Introduction

Every Thursday morning, from February to October 2007, a group of local residents have attended a Peoples' History course in Greenisland Library. With the help of the Ulster Peoples’ College we have researched and written a social history of Greenisland.

We chose to tell this story for several reasons:

- within the group there is a mixture of Greenisland residents; those whose families have lived here for generations, others who moved here when the estate was built and those who are the first generation of their family to be born in Greenisland. It was important for all to learn about the history of the place where they have made their home.
- to explore the history and identity of Greenisland. This is particularly important because as a commuter town Greenisland has often struggled for its own identity.
- to provide a resource for the community. There is currently no written history of Greenisland and we feel it is important to share this story with current residents, newcomers to the area and future generations.
- to document the changes in the Greenisland community between the 1950s, 1960s and the early 1970s and to reflect on life in Greenisland in the 21st century.

We used a range of research skills to find out about the past – Griffith’s Valuation (a list of the rateable property in Ireland in the 1800s), old maps, interviewing individuals, group discussions, newspaper analysis, public records and photographs.

We have learned a great deal on this course and we hope that this book will be of interest to the community of Greenisland. We certainly enjoyed researching and writing it.

The Greenisland Local History Class
31st October 2007
Contents

Historical Overview of Greenisland  Page 2
This section provides a brief history of Greenisland. It starts when the area was merely a hinterland of Carrickfergus and finishes just after the war years when Greenisland was an established community.

Development of the Railway  Page 6
The building of Carrickfergus Junction in 1845 was the first of two main events that led to an increase in the population of Greenisland. This section looks at the development of the railway and its effects.

Development of Greenisland Estate  Page 9
The second event which contributed to an increased population was the building of Greenisland housing estate in 1956. This section looks at the development of the upper and lower estates based on personal recollections.

The Big Houses  Page 16
Bassets Directory of 1888 describes Greenisland as the location of many fine gentlemen's residences. This section describes some of these houses and their occupants.

The 1950s, 60s and early 70s  Page 22
This section describes what life was like in Greenisland during these times. Through personal recollections we look at life in Greenisland in relation to what was happening in Northern Ireland and the wider world.

Present-day Greenisland  Page 31
In this section we look at the Greenisland community in 2007.

Acknowledgements  Page 33

Postcard of Greenisland in the 1970s. Note that the Knockagh Monument, our most famous landmark, is obscured.
Historical Overview of Greenisland

Greenisland today is largely a dormitory suburb of Belfast and even its name is quite recent. Previously it was merely part of the hinterland of Carrickfergus and early maps record nothing of significance there except the escarpment of the Knockagh and the Silverstream river which marked the western boundary of the town.

In the years 1602 to 1606 the leading citizens of Carrickfergus, known as freemen, obtained from the Crown the right to re-distribute land in their own interest and the area west of the town stretching as far as the Silverstream was named the West Division. This remains the legal definition today.

Allocation of land was made in strips from the slopes of the Knockagh to the shores of Belfast Lough, perpetuated in the names Longpark and Longfield. Lanes were built for access to owners’ houses and ditches dug alongside for drainage. Many of these lanes remain (Herdman’s, Neill’s, Whinfield), the most obvious being the Station Road which was widened and surfaced in the 19th Century for traffic to the railway station. The small farms of 20 to 30 acres on these long strips and the few important residences such as Castlelugg (the remnants of this building of 1570 can be seen on the Shore Road) and Scoutbush (c1574 and demolished to make way for Carreras tobacco factory) looked to the town of Carrickfergus for defence, markets and fairs, entertainment and religious observance.

The rapid growth of Belfast at the end of the 18th Century and the emergence of wealthy merchants led to the appearance of bathing lodges for summer recreation along the lough (Ravenhill 1820,
Stonepoint 1860). This stretch became known as Greenisland, named after the mossy islet exposed at low tide. Bassett’s directory of 1888 notes that it was ‘devoted entirely to handsome residences occupied for the greater part by gentlemen engaged in commercial and professional pursuits in Belfast’.

In 1845 the Belfast to Ballymena railway line was constructed. The route was via a turntable at Greenisland because engines could not cope with the steep gradient on the direct route from Whiteabbey to Ballymena. This turning point was known as Carrickfergus Junction. In 1893 when a larger station was constructed the name was changed to Greenisland.

Improved transport and growing prosperity led to more modest semi-detached and terraced houses appearing convenient to the railway station and the increasing population required better facilities. In 1911 Presbyterians opened a hall for worship on the Upper Road and by 1934 a new congregation had been formed and a new church followed in 1941. Previously residents had driven in their carriages to Whiteabbey and Carrickfergus while others walked to the Ebenezer Hall (erected in 1860) on the Shore Road. The nearest school was in Trooperslane and some children had to trek two miles there and back every day. The school was replaced in 1938 by Greenisland Public Elementary, a school of the latest design and conveniently located just above the railway station. On the opening day the pupils assembled in Trooperslane and then walked to their new school carrying armfuls of books, jars of ink and other miscellanea.

A nine hole golf course had been laid on the slopes of the Knockagh in 1894 and the club graciously allowed ladies ‘to play on the links every weekday up to 4 o’clock with the exception of Saturdays and Match Days when the links will be reserved for gentleman players only’.

Public entertainment on Christmas day was provided by a group of hardy swimmers who had a ritual ‘dip’ in Belfast Lough accessed by the ‘Gut’. The ‘Gut’ is the local name for the access point to the shore and is located opposite Shorelands housing development. On Boxing Day the married men played the single men at football in a field on the Upper Road.
After the First World War the Ulster Unionist Party bought and erected a large wooden army hut on the Station Road and this became the venue for dances, whist drives, jumble sales and film shows (and the weekly distribution of orange juice and cod liver oil for babies in the Second World War.)

The Knockagh has already been noted as the most imposing physical feature on the north side of Belfast Lough and on its summit stands the obelisk commemorating those from Co Antrim who died in the Great War of 1914-1918. The figures 1939-1945 were added to the inscription after the great conflict of the Second World War. During this period Carrickfergus returned to being a garrison town and the uniforms of the Allies were a common sight as troop trains passed on the railway, farmland was used for army manoeuvres and private houses were requisitioned by the Government for military use or to accommodate evacuees from Belfast.

The principal of the new Greenisland school, Mr Barbour, was in the army reserve and was called up in the summer of 1939. A strange man in uniform appeared in the school on several occasions and pupils stood up respectfully to greet him; they were not clear who he was until his re-appearance in civvies in 1946. An air raid shelter was built in the playground and gas masks were stowed under desks alongside school bags. The name on the outside of the school was covered so that any German parachutists landing in Greenisland would not know where they were. Civilians formed a local Home Guard and Civil Defence Post and mock air raid practices became regular free entertainment in the evenings. Stirrup pumps were issued to put out fires and proved very useful for watering gardens during the summer.

Some levity was necessary as housewives struggled to stretch the rations and the grocer Mr Knight would send whispered messages to favoured customers when occasionally a small consignment of tinned fruit arrived (though the appropriate coupons still had to be produced). Wardens dutifully patrolled roads in pouring rain looking for windows without blackout curtains and everyone became accustomed to hand-me-down clothes. The appropriate long white dress worn by Doreen Luney at her Confirmation in the Church Of Ireland had started life as a cousin’s wedding gown and then became the confirmation dress for several other cousins. Every age group played its part as 1st Greenisland Girl Guide Company collected jam-pots from door to door for recycling and a group of middle-aged housewives met in a barn on the Station Road to paint camouflage nets.
Day to day life was dominated by the daily news bulletins on the BBC radio broadcast. An advance in the battlefield would be countered with a ship sunk and rumours followed of local men involved who were killed or missing. One bright spot was the award of the Distinguished Flying Medal to Dickie Field and a large crowd greeted the train bringing him home on leave. Firecrackers were put on the railway line and the children in school were allowed to climb on to their desks (unheard of previously) to watch the celebrations out of the window.

The reality of war came home during Easter 1941 when a real air raid siren sent women and children out into the fields to shelter under hedges while others huddled at home under the stairs. The Anti-Aircraft Battery in Neill’s Lane went into action and although it did not bring down any enemy planes it did crack some domestic windows. Christopher Wilson whose family home was close to the Battery remembers the only occasion when they resorted to their air raid shelter. The guns boomed one afternoon and a neighbour reported excitedly that a German plane had flown up the Lough towards Belfast. His mother grabbed him and fled for the shelter followed by all the neighbours in Hillsea Terrace. Mrs Wilson, a teetotaller had brought along her ‘only to be used for medicinal purposes’ bottle of brandy and dosed everyone including young Christopher. There were no more salvos so his mother peered cautiously round the blast wall at the entrance of the shelter to see if German paratroopers had landed in their gardens. All was quiet. Mrs Wilson declared the emergency over and they all went back home.

ARP (Air Raid Precautions) volunteers disappeared for several days to help with the horror of bombed Belfast. Refugees from Belfast got off the train at Greenisland with hastily packed cases looking for people who would take them in. Local eyebrows were raised at the strange behaviour of these ‘townies’ who spoke loud and fast and expected buses to run up and down the Station Road.

Shortly after the war, Victor Cooke, an industrialist living on the Shore Road and head of the local ARP, set up public meetings to consider what form a local War Memorial should take. Money was available from the King George VI War Memorial Fund and after several public meetings, two large fields on the Top Road were bought and the Greenisland War Memorial Community Centre was officially launched. Cricket, football and hockey clubs started and in their spare time members constructed a pavilion with cement blocks. Swings, a slide and a children’s sandpit were added in a field on the other side of the road. A purpose built brick pavilion with full facilities eventually followed and was officially opened by Lady Brookeborough, wife of the PM, in 1956, and has progressively been improved and enlarged ever since.
Development of the Railway

On 16 November 1845 the Belfast & Ballymena Railway (B&BR) started building the 33¼ miles of track between Belfast and Ballymena via Greenisland. Advertisements were placed in the newspapers on 8 April 1848 to inform the public that the B&BR would be open for passenger traffic on 12 April. Due to a delay in starting operations, it was decided not to have an official opening ceremony; however, two special trains ran on 11 April to give members of the press and potential customers a foretaste of rail travel. The normal train service was five trains each way per day. The railway line was later extended to Londonderry via Coleraine and a branch line to Carrickfergus was opened later in 1848 and extended to Larne in 1862.

Carrickfergus Junction, as Greenisland was then known, was important because its turntable was used to turn the trains coming from Londonderry and Coleraine to join the line to Belfast. This was undesirable but a direct line would have had to cross Valentine’s Glen near Whiteabbey and manage the steep incline to Mossley. It was only in 1934, as part of a government unemployment scheme, that the engineering difficulties were overcome and a new “loop line” over the Greenisland Viaduct at Bleach Green was opened. Although the distance covered by the Loop Line was only two miles less than by the old route, eliminating the reversal at Greenisland saved as much as fifteen minutes per journey.

The opening of the railway encouraged people to move out of Belfast and the building of houses in Greenisland increased. In 1860 the Railway Company offered inducements to commuters by providing owners of newly-built houses within one mile of any of the stations between Belfast and Carrickfergus with free travel to Belfast for ten years. The class of ticket (1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd}) depended on the Poor Law Valuation of their house. Houses began to spring up in the vicinity of the railway station and soon the main centre of the population shifted from the shore. In 1893, after a bigger station was constructed, the name ‘Greenisland’ was adopted. Transport was provided for passengers from their home to the nearest station by horse drawn buses. These buses travelled along the Shore Road transporting passengers to either Whiteabbey or Greenisland stations. The old stable at Station Square is now the hairdressers and this also marks the site of the original level crossing.

During the air raids of April and May 1941, York Road Station in Belfast was severely damaged. Offices and accommodation were almost completely gutted and the stores at Greenisland Station were taken over as offices for the Belfast staff.

One local resident has fond memories of helping herd livestock transported by train.
“Cattle were imported from Glasgow to Belfast by McClelland’s Auctioneers, Ballyclare. Several hundred cattle were brought to Greenisland by train. The cattle were released from the wagons and herded up the Upper Station Road to their destinations. Locals including children would help by standing in gateways to prevent the cattle straying into gardens. It was as though the Ulster version of Rawhide was taking place and everyone became a ‘Rowdy Yates’ for that moment.”

Local children had a treat when they were able to visit the famous horse Trigger. Roy Rogers and his wife Dale Evans had flown to Northern Ireland to promote Sunday Schools, Trigger had travelled by ship and train. He was kept overnight in his horse box at Greenisland so that he wouldn’t be disturbed by the noise in Belfast.

At this time the railway station was open from early morning until late at night and staff worked shifts. Staff included a station master, 2 booking clerks, head porter, foreman, 2 porters and 3 signal men. The porters had to clean and oil lamps in the lamp room and in the evening they carried lighted lamps out to the signals. A water tank was used to fill up the engines and the water for the tank came from a small dam behind Mullaghmore Park. Greenisland got an award for the best kept station in Northern Ireland for 4 consecutive years in the mid to late 1950s.

“Platform 1 housed the station house, garden and stores, Platform 2 housed the booking office, station master’s office, gent’s toilet, ladies’ waiting room and toilet. During the cold weather there was always a lovely big fire in the waiting room.”

In the mid 1950s a ramp replaced the steps on Platform 2 to facilitate mothers with prams.

A local resident remembers the generosity of business man Mr Murray of Murray’s Bookmakers who lived in School Lane.

“He cut quite a figure in his long gabardine raincoat, Churchillian hat and wearing those
very dark horn rimmed glasses. Every Friday night without fail, as he emerged from the train and came up the ramp towards School Lane, he would throw a handful of sixpenny pieces to the assembled group which created what resembled a rugby scrum. You had to be quick to capture the rewards.”

The station house and stores had already been demolished when the station was burnt down in 1986. The current station was rebuilt to a smaller specification with an office and waiting room on Platform 1 and a sheltered area on Platform 2. The station is now single manned at peak times only.

Parking at Greenisland Station is limited to a few spaces in Station Square. This lack of parking for those who wish to commute to Belfast by train combined with the congestion around Greenisland Primary School at drop-off and pick-up times has led to the proposal of a significant ‘Park & Ride’ facility with turning circle to be located just above the station.

Parcel deliveries at Whiteabbey Station (mid 1940s – mid 1950s)
Development of Greenisland Estate

The biggest change to Greenisland came in the mid-1950s when the ‘Upper Estate’ was built, partly to house workers for Courtaulds factory which was being extended, and partly to rehouse people from Belfast which was overcrowded and had a lot of substandard housing. The Northern Ireland Housing Trust was set up in 1945. Financed by the government, its main function was to provide housing accommodation for workers in co-operation with local authorities. The Trust initially planned for 900 new homes to be completed in Greenisland by 1957 -1958.

“The first Housing Estate in Greenisland was built in the mid 1950s by James Logan & Sons, Ballyclare with the second phase being built by Laing & Company from Newcastle, England.

I had the dubious distinction of being the concrete-mixer driver for the second phase of the estate and was there for the complete development. In those days there was little mechanical assistance and all the foundations were dug by hand and foot by Tommy Major and his two associates. To all they were known as the ‘founds squad’.”

Although jobs were plentiful in the Carrickfergus area houses were difficult to find and housing lists were long.

“I was married in 1954 and we had our name on the housing list for 3 years. We had been with my mother and then with my sister before we got a place of our own. When our son was born we had to move because we couldn’t have a baby in the house. I didn’t care where I went as long as I got a house. We were interviewed by Mrs Brown and offered a flat in Greenisland. This offer was changed to a house when she heard that we were paying the same rent for rooms as we would for a new house and we had some furniture.”

“You had to have your name on a waiting list for a house so we lived with my parents. Our baby was about 3 months old when we finally got a flat in the estate (1957). We were on the waiting list a couple of years. When I was expecting my second child I was moved from a flat to a house, also in the estate.”

“We came in 1960. My husband had relatives in the Housing Trust so we got the house.”
Most people who moved into the estate loved Greenisland.

“When I came down to Greenisland (1960) to Knocksallagh Park I couldn’t get over it. Four bedrooms, a sitting room, a living room, electric and a bath. For a week I was up and down the stairs and out and in the garden thinking — ‘is this my house?’ The house still looked empty, the bits and pieces I had brought with me would hardly have filled one room.”

“It was great, there were tiled floors. The lady that was there before me had the bathroom done — black wallpaper with fishes swimming - and on the fireplace wall in the living room was black wallpaper with fishes swimming because she must have had some left over. It was there for a quare while because I couldn’t afford anything else. My house was beautiful and I loved it from the day and hour I went into it.”

Some however, especially those from Belfast, thought it was too quiet.

“This was 1967 and we had been looking for a house from 1965. Greenisland came up and we hadn’t a clue where it was — I said it doesn’t matter — we are taking it. We were offered one in Carrick at the same time and we took the cheapest rent, which was Greenisland. When I came down here I hated the place — I thought it was the back of beyond. I said, ‘this is godforsaken country out here’.”

“Our neighbour had lived in a two up two down — she had a husband, six children and one on the way. They rehoused her to Greenisland but she never liked it — she found the open spaces were too open!”

Not all the “old Greenisland” residents were pleased at the building of the estate and the influx of outsiders.

“They didn’t like the estate when it got started — they said things like —don’t let the riff raff in.”

“There was quite a bit of snobbery in Greenisland [in 50s and 60s]. There were the Top Road and Shore Road people — people who had businesses - , the Station Road people and the Estate people when they came.”

Photographs taken from Glenkeen Avenue showing the development of Rossmore Green
In 1963 ICI (Imperial Chemical Industries) opened in Carrickfergus and Carreras, part of Rothmans, set up a pilot manufacturing plant in 1965. Soon after Carreras opened, the building of the ‘Lower Estate’ began with enough space left between the two estates for a motorway through to Carrickfergus.

“My dad suggested we go to see the estate. He parked the car in Moyard Gardens which was still very much like a building site. A woman, who was cleaning out each house after the builders finished told us to pick any house to look through, we did and it seemed so bright and roomy compared to our wee kitchen house.

Rothmans arranged and paid for removal vans for everyone and gave their workers time off work so they could get their families settled in.

When we arrived we discovered the house we had been allocated was the same house we had chosen to view, so with our new home and great neighbours we loved Greenisland right away – and still do.”

Although now widely considered a Protestant estate many of the original estate families who came to work in the factories were Catholics.

“Housing Executive housing was the first housing really to be totally mixed – nobody asked what you were.”

“My husband came home one day and asked if I would like to live in Greenisland as new houses were being built to accommodate Carreras, Courtaulds and ICI workers. We talked it over and decided it would be a great opportunity to have our children grow up in a mixed community.”

“Community relations were good and we all supported dances and films in the Unionist Hall.”

“There was never any trouble here until the actual ‘Troubles’. Greenisland estate was well mixed.”

In the 50s and 60s rent was paid weekly to a collector who called at your door. Collectors were strict and used rent collection as an opportunity to inspect your property – inside and out.

“Rent in the 60s in Greenisland was 35 shillings a week. Miss McGuinness came round with a leather money bag. She came round on Tuesday. On Monday night you couldn’t have heard your ears for people
cutting the grass. If she came round to lift your rent and the grass was long she sent a boy to cut your grass and added the cost onto your rent.”

“Mrs Brown [supervisor] came round on a Tuesday for the rent – I was terrified of her – I thought she could have put you out on the street there and then.”

Shops
In the early fifties, before the estate was built, Greenisland was a very quiet semi-rural area. Greenisland Primary School (then Greenisland Public Elementary School) had been opened in 1938 and there was the Presbyterian Church on the Upper Road and the Ebenezer Church on the Shore Road. Although there was Weir’s grocery store on the Shore Road, on the site of the current Russell’s Cellars, and Mr Watson’s Knockagh Cash Store on the Upper Road, which is now a computer shop, Greenisland life centred around the railway station.

Mr. Clarke’s confectionery shop, formerly Mrs Boylan’s was painted bright red and usually referred to as the ‘wee red shop’. Adjoining Mr. Clarke’s was Sam McGookin’s, a real old style cobbler and beside him was a very old and large wooden building which housed McKirgan’s garage from where he traded petrol, coalbrick and paraffin. McKirgan’s was to be taken over by Billy Cooke who introduced car maintenance and repairs. Just above the Station was Mr Crymble’s Post Office, and Boyd’s Shop on the corner of Mullaghmore Park, now The Green Island.

“Old wooden ‘Drill’ rifles hung in the rafters of the garage; they had no metal or moving parts and were used for ‘drill’ purposes. I presumed they were a throwback to the WW2 days.”

Up the steps were old stables which were converted into a chemist shop by Mr Moore. It now houses a hair dressing salon.

“Across the road from the garage was The James Stores grocery shop. Mr Knight ran a very old style shop with
peas, lentils and biscuits in shelved boxes. He weighed the amount out then placed it in thick brown paper bags. Not a plastic bag to be seen. As a reminder to his customers Mr. Knight had nailed to the counter a forged florin [10p] made of lead. At some time it had been spent in his shop and by nailing it to the counter it served as a reminder to him and customers that he would not be taken in again by a forgery.”

Sam Knight’s shop was to be taken over by Mr. Jim Hainon and then Arnold Weir (Snr) who already owned the shop on the Shore Road and later owned an additional shop in the estate. His business was supplemented by two mobile shops which toured the Greenisland area.

As more people moved into the estate more amenities were provided.

“I found that most things were available as the basic shops were already here. Later the Housing Trust built several shops on the estate, which filled any gaps. We also had mobile shops; a fishmonger twice weekly, Weir’s grocery van daily, vegetable van, Jack the butcher who came alternate days, bread vans – Inglis, Ormeau and Kennedy - lemonade, library, fish and chip, and laundry vans and not forgetting Danny the coal man.”

“Travel was still by train though now that the big factories were paying better wages people were getting more affluent and cars were becoming more common. Eventually Ulsterbus provided a bus service from the estate to Belfast, Carrickfergus and Whitehead, which not only took the workers to their jobs but also pupils in secondary education to school.”

In 1968 a community centre, doctor’s surgery and library were opened in Glassillan Grove. This area, near to the shops soon became the new hub of Greenisland especially when the Post Office moved there.
Schools
Greenisland Primary School opened on 24 June 1938 with Mr Barbour as principal and the number of pupils rose steadily. On 15 August 1953 the Director of Education, Mr MacCormac was invited to attend a Management Committee meeting about the urgent need to expand the school. He was informed about the Housing Trust’s plans to build 900 new houses by 1958. The Director intimated he had no knowledge of this house building programme but said he would seek confirmation from the Housing Trust, and if necessary submit extension plans to the Ministry of Education as a special case. The building of this first extension of 4 classrooms, assembly hall and meals kitchen commenced in 1955. This coincided with the enrolment of the first new pupils from the estate.

The numbers on the roll continued to grow as more and more people moved into Greenisland. There was a further addition of 6 permanent classrooms and 6 portable classrooms and by January 1969 the roll had peaked at over 700.

In April 1969 Silverstream Primary School opened in Moyard Gardens in the ‘Lower Estate’. The vice-principal of Greenisland Primary Mr Young was appointed principal of the new school and teacher Miss J Magill became vice-principal. Approximately 250 pupils transferred from Greenisland Primary.

On the 23 August 1961 St Colman’s Catholic school was opened. The principal was Mr Owen Mulvenna and the school initially had a staff of three teachers and in 1969 was enlarged with five additional classrooms. By 1972 the school numbers had reached 329 with 12 teachers.
In 1981 Courtaulds and ICI closed with the loss of 4000 jobs and in 1986 Carreras factory closed with the loss of 850 jobs. The job losses and intimidation during the ‘Troubles’ led to a decline in the number of Catholic families in the estate. St. Colman's School was reduced to one teacher, Mrs Welden, but continued to educate children until 1992, when it finally closed. The site of the school is now the Old School Surgery.

Churches

“One of the first things people did when they came to Greenisland was find a church”.

The interdenominational Ebenezer Hall and Presbyterian Church existed before the estate was built. In 1951 The Church of Ireland purchased a site with adequate space for a church and parochial hall. Within a few weeks of the purchase, the Housing Trust acquired the adjoining land for the ‘Upper Estate’. The Church of the Holy Name was consecrated on 4 September 1954 and a parochial hall dedicated on 7 September 1957. The Methodist Church was opened and dedicated on 6 December 1958.

St. Colman's Church was officially opened in October 1969. The previous year nuns had moved to the parish. The Sisters belonged to a French order called ‘The Daughters of Jesus’ and lived in Rathmore House. They visited homes and hospitals and had a close and active role with Beacon House for over 16 years. They gave strength and support to their Parish in their own quiet and humble way, they also provided rented accommodation to students from the Ulster Polytechnic. Sister Rose was well known as she went about ‘doing’ the gardens of pensioners in the estate as well as looking after the Convent Gardens.

One Sunday night in December 1996 St Colman’s Church was burnt and needed complete refurbishment. There was sympathy and encouragement given by the ministers and congregations from the other local churches. St Colman’s built a beautiful new church which opened on 23 November 1997.

The 5 Clergymen of Greenisland (Church of Ireland, Methodist, Church of the Nazarene, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic) had a music group led by Father Brian Mullan on guitar. They visited hospitals and entertained patients.

Housing for the Elderly

Knockagh Court, part of the James Butcher Housing Association, was opened on 24 March 1986 by Mrs Joan Tomlin. Initially no-one in Greenisland was familiar with this Association but through her dedication and hard work, Joan played a significant role in getting Knockagh Court built. Abbeyfield House was opened on 24 May 1990 by RT Hon Peter Bottomley MP.
The Big Houses

According to the Griffith’s Valuation of 1861, the strip of land to the western side of the Station Road was owned by the Marquis of Donegall. During the 1840s and 1850s substantial residences were built on this land. These houses were Faunoran, Gortalee, Rathmore and Seaview. Of these houses only Rathmore still exists, the others having been demolished for subsequent housing development. Other large houses in the area are Rosemount and Longfield.

Faunoran
The entrance to Faunoran was from Station Road and corresponds to the current Glassillan Grove entrance into Greenisland Estate. The gatehouse was situated at the entrance and the driveway curved to the front of the house (located where the library now stands). The front of the house faced Station Road and could be seen from the road.

“We had often heard that after a prolonged spell of dry weather the outline of the driveway was clearly visible in the field in front of the library. It was only one Tuesday evening in the summer of 2006, when the staff were locking up that the outline of the driveway curving across the field was visible. It was startlingly obvious and it seemed impossible that it had not been possible to locate the position of the driveway during our normal weather conditions. The next day it rained and the outline disappeared.”

“Faunoran was a very large grand house. It had a big front door and pillars with many outbuildings and the obligatory tennis courts, orchard and vegetable gardens. It was painted a bluish grey colour similar to that used by the Royal Navy.”
The Allens

Faunoran was built by William John Campbell (WJC) Allen in 1854. WJC Allen was educated at the Royal Belfast Academical Institution (Inst) and went on to practise law in Dublin. However, he had little success and moved into business. He married Isabella Marshall in 1838 and they had three children, two daughters, Isabella and Jane, and a son, Andrew James who was Senior Wrangler at Cambridge in 1879 and became a Church of England clergyman. They moved into Faunoran in 1854 and remained there for the rest of their lives. The neighbouring houses of Rathmore and Gortalee were sub-let to Isabella’s parents and brother.

WJC Allen had close connections with the United States and visited it in 1831 and again in 1838 on honeymoon with his wife. These American links were useful during the famine years as WJC arranged for the shipment of corn to Ireland for free distribution. His business career was divided between the Ulster Railway Company and the Ulster Bank.

In 1838 he was appointed secretary to the Joint Board of Managers and Visitors of the Royal Belfast Academical Institution. He held this position for 40 years and was so highly thought of that his portrait was painted on his retirement to be hung in the school. Inst still has this portrait though unfortunately it is now in a state of disrepair.

Isabella Allen was the daughter of Andrew Marshall M.D. and Isabella Drummond. Isabella had a host of friends and relatives worthy of Dictionary of National Biography entries. These include: her maternal uncle, William Hamilton Drummond (non-subscribing Presbyterian minister and poet); her governess, Frances Knowles, sister of James Sheridan Knowles (playwright); her sister Margaret who married John Scott Porter (non-subscribing Presbyterian minister and biblical scholar) and her sister, Rosa, who married the famous portrait painter Richard Rothwell.

During the famine years, Isabella was involved in the Belfast Ladies Association for the Relief of Irish Destitution and worked as treasurer to the Industrial Committee which helped finance and sell locally made linen and knitwear.

After his death in 1884 Faunoran passed to WJC Allen’s daughters.
The Wilsons
On 19 February 1900 John Wilson JP owner of Wilson & Son (Belfast) Ltd (linen manufacturer), Whitewell, Dyeing, Finishing and Laundry Works bought Faunoran. John was originally from Ballymena and lived in May Street, Belfast. He moved into Faunoran with his wife Sarah Gelston Wilson, two daughters Minnie (who became wife of solicitor John H. Peden) and Gladys Evelyn along with sons John, Bob, William, Andrew Caldwell and Fred.

John Wilson died on 13 May 1913 leaving the house, land and businesses to his sons William, Andrew and Fred. Sarah remained living in the house after her husband’s death. Andrew married the daughter of Sir Crawford McCullough (former Lord Mayor of Belfast) from Lismara, Whiteabbey and lived in Annaghmore on the Upper Road, Greenisland. Their daughter Maureen rode and kept horses at Faunoran. William lived in Gortalee.

In 1881 the Belfast Women’s Temperance Association decided to open a home for ‘destitute little girls’. In 1893 with the development of further homes the name Victoria Homes was adopted.

Shortly after the outbreak of the war in 1939 the children living in the Victoria Homes were evacuated from Belfast to Faunoran. The young girls in this home were mainly from broken homes or those who failed to attend school regularly. There were approximately 15-30 girls in this home aged from 6 to 16 year old, with 4 full-time staff.

The first matron in Greenisland was Miss Jones, who resigned in order to join the army. Unfortunately she was taken prisoner and was sent to the notorious Belsen Concentration Camp where she remained until the end of hostilities. Her successor was Miss Anderson with assistant Matron Anna Knox (now Mrs Johnston).

Whilst in Greenisland the girls attended Greenisland School and were accompanied there by Miss Knox. The local children referred to the girls as the ‘homers’ and they were easily identified by their distinctive blue uniforms. On Sunday mornings the girls were taken to their respective churches. The Church of Ireland members walked along the railway path to St Patrick's Church in Jordanstown and the Presbyterians to the church on Upper Road, Greenisland. The large drawing room was used as a dining hall and another large room was used for games. The girls from the home also had use of the tennis courts. Those girls who had parents were allowed a visit by them one Saturday a month.

Some of the local residents and the choir from Greenisland Presbyterian Church were allowed to use the tennis courts at Faunoran on a regular basis. During the war years Faunoran also hosted the Greenisland Horse Show. This was a major social event with competitors travelling from all over the country to compete for the substantial prize money. There were riding, jumping and novelty competitions.
One regular competitor was the young Patricia Curran. Daughter of Major Curran (a prominent Northern Ireland figure), she was brutally stabbed to death on the evening of 13 November 1952 in the wooded grounds of her family home, The Glen, in Whiteabbey. She was 19 years old.

At the end of the war the Victoria Homes Management Committee decided that the girls should return to Belfast and in 1947 suitable accommodation was found at Schomberg House in the Belmont area of Belfast.

The Wilsons did not return to live in Faunoran and at Christmas the house was used by the War Memorial Community Centre for their Annual Christmas Fair.

In 1951 part of the Faunoran land was purchased by the Church of Ireland with adequate space for a church, parochial hall and rectory. The new church was consecrated on 4 September 1954.

"In the early 1950s Faunoran was falling into disrepair and being built beside it was the Greensland Church of Ireland. The excavations for the church created large amounts of good topsoil and with permission from the contractor a friend and I acquired an old pram to convey the riddled soil for sale around the newly developing housing estate. At two shillings a pram load it was a very good bargain, considering the soil could be described as 'consecrated'."

Lieutenant Colonel Harold Marcus Ervine-Andrews (VC)

On 7 January 1952 the Wilsons sold Faunoran house and surrounding land to Lieutenant Colonel Harold Marcus Ervine-Andrews V.C. for £6,000. The conditions of the sale of Faunoran stipulated that the land could not be used for:

- the purpose of a factory or for the erection of industrial buildings, plant or machinery
- the purpose of any trade or business of a noisy, offensive or noxious character, including the sale of spirituous or intoxicating liquors
- the purpose of a church, chapel or religious institution.

Northern Ireland Housing Trust

Six months after its purchase, on 9 June 1952 Lieutenant Colonel Ervine-Andrews V.C. sold Faunoran and the surrounding land to the Northern Ireland Housing Trust for £7,500. Faunoran was demolished and the building of Greensland Estate began.

In 1968 a library, health centre and community centre were built on the former site of Faunoran house.
Gortalee

Gortalee was built in the 1840s or 1850s. The house had a Shore Road address and was accessed from a lane running from the Shore Road past neighbouring Rathmore. The first resident was Doctor Andrew Marshall a surgeon who leased the land from his son-in-law WJC Allen of Faunoran. Dr Andrew Marshall and his son William who lived in Rathmore owned William Marshall and Co druggists, apothecaries and wholesale perfumers at 67 and 100 High Street, Belfast. Andrew’s daughter Eliza took over the lease of Gortalee when her father died in 1863.

On 13 May 1913, John Wilson from neighbouring Faunoran house left Gortalee to his 3 sons William, Andrew and Fred. William lived in Gortalee until his death in 1945. Gortalee was sold to Wilfred Davis Lougher-Goodey, a Government Architect on 25 October 1951.

On 1 May 1954 Wilfred Davis Lougher-Goodey sold Gortalee and surrounding land to the Northern Ireland Housing Trust for £4,000.

The Northern Ireland Housing Trust rented out Gortalee. The last tenant was Anna Craig who lived there with her three daughters for about 10 years in the 1970s and 1980s.

Rathmore

The first resident was William Marshall who leased the land from his brother-in-law WJC Allen of Faunoran. We know that in 1888 it was occupied by Mrs Nicholl and was later owned by Charles Kinahan brother of Sir Robin Kinahan, Lord Mayor of Belfast.

“The Kinahans had a market garden and Mrs Kinahan also grew beautiful roses. She always entered them in competitions and won many prizes. Although one year, just before she was about to show them, they were all stolen.”

In the late 1960s Charles Kinahan sold Rathmore House. St Colman’s Church and Primary School were built on the land and nuns from the French order ‘The Daughters of Jesus’ moved into Rathmore.
The Old School Surgery now stands on the site of the primary school and Rathmore is in private ownership.

Seaview
Seaview is known locally as Bates’ House and is remembered very fondly by everyone who has grown up in Greenisland.

In 1861 the resident was John Bell and in the 1940s it was occupied by the Bates family. They were from a family of lawyers whose children were educated at Harrow. Mrs Bates was a horse woman and Doreen Corcoran remembers her father going to help Mrs Bates get the horses ready for the Dublin Horse Show.

“I remember seeing the East Antrim Hunt meet there. It was quite an experience for a townie.”

“Bates’ House was a large imposing house where Mrs. Bates would kindly give us apples on request.”

The families who worked on the land lived in houses to the rear of Seaview. They were the Mannings and the McGiverns. Mary Manning married Willie Johnstone from Longfield. Longfield, on the Station Road is also known as Johnstone’s farm and was built around 1810.

Rosemount
Rosemount is a large house on the Carrickfergus side of Greenisland on the Shore Road. Originally known as Rose Cottage, it was built around 1842. In 1926 a Mrs Connell lived there with her daughter Rhoda. William Martin, a local postman, lived in the gate lodge. The current owner bought the house from the Robinsons (who owned a large bacon curing business in Belfast) in the mid 1960s.
The 1950s, 60s and early 70s

The 1950s

The World Scene
The 1950s was the decade when the Korean War made the news, American Senator McCarthy began his anti-communist witch-hunts, Fidel Castro came to power in Cuba and the ongoing Cold War between East and West led to civil defence shelters being built.

The Northern Ireland Political Scene
Basil Brooke was the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland (NI) between 1943 and 1963. There was a devolved government in NI between 1921 and 1972.

Entertainment
Residents remembered the 1950s as a time of the Teddy Boy swagger; Elvis, sharp dressing, suede shoes and crinoline underskirts. Greenisland people danced in the Unionist Hall known locally as ‘the hut’.

“\textit{The Catholic Churches held dances on a Sunday night – Protestant Churches wouldn’t – but that was the only difference. Protestants attended these dances on a Sunday night and Catholics went to dances in the Unionist Hall.}”.

“\textit{Women had to wait until the men asked them to dance. Men walked a special way – with a swagger.}”

In Belfast there was glitz and glamour at the Plaza, the Orpheus, Fiesta, John Dossor’s, the Kingsway the Trocadero, the Grand Central, the Floral Hall, the Club Orchid and the Orpheus.

“The Plaza had a stage which revolved. Half way through the evening the whole stage turned and the next band appeared. It had a good strong dance floor. It was beautiful and so posh - you nearly sunk into the carpets.”

The Rinkha in Islandmagee was also popular.

“The Rinkha was a shop with a specially designed dance hall attached. They had a dance every Saturday night. Ronnie Boyd was the pianist. Frankie McBride and the Polka Dots played there. They came from Belfast and all over.”

Theatres such as the Opera House, Empire, Lyric, Arts Theatre, Hippodrome and the Group were popular nights out as were the concerts in the Ulster Hall, Wellington...
Hall and St Mary’s Hall. There was also the cinemas – the Ritz, Classic, Imperial, Royal Cinema, Royal Avenue, Kelvin, Duncairn, Capitol, Lyceum, Troxy and Lido.

Having a car was a very important status symbol for the men.

“If you had a car you would ‘accidentally’ lose your keys. They announced – ‘Did anybody lose a set of keys?’ That way all the girls knew you had a car.”

Girls found a car equally important.

“We were at a dance on the Antrim Road. At the end of the night one girl came back to us and said ‘Right, I’ve got a fella with a car, you all stand over there and when he comes out to get into his car you all appear.’”

“The fellas in Carrick were very territorial. We went to Carrick in a Austin 7 Tourer to pick up girls. The girls sat in the back to shout comments at the Carrick boys. My friend, the driver, put his foot down. We took off with a jerk and the car broke in half. The Carrick boys looked at us and went into hysterics. They got bailer wire and we tied the car together with that.”

In the early 1950s a UK-wide revival of amateur making began, especially of Traditional Jazz, inspired by popular radio performers like Humphrey Lyttleton, Chris Barber and Acker Bilk.

Greenisland and the Unionist Hall hosted the debut performances of a number of local groups, some of which went on to more than local fame. The groups included the Greenisland Jazzmen, seen here playing at a dance in the Unionist Hall in 1951. A group of Courtaulds workers, including two Greenisland musicians, formed The Courtelles.

The White Eagles including Braddells McLatchie from the Shore Road, went on to the greatest fame. Their dances in the Unionist Hall attracted audiences
from far and wide and their trombonist Rodney Foster went on to form a popular jazz band of his own. In the photo they are seen performing at a Garden Fete at Greenisland Hospital, and they had the distinction of being invited to take part in the International Jazz Festival at Montreux in Switzerland.

Later in the 1950s Skiffle Groups using home made instruments enjoyed a short boom, but Skiffle and Trad Jazz were suddenly rendered unfashionable and out-of-date with the arrival of The Beatles on the music scene.

The 1950s was a time when there was less information available about health and sex education.

“I lived out in the country then and a fella came and took me to the Classic. After, we went down Adelaide Street with all the big gateways. He put his arms round me and gave me a kiss. The sweat was lashing off me and I didn’t know how I was going to tell them at home. The reason was my Mother told me if I kissed a boy I would have a baby. I told my Aunt – she was the black sheep of the family and she explained the facts of life.”

This was not an unusual thing for mothers of the fifties to tell their daughters.

Work and employment

By 1952 the NI linen industry had collapsed with Belfast mills closing down. The development of new non-iron and drip-dry fabrics such as crimplene and terylene permanently reduced the demand for linen. In the shipyard 21,000 people had been employed full-time by Harland and Wolff during the boom period after the war. Competition from Japanese and German shipyards and the popularity of air travel meant a drastic reduction in their work and increasing redundancies. Unemployment in NI at this time was more than twice that of the rest of the UK and many migrated to England in search of work.

People came to Greenisland for work in the main local firms like Courtaulds. Greenisland residents also travelled into Belfast to work in Gallaghers, Mackies, Shorts and Harland and Wolff. The average wages in Northern Ireland in the 1950s were 75% of the wages paid in England.

“My husband’s wages were 7 pounds something a week. Out of that we paid 3 pounds 4 pence a fortnight for rent and his train fare every day, which didn’t leave much. We were lucky we had some furniture so we didn’t have to get any.”

“I got my first job at 15 and I earned 1 pound and 15 shillings after the stamp.”

There had been a high demand for women’s labour during WW2 and the NI government had provided free nursery places to encourage women to work. Post-war the government stopped funding these nursery places and many women had to leave work. Traditional and conservative attitudes to women reinforced this process. Many women resented these attitudes as they felt that during the war they had proved they were as capable of working as men. Later in the 1950s women re-emerged into the
work-place. Many Greenisland women worked in firms such as the Albion as it had shift work which fitted around school hours.

**Politics**

There was a devolved government and parliament in NI between 1921 and 1972 although key policy areas such as finance issues remained under the control of the Westminster Government. The Unionist Party controlled the NI Government between 1921 and 1972 and Catholic or nationalist concerns tended to be ignored. Moreover, the hierarchy of the Unionist Party during the 1950s was mainly drawn from the upper classes and rich landowners making them less sympathetic to the demands of the working classes of all religions.

In the Westminster Parliament there was a ‘Speakers Convention’ in relation to NI issues. This meant that MPs could not raise any issue relating to Northern Ireland. This led to frustration particularly amongst Northern Ireland Labour Party politicians and their supporters as they felt that the Stormont Government was not acting strongly enough to address unemployment and poverty. Many working class people felt powerless to change the situation. Despite the poor performance of politicians on working class issues people continued to give priority to the constitutional issue when they voted. Most Protestants voted Unionist.

> “Protestants felt many aspects of life in the South at the time were controlled by the Catholic Church – this made them afraid. They did not want the Catholic Church influencing the way they lived.”

> “You voted with your family, whatever your family voted you voted. Secret voting was a fallacy. Everyone in the street knew who you were voting for. Everyone in the family knew who you were voting for.”

In the 1950s in Greenisland Tommy Wilson was the local Unionist Councillor. Jack Magee, a local Catholic who owned land in the area stood as an Independent.

**Health**

The Introduction of the Welfare State meant dramatic improvements in the health and material well-being of the people of NI. Post-war there was a general desire for new policies to reduce poverty, to improve education for children and to make health-care freely available to everyone on the basis of need. Under the Welfare State unemployment benefits and a social security system replaced the Poor Law: compulsory contributions provided a range of benefits including unemployment, sickness, maternity and state pension. In July 1948 the NHS came into operation in Britain and in the same year an almost identical act passed through Stormont which provided free health care for all. As public health improved Greenisland Hospital on the Shore Road, which treated children with tuberculosis, became redundant. After some years as a Geriatric Hospital, Langley Hall housing development was built on its site.

In Greenisland in the 1950s there was one doctor on Station Road, Dr Spratt who held three surgeries each day in his house – morning, afternoon and evening. Before he came Greenisland people had to travel to Carrickfergus to see a doctor. Most of the women residents had their babies in the cottage hospital in Carrickfergus though
some women still had their babies at home in the 1950s. The practice of churching was still popular.

“My mother said after her babies were born she wasn’t allowed out until she was ‘churched’. Churching was believed to spiritually cleanse the women after childbirth. The day of the churching they had a service and they said a prayer over you.”

Education
An Education Act (1947) provided free schooling for children and was intended to provide quality education for everyone. Aspects of the system such as selection at 11 have been criticized but the widening of educational provision did allow for more children to attend secondary level and third level education. By the 1960s the full impact of the education act could be seen with more children attending higher level education. For most residents this was the first generation of their family to have the opportunity to be educated at these levels.

Family and Community
Taking care of families and the home was considered women’s work in the fifties and beyond.

Due to housing shortages, low wages and tradition adult children lived with parents even after they were married and became parents themselves. Before redevelopment in Belfast family members often lived in the same street. This meant that help was close at hand and people were not isolated. Parents retained considerable control even after children were grown up:

“The adults had more respect for their parents and they did things because that was the way their parents did them. Even grown ups were still doing what their parents told them. Maybe because families lived closer together there was still that family control over grown ups. You didn’t want to bring disgrace on the family.”

More widely throughout Northern Ireland society there was a respect for authority.

“In those days we were afraid of authority. The doctor had power, the school teacher had power, the policeman had power and we were subject to all of them and afraid of them.”
The 60s and early 70s

The World Scene
The beginning of the ‘swinging sixties’ was a time of hope. In the 1960s England won the World Cup (as we are still reminded), man landed on the moon, the first heart transplant was carried out in South Africa and Concorde took to the skies.

One of the prevailing worries of the 1960s was the Cold War and the threat of nuclear attack, Martin Luther King and black American Civil Rights came to the fore and everyone remembers where they were when John F Kennedy was shot.

The Northern Ireland Scene
The 1960s and 1970s saw major social, political and economic change across NI. The Civil Rights movement of the 1960s challenged inequality and their demands, which included a points system for the allocation of housing was overshadowed by the start of the ‘Troubles’. In 1972 following escalating violence and forced population movements, the British Government terminated governing from Stormont. The Ulster Workers Council Strike of 1974, which was called in protest against the Sunningdale Agreement, affected the whole country.

Entertainment

A big occasion for the local teenagers in Greenisland was the night Rory Gallagher played in the Scout Hall. A scout’s sister was going out with Rory at the time and this was how he came to ‘gig’ in Greenisland. Most of the dances took place in the Unionist Hall. Local teenagers went to the Methodist Youth Club or into Carrick to the Youth Club in St Nicholas’s.

Television became an important part of family life and the first colour television was produced.

“We had the first colour TV in our estate and it was amazing the number of people who just happened to stop outside our window in the evenings.”

Television meant that many of the cinemas attended in the fifties were closed down.

Work and Employment
In the 1960s there was a huge improvement in living standards but NI was still the most economically disadvantaged region of the UK. Household incomes in 1968/69 were 89% of the UK average and in 1970 the NI unemployment rate was 7% compared with a UK average of 2.7%. The worst affected areas suffered a rate of 18%. The O’Neill administration encouraged investment in NI and firms such as Courtaulds, ICI, Carreras and Standard Telephones created better employment opportunities with higher than average wages. The clubs attached to these firms became an important new source of recreation and entertainment.
Politicians and parties
The 1970s saw the development of many different political parties in Northern Ireland. These included the SDLP and the Alliance parties, founded in 1970 and the DUP, founded in 1971.

Health
The introduction of the NHS in 1948 meant that by the 1960s the extremely negative health trends amongst the NI population had been reversed: and by the 1960s the general NI mortality rates were the lowest in the UK. Families were smaller due to developments such as the contraceptive pill and increased demand for family planning services.

By the 1960s most women in Greenisland had their babies in hospital attended by their local doctor. A Baby Clinic was held in the Unionist Hall where Nurse Parker was in charge. In 1969 the Health Centre opened in the building now occupied by the Baptist Church.

Family and Community
In the late 1960s and early 1970s the formation of community organisations such as Greenisland Knockagh Youth Club, Greenisland Women Together and Greenisland Community Council encouraged a strong community spirit in Greenisland.
Greenisland Knockagh Youth Club

In 1970 Alma Melville started a non-denominational Youth Club in the old wooden hall of the Presbyterian Church. As the ‘Troubles’ worsened the Club became a refuge, many of its members overcoming political pressures and sometimes even physical obstacles like burning barricades, to attend.

To broaden the children’s horizons Alma organised exchanges with cross-Border and cross-community youth groups, and more ambitiously, from 1976 she instituted what, until her retirement, became a very long series of two-way exchanges with young people from Germany.

In 1992 the hall was condemned as a fire hazard and North-Eastern Education & Library Board announced that they would build a purpose-built Youth Centre. This opened in 1998 beside the Community Centre on the site of the old playground.

Greenisland Community Council

The Greenisland Community Council (GCC) was founded in 1972 in the early part of the Troubles. Their remit was to bring together all the organisations in Greenisland to co-ordinate activities in the area. Two representatives from each organisation attended the monthly general meetings, organised an annual summer festival and dance and encouraged youth groups to participate in events with other groups in the area. They established a lunch club for pensioners which is still active. Churches in Greenisland came together to hold open air services on the first Sunday of the festival fortnight. GCC acquired premises at 99 Station Road in 1972 and moved to the current premises, an army Nissen hut at 84 Station Road in 1978. Some 27 years later the hut has been renovated using The Small Pockets of Deprivation Fund from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.
**Women Together**

Women Together was launched in November 1970 when Catholic and Protestant women joined together to campaign for an end to violence. Monica Patterson was the first chairperson of the movement from 1970 to 1973. This role was then taken over by Sadie Patterson (no relation to Monica).

Margaret Taggart formed the Greenisland Branch of Women Together after some Greenisland women attended a Women Together meeting in Belfast. Over 100 women attended an initial meeting in Greenisland Methodist Church and 120 members signed up. Joan Tomlin was the first chairperson, Marie Gearing was secretary and Irene Carson was vice-chair. The Greenisland branch held local meetings and community events, attended Women Together marches, visited widows of people who had been killed in the Troubles; in 1972 they held a Festival in Greenisland which involved all the community; they brought the churches together and during the Ulster Workers Council Strike (1974) brought dinners to people who were housebound.

The Greenisland branch of Women Together also participated in all the Northern Ireland wide Women Together events:

“We did all the marches. On the Shankill march the Shankill was on its best behaviour and men outside the pubs with their pints were shaking hands and welcoming the nuns.”

The meetings were very important and helped the women cope with the stress and trauma of the Troubles:

“Women could come and talk about their worries and what was happening. They all said that because they could come and talk about what was happening it helped reduce their fear.”

Women Together Greenisland worked hard within the community since its formation in 1970. The organization was disbanded in 2007.

“We felt our job was done. Local community organizations stopped a lot of bad things happening during the Troubles – but that didn’t get into the newspapers. I think we got away with a lot because we were women.”
Present-day Greenisland

Greenisland has continued to change and expand throughout the years. Initially a collection of small townlands with strong connections to Carrickfergus it became a popular summer resort for gentlemen with the main concentration of houses and amenities on the Shore Road. With the advent of the railway and the beginnings of a commuter community for the business people of Belfast the focus of the village moved to the area around the railway station. The building of the estate in the 1950s and 60s provided good quality, affordable housing and people came from inner city Belfast and throughout Northern Ireland to work in the new factories in Carrickfergus or to commute into Belfast. Although there were disturbances in the Greenisland during the ‘Troubles’, calm and peace has settled on the area. More recent housing developments including Farm Lodge, Bates Park, and Longpark have increased the commuter community and Greenisland, now part of the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area, has over 2000 houses and 5000 residents.

House prices have rocketed especially in the estate. In the 50s and 60s no-one would have believed that their council house would be worth in excess of £150,000.

People are moving into Greenisland from all over the world. The opening up of the European Union to eastern European countries has seen workers arriving from Estonia, Latvia, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic. Greenisland also has residents from Italy, China, Africa, Japan, America, South America, Australia and New Zealand.

Greenisland has always had strong community spirit. Every Saturday morning, around the site of the Library there is the Mango Tree Coffee Shop in the Baptist Church were everyone is welcome to drop in for tea and buns and in the Church Of Ireland car park there is a stall run by several of the churches with the profits going to the African Child Ministries The Knockagh School of Dancing runs all day in the Community Centre.

The Greenisland Community Council continues to work in the community and in its refurbished premises in the Jubilee Hall holds painting classes, yoga classes and a lunch club for senior citizens. At present, in partnership with Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Marie Curie Field of Hope they are working with local school children to plant daffodils around the area of the shops in Glassillan Court.
They are also lobbying Translink to provide a bus to the Abbey Centre from Greenisland.

Sporting Groups include the Greenisland Football Club which recently has sent 3 of its young players to the Manchester United Youth Team. There is also the highly regarded Knockagh Wrestling Club, mini-rugby and the Greenisland Ladies Hockey Club which now has 4 teams.

The local Heritage and Environment Group monitors planning proposals affecting Greenisland. It fights plans which would result in the loss of Rights of Way or loss of the Green Belts which protect Greenisland from merging with neighbouring Jordanstown and Trooperslane. The most important planning proposal affecting Greenisland today is Roads Service’s proposal for the upgrading of the A2 Shore Road route. Recent generations of planners allowed building on land laid aside for a by-pass (the gap between the upper and lower estate) and we are now left looking for ‘the least worst option’.

The Roads Service’s current ‘preferred route’ involves a dual carriageway by-pass loop running inland from Seapark through the Green Belt, and returning to a roundabout near the bottom of Station Road. From there a dual carriageway will run along the line of the existing road. This plan would result in the destruction of nearly 250 mature roadside trees not to mention the carving-up of many houses and gardens including the lovely setting of Rosemount. Many people, not just those directly affected await the outcome of the October 2007 Public Inquiry with concern.

The Knockagh Youth Centre continues to provide activities for the young people in Greenisland as well as being a meeting place for the Knockagh Wrestling Club, Army Cadets and EOTAS (Education Other Than At School).

The churches continue to provide for social needs in addition to spiritual ones. They hold youth clubs, mother and toddler groups, bowling clubs, Brownies, Cubs, Boys’ Brigade, Girls’ Brigade, Girl Guides and many more activities.

The Library, as well as being a place to select new books and meet others, provides free Internet access for all its members, has an adult reading group and holds various classes including English, Maths, Local History, Family History and Beginners Computer Classes.
Acknowledgements

The members of Greenisland Local History Class who compiled this book were: Margaret Addis, Collette Brock, Robin Cameron, Irene Carson, Billy Carson, Angela Campbell, Rosemary Colvin, Doreen Corcoran, Phyllis Foster, Letitia Hurley, Martha Maginty, Josephine McFadden, Betty McNab and Sam Noble.

A big thank you goes to class member Marjory Edgar (our Editor in Chief) for her IT skills in producing this book.

Special thanks go to our Tutor Karen McCartney and all the staff of the Ulster Peoples’ College, to Kate McAllister, NEELB Life Long Learning and Training Officer for all her help, support and editing and to NEELB for the use of premises and resources.

Thanks to those who supplied information and to those who where interviewed. Derek Catney (Victoria Homes Trust), Bertie Duff, Robert Gilliland, Anna Johnston, Mr and Mrs James McCay, Richard Meek, Pat O’Neill, Sister Rose, Mr Brian Stirling (Greenisland Primary School), Guy Warner, Maggie Watson, Maureen Weir and Timothy Wilson.

Thanks to the following for generously allowing us to use their photographs for the book. Bert Anderson, Joan Caldwell, Sarah Clawson, Anna Craig, Helen Evans, Dave Finlay, John Greer, Sheela Speers, Mr and Mrs BC Kelly, John MacIntyre, Miss Alison Moth (Silverstream Primary School), Mr and Mrs James O’Grady, Bernadette Owens, Sylvia Price and Richard White.

Thanks to Mark Edgar for photographing Greenisland as it is today and to James MacIntyre for allowing us to use his sketch of the Knockagh.

Acknowledgement to The Deputy Keeper of the Records, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland for the use of the Campbell Allen Papers (D/1558), D/1558/8/1 2-12, D/1558/12/3-4, 5-6 and D/1558/1/4/7.

Funding has been provided by the NI Community Relations Council with assistance from the European Union Special Support Programme.

References


The creation of this book was only possible through the contributions of many people. If you have helped in any way and we have forgotten to mention you please accept our apologies and our thanks.