

CLANE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP



MAINHAM POST OFFICE, NEAR CLANE, CO. KILDARE

The post office in Mainham was established in 1888 and was located in the lodge shown here to the right exiting the main gate of Clongowes Wood College. As well as serving the college it also covered the district between Clane, Prosperous and Donadea. The postmistress in the 1940s and 1950s was Mrs Josephine Dunne, wife of Pat Dunne the blacksmith. She always employed an assistant to help out, as the post office was a very busy place.

Unlike the post offices in Clane and Prosperous, Mainham was a “telegraph office” which meant that you could send and receive telegrams there. The delivery area covered Clane, Prosperous, Loughanure, Painstown, Rathcoffey and all intermediate areas as well as Clongowes Wood College itself. The assistant delivered the telegrams on her bicycle. On Saturdays and during school holidays family members were enlisted to help out. At such times Mrs Dunne often sought the help of her niece and nephews who lived across the green at the forge, when a telegram came for delivery to some house in the vicinity. Her method of communication with the youngsters was rather unique. She used to hang a white sheet on the door to indicate to the young Dunnes across the green that there was a telegram waiting to be delivered. Immediately they spied the sheet the youngsters knew what it meant. They would make their way to the post office and head off on their bicycles to make the delivery. In an age when most people didn’t have telephones, telegrams were the only means of sending urgent messages.

Mainham Post Office continued to serve the public of the surrounding area until 1970 when it was closed down. Today it lies empty and derelict.