

HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE
NAAS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP



NAAS WORKHOUSE GRAVEYARD

Along the roadside on the Blessington Road stands a lonely granite stone. On closer examination of the monument you will read the poignant words of local poet Mae Leonard -

'Remember me today and tomorrow, for all the days I hungered and there was no one, when they threw me under your feet, nobody to pray or shed a tear, remember, remember, remember.'

Words to indicate that nearby in a verdant green patch lies the workhouse graveyard. The road outside was once called the "Poorhouse Road" for that very reason. The workhouse opened its doors in 1841 but the graveyard did not open until 1845. Previous to that inmates of the workhouse were buried in the old graveyard at Tipper, two miles east of the town and not in Naas as the graveyard was then in the parish of Eadestown. The workhouse graves became known as the "Paupers Plot" and were described as, the loneliest patches of soil in Ireland, *'to bury strangers amid the friendless poor.'*

The austerity and harshness of the system was evident in the following report by a visiting committee. *"all funerals must take place before seven o' clock in the morning and that no more than twelve paupers be permitted to go with the funeral to Tipper churchyard. In cases when friends of the paupers wish to have their remains conveyed to their own burial ground, no paupers shall be allowed to accompany the funeral."* They were harsh and inhuman times. The monument was erected by Naas Local History Group from a granite stone mined in Ballynocken quarry in nearby Co. Wicklow and sculptured by the McEvoy family of Ballynocken. It is a testimony to these unfortunate people lest they be forgotten.

Each year in November the History group hold a prayer service in the graveyard.