

NAAS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP



TIGH – NA – CEARD / ARTISANS COTTAGES

Displayed on the wall at the end of a quaint row of little houses that sit neatly on the Newbridge Road is a green metal plaque with the words in Irish, “Tigh-na-Ceard”. This literally translated means “Houses of the Artisans or Tradesmen”.

Their story is an interesting one that began at the turn of the century around the year 1900. The then old Town Commission were discussing the provision of suitable “working class houses” and consequently the adoption of “the housing of the working classes Act 1890”. The resolution to adopt the act was proposed in July and formally adopted at the meeting of Wed. 4th August 1897. The commission included some well-known local families namely, Mr. Stephen J. Brown (founder member of solicitors Brown and McCann), William Staples (of Staples/Dowling), General Merchant, Mr. Jas Conway and Licensed Trader Mr. Richard Sargeant.

After much rancour a site was leased on the Newbridge Road from Mr. Jas Conway and landlord Col. Finlay. Architect Mr. Francis Bergin developed plans for a scheme of up to forty houses. These were to contain a living room, two bedrooms, a small pantry and a yard. The total cost was to be £4000 and a loan was to be secured from the Local Government Board. There were tenders placed in both the national and local papers, which included the *Irish Times*, the *Leinster Leader* and the *Kildare Observer*. Tenders were received and the one from a Mr. G. Robinson of Caragh was accepted at a cost of £120 per cottage. The Chairman of the Commission, Mr. William Staples, laid the foundation stone at a ceremony in 1899. On Feb.7th 1900 the rent was discussed and set at two and sixpence a week.

A committee of the Commission considered applications from deserved tenants and among the very first accepted were, number (1) Harry Kavanagh, number (2) John Leeson, and number (9) a Mrs. Flanagan. With the demise of the Town Commission these were the first houses to be built by the Naas Urban District Council at the beginning of the twentieth century – a unique example of social housing of the time.