

HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE



JEREMIAH JORDAN (1830 – 1911)

Jeremiah Jordan was an Irish nationalist politician from County Fermanagh. He was a Member of Parliament (MP) from 1885 to 1892, and from 1893 to 1910, taking his seat in the House of Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

Jordan was born in Tattenbar, eldest son of Samuel Jordan, farmer. He grew up by the Knocks Lough and was educated in Portora Royal School in Enniskillen. A merchant by profession, he became a member of the newly formed Enniskillen Urban Council, the Enniskillen Board of Guardians, the Fermanagh County Council. He was connected with Methodist Temperance and kindred movements. He was a member of the *Tenants' Association*, the *Land League*, the *Irish National League* and the *United Irish League* (UIL). In 1902 he became the first nationalist chairman of Fermanagh County Council.

From 1865, Jordan opposed the dominant Cole, Earl of Enniskillen and Crichton, Earl of Erne. In the early 1870s he joined the *Home Rule League* of Isaac Butt and spoke alongside Butt at an Enniskillen meeting in 1873. In 1880 he joined the *Land League* and helped to secure extensive Protestant support for it in Fermanagh by arguing that it was a law-abiding body whose principal aim was to help Gladstone overcome resistance to further land reform.

A Protestant Nationalist member of the Irish Parliamentary Party, Jordan was elected at the 1885 general election as MP for the Western division of County Clare and remained MP for that county until 1892 when leading Clare electors sought to remove him because of his anti-Parnellite stance following the break with the former Home Rule leader. He contested the North Fermanagh constituency in the 1892 general election but was defeated by the Unionist candidate. In an 1893 by-election in South Meath, Jordan won in a close contest with the Parnellite candidate. At the next election, in July 1895, Jordan stood in South Fermanagh, where he was elected with a comfortable majority and continued there until his retirement. That constituency returned Jordan to Westminster in 1900, 1906 and January 1910. By then he was 80 years old, and, after suffering strokes, he did not contest the December 1910 general election. He died in 1911 at High Street, Enniskillen, age 83, according to his death certificate. He is buried in Aghavea Church of Ireland churchyard, situated about 3 miles outside the village of Maguiresbridge in County Fermanagh.

In his will among gifts he left £200 to the Roman Catholic poor of Enniskillen parish and amounts to all Roman Catholic parishes of Fermanagh. His monument is the *Wyndham Act* of 1903, providing for the compulsory sale of landlord estates to the tenants living on them.

Acknowledgements:

1. McMinn, R., Phoenix, É, & Beggs, J. (2009). Jeremiah Jordan M.P. (1830–1911): Protestant home ruler or 'Protestant renegade'? *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol 36, No 143 (May 2009); pp 349-367.
2. Francis Gilbride