



# Cork Rebel Way

— *The Road to Irish Freedom* —

FREE

VOLUME 1

JULY 2019



Sam  
Maguire



O'Donovan  
Rossa



Tom  
Hales



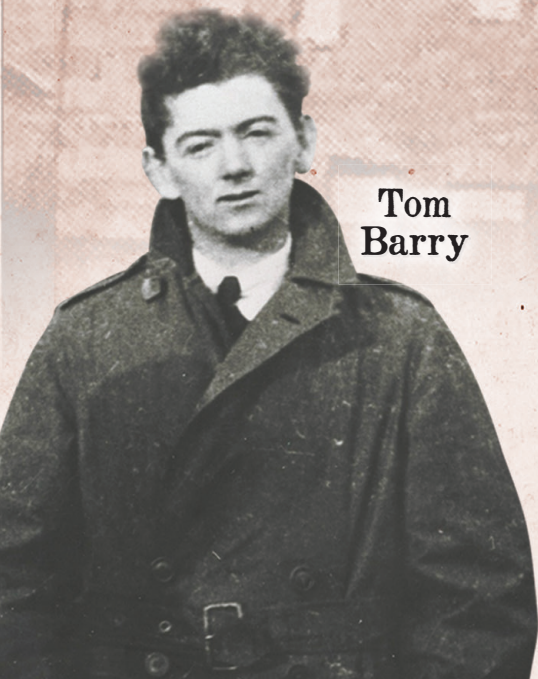
Cumann na mBan



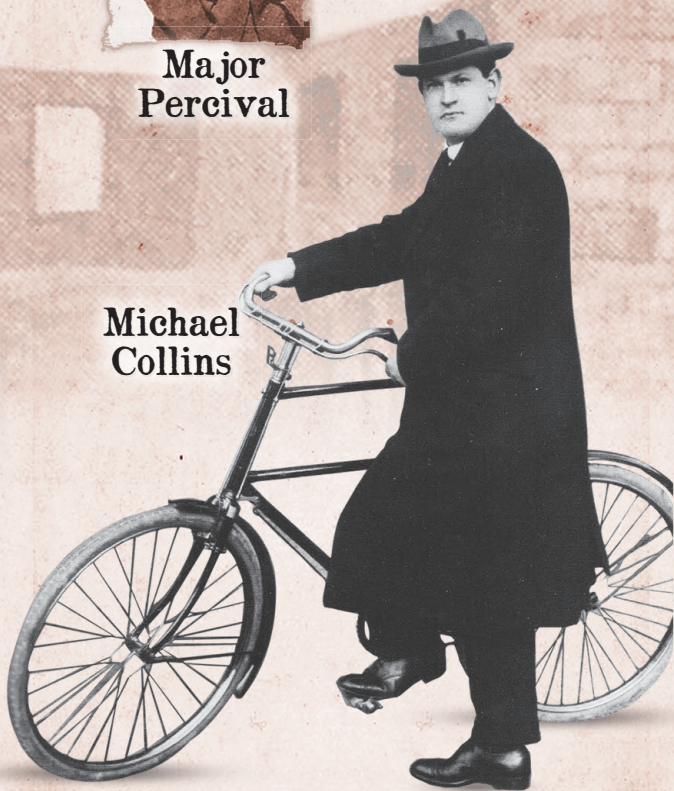
Charlie  
Hurley



Major  
Percival



Tom  
Barry



Michael  
Collins



# EDITORIAL

In May 2019 a large crowd representing Historical Societies, Museums, the accommodation sector and the arts from all over West Cork attended a meeting to establish a new visitor-driving route. The driving route is called the “Cork Rebel Way” and the aim behind the plan is to encourage and guide visitors to the many sites associated with the 1916 rebellion, the War Of Independence and Civil War throughout West and Mid Cork.

The initial area envisaged for the Cork Rebel way will take in the territory from Kinsale in the east, to the Beara peninsula in the west and from the Wild Atlantic Way along the South Cork coast to the Cork Macroom / Killarney road (N22) in the North.

The Cork Rebel Way area is unique in that it holds some of the most important sites associated with the Irish Revolutionary period. Visitors will be guided to well-known sites like Kilmichael, Béal na Blá and Crossbarry. But many lesser-known sites like Newcestown, where the IRA ambushed an Essex Patrol in 1920, Rosscarbery where the attack on the RIC barracks took place in 1921 and Crois na Leanbh near Kilbrittain, where four IRA volunteers were shot while trenching a road in 1921, will also be promoted. Figures like Michael Collins, Tom Barry, Tom Hales, Sean Hales, Charlie Hurley, Sam Maguire, JJ Walsh, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, Mary Jane Irwin and British Officer Major A E Percival, all form part of the story found along the Cork Rebel Way. There are also many sites on the Cork Rebel Way associated with incidents that happened over the last four

hundred years, which had an influence on the Revolutionary period later.

The following sites will also form part of the new driving route: The Battle of Kinsale (1601), the attempted French Landing in Bantry Bay (1796), the Battle of the Big Cross (1798), the Famine, Land War Evictions and the sinking of the Lusitania.

The generation that fought and lived through the troubled times, men and women, will be remembered and commemorated on the Cork Rebel Way. The people of Ireland of today owe a huge debt of gratitude to that generation. We have them to thank for the democratic rights, freedom and choices that we enjoy today.

The Cork Rebel Way is a bottom up, community led initiative, being influenced by the old custom of the meitheal and the Co-operative.

The Cork Rebel Way plan will encourage visitors to visit the small towns, villages and the countryside located off the usual tourist routes. Visitors will remain in the area for longer and hopefully make a return visit, with an obvious economic boost for local business.

Communities in the Cork Rebel Way area have over the last number of years set up museums, erected statues, plaques, information boards and laid out memorial gardens. It is hoped that the setting up of the Cork Rebel Way will encourage even more of these initiatives, for locals and visitors to explore and enjoy.

The Cork Rebel Way magazine is the first step in the development of the new driving route. Further initiatives are planned for the near future.



Over the coming winter the Cork Rebel Way Group is exploring the development of a mobile app and a podcast trail, using technology to guide visitors to all the amazing historic sites along the Cork Rebel Way. When they get there, their phone will give them the story of the event that happened at that specific site.

As promoters of the Cork Rebel Way we would like to thank all the writers and historians who are providing articles for the Cork Rebel Way Magazine. We appreciate the time you have devoted to the writing of the pieces.

A big thanks also to the businesses and organisations that took out advertising in this magazine, without your support this initiative would not be possible.

Promoters of the Cork Rebel Way are also conscious that not all communities in the proposed driving route area are represented in the Cork Rebel Way Magazine. If any Communities or Businesses want to become part of the Cork Rebel Way initiative they can e-mail michaelcollinscentre@gmail.com to contact Tim Crowley or columcronin@gmail.com to contact Colum Cronin.

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*Special Thanks To*  
**Cumann Seannchais Cloich na Coilte**  
**Niamh Crowley**  
**Photographs - Colum Cronin**

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# Cork Rebel Way

*The Road to Irish Freedom*

## Macroom

N22

### Castletown

Kinneigh  
Graves Of  
Kilmichael  
IRA Dead

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### Inchigeelagh

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### Kilmichael

Ambush  
28th Nov  
1920

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### Coppeen

### Ballineen/Enniskeane

Grave of "Flyer" Nyhan

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## Dunmanway

Home town of  
Sam Maguire

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N71

## Bantry

Attempted French  
Landing 1796

Page 9

### Drinagh

Home of  
Sean Hurley

### Michael Collins Country

Woodfield  
Sam's Cross  
Lisavaird

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N71

## Skibbereen

Potato Famine  
1845-1851

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### Famine Centre

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### Rosscarbery

Battle of Burgatia House  
2nd Feb 1921  
Attack on RIC  
Barracks  
30th March 1921

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**Cork City**

**Independence Museum**  
Kilmurry  
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**Crossbarry**  
Ambush  
19th March  
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**Upton**  
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**Béal na Blá**  
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Former British  
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**Kinsale**  
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Page 6

**Big Cross**  
1798

**Ballinadee**  
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**Kilbrittain**  
Crosanalanniv  
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16th Feb  
1921  
Page 51

**Clonakilty**

**Timoleague**

**Michael Collins**  
Centre  
Castlevew  
Page 18

**Michael Collins**  
House  
Museum  
Page 46



Museum



# KINSALE

## A Battle of Incalculable Consequence

BY JJ HURLEY

The recent anniversary of the First World War has again drawn our attention to how pivotal events and battles resonate and continue to shape the destiny of humanity, one of those seminal historic landmarks on the history of the world's road is the Battle of Kinsale. Fought between two of the world's leading superpowers of the time, England and Spain, its dramatic events were to have seismic consequences not just for Ireland and Europe but indeed the world.

The arrival of 3,500 Spanish soldiers in Kinsale on September 23rd 1601, under the command of Don Juan D' Aquila, set the stage for what was to be a winner takes all confrontation, as Spain sought to aid the northern Gaelic chieftains of Hugh O' Neill of Tyrone and Hugh Roe O' Donnell of Tyrconnel, who had been engaged in a nine year conflict with the Tudor monarchy,



*Briseád Cionn tSaile. "The Chair" Erected in 2001 to mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle Of Kinsale.*



*Memorial At the Site Of The Battle Of Kinsale 1601,*

inflicting a number of significant defeats on their English opponents at the Battle of Clontibret (1595) and Battle of the Yellow Ford (1598).

Of course, the Spanish intervention in the conflict was not just because of some benevolent regard for the downtrodden Irish, nor as a holy war against a hedonist monarchy, who had turned its back on God's representative on the earth: the Pope.

However, it was an attempt to finally 'snuff out' England's ability to interfere with its lucrative gold trade from the Spanish colonies in the Americas, by driving the Tudor monarchy out of Ireland and establishing Spanish garrisons on England's western flank, thereby severely restricting the English navy's ability to continue its attacks on Spanish trade.

In theory a great plan, but the choice of Kinsale as a landing point left a little matter of 300 miles between the Spanish and its Irish allies, served in between by a significant hostile number of not just English soldiers but also Irish chieftains, including the Burkes and O'Briens.

The town itself, which had received its first royal charter as far back as 1334, when Edward 111, acknowledged its significance, had fallen into something of disrepair, with its defence walls reported to be in a precarious state.

Soon surrounded by an English force of 11,000 men, under the command of the then Lord Deputy of Ireland, Charles Blount, 8th Baron Mountjoy, and having already lost half the original Spanish force that had departed





*Memorial At The Site Of The Battle Of Kinsale 1601*

for Ireland, D' Aquila had no alternative but to sit tight in Kinsale and wait for his northern allies to arrive.

With the English now secured on the high ground to the north of the town, still known locally as Camphill, the English drove the Spaniards from a number of their local strong points including Castlepark, Ringcurran and Ringrone, with Admiral Richard Leveson also taking control of the town's harbour, with a fleet of ten warships from Queen Elizabeth's navy.

With a Spanish defeat looking inevitable, O'Neill and O'Donnell undertook a 300 mile march to the south, crisscrossing the country in the depths of winter, avoiding the English forces sent to intercept them, eventually setting up camp at Coolcorran, near to what is now Belgooly village.

In what was a complicated game of chess, one that now placed the English forces in a precarious position, cut off from its home ports in the mainland, surrounded by the Irish and Spanish, lacking supplies in atrocious weather conditions - Elizabeth's forces began to suffer significant losses, with 40 men a day succumbing to disease.

Indeed the situation might have been totally hopeless had it not been that Mountjoy's forces were being supplied from the sea, at a location now called Browns mills, from an inlet accessed from

Oysterhaven Bay.

However, just as the noose began to be tightened, a rash decision by the Irish forces, under the influence of O'Donnell, persuading O'Neill and Tyrell that the Spanish in Kinsale were imminently in danger of being forced to surrender.

It was agreed to launch an uphill attack, near the present areas of Millwater Cross and White Castle, on December 24th 1601 English calendar or January 3rd 1602 for the Irish and Spanish armies calendar.

With reports of some of the Irish units losing their way, ill prepared to fight a conventional battle, the English armies readiness resulted in a total defeat for the Irish forces, as it rushed down the slopes of Ardmartin to engage the advancing Irish infantry.

In the coming weeks, the Spanish surrendered and eventually O'Neill and O'Donnell, who were joined by O'Sullivan Beara, were forced to leave Ireland, in what became known as the flight of the earls.

With the utter destruction of the Irish Gaelic way of life, England's grip on its nearest colony became ever tighter - it would take another 400 years before it would be relinquished.

In addition, Spain would never again threaten English shores - the way was open for the creation of the largest Empire the



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# Wolfe Tone And Revolution in Bantry Area

BY ANGELA O'DONOVAN



Theobald Wolfe Tone  
1763 - 1798

Bantry Bay and the town of Bantry are particularly well known for the links with Theobald Wolfe Tone (1763 - 1798) who is known as the father of Irish republicanism. Wolfe Tone grew up in Dublin, the “second city of the British Empire” where the scourge of sectarianism was deeply embedded during the era of Penal Laws. He was particularly incited by the plight of the Irish Catholics. Tone as a teenager wanted to become a soldier and often went to the Phoenix Park with his friends to watch the British Army drill instead of attending class in school. However, his father decided he should be educated in Trinity College Dublin which he entered in 1871. Having spent time in London, he later returned to Dublin to work as a barrister, but politics seemed to take over his life. Tone had a clear belief in Irish sovereignty in all matters including international affairs, and Irish neutrality was always important to him. Wolfe Tone was a founding member of the Society of the United Irishmen in 1791.

He wrote some political pamphlets against the Government and was obliged to leave the country quickly, so he went to America with his wife and family. There he established contact with the French envoy, Adet, with a view to obtaining French help “to enable us to assert our independence.” In July 1796 he arrived in Paris, and met General Hoche. The French were impressed with Tone’s sincerity and agreed to send a fleet to Ireland to help the Irish situation. There were 43 ships under sail, with some 14,000 men on board, and they left Brest in December 1796, destined for Bantry Bay, Ireland. Tone was on board the *Indomptable*, under command of Commodore Jacques

Bedout. The military and naval commanders of the expedition were Hoche and Admiral Morand de Galles. both on board the *Fraternité*. Disaster struck on the first night out. The *Fraternité*, with the two chiefs on board, was separated from the rest of the fleet (by stormy weather, according to some accounts) and was not seen again until the return to France. In their passage out of the harbour of Brest, one ship, *Séduisant*, struck a rock, resulting in huge loss of life. A number of the ships separated from the fleet during the course of the journey to Bantry Bay. On 20<sup>th</sup> December Tone wrote in his diary “Last night, in moderate weather we contrived to separate again, and this morning we are but fifteen sail in company... It is scandalous to part company twice in four days in such moderate weather as we have had, but sea affairs I see are not our forte”

The fleet was spotted by an English brig, while on their way to Bantry, according to a shore Journal kept by an Edward Morgan. This details how the information was passed on to Richard White of Seafeld House (now Bantry House) who “called together the Corps of Yeomanry under his command and made the necessary arrangements for establishing a chain of outposts along the mountains of Sheeps Head Peninsula.”

On the night of 26<sup>th</sup> December more misfortune beset the fleet with one boat in collision with another off Bere Haven, and when some crew members of another boat went to help they were blown ashore on Bere Island. Two men were captured and brought to Seafeld House and later transferred to Dublin. The boat blown ashore was held at Bantry House for several years. Now





*Civil War Memorial - Between Kealkill And Gougane Barra- Captain Denis Kelly Killed In Action On The 17<sup>th</sup> Of April 1923.*

restored, it can be seen at Collins Barracks NMI Dublin.

During the following week some further ships of the fleet arrived in to Bantry Bay. However, because they were

still without their military and naval leaders, and some vessels were damaged and bad weather continued, it was decided to call off the planned invasion. On 6<sup>th</sup> January 1797 the fleet (as it was then) sailed out of the bay and returned to France

This was a bitter disappointment for Wolfe Tone, but Hoche assured him that the French would try again.

And in 1798 a further French fleet arrived in Ireland, again with Tone on board.

This time they arrived in Lough Swilly, Co. Donegal in October 1798 but were defeated in battle by the British navy, so once more Wolfe Tone's hopes were dashed. He was captured, and having been identified by former fellow Trinity student Sir George Hill, an Orange Order member, was taken to the Royal (Collins) Barracks, Dublin where he faced trial by court martial

He had asked to be afforded the death of a soldier (to be shot) but this too was refused and he died in his prison cell in November 1798. His death is recorded as by suicide but this is disputed. He is buried in Bodenstown Graveyard, Co Kildare.

As stated in the outset of this article, Wolfe Tone is regarded as the father of Irish republicanism, and if we look at the timeline to Irish freedom, it is easy to see him as the political ancestor of Daniel O'Connell who achieved catholic emancipation in 1829, the Young Irelanders, Parnell and Davitt, Pearse and Connolly, Collins and De Valera on Ireland's ultimate path to independence.

The memory of Wolfe Tone has always been kept alive in Bantry. In 1899 the members of Bantry Town Commissioners voted to change the name of the town square from Egerton Square to Wolfe Tone Square. In the late days of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a statue of Wolfe Tone was erected (51.680280, -9.452768) and stands proud on Wolfe Tone Square Bantry, reminding visitors and locals alike of the origins of our fight for freedom.

During the Irish War of Independence 1919 - 1921, and the ensuing Irish Civil War, there was much activity in West Cork and in particular in and around Bantry. Two large stone plaques are affixed to the front wall of the former courthouse building in Bantry, listing many of those who died in the locality during that troubled time.

There is no memorial to be found marking the death of any RIC members, nor any of the Crown Forces, except the plaque commemorating the Battle of Keimineagh, which lists one member of Crown Forces together with some locals, members of the Whiteboys (or Rockies, as they were known in that particular area)

Reminding us of a much earlier period of conflict involving Irish history, there is a lovely monument provided by Fáilte Ireland at the entrance to Bantry Marina Pier which marks the Battle of Banty Bay in 1689.

**51.6795498,-9.4615261**

Battle of Bantry Bay 1689 Pic Credit: Seamus Larkin

(between the French and the British)

**51.7609627,-9.3547437**

Civil War Memorial: Lieut.Denis Kelly Killed in Action 17<sup>th</sup> April 1923

(Between Kealkill and Gougane Barra) Pic Credit Frank O'Donovan

**51.813809,-9.3012472**

Battle of Keimaneigh 1822

(On road from Kealkill to Gougane Barra)

Pic Credit: Frank O'Donovan



*Plaque At The Site Of The Battle Of Keimaneigh 1822 - On The Road Between Kealkill And Gougane Barra*

# THE GREAT FAMINE

BY TERRI KEARNEY



The Great Irish Famine (1845-52) was a pivotal event in modern Irish history and the worst humanitarian crisis in nineteenth century Europe. About one million people perished in seven years, and some two million fled the country in the decade after 1845.

Skibbereen is synonymous with an Gorta Mór. As one of the worst affected areas in Ireland, Skibbereen Poor Law Union lost one in three of its people during the Famine years with reports from the area of starvation and death on an almost biblical scale.

One of the reasons Skibbereen featured so prominently in contemporary accounts was that a relief committee was set up in the town very early on in the crisis. Some of its members did extraordinary work, writing to newspapers, medical journals, religious journals and to some of their own personal contacts, to highlight how bad conditions were and to solicit support for their relief efforts.

One of the most often-quoted letters of the Famine was written by a Cork

magistrate, Mr Nicholas Cummins, who visited Skibbereen in December 1846. Cummins was appalled at what he saw and wrote an open letter to the Duke of Wellington, 'without apology or preface', describing the conditions he witnessed. That letter, published in the Times of London on Christmas Eve 1846, had a huge impact on British public opinion. Cummins' letter was reproduced in many other newspapers across Ireland, Britain and America.

Two young students from Oxford University visited Skibbereen in February 1847 and they described the area as 'the very nucleus of famine and disease.' And, of course, James Mahoney of the Illustrated London News also came to Skibbereen in early 1847. His powerful illustrations of this area were accompanied by very moving and vivid descriptions of what he saw here.

This publicity helped to raise awareness of the Great Famine internationally and greatly helped Famine relief efforts.

In the decades after the Famine, Skibbereen gained for itself a notoriety of a different kind with the founding of the Phoenix National and Literary Society by O'Donovan Rossa and other like-minded men and the rise of the Fenian movement in the area.

Skibbereen is known as the 'Cradle of Fenianism.' Rossa, who was to become the most valiant Fenian of them all – the man the English couldn't subdue, was born in Rosscarbery in 1831. In 1845, his world changed dramatically and Rossa witnessed at first hand the three great evils of Famine:



his family was evicted, his father died working on one of the infamous Board of Works schemes, and his whole family emigrated to Philadelphia with Rossa coming to Skibbereen to live with his aunt.

Rossa, one of the most iconic figures in Irish history, bridged that period from the Great Famine to the early years of the twentieth century and he became an inspiration for a new generation in the struggle for Irish independence. When Patrick Pearse delivered his famous panegyric at the graveside of Rossa in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin, on 1 August 1915 it set in motion a series of events that led inexorably to the 1916 Rising and the War of Independence.

Was it fate therefore that another Skibbereen man, Gearóid Ó Súilleabháin, should have the honour of raising the Tricolour over the GPO in Dublin on Easter Monday, 24 April 1916, to mark the beginning of the 1916 Rising? ‘T’ll be the



man to lead the van, beneath the flag of green, and loud and high we’ll raise the cry, Revenge for Skibbereen!’

Skibbereen is the most important and significant town in Ireland in terms of its Famine heritage and many of the sites in the town have direct links to this era. The Famine Story exhibition at Skibbereen Heritage Centre uses these places, alongside personal accounts of those who experienced the tragedy, to tell the story of Ireland’s Great Famine in microcosm.

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# DIARMUID (JEREMIAH) O'DONOVAN ROSSA (1831 - 1915)

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BY TRAOLACH Ó DONNABHÁIN

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Diarmuid O'Donovan Rossa was born in Rosscarbery Parish on Sept 4<sup>th</sup> 1831.

He became a prominent member of the IRB & the Fenians. He was also a nationalist newspaper publisher, a tireless worker throughout his life in the cause of Irish freedom, a native speaker & staunch supporter of the Gaelic Language.

In his youth, he buried his neighbours during the Famine and witnessed, first hand, the tyranny of the British conqueror and their planted landlords in West Cork. He subsequently witnessed the eviction and emigration of his entire family, suffered terrible cruelty in English jails before he too was exiled to the USA.

Rossa's father, Donchadha, died in 1847 from famine disease. His mother and family were subsequently evicted and his uncle in the USA forwarded the passage for the family to emigrate to Philadelphia, in early 1848. Rossa alone remained behind.

He moved to Skibbereen, where he worked in Downing's shop. He married Nanno Egar in 1853.

In 1856, with some other youths, he founded the 'Phoenix National & Literary Society' whose stated, long term aim was to free Ireland by force of arms. He was jailed in 1857 for a year without trial.



*Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa*

James Stephens founded the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) in Dublin in 1858 and Rossa immediately joined the Organisation.

His wife, Nanno died in 1859 leaving four young sons, the eldest 5 years old.

He married Eileen Buckley in 1861 & she died in childbirth in 1863 leaving another son.

In 1863, James Stephens invited Rossa to Dublin to manage the newspaper 'The Irish People'. He travelled all over Ireland & much of Britain organizing the IRB.

In 1864, Rossa married Mary Jane Irwin from Clonakilty. He was 33, she 18 years of age. They had 13 children, 6 of whom died in childbirth.

Rossa was arrested in 1865, found guilty of plotting against the Government, & sentenced to life imprisonment. He was subjected to some brutal, inhumane treatment in Pentonville, Portland & Chatham prisons in England.

In 1869, he was elected as an MP to the British House of Commons for Tipperary, but was rejected because of his prisoner status.

In 1870, following an inquiry into the inhumane treatment in prison, he & some others were pardoned provided they did not return to Ireland.

In 1871, he and four others, known as the 'Cuba 5' emigrated to New York. Mary & the family travelled with him. They settled in Staten Island. He became more involved than ever in the Fenian movement & was elected Chief Executive of the Fenian Brotherhood in 1877. He was made an official American citizen in 1878.

He founded his own newspaper 'The United Irishman' where he proposed a 'dynamite' campaign to drive the British out of Ireland. He spent the remainder of his life travelling throughout the USA promoting the Fenian stance against the British

**“ ‘The United Irishman’ where he proposed a ‘dynamite’ campaign to drive the British out of Ireland. ”**

occupation of Ireland.

In 1893, James Connolly invited him to Ireland & he gave numerous lectures throughout the country. His American citizenship saved him from the British. In 1904, he unveiled a memorial to the 'Manchester Martyrs' in Skibbereen. In 1905, Cork County Council offered him a job as Clerical Officer. He & Mary returned to Cork for some 8 months. He

gave some lectures about the county & took a keen interest in the revival of the Gaelic Language. Separation from their family & Mary's failing health forced them to return to the USA in 1906.

He died on June 29<sup>th</sup> 1915 at his home in New Brighton. The Republican Movement shipped his body back to Ireland; where, following a lying in state, he was buried in Glasnevin Cemetery on August 1<sup>st</sup> 1915. Massive crowds lined the streets, the leaders of the 1916 Rising made up the Funeral Committee & Pádraig Pearse gave the inspirational graveside oration.

A steel casket was used to transport his coffin back to Ireland. It was restored in 2015, for the centenary of his death & is located at Reenascreena, where his ancestors came from.

Monuments & memorial gardens have been erected and streets, bridges GAA Clubs throughout the country, north & south, have been named in his honour. In 2015, the centenary of his death, numerous commemorative events were held locally, nationally & in the USA.

**(References): Articles by Con O'Callaghan & Michael O'Sullivan.**

## O'Driscoll's Pub Reenascreena



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The Restored Steel casket used to transport the coffin containing the mortal remains of the Fenian Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa across the Atlantic from New York to Ireland in 1915, is on permanent display in a special building next to O'Driscolls Public House.



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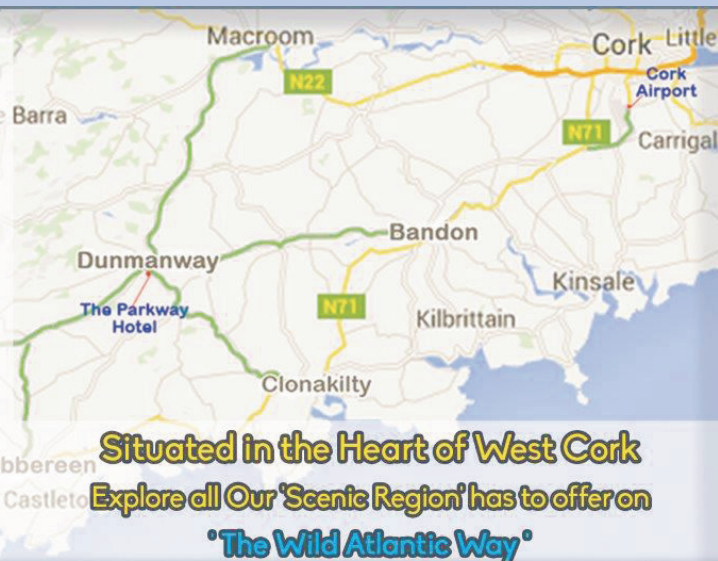
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# BALLINADEE IRA COMPANY

BY ANN HALES

6 Miles south west of Bandon town lies Ballinadee village and rural community. This area was to play a very significant role in Ireland's fight for freedom and from oppression by Britain in the early 20th century. Here there lived men and women who were passionate about Irish freedom and who were willing to sacrifice their lives. 1915 brought significant changes to the Anglo-Irish political landscape. There was a split in the Irish volunteers, some pledging support to John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party fighting for Home Rule, while there were other volunteers who believed in fighting for Irish freedom and self-rule.

This passion for Irish Freedom among the men of Ballinadee resulted in the establishment of the Ballinadee IRA Company, which was one of the first units of Irish volunteers to be organised in West Cork, as a result of a request made by Sean Hales to Terence MacSwiney vice-O/C of the Cork Brigade. The company grew from 24 members in 1915 to approximately 100 volunteers by Easter 1916. In a short time the Ballinadee Company had earned the reputation of being one of the most prominent, well organised, well disciplined, well trained, well equipped and best armed company of the volunteers in West Cork.

The Ballinadee IRA Company was instrumental in building up and the development of the other volunteers companies in the West Cork area. The Ballinadee IRA Company from the outset was intent on building up its ammunition supplies, thus each volunteer was

requested to contribute a subscription of 2d-3d per week into the company fund for the acquisition of weapons and equipment.

In August 1915, 17 fully armed members of the Ballinadee IRA Company were chosen to represent the company at the funeral of Jeremiah O Donovan Rossa in Dublin. On St. Patrick's Day, 1916, the Ballinadee IRA Company took part in a Volunteer Parade in Cork City. In support of the 1916 rising, a group of 65 members set out from Brown's Cross to march to meet Sir Roger Casement's shipment of arms which was due to land in Banna Strand. The group had to march to the town of Macroom, 20 miles from Ballinadee. On hearing about the capture of Casement and somewhat despondent, the company returned to Ballinadee the following day.

The British authorities now having evidence of rebel activity in the Ballinadee area, dispatched a force of military and RIC to the district. They set about crushing the rebels through harassment, arrests and reprisals. The homes of members of the Ballinadee IRA Company were searched and those captured in the initial raids were transported to Dublin and subsequently transferred to Wakefield Detention Barracks, England and Frongach Prison. All were released by Christmas of 1916. This was a disorganised period for the Ballinadee IRA Company as many were arrested and others were on the on the run. The volunteers had been changed by their prison experience, especially those who were interned in Frongach

Prison, 'University of Revolution'. The volunteers were now more determined in their resolve in their fight for Irish Freedom.

On the release of members of the Ballinadee Volunteers, the company began to re-organise. Its membership grew as did its activities in the struggle for Irish freedom. These activities led to the reinforcement of British military forces, with the dispatchment of the B Company of the First Essex Regiment in Bandon and Kinsale. March 1920 saw the arrival of the infamous Major A.E. Percival. Thus followed a tyrannical reign and the implementation of a policy of terror and destruction, which in turn led to the Ballinadee IRA Company strengthening in numbers and toughening in resolve. Throughout 1918 and 1919 the Ballinadee IRA Company were involved in many of the attacks on British Military forces in the name of Irish freedom.



Sean Hales



Tom Hales

Today, beside the gently flowing river in Ballinadee, is erected a memorial in honour of the brave men of the Ballinadee IRA Company who fought and died for Ireland's freedom and sovereignty . To quote Padraig Pearse *".....Life springs from death and from the graves of patriot men and women springs living nations..."*



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# MICHAEL COLLINS SITES ON THE CORK REBEL WAY

*And how to find them*

BY TIM CROWLEY, MICHAEL COLLINS CENTRE CASTLEVIEW

## Woodfield

*Birthplace of Michael Collins*

(GPS 51.616598, -8.9805055) »

Michael Collins was an Irish military and political leader, fondly known as the “Big Fella” who came to prominence during the Irish Revolutionary Period 1916 to 1922. He is looked on by many as one of the fathers of the modern Irish State. Collins was born on the 16th of October 1890 in the townland of Woodfield, between Roscarbery and Clonakilty.

The birthplace of Michael Collins is located about 7km west of Clonakilty. Head west on the N71 (main Clonakilty–Skibbereen road); after Lisavaird village take the first road to the right (L4003) and follow the signposts for Michael Collins’ birthplace.

Michael Collins’ birthplace is open to the public all year round.

Before entering the site, on your left is the stone that was unveiled by President Patrick Hillary when the birthplace was officially opened in 1990. Walking through the narrow gate and straight ahead, you will see the footings of a farmhouse. This is all that remains of the house built by Marianne, Michael Collins’ mother in 1899. The Essex Regiment burned this house during the War of Independence in April 1921. If you walk into the remains of the building, on your right, there is a molded concrete feature.



*Old Farmhouse Where Michael Collins  
Was Born At Woodfield*

This was one of the original chimney caps of the house.

Further on in the center of the site, three large trees mark the location of a two-storey barn, also burnt in 1921. A bust of Michael Collins can be seen to the right. The bust is a piece by English sculptor Francis Doyle Jones and was unveiled in 1991 by then Taoiseach Charles J. Haughey.

To the rear of the site is the earlier dwelling house, where Michael Collins was born in 1890. It is thought that this was originally a two-storey building but was converted into a one-storey farm outhouse following the erection of the newer dwelling out near the road. A blocked up doorway can be seen inside in this building, that once gave access to an adjoining room, which you can enter now from the outside.

## Sam's Cross

*Birthplace of Marianne O'Brien,  
Mother of Michael Collins*

(GPS 51.612414, -8.974157)

Sam's Cross is located about 7km west of Clonakilty. Head west on the N71 (main Clonakilty-Skibbereen road); after Lisavaire village take the first road to the right (L4003) and follow it to the Four Alls pub.

Sam's Cross is a hamlet located at a crossroads about 1km south of Michael Collins' birthplace. In the 1700s, a highwayman, called Sam Wallace, applied his trade in the area and later, the crossroads was named after him.

The focal point in Sam's Cross is a pub called the Four Alls. It was built as an inn sometime around 1780 and it is one of the oldest pubs in Ireland still in business.

Across the road from the Four Alls is a low, ivy-covered house; this is where Marianne O'Brien, mother of Michael Collins, was born in 1852.

On the day he died, August 22nd 1922, Michael Collins visited Sam's Cross on his return from Skibbereen. In the Four Alls, he bought two rounds of Clonakilty Wrastler for his men. This stout was brewed in Deasy's Brewery in Clonakilty. That evening he also visited his cousins, the O'Briens in the two-story farmhouse across the road, where his brother Johnny joined him.

A monument, dedicated to Michael Collins stands at Sam's Cross to the left of the O'Brien homestead. The stone is Wicklow granite and Cork sculptor Seamus Murphy, made the bronze plaque. The monument was unveiled in 1965 by Tom Barry, former IRA flying-column leader. It was remarkable that he agreed to unveil the monument considering he fought on the anti-treaty side in the Civil War.

## CLONAKILTY PARISH CENTRE:

*FORMERLY CLONAKILTY BOYS NATIONAL SCHOOL*

(GPS 51.623237, -8.892966)

The parish centre is located on Western Road, on the west side of Clonakilty's Roman Catholic Church. This building was formerly Clonakilty Boys National School. It was built in 1884, with an extension added in 1934. Michael Collins attended this school, from c. 1904 to 1906, while he completed the post office clerk's course. His teachers in the school were John Crowley and John Blewitt.

There are commemorative plaques on the front of the building.

## Béal na Blá

*The Ambush Site*

(GPS 51.813534, -8.856697)

The ambush site is located on the L2011 about 1km south of Béal na Blá crossroads;

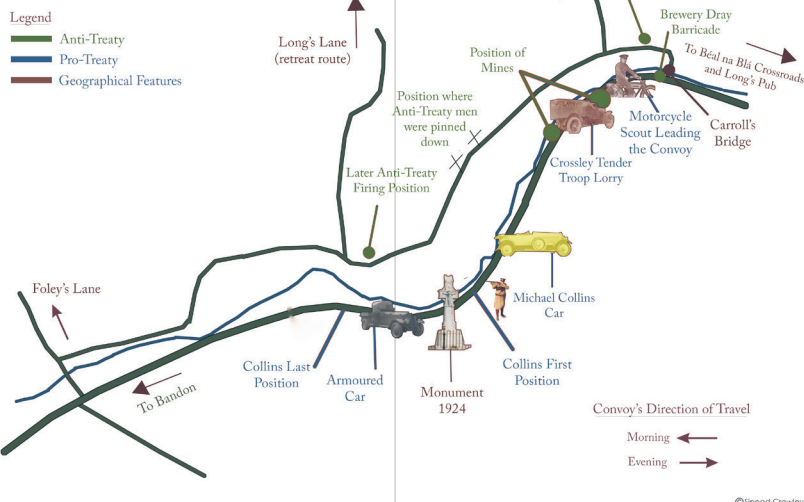
A large monument on the side of the road marks the location.

Béal na Blá was the site of a skirmish, which resulted in the death of Michael Collins on Tuesday August 22nd 1922. Michael Collins, traveling in a military convoy, passed through Beál na Blá in the morning. An Anti-Treaty IRA party set up an ambush, taking a chance that the convoy might return by the same route in the evening. The ambush site is on an 800m stretch along the Bandon/ Beál na Blá road (now L2011). The road, which meanders next to a river, is overlooked by high ground on both sides. On the western hill across the road from the monument is a narrow country road with three smaller lanes leading off of it into a number of farmyards. In 1922, the various little roads and lanes provided ideal firing positions and escape routes for members of the ambush party.

Collins and his convoy eventually returned to Béal na Blá at 7:45pm. He died in



## Béal na Blá Ambush Site



action during a skirmish with the remnants of the original ambush party, who were clearing a barricade and mines off the road when the convoy arrived. Standing with your back to the monument, most of the anti-treaty gunfire came from the high road on the western hill directly ahead.

It is difficult to pinpoint the precise location where Collins fell. It is my belief

that standing with your back to the monument, Collins was shot between ten and twenty meters to the left (south). He may have lived for a short time during which his men moved him behind the armored car, where he then died. Again, with your back to the monument, that spot is about ten to twenty meters to the right (north) of the monument.



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# JOHN 'FLYER' NYHAN

## FREEDOM FIGHTER.

BY DIARMUID KINGSTON

### Ballymoney Graveyard

(GPS 51.728945, -8.950539)

John 'Flyer' Nyhan was born in Sovereign Street, Clonakilty (now Pearse Street) on December 13 1893. At an early age he went to live with his grandparents, who lived in the Lyre district about five miles north-west of the town. From there he attended Knockskeagh Primary School but returned to his hometown some years later to complete his secondary education. On the playing fields he was outstanding. His prowess and fleetness of foot in both hurling and football earned him the nickname of 'Flyer' which stuck to him all his life. He played a central part in the Clonakilty team that won the Cork, Bandon South Coast Railway Shield hurling title in 1916.

The following year, 1917, a company of Volunteers was formed in Clonakilty and 'Flyer', along with a number of like-minded young men from the area, joined up. His daring exploits and bravery are still part of the folklore along with that of his great friends, James 'Spud' Murphy and Tom Barry. On the day of the Kilmichael ambush, 'Flyer' saved Tom Barry's life by kicking away the gun a fallen Auxiliary was pointing at the back of the IRA leader. Barry's Flying Column was formed in the late summer of 1920 and among the very first to volunteer was 'Flyer' Nyhan and his comrade, Stephen O'Neill.

Prior to Kilmichael, 'Flyer' was involved in a number of other engagements throughout West Cork, the first real action being the attack on Timoleague RIC Barracks that took place on the night of

25 February, 1920. An attempt was made to burn down the barracks by setting fire to a cart-load of hay and pushing it up to the barrack door. 'Flyer' and his comrades were in readiness to throw canisters of petrol and home-made bombs into the building as soon as the door burned down. However, the plan failed when the hay failed to burn properly and the complement of six RIC were able to direct heavy fire on the IRA, forcing them to call off the attack.

His next engagement was the attack on Ring Coastguard Station on the night of 20 June, 1920. At midnight, the hour decided for the attack, the Ardfield Volunteers had not yet arrived as they were crossing Ring Bay by boat and had been delayed by a strong ebb tide. The decision was made by Company Commandant Dan Harte to go ahead without them. 'Flyer' and his comrade, 'Spud' Murphy, rushed the door and surprised the guards on duty. Caught completely off-guard, they immediately surrendered their rifles and ammunition when ordered to do so.

Flyer's next engagement came on 27 July with an attack on a police patrol in Clonakilty town in which a Constable Murray was killed. His father's house was then commandeered by the Black and Tans and used as one of their billets in the town. 'Flyer' led a solo attack on his old home and for several minutes held the garrison at bay until all the windows were shattered and his ammunition ran out. Only then did he retreat through the nearby church grounds and today, the dent marks from



*Inset John "Flyer" Nyhan  
And His Headstone In  
Ballymoney Cemetery  
Near Ballineen*



Tan bullets can still be seen on the railings around the Parish church.

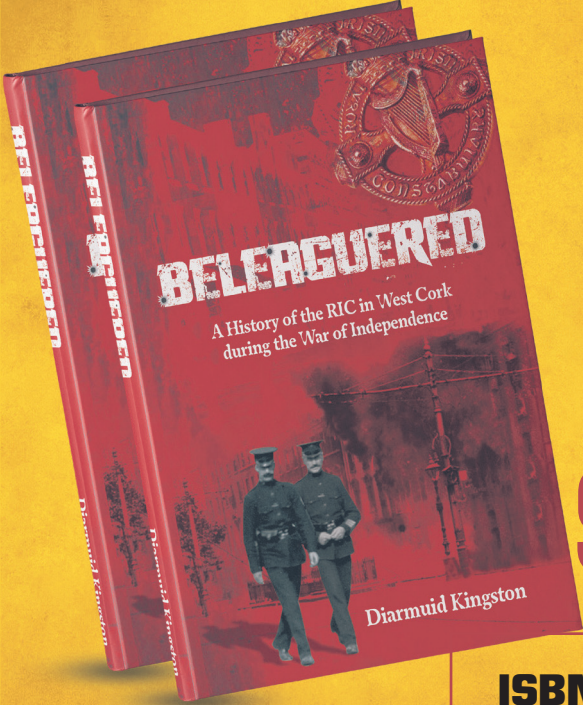
Following Kilmichael, 'Flyer' and Stephen O'Neill spent Christmas at a house in Shannonvale. On St. Stephen's night, the house was surrounded by the military while they slept and at dusk, they were arrested and taken to Clonakilty Barracks. From there they were sent to Cork goal under heavy escort, then on to Ballykinlar Camp in County Down. They remained there in captivity until released after the terms of the treaty came into effect.

In the aftermath of the treaty, 'Flyer' took the Republican anti-treaty side and when the Civil War broke out, he had to go on the run. On St. Stephen's Day, 1922, with a few friends, he entered a public house in Ring and ordered some refreshments. A short while afterwards the building was surrounded by free state soldiers. A soldier burst through the door firing his rifle. 'Flyer' was shot through the chest, the bullet passing through his lung and lodging

near his spine. Though seriously injured, he shot out the light and made his way out the back amidst a hail of fire and was hit several more times. In the confusion, he got away and managed to reach Bandon Nursing Home where he was treated by Dr Welply. He remained a patient there until after the Civil War had ended.

Job opportunities being scarce in the new Free State for a person with Flyers' credentials, he emigrated to Scotland where he found gainful employment with the construction firm of Clonakilty man, John Crowley. He was returning home to spend Christmas with his family when he picked up a cold on the ferry crossing. This developed into pneumonia from which he died on 6 January 1934. He was buried in Ballymoney cemetery not far from the ancestral homes of the Nyhan's and Barrett's. The opening words of the oration given by General Tom Barry at 'Flyer's' graveside, still resonate loud and clear.

*'Today, we have buried the greatest soldier and the bravest man of our time'.*



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# Sam Maguire

St Mary's Church of Irl. Dunmanway

(GPS 51.722199, -9.110398)

BY BRENDAN HAYES



*Sam Maguire,  
1877 to 1927*

Sam Maguire was born in 1877 to John and Jane Maguire. The Maguires lived in Mallabracka 3 miles outside Dunmanway where they farmed for a living. Their farm was considerably

large in comparison to other West Cork farms at the time. Sam had four brothers and three sisters. Willie was the eldest then Paul, Elizabeth, Sam, Jack, Susan, Dick and Mary.

Sam Maguire was educated at the Model School in Dunmanway and afterwards the Ardfield National School, which was also attended by Michael Collins. The schoolmaster, Mr Madden, prepared him for the British Civil Service examinations. During his school years in Ardfield, he stayed with his cousins in Rathbarry. At 20 years of age he passed his examinations and was consequently employed in the London Post Office

Among Sam's colleagues in the post office were Peadar Kearney, the composer of our National Anthem and Michael Collins who was to play a big part in the War of Independence. Like many Irish emigrants in Britain Sam joined some Irish organisations. He became involved with the Gaelic League and the G.A.A. He also joined the Hibernians Football Club, which dominated the GAA scene



*Sam Maguire Is Buried In The Church Of Ireland  
Graveyard In Dunmanway*

in London at the time. Sam did very well with the Hibernians. He captained their team in 1908 when they won the London Championship, his brothers Dick and Willie were also played on the same team.

Sam joined the IRB. He was a great leader and soon rose to the rank of Major General of the IRB and Director of Intelligence in Britain. In 1909 he recruited Michael Collins into the movement. In 1916 Collins returned to Ireland and was involved in the Easter Rising but Sam remained in London as his position in the Civil Service was an important one and he could best serve his Country by staying there as an unsuspected intelligence Officer in Britain.

Sam returned to Ireland in 1922 and started work in the GPO in Dublin. He became a regular visitor to Croke Park and a tireless worker for the GAA in



Dublin. Sam was dismissed from his post in 1924 when he clashed with his superiors. He returned to Dunmanway because of ill health and lived in his home place in Mallabracka until he died of TB in 1927. Sam is buried in St. Mary's Church of Ireland graveyard in Dunmanway.

## **CANON MAGNER and TADHG O'CROWLEY**

Thomas J. Canon Magner was born in the parish of Ovens in 1850. He was ordained to the Priesthood in 1881 and was appointed parish priest in Dunmanway in 1907.

Tadhg O'Crowley was born in Behigullane in 1898 and was one of a large family.

In 1920, the British Auxiliary forces responsible for the burning of Cork city were moved to Dunmanway. They established their barracks at the workhouse in the town. This was just two weeks after the Kilmichael ambush, where a company of their colleagues were wiped out by Tom Barry's West Cork Flying Column. The Auxiliaries and also Black and Tans (who were based in the local RIC barracks) declared their intention of seeking revenge for the defeat at Kilmichael.

At 11.30 on the morning of December 15<sup>th</sup> 1920 a group of more than twenty Auxiliaries came into contact with Canon Thomas Magner, an elderly man in poor health, who was walking along the main road about a mile on the Cork side of the town. With him was one of his parishioners, twenty three years old Tadhg O'Crowley. As the commanding officer and the rest of the group looked on, an auxiliary named Hart drew his gun and shot the two men in cold blood. Their bodies were pushed into a drain at the side of the road.

At a subsequent investigation, one of the reasons given for his murder was that he refused to have the parish church bells

tolled after the deaths at Kilmichael, when ordered to do so by the British.

The brutal act provoked widespread outrage while highlighting the unsavoury actions of the so called 'cadets' of the auxiliary forces in Ireland. The incident was also probably one of the contributing factors towards the instigation of later peace negotiations.

Ironically, the deaths of Canon Magner and Tadhg O'Crowley more than likely saved the town of Dunmanway from severe reprisals from British forces in the aftermath of the Kilmichael ambush. The two victims were known locally for some time afterwards as 'The Saviours of Dunmanway'

**In June 1924, a Memorial was erected at the site of the shooting at Ballyhalwick one mile east of Dunmanway.**

## **The Dunmanway Killings**

On the night of the 27<sup>th</sup> of April, four months after the signing of the treaty by Michael Collins, three protestant men in Dunmanway were killed. David Gray a chemist, Francis Fitzmaurice, solicitor and James Buttimer, a retired draper. There is much debate among historians as to the reasons and justification for these killings, whether they were sectarian, reprisals or other motives is still not clear. The effect of these killings led to fear among the protestant community, leading to many families leaving the area at that time. The memory of these events are still live in the folk memory of protestant families today, but with the passage of time and improved ecumenical relations the people of Dunmanway are learning to put these events behind them. The Sam Maguire Community Bells project developed in 2017 has greatly helped in the area of reconciliation in the town of Dunmanway. Two of the three are buried in the same graveyard as Sam Maguire, and the third at the old Methodist Church where the Dunmanway Historical Association is located.

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Sam Maguire Passport



# Bandon

BY PAT CANNIFFE

Droichead Na Banndan, meaning the Bridge of Bandon, was founded c.1604. The town has a long and illustrious history. Looking at its history, Bandon town and the surrounding area played a very important role in the War of Independence. There are many places of interest for a visitor to the town to see in connection with this period of our history. A good place to start is a visit to the Heritage Centre at Christ Church. The British Cavalry Barracks was located where Trunwits Transport is based now. Major A.E. Percival was in charge of the Essex Regiment there. Across the road stands the Maid of Erin. The Maid of Erin originally stood at the bridge and was destroyed during the trouble times. As a reprisal for its destruction the Allin Institute was burned by the old I.R.A on 23 June 1921. Near the Allin Institute stands the monument to Brigadier -General Sean Hales, T.D., late of Knocknacurra, who was killed in Dublin, 7th December 1922.

Kilbrogan Roman Catholic cemetery is the resting place of three local volunteers who died during the troubles.

On the south side of the town is the Munster Arms Hotel (formerly Lee's Hotel). Michael Collins visited here where his last picture was taken on the day of his killing on August 22nd 1922.

The War of Independence memorial to all the brave volunteers who died for Ireland since the year 1916 onwards is located at the east of the town. It was unveiled by President Sean T. Kelly in 1953. Nearby is the site of the old Workhouse which was burned in 1921 by armed Republicans.

The old R.I.C. barracks stood at South Main Street. On Sunday morning 25th July 1920, Sergeant William Mulhern left



*Republican Plot In St Peters Cemetery Bandon*

the barracks to attend 8 o'clock mass at St. Patrick's Church. As he entered the church, he was shot dead. As the shooting took place at a sacred place, there was widespread condemnation of the event. The adjoining cemetery contains the Republican Plot where eight members of the old I.R.A are buried. There are many burials of members of the old I.R.A in the cemetery including the late Tom Hales, Knocknacurra, in 1966 and Patrick Duggan in 1922.

Charlie Hurley G.A.A. Park was opened in 1971. It was named in honour of Comdt. Charlie Hurley, Baurleigh, who was killed in action on 19 March 1921.

Castle Bernard, home of the Earls of Bandon, was burned on 21 June 1921. Lord Bernard, 4th Earl. was kidnapped and was held captive. Before the truce was signed his release was secured.

Today Bandon has marked the centenary of the War of Independence by erecting a new sculpture, honouring the local heroes, who fought for Irish freedom between 1916 and 1921. Part of the design is a copy of the 1916 Proclamation. Local artists Don Cronin and Moss Gaynor created the memorial at St Finbarr's Place.

Bandon Historical Journals contain further information.

# Tom Barry

---

By Con O'Callaghan



*Tom Barry*

Tom Barry was born in Killorglin, County Kerry on 2nd July 1897 the second eldest of thirteen children, the others were Edmund, Margaret, Ellen, Catherine,

Michael, Maria and Elizabeth (born in Kerry) John, Noreen, Anna, Garry, and Johanna (born in Rosscarbery) His Father, Thomas Edward Barry, was born in Bohonagh Rosscarbery. The Barry family came to Bohonagh from Newmill. Edward Barry MP was an important member of the family. Thomas Edward Barry joined the RIC and was stationed in Cork East, Riding. He married Margaret O'Donovan from Liscarroll and was then transferred to Killorglin. Here they set up home in Langford St.

In 1907, Thomas E Barry resigned from the RIC and with his family returned to his native Rosscarbery, where he started business in The Arcade, now the old Post Office.

The Barry family went to school in the local Convent and the Ardagh boy's school. When Tom Barry left the Ardagh National School, he went to Mungret Collage in Limerick and studied there until he reached Inter-Cert Level. He then went to work with "Emersons" a hardware firm in Bandon.

About this time the family moved to Convent Hill in Bandon.

In June 1915, Tom enlisted in the British Army to get a gun, see other countries and see what the Great War was like. He saw military action in Iraq. While he was there, the 1916 rising took place. He read about this and the execution of the leaders. This stirred his national consciousness.

After the Great War, Tom Barry returned to Cork in 1919. The 1916 Proclamation impressed him greatly. He said "Lincoln at Gettysburg does not surpass it". His study of Irish history showed him that as well as armed attempts, there were also peaceful efforts to end British rule in Ireland, all to no avail. John Redmond was promised Home Rule but when the war was over, this promise was not fulfilled.

When Sinn Fein won a victory in the 1918 general election and established Dáil Eireann, as they promised to do, the British Authorities would not concede to the democratic wish of the Irish people, so armed conflict followed. The volunteers were secretly drilling and General Tom Barry approached Sean Buckley of Bandon one of the local leaders with a view to join the IRA. In 1919, his connection with the IRA began. Training camps were set up and the West Cork Flying Column was established with Tom Barry as Leader and Training Officer. His military experience made him the ideal man for the job. Not only was he a bright pupil of military strategy but he also developed new tactics in Guerilla Warfare.

The first major action of the Flying Column was on 22nd Oct 1920 at Toureen,

on the main road 12 miles from Cork and 7 ½ from Bandon. This engagement was only partly successful as the mine failed to explode and the first lorry past by the column. Still this fight yielded some weapons and ammunition. His next fight was at Kilmichael. Here the Column met the Auxiliaries. Tom Barry's success is famed in song and in story. A short time after Kilmichael, Tom Barry suffered a serious heart condition and as a result spent most of the month of Dec 1920 in The Mercy Hospital in Cork. By early Jan 1921 he had recovered and was busy organising the volunteers again. There were attacks on Barracks at Bandon and Innishannon and other planned ambushes where the enemy failed to pass by.

Tom Barry decided to hold his ground and fight at Crossbarry. Here with 103 men he beat off 1200 British Soldiers under Major Percival. This was surely Tom Barry's finest hour. After this success, he moved his men west and it was decided to capture Rosscarbery RIC Barracks. Here he was successful again and this was the first time that the IRA had succeeded in exploding a mine.

The Crossbarry and Rosscarbery fights played a major part in the calling for a truce by the British. There were many other smaller fights and others which were planned and never took place. It has been said that Tom Barry was a lucky leader but it is also said that "fortune favours the brave."

He showed that when things seemed to go wrong, he was able to change the tactics and succeed. He never asked his men to go into a position where he wouldn't go himself. At Kilmichael, he stood on the centre of the road in front of the British Lorries to stop them. In the attack on Rosscarbery RIC Barracks he was with the group of men who took the mine to the Barrack door. His courage always had him in the centre of the fighting. He led from the front. While the leaders at Headquarters in Dublin were very important in the overall planning,

nothing would be achieved without men like General Tom Barry. Proof of this can be seen in the fact that in some parts of the country there was very little done in the fight for freedom. The British propaganda at that time always exaggerated the number of IRA volunteers. This gave a false picture of their strength and may have influenced public opinion in England.

As the Leader of the most effective Flying Column in the most active County in the Country during the war of Independence, General Tom Barry deserves an exalted place in Irish History.

At this time Tom Barry's parents and family left their home in Bandon and went to live in Liverpool. His parents are buried in Alerton cemetery in Liverpool.

After the treaty he took the anti-treaty side. During the Civil War he was interned in Mountjoy Kilmainham and Gormanstown from which he escaped.

Tom Barry was invited to unveil the monument to Michael Collins at Sams Cross in 1965, which can be taken as a measure of the healing that took place in civil war wounds.

He married Leslie Price from Dublin on 22th August 1921. In 1927 he was appointed General Superintendent with Cork Harbour Commissioners and retired in 1965. He lived at 64 Patrick St Cork. He wrote "Guerilla Days in Ireland" published in 1949. This book gives a clear account of all the fights he was involved in and his organising work in the war of Independence. He died in the Mercy Hospital in Cork on 2nd July 1980. He is buried in St Finbarr's Cemetery in Cork.

As spoken by Pádraig Pearse "*Our Patriotism is measured, not by the formula in which we declare it but by the service which we render*".

General Tom Barry must go down in Irish History as one of our great patriots.

In November 2002 Rosscarbery Historical Society erected a plaque in Rosscarbery to mark the house where he lived. (The old Post Office).



# TOUREEN AMBUSH

BY MURT O'SULLIVAN

(GPS 51.787863, -8.609301) »

The Toureen Ambush was the first time the 3rd. Cork Brigade Flying Column came face to face with the British Army. Significantly, the Flying Column defeated the British Essex Regiment soldiers.

After the second training camp for Brigade officers held at Ballymurphy, the Flying Column formed there tried to ambush the British, who did not turn up. Any further attempt to ambush the British on the Bandon to Cork road was postponed until two prisoners captured by the Essex were safely transported from Bandon to Cork. Then on the night of November 22 1920 the column mustered at Delaneys, Fort William, Ballymurphy and prepared to attack the Essex lorries which travelled daily from Bandon to Cork in the morning and returned in the afternoon. Between 2 and 4 lorries travelled daily. More column members were billeted locally including at Murphys, Ballincourneening. In all 32 volunteers took part.

The ambush site chosen was at Roberts house and farmyard, now O'Donovans, about a mile east of Innishannon. The family and workers were put in places of safety. Two volunteers accompanied Mrs. Roberts to a neighbour's house where they not only minded her but kept an eye on the rear and eastern flank. At the farmyard gate a party of volunteers, under Tom Barry, were posted to attack the soldiers in the second lorry. A little further

east, there was a mine placed under the road with Brigade Commanding Officer, Charlie Hurley, in charge. When the first lorry passed over it, he was to detonate it. A little further east again another party of volunteers was placed, under Brigade Adjutant Liam Deasy, who would attack the soldiers in the first lorry. Provision was made further west to engage any further party of Essex which might travel on the day until the main body had successfully dealt with the first two lorries, which could then concentrate their fire on a third or fourth lorry.

The volunteers had come to Toureen early in the morning. Eventually the approach of two Essex lorries from the Bandon direction was signalled. When the first lorry was over the road mine, Charlie pressed the plunger but the mine did not explode. That lorry continued but was fired on by Liam Deasy's party. The British later said one soldier from that lorry was wounded in the knee. Meanwhile the second lorry had reached the farmyard gate, which was thrown open and 10 volunteers in Tom Barry's party fired at the soldiers. The lorry was put out of action by a shot to the engine and the officer in charge, Lieutenant Dixon, ordered his men to take shelter on the roadside. Soon he himself was shot dead as was at least one other soldier while another was fatally wounded. Many other soldiers were wounded. The Irish had no casualty in the entire action. It should be pointed out that

the soldiers in the first lorry continued on and ignored the plight of their hard pressed comrades in the second lorry. They never stopped till they reached Ballinhassig where they contacted Cork and Bandon barracks to send reinforcements. RIC from Ballinhassig are said to have gone to Toureen as well. The British surrendered. They had no bandages as these were in the first lorry which shamefully deserted their comrades. The Irish provided bandages and first aid supplies to them and got the unwounded soldiers to help the wounded. They took the dead away from the lorry. They took all rifles, other weapons and all military materiel from the soldiers and burned then burned it.

The soldiers were then addressed and warned that, while they had been treated as soldiers on that occasion, they would be treated more harshly in future if they did not stop torturing prisoners as the Essex had shamefully done to 3rd. Brigade C.O. Tom Hales and his Adjutant

Harte when they were captured. They had also tortured volunteer John Connolly when they captured him. He had been detained, tortured for a week and then shot. His body was then left in a Bandon park. They were instructed to bring this message to their C.O. in Bandon. The Essex Sergeant who was now in charge promised to do so whereupon the soldiers were allowed to go free.

Most of the column made their way to Ballydaly pier on the nearby Bandon river and were rowed across in Deasys boat in three trips to the other side. They then went to Clonbuig in the Kilbrittain area where the spent the night. The Crosspound company members in the column returned to their own area despite military reinforcements coming on the scene. The Essex, despite their promise to behave as soldiers should, went on the rampage in Bandon that night and burned or damaged over 30 premises.



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# KILMICHAEL AMBUSH

BY CON O'CALLAGHAN

(GPS 51.812521, -9.056579)

Following the 1918 general election in which Sinn Féin declared they would set up an independent Irish Parliament called “Dáil Éireann” The British reaction was to declare the Dáil an unlawful assembly and it was outlawed. In doing so, they had rejected the democratic vote of the Irish electorate for independence. Armed attacks on the British establishment were the only option for the Irish Volunteers so they began to collect arms for this fight for freedom. By the spring of 1920 many members of the RIC had resigned from the force. To fill these vacancies the British brought in the Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries.

150 Auxiliaries were stationed in Macroom. They were described by General Tom Barry as the most ruthless force that occupied Ireland through the years. This terrorist force raided into Coppeen, Castletown-Kennigh and Dunmanway. Firing shots at houses, ordering the occupants out and beating up innocent people was a regular occurrence. The Auxiliaries had been acting like this for some months and not a shot was fired at them anywhere in the country. By this time Tom Barry was training a flying column in the west Cork Brigade area. It was decided that this column should intervene to prevent the area being terrorised by the British Auxiliaries. When the column had completed a training camp in Ahilnane they were prepared for battle. At 3am Fr O'Connell PP of Enniskeane arrived to hear the men's confessions. The

**“The correct story I found to be as follows: The lorries were held up by land mines and the leading lorry was partly destroyed. The men were called upon to surrender and did so by throwing up their hands and grounding their rifles. Each policeman carried a revolver in addition to a rifle. One policeman shot a Sinn Féiner at close quarters with his revolver after he had grounded his rifle and put his hands up. A hand to hand combat of the fiercest kind ensued**

column reached the ambush position at Kilmichael at 8.15am. They were told by the commander that there was no retreat from their position, that it would be a fight to the end. The alternatives were, kill or be killed. Here we give a little detail of



the position of each section, which can be viewed when one visits the site. The development work done by Kilmichael history society and the Kilmichael and Crossbarry Commemoration Committee has made the site user friendly. The notice boards give a clear picture of where each section was and the pathways give you the opportunity to stroll around the site or sit down and savour the atmosphere.

All the positions were pointed out to the men so that each member knew what was expected of him. At 4pm the scout signalled the approach of the enemy. The first lorry halted exactly where the Column wanted and in a short time the occupants were killed. The second lorry stopped in front of where the monument now stands and put up a stern resistance.

Reinforcement arrived from the command post and heard the Auxies shout 'we surrender' and they put down their rifles. Then some of the volunteers stood up to accept this surrender, immediately the Auxies fired with their revolvers.

When General Tom Barry saw two of the column fall he gave the order to keep firing until the whistle sounded. When all the enemy were killed he blew the whistle. When the fight was over, 2 volunteers lay dead and one was mortally wounded, 16 Auxiliaries were killed, one wounded, thought to be dead. Another escaped back towards Macroom but was later captured and executed for murder he had committed in mid Cork, that he had boasted about. The Column collected the arms and ammunition of the dead auxiliaries. This amounted to 18 rifles and 1800 rounds of ammunition and 30 revolvers and some Mills bombs.

The Column left some men to remove the bodies of their dead comrades and the wounded to Buttimers of Gortroe. The main body marched south to Granure, eleven miles away and reached there at 11pm. The Ballinacarriga Company had an empty labourer's cottage ready, along with tea, bread and butter. They placed bundles

of straw on the floor, on which the weary men slept. While the men were resting in the cottage another member of the column, Michael Con O'Driscoll walked to his home a mile away and tackled his horse and trap and drove down to Kilbree near Clonakilty to collect Brigadier Charlie Hurley. They arrived back to Granure at 2am. This is an example of the fitness, toughness and courage of these men, who went for more than 24 hours without rest and very little food.

Commenting on the development work at the Ambush site a son to one of the participants of the ambush said "Ye have made a special place even more special"

Brigadier General Crozier who was in charge of the Auxiliaries in Ireland said in his memoirs in relation to the Kilmichael Ambush "The correct story I found to be as follows: The lorries were held up by land mines and the leading lorry was partly destroyed. The men were called upon to surrender and did so by throwing up their hands and grounding their rifles. Each policeman carried a revolver in addition to a rifle. One policeman shot a Sinn Féiner at close quarters with his revolver after he had grounded his rifle and put his hands up. A hand to hand combat of the fiercest kind ensued" *A clear admission of a false surrender.*

The British forces carried out reprisals around the ambush area. Homes, shops, hay sheds and outhouses were destroyed. One young man was shot at Dromleigh. They continued to terrorise the civilian population, for example, the shooting of Rev Cannon Magner PP Dunmanway and Tadhg Crowley.

The three volunteers killed at Kilmichael were;

Michael McCarthy, Jim O'Sullivan and Pat Deasy.

They are buried in the graveyard beside Castletown-Kenneigh Church.

The "Boys of Kilmichael" are commemorated each year on the last Sunday of November.





Kilmichael Ambush Site  
© Colum Cronin 2006



Beal na Blá Ambush Site  
© Colum Cronin 2006



# THE FIGHT AT BURGATIA HOUSE

BY CON O'CALLAGHAN

The “Burgatia battle”, as General Tom Barry described it, was not a fight that the flying column wanted but when they were cornered, they had no option but to fight their way to safety.

The target was the RIC Barracks. Burgatia House was planned as a resting place for the flying column before they moved on to attack the RIC Barracks in Rosscarbery. If this fortress was demolished, the country side from Clonakilty to Skibbereen would be free of enemy forces.

Burgatia House was owned by Tom Kingston, known locally as Lord Tom, one of many Loyalists around Rosscarbery at that time. This house was one mile from Ross, on the Clonakilty road opposite Ryan's filling station and set back about 150yds from the road.

It was a new departure for General Tom Barry to billet his men in a loyalist house, prior to this he had always taken his men to nationalist houses but he realised it was time to change and eat at the expense of the enemy. On the night of Feb 1st 1921, the column left Ahiohill and marched to the Rosscarbery area and occupied Burgatia House at 3am on Feb 2nd. The occupants of the house were held prisoners and the men of the column posted sentries, had a meal and rested for the night.

No doubt General Tom Barry had weighted up the pros and cons of billeting his men in the house and on balance decided in favour of this daring move. The Flying Column needed to have a good rest because they expected a tough battle to capture the RIC barracks and, from that point of view, Burgatia House was ideal because of its proximity to Rosscarbery. On the other hand, the position of the

house, with the main road on one side and Rosscarbery estuary to the rear, left very few options if the Flying Column were attacked.

The next morning the postman arrived. Tom Barry says, in his book “Guerilla Days in Ireland”, the postman held the bible in his hand and he solemnly swore not to inform any one of our presence for twenty four hours. So the postman Jerome Scully was released at 12.30pm.

At 2.30pm two members of the local company Sonny Maloney and Capt James Hayes reported that there was no unusual enemy activity in the town and they were to report again later. At 4pm the sentries reported that Black and Tans with rifles were moving along the road in front of the house and lorries of military were also arriving. In a short time Black and Tans were seen moving in the woods on the western flank. The column took up defence positions with strict orders not to show themselves or shoot at the enemy until the order was given. Soon after their arrival, the British opened fire on the house from the road to the north and from the woods to the west and with the Atlantic to the south the only escape route was to the east. Two sections of the column were to move in this direction. One section was to hold the Ownahinch road while the column moved east and the other section under Jim “Spud” Murphy were to move east of the Ownahinch road and then north and attack the enemy from the rear.

The men in Murphy's section were Tom McCarthy from Schull, Dan Nugent from Clonakilty, Dan Sullivan from Ardfield, Eugene and Dan Sweeney from Castlefrenke and Vol Brennan from Castledonovan, who was wounded in the leg.



These sections could not move just yet because the column had not returned fire and the British were not sure that the IRA were in occupation of Burgatia house. General Tom Barry let the enemy come very close to the house before he gave the order to fire.

When thirty IRA rifles fired, the British turned and ran, giving the two sections already mentioned a chance to move. Jim spud Murphy moved into a position and attacked the British from the rear, the enemy forces were confused by the turn of events and while they were engaged by Murphy's section, the main body of the column left Burgatia house and crossed the Ownahincha road and withdrew to the east.

For the British, it was one of their disasters. Here was one of the most wanted men in the country, they knew he was there, they were told by the informer who had met him face to face and yet with bad leadership and tactics they had failed to hold the flying column until

reinforcements came to support them.

While this is not the complete list, the following were involved:

Jack Corkery (Ballinadee) Sonny Maloney (Rosscarbery) James Hayes (Rosscarbery) Billy Sullivan, Jim Hurley (Clonakilty)

Tadhg O'Sullivan (Timoleague) Jim Spud Murphy (Clonakilty) Con O'Leary (Ardfield)

Mick Deasy (Timoleague)

Bob Brennan (Castledonovan) Jim Hodnett (Timoleague) Denis Collins (Ballinaspittle) Mick Galvin (Ballinaspittle) Tom McCarthy (Schull)

Dan Nugent (Clonakilty)

Dan O'Sullivan (Ardfield) Eugene McSweeney (Castlefreke)

Dan McSweeney (Castlefreke)

The attack on the RIC Barracks was shelved but it was only a temporary reprieve. Two month later on the 30th March 1921, General Tom Barry and his men captured the Barracks and ended the British occupation of Rosscarbery.

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# UPTON TRAIN AMBUSH

By Murt O'Sullivan

## Crossroads at the Railway Bar

(GPS 51.787564, -8.672213) »

It had started very promisingly. Information had come to Charlie Hurley, 3rd Cork Brigade Commanding Officer, at his HQ at O'Mahonys of Belrose House, that a party of British soldiers would travel on the morning train from Cork to Bantry on the 15th., February 1920. It was good intelligence which indeed proved true. He decided to ambush this party at Upton Station. The Brigade Flying Column was elsewhere so he decided to use the three 3rd. Brigade and 1st. Battalion officers in the area in the attack but relied mainly on members of the local Crosspound (Knockavilla) company. Between 13 and 15 British soldiers were expected. Considering the advantage surprise would give the Irish side, he believed that 13 Volunteers properly disposed around the Station, as shown in Tim Crowley's illustration, would suffice.

There was a great prospect that much needed arms and even more sorely needed ammunition could be gained in the action with little likelihood of major casualties on either side. In fact at a similar train ambush at Drishanebeg, near Millstreet, this is exactly what happened days before the Upton action. The British used to sit in their own compartment on trains which would effectively limit any risk to ordinary passengers, especially as the Irish would know in advance where the British compartment would be on the train, making them a straightforward target. A local man, John O'Connell of Ballymurphy, worked at the Cork Railway

Station and would send on to Upton the exact location of the British soldiers on the train after it left Cork. A party of Volunteer scouts would also be posted at Killeady or Kinsale Junction station, which was just a short distance before Upton, who could definitely confirm the details or advise of any change since Cork. As it was a junction the train stopped there long enough for a good cyclist to take the latest news of the British to Upton before the train would arrive there.

The ambushing party stayed in our house in Raheen on the night before the ambush. My aunt Kattie O'Sullivan, Captain of the local Cumann na mBan Branch, watched over their weapons, called them and gave them breakfast before they left to travel the 4 miles to Upton. When they got there they were amazed to see a man, who had been a high Company Officer previously, turn up unexpectedly with a rifle wanting to take part. This man had not been carrying out his functions as an officer for some time and had in fact faded out from the organisation. He was assigned a prime firing position. Having ascertained that the train would arrive as scheduled, the ambush party took over the railway station about 10.20 am, tied up the station master and put him in a place of safety. A message came through from John O'Connell detailing where exactly on the train the British party were. Some bags of grain were got from the railway goods store to create some cover for the ambush party.

Meanwhile the scouts dispatched

to Kinsale Junction Station got an unwelcome surprise. As well as the soldiers coming from Cork and sitting together as expected, a large party of Essex soldiers had come on the train from Kinsale and were estimated at 40 to 50 in all. One of the scouts immediately cycled at all speed to Upton to tell of the latest happening. Then, another unexpected thing happened. The Essex soldiers boarded the train and sat among the ordinary civilian passengers! This dastardly act by the British broke all rules of war and morality as they knowingly endangered the civilians in the event of an attack. Troops using a civilian train in a time of conflict probably broke the Rules of War then applicable under the Hague Conventions anyway. To sit in between ordinary civilian passengers was so much worse and an enormous outrage which brought inevitable tragic results. Then came the next alarming surprise. The train left much sooner than normal and reached Upton Station minutes before the scout despite his heroic efforts. Unaware of these developments Charlie Hurley gave the signal to attack when the train reached the Upton Station and the unequal combat had started.

It is as well to state at the beginning

that the volunteer who turned up unexpectedly before the action had simply gone into a house, had put his rifle under the stairs and took no part in the action and merely waited to be arrested by the British when the action was over.

The other 13, of whom 7 were armed with rifles and 6 with hand, (revolvers and pistols), fought bravely against the odds. When Charlie appraised the situation and the dangers to civilians and the overwhelming odds against the Irish the order to withdraw was given and the Irish wounded and unwounded left under constant heavy fire. Most tragically of all 8 passengers were killed and others wounded as a result of the British, in effect, trying to use them as human shields.

While the civilian deaths were of course most tragic, the volunteers suffered heavily as well. By this stage, two volunteers were dead at the scene: Section Commander Batt Falvey of Ballymurphy and Seán Ó Faoláin, a young Volunteer Officer and National Teacher who was Liverpool born of Irish parents. His surname was rendered locally in English as Phelan, though it should be Whelan in his case. Charlie Hurley was wounded in the face and also sprained his ankle



Map Of Upton Ambush





*Upton Railway Station 2018*

and had to be practically carried away by Tom Kelleher of Crowhill. Kelleher heroically insisted on staying with and helping Charlie even when Charlie insisted he save himself and he eventually got him to safety. Sadly Charlie was shot dead weeks later on the morning of the Battle of Crossbarry. Dan O'Mahony of Belrose House was seriously wounded and got away with help from Den Doolan and others. He never recovered from his injuries and died a few years later. Another Volunteer, Seán Hartnett, was wounded also and got away. Tom Kelleher, when some distance from the Station, gave covering fire to a number of Volunteers which helped them get away. My uncle, Pat O'Sullivan of Raheen, dragged himself from the scene though he was severely wounded in the stomach. He got help in a local Cronin House and Batty Cronin took him by horse and car to a place of safety. He got medical treatment and was later taken in an ambulance by a brave Cork Volunteer, Jack Kenefick, to the North Infirmary in Cork. He died there later. A doctor told my father that his life could have been saved if he had been brought in earlier. The dead volunteers from

Upton were accorded the signal honour of being buried in the Republican plot in St Finbarrs Cemetery, Cork which was generally for 1st. Brigade casualties only.

Information on the impending ambush had been given to the British by a local man which explains why they brought in the extra troops from Kinsale, why they made such a short stay at Kinsale Junction station and why they placed these soldiers in among the ordinary passengers. It also explains why, while volunteers and civilians were killed, no British soldier was. They must have obviously been wearing body armour as they knew they were going in to action. Kautt tells us that British had two forms of body armour available to them in Ireland.

The Upton ambush was the biggest loss for the Third Cork Brigade and especially as there were civilian casualties. Weeks later the local Volunteer Company helped the Brigade Flying Column prepare for the Battle of Crossbarry, while Tom Kelleher of the local Crosspound Company played a crucial part as Section Leader in the battle, which was arguably the greatest victory for the Brigade and the greatest defeat for the British in all Ireland.

# THE CAPTURE OF ROSSCARBERY RIC BARRACKS

**Rosscarbery Garda Station**

(GPS 51.577510, -9.031528) »

- BY CON O'CALLAGHAN

The British had boasted that the Rosscarbery Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) Barracks was one of the safest fortifications in the country and one that the IRA could not capture. In saying this, they more or less issued a challenge to the IRA. If this could be destroyed, the flying column would have a large area from Clonakilty to Skibbereen without a major enemy Barracks.

Following the success of Crossbarry on the 19th March 1921, the flying column moved west again and billeted in the Kilmeen company area. While the column had many great fighting men who were equal to any opposition with rifle or revolver, they had no man capable of making an effective mine. This was vital if they were to successfully take Rosscarbery Barracks. During the stop in the Kilmeen area a local officer, Tim O'Donoghue, made contact with Capt McCarthy from the district who had served as an officer in the Royal Engineers throughout the 1914-1918 war and who was willing to make a mine and some small canister bombs.

On Wed the 30th March 1921 the column moved into the Reenascreena Company area and was billeted in Cashel and Dunscllib. The headquarters was Whites of Cashel which is now the Murphy home and at Noonans of Dunscllib, now owned by Daniel Keane. Other members stayed in Tim Collins' house, now owned by the O'Sullivan family.

In "Guerilla days in Ireland" Tom Barry says the column billeted in Benduff. This



*The Ruin Of Rosscarbery RIC Barracks  
After The IRA Attack.*

is not correct. My father Dan O'Callaghan who was responsible for securing safe billets for the column said that Cashel and Dunscllib were the townlands where the men stayed before marching to Rosscarbery. The Flying Column paraded at 9pm and the men were told for the first time they were to move at midnight to attack Rosscarbery RIC Barracks.

Sonny Maloney and James Hayes of the Rosscarbery Company were given revolvers and were to act as guides. For some time before this attack, Sonny Maloney had secretly oiled the gate at the entrance to the Barracks to make sure that it didn't squeak when opened. The RIC Barrack was on the site of the present Garda station. The attacking force comprised of twenty one officers and men. Defending the Barracks were a head constable two sergeants and nineteen constables. At midnight the Column moved off. They entered the town by the

new line road, the high road into the town from the west, then through north square and on to where the Post Office was then (now Hayes house) about thirty yards from the Barracks. The mine which weighed about eighty pounds was raised on the shoulders of Jack Corkery Peter Kearney Tom Kelleher and Christy O'Connell. The fuses were lit and they moved to the Barrack door as quickly as possible. With the mine in position these men moved out to the footpath and lay there. The mine exploded but not as they had wished. It blew a hole in the door and the steel shutters off two of the windows. It also did considerable damage to O'Mahonys roof across the road. Rushing into the Barracks as they had planned was not an option as the Garrison were fighting at their attackers before the dust was settled. The Column fired some volleys but because of their location very few could get into firing position. Neilus Connolly of Skibbereen and three others were sent

to O'Mahonys house across the road to fire on the Barracks from upstairs. The fight continued using rifles revolvers and bombs.

The end came after four and a half hours fighting. The Column could not get up the stairs because of the flames. The Garrison threw all their arms and ammunition on the burning stairway and made their escape through a back window to the local convent.

The ruin was demolished in the 1960's to make way for a new Garda station. The boundary wall of the old Barracks is still standing between Hayes's house and the present Garda station. Some of the stones from the Barracks were used to build toilets at the Warren strand and more of the stones were used to improve the old pier near the coastguard station.

The metal remains of the mills bombs thrown out at the attackers by the RIC are still to be seen embedded in the footpath outside where the Barrack was.

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# REMEMBERED AND FORGOTTEN

BY COLUM CRONIN

## St Joseph's Church Castletown

(GPS 51.770963, -8.953922)

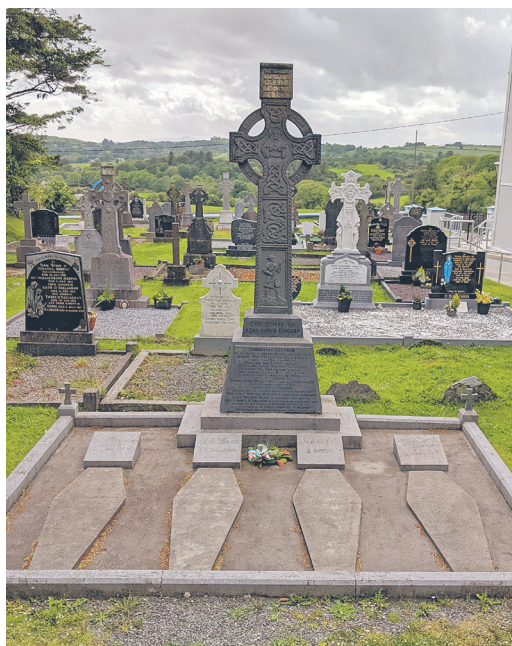
Most historians agree that the Kilmichael Ambush, which occurred on the 28th November 1920, was one of the most important military engagements during the War of Independence. Two Crossley Tenders carrying 18 British Army Auxiliary troops were ambushed and defeated in a carefully coordinated manner by a group of rebels, led by Tom Barry. During the engagement, three Volunteers were shot; Jim O'Sullivan (aged 23) from Rossmore, Michael McCarthy (aged 25) from Dunmanway and Pat Deasy (aged 16) from Kilmacsimon Quay.

O'Sullivan and McCarthy died at the ambush site, while Deasy was critically wounded. A horse and cart were borrowed from O'Donoghues to ferry the dead men away, while a door was borrowed from nearby Kellys' farmhouse, on which young Pat Deasy was carried away from the site.

They were taken to the farmyard of Buttimmers of Gortroe. Dr Charles Nyhan was called and he attended to Deasy, while Fr Goold administered spiritual aid to the dying man who passed away at 10pm.

The fear of reprisal raids by the Auxiliaries led to the three bodies being carried away and temporarily buried in hastily made coffins in a nearby bog.

Three days later, the remains were exhumed and transferred to a dense furze break in Curraghdrinagh, where they were placed in coffins made by Casey's of Inchigeela. One night later,



*Graves of the Kilmichael IRA dead and Jeremiah O'Mahony in Castletown Kinneigh Graveyard.*

on Thursday 2nd December, under cover of darkness and with great care, they were brought to Castletown Kinneigh graveyard. Fr O'Connell made his way on horseback from Enniskeane to give the three men a Christian burial.

A local man, Jeremiah O'Mahony, (Diarmuid Ó Mathúna) (O/C of G Company, 3rd Batt. West Cork Brigade) who participated in the Kilmichael ambush, was one of the group who were bringing the three bodies back to Castletown. As they were passing through Ballyvelone Cross, it was said that a bright light shone on O'Mahony from above, considered by some to be a

prophetic sign of his impending death. On the 5th March he was accidentally shot at that same spot and he died from his wound. Once again, Fr O'Connell made the journey, during the night, and prayed over Jeremiah as he was laid to rest beside his comrades in Castletown Kinneigh Church Yard.

Annually, down through the years, on the nearest Sunday to the 28th November, a commemorative mass has been celebrated in St Joseph's church in memory of these four men, followed by graveside prayers and laying of wreaths. Up until 1982 full military honours were shown by a Firing Party consisting of comrades who had fought in Kilmichael. From 1982 onwards, the government in their wisdom refused to allow a firing party.

A particularly fine Celtic cross marks the location of this famous grave, which lies on the right-hand side as one enters Castletown Kinneigh church yard.

It should be worth noting that, a few days after the death of Jeremiah O'Mahony on the 13th March 1920, another tragic death took place in The Paddock, just a short distance north-west of Castletown. Timothy (Thade) Hourihan, a hard-working farm labourer, was shot dead by a British auxiliary private (cadet), when crossing a field. The official British army record states that a warning shot was fired over the individual. He stopped, but then took cover in a gorge. Then he was seen running away, another warning shot was fired and when he failed to stop, the fatal shot was fired.

However, local records, specifically, a written account by Phillip Chambers (O/C Coppeen Coy. 3rd Batt. 3rd West Cork Brigade) states that he actually witnessed the event, but in quite a different light. Earlier, Chambers states, he met the unfortunate Thade, chatted

with him and they both casually went their separate ways. From a short distance away, Phillip saw and heard an auxiliary suddenly appear. At first, Chambers feared that he himself was spotted, but the Auxiliary called Thade and interrogated him before sending him on his way. In the meantime, Chambers hid behind a nearby rock. Afterwards, Thade walked off across the fields in the direction of his home. Chambers states that he heard a shot being fired by the auxiliary at Thade and he saw him fall. Thade Hourihane passed away a short time later, having been killed in cold blood. One can only imagine the terrible grief his large young family suffered as a result of this senseless act. To compound their suffering, his widow died just a few months later.

This is just one example of many incidents where members of the Auxiliary Crown Forces behaved in a cruel, despicable and deplorable manner. Tom Barry and his IRA Volunteers were acutely aware of this and those who fought and died at Kilmichael played a huge role in changing the British/Irish political and military landscape, which eventually led to the withdrawal of Crown Forces from Ireland.

The memory of Thade Hourihan has faded almost completely from local memory. In contrast, although they died just a short period of time apart almost a century ago, those who lie in that Castletown grave are widely remembered and honoured as brave and gallant heroes who died to free their country from tyranny such as that which caused the death of Thade Hourihan.

When we remember those heroes, let us not forget Thade Hourihan.



# CORK REBEL WAY AHIOHILL

(Information taken from "Desertserges - A West Cork History from the Ice Age to the Revolutionary Period")

(GPS 51.7089244, -8.8917365)

## DICK BARRETT

BY CON MCCARTHY.

Dick Barrett was born in the amalgamated parishes of Desertserges & Enniskeane in 1889/90. From 1917, inspired by the Easter Rising, he took a prominent part in the organisation and operations of the IRA & IRB.

Dick was a member of the Cross Pound Company of the Irish Volunteers and in July 1920 he became Brigade Quarter Master of the 3rd Cork Brigade, popularly known as the West Cork Brigade.

In light of later days, it's most interesting to note that Dick was on terms of lasting friendship with Sean Hales. Many prominent volunteers, including Dick Barrett and Sean Hales, attended a brigade council meeting at Kelly's of Gloun on Bloody Sunday, 21st November 1920.

Following on ambushes at Toureen, Kilmichael & Crossbarry, the Irish Volunteers, despite many losses, continued to plot and ambush, but less than a week after Crossbarry, Dick was arrested in Gurrane School and interred in Spike Island.

Dick organised a daring and successful escape from Spike Island along with 6 others on 10th November 1921.



Memorial Card For Dick Barrett

On the occupation of the Four Courts by the IRA, Dick was appointed Quarter Master General of the IRA. He took part in the defence of the Four Courts and when the IRA capitulated, he was made a prisoner and lodged in Mountjoy Jail.

Dick was condemned to death by the Free State Government without a trial, for a crime he could not have committed. He was executed on 8th December 1922 and buried at Mountjoy. 2 years later in November 1924, his remains were returned to Ahiohill graveyard, where he is buried with his parents.

## JAMES & TIMOTHY COFFEY

On 14th February 1921, brothers and volunteers, James and Timothy Coffey of Breaghna, Enniskeane were murdered in their beds by Auxiliaries and Black & Tans. It is almost certain that their deaths were in retaliation for the murder of Thomas Bradfield. The Coffey brothers were unarmed. The murderers were led directly to the room where their victims were sleeping by two masked civilians, believed to be local men and members of the British espionage circle. The Coffey brothers are buried in Ahiohill Cemetery and a memorial plaque was erected outside the Church wall in their memory by the Ahiohill Commemoration Committee in 1970's.



Memorial Card For The Coffey Brothers



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# Kilmurry and *THE HISTORIC DECADE*

BY MICHAEL GALVIN

Kilmurry Parish figured prominently in the historic decade 1912–1922; not uniquely, of course, but remarkably nevertheless.

As is often wryly remarked in the locality, “Béal na Blá was famous before Béal na Blá became famous”; as a result of the great Volunteer rendezvous there on Easter Sunday 1916 that marched to Carriganima to collect part of the expected Casement arms shipment. Kilmurry contributed at least fifty young men to the Great War of which fourteen perished, well above the national average.

Of note perhaps, though not by way of preference, is Richard Barter, Annesgrove, Aherla, sole heir to the family estate who was killed outright at the Battle of Loos, October 1915. Some seven years later, it was to his forlorn residence that Michael Collins’ body was taken to be laid out as the convoy moved to Cork City from the fatal ambush site at Béal na Blá.

The sombre stop-over

“*Béal na Blá was famous before Béal na Blá became famous*”

at Annesgrove followed high drama at the curate’s house in Cloughduv, when a soldier of the convoy fired at Fr Timothy Murphy but fortunately missed. The soldier claimed that when the priest saw the corpse in the touring car, he walked back into the house; thus refusing to anoint the body. Fr Murphy later denied this, claiming that upon seeing Collins’ body, he had walked back to the house to procure prayerbook, holy water, and oils. The stressed soldier had misunderstood his intentions.

The fatal ambush itself, technically in the townland of Glounarouge, has since been the focus of lively debate. What may be referred to as the “Dallas Syndrome”, however, continues to prevail locally,

i.e. a silence and sense of shame in a locale where a prominent atrocity has taken place (JFK in Dallas).

Local sages were always aware too that Béal na mBláth (mouth of the flowers) is an outrageous misspelling of the correct Béal na Bla (mouth of the meadow).

The War of Independence incidents in Kilmurry were typical of the country at large i.e. Lissarda Ambush (Michael Galvin shot dead); burning of Kilmurry and Carrigadrohid RIC barracks; burning of Warrenscourt and Ryecourt great houses; the shooting of Thomas Cotter, Curraclough House; the billeting by Perceval and the Essex Regiment at Gurraneigh; and the march from Crossbarry to there. H Company, 7th Battalion 1st Cork Brigade comprised the Kilmurry area.

Mercifully, Civil War incidents were almost non-existent, excepting the cataclysmic event at Béal na Blá on Tuesday August 22nd, 1922.





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# THE WILD WEST

BY KIERAN DOYLE

When we think of the ‘Wild West’ one automatically thinks of John Wayne and John Ford fighting Indians somewhere in Nevada, thousands of miles away. Yet one only has to drive along a short stretch of road on the N22 from Macroom to Ballyvourney to find a wild west far closer to home, a wild west that belongs to the revolutionary period, from 1920-23. It’s easy to see why. Even today in 2019, this road winds narrowly along a stretch that has high embankments and stony hills along the main artery from Macroom to Ballyvourney. It has an isolated feel, ideal ambush territory. One can reimagine the anxiety and fear the various forces on either side had at the time traversing this terrain.

Littered on this small stretch of road, are three monuments of significant value to historians and visitors. A magnificent Celtic cross marks the spot where Liam Hegarty was shot on this road on the 5th of September 1920, in what seems to have been as a result of a shoot to kill policy that Percival had implemented ‘unofficially’ in the area. A little further down is the Coolavokig ambush site

**“War and propaganda go hand in hand”**

where the IRA engaged a force of Auxiliaries killing three men. Observers will be curious when they read on the inscription that 28 British died there on February 4th 1921. “War and propaganda go hand in hand”, [as they say]. In the town of Ballyvourney itself is a plaque that pays homage to the death of three civilians murdered in the area in 1920 and 21.

But perhaps the most intriguing of the monuments on this road of death is the Carrigaphooka civil war memorial. Civil war monuments are rare, even more so deep in republican strongholds such as this area and this alone makes it an important site to visit. The men killed here were not natives of the area adding further intrigue as to why the tragedy was commemorated, when so many other civil war incidents, in



*The Carrigaphooka Civil War monument  
at Carrigaphooka Bridge  
GPS Coordinates: 51.91094, -9.02118*

particularculminating in the deaths of Free State troops, were not. Perhaps it was because of the scale of the tragedy. In echoes of the Ballyseedy massacre in Kerry - here at Carrigaphooka, eight men were blown up when the free state troops, under the command of Tom Keogh, tried to clear a mine on the bridge. Free State troops were penetrating into republican heartland in an effort to clear the area. While it could be argued that the tragedy was not as sinister and an unlawful act of murder, like Ballyseedy the scale and graphic nature of the shattered bodies, run parallel. In the IRA pension claims archive, the human face of the tragedy highlights the reality of the civil war. One of those who were killed that day was a young engineer from Wexford, Daniel O'Brien. According to official records, he was 'killed immediately when a mine went off and parts of his body blown away' The Irish Times ran a piece claiming a head and shoulders were discovered 'five fields away'. His mother sought 3000 pounds in compensation for his murder. O'Brien's mother Julie was denied a pension despite stating she was partially dependant on him. She said regarding the denial of a pension, 'I feel the whole thing should be reconsidered and that I am entitled to a little more generous treatment from the government for which my son gave his life'. This monument leaves the intrepid traveller or curious historian to ponder a few questions. Do we mark these places to mourn or celebrate? Or is it more simple than that? Is it so we don't forget? It's often been written, 'those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it'. Whatever one believes, a trip along the N22 from Macroom to Ballyvourney is a trip along the wild west of the revolutionary period and a must see for those with a love of history and a respect for those who helped shape our past.

***Kieran Doyle***



# REBEL WAY –

## SITES OF KILBRITTAIN

BY DENIS O'BRIEN

Kilbrittain is a small parish in West Cork, situated south of Bandon, west of Kinsale a few kms off the R600. During the War of Independence Kilbrittain ("B.1") Company, 1st Battalion, Cork No. 3 Brigade was one of the best-armed companies and helped capture most of the armaments won for the West Cork Brigade. According to Commandant-General Tom Barry in his book 'Guerilla Days in Ireland' Kilbrittain were 'the best company in Ireland'.

Fourteen volunteers from or in the locality gave their lives during the fight for freedom, the most Volunteer casualties from any West Cork area. According to Brigade O.C. Liam Deasy, no other parish did and sacrificed more for the cause of Irish freedom than this parish of Kilbrittain.

### **Kilbrittain Centenary Commemoration Garden**

**(GPS: 51.673435, -8.688662)**

Near the village centre is a beautiful stone themed remembrance garden to honour 1916 Rising leaders, native 1916 Rising participant, JJ. Walsh, fallen Volunteers of the War of Independence/Civil War. In the centre stands the Proclamation Stone.

### **Crois na Leanbh Ambush Site**

**(GPS: 51.692058, -8.656445)**

On the night of 16th February 1921, an Essex Regiment Patrol travelled in Crossley Lorries from Kinsale intent on searching the Clonbouig area of Kilbrittain

as it was Company and Tom Barry's Flying Column headquarters. Kilbrittain Company Volunteers were trenching the road at Crois na Leanbh crossroads, preparing for an ambush, expecting lorries. Shortly after 10pm, the patrol suddenly appeared on foot and opened fire. Four Volunteers were killed: John McGrath, Rathclaren aged 24, Con McCarthy, Kilanetig aged 29, Timothy Connolly, Farnagark aged 24, and Jeremiah O'Neill, Knockpogue aged 19. They were buried in Kilbrittain Churchyard Republican Plot (GPS: 51.673603, -8.694719) under full military honours.

### **Barry's Flying Column 1st Training Camp**

**(GPS: 51.684103, -8.653058)**

Site of the formation and training of Tom Barry's West Cork Flying Column. The first training camp was set up at O'Brien's, Clonbouig, Kilbrittain in September 1920. Tom Barry was in charge as training officer here and set up his headquarters in Vols. John, Michael and Denis O'Brien's dwelling house. Due to the site's topography and fortress-like security, O'Brien's dwelling house and the adjacent barn had been chosen as Company Headquarters (June 1920 until July 1921). The Brigade Staff were present, including Charlie Hurley, Kilbrittain Volunteer and then Brigade O.C. & and Liam Deasy, Hurley's future successor as Brigade O.C. General Michael Collins & Sean Hales, Bandon Battalion O.C. held meetings

with Brigade Staff here also. There were approx 50-60 Volunteers in training, all billeted in local houses. Volunteer training was over four weeks at different intervals with Barry at the helm. It was here that Flying Column ambush preparations for places such as Toureen, Kilmichael. Howe Strand (Kilbrittain) Coastguard Attacks (GPS: 51.639900, -8.643076), Kilbrittain R.I.C. Barracks (GPS: 51.673448, -8.690151) and Crossbarry were organised. Major Arthur Percival, Commander of the feared 1st Battalion of the Essex Regiment, attempted to burn down the dwelling house himself but was thwarted by local dispensary doctor Dorothy Stopford Price. Dorothy later became renowned for her research and efforts to introduce Tuberculosis testing and BCG vaccination in Ireland.

## Rathclarin Ambush Site

(GPS: 51.657914, -8.701061)

On the night of the 16th June 1919, Kilbrittain Company disarmed an armed military patrol of five British soldiers and one R.I.C. policeman, without loss of life. This event is famous as it was one of the first successful attacks on a British patrol in the country.

The other native volunteers who gave their lives were: Lieut. William Hurley, Baurleigh aged 22, Capt. Michael O'Brien, Clonbogue, aged 24 whose coffin was shouldered 14 miles to burial at Murragh

(GPS: 51.738088, -8.892346),  
Vol. Daniel J. O'Reilly Jr., Granasig,  
aged 24, shot & killed at Bandon

(GPS: 51.747661, -8.745901),  
Lieut. Patrick Crowley aged 26, shot &  
killed at Ardacrow

(GPS: 51.658062, -8.723847),  
Brigadier Charles Hurley, Baurleigh,  
aged 27, shot & killed at Ballymurphy

(GPS: 51.831088, -8.646726),  
Vol. Peter 'Scottie' Monahan shot &  
killed at Crossbarry

(GPS: 51.802710, -8.647987),  
Lieut. Con Murphy, Timoleague Company,  
aged 26, shot & killed at Cloundareen

(GPS: 51.664468, -8.738523),  
Commdt. Jeremiah 'Diarmuid' O'Hurley,  
Baurleigh, 'The Gaffer' shot & killed at  
Carrigogna, Midleton,

(GPS: 51.932858, -8.185463),  
Commdt. Michael O'Neill, Maryboro,  
shot & killed at Ballygroman,

(GPS: 51.862889, -8.681387) and  
Vol. Daniel O'Donovan, killed near  
Timoleague Bridge

Pictures (A) Kilbrittain Centenary  
Commemoration Garden (B) Crois na Leanbh  
Ambush Site (C) Kilbrittain Churchyard  
Republican plot (D) O'Briens Clonboug



(A)



(B)



(C)



(D)

# TWO INCIDENTS IN TWO WARS - near Newcestown

BY SEAN CROWLEY

(GPS 51.781704, -8.875193) »

## (1) Newcestown Ambush

On the night of the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 1920, men from the Cork No.3 Brigade I.R.A arrived in Newcestown after a failed ambush attempt on the Dunmanway-Ballineen road, where the expected convoy of British troops had not arrived. The group dispersed, taking food in different houses in the area. The commander of the brigade, Sean Hales, accompanied by Jim O' Mahoney, made their way into the village. They had just reached a public house when they were forced to flee, narrowly escaping members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Essex Regiment, who had arrived suddenly to conduct a search of the premises, as it was suspected of being an IRA 'haunt'. There they reportedly terrorised the barman and the customers for thirty minutes.

The battalion consisted of twenty men who were led by three officers; Major A.E Percival, Lt Robertson and Lt Richardson. The British were travelling in two Crossley

Lorries. Their search of the public house gave Sean Hales the time he needed to alert and re-assemble the members of his brigade, who were quickly mobilised. The men took up position behind a fence near the village along a distance of a hundred yards. Soon after the auxiliaries left the village for Castletown, where they were to conduct further searches, they were engaged by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade. The troops sprang from their vehicles and began returning fire. The fighting lasted thirty minutes under the cover of darkness, which prevented either side from knowing whether they had suffered casualties.

In the aftermath of the ambush it was discovered that Lt Robertson and Lt Richardson had been killed and that four other British Soldiers had been wounded. The IRA had no casualties. Notably, Lt. Richardson, among the deceased, was one of six officers present in Bandon Barracks when Tom Hales, brother of Sean Hales, and Pat Harte were brutally tortured in July 1920.





Irish Civil war on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1923. A Free state army patrol was traveling in Crossley Tenders from Bandon to Newcestown village. When it came to within a mile of the village, the soldiers discovered the road was blocked with a hastily built stonewall. A pin of a hand grenade was resting on the wall. The patrol turned around and drove to Newcestown by a different road and came to the church in the village just as people were coming out from 12 o'clock Mass.

The Free state soldiers picked out a number of young men who they suspected as being anti-treaty IRA and they loaded the men onto the lorries. The patrol drove back to the site where the stonewall was blocking the road and the young men were forced by the soldiers to remove the barricade. During the demolition of the wall an explosion took place and two of the prisoners were killed at the scene and seven others were injured, with one of them dying of his wounds later.

The names of the dead were; Paddy Murray and Charles O'Leary, with John Desmond dying in the Mercy hospital in Cork on February 24<sup>th</sup> 1923.

The ambush itself proved particularly significant, as three members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Essex Brigade were decorated as a result of their part in the action. Major A.E Percival was awarded the OBE and CSM for his gallantry. Sergeant Harry Benton was awarded the MBE and Private Wooton was awarded the Medal of the British Empire. These were amongst the first instances of British soldiers being awarded for their bravery in the

Anglo-Irish War of 1919 to 1921. Winston Churchill, who was Secretary of State as the time, emphasized the importance of their achievements, stating, "Why because they are shot down by Irish rebels and not by Mesopotamian rebels, should they be excluded from consideration."

## (2) A Civil War Tragedy

A terrible tragedy took place near the village of Newcestown during the

# THE WEST CORK WAR

## *on film*

BY SAMUEL KINGSTON



*The IRA Leave Kilmichael With The captured British rifles, a scene from Brigade*



*Aftermath of Kilmichael Ambush, A Scene From Brigade*

West Cork during the War of Independence was full of heroic tales, the story of the struggle was one of overcoming adversity against the odds, doing what was right and taking on the bad guy, all things that lend themselves well to film and television. Despite this there have only been a few attempts at telling the story of the 3rd Cork Brigade (West Cork Brigade).

**Broken Harvest** was a film made in 1994 by Maurice O'Callaghan that centred on a story line from the War of Independence / Civil War era and the repercussions of the struggle many years later.

The most notable example is of course **The Wind that Shakes the Barley**, while it was a fictional tale of events in west Cork; the storyline was often based on the true life experiences from the West Cork Brigade. The famous torture scene was based on the July 1920 torture of Tom Hales and Pat Harte. It was filmed in west Cork mainly around the Bandon area with many locals featuring as extras. The film went on to win numerous awards most famously the Palme D'Or at Cannes.

I was lucky enough to be involved in a two part living history documentary for RTÉ called **The Brigade**, exploring the lives of the ordinary West Cork men and women who fought for Irish freedom. I wanted to make the documentary to give people a real sense of what it was like to be in a flying column. In the documentary, a group of 12 Volunteers were chosen after an open day at Clonakilty GAA. These men then spent one week training as a flying column at locations in Kilbrittain, Enniskeane and Kilmichael.

The training started at West Cork Secret, Kilbrittain before moving to locations directly associated with the original flying column training. West Cork Secret was the perfect starting point. The Centre is run by Finbarr O'Mahony whose grandfather Jim was heavily involved with the IRA. The Kilbrittain area has many points of interest related to the war including O'Briens farm at Clonbuig where the Brigade held their first training camp. We then moved to Ahiliane where the flying column spent a few days training before the Kilmichael ambush. The week culminated in an ambush



scenario at the Michael Collins Centre in Castlevew. Their role was to follow in the footsteps of the flying column and to gain an understanding of what life would have been like for the men by being on the run, marching across country and living in barns.

In a secondary strand, a group of history students from the University of Essex spent a week travelling around West Cork meeting local historians and descendants of the original Brigade to hear the stories of the brave men and women from the area. They also heard about the notorious Essex













Regiment who were based in West Cork and the suffering they caused.

There are many incredible stories that could be told, the life of Charlie Hurley for instance is full of drama, while the ending with his death up at Forde's in Ballymurphy would disappoint some who like their heroes to win. Charlie did win by inspiring the others of the Brigade and flying column to never give up. Stories like May Twomey's in Bandon, who was passing information from the British letters to the IRA, could make exciting spy thrillers.

**Locations with GPS**

- Kilbrittain Village**  
51°40'24.7"N 8°41'31.5"W
- O'Brien's at Clonbuig**  
51°41'02.7"N 8°39'11.1"W
- Ahiliane training camp**  
51°45'11.7"N 8°58'08.4"W

- Kilmichael ambush site**  
51.812451, -9.056187
- Charlie Hurley monument**  
51.830726, -8.646428
- Michael Collins Centre**  
51.643243, -8.821538



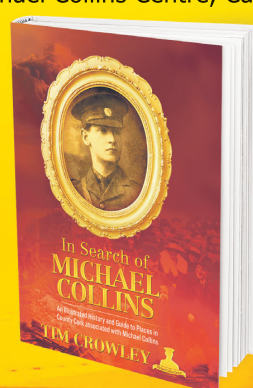
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Tim Crowley of the Michael Collins Centre, Castlevew has been conducting Michael Collins Tours since 1997. The Tour in the visitor's own car or coach, visits the following sites associated with Michael Collins. Birthplace at Woodfield, Sam's Cross, Clonakilty Town, Lisavaird Village, St Mary's Cemetery Clonakilty and Béal na Blá ambush site.

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# CROSSBARRY 19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 1921

## THE DECISIVE BATTLE OF THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

(GPS 51.802707, -8.647973) »

I wish to outline briefly the circumstances which led to this engagement taking place. If the British Government, led by prime minister Lloyd George, had accepted the result of the 1918 general election in Ireland where a substantial majority voted for independence and had not declared that Dail Eireann established in 1919 was illegal, then this engagement may not have been necessary.

In January and February 1921, the British Army had intensified attacks in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Cork Brigade area, resulting in local IRA companies witnessing setbacks. The Black and Tans and Auxiliaries who had been introduced into Ireland in March and July 1920 were conducting a campaign of terror in the countryside with interrogations, harassment, beatings and in some instances killing of innocent people.

In order to counteract this campaign by the British, Tom Barry Commander, and his flying column of 104 officers and men moved to John O'Leary's farm at Ballyhandle to the north of Crossbarry on the night of 18<sup>th</sup> March in anticipation of encountering the British. Shortly after arrival at O'Leary's, Tom Kelleher the local Crosspound Company Captain and Mick Crowley, Brigade Engineer left to mobilise the local company as an outer ring of unarmed scouts.

At 2.30am Kelleher and Crowley returned hurriedly to report seeing the lights and hearing the noise of lorries

some distance to the west. Ten minutes afterwards a report was received of military movements to the east and at 2.50am a third report was received of activity to the south. Barry and his officers were now in no doubt that an extensive operation against the column was proceeding.

At 1.00am on March 19<sup>th</sup> 1921, 400 British troops left Cork city, 200 Ballincollig, 300 Kinsale and 350 Bandon. Later 120 Auxiliaries left Macroom, but mistakenly went to Kilbarry. They proceeded by lorries to points, 4 miles north-north-east, south-south-east and west to Crossbarry. They then dismounted and formed columns. About half of each column moved on foot raiding the countryside as they converged on Crossbarry. The remainder mounted the lorries and moved slowly onwards after the raiding columns.

The column had occupied fighting positions by 4.30am, it consisted of 7 sections with 14 men in each section, commanded by Sean Hales, John Lordan, Mick Crowley, Denis Lordan, Tom Kelleher, Peter Kearney and Christy O'Connell. The column officers were Liam Deasy Adjutant, Tadhg O'Sullivan, Quartermaster, Dr Con Lucey Medical Officer, and Eugene Callanan, Assistant Medical Officer, Flor Begley, Column Piper and Assistant Adjutant.

At 6.30am Brigade Headquarters at Forde's House, Ballymurphy, north of

Crossbarry was surrounded by British forces and Charlie Hurley, Brigade OC, was shot dead while attempting to fight his way out.

At 8.00am the eerie silence was broken when a convoy of lorries carrying members of the Essex Regiment, drove past Harrolds and Beasleys farmyards. With Barry and Deasy to the fore, sections commanded by Crowley, Hales and John Lordan opened fire. Within 10 minutes the British were routed with many killed and the remainder fleeing. As the firing started, column piper, Flor Begley, Bandon started to play Irish war tunes on his pipes which inspired his comrades and had a demoralising effect on the British.

Shortly afterwards, troops were in combat with Denis Lordan's section adjacent to where the monument now stands. Some fierce fighting took place in this area and Pete Kearney's section was moved to support Lordan and his men. This resulted in the withdrawal of the British with some casualties on both sides.

The next significant happening was the arrival from the west through fields, of British troops who had been searching the countryside. These were confronted by Christy O'Connell and his men who shot a number of them.

The final part of the battle involved the section commanded by Tom Kelleher placed in the castle field about 600 yards to the rear of the main column. British troops 200 approximately were quite close when observed by Kelleher and his men. He placed Con Lehane and Denis Mehigan in the ruins of the castle and instructed them not to open fire until the British were close to the ruins, as they would be likely to surround it. The situation worked out as predicted and the British had many casualties. Support



arrived when Jim (Spud) Murphy and Eugene (Nudge) Callanan arrived with 10 volunteers. This location witnessed some of the fiercest and most prolonged part of the battle.

Barry arrived to discover that the battle was over with 3 volunteers killed and 4 wounded. The British did not give a casualty list for Crossbarry. However, British newspaper reports gave 35 to 39 casualties with 47 wounded.

After this engagement, Lord Birkenhead (Lord Chancellor) stated that it was beginning to dawn on Lloyd George that the Irish resistance was a very real force which had to be met by methods other than by force. The British now realised that a military victory over the IRA was unlikely to succeed. It is likely that the heavy defeat inflicted on them contributed to the truce of the 11<sup>th</sup> July, 1921.

**Sean Kelleher**

Son of Section Commander Tom Kelleher

**References:**

Guerilla Days in Ireland: Tom Barry;  
Towards Ireland Free: Liam Deasy; The Road to Crossbarry: Diarmuid Begley; Rebel Cork's Fighting Story Article: Tom Kelleher

**Crossbarry Monument Location Map,**  
Latitude: 51.802718 Longitude: -8.647961

# INCHIGEELAGH REBEL TOUR

(GPS 51.843730, -9.118935)

The parish of Uibh Laoire is very much a part of Rebel Cork. It's beautiful Landscape gave great cover to the rebel Earl of Desmond (1570), O'Sullivan Bere (1601), The Rapparees, The Fenians and the guerrilla fighters of the War of Independence. Michael Collins, Eamon DeValera, Terence McSweeney, Eskine Childers and Tom Barry were regular visitors to Uibh Laoire.

The Mouth Of the Glen Ambush, 7th of July 1918, near Ballingearry, is considered to be the first engagement of the War Of Independence.

The History Trail in Inchigeelagh old Churchyard leads to the grave of Lt Cecil Guthrie, an Auxiliary in the Crown forces who was shot after Kilmichael Ambush on November 28th 1920.

The military headstone inside the eastern entrance to the graveyard reads "In Memory of Cecil Guthrie November 28th 1920".

Cecil Guthrie was the driver of the second Crossly tender at Kilmichael. During the engagement, Guthrie was injured and made his way towards the military barracks at Macroom. At Dromcarra he was captured by local volunteers. He was executed and buried in Annahala Bog near Kilmichael.

In 1926 his body was exhumed and given a proper burial in Inchigeelagh. Cecil Guthrie was an auxiliary cadet and a member of C Company, he was 21 years of age and a native of Fyfe in Scotland. During World War One he served as a member of the Royal Flying Corps based in Pakistan and was the youngest flying instructor in the flying corps.

It was during World War One he met his wife Jane, a military nurse. She was with him in Macroom at the time of this death and shortly afterwards gave birth

to their daughter Dorothy.

Writing about the War of Independence in West Cork Daniel Corkery said that there was a small band of young male volunteers from Coolea, Ballyvouney, Kilnamarthyra, Inchigeela, Ballingearry, who did not wait to be attacked. Usually they went out to find the enemy. In this church yard there are 3 other reburials: 1822 Crown Forces Solider John Smith of the Rifle Brigade whose body was removed from a bog near Keimaneigh and reburied in 1822. Barra

O'Laoghair who died at the Battle of Keimaneigh is also buried here.

Also, James Mead, a victim of the civil war 1922-1923 whose body lay in Tirnaspidoga was buried here circa 1920.



*Grave Of Lieut Cecil J Guthrie In Inchigeelagh Church Of Ireland Graveyard*



# Johanna McCarthy (Gaibhdeach) O'Brien

(Grandmother of General Michael Collins)

**BY CON MCCARTHY**

Johanna McCarthy (Gaibhdeach) was born on 28th of November 1828 in Rosscarbery parish, in the townland of Garralacka, west of Clonakilty town. She was a daughter of Denis McCarthy and Catherine nee O' Connor, who were tenant farmers. These McCarthys were known as Gaibhdeach or Guidagh. She had two uncles and their families who were also tenant farmers in Garralacka. The family can be traced back to a Florence McCarthy who was born around 1750 in Garralacka and was Johanna's great-grandfather. Johanna was one of a family of six, four girls and two boys.

Her oldest brother Timothy married Ellen O' Donovan (Freehane) in March 1852 and they farmed in the home place before moving to Sarue, Reenscreena. His son Dan married Nora O' Sullivan (Boohig) Froe, Rosscarbery, they are my Grandparents.

Another brother Florence married Ellen O' Sullivan (Blascadee) and lived in Maulyregan, Reenascreena.

Johanna McCarthy married James O' Brien on the 17th January 1850. They lived on a farm at Sam's Cross. They had eight children, four boys and four girls. One daughter Mary (Marianne) who was born in 1852 married Michael John Collins Woodfield on the 26th February 1876. They are the parents of General Michael Collins, who was born on 16th of October 1890 and died in an ambush during the civil war at Béal na Bláth on the 22nd of August 1922 and is buried in Glasnevin



*Right to Left - Marianne O'Brien - Collins (Mother),  
Johanna McCarthy - O'Brien ( Grand Mother),  
Mary Collins ( Sister) and Patrick Collins (Brother)*

Cemetery, in Dublin on the 28th August 1922. At the time of his death General Michael Collins was engaged to be married to Kitty Kiernan from Granard Co Longford. It is claimed that Michael Collin's grave is one of the most visited graves in Glasnevin.

What is not well known, is that another Grandson of Johanna's, James O' Brien a first cousin of Michael Collins form Sam's Cross who lived in the same house as Johanna, joined the British Army and fought in the first world war. So while Michael Collins fought in the G.P.O., his first cousin James O' Brien fought with the British in the first world war.

Two of Johanna O'Brien's Grandnephews, Grandsons of her brother Florence McCarthy who lived at Maulyreagan, Jeremiah and Patrick Fehily from Reavileen, Rosscarbery where active volunteers during the War of Independence, they later took opposite sides during the Civil War which commenced in June 1922.

Johanna's husband died following an accident while her family were still young, but she continued to rear and educated her family and ran the family farm.

Johanna is associated with the Clonakilty Black Pudding recipe. It is believed that she passed on her Black-Pudding recipe to Philip Harrington in Clonakilty, who passed it onto his son Dan Harrington. When Edward Twomey took over the butcher shop, the recipe came with it and the rest is history. This world famous product can be traced back to Johanna's recipe over one hundred years ago.

Johanna O'Brien died on Christmas morning 1916. Following the wake in her home, her remains were removed to Lisavaird church on Saint Stephen's Day, and subsequently were interred at Castlefreke Graveyard in the presence of a large multitude of people.



When Michael Collins arrived back in Clonakilty on Christmas Day 1916, having been released from Frongoch internment camp in Wales where he was a prisoner following the 1916 rising, his Grandmother was being waked at home at Sam's Cross, so Michael walked home from the train station.

To commemorate the Centenary of this event the Clonakilty Historical Society organised a walk from the former Clonakilty Train Station to Michael Collins's Homestead. This walk passed along the Garralacka road past Johanna's birth place, and a decade of the Rosary was recited outside of Johanna's homestead by her relative Fr McCarthy of Garralacka at Sam's Cross on Saint Stephen's Day 2016 at the exact time that Johanna's remains were removed to Lisavaird church 100 years earlier in 1916.

# BLOODY SUNDAY

## As I Saw It,

BY FRANK DORAN

INTRODUCTION BY HIS DAUGHTER BRED AHERN

Frank Doran, horticulturalist, poet and man of literature, was one of a family of seven. He was born in Wexford but lived in Athy Co. Kildare. He was educated by the Christian Brothers in Athy. He then studied to be a Horticulturalist in The Albert Agriculture College, Dublin. During his college days, he and fellow students went to Croke Park most Sundays to view G.A.A. matches. He was there on November 21st 1920, when the Black and Tans invaded the pitch and opened fire, shooting 16 people as a reprisal for the shooting of British Secret Service Officials by the I.R.A. He wrote of his experience in his article called "Bloody Sunday as I saw it."

After his college days he worked in the Botanic Gardens and then came to Darrara College, Clonakilty where he worked for the next 50 years. He married Mary Sutton, Clonakilty and had 2 daughters and a son who died as an infant. He loved Clonakilty and lived there until his death on April 4th. 1974.

He was a renowned published poet and produced a book of poems called "Wayside Scribblings" He also contributed various articles to "The Cork Hollybough", "Weekly Examiner" and "The Southern Star"

He was deeply respected by all who knew

him and fondly remembered by family and friends.

**"Bloody Sunday, as I saw it."**

*Frank Doran*

*Written in 1964*

Sunday next is the forty forth anniversary of Bloody Sunday and the Croke Park Massacre. To the younger generation perhaps a brief explanation is needed.

Towards the end of the year 1920, the War of Independence was at its height. In the early hours of Sunday morning November the 21<sup>st</sup>, the I.R.A dealt a crippling blow to the enemy espionage, when they raided Dublin hotels and shot a dozen or more important secret service officials.

Reprisals were feared and it was unfortunate that an inter-county football game between Dublin and Tipperary was billed for Croke Park that afternoon. The game was not long in progress, when hordes of Black and Tans swooped on the pitch and without warning opened fire on the defenceless crowd of about twelve thousand. Sixteen were killed including one of the Tipperary team, seventy-two were wounded and many knocked and injured when trampled on in the stampede that followed. That day of horror was aptly called Bloody



Sunday and as such is known since.

We were a happy and carefree lot of students from all four provinces that left the Albert Agricultural College, Glasnevin on that fine November afternoon to see the Dublin-Tipperary football game in Croke Park in aid of the Republican Prisoners Dependent Fund. Ardent Gaels all, we rarely missed a game and our party included some fine players. Sligo's flying winger Johnny Harte, Dermot O'Dwyer from Tipp, who was killed shortly afterwards in an attack on crown forces in North Frederick Street. Mattie Murphy from Lissarda, Cork, who later wore the red jersey of his county and Munster's blue. The fair-haired Mick Adones Fallon of Roscommon and little Paddy Garaghty from Dublin, the best man you ever saw to strip a cut throat razor and didn't we keep him busy. Wonder he wasn't bald because Paddy tested every blade's sharpness with hairs plucked from his head.

Arriving in Croke Park, we took up our usual position, where funds permitted, opposite midfield in the shilling enclosure. There was only one small corner stand in Croke Park, then. Soon the teams appeared, the best in Ireland it was later proved because Tipp were to beat Dublin in that year's final and Dublin took the next three. It was mostly Tipp in the opening quarter and Dublin's fine goalie John McDonnell was coming through in a good clearance when a plane droned overhead. "Up the Republic", shouted Paddy Geraghty aggressively.

It circled the grounds twice, flying low and then came the sharp crack of rifle fire. Looking towards the canal end from where it came, we were horrified to see a row of Tans standing in the extended order, rifles to the shoulder firing into the crowd. There was instant panic, people rushing here and there, many being knocked and trampled underfoot. Others knelt or crouched in prayer, rosary beads in hand.

**“how did you  
enjoy the  
match?”**

We joined hundreds scaling the high boundary wall into the grounds of Belvedere College. I fell on top of someone and discovered it was a former Kildare teammate. We struggled to our feet, shook hands and without a word, ran

our hurried way, never to meet since. A large double gate leading to we knew not where was choked with people struggling to get through. As we reached it a bullet knocked chips from a pillar a few inches from someone's head. Getting through safely, some of us took refuge in a henhouse at the back of some house. We could not have selected a worse hiding place because Mr Rooster and about ten wives were at home and set up a loud cackle of protest. Soon we were ordered out by military who, with machine guns trained, has the area surrounded. We were forced back into Croke Park and searched several times by cordons of Tans spaced at intervals.

Mick Hogan, the Tipp. full back, lay dead near the cinder track opposite "Hill 16". Three or four Tans stood by chatting unconcernedly. We had to step aside to avoid treading on the body of a sixteen-year-old girl. She was lying on her back, shot through the forehead, blood trickling slowly down her face. Further on, ambulance men were placing an elderly man on a stretcher. He was moaning in pain, shot in the stomach.

Coats, hats, caps, sticks and umbrellas were strewn around and such a small thing to notice, that new white football forgotten on the pitch, held my interest. Outside, as we left, were Tans and more Tans jibing and asking "how did you enjoy the match?" It was with a feeling of relief we took the quietest way back to the college.

Michael Hogan is honoured by a stand in Croke Park to his memory, but what about those others shot down at headquarters - the forgotten others. They too deserve to be remembered of, even by a simpler plaque, but then who can name them.



