

# Roundwood & District

## Historical & Folklore Journal

No. 17

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# *Roundwood and District Historical and Folklore Society*

## *Officers 2006-2007*

Chairman	Derek O'Brien
Vice- Chairman	Mary Byrne
Secretary	John Medlycott
Treasurer	Joe McNally
PRO	Joe Timmons
Photographer	Agatha de Valera Mansfield
Editorial team	Claire Chambers, Dairine Coffey, Ita Corcoran & Ann O'Brien



*The Treasurer, Secretary and President flanked by Eleanor Murphy  
and Jürgen Schwalm  
See page 64*

## *From the Chair*

*Derek O'Brien*

Welcome to the 17th issue of the Roundwood and District Historical and Folklore Society's Journal.

According to generations of poets and writers since classical times, all of life is a journey either in reality or imagination. We were only in the door from our holidays when the co-ordinator of the editorial board was on the phone requesting the production of this piece forthwith. The resulting hurried review of the past year's activities and the contents of this Journal have convinced me that the poets may be right. From Samuel Beckett on his bike, Ronnie Delaney on his legs, travel and related topics abound.

We were taken back in time by members of the Umha Aois and Mogh Roith re-enactment groups who gave a marvellous display of how relatively simple but labour intensive techniques could produce serviceable metal artefacts. Grainne Medlycott took us to Papua-New Guinea and Mairtin Mac Siurtain took us to India.

Nearer to home, Dermot Somers recounted how Art O'Neill came to die above the Wicklow Gap and Colm Galligan told of his father's bicycle ride from Dublin to Enniscorthy, on the back roads, to get the 1916 Rising going there. Members of the Holt family from Australia were back in September.

The Society's own travels around the locality took us to see carved stones (Chris Corlett); Avonmore House (John Medlycott). Our thanks to the landowners concerned. Our summer outing took us to Arigna Mines, O'Carolan's grave and the King House in Boyle, Co. Roscommon (Mary Byrne and John Medlycott).

Pat Power gave us a talk on the sectarian troubles in Arklow in the late 19th century.

To all of these speakers and to the participants in the Bronze Age Seminar we are extremely grateful. We are lucky to have such a wealth of talent available to us, without it the last Mondays of the month would be very boring.

As ever, our thanks to the Patrons, whose generous support makes this Journal possible. Thanks also to the local shops that sell the Journal and Christmas cards.

Finally thanks are due to the editorial board, Claire Chambers, Dairine Coffey, Ita Corcoran and Ann O'Brien and to all the contributors, regular and new, for sharing their store of knowledge with us. Please keep up the good work. New members and contributors are always welcome.

*Some Highlights  
of the Society's Meetings and Outings*

*Photos by A de V Mansfield*



*Máirtain Mac Siúrtáin and Monica Farrell*



*Joe McNally and Joe Timmons at the Launching of our Journal*



*At the Bullaun Stone in Roundwood*



*At Arrigna coal-mine*



*Prof. Barry Rafferty and Derek O'Brien*

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### ***Wicklow People***

17/1/20

When Mr. Gerald Foley was cycling to his home in Glendalough one evening last week he came a cropper near the Croppery's Grave, outside the village of Laragh, as a result of which he sustained severe fracture of the left arm. He was subsequently treated by Dr. T. C. Harte, Annamoe, under whose skillful treatment he is almost the one old Jer again.

*The 1916 Rising in Enniscorthy:  
the man who made it possible,  
Commandant P.P. Galligan*

*Colm J. Galligan*



*Commandant P.P. Galligan*

**P**eter Paul Galligan was born in 1888 in Carrigallen, Co. Leitrim. In 1907, he came to Dublin to serve his time in a drapery business in a Henry Street warehouse. On arriving, he joined the Kickham Football Club and was introduced by the president, Mr. James Ryan, to the Irish Republic Brotherhood. He joined the Henry Joy McCracken Centre at 41 Parnell Square in either 1910 or 1911. Each cell of the Irish Republican Army was called a 'centre' and the leader was also called 'centre', James Ryan being the 'centre' of the Henry Joy McCracken Centre.

On joining he took the oath of the Irish Brotherhood from Thomas Clarke whom he visited many times in his tobacconists in Parnell Street. As he was a non-smoker, I wonder why - most likely social visits. At this time there were no drills or instruction in military subjects but lectures took place on Irish history, particularly on Emmet and Tone.

On the formation of the Ulster (Carson) Volunteers in the north, Volunteers were called from the different centres to form a class for military training. This group met in the Foresters' Hall at 41 Parnell Square. He recalled Ned Daly in this class. His instructors were from the Fianna: Sean Heuston and Con Colbert (both executed in May 1916 for their part in the Rising). He was instructed in drill, arms drill, musketry and small arms and signalling (semaphore).

On the formation of the Irish Volunteers in November 1913, he was instructed, with fellow I.R.B. members to join immediately and take control. Members of his class were distributed throughout different units in the city area. He joined at Blackhall Place and, as he had some previous military experience, he was selected to fill a key position.

On joining the Volunteers, all signed a register and were issued with member's cards. No oath was taken and collections were made for uniforms and equipment. Their instructors were ex-British army men but the I.R.B. was very much in control. They drilled with dummy rifles and had rifle firing practice with .22 rifles.

On 19th July 1914, all city battalions were mobilised and route marched to Baldoyle. This was a practice run for the Howth gun-running. On Sunday, 26th July, they mobilised at Parnell Square. This was a brigade mobilisation and was 800 strong. Oak batons were issued to certain officers, of which he was one (I still have the baton). At Howth, the Asgard arrived and the crew handed the rifles to the Volunteers. The coastguards fired rockets to warn the authorities but, by this time, all rifles and ammunition had been off-loaded from the Asgard. The brigade re-formed and marched back to Dublin. The ammunition was placed in handcarts and taken care of by the Fianna. No ammunition was issued to the Volunteers. Not too far from Dublin, British soldiers (Scottish Borderers) were drawn across the road with bayonets fixed. The Volunteers halted very close to them. The Volunteers' senior officers

went into discussion with the British officers. While this was in progress, the Volunteers were ordered to disband with their rifles and make their way home as best they could. At the time of the split at the end of 1914, in the Volunteers, the Irish Volunteers lost a large number of rifles and equipment to the Redmond or National Volunteers.

P.P. was then appointed Captain of G/Coy 2nd Battalion Dublin Brigade. They practiced with .22 rifles and hand guns. There were very few service guns available and a few Howth Mausers and some Lee Enfield rifles (some British soldiers sold their rifles to them). The money for these rifles was paid out of the Volunteers own pockets. Training camps were held on an on-going basis and usually lasted a fortnight.

In September 1915, a major training camp was held near Athlone on the Shannon. There were some photographs taken at this camp which are of great historical value. P.P. featured very strongly at this camp. At that stage, he must have been well-established as a major instructor. Later, he was transferred to Thomas McDonagh's staff as Staff Officer. McDonagh was in charge of all Volunteer training.

Around this time, a dispute between the C/C Enniscorthy Battalion and the Brigade staff in Wexford led to the resignation of the Enniscorthy C/C. As there was now some confusion in Enniscorthy, McDonagh sent him there as Vice-Command in charge of all training and field operations. In November 1915, he took a job at Bolger's Drapery establishment in Enniscorthy and began giving classes for N.C.O.s. There was general training of the battalion including night marches and battle exercises.

Activities within the Battalion were normal up to Holy Week 1916 except that the training was intensified. On Good Friday, a Capt. O'Connell arrived from Dublin and sent for the senior officers, those being Seamus Doyle, Seamus Rafter and Peter Paul Galligan. He told these officers that he had been appointed by the Volunteer Executive to take charge of Wicklow, Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny but that he refused to take over command and would take no part in the forthcoming Rising and also that it would be their own responsibility whatever action they took. The three named officers knew that the Rising was due to take place on Easter Saturday.

On the Saturday, with no official orders, there was now confusion among the Wexford officers and Paul Galligan decided he would travel to Dublin where he arrived late by train. He spent the night in a hotel in Dublin. On Sunday morning he made contact with the officers of his old Battalion and was told by him that the mobilisation had been called off. He read McNeill's countermanding orders in the Sunday Independent. Nothing was happening on Sunday but he stayed on in Dublin. Maybe he got a feeling that something was going to happen.

On Monday, hearing of the Rising, he reported to the G.P.O. where he was known to the leaders and to whom he explained the Enniscorthy position. On Monday, he helped with the defence of the G.P.O. However, late Monday night he was called to a meeting with Pearse, Connolly and Plunkett and the strategic importance of Enniscorthy was discussed. He was then instructed by Pearse and Connolly to go back to Wexford as quickly as possible and to mobilise the Enniscorthy Battalion. His orders were to hold the railway line to prevent troops coming through from Rosslare as reinforcements were expected to land there. Connolly also stressed the need to reserve their ammunition and not to waste it attacking barracks and such like. He then went to the canteen where he was given two buns and tea by none other than Desmond Fitzgerald.

He recalled that the time he left the G.P.O. was about 3.00a.m. Connolly had warned him not to travel via Wicklow. At Parnell's monument, he noticed that there were two flags flying over the G.P.O., one was the national flag, the tricolour, and the other a large green flag. It must have been well into the dawn when he travelled by the N.C.R., Mulhuddart and Maynooth and he did not come into contact with any Volunteers on the way. In Maynooth he noticed troop trains heading for Dublin. He cycled till late into the evening and stayed overnight in a hotel in a small town in Co. Carlow. Next morning he made for Enniscorthy where, late in the evening, a short distance from the town, by chance, he made contact with a Volunteer from the town who was delivering bread. He told him to contact the officers of the Battalion and to tell them to come out to meet him as he could not go into the town.

A meeting was convened and he informed them of his orders from Connolly, what was happening in Dublin, and that he was now in

command of all field operations. He pressed upon them that their comrades in Dublin had rallied to the flag and what was expected of them - to disrupt all rail and other traffic heading for Dublin. He also pressed upon them that, to the best of his knowledge, only Dublin had taken to arms at that point. A report arrived that two troop trains were waiting at Rosslare. This was the turning-point of the meeting for the Wexford officers who said it would be to the everlasting disgrace of Wexford if they stood by and allowed a train with troops to pass through. They were unanimous in their decision to fight even if it was only for twelve hours as they would not stand by and see their brothers in Dublin fall without striking a blow. Mobilisation orders were at once dispatched.

The Battalion was mobilised at about 2.00a.m. on Thursday morning and was about 100 to 200 strong when mobilisation was complete. Twenty Lee Enfield rifles, 2000 round of 303 ammunition and some shotguns and revolvers were handed out. The Volunteers formed up under Commandant P.P. Galligan and marched from Irish Street, through the Market Square and took possession of the Athenaeum Hall and, subsequently, the town itself. As Comdt. Galligan was in charge of all field operations, he placed a screen of outposts around the town. The banks were closed and guards were placed upon them, all public houses were closed and locked and the keys taken by the Volunteers. At 5.00a.m the first shots were fired and on Thursday at 12.00 noon the tricolour was raised and saluted by a firing party under Comdt. Galligan.

The tricolour was raised at the Athenaeum which is a large hall and it is still standing but is not in use. The flag was hoisted by Mrs Robert Brennan, a Miss Stokes and a Miss Comerford. All officers were in uniform and those Volunteers who had uniforms were in them. A large number of men were pressing to join the Rising. He wrote in his letters that about 1,000 men were present when they surrendered on Monday. The Cumann na mBan ladies looked after all the food requirements and bedding and clothing were commandeered from local shops and receipts were given in all cases of articles commandeered. The R.I.C. (police) in the town were put off duty and confined to their barracks. The Volunteers established their own police force which patrolled the town. Sentries and patrols were placed on all approaches to the town. The railway was taken over and the tracks taken up at certain strategic spots. All main roads

were blocked by downed trees and other materials. Small by-roads were left open for communication purposes. All during the period they were under arms they had an intelligence system working to find out what was happening on the other side as all telegraph wires were cut.

On Thursday morning Fathers Murphy and Coad came to the headquarters and Father Murphy wanted to join up. Comdt. Galligan said that there was no prospect of success for the Rising and that they were only carrying out orders. He asked for their blessing and they then left the HQ.

Friday was spent strengthening their positions and, as they had few arms, there was little they could do. This is interesting - Pike heads were made by a local blacksmith in 1915 and early 1916 and placed on to six foot wooden shafts but were not issued. They were pretty desperate for weapons and in hindsight it was lucky that there was no action in Enniscorthy or the Volunteers would have been slaughtered.

On Saturday morning news came that the British garrison in Arklow was preparing to move on Enniscorthy. Comdt. Galligan decided to establish a strong outpost at Ferns. This was to act as a buffer and to take the onslaught of the enemy as they came down from Arklow and Gorey. He selected a squadron of men who would have been from Ferns, barricades on the roads were extended and scouts posted. The plan was to fight a delaying action so as to give the battalion in Enniscorthy time to prepare for an attack.

Ferns was occupied by daylight Sunday morning by the Volunteers. Some time in the afternoon the District Inspector and Sergeant of the R.I.C. arrived under a white flag of truce. He was interviewed by Comdt. Galligan who was shown a surrender order from Pearse. This note was all typed including Pearse's name as he had not signed it. He immediately sent the R.I.C. men under escort to HQ in Enniscorthy where the commanding officer, Comdt. Seamus Doyle, refused to accept the surrender order. Comdt. Doyle and Capt. Etchingham then went to Dublin and saw Pearse in Arbour Hill where he confirmed the surrender. On returning to Enniscorthy the C/C sent a dispatch to Ferns verifying Pearse's order to surrender and Comdt. Galligan was to return to Enniscorthy at once with all his men.

He made preparation for the evacuation of Ferns. Cars were sent from Enniscorthy for this purpose. He took his position in the last car to leave Ferns which was involved in a bad crash on the way to Enniscorthy and one of the Cumann na mBan ladies was seriously injured. He had to return to Ferns for a priest and a doctor and when he eventually got to Enniscorthy at about 8.00am on Monday morning, the HQ was empty, having been disbanded. Please note that Pearse's order was to surrender or disband. He then found a safe house where he fell fast asleep and was wakened by noise outside on the street. He discovered that the military were making a house-to-house search but for some reason they did not search the house he was in. Civilian clothes and food were brought to him and a bicycle was supplied. That night, he made his way out of Enniscorthy reaching Carlow where he stayed in hiding for two to three days. He then made his way to his home in County Cavan arriving there on the Saturday after the surrender. However, on the following Monday night, his home was surrounded by R.I. C. and military, he was arrested, brought to Arbour Hill prison in Dublin and from there taken to Richmond barracks where he was interned with a large group of captured Volunteers.

After a few days he was notified of his court martial. He was then brought before a court of three military officers and charged with being an Officer in charge of an armed rebellion which was made war against His Majesty the King at Enniscorthy. The sergeant of the R.I.C. who came with the flag of truce gave evidence against him. The sergeant stated that he had found him at Ferns in Co Wexford in uniform and armed with a rifle and revolver. In answering the charges, he said that they were correct and that he was proud of having fought for his country and that the only regret he had was that he had not succeeded. He was then taken to Kilmainham jail. He was first placed in a cell in the top wing. After a day or two there, an officer came and read the finding of the Court Martial which was that he was guilty of the charges and that his sentence to be shot at dawn. He was then taken down to the condemned cells. The conditions in these cells were appalling and the bedding was just a blanket on the floor. The food consisted of dry biscuits and soup.

A Father Sylvester from Church Street came and heard his confession. His sentence was to be shot at dawn but he was never told which dawn - a fairly harrowing experience. After a few days in this cell at about 2.00am in the morning, two officers came to his cell and read out his sentence and then informed him that his sentence had been commuted to five years penal servitude of which he served one year and three months partly in Dartmoor and Lewis prisons. He was released in July 1917.

In the elections of 1918 he was elected on the Sinn Fein ticket, he served in the first Dail for West Cavan/Leitrim until he retired from public life in 1923 and was Comdt. of the Cavan Battalion in the War of Independence. In that time, he also served on the supreme military council. From his first internment in Richmond Barracks in 1916 until 1922, he served time in 10 different English jails.

### ***Sources:***

Family papers and letters held by the family.

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### ***Punctuation Is Everything***

A professor of English wrote the words: "A woman without her man is nothing" on the board and asked his students to punctuate it correctly.

The men wrote "A woman, without her man, is nothing."

All the women wrote "A woman: without her, man is nothing."

## *A Letter from 1916*

*Martin Timmons*

In the immediate aftermath of the outbreak of the 1916 rebellion in Dublin, martial law was introduced and consequently there was little information forthcoming on the evolving situation. This lack of information led to all sorts of rumours being circulated about the gravity of the situation. Many people outside Dublin were concerned for loved ones and relatives residing in the city. One such person was Molly Black of Rathdrum who had elderly relatives living in Donnybrook. On the 30th of April 1916, she acquired the following pass from the police sergeant in Rathdrum:

*Transcript of pass on opposite page*

BARRY'S  
RAILWAY HOTEL  
RATHDRUM  
R.I.C. Rathdrum

30/4/16

*The bearer Mrs Black Avondale Rathdrum leaves here this evening by rail in order to see three old ladies named Buckley 4 Morehampton Terrace Donnybrook who are friends of Mrs Black.*

*Mrs Black is a thorough loyal subject and her husband is a Captain in the Army.*

*Thomas Roberts Sgt*

*To all concerned*

At the time the R.I.C. were stationed at Barry's Hotel and on receiving her pass Mrs. Black determined to make her way to Dublin to assist her relatives. The following is a letter she subsequently wrote to her husband in which she gives a graphic eyewitness account of the situation in Dublin in the aftermath of the rebellion. I was unable to decipher a number of the words in the handwritten text and have placed question marks after these; otherwise, I have retained the original text and punctuation.

BARRY'S  
RAILWAY HOTEL  
RATHDRUM.

C.R.I.L  
Rathdrum  
30/4/16

He leaves Mrs Black Avondale  
Rathdrum leaves here this evening  
by Rail in order to see three old  
ladies ~~the~~ named Mackay & Moseley  
Terrace Droughinck who are friends  
of Mrs Black.

Mrs Black is a thorough loyal  
subject and her husband is  
a Captain in the Army.

Thomas Roberts

20/05/16

### Mrs Black's Letter

Avondale House  
Rathdrum  
May 3rd '16

My dearest Jim,

I haven't had a word of news from you for more than 10 days. Except what I heard indirectly from Mr Clarke. We have had the most alarming stories going about. Friday's news was dismal but on Saturday night an engine came down the line bearing a message that the rebels in Dublin had surrendered. [Saulle?] motored out to Forbes to tell him, and Mr Forbes came over at about 12 pm to tell me.

*We had been talking of going up to Dublin at the first opportunity, as I was very anxious about the old aunts at Donnybrook. I heard of people being shot on Morehampton Rd, and that Dublin was starving. We had only rumour to go on, as we saw no paper, or received no letters from Easter Monday. I walked in everyday to see the one train come in - after Wednesday it only went as far as Arklow, as the Rebels had Enniscorthy.*

*On Sunday I got ready for church but went to the train first. Gill was on it he had sent a message to the Comerfords to meet him about sending flour to Dublin I presume he was going on to Fogarty on the same errand to Aghrim. Some man had got out of Dublin from Ringsend and told ghastly tales of starvation, fires, devastation, etc, etc. Bell, the King's brother in law was on the train, and the news he added decided me to start at once with money and provisions to rescue the three old aunts. The train was to return from Arklow in a couple of hours for Kingstown [Dun Laoghaire] so I darted home, met Mr Forbes, and told him there was an up train (He was dressed to cycle to Bray to get news) and he ordered a car and I gathered up bread, milk, sugar eggs etc. All I could carry, also all the £.s.d. I could get. (I had got money from the bank on Thursday in preparation for the expedition) I travelled with Forbes in the carriage next Gill in hopes of getting a lift at Kingstown!! Mr Gill was staying in Kingstown I think or had no one to meet him. Anyway he looked rather sick, and although he lives in Fitzwilliam St, he knew absolutely nothing about the offices in Merrion St.*

*Kingstown was glorious with soldiers - I did love it - the first thing on arrival I was told to go and get a pass at the Town Hall a fairly long queue were waiting and all the men about were either in Khaki, or the green of the Veteran Corp with G.R. on their arms (The Wrecks? as they are called!) or somebodies with a red armlet band? with M.P. on it (what for I don't know) Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts all looking as if they were running the empire. I waited ages outside and then another age inside before I got to the Pass Giver - a duck of a little English Officer.*

*I produced a letter from the Sergeant here and talked to him nicely, and he said he would give me a pass. But, he would advise me not to go unless it was absolutely necessary, 'very unhealthy district' etc. etc. I said I would wait until morning, and he made out the pass for*

*Monkstown then (I had arranged to stop with Mrs Bell if I couldn't get into Dublin.) and for Ballsbridge next day. (I [....?] said I would go that way, as I expected to walk and only knew the main road). He said I would have to get another pass there, and to get one to bring me out again as well!*

*In the meantime Mr Forbes who had [...?] left me at the first to go and order a car, was chased back after a few yards and had to take his place miles behind me in the queue. So I said farewell to him and wished him luck. (He thought it would be healthier in England and crossed to London that night) I then proceeded to find the Bell's place at Salthill, as you are painfully aware I do not possess the [... ?] of locality. I took the sea road, which was paved with Tommies all English regiments and no one could direct me. At last a nice officer came to the rescue and hailed a coastguard and I got my bearings alright. My passport was getting dilapidated by this time as it was looked at every 50 yds.*

*I was lulled to sleep (as I thought) by the music of the guns (but in the morning found it was only the rocks at the Kish Lighthouse) and a nice sound? of motors and horses and a clanking of arms etc.- (We had a picket at the gate so felt extra safe) In the morning I decided the situation must be really desperate in Dublin, and I determined to have a motor and rescue the aunts. I set out for Cooks garage Kingstown and was truly glad I had my pass, as now the queue from the Town Hall reached halfway up to Georges St, that before 8.30 am. Cooke made a fearful fuss about the car, I had to pay 30/s down and engage only to keep her standing half an hour. The man (driver) said we would be all day if we tried to go through Ballsbridge, and that he would take me the back way, so we got off the main road and didn't dare call at Monkstown for the provisions (I decided it didn't matter as I was going to take them out of the place) and nipped round all kind of backways and hoped Sinn Feiners wouldn't commandeer the car and got into Donnybrook (no stopping to look at passes there at all.) I found the old ladies, all well, most cheerful, with an extremely large joint of meat in the house and plenty of everything except bread. They had been out every day, shopping, and to church, but had not been in the city. To my enquiries if they would like to come away, they only replied, how is the darling baby, and [s...?] etc. etc. so I said goodbye I'll go back to Rathdrum. I had no*

pass back, so the chauffeur said to say nothing and he would show his. So I sat in front beside him and tried to look innocent. He flew for it, but I just missed the 10 (and only) train (for the day) at Kingstown by three minutes. I then returned to Mrs Bell divided the eatables with her, and started with the other portion for Donnybrook again, on foot. I heard there was fighting of some kind about Merrion and Ballsbridge, so I went up Merrion Avenue way. I got a short lift to Donnybrook in an old trap, had lunch with the aunts, and set out to look up Mrs King's sister at South Circular Rd if possible. I walked by Marlborough Rd through Ranelagh and Rathmines. The population of these districts were all out searching for provisions. Everyone had a parcel, or loaves of bread without any paper at all. One youth rode a bicycle, and had a frilled pillowcase with loaves in it over his shoulder. Portobello Bridge was guarded with soldiers and there were a few stray soldiers about Rathmines. I displayed my pass and told them as it was disturbed at Ballsbridge I had to come in by Donnybrook. The sentry said I would have to have a pass out, but if I was only half-an-hour he would still be on duty and would let me out without one.

I simply flew along, but found the house where Miss King lived was miles away Dolphin's Barn end, and a passer by told me she had been all through Sackville St [O'Connell St] and it was quiet quiet, so I decided to risk the 'pass out' and see the sights. Miss King was all right I felt sure as everything was quiet and no sign of damage. I then began slumming, and made for the Adelaide to see Theresa. I simply fell into Jacobs Factory before I knew, it is there still, but all the glass is powder in the street, and sandbags in the windows. There was some scare on at the Adelaide, about turning some stray rebels out of a house close by, and the Matron was in the 'jump'. This performance has gone on all the time Theresa says. They have been kept jumping the patients from the top storey down to the basement, and then up again when there was a lull. She says they have had a truly awful time there. I didn't wait to hear more, lest I should get barricaded in, and see no more, and then went through Bishop St, Georges St, Parliament St, Dame St, Westmoreland St, Sackville St, Earl St and up to Dr Woods Gardiner St. Only in the Sackville St, Abbey St, Eden Quay, Earl St, Henry St and Liberty Hall is there real devastation. We climbed over bricks there and Lawrence's

ruins were still smoldering. The right hand side of Sackville St from O'Connell Bridge to Lawrences is non ext.

The Post Office is gutted, only the walls standing. Crowds were out sightseeing. The Woods had a stirring time, but had no leisure for fearfulness, as they entertained 25 or 30 officers and soldiers, and Addie went out in the thick of the fighting with a soldier to forage for provisions. They fired from their roof, and of course they saw the fall of Liberty Hall from shell fire from the gunboat.

I had tea there, and heard lots of news and came back by Eden Quay, Grafton St, the Green and intended to try my luck at Leeson St Bridge, but we (the other was a youth who told me lots of news: he saw some of the fighting) were 'shoved' out of Leeson St as there was some sniping or something going on on top. The youth told me the Officers handled the men very badly at first, without seeking cover, they were picked off in dozens at one spot, Earlsbrook House I think. Of course you have heard the Trinity Boys held the college and the Bank of Ireland, they are all right except for a few broken windows. Grafton St, Stephens Green, Shelbourne Hotel the same, only broken glass, no great destruction at all.

I parted from the youth at Leeson St and made for Richmond Bridge into Ranelagh all along by Earlsford Terrace, Harcourt St etc. (that's all right too, just a little glass broken). At Richmond Bridge there were a good many people at each side and a rough barricade was thrown up behind to stop cars getting out. I showed my pass in and the serjeants letter to a private. He said he didn't think that would do, but to ask the serjeant. While I was speaking to him the other sentry (there were only 3) shot at a man a couple of times. (They were fairly jumpy, as a sentry was shot in Kingstown by an old woman). The serjeant let me pass and I heard several more shots fired just I after that. I had seen the sentry chase an oldish man back as I came up to the bridge.

Of course they were banging away out Ballsbridge way all the time, and there were enough Red Cross people motoring, cycling and walking to look after a whole division. I only stayed a few minutes with the aunts and told them the news of how quiet Dublin was, and then continued my journey back to Kingstown for the night. I tried to hire a car in

*Donnybrook, but a man with a pass wanted 15/- so I walked on, and, about halfway there, a cab overtook me and I got a lift back. They had a barricade of sandbags at Blackrock. I saw guns being galloped out, for where I don't know, and they were digging trenches somewhere too. In the morning ten armoured motor cars with guns mounted in them left Kingstown and a lot of cavalry. A lot more soldiers came in on Monday.*

*I felt quite sorry to leave all the soldiers and excitement behind at Kingstown on Tuesday, - every empty house at Kingstown was full of soldiers, also the Marine Hotel, Royal Mail Hotel, Pavilion Gardens, etc. we had to sign our name on our passes also. My first pass did duty all through for me, but when we got into Dalkey, they searched the train, and there was great excitement. I was told I should have got a pass to go back to Rathdrum, and a man was very nearly kept back, but he provided a sheaf of letters and an income tax receipt and railway pass.*

*I was glad to see by to-days Daily Mail (there are no Irish papers now) that all is quiet in Cork. I had heard of a lady being shot there and the horrid way the Sinn Feiners picked off the officers coming from the races on Easter Monday disgusted me, and made me feel very anxious.*

*I expect by this the Ballsbridge district is cleared, and all the rest of Dublin is quiet. And one would think from the action here and at Kingstown that things were frightful but really, except the Sackville St area I saw nothing appalling. The military regulations are very strict, but when three soldiers alone, can guard a bridge, there are not many lively Sinn Feiners left.*

*Well much love, I am sending the [...?], in the hope that it may reach you, as I understand- no Irish letters are being delivered. Certainly I have had none, except one from Florence for 10 days. Do try and send me some communications soon.*

*Your loving wife  
Mollie Black*

## *The Early Days of my Father, Charlie Brien*

*Sheila Brien*



*Mr. Charles Brien Ashtown, Roundwood  
who died on 11th March 1993 - aged 94.*

**M**y father was in Crumlin Road Jail in Belfast, and later he was in an attack on the Royal Hotel Glendalough as well as helping to blow up the bridge in Laragh. He joined the Irish Volunteers in 1913. There were Posters everywhere telling the people what the Germans would do as soon they reached Ireland. My father continued to drill and train with the volunteers and was arrested after Easter Week but released after a short time.

Though meetings of the Volunteers were banned in 1917, there was a meeting fixed for the Town Hall in Bray and Charlie went along and made his way to the Platform. The police were there and some time later he was arrested and charged with supporting an illegal meeting. He was taken to Mountjoy, but as things got worse he was moved to Crumlin Road Jail in Belfast. There, they formed their own groups in the Jail and Austin Stack was their Commander there. The jail was surrounded by troops and things were looking very bad. At that time he thought he

would be shot and so he was given general Absolution by the priest. After three months he was released and had to find his own way back to Dublin.

Robert Barton drove him home to Roundwood. That was 1918.

*Ps. I should have said my father only got dry bread and red tea in jail.*

*From the  
Tocar (General Holt) Sinn Feinn Club  
And from the  
Tocar (Anne Devlin) Sinn Feinn Club  
Mr. Charles O'Brien Ballislan*

~~~~~

*We feel called upon whilst making this too small presentation  
To place on record our appreciation of the manly stand made  
By our fellow parishioner Mr. Charles O'Brien Ballislan  
One of Ireland's Republican Army, for the cause of Irish  
Independence. Three months in an English jail for doing  
Ireland's duty will be a mark of distinction whilst he*

*Lives for: -*

*"The Felon's Cap is the noblest crown  
An Irish head can wear"*

*This is a facsimile  
This scroll was presented to my father Charlie Brien.*

# *A Bicycle Ride to Lough Dan in 1914*

*Cesca Chenevix Trench*  
(transcribed by Hilary Pyle)

## **Introduction**

This is the first printing in full of Cesca's trip to Lough Dan, though extracts from it were published in *Cesca's Diary 1913–1916, Where Art and Nationalism Meet*, by Hilary Pyle, Woodfield Press, 2005.

Francesca Chenevix Trench (Cesca or Sadbh Trineach), 1981–1918, was an ardent nationalist from a unionist background. She grew up in England, often visiting her 'Big House' relatives in Ireland. She learnt to speak Irish in Mrs Weddall's school, Scoil Acla, in Achill, where she met Diarmuid Coffey, and also in the Sorbonne, while studying painting in Paris. Her diary was written in Irish, English and French, in exercise books and on scraps of paper, often in pencil and undated. This is what Hilary Pyle has skilfully disentangled and transcribed.

On 17th July 1914, Cesca was teaching semaphore drill in Fairview Park. The next day she left Blackrock on her bike for Lough Dan via the Sally Gap and a week later on Saturday 25th, she returned to Dublin so as to be at Howth for the arrival of the Asgard, on the 26th, together with Erskine Childers and the guns. Her description of this is to be found in *Cesca's Diary 1913–1916*. (editor)

## **The Diary**

*Loch Dan [County Wicklow], 20 July 1914.*

**O**n Saturday I started out from Blackrock to ride here. Elvery's had promised to send me a rucksack of Irish manufacture on Friday night, but hadn't, and without a word to say why, so I had to fly into Dublin to get it, and then it wasn't ready, and the hook was on wrong. However, they finished it, and I bought it and filled it up with heavy things and carried it on my back to here. One of the things I put in was a Browning automatic pistol, which I had found the night before when I got back from drill in Fairview Park.

That was an awful farce. Cousin Henry C-B [Cole-Bowen] came to see me, and brought me on to it ..., from Amiens St Station on a car [side-

car], and we drove for about 20 minutes before we could find it. When we got there, there were a man and a woman in the park who smiled and said there was supposed to be drilling there, when I asked. By and by, B. Cassidy turned up, and we talked for a bit walking up and down. Then another woman with lots of teeth and a blue woollen cap.

I started teaching them semaphore drill. There were six in the end and me. Three girls sat on a bench and looked on. I asked them would they like to join and they each said that they'd join next week when the others did. Óinsigh! [Fools!]. Tomás MacDonagh was watching some of the time with his wife and child. Just as we were going out the men came marching in. It was rather thrilling - we watched them a bit and then went back. I finished packing that night and puzzled over the automatic pistol without success. I found a letter from Mrs Coffey saying she'd had a card from Diarmuid from Ruytingen reporting a good sail and they hoped to be starting home 'soon', so he may be back early next week; she said. Today's early next week but he might be back tomorrow.

I'm going there [Howth] on Saturday anyway, starting 6am from here and sending painting things by post. Very cowardly but I can't face another day like last Saturday as I must have some notion when I'll arrive. I went to see Nóra ní Choinneagáin on my way here, and lost 1/2 hour at least. She is in Donegal. I went on after that and, as I was wheeling my bike up a hill, I met a woman, a shuler [vagrant]. She said, 'Would you give me a copper, lady, for the love of God. Sure I've not one to buy food.' I said, 'I'm sorry for that, and have you no place of your own?' 'I've not, me lady, no place at all, and only this that a woman gave me up there that I do be picking at and I going the road.' She showed me a sheep's head with little enough on it. 'Is that all you had today?' I said. 'It is, me lady, God help me, that and one potato.' 'Undo the sack on my back,' I said, 'and take out a bit of bread and cheese that's in it, in a bit of paper'. She did. 'The blessing of God on you, I'll pray for you night and day,' she said. 'The same to you and good luck,' said I.

When I began to get out into the country, I passed three men just before a cross-roads. I got off there and consulted my map. It didn't help me much but it told me what place to ask for - 'Is this the road to Cillbán?' I said to the men as they came up. 'Cillbán,' said one to the others, 'd'you know that place?' 'I never heard of it,' said the other, 'nor I', said a third,

'Sure you must know it' said I, 'it's near here. Whitechurch, the English call it, but Cillbán's its name.' 'Ah Whitechurch, is it?' said one, 'sure I didn't know the Irish on it'. 'Isn't that a shame for us?' said the other. 'It is then,' said the third and I together, 'but ye'll know it now whatever, Cill's a church and bán's white. And let you be calling it Cillbán instead of Whitechurch.' 'We will then; said they. 'You'll help to put the English out of it so,' said I. 'We will then,' said they. 'That's the right road you have for Whitechurch anyway, miss.' 'For Cillbán is it?' I said, 'It is, sure, for Cillbán,' they said laughing, and I went on my way.

It was not a long road, between white walls, low and curly. Soon after I left the woman, I passed some men milking. 'Is that milk you have there?' I said. 'It is' said they. 'Will you give me a drink of it?' said I. 'I've nothing to give it to you in,' said a man. 'Sure I have, tho'. Wait now'. 'I'll be thankful to you,' said I, 'will you give me a drink for a penny?' He brought it to me in a can and laughed, 'Ach, I wouldn't take that, you're welcome; he said. 'You're very good; said I, 'That's grand milk.' 'It's strained right enough,' said he. I drank the milk and put the can down. 'It's great milk,' I said, 'a thousand thanks and luck on your hand.'

I went on and it began to rain, so I sat on a bank till it stopped. An old man came past me who looked like a sailor, russet brown clothes he had on and his trousers in long boots and he brown with blue eyes and a russet beard. 'That's a grand shelter you have there,' he said. 'It is then,' said I. 'Will the rain go on?' 'It will not, likely, only a couple of minutes,' he said without ceasing his walk. I went on when it stopped, and a young policeman on a motorbike passed me. (Mrs Farmer came out to me where I was writing this to ask me what I'd like for supper. She dashed up the bank this minute to talk to a friend of hers from Bray, a big man with a big nose and a car, and they're colloquing [chatting] together yet.)

*23rd July 1914.*

I got further on till I was in a lane leading up a hill. A little man passed me on a bike and got off in front of me. 'Is this the right road for Glenduff [GleannDubh, the black glen above Rockbrook]?' I said. 'What part of Glenduff?' said he with a north of Ireland accent. We got into chat, and we going up the same long hill, and we walked on side by side.

Loe Sam *pl* 1914



He was Maunsel & Co, a friend of Synge's, and knew the roads well, and told me I'd not be at Roundwood till eight tonight. 'Why how many miles is it?' said I, 'We're near half way, and walking it's four miles an hour, so five for a bike ought to be ample and it's only three now. Will it take me five hours? Three should be lots.' He looked doubtful. 'The roads are very bad,' he said, 'it depends on what sort of cyclist you are, but maybe you'll be there before. But you say you don't know the road?'

'I never was on it before', I said. 'Well up the other side it's wretched, you'll find your way alright if it's light still. Oh, it will be, but it's a sort of cart-track.' We talked about plays and actors and books and maps.

He turned off on the road to Glencullen, and said I'd be very welcome anytime in Middle Abbey Street. Nice little man. We were going up thro' woods then, green grass, grey trunks, beech, and grey blue sky. Fine. Further on I saw a house and a man on the wall opposite. He had a yellow moustache and cycling knickers. He saluted me by saying jovially in a very strong northern accent that he was glad he hadn't the load. He didn't seem to mind my having it tho', so I said it was nothing, and I asked if I was right rather coldly. He said I wasn't till I told him the way I was going. Then a lad with him informed me genially I wouldn't be there till 8 tonight, and the orangeman agreed with scarcely veiled satisfaction.

I got up there and round a corner, and out onto a clear windswept upward hill road, good enough, but hard with the wind and the sun both going for you on it. I tied a red handkerchief on my head and washed my hands in a stream. It was what this yellow-haired kiddy, Lil would call 'dangerous hot.' Lots of motors passed me, some - regarding me obviously as a picturesque peasant girl - nodded and smiled encouragingly to me. One full of young men invited me by gestures to join them. Most stared and passed on with a backward glance of curiosity from any young boy or girl that might be in it.

I was destroyed with the thirst after a time and I saw a house and 'Cyclists' Rest' on it so I went in and asked for a drink of water. 'Would you take buttermilk,' said the woman of the house. 'I would, if I could get it,' I said, 'but I don't like to be taking it from you, sure it was only water I was asking.' 'Arra what matter,' she said, 'get the girl some buttermilk, Patsy.' A young man, her son, got up and gave me a glass full. While I was drinking it and praising it, she told me the children, small ones, were her grand-children. John Joseph was one and Mary the other. 'Those are good names,' I said. 'Aren't they the best names in the world,' she said, 'sure there's no names in the world like Mary and Joseph'. 'You're right about Mary,' I said, 'but I'd as soon have Colmcille, or Ciarán, as Joseph'. 'Then you'd be wrong,' she said, looking up and pausing from her ironing, a big dark woman. 'Wasn't he the greatest saint of all, that was appointed to be the guardian of the Mother of God?'

'He was of course in a way,' I said, 'but I'd as soon have saints of our own. Caoimhin and Colmcille were grand men, look at the way Columcille'd be turning people into cranes, the way he did it with the queen of Ireland. I wish he'd do it to more,' 'Ah, so do I, to all the kings and queens I ever heard of,' she said. 'I'd like to have him here now,' I said, 'there's no one can do the things he did,' 'The priests can do it', she said suddenly, with great determination. 'Is that so?' I said, 'can you be sure of that now?' 'Read the life of Christ and you'll find out,' she said, 'He left the power to them'. At this juncture Patsy filled my glass with more buttermilk. 'Well but it needs something in the priest too', I said. 'It needs faith,' said she. 'And you think they believe that they can do those things,' I said. 'They know it,' said she. 'Then why don't they be doing them more often?' I said doubtfully. 'They'd be afraid of making the doctors jealous,' she said with conviction.

She gave me further instructions as to the way then and said I might be at Roundwood in an hour from the top of the Sally Gap. This cheered me. I rattled down a hill and plodded up another, a long one, till I got to the top of the Gap. It was grey with occasional gleams of sunlight. I considered the possibility of having to sleep out and the notion did not attract me. But I was getting awfully tired, and my bicycle difficult to balance as time went on. At last I struck a road with a signpost on it and 'To Roundwood' written there. I was thankful for this, for only for it and meeting a motor just before I'd have thought I'd lost my way. The road was awful, worse and worse as it went on. Steep and rough in the extreme. At the end it went up steeply. That was a struggle, getting myself and the bike up it. However it was done in the end and, just as I got to a fairly steep but slightly superior road down, I got a puncture.

Holding a bike back is almost as tiring as pushing it up. I was reeling down when I saw a woman who came out of a bohereen. I saw the house at the end and wondered whether I would ask them to put me up, or mend my bike, or anything, and finally decided to ask the woman the way to Roundwood. I did. At length she extracted from me the information that it was to Mrs Farmer on Loch Dan I was going. She bade me wait on the roadside and rest myself while she went to get the cows in, her heart, as she subsequently explained, warming to me, I looked so simple and innocent-like. Then she would show me a short cut to Loch Dan. I lay on

the bank till she came back. Then I went with her to her house, and another woman there gave me strong tea and soda-cake, and butter and buttermilk, both fresh out of the churn. I was glad of the food.

After, she came on with me in the dark and rain to show me the way to Mrs Doyle's. Good woman, my heart warms to think of her. That last stage was really awful, I could hardly walk straight, or keep the bicycle straight, and it was 3 miles or so. As we were coming along we saw a light low down, glowing. 'A fire,' said she, then in a whisper, 'them's tinkers'. We dimly discerned a tent in the dark. 'Good night to you' I said as a corner of it lifted. 'Good night', they said back.

We turned a corner and came up a hill to a gate. She was in doubt was that Mrs Doyle's house, which I had said I'd go to as it was nearest, and asked me did I see a light. I did sure enough, a tiny light gleaming in an upper part of the house. She couldn't see it tho' and we went on till we came to Mrs Doyle's clear enough to be seen, and lights in every room. There I got a bed and cocoa and leave to rest. I didn't sleep much that night tho', and I was stiff like a poker when I awoke. I went to church tho', feeling rather sick, and with a blister on my left heel, for the sake of which Mrs Doyle gave me a lift on their car to the corner, where I turned off, and back again too. Kind woman. In the evening we passed the house where I saw a light, and it was an uninhabitable old ruin without a roof.

I came up here to Mrs Farmer. 20/- she is, instead of 30/-. It's a pity but 'there's a family quarrel between they two about a bit of land and they relations and all'. They were both telling me their side, and each say the courts settled it for them, one that the Farmers should have the right of way down to the lake, and the others that they shouldn't. They're both wrong and both right, that's the worst of it. Eilis (alias Lil) here was accused of cutting down a noticeboard pole the other day, a thing she couldn't have done, and everything like that they take and cast at each other.

*24 July 1914*

I got a letter from Mrs Coffey the day before yesterday, sending one from Diarmuid, saying he wouldn't be home until the 26th, and if I was near Dublin that Mrs C and I could go to Howth harbour at one on the 26th,

but 'don't say a word to anyone else', and that way we'd be certain not to recognise friends we'd see there, especially 'unexpected ones'. So I'll be there when he comes back. Good.

On Tuesday I went down to the fair in Roundwood. I had been sketching on a wall, and it was as hot as Africa. When I reached the place I had blisters on both feet, and I was tormented with the heat. It was a strange evening, great clouds came up and then the rain, straight down like sticks. The people who went down to the mission were drowned. I gave my cloak to one of them, but it's likely the damage was already done by then.

Last night Mrs Farmer and himself went down to the mission, and Eilís Bán and I were left together. She's a grand girl, dignified, strong, clean and light-hearted, with a modest opinion of herself. She showed me her treasures, little pieces of ribbon in a box, and ornaments and bits and pieces, and I think she has the glimmerings of good taste.

There was a boy here last night cutting hay, and as it was raining he sat down inside in the accustomed way, and prepared himself for the mission. And he told me stories about Billy Byrne of Ballymanus, and Michael Dwyer, and the people who 'informed' on them. 'Ah,' he said, 'if it was to come to that again now, there'd be plenty of informers to find.' The farmer stopped, he was looking for his knife. 'There could,' he said, emphatically, 'and you'd find one without moving far from where you sit.' I stared at him, I was making brown bread. 'I don't mean you, miss,' he said. 'Is it yourself then,' I said laughing. 'No, it's not, nor any of us.' Patrick Byrne, the fellow who had been cutting hay, made a gesture. 'Ah, down there is it?' I said, pointing to the Doyles' house. 'It is,' he said, and P.B nodded too. I'm sure they are right, and I hope they won't give him much mercy. He has a shifty look.

## *Escape Routes of Red Hugh O'Donnell*

*Dermot Somers*

**D**ermot Somers gave a most interesting lecture to the Society based around the Wicklow episodes in his new book *'Endurance - Heroic Journeys in Ireland'* published by The O'Brien Press, 2005. He has very kindly agreed that we should publish a few extracts from the book, which have been selected by Elinor Medlycott.

The hostage Red Hugh O'Donnell escaped from Dublin Castle in January 1591 and made his way towards Castle Kevin near Annamoe.

'There is a local tradition that O'Donnell crossed Three Rock Mountain during both of his escapes, and that this mountain, overlooking south Dublin, was actually *Sliabh Rua*. The repetition of the rumour down the centuries has fed back into the tradition itself and reinforced it. While the summit of Three Rock is most unlikely, it is reasonable to speculate that the fugitives were led through that general area - over the plateau formed by Three Rock, Killakee and Prince William's Seat, and into either the Glencullen or the Glencree valley towards Enniskerry. One thing is certain: the teenaged Red Hugh would not have had the faintest notion of where he was from the moment he plunged into the wet darkness beyond Dublin.

Most commentators, however, have opted for a romantic passage straight and true among the high mountains, via Lough Bray and the Sally Gap towards Glendalough. This is the line of the Military Road across the upland bogs. That road would not be built, however, until Red Hugh was dead and buried for a couple of centuries. The grazing tracks that preceded parts of it across the blanket bogs would have been a highly improbable route to have taken on a black winter's night of driving rain in January 1591- especially for a group weakened by years in Dublin Castle.

The blankness of a mountain bog in winter darkness has to be experienced to be understood. The kind of foul weather that might conceal an escape from Dublin Castle is the very weather that would make a night traverse via Lough Bray and the Sally Gap impossible, centuries before any road existed....

They might have covered around twenty miles in a six- to eight-hour push, putting them within range of today's Roundwood, Annamoe, Ashford, with a further ten miles to go to Glenmalure. This would assume that they were fit, knew where they were going in the dark and made no exhausting diversions. But they may well have been further back - towards Enniskerry. Red Hugh's white-skinned, slender feet, *a throughthe toinnngheala tanaidhe*, were torn by the furze and the briars and the ruggedness of the mountain. His light shoes were shredded.... In the morning, O'Donnell could not continue....

Left in the woods with a small party, he sent for help to Phelim O'Toole of Castlekevin, near Annamoe.... He should have kept on going, feet or no feet. O'Toole failed him, and handed him back to the Castle authorities. There were circumstances, of course. Phelim's arm was twisted by his family and by associates with Crown connections. Red Hugh's presence in the area had immediately become known to spies. Tracker-dogs were already on his trail, *cona luirgfor a shoillecht*. Whether he got away with the connivance of the O'Tooles or was recaptured in their company, they would have been hopelessly compromised. So, they handed him over. A warrant was issued by the lord deputy for the arrest of Hugh Roe O'Donnell at Castlekevin. The date was 25 January 1591.

There is another reason why the O'Tooles of Castlekevin have never quite been accused of treachery. Phelim's sister, Róis, at home on a visit, is said to have proposed that the fugitive be held overnight, as if awaiting arrest. Meanwhile, her husband, Fiach MacHugh O'Byrne, would raid the castle and carry Red Hugh away to Glenmalure before the soldiers arrived. O'Byrne, the outlaw, had nothing further to lose by enraging the English, while the O'Tooles could claim innocence of treachery to either side. If ever a plan deserved to succeed, that one did. The plot, stranger than fiction, was reported by Philip O'Sullivan, writing in Spain a generation later. According to him, it rained so heavily during the night that the rivers flooded and Fiach MacHugh O'Byrne could not get out of Glenmalure to raid Castlekevin before the English arrived.'

Having been held in Dublin Castle, in irons, Red Hugh O'Donnell and his fellow hostages, Art and Henry O'Neill, made a second escape on Christmas Eve 1591. The popular story takes them bribing the guards, and climbing by rope down the narrow privy, through the moat, and inadequately clothed and shod making for the Wicklow mountains in the snow.

The annual 'Art O'Neill Walk' commemorates this, the most celebrated mountain journey in Irish history, on 5th January, due to the changes resulting from the adoption of the Gregorian calendar. The walk now follows the presumed route 'past Ballysmutton Bridge; on then past Sorrel Hill and Black Hill, over Billy Byrne's Gap to Glenbride; across the King's River and up Glenreemore on difficult ground to Art's Cross, past the Three Lakes on the plateau and down Table Track into Glenmalure.' Art's Cross was first erected in 1932 to commemorate the place where he died of exposure. Fiach Mac Hugh's guide sought help and Red Hugh was rescued, though suffering from severe frostbite. He subsequently made his way back to Donegal by horseback.

Interestingly Dermot Somers proposes another route:

'Ten miles and many mountains away, an alternative tradition existed at the southeast end of Glenmalure. Local people strongly believed that the fugitives had come that way heading for the area where the hotel stands today, at Drumgoff crossroads. Research in the 1950s found that the people in one valley had not heard of the tradition in the other. It was also reported that the folklore around Drumgoff was far stronger than that in Granabeg.

For what it's worth, the Drumgoff tradition points to the fugitives having taken the same route as that pursued on the first escape to the east, towards Glendalough. High above the Glenmalure Hotel, beside an ancient track that long predates the Military Road, there is a battered cairn reputed to be the burial place of Art O'Neill. It is called the Clorawn, from *clochorán*: a heap of stones. Funerals passing by on the way to Glendalough would add a stone to the cairn. The tradition of Art's grave was fully established there. It included the necessary small niche under a crag where the fugitives sheltered, although no one has raised a wooden cross, or even a plaque to rival Glenreemore.

Either route is possible. The O'Byrnes had access to the neighbouring

valleys of Glendalough and the Glen. of Imaal. There was a rear entry to Glenmalure via the high plateau of Table Mountain at the northwest end. They had mountain access and escape to and from the Pale, the lowlands of Leinster controlled by the English. They were experts in guerrilla defence measures, and the slopes of the narrow valley are thought to have been covered in dense woods with heavy undergrowth.

Fiach MacHugh lived at the lowland end of the valley, a further six miles or so from the well-known ford at the very back of the Glen. Anyone entering Glenmalure via the upland route associated with Red Hugh had a wearisome distance still to go along the rocky valley to reach sanctuary. Fiach MacHugh O'Byrne's fortified home was at Ballinacor, in the vicinity of Greenane today. The famous guerrilla chieftain lived in a rath-type settlement, with wooden dwellings inside an earthen enclosure, densely hedged for additional protection.'

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The last chapter of the book *'Towards the Annals of the Four Masters - the travels of Michael O'Clery (1626-1636)'*, contains a small gem of local interest. Michael O'Clery was chief among the Four Masters and he travelled extensively throughout Ireland in the early seventeenth century before the Annals were compiled in 1632-1636.

In 1628 Brother Michael travelled:

'From Dublin, .... southeast in autumn, through Wicklow and Carlow, and across to Cashel in Tipperary. His research in Wicklow has always carried a puzzling hint of scandal because of a note he jotted down in relation to some poems copied at Castlekevin, near Glendalough.

O'Clery referred to the poems as *salach*, dirty. 'The poems are dirty, though I'm ashamed to admit for my part.' Fr Brendan Jennings translates *salach* as 'disgusting', raising the odds a lot higher. In fact, when the effort is made to dig out the offending lines about St Kevin, nothing offensive can be found in them, apart from the sentimental banality that sits comfortably in the context of popular verse. Maybe O'Clery was deploring the text as corrupt, in the sense of diluted or spoiled. On the other hand, considering the enduring tradition of St Kevin as a misogynist besieged by women, perhaps O'Clery came across something extra that he did not share'.

## *Deer, Deer* *– A Bluffer's Guide*

*John Flynn*

There are three species of deer in Ireland, but only the red deer is a native. It was so called because of the red-brown coat. This magnificent animal will have been probably seen daily up to 2002 when we changed over to the €, as it was on the £ coin from 1990. The native red deer is Ireland's largest land mammal. The earliest traces of red deer in Ireland are from about 26,000 years ago. However, in the 1800s, as the stocks ran very low, red deer were also brought in from elsewhere.

The non-native deer are the Sika and Fallow. The Japanese Sika is the smallest deer introduced by Lord Powerscourt to Ireland in 1860 to his estate in Enniskerry.

These have flourished and also integrated too well with the native deer. The results are seen as red deer/sika crosses. This makes recognition between the species difficult. For the bluffer, the red deer have a creamy underbelly and cream rump patch and a short tail. The Sika has faint spots on the red coat and a darker underbelly, but heart shaped white rump patch with a black edge extending up to a black stripe on the back and a longer tail is the main distinction. The hybrids can be anywhere in between depending on their genes! The antlers also vary in size and shape. Face on, the antlers of the red deer stag are wide and U-shaped and three dimensional, while the sikas are a flat V-shaped with fewer points. This clear distinction becomes blurred in the hybrids, as seen in the picture on the following page.

The fallow deer are medium sized deer and were introduced to Glencree to the 'Royal Deer Forest' by the Normans around the 1244. They initially stayed mainly in the 'deer parks' but many escaped and thrived due to our history over this time – plantation, clearance, farming. The fallow has several different coat colours from glossy black to chestnut or ginger browns. The rump patch is also white with a black edge, but the tail is much longer than that of the sika. In the winter the coat becomes shaggy and thick. The buck has an 'adam's apple' and palmate or

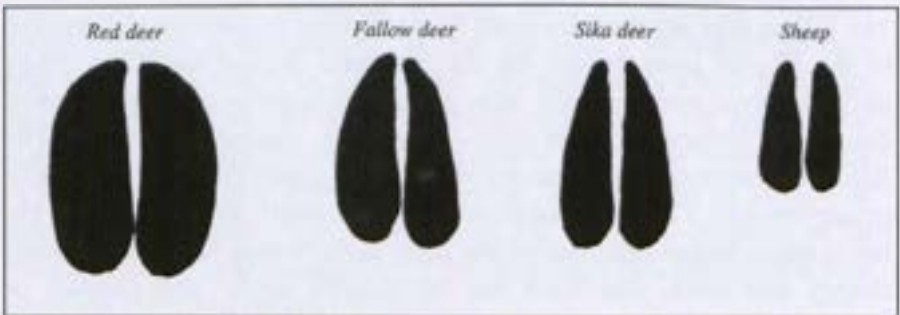


*Antlers: from left, red deer, red/sika hybrid and sika*

flattened style antlers. In common with the other deer, these are shed each spring (March to April) and the new set begins to grow immediately.

Other clues for the observant to help identification are the slots [tracks to you] and the noises during the rut in autumn. The males will engage in fights and become more vocal. The red stag roars, the sika stag whistles, red/sika hybrids can make a curious mixture of both sometimes starting with a whistle and ending in an attempted roar while the fallow buck makes loud grunting/groaning noises.

Use this simple information correctly and next you can convince people that you are the next David Attenborough!



*Slots*

## *In Conversation with Saive Coffey*

*John Medlycott and Martin Timmons*

The National Farmers' Association was established in 1955 and Saive became one of the first and few women members. Saive is currently President of the County Wicklow Executive of the Irish Farmers' Association and has held many other positions in the organisation in its fifty year existence.

Saive's interest in farming seems to have been with her from early childhood and among the influences that matter to her was her time at school in the 1940s. In a recent interview she reminisced about planting potatoes at school on V.E. Day as a symbolic gesture to help feed some of the starving millions in Europe; clearly the Quaker ethos of Newtown impressed her greatly. She comes from a family that was expected to contribute to the growth and development of this country. As she said, 'It was ingrained into us that we should do something for Ireland . . . we grew up in a world where one had to contribute to the welfare of society'. Her parents had huge but different influences on her. Her father, Diarmid, impressed her with his desire to realise the potential of the new State whilst her mother, Sheela, encouraged her to become a farmer. Saive spent the summer of 1949 getting farming experience with Travers Nuttall at Tittour. As chance would have it they very soon became neighbours.

In 1950 her parents moved from Cabinteely, where her mother kept some Jersey cows, one of the first T.B. tested herds in the country, to Glendarragh near Newtownmountkennedy. The Coffeys moved lock, stock and barrel, cows and farmyard manure to a wild and derelict place. With family support she was able to build up this 'very difficult but very beautiful' farm.

Mick Elliott, who had been working for the Coffeys in Cabinteely, also decided to move with his wife, Mary and their children. This proved invaluable in getting the farm established. Their son Michael lives on Glendarragh to this day and many members of the family still live in the district. The Coffeys received great help and kindness from the

neighbours, especially the Kavanaghs and the Clarksons who had been renting the lands until the Coffeys appeared.

Saive gives great credit to Macra na Feirme for its role in developing new skills and ideas in large numbers of young farmers. She had become a member of the Kilternan branch of Macra at sixteen whilst still a schoolgirl at Newtown School, Waterford. This branch was one of the first to be established and it gave its members opportunities to learn, including public speaking, to travel to Wiltshire and in 1954 to take part in the International Farm Youth Exchange to Pennsylvania and North Dakota for six months. Saive attended the first meeting of the NFA in Dublin and was far from convinced that it would be successful. She feared that it might weaken Macra, which up to then had embraced people of all ages and opinions, the only condition being that the chairman must be under forty. Meanwhile she had studied Agriculture for a short while in Trinity and started a rural diploma course in Edinburgh University but was rapidly appointed to the post of researcher in agricultural economics and farm management, as she was good at analysing figures! While she was away, Sheela held the fort at Glendarragh.

As well as farming she had become assistant to the farm manager at Townley Hall, near Drogheda, which was the practical farm for the Trinity College Agriculture course. After this she worked as a farm consultant for the next twenty years and continued to build up her own farm, specialising in Jersey cows. She was the only woman member of the original Ashford branch of the NFA, "I went because I wanted to be up to date with what was happening". She of course became branch secretary! When the Roundwood branch was established she was head-hunted to become its secretary and it appears that she regrets her decision not to move from Ashford!

In the early 1970s the NFA set up a Farm Family Committee for women and Saive was chosen to represent Wicklow along with "a great collection of female characters from all over the country". This group soon highlighted the necessity for proper wills to be made, to make sure that women on farms understood inheritance, that widows be helped to learn about money management, that self-employed people in agriculture

obtain social insurance and generally to empower women involved in farming. Each county in the country was to have a farm family committee and Marie Mackey of Rathdrum was very helpful in setting up the Wicklow one. About forty women replied to an advertisement in the Wicklow People and amongst those who got involved were Telia Cashman, Ann MacDonald Hill, Catherine Shaw and latterly Margaret Healy. This committee started 'Food from Our Farms' at the Tinahely Show and in many other ways it has been extremely significant for the development of farming in Wicklow and especially for equal treatment of men and women in local agriculture.

Saive has served on many other committees. She succeeded Michael Donnelly as Wicklow's representative on the IFA Rural Development Committee which has been important in reclassifying disadvantaged areas. Underlying all this involvement is the interlinking of them all for the betterment of women, farming and rural life in general.

When the National Park for Wicklow was announced there had been no local consultation and this was very controversial. The Rural Development Committee was immediately and directly involved. A meeting was organised by Paddy O'Leary of Tiglin in 1989 and whilst this was attended by representatives of the County Council, the OPW etc., it was also the first time that the farmers' views were part of the discussion. Saive gave a wide ranging address to the meeting on behalf of the IFA and reading this seventeen years later it is very impressive in showing her depth of understanding of the potential of the National Park and of the problems that had to be overcome for it to be successfully established. The Wicklow Mountains National Park was set up and eventually a National Park Council was established and Saive is an active and committed member of that Council.

The County Manager, Blaise Treacy, recognised the need to consider the future management of the Wicklow Uplands and commissioned Professor Adrian Phillips to undertake a detailed study, which was to become the basis for future discussion. A direct result was the formation of the Leader Scheme (now Wicklow Rural Partnership), which has been influential in the economic development of the rural community. Saive has been an active member of its management committee. Another result

of the Phillips Report has been the formation of the Wicklow Uplands Council. The principal aim of this body is to improve relationships between all users of the uplands by providing a forum for the resolution of contentious issues. This is another area where Saive's knowledge has been availed of and where she has contributed significantly.

When she was a small child her parents gave her a present of a cow and she has always had a special affection for cows. In 1982 she lost her beloved Jersey herd due to a TB breakdown. 'That was a real heartbreak.' The cows were replaced by a suckler herd and that too was lost to TB. Today she has a substantial flock of sheep, which Willie Gilbert has managed for over forty years, and a new herd of suckler cows.

Throughout our conversation Saive kept returning to three themes. She continually talked about farming, especially the changes, some of which she sees as for the better, but Saive is concerned about the uncertain future of farming in Ireland. The development of a better life for the people of rural Wicklow is another of her driving interests and she really has taken the ideas of her father and her teachers to heart and put those ideas into practice. But most of all, as we talked, the one phrase that really struck us was, "I just happened to be so lucky."

### **Saive on the tractor she won and nearly refused . . .**

*The tractor was given by the Lime Company in 1965 for a slogan on why you should lime in the summer. Saive said 'Somehow I won it, but when I was told that it was to be presented by the Minister of Agriculture at a dinner, I was horrified. I went to the head office of the Lime Company and thanked them for the prize but I would have to refuse. I could not go to a dinner and shake hands with the Minister, Mr Haughey, while the farmers' representatives were camped outside his building in protest.' In turn, the Lime Company realised that neither could they. So the tractor was presented very quietly. Later, at another dinner, she was officially presented with shiny keys to another shiny tractor by an uncontroversial dignitary. Needless to say that was the last she saw of the second one!*



## ***The Origins of Some Rural Organisations in Co. Wicklow***

*Saive Coffey*

*I am only considering those organisations that concern farming and the use of the countryside. It is not possible to cover the game/sporting activities in such a small space.*

### **Irish Country Women's Association**

The oldest rural organisation in the country may well be the Irish Country Women's Association. It was set up in 1935, but its roots were much older, being derived from the United Irishwomen, founded in 1910, influenced by Sir Horace Plunkett. The Wicklow federation now has 20 branches. The President of the Wicklow Federation is Jane Cronin of Roundwood. The branch in Roundwood has Patricia Cullen as President and Kay Clinton as Secretary. The Roundwood branch has just marked its 60th year.

The ICA national organisation is well known for its wide range of activities, both practical and informative. Nationally, it is very influential. It also is responsible for founding the College at An Grianan and promoting the Country Markets Ltd. These markets work on strict co-operative regulations with the produce sold by the market, but linked by number to the producer. Ahead of its time with traceability! They are now coming under some competition from the rapidly developing Farmers Markets. These are operated by individual producers who sell their own products and tend to be much more commercial.

### **Farming Groups**

Macra na Fierme, also called the Young Farmers Clubs started in mid 1940s and grew rapidly. This became a very dynamic movement embracing people of all ages who wanted to learn and develop a new and vibrant agriculture and to have much more opportunities than had been available in a very depressed countryside. By the early 1950s pressure had grown to become politically and economically active and a split came between the very young and the older farmers. So the Irish Farmers

Association (IFA), originally known as the National Farmers Association, and the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association (ICMSA) were born. The *Irish Farmers Journal* was also started and run by similarly minded people.

When the split came the IFA developed rapidly into a very influential organisation with a county committee basis. These committees covered areas such as:

|                            |                     |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Rural development          | Farm Business       |
| Hill farming               | Sheep               |
| Grain                      | Livestock           |
| Farm family                | Disadvantaged areas |
| Industrial and Environment |                     |

Each committee has a relevant county representative. The present county Chairman is Declan O'Neill from Rathdrum, The Honorary Secretary is Linda Strahan from Ballymanus. Roundwood representatives are Sean Malone (Rural Development) and John Power (Hill Farming).

There are 10 branches affiliated to the Wicklow County Executive of the IFA. Some West Wicklow branches chose to affiliate with Kildare, Carlow or Dublin.

Macra has become an active youth organisation, but suffered from the split with many losses while branches have come and gone when people aged and changed. Roundwood used to have a good branch but it has gone, but the IFA branch is very active. There are only 5 Macra branches left in Wicklow with about 120 members.

### **Wicklow Rural Partnership**

Formed to administer the LEADER funds in Co Wicklow, this now covers other development type initiatives as well. But LEADER is the main front. Now ending its third programme a new and more expansive type of programme is expected soon. LEADER, a European initiative, stands for links between actions for the development of the rural economy and was initiated in 1991.

First called Wicklow Rural Enterprises, this organisation consists of a board representing many voluntary and statutory organisations and administers European funds under the approval of the Department of

Agriculture and the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. Suitable projects are grant aided to meet matched funds according to the type and size of the application.

Amongst projects supported have been the upgrading and improvements of village halls, eg Moneystown, Brockagh and many others. Grants for rural enterprises and small businesses, tourism improvements, training courses and crafts, drama festivals etc – some large, some very small. Some students have also been grant aided for degrees and diplomas in rural development. Other activities include Wicklow Information Network (WIN), rural bus services for remote areas, operating the Social Service Scheme for qualifying farmers and fishermen, and contacts with other nearby LEADER organisations including some contacts with other European countries.

### **Wicklow Uplands Council (WUC)**

This is a voluntary organisation co-ordinating the rural organisations of the uplands and user groups. Its principal objective is to create better relations and understanding between potentially conflicting interests. 'The Council aims to promote the sustainable use and enjoyment of the local environment in partnership with the people who live, work and recreate there'.

It has quite a wide range of activities and research projects. One of its recent actions has been permanent signage boards in strategic places. It is concerned with the problem of access. This involves negotiations with farmers and interested parties. Trail improvements are also negotiated. It is now studying heather management problems.

Under the auspice of WUC, the Wicklow Dublin Mountains Board was set up to help the statutory and voluntary bodies co-ordinate activities to help deal with vandalism, crimes and waste dumping and other problems in the mountains. WUC also has links and co-operates with other groups nationally, cross-border and throughout Europe.

#### **Contact Information**

|                        |                              |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Macra County Chairman: | Lynda Woolmington            |
| County Secretary:      | Henry Alexander - 0402 35404 |
| WRP: Manager           | Brian Kehoe - 0404 46977     |
| WUC: Manager           | Colin Murphy - 0404 43958    |

## *General Holt – 250th Anniversary*

*Matthew Fowler*

Ten members of the Holt Family Fellowship (out of 3000 known descendants) arrived in Dublin on September 6, to celebrate the 250th birthday of General Joseph Holt.

They visited Dublin Castle. Tour Leader Lionel Fowler was invited to view the Birmingham Tower where General Joseph Holt was imprisoned in 1798.

The party then visited Powerscourt House and Gardens where Hester Holt had arranged Joseph's surrender to Lord Powerscourt in November 1798. On Sunday 10 September, the party visited York Road, Dun Laoghaire, the home of Joseph and Hester after their return from New South Wales; attended Mass at Monkstown Parish Church; visited the nearby Carrickbrennan Cemetery where they are buried, then had photos taken at the ruins of Joseph's Mullinaveigue farm with its 1798 Memorial. The party was met by Tommy Webster and Johnnie Medlycott of the Roundwood and District Historical and Folklore Society.

They then attended the birthday party arranged by Sonny Holt at Lawless's Hotel, Aughrim, where Ruan O'Donnell summarised the 1798 United Irish Rebellion involving Joseph Holt.

General Joseph Holt was the only United Irish General to be banished to New South Wales following the 1798 Irish Rebellion. During the six months voyage from the Cobh, Cork to Sydney, he and his family were befriended by Lieutenant William Cox and his family on board the 'Minerva'.

From Joseph Holt's own memoirs, he states, prior to being sent to Australia, that 'I was more inclined for agriculture than building [unlike his brothers], so I went to a friend of my father's, a Mr John Low, a steward and gardener for Mr Sweeney in the County of Dublin, near Bray and there continued for five years and three months'. Then his father, John Holt of Ballydonnell, sent him to Belfast to learn farming techniques.



*At Joseph Holt memorial stone at Mullinavieque  
 Pictured L-R: Aileen Fowler, Thomas Fowler,  
 Lionel Fowler (holding Joseph Holt's flag), Sharon Bodner,  
 Ross Fowler, Margaret Fowler, Matthew Fowler, Laurie Hibbard.*

When Joseph stepped ashore on the 11th January 1800, Lieutenant Cox sought Joseph's advice and quickly made him farm manager of all his properties as he purchased them in and around Sydney. Joseph and his sons, Joshua and Joseph Harrison Holt, were later granted 100 acres each at Irish Town by Governor Bligh. When Governor Macquarie subsequently pardoned Joseph Holt, he was allowed to sell his grant which he called, 'Glen Bride', as well as his purchased property which he called, 'Mt Hester', after his wife. A portion now forms the North-East boundary of The King's School at Parramatta. In December 1812, he sold his livestock and poultry to the leading men of the day and took passage in the *Isabella* with Hester and Joseph Harrison for Liverpool and their daughter Marianne in Dublin.

More information on Joseph Holt can be found in an earlier Journal (1994) of this Society that was dedicated to him and the activity of his descendants can be accessed from [www.joseph-holt.org](http://www.joseph-holt.org).

## Ronnie Delany - Arklow Olympian

J. Agatha De V. Mansfield



50 years after his victory in the 1500 metres at the Melbourne Olympics, Ronnie Delany has received many accolades about his achievement at the Melbourne Olympics. One of these is the 48c stamp showing him with the tricolour and the Olympic rings just behind him, capturing the drama and keen emotion of the moment of victory. The stamp, issued in August, is beautifully illustrated by Thomas Ryan RHA. Earlier, he received the honour of Freedom of Dublin on the 5th of March from the Lord Mayor, Cllr Catherine Byrne.

And how did he manage to win this Olympic medal in Melbourne? As the report goes:

*“ . . . with 300 metres remaining he was trapped on the inside edge of the track, back in 10th place. A gap opened and the Irishman flew through, picking off the men in front amidst tumultuous reaction. Ron Delany was a clear winner, running the last 100 metres in 12.5 seconds, to finish well ahead of Klaus Richtzenhain of Germany, the favourite, John Landy of Australia, and the rest of the pack . . . ”*

And so it was, that in the Melbourne 1956 Olympics, Ron Delany won only the second Irish gold medal on the track in the history of the Games

(Bob Tisdall won gold in the 400 metres hurdles in Los Angeles in 1932). It was a classic final, involving six of the ten runners who had broken the four minute mile barrier; the excitement, with one lap to go and the field tightly bunched, was such that an excited official forgot to ring the bell to signify the beginning of the last lap!

Ron Delany is recognised as the best track athlete produced by Ireland, and perhaps its most outstanding sportsman of the 20th century. Delany came from a sporting family with a brother Joe, who was, in the view of some knowledgeable people, even more talented than his brother Ron. As a schoolboy, Ron Delany was also a schools champion buy only in his last two years at school concluding his schoolboy athletic career in 1953 by winning the Irish Schools Senior 880 yards championship in the very modest time of 2 minutes 7.4 seconds.

Ronnie Delany was born in Arklow, Co. Wicklow, in 1935 and later moved to Sandymount in Dublin with his family. During his school days, Ron Delany was fortunate in having as his athletics coach Jack Sweeney, a mathematics teacher, at his school. Sweeney encouraged Delany to continue his running career after schooldays, but suggested that he concentrate on the half mile as his racing distance. This advice was the first step in Ron Delany's subsequent athletic career and Olympic success. In 1954, Delany first won the Irish Senior 880 yards championship, broke the Irish record for this distance in College Park, and competed in the European Athletics Championships in Berne, Switzerland. It was at these European Championships that Delany reached the final of the 800 metres, breaking the Irish record en route and as a result, received the offer of an athletics scholarship to Villanova University, located just outside Philadelphia in the US. Delany registered as a student there in the autumn of 1954 and came under the guidance of 'Jumbo' Elliott, the University athletics coach.

At Villanova, Delany competed in cross-country (run over the golf course), indoor and outdoor track meetings. His outdoor and indoor races were at 440 and 880 yards. During the summer vacation of 1955, Delany returned home and competed in a number of athletics meetings sponsored by Clonliffe Harriers. At the last meeting before his return to Villanova the energetic and far-seeing secretary of Clonliffe, Billy Morton, persuaded a very reluctant Delany to run his first ever mile race.

He completed the four laps of the famous grass track of College Park in 4 minutes 5.8 seconds for a new Irish record and one of the fastest mile times of that year. On returning to Villanova, coach Elliott told Delany that his athletic future was as a miler and set out a training and racing programme to this effect. Indoor racing was the first phase of this racing programme, with outdoor competition following, all in various parts of America. Off course, Delany did not neglect his 880 yard or even his 440 yard racing, as he was not yet a miler but had the ultimate view of competing in the Olympic 1500 metres championship in Melbourne, Australia in December 1956. But on 1st June, 1956, after an outstanding indoor and outdoor season, Ron Delany became Ireland's first four-minute miler and the seventh in history when he ran 3 minutes 59 seconds for the distance in Compton, California.

After summer again at home in Dublin, and without too much success due to an injury sustained in a race in Paris, Delany elected to return to Villanova to prepare for the Melbourne Olympic Games to be held in December. 'Jumbo' Elliott now prepared him with a 10 or 12 week programme of training over the terrain of the golf course, intermixed with speed endurance work on the track over shorter distances than the mile or 1500 metres. This, together with other strengthening and stretching work proved to be an excellent preparation for the Olympic 1500 metres. Back in Dublin, the Olympic Council of Ireland was in two minds as to whether they would send Ron Delany to Melbourne. Delany was selected by one vote. Shortly afterwards, he joined the Irish Olympic team as it prepared in Berkeley, California, before heading to Melbourne.

After qualifying comfortably in his 1,500m semi-final, he ran a tactically brilliant race in the final and set a new Olympic record by running the distance in 3 minutes 41.2 seconds. He covered the last 300m in 38.8 seconds and won the gold medal by almost four metres. On 1st December 1956, Ronald M. Delany of Crusaders Athletic Club, Dublin and Villanova University, became the Olympic 1500 metres champion.

Ron Delany returned to Ireland that December to a 'Hero's Welcome' and a Civic Reception at the Mansion House, Dublin, reminiscent of Tisdall and O'Callaghan's victorious return from Los Angeles in 1932.

Delany went on to have an outstandingly successful indoor running career in America with 34 consecutive victories and the world indoor

mile record. He was never beaten indoors at the mile. While many of his outdoors races in America were of outstanding quality, his half mile and mile victories in the American Universities Championships in California in 1958 – both within 50 minutes of each other – were equal to the best in the world. He was also the first Irishman to win a medal in the European championships at 1,500m in Stockholm in 1958. He retired from athletics in 1962.

His greatest running occurred outside Ireland, except for one notable race. This was the world record mile which took place at the newly opened Santry Stadium in Dublin (now re-named The Morton Stadium) in August 1958. Billy Morton had raised the money to build an international track and stadium in Santry. Thanks to Delany's Olympic success, athletics in Ireland had once again become a highly popular sport with many young athletes all over the country wishing to emulate Delany.

Morton had arranged a mile race that was to become perhaps the greatest mile race in athletics history with Herb Elliott of Australia breaking the world record by nearly three seconds; the second finisher, Merv Lincoln also breaking the previous world record and the first five finishers all running inside four minutes. Delany ran a fine race that evening, but it was to be Elliot's greatest race over this classic distance. Delany was third but it was his running that evening and his reputation that made Elliot's outstanding time possible in the same way that Ron Delany's Olympic victory helped make the Morton Stadium the Irish athletics Mecca. Delany finally retired to Dublin in the early 1960s and continues making a positive and visible contribution to Irish athletics and Irish sport right up to the present day.

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## *The Gossan Stones, Paddock Hill, Co. Wicklow*

*Chris Corlett*



**H**igh above Laragh and the Glenmacnass valley, on a N-S ridge between Paddock Hill and Scarr mountain are two of the most unassuming standing stones you would expect to see. The stones are set 1.75m apart (on a N-S axis), and stand little more than 1m high. I have seen more monumental gateposts in some of the nearby fields. They are commonly known as the Gossan Stones, a name that may derive from the Hiberno-English slang word 'gossoon' commonly used around the country to describe young boys or lads, a term that quite well describes the two stones. However, the burning question when I first saw them was what on earth were these doing all the way up here, in an area not known for prehistoric monuments.

When I was first brought by a colleague to look at these stones some years ago I noticed on our approach a U-shaped defile of the Devil's Glen in the distance. On arrival, and as we pondered the purpose of these stones I noticed that we were now looking out to sea straight through the Devil's Glen, due east. This glen is the E-W valley of the Vartry River as it drops dramatically from the Roundwood Plateau down to the coastal

plain and the sea at Wicklow town. The Gossan Stones themselves are not aligned on the Glen. The stones are aligned N-S, whereas the Glen is due east. However, I was convinced that they must have been in some way marking the position of the sun as it would rise in the east through the Devil's Glen. Given that the Glen is due east of the stones, it seemed most likely that the alignment must occur on the equinox (i.e. 20th March or 22 September when the sun is midway between the winter and summer solstices).

A few failed attempts later, and finally on the 24th September, 2005 I was able to put my theory to the test. As I left the car at 5.50 a.m. the night sky above was an uninterrupted chorus of stars. By 6.30 a.m. I was at the site, and began setting up the cameras. However, by now my earlier spirits had faded and my heart was beginning to sink, for while the sky above me was clear, the horizon to the east was dominated by a bank of dark grey clouds which seemed to merge with the dark moody sea. As the minutes passed the sky became a blaze of different burning colours, but I became increasingly resigned to the likelihood that the clouds would sabotage any view of the rising sun. Then, at 7.10 a.m., almost without warning, I could make out an orange glow on the horizon, and very soon I could clearly make out the crown of the sun peeking above the sea. My heart began to race as I fumbled for my cameras, anxious that after all this effort I wasn't going to forget to capture my proof. Within three minutes the full disc of the sun became visible, sitting directly above the Devil's Glen as I stood between the Gossan Stones. No sooner had it appeared the sun now began to disappear quite quickly under the bank of clouds that hovered above the sea and which earlier I thought had scuppered my chances for another year. Then the sun was gone completely hidden by the cloud, bringing a definite closure to the spectacle.

The Gossan Stones are situated in an upland landscape, some 364m above sea level. Furthermore, because the sun rises on the sea, and allowing for the curvature of the earth's surface, from the Gossan Stones the sun can be seen rising slightly earlier than it would from more low-lying locations. The alignment in this instance is of course somewhat different from conventional standing stone monuments aligned on the rising or setting sun, in that the axis of the Gossan Stones is not aligned,



but is rather perpendicular to the point where the sun appears on the morning of the equinox. Therefore, rather than acting as an alignment with the rising sun, the Gossan Stones act as portals framing the sun as it rises in the east within the U-shaped profile of the Devil's Glen. The architects of the Gossan Stones could also have been achieved by placing them some 50m to the east, from where there are panoramic views of the Irish Sea. Instead, the Gossan Stones were set back to a location where

a slight rise of ground level blocks a view of a v-shaped profile to the east-north-east, as if to prevent any confusion as to which profile, i.e. the Devil's Glen, the alignment is set.

This discovery that the Gossan Stones are marking a viewing point for observing the rising sun on the equinox is very significant, not least because it is the first discovery of this kind in Wicklow, but also because it adds to a small, but growing, number of prehistoric sites known to have equine solar alignments. As with all good stories, there is a twist. Some 3km to the NW of the Gossan Stones the Bellanagrana Brook rises on the slopes of Scarr Mountain and falls steeply down the Glenmacnass Valley to the west. The name in this case could not be the original name of the stream, and it is most likely that the stream took its name from a name that originally would have applied to a larger geographical area. Given the clear evidence for a solar alignment at the Gossan Stones the second element of the name, i.e. 'grana', immediately jumps out as being significant. In 1945 Liam Price suggested that the name Bellanagrana derived from the Irish *buaile na gréine* (i.e. booley of the sun or sunny booley), though he also suggested that the first element of the name, based on the local pronunciation of the name, may have derived from the Irish word *balla*, a wall. Price would not have been familiar with the new evidence for a solar alignment at the Gossan Stones. In light of this it is now tempting to suggest an alternative explanation for this name that is directly related to the solar alignment itself. It is possible that the name derives from the Irish *bealach na gréine*, i.e. way of the sun, which may reflect the path of sun from sunrise to sunset as seen from the Gossan Stones. Alternatively, the name may derive from *beal na gréine*, the mouth of the sun, which of course could be seen to be an appropriate description of the sun as it is seen to rise up from Devil's Glen.

## *Bronze Casting Demonstration by Umha Aois*

*Fiona Coffey*

Umha Aois is a County Wicklow based group dedicated to rediscovering Bronze Age activities. They gave demonstrations of their skills at the Society meeting 'Celebrating the Bronze Age in Wicklow.



*Pit Furnace*

They demonstrated two types of furnaces. The simplest is a pit furnace, dug into the ground. It is made from wet clay and horse dung and fired up immediately, using charcoal, to heat the crucible. This photo shows molten bronze being poured from a heated crucible made from clay/sand/dung into a clay/dung mould for small spearhead. The pit is surrounded by broken shards of used moulds. Also there are new moulds, being kept hot in the charcoal, at the ready to be used.

The second furnace is a portable, again of clay and horsedung. This portable furnace has been used at several events and is now held together with duct tape! Niall O'Neill is seen pouring molten bronze into a mould from a clay and dung mixture. The crucible is modern and made of graphite. Padraig McGoran is seen tending to their charcoal-fired furnace. This can be boosted by using a bellows, the nose is just visible on the right.



*Pouring the molten bronze*



*The same furnace with Niall and Padraig in costume*

*Photos by C. Hansen*

## *Collecting Ballot Boxes*

*Frank Nuttall*

In the mid twenties, at the urging of his brother-in-law, my father bought a Model T truck and obtained a "plate" which was a licence to haul goods for hire and reward.

He got the job of distributing the ballot boxes for the south and west of the county. Times following the civil war were very tense and he was provided with a soldier, who sat in the back of the lorry with a sub-machine gun.

I started to drive the lorry in 1955 (then an Austin - 5 lorries later) and since then we have continued to collect the ballot boxes. Soldiers with sub-machine guns guarded the lorry but this has declined to one Garda with a revolver.

In all the years only one incident of law breaking has arisen. Going into Baltinglass, one election night, which coincided with pension day, an inebriated elderly gentleman on a bicycle weaved out and fell off in front of me. I managed to avoid him by driving on the pavement. He was arrested as drunk in charge of a bicycle and had his day in court.

The boxes were collected from Wicklow Court House, where they were stored, and delivered to each polling station. Until about 10 years ago we distributed the boxes (all numbered) to the barracks at Aughrim, Carnew, Shilleagh, Tinahely, Baltinglass, Dunlavin, Hollywood and Blessington and the 3 in east Kildare (when they were included in the Wicklow constituency). The boxes were stored in the cells overnight so I can boast that I have been in at least 10 different police cells in Wicklow - in none of which I would have liked to spend the night.

After voting had ended (which could be General, Local, Presidential or Referenda) the boxes were collected in reverse order and brought to the Assembly Hall in Wicklow and subsequently to St. Patrick's GAA club hall.

Ballot boxes used to be beautifully made but were of many different sizes, shapes and vintages. The only thing in common was that they were all made from steel.

Twenty years ago, as a metal work exercise in St. Patrick's Institution for young offenders, a new set was made. They are all the one standard size and therefore stack easily but these have many jagged edges. Secure they may be, but health and safety of those on the front line was not considered. At least they are not electronic voting machines!

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### *Wicklow People*

25/9/1920

Auction of horses, cattle, implements and household furniture at Knockatemple on behalf of Mrs. Eagle and Wm. Plunkett. 4 good young milking cows, 4 calves, 3 two year old store cattle, 1 good farm mare, 16 hands 5 years old, by Volunteer, great strength and action, true and kind in all kinds of work, a rare animal. 1 bay mare, 6 years old, trained to all work. Bay horse, 6 years old, a capital worker. Colt by Hexam, 3 years old. 10 good store ewes, 1 fat sow, 1 colt by Hexam rising two years, one good quiet working jennet, Jennet's trap and set of driving harness, Jennet's spring dray, dray harness and creels, 2 sets of full sized dray harness, backbands and chains, timber chains, odd collars, good saddle, head collars, bridles and martingale, dray and creels, farm cart, car set, lot of boards, car ropes, water barrel on wheels. 2 Howard ploughs, one with lea brest, Sellar Bar-point, plough, 2-part iron harrow, Drill harrow, stone roller, drill roller, steel hay rake, 2 pulpers and slicers, grindstone, turnip sower, beam scales & weights, Weighing Councils, lot of paling wire, Spring-tooth harrow, Graham plough, Sack Truck, Springs and wheels, ladder, wheelbarrow, winnowing machine, riddles, sieves, etc. Mowing machine and equipment, Threshing machine, a variety of handles and farm-tools. Dairy utensils, churns, milk pans, crocks, butterworkers, milk benches, forms, boxes of tools, etc.

## ***Samuel Beckett: Wicklow Ramblings***

*Claire Chambers*

The Centenary of Samuel Beckett's birth reminded me of my early love for his work. I have never been one for searching the deeper meaning of Beckett's writings and interpretations beloved by critics. I just enjoyed his work. My introduction was *Waiting for Godot* which I saw in the Pike Theatre, Dublin, October 1955 when it was first performed in Dublin. Still at school and 'English' such as Jane Austen, this was a revelation – almost a road to Damascus. Language was liberated and honed to minimalist but with such humour. From then on I was hooked on Beckett.

I had not realized how parallel our lives were but with a few years in between! He was reared in Foxrock close to where I also grew up. This meant that as teenagers, both with a love of the outdoors, we seemed to have covered much of the same ground and mainly by bicycle.

He frequently walked in the Wicklow Mountains with his father, but then as he became more independent took first to the bike and then to the motorbike. 'In helmet and goggles, he flew over the narrow roads and ditches, stonyfaced and grim, impervious to the dangers that lay around every curve in the landscape' was how Deirdre Bair, his first biographer, described his antics. He competed in motorbike trials successful whilst a student in Trinity, distinguishing himself well in March 1925 through the Wicklow Mountains on his 2.75 h.p. A.J.S. This is not surprising as he was an allround sportsman. Notably as a cricketer, he has an entry in *Wisden Cricketers' Almanack*, the only Nobel laureate with such a distinction (Knowlson, 1997).

When his father Bill bought a car, he tried his hand at driving that, but again Bair reports 'Several times, he lost the use of the car for legal infractions and several times Bill (his father) simply forbade him to drive it, which reduced him to the motorcycle when he had one in running condition or, most humiliating of all, to an ordinary bicycle.'

Despite these setbacks with mechanized wheels, Beckett still enjoyed his pushbike. He cycled through the Loire valley in June 1926, much of the

time in the company of a young American, Charles C. Clarke. Clarke visited Beckett in Foxrock the next year, when they made several sorties into Wicklow by bicycle.

This landscape, Beckett's favourite landscape in all of Ireland, surfaces in his writings. No doubt one of these rides was up to Sally Gap. Beckett has an evocative description of the Military Road in his novel *Mercier and Camier* 'A road still carriageable climbs over the high moorland. It cuts across vast turfbogs, a thousand feet above sea-level, two thousand if you prefer. It leads to nothing any more. . . None ever pass this way but beauty-spot hogs and fanatical trampers. Under its heather mask the quag allures, with an allurements not all mortals can resist. Then it swallows them up or the mist comes down' Whether the heart-felt comment 'The bicycle is a great good. But it can turn nasty, if ill employed', from the same novel, referred to some problems encountered up there is unrecorded.

His love affair of the bicycle is seen in one of the stories from the early volume, *More Pricks than Kicks*. Belacqua Shuah, the main character, is walking a girl called Winnie through Fingal to the north of Dublin. She is trying to seduce Belacqua but she did not stand a chance, after Belacqua, 'who could on no account resist a bicycle,' spotted a bike hidden by its owner in the grass. He seized the first opportunity to get rid of Winnie and returned to the hiding place. 'It was a fine light machine, with red tyres and wooden rims. . . The machine was a treat to ride, on his right hand the sea was foaming among the rocks, the sands ahead were another yellow again, beyond them in the distance the cottages of Rush were bright white. Belacqua's sadness fell from him like a shift. He carried the bicycle into the field and laid it down on the grass.' Even Beckett's despairing characters from later novels, time and again, enjoyed their bicycles. 'Dear bicycle, I shall not call you bike, you were green, like so many of your generation. I don't know why. It is a pleasure to meet it again. To describe it at length would be a pleasure' is one of the musings of Molloy, an old tramp who can scarcely move. Molloy himself considered his bike and horn 'a real pleasure, almost a vice.' This affection for his bicycle far outweighs any for his mother 'What a rest to speak of bicycles and horns. Unfortunately it is not of them I have to speak, but of her who brought me into the world.'

Moran, the second hero of Molloy, muses on the question of what vehicle to use and calls this 'the fatal pleasure principle.' Having acquired a bike, he states that he 'would gladly write four thousand words' about it. When he and his son succeed in mounting the bike, Moran waxes enthusiastically 'Happily it was downhill. Happily I had mended my hat, or the wind would have blown it away. Happily the weather was fine and I no longer alone. Happily, happily.'

There are also references to suggest anticipated pleasure but never attained. In a later novel, *Watt*, a man carries his bike up and down the stairs in a railway station. At the end of the same novel, another bike owned by Miss Walker is transported by train. Despair comes through when Malone, Molloy's successor in the trilogy of Beckett's novels, muses that he would have liked to talk about his bicycle bell, one of his last possessions, but is unable to do so any more.

I could not find further references to Beckett's continued use of the bicycle while living in France but a possible tenuous link through *Waiting for Godot*. Beckett once, when asked about the meaning of Godot, mentioned 'a veteran racing cyclist'. Could this have been the French cyclist, Roger Godeau, considered a stayer, in town-to-town and national championships? After all, the surname would have been pronounced the same.

However, it is clear that Beckett still never forgot his love of the hills and mountain, even in his last years he was transported here: 'the old haunts were never more present - I walk those backroads with closed eyes.'

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## ***Life in the 1600s*** ***Strange Relics!***

*Ellen Cunningham*

Weddings tended to be in June, partly because people took their yearly bath in May, and still smelled pretty good by June. Just in case, brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide body odour! Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, followed by the other men, then the women and finally the children, last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, 'Don't throw the baby out with the bath water.'

Most of the cooking was done over the hearth. Bread was cooked on a griddle. It was divided according to status. The burnt bottom of the loaf went to the least favoured in the household and the most favoured and guests got the top. Hence, the phrase 'uppercrust.'

A big kettle always hung over the fire. Every day, a stewpot was also there. The ingredients were small amounts of meat, but mostly vegetables. The meat would be eaten quickly, The leftovers in the pot were saved and added to the next day. The pot could have been on the go for sometime. Hence the rhyme, 'Pease porridge hot, pease porridge cold, pease porridge in the pot nine days old.'

If a pig had been procured, some would be preserved as bacon. A piece of bacon hanging, was seen as a sign of wealth – hence 'bring home the bacon.' If a little was cut and shared with visitors, while sitting around chatting, it was considered to 'chew the fat.'

## *The Friesian Road Tunnel, Shramore*

*Arthur Hall (with acknowledgments to Wicklow People)*

I was shown this snippet below from the Wicklow People of 30 March 1935. 'The removal of that awkward curve at "The Goat Bridge" above Annamoe on the way to Laragh is welcomed by all. The old name of this bridge bears the title in Gaelic of *Anna luc gal*, which literally means the Ford of the Bright Mice. This translation was given the writer by the late Rev Hogan, CC, former curate of Glendalough. While on the fixing up of *Anna luc Gal* why not the Co. Council extend it activities to the reconstruction of the big bridge at Annamoe - "The Ford of the Cows"?'

The above snippet got me ruminating. It must be something in the air at this altitude that so many of our landmarks have 'animal' connections.

The latest has a distinct European flavour, the Friesian Road Tunnel, opened in December 2005. Although there is an increased volume of speeding traffic along the R755 from Kilmacanogue to Roundwood, this tunnel is not for vehicular travel.

This new Friesian Road Tunnel is in Shramore, Roundwood, or to be more specific, at Kennedy's Corner.

Through the good will of Peter Kennedy, the young local farmer, financial aid from somewhere up there or over there, and the skill, enterprise and commitment of Wicklow County Council and others, this Friesian Tunnel is actually a reality.

A downbeat opening of the tunnel for the cows took place in December 2005 during a well-earned tea break. I just happened upon some of the Council workers having a celebratory drink later the same day. My absence from the opening was noted, and I had to offer some excuse. Invitations to the opening were scarce with many notable dignitaries not present. The suggestion was that this was done only to cause minimum stress to the Shramore Friesian cows' milkflow.

I have been reliably informed that the event will be marked in verse and song by a local balladeer.

## *Harvest as it used to be . . .*

This was a nostalgic trip of reaping and threshing for many of us that also delighted and intrigued the younger generation. It was held in Schwalm's field in Roundwood and attracted people from way beyond the county. The main reason for this event was to raise money for St Catherine's School, Newcastle.

In addition to the machinery involved in the harvest there were vintage cars and tractors on show. These looked amazing, many as though they had just left the showroom. All praise to the enthusiasts who love and tend these machines so diligently.



*Well preserved 'old time' tractor with reapers under the control of Tom Power and Robert Mitchel had made short work of the field of oats*



*Loading the corn*



*Bagging the grain*



*Removing the straw*



*Rope making*



*Teabreak L – R: Robert Power, Pat Condren, Tom Power,  
Kit Murphy, Frank Nuttall and Eugene Shortt*



*Vintage camera and Frank Nuttall  
flanked by Elinor Medlycott and Monica Farrell*

## STOP PRESS



On Friday the 13 day of October in the year of our Lord 2006, a magnificent feast was held in the Roundwood Inn to celebrate the Wicklow 400 anniversary of the shiring of Wicklow.

The festivities included being regaled to fine piping on the street while the guests arrived in their finery by carriage. Our genial hosts in the Roundwood Inn, Aine and Jürgen Schwalm and their staff, promptly plied the gathering with mulled wine. The gathering was a motley one, ranging from political dignitaries from the government and their agencies, gentry to peasantry straight down from the mountains.

A feast it was,

*Wild Game Terrine*



*Duck Broth with Dumpling*



*Roast Wild Boar*

*Rabbit Casserole*

*Venison Ragout*



*Cheese*

*Hot Fresh Fruit Pies*

*Blancmange*

*Carrageen*

Despite this disparate grouping and copious quantities of red and white wine, the evening was deemed to be a great success with no rancour displayed or brawls occurring. The night of merriment was greatly enhanced by the musicians on harp and flute, comely to the eye as well as the ear.

Some of the good humour may have resulted by the arrival of the good news from the north that the Reverend Doctor Ian Paisley had said 'maybe yes'.

More details will be provided in the next Journal.

## *Wicklow People*

23/4/21

While driving to 2nd Mass on last Sunday, Mr. Healy, Glenmacnass had a narrow escape from serious injury. Mr. Healy was driving a spirited pony and when opposite Laragh School the animal took fright at a motor car and dashed against the ditch and turned the car. The driver who was flung violently out on the road had a marvelous escape as he sustained only slight injuries. He is nothing the worse of his rather exciting experience.

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The editorial team wishes to thank all who helped with the 17th Journal and made it possible in particular to the contributors. Special mention and thanks go to Elinor Medlycott who stepped down from the Editorial team but continued to assist us energetically. Both she and John have been incredibly helpful and generous with their knowledge. The team has now been joined by Ita Corcoran.

Now all we need is constructive criticism and meaty articles for the 18th Journal.

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*Copies of the Journal and  
Corlett, C. and J. Medlycott. 2000. 'The Ordnance Survey Letters - Wicklow'  
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