



love to ally
the Rebellion of 1798

Friday 5 October
in County Wicklow

education pack



Bicentenary of the death of Michael Dwyer

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the death of Michael Dwyer, the famous Wicklow 1798 Rebellion leader. Born in 1772 in the Glen of Imaal, West Wicklow, Michael Dwyer is one of the most famous rebel leaders of the 1798 period and became known for his guerrilla warfare tactics in the Wicklow Mountains where he successfully evaded capture for many years. Known as the “Wicklow Chief”, Dwyer fought alongside General Joseph Holt at significant battles such as Arklow and Vinegar Hill and conducted numerous skirmishes against British forces from 1798 until late 1803. Imprisoned from 1803 until 1806, Dwyer was transported to New South Wales, Australia in 1806 where he remained, and continued to be a figure of some influence with the Irish community until his death on August 23rd 1825.

In honour of Michael Dwyer, the Michael Dwyer 200 committee was formed by the Arklow Municipal District to organise a programme to commemorate this important figure in Wicklow history. This committee is chaired by Councillor Pat Kennedy, with committee members from our county council heritage, library and archives services and also historical and community representatives.

As part of the Michael Dwyer 200 programme, it is my pleasure to present the re-issue of this publication *The Rebellion of 1798 in County Wicklow Education Pack*. Originally commissioned as part of Wicklow County Council’s commemoration of the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion, this education pack will be distributed to all Wicklow schools and libraries. I am sure the excellent material in this publication will give a new generation of Wicklow young people an understanding of the 1798 Rebellion and an awareness and appreciation of the role of Michael Dwyer and his comrades in the history of our county.

Cllr. Melanie Corrigan
Cathaoirleach, Wicklow County Council
June 2025

Wicklow County Council is proud to support the Michael Dwyer 200 commemoration programme, honouring our famous 1798 Rebellion leader Michael Dwyer and marking this important period in our county’s history. I am delighted this valuable and comprehensive education pack will be made available to the young people of Wicklow to foster an appreciation and understanding of our history and heritage for the next generation.

Emer O’Gorman
Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council
June 2025

It is wonderful that Arklow Municipal District has co-ordinated this important programme to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Wicklow Chief Michael Dwyer. I am grateful to all who have given their time and expertise to make this programme a success, especially the local communities who treasure and preserve the history of their localities.

Cllr. Miriam Murphy
Cathaoirleach, Arklow Municipal District
June 2025



Comhairle Contae Chill Mhantáin
Wicklow County Council



Bicentenary of the death of Michael Dwyer

As chairperson of the Michael Dwyer 200 committee, I am proud of the programme developed to remember and honour our own Michael Dwyer. The programme includes an under-13s GAA match - the inaugural Michael Dwyer Memorial Cup, as well as a two-day event featuring guest lectures, the unveiling of a specially commissioned monument and a tour of Dwyer landmarks, and re-enactment event. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Arklow M.D., the members of the Michael Dwyer 200 committee, the West Wicklow and Rathdangan Historical Societies and especially to the members of the community who supported this programme.

Cllr. Pat Kennedy
Chairperson, Michael Dwyer 200 Committee
June 2025

Members of the Michael Dwyer 200 committee

Councillor Pat Kennedy (Chairperson)
Leonora Earls (Director of Services/District Manager)
Alvina Brehony (Arklow District Administrator)
Deirdre Burns (Heritage Officer)
Margaret Birchall (County Librarian)
Catherine Wright (County Archivist)
Dr. Joan Kavanagh (Historian)
Carmel O'Toole (Historian)
Pat Dunne (Community representative)
Anne Byrne (Community representative)



Foreword Foreword

It is my pleasure to introduce the Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98 Education Resource Pack for the 1798 Rebellion Bi-Centenary Commemorations.

The publication will, I believe, bring the realities of this tragic period into the classroom, using as it does original source material. As part of the Wicklow County Council's programme to commemorate this watershed in our country's history, it will be of enormous benefit to both teachers and pupils alike.

This year has seen many activities commemorating the men and women of '98 on both sides of the conflict. This has been due in no small way to the commitment and dedication shown by the many historical societies and community groups throughout the County who were determined to mark this year in a special manner. They remembered their local heroes and events in appropriate ways. I wish to thank them for their hard work in bringing an awareness of the 1798 into their communities.

The Education Resource pack will bring an even greater awareness of the Rebellion to our young people and will, hopefully, explode some of the myths which have grown up over the last two centuries. By looking at Wicklow society in the decade leading up to '98 the past puts a context on the events which were to follow. The foundation and spread of the Society of United Irishmen within County Wicklow is examined, as is the weaponry used by both sides during the conflict. This, along with the extent of the government forces in the field, goes some way towards explaining the eventual inevitable outcome. The chronological listing of events and the assessment of the aftermath are important in helping us to understand better this tragic period in our troubled history.



Liam Kavanagh,
Chairman, Wicklow County Council,
November 1998.

Foreword Foreword

It is extremely important that we acknowledge and interpret correctly our past in order to understand our present and our future. What better way to do that than through an education resource pack, which will be in every school in County Wicklow.

Many myths and misconceptions have grown up over the last two centuries in relation to the 1798 Rebellion. The Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, has in its programme of events to commemorate the Rebellion, attempted to dispel those myths, certainly those in relation to County Wicklow. 1798 had a major impact on Irish history and indeed, on every household in this County. There was an enormous loss of life, destruction of property and business and large scale transportation of rebels to the new penal colony of New South Wales. According to one observer, "there wasn't a good house left standing in the county after 1798..."

Contrary to belief, Wicklow played a major role in the Rebellion; before the outbreak of the Rebellion, during it and more importantly, long after the Rebellion had ceased else-where. Rebels on the run, under the command of Michael Dwyer, kept the rebellion alive until 1803, when Dwyer surrendered. The most visible and concrete symbol of the Rebellion is the Military Road, stretching from Glenree to the Glen of Imaal, the first purpose built road in Ireland, built by the authorities in an attempt to capture Michael Dwyer and his men.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those local committees who have, through their hard work and dedication, made the bi-centenary commemorations so memorable throughout the County. The Wicklow '98 Committee listed below, established by Wicklow County Council, along with Wicklow Leader II Programme, have assisted local committees with advice and financial support. This education Resource Pack has been produced by the Education Sub-Committee, under the chairmanship of Pat Power and I wish to thank all those who contributed to it, giving their valuable expertise and time so our future generations will have a better insight into the events of '98.



Blaise Treacy,
Wicklow County Manager,
November 1998

Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98 County Steering Committee

Officers:

Chairman Tony O'Neill
Secretary Joan Kavanagh
Assistant Dominic Martella
Treasurer John Nolan
P.R.O. Ruan O'Donnell

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Val Byrne
Tom Clandillon
Robert Downes
Brendan Flynn
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contents

Contents

Contents

- I **Introduction: The Rebellion of 1798 in County Wicklow.**
- II **Wicklow Society 1790 - 1798.**
Land occupation, Towns and Villages, Roads, Transport, Countryside, Industry, Policing and Magistrates, Major Hardy and the Antrim Militia, and Counter Insurgency Tactics.
- III **United Irishmen: Foundation and Spread.**
United Irishmen: The Society in County Wicklow
- IV **Rebellion Emblems.**
United Irishmen, Emblems of the Ascendancy.
Weaponry
Firearms, Powder and Shot, Pikes, Artillery, Other Weapons.
Government Forces
Regular Army, The Fencibles, Reay Fencibles, Glengary Fencibles, Durham Fencibles, The Yeomanry and Military Barracks.
- V **The Military Road**
Construction of the Road and The Barracks.
- VI **A Chronology of the Rebellion of the 1798 in Ireland and County Wicklow, 1791 to 1803.**
- VII **The Aftermath of the Rebellion.**
- VIII **Michael Dwyer.**
- IX **Joseph Holt.**
- X **William (Billy) Byrne.**
- XI **Illustrations, Maps, Inserts, Source List, Bibliography and Acknowledgments.**



introduction

Introduction.
Introduction



The Rebellion of 1798 in County Wicklow

Ireland has always been influenced from abroad. Indeed it is probably accurate to say that there is no such person as a 'true' Irishman. We are a mix of cultures and traditions comprising of late Stoneage peoples, Megalithic settlers, Celtic tribes and other intruders. Paganism of Celtic times was gradually replaced by Christianity from 431 A.D. and Ireland became renowned as the land of "Saints and Scholars". The tranquillity of Ireland was disturbed by the arrival of Viking raiders from the 8th century. Later waves of these hardy sea pirates began to settle along the coast and from their outposts our major towns and cities began to develop. Dublin, Cork, Waterford, Limerick, Wexford, Wicklow, Arklow and New Ross are all towns of Viking origin.

After the Battle of Clontarf in 1014 their supremacy ended. Diarmuid MacMurrough, King of Leinster, in 1169, persuaded Norman barons of Wales to come to his assistance following a dispute with a high king. Over the next century they extended their influence. As lands were seized the Normans built castles to help control the new territories. Some of these remain as ruins to the present day as at Arklow, Wicklow and Newcastle. Norman invaders eventually adapted the ways and customs of the native Irish to become 'more Irish than the Irish themselves'. A mixing of cultures was continuous and worked both ways.

By the 14th and 15th centuries Anglo-Irish families such as the Fitzgeralds, Butlers, and the Fitzwilliams had become increasingly prosperous and powerful and England began to take a deep interest in Irish affairs. In 1536 King Henry VIII of England renounced the supremacy of the Church of Rome.

An act declaring him head of the new Church of England and Ireland had been enacted a few years earlier in 1531. Religious differences now began to play an important role in Anglo Irish affairs. The power of the Kildare Geraldines was quashed in 1534 and in 1537 the suppression of the monasteries began throughout England and Ireland. The Franciscan Abbey in Wicklow was confiscated in 1552 and given to John Goldsmyth. Other religious foundations were suppressed in Arklow, Baltinglass and Bray. After the disastrous Nine Years War fought during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, Ireland was now almost totally under English control. Large scale plantation by English and Scottish settlers followed in many counties, especially in Ulster. In their wake religious differences became more acute.

The mountains of Wicklow, where the O'Byrnes and the O'Tooles had ruled undisturbed for generations, was one of the last areas to be conquered, following the killing of Feach MacHugh O'Byrne in 1597. In 1606 the former O'Byrne lands were shired as "County" Wicklow.

The rebellion of 1641 with its massive attacks on the new settlers on one side, and Oliver Cromwell's terrible revenge against the Irish on the other, caused the deepest of divisions which was to fester for the next 150 years. The Cromwellian plantations were to lead to further sectarian and cultural tensions. In 1690 much of Roman Catholic Ireland supported the Stuart King James II while the descendents of the planters, especially those in Ulster supported his son in-law, the Protestant King William of Orange. His victory over James at the Boyne only went to further the political and cultural chasm between the different communities.

This separation became final with the establishment of the 'Protestant Ascendancy' and the exclusion of civil, political and religious freedoms of Roman Catholics through the infamous 'Penal Laws'. The Ulster Presbyterians who had supported King William were also to be affected by the law, because it was against their tenants to support the concept of an 'Established Church'. The full enforcement of the Penal laws would prove difficult in the succeeding years, for the ratio of Protestants to Catholics was about 1 to 10. The alienation of the religious grouping in a county context can be gauged by a comment by the High Sherriff of Wicklow when in 1714 he reported "The Protestant inhabitants of the county are unanimous in the inclination and resolutions and will exert themselves with all the diligence and zeal for his Majesty's service in putting all the laws in every respect rigidly in force against the Papists"

When unjust commerical and tax demands were introduced into the American colonies in the 1770's the eventual result was the 'Declaration of Independence' which ended with the establishment of the 13 United States of America in 1776. The American colonists proved that, with assistance from

France, the power and might of England could be challenged. England feared that the example of America could be copied in Ireland. An armed force called the 'Irish Volunteer's' was set up to prevent a French invasion. However this force pledged its support for Ireland's commerical and political reform first. Britain, fearing a rebellion began a policy of reconciliation towards the Roman Catholics and Presbyterians by relaxing some of the Penal laws. To further ease the domestic situation they allowed an effective parlimentary opposition led by Henry Grattan to function in Dublin. Yet despite Grattan's leadership of the reformists, the Dublin parliament gave little heed or support to the Roman Catholic political reform issues.

On July 14 1789 the people of France began the revolution. The ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity appealed to many reformers across Ireland. From the French experience the ideal of a 'Society of United Irishmen' was born. People saw it as a way to break with religious and political injustice in the country. It was the unresolved conflict between the United Irish philosophy and Ascendancy intransigence which would spark off the Rebellion of 1798.

the rebellion of



1798

Wicklow Society 1790-1798

Land occupation

If one were to return to County Wicklow in the decade 1790-1800 probably the most striking thing they would observe would be the material contrast between the rich and the poor and the resigned acceptance by most people to their station in life. Of the county's half-million acres, over 95% was owned by just seventy wealthy families. These comprised Irish nobility like Lord Powerscourt, the Earl of Wicklow, Lord Carysfort, the Earl of Meath, Lord Aldborough, the Marquis of Downshire, and others. The largest landowner of all was the Earl of Fitzwilliam with 85,000 acres. The Fitzwilliam interest was left in the hands of an agent who in his own right wielded great influence in county affairs. Wicklow also had a number of large landowners described as 'middle' gentry with properties varying from one to eight thousand acres. Beneath the nobles and gentry of large estates were about seven hundred 'freeholders' who held land on long leases, preferred tenancies or were, in some cases, outright owners with properties ranging from middle sized farms to large holdings of hundreds of acres. Up to the Catholic Relief Act of 1782 (21 & 22 Geo.III,c.24 - "Lord Gardiner's Act") Roman Catholics could not own or lease land. Because of this stricture most freeholders were still members of the Established Church. Below freeholders lay the great mass of the county's rural population of about 90,000. Towns and large villages contained perhaps 10,000 people collectively. It was at this level that most Roman Catholics held their land.

Towns and Villages

Wicklow had eleven population centres which could be designated as towns in 1798. The largest of these were Arklow, Bray, and Wicklow, site of the county gaol. Places like Tinahely, Blessington and Dunlavin were all described as 'towns' in the official despatches emanating from the Rebellion. There were also twenty-two lesser villages ranging from Laragh to Kiltegan. As with agricultural land, towns and villages were owned by the head landlords, and the civic importance and the economic welfare of these centres depended very much on whether the landlord invested in them or not. The only exception was Wicklow town which belonged, by and large, to its freeholders and corporation of aldermen. Of importance in county administration was Rathdrum. It was a vital communication point between east and west Wicklow, located as it is on the then main coach road from Dublin to the south, and bisected by the road to Tinahely and County Carlow. Here also was situated the "County Wicklow Woollen Exchange" one of the most important buildings in Wicklow, built by the Earl of Fitzwilliam (1795). Bray remained a small coastal town but expansion was beginning which would bring it renown as the leading tourist venue in Ireland over the next fifty years. Surrounding Bray were the elegant homes of many leading figures in the Irish parliament like Henry Grattan, Lord Monck, Lord Meath, David La Touche, and others.

All County Wicklow villages, large or small, were owned by some landlord, either resident or absentee. Places like Carnew, Knockanna, Baltinglass, Dunlavin, Aghrim, Tinahely, and Newtownmountkennedy depended on the whims and outlook of their owners for the quality of their infrastructure, and well-being of their inhabitants. Several features were common to most small towns like a fair green, perhaps a market house as in Newtownmountkennedy, an Established church, usually the most prominent building, and a Roman Catholic chapel which until the next century, tended to be a modest, discreet, building on the periphery of villages. A ubiquitous feature of all villages and towns were the rows of single-storeyed mud and thatch cabins standing in untidy lines at their approaches and overlooking the fair greens. Only in the centre of built up areas were there likely to be any stone built houses with slate roofs, normally the property of the principal merchant or shopkeeper.

Roads

Because of topographical features dictated by the underlying geology, County Wicklow was a place of great contrast in its road structure and communications. The eastern portion, from Arklow to Bray, was endowed with an elaborate road network, from pack-tracks to high quality mail coach roads which were well surfaced with gravel. These routes were maintained by the county Grand Jury, the fore-runner of the County Council. In the north-west of the county a single main road radiated from Dublin via the village of Tallaght following along the

route of an ancient way called 'Slieve Rua'. This road served to communicate with Baltinglass, Dunlavin and further south to Shillelagh and Tinahely. Because of the impassability of the mountain country to all but the hardest travellers, the road from Dublin to Rathdrum and on through Tinahely into Shillelagh Barony was of great importance.

Occupying over a third of the County, Wicklow's mountains, from time immemorial, posed special problems for physical communication, cultural unity, and County identity. Up to 1799 the mountain area was traversed by pack-track and footpaths and was inhabited mainly by turfcutters and shepherds, a land known intimately to only a few, whose business regularly took them there. This aura of 'Terra Incognita' would help fugitives like Dwyer and Holt to remain free in the post-rebellion years.

Transport

Horse, mule and donkey transport by road, boats on the rivers and walking were the only ways in which goods, persons and information could percolate through the County. By modern standards communications were slow. It took two full days to journey from Gorey to the city. From Arklow across country to Carlow town took about thirty hours in a cart. Horsemen were constrained by the state of the roads, and the needs of the horse from going too hard on long journeys. A trip to Dublin from Arklow on a good hunter might take twenty hours. During the Rebellion horses were put to the limit of their endurance by the cavalry (and by insurgents lucky enough to be mounted). The other main means of transport was on foot, and at all times and at every point between towns and villages, roads were thronged with wayfarers. In the mountain region young men were employed as letter carriers to hot foot it over the bogs and tracks carrying letters from one big house to another, and were usually much swifter than mounted transport over rough ground. (From such examples of courier came the derogatory term for Irish countrymen - "The Bogtrotter").

Countryside

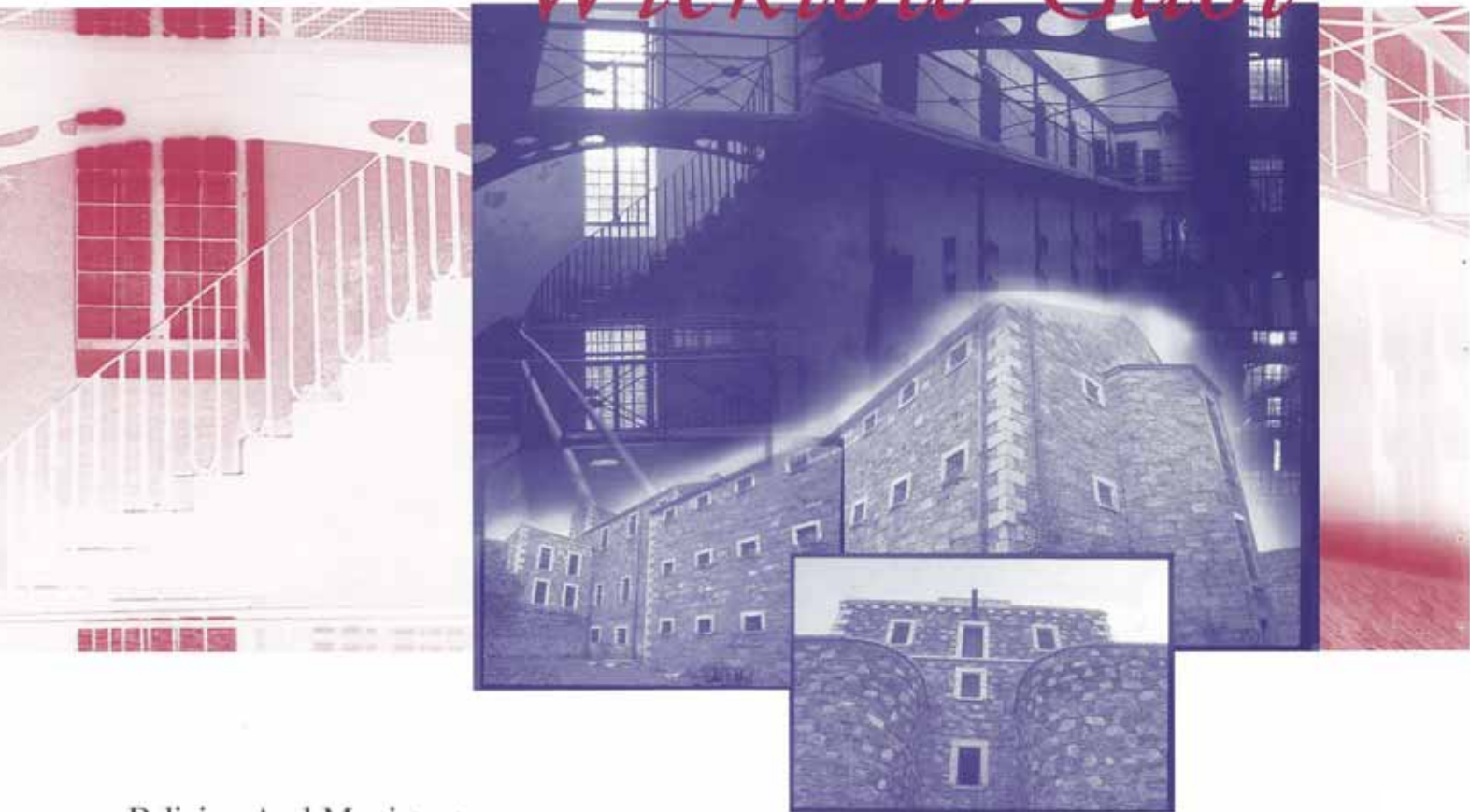
Due to intensive farming and centuries of enclosure the face of County Wicklow in 1798 looked much as it does today. By necessity field sizes were smaller. Good arable land was divided by hedgerows of varying quality but would have been much denser than is found in hedges now. Enclosed areas were prey to thornbush and furze creating scrubland, a factor which lent itself to ease of movement and concealment on all sides in the guerilla war of the Rebellion. Large stretches of roadsides were also overgrown, a factor which aided the rebel victories at Tubberneering in County Wexford and at Ballyellis near Carnew. Except around the larger houses and on demesne land of the gentry, County Wicklow lacked extensive tree coverage. Unlike today's profile, huge swathes of mountain country were bare and exposed as were much of the river valleys.

Industry

Outside north-east Ulster, County Wicklow was the heaviest industrialised area in Ireland. Agriculture, mining, and clothmaking were the largest direct employers of labour. Mines were established from the mid-18th century at Glenmalure for the extraction of lead and silver. In the Avoca valley the mines of Tigroney, Cronebane and Ballymurtagh provided copper. In April of 1798 just before the Rebellion, some of the working materials for the Croghan gold works were removed by the Rathdrum Yeomanry to help fortify the approaches to the County Wool Exchange. Later the remaining buildings and outhouses at Croghan were burned by Joseph Holt so as to deny the structures to the military as a possible military barracks.

Granite quarrying was extensively pursued at Golden Hill and Butter Hill where dressed stone was prepared for the building of Georgian Dublin. Aughrim's famed Tinakilly Quarry was also well established by this time. Iron smelting was in decline. Of immense economic importance to the County was its cloth industry which employed more than the mines, if home work is taken into account. Lord Aldborough constructed his 'model' village at Stratford-on-Slaney just for cloth manufacturing. Satellite cloth enterprises were established at Baltinglass and the village of Greenane where Henry Allen built a large factory employing hundreds of women (and children). Outworking and home weaving was an important supplement to family income. Like the mining community, cloth workers in Stratford were susceptible to the philosophies of the United Irishmen. Many of the male population of Arklow were engaged in the fishing trade and collectively those gaining livelihood from the sea ran into hundreds. Among the Arklow fishermen the Society of United Irishmen was gaining headway and growing in strength until the local leadership was betrayed by one of its members in May of 1798.

Wicklowl Gaol



Policing And Magistrates

Normal policing was carried out in the county by appointed magistrates who were invariably members of the nobility or gentry, and by law, were members of the Established Church. In times of civil strife they could call upon the militia or the regular army. The Wicklow rebel leader Joseph Holt in fact gained a great deal of his skill and knowledge of Wicklow as a 'Thief-Taker' for the Wicklow magistracy. John Hunter Gowan, the Gorey magistrate and ultra-loyalist, also came to official notice as a magistrate-cum-bounty hunter, (his second Christian name was merely coincidental to his occupation). Wicklow had over eighty magistrates drawn from the nobility and landed gentry, who were appointed for life without recompense. They wielded authority with varying degrees of efficiency. While it seemed a large number of magistrates for the County, only about twenty or so would have been active. Initially it was up to the County magistracy to decide on the level of counter measures against the United Irishmen activities. Wicklow's tradition of liberal politics soon came into conflict with the government's urge for tough measures. Against the 'dissatisfied', many of the magistrates were found wanting in zeal, in enforcing draconian law against subversion.

Major Hardy And The Antrim Militia

Because Dublin Castle would not trust the leading Wicklow nobles to crack down on subversion, the conservative Lord Lieutenant Camden appointed a security 'supremo' Major Joseph Hardy to the County from the Antrim Militia, a loyal officer who had seen service at Bantry Bay. His brief was two-fold, to build an loyalist organisation which would carry out the political agenda of the Lord Lieutenant and also break the power of the United Irishmen and other groups considered enemies of the state like the "Defenders". Hardy was to be especially zealous in rooting out sympathisers in the military and the yeomanry. Under his sweeping powers he appointed new magistrates and sacked those he considered too soft. He also reorganised the County politically by creating new organisations drawn from the ranks of the loyalists, who for the duration of the Rebellion and its aftermath, supplanted the traditional liberal regime. In his activities Major Hardy was ably assisted by a number of regional magistrates, some of whom held commissions in the yeomanry. Tom King of Kingston near Rathdrum, John Hunter Gowan of Hollyfort, County Wexford (but who operated in the Arklow area), Thomas Hugo of Drumeen, Benjamin O'Neil Stratford of Baltinglass and others of their ilk. All were indefatigable in their exertions to destroy the United Irishmen. Armed with sweeping judicial powers these men, of single uncompromising mind, with their posses of armed retainers, instituted a reign of judicial terror across the County.

Counter Insurgency Tactics

Many methods were employed to break the conspiracy of the United Irishmen. These activities were enforced by the Yeomanry and Militia units. Intelligence against subversives was gathered by members of the defence forces, private individuals, magistrates and a special committee established in County Wicklow headed by the altruistic minded banker Peter La Touche of Bellevue. Paid spies and informers were also employed. Spies and informers were active before and after the rebellion, acting from motives ranging from pure greed to the terrible personal dilemma of being tortured and killed themselves if they did not betray their associates. Information was collected in many ways. Blacksmiths were arrested and relentlessly questioned on the supposition they could be manufacturing pike heads. Towards the end of May 1798 twenty-one suspected blacksmiths were interned and later killed in the notorious massacre in Carnew. Groves of ash and hazel trees were carefully monitored to see if straight poles were illegally cut for the supply of pike handles. By counting the amount of cuts on the trees the authorities could make a shrewd guess as to how many pikes might be held in any given area. In order to keep a check on the movements of population Hardy ordered that the names of all in the household of proclaimed areas be posted outside each house. These lists were then subject to nightly and daily spot checks by the military units. Eventually all civil law was suspended and replaced with special powers over-riding personal rights and the checks and balances of the normal rule of law, such as the suspension of 'Habeus Corpus' the legal machinery by which accused persons must be brought to court and made aware of the charges against them.

Internal investigation of Yeomanry Corps and Militia Units for covert membership of the United Irishmen Society received special attention from Major Hardy and his associates. To weed out possible subversives a loyalty test oath of allegiance was devised by Captain Thomas King of the Rathdrum Yeomanry. Its purpose was to embarrass, or compromise the conscience of any yeoman who did not fully subscribe to the prevailing attitude of Government. That the wording of the oath was particularly offensive to Roman Catholics was probably a deliberate sectarian ploy to encourage them to quit the units. Failure to take the oath was perceived as a sign of dissatisfaction and those who would not take it were marked down as closet United Irishmen. Some yeomanry units were felt to be so impregnated with United Irishmen that they were disbanded such as the Cronebane Cavalry, organised among the mining community in the Avoca valley. Captain John Edwards of Old Court Bray was one of the few magistrates who publicly deplored the excesses of authority in dealing with the problem posed by the United Irishmen and was prepared to speak out (at some risk to his own life). For all the efforts of Hardy's campaign he could not totally break down the United Irishmen, no more than other counties did. In a final desperate act to destroy the prospect of rebellion and get the population to turn in their United Irishmen and their weapons, public torture was resorted to in the form of floggings, half-hangings and beatings. An added refinement to the terror was the invention of the 'pitch-cap' by Sergeant Tom Homan of the North Cork Militia. Torture was widespread around the County. It was reported in use in Rathdrum, Aughrim, Wicklow town, Baltinglass, Dunlavin, and other centres. The only major centre in which it seems to have been restricted (until the rebellion actually broke out) was Arklow.

public torture...



flogging, half-hanging & beatings

United Irishmen: Foundation and Spread

The 'Patriots' Parliament' of 1782 was a watershed for 18th century politics in Ireland. Although an all-Protestant parliament, it strived to assume limited legislative independence from England, which preoccupied with the war in America, was forced to grant many concessions to the Irish, mostly in economic and commercial matters. Expectations for further reform were high, but went beyond what many, deemed Ascendancy liberals, would be prepared to grant. Roman Catholic and Presbyterian interest groups both hoped to see substantial concessions to allow some participation in government.

Inspired by the American example France embarked on its great course in July 1789. The "French Revolution" was initially welcomed in many quarters in England and Ireland. It inspired political reform clubs all across the United Kingdom. One such group was founded in Belfast by Thomas Russell, Samuel Neilson, Theobald Wolfe Tone and others. In its formative years the "Society of United Irishmen" attracted many liberal-minded Protestants, Presbyterians and Roman Catholics whose object was complete legislative independence, but who did not advocate a particularly militant approach to its goal. On the outbreak of war between England and France all French inspired ideology and its adherents, quickly became suspect. This was especially true of the United Irishmen who made poor secret of its clandestine contacts with France or its tenet for complete national independence. In 1794, the authorities declared the Society proscribed and a clampdown was later adopted nationwide. By then it was too late, for the seeds of a revolutionary change in Irish politics had been well sown throughout the North and Southeast.

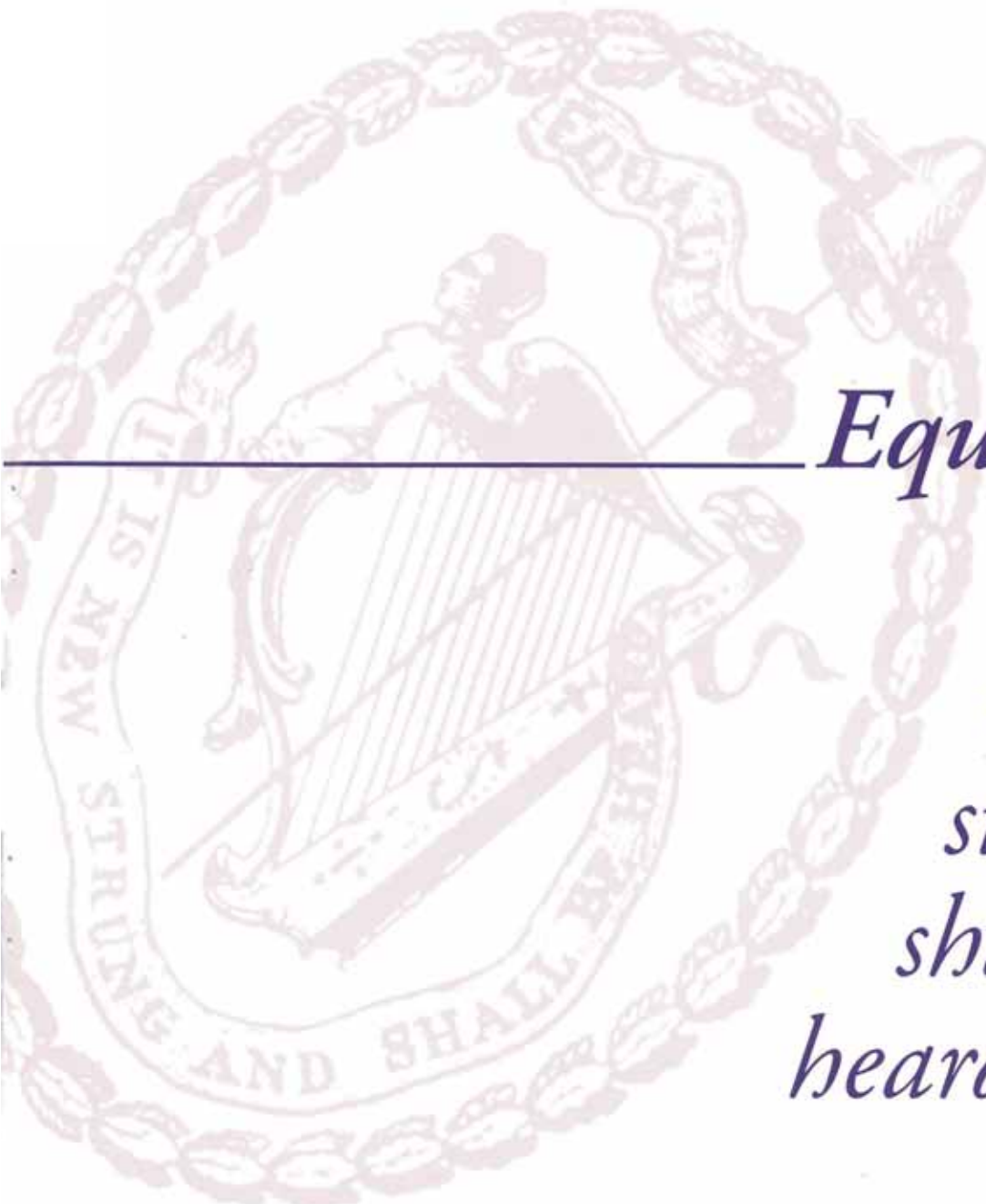


United Irishmen: The Society in County Wicklow

The first manifestation of the Society of United Irishmen in County Wicklow originated as early as 1792, where its initial appeal was mostly to middle class Roman Catholics. County Wicklow's basic politics in the late 18th century were liberal Ascendancy, in so far as the one party Ascendancy state could be described as 'liberal'. At first there was no real conflict with the United Irishmen and the liberal agenda until the Anglo-French war broke out and military assistance from revolutionary France looked a possibility. The ousting of the reform-minded Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Earl Fitzwilliam, in 1796 drastically altered attitudes to constitutional politics for many of the United Irishmen, previously lukewarm to the idea of armed revolution. With the re-instatement of hard-line Protestant Ascendancy government in the country, militant United Irishmen felt there was no other road open for

reform other than by direct action. A watershed for all shades of opinion was the aborted attempt of a French invasion in Bantry Bay in December 1796. In the aftermath of its failure the United Irishmen were proscribed and driven underground. From 1797 a more militant United Irish Society emerged in the country, reflecting the new National Directory led by Wolfe Tone, Lord Edward Fitzgerald and others. The Wicklow Society organised first in the industrialised area of Stratford-on-Slaney and Baltinglass. Many of these people were drawn from the linen heartlands of the Lagan valley in Ulster and were imbued with the radical ideas of United Irish philosophy and Presbyterian independence of thought. The new strategy in effect created two strands in the United Irish structure. The 'moderate' wing advocated armed rebellion but only when all things were in place and French help could be distinctly counted on. They also kept socially distant from too much political intimacy with the lower echelons of society. The 'moderates' counterpoise was a rapidly expanding radical wing who planned rebellion as soon as the peasantry could be armed, trained and motivated, without French help if need be. In the long term the radicals were to carry the day.

Quality of local leadership was to play a critical role in the success or failure of much of the Wicklow organisation. Commitment to an armed uprising and the establishment of a republic necessitated the procuring of arms, ammunition, transport and the logistics of war. Naturally such a course brought the United Irishmen into direct conflict with authority. Initially the effort to secure arms met with good success as the forces of authority in Wicklow had not the organisation, resources, policing intelligence or leadership to oppose them.



Equality...
it is
new
strung &
shall be
heard!

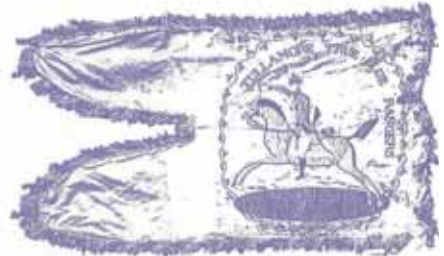


United Irishmen

Emblems and tokens were of great importance to all participants during 1798. In an era before general literacy much emphasis was placed on the meaning of emblems, flags, medals and other symbolic devices and this iconography extended to the use of single colour. The most ubiquitous emblem, and one adopted by all participants in the 1798 Rebellion, was the harp. Ireland's association with the musical instrument as a national emblem was already established as early as 1490. Thereafter it was used more and more until, by the reign of King Henry VIII (8th) the harp was used on Irish coinage when it became fixed as the premier heraldic emblem. In its early representations the harp was always surmounted by a crown, the symbol of Royal authority. To further inculcate the meaning the crown was always on top, proclaiming that all authority came down from the sovereign.

By 1603 the beautiful 'Maid of Eireann' design had evolved. In this the harp was a winged female figure. For the next two centuries the crowned harp of Eireann was used as the national symbol on military hardware and on brass buttons, flags, banners and other heraldic devices. In 1780 the shamrock was appearing as a surround design, as was the colour green for a flag background reflecting the unique natural state of the Irish countryside. In various manifestations the harp, shamrock and the use of 'the green' was adopted by different aspects of Irish culture, from ultra-loyalist Ascendancy interests to the celebrated 'Wild Geese' regiments in European service. The Society of United Irishmen fully understood the use of symbols and freely adopted the harp motif for their own use. As the republican principles of the Society hardened, the crown was completely dropped.

The official symbol the United Irishmen finally adopted became a 'Maid of Eireann' harp transfixed by a 'Cap of Liberty' on the pole and underneath a flowing banner with the words "It is new strung and shall be heard". It was an irony that on the field of battle the harp banner crowned was often set against the harp flag uncrowned, emphasising the nature of the '98 Rebellion as a civil war, as much as a war against perceived foreign domination. Other symbols were used by the United Irishmen and the earlier organisation they absorbed the 'Defenders'. The adoption of a cross motif on flags was probably part of the Defender legacy. Its incorporation would not have appealed to the Presbyterian or Protestant element in the United Irishmen. Crosses were used on banners by the clerical insurgents like Father Michael Murphy of Ballycanew at the Battle of Arklow. United Irish symbols included the 'Cap of Liberty' device borrowed from the French republicans and the 'Tree of Liberty', another representation of the Revolution. The liberty tree was usually a painted or woven outline of a tree described on a flag or banner, but in some instances an actual tree was cut down and set up in the rebel camp to act as a focal point. Slogans were also reproduced in flowing scroll-like settings with variations on such phrases as 'Eireann Go Breagh' (Ireland forever). This slogan was claimed by both sides during the Rebellion. (The Lord Mayor's chain of office used by Belfast Corporation, down through all its years of Unionist control still carries the legend 'Eireann Go Breagh' on its principle medal). Green as a colour expressing nationhood was extensively used in symbolic renderings on flags, sashes, armbands, hat ribbons, and for decorating houses. During the height of the summer Rebellion of '98, and in its aftermath the hatred aroused by the use of emblems knew no bounds. People could be literally killed for wearing a green coat or any garment which publicly displayed the colour. In the fury to quell the revolutionary



passion of the United Irishmen Society all signs and displays of their offensive devices were strenuously rooted out by authority. Yet despite the use of military force and the full rigour of the law to prevent it, the main symbols of the United Irishmen survived in the mind of the common people and were later to be revived during the days of the great Daniel O'Connell and later political movements until, in varied form, they became the representative emblems for modern Ireland.

Emblems of the Ascendancy

With the full support of government, the military, and the wealthy patronage of great men behind them, it was natural that the militia and the yeomanry units would have a diverse collection of symbolic colours and emblems attached to them. Royal ciphers abounded on military insignia in the form of Union Jacks, imperial crowns, unicorns, lions and other 'Royal Beasts'. Militia regiments relied heavily on the decorations officially encouraged by government, the harp motif, the conspicuous red coat and a variety of hats and helmets decorated with badges and crests. By the bounty of wealthy patrons, who were in many instances the commanding officers, yeomanry corps were highly individualistic in their presentation and uniforms

when the officers chose to spend large amounts of money on corps embellishments. Thus, there were a bewildering variety of militaria associated with the County yeomanry. As the colour green was becoming indelibly associated with United Irishmen and Croppism most yeomanry flags eschewed its use. They turned to using bright red, yellow, and in its full symbolic meaning to the Protestant loyalist, orange. Symbols and tokens of loyalty were adopted amid a wide and varied selection of backgrounds. The White Horse of Hanover was incorporated into many yeomanry pennants and regimental standards, along with Maid of Eireann harps and shamrocks entwined.

The most enduring symbol for modern interpretations of the Rebellion of 1798 is the pike. It was not adopted as an emblem until long after the events were over. Pikes as decorative features were represented on 1782 Volunteer flags in militaria groupings along with swords and cannons. As an emblem in itself the pike outline did not achieve prominence until the 1898 centenary when it was adopted as the central Nationalistic motif.



Weaponry

weaponry

Firearms

Throughout 1796, 1797, and the early months of 1798, the United Irishmen collected firearms from wherever they could, legally and illegally, with varying success. On the eve of the Rebellion the Government forces claimed that they had captured about 1200 firearms of all types from subversives in County Wicklow, but this was not the full extent of the United Irishmen's arsenal, for they succeeded in retaining another 1,000 weapons. There were several channels through which the insurgents succeeded in arming themselves to this extent. Weapons were obtained for the organisation through purchase in England and smuggled through Arklow in fishing boats. Guns were also given as gifts by sympathetic members of the organisation who were in the position to acquire them. Others were acquired by stealing from private houses, or spirited away by United Irishmen who were in the militia or yeomanry. Arms raids on the homes of loyalists became prevalent in the early months of '98 when other avenues of arms acquisitions were closed by the security forces. These were mostly concentrated in the Baltinglass-Donard area. Christopher Robinson, the Rector of Baltinglass records seven such raids in his parish. Although fraught with danger for both the raiders and the loyalists concerned, arms seizures, by directly attacking the houses of yeomen and loyalists, could result in the capture of high quality military issue of guns.

Powder and Shot

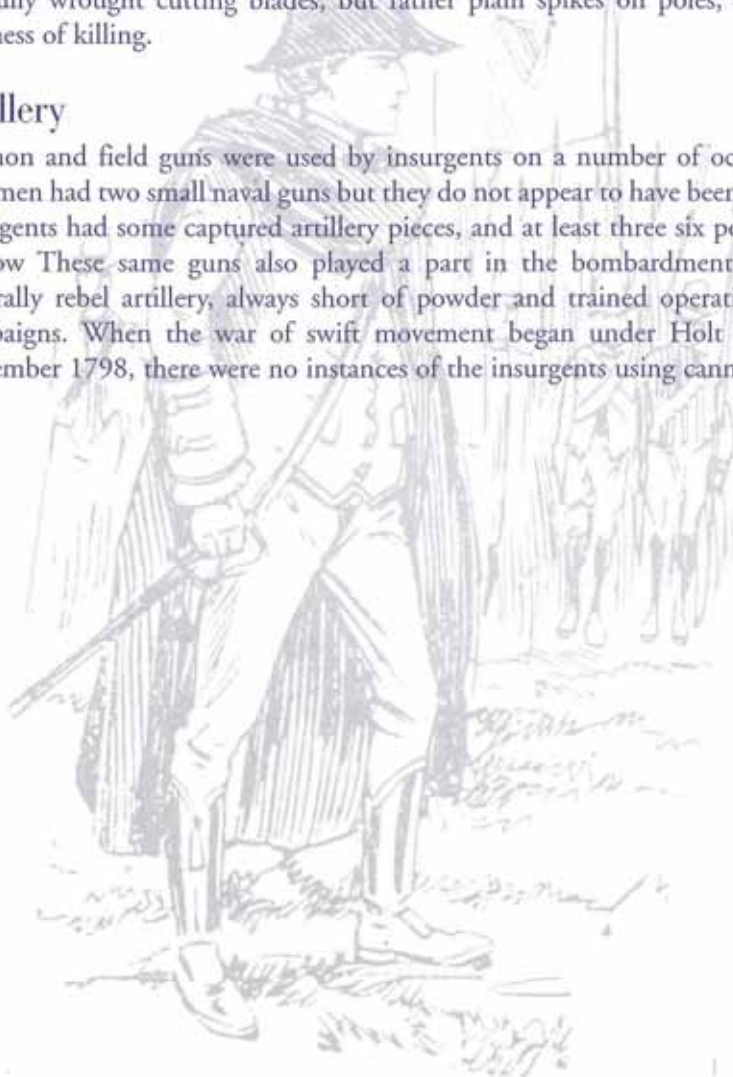
Gunpowder was a perishable and temperamental commodity to store and was always in short supply for the United Irishmen. Like firearms acquisitions, it was stockpiled from diverse sources. Some was pilfered from military stores or given over by sympathetic soldiers, militia men, or yeomen. Quantities were seized in arms raids on the homes of loyalists. Avoca Mines may have been an important supply source in the early days of the organisation, until supplies of powder were closely watched after the government clampdown. Powder was smuggled in through Arklow port. Collectively, all the powder obtained by the rebels was only a drop in the ocean to their actual requirements and its scarcity was always a chronic problem for the Wicklow insurgents.

Pikes

In County Wicklow the United Irishmen had probably less than 1,000 guns of all kinds when the Rebellion broke out due to the effectiveness of Government counter-insurgency measures. To arm its estimated 14,000 army, in all probability a paper army only, the Society's strategy relied on the pike. These weapons were by far the easiest and the cheapest to mass-produce. In theory massed ranks of trained pikemen could, with support from guns and artillery, prove formidable enough to carry the day against any armament expected to be mustered against them. Typical pikes were hand-forged iron spear points set on long wooden handles at least eight feet in length. Most pikes were beaten out of bought or stolen scrap iron. Finished pike heads were carefully stored, covered in bacon fat to keep them keen and sharp. Handles do not appear to have been added until the Rebellion had actually broken out, but straight poles were cut and stored separately before hostilities commenced. Other advantages of the pike as a weapon was its cheapness and the speed in which it could be made. An efficient pike could be beaten out on an anvil by a blacksmith in the space of twenty minutes or less. Most genuine '98 pike heads were not the elaborate weapons often depicted in later commemorative iconography with their axe heads and carefully wrought cutting blades, but rather plain spikes on poles, really hideous weapons when used in the business of killing.

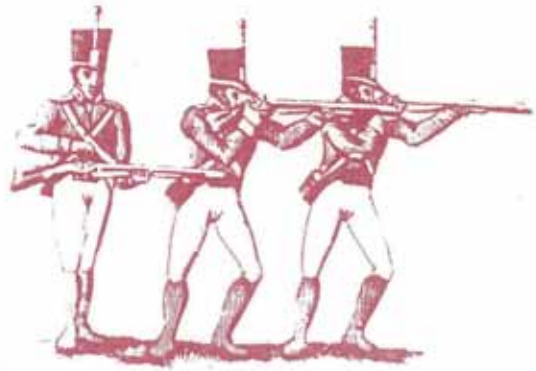
Artillery

Cannon and field guns were used by insurgents on a number of occasions in the Rebellion. Arklow's United Irishmen had two small naval guns but they do not appear to have been used in the eventual conflict. The Wexford insurgents had some captured artillery pieces, and at least three six pounders were used by them at the Battle of Arklow. These same guns also played a part in the bombardment of Carnew and at Mount Pleasant, but generally rebel artillery, always short of powder and trained operatives, played a minor role in the Wicklow campaigns. When the war of swift movement began under Holt in the Wicklow mountains from July to November 1798, there were no instances of the insurgents using cannon.



Other Weapons:

A stockpile of swords, dirks, small firearms and blunderbusses were acquired much as larger firearms were, by various stratagems. Later in the Rebellion these weapons were augmented by items captured from the Government forces. As rebels became more skilled in the light of bloody experience, they learned to wield sabres and pistols as good as any trained cavalry or militia man, as was instanced by Michael Dwyer's prowess with a sword at the Battle of Ballyellis.



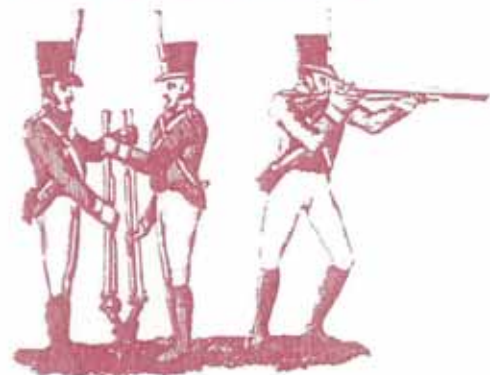
Government Forces

The Crown forces in Ireland during the 1798 period consisted of four different types of soldier. These served in either the Regular Army, Fencible Regiments, the Militia or the Yeomanry. Of these only Militia soldiers were exclusively infantry. In the other formations, a soldier could serve as either an infantryman (foot soldier) or as a cavalry trooper (horse soldier).



Regular Army

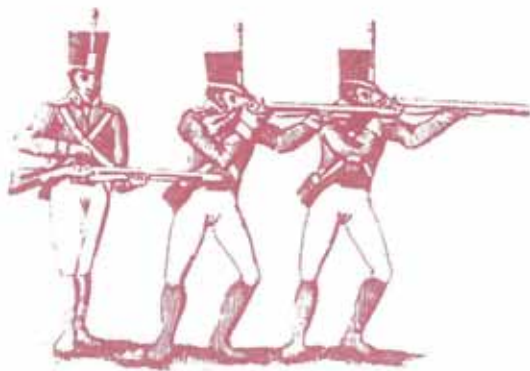
The regular or standing army were permanent soldiers who were generally recruited in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Comparatively few regular army infantry regiments took part in the engagements of 1798 because at that time, Great Britain was locked in mortal combat with Napoleon in the Peninsular wars (Spain and Portugal) and other campaigns.



Infantry regiments contained about 1000 men, organised in ten companies each of 100 men. In addition, each regiment had a small fife and drum band who would play music for them while on the march or in battle. The bulk of the standing army were infantry of the line, but there were also cavalry regiments, each of about 400 men, and some Artillery and Commissary units.

At no stage were Regular Regiments ever stationed permanently in Wicklow, but at different times the 89th Regiment (later renamed the 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers), and three cavalry regiments, the 4th Dragoons (Royal Irish Dragoons), the 5th Dragoons (Royal Irish Dragoons Guards), and the 9th Dragoons all saw some active service in the County.

The Militia which was set up in 1715 was an exclusively Protestant organisation, but this had been amended over the years, and was finally replaced in 1793, when the Irish Militia was re-organised with the introduction of The Militia Act (Ireland). This Act provided that each County must raise an Infantry Regiment, which was to be used for home defence, and to help repel any French invasion of Ireland.



There were 38 different regiments formed in Ireland, each one based in a city or County. Their organisation, uniform, arms and equipment were similar to the standing (regular) army.

In Ireland Militia service was semi-conscript and volunteers. The uniform of the militia was red with different coloured facings to distinguish different regiments. The selected facing colour was also usually used as the background of the Regimental Colours (flag).

Wages for service was good. Captains earned £14-11-11 a month, with Sergeants getting £2-8-0, and Privates £1-11-0.



Several Irish Militia regiments saw service in Co. Wicklow during this period, and the light company of the Wicklow Militia also served for a while in west Wicklow. Some of these were; - The Antrim (buff facing), Armagh (white facings), Cavan (black facing), Monaghan (yellow facing), North Cork (yellow facing). The 1st. Somerset Militia was the only English Militia regiment to serve in Wicklow at this time.



Irish Militia units were not intended for use in their own County, and were normally based in another County. In 1797 during the build-up to the Rebellion, the Wicklow Militia were stationed in County Westmeath, where they engaged in police activities. In 1798 they were based in Kilkenny where they saw much active service in the battles of Castlecomber and Kilconnel Hill, as well as many smaller actions. The most infamous person to serve in the Wicklow Militia during this period was Lieutenant Hempenstall, who was nicknamed "The Walking Gallows". An extremely tall man, he is said to have adapted the torture of "Half Hanging" a man to his own use, by half strangling suspects over his shoulder with a rope. Legend has it that sometimes these torture sessions went wrong, resulting in the deaths of several men.

During the same period, the Antrim Militia was based in County Wicklow where various sections were involved in every major battle fought in the County.

The North Cork Militia, who served in counties Wicklow and Wexford, were responsible for many cases of ill-treatment of rebels and the general population, and were said to have invented the "pitch-cap", a form of torture which involved a cap made of linen or thick brown paper, which was filled with boiling pitch and placed on the head of a suspect.

The Fencibles

The regiments were to be used for home defence in Great Britain and Ireland, and were to be disbanded at the end of the emergency. Forty-six regiments of infantry and 34 regiments of cavalry were raised, most of them Scottish. Two cavalry and two infantry units were Irish.

Discipline was good in the Fencible regiments, and they proved to be very effective soldiers. Together with the militia, they made up the backbone of the Government forces in Ireland.

Some of the units which played important parts in the Wicklow campaign were;-

Reay Fencibles

This unit was drawn from the MacKay and associated clans of the Sutherland and Caithness area of Scotland, and they provided guards at Bray and Newtownmountkennedy in June 1798. They took part in engagements at Ballyrush on the 20th June and at Seven Churches on the 25th June.

Glengarry Fencibles

These were recruited from the MacDonald and its associated clans in the Inverness and Perth area of Scotland. They were the only exclusively Roman Catholic regiment to serve in Ireland during the rebellion.

They served extensively in west Wicklow in 1798-1799, and their chaplain Rev. Alexander MacDonald, was responsible for putting a stop to the practice of Yeomanry units stabling their horses in R.C. chapels.

Durham Fencibles

This was an English Fencible regiment which played a vital role in the Battle of Arklow on the 9th June 1798. Under their commander, Colonel Skerritt, they took the brunt of the main rebel attack.

Other Fencible infantry regiments which served in County Wicklow were;- Suffolk Fencibles and Dumbarton Fencibles, who both served at the Battle of Arklow. The Ancient British Fencibles, were the most famous of the Fencible cavalry regiments to serve in County Wicklow, taking an active part in the Battle of Arklow, where they lost 16 dead and missing, and 8 wounded. They also lost 26 dead at the Battle of Ballyellis near Carnew on 30th June. This regiment, like the North Cork Militia, was also renowned for its ferocity and left behind many legends of torture and ill-use.

The Yeomanry

Yeomen were part-time soldiers in companies raised by local gentlemen, who were often dressed in uniforms designed by, and provided by their commanding officer. They were rarely used outside their own immediate locality, and few saw any action outside their own parish, except those units in Counties Wicklow and Wexford. They had no formal training, and were very poorly disciplined. This situation was aggravated in 1797 and 1798 when Supplementary (extra) yeomanry Corps were formed. When operating with other units-of Regular, Fencible or Militia, they automatically came under the command of the officers of the other units, no matter of what rank. Such Government officials and permanent soldiers under whose command they sometimes came, found great difficulty in controlling them. Undoubtedly, many of the excesses which were carried out on the civilian population were perpetrated by the yeomen, and many complaints about this are included in the reports of senior officers to their own superiors.

Military Barracks

There were two permanent military barracks in County Wicklow in 1798, at Arklow and Baltinglass. In addition to these there were temporary barracks at Bray, Wicklow, Rathdrum, Carnew and Dunlavin.

The Military Road

The Military Road

the military road

The Military Road through the mountains of County Wicklow is, together with its associated barracks, the most significant reminder of the 1798 period surviving in Ireland today. It is a system of roadways constructed by the Government for military use, which commenced in Dublin and ran down the spine of the Wicklow Mountain range in a southerly direction towards the Glen of Imaal.

Thirty-five miles long, it included five military barracks which provided it with protection. It is the only road of its kind ever constructed by the military in Ireland.

Construction of the Road

Construction began at the Northern end near Rathfarnham in 1800, and good progress was made initially. Workers, both soldiers and local people, were paid one shilling and one penny (about 5.5p) per day for their labour. Weather slowed the work at times, particularly in the winters, and the work was not completed until the winter of 1809. The total cost of the road ran to almost £44,000 or £500 per mile, exclusive of bridges, watercourses, supervision etc.

Barracks

Five military barracks were built to protect it, and these were used to provide accommodation for troops who were occupying the area and also as transit accommodation for troops en route over it. These were Leitrim in the Glen of Imaal, Aughavanagh, Drumgoff in Glenmalur, Laragh, and Glencree. Each had accommodation for over a hundred men, although they were never used to full capacity. Construction of the barracks finished in 1806 at a total cost of £26,500.

Major Alexander Taylor was given the job of supervising the maintenance of the road and barracks, and he continued in this job until his death. The barracks were then sold and the roads handed over to the Grand Jury of County Wicklow for use as public highways.

Of the barracks, Leitrim is now destroyed, while Laragh was burnt down and later rebuilt as a private dwelling.

Drumgoff, even without its roof, remains closest to its original condition. Its imposing facade, beech lined parade, boundary wall and gate, together with its picturesque setting, all combine to make it an imposing sight.

Probably the best known of the barracks is Aughavanagh, which was later owned by Charles Stewart Parnell, and afterwards by John Redmond the Nationalist Leader. Glencree Barrack was later used as a reformatory, and ironically, and perhaps fittingly, is now the National Centre for Reconciliation.

A Chronology of the Rebellion of 1798 in Ireland and County Wicklow

1791

1791, Oct 14th

Society of United Irishmen founded in Belfast by Neilson, Sinclair, and others.

1791, Oct 18th

Theobald Wolfe Tone attends his first United Irishmen meeting in Belfast.

1791, Nov 7th

First public meeting of the United Irishmen held in Dublin.

1792

1792, Date unknown

Beauchamp Bagenal Harvey sworn as a United Irishman in Dublin.

1792, Date unknown

Anthony Perry of Inch may have formed a United Irish Society in Gorey Barony. Other Societies may have been formed in County Wexford at this time.

1792, Date unknown

Turner Camac, mining proprietor of Cronebane, employs "Defenders" from County Louth.

1793

1793, Feb 1st

Anglo-French war begins. Reports of United Irish Societies in County Wicklow.

1793, April 9th

The Militia Act (33 Geo.III,c.22) establishes County Militias by conscription and volunteering. Roman Catholics allowed to enlist and fill N.C.O. and lower officer ranks.

1793, June 10th

The County Wicklow Regiment of Militia is embodied for the first time. In April Viscount Wicklow has been appointed the first Colonel of the Wicklow Regiment. Most of the enlisted men are Roman Catholics and the officers all of the Established Church. Militia units are normally employed outside their own County as a quasi-police force under the directions of local magistrates. Following this policy the Wicklow Regiment leave the County in 1793, and with the exception of a few months, remain in service outside Wicklow for the next twenty years.

1793, July 11th

County Wexford Militia riots in which c.70 civilians killed including John Moore and Major Charles Vallotton of the 56th Regiment.



1793, August 18th

Sermon preached before Wicklow Militia by Rev. Edward Lambert Bayly, Rector of Arklow.

1794

1794, May 24th

Dublin Society of United Irishmen suppressed by authorities. Many members withdraw, dissatisfied by the direction the Society is taking.

1795

1795, Jan 4th

Earl Fitzwilliam sworn in as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Hopes of reform raised.

1795, Feb 12th

"Ascendancy" Government ministers dismissed by Lord Lieutenant. Henry Grattan introduces a Catholic Relief Bill.

1795, Feb 23rd

Fitzwilliam recalled as a result of Parliamentary intrigue. His Irish political enemies restored to positions. Irish reform hopes dashed.

1795, March 31st

Earl Camden sworn in as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

1795, May 10th

United Irishmen organisation restructured as a secret society of republicans.

1795, July 12th

Major celebration of the Battle of the Boyne held by loyalists in Rathdrum.

1795, Sept

Sectarian troubles in Armagh between Catholic "Defenders" and Protestant "Peep O' Day Boys", much of which is agrarian in origin.

1795, Sept 21st

Orange Society founded in Loughall following the "Battle of the Diamond" (County Armagh).

1796

1796, March 24th

Insurrection Act (36 Geo. III, c.2) makes it a capital offence to administer oaths in a secret society. Act is aimed specifically at the United Irishmen organisation.

1796,

Thomas Hugo of Drumeen, an ultra loyalist, is appointed High Sheriff of County Wicklow.

1796, July 12th

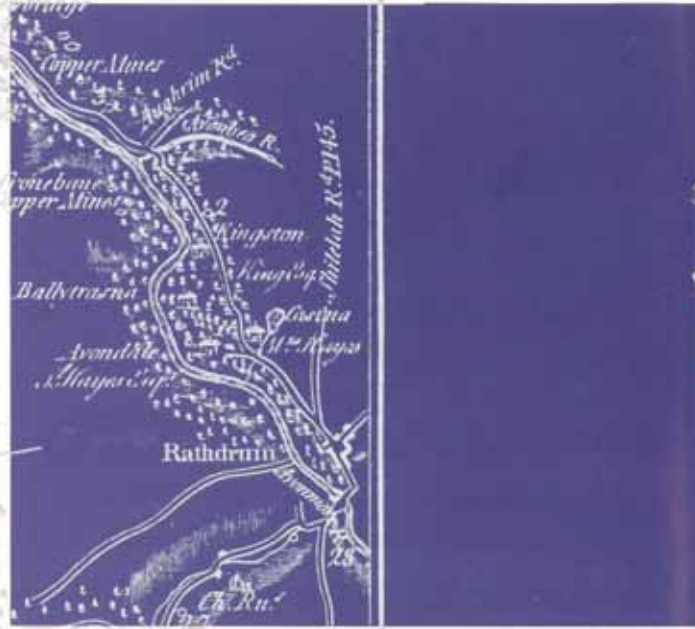
First Orange Order parade is held in Lurgan.

1796, Aug 21st

"Defenders" organisers Patrick and James Corrigan active in Baltinglass parish.

1796, September

"Yeoman" cavalry established. Later they were augmented by "dismounted" yeomen, infantry forces and "supplementary" yeomen, who are no more than armed loyalist civilians. Yeomenry Corps were initially non-sectarian, but as the crisis deepens and rebellion breaks out they assume an acute loyalist role. Yeomen were never intended for military duty outside their own immediate area.



1796, Oct 5th

Arklow, Gorey, Rathdrum and other local yeomen units formed. Initially open to all, it is very probable that sworn United Irishmen joined to learn warfare and attempt to subvert others.

1796, Oct 6th

"Habeas Corpus" Act suspended (37 Geo. III, C.1). Act allows arrest without trial.

1796, Dec 22nd/29th

The French off Bantry Bay, 43 ships and 15000 troops. Invasion force cannot land due to bad weather. Threat causes national panic to Government and Irish loyalists. The crisis colours all subsequent actions of the Government in security matters.

1796, Dec 30th

A meeting in Rathdrum organises an active loyalist faction with heavy emphasis on security and putting down all manifestations of republicanism. United Irishmen are especially singled out.

1796, January 7th

Lord Edward Fitzgerald sworn as a United Irishman. Short haircuts in the French style are favoured by republicans who are nicknamed "Croppies" (crop-cut).

1797, March

Forced disarming in the Ulster counties commenced with great vigour by General Lake.

1797, May 16th

John Smith, a Castle informer and spy, reports some of the Dunlavin Yeomen as United Irishmen and Defenders.

1797, May

Matthew Doyle of Poolahoney (modern Glenart) near Arklow, active in United Irish recruitment. He is an important element in the Wicklow/North Wexford organisation.

1797, May 17th

United Irishmen proclaimed. Large areas of the County under martial law.

1797, May 29th

Constitution of the Orange Order published.

1797, June

The Wicklow Militia stationed in Westmeath use savage methods in putting down the United Irishmen movement. In June they burn 36 houses in Myvore, 7 in Tyrrellspass, and others in Multifarnham. About a dozen suspects are shot in the process. The Westmeath Grand Jury award the regiment a medal for their services.

1797, June 4th

Orange Lodge established in Dublin.

1797, July

Duel reported between Billy Byrne of Ballymanus and Lt. William Tomlinson of the Rathdrum Yeomanry.

1797, July 1st

Wicklow United Irishmen Society meet at Annacurra and organise the County.

1797, Aug 27th

United Irish constitution issued with new amendments.

and the whole

1797, Aug

Death of General Hoche in France. This is a grave setback to the aspirations of United Irishmen.

1797, Sept

Major Joseph Hardy of the Antrim Militia, a loyalist soldier, appointed District Commander of west Wicklow and parts of Carlow and Wexford.

1797, Oct

Suspected United Irishmen in west Wicklow arrested.

1797, Oct

Further spy reports on west Wicklow submitted to Dublin Castle by John Smith.

1797, Nov

Large quantities of guns and a number of pikes seized in Wicklow by Major Hardy. He receives the thanks of the Lord Lieutenant for his services.

1797, Nov 7th

An elderly magistrate named Richard Nickson (Nixon) is killed at his home in Killanure during an arms raid. This is one of the first murders to take place in the County in relation to the troubles.

1797, Nov 10th

Talbotstown Barony proclaimed.

1797, Nov 20th

Barony of Gorey proclaimed. Major Hardy orders a general search of his district which results in the seizure of 700 firearms, for which he receives official thanks.

1798

1798, January

Organisation of the United Irishmen in County Wicklow continues to increase.

1798, January

A test of loyalty and allegiance for yeomen devised by Tom King of Rathdrum to flush out possible United Irishmen in their ranks.

1798, January

Major Hardy purges United Irishmen suspects from the ranks of the Cronebane Yeomanry. Afterwards, the whole corps is reorganised and seconded to Rathdrum Yeomenry. Castlemeadam Yeoman infantry is so mistrusted it is forced to disband.

1798, January

Many United Irishmen are arrested throughout County Wicklow. Forty-five confined in Wicklow Gaol.

1798, January

Aughrim is the scene of public flogging to induce local United Irishmen to give up arms and denounce others.

1798, February

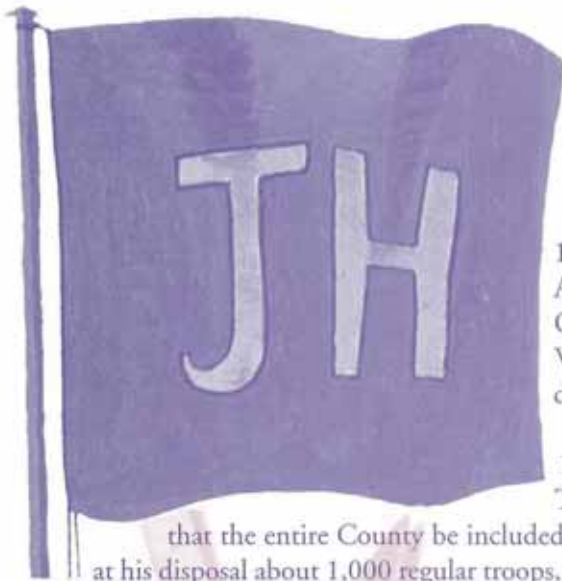
Over 100 suspects are arrested on information supplied by the informer John Cooper of Newtownmountkennedy.

1798, February 19th

The informer Thomas Reynolds betrays the plans of the Leinster Directory of United Irishmen. This information will have profound consequences for the course of the Rebellion.

1798, February

Leading United Irishman Arthur O'Connor is arrested on Margate Beach.



1798, March 8th

National Orange Society expansion. Lodges are formed in Gorey and Arklow by Thomas King of Kingston, Rathdrum and John Hunter-Gowan of Mount Nebo.

1798, March 12th

Arrest of the Leinster United Irish Directory at the house of Oliver Bond. Only the Wexford delegate escapes capture. William Michael Byrne and Sam Lynch, County Wicklow delegates are arrested.

1798, March 30th

The County Wicklow Grand Jury petition the Lord Lieutenant that the entire County be included in Major Hardy's district and this request is agreed to. He has at his disposal about 1,000 regular troops, which includes Fencibles and Militia, and about 1250 yeomen. In addition, he has 2,200 'supplementary' yeomen. These latter troops are poorly disciplined and have little training. Leinster is proclaimed. Martial law, flogging in public and troop quartering introduced. Severe public order measures adopted in west Wicklow. The repression is aided by the County Wicklow Militia, which has returned from active service in County Westmeath.

1798, April 8th

The "Ancient Britons Fencible Cavalry", a Welsh military troop, are deployed in Newtownmountkennedy under Sir Watkin Williams Wynne. They become by-words for severe and repressive measures against civilians.

1798, April 25th

General Gerald Lake succeeds General Abercromby as Irish Commander-in-Chief.

1798, April 26th

300 North Cork Militia arrive on duty in County Wexford, some are deployed in Gorey.

1798, April 27th

Floggings and house burnings instigated by the Ancient Britons in central Wicklow.

1798, April 27th

County Wexford is proclaimed at a magistrates meeting in Gorey.

1798, April

Further Orange Lodges founded in Wicklow.

1798, May 8th

Ballymanus House raided by Tinahely Yeomen.

1798, May 10th

The house of Joseph Holt burned by Yeomanry.

1798, May 11th

County Wicklow magistrates issue an appeal for the surrender of arms before stern measures are applied against the population.

1798, May 13th

Bray and environs proclaimed.

1798, May 18th

Re-organised Directory of the United Irishmen meet to plan rebellion date.

1798, May 19th

Lord Edward Fitzgerald arrested and wounded. He dies on the 4th June.

1798, May 21st

Organisation of the Arklow and district United Irishmen betrayed by the informer "A.B." (Thomas Murray of Sheepwalk, Arklow).

1798, May 21st

Arrest of United Irish suspects of the Saunders Grove - Narraghmore Yeomanry.

1798, May 22nd

Twenty-one blacksmiths alleged to have United Irish sympathies are initially sent to Duncannon Fort in County Wexford, but they are later diverted to Carnew.

1798, May 23rd

Open rebellion commences in counties Kildare, Wicklow, Dublin, and Meath. Attacks on Baltinglass, Ballymore Eustace, Stratford-on-Slaney, Prosperous and other places.

1798, May 23rd

Major Joseph Hardy claims he had captured in all 1,300 guns and 4,000 pikes from United Irish suspects.

1798, May 24th

Tinahely 'True Blues' supplementary Yeomanry Corps formed.

1798, May 24th

Stratford-on-Slaney is attacked by about 500 rebels. A defending garrison is manned by members of the Antrim Militia, the 9th Dragoons and a party of Yeomen under their Captain, Benjamin O'Neil Stratford, numbering about 200 in all. The rebels are beaten off with the loss of about 150 (military estimate). None of the garrison is reported killed but about 20 are wounded including O'Neil Stratford.

On the same day a force of rebels numbering about 200 gather near Dunlavin. It too is defended by Antrim Militia and local Yeomanry. The attackers are defeated with an estimated loss of 300 killed (military estimate). The infamous executions at Dunlavin take place the same day. On hearing the reports of an attack on Ballymore Eustace the officers of the garrison commanded by Captain Richardson of the Wicklow Militia take the decision to kill the prisoners held in the Market House, supposedly out of fear of rebel attack to release them. Forty-three prisoners are murdered on Dunlavin Green, (a crime for which no one is ever made culpable).

1798, May 24/26

Rebel attacks beaten off in counties Kildare, Meath and Dublin.

1798, May 25th

Attack on Carlow town repulsed by military with great slaughter.

1798, May 25th

First battle in Hacketstown, rebels repulsed. Unsuccessful attack on Monasterevin.

1798, May 25th

Order issued by General Lake for death penalty on all civilians caught in arms and a waiver to the military that they need take no prisoners.

1798, May 26th

A rebel camp on Blackmore Hill near Blessington. One thousand rebels reported to be encamped

1798, May 26th

Booolavogue rebels turn out under Fr. John Murphy.

1798, May 27th

Battle of Oulart Hill, County Wexford. First substantial insurgent victory. North Cork Militia defeated with great losses to their ranks.

1798, May 27th

First massacre of prisoners in Carnew by the yeomanry.

1798, May 28th

A general flight of north Wexford civilians and Gorey loyalists to Arklow following news of the fall of Enniscorthy to insurgents.

1798, May 29th

A small party of Government troops consisting of 10 Ancient Britons and 10 members of the Newtownmountkennedy Yeomenry ride to Roundwood where they meet a group of rebels and engage them in battle. The cavalry later relieve Thomas Hugo's house at 'Drumeen' which was under assault and already partially burned. After beating off the attack, the patrol followed the attackers to the village of Clohogue, which they burned down. Although a minor event among greater events, this incident was significant as it prevented Joseph Holt's 600 strong rebel column from taking part in the crucial attack on Newtownmountkennedy on the following day.

1798, May 30th

The battle of Newtownmountkennedy. Around mid-day the town is attacked by two columns of rebels totalling about 1000 men. The defenders consist of a garrison of 20 Antrim Militia, 40 Ancient Britons (The Carmarthen Cavalry from Wales) and about 80 local yeomen. The commander of the Ancient Britons is Captain Burganey. Following a lengthy conflict the rebels are beaten off. About thirty of them are killed. Ten soldiers die, including Captain Burganey. In a follow-up operation, about 60 rebels are killed in Dunran Wood and Devils Glen. Many wounded die when they cannot escape after the woods have been set on fire by the cavalry.

1798, May 30th

Wexford town falls to the insurgent army. Harvey, Colclough and other United Irishmen given commands as leaders of the rebel host.

1798, May 31st

Following the funeral of Burganey in Newtownmountkennedy, the local Yeomen and Ancient Britons go on a rampage, killing about twenty people mostly innocent civilians. Included in these murders is a ninety-year-old farmer named Laurence Cooney.

Sir James Duff attacks the rebel camp at Blackmore Hill in north-west Wicklow, leading a force of the 6th Dragoons and the Dublin City Militia. The rebel force of perhaps 4,000, avoids a fight and withdraws to the safety of the Wicklow mountains.

1798, June 1st

Massacre in the Ball Alley, Carnew of c.40 prisoners by order of Lt. Patten of the Antrim Militia.

1798, June 2nd/3rd

Many Wicklow United Irishmen find their way to County Wexford and join the main rebel army. Among the fighters are Michael Dwyer, Joseph Holt and Billy Byrne of Ballymanus. The Wicklow contingent is known as the "Ballymanus Division".

1798, June 1st

Battle of Bunclody (then called Newtownbarry). Rebel army repulsed.

1798

1798, June 4th

Battle of Tubberneering. Insurgent victory over Colonel Walpole who is killed along with many of his men. The Ballymanus Division participate in the victory. Arklow town and much of the south-east of County Wicklow abandoned by the military when news of the rebel success is known. Government troops retreat as far as Wicklow town.

1798, June 5th

Attack on the town of New Ross by the insurgent army. Many Wicklow rebels take part in the unsuccessful assault. Great loss of life. Scullabogue barn burned in which approximately 75 civilian prisoners of the rebels are piked and burned to death.

1798, June 7th

Carnew burned by north Wexford rebel army under the leadership of Anthony Perry.

1798, June 7th

United Irish rising in Ulster under Henry Joy McCracken. Battle of Antrim.

1798, June 6/7

Arklow occupied by government army under General Francis Needham who fortifies parts of it.

1798, June 8th

Rebel camp established at Mountpleasant near Tinahely.

1798, June 9th

Battle of Arklow. A government army of 1,500 men under General Needham defends Arklow against a rebel army of about 10,000 combatants (although the rebel host is much larger). After a savage five hour assault the rebels withdraw with heavy losses. This is the turning point of the rebellion.

1798, June 9th

United Irishmen rise in County Down under Henry Monroe.

1798, June 11th

A United Irish courier, Fr. John Martin arrested in north Wicklow taking instructions from the Dublin Directory to the Wicklow rebels.

1798, June 12th

Attack on Borris in County Carlow. Rebels repulsed.

1798, June 13th

Battle of Ballynahinch, County Down signals end of the Northern rising.

1798, June 14th

Joseph Holt's north Wicklowmen adopt a "scorched earth" policy in the Roundwood and Glendalough area, burning over 20 loyalist homes. The rebel forces march and countermarch across the highlands of Wicklow, keeping that part of the County in turmoil.

1798, June 17th

A Government army patrol is sent from Tinahely which has been re-occupied by troops. It is to reconnoitre the rebel camp on Mount Pleasant, a short distance from the town. They are repulsed with some losses and retreat from Tinahely. The abandoned town is burned by the rebel army.

1798, June 18th

Government launches an indecisive attack on a rebel encampment near Kilcavan Hill.

1798, June 19th

Yeomen withdraw after inconclusive engagement on Sleamine Hill.

1798, June 19th

Lord Camden resigns from the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland.

1798, June 19th

General Needham re-occupies Gorey. Rebels withdraw in great numbers to Vinegar Hill.

1798, June 19th

Abortive rising by United Irishmen at Ballynascarthy, County Cork.

1798, June 20th

Lord Cornwallis arrives in Ireland as Lord Lieutenant and commander of the army.

1798, June 21st

Battle of Vinegar Hill. Rebel army dispersed. Billy Byrne commands Wicklow division. Garret Byrne assumes command during the retreat.

1798, June 22nd

Anthony Perry leads attack on Gorey. Insurgents establish a camp on the "White Heaps" on Croghan mountain.

1798, June 24th

General Mayers leads army to occupy north Wicklow.

1798, June 22nd/26th

Wexford army under Fr. John Murphy scattered. Epic march of the remnant through County Kilkenny. Several engagements fought including Goresbridge, Castlecomer, and Kilcomny.

1798, June 25th

In a skirmish at Seven Churches (Glendalough), a strong party of troops under the command of Lord Powerscourt drives off a body of rebels encamped there. In the process the soldiers seize a herd of the rebels' cattle. On the same day the second battle of Hacketstown takes place. A large force of rebels who have earlier retreated from Vinegar Hill attack the town. Among the leaders are Michael Dwyer and Michael Reynolds. The defending garrison consists of a detachment of 40 Antrim Militia, 50 Hacketstown Yeomen, 30 Talbotstown Yeomen, 24 Shillelagh Yeomen, and 30 Coolattin Yeomen. In the early part of the battle the cavalry are driven off by the rebels and Captain Hardy (brother of Major Hardy) is killed along with four other yeomen. Thereafter the rebels launch a determined nine hour attack but finally have to withdraw from lack of gunpowder. The garrison survives by barricading themselves inside stone built houses. About 80 houses in the town were burned. An estimated (military figure) 500 rebels are killed and 11 soldiers. An epic seige takes place at the Rev. McGhee's house in Hacketstown, and is defended by Yeomen.

1798, June 29th

Lord Cornwallis Amnesty Act to encourage the rebels to lay down their arms. The amnesty does not extend to sworn United Irishmen.

1798, June 30th

Battle of Ballyellis near Carnew. Rebel division under Joseph Holt destroys a column of Ancient Briton Cavalry. Later in the day the rebels are repulsed from taking Carnew. About a mile from Carnew, the rebel army under Joseph Holt, which has been moving through the countryside between Carnew and Tinahely, ambushes a large cavalry patrol near Ballyellis cross roads. Nearly 50 of the Ancient Briton Fencibles are killed, some 5th Dragoons and at least three Wexford based Yeomen. It is the only clear cut victory of rebel arms in County Wicklow. Michael Dwyer plays a prominent part showing his emerging tactical skills.

*These rebels, I understand who were
sworn last Sunday at Ballyellis
and also at Ballyellis. The whole*

1798

1798, July 2nd

Battle of Ballyrahan. Following the victory at Ballyellis the rebel army occupies the area between Carnew and Tinahely. Protestant farms are raided for arms. A force of local yeomen who are in pursuit meet up with them at Ballyrahan near Tinahely. Nineteen yeomen are killed in the ensuing attack. The rest of the patrol, about 40 in number, retreat to the strong stone built house of Lt. Chamney, from which they resist fierce attacks all night long. Chamney himself is killed in the engagement.

1798, July 4th

Battle of Ballygullen (the battle in the fog). The rebel army who are encamped at the "White Heaps" on the side of Croghan are attacked on three sides by a strong government force. The insurgents are trapped by a pincer movement and scatter as best they can. Some disperse through the countryside while others surrender hoping to come under the terms of a government amnesty. A column of rebels retreating to the mountain heartland of the County destroy the building attached to the Croghan gold works so as to deny it as an army base. Losses on both sides are slight because of the thick fog which aids the rebel escapees. This engagement effectively ends the active County Wexford phase.

1798, July 6th

Rebels establish camp at Aughavannagh. Several loyalists are piked there.

1798, July 8th/14th

March by remnant of Wicklow and Wexford rebel army from Wicklow mountains to County Louth. Engagements at Ryndville, County Meath, Clonard, Knightstown and Lusk, County Dublin.

1798, July 12th

General John Moore occupies Glenmalure.

1798, July

Anthony Perry and Fr. Roche hanged near Edenderry, County Offaly.

1798, July 17th

Lord Cornwallis issues second amnesty for rebels not in leadership positions.

1798, July 20th

Four members of the Antrim Militia desert to Joseph Holt.

1798, July 25th

Greenane Linen factory burned by Holt to prevent its use as a military barracks. A further 24 members of the Antrim Militia desert to him.

1798, July 26th

Holt raids Humewood House, Kiltegan.

1798, July 29th

Principal leaders of the United Irishmen pledge an exile pact.

1798, Aug 6th

General Moore is again in Glenmalure with large forces.

1798, Aug 7th

Joseph Holt destroys a military convoy at Killballyowen.

1798

1798, Aug 15th

Loyalists are killed in the Woodenbridge area.

1798, Aug 22nd

French land 1,500 troops at Killala, County Mayo under General Humbert.

1798, Aug 26th

"The Races of Castlebar" - French rout General Lake.

1798, Aug 30th

Further engagement against Government forces by Holt at Aughavannagh.

1798, Sept 2nd

Holt establishes rebel camp at Knockalt (in the parish of Boystown). He is joined by 21 deserters of the Antrim Militia and "100 Arklow men led by Andrew Hackett". This later claim is very probably an exaggeration. For its actual population, Arklow produced few rebels in the '98 Rebellion.

1798, Sept 5th

Rebel raids in the Blessington area. Hollywood Lodge, a home of the Marquis of Waterford, is burned as well as Blessington House belonging to Lord Downshire.

1798, Sept 6th

United Irish rising in County Longford and Westmeath crushed by military at Granard and Wilson's Hospital.

1798, Sept 8th

Main government forces pursue French and Irish army through Connaught.

1798, Sept 8th

Battle of Ballinamuck, County Longford. Government victory ends the French campaign.

1798, Sept 19th

Rebels under Holt seize and burn much of Aughrim village.

1798, Sept 22nd

General Lake invades Wicklow in strength in order to crush all resistance.

1798, Sept 28th

Holt and his followers make a dramatic escape from a cordon around Clone Hill.

1798, Oct 1st

Joseph Holt, Michael Dwyer and their men inflict a local defeat on a strong force of the Fermanagh Militia who had been sent out to encircle them.

1798, Oct 6th

Henry Grattan is stripped of all his honours after wrongful accusation that he was a United Irishman.

1798, Oct 8th

Death of William Hume M.P. for County Wicklow, while on duty as a Yeoman officer. He is shot by a rebel.

1798, Oct 10th

Holt narrowly escapes capture or death in Glenbride. There is a £300 bounty placed on his head.

Terry Group. Published as the 2nd director 24 Sept 1778.

1798

1798, Oct 16th

Michael Dwyer launches an attack on the Rathdrum loyalists. Holt is probably not involved in this venture. Michael Dwyer attains joint leadership with Holt. Both men distrust one another.

1798, Oct 20th

Wolfe Tone is captured on a French ship off County Donegal.

1798, Nov 4th

Holt makes a daring visit to the remnant of the United Irish leaders in Dublin. He concludes there is little to be gained by remaining on the run and to pursue the Rebellion is futile.

1798, Nov 10th

Joseph Holt surrenders to Lord Powerscourt on terms which guarantee his life and save him from criminal imprisonment. He is later exiled to Botany Bay.

1798, Nov 20th

Andrew Hackett, Holt's comrade in arms, is shot while attempting to raid an Arklow Yeoman's house.

1798, Nov/Dec

Outrages, chapel burnings, and widespread intimidation of ex-rebels extend into the following year. Authority cannot, or will not, curb the excesses of sectarian Yeomen and loyalist gangs.

1799

1799

Military occupation of the principal towns and villages of County Wicklow.

1799, Feb 15th

Michael Dwyer's escape from the cottage at Derrynamuck. Death of Sam McAllister.

1799, Sept 26th

Trial and execution of Billy Byrne of Ballymanus in Wicklow.

1800

1800 - 1803

The building of the Military Road from Rathfarnham to Aughavannagh along with five large barracks. The main purpose of the work is to defeat Michael Dwyer and his rebel band.

1803

1803, July 23rd

Abortive rising by Robert Emmet.

1803, Sept 19th

Robert Emmet is publicly executed in Dublin.

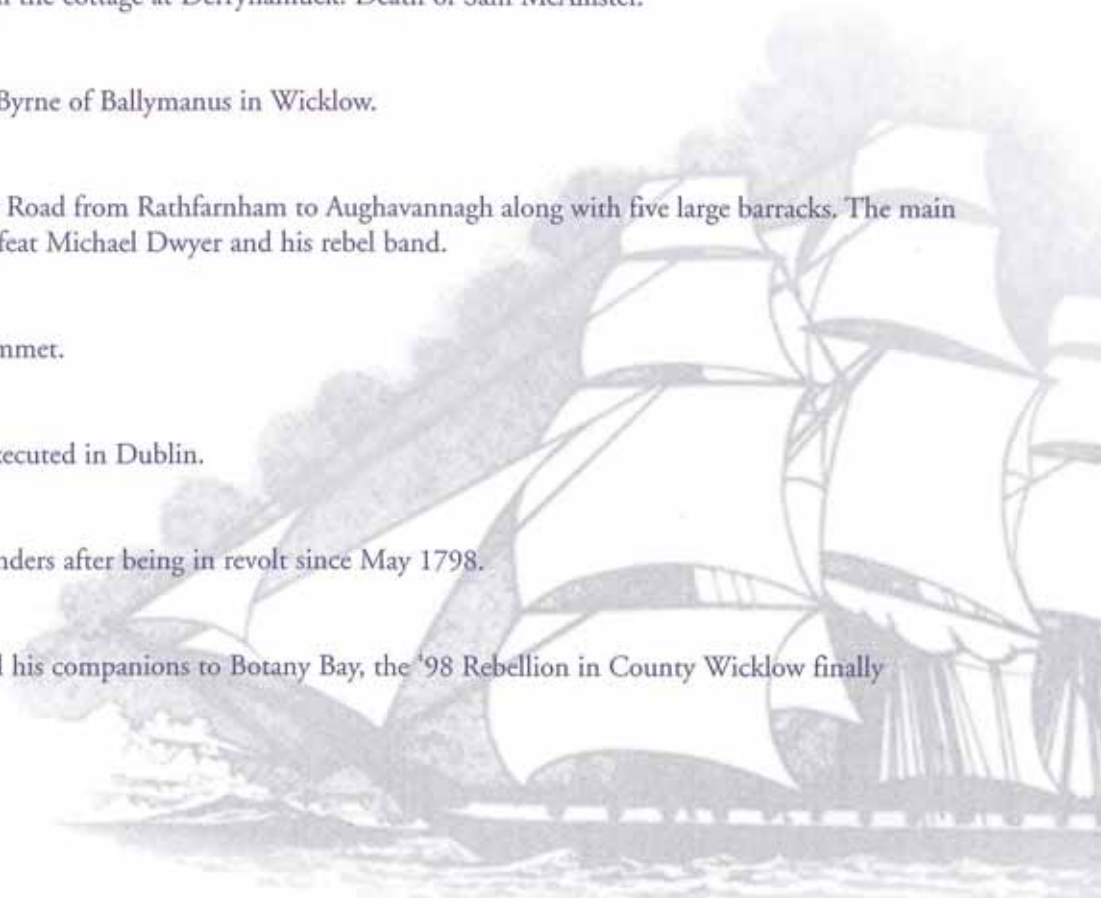
1803, Dec 14th

Michael Dwyer finally surrenders after being in revolt since May 1798.

1805

1805 Aug 28th

With the exile of Dwyer and his companions to Botany Bay, the '98 Rebellion in County Wicklow finally closes.



The Aftermath of the Rebellion

1798: the aftermath of the rebellion

The Aftermath of the Rebellion

The Rebellion of 1798 did not end on Vinegar Hill when the main rebel forces were dispersed on June 21st, nor with the surrender of Joseph Holt in Wicklow the following November. One of the more unsavoury aspects following the rebel defeat was the outbreak of militant sectarianism encouraged by the ultra-loyalist Orange faction, who roved triumphally around the County burning Roman Catholic chapels, harrying their congregations and making life very uncomfortable for the priests serving that community. Initially the authorities made little effort to curb the excesses because they needed the co-operation of the various local military units to help them subdue the country. South County Wicklow and large areas of Wexford were especially singled out by fanatical anti-Catholic yeomen who blamed priests and 'Papisty' (the name given for politicised Catholic activity) for all that had occurred and who were bent on revenging themselves on the most conspicuous signs of Roman Catholic worship, its chapels and clergymen. Sectarianism was bitterest in the border areas of the south and south-east of the County. It was spearheaded by a particularly obnoxious group of fanatics who had founded Orange Lodges in the area, and who did actually harbour some thoughts of trying to expunge all traces of the

Roman Catholic Church. Chapels were burned in Arklow, Castletown, Redcross, Claragh, Rathdrum, Ballydonnell and other locations. Parish priests were murdered in Arklow and Wicklow and several others had serious attempts made on their lives. Motivation for these attacks was fuelled by a variety of reasons. Primarily, there were always sectarian tensions waiting to surface, in both traditions, kept alive by a long history of bad politics, intolerant dogmas and hatreds bred from old conflicts and injustices. In the unbridgeable gulf between Ascendancy and Penal Law it never took much to fan the flames of religious conflagration by either side. The perceived identification of some Roman Catholic priests as United Irishmen did little to help matters, and their part in the Rebellion was eagerly seized upon. The official attitude of the Roman Catholic church, which vehemently condemned the participation of priests in rebellion, mattered little to the predisposition of the wilder ultra-loyalists. Further motive for anti-Catholic revenge was the treatment of loyalists at Vinegar Hill, in Wexford town, and the terrible events at the barn in Scullabogue.

Higher authority wished to pacify the country as quickly as possible and it was realised that unbridled outrage against Roman Catholics could not be allowed to continue. Slowly over the following two years under the Lord Lieutenancy of Lord Cornwallis, the most virulent Orange factions were stood down and the worst of fanatical magistrates like John Hunter Gowan and O'Neil Stratford were removed from office, but not before a long catalogue of anti-Catholic incidents had taken place which was to sour relations and the healing process for years to come.



*Sir John Moore (1761 - 1809)
commanded government
forces in Glenmalur*

My Dear Mary

A return of Yeomanry for the County of Wicklow in December 1803 was: - 140 officers, 135 sergeants, 40 drummers, 270 cavalry and 2,466 infantry.

The Yeomanry Corps listed for County Wicklow in 1797 were:

- Arklow Cavalry: Capt. Thomas Jones Atkins, Lt. Abraham Coates, Lt. John Sherwood.
- Arklow North Cavalry: Capt. Lord Viscount Wicklow, Capt. Robert Howard, Lt. Richard Manifold, Lt. Robert Darlington.
- Baltinglass Cavalry: Capt. Benjamin O'Neil Stratford, Lt. William King, Lt. Humphry Johnson.
- Castlemacadam Cavalry: Capt. John Camac, Lt. Burgess Camac, Lt. Benjamin Coates.
- Dunlavin Cavalry: Capt. William Ryves, Lt. John Fisher, Lt. John Ryves.
- Lower Talbotstown Cavalry: Capt. Richard Hornridge, Lt. W. Patrickson, Lt. William Hemsworth.
- Mount Kennedy Cavalry: Capt. Robert Gore, Lt. Thomas Archer, Lt. Richard Gore.
- Powerscourt Cavalry: Capt. Stanely Monck, Lt. William Colthhurst, Lt. Charles William Quin.
- Rathdrum Cavalry: Capt. Thomas King, Lt. Wiliam Tomlinson, Lt. Richard Bestall.
- Upper Talbotstown Cavalry: Capt. William Hoare Hume, Lt. William Pendred, Lt. Michael Feont.
- Wicklow Cavalry: Capt. Alex Carroll, Lt. John Revell, Lt. Thomas Hugo.
- Shillelagh Cavalry: Capt. William Wainwright, Lt. Solomon Scott, Lt. Joseph Braddell.
- Ballynacrow & Tuckmill Infantry: Capt. Morley Saunders, Lt. Thomas Jones, Lt. James Wall.
- Castlemacadam Infantry: Capt. Turner Camac, Lt. John Maxwell Templeon.
- Cronebane Infantry: Capt. Abraham Mills, Lt. Thomas Weaver, Lt. George Blood.
- Donard Infantry: Capt. George Heighington, Lt. Henry Cheney, Lt. Arthur Conolly.
- Carnew Infantry: Capt. Thomas Swan, Lt. Richard Bookey, Lt. Robert Blaney.
- Coolattin Infantry: Capt. Joseph Chamney, Lt. Thomas Chamney, Lt. George Binks.
- Coolkenno Infantry: Capt. Abraham Nickson, Lt. Abraham Nickson Jnr., Lt. John Revell.
- Tinahely Infantry: Capt. James Morton, Lt. George Coates, Lt. Henry Dowse.
- Wicklow Infantry: Capt. William West, Lt. Thomas Kehoe, Lt. Thomas Halbert.

To the above were added in the 1798 list:

- Bray Infantry: Capt. J. Edwards.
- Bray Cavalry: Capt. The Earl of Meath



John McMurray

THE OATH OF LOYALTY

“I do, in the presence of my neighbours, solemnly swear by the contents of this book, containing the Holy Gospels of Christ, that I have not joined, nor in any manner entered into any society or association of persons styling themselves ‘United Irishmen’, or any other seditious society or association whatsoever, or taken any oath to keep the secrets of any such society, or taken any oath to the prejudice of his Majesty King George the Third, or contrary to the existing laws or constitution of his Kingdom of Ireland: and all this I do freely and voluntarily swear, without any mental evasion or secret reservation whatsoever. So help me God”.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPELS DESTROYED BY UNKNOWN PERSONS, DURING AND SINCE THE LATE REBELLION.

In the Arch-Diocese of Dublin.

County of Wicklow: -

Roundwood	.	.	.	June 26,	1798
Anamoe	.	.	.	June 28,	1798
Kilpatrick	.	.	.	Oct. 11,	1798
Ballinvolagh	.	.	.	Oct. 11,	1798
Castletown	.	.	.	Nov.	1798
Ashford	.	.	.	Jan. 25,	1799
Boomaley	.	.	.	Jan. 25,	1799
Johnstown	.	.	.	April 20,	1799
Castledermot	.	.	.	March 20,	1799

The windows of Wicklow Chapel broken, and part of the new chapel at Newbridge destroyed by fire, in January and May, 1799.



Michael Dwyer

Born in 1772 in Camara in the Glen of Imaal, West Wicklow, Michael Dwyer is one of the most famous rebels of the 1798 period. It would appear that he had joined the United Irishmen as early as April 1797 when the movement spread to the west. Active in the movement, he was forced to go on the run prior to the outbreak of the Rebellion. He fought at the Battles of Arklow and Vinegar Hill and led the rebels at the Battle of Hacketstown. With the retreat of the rebels into the Wicklow mountains he was appointed "Governor of Glenmalur". He did not agree with the plan to march into Meath and elected to stay to guard the wounded. On Holt's return on the 16th July he rejoined the main rebel force.

By August General Moore was issuing amnesties but Dwyer was wary of accepting one, as loyalists in his locality swore he would be killed if he returned home. Though the Rebellion was virtually over in a matter of some months, Dwyer along with a small band of loyal followers held out in the hills. He carried out a very successful campaign of guerrilla warfare, always managing to elude his pursuers such as the incident at Derrynamuck.

Dwyer stayed for five years on the run in the hills. The Military Road and five barracks along its route were built in an attempt to capture him.

With the failure of Emmet's rising in 1803 pressure was increased to capture the elusive Dwyer. His usual haunts were guarded by the government and eventually in the winter of 1803 he surrendered to Mr. Hume, M.P. for County Wicklow. It was agreed that he and his four lieutenants would be pardoned and with their families be sent to America.

He remained in Kilmainham Gaol until 1805, when he was informed a week before that he was being sent as a free man to the penal colonies of Australia. He was devastated at this news and protested vociferously at this treatment, reminding the authorities of the terms of his surrender. It was in vain.

On August 28th 1805 Dwyer with his wife Mary, Hugh Vesty Byrne, his first cousin, his wife Rachael and children, Arthur Devlin, John Mernagh and Martin Burke left Cobh Harbour aboard the "Tellicherry", arriving in early 1806.

On landing the men were given 100 acres of land and they settled into their new life. However, the Governor of New South Wales, Captain Bligh, of "Mutiny on the Bounty" fame had the five men charged with seditious activities and though cleared of the charges in court, Bligh had them re-arrested and sent to various convict depots, including Norfolk Island and Van Diemen's Land.

Bligh was eventually removed from office by the military in the Rum Rebellion. Dwyer and his men were released and pardoned. The families returned to their farms at Liverpool, near Sydney and settled down to a life in farming.

Dwyer was persuaded by Governor Lachlan MacQuarie to take a position as a constable in the district. He held this position for some time but was eventually removed from office for misconduct. He opened a tavern, but this venture brought him financial problems. On leaving Ireland it had been decided that their four children would not accompany them but that they would follow at a later date.

Michael Dwyer died on August 23rd 1825, aged fifty-three. His children arrived one week after his death. He was buried in Redfern cemetery but was reinterred in Waverley Cemetery and a monument erected over his grave to commemorate the "Wicklow Chieftain" in 1898. It is reported that over 200,000 attended the unveiling of the monument. It is still the largest memorial of its kind in Sydney today.

Joseph Holt *joseph holt* Joseph Holt Joseph Holt

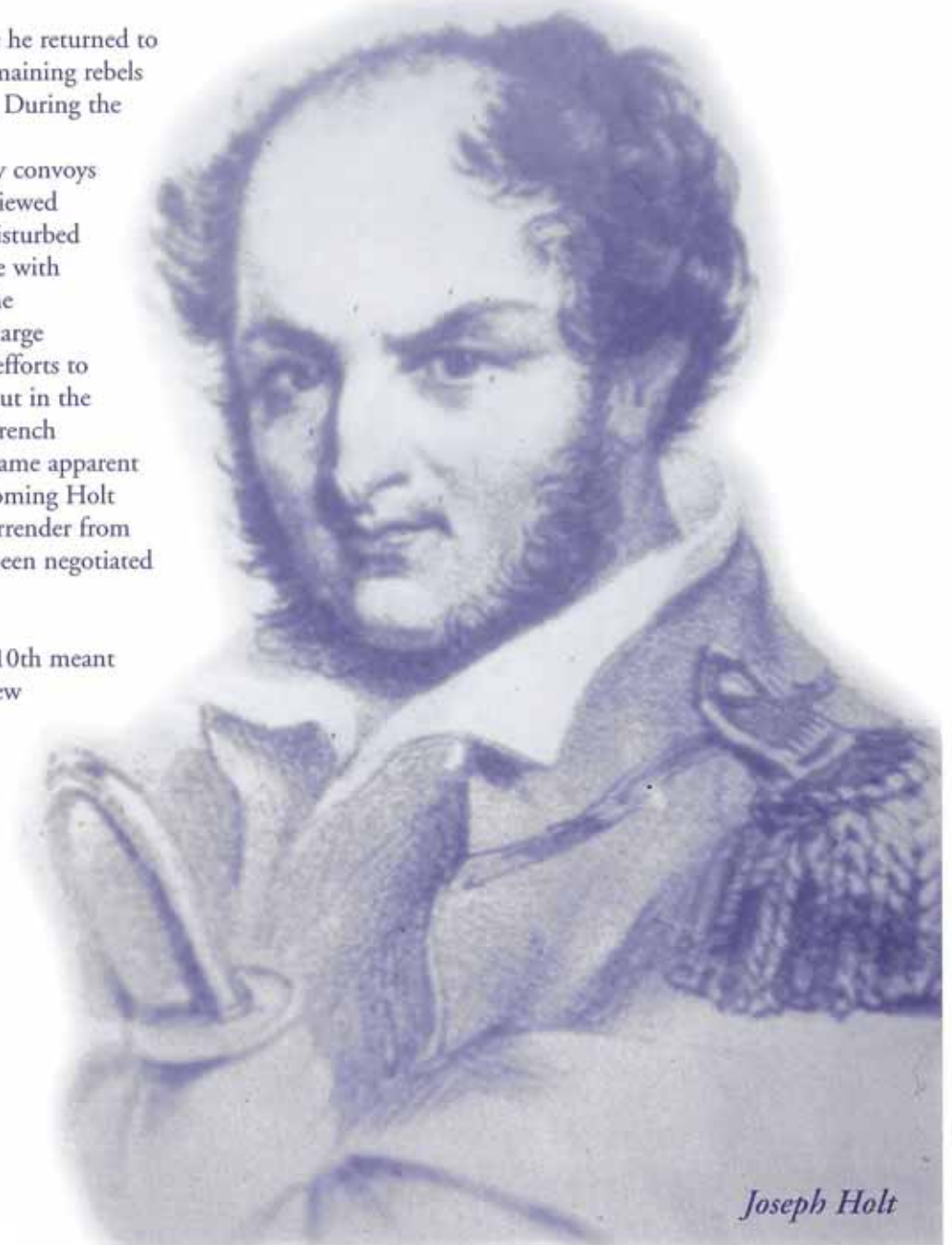
Joseph Holt was born in the parish of Castlemacadam, County Wicklow in 1756.

After marrying Hester Long in 1782 he settled in Mullinaveigue, outside Roundwood. He served as a volunteer in his youth and went to study agriculture in the north of Ireland. On returning to County Wicklow he took up a position as a baronial sub-constable in the 1780s, as well as being a bounty hunter. He also worked at road building and cloth assessment. Despite Holt's claim in his Memoirs that he was not a member of the United Irishmen, it would appear that he joined the Society in 1797.

He acted as a recruiter and liaised with the Dublin Committees. Prior to the outbreak of the Rebellion Holt's farm was burned by the Fermanagh Militia on 10th May. He joined the rebels and remained at large until November. Once the Rebellion had commenced he fought within Wicklow, gaining a reputation for leadership, moving into Wexford with the Wicklow men in early June. His greatest moment of triumph was at the Battle of Ballyellis on 30th June where he organised an ambush of the Ancient Britons. He elected to participate in the Meath expedition in July, where he distinguished himself.

Despite being wounded twice he returned to Wicklow where he led the remaining rebels amounting up to 1,000 men. During the following months he carried out attacks on military convoys and loyalists. Dublin Castle viewed Wicklow as being the most disturbed County in Ireland at this time with over 400 houses burned by the undefeated rebels. Though a large reward was offered for Holt, efforts to capture him failed. He held out in the mountains awaiting further French intervention, but when it became apparent that no such assistance was coming Holt decided to accept terms of surrender from the Government which had been negotiated through his wife.

His surrender on November 10th meant that he would be exiled to New South Wales as a free man.



Joseph Holt

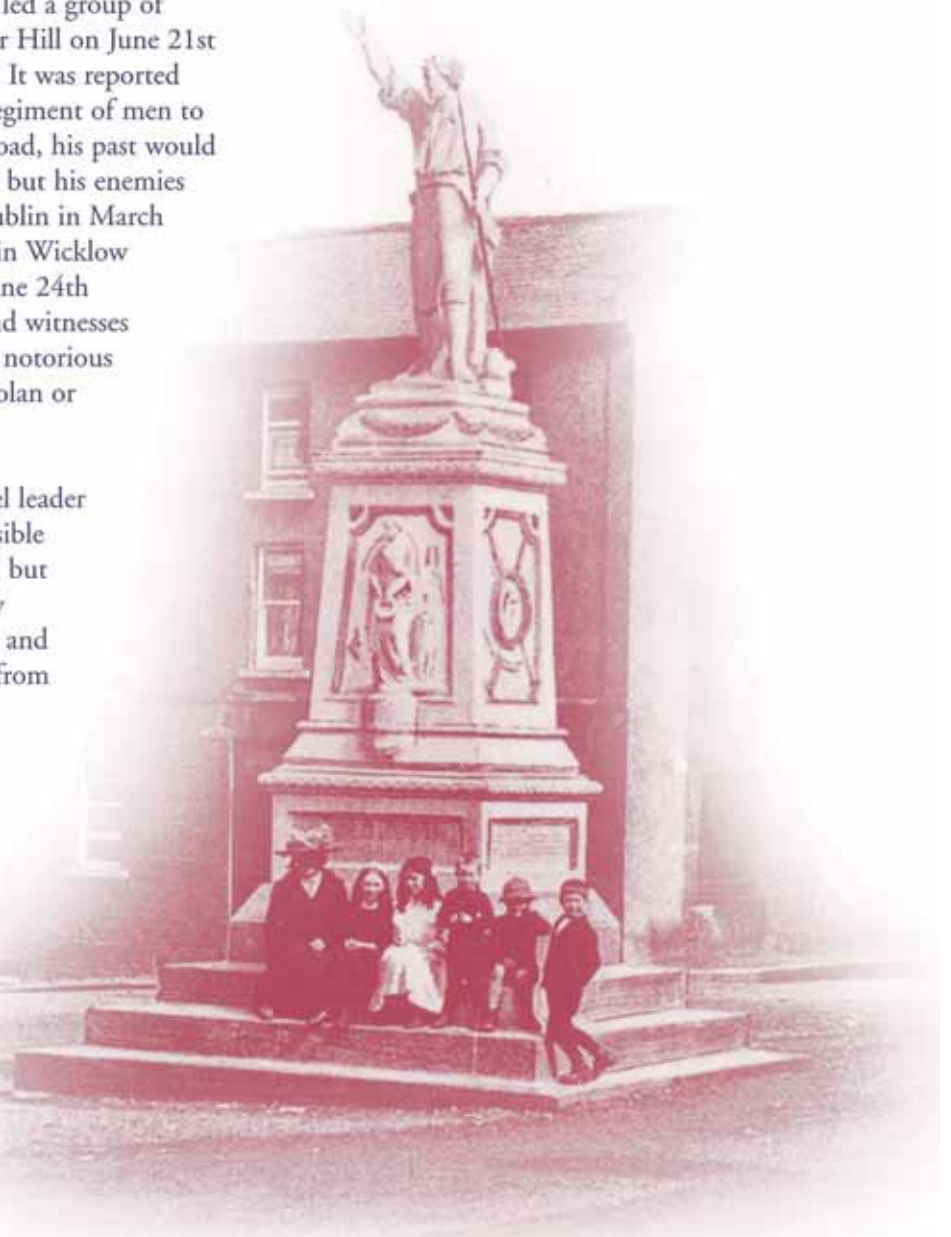
William (Billy) Byrne

Billy Byrne, born in 1775, was the youngest son of Garret Byrne of Ballymanus. This was one of the last great Catholic landed families in Wicklow. They lost their position and lands as a result of the participation of Billy and his older brother, Garret Jr., in the 1798 Rebellion. Garret Jr. was a United Irishman, as was his brother Billy, a "man about town", who was described as handsome, powerfully built and six foot six inches in height. The Byrnes of Ballymanus had made enemies of various influential people over the years and Billy was no exception. This was later to lead to his death.

He refused to take a Test Oath and was dismissed from the Wicklow Yeoman Cavalry. It would appear that he had no contact with the United Irishmen. It was only after the fall of Wexford at the end of May that Billy decided "there is nothing for us now but to join the people".

In the absence of his brother, Garret, he played the part expected of a Byrne of Ballymanus and fought with the vanguard at Arklow on June 9th. He led a group of Wicklow men at the battle of Vinegar Hill on June 21st but after the defeat went into hiding. It was reported to him, however, that if he raised a regiment of men to fight for the British Government abroad, his past would be atoned for. This he decided to do, but his enemies struck first and he was arrested in Dublin in March 1799. He spent the next six months in Wicklow Gaol. He was court-martialled on June 24th 1799. Evidence was manufactured and witnesses paid to swear against Billy. The most notorious of those was the infamous Bridget Dolan or "Croppy Biddy."

Billy was found guilty of being a rebel leader and was sentenced to death. It is possible that this could have been commuted, but his enemies were too influential. Billy Byrne was taken from Wicklow Gaol and brought to Gallows Hill, half a mile from Wicklow Town, on the old Glenealy Road, and executed on September 26th.



William (Billy) Byrne Memorial

illustrations & maps

- Cover. "Attack on Captain Chamney's House" (Detail) George Cruikshank c.1845. First printed in 'History of the Irish Rebellion of 1798' .W.H.Maxwell
- Page 1. Cartouche and Portion of County Wicklow Map by Jacob Nevill 1760. P. Power Collection.
- Page 2. *ibid.*
- Page 3. *ibid.*
- Page 4. *ibid.*
- Page 5. Wicklow Gaol, now Wicklow's Historic Gaol. Wicklow Heritage Society Collection.
- Page 6. "Execution of Robert Emmet in Thomas Street Dublin. Print c. 1898. National Library of Ireland.
- Page 7. "Pikemen at the Rising of the Moon" D. Owens Collection Arklow.
- Page 8. United Irishmen Society. Official Emblem. 1796.
- Page 9. *ibid.*
- Page 10. Illustration D. Owens Collection Arklow.
- Page 11. Pikes. D. Owens Collection Arklow.
- Page 12. Yeomen Infantry. D. Owens Collection Arklow.
- Page 13. *ibid.*
- Page 14. *ibid.*
- Page 15. *ibid.*
- Page 16. Nevill 1760
- Page 17. Maps of the Roads of Ireland 2nd. Ed, G. Taylor & A. Skinner. 1783. London.
- Page 18. *ibid.*
- Page 19. *ibid.*
- Page 20. Cavalry Sabres. D. Owens Collection Arklow. "Holt's Flag" facsimile Wicklow Heritage Society Collection
- Page 21. Letter Major Hardy to Dr. Coke May 1798. National Archives of Ireland.
- Page 22. *ibid.*
- Page 23. The Battle of Arklow by Cpt. Holmes: Durham Fencibles.
- Page 24. "The Rev. Mr. McGee's House Successfully defended against the Rebels" (An incident during the second Battle of Hacketstown) George Cruikshank c.1845.
- Page 25. Attack on Captain Chamney's House.
- Page 26. Taylor and Skinner.
- Page 27. The "Tellicherry"-Wicklow Heritage Society.
- Page 28. John Moore of Corunna. P. Power Collection Arklow.
- Page 29. Lt. John McMurray of Rathdrum P. Power. Collection & Letter Addressed to his wife.
- Page 31. Michael Dwyer. Wicklow Heritage Society Collection.
- Page 33. General Joseph Holt. Wicklow Heritage Society Collection.
- Page 34. Billy Byrne Monument c.1914. Wicklow Historical Society Collection.

Inserts & Documents relating to 1798

1. Sir John Parnell to Dr. Coke National Archives of Ireland 620/18a/6
2. Map of the Parish of Baltinglass. County Wicklow, forwarded to the Government by a Correspondent in the parish, May 7th 1798. (Christopher Robinson, Rector of Baltinglass. National Archives of Ireland 20/37/35.
3. A Listing of officers of the Ancient British Fencible Cavalry. Carmarthen Public Library, Wales
4. Bulletin issued from Dublin Castle June 5th 1798. National Library of Ireland.
5. Bulletin issued from Dublin Castle May 24th 1798. National Library of Ireland.
6. Bulletin issued from London Gazette June 25th 1798. National Library of Ireland.
7. Bulletin issued from Dublin Castle describing Battle of Arklow June 10th 1798. National Library of Ireland.
8. Bulletin issued from Dublin Castle October 25th 1799,(describing event in Tinahely May 24/25th 1798), National Library of Ireland.

Source List *source list*
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Extensive primary and secondary sources for the history of the 1798 Rebellion are cited in the following works. Readers who wish to pursue deeper study of the events of '98 in County Wicklow should bear in mind the excellent material held in the Rebellion Papers of the National Archives, Bishops Street, Dublin, as well as the 1798 references in the National Library of Ireland, Kildare Street Dublin. Other fruitful collections are housed in the Linenhall Library, Belfast, The Ulster Museum, Belfast. The National Museum, (Collins Barracks section) has a large collection of artifacts and documents pertaining to the period. Wicklow Heritage Centre Collection contains many unique objects relevant to the County's '98 period. Many older published works on the Rebellion are to be found in the Wicklow County Library, Main Reference Section, Bray, Wexford County Library, Wexford, and Carlow County Library, Carlow.

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acknowledgements

Acknowledgements

This Education Pack was produced by County Wicklow 1798 Education Committee, a sub committee of Wicklow County Council 1798 Committee, chairman Anthony O'Neill.

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John Medlycott, Roundwood Historical Society.

David Owens, Arklow Arts Centre Supervisor.

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The following individuals gave valuable time and material assistance to this project;

Dr. Ruan O'Donnell, Henry Cairns, Nicholas Furlong (Wexford),

Dominic Martella (Wicklow '98 Committee), Enniscorthy Castle Museum,

National Museum (Collins Barracks), Jim Rees, Arklow.

Joan Kavanagh, Heritage Co-ordinator, Wicklow County Council, Secretary Wicklow '98 Committee.

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to act on our system. I need not reason
on the increasing difficulty of restraining
especially in times of war.

The state of the Treasury is now very
good.

I am with much regard
S^r Coke

August 20th
1797

Yours very truly

J. Parnell

1. Sir John Parnell to Dr. Coke N.A.I. 620/18a/6

*Dr. Coke,

...Those United Irishmen who were sworn last Sunday at Arklow were acquitted at Wicklow assizes. The whole of this country is swearing. I am convinced that the whole mass of the lower class of the people of Ireland will shortly be brought to act in our system. I need not reason on the increasing difficulty of such — (policy?), especially in times of war. The state Treasury is now very good.

I am with much regard

S. Coke.

Yours very truly, J. Parnell August 20th 1797.

The Ancient British Fencible Light Dragoons,
(six Troops.)

Rank.	Name.	Rank in the	
		Regiment.	Army.
Colonel -	Sir W. W. Wynne	14 Mar. 1794	
Lieut. Colonel	Richard Puleston	21 Oct. 1795	
Major -	Thomas Cuming	21 Oct. 1795	
Major -	Gwilliam Lloyd Wardle	1 Nov. 1797	
	G. H. Wardle	14 Mar. 1794	
	Thomas Boycott	21 Oct. 95	
	Sir H. Goodricke	5 April 96	
Captain -	William Wynne	1 Nov. 97	
	George Francis Barlow	1 July 98	
	John Edwards	26 Jan. 99	
Captain Lieut.	John Burganey	5 April 1796	
	George Francis Barlow	1 July 1798	
	Archibald Paxton	23 Feb. 1799	
	William Wynne	10 June 1795	
	G. R. Barlow	5 April 96	
	John Edwards	19 Aug. 1796	
	Archibald Paxton	1 July 97	
Lieutenant -	Adolphus Giffard	21 Oct.	
	John Groome Smyth	1 Nov.	
	Joseph Airdell Sparkes	1 July 1798	
	John Waring	2 do.	
	Charles James Apperley	23 Feb. 99	
	Thomas Zouch	12 Mar.	
	Edward Grainger	22 Apr.	
	Edward Granger	17 Oct. 1794	
	Charles Spencer	10 June 95	
	Thomas Jones	12 June 96	
	J. Airdell Sparkes	23 Mar. 97	
	John Groom Smyth	6 April	
	Archibald Paxton	24 Oct.	
Cornet	Edward Browne	3 June	
	J. Griffith	1 July 98	
	Richard Steel, <i>Bart.</i>	do.	
	Charles James Apperley	28 do.	
	Thomas Zouch	do.	
	J. Denton	12 Mar. 99	
	John Usher	1 Apr.	
	Thomas Skelding	2 do.	
	Adjutant -	George Francis Barlow	1 July 1798
	Surgeon -	Edward Grainger	14 Mar. 94
	Mate -	Charles Spencer	25 Dec. 94
	Paymaster -	Charles James Apperley	5 Sept. 98
	- Agents, Messrs. Armit and Borough, Kildare-street.		

*Dublin Castle, 5th June, 1798.
Five o'Clock, P. M.*

MAJOR MARLEY is just arrived from Major-General Loftus, and brings an Account that the Major-General, finding that Colonel Walpole's Detachment had received a Check, thought it prudent to move to Carnew, which he effected without the Loss of a Man.

It appears that Colonel Walpole had met with the main Body of the Rebels in a strong Post near Slievebuy Mountain, and having attacked them, he was unfortunately killed by a Shot in the Head in the Beginning of the Action, when his Corps, being in a Situation where it could not act with Advantage, was forced to retire to Arklow. The Loss was Fifty-four Men killed and missing, and Two Six-Pounders. Captain Stark, Captain Armstrong, Captain Duncan were wounded, but not dangerously, and Sir Watkins William Wynne received a Contusion in the Hand.

Extract of a Letter from Lieutenant Macaulay, of the Antrim Militia, to Major Hardy, commanding in the County of Wicklow, dated Baltinglass, the 24th of May 1798.

BETWEEN Twelve and One o'Clock To-day, the Insurgents appeared in the Neighbourhood, to the Amount of at least 4 or 500. Thirty of the Antrim Militia, under my Command, and Cornet Love, with 20 of the 9th Dragoons, were sent to attack them. At the Instant that we were advancing upon them, in the Town of Stratford-upon-Slaney, Captain Stratford appeared at the other End of the Town, with Part of his Corps. We attacked the Rebels on both Sides, and completely routed them, having between 1 and 200 killed, besides many wounded, who made their Escape.

There are several of our Men wounded, and one of the 9th Dragoons very severely. I have great Pleasure in telling you, that every Man behaved as well as possibly could be wished.

BULLETIN

FROM THE

LONDON GAZETTE

MY LORD, *Dublin Castle, June 25, 1798.*

I HAVE the Honour to acquaint your Grace that this Day Advices were received from Lieut. Gardner of the Antrim Militia, dated from Baltinaglas the 26th Instant, which state, that early in the Morning of the 25th, a very large Body of Rebels attacked his Post at Hacketstown. They were in Number many Thousands. Lieutenant Gardner's Force consisted of 50 Upper Talbotstown, and 24 Shebagh Cavalry, 50 of the Antrim Regiment, 46 Hacketstown, and 30 Coolattin Yeoman Infantry. He at first took an advantageous Situation in Front to defend the Barracks, A Contest took Place in the Midst of Flames for near Nine Hours, for the Rebels set Fire to the Town. They were at last repulsed with considerable Loss; many dead were found in the Streets and Ditches, and 30 Car Loads of Killed and Wounded were carried off in their Retreat.

Lieutenant Gardner speaks in the highest Terms of the Gallantry of his whole Detachment. He particularly praises Lieutenant Rowen of the Antrim, Captain Hume of the Upper Talbotstown Cavalry, Captain and Lieutenant Charnley of the Coolattin, Lieutenants Saul and Thomas of the Hacketstown Cavalry, and Lieutenants Braddell and Taylor of the Shebagh Cavalry; and he strongly mentions the good Conduct of Serjeant Nixon of the Antrim Regiment.

He severely laments the Loss of a good Officer, Captain Hardy of the Hacketstown Yeomen Infantry, who fell early in the Action. His other Loss consists of 10 Privates killed, and of 1 Serjeant and 19 Privates wounded.

I inclose to your Grace a further Account of the Action near Goresbridge, and a Return of Killed and Wounded, which has been received from Major-General Sir Charles Asgill.

I have the Honor to be, &c. &c.

CORNWALLIS.

*Arklow, June 10, 1798.
Half-past Five, A. M.*

SIR,

ABOUT Three o'Clock, P. M. Yesterday, the Rebel Army presented itself at my Outpost in very great Numbers.

They approached from Coolgrexny Road, and along the Sand Hills on the Shore, in Two immense Columns, while the Whole of the intermediate Space, embracing my entire Front, was crowded by a Rabble, armed with Pikes and Fire-arms, and bearing down on me without any regular Order.—The Position I had chosen was a very strong one in Front of the Barrack.—As soon as the Enemy approached within a short Distance, we opened a heavy Fire of Grape, which did as much Execution as from the Nature of the Ground and the strong Fences of which they possessed themselves, could have been expected. This continued incessantly from Six until half-past Eight o'Clock, when the Enemy desisted from their Attack, and fled in Disorder on every Side. The Numbers killed have not been ascertained. Our Loss is inconsiderable, and no Officer is wounded. A principal Leader is among the Slain.

Colonel Sir W. W. Wynne, with some of the 4th Dragoon Guards, and 5th Dragoons, and Part of his own Regiment, and the Yeomanry, charged the Rebels most gallantly, and routed a strong Column of them attempting to gain the Town by the Beach. Colonel Maxwell offered his Services to burn some Houses in his Front, near the End of the Action, and effected it most handsomely, and without Loss. Colonel Skerrott, of the Durham Fencibles, on whom the Brunt of the Action fell, acted in the most spirited and determined Manner, as did also Colonel O'Hara, who commanded the Antrim, and covered the Road on my Right. The Coolness and good Conduct of Colonel Cope, of the Armagh, does him infinite Credit, and it is with the most real Satisfaction I add, that the Zeal and spirited Conduct of the Yeomanry Corps, were every Thing I could wish.

To Lieutenant-Colonel Blackwood, of the late 33d, and Lieutenant-Colonel Cleghorn, of the Meath, who did me the Honor to serve with me upon this Occasion, I am indebted for the most essential Services, and I am happy thus to acknowledge my Obligations to them both, and of the spirited Exertions of Mr. Whaly I cannot speak too highly.

I must, in Justice to my Aide de Camp, Captain Moore, of the 4th Dragoon Guards, and Major of Brigade Captain Needham, of 9th Dragoons, mention their great Alertness. To the Activity and Information of the former I am much indebted, and he will detail to you all other Particulars.

(Signed) FRANCIS NEEDHAM.

TINEHALY, OCTOBER 25, 1799.

Sir,

ON Whitsun-Sunday eve, 1798, Lieutenant Bookey, of the Camolin yeomen-cavalry, being on piquet between his own house and Camolin, was surrounded and inhumanly murdered by a party of rebels, who brought him to his own house, which they burned; they also killed and wounded some of his party. At break of day the next morning, a party of the yeomenry and true blues of Tinahely, on piquet near Wicklow-gap, perceiving the house of (Smith) a yeoman, at Anagh, on fire, made towards it, and observing some people on the rocks of Conna-hill; they pursued them, and took five, one a well-dressed clever young man (son to Laughlin Finn, of Camolin, in the county of Wexford, a respectable farmer), upon whose clothes was discovered blood; they were then brought to the guard-house of Tinehaly, where an express arrived with the account of Mr. Bookey's murder; and as, upon examination, they could give no proper account of themselves, they were ordered back to Wicklow-gap, there to be shot and buried. It has since been more fully proved that they murdered Lieutenant Bookey. The same morning another party of the yeomenry and true blues of Tinehaly, took one Doyle, at Kilpipe church-yard; it appeared that he had been a tenant to Mr. Bookey of Doneshall, brother to the deceased Lieutenant; he rode one horse and led another, and was after conveying a son of his to the county of Wicklow mountains, who had been concerned in the murder of Mr. Bookey—he was brought to Carnew, where he suffered death. Another party from Tinehaly, at Balinglin, took three men with pikes, who were afterwards shot near the church of Kilcommon. Wicklow-gap, and that part of the country, being the pass from the counties of Kildare and Wicklow to Wexford, there was not a night after until the seventeenth of June, that the same loyal people, and the yeomenry and loyalists of Shillelagh and that neighbourhood, by scouring the country, did not meet with more or less armed rebels (but not in great force) going back and forward, whom they dispatched,—not many of the loyalists lost their lives.

I received a letter from your
private hand this morning - it is not very
to confirm it being strong while she is taking
pardon - I am surprised to hear Mr. Goussier
- their attention is turned on the

Design - Graalopper Graphica

Miss Anne Murray
Rev. Mr. Edwards
Rev. Mr. St. John's

your between you & his
purpose of self how to
sincerely be the



This education pack was produced by Coiste Chill Mhantain '98,
Wicklow '98 Committee, Education Sub-Committee.

Established by Wicklow County Council to
Commemorate the 1798 Rebellion in County Wicklow.

