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Mission at St. Paul's Passionist Monastery, Capitán Sarmiento, 29 May 1898
(*'Golden Jubilee' 1938*).

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>The First Irish Race Congress in South America</i> , by Carolina Barry	17
<i>Was Admiral William Brown Admiral Someone Else?</i> , by Michael John Geraghty	19
<i>Camila O'Gorman (1828-1848), figure of scandal</i> , by Edmundo Murray	25
<i>John Oughan [Oughagan] (b.1782), physician and military surgeon</i> , by Edmundo Murray	26



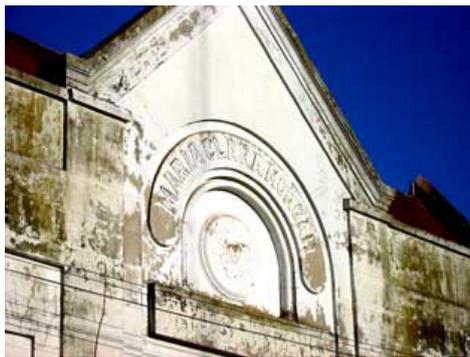
The First Irish Race Congress in South America

By Carolina Barry

Translated by Maggie O'Reilly

During the intense negotiations between Dáil Eireann President Eamon DeValera and British PM Lloyd George, a call was made to organize the first International Irish Race Congress, to be held in Paris in January 1922 in compliance with the strategy of making public the violence of the war. The initiator of the congress was Thomas Hughes Kelly from New York, who declared that 'Ireland's future is not limited to its geographic boundaries. She gave away to the world her strongest and most trustworthy sons. Now we compensate her with our support, which is the first offspring of that prolific seed' [*El Boletín Irlandés*, Buenos Aires, 24 December 1921]. In order to prepare the international congress and to unify strategies, it was firstly necessary to organize the Irish communities in all countries in which they were settled.

During 1921, with the purpose of gaining support to the Irish demand for a Republic, the Irish government sent special missions to South Africa, South America, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, and the US [*Dáil Éireann Report on Foreign Affairs*, Dublin, 26 April 1922]. Thus, Laurence Ginnell arrived at Buenos Aires as a representative of the Irish Republic to co-operate with Eamon Bulfin, who was the first envoy. Ginnell contacted members of the Irish community and worked to make public the state of affairs in Ireland. Ginnell also made great efforts to motivate and organize the Argentines of Irish ancestry.



Maria Clara Morgan Hospital in San Antonio de Areco,
donated by Margarita Morgan in 1900.

'Once it became known that the treaty had been signed, no Irish Republican Bond could be sold. And once Dáil Eireann had adopted the treaty, the Republic was universally regarded as at an end.' [Ginnell to Gavan Duffy 4 March 1922, writing from Hospital Maria Morgan, San Antonio de Areco, where Ginnell was confined due to sickness].

News arriving from Ireland in Argentina generated support from such prominent representatives of the affluent Irish-Argentine community as the Irish Argentine White Cross. Following Ginnell's proposal, on 29 November 1921 the first Irish Race Congress in South America was held in Buenos Aires. Over 50 Irish-Argentine organisations sent their representatives to this Congress, and they founded a new Federation. Ginnell addressed the meeting and spoke about the following points:

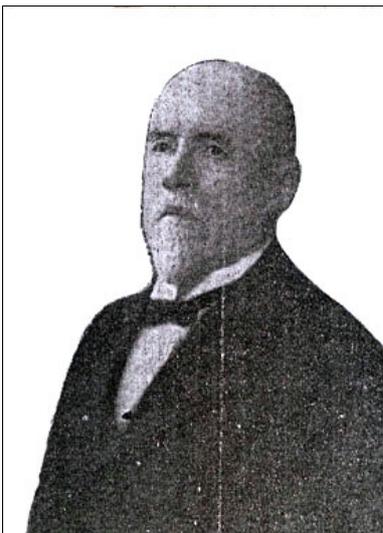
1. Lack of organization in the Irish-Argentine community,
2. The future place of Ireland in the world,
3. The friendly support of Argentina, and
4. The peace strategy of Ireland

Ginnell expressed his favourable impression of the Argentine people and of their friendship towards Ireland. However, he was surprised by their 'almost complete lack of knowledge about Irish life. Your deficient organization would not help to support the human ideal of freedom, and would not maintain your distinct and valued identity' [*El Boletín Irlandés*, Buenos Aires, 10 December 1921]. He also acknowledged the 65 Argentine priests that in All Souls' Day celebrated masses for the heroes executed in Ireland: 'This was the most sacred and warm expression from one nation to the other, for the first time in the life of the Argentine Republic. This tribute was never ever dedicated to, or pleaded for by any other foreign nation. Yet if this was solicited by a certain powerful empire, it wouldn't be easily be granted. It was an expression that cannot be bought by empire money, and which cannot be voided or destroyed by that empire' [*El Boletín Irlandés*, Buenos Aires, 10 December 1921].

During the meeting a decision was adopted to report to the Congress in Paris the activities performed by the Irish in South America. Additionally, a grant of £50 per annum was established to students of Spanish language in the National University of Ireland. This would serve as a cultural link between Ireland and Argentina, with the hope that 'this link will flourish and be of advantage.' Many committees were established, including one to sponsor the Irish Loan in Argentina.

At the closing of the meeting five delegates were elected to represent Argentina in the International Irish Race Congress. Also, representatives were elected to represent Brazil, Chile, Bolivia and Peru.

The first Irish Race Congress in South America achieved its goals thanks to people like Laurence Ginnell, who journeyed among the Irish abroad to seek their support for independence. The meeting was adjourned, and a message was telegraphed to the President of Ireland: DeValera, Mansion House, Dublin, Ireland. 'First Irish-Argentine Congress presents honours, support. Delegates appointed Paris.'



Laurence Ginnell (1852-1923)

Born in Delvin, Co. Westmeath, graduated in Law, author of *The Doubtful Grant of Ireland*, a book about the illegality of Pope Adrian's Bull allowing for the Norman Invasion of Ireland. Elected in 1906 to the British Parliament for North Westmeath, he was the first Sinn Féin MP. In 1905 he was expelled from the Irish Parliamentary Party for the offence of asking to see the party accounts. Known as 'The Member for Ireland'. In 1917 Ginnell resigned his seat in the House of Commons. He became the first, and only, MP to move from constitutional nationalism to republican separatism. Soon afterwards he joined Sinn Féin and was elected joint Treasurer. Jailed in early 1918, for inciting cattle driving in Westmeath. At the end of the six month sentence he was re-arrested and interned in England until the end of the 1918. On release he demanded an apology from the governor for his 'wanton imprisonment'. Elected to the First Dáil he was

appointed Minister for Propaganda, a position he held for only 4 months until his arrest in May 1919 when he was jailed again, for unlawful assembly. The Dáil gave him the task of raising the Republican Loan and he spent a short period in Argentina as a delegate of the Irish Republic - effectively an Irish ambassador (25 July 1921 through April 1922). He returned to Ireland fearing the advent of partition, which he had spoken against as early as 1917, and determined to fight to prevent it. He took the Republican side in the Civil War. He fought his last, as an Anti-Treaty candidate, in 1922 and was again elected in North Westmeath. In late 1922 he was sent to America to assist in co-ordinating Republican work there. He was reportedly very upset at developments in the Irish Civil War, and was increasingly incapacitated by his declining health. In 1923 he wrote a book entitled *The Seventh year of the Republic: A Defence of Erskine Childers*. It was to be his final political act. He died in a Washington Hotel on April 17th 1923 [Glennon, Mags, Laurence Ginnell: 'The Member for Ireland'].

Adapted from *The Southern Cross* Vol. 129 N° 5883 (January 2004)

Was Admiral William Brown Admiral Someone Else?

By Michael John Geraghty



The topic Admiral William Brown and the British Connection in the early nineteenth-century movement for independence in Latin America is really about if William Brown, and all the other British names, and names that were not British like José de San Martín in Argentina and Simón Bolívar in Venezuela, were agents of the British crown in the war between dissident local Creole elites in favor of independence against royalists loyal to the Spanish crown and the old colonial order.

Basically the question is: To what extent was Great Britain linked to this movement for independence?

When I include William Brown in the British connection, I am simply stating a fact since all Irishmen and women were legally British at the time. And this simple statement of fact is borne out on the monument to the admiral Brown

in La Recoleta cemetery that states that he was... “English by origin.”

This does not mean that he was not Irish, he was of course, and in an article I wrote about him in Spanish in April 1998 for *El Arca* (Nº37) I suggested to the Federation of Irish Argentine Societies, an umbrella group for the different associations of Argentines of Irish descent that are to be found mostly in Buenos Aires City and Province, that something should be done to clarify the changes that had taken place in the British-Irish relation between 1777 and 1998.

The suggestion was never acted on, so it still stands and there is a need for it because many historians still refer to Brown as British, which -- as I have already said -- he was, but he was -- as I have also already said -- Irish too, and I thought a little plaque with a few historical facts would do the trick and set the record aright for historians, with whom the admiral is very popular, and for tourists, with whom La Recoleta cemetery is very popular.

Since I would not expect a group of British engineers to be over familiar with the life of an Irish-born Argentine patriot, who was of English origin, let me first try to say who Brown was before I try to say what he was.

I give great importance to the phrase “try to say” because it has to be stated very clearly from the outset that not too much is known about his personal life and everything that is being written about him is a rehash of what has already been written. So no matter what you read, you are simply getting a new version of an old story.

Added to this is the fact that he is not only a national hero, but also a Latin American national hero and there is a great tendency in Latin America -- perhaps it exists in other countries too, but as I do not know them I cannot affirm it -- to endow these people, these national heroes, with an aura of greatness, which they may very well have had or which they may very well not have had, but in either case, it does not help to understand them as real persons or to understand the lives they really lived.

This aura of greatness clouds out historical truth in sanctimoniousness, service, and self-sacrifice. The object of analysis has become a God and all conclusions have to remain with the tenets of that's God's doctrine. Anyone who strays outside that doctrine is a heretic of the worst ilk.

Nevertheless, we can say “Brown was by all accounts,” and here I am quoting from an article I wrote for the *Buenos Aires Herald* for St. Patrick's Day 1998 -- that was my Brown year-- “an intensely private man even after he had become a very well known public figure. This was quite an achievement when it is said that the people of this City loved him and often waited for him to disembark where his monument is

today -- Leandro N. Alem and Cangallo -- to carry him shoulder high through the nearby streets to celebrate a victory.

Historians have the following to say about his background: William Brown was born on 22 June 1777 in Foxford, Co. Mayo, 140 miles west of Dublin, in Ireland.

But now something curious arises about Brown's identity and it arises in Irish-Argentine writings and the fact is that he may not have been William Brown at all. He may have been William Someone else!

Mgr. Santiago Ussher, the well known and highly respected Irish Argentine ecclesiastical historian, writes in his 1954 book "The Irish Chaplains in the Hiberno-Argentine Collectivity during the nineteenth century" that an Irish-born priest, Father Michael Gannon, was related to William Brown. So far so good but a curious thing is that Ussher consigns Gannon into oblivion with only six lines. Now, this is not Ussher's style. He is a hagiographer in the finest, truest, purest Roman Catholic fashion. He lays it on thick when he can and when he has to flee, he flies.

Thomas Hudson in his recent book, "Admiral William Brown, Master of the River Plate," confirms that Brown had an uncle a priest, but having a relative a priest is hardly worthy of note and much less so in the case of the eighteenth and nineteenth and even twentieth century Irish. It was so common it even became part of the Percy French song, "The Emigrant's Letter"... "and her brother a priest."

Then an Argentine historian -- Maria Teresa Julianello -- threw some light on the priest when she wrote in an essay titled "The Scarlet Trinity" that this Fr. Michael Gannon was none other than the man of God who turned the unfortunate and pregnant 20-year-old Camila O'Gorman and her 24-year-old priest lover and father of her unborn child, Ladislao Gutierrez, over to the police in Corrientes in 1848, the police handed the lovers over to the feared Mazorca, and a terrible crime was committed when the lovers and their unborn child were executed by firing squad. Julianello simply states the facts. She makes no value judgment. But then, Julianello is, after all, a historian and they take no license with words.

Then the late, well known Argentine writer Enrique Molina in his 1973 novel "Una Sombra donde sueña Camila O'Gorman" (for those who don't understand Spanish that would be "A Shadow where Camila O'Gorman Dreams") describes this Fr. Gannon physically and morally and believe me it is not a pretty picture. But then Molina is, after all, a novelist and a poet and they do take license with words.

The picture however that Molina paints of Gannon would fit in with what Mgr. Ussher wrote about this particular man of god, and I put God in lower case on purpose: Ussher only says that Gannon: "ministered in Buenos Aires for aints of Gannon would fit in with what Mgr. Ussher wrote about this particular man of god, and I put God in lower case on purpose: Ussher only says that Gannon: "ministered in Buenos Aires for two or three years, went to Corrientes and is thought to have died there." Ussher's comments, or his lack of comments rather, are -- I think -- an example of a Roman Catholic priest practicing the charity he preaches.

But this Brown-Gannon connection had nothing to do with the admiral's life until an email appeared in an Irish-Argentine website www.irlandeses.com.ar mail box in April 2003 from a John Hutton in Australia of all places and it reads in reference to my *Buenos Aires Herald* article, which the website had reproduced:

"I read the recent article on Admiral Brown's family with much interest as my wife is descended from the admiral's younger brother Michael, a Master in the Royal Navy. My father-in-law spent several years of his retirement attempting to find details of the admiral's parents and he discovered that William Brown's mother was a Brown from Sligo, Ireland, and his father was a Gannon and that their three sons took the mother's name."

I corresponded with Hutton and he knew nothing about Julianello or Molina's work.

This explained the Brown-Gannon connection and although it does cast doubt on the admiral's real surname, he may have been William Gannon and not William Brown, it does not change the course of events in his life. Nevertheless, we still know very little, almost nothing about those events prior to his arriving in Argentina and I think it is true to say and safe to affirm that when nothing is made public, it is not that there is nothing to make public, but that there are things *NOT* to make public.

The official story is that he was a poor peasant's son, and then there are the variations.

Michael Mulhall says in his book "The English in South America" that Brown's father "was a small farmer;" the well known English historian, David Rock, says in his book "Argentina 1516-1987" that

Brown was “an Irish-born deserter from the British navy, who arrived in Buenos Aires a penniless fugitive and immortalized himself during the siege of Montevideo.” Andrew Graham-Yooll says in his book, “The Forgotten Colony” that “William Brown was a fortune hunter who decided to settle in trade in the River Plate and as Admiral Guillermo Brown became an Argentine national hero and the star of the Irish community.” Thomas Hudson says that Brown’s father worked in the local textile factory in Foxford and when it closed “abject poverty was staring the family in the face.” John de Courcy Ireland says in his book “The Admiral from Mayo” that Brown “may have been the illegitimate son of an aristocrat and was sent away to sea at an early age to get him out of the way.”

More than that we do not know but John de Courcy Ireland stresses in his book that “Brown never spoke or wrote about his father or mother in Argentina and never referred to his early life in Ireland. Why should this be so?” De Courcy Ireland asks but does not answer the question.

So let me give my opinion:

My theory is that there was a skeleton in the Brown cupboard, a considerably big one, and it was related to the Gannons and this was why William Brown took his mother’s name. I also imagine on the basis of the De Courcy Ireland book that the skeleton was related to illegitimate birth and that the story is apocryphal of going to Philadelphia where his father died and left the boy a 10-year-old orphan to be taken on board a ship as a cabin boy by a kind old sea captain, “who was,” in Michael Mulhall’s words, “impressed by the intelligent look of the Irish orphan.”

It cannot be at all easy to look intelligent when you are an abandoned 10-year-old child on a foreign port just after your father has died and your mother, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends are three thousands miles away “across the wild and roaring Atlantic,” which in those days took three to four months to cross.

Nevertheless, whether he was Gannon or Brown, a “peasant boy,” “a penniless, fugitive deserter,” a “fortune hunter,” or an “illegitimate son” is beside the point and the fact is that “in 1812 he brought his wife and two babies to settle in Buenos Aires and he never left it. What happened afterwards is, and I hate to repeat the saying, history. What happened before is only of anecdotal interest to fill out the gaps left in his life.

Now that we do not know who he was, let us what was he?

Here historians agree that by the time Brown got to Buenos Aires he was a master mariner, who had learned the art of war in the best school of all, the Royal Navy, in the days when Britannia ruled the waves.

I have no doubt whatsoever that Brown was a Royal Navy graduate and I wrote in my 1998 article for the *Buenos Aires Herald* that the then president of the Instituto Browniano, retired Rear Admiral Horacio Rodríguez, told me in an interview that Brown hoisted a Royal Navy ensign on his top mast every time he sailed into battle. This revelation prompted a letter to the newspaper and a denial by the rear admiral that he had said this in the first place but the paper never rectified the comment because it was on tape and it was soon consigned to oblivion.

Whether Brown did or did not fly that flag, and if you speak to Anglo-Argentines today they will go further and tell you Brown flew a Union Jack in battle, look at it from Brown’s point of view as he rode the river and the seas. Wouldn’t it have been a good idea to fly a Royal Navy ensign or better still a Union Jack and on the top mast, where it could be well seen from afar through a telescope. Would that flag not have deterred all but the strongest opponents? Was that not the very purpose of a flag?

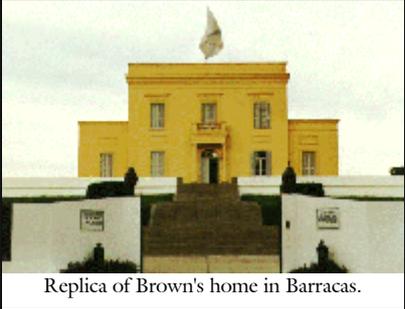
Historians agree too that Brown founded the Argentine navy, took part in the wars of independence for Argentina, Chile, and Peru, sailed the Horn, the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, and helped himself to whatever he thought he could capture and carry. To put it bluntly, William Brown was a pirate. To put it politely, he was a privateer. To put it in between, he was a freebooter or a buccaneer.

No matter how it is put, he was a master mariner by the time he was thirty and had sailed the seven seas, not for pleasure but for pillage, plunder, and pounds. That means he was more at home on the deck of warship than in his own living room and the thick of battle on the waves was his natural environment. He could and did take on and acquit himself against all opponents in many scenarios.

Admiral William Brown was a man not to be crossed, unless at your peril and without giving any spin of romanticism to his life and deeds, historians agree that he was fearless to the point of rashness and capable of anything on board a warship before, in, or after battle.

The story is told about him by Thomas Murray in his book "The Story of the Irish in Argentina" and I quote that "one day the great Supremo, Juan Manuel de Rosas, the dictator or the Restorer of the Laws, according to whatever side of his fence you were on, decided to visit and to inspect the fleet, which was at anchor in port. The inspection was made with all pomp and ceremony and once the formalities were finished, a banquet on the flag ship followed. The order of precedence was all arranged and the solemn master of ceremonies stood watchful to see it fulfilled. Admiral William Brown proceeded sternly in full uniform to the place of honor, and silently took his seat. The master of ceremonies and all present, save Don Manuel and the Admiral, experienced something like a current of severe electric shock. The official in charge quickly, and with the grace of such functionaries, sought to correct Brown, tactfully reminding him that the head of the feast was the place for the great Supremo. Brown answered coldly and slowly in his monosyllabic Spanish that "whatever Don Juan Manuel de Rosas might be on land, he, William Brown, was master of his vessels and would sit at the master's place."

Brown lived the rest of his life peacefully as a grocer and a breeder of horses -- Graham Yooll -- and he is said to have spent many an evening on the porch of his Casa Amarilla residence in what is La Boca today enjoying the breeze from the Plate and watching the comings and goings of vessels whose every creak, cranny, and cannon he knew so well.



Replica of Brown's home in Barracas.

The question now is why a man like William Brown decided to come to Buenos Aires in the first place and I think the answer is in the essay written by the Ulster historian Peter Pyne and published in 1996 by the University of Liverpool titled: "The Irish Dimension of the Invasions of Buenos Aires, 1806 and 1807."

Pyne says that "the purpose of the first British invasion was to seize one and a half million dollars in bullion, which the viceroy had assembled here for shipment to Spain. The British duly took it and shipped it to Great Britain. As this treasure was being conveyed from Tilbury through the streets of London in wagons drawn by 6 horses each to the Bank of England, the thoroughfares rang with cheers for British Generals Popham and Beresford, and the people really believed that the River Plate was the El Dorado so long sought for by Walter Raleigh."

The commercial implications of so much gold in the River Plate -- 20 million dollars a year was the calculation -- was not lost on anyone in power in London and this was what spurred William Brown, who was then a young and hardy seadog, to jump the gun and to start trading to the River Plate from the time of the British invasions.

He was coming here from 1807 on and he wasn't bringing in British beef and bacon. He was obviously running arms and munitions to the patriots on both sides of the River and to Spaniards and the Portuguese and the French and the Brazilians and to whoever else wanted them and could pay for them. He was a privateer and he was in the business to turn a buck.

He was so impressed with the River Plate that he moved here definitively in 1812. At about the same time the British government had also made up its mind in fits and starts not to colonize Latin America but to promote its independence and thus deprive Spain of the resources it received from the viceroyalty and open it up to British trade, which needed alternative outlets for the European markets it was losing through Napoleon's continental blockade.

Independence movements were soon successfully under way and the amount of British names that took part in them is incredible. The British invasions had left at least a 1,000 deserters or prisoners in different parts of Argentina and it is to be supposed that most of these joined José de San Martín's Army of the Andes because the local male population, according to Peter Pyle, "seemed to have no pursuit and no visible means of support other than stealing."

The rest of San Martín's top men came from abroad and we are led to believe that they came here by chance. No. I don't believe that. They were not only good, they were the best and you don't find the best men or women by chance anywhere, anytime. They are found only by design.

General José de San Martín was their leader and he came to Buenos Aires in March 1812 on a British vessel -- very aptly named *Canning* -- to offer his services to the government. In an extraordinary coincidence he was accepted. Have you tried offering your services to a government lately? You usually have to have some very good letters of recommendation, first to be interviewed and then to be accepted. San Martín had those recommendations. His story is well known but his British connection has still to be clarified.

General John Thomond O'Brien was one of these men. He was born in Wicklow, Ireland, in June 1786 and according to the recently deceased historian, Emilio Manuel Fernandez Gomez, arrived in Argentina in 1812. He became San Martín's aide-de-camp in the Army of the Andes on that memorable trip across the cordillera, which is comparable in military terms only to Hannibal's crossing the Alps. After the war, he became a very successful businessman and diplomat in....London. John Thomond O'Brien's story has still to be told.

General William Miller was another such man. He was born in Kent, England, in December 1795 and he arrived in Argentina in 1817 to join the Army of the Andes. Miller was an artillery officer who learned his trade on the killing fields of Europe in no better school than in Wellington's army in the war against Napoleon and on the plains of America in the war of 1812. He was an artillery man without parallel. He knew how to calibrate and train guns. He was some man to find by chance, just exactly when you needed him, and when San Martín withdrew to return to Europe, Miller remained to serve under Bolívar. His brilliant career is well told by Thomas Hudson in his book "The Honorable Warrior."

Admiral Thomas Cochrane was another of these men. He was born in Scotland in December 1775. He arrived in Latin America in 1818 to serve in the Chilean and Brazilian navies. Cochrane was always a controversial figure but nobody would deny he was an extremely capable and intrepid sailor in the best British tradition.

There were so many of these men from Venezuela -- the immensely famous Daniel O'Leary who rode the mountains and valleys alongside the great Bolívar -- through Peru, Brazil, and Chile to Argentina that it would be impossible to name them all, but the fact is that they were there when they were needed and there is no record of them ever coming again.

The point I want to make is that these men did not come here by chance. They came in the service of the British crown to take part in the liberation of Latin America.

William Brown was the only exception to this.

He came here on his own steam, in his own interest, and -- as in the case of San Martín -- I find it hard to believe that Gervasio Posadas asked him to form a war navy on the strength of his exploits on the River Plate. I think Brown was recommended to Posadas from far away by people who already knew him and who knew that he could fit into their overall plan. These were the same people who sent José de San Martín to form, command, and lead an army, the same people who told William Miller to pack his bags and go to South America for a little bit of target practice.

There was no William Brown in Santiago and so Cochrane had to be brought in. What did Brown and Cochrane have in common? A lot. A whole lot: Master mariners, expert sailors, veritable sea dogs, unflinching men of war, and, and, and freemasons. Yes, this distinguished band of military and naval officers were freemasons to a man.

All of these men were key players in the Latin American independence movement. The British did not want to defeat the Spanish in the 1806 and 1807 invasions but they did want them defeated ten years later and they knew exactly what they needed to do it. They knew this from the military intelligence they acquired from the aforementioned invasions and through more the formal intelligence channels which would have been open and working well all along.

Notice please that I said the British wanted the Spanish "defeated." That is an important point. The British were clear on a couple of issues which have marked Latin America ever since and will continue to mark into the foreseeable future. They wanted Spain defeated and Latin America divided. They did not want

another United States in South America. The United States of North America was more than sufficient thank you very much.

They did not want to do the job themselves. So they provided the military and naval expertise and the financing for the pincer movement of Bolivar from the north, San Martin from the south and Brown and Cochrane shelling from the Pacific. It was a perfect pincer and is, I am told, studied to this day in military academies. A brilliant piece of military strategy perfectly planned and perfectly executed by brilliant military and naval commanders.

It was a perfect day's work and the development of Argentina over the next 120 years is ample proof that Great Britain was behind the liberation movement, not for political but for industrial reasons.

Huge British investment began to pour in to certain pre-selected Latin American countries and one of them -- Argentina -- became a British colony in everything but name and -- in the words of David Parsons -- the second biggest jewel -- after India -- in the British crown.

Whitehall lit and fanned the fires of independence in Latin America, it supplied the men, the munitions, and most importantly of all, the money to do the job. William Brown was the only top man Whitehall did not bring in to lead the movement, it was, as I have already said, not necessary, he was already here.

I often wonder what he felt as he looked in his old age at that river on which he had known victory and defeat and into which his own daughter had walked to her death? What thoughts ran through the head of the man who was always lived beside the sea from the Killala Bay he was born beside to the River Plate he lived and died beside?

In his eulogy at Brown's funeral, Bartolomé Mitre said: "If some day, new dangers threaten the shores of our Argentine fatherland and we should find ourselves obliged to confide to our floating timbers the banners of May, the conquering breath of the old admiral will swell our sails, his ghost will grab our helm in the midst of the tempest and his warlike figure will be seen to stand on the top deck of our ships guiding us through the thick of the cannon smoke and the din of the grappling shouts."

Curiously, Mitre's words did not come true and just as curiously the occasion when they did not come true was when the Union Jack sailed the South Atlantic again in 1982. Would Brown have raised anchor to fight the Royal Navy?

I really do not know. After all, he was Irish by birth, British by origin, and Argentine by adoption. I really do not know.

But I do know and I think you will agree that Admiral William Brown served his native land or lands and his adopted land equally well but at the end of the day we can truly say in answer to the question whose agent was he that he was very much his own man. There are men, an women, not many of them though, who map their own course through life. William Brown was one of them.

William Brown served William Brown.

* Lecture 'William Brown, whose agent was he?' given by Michael John Geraghty at the British Engineering Association (Buenos Aires) on 6 April 2004.

Camila O'Gorman (1828-1848), figure of scandal

By Edmundo Murray



Camila O'Gorman (1828-1848)
(by Leon Pallière, in Félix Luna 2000)

O'Gorman, Camila (1828-1848), figure of scandal, was the youngest daughter of Adolfo O'Gorman and his wife, Joaquina Ximénez Pinto (d.1852). Adolfo O'Gorman was the second son of Thomas O'Gorman and Anne Perichon de Vandeuil (b.1744), both born at the French colony of Mauritius. Thomas O'Gorman was related to Dr. Michael O'Gorman (1749-1819) of Ennis, Co. Clare, physician of the Spanish viceroyalty of the River Plate and founder of its school of medicine.

Camila O'Gorman grew up in the bosom of a traditional family, during the rule of Buenos Aires governor Juan Manuel de Rosas. In 1847, she met the Catholic priest Uladislao Gutiérrez, of Tucumán, who was assisting the parish priest at Socorro church of Buenos Aires. On 12 December 1847 O'Gorman and Gutiérrez eloped on horseback and found refuge in Corrientes province. Eight months later they were betrayed by Fr. Michael Gannon and brought back to Buenos Aires. Among others, Fr. Anthony Fahy and lawyer Dalmacio Vélez Sarsfield "demanded an exemplary punishment of the wayward daughter that was also giving the industrious and well-regarded [Irish] community a bad name" (Julianello 2000). They were executed by a firing squad on 18 August 1848 in Santos Lugares, near Buenos Aires. Camila O'Gorman was twenty years old and was eight-months pregnant.

Edmundo Murray

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John Oughan [Oughagan] (b.1782), physician and military surgeon

By Edmundo Murray

Oughan [Oughagan], John (b.1782?), physician and military surgeon, was born in Ireland in on about 1782. After some years spent in the United States, Dr. Oughan was recruited to act as a surgeon in the Wars of Independence. He sailed on the *Clifton* and arrived at Buenos Aires on 9 February 1817, and attended the revolutionary armies in Argentina, Bolivia and Peru.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century Oughan appears to have acted as the secretary of the Irish merchants in Buenos Aires. On 28 June 1825 Oughan wrote to the Archbishop of Dublin arguing that "North America is not a country proper for Irish settlers. These, their identity, their ancient faith, and the peculiar cast of their national character, in the mixture of many nations, is totally confounded and lost for ever". In promoting Argentina he wrote, "Thanks to Providence a very different destiny awaits them here. It would seem that Heaven had at length interposed to protect some few of her faithful followers and created this new world, as the land of promise where harassed Irishmen may pause from toil and Christianity devastated of all its secters and impurities may flower again and become infallible". Dr. Oughan went on to state that "this country, fertile and vast beyond limits, abounding with all that nature can furnish... will welcome [the Irish] with special preference and instead of being the drudges of the rest of mankind, may set themselves down in societies in various parts of these boundless plains..." (McKenna 1994).

According to Thomas Murray, Dr. Oughan was an "unrelenting enemy of O'Higgins and San Martin and the governing party in Buenos Aires; so, when he arrived in this city, and his plan became known, Supreme Director Juan Martín de Pueyrredon made him a prisoner and placed the new ships and their complements of men and munitions at the service of the common cause. Oughan passed over to the liberating armies under San Martin and remained for some time in Peru after the independence of the western Republics had been secured. He returned to Argentina in the early 1820s and at once became a very noted doctor. He quarrelled with Parish, the English Minister, and was shamefully persecuted by him and the English then in Buenos Aires. [...] Early in January 1825 Dr. Oughan's furniture was sold in public auction under orders of the English Minister. Oughan, it appears, had made himself objectionable to the English residents, and the English representative had him confined in a hospital as a lunatic, and in due time shipped to England. When he got home he instigated proceedings at law against the Consul, in the high courts, and got judgment on his favor. Soon after he returned to Buenos Aires, ... made things rather unpleasant for both the English Legation people and himself" (Murray 1919). In 1839 Oughagan returned once more to Ireland with his wife. He was considered a very distinguished physician, and as a surgeon gained fame in England and in France.

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