

## HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

### NAAS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP



### RAILWAY STOREHOUSE

Tangible signs of the old Naas Railway Line are now not that easy to find. There are however a few reminders, namely the Crossings Maxol Service Station where the rail line crossed the main Dublin Road, Railway Terrace just opposite across the Dublin Road and the old railway bridge on Friary Road.

However still standing proud near Friary Road is the old Railway Storehouse resplendent in all its old glory. Built from the finest cut stone it stands as testimony to a railway system now alas gone. One can imagine the time when it was a hive of activity with store men stacking and un-stacking all sorts of merchandise in the course of a day's work. The whole area would have been alive to the sound of porters, signalmen, storemen and day workers.

Since ceasing as a store it has been used for various activities including a printing works and restaurants. The whistle of steam locomotives was first heard through the town in 1895 when the first passenger services began to Tullow. This was a thirty four-mile journey on a branch line that linked up Naas, Baltinglass and Tullow with the main line at Sallins. The coming of the railway changed the town's geography and the landscape somewhat. The Railway Company blocked up Gleann na Greine which was originally the Tipper Road and built a new road from the Dublin Road at the Scout Den to the Fairy Flex. When one thinks of the famous Percy French railway song, "Are you right there Michael are you right", it is very likely that the great man himself would have travelled on the Naas line to appear in the concerts he gave in Naas Town hall.

With the demise of rail transport regular passenger trains stopped in 1947. There did continue to be some commercial cattle trains and the occasional excursion trains to places like Knock and Drogheda. Also ardent race goers still made use of the race day specials that continued to arrive from Dublin. The last train to use the line was on March 1959. So today if lucky enough to enjoy a meal in the restaurant you might spare a thought for those store men who in days gone by were probably lucky to have tea and sandwiches during their well earned break.