahy, *A practical treatise on making and repairing roads* (London, 1844), p. 21.

<sup>7</sup> P. J. Meghen, *Roads in Ireland* (Dublin, 1965), p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> P. O'Keeffe & T. Simington, *Irish stone bridges* (Dublin, 1991), p. 26-31.

<sup>10</sup> Henry F. Berry, ed. *Statutes and ordinances and acts of the parliament of Ireland - king John to Henry V* (Dublin, 1907), p. 209.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 209-211.

<sup>12</sup> British Museum Library, Cotton Ms : Augustus, i, vol. 2; 21,.

<sup>13</sup> Michael C. Andrews, 'The map of Ireland, A .D. 1300-1700' in *Belfast Natur. Hist. Soc. Proc.*, Session 1922-23, p. 25.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> W. A. McCutcheon, *The industrial archaeology of Northern Ireland* (London, 1980), p. 16.

<sup>17</sup> Alen to Bellyngham, 21 June 1549 (*Cal. S. P. Ire., 1509-73*), repr. 1974, p. 104).

<sup>18</sup> T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, F. J. Byrne (eds.), *A new history of Ireland*, iii, (Oxford, 1976), p. 161.

<sup>19</sup> *C. A. R. D.*, i, p. 284.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p. 358.

<sup>21</sup> *Cal. S. P. Ire., 1611-14*, p. 126-8.

<sup>22</sup> O'Keeffe & Simington, *Irish stone bridges*, p. 91.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Proctor, *A profitable work to this whole kingdom concerning the mending of all highways, as also for waters and ironworks* (1607-10), quoted in *The story of the king's highway*, by S. & B. Webb, (London, 1913), 1963 ed., p. 44.

<sup>24</sup> William Albert, *The turnpike road system in England* (Cambridge, 1972), p. 135.

<sup>25</sup> J. T. Fulton, *The roads of county Down, 1600-1900: the evolution of the road system of an Irish county*, Ph.D. thesis, Q. U. B. April 1972, pp. 24-25.

<sup>26</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, i, p. 63. .

<sup>27</sup> *C. A. R. D.*, iii, p. 20.



- <sup>28</sup> C. Maxwell, *Country and town in Ireland under the Georges* (Dundalk, 1949), p. 276.
- <sup>29</sup> Fulton, 'Roads of county Down', p. 42.
- <sup>30</sup> *Cal. S. P. Ire. 1647 - 60 (Addenda 1625 - 1660)*, p. 247.
- <sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p. 343.
- <sup>32</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, i, pp. 486-7.
- <sup>33</sup> O'Keeffe & Simington, *Irish stone bridges*, p. 219.
- <sup>34</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>35</sup> E. McCracken, The woodlands of Ireland circa 1600, in *I. H. S.*, xi, 44 (Sept. 1959), p. 283-4.
- <sup>36</sup> J. Woodhouse, *A guide for strangers in the kingdom of Ireland* (London, 1647).
- <sup>37</sup> Thomas Wight, *A history of the rise and progress of the people called Quakers in Ireland* (Dublin, 1751), p. 110
- <sup>38</sup> *The Hastings manuscripts, H. M. C.*, 78, iv, p, 142.
- <sup>39</sup> *Earl of Egmont manuscripts, H. M. C* (London, 1909), ii, p. 49.
- <sup>40</sup> R. Lawrence, *The interest of Ireland in its trade and wealth stated* (Dublin, 1682), p. 4.
- <sup>41</sup> Council of Trade to Lord Lieut. 25 March 1673 (T. C. D., Ms. 888/1, f.138).
- <sup>42</sup> Charles Smith, *The present state of the county and city of Cork* (Dublin, 1750), i, p. 335.
- <sup>43</sup> M. F. Cusack, *A history of the kingdom of Kerry* (Dublin, 1995), facsimile by Edmund Burke of orig. ed. of 1871, p. 282-3.
- <sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, p. 346.
- <sup>45</sup> E. MacLysaght, *Irish life in the seventeenth century* (Dublin, 1979), 2nd repr., app. K, p. 410.
- <sup>46</sup> Dorothea Townshend (collector), 'Notes in the council book of Clonakilty' in *J. C. H. A. S.*, i (2nd. series), 1895, p. 514.
- <sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, p. 518.
- <sup>48</sup> Edward MacLysaght (ed.), Manuscripts of the old corporation of Kinsale' in *Anal. Hib.* 15, November 1944, pp. 190-3.
- <sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, p. 190.
- <sup>50</sup> Santry parish, 2 October 1728 (R. C. B. library, Vestry minute book).
- <sup>51</sup> Louth grand jury, 6 March 1730 (N. L. I., Ms. 11,949, Presentment book 1715-33).
- <sup>52</sup> Mrs. Eliz. Freke, her diary, 1671-1714 in *J. C. H. A. S.*, xvi, (2nd series), 1910, p. 155.
- <sup>53</sup> Dobbs to Molyneux, 14 May 1683 (T. C. D., Description of county Antrim, Mss. 883/1, pp. 201).
- <sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, p. 202.
- <sup>55</sup> R. H. Murray (ed.), *Journal of John Stevens* (Oxford, 1912), p. 89.
- <sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 45-51, 87-89.
- <sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, p. 45.
- <sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, p. 46.
- <sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 46-47
- <sup>60</sup> *ibid.*, p. 48.
- <sup>61</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p. 49-50.
- <sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 108-9.
- <sup>64</sup> K. H. Connell, *The population of Ireland, 1700-1845* (Oxford, 1950), p. 25.
- <sup>65</sup> Arthur Dobbs, *An essay on the trade and improvement of Ireland* (Dublin, 1729), p. 5.
- <sup>66</sup> L. M. Cullen, *An economic history of Ireland since 1660* (London, 1972), 2nd. ed., 1987, paperback. repr. 1993, p. 54.
- <sup>67</sup> S. J. Connolly, *Religion, law, and power* (Oxford, 1992), p. 44.
- <sup>68</sup> Tighernan Mooney and Fiona White, 'The gentry's winter season,' in D. Dickson (ed.), *The gorgeous mask* (Dublin, 1987), p. 4.
- <sup>69</sup> 'Letter from Dublin 5 May 1685' in *Philosophical Transactions* (Oxford, 1686), xv (1685), pp. 1028-9.
- <sup>70</sup> E. MacLysaght, *Irish life in the seventeenth century* (Dublin, 1939), 1979 repr., appendix B, p. 373.
- <sup>71</sup> Anon, *An exact description of the roads of Ireland* (London, 1690), Thorpe 11, pamph. 666, micro-fiche 50, N. L. I.
- <sup>72</sup> J. H. Andrews, 'Land and people, c. 1685' in T. W. Moody and W. E. Vaughan (eds.), *A new history of Ireland* (Oxford, 1986), iii, pp. 454-477 (470).
- <sup>73</sup> *Cal. S. P. (Domestic Series)*, 1 Nov. 1691 - End of 1692, p. 71.
- <sup>74</sup> Journeys of Dr. Thomas Molyneux (T. C. D., Mss 883/2 (paginated)).
- <sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, p. 143.



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- <sup>76</sup> *ibid.*, p. 145.
- <sup>77</sup> *ibid.*, p. 71.
- <sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, p. 74.
- <sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, p. 75 & 76.
- <sup>80</sup> R. H. Dorman, 'Road maintenance' in *Proc. Incorp. Assoc. of Mun. and Co. Eng.*, 18 (1891-92), p. 46.
- <sup>81</sup> Marie Louise Legge (ed.), *The Synge letters* (Dublin, 1996), p. 393.
- <sup>82</sup> Journeys of Dr. Thomas Molyneux (T. C. D., Mss 883/2, p.107).
- <sup>83</sup> Herman Moll, *A new map of Ireland* (London, 1714).
- <sup>84</sup> Dobbs, *Trade and improvement of Ireland*, p. 8.
- <sup>85</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, iii, p.193.
- <sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 194-5.
- <sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 337-8.
- <sup>88</sup> *Considerations upon considerations for the promoting of agriculture and providing for the poor* (Dublin, 10 November 1723), p. 66.
- <sup>89</sup> *Some considerations for the promotion of agriculture and employing the poor* (Dublin, 1723), pp. 25-6.
- <sup>90</sup> John Browne, *The benefits which arise to a trading people from navigable rivers* (Dublin, 1729), p. 4.
- <sup>91</sup> Jonathan Swift, quoted in Maxwell, *Country & town in Ire.*, p. 278.
- <sup>92</sup> Browne, *Benefits which arise to a trading people*, p. 31.
- <sup>93</sup> Anon, *Considerations on the act for encouraging inland navigation in Ireland* (Dublin, 1729), p. 53.
- <sup>94</sup> *ibid.*, p. 19.
- <sup>95</sup> John Cantwell, *A practical treatise in the law of tolls and customs* (Dublin, 1817), p. 36.
- <sup>96</sup> *ibid.* p. 28.
- <sup>97</sup> Albert, *Turnpike road system in England*, p. 22.



## CHAPTER 2 DEVELOPMENT OF TURNPIKE ROADS IN FIRST THIRTY YEARS

This Chapter deals with the introduction of turnpike roads to Ireland and with the progress, development and operation of these roads during the next thirty years, that is from 1729 to 1758. This period is chosen because it covers the years up to the introduction of the corn bounties and up to the abolition of the statute labour for road labourers. It also covers approximately one quarter of the period of existence of turnpike roads in Ireland. Within this period almost one fifth (19.3 %) of the statutes enacted by parliament concerned roads and at the end of the period, an important report on the turnpike road system was presented to the house of commons.

### 2.1 *State of Ireland from 1730 - 1760*

It can be seen from Table 1.2 and Figures 1 and 2 in Chapter 1.4 that from 1730 onwards, the value of overall exports grew steadily through the remainder of the century and beyond it to 1816, except for minor set-backs in 1790 and 1801. In the case of overall imports while there was a somewhat similar growth, there were occasional setbacks in 1740 and in 1816. Within the overall increase there were of course widely different growth rates in the different industries and in different areas of the country. On this account the demand for transport and communications varied considerably. The greatest expansion came in the linen industry, which was largely concentrated in the North. However the linen had to be brought to the Linenhall in Dublin to be sold, as Dublin was also the financial centre. This gave rise to considerable traffic on the turnpike and other roads leading to and from the northern counties.. In the late thirties the increase in cattle grazing quickened and by '1749/52 beef exports were 49 per cent above the level of 1717-20' and in '1769/72, 73 per cent' up on that level<sup>1</sup>. Butter exports increased considerably between 1737/40 and 1765/8. Grain exports also began to increase after 1780. This increasing trade was accompanied by an increase in fairs and markets.

Despite the general increase in trade and prosperity, the benefits were unequally shared. There was much poverty in the midst of plenty. The small farmers and labourers existed on a meagre diet and lived in miserable cabins, which were often located along the roadsides. A visitor to Ireland in the late 1730s was the Rev. George Whitefield, who landed on the western coast of Ireland on 15 November 1738 after a voyage from North America. He first travelled to Kilrush and then to 'Fourthfergus' (now Ballynacally), an overall distance of about 30 miles and 'was struck with the poverty of the people'. Whitefield then travelled to Limerick and from Limerick on to Dublin. The journey from Limerick to Dublin took him three days and after arrival in Dublin, he remarked 'that there were two things for which Ireland deserved credit - the roads were good and provisions cheap.'<sup>2</sup> The roads, to which he referred most probably included some of the recently built turnpike ones. In a set of five letters originally written in French, in 1735 by a French visitor the following passage speaks for itself:



I believe the poor Irish are the most bloody people on the face of the globe. As I travelled the road I could see at the door of every hut or cabin six or seven little things almost stark naked, crawling about on all fours; more resembling mice than rational creatures. I had been entertained with a scene resembling this, in some parts of Westphalia but nowhere else. But that is far exceeded by this both in numbers and wretchedness. Had not the philosophy of the phenomenon, the virtues of potatoes, engaged my thoughts, I believe I should have fallen into a fit of melancholy; to see such numbers of noble and immortal creatures, made after the image of the great God, and of the same make with the grandest monarch on the throne, so amazingly disfigured and sunk so low as the beasts that perished.<sup>3</sup>

To add to the difficulties, there was a very severe frost in 1739, \* which continued for forty days, and from which many memorable incidents have been dated."<sup>4</sup> Perhaps because of this the harvest failed, resulting in the extensive famine of 1740-41. Despite these set-backs, there was a general increase in inland trade from 1730. This trade consisted mainly of cattle, butter, linen and wool and associated products and by-products. The need to move and export these goods from ports such as Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Belfast created the need for an adequate road network.

## **2.2 Origin and progress of Turnpike road legislation**

On 6 December 1729 a petition was received in the house of commons from the grand jury, justices of the peace, and several freeholders and inhabitants of county Dublin concerning the roads in that county and within a twenty mile radius of Dublin city. The petition stated:

That keeping the roads of the county of Dublin in repair is a most extraordinary expence to the petitioners, and, as the law now stands, by the six days labour, an intollerable burden on the poorer sort of people, whose families must perish while they are at work, when they are compelled to attend the same; that the petitioners are very apprehensive that erecting of turnpikes within twenty miles distance round the city of Dublin, would not only raise a fund sufficient to repair the roads much better than they are now, or ever have been, but the petitioners, especially the poorer sort, will be very much relieved; the fund to be raised by the several turnpikes being a much more equal way of mending the roads, which will then be mended at the charge of those whose carriage and cattle travel along the several roads, and by those who travel for pleasure or advantage; moreover, those who send cattle, corn, and other necessaries to Dublin, will in a great measure be reimbursed their turnpike expences by the consumers of them in Dublin, and for whose use they are sent thither: and praying the house to take this matter into consideration, and make such laws relating thereto as shall seem meet.<sup>5</sup>



This petition shows clearly the thinking behind the original turnpike legislation. The intention was to make the people of Dublin city contribute to the repair of the roads leading to the city. This was to relieve the county residents of a burden from which the county derived no benefit. It is obvious that widespread consultation with members of the house of commons took place before submission of this petition. This is because on the same day (6 December 1729) the house ordered 'that leave be given to bring in the heads of a bill for amending the roads within twenty miles of Dublin, and named Mr. Keating, Mr. Carter and Mr. Agmondisham Vesey to prepare and bring in same.'<sup>6</sup> The house also appointed a committee consisting of these and any other interested members to urgently examine the petition. Two days later on 8 December, Mr. Keating reported on behalf of the committee that the petitioners had 'fully proved the allegations of their petition.'<sup>7</sup> On the same day leave was given to Messrs. Keating, Carter and Vesey to bring in the heads of a bill for repairing the road leading from the city of Dublin to the town of Naas and to Messrs. Hill and Singleton to do likewise for repairing the road leading from the city of Dublin to the town of Drogheda. On the eleventh day of December the house granted leave for two more bills; one to Messrs. Vesey and Bingham for the repair and amending of the road to Clonard Bridge via Chapelizod, Lucan, Maynooth and Cloncurry and the other to Messrs. Bettesworth and Ludlow for the road from Dublin to Navan.<sup>8</sup>

However only two of above bills passed into law in 1729 and in the case of one, it was only enacted after amendment. These were 'An act for repairing the road from the city of Dublin to Kilcullen-Bridge, in the county of Kildare' (3 Geo.II, c.18), which was the first turnpike road act in Ireland and a similar act for the road from Dublin to Navan (3 Geo.II, c.19). In the next parliamentary year 1731 (note; parliament only met every second year), a total of eight turnpike road acts were passed. A complete list of the principal enabling turnpike acts passed up to 1758 is given in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 Enabling turnpike acts from 1729 to 1758**

Number	Short name	Enabling act	Year	Length in miles <sup>i</sup>
1	Dublin-Kilcullen Bridge.	3 Geo.II, c.18	1729	27.25
2	Dublin-Navan	3 Geo.II, c.19	1729	30.25
2a	Navan - Nobber	7 Geo.II, c.22	1733	12.50
2b	Navan - Kells	7 Geo.II, c.22	1733	9.75
3	Dublin-Dunleer	5 Geo.II, c.15	1731	38.00
4	Dublin-Kinnegad extended. to Mullingar	5 Geo.II, c.16 & 7 Geo.II, c.21	1731 1733	37.50 12.00

<sup>i</sup> It is extremely difficult to give exact mileages as even the smallest improvements in alignments will affect the overall lengths of the roads. Where possible the mileages shown are taken from 'Maps of the roads of Ireland' by Messrs. Taylor and Skinner and converted to statute miles, using the conversion factor of eleven Irish miles equalling fourteen statute miles. The resultant lengths are rounded up or down to the nearest quarter mile. In other cases, lengths are scaled directly from appropriate maps.



5	Blackbull - Athboy	5 Geo.II, c.17	1731	23.50
6	Kilcullen - Kilkenny	5 Geo.II, c.18	1731	-
6a	Kilcullen - Carlow	"	"	23.50
6b	Carlow - Kilkenny	"	"	23.50
7	Kilkenny - Clonmel	5 Geo.II, c.19	1731	30.75
8	Cork via Kilworth mountain to the brook on Co. Tipperary border.	5 Geo.II, c.20	1731	34.00
9	Naas -Maryborough	5 Geo.II, c.21	1731	31.25
10	Newcastle-Limerick-Cork	5 Geo.II, c.22	1731	80.25
11	Kinnegad-Athlone	7 Geo.II, c.21	1733	38.25
12	Banbridge-Belfast	7 Geo.II, c.23	1733	24.75
13	Dundalk-Banbridge	7 Geo.II, c.24	1733	25.50
14	Tubber-Limerick	7 Geo.II, c.25	1733	38.75
15	Mullingar- Lanesborough.	9 Geo.II, c.14	1735	30.50
16	Antrim - Coleraine	9 Geo.II, c.15	1735	37.00
17	Banbridge- Randalstown	9 Geo.II, c.17	1735	32.00
18	Armagh - Lisburn	9 Geo.II, c.18	1735	31.25
19	Armagh - Newry	9 Geo.II, c.19	1735	19.25
20	Mullingar Longford.	9 Geo.II, c.21	1735	24.50
21	Maryboro. -Toomivara	9 Geo.II, c.22	1735	36.00
22	Kilcullen -Timaho	9 Geo.II, c.23	1735	25.50
23	Lanesboro-Roscommon (Extension. to No. 15)	11 Geo.II, c.17	1737	9.00
24	Toomivara-Limerick	11 Geo.II, c.18	1737	32,50
25	Belfast-Antrim & Randalstn.-Toome	13 Geo.II, c.13	1739	22.00
26	Timaho -Tipperary	13 Geo.II, c.14	1739	25.50
27	Clonmel -Doneraile	13 Geo.II, c.15	1739	39.75
28	Nenagh-Curranaboy Bridge	13 Geo.II, c.16	1739	50.00
29	Cork-Listowel	21 Geo.II, c.13	1747	75.75
30	Clonmel -Hurlingford	25 Geo.II, c.17	1751	26.50
31	Mountrath- Cloneshin	25 Geo.II, c.18	1751	25.00
32	Athy -Leighlinbridge.	25 Geo.II, c.19	1751	18.00
33	Ballingar - Clane	25 Geo.II, c.20	1751	11.00 <sup>i</sup>
34	Mallow-Glin	29 Geo.II, c.19	1755	28.25 <sup>ii</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Part only built.

<sup>ii</sup> Only built as far as Newcastle.



35	Castlecomer-Limerick	31 Geo.II, c.18	1757	69.00
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### 2.3 Planning

It is first necessary to examine Table 2.1, to detect if there are any signs of pre-planning as to which roads or routes were selected for turnpike status. Roads 1 to 4 in the Table were clearly chosen in accordance with the petition from county Dublin. Road 5 from Blackbull to Athboy was probably chosen because of its former importance (See page 22) as it was not by 1731, in any sense a main artery. The earlier importance of this road was possibly due to the presence of the bridge over the Boyne near Trim, but its function as a principal traffic route had obviously been taken over by the almost parallel Navan and Mullingar roads. It is hardly surprising that the turnpike status of the Athboy road was not renewed when the original enabling act (5 Geo.II, c.17) expired in 1752. The next two acts extended the Dublin-Kilcullen turnpike to the important towns of Kilkenny and Clonmel. Some of the next turnpikes to be set up, for example, Cork via Kilworth Mountain to the brook on county Tipperary border and the road from Banbridge to Belfast, appear to show that approaches to major ports were given priority. It is worth considering how the turnpike system developed relative to the ports. It is accepted that the trade through the ports varied from year to year but Arthur Dobbs in 1729 gave a good idea of the relative importance of the different harbours in 1723 in *'An essay on the trade and improvement of Ireland.'* From this, the percentage of the total tonnage in all Irish ports which passed through each port<sup>9</sup> is shown in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2 Percentages of the total tonnage handled by the principal Irish ports in 1723**

Port	Percentage of total tonnage	Fraction
Dublin	52.16	Slightly over one half
Cork	21.02	Slightly over one fifth
Belfast	5.28	Slightly over one twentieth
Waterford	4.34	Slightly over one twenty-fifth
Drogheda	2.71	Slightly over one fortieth
Dundalk	2.47	Slightly less than one fortieth
Limerick	1.98	Slightly less than one fiftieth
Derry	1.31	Less than one-fiftieth
Galway	1.31	Less than one-fiftieth
Kinsale	1.27	Less than one-fiftieth
Youghal	1.24	Less than one-fiftieth

In the case of Table 2.2, it should be noted that the eleven named ports were the only ones with more than one per cent of the total tonnage and that they handled together 95.09% of that tonnage. It should be also noted that throughout almost the whole of the eighteenth century up to



1796, turnpike roads were only created for roads leading to six of the top seven ports (Waterford excluded) and a line of exclusion seems to have been drawn for all ports with lesser portions of trade than Limerick. These top seven ports may be classified as the major ports. The reason for excluding Waterford may have been the fact that three navigable rivers: Barrow, Nore and Suir flow into Waterford harbour. Drogheda and Dundalk were catered for in the early stage as Drogheda was on the Dublin-Dunleer turnpike (1731), while Dundalk was given access to Belfast harbour by the Banbridge to Dundalk turnpike in 1733. Limerick, which was the seventh busiest port, was given turnpike access in 1731, and even though a bill was introduced in 1735 to parliament which proposed that the road leading from the turnpike road at Cloncurry via Edenderry, Phillipstown, Tullamore and Banagher to Galway be a turnpike one<sup>10</sup>, it never became an act. Whether this was because the parliament decided that the traffic to the remaining ports such as Galway and Derry did not warrant turnpike status or for some other unknown reason, remains a mystery. The possible use of port traffic as a deciding factor is made more credible by the fact that the coast road from Dublin to Wicklow and Wexford harbours was never a turnpike one. These ports in 1723 only had only 0.46% and 0.37% respectively of the total yearly tonnage. Dublin and Cork in addition to being the major ports were also the largest cities in the country,. In the case of the third largest city in terms of population, i.e., Limerick, the port traffic was relatively small at that time. However in the case of Belfast, while the harbour was the third busiest in the country the population was quite small, being only about 8,000 in 1730. The fact that the main roads to Belfast were made turnpike ones, once again leads to the conclusion that the volume of port traffic was a major factor in the selection of roads for conversion to turnpike status.

The turnpike system spread by an extension of these port access roads and in time the inter-city or national routes became turnpikes. Dublin and Cork became connected by turnpike road in 1739, when Road No. 27 from Doneraile to Clonmel was given turnpike status probably by the desire of Lord Doneraile. The road from Dublin to Limerick was made an all turnpike one in 1737 as a result of the joining of separate turnpikes. Even though roads from Coleraine and Armagh and other towns in the north-eastern area which connected to Belfast were made turnpikes in the early stages, a 'turnpike gap' remained on the Dublin-Belfast road between Dunleer and Dundalk. This was only made an all turnpike road in 1773/4, that is forty four to forty five years after the first turnpike act in Ireland, when a separate act (13 & 14 Geo.III, c.30) set up a new trust for this twelve-mile stretch. This development of all-turnpike national routes by linking of individual lengths of turnpike roads is similar to the findings of W. Albert about the position in England. There Albert found that it took until 1750, that is about fifty years after they came into common usage, before the thirteen major routes leading from London were virtually complete turnpikes along their whole lengths.<sup>11</sup> However it took some further time to close the 'gaps' and to take one case, it was not until 1776 before the last 'turnpike gap' (Doncaster to Bawtry) was closed on the Great North Road from London to Berwick on Tweed.<sup>12</sup>

It can therefore be seen that by 1740, all the major ports (except Waterford) and all the major towns except Waterford and Galway were served by turnpike roads and that all ports and



towns so served were interconnected by turnpike roads except for the 'turnpike gap' on the Dublin-Belfast route. In the 1740s the turnpike system spread in a seemingly unplanned way in a generally south-western and western direction from Dublin and in the north-eastern area. Most of these roads were main routes but some and especially some of those chosen in 1751, as for example the road from Mountrath across the Slieve Bloom mountains to Cloneshin and the road from Clane in county Kildare westward to Ballinagar which was never completed and ended in a bog, were definitely not main routes. It is also of interest to note that turnpike roads were never provided in the whole north-western portion of the country. (See Map 2)

The only national turnpike road plan on record was the rather fanciful and idealistic outline plan made by George Semple in his book *'Hibernia's Free Trade'*<sup>13</sup>. In this book which was published in 1780, Semple envisaged that a major turnpike road be constructed from Derry to Cork and another from Dublin to Galway with feeder roads. He further envisaged that the major turnpike roads be 120 feet wide with forty foot wide carriageways and shops and stalls on the road margins, while he suggested an overall width of sixty feet for the feeder roads. Despite the fanciful nature of the overall plan, Semple's detailed design in his book for the road from Dublin to Athlone was very realistic in that he chose the route carefully and a portion of the present Maynooth by-pass is located on the same route. Semple's plan also showed that he was aware of the value of a national roads system.

It has been seen that the turnpike system started because of pressure from pamphleteers and from the county Dublin grand jury and it may be asked how the momentum was maintained. The writers kept up the pressure. A most notable and influential writer was Dr. Samuel Madden who was one of the founders of the Dublin Society. Writing in 1738 of methods other than canals to increase the inland trade, Madden wrote:

The first is, the increasing number and extent of our turnpike roads in every part of the kingdom that wants them and is able and willing to bear their expence. I need not dwell on so evident a thing as the use they are to trade and how much they contribute to make our coin circulate in the extremities of the nation, where it used to stagnate whenever it was carried **thither; but I hope, as everyone is convinced of the service they do us, where they are made, so no one will oppose their being settled where they are not yet established.**<sup>14</sup>:

This writer well understood the need and function of good roads and water transport, when he added:

As carriage is the great and mighty clog to trade in many of our counties, this would reduce the price of transporting our goods from one part of the country to the other; and, until this is done, we must be content to see our lands untilled, for want of roads and rivers to carry our grain, and our best soils neglected, or just grazed with cattle, that can go with their own beef and tallow to the market.<sup>15</sup>



The landlords exerted a major influence in order to enhance the value of their holdings. An instance of the value placed by landlords on the presence of a turnpike road is shown in the Kenmare manuscripts, when Sir Thomas Browne, the 4th Viscount Kenmare, writing in a private notebook dated 1755-1757 but with later additions, bemoaned the fact that his father leased so much good land in the Rathmore area to his agent :

Though my father was either imposed upon, or did not sufficiently consult the interest of his family, in setting so many and large improveable farms to one man (who by this and other leases to himself and kindred, held three fourths of the parish of Kilcommon), yet the roads were then [1732] so bad, and the reputation of the county so indifferent, that few strangers could have induced to settle there. Now by the turnpike, which runs through it, it is within 20 mile of Cork.<sup>16</sup>

In the same notebook Browne wrote concerning a large mountain farm in Knockanine :

At my coming of age in 1748 I found most part of this estate a great dreary waste without a passable road in it, limestone in the mountains but no way of coming at it and the whole in a state of nature without any attempt of improvement. I first prevailed on the gentlemen of the county to apply for a turnpike road to Cork and lent money to pay for passing the bill to Murphy the undertaker which road will be of the utmost service to this country.<sup>17</sup>

It should be noted that the 'Murphy' referred to was John Murphy who was named in the turnpike act (21 Geo.II, c.13) of 1747 from Cork to Killarney and Listowel as proposing to defray the expense of obtaining the act and to lay out his own 'proper' money on the road and on the erection of bridges, turnpikes and toll-houses. It can only be surmised how many members of the parliament believed that John Murphy proposed to spend his own money on this road. However Thomas Browne soon regretted that he placed so much trust in Murphy as the following excerpt from his notebook shows. It also shows Browne's own enthusiasm for the completion of the turnpike road. Referring to a holding at Knocknacarra which was occupied by Morto Murphy, a son of John Murphy, Browne wrote:

The pretence for taking this at £42 ster. and receiver's fees was as he was employed by his father in executing the turnpike road to Cork his father and he represented they could not proceed on the line from Killarney to Millstreet without some land to keep their horses and people on. My zeal for the road was such that I accommodated them with this at said rent and with another large division of Knocknaseed at as reasonable a one; and the return I met for it was their running in arrear with me for near £300, which I was obliged to take in oats, potatoes, etc, as



they were a parcel of beggars. His father-in-law, Moyahan of Rathbeg, has now an assignment of this farm and pays the rent punctually, but I insert this memorandum as one of the many knaveries practised on me by John Murphy and his children.<sup>18</sup>

The importance attached to the idea of turnpike roads enhancing rent is echoed by a quotation from a tenant on the Wandesford estate at Castlecomer in county Kilkenny in 1746, who sought relief from the high rent he had agreed to pay on his house, because of being promised that 'the Courts Leet would be held there and that a turnpike road would be brought by his door.'<sup>19</sup> The influence of the landlords is also shown by the names of the large land-owning members of parliament who proposed some of the turnpike acts, such as Sir Richard Cox and Robert French and by the very large number of extensive landowners who became turnpike road trustees.

It must not be assumed that all the turnpike roads were intended to cater for the long distance through-traffic only and to cross county boundaries with no regard for the individual counties through which they passed. This was the case in some instances as for example, the Dublin-Dunleer turnpike, which passed through counties of Dublin, Meath and Louth and the town of Drogheda. On the other hand in the case of the Newcastle-Limerick-Cork turnpike road, tolls collected in county Limerick were only to be spent in county Limerick and tolls collected in county Cork were only to be spent in county Cork.

## **2.4 Examination of legislation**

It is best at this stage to examine the turnpike road legislation. As already stated, this was borrowed directly from the Westminster parliament, which was at this time passing a number of such acts. The general form of the Irish acts was to give control of a length of road, usually about thirty miles, to a number of trustees. . An example of a departure from the general rule was the Banbridge-Belfast turnpike road, which consisted in part of two separate almost parallel branch roads from Lisburn to Belfast, one leading through the county of Antrim and the other through the county of Down. The reason given in Section 2 of the enabling act (7 Geo.II, c.23) for this, was that both 'are absolutely necessary to be repaired for the conveniency of the inhabitants.' Trustees were given power to collect specified tolls from the users of the designated road length and were required to apply the collected funds for the improvement and maintenance of the road. As both the alignment and condition of nearly all the roads in question was poor, it was also necessary to give the trustees power to borrow capital sums by way of debenture to pay for the procurement of the act, the erection of the necessary gates and toll-houses and to carry out the necessary improvements. These debentures or loans as well as the interest due on them were to be repaid from the toll-receipts. With a good number of exceptions, the turnpike acts were generally intended to assist the six-day labour system in the maintenance of the roads. This will be discussed more fully later in this Chapter (See page 67) and the acts so affected are listed in Table 2.3. All the turnpike acts were also intended to be only temporary measures and generally were enacted for periods of twenty one years in the case of the early acts and occasionally periods



of forty one years in some of the later ones. In addition all the Irish turnpike acts were declared to be public acts. In order to describe the main provisions of the acts and how these altered with time and circumstances, it is perhaps best to use one act as a baseline and show how the other acts related to and differed from it.

As previously stated, the first turnpike act (3 Geo.II, c.18) in Ireland was in respect of the road from Dublin to Kilcullen-Bridge (No. 1 in Table 2.1). The first part of the preamble to this act was:

Whereas the highway or road leading from the city of Dublin through Kilmainham and Rathcool to the town of Naas, and thence to Kilcullen-Bridge in the county of Kildare, by reason of several hollow-ways, and of the many and heavy carriages frequently passing through the same, are become so ruinous and bad, that in the winter season many parts thereof are impassable for waggons, carts, carrs, and carriages, and very dangerous for travellers, and cannot by the ordinary course appointed by the laws and statutes of this realm be effectually mended and kept in good repair .....

It is obvious that, because phraseology such as 'hollow-ways' was not normally used in Ireland but was common in England, the form of the preamble came from some of the English turnpike acts. The wording of this opening part of the preamble or similar wording became the standard introduction in Ireland as well as England for all turnpike road acts. On account of its standardised nature wording of this type must never be taken as an indication of the actual condition of the road. Occasionally a more specific reason for the introduction of the act is given in the form of an addendum to the standard version; as for example, in the act concerning the road from Tubber on the border of counties Clare and Galway to Limerick via Ennis (No. 14 in Table 2.1) the following additional reason is given:

And whereas, the inhabitants of County Clare have of late been at a great expence in erecting and building a session house at Ennis, which has disabled them to raise a fund towards repairing the same [road].

The preamble of the Dublin to Kilcullen-Bridge road act went on to authorise some 91 individuals to be trustees to execute the provisions of the legislation. In the case of the acts which immediately followed this act the numbers of trustees increased considerably, as for example, in the case of the Dublin-Navan road, the number was 102, for the Dublin-Dunleer road 237 and for the Dublin-Kinnegad road 234, though in general the numbers fluctuated greatly. In the case of the Dublin-Dunleer road, where the number of trustees was so large, the quorum was only seven for all ordinary business and fifteen for raising loans. More generally the quorum in most acts for ordinary business was five members and fifteen for raising loans. It is very difficult to see why such large numbers of trustees were needed to administer comparatively short lengths of road.



The same difficulty as regards large lists of trustees was apparent in England. In respect of the English situation, William Albert observed:

The extreme length of these lists coupled with the few trustees needed for a quorum suggests that most names were included simply to facilitate the passage of the act through Parliament, and once it had been passed to serve as an assurance of the trusts' creditworthiness. The indifferent participation at most meetings confirm that only a few of those named were actively concerned.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the large numbers of trustees appointed under each turnpike road act, it appears that in Ireland also, only a small number in the various trusts took an active role. This became more common with the passing years as is shown by an advertisement in 1753<sup>21</sup>:

Whereas a board of trustees appointed by act of parliament for executing the turnpike act between Ban-Bridge and Belfast has been twice fixed and properly advertised in order to set up the tolls of the several gates on the said road by public cant for the first of May next and for want of a sufficient number of trustees the gates are still unset. It is therefore hoped that the trustees will attend at Lisburn on the twenty eight of April inst. in order to attend said cant, as by the present act of parliament they must be set for the first of May next.

The number of trustees appointed for this road was 103 and the quorum for conducting ordinary business was five and for conducting financial and other important business was fifteen. There must have been some fall-off in interest when out of such a large number of local trustees, it proved so difficult to get a quorum. It should be noted that large numbers of trustees were not a means of ensuring the presence of quorums at meetings, as in the case of the Dublin-Navan road where the number of trustees was 102 and the quorum was five for all ordinary business and nine for authorising borrowing, four meetings in the first four years had to be abandoned because the attendance was less than five (See page 71). By way of contrast in the case of the Dublin-Knocksedan turnpike road (See Chapter 4.3, page 168), where there were 15 commissioners (trustees) and these had to elect five of their number to be directors, the quorum was three for two years from 1798 to 1800 and then raised to five because of the addition of four more directors, no meetings had to be abandoned during the four years from 1798 to 1802.

Towards the mid years of the century the numbers of trustees for each act showed a reduction, as for example, in the case of the road from Cork to Listowel, for which the enabling act was passed in 1747, the number was only forty one. Trustees usually consisted of locally resident high -office holders or titled persons together with a majority of other local landowners. The 91 trustees of the Dublin-Kilcullen Bridge turnpike trust were made up as follows: one archbishop and one bishop, five earls, two viscounts, two lord barons, two Right Honourable esquires, five Honourable esquires, two baronets, sixty one esquires and ten gentlemen. The



qualifications of almost all other turnpike board trustees were broadly similar. The concentration on landowners brings to mind the statement of Sidney and Beatrice Webb that: 'Running like a red thread through all local institutions of the eighteenth century was the assumption that the ownership of property carried with it, not only a necessary qualification for, but even a positive right to carry on, the work of government.'<sup>22</sup> The Webbs were of course referring to the position in England, but their statement also applied to the situation in eighteenth century Ireland. For example in the 1763 amending act of the Dublin-Dunleer turnpike road (3 Geo.III, c.30), replacement trustees were required to 'be worth in personal fortune the clear sum of two thousand pounds, or shall have lands, tenements, and hereditaments of the clear yearly value of one hundred pounds'. Sometimes the requirements were higher as is shown by the stipulation in clause five of 'An act for more effectively amending and repairing the road from Dundalk to Banbridge' (23 & 24 Geo.III, c.27) in 1783/4, where trustees had to take the following oath before acting:

I AB do swear, that I am in possession of a real or freehold estate, of the clear value of £200 sterling, above all debts and incumbrances, or that I am possessed of a personal fortune of the value of £4,000 sterling above my debts, and that I will at every board or meeting of the said trustees for carrying this act into execution, where I shall be present, execute the office of trustee thereby reposed in me, honestly and impartially to the best of my skill and judgement. So help me God.

The tolls to be collected from the various units of traffic were also listed in the enabling act and were in some cases similar to the English toll-rates.

**Table 2.3 Original tolls on Dublin to Kilcullen-Bridge turnpike road**

	Description of traffic unit	Rate £ - s. - d
A	For every coach, berlin, chariot, calash, chaise or chair drawn by six or more horses.	0 - 1 - 0
B	For similar vehicles drawn by less than six and more than one horse.	0 - 0 - 6
C	For every wagon, wain, cart or carriage with four wheels.	0 - 0 - 6
D	For every wain, cart or carriage with two wheels drawn by more than one horse, mare or gelding.	0 - 0 - 2
E	For every car or other carriage drawn by one horse, mare or gelding.	0 - 0 - 1
F	For every horse, mare, gelding, mule or ass, laden or unladen.	0 - 0 - 1/2
G	For every drove of oxen or neat cattle. <i>price per score (lesser number pro rata)</i>	0 - 0 - 10
H	For every drove of calves, hogs, sheep and lambs <i>price per score (lesser numbers pro rata)</i>	0 - 0 - 5



The rates A to H varied upwards with every revision or amendment of the original acts and there were of course variations from act to act as time progressed. For example, in the first amendment of the Dublin-Kilcullen turnpike road (7 Geo.II, c.16) in 1733, rate A was increased to one shilling and sixpence, rate B to one shilling for four horses but remaining at sixpence for one or two horses while rate C increased to five shillings. Other rates increased by approximately one hundred per cent. The reason for the upward variations of the rates in amendments of original acts was to increase the toll receipts. However other variations occurred which are more complicated to explain such as the tenfold increase in rate C above. In the case of the act passed in 1733 to make the road from Dundalk via Newry to Banbridge a turnpike one (No. 13 in Table 2.1), rate C was increased from sixpence to ten shillings, a twentyfold increase, while rate E only increased from one penny to one and a half pence. It appears that sometime between 1729 and 1733 the essential distinction between a four-wheeled and two-wheeled goods vehicle was realised or at least some rudimentary version of this distinction was discovered. It is now generally accepted that the destructive effect of a wheel-load on a road varies as the 3.89th power of the ratio of the wheel loads.<sup>23</sup> The 3.89th power can normally be taken as the fourth power for ease of calculation, but *Road note 29*, third ed., (H. M. S. O., 1970)<sup>24</sup> provides a table of equivalence factors for the ratios of damaging powers of the different loadings based on the exact relationship. A simple example will show how this is applied. It must be assumed that the two-wheeled car of that period drawn by one horse on a level road could carry a maximum load of six hundred weight (cwt.). Under those circumstances each wheel transmits a three-cwt. load to the road. A four-wheeled wagon with four horses could under similar circumstances draw two tons and if this load is evenly distributed, each wheel will transmit a load of ten cwt., or half a ton to the road. Thus the ratio of the wagon wheel load to the car wheel load is 3:1 in round figures. The destructive effect of the wagon wheel load is therefore  $3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3$  or eighty one times greater than the car wheel load. In view of this, if the charge for the car is one and a half pence, then the charge for the wagon should be eighty one times greater or ten shillings and one and a half pence (ten shillings in round figures). This knowledge of the relationship between the wheel-load and its destructive effect on a road, answers a number of questions about toll rates though not all and certainly not the reason as to why the toll rates for wagons in 1733 were set at ten shillings and in some later acts were only five shillings. That the figure of six cwt. is a realistic one for the maximum load carried by cars drawn by a single horse, is shown by the following quotation from John Loveday who undertook a return journey from Dublin to Cork in 1732:

They have no carts or waggons here, they have carrs, which are a kind of sledges, set on two solid wooden wheels, straked<sup>i</sup> with iron and drawn by a single horse; they carry great burthens, some 600 weight.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> A streak, often spelt straike or strake, was an iron band or shoe fitted to the rim of a timber wheel to strengthen it and prevent undue wear on the wheel.



This quotation also shows that the rates inserted in the turnpike acts for wagons were of no relevance, due to the absence of wagons in Ireland at that time. The reason for the insertion of rates for wagons may have been to discourage the use of these vehicles, because of the devastating effect they were having on the English roads.

The use or apparent use of the 'Fourth power relationship' as it is known remains one of the most puzzling items in the whole history of the Irish turnpike system. As can be seen from the examples of toll rates from contemporary English turnpike acts in Chapter 1.7, there is no hint whatever of it in those rates. It does not appear to have developed at a later date either in the English legislation as is shown by, for example, the rates in the 'act to continue and render more effectual an act passed in the thirtieth year of his late Majesty, for amending, widening, and keeping in repair, the road leading from Burleigh Bridge, in the Town of Loughborough, to Ashby de la Zouch in the County of Leicester' {2 Geo.III, c.82 (Eng.)}, passed in 1762/3. In this act the relevant rates are given as : 'For every horse, mare, gelding, mule, ass, or other beast of draught, drawing in any carriage, the sum of four pence.' Thus the rate for a wagon drawn by four horses was 1s.- 4d. This contrasts with the rates given in two of the amending acts for the Dublin-Dunleer turnpike road passed in 1733 (7 Geo.II, c.18) and in 1763 (3 Geo.III, c.30), where the rate for a wagon with four wheels was 5s. in the case of the 1733 act and 10s. in the case of the 1763 act. This fourth power relationship was not only applied in the case of toll rates for wagons but was apparently also used in the determination of rates for other goods vehicles as for example, in the above Dublin-Dunleer amending act of 1733, where the rate for a two-horse cart was 4d., the rate for a cart drawn by three or more horses was 2s.- 6d. These rates for carts drawn by two or more horses were of course largely irrelevant as almost all Irish goods vehicles at that time were drawn by single horses only (See page 87).

According to Section 10 of the Dublin-Kilcullen turnpike act (3 Geo.II, c.18) it was only necessary for each unit of traffic to pay the specified toll at the first turnpike gate met in the course of a journey along the road and this payment was also sufficient for a return journey on the same day. When the toll was paid at the first gate, a ticket was issued which authorised free passage through other gates on the same day for the same traffic unit. A similar arrangement was adopted in the case of the other turnpike roads. In the matter of tolls there was a power given to trustees by Section 13 of the same act and also included in other turnpike acts, for trustees to compound tolls:

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the said trustees, or any five of them, may and are hereby impowered from time to time, as they shall see convenient or think fit, to compound or agree by the year or otherwise with any person or persons using to travel through the turnpike or turnpikes to be erected with any milch cows, horse, mare, or gelding, ass or mule, or with any coach, berlin, calash, chaise, chair, waggon, cart, carr, or other carriage, for any sum or



sums of money, to be paid quarterly from time to time after such agreement shall be made.

As can be seen from this Section of the act (3 Geo.II, c.18) there was no specified method of calculating the agreed sum nor was there any limit on the numbers of such compositions. The latter omission gave rise to later abuse of the system, as was apparent in the case of the Kilcullen-Timaho turnpike road, where the enabling act (9 Geo.II, c.23) had a similar Section (See page 100). Section 2 of the original Dublin-Kilcullen Bridge act required the trustees to first pay the cost of procuring the act and the cost of erecting the turnpike gates and toll-houses out of the toll-receipts and only then were they to spend these receipts on the repair of the road. Costs of procuring turnpike acts were considerable as is known from the case of the Mountrath-Cloneshin road in 1751 (No. 31 in Table 2.1). In this case the cost of getting the act passed through the parliament was £387 - 18s - 6d. The Right Hon. John Earl of Wandesford, who subsequently became chairman of the trustees, advanced this money, which was repayable from toll-receipts<sup>26</sup>. It should be noted that in Section 2 and other Sections of the Dublin-Kilcullen Bridge act, five trustees were sufficient to enforce payments, to act against those avoiding toll charges. and to discharge a number of other functions. The number necessary to act in a similar manner in the case of some items the Cork-Listowel road (No. 29 in Table 2.1) required the assent of eleven trustees. Section 5 of the Dublin to Kilcullen Bridge act made provision for the appointment of a collector or collectors and a surveyor or surveyors as well as receivers or gatekeepers. However no payments were specified in this act but in the act for the Dublin-Dunleer road a payment of not more than thirty pounds per annum was provided for the collectors and a sum of three shillings per day was provided for the surveyor(s). Of the remaining Sections of the original Dublin-Kilcullen Bridge act, five were of special importance. The first of these was Section 9, which gave authority to the trustees or to any nine of them to assign the toll as security for money borrowed to carry out repairs to the road. It could be said that this power to borrow was the basis of all major improvement work in the turnpike road system while it was at the same time, because of its unlimited nature, the source of all the financial trouble which was later associated with turnpike roads. This provision which was included in most of the early turnpike acts gave rise to much amending legislation. Section 15 demanded that two days of the six-day statute labour be given to the trustees by the parishes through which the turnpike road passed as in theory, the turnpike system was intended to aid the statute labour system and not supplant it. However all turnpike acts did not contain this provision, there being no such stipulation in the Dublin-Dunleer road act or any other of the eight turnpike acts passed during 1731. Three of the acts passed in 1733 and all the acts after the first passed in 1751 did not have such a provision. The position is clearly set out in Table 2.4, which shows the situation was as regards the principal acts, as set out in Table 2.1. Road No. 23, even though not a principal act, has been included in Table 2.4 in order to preserve the numbering system and make it possible to compare Tables 2.4 and 2.1.

***Table 2.4 Indicates provision for use of Statute labour in principal enabling acts from 1729 - 1757***



No.	Short name of road	Enabling act	Year	Provision for use of two day's statute labour
1	Dublin-Kilcullen Bridge	3 Geo.II, c.18	1729	Yes
2	Dublin-Navan	3 Geo.II, c.19	1729	Yes
3	Dublin-Dunleer	5 Geo.II, c.15	1731	No
4	Dublin-Kinnegad	5 Geo.II, c.16	1731	No
5	Blackbull-Athboy	5 Geo.II, c.17	1731	No
6	Kilcullen-Kilkenny	5 Geo.II, c.18	1731	No
7	Kilkenny-Clonmel	5 Geo.II, c.19	1731	No
8	Cork-Kilworth Mountain	5 Geo.II, c.20	1731	No
9	Naas-Maryborough	5 Geo.II, c.21	1731	No
10	Newcastle-Limerick-Cork	5 Geo.II, c.22	1731	No
11	Kinnegad-Athlone	7 Geo.II, c.21	1733	No
12	Banbridge-Belfast	7 Geo.II, c.23	1733	Yes
13	Dundalk-Banbridge	7 Geo.II, c.24	1733	No
14	Tubber Limerick	7 Geo.II, c.25	1733	No
15	Mullingar-Lanesborough	9 Geo.II, c.14	1735	Yes
16	Antrim-Coleraine	9 Geo.II, c.15	1735	Yes
17	Banbridge-Randalstown	9 Geo.II, c.17	1735	Yes
18	Armagh-Lisburn	9 Geo.II, c.18	1735	Yes
19	Armagh-Newry	9 Geo.II, c.19	1735	Yes
20	Mullingar-Longford	9 Geo.II, c.21	1735	Yes
21	Marlboro.-Toomivara	9 Geo.II, c.22	1735	Yes
22	Kilcullen-Timaho	9 Geo.II, c.23	1735	Yes
23	Lanesboro-Roscommon (Extension. of No. 15)	11 Geo.II, c.17	1737	Yes by virtue of No. 15
24	Toomivara-Limerick	11 Geo.II, c.18	1737	Yes
25	Belfast-Antrim & Randalstown.- Toome	13 Geo.II, c.13	1739	Yes
26	Timaho-Tipperary	13 Geo.II, c.14	1739	Yes
27	Clonmel-Doneraile	13 Geo.II, c.15	1739	Yes
28	Nenagh-Curraghboy Bridge	13 Geo.II, c.16	1739	Yes
29	Cork-Listowel	21 Geo.II, c.13	1747	Yes
30	Clonmel-Hurlingford	25 Geo.II, c.17	1751	Yes
31	Mountrath-Cloneshin	25 Geo.II, c.18	1751	No
32	Athy-Leighlinbridge	25 Geo.II, c.19	1751	No
33	Ballinagar-Clane	25 Geo.II, c.20	1751	No



34	Mallow-Glin	29 Geo.II, c.19	1755	No
35	Castlecomer-Limerick	31 Geo.II, c.18	1757	No

The two day statute labour provision in the act of 1729 authorising the Dublin-Kilcullen Bridge act has exactly similar wording to the corresponding provision in the English act {2 Geo.II, c.5 (Eng.)} of 1729 for a group of roads in the Lichfield and Stone areas, except that the provision in the English act was for three days statute labour. The securing of this labour in England led to disputes between the parish surveyors and the turnpike trusts and this led to a change in some of the English acts of that period as for example, in the case of the act for the roads from Saint John's Bridge to Fyfield, in Berkshire {6 Geo.II, c.16 (Eng.)}. The relevant Section of this act directed that it was a matter for two or more Justices of the Peace for the county of Berkshire on the application of five or more trustees 'to adjudge and determine what part or proportion of the Statute Work shall be done in the said roads by the inhabitants of each or any of the Parishes and Divisions, in which the said roads hereby directed do lie.' The omission of the statute labour provision in all the 1731 Irish acts and in three of the 1733 Irish acts may have been due to an anxiety to avoid the type of disputes which arose in England as there appears to be no other reason. The statute labour provision was however included in all subsequent acts up to and including the first turnpike act passed in 1751, but in none after that. This omission foreshadowed the abolition of the statute labour system itself in the 1759 and 1765 legislation.

Section 16 of the Dublin-Kilcullen Bridge act provided that the act would only remain in force for twenty one years and Section 17 added hopefully that the act could be terminated before then if the road was put into a proper condition and any borrowed money repaid. Lastly, Section 22 provided categorically that this was a public act (as distinct from a private act) in the following words:

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That this act shall be deemed, adjudged, and taken to be a public act, and be judicially taken notice of as such by all judges, justices, and other persons whatsoever without specially pleading the same.

A provision such as this, emphasising that the act was a public one was included in all the turnpike acts.

## **2.5 Operation of turnpike trusts and roads**

The turnpike trusts promptly set about their allotted tasks. At the first meetings of the various boards of trustees, the officers including: receivers of money (treasurers), surveyors, toll collectors and clerks were appointed. The procedure at these first meetings is shown in the case of the Navan road by the record of the first meeting of the trustees for that road held on 16 April 1730 at the Tholsel in Dublin. The original journal of the Navan turnpike road<sup>27</sup> has survived. It covers the period from 16 April 1730 to 20 March 1734 and provides a very clear insight into the



beginning and teething troubles experienced in establishing this major turnpike road. At the inaugural meeting attended by a total of twenty one trustees (including three baronets) under the chairmanship of The Right Honourable Ralph Gore, bart., John Ker was appointed clerk, Luke Stanford was appointed receiver of the tolls 'at the salary of one shilling per pound provided the same doth not exceed thirty pounds and he giving £500 security to the commission such as they shall approve' and Charles Nuttall of Trim was appointed surveyor of the road 'at three shillings per diem during such time as he shall attend and be employed thereon.'<sup>28</sup>

At the first meeting of the Navan road trustees it was also decided to erect two turnpike gates, one at Stoneybatter and the other at Castleknock and it was further decided that road repairs should begin at Stoneybatter. The second meeting<sup>29</sup> of the trustees was held eight days later on 24 April and twenty four trustees (nineteen esquires and five gentlemen) attended under the chairmanship of Peter Ludlow Esq. This meeting on receiving word from Charles Nuttall that he was not in a position to accept the post of surveyor, decided to appoint two surveyors for the road, one John Magouran for that part of the road leading from Navan for a distance of ten miles and the other named Samuel Blood for the remainder of the road to Dublin, both appointments subject to the original conditions and rate of pay. The Navan road trustees held two further meetings on 27 and 29 April<sup>30</sup> and arranged at these meetings for the erection of the gates at Stoneybatter and Castleknock as already decided and a further one at Kilcarn bridge near Navan and also arranged that the public be informed that the authorised tolls were to be paid at these gates on and after 10 May 1730. At these meetings it was also resolved to borrow 'a sum of money not exceeding £3000 from such person or persons as are willing to lend the same at a rate of seven per cent per annum for the more speedy and effectual repairing the said road and for defraying the other necessary expences attending the same.' The money was originally borrowed at the rate of seven per cent per annum but this interest rate was later reduced by agreement to six per cent per annum, as the legal rate of interest was reduced from seven per cent to six per cent per annum by virtue of an act (5 Geo.II, c.7) passed in 1731. The resolution which reduced the interest rate in the case of the Navan road was (presumably on subsequent dates) signed by thirty two trustees, even though only twenty one attended the meeting at which it was passed.

It is perhaps best at this stage to look at how these turnpike trustee boards operated and how their business was conducted. In the case of the Navan road, the clerk recorded the minutes of each meeting, noting those who attended and the chairman's name and the decisions made including the arrangements for the following meeting. In some cases the clerk was instructed to communicate particular decisions to those involved and in other cases it has to be presumed that he did this in the normal course of his duties. At the outset the Navan road board met four times in the latter half of April 1730 as stated above and six times in each of the following months of May and June. The numbers of meetings per month soon dwindled to two or three for the period from July to November and further decreased later to one, though generally up to 1734 at any rate, the months from November to March appeared to be the busiest with often two or three meetings per month. However the attendances at the meetings may be a better indicator of the interest taken by the trustees in the road. The average attendance at the first eight meetings was



sixteen trustees per meeting. At the meetings of 21 September and 3 November 1732, only three and two trustees respectively attended and the meetings had to be abandoned for lack of the necessary quorum of five. The average attendance at the last eight meetings recorded in the journal (ending 20 March 1734) was eight trustees per meeting including two where the numbers were less than the quorum.

The journal did not record how the chairmen of the meetings were chosen but the selection seemed to start with precedence and seniority and at later meetings with fewer titled people and smaller attendances, appeared to be based on agreement. An examination of the names of the chairmen of the recorded meetings shows the following numbers of meetings chaired by each named individual:

**Table 2.5 Chairmen of meetings of Navan road turnpike trustees from 16 April 1730 to 20 March 1734**

Name	Number of meetings chaired
Peter Ludlow Esq.	24
Sir Thomas Taylor Bart	14
Charles Hamilton Esq.	12
Thomas Taylor Esq.	5
Rt. Hon. E. Brabazon	5
Nath. Preston	4
Lord Bishop of Meath	3
Rt. Hon. Humphrey Butler	3
Wm. Fitzherbert	3
Sir Ralph Gore	2
John Wade	2
Sir Gustavus Hume	1
Benedict Arthur	1
Wm. Beckett	1
Wm. Burton	1
Nathaniel Clements	1
Arthur Dillon	1
Thomas Meredith	1
Robert Percival	1
Wm. Rowley	1
Henry Sanford	1
Wm. Swan	1

Luke Gardiner was a most regular attender at these board meetings, but never chaired a meeting during the four years in question.



The initial main business of the board of trustees was to bring the condition of the road up to an acceptable standard, though of course there must have been various views of what this standard should be. From the journal, which recorded only final decisions and not the various viewpoints expressed at the meetings, it seems that horizontal alignment, widening, surface repair and drainage were the main concerns as regards the condition of the road. There were frequent decisions to 'run the road in a straight line between two points.'<sup>31</sup> Use was made of land surveyors to draw up maps and, on one occasion where a major realignment was concerned, a cost estimate was also prepared and a decision on the work was influenced by the surveyor's findings. For example, at the meeting of 6 February 1731 it was agreed:

That Alexander Stewart the surveyor of land be employed to make a survey in a straight line from or near the church steeple of Dunshaughlin to the Hill of Tara and make a return of the number of perches therein contained together with an account of the number of perches in each persons estate through which the same shall go. Also to make a return of the number of perches contained in the present road from the said town of Dunshaughlin to the foot of the Hill of Tara, together with an estimate of the expence that will attend the repairing of the present road and likewise an estimate of the expence of making a new road in a straight line.<sup>32</sup>

At the meeting of 17 March 1731 the surveyor's report must have been available, because the following resolution was recorded:

That it was impractical to execute the scheme laid down by a mapp for carrying the great road in a straight line from the foot of the Hill of Tara to Dunshaughlin by reason of the great expence it would occasion to alter the old road into the said line, for that it appears to the said trustees, the fund arising out of the tolls and dutys will in no sort answer the said expence and that it is necessary to repair the old road and for that the old road must be always kept open and must constantly prove an expence to the county.<sup>33</sup>

It must be stated here that the receiver of the tolls reported on 21 May 1731 that the toll receipts at the four turnpike gates on the road for the twelve months ending on 10 May 1731 were as follows: Stoneybatter - £106 - 14s - 6d, Castleknock - £74 - 3s - 2.5d, Clonee Bridge - £278 - 1s - 0, Kilcarn Bridge - £138 - 19s - 1d to which must be added a sum of £2 - 14s - 9d for compositions of tolls at gates, thus giving a grand total of £600 - 12s - 6.5d for the total toll income of the road.<sup>34</sup> Despite the rejection of the major realignment scheme between Dunshaughlin and the Hill of Tara, the trustees allocated money for several smaller schemes and embarked on a large scale road widening scheme in the Castleknock area. The system for allocating money for these schemes as well as for repairs was to give an order for the estimated cost (usually figures of £50, £100 or even £200) to a local trustee to spend where and in what



manner he thought proper and he could choose whatever surveyor he liked to carry out the work. An example of this is shown in the allocation of £150 to Nathan Preston Esq. on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1731 to:

Be laid out in repairing such part of the said road as he shall think fit between the Black-Bull inn and the new amended road near the town of Dunshaughlin and that he employ such surveyor as he thinks proper to see the said sum duly expended.<sup>35</sup>

This was not a very sensible way to manage the available resources, as the money passed through too many hands and the engagement of extra surveyors over and above the regular surveyors seems wasteful. An overall view of the activities of the trustees and surveyors on the Navan road in the first four years shows that the trustees, or those who were interested enough to attend the meetings, acted more on personal basis to have their own particular stretch repaired rather to consider the condition of the road as a whole. To add to the poor management the funds for these works were sometimes allocated from borrowings and at other times charged to the toll-takings. A good deal of time was taken up on investigating whether these funds were properly and fully spent. The borrowing of money seemed almost too easy, as on 26 April 1731 it was ordered that £106 - 3s - 7d be paid to Richard Morgan, being the interest on the £2,000 already borrowed off him and the same day another £1,000 was paid over to the trustees by Morgan. It also appears from the journal that the trustees spent a good deal of their time arranging compositions of the tolls to regular road users. Under these compositions a person or a person's whole family and servants could pay an agreed sum in quarterly payments for a period of up to one year in lieu of tolls at a particular gate and the agreed sum was often only a small fraction of what the tolls would have cost.

In addition to the road works the Navan road trustees seem to have had difficulties recruiting reliable and agreeable staff to collect the tolls at some of the gates. At their meetings held on 7 and 9 May 1730, the trustees laid down three requirements for gatekeepers or toll gatherers, which were as follows: 'that the several toll gatherers who are to be employed at the several gates in the turnpikes do not keep a public house or sell any liquor,'<sup>36</sup> 'that no person be employed as a toll gatherer at any of the turnpikes who cannot read and write and that no papist be employed at any of the said gates.'<sup>37</sup> In all, four toll gatherers were appointed at this time, one for Stonybatter gate and one for Kilcarn Bridge gate at £20 per annum each and two for Castleknock gate at £10 per annum each. All four had to give £50 security for the faithful discharge of their trusts. A fifth toll gatherer was later appointed at the new turnpike gate established at Clonee Bridge. It may be inferred that single toll gatherers could share the post with an officially appointed assistant provided the salary was evenly divided between them. At the trustees' meeting of 8 September 1730, that is four months after appointment, the toll gatherer at Kilcarn Bridge was dismissed because he gave his bag containing the day's takings to his fellow toll gatherer who lost some of the money playing cards but repaid the loss next day. However the second toll gatherer did not return any takings during the period he was in charge of the gate that day and he was also



dismissed. At the next meeting on 19 September one of the toll gatherers at Castleknock gate indicated that an assistant employed there had departed with some sheets of turnpike tickets. On 21 November one of the toll gatherers at this gate was dismissed because of his embezzlement of part of the tolls collected by him and other misbehaviour. Still more trouble at this gate was recorded on 6 February 1731 when a complaint was received that one of the toll gatherers had assaulted a man and bitten his thumb. This toll gatherer was dismissed on 20 February because the complainant did not receive an acceptable apology and was replaced by Fredrick French on the recommendation of Fredrick French Esq. and others. It is not known if there was any relationship between those two individuals with the same forenames and surnames. Fredrick French was dismissed three months later on 21 May, because of the testimony of several witnesses that he was frequently drunk and had absented himself from his duty.<sup>38</sup> It is possible that the Castleknock gate was exceptional in attracting so many unsuitable and undesirable toll gatherers. At a meeting of 14 April 1732 it was decided to remove the turnpike from Castleknock to Dunshaughlin and to discharge the toll gatherer at Castleknock. The Receiver of tolls was instructed to ensure that any deficiency in the accounts of this toll gatherer was to be taken from his security. At the very last meeting of 20 March 1734 recorded in this journal, the two toll gatherers at Kilcarn Bridge gate were ordered to attend the next meeting to answer a complaint against them.

A good deal of the journal is taken up with items such as the building of houses for the toll gatherers and payments for services but one matter of interest provided for at a meeting of 26 October 1733 was an instruction to the surveyors 'that they do provide proper flagg stones to be affixed in the ground at the distance of 320 perches each (the same being one mile) and have the number cutt in each stone beginning with number one on the first next to Stoneybatter turnpike.'<sup>39</sup> Another interesting entry in the minutes of the trustees' meeting of 24 November 1732 was an early example of a workman's compensation payment to a road worker who appears to have been severely injured in the course of his employment:

Ordered that the sum of ten pounds out of tolls and dutys be paid with [to] James Betagh labourer, who was disabled from working by a bank falling on him when employed in labouring at said road, which sum is given to him as a compensation to him for his loss of health and limbs and towards supporting him and his wife and five children.<sup>40</sup>

In 1732, a sum of ten pounds represented four hundred days or over one year's wages, as the labourer's daily rate at that time was six pence and not all employers would have paid compensation in such cases.

In the case of the Dublin to Kilcullen Bridge road, improvement work on the carriage-way must have started very soon after the passing of the enabling act (3 Geo.II, c.18) in 1729 because a traveller on the road in 1732 considered it 'a very fine made way of considerable breadth.'<sup>41</sup> The amount of work done on some of the turnpike roads immediately after the coming



in to effect of their enabling acts, may be gauged from the amounts of money borrowed by the individual trusts. Examples of this are the Dublin to Kilcullen Bridge and the Dublin - Navan roads, where in the case of the former it was stated in the preamble to the first amending act (7 Geo.II, c.16) in 1733 that a sum of £7000 was outstanding, while in the case of the latter, amending act (7 Geo.II, c.22) showed that a sum of £6,500 sterling was owing. Table 2.6 gives details of the sums outstanding in the case of six of the early trusts. It should be noted that in the case of the trust for the road from Blackbull to Athboy, there was no extending or amending act when the enabling act expired in 1752.

**Table 2.6 Borrowings of early turnpike trusts and amending acts**

Road trust	Amount borrowed £s.	Year	Amending act
Dublin-Kilcullen Bridge	7,000	1733	7 Geo.II, c.16
Dublin-Navan	6,500 (sterling)	1733	7 Geo.II, c.22
Dublin-Dunleer	11,000	1733	7 Geo.II, c.18
Dublin-Mullingar	12,400	1733	7 Geo.II, c.21
Blackbull-Athboy	----	----	----
Kilcullen-Kilkenny	2,600	1735	9 Geo.II, c.24

It seems that the works of improvement and maintenance which was carried out in the early stages on some of the turnpike roads was of a very high standard. In the case of the Navan road, gravel was used from the outset in order to carry out road repairs as is shown by the following entry in the journal for 22 August 1730:

That £60 be paid to Mr. Samuel Blood one of the surveyors of the said road and by him to be paid to the several owners of the carts for their drawing of gravel to part of the said and towards the repairing of the said road.<sup>42</sup>

Gravel was also used on the Navan to Nobber turnpike road as the following excerpt from the minutes of a meeting of the trustees on 5 August 1735, where an allegation against the surveyor was being investigated, shows:

John Gerrard of [ Ballsaro ?] being sworn, informed the trustees that Mr. Stapleton employed some of his own horses and carrs and the carrs of his overseers and says the loads of gravel a man would carry in a baskett on his back.<sup>43</sup>

For the traffic using the roads at the time (see page 86) gravel was a far more appropriate material than stone for the roads and the surveyors of those days must be commended for using it. Surveyors were later most probably guided by the recommendations or directives on road construction issued by the Dublin Society in 1737 which were innovative and practical.<sup>44</sup> These 'Directions for making roads' were issued 'in compliance with the request of several



gentlemen'<sup>45</sup> and refined and formalised some of the recommendations of Thomas Proctor (See page 25). The 1737 publication was very forthright about the advantages of using gravel for all roads:

Gravels make the most commodious and easy roads for travellers and carriages, and are greatly preferable to causeways and pavements, which are at best very inconvenient, and when broken up, as they are apt to be, vexatious and dangerous to all who use them.

Our great roads made in pursuance of the turnpike acts are all gravelled and as everybody knows the finest in Europe. Those more distant from the Metropolis, and the bye and cross roads, which now require our care and attention should now be made in the same manner; what this is, is at present pretty well understood in those parts where turnpikes have taken place, and to make the same method universal is the design of this paper.<sup>46</sup>

The main recommendations were: the necessity of laying good sound foundations and drains, the use of suitable gravel with provision of proper camber (high in centre and sloping towards sides) and the need to lay the gravel in thin layers with the best gravel on the surface. The recommendation about camber was that 'an inch to a foot slope is generally sufficient'<sup>47</sup> and in the case of construction thickness or depth, the advice was:

Large turnpike roads require a considerable depth of gravel to answer the constant wear of them; but other roads which are at present principally under consideration may be made good with gravel from eight to twelve inches deep in the middle and from four to eight inches in the edges.<sup>48</sup>

The recommendations referred to the construction of new roads as well as the reconstruction of existing ones. In the case of the new roads, the publication put forward different methods of building:

There are several ways of making them; the first is this, make large ditches on each side of the road, and excepting the first spit of earth, which must be carefully kept off; lay the soil you take out of the ditches on the middle of the road as wide as you intend to make your gravel, raising it higher in the middle than the edges; then rake it and lay it even, and let it lye so for some months 'till it becomes hard, without letting any horses or carriages go on it; and when it is well settled and dry, lay your gravel on it; this method has been found to answer very well, without using any stones, except in hollow bottoms. The second way, which succeeds very well, where the bottom is good and gravelly is this; dig the ground in the middle of the road five or six inches deep, and as wide as you intend to gravel it; throw away all



the soil you dig up and level it<sup>i</sup> at the bottom; then fill this hollow space with good gravel, and raise it three or four inches in the middle and one inch at the edges higher than the grass on each side; by this means the gravel will be kept in by the ground on both sides and make a lasting road.<sup>49</sup>

These recommendations are and were of prime importance in that they showed how the turnpike roads were being constructed at that time and they also helped in many cases to bring about the improvements in the cross and by-roads over the next forty years which, as will be seen, were praised by Roy in 1766 and Young in 1780 (See pages 137 and 135). The recommendations were, of course, not always followed with the result shown by Coote in 1804 in respect of the roads in county Armagh:

Several of the roads of this county are in good condition; but the greater number are bad, many of them in the extremest degree.....The great mistake in the roads of this county is, the neglect of originally making the centre of the road higher than the sides, which would throw off the water into the ditches,<sup>50</sup>

The only drawback to the use of gravel and indeed of all road construction at that time was the absence of appropriate means of compaction. On this account, it was essential to adhere strictly to the guidelines and most of the difficulties experienced in the repair and construction of roads arose from either using unsuitable gravel or other materials or taking 'short cuts' with the laying and other necessary procedures. The good condition of the roads in 1737, was also expressed by George Pakenham who travelled from Dublin to Pakenham Hall by the Dublin-Kinnegad turnpike road in the following terms: 'The roads were the finest I ever saw. They run in direct lines and never bad but a continued causey for more than a hundred miles.'<sup>51</sup>

The later extensive use of gravel on the turnpike roads is shown from an account of the meeting of the trustees of the Mountrath-Cloneshin road (25 Geo.II, c.18) held on August 13 1753. Information about this road in the 1753-4 period and information concerning the turnpike road from Naas via Maryborough to Ballyroan (No. 9 in Table 2.1) in the period from 1767 to 1772, was taken by E. O'Leary<sup>52</sup> prior to 1914 from the original minutes of the trustees, which were later destroyed by the fire and explosion in the Record Office at the Four Courts, Dublin in 1922 The account of the meeting of 13 August 1753 contained an item about the acceptance of tenders for road-building, summarised by O'Leary as follows:

Contractors' applications were before the meeting for making that portion of the road from the south side of Lumcloone river, through the bog of Lumcloone and Broughall and the wood of Derrybratt on to the point where the proposed and present road should meet. It was to be made according to the conditions of the Act

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<sup>i</sup> The base of the excavated area.



of Parliament, but there appears to be no question of any fences except the side drains. It was to be 40 feet wide from drain to drain, but the width of the road proper seems to have been left to the discretion of the trustees. One contractor proposed to make the drains and also the road proper 12 feet wide of clay and gravel, and 6 inches deep, for 7s a perch, and keep it repair for two years. Contractor Condor proposed to make the road proper 18 feet wide and 15 inches deep of clay and gravel, and keep it in repair for five years at 18s a perch. He was accepted,.....<sup>53</sup>

The widespread use of gravel for repair and maintenance as well as for road construction is also shown by the following excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the trustees of the first division of the Banbridge to Belfast turnpike road (No.12 in Table 2.1) at their meeting of 22 August 1762 concerning payments to contractors for work done: 'To 40 perches of road in exceeding bad order well bottommed and gravelled and the twelve perches of said road raised and laid down again in tolerable order - £7- 16s - 0.'<sup>54</sup> It must not be assumed that gravel was only used on turnpike roads. It was of course also used on other roads as it is known from an entry dated 26 August 1732 in the journal of Mary Delaney, that 'from the town [Cootehill] one drives nearly a mile on a fine gravelled road' to Mr. Coote's house [Bellamount Forest].<sup>55</sup>

One of the difficulties experienced in studying the history of any road work, is the 'blurred' distinction between 'improving or amending' an existing road on the one hand and 'maintaining' a road on the other. Improving or amending would normally involve operations such as realignment, widening or building of bridges while maintenance generally involves work such as filling of potholes and clearing of drains. However in cases where the condition of a road deteriorates so badly that the carriage-way needs to be completely or partially re-surfaced or reconstructed without any realignment or widening, it is a problem to say whether this is an improvement or a maintenance operation. The original idea of the statute labour system was intended purely as a maintenance operation but gradually became involved in improvement works which were mostly minor. Major improvement works are 'capital' in nature and require specific funding over and above the day to day expenses needed for road maintenance. The turnpike road system was introduced in order to bring about major improvements in the principal roads and to maintain them in good condition. An example of the type of major improvement involved is that mentioned in Section 20 of the act (5 Geo.II, c.16) setting up the turnpike road from Dublin to Kinnegad:

The road leading from the bridge at Lucan by the causeway of St. Katherines to the town of Leixlip by the sudden and frequent overflowing of the river Liffey over the said causeway is dangerous to passengers; several persons having lost their lives and many cattle having been drowned; it is almost impractical to raise and make and the same safe and commodious, and by the building of a bridge over the river in a convenient place and turning the road another and shorter way, the like



accidents will for the time to come be prevented: be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the trustees being appointed may and shall build a bridge of stone and lime in some convenient place over the said river, and make a new road through the town of Lucan and lands of Cooltreny leading to such bridge,.....

This new bridge was built at Leixlip and the new line of road from the present Celbridge junction to it were both built before 1752 according to O'Keeffe and Simington in *'Irish Stone Bridges.'*<sup>56</sup> It is however highly probable that a good deal of the early work done on the turnpike roads was the rebuilding of some carriage-ways and the resurfacing of others, together with necessary improvements to drainage. Such work never shows up on maps and only the road users were aware of the 'improvement'

Perhaps the best method of showing how the turnpike roads improved the existing highways and their effect on the countryside is to follow the journey of an accompanied traveller (Chetwood) from Cork towards Dublin in 1746, which is almost the mid-year of the thirty-year period under consideration. Leaving Cork, the traveller described the turnpike road in the following terms:

The roads are charming, and the measured miles with their red figures cut in marble, gave us a satisfaction in our journey, by being in expectation of passing the next milestone. The first place we took notice of was a pleasant village, three miles from Cork called Glanmire. You come down to it over a pretty steep hill into a pleasant bottom and cross a new bridge of five arches over a stream of the same name that runs with its windings into the Leigh [Lee] below Cork. The road winds very much to avoid the hills that surround it, which is made easy now, but before the turnpikes were erected, it was a very difficult ascent and descent, for some part of the old road remains, which plainly shows us the former height and difficult ascent.<sup>57</sup>

On the approach to Rathcormack the traveller described the bridge over the river Bride in the following terms:

After an easy two hours ride, we crossed a bridge not long built, for about the middle of it was a stone with this inscription "The foundation of this bridge was laid June 22nd 1733 and finished November 16th 1734, colonel Redmond Barry, James Devonshire and James Barry being the overseers thereof."<sup>58</sup>

The travellers had little to say about the town of Fermoy except to remark on the 'handsome bridge over the Blackwater of sixteen arches.'<sup>59</sup> After the travellers left Fermoy, they came to Kilworth and then headed for Kilworth mountain. The description of this area shows the effect of the turnpike roads on the terrain through which they passed:



The next morning we set out and travelled over Kilworth mountain, a place, not above thirty years ago, a more dreary waste, as it was described to me, than could be found in the deserts of Arabia; but now you might perceive all round you black cattle feeding and every half-mile little plantations and farmhouses.<sup>60</sup>

The travellers' coach driver exchanged banter with the turnpike gatekeeper at Ballyporeen on the county Tipperary border. From the account it seems that some of the turnpike trusts engaged sharp-witted and able gatekeepers. In the Clonmel area the traveller wrote of bogs and their dangers:

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But this was before the turnpikes were erected; for now there is not the least danger, though the roads I am told, in many parts run through several of these bogs; and such noble roads cannot be equalled in the universe.<sup>61</sup>

Chetwood and his travelling friend, who were both going to county Kildare, took a number of detours after Clonmel to places such as Cashel and Wexford before arriving in Kildare via Kilkenny. The writer continued to describe the roads and contrasted the poor condition of the non-turnpike roads (e.g. Duncannon to Wexford) with the good condition of the turnpike ones. In the case of the Duncannon-Wexford town road, Chetwood wrote:

From Duncannon Fort we crossed the country, with the sea sometimes in view to our right; and after a tedious long journey and rugged road, (not being a Turnpike) we arrived safe at the town of Wexford,.....<sup>62</sup>

In an earlier reference to the then non-turnpike road between Kinsale and Cork, this writer described it in the following terms: 'The road we passed is very well for travellers on horseback, but indifferent for carriages.'<sup>63</sup> The writer also described some of the traffic on the various roads and this will be referred to later in Chapter 2.7.

Even up to the end of the thirty-year period up to 1758 the turnpike roads were still being praised as is shown by the following observation made by the Dublin Society in 1756:

We shall here take notice of a late improvement among us, which is a great ease and benefit to inland commerce, that by means of our turnpike acts we have the finest roads in Europe and perfect gravel walks from part of the kingdom to another.<sup>64</sup>

and in a letter dated 1761, Baron Edward Willes wrote about the turnpike road in county Clare that 'the road from Limerick to Ennis is as fine as a gravel walk.'<sup>65</sup>



A road where the condition of the actual road was giving rise to official concern was the Navan road. A committee set up in 1745<sup>66</sup> to inquire into the state and condition of the road reported on 21 December 1751 'that the turnpike road leading from the city of Dublin to the town of Navan, in the county of Meath is greatly out of repair.'<sup>67</sup> The committee attributed this to: the appointment of only one person to be overseer of the whole road, the great number of compositions lowering the toll-income and to the fact that the toll-income was insufficient to repair the road because of the distance suitable repair material for the road had to be drawn.

## **2.6 Finances**

As stated earlier all the improvement work on the turnpike roads was funded out of investments made by private individuals by way of debentures or mortgages raised on the security of the tolls and the relevant acts required that repayment of principal and interest on these loans was to be funded out of the toll-receipts. Interest rates on these debentures or loans varied from trust to trust mainly reflecting either legal or market rates at the time of the raising of the loans; most were at six per cent, a lesser number were at five per cent while two were at five and a half per cent. It appears that in some cases these debentures were subscribed by the trustees and their friends while in others it was necessary to place public advertisements to invite investors. One such advertisement was placed in a newspaper in June 1736/7 by the trustees of the Mullingar to Lanesborough turnpike road which was initiated in 1735 by an act of that year (9 Geo.II, c.14):

The trustees of the Lanesborough turnpike have come to a resolution of borrowing the sum of £2,500 for financing the road between Mullingar and Lanesborough, the ensuing Summer. They do hereby give notice that they intend some time in the month of January next by proper deeds registered to vest the tolls of the said road in The Rt. Hon. Lord Viscount Lanesborough, Anthony Sheperd and P. Molyneaux Esq. in trust for the said principal sum and the interest thereof at the rate of six per cent to such person or persons, who are willing to advance the same. N.B. No debenture will be issued for less than £50 pursuant to act of parliament.<sup>68</sup>

It seems that there was no rush to invest money in this turnpike road because the request for investors was re-advertised in another newspaper eight months later.<sup>69</sup> The same issue of this newspaper the trustees of the Longford turnpike road advertised for persons to invest a sum of £1500 by way of debentures of £50 upwards at six per cent to supplement the sum of £1000 which was already borrowed by them. The Longford trustees appear to have fared better than their Lanesborough friends because in April 1737 the following advertisement was placed in the press:

Whereas the Honourable the trustees of the Longford Turnpike having borrowed the sum wanting for repairing of the road between Mullingar and Longford, which



money is now in the treasurer's hands, the said trustees do hereby give notice that they will at the Boards to be by them held at Longford or Edgeworthstown on Tuesday in every week until the nineteenth of this instant, April, receive the proposals of any person or persons who are willing to undertake the repair of any part of the road between Longford and Ballynaleck-Bridge (not already contracted for), the rest of the road not being as yet laid out by the surveyor.<sup>70</sup>

This advertisement and others like it shows that most of the improvement works done on the turnpike roads, was done by contractors and that the statute-labour, where applicable, only carried out the ordinary maintenance work.

One of the trustees of the Longford-Mullingar turnpike road was Richard Edgeworth, who was a regular attender at the trustee board meetings and kept a series of yearly account notebooks in which he entered all his income and expenditure in a most detailed manner. This turnpike road was established by an act of 1735 (9 Geo.II, c.21). From 3 June 1737, up to and including 14 September of the same year, Edgeworth attended a total of five of these board meetings. Edgeworth obviously had a personal interest in the proceedings because in October of that year he paid the 'jury' a sum of six shillings and six pence for valuing that part of his lands through which the turnpike road passed. It must however be stated that this man regularly paid his turnpike tolls. Edgeworth continued to be a fairly regular attender at the board meetings for a number of years up to 1742<sup>71</sup> when he became sheriff of county Longford, after which he appears to have been abroad for a period of years. When he returned in 1750 he did not apparently resume his attendance at the board meetings. However in his notebook, Edgeworth recorded on June 23 1750:

Received from Samuel Forth Esq., treasurer of the Longford turnpike half a year's interest due to me on March 25 1744 at the rate of five per cent for £300 advanced and lent by me on the security of the tolls of the said turnpike,-----£7--10s--0d.<sup>72</sup>

This is important as it seems to indicate that the toll-receipts were so low on this turnpike road that even the payment of the interest had fallen behind by over six years already. However matters seemed to deteriorate even more because the half-year's interest due on 21 September 1746 was not paid according to Edgeworth until 5 December 1755<sup>73</sup>, which was eleven years late. In this case Edgeworth recorded in his diary that he received £7 - 10s - 0d and noted<sup>74</sup> 'the payment of the remaining one per cent being postponed'. As the £300 advanced was at six per cent per annum both the 1746 and 1755 payments should have been £9 - 0s - 0d so it is obvious that this turnpike trust was in serious financial trouble from about 1744 onwards and from, perhaps earlier.

Some of the turnpike trusts however, appear to have paid the interest on the debentures in a regular manner. One such trust was that on the Dublin-Dunleer road, which road was sometimes referred to as the Drogheda turnpike. A record of the payment of the half-yearly



interest on debentures from November 1735 to November 1741 exists in the Headfort papers<sup>75</sup> and - details are given in Table 2.7.

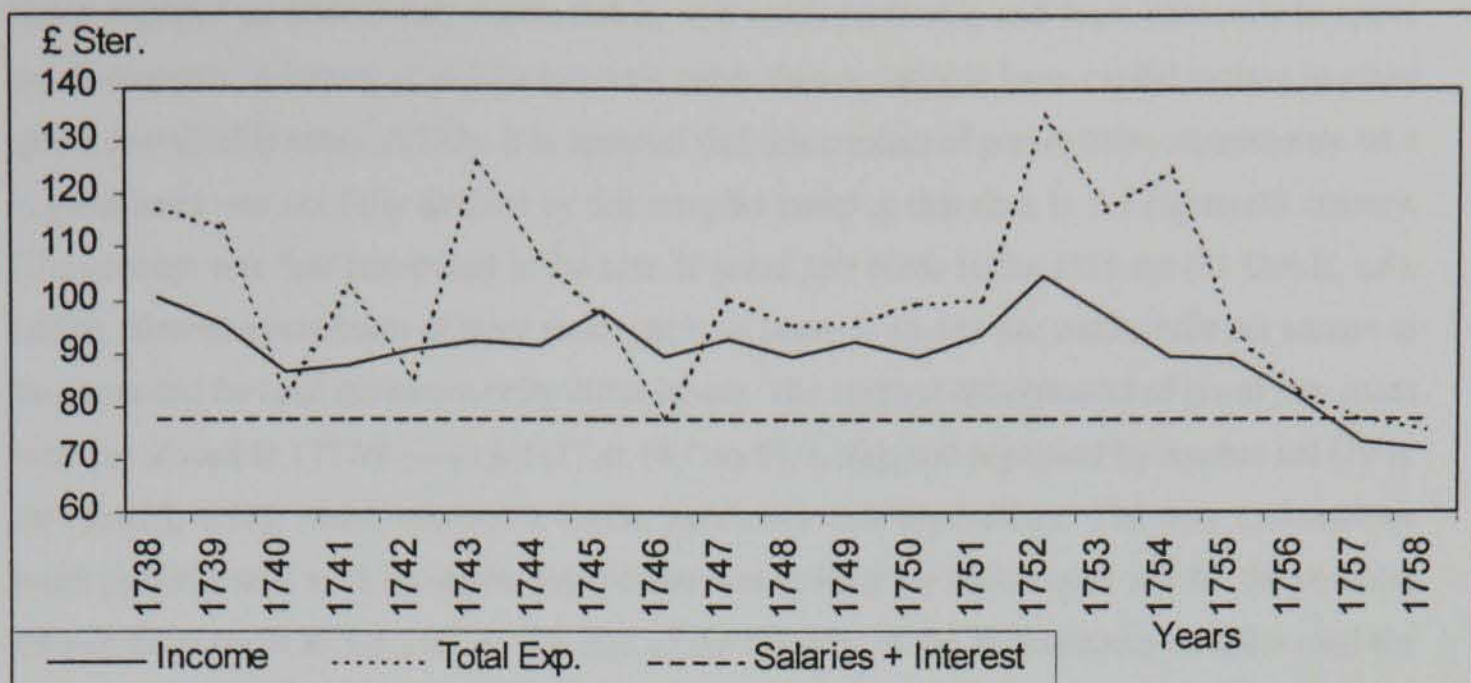
*Table 2.7 Interest paid by Dublin-Dunleer turnpike on debentures held by Sir Thomas Taylor from 1735 to 1741.*

Date interest was due	Date interest was paid	Amount
Michaelmas 1735	5 November 1735	£7 - 10 - 0
29 March 1736	18 May 1736	£7 - 10 - 0
Michaelmas 1736	14 November 1736	£7 - 10 - 0
29 March 1737	10 May	£7 - 10 - 0
Michaelmas 1737	21 November 1737	£7 - 10 - 0
29 March 1738	11 May 1738	£7 - 10 - 0
Michaelmas 1738	14 November 1738	£7 - 10 - 0
29 March 1739	23 April 1739	£7 - 10 - 0
Michaelmas 1739	16 May 1739	£7 - 10 - 0
29 March 1740	23 April 1740	£7 - 10 - 0
Michaelmas 1740	23 November 1740	£7 - 10 - 0
29 March 1741	No date given- marked paid only	£7 - 10 - 0
Michaelmas 1741	18 November 1741	£7 - 10 - 0

It must have been obvious to many that most trusts were in financial trouble before 1750 and so it was not surprising that parliament set up a committee to investigate and report on the position. This report was presented on 7 February 1758 and was detailed and comprehensive. This report will be dealt with in Chapter 2.10..

A good example of the financial difficulties in which the turnpike trustees found themselves is shown by the surviving record of one of the smaller trusts, namely that for the Navan-Kells turnpike road. The Navan-Kells road was an extension of the Dublin-Navan turnpike road but it was legally a separate road and kept its own separate accounts. The road was only 9.75 miles long and turnpike gates were set up and operated at either end. The record of the gross receipts at each of the two gates together with the expenditure on the wages of the toll gatherers including the hearth-money on the houses and the expenditure on road repairs each year is available for the period from 1738 to 1758.<sup>76</sup> Based on loans of £490 [500] and £250 raised shortly after the establishment of the trust at a presumed rate of five per cent per annum, there is an interest bill of £37 - 10s - 0d shown in the record for each year. The gross income and the listed expenditure has been plotted on Figure 3.





**Figure 3 Toll receipts and expenditure on Navan-Kells turnpike road 1738 – 1758**

In Figure 3 the difference between the variable total Expenditure line and the salaries and interest line represents the expenditure on road repairs. From this figure it is seen that the total income from toll - receipts from 1738 up to 1755 was reasonably steady with a minimum of £86.46 in 1740 and a maximum of £104.74 in 1752. However after 1755 the income from toll dropped steeply to a level of £72.08 in 1758 and it was very obvious that the turnpike road was not then financially viable. In 1757 the income had dropped below the level of the salaries and interest payments and so the road had to go into further debt in order to continue operations. The fall off in income in the 1739/40 period may have been due to the severe frost of 1739 and the bad harvests and resultant famine of those years already mentioned in Chapter 2.1. The effect of the bad harvests and famine on the road traffic in this area must have been severe as: 'Louth and Meath in particular were grain growing counties.'<sup>77</sup> The later fall-off in income in the 1756-58 period was no doubt due to the failure of the potato crop allied to a shortage of corn at the same time.<sup>78</sup> However it is the expenditure, which best shows the poor financial management of this turnpike road. The total expenditure was as mentioned above, divided into a constant fixed expenditure on interest of £37.50 per annum together with the wages of the two gatekeepers at £40.2 per annum up to 1745 and £40.4 thereafter, and a variable amount for repairs each year. Thus the constant expenditure was £77.70 to £77.90 per annum, while the amounts spent on repairs varied from nil in 1746 up to a maximum of £57.14 in 1752. An examination of this expenditure on repairs shows that while it is understandable that a big expenditure on restoring the condition of the road after the severe frost of 1739 was necessary, the variation after that seems unwarranted and unreasonable. It is not known what actual work was done with these amounts of money listed as repairs but it is not the amounts of money that are regarded as unwarranted, but the variation in these amounts.



The value of preventative maintenance has long been appreciated by road engineers and those engaged on maintaining roads, that is, it is much preferable and more economic to spend small amounts of money at regular intervals rather than occasional large capital outlays to make good, preventable major defects. It is apparent that this concept of preventative maintenance on a regular basis was not fully realised by this turnpike board at that time in the eighteenth century. The concept was first introduced in the case of grand jury roads in the 1759 act (33 Geo.II, c.8), which allowed a maximum of three pence per Irish perch or £3.143 per statute mile per annum to be expended for road maintenance by direct labour. The contract management of grand jury roads was introduced in 1777/8 by an act (17 & 18 Geo.III, c. 22), and regulated by another act (19 & 20 Geo.III, c.18), which allowed a similar maximum unit expenditure. The only maintenance work possible with such minimum expenditure was to keep the drains open and fill the potholes two or three times in the year. In the case of the finances of the Navan-Kells turnpike road the position was critical in that the average yearly income over the 21 years from 1738 to 1758 was £86.29, while the average yearly expenditure for the same period was £100.625. The average amount spent on repairs was only £22.80 per annum and this represents a figure of £2.34 per mile per annum which was indeed minimal. The only possible saving was the elimination of one gate and the saving on this would have been £21.16 per annum and this would have reduced the average expenditure to £79.48. Provided the income did not drop by more than £6.81 and everything else remained the same, this would have brought the finances back on even keel, as regards income and expenditure, but of course would not have allowed the debt to be paid off. However an improvement in the condition of the road may have attracted more traffic users. The use of two turnpike gates on only 9.75 miles of road appears to have been wasteful as the average distance between turnpike gates on the Belfast-Dublin-Cork route was one gate for every 7.88 miles (See page 134). A suitable location for the location of the one gate so as to maximize toll-receipts could have been determined from an analysis of the existing gate receipts and a study of the inflow of traffic from side roads. The state of the turnpike administration in this case shows how necessary it was to have effective management of these roads.

It is possible that the Navan-Kells turnpike trustees informed the parliamentary committee inquiring into turnpike road finances of the serious state of their finances as there is a document attached to the surviving minute/account book headed:- 'Observations on the turnpike act'<sup>79</sup>. This document set out the above financial information in a different way by taking 1751 as the standard year, and then setting out the decreases of the gross amounts for the seven years after 1751 as against the gross amounts for the seven years prior to 1751.

It is also possible and indeed probable that the severe and prolonged frost of 1739 which was followed by the widespread famine had a significant effect on the whole road system. Where any roads were inadequately drained or had frost-susceptible materials in their subgrades or construction, the damage must have been considerable and extra funds must have been used to make good this damage. In addition the traffic on some turnpike roads and consequently their toll-income must have diminished. This diminution in traffic could have arisen from various reasons as for example traffic to water-powered flour-mills, which had to close down during the



severe frost. Maurice Lenihan in his '*Limerick: Its history and antiques*' published in 1866<sup>80</sup>, who obviously had access to the turnpike records of the Newcastle-Limerick-Cork road because he was able to furnish one week's detailed traffic in his book (See Table 2.8 on page 96), stated in reference to the frost and famine of 1739/41 in the Limerick area and the lean time leading up to this period:

The state of things had an adverse effect on the turnpike roads, which had become for a time, such bad speculations for those who had engaged in them, that they gave no return.<sup>81</sup>

However Lenihan did not give sufficient information in his explanatory note to fully substantiate this assertion. In this note he simply stated:

The returns of the Bruff or Limekiln turnpike for the nine years ending in 1741, showed an average of about £62 per year; Ardsallagh turnpike £35, and Blackboy £195. Out of this income, wages of collectors and other monies were deducted, leaving a very small net income.<sup>82</sup>

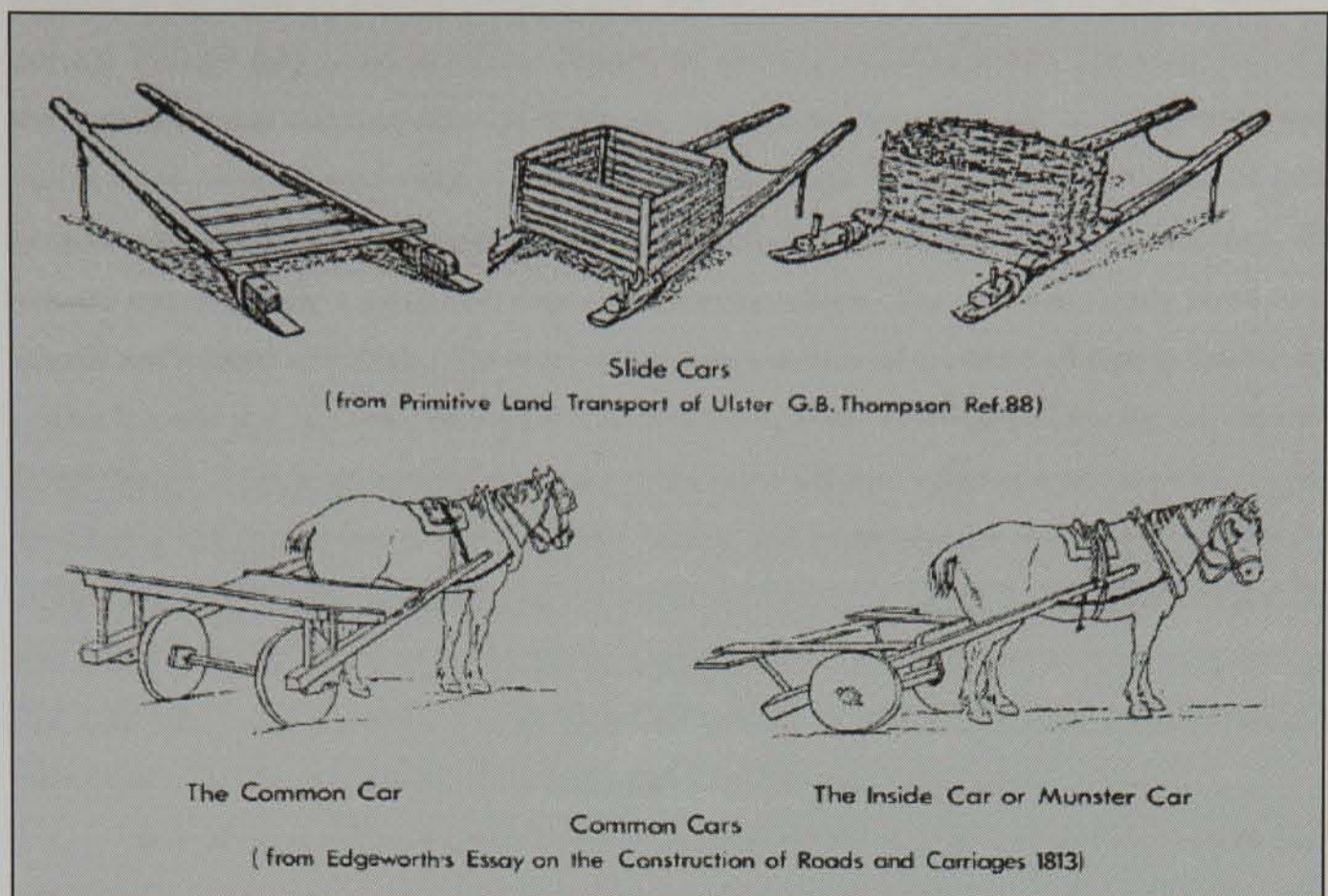
While the figures for the average toll income from 1733 to 1741 for these three gates are useful information, the fact that they are not broken-down on a year by year basis makes it impossible to now show the direct effect of the 1739/41 frost and famine. This effect is best shown by Figure 3 where the steep rise in road repairs in 1742 is apparent.

## **2.7 Traffic**

The purpose of any road is to carry the traffic needing and desiring to use it. Traffic can be divided into two main types; passenger and goods traffic. These divisions may be further subdivided into pedestrian, animal mounted and vehicular in the case of passenger traffic and goods can be carried by pedestrians, animals and vehicles. Of course, farm animals travelling on the hoof can also be classed as goods traffic. Traffic can be further classified as urban and rural. With all these divisions and classes, it is difficult to describe traffic and even more difficult to quantify it. However, the most important element of the traffic-flow from the point of view of the economy is the goods vehicle.

### ***Goods traffic***





**Illustration 2 Slide cars and common cars, circa 1800.**

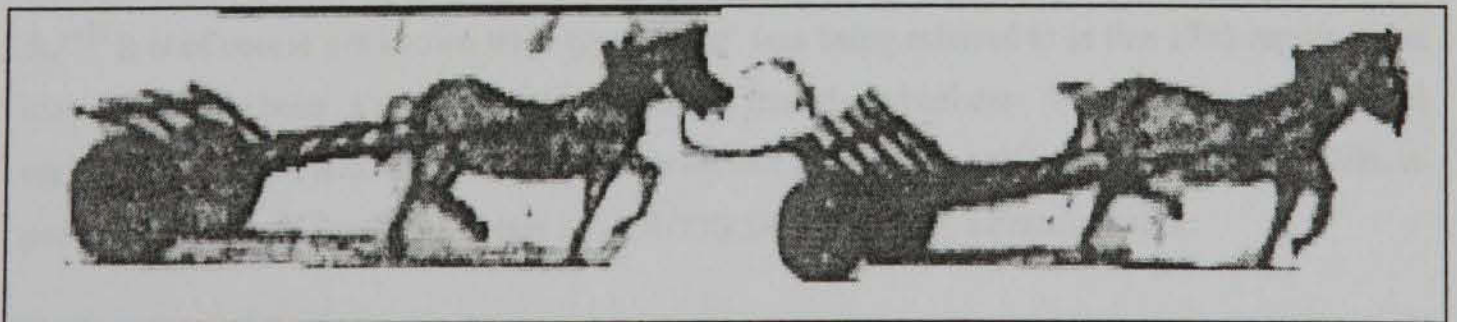
(From O'Keeffe, Peter J. 'The development of Ireland's road network' in *Trans. I. E. I.*, 98-99 (1973-75), p. 80.)

In 1729, when the turnpike era in Ireland began, there were no wagons or heavy carts in general use apart from imported ones. The outstanding features of such vehicles were usually that they required more than one horse to draw them and they could carry large loads often up to two tons and more. It is rather surprising that the English carts brought here were not copied or copied more often, but perhaps this may have been because of the inability of the roads to bear such heavy loads. English carts were mainly of the heavy type. The goods vehicles normally used in Ireland in the early part of the eighteenth century and indeed for almost the whole of it were basically light and of three kinds: the slide-car, the truckle cart or car and the wheel car. The one common factor, which all three had, was that they were drawn by only one horse. The first type or the slide car as used in Ireland, was composed basically of two long straight posts drawn or dragged by the drawing horse. On the two posts various containers were attached into which the load to be transported was placed. A selection of different types of slide cars are shown in Illustration 2. Such slide cars of various types were used throughout the world. One of the distinguishing features of the Irish slide car was the replaceable shoe at the wearing end of each post. The slide car was most suitable for use on land or on mountainous terrain, but not suitable for use on road surfaces. The second type of vehicle was the truckle car or cart. This may have been a development of the slide car where some inventive individual or individuals decided to fit the slide car with wheels or else it may have derived from a combination of the slide car and the not as yet described, third type of vehicle, but it is best seen as a slide car with wheels. The appearance and use largely depended where the wheel was located and of course on the diameter of the wheel. Illustration 1 shows one of the more developed types of truckle car, which were



popular in the north of Ireland. Truckle cars, which were also much used in Wales, were very popular because they could travel on all types of surfaces including roads. The main benefit of the truckle car was that it could on hilly terrain, 'operate as a true slide car on downward slopes, and that the wheels would work to advantage during ascent.'<sup>83</sup> The last or third type of goods vehicle was the wheel car or common car as it became known in the nineteenth century. This vehicle was originally a small one with solid wooden wheels. The axle was firmly fixed to the wheels and rotated with them.. The original capacity was only of the order of four to six hundred weight but this was increased during the course of the century. Two types of this car are shown in Illustration 2. To sum up, the main features of the three different vehicles were: the slide car had no wheels, the truckle car or cart had both wheels and slides and so could function when so required as either a slide car or a wheel car, while the third type, called the wheel or common car had wheels only and could only function as a wheel car. It must of course always be understood that different versions of these basic types of vehicle existed in different areas because of variations in terrain, availability of materials and local transport requirements and skills.

It is worth recalling the words of John Brown, written in 1729 and quoted on page 45, in order to show that truckle carts were being used on Irish roads at that time.<sup>84</sup> The extensive use of wheel cars throughout the country is shown by Samuel Madden's reference in 1738 to 'our miserable land carriage by wheel cars.'<sup>85</sup> An example of the numbers of these wheel cars used in certain locations is shown in the inventories of the wills of some twenty two Quaker farmers who died in the north Armagh and east Tyrone area between 1716 and 1740. Wheel cars were included in fifteen of these inventories and a number of farms had as many as four of these vehicles.<sup>86</sup> John Loveday's comments, written in 1732 and already quoted on page 65, refers to the larger type wheel cars, which were capable of carrying six hundred weight. Thus there were two distinct types of goods vehicle in use on the roads in the early part of the eighteenth century, that is, truckle cars and wheel cars. For a description of the comparisons between the different types of these vehicles, the excellent pamphlet entitled 'Primitive land transport of Ulster' by G. B. Thompson<sup>87</sup> should be consulted. Illustration 3 shows a drawing of early eighteenth century wheel cars from the journal of G. E Pakenham (1737 - 1739).



*Illustration 3 Wheel cars from the journal of George Edward Pakenham 1737 - 1739.*

(From C. Maxwell, *Country and town in Ireland under the Georges* (London, 1940 Revised, Dundalk, 1949), p. 293.)



The use of wheel cars or carrs as they were sometimes spelled became common throughout the country and especially in Ulster, where they were particularly useful for the transport of linen. These wheel-cars or common cars continued in use throughout the whole of the eighteenth century and up to the latter part of the nineteenth century, while in isolated areas some were still lasted into the early years of the present century. Illustration 4 shows a typical wheel car without sides, which type was more generally known as the 'low back car.'



*Illustration 4 Type of wheel car used mainly in Northern Ireland (It should be noted that the wheels are inside the shafts)*

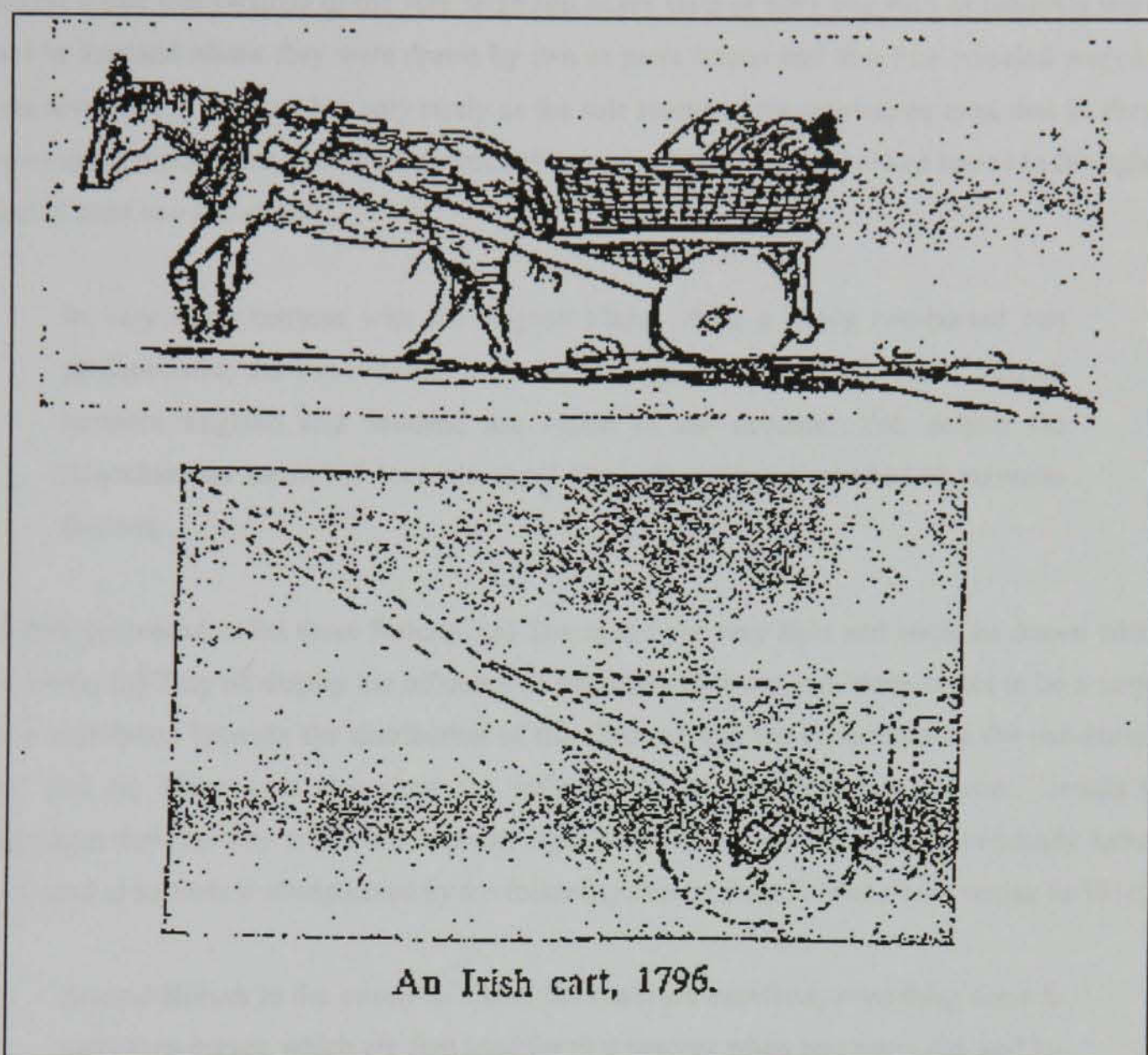
(From G. B. Thompson, *Primitive land transport of Ulster* (Transport Handbook, No. 2), (Belfast, 1958), unpaginated.)

Despite Loveday's description of the capacity of some of these cars, the general normal load capacity was only regarded as four hundred-weight (cwt.) in 1745 as is shown by evidence given to the select committee on Holyhead roads (Irish roads) in 1822, when a witness stated: 'I saw a fragment of a Report of a Committee published in the year 1745, which says, " And your Committee further report, that the average load of a car drawn by one horse in Ireland is 450 lb.''<sup>88</sup> It is of course not known what type of 'car' was being referred to in this 1745 report and it may well have been a type of truckle car rather than the wheel car. The capacity of the wheel car increased over the course of time and was around seven and a half hundred weight by 1800. A good description of one of these cars in 1796/7 by De Latocnaye, a French visitor:

Their car is a species of low cart on wheels two feet in diameter, made out of one or two pieces of wood, attached to a great axle of wood or iron turning with them. This singular construction seems to be well fitted for carrying heavy loads, but not for the country work in which they are commonly employed. I take it to be a farmer's invention.<sup>89</sup>



A drawing of such a car or cart was made by James Gilpin<sup>90</sup>, an American manufacturer who visited Ireland in 1796, while en route from Cork to Dublin and is shown in Illustration 5. The most important item to note in this drawing is the method by which the rotating axle was fixed to the shafts as highlighted in the lower enlargement



*Illustration 5 Drawing of An Irish cart on Cork - Dublin road in 1796.*

(From Harold B. Handcock, and Norman B Wilkinson, An American manufacturer in Ireland, 1796 in *J. R. S. A. I.*, xcii. (1962), p. 126).

The presence in Ireland of the small capacity solid two wheeled cart is perhaps more understandable in the overall Eurasian context from an article by J Geraint Jenkins in 'Gwerin.'<sup>91</sup> In this article Jenkins divides the Eurasian continent into three broad zones according to whether different types of carts or wagons were or are prevalent:

The north European cart zone which extends from Iceland in the west to north central Russia in the east. In this zone the two wheel carts are large and generally horse-drawn and equipped with side shafts.

The south Eurasian cart zone that extends over a vast domain, from Portugal in the west to the Philippine Islands in the east. In this zone the carts were much smaller than in the north European zone and originally designed to be drawn by oxen and often equipped with a central draught pole.



The mid-continental wagon zone that extends from Holland and Flanders in the west to Kamtchatka on the Pacific coast of Russia in the east. In this zone wagons and not carts were used.

Jenkins stated that versions of the very large and heavy carts of zone one such as tumbrels were used in England where they were drawn by two or more horses and that four wheeled wagons were also used in England but only rarely as the sole means of transport in an area, that is, they were more generally mixed with other types of two-wheeled carts. Jenkins then turned to the light carts of zone two and stated:

In very sharp contrast with the English Plain, where a heavy two-horsed cart predominates, the two wheeled vehicles of south-west England, Wales, Ireland, northern England and Scotland are varied in the extreme....Yet, despite the miscellaneous nature of 'oceanic carts' they all display a number of common features.

He then proceeded to list those features: (a) The carts were very light and could be drawn with one horse, (b) They all display the influence of the native slide car and 'there seems to be a very close correlation between the distribution of the slide car and the occurrence of the one-horse cart' and (c) These carts also show the influence of the Mediterranean ox-cart. Jenkin's suggestion that the very small low capacity light two-wheeled carts may have originally have been used as ox carts is strengthened by the following excerpt from E. Wakefield writing in 1812:

Around Kilrush in the county of Clare, the roads are excellent; everything there is carried on horses, which are first used for that purpose when two years old, and by being continually employed in this manner, their backs in the course of time become quite hollow. In that district, conversing with several of the peasants who were conducting these animals, I found that each carried twenty two stone.<sup>92</sup>

This shows that the horses had to adapt to the cart rather than the cart being made to suit the drawing animal.

The most important thing to note is the almost complete absence in the Ireland of the early eighteenth century of wagons or heavy carts or wains. Thus the popular notion that the turnpike roads put an end to the use of wagons in Ireland is incorrect, though of course the high toll rates did not encourage their introduction. Efforts were of course made to bring in wagons from England. In 'A tour through Ireland' written in 1746, the traveller (Chetwood) describes a visit to Low-Grange, situated within one mile of Gowran in county Kilkenny and the 'progressive' owner of the demesne. Of this owner's possessions, the traveller records:



He has six of our English waggons, with bells and harness, and English waggoners to drive them. I mention this, because we are told that there are few such carriages in any other part of the kingdom.<sup>93</sup>

This record contradicts the often quoted statement concerning the Duke of Leinster (Earl of Kildare) that: 'About the year 1755, the first English four wheeled wagon used in Ireland was imported by the Earl.'<sup>94</sup> Indeed there is evidence of the use of a wagon in 1656 to transport the captured records of the supreme council of the Confederation of Kilkenny to Athlone and Mallow and subsequently to Dublin. These records could incriminate the Catholic land-owners in the eyes of the Cromwellians who were eager to get hold of the forfeited lands and so great care was necessary with their transportation:

A captain Edward Tomlyns, Comptroller of the trayne, was ordered to prepare a closed wagon in which to transfer the documents from Mallow to Dublin; the lord Henry Cromwell was requested to provide a guard to protect the wagon. On 10 October 1656, it was ordered that Matthew Doyle, wagon master, be appointed to transport the records, and that the governors of Callan and Kilmallock, on the way to Mallow, be directed to furnish respectively four horses as a convoy from Callan to Kilmallock, and a like number from Kilmallock to Mallow.<sup>95</sup>

It is possible that some confusion arose in this case from the definition of the word 'wagon' because as previously pointed out, in some instances and even today, heavy carts are still called wagons.. However the use of imported wagons never became popular. The truckle and wheel car were the principal goods vehicles used throughout the eighteenth century, though as has already been stated, the capacity of the latter increased in the later years to approximately seven and a half hundred weight. These vehicles were used for the conveyance of all farm and general purpose goods. In the industrial sphere they were used in the linen trade and especially for conveying the finished linen cloth to the new Linenhall in Dublin. Pococke on a visit to county Donegal in 1752 wrote in his journal about how these vehicles were used to transport wine and indeed how the roads they used were constructed:

To the publick spirit and activity of Mr. Wray those fine roads are owing, which are made over Lough Salt mountain and in other parts, laid out to be finished in about seven years, by allotting such a measure of road yearly to each house, according to the value of the land they hold: they are twenty one feet broad, with a margin on each side of green turf about two feet wide: they are first raised with the earth that is thrown up to make a fosse on each side, then they lay a coat of broken quarry stone, on that some earth and then gravel at [the] top. These roads considering the cheapness of carriage on little truckles drawn by one horse, almost answer the end of water carriage, for they will draw a hogshead of wine, or



anything not exceeding 600 pounds weight and one man will attend three or four of them; they commonly feed their horses on the grass they find in the road so that they will carry a hundred and fifty miles for about three shillings a hundred.<sup>96</sup>

This account shows that the transport cost in 1752 was about five and a half pence per ton-mile. It is not known in this case whether the miles mentioned in the above quotation were English or Irish miles but in either case the unit cost was reasonable. Wheel cars were used in the transport of coal to Dublin from the Castlecomer mines. An account of the cost and a description of this traffic is given by the previously mentioned traveller (Chetwood) in 1746:

The carriages that transport them [coals] from the mines, are drawn each by one poor garron, as they term them here. The wheels are one entire piece of wood, without spokes, and very low, so that the shafts gradually rise, till the points come up to the shoulders of the beast. The lading is placed in a vehicle which is called a kish, and stands in the middle of the carriage. The kish is composed of wattles, or what we call in England wickers; and in this they will place you six hundred weight, which they convey round the country. They send large quantities to Dublin, fifty Irish miles, and find their account in it; for men and horses fare hard enough on the road; they seldom stop at any inn on the way, but whenever they meet with any grass on the borders of the road, which is generally near some running brook, they unharness their cattle, and let them graze, while themselves fall too on what simple provisions they bring along with them; then, like the Tartars they drink of the running stream, put their cattle to their carriages and march on. I have met with sixty or seventy of these caravans with one man to ten or more horses, who travel much at the same rate as our large waggons; and these sort of carriages preserve their roads, which are much the best I ever saw. The nearer the coal-mines the cheaper the coals, and what they purchase for five or six pence at the mine, will yield them an English crown at Dublin. Not only coals are drafted in this manner, but all other goods are transported the same way to all parts of the kingdom with the greatest safety, and cheaper than in England.<sup>97</sup>

This was really efficient road transport in that the unit cost was less than three pence per ton-mile for statute or English miles and about three and a half pence per ton-mile for Irish miles. The transport of the coal from Castlecomer to Dublin was mainly on turnpike roads. An example of the transport of other goods, again in the Kilkenny area is given in the correspondence of Alderman William Colles, who was a prominent merchant of that city. Colles was concerned with reducing transport costs. He had written on 2 November 1737 about the difficulties of making the river Nore navigable to Kilkenny and the river Barrow navigable to Athy.<sup>98</sup> In a further letter of 14 October 1747, Colles, replying to a written query from the Rt. Hon. Thomas



Carter of Dublin about the availability, price and transport cost of obtaining wheat supplies from Kilkenny, wrote that:

carriage can be got here in great quantity from the beginning of June to Christmas. the price of wheat here is generally about 3 shillings per barrell less than in Dublin. The price usually given for carriage is from 2s.- 6d. to 3s. per barrell from here to Dublin.<sup>99</sup>

As the weight of a barrel of wheat at that time was legally twenty stones<sup>100</sup>, the cost per ton-mile was from 3.38d to 4.06d which again is remarkably cheap. The transport of this wheat would also have been on turnpike roads. In a letter written in 1761, Edward Willes describing a tour stated: 'From Limerick to Ennis [turnpike road] I met near 70 carrs drawing packs of wool from 5 to 700 weight each going to be shipped at Cork for England.'<sup>101</sup> The above examples of the coal, wheat and wool transport show the nature and volume of the goods traffic which used some of the turnpike roads in the middle years of the eighteenth century.

### *Passenger Traffic*

In the case of passenger traffic, private vehicles such as chaises seem to have been imported from England since the seventeenth century. A petition was sent to the king in 1665 by Rene Mezandiere seeking an exclusive franchise to provide coaches and chairs for hire:

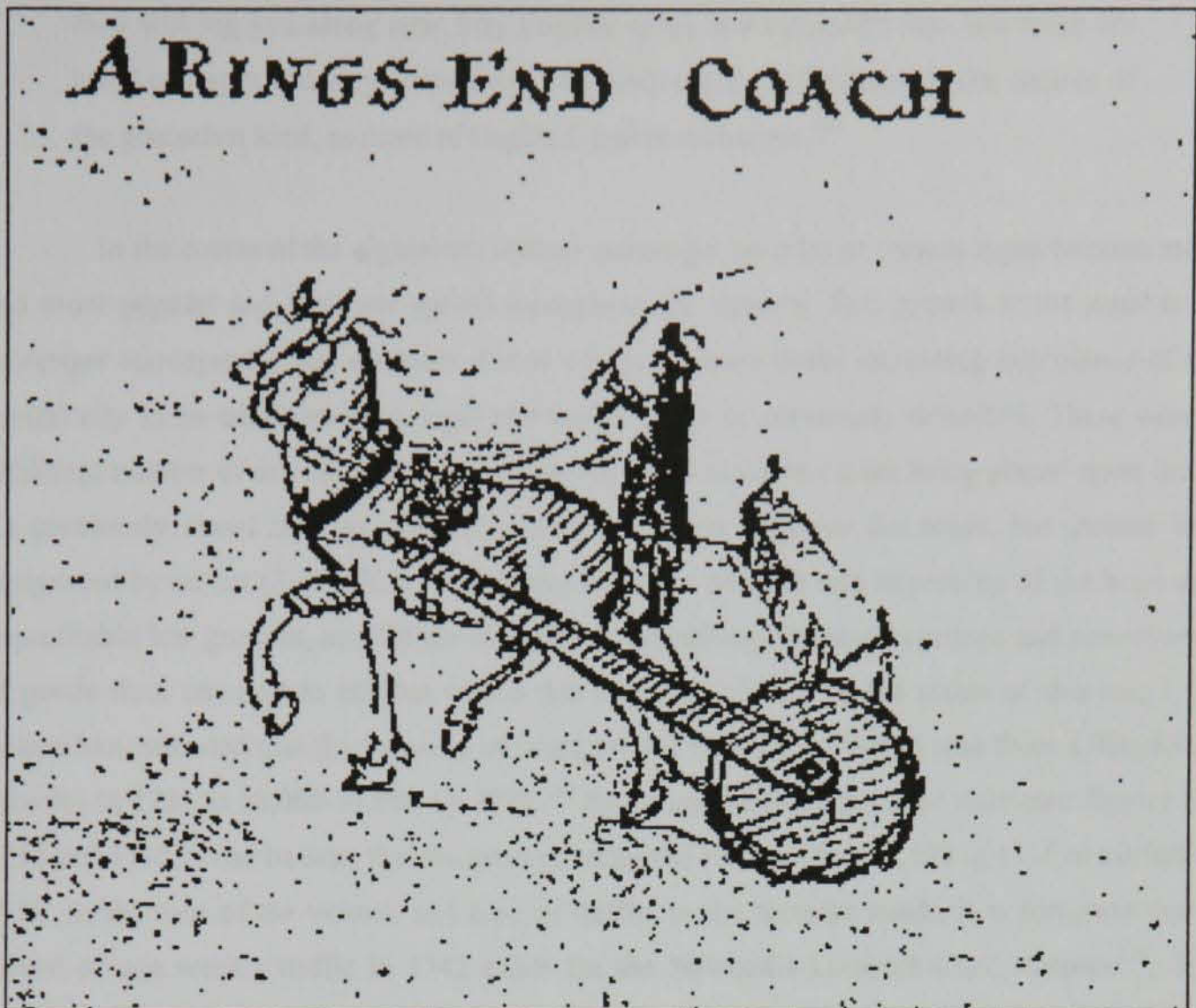
In Dublin and elsewhere in Ireland there are no coaches or chairs for hire sufficient to supply or accommodate ladies or other persons of quality either for journeys into the country or the seaside from Dublin, or from one place to another in Dublin or the other towns of that kingdom.<sup>102</sup>

Vehicles for public hire first appeared in the cities and it interesting to read Dunton's account of his effort to hire one in Dublin towards the close of the seventeenth century, probably 1699:

We inquired for a coach, but found no such thing was to be had here, unless by accident; but was informed that we might have a Rings-end carr, which upon my desire was called and we got upon it, not into it. It is a perfect car with two wheels, and towards the back of it a seat is raised crossways, long enough to hold three people; .....and I was told there are one hundred more plying hereabouts.....<sup>103</sup>

It is fortunate that an early drawing of this carr was made by Thomas Dineley, who visited Ireland in 1681.<sup>104</sup>





*Illustration 6 The Ringsend carr or coach, as seen in 1681.*

(From J. R. Garstin (ed.), 'Extracts from the journal of Thomas Dineley' in *J. R. S. A. I.*, IV, xliii (1913), p. 276).

As already noted on page 41, Dunton made a reference to Ireland's first stage coach; which travelled between Dublin and Drogheda. The development of the stage coach service throughout the country was slow in the beginning. However in the second decade of the eighteenth century due possibly to an improvement in the roads, stage coach services began to spread outwards from Dublin. In 1718 a coach service between Dublin and Kinnegad was begun<sup>105</sup>. An early traveller on this service in 1721 was Jonathan Swift who later wrote of 'his weary journey [sic] in an Irish stage coach.'<sup>106</sup> Commencing in 1733, Watson's Almanack<sup>107</sup> published each year a growing list of these coach services.

In his tour through Ireland in 1746 the traveller (Chetwood) commented on the passenger vehicles for hire and the private conveyances. At a place two miles from Clonmel where he had an enforced stay because of an accident, he was given a chaise in order to attend a race-meeting at Fethard. His English driver cum manservant called this chaise a 'Booby Hatch' and the traveller was also surprised by it. The following excerpt from Chetwood's account is of interest, concerning the availability of hired carriages in rural areas:

I must own, cousin, the first I saw of this kind of vehicle surprised me as much as Jacob [his driver]. They are hung high for the ease of the horse, not the rider. The driver is seated upon a thing like a stool, with his back-side near your mouth, and a foot upon each shaft, and away he drives at a great rate; for the roads are so good,



they will lug you along near fifty English miles in a summer's day. But these are hired carriages and very convenient. The roads are much frequented with chaises of the genteelest kind, as those of England, and as numerous.<sup>108</sup>

In the course of the eighteenth century passenger vehicles of various types became more and more popular and their use spread throughout the country. This growth in the number of passenger conveyances was no doubt due in a large measure to the increasing importance of the capital city as an administrative, legal and social centre as previously described. There were a sufficient number of private passenger vehicles by 1729 to warrant a tax being placed upon them. As previously stated this tax was not used to repair or improve the roads, but instead was designated by an act (3 Geo.II, c.3) 'To encourage the draining and improving of the bogs and unprofitable low grounds, and for the easing and dispatching the inland carriage and conveyance of goods from one part to another within this kingdom.' Based on the yields of this tax, J. T. Fulton has estimated that the numbers of taxed private vehicles in Ireland rose from 4,000-5,000 vehicles in 1730 to 10,000-11,000 by 1775.<sup>109</sup> By taking the average of the estimated figures for 1730 and 1775, it can be seen that the average estimated rise was from 4,500 in 1730 to 10,500 in 1775. In the case of the volume and type of traffic on the turnpike roads, it is fortunate that a record of one week's traffic in 1742 exists for the Newcastle-Limerick-Cork turnpike<sup>110</sup>. The traffic as set out for this one week in June 1742 at the Blackboy turnpike gate on the Limerick - Cork road is shown in Table 2.8.

**Table 2.8 Traffic and toll-receipts for one week in June 1742 at Blackboy gate on Limerick-Cork turnpike<sup>i</sup>**

Type of traffic	Toll-rate in £ s d	Numbers	Total toll-take £ s d
Coach and six horses	0 1 0	2	0 2 0
Coach and four horses	0 0 6	2	0 1 0
Chair and one or two horses	0 0 3	30	0 7 6
Wagon of four wheels	0 0 1	-	-
Carriage(two wheels & 2 hr)	0 0 3	-	-
Cart or truckle-one horse	0 0 1	120	0 10 0
One horse and rider	0 0 1	240	1 0 0
Every backload	1/2	480	1 0 0
Cattle per score	0 0 10	100	0 4 2
Calves, hogs, sheep and lambs	0 0 5	200	0 4 2
			Total 3 8 10

<sup>i</sup> It is necessary to point out that the toll-rate for wagons is incorrect in this Table and should be one shilling instead of one penny. Though there is no way of checking the data in the Table, the figures for the last five items look surprisingly even. It appears that in case of farm animals, either these always passed by the score that week, or else odd numbers were rounded up or down.



Despite the misgivings in the footnote, the figures in Table 2.8 are capable of providing much useful information. Firstly it is seen that the observations of the various travellers on the absence of wagons and heavy carts were correct, in that all transport of goods was by one-horse carts or truckle cars. The total number of wheeled vehicles comprising four and six horse coaches, one and two horse chairs and carts and truckle carts or cars, returned for the week was 154, of which twenty two per cent were passenger vehicles and seventy eight per cent were goods vehicles. This compares favourably with the figures derived from a full year's toll-gate count at Lissenhall, one mile north of Swords, county Dublin on the Dublin-Dunleer turnpike road in 1818<sup>111</sup>, where the proportion of goods vehicles was 81.75 per cent. In order to determine the average annual daily traffic (A. A. D. T<sup>i</sup>) of wheeled vehicles, the same factors and weekly traffic variation curve determined for Lissenhall can be used, because of the similarity in the nature of the two roads i.e. both are rural inter-urban. Using the Lissenhall data, the estimated minimum A. A. D. T. was found to be thirty three. It is also of interest to note the large numbers of farm animals which used the Limerick-Cork turnpike road at that time together with the amount of goods carried as backloads on horses.

It is regrettable that there is no way of estimating the amount of tax avoidance or tax evasion that occurred in the payment of the private vehicle tax mentioned above nor is there any way that the numbers of hired coaches, chaises etc., outside of city hackney and other local transport, can be determined. However, because of the ease with which such vehicles could be obtained, even in small villages (See Chetwood's observations on 'Booby Hatch' two miles from Clonmel, above), it may be estimated that the number of these vehicles together with stage coaches and untaxed vehicles was approximately fifty per cent of the total number of the taxed privately owned passenger vehicles. Using this estimated fraction and taking the average of Fulton's figures given above for the numbers of privately owned vehicles, the estimated total number of passenger conveyances (taxed private + hired + untaxed + stage coaches) for the year 1730 is 6,750 (4,500+2,250), and for the year 1775 is 15,750 (10,500+5,250). It has been seen from the Lissenhall and Blackboy data that passenger vehicles constitute almost a constant one fifth of all wheeled vehicles and so it possible to arrive at an approximate estimate of the total number of wheeled vehicles in the country in the years 1730 and 1785 by multiplying the total numbers of passenger conveyances by five, the resultant number for 1730 being 33,750 and for 1775 being 78,750.

From the point of view of traffic it is perhaps best to get an idea of the cost of a journey on turnpike roads at this time. It must be pointed out of course that in those days only the wealthier people could travel in any comfort as costs were prohibitive for the majority of the general public. A record of one such journey from Dublin to Cork in 1758<sup>112</sup> is shown on a

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<sup>i</sup> This is a modern description of the annual average daily number of wheeled vehicles using a road and is used internationally for comparing traffic volumes and for determining the classification of roads such as for example, whether a road should be a single or dual-carriageway or a motorway. It is simply calculated by adding together each day's traffic for a whole year and dividing by 365.



traveller's bill. Nothing is known about this traveller, nor about the purpose of his journey. The journey took five days to accomplish and the details are as shown in Table 2.9.

**Table 2.9 Claim for travelling expenses for journey from Dublin to Cork in 1758**

Date	Item	Cost £ s d
August 13th	To wash ball and case ?	6.5
"	To ale for servants in Dublin	8
"	To bill at Naas	15 8
"	To turnpike	3 9
August 14th	To bill at Kilcullen	1 18 2
"	To man for taking horse	1 1
"	To bill at Castledermot	14 4.5
August 15th	Leighlinbridge bill	1 18 10.5
"	Turnpike	4 9
"	Kilkenny bill	19 6
August 16th	Nine Mile House do.	1 4 9
"	Clonmel do.	8 7
"	Turnpike	5 0
"	Clogheen do.	15 4
August 17th	Kilworth do.	1 1 8
"	Rathcormack do.	5 9.5
"	Turnpike	1 5
"	To helper on road	1 1
	To 3 men - 5 days board	1 4 4.5
	To Fitzgerald do.	10 10
"	To beggars in Cork	1 1
"	To beggars on roads	6.5
	Incorrect total as given on bill	12 11 4
	<b>Corrected total</b>	<b>Total 12 17 10</b>

It should be noted that the itemised individual costs were incorrectly added on the bill. The total cost should read £12 - 17s. - 10d. The total turnpike charges, if correctly stated, amount to 14s.- 11d., or 5.8 per cent of the corrected total cost. This is an isolated example of how turnpike charges affected travel costs in middle years of the eighteenth century. The distance travelled was 158 miles and the cost per mile of the turnpike charge was 1.133d. It is not possible to calculate the speed of the vehicle used, as the times spent travelling each day are not known. However it appears to have been a fairly leisurely journey, as the average distance travelled per day was only 32 miles.



## 2.8 *Sharp practices, abuses and frauds*

The legislation for turnpike roads placed too much power in the hands of the trustees. It was assumed that the high office holders, lords, members of parliament and other large landowners would be above reproach at all times and take such an interest in the affairs of the trust that nothing underhand could ever occur. One of the clearest examples of what could and did go wrong concerned the Kilcullen to Timaho road via Athy (no. 22 on Table 3.1), which was made a turnpike in 1735. The relevant facts are covered in a comprehensive report by Sir Richard Cox to the house of commons on 5 April 1748 on behalf of a committee of inquiry<sup>113</sup> and are described in the following paragraph.

The expense of procuring the enabling act for this turnpike road (9 Geo.II, c.23) was £350, which was paid for by Theobald Lewis of Clonmel. A James Lewis was appointed clerk and treasurer of the trust at a meeting of 12 April 1736. It is not known if there was any relationship between the two men. The enabling act was the usual type which specified that out of the first money arising from the profits of the tolls, the trustees shall pay and discharge the expense of procuring the act. The trust transgressed this requirement by issuing seven fifty pound debentures to Theobald Lewis on 12 August 1736 in lieu of the repayment, without apparently previously consulting him. These seven debentures were the first debentures issued by the trust. Subsequent to this, the trust borrowed further money by way of debentures for road repairs and improvements so that by 1748 a total of £3,725 was owed. The trust was unable to pay the interest on these debentures and so there was also a large sum also due for unpaid interest. In 1743, a committee was appointed by the house of commons to investigate complaints by some creditors that they were not being paid, so that it was obvious that the trust was in trouble from an early stage. There was no complaint from Theobald Lewis as his interest was being paid each year. In 1746, other debenture holders protested that it was unfair that Lewis's debentures should be treated preferentially and legal advice was sought from at first, Walter Dawson, Barrister at Law and then Eaton Stannard, Recorder of the city of Dublin, and they were both of the opinion that because of the fact that these were issued without being sought, in lieu of a lawful debt that they should be treated in effect as guaranteed / preferential shares. The trust promptly resolved that 'the interest of [on] the said sum of £350 be for the future annually paid to the said Theobald Lewis, or his order, during the continuance of the act, preferable to all other creditors, or demands whatsoever, and so on, until the principal sum be paid at one intire [sic] payment.'<sup>114</sup> It should be noted that the enabling act for this turnpike road was to last for 41 years (that is until April 1777) in contrast to the period of 21 years for some of the earlier trusts. Theobald Lewis's seven fifty-pound debentures all dated 1736 were found in the N. L. I. among the Weldon papers.<sup>115</sup> The debentures were legally assigned to Rev. Anthony Weldon, vicar of the union of Athy in 1779 by Margaret Lewis spinster, surviving heiress of Theobald Lewis. Hand-written notes on the back of these printed debentures indicate that interest was paid on two of these up to 1787 and on the other five up to 1780, showing that the trust honoured its resolution as regards payment of the interest. There were various other matters in Cox's report such as: overpayment of the surveyor, payment for land on affidavits of the surveyor which affidavits could not be found, payments for



bills less than £25 and £50 with debentures worth these amounts provided the receiver paid over the balance to the treasurer with no proper accounts of these payments being kept. James Lewis appeared to have been involved in all these matters. Cox's report also shows that in the matter of compositions of tolls for regular road users, this trust made an excessive number and listed the compositors names at the various gates. There was also talk of the proceeds of gates being not accounted for by Lewis, as well as bribe-taking. It appears that for most things this man was able to pass responsibility on to the trustees who did not appear able to handle him. The following resolutions submitted to and agreed by parliament seem to contain those items which Sir Richard Cox hoped could put an end to the activities of James Lewis:

- (1) That it is the opinion of this committee that the compositions heretofore made by the trustees of the said road, are unreasonable and destructive to the creditors of the said road.
- (2) That no person or persons should be compounded, except those that live within a half mile of some turnpike gate and that such a composition should only extend to such gate.
- (3) That the not obliging James Lewis to hold the tolls for the year 1744 at £200 above all salaries, according to his agreement, was the cause of reducing the income of that year from £200 to £51.
- (4) That it is the duty of the trustees to oblige said James Lewis forthwith to account for the produce of the tolls arisen on the said road, for which he has not yet accounted and particularly for the surplus money arisen on the several debentures issued by him, pursuant to the several orders of the said trustees, which surplus money he ought to have received before such debentures issued.
- (5) That James Lewis be obliged to give a full account on oath for all transactions in 1744.
- (6) To prevent any abuses, proper entries of all dealings to be kept and noted by the clerk to the trustees and all these should be safely kept by him.<sup>116</sup>

In the case of the separate turnpike road extending the above road from Timaho through Ballynahill, Durrow, Beggars Inn and Cashel to the town of Tipperary, a petition was presented on 17 November 1747 by a Mr. John Pigot to the house of commons seeking redress concerning money owed to him and not paid because of mismanagement by the trustees. A committee was set up by the house to inquire into the state of this road. The committee reported on 8 December 1747 and put forward the following resolutions: 'John Pigot's allegations were fully proved; it is the opinion of the committee that there has been a great mismanagement of the public funds arising from the said turnpike; the funds arising are not sufficient to pay the expenses; this deficiency is occasioned by not erecting gates at proper places on the said road; gates ought to be erected between Beggar's Inn and the town of Tipperary at proper places to take all persons travelling that part of the turnpike road and John Pigot is to be paid out of the tolls the £400



principal money together with all interests and costs due to him because of the money he expended for the passing of the enabling act (13 Geo.II, c.14) of 1739<sup>117</sup>. This case calls into serious question the calibre and earnestness of the trustees who did not seem to wish to collect tolls from those travelling on a considerable length of the turnpike road under their control.

In the case of the Naas to Maryborough turnpike road (No. 9 in Table 2.1), a report to the house of commons of 1 February 1741, was more forthright. After a complaint from Anne Car, widow of the late bishop of Killaloe and others, the report of the investigating committee included the following observation:

That it is the opinion of this committee that there has been a great misapplication and embezzlement of the money arising from the tolls and duties payable by the said acts, whereby the interest on the money borrowed upon the credit of the said tolls and duties is greatly in arrears.<sup>118</sup>

Other matters included in the report on this investigation were: that letting the tolls to farm to the highest and fairest bidder for a term not exceeding three years was the most effectual way to prevent frauds and abuses in the collection of the tolls; that the maximum salary for any treasurer or clerk should be thirty pounds per annum and that no gatekeeper should keep an inn or public house or provide grazing for carriage or travellers' horses.

An unusual case of abuse of the turnpike legislation, which was to later have disastrous repercussions for the country occurred in connection with the road from Clonmel to Doneraile via Clogheen and Mitchelstown. This turnpike road (No. 27 in Table 2.1) was initiated in 1739 (13 Geo.II, c.15) and extended for a distance of 39.75 miles of which, 21.75 miles were in county Tipperary and the remaining 18 miles were in county Cork. The trustees were drawn from both counties. It seems that inter-county rivalry began early between the trustees as in a report on the troubles of this road in 1752 reference was made to a breach of the turnpike board's own order of 29 June 1741, which presumably related to this rivalry. The 1752 report from a house of commons committee was very comprehensive and Colonel Lysaght on behalf of the committee put forward a number of resolutions all of which were agreed by the house. The important points of these resolutions were:

- (1) The trustees paid their clerk and treasurer ten pounds more per year than was allowed by the act.
- (2) The tolls collected in the county Cork area were £52 for the year 1741, £40 per year from 1742 to 1747 and £55 per year thereafter. Despite this only £7 was spent in the Cork area during all that time.
- (3) The condition of the road in the county Cork area was ruinous while the portion of the road in the county Tipperary was in good repair.
- (4) The yearly net produce of the tolls of the whole road in 1752 was £258.



(5) The trustees were in breach of the enabling act in accepting a proposal of their then clerk and treasurer, the late Daniel Linihan, whereby he would keep the county Tipperary section of the road in repair provided the full tolls of the whole road were farmed to him for a period of twenty one years and entering into a contract to this effect with him on 2 April 1747. Such a contract was in itself void.

(6) That a sum of £200 out of the tolls be spent annually on the county Cork portion of the road until it was sufficiently repaired.

(7) That the trustees were in breach of their own order of 29 June 1741 and the meaning of the enabling act in electing fifteen residents of county Tipperary to replace those county Cork resident trustees who had died since the passing of the original act.<sup>119</sup>

It was obvious that the toll payers on the Cork portion of the road were being swindled and it is difficult to see how the perpetrators hoped to get away with it and indeed how they got away with it for so long. It must be stated that in the traffic sense there was a certain amount of logic in using the bulk of the available money on the portion of the road carrying the greatest number of vehicles, as the section of road between Clonmel and the junction of the Cork-Kilworth mountain road formed part of the main Dublin-Cork route. However the swindlers were dealing with a powerful man in Lord Doneraile who earlier had been elected Grand Master of the Freemasons in Ireland<sup>120</sup>. An amending act to remedy the position on the Clonmel-Doneraile turnpike road was passed in 1755 (29 Geo.II, c.20) and the terms and implications of this act will be dealt with in Chapter 3.1

Perhaps the worst case of wrongdoing occurred on the Kilkenny to Clonmel turnpike road (No. 7 in Table 2.1). This is shown by the necessity to pass an act (25 Geo.II, c 21) in 1751 to remedy the position. The title of this act speaks for itself:

An act for the more effectual repairing and amending of the said road from the city of Kilkenny to the town of Clonmel and discharging the said road from all incumbrances by fraud affecting the same; and for the relief of Richard Gore esq. and Anne his wife, administratrix of William Gore esq. deceased and John Wallas (Henry Wallas deceased.).

It is seen from above examples that there was widespread fraud going on in the case of a number of turnpike roads. It is of course possible that some smaller amount of wrong-doing occurred in other ones. There were so many ways in which toll receipts could be 'short': gatekeepers could allow friends through the gate without charge or with inadequate charge; gatekeepers could withhold for their own use some of the tolls received; collectors of the tolls from the gatekeepers could act similarly; larger amounts of money could be embezzled by the higher officials, for example treasurers, as seen above and surveyors could allow contractors to carry out inferior work. Even though there was a good deal of wrongdoing going on at this time there was on the other hand a natural tendency among investors who did not get the interest on



their debentures on time to presume that someone must have embezzled it. It probably never occurred to them that the expected profit failed to materialise. There must also have been a good deal of wrong-doing which went on undetected. The failure of the whole turnpike system to live up to the hopes and expectations of the parliament and investors resulted in a certain amount of disillusionment with the turnpike roads and made money more difficult to borrow later.

## **2.9 *Alternative transportation links***

While the system of turnpike roads was being developed from 1729 onwards, two other transport systems were being developed simultaneously. The first of these was the non-turnpike road network and the other was the canal and river-navigation system. Both of these systems were in competition with the turnpike roads though in practice they were in many cases complementary to each other and only rarely did canals run in parallel to turnpike roads. Non-turnpike roads and canals, including river-navigations will be looked at separately.

### ***Non-turnpike roads***

This category includes all main roads or highways not converted to turnpikes and all by-roads or feeder roads in the care of the grand juries of the various counties. It will be recalled from Chapter 1.3 that in 1727 a major act (1 Geo.II, c.13) was passed concerning roads, which provided, inter alia, that all roads be gravelled to a width of twelve feet and that all new roads were to have an overall width between fences of at least thirty feet. This act tightened up much of the previous road legislation. In addition to the appointment of paid surveyors it empowered grand juries to appoint overseers, where any parish failed to do so. The 1727 act also provided that the treasurer of each county was to be supplied with details of all presentments made at the assizes and he was to arrange to ensure that the appropriate levy was collected from those liable to pay. When the overseer attested on oath that the work, for which the presentment was made, had been completed, the appropriate payment was made. A good example of the type of work done in the 1730s under the presentment system which also shows the control exercised by the extensive land-owning class is given in the autobiography of Pole Cosby, of Stradbally, Queen's County (now county Laois):

Lent Assizes 1733 the Grand Jury gave me £20 to build a bridge at Mr. Frank Cosby's house, which was full sufficient to build a convenient bridge for the use of the traveller, but it being near my seat I had a mind to have it somewhat handsome, & in June 1734 I began it & made it passable before winter & levelled the hill (a great piece of work) & afterwards the finishing of the whole bridge levelling & all stood me (beside the £20 the county gave me) in £41. 3. so the whole cost £61. 3. the same Lent Assizes the Grand Jury gave me £15 to widen the 2 bridges of Stradbally which were but 9.5 [9 feet - 6 inches] wide in the clear & Little or no Battlemts so yet they were exceeding dangerous & beside the two bridges were not strait to one another and mighty sharp pinches to crown of each bridge, so that it was mighty terrible to be either in a wheel carriage or horse back and also the



bridges wall all askew to the town, & so made the bridge answer the street as well as it could, I added to the south west side & at the south east end a great breadth & brought it in a point to the N. W. end & and so on the N. E. side at the N. W. end I added the same breadth as I did on the other side at the other end, so by this means I brought it much than it otherwise wo'd be to the town with the £15 the county gave me and £3. 10 of my own I almost finished the S. E. side summer 1734, & so Lent Assizes 1735 the Grand Jury gave me £25 more to finish the other side & to widen the Little Bridge over the mill course, & with a £10 more of my own I compleatly finished the Bridge & built 4 pillars one on each side at each end, & so the whole expence of the town Bridges was £53. 10 sterling.<sup>121</sup>

A new act (13 Geo.II, c.10) was passed in 1739 to build new roads from 'market town to market town.' Under this act grand juries were given power to acquire any land needed for new roads, other than in built-up areas. Compensation was payable for acquired land but this was decided by the grand juries themselves.. Some landowners and mainly those in the north of Ireland were reluctant to part with their lands for this purpose. However land acquisition did not generally hold up progress as some of the smaller landowners were keen to hand over their lands for roads in order to secure road building contracts as a supplementary source of income. As evidence of this the following extract from J. H. Andrews is appropriate:

In fact there was little objection to finding room for new roads in a country where land was owned in large blocks and used extensively rather than intensively, and indeed in the last analysis it was the Irish tradition of low yielding husbandry that made many middle-class tenants and small gentry so assiduous in their efforts to secure road contracts as a supplementary source of income: as one Co. Limerick landowner succinctly expressed it, 'roads are discovered to yield a more profitable crop than farming'.<sup>122</sup>

The progress made with roads generally even prior to 1740, is shown by the following extract from 'Economy and society in south Ulster in the eighteenth century' by W. H. Crawford:

By 1740, for example, Fermanagh with a population of only about five thousand families, had constructed most of the main roads in that county linking Enniskillen with Sligo and Connaught by way of Florencecourt, with Ballyshannon both by Belcoo and by Belleek, with Belturbet, with Newtownbutler, with Clogher and with Omagh.<sup>123</sup>

Crawford noted that the roads were well maintained at this time and cited the Rev. William Henry, who claimed in 1739 that those working on the 'statute labour' system were:



.....so accustomed now to these public works that they look on it as part of their yearly labour and in the months of June and July fall as regularly and cheerfully to the breaking of stones and gravelling of roads as in March to the plough and the harrow.<sup>124</sup>

As regards the new roads made in accordance with the 1739 act, it soon became apparent that in some cases these roads were being built by the grand juries to suit either the large landowners among their members or to suit friends who wished to have 'private avenues' built at public expense. J. H. Andrews<sup>125</sup> gives examples of some of these cases. These roads were also built by some of the extensive landowners out of private funds. Charles Smith writing in 1756 described the position in county Kerry:

Within a few years past they [the landowners] have been at great pains and expense to carry on several very excellent roads throughout the county, without any public tax or assistance, but by a voluntary subscription among themselves; except where these roads lead to the chief cities of the kingdom, which are much smaller works, than those private highways they have cause to be made through other parts of the county.<sup>126</sup>

An idea of the number of new roads of all kinds, which were constructed at this time, may be gauged from Smith's description of the new roads leading in to Killarney:

There are already four great new roads finished to this town; one from the city of Cork, which leads to that city [turnpike]; a second from Castle-Island which proceeds towards Limerick; the third is that to the river of Kenmair before mentioned; and a fourth is lately made to Castlemain, from which place, new roads have been carried to Tralee and Dingle.<sup>127</sup>

There were however a number of roads built or repaired by the grand juries which directly benefited only the big landowners and this matter of private roads built at public expense attracted the attention of the newspapers as is shown by the following extract from the *Freeman's Journal* of October 1763:

As to the private highways, as far as gentlemen have found themselves concerned, in those leading to, or immediately about their dwellings, they are often too well repaired and supported at the public expence: while those more remote, or out of the way of gentlemen's houses, rarely, if ever, get any share of the public money.<sup>128</sup>

There was generally after the 1739 act a desire for road building brought about by the early success of the turnpike roads. While the famine and economic difficulties slowed the work



for a time in the early 1740s, the momentum gradually built up. The early improvement of the running surfaces and the improvements in alignments brought about by the expenditure of the borrowed money in the first ten years of the turnpikes showed what could be achieved to reduce transport costs, to open up untapped areas and to improve communications. It was also seen by many big landowners that there was no need to apply for turnpike status for each road as they could either get the grand juries to build the roads at the local taxpayers expense or in the case where the landowner required the road at short notice, he may as well pay for its construction himself instead of investing in turnpike debentures. An example of this desire for road building and the difficulties involved in carrying out the works, is shown from the following letters referring to roads in county Donegal in 1750:

'21 Sept. 1750, Philip, Bishop of Raphoe, Raphoe, county Donegal to the Earl of Abercorn:

Mr. McClintock, I hope, has by this post acquainted your Lordship with the intention of the country gentlemen to alter the road from this town to Lifford, if they shall be so happy as to obtain your Lordship's consent to carry it through part of your lands to Ballindrait which will enable them to, shorten it between two and three miles. I need not inform your Lordship that 'tis necessary to cast a new road up the year before they are finished in order to settle them in such a manner that they shall be properly prepared for stoning and gravelling the year after. If your Lordship shall think proper to grant them this liberty, I could wish you would signify your consent as soon as possible because the low ground cannot be properly cast up in the winter season which is absolutely necessary previous to finishing it next summer to which your Lordship's consent is only wanting.<sup>129</sup>

It should be noted that the policy of 'casting up' the road one year before stoning or gravelling mentioned in the above letter was in compliance with the Dublin Society's recommendations made in 1737 (See page 76).

22 Sept. 1750, John McClintock, Strabane, to Earl of Abercorn:

Your Lordship may remember that when you were last at Baronscourt there was a new road talked of to be carried from Raphoe to Strabane through Ballindrait; at the last assizes of the County of Donegal the Bishop of Raphoe proposed it to the Grand Jury, but Mr. Sinclair of Holly Hill would not suffer it to go through his estate, if he was not paid the value of his land taken up by the road, but as the value of the land was not ascertained or the other lands particularly mentioned through which the road should go there was no presentment made, and I had no further account of it 'til Thursday last when John Houston of Drumnabraty and Samuel Marten of Culahymore came to acquaint me that there were men set to work to cut



the road through their farms, on which I desired they should stop them from breaking the ground 'til they had your Lordship's consent, but before their return they had cut the road through a great part of John Houston's farm and broke down several of his ditches, and they came again yesterday morning to go on with the work but the tenants got them stopped (with difficulty) as I had desired. I went yesterday to see what was done and observed the new road cut out from the old road that leads from Raphoe to Derry 'till it came through part of John Houston's farm, and so far as I could observe, the new road will neither be straight or carried on the most level ground, which I always thought the two most principal things chosen in laying out new roads, and indeed I can't judge what is the motive to carry the road after the manner it is laid out, if it is not to save some of the parks at Raphoe or to avoid as much as possible the carrying it through Mr. Sinclair's estate.<sup>130</sup>

### *Canals and River Navigations*

Water transport is as old as man himself. If there was a suitable stretch of water available between the point of origin of the goods to be transported and the intended destination and a suitable vessel or raft could be used, then no cheaper form of transport existed. However the reality was often that a suitable stretch of water did not exist where required and one had to be created. This was usually done by cutting out passageways for the boats or ships through the intervening land, which filled with water and so enabled the ship to pass through the cutting or canal, as such cuttings were called. In many cases rivers had to be provided with suitable cuttings, for example to by-pass rapids or shallow areas, in order to make them navigable. Sometimes canals had to connect bodies of water at different levels and ships had to be lifted or lowered by means of 'locks' or compartments on the canal controlled by gates. Thus in many cases while the apparent cost of transport was cheap, the true cost, taking into account the often very large capital cost, was usually much greater. Because of this, simple comparisons between road and internal water transport costs can be misleading. Statements such as that by the Frenchman Vauban who said: 'A boat of reasonable size on a good stretch of water, can convey on its own, using six men and 4 [towing] horses.....a cargo that 200 men and 400 horses would have difficulty conveying on normal roads.'<sup>131</sup> must be viewed in this light. Canals are also less flexible than roads in that, under normal conditions their routes are fixed, whereas roads can be more easily diverted to take account of changing demands.

As previously stated the 'canal age' was initiated in Ireland in 1715. Very little work except minor improvements on the rivers Liffey in county Dublin and Maigue in county Limerick was carried out after the passing of the 1715 act (2 Geo.I, c.12) because no funds were provided by this act. A revised act was passed in 1729 (3 Geo.II, c.3), which set up Commissioners of Inland Navigation for each of the four provinces and assigned them the revenues raised by duties levied on specified goods including private carriages. These assigned revenues were sufficient for a start to be made on cutting a canal in order to connect the southern shore of Lough Neagh via



Portadown, Poyntzpass and Newry to Carlingford Lough in 1731. The purpose of this canal was to give Dublin a cheap supply of coal from the Tyrone coal fields located near Coalisland, and situated about nine miles from the western shore of Lough Neagh. The city of Dublin was always short of coal which had to be imported at great expense from ports on the west coast of Britain such as Whitehaven. There appeared to be a good supply available in Ireland at Castlecomer, county Kilkenny and at the Tyrone coal-field. However the difficulty was the high cost of transport to Dublin. The aim of the Newry canal or navigation as it came to be known, together with a short length of canal from the coal mines in county Tyrone to join the river Blackwater flowing in to the western shore of Lough Neagh was to enable the coal to be carried to Dublin by water-transport only and so enable it to be sold cheaply.

The Newry navigation was built between 1731 and 1741. It was opened for traffic on 28 March 1742 and the first colliers came directly to Dublin with the Tyrone coal.<sup>132</sup> The short length of canal between the coal-mines and the river Blackwater proved to be a most difficult piece of engineering work and between delays and changing of engineers it was not until 1787 that this small canal was completed.<sup>133</sup> Meanwhile in 1769 a new ship-canal between Newry and Carlingford Lough was built which, in effect, made Newry a deep-sea port. While a good deal of Tyrone coal was taken to Dublin by means of the Newry navigation and canal, the overall scheme for cheap coal for Dublin was never a success. Apart from coal the benefits of the canal system proved worthwhile to the whole area and helped make Newry a major port for the export of linen and other local produce. The success of the Newry navigation in 1742 spurred on work on all other such projects throughout the length and breadth of the country. Survey work began on various river navigations such as the Boyne and Shannon and for what was long seen as the most needed of all transport routes, a canal between the river Shannon and Dublin.

## **2.10 Major parliamentary report on turnpike roads in 1758**

On 7 February 1758 Dr. Cooper reported to the house of commons<sup>134</sup> from the Committee appointed to inquire into the state and management of the several turnpikes in Ireland. This report contained a good deal of information on the turnpike system.

The total amount for which debentures have been issued by the trustees of the turnpike roads listed in Table 2.10, was £133,290 - 16s - 0.5d and this was exclusive of demands for making and repairing some of these same roads, for which no debentures were given.

**Table 2.10 Names and lengths of roads listed in Dr. Cooper's report for which debentures were issued**

Number in Table 2.1	Short name of turnpike road	Length of road in miles
1	Dublin-Kilcullen	27.25
2	Dublin-Navan	30.25
2 (a)	Navan -Nobber	12.50
2 (b)	Navan-Kells	9.75
3	Dublin-Dunleer	38.00



4	Dublin-Mullingar	49.50
6 (a)	Kilcullen-Carlow	23.50
6 (b)	Carlow-Kilkenny	23.50
7	Kilkenny-Clonmel	30.75
8	Cork-Kilworth	34.00
9	Naas-Maryborough	31.25
10	Newcastle-Limerick-Cork (part)	26.00
11	Kinnegad-Athlone	38.25
12	Banbridge-Belfast	24.75
13	Dundalk-Banbridge	25.50
15	Mullingar-Lanesboro'	30.50
17	Banbridge-Randalstown	32.00
19	Armagh-Newry	19.25
20	Mullingar-Longford	24.50
21	Maryborough-Toomivara	36.00
22	Kilcullen-Timahoe	25.50
24	Toomivara-Limerick	32.50
25	Belfast-Antrim & Randalstown- Ferry of Toome	22.00
26	Timahoe-Tipperary	25.50
28	Nenagh-Curranaboy bridge	50.00
30	Clonmel-Hurlingford	26.50
32	Athy-Leighlinbridge	18.00

Total mileage---- 767.00

Length of Armagh-Lisburn road---31.25

Grand total----- 798.25

Total length in Irish miles----- 627.25

It should be noted that only twenty seven of the thirty eight turnpike trusts and sub-trusts listed in Table 2.1 are included in above Table 2.10. This is because, of the thirty eight; the legislation authorising the one for the road from Blackbull to Athboy expired in 1752 and was not renewed; the Armagh to Lisburn trust appears to have been inadvertently omitted from the list, though it was included in all the reckoning and named later in the report while the remaining trusts must not have issued debentures. The report also refers to the Kilkenny-Clonmel turnpike road as extending to Tipperary, which is incorrect. The other nine trusts omitted include ones for major turnpike roads, such as Tubber-Limerick via Ennis, Antrim- Coleraine, Clonmel-Doneraile, Cork-Listowel and Castlecomer-Limerick. It should be noted that the portion of the Newcastle-Limerick-Cork road between Limerick and Cork has also been omitted. The total length of



turnpike roads existing in 1758 and not included in Table 2.10 above, is 387.75 miles. Thus the grand total length of turnpike roads in Ireland in 1758 was 1,186 miles or 932 Irish miles.

Interest on the debentures of seventeen of these turnpike trusts was at six per annum and on two others was at five and a half per cent per annum, while on the debentures of eight others the interest was at five per cent per annum. Of the seventeen roads for which the interest on the debentures was at six per cent pre annum and for which the total debt was £71,246 - 14s - 9.5d with an annual interest of £4,374 - 16 - 0.25d, the Cork-Kilworth road trust also had an extra debt of £490 - 13s - 10d with annual interest at five per cent. and a further debt of £93 with annual interest at four and a half per cent. The debt for the two roads at five and a half per cent per annum amounted to £19,920 - 4s - 0d and the annual interest amounted to £1,095 - 16s - 0d. In the case of all the remaining roads, including the extra debt on the Cork - Kilworth road, the total debt was £42,123 - 17s - 3d with a yearly interest of £2,105 - 14s - 6d. Thus the total annual interest due was £7,576 - 6 - 6.25d. The grand total owed in respect of the twenty eight turnpikes (twenty seven in Table 2.10, together with the one from Armagh to Lisburn) was £169,822 - 10s - 5d. consisting of debentures and arrears of interest unpaid as of 1 November 1757, and the total average annual toll income over the last seven years was £11,197 - 1s - 9.5d. The annual allowance for repairs averaged over the previous seven years was £3,742 - 6s - 8d and the total for wages and salaries, calculated in the same manner was £902 - 16s - 3d. Thus the nett annual income from these roads was £6,551 - 15s - 9.5d.

The committee considered that the total cost of making the roads should not have exceeded £88,629 - 8s - 6d. This figure is based on an average cost of nine shillings per Irish perch for the complete length of 627.25 Irish miles, though there is no indication of where the figure of nine shillings came from. The cost of having all of these turnpike acts passed by parliament including the erection of gates and gate-keepers' houses should not have exceeded a figure of £10,000. Thus the committee stated that if these figures are subtracted from the total of £133,290 - 16s - 0.5d actually spent, there remained a figure of £34,661 - 7s - 6.5d which was unnecessarily spent and was the cause of the financial trouble for the turnpike road system.

The committee further resolved that in many cases 'several debentures were given to contractors for great sums of money for making part of the said roads, far exceeding the real value that ought to have been paid to such contractors for making such roads, which is a grievance that ought to be redressed.'<sup>135</sup> The committee were also of the opinion that creditors of the turnpikes who had to sell their debentures at a loss of thirty per cent as a result of the failure of the trusts to pay interest for periods of seven years ought to be compensated. This occurred in the committee's judgement because of the excessive amount of money borrowed on some of the turnpike roads and because of the mismanagement of this money.

Dr. Cooper's committee then made a series of recommendations which it was felt 'would be a means of remedying said grievances'. These were: (a) that the rate of interest on all just debts of the several turnpike trusts be reduced to five per cent per annum, (b) that the produce of the tolls of all the said turnpikes be made one aggregate fund under proper regulations, (c) that



'preference of payment of the interest to the respective creditors of the said several and respective turnpikes [be] according to the three distinct classes hereafter set forth'<sup>136</sup>:

*First Class*

Dublin to Kilcullen.

Dublin to Navan.

Navan to Kells.

Navan to Nobber.

Dublin to Dunleer.

Dublin to Mullingar.

Cork to Kilworth .

Banbridge to Belfast, from Randalstown to the Ferry of Toome.

Dundalk to Banbridge.

Belfast to Antrim.

Clonmel to Hurlingford.

Banbridge to Randalstown.

Armagh to Newry

*Second Class*

Kilkenny to Clonmel.

Carlow to Kilkenny.

Kilcullen to Timahoe.

Nenagh to Curraghboy bridge.

Athy to Leighlinbridge.

Kinnegad to Athlone.

*Third Class*

Tomivarah to Limerick.

Mullingar to Longford.

Naas to Maryborough.

Kilcullen to Carlow.

Newcastle to Limerick.

Maryborough to Tomivarah.

Timaho to Tipperary.

Mullingar to Lanesborough.

Armagh to Lisburne.

The committee finally resolved: 'that if a proper law was framed for the better and more effectual securing the revenues arising out of the tolls of the said several turnpike roads, for preventing frauds and abuses, in collecting of the said tolls, as aforesaid, and for repairing said roads, and for the better ascertaining the real and just debts due to the several creditors of the said



turnpike roads, [such a law] will be an effectual means of remedying the said grievances.'<sup>137</sup> This report was the first time that all the turnpike roads were viewed as components of a national road system and it was pointed out that basically the same problems beset them all. Creating an overall fund would have led to: a national supervising authority, a means of helping the most deserving trustee boards, cut down on local fraud and corruption and setting uniform standards of performance. Unfortunately no such reforms resulted from this excellent report and while some action was taken it was only more of the same and did nothing to drastically change the bad image which the turnpike boards either had already got or were getting at that time. This report came at a time when parliament actually had the financial resources to assist the turnpike trusts if they so wished. It was and indeed still is unusual to find parliaments with surplus funds. From 1753 onwards the surplus revenue was used to finance items such as canals, roads other than turnpikes and other industrial infrastructure. Unfortunately this money was not always spent wisely. The saddest outcome was the failure to pay off the debt due on the turnpike system in order that the tolls could be used solely for maintenance and minor improvements rather than help pay the loan charges as detailed in the above 1758 report.

Such a use for the surplus revenue was suggested in a letter dated 16 April 1753 from the Primate Dr. Stone, a formidable political figure in the parliament at that time to Chief Secretary Lord Sackville:

The most popular thing would be to pay the turnpike debts. The roads all over the country are gone to ruin, the tolls are mortgaged so as to leave nothing for the repair, and the tax upon the people shall continue without any benefit to them. This affects every person in the nation. The grievance has arisen from mismanagement, but it is a grievance, and will one day or other force itself upon the Legislature, for it is got beyond the reach of any other remedy, and the money must one day or another be raised upon the country for that purpose. If the Government were to take the lead, it would be a very extraordinary mark of the King's attention to the internal affairs of this country. I am sensible that turnpike debts are not to be ranked among debts of public credit, but the condition of these will bring them at last under that consideration. If this thought is not wild and impracticable, I would have it examined. It is at present my own only; any farther [than] that there is a general outcry for something to be done, for the roads are almost impassable and there are no funds for repairing them. If anything of that sort could be done, I would repeal all the borrowing clauses, and make the repair only with the growing tolls. Some attention must be had about this large balance [sic] for it cannot remain unemployed.<sup>138</sup>

This letter showed remarkable foresight in that almost exactly one hundred years later on 13 June 1854, A. Hayward Q. C. reporting on the Dublin turnpike inquiry echoed the same reasoning in



justifying his recommendation that the cess or rate-payers had to take over the running of the turnpike roads and had to compensate the debenture holders, when he said:

The equitable obligation to pay off the money due on debentures and other outstanding charges of a permanent character, seems to me to be necessarily determined by and to follow in each instance, the legal and prescriptive obligation to maintain the road; because the money was raised to supply the neglect or default of the cess-payers, and because they will be the gainers on the whole by having the roads thrown back upon their hands in a highly improved condition, although with a limited amount of debt.<sup>139</sup>

Hayward also said later in the same report:

The Dublin Wide-street Commission stood in nearly the same relation to the city in which a turnpike trust stands to a barony or county. It was invested by the Legislature with powers of acting independently of the rate-payers, and it had incurred a large debt (exceeding £30,000) without their assent; yet, when the management of their streets was restored to the citizens, they were burthened with this debt.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> L. M. Cullen, *An economic history of Ireland since 1660* (London, 1972), 2nd. ed. 1987 repr. 1993, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> L. Tyerman, *The life of Rev. George Whitefield* (London, 1876), pp. 146-47.

<sup>3</sup> Anon, *Four letters with remarks and a fifth letter* (Dublin, 1739), pp. 21-22.

<sup>4</sup> Maurice Lenihan, *Limerick: Its history and antiques* (Dublin, 1866), p. 332 and n. 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, .iii, p. 612.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 613.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 616-17.

<sup>9</sup> Dobbs, *Trade and improvement of Ireland*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>10</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, iv, pp. 179, 190, 193, 195, 196.

<sup>11</sup> Albert, *Turnpike road system in England*, p. 42.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>13</sup> George Semple, *Hibernia's free trade* (Dublin, 1780), pp. 168-182.

<sup>14</sup> Samuel Madden, *Reflections and resolutions proper for the gentlemen of Ireland* (Dublin, 1738), p. 183.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>16</sup> E. MacLysaght (ed.), *The Kenmare manuscripts* (Dublin, 1942), repr. 1970, p. 185.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.* p. 201.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.* p. 208.

<sup>19</sup> W. Nolan, *Fassadinin: land, settlement and society in southeast Ireland 1600-1850* (Dublin, 1979), p. 100.

<sup>20</sup> Albert, *Turnpike road system in England*, p. 57.

<sup>21</sup> B. N. L., 20 April 1753.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Albert, *Turnpike road system in England*, p. 58. n.3.

<sup>23</sup> *Road research note 29*, 3rd. ed. H. M. S. O. (London, 1970), p. 16.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> J. F. T. Loveday (ed.), *Diary of a tour in 1732 through parts of England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland made by John Loveday of Caversham* (Edinburgh, 1890), p. 59.



- <sup>26</sup> E. O'Leary, 'Turnpike roads of Kildare, Queens county, etc. in the eighteenth century' in *Kildare Arch. Soc. Jn.*, vii (1912-14), pp. 118.
- <sup>27</sup> Journal of Navan turnpike road, 1730-34 (N. L. I., Marquis of Headfort papers [Taylor estate], Ms 25,448).
- <sup>28</sup> *ibid.* pp. 1-2.
- <sup>29</sup> *ibid.* p. 3.
- <sup>30</sup> *ibid.* pp. 6-11.
- <sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 60 and 61.
- <sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. 82.
- <sup>33</sup> *ibid.* p. 88.
- <sup>34</sup> *ibid.* p. 100.
- <sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, p. 94.
- <sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p. 15.
- <sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p. 17.
- <sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p. 100.
- <sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, p. 242.
- <sup>40</sup> *ibid.* p. 193.
- <sup>41</sup> J. F. T. Loveday (ed.), *Diary of a tour in 1732*, p. 27.
- <sup>42</sup> N. L. I., Ms. 25,448, p. 52.
- <sup>43</sup> Minute book of Navan-Nobber turnpike road (N. L. I., Marquis of Headfort papers [Taylor estate], Ms. 25,451, p. 17).
- <sup>44</sup> 'Directions for making roads,' in *Dublin Society, Essays and Observations*, originally printed in Dublin, repr. (London, 1740), xxi (24 May 1737), pp. 86-89 and xii (31 May 1737), pp. 89-93.
- <sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, p. 86.
- <sup>46</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, p. 88.
- <sup>48</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 89-90.
- <sup>50</sup> Sir Charles Coote Bt., *Statistical survey of county Armagh* (Dublin, 1804), pp. 258-59.
- <sup>51</sup> Edward MacLysaght (ed.), 'Journal of George Edward Pakenham 1737-39', (Longford papers), *Anal. Hib.* 15 November 1944, p. 120.
- <sup>52</sup> E. O'Leary, 'Turnpike roads of Kildare, Queen's County, etc.', pp. 118-124.
- <sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p. 119.
- <sup>54</sup> Minute book of Banbridge-Belfast turnpike road, (P. R. O. N. I., D.671/03/1).
- <sup>55</sup> Angelique Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland - The correspondence of Mary Delany, 1731-68* (Belfast, 1991), p. 130.
- <sup>56</sup> O'Keefe & Simington, *Irish stone bridges*, p. 217.
- <sup>57</sup> William R. Chetwood (ed.) *A tour through Ireland* (Dublin, 1746), p. 127.
- <sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, p. 128.
- <sup>59</sup> *ibid.* p. 131.
- <sup>60</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>61</sup> *ibid.* p. 138.
- <sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p. 168.
- <sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, p. 99.
- <sup>64</sup> Quoted by John Stevenson in *Two centuries of life in county Down* (Belfast, 1920), p. 264.
- <sup>65</sup> James Kelly (ed.) *The letters of Lord Chief Baron Edward Willes 1757-62* (Aberystwyth, 1990), p. 78.
- <sup>66</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, iv, p.496, 27 November 1745.
- <sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, v, p.117.
- <sup>68</sup> *Dublin Daily Advertiser*, 6 June 1736/7.
- <sup>69</sup> *Dublin Evening Post*, 15-19 February 1736/7.
- <sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, 5-9 April 1737.
- <sup>71</sup> Personal accounts book of Richard Edgeworth, 1737 (N. L. I., Ms. 1,515, p. 99).
- <sup>72</sup> Personal accounts book of Richard Edgeworth, 1750 (N. L. I., Ms. 1,519, p. 4).
- <sup>73</sup> Personal accounts book of Richard Edgeworth, 1755 (N. L. I., Ms. 1,522, p. 11).
- <sup>74</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>75</sup> Account book (N. L. I., Marquis of Headfort papers [Taylor estate], Ms. 25,386, p. 43).
- <sup>76</sup> Minute book of Navan-Kells turnpike road (N. L. I., Marquis of Headfort papers [Taylor estate], Ms. 25,450, pp. 28-68).



- <sup>77</sup> Cullen, *Econ. hist. Ire. since 1660*, 2nd ed., 1987, paperback repr. 1993, p. 70.
- <sup>78</sup> George O'Brien, *The economic history of Ireland in the eighteenth century* (Dublin & London, 1918), p. 105..
- <sup>79</sup> Minute book of Navan-Kells turnpike road (N. L. I., Marquis of Headfort papers [Taylor estate], Ms. 25,450, inset.
- <sup>80</sup> Maurice Lenihan, *Limerick: its history and antiques* (Dublin, 1866).
- <sup>81</sup> *ibid.* p. 335.
- <sup>82</sup> *ibid.* n. 3.
- <sup>83</sup> G. B Thompson, *Primitive land transport of Ulster* (Transport Handbook, No. 2), (Belfast, 1958), unpaginated.
- <sup>84</sup> Browne, *The benefits which arise to a trading people*, p. 4.
- <sup>85</sup> Madden, *Reflections and resolutions*, p. 181.
- <sup>86</sup> A Gailey, 'The Ballyhagan inventories, 1716-1740' in *Folk Life*, xv (1977), p. 55.
- <sup>87</sup> G. B. Thompson, *Primitive land transport of Ulster* (Transport Handbook, No. 2), Belfast, 1958), unpaginated.
- <sup>88</sup> *Sixth report from select committee on Holyhead roads (Irish roads)*, mins. of evid., p.11, H. C.1822 vi, 251.
- <sup>89</sup> De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's walk through Ireland 1796-7*, John Stevenson, translator (Belfast and Dublin, 1917), p. 14.
- <sup>90</sup> Harold B. Handcock and Norman B. Wilkinson, 'An American manufacturer in Ireland, 1796' in *J. R. S. A. I.*, xcii. 1962, p. 126.
- <sup>91</sup> J. Geraint Jenkins, 'Two-wheeled carts' in *Gwerin*, ii, 1958-59, pp. 162-175.
- <sup>92</sup> Edward Wakefield, *An account of Ireland statistical and political* (London, 1812), i, p. 677.
- <sup>93</sup> Chetwood (ed.) *A tour through Ire.*, p. 217.
- <sup>94</sup> Charles Fitzgerald, *The earls of Kildare and their ancestors (addenda)*, (Dublin, 1862), p. 371.
- <sup>95</sup> Mainchin Seoighe, *The story of Kilmallock (Kilmallock, 1987)*, p. 121.
- <sup>96</sup> Richard Pococke's Irish tours, 19 July 1752 (T. C. D., Ms. 887).
- <sup>97</sup> Chetwood (ed.) *A tour through Ire.*, p. 203-204.
- <sup>98</sup> William Colles, 2 Nov. 1737 (Nat. Arch., Colles correspondence, P R I/86, p. 7).
- <sup>99</sup> *ibid.* 14 Oct. 1747, p. 19.
- <sup>100</sup> Anon, *Remarks on the law and present state of the corn measures and weights in Ireland* (Dublin, 1841), p. 4.
- <sup>101</sup> Kelly (ed.), *Letters of Lord Willes*, p. 79.
- <sup>102</sup> Rene Mazandiere to King, 10 Feb. 1665 (*Cal. S. P. Ire., 1663-65*, p. 536).
- <sup>103</sup> John Dunton, *The Dublin Scuffle*(London, 1699), p. 419.
- <sup>104</sup> E P. Shirley (ed.), 'Extracts from the journal of Thomas Dineley' in *J. R. S. A. I.*, IV, xliii (1913), p. 276.
- <sup>105</sup> Joseph McMinn, *Jonathan's travels* (Belfast/New York, 1994), p. 60.
- <sup>106</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>107</sup> Samuel Watson (compiler), *The gentleman's and citizen's almanack* (Dublin, 1733-1810). This almanack was replaced from 1811 by *The treble almanack*.
- <sup>108</sup> Chetwood (ed.) *A tour through Ire.*, p. 142.
- <sup>109</sup> Fulton, 'Roads of county Down,' p. 304.
- <sup>110</sup> Lenihan, *Limerick*, p. 335, n.3.
- <sup>111</sup> David Broderick, *An early toll-road; the Dublin-Dunleer turnpike, 1731-1855* (Dublin, 1996), p. 35.
- <sup>112</sup> Lenihan, *Limerick*, p. 347.
- <sup>113</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, vi, appen. ccxci-v.
- <sup>114</sup> *ibid.*, appen.. ccxci.
- <sup>115</sup> N. L. I, Weldon papers, File 57L.(as yet uncatalogued)
- <sup>116</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, vi, p.564.
- <sup>117</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, iv, p.540.
- <sup>118</sup> *ibid.*, p.389.
- <sup>119</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, v, p. 129.
- <sup>120</sup> *Reilly's Dublin Newsletter*, 13-17 May 1740.
- <sup>121</sup> Pole Cosby, 'Autobiography of Pole Cosby of Stradbally, Queen's County, 1703 - 1737 (?)' *Kildare Arch. Soc. Jn.*, v (1906 - 1908), p.311.
- <sup>122</sup> J. H Andrews, 'Road planning in Ireland before the railway age' in *Ir. Geography*, v (1964-68), p. 21.



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- <sup>123</sup> W. H. Crawford, 'Economy and society in south Ulster in the eighteenth century', *Clogher Rec.*, viii, 3, 1975, p. 251.
- <sup>124</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>125</sup> Andrews, 'Road planning in Ireland,' pp. 21-22.
- <sup>126</sup> Charles Smith, *The ancient and present state of the county of Kerry* (Dublin, 1756), p. 65.
- <sup>127</sup> *ibid.*, p. 146.
- <sup>128</sup> *F. J.*, 1-4 October 1763.
- <sup>129</sup> W. H. Crawford, 'The evolution of the urban network' in *Donegal history and society*, W. Nolan, L. Ronayne, M. Dunlevy (eds.), (Dublin, 1995), pp. 401-2.
- <sup>130</sup> *ibid.*, p. 402.
- <sup>131</sup> Fernand Braudel, *'The identity of France,'* [English transl. by S. Reynolds]. 2 vols., ii (hardback, (Great Britain, 1990)], p. 478.
- <sup>132</sup> McCutcheon, *Industrial archaeology*, p. 54.
- <sup>133</sup> *ibid.*, p. 60.
- <sup>134</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, vi, p.78.- 80.
- <sup>135</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, vi, p. 79.
- <sup>136</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>137</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>138</sup> *Stopford – Sackville Manuscripts*, H. M. C.(London, 1904), p.194-5.
- <sup>139</sup> *Report of the commission to inquire into the Dublin turnpike roads*, p. 12, H. C. 1854-55 (01), xix.
- <sup>140</sup> *ibid.*, p. 13-14.



## CHAPTER 3 PERIOD OF DEVELOPMENT AND RE-ORGANISATION FROM 1759 TO 1788

From 1758 up to 1788, the turnpike system, though experiencing much financial hardship and criticism, managed to cope with both the shortage of funds and criticism by adapting itself to the changing circumstances.. It was a period in which the six-day labour system was ended; the 'corn bounties' were introduced and operated; the existing turnpike roads and trusts were mapped and reorganised and new ones created.

### **3.1 Abolition of six-day labour system and associated disturbances**

The abolition of the six-day or statute labour system was 'flagged' well in advance because in the turnpike acts passed immediately prior to 1759, no provision was made for the use of it. As can be seen from Table 2.4 the last turnpike act to make provision for its use was (25 Geo.II, c.17) in 1751 in respect of the road from Clonmel to Hurlingford. Great credit was due to the Irish parliament for being the first to abandon such an inequitable and unpopular system. The parish six-day labour system continued in England until 1835, while in France the dreaded '*corvee royale*' was abolished in February 1776 but brought back in August of the same year and was eventually ended only by the revolution in 1789<sup>1</sup>. The manner of the abolition in Ireland was however badly mishandled in that it was done in two parts by separate acts over a period of six years. The first of these acts was passed in 1759 (33 Geo.II, c.8). Section 11 of this act exempted the ordinary labourers from the six-day labour requirement on the grounds that regulations requiring such compulsory unpaid work 'are generally considered to be so burthensome to the poor, and for that reason have not in many places been put in execution.' While such work was indeed burdensome to the poor, this act placed an even greater burden on the tenant farmers and cottiers who now had to pay an increased local cess to the grand juries as well as perform the required unpaid work themselves. A big change had taken place since 1739, when a county Fermanagh rector named W. Henry, wrote of the attitude of the people of the western portion of that county suggesting enthusiasm for their work on the roads (See page 104). It is regrettable that no account of what those largely illiterate road labourers themselves thought of the statute or six-day labour system has survived. It is felt that throughout most of the country and in the southern part in particular, they were never quite so cheerful about it. W. Greig, writing in 1818 of how statute labour functioned in Ireland, observed:

There was no trick, evasion or idleness, deemed too mean to avoid working on the roads; sometimes the worst horses were sent, at others, a broken car, or a boy, or an



old man past labour, to fill; they were sometimes sent an hour or two late in the morning, or left off much sooner than the proper time, unless the overseers or directors watched the whole day; for a long time the former were compelled to superintend without any remuneration, and the wages, afterward allowed to the latter, were not sufficient to excite exertion, when avoidable.<sup>2</sup>

The situation was no different in England as the following excerpt from the minute book of an English parish surveyor in Shrewsbury in 1788 shows:

I have found by ten years' service in the office of a surveyor that five hired labourers will do as much work as ten or twelve who come out upon the statute. They make a holiday of it, lounge about, and trifle away their time. As they are in no danger of being turned out of their work, they stand in no awe of the surveyor. It is a common saying amongst us that if a drop of sweat should happen to fall from any of them it would infallibly produce a quagmire. In short, statute work will never mend the roads effectually.<sup>3</sup>

The increased taxes on the tenants and cottiers in order to pay hired labourers to do the road works made a considerable difference to those who had to find the extra money and it made them question whether all the road works were necessary and whether they were being carried out efficiently. In 'A petition on behalf of the poor inhabitants of the barony of Gowran in particular and of the other baronies of the county of Kilkenny in general, humbly addressed to the lord justices of assize for the Leinster circuit,' dated 22 July 1761, the petitioners sought relief from the 'grievous and insupportable taxes laid on for unimportant roads'. The petitioners went on to question the road policies of the grand jury by advancing a number of rhetorical queries among which, were the following:

Whether some roads, in particular the great ones leading from the collieries, should not still be a county tax; whether judgment is not as necessary as honesty in those who lay out the public money; whether one road in ten is made on the original place of turnpike or gravel roads; whether it would not be better to inspect roads to see they were properly made before the money was paid over for them; whether the trade of road-making doth not, modestly speaking, promote indirect perjury more than any other in the country whatever; whether it be really for the benefit of the public to lay out so much money on roads that seldom last longer than two years and whether it would not be advisable to make roads by degrees and by moderate presentments for the sake of thousands of poor people who receive little or no benefit by, in proportion to what they pay for them.<sup>4</sup>



It must be stated that at this time and indeed 'for at least fifty years before the 1770s .....the tendency was for the graziers of Ireland to encroach upon arable land.'<sup>5</sup> This was done for a variety of reasons but mainly because it was generally more profitable, provided that there were suitable markets available for cattle and provisions. The burden on the tenant farmers and cottiers was further increased by the fact that 'in 1758 the British market was made available to Irish cattle exporters'<sup>6</sup> and 'in response to these changes in the market, landlords increasingly let their lands to graziers who cleared them of small tenants and turned the land over to pasture.'<sup>7</sup> This change to pasture resulted in 'enclosing lands previously understood to be commons'<sup>8</sup> including the clearing of roadside patches or strips of land. The importance of these roadside strips is best set out by J. Bush, a visitor writing in 1764:

There are many little commons, or vacant spots of ground, adjacent to the road, upon which the inhabitants of the cabbins by the highwyside have been used, from time immemorial, to rare, as they express it, a pig or a goose, which they have bought very young, the sale of which has helped to furnish them with a few necessaries. Many of these have been taken into fields or enclosures on the road side by the landlords, who have farmed or purchased them, or the lords of the manor. From an impartial view of their situation, I could not from my soul, blame these unhappy delinquents. They are attacked and reduced on all sides, so hardly, as to have barely their potatoes left them to subsist on.<sup>9</sup>

The reference in the latter part of the quotation is to the 'Whiteboy' or 'Leveller' troubles which began in the spring of 1761. These troubles which occurred mainly in the southern part of Ireland, coincided with other troubles in the northern parts of the country. Both troubles resulted from a combination of the effects of the roads act of 1759 (33 Geo.II, c.8) and the land enclosures with the difficulties stemming from the roads act predominating in the northern parts of Ireland and those arising from the land enclosures predominating in the southern counties. The 'Whiteboys' were a secret society, which seems to have first been formed in county Tipperary but initially spread along the line of the turnpike road from Clonmel towards Cork via Clogheen, Ballyporeen, Kilworth and Rathcormack and towards Doneraile, and later into counties Limerick and Kilkenny. The Whiteboys secretly tore down newly erected fences and issued threats against the landlords involved. In the above extract, Bush implied that the Whiteboys were only the poor roadside cabin dwellers but there is evidence that others such as tenant farmers were also involved as the following newspaper extract suggests:

We hear from Clonmel that 14 Levellers were carried to the gaol of the town. Among this number is one named Hyland who followed the woollen business in an extensive manner near Ballyporeen and is a man worth several hundred pounds. Likewise one Sheehy, a farmer of considerable property.<sup>10</sup>

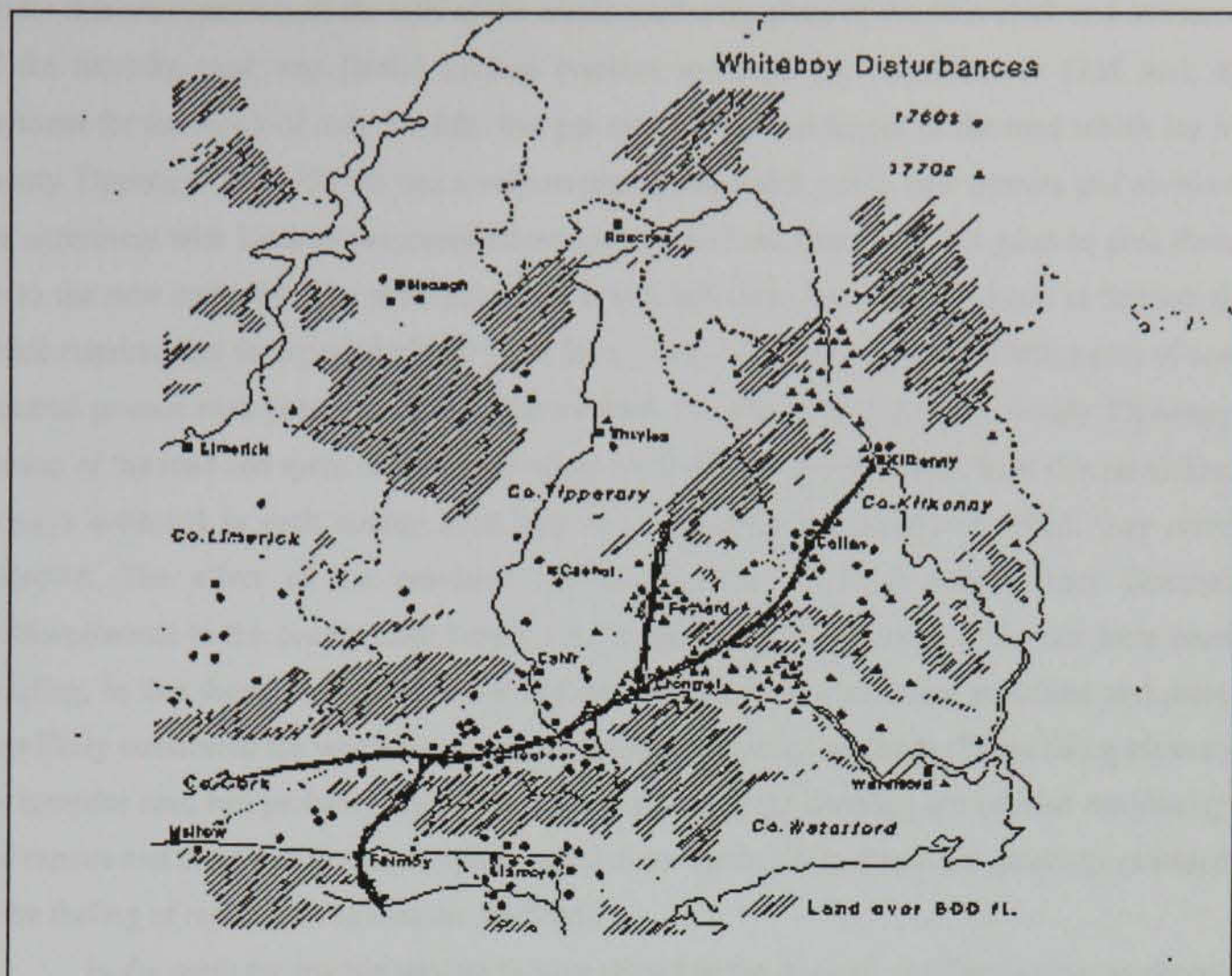


The involvement of the tenant farmers shows that the 1759 roads act was also one of the most likely triggering factors of the outbreak of Whiteboy activity, as under this act these tenant farmers had to both provide carts free for roadworks as under the statute labour system and pay extra county cess to provide replacements for the labourers. It is appreciated that the Whiteboy activity resulted from many grievances other than roads and land enclosures. These grievances included tithes, religious persecution, electoral disputes and above all poverty. However it is remarkable that many of the incidents resulting from this activity took place in areas where turnpike roads had been built including a new one in 1751 from Clonmel to Urlingford (25 Geo.II, c.17). Speaking of this connection, Thomas P. Power wrote in ' *Land, politics and society in eighteenth-century Tipperary* ':

The construction of these roads is an index of the growing commercialization of the county. However they could be a source of grievance on two counts. First, leases of land along the proposed routes were overridden, tenancy arrangements disturbed and, in consequence, tenants' holdings reduced. Secondly, the toll-houses and gates erected at various points along the turnpikes for the collection of tolls on produce and animals, represented an additional imposition. Such toll-houses or gates were built at Urlingford, Longford Pass, Nine-mile-house, Ballypatrick, Twomilebridge, Marlfield, Clogheen, Knockboy and elsewhere. These became the focus of attack by agrarian groups, on occasion making them important in a location sense. Also they often acted as a means whereby unrest was disseminated to wider areas. This was the case in the Whiteboy movement of 1760-6, when the outrages spread from Tipperary to Cork via the new Clogheen - Ballyporeen - Mitchelstown road.<sup>11</sup>

It is difficult to prove whether the reasons given by Power were the correct reasons for the association between the outrages and the turnpike roads but there is no doubt whatever about the strong connections between the turnpike roads and the outrages. On a map from an essay<sup>12</sup> by Maurice J. Bric in ' *Tipperary : history and society* ' showing the location of Whiteboy disturbances in county Tipperary and in parts of adjoining counties for the period from 1760 to 1780, the lines of the turnpike roads from Kilkenny to Clonmel, from Clonmel to Doneraile, from Clonmel to Urlingford and from Ballyporeen to Fermoy have been drawn (See Map 1).





**Map 1 The location of Whiteboy disturbances from 1760 - 80 in county Tipperary and parts of adjoining counties in relation to the turnpike roads**

{From Maurice J. Bric, 'The Whiteboy movement in Tipperary' in *Tipperary: history and society*, W. Nolan (ed.), (Dublin, 1985), p. 164. fig. 9. 1.-.Heavy black lines denoting turnpike roads super-imposed by thesis writer}.

Map 1 shows very clearly the strong association between the disturbances and the turnpike roads. The connection with the portion of the Cork-Kilworth road between Rathcormack and Ballyporeen and the early spread of the Whiteboy movement is also shown by arrests made early in 1761 as reported in the press of 13 April 1762:

...to the county gaol, Henry Size and Nicholas McGrath, who were apprehended at Kilworth..... charged and suspected of aiding and assisting of the clan called the white boys.....same evening (four named individuals) apprehended at Rathcormack.<sup>13</sup>

The reasons given by Power for the association between the early Whiteboy disturbances and the turnpike roads do not of course indicate why the disturbances seem to have originally concentrated in the Clogheen-Clonmel area. The self same reasons applied all over Ireland wherever turnpike roads were built, as for example, Naas, Navan or Mullingar, yet in none of these areas did the disturbances originate. Because of this, there must have been another triggering mechanism connected with the Clogheen-Clonmel portion of the turnpike and indeed such a mechanism existed. It will be recalled from page 102 in Chapter 2.8 that an act (29 Geo.II, c.20) was passed in 1755 to remedy an unlawful arrangement on the Clonmel-Doneraile road.



Under this arrangement, all the tolls of the whole road were given to the then clerk and treasurer of the turnpike trust, one Daniel Linihan (various spellings e.g. Linnihane in 1755 act), in payment for the repair of only the fifty five per cent of the total length of the road which lay in county Tipperary. The 1755 act was a very sweeping one which put in new trustees and revoked the agreement with Linihan's representatives and required the farmers of the gates to give them up to the new authority. The most punishing action however, was that contained in Section 6, which required that for a period of four years from 1 May 1756 up to 30 April 1760, a sum of one hundred pounds each year was to be deducted from the tolls collected in the county Tipperary portion of the road and spent on the repair of the Cork portion and that apart from this provision, moneys collected in each county were only to be spent in the county in which they were collected. The effect of the provisions of this act on the local people from Clonmel southwestwards to the county Cork border via Clogheen right up to May 1760 must have been puzzling, in that these local people were unaware of why they were being penalised and more than likely considered the whole exercise a further imposition by landlords. Those living close to the turnpike road had probably built up small businesses in the carrying out of road resurfacing and repairs and these people had no option but to close down, while dismissed gatekeepers added to the feeling of resentment against the landlords.

In the north the trouble appears to have started in the Armagh and Down areas at almost the same time. Here the action was taken directly against the turnpike roads. This action is best described in the proclamation issued from Dublin castle on 30 March 1762 by the Lord Lieutenant:

Whereas we have received information from the trustees appointed by act of parliament for repairing the turnpike road from Banbridge in the county of Down to Belfast in the county of Antrim, and from other persons, that a riotous and tumultuous mob, most of whom are yet unknown and undiscovered, have at different times, violently pulled down five out of seven gates erected on the said road for collecting the toll on said road, and have had the insolence to threaten to take the lives, and to burn the houses of the gatekeepers, or of any person who should discover them, or to stop any passengers refusing to pay the tolls on the said road, by means whereof, the tolls now collected are not sufficient to pay the gatekeeper's salaries, much less to discharge a large debt contracted for the repair of the said road.

And whereas we have also received further information that on the twenty third day of March instant, the gate commonly called Carruther's gate, on the said road which had been lately erected, was pulled down and carried away by several persons unknown, after several shots had been fired, and the gate commonly called the Backnamullagh gate, hath been defended by persons alert and watching to prevent the threats of such riotous persons being put into execution.<sup>14</sup>



The proclamation went on to offer a reward of twenty pounds sterling for the apprehension and conviction of the wrongdoers and offered pardons to participants who informed on their accomplices. In the case of the road from Armagh to Lisburn, a report to the house of commons on 1 February 1762 described further damage:

....that some time about the end of last summer, two of three turnpike gates, erected for taking toll on said road, were cut down and carried away in the night by riotous mobs, and, since that, the house of one of the toll-gatherers burned to the ground, for erecting a rail where the gate had stood, and requiring the usual toll from passengers in the day time.<sup>15</sup>

The attacks on the turnpike roads in the north, together with the loss of these turnpikes' free statute labour left the roads in such a bad condition that the Armagh - Lisburn road was described as 'so ruinous and out of repair as to be in winter almost impassable.'<sup>16</sup> In 1763 the county Armagh grand jury increased the 'county cess' possibly in order to give some assistance to the stricken turnpike road, though it is difficult to see how this could have been legally correct at that time. At any rate this high cess or rate caused a furore among cess payers in the county of Armagh which quickly spread into the adjoining counties to the west and south of Armagh. A movement came into existence which was known as the 'Hearts of Oak' movement and the individuals became known as 'Oakboys' The name arose from the fact that the members wore sprigs of oak in their caps while demonstrating in public. The Oakboys were bitterly opposed to public representatives who 'wasted' public money on private roads and as stated by J. Donnelly:

One standard form of oath tendered to gentlemen in counties Armagh and Tyrone included the promise that they would ' never hereafter be aiding or assisting in laying on any tax or cess for building useless bridges and making highways (the king's highways excepted ).'<sup>17</sup>

In 1765 a new act (5 Geo.III, c.14) abolished the compulsory six-day labour for all and made the procedure for obtaining money for road works easier by formalising the presentment system.. All the existing road legislation concerning the involvement of the grand juries and parishes was repealed by the act. This new measure removed some of the road grievances of the 'Hearts of Oak' movement, though like the Whiteboy movement it continued seeking to have other matters resolved. As a result of the 1765 act, those turnpike roads which were entitled to the two days statute labour from the parishes through which the turnpike roads passed, lost this assistance and this loss added to their trusts' financial worries. This 1765 act set off a new fervour and zest among land owners for road building. Lord Charlemont was one of those who spoke out against continuing to use the grand jury presentment system for private gain when he said:



Nothing is more certain, than that it is highly advantageous to every country, and particularly to one emerging out of an uncultivated state, that good roads should be made through it. But in laying out such roads, the public advantage should be invariably and exclusively pursued, so that it should be obvious to the people, that the taxes levied upon them were expended really and intrinsically to their advantage. In this case however, the gentlemen were, in many instances, undoubtedly partial and oppressive; as by their influence in the grand juries, presentments were too frequently procured, merely for the emolument and convenience of particular persons; and by no means with any advantage to the community.<sup>18</sup>

After the passing of this act and subsequent amending acts a good deal of road building was undertaken by the grand juries, but much of it involved local roads, because of the make up of the grand juries. The grand juries were mainly composed of the extensive land-owners, many of whom continued to use the newly legislated presentment system to build roads for their own purpose and political advantage, contrary to Lord Charlemont's advice.

### 3.2 *Corn bounties*

The 'corn bounty' was a subsidy or bounty paid by parliament on the inland carriage of corn from all parts of the country to Dublin. The reasons for its introduction were best explained by Arthur Young in comments on these bounties in his *Tour of Ireland 1776-1779*:

Dublin, it was asserted, from the peculiarity of its situation on the eastern extremity, without any inland navigations leading to it, was found to be, in point of consumption, more an English than an Irish city, in corn almost as much as in coals. The import of corn and flour drained the kingdom of great sums, at the same time that the supply was uncertain and precarious. It was further asserted that tillage was exceedingly neglected in Ireland, to the impoverishment of the kingdom, and the misery of the poor. That if some measure could be struck out, at once to remedy two evils, it would be of singular advantage to the community.<sup>19</sup>

The enabling act (31 Geo.II, c.3) came into operation on 1 June 1758. The rates of the bounty were as set out in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 Rates of bounty payable on inland carriage of corn from 1 June 1758**

Commodity	Rate per Irish mile
On 5 cwt. of flour	3.0d
On 5 cwt. of malt	2.5d



On 5 cwt. of wheat	1.5d
On 5 cwt. of oats	1.0d
On 5 cwt. of bere <sup>i</sup>	1.5d
On 5 cwt. of barley	1.5d

Under the initiating act, it was provided that the corn should have originated at a greater distance than ten miles from Dublin but this was reduced to five miles by an amending act of 1767 (7 Geo.III, c.12). This corn bounty had a major influence on the turnpike roads and indeed on many of the main roads by the resultant traffic increase and this will be treated separately under Traffic on page 144. A further act was passed in 1767 (7 Geo.III, c.24), which gave a bounty of 4d. per cwt. on grain brought by sea from places south of Dublin between Wicklow and the Tuskar and from places north of Dublin between Drogheda and Carrickfergus with an extra 1d. per cwt. on grain brought by sea from places further south than the Tuskar and further north than Carrickfergus. In 1777/8 a new act (17 & 18 Geo.III, c.29) was passed in order to clear up 'the uncertainty as to how far persons bringing flour and corn to Dublin, partly by canal and partly by cart were entitled to the premiums.' It was explained that:

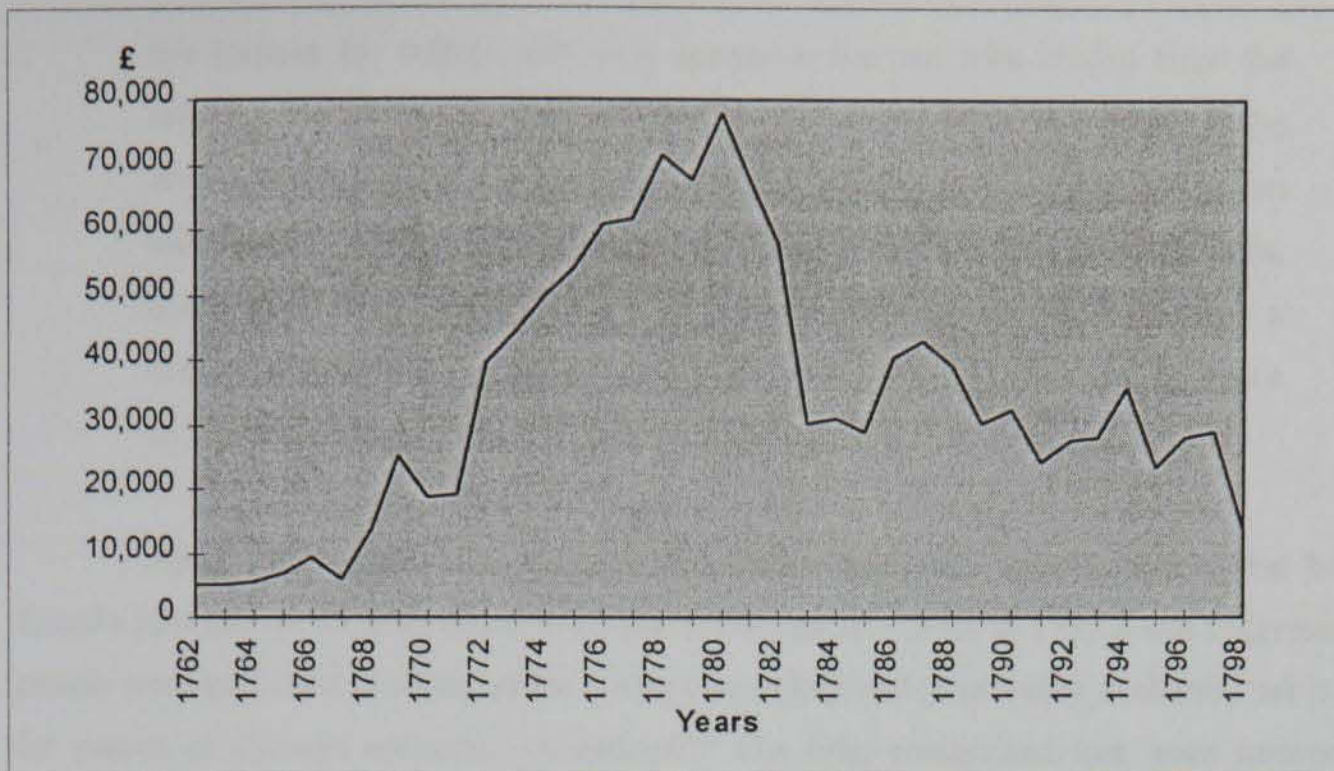
as the charge by canal was less than by road it would be unreasonable for the State to pay the full bounty for produce brought by canal: accordingly from 1 January 1779, for all corn and flour coming by inland navigation two-thirds of the premium offered for land carriage should be payable: oatmeal was made an exception; it continued to qualify for the full bounty when brought by canal.<sup>20</sup>:

Other acts made changes on the sea transport rates and extending the time for bounties but an act passed in 1779/80 (19 & 20 Geo.III, c.17) made reductions in the bounties payable on inland carriage to help finance export subsidies but did not reduce the inland navigation rates. Figure 4 shows the effects of all of above changes on the land carriage bounties and shows that these were at a maximum in 1780. The act giving the inland bounty was repealed in 1797 by another act (37 Geo. III, c.4) and so the last payments were made in 1798.

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<sup>i</sup> Bere is a variety of barley.





**Figure 4** Amounts paid in corn bounties (land carriage)

### 3.3 Early criticism

One of the first major articles in the newspapers of the time criticising turnpike and other roads appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* in October 1763. Extracts from this article show how the activities of the turnpike trustees were beginning to be viewed by even the literate members of the public and how the condition of the turnpike roads was deteriorating due to lack of finance:

There is no instance in which the complaints of the public are better founded, than those universally of the ruinous and almost impassable condition, in which the highways of this kingdom are found; nor are there any taxes so severe as those on passengers on the turnpike roads of the whole kingdom, even to the gates of our metropolis; where the traveller, at this day, cannot be said to receive value for the excessive tolls, payable on all parts of these roads, while they are universally found in a worse condition, than they have been known within the memory of man, before turnpikes were instituted.<sup>21</sup>

There is no doubt but that the condition of some of the turnpike roads had deteriorated badly at this time. This is shown from the following petition submitted to parliament in November 1761:

A petition of the several linen drapers of the counties of Antrim, Armagh and Down was presented to the house and read, humbly representing the great hardship and inconvenience they are exposed to from the wretched state of the turnpike road leading from Armagh to Lisburn, which is a line of twenty four miles in length through the heart of the linen country, at present and for some years past almost impassable. That the petitioners have several times applied to



the trustees for redress and were answered that the tolls arising from the turnpike gates were barely sufficient to pay the interest of the money due to the creditors of the said road, and in no sort adequate to the repairing of it. That on this account applying to this honourable house for relief, they as individuals, being great sufferers, and the trade in general receiving through them a considerable check, as they cannot attend fairs and markets with that diligence and punctuality which their business would require,.....<sup>22</sup>

Apart from commercial purposes, a Sunday observance fanatic thought that he had found a new use for turnpike roads. In a letter to the *Dublin Journal* in 1759 it was suggested that people were beginning to disregard the Lord's Day and instead of attending at church, 'set it apart for parties of pleasure and other recreations.'<sup>23</sup> The letter complained that 'even carmen and carriers to drive their carrs and loads on that day,'<sup>24</sup> was 'to the great scandal of religion'<sup>25</sup> and went on to suggest:

May it not be turned to the advantage of the poor, by authorising the minister and church wardens of every parish where any public roads are, to erect a turnpike gate to be kept only on Sunday, that all coaches with six horses going through the same, shall pay one English shilling; a coach with four, nine pence; with two, sixpence; chairs, chaises and carrs, three pence and every single horse and cow, one penny: and this is to be paid in every parish, with an exception to such as are known to be going to public worship, and thus may the vice of some, be made a benefit to the poor.<sup>26</sup>

### **3.4 Turnpike road legislation [1759 - 1789]**

The bulk of the turnpike road legislation in this period was concerned with trying to increase the income of the various trusts from the tolls. This was attempted in two ways; the first was raising the tolls, while the second was shortening the lengths over which the tolls would apply. Sometimes both methods were used in tandem and the device used for shortening the lengths over which the tolls applied was to divide the original length of road under the trusts into two or more divisions and requiring each division to act as if it was a separate turnpike trust. Under this system, tolls paid in one division did not allow passage through the next division of the same turnpike trust as heretofore. Some roads as for example the Banbridge to Belfast turnpike were divided into two divisions: northern and southern, while the Dublin to Dunleer turnpike was ultimately divided into three such divisions: northern, middle and southern. Before getting into detail about such amending legislation, it is perhaps best to proceed with the acts originating new turnpike roads in order to get an overview of the general picture.

The nine new turnpike acts passed in the period from 1759 to 1789 are shown in Table 3.2:

**Table 3.2 New road lengths added to turnpike system between 1759 and 1789**



Short name	Enabling act	Year	Length in miles
Dublin circular road	3 Geo.III, c.36	1763	5.25
Kanturk - Fair Lane	5 Geo.III, c.13	1765	not built
Athlone-Ballyforan and Mt. Talbot	5 Geo.III, c.25	1765	26.00
Monasterevan to Birr and Lehinch	5 Geo.III, c.26	1765	54.00
Dundalk-8 mile. stone	5 Geo.III, c.27	1765	19.00
Listowel-Reens	7 Geo.III, c.11	1767	21.50
Dundalk-Dunleer	13 & 14 Geo.III, c.30	1773/4	12.00
Nenagh-O'Brien's Bridge	19 & 20 Geo.III, c.46	1780	15.00
Dublin-Malahide	26 Geo.III, c.3	1786	10.50

Of the above new turnpike roads the most unusual was the Dublin Circular road. All other turnpikes were rural in character, but this was, even at that time, largely suburban in nature. The enabling act was entitled 'An act for making more convenient the approaches to the city of Dublin by making a new turnpike road on the south side, the west side and the north side of the said city, to commence at the road leading from Dublin to Donnybrook and to terminate at Cavendish street'. Among the many unusual provisions included in this act was a special requirement that the road be sixty feet wide and another that the holder of the post of treasurer had to lodge a sum of £1,000 as security. The treasurer's salary was set at £40 per annum.

There is an abstract in the *house of commons journals* of the tolls received on this Circular road for the seven years commencing 22 December 1781 together with a balancing account of how these toll receipts were expended each year.<sup>27</sup> Allowing for obvious errors in dates, it is possible to obtain a good deal of information from this data though it also raises questions. According to this abstract the total income in tolls for the Circular road for the seven years was £5,637 - 13s. - 4d., giving an average per year of £805 - 6s.- 8d. with a maximum of £975 - 13s - 0d in 1786 and a minimum of £691 - 13 - 8.5d. in 1782. It also shows that eleven gatekeepers were employed at a wage of twenty pounds per annum and that a secretary was taken on in 1785 at a salary of forty pounds per annum in addition to the treasurer who, as stated, had a similar salary. In addition to these salaries and wages there was an office rent of thirty pounds per annum, while the bill for printing tickets, advertising, summoning trustees and miscellaneous expenses for the seven years came to £254 - 2s.- 8d. The road seems only to have been repaired every second year and the total bill was £517 - 1s.- 6.5d. A 'once-off' payment of £147 - 4s.- 8.5d. was also made for the repair and building of a toll-house. After payment of these bills the balance each year (average of £364) was paid as 'rent to sundry proprietors through whose ground the road runs'. These figures may be summarised as follows: total cost of administration amounted to 45.6% of toll-income, cost of paying rents to owners of land over which the road ran amounted to 45.2% and only 9.2% was devoted to road repairs and gravelling. Questions which arise from this abstract include ones as to what is the total amount owed per annum in respect of rents for the land over which the road ran as only the balance each year was paid and in the



absence of a surveyor, even an unqualified one, who decided on the road repairs and who certified payment for the works carried out.

The condition of any road depended largely on the skill, ability and integrity of the surveyor. In the days before properly qualified civil engineers specialising in highway construction and maintenance the surveyor was usually a person with experience of road works and with some knowledge of land surveying. George Semple writing in 1780, set down the desirable attributes of surveyors or supervisors of road and drainage works:

A person proper to supervise these works ought to possess the following qualifications: 1st, He must be extremely well versed in the practical business of a surveyor of land, in all its various branches, and be able to produce specimens of his works actually performed with his own hands. 2nd, He must be sober, diligent, and strictly honest. 3rd, He must be healthy, active, able and willing to undergo the most laborious fatigue that can properly relate to the business of his vocation, and give due and personal attendance to it.<sup>28</sup>

Possibly because of mal-practices current at that time Semple added:

And it may be presumed, that no gentlemen will use means to impose on the board, by endeavouring, through their influence, to put any person into such a weighty employment who doth not enjoy these, or the like qualifications. This ought to be strictly observed, because many weighty matters will depend on it.<sup>29</sup>

The job of gatekeeper was also a difficult one, especially on the Dublin Circular road as an incident from the personal sketches of Sir Jonah Barrington [1760-1834] the well known barrister shows:

There were (and are) on the circular road by which I had desired Matthew Querns to drive us, some of those nuisances called turnpikes. When we had passed the second gate, the gatekeeper, who had been placed there recently, of course demanded his toll.<sup>30</sup>

Barrington together with his brother and a friend who were riding in a coach to attend a wedding in Bray, then found that they had no more money in their pockets while their driver when asked to pay, replied:

‘‘Is it me pay the pike ?’’ said Matthew--’’me? the devil of a cross of wages I got from the master this many a day; and if I did, do you think, Master Jonah, the liquor would not be after having it out of me by this time ?’’ and he then



attempted to drive through without paying, as he used do at Cullenaghmore. The man [gatekeeper] however grappled the blind horse, and gave us a full quantum of abuse, in which his wife, who issued forth at the sound, vociferously joined. Matthew began to whack him and the horses alternately with his thong whip;.....<sup>31</sup>

The trouble at the turnpike gate was subsequently resolved amicably with a promise to pay on the return journey.

In the case of the Navan road and the extensions to Nobber and Kells, the original enabling acts were running out of time in the year 1775-6 and parliament extended them by a short act (15 & 16 Geo.III, c.37) for a period of one year. The following year, parliament again passed an act (17 & 18 Geo.III, c.37) extending the acts dealing with the turnpike status of the Navan road. Section 1 of this act included the words: 'until the end of the next session of parliament, excepting such parts of the acts, which relate to the Roads leading from Navan to Nobber and from Navan to Kells in the said county of Meath.' Thus is seen the unobtrusive and partly concealed way in which two lengths of turnpike road lost their turnpike status. In this short 'holding' act, Section 2 directed that the income from the tolls 'be used first and foremost for the roads and for no other purpose whatsoever, until the trustees therein named shall certify under their hands that the said roads shall be completely and sufficiently repaired.' The major act for continuing and amending the turnpike status of the Navan road (19 & 20 Geo.III, c.43) was passed by parliament in the 1779-80 session and introduced new trustees and increased tolls. Section 1 of this act formally repealed the portions of all previous acts concerning the Navan-Nobber and Navan-Kells extension turnpike roads and so officially declared them 'null and void to all intents and purposes'.

Early in this period a new concept was introduced because it was thought that the damage to the running surfaces of the carriageways was caused or accentuated by the narrowness of the vehicle wheels. This was first introduced in England and was popularised by an anonymous publication issued in London in 1756, entitled '*An essay on the present state of our public roads*'. The sub-head for this publication included a reference to the need to prohibit the use of narrow wheels 'on all carriages drawn by more than one horse lengthways.'<sup>32</sup> In order to show the context in which the 'broad wheel' concept was advocated and to show the state of some of the road surfaces in the London area at that time, the following excerpt from above publication is appropriate:

It is very notorious to everyone who has had occasion to travel on our public roads near London this winter, that they have found them in the wet part of the season resemble a standing lake of mud and dirt, with here and there a deep slough; so heavy that light carriages, were with difficulty drawn a foot-pace through them, with a pair or even four horses. In the dry part of the season, the



ruts were so deep, they were crossed with great difficulty and danger, as well by coaches, as by horsemen.<sup>33</sup>

A newspaper article on broad wheels appeared in 1762, prefaced by a news item concerning two resolutions recently passed by the house of commons:

First resolution: That a great cause of the decay of the highways of this kingdom and of the great expence the public are usually put to in keeping same in repair, is the use of narrow wheels.

Second resolution: That the laws relative to broad wheels are highly useful and beneficial to the public.<sup>34</sup>

As a result all new and amending turnpike acts contained provisions for financially penalising users of narrow wheeled vehicles. For example in the 1763 act for the amendment of the Dublin-Dunleer road (3 Geo.III, c.30), the toll-rate for a wagon, wain, cart or carriage drawn by three or more horses with smooth wheels, nine inches wide was sixpence. For the same vehicle and under the same conditions but with wheels less than nine inches wide the rate was ten shillings. This represented a twentyfold increase for a difference of even half an inch in wheel width. The broad-wheel theory was introduced because it was seen that the narrow wheels were cutting ruts into the road surfaces and it was felt that the broad wheels would spread the load over a greater area and so prevent the wheels cutting the ruts. As the theory was partly true, it survived for some time. The idea was that the traffic should be required to act as rollers or compactors of the road surface as well as perform its transport function. This was brought to impractical extremes as is evident from the enabling act of the Dundalk-Dunleer turnpike road in 1773/4 (13 & 14 Geo.III, c.30), where provision for the following 'vehicle' is included among the toll rates:

For every waggon, wain, cart or carriage with four wheels, the breadth thereof being not less than six inches at the sole and the streaks<sup>i</sup> thereof set on with flat or rose headed nails, and the fore axle tree of such carriage being so much shorter than the hind axle tree, that the wheels of such carriage shall roll at least ten inches of the road in breath on each side of such carriage, and the wheels thereof placed at such a distance of each other, that the space from the middle of one track, made by such wheels on the road and the middle of the other track, shall be from four feet ten inches and five feet drawn by three or more horses, three pence.

The reality was that the heavier wheels added to the vehicle weight and used up more of the tractive power and that the main cause of the problem did not lie in the vehicle but in the

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<sup>i</sup> See footnote on page 65



make up of the road or carriageway. The notion that the road should be constructed to bear the traffic wishing to use it, instead of trying to suit the traffic to the existing road may seem patently obvious nowadays but it had to await the coming of the new breed of fully qualified civil engineers before it gained widespread acceptance. Whatever small amount of validity which the broad wheel concept had in England with the heavy wagons, it had much less in Ireland with the light traffic. However the notion that the narrow wheel and especially when combined with non-smooth wheel rims were deleterious to the roads persisted as the following excerpt from an anonymous pamphlet of 1787 in support of more turnpike roads shows:

Next, as to unstatutable wheels; a low-backed car, such as in common use, is a machine well adapted to this country; but until a law shall be made to prove effectual in enforcing a reasonable breadth, and a proper formation of its wheels, no road can be made to resist them. Two wheels affixed firmly to an axle-tree, shod with sharp iron, that iron armed with long spikes, and that axle-tree loaded with a very heavy weight, and dragged along a road, is a formidable instrument to tear up its surface, however well constructed and gravelled.<sup>35</sup> Yet such is the practice of today, and no mode can ever stop it, but a light toll on statutable and a heavy one on unstatutable wheels.

It should be noted that in fitting iron rims or streaks to the wooden wheels to prevent excessive wear from direct contact with the road surface, the securing brads, screws or nails can be driven well in so as not to project beyond the outer surface of the iron rim so as to give a smooth surface to the wheel. This smooth wheel did minimum damage to the road surface and was preferred and encouraged by the turnpike trusts. On the other hand, vehicle drivers especially in hilly terrain preferred to have the heads of the securing brads or screws projecting beyond the wheel rims so as to give them 'a grip' on steep or slippery road surfaces. In all turnpike acts provisions were included to discourage the non-smooth wheels by increasing the toll-rates for vehicles with such wheels.

It should be noted however that the greatest damage to all roads in Ireland including turnpikes was caused by the fact that that the axles on the carts were fixed to the wheels and rotated with them. (See Illustration 5). The notion that the wheels should rotate about axles firmly fixed to the cart body had not yet become common. The difficulty of driving cars with rotating axles fixed to the wheels is hard to envisage today. As observed by Peter O'Keeffe:

The Irish block wheel car with fixed wheels and rotating axle caused considerable damage to road surfaces at entrances to cottages, on the cross roads and other points where they turned frequently, because the inside wheel, not being free, gouged the surface when the car was turning.<sup>36</sup>



The following Section 7 was inserted in a 1787 amending act (27 Geo.III, c.59) for 'improving and repairing the turnpike road from Dublin to Dunleer':

Provided always, That for every car, whose wheels however narrow they may be, shall be formed and put on so as to turn round the axle-tree, and whose axle-tree shall be fixed so as not to turn round with the wheels, the sum of one penny only and no more, shall be demanded or taken at any gate, for each horse, or other beast drawing the same,.....

There may have been some cars, which had changed over to the fixed axle but it is felt that the insertion of such a cheap rate in contrast to a charge of three pence for similar cars with rotating axles and wheel shoe widths of less than three inches, was also inserted as an inducement to encourage the use of fixed axles. Much damage must have occurred on the turnpike roads and particularly on the steeper hills where the more heavily laden vehicles had to go from 'side to side' to ascend the slopes. This 'side to side' action gave rise to a need to widen the roads in addition to strengthening them. This is shown in the same act (27 Geo.III, c.59) 'for improving and repairing the turnpike road from Dublin to Dunleer.' Section 48 of that act stated that 'whereas the said road is in many places too narrow, and thereby not only dangerous and productive of delay to travellers, but requires more frequent repairs' it was lawful for the commissioners to widen the road to a breadth of eighty feet between Dublin and Lissenhall bridge north of Swords, and to a width of sixty feet from Lissenhall bridge to Dunleer. By any standards eighty feet is a considerable width for a road and such a width could today accommodate a two-lane (2x2) motorway. The road's commissioners took immediate steps to investigate the feasibility of this widening and Mr. Thomas Sherrard, an experienced surveyor produced a detailed estimate of the necessary land acquisition areas and costs of the proposed widening<sup>37</sup>.

### **3.5 Frequency of turnpike gates on major routes**

The frequency or distribution of toll-gates throughout the turnpike road system. was examined by using Taylor and Skinner's *Maps of the roads of Ireland*,<sup>38</sup> (second edition). George Taylor and Andrew Skinner were experienced surveyors from Scotland who carried out a survey of the Irish roads in 1777 and corrected it up to 1783, when the survey was published. It is surprising that on such generally accurate maps, the mention and location of the turnpike gates on some major routes were omitted, as for example on the Dublin-Mullingar turnpike road, only the Kinnegad and Mullingar turnpike gates are shown. However on the Dublin to Belfast and Dublin to Cork routes the location of the gates were found to be correct. An examination of the route from Dublin to Belfast shows that there were fourteen toll-gates to be negotiated by a vehicle travelling between those cities at that time. These gates were located on four different turnpike roads as follows: the first seven were on the Dublin - Dunleer road, the next one was located on the Dunleer -Dundalk road, the next three were on the Dundalk-Banbridge road , while the last



three were located on the Banbridge- Belfast road. Payment of toll had to be made at only one gate in each division, so on the journey from Dublin to Belfast, the vehicle driver had to pay a total of eight times (seven divisions and at one separate turnpike-gate near Lurgan Green). These gates are as listed in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3 Turnpike gates, trusts and divisions on Dublin-Belfast route in 1783**

Gate	Location	Turnpike Trust	Division
1	Santry	Dublin-Dunleer	Southern
2	Man-of -War	ditto	ditto
3	Lissenhall	ditto	Middle
4	Gormanston	ditto	ditto
5	South of Drogheda	ditto	Northern
6	North of Drogheda	ditto	ditto
7	South of Dunleer	ditto	ditto
8	north of Lurgan Green	Dunleer-Dundalk	-----
9	Near Ravensdale	Dundalk-Banbridge	Southern
10	north of Newry	ditto	Northern
11	north of Loughbrickland	ditto	ditto
12	north of Dromore	Banbridge-Belfast	Southern
13	south of Lisburn	ditto	ditto
14	south of Belfast	ditto	Northern (Malone)

Thus there was on average one turnpike gate for every 7.27 miles between Dublin and Belfast in 1783. The route from Dublin to Cork at that time was via Naas, Kilcullen Bridge, Carlow, Leighlinbridge, Kilkenny, Clonmel, Clogheen, Kilworth and Fermoy. The total distance was 158 miles and with a total of nineteen gates, the average was one gate for every 8.32 miles. Combining these two routes, which are the principal long-distance routes in the country gives an average of one gate for every 7.88 miles. It may be of interest to note here that the expense in tolls of a journey from Dublin to Belfast in a chaise drawn by one horse in the year 1788, was 4s - 1.5d., or just under a halfpenny (0.48d.) per mile.

### **3.6 Arthur Young's visit and his observations**

One of the most famous critics of the turnpike roads and indeed the most often quoted, was an Englishman named Arthur Young, who toured Ireland in the years 1776 to 1779. Young was a shrewd observer and was one of the most articulate tourists ever to visit Ireland. He toured England in the years from 1768 to 1771 and travelled in France in 1787, 1788 and 1789. While Arthur Young was one of the greatest agricultural writers of his day, he had no special expertise on roads, but this did not deter him from using his sharp powers of observation and his pen to include descriptions of roads and traffic among the many other subjects covered in his diary.



Young's most quoted excerpt on Irish roads is the following:

For a country so very far behind us as Ireland, to have got suddenly so much the start of us in the article of roads, is a spectacle that cannot fail to strike the English traveller exceedingly. But from this commendation the turnpikes in general must be excluded; they are as bad as the bye-roads are admirable. It is a common complaint that the tolls of the turnpikes are so many jobs, and the roads left in a state that disgrace the kingdom.<sup>39</sup>

He further wrote of the turnpike roads: 'In a few years there will not be a piece of bad road, except turnpikes, in all Ireland'<sup>40</sup> On a journey in July 1776 on the turnpike road from Newry to Market Hill in county Armagh, Young must have been very frustrated indeed with the condition of the road when he wrote:

This road is abominably bad, continually over the hills, rough, stony and cut-up. It is a turnpike, which in Ireland is a synonymous term for a vile road, which is the more extra-ordinary, as the bye-ones are the finest in the world. It is the effect of jobs and impositions which disgrace the kingdom, the presentment roads shew what may be done, and render these villainous turnpikes the more disgusting.<sup>41</sup>

These comments are worth looking into as either Arthur Young was correct, though his generalisations are hard to believe in a literal sense, or else he was conditioned by his other travels to expect that turnpike roads would be better and that bye-roads would be worse. Young seemed from his account of his tour to be preoccupied with costs, including unit costs and so was very conscious of getting value for money. He obviously felt that because a traveller or road user was paying for travelling on a turnpike road, such a road should be superior to an ordinary public road where travel was free.

W. Albert, in his *'The turnpike road system in England 1663-1840'* quotes Young's biographer Edwin Gay, as saying that: 'Young expected the turnpike roads to be well repaired, and that 'The frustration of a traveller's normal expectation is in part responsible for the vigour of his condemnation.'<sup>42</sup> Of Young's travels, mainly in England, Dyos and Aldcroft wrote:

Arthur Young, whose language was among the most vivid, kept the best of it for the worst journeys and is inclined to deceive the casual reader of his *Tours* into thinking that his travels must have been uniformly bad. He cursed bad roads so splendidly that his expletives ring on in almost every account written of his travels. The murmurs of approval are seldom heard. Young's movements through the south of England, especially Sussex, seem to have angered him most, though it is noticeable that he managed to get his light chaise across a



hundred miles of these roads per week. On a 1,460 mile tour he made in 1768 through the Midlands, Yorkshire, Northumberland, and Cumberland, before returning to his farm in Hertfordshire, he gave his verdict on more than half the turnpikes he used (930 miles of them in all) as good, while the rest were divided between middling and bad; on the other hand, well over half the crossroads he regarded as bad and nearly a third as middling. Yet he found some excellent parish roads which he quietly praised and a few turnpikes which obviously pleased him greatly.<sup>43</sup>

Thus it seen that Young had a definite familiarity with turnpike roads before he came to Ireland and naturally expected them to be in far better condition than the non-turnpike ones. Sir Henry Parnell writing in 1833 quoted from Young's *Six months' tour* [in England] published in 1770 and one of his accounts of travel on a turnpike road [to Wigan] makes his criticism of the Irish turnpikes seem mild:

I know not in the whole range of language terms sufficiently expressive to describe this infernal road. Let me most seriously caution all travellers who may accidentally propose to travel this terrible country to avoid it as they would the devil, for a thousand to one they break their necks or their limbs, by overthrows or breakings down. They will here meet with ruts, which I actually measured four feet deep, and floating with mud only from a wet summer; what therefore must it be after a winter? The only mending it receives is tumbling in some loose stones, which serve no other purpose than jolting a carriage in the most intolerable manner. These are not opinions but facts; for I actually passed three carts, broken down, in these eighteen miles of execrable memory.<sup>44</sup>

In order to check Arthur Young's knowledge of Irish turnpikes it is perhaps best to attempt to ascertain, if possible, the length of turnpike roads on which he travelled. When the map of Young's tour<sup>45</sup> is compared with Map 2 (preceding page 166) of the turnpike roads (including only those in operation in the 1776 to 1779 period), it shows that Young only travelled on small proportion of them. However it would scarcely be reasonable to expect him to travel on all of the turnpike roads if he found those he had travelled on so poor. By contrast he travelled on a good deal of non-turnpike main roads and roads from 'market town to market town', which it will be recalled were newly built after the act of 1739. His views on the Irish road system were the exact opposite of the 1746 tourist (Chetwood) in that the 1746 visitor found the turnpike roads excellent and the bye-roads poor. Hugh Faulkner, a county Tyrone linen bleacher, writing in December 1768 from the Coventry area commented: 'The worst road in Ireland is better than the best here'<sup>46</sup>, and attributed the bad condition of the English roads to the heavy four-wheeled wagons pulled by at least two horses. Because of the nature of the roads on which Young travelled one can only ponder as to whether his comparison between the newly made side roads



and the turnpikes is fair. Nevertheless the contrast is striking. This contrast shows where the bulk of the money was spent during the thirty years between 1746 and 1776, or more exactly the inability of the turnpike roads to attract the necessary funds.

Young attributed the very good condition of the non-turnpike roads to the acts of 1759 (33 Geo.II, c.8), 1763 (3 Geo.III, c.7) which required seven days advance notice of road presentments to be given to grand juries and mainly the major reforming act of 1765 (5 Geo.III, c.14). This was shown when he said: 'The original act was passed but seventeen years ago, and the effect of it was so great, that he found it perfectly practicable to travel upon wheels by a map'<sup>47</sup> and: 'The roads of Ireland may be said all to have originated from Mr. French's presentment bill, and are now in a state that do honour to the kingdom.'<sup>48</sup> However this was disputed by M. B. Mullins, in his Presidential address to the Institution of Civil Engineers of Ireland in 1859, when he pointed out that the improvement of the non-turnpike roads must have begun much earlier<sup>49</sup>. Mullins quoted part of a report of a Colonel Roy who was sent to Ireland in 1766 with a view to military defences. This report said:

There was no country whatever, where there were more, or, in general, better roads than in Ireland. The gravel or other materials for making them are found in plenty,[and] excepting where the bogs intervene instantly near at hand. They appear to be likewise judiciously enough conducted and substantially made. But what contributed greatly to their lasting is the little repair that is upon them, being entirely free from heavy carriages, those chiefly made use of in the country being only small carrs or sledges drawn by one horse or two at most.'

The Irish had been at great pains in this respect as well as in the building of bridges, for there were not only great roads leading from Dublin in all directions to the most distant quarters of the Kingdom, but likewise from every considerable town there were cross roads leading to the next adjacent places, and that manner of communication was continued from town to town almost through the whole extent of the Kingdom.<sup>50</sup>

It should be noted that the excerpt contains no criticism of the turnpike roads and it seems most probable that the improvement of the non-turnpike cross roads dates from the 1727 (1 Geo.II, c.13) and 1739 (13 Geo.II, c.10) acts which began the reformation of the road administration and facilitated the construction of new roads from market town to market town. Colonel Roy also referred to areas where the roads were poor:

The mountainous parts of Kerry with some other rugged districts such as Burrin and Ibrickan in the county of Clare, must however be excepted, there being no roads in these parts practicable for carriage.



Arthur Young travelled in France during the years 1787, 1788 and 1789 and from his account of some of the roads he journeyed on, it is possible to establish the standard that he regarded as near perfection in road engineering though he deplored the fact that the traffic on one particular road did not warrant such a high expenditure:

The roads are stupendous works. I passed a hill, cut through to ease a descent, that was all in solid rock and cost 90,000 liv. (£3,987), yet it extends but a few hundred yards. Three leagues and a half from Sejean to Narbonne cost 1,800,000 liv. (£78,750)<sup>i</sup>. These ways are superb even to a folly. Enormous sums have been spent to level even gentle slopes. The causeways are raised and walled on each side, forming one solid mass of artificial road, carried across the vallies to the height of six, seven or eight feet, and never less than 50 feet wide. There is a bridge of a single arch, and a causeway to it, truly magnificent.....The traffic of the way, however, demands no such exertions; .....In 36 miles, I met one cabriolet, half a dozen carts, and some old women with asses.<sup>51</sup>

There was a tour of Ireland undertaken in July, August and September 1782 by an English visitor known now only as X. Z. This man's tour was originally published in three parts in *Walker's Hibernian magazine*, but has now been edited by James Kelly and published in the *North Munster antiquarian journal*.<sup>52</sup> As this tour took place within five years of Arthur Young's, it is of interest to compare their views on both turnpike and non-turnpike roads. X. Z. travelled from Dublin down to Cork via Kilkenny, Clonmel, Cahir and Mitchelstown. He then travelled in a circular route from Cork to Youghal, Lismore, Clogheen Kilworth and back to Cork. Later he went on to Limerick, Clonmel, Cashel, Urlingford, but instead of returning to Dublin at that time, he did a tour through Portarlinton, Roscrea, Birr, Athlone and Mullingar before returning to the capital via Drogheda. X. Z. did not comment on the roads until he left Clonmel after coming from Dublin:

From Clonmel we rode west 8 miles to Cahir and here we first noticed the difference between Munster and Leinster roads: the roads in Munster are not carried on right lines, but wind about considerably in different places for no reason that we could find out, except it be in some places for the sake of mounting a few steep hills, which would be avoided if the roads were carried in a straight line -- They seem the paths formerly trod by their ancestors, and are in some places paved and gravelled in others in a natural state -- Travelling on these accounts is very slow in Munster, especially if we go out of turnpike roads.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> There is a discrepancy between the two conversions from livres to pounds made here by Young.



This tourist had a good deal to say about the roads he travelled, describing some of them as good and others as bad but always anxious to emphasise the difference between the roads in Munster and in Leinster:

It is worthy of remark, that the turnpike roads are almost the only roads fit for travelling in Munster, whereas in other parts the county roads are much preferable to the turnpike roads. This must proceed from inattention or want of public spirit in the inhabitants of the South; for it is scarce conceivable what difference there is between the roads in this part, and those in other provinces.<sup>54</sup>

As this traveller left Munster, he unwittingly criticised one of the province's turnpike roads:

From Cashel we rode 15 miles of a bad road, through a bleak country to Urlingford, when we enter Leinster province. The country now becomes more populous, better improved, and the roads much more agreeable for travelling.<sup>55</sup>

It is seen that there is some difference between Young and X. Z. With Young all turnpikes are very bad and all county roads are very good. In X. Z.'s account; within Munster, the turnpike roads, with one exception are the only roads fit for travelling, though he lauded some non-turnpike roads and within Leinster he agrees with Young that the county roads are better than the turnpike ones.

One of the most carefully recorded tours of Ireland and Irish roads and inns was made in 1788 by Rev. Augustus Beaufort and his family.<sup>56</sup> They travelled extensively through the north, west and south western parts of the country and the Rev. Beaufort recorded mileage, road conditions and his evaluations of the inns. In the case of the roads he normally described them as; excellent, very good, good, middling, indifferent, not good and rough. He did not generally add any comment on the various turnpike roads and only on one occasion did he mention their condition. On this occasion he referred to the section of the Dublin-Dunleer road between Dublin and the Man - of - War inn south of Balrothery where he and the family spent the night, as: 'but very indifferent'<sup>57</sup> and: 'rough no hills'<sup>58</sup>. This latter quotation seems to ignore the fact that the Man - of - War inn itself was located at the top of a fairly steep hill. On the following day Beaufort travelled to Collon, county Louth to meet Mr. John Foster, Speaker of the house of commons and recorded in his travel diary:

Observed on my way, that they are turning around the hills in a broad road, that which now go over them. The turnpike to Dublin is all to be altered upon the same plan as the Naas road.<sup>59</sup>



### 3.7 Progress on non-turnpike roads

The work of improving roads other than turnpikes and especially those leading to the important towns and ports continued apace in this period from 1759 to 1789. The impetus given by the 1739 act for the construction of roads 'from market town to market town' and the final removal of the last of the compulsory statute labour aspect of carrying out roadworks by the act of 1765 (5 Geo. III, c.14) resulted in the production of many fine roads. A description of the town and surrounding district of Mallow, situated on the river Blackwater in county Cork, in 1775 shows this concentration of roads:

The five<sup>i</sup> great roads from Mallow on the north are - first, the high road to Tralee, through Kanturk, Newmarket, and the Island of Kerry- this road is tolerable; the second is the turnpike road to Limerick, through Buttevant, Charleville, and Killmallock; ye fourth is the Dublin road, through Doneraile, Mitchelstown, and Clonmel; the fifth is the road to Kilworth through Castletown- Roche and Glanworth. The five great roads from Mallow on the south are-first, the high road west to Killarney, through Millstreet, and a good road; the second is the high road to Macrump, through Donnoughmor- this road is good as far as Donnoughmor, which place is midway between Mallow and Macrump, but from Donnoughmor, it is very bad and deep in winter; the third is the road to Cork; the fourth is the road to Rathcormack, south-east -- about half this road was lately repaired, and the other half will be repaired in a few years, otherwise it would be almost impassable in winter, as it runs mostly through mountains ; the fifth is the road due east to Fermoy, along the banks of the Blackwater. I need not observe that all these different great roads are branched, at 1, 2, and 3 miles distance, into bye roads, for the convenience of the country.<sup>60</sup>

Of the above ten roads emanating from Mallow, only four were shown on Moll's map of 1714. These were the road to Tralee; the road to Newcastle West via Liscarroll and Drumcolliher, the road to Limerick via Buttevant and Charleville and the road running southward to Cork.

In order to get the total picture of the moneys raised for roads by the grand juries by way of county cess for the years from 1766 to 1773, it is best to consult Table 3.4 which is taken from the papers of John Foster<sup>61</sup>, a member of parliament and Speaker of the house of commons.

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<sup>i</sup> It should be noted that the second road in this list, which only contains four roads should have been the road to Newcastle West via Liscarroll and Drumcolliher and so the turnpike road to Limerick via Buttevant and Charleville should have the third road instead of the second.



**Table 3.4 Amounts of money in pounds presented for roads from 1766 to 1773**

County	1766	1767	1768	1769	1770	1771	1772	1773
Antrim	2,873	3,654	3,946	4,033	4,216	3,899	2,920	-----
Armagh	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Carrickfergus	51 <sup>i</sup>	127	106	152	113	42	31	54 <sup>ii</sup>
Carlow	1,258	1,524	2,892	1,570	1,975	2,077	2,155	-----
Cavan	-----	2,045	3,050	3,329	2,816	2,646	2,183	2,280
Cork	1,338 <sup>iii</sup>	3,480	4,134	6,183	4,840	6,266	4,129	-----
City of Cork	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Clare	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Donegal	4,376	4,888	3,895	4,254	4,516	4,796	4,129	-----
Down	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Drogheda	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Dublin	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Dublin City	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Fermanagh	-----	1,113	1,259	1,669	1,535	1,034	1,116	1,081L <sup>iv</sup>
Galway	476	3,924	3,207	2,266	4,008	3,849	236	3,763
Kerry	1,590	2,950	3,489	3,373	4,031	4,488	5,242	-----
Kildare	1,111	2,285	192	3,355	2,988	3,417	1,952	-----
Kilkenny	-----	1,669	1,780	2,302	2,135	1,984	2,349	2,578
Ditto city	8	112	100	96	91	164	177	-----
King's Co.	1,020	2,281	1,773	3,489	2,699	3,901	2,891	-----
Leitrim	63	516	794	1,008	1,165	981	902	-----
Limerick	910	1,603	2,790	2,244	2,758	2,837	2,194	-----
Ditto city	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Londonderry	4,224	4,092	4,025	3,511	4,491	4,037	2,888	-----
Longford	1,156	1,031	405	921	1,127	1,113	1,277	-----
Louth	2,160	2,109	2,679	2,588	2,050 <sup>v</sup>	3,320	3,048	-----
Mayo	-----	1,071	934	1,682	2,081	1,167	1,405	-----
Meath	-----	5,293	6,722	10,578	6,087	6,343	6,454	8,461

<sup>i</sup> Summer assizes.

<sup>ii</sup> Spring assizes.

<sup>iii</sup> Summer assizes

<sup>iv</sup> Lent or Spring assizes.

<sup>v</sup> Units figure illegible, - assumed to be zero for purpose of addition.



Monaghan	234 <sup>i</sup>	1,550	1,418	2,092	1,597	1,678	1,404	632 L <sup>ii</sup>
Queens Co.	----	1,742	619	2,669	2,024	2,053	2,129	2,821
Roscommon	----	1,885	1,039	2,421	2,059	2,488	2,083	4,505
Sligo	206	1,097	541	1,483	1,122	2,675	1,073	-----
Tipperary	----	2,332	2,907	3,777	3,521	3,830	3,985	4,329
Tyrone	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Waterford	----	1,333	1,193	1,274	1,697	1,625	1,354	692
Ditto city	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Westmeath	----	2,408	2,013	2,634	2,094	1,975	1,760	2,435
Wexford	1,104	2,942	3,356	3,336	3,203	3,857	4,665	-----
Wicklow	2,218	2,687	2,442	2,331	2,068	3,038	3,058	-----
Yearly totals	26,376	63,743	63,700	80,620	75,107	81,580	69,189	33,631

The amounts presented for roads by the grand juries from 1775 to 1800 are shown in Table 3.5.

These are based on accounts returned to the house of commons.<sup>62</sup>

*Table 3.5 Accounts of the sums of money in pounds presented for roads from 1775 to 1800 by those grand juries which sent in the requisite returns to the authorities*

County	1775	1780	1785	1790	1795	1800
Antrim	2,575	6,227	6,239	8,276	9,109	12,998
Armagh	4,763	4,623	5,021	7,765	7,902	11,761
Carlow	1,434	489	194	1,999	2,167	2,284
Cork county	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cork city	-	-	270	1,126	708	1,808
Donegal	4,768	5,624	6,652	9,784	11,533	15,666
Down	4,264	4,159	4,699	6,651	6,992	11,569
Drogheda	175	120	-	127	214	282
Dublin	-	5,154	5,984	4,409	4,925	5,785
Fermanagh	2,740	1,558	2,785	4,213	3,817	4,844
Kerry	2,575	2,551	2,481	4,037	4,249	3,405
Kilkenny city	-	-	-	-	-	379
Derry city & county.		5,130	4,600	8,073	7,559	12,667
Louth	2,342	2,186	2,454	2,664	3,339	3,325
Monaghan	2,190	2,674	2,367	4,654	5,552	6,910

<sup>i</sup> Summer assizes

<sup>ii</sup> Lent assizes.



Roscommon	-	-	-	5,697	5,613	8,115
Tipperary	4,498	7,919	7,809	10,559	11,594	17,759
Waterford county	1,801	1,196	2,264	2,810	3,288	6,908
Waterford city	-	-	137	421	596	541
Wicklow	-	1,804	1,963	2,575	2,412	1,935
<b>Yearly totals</b>	<b>34,125</b>	<b>51,414</b>	<b>55,919</b>	<b>85,840</b>	<b>91,589</b>	<b>128,914</b>

### 3.8 Traffic

There was obviously a very large increase in all types of traffic using the roads during this latter part of the eighteenth century but unfortunately no counts or measures of the volume of this traffic nor of the nature of the goods carried, survive today. It is appreciated that the notion of taking a traffic census on a road was not then the normal procedure nor indeed was such a census then deemed a necessity. This lack of records was noted by the Railway Commission in their report of 1837:

With regard to the great fairs or markets of this country, no records are to be found of the produce or merchandise sold; even the information as to the amount of traffic along the roads which turnpike receipts would supply, is not to be had in Ireland.<sup>63</sup>

The position as regards transport costs is similar in that very little information concerning these costs is available. As previously stated the ultimate test of any road system is how it helped to lower transport costs. On this account any available reliable pieces of information must be utilised to help to build up as complete a picture as possible of the traffic and costs of transport of persons and goods. In order to show the overall position it is necessary to use information from widely dispersed parts of the country. The first information on transport costs on a turnpike road is in the south, where costs on the portion of the Cork-Limerick road are given in a report on the Mallow district of county Cork in 1775:

The price of carriage from Mallow to Cork, 14 miles, and vice versa, is 8d. per hundredweight, 3d. per foot for balk, 4d. per foot for oak, 3 shillings for a hhd. of cider, rum, or of any liquor, and so on proportionately for all other articles; in places more remote, they advance the price of carriage in proportion to the distance from Mallow or Cork.<sup>64</sup>

The above price for carriage of goods, which works out at nine pence per ton-mile (statute mile) is reasonable, as the price probably allowed for an empty return journey. This rate can be compared with English rates as quoted by Dyos and Aldcroft, when referring to average road carriage costs<sup>65</sup>: 'The most general impression they give is of carriage costs of 12d. or more per-ton mile, though the upper limits varied widely between districts and seasons of the year.' As the



road between Cork and Mallow was part of the Limerick-Cork turnpike road, it is presumed that the price also included payment of the turnpike tolls.

The second example of transport costs comes from the opposite end of the country in the north-eastern quarter. The costs were those given by A. Young in his 1776-1779 tour:

The linen manufacture is very general about Coleraine, coarse ten hundred linen. It is carried to Dublin in cars 110 miles at 5s. per cwt. in summer and 7s.- 6d. in winter.<sup>66</sup>

These charges represent costs of 1s - 4.36d per ton mile (statute miles) in winter and 10.9d. per ton-mile in summer, which again, though a little high in winter, are not unreasonable. These rates were again comparable with appropriate English rates as quoted by Dyos and Aldcroft:

The Leicestershire justices' ruling in the 1780s on rates from London, a distance of about a hundred miles, which allowed for small variations around 5s. per hundredweight according to destination, fixed a relatively low rate.<sup>67</sup>

This ruling represented a rate of twelve pence or one shilling per ton-mile.

The best example of cheap transport must however remain the carriage of coal from the Castlecomer pits to Dublin market. In his book 'A tour through Ireland' Philip Luckcombe described this transport in 1779 in the following terms:

The carriers pay 5d. per hundred weight, and sell this for 1s - 8d in Dublin, which is above eighty English miles from the pits. Each car draws but seven hundred weight, which, with 9d. for turnpike, makes the load cost 3s. - 8d. and it sells for 11s. - 8d. So that for six days travelling charges of a man and horse, there is but 8s. to say nothing of the labour of both, and the wear and tear of the car. They are said to be laid down in the most remote parts of the Kingdom, at a price so low that it almost puzzles calculation to make out how these wretched carriers can subsist.<sup>68</sup>

These figures show that the cost per ton-mile (statute mile) was still only fractionally over 3d. (3.08) and only marginally exceeds the unit cost, which was achieved in 1746 with smaller capacity vehicles. The method of achieving this low cost was probably similar to that used in 1746 as described in Chapter 2.7. Thus from three different parts of the country, there are examples of road transport rates on turnpike roads for the 1770s.

The major traffic however arose from the transport of corn, under the inland bounty scheme previously referred to in Chapter 3.2. This traffic built up slowly from 1762 and peaked in 1780. As the weights of each type of corn such as flour, malt, wheat, oats, bere and barley from the several counties on which the bounties were paid is known for say the year 25 March 1775 -



24 March 1776, it is possible to attempt to estimate the resultant traffic on some of the principal turnpike roads leading into Dublin that year. In order to make such an estimate, certain assumptions have to be made and any estimate can only be as good as the assumptions. The first assumption is that each vehicle driver conveying the corn to Dublin used the shortest and most direct route to the city on the appropriate turnpike road, though from the outskirts of the city some portion of it may have used less busy roads and streets into the city centre. The second assumption which is more difficult is to choose appropriate weight capacities for the vehicles. Arthur Young who came to Ireland in June 1776 and saw some of the vehicles stated with reference to the flour-mill at Slane that the land carriage loads were generally six cwt. per car, but that the owner once sent eighteen cwt., on a one horse cart and often sent fifteen or sixteen cwt. by the same method. However with reference to the flour produced at the mill at Marlefield outside Clonmel, Young stated that: 'It goes to Dublin in cars which take each eight to ten cwt., that is from four to five bags.'<sup>69</sup> In view of such conflicting information it is considered best to use the average figure of six cwt. per car for all corn originating more than fifty miles from Dublin and an average figure of eight cwt. per car for all corn originating within fifty miles of the capital together with the average figure of eight cwt. per car for all flour. Based on these figures and on the total weights of the different types of corn and flour received from the various counties as given in the journals of the house of commons<sup>70</sup> and assigning the loads from the counties or portions of counties to the appropriate turnpike roads leading to the city, it was found possible to estimate the extra corn traffic on the different roads. Thus the estimated corn traffic on the turnpikes for the year ended 24 March 1776 was as follows: Dublin-Kilcullen ---185 loaded vehicles per working day (v. p. w. d.), Dublin-Kinnegad ---65 v.p.w.d., Dublin- Navan ---41 v.p.w.d. and Dublin-Dunleer --- 22 v.p.w.d. From this it is seen that the great bulk of the corn traffic was carried on the Dublin - Kilcullen road and it had to be accommodated along with the normal traffic on the carriageway. It is difficult to estimate the actual total amount of traffic on these roads, but an approximation to the relative amounts may be gleaned from the costs of the licenses issued by the Dublin Corporation for the municipal toll collection on the entry routes to the city, which all commercial traffic had to pay. Separate figures for each route are not available after 1763. and accordingly the 1763 figures have to be used<sup>71</sup>. These are as shown in Table 3.6:

**Table 3.6 Costs of licenses for collection of municipal tolls in 1763 on access roads to Dublin city**

Toll collection area	Entry routes to city	Cost
Lot 1 (South-west)	The avenues of James street, the Park gate Dolphin's Barn	£2,120
Lot 2 (North-west)	The avenues of Stoneybatter and Glassmahonoge	£ 970
Lot 3 (North-east)	The avenues of Drumcondra lane and Ballybough bridge	£ 350
Lot 4 (South-east)	The avenues of Stephen's Green, Ball's Bridge & Kevin's Port	£ 100



An analysis of these figures show that of the total toll-paying traffic entering Dublin by these routes, the percentages, which entered via each of the four routes are shown in Table 3.7:

**Table 3.7 Percentages of total municipal toll-receipts collected in 1763 on the Dublin city access routes**

Routes	Percentages
Lot 1 (south-west)	59.89
Lot 2 (north-west)	27.40
Lot 3 (north east)	9.89
Lot 4 (south-east)	2.32

These percentages show a correlation with the traffic derived from the above analysis of the corn traffic on the major turnpike roads into Dublin which are shown in the Table 3.8:

**Table 3.8 Estimated traffic on turnpike roads feeding in to above city access routes**

Turnpike road	Direction	Est. traffic in v.p.wd.	Percentage of total
Dublin-Kilcullen	South-west	185	59.10
Dublin-Kinnegad	West	65	20.77
Dublin-Navan	North-west	41	13.10
Dublin-Dunleer	North-east	22	7.03

It is appreciated that the year ended 24 March 1776 was not the busiest for the corn bounty traffic, but it was only 22 per cent less than the maximum which occurred in year ending 24 March 1780. The 1776 figure was only exceeded on five years out of the thirty six years from 1762 to 1798 in which the corn bounty was paid and as the 1780 figure was abnormally high, the estimated traffic for that year could be misleading.

The heavy volume of corn traffic carried on the Dublin-Kilcullen road and the views of the legislators on financing turnpike roads are shown by a bill introduced in the house of commons on 18 March 1788 by the Solicitor-general to improve and repair this road. Under the bill a sum of £10,000 over and above the toll income was required to pay for the proposed improvements. The proposer stated that 'the corn cars were the principal cause of injury to the Kilcullen road, and if they were, the justice of making them contribute somewhat towards its repair was obvious'<sup>72</sup> and he proposed that a halfpenny be deducted from every shilling paid as bounty on the land-carriage of corn and that this would amount in four years to £10,000. The Secretary of State opposed this provision in the bill and called on: 'every gentleman who valued the corn bounty as a main spring of our agriculture, to stand up and prevent its being frittered away in the repair of turnpike roads.'<sup>73</sup> He also said that if this was allowed every other turnpike road carrying corn would seek similar relief and: 'desired gentlemen to recollect the fund from which the corn bounties were paid---the hereditary revenue, partly a land-tax; were they prepared



to adopt the principle of making roads by land-tax?' Sir Hercules Langrishe also opposed this provision in the bill and the record of the debate noted:

He could not help observing upon the honourable gentleman's argument, that the multitude of cars were the cause of destroying the road. Did not those cars pay toll and double-toll? what further claim had the honourable gentleman upon them? He had never understood that too much very profitable business could be deemed injurious to a road. He further

observed, that the intention was more to make a road of magnificence than convenience. What necessity was there for having it sixty feet wide for several miles, and that at the expence of £10,000 besides, the very large tolls collected? That there could be no such necessity must be apparent to every one who knew that the best roads in the kingdom were those that were made without any turnpike tolls at all.<sup>74</sup>:

The Solicitor-general's contention that the corn traffic was a principal cause of wear and tear on the Dublin-Kilcullen road was supported by a pamphleteer writing in 1786 of the roads in county Dublin: 'that since the enaction of the corn-laws, the roads of this county have been infinitely more worn than before.'<sup>75</sup> Arthur Young made several references to traffic during the course of his tour and in a reference to the corn traffic asked: 'Why not carry the corn in ships, as well as tear up all the roads leading to Dublin by cars?'<sup>76</sup> When he was writing about wool at Annesgrove in north Cork, he added: 'Immense quantities of raw wool are sent to Cork from all parts. 500 cars have been seen in a line;'.....<sup>77</sup>

### **3.9 Further financial difficulties**

As already mentioned, most of the existing road trusts were in financial trouble and consequently were unable to maintain their roads. As a result this period of years from 1759 to 1789 was one of petitions, complaints and reports on the various roads resulting in amending acts which generally increased the tolls and shortened the stages by creating separate divisions of the trusts. An example of the financial trouble in which some trusts found themselves is shown by the report made by Sir Lucius O'Brien on 24 February 1766<sup>78</sup> on the Newcastle road in county Limerick as a result of a petition to parliament by a number of the road's creditors. The report showed that the principal owed was £6,587 - 15s - 0d, while the interest due on same was now in excess of £6,000. It also showed that the tolls, which were set by public act from 1 May 1765 for two years only yielded £265 per year and so there was insufficient money to carry out even the necessary repairs and consequently the road was in a bad condition. Thus it can be seen that as the money to maintain the system became unavailable, necessary repairs were not carried out and due to this, less traffic used the system and the income reduced even more.



On 13 November 1767 a report was received by the Irish house of commons from a committee of inquiry into the state and condition of the turnpike roads from Dublin to Dunleer, Navan, Kinnegad and Naas<sup>79</sup>. The findings of the report are summarised in Table 3.9:

**Table 3.9 Financial state of turnpike roads from Dublin to Dunleer, Kinnegad, Kilcullen and Navan in 1767 (All money expressed in pounds)**

Name of road	Length miles	Toll-take	Capital Debt	Interest	Salaries	Misc. debt	Repairs
Dublin-Dunleer	38.00	1,500	13,500	675	82	8	735
Dublin-Kinnegad	37.50	1,835	1,500	82.5	85	-	925
Dublin-Kilcullen	27.25	1,404	9,000	450	50	-	904
Dublin-Navan	30.23	620	11,400	570	-	-	-

A glance at this Table shows that some of the interest payments as a percentage of the toll-income were reaching high proportions. The proportions for the above four roads were: Dublin-Dunleer road ---45%, Dublin-Kinnegad road ---4.5%, Dublin-Kilcullen road ---32% and Dublin-Navan road ---92%. These figures show that the position of the Navan road was indeed critical and it was further complicated by the fact that there was at that time a total debt of £1,601-14s.-5.5d. outstanding on its extension to Nobber. The Committee resolved that the Navan, Dunleer and Kilcullen roads required the aid of parliament. While it was obvious that something needed to be done, it also appears that the toll-income from the Navan road was well below what it should have been, given its length and importance and the management of this road should have been more thoroughly examined. In the case of the Dublin-Dunleer road, where the interest was 45% of the toll-income and the 1767 report also showed that interest on debentures had not been paid for two and a half years, action was taken in an 1787 act (27 Geo. III, c.59) to ensure that the payment of the interest was given a degree of priority and to divide the road into three divisions so as to increase the toll-income.

In a report on the Dublin-Kilcullen turnpike road on 8 March 1787 John Wolfe, on behalf of a committee set up for that purpose stated that road was 'found to be extremely bad, such as to require immediate amendment.'<sup>80</sup> The committee after examining the state of the funds found:

that over and above the original debt of £9,000 in debentures for which interest is paid a five per cent per annum, the Board of trustees are at present indebted to sundry persons to the amount of about £500, occasioned by the failure of the late treasurer, by whose insolvency they lost £1,470.<sup>81</sup>

Wolfe then stated:



The management of the road is at present under the direction of ninety trustees, seven of whom in some cases and in others nine are necessary to the performance of any act, and it has been found that the same fatality which has attended large bodies in all other instances, where constant attendance is required, has in this also defeated the purposes of the institution.<sup>82</sup>

It was recommended that existing trustees be not replaced until the number was reduced to twenty one and that those elect a governing body of five with three paid commissioners to look after the day to day running of the road and its affairs. A statement of revenue and expenses was also given in the report which it said would show 'that the tolls are utterly inadequate to the effectual repair of it.'<sup>83</sup> It must be clearly understood that by the word 'repair' in the context of those days meant necessary improvements and not just the maintenance of the original condition. Table 3.10 shows the statement of revenue and expenses given in the report

**Table 3.10 Table of revenue and expenses on Dublin-Kilcullen (Naas) road in 1787**

Revenue and expenses	Amounts
The tolls now produce	£ 1,535 - 0 - 0
The interest at 5% on £9,000 worth of debentures	£ 450 - 0 - 0
The salaries to officers	£ 100 - 0 - 0
Stationery and incidentals	£ 20 - 0 - 0
Remains for repair of road, toll-houses, gates, bridges and misc. charges	£ 965 - 0 - 0
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 1,535 - 0 - 0</b>

The report went on to point out that even omitting all other items such as bridge and toll-house repairs, the funds for the repair of the road itself only amounted to 2s.- 10d. per perch.(actually less than 2s.- 2.25d.) per annum. The report then added the words 'and that for the annual repair of the most frequented road in Ireland...'. The list of 'repairs' given included widening a section to 60 feet and including the acquisition of 50 acres of land at 40s. per acre and a sum of £1,000 to set back fence giving an overall figure of £3,000 for the first year. It is very difficult to compare figures for repair of the different turnpike roads as it depends very much on what items were regarded as repairs

Consequent on the abolition of the statute labour, the affected turnpike trusts pressed for compensatory assistance from the parliament which was slow to act. However in the 1779/80 parliamentary year 'An Act for further enforcing due execution of the Laws relative to Turnpike Roads in this Kingdom' provided that grand juries were free to make presentments in respect of portions of turnpike roads provided the expenditure did not exceed the funds in the hands of the relevant turnpike roads treasurer. There was nevertheless still a doubt in the minds of the grand jurors of county Down about their legal powers to present money for the purpose of financially assisting the trustees of the Banbridge-Belfast turnpike road. In order to clarify the position it was



necessary to insert a Section 24 in the 1783/4 amending act for the road (23 & 24 Geo.III, c.27). This Section read as follows:

and whereas doubts have arisen among several of the grand jury of county Down whether they can by law present any sum of money at the assizes held for said county, in aid of said tolls for the purpose of keeping the said road in repair, county Down grand jury are formally authorised to do so.

These provisions introduced the concept of the grand juries being able to assist the turnpike toll-receipts where necessary. However, apart from a few isolated cases, the grand juries were generally reluctant to use presentment money to aid the turnpike roads.

Lord Mountmorres was one of those who felt strongly that presentment money should be used for the turnpikes and writing in 1792 put forward what he considered was the solution for the financial problems of the turnpike roads.<sup>84</sup> In his book on the history of the Irish parliament, he set out the principles of the presentment system of the grand juries and wrote of how it was only applied to private and cross roads and not to turnpike roads. He added that as a result the system 'has rendered the private and cross roads much better; though the turnpikes, which are uncommon in Ireland, are much inferior to those in England.'<sup>85</sup> Lord Mountmorres then wrote:

To this system [Presentments], thus shortly stated, the people of Ireland are remarkably attached, and prefer it to turnpikes; possibly it might be expedient to apply these grand jury presentments, to the repairs of the public or turnpike roads, to aid the tolls where they may be inadequate; and to give those applications for the repairs of public, a precedence and a priority to those of private roads.<sup>86</sup>

He was obviously referring to minor roads and 'convenience' roads as private roads and equating public roads with turnpike roads. Though it was then legally possible for grand juries to present money for turnpike roads it was clear that they were choosing not to do so. Lord Mountmorres wrote that it was calculated by a recently deceased judge, named Robinson that at least £200,000 per year was being spent on these 'private' roads and that this was a considerable sum as the whole of the Irish revenue did not much exceed £1,300,000. The figure of £200,000 per annum being spent by the grand juries on roads may have been approximately correct as it can be seen from Table 3.5 that in 1790, a total of £85,840 was spent by fifteen counties and four urban areas, while in 1800, £128,914 was spent by the same local authorities, with the addition of one small urban area. He pointed out that in England parochial labour was applied to the repair of turnpike roads wherever the tolls were insufficient and that as a result the English turnpike roads were kept in constant repair and so he finally exhorted that:

as materials are almost universally excellent and commodious in Ireland, and the private roads are at present in very good condition, the application of this system



[Presentments] to turnpikes, as above mentioned, would probably enable the people of Ireland, to make, to repair, and to protect their public roads, and to render them as good as any other part of Europe.<sup>87</sup>

### **3.10 More turnpikes round the city of Dublin?**

There were by 1786 sixteen major roads leading from the country in to the city of Dublin. Of these the following five were turnpikes: the Dublin-Malahide road (created a turnpike road in 1786), the Dublin-Dunleer road, the Dublin-Navan road, the Dublin-Kinnegad road and the Dublin-Kilcullen Bridge road. Certain businessmen and landlords within the city and county of Dublin felt that the other eleven major roads leading to the city were being damaged by some of the corn traffic and they wanted to have them repaired by those whom they deemed responsible for the damage. These men found a very willing advocate in Luke Gardiner who was a member of parliament for county Dublin and a major builder and developer in Dublin city. Gardiner was also one of the largest landowners in Ireland. He submitted a bill to parliament<sup>88</sup> for bringing the eleven non-turnpike approach roads for a distance of six and a quarter Irish miles (extending from a quarter of an Irish mile inside the Circular road to six Irish miles outside it, less the three Irish miles of the Blackrock road repaired by the city authorities) under turnpike trusteeship. The eleven roads concerned were the roads to: Howth, Baldoyle, the Naul, Finglas, Ratoath, Tallaght, Rathfarnham, Milltown, Donnybrook, Ballsbridge and the road through Ringsend.

There was an almost immediate reaction from some other Dublin landowners, who submitted a petition to parliament in March 1786 objecting to the proposed new turnpike roads. The petitioners feared that if the bill before parliament was passed 'it would prove a most grievous and oppressive tax upon agriculture and utterly destroy the roads of the county.'<sup>89</sup> They also stated that 'wherever turnpikes were established that roads are generally in a ruinous condition, while roads under the grand juries are kept in good repair.'<sup>90</sup> The petition continued:

The petitioners therefore suppose the turnpike system ill-adapted to this country, but they cheerfully pay the Grand Jury assessments having a confidence in that established and constitutional mode of levying and applying their money; that the farmers who hold adjacent lands to the roads made by a presentment have taken such lands at an advanced rent under a confidence that they would never be burdened with a turnpike tax.<sup>91</sup>

In 1786 also a pamphlet was printed, entitled '*Remarks on the principle of a bill for the establishment of turnpikes round the city of Dublin*'.<sup>92</sup> It was reprinted in 1787 with additions including a brief abstract of Luke Gardiner's bill which was then pending in parliament. There was no author's name attached but it is almost certain that it was written by Luke Gardiner or someone acting on his behalf. This pamphlet was strongly in favour of the turnpike concept and system and advocated the adoption of the proposed bill. In addition to this pamphlet, details of the parliamentary debates on the relevant bill are also available. Even though the bill was



defeated in parliament, the debates shed considerable light on the thinking about turnpike roads at this time. The bill was presented to the house of commons for the second time by Gardiner on 28 February 1787.<sup>93</sup> Sir Edward Newenham opposed it 'as being disagreeable to nine out ten of the inhabitants of the county of Dublin.'<sup>94</sup> A petition of the freeholders and landholders of county Dublin, convened by the high sheriff at Kilmainham on 22 February 1787 was then read to the house, part of which indicated that the petitioners were fearful that the tolls:

:

would be highly oppressive, and operate to the injury of agriculture of the petitioners, and it being a matter of notoriety that turnpike roads are universally the worst roads through the kingdom, they therefore pray the house not to suffer any bill to pass for fixing or erecting turnpikes on the free roads of said county, as the petitioners are ever willing to keep them in good order by barony cess.<sup>95</sup>

A somewhat similar petition was received from the Dublin city grand jury, which stated that the proposed turnpikes would adversely affect the trade in the city by increasing costs and added that the new system 'must also operate to the injury of the health and convenience of the inhabitants of Dublin, by drawing a line of circumvallation round the city.'<sup>96</sup> On 8 March 1787 the house of commons received another petition from 'the gentlemen, landholders and farmers of the county of Dublin,' which called for the turnpike bill to be passed because the roads that lead to it [Dublin city] and intersect their small county being so numerous, so worn, and so broke up .....that they cannot be kept in repair.'<sup>97</sup> These petitioners also criticised the 'new freeholders' when they pointed out: 'that the city having spread its buildings over a small part of the county, many citizens have become freeholders, though possessing no more land in it than is sufficient to erect a shop upon...'<sup>98</sup> The petition ended with the plea 'that every man that wears the roads may contribute a small matter towards their repair.'<sup>99</sup> Mr. Rowley, a member of the house was opposed to the bill as he well knew 'that turnpikes were in general infamous jobs'<sup>100</sup>. Several other members then spoke either for or against the bill but one member, a Mr. Annesley speaking in favour of the bill said that he had voted against the former bills brought in by Mr. Gardiner, 'because their principle was to make one aggregate fund of the tax to be raised by all turnpikes in the county; but this was a different bill; by it each road was to be repaired by the tax collected on itself.'<sup>101</sup> Sir Francis Flood was another member who vehemently opposed the proposed new turnpike bill and had described it as. 'A bill of circumvallation and imprisonment for the citizens of Dublin; for harassing people with useless taxes, to be jobbed away for rendering the roads impassable.'<sup>102</sup> This bill was not passed in the house of commons in 1787. Another effort by Mr Gardiner to have the bill passed in 1788 was also unsuccessful.<sup>103</sup>

A further example of the opposition of some members of parliament to any extension of the turnpike system in the Dublin area is shown by the contribution of Sir Edward Newenham to the debate on the second reading of a bill to extend the Malahide road turnpike to Raheny and Clontarf in 1788:



Sir Edward Newenham entreated the gentlemen who had brought forward that measure to give it up entirely. He said it was obvious to him that in a little time, by the ill effects of turnpikes, the roads would be utterly destroyed; whereas were the gentlemen to relinquish that injurious mode, he would venture to vouch that the county and city would present liberally the repair of the roads.<sup>104</sup>

### 3.11 Concluding remarks on period

It is thus seen that during the period between 1759 and 1789 the popular support for the turnpike concept was diminishing. The main reason for this was the crippling debt incurred by many of the trusts in the initial period up to 1758. The payment of the interest on these debts did not allow for proper road maintenance in many cases. There was also a realisation in some of the trusts that increased traffic such as occurred on the Dublin-Kilcullen road, also increased the need for greater expenditure on repairs. In short the turnpike roads were trapped in the vicious spiral of inter-dependencies that besets all transport modes and not all the trustees were able to understand, let alone resolve the problems. Various stratagems such as sub-division of trusts and increasing toll-rates were tried out to overcome the difficulties with only partial success in some instances. The real nature of the problem does not appear to have been fully appreciated by those in authority in parliament. It was obvious that more changes would be needed in the next period.

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<sup>1</sup> Braudel, *The identity of France*, ii., p.p. 484-5.

<sup>2</sup> W. Greig, *Strictures on road police* (Dublin, 1818), p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> M. Searle, *Turnpikes and toll bars* (London, 1930), i, p. 86 [quoted in *Transport revolution from 1770*, Philip S. Bagwell (London, 1974), p. 36].

<sup>4</sup> Petition from baronies of county Kilkenny to assize justices, 22 July 1761 (N. L. I, Ms. 8804).

<sup>5</sup> Connell, *Population*, repr.(U. S. A., 1975), p. 99.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Beames, *Peasants and power* (Brighton, 1983), p. 27.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> John Bush, *'Hiberna curiosa'* (London, 1769), p. 137.

<sup>10</sup> B. N. L., 23 April 1762.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas P. Power, *Land, politics and society in eighteenth-century Tipperary* (Oxford, 1993), p. 177.

<sup>12</sup> Maurice J. Bric, 'The Whiteboy movement in Tipperary' in *Tipperary: history and society*, W. Nolan (ed.), (Dublin, 1985), p. 164. (fig. 9.1).

<sup>13</sup> B. N. L., 13 April 1762.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, 23 April 1762.

<sup>15</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, vii, p.113.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> James S. Donnelly, Jr. 'Hearts of oak, hearts of steel' in *Studia. Hib.*, 21 (1981), p. 14.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted by Rice in *Effects of the Irish grand jury laws*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>19</sup> Young, *A tour in Ire.* (Dublin, 1780), ii, (ii), p. 114.

<sup>20</sup> Connell, *Population*, repr.(U.S.A., 1975), appen. iv, pp. 270-271.

<sup>21</sup> *F. J.*, 1-4 Oct. 1763.

<sup>22</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, vii, p. 51.

<sup>23</sup> *Dublin Journal*, 31 March - 3 April 1759.



- <sup>24</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>25</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>26</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>27</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, xiii, p. cccci.
- <sup>28</sup> Semple, *Hibernia's free trade*, pp. 184-185.
- <sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p. 185.
- <sup>30</sup> H. B. Staples (ed.), *The Ireland of Sir Jonah Barrington--selections from his personal sketches* (London, 1968), pp. 104-105.
- <sup>31</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>32</sup> Anon, *An essay on the present state of our public roads* (London, 1756), p.1.
- <sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>34</sup> *B. N. L.*, 8 January 1762.
- <sup>35</sup> Anon, *Remarks on the principle of a bill for the establishment of turnpikes round the city of Dublin* (Dublin, 1786), repr. 1777, p. 5.
- <sup>36</sup> Peter J. O'Keeffe, 'The development of Ireland's road network' in *trans. I. E. I.*, 98-99 (1973-75), pp. 78-79..
- <sup>37</sup> Observations on Dublin-Dunleer road survey by Thomas Sherrard, 1787 (F. C. C. Archives, Records of Dublin-Dunleer turnpike road, Box 14, File 16).
- <sup>38</sup> G. Taylor and A. Skinner, *Maps of the roads of Ireland* (London and Dublin, 1778) 2nd. ed. corrected 1783, repr.(Shannon, 1969).
- <sup>39</sup> Young, *A tour in Ire.* (Dublin, 1780), ii, (ii), p. 56.
- <sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, p. 57.
- <sup>41</sup> Young, *A tour in Ire.* (Dublin, 1780), i, p.156.
- <sup>42</sup> Albert, *Turnpike road system in England*, p. 141.
- <sup>43</sup> H. J. Dyos and D. H. Aldcroft, *British transport: an economic survey from the seventeenth century to the twentieth* (Leicester, 1969), p. 69.
- <sup>44</sup> Sir Henry Parnell, *A treatise on roads* (London, 1833), pp. 22-23.
- <sup>45</sup> Arthur Young, *A tour in Ireland...in the years 1776, 1777 and 1778*, ed. Constantia Maxwell (Cambridge, 1925), map to illustrate the tour at end of book.
- <sup>46</sup> Hugh Faulkner, to Samuel Faulkner, 10 December 1768. P. R. O. N. I., Faulkner papers, Mic. 21 quoted by J. W. McConaghy, in Ph.D. thesis on 'Thomas Greer of Dungannon, 1724-1803, Quaker linen merchant', Q. U. B., 1979, p. 21.
- <sup>47</sup> Young, *A tour in Ire.* (Dublin, 1780), ii, (ii), p. 57.
- <sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, p. 195.
- <sup>49</sup> M. B. Mullins, Presidential address in *Trans. Inst. of Civil Engs. of Ireland*, iv (1959-60-61), pp. 109-110.
- <sup>50</sup> Colonel Roy, 1766 (N. L. I, Report on tour in Ireland, Ms. 14,306).
- <sup>51</sup> Arthur Young, *Travels during the years 1787, 1788 and 1789* (London, 1791) 2nd. ed., i, pp. 44-45.
- <sup>52</sup> James Kelly (ed.), 'A tour of Ireland in 1782' in *N. Mun. Antiq. Jn.*, xxix (1987), pp. 49-67.
- <sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p. 54.
- <sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, p. 62.
- <sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, p. 63.
- <sup>56</sup> Diary of Rev. A. Beaufort of tour in Ireland (T. C. D., Beaufort papers, Ms. 4029 and 4030).
- <sup>57</sup> Ms. 4029, p. 1.
- <sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, Note in mileage record at end of diary.
- <sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1.
- <sup>60</sup> James Mockler, 'A report on the state of the district around Mallow, in 1775' in *J. C. H. A. S.*, xxi 2nd. ser.(1915) pp. 17-29.
- <sup>61</sup> P. R. O. N. I., Masserene-Foster papers, Ms D562/2288.
- <sup>62</sup> *Accounts presented to the house of commons respecting the grand jury presentments of Ireland*, pp. 1-49, H. C. 1805 (211), vi, 595-643.
- <sup>63</sup> *Second report from the railways commissioners, Ireland*, H. C. 1837-38 (145). xxxv.
- <sup>64</sup> Mockler, 'A report on district around Mallow,' pp. 17-29.
- <sup>65</sup> Dyos, & Aldcroft,. *British transport*, p. 73.
- <sup>66</sup> Young, *A tour in Ire.* (Dublin, 1780),.i, p. 220.
- <sup>67</sup> Dyos, & Aldcroft,. *British transport*, p. 73.
- <sup>68</sup> Philip Luckcombe, *A tour through Ireland* (London, 1780), pp. 79-80.
- <sup>69</sup> Young, *A tour in Ire* (Dublin, 1780), i, p. 166-7.



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- <sup>70</sup> E.g. *Commons jn. Ire.*, ix, appen. pp. dxvi-dxviii for bounties paid in year ending 24 March 1776.
- <sup>71</sup> *C. A. R. D.*, xi, p. 148.
- <sup>72</sup> *Parl. reg. Ire.*, viii (1788), p. 409.
- <sup>73</sup> *ibid.* p. 410.
- <sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, p. 411.
- <sup>75</sup> Anon, *Remarks on the principle of a bill for the establishment of turnpikes round the city of Dublin* (Dublin, 1786), repr. 1787 with additions, p. 11.
- <sup>76</sup> Young, *A tour in Ire.* (Dublin, 1780), ii, (ii), p. 135.
- <sup>77</sup> Young, *A tour in Ire.* (Dublin, 1780), ii, p. 14.
- <sup>78</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, viii, appen. lxxx.
- <sup>79</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, viii, appen. cxiv.
- <sup>80</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, xii, appen. dxi.
- <sup>81</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>82</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, appen. dxii.
- <sup>84</sup> Lord Mountmorres, *The history of the principal transactions of the Irish parliament* (London, 1792), in 2 vols., i, pp. 180-5.
- <sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, p. 181.
- <sup>86</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, p. 184.
- <sup>88</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, xii, p. 75.
- <sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, p. 89.
- <sup>90</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>91</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>92</sup> Anon, *Remarks on the principle of a bill for the establishment of turnpikes round the city of Dublin* (Dublin, 1786), repr. 1787 with additions.
- <sup>93</sup> *Parl. reg. Ire.*, vii (1787), p. 258.
- <sup>94</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>95</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, p. 259.
- <sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, p. 300.
- <sup>98</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>99</sup> *ibid.*, p. 301.
- <sup>100</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>101</sup> *ibid.*, p. 303-4.
- <sup>102</sup> *ibid.* p. 303.
- <sup>103</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, xii, p. 388.
- <sup>104</sup> *Parl. reg. Ire.*, viii (1788), pp. 274-5.



## CHAPTER 4      INNOVATIONS AND CHANGES IN PERIOD FROM 1789 TO 1819

Between 1789 and 1819 the emergence of the Post Office mail service had an influence on Irish roads, both by creating special mail-coach roads and breathing new life into some of the turnpike roads by paying tolls (usually quarterly payments) for their use by the mail coaches. In the year 1800 the act of union was passed which ended the parliament in Dublin and transferred all its powers to the United Kingdom parliament. Generally the period up to the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1816, was one of comparative prosperity for the country but a period of depression soon set in and once again by 1818 some of the rural areas were on the verge of starvation.

### ***4.1 Introduction of mail coaches and their effect on the turnpike road system***

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when the postal service in Ireland began to operate. It is however known that 'there were regular posts from the reign of Elizabeth.'<sup>1</sup> The service proper did not become reasonably well established until 1638 when Evan Vaughan was appointed the first Dublin postmaster<sup>2</sup>.and a report by him in 1655 gives the first list of provincial post offices:

Ulster<sup>i</sup> - Belturbet, Drogheda, Dundalk, Newry, Armagh, Londonderry, Antrim, Coleraine, Belfast and Carrickfergus.

Connaught - Athlone, Castlerea, Loughrea, Galway.

Munster<sup>ii</sup> - Kilkenny, Clonmel, Mallow, Youghal, Cork, Cashel, Limerick, Gowran, Wexford and Waterford.<sup>3</sup>

The posts were once weekly, increasing to twice a week by 1663. Despite this early progress, the postal service improved only very slowly throughout the following century due mainly to the system of charging for letters by the distance they had to be carried. Lack of a reliable and efficient postal system was a handicap to trade and commerce and efforts were made to speed up the service as well as reduce costs. There was much relief in 1784 when an act was passed by parliament (23 & 24 Geo.III, c.17) which gave Ireland its own postal service with two Postmasters General. This act was probably prompted by the idea of John Palmer of Bath in 1782 to reform the postal service in England by using special coaches to convey the mail instead of

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<sup>i</sup> Note that Drogheda and Dundalk are in the province of Leinster.

<sup>ii</sup> Note that Kilkenny, Wexford and Gowran are in the province of Leinster.



using post-boys to carry the letters. The first Royal Mail coach ran from London to Bristol on 2 August 1784.<sup>4</sup>

However a significant step had been taken by the authorities in 1774 when John Lees, a Scotsman who came to Ireland in 1767 as part of Lord Lieutenant Townshend's entourage<sup>5</sup>, was appointed as Secretary of the then Irish branch of the post office. Lees continued as Secretary after the change in 1784 and occupied this post until he died in 1811. Perhaps because of the fact that there were two Postmasters General instead of the more appropriate one, most of the management and running of the postal service was left in the hands of the Secretary. Due to ill-health John Lees was joined by his son Edward in 1801 who became Joint Secretary and actually carried out most of the work even though he was only eighteen years of age when appointed. After involvement in many financial discrepancies in the Irish post office Edward Lees was dismissed in 1831 but was subsequently transferred to Edinburgh post office. The Lees, in the words of Peter J. O'Keeffe 'dominated, defrauded and mismanaged the Irish Post Office.'<sup>6</sup> As evidence of this O'Keeffe quoted N. Brunicardi, the biographer of John Anderson, one of the original contractors for the conveyance of mails by coach in Ireland. Brunicardi commented on the high cost of running the Irish postal service and said: 'The subsequent inquiry characterised it with almost every term of opprobrium, nepotism, jobbery, corruption, trickery, bribery, graft, swindle, peculation, stealing and fraud, and the lack of record of transactions.'<sup>7</sup> O'Keeffe also quoted B. Bayley Butler's article in the *Dublin Historical Record*, in which she concludes about the Lees:

They were not to blame for having so much power, but must be held responsible for the way they misused it, amassing fortunes for themselves, inventing sinecures for their relations and outwitting auditors by destroying the records.<sup>8</sup>

In common with traders all over Ireland the merchants of Cork were anxious to have an improved postal service particularly from Dublin and Waterford. They were led by the previously mentioned John Anderson, a Scottish entrepreneur, who came to Cork in 1780 from Dumfries. Anderson quickly became one of the principal shipping merchants and was soon befriended by some leading members of the aristocracy. In 1789, Anderson and two other Cork merchants were awarded the contract for conveying the mails between Dublin and Cork. This service was to commence on 5 April 1789 but, having purchased coaches and horses, Anderson and his associates felt that the road was too bad to achieve the required minimum speed of three Irish miles (3.82 statute miles) per hour. Accordingly a petition was presented to the house of commons on 15 April 1789 in the names of the three contractors; Bart O'Donoghue, John Anderson and Henry Fortescue, described as merchants of the city of Cork:

That petitioners have entered into a contract for the conveyance of His Majesty's mail between Dublin and Cork on a plan similar to that lately



adopted in England and in order to carry the same into effect have gone to a very considerable expense providing coaches horses and other necessaries. That the petitioners intended to commence running said coaches on 5th April inst. in the full hope that by that time the trustees of the different turnpikes would in compliance with his Excellency, the Lord Lieutenant's circular letter to the different High Sheriffs issued last summer, have caused the roads to be completely repaired. That upon last minute inspection of the road, particularly between Kilkenny and Clogheen, the petitioners are much disappointed to find the necessary repairs have been neglected and in many instances they continue so bad and so extremely narrow as to render it impossible for two carriages to pass even by daylight without utmost danger of one being overturned into the deep ditches on either side, that upon application to the turnpike boards the petitioners were given to understand they had not sufficient funds for accomplishing the repairs so essential to the success of the undertaking. That under these difficulties the petitioners have too great cause to fear that the establishment of so great a public utility will be entirely defeated without the aid and interposition of parliament. In confirmation of these facts the petitioners humbly beg leave to refer to a report of the present state of the post roads to the Postmaster General and therefore praying relief.<sup>9</sup>

An almost identical petition was presented on 25 April 1789 by a George Anderson and Thomas Greer both Newry merchants in respect of the mail contract on the Dublin to Belfast road<sup>10</sup>. This second petition shows that there was either some collusion between the contractors for the Dublin-Belfast and the Dublin-Cork mail coaches or else that the Dublin-Belfast contractors decided to copy the example of their Dublin-Cork counterparts, as they felt that they had similar problems.

The mail coach service from Dublin to Limerick was started in 1791 and the coaches were owned by William Bourne, who operated the service with John Anderson. The award of the mail contracts resulted in the mail contractors developing an interest in the repair of the turnpike roads and then seeking to take full control of the roads in order to run them so that any resultant profit would accrue to the operators. The origin of this 'privatisation' of some of the turnpike roads started with a petition of that by now experienced petitioner John Anderson and William Bourne, his partner on the Naas-Limerick mail coach contract. The petition was read to the house of commons on 20 June 1793:

That in the year 1791 the Petitioners contracted to convey His Majesty's Mails by coaches between Dublin and Limerick. That, from the extreme bad condition of the road between Naas and Limerick, they have been compelled to lend upwards of £2,000 to have some of it made passable, a large part of which sum they have not a probability to ever receive. That, to avoid part of one stage, the Mail-Coach has been, and is, obliged to go near three miles about; and that



if a general and effectual repair does not precede the winter, they conceive the public must be deprived of the benefit of the Mail-Coach Establishment and that the Petitioners must sustain great loss. That the present line of the Road is in general narrow, hilly and circuitous; that, in several instances, a considerable reduction of distance might be effected by making a New Road between one town and another, and by taking off angles, by which most if not all the hills would be avoided. That the Petitioners believe the sum of £27,000 would be requisite to make the necessary and proposed improvements, which sum the Petitioners, involved as they are, and seeing no other prospect of being extricated, would lend to such persons as might be appointed, on being properly secured, or would advance, and, under the penalty of £20,000, covenant within four years to make such New Roads as upon survey should be deemed necessary, and repair and put into complete order such Old Road as should be continued of the line, and would keep the entire line of road from Naas to Maryborough and Ballyroan, and from Maryborough to Limerick, in perfect repair for 30 years, upon having the Tolls made equal to those on part of the Northern and other Roads, and assigned to the Petitioners for the term of their agreement; and therefore praying that a Bill may be brought in for said purpose.<sup>11</sup>

As a result of this petition, an act (33 Geo.III, c.32) was passed in 1793, which granted the lease of the road and tolls from Naas to Limerick to the petitioners for thirty years from that date, on certain specified conditions as to upholding the road. The select committee on monopolies in the management of turnpike roads in their report of 1837 commented on the reason for one of the unusual provisions of the 1793 act:

In this act [33 Geo.III, c.32] a power was given to levy a penalty of five shillings a horse on every coach on the roads from Dublin to Limerick, provided the passengers therein exceeded nine in number, being similar to an enactment obtained by influential persons near Limerick to protect the monopoly of carrying passengers to Dublin by the canal, against the competition of a long coach or omnibus, introduced even in those days to carry 16 or 18 passengers at a cheap rate.<sup>12</sup>

This power was to give rise to much difficulty and criticism in later years and should not have been granted as 'no five shilling penalty ever did apply for the northern roads.'<sup>13</sup>

In 1798 a bill was brought into the house of commons for the privatisation of the road from Dublin to Kilcullen Bridge, and to the 21st. milestone westward of the said bridge. It was presented as a public bill by John Wolfe on 23 July. It spent some time going through the



parliament and just before it was enacted the Steering Committee was given powers to insert certain clauses, 'which clauses contain the prolongation of the Act of 1793 [33 Geo.III, c.32 - Naas-Limerick] for 20 years longer, making the term 50 in place of 30 years, while 25 years of the 30 years' Act had yet to run.'<sup>14</sup> The power given was:

To receive a clause or clauses for prolonging the duration of the Act for repairing the Limerick Road to the same period with the said Bill; also a clause or clauses for the further improvement of the road, from the bounds of the county of Cork at Kilworth Mountain, to the city of Cork.<sup>15</sup>

As a result of this the original title of the bill was changed to read:

To explain and reduce into one Act the several laws for making and repairing the Turnpike Road leading from the City of Dublin to Kilcullen Bridge in the County of Kildare, and to the 21st. milestone westward of the said Bridge; and for prolonging the duration of the Act for repairing the Road from Naas to Limerick; and for the further improvement of the Road from Kilworth Mountain to the City of Cork<sup>16</sup>

The resulting act (38 Geo.III, c.83) was passed in 1798 with this title. The report of the select committee appointed by parliament in 1837 to inquire into the monopoly enjoyed by persons in Ireland on certain roads said about the passage of this act and the way two other roads were worked in to an act proposed for another road: 'These suspicious facts tend to prove that the prolongation and extraordinary pains and penalties of the Act could not have been known to the large body of the people to be affected by it.'<sup>17</sup> It added:

The Act in 1798 was passed during the rebellion in Ireland, without any amelioration or diminution of the heavy tolls or enormous and inoperative penalties authorized by the then existing Act, or any benefit conferred on the public in consideration of the many advantages derived by the lessees from the extension of their monopoly from 30 to 50 years, of which Your Committee have been made cognizant by the evidence taken before them or before previous Committees.<sup>18</sup>

It is appropriate at this stage to attempt to ascertain the background reasoning for the award of the contracts for the virtual hand-over of the above three roads to John Anderson and his associates for such long periods. In the case of the Naas-Limerick road the contractors were as already stated, John Anderson and William Bourne. The contractors for the Dublin-Kilcullen Bridge (Naas) road were John Anderson and two experienced road engineers named George and Alexander Taylor, while the contractor for the Cork-Kilworth Mountain road was John Anderson who subsequently entered into an agreement with a Robert Briscoe, whereby Briscoe undertook



the management of the road for a fifty per cent share of the profits.<sup>19</sup> At the hearings of the select committee on turnpike roads of 1831-32 William Taylor, a son of George testified that both his father and uncle, Major Alexander Taylor were friends of John Anderson (note that all three were Scottish) and were partners of his in the contract for the Naas-Limerick turnpike road. William Taylor added that his father George was made manager of this road.<sup>20</sup> He further testified:

The committee will no doubt bear in mind that in the year 1798 it was an object of first rate importance to the government that the communications with the capital should be on the best footing and it was only natural for them to have applied to the only professional engineers then residing in Ireland, particularly as these engineers had already established their skill and knowledge in the management of the extensive line of road from Naas to Limerick, which road must have come under the notice of the Chancellor of Ireland, Lord Clare, as his country residence was at Mount Shannon near the city of Limerick. I need not press upon the Committee the known pecuniary embarrassment of the Irish Government of that day or of the cause from which the arose, it is sufficient for my purposes to state distinctly and positively as I do that the arrangements respecting the Naas Road were entered into at the solicitation of the Government.<sup>21</sup>

William Taylor also testified that his father and uncle, on inspection of the Dublin-Naas road found it to be in very poor condition with inadequate resources and on this account indicated that:

They would not contract for its improvement unless the tolls were vested for 50 years and also that the term for which the Limerick road was vested in its contractors was extended for [to] 50 years so that the Kilcullen and Limerick acts would expire on the same day.<sup>22</sup>

From these testaments it obvious that there were political and security considerations involved in ensuring that these roads and especially the Dublin-Kilcullen Bridge (Naas) road was put into good repair by expert road engineers and that these considerations were primarily responsible for the enactment of the 1798 act (38 Geo.III, c.83). By 1832, John Anderson and Major Taylor were both dead. In the early 1800s as other financial troubles began to build up for Anderson, he sold off his turnpike interests to his partners and so the Limerick road contract became the sole property of the Bourmes, the Dublin-Naas road the property of the Taylors (Major Taylor, in his will, left his share to the sons of his brother George) and Robert Briscoe took over the Cork-Kilworth Mountain road.

The provision in the 1798 act (38 Geo.III, c.83) which empowered the exaction of a penalty of 5s. a horse for even one passenger in addition to nine was removed in by an act passed in 1810 (50 Geo.III, c.32) and restored by another act of 1811 (51 Geo.III, c.40). Later in 1811, still another act was passed (51 Geo.III, c 92), which again abolished the 5s. per horse penalty but



imposed a new penalty of an extra 4d. per horse over and above the normal tolls payable at every gate. This flurry of legislation showed the indecisive nature of the authorities and the influence of the private turnpike road operators who were only securing their own profits by excluding the opposition which was sound business practice as far as they were concerned. No blame could be attached to them for this, however much it affected others, as the responsibility was entirely in the hands of the parliament and government.

From the point of view of the turnpike roads it is thus seen how influential John Anderson was in the origin of the Irish mail coaches and in the repair and improvement of the road system. Anderson was a banker and land speculator as well as a merchant and became friendly with Bernard Shaw, Collector at the port of Cork. Bernard Shaw's father was Robert Shaw, a prominent Dublin merchant and Accountant-General of the Post-Office, while Bernard Shaw's elder brother was Sir Robert Shaw Bt. M. P., leading Dublin banker and politician. Anderson's son married into the Shaw family as also did a son of John Lees, the Secretary of the Post Office. It can be seen from an entry in the rough journal of the Dublin-Mullingar turnpike road that Anderson and Robert Shaw acted as guarantors for the successful bidder for the tolls on that road in 1794<sup>23</sup>. Because of the Shaw connection Lees and Anderson developed a friendship and Anderson when in Dublin stayed at the Secretary's official residence in College Green. In the course of land dealings in Fermoy, John Anderson also became friendly with the Hely-Hutchinson family, one of whom, Richard, first Earl of Donoughmore was Joint Postmaster-General from 1805 to 1809. In view of all these acquaintances and connections, Anderson seems to have assumed that he would be 'looked after' if he got into financial trouble. In 1816 his bank failed and he died, a broken man, on 13 July 1820.<sup>24</sup> Before his death, he wrote several letters seeking help and in one of these written to his son Sir James Anderson on 9 February 1820 for transmission to a friend, probably Lord Donoughmore, he recounted his involvement with the mail coaches and the turnpike roads.<sup>25</sup> In this letter John Anderson recounted about how he first got the idea that if he could improve the postal service by running mail coaches he would benefit both himself and the country. Despite his expressed attempt to benefit the country, one cannot help feeling that he was much more concerned with the benefit to himself. He wrote:

Having occasion to be in England, and observing the great benefits accruing to the Mail Coach Establishment, together with the clear prospect it held out of its becoming an extensive source of additional revenue, I was ambitious to be instrumental in introducing the same system into this kingdom, where the state of travelling was at so low an ebb, as to require four, and frequently five days in moving from Dublin to Cork,.....and is now performed by the Mail Coach in twenty-four hours.<sup>26</sup>

Anderson continued to recount in the letter about how he 'cultivated an acquaintance with the celebrated Mr. Palmer, with whom the plan had originated in England' and having 'obtained all the necessary information,' he submitted a tender to the Irish Postmasters-General for a



somewhat similar system here.<sup>27</sup> He then related in his letter that his proposal was accepted provided that in addition to providing the coaches and horses, that ' I was also to find what further means, beside the tolls, might be necessary, for having the roads put in proper repair and changed where required and also to make new lines of road where the old ones would not answer the purpose.'<sup>28</sup> He continued:

My operations commenced on the road between Dublin and Cork, when, before the coaches could be moved with safety and expedition, I was obliged to advance large sums of money to the Turnpike Boards of the counties of Kildare, Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary and Cork. The line between Dublin and Limerick, on which I next commenced, was still, if possible, in a more disgraceful state, and a great part of it obliged to be made entirely new, for which purpose, I covenanted to expend no less than twenty-eight thousand pounds, and had the good fortune to accomplish the business to the satisfaction of all concerned. This being done, I bent my attention to the line between Dublin and Galway via Mullingar, on which at least ten thousand pounds was expended.<sup>29</sup>

Mr. Anderson further wrote that he paid for works on other roads such the Dublin-Waterford, Cork to Waterford via Clonmel and the Clonmel to Limerick road in the progress of which 'fifteen hundred pounds was lost by a dishonest agent'<sup>30</sup> who fled the country with the money. He added in the same letter that as a county Cork grand jury member, he brought forward presentments and assisted in others for the improvement of the Cork-Limerick turnpike road and the Cork-Kinsale / Cork-Skibbereen roads which were later made into turnpike roads.

In controversial subjects such as the privatisation of turnpike roads, it is essential to hear both sides of the story. There seems to be little doubt but that Anderson, the canny Scot was primarily interested in making money for himself, but in the process benefited his adopted country in no small way. He began the mail coach system and made postal communication more reliable. He also pioneered cheap dependable passenger travel and opened up the way for Charles Bianconi to follow. Anderson also rebuilt the bridge and town of Fermoy and some of the quays of Cork, one of which still bears his name.

The introduction of the mail coaches and related legislation brought about several changes in the Irish roads including the turnpike system. An act of 1792 (32 Geo.III, c.30) allowed grand juries to present new post roads to be laid out in the counties with a maximum width of 52 feet and a minimum width of 42 feet. In 1805, a major mail coach road act (45 Geo.III, c.43) was passed by parliament. This act provided that proper surveys of all post roads be carried out by qualified surveyors, who were then to design and draw up the necessary road realignment schemes for the improvement of these roads in accordance with the alignment standards laid down in Section 2 of the act. These standards were as follows:



... in no part of any such new line shall the ascent or descent of the road when finished exceed the rate or proportion of one foot in height or fall in each thirty-five feet of the length thereof, if same be practicable, without causing such a great increase of distance as to delay considerably the carriage of the mails; and if same be not practicable, then such surveyor shall find out and survey the most practicable line which shall be nearest in its ascent or descent to such proportion of height or fall.

These were the first design standards ever prescribed in Ireland and their implementation over a long period considerably improved a good number of the more important roads including the turnpike roads. A good example of the application of the standards was the construction of the by-pass of the steep hill at the Man -of -War inn south of Balrothery on the Dublin-Dunleer turnpike road.<sup>31</sup> The design of this four mile by-pass was done by William Dargan and the work was completed in 1834.

In order to assess the changes brought about in the turnpike system by the introduction of the mail coaches and other nineteenth century developments it is appropriate to consider the condition of some of the principal roads at the turn of the century. Reports on the condition of some of these roads were made in the county surveys organised by the Dublin Society at that time and the condition of the roads can be ascertained by consideration of a few examples from these reports. The Armagh-Newry turnpike road already criticised so much by Arthur Young (See page 135 ) was again criticised in 1804: 'The turnpike road from Armagh to Newry is, perhaps, the worst in Ireland as a public road, and is a disgrace to an opulent county.'<sup>32</sup> Thus it is seen that very little had changed as regards the condition of this road in over twenty five years. By way of contrast things appeared better in county Meath as Robert Thompson observed in 1802:

There are only two turnpike roads running through the County of Meath, the one leading from Dublin to Drogheda and the other from Dublin to Navan, both kept remarkably well. The latter is a new line, and promises, through the exertions of the turnpike board and particularly Charles Drake Dillon Esq. to be of great advantage to the County.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the good prospects for the Dublin-Navan turnpike road, it will be seen that troubles lay ahead for this road (See page 230). Lastly an interesting description of the condition of the turnpike roads in county Kilkenny was given in 1802 by William Tighe in his *Statistical survey of county Kilkenny*:

The Cork road through Kilkenny and Callan is a turnpike road and not so well kept as might be expected from the goodness of the materials near it; those that go from Castlecomer are all turnpike roads, to Kilkenny, to Athy, to Ballinakill, to Leighlin, and [are] bad like most colliery roads, being made of



large stones: three of them are in the hands of Lady Ormonde, who has employed an overseer to repair them at £200 per year; he takes up all the stones and has them broken small.<sup>34</sup>

It is seen from this description that gravel was only used on roads where it was available locally and in its place, the local stone was substituted.. However the stone was not always broken down to the correct size before use and this created further problems for traffic. Thus the advent of the mail coach system which operated on fixed times and reasonably uniform vehicle speeds made it necessary that rapid improvements be made in the running surfaces of the turnpike roads as well as future improvements in vertical alignment.

## 4.2 *New turnpike legislation*

There were a total of six acts passed between 1790 and 1819. Four of these were enacted in the Irish parliament. After the act of union (40 Geo.III, c.38) the number of new turnpike acts was much reduced. Between 1800 and 1819 there were only two such acts passed and details of all six acts are listed in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 *New road lengths added to turnpike system between 1790 and 1819***

Number	Short name of road	Enabling act	Year	Length in miles
1	Castlecomer-Kilkenny	33 Geo.III, c.19	1793	12.00
2	Dublin-Curraha & Ratoath	35 Geo.III, c.47	1795	11.50
3	Waterford-Cork boundary.	36 Geo.III, c.13	1796	50.91
4	Dublin-Knocksedan	38 Geo.III, c.31	1798	8.00
5	Shankill-Waterford	51 Geo.III, c.19	1811	35.00
6	Cork-Tralee	52 Geo.III, c.138	1812	76.4 (20.00 new)







Map 2 ( see page 166) shows the roads for which turnpike enabling acts were passed by the Irish parliament from 1729 up to 1798 and these constituted 80.5% of the total length of all the roads in Ireland for which turnpike enabling acts were ever enacted. Thus it can be seen from this map that by 1800, that though new turnpike roads continued to be made up to 1837, the main framework of the system was already in existence.

There was a change in the administration of some of the trusts of the roads listed in Table 4.1. Writing in 1833 about the position in England, Sir Henry Parnell pointed out the difficulties of operating a road trust with control resting in the hands of large numbers of trustees:

According to the provisions of every turnpike act, a great number of persons are named as trustees: the practice is to make almost everyone a trustee, residing in the vicinity of a road, who is an opulent farmer or tradesman, as well as all the nobility and persons of large landed property; so that a trust seldom consists of fewer than one hundred persons, even if the length of the road to be maintained by them does not exceed a few miles. The result of this practice is, that in every set of trustees there are to be found persons who do not possess a single qualification for the office; persons who conceive they are by the title of a road trustee to a station of some importance; and who, too often, seek to show it, by opposing their superiors in ability and integrity, when valuable improvements are under consideration; taking care, too frequently, to turn their authority to account, by so directing the spending of the road money as may best promote the interests of themselves or their connections.<sup>35</sup>

The difficulties highlighted in this were equally true in Ireland. Sir Henry Parnell then proceeded to bring up another difficulty:

It often happens that, when some important business is to be performed, one set of ten or twenty trustees , after devoting a great deal of their time in attending meetings, finally decide upon some useful measure, when another set of trustees summon a meeting, and rescind all their fellow trustees have done<sup>36</sup>.

This last difficulty also occurred in Ireland.<sup>37</sup> As a solution to these problems,. Parnell suggested that: 'Each body of trustees should be obliged to elect by ballot a committee of seven trustees, in whose hands every thing relating to the business of managing the road should be vested.'<sup>38</sup> He goes on to say that this concept was not new in road legislation as an act passed by the Irish parliament in 1798 for the amendment of the Malahide road (38 Geo.III, c.41) already embodied it. A better example involving the concept of 'Director trustees' was the enabling act for the conversion of the Dublin-Knocksedan road to a turnpike one (See No. 4 in Table 4.1) and details of this act and the operation of the turnpike road are set out in Chapter 4.3.



### 4.3 Administration of new 'director' type turnpike road

The Dublin-Knocksedan road is a portion of a secondary road running northwards from Dublin towards Drogheda via Naul. Because it was considered necessary to make the Dublin-Knocksedan portion 'more convenient for travellers'<sup>39</sup> in 1798, an act was passed converting it to a turnpike road under the control of director trustees. As the operation of this turnpike road was relatively uncomplicated and straightforward, a close examination of its procedures and methods of carrying on its business will show how these 'director trustee' turnpikes generally fulfilled their functions. It must be stated that this turnpike trust was most unusual in that the enabling legislation did not specify any time-limit for its duration. Fifteen named persons were appointed commissioners of the road in the first Section of the enabling act (38 Geo.III, c.31). Sections 2 and 3 of this act read as follows:

Section 2 - And be it further enacted That the said commissioners, or any seven or more of them, shall assemble on the first Monday, or any other Monday, after the passing of this act; at the parliament house in the city of Dublin, and shall at said meeting elect by ballot, from among the said commissioners, five persons to be directors for the superintending and managing the said road, and for transacting all business relative to the same.

Section 3 - And be it further enacted, That whenever any of the said commissioners herein appointed by name, shall happen to die or resign, it shall be lawful for the remaining commissioners, or any seven or more of them, on the first Tuesday in any month, to elect a person to be commissioner in his stead, and so as often as a vacancy shall happen, by the death or resignation of any person so chosen.

The act went on to specify the powers of the directors and the tolls to be charged. There was an amending act (40 Geo.III, c.48) passed in 1800. By any standards this was an unusual act. It consisted of only six short Sections. The act named the two vice-presidents and the treasurer and secretary of the Dublin Society (later Royal Dublin Society - the prefix was adopted when King George IV became patron on 29 June 1820<sup>40</sup>) as commissioners of the road and decreed that these four individuals and their successors in office were to be also directors of the road along with the directors under the previous act but raised the quorum of directors' meetings to five from the three in the earlier act. In the view of W. H. Hardinge, writing in 1849:

The reason of this appointment of persons connected with the Royal Dublin Society appears to me to be, because the Botanic Gardens of that Society are approached by the Knocksedan road.<sup>41</sup>

The amending act of 1800 also disallowed any poundage payments to supervisors or gatekeepers and provided that where the length of road between Prospect house and Dublin overlapped or coincided with the turnpike road leading from Dublin to Curraha (Ratoath), then a portion of the



tolls already being collected by the Curraha trust should be paid to Knocksedan directors by way of an agreed annual sum. Lastly the amending act optimistically decreed that any widening of the road between Glasnevin bridge and Knocksedan should not have a width of less than sixty feet.

The first meeting took place on 28 June 1798 and was attended by nine commissioners who duly elected the following five directors: Alderman Richard Manders, Richard Hayes, Isaac Manders, James Stewart and Robert Weir who acted as secretary.<sup>42</sup> The first meeting of the directors took place on 5 December 1798 and Benjamin Pemberton was unanimously selected as supervisor at a salary of forty guineas for one year. However at this meeting only four directors were present and it appeared that one of their number James Stewart was in failing health as he only attended two other meetings in June and July 1799 before a meeting of the commissioners was held on 4 March 1800 to elect a new director and commissioner in his place. At that meeting Humphrey Butler was unanimously elected a director and David Babington a commissioner. A number of meetings were held each year by both directors and commissioners and it is obvious that a good deal of time over the life-span of the turnpike road was taken up electing directors and commissioners. Over almost the first half of the life of this turnpike trust, the most regular attender was alderman Richard Manders who only resigned in 1823 shortly before his death in 1824.<sup>43</sup> The Manders family had a long association with this road in that Richard Mander's son also named Richard, replaced the father and was still a director when the trust was abolished in 1856, by which time the alderman's grandson again named Richard was a commissioner. Both alderman Manders and his son acted as treasurers for very long periods. This family was associated with milling in the Brackenstown area near Swords county Dublin and was experienced in collecting tolls as Richard and Isaac Manders tendered an annual sum of £4,051 for a lease of the tolls and customs of Dublin city in 1783 and this was accepted by the Corporation.<sup>44</sup> In 1786, the city records show that the Manders were again the successful tenderers for the collection of the city tolls and customs,<sup>45</sup> and were highly respected by the authorities as the following excerpt shows:

And from the known integrity and punctuality of Messieurs Richard and Isaac Manders, we are of the opinion and do recommend that a warrant be made out....., empowering the said Richard and Isaac Manders to collect tolls and customs at the different gates.....<sup>46</sup>

During alderman Mander's term as a director of the Knocksedan turnpike trust, he became Lord Mayor for one year as from 17 April 1801.<sup>47</sup> During the taking of evidence in the course of the inquiry held by the select committee for turnpike roads in 1831/32, Sir Josiah Coghill Bt., in reply to questions, stated that the Knocksedan road was then in 'excellent' condition 'and it was in a very bad state when Mr. Manders got it.'<sup>48</sup> This shows that alderman Manders was held in high regard as a turnpike administrator by Coghill, who also informed the inquiry that the Knocksedan road was being 'kept for £37 - 10s. a mile per annum' at that time.<sup>49</sup>



It is possible to see how the actual repair and construction of the portion of the road between Dublin and Prospect house in Glasnevin was done and the cost of same from the tender accepted at the Directors meeting of 26 May 1801. A Mr. Wm. Clarke proposed:

to furnish limestone for repairing the road at the cost of 2s.- 4d. per ton and 2s.- 4d. more for breaking them to the size of hen's eggs or less and to furnish carts to draw same at 2s.- 2d. per day and the necessary labour to lay the stones in a workmanlike masterly and permanent manner at the usual price of labour and to superintend same.<sup>50</sup>

The reference to the breaking of the stone to the size of hen's eggs or less seems to show a possible knowledge of Telford's very early road work because of a reference in Robert Southey's journal of a tour with Telford in Scotland in 1819. Telford was by then in charge of the major reconstruction of the Scottish roads having established his fame as a civil engineer. Southey described some of this road work in the following terms: 'After the foundation has been laid, the workmen are charged to throw out every stone, which is bigger than a hen's egg.'<sup>51</sup> It is known that Telford possessed a ring gauge of two and a half inches diameter and this would tend to corroborate Southey's account. On the other hand it is possible that the Knocksedan contractor may have been acting either from his own or someone else's knowledge.

The collection of toll on this road was set by public cant for periods of from one year to seven years and the details of the selection of the toll-farmers from 2 March 1802 to 21 June 1843, as recorded in the minute book,<sup>52</sup> are given in Table 4.2.

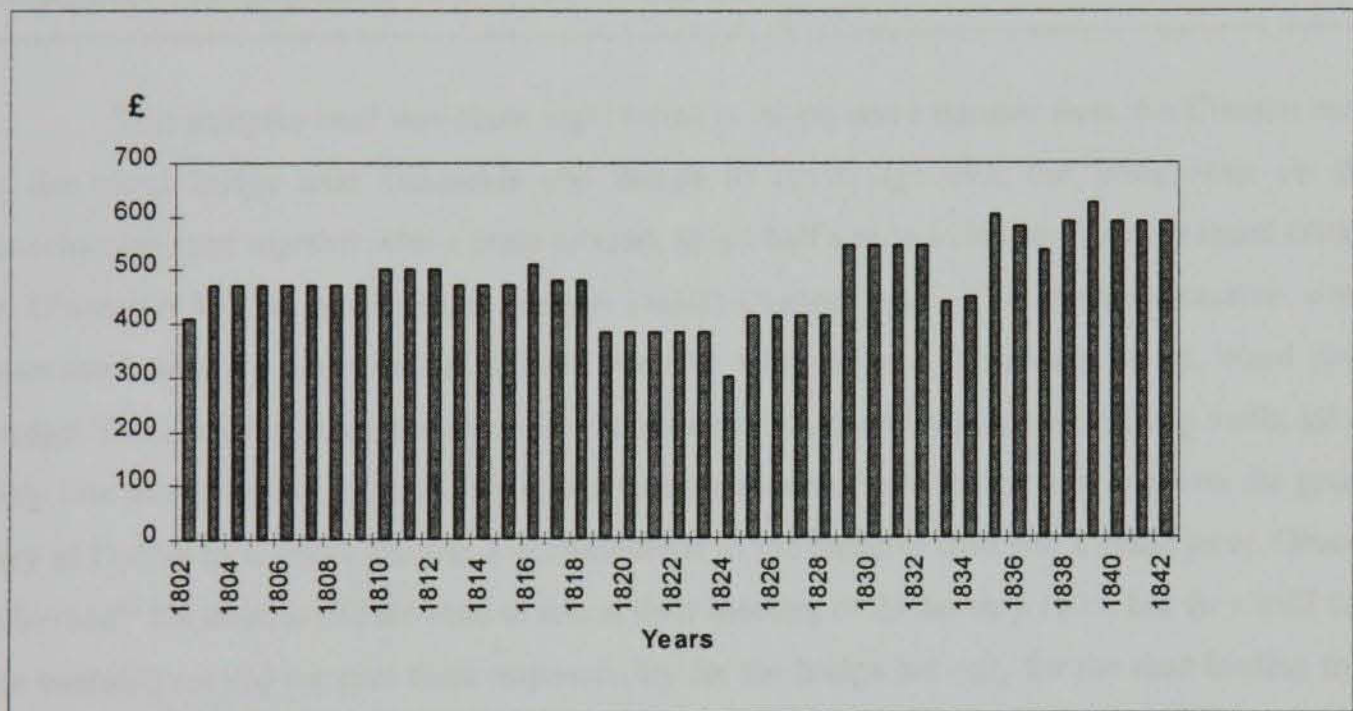
**Table 4.2 Results of 'public cants' for toll collection on Knocksedan turnpike road from 1802 to 1843**

Date of Meeting	No. of Bidders	Range of Bids in Pounds	Name of successful bidder	Starting Date	Duration
2 - 3 - 1802	3	360 to 410	Mr. Quin	1 - 4 - 1802	1 year
25 - 3 - 1803	6	300 to 470	Mr. Charles Bracken	1 - 4 - 1803	3-7 years
22 - 3 - 1810	3	400 to 500	Lord Bishop of Kildare	1 - 4 - 1810	3 years
25 - 3 - 1813	3	400 to 470	Bartholomew Young	1 - 4 - 1813	3 years
27 - 3 - 1816	4	400 to 512	Nicholas Sheridan	1 - 4 - 1816	1 year
10 - 3 - 1817	3	450 to 480	Nicholas Sheridan	1 - 4 - 1817	2 years
29 - 3 - 1819	3	360 to 385	Nicholas Sheridan	1 - 4 - 1819	5 years
1 - 6 - 1824	4	90 to 300	Mrs. Sheridan	1 - 7 - 1824	1 year
24 - 6 - 1825	2	370 to 415	James Young	1 - 7 - 1825	3 years
12 - 1 - 1829	3	400 to 545	Patrick Nowlan	1 - 2 - 1829	3 years
7 - 5 - 1832	4	405 to 545	John Pepper	1 - 6 - 1832	1 year
17 - 6 - 1833	3	400 to 440	Edward Hogan	1 - 7 - 1833	1 year
20 - 6 - 1834	3	400 to 450	"	1 - 7 - 1834	"



10 - 7 - 1835	3	450 to 605	“	1 - 7 - 1835	“
30 - 6 - 1836	3	500 to 580	“	1 - 7 - 1836	“
15 - 6 - 1837	3	505 to 535	“	“	“
6 - 7 - 1838	3	585 to 590	“	“	“
27 - 6 - 1839	3	595 to 625	“	“	“
5 - 5 - 1840	1	590	“	“	3 years
22 - 6 - 1843	--	-----	Patrick Ryan chosen to collect tolls for trust -- end of toll farmers		

The accepted bids are shown in bold figures in Table 4.2 and graphically in Figure 5.



**Figure 5** *Toll income per year on Dublin-Knocksedan turnpike road 1802 - 1842*

The amounts of the toll-income for the years 1843-4, 1844-5 and 1845-6 were recorded in the account book of the road<sup>53</sup> and are as shown in Table 4.3:

**Table 4.3** *Toll receipts on Dublin-Knocksedan turnpike road from 1 July 1843 to 31 October 1846*

Period	Toll Receipts in £ s. d.
Year from 1 July 1843 to 30 June 1844	£634 - 6s. - 7d.
Year from 1 July 1844 to 30 June 1845	£635 - 17s. - 6d.
Year from 1 July 1844 to 30 June 1846	£578 - 5s. - 9d.
Period from 1 July 1846 to 31 October 1846	£187 - 13s. - 11d.

The toll-income from November 1846 to its abolition in 1856<sup>54</sup> is given in Table 4.4.



**Table 4.4 Details of toll income and method of collection on Knocksedan turnpike road from 1846 to 1856**

Period or Year	Toll-Income	Method of collection
7 November 1846-26 June 1847	£259 -15s.- 0d.	Direct
26 June 1847-27 May 1848	£390 - 2s.-11d.	Direct
27 May 1848-1 September 1849	£581 - 3s. - 6d.	Direct
1 September 1849-31 Aug. 1850	£450 - 0s - 0d.	Tolls let by contract (per annum)
1 August 1850- 1 August 1851	£450 - 0s - 0d.	"
August 1851- August 1852	£450 - 0s.- 0d.	"
August 1852- August 1853	£550 - 0s - 0d.	"
September 1853-September 1854	£450 - 0s - 0d.	Three year contract
September 1854-September 1855	£450 - 0s - 0d.	"
September 1855-September 1856	£450 - 0s - 0d.	"

This turnpike road was about eight miles in length and extended from the Circular road to the canal bridge near Glasnevin and thence to the bridge over the Ward river on the Knocksedan road together with a piece of road, about half a mile in length from the canal bridge at Glasnevin to the canal bridge on the Dublin-Dunleer road. The most impressive work associated with the Knocksedan turnpike was the widening and rebuilding of the Ward river bridge. The bridge is a single stone arch with masonry abutments and wing retaining walls, all of very fine workmanship.. The widening and reconstruction of this bridge was urged on the grand jury of Dublin by a Major Greene, a commissioner of the turnpike trust and a grand juror. Greene informed<sup>55</sup> the directors of the road of this at their meeting of 23 January 1829, but they held that the enabling act did not give them responsibility for the bridge but only for the road leading to it and that the toll farmer would be entitled to compensation for any loss incurred while the bridge was being rebuilt. It appears that the bridge plans prepared by William Duncan for the grand jury provided for some road realignment and widening and at a directors' meeting held on 20 November 1829 it was agreed that the turnpike funds would pay £451- 0s. - 1d. out of the total estimated cost of £1,817 - 7s. - 10d. The work on the bridge was carried out during the period from 11 March 1831 to 20 January 1832, and a meeting of the directors of the road the toll-farmer submitted a claim for a loss of £100 incurred during this period which was allowed.

This turnpike road was reasonably well looked after having regard to the general standard of administration of these roads. Some 127 meetings have been recorded in the minutes, of which 27 have been recorded as meetings of the commissioners and the remaining 100 as meetings of the directors. No meetings were recorded for the periods from 7 November 1820 to 3 June 1823 and from 2 November 1829 to 23 January 1832. Omitting the unrecorded periods, these figures give an approximate average of two directors' meetings per year and one commissioners' meeting every two years. The commissioners' meetings were exclusively taken up by the election of replacement commissioners and directors, while the business of the trust



was conducted by the directors, as required by the statute. The only major money raised was a sum of £1398 which one of the directors, the bishop of Kildare, who lived at Glasnevin house expended out of his own funds for the completion of road improvement works, because of the difficulty of 'getting money under the Act.'<sup>56</sup> To cover this sum he was given debentures at five per cent per annum. A son of the bishop, a Capt. Lindsay became a director in 1845 and became secretary and sole manager of receipts and expenditure in 1846. He paid off £150 of the debentures before the trust was abolished in 1856 and was still owed £1,200 at the close. He was suitably compensated.<sup>57</sup>

#### **4.4 *Difficulties of achieving major road improvements towards the end of the eighteenth and early in the nineteenth century***

The improvement of roads towards the end of the eighteenth century was pursued actively by the wealthy and usually titled landowners. One of the most prominent of these was John Foster, the speaker of the house of commons. Foster lived on a large estate in Collon, county Louth and so was a regular traveller on the Dublin-Dunleer turnpike road. He took an active interest in the affairs of the road and was appointed a commissioner of the road by the 1787 improvement act (27 Geo.III, c.59). However Foster was not only an administrator but took an active interest in the supervision of the repair and improvement work. In 1794 George Tyner described this interest:

Entering Drogheda from the south side, there is a very noble improvement in the road carrying on and nearly finished; the steep bank going down to the town, which was formerly very dangerous and difficult has been cut away in the highest point and the hollow ground filled up with it, supported by stone walls in such a manner as to present an inclined plane of an easy access from the bottom to the top. This improvement and all the others on the road from Dublin to Dunleer, owe their existence to the public spirit, abilities and indefatigable attention of The Right Hon. John Foster, speaker of the house of commons.<sup>58</sup>

Hely Dutton writing in 1802 about the poor condition of the road leading from Dublin to Blackrock observed:

If half of this road had been made at a time (as I have seen practised on the Drumcondra road), and, when firm, the other half, it would have prevented all the cause of complaint; but the eye of The Right Hon. John Foster was over the Drumcondra road.<sup>59</sup>

Another individual who took a great interest in the improvement of the portion of the Dundalk-Banbridge turnpike between Loughbrickland and Banbridge was Lord Downshire and



the following letters show both his interest and the difficulties he had to overcome. The first relevant letter was in May 1794 from the Marquis of Downshire to his agent:

We have £400 in the Treasurer of Newry Turnpike's hands. We have God knows how much in the County Treasurer's hands so that the whole line had better be blocked out if possible. If any part of it is cropped, that may be left till the crop is off, but I believe it goes through a great deal of bog which the longer it is made before travelled upon the better - the only observation I have to make is that a road should follow the natural inclination of the land and should be convex only in levels.<sup>60</sup>

In a letter to the same agent on 5 July 1796, the Marquis of Downshire wrote:

I think the new road ought to be finished from Loughbrickland to Banbridge. I think you were parsimonious in the number of Pipes across the road and also in the size of those you have made. The Ruin of our Roads is water standing in our Tables or ditches on the side, where there is a quick fall it matters not how much water runs, but if it once stagnates our soil imbibes I believe and makes our roads spewy. I would let this road be travelled upon this summer to make it settle and shut it up at the fall of the year till next Spring filling up the Ruts well opening the water tables and giving a good thick coat of Gravelle of twelve or thirteen inches in the Center. I will write to Mr. Lane about the houses in Loughbrickland. They cannot interfere with you to let them stand till the Bridge over the Glen is built. There can be no objection to getting five or six thousand Pd. this Assize if you can for this road, but I do not think the line is entirely ascertained.<sup>61</sup>

The feelings of the Marquis can only be imagined, when he received the letter of Mr. Lane which was written on 16 June 1796 before the above letter was penned. Lane's letter stated:

The assize I am sorry to observe was a horrid Scene of Confusion throughout. The inattention and irregular proceeding of the Grand Jury reprehensible. The New Road Act not being attainable but to a very few only left the Baronies in a very damaged State indeed. The Judge (Mr. Downes) was solicited to Fiat the Presentments in the old Form which he rejected. No one but Mr. Reilly, Mr. Magennis and Mr. Waddell had seen or obtained the Act. The former secured £489 for the New road from Loughbrickland to Newry the whole Presentment being copies in his own Hand writing from the Act. Three others Mr. Reilly thought equally safe were nilled. Mr. Waddell went all wrong with the Advantage he had. Lord Castlereagh reserved his till past the time (6 Clear



Days) fixed by the Act and the Secretary to the Grand Jury would not schedule them. Lord Castlereagh appealed to Judge Downes who ordered the Secretary to form a second schedule and inform the Grand Jury he recommended their receiving them. This the Gentm. fired at conceiving it hard that a Judge would not allow the usual routine of County Business to be carried on because they failed in a few Words introduced in an Act to which they were utter Strangers and immediately after recommend them to accede to a project of his own in direct violation of an established well known Law. It was therefore voted for them being *All thrown under the Table* and such was their fate.....<sup>62</sup>:

It was not unexpected to find the Marquis writing to his agent on 5 January 1797 stating that 'The road is abominable from Loughbrickland to Banbridge.'<sup>63</sup> The road was not realigned until early in the nineteenth century. The situation in the south of Ireland at this time was similar. The Duke of Devonshire's estates included areas of west Waterford and east Cork and parts of county Tipperary and included the towns of Lismore, Tallow, Dungarvan, Youghal and Bandon. In a report of 1 February 1794, his Irish agent reported on all aspects of the estate and in respect of improvements at Lismore stated:

I think it will be of more advantage to the Duke to build at his own expense, than to let building leases---considering that the following improvements, when made, will in all probability increase the value of property in that neighbourhood. The improvements are 1st., a new road from Waterford through Lismore to Cork, upwards of 70 English miles in length, of which 42 miles from Waterford to Tallow Bridge, 3 miles on the Cork side of Lismore are already made; and when it is completed, it is said will be a shorter mail coach and posting road , between those two commercial cities, than the present through Carrick-on-Suir and Clonmel, by 18 miles.....<sup>64</sup>

In his second annual report of 14 February 1795, the agent Henry Bowman again referred to this road:

In this district a new road from Waterford to Cork by the way of Lismore was made by Government to the extent of about 33 miles Irish, being 42 English, before Michaelmas 1792. Since which time no progress whatever has been made in that work,....<sup>65</sup>

The position was similar in his report of 23 January 1796: 'No progress has been made in the new road from Waterford through Lismore to Cork since Michaelmas 1792.'<sup>66</sup> It must also be mentioned that during the same period another new road from Lismore northwards across to



Clogheen was built and 'entirely finished' in the agent's report of 23 February 1797, while the same report repeats the lack of progress on the major Waterford-Cork road.<sup>67</sup>

Obstacles to progress on busy suburban roads were no different as can be seen in the case of the Dublin-Navan turnpike road. The commissioners of the Navan road wished to improve the portion of this road leading into the city in 1796 and had the requisite plans and estimate drawn up by Messrs. Sherrard & Co. at the time. The proposed improvement was intended to:

To change the line.....from where it intersects the Circular road near Stoneybatter to Blanchardstown by forming a new line commencing at the Female Orphan's house on the Circular road whereby it will be removed from a low confined situation, sunk considerably by continual working beneath the level of the adjoining ground shaded by gardens and the Park wall and overflowed by water in many places to a ridge of open well situated land excellently adapted to the purposes of a leading road, and which will shorten the distance from Dublin to Blanchardstown very materially.<sup>68</sup>

The estimated overall cost of the proposed improvement was £6,000. However this improvement could not be carried out at the time 'in consequence of the want of funds.' In August 1817 the Navan road commissioners applied to 'The Commissioners appointed by His Excellency The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland for the execution of an act passed in the 57th year of the reign of H. M. King George III, entitled an act to authorise the issue of exchequer bills and the advance of money out of the consolidated fund for carrying on of Public Works in the U. K. of Great Britain and Ireland,' seeking a loan of the sum of £6,000 to carry out the proposed work. In their application the Navan road commissioners set out their reason for the application:

That the present state of that part of the turnpike road leading from the city of Dublin to Navan immediately issuing from Stoneybatter and Aughrim Street into Blackhorse Lane, which is one of the principal avenues to and from the Metropolis and the great north west mail coach road leading to Enniskillen is and ever has been in a state disgraceful to the county, while it materially injures the supply of several markets into Dublin.<sup>69</sup>

The application also stated that the road tolls were set to a good and solvent tenant at the annual rent of £2,200, which was paid monthly into 'the bank of the Right Hon. Lord Viscount Newcomen & Co.'<sup>70</sup> (See page 213). The Navan road commissioners undertook to repay directly the interest on the loan and to repay the principal by means of a sinking fund at six per cent per annum and to mortgage the tolls as security for both. The consolidated funds commissioners sought replies to a number of queries which were answered on 12 September 1817. These answers indicated that the employment content of the work would be 150 - 200 men and quoted



the interest rate on the sinking fund as five per cent per annum instead of the six per cent previously stated. On 3 February 1818 the commissioners of the consolidated fund recommended to the Lord Lieutenant that the required loan be given as requested. This loan was to have later major consequences for the Navan road. (See page 229)

Difficulties in the construction of roads also extended to the post roads. One of the early turnpike roads was one from Clane to Ballinagar (See road 33 in Table 2.1). The decision to build this road was one of the most futile made by the Irish parliament. It involved the building of a major road through the middle of the bog of Allen to connect two villages directly in order to shorten the existing road which naturally detoured around the bog. It appears that the legislators never considered the fact that the technology to achieve such a result did not exist in the Ireland of that time, and even if it did, the construction cost would be astronomical and the maintenance cost also very high. However such details did not deter the trustees who engaged a contractor named Andrew Mosse to start work at the Clane end and work westwards towards the bog. Mosse worked hard and conscientiously and built a straight road between Clane and Prosperous and then headed westward towards Lullymore. He obviously noticed the road sinking and found that the more material he piled in, the lower the road sank. It must have soon dawned on him why the existing road skirted the bog. Mosse had come to a stop after building about eleven miles of straight road, a good deal of which could not be used by through-traffic. On 5 December 1757 a report on a petition from Mosse and on the road generally, was presented to the house of commons by a Mr. Gilbert on behalf of an investigating committee. In the report the following items were agreed: Mosse had spent £2,017- 14s.- 10d. on making the road and besides this other sums were owed for various items, that about six miles [Irish] of the road were completed and about three miles [Irish] half-completed and that no further money could be raised or borrowed to fully complete the road or even to pay the several creditors. It was also agreed that, as the petitioner was 'distressed in his circumstances, and labours under great difficulties, on account of the money he has expended on the road,' a new act should be passed to aid him.<sup>71</sup> However no such act was passed and a further report on this road was given to the house of commons on 18 November 1767. The main part of this new report observed that:

It appeared to your Committee by a testimony upon oath, that the line of the inland navigation crosses the said road, and that the said road is not a president [precedent] for any other turnpike, as no gates were ever erected on the said road, nor any tolls collected. That the petitioner has made 12,600 perches of drains on the said road, which is of great use to foot-passengers, being a short cut of seven miles to the city of Dublin, which is of great use to the kingdom in general.....Petitioner deserves the aid of parliament.<sup>72</sup>

It was obviously a relief to all that the intervention of the canal provided a valid excuse for abandoning this turnpike road, which was clearly not feasible from a construction point of view.



Nothing more was heard of Mosse's road as it became known, until 1819, when according to the county Dublin grand jury presentments records an effort was then being made to build a new post road from Dublin to Tullamore:

William H. Bourne, F. Bourne and Robert Bourne to make a new post road between Dublin and the post town of Tullamore in the King's county commencing at the circle of what is called the Fox-and-Geese Commons and terminating at the west side of the village of Clondalkin, all in the Barony of Uppercross and County of Dublin to be in length 467.5 perches and 42 feet wide.....<sup>73</sup>

Only about 140 perches of this road was built and then it was abandoned. The reason for the abandonment was not made public until 1832. At the oral hearings held by the select committee on turnpike roads in that year, Frederick Bourne in reply to a question asking him if he could give an example of how difficult it was to get road improvements carried out in view of resistance by local interests, stated:

Yes, I can, the proposed road to Tullamore would shorten the distance between Tullamore and Dublin near eight miles; a considerable portion of the road through the county of Kildare has been made, another part through the King's county has been laid out; and I sought for a presentment to connect the near part of the road called Moss's [Mosse's] Road with the city of Dublin; and I got some presentments for making the road as far as Fox-and-Geese. A bill was about to be brought into Parliament to establish turnpikes upon the road as soon as could be made, with a view, on the faith of those tolls, to get the funds for making the road, and it was opposed by persons residing at Celbridge and other places; I need not mention them; they opposed it and defeated the business entirely, after a considerable expenditure to the County Dublin and to me also.<sup>74</sup>

Thus Mosse's road avoided becoming a turnpike road again in the second attempt. It was perhaps just as well that the early nineteenth century attempt was frustrated by the objectors, as without expert engineering skill and adequate financial resources, its feasibility was at best, doubtful. In evidence given to the select committee on amount of advances made by the Commissioners of Public works in Ireland, Richard Griffith made reference again to the use of Mosse's road as part of a possible new route to Limerick.<sup>75</sup> Richard Griffith was the Irish engineer who had built a good number of roads in counties Cork, Kerry and Limerick in the eighteen twenties and who was also interested in the drainage and development of the bogs. He believed that roads would allow access to the bogs and help to cultivate portions of them. When asked how he proposed to make roads through the great boglands he included in his reply:



I would mention here a road, which, if completed, would perhaps be one of the most useful in Ireland, which was commenced about 50 years ago, at the expense of Government, but never persisted in; I mean the road known by the name of Mosse's Road, which was intended to open a new line from Dublin to Limerick, and which, if completed, would shorten the distance between those points about 10 statute miles.<sup>76</sup>

Griffith went on to explain how this road stopped at the edge of the Bog of Allen and that if it was completed it would serve as a spinal road from which the wealthy owners of the bog such as the Duke of Leinster, the Marquess of Downshire and Sir Gerald Aylmer, could build their own branch roads and so open the bog to development. In the event nothing was done and like all schemes for this road was soon forgotten.

In the case of roads generally the grand juries were experiencing internal difficulties in getting road presentments passed in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. This is vividly evident from a letter sent by the 2nd Earl of Rosse to Lord Redesdale, dated 30 March 1822:

Our road law now requires a sessions to be held, at which there must be three magistrates at least of £500 a year property to approve of presentments for roads, before the grand jury at the assizes can grant them. These sessions are held in districts composed of three or four baronies each. But frequently the whole presentments of a district are stopped for a year, from the impracticability of getting three magistrates so qualified. It happened this year in one district of the King's Co., and was very near happening in my own, two of us waiting in court for several hours, sending expresses in various quarters, to get a third magistrate.<sup>77</sup>

The following sentence from the same letter aptly sums up the general position about road building and administration in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: 'Yet, you know, there is nothing about which country gentlemen are more anxious than their roads.'<sup>78</sup>

#### **4.5 Road construction**

It is appropriate at this stage to look at road construction methods and how these methods were altering over the years both in Ireland and in neighbouring countries. In order to fully understand the position in Ireland it is best to look at the position in the neighbouring countries such as France and Britain.

##### *France*

There seems to be little doubt but that the French were the first to put their road system on a proper footing and to realise that the main or trunk roads were a national and not only a local responsibility. They also realised that scientific principles could and indeed should be applied to road making and maintenance and that the rules of thumb of the gifted amateur were no longer adequate for a modern nation. In 1747 the world's first road engineering school was opened in

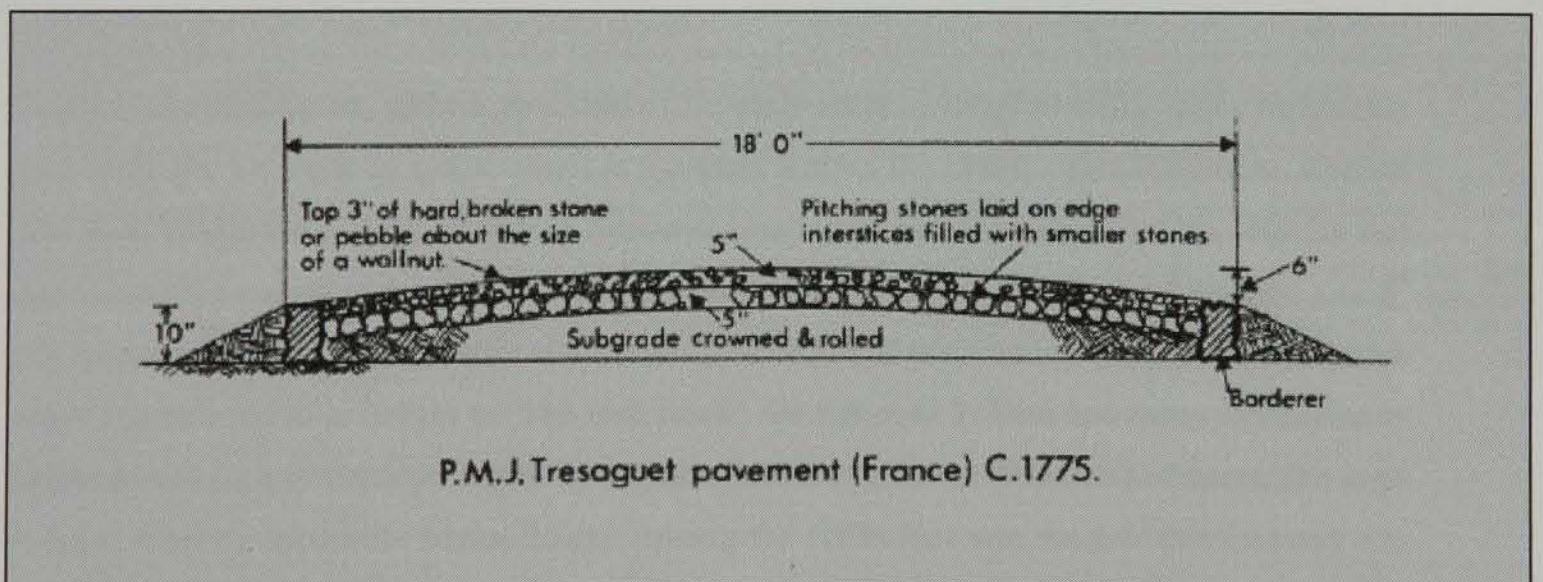


the department of *Ponts et Chausees*.<sup>79</sup> In 1720 specifications were drawn up for the different road types: the main roads were to be sixty feet wide clear of ditches and secondary roads thirty six feet wide. The foremost road engineer in eighteenth century France was Paul Tresaguet. In the words of Geoffrey Hindley:

Tresaguet was one the first to introduce the idea that road-building was susceptible to the operations of science. He designed pavements with two basic essentials : a firm well drained foundation, and a surface impervious to water. His roads consisted of three layers contained by large upright stones at either edge. The foundation was of large, heavy stones set on a cambered footing; above this came the 'base course' of somewhat smaller stones; and the surface was composed of small graded stones.<sup>80</sup>

Tresaguet worked as a civil engineer on roads in Paris and Limoges and ended up as inspector general of roads. Despite Tresaguet's good work the French main roads were not always in an acceptable condition as in 1800:

an inspector of the roads set out on a tour of duty: his carriage overturned six times in 500 kilometres requiring many hours of repairs. No fewer than eleven times it got bogged down in the mud and oxen had to be sent for to haul it free.<sup>81</sup>



*Illustration 7 Cross-section showing construction of road as designed by P. Tresaguet.*

(From O'Keefe, Peter J. 'The development of Ireland's road network' in *Trans. I. E. I.*, 98-99 (1973-75), p.68.)

### **Britain**

In Britain almost all through the eighteenth century, the roads were built and maintained largely by unqualified 'surveyors'. Only one of all these surveyors achieved sufficient skill to



make good roads. This was John Metcalfe who was better known as 'Blind Jack of Knaresborough.'<sup>82</sup> It was two famous Scottish engineers who were destined to 'straighten out the crooked road an English drunkard made'<sup>83</sup>. One of these was Thomas Telford who was born in 1757 and who was to found the Institution of Civil Engineers and be its first president. Telford believed that the function of an engineer was to use the resources of nature for the benefit of man. He realised that the natural resources included man himself and of course money and that these resources needed to be used wisely and well. On this account he trained operatives and contractors to work on various projects and always sought value for money and avoided unnecessary waste. Thus he played a major part in establishing what is called nowadays management and personnel or human resource management. Sidney Pollard in his book *The Genesis of Modern Management*, observed: 'It was the canal-builders, and Thomas Telford, in particular, who first called into being the large contracting firm, responsible, resourceful, and pioneering its own managerial solutions, who brought their methods of business to a new standard, whether on the side of skill or on that of honesty.'<sup>84</sup> Pollard added:

Telford introduced or elaborated the system of monthly payments; of the retention of definite sums as guarantee of satisfactory workmanship and punctual completion; of a period of maintenance during which the contractor is responsible for the state of the new work....[In order to have competent and contented contractors, he] always endeavoured to use one or other of the small group of contractors that he had trained to his ways, selecting them individually, each for the class of work for which he was best suited.<sup>85</sup>

Telford, as stated above, spent a good deal of his early years on canal building where he quickly won fame for his work on major canals in Scotland and on the Gotha canal in Sweden. Telford also built bridges and roads mainly in Scotland where it is reckoned that 'Before 1820 he had supervised the construction of over 1,000 miles of road and many hundreds of bridges.....'<sup>86</sup> His major road work was undoubtedly the reconstruction of the London-Holyhead road which was often referred to in Britain as 'The Irish Road'. On this road Telford had many difficulties to contend with such as those presented by the mountainous terrain in Wales and of course the need to build a bridge across the Menai Straits. Among the difficulties was the fact that the road was under the control of a number of turnpike trusts. Work started on the section of the road between Shrewsbury and Holyhead in 1815 after a survey by Telford and progressed rapidly. The work was financed out of a parliamentary grant and was under the control of a Committee headed by an Irish M. P., Sir Henry Parnell. Telford's method of road construction was as described in his own words:

Where a road has no solid and dry foundation, it must be constructed anew. It must be well-drained, and put into a proper form. Upon the 18 centre feet of it stones must be put, forming a layer 7 inches deep. Soft stones will answer, or



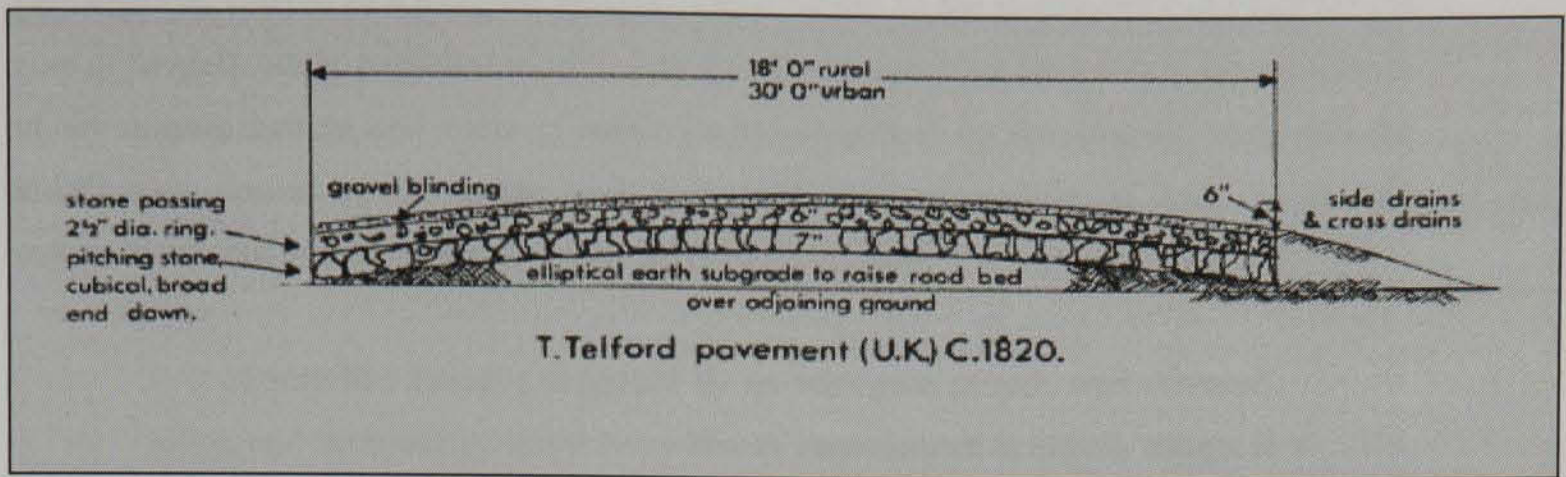
cinders, particularly where sand is prevalent. These bottoming stones must be carefully set by hand, with the broadest end down, in the form of a close-neat pavement; the cavities should be filled up with stone chips, to make all level and firm, and no stone should be more than 5 inches broad on its face. This proportion of a solid and level foundation is the most essential point to be secured in order to have a perfect road.....Over this bottoming of stones and cinders, 6 inches of stones, of a proper quality, broken of a size that will, in their largest dimensions, pass through a ring 2.5 inches in diameter, must be laid.<sup>87</sup>

When sections of the road were completed Telford was so concerned about handing them over to the various turnpike trusts for maintenance that he prevailed on Sir Henry Parnell to have a special Parliamentary Commission set up for this purpose. It should be noted that there were at that time seven turnpike trusts in charge of the road between Shrewsbury and Holyhead, and Telford feared that these might allow the road to lapse back into an unsatisfactory condition.

One of the engineers who worked as an assistant under Telford on the Holyhead and Howth roads was William Dargan who was later employed by the Dublin-Dunleer turnpike trust for a short time. During that time he designed the Man-of-War bypass from Ballough to Balrothery, which is still in use today (See page 164). William Dargan also worked on the Dublin-Carlow turnpike road. Dargan later went on to become the major builder of Ireland's railways, including the first one from Dublin to Dunleary in 1834. Telford himself came to Ireland earlier in 1817 to survey and later to inspect the building of portion of the Howth road, which road, was regarded as part of the Dublin-London route. At that time it was intended that Howth and not Dunleary was to be the port for the Holyhead ferry service. Sir Henry Parnell has described the work carried out under Telford's management on the Howth road in the following terms:

Between Howth harbour and Dublin, a distance of eight miles, the road (formerly very imperfect) has been wholly remade, and rendered in all respects similar to the Holyhead road; it is now in a perfect state, having a proper cross-section and being smooth and substantial. A considerable sea-wall has been built to protect the road. It is now referred to as a model for other roads in the vicinity of Dublin.<sup>88</sup>





**Illustration 8** *Cross-section showing construction of road as designed by T. Telford.*

(From O’Keeffe, Peter J. ‘The development of Ireland’s road network’ in *Trans. I. E. I.*, 98-99 (1973-75), p.68.)

British road construction was also influenced by another famous Scotsman named John Loudon McAdam, (Note, surname often incorrectly spelt Macadam) who was born in 1756 and spent his youth in America. On his return he was appointed a commissioner for highways and taught himself about highway construction and administration. After 1800 he moved to Bristol, where in 1816 he was appointed the general surveyor for the Bristol turnpike trust. He had learnt road engineering so well that his reputation for good construction of road surfaces spread rapidly and widely. McAdam differed from Telford in that he did not consider the costly foundations of Telford necessary, provided the road formation or subsoil was properly shaped and adequately drained. McAdam was very concerned about the quality and grading of the surfacing, which was basically similar to Telford’s. McAdam’s method of construction proved adequate for the iron-shod wheels and horse drawn traffic of his time and due to its low cost, McAdam’s method spread rapidly and widely. Telford was even criticised for his insistence on proper foundations. McAdam’s surname became an adjective and verb in the English language to denote a type of road-surface finish. Viewed in retrospect, it is clear that both Telford and McAdam were correct; Telford’s roads lasted longer and withstood rubber-tired wheels and so proved cheaper in the long run; McAdam’s roads proved adequate for the traffic of the day and spread the demand for better road surfaces. Modern road construction has grown from a combination of both methods, that is, Telford’s solid foundation and McAdam’s surfacing.

McAdam was also famed as a road administrator. He was very critical of the turnpike system of road financing and management. When he became general surveyor of the Bristol turnpike trust, McAdam put into practice his system, which achieved widespread fame. This ‘McAdam system’ consisted of seven basic principles: (1) accommodate the road to the traffic, (2) standardize road engineering procedures, (3) form the road surface of uniformly small artificially-broken stone of the best quality available, unmixed with sand or earth, (4) construct the road perfectly flat (he later recommended a three inch camber), uniformly ten inches thick, and build it on the natural subsoil without special foundation, (5) prepare carefully phrased and specific instructions for all contractors and subordinates, (6) engage only competent surveyors, who are scrupulously honest, (7) and submit turnpike road administration to a mild measure of



parliamentary control. In a pamphlet entitled '*Observations on the management of trusts for the care of turnpike roads*' published in 1825, John Loudon McAdam set forth clearly his abhorrence of the mismanagement and waste of public funds indulged in by the turnpike trusts and the indifference shown by the public and their elected representatives of such waste and malpractice<sup>89</sup>. His opening sentence set the tone of his criticism:

In a country like England, inhabited by an intelligent people, well educated, active, and enterprising, where every hint of improvement is eagerly caught at and prosecuted with spirit, it is only possible to account for the apathy respecting roads and the want of exertion in prosecuting the means given for improvement, by shewing that a strong counteracting principle exists in the defects of the road laws, and that although much want of encouragement has arisen from the prejudices of old practitioners - the great obstacle to success remains in the zealous opposition of those who profit by mismanagement in various ways.<sup>90</sup>

McAdam may have overestimated the power of those mismanaging the English roads. However the Irish grand juries and some turnpike trusts often acted as if roads were there solely to enrich the most powerful members of these bodies. Throughout this pamphlet, McAdam gave more examples of the defects in turnpike legislation and procedures and the results of these deficiencies, such as:

A desire for removing all respectable superintendence is indulged under the pretence of further economy; or if the roads have been put into a strong condition, the more destructive plan of letting them at low contracts for a few years is adopted. Contractors are thus suffered to engross the proceeds of the tolls which the previous good construction of the roads enabled them to do, until they are fairly worn out, [which is] the most ruinously expensive plan that any trust can adopt.<sup>91</sup>

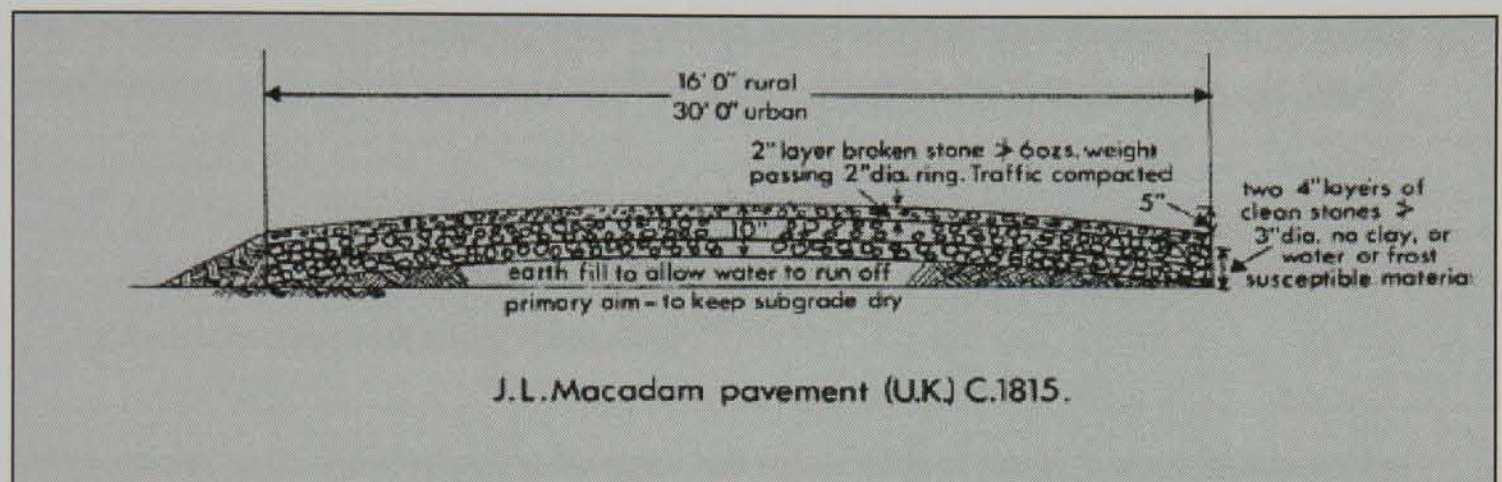
J. L. McAdam then pointed out that if the Government were to ensure that the current evils and mal-practices were eliminated, 'a saving of half a million annually, would be made to the country, of toll duties'<sup>92</sup>. He was writing of course about the position in England but the general tone of his statements was equally applicable to Ireland. McAdam then gave cases of bad management and saw the unqualified and unscrupulous surveyors as one of the causes of much waste of funds: 'I found that the greater part of the evils were occasioned by the dishonesty and incapacity of the surveyors.'<sup>93</sup> He regarded interfering and pompous 'know-alls' of trustees even a greater menace, when he said: 'The trustees in these cases entertain a mistaken idea that road-making may be learned from books, or from descriptions; whereas no opinion was ever more



erroneous, or has produced worse effects.'<sup>94</sup> McAdam then went on to give his requirements for the selection of persons suitable to become surveyors:

Surveyors should be chosen from amongst the sons of respectable yeomen; their education in other respects should correspond with their station in life, their salaries ought to be liberal as to induce the best of their class to embrace the profession and to bestow the necessary time and expense on acquiring the calling.<sup>95</sup>

McAdam's observations on turnpike road administration are highly regarded as he included some timeless truths, which were and are applicable in a variety of circumstances.



**Illustration 9** *Cross-section showing construction of road as designed by J. L. McAdam.*

(From O'Keeffe, Peter J. 'The development of Ireland's road network' in *Trans. I. E. I.*, 98-99 (1973-75), p. 68.)

### **Ireland**

The position about road construction in Ireland was different to that in France or Britain because of the different vehicles used and the comparatively low traffic volumes. The sub-soil's also differed in that in Ireland there was a good deal of bog or peaty soils with very poor bearing capacities. The available materials for road construction also differed. With soils having poor bearing capacities it is essential to have a reasonably light material which will spread the load as much as possible and as gravel is such a material which is widely available in Ireland, it is not surprising that gravel was the favoured material for roads here. An instance of the early use of gravel for the carriageways of even busy city streets is given in the ancient records of Dublin for the year 1573:

It is agreed also that the inhabitants of Thomas street shall pave the street before their houses, and ground that they occupy, until the same do come into the channel, where the water run, or until the same do come into the great pavement lying betwixt both the channels; and, as for that great pavement, the inhabitants next



adjoining unto the same, finding only sand and gravel to serve the paving of the city, shall stand to and be at the residue of the charges of the said great pavement.<sup>96</sup>

Its wide-spread use on the Irish turnpike roads is described on page 75. The recommendations by the Dublin Society in 1737 about the use of gravel on roads, as for example applying it in thin layers are remarkably in conformity with the best modern practice for such work. The only factor missing was an adequate means of compaction. The first to mention and recommend the use of a heavy metal roller in road construction was Hely Dutton in 1802. Dutton was a landscape gardener and land improver, who had a knowledge of constructing rural roads. In his *Observations on the statistical survey of Dublin* he considered some of the more important roads in the county to be in very poor condition due to bad management.<sup>97</sup> Dutton recalled an experimental road he had previously built and as a result he did not entertain a doubt 'that every road in Ireland could be ploughed, harrowed and rolled as easily as a garden walk; it is only proportioning the power to the resistance.'<sup>98</sup> He used four bullocks to pull the plough and added:

After being ploughed it was harrowed and well rolled by a heavy metal roller. I am convinced that nothing would contribute more to the goodness of our roads, than frequent rolling with a *very heavy roller*.<sup>99</sup>

On occasions, stone was also used in the repair and construction of roads. In some locations there was a change from gravel to stone, prompted possibly by the unavailability of suitable gravel, or a mistaken belief that the application of stone did not need as much attention as did gravel to produce a good running surface. The advent of vehicles such as the Scottish cart (See Illustration 11 and page 188), which was capable of taking heavier loads and the increasing volume of traffic was, no doubt, also a consideration, in that under such conditions, a properly laid stone surface was more durable than a gravel one. An example of such a changeover is given in the minutes of the Dublin-Mullingar turnpike trust meeting held in 1794, as recorded in the following short excerpts from the Mullingar Rough journal:

(From minute of surveyor's report) that the whole of the road is very much out of repair and [this included] portion of those parts between the 4th and 5th milestones, whereon money had been expended two seasons past.

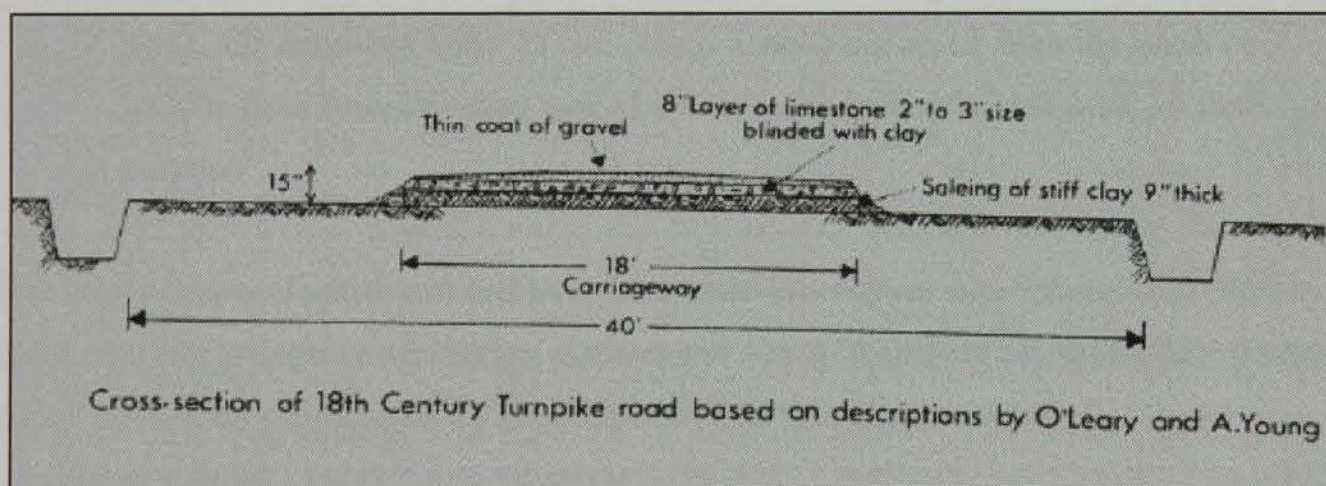
(Resolution) that the surveyor be empowered to employ persons immediately to repair.....the 320 perches of road between the 4th and 5th milestones and have the stones broke small, which will be better that gravelling over same,....<sup>100</sup>

The best Irish publication on road construction and maintenance was that by Edmund Leahy, one of the first county engineers of Cork, whose book '*A practical treatise on making and repairing roads*' published in 1844, showed a comprehensive and penetrating knowledge of his subject. The first county engineers or surveyors as they officially designated were appointed



in 1834. Leahy, at the age of twenty was made county surveyor of the West Riding of Cork. In his book he referred to the maintenance of roads in Ireland and Cork and showed how the turnpike roads in county Cork differed from the grand jury roads:

In the County of Cork alone, there are 3,365 miles maintained under the Grand Jury law and the expense of the last year ending at 1843 has been £29,147 - 9s. - 3d., being eight pounds thirteen shillings and three pence per mile per annum; and it is believed that under any other existing system whether Turn-pike or other, the average cost of maintenance will be found to exceed the expenditure upon the County roads in a large proportion. Indeed with reference to the County of Cork it can be stated with certainty that the average cost of the Turn-pike roads is three times greater than the cost of the County roads, whilst the state of repair of the latter is generally much better than that of the former. There is very ample room for improvement in both. But the Turn-pike roads, it may be safely said, are maintained during the winter months in a condition barely sufficient to render them passable; and at all seasons they will be found to want that solidity so essential for the public convenience and for the ordinary purposes of communication. They are most part left to the management of unprofessional men, and have no well regulated system of supervision,.....<sup>101</sup>



**Illustration 10** *Cross-section showing construction of 18<sup>th</sup> century Irish turnpike road*

(From O'Keeffe, Peter J. 'The development of Ireland's road network' in *Trans. I. E. I.*, 98-99 (1973-75), p. 77.)

#### 4.6 Traffic

The 1789-1819 period was one where both the vehicles and their modes of operation changed. These changes involved the introduction of the Scottish cart and the introduction of cheap public transport brought about by an Italian entrepreneur named Bianconi, who managed his coaching enterprise in a proper business-like manner.

In the remote rural areas of Ireland, even the wheeled vehicle of the crudest kind was still a rarity and the slide-car was the common mode of transport on the steep mountain tracks. This is shown by the account of Coquebert de Montbret who visited county Kerry in October 1790 and having crossed over the mountain gap from Ballyvourney on his way to Kenmare and



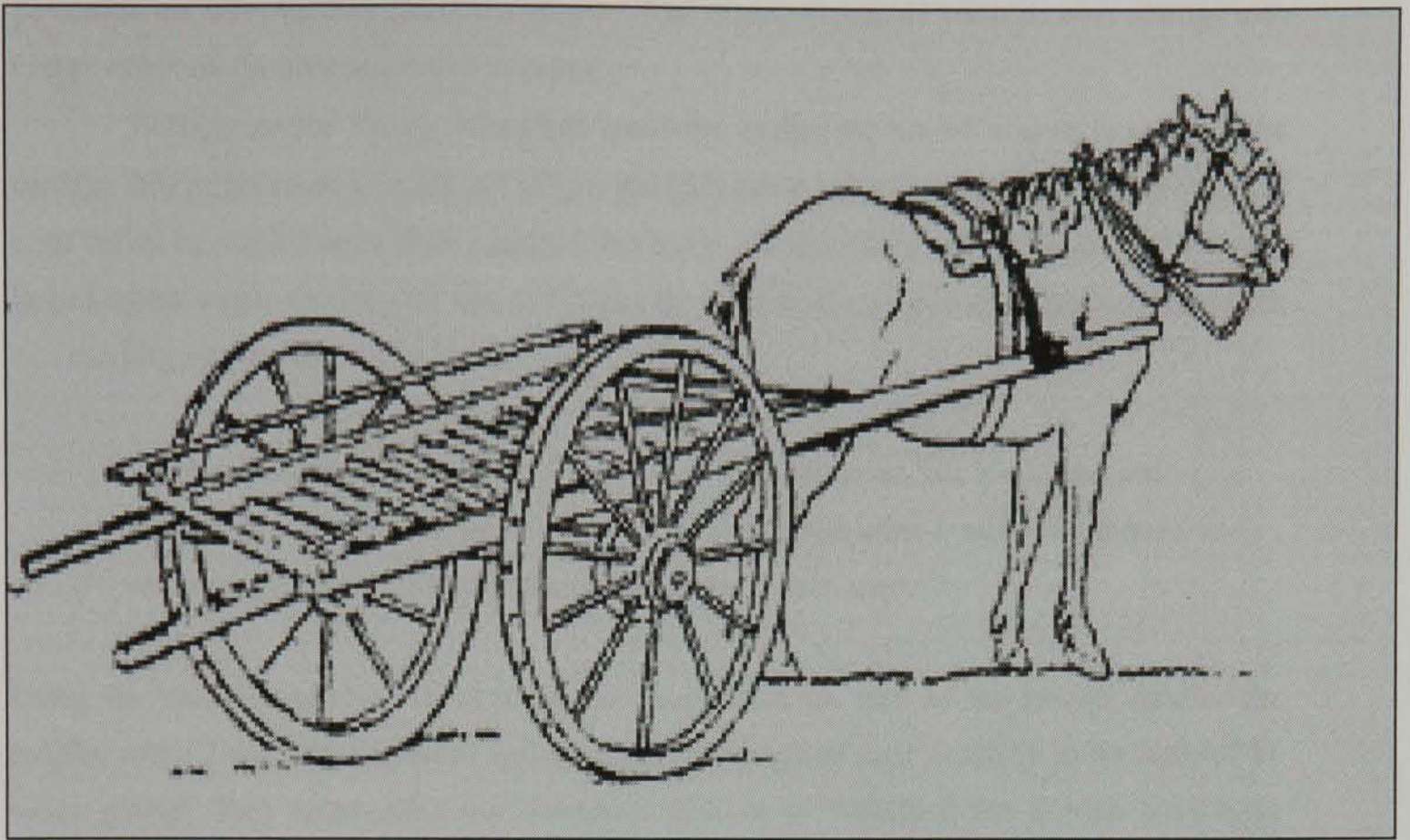
saw that the terrain was intensely cultivated, noted: 'For transport these people still use the *carra slaounain*, or sliding car, almost to the exclusion of the truckle, or cart on wheels, the former vehicle being better suited to a roadless terrain of perilous heights, soft sands and turf-bogs.'<sup>102</sup>

During this period '*An account of Ireland, statistical and political*' was drawn up in 1812 by an Englishman named Edward Wakefield<sup>103</sup>. This work was undertaken on the suggestion of John Foster, the former Speaker of the Irish house of commons and was reckoned by Wakefield to 'be of great use not only to Ireland but to the empire at large.'<sup>104</sup> Among the matters surveyed by Wakefield was transport and for this he set the scene by describing the primitive nature of the rural part of the country where 'every man may be said to be his own carpenter and mason.'<sup>105</sup> He then added that because of this 'there can be little encouragement to manufacture' and so 'the transit of goods must be very small and this is actually the case in Ireland.'<sup>106</sup> Wakefield turned to roads after his account of the canals and waterways and stated roads were: 'works of much utility and justly celebrated for the excellence of their construction.'<sup>107</sup> The turnpike road system did not obviously impress him; his only comment being, 'There are few turnpikes in Ireland.'<sup>108</sup> Wakefield's most interesting contribution was however his comment on the carriage of heavy goods:

Corn is transported to most parts of Ireland on cars drawn by one horse; but a machine called a Scot's dray ,with high wheels and iron arms, drawn in the same manner, has been introduced of late years, and is general throughout the north; the latter can carry 22 cwt. More linen is conveyed from the north to Dublin, than from any other part of Ireland; and these drays are used for that purpose.<sup>109</sup>

The Scot's dray or Scottish cart had been introduced into Ireland sometime around 1800 by the Dublin Society to improve agricultural methods and output. Wakefield has shown how quickly its use spread and how it was used for purposes other than agricultural output.





*Illustration 11 Scottish cart brought into Ireland circa 1800.*

(From I. Herring, 'The Scottish cart in Ireland and its contemporaries, circa 1800' in *U. J. A.* 3rd. Ser., vii, (1944), p. 45).

At the same time as the introduction of the Scottish cart there was another change which applied mainly to passenger vehicles. This was expressed by P O'Kelly as follows:

Before the common use of springs all sorts of devices were tried to counteract the jolting, inseparable from the rocking of unyielding coaches on rough roads, as well as to prolong the life of the vehicles themselves. Springs first came into use in England in 1670 and [were] not generally in use in Ireland until 1800.<sup>110</sup>

O'Kelly also showed the involvement of an Irish engineer in this development:

It was not until 1768 that it was discovered that springs were as advantageous to the horses as to the passengers. A carriage constructed by R. L. Edgeworth to illustrate this fact was awarded the gold medal of the Society of Arts.<sup>111</sup>

O'Kelly added:

Other experiments in England showed that, at a speed of nine miles an hour, springs diminished the resistance of the road by one half.<sup>112</sup>

The widespread availability of passenger vehicles with springs in Ireland resulted in increased speed and comfort for passengers and, as will be seen contributed to the establishment of



passenger car services throughout the country. The higher speeds of vehicles with springs also had an effect on the maintenance of the roads.

Echoing Arthur Young, Wakefield spoke out against the use of wagons because of the damage they might cause to roads and of how the Irish goods vehicles, consisting of two-wheeled carts drawn by single horses, were equally if not more efficient. He instanced the case of the very large English wagon carrying six tons and drawn by six or even eight horses as against the Scotch cart carrying one ton and drawn by one horse. He added:

The comparison thus far relates only to the force employed, but if we take into account the cutting and wearing the roads; which occasion a most enormous expense, the result must still be in favour of the Scot's drays.<sup>113</sup>

Using the 'fourth power rule' as explained in Chapter 2.4, the ratio of the damage done to the road by using the six-ton wagons as against the one-ton drays or carts would be of the order of 81 times greater. Such information was however unknown to Wakefield but it must have been obvious to all those concerned that the figure was a very large one indeed.

Despite the fact that some of the canals and navigations had been brought into operation by 1789 and the coastal trade had been developed, land carriage remained the most common method of corn transportation. The volume of traffic on the Dublin-Kilcullen turnpike, Ireland's busiest road, continued to increase and as can be seen from the toll income submitted to the select committee on turnpike roads in 1831-32, was very high in the years from 1810 to 1815. Due to the Napoleonic wars this was a very busy time for traffic on most turnpike roads and generally the year 1816 was the peak year for toll-receipts. One writer, A. Atkinson has left a description of what the traffic conditions were like on the Dublin-Kilcullen road in 1813:

The road from Kildare to Naas and from thence to Dublin, but particularly between the latter two places, is so frequently thronged with carts, cars, carriages and foot passengers, as to give a traveller but slender opportunity of making observations on the seats and scenery within view he will find on several parts of the road, particularly if travelling in a gig or dog cart, enough to employ him while whipping in to the way and out of the way, while steering clear of public coaches, of weak and disabled men, of apple-women and tinkers, and of a numerous tribe of pedestrians who are streaming towards the great city in pursuit of fortune, or with broken heads and tattered garments are returning to the country.....<sup>114</sup>

### ***Bianconi***

Charles Bianconi came to Ireland from his native Italy and started selling prints first in Dublin and later in Clonmel and surrounding towns. He quickly appreciated the need for improved transport and communication and was not a man to miss an opportunity. He saw that



travel was limited to the wealthy because of the costs associated with it and resolved to make travel cheaper and more accessible to those less well-off. Bianconi commenced by running a jaunting car between Cahir and Clonmel in 1815 after the end of the Napoleonic war. Because of the ending of the war, he was able to purchase very good class horses which had been bred and groomed for the army, at cheap prices. One of these horses could draw a car with six passengers at seven miles an hour. Bianconi expanded his business quickly because of his low fares and by 1825 'his daily mileage had become 1,170 miles, by 1835 it was 2,234 miles and by 1845, the pinnacle of his career, 3,190 miles.'<sup>115</sup> The popularity of this cheap and rapid transport is shown by an account in 1835:

Another great benefit to the country is the constant and cheap facility of travelling, in all directions, from centre to circumference through the kingdom. None of the proprietors of public carriages deserves to be more patronised than Mr. Bianconi, of Clonmel, whose spirited and enterprising plans have evidently lowered the travelling charges at least 30 per cent. Forty years ago a person going to Dublin from the interior should make almost as much preparation as some now make for America, but now from five to eight hours is the general routine of travelling, without fail, day and night, through the kingdom.<sup>116</sup>

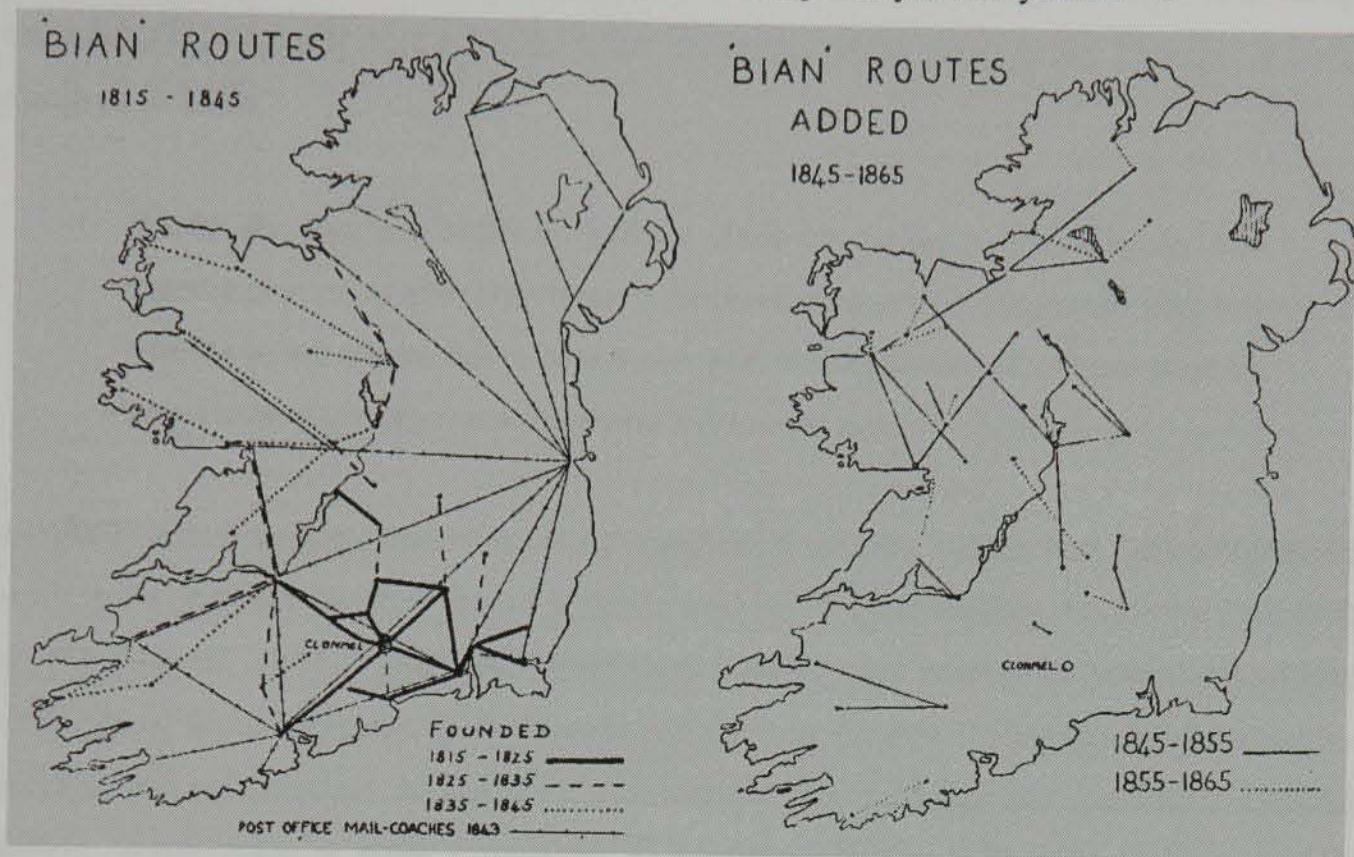
By 1843, 'Bianconi's vehicles carried from four to twenty passengers at an average speed of 8 - 9 m. p. h, and a fare of 1.25d. per mile.'<sup>117</sup> As I. J. Herring shows, Bianconi succeeded where others failed:

First in the field of cheap travel, Bianconi could hardly fail, unless other car-owners by superior organisation and greater capital could draw the new travelling public away from the 'Bians'. A profit of £1,000 from the Waterford Election of 1826, which enabled him to purchase stores and obtain independence of forage-price fluctuations, and, from 1830, a direct contract with the Post Office for carrying mails, stabilised his position, while his growing capital reserves and meticulous economy ensured that competitors usually went bankrupt in a vain attempt at under-cutting.<sup>118</sup>

However not all travellers were impressed with Bianconi's coaches, though they still admired his initiative and hard work. One such traveller was an Englishman named Thomas Campbell Foster, who wrote in a letter in 1846 that 'After the rapidity with which you are whirled about in England from one end of the island to the other, nothing can be more tedious than travelling in Ireland.'<sup>119</sup> He went on to say:



Off the great lines of road, coaches are unknown, and the cars of Bianconi are the only public vehicles; between many places you do not even find these. The journey, for instance, from Limerick to Belfast, has to be performed by travelling over two sides of a triangle - first to Dublin, then to Belfast. Attempt a direct line, and you have an awful outside-car journey before you.....<sup>120</sup>



**Map 3 Coach routes operated by Bianconi.**

(From I. Herring, 'The Bians' [2] in *U. J. A* 3rd. Series, ii, p. 132.)

Foster first praised John Anderson for setting up and running his coaching business and writing of Bianconi said:

The next man who attempted to supply an evident want was Mr. Bianconi, a clever Italian. By slowly proceeding step by step, and by providing a cheap, though most comfortless conveyance, but adapted to the habits and wants of the people, this gentleman has realised a large fortune, and is really one of the greatest benefactors the country possesses. To his individual energy and industry Ireland owes, in very many parts of the country, her sole means of intercommunication.<sup>121</sup>

Bianconi's success shows that statements like 'because the cars travelled faster, the roads must have been improved' are not necessarily valid in all circumstances. Bianconi's vehicles ran on the same roads at the same time as his competitors. It gives testimony to the fact that road transport costs are a function of the management as well as being a function of the road and vehicle.



#### 4.7 Turnpike roads as part of the Mail coach road network

With the setting up of the Mail coach road network, the principal turnpike roads were in place to form the backbone of this network. The mail coach network was centred on Dublin and the roads radiated from Dublin to all parts of the country (See Map 4). The total length of the network was about 1,450 miles and of these about 570 miles were under the control of turnpike trusts and the remainder were of course under the control of the grand juries. Thomas Newenham observed in 1809:

As for the turnpike roads of Ireland which by the way, are infinitely less numerous in proportion than those of England, they are for the greater part still inferior to the others; but in consequence of the establishment of mail coaches much better than they were in general a few years ago.<sup>122</sup>

As will be recalled the mail coaches started operating from 1789 and the Post Office required the roads to be of a high standard for the efficient working of these coaches. Under the Post Office act (45 Geo. III, c.43) of 1805, the Postmasters General were enabled to have the mail coach roads placed in proper repair. In furtherance of these acts the Post Office appointed a chief road engineer and six assistants, all qualified professionals. The chief engineer was Major Alexander Taylor, 'a gentleman of great experience.'<sup>123</sup> Alexander Taylor, a Scottish engineer who had come to Ireland around 1780 and joined the Royal Engineering Corps was a brother of George Taylor who was co-author of *Maps of the roads of Ireland*<sup>124</sup> (See page 133). These Post Office engineers surveyed the mail coach routes and drew up reports on the necessary changes and improvements required, together with cost estimates. The reports and estimates were forwarded to the appropriate turnpike trusts and grand juries. A summary of the latest reports was given in evidence before the select committee on Holyhead roads in 1822<sup>125</sup> and from this summary a clear view of the condition and state of those turnpike roads involved may be drawn. Such an impartial and professional view is of value in order to appreciate the difficulties of travel at that time and to understand the changes and improvements subsequently made. The report gave in some cases graphic descriptions of the systems for repair of the roads and also contrasted the condition of the turnpike sections of some routes with adjacent sections maintained by the county grand juries. In general, the condition of the sections of road maintained by the turnpike trusts though variable, was superior to those sections maintained by the grand juries.

In this summary the road from Dublin to Cork was described as being 'generally in bad repair.'<sup>126</sup> The stretch from Dublin to Carlow was described as safe for travelling, while the next forty miles was referred to as 'very dangerous and mostly only twelve and thirteen feet wide from ditch to ditch, with sharp hills and quick turnings.'<sup>127</sup> The road near Callan in county Kilkenny was said to be particularly bad. Those employed on the repair of the road were described as 'generally ignorant persons, who study their own interest more than that of the road. They are termed 'road jobbers and are paid by the trustees 1s. per perch of seven yards.'<sup>128</sup> In the case of the Dublin-Navan (turnpike) stretch on the Dublin-Enniskillen post road, its condition was said to



be in very bad order for the first four miles, where the commissioners spent £6000 of borrowed money but got no value because the road was badly made, while the next seven miles of the road were said to be bad and hilly<sup>129</sup>. The remainder of the turnpike section of the road was described as being generally good. On the Dublin-Derry route, the portion nearest Dublin was part of the Dublin-Dunleer turnpike road. The state of this for the previous year was described as: 'from Gormanston to Dublin very bad and two severe hills.'<sup>130</sup> The Dublin-Galway road was held to be satisfactory where it was maintained by turnpike trusts between Dublin and Athlone, but there was severe criticism of the stretch from Athlone to Ballinasloe and of the last four miles in to Galway, which was 'scarcely passable for a common car.'<sup>131</sup> The road from Dublin to Cashel and Cahir, which was almost all turnpike, was described as in bad repair in the section through county Tipperary and of being so narrow in parts of the sixteen mile stretch from Kilcullen to the bounds of county Kildare, 'as not to admit two carriages to pass, with sharp hills, deep gripes<sup>1</sup> and short turnings.'<sup>132</sup> Other sections towards Cahir were also described as narrow, with deep gripes, with sharp hills or with quick turnings. The road was maintained by the turnpike trustees who employed road jobbers at 1s. per perch.<sup>133</sup>

The summary included an account of a road Cork to Skibbereen which was not yet a turnpike road but became so in 1822. The Post Office engineers were very critical of the condition of this road in their report: 'Two thirds of this road is in so bad a state, that it is not possible for a mail-coach to travel at the prescribed rate, and the loss in springs and wheels is greater than in any part of Ireland for a similar distance.'<sup>134</sup> The report detailed the worst section and the major faults and seemed to blame the system of maintenance for its poor condition 'A presentment road under supervisors. Expenditure is generally confided to the tenant, or follower of some large landed proprietor, to throw the emolument in his way. The repairs are executed in a most inefficient way'.<sup>135</sup>

In the case of the turnpike road from Cork to Killarney, the summary of the report was also critical of the condition of the road at the time of inspection and generally, and used expressions such as 'a perfectly worn out surface', 'hilly and circuitous' and 'bad and narrow' to describe various lengths. Here the description of the maintenance method is also interesting:

A toll road; is in the hands of poor working farmers, under trustees, who are their landlords; some reside near, and others at a distance from their work. Only work when convenient to them, and often not to be had, when most wanting. There are supervisors over them, who receive salaries of £50 from trustees.<sup>136</sup>

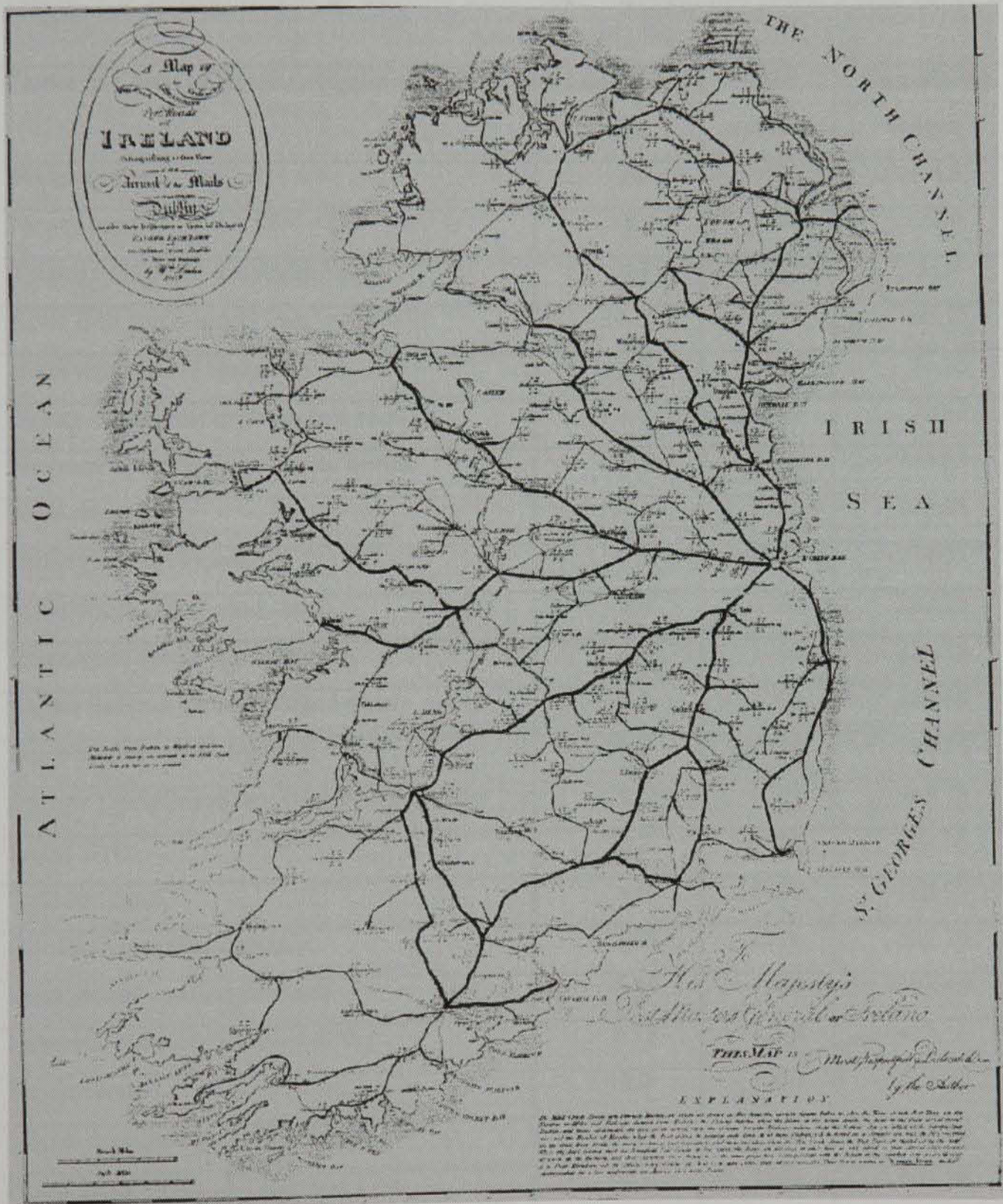
The last road of interest in the summary is the Post Office road from Cork to Waterford. This route was then comprised of the turnpike road from Waterford city to the county bounds of Cork and a non turnpike road from there to Cork city which was maintained by the county grand

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<sup>1</sup> A gripe is an excavated roadside drainage ditch or water channel leading from the carriageway to the side ditch.



jury. The summary of the report regarded the turnpike road as generally in good order with sections where the usual defects of rough surface and deep gripes were detailed. By contrast the report was most critical of the first six miles in county Cork (from Youghal to Killeagh) which was described as: 'Six miles of the next stage, without doubt, the worst road in Ireland. It was made four years ago, by the organist of the cathedral at Cloyne, and is now in the most disgraceful and dangerous state.'<sup>137</sup> The summary stated that the turnpike road was 'repaired by farmers, under the trustees, who have contracted for five years, at £24 a mile,'<sup>138</sup> while the portion of the road in county Cork was repaired 'by bailiffs or working overseers.'<sup>139</sup>



**Map 4 The Post roads of Ireland by W. Larkin, 1803.**

(From *John Anderson, entrepreneur* (Fermoy, 1987), by N. Brunicardi, p. 149)



#### 4.8 River navigations and canals become significant in transport system

The river navigation and canal system originally described in Chapter 2.9 had by now grown to be a major link in the national transport network. The number of canals and navigable waterways had increased considerably. Table 4.5 shows a complete list of the man-made canals or of waterways reshaped by man together with the dates of opening and lengths completed in miles based on the data in Ruth Delany's *'Ireland's inland waterways'*<sup>140</sup> and cumulative mileages up to 1929.

**Table 4.5 Development of canals and river navigation from 1720 to 1929**

Name of Canal or River navigation	Length in miles	Year opened	Cumulative length
Maigue river	8.5	1720	8.5
Newry canal	18.5	1742	27.0
Tyrone navigation /Coalisland canal	4.4	1755	31.4
River Suir (early work) later work 1818	34.75	1757	66.15
Blackwater river (Munster)	5.0	1765	71.15
Newry Ship Canal (extension in 1850)	1.7	1769	72.85
Shannon & Boyle Water (early works)	177.0	1769	249.85
Nore river	21.0	1775	270.85
Dukart's colliery canal	3.5	1777	274.35
Milltown feeder (Grand canal)	8.0	1780	282.35
Blackwood feeder (Grand canal)	4.0	1780	286.35
Sallins to Naas harbour (Grand canal)	2.5	1789	288.85
Barrow (Athy to St. Mullins)	41.4	1790	330.25
Barrow Line (Grand canal) Lowtown to Athy	28.5	1791	358.75
Lagan river	26.2	1794	384.95
Strabane canal	4.0	1796	388.95
Circular Line (Grand canal)	3.75	1796	392.70
Broadstone Line (Royal canal)	0.75	1796	393.45
Limerick-Killaloe (Shannon river)	8.75	1799	402.20
Boyne river	19.0	1800	421.20
Edenderry Line canal (Grand canal)	1.0	1802	422.20
Grand canal -Main and Shannon Line	79.3	1804	501.50
Naas harbour to Corbally	5.3	1810	506.80
Lismore canal by-passing part of river	1.4	1814	508.20
Royal canal - Main Line	90.5	1817	598.70
Lough Allen canal	4.25	1820	602.95



Broharris canal	2.0	1820	604.95
Ballinasloe Line	14.5	1828	619.45
Longford Line (Royal canal)	5.2	1830	624.65
Mountmellick Line (Grand canal)	11.5	1831	636.15
Kilbeggan Line (Grand canal)	8.0	1835	644.15
Ulster canal	45.7	1841	689.85
Tralee Ship canal	1.5	1846	691.35
Fergus river	20.0	1850	711.35
Shannon & Boyle water -extended & improved	25.0	1850	736.35
Lough Corrib	34.0	1852	770.35
Eglinton canal	0.7	1852	771.05
Cong canal	3.0	1854	774.05
Ballinamore and Ballyconnell canal	38.0	1859	812.05
Bann, Lower and Lough Neagh	32.4	1859	844.45
Belmullet canal	0.75	1880	845.20
River Erne and Lough (Beleek-Belturbet)	52.0	1890	897.20
Limerick-Killaloe	8.0	1929	905.20

The period from 1789 to 1819 was one where the quest for less costly transportation was vigorously pursued. Canals were popular at this period because the major canals were coming into operation. As well as those in Table 4.5, there were many planned and projected canals, which were never built. Two of these proposals may show the desire for better transport facilities. The first was the idea of running a canal from Dublin to Dunleary in order to give direct access to deep water from the city centre. A plan and estimate for such a canal was drawn up on 29 April 1800 by W. Jessop.<sup>141</sup> The estimated cost of the work was £405,438 and the canal was to be 20 ft. deep, 80 ft. wide at the base and 160 ft. wide at the water surface. Though this canal was never built, Ireland's first railway was built on its planned route some thirty years later. The second canal or system of canals was planned by the Earl of Fitzwilliam<sup>142</sup> about 1792 to benefit his estate in county Wicklow and the general area as well as give access from Avoca copper mines to Arklow harbour. On a drawing among the Fitzwilliam papers, the most probable line for the extension of this canal or navigation from where the Derry Water joins the Avoca river near Ballyarthur (Woodenbridge area) through Aughrim and Tinahely to Shillelagh is shown and it is indicated that a further line of communication to the town of Carlow was considered practicable. This was an imaginative concept for a canal as very few must have thought it was possible to join Carlow directly to the Irish Sea.

<sup>1</sup> F. E. Dixon, 'Irish postal history' in *D. H. R.*, xxiii (1969-70), p.127.



- <sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p.128.
- <sup>3</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>4</sup> Niall Brunicardi, *John Anderson, entrepreneur* (Fermoy, 1987), p.19.
- <sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p.130.
- <sup>6</sup> Peter J. O'Keeffe, *Alexander Taylor's roadworks in Ireland, 1780-1827* (Dublin, 1996), p.15.
- <sup>7</sup> Brunicardi, *John Anderson*, p. 31.
- <sup>8</sup> B. Bayley Butler, 'John and Edward Lees' in *D. H. R.*, xiii, 3 & 4 (1953), pp. 138-150.
- <sup>9</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, xiii, p. 74.
- <sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p. 94.
- <sup>11</sup> *Report of select committee on monopolies in the management of turnpike roads in Ireland*, p. 3, H. C. 1837 (484), xx, 399.
- <sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4, 400.
- <sup>13</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, p.5, 401.
- <sup>15</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>16</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>18</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> *Report of select committee on state of roads under turnpike trusts in Ireland*, appen. pp. xlv-l, H. C. 1831-32 (645), xvii, 678-684.
- <sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p. 185 (581).
- <sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p. 188 (584).
- <sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 184-85 (580-81).
- <sup>23</sup> Rough journal, 3 November 1794 (F. C. C. Archives, Records of Mullingar turnpike road, TR3/1/1, unpag.).
- <sup>24</sup> Brunicardi, *John Anderson*, p.114.
- <sup>25</sup> Niall Brunicardi, 'John Anderson's bankruptcy' in *J. C. H. A. S.*, lxxxix- 248, (1984), pp. 92-97.
- <sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p. 93.
- <sup>27</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 93-4.
- <sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p. 94.
- <sup>31</sup> Broderick, *The Dublin-Dunleer turnpike*, pp. 54-5.
- <sup>32</sup> Coote, *Survey of county Armagh*, p. 259.
- <sup>33</sup> Robert Thompson, *Statistical survey of county Meath* (Dublin, 1802), p. 359.
- <sup>34</sup> William Tighe, *Statistical survey of county Kilkenny* (Dublin, 1802), p. 559.
- <sup>35</sup> Parnell, *Treatise on roads*, p. 292-293.
- <sup>36</sup> *ibid.* p. 294.
- <sup>37</sup> *Report of select committee on state of roads under turnpike trusts in Ireland*, p. 5, H. C. 1831-32 (645), xvii, 401.
- <sup>38</sup> Parnell, *Treatise on roads*, p. 296.
- <sup>39</sup> Preamble of enabling act for upgrading the Dublin-Knocksedan road to a turnpike (38 Geo.III, c. 31).
- <sup>40</sup> James Meenan & Desmond Clarke eds., *Royal Dublin Society 1731-1981* (Dublin, 1981), p. 30.
- <sup>41</sup> W. H. Hardinge, *Summary of authorities relating to the nine turnpike trusts on the north side of Dublin* (Dublin, 1849), p. 19.
- <sup>42</sup> Commissioners' & Directors' Minute book, 1798-1849 (F. C. C Archives, Records of Knocksedan turnpike road, T R.5/1/1, unpag.).
- <sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, meetings of commissioners of 23 June 1823 and 1 June 1824.
- <sup>44</sup> *C. A. R. D.*, xiii, pp. 333-4.
- <sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 491-2.
- <sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, p. 491.
- <sup>47</sup> *C. A. R. D.*, xv, p. 188.
- <sup>48</sup> *Report of select committee on state of roads under turnpike trusts in Ireland*, mins. of evid., p.79, H. C. 1831-32 (645), xvii, 475.
- <sup>49</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>50</sup> Commissioners' & Directors' minute book, 1798-1849 (F. C. C Archives, Records of Knocksedan turnpike road, TR5/1/1).



- <sup>51</sup> L. T. C. Rolt, *Thomas Telford* (London, 1958), republ. 1979, repr. paperback. 1985, p. 127.
- <sup>52</sup> Commissioners' & Directors' minute book, 1798-1849 (F. C. C Archives, Records of Knocksedan turnpike road, TR5/1/1).
- <sup>53</sup> Directors' account book, 1824-1826 (F. C. C. Archives, Records of Knocksedan turnpike road, TR5/2, unpag.).
- <sup>54</sup> *Report of the commission to inquire into the Dublin turnpike roads*, notes of evid., p.36., H. C. 1854-55 (01), xix.
- <sup>55</sup> Comms. & Dirs. minute book (F. C. C Archives, Records of Knocksedan turnpike road, TR5/1/1).
- <sup>56</sup> *Report of the commission to inquire into the Dublin turnpike roads*, p.18, H. C. 1854-55 (01), xix.
- <sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 20-21.
- <sup>58</sup> George Tyner, *The traveller's guide through Ireland* (Dublin, 1794), p. 2.
- <sup>59</sup> Hely Dutton, *Observations on Mr. Archer's statistical survey of county Dublin* (Dublin, 1802), p. 138
- <sup>60</sup> Ivor J. Herring, 'Ulster roads on the eve of the railway age' in *I. H. S.*, ii (1940-41), p.187, appendix 1.
- <sup>61</sup> *ibid.*, appendix 2
- <sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, appendix 3, pp.187-8.
- <sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, appendix 4, p.188.
- <sup>64</sup> John Barry, 'The Duke of Devonshire's Irish estates' in *Anal. Hib.* 22 (Dublin, 1960), p. 277..
- <sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, p. 289.
- <sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, p. 298.
- <sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, p. 312.
- <sup>68</sup> Copy of memorial of comms.of the Navan turnpike road for loan of £6,000 stg. and assoc corr. 1818 (Nat. Arch., Chief Sec. corr., C. S. O. C. R. 1, L1818, Box 594, 3/600/1).
- <sup>69</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>70</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>71</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, vi, p. 40.
- <sup>72</sup> *Commons jn. Ire.*, viii, appen., p.. clxxxiv.
- <sup>73</sup> Liam Ua Broin, 'Traditions of Drimnagh, Co. Dublin, and its neighbourhood', *J. R. S. A. I.*, xii (7th. series) 1942, pp. 106-115.
- <sup>74</sup> *Report of select committee on state of roads under turnpike trusts in Ireland*, mins. of evid., pp 173-74, H. C. 1831-32 (645), xvii. 569-70.
- <sup>75</sup> *Select committee on amount of advances made by the Commissioners of public works in Ireland, First and second reports and mins. of evid.*, H. C.1835 (573), xx.
- <sup>76</sup> *ibid.*, mins. of evid., p. 221, (419).
- <sup>77</sup> Rosse, Dublin to Redesdale, 30 March 1822, T3030/13/1, Redesdale papers in *Eighteenth century Irish official papers in Great Britain*, priv. collections, ii, A. P. W. Malcomson compiler, (Belfast P. R. O. N. I., 1990), p. 460.
- <sup>78</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>79</sup> Geoffrey Hindley, *A history of roads* (London, 1971), p. 75.
- <sup>80</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>81</sup> Braudel, *The identity of France*, i, paperback (Great Britain, 1988). p.114.
- <sup>82</sup> Hindley, *History of roads*, p. 75.
- <sup>83</sup> G. K. Chesterton, 'The rolling English road' poem in *The Oxford library of English poetry*, John Wain (ed.), (London, 1986), iii, pp. 308-9.
- <sup>84</sup> Sidney Pollard, *The genesis of modern management* (London, 1965), p.107.
- <sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, p.108.
- <sup>86</sup> Hindley, *History of roads*, p. 64.
- <sup>87</sup> Mervyn Hughes, 'Telford, Parnell, and the great Irish road' in *Jn. of transp. hist.*, vi, (1963-4), p. 201.
- <sup>88</sup> Parnell, *Treatise on roads*, pp. 381-82.
- <sup>89</sup> John Loudon McAdam, *Observations on the management of trusts for the care of turnpike roads* (London, 1825).
- <sup>90</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1.
- <sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2.
- <sup>92</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4.
- <sup>93</sup> *ibid.*, p. 15.



- <sup>94</sup> *ibid.*, p. 36.
- <sup>95</sup> *ibid.*, p. 37.
- <sup>96</sup> *C. A. R. D.* ii, p. 87
- <sup>97</sup> Dutton, *Observations on survey of county Dublin*, p. 136.
- <sup>98</sup> *ibid.*, p. 142.
- <sup>99</sup> *ibid.*, p. 143.
- <sup>100</sup> Rough journal, September 1794. (F. C. C. Archives, Records of Mullingar turnpike road, TR3/1/1, (unpaginated)).
- <sup>101</sup> Leahy, *Treatise on roads*, pp. 37-38.
- <sup>102</sup> Sile ni Chinneide (ed.), 'A new view of eighteenth century life in Kerry' (Charles Etienne Coquebert de Montbret's notes on his visit to Kerry in Oct. 1790), in *Kerry Arch & Hist. Soc. Jn.* 6, 1973, p. 85.
- <sup>103</sup> Wakefield, *Account of Ireland statistical and political* (London, 1812), 2 vols.
- <sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, i, pp. iv-v.
- <sup>105</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 676.
- <sup>106</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>107</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 656.
- <sup>108</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>109</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 676.
- <sup>110</sup> Patrick O'Kelly, 'History of inland transport in Ireland down to the period of railways', M. Sc. Econ. thesis, Univ. of London, 1922, p. 129.
- <sup>111</sup> *ibid.*, p. 132.
- <sup>112</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>113</sup> Wakefield, *Account of Ireland*, i, p. 677.
- <sup>114</sup> A. Atkinson, *The Irish tourist in a series of picturesque views, travelling incidents etc.* (Dublin, 1815), p. 216.
- <sup>115</sup> Ivor Herring, 'The Bians' (1) in *U. J. A.* (third series 1939), ii, p. 130.
- <sup>116</sup> *ibid.*, p. 130.
- <sup>117</sup> T. W. Freeman, *Pre-Famine Ireland* (Manchester, 1957), p. 114.
- <sup>118</sup> Herring, 'Bians', pp. 132-34.
- <sup>119</sup> Thomas Campbell Foster, *Letters on the condition of the people of Ireland* (London, 1846), p. 561.
- <sup>120</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 561-62.
- <sup>121</sup> *ibid.*, p. 562.
- <sup>122</sup> Thomas Newenham, *A view of the national, political and commercial circumstances of Ireland* (London, 1809), p. 35.
- <sup>123</sup> *Sixth report from select committee on Holyhead roads (Irish roads)*, mins of evid., p. 17, H. C. 1822, vi, 257.
- <sup>124</sup> Peter J. O'Keeffe, *The Dublin to Navan road and Kilcarn bridge* (Trim, 1994), p. 17.
- <sup>125</sup> *Sixth report on Holyhead roads (Irish roads)*, H. C. 1822, vi.
- <sup>126</sup> *ibid.*, mins. of evid., p. 28 (268).
- <sup>127</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>128</sup> *ibid.*, p. 29 (269).
- <sup>129</sup> *ibid.*, p. 28. (268).
- <sup>130</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>131</sup> *ibid.*, p. 30 (270).
- <sup>132</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>133</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>134</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>135</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>136</sup> *ibid.*, p. 33 (273).
- <sup>137</sup> *ibid.*, p. 32 (272).
- <sup>138</sup> *ibid.*, p. 33 (273).
- <sup>139</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>140</sup> Ruth Delany, *A celebration of 250 years of Ireland's inland waterways* (Belfast, 1986), repr. 1992, pp. 186-191.
- <sup>141</sup> Sir George Macartney *Facts and arguments respecting the great utility of an extension plan of inland navigation in Ireland* (Dublin, 1800), pp. 69-77.
- <sup>142</sup> Fitzwilliam papers, wwm mp 23, Sheffield city archives.



## CHAPTER 5 LAST PERIOD FOR TURNPIKE ROADS - 1820 TO 1858

The period from 1820 to 1858 when the turnpike trusts were finally abolished and all gates were opened up was a period when the last efforts were made to make the turnpike system operate efficiently. These were the years of the great parliamentary inquiries which opened up the administration of the trusts to public scrutiny. However the improvement of the grand jury system and the advent of the railways and the very serious famine of 1847 proved too much for the turnpikes and it became a question of how best to end them.

### 5.1 New turnpike road legislation

From 1820 to 1837 there were a total of twelve acts passed by parliament which created new turnpike roads and trusts. The last was in respect of the Belfast -Lisburn and Hannahstown and Castlerobin to Crumlin turnpike roads in 1837. These acts are listed in Table 5.1.

*Table 5.1 New road lengths added to turnpike system between 1820 and 1837*

Number	Short name of road	Enabling act	Year	Length in miles
1	Cork-Skibbereen-Kinsale	3 Geo.1V, c.108	1822	64.00
2	Dublin-Howth (Ext to Dublin-Malahide road)	4 Geo. IV, c.74	1823	8.00
3	Cork-Ballyhooly	6 Geo.1V, c.96	1825	17.00 (not fully implemented).
4	Dublin-Ashbourne-Slane & Drogheda	7 & 8 Geo.1V, c.66	1827	30.50 excl.Curraha rd.
5	Belfast-Antrim	9 Geo.1V, c.71	1828	28.00
6	Belfast-Copeland Water	"	1828	inclusive
7	Lisburn-Monaghan	9 Geo.1V, c.80	1828	33.09
8	Dublin-Blessington-Carlow	10 Geo.1V, c.75	1829	47.00
9	Dundalk-Castleblaney-Carrickmacross	11 Geo.1V, c.112	1830	25.00
10	Newry-Charlemount	5 & 6 Will IV, c.67	1835	25.875
11	Belfast-Crumlin	5 & 6 Will. IV, c.2	1835	9.75
12	Belfast-Lisburn by Malone & Falls and 2 roads from Hannahstown & Castlerobin to Crumlin	7 Will. 1V, & 1 Vict., c. 62	1837	26.00

From this and previous Tables it is evident that there was a concentration of turnpike roads and gates in the Belfast area similar to the concentration on the north side of Dublin city.



With the increase in population and industrial expansion in Belfast coupled with the major realignments of the existing turnpike and other roads often on completely new lines, it is not surprising that gate locations had to be altered frequently to cater for the changing position. In order not to add to the confusion about these turnpike roads and gates in the 1817-37 period, the description of the changes and associated problems given by W A. McCutcheon is quoted in full:

Other roads on which turnpikes were established included those from Newry to Armagh, from Lisburn to Armagh, from Banbridge to Rasharkin, from Belfast to Carrickfergus and from Belfast to Antrim. On some of these the effects of an expanding road network are not without interest to the local historian. The former road from Belfast to Antrim, for example, was by way of the Shankill and Woodvale roads, by Ardoyne loanin' and the Flush road to upper Ligoniel. When the road became a turnpike a toll house was built at the old graveyard on the Shankill road. In 1837, however, an entirely new line of road from Belfast to Antrim was completed, by Glengormley and Templepatrick. This, too, was a turnpike with a toll house at the New Lodge road (Pinkerton's Row) junction. An offshoot to this main Antrim road, constructed at roughly the same time, was the present-day Crumlin road, forming a junction with the old line to Antrim at Ardoyne. For several years travellers with economy in mind eluded the various toll gates on the new Antrim road and by using the Crumlin road, which was free of toll houses, made their way from Belfast to Antrim along the old line, free of charge. However, this loophole was soon plugged by the transfer of the toll house from the Shankill road to a point controlling both the Crumlin and Shankill lines, in the angle formed by the junction of the two roads at Ardoyne. This building, today No. 438 Crumlin Road, was for twenty years, until the abolition of the entire turnpike system in 1857, one of the busiest toll houses in the vicinity of the city.

Similarly, the toll house on the old Belfast-Lisburn road stood approximately in what is now University Road, at about Mount Charles, being replaced by the better known example at the southern end of Bradbury Place only on the construction of the new road from Belfast to Lisburn between 1817 and 1819.<sup>1</sup>

The preambles of the original enabling acts for turnpike roads almost invariably cited the poor condition of the roads as a reason for the establishment of turnpike trusts (See pages 48 and 62). The preamble of the turnpike act (3 Geo.IV, c.108) of 1822 (No. 1 in Table 5.1) in respect of the Cork -Skibbereen-Kinsale road showed a change in this practice in that the purpose of this act was to provide for the maintenance of a recently improved road:



Whereas a public road has been made leading from the city of Cork to the town of Skibbereen, having a branch therefrom of about seven miles in length leading to the town of Kinsale: And whereas such roads were formed and been heretofore maintained by the application of money presented by the grand jury of the county of Cork and raised in the said county: And whereas in consequence of making such roads there has been established between the city of Cork and the towns of Skibbereen and Kinsale, and other towns on the line of the said roads, a considerable intercourse, which has occasioned a constant wearing of the said roads, and has rendered it necessary that continued attention should be paid to the state of such roads, and that money should be constantly expended for keeping them in repair: And whereas it is reasonable and expedient that the funds for the repairs of such roads should in future be raised as in hereafter mentioned:.....

**No return was received in respect of this road by the 1831/32 Select Committee of inquiry.**

The reconstruction and realignment of this road was the cause of much argument and disagreement between the grand jury and the Post Office engineer who designed it under the provisions of the mail coach road act of 1805 (45 Geo.III, c.43). The engineer concerned was William Larkin and he contended that the grand jury's overseer a Mr. Kingston had unnecessarily altered the line of the road and so increased the cost. The grand jury took the side of their overseer and the Post Office sent down Major Taylor and Sir Charles Coote to investigate the matter. These two conducted their inquiry without hearing Kingston's evidence and came down on the side of their engineer. Faced with this, the Cork county grand jury deputed five of their number to carry out before a judge a detailed investigation and interrogation of all concerned. The five issued a report<sup>2</sup> at the Spring Assizes of 1814 clearing Kingston of any wrongdoing which was accepted by the government and the building of the road was completed on the grand jury line. The report of the five members throws much light on the methods and difficulties of road building in the early part of the nineteenth century.

In respect of this **arterial** road it is of interest to note the large number of roads in the west Cork area and the fact that most of these roads were regarded as good in 1797. This is shown in a report of General Darymple to Earl Carhampton on 28 February 1797. Darymple had a survey carried out in view of the threatened invasion by the French in the West Cork area as to the suitability of the roads for military traffic and reported in a 'hurried' fashion as follows:

The road from Baltimore towards Cork is tolerably good and artillery might pass from Bantry the same: the road from Dunmanus bay to Bantry or Skibbereen is not good and doubtful whether artillery might pass from Bantry to Macroom - very bad and hilly but practicable for infantry and cavalry: to Kenmare it might easily be made practicable for light artillery. From Macroom to Dunmanua [Dunmanway] it is very good and also from Macroom to Cork. The roads by the shore from Clonakilty b[ay] are all good . From Dunmanua to



Cork there are many good roads. All the cross communications are in general good and they are numerous.<sup>3</sup>

Another turnpike road which evoked controversy in its early stages was the one from Dublin to Carlow via Blessington (No 8 in Table 5.1). On the direction of the Post-masters General, the grand jury of county Wicklow presented a sum of £16,935 - 8s - 4.5d at their Lent assizes in 1813 in order to construct their portion of the proposed new mail coach road from Dublin to Waterford, for which plans had been drawn up by the Post Office engineers.<sup>4</sup> The Post Office agreed to run the Waterford mail coach on the road 'as soon as the road should be fit for it.'<sup>5</sup> Applications were made shortly after to the grand juries of Dublin and Kildare to present sums to repair the portions of the road in these counties but both grand juries refused. The Carlow grand jury had meantime agreed to fund their section of the road and on the refusal of the Kildare and Dublin juries, a deputation was sent by Carlow and Wicklow to meet the county Dublin grand jury but no agreement was forthcoming. The planned route of the new Waterford road was via Tallaght. However the deputation were given to understand by an individual 'that if the road was run into the Rathcool road, the opposition would cease.'<sup>6</sup> As the Wicklow grand jury were opposed to this because it would lengthen the journey and subject the road users to an extra toll, they saw no option but to seek a turnpike act for the whole road, as planned from Carlow to Dublin. Some 25 miles of this road had been constructed in county Wicklow at a cost of £22,000. The act (10 Geo.IV, c 75) for the setting up of this turnpike trust was passed in 1829. In the preamble of this act there is a reference to the reason for it in the wording 'and as it passes through and on the skirts of several counties, it cannot be effectually completed, amended and maintained by ordinary presentments from grand juries.' By a clause in the act 'the trustees were authorised to apply for a loan of the whole or part of any sums necessary for the purposes of the act to the Commissioners of Public Works, (viz.) for the cost of passing it and of perfecting the line between Dublin and Carlow'. However when the application was made, the fund was exhausted, and though at that stage, money was sought from the public by advertisement, none could be procured for less than six per cent per annum. Much of the above information was given by Francis William Green to the select committee on post communication with Ireland in 1832<sup>7</sup>. Green was a magistrate who stated he had been a member of the county Wicklow grand jury since the death of his father in 1799 and obviously had a deep knowledge of the history of the origins of the Dublin-Carlow turnpike road. When asked about who told him that there would be no opposition by the Dublin grand jury if the new Carlow road was routed through Rathcool, he revealed that it was an employee of an individual in possession of the tolls of the Rathcool road. Mr. Green also agreed that it would be desirable if adequate powers were vested in the Lord Lieutenant and Council to prevent dissenting grand juries from blocking lines of major roads, where grand juries in whose areas the greater part of the lines lay agreed to the proposed road lines.



## 5.2 Introduction of railways and steam carriages

Ireland adopted the new transport system by which carriages were drawn along specially laid steel tracks by steam engines not long after the advantages of such a system had become apparent in England. The first railway built in Ireland was the one from Dublin to Dunleary, which opened for business on 17 December 1834.<sup>8</sup> This was followed by the portion of the Ulster railway between Belfast and Lisburn which opened on 12 August 1839<sup>9</sup>. From the late twenties there was a demand throughout the country for railways but the available private funds were inadequate. On this account the investors in the Dublin-Dunleary line had to receive a loan from the Board of Public Works and the Ulster railway required a similar loan in order to advance the line from Lisburn to Portadown.<sup>10</sup> The next town which took positive action to have a rail connection with Dublin was Drogheda and this proposal opened the question as to whether this line should follow the coastal route via Balbriggan or head initially towards Navan. Such a line would eventually form part of a railway connection between Dublin and Belfast. A major political argument ensued and those favouring the coastal route sought engineering advice from the eminent engineer William Cubitt, who informed a public meeting on 11 October 1835 that the coastal route was the one he found most suitable<sup>11</sup>. After this the proposers of the coastal route railway took the appropriate steps to have the scheme implemented and on 18 June 1838, two contracts were awarded for construction of a portion of the line.

However it was not to be as simple as was thought. The government faced with requests for loans for railway building and seeing different companies adopting different gauges for their tracks (Dublin-Dunleary; 4 ft.- 8.5 in. and Belfast-Lisburn; 6 ft.- 2 in.) felt that the only solution was to set up a Commission<sup>12</sup> 'to consider and recommend a General System of Railways for Ireland' and the commission was appointed on 20 August 1836. The chairman of this commission was Thomas Drummond and the other members of it were Richard Griffith, Col. John Fox Burgoyne and Peter Barlow. Drummond was Under Secretary of State for Ireland, Barlow was a professor of mathematics from London and Griffith and Burgoyne were both engineers. It became known as the Drummond commission and ranks with the Devon commission<sup>13</sup> as giving the most comprehensive information about conditions in Ireland prior to the Great Famine. The results of the major traffic survey undertaken by this commission are given in Chapter 5.7.

After the initial slow start on the railways in 1834-44, rapid progress was made<sup>14</sup> in building up the system as is shown in the following Table 5.2

**Table 5.2 Rapid extension of rail system between 1844 and 1910**

Year ending		Length of lines open in miles
30 June	1844	31.25
"	1845	65
"	1846	65
"	1847	121
"	1848	209



31 December	1849	428
"	1850	515
"	1855	942
"	1860	1,364
"	1865	1,838
"	1870	1,925
"	1875	2,148
"	1880	2,370
"	1885	2,575
"	1890	2,727
"	1895	3,172
"	1900	3,183
"	1905	3,312
"	1910	3,401

Among the most important early lines after 1844 were: the completion of the Dublin - Cork line in 1849, the Dublin - Galway line in 1851 and the completion of the Dublin - Belfast line in 1853<sup>15</sup>. By the time the turnpike roads had all been officially ended on 1 April 1858, 1,064 miles of railways were already in operation. It should be said that the gauge of all these and all future Irish railways was 5 ft. - 3 in., as: 'It was recommended by General Pasley in his report of 10 March 1843 to the Board of Trade, and was adopted by the legislature, notwithstanding that the commissioners of Irish railways had previously resolved that 6 ft.- 2 in. should be the national gauge of Ireland.'<sup>16</sup>

The steam locomotive had developed as a road vehicle as well as a railway engine and some of these were manufactured in Ireland by the Speedwell forge near Doagh, county Antrim. This forge or factory was established in 1824 by John Rowan and sons, proprietors. The Ordnance Survey inspector for the area in 1832 reported: 'Mr. John Rowan and sons are the inventors of the first steam engine or locomotive carriage ever invented in this country. This machine is 21 horsepower and has travelled to Belfast and through all the principal streets in it.'<sup>17</sup> On roads the best use of steam locomotives was for passenger transport vehicles such as omnibuses. An advertisement for one such passenger vehicle to run from Dublin to Belfast appeared in the press in February 1820 which announced:

That on the first day of March, a new invented coach, impelled by steam and air pressure, is to leave the Moira Hotel, Sackville street at twenty minutes past seven o'clock in the morning, and deliver passengers and luggage in Belfast, at two o'clock; to remain forty minutes in Belfast, and reach Dublin again at nine o'clock. Its motion is equal to seven Irish miles an hour. The coaches are mounted on Mr. Bellingham's patent axles. It is added that the proprietor,



having an exclusive patent, will neither take mails nor horses; therefore no delay from post--- or Toll-gates can occur.<sup>18</sup>

It is not known if this steam coach ever went into service as there is no record of its use in the almanacs which gave the time-tables for such services. The turnpike trusts however soon caught up with the possibility of toll-avoidance by these 'horseless carriages' and the Dublin-Dunleer turnpike road amendment act (10 Geo.IV, c.63) of 1829 contained a provision for tolls on carriages not drawn by animals to be at the same rate as for similar carriages drawn by two animals.

Some engineers still believed that road transport was the long term answer to the natural human desire to come and go as one pleased, instead of being constrained to use canal and railway timetables and routes. In other words, the operations of railways and canals are limited by being fixed in time and space while the basic wish of everyone was and always will be to choose where and when they wish to travel (See page 233). While no system can give absolute freedom of movement to all places at all times, there is no doubt but that the personal vehicle operating on an adequate and widespread road system, is the nearest that can be found to the ideal free movement system. The ideal road system is also one where different types of traffic are segregated as for example today, slow-moving 'mopeds' are not allowed on motorways. In the early nineteenth century steam-driven vehicles must have found horse-drawn traffic as awkward as steamships found sailing vessels at sea. About 1841, Sir James Anderson, son of John Anderson of Fermoy and a Jasper Rogers obtained a franchise or license from a manufacturer of steam carriages to make or sell in Ireland a type of steam carriage which they claimed could travel at an average speed of twelve to fifteen miles an hour on reasonably good roads<sup>19</sup>. They consulted the well known civil engineer, William Bald on how best this new vehicle should be operated. Bald was a Scotsman who originally came to Ireland in 1809 to join the bog survey team.(See page 224) He later worked extensively on roads.<sup>20</sup> Bald drew up a short but enthusiastic report on the use of these high-speed vehicles. He wrote in an undated letter which accompanied his report:

If you succeed in travelling on common good strong roads at a velocity of fifteen miles per hour with your Steam Carriage -- I will look upon it as one of the greatest achievements of the age, and as being one of the most happy and useful applications of steam power that has yet been brought into operation.<sup>21</sup>

Bald's report proposed that the principal roads of the country (1422 miles) or at least a large number of the through routes be widened by a further 24 feet to create a parallel road to the existing carriageway for the exclusive use of the steam carriages. The report further proposed that these new roads should be divided from the running surface of the existing carriageway by a four foot high wall eighteen inches thick and that the new road surface should be built in strict accordance with the standards set down by Thomas Telford and J. L. McAdam and that where



possible, alignment should be improved. The report then stated that the costs of the proposed road works would be only be a fraction of the costs of construction of the railways. Bald's concept of creating separate carriageways for motor traffic was an early portent of the motorways of this century.

The steam carriages of Anderson and Rogers went into service and must have been an initial success as a report of 1843 from an engineer indicated:

Experience has proved beyond a doubt, that the mechanism of common road steam carriages, particularly those under Anderson's and Rogers' patents, are at least as perfect as they need be for a commencement. They can ascend with ease any hill, the gradient of which does not exceed one foot in fifteen.<sup>22</sup>

The report continued:

The most crowded streets may be passed through much more safely than if drawn by spirited horses. All noise has been done away with.<sup>23</sup>

Steam-driven vehicles were however not a great success and the horse-drawn vehicles maintained their place with them as the main means of road transport until the advent of the internal combustion engines towards the end of the nineteenth century.

### **5.3 *Parliamentary inquiry of 1831/32***

In 1831/32 a select committee was set up by parliament to inquire into the 'state of the Roads under Turnpike Trusts in Ireland [and] the amount of Receipt, Expenditure, and Debts of each Trust, and whether the provisions of the Act under which each Trust was formed, have been complied with.'<sup>24</sup> The committee was set up as a result of several petitions from north county Dublin complaining about unequal taxation and the conditions of the roads. These petitions were of course referred to it. The committee comprised seventeen persons including two lords and three baronets, one of whom was the experienced Sir Henry Parnell. A very thorough and searching investigation was undertaken by the committee and evidence was taken by it from twenty eight witnesses before a comprehensive report was issued. This report stated that the committee had directed their attention to the valuable information and suggestions contained in the evidence and reports of similar inquiries in Britain, 'with the intention of recommending for adoption in Ireland, such parts of the improved system of road management, as experience of its efficiency recommends.'<sup>25</sup> This is a reference to the reports on the Holyhead road and the reports on the highways of England and Wales of 1819 and on the Metropolitan Trusts. The Committee carefully inquired into the abuses alleged to exist in the turnpike trusts and 'almost invariably found them similar to those complained of in England.'<sup>26</sup> The report then adverted to the evidence of McAdam before the committee of 1819:



That the first effectual repair of a bad road may be accomplished with little, if any, increase of expenditure, that its future repair will be attended with considerable saving, although with an increased employment of manual labour.<sup>27</sup>

and expressed the hope that this may be turned to advantage in Ireland. The report added that 'the best materials for road-making can easily be procured in Ireland; the low rate of labour, and the limited intercourse of vehicles more than a ton weight, afford Ireland the opportunity of possessing the best Roads at a moderate expense.'<sup>28</sup> This excerpt of the report was then followed by a sentence, which contained the essence of the findings: 'An improved system of management alone appears wanting to ensure so desirable a result.'<sup>29</sup> The report divided the more important roads into four classes:

- 1 - The Turnpike Roads under the management of Trustees, comprising 631 miles [Irish miles].
- 2 - The Turnpike Roads vested by Act of Parliament in individuals for unexpired terms, amount to 139 miles [Irish miles].
- 3 - The leading Roads on which mails travel, the cost and repair of which are raised under the Post Road Act, by the Grand Juries on counties at large, and administered under their control.
- 4 - The cross lines of Roads between large towns, which are repaired at the expense of the baronies through which they pass by Grand Jury Presentment, and on which mail-coaches do not travel.<sup>30</sup>

The following description was given of the above class 1 of turnpike roads, which accurately outlined their history and present position:

It appears by the preamble of Acts passed to establish Turnpikes in Ireland, that the Roads were of the worst description; the power to borrow money was acted on to a great extent under the early Acts, for purposes of improvement, which involved the Trusts so deeply as to absorb the greater portion of the tolls in the payment of interest; the Roads soon reverted to their original state, the intercourse diminished, and the Trusts became bankrupt, notwithstanding frequent aid from counties. The number of Acts passed for each Trust within a few years afforded no remedy. The debts increased, and the funds diminishing, it was found ultimately impossible to raise money on the security of the Tolls.<sup>31</sup>

The report went on to highlight the inequality in taxation between those living on the north and south sides of county Dublin due to the number of turnpike roads on the north side and the absence of them on the south side. It then pointed out some of the mal-practice's and



anomalies, which were made clear in the evidence given by the witnesses such as: the high salaries paid by some trusts to inspectors, overseers and treasurers in proportion to expenditure for repairs, the fact that 'a proposal to borrow money may be rejected at one Board, and adopted at another by different Trustees' was capable of giving rise to many abuses,<sup>32</sup> repairs were poorly carried out in the absence of engineers or qualified surveyors and the 'the mode of payment for repairs in some of the Trusts is [was] injudicious and reprehensible.'<sup>33</sup> The report also recorded the fact that though the turnpike trusts were required under the terms of the act of 1779/80 (19 & 20 Geo.III, c.50) to lodge their accounts with the Clerk of the Peace of the county in which the trust is situated once in each year for public inspection, no such accounts were lodged and in the case of Dublin county, the Clerk was paid a special salary each year for this non-existent work. Lastly, in the case of the class 1 turnpike roads, the report pointed out that 'The expense of an Act of Parliament is so disproportionate to the funds on new lines of Road, as in some instances to prohibit an application.'<sup>34</sup> An example of this was given in the case of the then new Blessington turnpike road, established in 1829, where the income from the tolls amounted to £1554 - 6s. - 11d. and the cost of the enabling act, which was so defective that the trust had to expend considerable expense in suits to enforce, was £1,038 - 5s. - 3d.

The roads in class 2 were those granted to individuals on certain conditions. The individuals concerned were ones who had established mail-coaches for the first time in Ireland. The report stated these roads formed the most important part of the inquiry as regards balancing the interests of the public and the rights of individuals guaranteed by act of parliament. The report stated:

Your Committee have carefully examined into the allegations made against the management of these Roads, and although the strict letter of the original contract may have not been observed, yet they do not find sufficient grounds for recommending an interference with rights conferred by Act of Parliament, without due compensation being made to individuals who embarked a considerable capital on the improvement of the great lines of Road, at a time when all previous efforts had failed of success.<sup>35</sup>

From the tone of this it is obvious that the select committee was satisfied with the method of operation of these roads. (See under Privatised Turnpike roads below)

The report on the third class of roads showed dissatisfaction with the grand jury (county-at-large) system of maintaining these roads. The report was scathing on the presentment system: 'The mode of repairing Roads under Grand Jury presentments is so defective, the facility to plunder is so great, that value is seldom given for the money paid.'<sup>36</sup> The report noted in the case of the fourth class of roads that 'this class of road is so much affected by the establishment of Turnpikes on other Roads, Your Committee feel it necessary to include them in the Report, and in the recommendation with which it will conclude.'<sup>37</sup> The report then gave the reason for this inclusion:



When Turnpikes are placed on the direct line of communication, the Roads leading to the same point, though at a greater length, are almost exclusively used by carriers employed in conveying heavy burthens, a high rate is imposed on the barony for repairs, to the inhabitants of which the Road may be of little importance, while it deprives the Trust of toll.<sup>38</sup>

### *Privatised Turnpike roads*

These were the 139 miles of turnpike roads vested for individual profit, which are included in class 2 above. There were four roads involved; the roads from Dublin to Kilcullen, from Naas to Limerick, from Dublin to Ashbourne and from Cork to Kilworth Mountain. The names of the contractors/proprietors, the current annual profits and the dates of termination of the contracts are given in Table 5.3:

**Table 5.3 Position of the four privately operated turnpike roads in 1832**

Road	Name of contractor	Current annual profit	Date of end of contract
Dublin-Kilcullen	Messrs. George, Archibald., George Jun. and W. Taylor	£ 3,156 - 11s - 10d.	October 1848
Naas-Limerick	Messrs. W. H & R Bourne	£ 4,405 - 16s. - 0d.	October 1848
Dublin-Ashbourne	Mr. Frederick Bourne	£ 1,025 - 8s. - 4d.	1848
Cork-Kilworth Mountain.	Mr. Robert Briscoe	£ 1,640 - 0s. - 9d.	1841

These privatised turnpike roads proved to be the ultimate realisation of the initiators of the turnpike system in that a profit or surplus was annually earned or made. It is easy to say that the operators started with favourable circumstances and enjoyed a monopoly on the roads carrying the heaviest traffic, but they showed that it was possible to operate turnpike roads and not alone break even, but show profits. The main difference from other turnpike roads was the need to operate efficiently and to reduce the costs of repair and maintenance as much as possible while still making it attractive for traffic. The 1831-32 select committee report gave the three year total average annual income of the four privatised roads as £114 per mile as against £49 per mile for all other turnpike roads, while it gave the total average annual expenditure at £42 per mile for the privatised roads and £48.5 for the others. Of the figures on expenditure, the actual expenditure per mile on road repairs and management was £39.25 (£32.55 for repairs and £6.7 for management) for the privatised roads, and £42 (£35 for repairs and £7 for management) for the other turnpikes. The average costs for the non-privatised turnpike roads however, conceal the very large variation between individual roads. Indeed the variation in these costs for the non-privatised roads is most difficult to credit, as for example; the average cost of road repairs on the



Shankill to Waterford turnpike was £14.75 per mile and the cost of management was only £1.75 per mile, while the average cost of road repairs on the Dundalk to Castleblaney and Carrickmacross road was £48.35 per mile and the cost of management a whopping £23.8 per mile. From these figures it is clear that the system was in chaos and each trust was acting entirely on its own. The figures also show how well the privatised roads were being run in that they carried the heaviest traffic and yet despite this their average cost of road repairs per mile was less than that of roads with much lighter traffic.

The low cost for maintenance of the privatised turnpike roads despite their large volume of traffic bears out J. L. McAdam's assertion of 1819 about the small amount of maintenance required on roads which were originally properly repaired or reconstructed. ( See page 209 ).

***Fraud in turnpike trusts:***

One of the questions asked on the general query form sent by the select committee to the trusts was Question No. 30, which sought details of the amounts of loss incurred by the trusts by defalcation of treasurers or other public officers during the previous twenty years. The questions were answered in March 1832. The trusts which reported such losses, included those in charge of the roads listed in Table 5.4<sup>39</sup>:

**Table 5.4 Fraud in turnpike trusts**

Name of turnpike road	Date	Details of loss, where known
Carlow - Kilkenny	1823	£25 embezzled by treasurer
Kilkenny - Bds. of Co Tipperary.	1823	£25 embezzled by treasurer
Co. Kilkenny Bds.to Co. Cork Bds.	1821-30	£196-6s.-9d. short at toll-gates
Timaho to Bds, of Co. Kilkenny	1814-31	Not possible to identify shortage at gates
Kinnegad to Athlone	1819-25	£255-0s.-9.5d. short at toll-gates
Waterford to Bds. of Co. Cork	1813	£350 -16s.-7d. embezzled by treasurer
Newcastle to Charleville	-	Estimated £2,000 short at toll-gates
Dublin to Dunleer	1826	£501 - 2s.- 6d.
Dublin to Malahide	1826	£530 - 16s. - 8d.
Kilcullen to Carlow	1824	£623 - 10s.- 1d.
Naas to Limerick	-	£700+
Cork to Kilworth	-	more a plea for compensation
Dublin to Knocksedan	1825	£8 by a tenant
Dublin to Ratoath	1824	£160
Circular road, Dublin	1824	£1,800 embezzled by treasurer

It can be seen from this that the funds of the turnpike trusts were still being misappropriated by both those in charge of the funds and by employees. Despite the clarity of the question a number of the trusts' secretaries and treasurers misread it and assumed it included losses because of other reasons. The biggest amount directly mentioned was the £1,800 taken from the trustees of the Circular Road. This was stolen by the then Receiver and Treasurer from



the trusts' Directors and he 'was afterwards arrested at the suit of the said Directors, and spent nearly one year in prison, till discharged under the Insolvency act, without any schedule of property to return.'<sup>40</sup> In the case of the trust of the road leading from the city of Dublin over Ballybough and Annesley bridges, sometimes styled the turnpike trust of the Malahide road, a double loss of funds occurred. In 1825 the bank of Lord Viscount Newcomen where this trust's income was regularly lodged, failed and stopped trading. G. L. Barrow described the collapse of this bank:

The new Viscount was obviously not cut out to be a banker. He suffered from poor health, but nevertheless the announcement of his death on 17 January 1825 came as a shock to the public, and the bank promptly closed. Reports that he had shot himself were quickly denied, but the state of affairs which came to light at least give ground for suspicion that there may have been more truth in the report than in the denial. The first announcement was of a deficit of £161,000, but two weeks later a committee appointed by the creditors produced a more detailed report.<sup>41</sup>

The detailed report indicated that the total debts were £281,000, but that there were also assets in property of a smaller amount which took time to be sold. The Malahide road trust lost £536 - 3s. - 0d. because of the failure of this bank, but £223 - 8s. - 0d. was subsequently recovered<sup>42</sup>. It should be noted that the Newcomen bank was also used by the Dublin-Navan turnpike road trust (See page 176). In the following year, 1826, the then Secretary to the Malahide road trustees one William Wilkins, absconded because of an impending audit into his accounts, and all the trust's records disappeared at the same time. Wilkins alleged that the records were lost by a messenger taking them from his office to one of the trustees. In all events, a further sum of £530 - 16s. - 8d. was found to be missing. On discovery of this two of the trustees went to Wilkin's house and searched it thoroughly and took away any documents relating to the trust but these were later found to be of little value. The attorney general was consulted about the matter but he 'advised the trustees not to risk a prosecution against the said Wilkins thereon.'<sup>43</sup> It is recorded in the minutes of the trust that Wilkins was dismissed as Secretary on 12 July 1826 'in consequence of his non-attendance and with-holding of books and other documents.'<sup>44</sup> In the case of the road from Naas to Limerick, which was now under the private control of W. H. Bourne, the position was somewhat similar and Bourne reported that:

Considerable losses have been sustained by the dishonesty of some of the principal overseers, two of whom ran off to America; also by turnpike-men, and by prosecutions for breaking into toll-houses and robbing them. Much expense accrued in prosecuting for various offences, amongst which was that of a receiving clerk, who, to protect himself, having carried off or made away with various books in his care, deprived me of the means to prove his defalcations to



the full extent; those which I was enabled by other documents to establish against him amounted to upwards of £700.<sup>45</sup>

It is seen from above two cases that in addition to the loss of money there was also a lack of vital documents about the operation of the turnpike roads. It was naturally in the interest of those involved in fraud to destroy or remove any incriminating evidence.

The main recommendation of the report in the case of the turnpike roads was generally that the Committee wished 'to devise a system of management for the great roads of Ireland, which would unite the exertions of gentlemen resident in the country, with a class of persons who could devote more time and become responsible for the duties assigned them.....'<sup>46</sup> The class of persons referred were of course the professional civil engineers as is shown by the following excerpt from the report:

They [expert witnesses] all concur in stating, that however useful or praiseworthy the exertions of local trustees may be, where a sufficient number can be induced to attend, that with the imperfect knowledge possessed by persons usually employed in road-making, and from the inability of trusts of small extent to remunerate professional men of experience and integrity, an effectual improvement in road-making cannot be introduced without a total change in the system of management.<sup>47</sup>

The select committee, being conscious of the beneficial results attending the appointment of a Board of Commissioners for superintending the Holyhead road were induced to:

expect similar advantages in Ireland, by placing them [the turnpike roads] under the care of the Board of Public Works in conjunction with the local trustees; a system of economy and improvement may be introduced under the management of the Board, without interfering with the discharge of its other duties or entailing any additional expense on the public.<sup>48</sup>

The recommended changeover to the Board of Works was never made because of outside developments such as the reform of the grand jury system. It was perhaps fortunate in a sense because within two years the railways had come to Ireland and the turnpike roads were only to remain in existence for another twenty five years.

#### **5.4 Strengthening and reform of Grand Jury road administration system and its effect on the turnpikes.**

The system of carrying out road works on the county roads under the grand juries continued to be the 'presentment' system first introduced in 1634 and partially improved by



various enactments since then. The presentment system as up-dated mainly in 1765, was described by Arthur Young in these terms:

The following is the system on which the cross-roads are made. Any person wishing to make or mend a road has it measured by two persons, who swear to the measurements before a justice of the peace. It is described as leading from one market town to another (it matters not in which direction) that it will be a public good, and that it will require such a sum, per perch of twenty one feet, to make or repair the same; a certificate to this purpose (of which printed forms are sold) with the blanks filled up, is signed by the measurers, and also by two persons called overseers, one of whom is usually the person applying for the road, the other the labourer he intends to employ as an overseer of the work, which overseer swears also before the justice the truth of the valuation. The certificate, thus prepared, is given by any person to some one of the Grand Jury, at either of the assizes, but usually in the spring. When all the common business of trials is over, the jury meets on that of roads; the chairman reads the certificates, and they are all put to the vote, whether to be granted or not. If rejected, they are torn to pieces and no further notice is taken, if granted they are put on the file.

This vote of approbation, without any further form, enables the person, who applied for the presentment, immediately to construct or repair the road in question, which he must do at his own expence; he must finish it by the following assizes, when he is to send a certificate of his having expended the money pursuant to the application; this certificate is signed by the foreman, who also signs an order on the treasurer of the county to pay him, which is done immediately.<sup>49</sup>

In an appendix to the report of the select committee on the amount of advances by the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland,<sup>50</sup> there was an abstract of some communications sent to the Duke of Wellington in the year 1829 relating to public works in Ireland. In this abstract, the Irish grand juries came in for severe criticism. The abstract pointed out that 'the uncontrolled power of taxation vested in Irish grand juries, not justifiable on any sound principles has led in practice to abuses which have excited general complaint.'<sup>51</sup> It then stated that 'the amount of money levied in the last 30 years by grand juries must exceed 18 millions; an immense sum, which, judiciously and economically applied, would have advance Ireland to a high degree of improvement.'<sup>52</sup> In the case of road expenditure there was further criticism:

No doubt grand jury expenditure has afforded fine main lines of communication, and the cross roads are better than those of more advanced countries; but the result leaves an impression of extensive misapplication of the fund. All roads under grand juries could be better and more economically made and repaired. The management of bridges is still more defective.<sup>53</sup>



There was little doubt among all classes and writers and commentators that the grand juries were corrupt. Some of the extensive landowners presumed that the grand juries were there primarily for their own benefit. An instance of the corruption in the Irish grand jury system was given in the house of commons on 19 February 1833:

A gentleman who wanted a road on his estate, or who wanted employment for his labourers, would make a presentment - a committee would be appointed - he would get his own name, and perhaps that of a friend, put on this committee, and he would have the management of the whole affair. He would then employ his own labourers - would pay them out of the funds levied upon the county, and by these means would enable them to pay him out of the salary they thus received from the county at large a rent which depended not on the holding itself, but on the amount of money he was able to procure them, on account of labours in public works.<sup>54</sup>

As grand juries were not democratic bodies and their principal reason for existence was to help administer the law, the members saw road work allocation as a perk of the job. Among the grand jurors there were of course genuine people who tried to serve the public good and not all the others were equally corrupt. An overseer of roads in county Armagh wrote in 1806 of ignorant persons submitting inflated estimates to grand juries for road works:

and those persons are usually named overseers to expend the money, and thereby have an opportunity of embezzling and sinking into their own pockets a large proportion of the sum presented, notwithstanding they account for the faithful expenditure in a solemn manner, and others account in like manner who have never seen one perch of the road repaired, and depend on the report of a deputy.<sup>55</sup>

In the period after the act of union a survey was carried out by the Dublin Society of the counties mainly to determine the state of agriculture but also included reports on various aspects of the road networks. In observations on the Dublin survey, Hely Dutton, who had himself carried out the surveys of the counties Galway and Clare, showed an understanding of the problem of road management and financing far beyond his time, when he wrote in 1802:

When a better system of road making is established, the enormous waste of the public money, that has taken place, will be truly astonishing; and I am convinced until a *National Board of Roads*<sup>i</sup> is established, we never can expect matters to mend; for then the grand cause, grand jury jobbing, will cease, and the conduct be thrown into the hands of the scientific and practical road-maker.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> It was only in 1995 that a National Roads Board was set up in the Republic of Ireland.



Dutton must have been thoroughly sickened and fed up with the corruption and waste of public money on roads when he wrote such a sentence. Dutton was not the only person to criticise the Irish grand jury system of road making. In his survey of county Meath also carried out in 1802, Robert Thompson wrote of the corruption in road expenditure and intimated that proper supervision was necessary:

In the expenditure applied to road-making, as in the carrying on of most public works in this country, abuses of a glaring nature appear every day, which, though seen by everybody, yet are the business of nobody; and, although the precautionary steps, taken at the barony meetings, are in some measure a check to such frauds, yet no means, as far as I can see, have hitherto proved effectual towards putting a stop to what deserves no better name than public robbery, and why? There is no person, on whom responsibility is fixed, and the too common recourse to affidavit is the only necessary step towards obtaining money for work, well or ill executed.<sup>57</sup>

Thompson advocated that 'an active person' should be appointed by the grand jury 'to observe throughout the county or barony, what roads want repair, what bridges, gullets, walls, &c. are requisite to be built' and that he should report on the necessity of any work prior to presentment. This person should also certify that the work was done 'in a fair and equitable manner, before the amount is paid.'<sup>58</sup> Writer after writer and speaker after speaker denounced the grand jury system and parliament could no longer ignore the clamour for curbing the worst excesses of the system. Moreover, these criticisms continued while the parliament were ignoring the clamour for change. Writing in 1829, Joseph Lambert made the following observation: 'The roads of Ireland, generally speaking, are and will continue to be badly made, so long as the management is altogether in the hands of the gentry.'<sup>59</sup>

One of the most learned writers on the subject was Thomas Rice. As the first act to authorise the appointment of county surveyors was before parliament in 1815, Rice wrote of the duty of the Irish members of parliament:

They are called upon to dismiss all deep-rooted prejudice, - all ideas of private interest, - all favouritism for things as they are, in opposition to things as they ought to be :- they are called upon to decide from exalted and patriotic motives.<sup>60</sup>

In the parliament itself, the defects of the Irish grand jury system were spoken of on so many occasions that no one could have been in any doubt about the widespread dissatisfaction with the system as it stood. The act (57 Geo.III, c.107) entitled 'An Act to provide for the more deliberate investigation of Presentments to be made by Grand Juries, for Roads and Public Works, in Ireland, and for accounting for money raised by such Presentments,' which authorised the appointment of county engineers or surveyors was passed in 1817. Unfortunately no county



surveyors were appointed at that time because the interview board did not find suitably qualified applicants.<sup>61</sup> The interview board consisted of the following three members: Thomas Telford, the Scottish road engineer who founded the Institution of Civil Engineers, Major Alexander Taylor, and Francis Johnson, the architect. In the debates preceding the 1833 act (See below), the following excerpts give a sample of the opinions of some of the Irish members on the system as it then operated: Lord Clements, speaking on 19 February 1833 said:

...he could not refrain from denouncing the Grand Jury as it had hitherto existed. He represented one of the smallest counties in Ireland (Leitrim), and he could say, that the roads of it were impassable, except in those parts of it where the Grand Jurors resided. There they were kept in such a high state of repair, that the county was not able to pay the expenses of them.<sup>62</sup>

Mr. Ruthven, speaking on 11 July 1833, said:

The Grand Jury Law, as it stood at present in Ireland, was the fertile parent of innumerable hardships and of much misery, and the sooner even any of them could be got rid of the better.<sup>63</sup>

An act was passed in 1833 (3 & 4 Will.IV, c.78) to amend the laws relating to Grand Juries in Ireland. This act reintroduced provision for the appointment of properly qualified county surveyors for the counties. These county surveyors were appointed in 1834 and the position in each county in 1841, showing the lengths of road repaired by grand jury presentment and the names of the then county surveyors and the numbers of assistant surveyors in each, is shown in Table 5.5. The information in this Table is taken partly from *A practical treatise on making and repairing roads* by Edmund Leahy<sup>64</sup> and an article on 'The office of county surveyor - origin and early years' by B. O'Donoghue<sup>65</sup>.

**Table 5.5 Miles of road under maintenance in each county in 1841 with details of Engineering staff.**

County	Miles of road under maintenance	Names of county surveyors	No. of assistants
Antrim	1,900	Charles Lanyon	12
Armagh	917	Henry L Lindsay	6
Carlow	540	Charles G. Forth	1
Cavan	1,200	Alexander Armstrong	3
Clare	1,170	James Boyd	3
Cork - East	1,904	Patrick Leahy	5
Cork - West	971	Edmund Leahy	3
Donegal	2,482	John Steadman	5



Down	2,560	John Frazer	7
Fermanagh	868	Roderick Gray	2
Galway - East	957	James Forth Kempster	none
Galway - West	900	Henry Clements	none
Kerry	950	Henry Stokes	2
Kildare	806	John Yeats	3
Kilkenny	816	Samson Carter	5
King's County	729	William Barclay	2
Leitrim	652	Thomas Dugall Hall	1
Limerick - East	656	Thomas Kearney	1
Limerick - West	576	Richard Lanauze	1
Londonderry	1,450	Stewart Gordon	4
Longford	534	James Bell	none
Louth	400	John Neville	3
Mayo	1,400	Henry Brett	4
Meath	1,700	Samuel S. Searancke	1
Monaghan	1,142	Alexander Harrison	4
Queen's County	689	Henry H. Owen	2
Roscommon	959	John Kelly	none
Sligo	584	Noblett R. St. Leger	2
Tipperary - North	972	H. Uniacke Townsend	3
Tipperary - South	2,089	Samuel Jones	4
Tyrone	1,200	Richard Richards	none
Waterford	600	John Walker	4
West Meath	829	Florence Mahony	none
Wexford	1,544	James Barry Farrell	4
Wicklow	870	William Hampton	3

There seems to be little doubt but that the appointment of the county surveyors started the roll-back of the widespread waste of public funds and corruption which was so prevalent in the Irish grand jury system. These qualified surveyors were appointed by the Lord Lieutenant on the basis of professional interviews and even though they could be dismissed by the grand juries, they achieved a high standard of conduct by refusing to certify defective works for payment, even though this made them highly unpopular. An example of this was John Neville of county Louth, who 'regularly refused completion certificates to road contractors - a most disagreeable duty which made him many enemies among interested parties'<sup>66</sup> The county surveyor of Cork (West Riding) Edmund Leahy, who has already been mentioned in Chapter 4.5 was similarly treated<sup>67</sup>. Between his appointment in 1834 and 1841, Leahy constructed 143 miles of road<sup>68</sup> and this was more than all his contemporaries. In many accounts of this period, these men and their successors



were never given the credit due to them. In the case of Edmund Leahy the rise of a new obstacle to the enterprising and hard working engineer or surveyor and indeed to all professionals in the public service, soon showed itself. This new obstacle was epitomised by the bureaucrat, who wrote to Leahy on 9 May 1840 from the Under Secretary's office 'demanding an explanation as to why a report was not written on "half margin"' as required by a circular from that Office.<sup>69</sup> As stated by B. O'Donoghue in his paper on the county engineers:

Bureaucratic demands of this kind, however, should not be confused with central controls which were, in fact, very limited. The need for such controls was considered in 1835 by the select Committee on Public Works which expressed support for Burgoyne's view that control or direction by a central authority could be useful, to ensure coordination and a measure of uniformity in standards. In the event, no statutory provision for direct central supervision of the work of the surveyors was ever made.<sup>70</sup>

Edmund Leahy resigned in January 1846 to pursue an interest in railway engineering.<sup>71</sup> The reforms in the grand jury system at this time must have been a strong determining factor in the fall off of the demand for turnpike roads. No doubt these reforms coincided with the advent of the railway and together they ended the need for turnpike roads.

Though it must have been obvious to many people in the 1840s that the appointment of properly qualified engineers or surveyors was transforming the grand jury roads, some of the turnpike trustees remained lamentably ignorant of the qualifications and functions of such engineers. This is shown by part of the requirements for the post of surveyor laid down by the Dublin-Carlow turnpike trustees in 1843:

It is resolved and ordered that no person shall be elected, or put in nomination for that office, who shall not previously produce to the Trustees, testimonials of his qualifications and ability, from some regular Engineer employed under Government, or on some Public Work, and in particular, that he be acquainted with the quality and relative value of the different materials for road making, and the proper division and expense of labour, that he understands levelling and mapping (of which he is to produce specimens) and that he has been employed on some Public Work for at least one year.<sup>72</sup>

The above requirements are reasonable and normal, but it was followed by a requirement which shows how little the drafters or copiers of the above requirement understood what it meant. 'He must also be master of Arithmetic, so as to check and keep accounts, measure solids, &c.'<sup>73</sup>: It is inconceivable that anyone who could carry out almost any of the above requirements such as levelling and mapping, which entails such involved mathematical calculations, would not know sufficient simple arithmetic to check and keep accounts and measure solids. As regards duties, it



appeared that these were more those of a works-technician rather than those of a qualified engineer or surveyor, whose proper job should have been to advise the trustees and submit plans on how best the trust could be run effectively and efficiently and to implement any approved schemes in a businesslike and economic manner. In case of indisposition or other absence of the surveyor, the rules setting out the duties laid down that the overseer was to act in his place. The only requirements specified for overseer were that he 'shall reside on the line, that he shall give his entire time to the Trustees, and constant personal attention to the works carrying on.'<sup>74</sup>The insistence of turnpike trusts on an ability to measure being the test for the post of surveyor was a long standing one and unfortunately it was generally assumed that because an individual knew how to measure he somehow automatically knew how to construct and maintain a road. This assumption drew from J. L. McAdam in 1810 one of his most caustic remarks:

Surveyors are elected because they can measure; they might as well be elected because they can sing; but they are more commonly elected because they want a situation.<sup>75</sup>

As can be seen from Table 5.5 no county surveyor was appointed in 1834 for the county of Dublin, as there was no provision in the 1833 act for such an appointment. In 1844 a separate act (7 & 8 Vict., c.106) was passed that made provision for District Surveyors to be appointed to separate districts or divisions of the county and initially the county was divided into three districts and three district surveyors were appointed<sup>76</sup>. The appointment of these surveyors was timely because in 1837, there was severe criticism of the way road repair and road maintenance work was then being carried out. In an all too rare description of how actual work was performed on any Irish roads, J. S. Brunton has left this description of roadworks and road workers in county Dublin at that time:

I am given to understand, that most, if not all, the presentments and contracts for roads, specify, they were to be repaired with broken stones of a certain size and a layer of a certain depth [True at this time because of influence of Telford and McAdam], while in two cases out of three, it is round gravel mixed with sand that is spread; limping through which may sometimes be seen a wretched cripple or a half-naked boy, employed at a few pence per day, with hammer in hand to crack such large stones as are significantly termed, "spring setters".<sup>77</sup>

This writer then wrote that the custom of only paying roadmen only half the usual wages of the county was injudicious and added:

Be assured there is no money saved or respect gained by habits that have grown with narrow minded parsimony for years, and have been nursed in ignorance: pay the labourer a fair remuneration, and require him to work like a man; if not,



discharge him, and so long as you pay, you will find it easy to replace; on their present sorry wages they do as little as possible, and they cannot be altogether blamed. I have frequently observed a day's scraping done on a road, by one man, on which I might wager to find a charwoman that would not only scrape, but sweep and wash the space he had gone over in the day; yet this is not considered waste of public money. A system of task work, in all cases where mere labour is required, would be more beneficial to the public, and gives, when fairly adjusted, infinitely more satisfaction to the workmen.<sup>78</sup>

This extract makes reference to the small amount of work done by the roadman and implies that a woman might do more work. This is not as far-fetched as one might imagine, as in England women and children worked on some of the turnpike roads. In some cases the women and children were paid as W. Albert noted:

In 1762 the Chappel-on-the-Hill Trust paid two girls and a boy for picking pebbles, and in the 1790s women and children were being employed by the Canterbury-Dover Trust to pick gravel at 6d. per head.<sup>79</sup>

In other cases, unfortunate pauper women and children were obliged to work for no pay:

The use of paupers on trust roads was advocated by J. L. McAdam. In 1810, he contended that 'women or men past hard labour' should be employed breaking stone. He claimed 'a woman *sitting* will break more limestone for a road than two strong labourers on their feet with long hammers in a given time. He had success in using in using women, children and older labourers in Bristol, and pauper labour was adopted by other trusts which adopted his system.....Labourers' children were taken at nine or ten years of age and put to work, with women, breaking stones with small hammers.<sup>80</sup>

As Albert added: 'It would seem that the use of unfree labour and the ruthless exploitation of children was not restricted to the "dark satanic mills."<sup>81</sup> It seems that in Ireland the women and girls were spared such exploitation and employment on all roads including the turnpike ones, as no evidence could be found of females working on any of them. There was mention of boys and old men working under the statute labour system, as was already stated in Chapter 3.1.

There was a proposal for a new turnpike road from Kells, county Meath to Drogheda via Slane in the early 1830s. Two undated drafts of the proposed act were prepared in manuscript form<sup>82</sup>. Page 11 of the longer draft suggests that the first meeting of the proposed trust be held in 1834. The reason for the proposal was that the repair and maintenance of this road would be 'extremely burthensome to the holders of land within the baronies of the several counties through which the said road passes.'<sup>83</sup> It is also strongly emphasised that 'nothing in this act contained



shall extend or be construed to extend to take away [from] any Grand Jury the power or the obligation to repair any part of the said road<sup>84</sup>.' On the contrary the relevant grand juries are:

hereby required to present from time to time such sums to be levied on the county at large or on any barony or baronies therein as shall appear to be necessary in consequence of a deficiency in the tolls for repairing any part of the said road within the jurisdiction of such Grand Jury.....<sup>85</sup>

It seems most probable that the proposed turnpike road scheme was abandoned because of the afore-mentioned 1833 act appointing the county surveyors.

It must not be assumed that only the official bodies such as the grand juries and Board of Works were concerned in the development of roads in order to open up both unproductive land and to give access to good land. The landlords also were being advised of the necessity of roads for these purposes. An example of this was shown by a report<sup>86</sup> on the Dromahair estate in county Leitrim owned by the Lane family. This was a very large estate (18,684 acres) and the quality of much of the land was poor. The report was submitted to the family by Robert Stewart on 25 June 1831 and recommended the building of ten new roads with a total length of 18.125 miles in order to improve access to the land. Stewart showed the need for the roads and understood the desire of the landlords for a return on their outlay as can be seen by his remarks on one of the recommended roads (No. 4 - Drumconner, Flahanagh and Kilcoon road):

These townlands are greatly in want of a road, the tenants being obliged to carry the produce of the land upon their backs a considerable distance before it can be put on horseback, and when they avail themselves of a horse to carry the produce they have a very circuitous route to get to any market. This is a fine tract of land and the tenants are said to have promises of leases, but they would willingly and immediately pay any reasonable interest for the outlay that may be necessary for making a road through this division of the estate, should the promises of leases be confirmed. If not, they would pay an increased rent under fresh arrangements, [as] they are mostly a well conducted and industrious set of men.<sup>87</sup>

Thus it can be seen that the 1830 - 1850 period was one of increased road building and road maintenance. In the report of the commissioner for inquiring into the turnpike roads of 1856, it was pointed out that the mileage of roads being maintained by grand jury presentments had risen from 13,191 miles in 1834 to approximately 41,000 + in 1854.<sup>88</sup>

## **5.5 Maintenance of some turnpike roads by Board of Works**

After the rebellion of 1798, official thinking began to embrace the idea that one of the effective ways of pacifying the barely subsisting 'lower orders' was to engage them on public



works such as draining bogs and building roads. This is shown in part of a letter written by John Foster, Speaker of the Irish house of commons on 21 October 1798:

I think the great difficulty in governing Ireland arises from a want of knowledge of the comforts of life in the lower orders, and of course a want of education, of veneration for the laws which promote and protect wealth, and a want of industry or exertion to procure it. This difficulty has been gradually lessening for the last fifteen years, during which the country was increasing into wealth and prosperity beyond even our most sanguine expectations; and so convinced am I of the soundness of this principle that I have the vanity to think that, if I could have gained attention to my opinion when the King's forces overthrew the rebels in Wexford and Wicklow, these countries [sic] would have been quieted long since.....My wish was instantly to have had great works begun, such as the navigation of the Barrow, new roads through the mountains, draining of bogs etc. at the public expense in these counties,.....giving full employment to every man who would work, and I did presume that after the misery they had experienced, they would have thus become interested against new tumults, and learn to respect the government that not only pardoned, but gave them easy means of subsistence, not as beggars, but by honest industry.<sup>89</sup>

John Foster did not of course mention in the above letter that roads were more immediately required at the time for military purposes to get troops rapidly from Dublin into the Wicklow mountains. This need resulted in the military authorities being a new agency entering the field of road building in addition to the grand juries and the turnpike trusts with the Post Office about to enter. A military road was built in to the Wicklow mountains from Dublin.<sup>90</sup> The completion of this road in 1803 coincided with the ending of the uprising. An earlier military road built in county Waterford became a turnpike one in 1796 (See Table 4.1, No. 3).

In 1809 it was decided to survey the Irish bogs and wastelands with a view to future development and three civil engineers were engaged to carry out the work. Two of these were Irish: Richard Griffith and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, while the third, Alexander Nimmo was Scottish. These in turn engaged teams of surveyors and seven assistant engineers all of whom were to gain valuable experience in the course of the survey and to play an active part in other public works schemes in the future.<sup>91</sup> Among these assistant engineers were: John Longfield, David Aher and William Bald. After the end of the war against Napoleon, a widespread recession took place in Ireland as the extra supplies of food and horses for the army were no longer required. Consequent poverty followed and with it the possibility of unrest. Parliament by means of a new act (57 Geo.III, c.34) set up a body of commissioners in Ireland in 1817 to authorise exchequer loans for public works up to a maximum of £250,000. However the grand juries were reluctant to take up these loans because they felt unable to meet the conditions for their repayment. After a partial potato failure, famine conditions recurred in the poorer areas in 1821-



2. The Lord Lieutenant was given extra funds as well as a poor relief grant and engaged a team of three engineers to commence public works such as: roads, small harbours and piers. These engineers were given a reasonably free hand and carried out excellent road works which opened up the poorer areas of the country and allowed the land to be manured and tilled. The names of the engineers became household words in the areas in which they operated: Alexander Nimmo in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon, John Killaly in Clare and Richard Griffith in the north Cork, west Limerick and north Kerry areas. In 1831 the existing bodies in charge of the funds and loans and their engineering staff were reconstituted as 'The Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland' by a new act (1&2 Will. IV, c.33) but were still popularly known as the Board of Works.

About this time and especially after the 1832 Inquiry, several of the turnpike trusts engaged the Board of Works on a contract basis to carry out or oversee the maintenance work on the roads. This was done because they were aware that the Board of Works always employed professional qualified engineers and surveyors and that consequently the work would be properly performed. An example of such a road was the newly constructed or reconstructed mail coach road from Belfast to Antrim. This was also a turnpike road. A good description of the construction and state of the road in May 1838 is given in an Ordnance Survey memoir by James Boyle, which also shows how well the Board of Works operated:

Its breadth throughout is 33 feet, exclusive of the footpath, which is 8 feet broad. This road was completed on 1831, having cost 21,000 pounds, its total length being 17 and three-quarter miles. The original engineer was Mr. Edgeworth, but in consequence of his death it was completed under Mr. Stevenson. The expense was defrayed by the county. There are two toll gates on the road, one at Antrim and another at the Belfast end, and there is another toll-gate on the Carrickfergus road near Belfast which, from the communication between the roads, is let with the 2 others. In the first year the road was managed by the trustees. The next year the tolls were let at 2,500 pounds, afterwards at the rent of 2,300 and 2,370 pounds, and intake last year (1837) at 2,500 pounds.

It is now in the hands of the Board of Public Works, by whom it is managed. Its repair is let by them to a contractor, who receives 3s.- 6d. per cubic yard for broken stones which are laid on by a person appointed by the board. It is a beautifully laid out and gently undulating road, and is kept in admirable order.<sup>92</sup>

However relations between the Board of Works and the turnpike trusts were not always on such amicable terms. An examination of the minute book of the Dublin-Mullingar turnpike road shows how cautious the Board of Works were before taking on such works and how they reacted when they discovered that the contract sum which they submitted, proved to be inadequate. At a meeting of the trustees of the turnpike road held on 8 January 1834, it was resolved 'that as W. Harthy's contract for the repairs of the road will expire on 1 April next, a proposal be made to the Commission for the extension and promotion of Public Works in Ireland,



to undertake the repairs of said road and all bridges, pipes, gulleys and other works thereon pursuant to the 102 Section of the Act of 1 & 2 Wm. IV, cap. 33.<sup>93</sup> It was also resolved by the meeting that a letter be sent forthwith to the Board of Works giving details of the location and extent of the road and asking the Board 'whether they will undertake said repairs, and if so, at what rate per Irish perch or mile.'<sup>94</sup> On receipt of this letter the Board of Works replied on 10 January 1834 that the Board were 'willing to undertake the charge of the road in question,' but that before they could submit a firm price, 'it will be necessary that they should have a minute examination by an engineer in their confidence, of its present state, the probable wear and tear, the facilities to be found in the neighbourhood of the line for its repair', as they were under an obligation to avoid losses.<sup>95</sup> The Board also requested a deposit of £50 'to defray the expenses of the survey' and sought exhaustive written information on the records of the trust expenditure for the previous seven years, information on prices paid to present and previous contractors, the position about the quarries and gravel pits used for road materials and facilities for inspection of all maps. The required deposit and all the required information was furnished by the trustees and the Board of Works took over the maintenance of the road.

However in 1839, when the road was being maintained for an annual sum of £1791 - 2s. - 4d. (£447 - 15s. - 7d. per quarter), the Board of Works wrote a letter to the trustees of this road seeking a further once-off payment of £447 - 15s. - 7d in addition to the usual quarterly payments. The reason for this increased charge was conveyed in a letter dated 15 October 1839 from the Board to the trustees:

I am directed to acquaint you that owing to the extraordinary wear and tear on the Mullingar Road during the past year, caused principally by the severity of the weather, the Board find that the funds at their disposal for its maintenance are insufficient to prevent its deterioration, they therefore submit, for the consideration of the Trustees, the propriety of their increasing the amount payable to the Board for the next six months, say to the extent of the amount of one quarter's payment, viz. £447 - 15s. - 7d. If this sum were paid in two installments, the Board's Engineer is of opinion that it would be sufficient to maintain the works (with usual quarterly payments) in a proper manner.<sup>96</sup>

The trustees or commissioners of the Dublin-Mullingar road were not too happy with the contents of this letter and after investigation of the condition of the road, met on 4 December 1839 to consider the request. At this meeting dissatisfaction was expressed<sup>97</sup> with the actions of the Board of Works but it was decided to pay a sum of £200 to prevent further deterioration of the road. This was communicated to the secretary of the Board of Works, who replied with a letter stating that if the trustees were dissatisfied with the actions of the Board, they could always get another contractor to do the maintenance work. This was not very helpful as it is almost certain that the trustees were aware of their legal rights. A letter of 9 December 1839 from the Board of Works stated:



The Act of Parliament authorising the Board to undertake contracts for the maintenance of roads, makes no provision whatever in case of any deficiency in the funds to be advanced to them to effect the object properly -- neither the Commissioners [Board of Works] nor the Government can be made responsible and consequently if there is a failure on their part to complete their undertaking, the Trustees have no remedy whatever but that of resuming possession, to which there could be no objection on such an occasion.<sup>98</sup>

The same letter gave an excuse for their wrong estimate, which can only be regarded as a classic:

There is no doubt but that their Engineer in proposing the terms for this Contract underestimated the difficulty of keeping this line of road in good repair, and the Board regret that the Trustees as well as themselves, should have been disappointed in the result, at the same time they think it better policy on such occasions, to endeavour to make a reasonable estimate and demand, one that might be somewhat too much, or somewhat too little, rather than put forward exorbitant demands in the place of the necessity of over-estimating on all occasions; the latter however must be adopted should there be great dissatisfaction expressed on any occasion of extra sums being required.<sup>99</sup>

Irrespective of the legal position this was a most unjust decision by the Board of Works and the trustees of the turnpike road decided at their meeting of 2 January 1840 to terminate their 'contract' with the Board of Works and make alternative arrangements.

The experience of the Dublin-Knocksedan turnpike trust was similar to the above in some respects and different in others. It will be recalled (Chapter 4.3) that this trust was run by a board of five directors elected by the trustees and the length of road concerned was only eight miles. The tolls were farmed out to contractors for periods of up to three years and the finances were in generally good shape. Contact with the Board of Works concerning road maintenance was opened in 1838 as a letter from Henry Paine, secretary of the Board of Works dated 10 October of that year was read at the director's meeting of 27 June 1839. This letter was the standard one seeking the accounts of receipt and expenditure for the previous seven years<sup>100</sup> The directors of the road replied that the tolls were annually set {for £590 in the previous year) and 'that hitherto, the produce of the tolls have been amply sufficient for keeping the road in repair, and for paying all other necessary disbursements.'<sup>101</sup> At the directors meeting of 4 April 1840, a letter was read from the Board of Works which gave a figure of £506 - 10s - 6d. per annum for the maintenance of the road but again seeking the last seven years accounts which the directors now agreed to furnish.<sup>102</sup> However no action was taken at that time and it was not until 20 June 1844 a letter was sent to the Board of Works asking them formally to take over the maintenance of the road:



This road is now in much a better state than when surveyed by your Engineer in 1838--I will only add that the present amount of tolls is £620 per annum and the only liability of the trustees besides the ordinary repairs are to Mr. Bourne for the repairs of the Drumcondra road - £20 and Interest on debentures £60.<sup>103</sup>

The Board of Works wrote back on 20 August 1844 stating that their price to maintain the road was £532 - 11s - 0d. per annum payable in advance.<sup>104</sup> This figure appears not to be one estimated by an engineer but seems more one designed to utilise all the funding available to the trust except for £7- 9s.-0d which could only cover the cost of correspondence. It is possible that the figure was a coincidence but then why did the Board of Works need the full and exact accounts of the trust. The Board were engaged to carry out the work on the road on this basis and everything appeared to be satisfactory. However on 28 August 1845, the turnpike trustees informed the Board of Works that because of 'the failure of the potato crop and other causes the traffic on the road had been much diminished and consequently the receipt of the tolls considerably lessened' and they were no longer able to pay the same rate for maintenance.<sup>105</sup> After much correspondence and negotiation the sum for the year from 1 September 1847 was reduced to £400. For the year beginning 1 September 1849, a proposal was received from Mr. Tate, the county surveyor of Dublin to maintain the road for £320 and this was accepted and the arrangement with the Board of Works ended.<sup>106</sup> On 27 August 1852, an offer from the toll-farmer to maintain the road to 31 August 1853 for £250 was accepted and this was renewed on a three year contract basis to 31 August 1856, by which time the turnpike status of the road had ended.<sup>107</sup> Thus it is seen that by 1853 the road was being maintained for less than half the rate charged by the Board of Works though in fairness to the Board of Works it must be said as a general principle that if a road was put into a very good condition and well maintained for even a few years the required maintenance would be cheaper in the subsequent years.

In the report of the Commissioners of Public Works (Board of Works) for 1847 a reference to the work done in the year ending 31 December 1845 on this road was included.<sup>108</sup> The receipt of £532 - 11s. - 8d. from the Knocksedan road trustees was shown under the receipts and the expenditure recorded was £482 - 12s - 4d. This expenditure was broken down into: Labour and material - £453 - 9s -2d, Superintendence - £19 - 13s -2d. and Incidents - £9 - 10s. - 0d. In an earlier report of the same body for 1837/38 reference was made to the activities by the Board in the repair of turnpike roads by contract.<sup>109</sup> At that time the Board of Works were involved in a total of four roads as shown in Table 5.6:

**Table 5.6 Involvement of Board of Works in turnpike road maintenance in 1837/8**

Number	Location of turnpike road	Length in miles
1	Between Dublin and Mullingar	51.00
2	Between Dublin and Ashbourne	12.75



3	Between Dublin and Navan	29.00
4	Between Belfast and Antrim	17.00

The report went on to give some interesting information about the above four roads. In the case of the Dublin-Mullingar road, it indicated that new footpaths were being provided and old ones repaired, 'a matter of great importance where so large a portion of the population are foot passengers.'<sup>110</sup> It also observed with reference to this road:

The department of Woods and Forests have co-operated with the trustees of this road in a very liberal and judicious measure for opening the part immediately out of Dublin between Island Bridge and the village of Chapelizod, which was previously narrow, crooked, uneven, and dangerous, by straightening the irregular line of park wall, and in so doing, adding a small width to the road, a very improved approach to the metropolis has been effected at a moderate expense.<sup>111</sup>

In the case of the Ashbourne road, the report indicated the Board had undertaken to maintain it at much too low a rate and so they have insufficient funds to put it into proper order and added that 'it is good policy to obtain [adequate funds] on all occasions.'<sup>112</sup> The condition of the Navan road was described as good while the condition of the Belfast-Antrim was described as 'very defective in its original formation' but that a good deal of improvement both to it and to the footpaths on it was carried out in the previous year.<sup>113</sup> Finally the report showed the Board looking forward to repairing other turnpike roads in future years.

The 1843 report of the Board of Works showed that the Board was indeed involved in the repair of further turnpike roads namely: the Malahide road, the Howth road and portion of the Dublin-Dunleer road<sup>114</sup> and the 1847 report covering the year ending 31 December 1845 showed that in addition to the above turnpike roads, they were also maintaining the Knocksedan road. The major turnpike road business taken on by the Board was of course the Navan road. This road was taken over in its entirety by the Board of Works as security for the money advanced by the Exchequer Loan Commissioners in three installments in 1817, 1819 and 1823 (See page 176). The total of the money advanced in those years amounted to £9,507 - 13s - 10d. and of this only £2364 - 11 - 4d. had been repaid up to 1854. The arrears on this up to 31 December 1853 were £2,490 - 9s. - 9d. the interest on £5538 - 9s. - 2d. of the principal being at six per cent, and five per cent on the remainder. A letter from Lieutenant Hill of the Board of Works dated 12 July 1854 to the Commissioners of Inquiry into the Dublin turnpike roads showed how the Board of Works got involved in the affairs of this road and how they attempted to cope with its problems:

The powers, rights, and authorities of these Loan Commissioners were transferred to the Commissioners for Public Works, who finding a larger arrears for principal and interest on foot of the mortgage secured for the purpose, had a Receiver appointed by the Court of Chancery; subsequently the Receiver was discharged,



and the Board then, under the powers given them by the Act, appointed their own collector. The tolls were let by contract until 1842, when the then contractor a Mr. Smullen, in consequence of a new Act of parliament coming in to operation, which allowed manure carts to pass toll-free, requiring a reduction of the rent from £1,800 to £1,600, the Board took the collection of tolls into their own hands, and entrusted the management to me, at a salary (including all expenses) of £100 per annum, which duty I have performed until the present time.<sup>115</sup>

It was a matter for the Board of Works, in the person of Lieut. Hill, to attempt to run the Navan road as a turnpike road so as to secure repayment of the outstanding principal and interest and at the same time to keep it insufficiently good repair to generate an income. A number of difficulties including the fall off in traffic on the road due to the railways opening up faced Lieut. Hill, but nevertheless he succeeded in transferring to the Exchequer a sum of £6,450 since taking over the road. In addition to this, Hill furnished accounts as shown in Table 5.7, to the 1854 Commission of inquiry concerning the previous five years<sup>116</sup>:

**Table 5.7 Financial affairs of Navan road turnpike trust from 1849 to 1853**

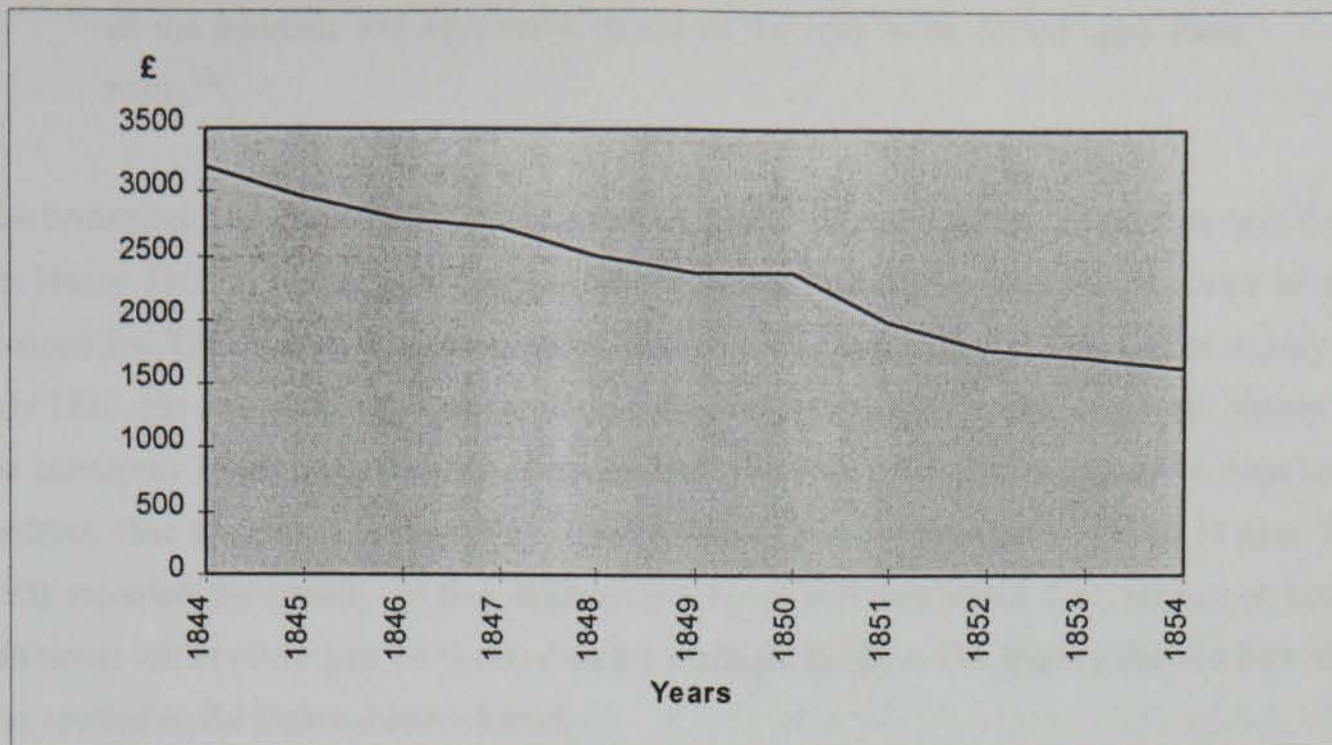
Years	1849	1850	1851	1852	1853
Net produce of tolls deducting collectors wages, to nearest £	2,110	1,820	1,549	1,461	1,381
Expenditure on Maintenance to nearest £	1,282	963	732	801	734
Amounts paid to Exchequer in £s.	700	500	450	450	350

Lieut. Hill also stated that there were six turnpike gates in operation on the twenty eight mile length of the road in 1854<sup>117</sup> and that the traffic then consisted:

almost entirely of farm produce brought to market in Dublin, and shop goods conveyed from Dublin to the country, and the passenger traffic of parties living immediately on the line;- all through traffic to distant parts of the country having nearly ceased.<sup>118</sup>

Information concerning the fall-off in the gross tolls (tolls including payments received in respect of public conveyances etc.) was also given to the inquiry (See Figure 6).<sup>119</sup>





**Figure 6** *Decline of toll receipts on Dublin-Navan turnpike road*

Faced with this fall-off, it was no surprise when the 1854-55 commission of inquiry into the Dublin turnpikes recommended the abolition of the turnpike status of the Navan road, even though the Board of Works manager contended that its continuance would allow the debt to be paid off and he said that the traffic on it could not decrease any further.<sup>120</sup>

### **5.6** *Select Committee on Turnpike roads in Ireland of 1837*

This select committee was appointed to: 'inquire into the monopoly enjoyed by persons in Ireland, on certain roads there; how far the said monopoly is consistent with law, the convenience of travellers, and the revenue of the Post Office; also into the best mode of removing the said monopoly, keeping in view the rights of private parties (if any); and to whom a petition from Limerick was referred.'<sup>121</sup> As usual the members of the committee heard witnesses, considered the evidence and considered the matter carefully and then on 6 July 1837 issued their report. The opening paragraphs of this report gave the gist of the problem and of the committee's view:

It appears manifest, from documentary evidence and ample reports (especially the report of the 1832 Select Committee) relating to the turnpike roads between Dublin and Kilcullen, Naas and Limerick, Dublin and Ashbourne, and between Cork and Kilworth mountain, that tolls of an unusual character are exigible on these roads.

It appears to your Committee, that the convenience of travellers has been impeded, and the intercourse of the public greatly interfered with, by the monopoly so effectually established by Messrs. Bourne and Taylor between Limerick and Dublin; and that complaints have been made for many years past



of the injurious and oppressive effects of the tolls to be levied upon these roads.<sup>122</sup>

The committee had fifteen members including Sir Henry Parnell. Evidence was taken only from Sir Henry Parnell, Sir Edward Lees, secretary of the Post Office and the operators of the monopolies. The minutes of evidence taken before the Commissioners of Post Office inquiry in July 1836 was also read. The final report was short (six pages) and mainly traced the history of the monopoly trusts, indicating in particular how some of these achieved their monopolistic position. (See Chapter 4.1, page 156). It was indicated how the final act of 1811, (51 Geo. III, c.92) repealed the penalty of five shillings per horse and substituted four pence per horse additional toll at every gate on horses drawing carriages for hire. The inquiry showed how this was applied on the Dublin-Limerick road:

It should be here observed that the penalties above referred to were never exacted on horses drawing post-chaises for hire; they were and are confined to stage and mail-coaches, whereby the lessees, who are stage proprietors and mail contractors, have maintained, and do maintain, a monopoly of the carriage of passengers by one coach and one mail between the great cities of Dublin and Limerick, to the exclusion of all competition.<sup>123</sup>

Messrs. Bourne the lessees of the Naas-Limerick turnpike road claimed this additional four pence from the Post Office in respect of the mails over a long period and in 1835 the Treasury agreed following legal advice obtained by Bournes that the this extra payment was due. The penalties of the extra charges were never charged in the case of the hired post-chaises, because these vehicles posed no threat to Bourne's business, which was solely concerned with the operation of stage and mail coaches and because if the charges were imposed, they would mean that the hired post-chaises would be either put out of business or forced to use other roads and so the ordinary tolls would be lost to the road operators.

The committee was opposed to the general idea of allowing any monopolies to continue to operate and ended their report with the following sentence:

Your Committee are so entirely strongly impressed with the necessity of putting an end to the monopolies of roads and tolls from Dublin to Kilcullen, from Naas to Limerick, from Dublin to Ashbourne, and from Cork to Kilworth Mountain, as to induce them to recommend that the whole case on behalf of the public, the Post Office and the Treasury, should be left to the decision of a competent tribunal with as little delay as possible, and that compensation should be made to the parties, as that tribunal shall adjudicate, previous to the repeal of the Acts under which they respectively hold their interests.<sup>124</sup>



However the acts were never repealed, possibly because of the imminence of the railways, one of which were already in operation between Dublin and Dunleary and others were under construction or being planned before the report was issued.

## 5.7 Traffic

In this period from 1820 on to 1858, it has been seen that there was a variety of transport systems both for goods conveyance and personal travel: river navigations and canals, river and estuarine steamboats, railways and all types of roads. The fundamental difference between road transport and almost all the other types became obscured at this time, and remained so in many instances. In order to explain this difference it is best to consider private or privately owned road vehicles and rail transport. Basically the rail transport as stated in Chapter 5.2, is fixed in time and space, in that the trains always run from point 'A' to point 'B.' or from 'B' to 'A'. Moreover, these trains run at fixed starting times and arrive at reasonably fixed arrival times. In the case of roads, the vehicle can start from any point (a) and travel to any other point (b), (c), (d),.....etc., on the same land mass. Again, the vehicle can depart from point (a) or any other point whenever the owner or driver chooses. Thus there is a degree of freedom in road transport not normally available in other forms. This difference became obscured because road transport was used in conjunction with the other 'fixed' forms of transport as for example when passengers were brought to and collected from railway stations by jaunting cars and grain and peat were brought by carts to the canal harbours for shipment to Dublin. Despite the real and perceived advantages in such combined usages of transport modes the greater freedom of the transport by road remained the desired option.

The principal types of roads present in Ireland in the first half of the eighteenth century included: ordinary turnpike roads, privatised turnpike roads, mail-coach roads and main, cross and minor roads made by the grand juries and of course the mountain and main roads built by the Board of Works in the remoter areas. The maintenance of these roads was also complicated in that most of these bodies, except the turnpike trusts, gave grants and funds to roads other than those for which they had direct responsibility. On this almost bewildering variety of roads, an assortment of vehicles ran. On some of the mountain roads in the remoter areas the slide-car still was used, the solid-wheeled Irish car still existed, while the Scotch cart was steadily making its presence felt. In some areas new light types of carts were making their appearance as described in Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary* of 1837 for the King's county (Offaly):

.....the slide car, and that with solid wheels, are both exploded, and a light car with iron-bound spoke wheels has taken their place; it is formed of framework, consisting of the shafts and a few transverse bars for the body, on which rests a large wicker-work basket, here called a kish; by removing the basket the frame serves to carry bulky articles, such as sacks of grain or hay; this car is very



light, not weighing more, when well made, than 1.5 cwt. The Scotch cart is seldom seen but with the gentry.<sup>125</sup>

The traditional car also survived up to this time as is evident from a description by an English visitor, of traffic on the Belfast road in or about 1837:

The vehicles too called cars that are passing and repassing with goods and passengers, excepting stage coaches which are now equal to those in England, is [are] generally of a very poor description, drawn by a single horse, and the vehicle [?] placed so near the animal as to become extremely filthy. The wheels are thin round blocks about thirty inches in diameter and when common people are making pleasure, or going on Holy-days to their priest [?], a bed or mattress is placed on the car, when five or six people sit on it with their legs dangling a few inches from the ground, and in this grotesque manner they journey for miles.<sup>126</sup>

A perception of a beneficial influence of the turnpike roads on the traffic emerges in the questioning of Richard Griffith before the select committee on turnpike roads of 1831-32:

Question 2158 - Would you recommend any alterations in the taking of toll; taking it by weight instead of by the horse? - I would not recommend taking it by weight; by taking it by the horse, I think the public, in Ireland, have derived great benefit. It has been the means of introducing into Ireland perhaps the best system of inland carriage in the empire; the usual carriage on the turnpike roads of Ireland is what is called the Leith dray; and a moderate-sized horse, reasonably well fed, will draw on most of our turnpike roads from 20 to 24 cwt. with that carriage. In some cases, I have known coals drawn at so low a rate as 5d. per ton mile, the carrier paying the turnpikes. In some parts of Ireland where there are no turnpikes similar improvements have not taken place, at least not to the same extent; consequently I attribute to the turnpikes the forcing the people [sic] to adopt a better kind of carriage, and to keep a superior class of horses, by which means both the carriers and the public have been mutually benefited.<sup>127</sup>

A good indication of the speeds of mail coaches on the mail routes at the same period was given to the select committee on the turnpike roads of 1832 by Patrick Urquhart a former inspector of mail coaches<sup>128</sup>. He stated that the Wexford mail travelled at five and a half Irish miles per hour (seven statute miles per hour) including stoppages, while the Limerick mail travelled at nearly nine miles per hour. The Wexford road was not a turnpike one and Urquhart stated that he thought the turnpike roads were kept in better order than the non-turnpike ones. He added that the condition of a road did not normally dictate the speed of the mail coaches, which was fixed by contract but admitted that the condition of the Wexford road during the



winter months would not allow a speed of nine miles per hour without further repairs. The maximum speed of the mail coaches appeared to be 9.5 miles per hour on good roads.

Towards the mid-century there was a definite increase in the loads being carried by goods vehicles. For example in the evidence given to the hearings held by the Commissioner for the abolition of turnpike roads in 1856, Bernard Hughes of Belfast, a flour merchant stated: 'My bread carts are all on springs, with four wheels and a pair of horses for each. A full load on each cart would be from a ton to 25 cwt.'<sup>129</sup> The *Statistical survey of county Roscommon*<sup>130</sup> was not carried out until 1832, which is a long time after the other surveys. This survey gave the prices of land carriage from various locations in the county to the different ports as shown in Table 5.8<sup>i</sup>.

**Table 5.8 Land carriage costs in and from county Roscommon in 1832**

Locations and Ports	Distances in miles <sup>ii</sup>	Price per cwt. . s. - d.	Price per ton-mile in pence -d.
Roscommon to Dublin	100.0	2 - 0	4.80
Roscommon to Galway	44.5	1 - 0	5.39
Roscommon to Sligo	49.5	1 - 0	4.85
Boyle to Dublin	108.0	2 - 0	4.44
Boyle to Drumsna	12.5	0 - 5	8.00
Castlerea to Sligo	40.5	0 - 11	5.43
Castlerea to Dublin	108.0	2 - 6	5.56
Athlone to Dublin	75.0	1 - 6	4.80

The writer of the survey thought it remarkable that the long carriage from Boyle to Dublin should be the cheapest per ton-mile and the short carriage from Boyle to Drumsna should be the dearest. This could have been due to the fact that the loading and unloading costs formed a greater fraction of the short journey's total cost than they did of the long journey's total cost. It may also have been due to the greater possibility of return loads from Dublin, as Dublin was the prime wholesaling centre for the entire country. The weighted average cost per ton-mile derived from the figures in Table 5.8 is 5.06d. This and the fact that the road from Athlone to Dublin was an all-turnpike one, bears out Griffith's figure for the unit cost per ton mile on the turnpike roads.

As was stated on page 205 in Chapter 5.2, a major commission to consider and recommend a general system of railways for Ireland, known as the Drummond commission was set up in 1836. One of the objects of this commission was a complete survey of the road traffic between the major towns. This was necessary because of the almost complete absence of any information at that time about road traffic flows or numbers of vehicles or quantities of

<sup>i</sup> Note that, as the original miles shown were Irish miles, exact equivalent distances in English miles have been substituted in the Table.

<sup>ii</sup> The original distances given in the Table in the survey and quoted above are not exact, as for example the distance from Boyle to Dublin is 110 miles, while the distance from Athlone to Dublin is 79 miles. However the Table is instructive because it gives the overall position.



merchandise moved by road transport, as was shown by the excerpt from the second report of the commission already quoted on page 143. The commission was very fortunate to have the services of an able and innovative engineer, a Lieutenant Harness, who carried out the required traffic survey in April and May 1837. Harness presented the results in a novel graphical form where the volume of traffic between two towns or locations was represented by the thickness of the line joining the two locations on the map. In the words of P. O’Keeffe:

This census was the first comprehensive traffic survey of its kind carried out anywhere in the world. The graphical technique of presenting traffic volumes in the form of flow charts was also applied for the first time in the atlas of maps accompanying the Commissioners’ report. Lieutenant Harness developed the graphical technique, but much of the credit for the planning and execution of the census is due to [Richard] Griffith who was a member of the Commission.<sup>131</sup>

In a reference to how suitable his method of determining the future traffic to be carried by rail was, Harness pointed out how underdeveloped commercially Ireland was at that time:

Her inland traffic is almost exclusively confined to the conveyance of articles to and from the ports. She has no great manufacturing inland towns receiving a variety of materials from different parts, and returning their commodities in complicated streams for exportation, or consumption; with the exception of the trade occasioned by four collieries as yet of small importance, the linen and cotton manufactures, there does not appear to be any transit worthy of note, of other than agricultural produce. The inland towns are only important in proportion as they offer good markets for such produce; and it is in almost every case, to the facilities afforded by a navigation, they owe their superiority. It may be safely said then, that the only towns of real importance, in a trading point of view, are the ports; that the traffic of the country is confined, almost entirely, to forwarding agricultural produce to them, and receiving small supplies of imported articles in return.<sup>132</sup>

It is appropriate at this stage to look at the traffic using the various ports in order to see where the imports and exports were concentrated. The figures for the overall value of the import and export trade through the different ports in 1835 as shown in Table 5.9 are based on figures extracted from the *Second report of the commissioners appointed to consider and recommend a general system of railways for Ireland*.<sup>133</sup>

**Table 5.9 Value of trade through the major ports in 1835**

Port	Value of Imports & Exports £s.	Percentage of total
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Belfast	8,037,222	24.55
Dublin	6,958,864	21.26
Cork	5,661,530	17.30
Waterford	3,075,399	9.40
Derry	1,748,972	5.34
Newry	1,185,547	3.62
Limerick	1,050,170	3.21
Drogheda	1,025,881	3.13
Wexford	933,553	2.86
Dundalk	560,766	1.71
Sligo	494,182	1.51
Galway	340,133	1.04

These twelve ports are those which handled more than one per cent of the total value of imports and exports and together they handled 95 % of the total. It is of interest to compare this Table generally with Table 2.2 in Chapter 2.3, which shows the relative importance of the ports in 1724. It must of course be stated that the two Tables are not directly comparable as value and tonnage are different entities. However keeping this in mind, a general comparison does indicate a changing position. The same four ports occupied the first four places in 1835 but Belfast had displaced the dominant position of Dublin and was then the busiest port in Ireland. Cork slipped from second to third place but almost maintained its share of the traffic. Waterford more than doubled its share while Derry increased its share by more than three times its earlier level. The fact that Newry was ahead of Limerick is significant. This Table is very revealing from a point of view of the economic state of the country and of the different parts of it. The general trend appears to be the increased industrial activity in the north and the absence of it in the west and south-west. To assess the effect on the turnpike roads and road traffic generally, the excellent traffic survey of Lt. Harness is very welcome, but overall considerations need to be taken into account.

A Table with more relevance from the traffic point of view is that based on the total tonnages of both imports and exports which passed through the ports in 1835<sup>134</sup>, as recorded in the *Railway commissioners' second report* However these figures are distorted by the importation through Dublin of 349,230 tons of coals, culm and cinders, a good deal of which was used in Dublin city itself and so Table 5.10 showing the tonnage of exports only, is more revealing about the dispersal of the goods traffic:

**Table 5.10 Tonnage of exports through the major ports in 1835**

Port	Total exports in tons	Percentage of national total
Waterford	96,460	12.33
Dublin	78,747	10.06



Cork	75,433	9.64
Galway	61,938	7.91
Limerick	56,819	7.26
Belfast	53,925	6.89
Dundalk	35,937	4.59
Drogheda	35,488	4.53
Londonderry	33,101	4.23
Newry	30,885	3.95
Sligo	28,033	3.58
Wexford	26,658	3.41
Youghal	23,208	2.96
Strangford	17,778	2.27
Wicklow	16,346	2.09
Westport	14,713	1.88
Ardglass & Killough	9,849	1.26
Ballina	9,345	1.19
Donaghadee	9,020	1.15
Tralee	8,284	1.06

This Table is most interesting from the traffic point of view. It shows that Waterford and not Dublin was the leading port for exports and that the dispersal of points of export was greater than would be expected in that the leading twenty ports handled only 92.24% of the total exports in that year. Notwithstanding the fact that the main canal and trunk road system were centered on Dublin, a greater tonnage of goods was exported through Waterford. The main difference was due to the fact that some 76,192 tons of corn, meal and flour was sent out from Waterford as against 34,863 tons of the same materials from Dublin. The Table also shows that Galway was the fourth largest port for exports, while Sligo also had a significant share of this traffic. This would tend to lend credence to the suggestion of Isaac Weld in the *Statistical survey of county Roscommon* which was not carried out until 1832 and mentioned earlier in this Chapter that, as it was as cheap to bring goods to Sligo and Galway by road, as it was to go to Dublin by road and canal, an appreciable number of producers were taking the latter option. The amount of goods which were being exported through Waterford was part of the reason why the road from Shankill down through Gowran and Thomastown to Waterford was made a turnpike one by the act of 1811 (51 Geo.III, c.19). This turnpike road facilitated a stagecoach service from Dublin to Waterford and provided a route for goods traffic as 'progressive silting, already apparent in the 1780s, had made water carriage unreliable and seasonal.'<sup>135</sup>

It was seen that the turnpike road system was planned when Dublin was the capital and chief port handling more than half the shipping. The post roads and main canal system was also planned on that basis. Thus in the eighteenth century, the turnpike roads served Dublin very well,



particularly during the years of the 'corn bounties.' Even though the concentration on Dublin helped in the twentieth century to organise services to serve as capital of the new state, it is open to question as to whether the overall interests of the country were best served by a road system centered on Dublin, when it was no longer the capital in the nineteenth century.

Lt. Harness gave a very good breakdown of unit transport costs in his report to the railway commission which is of interest in the appreciation of the importance and place of land carriage even at a time when the canals were almost fully functioning:

Now in the districts referred to, and indeed in Ireland generally, the charge for the land carriage of heavy articles is returned as being about 6d., per ton per Irish mile<sup>i</sup>; but a great part of the produce of the country is purchased by jobbers, who are satisfied with a very small profit, beyond the actual cost of conveyance, from the place of purchase to the place of sale, by their own horses and carts; and it does not appear that such cost exceeds 6d. in any part of Ireland; 4d. per statute mile, being more nearly the average, while it falls in some places, where there are good return loads, to less than 3d..... That land carriage in Ireland is as low as the amounts above given, may be inferred also from the fact, that some of the trade, between Dublin and the west of Ireland, is carried on by land, in preference to the Royal Canal; the charges upon which appear from the returns made by that company, to be between 2d. and 3.5d per ton, per mile.<sup>136</sup>

Lieutenant Harness's report gave other important figures such as, showing that the cost of transporting goods nine miles by land carriage from Bagnelstown and Goresbridge and then by the Barrow navigation to Dublin, was equal to the cost of carrying the goods all the way to Dublin by land carriage and this was between 3.5d. and 5.75d per ton-mile. The report further stated that the cost of transporting goods by rail would be as low as 2d. per ton-mile, but that the cost of loading and unloading together with the cost of a passenger to accompany the goods would raise this to 2.5d. per ton-mile as against 3.5d per ton-mile for road transport, but that the main advantage of the rail over the canal and road would be speed. Thus the position about unit costs of road and canal transport at the time of the commencement of the railway system is known. The importance of roads in the overall economy of the country is thus seen; not alone were they primary routes, but also they were the feeder routes to the canals, navigations and railways.

Evidence was frequently given to the Commission to inquire into the Dublin turnpike roads in 1854<sup>137</sup> and the Commission for abolition of turnpike roads in 1856<sup>138</sup> that the volume of traffic on these roads was severely reduced because of the introduction of competing railways on or near the roads. It is therefore of interest to investigate the traffic on one such road in 1855. The turnpike in question was the Dublin-Carlow road. At the Dublin turnpike inquiry the treasurer

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<sup>i</sup> 4.71d. per ton per statute mile.



stated: 'that he had no expectation of improvement in the receipts, which declined on the opening of the railway to Carlow....'<sup>139</sup>. Records are available of the vehicle numbers and types and of all traffic, which used seven of the turnpike gates on this road during the period from 1 July to 31 December 1855<sup>140</sup>. Table 5.11 shows this traffic as derived from the weekly returns of the gatekeepers together with the estimated total traffic and the percentages of leisure traffic as opposed to commercial. The estimated total daily traffic is obtained by multiplying the average daily number of toll-paying vehicles by 1.75 to cater for: vehicles returning the same day and so not paying tolls on the return journey, vehicles paying at head office and vehicles entitled to pass free of toll.

**Table 5.11 Daily traffic on the Dublin-Carlow turnpike road from 1 July to 31 December 1855**

Name of Toll gate	Average daily number of toll- paying vehicles	Estimated total daily traffic	Percentage of leisure traffic
Dolphin's Barn	28.68	50	24.37
Tallaght	15.13	26	14.27
Brittas	20.71	36	9.43
Blessington	13.33	23	7.70
Hollywood	6.69	12	8.63
Merganstown	3.65	6	10.00
Tuckmills	5.74	10	11.79.

By any standards the traffic on this road in its last six months as a turnpike road was extremely low. Thus the evidence given at the Dublin turnpike abolition inquiry was correct. When the treasurer stated that the receipts had declined on the opening of the Dublin to Carlow railway, he was not exaggerating. It should be noted that the main railway line from Dublin to Kildare with a branch to Carlow was opened on 4 August 1846. The traffic at Merganstown gate which was near the half-way mark (slightly nearer to Carlow) shows that there was almost no through-traffic from Carlow to Dublin and what little traffic was on the road was purely local, though there may also have been some evasion at this gate. At a meeting of 13 February 1844, a Committee reported that payment of tolls was then being evaded by large numbers travelling to Dublin as for example those coming from Newtownbarry, Tullow, Rathvilly and Baltinglass, 'and from Clough to Dublin since they travel the road thro' Donard and Hollywood Glen by-passing the Turnpike of Merganstown.....'<sup>141</sup> As a result of the evasions at that time, the trustees decided to set up three extra toll-gates. Despite all efforts to prevent evasion there was still evidence of possible evasion in 1855 as the figures for the Merganstown gate in Table 5.11 would seem to indicate. (See also Chapter 6.1). The nature of the traffic flow as recorded at other gates also brings forward a suspicion of possible evasion. The turnpike status of such a road had to be terminated.



As this was the record of the last six months traffic on an Irish turnpike road it is perhaps best to see the principal toll rates, which were being charged in 1855. These were as set out in Table 5.12.

**Table 5.12 Toll-rates on Dublin-Carlow turnpike road in 1855**

Unit of traffic	Toll per unit
Six horse carriage	3s. - 0d.
Four horse carriage	2s. - 0d.
Two horse carriage	1s. - 0d.
One horse Gig, car, etc.	0s. - 6d.
Carts, etc.	0s. - 4d.
Broad shod carts	0s. - 3d.
Pigs, sheep and lambs	0s. - 0.5d.
Cows, &c.	0s. - 1d.
Horses,.	0s. - 2d.
Turf carts or cars drawn by asses,	0s. - 2d.

### **5.8 Effect of the 'Great Famine' on turnpike roads**

Due to the overlapping effects of the advent and spread of the railways, it is in some cases difficult to isolate the effects of the famine of 1845-48 on the roads. However as the famine had such a major effect on the entire country and its future, it is of interest to see something of its effect on the road system. An English visitor in or about 1837 who landed in the north of Ireland and travelled along the turnpike roads to Dublin commented on the poverty of the roadside cabbins, people, and vehicles. As he approached Dublin city he wrote:

It has a strange appearance to an Englishman to see so great a contrast in the approaches to a city of a fine expansive well made turnpike road [and an] environment on each side with a row of shapeless huts that would disgrace a depopulated village in [Illegible word].<sup>142</sup>

It was obvious that famine was approaching because of the poverty and the increase in population. In 1845 when the blight spread through the potato crop, market garden areas like north county Dublin were badly hit, in that the potatoes had to be destroyed, or left undug and so could not be transported to the city. The loss of this traffic to some of the turnpike roads on the north side of the city was considerable. This is indicated by the following excerpt from a letter from the Secretary of the Dublin-Knocksedan turnpike trust to the Board of Works in October 1845:



..... from the falling off of the traffic on the road owing to the failure of the potato crop. The weekly tolls of the road as will appear by the returns of the gates have fallen off so much as dictates the Directors from contracting for so large a sum ....<sup>143</sup>

The Board of Works were at that time maintaining the Knocksedan road by way of contract on a yearly basis and had submitted a price of £476 - 16s. - 0d for the coming year. The reply of the secretary of the turnpike trust indicated that the price was unacceptable for the reason stated in the excerpt. The excerpt from the letter of 28 August 1846 on page 228, is also indicative of the effect of potato shortage. In the case of the Dublin-Dunleer turnpike road, the effect of the loss of the potato traffic due to the blight, must also have been considerable and lasting in view of the statement made by Arthur Barlow, treasurer of the turnpike road at the Commission of inquiry into the Dublin turnpikes in 1854 that: 'If the potato cultivation were restored, there would be a prospect of increasing toll.'<sup>144</sup> It may well be contended in this case that some or most of the available potatoes may have been dispatched to Dublin by the new rail line. However, in the case of the Knocksedan road such a course would have been highly unlikely as it would generally be cheaper to cart the potatoes to Dublin than to the nearest railway station. In the report of the above commission of inquiry into the Dublin turnpikes, it was held in the case of the Knocksedan road that the decrease in tolls of one fifth, which occurred in 1846 and 1847 was 'sufficiently accounted for by the state of the country, and the potato disease, a large part of the tolls being payable in respect of agricultural produce.'<sup>145</sup> The report added:

This road, as well from its position and direction, as from the nature of the traffic, has been little if at all affected by the railroads, nor does there appear any likelihood of its being so affected. The tolls are principally paid by persons attending the Dublin market with produce, or by carriages and cars going to the Botanic Garden.<sup>146</sup>

### **5.9 Effects of the railways on the turnpike roads**

It is almost as difficult to isolate the effects of the introduction of railways on the turnpike roads as it is to isolate the effects of the famine and potato blight, because both more or less occurred at the same time. However, in the case of the railways the effect was much more direct and longer lasting and the effect was noted by various individuals. The best testament on this effect was the evidence given to the Commission of inquiry for the abolition of the turnpike roads 1856<sup>147</sup>. In the report of this commission, a Table was given<sup>148</sup> showing the turnpike roads directly affected by parallel rail lines, which effect is easy to understand. The information given in the commission's report is reproduced in Table 5.13:

**Table 5.13 Traffic on original turnpike roads directly affected by parallel railways**



Turnpike Acts	Name of Turnpike Road	Traffic absorbed by the following Railways
3 Geo. II, c.18	Dublin to Kilcullen	Gt. Southern & Western
3 " c.19	Dublin to Navan	Dub. & Dr. with Navan Br.
5 " c.15	Dublin to Dunleer	Belfast Junction
5 " c.16	Dublin to Kinnegad	Midland Great Western
5 " c.17	Dublin to Athboy	Drogheda and Kells
5 " c.18	Kilcullen to Kilkenny	Gt. Southern & Western & South Eastern
5 " c.19	Kilkenny to Clonmel	Limerick, Waterford & Kilkenny
5 " c.20	Cork to Kilworth	Gt. Southern & Western
5 " c.21	Naas to Maryborough	Gt. Southern & Western
5 " c.22	Newcastle to Limerick, and Limerick to Cork	Limerick and Foynes, and Limerick Junction
7 " c.23	Banbridge to Belfast	Dublin and Belfast Junction
7 " c.24	Dundalk to Banbridge	Dublin and Belfast Junction
7 " c.25	Ennis to Limerick	Limerick and Ennis
9 " c.14	Mullingar to Longford	Midland Gt. Western, Longford branch.
9 " c.15	Antrim to Coleraine	Belfast and Ballymena
9 " c.17	Banbridge to Randalstown	Ulster and Belfast and Ballymena
9 " c.18	Armagh to Lisburn	Ulster
9 " c.21	Armagh to Newry	Ulster
9 " c.22	Maryborough to Mountrath, Roscrea, &c.	Gt. Southern & Western
9 " c.23	Kilcullen to Athy	Gt. Southern & Western
11 " c.18	Roscrea, Nenagh to Limerick	Limerick Junction
13 " c.13	Belfast to Antrim	Belfast and Ballymena
13 " c.14	Timahoe to Cashel	Gt. Southern & Western
13 " c.15	Clonmel to Doneraile	Gt. Southern & Western
21 " c.13	Cork to Killarney	Killarney Junction
25 " c.17	Clonmel to Urlingford	
25 " c.18	Mountrath to Cloneshin, King's county	Gt. Southern & Western.
25 " c.19	Athy to Carlow	Gt. Southern & Western, Carlow branch.
25 " c.20	Ballinagar to Clane	
29 " c.19	Mallow to Newcastle	Limerick Junction
31 " c.18	Castlecomer to Limerick	Gt. Southern & Western

However, there was also evidence given to show how roads not directly affected also suffered losses of traffic, which is less easy to understand. The report gives two instances of such effects.



The first is the case of the Dundalk, Castleblaney and Carrickmacross turnpike trust, which controlled two lines of road. These two roads were twelve and thirteen miles in length respectively and both started in the town of Dundalk - the one running nearly due west, the other somewhat north west and thus including about half a right angle:

From Dundalk to Castleblaney the railway runs direct and meets the very town itself. There can be no question as to the absorption of traffic in this case. But the town of Carrickmacross seems upon the map to be unsullied with railway accommodation; and yet the traffic on that portion of the road is just as much absorbed as on the other, the income reduced and the road rendered impassable.<sup>149</sup>

A Mr. McMahon, a witness at the inquiry, speaking of the Dundalk-Carrickmacross branch of the turnpike road, upon which he was often obliged to travel, stated:

The carriage of coals along the road to the distillery of Messrs. Gartlan and Sons, Carrickmacross once yielded an income, in tolls, of several hundred pounds per annum - now it yields nothing. The coals are carried by rail. This item I give as but one of many.<sup>150</sup>

Though not stated, it is presumed that the coals were transported by carts from the railway station at Castleblaney along the non-turnpike road from Castleblaney to Carrickmacross. Mr. Bolton of Castlering, residing close to the Dundalk and Carrickmacross portion of the road, stated: 'Before the establishment of the railway in 1848, there was very great traffic on that trust, but it has almost all fallen away since.'<sup>151</sup>

The second instance is the case 'in the south of the turnpike road from Limerick to Charleville, about twenty five statute miles in length, [which] forms one of the sides of an equilateral triangle, of which the other two are railways.'<sup>152</sup> In this case Mr. Langley, the professional engineer engaged by the trust gave the following evidence: 'The Charleville line was once a line of great traffic, but is not so now, not since the opening of the railway about 1848.'<sup>153</sup> On the same line the secretary said: 'My salary, at first £60, is now reduced to £48 in consequence of the depressed state of the Bruff (Charleville) line. The traffic left it soon after the opening of the railway.'<sup>154</sup> This witness in reference to the length of road in question, added: 'On the whole, it is sufficiently parallel to swallow up the great and heavy traffic of the road.'<sup>155</sup> From the evidence given in both these cases, the commission of inquiry report concluded: 'It is clear that railways do not merely absorb the traffic of such roads as run parallel to them, but of all roads lying within a distant range.'<sup>156</sup> In the case of the privatised turnpike roads it can be seen from Table 5.3 that three of these, namely the Dublin-Kilcullen Bridge road, the Naas-Limerick road and the southern portion of the Ashbourne road were due to lose their privatised status in 1848. The busiest of the turnpike roads was of course the Dublin-Kilcullen road and it is of



interest to see how it ended. In 1980 a volume giving the quarterly accounts of this road from 1844 to 1848 was discovered in the offices of C. I. E., the Irish railway company. It was examined and written-up in an article in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* by Joseph Leckey. In the words of Leckey 'the railway arrived in the Kilcullen area in 1846, and the C. I. E. volume chronicles the immediate, and dramatic, collapse of the turnpike.'<sup>157</sup> The income and expenditure for the four years 1844, 1845, 1846 and 1847 as shown in tabular form in Leckey's article show clearly the effect of the opening of the railway line.<sup>158</sup> These tables are reproduced in Tables 5.14 and 5.15. Table 5.14 shows the large number of private coach operators using this road.

**Table 5.14 Revenue in pounds in final four years of operation of Dublin-Kilcullen (Naas) turnpike road**

Income sources	1844	1845	1846	1847
Tolls	2,600	2,600	2,650	1,710
Post Office	1,387	1,387	1,024	-
Bournes	438	401	275	-
Peter Purcell & Co.	406	390	211	-
Fishbournes	250	250	146	-
Waters	102	102	88	13
Moses Byrne	47	47	29	-
McEvoy's	-	-	22	-
Malones	-	-	-	12
Extra	8	-	-	-
Rents etc.	21	14	27	44
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>5,259</b>	<b>5,191</b>	<b>4,472</b>	<b>1,779</b>

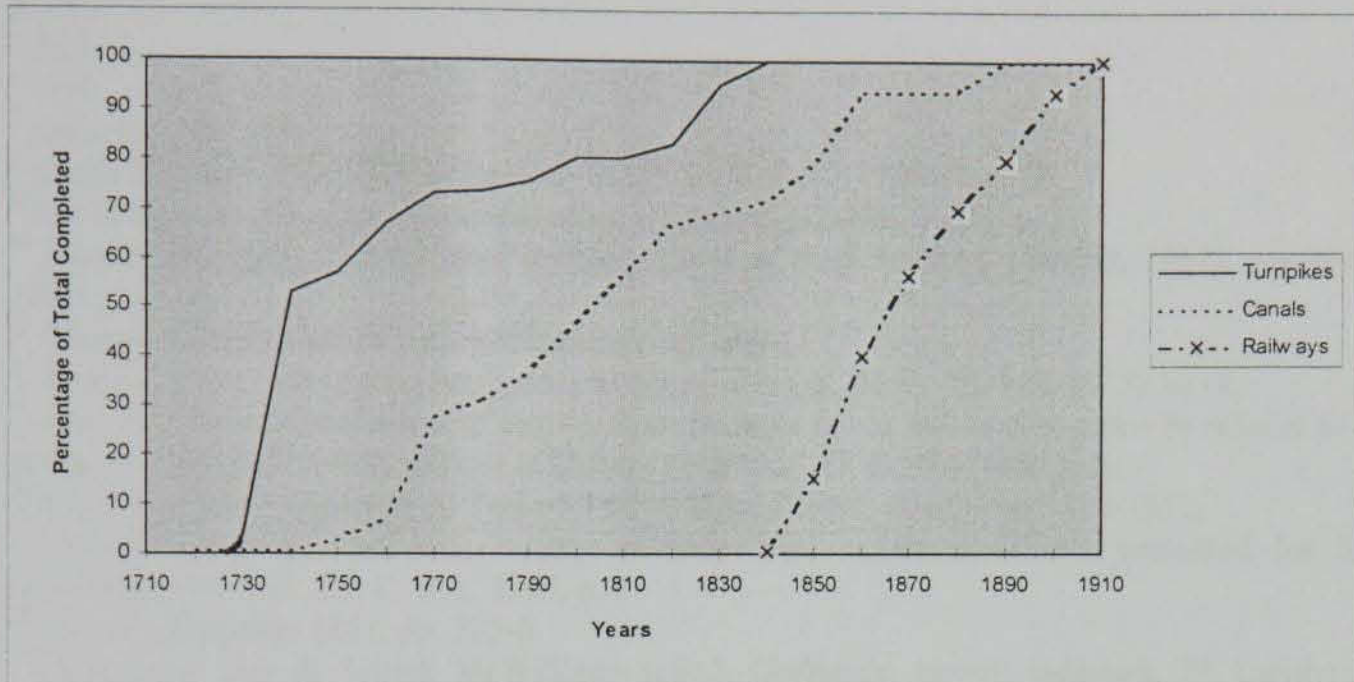
**Table 5.15 Expenditure in pounds in final four years of operation of Dublin-Kilcullen (Naas) turnpike road**

Item of Expenditure	1844	1845	1846	1847
Upkeep	1,469	1,694	1,715	844
Repairs	4	22	2	-
Interest	358	434	418	330
Rents	36	83	50	51
Rates and cess	21	22	20	54
Stamp receipts	7	7	5	1
Miscellaneous	-	-	1	51
Money in hand	-	-	32	357
Mrs. Taylor, tolls	292	292	216	-



Wm. Taylor, management	150	150	150	100
Surplus	2,984	2,487	1,863	-
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>5,259</b>	<b>5,191</b>	<b>4,472</b>	<b>1,788</b>

### 5.10 Rates of development of turnpike roads, canals and railways



**Figure 7** Comparison of rates of development of turnpike roads, canals and railways

Figure 7 shows the comparative rates of development of the Turnpike Road system, the Canal and River Navigation system and the Railway system in Ireland. The format and layout of the graph is based on a somewhat similar set of diffusion curves devised by Eric Pawson for the transport innovations in Britain from 1650 to 1930.<sup>159</sup> In the compilation of this graph, it was assumed that each new turnpike road was opened the year the enabling act was passed except where it was known that this was not the case. The total mileage of newly created turnpike roads was 1824 miles; the first being opened in 1729 and the last in 1837. It must be understood, of course, that roads were also losing their turnpike status during that period, as for example Road No. 5 in Table 2.1, which reverted to non-turnpike status in 1752. However, the graph does not show such cases in the interests of clarity. In the case of the canal and river navigations only those river navigations on which work was done to improve their ability to carry traffic are included and the opening dates of completed sections were used in all cases. The total length of the canal and river navigations involved up to 1910 was 897.2 miles. Finally in the case of the railway system the total mileage grew from the start in 1834 to a total of 3401 miles in 1910. It can be seen from Figure 7 that the peak period for the creation of turnpike roads was from 1731 to 1737, the peak for the development of the river navigations and canals was from 1760 to 1770, while in the case of railways, the peak period for building was from 1845 to 1865.



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- <sup>1</sup> W. A. McCutcheon, 'Roads and Bridges' in *Ulster Folklife* (Belfast, 1964), x, p. 78.
- <sup>2</sup> *Report of the grand jury of the county of Cork* (Cork, 1814).
- <sup>3</sup> General Darymple to Earl Carhampton (N. L. I., Ms. 809).
- <sup>4</sup> *Select committee on Post communication with Ireland 1831-32*, p.198, H. C. 1831-32 (716) xvii, p.198.
- <sup>5</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>6</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 198-199.
- <sup>8</sup> Kevin Murray, 'Dublin's first railway' (1) in *D. H. R.*, i, (1938-9), p. 26.
- <sup>9</sup> Kevin Murray, *The great northern railway (Ireland)* (Dublin, 1944), p. 3.
- <sup>10</sup> Fergus Mulligan, *One hundred and fifty years of Irish railways* (Belfast, 1952), paperback, 1990, p. 85.
- <sup>11</sup> Murray, *Great northern railway (Ireland)*, pp. 14-15.
- <sup>12</sup> *Second report from the railway commissioners, Ireland*, H. C. 1837-38 (145). xxxv.
- <sup>13</sup> *Report from commissioners of inquiry into the state of the law and practice in respect to the occupation of land in Ireland* [earl of Devon, chairman], H. C. 1845 (605), xix.
- <sup>14</sup> Details of yearly mileages in Table 5.2 taken from *Thom's directories 1851-1911*.
- <sup>15</sup> Joseph Lee, 'An economic history of early Irish railways', Thesis presented for trav. studentship, N. U. I., (U. C. D.), 1965, p. v.
- <sup>16</sup> *Thom's directory*, 1851, pp. 205-6.
- <sup>17</sup> Angelique Day & Patrick McWilliams (eds.), *Ordnance. survey. memoirs*, 29, parishes of county Antrim XI, 1832-3, 1835-9 (Belfast, 1995), p. 92.
- <sup>18</sup> *Cobbett's Evening Post*, 7 February 1820, quoted by Mark Searle in *Turnpikes and toll-bars* (London, 1930), ii, p. 733.
- <sup>19</sup> Rogers, *Road and steam communication*, p. 14.
- <sup>20</sup> Ruth Heard, 'Public works in Ireland 1800 - 1831,' M. Litt. thesis, T. C. D., 1977, p.195.
- <sup>21</sup> Rogers, *Road and steam communication*, Inset copy of manuscript report of W. Bald.
- <sup>22</sup> Anon. Engineer, *Plan for substituting wood pavement for 'macadamizing' to carry into effect the establishment of steam engines on the common roads of Ireland* (Dublin, 1843), p. 6.
- <sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p. 7.
- <sup>24</sup> *Report of select committee on state of roads turnpike trusts in Ireland*, H. C. 1831-32 (645), xvii.
- <sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3, 399.
- <sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4, 400.
- <sup>27</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>29</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>30</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>31</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. 5, 401
- <sup>33</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, p. 6, 402.
- <sup>35</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p. 7, 403.
- <sup>37</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, appen. 11, pp. viii - lviii, 642 - 692.
- <sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, p.lviii, 692.
- <sup>41</sup> G. L. Barrow, 'Some Dublin private banks' in *D. H. R.*, xxv, pp. 41-3.
- <sup>42</sup> *Report of select committee on state of roads under turnpike trusts in Ireland*, app. p. lxvii, H. C. 1831-32 (645), xvii, 701.
- <sup>43</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>44</sup> Chairman's minute book, 1826-32 (F. C. C. Archives, Records of Malahide turnpike road, TR2/1/1, p. 6).
- <sup>45</sup> *Report of select committee on state of roads under turnpike trusts in Ireland*, app. p. xliii H. C. 1831-32 (645), xvii, (677).



- <sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, p. 7, 403.
- <sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, p. 8, 404.
- <sup>48</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>49</sup> Young, *A tour in Ire.* (Dublin, 1780), ii, (ii), p. 56..
- <sup>50</sup> *Select committee on public works (Ireland)*, H. C.1835 (573), xxx.
- <sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, appendix, p. 319, (517).
- <sup>52</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, appen. pp. 319-320, (517-8).
- <sup>54</sup> *Hansard, Parliamentary debates (3rd. series)*, xv, p. 958., 19 February 1833.
- <sup>55</sup> Anon (Overseer of roads, Armagh), *Observations on the present method of making and mending roads &c*, (Dublin, 1806), p. 7.
- <sup>56</sup> Dutton, *Observations on survey of county Dublin*, p. 136.
- <sup>57</sup> Thompson, *Survey of county Meath*, p. 361.
- <sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, p. 362.
- <sup>59</sup> Joseph Lambert, *Observations on the rural affairs of Ireland* (Dublin, 1829), p. 11.
- <sup>60</sup> Rice, *Effects of the Irish grand jury laws*, p. 5.
- <sup>61</sup> *Report of board of civil engineers*, p.1-2, H. C.1818, xvi, 435.-436.
- <sup>62</sup> *Hansard, Parliamentary debates (3rd. Series)*, xv, p.970. 19 February 1833.
- <sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, xix, p.562 11 July 1833.
- <sup>64</sup> Leahy, *Treatise on roads*, pp. 44-45.
- <sup>65</sup> Brendan O'Donoghue, 'The office of county surveyor -origins and early years' in *Trans. I. E. I.*, 117 (1992-3), appendix v, pp. 262-270.
- <sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, p. 215.
- <sup>67</sup> *ibid.* p. 215-6.
- <sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, appen. ii., p.258.
- <sup>69</sup> *ibid.* p. 217.
- <sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, p. 217.
- <sup>71</sup> *ibid.* p. 246.
- <sup>72</sup> Minute book 1829-1855 (F. C. C. Archives, Records of Dublin-Carlow turnpike road, TR4/1, p. 282-3).
- <sup>73</sup> *ibid.*, p. 283.
- <sup>74</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>75</sup> *B. P. P. 1810-1811 (240)*, iii, 855, p. 31, quoted in Albert,. *Turnpike road system in England*, p. 79.
- <sup>76</sup> O'Donoghue, 'The office of county surveyor,' pp. 211-13.
- <sup>77</sup> Benjamin S Brunton,. *Objection to the present state of the county Dublin roads* (Dublin, 1837), p. 11.
- <sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
- <sup>79</sup> Albert,. *Turnpike road system in England*, p. 157.
- <sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, p. 158-9.
- <sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, p. 159.
- <sup>82</sup> Townley Hall papers, (N. L. I., Ms. 10,239).
- <sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, Long draft, p.1
- <sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, Short draft, p. 109.
- <sup>85</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>86</sup> Lane-Fox estate papers, L F C X IV 22, W. Y. A. S., Leeds.
- <sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, unpaginated.
- <sup>88</sup> *Report of the commissioner to inquire into the turnpike trusts, Ireland*, p. xxvii, H. C. 1856 (2110), xix,
- <sup>89</sup> John Foster, Letter to [Auckland] 21 Oct. 1798, T.3229/2/36 Sneyd papers in *Eighteenth century Irish Official papers in Great Britain*, Priv. collections ii, A. P. W. Malcomson ed., (Belfast P. R. O. N. I., 1990), p. 297.
- <sup>90</sup> Peter J. O'Keefe, *Alexander Taylor's roadworks in Ireland, 1780 - 1827* (Dublin, 1996), pp. 53 - 104.
- <sup>91</sup> Ruth Heard, 'Public works in Ireland 1800-1831', M. Litt. thesis 1977, T. C. D., pp. 164-5.
- <sup>92</sup> Day & McWilliams (eds.), *O. S. Memoirs*, 29, parishes of county Antrim XI, pp. 21-2.
- <sup>93</sup> Minute book, 1833-47 (F. C. C. Archives, Records of Dublin-Mullingar turnpike road, TR3/1/2, p.14).
- <sup>94</sup> *ibid.*



- <sup>95</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 16-7.
- <sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, p. 202.
- <sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, p. 201.
- <sup>98</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 204-05.
- <sup>99</sup> *ibid.*, p. 206.
- <sup>100</sup> Comms. & Dirs. minute book, 1798 -1849 (F. C. C. Archives, Records of Dublin-Knocksedan turnpike road, TR5/1/1, unpag.).
- <sup>101</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>102</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>103</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>104</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>105</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>106</sup> Comms. & Dirs. minute book, 1849-1855 (F. C. C. Archives, Records of Dublin-Knocksedan turnpike road, TR5/1/2, unpag.).
- <sup>107</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>108</sup> *Fourteenth report of commissioners of public works (Ireland)*, p. 37, H. C. 1847 (762), xvii, 493.
- <sup>109</sup> *Sixth report of the commissioners of public works (Ireland)*, p. 10, H. C. 1837-38 (462), xxxv, 152.
- <sup>110</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>111</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>112</sup> *ibid.*, p. 11, (153).
- <sup>113</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>114</sup> *Eleventh report of the commissioners of public works (Ireland)*, p.33, H. C. 1843 (467), xxviii, 311.
- <sup>115</sup> *Report of the commission to inquire into the Dublin turnpike roads*, mins. of evid. appen. p. 103, H. C. 1854-55 (01), xix
- <sup>116</sup> *ibid.*, p.105.
- <sup>117</sup> *ibid.*, p.103.
- <sup>118</sup> *ibid.*, p.104.
- <sup>119</sup> *ibid.*, p.107.
- <sup>120</sup> *ibid.*, p.104.
- <sup>121</sup> *Report of select committee on monopolies in management of turnpike roads in Ireland*, H. C. 1837 (484), xx.
- <sup>122</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3 (399).
- <sup>123</sup> *ibid.*, p. 6 (402).
- <sup>124</sup> *ibid.*, p. 8 (404).
- <sup>125</sup> Samuel Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* (Dublin, 1837), ii, p. 223-4.
- <sup>126</sup> Anon, *Diary of a tour in Ireland*, c.1837 (N. L. I, Ms. 194, p. 19 and 19f.).
- <sup>127</sup> *Report of select committee on state of roads under turnpike trusts in Ireland*, mins. of evid. p.155, H. C. 1831-32 (645), xvii., 551.
- <sup>128</sup> *ibid.*, p. 48 (444).
- <sup>129</sup> *Report of the commissioner to inquire into the turnpike trusts, Ireland.*, notes of evid., p. 63, H. C. 1856 (2110), xix.
- <sup>130</sup> Isaac Weld, *Statistical survey of the county of Roscommon* (Dublin, 1832), p. 175.
- <sup>131</sup> Peter J. O'Keeffe, 'Richard Griffith : planner and builder of roads' in *Richard Griffith 1784-1878* (Dublin, 1980) eds .G. L. Herries-Davies and R. C. Mollan, p. 72.
- <sup>132</sup> *ibid.*, appendix III., p. 42.
- <sup>133</sup> *Second report from the railway commissioners, Ireland*, appen. B.9, pp. 69-90, H. C. 1837-38 (145), xxxv, 793-814..
- <sup>134</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>135</sup> P. H. Gulliver and Marilyn Silverman, *Merchants and shopkeepers* (Toronto, 1995), p. 98.
- <sup>136</sup> *Second report from the railway commissioners, Ireland*, app. p. 45, H. C. 1837-38 (145). xxxv, 793.
- <sup>137</sup> *Report of the commission to inquire into the Dublin turnpike roads*, p. 63 notes of evid., H. C. 1854-55 (01), xix.
- <sup>138</sup> *Report of the commissioner to inquire into the turnpike trusts, Ireland*, pp. xv-xvii, H. C. 1856 (2110), xix



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- <sup>139</sup> *Report of the commission to inquire into the Dublin turnpike roads*, p. 28, H. C. 1854-55 (01), xix.
- <sup>140</sup> Toll returns, 1855-6 (F. C. C. Archives, Records of Dublin-Carlow turnpike road, TR4/10).
- <sup>141</sup> Minute book 1829-1855 (F. C. C. Archives, Records of Dublin-Carlow turnpike road, TR4/1).
- <sup>142</sup> Anon, *Diary of a tour in Ireland*, c.1837 (N. L. I., Ms. 194, p.19).
- <sup>143</sup> Comms. & Dirs. minute book, , 7 October 1845 (F. C. C. Archives, Records of Dublin-Knocksedan turnpike road, TR5/1/1).
- <sup>144</sup> *Report of the commission to inquire into the Dublin turnpike roads*, p. 64, H. C. 1854-55 (01), xix, 760.
- <sup>145</sup> *ibid.*, p. 20.
- <sup>146</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>147</sup> *Report of the commissioner to inquire into the turnpike trusts, Ireland*. H. C 1856 (2110), xix.
- <sup>148</sup> *ibid.*, pp. xiv-xv.
- <sup>149</sup> *ibid.*, p. xvi.
- <sup>150</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>151</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>152</sup> *ibid.*, p. xvi-xvii.
- <sup>153</sup> *ibid.*, p. xvii.
- <sup>154</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>155</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>156</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>157</sup> Joseph Leckey, 'The end of the road : the Kilcullen turnpike 1844-1848 compared with 1787-1792,' in *J. R. S. A. I.*, cxiii (1983), pp. 106.
- <sup>158</sup> *ibid.*, p. 115.
- <sup>159</sup> Eric Pawson, *Transport and economy: the turnpike roads of eighteenth century Britain* (London, 1977), p. 13.



## CHAPTER 6 EFFECTS OF SYSTEM ON SURROUNDING AREAS AND TERMINATION OF TURNPIKE ROADS

This Chapter deals with the evasion of tolls, the effects of the turnpikes on the areas through which they passed and which they served and the ending of the turnpike road system and the arrangements made for winding up the trusts. It covers the financial settlements with the debenture holders and contractors and the arrangements made for future maintenance of the roads.

### 6.1 *Evasion of tolls*

One of the factors which militated against the financial success of the turnpike roads was the degree of toll-evasion over the years. Toll-evasion must have been prevalent from the early days of the turnpike roads and particular forms of it must have been prevalent in certain locations. Evasion of turnpike gates must have been envisaged from their introduction, as in the enabling act (3 Geo.II, c.18) for the Dublin-Kilcullen road, Section 3 made it an offence punishable by fine for anyone:

owning, renting, or occupying any land near unto any turnpike to be erected in pursuance of this act, [who] shall for gain, reward or otherwise, wittingly or willingly permit any person or persons whatsoever to pass through any gate, passage, or way with any coach, berlin, chariot, calash, chaise, or chair, wain, cart, carriage, or riding or driving any horse, ass, mule, or any sort of cattle, [to avoid the payment of the toll].....

It is easy to see that in times of hardship, evasion must have increased, as the tolls were high relative to the income of the poorer sections of the population. On occasions some tolls were seen to be unjust as well as high. One such case was highlighted in the *Report of the committee for the abolition of tolls on the Dublin-Mullingar road*.<sup>1</sup> This report referred to the fact that despite the 'heavy penalties imposed by the turnpike act for evasion and fraud, 'the pecuniary interests of the toll-collectors' led 'to such open and acknowledged infractions of the law.'<sup>2</sup> As an example it was pointed out that the heavily laden carts of millers who made illegal compositions with the collectors were allowed to pass the toll-gates for threepence per cart, while those who could not or would not make such compositions were charged the full sixpence.<sup>3</sup> The report then stated:

During the severity of last winter, a turfman stated to the committee that he had to leave his coat with the toll-collector as a pledge for the payment of the full of



sixpence on returning through the gate, he having no other means of discharging the demand but by the sale of his little load of turf.<sup>4</sup>

It is naturally very difficult to get information on toll-evasion but there seems to be little doubt that a good deal of it went on.. One of the worst of these cases occurred on the Dublin-Mullingar road at the Chapelizod turnpike gate in 1797, where presumably the gatekeeper thought that toll evasion was in progress, but seemed determined to act before the matter was properly resolved. The following report of the incident was published in the *Freeman's Journal*:

The most ruffianly and savage conduct was yesterday evinced by persons at the toll-house at Chapelizod, in stopping horsemen coming from Palmerston fair, by seizing the cattle by the bridles, dragging them about the road, and insisting on toll that was not due. A gentleman that shewed some resistance to this atrocious behaviour, was near being killed by one of the ruffians of this place, who threw a large stone at his head, which fortunately missed him, while another, a tall fellow in a blue coat, was preparing to attack the gentleman with a bludgeon, but from both of whom he escaped. It is a wonder if murder or bloodshed is not the consequence of such base uncivilised behaviour.<sup>5</sup>

It was plain that this was not an isolated case of bad behaviour by the individuals employed by the toll-farmers on this turnpike road. In the same newspaper of 21 October 1794, the fact that the toll collection contract for the road was about to be set, evoked the comment that the receipts were now much increased because of the discovery of the Leixlip spa. It also evoked the following comment:

Let who may become the tenant of them, we hope he will take care to have more civilized gate keepers than have recently appeared on that road, from whose impositions and ruffianly conduct in these places, they seemed to be no better than free-booters.<sup>6</sup>

A record exists of the minutes of the meeting in the rough journal of the trustees of the Dublin-Mullingar road of 3 November 1794 at which the tolls were set for a period of six months from 12 November 1794. At this meeting no comment was recorded about any untoward behaviour by toll-collectors<sup>7</sup>.

A more civilised method of dealing with toll-evaders or those refusing to pay tolls was adopted by the directors of the Knocksedan turnpike road in 1828. The legal costs incurred by the trust's Law Agent for taking proceedings against a Mr. John Bond for forcing through the Glasnevin turnpike gate at Carey's Lane was £25 - 6s. - 0d. On reading the petition of John Bond expressing his contrition for the deed, it was resolved by the directors of the turnpike road that



'the penalty incurred by him be not enforced on condition of his paying five pounds to the Hon. Colonel Gore,[one of the directors] to be distributed to the poor of Glasnevin.'<sup>8</sup>

There was much evidence of toll evasion at the parliamentary inquiry into the turnpike trusts in 1856<sup>9</sup>. In one case in the Banbridge area, an attempt was made to quantify the extent of the evasion. In this case a farmer named John Drake testified:

I took down the traffic this day up to one o'clock on the turnpike road and the Rathfriland road where both form a junction near the courthouse. On the turnpike road, the traffic was 176 one-horse vehicles. On the Rathfriland road, the number was 457 of the same. Of single horses on the turnpike road, there were 13, and on the Rathfriland road 22. This was market day; and I thought it a good opportunity to test the traffic.<sup>10</sup>

Under cross-examination, this witness added that:

A good many of the persons who came in by the Rathfriland road I know could have come in by the Banbridge road, and would, I believe, only for the toll-gate - in other words, the Rathfriland road has more than its fair share of traffic.<sup>11</sup>

Other cases of evasion were given at this inquiry, including a statement from the eminent civil engineer, Sir John McNeil, the designer of the railway viaduct across the Boyne at Drogheda, with reference to the Dundalk-Banbridge turnpike road: 'People go very far and lose their time for the sake of evading payment of road tolls.'<sup>12</sup>

Other examples from the Dublin area show different ways in which toll-payments were evaded. The first case is in respect of the Tallaght gate on the Dublin-Carlow turnpike road which probably occurred in the early eighteen fifties. The matter was recalled in 1943 by Malachy Horan, an old resident in the area, in the following terms:

There was a 'pike' in Tallaght by the corner of the Clondalkin road. The toll was fourpence, but if the return was after midnight, another fourpence had to be paid. The people took this arrangement very ill, not only for the money, but it was a night's work to get the toll-keeper out of his bed. Many would go the back road and ford the river rather than be put to this trouble.<sup>13</sup>

The second example is of a different type of toll evasion or avoidance, which occurred on the north side of the city and concerns the group of houses known as 'The Crescent' at the junction of the Malahide and Howth roads.:

In 1792 a speculative builder named Ffolliott expressed a desire to build houses near the sea-shore and adjoining Marino. The Earl of Charlemont tried to dissuade



him but without success. Materials for the building had to pass through a toll gate on Charlemont's land and on these Ffolliot was forced to pay exorbitant rates. The builder's answer was to have the goods towed by barge across the bay and the completion of his revenge was to build the houses in the form of a crescent which still stands. The houses pretty well spoiled the view from Marino. The turnpike referred to was situated near the corner of Fairview Strand.....<sup>14</sup>

A third method of toll avoidance was attempted on the Malahide road which is best described in a written report to a meeting of the trustees on 15 November 1837 by a lawyer on a query submitted to him. The question and answer given below are not verbatim extracts of the actual question and answer but partly abridged versions of same:

Q- Where drivers do not pass through Toll Gates but unload and carry the goods thro' thereby causing inconvenience in addition to avoidance of Tolls, can Trustees call upon Parties for payment of Tolls or take proceedings re avoidance thereof or can they legally send their Collector with a Toll Bar to another part of the road through which such Dray etc. should pass on its return and there with a Toll Bar and Board enforce the Toll payable.?

A- If Drays' delay on the Road obstructs the public, the proprietors may be proceeded against as for a nuisance. If such cart or carriage does not pass through Gate then no Toll is payable - Counsel cannot advise proceedings unless party admits to such. Counsel does not think that Trustees can legally send Collector with Toll Bar and Board to enforce payment along the line.<sup>15</sup>

## **6.2 Effect on rural areas and provincial towns and cities**

It is difficult to isolate the effect of the turnpike roads on the countryside because many other influences may have affected the area at the same time. There seems to be little doubt but that the turnpike roads were seen as a means of directly benefiting the lands close to their routes, as in 1761 a gentleman wrote in a pamphlet 'Witness the rising rents of those lands, through which most of our turnpikes have passed.'<sup>16</sup> An example of an easily observed effect was that noticed on the road over the Kilworth mountain by the English traveller in 1746 (Chetwood) {See page 79}. This section of road across the mountain was part of the turnpike road from Cork city to the brook at the northern foot of the mountain which formed the boundary with county Tipperary. It was made a turnpike road in 1731 (5 Geo.II, c.20). Chetwood records the transformation of the area from a barren mountain to a pastoral farm district. There seems to be very little doubt, but that this effect was brought about by the ease of access facilitated by the upgrading of the road to turnpike status and the consequent improvement of same.

More usually the effect on towns was wrought by by-passing or diversion of the line of road away from the town. An example of this type of effect which readily comes to mind is that of the town of Kilmallock in county Limerick. When the Newcastle-Limerick-Cork turnpike road



was first implemented in 1731, the section from Limerick to Cork passed through Bruff and Kilmallock to Ardskeagh bridge on the county Cork border and thence to Cork city via Ballyhoura and Mallow, without touching Charleville. In the 1740s a new section of this road was built bringing the turnpike route from Kilmallock through Charleville, a new town created by Lord Broghill and from there to Ballyhoura<sup>17</sup>. In addition to putting Charleville on the turnpike route, Lord Broghill fostered its growth as best he could, while Kilmallock's ruling landlords were almost constantly at odds with one another. The position of the turnpike road on Taylor and Skinner's *Maps of the roads of Ireland* surveyed in 1777 and corrected down to 1783<sup>18</sup> was shown as proceeding from Mallow to Limerick via Ballyhoura, Charleville, Kilmallock and Bruff. In 1837 a new road, eight Irish miles in length was completed from Charleville to Croom to shorten the distance to Limerick<sup>19</sup> and so the town of Kilmallock was by-passed. As a result of all three developments, Kilmallock, which had once been a thriving town with well-attended markets decreased in importance as a commercial centre while Charleville, the new town located about six miles south-west of it grew in importance as a trading and market town.

It was not of course necessary for a town to be by-passed in order to be affected by a turnpike road. The streets in some towns located on busy turnpike roads were often seriously affected by the action of the traffic. Many of these towns collected their own tolls from goods traffic entering the towns and repairs to the streets were financed from these tolls and the turnpike trusts had no function in the matter. The town of Callan in county Kilkenny near the border with county Tipperary is an example of such a town. Callan was situated on the then main road from Dublin to Cork and was located on a busy turnpike road since 1731. The turnpike trust concerned in this area in the 1830s was the one for the turnpike road from Kilkenny city to the boundary of the counties of Kilkenny and Tipperary. In order to fully understand the position about Callan, it is necessary to set out the sequence of events as reported by various observers over a period of 15 years since 1822. It was seen in Chapter 4.7 that evidence was given before the select committee on Holyhead roads in 1822 that the Post Office engineers reported that the main road near Callan was in a particularly bad condition. The next observer was Humphrey O'Sullivan, the Callan schoolteacher and trader who wrote in his diary for the year 1829:

The mail goes from Dublin to Cork in twenty one hours, although it is only fifty years ago since the coach from Kilkenny to Dublin used to take two days, although Kilkenny is half-way between Dublin and Cork. At that rate that coach, called 'The Flyer,' would take four days to do one day's work. 'The slow flyer' would be a more appropriate name. But the blame couldn't be put on 'The Flyer', but on the English Parliament, that left Ireland without proper travelling facilities -- nothing but muddy roads and rough paths, fords without bridges, hills and rough glens, unlike the level even road, without hole or rock, steep ascent or descent, sharp bend or filthy breen, which we now have from Dublin to Cork;.....<sup>20</sup>



Even though this description did not refer to the streets of Callan directly, it did imply that they were not an obstacle to traffic at that time. It seems that during the period between 1829 and 1834, there was a significant deterioration in the condition of the streets. On 15 May 1834 Peter Purcell, the mail coach contractor and coach operator, in a letter to the Chief Secretary advised that:

The Cork and Dublin mail coach is delayed fifteen minutes each way every night in consequence of the badly neglected and dangerous state of the road through the town of Callan in the county of Kilkenny -- frequent interruptions to the correspondence are also produced by the broken springs.....<sup>21</sup>

The matter was referred to the Board of Works for their report and was obviously treated with urgency because the Board of Works replied to the Chief Secretary on 30 June 1834. In their reply the secretary of the Board, Henry Paine stated that enquiries were made 'as to the real cause of so great an inconvenience and to the proper remedy.'<sup>22</sup> He then added:

It appears that Callan is a corporate town and, as such, expressly exempted from the operation of the act for the turnpike trust road at either end of it. They it is understood certainly have not the funds adequate to the necessary repair, nor if it had, as far as the Board believe, is there any law to compel them to expend them in that manner, or to enforce any presentment for the purpose from the grand jury.<sup>23</sup>

Henry Paine then added a sentence which showed that the predicament in Callan was not an isolated case and the effect such situations could have for long-distance land transport in Ireland:

The Board have reason to believe that in other cases in Ireland great impediments exist on roads of primary importance, by the neglect of parties under whose jurisdiction certain small portions are allowed to be in extreme bad order, and may become, what that part through the town of Callan is approaching to, quite impassable.<sup>24</sup>

The Board of Works went on to recommend that appropriate legislation be enacted to resolve these problems and informally hinted that Lord Clifden, the proprietor of the town and the grand jury should share the cost of the repairs to the road and bridge in Callan, but stated that it was not a matter for the Board to approach these parties, thereby implying that it was a matter for the Chief Secretary or Lord Lieutenant.

The matter was also highlighted by another English traveller in 1834 named H. D. Inglis in a book, in which he wrote about Callan (spelt Callen by Inglis) in the following terms:



I had heard, even in England, of the wretched condition of a town in the county of Kilkenny, called Callen..... In so execrable a condition are the streets of this town, that the mail coach in passing through it, is allowed twelve minutes extra; an indulgence which can surprise no one who drives, or rather attempts to drive through the streets; for no one who has the use of his limbs, would consent to be driven. And yet, will it be credited, that a toll is levied on the entrance into the town, of every article of consumption; and not one shilling of the money so received, is laid out for the benefit of the town.<sup>25</sup>

In a reference to the people of the town, Inglis estimated the population at between four and five thousand with about a thousand without regular employment and from six to seven hundred 'entirely destitute'<sup>26</sup> He then described their houses as hovels 'and there I saw people crawling out of their hovels,....they and their hovels not one shade better than I have seen in the sierras of Granada, where the people live in holes excavated in the banks.'<sup>27</sup> In an issue of the '*Times*' of December 1834 the following item appeared 'from their own correspondent in Ireland,' under the heading 'Lord Clifden's Town and Tolls of Callan':

A letter in the *Kilkenny Journal* of this day throws some light on the question in debate between Mr. Inglis and Lord Clifden,- and so far as it goes, fully supports the statement of the able traveller. It runs as follows: To the Editor of the *Kilkenny Journal*; - "Sir, having read in your paper a letter from Lord Clifden to the *Times*, in which his Lordship states that it is the duty of the Trustees of the Turnpike-Road to keep in repair that part of the road passing through the town of Callan, I beg to apprise the public that such is not the fact; on the contrary, the trustees are restrained by a clause in the Act of Parliament from expending any portion of their revenue in repairing the streets of Callan, inasmuch as Tolls and customs are levied in that town for the purpose. I have no desire to take any part for or against Lord Clifden; but I consider it my duty to the trustees to show there is no blame attachable to them for allowing the streets of Callan to become nearly impassable" - Andrew Johnson, Surveyor to the trustees of the turnpike road from Kilkenny to the bounds of the counties of Kilkenny and Tipperary.

This communication will doubtless call "Mr. Henry Ryan gentleman attorney, to come into court," and explain the system of expenditure pursued in the outlay of the Tolls and customs of Callan, valued at £250 per annum, on the "nearly impassable streets."

This gentleman (Lord Clifton's Agent) is a resident in the Metropolis, and is of course obliged to allow somebody else to disburse these monies, for the non-repair of Callan streets, but it is to be hoped that 'somebody' can and will be brought to account to the public for this disgraceful state of things. His Lordship himself ought, according to all accounts,



to be the most capable of rendering a correct explanation of all items of profit and loss connected with the rent-roll of his extensive property in the counties of Kilkenny, Meath, Queen's County etc. His Lordship is not an individual to leave his estates to the exclusive mismanagement of anyone, save himself, or to lose a portion of rent for want of good looking after. ....<sup>28</sup>

The item in the *'Times'* continued to give further details of Lord Clifden's parsimony in his dealings with his tenantry, but enough evidence has been shown as to the reason for what must have been the appalling condition of the streets by which the turnpike road passed through the town. The effect of running a turnpike road through such a town must have disturbed the consciences of even the most insensitive trustees, grand jurors and other public representatives, as the through-traffic only exacerbated the bad condition of the streets, but at least it showed to the world what hardship was being caused by an uncaring landlord. The position must have changed by 1836/7 as Lewis's *'Topographical dictionary,'* published in 1837 in a reference to Callan, observed that: 'the thoroughfares were formerly very bad, but have been improved in the town, though the roads in the vicinity are still much in need of repair.'<sup>29</sup>

### **6.3 Effect on Dublin area**

As has been seen in the attempt to introduce more turnpikes in and around the city of Dublin, (See Chapter 3.10, page 151) turnpike roads had quickly lost their popularity among the inhabitants. Despite this, a number of new turnpike trusts were set up in the Dublin area in the last years of the eighteenth century and early years of the nineteenth. These included the Malahide, Howth and Clontarf roads, the Knocksedan road, the Ratoath road and the roads from Dublin to Ashbourne, Slane and Drogheda, which were all on the north side of Dublin together with the new turnpike road from Dublin to Carlow via Blessington established in 1829, which was on the south-west side of the city. Thus in 1830 the position in the Dublin area was completely unbalanced from a turnpike road point of view. There were on the north side seven such roads with two on the west and one on the south-west with no other on the south or south-east sides. This imbalance and the resulting inequities took up a considerable period of attention of the select committee on turnpike roads 1832<sup>30</sup> and much evidence was given by residents to the committee on the grievances and perceived grievances.

The principal complaint was the difference in the amount of taxation between the north and south sides of Dublin. The first witness called to give evidence before the Committee was James Huffington a resident of Dublin. Huffington stated that he had been aware of the complaints of the citizens against the system of turnpike tolls for the previous twenty five years.<sup>31</sup> He also stated that he was one of the persons who signed 'a petition which emanated from a meeting of the county of Dublin.' Huffington then indicated 'that property on the north side of Dublin had suffered very materially in value, in consequence of tolls being imposed on the roads to the north of Dublin, when no tolls are imposed to the south of Dublin' and stated that he had personal experience of this as he owned property both in the city and in north county Dublin<sup>32</sup>.



The next witness, A. J. O’Keeffe, corroborated the evidence of the first witness and in reply to a question as to whether he could of his own knowledge show that property has been diminished in value because of the heavy rate of toll, stated: ‘In fact all the north side of the city has gone completely to ruin because of it.’<sup>33</sup> O’Keeffe went on to explain that on the south side of the county where there were no turnpike tolls, a house tax was levied in 1810 in lieu, to repair the great roads. He pointed out that this tax was levied only on the better class houses and gave an example in the case of the barony of Rathdown where at that time only 693 houses were so taxed. He went on to say that despite this tax, a further 421 better class house had been built in Rathdown by 1828, whereas ‘on the north side of the city, surrounded with turnpikes, only four houses have been built in the last 10 years on the Malahide road: on the Dunleer road but one house built; and on the Clontarf strand, which was the great bathing station of Dublin, there have been only 71 houses built for the last 30 years, 46 of which are built of mud and straw.’<sup>34</sup> Mr. O’Keeffe then proceeded to list the toll rates on building materials on the Malahide road trust: ‘a toll of 2s.- 6d. to be levied on every piece of timber more than 12 feet long, unless carried in two cars; 8d. per thousand was to be levied off bricks and 1.5d. off stone.’<sup>35</sup> He added that ‘the privilege of exemption from toll enjoyed..... by cars drawing manure was taken away, as also that enjoyed by fish cars, unless the owners of the fish cars made an oath that they would not otherwise be employed.’ It was obvious that O’Keeffe was a forward thinker on the subject of financing roads because of the following reply to a question as to how he thought roads should be paid for: ‘I would then say, that at least half of the money which is produced by the registering of public vehicles and cars in the city of Dublin should go towards the repairs of the leading country roads, because these vehicles materially cut up the roads.’<sup>36</sup> He also contributed the following observation about turnpikes in general which was almost certainly shared by many:

I am, however, (individually) entirely opposed to the principle of turnpikes; though it appears very fair, particularly so, as I know no instance of a Turnpike Trust in Ireland, that at the commencement did not originate in the best Acts of Parliament that could be passed; and yet that they have all at some time been a job,.....<sup>37</sup>

In support of O’Keeffe’s contention, about the effect of the toll-charges on building of houses on the north side of Dublin, the following figures as shown in Table 6.1 were submitted to the Dublin turnpike inquiry of 1854<sup>38</sup> showing the numbers of new houses built in the toll districts and in the districts free from toll from the year 1848 to 1854 inclusive:

**Table 6.1 Numbers of houses built in the Dublin Districts from 1848 to 1854.**

**(a) Numbers of houses built in the Toll Districts**

Electoral	Built in	Built in	Built in	Built in	Built in	Built in	Totals
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Division	1848	1849	1850-51	1852	1853	1854	
Clondalkin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Palmerstown	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tallaght	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Blanchardstown	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Castleknock	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
Clontarf	-	33	12	-	-	-	45
Coolock	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Drumcondra	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Finglas	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Glasnevin	8	-	-	-	-	-	8
Howth	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>57</b>

(b) Numbers of houses built in the Districts free from Tolls

Donnybrook	7	41	58	14	13	44	177
Rathfarnham	4	21	8	9	17	5	64
Rathmines	3	11	22	11	24	41	112
Inchicore	58	-	-	-	-	-	58
Cabra	-	-	4	7	-	-	11
<b>Totals</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>422</b>

In addition, it was pointed out that the average valuation of the 422 houses built in the districts free from toll was £21, while the average valuation of the 57 houses built in the toll districts was only £13. It may of course have seemed to those in favour of turnpikes that the tolls were not the sole cause of this difference in numbers of houses built and that people may have chosen to live on the south-side for better views or clearer fresher air on the hill slopes or because the landlords were more disposed to sell land for sites. While these factors cannot be ruled out, the discrepancy is so marked that toll-charges must have played a significant part in the residential development at that time.

The Circular road, or the North and South Circular roads as the two halves of it became better known, had a profound effect on the planning and development of the city. B. S. Brunton wrote in a pamphlet entitled '*Objections to the present state of the county Dublin roads*' in 1837:

Can any man who views the Circular road give a substantial reason why the City of Dublin is surrounded by a turnpike, or show what general advantage can be derived thereby; if it were for the purpose of restricting improvement in that immediate neighbourhood, the plan has succeeded; but this we cannot suppose; it may be true



that the rents received keep it in repair, and support a number of persons at the toll-gates; but the time has come when such narrow minded views must fall into deep shade, and no charges be placed, or continued, upon the public, or restrictions on free trade, even in its minute relations, without the express utility and necessity being distinctly demonstrated.<sup>39</sup>

Brunton had some further interesting comments on both the turnpike roads in the Dublin area and their effects, such as:

The turnpike roads of this county are best kept, generally speaking; those on the North side, contracted for and new modelled by Mr. Dargan<sup>i</sup>, are highly creditable, but much less used than on the South side, as few persons drive upon them for the mere pleasure of paying a toll.<sup>40</sup>

and:

It is my opinion, that turnpikes are, in all cases, a bad system; they restrict in no inconsiderable degree, free intercourse, which restraint brings with it a train of evil consequences. It is difficult for a man of liberal ideas and equitable principle to favour the present arrangement, by which the South side enjoys all the advantages arising from spirited and speculative enterprise in building and other improvements, and is thereby raised above its local merits.<sup>41</sup>

In a further comment on how the Dublin-Carlow turnpike road in the south-western suburbs of the city affected the village of Crumlin, Brunton wrote:

I have, in addition to my own, the opinion of a talented physician, whose benevolent practice brings him frequently through the Earl of Meath's Liberty, that house property could not be called valueless in that district until a turnpike was placed on the Crumlin Road; which took from it all it could boast of since the decay of its manufactures; a small portion of country trade.<sup>42</sup>

It is thus seen that the turnpike roads had some profound and varied affects on the city and county of Dublin.

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<sup>i</sup> This is a reference to the major road realignment scheme carried out to by-pass the Man-of-War hill in north county Dublin on the Dublin-Dunleer turnpike road by W. Dargan, the civil engineer who later built the first Irish railway.



## 6.4 Effect on Belfast and north eastern area

Most of the resentment in the north-eastern area was officially expressed at the session of the Commission of inquiry of 1856 held in the north because the bulk of the remaining turnpike roads were in this area.<sup>43</sup> One trader, George Cowan of Damolly, Banbridge road, Newry, testified:

I am a miller on the Newry and Banbridge roads; and find turnpikes to operate much against my trade. We keep about eight horses; I use about three-quarters of a mile (!) of the turnpike road, which costs for my carts about £10 a year passing. We have less profit on flour than the Newry people, in consequence of the toll. All grain coming out to us has to pay toll. The flour then pays twice - coming out to be ground, and going in when ground. All the wheat coming in by that gate must have paid before I bought it. Bread is also sent out by that gate, so that there are sometimes four payments in that way. I have been frequently told by people that they took their grain to Banbridge to escape toll, or to pay only one toll instead of two.<sup>44</sup>

There seems to be very little doubt from this but that the turnpike road system acted unfairly on certain individuals and businesses and this was true throughout the country as well as in the northern area. Other evidence given to the 1856 inquiry by George Lynn of Banbridge showed how even private houses could be affected by the turnpike roads:

There are very few private residences in the neighbourhood of the line, which he believes is, in great part, owing to the existence of the tolls; people do not like to pay toll as soon as they leave hall doors to go a short distance.<sup>45</sup>

The town of Newry was a nodal point for turnpike roads as well as other roads and so a large number of passenger coaches and public conveyances used it as a depot or stopping place. The effect of such traffic on Newry and on comparable towns all over Ireland was that it brought tourists and strangers to the towns and created the need for hotels, inns and other catering establishments. In order to give some idea of this traffic, the public coach services from the Ordnance Survey memoir of October 1836 for Newry may be cited.<sup>46</sup> On peak days these services entailed eight coaches into Newry and eight coaches out of it.

**Table 6.2 Public coach services to and from Newry in October 1836**

Name of coach	Description	Established	Runs from and to	Departure time from Newry	Hours on road	Arrival time at Newry	Service
Belfast mail	4 horse coach	1788	Belfast-Dublin	10.45 p.m.	11.5	2.15 a.m.	Daily
Belfast day mail	“	1816	“	9.30 a.m.	12.0	3.15 p.m.	“



Fair Trader	''	1820	''	12.00 noon	12.0	2.30 p.m.	''
Armagh coach	''	1820	Armagh-Dublin	8.30 a.m.	10.0	2.30 p.m.	''
Newry Lark	''	1820	Newry - Dublin	7.00 a.m.	8.0	5 30 p.m.	M. W. F <sup>i</sup>
Dungannon mail	''	-	Newry-Dungannon	2.30 a.m.	4.5	10.30 p.m.	Daily
Downpatrick m.	1 horse car	-	Newry-Downpatrick	2.30 a.m.	5.0	10.00 p.m.	''
Monaghan mail	4 horse van	1830	Newry-Ballybay	3.30 p.m.	4.7	9.30 a.m.	''

## 6.5 Termination of turnpike status of roads

Turnpike roads lost their turnpike status in various ways. The second volume of '*A statistical account or parochial survey of Ireland*,' published in 1816<sup>47</sup> gives a good description of how the turnpike road leading from the Lurgan area to Antrim lost its turnpike status and reverted to being a grand jury road, six years previously. This road was the turnpike road from Banbridge to Randalstown, which gave a more direct route from Dublin to counties Antrim and Derry than by travelling through Belfast. In the words of J. T. Fulton:

Even after the Belfast to Antrim Trust commenced in 1739, it meant that a journey from Antrim to Banbridge could be accomplished on payment of one toll, whereas the route via Belfast, besides being longer and more hilly, would have required two.<sup>48</sup>

However by an amending act of 1767 (7 Geo. III, c.13) the turnpike status of the road was extended to 1818 and the road was divided into two divisions and this meant that the number of toll payments increased. This obviously made the road less favoured. Apparently the road was first 'suffered to go out of repair, so as in some places to be almost impassable for heavy carriages'. The trust's funds were inadequate to maintain the road and as travellers were forced to divert to alternative roads, these funds diminished further. Caught in this downward spiral, the trust was unable to pay interest on its debentures for many years. As the 'parochial survey' indicated:

This circumstance together with the desire to have this useful line of road repaired by county presentments, which could not be done while tolls were paid, suggested the idea of offering a composition to the holders of the debentures by way of purchase, as this was the only obstacle to the removal of the gates. The sum of £10 per cent was accordingly offered to the proprietors, and accepted by them. By the liberality and successful exertion of some of the neighbouring noblemen and gentlemen, a subscription was opened, which produced the sum

<sup>i</sup> Monday, Wednesday and Friday.



required.....The turnpike gates were immediately removed and large presentments obtained from the grand jury at each succeeding assize. The road is now repaired, to the manifest advantage and accommodation of the public.<sup>49</sup>

The formal method of ending the turnpike status of a road was of course by legislation. The earliest use of such a method was the case of the ending of the Navan-Kells and Navan-Nobber roads in 1779/80 (see page 130). Such a method was also adopted in 1847 to abolish the turnpike status of the road from Waterford city to the border of county Cork. The relevant act (10 & 11 Vict., c.50) provided that the this turnpike be abolished from 1 June 1848 because the 'road had proved inconvenient and not advantageous to the occupiers of land and to the inhabitants of the towns along the line of the road'. Section 2 of the act provided that from the date of abolition, the road was to be repaired by grand jury presentment and Section 3 required the grand jury to present for payment of all awards to Hamilton White of Dungarvan, who was the contractor. The trustees were also required to sell-off their toll houses, toll boards, bars and gates and give the proceeds to the grand jury. The abolition of this turnpike was obviously prompted by an act of the previous year, 1846 (9 & 10 Vict. c. 397), which provided for making a railway from Cork to Waterford with branches therefrom. Other turnpike roads however were ended in most unorthodox and non-legal ways. The most well known case was that of the Carlow, Kilkenny, Callan and Tipperary trust. This trust operated the portion of the main Dublin-Cork road from the town of Carlow through Kilkenny and Callan to the bounds of county Tipperary. The demise of this trust and of the turnpike status of this road was described in the local press following the insertion in the newspapers of a notice of a full meeting of the trustees to be held on 14 February 1852 to discuss the possible winding up of the affairs of the trust:

An adjourned meeting of the trustees of the turnpike road.....was held in the Tholsel on Saturday, for the purpose of considering what course they ought to take in the present exhausted state of their finances and bad condition of the road, The trustees present were , Mr. Sullivan, J. P. in the chair, Sir Wheeler Cuffe, Bart., Captain Stewart, the Rev. J. Chapman, Messrs. J. K. Alyward, J. P., H. Potter, J. P., H. M'Creery, P. Blanchfield, J. M. Tidmarsh, and H. J. Loughnan. Upon examination of the accounts, it appeared that the debts of the trust were £41 - 0s. - 5d., exclusive of what may be due to debenture holders, and the Trustees were unanimous in considering that they had no means of going on, the cesspayers having refused to give them presentments to aid in mending the road. It seemed to be the wish of all to resign, if only the debt of £41 could be paid off, and it was suggested that if Mr. Carter would continue to act as Surveyor for five months, and apply the tolls received to paying this debt, and the remainder to repair the road as far as possible, it would be better at the end of that time to let the Grand Jury take up the road altogether and for the Trustees to have no more to do with it. Mr. Carter consented to this, and stated that he would not ask for any remuneration for the



half year. The Trustees then pretty generally set about writing out their resignations, and when they were prepared, it was moved by Mr. Potter, and seconded by Captain Stewart, that the thanks of the Trustees be given to Mr. Carter, and that he be authorised to superintend the road and receive the tolls for the next five months, the proceeds to be applied to pay the debts, and the remainder to repair the road. Mr. M'Creery .....protested against having a course taken which would leave the road impassable for five months, whilst people would still be charged toll; and this arrangement, too, to be carried out on the order of gentlemen, who were prepared to resign the moment the act was done. After a discussion the question was put to the vote and the motion was negatived by a majority of one. A long altercation then took place: those who opposed the motion were called on to suggest a better plan, but this seemed to be easier asked than accomplished. Captain Stewart handed in his resignation and left the room. Mr. Carter protested against the want of unanimity which the body evinced, and tendered his resignation of the office of Surveyor - he would do anything to assist them, but found it impossible to get them to be agreed on anything.....all the Trustees present, except Mr. Loughnan, a debenture holder, handed in their resignations, without making an order as to continuance of tolls, or payment of debts, and so the Chairman rose, and the meeting separated, Mr. Carter directing his man to inform the [Turnpike] Gate keepers that he would no longer be responsible to them for their wages, nor authorise them to receive tolls.<sup>50</sup>

As soon as 10 March 1852 the *Kilkenny Moderator* reported that the former turnpike road was in a 'fearful condition' and 'really so cut up and shockingly out of repair as to be dangerous to the lives of her Majesty's subjects.'<sup>51</sup> Because of this and the fact that the tolls and turnpike trust were now gone, the grand jury was asked to attend to it urgently. A further report of 13 March 1852, indicated that a presentment applied for by the county surveyor, Mr. Carter to the grand jury for the repair of the road, was passed by the grand jury. 'on the understanding that the turnpikes were altogether abolished.'<sup>52</sup> It should be noted that two members of the grand jury 'Messrs. Flood and Aylward stated that they had been trustees, but they with almost all the others, had resigned, and there was now no Board to put on the Turnpikes.' The basic facts concerning the ending of this turnpike trust and road as set out in above press reports were confirmed by both Carter, the county surveyor and Humphrey Semple, the secretary of this trust at the hearings of the commission of inquiry for the abolition of turnpike roads held in 1856.<sup>53</sup>

The most common method of loss of turnpike status was of course, the failure to renew the enabling acts before the time-limits expired. The first example of this was the non-renewal of the enabling act for the Black-Bull to Athboy turnpike road in 1752. Four turnpike acts expired in 1777 and as time went on, the tendency grew for more acts to be allowed lapse, than were being initiated. In some cases there was active opposition to the renewal of turnpike gates on specific lengths of road. This is shown, for example, by the case



of the branch of the Banbridge-Belfast turnpike road which passed through the parish of Knockbreda - (Newtownbreda) located in county Down about three miles from Belfast. In this instance, an effort to reinstate the turnpike tolls in 1818 was strongly opposed by a parish meeting which resolved:

That viewing the intended application to Parliament for a renewal of the late Turnpike Act empowering a board to re-levy toll on the line of the road between Belfast and Banbridge by Newtownbreda, is an attempt at imposing a grevous, burthensome and unnecessary tax on us, we will oppose the said application by all the legal means in our power<sup>54</sup>

The total length of turnpike roads, which were legally created from 1729 to 1837 was 1824 miles (See page 246). The maximum mileage in existence at any one time was about 1300 miles in 1812. and the mileage in existence in 1831 was only 770 miles<sup>55</sup> (631 miles under the control of trusts and 139 miles vested in private individuals). [Note – the 770 (631+ 139) miles were Irish miles.]

## 6.6 *Initial steps to have tolls legally abolished in the Dublin area*

In Dublin in the late 1840s a movement to have turnpike roads abolished which styled itself 'The county and city of Dublin anti-toll committee' emerged. It was primarily concerned with the concentration of turnpikes on the north side of Dublin, as highlighted at the 1831-32 Commission of inquiry. In 1849, a Mr. Hardinge published a pamphlet on its behalf, in which the author was complaining about a petition from some of the better-off north-side residents to preserve the turnpike status of the roads. In the pamphlet Hardinge stated that this petition:

.....is signed by the trustees of these lines [existing turnpikes] and by other easy gentlemen who wish to continue the *turnpike cordon aristocratique*, in order to preserve the privacy of their villa residences which occupy the district between Dublin, Malahide and Howth.<sup>56</sup>

The Circular road around Dublin city lost its turnpike status on 1 January 1851 under the provisions of 'The Dublin Improvement Act 1849' (12 & 13 Vict., c. 97), which transferred responsibility for the road to the city authority. On 25 October 1852 a meeting of owners and occupiers of land and others interested in the abolition of the tolls payable on the Dublin-Mullingar turnpike road was held at the court-house at Lucan, county Dublin.<sup>57</sup> These objectors sent a memorial to the Lord Lieutenant setting out the reasons why they considered the tolls should be abolished.<sup>58</sup> It must be stated that this particular turnpike trust and road was one of the most successful in the country and was at that time operating under an up-dated act of 1848 (13 & 14 Vict., c.107) which continued the trust for thirty- one years from the date of enactment. The main reasons set out in the memorial were that: the tolls were too high and oppressive, vehicles carrying loads of manure and other materials needed for improvement of farmlands were not toll-



free, the tolls were still being partly used to service a debt of some £15,000 originally raised by way of debentures in 1733 and finally that, as the road lay between two main line railways to Cork and Galway and was parallel to two major canals, its future viability and reason for existence were in serious doubt. In respect of the debentures, the memorialists contended that these were already paid for many times over in interest payments, as part of the memorial stated:

That it appears by computation that, since the original creation of the debentures in 1733, no less a sum than £85,980 has been paid out of the tolls for interest alone on these debentures,.....and, therefore, it will be found that the holders of the debentures have been repaid their original actual outlay many times, even with the highest legal interest upon it,.....<sup>59</sup>

It was, observed in a reference to the original debt of £15,000, ‘ how much of that sum was actually received and applied to the purposes of the road there are no means of ascertaining, as the accounts and transactions of that period are not to be found.’<sup>60</sup> The memorial was signed by more than four thousand persons and a deputation from them headed by Sir John Kingsmill met the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary. The deputation was advised to meet the debenture-holders to seek an amicable settlement with them and that if agreement was not possible, then their only course was to seek to have an act passed by parliament. The meeting with the debenture-holders was arranged and Kingsmill sought their agreement to having their debentures independently valued by the government or other actuary. David C. Latouche replied on behalf of the debenture-holders that twenty shillings in the pound was their final word. Accordingly the objectors published their bill<sup>61</sup> and sought to have it enacted by parliament. The bill, in effect, asked that an inquiry be conducted by the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland, or any two or more of them, into the financial affairs and prospects of the turnpike trust. It also asked that an assessment be made of the value of the debentures, with a view to having the road transferred to the relevant grand juries and all reasonable costs of acquisition met by the grand juries. It also envisaged that the road would then be maintained by the local authorities, free of tolls in the same manner as all other main roads.

At this time in the early eighteen fifties, it must have become clear to the government that the ‘days of the of the turnpike roads’ in Ireland were numbered. This was especially so in the Dublin area where a committee consisting mainly of those with a financial interest in the trusts and including Kingsmill and those from the Dublin-Mullingar road had been formed in October 1853 for the purpose of procuring the abolition of the tolls. This committee was known as the ‘Turnpikes Abolition Committee’ and in March 1854 sent a letter to the Dublin-Carlow turnpike trust seeking support. In this letter a copy of three resolutions adopted by the committee were set out:



That the objects of this Committee shall be to abolish, as speedily as practicable, the several trusts leading from Dublin, upon terms fair and equitable to the public, to the creditors having charges thereon, and to all parties interested therein.’

‘That with the view of promoting the object of this Committee, it is of first importance to add to its power and influence by enrolling among its members such of the nobility, magistracy and gentry as may approve of the purpose for which this Committee has been constituted, and thereby concentrating their opinions and support.’

‘That Lt. Gen. Sir Hopkin Scott, K. C. B., Sir Henry Jervis, Bart., The Rt. Hon. Frederick Shaw, Sir John Kingsmill, J. P., John E. V. Vernon, Esq. J. P., D. L., Thomas Hutton, Esq. J. P., D. L., John Lentaigne, Esq. J. P., D. L., Col. Willcocks and Arthur Guinness, Esq. be appointed as a sub-committee and requested to carry out the spirit and purport of the fore going resolutions.’<sup>62</sup>

The members of the Committee certainly ensured that they had adequate fire-power in their sub-committee. This Committee made an application to the Lord Lieutenant which was similar to that submitted by those objecting to continuation of the Dublin-Mullingar turnpike road and by those other objectors in respect of the Dublin-Malahide and Howth trust and two debenture-holders in respect of the Dublin-Dunleer trust.

In 1854 a ‘Commission for inquiring into the propriety of maintaining or abolishing certain turnpike roads in the vicinity of Dublin’<sup>63</sup> was set up on somewhat similar lines to that suggested by the objectors to the Dublin-Mullingar road and so made the objectors bill unnecessary. The Commission consisted of two persons namely, Abraham Hayward, a senior lawyer and Henry Drury Harness, ‘A Commissioner of Public Works in that part of our United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland called Ireland’. The turnpike roads, which were to be the subject of this inquiry were those listed in Table 6.3 and included all turnpike roads leading to and from Dublin.

**Table 6.3 Turnpike roads leading from Dublin in 1854**

Number	Name of existing Turnpike Road
1	The Dublin, Malahide, Howth and Clontarf roads
2	The Dublin and Dunleer road
3	The Dublin and Knocksedan road
4	The Dublin and Ashbourne road, to Slane and Drogheda
5	The Ratoath road
6	The Dublin and Navan road
7	The Dublin and Mullingar road and the road branching from same by Kinnegad and Athlone
8	The Dublin and Carlow road



The commission took evidence from the treasurers and secretaries of all eight road trusts and examined the accounts and other documentary evidence. The commissioners also took evidence on oath from all those that they felt had a useful contribution to make. In general they were of the opinion that no necessary information was either unintentionally or deliberately withheld from them. The two commissioners issued separate reports. Mr. Hayward issued the major report while Major Harness issued a much smaller one.

In his report Hayward listed the chief objections to the turnpike system as it existed in the vicinity of Dublin before giving a detailed report on each of the roads and its recommendations. He listed these objections under the following heads: '(1) Its vexatiousness, inequality, and consequent injustice, (2) The irresponsibility of its administrators, and its consequent liability to abuse, (3) Its expensiveness and comparative inefficiency as regards the condition of the roads.'<sup>64</sup> Under the first head the commissioner re-echoed the observation and contention made at the 1831/2 inquiry about the inequitable high cost of land ownership and occupation on the north side of Dublin because of the presence of the turnpike roads, as against the lower costs on the south side of the city, where no turnpikes existed. The absence of turnpike roads on the south side of Dublin city was a factor which helped to sell houses as early as 1797, as the following selling point from an auctioneer's advertisement of that date concerning the sale of four new houses at Kellerton on the road from Dublin between Blackrock and Monkstown described the road as: 'the pleasantest road to Dublin, free from turnpike.'<sup>65</sup> Under the second head the commissioner stated:

It is notorious that the trustees are practically irresponsible; and the liability of the turnpike system to abuse may be inferred from the frequent neglect of the strict provisions of the Acts passed for its regulation, which have been rarely either accurately understood, or regularly observed by the trustees or their officers.<sup>66</sup>

This statement clearly shows where Hayward laid the blame for the failure of the turnpike system in Ireland to match up to expectations. He saw the irresponsibility of the trustees and their failure to recruit suitably qualified staff to properly administer the trusts and roads as the primary cause of why so much money was wasted. In the case of the third heading, Hayward gave much useful information on the overall operational finances of the nine roads: the aggregate annual amount of tolls levied by the trusts was £10,000; there were forty nine gates including two side-gates on the nine roads; the cost of the gatekeepers salaries and the rents and repair on the toll-houses cost about £2,200 and this together with the salaries of the treasurers, secretaries and surveyors showed that the cost of collection of the tolls amounted to approximately twenty five per cent of the toll-take.<sup>67</sup> He contrasted this with a cost factor of two and a half per cent for the collection of the baronial cess in county Dublin. The commissioner then commented on the fact that the grand juries were in a good position to take over the turnpike roads. 'The maintenance of public roads in Ireland, in default of turnpike tolls, is sufficiently provided for by the existing laws.'<sup>68</sup>



Hayward pointed out that the area in which the road was situated should bear the burden of maintaining it, but added:

The turnpikes on the Dublin Circular Road were an injury to the county as well as the city: yet, when they were abolished by the Dublin Improvement Act in 1851, the entire debt was thrown on the city, which is bound to keep the Circular Road in repair.<sup>69</sup>

During the course of the hearing of evidence before the above inquiry and unknown to the public, the Under Secretary of State and former Commissioner of Public Works, one Lt. Col. Thomas A. Larcom had written a letter dated 20 July 1854 to Hayward urging him to consider that Dublin city should be asked to 'bear some small portion of the turnpike debts.'<sup>70</sup> Larcom was one of the most capable and versatile engineers who had come to Ireland. He had carried out important work with the Ordnance Survey team, organised the census of 1841 and worked on the reform of the municipal corporations and so, was very much aware of the issues involved in the abolition of the Dublin turnpike roads. It had previously been made clear by Hayward that he was opposed to the fiscal involvement of Dublin city. Hayward wrote four letters in that period to Col. Larcom; one on 19 July enclosing a memorandum on the turnpike trusts 'containing arguments decidedly against the suggestion that part of the cost of abolition be drawn on Dublin city'; one on 25 July pointing out the debts of the Wide Streets Commissioners were borne by Dublin city; one on 1 August pointing out that Major Harness, the second member of the Turnpike Abolition Commission was also in favour of charging Dublin city with some of the debt. The final letter on 3 August gave what was probably the true reason why none of the debt was put on the city, as 'trying to tax the city would be like skinning a wild cat.'<sup>71</sup> In the finished report Major Harness generally agreed with Hayward but made plain his reservation that Dublin city should be made contribute because:

If by a general measure the turnpike system of maintaining roads were to be at once abolished throughout Great Britain and Ireland, no one would hesitate to recommend that the remaining debts, at a fair valuation, should be spread over the whole community, or that they should be met by the general revenue; in which case, each portion of the country would contribute towards the necessary expense attending the change of system according to its valuation, and not according to the particular extent of benefit received.<sup>72</sup>

It is remarkable that the question of whether Dublin city should contribute to the costs of abolition of the turnpike roads as well as the counties should arise at that time, as in 1729 (See petition of 6 December 1729 in Chapter 2.2) the turnpike roads in the Dublin area seemed to have been started by the county interests in order that the Dublin city inhabitants would have to pay indirectly through the toll-charges for the main roads in the county.



The commissioners had the debentures of the various trusts independently valued by Messrs. Boyle and Low. The commissioners recommended that all these trusts be wound up and that the roads be transferred to the appropriate grand juries which should also pay the outstanding debts and take responsibility for all outstanding obligations and compensate the debenture holders in accordance with prescribed current market valuation. They further recommended that legislation be enacted to give legal powers to have their recommendations implemented as soon as possible. The required act was passed in 1855 (18 & 19 Vict., c.69) and it embodied most of the recommendations of the commissioners. In accordance with the terms of this act, a turnpikes' abolition commissioner was appointed to oversee the abolition and very detailed instructions on the payments to be made and the contributions to be paid by each barony were sent to the relevant grand juries by way of certificates. One such certificate was the 'Certificate of the allotment and apportionment of charges' was sent on 10 April 1856 to the secretary of the grand jury of the county of Dublin<sup>73</sup>. A letter was included with the certificate, which detailed the various amounts chargeable to the grand jury and how these were to be settled. The certificate itself which was signed by John Prendergast, the abolition commissioner, set out:

the specific sums and annuities payable to the mortgaged creditors and rentholders of the several abolished turnpike trusts under his general award made in execution of the Dublin and other roads turnpikes abolition act 1855 *allotted* by the said Commissioner to the baronies of the county of Dublin chargeable in respect of the said act.. Also the apportionment of each such specific sum and annuity between the said baronies. Also the division and apportionment of £1,950 - 2s. - 3d, the costs of obtaining the said act and of the sum of £385 - 4s. - 3d., the expenses of executing the said act and the persons to whom the said sums annuities costs and expenses are respectively payable.<sup>74</sup>

The certificate named 54 mortgagees who were awarded a total sum of £5,545 -7s.- 9.5d, four rentholders which was later (10 November 1856) increased to five who were awarded a total of £34 -15s - 6.5d. in annuities to be payable in two half-yearly instalments for ever and twelve creditors who were awarded a total sum of £353 - 15s.- 10d. and were each to be paid in one instalment. The certificate fixed the county Dublin grand jury's portion of the cost of the abolition act at £133 - 10 - 11.25d. and the portion of the expenses of executing the act at £626 - 12 - 10.75d. The apportionment of the charges between the various baronies as a consequence of the different turnpike roads is given in Table 6.4.

**Table 6.4 Apportionment of cost to the grand jury of county Dublin, of the abolition of the turnpike roads in 1855-6**

Baronies	Turnpike trusts	Length in miles	Mortgages in pounds	Annuities in pounds	Debts in pounds	Costs of act in £s	Expenses in pounds
Uppercross	Dublin-Carlow	9.5875	1298..85	-	105.85	71.617	14.09



	Dublin-Mullingar	4.7500		-	-	35.233	6.98
Newcastle	Dublin-Carlow	1.5375	916.03	-	16.98	11.485	2.26
	Dublin-Mullingar	3.3500		-	-	25.025	4.93
Castleknock	Dublin-Mullingar	1.5750	430.66	-	-	11.500	2.31
	Dublin.-Slane-Drogheda	5.0375	25.12	2.8625	29.24	37.581	7.41
	Dublin-Navan	6..6250	1395.88	21.3833	5.43	49.452	9.74
	Dublin-Ratoath	7.5750	-	-	-	56.533	11.14
Coolock	Dublin-Dunleer	5.9625	91.82	-	-	44.541	8.77
	Dublin-Slane and Drogheda	2.0875	10.41	1.18646	12.18	15.537	3.07
	Dublin-Knocksedan	5..3500	644.08	-	138.54	39.280	7.86
	Dublin-Howth-Malahide	17.7500	-	3.69167	-	132.546	26.10
	Dublin-Navan	1.4625	308.14	4.72500	1.22	10.678	2.18
	Dublin Ratoath	0.1750	-	-	-	1.303	0.26
Nethercross	Dublin-Dunleer	3..8125	58.72	-	5.70	28.481	5.60
	Dublin-Slane and Drogheda	1.0000	4.99	0.56770	40.41	7.420	1.48
	Dublin-Knocksedan	1.5625	188.11	-	-	11.198	2.26
Balrothery West	Dublin-Slane and Drogheda	0.6375	3.18	0.36042	3.72	4.763	0.94
Balrothery East	Dublin-Dunleer	11.0000	169.40	-	-	82.477	16.17
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>90.8375</b>	<b>5,545.39</b>	<b>34.7771</b>	<b>359.27</b>	<b>676.645</b>	<b>133.55</b>

In the case of the annuities in Table 6.4, the payment of these was continued by Dublin county council until 1984, when the payments were ended by agreement.<sup>75</sup>

### **6.7 Abolition of remaining turnpike trusts and of toll taking on all roads**

Once the Dublin turnpike roads had been taken out of service, it became only a matter of time before a call was made to abolish the remaining ones. The entire extent of the mileage under the turnpike system throughout Ireland at that time was 325 miles. This 325 miles was divided between the provinces as follows: Munster - 50 miles, Leinster - 101 miles, Ulster - 174 miles and Connaught - nil. A commissioner, one Edward Clements barrister-at-law, was appointed by parliament to inquire into the turnpike trusts in Ireland and he issued his report in 1856.<sup>76</sup> His brief was to inquire and report on the propriety of maintaining or abolishing the several turnpike roads in Ireland taking into consideration:



Firstly; the present condition of each of the said roads, Secondly; the receipts and expenditure and state of accounts of same, Thirdly; the amounts of debts and charges on each trust; the current and original value, and the market value in each of the last ten years of the debentures; the number of debenture holders; the mode of paying off those debentures which to him should appear most equitable; the proportion thereof which should be charged to the respective counties; and generally to consider all matters relating to each of the said trusts.<sup>77</sup>

It is obvious from this that he had little choice but to recommend the most economic and expedient method of abolition. In the course of the inquiry a total of 98 witnesses were heard and examined and of this number 70 were against the turnpikes continuing, 24 were for the continuation of them and four were indifferent. In the course of this report the commissioner observed that:

It must be admitted that turnpikes had their uses; at least some contrivance of the sort was at one time needful, perhaps necessary, especially where travellers began to multiply to any perceptible extent in the early stages of commerce.<sup>78</sup>

On 27 July 1857 an act (20 & 21 Vict., c 16) was passed 'to discontinue the taking of Toll on the Turnpike Roads now existing in Ireland, and to provide for the Maintenance of such roads as public Roads, and for the Discharge of the Debts due thereon, and for other Purposes relating thereto.' This act ended the turnpike status of the roads included in Table 6.5.

**Table 6.5 List of last existing turnpike roads which legally lost turnpike status on 5 April 1858**

Number	Name of existing turnpike road
1	Newcastle-Limerick-Charleville
2	Athy-Castlecomer-Kilkenny, Castlecomer-Leighlin Bridge & Carlow-Castlecomer
3	Second division of above
4	Clonmel-Knocklofty
5	Shankill-Waterford
6	Dundalk-Castleblayney and Carrickmacross
7	Dundalk-Dunleer
8	Dundalk-Banbridge (Southern Division)
9	Dundalk-Banbridge (Northern Division)
10	Newry-Charlemount
11	Banbridge-Belfast (mail coach road)
12	Belfast-Lisburn (by Malone)
13	Belfast-Lisburn (by Falls )



14	Belfast- Crumlin (two roads)
15	Belfast-Antrim
16	Belfast-Copeland Water

Section 38 of the act concerning the ceasing of toll collection came in to operation on 5 April 1858 and from that date the roads reverted to grand jury control. The transition of the former turnpike roads to the grand juries was without acrimony and the roads maintenance and improvement financial allocations were administered equably as is shown by the following newspaper report of 9 November 1866:

Toll gates have now been entirely abolished in Ireland for more than 8 years. The roads there are paid for out of the county cess, every county having an engineering surveyor appointed by the Lord Lieutenant, and every barony an assistant surveyor appointed by the Grand Jury. All works and contracts are determined on by the "associated ratepayers," a selection made by the Grand Jury out of those who pay the largest amount of rates in each barony; but before new works are executed the contract must be laid before the grand jury and if they reject, there is no appeal. In this way jobbery is made almost impossible, and as every part of a county is represented in the grand jury, no district is likely to be neglected. The consequence is that the Irish roads are proverbially excellent—except, indeed, within the boundaries of Dublin City, where the corporation will neither act themselves nor let anyone else act for them.<sup>79</sup>

Some counties, however, found the added costs of maintaining the former turnpikes troublesome, as a report which accompanied the proposed presentments for 1859 from the county engineer (surveyor) of Limerick to the grand jury indicated:

The increased cost is principally caused by the new letting of the late turnpike road from Limerick to Charleville which amounts in all half-yearly to £446 for 24.5 miles. The portion of the late turnpike road from Limerick to Newcastle which lies within the baronies of Pobble Brien and Coshma, in length 11.25 miles, was in such a wretched worn out state before the abolition of the turnpikes, that in the absence of other applications, I was obliged to apply at Sessions for a special presentment at 5s. per perch on 2,286 perches thro' Pobble Brien.....and for a contract of 2s.- 6d. per perch per year for five years on 1324 perches thro' Coshma but the state of the road was so very bad that no contractor would tender for either of those works and in the circumstances the Grand Jury ordered me to have them executed which I did to the best of my ability.<sup>80</sup>



- <sup>1</sup> *Report of the committee for the abolition of toll on the Dublin and Mullingar turnpike road* (Dublin, 1853).
- <sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 10-11.
- <sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 11.
- <sup>4</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>5</sup> *F. J.*, 22 August 1797.
- <sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, 21 October 1794.
- <sup>7</sup> Rough journal (F. C. C. Archives, Records of Mullingar turnpike road, TR3/1/1, [unpag.]).
- <sup>8</sup> Comms & Dirs minute book, 17 June 1828 (F. C. C. Archives, Records of the Knocksedan turnpike road, TR5/1/1).
- <sup>9</sup> *Report of the commissioner to inquire into the turnpike trusts, Ireland*, H. C. 1856 (2110), xix.
- <sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p. 20, (664).
- <sup>11</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p. 9, (653).
- <sup>13</sup> George A. Little, *Malachi Horan remembers* (Dublin, 1943), pp. 50-51.
- <sup>14</sup> M. J. Tutty, 'Clontarf' in *D. H. R.* xxi, May 1966, p. 4.
- <sup>15</sup> Chairman's min. book, 1833-39 (F. C. C. Archives, Records of the Malahide turnpike road, TR 2/1/3, entry for 15 November 1837, unpaginated).
- <sup>16</sup> Anon *The benefits of an inland navigation* (Dublin, 1761), p. 10.
- <sup>17</sup> Ted O'Riordan, 'The roads around Charleville' in *Charleville Hist. Jn.*, i, (1986), pp. 55-6.
- <sup>18</sup> Taylor & Skinner, *Maps of the roads of Ireland*, p. 184.
- <sup>19</sup> Samuel Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* (Dublin, 1837), i, p. 324.
- <sup>20</sup> Humphrey O'Sullivan, *The diary of an Irish countryman 1827-1835* (Cork, 1979), a translation of Cin lae Amblaoibh by T de Bhaldraithe, p. 72.
- <sup>21</sup> Chief Secretary's papers of 1834 (Nat Arch., C. S. O. C. R. 25, R2795, Shelf - 3/609/3/17).
- <sup>22</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>23</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>24</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>25</sup> Henry David Inglis, *Ireland in 1834* (London, 1834), i, p. 97.
- <sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p. 97.
- <sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 98.
- <sup>28</sup> *The Times*, 13 December 1834, also quoted in *Turnpikes and toll bars* by Mark Searle (London, 1930), ii, p. 735.
- <sup>29</sup> Lewis, *Topographical dictionary*, i, p. 244.
- <sup>30</sup> *Report of select committee on state of roads under turnpike trusts in Ireland*, H. C. 1831-32 (645), xvii.
- <sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p. 19 (415).
- <sup>32</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p. 27 (423).
- <sup>34</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>35</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p. 29 (425).
- <sup>37</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup> *Report of the commission to inquire into the Dublin turnpike roads*, app. p. 125, H. C. 1854-55 (01), xix.
- <sup>39</sup> Brunton, *Objection to the county Dublin roads*, pp. 28-9.
- <sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 27-8.
- <sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, p. 28.
- <sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, p. 29.
- <sup>43</sup> *Report of the committee to inquire into the turnpike trusts, Ireland*, H. C. 1856 (2110), xix.
- <sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, notes of evid. p. 23, (667).
- <sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, notes of evid. p. 11, (655).
- <sup>46</sup> Day & McWilliams (eds.), *O. S. memoirs*, 3, Parishes of county Down (South Down) 1 (Belfast, 1990), p. 78.
- <sup>47</sup> William Shaw Mason, *A statistical account or parochial survey of Ireland*, ii, (Dublin, 1816), pp. 234-35.
- <sup>48</sup> Fulton, 'The roads of County Down,' p. 259.
- <sup>49</sup> Mason, *Parochial survey of Ireland*, ii, pp. 234-35.



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- <sup>50</sup> *Kilkenny Moderator* 14 & 18 February 1852, quoted by Searle in *Turnpikes and tollbars*, ii, pp. 737-38.
- <sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, but *Kilkenny Moderator* of 10 March 1852.
- <sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, but *Kilkenny Moderator* of 13 March 1852.
- <sup>53</sup> *Report of the commissioner to inquire into the turnpike trusts, Ireland 1856*, pp. 89-91, H. C. 1856 (2110), xix, 689-691.
- <sup>54</sup> W. P. Carmody, *History of the parish of Knockbreda* (Belfast, 1929), p. 86, quoted in Fulton 'The roads of county Down,' p. 258.
- <sup>55</sup> *Report of select committee on state of roads under turnpike trusts in Ireland*, p. 4, H. C. 1831-32 (645), xvii, 400.
- <sup>56</sup> W. H. Hardinge, *Summary of authorities relating to the nine turnpike trusts on the north side of Dublin* (Dublin, 1849), p. 34.
- <sup>57</sup> *Report of the committee for the abolition of the tolls on the Dublin and Mullingar turnpike road* (Dublin, 1853), p. 3.
- <sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 3-6.
- <sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, p. 6.
- <sup>60</sup> *ibid.*, p. 5.
- <sup>61</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 15-23.
- <sup>62</sup> Correspondence, 1854 (F. C. C. Archives, Records of Dublin-Carlow turnpike road, TR4/4).
- <sup>63</sup> *Report of the commission appointed to inquire into the Dublin turnpike roads*, H. C. 1854-55 (01), xix
- <sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, p. 8.
- <sup>65</sup> *F. J.*, 25 April 1797.
- <sup>66</sup> *Report of the commission to inquire into the Dublin turnpike roads*, p. 9, H. C. 1854-55 (01), xix.
- <sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 9-10.
- <sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, p. 11.
- <sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, p. 13.
- <sup>70</sup> C. S. O. Official papers, 1832-82 (.Nat. Arch., O. P. M. A., p. 151, [Abstract of Larcom letters -Orig. letters unavailable]).
- <sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 152-3.
- <sup>72</sup> *Report of the commission to inquire into the Dublin turnpike roads*, p. 32, H. C. 1854-55 (01), xix
- <sup>73</sup> Abolition commissioner's certificate (F. C. C. Archives, Records of Dublin-Dunleer turnpike road, TRI/31).
- <sup>74</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>75</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>76</sup> *Report of the commissioner to inquire into the turnpike trusts, Ireland*, H. C. 1856 (2110), xix.
- <sup>77</sup> *ibid.*, p. v.
- <sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, p. xii.
- <sup>79</sup> Mark Searle, *Turnpikes and toll bars* (London, 1930), ii, p. 734.
- <sup>80</sup> P. J. Meghen, 'Turnpike roads in county Limerick' in *Old Limerick Jn.*, xx, winter 1986, pp. 21-25.



## CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

### 7.1 General

It has been seen in the last six Chapters how the poor condition of the transport system in the early years of the eighteenth century first created the need for turnpike roads and canals and river navigations and later in the nineteenth century the need for railways. There is little doubt but that the writers and pamphleteers of the early 1700s understood the vital need for cheap and efficient transport in order to create economic well-being and that they understood this more fully than some of their later compatriots. Ireland had to export to survive, let alone thrive and the only way to sell goods was to have cheaper goods than competitors. In view of the prevailing circumstances in the country at that time, the concept of turnpike roads seemed to be the answer to the government's problem of lack of finance. However, it seems that little thought was given to the fact that:

The specious fallacy of "those who use a road ought to pay for it" has never stood the test of inquiry. The correlative proposition that those who do not use a road ought not to pay for it, being contrary to the present practice, and to our fixed notions of maintaining highways for common benefit.<sup>1</sup>:

The thinking behind the original turnpike roads was that the consumers would pay for the tolls. The thinking also was that control of roads was a local matter and it was presumably thought that the local landowners would do an adequate job consistent with national requirements. These concepts bring to mind the observations of one engineer who had experience of dealing with Irish roads of all kinds. This engineer was Sir John F. Burgoyne R. E. who had headed the Board of Works in Ireland and was subsequently promoted to the rank of Field Marshal. He observed in 1868:

In Ireland, for instance, where the roads are maintained by county assessment, the amount of funds granted has chiefly reference to the weight of the tax, and not to the necessity of the case, or the indirect advantages to the community from good roads. The first principle to be established should be the most beneficial and economical system for the country generally, and afterwards to regulate the just apportionment and the manner by which the necessary funds are to be raised. It is not the object of this paper to go into the question of how that is to be done -- but it may be stated *en passant* that the turnpike system, on the fallacious reason of those who use the road paying for it, is considered to be by no means judicious or equitable.<sup>2</sup>



However the planning of the legislation left a lot to be desired. It should have been obvious even to the politicians that toll charges could not pay for major realignment or reconstruction works to the roads, which works are capital by their nature, as well as running repairs or maintenance, which need to be financed out of revenue. It is obvious from a study of the progress of the roads that this distinction between the two different kinds of financial requirements was not even understood. The failure of the turnpike system to break even in a financial sense or indeed to show a surplus for the investors or debenture-holders is often blamed on the fact that the traffic was insufficient, but this can be fallacious. In the case of several English turnpikes the traffic was exceedingly heavy but many of those trusts were in serious financial difficulties. It is often forgotten that heavy traffic results in costly wear and tear on the roads and for the road to continue to function, such wear and tear must be made good. As far as the Irish turnpike roads were concerned, the original roads before the turnpike trusts were established were, as was seen, in extremely poor condition. This forced the new turnpike trusts to borrow very large sums to put these roads in a suitable condition for traffic. For most trusts, it was fortunate that the traffic was indeed light **because if it had been heavy, road maintenance would have been much more expensive.** The best Irish example of the effect of a large volume of traffic on the finances of a turnpike road is the case of the Dublin-Kilcullen road prior to its privatisation in 1798, when the corn traffic caused a large increase in the traffic flow which resulted in so much wear and tear that frequent and costly repairs were needed. The changing relationship between toll receipts and road maintenance expenditure and other costs emphasises the need for good management, which is a *sine qua non* of any successful turnpike operation. Good management would also have curbed and in many cases prevented the loss of funds, which resulted from fraud and embezzlement.

The inquiry reported on by Dr. Cooper in 1758, showed clearly what was happening to the whole turnpike system and it was very unfortunate for Ireland that this report was shelved. Dr. Cooper stopped short in this report and should have recommended that the capital debt be paid by the government. It was not as if there was no money to pay off this debt as the government had the surplus cash. Dr. Stone, the Primate and a main figure in the Dublin administration, in his letter to Lord Sackville recommended this course but instead, the money was spent unwisely on a variety of small works, where much of it went to 'the aggrandisement of private individuals or Members of Parliament and their friends.'<sup>3</sup> One can only speculate on what would have happened had the turnpike trusts been freed of their **crippling debts and been left free to use the toll receipts to maintain the roads.** What a different picture would have emerged.! The progress of the turnpikes would have avoided much of the increased charges and the subdivision of the trusts. Of course other changes would also have helped such as: central control of expenditure with powers to allocate funds where needed; audit of accounts with vastly increased penalties for fraud and embezzlement; co-ordination of works at boundaries between trusts; amalgamation of trusts instead of subdivision and above all the setting of national standards of width, alignment and surface condition. Some laid the blame for the failure of the turnpike system on those chosen to



operate the trusts as for example the French consul Charles Etienne Coquebert de Montbret, who noted in 1790 that in Ireland 'the turnpikes are profitless, confided as they are to trustees who give prizes of £50 for horse races.'<sup>4</sup> There is much to be said for this point of view when the actions of the same general class showed how irresponsibly they could behave as members of grand juries. It must of course be added that not all grand jurors or turnpike trustees were either irresponsible or corrupt, but this widespread inclination tended to compel the more responsible members to virtually take over the running of the trusts. It is seen in many cases that certain individuals, as for example, John Foster on the Dublin-Dunleer road and even families, such as the Manders on the Knocksedan road, took almost complete charge of some roads. Perhaps one of the principal reasons for the failure of many of the trusts was the fact that the meetings were held in camera and the general public or even non-trustee debenture holders were not allowed access. This air of secrecy does not help any society or organisation and it certainly did not build confidence among the toll-paying public of the turnpike roads. Most of the trusts did not even comply with the legal requirements to send their yearly accounts to the appropriate local Clerks of the Peace.

## **7.2 Benefits of the turnpike system**

The great benefit of the Irish turnpike system was that it showed the legislators and grand jurors and those who elected and selected them what could and should be done with roads. Between 1729 and 1740 there was not one unfavourable comment on the condition of the completed turnpikes. This is because the money was being spent on both major and minor realignments and improvements in the running surfaces. It seems most probable that it was the turnpike roads which provided the inspiration for the 1739 act for the creation of new roads from 'market town to market town' and for the 1765 act that helped the progress of the non-turnpike roads, which Arthur Young praised so eloquently. The proposition that the turnpike roads were the inspiration for the improvement of the non-turnpike roads was aptly set out by George Semple, the most capable Irish civil engineer of the eighteenth century, in 1780:

The landed interest did not begin to rise till we began to make turnpike roads; and whilst we continue to improve the one, we shall raise the interest of the other.<sup>5</sup>

A glance at Figure 7 shows that the turnpike roads developed and spread at a faster rate in the first thirty-year period than even the railways did in the mid-years of the nineteenth century. Without the turnpike system providing the back-bone of the trunk transport system, the country could never have developed as it did. The corn was carried to Dublin on the turnpike roads during the bounty period and these roads provided the basic infrastructure for the introduction of the mail-coach road system.



### 7.3 *Deficiencies in turnpike system*

The greatest defect in the system was the lack of uniformity in the roads. Despite Arthur Young's criticism, the roads were not even uniformly bad as he implied. Variability is far worse than a general poor condition in a transport system as it renders planning all but impossible. Suppliers of goods can give their customers dates and times allowing for the poor road conditions but with a variable system it is almost impossible to give delivery times or dates. Roads can vary in two principal ways. The first is that major elements on it such as bridges and retaining walls may collapse due to flooding or snow; stretches may be impassable due to rivers bursting their banks or again that steep hills may be covered with ice. The second type of variability can be in the type of materials used to surface the carriageway and the degree of maintenance given to the roads and indeed to the skill or interest of those responsible for the maintenance. Each turnpike trust managed its own length of road as if no other trust existed. Thus on the route between Dublin and Belfast there were four separate trusts, each only intent on its own affairs. Each of these four trusts had different toll rates and consequently different standards of maintenance. In cases such as this standards tended to fall as the incentive to keep up standards was frustrating. Despite the national importance of some of the roads selected for conversion into turnpike roads, as for example through-routes intended to carry long-distance traffic, the county units seemed to take precedence in certain areas. An example of this was the Newcastle-Limerick-Cork turnpike road, where the money collected in each county had to be spent in that county irrespective of the need for such expenditure.

In the light of the defects in the British turnpike system as set out by Sir Henry Parnell in his '*Treatise on roads*' in 1833, how did the Irish turnpike system measure up in comparison? The first item mentioned by Parnell was the faulty horizontal and vertical alignment of the roads. While this may have been true in the early stages in Ireland, a good deal of improvement in alignments of the roads was carried out in the early development of the turnpike system, as is shown by the large sums spent in the first few years by practically all trusts. Parnell then bemoans the fact that the trusts did not, presumably in the early years of the nineteenth century, engage professional civil engineers to manage their works and so bring about much needed improvements. This was exactly similar in Ireland where only one turnpike trust, namely, the Dublin-Dunleer one, engaged William Dargan to carry out the design of a by-pass (See page 164). This same engineer was also employed for a short time on the Dublin-Carlow turnpike on maintenance and even on clerical duties. This is all the more surprising since an example of the potential savings possible by having the expertise of an engineer was given in 1819 and referred to in 1832 in the findings of the select committee on turnpike roads in Ireland (See page 208). Towards the last years, most turnpike trusts did engage grand jury engineers on a part-time basis. The difficulties of these engineers was illustrated by the words of one at the 1856 inquiry, when John Neville, the county surveyor of Louth and part-time surveyor to the Dunleer-Dundalk turnpike trust stated: 'It is a subject of great difficulty to get together the requisite number of five trustees to form a board.'<sup>6</sup> However by then it was too late and only a miracle could reverse the downward trend. Parnell quoted Adam Smith whom he said remarked nearly sixty years before



[before 1833]: 'The money levied is more than double of what is necessary for executing, in the completest manner, the work, which is often executed in a very slovenly manner, and sometimes not executed at all.'<sup>7</sup>

#### **7.4 Legislation**

Turnpike legislation and indeed almost all other legislation of the period was of the direct type as opposed to the 'delegated legislation' of today. In the case of delegated legislation, powers are delegated to persons such as Government ministers to make regulations under a provisions of an act and such regulations become in effect part of the act. The making of these regulations is very strictly controlled and they must be laid on the table of the parliament for a prescribed period to give the legislators time to lodge objections. The delegated parts of legislation are usually the small details, which would only clutter up the acts and waste parliamentary time. Examples of such delegated matters are, say in an act dealing with traffic regulation, items such as the details of types and power of lights required on vehicles, requirements of seat-belts and the reflectivity requirements of road warning signs. Delegated legislation gives a certain flexibility to enable necessary changes to be made quickly as for example when a safer and more reliable type of vehicle lighting becomes available the regulations can be changed to accommodate the new method, if the existing regulations prevent its use. In order to implement delegated legislated, it usually requires that the government must form part of the parliament. In the eighteenth century the executive government was in the hands of the Lord Lieutenant, and accordingly parliament kept all legislative powers in their own hands. New acts had to be passed for every change required no matter how small the required change was. This led to introducing changes required in one road to be inserted into an act dealing with another road and thus creating confusion.

#### **7.5 Final overview of turnpike system**

The turnpike road system in Ireland was introduced in 1729 with the best of intentions but with little forethought or adequate planning. It was operated by amateurs with no knowledge of the professional engineering skill and expertise required to run such a delicately balanced operation and individual trusts were allowed to and acted completely independently in the blind belief that they could do no wrong. The situation was no different to that in Wales, about which A. H. Dodd wrote:

Turnpike trusts were usually established for a period of twenty one years, during which time the trustees were expected to make the existing roads fit for traffic and to provide new ones when necessary. But the trusts had a way of being an unconscionable while a-dying. From time to time they were given a fresh lease of life under a new Act - sometimes in order to enable the trustees to complete a task held up for lack of resources; .....<sup>8</sup>:



The Irish turnpike trusts were truly unconscionable while a-dying. Despite these faults, the roads served the country well until other roads and other means of transport superseded them. Speaking of the Irish Linen Board 1711 - 1828 and asking why, despite its suitability in many respects, it failed so badly in others, the author, H. D. Gribbon said:

The Irish Linen Board was created ahead of its time, before administrative machinery had been devised to carry out the sorts of duties with which it was charged. Constituted as it was, too great responsibilities had to be delegated to the permanent officials, without adequate supervision. Almost uniformly they failed - but that is another story. Given the inadequacy at administrative level it is remarkable, not so much that the Board worked badly, but that it worked at all.<sup>9</sup>

This quotation can be aptly applied to the place in history of the Irish turnpike system.

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<sup>1</sup> *Report of the commissioner to inquire into the turnpike trusts, Ireland*, p. xxvii, H. C. 1856 (2110), xix.

<sup>2</sup> John F. Burgoyne, 'Remarks on the maintenance of macadamised roads' in *Road making*, No. 6 in Weal's rudimentary series (London, 1868), p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> O'Brien, *Economic hist. Ire. 18th cent.*, p. 323.

<sup>4</sup> Sile Ni Chinneide, An 18th century French traveller in Kildare in *Kildare Arch. Soc. Jn.*, xv. 4 (1974-75), p. 377.

<sup>5</sup> Semple, *Hibernia's free trade*, p. 168.

<sup>6</sup> *Report of the commissioner to inquire into the turnpike trusts, Ireland*, p. xix, H. C. 1856 (2110), xix.

<sup>7</sup> Parnell, *Treatise on roads*, pp. 291-2.

<sup>8</sup> A. H. Dodd, *The industrial revolution in North Wales* (Cardiff, 2nd. ed. 1951), p. 93.

<sup>9</sup> H. D. Gribbon, *The Irish linen board, 1711-1828* in *Comparative aspects of Scottish and Irish economic and social history, 1600-1900*, L. M. Cullen & T. C. Smout (eds.) (Edinburgh, 1977), pp. 85-86.



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2 Dublin-Navan turnpike rd. treas. acc. bk.	1738 - 1743	Ms. 25,449
3 Navan-Kells turnpike rd. min. book & misc.	1734 - 1758	Ms. 25,450
4 Navan-Nobber turnpike rd. minute book	1734 - 1736	Ms. 25,451

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1 Dublin - Dunleer turnpike road	Date	File number
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2 Dublin - Malahide turnpike road	Date	File number
(1) Chairman's minute book	1826 - 1832	TR2 /1/1
(2) " "	1833 - 1839	TR2 /1/3
(3) " "	1840 - 1847	TR2 /1/5
3 Dublin-Mullingar turnpike road	Date	File number
Rough minute book	1792 - 1833	TR3 /1/1
Commissioners minute book	1833 - 1847	TR3 /1/2
4 Dublin-Carlow turnpike road	Date	File number
(1) Minute book	1829 - 1855	TR4 /1
(2) Correspondence	1854	TR4 /4
(3) Toll returns	1855 - 6	TR4 /10
5 Dublin-Knocksedan turnpike road	Date	File number
(1) Commissioners and Directors minute book	1798 - 1849	TR5 /1/1
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