

HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

ULSTER HISTORY CIRCLE



SIR JAMES MURRAY (1788-1871)| Inventor of Milk of Magnesia

Murray was born at Culnady, Co Londonderry. Educated in Edinburgh, at the age of nineteen he was appointed apothecary at Belfast's Dispensary and Fever Hospital (later the Royal) but left after a year to set up on his own as surgeon and apothecary in High Street, Belfast. In 1829 he used a fluid magnesia preparation of his own design to treat the lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Marquis of Anglesey. This was so successful that he was appointed resident physician to Anglesey and two subsequent Lords Lieutenants, and knighted. He also became Inspector of Anatomy in the Dublin College of Surgeons and published pioneering works on matters varying from chemical fertilizers to the effects of climatic conditions on health, by way of electricity as a cause of epidemics. He died in Dublin in 1871.

Murray's name is perpetuated in Murray Street, off Fisherwick Place, Belfast, which he helped to develop. But his lasting claim to fame is his fluid magnesia product, which was patented two years after his death and sold world-wide under the name of Milk Of Magnesia.

Location of plaque: 16 High Street, Belfast (corner of High Street/Bridge Street)

[The Ulster History Circle erects blue plaques in public places throughout the province to commemorate people who have made a significant contribution to the community locally, regionally or in the wider world. Not all are well known and many have been forgotten in the place where they were born or worked.]