John Sarsfield Casey – "The Galtee Boy" (1846-1896)

I would like to begin this talk by thanking you on behalf of my mother and myself for your interest in John Sarsfield Casey, "The Galtee Boy", and by paying tribute to his granddaughter and last descendant, Mary Casey, who preserved his papers, assisted in the editing and publication of his prison memoir and Australian material, and finally donated his papers to the National Library of Ireland. It is a pity that she did not live to hear of this invitation.

John Sarsfield Casey was born in 1846, the son of a shopkeeper from Mitchelstown, which lies in the far north-eastern corner of County Cork, close to the boundaries of Limerick and Tipperary and within sight of the Galtee Mountains. Its status as an estate town constructed by the local landlords, the Earls of Kingston, whose mansion overshadowed the town until it was destroyed during the Irish Civil War of 1922-23, contrasts with the poverty of the surrounding hill country, which in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had a long tradition of land agitation and republicanism. Casey's mother was the daughter of a farmer from Anglesborough, a village near the town, and Casey recorded that he was politicised by the memories and after-effects of the great Famine of 1845-49 which were all around in his youth.

Casey was educated at the local national school and then the Christian Brothers' School. He was a bright pupil, and developed a particular interest in the sixteenth-century rebellion of the Earl of Desmond against English rule. (Spanish involvement in sixteenth-century Irish history may have motivated him in learning Spanish; his prison writings are sprinkled with Spanish words and this linguistic knowledge assisted Casey in communicating with Spanish missionary clergy in Western Australia, including the future bishop Martin Griver and the monks of New Norcia.)

Like his father, Casey was a devout Catholic, who spent some time as an altar boy and taught younger children their catechisms. As a teenager he became involved with the Irish Republican Brotherhood and wrote several letters for the pro-Fenian *Galway Vindicator* which contrasted the lavish lifestyles of local landlords with the poverty of their tenants. He wrote under the pen-name

"the Galtee Boy" by which he was known throughout his life. One of his two younger brothers, Daniel, also contributed to the paper as "the Galtee Boy's Brother". Daniel later emigrated to the US after participating in the unsuccessful Fenian Rising of 1867, and lived under straitened circumstances in Chicago. Casey's authorship of the letters was discovered, leading to his expulsion from the local Christian Brothers' School and denunciation from the pulpit by the parish priest. Casey's relations with the Christian Brothers remained ambivalent; one of his teachers, an Englishman, formally identified his handwriting in subversive letters produced at his trial and helped to secure his conviction, but when Casey was sent to Western Australia another Brother, PB O'Brien, supplied him with a glowing testimonial to his good conduct as a pupil and his religious commitment.

After his expulsion from school Casey was apprenticed to a Mitchelstown draper, but was dismissed when he became the local agent for the official Fenian paper, the *Irish People*. Casey's father burned his son's copies of the paper, and tried to detach him from the IRB by apprenticing him to a Cork City wine and spirits merchant called JJ Geary; the father didn't know that Geary was one of the four IRB Head Centres for Cork City, and that his business premises became a gathering-point for Irish-American veterans of the American Civil War who had returned to Ireland in expectation of an uprising. Geary also placed remarkable trust in a Crimean War veteran named Warner, employed to drill and train IRB members, who became one of the principal informers against the Cork Fenians; for this and other reasons, Casey's attitude to Geary in his reminiscences is contemptuous.

"The Galtee Boy" continued to sell and write for the Fenian newspaper. The manuscript of one such letter was seized by the police when the *Irish People* office was raided in September 1865. Geary fled precipitately to escape arrest, leaving Casey to dispose of compromising documents and concealed weapons before the house was raided; it is at this point that his incomplete prison memoir, published in 2004 as *The Galtee Boy*, begins. Although Casey was not included in the original round-up he was arrested three days later and brought to the Cork City Bridewell, where dirty beds

infested with fleas and bugs, and the nightly outcries of detained drunkards and prostitutes, provided his introduction to the parallel universe of the Victorian prison system.

Casey was removed to the County Jail on the slopes north of the River Lee, where he and the Cork Fenian detainees spent most of the next three months awaiting trial. Casey recalls that he and his fellow-prisoners were generally in high spirits despite prison discipline, harassment by some warders, identification parades before potentially hostile witnesses, and intense pressure on potentially vulnerable prisoners. (In his reminiscences Casey contrasts the son of a well-to-do family who was pressured into pleading guilty by his family and local priests and politicians – this man secured a suspended sentence for himself and in the process compromised at least one of his fellow-defendants whose case was bound up with his own – with a middle-aged Protestant brewery worker, Marcus Adams, who remained staunch despite religious and political pressure and with a family dependent upon him.)

Casey recalls that he and his fellow-prisoners were in generally high spirits; the governor was mild and lenient, there was an extensive street demonstration in their favour when they were brought before the magistrates' court for indictment, and they believed the Fenian leader James Stephens (who had escaped the round-up and when captured soon afterwards escaped from prison in Dublin with the assistance of sympathisers among the warders) would soon launch a nationwide rising. One interesting feature of the memoir is that Casey was much more indiscreet about clandestine methods of communication and smuggling goods into the prison than he is likely to have been if the memoir had been completed and published soon after its composition. The following extract gives a glimpse of some of these methods, of the ambivalent relationship between the Fenians and some of the criminal prisoners, and incidentally of Casey's physical build:

> Pipes and matches, and an unlimited supply of papers and tobacco were at last obtained. How? On the gallery beneath us were confined a number of men from the city for petty thefts, etc. Some of these, it appeared, held communication with the milkman who brought milk for the Governor. They spent their evenings, previous to retiring to bed, looking out of their cells under ours, and talking to one another. We soon opened communications with him who appeared to be the 'Leader', and a sort of

> privileged person in the prison. His fertile brain hit on a plan at once. "Let a string be produced", he said, and lowered from such a cell upstairs through the window. 'Let one, or as many as like, write notes for money, papers tobacco etc to their friends outside.' He undertook to have the articles procured and given to us minus one-fourth 'for his trouble'. To this we agreed and night after night the string would be lowered, the bundle of tobacco papers etc secured, the string pulled up and all was right…
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> Previous to being removed from the first ward, I was much amused one evening after 'lock up', when looking out towards the Dyke, to hear all the prisoners on our ward holding a council about the Fenians. Our friend the Leader or 'Sticks', as he was familiarly called, explained all about it to his astonished fellow prisoners, and concluded by assigning to each of us our rank in the army of the IRB. Lynch was the Field Marshal Commanding, Kenealy Brigadier General, Mountaine Major General, Dillon Half Pay and 'The Galtee Boy' Major, because Majors are always short and fat and 'The Galtee Boy' is the shortest and fattest of the whole. This announcement of our Commissions from such an authority as 'Sticks', before they appeared even in the Gazette, plunged us all into roars of laughter, in which the party below joined and Lynch having asked 'Sticks' what position would satisfy him [he] meekly replied, 'Pay Master of the Forces'…

The Fenians even took to playing with marbles smuggled in by this route until the jail governor (whom they called Simon Pure) saw them and warned that there might be trouble if the prison inspectors heard of the marbles.

The light-hearted tone of this section of the memoir is overshadowed by Casey's reference to the subsequent fates of some of his friends, who died in British prisons as a result of maltreatment and neglect, and by the propagation of claims that the Fenians had conspired to tar and feather the Catholic bishop of Cork and set him on fire. (As with similar allegations about the Dublin Fenian prisoners, these allegations were never produced in Cork but were used by authorities in state and church to blacken the prisoners before trial. Casey's account of his trial emphasises his concern to rebut this slander; at one point he recalls joking with a visitor about the contrast between his innocent appearance and the violent schemes of which he is accused.)

The atmosphere darkens when the Fenians are moved to City Jail (whose site has now been incorporated into University College Cork) to await trial before a county grand jury dominated by landowners. (A city grand jury would have drawn on a larger panel, been more likely to contain political sympathisers with the prisoners and harder to pack.) The governor and deputy governor were harsher and more dissipated than their counterparts at the County Jail. At the end of December

1866 the Cork Fenians were tried by a two-judge Special Commission which had previously sentenced Fenian leaders in Dublin; Casey emphasises that one of the judges was William Keogh, a former nationalist politician who had notoriously sworn never to accept a government appointment then did so at the first opportunity. Casey was sentenced to five years' imprisonment despite a vigorous defence by the future Home Rule leader Isaac Butt.

Casey's conduct while awaiting trial and actually in the dock consciously drew on role-models such as Robert Emmet. Now he, and the other convicted Fenians, moved deeper into the prison system; though he cites John Mitchel's *Jail Journal* this was of limited value as a guide to what was about to befall them. A recurring theme of Casey's writings is the prisoners' ignorance of what was about to befall them:

> At the moment when McCafferty was put to his trial, poor Lynch was endeavouring to raise the flagging spirits of any who may be downhearted. He described graphically and humorously the position of each of us a few months hence. I and several others were to be acquitted. The remainder were to be transported hence to Botany Bay – we knew of no other convict prison – we were as yet ignorant of the existence of Pentonville, Chatham, Millbank, Portland or Dartmoor as the child unborn. Mountaine would get life and sail for the Cape of Good Hope, where whilst on board he'd fall in love with the Captain's daughter… Bryan Dillon on the voyage would die and be cast overboard and swallowed by a shark but Bryan's hump would prove too large for the said shark's throat, so he'd vomit him on the beach at Queenstown, where Lynch would find him, considerably the worse for his journey, on some fine pleasant morning. Kenealy would arrive in Australia, skidaddle, join the blacks and marry a chief's daughter… Of course we all laughed heartily at poor Lynch's jokes.

Before Casey wrote these reminiscences Lynch had died in prison in England, and Dillon and Mountaine had died after release partly as a result of their prison experiences.

Casey's motives for writing included desire to re-enact and record the solidarity and self-sacrifice of most of his Fenian fellow-prisoners incarcerated in a system aimed at breaking them down into submissive acceptance of guilt (he does indicate some tensions between individual prisoners, but does not dwell on them), and a wish to demystify the prison system for future political offenders.

After their conviction the Cork Fenians were shaved, dressed in prison uniform and sent by train to Dublin. After a brief stay in Mountjoy Prison on the north side of the city where they were photographed – Casey remarked that the involuntary smile captured on his face by the camera

followed him through the prison system - the Fenian prisoners, including those convicted earlier in Dublin, were handcuffed in pairs and marched on board a cross-channel ferry en route to Holyhead and London. Strictly speaking, they should have served their sentences in Ireland; this transfer was intended to remove them from potential sympathisers and to reduce the risk of another embarrassing escape. The captain of the ferry supplied them with food and drink, but this attempted kindness backfired as they had a rough crossing and were all seasick, while the guards insisted that they must remain handcuffed to each other whatever the circumstances. They were transferred to London by train and delivered to Pentonville prison.

Casey found the discipline in British prisons much harsher and more degrading than in Ireland. The memoir dwells angrily on group strip-searches, on prisoners being told to their faces when they made complaints that their sworn oath would receive less credence than a warder's unsupported statement, and on prisoners being deprived of underwear during the harsh winter:

> Bryan Dillon appeared but a mere skeleton of his former self, scarcely able to crawl along – his very appearance most miserable. Neither he nor we had the slightest expectation that he would survive six months in Pentonville. To an encouraging smile or a familiar nod he would shake his head, look unusually grave, and point his finger to the ground as if to say; with me all is over. Not so with poor Lynch who daily wasted away. To our stolen remarks that poor Dillon was sinking, he would reply that 'Bryan was too tough', but that he himself would never 'do', that the cold, the hunger, the dismal solitude of his dark cell were killing him. In a few days, just as spring was opening, he disappeared from the exercise yard in company with poor Bryan. We never heard more about him, until when in Portland the sad news was told us; that the walls of Woking Prison received his last sigh.
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> That Lynch was 'done' to death I have not the slightest doubt. He was, to use a prison phrase, 'Killed so slowly that the public could not call it murder'. It was black hideous murder; the officials heaped persecution on persecution, privation on privation to kill him. And, lest the natural cold of a damp English climate might fail to cause a dissolution of his frame, artificial means were brought into requisition; deprivation of flannels, exposure to the chilling cold in his nakedness, while removing his cell furniture twice daily which none but the most hardened criminals were obliged to do. Peace be to his ashes.
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> The writer was probably the only one of the Cork rebels who beheld poor Lynch, from the period of his total absence from exercise to his removal to Woking. Well do I recollect that cloudy May day when seated at my table the cell door stood open, it being 'school hour'; when a tall skeleton figure crept along the corridor, supporting himself with an arm grasping the railing, and with the other holding his unmentionables. Failing to recognise him, it was only on his return from the Doctor that I knew him, when he

glanced towards me, sadly smiled, shook his head despondingly, as if to say 'For me all is finished'.

After some time in Pentonville Casey was among those Fenians removed to Portland prison and set to work quarrying building stone. One of the ironies of their situation was that although the prison chaplains pressurised them in the confessional to renounce Fenianism, and outside they were denounced from the pulpit as godless revolutionaries, it was the presence of the Fenians which led to Mass being celebrated in Portland prison for the first time.

At this point the prison memoir breaks off. Our second collection of Fenian material, *A Mingling of Swans*, - a title coined by my mother in reference to the Westralian black swan and the white swans on the Lough which are a symbol of Cork - opens with Casey writing to his parents informing them that he has been selected for transportation to Western Australia. (The selection was somewhat haphazard; in theory only prisoners with sentences of seven years or more were supposed to be transported.) Casey initially welcomed this prospect as a change from the harsh conditions of Portland; he assumed that the Fenians would receive the same treatment as the Young Irelanders transported in 1848 – that is, they would be released on parole soon after arrival, on condition that they remained in an assigned district. This proved mistaken, and soon after arrival he told correspondents that in his opinion Western Australia was worse than Portland. His father managed to reach Portland in time to see Casey before his departure: "I had seen my poor Gaulty boy as strong and as well looking as any of his age in Mitchelstown, with his usual innocent smiling countenance."

Casey led prayers on the voyage out in the absence of a priest, and contributed to an onboard newspaper, the *Wild Goose*. He kept one of three surviving Fenian diaries of the voyage out (edited and published by Edmund Cusack in 1988 on the basis of a transcript by Mary Casey); it is marked by frequent Oliver Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* was a favourite reference text.

The impending arrival of the Fenians caused a panic among sections of the settler community; fortunately, the authorities did not accede to suggestions that they should be imprisoned on Rottnest Island. On arrival most of the Fenians, including Casey, were sent to road-building parties in the Guildford area. Casey kept a fragmentary notebook for an aid to future reminiscences; he hints at the personal tensions between some prisoners and between prisoners and warders, and gives his (mostly unfavourable) impressions of the vegetation and fauna – which he contrasted unfavourably with the lush green of the Golden Vale in South Tipperary - the bare parched landscapes, and the working conditions on the road parties.

After receiving his ticket of leave Casey became a schoolmaster in York, employed by Fr Patrick Gibney, brother of the future Bishop of Perth. He raised the standard of teaching in the school considerably, and was highly regarded by Bishop Griver, who tried to persuade him to remain in Western Australia. There are some fragmentary indications that Casey struck up an acquaintance with a local young woman called Emma; but overall his opinion of the settlers was unfavourable. Both in his contemporary correspondence and in articles which he published after returning to Ireland with the aim of discouraging emigration, Casey described the harsh material conditions of the colony and the low moral standards of its settler inhabitants, and wrote with disgust of the killing of aborigines with impunity by settlers. Casey continued to resent the conditions, resembling martial law, under which Western Australia was governed. At one point Casey and some friends narrowly escaped detention for visiting a friend's house after curfew; at another, he got into trouble which some letters which he had clandestinely addressed to friends and relations in other Australian colonies were returned to the Westralian dead letter office when the addressees could not be located.

At the same time, Casey and the other Fenians were not as powerless in the remote colony as the government which had sent them may have hoped. Casey became the York correspondent of the oppositional *Fremantle Herald* which reported sympathetically on the conditions of the Fenians, and the ability of publicity to give them a measure of protection was not confined to Australia. Soon

after the final defeat of the Fenian rising an agitation for the amnesty of the Fenian prisoners in Britain and Australia had sprung up in Ireland, led by a combination of genuine Fenian sympathisers and nationalist politicians who had opposed Fenianism in its heyday but were now willing, from mixed motives, to sympathise with them as misguided idealists suffering for Ireland. The extent to which the Fenian prisoners were able to transmit letters from Australia describing their conditions for publication by sympathisers in Ireland (and, to a lesser extent, America) was so remarkable that some years ago an academic suggested that the letters must have been concocted in Ireland for propaganda purposes – this theory is disproved by the survival of original letters in the Casey Papers.

In 1871 Gladstone's government amnestied most of the civilian Fenian prisoners, but did not provide any assistance for those in Western Australia to return home. Sympathisers in Ireland, America and other parts of Australia raised money to enable those who wished to return home to do so, with the amnestied prisoners making it known that they would not accept the money as charity but only as an expression of political sympathy. Casey was one of twenty-five prisoners who travelled to Sydney by steamer from Albany (the journey was complicated by the fact that they were still subject to restrictions excluding recently released convicts from landing in South Australia or Victoria); after demonstrations in their favour fifteen sailed to San Francisco while ten, including Casey, returned to Ireland via London.

On returning from Australia Casey combined working in his father's shop with campaigning for the release of the remaining Fenian prisoners (including the military Fenians still detained in Western Australia and eventually rescued by the *Catalpa*). He liked to contrast the size and spontaneity of the crowds at Amnesty meetings with the onlookers at state ceremonials involving the Lord Lieutenant, the Army and the judiciary – a sign of the competition between rival forces to occupy public space. Casey eventually went into business as an auctioneer, and inherited some house property from his father. (The family business went to the third son and after his early death was carried on by their unmarried sisters.) In the early 1870s soon after his return from Australia Casey worked on a

number of manuscripts including a history of contemporary Ireland, a historical novel set in the seventeenth century, a number of articles on the contemporary situation, and a prison memoir. Many of these works remained incomplete and unpublished, though articles describing Western Australia and his experiences there appeared in the pro-Fenian Dublin paper the *Irishman*, and he appears to have written to newspapers under a variety of names. Casey's motives appear to have included a degree of personal therapy.

At the 1874 general election Casey campaigned in the County Limerick constituency for the Home Rule candidate WH O'Sullivan, a Kilmallock businessman and Fenian sympathiser whose son had served a prison sentence after the 1867 Rising and who had himself been detained for several months though released without charge. (Casey had stayed with O'Sullivan for some time soon after his release, nursing another released prisoner whowas dying of TB.) O'Sullivan's victory as a Home Rule candidate supported by the Farmers' Clubs and committed to tenant right over an official Gladstonian Liberal supported by the Catholic bishop of Limerick and his clergy was seen as a significant nationalist victory.

In 1876 the second of two attempts was made on the life of Patten Smith Bridge, land agent for a Manchester millionaire called Nathaniel Buckley who had bought an estate in South Tipperary which included extensive tracts of poor mountain land on the Galtees. (The estate had originally been bought by a Manchester syndicate from the Kingstons through the Encumbered Estates Court, set up to attract outside investors to purchase Irish land on favourable terms just after the Famine. Buckley, who had briefly represented a Lancashire constituency, is believed to have aspired to an Irish parliamentary seat.) Bridge was injured and his driver was killed. A relative of Bridge claimed in a letter to the public that the killing was the work of outsiders and he was generally popular with the tenants. Casey wrote to nationalist newspapers disputing these claims, describing the living conditions of the mountain tenants and listing the rent increases which Bridge had recently imposed on them. The case was as clear an illustration as could have been found that the majority

of land improvements in Ireland were carried out by tenants rather than landlords; some of the hill farmers had literally created their plots by carrying soil up from the valley floor. (Some of these tenants were Casey's own relatives, and when he worked for his father he had visited them regularly in connection with the egg and feather trade carried on by his father's shop.) Bridge responded by suing Casey for criminal libel (which meant that Casey could not testify in his own defence as he could have in a civil libel trial, and that if Casey had been convicted he would have faced a jail sentence). Bridge's lawyers attempted to draw the proceedings out in the hope of draining Casey's financial resources; notable points in these proceedings included a dictum by Chief Justice Whiteside (formerly a prominent Irish Conservative politician) that any comment by outsiders on landlord-tenant relations on a particular estate constituted unjustifiable interference, and an attempt to have the case dismissed on the grounds that Bridge's treatment of the tenants had provoked his attempted assassination. (Although this proposal was dismissed, the evidence concerning the treatment of the tenants provided Bridge with unwelcome publicity, while the London *Times* complained that by even discussing the possibility that Bridge had provoked the attacks, the judges were reducing themselves to the level of a Ribbon lodge.) During these legal preliminaries, a by-election took place in the County Tipperary constituency, which had a record of contests between separatists and clerically-supported conservative nationalists; it had elected the imprisoned Fenian Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa in November 1869 and the veteran Young Irelander John Mitchel in February and March 1877. Casey now came forward as a Fenian-supported candidate in opposition to Edmund Dwyer Gray, the proprietor of the main Dublin nationalist paper, the *Freeman's Journal*. Gray was supported by Archbishop Croke of Cashel and his clergy who fought the election with a mixture of denunciations of Fenian anti-clericalism and appeals to the memory of Caroline Chisholm, Gray's mother-in-law, who had recently died after a lengthy career of assisting emigrants to Australia. Since many emigrants from Tipperary had gone to Australia, this appeal was a significant factor in the outcome. On 15 May 1877 Gray defeated Casey by almost three to one (3852 to 1344).

Gray and Croke, however, felt the need to reassert their patriotic credentials after the election campaign, and supported a church-door collection to fund Casey's legal expenses.

The trial (27 November-10 December) was the occasion for Isaac Butt's last high-profile court appearance and ended when the jury disagreed after numerous tenants gave evidence of their rent increases and living conditions. (This meant that each side had to pay its own legal costs; the case could have been re-heard but Bridge chose not to proceed.) Among those present in court was Lord Randolph Churchill (father of Winston) who as son and private secretary of the Lord Lieutenant was allowed to sit on the bench next to the judge. The case was subsequently raised in Parliament, with some Conservatives joining Irish nationalists in taking the opportunity to highlight the misdeeds of a former Liberal MP. An account of the proceedings was published in pamphlet form by the Central Tenants' Defence Association and Michael Davitt describes the case in *The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland* as one of the stimuli leading to the creation of the Land League. In December 1877 Gray sent a prominent *Freeman's Journal* reporter, William O'Brien, to report on the conditions of the Buckley tenants; O'Brien's series of articles entitled *Christmas on the Galtees* further publicised the rent increases inflicted on the tenants and, by extension, the failure of Gladstone's 1870 Land Act to resolve tenant grievances. Because O'Brien later became one of Parnell's principal lieutenants, his role in publicising the plight of the Galtee tenants has been remembered to the exclusion (outside the Mitchelstown area) of Casey and the wider campaign surrounding him.

During the subsequent Land War the Galtee mountain tenants continued to attract attention as an example of the most extreme poverty under the landlord system. In 1881 the American abolitionist turned Land League activist James Redpath converted a sceptical American friend into a Land League supporter by taking him up the Galtees to show him the tenants. Some years later, another journalist who was brought by Casey to see the tenants discovered that Casey still kept in touch with them and advised them on how to improve their situations.

Shortly after the trial, Casey was elected Coroner for East Limerick (the government subsequently made the position of coroner a nominated rather than elective office). In 1880 Casey campaigned for Andrew Kettle, a Parnellite who stood unsuccessfully in Cork County at the 1880 general election, after Bridge supported Kettle's "nominal Home Ruler" opponent Captain Colthurst. Casey was active in the Land League, though he was on the losing side in factional disputes within the Mitchelstown branch. After he denounced an attempt to bomb a land agent's office in Mitchelstown (one of his sisters had been slightly injured in the explosion) Casey was expelled from the Mitchelstown branch but accepted as a member by the Fermoy branch. Probably because this dispute publicised his opposition to agrarian violence, he was not interned with other local Land Leaguers in 1881-82, and took charge of the remains of the Mitchelstown organisation. Casey was active in a variety of local bodies, serving as secretary to the local branch of the Society of St Vincent de Paul and acting on a committee seeking a railway extension to Mitchelstown.

In January 1883 Casey married Julia Mary O'Connor; they had eight children, of whom only three sons survived to adulthood. In the late 1880s Casey opposed attempts to extend the Plan of Campaign land agitation to the Kingston estate on the grounds that it involved an unacceptable degree of risk to the tenants. (This was vindicated by later events; although the Plan did secure concessions on a number of estates, on others it brought ruin on tenants who were led to accept eviction in the belief that they would be reinstated by the next Liberal government, only to be outmanoeuvred by landlord opposition and left stranded by the Parnell Split.) On 9 September 1887, when policemen opened fire at a demonstration in the main square of Mitchelstown, Casey was one of several prominent figures who approached the barracks calling for a ceasefire. He later served on a committee to erect a monument for the local land campaigner John Mandeville, who died as a result of his prison experiences.

Casey was an anti-Parnellite in the Split, and in 1893 he was considered as a possible candidate for the North-East Cork parliamentary seat. In the same year, while entertaining some of his old Fenian

colleagues (including Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa) who were revisiting Ireland, Casey displayed the first symptoms of Bright's Disease, a kidney ailment often associated with diabetes and cardiac problems. He died in Mitchelstown on 23 April 1896 and is buried in the parish churchyard under a headstone which he designed himself. Honora Casey died soon afterwards in childbirth, and their sons were brought up by relatives. One served in the British Army during the First World War and died soon after the Armistice from influenza exacerbated by war injuries. A second, Mary Casey's father, became a civil servant in Dublin. The third son was a dentist in Mitchelstown, and it was noted that many hill farmers made a point of becoming his patients as a way of expressing their gratitude to his father. My mother recalls that during her childhood she was sometimes pointed out on market days as a relative of the Galtee Boy.

Thank you once again for your kind attention to the story of one of those Fenians who was sent across the globe because of their political principles, who brought Western Australia in its early days to the attention of the Irish public and created one of the earliest of the many connections which have existed and still exist between us. They deserve to be remembered, in Ireland and in Australia.

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