Rev. P.B. Murphy
American cleric, Fenian revolutionary & Spanish-American War veteran, visits 6 Belgrave Place, Cork.

Patrick Bowen Murphy of Boston photographed in Cork c.1913 visiting his cousins Margaret Lynch and Julia Ahern.

But just who was the Rev. Patrick Bowen Murphy?

Ruairi Lynch explores a distant relative's colourful life story that was lost in time.
CONTENTS

- Cover Article: Rev. P.B. Murphy (1850-1929) Cleric and Fenian Revolutionary
- Irish Volunteers Annual Convention 1915
- Telecommunications in 1915 Ireland
- German Prisoners of War, Templemore & Lynch Family Correspondence
- Devoy, Lynch & Cunningham. Central Park 1924
- Richard Henchion & Reply from Eileen McGough
- British Intelligence files on Michael Collins
- 2016 News
- The GAA and revolution in Ireland
- Hill 60 versus Hill 16
- Patrick Pearse & his Christmas Message
- Nationalist Private Armies 1914-1916
- Transport in 1915
- Passenger Manifest - Michael, Carmel & Deirdre, 1925
- Conscription Threats 1915
- Passenger Manifest - Diarmuid & Kit, 1929
- David McWilliams Opinion on 1916 Leaders
- Snapshots in Time
- December 1915 snippets - this month 100 years ago
- Century View & Events 2016
- GPO Participants
- The Dublin Castle Personalities Files
- Mrs. Kathleen Clarke on Casement
- The Rockingham Transport shipwreck, 1775
- The U24 & the El Zorro shipwreck, 1915
- December shipwrecks off the Tracton coast
- Alloys Fleischmann at Man of War Cove, 1927
- Dublin on the eve of Revolution
- Joseph Mary Plunkett
- Home Rule laid the foundations for a Rising
- Casement’s Mission to Germany
- Archbishop Daniel Mannix
- Tracton Memorial Famine Walk
- Ireland 1915 - before the Rising
- John Redmond
- Prelude to Revolution & Cork burns 1920
- Websites, Birthdates & Next Month’s issue
- DMP Detective Reports: October-November 1915
Patrick Bowen Murphy (1850-1929), was an Irish born, American Roman Catholic priest. He took part in the 1898 Spanish-American War as Chaplain to the Ninth Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteer, was a member of the Arundel Art Society of London; of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society; an honorary member of the Grattan Literary Association and member for life of the Congregation of Laval, Quebec, Canada. For four years he was state chaplain of the Massachusetts Knights of Columbus, an active member of Division 1, Ancient Order of Hibernians, Boston, a member of Simpson Assembly, No. 169, Royal Society of Good Fellows and he was the ex-chaplain-in-chief of the Legion of Spanish War Veterans.

But the Rev. Murphy was also a Fenian member & revolutionary. A close friend of John Boyle O'Reilly (the famous poet, journalist & Fenian escapee from the Western Australian convict Prison) and both took part in the 1870 Fenian Raid on Canada.

Patrick Bowen Murphy was born on May 17, 1850, in Inniscarra near Cork to Daniel Walter Murphy (1833-1904) and Marianne Bowen (1832-1901). His father Daniel was born in 1833 to Patrick Denis Murphy and Anna Wall. Daniel’s siblings were Ellen, Jane, Denis (died in infancy), William, Margaret, Mary, Bartholomew, Michael and George. Patrick Denis Murphy was the son of Timothy (d.15 Mar 1843) and Mary Ann Murphy (d. 1 Feb 1838) of Blarney Street in Cork.

The direct Lynch family connection is with Bartholomew Murphy. His daughter Margaret (c1847-11 Jun 1915) married widower, Timothy Lynch (1844-1890) of Granig in 1879, becoming step-mother to two year old Diarmuid [Diarmaid] and then produced five children: Mary (May 1881), Timothy (Jan 1883), Daniel (Jul 1884), Dennis (Jul 1886) and finally Michael (Jan 1890). Michael is whom from the family lines of Granig Lynch, Daly and Scott descends. Margaret & Patrick were first cousins.

Daniel was a civil engineer and constructed the military road from Ballincollig to Ovens. He married Marianne Bowen (1832-1901), a descendant of the Bowens of Passage, county Cork, Ireland, famous boat builders of that time in Cork c.1849. Two of Patrick’s siblings were born in Ireland; William Bowen Murphy (1853-1903) and Edward John Murphy, who died at a young age and was buried in what was then the Botanic Gardens, Cork, in a grave adjoining that of the famous Father Matthew. (now St. Joseph’s Cemetery).

(But the way, did you know there was once Botanic Gardens in Cork?: On the south side of Cork City, between Turners Cross football stadium and Munster Rugby’s Musgrave Park, lies the remnants of the southern city’s long lost botanical garden. It’s so long ago since the site was used as a botanical gardens and the duration of its existence so short, that the memory of it is almost gone from the public consciousness. The Royal Cork Institution was set up in 1803 and received a Parliamentary grant of two thousand pounds per year. The Governors decided to establish a botanical garden, and in 1807 leased a 5.5-acre (22,000 m²) site at ‘Lilliput’, Ballypehane, Cork. In 1808 they employed Scotsman James Drummond (1787-1863) to lay out the gardens. In 1822 the garden was described (Power; Botanist’s guide to the County of Cork, 1845) as having approximately six acres and a glasshouse in a walled enclosure of 1-acre (4,000 m2). Drummond was a noted field botanist during his time in Cork (and subsequently in Western Australia). The Government grant was withdrawn in 1830 and the Governors declined Drummond’s offer to lease the gardens and opted to surrender the lease. The lands were then let to Fr. Matthew of Temperance fame for a cemetery, St. Joseph’s, which use still continues. The only current evidence of the gardens is a cedar tree.)

Another of Daniel’s brothers, George and his wife Mary emigrated from post-famine Ireland to America in 1850 and settled in Milford, New Hampshire. There, George became the first sergeant of Company B, First Massachusetts Volunteers and for thirty years he was chief truant officer of the Boston public schools. Some of his wife Mary’s relatives, the Bowens also emigrated to the US and settled in Milford.

Daniel was described as "a man of splendid physique, six feet four inches tall, and very straight" and his young family emigrated to America on the vessel "Daniel Webster" in 1854, and settled first in Milford, New Hampshire, where he was a road builder and where his wife taught in local schools.

He moved his family to Boston, Massachusetts, and worked as a sand contractor supplying sand for the building of the Carney Hospital, the Little Wanderers’ Home and other public buildings in the city. Later he was foreman in the paving department of the city. "He was exceedingly fond of reading, and accumulated a library of choice books, including many works on mathematics, of which he was especially fond. This library is among the most cherished possessions of his son [P.B.Murphy]."

Born to the Murphy family in Boston were Walter Daniel, who died in his teens and Annie Louise, who was a teacher in the public schools and later a graduate of New England Conservatory of Music, Boston becoming a teacher of organ and piano. She married John Henry McCarthy (7-Oct 1909) of Cambridge, Massachusetts.
Their brother, William Bowen Murphy became a writer for magazines and contributed to many New York and Boston papers; served in the US Army under General Miles during the German uprising and was an observer when this chief was brought in as a prisoner and attempted to assassinate the General; was orderly sergeant in Battery I, Fourth Regiment of Artillery, under General George W. Getty, and honourably discharged as a "most excellent soldier" after eight years' service. He was given charge of the Metropolitan Parks Police of Boston as Sergeant and visited Europe in 1876 to investigate the methods of caring for public parks and horticulture. He saved three children from drowning in the Back Bay Fens in May 29, 1892, for which he was awarded a medal by the Massachusetts Humane Society; was life member of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society and never married. He died in Boston on Monday, May 11, 1903.

" Geronimo (June 1829 – February 17, 1909) was a prominent leader of the Bedonkohe Apache who fought against Mexico and Arizona for their expansion into Apache tribal lands for several decades during the Apache Wars. In 1886, after a lengthy pursuit by American forces, Geronimo surrendered to the Arizona authorities. As commander of an old age, he became a celebrity, appearing at fairs, but he was never allowed to return to the land of his birth.

Patrick Bowen Murphy graduated from the Lincoln School, South Boston, Massachusetts in 1867... and a warm affection has existed since that time for all his schoolmates, as is attested by his presence at each yearly gathering."

At an early age he became a member of the Ninth Regiment. Massachusetts Volunteer Militia, under General P. R. Guiney and Colonel B. F. Finan, and was quickly appointed sergeant-major.

(The 9th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry was a military unit from Boston, Massachusetts that was a part of the Army of the Potomac during the American Civil War seeing action at Mechanicsville, Gaines Mill, Malvern Hill, the Second battle of Bull Run, Antietam, The Wilderness, Fredericksburg and Gettysburg until the end of the war in 1864. It is also known as: "The Fighting Ninth". The unit was an Irish heritage unit, with many volunteers having been born in Ireland.)

In 1869, through the influence of the pioneer Irish patriot of South Boston, Andrew R. Strain, Murphy became a member of the Patrick Henry Circle, Fenian Brotherhood, "... which held on its membership rolls some of the most prominent men of Irish blood in Boston".

Fenian Invasion of Canada 1870

Background: Between 1866 and 1871, the Fenian Brotherhood, an Irish Republican organisation who were based in the United States, crossed the border with Canada and raidied British army forts, customs posts and other Imperial targets in Canada. These raids were used to engineer a border incident that would entangle British forces in a war with the United States. (At the time the US Government had a difficult relationship with the British and various provinces in British North America due to their support for the Confederacy during the recent Civil War. While this ill-feeling was unlikely to lead to full-scale conflict, the US Government was in no mood to provide any aid to the British in Canada. While President Andrew Johnson was aware of the Fenians plans but did little to hinder them.) There were five Fenian raids of note and all of them ended in failure.

In 1870, Fenians met at a convention which took place amid much in-fighting. Only around 200 delegates attended but it resulted in a resolution to launch another raid into Canada. The Fenian force would be commanded by O'Neill and its goal was to capture two small towns on the Canadian side of border, in the hope that this success would lead to a larger confrontation. The journalist and Fenian John Boyle O'Reilly, who would write some of the most detailed accounts of the invasion, joined with the Fenian force on 25 May 1870. O'Neill, as General, mustered his Canadian militia units, many of the border around noon at which point they came under fire from Imperial targets. Geronimo uprising and was an observer when this chief was brought in as a prisoner and attempted to assassinate the General; was orderly sergeant in Battery I, Fourth Regiment of Artillery, under General George W. Getty, and honourably discharged as a "most excellent soldier" after eight years' service. He was given charge of the Metropolitan Parks Police of Boston as Sergeant and visited Europe in 1876 to investigate the methods of caring for public parks and horticulture. He saved three children from drowning in the Back Bay Fens in May 29, 1892, for which he was awarded a medal by the Massachusetts Humane Society; was life member of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society and never married. He died in Boston on Monday, May 11, 1903.

Once back on American soil O'Neill found that he had a new foe. The sitting US President, Ulysses S. Grant, had become fearful that, if his government was seen to do nothing while an attack was launched from US territory, then the relationship between the United States and the British Dominion of Canada could be irreparably damaged. He therefore had issued an order allowing for the arrest of any Fenian violating Canadian territory.

The whole affair was a crushing blow to Fenianism in the United States. John Boyle O'Reilly, who had suffered imprisonment in Ireland, England and Australia because of his Fenian activities, gave voice to the dismay felt by many of the participants. "After the failure of the invasion, the bulk of the Fenians", he wrote, were 'sadder and wiser men'. He was particularly upset by the factionalism that rendered the Fenians incapable of united action as well as the condemnation which many American newspapers poured upon the whole Irish community. His paper, The Pilot, would launch a series of editorials attacking O'Neill and other Fenian leaders: 'The men who planned and executed this last abortion of war-making have proved themselves to be criminally incompetent.' Fenianism within the United States had been shattered. Its place would soon be taken by a new revolutionary group, Clan na Gael.

The greatest impact of the Fenian raids was in developing a sense of Canadian nationalism and leading the provinces into a Confederation. This was seen as necessary for survival and self-defence; the raids showed Canadians that safety lay in unity and were an important factor in creating the modern nation-state of Canada.

In 1872 Governor Washburn commissioned Patrick Bowen Murphy as a second lieutenant in Company F, Ninth Regiment the Massachusetts Volunteers.

In 1873 Patrick Bowen Murphy decided to study for the priesthood, entered Saint Charles College, Maryland, graduating from Leval University, Quebec, Canada and later attending the Nicholet College, Canada. In 1882, he was ordained at St. Vincent Church, South Boston. The services were attended by many relatives and friends, and in his honour, a battle of the Ninth Regiment was present in full uniform and under arms.

Fr. P.B.Murphy next became involved in organising the repatriation of the preacher & lecturer Dr. Cahill to Ireland.

Daniel William Cahill (Nov 28, 1796 – Oct 28, 1864) was a Roman Catholic preacher, lecturer, writer and educator in Ireland and the United States. In 1825 he was appointed professor of natural philosophy (mathematics, physics, chemistry) at Carlow College, where he taught for some years. He then opened a school at Seapoint, Williamstown, which he conducted from 1835 to 1841. Meanwhile he wrote largely for the press, and for a time edited the Dublin Telegraph. He became a distinguished preacher and lecturer, and his vigorous attacks on the government and the Established Church of Ireland only extended his reputation. In December 1859 he visited the United States, where he lectured on astronomy and other scientific subjects and preached in many American and Canadian cities. As he generally gave his services for religious and charitable purposes, large sums of money were raised by him for Roman Catholic projects. He died in 1864 and was buried in Boston.
He was then rector of Saint George's Church at Saxonville. His military rank was equivalent to that of mounted captain, entitling him to the use of a horse, necessary to the performance of his duties. But only five horses went to Cuba with his brigade, and his saddle horse was sent home when General Shafter’s order forbidding horses was issued. (It was alleged that only mules could live in Cuba). Of course, without his horse, he shared all the hardships of the regimental marches, for which he was so unprepared by his profession. Services were not confined to the Ninth Regiment but, with those of Fathers Hart and Fitzgerald, owing to his vows as a priest, were given to the whole of the third division of the Fifth Army Corps, comprising thirty thousand men.

Despite the gradual build-up of hostilities, the U.S. armed forces were ill-equipped and untrained for war in Cuba, especially one involving highly coordinated land-sea operations. It was enormously fortuitous for the U.S. that the Spanish forces were even less prepared. The Spanish fleet, after successfully crossing the Atlantic, managed to trap itself in Santiago Bay, and was destroyed by the U.S. navy a few days before U.S. ground troops captured Santiago and they tried to flee the blockaded harbour.

“Among his acquaintances made in Cuba was the celebrated traveller and lecturer, Peter MacQueen, who was a correspondent there for certain Boston papers. This acquaintance opened into friendship which has continued to the present time.....

Another friendship made at that time was that of James A. King, president of the Michigan American Patriotic Association, serving in Cuba as surgeon of the Thirty-third Michigan Regiment. He having learned that some strictures had been passed upon Father Murphy's performance of his duties, in a letter dated October 19, 1898, after expressing his surprise and indignation, refers to the fact in this way: "It seems to be the lot of all energetic men ambitious to do their full duty, to suffer from unjust and ignorant criticism." And again: "You are the only chaplain I saw who was always ready for duty and always looking for duty to perform...

Of the many stories about Father Murphy sent from the seat of war, a correspondent of the Chicago Journal thus wrote about him: “Father Murphy was as fine a type of the American chaplain of volunteers as I saw in Cuba. He had the faculty of winning both respect and the affection of soldiers, and that was largely due to his adaptability.

Further illustrating his estimate of Father Murphy, the same writer relates this incident: "Once several civilians and a slightly wounded soldier marched with him from the firing line to Siboney. That is nine miles, and we crossed two mountains and encountered two rain-storms. But the parson never whimpered, though we marched at a Killing pace, for we wanted to get under cover before night fell... and in spite of his years, he (Father Murphy) offered on that very trip to carry the wounded soldier's gun, and every mile or so he would call back to the man 'You know, my boy, what to do with that rifle if it gets too heavy for you, give it to me...'. At the request of the Archbishop of Santiago, Father Murphy performed two of the very few marriages contracted in Santiago Province during the campaign...

Stalwart and energetic, he was occasionally called on for services not usually looked for one of his cloth. At Siboney, with the hospital staff and engineer corps, he was active in executing the order of General N. A. Miles, designed to clear the spread of yellow fever, to burn hundreds of buildings condemned as unsanitary

Numerically superior, Cuban, Philippine, and U.S. forces obtained the surrender of Santiago de Cuba and Manila, despite the good performance of some Spanish infantry units and fierce fighting for positions such as San Juan Hill. With two obsolete Spanish squadrons sunk in Santiago de Cuba and Manila Bay and a third, modern fleet recalled home to protect the Spanish coasts, Madrid sued for peace.

On July 17, 1898 the Spanish army surrendered. For the following two weeks 3,000 U.S. troops moved on to Puerto Rico, encountering little resistance. Of the 943 in the Ninth Regiment who were shipped to Cuba, only 342 returned to the U.S. 601 died in Cuba – not one killed in battle but all as a result of disease. Total American losses were 345 killed in action and 2,565 dead from disease.

This war had started out as a very popular campaign, but by wars end, the shine had worn off and some brave citizens began to raise their voices in protest. Among them was the author Mark Twain. He pointed out the enormous contradictions between "our benevolent" foreign policy and its brutal consequences. As American involvement became progressively more difficult to justify, and eventually came to be defended on the grounds that the U.S. could not retire from it without suffering "dishonour". Twain advocated the position that "An inglorious peace is better than a dishonourable war.

The result was the 1898 Treaty of Paris, negotiated on terms favourable to the US, which allowed it temporary control of Cuba, and ceded ownership of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippine islands. The cession of the Philippines involved payment of $20 million ($568,880,000 today) to Spain by the US to cover infrastructure owned by Spain.

The defeat and collapse of the Spanish Empire was a profound shock to Spain’s national psyche, and precipitated a philosophical and artistic revaluation of Spanish society known as the Generation of '98. The United States gained several island possessions spanning the globe and a rancorous new debate over the wisdom of expansionism.

To pay the costs of the war, Congress passed an excise tax on long-distance phone service. At the time, it affected only wealthy Americans who owned telephones. However, Congress neglected to repeal the tax after the war ended four months later, and the tax remained in place for over 100 years until, on August 1, 2006, it was announced that the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the IRS would no longer collect the tax.

By the end of December 1898, Fr. Murphy had returned to his ministry in Saxonville after a compulsory 30 day quarantine period for all returning personnel in Montauk, Long Island.
Following his service in Cuba, Fr. Murphy settled back into clerical life. According to the Biographical History of Massachusetts: Biographies and Autobiographies of the Leading Men in the State (volume 6) Published in 1916 (from which much of the detail for this article was sourced) Fr. Murphy was a member of the Arundel Art Society of London; of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society; honorary member of the Grattan Literary Association, member for life of the Congregation of Laval (affiliated), Quebec, Canada. For four years he was state chaplain of the Massachusetts Knights of Columbus, and an active member of Division 1, Ancient Order of Hibernians, Boston. He was a member of Simpson Assembly, No. 169, Royal Society of Good Fellows; he is the ex-chaplain-in-chief of the Legion of Spanish War Veterans.

By 1916 “Father Murphy is at present the rector of the Church of the Holy Rosary, South Boston. He is a graceful speaker and is much in demand on public occasions. Father Murphy is decidedly in favour of military training for school boys, and believes that all young men should be affiliated with some military organization, as it teaches them proper carriage, erect form, respect for all superiors, promptitude in all things, and even makes them better business men, and better companions. In word and act Father Murphy has upheld the dignity of his high calling.”

There is scant information relating to Murphy between 1916 and 1929 apart from brief family references to him by Diarmuid Lynch while he lived in New York (1918-32).

Fr. Murphy was a frequent visitor to Ireland, Ovens and Granag over the years. A number of photos survive in the Lynch Family archives of these visits (such as the cover of this month’s Newsletter) and portraits in his military chaplain uniform.

On April 30, 1929, Fr. Murphy left his South Boston parish of Our Lady of the Rosary and sailed aboard the S.S. Cedric to Ireland for an annual holiday. While at sea in mid-Atlantic, he passed away aged 80.

His funeral service was held in Cobh Cathedral where he had lain in state for a number of days, attended by “the great and the good” until burial on a wet Tuesday morning, 7th May, 1929 to his Great Grand-parent’s plot in St. Joseph’s Cemetery, Cork.

The Tablet, the London based Catholic international weekly review in the 11 May 1929 issue reported: “A PRIEST’S DEATH AT SEA.—In St. Joseph’s cemetery, Cork, there was buried last Tuesday an Irish priest, the Rev. P. B. Murphy, whose field of labour was in the United States, and who died on board the Cedric while on the way home to his native land. The body was landed at Cobh on Monday and rested, until the funeral, in St. Patrick’s, Cork.—R.I.P.”
It is with sadness that we announce the passing of:

Frederick (Fred) O’Dwyer

Father of Freddie O’Dwyer

Fred passed away on Thursday, 12th November 2015 in his 93rd year.

Our condolences to Freddie, Emer and family.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.


BY THE AUTUMN of 1915, the Military Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood was well-established and was busy planning an insurrection for the spring of the following year.

Joseph Plunkett had been to Germany earlier in the year to seek German Government aid, Roger Casement was still in Germany, and Military Council and other IRB members were in key positions in the Irish Volunteers.

It was a year since Irish Parliamentary Party leader John Redmond had split the organisation by urging Irishmen to join the British Army to fight in the First World War. The Irish Volunteers who remained true to their original aim included those seen as moderates such as the Volunteers’ President, Eoin Mac Neill, as well as the strong IRB element.

Though greatly reduced in numbers due to the Redmondite split, the Volunteers in late 1915 saw themselves as a leaner and tougher organisation, with a greater emphasis on military training.

Delegates from across Ireland, as well as from Glasgow and Liverpool, assembled for the Second Annual Convention of the Volunteers in the Abbey Theatre in Dublin on Sunday 31 October. The largest contingents were from Dublin, Cork and Limerick and included the Tracton Irish Volunteer Captain, Michael F. Lynch.

Mac Neill, who had previously given qualified support to Redmond as Home Rule leader, used his presidential address to denounce his leadership. He said the Volunteers were asked “to submit to the rule of an autocracy which claimed to be infallible and which looked with disfavour on any expression of opinion that did not take the form of a vote of confidence”.

Mac Neill said they had tried to maintain unity in the Volunteers while the British Government adopted the policy of partition, but the breaking point was reached “when we were called upon to cast aside our pledges and to become a British imperial organisation”. He said: “We are now and must continue to be a national defence force for Ireland, for all Ireland and for Ireland only.”

Mac Neill’s main ally in the Volunteer leadership was Bulmer Hobson, Honorary Secretary, who had fallen out with the IRB. He presented a detailed report on the formation of the Headquarters Staff. The key IRB figures on that staff were both IRB Military Council members – Plunkett himself, who was Director of Military Operations, and Pádraig Pearse, who was Director of Military Organisation.
1914-15: German Prisoners of War, Templemore

Research for Newsletter articles can sometimes lead to unusual discoveries. Case in point was this cutting attributed to the Irish ‘Daily Independent’ of 12 December, 1914 which made me curious: Was there a POW camp in the north Tipperary town?

Garda Sergeant John Reynolds, serving in the Garda Siochána College, Templemore confirms there was a huge Prisoner of War camp referencing a 2008 article published by History Ireland.

Following the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914, the UK government interned ‘all Germans, Hungarians and Austrians of military age’ throughout Britain and Ireland, and 300 civilians were briefly interned at Richmond Barracks, Templemore [not to be confused with Richmond Barracks, Dublin]. When the first batch of 400 military prisoners arrived on 10 September 1914, the civilians internees were moved to camps at Oldcastle, Co. Meath, and on the Isle of Wight. The arrival of the POWs in Templemore generated much interest both locally and nationally. The magazine of the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) commented that the POWs were received ‘with much cordiality by the townspeople’, who had long been campaigning to have the barracks reoccupied for the economic benefit of the town. The prisoners arrived in Ireland on specially chartered vessels, landing at the North Wall in Dublin. They were then taken under heavy guard by train to Templemore.

On their arrival they were described as having a ‘very crestfallen appearance’ and said that ‘utter dejection seemed to have fallen on them’. Up to 50 of the soldiers were suffering from serious injuries sustained in battle, and they were cared for in the military hospital at Richmond.

‘Mastering the subtleties of the Bearla’ While marching to the barracks from the railway station, one prisoner was heard to ask a local publican to get him ‘a pint’, prompting a local newspaper to inquire as to whether the news arrivals ‘had mastered the subtleties of the Bearla’. Within two weeks over 2,300 prisoners had arrived in Richmond. The two large barracks squares were divided into four separate compounds. Each had high observation towers complete with machine-guns and searchlights. The entire camp was surrounded by barbed wire and patrolled between the squares by the 3rd Leinster Regiment. The prisoners had been captured during battles in the early months of the war, including Aisné and Mons. There was also a detachment of the elite Uhlan cavalry and fourteen sailors from the Koenign Luise minelayer, which had been sunk by the Royal Navy’s HMS Amphion on 15 August 1914, the first naval engagement of the war.

The prisoners included soldiers from the 35th Brandenburg Infantry, the 74th Hanoverian Regiment, the 211th Reserve Regiment, the 241st Reserve Regiment, the 4th Jaeger Regiment, the 212th Reserve Regiment and the 9th Regiment. A local newspaper commented that the arrival of the prisoners was calculated to greatly re-enliven the town”. This proved to be the case, with many visitors coming to the barracks out of curiosity to see the POWs. Local businesses benefited from supplying the barracks, and one enterprising local shopkeeper, Mr Percy, set up a store in the barrack yard to supply the prisoners. In keeping with established POW conventions, the Germans were paid the relevant wage to which they were entitled while bearing no war tax. The ‘Daily Independent’ commented, ‘The English are very brave but nothing to be afraid of’. The captured soldiers and their guards soon settled into a comfortable routine and there were no reported escape attempts. The prisoners were well fed and accommodated, and one commented to a policeman that it would take a good many bayonets to get us out of Templemore barracks!

The POWs referred to Richmond, Templemore as ‘Turnhalle barracks’ in letters home to their families. Each day they were taken out of barracks for exercise, usually for a route march to the nearby village of Barrnane before returning to camp. Some of the soldiers were accomplished musicians and singers, and each Sunday the prisoners were marched to their respective churches in the town, where they played the organ and formed choirs. It was reported that prisoner’s faiths were evenly divided. As they marched to and from church, the POWs sang their national songs, and, appropriately in the circumstances, were often heard singing ‘It’s a long way to Tipperary’.

Two German prisoners died while detained in Templemore. Private A. Gierzewski died of diabetes in December 1914, and Private L. Spellerberg died of food poisoning in March 1915. Both were buried in the Church of Ireland, Templemore cemetery with full military honours provided by the Leinster Regiment, and the remains of both soldiers were re-interred at the German Military Cemetery in Glencree, Co. Wicklow. As a mark of gratitude to local people for respectfully maintaining the graves over the years, the German War Graves commission gave permission for both headstones to remain in the cemeteries where they had originally been laid.

At Christmas 1914 it was reported that the ‘number of presents received from the Fatherland was almost beyond counting’. On Christmas Eve, local people came to the barracks to listen to the POWs singing Christmas carols in their native tongue. Despite the ongoing war, a warm and friendly relationship had developed between the prisoners and the local townspeople.

In March 1915, however, a decision was taken to move the prisoners to England. The official reason for the move—as reported in the RIC magazine—was that sanitary facilities in Templemore were not up to standard, and also that the barracks were now required as a training depot for Irish soldiers preparing for the front. A secret report compiled by the RIC Special Branch, however, revealed that Pierce McCann, a senior member of the Irish Volunteers from Tipperary, had ‘attempted to visit the POWs in Templemore’ and had been involved in ‘the distribution of anti-recruiting and pro-German leaflets’. It was also reported that under the POWs’ command had formulated a plan to attack Richmond barracks, Templemore and liberate the prisoners. The RIC reported that McCann was ‘intimately acquainted with P. H. Pearse, the O’Rahilly, Thomas McDonagh, the Plunketts and other extremists’. Given the links that existed between Irish Republicans and the German government, it is conceivable that the POWs’ refusal to return to England was the real reason behind the decision to move the prisoners to England.

Not keen to leave The POWs were not keen to leave with the RIC magazine reporting that ‘many were the regrets uttered at the thoughts of being taken away from the comfortable quarters and the “Gude nicy people” of Templemore’. They were moved to the Lilford Mill camp at Leigh, Lancashire. Prior to their arrival, local newspapers began publishing virulent anti-German propaganda as part of a wider campaign to boost morale on the home front. ‘Spy fever’ abounded in England, and it was alleged that German soldiers had been involved in atrocities in Belgium and France. Journalists were sent to report on the preparations for the POWs’ departure from Templemore, which was described as the ‘quietest place on earth’. When the prisoners first arrived in Lancashire, they were depicted very negatively in local newspapers. One commented that ‘they had a villainous look about them which satisfies one of their being capable of committing every conceivable kind of atrocity’. Another stated that ‘we are sorry to think that for a couple of years the pure air of respectable Leigh will be tainted with the breath of these specimens of the scrapings of Hell’. Anti-German sentiment was very strong in the area, particularly after the sinking of the Lusitania. The Lilford Mill camp at Leigh, Lancashire, was chosen as part of a wider campaign to boost morale on the home front.

The POWs had a difficult time during their detention in Leigh and were employed working in local coal mines under very harsh conditions.
It was reported that several prisoners were shot dead during various attempts to escape in the years that followed. After the POWs left Templemore, it became a huge training barracks for Munster Fusiliers and Leinsters destined for the trenches of the Western Front. Little evidence remains today of the time spent by over 2,300 German prisoners in Richmond Barracks as ‘guests of the nation’. On Independence, Richmond was renamed McCann Barracks in honour of Pierce McCann who had planned to liberate the German prisoners in 1915 and died on hunger strike in Gloucester Jail in 1919. The Garda Training College took over the barracks in 1964. 

Ludwig Spellerberg. Further research shows that today in the Templemore Church of Ireland parish church, which lies at the Roscrea end of the town, a small stone cross with a German inscription can still be seen: “Hier ruht unter lieber kamerad L. Spellerberg vom Inf Regt 212 21e Komp am 21 Feb 1915 aus 21 Jan 1915”

Below here lies our dearly loved comrade”. A German infantryman, Ludwig Spellerberg died a month short of his twentieth birthday. He died from food poisoning and was buried with full military honours by members of the Leinster Regiment. Templemore was not to be Ludwig Spellerberg’s last resting place. The German War Graves Commission, the Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge opened a military cemetery at Glencree in Co Wicklow in 1961 and the mortal remains of German soldiers buried in various parts of Ireland were brought to a place of beauty and tranquility. Each flat stone cross marks a paired burial. Some are named and some are not.

Although a neutral country Ireland did not entirely escape the direct effects of the Second World War. There were events such as the bombing of Dublin’s North Strand, the destruction of the Campile Creamery in County Wexford, isolated bomb droppings in many locations, the sinking of Irish ships, the threats of invasion and the general rigours of war time restrictions. Some of the Germans killed in action over Ireland resulted from causes such as aircraft getting lost in foul weather or crashing as a result of damage in action over England. Running out of fuel and navigational errors from inexperience also caused fatalities. These Luftwaffe (Air force) personnel are all buried in Glencree. Interred here also are a number of regular naval personnel (Kriegsmarine) whose bodies were found washed up, sometimes in remote coastal locations. 53 of the air and naval service men buried in Glencree have identities while 28 are unknown. Probably the most unfortunate victims were 46 German civilian detainees who were in the process of being shipped from England to Canada for internment and died when their ship, ‘The Arandora Star’ was torpedoed by a German U Boat off of Tory Island in July 1940. Although civilians, these persons were deemed military casualties and so were entitled to be buried in the military cemetery. Six soldiers of the First World War are also interred. These soldiers died while prisoners in a British prison of war camp located in Ireland in 1915/18. In all 134 persons are buried in the cemetery. The idea of the German War Cemetery was originally espoused in 1951 by Dr Katzenberger, the first accredited German envoy to Ireland after the war. He was devoted to locating and centralising the German war graves in Ireland so they could be better maintained and the dead given due recognition. In the immediate aftermath of the war German dead in Ireland were scattered through 15 counties in 59 graves. In 1959 the Glencree site was agreed by the Irish and German governments as the suitable location for a central German war cemetery and the project was then handed over to Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge of Kassel in Germany, who organise and care for German war cemeteries all over Europe and further afield. The old quarry site was modified and landscaped over several seasons by German and volunteers of other nationalities through the summers of 1959, 1960 and 1961. Glencree Deutsche Kriegsgräberstätte dedicated on 09-Jul-1961.

The Glencree cemetery has a commemorative poem by Stan O’Brien’s inscribed upon a memorial stone in German, English and Irish:

It was for me to die
Under an Irish sky
There finding berth
In good Irish earth
What I dreamed and planned
Bound me to my Fatherland
But War sent me
To sleep in Glencree
Passion and pain
Were my loss my gain:
Pray as you pass

The Cork, Bandon and South Coast Railway (CB&SCR), was an Irish gauge (1,600 mm (5 ft 3 in)) 94 mile (151km) railway in Ireland. It opened in 1849 as the Cork and Bandon Railway, changed its name to Cork Bandon and South Coast Railway in 1888 and became part of the Great Southern Railway in 1924 and closed in 1961. Above is a rare 2d stamp ‘fee for conveyance of single post letters by railway’

Family Correspondence

Judging by various letters exchanged between Alice Lynch and her sister-in-law, Mary in Granig, there were frequent misunderstandings and difficulties between both. However, the letter printed here is a beautifully crafted Christmas note of peace and goodwill. There seems to have been little correspondence between both following a disagreement earlier in the year but this letter was one of the very few that Mary retained and has survived to be included in the archives.

23 December, 1915
Jones Rd Distillery.

My dear Mary,

I, or rather, we cannot let this holy season of peace and goodwill pass without sending you from Denis and myself, best wishes for a happy Xmas filled with untold consolations. I know it will not be as other Xmas’ but please God you will find at this time many joys and blessings.

You may be surprised to hear from us, but Mary [our] relationship is too sacred, and brotherly and sisterly love ought to be above such differences. Each of us have, and will have many sad trials to bear which will be God’s will for us, without making trials and sadness for ourselves.

I am at the moment overwhelmed by the news of dear Uncle Richard’s death. Only, thank God that I have a dear, loving husband to console and cheer me, it would be more than I could bear. We are all broken hearted, for poor Uncle Richard with his big soft heart was dearer to each one of us. He shared all the joys and sorrows when he was amongst us, and since he went to Canada also. He lightened everyone’s problems often by increasing his own and now God has taken the good, big-hearted man to himself. Denis and I have had sorrows this year which has left us well-nigh desolate and so I say Mary, we will all have our share of sorrows, without making more for ourselves.

And now may our dear Lord console us all this Xmas, and replace our sorrows with joys and blessings.

Will you give our love and good wishes to Diamuid, Tim, Dan and Michael and accept the same for yourself.

Yours affectionately, Alice

PS Our love and good wishes to Aunt Julia also.

Lynch Family Archives – Folder 2 – 1915-1916
Devoy, Lynch and friends

Central Park, New York 1924

Eileen McGough recently contributed this never before published photograph of John Devoy, Diarmuid Lynch and two unknown friends. No details were recorded on the photo other than an impression it was taken in Central Park, New York prior to Devoy’s visit to Ireland in 1924 and a hunch as to who the person on the extreme right was. Identifying images captured over ninety years ago can be problematic, particularly in never before published photographs where vital information is not recorded. While various online image recognition sites can locate other copies of an image online, nothing was found to identify these two unknown friends of Devoy & Lynch.

Old fashioned research work followed. Images containing Devoy were checked online and in various published books, theses and articles in an effort to identify the sartorial duo by connection and inclusion. While interesting little items surfaced (see photo below) and some possibilities were ruled out, no direct photos to prove or disprove the Historian’s hunch were discovered.

This photo dates from c.1924, Central Park, New York. With John Devoy were the former Cumann na mBan member Kathleen Kemmy McLoughlin, her son Charles McLoughlin and an unknown member of the 69th Regiment. (Source: Terry Golway “John Devoy” 1998. Note Devoy’s habit of carrying papers in his right hand jacket pocket in both photos)

A newspaper item finally lead to a positive identification of one of the men.

The background story is that on July 19th 1924, having spent 54 years as a political exile in America John Devoy boarded the President Harding as it prepared to sail from New Jersey’s Hoboken pier to Ireland. His friend Harry Cunningham, an emigrant from Donegal, IRB and Friends of Irish Freedom member, accompanied him on the voyage and travel in Ireland.

On the 28th of July, photographer W.D. Hogan of the Irish Times captured an image of John Devoy arriving at Government Buildings to meet President Cosgrave of the Irish Free State Government. The figure accompanying Devoy clearly resembles the man seated next to Diarmuid in the earlier photo above. Research through the Irish Times establishes that our unknown man (and incidentally Eileen’s hunch) is Devoy’s long-term friend, New Yorker and former Donegal man, Harry Cunningham (1891-1938).

On hearing of Devoy’s return, his childhood sweetheart Eliza Kilmurray wrote to him. The letter came as a surprise to Devoy as he had heard some years earlier that she had died. He responded by visiting her home in Naas and a visit to where his house once stood at Greenhills. Three days previous to his meeting with Eliza Murray he was a guest of honour in Croke Park for the opening of the Tailteann Games and was greeted with a very enthusiastic reception from a full stadium. President Cosgrave saluted him with a banquet in Dublin’s Dolphin Hotel before his return to New York. After a memorable six weeks in Ireland Devoy returned to New York on September 6. Devoy, now in old age would begin writing his memoirs, Recollections of an Irish Rebel. At the age of 86 his health, which had been fading for some time deteriorated further and early in the morning of 29 September, 1928 in a hotel room in Atlantic City John Devoy died in the presence of his friend Harry Cunningham. His body was returned to New York for a funeral mass in Manhattan’s Church of the Ascension before John Devoy would make one final visit to Ireland on the President Harding leaving New York in June 5, 1929. His remains arrived in Dublin where he lay in state in City Hall before he was accorded a state funeral to Glasnevin Cemetery and laid to rest alongside his Fenian comrade, O’Donovan Rossa.

Richard Dalton, Diarmuid Lynch and Harry Cunningham were executors of Devoy’s Will. “The Devoy grave was originally purchased by Harry Cunningham. The trusteeship was later transferred to James Reddy - both these men were from New York” (Edward Maguire statement to the Bureau of Military History.

Harry Cunningham was honoured on his return in 1929:

HOONRED BY PRESIDENT.

On June 25, 1929, Mr. Cunningham was the guest of honour at a luncheon given by President Cosgrave in the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin. In addition to Mr. Cosgrave, there were present Mr. E. O’Connor, Col. O’Keely, General MacEoin, Messrs. Diarmuid O’Hectary, Martin Conlon, Fionon Lynch, Minister for Fisheries, Dr. Mark Reay, the veterans Fenian, and General O’Duffy.

Mr. Cunningham was President of the Irish-American Athletic Club and of the Thomas J. Clarke Club. He was on the Executive Council of the American Irish Historical Society and a member of the National Council of the Friends of Irish Freedom. He was also an active member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, Veterans’ Association and of the American Philo-Celtic Society.

Harry Cunningham died aged 48 in 1938.
Richard Henchion survey Tracton Abbey graveyard

In the current edition of the 'Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society' (2015), local historian Richard Henchion authored a survey of the Tracton Abbey graveyard. This included historical notes on the Lynch family and specifically, Diarmuid is reproduced here:

“If the Codagan and Falvey Dictionary is accepted as the biographical bible of Cork then Diarmuid Lynch (1876-1950) will be acknowledged as one of Tracton’s most important personages for only four natives of the parish are profiles in that authoritative work and he is one of the four. Nor will there be any inclination to cast doubt on Diarmuid’s own claims that he was of the ninth generation of Lynch’s in Granig for all that was needed to prove that was an ancestor born around 1620 and we know from the census returns of the 17th century that Lynch was among the most numerous surnames in Kerrycurry at that particular time.

Moving on to the next century we meet Daniel Lynch of Granig who died about 1772 99drix of Cork Willis) and Dan Lynch of Granig who died in 1820. (C.1808-c.1875) was farming 41.5 acres in the town land. Granig was a very crowded place at that period there being no less than 22 farming households with acreages ranging from 6 to 72 acres. Only a single property, the estate of Daunt, Lynch, Neill and Walsh. The Great Famine boosted rather than crushed the Lynch’s for in 1850 three substantial holdings were in the name of Jeremiah Lynch, although it is possible that he was a relative and not an ancestor. Three Jeremiahs, rather than one person’s names, were in question. The farms were of 61, 91 and 47 acres, the last two having substantial buildings valued at £5.10.0 and £3.10.0 attached. A Jeremiah also had a slate quary valued at £1.0.0. When it was learned that Jeremiah Lynch had died it was mistakenly stated that Lynch was a native of Ovens; when she died of bronchial pneumonia. He was the first elected in 1918 as the member for the new county of Cork East and later a TD in an impoverished, war torn country.

Denis J. who acquired Upton House, and his wife Alice Mary Wyatt who died there on 10 March 1968, are also buried in this plot. On the other hand, Michael F (1890-10 October 1958) was a TD for Cork East (1928-1945 and 1947-1951). He was a son of Denis J and his wife Mary Rose Coveney, and author of the Declaration of Independence. The granite headstones of both Daniel and his father are quite well- preserved and the name of their son is also shown it was Daniel’s Cemetery in Cork in a plot purchased by Daniel Lynch’s wife. It was the custom that the family of the late Joseph Lynch in Cork was being buried in the GPO during the Easter Week where it was a practice to be something of a specta for him (Diarmuid) had been softened by foreign and domestic influences to approach Irish politics more as a spectator than a participant. He was not cast in the same mould as Michael Collins and as time showed as the same mould as Collins and the people the company to cherish.

One suspects that there was some doubts about his true blue bloodedness in the minds of his IR colleagues when he was just 20 years of age. Of the members of the ‘49 assembly. Beasts of the Rising, although he was a member of the Supreme Council and Pearse had entrusted him with the deciding role in the Rising, although he was a member of the Supreme Bloodedness in the minds of his IR colleagues when he was just 20 years of age. Of the members of the ‘49 assembly. He was the man who stood in the dock giving witness for the Lynch of De Valera’s setting up the American Association of the free states of Dec 1932. This lack of knowledge has not stopped him from eroding the character of Lynch were, (a) the opinion of fellow certificates. Following the Treaty and establishment of the

Diarmuid Lynch, Supreme Council of the IRB. To remain in the USA as National Secretary of the FOIF (Friends of Irish Freedom) following the Treaty of 1921. As the ‘predominant force within the FOIF’ according to the current AIHS (American-Irish Historical Society) archives Lynch spent the 1920s in American courtrooms, representing Irishmen and their families in the legal battles that followed the suppression of the IRB. His work was concerned with the legal rights of those involved in the Easter Rising, much of which was released under the terms of the Treaty. Of course, one of the main objectives of the FOIF was to provide a voice for the Irish people in the United States. Lynch's efforts were crucial in helping to shape public opinion and to raise awareness of the plight of the Irish people in Ireland.

Lynch’s reputation suffered its most serious set-back when the powerful support group, the Friends of Irish Freedom, of which he was National Secretary, was devastated as a result of De Valera’s setting up the American Association of the Irish Free State. Lynch’s support of the Free State led to his resignation from the FOIF. He continued to be associated with Ireland’s cause, but it was as a spectator rather than as an active participant. He was not cast in the same mould as Michael Collins and as time showed as the same mould as Collins and the Lynch's for in 1850 three substantial holdings were in the name of Jeremiah Lynch, although it is possible that he was a relative and not an ancestor. Three Jeremiahs, rather than one person’s names, were in question. The farms were of 61, 91 and 47 acres, the last two having substantial buildings valued at £5.10.0 and £3.10.0 attached. A Jeremiah also had a slate quary valued at £1.0.0. When it was learned that Jeremiah Lynch had died it was mistakenly stated that Lynch was a native of Ovens; when she died of bronchial pneumonia. He was the first elected in 1918 as the member for the new county of Cork East and later a TD in an impoverished, war torn country.

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Further vexation is added because Henchion’s brief history of the Lynch family is replete with annoying errors. For example,.”


**1916-2016 Commemoration Newsletter December 2015**
British Intelligence file on Michael Collins

Dublin Barrister-at-Law John McGuiggan, on a most unusual discovery in 2011:

“We have an ordinary index card, 6in. by 4in., brown and fragile with age; a rough photograph, cropped from something larger; a description, not very accurate; and a typed legend of remarks, intended, perhaps, to be helpful but of questionable value.

The card was found in an old book, a 1926 edition of Michael Collins and the making of a new Ireland by Piaras Beaslaí, his close political comrade. It was folded in three and tucked into the book, where it had perhaps been used as a bookmark, or placed there for safekeeping. The book came from the library of a Wicklow man, a man without connections to either the republicans fighting for Ireland or to the Crown forces against whom they fought. It is not too difficult to date the card in that the title refers to Collins as ‘chief of [the] IRA’ and ‘organizer of all ambushes and murders’. We know that the first ambush was the unapproved 21 January 1919 Soloheadbeg attack led by Dan Breen and Seán Tracey in which Constables James McDonnell and Patrick O’Connell (both Irish-born Catholics) were shot dead. So it must be from after that date. The phrase ‘all ambushes and murders’ indicates that the card was made quite late in the War of Independence, perhaps late 1920. And then there’s the photograph. It has been cut from a larger, good-quality photographic print rather than from a newspaper, then pinned to a wall and re-photographed. We know the date of the larger photograph: it was one in which Collins was unhappy about being included. It is the photograph taken in April 1919, in the gardens of the Mansion House, of members of the first Dáil Éireann. The photograph was subsequently used, as Collins feared it would be, to identify him in wanted posters, and it duly appeared in the December 1919 issue of the police gazette, Hue and Cry.

There can be little doubt that that famous group photograph was used extensively in intelligence circles to identify the Sinn Féin ringleaders, and probably many of the men in the group had their faces cropped and stuck onto intelligence index cards. Of the four wanted men pictured in that December issue of Hue and Cry, certainly two and possibly three of the photographs used were cropped from the same Dáil Éireann group who posed for posterity in the Mansion House gardens.

So we know that, if genuine, the index card certainly post-dates the taking of the photograph of the first Dáil. We also know that at least prior to 1919, British Intelligence had no photograph of Collins. Broy, his secret agent in ‘G’ Division of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, had checked the file held on Collins just before he met him for the first time in 1919 and recalled that the police file contained no photograph of the man.

It would have been difficult, in those early years of photography, to take a covert photograph of Collins, or indeed of anyone else, and it was the common practice of intelligence services to crop photographs from whatever source they could – newspapers, wedding photographs…

College photographs and so on. Indeed, the practice remains common even today, although the sources of such photographs are much richer. We can be confident that Facebook images are regularly trawled by today’s intelligence services, of all colours, creeds and kind.

The description of Collins that appeared in Hue and Cry was a bit light on detail and got his age wrong (he was then 29, not 26). But it got his height correct at 5ft 11in., whilst the index card gets his age (more or less) correct at ‘about 30’ but incorrectly has his height at 5ft 7in. or 8in. (more of a ‘little fella’ than a ‘big fella!’).

So who might have put this information together? By January 1920 the December issue of Hue and Cry with the photograph and description of Collins would have been circulated to every police barracks in Ireland, and no doubt pinned on notice boards throughout the 32 counties. It is therefore unlikely that the index card is a product of police intelligence services—or, if it is, it is unlikely to have been produced by police intelligence officers after December 1919.

The British intelligence war was widely acknowledged as being disastrous, with Collins and his men and women consistently out-spying His Majesty’s secret services.

In the immediate post-war period the British made a detailed analysis of their intelligence failures in Ireland and, in a flurry of activity, papers were published, conferences held, reports commissioned and lectures given in which the failures were fully acknowledged. From that analysis, some of it published in Peter Hart’s British intelligence in Ireland 1920–21, we know that as late as May 1920 the chief of police had an intelligence staff consisting of one officer. Its primary source of information, from the political detectives of ‘G’ branch of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, had all but dried up, as most of those detectives had been assassinated by Collins.

By late 1920 intelligence officers had been appointed to each divisional commissioner of the RIC to coordinate military and police intelligence. The military, now present throughout Ireland in force, together with Auxiliaries, had their own intelligence service with young officers, many of them noted for their zeal in intelligence matters, and it is most likely that this card, if genuine, emanates from a local centre of intelligence rather than from the Castle.

So is it the real thing? In all probability it is. The mis-description of Collins’s height and the somewhat romanticised remarks as to his habits rather support its being genuine, for had it been produced after the events of the time it would have been possible to be much more accurate in such details.

This, then, is the real thing and was produced at the very height of the War of Independence, the very height of Collins’s reputation, in the very heat of the intelligence battle.

It is how his enemies and pursuers saw him”
RTÉ’s Easter Rising centenary focus to include ordinary people

RTÉ’s commemorative programmes to involve ‘framing the future’, says Director General RTÉ’s programme for the 1916 centenary was launched in Dublin November 2nd with the station pledging to “embrace all of the complexity” of the Easter Rising with storytelling of the key events and protagonists as well as the ordinary people caught up in the violence. Director general Noel Curran said the station’s approach to commemorating 1916 would involve “framing the future” as well as “taking stock” of what has been achieved over the past 100 years, and examining aspects of the proclamation that remain unfulfilled. “RTÉ wants to engage by telling the stories of the key events and protagonists but also of the ordinary families, children, soldiers and the broader cultural context of the time,” he said.

In that context, RTÉ One is running a one-off documentary called Ready for Revolution? Presented by National Archives head of special projects Catriona Crowe, it will provide a snapshot of Ireland in the first few months of 1916. Seeking to create a picture of “what ordinary lives were like”, it will examine the impact of the Rising on the lives of the vast majority of people who had no hand in the revolution.

Mr Curran said perspectives on the Rising were “constant changing”, with global and national events – and particularly the violence associated with the Troubles – “complicating perceptions of nationalism”, and views of the Rising.

A three-part series on RTÉ One called 1916, narrated by Liam Neeson, will seek to place the Rising “in its European and global contexts” as anti-colonialism found its voice in the wake of the first World War. It will also explore the role of the United States and of Irish America in both the lead-up to and the aftermath of events in Dublin and elsewhere.

Little resonance

Mr Curran said the broadcaster would also seek to engage younger audiences with the Rising as it currently has “little resonance” due to the gradual disappearance of real human connections with the people of that time.

A one-off show on RTÉ Two with the working title 1916 Children will document how eight children spent 24 hours as their ancestors would have in 1916. Stripped of all modern trappings, they undertook 10 challenges typical for a 1916 child. The show will seek to “reconnect today’s children with the reality of the past”.

Another one-off special, Children of the Revolution, will be presented by Joe Duffy, who will tell the stories of the 38 children killed during the Rising, who were aged from two to 16. The programme will “retrace and respect their lives and deaths”.

On Easter weekend, The Rising on 2fm will cover events “as if the events of Easter 1916 are happening live in 2016”. All shows, news and social media channels “will have the urgency and drama of the moment”, and the station will delve into the National Archives for famous and not-so-famous recollections to retell them for younger audiences.

Mr Curran added that the programmes would be available across television, radio, and mobile so audiences could “engage with, understand, commemorate and celebrate 1916”.

“Choclamation”

Fears that 1916 commemorations will become “overly commercialised” have been sparked by a chocolate bar.

The 1916 Easter Rising commemorative chocolate bar - dubbed the ‘choclamation’ - bears images of the seven executed rebel leaders and the proclamation on its wrapper. It is being sold in Heatons stores for €3. James Connolly Heron, great grandson of 1916 leader James Connolly, said the bar risked undermining the centenary commemoration.

“...there’s so much more we can tell about the 1916 leaders than reducing them down to covering a chocolate bar,” he told RTÉ’s ‘Liveline’.

He said it is important to educate younger generations about the Rising, but said the bar was “simply a commercial venture”. “One would expect a certain amount of sensitivity particularly around those that were executed,” he said.

Fianna Fáil Wexford Councillor Malcolm Byrne, who initially raised concerns about the bar, said the centenary must not be “overly commercialised”.

Heatons did not respond to a request for a comment.
The GAA & Revolution in Ireland 1913-1921
Edited by Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, published by The Collins Press 2015

The Kerry and Wexford teams parading before the 1913 All-Ireland senior football final. James Rossiter, who played in this final, fought with the Irish Guards and once wrote home that he felt more nervous before an All-Ireland final than before an Irish Guard attack on the Germans.


Eamon de Valera throwing in the ball to start the April 6th 1919 Gaelic football match between Wexford and Tipperary in Croke Park, in aid of the Irish Republican Prisoners Dependents Fund.

Eamon de Valera throwing in the ball to start the April 6th 1919 Irish Republican Prisoners Dependents Fund match between Wexford and Tipperary.

Action shots from a 1924 Ladies Hurling Match at Nenagh, as published by the Cork Weekly Examiner.

The 1904 Cuchullains Camogie team. The dress and the shape of the caman, as seen here, were standard for camogie players at the time and for the foreseeable future.

Camera crews filming the opening of the 1924 Tailteann Games. The filming of Gaelic games became popular between 1913 and 1923.

The 1914 Clare team, which included John Fox who, in 1915, enlisted in the Irish Guards and joined the Munster Fusiliers. Fox was injured in the Battle of the Somme in 1916, rescued by another serving Clare man and brought home to Ireland.

The GAA & Croke Park Connection

Having purchased a ground on Jones Road in Dublin in December 1913, the GAA named that ground Croke Memorial Park and set about redeveloping the stadium. By the time of the GAA’s annual convention in April 1915, the association’s secretary Luke O’Toole was able to report that the wall at the Railway End had been built and that the enclosure on the side of the pitch facing Jones Road was almost complete, as was the banking behind the bottom goals; that is, the area now known as Hill 16. The work was complete by the playing of the All-Ireland finals late in 1915.

Pearse commenting on the war, wrote in ‘The Spark’:

“The last sixteen months have been the most glorious in the history of Europe. Heroism has come back to the earth. . . It is good for the world that such things should be done. The old heart of the earth needed to be warmed with the red wine of the battlefields. Such august homage was never before offered to God as this, the homage of millions of lives given gladly for love of country. . . . Ireland has not known the exhilaration of war for over a hundred years. Yet who will say that she has known the blessings of peace? When war comes to Ireland, she must welcome it as she would welcome the Angel of God. And we must not faint at the sight of blood. Winning through it, we (or those of us who survive) shall come unto great joy.”

This opinion was certainly not shared by James Connolly writing in the ‘Irish Worker’ shortly after ‘Peace and the Gael’ was published:

“No, we do not think that the old heart of the earth needed to be warmed with the red wine of millions of lives. We think that anyone who does is a blithering idiot. We are sick of such teaching”

Even a century later, it’s not difficult to disagree with Connolly.

Tim Pat Coogan commented in 2009: “These Rupert Brooke-like sentiments were not uncommon amongst romantics on both sides of the Irish Sea at that stage in the Great War’s history. Before the grinding horror of the conflict became more generally understood. They attracted attention at the time and amongst revisionists who examined Pearse’s career posthumously, revulsion” Tim Pat Coogan. Ireland in the 20th Century. 2008. P42

Joseph Theodoor Leerssen in ‘National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History’ agrees, commenting: “at the outbreak of the war and maybe even still in December 1915 when Pearse wrote this, such a sentiment was still an acceptable rhetorical continuation of nineteenth century romantic attitudes, sharpened by the prevailing fear of decadence and degeneration; a few years later it became an obscenity. The horrors of the mud clogged trenches, with their barbed wire, their poison gas, their artillery barrages, splintered forests and endless casualty lists spread far and wide into society-at-large by new media such as press and photography. Press coverage was followed by artistic representations of what war could inflict, in the poems of Wilfrid Owen, the novels of Remarque and Hasek, the drawings of Otto Dix. All this cast a pall over the old Romantic glorification of the military and of warfare…”

An attempt to fully understand Pearse is not possible in such a short article for a family Newsletter, but the reality today is that he has been negatively regarded for decades, or another writer put it, he’s a very unfashionable figure these days.

Pearse tends to get written off for what is perceived as his version (and his vision) of fundamentalist Irish Catholicism, what with offers to God, blood sacrifice and other phrases that tend to raise the ire of historical revisionists and many readers today. Some have even commented that Pearse was “not a mad Catholic theocrat in the Maria Duce mould, but basically a Rousseauist political thinker” While I will leave you to work that theme out for yourself, it can be argued that what sets Pearse apart from his fellow revolutionaries was that he was also a poet with an intimate knowledge of Gaelic Irish history, tradition, lore and language.

An opinion is that “it’s worth remembering the basic transformative element of the aisling genre, a patriotic verse form that Pearse was steeped in, whereby the cailleach (hag) becomes the spiribeann (goddess or woman of great beauty). This is a very old theme in folklore, and a sanitised version appears in European fairy tales in which a girl kisses a frog, whereupon it magically transforms into a handsome prince. In the old Irish version, not only are the gender roles reversed, but, as Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill is fond of reminding us, the hero doesn’t get away with just demure kissing – no, he has to sleep with the hag. The aisling poems of later centuries tend to be more elevated in tone than the Old Irish texts, as befits their identification of the cailleach-spiribeann transformation with the cause of national rebirth, but nonetheless they build on the original…”

The full text of this Christmas message from Pearse:

“When we are old (those of us who live to be old) we shall tell our grandchildren of the Christmas of 1915 as the second Christmas which saw the nations at war for the freedom of the seas; as the last Christmas, it may be, which saw Ireland, the gate of the seas, in the keeping of the English. For that is the thing for which men are bleeding to-day in France and Serbia, in Poland and Mesopotamia. The many fight to uphold a tyranny three centuries old, the most arrogant tyranny that there has ever been in the world; and the few fight to break that tyranny. Always it is the many who fight for the evil thing, and the few who fight for the good thing; and always it is the few who win. For God fights with the small battalions. If sometimes it has seemed otherwise, it is because the few who have fought for the good cause have been guilty of some secret faltering, some infidelity to their best selves, some shrinking back in the face of a tremendous duty.

The last sixteen months have been the most glorious in the history of Europe. Heroism has come back to the earth. On whichever side the men who rule the peoples have marshalled them, whether with England to uproot her tyranny of the seas, or with Russia to break that tyranny, the people themselves have gone into battle because to each the old voice that speaks out of the soil of a nation has spoken anew. Each fights for the fatherland. It is policy that moves the governments, it is patriotism that stirs the peoples. Belgium defending her soil is heroic, and so is Turkey fighting with her back to Constantinople.

It is good for the world that such things should be done. The old heart of the earth needed to be warmed with the red wine of the battlefields. Such august homage was never before offered to God as this, the homage of millions of lives given gladly for love of country.

War is a terrible thing, and this is the most terrible of wars. But this war is not more terrible than the evils which it will end or help to end. It is not more terrible than the exploitation of the English masses by cruel plutocrats; it is not more terrible than the infidelity of the French masses to their old spiritual ideals; it is not more terrible than the enslavement of the Poles by Russia, than the enslavement of the Irish by England. What if the war kindles in the slow breasts of the peoples. Belgium defending her soil is heroic, and so is Turkey fighting with her back to Constantinople.

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It is because peace is so precious a boon that war is so sacred a duty. Ireland will not find Christ’s peace until she has taken Christ’s sword.

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On the outbreak of the First World War, John Redmond, chairman of the Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster, pledged the Irish Volunteers to the defence of Ireland during wartime. When, on 20 September 1914 he urged Volunteers to fight, it was the purest form of loyalty and patriotism that could be conceived of. With ousting the poacher, Irish Volunteers became ‘National Volunteers’. However, this organisation lapsed into inactivity by the middle of 1915. Later that year, 150,000 National Volunteers had enlisted for service with the British Army by the spring of 1917. Meanwhile, Eoin MacNeill, the founder of the Irish Volunteers, retained the name and 12,500 (seven percent) of the membership of the original volunteer force.

The other thing which MacNeill’s Volunteers retained was a concealed cohort of Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) activists. This secret movement had been reinvigorated after 1905 when two northern republicans, Bulmer Hobson and Edward Macleod, took over and revamped the movement.

The IRB had seized the opportunity presented by the vogue for volunteering to infiltrate the Irish Volunteers from its inception. The infiltration went to the very highest echelons of the force. When the provisional committee of the Irish Volunteers was formed in November 1913, 12 of its 25 members were also members of the Brotherhood. Subsequently, other provisional committee members, most notably Patrick Pearse, Joseph Plunkett, and Thomas MacDonagh were sworn into the IRB; their potential having been recognised through their work in the Volunteers.

Though by no means as large as the aforementioned Irish, Ulster, and National Volunteers, two other forces - the Irish Citizen Army and the Hibernian Rifles - were also founded primarily prior to the first World War and joined with the Irish Volunteers in forming the combat troops of the Easter Rebellion in 1916. The Irish Citizen Army had been founded in 1913 to protect the citizens of Dublin from the Dublin Metropolitan Police following notable clashes such as Bloody Sunday on 31 August 1913 in which a DMP baton charge resulted in the deaths of two citizens. Approximately 500 were injured in that incident alone. The Irish Citizen Army numbered no more than 350 members in 1916, but, an impressive 250 of these turned out to fight during Easter 1916. The Hibernian Rifles was smaller again. So small, in fact, that it has been almost forgotten in the history of the Rising. While the Irish Citizen Army wore its own uniform, distinctive to that of the much larger Irish Volunteers, by 1916, the Hibernian Rifles wore a uniform identical to that of the Volunteers but with ‘blue facings on the cuffs and collars and slacks’. Numbering around 50, the Hibernian Rifles was established by a faction of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) known as the Irish American Alliance. Whereas the better known and more populous AOH ‘Lord of Eireann’ was a key part of the Home Rule electoral and constituency machine, the AOH IAA had, as its name suggests, links to radical Irish America. Around 20 of the Hibernian Rifles fought during Easter Week. The unit suffered combat casualties, most notably when it was dispatched to engage in heavy fighting at the Exchange Hotel on Parliament Street. Two further organisations were Cumann na mBan and Na Fianna Éireann. Cumann na mBan was the women’s auxiliary to the Irish Volunteers and Na Fianna Éireann a ‘repeal club’ for the under-21s, which was constantly dropping the rush to arming and drilling but who nonetheless organised the vogue for volunteering swept Ireland in 1916. Both units served prominently during the insurrection.

The distinction of gender is an important one. Although entirely gender equal on paper, the Irish Citizen Army has come in for fresh scrutiny in recent years as files in the Bureau of Military History reveal that traditional gender roles perpetuated in the army. Only two female members, Constance Markievicz and Margaret Skinner, played full combatant roles during the Rising with many others confined to cook or messenger duties. By contrast, Cumann na mBan, which was officially an ‘auxiliary’ organisation to the all-male Irish Volunteers, was an autonomous organisation with its own leadership and command structures.

All five of these bodies; the Irish Volunteers, the Citizen Army, Cumann na mBan, Fianna Éireann, and the Hibernian Rifles fought as part of the rebel army of the provisional government of the Irish Republic declared on Easter Monday 1916.

While historians often dwell on the importance of nomenclature nowadays, Dublin Castle was happy to dub any organisation unsympathetic to the official Home Rule party and to the British war effort as ‘Sinn Féiners’ and referred to Irish Volunteers as ‘Sinn Féin Volunteers’.

Strictly speaking, ‘Sinn Féin’ denoted membership of Arthur Griffith’s dual-monarchist party which advocated parliamentary abstention in this period. However, the term features regularly in police reports and Under Secretary’s dossiers during the war years with reference to advanced nationalism and republicanism more generally.

Returning to the British government’s attitudes to these organisations, Sir Matthew Nathan had been appointed Under Secretary at Dublin Castle in September 1914, after the First World War had broken out. From then until his resignation in the wake of the Easter rebellion, he was the top civil servant on the ground in Ireland. He reported directly to his Chief Secretary, Augustine Birrell, who was a member of Cabinet in London.

Nathan and Birrell were the focus of blame when the Royal Commission of Investigation into the Irish Rebellion reported on 10 May 1916. Although others such as the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Wimborne, and the heads of the Royal Irish Constabulary and the Dublin Metropolitan Police, weathered the storm, both Birrell and Nathan resigned thereafter. Inactivity rather than ineptitude was the criticism levelled at them.

Why were large numbers of armed citizens allowed to parade and drill in public even after the First World War had broken out? In a climate where all sorts of activities from eating seed potatoes to lighting bonfires were outlawed, the relative lack of suppression, surveillance, and infiltration of these private armies can often appear remarkable to modern observers.

Assembling young men and women willing to become members of the paramilitary organisations was one thing, the acquisition of arms was quite another. After spectacular large scale arms imports by the UVF and Irish Volunteers prior to the declaration of war, a steady stream of rifles continued to be acquired by nationalists through various methods after the First World War broke out.

In an apparent irony, while it had been illegal to import arms to Ireland at the time of the Larne and Howth gun running, the ban on arms importation had actually been lifted upon the outbreak of the war.

One practice that became prevalent during 1915 and into 1916 was that rifles were acquired from British Army Ordnance stores in Ireland.

Soldiers sympathetic to republicanism or just eager to make money by selling arms to persons willing to pay a premium would smuggle rifles out of army stores and remove the brass cap containing its serial number, replacing these with wooden inserts. The government became aware of this practice as late as March 1916, by which point one informant reported that 60 rifles had been acquired in this fashion.

Police and intelligence reports from this period indicate official awareness of large Volunteer arms dumps around the city of Dublin. Ten full boxes of ammunition were being stored in Father Matthew Park in Fairview, north Dublin.

Continued on next page>
Georges Jeffrey, an Irish aoiseach, quietly arranged to have the state transiting from the main ports of Belfast, Dublin and Cork, as with train engines, steam provided power to the ships. The total value of imports and exports increased from £108m in 1905 to £148m in 1913. In 1906 a new route was opened between Fishguard and Rosslare in Wexford. By 1918 at least 38 shipping companies operated across the Irish Sea. An indicator of the increasing power of ships was the Luststina, whose engines were rated at 65,000 horsepower.

Change was also coming with the rise of the internal combustion engine. The first car imported to Ireland, a Benz Velo, arrived in 1898. The Motor Car Act of 1903 raised the speed limit to 20mph and introduced compulsory registration. In 1904 there were 38 registered motor vehicles, 5,056 by 1911 and 19,524 in 1914.

The number of licensed petrol dealers doubled from 1901 to 1914. In July of that year, there was an experimental run of eight motor buses from O’Connell Bridge to the North Quay docks in Dublin. However, motor vehicles were very expensive. One newspaper advertisement in 1916 invited a trial run of a 35 horsepower Overlands £3, costing £275 plus £6.6s road tax (in comparison, a policeman’s annual salary was £65 and a sergeant earned up to £101).

The use of the roads by different types of traffic can be seen in the 110 fatalities during 1914: 49 by horse-drawn; 53 by motor vehicles; and eight involving bicycles.

Although the world’s first cycle factory opened in Dublin in 1888, and 25 cycle companies launched on the Dublin Stock Exchange thereafter, bicycles were also expensive. With the average Dublin wage less than £1 a week in 1915, a Model de Luxe bike was out of range for most people at £4.10s. Appealing to aesthetics, an advert claimed: “To ride a Triumph Cycle is to be in fashion, and to possess a mount which can thoroughly be relied on...” And it was relied on during the Rising.

The mobilisation order for the Irish Volunteers, Dublin Brigade read: “Cycle scouts to be mounted, and ALL men having cycles or motor cycles to ‘bring them’. James Cullen, an Irish Volunteer, recounted that “...Commandant Gilligan, who had gone to Dublin on Good Friday, arrived back in Enniscorthy late on Wednesday night. He had cycled all the way from Dublin”.

Margaret Skinner, an Irish Citizen Army member based in St Stephen’s Green, wrote: “As I rode along on my bicycle, I had my first taste of the risks of street-fighting. Soldiers on top of the Hotel Shelbourne aimed their machine guns directly at me. Bullets struck the wooden rim of my bicycle wheels, puncturing it; others rattled on the metal rim or among the spokes. I knew one might strike me at any moment, so I rode as fast as I could. My speed saved my life, and I was soon out of range around a corner...”

**Transport back to the future**

Fergus Cassidy writing in the Irish Independent (29 October 2015) on an era when horses were slowly being overtaken by cars and trains.

No planes. Just trains and automobiles. And ships, bicycles, and horses. All 560,916 of them, as recorded by the Department of Agriculture for Ireland in 1915. Along with 28,923 mules and 227,422 asses. Whether pulling freight barges on canals, or as with builders’ yard adjacent to it, were stuffed with munitions; they even kept boxes of cartridges in the hollow kerbs on their fireplaces. A military raid on the premises after the Rising failed to uncover the remnants of the cache.

Mrs. O’Connor recalled how, showing them around the adjacent yard, she brought the soldiers ‘actually over the places where the stuff was stored but they got nothing.’

Despite official knowledge of these arms dumps and with both Irish Volunteers and Irish Citizen Army carrying out mock attacks and armed parades in Dublin prior to the Rising, there was still an outright reluctance to suppress these movements. Warnings had been received from low-level informants and from America, where John Devoy was speaking rather openly about plans for an insurrection in the hope of obtaining funds from sympathetic Germans.

Dismissed as improbable, the Rising that broke out on 24 April 1916 still shocked those in power.

Dr Conor Mulvagh is a lecturer in Irish History at the School of History at University College Dublin (UCD) with special responsibility for the Decade of Commemorations. Published: Irish Independent October 29, 2015

**Did You Know?**

THE deaths of 10 executed leaders of the Easter Rising, including Pádraig Pearse, were never registered until Bertie Ahern, as Taoiseach, quietly arranged to have the state records amended in 2000, it has emerged.

The discovery of the 84-year delay has shocked the men’s relatives, as they were unaware the deaths had not been registered in 1916. The discovery was made by Pearse O’Hanrahan, a grand-nephew of Micheál Ó hAnnracháin who fought at Jacob’s Biscuit Factory, while researching his family’s history in the General Register Office in Dublin.

O’Hanrahan, a former Fianna Fail councillor in Dundalk, now wants to have the death certificates changed because he believes they are “derogatory”. He was upset to find his grand-uncle’s death certificate states, “Probable cause of death gunshot wounds”. The certificates of all 10 men record the same cause of death.

Assembling armies and acquiring arms continued...

Similarly, authorities were aware of an arms cache on Connaught Road, near the back of Dalymount Park. This was in the home of Michael O’Hanrahan, second in command to Thomas MacDonagh in the 2nd Dublin Battalion of the Irish Volunteers.

Similarly, in the suburb of Donnybrook, Eamon de Valera, then commandant of the 3rd Battalion, had an arms stash in his house on Morehampton Terrace, and Batt O’Connor, an IRB member who was sent to Kerry during Easter week, stored a vast quantity of arms and especially ammunition at the house he had built for himself on Brendan Road, Donnybrook. After her husband’s death, Batt O’Connor’s widow recalled how their house, as well as a builders’ yard adjacent to it, were stuffed with munitions; they even kept boxes of cartridges in the hollow kerbs on their fireplaces. A military raid on the premises after the Rising failed to uncover the remnants of the cache.

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# Passenger Manifest S.S. Alunia. December 1925

## Shipping Passenger Manifest Record – U.S. Immigration

**Name:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Michael F. Lynch</th>
<th>Carmel J. Lynch</th>
<th>Deirdre M. Daly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Age               | 35               | 28              | 3               |

| Gender            | Male             | Female          | Female          |

| Marital Status    | Married          | Married         | Child           |

| Nationality       | Irish Free State | Irish Free State | Irish Free State |

**Departed:**

Departed from Cobh (Queenstown) 20 December, 1925

**Arrived:**

Not recorded but would have been c.26/27 December, 1925.

**Address in US:**

Not recorded.

**Ellis Island ID:**

Not recorded.

**Ship Details:**

14,040 tons gross. Built by John Brown & Co. Ltd in Glasgow and launched on February 7, 1925. This was the last of the six 14,000 ton cruisers built for Cunard. 519.6 feet x 68.2ft. Accommodation for 500 cabin passengers and 1,200 3rd Class passengers. Completed maiden voyage on July 24 from Liverpool to Quebec and Montreal. Operated on the Transatlantic service to the US and Canada until 1939 when she was re-registered as an armed merchant cruiser. In 1940, she was sold and became a fleet repair ship. Remained in this work until 1957 when the Alunia was scrapped at Blih, Scotland.

**Note:**

A future article on this visit to the US by Michael and family will feature in a future Newsletter. Carmel was 7 months pregnant on departure to the US with Diarmuid Eoin Lynch who was born there on February 23, 1926.
Conscription & Ireland, 1915

Unlike other European nations at the outbreak of war in 1914, Britain did not introduce conscription but instead appealed for volunteers. This was phenomenally successful and brought in 2.5 million men in the first two years of the war, so much that the army was unable to cope. In addition to difficulties outfitting, arming and organising the volunteers, there was concern that almost 40% of all volunteers were rejected for medical reasons including malnutrition and poor health.

This public enthusiasm continued through early 1915, when enlistments averaged 100,000 men per month throughout Britain and Ireland.

However, by early summer of 1915, British military offensives to break the military stalemate of trench warfare on the Western Front and to open a new front on Gallipoli had failed and at an enormous cost in lives. With military setbacks and increasing casualties of war, the numbers of volunteers rapidly declined throughout Britain and Ireland and as quickly, rumours of a military draft or conscription circulated. In an attempt to boost numbers, the upper age limit for volunteer recruits was raised from 38 to 40 in May 1915 but it became clear to the Government that voluntary recruitment was not going to provide the numbers of men required to continue the war or to take the offensive against German and Axis forces.

The obvious remedy was conscription, which quickly became a hotly debated political issue both in Ireland and Britain.

In May, 1915 the ruling Liberals merged with the Conservative/Labour/Unionist opposition to form a war-time coalition administration following revelations that insufficient munitions were being supplied to Allied forces. This led to the appointment of Sir Edward Carson as Attorney General. Carson, as leader of the Irish Unionist Party, abhorred any idea of Home Rule as “Rome Rule” and was determined to take the Act off the Statute Book and as determined to introduce conscription throughout the United Kingdom. His appointment was seen as a direct betrayal of all promises to Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party on Ireland’s entry into the War. Home Rule, the one persuasive political card the British had to play in Ireland — immediately became more remote.

Various Irish public organisations expressed their dissatisfaction with Carson’s appointment. At a meeting of Kildare County Council, members expressed their opinion of this move as “a direct insult to the great majority of Irishmen, and must express our surprise that leading statesmen in England should sanction such a course as a time when thousands of Irish Nationalists are sacrificing their lives to maintain the integrity of the British Empire.” Kildare Observer 5 June, 1915

As talk in Westminster turned increasingly towards a military draft, public anxiety and nationalist hostility to conscription grew in Ireland. Redmond was called on to withdraw his pledge to recruit Irish volunteers for the British army. By early summer in Ireland, public resistance to the war was visibly growing, army volunteer recruits had dramatically dropped and the Irish Volunteer numbers increased.

In June 1915, The Redmond’s Irish Parliamentary Party responded by publically opposing compulsory military service and that any attempt to introduce it would be met with vigorous resistance. The party also argued that the existing system of voluntary recruitment had produced magnificent results and that any attempt to undermine it was ‘scandalous and treacherous’.

Within a month, as Carson was publically calling for conscription, the rise in opposition to the prospect of a military draft introduced for Ireland continued with a public meeting in Beresford Place in Dublin. Amongst the speakers on the platform were the trade unionists and socialists William O’Brien and James Connolly, and the nationalists Thomas Kelly and Sean T. O’Kelly. Each speaker in turn condemned the plans to get all working men in Ireland to register their names, deriding it as the ‘thin end of the edge of conscription’. Thomas Kelly, a City Alderman, told the meeting that he had never made shells, but that if he were ever put to make them they would be for use against Britain, not Germany. Sean T. O’Kelly told the meeting that he was sure the British government would try and introduce conscription in Ireland but they needed to show there was a large body of men in Ireland who would strongly resist any such move. Mr. O’Kelly continued by saying that they would not follow the traitor path mapped out for them by John Redmond and his people.

Bulmer Hobson informed the crowd that the Irish Volunteers would continue to resist conscription in Ireland. After the meeting had unanimously pledged to resist conscription, Hobson announced that the General Council of the Irish Volunteers has reiterated their commitment to resist any attempt to force the men of Ireland into military service until a free National Government is empowered by the Irish people themselves to deal with it.

“Reports from British intelligence from both Dublin and the countryside indicated that they believed anti-conscription sentiment had grown so rapidly and had become so entrenched that MacNeill’s volunteers, with support from some Redmondites, had planned an anti-conscription uprising as early as October 1915.”

Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption: The Mind of the Easter Rising by Sean Farrell Moran

The human cost of the war and now the threat of conscription effectively undermined the Irish Parliamentary Party position on Ireland and on recruitment. This was quickly recognised and some attempts were made to reassure nationalist concerns in June. Redmond and the IPF newspaper The Freeman’s Journal commented that both the British and Irish people were opposed to conscription and that any attempt to alter the voluntary recruiting ‘would wreck British national solidarity…conscription, being similar to Prussian militarism, would be resisted by the liberty loving people of the British Isles.’

Nationalists and Sinn Fein countered Redmond’s calls on the community to safeguard Irish liberties by continuing to enlist in the British army with charges that he had not secured a Home Rule parliament but only a suspended Home Rule Act and then the prospect of an Amending Bill by possibly partitioning the island. The cobbled together Coalition government gave every indication that Home Rule would never be implemented.

Moves towards Conscription

The Government continued to edge towards conscription during the summer of 1915 with the National Registration Act 1915, passed by Parliament on 15 July. Its purpose was primarily to discover just how many men of military age were still civilians, how many could be spared for war work and, more pressingly, how many would be eligible to join the armed forces. “Registration day”, for the UK excluding Ireland was 15 August 1915. Some 29 million forms were issued and the extraordinary census was completed on every man and woman aged between 15 and 65 and not in the armed services. While the register did not in itself make men liable to serve, the responsible minister (Walter Long) said that it will compel them to declare that they are doing nothing to help their
Conscription & 1915 continued.

country in her hour of crisis.' Essentially, each person who registered was agreeing to be conscripted if, in the future, such a step was considered necessary.

All those who registered were then sent a certificate.

The results of this census became available by mid-September 1915 and showed there were almost 5 million males of military age who were not in the forces, of which 1.6 million were in the "stared" (protected, high or scarce skill) jobs, 2.18 million were single and 2.83 million were married.

Carson resigned from the coalition government in October 1915 citing government inaction and procrastination in prosecuting the war, particularly in relation to Serbia and conscription which he continued to call for in Parliament. Redmond emphasised the bitterness felt by Irish Nationalists over Irish losses in the Dardanelles and believed there had been a 'systematic suppression' of the gallantry of the Irish troops, and did 'not think that there was any single incident that did more harm' to his efforts to encourage Irish recruitment. Despite this, on 23rd August 1915 in Waterford, Redmond exhorted "Your first duty is to take your part in ending the war" (which formed the text of the recruitment poster on page 20)

The Derby Scheme

On 11 October 1915, Lord Derby was appointed Director-General of Recruiting. He brought forward a programme five days later to determine whether British manpower goals could be met by volunteers or if conscription was necessary, "The Group Scheme", but more often called "the Derby Scheme", for raising the numbers of army recruits. This was a moral scheme in that it attempted to give voluntary enlisters one last chance to do so.

Men aged 18 to 40 were informed that under the scheme they could continue to enlist voluntarily or attest with an obligation to come if called up later on. In other words, agreeing to be conscripted. The War Office notified the public that voluntary enlistment would soon cease and that the last day of registration would be 15 December 1915. There was a surge in recruiting as many men volunteered without waiting to be 'fetched'. Face to face with the canvasser each man announced whether or not he would attest to join the forces, no one was permitted to speak for him. Those who attested promised to go to the recruiting office within 48 hours; many were accompanied there immediately. If found fit they were sworn in and paid a signing bonus of 2s 9d. The following day they were transferred to Army Reserve B. A khaki armband bearing the Royal Crown was to be provided to all who had enlisted or who had been rejected, as well as to starred and discharged men (they were no longer issued or worn after compulsion was introduced). It obtained 318,553 medically fit single men but not sufficient for war purposes.

Little option remained but formal conscription.

Meanwhile, an unofficial form of recruitment continued in Ireland — known as 'Economic Conscription', this was where men of military age were sacked from workplaces or simply not employed if applying for work, forcing most into the armed services to survive. Others emigrating to the United States from Ireland via Liverpool were similarly refused passage by shipping companies. On a single day in mid-November 1915, over 600 Irishmen of military age were refused permission to leave the United Kingdom.

A novel approach to Recruitment in Ireland took place on October 28, 1915 with a letter distributed throughout the country:

Sir,

Lord Kitchener sends me the attached message for YOU. He wants 50,000 Irishmen at once for the period of the war. You will be equipped and will start your training in Ireland, and complete it in different parts of the world. Wherever you go you will be serving with Irishmen. The relatives whom you look after will be looked after for you while you are away. Your Wives, your Children, or those dependent on you will receive an allowance every week. Every great Irishman urges the appeal. The safety of your homes and your possessions depend on your answer. Sons of farmers whose lands are passing into your own possession, you must come out and defend this heritage. Townsmen, your interests are threatened too. You must equally respond to the call. It is your privilege as an Irishman to come forward voluntarily. Will you come now? Fill in this form and post it today. Yours faithfully,

W. Wimborne

Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and Director of Recruiting

Newspaper sources show how prominent the issue of Conscription had become. An attention grabbing little advert from the Irish Volunteer of October 30th:

Issues were coming to a head by December, 1915. The Irish correspondent of The Times on 7 December reported that Sinn Fein and the Irish Volunteers were now quite open in their opposition to recruiting. The British Administration in Ireland were also very aware of the opposition to conscription. On 18 December, Sir Matthew Nathan, British Under-Secretary, informs the Chief Secretary that the situation in Ireland is "most serious and threatening" and "that an outbreak is certain if any attempt is made to enforce conscription"

By year’s end, the war, Irish losses, the Irish Parliamentary Party impotence in Westminster and Britain’s insensitivity towards nationalist issues began to interlink. Ireland was becoming more and more marginalised away from the War, as the political situation between the two unfolded. Economic necessity continued to force many to join the armed services but much was to change during the following year, 1916.
**Passenger Manifest SS Westphalia 1929**

Shipping Passenger Manifest Record – U.S. Immigration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Diarmuid Lynch.</th>
<th>Kathleen Lynch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vessel</td>
<td>SS Westphalia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrived</td>
<td>New York. October 08, 1929.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address in US</td>
<td>286E 206 Street, NY.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ellis Island ID:** PASSENGER ID9011983240520 FRAME395 LINE NUMBER3


**Notes:** Diarmuid and Kit travelled to Ireland as part of an entourage accompanying the body of John Devoy from New York departing aboard the President Harding, June 5, 1929. Devo’s funeral service was held in Dublin, with a lying-in-state before burial on 26 June, 1929. While in Ireland, Diarmuid attended a memorial service to Rev. Patrick Bowen Murphy in St. Joseph’s Cemetery, Cork. (Details in main article)
Opinion

Economist David McWilliams on the Easter Rising:

“The heroes of 1916 were economically clueless and the nation paid for it”

The decades leading up to the Rising were a period of relative prosperity for those who didn’t emigrate – despite the narrative of ‘rich Britain subjugating poor Ireland’

As we are about to embark on a year of celebrating 1916 and the birth of the nation, maybe it’s a good idea to stand back and ask what 1916 did for the economy.

The last time I checked, you couldn’t buy bread with slogans, speeches and flags, so isn’t it a good idea to ask what happened to living standards and economic opportunity after the Rising?

What was the economic and financial backdrop to the Rising? And what economic policies were followed to ensure that the pledge to “cherish all the children of the nation equally” (which was intended to refer to Unionists rather than the poor) was underpinned by financial reality?

When I learned about 1916 and the national struggle, economics was never mentioned other than scant reference to Horace Plunkett and his co-operative movements. Because this Plunkett, a former Unionist MP, was often confused with his relative Joseph Plunkett, a Proclamation signatory, there was always a vague sense that some Plunkett who was involved in national politics at the time had something to do with economics.

That was about the height of the economics - which is unusual because the story of revolutions tends, typically, to have a big economic component. The story of our revolution, as told in school, is one of rich Britain subjugating poor Ireland. This sounds good, but it’s not entirely accurate.

Work by economists Kevin O’Rourke and Ronan Lyons reveals another, more nuanced, story. In fact, the decades leading up to the Rising were a period of relative prosperity for those people who stayed in Ireland. They were decades of rapid social improvement. I know it sounds counterfactual, but it’s true.

Take for example, the lot of Irish skilled workers and tradesmen, such as carpenters and fitters. During the Famine they earned about 90pc of what their English counterparts did. This ratio remained more or less unchanged, but in those decades leading up to 1913, both English and Irish tradesmen saw rapid increases in their wages. The Empire project enriched all of Britain and Ireland. In the later part of the 19th century both Irish and English tradesmen got richer together.

However, we see much greater upward mobility in the wages of unskilled Irish workers and farm labourers, which actually rose rapidly after the Famine. This goes totally against the national narrative. I am not saying that people weren’t poor, but they were beginning to get richer.

In 1845, Irish unskilled workers earned half of what their counterparts were earning in Britain - by 1913 they were earning three quarters.

This seems counterintuitive because these were years of natural catastrophe and mass emigration – and surely that should be the key metric for any assessment of economic viability. But the fact is that those workers who stayed in Ireland did well after the Famine. When there are fewer workers to do the work, their wages tend to rise, and that’s what happened. Therefore, strange as it may sound, the typical economic reasons for a Rising, which traditionally should be a deterioration in the plight of the local people ahead of the Revolution, were not present in Ireland.

In addition, wealth, which in agricultural Ireland primarily stemmed from land ownership, was also undergoing a transformation. The various Land Acts from 1870 to 1909 began the mass transfer of land from the Anglo Irish aristocracy to the local farmers. This too would have had a profound positive impact on the wealth of the local population. Finally, the Irish stock market, which if the country had been an economic basket case would have been falling, actually doubled in the late Victorian era. Indeed some household names such as Arnotts were quoted at the time, revealing a buoyant retail sector in Dublin.

During this period, we had an Irish Home Rule party that held the balance of power in Britain and could therefore extract concessions from British imperialists who were looting the globe at the time. As a result, large-scale sanitation and infrastructural projects were undertaken such as bringing clean water to Dublin from Roundwood Reservoir. (By the way, there is a statue of the dude behind that initiative, which saved the lives of thousands of poor Dublin children - more than Jim Larkin ever did - situated just behind “Big Jim” on O’Connell Street. Can you name him?)

All this taken together explains how in 1913, on the eve of the Rising, far from being poor, Ireland was actually a rich country - one of the richest in Europe. Income per head was on a par with the Scandinavian countries of Norway, Sweden and Finland.

Seventy years after the Rising in 1986, Irish income per head was half the income of the Scandinavians. What happened?

Did our population expand rapidly so that our income per head fell - which would have been the inverse of what had happened between 1850 and 1900, when wages rose because the population fell? No, in fact, the Irish population kept falling until up the 1970s.

Emigration remained at ridiculously high levels. Consider this: in the 1950s, we know that 450,000 Irish people emigrated to England alone. That is not taking into account the people who went to America, Canada or Australia. And we are talking about a decade when the rest of the world boomed. In the 1980s, again, when our major trading partners - the English-speaking world - boomed, we went backwards. This is hard to do.

Since then, things have got much better. In fact, since the mid-1990s, even despite the crash, Ireland’s living standards have increased dramatically.

However, the fact remains - the first 80 years of this State were an economic disaster.

I am talking here about the ability of the new State to look after its own people, to match the rhetoric of nationalism with some semblance of achievement. Two out of three people born in the country in the 1930s – the first real generation of the new State - ended up living abroad. Just take that in.

I wonder will any of these individual stories be referenced in the many centenary celebrations that lie ahead?

Don’t get me wrong: I wouldn’t trade my Irish citizenship for anything and I believe in a nation’s right to make its own mistakes. And yet we should acknowledge that the people who took over this country in the aftermath of 1916 in our name were about as economically literate as the Taliban, and it wasn’t until these men were dead that this country began to deliver economically for its citizens.

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Anniversaries- December

06 Dec 1921 – Anglo-Irish treaty
06 Dec 1922 – Free State established
11 Dec 1920 – Cork set on fire by British Forces
12 Dec 1928 – Irish coinage introduced
13 Dec 1867 – Clerkenwell outrage
21 Dec 1916 – Prisoners released from Frongoch
28 Dec 1918 – SF wins in General Election
In Jimmy Wren’s north Dublin home, there’s a dated black-and-white photograph in the hall showing about 300 people. The image is shallow but very wide. Behind the first row of people seated, there are five more rows, with everyone standing on raised ground so all may be seen. “That’s my father there,” says Jimmy pointing to a small face in one of the middle rows, over on the right side of the frame, before going on to identify some of the others. “Seán T O’Kelly; Stephenson; the city librarian, Paddy Stephenson; Harry Colley. It’s some photograph,” he says. It is, and it was taken in 1938. “Croke Park, Hill 16…before the Galway-Kerry All-Ireland final.” “Galway won,” he adds with a smile.

The people in the photograph all took part in the 1916 Rising, a subject dear to Jimmy’s heart and the basis of his latest book, The GPO Garrison Easter Week 1916 – A Biographical Dictionary. The volume is a comprehensive, accessible and altogether fascinating, bringing together of data on the men and women who fought in and around the GPO. “My aim was to bring the story of the people who wouldn’t normally appear [in history books] just to have a record of them in a publication,” says Jimmy, a man of few words and much modesty. “I always had an interest [in history] since school. I am very interested in local history.”

Jimmy is aged 78 and has written six other books on Dublin local history and the GAA. He has lived alone since the death 15 years ago of his wife Bernadette. For more than 40 years, he was a supervisor in the housing department of Dublin Corporation, overseeing the caretakers in the council’s inner city flat schemes.

His new book contains the biographies of 572 people. To date, the figure most commonly given for the number of men and women in the GPO garrison has been just over 400. However, by examining old newspapers, the archives of the Military History Bureau, the recently made available pension records and the 1916 Roll of Honour that was created in 1936, Jimmy has come up with what he says he believes is a comprehensive record of participants in the garrison. “I don’t think there has been any biographies of the general participants, except leaders and well-known people,” says Jimmy. “This is about the ordinary rank-and-file.”

Some 320 of the 572 biographies are illustrated with small pen-and-ink portraits that Jimmy drew himself, using as his guide such grainy photographs as he could find in old newspapers. The book also contains a wealth of social data, compiled with the help of Kildare teacher David Gorry, confirming the strongly working class, north inner-city Dublin character of the rebels. Of the known addresses of members of the garrison, 287 were in the north inner city. By age, 362 were under 30 and by social class, 56 per cent were skilled workers, shop assistants and clerks, and 18 per cent were semi- or unskilled workers. “A lot of these were working people,” says Jimmy. “They were just patriotic. Beyond that, some of them weren’t very well educated. It was just pure patriotism that they took part.”

Thumbing through the volume, Jimmy stops at random entries and is able to talk about them all, as though he and they are old acquaintances. Page 222: Andy Mulligan, Irish Citizen Army; occupation: coal carter. “Andy Mulligan,” says Jimmy, “he’s an interesting guy. They nicknamed him ‘The Dazzler’. He was a carter and brought the ammunition and guns from Liberty Hall to the GPO.” Mulligan also hauled the typeset from West’s Printers on Capel Street to Liberty Hall for the printing of the Proclamation. After the Rising, he was interned for four months in Frongoch camp in Wales but later helped reorganise the Citizen Army. He died an invalid in St Kevin’s Hospital in 1942.

“That guy there,” says Jimmy pointing to an entry beside The Dazzler, ‘that’s Stephen Mulvey. He was attached to the Bray company of the Volunteers and walked into the city from there. He won an All-Ireland medal with Dublin in 1902.’

Jimmy’s father, also named Jimmy, was also in the GPO, going there from his home on the North Strand. “On Easter Monday,” says his entry, “at the age of 17½, he, accompanied his first cousin, Tommy Mahon, and friend, Paddy Hailey, went to the GPO and offered his services. He was given a shotgun and put on sentry duty.

“He was later sent out with dispatches and was attacked in the street by a pro-British crowd. He was badly beaten and he received a back injury. He made his way back to the GPO and was ordered home due to illness.”

According to Jimmy’s record, there were 74 women associated with the garrison at one time or another throughout Easter Week. The biographies start and end with women. The first is Mary (Molly) Adrien from north Co Dublin, who delivered dispatches throughout Easter Week. The biographies end with women. The first is Mary (Molly) Adrien from north Co Dublin, who delivered dispatches throughout Easter Week. The biographies start and end with women. The first is Mary (Molly) Adrien

He is phlegmatic as to the Ireland inherited from the Rising and War of Independence, noting today’s housing crisis and levels of poverty. “I suppose it’s the same in other countries too; you have a lot of poor.” The GPO Garrison Easter Week 1916 is published by Geography Publications (with financial support from the GAA and Dublin City Council) and is available from bookshops, including Eason.
December 1915 Snippets

3rd
Robert Monteith returned to Berlin as Casement was ill. He was unable to attend to the Brigade business and handed it over to me. Zossen was within easy reach of the capital, so I persuaded him to join us there and rest. The village was about half an hour’s walk from my quarters and I saw him almost daily. He always accompanied us on our route marches, much to the delight of the boys, whom he treated to light refreshments at the quiet little inns along some of our routes...Sir Roger remained with us until about December 22nd when he left to spend Christmas [in Dresden and Munich] with some friends’

4th
Henry Ford, with large party of peace advocates, sails for Europe on chartered steamer Oscar II, with the object of ending the war. The Citizen Army had its third and last night manoeuvre with the target being a raid on an army drill hall in Sutton, Co. Dublin. Only wooden rifles were found, for use by the local home defence force

10th
US: In Detroit, Henry Ford makes its one millionth car.

13th
Serbia in hands of enemy, Allied forces abandoning last positions and retiring across Greek frontier.

14th
Further reports of genocide in Armenia: over 1 million Armenians have been killed by the Turks. Casement received a letter from John Devoy, warning him that Adler Christensen was in his opinion, little more than a double agent.

15th
Western Front: after 16 months commanding British forces, Sir John French has been replaced by Sir Douglas Haig. First Army Commander in Flanders

Pearse writing in the pamphlet ‘Peace and the Gael’ commented that 'Ireland has not known the exhilaration of war for over a hundred years. Yet who will say that she has known the blessings of peace? When war comes to Ireland, she must welcome it; she would welcome the Angel of God. And...we must not faint at the sight of blood. Winning through it, we (or those of us who survive) shall come unto great joy.' See article in Newsletter.

18th
Writing in the Workers’ Republic, Connolly reminded his readers of the great strike of 1913 ‘.when the misguided Irish people stood so callously by...out of that experience is growing the feeling of identity between the forces of real nationalism and labour which we have long worked for and hoped for in Ireland...we want and must have economic nationalism and labour which we have lost.’

20th
The Allies finally retreat from Gallipoli disaster - over 90,000 men, 4,500 animals, 1,700 vehicles and 200 guns were evacuated. The House of Commons was told plainly that the

22nd
Henry Ford leaves his peace party at Christianity and returns to the United States. The Irish Parliamentary Party pledged a ‘vigorous resistance’ to the parliamentary move to entrench conscription in Ireland.

Pearse and Plunkett held a meeting at 41 Parnell Square, at which Thomas MacDonagh had unexpectedly turned up...Pearse was proposing that he and Plunkett should launch a new weekly paper in which he was to write inflammatory articles, designed to rouse the country to fever pitch. The idea was reminiscent of what Mitchell had done, and for which he had been transported...MacDonagh took great exception to what Pearse was proposing and left the meeting very angry. He told Tom [Clarke] he believed there was no reason for the proposal was that Pearse and Plunkett resented the fact that Sean and Tom had more power than they had...Pearse had no money to start the new paper, so he and Plunkett had been obliged to await Tom’s return from Limerick [where he was spending Christmas with his wife’s family] to get his consent on the proposal’


Monteith wrote that Casement went to spend Christmas with some friends, and that although he wanted to spend it with the Brigade, he was persuaded to go. ‘Christmas festivities require careful handling in an Irish Regiment, and I did not wish to disintegrate the chief. Before he left, he made ample provision to give the boys a good time. This was the first entertainment the men had in Germany...few delicacies were obtainable, but the boys searched the countryside to provide a substantial dinner. Invitations were sent out and we were the sole entertainment the men had in Germany...few delicacies were obtainable, but the boys searched the countryside to provide a substantial dinner. Invitations were sent out and we were

25th
Eoin MacNeill wrote in the Irish Volunteer, directed to Connolly ‘No man has a right to seek relief of his own feelings at the expense of his country’.

27th
Following a discussion on the proposed Pearse newspaper, Clarke vetoed it on the grounds that the Rising was planned and publication would alert the authorities to the potential dangers in their own back yard.

30th
Mediterranean: 400 die when a U-Boat sinks the P&O Liner “Persia”.

Hits of the year: “Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag” & “Back home in Tennessee”

By years end, the stalemate in the West continued. Military thinking, particularly on the Allied side, still operated in the Napoleonic era, sending troops forward in hapless attempts to capture enemy lines through a hail of shell and machine gun fire, barbed wire, poison gas and land that was churned into a mire of mud. Advances had been miniscule and losses were mounting. 600,000 German and 1,500,000 British and French men were lost. The Eastern front saw widespread Russian defeats as German forces took Poland and Lithuania. However, the worst of the war was still to come.
No further State events planned for the remainder of 2015

2015

January 1
- Dublin Castle: Opening events of the State Commemorative program.
- Issue of 16 Commemoration Stamps by An Post and special coins by the Central Bank.

March 8
- Richmond Barracks, Dublin: Women in the 1916 Rising Commemoration & Exhibition.

March 15
- Proclamation Day – all educational establishments

March 26 Easter Saturday
- Wreath laying ceremonies at key sites to mark the Rising centenary.
- Garden of Remembrance, Dublin 1: Remembrance Ceremony for all who died during 1916.
- State Reception for relatives of the 1916 participants. Farmeligh House

March 27 Easter Sunday
- State ceremonies at the GPO, Dublin marking the centenary of the Rising.
- State Reception for all guests invited to the State Ceremony at the GPO.
- Wreath laying ceremonies - nationwide

March 28 Easter Monday
- Wreath laying ceremonies throughout the capital & state at 13:15hrs – marking the time the Rising began.
- Official opening of the Easter Rising Centenary Interpretative Visitor Centre at the GPO.
- Ireland 2016 Public Celebrations nationwide

March 29 Easter Tuesday
- Liberty Hall Ceremony to mark the contribution of the Irish Citizen Army and James Connolly.
- Official opening of the Kilmainham Courthouse
- Official opening of the Tenement Museum, Dublin 1.


April 3: Journey of Reconciliation 1916-2016 interfaith service in Glasnevin cemetery

April 9: Pearse Museum – Presidential visit
- Official opening of the Military Archives, Cathal Brugha Barracks, Rathmines, Dublin 6

April 10: Commemoration event 1916-2016

April 11: Garda Museum – opening of an exhibition on the DMP & the 1916 Rising.

April 12: National Concert Hall – opening of new facilities

April 21: Banna Strand, Co. Kerry. Wreath laying ceremony marking the centenary of Casement’s landing.

April 24: Arbour Hill – Commemoration event

May 2: Richmond Barracks. Re-opening of the historic barracks on the same day as the Courts Martial began.

May 3-12 – Stonebreakers Yard, Kilmainham Jail. Ceremonies will take place to commemorate the 15 executions. Marked by Military Colour party, wreath laying and piper’s lament.

May – Grangegorman Military Cemetery. Ceremony marking British soldiers killed during the Rising.

May – Pearse Cottage, Rathfarnham. Official re-opening of Pearse’s Cottage.

August 3 – Roger Casement Centenary - commemorative events for Roger Casement marking the centenary of his death in Pentonville Prison, London.

December – Conclusion of the 1916 Commemoration year at Aras an Uachtaráin

More events are being added weekly. For full details, visit the Government 1916-2016 Commemoration website at ireland.ie

April 1916: Rebels in the GPO

May 1916: Michael Mallin and Countess Markievicz being led away by troops.

May, 1916: Rising prisoners are marched along the Dublin quays past the Croppy Acre towards the docks and jail in Britain.

July 1916, London, England. In the prison courtyard of the Bow London Court during the recess hour of the Casement Trial, on the extreme right is Sir Roger Casement with a leaf of paper in his hand. On his left with his back to the camera, Bailey, alleged co-conspirator with Casement. In the background with his arm behind his back is Corporal O’Connor. On the right is Mary Gorman, the Kerry girl who aided in capturing Casement. Directly in front of the PC on the right is Martin Collins. Image by © Bettmann/CORBIS
Based on the 1916 Honour Roll instigated by Diarmuid Lynch, this lists some 423 individuals whose claims were cross checked and referenced by multiple witnesses before being accepted as having fought in the building during the Rising.

Cullen, May. Cumann na mBan. Delivered food and dispatches to the Mount Street Bridge Garrison at about noon on the Wednesday.

Cullen, William F (Liam). “F” Company, 2nd Battalion, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Born in 1888 died on the 18th of December 1989, aged about 16 at the time of the Rising. Fought in the General Post Office, O’Connell Street, Moore Street, William’s Henry Street and Cole’s Lane areas. Patrick Dalton was not interned following the Easter Rising having been released on account of his age. Joined the Irish Volunteers a fortnight before the 1916 Rising, he lost his employment and unable to obtain work he emigrated to England where he subsequently joined the British Army with which he served up to June 1922. He joined the National Army in July 1922 serving until discharged time expired in March 1923. He then joined the Protective Officers Corps which he left in July 1923 subsequently joining the Prison Service.

Cunningham, Andrew. Killed in Action.

Dalton, Patrick. 1st battalion, Dublin Brigade Irish Volunteers. Born in 1900 died on the 26th of December 1916, aged about 16 at the time of the Rising. Fought in the G.P.O. and Moore Street areas. William Cullen joined the Irish Volunteers in 1913 and from 1914 onwards was involved in the storage, distribution and transport of munitions serving with General Headquarters and Quarter Master Generals Department of both the Irish Volunteers and IRA as well as providing transport generally to those organisations. He served as a GHO staff officer during the 1916 Easter Rising and was wounded on Saturday 29 April, received a bullet wound to the thigh. Cullen was imprisoned from July to September 1918 and also from November to December 1920 and took no part in the Civil War.

Cummins, Tom - no information

Dally, Dennis, Kimmage Garrison.

Daly, Liam (William D.). Kimmage Garrison. He was 21 years old at the time of the Rising and was born in London, his mother had left Kerry at the age of 4 and his father was born in London of Irish parents. He joined the Irish Volunteers at a meeting in Saint George’s Hall Westminster Bridge Road London on Saturday the 6th of December 1913. After the split in the Volunteers his group formed the South London Volunteers numbering about 60 men. Due to the treat of conscription a meeting of the London Volunteers was held at St. George’s Hall in the first week of January 1916 and it was decided that all single men should go to Dublin to avoid conscription, assistance would be given for travel expenses and accommodation in Dublin. On the morning of the 10th of January along with other members of his Company he left London and travelled to Dublin via Holycross.

On Easter Monday while the Rising was being occupied he assisted in erecting barricades across Lower Abbey Street using large rolls of paper from a newspaper storage depot and equipment from a bicycle shop. On several occasions the Volunteers had to put out fire over the heads of crowds that had gathered and were ordered to fix bayonets to discourage looters. Under orders from James Connolly along with Volunteer Joe Good he constructed a line of communication between the main hall and the roof of the G.P.O. He also assisted in erecting airmail for the wireless that would operate from the Wireless School to send messages to the outside world.

On Wednesday morning he was assisting in loading large quantities of food from the Dublin Bread Company and the wireless transmission set into a cart to be transported to the G.P.O. Later in the day he assisted in evacuating Reis’s to the Hibernia Bank. After a short time at the bank they were forced to retreat to the G.P.O. On the Friday he was ordered to act as part of a group of about 30 men under Raymond Devine’s command to help the G.P.O. to take the Bull’s Bridge. The group were number 135. He was released from Frongoch in September 1916. He returned to Dublin with Citizen Army Captain Robert de Coeur who was released from Frongoch on the same day.

Daly, Seamus. 2nd Battalion Dublin Brigade Irish Volunteers. After the countermanding order he, along with several hundred other Volunteers, assembled at Father Matthew Park on Easter Monday, they were ordered to relieve the men in the School of Musketry in Dollymount. The group were ordered to intercept a party of British infantry coming from the Blenheim Barracks and was forced to retreat into a stable where he remained until the Saturday morning. After the surrender he was taken first to Parnell Street with the rest of the wounded, their names were taken and then they were taken to Dublin Castle where their wounds were dressed by Frank Heeney but refused. After acquiring several horses and carts to transport their arms the group set off for the G.P.O., Seamus Daly was part of a group which was split from the main body and ordered to intercept a party of British Infantry coming from the Blenheim Barracks and was forced to retreat to the G.P.O. They were then ordered to take up positions at Ballybrough Bridge, they took possession of Lamb’s Public House and another shop and remained there through Monday night.

On Tuesday morning, about 11am, the group were ordered to report to the G.P.O., using the back-roads to reach the G.P.O. they received a very hostile reception from the residents of the tenements. On entering the G.P.O. Seamus Daly was put in charge of a group of men and was responsible for about 30 Volunteers. That evening they made four trips under heavy fire to deliver bedding to the G.P.O., it was after this that Pearse promoted him to Lieutenant. On Wednesday afternoon the tank holding the Mount Street Bridge Garrison at about 4pm. On Easter Monday, they were ordered to partake in various activities during the War of Independence. He resigned from the Irish Volunteers in 1917.

Darcy, Charles. (Recorded on some Sinn Fein records as Peter D’Arcy), Killed in Action.

de Burca, Aoife (Eva Burke). Nurse with Cumann na mBan. Served in the G.P.O. and was sent to Reilis Shop to attend to some wounded there. She was with Captain Tom Weaver when he was killed. She was the sister of Frank Burke who also fought in the G.P.O. for the week. Owing to the seriousness of the position in the G.P.O. on the Friday she was sent with the wounded and the Red Cross section to Jervis Street Hospital.

deaner, Michael – no information available

Dennan, Patrick. Irish Citizen Army. Born in 1895 died on the 4th of November 1955, aged about 21 during the Rising. Fought in the General Post Office. Delahunt’s Public House, Fleet Street, Imperial Hotel, O’Connell Street, Dublin Pro-Cathedral and Marlborough Street areas. Employed in Ross & Wapole Engineers, North Wall, Dublin. He was awarded a pension by the Irish Government for Traumatic Neurosclerosis which he suffered as a result of his participation in the Rising and detention after.

Devine, Francis. Hibernian Rifles. Born in 1881 died on the 2nd of April 1939, aged about 35 years old during the Rising. Fought in the G.P.O. and Parliament Street areas. He was not arrested following the Easter Rising. During the War of Independence he was appointed Company Quarter-master and was involved in raids for arms and ammunition. He was involved in an armed ambush of a police car at Parnell Street. During the Truce Period he was involved with tobacco raids during the Belfast boycott and he occupied Fowler Hall for 6 to 8 weeks. He assisted in training at Mulhuddart. During the Civil War he was involved in exchanges with National Army forces at the Sackville Club, ordered to evacuate on 4 July 1922. He is buried in Glasnevin Cemetery.

Devine, Thomas William. (Tommy) “E” Company, 3rd battalion, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Born in 1898 died on the 16th March 1969, aged about 16 during the Rising. Fought in the G.P.O. and the areas of Fairview, Henry Street, Liffey Street and Moore Street. On the Monday of the Rising he was sent along with seven or eight other men under the command of Harry Boland to occupy Gilbeys in Fairview. They returned to the G.P.O. on Tuesday afternoon. After the Rising he was detained at Haddington Road Barracks for eight days, he was released due to his age. He resigned from the Irish Volunteers in 1917.


Donnelly, Charles. “E” Company, 4th Battalion, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Born in 1892 died on the 29th of June 1964, aged about 24 years old during the Rising. Fought in the G.P.O. and Moore Lane areas. He was born in Fairview and had already left the wedding breakfast to go to the G.P.O. After the Rising he was interned until December 1916 arriving back in Dublin on Christmas Eve. He re-joined his company after release and took part in various activities during the War of Independence.
Donnelly, Charles contd.

He was imprisoned in Mountjoy from July to October 1919, he was arrested and imprisoned for distributing political leaflets outside Rathfarnham Church, while in prison he served as Officer Commanding political prisoners and took part in a hunger strike. He served as 2nd Lieutenant with "E" Company from 1918 until the Truce. He acted as a rate collector in County Dublin providing funds for Dáil Éireann and provided information regarding a British intelligence.

Donnelly, Patrick – no information available

Dore, Eamon T – no information available

Dore, Mrs. Nora Daly – no information available

Dowling, Michael. His two brothers Andrew and John also fought in the Rising.

Downie, Margaret (Margaret Viant, Peggy). Liverpool Branch. Cumann na mBan. Served in the G.P.O. Jervis Street Hospital and Jacob's Biscuit Factory, Bishop Street. She was not arrested or detained after the Rising and returned to Liverpool in May 1916, she had no further service.

Doyl, J.J. – no information available

Doyl, John Joseph. "E" Company, 2nd Battalion, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Born in 1889 died on the 26th of November 1961, aged about 27 years during the Rising. Fought in the G.P.O., Moore Street and Moore Lane areas. After the Rising he was captured and interned until December of 1916. After release he was again arrested and imprisoned between January and October 1919 undergoing hunger strike during this time. On his release he travelled to Liverpool and then to the U.S.A. Working for the Irish Republican Mission there and returned to Ireland in September 1920. Following his return he became IRA Company Lieutenant and from then until his arrest in April 1921 he was involved in a large number of IRA attacks and operations against British forces and military targets especially in the area of Dublin popularly known at the time as the "Dublin Ghetto" (the area of Camden Street, Aungier Street, and George's Street). John Doyle was also involved in the IRA operations against suspected British Intelligence agents in Dublin on 21 November 1920, Bloody Sunday, in particular the killing of a Captain Fitzgerald in Earlfort Terrace. Rearrested in April 1921 Doyle was imprisoned until released from Dartmoor Prison, England in January 1922.

Doyl, John. Medical Services, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Died on the 19th of December 1972 age at the time of the Rising unknown. Served in the G.P.O. and Coliseum Variety Theatre, O'Connell Street. John Doyle served as Medical Officer for Dublin Brigade Irish Volunteers and IRA from prior to the Easter Rising in 1916 through the War of Independence up to the end of the Civil War in 1923. During Easter Week while in the General Post Office he was attached to Irish Volunteers General Headquarters. John Doyle was held prisoner for 2 days by British forces following the surrender at the end of the Easter Rising and was not subsequently interred. At the outbreak of the Civil War in June 1922 John Doyle served with the IRA in the fighting against National Army forces in Dublin and was captured and imprisoned for approximately 5 weeks from October 1922.

Doyl, Peter – no information available

Duffy, Edward. Volunteer, F Company, 4th Battalion, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Born on the 12th of October 1898 died on the 17th of August 1951, aged 77 years old at the time of the Rising. Fought in the G.P.O. He was deported after the Rising first to Stafford and then from O'Connell Street and was arrested after the Rising. He joined the Volunteers on released and served up to the 31st of March 1917 when he returned to England to be with his wife and child. He took no part in the War of Independence.

Duffy, Joseph. Volunteer, Kimmage (Larkfield) Garrison, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Born in 1892 died on the 13th of May 1972, aged about 24 years old during the Rising. Fought in the Fairview, Abbey Street, the G.P.O. and surrounding areas. He joined Irish Volunteers in Liverpool in 1913 arriving in Dublin in February 1916, he had been a member of the I.R.B. since 1910. He was interned after the Rising being detained in Stafford and Frongoch, he was released from Frongoch on the 24th of December 1916. He re-joined the Volunteers on released and served up to the 31st of March 1917 when he returned to England to be with his wife and child. He took no part in the War of Independence or Civil War.

Dunne, Francis – no information available

Dunne, John Joseph. Born in Dublin, he was 19 years old at the time of the Rising. He was employed as a Clerk. He is recorded in the 1911 census at the same address given when he was detained by the British after the Rising. He is recorded as being from Ballsbridge, speaking English and Irish. He was detained in Knutsford. He died on the 10th of October 1978 at his son’s residence in Connecticut U.S.A.

Dunne, Joseph – no information available

Dunne, Thomas – no information available

Dwyer, Michael. Died in 1943 aged 41, he fought in St Stephen's Green and the G.P.O., he was a prominent member of the 1916 Veterans Association.

Dyas, Albert – no information available

Early, John – no information available

English, Maire. Ard Craboob Branch, Cumann na mBan. Born in 1887 died on the 2nd of January 1968, aged about 29 years old during the Rising. Served in the Hibernian Bank, Reis's Building, Irish School of Wireless Telegraphy, Reis's Building, O'Connell Street/Lower Abbey Street and General Post Office areas. She joined Cumann na mBan Central Branch before Easter Sunday and remained a member until 1923. She helped mobilising others on Sunday 23rd and Monday 24th of April. She and others first went to the Hibernian Bank to set up a base hospital and she was sent home on Wednesday 26th. Later in the week she carried ammunition and messages to Paddy Belton for the Volunteers in Ashbourne. Following the Rising she visited people amongst others, Captain Weafer's wife to whom she did not reveal that her husband had died and general was involved with the Dependants' Fund as well as doing anti-conscription work and more routine work up to the Truce. She also took care of a man called Peter Fleming, on the run at that time. During the Civil War she helped in a general manner getting bandages to Lilly Brennan in the Four Courts, courier, helped with food in Hickey's following this, she worked mostly as a dispatch carrier for Maria Gleeson. She helped other men on the run among them Bartle Flynn, Charlie Price.

English, Patrick. "F" Company, 4th Battalion, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Born March 1894 died on the 27th of January 1970, aged about 22 years old during the Rising. Fought in the G.P.O. Detained in Stafford Jail and then from O'Connell Street and was arrested after the Rising, released in December 1916. He was a member of Fianna Eireann before joining the Volunteers in Ashbourne. Following the Rising he served up to the 31st of March 1917 when he returned to England to be with his wife and child. He took no part in the War of Independence or Civil War.

English, Patrick Francis. "F" Company, 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Born in 1879 died on the 24th of March 1949, aged about 33 years old during the Rising. Served in the G.P.O. and Pro-Cathedral, Marlborough Street areas. He was not arrested after the Rising. He joined the Volunteers in 1914. He was at home in Howth on Easter Monday when he heard of the Rising, he walked into the city arriving about 10pm, and he spent Tuesday at a friend’s house and reported for duty at the Imperial Hotel on the Wednesday morning about 10am. He rejoined his Company when it reformed after the Rising but had to resign due to ill health in October 1918, he did not take part in the War of Independence or Civil War.

Ennis, Thomas. Part of the Company that went with Captain Weafer to occupy the Hibernian Bank block to provide cover for the Radio at the Wireless School. Achieved the rank of Major General in the Free State Army.

Finnegan, Michael – no information available

Fitzgerald, Desmond – no information available

Fitzharris, John J. Born in Dublin. He was 22 years old at the time of the Rising. He was released from Military custody between the 4th and 7th of June 1916.

Fitzpatrick, Andrew J. Citizen Army. Part of a small garrison of 5 men who occupied the premises of Hopkins and Hopkins a silversmith on the corner of O’Connell Street and the Quays makers of the Sam Maguire Cup.

Flanagan, Matthew. Severely injured while attempting to retreat from O’Connell Street in the early hours of Friday morning. Part of a group of Volunteers attempting to break out of the British cordon around O’Connell Street. These men had been in various positions including The Imperial Hotel, Bernard Street, and surrounding buildings. Frank Thornton had taken the first group but and Seamus Daly was to lead the second group 10 minutes later. Some of the first group did not make it through the cordon and were forced to retreat into the Pro-Cathedral. When they reached the intersection between Railway Street and Gardiner Street they came under heavy fire.

Flanagan, Reverend John CC – no information available

Flynn, Ignatius George. "E" Company. Wounded during the fighting. 2nd Battalion, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Born in 1895 died on the 14th of March 1922, aged about 21 during the Rising. Fought in the Hibernian Bank, O'Connell Street. He was captured by British forces and hospitalised at Dublin Castle Hospital, the Mater Hospital, Dublin and Beaumont Convalescent Home. He died on the 14th of March 1922 of Meningitis and Asthenis (Asthenias). His widow made a claim to the Army Pensions board claiming that his death was due to injuries received during the Rising but this claim was rejected.

Flood Josephine nee Neary. Ard Craboob (central) branch, North Dublin, Cumann na mBan. Born in 1895, aged about 21 years old during the Rising. Joined Cumann na mBan in 1915 and served until 1921. She mobilised for Easter Week on Tuesday 25th April. She was arrested by British military in January 1921 and detained in Mountjoy for a fortnight. Her sister, Sarah Neary (Henderson) was mobilised on Monday 24th and was in charge of Colmcille branch.

Fogarty Thomas – no information available

Foley Michael Patrick. "D" Company, 2nd Battalion, Dubin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Born on the 10th of July 1893 died on the 19th of July 1960, aged 22 years old during the Rising. Fought in the G.P.O., Henry Street and Moore Street. He was interned after the Rising, released in August 1916. He served as a Company and Battalion Commanding Officer with the Irish Volunteers and IRA from 1918 to 1920. He was arrested in December 1920 and interned at Rath Camp. His widow, Michael Foley’s claims to have been appointed by Michael Collins to assist reorganisation of the Irish Volunteers in County Offaly. He also claims to have provided Irish Volunteers GHQ with intelligence regarding RIC Detective Sergeant Daniel O’Connell of the 2nd Battalion, and information on the location of Captain Weafer's GHQ. Evidence for this is not available. Foley and references/witnesses contain evidence of some confusion/disagreement regarding Foley’s actual activities during Easter Week 1916. Similarly, file contains evidence of considerable disagreement within Irish Volunteer and Sinn Fein circles within Edenderry and Offaly generally during 1917-20.
Fox Michael. “F” Company, 4th Battalion, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Born on the 27 of October 1891 died on the 3rd of January 1982, aged 24 years old during the Rising. Employed as a labourer in the Great Southern Western Railway Company at the time of the Rising. Interned until August 1916, served with the IRA during the War of Independence and Truce Period from 1920 to 1922 and with the National Army through the Civil War from 1922 to 1923. Participated in the Red Cow ambush in 1921. Joined the National Army in February 1922 and served on the Quartermasters Staff in Beggars Bush Barracks. He continued serving, at the rank of Private, with the Defence Forces until April 1924.

Frick Bernard – no information available

Furlong Andrew, Kimmage Garrison. Wounded in the knee when all the Volunteers who gathered in the large main room of the G.P.O., Pearse was addressing the group informing them that their position had become untenable, a bullet struck Furlong in the knee. Patrick Caldwell, Bernard Carmichael and Andrew Friel, members of the Kimmage Garrison, were ordered to take Furlong to Jervis Street Hospital. Unable to reach the Hospital the group returned with the injured man to the G.P.O. which they found was evacuated when they returned, the group left the G.P.O. into Henry Street and on to a barricade in Henry Place.


Gahan Joseph is buried in Glasnevin cemetery Dublin, he died on the 30th of July 1969.


Galligan Paul – no information available

Gannon Henry (Harry) Born in Dublin and was a painter by trade. He was 34 years old at the time of the Rising. He was detained in Knutsford after the Rising.

Garland Patrick Joseph. Born in Dublin and was 19 years old at the time of the Rising.

Gavan John James. “F” Company, 2nd Battalion, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Born in 1892 died on the 21 of July 1945, aged about 24 years old during the Rising. He joined the Volunteers when the Volunteers occupied Lambro’s Public House where he was employed as a barman on Easter Monday. He was interned after the Rising in Stafford Jail and the North Camp Frongoch, he was released August 1916. John James Gavan received an award under the Army Pensions Acts in 1928 in respect of neurasthenia (Chronic Fatigue) which Gavan and references attributed to mistreatment which it is alleged he received from a British Army officer following the surrender of Irish Volunteer forces at the end of the Easter Rising.

Gethings Lucie – no information available

Gibson Richard. “F” Company, 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Date of birth unknown died on the 4th of February 1977. Fought in the G.P.O. and Moore Street areas. Interned until December 1916 he was taken from Kilmainham to Knutsford then Frongoch and after spending some time in Wandsworth Jail he was returned to Frongoch, he was wounded during the fighting. He was employed by the Midland Railway at the time of the Rising and did not go to the G.P.O. until the Tuesday because he was working on Easter Monday. Although descended from a Baptist Family after his release he had to resign soon after due to ill health as a consequence of his injuries received during Easter Week.

Giffney Michael – no information available

Gleenon Joseph. Kimmage Garrison, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Born in 1889 died on the 18th of December 1959 aged about 27 years old during the Rising. Fought in the G.P.O. and Moore Street areas. He was a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood before the Rising. His brother Joseph also fought in the G.P.O. He was interned until December 1916. He joined the National Army on 1 May 1922 and served throughout the subsequent Civil War in the Accounts Office of Quartermaster General’s department. He was demobilised from the Defence Forces in March 1924 at the rank of Lieutenant while serving with the Kerry Command. He was the owner of the premises, 10A Aungier Street, Dublin, from which An t-Oghlah was printed in 1921.

Gleenon Martin. Kimmage Garrison, Irish Volunteers. Born in 1882 died on the 12th of November 1947, aged about 34 years old during the Rising. Fought in the G.P.O. and Moore Street areas. He was a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood before the Rising. His brother Joseph also fought in the G.P.O. He was interned until December 1916. He joined the National Army on 1 May 1922 and served throughout the subsequent Civil War in the Accounts Office of Quartermaster General’s department. He was demobilised from the Defence Forces in March 1924 at the rank of Lieutenant while serving with the Kerry Command. He was the owner of the premises, 10A Aungier Street, Dublin, from which An t-Oghlah was printed in 1921.

Goggin Richard P. “B” Company, 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Born in 1890 died on the 28th of May 1968 in Bull Island training camp in Dublin. Served in the Rising Spoke Irish. Assisted in carrying the injured James Connolly across Henry Street into Henry Place and on to Moore Street under heavy machine-gun fire. Served as a mobiliser and was released after a week’s detention on account of his age and sentenced with the others to 6 months in Kilmainham Jail in 1916. After the surrender, he was transferred to Richmond Barracks the next day. After Richmond Barracks he was taken to Holyhead by cattle boat and then to Stafford Jail. In July he was transferred to Frongoch, he appeared before the Sankey tribunal and was released from Frongoch on Christmas Eve 1916.


Harris Thomas – no information available

Hayes James Joseph. “C” Company, 2nd Battalion, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Born in 1888 died on the 26th of April 1941, aged about 28 years old during the Rising. Fought in the G.P.O. Interned until August 1916. During the War of Independence he mobilised for IRA operations surrounding the escape of Frank Teeling and other IRA prisoners from Kilmainham Jail in 1920 as well as the occupation of the Inchicore Railway Works. In April 1922 he took part in the IRA occupation of the Four Courts and following the outbreak of the Civil War in June that year and took part in the IRA defence of 44 Parnell Square against National Army forces. He had no further activities.

Heagerty Sean, Kimmage Garrison

Henderson Frank Captain “F” Company 2nd Battalion Dublin Brigade Irish Volunteers. Joined the Irish Volunteers at the inaugural meeting in 1913. After the countermanding order on Easter Sunday, Henderson’s company were ordered to occupy Lamb’s Public House where they were engaged in a firefight against British forces earlier in the week. He was wounded in the G.P.O. and Moore Street areas. Interned until August 1916. During the War of Independence he mobilised for IRA operations surrounding the escape of Frank Teeling and other IRA prisoners from Kilmainham Jail in 1920 as well as the occupation of the Inchicore Railway Works. In April 1922 he took part in the IRA occupation of the Four Courts and following the outbreak of the Civil War in June that year and took part in the IRA defence of 44 Parnell Square against National Army forces. He had no further activities.

Heffernan Michael, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Born in 1889 died on the 5th of June 1954, aged about 27 years old during the Rising. Fought in the G.P.O. Michael Heffernan was arrested by British forces in Jervis Street Hospital at the end of the Easter Rising where he was being treated for injuries received in a fall while participating in fighting against British forces earlier in the week. He was taken to Frongoch in September and released in August 1916. During the War of Independence he mobilised for IRA operations surrounding the escape of Frank Teeling and other IRA prisoners from Kilmainham Jail in 1920 as well as the occupation of the Inchicore Railway Works. In April 1922 he took part in the IRA occupation of the Four Courts and following the outbreak of the Civil War in June that year and took part in the IRA defence of 44 Parnell Square against National Army forces. He had no further activities.


Healy Richard – no information available

Henderson Frank Captain “F” Company 2nd Battalion Dublin Brigade Irish Volunteers. Joined the Irish Volunteers at the inaugural meeting in 1913. After the countermanding order on Easter Sunday, Henderson’s company were ordered to occupy Lamb’s Public House where they were engaged in a firefight against British forces earlier in the week. He was wounded in the G.P.O. and Moore Street areas. Interned until August 1916. During the War of Independence he mobilised for IRA operations surrounding the escape of Frank Teeling and other IRA prisoners from Kilmainham Jail in 1920 as well as the occupation of the Inchicore Railway Works. In April 1922 he took part in the IRA occupation of the Four Courts and following the outbreak of the Civil War in June that year and took part in the IRA defence of 44 Parnell Square against National Army forces. He had no further activities.
The Dublin Castle ‘Personalities Files’ by Fergal McGarry

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, Dublin Castle’s ‘Personalities Files’ span the emergence of Sinn Féin, the Easter Rising and the War of Independence, with the largest number relating to the period 1917–20. As might be expected, the documents provide a rich source of information on leading figures such as Michael Collins and Eamon de Valera, detailing their movements, contacts with other revolutionaries, public speeches, private correspondence and legal struggles with the authorities—but their value is enhanced by the fact that many of the files concern lesser-known political activists, individuals who never became household names but were crucial to the success of the republican movement. Perhaps the most significant aspect is the light that they shed on the security forces and Dublin Castle during these final years of revolutionary violence and administrative chaos.

Origins

How was the intelligence in the Personalities Files gathered? For what purpose? What does it tell us about law and order in Ireland and the administration’s attempts to contain the growing social unrest and political violence of the period? What do the files reveal about the outlook of the politicians, officials and Crown forces tasked with suppressing the Irish revolution? What do they tell us about the strategies adopted by republicans to overthrow British rule?

The documents, only declassified during the past decade, form a small section of Colonial Office class 904 (better known as ‘the Dublin Castle Records’), a series of records of the British administration in Ireland held by the National Archives in London. They originally formed part of the records of the Crimes Special Branch of the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC), one of two police forces operating in Ireland at this time. The RIC was responsible for law and order throughout the country, while the Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) had responsibility for Dublin and the surrounding metropolitan area. It was the latter’s G Division (or Special Branch) that would fight the IRA for control of the streets of Dublin during the War of Independence. The Personalities Files were assembled by the RIC, not the DMP, but include many documents generated by the G because of Dublin’s role as the administrative centre of the republican movement. Given the dearth of surviving material on the DMP, the Personalities Files represent an important source for its crucial G Division.

Like the DMP, the RIC operated a discrete section tasked with monitoring and prosecuting subversives: the Crimes Special Branch (more commonly known as Special Branch). Both special branches shared intelligence but maintained separate staffs and records. Contrary to popular belief, neither was a particularly imaginative or effective organization. Even at the height of the IRA’s campaign, the G employed fewer than two dozen men exclusively dedicated to political work, while the RIC’s Special Branch consisted not of a nationwide detective force along the lines of Scotland Yard but a confidential records office based in Dublin Castle, staffed by several clerks, a detective inspector and a chief inspector. The vast bulk of intelligence gathered by Special Branch was collected by ordinary RIC men throughout the country, and forwarded to Crimes Special Branch’s small office in Dublin Castle. Until the final year of Dublin Castle’s rule, there was no ‘secret service’ in Ireland; Special Branch did not run undercover agents, rarely recruited informers and made little effort to penetrate the organisations of its enemies. The documents gathered here demonstrate the old-fashioned methods employed by the police: republican premises were kept under surveillance, subversive letters and leaflets were watched, suspects were shadowed from town to town, and their speeches were recorded by policemen who rarely disguised their identity.

The Personalities Files were generated for a variety of purposes: to gather intelligence on revolutionaries, to compile evidence for their prosecution, to respond to the many inquiries about suspected republican sympathisers that Dublin Castle received, and to justify the dismissal of republicans from public employment. The series documents the correspondence not only of the police but of the offices of the chief secretary, under-secretary, lord lieutenant, government departments such as the General Post Office, and various sections of the Irish and British security forces, including Scotland Yard and MI5. The comments appended to the files by these officials offer revealing insights into the political rationale behind Dublin Castle’s decisions and the legal and bureaucratic difficulties they encountered in securing prosecutions.

The enemy within

The largest proportion of files relate to public servants, demonstrating that teachers, clerks, telephonists, excise officers and even postmen were viewed by the regime as potentially dangerous enemies within. The outspoken Borrisoleigh schoolteacher Thomas Bourke was ‘a disgrace & a danger to the state’, suspected of ‘instilling disloyalty into his pupils’. The Strabane postman Cornelius Boyle delivered more than the mail: ‘on his travels . . . he is stirring up revolts in the minds of the young men on his walk every day’. Schoolteacher Michael Thornton, a ‘devilish ruffian’, was dismissed for ‘teaching disloyalty and sedition to the children in Furbough School’. Unfortunately for Dublin Castle, teachers, clerks and other public servants belonged to a class particularly drawn to republicanism: young men who were educated, status-conscious and ambitious but frustrated by the lack of social and political opportunities available to them in Ireland under the Union. Although some individuals were dismissed on dubious or malicious grounds, the files indicate that the quality of evidence demanded for prosecution, or even dismissal, was generally high: no action was taken in many of these cases despite the RIC’s efforts to gather discrediting evidence. Consequently, the Irish administration remained penetrated by republican sympathisers despite its periodic attempts to purge potentially subversive employees.

These sensitive documents, written by officials who would not have expected them to become available for public scrutiny within their own lifetimes, shed much light on the mentality of Britain’s officials in Ireland and their outlook of the official mind and the mores of contemporary society as well as the suspects in question. There was very little, in the early years at least, that escaped the sharp eyes and ears of the local RIC: certainly not a drinking problem, an addiction to gambling, a propensity for keeping bad company or an adulterous affair. Even their social betters did not escape the RIC’s perceptive evaluations. Thomas Gaffney, a former British diplomat, merited a grudgingly approving assessment as ‘a man of wonderful pretensions . . . a man able to live by his wits’.

These frank and often intimately detailed reports provide fascinating insights into the lives of republican activists and the wider community among which they sought to proselytise. The range of propaganda material gathered here is vast: personal letters stopped by the wartime censor, political pamphlets, subversive news-sheets, seditious leaflets, anti-war posters, rebel ballads and even overheard conversations. Republicans active in other countries, particularly the United States, also came under the scrutiny of Special Branch. Most of those who fell under police suspicion were male, but there are files on almost 50 women, including some prominent republicans as Maud Gonne MacBride, Countess Markievicz, Helena Molony and Alice Milligan, as well as lesser-known activists and various victims and opponents of the republican movement.

An early reference to Michael Collins. (British National Archives, Kew)

Most of the files concern republican suspects or victims of republican violence, but a substantial number outline the activities of socialists, trade unionists, feminists, communists and agrarian radicals during a period of disturbed social and US economic conditions. For example, Sylvia Pankhurst’s visit to Dublin in 1919 to speak at the Irish Women’s Franchise League was closely observed. There are also files on deserters, suspects foreign nationals, disgruntled policemen, poison-pen letter-writers.
The difficulties faced by the police in securing convictions for political crimes are clearly evident, particularly in troubled areas where local justices and juries were reluctant to convict suspects for political offences and witnesses were invariably unwilling to come forward. The files also demonstrate how republican strategies evolved during the Tan War. Whereas the rebels of 1916 responded to defeat in an idealistic (or naive) manner, defiantly admitting their actions and making little effort to evade capture and punishment, the rules had clearly changed by 1919. Republicans found in possession of incriminating documents denied any knowledge of them, publicly repudiating their political sympathies if necessary. Convicted republicans signed undertakings to abstain from political activity and activities absolutely about any intention of honouring them. Suspects rarely admitted the charges against them—no matter how strong the evidence—and exploited every legal (or illegal) loophole to avoid prosecution or dismissal.

The RIC undermined

Indeed, it was the increasing inability of the police to respond to the transformed political circumstances that provides the vital context to these files. Before the outbreak of the Great War, the lot of the police constable was not enviable. Although grievances about pay and conditions existed, the police enjoyed a respectable status within their local community. Admittedly, in contrast to the English constabulary, the RIC was an armed force—its 12,000 constables living in military-style barracks outside their home counties for reasons of security and discipline—but it was not generally resented as an alien body, except during periodic outbreaks of political or agrarian tension. The vast majority of RIC men were nationalists—and most, therefore, were nationalistic—although the higher ranks of the force, like the commandant general, were not political activists.

The streets of Dublin, however, were the front line in the conflict between the police and the IRA. Well known to their putative targets, the G-men who specialised in political work proved particularly vulnerable to IRA attacks. In mid-1919 Michael Collins formed ‘the squad’ to assassinate these men. The decision was partly pragmatic. Their elimination would remove a vital source of intelligence from the Irish administration, allowing the IRA vital breathing space. But there were also political and symbolic motives. The G-men were the most hated symbols of the British regime, particularly despised for their role in picking out the leaders of the rebellion for execution in 1916.

Their killings could be depicted as justifiable, while the British response to them would escalate the conflict. Between July 1919 and May 1920, a dozen DMP men were assassinated. By the end of the IRA’s brutal but effective campaign, the DMP’s intelligence-gathering capabilities had been destroyed and the force was on the verge of collapse. Remarkably, the DMP was compelled to withdraw from direct involvement in the conflict. Its members refusing to carry arms or assume any responsibility for political crime.

The RIC proved more resilient, particularly in terms of morale, but it was placed under enormous strain by the IRA’s campaign. The police increasingly came to view the entire community as hostile. By the summer of 1920, even Dublin’s Mater Hospital appeared a hotbed of intrigue: ‘The community of nuns who manage this hospital, the majority of the medical staff, the nurses and practically all the students are Sinn Féiners or Sinn Féin sympathisers’.

These files testify to the RIC’s growing inability to meet the republican challenge. Activists could not be located despite continuing to operate within their own areas. IRA men could not be arrested without military support. Although aware of the identity of many of its enemies, the RIC was unable to gather sufficient evidence to prosecute them. Witnesses would not testify against the IRA, and those who were prepared to do so could not be protected. The police’s authority in rural areas diminished, increasingly displaced by that of the IRA. By 1920 judges were frequently presented with white gloves, signifying not the peaceful state of the country but the RIC’s inability to bring offenders before the courts. Despite misgivings, many RIC men remained loyal to the Crown but—increasingly demoralised and anticipating Britain’s eventual withdrawal—hundreds resigned, looked the other way or defected to the enemy. These files illustrate the consequent decline of the police’s intelligence capabilities. While many of the earlier files contain detailed and vivid information, the police had clearly lost touch with political crime by 1920.

The British Army’s ‘Record of the Rebellion in Ireland’ attributed some of the blame to the RIC’s outdated methods and lack of resources: ‘The Crimes Special Branch demanded much more on personal and local knowledge than on organisation and methodical recording...’ The unwise economy which reduced the personnel of the Crimes Special Branch made it almost impossible to keep adequate, up-to-date and reliable records and files. Moreover, nearly every ‘Crimes Special’ report was laboriously written out in longhand and copies were seldom kept. They were passed backward and forward between the central and subordinate officers, thus greatly increasing the opportunities for discovering their contents. The result was that when those men, whose knowledge would have been invaluable during 1920 and 1921, were murdered, the intelligence system in Ireland collapsed for the time being and had to be built up afresh.

Too much responsibility for these shortcomings, however, could be placed on the police, who had little influence over the policies they were expected to execute. Until mid-1920, no coherent security policy was put in place either by the British government or its administration at Dublin Castle, which was regarded by many of the politicians and civil servants who worked within it as dysfunctional and chaotic. The superficially orderly appearance of the Personalities Files masks the confusion that reigned within Dublin Castle. Closer scrutiny provides many examples of these problems. Cooperation and coordination between the army and the police were poor and relations were often strained—as is revealed by such incidents as the forced resignation of the RIC’s county inspector for Londonderry, ‘who has not the confidence of the military’, or the police’s anger at the army’s failure to come to its assistance following the murder of a sergeant in Clare. Police advice to Dublin Castle, whose approach oscillated between conciliation and coercion, was frequently ignored: leading republican...
activists were often released by Dublin Castle despite the RIC’s opposition. The resulting tensions between the demoralised police force and Dublin Castle were reflected by the poor relationship between the staunchly unionist lord lieutenant, Field Marshal Lord French, and the inspector general, General Joseph Byrne, until the latter’s acrimonious removal from office.

Few of these files concern the final twelve months of the conflict, the period when the British cabinet applied serious effort and resources to the Irish crisis. The appointment of a military officer, Major-General Hugh Tudor, as chief of police signalled a decision to militarise the embattled police force. General Sir Nevil Macready, an officer with a knowledge of both policing and Irish affairs, was appointed general-officer-commanding, Irish command, in March 1920.

Perhaps the most enlightening of all is page two of that day’s edition, much of which was devoted to situation vacant advertisements for servants of all station, including parlourmaids, domestic servants, male servants, chauffeurs, cooks and dairymaids. The lists of positions wanted and servants disengaged is fascinating.

Having a wife but no children was a bonus it seemed; “Wanted: Yardman, married, no family: strong active Man required, care pony and trap and odd jobs. Wife assist with milking, feeding of calves etc. State age, wages expected, house, firing, milk. Apply with references to John Blunden, Castle Blunden, Kilkenny”. Few of these bear testimony was bypassed in favour of an aggressive counter-insurgency campaign relying on martial law, internment and an increasingly dirty undercover war. The RIC’s intelligence role was superseded by a reorganised intelligence branch under Brigadier-General Ormonde Winter. These changes placed the IRA under greater pressure but alienated moderate nationalist opinion and shocked international and British opinion, thereby increasing the pressure on both sides for a negotiated end to the conflict. They also spelled the end of the old RIC, many of whose members resigned service alongside their less disciplined comrades and the aggressive policies they were now expected to execute.

The Personalities Files provide a valuable insight into the final years of that force, illuminating diverse aspects of the Irish revolution. For students of the Irish revolution, they represent a rich source of information about the social and political unrest of the last decades of British rule in southern Ireland. The files provide valuable and often revealing insights into the challenges facing the British administration and the background and activities of the young men and women who fought Britain’s Crown forces to a stalemate by the summer of 1921.

Feakghal McGarry lectures in history at Queen’s University, Belfast.

Further reading:

Servants and ladies: 100 years ago in The Irish Times

The Irish Times of November 3rd 1915 was dominated by Britain, war and servants’ positions.

One hundred years ago today, less than six months before the 1916 Rising, The Irish Times reflected an Irish society still deeply embedded in British politics and social norms. The news stories of the day included the sorry tale of a “Shocking motor accident: car goes over a 250 feet cliff with a Lady”. The Lady in question was the 32-year-old wife of Squadron Lieutenent St John Sampson, an Irishman, who while visiting a lighthouse in Eastbourne fell behind his wife who returned to their car alone and “accidently, apparently, set the vehicle in motion”. His wife wasn’t named but it is reported that when her body was found “her right hand was still claspimg a handbag.”

Elsewhere there was much coverage of the recovery of King George, who had fallen from a horse while on parade and on November 3rd was still confined to bed, according to a statement from Buckingham Palace. On the same page there were multiple articles on the war in Europe and a roll of honour listed the names of officers who had experienced casualties, under the headings of Officers killed; Officers accidentally killed; Officers suffering from gas poisoning and latterly “Irish regiments, other ranks”.

The news stories of the day included the sorry tale of a “Rabbit trapper R.C. wishes to be trained as a chemist for Ladies. Young girl R.C. wishes to be trained in horse riding”. Religion and nationality were also factored in with a.Roll of honour listed the names of officers who had experienced casualties, under the headings of Officers killed; Officers accidentally killed; Officers suffering from gas poisoning and latterly “Irish regiments, other ranks”.

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Mrs. Clarke said her husband had said, while awaiting execution in Kilmainham Gaol, that the Germans “to the last letter of the law” had sent the arms they promised and deserved credit. Mrs. Clarke told Fr O’Kane her husband had made up his mind before the First World War to start a rebellion if war broke out between Britain and Germany. She and her husband only disagreed about the timing. Amidst reports of his escape, Sir Roger Casement “made a fool of himself” in his dealings with the Germans, according to the wife of executed Easter Rising leader Tom Clarke. Kathleen Clarke described Casement as “someone who really knew nothing about Ireland and who considered himself a leader of the Irish Volunteers despite being nothing of the kind.”

The interview with Ms Clarke was recorded in 1968 by Fr Louis O’Kane and has been stored in the Cardinal Tomas O’Flahy Memorial Library and Archive in Armagh until now. A full transcript of its contents has never been released previously. The Fr Louis O’Kane collection includes some 120 interviews with some of the last survivors of the War of Independence, nearly all from the North.

In late 1914 and early 1915, Casement went to Limburg prisoner-of-war camp in Germany in an attempt to raise a brigade among Irishmen who had been captured early in the war. He hoped it would be the vanguard of a German invasion force which would liberate Ireland from the British, but only 56 out of some 2,000 prisoners joined. Mrs. Clarke told Fr O’Kane that Casement had no mandate to do such a thing. “He went off to Germany and started things that the revolutionary group here didn’t want,” she said. “They didn’t ask Germany for men. All they asked them for was arms. And he was trying to get men.” She described Casement as the “aristocratic kind and he assumed that when he went into any movement, ipso facto, he was one of our leaders, if not the leader… and what could he know of Ireland, when he was all the time out of it.” However, Casement was successful in securing arms for the rebellion although the Austro-Norge, the ship which carried the arms, was intercepted by the Royal Navy on Good Friday 1916 and scuttled.

Mrs. Clarke said her husband had said, while awaiting execution in Kilmainham Gaol, that the Germans “to the last letter of the law” had sent the arms they promised and deserved credit. Mrs. Clarke told Fr O’Kane her husband had made up his mind before the First World War to start a rebellion if war broke out between Britain and Germany. She and her husband only disagreed about the timing. Amidst reports of his escape, Sir Roger Casement “made a fool of himself” in his dealings with the Germans, according to the wife of executed Easter Rising leader Tom Clarke. Kathleen Clarke described Casement as “someone who really knew nothing about Ireland and who considered himself a leader of the Irish Volunteers despite being nothing of the kind.”

The interview with Ms Clarke was recorded in 1968 by Fr Louis O’Kane and has been stored in the Cardinal Tomas O’Flahy Memorial Library and Archive in Armagh until now. A full transcript of its contents has never been released previously. The Fr Louis O’Kane collection includes some 120 interviews with some of the last survivors of the War of Independence, nearly all from the North.

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The Rockingham was ordered firstly to Gravesend in Kent to join other vessels. From there, on December 17, 1775 she sailed for Cork in a convoy of six transports. The Rockingham claimed many more...local newspapers did not even mention shipwrecks because they were so common. Sailors[drowned at sea and washed up on beaches] were called "foreigners" in a locality and their graves are rarely marked in Irish churchyards. Most were not buried in churchyards at all because their religion was unknown and it was uncommon to see a description of a burial behind a beach. If a family was well to do, a headstone might be raised to a Captain but rarely to any of the crew...

This month, two December shipwrecks which occurred at the same time and mentioned by Mr. Bourke, are examined in more detail. The troop transport vessel 'The Rockingham' which sank in 1775 off the Rennies and the SS El Zorro which broke up in Man of War Cove, December 1915.

The Rockingham, 1775

On December 22, 1775 a vessel variously named as Rockingham, Castle Rockingham, the Rockingham Transport or Marquis of Rockingham was wrecked on the coast at The Rennies, Nohoval during a heavy storm.148 lives were lost. The master and crew of the ship were drowned, as were about ninety two of the passengers - men, women and children. Allegations of wrecking were made in various communications at the time as well as calls for lighthouses in what was one of the busiest shipping ports in the British Empire.

* Wrecking is the practice of taking valuables from a shipwreck which has foundered close to shore. Often an unregulated activity of opportunity in coastal communities.

**Background**

With the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War in 1775, soldiers and armaments were rapidly moved from Britain and Ireland to reinforce the existing British armies in the American Colonies. In late 1775, the vessel Rockingham was hired to transport three companies of the 32nd Regiment of Foot, along with a number of their families, to Ireland. Some sources believe the troops and their families were en route to British North America as part of a force under General Cornwallis via Cork. Others believe they were to be stationed in Cork City.

The 32nd Foot had recently returned from a disastrous posting on the Caribbean island of St. Vincent where many of the troops had been decimated by disease. Additional men had been recruited from Somerset, Devon and Cornwall to bolster numbers and by 21 November it was reported that all baggage was loaded aboard and ready to sail from Richmond. Officer's wives and children traditionally travelled with many Regiments on overseas postings and many were also aboard.

"...The regiment returned home in 1773, and was stationed at Wells [Serset]; from thence they proceeded to Bath, and in 1774 we find them in Salisbury, probably having been moved about in the hopes of raising more men after their losses in the Caribbean Islands [West Ind]. So in October of that year they look part in a grand review at Richmond. On December 17th, 1775, they were moved to Ireland...the head-quarters and three companies, together with women and children, and all the records of the regiment, embarked in the Rockingham Castle transport..."[Historical Records of the 32nd (Cornwall) Light Infantry, now the Duke of Cornwall's. From the formation of the Regiment in 1702 down to 1892.]

In 1775 she sailed for Cork in a convoy of six transports. From there, on December 17, 1775 she sailed for Cork in a convoy of six transports. The Rockingham was piloted into Crookhaven [possibly Crosshaven] for the Cove of Cork, it blowing a gale of wind, and being thick weather. There were on board three companies of the 32nd Regiment. Lieut. March and his wife, Ensign Sandiman, Lieut. Barker's wife and upwards of 90 soldiers, besides the Captain and crew. Five officers and twenty soldiers saved themselves in the flat bottomed boat. By a similar mistake, during the last war, the Ramilies, of 90 guns and 850 men (taking the Bolt head for the Ram, near Plymouth) perished, with all on board, except twenty seamen, and one midshipman. These, among innumerable other inheritances, show the great necessity of sea lights, particularly distinctive ones..."

**Wrecking**

Wrecking was well known & practised in south-west England and southern coasts of Ireland where the rocky coastline, and strong prevailing onshore winds helped wreck many merchant ships and warships. It is rumoured that ships were sometimes deliberately attracted: false lights on the shore were said to be used sometimes to lead ships into disaster. Under Brehon law in Ireland when a ship was wrecked its cargo belonged to the people of the locality of the wreck. In 1735 a law was passed to make it an offence to make false lights, but no one was prosecuted as a result. In 1769 William Pearce was hanged at Launceston in Cornwall for stealing from a wreck. It was not until after a case in the Court of Appeal in 1870 that rewards were made for rescuing people. Wrecking was a major industry in the 19th century, and as far back as the 16th century, especially of ships returning from the New World using the Gulf Stream, wreckers would attempt to frighten off the curious, suspicious or unwanted visitors, by spreading wild rumours concerning supernatural activity, ghosts and canibals near their wrecking sites.

Wrecking was a major activity well into the 19th century. The Victorian architect Pugin supplemented his income by wrecking, using his lugger The Caroline to salvage cargoes from ships aground off the Goodwin Sands in the English Channel off Kent.

Transcription: "At night, the Rockingham transport was lost, by mistaking (as is supposed) Robert's Cove, about ten miles from Cork, for the Cove of Cork, it blowing a gale of wind, and being thick weather. There were on board three companies of the 32nd Regiment. Lieut. March and his wife, Ensign Sandiman, Lieut. Barker's wife and upwards of 90 soldiers, besides the Captain and crew. Five officers and twenty soldiers saved themselves in the flat bottomed boat. By a similar mistake, during the last war, the Ramilies, of 90 guns and 850 men (taking the Bolt head for the Ram, near Plymouth) perished, with all on board, except twenty seamen, and one midshipman. These, among innumerable other inheritances, show the great necessity of sea lights, particularly distinctive ones..."
1915: The SS "El Zorro", U-24 and Benson Leck Blacklock

The steam ship El Zorro (The Fox) was an Admiralty requisitioned red-ensign oil tanker of 5,989 tons built by Swan, Hunter & Wadson Richardson in Newcastle, launched in February 1914 and registered to Lobitos Oilfields Company (managed by C.T.Bowring), London. She operated on the trans-Atlantic route freezing oil from Port Arthur near Houston Texas (then the world's largest oil refinery) to the Royal Navy Dockyards in Dartmouth.

Due to the outbreak of war in August 1914, the El Zorro was requisitioned for the Admiralty for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary in September but remained in service on the trans-Atlantic oil run.

While on one of these outward voyages, on 3 February, 1915, the El Zorro rescued the crew of a sinking Norwegian steamer 'Imataca' mid-Atlantic.

Transcription: May 6, 1776: To Edm Armstrong, Esquire, for losses sustained by sundry officers of the 32nd Regiment of Foot lost in the Wreck of the Rockingham Transport on the coast of Ireland on 22d December 1775 £624.14.0

Sep 16, 1776: To Sergeant Carter of Do Regement for losses sustained by him in the wreck of do. Transport. £50.0.0

Oct 3, 1776: To Lieutenant Colonel Fletcher, of the 32nd Regiment of Foot for Clothing and Sundry Accoutrements belonging to the 32nd Regiment of Foot lost in the Wreck of the Rockingham Transport on the coast of Ireland, the 22d December 1775 £236.17.10

Dec 25, 1777: To Major William Prescott, for the loss of Camp at Philadelphia'

Rudolf Schneider (1882-1917) & U-24

The U-24, one of 329 diesel/battery powered ocean submarines in the imperial German Navy, was engaged in commercial warfare during the First Battle of the Atlantic and had amassed a formidable tally of Allied shipping by the time she encountered the El Zorro. In seven patrols, U-24 had sank a total of 34 ships totalling 106,103 gross register tonnage, damaged three more for 14,318 tons, and took one prize of 1,925 tons.

Her second kill was the most significant. The victim was "HMS Formidable", torpedoed south of Lyme Regis in the English Channel on 1 January, 1915. Out of a crew of approximately 711 men, 547 died as a result. This was one of the largest ships sunk by U-boats during the war.
The El Zorro continued...

At 0530hrs on Tuesday, the SS El Zorro was now steaming at 9 knots and positioned 10 nautical miles (19 kms) south of the Old Head of Kinsale.

Crew accounts have it that the U-24 was not spotted until the submarine came up on the port side and began to shell the Zorro with a deck gun in an effort to destroy the vessel but shells fell wide. Captain Lanier and crew swung into action, immediately turning stern on, went to full speed and fled the area on reverse course while William Hicks, the Marconi Operator sent out an SOS. The U-24 continued in pursuit.

The Admiralty picked up the SOS and quickly sent out the “armed yacht Greta and a couple of obsolete torpedo-boats” from the Haulbowline Royal Navy base.

At 0630hrs, the U-24 caught up with SS El Zorro and launched a torpedo hitting the vessel starboard amidships followed shortly by a second torpedo port-side. In this explosion, the Third Engineer, Benson Leck Blacklock, was killed by shrapnel. The vessel lost power and the crew abandoned ship taking the body of the 3rd Engineer Blacklock with them.

The armed yacht Greta and support torpedo boats arrived a few hours later “...but by this time the submarine had made off...Two tugs were sent out, but could not make much headway owing to the sea...”

Armied Yacht Greta. Launched in 1898, she was hired by the government for wartime service on 8th October 1914, retro-armed with a 12pdr. gun and employed on the auxiliary patrol until released in March 1919. Last recorded in 1931 as the property of Mr. Thomas Rees, Lloyd’s Yacht Register of that year contains the rather enigmatic notation that Greta was “no longer a yacht”.

The crew were picked up by a torpedo boat and reboarded the El Zorro to secure a line and maintain the vessel.

Damaged but still afloat with no power, the El Zorro was taken in tow towards Queenstown (Cobh) and joined by the armed trawler, Freesia (one of three vessels that patrolled the area from Mizen Head to Kinsale). The Greta left and continued the pursuit of U-24 on her last known course.

Meanwhile, as the S.S. El Zorro continued the tow, the weather worsened. Sir Archibald Hurd comments:

“That night it blew a gale. The El Zorro anchored [close to Man of War cove] and the crew were taken off during the night by the trawler Freesia.”

During this rescue operation in the middle of the gale and stormy seas, crew member Frank Fleet was swept overboard and drowned. His body was never found.

The gale grew worse and the El Zorro dragged her anchor and her connection to the Freesia. Drifting in the gale, she went ashore in Man of War Cove, at 51.72N -8.33W -broke in two and totally wrecked. The Zorro’s oil cargo of 8,000 tons gushed from ruptured tanks and destroyed the local seashores. The Freesia landed the surviving crew and the body of Benson Leck Blacklock in Queenstown. (Incidentally, the edition of the Examiner which reported the wreck of the El Zorro reported also on the death of Major Newenham of Coolmore, and that the four pound loaf of bread was increasing in price to 9d).

News of the death of Benson Leck Blacklock, a well-known local rugby footballer whose sporting ability was noted in the obituaries column in the Shields Daily News on 4th January, 1916: "News has been received of the death at sea of Mr Benson Blacklock, a well-known forward player of the Percy Park Rugby Football Club, thus adding to the already considerable list of the members of that organisation who have laid down their lives in the service of their country during the last 18 months. Mr Blacklock was not a member of His Majesty’s Forces, but as engineer of an oil-carrying steamer carrying fuel for the fleet he was undoubtedly in the service of his country."
As for Rudolf Schneider, on October 13, 1917 he was lost overboard from the conning tower of the U-87 during stormy weather in the North Sea. He was rescued by one of the crew but had drowned. He was subsequently buried at sea between the Shetland Isles and Norway.

U24 survived the war, surrendering on 22 November 1918 after the Armistice and was eventually broken up at Swansea in 1922. In total, the U24's record was: 34 ships sunk with a total of 106,122 tons, 3 ships damaged with a total of 14,318 tons, 1 ship taken as prize with a total of 1,925 tons and 1 warship sunk with a total of 15,000 tons.

Meanwhile at Man of War cove, the SS El Zorro remained on the rocks. In early 1916, a Liverpool company with the salvage rights to the vessel sent a team of eight Chinese labourers to work with local men salvaging steel, manganese, brass and copper. The Chinese labourers were using a sea saw on a building site close to the Roberts family home in what has been known since as 'Chinaman's Loft'. The building name has been retained and is today the home of artist Sara Roberts and family.

Edward Bourke in 'Shipwrecks off the Local Coast' comments that "the copper and brass were stored in an old mill near the strand and shipped to Cork in a small ship, the Nautilus. On one occasion, carriers arrived with four horse drawn dray carts to collect the scrap. The Chinese were unaware of the arrangement and the engineer Mr. Chip Watkins was not around. When the draymen attempted to load their carts, the Chinese defended their horses with drawn knives. The Corkmen retreated empty handed'" Tracton, Where the Abbey Lies Low KWP Print. 2007 P201

There remains one postscript to the events of the sinking of the El Zorro in 1915. According to writer Nigel Clarke in the "Shipwreck Guide to Dorset and South Devon", the original "Lassie" who inspired so many films and television episodes was a rough-haired crossbreed who saved the life of a sailor during World War I. Half collie, Lassie was owned by the landlord of the Pilot Boat, a pub in the port of Lyme Regis. On New Year's Day in 1915 the Royal Navy battleship Formidable was torpedoed by the German submarine U-24 off Start Point in South Devon, with the loss of more than 500 men. In a storm that followed the accident, a life raft containing bodies was blown along the coast to Lyme Regis. In helping to deal with the crisis, the local pub in Lyme Regis, called the Pilot Boat, offered its cellar as a mortuary. When the bodies had been laid out on the stone floor, Lassie, a crossbred collie owned by the pub owner, found her way down amongst the bodies, and she began to lick the face of one of the victims, Able Seaman John Cowan. She stayed beside him for more than half an hour, nuzzling him and keeping him warm with her fur. To everyone's astonishment, Cowan eventually revived. He was taken to hospital and went on to make a full recovery. He visited Lassie again when he returned to thank all who saved his life. The sinking of the battleship was a severe blow to Britain during these early years of the war. When the officers heard the story of Lassie and what she did to rescue Cowan, they told it again and again to any reporter who would listen as it was inspirational and heart-warming. In 1938 the novel ‘Lassie come home’ was published by author Eric Knight who is believed to have been inspired by this tale. Hollywood got hold of the story, and so a star was born.

December Shipwrecks
This a brief list of ships lost and wrecked on the coast from Crosshaven to Kinsale since 1750.

18.12.1750: The Twins, skipped by Master Swaine, from Nantz, was lost at Roberts Cove.
07.12.1758: The Pembroke, from Bristol to New York was lost off Roberts Cove. 12 men were drowned.
22.12.1775: The Rockingham. See this month’s Newsletter for details.
7.12.1794: The Nancy, under Master Collins, from Swansea to Cork was lost near the Old Head of Kinsale. Date in December unknown.
29.12.1798: The Charlotte, skipped by Master Williams, was lost off Cork Harbour. Only one boy was saved.
31.12.1800: The Gravalia, skipped by Master Iclebrom, from the coast of Spain to Hambro, was lost off Kinsale. It was stated that the crew were saved.
25.12.1803: HMS Sufisante, a 16-gun sloop went ashore off Spike Island. She heeled over in the heavy seas and split in two. Seven crew were drowned and three were killed by a falling mast.
27.12.1807: The Rising Sun, master Hutton, was driven on shore on her beam-ends, in Kinsale. She was gotten off without major damage the following week. "The wine on board was saved, but it was feared that the cargo of barilla (soda ash) would be lost."
7.12.1814: The Maria, Master Henderson, was lost with all of her crew in Rocky Bay, Cork. Date in December unknown.
14.12.1844: The paddle steamer Vanguard sailing from Dublin to Cork hit the Cow and Calf rocks off Roche's Point and drifted ashore. All on board were rescued. The ship was later saved and resumed a sailing service on the Cork to Dublin route.
20.12.1844: Wreckage from a ships boat was driven into Rocky Bay, near Nohoval, it was painted lead colour on the inside. On the following Monday, the mainmast of a schooner, of about 150 tons drifted into Ringabella Bay. It had only been in the water a short time, and was broken off under the rigging. It was surmised that an unknown vessel had foundered off the harbour, and that these pieces of wreck were all that remained of her.
15.12.1848: A violent storm struck the Irish coast in December 1848, damaged buildings as well as holding up all coastal and cross-channel steamer traffic. A foreign brigantine, The Minto of Yarmouth, laden with oranges and oil from the Mediterranean, parted her anchor cable and drove ashore at Dunboyne Cove. All fifteen of her crew were drowned.
24.12.1878: The barquentine Princess Royal grounded below Camden Fort in a gale. The Roche’s Point coastguard boat and pilot boat tried to give assistance, but were unable to save any of the crew. All were lost.
31.12.1905: The Pluvier was lost off Flat Head at the east end of Rennies Bay on 31 December, 1905. A severe storm had occurred and wreckage, bodies and a figurehead were washed ashore confirming that a schooner had been lost at sea. The five bodies washed ashore were buried in Nohoval graveyard. The Cork Examiner correspondent pursued enquiries as to what vessel might have been lost. In February 1906, the firm of Ebenezer Parry were in contact. They believed that their two mastd 310 ton Pluvier was the lost ship. She had sailed from Figueria in Portugal on Christmas Eve and from the voyage times of other vessels, they surmised that she would have been near Cork at the time of the wreck. Their fears were confirmed when a watch and the ship's figurehead were identified. The schooner had been built at Fowey in Cornwall.

The Shields Daily News carried details of the funeral in its edition of 11th January, 1916. "The funeral of Mr Benson Blacklock … took place at Queenstown on Friday. An Appreciation from an Old Percy Parkite. 'Bennie Blacklock! What memories of many hard-fought Rugby matches does his name conjure up… Home and abroad he loved to chase the ball. Alas he and others who helped to make the name of Percy Park famous are gone from us. We mourn his loss but appreciate the fact that we had his friendship…"

Benson Leck Blacklock was buried in Cobh graveyard on Friday, 7 January 1915.

A distant relative of Benson Leck Blacklock, Richard Blacklock of Canada was in touch during research for this article. He wrote that his relative, Benson was the third in line with the same name and continued the tradition with one of his own sons. Tragically, he left a son who was just three years old when he died and his wife, Annie was 6 months pregnant with their second son, Henry Whitfield Blacklock.

Seaman Frank Fleet is remembered in The Tower Hill Memorial in Trinity Gardens, London. It is a Commonwealth War Graves Commission war memorial commemorating those from the Merchant Navy and fishing fleets who died during both world wars and have "no grave but the sea".

Grave on Benson Leck Blacklock in Cobh old Cemetery.

Man of War Cove today

SS El Zorro continued...

...The ship, The steamer El Zorro… was carrying oil from Port Arthur to the United Kingdom, was lost off the coast of Ireland… Mr Blacklock and another member of the crew lost their lives... [he] was 32 years of age [and] was a son of Mr Benson Blacklock, an engineer employed at Smith's Dock, and served his time at the Shields Engineering Co’s premises before going to sea. He was an enthusiastic football player, ever one of the foremost in the rushes of the Percy Park pack, and was a great favourite at Preston Avenue. He still kept up his connection with the game after going to sea, and when home from a voyage would don the jersey if the winter game was in progress…"
Dublin on the eve of the Rising – December 1915 by Joseph Brady

A minor character in Seán O’Casey’s The Plough and the Stars is the fashionably-dressed middle-aged stout woman from Rathmines. As the Rising begins to affect the city and the trams are stopped, she meets Fluther, the Covey and Peter and asks ‘For Gawd’s sake, will one of you kind men show any safe way for me to get to Wathrathmes?” She is not treated sympathetically, for to be from Rathmines was to be far removed from the reality of life in the tenements.

Dublin in 1916 was a city of great social contrasts even though it was a small place in geographical terms. It was not a single urban area but rather a city and a collection of adjacent independent towns bound by economic ties. To be from Rathmines, was not just to be of elevated social status, it was also not to be from Dublin but from an entirely different legal urban entity, a suburb. Rathmines was to be far removed from the reality of life in the tenements.

In the evening they went home, insulated from the lives of the poor whose streets they shared during the day, for even in the best street the tenements were only a stone’s throw distant. They also avoided having to support the work of Dublin Corporation in addressing the housing crisis - there were 21,133 one-room tenements alone in Rathmines in 1911 - though the 1913 Housing Inquiry suggested that Dublin Corporation’s commitment to that project was not what it might be.

The main business area was around College Green where many insurance and financial institutions had built impressively while the legal profession had offices along the quays between O’Connell Bridge and the Four Courts.

Sackville Street, for all its impressive scale, was not a major business street but directed more to tourism with some shopping and the Metropole, Hamman, Imperial and but even those with more modest salaries were able to shop and enjoy themselves.

Despite the efforts of Dublin Corporation in the latter years of the 19th century to absorb the townships - and so get their rate books - Pembroke, Rathmines and the coastal townships of Blackrock, Kingstown, Dalkey and Killiney were still independent in 1916. Though the townships were relatively small compared to the city - 29,294 people in Pembroke and 37,840 in Rathmines/Rathgar in 1911 compared to 304,802 - they were middle-class in character and were important to the business and commercial life of the city. For example, though there were 2,090 civil service officers and clerks in the city, there were 303 in Rathmines and 566 in Pembroke alone. It was to the city that they came to work, to shop and to enjoy themselves.

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Despite the efforts of Dublin Corporation in the latter years of the 19th century to absorb the townships - and so get their rate books - Pembroke, Rathmines and the coastal townships of Blackrock, Kingstown, Dalkey and Killiney were still independent in 1916. Though the townships were relatively small compared to the city - 29,294 people in Pembroke and 37,840 in Rathmines/Rathgar in 1911 compared to 304,802 - they were middle-class in character and were important to the business and commercial life of the city. For example, though there were 2,090 civil service officers and clerks in the city, there were 303 in Rathmines and 566 in Pembroke alone. It was to the city that they came to work, to shop and to enjoy themselves.

In the evening they went home, insulated from the lives of the poor whose streets they shared during the day, for even in the best street the tenements were only a stone’s throw distant. They also avoided having to support the work of Dublin Corporation in addressing the housing crisis - there were 21,133 one-room tenements alone in Rathmines in 1911 - though the 1913 Housing Inquiry suggested that Dublin Corporation’s commitment to that project was not what it might be.

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Joseph Mary Plunkett: Ailing writer who shaped the rebellion

Dr Conor Mulvagh on the military tactician of the Rising who married shortly before his execution in Kilmainham Gaol

Patrick Pearse and James Connolly became the icons of the 1916 Rising as it passed into history and national memory. Their edification eclipsed their comrades and, indeed, among the most interesting backstories is that of Joseph Mary Plunkett. On the face of it, Plunkett was perhaps an unlikely revolutionary. Biographers have variously described him as eccentric, nervous, and fragile. By far the most financially comfortable of the Proclamation signatories, Plunkett lived a privileged existence but also came from a family with deep republican credentials.

The enduring image of Plunkett is of him, standing at the altar in Kilmainham, marrying his bride just before his execution in the breakers’ yard. However, behind this romantic and romanticised representation is a much more complex figure without whom the Rising would certainly not have played out as it did. Plunkett was the primary military tactician of the Rising. Along with Pearse and Eamonn Ceannt, he was part of the group that conducted a feasibility study into holding an insurrection in Ireland as early as October 1914. Plunkett was exceptional, too, in that he managed to travel to Germany in 1915 to link up with Roger Casement both to inspect and to assist his foundering efforts to raise an Irish Brigade from Irish prisoners of war in Germany. As an experienced traveler and possessing the credible excuse that he needed to travel abroad to aid his fragile health, Plunkett was uniquely placed among the rebel conspirators to travel to Germany in wartime. Under the watchful eye of Plunkett and his siblings, the ‘Kimmage Garrison’, as it came to be known, was assembled out of Irishmen - most of whom had an existing Irish Volunteer or IRB connection - who had left Britain not wanting to fight in America and there met with the senior Fenian John Devoy in New York. By October 1915, Plunkett finally set sail for Ireland after this extraordinary six-month journey.

Back home in Dublin, Plunkett established a rebel training camp at a recently acquired family property at Larkfield, in Kimmage, south-west of Dublin city. The camp had been founded following the introduction of conscription in Ireland, and initially served as a place to train an Ulster battalion. Under the watchful eye of Plunkett and his siblings, the Kimmage Garrison, as it came to be known, was assembled out of Irishmen - most of whom had an existing Irish Volunteer or IRB connection - who had left Britain not wanting to fight in America and there met with the senior Fenian John Devoy in New York. By October 1915, Plunkett finally set sail for Ireland after this extraordinary six-month journey.

The garrison was the most extraordinary training camp to have existed in Ireland during wartime. In a classically Persianian flourish of rhetoric, Patrick Pearse told the men of Larkfield that they were ‘Ireland’s first standing army since the days of Patrick Sarsfield’.

Joseph Mary Plunkett’s younger brother, the 22-year-old George Plunkett, was Officer in Charge of the Kimmage Garrison. Jack, the youngest of the Plunkett brothers, also fought in the Rising. An iconic photograph of the aftermath of the rebellion shows George and Jack, uniformed and in identical slouch hats, standing side by side under the eye of a soldier in Richmond Barracks. Like their older brother, both were handed down death sentences but, in their cases, the sentences were commuted. This is not the only reason why one should consider the Plunketts’ association with the 1916 Rising as very much a family affair. Joseph Mary Plunkett’s father, George Noble Plunkett, was an important figure during, and especially after, the Rising. He became the first-ever elected Sinn Féin MP in the North Roscommon by-election of February 1917.

If family was one important aspect of Joseph Mary Plunkett’s 1916 story, then friendship was the other. Seeking a tutor to teach him Irish so that he could matriculate into University College Dublin in 1909, Plunkett found Thomas MacDonagh, well-known Gaelic poet, and in 1914, they had met Thomas MacDonagh, an acknowledged rebel. Plunkett and MacDonagh kept up their friendship with MacDonogh through correspondence wherein they sent each other their poems. From 1913 onwards, Plunkett and MacDonogh took over the running of a small but important radical journal, The Irish Review. It combined poetry, prose, and political commentary. The journal was suppressed by the censor under Defence of the Realm legislation in November 1914.

The friendship between Plunkett was enhanced through the fact that they eventually married two sisters. Thomas MacDonagh married Muriel Gifford in 1912. They had a son and daughter born in 1912 and 1915 respectively. In December 1915, Plunkett became engaged to Muriel’s sister Grace. In a most unusual twist of history, Joseph and Grace were due to be married on Easter Sunday 1916 in a double wedding with Joseph’s sister, Geraldine, who was engaged to Thomas Dillon, lecturer in Chemistry at UCD. Joseph was forced to postpone his wedding until after the Rising, and Grace’s marriage not because of the Rising but because he had to undergo surgery on a gland in his cheek early in April.

With Michael Collins as his bodyguard, Plunkett left the nursing home in which he was recuperating on Good Friday 1916, the day after the Aud, the boat carrying the Anglo-Irish Agreement to Germany, to send, had arrived off the Kerry coast. On Easter Sunday, while crisis meetings of the Proclamation signatories were held in Liberty Hall, Geraldine Plunkett’s wedding went ahead as planned with neither her father nor her fiancé in attendance. The next morning, from her bridal suite in the Imperial Hotel on O’Connell Street, she watched the Rising which she had known was coming unfold beneath her window.

Following the seizure of the Post Office, Geraldine Plunkett Dillon watched her brother Joseph out on O’Connell Street erecting barricades from whatever could be found. He placed a homemade bomb into an empty tram on Earl Street, retreated a safe distance, and fired a shot detonating the bomb and immobilizing the tram. This was the last time she saw her brother Joe.

Dr Conor Mulvagh is a lecturer in Irish History at the School of History at University College Dublin (UCD) with special responsibility for the Inter-University Decade of Commemorations. Published in the Irish Independent 29 October 2015.

Did You Know? CIE, the state transport company (which was later became Iarnród Éireann, Bus Éireann and Dublin Bus) renamed its 15 principal railway stations in 1966 in memory of the men executed in 1916.

In Dublin that meant Amiens Street station became Connolly, and Westland Row became Pearce (renamed after both brothers, who grew up nearby). CIE’s headquarters at Kingsbridge was renamed after Seán Heuston, who had been a clerical officer in the Traffic Manager’s Office there. As a special memorial to Heuston was unveiled at the station in 1966 by defence minister Michael Hilliard. The idea was proposed by the company’s chairman, Todd Andrews, who had fought in the War of Independence and the Civil War - two of his sons and two of his grandsons were later TDs. CIE also had an 1916 symbol, An Claidheamh Soluis, mounted on the front of its buses.

The other stations renamed were in Cork (Thomas Kent), Limerick (Con Colbert), Dun Laoghaire (Michael Britain (but not in Ireland), Waterford (Joseph Plunkett), Galway (Eamonn Ceannt), Dundalk (Thomas Clarke), Drogheda (Major John MacBride), Sligo (Seán Mac Diarmada), Bray (Edward Daly), Wexford (Michael O’Hannrahan), Kilkenny (Thomas MacDonagh) and Tralee (Roger Casement).
Home Rule laid foundations for insurrection

Dr. Paul Rouse on the Irish political landscape of the time

Although led by the Dubliner and Trinity College graduate, Sir Edward Carson, unilateral opposition to Home Rule in Ireland centered on Ulster. Massive public rallies of opposition to Home Rule, the signing of the Ulster Covenant in September 1912 by almost 500,000 people and the establishment of the Ulster Volunteer Force in January 1913 underlined determined opposition to the introduction of Home Rule. The pledge by unionists in Ulster to reject any measure of Home Rule for the north of the island received powerful support in Britain from the Conservative Party leader, Andrew Bonar Law.

Against this opposition, nationalist opinion was equally determined that Home Rule would be introduced as planned and that it would apply to all of Ireland. Irish nationalists held repeated public meetings to demonstrate in favour of Home Rule. In November 1913 they established a militia of their own to rival the Ulster Volunteer Force. This new Irish Volunteer Force quickly assumed a prominence that confirmed the militarisation of political life in Ireland. By the summer of 1914, there was a bitter, precarious stalemate as the plan to give Home Rule to Ireland was rejected by the House of Commons in London in April 1912 by almost 500,000 people and the establishment of the Ulster Volunteer Force in January 1913 underlined determined opposition to the introduction of Home Rule. The pledge by unionists in Ulster to reject any measure of Home Rule for the north of the island received powerful support in Britain from the Conservative Party leader, Andrew Bonar Law.

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Amid unprecedented scenes, there had even been a mutiny of British army officers based at The Curragh, Co Kildare. Almost 60 British Officers threatened to resign their commissions in 1914 as a result of a decision by the War Office to send extra troops to Ulster. The sensational development was said to have occurred after officers were presented with the choice of pacifying Ulster, or rendering their resignations. Led by Brigadier-General Edward Carbery, over 60 officers in the Curragh camp declined to obey the orders. Attempts to downplay the significance of the mutiny were unconvincing; it was clear that a military crisis had been laid on top of a political crisis.

Ulster unionists remained implacably opposed to Home Rule and were threatening armed resistance. Irish nationalists were equally determined that it be introduced across Ireland immediately. Faced with mounting pressure from all sides, the British government - not entirely sure of its army in Ireland and understandably loath to use it to implement Home Rule in any instance - was paralysed. It says much for the scale of the dilemma that the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914 offered relief from the question of Ireland. Irish politics were at once transformed by events in Europe.

Ulster unionists rallied immediately in support of the war and enlisted in their tens of thousands in the British Army. Their leader, Sir Edward Carson, metabolised from being a patron of illegality in Ulster to a law officer at Westminster when he was appointed Attorney General in a national coalition government in London. Carson urged the Ulster Volunteers to enlist in the British Army and many heeded his call.

John Redmond, too, was offered a place at the cabinet table, but he refused when he saw that the Ulster Parliamentary Party, an ad hoc coalition government in London, had endorsed the British war effort and called on the 170,000 strong Irish Volunteers to enlist in the army - many of those Volunteers answered that call.

It was a significant political gamble - one which ultimately failed - but that it should have been made at all was significant in itself. It was the result of a catastrophe. Armistice followed armistice and the people refused to accept that the fighting was over. The people of Ireland accepted it as a fraud, with the result we were compelled to abandon the attempt of revolt in Ireland unless backed up with strong foreign military help. It did not suffer regularly from both physical illness and depression during his stay in Germany, as witnessed by his comrade Robert Montefith in the spring of 1916.

By this time Casement's only attachment to Germany was his concern for the members of the Irish Brigade left behind in Germany. His final letter to his German chancery witness to his concern. It could be argued that he was privately happy to leave Germany, clandestinely seizing this opportunity to prevent what he considered a full insurrection. In a letter to his sister after his capture he claimed: "When I landed in Ireland that morning... I was happy for the first time for over a year."

Casement, Montefith and Daniel Julian Bailey, (alias Beverley) departed Wilhelmshaven on 12 April 1916, on the submarine U-20. It was the first German military expedition and the German cruiser SMS Scharnhorst, a shopping list.

Devoy considered Casement’s mission to Germany had three main objectives:

1. To secure German military help for Ireland when the opportunity arose.
2. To educate German public opinion on the Irish situation so that the people would support their Government when it took action in Ireland.
3. To organise if possible, Irish prisoners of war into a military unit to take part in a fight for Irish Freedom

Devoy commented: “Casement did his best in all these things, but did the first ineffectively, succumbed admirably in the second and failed badly in the third.”

In December 1915, Adler Christensen was now engaged to transport another two former officers in the Irish Volunteers from New York to Germany. Devoy writes that Casement was to have hoisted the Irish Red Ensign with a grand insurrection. In his diaries, he recorded: “I tried all I could… we have failed... let me go back.” However, shortly before he left Germany, Casement wrote to Count Georg von Wedel, explaining his plans and that it should have been made at all. Devoy considered Casement’s mission to Germany was a fraud, with the result we were compelled to abandon the attempt of revolt in Ireland unless backed up with strong foreign military help. It did not suffer regularly from both physical illness and depression during his stay in Germany, as witnessed by his comrade Robert Montefith in the spring of 1916.

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When Archbishop Mannix and Eamon de Valera shared a platform at Madison Square Gardens in New York in July 1920, it must have been hard to say whose words were the churchman’s and whose the politician’s.

When Daniel Mannix left Ireland in 1913 to become archbishop of Melbourne, he was best known as the quiet and austere president of Maynooth seminary in Co Kildare. The Easter Rising transformed this moderate nationalist into a radical republican. Tens of thousand of Melbourne Catholics turned out to hear him speak about Irish freedom. They also heard him challenge the Australian prime minister Billy Hughes who wanted to introduce conscription. The defeat of two conscription referenda in 1916 and 1917 owed a great deal to Mannix. He was a strikingly handsome figure and an electric speaker. Prime ministers Billy Hughes and David Lloyd George agreed that Mannix posed a danger to the British empire. But they did not know how to restrain a churchman of such standing. His travels to Rome by way of the United States in 1920 brought matters to crisis point.

When Mannix and de Valera shared a platform at Madison Square Gardens in New York in July 1920, it must have been hard to say whose words were the churchman’s and whose the politician’s. An audience of 15,000 people heard Mannix’s demand that Ireland be given the same status in postwar planning as the long-suffering Irish Catholic community in Australia, idolised by Catholics in the community in Australia, idolised by Catholics but detested by others, including those in power federally and in Victoria. He had spoken against the Treaty of Versailles, saying it would lead to a greater war than the one just ended. For many years he was ostracised and not invited to the official functions his position would have entitled him to attend. Mannix formed the Irish Relief Fund, which provided financial support for the families of those shot or imprisoned by the British. When he left Australia he was sent to parish work in the United States.

Daniel Mannix: the republican Archbishop who took on the British Empire

The long-serving archbishop of Melbourne successfully fought conscription in Australia and was arrested at sea on Lloyd George’s orders to stop him from returning to Ireland.

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The long-serving archbishop of Melbourne successfully fought conscription in Australia and was arrested at sea on Lloyd George’s orders to stop him from returning to Ireland.
After the Irish Free State was created in 1922, Mannix became less politically controversial and anomy to him gradually faded for the most part. From the 1930s he came to see Communism as the main threat to the Church and he became increasingly identified with political conservatism. He was a strong supporter of Joseph Lyons, who left the Labor Party in 1931 and led the conservative United Australia Party in government from 1932 until 1939, although he continued to support Catholics in the Labor Party such as Arthur Calwell.

Mannix's best-known protégé in his later years was B. A. Santamaria, a young Italian-Australian lawyer, whom Mannix appointed head of the National Secretariat of Catholic Action in 1937. After 1941, Mannix authorised Santamaria to form the Catholic Social Studies Movement, known simply as The Movement, to organise in the unions and defeat the Communists. The Movement was so successful in its efforts that by 1949 it had taken control of the Victorian branch of the Labor Party. Another associate was William Hackett, a Jesuit priest from Ireland, who had been involved in the Irish Republic's struggle for independence from Britain before being posted to Australia.

In 1951 the Liberal Party of Australia government of Robert Menzies held a referendum to give the government the constitutional power to ban the Communist Party.[7] Mannix surprised many of his supporters by opposing this, on the grounds that the bill was totalitarianism, which in his view was worse than communism: his may have been a decisive influence in the referendum's narrow defeat. This alliance with the Labor leader, H. V. Evatt, was short-lived.

The Labor Party split again in 1954 over attitudes to Communion and the Cold War. Santamaria's supporters were expelled and formed the Democratic Labor Party (DLP). Mannix covertly supported the DLP and allowed many priests and religious to work for openly. This involvement in politics was opposed by the head of the Australian church, Norman Thomas Gilroy, Cardinal Archbishop of Sydney, who worked with the Premier of New South Wales, Joseph Cahill, to hold together the Labor Party in New South Wales, and also by the Vatican which, in 1957, ruled that the Movement should not interfere in politics. Rome appointed Archbishop Justin Simonds as coadjutor to Mannix – Simonds was widely seen as Rome's man in Melbourne.

In the late 1940s and 1950s, Mannix spoke against the White Australia policy, which was in effect at the time. He described the policy as “crude” and said that Australia had much to learn from other races. In his opposition to the policy, Mannix stated in 1949 that “there is no colour bar in Australia”.

In 1960 Calwell became Labor leader and sought Mannix's support to bring about a reconciliation between Labor and the DLP. Mannix's government was to be defeated. Some figures in the DLP supported this idea, but Mannix supported Santamaria in his resistance to such suggestions. The negotiations fell through and Menzies was re-elected in 1961. Mannix and Calwell became permanently estranged.

By the 1960s the distinct identity of the Irish community in Melbourne was fading, and Irish Catholics were increasingly outnumbered by Italians, Maltese and other postwar immigrant Catholic communities. Mannix, who turned 90 in 1954, remained active and in full authority, but he was no longer a central figure in the city's politics. He died suddenly on 6 November 1963, aged 99, while the archdiocese was preparing to celebrate his 100th birthday. He was buried in the crypt of St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne.

Mannix's legacy to the Roman Catholic Church in Australia is substantial. Over fifty years during his episcopacy, the number of archdiocesan parishioners increased from 150,000 to 600,000; churches from 160 to 300; students in Catholic primary schools from 21,792 to 73,699; secondary pupils from 3,126 to 28,395; priests increased by 237, brothers by 181, nuns by 736. 10 male and 14 female orders were introduced; 10 seminaries and 7 new hospitals, 3 orphanages, homes for delinquents, the blind and deaf, hostels for girls, and a range of other church facilities.

In recognition of his influence across both Church and state, the Catholic Church commissioned a statue of Mannix, pictured above, which is located in the forecourt of St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne, facing Parliament House. The bronze and marble sculpture was unveiled by the Governor of Victoria Sir James Gobbo in March 1999. Interestingly, the statue replaced an existing one of Daniel O'Connell.

The site of Easter Rising headquarters on Moore Street in Dublin.

Restoration work has begun on the site of the final headquarters of the Easter Rising rebels on Moore Street in Dublin ahead of next year's centenary celebrations.

The Government purchased 14-17 Moore Street for €4 million earlier this year.

The site is to be turned into a commemorative centre, which Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Heather Humphreys expects to be completed next year.

Number 16 is recognised as the site where the Rising leaders agreed to surrender.

All four of the buildings will be restored to their 1916 condition following structural stabilisation work and the reinstatement of contemporary interiors.

It was announced that the restoration of Kilminnagh Courthouse, Dublin-based conservation and heritage specialists, Lissadell Construction Ltd, will undertake the Moore Street project.

National monument

The buildings in question date back to the 18th-century, and were declared a national monument in 2007.

“i am delighted to see this project moving ahead. The national monument at numbers 14-17 Moore Street has such special historical significance in the context of the Easter Rising,” Ms Humphreys said. “This project is a very important element of the Government’s plans for the 1916 centenary commemorations. The conservation work will reveal the period architectural detail, the living conditions and, above all, the imprint of the insurgency. The primary focus of the work is to reveal the buildings as they were during the Rising, allowing them to illuminate that period in our history.”

Preservation campaigners have praised the Government for its actions in securing the future of numbers 14 to 17, but some have voiced concerns about development proposals for adjoining houses.

Planning permission still stands for a stalled retail development in the neighbouring area, which may be resurrected after Nama sold its stake in the premises to UK-based property group Hammerson last month.

Irish Independent: Tue, Nov 10, 2015
More Details: http://1916rebellionmuseum.com/
Tracton Memorial Famine Walk

The meticulous records kept by the personnel of the workhouse, which are available to be studied at the Cork County and City Archives, mean that we can identify every man, woman and child who was admitted to the workhouse, those who died in the workhouse or who died outside the gates waiting for admission, and those who survived and made it home again.

For example, on February 4, 1847, 40 persons were admitted to the Workhouse, ages ranging from a baby of four months to a man of 60 years. Eleven of those admitted were children. Among those admitted on that day was Mary Dineen of Kilpatrick and her five children, aged from five to 16 years. Mary died on the day she was admitted, leaving her five orphans to the mercy of the Kinsale Workhouse.

Cornelius Desmond, Tracton, aged 17, died on the day he was admitted in May of 1847.

An entry made on June 22nd in 1850 shows that four sibling orphans, Mary, Kate, John and Norah (aged two) Neil (Neill) were all admitted to the workhouse on that day. After being registered, washed, deloused and inspected, John was sent to the boys’ quarters and the three girls, Norah in her “big” sister’s arms, were directed to the girls’ quarters.

During their time in the workhouse this strict segregation continued. Wives and husbands were separated, children were separated from their parents, brothers from sisters. That was the official policy.

We do not know if any of the Neil children survived the diseases rampant in the workhouse. The two older girls may have been shipped out to Australia as part of the solution by the Board of Guardians to deal with the large number of orphaned teen aged children left bereft in workhouses during Ireland’s Great Famine (1847 - 1850).

The orphans were of a party of 124 men, women and children, old and young, who left their homes in the Tracton area in South Cork on that day in June 1850 to walk the eight miles to the Kinsale Workhouse.

The Kinsale Workhouse admission house still stands today.

Another famine-stricken family was that of Cornelius Coffee/Cowhig, his wife, Mary and their five children, who were signed in on December 13, 1848.

The awful truth about the chances of surviving the rampant diseases in the workhouse is brutally exemplified by the fact that when Cornelius and his family were discharged in May 1849, only two of their five children were left alive to return home with their parents. The bodies of those who died in this workhouse lie in the Famine Graveyard just 100 yards from the main gates. The voice of Fr. Cornelius Corcoran, the Parish Priest of Tracton, was loud in publicizing the crisis in his parish; (and, by extension, of other parishes) as he issued statement after statement from Ballyfeard House. Most appeared in the London and local newspapers, such as this one on February 1947:

“The large sea-coast territory which stretches from Cork’s Harbour mouth to that of Kinsale, is steeped in affliction. It witnessed this week the most appalling miseries that a civilized country could present, or a savage tribe endure - auctions, evictions, famine, fever houses tumbled, manhood weeping, hearts breaking, emigrants adieu…"

At the conclusion of the Famine Walk of 2012, a hawthorn tree was planted to commemorate the Tracton Famine victims admitted to the Kinsale Workhouse during the years of the Great Famine. The tree is thriving.

The Famine tree still stands

For more information see the Facebook pages of Tracton Famine Walk, or Tracton Family History, or, Tracton Arts and Community Centre, or call the Tracton Centre at 011-353-86-0711910. Published in IrishCentral.com 03.05.15

124 poor Irish souls forced to walk to workhouse, where families were torn apart and death was certain for many

June 22 was the exact date in 1850, writes Eileen McGough on which 124 natives of Tracton, County Cork left their homes in a convoy - mothers, fathers, children, infants, grandparents.

Their destination was the Kinsale Workhouse, eight miles away. Their abject circumstances at the height of Ireland’s Great Hunger compelled them to seek help at the gates of the Workhouse, though the building was grossly overcrowded with starving, sick and dying inmates. Built to accommodate 500 normally and a stipulated maximum of 700 inmates, on July 28, 1849, the meticulously kept records show that there were 2,127 inmates on that day, that 90 had been admitted in that week and that 21 had died in the workhouse in the same week.

The most frequent descriptions used were “Mendicant” (describing a tramp or homeless person). “Beggar,” “Weak and Infirm,” “Idiot,” and “Weak-minded.” Many were described as “poorly clad” and “dirty.”

In their memory the people of Tracton hold an annual Famine Walk on a date near June 22. The same roads are travelled on foot, and every walker represents a named Workhouse/Famine victim.

The following are a few of their stories.

At the first signs of potato blight in the autumn of 1845, local relief committees were set up by the leading landlords and by the church ministers. After a harsh winter, in January 1846 the board of the Kinsale Workhouse urgently petitioned the House of Lords for a solution by the Board of Guardians to deal with the large number of orphaned teen aged children left bereft in workhouses during Ireland’s Great Famine (1847 - 1850).

The Workhouse was well known to Tracton people by that time.

At the first signs of a looming catastrophe were now evident. Potato prices had gone through the roof and potato blight in the autumn of 1845 failed the main food source, compelling them to seek help at the gates of the Workhouse. The voice of Rev. Roger’s letter was published in the Evening Standard in February 1847. In it he wrote, “We are accused of exaggerating our distress and painting it in darker colours than truth will warrant, in order to obtain more liberal supplies from the wealthy English. Oh, I so wish that they who so accuse us were but one hour in my parish. I could show them such scenes of misery as would thrill their blood could show them living skeletons crouching and trembling together in one corner of their dark and cheerless chambers while at the other lies the corpse of a father or a brother dead from the effects of hunger…”

The mourners’ wailing, the bailiff’s triumph - the curse that required it. I witnessed despair in every face and desolation on every heath. Distress in the same terrific reality pervades all the coterminous parishes as you pass from here to Donegal via Skibbereen and Kilrush.

The published letter of, Rev J.Cecil Rogers, Rector of the Church of Ireland in Nohoval, should also give us pause for thought. Rev Roger’s letter was published in the Evening Standard in February 1847. In it he wrote, “We are accused of exaggerating our distress and painting it in darker colours than truth will warrant, in order to obtain more liberal supplies from the wealthy English. Oh, I so wish that they who so accuse us were but one hour in my parish. I could show them such scenes of misery as would thrill their blood could show them living skeletons crouching and trembling together in one corner of their dark and cheerless chambers while at the other lies the corpse of a father or a brother dead from the effects of hunger…”

It is incredible to us in today’s world that while the Parish Priest of Tracton, Canon Cornelius Corcoran, and the Rector of the Church of Ireland in Nohoval, Cecil Rogers, were literally carrying emaciated bodies on their backs to the churchyards for burial that a grand ball in Cork City was graced by wealthy young women of Tracton, near neighbours of those emaciated bodies, whose only worry for the night was that their gowns would be as rich as the next one. However, let it be also told that the local landlords, the fathers of those fashion-conscious ladies, did their best to help their starving tenants; several of them served on the Governing Body of the Kinsale Workhouse, and one Famine victim was Lady Roberts of Roberts Cove, who died when she contracted a fever as she administered to the sick.

The Tracton famine victims will be well remembered by those who walk in their names. Funds raised are donated to the local Community Centre and to the Kinsale Community Hospital.

At the conclusion of the Famine Walk of 2012, a hawthorn tree was planted to commemorate the Tracton Famine victims admitted to the Kinsale Workhouse during the years of the Great Famine. The tree is thriving.

The Famine tree still stands

For more information see the Facebook pages of Tracton Famine Walk, or Tracton Family History, or, Tracton Arts and Community Centre, or call the Tracton Centre at 011-353-86-0711910. Published in IrishCentral.com 03.05.15

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Ireland before the Rising: From Gallipoli to the Little Tramp

Cinema had made household names of Charlie Chaplin and Jack Johnson but did little to boost recruitment for the Great War.

If John Maynard Keynes had been able to take time off from his treasury job in the autumn of 1915 to write a moment-defining prequel to his famous treatise on the peace conference he might have called it *The Economic Consequences of the War*. In late September British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith revealed that the campaign was costing £5 million a day. Coal and bread were in short supply.

On the assumption that Chancellor of the Exchequer Reginald McKenna was planning substantial tax rises in his imminent budget, there was a run on tea, sugar and tobacco; one Dublin merchant reported that his stocks had virtually disappeared. But although McKenna raised income tax by 40 per cent, such was the worry about the possible scale of the new indirect taxes that a nine-fold increase in the sugar duties and 50 per cent on tea were greeted with equanimity by Irish retailers.

The exemption of spirits from punitive taxation was greeted with relief but the budget was but another sign of how, after a year, the war had become a banal but insidious feature of everyday life.

The enthusiasm of the first months when soldiers had been treated as cannon fodder, betrayed by the censorship of the mosquito press enjoyed limited sales but readers of the *Irish Times* printed an account of the wounded who were in short supply.

Prime Minister Asquith was accompanied by his white wife Lucille, who was singled out as a class of men with a unique propensity for shirking which suggested that their work had not been rendered them effeminate. Unlike men accustomed to a robust outdoor life, they had been corrupted by the creature comforts afforded by standing behind counters.

In a speech in Clonmel, the director of the new body established to organise recruiting fulminated that “no man had a right to do anything but a man’s job, and if he was doing a woman’s job for God’s sake let him put on a woman’s skirt.”

But rugged and virile farmers’ sons were proving no less reluctant than their cosseted urban peers; they listened to such speeches leaning against walls with hands in their pockets, oozing indifference and hostility. Marching bands and the exhortations of local dignitaries did little to lift the mood at recruiting meetings. Nor did a significant new marketing tool, touring vans displaying film of war scenes from Champagne and Flanders, showing the ruins caused by German bombardment.

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Well before the war, picture halls were opening in the smallest of Irish provincial towns, “brightening the dreary reality of life in the trenches concealed by the censorship. The Mosquito press enjoyed limited sales but readers of the *Irish Times* printed an account of the wounded who were in short supply.

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On the night of May 18th, 1915, the Irish national leader John Redmond was staying at the south Dublin home of his daughter Johanna and her husband Max Green, the chairman of the Irish Prisons Board. Redmond was not at home, then, to hear a late-night knock on the door of his house at Aughavaghan, an old military barracks in the Wicklow Mountains previously used as a shooting lodge by Charles Stewart Parnell. The caller was not to be deterred, however. He was bearing an urgent message from British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith and it was imperative that he get to Redmond, regardless of the lateness of the hour. On arrival at the correct address at 3am, the messenger was at first turned away by the suspicious housekeeper, but Redmond was eventually roused from his sleep to be presented with an invitation to join the British cabinet.

The First World War was by now into its 10th month and Asquith, facing a crisis over press revelations of a shortage of shells for soldiers fighting in France, as well as the disastrous prosecution of the Gallipoli campaign, had decided to bring all of the main parties – including the Irish nationalists – into the government.

There were strong reasons for Redmond to accept the prime minister’s invitation. For some time he had been frustrated by the British government’s failure to deliver on a promise to establish a separate Irish cabinet for Ireland, and it was time, perhaps, to take the initiative on board any of Redmond’s advice on recruitment policies in Ireland. A position in the cabinet would give the nationalist leader a direct say in these matters for the first time. Of even greater significance, perhaps, was the intimation given by Asquith in his early hours message to Redmond that Edward Carson might also be invited to join the government. By this stage Redmond and the Irish Party had secured the passage of legislation establishing a home rule parliament in Ireland. The Government of Ireland Act – providing for this – was now on the statute book.

Implementation of the act had been suspended, however, because of the outbreak of the war. Of further concern to the nationalists was the government’s commitment to bring in an amending bill ensuring the exclusion from home rule of a number of Ulster counties. There was much still to play for, therefore, and Redmond’s army corps to fight in the war, and to indeed take on board any of Redmond’s advice on recruitment policies in Ireland. A position in the cabinet would give the nationalist leader a direct say in these matters for the first time. Of even greater significance, perhaps, was the intimation given by Asquith in his early hours message to Redmond that Edward Carson might also be invited to join the government. By this stage Redmond and the Irish Party had secured the passage of legislation establishing a home rule parliament in Ireland. The Government of Ireland Act – providing for this – was now on the statute book.

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The sudden change in the make-up of the government left Redmond and his party in an extremely vulnerable position. For the previous five years it had held the balance of power in the House of Commons. Following the December 1913 general election, the Liberal Party had brought it to the brink of its long-priced goal: the establishment of an Irish parliament to deal with exclusively Irish affairs.

Now the Conservative and Unionist Party was back in office – albeit as a coalition partner of the Liberals – after a nine-year absence, and in a position to directly influence policy on Ireland.

Redmond’s protestsations over Carson fell on deaf ears, and the Ulster unionist leader joined the cabinet as attorney general. Making matters worse for the nationalists, Asquith moved to appoint Carson’s fellow Unionist MP for Trinity College, James Campbell, as Lord Chancellor for Ireland. In a remarkable twist, Campbell would go on to become the first Ulster Unionist leader of Northern Ireland. It was a fact that, for Redmond, was a bitter reality. He had arrived, yet again, in a position where the country was divided, and where he had to choose which side to support. The offer to Redmond from Carson was a paradox of a Constitution.” Redmond shrugged off the denunciations, but he knew that further criticism was inevitable as the first anniversary of the Suspensory Act – under which the implementation of home rule had been delayed by a year or until the end of the war – approached.

Typical was an editorial in its edition of July 15th, lamenting the “loss of faith” and was “an impossibility”. Redmond was a lot more work for the police in Ireland than Redmond’s ability to deliver.

The intervention was successful and, when the government brought forward a nine-month Service Bill in early 1916, introducing conscription for unmarried men and widowers, aged between 19 and 41, Ireland was excluded from its terms. Redmond received little credit, however, for behind-the-scenes manoeuvres that the increasingly impatient nationalist public was a continuing delay in implementing home rule. Frustration was compounded by the actions of a distrustful British government that seemed unwilling to give Ireland its due under its own constitutional provisions, and to even consider conscription for an Irish army corps or even proper recognition of the sacrifices made by Irish soldiers on the battlefields, which seemed always to be slow in coming. The delay in issuing an official dispatch about the British war effort and joined his b
Ireland in 1915: Prelude to Revolution
Dr Richard McElligott lecturer in modern Irish history in UCD.

By the autumn of 1915 Ireland appeared to be a haven of tranquility in a continent tearing itself apart through war. Her economy benefited as Irish farmers reaped the benefits of huge wartime demand for food produce. Her people, too, benefited as militant trade unionism in 1913 and a seemingly inevitable descent into civil war in 1914, this transformation was all the more remarkable.

With home rule placed on the statute books a year before, most Irish nationalists now appeared content to wait until the end of the war and hoped for a rapid implementation of devolution once it had finished. Few could know or suspect that plans were secretly in train to launch a bloody insurrection which would change the course of Irish history forever.

For the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) the decade before 1916 had been one of regeneration. Once dismissed as an organisation of “prating mock rebels”, the emergence of cultural nationalism as a force in Irish society helped to radicalise a committed core of young militant Irish nationalists who revitalised the Brotherhood.

One veteran of 1916, Padraig O’Kelly, believed that his generation experienced “a kind of natural graduation” from cultural nationalism to republican violence. Men like Padraig Pearse, Joseph Plunkett, Thomas MacDonagh and Eamonn Ceannt would crystallise this overlap between cultural and physical force nationalism. The ruling Supreme Council of the IRB had long regarded itself as the legitimate government of the Irish republic. The Brotherhood sought first and foremost to safeguard its own existence until the next revolutionary opportunity arose.

However, in 1907 its reorganisation was given added urgency by the return to Ireland from America of the veteran Fenian activist Thomas Clarke. Aware of the possibility that Britain might become embroiled in a European war with its industrial rival Germany, Clarke returned to ensure that if such a conflict broke out, Irish republicans would be in a position to react.

He was appointed to the Supreme Council and became a close friend and mentor to the young men who were spearheading the IRB’s revival, among them Seán Mac Diarmada, Clarke’s influence secured Mac Diarmada’s appointment as IRB national organiser in 1908.

In August 1914, the IRB’s Supreme Council held a meeting soon after the British declaration of war on Germany and came to a decision to stage an insurrection before the conflict’s end. In the summer of 1915, the Military Council perfected their plan both the opportunity and, more importantly, the time to execute its plans.

Three high-ranking IRB officers in the Irish Volunteers: Pearse (director of military organisation), Plunkett (director of military intelligence) and Ceannt (director of communications) were the only ones initially on the council, and numbers were kept small for security purposes. In September, Clarke and Mac Diarmada joined.

Meeting in secret, often in Clarke’s tobacconist’s shop at 75a Parnell Street, the council left no record of its deliberations. But by the autumn of 1915 it had become the real power in the IRB, and not even the Brotherhood’s nominal leadership in the Supreme Council was aware of its plans.

Once it had decided on a date for the rebellion, initially planned for the autumn of 1915, but subsequently pushed back to the spring of 1916, Clarke used his contacts in the Irish-American republican movement to help secure aid from among the Irish emigrants. Roger Casement, one of the original founders of the Irish Volunteers, had already styled himself Irish ambassador to a friendly ally and travelled to Germany with the IRB’s support. Casement’s mission was threefold: to recruit an army of volunteers for military operations in Ireland and to arrange an arms shipment from Germany for support of the Irish revolution.

However, it soon became evident that there were problems with Casement’s cherished desire for a German declaration of support for Irish independence and also with the idea of raising an Irish legion.

On November 20th, 1914, the German government issued a statement which declared that if it invaded Ireland, “it would do so with goodwill towards a people to which Germany wished only national welfare and national liberty. This was quite different from the direct recognition the IRB had hoped for. The military authorities, who were in charge of allowing Casement to address prisoners and to make arrangements to free those who joined him, were even less enthusiastic. In any event, embarrassingly few POWs did so.

The summer of 1915 also found Plunkett in Germany, sent on a mission to meet up with Casement and persuade German military leaders that Ireland offered a strategic opportunity tantalising enough to justify sending a small force of volunteers to help support an Irish-led rebellion. Plunkett proposed a German invasion around the mouth of the Shannon which would support a mass rising of Irish Volunteers in western Ireland at the same time as Volunteers in Dublin seized the capital. He suggested that 12,000 troops bringing 40,000 rifles would be enough to begin the process of unravelling British control in Ireland. While Plunkett’s argument displayed plausible strategic thinking, the Germans’ major concern was the obvious danger of attempting to land a force and support an entire division after a 2,000-mile sea voyage through British-controlled waters.

Also there was the problem of how quickly British forces in Ireland could be reinforced. Though the Germans rejected Plunkett’s plan, they were determined to avoid a repetition of the Easter Rising. Preparations for the 1915 rising were less enthusiastic. In any event, embarrassingly few POWs did so.

In the winter of 1915, the Military Council perfected their plan of a rising which was later to be based on a strategy worked out by Plunkett over the previous year. This advocated that a ring of fortified positions in strategically placed buildings in Dublin would be seized by the rebels and defended against a full-force British counter attack, while reinforcements from the countryside advanced on the city.

Any rebellion needs an army and the Military Council looked to the Irish Volunteers which the IRB had successfully infiltrated and gained increasingly control over. As the British military focused on large-scale operations within the greater Volunteer movement, the more radical Irish Volunteers (whom British intelligence estimated numbered only 13,500 out of the original force of 188,000) had throughout 1915 begun to slowly but surely rebuild and increase its numbers.

The principal reason for this was the ever-increasing fear among young Irishmen that due to the huge losses being sustained in the European war, Britain would introduce compulsory conscription into Ireland.

Even the moderates within the organisation (like its leader Eoin MacNeill) were determined to resist, by force if necessary, any attempt to introduce conscription into a Volunteers’ territory and the leadership of the Volunteers was a secret one which most ordinary members were unaware of.

Yet, increasingly, Volunteer units across the country came under the authority of local commandos who were invariably IRB men and who reported directly to IRB officials such as Pearse, bypassing MacNeill’s official chain of command.

By now, Pearse and the Military Council were also able to use the nexus of control and influence the IRB enjoyed among nationalist organisations such as the Gaelic League and Sinn Féin. For example, in October 1915, Pearse visited Trále and appointed Austin Stack, the senior IRB officer in Kerry and chairman of the Kerry GAA, as commander of the county’s Irish Volunteers. At this time, Pearse first informed Stack of the IRB’s plan to consider, by force if necessary, sending an Irish force to defend Kerry and to arrange an arms shipment off the Kerry coast on the eve of the Rising. In preparation for this, Stack used the All-Ireland Final between Kerry and Wexford in November 1915 as cover for an operation to smuggle a sizeable consignment of rifles from Dublin in order to properly arm the local Volunteers so as to protect the planned German arms landing.

Tadhg Kennedy, a lieutenant in the Volunteer Volunteers and a member of the Kerry County Board, was put in charge of a group of Volunteers ostensibly to support the plan to match the morning after the game, Kennedy’s men drove to the residence of Michael O’Rahilly, the Irish Volunteers’ director of arms, where the weapons were secured and smuggled aboard the returning supporters’ train to Tralee that evening.

Similarly British intelligence reports from Ireland warned that the Gaelic League had come under the influence of men “of extreme views”. Pearse and several of his co-conspirators were all enthusiastic Gaelic League members. By 1915, members of a radical group of Irish language activists with strong IRB connections, known as “The Left Wing”, had taken control of the league’s ruling executive board. The group included O’Rahilly, Ceannt, Daimiund Lynch and Thomas Ashe. All were destined to play a prominent role in the upcoming rebellion.

Meanwhile, for James Connolly the outbreak of the Great War was a watershed moment which sent him down the road of revolutionary nationalism. As a committed socialist, Connolly had believed that the working masses of Europe were on the verge of overthrowing their capitalist masters and creating a socialist golden age for European civilisation. Throughout 1915, Connolly and his tiny Irish Citizen Army moved closer to Pearse. The latter’s increasingly explicit talk of revolution seems to have convinced Connolly that some within the IRB were prepared to go beyond rhetoric and empty gestures. Pearse, genuinely shocked by the events of the 1913 Lockout, had afterwards shown an inclination towards cautious socialism. This gave Connolly hope that a revolution in Ireland might achieve more than simply a change of capitalists. In November 1915, Connolly was asserting that if Ireland “did not act now the name of this generation should in mercy to itself be expunged from records of Irish history”.

Ironically, in the autumn of 1915, the organisation which would benefit most from the IRB’s Rising, Sinn Féin, verged on obscurity. Arthur Griffith’s movement had preached a doctrine of national independence through a combination of resistance and social and economic self-sufficiency. Yet after contesting and losing a by-election in Leitrim in 1908, the movement had seemingly missed its opportunity. With the Irish Parliamentary Party’s successes in the form of the Third Home Rule Bill after the 1913 Lockout, the pressure for Irish political power now rose. According to one Dundalk Sinn Féin activist, by 1915 the public looked upon them “as cranks and dreamers”.

But Sinn Féin would be important for what it represented, an attempt to harness the energy and idealism of cultural nationalism in a more tangible and political form. Though it had no involvement with the IRB’s planned rebellion, for a decade British authorities had casually branded radical nationalists as “Sinn Féiners”. The defeated rebels of 1916 would be labelled the same, inadvertently investing Griffith’s Sinn Féin party with a role of authority in Irish nationalism it had never achieved by itself.
20 December 1909: James Joyce opens the Volta cinema, Dublin.

The Volta Cinema, Dublin, opened on Monday 20 December 1909 to a select audience, and opened to the general public the following day. It was the first dedicated cinema in Dublin.

Up to 1909, films had only been seen in Dublin as part of variety performances in theatres, but Joyce’s sister Eva had suggested the idea of a dedicated cinema for Dublin. Through his friend Nicolò Vidacovich, Joyce found a group of Triestine businessmen willing to fund the venture, and he arrived in Dublin at the end of October to start looking for suitable premises.

Joyce settled on a building at 45 Mary Street and set about making structural alterations. Once completed, the interior was decorated in crimson and light blue, and had a capacity of 420. The films were to be shown daily between 5 and 10pm, and admission cost between three and six pence. The silent films were accompanied by a string quartet, and the programme was to be changed twice weekly.

Two of the Triestine businessmen, Machnich and Rebez, arrived in November. Neither of them could speak any English, and it was probably Machnich that John Joyce described as “the hairy mechanic in a lion tamer’s coat”. Novak, the manager, arrived from Trieste at the beginning of December with the projectionist, Guido Lenardon, and the imminent opening was announced in the English film magazine, The Bioscope, on 9 December: ‘The International Cinematographic Society Volta is about to open a branch in Dublin’, it declared.

On the evening of the opening, the Monday of Christmas week, the electrician disappeared and Joyce had to go out in search of another. By the time he returned, the crowd was so large that the police had to be called to restore order. Among the first films shown were The First Paris Orphanage, La Pouponnière, and The Tragic Story of Beatrice Cenci (which the Freeman’s Journal claimed ‘was hardly as exhilarating a subject as one could desire on the eve of the festive season but it was very much appreciated and applauded’).

The Freeman’s Journal also claimed that the special feature of the cinema is that it is of Italian origin, and is in that respect somewhat out of the ordinary. As an initial experiment it was remarkably good…’ Over the following weeks the Italian films included Nero, Manoeuvres of the Italian Navy in the Mediterranean, Alboino, Fatal Forgetfulness, The Abduction of Mrs Berrilli, Bewitched Castle, and Devilred Crab.

Perhaps it was the programmes of Italian films that put off Dublin audiences, or perhaps it was Novak’s dislike of the Irish climate, but the partners were soon talking about making structural alterations. Once completed, the interior was decorated in crimson and light blue, and had a capacity of 420. The films were to be shown daily between 5 and 10pm, and admission cost between three and six pence. The silent films were accompanied by a string quartet, and the programme was to be changed twice weekly.

Joyce settled on a building at 45 Mary Street and set about making structural alterations. Once completed, the interior was decorated in crimson and light blue, and had a capacity of 420. The films were to be shown daily between 5 and 10pm, and admission cost between three and six pence. The silent films were accompanied by a string quartet, and the programme was to be changed twice weekly.

95th Anniversary. Cork Burned by the Black and Tans – December 1920

The Burning of Cork took place on the night of 11-12 December 1920, during the Irish War of Independence. It followed an Irish Republican Army (IRA) attack on a British Auxiliary patrol in the city, in which one of the patrol, Spencer Chapman, was killed by an IRA grenade. In retaliation for Chapman’s death, Auxiliaries, Black and Tans and British soldiers set fire to a number of houses and businesses in the city centre. Many attackers were also reported being beaten, shot at, robbed and verbally abused by British forces. Firefighters later testified that British forces hindered their attempts to tackle the blazes by intimidating them, shooting at them and/or cutting their hoses. There were four known fatalities, the above-mentioned Auxiliary, as well as two IRA volunteers (who were brothers), and a civilian woman who died of a heart attack.

More than 40 business premises, 300 residential properties, City Hall and the Carnegie Library were destroyed by fire. Over £3 million worth of damage (1920 value; 172 million euro in today’s money) was done, 2,000 people were left jobless and many were left homeless. Two unarmed IRA volunteers were shot dead at their home in the north of the city, and a woman died of a heart attack when Auxiliaries burst into her home.

British forces carried out many other reprisals on Irish civilians during the war, but the burning of Cork was one of the biggest and most well known. The British government initially denied that its forces had started the fires and blamed them on the IRA. However, a British Army inquiry (which resulted in the “Strickland Report”) concluded that a company of Auxiliaries was responsible. Although many witnesses described the burnings as systematic and organized, there is debate over whether they had been planned before the ambush.

The War of Independence had begun in 1919, following the declaration of an Irish Republic and its parliament, Dáil Éireann. The army of the new republic, the Irish Republican Army (IRA), waged a guerrilla war against British forces in Ireland: the British Army and the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC). To help fight the IRA, the British Government formed the Auxiliary Division. This was a paramilitary unit composed of ex-soldiers from Britain which specialized in counter-insurgency. It also recruited thousands of British ex-soldiers into the RIC, who became known as “Black and Tans”. Both groups became infamous for their reprisals against Irish civilians for IRA attacks. Many villages were sacked and burnt. IRA intelligence officer Florence O’Donoghue wrote that the subsequent burning and looting of Cork was “not an isolated incident, but rather the large-scale application of a policy initiated and approved, implicitly or explicitly, by the [British government].”

For most of the war, County Cork was where the IRA was most active. On 28 November 1920, the IRA’s 3rd Cork Brigade ambushed an Auxiliary patrol at Kilmichael, killing 17 Auxiliaries. This was the biggest loss of life for the British in County Cork since the beginning of the war. On 10 December, British forces declared martial law in counties Cork (including the city), Kerry, Limerick, and Tipperary. It also imposed a military curfew on Cork city, which began at 10PM each night. IRA volunteer Séan Healy later recalled that “at least 1,000 troops would pour out of Victoria Barracks at this hour and take over complete control of the city”.

The official British report on the ambush said that 12 members of the Auxiliary Division of the Royal Irish Constabulary were wounded and that one, Temporary Cadet Spencer Chapman, a former Officer in the 4th Battalion London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers), died from his wounds shortly after.

Ambush at Dillon’s Cross

The IRA had found that an Auxiliary patrol usually left Victoria Barracks (in the north of Cork city) every night at 8PM and made its way to the city centre via Dillon’s Cross. On 11 December, IRA commander Seán O’Donoghue received intelligence that two lorries of Auxiliaries would be leaving the barracks that night and travelling with them would be British intelligence officer Captain James Kelly. That evening, a unit of British volunteers commanded by O’Donoghue took up position between the barracks and Dillon’s Cross. Their goal was to destroy the patrol and capture or kill Captain Kelly. Five of the volunteers hid behind a stone wall while one, Michael Kenny, stood across the road dressed like an off-duty British officer. When the lorries neared he was to beckon the driver of the first lorry to slow down or stop. The neighbourhood was mainly unionist and there were many British servicemen and their relatives living there.

At 8PM, two lorries carrying 13 Auxiliaries emerged from the barracks. The first lorry slowed when the driver spotted Kenny and, as it did so, the IRA unit attacked with grenades and revolvers. As the IRA unit made its escape, some of the Auxiliaries managed to fire their rifles in the direction of the volunteers while others dragged the wounded to the nearest cover: O’Sullivan’s pub.

The Auxiliaries charged into the pub with weapons drawn and ordered everyone to put their hands over their heads to be searched. Backup and an ambulance were sent from the nearby barracks. One witness described seeing a number of young men being rounded-up and forced to lie on the ground. The Auxiliaries dragged one of them to the middle of the crossroads, strapped him naked and forced him to sing “God Save the King” until he collapsed on the road.

The official report on the ambush said that 12 members of the Auxiliary Division of the Royal Irish Constabulary were wounded and that one, Temporary Cadet Spencer Chapman, a former Officer in the 4th Battalion London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers), died from his wounds shortly after.

Burning and looting

Angered by an attack so near their headquarters and still seeking retribution for the deaths of their colleagues at Kilmichael, the Auxiliaries in Victoria Barracks gathered to wreak their revenge. Charles Schulze, a member of the Auxiliaries, and a former British Army Captain in the Dorsetshire Regiment during World War I, organized a group of Auxiliaries to burn the centre of Cork.

At 9:30PM, lorries of Auxiliaries and British soldiers left the barracks and drove to Dillon’s Cross. The vehicle was broken into a number of houses and herded the occupants on to the street. They then set the houses on fire and stood guard as they were razed to the ground. Those who tried to intervene were fired upon and some were badly beaten. Seven buildings were set alight at the crossroads.

At about the same time, a group of armed and uniformed Auxiliaries surrounded a tram at Summerhill, smashed its windows, and forced all the passengers out. According to witnesses, a number of the passengers (including at least three women) were repeatedly kicked and hit with rifle butts, threatened, and verbally abused.
The Auxiliaries then forced the passengers to line-up against a wall and searched them, while continuing the physical and verbal abuse. Some had thorny hedges plaited around them. Another tram was set alight near Fr Mathew’s statue.[8] Meanwhile, witnesses reported seeing a group of 14–18 Black and Tans firing wildly for upwards of 20 minutes on nearby MacCurtain Street.

Not long after, witnesses reported seeing groups of armed men on St Patrick’s Street, the city’s main shopping street. Some were uniformed or partially uniformed members of the Auxiliaries and British Army while others wore no uniforms. They were seen firing into the smashing shop windows and setting buildings alight. Many reported hearing bombs exploding. A group of Auxiliaries were seen throwing a bomb into the ground floor of the Munster Arcade, which housed both shops and flats. It exploded under the residential quarters while people were inside the building. They managed to escape unharmed but were then detained by the Auxiliaries.

The fire brigade was informed of the fire at Dillon’s Cross shortly before 10PM and was sent to deal with it at once. However, on finding that Grant’s department store on St Patrick’s Street was ablaze, they decided to tackle it first. Superintendent Alfred Hutson called Victoria Barracks and asked them to tackle the fire at Dillon’s Cross so that he could deal with the burning of his store. Hutson took no heed of his asking. As he did not have enough resources to deal with all the fires at once, “he would have to make choices – some fires he would fight, others he could not”.

Hutson went to oversee the operation on St Patrick’s Street and there he met Cork Examiner reporter Alan Ellis. Hutson told Ellis “that all the fires were being deliberately started by incendiary bombs, and in several cases he had seen soldiers pouring cans of petrol into buildings and setting them alight”. A number of firemen later testified that British forces hindered their attempts to tackle the blazes by intimidating them, cutting their hoses and/or driving lorries over the hoses. They also said that firemen were shot at and that at least two were wounded by gunfire.

Shortly after 3AM, Alan Ellis came upon a unit of the fire brigade pinned down by gunfire near City Hall. The firemen said that they were being shot at by Black and Tans who had broken up into groups. They were reported to have seen uniformed men carrying cans of petrol into the building from nearby Union Quay barracks. At about 4AM a large explosion was heard and City Hall and the neighbouring Carnegie Library went up in flames, resulting in the loss of many of the city’s public records. When more firemen arrived, British forces fired at them and refused them access to water. The last act of firemen was to be killed by British forces.

Three days after the fire, on 15 December, two lorry-loads of Auxiliaries were travelling from Dunmanway to Cork for the funeral of Spencer Chapman, their comrade killed at Dillon’s Cross. When they met two men (an elderly priest and a farmer’s son) helping a resident magistrate fix his horse, they were asked if they had any involvement and accused the IRA of starting the fire. When asked about reports of firefighting equipment being commandeered by superior officers, Florence (‘Florrie’) O’Donoghue, who was intelligence officer of the 1st Cork Brigade IRA at the time, wrote:

“What appears more probable is that the ambush provided the excuse for an act which was long premeditated and for which all arrangements had been made. The rapidity with which supplies of petrol and Verey lights were brought from Cork barracks to the centre of the city, and the deliberate manner in which the work of firing the various premises was divided amongst groups under the control of officers, gives evidence of organisation and pre-arrangement. Moreover, the selection of certain premises for destruction and the attempt made by an Auxilary officer to prevent the looting of one shop by Black and Tans. You are in the wrong shop; that man is a Loyalist,” and the reply, “We don’t give a damn; this is the shop that was pointed out to us”, is additional proof that the matter had been carefully planned beforehand.”

Investigation

Cork Corporation and other public bodies, together with nationalist politicians, called for an open and impartial inquiry. In the British House of Commons, Sir Hamar Greenwood, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, refused demands for such an inquiry. He denied that British forces had any involvement and accused the IRA of starting the fires. When asked about reports of firemen being injured by British forces he said “Every available policeman and soldier in Cork was turned out at once and without their assistance the fire brigade could not have gone through the crowds and did the work that they tried to do”. Bonar Law said “in the present condition of Ireland, we have little chance of any impartial inquiry in a military court than in any other”. The British military then launched its own inquiry, which became known as the “Strickland Report”, but Cork Corporation instructed its employees and other corporate officials to take no part in the investigation. The findings of the inquiry, composed of members of the Auxiliaries’ K Company, based at Victoria Barracks. The Auxiliaries, it was claimed, set the fires in reprisal for the IRA attack at Dillon’s Cross. However, the British Government refused to publish the report.

The Irish Labour Party and Trades Union Congress published a pamphlet in January 1921 entitled “Who burned Cork City?” The work drew on evidence from hundreds of eyewitness, gathered by Seamus Fitzgerald, which suggested that the fires had been set by British forces and that British forces had encouraged firefighters from tackling the blaze. The material was collated by the President of University College Cork, Alfred O’Rahilly.

K Company Auxiliary Charles Schulze, a former British Army Captain who was later identified as the main organizer of the burning, wrote in a letter to his girlfriend in England that it was “sweet revenge” while in a letter to his mother he wrote: “Many who had witnessed scenes in France and Flanders say that nothing they had experienced was comparable with the punishment meted out in Cork”. After the fire, K Company was moved to Dunmanway and began wearing burnt corsets in their caps in reference to the burning of the city. For their part in the arson and looting, K Company was disbanded on 31 March 1921.

There has been debate over whether British forces at Victoria Barracks had planned to burn the city before the ambush at Dillon’s Cross, whether the British Army itself was responsible, and whether the fire was set by prisoners being commanded by superior officers. Florence (‘Florrie’) O’Donoghue, who was intelligence officer of the 1st Cork Brigade IRA at the time, wrote:

Two claims for injuries received at the Dillon’s Cross ambush on 14 December, after which the burning of Cork city took place, were heard by the Recorder of Cork. The awards for them were: Cadet A. Moloney, 600; Cadet A. Singleton, 600; Constable J. O’Callaghan, 400; Constable J. O’Callaghan, 150; Constable J. O’Callaghan, 350; Constable J. O’Callaghan, 250; Constable J. O’Callaghan, 150; Constable J. O’Callaghan, 300; Constable J. O’Callaghan, 100; Constable J. O’Callaghan, 50; Constable J. O’Callaghan, 20; Constable J. O’Callaghan, 10; Constable J. O’Callaghan, 5; Constable J. O’Callaghan, 2; Constable J. O’Callaghan, 1; Constable J. O’Callaghan, 0.5.

Other awards were:

- Father of Const. Johnson, died wounded 1,000
- Constable T. Donnell, died wounded 600
- Constable T. Donnell, died wounded 350
- Constable T. Donnell, died wounded 250
- Constable T. Donnell, died wounded 150
- Constable T. Donnell, died wounded 100
- Constable T. Donnell, died wounded 50
- Constable T. Donnell, died wounded 20
- Constable T. Donnell, died wounded 10
- Constable T. Donnell, died wounded 5
- Constable T. Donnell, died wounded 2
- Constable T. Donnell, died wounded 1
- Constable T. Donnell, died wounded 0.5

- Reps. Bandman E. H., Whitehead, wounded 600
- Reps. Bandman E. H., Whitehead, wounded 350
- Reps. Bandman E. H., Whitehead, wounded 200
- Reps. Bandman E. H., Whitehead, wounded 150
- Reps. Bandman E. H., Whitehead, wounded 100
- Reps. Bandman E. H., Whitehead, wounded 50
- Reps. Bandman E. H., Whitehead, wounded 25
- Reps. Bandman E. H., Whitehead, wounded 15
- Reps. Bandman E. H., Whitehead, wounded 10
- Reps. Bandman E. H., Whitehead, wounded 5

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A very Happy Christmas and New Year 2016 to all family, extended family, friends and readers of the Newsletter. Hopefully, many of us can meet up during the Centenary Commemorations in 2016. Looking forward to seeing you there.

Ruairí
Newsletter editor

In your January 2016 Newsletter:

- Opening of the Centenary Year
- Weddings of Teddie Quinn & Joe Clancy 1921 and Carmel Quinn & Michael Lynch 1922 by Freddie O’Dwyer & Ruairí Lynch
- Irish Volunteer Training, Cork
- Planning for a Rising
- The Irish Crown Jewels theft
- Michael Collins returns
- Diarmuid Lynch – early years
- January Shipwrecks
- Tracton and the Cistercians

Available early January, 2016
email: ruairi_lynch@hotmail.com
Dublin Metropolitan Police - Movements of Dublin Extremists

Reports on Diarmuid Lynch

October - November 1915

The Chief Secretary's Office, Crime Branch: Movement of Extremists collection was a series of daily reports by the Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) Detective Department on the movements and associations of pro-independence suspects.

These reports were compiled by Superintendent Owen Brien and submitted to the Under Secretary for Ireland, Sir Matthew Nathan, at Dublin Castle, annotated and then read by the Chief Secretary of Ireland, Sir Augustine Birrell.

These reports describe Republican activity in Dublin during the 11 months preceding the Easter Rising and detail intelligence gathered at a number of key city centre locations, most notably the shop of Thomas J Clarke at 75 Parnell Street, the Irish Volunteers Office at 2 Dawson Street, the Irish National Foresters Hall at 41 Parnell Street and the Gaelic League Offices in 25 Parnell Street. Major events which took place in 1915 and 1916 are recorded in the reports, including the funeral of Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa and the Annual Convention of Irish Volunteers.

The reports also include details of anti-recruitment and conscription rallies, meetings of the Irish Women’s Franchise League, and protests against the imprisonment of revolutionaries under the Defence of the Realm Act and the movement of suspects to locations and major events outside of Dublin.

There are over 230 individuals referred to in the reports, principally members of the Irish Volunteers, the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Sinn Féin. The primary person of interest is Thomas J Clarke, who is mentioned in almost every report, while the other most frequently mentioned individuals include Pierce Beasley, Thomas Byrne, Con Colbert, Bulmer Hobson, Seán T Ó Ceallaigh, Seán Mac Diarmada, John McGarry, Diarmuid Lynch, Joseph McGuinness, Herbert Mellows, Michael O’Hanrahan, William O’Leary Curtis, Michael Joseph O’Rahilly and James Joseph Walsh.

In total there were approximately 260 files comprising 700 documents which were conserved, listed and scanned.

To view these and other reports in full, visit the National Archives of Ireland website.

The reports included with the Newsletter relate to Diarmuid Lynch and also include details of historic and unusual events. Side notes provide contextual historical information on events and personalities (Click on items hyperlinked for further info)

Earlier DMP reports are available in previous Newsletters or online at www.diarmuidlynch.weebly.com
Sunday, 31 October 1915.

The Annual Convention of the Irish Volunteers was held in the Abbey Theatre yesterday. Those observed in attendance included - Professor John McNeill, L. Ginnell, M. P.; M. J. O’Rahilly; P. H. Pearse; J. Plunkett; Thomas McDonagh; E. De Valera; Thomas J. Clarke; Bulmer Hobson; E. Kent; E. Daly; John T. Kelly, T. C.; P. Beaasley; John Fitzgibbon; John Milroy; D. Lynch; Geo. Irvine; John McDermott; Wm. Mellon; H. Mellon; J. O’Connor; J. J. O’Connell; P. Ryan; Joseph McGuinness; B. Parsons; C. Colber; J. McGarry; J. J. Walsh; T. McCarthy; Thomas Byrne; P. Hughes, Dundalk; J. R. Etchingham, Cork; Pierce McCann, Thurles; James Ledian, Limerick; F. Lawless, Swords; Thomas Ahe, Lusk; A. W. Cotton, Tralee; and E. O’Duffy, Secretary, Sinn Fein League.

About 1000 Volunteers, 700 of whom carried rifles, assembled at 41, Parnell Sqr. at 2 p.m., and afterwards marched via Sackville St. to Abbey St., passing the Theatre where they were reviewed by the leading members of the Convention. The Volunteers then proceeded to Beresford Place, where they disbanded.

The business of the Convention, which had commenced at 10. 30 a.m., was then resumed and continued until 7. 30 p.m. when...
Page 2 of the DMP Report on the 2nd Annual Convention of the Irish Volunteers. Also attending were many that had as yet, not come to the attention of the DMP. See page 7 of this Newsletter for details of the Irish Volunteers Second National Convention.

Monday, 1 November 1915.

"D. Lynch, T. Barry, T.J. McSwiney, Wm. Roche and J. O'Sullivan, Cork; Patrick Hughes, Dundalk, and E. O'Duffy in Volunteer Office, 2 Dawson St. together for an hour from 3 p.m."
Monday, 1 November 1915.

A meeting, in support of the Irish Language movement, took place last night in the Mansion House. Mr John McNeill presided, and others present included: Thomas McDonagh, M. J. O'Rahilly; Bulmer Hobson; John T. Kelly, T. C.; E. Kent; M. O'Hanrahan; D. Lynch; John McDermott; T. S. Cuffe; John Fitzgibbon; E. O'Duffy; E. Blythe; T. J. McSwiney; Cork; Pierce Beasley; J. Murray; G. Crofts; E. De Valera; A. W. Cotton; Tralee; and P. H. Pearse.

There was considerable interruption when Alderman Byrne, M. P. rose to address the meeting. He was questioned by a large section of the audience as to his action in the Corporation respecting Kuno Meyer.

The Chairman, after some difficulty, succeeded in obtaining a hearing for the Alderman. Other speakers having followed the proceedings ended without further disorder.

James Connolly’s The Worker’s Republic of November 6, 1915, carried a comment on Kuno Meyer & a letter from Michael Mallin:

Kuno Meyer (20 December 1858 – 11 October 1919) was a German scholar, distinguished in the field of Celtic philology and literature. His pro-German stance at the start of World War I while traveling in the United States was a source of controversy.

In 1903 Meyer founded the School of Irish Learning in Dublin, and the next year created its journal Ériu, of which he was the editor. Also in 1904 he became Todd Professor in the Celtic Languages at the Royal Irish Academy. At the outbreak of the First World War, Meyer left Europe for the United States of America, where he lectured at Columbia, Urbana University, and elsewhere. A pro-German speech he gave in December 1914 to Clan na Gael on Long Island caused outrage in Britain and Ireland, and as a result he was removed from the roll of freemen in Dublin and Cork and from his Honorary Professorship of Celtic at Liverpool, and he resigned as Director of the School of Irish Learning and editor of Ériu.

Meyer remained in the United States and went on a lecture tour around the country. He was injured in a railway collision in 1915 and met 27-year-old Florence Lewis while recovering in a California hospital. They married shortly afterwards. Meyer died on 11 October 1919, in Leipzig. In 1920, he was re-granted the Freedom of the City of Cork, as follows: “Re-elected 14th May, 1920, and order of Council of the 8th January, 1915, expunging his name from the roll rescinded.” The expunging of Meyer’s name from the Roll of Honorary Freemen of Dublin on 15 March 1915 by the Irish Parliamentary Party-controlled Council was rescinded on 19 April 1920, three months after Sinn Féin won control of the City Council.
Wednesday, 3 November 1915.

"With Thomas J. Clarke, 75 Parnell St....Pierce Beasley (Pierce Beaslaí) and D. Lynch from 11.45am until 12 noon..."

"Thomas J. Clarke and D. Lynch at 12, D'Olier Street for a quarter of an hour between 1 & 2 pm."
Friday, 5 November 1915.

"With Thomas J. Clarke, 75 Parnell St….Thomas Byrne and D. Lynch for a quarter of an hour from 8.40 pm"
Saturday, 6 November 1915.

“With Thomas J Clarke, 75 Parnell St. Saturday...D.Lynch, C. Collins G.P.O and Patk. O’Keeffe G.P.O, together from 9:40 p.m. to 10 p.m...”

“A Gaelic League Carnival was held in the Round Room, Mansion House between 8pm and 11pm. About 150 persons were present including... D. Lynch...”
Monday, 8 November 1915.

"With Thomas J. Clarke, 75 Parnell St.…John T. Kelly [Sean T. O’Kelly] and D. Lynch from 9pm to 9.15pm"

Tuesday, 9 November 1915.

"With Thomas J. Clarke, 75 Parnell St.…John [Sean] McDermott and D. Lynch from 10.30 pm to 10.35 pm."
Friday, 12 November, 1915

“With Thomas J. Clarke, 75 Parnell St…. D. Lynch, 11.15am to 11.30am….D.Lynch left Amiens St. by 3 p.m. train en route to Belfast. R.I.C. informed…”

Monday, 15 November, 1915

“With Thomas J. Clarke, 75 Parnell St…. D. Lynch for half an hour between 1 & 2pm….Pierce McCann, Cashel, Bulmer Hobson, H. Mellows, M. O’Hanrahan, P. Ryan, J.J. O’Connell and D. Lynch in Volunteer Office, 2 Dawson St. at 12 noon ”
Tuesday, 16 November, 1915

"With Thomas J. Clarke, 75 Parnell St…. D. Lynch and M. McGinn for half an hour between 12 & 1 p.m….D.Lynch left Kingsbridge en route to Cork, by 3 p.m. by train. R.I.C. informed…"

Michael ‘Mick’ McGinn, originally from Omagh, Co. Tyrone where he was a baker. Forced to leave the area due to his revolutionary sympathies, he moved to Dublin and was employed as the caretaker of the Clontarf Town Hall. He was part of the 1915 O'Donovan Rossa Organising Committee (where this image is sourced) and a senior IRB member. Imprisoned in Frongoch following the Rising.
**G (detective) Division** was a plainclothes divisional office of the Dublin Metropolitan Police concerned with detective police work. Divisions A to F of the DMP were uniformed sections responsible for particular districts of the city. The colloquial nickname amongst Dubliners for these detectives was “‘G’ Men”. One of the ‘Mosquito Press’ newspapers, ‘The Spark’ comments on the DMP Detective Division men, ‘The “G” Men in its Issue 21 November, 1915:

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**THE SPARK**

3

**THE “G” MEN.**

Whenever you see a tall man trying to walk an umbrella comfortably, you see a “‘G” man. He seems to be constantly out of work, but he is not. He is like the “beauty chorus,” more or less; he walks on and off. He smokes as he walks, and looks round with a childish air, and then goes home and writes a report as grammatical as may be. He keeps his own counsel, trusts no man, and has an eye to his brother “‘G” men, in whose deliberations may lie an easy revenue to the observant official. His pay is returned at about £2 per week, yet when he retires, he usually puts £1,000 into spin property, or into the trade,” an index of no ordinary thrift. He is sometimes a “practical” Catholic, and attends the sodality regularly, for an accurate record must be kept of all sermons, especially or those in Irish. He will drop into a Gaelic League class, and has been known to present himself to a hurling club as a prospective member.

You will see a “‘G” man at all railway stations round Dublin. See his feet and the circumambient spittle. Years of habit cannot break him off the habit of expectoration—a matter which the authorities might well consider in its regard both to hygiene and efficiency. The railway “‘G” man smokes with a simper. “A nice young fellow waiting for a friend from Dunmanway.” Don’t talk Irish near him; he knows it better than yourself. How happy he is, if he can report even one youth with a green, white, or orange badge. It is thus the watch-dog of Empire thrives.

The “‘G” man will loiter near a Volunteer drillground when a full parade is on. He is then a middle-aged, fatherly provincial; large boots, an umbrella, and, generally, an Abbey Theatre appearance. “Them is a fine, strapping, lot of young lads, Glory be to God! I dunno would I be too old to join? And is them real rifles? Well yiz are great chaps.”

Some “‘G” men are hearty, talkative, individuals. They meet you in the tavern, talk horses, give out good tips, and stand drinks. Later, they admit a connection with the police force, and bring you into the snug. There, with a mysterious air, many winks, nods, and contractions of the eyebrows, they begin to talk. They then break off suddenly, and look round as if they expected to see Sir Matthew or John S. Kelly in the offing. At last, holding an index finger near their nose, they whisper: “All the D.M.P. men in Dublin is served out with revolvers at night.” This type of “‘G” man incessantly laments his fate in being in the force. “It...”
The National Archives of Ireland

Thanks to the National Archives of Ireland for these excerpts