

**HistoryHubUlster**

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**BELFAST BANKING  
COMPANY, BUSHMILLS  
BRANCH**

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History Hub Ulster

## Belfast Banking Company Limited, Bushmills Branch

Whilst undertaking research into the Northern Bank in Bushmills, I came across a sad tale about the first branch manager of the Belfast Bank branch in that small village.



In 1870, **Thomas McComb** (32) had been working in the Belfast Bank, Coleraine branch as Accountant and Cashier for 13 years when he was appointed Manager of their Bushmills Agency. He was widely respected in the town.

The *'Belfast News-Letter'* of 15th December 1870 carried a long report on the 'Address and Presentation' to Thomas. He was presented in Coleraine Town Hall with a "purse containing 100 sovereigns and a very handsome ormolu time-piece" from the inhabitants of Coleraine and the surrounding district. There was a large attendance with Sir Henry Hervey Bruce Bt, MP taking the Chair.

Following the success of the Agency under Thomas, the Belfast Bank opened a branch on Bridge Street, Bushmills (*'Coleraine Chronicle'* of 1st February 1873) that also contained accommodation for the manager and family.

A search of the British Newspaper Archive found many references to Thomas. The *'Londonderry Sentinel'* of 3rd May 1873 reported that "Mr McComb, manager of the Belfast Bank, Bushmills, having, on account of his removal from Coleraine, found it impossible to continue to act as treasurer of the [Bann Bowling] club".

The next mention was in the *'Ballymoney Free Press and Northern Counties Advertiser'* of 26th August 1875 with Thomas McCombe, Belfast Bank, Bushmills kindly volunteering to be a collector for Toberkeigh Presbyterian Church.

The *'Coleraine Chronicle'* of 11th December 1875 reported that "At the appointed hour, Mr McCombe, Manager of the Belfast Bank, Bushmills was duly moved to the Chair" at the "Spelling Bee Amateur Concert and Readings" event in Bushmills.

January 1876 saw T McComb Esq Belfast Bank attending the funeral of Sir E C W Macnaghten of Dundarave, Bushmills.

The following year, the *'Ballymoney Free Press and Northern Counties Advertiser'* of 24th February 1876 reported "Among those who contributed to the great success of the demonstration the largest share of credit is due to Mr McCombe, manager of the Belfast Bank, Bushmills". Apparently, Mrs Douglas's dog Donald had won the Waterloo Cup.

The *'Belfast News-Letter'* of 4th January 1878 carried a family notice advising readers of the death on 2nd January of Tom McComb at Belfast Bank, Bushmills.

In a syndicated story that was also published in local newspapers, the *'Greenock Advertiser'* of 4th January 1878 reported on the "Suicide of a Bank Manager".

**SUICIDE OF A BANK MANAGER.**—Mr Thomas M'Comb, manager of a branch of the Belfast Bank, at Bushmills, has committed suicide under melancholy circumstances. It appears that he deliberately loaded a rifle, and afterwards went upstairs to his bed-room, where he blew his brains out. Mr M'Comb was a widower, and leaves several children. Deceased was highly respected by all who knew him.

The *'Northern Constitution'* carried a short two-line death notice the following day. The *'Coleraine Chronicle'* of 5th January 1878 carried a lengthy report on Thomas' health in last few weeks of his life and also gives details of the inquest.

On 12th January 1878, ten days after Thomas McComb's sad death, an advertisement appeared in the *'Northern Constitution'* for an auction of household furniture, guns, pistol, pony etc .... the property of the late Thomas McComb deceased. Below the auction advertisement was another for 'The McComb Fund'. The fund advertisement emphasises that "*the Funds of the Bank under his charge were quite correct*".

**IMPORTANT SALE BY AUCTION**  
OF  
**HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, GUNS,**  
**PISTOLS, PONY, &c.,**  
**AT THE BELFAST BANK, BUSHMILLS.**

I HAVE been instructed to Sell by Auction, upon the Premises, at the BELFAST BANK, BUSHMILLS, on WEDNESDAY, the 23rd inst., at the hour of 10 o'clock sharp, the entire of the HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, &c., the property of the late Mr. THOMAS M'COMB, deceased. The Furniture comprises, in

**DRAWING ROOM.**—Round Table in Mahogany, on pillar and claw, Couch in do., 6 Chairs in do., covered in hairweb, Occasional Chair, Sideboard, 2 small Tables, 2 large revolving Geographical Globes, Pier Glass, Ornaments, Engravings, Carpets, Rug, Window Drapery, and Blinds, Fender, Fire-irons, &c.

**DINING ROOM.**—Set Dining Tables in Mahogany, Couch, Easy Chair, small Chairs, Office Desk, Occasional Chair, Pictures, Lamps, Carpets, Window Drapery, Fender, Fire-irons, &c.

**BREAKFAST ROOM.**—Wardrobe, Table, Chairs, Lamps, &c.

**HALL.**—Large Clock (only requires winding-up monthly), Table, Chair, Engravings, Oilcloth, Mats, Lobby and Stair Carpets, Oilcloth, &c.

**LIBRARY.**—A large collection of Books, Trunk, Table, Camp-Chair, 2 Double-barrelled Guns, 2 Bunderbusses, Pike, Dagger, 2 large Horse Pistols, 2 pocket do., Sword, Stationery Box, Letter Press, &c. Also the entire Furniture of

**SIX BEDROOMS.**—Comprising Iron and other Bedsteads, Mattresses, Feather Beds and Bedding, Wardrobes, Chests of Drawers, Secretary, Dressing Tables, Wash Stands, Towel Rails, Looking-glasses, Carpets, Window Draperies, Fenders, Fire-irons, &c., with all the Kitchen Furniture, China, Delft, and Glass.

A large quantity of Flowers and Plants in pots, Straw, Hay, Manure, 2 Garden Chairs, Metal Mangers, Lumber, &c., with a variety of other articles too numerous for insertion. Also, a splendid Shetland Pony, rising 4 years old, accustomed to ride and drive.

Terms—Cash, and 5 per cent. Auction Fees.

**GEORGE MOONEY, Auctioneer.**  
Bushmills, 9th Jan., 1878. 2070

**THE M'COMB FUND.**

**BY** the sudden death of Mr. T. M'COMB, Manager of the Belfast Bank, Bushmills, his family, consisting of Four Boys, ages seven to fourteen years, are left wholly unprovided for, their Mother having died four years ago. The melancholy facts concerning his death are too well known; but it is a source of much consolation to his friends to know that the Funds of the Bank under his charge were quite correct.

Some of his friends are now endeavouring to raise a Fund which will assist in maintaining and Educating his Sons until they are ready to enter some business, and fondly hope for assistance from the numerous circle to which he had endeared himself by his kind and obliging disposition, from his fellow-officers in the various Banks throughout the province, and from many generous hearts who will sympathise with the Orphans in their ardent bereavement.

Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by any member of the Committee, or by the Treasurer, JAMES BARR HUNTER, Esq., Manager Belfast Bank, Bushmills.

**COMMITTEE:**  
REV. C. T. OVENDEN, Bushmills.  
REV. J. G. KIRKPATRICK, do.  
REV. R. W. FLEMING, Coleraine.  
SAMUEL STEEL, Esq., Bushmills.  
W. J. M'KENNY, Esq., do.  
J. B. GIVEN, Esq., J.P., Coleraine.  
R. M. DOUGLAS, Esq., J.P., Bushmills.  
R. A. TAYLOR, Esq., Coleraine.  
HUGH ANDERSON, Esq., do.  
JAMES MACAW, Esq., M.D., Bushmills.  
JOHN WALES, Esq., Belfast Bank, Belfast.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.**

Daniel Galley, ... ..	£40 0 0
Doctor Macaw, ... ..	8 0 0
John Wales, ... ..	5 0 0
William Ellis, ... ..	5 0 0
George Mooney, ... ..	4 0 0
	2075

'The McComb Fund' advertisements were published in local newspapers for a few months.

Thomas (40) was a widower whose wife Mary Eleanor McComb nee Harbinson or Harbison (37) had died at Bushmills on 19th January 1874 leaving him to raise **4 young boys aged between 7 and 14** (at 1878). The couple had married on 26th September 1860 at St. Columb's Cathedral, Londonderry.

A search on the Irish Genealogy (\*) website identified the following children of Tom and Mary McComb:

- **Thomas** (14) was born on 28th December 1864 at Castle View Terrace, Coleraine
- **Samuel Archibald** (12) was born on 2nd May 1866 at Castle View Terrace, Coleraine.
- **John Alex** (8) was born on 29th October 1869 at Castle View Terrace, Coleraine.
- Mary was born on 2nd January 1871 at Castle View Terrace, Coleraine and died on 3rd February 1871.
- Unknown (female) was born on 5th June 1872 at Meeting House Place, Coleraine and died on 5th September 1872.

(\*) The birth registration for the **4th boy** is proving elusive.

The new manager of the branch, James Barr Hunter was appointed the Treasurer with the fund being administered by a committee of 14 that included John Wales of the Belfast Bank, Belfast. John Wales was to become General Manager of the bank around 1878.

The '*Coleraine Chronicle*' of 30th March 1878 reported that the sum of £398 17s 6d had been collected so far and that the fund is due to be closed. This is equivalent to £48,600 as at 2021.

The '*Coleraine Chronicle*' of 16th November 1878 reported that **John Alex McComb** had been elected into the Masonic Orphan Boys' School, Dublin. Three out of 18 applicants were successful. "The lad who stands at the head of this list is the youngest son of the late Mr Thomas McComb, of the Belfast Bank, Bushmills, and was born in Coleraine in 1869".

Letters of Administration were granted on 26th March 1879 to Thomas' brother Samuel McComb who was the 'Curator of the Minor Children of the Deceased'.

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The sepia picture of the Bushmills branch is from the 1918 Belfast Banking Company property portfolio album. The building was advertised for sale a few years ago via PropertyPal.com and is currently being renovated possibly into a private house. The following picture is of the Coleraine branch (1918) where Thomas was Accountant and then Cashier.

