

**Cork City and County Archives**  
**Macroom Board of Guardians (Ref. IE CCCA/BG/115)**  
**Descriptive List**

**Table of Contents**

Identity Statement.....	2
Context.....	2
Creator(s):.....	2
Archival History .....	2
Administrative & Biographical History.....	2
Scope & Content .....	4
Arrangement .....	5
Conditions of Access & Use .....	5
Allied Materials:.....	6
Archivist's Note: .....	6
List of Items and Descriptions .....	7
1. Minute Books.....	7
BG/115/A Macroom Board of Guardians Minute Books .....	7
2. Correspondence.....	17
BG/115/BA Inward Letter Books (LGB/LG Dept) .....	17
3. Accounts .....	18
BG/115/CA General Ledgers.....	18
BG/115/CD Financial Statements Book - Receipts .....	19
BG/115/CL Bank Pass Book.....	19
4. Statistics (Dispensary) .....	20
BG/115/DF Medical Officer's Monthly Return Book – Inchigeela Dispensary .....	20
5. Workhouse: Inmates .....	20
BG/115/G Indoor Relief Register .....	20
6. Workhouse: Infirmary .....	21
BG/115/HH Matron's Requisition Book.....	21
7. Boarding Out .....	21
BG/115/IC Boarded Out Children Contract Book.....	21
BG/115/ID List of Boarded Out Children.....	22

## Identity Statement

**Reference Code:** IE CCCA/BG/115

**Title:** Macroom Board of Guardians

**Dates:** 1852 – 1924

**Level of description:** Fonds

**Extent:** 40 items

## Context

### **Creator(s):**

Macroom Board of Guardians

### **Archival History**

Most of the surviving records of the Macroom Board of Guardians were deposited in the Archives in the early 1980s. One item, BG/115/DF/1, the Inchigeela Dispensary Medical Officer's Report Book, was deposited separately, and originally had the reference code U337. There are many gaps in the series of minute books, and it is likely that records were destroyed in the fire at the workhouse in 1921.

### **Administrative & Biographical History**

The Macroom Board of Guardians was the governing body of Macroom workhouse and poor law union. Macroom Poor Law Union was established under the Poor Law (Ireland) Act, 1838. It was one of 16 unions in the overall County Cork area. Each union was centred on a city or market town and its hinterland, and this union area sometimes ignored existing parish or county boundaries. In this central town was situated the union workhouse (usually built between 1838 and 1852) which provided relief for the unemployed and the destitute.

Macroom Union was declared by the Poor Law Commissioners on 20 December 1839 and an order declaring its workhouse fit to receive paupers was issued on 1 October 1842. The first admissions occurred on 13 May 1843. A PLC order dated 3 October 1849 altered the area of the union somewhat.

Unions were divided into electoral divisions (EDs) for electoral and rate collection purposes. Over time, larger dispensary districts and relief districts, consisting of several EDs, came into being. The Macroom Union consisted of the Dispensary Districts of Macroom, Cannaway, Clonmoyle, Inchigeela, and Slievreagh. Each district had a medical officer and dispensary. The workhouse also had a medical officer.

Each workhouse was managed by a staff and officers under the charge of a workhouse master, who reported to the board. Overall responsibility rested with the union's board of guardians, some of whom were elected, and some of whom were ex-officio members appointed usually from amongst local magistrates. The board appointed its own inhouse committees, and received reports from workhouse officers and from dispensary district committees and district medical officers. It also made resolutions on internal and poor law matters and, sometimes, on wider political or social issues. Poor law services were principally financed by a poor rate levied on property owners in the union's districts, and collected by rate collectors appointed by the board. Central government also provided loans. From 1899 on, the newly-created Cork County Council collected rates and funded Cork boards of guardians based on an annual estimate and demand.

Each union was under the central supervision of the Poor Law Commissioners up to 1874 and thereafter of the Local Government Board (later Local Government Board for Ireland). These government-appointed bodies received reports from the board and its officers, appointed inspectors and auditors, sanctioned or rejected proposed expenditure, appointments, and policies, and made the final decision on major administrative issues. On 19 June 1920 the board resolved to pledge allegiance to Dail Eireann, and subsequently did not submit minutes to the LGB.

The responsibilities of the guardians increasingly encompassed public health, and to medical relief for the destitute at the workhouse and 'outdoor' relief though a system of dispensary districts were added other functions including overseeing smallpox vaccinations, the boarding-out of orphan and deserted children, monitoring contagious diseases in animals, and providing labourers' cottages and improved sanitation. The workhouse buildings included an infirmary and a fever hospital. The workhouse also provided nursery care and education to child inmates, and employed school teachers. Hospital and other medical services were available to all, not just the poor, although the latter received free treatment when inmates, or through the system of tickets issued by relieving officers and medical officers.

The guardians' changing responsibilities were governed by legislation, including the Public Health (Ireland) Acts 1874 and 1878, Medical Charities Acts, Vaccination Acts, Dispensary Houses Act, the Nuisances Removal and Diseases Prevention Acts (1848-49), Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act 1878, and Labourers' Acts (1883-86). While these acts tended to increase the role of the board, the Local Government (Ireland) Act 1898 saw rate collection and many of its public health functions taken over by the newly-created Cork County Council and the Macroom Rural District Council. The union's clerk was also clerk to the RDC, and several members were common to both bodies. The board continued to administer the workhouse and its hospital, and to supervise dispensary services, outdoor relief, and the boarding out of children. However, in 1921 the workhouse was burnt down during the 'Troubles'. Officials were dismissed and the destitute and sick of the Macroom area were sent to Cork Union Workhouse and other institutions. The Macroom board paid the related expenses. Remaining premises were occupied by the National Army from September 1922.

The Local Government (Temporary Provisions) Act 1923 led to the abolition of the workhouse system, and its replacement with the formation of the county boards of health and public assistance. The final meeting of Macroom board of guardians was held on 26 April 1924.

## **Scope & Content**

Unfortunately, many of the records of Macroom union have not survived, possibly owing to the fire which destroyed the workhouse in 1921. Only 22 volumes of minutes of board meetings, one indoor relief register of inmates/patients, and a few other volumes are in existence. There are no minutes prior to 1884 and many gaps thereafter up to the final volume for 1923-24. The early years of the union, and its experience of the Great Famine (1845-49), which is known to have made a grave impact on the region, sadly are not documented in the present collection. The present minutes do, however, shed light on the provision of poor law and public health services in this relatively remote area in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Dispensary services, out door relief, and the boarding out of children are all extensively documented, for example. There are also many references to the need for district doctors to have a knowledge of Irish, owing to the large Irish-speaking population of the area. This became something of a political issue in 1920, as the board sought to increase its own use of Irish and to include a language requirement when making appointments, despite opposition from the LGB (BG/115/A/19). The board made many political resolutions, in particular calling several times for the release of political prisoners. In 1923 it voted not to sign a letter from the Local Government Department requiring that preference be given to former National Army members when making appointments. It was further resolved not to meet until political prisoners were released, although this was later rescinded (BG/115/A/22). Overall, the minutes provide a varied, if piecemeal, picture of the Poor Law at work, and of the development of local government and nationalist and republican politics, in the Macroom area.

The three surviving letterbooks (BG/115/BA/1-3) supplement the minutes with sets of letters received, mainly from the Local Government Board and the Local Government Department, the first two volumes covering years (1901, 1918) for which no minutes have survived.

The financial records present, including general ledgers (BG/115/CA), one receipts book (BG/115/CD), and a bank pass book (BG/115/CL) shed light on the daily operations and transactions of the union in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Inchigeela Dispensary Medical Officer's Return Book (BG/115/DF/1) is a rare example of a dispensary statistical record, and while it does not give names, it does give information on numbers of patients and the nature of their illnesses. It is also the earliest surviving record (1852-54).

The one remaining indoor relief register (BG/115/G/1) provides information on inmates and hospital patients in the period 1916 to 1921, and may be of interest for family history research, as well as providing a glimpse of workhouse life in the final years of the system. The matron's requisition book (BG/115/HH), documenting purchases for the infirmary, adds a different perspective.

The final two items present, the Boarded Out Children Contract Book (BG/115/IC) and the List of Boarded Out Children (BG/115/ID), both covering the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, are rare examples of such records, which have not survived for other Cork unions. They document vital childcare services in the era before formal adoption, and, together with the minute books, shed light on the lives and experiences of orphan, founding, and deserted children at that time. They add a fascinating extra dimension to this incomplete but important collection of Poor law records.

## Arrangement

The collection consists of an incomplete series of minutes of meetings of the board of guardians, some 20<sup>th</sup> century board correspondence, financial records, an early dispensary statistical record, one indoor relief register, a matron's requisition book, and two volumes relating to the boarding out of children. The arrangement of Board of Guardian records is based on that devised for Poor Law records nationally by Sean McMenemy of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (see Appendix 2 to McMenemy's article in *Irish Archives Bulletin* Vol 1, No 2, October 1971).

## Headings

### 1. Minute Books

A1- 122	Board of Guardian Minute Books	1884-1924 (22 items)
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### 2. Correspondence

BA1-3	Inward Letterbooks (LGB/LG Dept)	1901, 1918, 1922 (3 items)
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### 3. Accounts

CA1-10	General Ledgers	1899 – 1924 (8 items)
CD1	Financial Statement Book – Receipts	1905 – 1913 (1 item)
CL1	Bank Pass Book	1920 (1 item)

### 4. Statistics (Dispensary)

DF1	Medical Officer's Monthly Return Book, Inchigeela Dispensary	1852 – 1854 (1 item)
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### 5. Workhouse: Inmates

G1	Indoor Relief Register	1916 – 1921 (1 item)
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### 6. Workhouse: Infirmary

HH1	Matron's Requisition Book	1894 – 1921 (1 item)
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### 7. Boarded Out Children

IC1	Boarded Out Children Contract Book	1901 – 1922 (1 item)
ID1	List of Boarded Out Children	1902 – 1920 (1 item)

## Conditions of Access & Use

**Access:** Open by appointment to those holding a current reader's ticket.

**Language:** English

**Finding Aids:** Summary descriptive list.

## **Allied Materials:**

### **Related Material**

CCCA:

Board of Guardian records for other poor law unions in West Cork (BG/42 Bandon; BG/43 Bantry; BG/59 Castletown; BG/65 Clonakilty; BG/83 Dunmanway; BG/145 Schull)

Cork County Boards of Health and Public Assistance records, 1921-66

Macroom Rural District Council records, 1899-1921 (RDC/115)

Cork County Council records, 1899- (including rates valuation books)

U337 Inchigeela Dispensary Medical Officer's Monthly Returns 1852 – 1854: now BG115/DF1

Elsewhere:

National Archives of Ireland:

Archives of the Poor Law Commissioners

Archives of the Local Government Board for Ireland

Archives of the Department of Local Government

## **Archivist's Note:**

Timmy O Connor

Local Government Archivist, CCCA

November 2011

## List of Items and Descriptions

### 1. *Minute Books*

#### BG/115/A Macroom Board of Guardians Minute Books

**Scope and Content:**

A record of meetings and decisions made by the board of guardians in administering the workhouse and poor relief generally. At meetings, officers' reports and committee findings were heard, correspondence read and considered, and applications decided on. Matters arising with regard to the workhouse, staff, provisions, bills, finance, the Poor Law, the Poor Law Commissioners, the Local Government Board and the Local Government Department, and other issues, were also discussed. The minutes also include weekly statistics of admissions, discharges, and deaths in the workhouse, and of outdoor relief.

**Date:** 10 May 1884 – 26 Apr 1924

**Level:** Series

**Extent:** 22 volumes

1. 10 May 1884 – 14 Mar 1885

Some pages from the meeting preceding 10 May 1884 are present. Minutes of ordinary proceedings are followed by supplemental sheets for proceedings under the Medical Charities Act and proceedings of the board of guardians as a rural sanitary authority. Ordinary minutes often continue into the Medical Charities sheet. Includes:

24 May 1884 Total inmates: 297. Out door relief: 354 persons.

LGB order dated 12 May 1884 setting aside the return of the election of Edward Neville as guardian for Mashanaglass ED as, on inquiry, he 'did not obtain a majority of good and lawful votes'. The office is declared vacant. LGB letter referring to their inspector's report, which finds workhouse management satisfactory, but notes painting required, the long time since stocktaking was done, and the deficiency of industrial training for children. Letter from Mr Parnell MP regarding the land purchase company 'unanimously approved of' [contents not given].

Resolution expressing regret 'that an attempt has been made to organise an opposition to the proposed Cork & Muskerry Light Railway'.

LGB letter forwarding a sealed copy of the provisional order under the Labourers' Act.

21 Jun 1884 Resolution passed resolving to proceed with alterations to the workhouse chapel, despite advice questioning its financial expediency.

Resolved, to take no action regarding a letter making claims relating to the management of the workhouse, as 'it appears John Murphy is a fictitious

name and that this letter was got up by some person for malicious motives'. Resolved, that all women who are mothers of more than one illegitimate child be kept separate from other inmates, 'as the Poor Law requires'. Letter from medical officer, Slievreagh Dispensary District, complaining that lots given to families in Ballyvourney graveyard are too small and the surface is too light in places. He recommends purchasing a new graveyard. The board appoints a committee of the three parish clergymen, Sir George Colthurst, and the guardians of the district to select and report on a site. The Representative Church Body was also informed. [See, eg, 5 Jul, 16 Aug]

2 Aug 1884 Report of special committee appointed to enquire into the sanitary condition of the town [ie, Macroom. See also 16 Aug. On 30 Aug a letter from Cork Corporation was received regarding pollution of the Sullane river at Macroom. Analyst and committee reports read on 13 Sep].

13 Sep LGB letter, in reply to the board, explaining that the urban sanitary authority [for Macroom] is empowered to provide urinals and water closets, but that if a rural sanitary authority [ie, the board] incurred such expenditure, 'the auditor would probably not be called upon to question it'. [See 11 Oct]

27 Sep 1884 Master's report regarding two inmates who 'conducted themselves in the most insubordinate and scandalous manner'. LGB letter regarding an illegitimate child out at nurse. Resolution from the society for the Preservation of the Irish Language adopted, regarding preference for medical candidates with knowledge of Irish. Lists of cheques passed [eg, salaries] and tenders accepted. Letter from the inhabitants of Carrigadrohid on 'the necessity for procuring a supply of pure water', noting the present source is half a mile away and is 'almost unapproachable', and is 'not at all suited for baking purposes'.

25 Oct 1884 Relieving officer's report regarding a child desertion case at Coachford Petty Sessions. Resolution requiring tendering parties to lodge 10% of contract value, to be forfeited if tender is withdrawn late, or goods not supplied after acceptance. Resolved, that advertisements be placed in the Cork Examiner only. Resolution deploring the death of AM Sullivan and supporting a fund in his name, noting his work to better 'the condition of fallen Ireland and humanity'. Rates for stated EDs declared uncollectable ['waste land', 'vacant house']. LGB letter pointing out that notice does not appear to have been given in the case of bye-laws for common lodging houses in Macroom.

8 Nov 1884 New relieving officer appointed by election. Resolved, 'that the re-appointment [by the government] of George Bolton is a fresh insult to the Irish people'. Representations for labourers' cottages considered, stated numbers approved. [Special meeting held on 13 Nov, with consideration of houses, additional to the 72 already arranged to be built, deferred for 12 months].

22 Nov 1884 LGB letter requesting 'specific facts' and names of witnesses before instituting an inquiry into claims by D O'Connell, guardian, regarding contracts for workhouse supplies. [LG report read on 17 Jan 1885]



LGB letter regarding a communication received from the inmates complaining of the quality of the bread.  
Coachford water supply plans referred to Clonmoyle dispensary committee.

6 Dec 1884 Reports of LG Inspector and auditor considered. The first notes a balance against the guardians of £468 and debts of £620.

31 Jan 1885 Several motions put regarding contractor for supply of flannel, including one that the contractor leave the board room, and another regarding the notice excluding all persons except guardians. All defeated.

28 Feb 1885 Resolved, that the Constabulary be appointed inspectors of explosives 'as we consider that the ratepayers should in no way be liable to pay for what is a matter of Imperial expenditure'.  
Reply to Mr McMullen, engineer, Cork Corporation, regarding pollution of the Lee, stating the board is having plans for the improvement of the sanitary condition of Macroom submitted to them, and that they do not consider themselves bound to submit those plans to Cork Corporation.

14 Mar 1885 Master reports a case of one inmate stabbing another.  
LGB solicitor's letter regarding proceedings against a late relieving officer for recovery of money given for emigration.

2. 28 Mar 1885 – 20 Feb 1886  
Gap
3. 6 Nov 1886 – 24 Sep 1887  
Gap
4. 10 Aug 1889 – 17 May 1890  
Gap
5. 4 Apr 1891 – 19 Mar 1892  
Gap
6. 2 Feb 1895 – 22 Feb 1896  
Gap
7. 26 Sep 1896 – 30 Jan 1897
8. 13 Feb 1897 – 28 Aug 1897  
Gap
9. 16 May 1903 – 2 Apr 1904  
Gap
10. 4 Mar 1905 – 18 Mar 1905
11. 1 Apr 1905 – 24 Mar 1906
12. 7 Apr 1906 – 25 Aug 1906

## 13. 8 Sep 1906 – 23 Feb 1907

Minutes of ordinary meetings are followed by tables for financial and statistical minutes (returns), and by a supplemental sheet for proceedings under the Medical Charities Act. Includes:

22 Sep 1906 Total inmates: 125. Out door relief: 398 persons.

Clerk reports visit to the house by members of the Royal Commission for the Care and Control of the Feeble Minded.

Relieving officer's report regarding a home into which a child is to be boarded out, noting that there are still two other children at nurse there. [See 6 Oct]

20 Oct 1906 Extract from Offence and Punishment Book: tobacco stopped in the case of three inmates who refused to work.

Resolution by the guardians and RDC condemning 'the harsh eviction' of Jerry Mahony of Ballingearry, and calling on farmers of Kanturk to prevent the landlord, Stephen Grehan, from hunting over their land. [See 17 Nov, 15 Dec]

Out door relief granted to a mother of five living in a labourers' cottage, her husband being unable to work. [See 3 Nov]

3 Nov 1906 Numbers of outstanding vaccination defaulters in each district.

1 Dec 1906 LG auditor's report read, noting 'the average weekly cost during the period under audit was very high'.

Applications for wage increases and bonuses considered [recurring items]

Letter from the midwife, Macroom district, regarding the confinement in an outhouse of 'a tramp's wife', to whom she went in the ambulance.

Extracts from punishment book regarding five cases [recurring items].

15 Dec 1906 Solicitors' letters in the case of the guardians versus a defendant ordered to give up a child boarded out to her, for return to the workhouse.

12 Jan 1907 Master's report noting death of the porter [board resolution of sympathy notes he was at one time its vice chairman]. The master further reports that the medical officer privately offered a gallon of whiskey for the inmates at Christmas, but he refused to permit it owing to the rules.

9 Feb 1907 Resolution passed (7 votes to 4) asking again that the master's salary be increased from £80 to £90, noting his extra work in the buying and selling of pigs, issuing accounts orders, and 'his skill and judgement in his management of the farm and of the house generally'.

LGB circular regarding contagious ophthalmia, and medical inspection of children, noting 'the health and prospects of the children in after-life are very frequently injuriously affected by neglect of their teeth in youth'.

LGB letter regarding their inspector's report, which is 'generally satisfactory'.

Resolved 'that we the members of this union take up the collection in support of JR O'Sullivan in their respective districts on Sunday'.

Petition read requesting 'a serviceable limb' to allow a Clondrohid woman 'to eke out an existence by her knowledge of dressmaking'.

Resolved, on foot of circular from the Dublin Industrial Development

Association, 'that Irish made drugs be advertised for'.

- 23 Feb 1907 Letter from the workhouse medical officer in response to two charges made against him, and referring to 'the unfriendly disposition shown towards me from time to time by the master'. Explanation approved.
14. 9 Mar 1907 – 10 Aug 1907  
Gap
15. 6 Mar 1909 – 24 Jul 1909  
Gap
16. 19 Feb 1910 – 9 Jul 1910  
Gap
17. 2 May 1914 – 3 Oct 1914
18. 17 Oct 1914 – 17 Apr 1915  
Gap
19. 8 Nov 1919 – 24 Apr 1920

Ordinary minutes are followed by a sheet for proceedings under the Pauper Children (Ireland) Acts and Children Act, 1908; by tables for financial minutes and statistical minutes; and sheets for proceedings under the Medical Charities Acts. Includes:

8 Nov 1919 Total inmates: 67. Out door relief: 146 persons.  
LGB letter giving the 'substance' of the medical inspector's report on the workhouse infirmary and fever hospital. [see 6 Dec: LG inspector's report]  
LGB letter regarding admission of an illegitimate child, noting the auditor must 'be satisfied that the expenditure on the maintenance of any inmate is lawful and justifiable'. [See also 6 Dec]  
LGB letter stating that sugar consumption must be reduced to comply with the Food Controller's order.  
Resolution calling on Irish Railways 'to have the link between the city terminus of the Cork and Macroom Railway adapted for commercial use'.  
LGB letter regarding boarded out children, noting that it may be desirable to place stated children whose school attendance is irregular with other foster parents [recurring items].

6 Dec 1919 Acting master's report requesting stated extras for Christmas.  
LGB letter accepting the appointment of the medical officer of Slieveveagh Dispensary District 'if the guardians are in a position to satisfy them that in this particular case the requirement as to the knowledge of the Irish language did not affect or limit the competition for the office'.

20 Dec 1919 Resolved, 'that the several amounts of Outdoor Relief be doubled for two weeks from this date'.

3 Jan 1920 Acting master reports a foundling child admitted on 26 December was baptized and christened Stephen Day.  
Letter from Union and Rural District Clerks' Association of Ireland proposing a graded scale of salaries. [Remuneration of clerks an ongoing issue between board and LGB. See, eg, 28 Feb 1920].  
Letter from Dublin Union seeking support for a test case regarding disqualification of old age pensioners in workhouses. [See 28 Feb]

31 Jan 1920 Letter from the Cork Nurses Association advocating a substantial increase of salary for two nurses. [See 14 & 28 Feb]

Board solicitor's letter advising that the outstanding salary of the tailor (deceased) may be paid to his widow if she indemnifies the board, the solicitor not caring to put her to the expense of taking out administration.

Three applications for the post of tailor read and refused.

Resolution of Macroom and Ballyvourney Sinn Fein Club calling for the vacant position of master to be filled by competitive examination, 'a thorough knowledge of Irish to be essential'. [See later minutes, eg, 14, 28 Feb, 13 Mar]

28 Feb 1920 Letter from Medical Officer, Clonmoyle district, explaining that he did not attend Donoughmore depot yesterday 'in consequence of a notice received by me' [enclosed but not given in minutes]. He adds 'I have been given to understand that nobody will attend at the present depot under existing conditions' [ie, the 'Troubles'. See 13 Mar and later minutes]

13 Mar 1920 LGB letter forwarding an order constituting Macroom Urban District a Poor Law Electoral Area under the Local Government (Ireland) Act 1919, and assigning three members thereto.

Enclosed, list of accepted tenders for half-year to 30 Sep 1920.

Relieving officer's reports on boarded out children read [copied into minutes]

27 Mar 1920 Meeting adjourned out of respect for Thomas MacCurtain.

24 Apr 1920 Lengthy resolution regarding superannuation for the late master, referring to 'the purchasing power of money compared with pre-war days'.

20. 8 May 1920 – 25 Sep 1920

Includes:

8 May 1920 Total inmates: 73. Out door relief: 153 persons

LGB letter stating that 'they fail to see the necessity for the employment of eleven attendants for about 60 inmates, and they must decline to approve of their continued employment' [see medical officer's report, 22 May].

22 May 1920 Extracts from Medical Inspector's report on dispensary districts. Scale of extra professional fees for medical officers approved.

19 Jun 1920 Matron's report regarding the porter's refusal to allow the messenger, an inmate, out of the house with messages or to accompany the children to the convent school (owing to a dispute; see 3 Jul).

LGB letters regarding war bonuses, including arbitration awards [recurring].

Resolution protesting at a new bank charge of 10s 6d for keeping current accounts. 'We regard it as a movement intended to shift the burthen of increased remuneration paid to bank staffs from the shoulders of the directors to the public whose business has led to the prosperity of Irish banks'.

Resolution acknowledging the authority of Dail Eireann 'as the duly elected government of the Irish people'.

Resolved, that the military authorities be asked to leave the medical officer's residence in Ballyvourney.

3 Jul 1920 Series of resolutions passed, one refusing 'to tolerate the canvassing of its members', and another 'that the resolution passed after Easter Week be read to the guardians with the names of the proposer and seconder and the other members present' ('the resolution referred to was produced and burned by the chairman').

17 Jul 1920 Series of resolutions, one stating that members missing three consecutive meetings without satisfactory explanation 'shall be deemed to have tendered their resignations', and others requiring that union stationery be in Irish, that advertisements be bilingual, that no official be appointed without a good knowledge of Irish, that officials under 40 acquire such a knowledge 'as soon as possible', and that Irish-speaking members 'pledge ourselves to speak in Irish on suitable occasions', while non-Irish speakers 'pledge themselves to do their best to learn Irish'.

Visiting committee report, including reference to the lighting of the house, noting that in the week to 20 Dec 1919, use was 12lbs candles (at 9s) and 16 pints oil (at 3s 10d).

Clerk draws attention to the condition of the boardroom, noting 'books are stored in the lavatory for want of library accommodation'.

Letter drawing the board's attention 'to the incompetency of your midwife nurse for the Ballingeary district, through whose bungling action, I attribute the death of my child'.

14 Aug 1920 Letter, 'we the undersigned Dail Eireann justices called in the services of Dr W Riordan to commit a patient to the Cork Lunatic Asylum, and we recommend payment of his fee'. Paid.

Letter from the late master regarding charges made by the female searcher.

Resolution, 'while reluctant to take any action which might be considered suggestive of coercion', calling for a cessation of trade with 'tainted areas' in Belfast, until 'all the employees who have been driven from their employment because of their religion and political beliefs, have been unconditionally reinstated'.

Resolution asking the proprietors of the Cork Examiner why they did not publish the board's resolution 'calling on all men between the ages of 17 and 40 to join the Republican Army'.

28 Aug 1920 Resolution of adjournment, in response to 'the inhuman treatment meted out to Alderman Terence McSweeney, Lord Mayor of Cork, and representative of this constituency in Dail Eireann'.

25 Sep 1920 Clerk reports that the Local Government Auditor attended on 13 Sep and accounts were not submitted to him.

Representatives appointed to [Dail Eireann] Conciliation Board.

Inserted, printed form of 'General tender for Workhouse Supplies'.

Resolution refusing 'to recognise the authority of the English Local Government Board'.

Gap

## 21. 11 Feb 1922 – 9 Dec 1922

Inside the front cover 14 letters have been enclosed, mainly from the clerk to the LGB/Department of Local Government, 1918-23, regarding appointments, especially of medical officers. No inmates are recorded in the 'State of the Workhouse' table preceding ordinary minutes, but figures for out door relief are recorded up to 12 Aug, but not thereafter.

Includes:

11 Feb 1922 Out door relief: 135 persons.

Report of committee appointed to investigate claims of officials whose services were dispensed with on 31 December last for superannuation and gratuities, including master, matron, and porter of the workhouse.

Letter from the Superioress, Convent of Mercy, Macroom, regarding articles sold 'to the nuns who were officials of the workhouse'.

Order, in reply to LG Dept letter regarding a change of treasurer, explaining that the National Land Bank was chosen as being 'an Irish institution, not only in origin but in sympathy'.

Particulars of salaries of midwives (stated) furnished to the LG Dept. [Letter from Irish Nurses and Midwives Union regarding salaries also read]

11 Mar 1922 Clerk reports that 'all the stock and chattels in the House' were sold by public auction, apart from some bedding for the hospital.

Assistant clerk reports stated articles commandeered by the IRA.

Letter from Macroom Urban District Council regarding water rent on the workhouse up to 31 December 1921: 'the date up to which the premises were occupied'.

LG Dept letter approving of the transfer of Macroom dispensary to the workhouse, and of fitting up 20 beds in the fever hospital, in case required.

Minutes for 23 Jan 1923 inserted between those for 25 Mar and 8 Apr 1922.

Includes notice of a letter from the National Army ordering that the clerk's office be handed over to the military authorities. Also present is an application by the treasurer for interest on overdrawn accounts of the board and RDC.

The Medical Charities minutes include a report by the medical officer for Macroom on low stocks of medicines and poor quality supplies, owing to the neglect of the contractor. [Also recorded in the next volume, dated 13 Jan]

8 Apr 1922 Clerk reports a letter from Macroom UDC informing him of officers appointed to the committee of management of the County Home, and to the sub-committee 'to be formed to replace guardians under scheme for abolishment of workhouses'.

Letter from midwife, Macroom district, threatening to go on strike over pay.

13 May 1922 LG Dept letter regarding the clerk's claim for conveyance of correspondence for the previous year, asking 'whether the prohibition of the use of bicycles by the English Military did not terminate with the signing of the Truce in July last'.

Solicitor's letter regarding the board's case against a mother for maintenance,

reporting that she is paying for another child from her small wages, but has named a large farmer as the father of her illegitimate child.

Relieving officer's report regarding a mother of two children whose husband was shot, and whose only income is 6s per week from the White Cross Fund. [Outdoor relief granted, and to a family with six children under 15 living in a labourers' cottage on half an acre. Outdoor relief a recurring matter].

Resolution regarding admission and maintenance of persons from Macroom union in Cork union workhouse.

8 Jul 1922 Letter from secretary, Cork County Council, regarding arrangements for transferring old, infirm, chronic sick, and debilitated persons and sane epileptics from the west Cork unions, including Macroom, to the new home in Clonakilty.

15 Jul 1922 Special meeting held to consider a resolution of Cork Harbour Commissioners regarding the Civil War. Resolution passed calling on 'Army Leaders of both sides and Dail Eireann to arrange for an immediate armistice'. Amendment calling for disbandment of the National Army defeated.

30 Sep 1922 Clerk reports that National Troops took possession of the workhouse, including the board and RDC buildings, on 18 Aug.

11 Nov 1922 Solicitor's letter regarding superannuation of the late porter and female searcher, the amount of which has been 'illegally' reduced by LG Dept.  
13 Jan 1923 – 26 Apr 1924

22.

State of the Workhouse and Outdoor Relief Returns not completed in this volume. Minutes February to May 1923 inserted as loose typescript pages into the volume. Includes:

9 Jun 1923 Clerk's reports, referring to several requisitionings of the ambulance by the Red Cross Corps, and to a 10 month old boy sent to Cork District Hospital (his father having been 'taken out of his own house in Co Waterford and shot', and his mother having gone to Scotland).

14 Jul 1923 Relieving officer submits eviction notices at the suit of Timothy Lucey, Main St, Macroom, 'Shopkeeper & Farmer'.  
Letter from Medical Officer, Macroom, regarding 'grave objections to the further use of the Town Hall premises as a dispensary'. [See also 8 Dec]  
Resolution protesting at the LG Dept's delay in sanctioning the appointment of Denis F MacCarthy as medical officer of Cannaway district, noting 'the voting was obviously not along political lines'.

11 Aug 1923 Resolution, following hearing of 'a deputation of bodies', calling for the immediate and unconditional release of political prisoners.

8 Sep 1923 Order in response to an LG Dept letter regarding an application for out door relief, noting 'owing to the Workhouse having been burned this man and his family cannot be relieved therein'.

13 Oct 1923 Relieving officer reports a case of a child left on a doorstep.

Relieving officer's report regarding the midwife of Macroom district having ceased work until pay deducted for not attending a case is refunded. Solicitor's letter also present. [Issues with midwives recurring subjects].

10 Nov 1923 LG Dept letter forwarding extracts from returns by medical officers of the dispensary districts, referring to deficiencies in premises and large numbers of vaccination defaulters.

8 Dec 1923 LG letter forwarding a letter to be signed agreeing to give preference to men who have served in the National Army in filling vacancies. The chairman refused to sign it, stating 'preference ought be given to men who fought against the English'. The board voted its support (5 to 3). Resolution passed (7 to 5) 'that the future business of the board be not transacted until the prisoners are released'. [The clerk pointed out that outdoor relief recipients would be deprived, and that notwithstanding three members could legally transact a meeting. Resolution rescinded 12 Jan 1924]

9 Feb 1924 Resolution ordering payment of wages to the ambulance driver 'without waiting for sanction... as the man cannot live on air'.

26 Apr 1924 Letter from the Minister for Local Government informing the board that Cork County Council and Cork County Borough Council have submitted a scheme for the relief of the poor under the Local Government (Temporary Provisions) Act 1923, and that boards of guardians in the county shall be abolished from and after 1 May 1924.



## **2. Correspondence**

### **BG/115/BA    Inward Letter Books (LGB/LG Dept)**

**Scope and Content:**

Incoming letters, mainly from the Local Government Board (letters from 1922 are mainly from Dail Eireann and the Local Government Department). Some letters from other public bodies and committees (eg, Cork County Council, Food Control Committee for Ireland) and a few letters from individuals are also present. The volumes are indexed, noting letter number, date, who from, and subject. Letters and orders or responses arising from them are summarised in the minutes. Letter books and minutes were maintained by the clerk of the union, to whom almost all of the letters in the present volumes are addressed. [Macroom RDC records include a volume of similar incoming letters 1888-1918 (mainly 1905-18) to both Macroom union and RDC, but mainly to the latter. The same clerk served both bodies]

**Dates:** 3 Jan 1901 – 22 Dec 1922 (Gaps)

**Level:** Series

**Extent:** 3 volumes

1. 3 Jan – 31 Dec 1901
2. 1 Jan – 28 Dec 1918
3. 1 Jan – 22 Dec 1922

Includes 'Instructions to Home Help Officers' (received 10 Feb 1923)

### 3. *Accounts*

#### **BG/115/CA    General Ledgers**

**Scope and Content:**

Volumes recording debits, and noting 'corresponding credits and particulars', for each financial half-year, under the following headings: Repayment of Relief; Rents of Dispensary Residences; Sales of Farm Produce; Sales of Offal and Old Stores, and Other Receipts; Provisions and Necessaries (followed by abstract of provisions receipt and consumption account); Clothing and Bedding; Workhouse Burials; Workhouse Farm; Extern Institutions; Emigration; Registration; Examination of Lunatics; Interned Aliens; Medical Charities; Superannuation. There are also details of accounts, including the following: Salaries; Loans; Union Fund and County Accounts; and General Balance. Also present are statements of insurances and of the names of officers giving fidelity bonds, auditor's notes, treasurer's account and reconciliation, unpaid bills, and clerk's petty disbursements.

**Date:** 30 Apr 1899 – 30 Apr 1924 (Gaps)

**Level:** Series

**Extent:** 8 volumes

1. 30 Apr 1899 – 30 Mar 1905
2. 31 Mar 1905 – 31 Mar 1907
3. 31 Mar 1907 – 31 Mar 1909
4. 31 Mar 1909 – 31 Mar 1911
5. 31 Mar 1911 – 31 Mar 1913
6. Missing
7. 31 Mar 1915 – 31 Mar 1917
8. Missing
9. 9 Oct 1920 – 30 Sep 1922
10. 30 Sep 1922 – 30 Apr 1924

**BG/115/CD    Financial Statements Book - Receipts****Scope and Content:**

Record of monthly financial statements of receipts, for each half-year. The printed statement forms (called 'Form 1 (article 9)') contain the following headings: date when lodged with Treasurer, From whom received, particulars of receipt, total amount received, and classification of receipts. The last field is broken down into the following classes: County Council money supplied on demand of Guardians, repayment of relief, rents of dispensary residences, farm account – sale of produce, sales of offal, old stores and other receipts, loans received. Each form notes the total amount of receipts for the month and the ledger folio to which amounts are posted. At the end of each statement is a certificate of the clerk of the Union and a certificate of confirmation by Guardians, certifying, respectively, that statements are correct and accounted for, and that they have been examined and confirmed.

**Date:** 5 Apr 1905 – 31 Mar 1913

**Level:** Item

**Extent:** 1 volume

**BG/115/CL    Bank Pass Book****Scope and Content:**

Record of the capital account of Macroom Union in account with its treasurer, The National Bank Limited (Macroom Branch). The volume notes dates and totals of receipts and payments, and balances. Only the first 9 pages have been used. The volume was printed for Macroom RDC, but this has been crossed out and 'Union' written in on the pages used.

**Date:** 14 Jul 1920 – 11 Dec 1920

**Level:** Item

**Extent:** 1 volume

#### **4.     *Statistics (Dispensary)***

##### **BG/115/DF     Medical Officer's Monthly Return Book – Inchigeela Dispensary**

**Scope and Content:**

Record containing forms completed monthly by the medical officer of Inchigeela Dispensary District, copies of which were forwarded to the PLC medical inspector. The forms, 'Form K', are described as 'A Return of the number of patients prescribed for daily, distinguishing those attended at the dispensary from those visited at their homes: and showing the number of prescriptions dispensed, and the number of cases of certain contagious and other diseases'. A note on the first return reads 'The opening of the dispensary not being generally known this return exhibits but a small amount of attendance this month'. [This record was deposited in the Archives separately from the remainder of the collection and originally had the reference code U337. The volume is fragile].

**Date:** July 1852 – Feb 1854

**Level:** Item

**Extent:** 1 volume

#### **5.     *Workhouse: Inmates***

##### **BG/115/G     Indoor Relief Register**

**Scope and Content:**

Volume recording and registering the admission, residence, and discharge of inmates of the workhouse. Noted are register number, date of admission, address, sex, age, marital status, employment, religious denomination, observations, and date of discharge or death. Only one indoor register for the Macroom Union has survived. The volume is indexed.

**Date:** 12 Aug 1916 – 17 Dec 1921

**Level:** Item

**Extent:** 1 volume

## **6.     *Workhouse: Infirmary***

### **BG/115/HH     Matron's Requisition Book**

**Scope and Content:**

Record containing written requests for articles required signed by the Matron and (in most cases) countersigned by the Master. The requests, mainly for clothing, bedding, and related hardware, were laid before the Board of Guardians, and their directions are noted (eg, 'advertise', 'adjourned'). There are no requests for many of the years covered.

**Date:** 5 Dec 1894 – 18 May 1921

**Level:** Item

**Extent:** 1 volume

## **7.     *Boarding Out***

### **BG/115/IC     Boarded Out Children Contract Book**

**Scope and Content:**

Volume containing printed forms of contract 'for Boarding Out Pauper Children'. Contracts are between the board and the foster parent, each agreeing to stated conditions. The foster parent agrees to clothe and nourish the child, ensure it attends school and divine worship, receives medical relief if required, and to present the child for inspection by the board's relieving officer. The board agrees to pay a stated sum (usually ten shillings) on the first day of each month, and to assist with clothing and schooling. Payment is continued until the child reaches 15 years of age, or is removed from the foster parent. The child's name is recorded on the contract. Notes such as 'cancelled', 'off', and 'dead' have been added to some forms.

**Date:** 10 Sep 1901 – 13 Apr 1922

**Level:** Item

**Extent:** 1 volume

**BG/115/ID    List of Boarded Out Children****Scope and Content:**

Volume containing lists of children out at nurse hired out, or boarded out. Each list notes Name of Child, Age, Date when given out, By Whom Nursed, Residence of Nurse, Initials of Chairman/Clerk. The name of the relevant relieving officer and district are often noted. Some letters and other lists have been inserted into the volume.

**Date:** 21 Aug 1902 – 14 May 1920

**Level:** Item

**Extent:** 1 volume