

HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE
NAAS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP



LORD EDWARD BANNER – 1882

Most people would be familiar with Edward Lord Fitzgerald and Daniel O’Connell since both were iconic figures in the course of Irish History. However not as many people would know of an interesting connection between Naas and these two giants of Irish History.

Currently housed safely in Naas Town Hall is a unique banner that has been expertly restored to a pristine condition. The banner in question is the Lord Edward Fitzgerald Banner – 1882. From the Leinster Express and the Kildare Observer newspapers it appears that the banner was commissioned by Naas Town Commission for the unveiling ceremony in Dublin of the O’Connell Statue on the 15th August 1882. The Chairman, Mr. S. J Brown and a deputation were invited to attend. Mr. Brown it seems contacted the artist, Mr. Watson of Sackville-street, Dublin regarding the banner. The estimate for the work was £15 and the banner to be made of poplin or tabinet with a coat of arms of the town and a motto on one side and a portrait of Lord Edward on the other. The commissioners unanimously accepted the design and an order then made to have it ready as soon as possible and a telegram sent to Mr. Watson to this effect. This was reported in the paper of 12th August so it was very close to the time. A subscription list was opened to cover the cost of the banner, new uniforms for the band etc, with the cost of the banner being the immediate priority.

The interesting thing is that the portrait of Lord Edward was on the reverse and the coat of arms and motto on the front. It was carried on the day of the unveiling ceremony; the band wore a green uniform with yellow and gold trim and their banner was also green and gold. Deputations from Naas, Athy, Newbridge, Kildare, Rathangan and Maynooth were present. All carried banners (with different portraits). The painter’s inscription is on one face showing the image of Lord Edward. It is located below the “g” of “go brat” and probably painted in a gold coloured paint and inscribed *HWatson Des.e et pinx.t Sackville St. Dublin, 1882.* The other face shows the snake of Naas in a shield surmounted by a crown. The text – *Naas of the Kings, Prudens Ut Serpens.* (Note on the banner)

Larry Breen. – Research M. Corrigan/S. Hickey