

# The Belmont Boys

Michael Fitzgerald

## Introduction

### Question:

What do an Australian Civil Engineer, explorer and sketch artist, a young man ministering to the inmates of an isolated Convict Probation Station on the east coast of Tasmania while preparing for ordination as an Anglican Deacon, a Lieutenant Governor of New South Wales, a drover and Speaker of the House of Representative in New Zealand, and a Lord Chancellor of Ireland have in common?

### Answer:

They were all 'Belmont Boys'.

### Dr. Smyth and His Schools.

Doctor John Smyth started his *Select Boarding and Day School* at the beginning of the school year in August 1822. The school was located at No. 11, Lower Dominick Street, Dublin across the River and north east of Trinity College. An inspection of the Examination results published in December 1822 suggests that he had recruited well for students.<sup>1</sup> In July 1833 the school moved to Belmont House in Stillorgan, when Dr Smyth noted that he had conducted a Public School in the metropolis for the previous ten years.<sup>2</sup>

When this occurred Doctor Smyth was at pains to stress that it wasn't a new school but just a new location. Thus in February 1834, he noted that honours of the highest rank in both Classics and Science in the previous January Examinations in the University, had been obtained by Mr. John Ball. He went on to say that even though he had attended the school in Dominick Street, the present students would honour his achievements with a holiday.<sup>3</sup>



Belmont Boarding School 1850

Doctor Smyth died on 4 December 1852 aged just 55.<sup>4</sup> In September 1853 it was noted that the domestic arrangements of the school were being carried out by his widow and that her brother, the Rev. Dr. Wall, Chaplain of the Royal Chapel, Ringsend, visited the school twice weekly.<sup>5</sup> The last advertisement for the school was published in March 1854<sup>6</sup> and the property was advertised for sale in November of that year.<sup>7</sup>

## George Cobbe Newenham

George Cobbe Newenham was the son of Charles Burton Newenham and Mary Louisa née Darley. George, his parents and his five siblings moved from Westland Row in Dublin to Stillorgan in 1832. His brother, Edward Worth Newenham, was baptised in St. Brigid's Church in April 1834.

He was enrolled at Dr. Smyth's school for the semester February to June 1837. In the Midsummer Examination at the end of June, George, who was about 14 at the time, was awarded Premiums by the Examiners in the following: Mythology, History, Ancient and Modern Geography, Euclid, Arithmetic and Writing, Spelling, Reading and English Grammar, Elocution, Greek, Latin Composition, Verse and Prose, and English Essay on Given Subjects and Composition. As far as is known all of his previous schooling had been based in the family. His uncle the poet, George Darley, was accustomed to sending books to him and his siblings.<sup>8</sup>

George's great grandparents, Sir Edward and Lady Newenham, had moved to nearby *Reteiro* on what is now Newtown Avenue, Blackrock, in 1798.<sup>9</sup> It is possible that his grandparents also lived on the property until it was sold in 1820. Between 1802 and 1808 his father and/or his uncle had attended *Elmfield School* which was also in Blackrock.<sup>10</sup>

The family left London for South Australia in July 1837 arriving in December, just short of a year after the first colonists. By March 1839 George was employed in the Province's Survey Department and in April 1840 he was promoted to Assistant Surveyor.<sup>11</sup> George's geometrical skills would have been a great advantage in the Department's use of a trigonometrical survey to fix property boundaries – a world's first.<sup>12</sup> In January 1842 George left Adelaide for Hobart to pursue a career in surveying or engineering.

Rev. Francis Russell Nixon, the first Bishop of Tasmania arrived in Hobart in June 1843, George applied to him for ordination as an Anglican Cleric. He was initially sent as a probationary catechist to the Rocky Hills Convict Probation Station on the east coast of Tasmania to give both himself and the Bishop an opportunity to judge his suitability for ordination.<sup>13</sup> He received Deacon's Orders at an Ordination ceremony in St. David's Cathedral, Hobart on 5 March 1846.<sup>14</sup> Later that month he returned to Adelaide.<sup>15</sup>



Rocky Hills Convict Station

On 23 September 1849 Bishop Short held an ordination ceremony in the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity when Rev. George was admitted to the order of priesthood in the presence of the Very Rev. the Dean, the Venerable the Archdeacon, and other canons and clergymen of the diocese.<sup>16</sup>

Unlike many of the other clergy in the Diocese, Rev. George was often accused of being a 'Tractarian' – his convictions in this matter led him into some ill-advised behaviour and he subsequently resigned and left for Tasmania where he married Lucy Gell. Late in 1852 he left for Queensland with his wife and sister Frances. After Frances married the Rev. Henry Irwin there, Rev. George and Lucy left to return to Tasmania, but hardly had the ship set sail when George collapsed and died. He was buried in a local cemetery which is now covered over by Lang Park – Brisbane's multi-purpose stadium

### The Ball Boys

Major Benjamin Marcus Ball and his wife, Elizabeth Feltus, had ten children – six sons and four daughters. Of the daughters, Anna Elizabeth, married her cousin, Edmond Robert Ball, who is buried in St. Brigid's Churchyard, Stillorgan. At least four of the sons attended Dr. Smyth's School and two at least went on to Trinity College.

The eldest, John Thomas, was born in Dundrum on 24 July 1815 and died on 17 March 1898. He entered Trinity in 1830 aged 15 after leaving Dr. Smyth's School. He successively graduated B.A. 1836, LL.B. 1841 and LL.D. 1844. He married Catherine Elrington, the daughter of Rev Charles Elrington, D.D., Regius Professor of Divinity, T.C.D. in 1852. Their third son, Rev. Francis Elrington Ball, was the author of the oft-quoted *A History of the County Dublin*.<sup>17</sup>



John Thomas Ball 1875

Besides being an outstanding scholar he also enjoyed some reputation as a journalist and minor poet. A brief review of the major positions he occupied describe his lifetime achievements.

He successively became barrister in 1840, Queen's Counsel 1854, Vicar-General of the province of Armagh, 1862, Queen's Advocate in Ireland 1865, Solicitor General for Ireland 1868, Attorney General for Ireland 1868 and 1874–1875, Member of the Privy Council of Ireland 1868, Member of Parliament for Dublin University 1868 – 1875, Vice-Chancellor of the University 1880 – 1895 and Lord Chancellor of Ireland, 1875–1880.<sup>18</sup>

Adam Gustavus Ball was born on 14 April 1821. He left Ireland as a young man, arriving in Sydney, New South Wales, in 1839, just 18 years old, living there until 1847<sup>19</sup>

when he left for and died in Adelaide, South Australia on 22 August 1882 leaving a wife and two children



Adam G. Ball - Paralana, Flinders Ranges, South Australia<sup>20</sup>

His obituary, published in Adelaide, sums up his life: *Mr. Adam Ball was well known all over the colony as a remarkably clever amateur artist, his pencil sketches of stirring scenes in bush and camp being quite famous in their way. He had a peculiarly free style of drawing, eminently characteristic, and his productions may be seen in many hotels as well as private houses. They are easily recognisable by their bold execution. He was very fond of sketching such incidents as kangaroo hunts, cattle musters, and such-like characteristics of Australian life.*

*He was by profession a civil engineer, but much of his early life was occupied in exploring, until he unfortunately met with an accident which prevented him from taking a bigger part in active pursuits. Of genial disposition and some what Bohemian propensities, he was well known on every station north and south.*<sup>21</sup>

In later years, Adam was a prolific writer of Letters to the Editor in the Adelaide Newspapers. He and his wife are buried in an unmarked grave in The West Terrace Cemetery, Adelaide's oldest cemetery.



Adam Ball's unmarked grave in the foreground.<sup>22</sup>

Benjamin Ball graduated from the School at the end of the school year in 1831 while Rutledge who graduated in 1847 entered Trinity on 1 July of that year and graduated B.A. in 1853.<sup>23</sup>

Their father's cousin, also Benjamin, entered Trinity in 1826, graduated in 1831, and was admitted to the Irish Bar in 1834. By 1851 he was in Tasmania where he was ordained a Deacon then priested the next year. Like Rev. George Newenham, he served in the north of Tasmania.<sup>24</sup>

### George Maurice O'Rorke

George Maurice O'Rorke was born on 2 May 1830 at Moylough House, County Galway, the third son of Rev. John O'Rorke and his wife, Elizabeth Dennis. He was a student at Dr. Smyth's School by the 1841-42 school year and won an exhibition from the School to Trinity in 1847. He graduated from there with a B.A. with honours in Classics in 1852. Two of his brothers were also pupils at Dr. Smyth's and like wise graduated from Trinity –

Charles D. B.A. 1850 and Henry Thomas B.A. 1854, M.A. 1859.

He left soon after for Australia where he worked overland stock to Bendigo and Sydney. After a short time digging on the gold fields he left for New Zealand in 1854. In 1858 he married Cecelia Shephard, the daughter of one of the colony's first State Treasurers, and spent a year as a clerk on the Auckland Provincial Council.



Sir George Maurice O'Rorke

He was a Member of the House of Representatives for many years and was elected as its Speaker on eight separate occasions. He gained a law degree during the 1860's, while serving in the House. He was knighted by the Queen in 1880. In 1896 he was awarded an M.A. and honorary LL.D from Trinity.

His 1916 obituary noted that *his reputation as Speaker stood very high in the Empire. His control over the House as Speaker was complete, his knowledge of precedents faultless and if there were no precedent for a ruling he never shrank from creating one.* One paper noted that *New Zealand had lost one of the last of the great men amongst its political pioneers.*

### The 'Darley and Guinness Cousins'

Henry Guinness finished at the end of the 1844 school year, entered Trinity in October of that year and graduated B.A. in 1849. In the Examinations in 1845 he gained Honours in Classics.<sup>25</sup> In 1850 he became a partner in the banking firm founded by his father and John Ross Mahon.<sup>26</sup> In 1863 he purchased *Burton Hall*, Stillorgan, where both he and his wife, Emmelina, lived their whole lives – he died in 1893 and she in 1906 leaving an estate of some £60, 000<sup>27</sup>



Henry Guinness and Family – Burton Hall - 1890

Richard Guinness finished at the school in 1841 and entered Trinity in November. Richard Dixon left the School at the end of the academic year in August 1837, while his step-brother, Wakefield Dixon, left at the 'end of the year' in 1847. His brother, Frederick Ball Dixon, finished at Dr. Smyth's in 1848 and entered Trinity in March 1850.

Frederick Matthew Darley, the eldest child of Henry Darley, a member of the Irish Bar, and his wife Maria Louisa née West, was born in Wingfield, Bray, County Wicklow, in 1830. By 1834 he, his sister and their parents were living at *Beaufield*, Stillorgan, when his sister, Olivia Elizabeth, was baptised in St. Brigid's Church.

After leaving Dr. Smyth's School, Frederick continued his education at Dungannon College, county Tyrone, where his uncle, the Rev. John Darley, later Bishop of Kilmore, was headmaster. He entered Trinity College in July 1847, aged 16, graduated B.A. in 1851, and was called to the Irish Bar in January 1853. In December 1860 he married Lucy Forrest Brown, who had been born in New South Wales, in Hertfordshire, England. They were to have two sons and four daughters,

In January 1862, they left for Australia on the *Swiftsure* and in June he was admitted to the Bar of New South Wales. In 1868 he became a member of the Legislative Council, resigning in 1886. In 1878 he was appointed a Queen's Counsel. From 1879 he was a Fellow of the Senate of the University of Sydney.



Sir Fredrick Matthew Darley G.C.M.G.

In 1882 Frederick visited England, and was appointed Executive Commissioner for New South Wales. He returned to New South Wales in 1883. In 1886 he was sworn in as Chief Justice.

He officiated as Lieutenant-Governor on many occasions from 1893. In all, his career at the Bar of New South Wales and later as Chief Justice, was a notable one. Uniformly courteous and considerate to all those who approached him, the traditions of his honourable office in the State had seldom been placed in better hands.

His work was recognized by many honours. He was knighted in 1887, appointed K.C.M.G. in 1897 and G.C.M.G. in 1901; he became a Privy Councillor in 1905. Trinity conferred an honorary LL.D. on him in 1903. He died in London on 4 January 1910 and was buried in the family vault in Dublin.



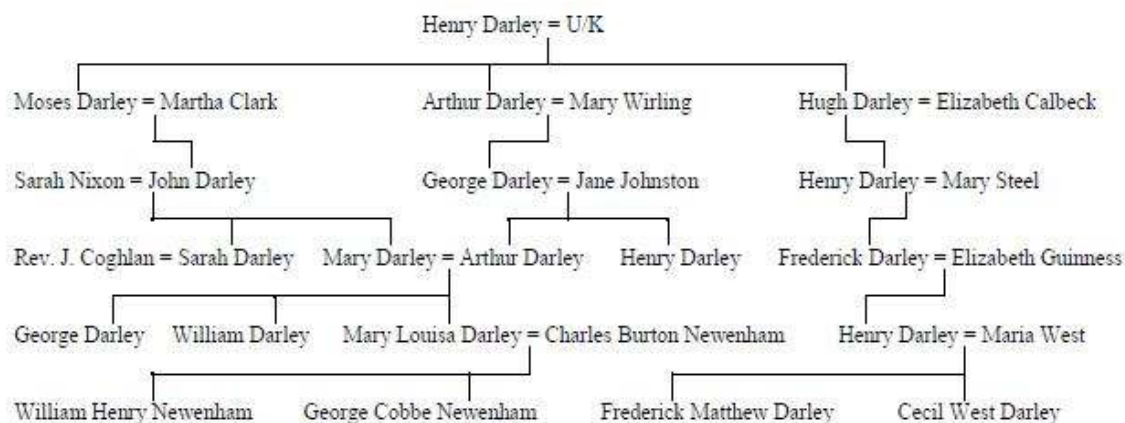
Cecil West Darley M.I.C.E., I.S.O.<sup>28</sup>

Frederick's brother, Cecil West Darley, who had attended King Williams's College, Isle of Man, followed him to Australia in 1867. He became Chief Engineer of New South Wales and supervised the construction of the Sydney Harbour Docks. His 40 years of meritorious service were recognized by the award of the Imperial Service Order. He died in London in 1928 as the result of a road accident.<sup>29</sup>

Rev. John Armstrong was the Principal of the *Lower-Gardiner Street School* during the same era. Like Dr. Smyth's school, it was north of the River – but unlike Dr.

Smyth, Rev. Coghlan had opened his school by at least 1807.<sup>30</sup> The husband of Sarah Darley, he was uncle to George Darley the poet, and his brother William. From 1809 to 1823 various Ball, Darley and Guinness lads were his pupils. William Henry and/or George Newenham, his great nephews, appear to have been his students in 1830. William Henry arrived in Adelaide in mid January 1839 and by the end of the month had been appointed Clerk of the Supreme Court of South Australia – a position he occupied for five years.<sup>31</sup>

### Joining The Threads



Not only were all of these boys joined by ties of blood and/or marriage. William Henry and George Newenham, Richard and Henry Guinness, and Richard Dixon were all grand nephews of Henry Darley of *The Grange* while Frederick and Cecil Darley were their fourth cousins. The four Ball boys and Frederick and Wakefield Dixon were either grandsons or great grandsons of Benjamin Ball while the three Dixon boys were step brothers.

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<sup>1</sup> *Saunders's News-Letter* 26 December 1822 pg. 4, 30 December 1822 pg. 3

<sup>2</sup> *Dublin Evening Mail* 12 July 1833 pg. 1, *Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent* 11 July 1833 pg. 2, 13 July 1833 pg. 2, 16 July 1833 pg. 1, 18 July 1833 pg. 1, 20 July 1833 pg. 1, *Dublin Evening Post* 16 July 1833 pg. 1, 25 July 1833 pg. 1

<sup>3</sup> *Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent* 8 February 1834 pg. 1

<sup>4</sup> *Belfast News-Letter* 15 December 1852 pg. 2

<sup>5</sup> *Armagh Guardian* 16 September 1853 pg. 1, 7 October 1853 pg. 1

<sup>6</sup> *Armagh Guardian* 10 March 1854 pg. 1

<sup>7</sup> *Saunders's News-Letter* 14 November 1854 pg. 4

<sup>8</sup> Abbott pg. 79

<sup>9</sup> Coyle pg. 16, *Saunders's News-Letter* 10 June 1820 pg. 4

<sup>10</sup> *Saunders's News-Letter* 22 January 1802 pg. 2, 15 July 1802 pg. 2, 2 January 1803 pg. 11, 21 January 1807 pg. 4, 30 July 1808 pg. 2

<sup>11</sup> *Adelaide Chronicle and South Australian Advertiser* 7 April 1840 pg. 3, *Southern Australian* 9 April 1840 pg. 3

<sup>12</sup> *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)* 28 April 2018 pg. 27

<sup>13</sup> *South Australian Register* 7 June 1848 pg. 2, 4 October 1848 pg. 4, *The Courier (Hobart)* 5 July 1845 pg. 2, Norris 1852A pg. 25

<sup>14</sup> *Launceston Examiner* 7 March 1846 Afternoon Edition pg. 4, 11 March 1846 Morning Edition pg. 4, *The Cornwall Chronicle (Launceston)* 7 March 1846 pg. 183, *The Courier (Hobart)* 7 March 1846 pg. 2, 18 March 1846 pg. 3, *The Sydney Morning Herald* 25 March 1846 pg. 2, 12 March 1846 pg. 2, Hilliard pg. 11

<sup>15</sup> *Adelaide Observer* 11 April 1846 pg. 6, *Launceston Examiner* 1 April 1846 pg. 4, *Colonial Times (Hobart)* 3 April 1846 pg. 2, *The Courier (Hobart)* 4 April 1846 pg. 2, *South Australian* 7 April 1846 pg. 2, *South Australian Register* 8 April 1846 pg. 1

<sup>16</sup> *Adelaide Observer* 22 September 1849 pg. 1, *South Australian* 25 September 1849 pg. 2, *South Australian Gazette and Mining*

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*Journal* 22 September 1849 pg. 3, *South Australian Register* 22 September 1849 pg. 2, *The Sydney Morning Herald* 13 October 1849 pg. 2

<sup>17</sup> Ball, F. Elrington, 1902-1920. *A History of the County Dublin: The People, Parishes and Antiquities from the Earliest Times to the Close of the 19th Century*, Alexander Thom and Co (6 volumes)

<sup>18</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Thomas\\_Ball](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Thomas_Ball)

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.daa0.org.au/bio/adam-gustavus-ball/references/>

<sup>20</sup> State Library South Australia B 6912/L8

<sup>21</sup> *South Australian Weekly Chronicle* 29 June 1867 pg. 1, 26 August 1882 pg. 30, *The Express and Telegraph (Adelaide)* 26 June 1867 pg. 2

<sup>22</sup> Author 24 August 2017

<sup>23</sup> <http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/darley-sir-frederick-matthew-3366>, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/darley-sir-frederick-matthew-3366> and others

<sup>24</sup> Cable pg. 112

<sup>25</sup> *Armagh Guardian* 11 February 1845 pg. 1 *Dublin Evening Mail* 10 February 1845 pg. 3, *Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent* 13 February 1845 pg. 3, *Statesman and Dublin Christian Record* 7 February 1845 pg. 3

<sup>26</sup> Mullally pg. 71

<sup>27</sup> *Weekly Irish Times* 29 December 1906 pg. 24, <https://churchrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/display-pdf.jsp?pdfName=d-45-3-12-078>

<sup>28</sup> <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-136737266>

<sup>29</sup> *The Maitland Daily Mercury (NSW)* 20 October 1928 pg. 6, *The Sydney Morning Herald* 20 October 1928 pgs. 16, 18, [https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Cecil\\_West\\_Darley](https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Cecil_West_Darley)

<sup>30</sup> *Saunders's News-Letter* 13 January 1808 pg. 2

<sup>31</sup> *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register* 9 March 1839 pg. 4, *Southern Australian* (Adelaide) 9 April 1844 pg. 2