

## HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

### CLANE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP



### JACK KELLY/JACK DEMPSEY

Unknown to many of its inhabitants, the village of Clane had a world boxing champion in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Jack Kelly was born on December 15<sup>th</sup> 1862 in a house located on the present back avenue into Clongowes Wood College. When he was just a youngster his family emigrated to New York where he eventually became involved in the professional boxing circuit. He fought under the name of Jack Dempsey. He was a skillful, clever and agile boxer who because of his excellence in the ring became known as the "Nonpareil" i.e. the unequalled or unparalleled.

He won the World Middleweight title on June 30<sup>th</sup> 1884 when he knocked out George Fulljames in the twenty second round. He retained the title for seven years until January 14<sup>th</sup> 1891, when he was defeated by Bob Fitzsimons. His last fight on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1895 was a "benefit" match against the legendary John L. Sullivan, the proceeds of which went to Dempsey whose health was deteriorating. He died of tuberculosis on November 1<sup>st</sup> 1895, aged thirty three and is buried in Mount Calvary Cemetery, Portland, Oregon. He remained forgotten for many years and is still relatively unknown in his native Clane. Jack (Nonpareil) Dempsey was inducted into the Ring Boxing Hall of Fame in 1954 and into the International Boxing Hall of Fame as late as 1992.