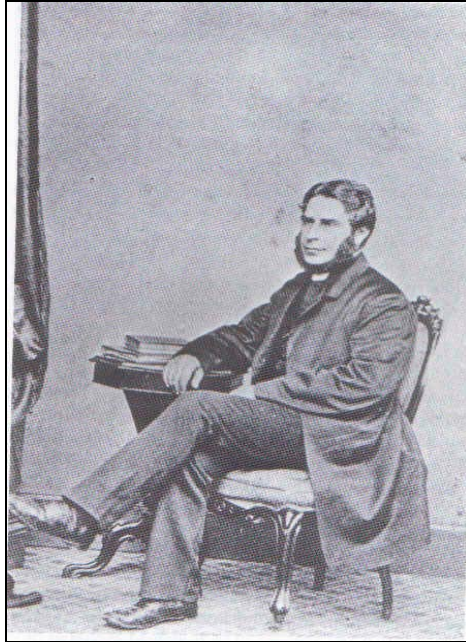


Hidden Gems and Forgotten People
KILLULTAGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY



ARTHUR BELL NICHOLLS

Arthur Nicholls, the future husband of Charlotte Bronte, one of England's greatest novelists, was born in 1818 on his parents farm at Tully, a rich farming district overlooking Lough Neagh and close Aldergrove, now Belfast International Airport. His mother Margaret died aged 44 leaving her husband to raise eleven children. When Arthur was seven and his brother Alan nine, they were adopted by an uncle, Rev. Alan Bell, headmaster of the Royal School Banagher. They were extremely fortunate to be brought up and educated by this prosperous and loving family.

After eight years at Trinity College, Dublin, Arthur Bell Nicholls was awarded his degree and entered the Church. In 1845 he arrived in Haworth, Yorkshire, as curate to Rev. Patrick Bronte, father of Charlotte. The tragic story of the Brontes is well known, but after a troubled courtship, and when her mother and all her siblings were dead, Arthur and Charlotte were married. They spent their honeymoon in Ireland, but strangely never visited their families in the North. Part of their time was spent at Banagher, where Charlotte was much impressed by the grandeur of Cuba House, and his delightful family.

Sadly, it was to be a brief spell of happiness. Within nine months Charlotte, the last of the six Bronte children was dead. She was 39. Arthur remained with his father-in-law until the old man died in 1861 at the age of 84. He was not given the living at Haworth and returned to Banagher where he married his cousin Mary Anna. He died in 1906 at the age of 88 and is buried at St. Paul's Church, Banagher. Several of his siblings lie in the Nicholls family plot in Killead Presbyterian Churchyard. His birthplace, now much enlarged, is still occupied.