

DEATH OF MR. JOHNNY PATTERSON. Wed Jun 5th 1889

On Monday week last Messrs. Patterson and Keely's circus arrived in Tralee, and on that night, being unusually wet, the celebrated clown, Mr. Johnny Patterson, contracted a severe cold which gave him congestion of the lungs. He was admitted to the Tralee Fever Hospital, but his medical attendant could give no hope whatever of his recovery, and the patient died at an early hour on Saturday morning. His remains were buried in the New Cemetery on Sunday.

The death register also makes no mention of this -

1889	John Patterson of no fixed residence	M	Bachelor	49 years	Travelling Clown	Pneumonia 9 days Certified	Mary Flynn occupier Fever Hospital	Twenty- fourth Decemb. 1889	<i>M. Hayes</i> Registrar.
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However a 1932 article does repeat the claim -

In Our Owe Dear Land. [song title]

This song also had a tragic result for the singer. After travelling successfully up and down Ireland for many years poor Johnny met his death in a town in the South of Ireland. It was the time of the Parnell Split and Party feeling ran high. Johnny had just sung the last mentioned song when he was attacked by a crowd of yahoos—who gave him such a bad beating, that he died shortly after from the effects of it—universally regretted all over Ireland. The story is told that when the doctor who attended him was going away he said: "I'll see you in the morning, Johnny." "You will," he replied, "but I won't see you." He was dead when the doctor called again. Thus passed from the stage of life the greatest circus clown this country has ever produced.

And a contemporary account does suggest some tension on Monday May 27th -

SCENE AT A CIRCUS.

At the performance of Messrs. Keely and Patterson's circus in Tralee, on Monday night, a scene took place when one of the proprietors (the famous Johnny Patterson) came into the ring dressed as a clown. On his back was embroidered a large harp, but over it appeared the Crown. This did not suit the "Nationalist" sentiment of a few of the audience who hissed at Mr. Patterson, but finally the majority of the audience put down the hisses, and Mr. Patterson was able to proceed with his song.