

## CARRICKFERGUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY



### GRAVE OF JOHN MITCHEL

John Mitchel was born on 3 November 1815 at the manse, Camnish, near Dungiven, County Londonderry, son of the Presbyterian Minister. In 1823, when his father became minister of Newry Presbyterian Church, the family settled in Dromalane House. He graduated at Trinity College, Dublin in 1834. In 1840 he became a lawyer in Banbridge. There he met Thomas Davis, who inspired him and whose place he took on the journal *The Nation* when en Davis died in 1845.

In 1843 he joined Daniel O'Connell's Repeal Association but seceded from it in 1846 with the rest of the Young Ireland party. Having left *The Nation* in disagreement with its moderate stance he founded the *United Irishman* in 1848. In May 1848 he was arrested under the new Treason Felony Act, convicted and sentenced to transportation for fourteen years. In Van Dieman's Land, which he reached after spells in the hulks in Bermuda and the Cape of Good Hope. His wife and family joined him in 1851. In 1853 he escaped to America where he started a newspaper, *The Citizen* which serialised his *Jail Journal*, a detailed account of his transportation, published as *Five Years in British Prisons* in 1854.

In surprising contradiction to his revolutionary past he was advocate of slavery. When the war started he moved to Richmond and edited *The Enquirer*, the semi-official organ of Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy. The war cost him dearly as his sons John and William were killed and James severely wounded. After the war, his continued advocacy of the southern cause earned him a five-month spell of confinement in Fortress Monroe, which undermined his health. When he returned to Ireland in 1874 he was elected Member of Parliament for Tipperary, but he was declared ineligible as an undischarged felon, even when subsequently re-elected in 1875. He died in Dromalane House on 20 March 1875.

He is buried in the Non-Subscribing Graveyard at Meeting House Green, that can be accessed from High Street through a gateway of the Poor Sister of St. Clare Convent building. His grave is on the left of the burial plot, which is shared with other members of his family.