

The O'Glisane (Gleeson) Sept of Silvermines

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In, seeking to position the Gleesons of Silvermines in a broad social, economic and demographic context, this article has four main aims. First, to provide a comprehensive historical account, including a review of the name and its origins. Secondly, to provide an analysis of extant parish baptismal and marriage registers. This will provide a rich insight into 19th century demographic trends in Silvermines. This leads into a discussion of the impact of the 1840s Famine on the Gleesons. Finally, what historians call the 'push-pull model of emigration' is considered. What were the local pressures and international opportunities, in the form of secure employment and higher wages that led many members of the Gleeson, O'Brien, Byrne, Dwyer and Kennedy families of Silvermines to emigrate to Australia.

Gleeson – a 'genuine Gaelic Irish Family' – had various spellings, including Glisan, Glysane, O'Glisain, O'Glyssane, O'Glesain and O'Glisane.³ The origin of Gleeson has attracted several theories. As Gloss or Glas means green in modern Irish, it has been suggested that Gleeson means descendant of a little green man or grey eyes.⁴ D.F. Gleeson proposed that Gleeson was spelt Glise in the 14th and 15th centuries. Glise derived from the Irish words *Giolla and losa*, which meant servant of Jesus.⁵

The O'Glisane Sept dominated the territories between Nenagh and Killaloe on the Shannon River. Between the 11th century and the end of the 16th century, the O'Glisanes were considered one of Ireland's principal families.⁶ Despite their extensive number they did not have a (separate) coat of arms. Their main ancestral civil parish, *Kill-mor-Aradh-tire*, now Kilmore, meant the Great Church of Ara Tire. According to distinguished genealogist, Edward MacLysaght, the Gleesons were of the same stock as the O'Donegans of the Barony of Ara, Co. Tipperary, who originated from Muskerry, Co. Cork.⁷ D.F. Gleeson believes the O'Glisanes were descended from O'Brien stock, which traditionally held more than 250 acres in Kilmore.⁸ He wrote that the ancient name of Silvermines was *Knockaunderrig*, later refined to *Knockanroe*.⁹

Gleesons appear in records from the Middle Ages. William O'Gleesan of Kilmore, for example, received a fine in November 1374 for not keeping the peace on several occasions.¹⁰ In 1303 Sir William Glise the chaplain of 'Byr' (Birr), reacted strongly to the death of a local Silvermines man by an migrant miner. A 'revengeful' Sir William had all migrant miners excommunicated from the Catholic Church.¹¹ The 1420 Calendar of Papal Registers records a Dermot O'Gleeson.¹² In 1558, Conogher O'Glisane of Cloghetany was fined for stealing a cow from Walter Archer of Kilkenny. At a similar time Raynble O'Glisane

had his cattle stolen from the former monastery of Holy Cross.¹³ In 1594 the Earl of Ormond received two and a half acres of land owned by the slain Dermot O'Glisane of Garranmore, *alias* Garrymore.¹⁴

Erenach, derived from *eireanaigh*, referred to the land stewards of Kilmore Monastery.¹⁵ The 1646 *Down Survey* recorded Teige Glisane and John O'Glissane as *erenachs* of Kilmore Abbey, meaning they were descendants of the founders of the ancient abbey and also, for many generations, custodians of church lands.¹⁶ Historian, William Smyth, says that the 'old erenagh family of the Gleesons controlled 5.2 per cent of land in Tipperary, mainly in the parish of Kilmore in the mid 17th century'.¹⁷ The 1654-6 *Civil Survey* shows O'Glisanes held 1,461 acres - almost all of it within the parish of Kilmore - with thirty-three freeholders in this small area.¹⁸ In the mid 17th century there were eighty-five recorded occurrences of Gleeson in the Barony of Upper Ormond.¹⁹ The following Gleesons paid taxes in the 1650s.

Table One:
Glissane Sept Members in Kilmore Parish
according to the 1650s' Hearth Money Records

<u>Name</u>	<u>Townland</u>
Conr. Glissane	de Cooline
Daniell Glissane	de Kilboy
Derby Glyssane	Lisin Conly
Edmond Glissane	Ballianragh
Edmond Glisane	Carriglaehe
Donough Glissane	Gariard
John Glyssane	Gurtedeghed
Loghlin Glyssane	de Errinagh
Mortagh Glyssane	Kyllrofill
Morrrough Glissane	Lisin Conly
Mortagh Glyssane	Lisin Conly
Roger Glissane	de Gariard
Roger Glissane	Tulahedy
Shilly Glissane	Carriglaehe ²⁰

By the 17th century Gleeson had become the dominant spelling. Some families, however, continued to use more traditional spellings. Jillin Glison (1740-1781), for example was buried in the parish of Burhessbeg.²¹ In 1704, 28 year old Fr. James Glisane of Killaneave was registered as a 'Mass Priest' at Nenagh.²² While Gleesons were unmistakably Catholic, a very small number converted to Protestantism. Edmund Gleeson of Kilmore converted on 20 February 1762 in Dublin. So too did Roger Glison, a Nenagh-based carpenter in 1770 and Edmond Gleeson, son of Morgan Gleeson of Lisduff.²³ In 1780 Catherine Gleeson of Kilmore parish married George Spiaules at the Church of Ireland in Kilmastulla.²⁴

One way of distinguishing the numerous Gleesons in Silvermines and adjacent parishes was through the use of nicknames. Writing in the late 20th century, Martin O'Corrbui explained:

The Gleeson surname is about as strong today as it was 1,000 years ago. So strong, indeed, that a variety of nicknames are in use, not for amusement or ridicule, but as a necessary way of identifying themselves.²⁵

Nicknames derived from multiple sources: maternal maiden name, a physical feature, a person's trade or occupation, fighting prowess, the townland of birth or locality. Many Gleeson nicknames passed down the generations, though unfortunately for historians, they were usually not recorded or have died out. Gleeson intermarriage sparked more nicknames to distinguish new branches. Fortunately, the 1850s Griffith's Valuation recorded *some* Gleeson nicknames, an extract of which is provided in Table Two.

Table Two:

**Gleeson Nicknames Recorded
in the 1850s Griffiths Valuation**

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Townland</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Nickname</u>
Kilmore	Curryquin	Mich.	Martin
	Erinagh	Patrick	pro.
	Erinagh	John	Boulteeny
	Garryard West	Jas.	Oxley
	Gorteenadiha	Jas.	Oxley
	Gorteenadiha	James	Oxley
	Gorteenadiha	Michael	of Shallee
	Gortshaneroe	Thomas	Jack
	The Division	Thos.	Brook
Killoscully	Ballynаноose	William	Michael
	Lackagh	John	Tom
	Shallee (Coughlan)	Patk.	Owen
	Shallee (Coughlan)	Patk.	Red
	Shallee (Coughlan)	Patk.	Catherine
	Shallee Upper & Lower	Denis	Helper
Castletownarra	Kilparteen	Patrick	Dan.
	Kilparteen	Edmund	Patt.
Kilnarath	Garrain	Michael	Morty
Ardcrony	Gortadalava	Edward	Plover
	Magheranenagh	Edw.	Plover
Kilcomentry	Birdhill	Ptk.	Larry

John Gleeson *Boolteeny* of Erinagh rented 42 acres from Mrs. Hanley. Given the dominance of John as a first name within Kilmore parish, and in the townland of Erinagh, it is possible that John Gleeson *Boolteeny* identified either his native townland of Boolteeny or perhaps he had moved to Boolteeny. James Gleeson of Garryard West was named 'Oxley'. *Jack* as a nickname arises in several references such as Thomas Gleeson *Jack* of Gortshaneroe, and Kiltyrome in Kilmore parish. It is unclear whether this was the same person. A more indicative nickname was *gravel* as in Patt Gleeson of Cooleene, who according to the 1823 *Tithes Applotment* rented one acre. *Gravel* perhaps reflected the occupation of Pat's ancestor, who probably swept gravel at nearby Shallee silvermines.

A well known nickname linked with some Gleeson families of Garryard and Shallee was *helper*. Local history tells us that these Gleesons helped Cromwell's cannon up Cruishanee hill in preparation for the 1651 siege of Limerick. In return for their help, these Gleesons supposedly retained or received free land. D.F. Gleeson refutes this interpretation saying that Cromwell did not enter North Tipperary; his army did not cross the mountains; and a cannon was transported along the Shannon River to Limerick. He concluded:

This story furnishes a curiously apposite illustration of the manner in which tradition down the years can erect an edifice of fiction upon a substratum of fact.²⁶

Oliver Cromwell left Ireland in 1650.

There does remain, however, some possible basis for the nickname. D.F. Gleeson does somewhat focus on the literal - that is, he is correct in ruling out Cromwell's personal involvement, the exact route and the nature of the arsonary. Nevertheless, D.F. Gleeson agrees that the most probable route taken was 'via the silver mines' and 'that some of the native families of the locality, willingly or unwillingly, assisted . . . and helped the transport.'²⁷ Given the abundance of Gleesons and the possible absence of a formal hierarchy the involvement by some Gleesons and others is plausible. In this scenario some Gleesons may have earned the *helper* nickname. Putting to one side this discussion, there is considerable doubt that Gleeson *helpers* retained their lands due to some agreement with Cromwell. D.F. Gleeson says that Thady O'Meara of Lissiniskey, the 'lawful overlord of them in English law in 1651' left the lands to several individuals including Kennedys, Gleesons and Quigleys.²⁸

Another interpretation is that *helper* derived from those Gleesons who worked at Shallee mines. During operations, a call would go out for men to help lift the large buckets from the mine shaft to the surface. Those Gleesons who responded to this call were given the name *helper*.²⁹

- III -

During Ireland's 1641-42 rebellion the village of Silvermines became a flash point. Leading members of Anglo-Irish and Irish Catholic septs began an island-wide uprising against the new British settlers. In his 1860 classic John O'Donoghue says that a 'series of acts of oppression on the part of those who had the charge of the government' provoked the rebellion.³⁰ Other historians note that the policies of English monarch, Charles I, 'drove Irish Roman Catholics, even of the most loyal type into rebellion'.³¹ Rising tensions in 1641 between Protestants and Catholics led to vicious assaults and reprisals in several Irish counties. P. J. Cornish commented that:

There was no such plan of wholesale massacres . . . but in the first few months the insurgents committed many murders, often savagely. These murders were committed because of a lack of discipline, for private vengeance, or out of religious fanaticism.³²

Figures of the total number killed vary quite considerably. One source says that ' . . . a moderate calculation, 150,000 of British Planters are said to have lost their lives, without the least provocation on their part, in this barbois and cruel manner'.³³ The same source noted that 'many' Irish or Papists, were 'persons of honour' and that they detested the rebellion. In Munster, representatives of Gaelic families and Protestant landowners traded blows in several towns. The local pre-cursor was the ongoing confiscation - or plantation - of lands by the British government under the direction of Lord William Russell and Sir Charles Brooke. D.F. Gleeson reports that of the 32 Gleeson landowners in Upper Ormond at this time, only two acquired land in Connaught.³⁴

By 1641 Silvermines' deposits of lead and zinc had attracted several hundred foreign workers. Des Cowman suggests that 'good relations existed between local people and the mining colony up to the outbreak of the rebellion'.³⁶ Significantly, also, the 'social elite' did not lend support to what would become known as the Silvermines 'atrocities'. Historian, Nicholas Canny says that John Kennedy, a landowner of Dunaille, spread word of an impending assault and tried to protect more than 20 of his Protestant tenants.³⁷ But John's brother, Hugh, struck in February 1642. His attack on Protestant families drew support from several cousins, including John and Daniel Glisane, the latter known as 'Daniel the Great', as well as Hugh Coffey.²⁰ Canny concludes that:

The fact that discipline broke down so quickly and so readily suggests the relatively few of the minor officers of the rebel forces shared the lofty objectives and high sense of moral purpose that was articulated by the leaders.³⁹

British sources put the death toll in Silvermines at 32.⁴⁰ Fr. John Gleeson and D.F. Gleeson believe the figure 'enormously exaggerated'. Fr. Gleeson, for example, puts the loss at 13.⁴¹ William Nolan does not give a figure, but says the 'highly skilled imported workforce . . . suffered substantial attrition'.⁴² R.F. Foster believes 'horrific sufferings' took place, but also noted that the 'reliability of contemporary accounts remains suspect'.⁴³ A modern-day plaque in Silvermines village indicates 20 died in the revolt.

The Earl of Ormond urged retribution:

the English at the Silvermines . . . were most treacherously killed, except some few that got into Nenagh and Roscrea. The perpetrators of this cruelty were the Kennedy and Glisanes and Bryans of Duharra, to whom I trust it shall be returned in full measure.⁴⁴

A remorseful Hugh Kennedy committed suicide before he was captured. Despite his sincere efforts at Silvermines, John Kennedy, and his son, James, by virtue of being members of the Confederate Army, were later arrested and executed at Nenagh in 1651. It is unclear what befell the Glisanes involved in the massacre. The 1642 massacre had another dimension: historian, Perceval-Maxwell says that Catholic gentry and clergy combined to encourage a 'prominent Protestant, William Tymes, who lived near the 'royal' Silvermines to convert to Catholicism in exchange for an assurance of the security of the estate'.⁴⁵

- IV -

Documentation about life in 18th century Silvermines is rather sparse. The story takes more shape in the early decades of the 19th century, through the use of extant parish records and local newspapers. Contemporary and limited official data suggests a prevalence of early marriage, especially among the rural lower classes. An early age marriage led to increased fertility rates, and when combined with longer life expectancy, underpinned the growth of Ireland's population. By 1780 the Irish population was estimated to be four million.⁴⁶ In the decades leading up to the 1840s Famine, Ireland experienced an unprecedented sharp rise in population, which peaked at around 8 million in 1840. Ireland had become one of Europe's most densely populated countries with up to 400 people per square mile. Predominantly rural-based the burgeoning population was largely reliant on the agricultural sector, and its staple crop, the potato. By 1845, Tipperary North's population had surpassed 200,000, including more than 6,000 inhabitants in Silvermines Parish.⁴⁷

The resulting population pressure intensified the struggle for available arable land. Anti-social behaviour and serious crimes rose sharply, also. During the 1840s many Gleesons of Tipperary North were both victims of, and conspirators/perpetrators in crime. Some Gleesons also appeared as defence witnesses in court cases, sometimes involving family members, at the Nenagh Assizes, and occasionally appeared 'unwillingly for the Crown'.⁴⁸

From its commencement in mid 1839, the *Nenagh Guardian*, a re-launch of the reactionary *Clonmel Advertiser*, regularly published accounts of local crime. The *Guardian*, an unabashed promoter of Protestant land rights, promoted unlawfulness by Catholic Irish as a platform to support English rule. Notwithstanding its bias, the *Guardian* remains an important primary source. In an early edition, the *Guardian* reported that Edward Shea of Silvermines 'lies dangerously ill' after a beating he received at a *Sheebeen*, an illegal drinking house, by two men, named Quigley and Gleeson.⁴⁹

The *Guardian's* publication of the extent of violence in Tipperary North districts drew praise from other similarly minded unionist publications:

. . . a valuable auxiliary to the cause of Conservatism . . . we cannot but congratulate the loyalists of Tipperary, and indeed the friends of Conservatism throughout the united Kingdom, on having so efficient a GUARDIAN [sic] stationed in a district that which has for so long a period been a sink of iniquity and sedition.⁵⁰

The *Guardian's* report of the murder of John Kennedy, an agent, raised suspicions that his assailants may have been members of a Gleeson family who recently lost their jobs to Kennedy. A brother of the deceased and a Mr Carey, to whom a Gleeson owed a debt, were present at the arrest of the said Gleeson. As the bailiffs escorted the prisoner to Clonmel, Kennedy and Gleeson feigned an argument.

Parties so deadly opposed, and who had repeatedly declared their determination not to cease till one or the other was totally expired, were wrangling and abusing on the way; they had not proceeded much further from Holycross when the driver was assailed by Kennedy and Carey and knocked off the car. When the driver (bailiff) reached Cashel he found Kennedy lying stupidly drunk . . . and on being asked where Gleeson was, both he and Carey said that they did not know, that he made his escape from them.⁵¹

In the immediate years before the famine violence escalated. In January 1842 Thomas and Phillip Gleeson were convicted of causing a riot and received one month's confinement.⁵² Dennis Gleeson of Shallee was murdered in connection with being a caretaker for William Gleeson's property. Matthew Gleeson of Curragharnie and James Gleeson were also assailed because they worked for the same William Gleeson.⁵³

In January 1843 John, Stephen and Patrick Gleeson were indicted for possessing arms and assaulting Martin Maher of Knockinglass, near Nenagh. There was conflicting evidence about the whereabouts of the Gleesons. Johanna Brien of Ballymackey said that Patrick and Stephen Gleeson were at her house until shortly before the victim appeared at the local police station to register a complaint.⁵⁴ The judge questioned Brien and the Gleesons at length to ascertain the veracity of her claim. Maher's employer, Richard Coffee and his wife declared that the Gleesons were present at the crime, and also alleged that John Gleeson 'swore if I did not hold down my head that he would blow my brains out'. After instructions from the judge, the jury retired, before they issued a verdict of guilty for all three Gleesons. Each received life transportation to Australia.⁵⁵

Violence and domestic crime reached 'unprecedented levels' in North Tipperary by 1844. Assaults occurred regularly in the villages surrounding Nenagh, as well as in the town itself. In January four members of the 'Tipperary boys', a local secret society, assaulted John O'Brien of Kilmore, a Poor Law Guardian,⁵⁶ on his return home from the Nenagh Quarter Sessions. O'Brien managed to draw 'a pistol from his breast and fired on his assailants, whereupon they instantly fled.' The *Guardian* reported that this was the perpetrators second attack on O'Brien.⁵⁷ This John O'Brien is probably the same man that Daniel Grace referred to as having succeeded Daniel O'Brien, 'probably a near relative', as district relief officer for Dolla, Kilmore and Templederry in 1847.⁵⁸

In March 1844, John Gleeson of Kilmore parish was returning home with his wife in their donkey and cart when a stone thrown at him caused 'his skull [to be] dangerously fractured'.⁵⁹ In the same month:

A man staggered into Nenagh 'with his face wounded and battered to a jelly which he had received from the infliction of an armed party of seven men, in the parish of Kilmore, but against whom he could not lodge any information.'⁶⁰

The *Nenagh Guardian* editorialised:

We do not recollect that at any previous period of our ministry, this division of the County was in a more fearful state of disorganization . . . outrage against outrage follows in quick succession that it would require a regular official Registry of each in order to keep in recollection even those of the most recent occurrence. It has been argued before, and strongly too, that the existing laws are not adequate to protect property and life.⁶¹

Of the ninety prisoners brought before the Spring 1844 Assizes at Nenagh, one quarter faced charges of murder and a further twenty-five per cent for aiding and conspiracy to murder or serious assaults, often conducted at night, involving the firing of weapons which inflicted grievous injuries to unarmed farmers.⁶² There were relatively few cases of lesser crimes, such as cattle or sheep stealing. On the eve of the Assizes, the *Guardian* editorialised:

Murder, the deepest crime in the catalogue of human sins - and one that eries the loudest

before Heaven for justice on its perpetrators - should neither be unrobed of its horrors - not extenuated in its criminality.⁶³

In 1841 Patrick Gleeson, nicknamed *Omadhaun* (which means a fool⁶⁴), of Blakefield, near Toomavara, had been charged with the murder of Thomas Tierney. When the case came to trial in 1844, *Omadhaun's* siblings, John, Thomas, and Catherine, and their mother, Hannah attended the trial. John put up a strong defence, and in a rare case, the jury dismissed the charge.⁶⁵ This did not stop the local press from expressing concerns about *Omadhaun's* acquittal and questioning the evidence provided by Fr John Meagher, the Gleesons' parish priest.⁶⁶

At the same assizes a Patrick Gleeson of Hoghernenagh was brought before the court on a charge of abducting Margaret Brien of Nenagh. He was tried at Nenagh on 13 April 1844 for attempting to 'seduce Margaret Brien who had entered into a treaty marriage with the prisoner's brother, John Gleeson.'⁶⁷ The jury regarded the witness, Honora Gleeson, a sister of the accused as unconvincing. After being convicted Patrick Gleeson pleaded 'My Lord, I have a large family and don't take me from them'.⁶⁸ The Judge replied:

I am sorry for it and I am equally sorry I cannot give the least mitigation in your case. You appear to have been in a comfortable station in the class of society to which you belong, and I regret, that in the circumstances, that you are deterred from the commission of that most guilty and criminal act.

It seems that the young woman was seduced and had some small property, and you took her away in order to get her married to your brother, or for some other purpose, and afterwards did your best to prevent her being restored to her own family - and by her evidence and demeanour on the table, she appeared to tell the truth. His Lordship then passed sentence of transportation for seven years to the prisoner.⁶⁹

A year later, Patrick's brother John, was charged for a similar offence. When John's trial began in early 1845, Margaret Brien, initially refused to give evidence:

I would rather go to gaol for 12 months. I've been threatened very severely for the fellow that has gone (the witness transported a brother of the prisoner last assizes for the same offence. If he (John) is transported I can't stand in this country. I'd be killed.⁷⁰

Brien went on to say that she had forgiven the prisoner and 'would sooner marry him than he'd be transported'.⁷¹ The jury found John Gleeson not guilty and the prisoner was discharged. In October 1844 several other Gleesons were involved in major incidents, including Daniel Gleeson, who was alleged to have inflicted a grievous assault on Mary Hara.

Gleeson came up the lane shouting for informers and he accused Hara's brother of being an informer. He struck Hara with a stone.⁷²

The blow cut Hara severely and she was confined to bed for 18 days. During the trial it was revealed that her brother was in jail for stabbing a cousin of Daniel Gleeson. The jury returned a guilty verdict and Gleeson was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment and hard labour. The magistrate explained what appeared to be a light sentence:

You are surprised perhaps by the leniency of the sentence: it appears your case arose out of intemperance which is a source from whence springs many of the crimes which are unhappily too frequent in this county.⁷³

At a similar time Pat Ryan and Pat Gleeson were indicted for starting a 'riot' which resulted in '30 men fighting in the streets of Silvermines with sticks . . .'⁷⁴ While Ryan's defence referred to his 'excellent character', Gleeson did not have a similar defence. Both were sentenced to one month's confinement. A year later a Michael Gleeson was charged with 'encouraging a witness to give false evidence.'⁷⁵

On the eve of the Famine the *Nenagh Guardian* proclaimed:

It is a fearful state of things when the murderer is cherished - instead of being abhorred - sheltered and protected instead of being handed over to the law - and every ingenuity and services, aided by gross perjury was to save him from the punishment of his offence. The murder governs by day; and the Terry Alts reigns by night.⁷⁶

In April 1845 John Gleeson was 'fully committed to the Nenagh gaol' for his grievous assault on William and James Meahan.⁷⁷ Fever pitch suspicion about government informers contributed to outbreaks of violence. In one case a dispute arose after a fair at Killaloe. On the way home to Tipperary North, Thomas McMahon, John Gleeson, Thady Ryan and Patrick Ryan got into an affray with James and William Meahan and Mary Hurley at Ballinard. A small riot broke out after one of Meehan's cousins complained that Gleeson had 'called his name out at the fair'. The crown dropped the more serious charge of grievous assault - as there was evidence that Meehan freely entered into the fight with Gleeson and that neither Gleeson nor his companions had any weapons. A guilty verdict and a sentence of 12 months hard labour was imposed on Gleeson, McMahon and the two Ryans.⁷⁸

In 1846 Patrick Gleeson was murdered when he attempted to serve legal notices on behalf of his employer. His assassin Terence Corby, and three other armed men were stationed at the four routes along which Patrick would come. Although locals raised £5 for Corby to escape to Wales, he was caught, arrested and brought back to Tipperary where he was tried and executed.⁷⁹ As the historian, R. M. Beames acknowledged, gangs involved in violent crimes targeted and randomly selected persons. Given Corby's youthful age (22) and that he was one of four men who sought to detain Gleeson, it may not have been that he had a grievance against Gleeson; rather that he was a victim of circumstance.

- V -

The large demographic growth of the early nineteenth century and rising violence of the 1830s and 1840s met a circuit breaker with the outbreak of the 'Great' Famine. Famines had occurred across Ireland throughout the Middle Ages. In 1580-81, for example, a 'terrible famine' occurred in Munster.⁸⁰ In the late 1640s a serious famine affected much of Ireland.⁸¹ In the first half of the 19th century, crop failures occurred frequently, with serious losses reported in 1822, 1832-1834; 1836-37, 1839 and 1842. But the famine of the late 1840s precipitated a catastrophe of unparalleled proportions by Irish, and European, standards.

Following the potato crop failure in 1846, a group of 'non-resident noblemen, gentlemen and inhabitants of the Parish of Kilmore' made donations 'to the Treasurer of the Silvermines Relief Committee for the poor of the Parish of Kilmore'.⁸² Some of the local farmers who contributed to the Kilmore Parish relief fund included:

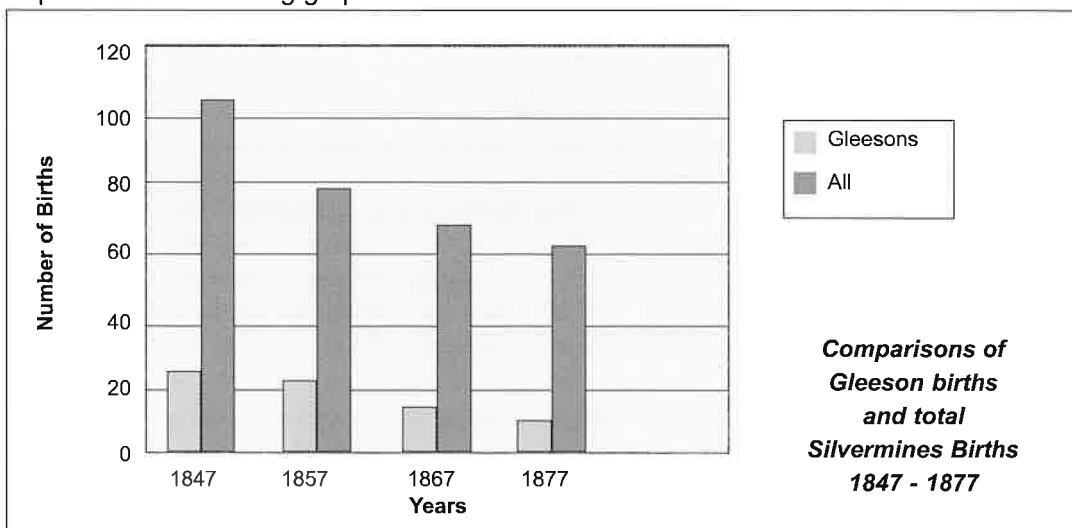
Table Three:
Silvermines' supporters of Relief Fund

<u>Name</u>	<u>Townland</u>	<u>£</u>
Denis Glisan	Silvermines	2
John Gleeson	Boolteeny	2
James Gleeson	Tenneranna	1
Andrew Gleeson	Bawn	1
Denis Gleeson	Bawn	0 10s
Thomas Gleeson	Ballyphilip	0 5s
Nicholas Kennedy	Bawn	1
John Kennedy	Lahed	0 5s
John O'Brien	Kilmore	0 10s

Other, probably poorer members of Kilmore Parish, also contributed to famine relief appeals. At the Silvermines' Catholic Chapel, for example, three collections were made in 1849, netting £16; £8-7 and £8-7 respectively.⁸³

The Famine and its suddenness dealt a sharp blow to most Gaelic and poorer Protestant families. Across County Tipperary approximately 70,000 people died during the second half of the 1840s. Many more died in the early 1850s as a result of destitution, lingering disease and poor nutrition. The population declined thirty per cent in Tipperary North, well above the national average of twenty per cent.⁸⁴

The 1840s famine created a Malthusian-like situation. A check on population occurred with a significant deferral in marriages, which consequently led to a large decline in fertility. In Silvermines the number of marriages fell by fifty-five per cent in the late 1840s, creating a forty per cent decline in baptisms registered at the Silvermines' church, as depicted in the following graph.⁸⁵



As the Famine crisis deepened administrative tasks such as the recording of baptisms and marriages – never a high priority for some clergy – were hampered. The clergy struggled to attend to the rapidly rising number of sick and dying. Not surprising the Kilmore parish registers contains a note written by the priest indicating in a number of instances: 'I do not know the date' of the weddings – and have relied on 'declarations that the people had been married'.⁸⁶

Several factors accounted for the large decline in Kilmore's population. First, mortality and morbidity resulting from the famine had the largest impact. A hospital at Silvermines established in October 1846 was shortlived due to insufficient government funding.⁸⁷ Second, although weak in spirit, many starving people gravitated towards workhouses in towns such as Nenagh and Borrioscane. During the famine years Nenagh recorded a population increase of twenty-two per cent and Borrioscane forty-three per cent.⁸⁸ The Nenagh workhouse, which housed many Gleesons, recorded the largest mortality in Tipperary during the famine years.⁸⁹

Admittance to the over-crowded Nenagh workhouse provided some solace, with 750 people emigrating to Australia, Canada and the United States between 1849 and 1860.⁹⁰ Morty Gleeson, 60, and wife, Margaret, 51, and their 13 year old son moved from Kilmore to the Nenagh Workhouse where they stayed for several years, before some US-based relatives provided £8 for their passage.⁹¹ In August 1851 Judy and Bridget Gleeson emigrated to Canada. Orphans, such as Bridget Gleeson also emigrated to Australia. So too did Mary Gleeson, 16, from Newport, and Margaret Gleeson 30, and her four children of Nenagh. New York bound were Bridget Gleeson, 16 of Kilkeary; Margaret Gleeson, 14, of Nenagh; and in 1856 John Gleeson 8, Catherine Gleeson and another child emigrated to New York.⁹² Residents were more likely to migrate to other towns than to undertake permanent emigration. It would not be until the 1850s and 1860s that emigration accounted for a considerable part of population outflow from the parish.

As a result of the famine, many Gleeson families either perished or permanently emigrated, such as Michael Gleeson and Mary Cooney of Erinagh and their children Thomas and Mary born in 1841 and 1844; Michael Gleeson and Mary Flannery of Erinagh, and their children, Marryanne, 1845, and Sarah, 1847.

Even before the Famine some Gleesons undertook the long sea voyage – some three months – to Australia. Most settled in the two largest colonies, New South Wales and Victoria. In 1842 the 'respectable' Dr Glissan of Nenagh, with his 'lady' and six young children, emigrated to Australia. The *Nenagh Guardian* reported that Dr Glissan possesses the 'most mild and affable demeanour and the most gentle and docile manner'.⁹³ In the mid 1830s, John Hampton Gleeson, son of John Gleeson and Mary Burton of Nenagh, emigrated to India; after marrying he took his young family to South Australia in 1838.⁹⁴ John Purcell and his wife, Bridget Gleeson, arrived on the *Jane Gifford* in 1841. Bridget was the daughter of Patrick Gleeson and Magdalan Gleeson, the latter who had died before Bridget emigrated. On 7 January 1840 Patrick Gleeson, son of Patrick and Bridget Burke, aged 18 of Kilmore arrived in Sydney, on board the *Alfred*. So too, Michael Gleeson, aged 28, a farm labourer of Silvermines, arrived in the following year. Both Patrick and Michael were single and could read, but neither could write.⁹⁵ Edward Gleeson of Nenagh also arrived on the *Susan* in that year.

After the Famine the incidence of reported violence declined, though roughly in proportion to the (reduced) population. A family quarrel in November 1857 resulted in Edward Gleeson murdering his first cousin Michael Gleeson near Borrisoleigh. Edward's good character references, including one from the coroner, Mr O'Meara, led to a reduced sentence of two years hard labour.⁹⁶ On Christmas Day, 1857 Morgan Gleeson and Pat Ryan of Silvermines were fined 10s for selling spirits at prohibited hours.⁹⁷ Crime continued in Silvermines and neighbouring districts on the eve of the Gleesons' emigrating to Australia. In February 1858 the *Nenagh Guardian* reported that:

On the night of the 12th, as John and Michael Gleeson (brothers) were returning to their residence near Shallee, where both parties partook freely of the 'mountain dew', John while under the care of his servant man, Timothy O'Brien, fell off the car, and was seriously injured, which so irritated Michael Gleeson that he struck O'Brien with a . . . on the head, inflicting severe cuts, from the effects of which he lies in a dangerous position.⁹⁸

In March 1858, the *Nenagh Guardian* reported John Gleeson had been convicted of stealing £10 and sentenced to six months jail. The *Nenagh Guardian* editorialised:

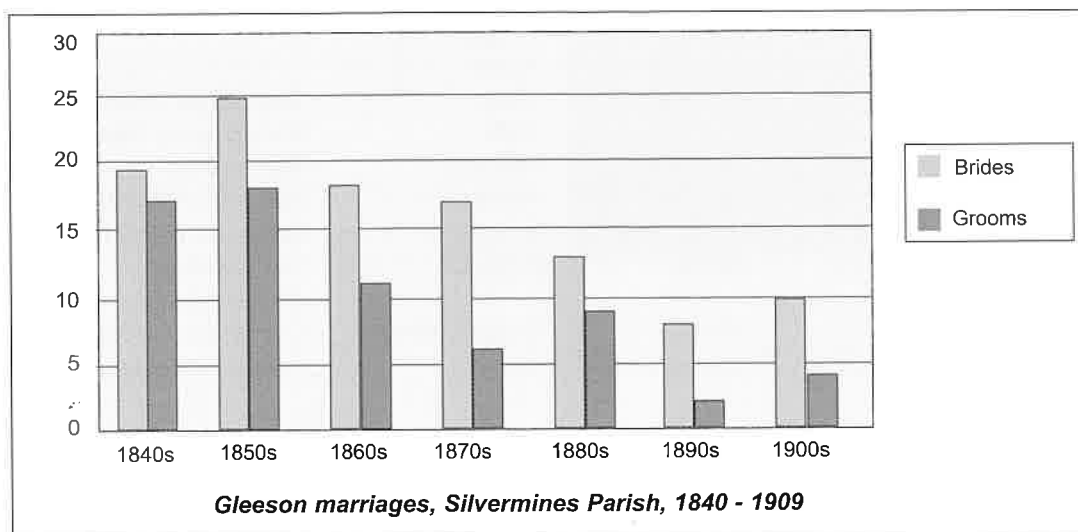
Are our hopes doomed to be disappointed and our fears to be realised? Will we never have an end to the murder and bloodshed in the unfortunate country?¹⁰⁰

The late 19th century Irish aversion to marriage – more pronounced among men – was reflected in the declining number of Gleeson grooms. By the 1880s there were significantly fewer occasions where both parties to a marriage were Gleesons. Other factors, too, had contributed to fewer Gleesons in Silvermines. Locally, the declining importance of the Shallee mine and less employment prospects reduced Kilmore's population.

After the 1860s the Gleeson presence in Silvermines decreased and in numerical terms the Ryans became the dominant sept, followed by the McGraths and Hogans. Yet, in 1878, brides with a Gleeson surname comprised five of the eleven marriages at Silvermines.¹⁰¹ In 1881, Bridget Gleeson of Erinagh married Timothy Ryan. A few years later, the *Postal Directory of Munster*, listed the following Gleesons as 'Principal Farmers' in the Parish of Silvermines:

- Denis Gleeson, Lisheenacloonta
- John Gleeson, Boolteeny
- John Gleeson, Garryard
- Michael Gleeson, Carrow
- Patrick Gleeson, Carrow¹⁰²

This discussion begs the question of what might have been the population situation in Kilmore Parish if the famine had not occurred. It is unlikely that the large population growth of the first half of the century could have been sustained. It would appear that emigration – which had begun through various assisted and unassisted schemes prior to the Famine – may have played an even larger role in Irish society if it had not been for the watershed of the Famine. Between 1844 and 1911 the province of Munster recorded a 57 per cent decline in population, the largest in Ireland. As Joseph Lee noted, the striking change in population after the famine was influenced by delayed or declined levels of marriage and emigration.¹⁰³



- VI -

Extant marriage and baptismal registers are a good source of demographic and genealogical information. Whilst not as informative as comparative Australian parish registers, e.g. they do not list age at marriage, and parents' names before the early 20th century, Irish registers' inclusion of the townland of bride or groom and other comments, such as 'gone to America', is most helpful when trying to distinguish between people with the same Christian and surnames.¹⁰⁴ The following table lists those marriages where both parties had a Gleeson surname. Given Gleesons had lived in Silvermines for many centuries there would have been numerous other inter-marriages with relatives, such as Brien, Dwyer, Flanagan, Kennedy and Leamy, to name just a few. For example, William Shanahan (b 1848) son of Thomas Shanahan and Mary Gleeson, married Bridget Gleeson of Garryard in March 1878.

Table Four:
Gleeson Intermarriages, Silvermines Parish, 1840-1930

<u>Date</u>	<u>Groom</u>	<u>Bride</u>	<u>Townland of parties/comment</u>
7 August 1841	Cornelius	Margaret	
7 September 1841	James	Mary	
23 January 1842	Michael	Margaret	
n.r. 1842	William	Mary	
16 February 1848	Michael	Honoria	
6 March 1848	Denis	Catherine	Kiltyrome. nee Quigley
28 February 1854	Timothy	Ellen	
20 February 1855	John	Margaret	
16 February 1858	Michael	Honora	'cousins'
12 April 1858	William	Onny	
19 October 1864	John	Catherine	nee Quigley

28 April 1870	James	Bridget	
19 February 1871	John	Anne	
22 October 1876	Michael	Mary	Glencolloo; Cranahurt
3 July 1877	John	Kate	Knockanroe; Garryard
13 May 1888	John	Winifred	Silvermines
23 October 1907	William	Winifred	Rathfala; Ballycahill
4 February 1917	Thomas	Bridget	Garryard; Ballinoo
16 January 1918	Denis	Bridget	Gortnachleha; Gortnachleha
22 February 1922	Martin	Bridget <i>planner</i>	Cranahurt; Gurnadi
24 November 1926	Michael	Sarah	Rosminane; Gurnadi

In addition, the Silvermines' registers enable identification by townland of the following major Gleeson families in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Table Five:

**Some major Gleeson Families residing in Silvermines and Ballynacloough Parishes,
late 18th century to early 20th century**

<u>Townland</u>	<u>Gleeson</u>	<u>Spouse</u>
Ballincur	Matthew	Penelope Corbett
Ballinoo	John	O'Mara
Ballinoo	Thomas	Bridget Ryan
Ballycahill	Daniel	Margaret Boyle
Ballygasheen	John	Mary McGrath
Ballygasheen	John	Mary Ryan
Barravie	Martin	Mary Malone
Bawn	Andrew	Mary Duggan
Bawn	Denis	Judith Ryan
Boherbawn	Michael	Margaret Behan
Boherboo	Patrick	Sally Woods
Boolteeny	Andrew	Mary Anne Healey
Capparoe	Denis	Bridget Irwin
Capparoe	Michael	Mary Forrester
Cranahurt	John	Judith Reidy
Cranahurt	Michael	Mary Gleeson
Curragharneen	Patrick	Bridget Kennedy
Curryquin	Patrick	Winifred Boland
Garryard	John	Mary Reidy
Garryard	James	Mary Ryan
Garryard	Timothy	Judith Ryan
Garryard	William	Bridget Gleeson
Gortnacleha	Michael	Mary Collins

Gurtnadi	Patrick	Bridget Grace
Gurtnadi	William	Onny Gleeson
Erinagh	Denis	Sarah Ryan
Erinagh	Michael	Elizabeth Kennedy
Erinagh	Michael	Catherine Walsh
Erinagh	Michael	Mary Cooney
Erinagh	Honora	Feehilly
Kilmore	Cornelius	Margaret Cooney
Kilmore	John	Julia Rix
Kilmore	John	Kitty Quigley
Kiltyrome	Patrick	Margaret Dwyer
Kiltyrome	Timothy	Mary McGrath
Lisenhall	James	Bridget Dwyer
Lisenhall	James	Judith Fogarty
Milebush	John	Johannah Gleeson
Mucklin	James	Catherine McGrath
Mucklin	Michael	Catherine Collins
Mucklin	Michael	Mary Walshe
Mountisland	Michael	Honoria Gleeson
Mountisland	Michael	Onny Kennedy
Shallee	John	Anne Gleeson
Silvermines	Henry	Margaret Nolan
Silvermines	John	Kitty Quigley
Silvermines	Mortimer	Mary Mara
Silvermines	William	Anne Hanley
Stangs	John	Sarah Hogan
The Division	Thomas	Mary Flynn

Space does not allow discussion of most of these branches in this article. The inclusion of parents' names in early twentieth-century marriage records assists the researcher. James Gleeson, son of Michael Gleeson of Garryard, married his *third cousin* Johannah Lyons, daughter of John Lyons, on 17 June 1917. John Lyons, who had married Honoria Delaney in 1886, was the son of John Lyons and Mary Gleeson. Another interesting marriage entry records *first and second cousins*, Maurice Leamy of Erinagh and Honoria Ryan of Lisnageenly. The bride's parents were Martin Ryan and Bridget Gleeson. Maurice's parents, Denis Leamy and Catherine Kennedy had married in February 1869. The common denominator in these examples was Gleeson connections.

Of the families bound for the United States, Honora Gleeson and Michael Feehily¹⁰⁵ with their children, Maria (1851), Bridget (1852), Honoria (1854), John (1856), Cornelius (1858), Michael (1859) and Margaret (1862), emigrated to Chicago. Honora Feeley died in Chicago on 27 July 1895, aged 70. Her obituary in *The Chicago Times* says she was survived by three daughters, Mrs Walsh, Mrs Watson and Miss Hannora Feely.

The records of adjoining parishes also offer insights into marriage patterns. Inter-marriage between Gleesons in the parish of Burgess and Youghalarra was high; inter-marriage in Nenagh, where fewer Gleesons resided, was lower. Between 1792 and

1838 (register incomplete) only three Nenagh marriages where both parties were Gleeson. When Matthew Gleeson, for instance, married Catherine Gleeson in 1819, the witness was Fr Pat Ryan, Parish Priest of Kilmore and Ballinaclough.¹⁰⁶ Fr Ryan may have been a cousin and/or the groom was a Kilmore native.

In rural Youghalarra Gleeson and O'Brien intermarriages occurred more frequently than in Nenagh in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Given the tendency to identify the townland/parish of grooms the following marriages can be identified as having a connection with Kilmore.

Table Six:

Gleeson and O'Brien marriages, Youghalarra Parish, 1821-1855

<u>Date</u>	<u>Groom</u>	<u>Townland/Parish</u>	<u>Bride</u>
7 December 1821	Martin Brien	Garryard	Margaret Crotty
2 March 1824	Michael Gleeson	Bawn	Nancy Dwyer
4 February 1827	James Gleeson	Kilmore	Maria Madden
26 February 1827	Pat Gleeson	Portroe	Mary Touhey
March 1829	Morgan O'Brien	Ballywilliam	Sarah Brien
		<i>Witness: James Gleeson, Erinagh</i>	
10 March 1832	William Gleeson	Kilmore	Mary Dwyer
3 March 1840	John Gleeson	Kilmore	Mary Brien
23 February 1841	Jeremiah Gleeson	Kilmore	Bridget Mara
3 January 1845	Michael Gleeson	Ballinaclough	Mary Brien
7 February 1848	Michael Gleeson	Kilmore	Mary Hayes
7 March 1848	Daniel Gleeson	Kilmore	Mary Gleeson

- VII -

One large branch of Gleesons is the descendants of Michael Gleeson and Elizabeth Kennedy of Erinagh, who had at least five children: Patrick, Michael, John, James, and Margaret, born about the turn of the 19th century. Michael Gleeson junior married Catherine Walsh around 1830 and their children included Michael (died early), John, Michael and Eliza. The latter was baptised at Silvermines Church on 5 August 1843.¹⁰⁷ Eliza's sponsors were James Gleeson and Anne Flanagan. Given the Irish custom of relatives often being godparents to nephews and nieces, Anne's maiden name may have been Gleeson or Walsh. James Gleeson was most probably her father's brother. It is unlikely that baby Eliza survived the 1840s famine (a period in which her mother also probably died). There is no record of Eliza migrating to Australia with her father and brothers and O'Brien cousins.

The first Gleeson from Silvermines to emigrate to Australia was Patrick, son of Michael and Elizabeth Gleeson. Little is known about Patrick before his conviction for cow stealing on 28 March 1829. Patrick received a seven years sentence to the penal colony of NSW. He travelled on the *Larkins 2*, which sailed from Cork on 18 August 1829. Along with 190 other male prisoners Patrick received a grey cloth jacket, waistcoat, pair of trousers and shoes, shorts, two pair of stockings, cap, brush, towel, thread and needles and bag.¹⁰⁸ The *Larkins* arrived in Sydney on 22 December 1829.¹⁰⁹ Patrick Gleeson was allocated to Robert Greentree of Wilberforce, near Windsor, the third town established in the colony.¹¹⁰

On 26 July 1835 Patrick received a Ticket of Leave, which 'allowed [him] to remain in the district of Wilberforce on the recommendation of the Windsor Bench, 31 October 1833.¹¹¹ In 1836 Patrick Gleeson received a Conditional Pardon, which allowed him to remain in the colony.¹¹²

Patrick Gleeson married Rosanna Duffy, *alias* Reilly in 1837.¹¹³ Rosanna, a dairymaid from Dublin had been tried on 5 February 1835 for stealing and received seven years transportation.¹¹⁴ She was quite diminutive at four feet nine and three quarter inches, and had a scar on the right side of her upper lip. Although she had a son, she travelled alone on the *Rosylin Castle 5*.¹¹⁵ When Patrick Gleeson died on 10 November 1862, his death certificate referred to "Leeson", the Catholic parish recorded Gleeson, while the Probate Division of the NSW Supreme Court holds a "Will of a Patrick Gleeson or Leeson" of the same date.¹¹⁶ Unsurprising for the period, Patrick signed his will on 16 January 1860 with a mark.¹¹⁷

Patrick and Rose Gleeson were significant because financially and morally they supported the emigration of Gleesons and O'Briens from Silvermines. Nearly three decades elapsed between Patrick's involuntary arrival and the emigration of his nephew, John Gleeson (1834-1883), son of Michael and Catherine Gleeson. John arrived in Sydney on the *Herald of the Morning* on 23 June 1858 and quickly began the process of chain emigration from Silvermines. Younger brother, Michael, their father, Michael, a family of first cousins and other relatives arrived in 1859. The shipping indent recorded Michael's age at 52, which probably understated his actual age by nearly a decade, because at the time people above 60 were not allowed to emigrate. Patrick Gleeson of Kiltyrome, son of John and Margaret Gleeson, and a first cousin of John and Michael, emigrated also. Patrick had married Margaret Dwyer, the daughter of Michael and Bridget Dwyer at Silvermines in early 1854. A son, John, born during the voyage, died a year after arrival. Patrick and Margaret Gleeson had five more children born in the Windsor district.¹¹⁸

Another emigrant was Margaret Brien a 'needlewoman' and second cousin of her sponsor, John Gleeson. The daughter of Morgan Brien and Catherine Collins of Erinagh, Margaret's paternal grandparents were Patrick Brien and a Gleeson. Her maternal grandmother was a Gleeson *Cooper*. Within months of Margaret's arrival, she and John married at St Matthew's Catholic Church, Windsor.¹¹⁹ In 1862 Michael Gleeson jun. sponsored Margaret's siblings, Nancy and John O'Brien.

Gleeson immigrants found Australia had an abundance of land tinged by a harsh climate. Historian, Jas Steele wrote that 'the danger from floods is always a source of anxiety to the occupants of low-lying lands along the banks of the Hawkesbury River'.¹²⁰ In 1864 'the fertile and beautiful district of Windsor . . . was converted into an ocean', causing great hardship to settlers including the Gleesons and O'Briens.¹²¹ John and Michael Gleeson's 100 acre farm, leased from a prominent Protestant, was ruined by the floods and in March 1865, John Gleeson filed for bankruptcy on behalf of Michael and himself.

After being granted bankruptcy, the Gleesons and their cousins retreated inland and settled at Stony Creek, about 12km from Mudgee, in North-West NSW. With few funds and several young children both John and Michael worked as labourers for a few years, before renting, and later buying, their own farms. John Gleeson, in the tradition of his *erenach* forebears, hosted early Masses at Stony Creek.¹²³ He and Margaret had a large family - two

sons and seven daughters.

The importance of education for the first generation Australians was emphasised by John and Michael Gleeson and their cousin, John O'Brien (1837-1920). They advocated for publicly-funded education for their children. During a debate in mid 1870s Michael Gleeson successfully lobbied the colonial government for a school for families including his own six children, his brother's eight children, and John O'Brien's three children.¹²⁴ John O'Brien and John Gleeson petitioned for the school to be enlarged:

There are nearly 50 children in average daily attendance... the school at present does not give room for more than 30 or 35 children... in fact 30 would be unhealthy in a room 20 by 15 or thereabouts. Our teacher has to use convenience from his own dwelling [so] that the pupils may not be compelled to stand.¹²⁵

Frustrated by inadequate facilities, O'Brien continued to petition the Minister for Public Schools to approve a veranda that could 'shade the burning rays of the afternoon sun', which is 'very unhealthy for the pupils'.¹²⁶ John Gleeson also successfully petitioned for an Evening Public School, but it lasted only a short time at Cooyal.¹²⁷ His brother's school fees were in arrears on several occasions. A frustrated district education inspector noted that Michael Gleeson 'is well able to pay, but will pay just when he feels inclined. I recommend that he be warned.'¹²⁸

John Gleeson, a native of Erinagh, died at Stony Creek in late 1883. His will, in shaky handwriting, evenly distributed his real and property assets.¹²⁹ John's wife, Margaret, died in 1903. Michael Gleeson, a 'farmer and grazier' died at Cooyal on 28 November 1918. His will set out the distribution of assets via his son, Morgan, the executor.¹³⁰ John O'Brien, the last of the immigrant generation, died in 1920.

A prominent Gleeson migrant in 'new Ballarat', Victoria in the second half of the 19th century was Mortimer Gleeson (1838-1902), son of John Gleeson and an O'Mara, of Ballinoo. Morty arrived at Port Philip Bay, Victoria in 1855. He became a butcher and also held public office, being elected to the Council of Chiltern in 1874.¹³¹ Morty recalled with gratitude his Kilmore roots and in 1901, more than 40 years after emigrating, sent home a large gift to support the Silvermines Church refurbishment so that seats could be provided 'for the free use of all'.¹³² A fading memorial to Mortimer Gleeson lies in the ruins of the Silvermines church.¹³³ Morty died in 1902 and was buried in the Old Chiltern Cemetery, Victoria.

Other Gleesons from Silvermines also made the long trek to Australia. Bridget Gleeson (b 1831), daughter of Patrick and Mary Gleeson, migrated on the *Earl of Elgin* in 1853.¹³⁴ Denis Gleeson (b 1840), arrived on the *John Templebery*. His sponsor, Bridget Kennedy, was listed as a 'friend . . . at place unknown'. She had also sponsored John Gleeson in 1862, whose parents lived at Garryard. Another Gleeson family (Woods) arrived in 1862. In the 1880s, when assisted emigration to Australia had almost ceased, Kate and Thomas Gleeson of Thomas Gleeson and Mary Byrne of Silvermines migrated to NSW.¹³⁵

- VIII -

This article in surveying the Gleeson Sept over several centuries has confirmed its numerical dominance in Upper Ormond, especially in the ancestral parish of Kilmore (Silvermines). The 1840s famine, probably the largest watershed in Irish history, resulted in a mass exodus of poor and lower income families from many parts of Tipperary to numerous countries, including Australia. Many others left involuntarily, often victims of over-crowded conditions and a repressive foreign government.

Emigration did not always prove to be a safety valve. In the penal colony of NSW, Gleesons and O'Briens experienced mixed fortunes. A harsh climate contrasted with Ireland's milder conditions. Extremities, from floods to drought, forced many Gleesons to leave their debt-ridden farms and to seek solace in city landscapes in the early years of the twentieth century.¹³⁶ Others, such as thirty-one year old Michael Gleeson, son of Thomas Gleeson and Bridget Ryan of Ballinoe, found nature overpowering and drowned while crossing the Murrumbidgee River in 1896.¹³⁷

Many Gleesons and O'Briens took up labouring and farming and in the initial decades they were largely free to practice their Catholic faith led by Irish clergy, who fostered loyalty to the new country. Ireland's legitimate quest for independence appears to have dissipated, relatively quickly, and there is no evidence that Gleeson migrant or succeeding generations in Australia supported *Home Rule*. Another consequence of this Australian-Irish religious devotion was many vocations to the priesthood and to religious orders of brothers and sisters.

Religious affiliation, however, generated hostility towards Irish-Australians. The nineteenth century suspicion of migrants intensified during the early decades of the twentieth century. Sectarianism unfortunately dominated most aspects of Australian social, cultural and political life well into the last decades of the twentieth century. The stellar career of third generation family member, Gerald Gleeson AC, KCSG, attracted negative media commentary about his 'Irish ghetto' background and his support of the Catholic Church.¹³⁸

Partly as a result of sectarianism, education became a focal point in the lives of successive generations of Australian Gleesons, who have made impressive contributions across the arts, literature, law, government, and the church. Justin and Fabian Gleeson, for example, are prominent Sydney-based lawyers, while their older brother, Rev Professor Gerald Gleeson is a leading philosopher and ethicist.¹³⁹ These three siblings are sons of the aforementioned Gerald Gleeson.¹⁴⁰

This article has begun a field of historical enquiry that hopefully will receive more attention. Paucity of official and Church records makes a detailed study of the Gleeson sept somewhat difficult before 1800. Nevertheless, there are numerous opportunities for nineteenth and twentieth century research, including demographic accounts, analysis of social conditions and migration, and comparative studies of the experiences of Gleeson families in Ireland, the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

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87. Grace, *The Great Famine*, p.153.
88. *ibid.*, p 181
89. *Ibid.*
90. S.C. O'Mahoney, 'Emigration from the Workhouse of Nenagh Union, Co Tipperary, 1849-1860', *The Irish Ancestor*, Vol. XXX, 1985, pp. 14-15.
91. *Ibid.*, p. 14-15.
92. *ibid.* p. 17.
93. *Nenagh Guardian*, 4 May 1852.

94. *Biographical Index of South Australasians, 1836-1885* (South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society, 1986).
95. *NSW Bounty (Assisted) Immigration Index, 1828-1842*.
96. *Nenagh Guardian*, 13 March 1858.
97. *ibid*, 2 January 1858.
98. *ibid.*, 17 February 1858.
99. *ibid.*, 13 March 1858.
100. *ibid.*, 20 March 1858.
101. Catholic Marriage Register, Silvermines.
102. F. Guy, *Postal Directory of Munster, 1886* (Cork, 1886), p. 828.
103. J. Lee, *The Modernisation of Irish Society, 1848-1911* (Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, 1973).
104. For a discussion of Australian and Irish parish registers as a genealogical source, see D.J. Gleeson, 'Researching 19th century NSW Irish migrants through church registers', *Descent*, v.31, no.2, June 2001.
105. Also spelt Feeley and Fehilly.
106. Nenagh Marriage Register, Microfilm copy located in National Library of Ireland.
107. Silvermines Baptismal Register.
108. Report of *Larkins 2, 2/8266*, p. 159, State Records of New South Wales (SRNSW).
109. Principal Superintendent of Convicts, Fiche No 674, SRNSW.
110. Convict Records, Fiche 674, p. 25, 4/4015, Film 398, SRNSW.
111. Ticket of Leave, Patrick Gleeson, No 34/625, Reel 921. 4/4094, SRNSW.
112. C36/221; Reel 1046 p 175 letter re convict. SRNSW.
113. NSW Convicts Permission to Marry, May 1833-December 1837, SRNSW.
114. Fiche 719; 724 p. 217, SRNSW.
115. NSW Convict Indent, No. 191-1836, SRNSW.
116. Supreme Court of NSW, Last Will and Testament of Patrick Gleeson or Lesson, Series 1, No 5530A, SRNSW.
117. *ibid*.
118. *Grevilles Post Office Directory*, NSW, 1872.
119. Parish Register, St Matthew's Windsor.
120. J. Steele, *Early Days of Windsor* (NSW), North Sydney, N.S.W. : Library of Australian History, 1977.
121. *Sydney Morning Herald* 14 June 1864. p. 4.
122. State Records of NSW (SRNSW), Bankruptcy Records, 2/9140, No 7019.
123. *History of Mudgee Catholic Church* (Mudgee, 19cc)
124. *ibid.*, 29 March 1876.
125. Correspondence, John O'Brien to Secretary Public School Board, Mudgee District, 12 September 1883, Stony Creek, Cooyal, Public School Files, 83/26245, SRNSW.
126. Correspondence, John O'Brien to the Minister for Public Instruction, 5 September 1884, Stony Creek, Cooyal, Public School Files, SRNSW.
127. NSW Department of Education, *Government Schools of New South Wales, 1848-1998: 150 Years* (OTEN, 1998, p. 54).
128. Correspondence Public School, Cooyal, Stony Creek to the District Inspector, Wellington, 15 September 1888, NSW School Files, Mudgee, SRNSW.
129. Will of John Gleeson (sen), 27 October 1883, Supreme Court of NSW Probate Records, No 27568, Container SC1154, SRNSW.
130. Will of Michael Gleeson, 15 July 1915, Supreme Court of NSW Probate Records, No 93120, Series 4, Container SC003862, SRNSW.
131. R.W.P. Ashley, *The History of the Shire of Chiltern* (Published in conjunction for the Shire's Centenary, 1974), pp: 49-50.
Cyclopaedia of Victoria, Vol. 3, p 398; *Victoria and its Metropolis*, Vol. 11, p. 343.
132. *The Parish of Silvermines*, p.24.
133. Thanks to Beryl Medlin for bringing Mortimer to my attention. Monument uncovered by Gladys Furlong, Mary Anne Furlong and this writer in 1997.
134. Reels 2136 & 2464, SRNSW.
135. Reel 2674, SRNSW.
136. For example Margaret Griffin, relict of John Patrick Gleeson, and her four children, William, Thomas, Leo and May.
137. A monument was erected by his brother, John, at Coolac Cemetery.
138. *Times on Sunday* 15 May 1987, p. 15; *Sun Herald*, 31 August 2003, pp: 52-53.
139. Fr Gerald Gleeson, *Priesthood: the hard questions* (ed.) (Newtown, NSW, E.J. Dwyer, 1993); *From Ethics to Spirituality* (North Sydney, NSW, Australian Catholic Social Justice Commission, 1994).
140. *Who's Who in Australia*, 1974 editions onwards.