

Bawnboy Poor Law Union



Bawnboy was one of the second wave of Unions created in Ireland between 1848 and 1850, the only such addition in Ulster.

Formally declared on 26th April 1850 it was formed from the western part of the Cavan Poor Law Union and occupied an area of 163 square miles.

In 1905, it comprised 26 electoral divisions, including Kinawley in County Fermanagh.

Built 1851-52 at a cost of £4,900 plus £945.00 for fixtures and fittings. A 12-acre site situated a quarter of a mile to the east of Bawnboy, was bought from a local landowner, JD Rochford.

Built by an Enniskillen man, James Credden to the specifications of a design by George Wilkinson, the Poor Law Commissioners architect.

Capacity of 500 inmates.

Capacity never reached, in 1855 the average number of inmates was 172.

At the front of the site, two long two-storey children's blocks flanked the entrance: girls to the left and boys to the right. Behind the central entrance lay a T-shaped block, the central portion containing the porter's room, with kitchen, dining-hall and chapel behind, and women's and men's accommodation wings to the left and right.


Connecting Peoples
Places and Heritage



Fermanagh County
Museum



MÚSAEM CONTAE AN CHERRÁIN



The workhouse also had a laundry and nursery on the women's side, and a bakehouse on the men's side.

The new workhouse opened in November 1853 with 52 inmates. The first master was John Carson and the first matron Jane Brownlow. Carson held the post for over 40 years and was followed in the 1890s by Peter McTeigue. Jane Brownlow was succeeded by Jane Perry and Marian Kane.

The weekly cost of one inmate was 2-3d.

Breakfast was a mixture of oatmeal and Indian meal boiled together and served with buttermilk.

Dinner consisted of potatoes with sweet milk and sometimes meat.

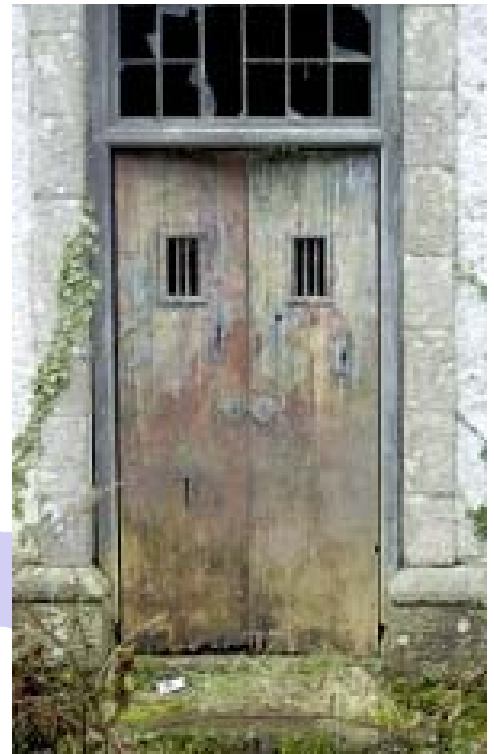
The evening meal was porridge with bread and milk.

Paupers in Bawnboy were subject to severe discipline.

Unlike many other workhouses the teaching at Bawnboy was thought to be of a good standard.

Its doors closed in November 1921, 23 inmates were sent to Cavan workhouse and 7 to Carrick on Shannon, the remainder went to stay with friends and relatives.

Nurses Dodds and Byrne received lump sums of £80.00 & £70.00 respectively and continued to live in the building. Since then the building has been used for a variety of purposes.



One wing was converted into a Vocational School from 1933-1967. The boys' school was used as a dance hall and concert hall; the dining hall as a theatre. The workhouse chapel continued to be used for a number of years. Latterly, it was occupied by a bakery.

The fabric of building remains almost intact. Many other contemporary workhouses have been either partially or completely demolished. The importance of Bawnboy workhouse relates not only to its architectural heritage, but social legacy. Bawnboy workhouse, like all workhouses, is crucial reminder of a way of life. It enhances our understanding of society's attitude to the poor, orphans, those suffering from psychological illness, unmarried mothers and the disadvantaged in society.

An Taisee, The National Trust for Ireland has listed the workhouse in Bawnboy as a building at risk.