

# KILLOYLE

## *A Handy Reference Guide*

Supplement to the *Complete Killoyle Trilogy*

Kein & Aber, Zürich

KILLOYLE, pop. (2000) -42,000, is a seaport, market town, health resort, ecclesiastical seat (R.C., C. of I.), place of pilgrimage and prostitution, manufacturing centre for beer, beer mats, door mats, rubber mats, and bath mats, and chief town of the County of Killoyle, in the nonexistent far-southeastern corner of the province of Munster in the Republic of Ireland. The name is derived from the Irish words *Cuill gHuaill* (“the place [or ‘church’] of the flail”), referring to pre-Celtic pagan rituals (see **History**, below).

If Killoyle is known at all in the wider, “real” world, it is mainly as the setting for a trilogy of silly yet grandiose novels (*Killoyle*, *The Great Pint-Pulling Olympiad*, and *Killoyle Wine and Cheese*) (see **Personalities**, below) and as the inspiration for the traditional ballads *The Bho-yoy-oy-oy-oh from Killoyle-loy-loy-loy-loy-loh* and *Knickers Down, Acushla, You’re in Old Killoyle Now*.

## **Location**

The city is 1.6 km. N. of Crumstown, 44 km. SSE of Waxford, 45 km. E of Weterford, 243.2 km. SWS of Dublin, and 1,175 km. W of Hamburg. It is an assortment of bars, retail outlets, hotels, garages, schools, bicycle shops, factories, windmills, dealerships, restaurants, houses of worship, and many private residences in apartment or semidetached style (or even detached: see King Idris Road and environs), all frozen in mid-tumble down the sides of six hills (or seven: accurate measurements have yet to be made) above the Irish Sea. The site and layout of the city have been compared to those of Macao, in the south of China, minus Chinese, and Bergen, Norway, minus Norwegians.

One traveler commented, “It rains intermittently, episodically, especially during the spring, summer, autumn, and winter, pausing for moments of dazzling blue and golden shafts of sunlight and bright puddles reflecting the opalescent sky. Sea gusts chase stained scraps of newspaper along the gutters and waft the scent of beer-yeast from Molloy’s Brewery and that signature smell of the British Isles, the grease of frying chips, burgers, bangers, bacon, kidneys, Mars bars in batter, pigs’ earlobes, etc. These aromas assault the nostrils of the new arrival aboard the Brest or Holyhead ferry docking in the harbor.”

\* \* \*

The Killoyle River flows through the city, ***Maheer’s Island***<sup>1</sup> forming the main part of the city centre just before the river flows into ***Lough Dough*** and thence to ***Crumstown Harbour***, which would be one of the world’s largest natural harbours if it were, say, five times bigger than it is, whereas in fact, being no more than half the size of ***Killoyle Harbour*** (1.8 km. NNE), its diminutive status makes Killoyle, by comparison, “quite a butch seaport” (in the words of Fiona, Lady Houndsditch),<sup>2</sup> with quays and docks and big cranes and barges and ferryboats and all. The Docks are sited along the broad estuary of the Killoyle River on the city’s East side, from where stretches the ***Strand*** and, most importantly, the dimpled, rippled Irish Sea, an important means of attaining Europe— notably France, via the Breton ports of Brest and Killouaille, or (slightly NE of SW)

---

<sup>1</sup> Formerly Kneeland Island, once a barracks, then an orthopedic hospital (the Brian Boru Memorial Clinic); now a low-income housing estate called Lord Maheer’s Green Meadows.

<sup>2</sup> A doughty old dame who went on to say, on her deathbed, “Gangway, you scum, here I come.”

Wales, the coast of which is visible on clear days.<sup>3</sup>

To the W. of the city rise and fall the forbiddingly gray South Killoyle Hills, beyond which (NNE) is *The Belfers*, a plain well-watered by peat marshes. Nearby runs (E. to S.) the stilly-greeny *Mangan Canal*, an important aquatic thoroughfare whose environs are inhabited by small farmers and large amphibians as well as retired terrorists, holidaymakers, and turf accountants. Some 1,000 bargees and attendant barges, the greatest concentration of same in Western Europe, if not the world, live there. (See *Killoyle Wine and Cheese*, pp. 30-35, for details.) (Hic.)

Killoyle is the only county in the republic that has neither an institute of technology nor a university, although the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, maintains the famous Alcoholic Pederast outreach centre at *Upper Killoyle College*, also known as *Killoyle Upper College* and *The College of Upper Killoyle (Lower)*, 10 Pollexfen Walk (W).<sup>4</sup>

\* \* \*

## History

Although quite unknown until recently, Killoyle City is of very ancient origin, some say older even than the Earth itself. It certainly predates the era of dual carriageways and

---

<sup>3</sup> As a sort of clotted area on the horizon, “like a monstrous, half-eaten pot roast” (O’Spanner, *Legends of Old Killoyle*).

<sup>4</sup> Killoyle is also the only county in the republic that does not exist.

polyester clothing. For a long time it was merely a lapsed-Catholic settlement built on and around a pile of ancient Celtic rubble known as *Cuill gHuail* (“the place [or ‘church’] of the flail”), a temple for the worship of Celtic gods, principal among whom appears to have been *Dagda*, a crazy old sod responsible for the heavy drinking and flushed features once so characteristic of the Irish race. His feast day was All Holes’ Day, November 31st (Old Style). Rites of worship involved flagellation with thin metal flails; banging of the head against a tall stone plinth (the “*Head Banger*,” bits of which are still visible under the turf); self-administered black eyes; the propitiatory sacrifice of gonads; monotonous chanting (“Dagda Dagda Dagda Dagda Dagda Dagda,” etc.); and mighty draughts of poteen. But all good things must come to an end, and one dark and stormy night in the autumn of AD 450 the temple fell over and was abandoned and the site drifted into the desuetude and gloom of the Dark Ages, when it rained for seven hundred years, transforming Ireland from the desert island it once was (home to the giant dik-dik and the Great MesoAfrican Slug) to today’s lush green-quilted isle of saints, scholars, and software.

(Remains of the old temple can still be seen along various parts of the Killoyle-Crumstown Road, on and around the ancient feast days of Dagda, at 10 p.m. Admission free with proof of purchase.)

When Dagda disappeared, some say to Borneo, things fell apart, and in the Killoyle City of early medieval times three families of upper-class serfs—the O’Bladdys, the

O’Bladdas, and the Oyts—took over and regulated everyday economic and social life. They were known as *The Three Families*. Fun was scarce; punishments were harsh. Crimes that warranted death or lethal torture included not just murder or treason but also excessive snoring, fondling oneself or others, tying things up with a rope or twine, and owning a pig with black blotches.<sup>5</sup> Times were desperate, and desperate measures were called for.

\* \* \*

## St. Oinsias

Oinsias O’Jaggery, better known as *St. Oinsias*, patron saint of Killoyle, was a domineering but controversial figure, and, some say, barking mad. First case in point: He circumnavigated the island of Ireland in a single day, rowing a coracle at incredibly high speed, returning home in time for supper leftovers (“It’s a miracle!” said his mum, Niamh). Second case in point: On one of his business trips South, *St. (first-class) Patrick* himself, CEO of all Christian operations in Ireland (umbrellas, wellies, pretty pictures, passes to Heaven, photo ops with the Almighty, and all kinds of free giveaways for the kiddies), stayed overnight at the now-defunct Stationary Hotel on *Stationary Square*.<sup>6</sup> He had the prawns *au jus*, which he pronounced excellent. However, whilst enjoying a

---

<sup>5</sup> Later simplified to “owning a pig.”

<sup>6</sup> Where the *Big Gay Chef* restaurant now stands (No. 5). Note also Spinks’ Travel Agency at No. 7 and the knockout gal behind the desk. What a figure, eh? That’s Nuala O Mavourneen. We used to be neighbours when I was a lad, and believe you me, the showers we took together, the crevices we jointly explored...! But I digress.

snifter of cognac after dinner, he was suddenly punched on the nose and unceremoniously bundled out of the hotel and cast into the outer darkness by none other than Oinsias O’Jaggery, who thereupon proclaimed himself Number One Saint in Killoyle and started wearing loud wooden clogs and a vicuña hairshirt. The Three Families were incensed; they had business dealings with St. Patrick (a stable, a manure emporium, an anvil shop), so the headmen, Proinsias Oyt, Dan-Dan O’Bladda and Blather O’Bladdy, got together and, with minimal pushing and shoving, and only one head-butt to midriff (Proinsias to Dan-Dan), they signed a pact to “go after the bustard (sic) and set him on fire.” It was no easy task. Oinsias O’Jaggery, son of Brian, the local scarecrow, was a local wide boy who’d had a colourful career (jousting, singing, boxing, etc.) before retiring to the hermitage (now the *Hermit’s Hotel*\*\*\*\*–RIAC, AA, Opus Dei, Visa/MasterCard) on the placid shores of *Lough Dough*, SSW of Killoyle City. There he spent seventeen years, from 582 to 599, meditating on the sins and failings of men and, with the aid of our friends the gnats and mosquitoes, developing the once-famous haunch-slapping dance. One sullen October day a spy from the Three Families spotted the great anchorite practicing a double-jetée, quite naked, amid a cloud of gnats. The snitch promptly sailed to Rome and told the Pope, no less a personage than that hearty trencherman and seer-of-visions Gregory I, known to his friends as “Gregory” or “just a Great Guy.” According to Phelim Hickman’s fact-based romance novel *Loves of Oinsias*, the description of nudity really got Greg’s attention (“*coglioni grandi?*” was his first question), but he drew the line at meditation (“*meditazione? Va fanculo,*” he snapped, between belts of rough

Frascati and bites of his favorite *panino*). Still, the old Vicar of Christ had a soft spot for the lad, so as a special favour, Oinsias was promoted to Saint First Class and not burned alive until his birthday (September 2).

### **The Immolation of St. Oinsias**

It was a grand old hooley and its memory lingered long in local lore. It is said that the saint, having enjoyed a final smoke with Proinsias Oyt, tossed his fagend into the bundled kindling at his feet, thereby causing a slow fire to start smoldering, but not quite fast enough for the crowd, who began to growl menacingly when the ever-present rain put out the flickering flames, then started brandishing shillelaghs and blackthorn sticks and making ancient Celtic gestures indicative of fisticuffs and carnal self-knowledge. Oyt, quaking in his short and hairies, called in Petey and Neill O'Bladda, local flame-throwers, who briskly rubbed together Swan Vesta safety stones under an umbrella helpfully upheld by Oinsias. Hours passed and the mood grew nasty; but Oinsias, nothing daunted, entertained his restive audience with a spot of conjuring, a quick round of Twenty Questions, and, backed on instrumentals by The Wains, a then-popular musical-serf ensemble, a few hits of the day ("*That Smell Is Mine*"; "*My Wife's Two Cows Wide*"; "*Who's the Fella with the Big Friggin' Beard?*"; and much, much more), as the flames finally licked ever higher, fanned into profusion by Petey and Neill (who were later hanged, drawn and quartered down the pub). It was long believed that the saint's last words were "O, optimum est," now the official motto of Killoyle City (and which can be

seen hand-carved into the side door of the *Killoyle Corporation* offices, 5 Pollexfen Walk, and again in the *Men's WC*; admission free, unless Big Tom's using it), but in 1958 P. D. Turboboylan, a local historian and bogtrotter who needs no introduction, came upon a sixth-century monolith under the grass, upon which the true last words of St. Oinsias had been meticulously carved by Groin, the local scribe, and preserved for future generations: "O, fuckin' hell."

The immolation of St. Oinsias was long a favorite subject of medieval votive artists in Ireland and abroad, notably *Blessed Jams O'Donnell* of the Bogside (1221–1278), who painted the seminal "St. Oinsias Lights his Last Fag" (now hanging in the Letterkenny Museum of Fine Arts) and Dino of Umbria, "*The Master of Poggibonsi*" (ca. 1152–1206), whose masterpiece "St. Oinsias Ascends to Heaven" (*Sant'Onsi Monta Nella Strada del Paradiso*), hangs above the altar in the 13th century Cathedral of St. Virgin in Citta Assoluta (Liguria), next to the racetrack. A local Killoyle real estate magnate, *Lord Maher of the Strand*, who has extensive business holdings in Italy, has vowed to intercede with the Italian Government to purchase the work for display in perpetuity in Killoyle. (See **Personalities**, below.)

\* \* \*

### **Some Points of Lesser Interest**

Killoyle is known for a good many monuments, and unknown for a good many more.

Chief among the latter is the invisible *Shrine of the Invisible Virgin*, 44 Uphill Street, erected sometime in the late 11th century—discreetly, mind you, with all those Vikings about. Indeed, it was in the spirit of discretion that on one night in 1094 the Holy Mother appeared down by the riverbank to a pair of old drinking butties, Sean and Mick. The lads had done justice to more than a few jars and were sniggering over some rather crude carvings Mick had made on a brick when all of a sudden there She was, finger to lips: “Shhhhh! Wicked boys!” admonished She, then *poof!* vanished into thin air. Mick and Sean looked high and low, but She was nowhere to be found, so they shrugged their shoulders and set to work, result: A fine Gothic shrine, all the more remarkable for incorporating elements of an architectural style that had never been seen in Ireland and existed nowhere else at that time. More remarkably still, after hovering overhead for awhile it vanished, giving credence to its status among the credulous (i.e., everybody). Man, no one laughed at Sean and Mick after that. The chums took early retirement, claiming precedence over the rest of the serfs “because,” as Mick put it (see O’Spanner, *op. cit*), “how many of them other stupid lazy good-for-nothing feckin’ wankers have ever done anything at all, bar get flewtered on Saturday night and make more stupid lazy good-for-nothing feckin’ wankers?” Point taken; immortality assured. Indeed, the small alley that passes between the putative location of the shrine and the fine new carpark NE of Wally’s Tesco is named Mick Alley in honour of Mick, whoever he was. As for Sean, he disappeared one day after breakfast and nothing but a shoelace was ever found; and it wasn’t his.

On the downhill corner of Uphill Street, just up from Downhill Street about 2.2. km. from the putative site of the Shrine (coach parking), sits the former *Pro-Cathedral of St. Oinsias*, now *Laddi's Disco*. In spite of recent conversions, it still presents the noble face of an early medieval mid-Victorian holy-redbrick pile. Inside, above the bar, one may still admire the famous Non-Norman Altar Windows (admission free except on weekdays and weekends). Installed in the original non-Norman—i.e., Hiberno-Romanesque—church by Paul Pot-de-Chambre, the *Master of Owest Sud*, c. 1299, the magnificent windows depict the occupation of Antwerp or Amsterdam by Burgundian or Savoyard forces under Duke Heston IV or Count Charlton I in 1015 or 1162 and other major events of the Middle Ages, or East. Lord Clark, the art historian, pronounced them “a historic mistake”; but, like all controversial art, they command respect, or nearly.

\* \* \*

### **Some Historical Non-Events**

It must be said, however, that Killoylers have a reputation for making historic mistakes. An outstanding example occurred in 1550, when Seamus P. Dolan, Phil Muggery, and Marty Dalton, three Killoylers working on a construction site in England,<sup>7</sup> made a bet one night at the Pryce's Prime Ribs steak restaurant in Archway that they could overthrow the king of England (then a Mr. VIII, first name Henry) and be home in

---

<sup>7</sup>Marty was Seamus and Phil's uncle by marriage (his) to Oona Frazer, their aunt by marriage to him. Odd, because otherwise they weren't related.

time for tea. Well! Needless to say, within minutes Mr. VIII's men were soundly thrashing the poor eejits with cats o' nine tails. Each hapless Paddy was then tenderized with mallets, hanged for a bit, then disemboweled, and his organs were grilled over a coal fire and served with Worcestershire sauce, chips, a salad, and a medium-sized drink to the lords and ladies of Hampton Court. No last words were recorded, except "ouch." *The Three Stupid Martyrs Memorial*, 2 Brendan Behan Avenue, by local sculptor "Box," commemorates the ludicrous yet unfortunate episode.<sup>8</sup> (Note the fine cross-hatching in the depiction of a plate of Marty's kidneys being served to a lady of the court and the extreme plasticity of Phil's facial expression as the maitre d' goes to work with the steak knives.)

More recently, the reputation of the citizenry as being a little behind the times, or just obstreperous, referred to the infamous visit of *King George IV* in the blustery spring of 1828, a public relations disaster. The Hanoverian monarch, known for looseness of both morals and bowels, appeared on the deck of his yacht blotto to the eyeballs, proceeded to belch insistently during the Lord Mayor's welcoming speech, then vomited abundantly over all and sundry for a prolonged period of time (some say up to an hour). This resulted in a mass protest, coordinated assault with umbrellas, and several men overboard. (See *The Great Pint-Pulling Olympiad*, Chapter 17, Footnote 4, for details.) In a fit of pique, the king, having returned to Windsor Castle, ordered the city's name changed back from

---

<sup>8</sup> Many locals have hinted that "Box" is the pseudonym of that fella that hangs about behind the bus station and seems to have an altogether unhealthy interest in the comings and goings at the ladies' loo. You know, the one with the yellow eyes and long teeth who always wears the long black cloak and sleeps in the box? By the Crumstown express stop?

West South, as it then was, to Killoyle, which, said His Majesty, “sounds so bloody Irish no one will want to go near the ghastly place, urrrp” (B. Uphole, *Royal Court Chronicles*, Vol. VI).

\* \* \*

## **Modern Times and Beyond**

Killoyle’s non-participation in the Irish War of Independence and the Irish Civil War, to both of which both city and county gave “the fig” (a gesture with two fingers of either hand), contributed further to its reputation as a place of free spirits. Indeed, to compete with the Easter Rising in Dublin in 1916, Killoyle staged its own “Easter Falling,” which consisted of a group jump from the spire of St. Oinsias, pony treks through the hills, a 10K run along the strand (one man ran; he later died), wheelks and ice cream stalls, a bearded lady (Eugene), and a locomotive imported from Chicago, USA. The city thereby acquired the nicknames of “Killarsehole” and “West Little Britain.” This led to ill-feeling between Killoyle and the rest of the nation. Indeed, a motion was tabled in Dail Eireann to have the entire city and county of Killoyle declared “nonexistent,” but it was voted down after last-minute lobbying by the imaginary Fine Whiskies party. However, ill feeling persists, and it is not unusual for Killoylers to address their fellow countrymen either in French or in French-accented English;<sup>9</sup> certain it is that the people of that fair county feel they have a distinct identity from the rest of Ireland, who are known locally

---

<sup>9</sup> Indeed, one of the best-known natives, S. MacBride, Esq., spoke with a strong Provencal accent and refused ever to speak normal English. For the remainder of his days he was known as “Oy! You poof!” To which his rejoinder was, generally, a Gallic shrug and a puff of Gauloise smoke.

as “Fenian feckers” or (with a shudder) “the ones who exist.”

One of the main events of the pre-100th anniversary commemoration of the 1916 “Easter Falling” last year occurred in the graceful mid-18th century neo-neo-Romano-Gothic Revival *Cathedral of SS. Laurence and Peter O’Toole*, 12 Docks Square, whilst the then-Archbishop of Dungarvan, His Grace Lemuel “Pinky” Willis, was demonstrating the ancient art of pistol-whipping, using his housekeeper, Les Baine, as a model. (Les is buried behind the church, beneath the little arbor, “from where she can gaze for all eternity upon the roiling waters of the snot-green sea and dream of houris far and near” in the words of K. Overshaft’s *Romance of She-Buddies*). Meanwhile, behind the scenes that memorable day, Sig. Gino Laddi, owner of Laddi’s Disco (the former St. Oinsias’ Pro-Cathedral—*qv. supra*), supervised the transfer of hand-carved *Mad Begg*, the great bell of St. Oinsias’, from the former sacred edifice to the newly consecrated Cathedral of SS. O’Toole. The mighty bell, forged in 1649, was hoisted to the North Tower by a pair of strapping berks named Burke, and when it finally rang out the entire county paused in its business for a moment to contemplate the miracle; for, alone among cast-bronze bells, Mad Begg rings in augmented fourths. Indeed, in March 1837 it became the *casus belli*, as it were, between the local Anti-Augmented Fourthists, who called for the immediate execution of the Lord Mayor, Sir Jocelyn de Beef, leader of the Pro-Augmented Fourth Party, which supported the emancipation of South African blacks. Eventually, Dad’s Army had to be called out of Kneeland Barracks, but Sir Jocelyn was strung up anyway (plaque nearby, upon which his name is misspelled “Boof”). His last words are unknown,

but witnesses say they contained a lot of plosives and aspirants, as might be expected in a case of extreme pressure upon the windpipe. (See *Killoyle*, Chapter 8, Footnote 3.)

\* \* \*

## **The Seafront**

The seafront is Killoyle's most beautiful feature, notably the windswept *Parnell Parade* leading to *The Strand*, a mile-long sandy promontory popular among waders and schoolchildren for its rock pools and iced-lolly stands, and widely known as "the Irish Algarve." The origins of this name are a mystery, although one school of thought holds that the three newly whitewashed Napoleonic-era *Martello Towers* (1805-6) that dominate the northern stretch of the promontory closely resemble, in "the buttery Lusitanian summer-evening light" (Wilson, *Noxious Ramblings*, Vol. 19), the famous white windmills of Portugal's southern shore. Others maintain this to be utter drivel (see *Killoyle*, Chapter 6, Footnote 1), citing the non-resemblance between your old man and Kirk Douglas, the actor, as an apt parallel. The Towers are now occupied by The Star of Bihar, an Indian restaurant; Herb's, a vacuum-cleaner repair shop; and Jake Nicholson's Outerwear, respectively; and cannot be visited absent an intention to purchase.

Adjacent to the Strand is the quarter-mile-long rainbow-coloured and corkscrew-shaped *Queen Anne Jetty* (1894), lined with whelk stands and lemonade stalls and software outlets, culminating in the 43-foot-tall bronze-faced *Con Leventhal Lighthouse* (1939), named after the writer and lecturer, who was similarly bronze-faced (especially when he'd been in the sun a bit), but was not a native of Killoyle; indeed, there is strong

evidence to suggest that he had never even heard of the place. The reasons for the honour are not immediately apparent. Speculation is rife, however, that the descriptive remark “His light shines on and off, then goes off again, in his face of hammered bronze” made by Percival “Percy” O’Brien (no relation), was instrumental in the naming process.

Perpendicular to all the above is a broad, paved seafront promenade called *The Promenade*, dominated by West Cork sculptor Boner McKeown’s *Statue of Michael Collins* (1934), which depicts the great martyred Anti-Treaty general in his nightshirt, glass of whiskey and all, in a symbolic attempt to greet the rising sun. (The statue is a well-known rendezvous point for prostitutes, who may be observed plying their trade any weeknight, admission negotiable.)

At the poor, N. end of the Promenade are unsightly lean-tos housing the O’Moons and their neighbors, an immigrant (or traveler) family named (or from) Jordan. Next door to them are some dirty louts who live in a sort of paper sack, burning all manner of old fish wrappers, flammable macs, cut-off whiskers, and sundry other articles to keep warm, even in summer. (Warning: Passersby run the risk of being shouted and even gestured at.) This is Killoyle’s Third World Ward, where “the poor sods don’t even have a pit to piss in” (sic) (O’Spanner, *op. cit.*) The rich end of the Promenade, by contrast, is called the Shops, after the upscale boutiques that line it: Mlada, De Angelis, Charisse DuPuy, Ibn Buggah, Oxnard Van Ransselaer, etc.

Looming above the Promenade and the harbour is the *Spudorgan Palace Vacation*

*Inn* (\*\*\*\*–Vacation Inns International; RIAC, AA, AAA, AAAA, AAAAA, Hearty Harry Auto Club, Visa/MasterCard), formerly Spudorgan Hall, a massive neo-non-Gothic building in a magnificent location, teetering on the tiptop of MacLiammoir (Uphill) Hill with an unparalleled view of the harbour, the coast as far as Crumstown, and the shiney sea as far Wales (left) and Brittany (somewhere to the right, toward Rio). Built in 1894 as the second residence of the Earl of Greengage, it was converted to its present function of hostelry immediately subsequent to His Grace’s demise at the racetrack in Divonne-les-Bains, France, in 1901.<sup>10</sup>

The central social event of the year at the Spudorgan Palace is the annual world bartending championship known as the *Great Pint-Pulling Olympiad* (first prize: a pub of your very own), a high-profile show that gave its name to one of the finest, if most foolish, novels of all time (see below), which chronicled the highly fictional 2002 or 2003 event.

\* \* \*

## Local Personalities

“One thing this rubbish tip of a town does have, if nothing else,” growled the da one

---

<sup>10</sup> “Go!” he screamed, between urgent gulps from his flask. “Go, ya bloody nag!” But it was no use; Bigfoot Mark One was simply not in the mood that day. Indeed, the noble stallion resigned his commission halfway through the race (the 1901 Coupe du Duc de Longuemoustache) and, jettisoning his jockey, a surly Spaniard named Miguel, he sauntered off the course, heading for the charming converted ostlery in the nearby Jura foothills where he and his mares made their home. The Earl of Greengage, fulminating in impotent rage, staggered in an inebriated fashion across the racetrack and, spitting insults, attempted an assault on the victor, Jules Renault-Frégate, who stomped him soundly and later split funeral costs with the widow (who, secretly relieved, moved into a studio in Lausanne with Hugo, her fencing instructor).

Saturday night down the pub, “is bloody personalities.” The antics of many of these personalities, some of whom are described in the following list, have been chronicled in at least one of the three Killoyle novels; one luminary has actually managed to land starring or semi-starring roles in all three.

**Key: K=Killoyle; PP=*The Great Pint-Pulling Olympiad*; KWC= *Killoyle Wine & Cheese*.**

### **Milo Rogers**

*K/PP/KWC*

Poet, briefly Poet Laureate of Munster. Much-derided author of the collection *Stockings in the Dust* and *Gobbing in the Gutter* and the epic poem *O’Mallet Bawn: A Non-Epic* (*PP*, last chapter) and other priceless collections of “verse”; headwaiter at Spudorgan Hotel (in *K*); footnoter (in *PP*); manager of Spudorgan Hotel (in *PP*); occasional chronicler of local events (in *K*, *PP*, and *KWC*); boozer (4 to 6 pints daily, plus whiskey on weekends and, on holiday, rough red wine from the Rioja); knocking-shopper; TV-watcher; occasional reader, mostly of works in which he is mentioned. Once engaged to be married to Kathy Hickman (see below), who hired him to work for her magazine, *Glam*, then sacked him, on (according to him) a whim or (according to her) principle.

**Kathleen “Kathy” Hickman**

*K/PP*

Hard-bitten career woman, *neé* MacRory, CEO of Glam International, PLC, widow of Phelim Hickman, crusading journalist and romance novelist (*The Loves of Oinsias; A Crumstown Serenade*). KH was formerly romantically linked with Milo Rogers the poet (*K, PP*), and Michael “Mick” McCreek, the automotive journalist (*PP*), and, some say, Tom Maher (see below), despite the latter’s well-known burly impotence. In any event, last year KH sold her magazine to Maher Enterprises and moved to the hills of Provence, where she resides in a sixteenth-century *mas* somewhere outside Vence with her aging Irish Terrier, Strongbow, hosting a succession of mysterious Levantines (and one heavily bearded German with a slight but unmistakable accent).

**Tom “The Greek” Maher**

*K/PP/KWC*

“Ah, Tom, we hardly knew ye” hardly applies; in fact, after three books, we knew him all too well. Tom Maher—Lord Maher of the Strand, as he now styles himself, following his purchase of the title on the online shopping channel AllMonikers.com—has appeared, in starring or cameo roles, in all three Killoyle novels. A ruthless developer and estate agent, he was bludgeoned one day by several Greek sailors in the employ of a Greek

shipping millionaire for whom Tom, then in his capacity as harbourmaster and amateur sleuth, was researching Irish blueblood lines and their links to Greece (*K*, Chap. 6). This incident altered his world-view and gave him the nickname “The Greek” (the use of which he later banned on his company’s premises, Greek Tower; see *KWC*, pp. 324–330). He took his wife’s savings and went on to buy up aging slums, which he replaced with the most modern, up-to-date slums, such as those that ring **Oxtail Place** and **Maher’s Green Meadows**. His organization, Maher Global Worldwide International PLC, has expanded abroad—notably into Italy, where it financed the construction of worker’s condos in the crater of Mount Vesuvius; and in the U.S., especially in and around the town of New Ur of the Chaldees, Ohio, where Maher and several other Killoylers have connections (*KWC*).

*Father Aloysius Doyle*

*K*

Fairly standard novelistic cliché: Irish literary whiskey priest, with a little more intelligence and far more faith than the average priestly punter. Did his time for Rome and God worldwide, including a horrid stint in New Nubia in the Caribbean, before being sent to Killoyle as the steward of the Shrine of the Invisible Virgin. His entire outlook is coloured by memories of his years in Rome, for which city he longs passionately, or thinks he does. He appears to have no sex drive whatsoever (although a youthful

acquaintance in Rome named Father Tazio *does* pop up in his memories a bit too often); still, his faith in Mother Mary and the upper echelon is unshakeable. Fr Doyle drinks whiskey by night and smokes Craven A cigarettes and tunelessly sings Italian ballads all the while. By day, he enters into theological dispute with his friend Emmet Power, an unbelieving hotel manager.

### *Mick McCreek*

*PP*

A man's man, and as such, a bit of a wastrel, a dreamer, and a feckless git who's had more jobs than you've had hot dinners, but he's got guts, and he's not the sort of fella to give up easily. He's a great one to have a pint or five with down the pub, although you wouldn't necessarily want your daughter hanging around with him. Still, Mick, for all his hard-drinking (and therefore slightly stereotypical) Oyrish character, has more culture in his little toe than half the faculty of Trinity Dublin do in their entire bloated persons. When we meet him he's a car tester for Jocelyn Motors with newly-forged ambitions (consequent to a motoring holiday in Italy) of being an automotive journalist, but he knocks down a pedestrian on a test drive and gets the sack—even though the downed pedestrian is a worthless git—and embarks on a tortuous career of low-level professional humiliation, suspense, amorous flings, and blackmail.

## *Penny Burke*

*PP*

Internal émigrée from the West of Ireland, where she was raised with donkeys. Moved to Killoyle and became an assistant librarian and would-be novelist—or poet or short-story writer or playwright or something. More importantly, Penny’s the gal who renders the humiliation, suspense and blackmail in Mick McCreek’s life slightly more bearable for awhile; for of course all things, good and bad, must come to an end. Still, as the result of a secret suddenly revealed in the exciting denouement of *PP*, Penny’s career, long stalled, finally takes off—but not in the direction she had anticipated. Indeed, quite the opposite, in a way.

## *Anil Swain*

*PP*

Head waiter at the Koh-I-Noor restaurant. Anil and his wife Rubina are the first of a new wave of Asian immigrants to Ireland, driven there in despair after several failed attempts back home in Sandrapore in the semi-impooverished state of Sandra Pradesh and a miserable stint at a factory in Wolverhampton. The Swains live in the same block of flats as Mick McCreek, with whom Anil becomes chummy despite Anil’s being a lifelong teetotaler and Mick, as we have seen, not. When Anil boldly attempts to break out of the

suffocating mediocrity of his existence he finds himself face to face with dangers of a kind previously confined to the television dramas he so loves, but it's a bloody good ride all the way down.

### **Tom and Jerry O'Mallet**

*PP*

Ludicrous and slightly sinister father-and-son legal team and protagonists of Milo Rogers' non-epic poem *The Ballad of O'Mallet Bawn*. Tom is a barrister, Jerry a judge. Both are for sale or rent to the highest bidder. Unscrupulous, full of guile, and charming; indeed, more thoroughgoing embodiments of that traditional Irish character, the Gombeen Man, could hardly be imagined. Pride comes before a fall, though, as the O'Mallets notably neglect to remember in their dealings with one of their staunchly loyal clients, the Provisional IRA (as it then was), which still has a card (or Armalite) up its tattered sleeve.

### **Fergus Goone**

*PP*

More-or-less honest Ulsterman, local businessman, owner of the Koh-I-Noor Restaurant and Emerald Mats, Ltd. Would-be millionaire and international tycoon, but somehow the brass ring always just eludes his grasp. A gruff homosexual, yet distinctly ungay in his

demeanor and appearance, he lives with Cornelius Regan, the flamboyant but tormented cross-dressing sexton at St. Derek's Church (C. of I.). Because he hires Asian immigrants, and because the headwaiter at the Koh-I-Noor is none other than the aforementioned Anil Swain, Goone becomes involved in an Asian labor dispute of international dimensions, on two fronts. And because Cornelius decides he wants a sex change, they both become involved in a domestic dispute of major, and potentially tragic, proportions.

### **Ferdia Quain**

*KWC*

Former Head Archivist of the Belfast Command of the Provisional IRA, now—along with his former employer—retired. Entering upon the second phase of his life, Ferdia has evolved the intention of setting up a nice wine and cheese boutique with piped-in music, wood-paneled walls, and elegant gilded lettering, attractive to the prosperous local ladies. Financing is hard to come by, however, and the shop's initial inauguration day is delayed, then canceled, by poor timing. In desperation, Ferdia contacts Crankshaft, an old IRA man who, unlike him, was once an active mad bomber; but, far from wanting to help set up a wine-and-cheese shop, Crankshaft is inspired to take up the plastique again for one last Ka-Boom, as long as he can take Ferdia down with him. That traditional way out, the Irish road of exile, beckons, and Ferdia responds.

## Shirley Quain

KWC

Wife of Ferdia. A Yorkshire lass, *née* Soup (“of fine old Yorkshire stock”), she was drawn to Ireland by the high standard of living and a plush job (for a secretary), at Maher International Worldwide, PLC. Her trajectory in this troubled tale is a roundabout one, with the preservation of her marriage as the ultimate goal. However, for a considerable time, it looks as if Ferdia, the ex-IRA man, and Shirley, the daughter of North Country Tories, are headed for the rocks, as they crisscross each other’s paths globally, from Killoyle in Ireland to mysterious and exotic New Ur of the Chaldees, Ohio, USA.

\* \* \*

*“Then there’s the sea, a blue sliver at the end of alleyways, a line on the horizon beyond the garden gate, a shivering skein of blues and greens and tints of silvery-gray enfolding the harbor’s long stone jetty. On blue and blustery March days the breakers crash against the Strand’s low seawall and spew foam over the jetty, drenching the prostitutes and, occasionally, their customers. On calm, clear days you might just be able to make out on the horizon a dun-colored slice, like roast beef in gravy, of Wales.”*